

# **My Drift**

**Title: 500!** 

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**Date: 4 Jun 2025** 

**Article Number: (500-2025-15)** 

# 500!

Well, this is my 500th article since I started writing these things back on 4 Jun 2006. If my arithmetic is correct, that is exactly 19 years. My articles might not be that great, but you have got to admit that I am persistent. I started my website (bigdrifter.com) in 2005 and there is one menu item that I have been tracking longer than writing the articles. That is the Hawaii Headlines. The first headline reads: "(JUN-JUL 2005) Oahu Brush Fires are Worst Ever". All my headlines include pictures and details of the event.



The Big Drifter

I wanted this article to be special. But here I sit at my computer, and I can't think of anything special. So, the best I can come up with are some facts and statistics about my articles. In addition to that, a friend suggested that I write about my secret to living a long life. Hey, I will be 85 years old in a couple of months, and I still walk my dog every day, go places with my friends, and drink a lot of beer. Life is good!





I write about everything – usually things of interest to me. On my website, I have separated or listed them under the following 12 categories:



Note: The number of articles in each category is in parentheses.

# **Background**

In the beginning back in 2006 when I first started this little writing project, my intention was to write a weekly column. I did this for about 6 months (25 columns), but my regular government job and my part-time job prevented me from doing a weekly column any longer. I didn't have time! So, starting in December 2006, I started calling my write-ups articles instead of columns. I planned to write a couple of articles a month. Let's see how I did: 19 years is 228 months. So, if we divide 500 articles by 228, we get 2.1 articles a month. Close enough!

Back in 2006, the Hawaii (mostly Honolulu) issue that irritated me the most was the homeless problem. Downtown Honolulu was overrun with the homeless sleeping on benches, sitting on the sidewalk, and begging for money. Driving down King Street was like what you might expect in a third world country. It was obvious that the Governor, Mayor, and other elected officials were doing little to fix the problem. So, I decided it was up to me to solve the problem! My first four articles were about the homelessness problem and how to fix it. I sent my articles and ideas to Mayor Mufi Hannemann. He sent me a response but as far as I could tell, nothing was done.

Well, here we are 19 years later and guess what?? The homelessness problem has got much worse! Over the years I have written several articles about fixing the homelessness problem. Nobody listens to me!

In fact, Hawaii like every other state has a lot of problems. Here are my top five and I have written articles about all of them:

# 1. The homelessness problem



**Downtown Honolulu (Hotel Street)** 

# 2. Drugs (especially Crystal Meth and Fentanyl)



# 3. Oahu traffic



H1 Freeway in Honolulu at most anytime

# 4. Graffiti



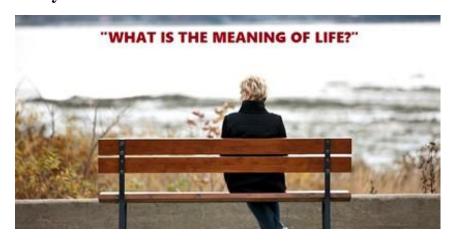
# 5. High cost of living



Hawaii has the highest cost of living of any state in the U.S.

## Here are a few more article facts:

- **❖** I have written something about all 50 states.
- **❖** I have written more articles about Hawaii than any other state.
- **Utah** (where I was born and raised) has the next most state articles.
- **❖** I have written more articles about the World (and outer space) than any other category.
- **❖** As I have got older, many of my recent articles are health related.
- **❖** I'm currently reading the Bible for the first time and writing an article about each book. (There are 66 books − 39 in Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament)
- **❖** The article that I got the most feedback on was "What is the Meaning of Life?". Do you know?



❖ All 500 articles are available on my website for anyone to read.

## MY SECRET TO LIVING A LONG LIFE

# Here is what health experts, doctors and GOOGLE say:

There's no single secret to a long life, but a combination of healthy habits and a positive mindset can significantly contribute to longevity and well-being. Key factors include maintaining a healthy weight, eating a nutritious diet, engaging in regular physical activity, managing stress, prioritizing sleep, and avoiding smoking.

Here's a more detailed look at the factors:

# 1. Lifestyle Choices:

Healthy Diet: Prioritize whole, unprocessed foods like fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains. Consider adopting a plant-based diet or a Mediterranean diet, which are known for their health benefits.

**Regular Exercise:** Engage in physical activity that you enjoy, whether it's walking, running, swimming, or dancing. Even moderate exercise can significantly improve health and longevity.

Stress Management: Practice stress reduction techniques like meditation, yoga, or deep breathing exercises. Chronic stress can negatively impact health and lifespan.

Adequate Sleep: Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night. Sleep deprivation can lead to various health problems and reduced lifespan.

Avoid Smoking: Smoking is a major risk factor for premature death and numerous diseases. Quitting smoking can significantly improve health and increase lifespan.

Limit Alcohol Intake: If you choose to drink alcohol, do so in moderation. Excessive alcohol consumption can be detrimental to health.

Maintain a Healthy Weight: Being overweight or obese increases the risk of various health problems, including heart disease and diabetes.

# 2. Mental and Social Well-being:

# Positive Mindset:

Cultivate a positive outlook and believe in your ability to achieve your goals.

## **Social Connection:**

Maintain strong social connections and engage in activities that bring you joy. Social isolation can negatively impact health and lifespan.

# **Purpose and Meaning:**

Find meaning and purpose in your life, whether it's through work, hobbies, or volunteering.

# **Stay Curious:**

Keep your mind active by learning new things and engaging in intellectual pursuits.

# 3. Other Important Factors:

Regular Check-ups: See your doctor regularly for check-ups and screenings.

Stay Hydrated: Drink plenty of water throughout the day.

Avoid Overeating: Practice moderation and eat until you're 80% full.

# **Bottomline:**

By incorporating these healthy habits and lifestyle choices into your daily life, you can significantly increase your chances of living a long, healthy, and fulfilling life.

# MY COMMENTS

I don't really disagree with any of the above but if they were all true and required for a long life, I would have been dead forty years ago. So, starting on the next page I'm going to see how well I'm following the above healthy habits and lifestyle choices.

**DISCLAIMER:** I don't recommend that anybody follow my secrets to a long life. In fact, you would probably be worse off. Some of the things that works for me would probably kill you. Each individual needs to determine what is best for him or her.

# 1. Lifestyle Choices:

# **Healthy Diet:**

The experts say you should eat a plant-based diet of at least 5 servings of unprocessed foods like fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains. Or consider adopting the Mediterranean diet.



# **My Diet:**

# I am a very picky eater! Let's see how picky you are by taking the following test:

Picky Eater Test			Picky Eater Test		
1 Point For E	very Item You Wo	ould <u>NOT</u> Eat	1 Point For E	very Item You Wi	ould <u>NOT</u> Eat
Ketchup	Beef	Celery	Ketchup	Beef	Celery
Mustard	Pork	Egg Plant	Mustard	Pork	Egg Plant
Mayonnaise	Turkey	Mushrooms	Mayonnaise	Turkey	Mushrooms
Ranch Dressing	Garlic	Pickles	Ranch Dressing	Garlic	Pickles
Vinegar	Tofu	Beans	Vinegar	Tofu	Beans
Soy Sauce	Onions	Olives	Soy Sauce	Onions	Olives
Blue Cheese	Carrots	Avocado	Blue Cheese	Carrots	Avocado
Raw Fish	Lettuce	Peas	Raw Fish	Lettuce	Peas
Cooked Fish	Cabbage	Strawberries	Cooked Fish	Cabbage	Strawberries
Canned Tuna	Tomatoes	Oranges	Canned Tuna	Tomatoes	Oranges
Oysters	Brussel Sprouts	Watermelon	Oysters	Brussel Sprouts	Watermelon
Snails	Zucchini	Bananas	Snails	Zucchim	Bananas
Crab	Cauliflower	Apples	Crab	Cauliflower	Apples
Shrimp	Cucumbers	Pineapple	Shrimp	Cucumbers	Pineapple
Chicken	Asparagus	Grapefruit	Chicken	Asparagus	Grapefruit
Grapes	Coconut	Wheat Bread	Grapes	Coconut	Wheat Bread
Sourdough Bread	Eggs	Milk	Sourdough Bread	Eggs	Milk
Coffee	Tea	Raisins	Coffee	Tea	Raisins
Peanut Butter	White Chocolate	Yogurt	Peanut Butter	White Chocolate	Yogurt
Nutella	Liver	Beets	Nutella	Liver	Beets
	Score = ?		My Score is 28		

I eat everything plain. When I go get a Quarter Pound Burger from MacDonald's, I get a bun, a hamburger, and a bun. Nothing else. No ketchup, no mustard, no mayo, and no vegetables. Some French fries are good. I will take it home to eat. I don't eat anything in my truck. I will put some butter on the bun and a little pepper on the burger plus some salt on the fries. I will eat this with a cold beer.

Breakfast is my main meal. I always eat breakfast – the other meals are optional. A good breakfast consists of scrambled eggs, hash brown potatoes, and a meat like bacon, sausage, spam, or ham plus buttered toast with jelly. To drink, I like coffee and a glass of milk and/or a glass of juice (orange or pineapple) plus water. Sounds good - right? Sometimes in place of this I will have pancakes, waffles, or French toast plus a meat of some kind. Other times at home, I will just have cereal (with a cutup banana) and toast.

I usually only eat two meals a day plus ice cream at night. For lunch/dinner I usually have a sandwich or soup or chili or pizza. I usually have a beer or two with this. I like ice cream with nuts in it like pecans.

I don't eat salads! When I was young, living on a small farm in Utah, we grew our own vegetables and had fruit trees for our fruit. Well, back then I ate most of the fresh vegetables and fruits. My favorites were peas and cherries. I knew everything was safe since we didn't use strong pesticides and my mother washed everything thoroughly.

However, now days you don't know where the vegetables and fruits you buy in the store or



restaurants come from. Many countries like Mexico or China probably use very strong poisonous pesticides that are banned in the US. My theory is countries like China are trying to kill all us Americans and our pets. So, I don't eat salads, and I don't give my dog any food with ingredients from China.

When I meet my friends at a restaurant for lunch, I don't usually eat anything. I will just drink my beer and when I go home, I will eat. People in Hawaii find this habit a little strange. Most people here eat while they are drinking. For me, old habits die slowly. Back when I first started drinking in Utah, the bars I went to didn't even sell food. So, when we were done drinking, we would go to a café for coffee and a bite to eat.

Speaking of old habits, the only new food item I have tried in the last 50 years is pizza. I like the Meat Lover at Pizza Hut. I have no desire to expand my diet any further. For special occasions or when family or friends go out for dinner, I do eat. A good dinner for me would be a small tender steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, and a cooked vegetable like green beans. Hot bread and butter. A glass of water and a cold beer.

So, you might be thinking — "How in the world does Jerry get his five servings of fresh vegetables and fruits?" or maybe — "How in the world is Jerry still a live with a screwed-up diet like that?"

Well, in the mornings I have one or two glasses of orange or pineapple juice and in the evening, I have a can of V8 juice. Apparently, that is good enough.

What do these experts know anyway? Most of them don't live to be my current age.

# Regular Exercise:

The experts say you need to engage in regular physical activity that you enjoy.

I agree completely.

I played basketball, ping pong, bowling, and other sports until age 70 when I retired from the Federal Government. Since then, I walk my dog Apache almost every day – usually for about 45 minutes or about 2 miles.



**Apache** 

Daily exercise may just be the key factor for a long life.

# **Stress Management:**

The experts say chronic stress can negatively impact health and lifespan.

Again, I agree completely. Here are a few slides to help you and me better understand STRESS.



# WHAT IS STRESS?



Stress is a psychological and physiological response to events that upset our personal balance in some way. These events or demands are known as stressors.

# symptoms of STRESS

#### INTELLECTUAL

- Memory problems
- Difficulty making decisions
- Unable to concentrate
- Confusion
- Seeing only the negative
- Racing thoughts
- Poor judgment
- Loss of objectivity
- Desire to escape or run away

#### **EMOTIONAL**

- Moody
- Restlessness and anxiety
- Depression
- · Anger and resentment
- Easily irritated
- · Sense of being overwhelmed
- · Lack of confidence
- Apathy
- · Urge to laugh or cry or both

# symptoms of STRESS

#### PHYSICAL

- Headaches
- Digestive problems
- Muscle tension and pain
- Can not sleep
- Fatique
- Chest pain
- High blood pressure
- Weight gain or loss
- Shortness of breath
- Skin problems Decreased sex drive

## BEHAVIORAL

- Eating more or less
- · Sleeping too much or too little
- Isolating yourself from others
- · Neglecting your responsibilities
- · Increased alcohol or drug use · Nervous habits
- · Teeth grinding or jaw clenching
- Overdoing activities
- Losing your temper Overreacting to problems





### How can I change my lifestyle habits to manage stress better?

- Get enough sleep: Adequate sleep refreshes your mind and your body.
- Develop a support system. Share your feelings with a friend, family member, teacher, clergy person or counselor. Talking with someone can help clear your mind of confusion.
- Exercise regularly: Find 20-30 minutes a day to walk or do something physical. Being physically fit is very beneficial in reducing stress
- Eat a balanced diet: Eating several balanced, nutritious meals throughout the day will give you the energy to think rationally and clearly.
- Stay away from alcohol and drugs: When you sober up, the problems and stress will still be there.





#### How can I change my thinking to handle stress better?

- Have realistic expectations: Know your limits.
- Reframe problems. Use positive thinking to see problems as opportunities.
- Keep your sense of humor. You must be able to laugh at yourself once in awhile. Laughing helps your body fight stress.
- Express your feelings: Bottling up your emotions will make things worse and increase your anxiety.
- Don't try to control events or other people: Many things in life are beyond your control, particularly the behavior of others.
- Try to manage your time better. Give priority to the most important tasks and do those first. Schedule time for both work and recreation.
- Ask yourself "Is this my problem?": If it isn't, leave it alone. You cannot solve all of the World's problems.

I am lucky to have a personality and lifestyle where very few things or people give me stress.

# **Adequate Sleep:**

The experts say you need 8 or 9 hours of quality sleep each night. Sleep deprivation can lead to various health problems and reduced lifespan.



I wish I could get 6 or 7 hours of quality sleep every night. However, I'm not sure these so-called experts have to get up 2 or 3 times a night to go pee. If I can get 5 hours, I feel lucky. As we get older, taking a nap in the afternoon can help us get the sleep we need.

# **Avoid Smoking:**

Smoking is a major risk factor for premature death and numerous diseases. Quitting smoking can significantly improve health and increase lifespan.



I have always thought smoking was bad for you but that didn't stop me from smoking when I was younger. I didn't smoke much — usually only when I was on TDY and at a bar drinking. Most bars I went to back then were so smoky, you might as well smoke. I quit for good in the late 1990s when my TDY trips to Korea stopped.

Most states banned smoking in bars/restaurants and other public buildings in the early 2000s. Smokers are a dying breed!

# **Limit Alcohol Intake:**

Moderate alcohol consumption has been linked to certain health benefits such as a lower risk of heart disease and death from any cause. However, other so-called health experts state that the potential risks outweigh any potential benefits, and that no amount of alcohol is safe.

Regardless, everybody (even me) agrees that excessive alcohol consumption can be detrimental to your health.



The primary question all of us beer drinkers want the answer to - What is moderate alcohol consumption?



Falling off a bar stool or sleeping on the bar are sure signs of excessive alcohol consumption. Health experts say that moderate alcohol consumption is:

- ➤ Men: Up to two standard drinks per day
- > Women: Up to one standard drink per day

A standard drink is equivalent to:

- **▶** 12 ounces of beer
- > 5 ounces of wine
- > 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits

Well, I disagree!! After much research and studying the benefits of drinking a few beers plus actually drinking many thousands of beers over the past 60 years or so, I have determined that my moderate alcohol consumption number is six not two.

# Maintaining a Healthy Weight:

Experts say that being overweight or obese increases the risk of various health problems, including heart disease and diabetes.

Well, that is true, but we should also state that being a lot overweight or obese almost certainly ensures an early death for you. In other words — "Fat people die young!"





I just Googled "How much should a 6'4" older male weigh?" For an older male 6'4" tall, a healthy weight range is typically considered to be between 182 and 222 pounds.

Darn! According to this and the chart hanging on the door at my doctor's office, I'm overweight!

Until I got married at age 32, I was considered by most to be skinny. Here is a brief rundown of my weight over the years:

- ➤ As a young boy—Weight is unknown, but I was skinny. (See picture below)
- ➤ High School As a senior I was 6'3" and weighed 180 pounds.
- > College At 20 years old, I was 6'4" and weighed 195 pounds.
- ➤ Navy For 4 years and 4 months I weighed between 200 and 210 pounds.

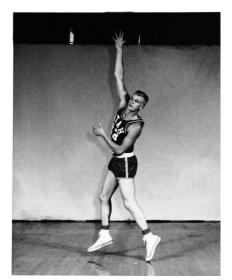
- > For the next 7 years before I got married, I weighed between 210 and 220.
- > For the next 50 or so years, I weighed between 220 and 240 pounds.



Me as a young boy



Pleasant Grove High School Basketball Team I'm number 44 and weighed about 180



Me at the University of Utah (6'4" and 195 pounds)



Me now at 84 – Weigh about 230

Do I look fat or even overweight in any of these pictures? I rest my case.

I think the experts and weight doctors need to redo their charts.

# 2. Mental and Social Well-being:

## **Positive Mindset:**

Try to have a positive outlook and believe in your ability to achieve your goals.

I watch Jeopardy! every weekday and I believe that I can answer more of the questions than most contestants.

Is that a positive outlook or what?

Well, I will have to admit that the all-time Jeopardy! champion Ken Jennings is a little smarter than me. However, I bet I can beat him at a game of one-on-one basketball or a game of ping pong.



**Ken Jennings** 

I think we already established that I am persistent and when I set a goal, I almost always complete or continue to reach it.

## **Social Connection:**

Maintain strong social connections and engage in activities that bring you joy. Social isolation can negatively impact health and lifespan.

Sorry, I don't do social media. Some people (especially young people) spend most of their waking hours on social media apps like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, and X (formerly called Twitter), etc. I think this is bad for our younger generation and will hurt them in more ways than one in later life.

I don't have many friends but the ones I do have are good friends.

My wife died a couple of years ago (July 2023), so it is just me and my Rottweiler Apache. He is by my feet whenever I'm home – He is a very loyal and protective dog. I probably talk to him more than any person.

I am close to my kids (Toni, Tracy, and Michael) and talk to them on a regular basis. My daughter Tracy lives in Erie, PA and she calls me every Sunday to see what is going on and to make sure I am alive. I am also close to my sister in Utah and her family.

The closest thing I have to social media is the Shack Restaurant and Bar in Mililani. I go there once or twice a week during the day and sit at the bar where there are several old-timer regulars drinking and shooting the bull.

Every Tuesday I meet several retired friends I worked with at Fort Shafter for lunch and drinks. I don't eat but I do have a few beers and an occasional shot.

And for the past two years, I have gone to March Madness in Las Vegas with my good friend and her husband. It was fun and I won money betting on the basketball games on both trips. We also meet for lunch and drinks once or twice a week here in Hawaii.

Hey! Occasionally I need to stay home and rest. I will be 85 years old in a couple of months.

However, I hope you can tell that I'm not sitting at home every day isolated, lonely, and waiting to die.



# **Purpose and Meaning:**

Find meaning and purpose in your life, whether it's through work, hobbies, or volunteering.

Here is what I think. If you are one of those people who watch all those stupid TV shows every night with a bag of potato chips, your brain is going to turn to mush, and you will be going senile long before you reach old age.

Me, I don't watch TV at night. I don't even have a TV in my bedroom. I do have a TV in my living room and outside in the patio area. Here is a typical schedule of things I do when I don't go out with friends:

5am My do	g Apache gets me up
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6am Me and Apache go walking for about an hour

7am Stop at MacDonald's for a large coffee

8am Feed Apache his morning steak

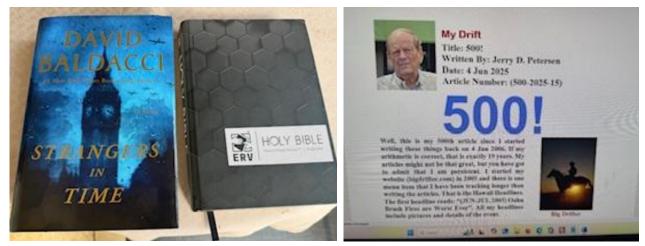
Eat my breakfast Watch the news on my patio TV 9am Check my email messages on my iPhone Check what sports are on TV today 10am Run errands or read my book for a couple of hours **12pm** Give Apache his crackers for a lunch time snack Time for a cold beer for me Watch sports on TV 2pm If no football or basketball on TV – I take a nap 4pm Fix something to eat like a sandwich or soup Watch Jeopardy! and the news on TV 6pm Feed Apache his dry food and cold water Go on my computer – research and write articles Play computer games – I only play ones I programmed

Go to bed – read my book until I fall to sleep

# What a tough life!

9pm

My hobbies other than sports include reading, researching, writing, and maintaining my website.



Books I'm currently reading and the article I'm currently writing.

I prefer to read hardcopy books instead of online books. I do my research online and write my articles in Microsoft Word before converting them to a PDF.

# **Stay Curious:**

Keep your mind active by learning new things and engaging in intellectual pursuits.

# I try to learn something new every day!

# 3. Other Important Factors:

# Regular Check-ups:

See your doctor regularly for check-ups and screenings.

I get my blood tested and see my doctor every three or four months.

# Stay Hydrated:

Drink plenty of water throughout the day.

I used to think since beer is about 95% water, I was getting plenty of water every day. I have since learned that this was a false assumption. Here are the facts:

"While beer contains mostly water, it also contains alcohol which acts as a diuretic leading to dehydration. Therefore, beer should not be considered a substitute for water in terms of hydration."

# **Benefits of Drinking Water**

In case you need further motivation to stay hydrated, here are just a few of the ways water can help your body function at a high level:

- Promotes less dry skin
- May help with weight control and even weight loss when people replace drinking high-sugar drinks with drinking water.
- Promotes healthy bladder and kidney function
- Improve digestion
- Promote healthy joints



Health experts recommend that we drink 8 cups or glasses of water a day. However, the actual amount differs from individual to individual based on certain health, lifestyle and environmental factors. Many doctors say the word "water" should be changed to read "fluids". Besides water, several drinks can help you stay hydrated, including coconut water, smoothies, herbal tea, fruit juice, sparkling water, and broth. These options not only provide fluids but also offer nutrients and electrolytes. So, the number of glasses of water needed might be much less than eight.

# Avoid Overeating:

Practice moderation and eat until you're 80% full.

Check out my eating habits earlier in this article. I don't overeat!

# **CONCLUSION**

# THE REAL SECRET FOR LIVING A LONG AND HAPPY LIFE

# GOOD GENES AND BEING LUCKY







If none of these things happen to you before old age, you must have good genes and are very lucky:

- **4** Bad car accident
- **♣** Falling and hitting your head
- **Knee or another Joint replacement**
- **High blood pressure**
- **♣** Stroke or heart attack
- **4** Aggressive cancer of any kind
- **4** Any other life-threatening disease
- **4** A major operation
- Showing signs of going senile
- **♣** Weakness in legs and hands
- **4** Fractured spine

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