I knew I was alive.

In the phosphorescent glow of a TV screen,

What
Continued on page 23.

I do not feel well. I go to a doctor and he prescribes me medicine for my stomach ailment. I take the medicine as prescribed and feel better. I continue to work and carry on with my daily activities. I am able to function normally and lead a relatively healthy life.

The doctor's diagnosis is that I have a gastritis condition. He recommends taking the medication regularly and avoiding spicy and greasy foods. He also suggests eating small, frequent meals to prevent stomach upset.

The condition seems to be improving with the medication. I continue to monitor my symptoms and follow the doctor's advice. I am hopeful that I will be able to lead a normal life with minimal restrictions.
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tedium of adulthood, I sat down to write a grocery list at 10 p.m. The TV was on: a “Law & Order" rerun. I had seen it, but still I sat, dazed and stupefied, letting its high mediocrity wash over me. It was a cranking hearth, a warm bath, a friend. My life was hardly elevated by this hour, but can I honestly say it was wasted?

Although I remember the classic “Lucy" episodes, I've forgotten most of the great books I’ve read. Curious to see what inspired me

stood apart from the very group he represented. He was, in short, an original. — “Frasier," September 1993

“A Season in Hell" is not a great film, but if there were a Cannes Film Festival of bimania documentaries, it would probably take home the Palme d’Or. — July 1992

Anybody who’s spent time on the Planet Uterus will grow misty and damp, even while noting how little this show has to do with reality. But then that dichotomy is what being a woman is all about. — “Sisters" (above), May 1992

Like Bill Clinton, Delta Burke continues to rise from the ashes of her career, and gain weight. — May 1992

If there's one thing I want to see less than Robert Wagner in a floral costume, it's Ed Asner in a bathing suit. “Rose" is going nowhere no one has gone before, to a place where no one wants to be. — “The Trials of Rosie O'Neill," April 1992

Spelling-out-the-issue scenes are always so predictable, and ring so false, they ought to be eliminated from TV movies, the way the compulsory figures were eliminated from Olympics ice skating. — “Taking Back My Life: The Nancy Ziegenmeyer Story," March 1992

If you're hearts in the Highlands, or any place where people talk in complete sentences and wear wool year-round, you'll go wild over “Masterpiece Theatre"’s “Doctor Finlay" It's just about perfect. Perfect. That is, if you are fond of oats, grouts, manly Scottish bonding, broken engagements, battle fatigue, moors, heaths,
lochs, cabbage soup, rain, brooding and minimalist decor. — May 1993

When the big birth scene comes, and the uterus-less Christa has become, against all odds, a biological mother, whom does she look at adoringly? Her new baby? No. Her mother. Mothers in the real world will see this for what it is: a romance novel in which birth replaces sex. — Review of "The Arlette Schweitzer Story," May 1993

I’ve waited as long as possible to say good-bye to Norm (left). Like the Scarecrow of "The Wizard of Oz" or Pooh Bear himself, Norm is not just part of "Cheers"; he’s its heart and soul. If "Cheers" were a sinking ship, Norm would be the one to go down with it. Sam would have gone ahead, on the women’s raft, leaving all that free beer. ... Lovable as Norm’s many frailities were (weight, joblessness, suds consumption, marriage), the thing that we’ll remember about him is his strength. It included esoteric talents — the Norm-the-decorator and Norm-the-beer-taster episodes were classics — and quiet wisdom. If you really needed advice, you wouldn’t go to the shrink or the bartender; you’d go to Norm.

Why was Norm the secret soul, the literal "norm" of every episode? Because he was drunk most of the time? That frightening possibility was the philosophical core of "Cheers." The greatest comfort show of all time didn’t get its strength by making the world look cheery. Norm alone recognized that life is an uncertain voyage in a stormy sea. Then he did what every sane person must do with that information: He ignored it.

And so we end with that great hello:
"What’s shakin,’ Norm?"
"Just four cheeks and a couple of chins." — May 1993
IT STILL BLOWS ME AWAY. I've seen "Gone With the Wind" an embarrassing number of times; I know most of it by heart. Not just the big lines, the "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn," but the little ones as well: "Hoss, make tracks!" And "I ain't so velly drunk, Melly." I don't watch this movie anymore; I lip-sync it. I know every twist and turn, yet I'm still rocked, socked and drained of emotion every time.

Why does "Gone With the Wind" touch such deep chords inside me? Maybe because it put those chords there in the first place. This is the movie that taught me and three generations how to be Southerners. It doesn't move us because we are Southern; we are Southern because we have taken this movie to heart.

I've loved a lot of big, splashy romantic epics, from "The Wizard of Oz" to "The Sound of Music" and "Doctor Zhivago." But I never hid from a tornado in Kansas or red Nazis in Austria or struggled through a Russian winter. I was, however, born in Virginia, a state where people once owned slaves. If for no other reason than geography, "Gone With the Wind" is my epic, a reminder that we come from, and still live in, a world where true equality is elusive but worth fighting for. It's BY SUSAN STEWART about living in a social order, upending that order and then learning to not only survive but thrive.

I'll go further. "Gone With the Wind" didn't just teach me how to be Southern; "Gone With the Wind" taught me how to live. This movie is so many things—

LESSONS LEARNED

THE ENDURING TRUTHS OF "GONE WITH THE WIND"

melodrama, historical fiction, tragedy—that it's easy to miss the fact that it's also a morality play. Amid the splendor and the blood and guts, this movie's most lasting lessons are about basic human behavior. Every time I have seen "Gone With the Wind," I have learned from it. When I was a teenager, the lessons were superficial. As I matured, the lessons have been deeper ones. Here are a few of the truths, major and minor, I've learned from "Gone With the Wind."

1. Never let 'em see you sweat (or eat or cry). When Mammy fastens Scarlett's corset and admonishes her that ladies "eats like a bird" in public, she articulates a theme that will follow Scarlett through three husbands, a war and a financial crisis so severe our heroine must fashion a dress from her dead mother's curtains. It got me through high school. When the going gets tough, apply more blush and carry on.

2. Don't marry your high school boyfriend. Like Scarlett, I preferred Ashley Wilkes at first. With his long eyelashes and dreamy speeches, Leslie Howard's Ashley is romantic but not sexual: the perfect fantasy for a backward 16-year-old who loves pretty talk. Rhett is, well, scary. At least initially. It took me 10 years, six or eight viewings and a couple of disastrous relationships with graduate students to learn the value of men who know how to get things done.

3. Kindness pays. After her famous "I'll never be hungry again!" vow, Scarlett chastises kind cousin Melanie for sharing their meager meals with Confederate stragglers. Melanie explains herself thus: "Maybe some Northern woman is giving Ashley a share of her dinner and helping my beloved come home to me." As Rhett says: "She was the only completely kind person I ever knew. A great lady. A very great lady." And how. When I first started watching "Gone With the Wind," Scarlett was, naturally, the woman who fascinated me. Melanie seemed, as Scarlett says, mealymouthed. But over the years I've come to see Scarlett as a tragic victim of her own lack of imagination. The myopic "I'll think about it tomorrow" vision that gets Scarlett through the day also keeps her from seeing the big picture. Melanie sees life steadily and sees it whole. Her strengths are subtle but enduring. We may want to live like Scarlett, but we should all want to die like Melanie.

4. Always have a fallback position. When Scarlett's father tells her that land is more important than love (his glorious land-is-the-only-thing-that-matters speech), his advice can be boiled down to just four words: Keep your day job. Men will go to war, sleep with whores, disappoint you and die on you. But gainful employment will put food on your table when your bed is empty.

Around the time of my initial infatuation with "Gone With the Wind," I was filling out college applications. My quest came down to one criterion: What would Ashley Wilkes most likely matriculate? Yet in my four years at the University of Georgia, I never met anybody resembling Ashley, unless you count the brandy-swilling literary-magazine editor who wore a black cape to class. But I got a degree and had so much fun I almost forgot what, or who, had drawn me there in the first place.

In the end, that's the biggest lesson "Gone With the Wind" offers: Civilizations will crumble; war and pestilence will strike; people will lose in love, die in childbirth, fall off their horses and go off their rocker. And we can't do a thing about any of it. All we can do is try not to live in the past or worry about the future, but, like mules in harnesses, set ourselves to the plow and get on with the business of surviving.

If "Gone With the Wind" were merely a beautiful movie about "a world where gallantry took its last bow," it wouldn't be worth a Confederate dollar. But this film steeps us in the past to shore us up for the present and takes us on a great journey only to return us, a little wiser every time, to wherever we call home. I don't call that a movie; I call it an education.