

The Adventures of Kozmos Lovejoy, Exp

By Patrick O'Brien

Questions and Answers with the Author

1) *While many memoirs and books have been written about the '60s, few have presented the constant spiritual growth undercurrent, drumbeat and center-stage presence of *The Adventures of Kozmos*. **Can you share what mattered most in what you wanted to present in the book?***

I wanted to write a fast moving, fun, true coming of age journey that covered a lot of spiritual history, from the pre-Christian Gnostics to the Age of Aquarius. It's a transcendental memoir of dreams come true about an ordinary young man who discovers in a dream the divine intelligence that is guiding him into an unknown future. He's an observer of a spiritual life that seems to unfold of its own accord within and all around him, filled with synchronicity and serendipity.

The social environment of *The Adventures of Kozmos Lovejoy, Exp* in the 1960s and early 1970s was one of political chaos, spiritual transformation, and psychedelic revolution. This was a time of global, social, and political upheaval with unlimited possibilities for the avant-garde generation of "New Age" thinkers. For Kozmos there was only one solution...transcendence of time and space. Whether through drugs, meditation, or dreams he knew there had to be a better way than what he had learned in school.

The archaic, three-dimensional physics of Newton and the "reality" of Descartes were shadowed by the blinding light of the psychedelic revolution, quantum physics and personal transcendence. When Koz had *The Dream*, and then met people from the dream in his daily life, he knew he had broken through the illusion of time and space. Once he had seen the future manifest in present time, he was on his way a new world.

Though I took some liberties to include dialogue that moved the story along I made sure that the dialogue (which was difficult to remember word

for word after 50 years!) reflected the speaker's intent as I remembered it. Still, the events are all true and happened pretty much as described.

- 2) Of course, the other driving force of *Kozmos* is the incredible journey you take us on, through expressions of freedom and society that, sadly, may be lost to us now, 50 years later. **What was it like to live and journey and experience so much in those times?**

I remember the Fifties as a time when kids could play in the streets until dark, leave our bikes in the front yard overnight without fear of theft, drink water from a garden hose or catch a ride in the milk truck while sucking on the shaved ice stored in canvas bags that kept the milk cold on hot summer days.

In the Fifties, time was measured on a circle, not a pulsing digital screen. It could be "ten after five", not 5:10 or "around twenty to nine", not 8:42. It was a softer world, less exacting, and time was more generous. It was a time when people were a lot more willing to be seen as wrong even if they knew they were right. "Time will tell" was a common phrase. Conversations were two-way, most people didn't think they knew everything or that there was only one right answer and there was no internet to perpetuate false information. Most people gave one another the benefit of the doubt.

Globally, in the 1950s, the US was living a dangerous post-atomic war period known as the Cold War where air raid sirens were tested every week for a couple of minutes in many US cities; where my school conducted air raid drills regularly by having a fire truck pull up and turn on its siren to simulate an impending atomic attack. Kids would get under their desks or line up on their hands and knees in the hallway. Meanwhile, every day for years, dozens of American bombers loaded with atomic bombs flew to designated "Fail Safe" sites on their way to bomb Russian cities while, at the same time, Russian planes flew to their opposing sites. Once a plane crossed this Fail Safe point it did not have enough fuel to return home. The pilots were on a suicide mission, and so was the entire planet.

It was easy to catch a ride hitchhiking in the Fifties. After the Korean War it was common to see soldiers hitchhiking and by the time the Sixties rolled around hippies were hitching everywhere. When I first tried it around 1956 as a 9-year-old, I was in a residential neighborhood. Four years later when I started hitchhiking seriously, I was hitching all over the county! It was illegal, but nobody cared.

There were laws, but very few rules back in the day. Something might be illegal but circumstances and personal preference were options that allowed for a lot of latitude. Police were not bound by iron clad laws and procedures. Often, common sense was called up to resolve situations. Once, as I mention in the book, a state patrolman picked me up for hitchhiking on a winter's night out on Route 66 and took me to jail so I wouldn't freeze. He let me go in the morning with cup of coffee and a kick in the butt!

Until the Sixties arrived, which had to be the most divisive decade of the 20th Century, it was the beginning of the end of the America Kozmos grew up in. When Kozmos' parents divorced in the late 50s, he had access to a lot of unsupervised opportunities to explore. He was free to come and go as he pleased. But this same freedom gave him a lot of lonely time when he'd be out roaming around when other kids that had to be home for dinner or doing their homework. His friend's parents were often disturbed about having Koz showing up and hanging out during dinner or at other family times. Being from a divorced family was threatening to some families who were on the verge of divorce themselves. Kozmos, as free as he was, was beginning to feel ashamed of his situation and became more and more of a loner.

It was later in life that this guilt and shame would drive Kozmos to dramatic risk taking and the development of antisocial habits and a vagabond lifestyle on the road. Free to hitch a ride wherever and whenever he wanted, he learned to run whenever things got tough.

And what did you take away that has been a part of your life since?

Most of us in the Sixties had issues with authority. A common slogan was "Question Authority". Those were the days when you *could* question

authority, there was some wiggle room and we used to say, “you need to know the rules, so you know how to break them”. While that is still true today, it’s not as easy in the computerized digital world. But what I learned from The Feast of Knowledge was that I’m responsible for whatever happens to me, or as some people say, “there are no victims, only volunteers” ... or as Bob Dylan wrote, “one should never be where one does not belong” and “don’t follow leaders and watch the parking meters” which he interpreted to mean as don’t be a lost follower and don’t stay in the same place too long...adapt and adjust. This was his style...just keep moving.

3) What prompted you to pull this incredible life adventure and spiritual journey into book form?

I started writing this book in 1978 about 4 years after I moved to Aspen. At that time the whole story was a “timeline” of what happened in about 20 pages, double spaced. I worked on it again in the mid 1980s and again in the 90s creating notes and memories. As I reflected on that period of my life, I realized it was a great life blessing to have been so free and to have had so many amazing life experiences. Most importantly all the events described in the book actually happened, so I thought I’d write a memoir. But in the process, I realized there was a story to be told that required more action than a memoir, so I began to write dialogue to move the story along and to tie up the loose ends.

In 2008 my father died at 99. He was a major influence in my life, though seemingly in opposition to my soul journey, until the last years of his life when we fully embraced one another. After my father’s death I wanted more than ever to write the book. In February 2009 I started writing the book with true intention. I wanted to tell the story of my spiritual journey as a true story. For seven or eight months I wrote every day and by September I had 500 pages double spaced covering 30 years of my adult life. I then realized it was more than one book and saw the three books in my mind. This first book, *The Adventures of Kozmos Lovejoy, Exp* was written from the first 200 pages of these 500 pages and briefly covers my childhood through my twenties focusing on my life in the 1950s through 1974.

In October of 2009 I was diagnosed with Stage 4 colon-rectal cancer that required surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy. I declined the chemo/radiation and had the surgery. Ten months later the cancer had metastasized, and I required a second surgery, and again chemo/radiation was strongly advised. I declined chemo/radiation again and had the surgery prior to moving to Hawaii to live on the beach and practice yoga and naturopathic healing techniques. Five years later I was released from oncology supervision. That was more than 10 years ago.

What challenges or considerations did you have as you tried to pare down probably 2,000 pages of potential stories into your final selection?

I wrote this story to share the magic of those years between 1969 and 1974. They were magical years for all of us coming of age after the Second World War. I know there are millions of people who remember those years with love, joy and more than a little wonder! These were the magical, mystical years that transformed a whole generation and life on earth as we knew it. We began to understand, as our grandparents had, the importance of our ecology, how we were part of the spirit of the earth and how we were connected to the earth and each other. It was a mini renaissance, a rebirth of humanity, with many ramifications obvious today, 50 years later.

But there is also the inner story. The healing that occurs when one reflects on one's past with love and wonder, "how did all that happen to me?" and "who am I?" or better yet, "who are we?". I loved writing this book because it brought me back to a time in my life that defined me through events and relationships that opened a new world for me. The dream of this story transformed my life.

And there is nothing like a few decades to provide perspective. The whole story was driven by The Dream and The Feast of Knowledge. Today we hardly live in the same world Kozmos experienced in the early 70s and I wanted to keep his perspective of how the events unfolded during those years, not as I would see them today. The Dream came true when he met Valerie and she shared the wisdom of Yogananda, The Aquarian Gospel,

the Essene Gospel of Peace, the Gnostic Christ and more. But there was more to the Feast as he learned in France when he discovered the Sufis and the teachings of Pir Vilayat. Then there were other meetings of Seers and Sages over the years after 1974 that could easily provide for another book as they too are part of The Feast of Knowledge. But, for this book, I wanted to limit the content to how his spiritual journey was affected by Yogi Bhajan's Kundalini Yoga and Dawson at Maharaj Ashram in Santa Fe, New Mexico and Pir Vilayat's Sufi camp in the French Alps.

What are your three favorite experiences and scenes that appear in Kozmos — and what was it like to write about them? The memories it brought up, the feelings, how you transferred those onto the page.

Meeting Valerie at the palapa and sharing The Dream with her at the spring. (audiobook Chapter 2 12:58 – 25:45) It was such a transcendental moment to actually be with her in time and space after having met her in The Dream. It was just too "far out", to quote the hip vernacular. And her response, sharing her past and offering The Feast of Knowledge was a divine gift.

The acid trip with Jack on the Golden Gate bridge (audiobook Chapter 10 13:32 – 25:26) . Jack was such a trickster and he "busted" me. There was a part of Koz that was on a spiritual ego trip and Jack knew it. He wasn't the kind of guy to approach a situation directly and his coy prank was perfect. There was a lot of serendipity in his pulling it off on short notice that day and he loved being a part of it as much as he was creating it. This is a part of the story where there is a lot of dialogue and as I mentioned previously and in the book, I took liberties to write the dialogue (you can't remember conversations exactly from 50 years ago!) so it was fun to write. Everything in that scene happened and adding dialogue made it more real than a memorable description.

Writing about traveling with Nicole when we left the Ashram to meet the Yogi in Santa Cruz (audiobook Chapter 25) We had a magical love affair and it was sweet to remember it.

Hitchhiking to France. (audiobook Chapter 28 24:20 – end) Almost unimaginable serendipity and synchronicity as that vignette unfolded in Gander and again in London as my ticket manifested out of nowhere and was sold on the streets of London to the perfect buyer! It made me laugh and warmed my heart to write and remember it.

- 4) One thing in Kozmos that will surprise people who are diving into plant-based eating, yogic or spiritual lifestyles, and new ways of independent living (working remotely, for example) today, and thinking it new because its new to their lives — just how many seeds were planted by your generation. I feel between the lines, we're reading the ascendance of all of the above, things we take for granted today. **What was it like to find a yoga community, a vegetarian restaurant or good alternative medical care back in the day?**

Rachael Carlson's book, *Silent Spring* published in 1962, was the beginning of our cultural awareness of how our toxic petroleum-based lifestyle was destroying the earth, air, water and human wellness. The Second World War had created a massive industrial/military complex that was irresponsibly producing industrial waste that was polluting the planet's air, water and soil.

The effect of these toxins in our food was the cause of numerous diseases including cancer, Alzheimer's, and heart disease. Carlson's book woke people up to the interrelationship between energy, agriculture, transportation, and industry, and how they were destroying the environment.

Most of the yoga and meditation teachers were vegetarians and as more and more vegetarians learned about fasting, diet and exercise the phrase "You are what you eat" became a popular slogan and the relationship between the earth, nutrition, health and spiritual awareness became obvious.

In 1969 we landed on the moon resetting our vision the possibilities of life on Earth extending into space, begging the question of "Who are we?". Then in 1972 an extraordinary photograph of the earth from space, called

the “Blue Marble” photo, caught the attention of everyone. The photograph of our small blue water drop of a planet brought an awareness that we were living on a tiny island in space. With this awareness came the realization that we needed to protect our home. For the Boomers, relatively well educated in their early teens and early 20s, this was the beginning of a new world. We were overwhelmed with data and scientific evidence that the planet needed to be protected, and nature embraced as the source of life. Millions of Boomers accepted this realization as guiding their purpose in life.

In 1970, Earth Day was proclaimed, and more and more people became aware of the need to consciously protect the earth by making intelligent choices which led to a deepening of our spiritual connection to the planet. Today we all benefit from the awareness that we live on an island in space that must be protected. At the same time, it became obvious that the human body was our connection to the Earth. Thus, food became an important element in our spiritual practices. Ashrams, communes, and retreat centers promoted back to the land lifestyles, organic food and agricultural sustainability. We opened health food stores and organic restaurants and farms. On a personal level individuals became aware that each of us contributed to pollution of the earth by the personal choices we made in our lives. We chose to come together and take responsibility for our individual effect on the environment.

And how gratifying is it to see the efforts of you and your Boomer peers manifest in this very healthy side of our society today?

This period was the beginning of the Green Revolution, the EPA, recycling, conscious awareness, and healthy food options in mainstream markets. Over time even the government began regulating food ingredients to inform the public and remove carcinogenic ingredients, and though the agricultural industry is getting away with murder and has created an impossible health care “industry” that is draining our national treasure of a healthy population as if we were sending people to slaughter. Fortunately, the “Food Pyramid” of the Fifties has been turned on its head as we learn the real environmental cost of raising cattle, using toxic pesticides and fertilizers as well as yet to be

proven genetic modification. Not to mention the petroleum driven synthetic pharmaceutical industry.

Life on the road in the Sixties was hard on the stomach. It was all sugar or salt, laden with chemical preservatives, or greasy fast food. Health food stores were mostly vitamin shops with very little, if any, fresh produce though fresh organic juice and whole grain veggie sandwiches were available around college campuses. But out on the road there was very little healthy food.

Although there were communes that had developed during the Sixties, there were fewer spiritual ashrams. If someone knew someone in a town or met someone at a coffee house, you might stay at a “crash pad” on the floor at on a couch.

Alternative medical care was almost nonexistent, consisting of mostly acupuncture and chiropractors. However, there were centers like Esalen in Big Sur, the Lama Foundation near Taos, and Hippocrates in Florida. Santa Monica and the southern California beaches also hosted pockets of conscious food and alternative medicine as did New York and Boston.

- 5) Kozmos is not only a riveting memoir of the late 60s/early 70s, but a deep dive into the growth process in our 20s — spiritual, emotional, and knowledge of the world as well. **What from your experience, and in the book, do you feel are key takeaways into how we approach this difficult future in our own lives? How would Kozmos’ mindset have helped him navigate the world today?**

The world we live in today is not even close to the world Kozmos knew! The world we live in offers a far greater opportunity for spiritual growth and enlightenment than the late Sixties/early 70s. You don’t need to believe in the astrological shift from Pisces to Aquarius to know that human consciousness is experiencing an existential transformation from a three-dimensional reality of endless space and limited time, to higher dimensions and faster frequencies.

The world is still flat if you go to the beach just as it's round if you go far enough out in space. However, we now know that when "seen" through the activated Pineal gland, (the "third eye" as it was known to the ancients) the world as we know it is patterns of energy condensed by gravity! What? All pretty "far out" stuff, that was literally unbelievable when Kozmos had his dream, but today phrases that were once "woo woo" science, like "What you see is what you get" and "Perception is reality" are now scientifically validated!

Quantum physics and quantum consciousness have determined that there are frequencies faster than the speed of light, and that the mass of an atom is less than 1% of its total volume and it's 99% energy! This means our bodies are made up of energy, not matter. We think we live in a 3D world because our physical senses are designed to identify a certain range of frequencies between matter and light.

Today millions of people are seeking enlightenment by learning to activate the pineal and pituitary glands, and to achieve a calm state of mind through meditation. to release chemicals like benzodiazepines (the human neurotransmitter modeled to manufacture Valium).

- 6) While Kozmos is a book based on a roughly 5-year period of your younger adult life, you've been quite the Renaissance man in the four decades since — lots of travel, work and life experiences, continued spiritual focus, and living in a variety of places. **How has this life path of yours informed you in not only your own walk and choices, but also how you work with and advise others?**

Like so many Boomers, we've certainly been blessed with a lot of wonderful life experiences, and I've met some amazing life teachers. I can't discount the effect that Jack had on my life. He played the fool so well. You never knew just exactly what he was going after until he had it in his hands. I never did ask him if he stole my passport. I don't think I really wanted to know nor did I know if I would have believed whatever he said. I learned a lot from Zonette's life reading about how previous lives can affect our present conditions. I learned a lot about human nature just being around Dawson and for years

he was my role model for teaching others. He had a deep respect for others and only made demands of himself.

Live and let live sums it up for me and I need to be a better listener.

8) Three of the bellwether spiritual journey stops in this book are New Mexico; Denver/Colorado; and France. Briefly, **what did you learn about communal living in these experiences?**

Santa Fe, New Mexico

We were a very small community at Maharaj Ashram in Santa Fe. When I arrived at the ashram there were only three other people, a couple of dogs and three goats! Dawson was the leader and Bobby and I were there at his pleasure...and Kate's of course, that's for sure!

We were very careful to be cautious and considerate. The rules were pretty simple. Get up when we heard Dawson begin the long chant at about 3:30am and continue for about 2 and 1/2 hours, then meet down in the dry sandy arroyo where Dawson would lead us in an hour or so of Kundalini yoga. Then we'd do some chores before breakfast including milking the goats and whatever needed to be straightened up. Kate would set out some cereal in wooden bowls and Bobby or I would bring the goat's milk. There was always yogi tea, a spicy blend of pungent herbs and spices that we dosed with a lot of honey and goat's milk. Then we'd wash our dishes and Dawson would lay out the work plan for the day. Both Bobby and I were very careful to be alert and diligent making sure we did what we were told so it was basically a disciplined karma yoga experience during the day with few hours here and there for reflection after lunch when Dawson and Kate would hang out together in the trailer. Then we'd work til sunset and Kate might go to town for supplies or we'd all go together to the Community Center in Santa Fe where Dawson would teach a yoga class. It was a pretty regimented lifestyle and we spent most of our time improving the land or doing yoga on our own.

After a month or so as more people started showing up for the upcoming solstice celebration there was more work to be done and Bobby and I would work with the new people showing them how to do whatever

Dawson had laid out for the day. For me the challenge was to slow my mind down and allow things to happen. The four of us got along well and the new people, just a few at a time, were thrilled to be a part of tribe. Some stayed longer than others and eventually there were 8 or 10 of us who made up the core group as the Solstice approached when there were a dozen or so people working and living in tents, teepees and VW vans...that was a lot of people but we thinned it out after the solstice when we opened the restaurant in Santa Fe and not everyone was living on the ashram.

Denver, Colorado

Denver was a more conventional ashram and communal living situation. Once we had secured the restaurant about 5 of us moved in to the restaurant after putting butcher paper on the street windows for privacy. We slept on foam mats in the dining room, chanting quietly at 3:30 am for 2 1/2 hours before doing yoga and showering at the Denver University dorms...sneaking in and out like we were students! Fortunately, we only had to do this for a couple of weeks before we found a three bedroom one and 1/2 bath house with a big, grassy yard about three blocks from the restaurant. We were very disciplined because that was the nature of our yogic lifestyle and we were busy restoring and setting up the restaurant. Once we got the house more people showed up and wanted to live there and work in the restaurant. By the time we opened the restaurant we probably had 10 people living in the house. Everyone got up at 3:30 and took a cold shower before meeting in what was the living room for yoga class. We had no furniture in the house except for a few chest of drawers. We all slept on the floor and people were pretty quick to shower in the ice-cold water! We drank tea in the house and made our own yogurt but most of the eating was done at the restaurant and of course we brought the leftover from the restaurant back to the house.

By May people were sleeping on the grass in sleeping bags and the living room was full for yoga classes. As you can imagine there was not a lot of privacy. People were sleeping everywhere but again, because of our yoga disciple, nobody expected a lot of privacy and we were working all the time.

Chamonix, France

The Sufi Camp was super well organized. The same people who had founded the Lama Foundation in New Mexico were in charge of the camp at Chamonix and were very experienced in community living. Of the three locations it was the more like a hip commune than a yoga ashram. There were at least a hundred people, even small families with a couple of kids and even babies. The kitchen had been set up in an old cow barn, a *vaschere* in French, and had been re-roofed with corrugated metal and a solid floor installed with wood paneled walls and a nursery/infirmery just off the kitchen. The stoves were fueled with propane tanks brought up the mountain along with the food, on the *telepherique* (cable car) to the hotel below the camp and then passed person to person up the trail on on our donkey!

Hot water was provided with small “on demand” propane heaters under the sinks. The dishwashing area was set up along the dining room wall outside the kitchen which was actually a large military tent where 60 people or more could sit on picnic tables. Hot tea and coffee were available in the dining tent. So again, conditions demanded that we work together and help one another. People slept in large (60×30 foot) tents with sleeping mats and bedding along the walls right next to each other. There was a freshwater reservoir outside and above the dining tent with showers set up with the on demand hot water heaters. However, most people walked about fifty yards to a spot where rainwater would spill making small showers.

The whole camp experience was simple but very well organized. We had to be respectful of one another for it to work and that required a good attitude. Without the spiritual component it would have been very difficult to cope with the elements and lack of privacy.

9) The funnest passage you wrote in Kozmos.

I had fun writing about my conversation with Nicole on our trip back from Paonia to Denver after pressing apple juice in Cedar Ridge. I also loved

writing about hitchhiking to Europe and selling the airline ticket in London! Even writing it, it was hard to believe it actually happened!

10) Your background in radio, sales, etc. A more complete picture of the many roles you've played in this life (so far).

Dawson taught me how to teach yoga and he gave me a lot of confidence. I loved doing the yoga and sharing our whole lifestyle with the natural food restaurants and yoga schools. So when I learned that KFML- FM, a hip radio station in Denver, wanted someone to produce a hip Sunday morning show to comply with FCC required religious programming I offered to do an eclectic spiritual program with a lot of different indigenous religious music and spiritual readings from books like *Be Here Now*, *The Prophet*, *The Essene Gospel of Peace* and other books from the Feast of Knowledge. It was called Starship Aquarius and we did it for maybe a year or so. It was a lot of fun we even had live gospel music and people playing guitars.

Then years later when I was living in Aspen I worked at KSPN-FM where I had a Midnight to Dawn show on Friday and Saturday nights broadcasting from the basement of the Hotel Jerome. I also started a natural, honey sweetened soft drink company for kids. When I left Aspen I found a great business in Florida selling water filtration equipment, became a sales trainer and eventually a Marketing Director producing sales events around the country. It all started with teaching yoga and learning how to inspire, encourage and coach people. Most recently, when I was living in Hawaii after I had a cancer diagnosis, I set up an online herbal distribution network that has grown beyond my wildest expectations! I believe that network marketing, when done right, is the perfect business model for the times we live in today. And the herbs fit my spiritual lifestyle. The restaurant in Denver was called Hanuman's Conscious Cookery and Hanuman is the patron of herbalists worldwide. He is a mythical hero whose father is the wind (perfect for a hitchhiker!) and he is connected to herbal healing. One of the stories about him tells how once when he was losing a battle with the Ravens, he picked up an entire mountain of healing herbs, caught the wind, and flew back with the herbs to heal all the wounded monkeys and bears on the battlefield! It's a great story from the Ramayana, an East Indian Epic poem.

But my most satisfying role is being the father to two wonderful daughters who have taught me more than I could ever teach them. Don't get me started on them! or their mom! For that you'll have to read the second book to meet them.

11) Are we going to see a follow-up memoir from you? And what are your plans moving forward?

The Adventures is just the beginning. I started writing about 20 pages in 1978 and put it away until 2010 when I started again. I wrote about 500 pages in six months and realized there was more than one book to be written so, for this book, I focused on the five years between 1969 and 1974 that are covered here. But like I say, there's more to be told, all woven around The Dream and The Feast of Knowledge. I have two more books lined out. The second begins where The Adventures leave off with Kozmos heading back to Colorado from Chamonix where he finds himself in Aspen. I'm not going to spoil the plot but I will tell ya that there is more to be told and I'm excited about continuing the tale.