

TFTA—First Time Back 13

The First Time: Stories of AR-Adults and Their First Times Back to Work and Play After Bouncing

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Lukas Ellridge (11/2023), 2074: “This was from my first real hiking trip after I bounced. While I may not show it, I was actually only a few steps away from panic. I’d been a dedicated hiker and backpacker before the Virus. Afterward, I could only look in awe at the huge world I found myself in. I was nearly two feet and 150 pounds smaller than the last time I’d gone out. Even though I had Marton for my partner, I still couldn’t shake the anxiety. A week later, much dirtier and another couple of pounds lighter, I was ready to conquer the world. That hike did more for me than six months of therapy. I haven’t stopped since.”

Mike Teasdale (3/2031): “I’ve been a midway junkie all my life. I like nothing better than wandering down the rows of booths and trying my hand at every game of ‘skill’ that I come to. Now that I’m so



small I can’t see over the edge of a lot of them, it takes a bit of work to play. On my first visit post-Virus, to our county fair, I was so frustrated that I’m sure some people looked at me and wondered why my parents hadn’t spanked me already! Good thing my cousin, who was my driver, enjoyed the show. I still blush when she shares some of the videos from that evening!”



Eddie Ringwall (12/2018): “My career as a lounge musician was almost ended by the Virus. It took months to find a manager who’d even listen to the music. One look at me and most were like “I don’t need any kids around my place.” Since then, it’s gotten a lot easier, especially since the AR rights laws were passed. My voice is kind of in the middle, so I still get some people who think it’s a girl singer, or sound off about child labor, but most are cool with it. For me, after I got over my initial doubts and found out I could still sing, it’s been a good living. I’ve been part of community concert series all across the country, played clubs in Vegas and elsewhere and even did a couple of recordings. I’ve done multiple Caribbean cruises...now that is a set of stories I can tell you—but won’t!”

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