

AWARE ONES OF THE TREASURE COAST

BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER

"We are Progressive Humanists
We are the Soul of the Coffee House
We are Love and Laughter"

Vol.1 No.2

July 2016

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-- Produced by the TC Secular Writers --

INTRODUCTION

Ed Zillioux

And so, we evolve! The new look of our front page embodies three major changes. First, largely because we were all tired of the long harangue over, and go-nowhere aspect of, the naming issue, we have reverted to the earliest proffered name of the "Aware Ones" as our official name. We don't claim to be democratic here, but when presented as a draft at the June 16 meeting of the TC Secular Writers' meeting all present enthusiastically agreed. As a further clincher, we later learned that Paul Carlos (long-time in opposition to the need for any name) had independently come to the same conclusion. So it has finally come to pass that the "Aware Ones of the Treasure Coast," or AOTC, has emerged as our official name.

By way of background, it should be noted that Bert Mautz, as most of you already know, was the first to use the term "Aware Ones" to denote the core group of humanists that has persisted in weekly attendance at the Stuart Coffee Company over the past year and has become the nucleus of the present AOTC membership. Bert is quick to point out that the name was not original on his part. It was borrowed, he admits, from an all-night jazz DJ in south Chicago in the '60s who referred to his bleary-eyed audience as his "aware ones."

Second, in order to counter an earlier concern that our name had to define who we are, we have installed a recurring banner under our name that will, we envision, be carried over to all future issues of the AOTC Newsletter, and clearly states who we are, beginning with the words, "We are Progressive Humanists...."

Third, we have changed our first inclination to launch the newsletter as a quarterly publication to a bimonthly Newsletter. Accordingly, publications are projected to appear on or about the first day of Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, and Nov of each subsequent year.

The current issue, Vol.1, No.2, will continue the order of contents as initiated in Vol.1, No.1, with the exception of the one-time "Who We Are" essay that appeared in No.1, which is no longer needed and now replaced by a simple Member List to be regularly updated.

MEMBER LIST

This section is password protected. Access limited to AOTC members only.

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Meetings

Sunday Coffee – Every Sunday, Stuart Coffee Company, 10 a.m.

TC Secular Writers – Every other Thursday, Jensen's House of Brews, 6:30 p.m.;
July 14, 28, August 11, 25.

Events

The Pot Luck returns! Once again, Gloria and Paul will make it happen on Saturday, July 9 at 5pm. RSVP to Gloria, 772-344-0577

Bert's much anticipated and long awaited summer solstice night-blooming Cereus event finally came to fruition, so to speak, on 6/23/16. Almost on schedule!



MEMBER NEWS

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COMMENTARY

A Vision

Bert Mautz

Can we learn to be comfortable knowing whatever this fellowship/social camaraderie is, it is for and about us?

We aren't growing the brand. Shared philosophical roots in Humanism, liberal politics not essential, refers to rational thought, and empathic social maturity.

We needn't have offerings for folks half our age, or for children. While we are welcoming of kindred spirits, we've no compulsion to proselytize.

Call this elitist, but who else matters? Unfiltered, inquisitive, spontaneous, will not behave so as to avoid offending a stranger. We are "R" rated. Sunday coffee together ain't Sunday school.

We have been observed, examined, and joined by intellectual and generational peers. One can miss the commonalities and miss the attraction, or one intuitively catches the vibe at our table in the coffee shop, and seeks to be part of it. You will know if you are a fit.

A few of us may have come to understand our pending mortality. We've no time to waste; this is for and about us, so we must maximize the experience we share and the pleasure there is to enjoy.

We have much to offer each other; empathy, affection, rich personal histories, compassion, and aid. And every Sunday morning we gather to talk, uninhibitedly.

"Aware Ones," is meant to convey admiration and recognition of shared reasons to be together.

Invocation. Martin County Commissioners, 21 June 2016

Marcia Drut-Davis

You don't have to bow your heads, if you choose not to. I'm just a human speaking from my heart to yours hoping to inspire. On behalf of The Humanists of The Treasure Coast, and many more growing Humanist organizations all over the world (ed: yea! That includes the AOTC!), I'm honored to offer this invocation:

We come here to do the business of local government. As we gather, we're reminded that in our differences there's great strength. We do **NOT** all think the same way or believe the same things. Yet, we **hope** we're linked by our common humanity and compassion to what **is** right or wrong. When we work together to move our community forward in a spirit of mutual respect and common decency, we showcase what's best about our community.

Our community embraces many traditions. We're: Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Humanists, Atheists, Agnostics, Wiccans, Pagans, unaffiliated, uncertain, and so many other things. We're straight, gay, bi and transgender. We're young and old and everything in between. We represent dozens of races and nationalities. We run the gamut from liberal to conservative, and some of us may be a bit of both.

To be sure, we **don't** agree about everything! (And often feel fiercely protective of what we do or don't believe.) There's great passion in our beliefs—and rightly so. But there's one thing we all agree: We share the goal of making our community the best place it can be. We unite here today around that noble aim and common purpose. We ask the members of this Board to use their wisdom and rational thinking, guided by reason... to resolve the issues before them today. Thank you.

ARTICLES

The Duffers

John Lynch

Golf is an outdoor game in which players use special clubs to try to hit a small ball with as few strokes as possible into each of 9 or 18 holes. Golf is viewed by some as a good walk spoiled. I concur.

If you think it's hard to meet new people, try picking up the wrong golf ball. The results will not be a cordial atmosphere. There is nothing that will get your mind off your troubles like golf. You get so sore at yourself you forget to hate your enemies and still others say it is spending a pleasant day with friends enjoying nature's many beauties. Not so in my view.

"Duffer" is a term for a mediocre or poor golfer. This definition is very generous because my memories of duffing are totally different. I can say without blinking I have expertise on duffing and mediocre is not what comes to mind, but poor also may be a stretch. Let me introduce you to some duffers.

My memories include much libation to prepare for the injustices of the nine holes we played each week. Included in the injustices were sand traps, water hazards and the tortuous rough. After finishing a few beers and perhaps a harder form of alcohol we were ready to meet the challenges that awaited our well-confident group. Booze has been known to bolster courage and confidence. Sadly, when put to the test it fails miserably.

Tolerance for taking booze on the course was much different than today and we were allowed to take alcohol with us. We loaded the golf carts with as much fortification as possible. Groups as ours can take pride in the fact rules were changed because of our questionable behavior on the golf course.

Duffers also create their own special rules that included the well know mulligan rule. This rule entailed not counting a bad shot and replacing it with another. If that failed, you must count the results regardless if it has been a worse shot than the previous. More often than not, that was the case. Mulligan's were limited to one per nine holes, but, that may have been one of the worst violations of the special rules. More than a few were suspected in claiming more than their share. Not accusing others of cheating was another rule. The delicate way of bringing this up was by mentioning to the offender that he may have made a mistake in his stroke count. Knowing he was caught in the act, he would pretend to go over the strokes in his mind and announce that he surely miscounted. Much face was saved through the course of a round by using this method.

The "gimmie" was another special rule. A gimmie is an agreement between two golfers that do not putt very well. It is used from anywhere

from three feet to inches from the cup, an excellent way to shave strokes from your score.

I have witnessed some creative attempts at saving strokes. A fellow golfer, excuse me, duffer, hit his drive into the woods. Hershel went into the suspected area and walked out and suddenly saw his ball on the edge of the fairway and made the claim that his ball bounced from the trees and miraculously dropped in the fairway. He actually took a ball from his bag and kicked it on the fairway. The problem was he drove an orange colored ball and the one he claimed was his was white. The only thing to do was laugh at him with much glee at this fraudulent attempt to save strokes and enhance his score.

Another special rule was fluffing. Fluffing allowed you to place your ball in a more enviable position lest you landed in a divot or the rough or any situation where true talent was necessary. This method never seemed to help the untalented duffers.

Sand traps were always a joy for our group. I witnessed my brother-in-law, Gene, take three swipes from a greenside bunker and claimed two were practice swings. Another delicate situation occurred when I recited the rule of not grounding the club in a trap, which seemed reasonable to me. My mistake, as he responded by a huge puff of his cigar and murder in his eyes. He reluctantly accepted the penalty strokes. Since that incident until the end of the round, Gene watched every move I made, ready to pounce at the slightest suspicious move on my part. I do not profess innocence at taking advantage of the special rules but I must say, for the most part, I towed the line.

I mentioned alcohol to prep us for our round and the supply we carried in our golf carts. One of the fellows in our group, George by name, hit an errant shot into a small pond. Overwhelmed by frustration and in no small part his intake of Jim Beam, led him to throw his iron into this particular body of water. George had second thoughts and decided to retrieve his club and jumped into the pond fully attired. Unbelievably, he recovered his club, but the stench and various species of fungus on his clothing made one wonder if the effort was worth it. Pity was felt for the player that shared the cart with stinky. Again, we were beside ourselves with laughter, but it was not that we were unsympathetic to his plight or a better word may be blight.

Another in our group, nicknamed Sticks because of his thin frame, had his own adventure. Sticks hit his ball into a small creek, but had to lean over to retrieve his ball, after all, it was a Titlist, the ball of champions. Needless to say, Sticks tumbled into the creek, but hell, he did get his Titlist back and climbed out of the creek with a big smile on his face. Idiot is a word that comes to mind as I saw Sticks soaked to the skin with this effort to retrieve his ball.

Our group approached the midway point in our adventure; I would say the sixth hole if my memory serves me. Imagine if you will four people in various degrees of alcohol poisoning. The sixth hole at Royal Oaks is a long hole with all the hazards you will want to encounter. A par 5 520-yard hole and for our group it might as well have been 520 miles. Counting strokes

were now a guessing game and honestly no one was paying attention. After trying to negotiate multiple sand traps and a lake in front of the green the scores that were announced defied belief, and they were beyond belief. A few actually claimed a par score. The more honest or at least the less dishonest, and I include myself in this, were willing to take a double bogey although that was a tremendous stretch of the truth.

The rest of the round was, not to exaggerate, pathetic. Out of beverages, stumbling, complaining and cursing were the general comportment the rest of the way. That was a predicted attitude since we ran out of alcohol. The clubhouse looked like a utopia we were searching for years. We, as usual, finished our round in the dark; thankfully the end was at hand. We resupplied our libations and headed to one of the picnic tables the golf course used for outings. An outing was mostly used for large groups that had a get together after the golf season was declared over. Groups that played on weekly basis were granted permission to use these after a round. After all, who is having a picnic at nine o'clock in the evening?

The conversation was centered on how our game was and much lying followed. Of course, Perry brought along his projector and smoker reels. Smokers sound so much more acceptable than what they call porn these days. When in a drunken state the smokers provided much laughter. At that stage atom bombs dropped on Japan would have provided the same result. After two hours of this, my concern was making it home without being stopped by the police. My bigger concern was trying to explain to my wife how I could golf at such a late hour and how I could get drunk while golfing. I cannot remember what my lame excuse was this particular time, but she was not buying any story I came home with. She heard my stories many times. This duffing and drinking would eventually led to divorcé. Sometimes a guy just gets lucky.

I hope through this account, I have cleared up any misconception that duffers are golfers. I spent many years duffing and I must tell you it resembles nothing that you will witness on T.V. The amazing thing about duffers is they think their game will resemble those of a pro without the benefit of instructions or practice. It was Albert Einstein who defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. I think this definition is the one that best describes duffers.

Pool Gods

Dan Vignau

Pool gods are feisty little critters, scurrying about in the attics and drop down ceilings above every coin eating, quarter pool table in America. No respectable dive or college pub is immune from their influence on this, the most popular American bar game ever played, eight ball.

As a perpetual student, I learned about many such creatures, hanging like bats from the rafters, just waiting to torture you into making senseless mistakes. Winning at eight ball is crucial for many reasons: you meet more people, spend less money, but most importantly, you get to play, rather than sit. These little imps sole existence is to torture your soul by cajoling you to miss your easy shots. Because of these ignoble gods, you must sit and wait while they torture the ensuing players. You wait; you drink. Player after players succumb to their mischief.

Pool gods are not like cats, with their total focus on the object of prey. These Lilliputian brats are more like jackals, scurrying about, one by one trying to swipe a bite here, a bite there, trying to intimidate the tiger for its kill, then pouncing on the remains after the big cat carries off the grand prize.

Because of these ignoble demons, you sit and wait. Sit and wait. You should be studying, cleaning house, or washing the car, but you wait... you endlessly wait. Finally, it is your turn again. Once more, you tell yourself that these demons will not affect your game. I know. I have been there. I am a pool player. My allies are in the attic.

While these spirits frolic above, I quietly go about my game, never bragging, never betting, and never allowing my focus to waver. I know how they think, and more importantly, I know that they can see and hear, but that they cannot read minds. This is a very important point. Many players will say something to distract you, but these devilish little gods will punish them for their ungentlemanly behavior.

It is of the utmost importance that they see you as the good guy: never brag; the gods will make you look like a fool when you shoot; never do a short rack for an advantage, they are watching; never ask to make a bet, you will be smitten; never say, "nice game" before it is over; they will hear you, and plot to overturn your feeble attempt at reverse psychology.

OK now! I've done everything right. I'm shooting for the win. Just a few easy shots and someone else will have to sit and wait his turn. Then, just as I am ready to sink the eight ball, my opponent reaches into his pocket to retrieve quarters for his next game, many long minutes away if I make the shot. He puts his stick back in the rack on the wall, but the pool gods are watching him, and more importantly, listening. They will stop at nothing.

I have learned a lot about them. I know what they are thinking, but will never let them know. I act as innocent and pure as a newborn puppy, but the damned pool gods hear the change jingle, jump into action like the pack of Hyenas, and do everything to make me miss. First, someone really cute walks by. Next, a door opens. A drink drops. I have no chance. Finally, just as I prepare to shoot an obvious shot, my opponent asks, "Where are you calling it?" He screwed up. They know he is trying to sabotage my focus. They will want him to lose, rather than me.

But I still miss. Damn! They did it again. I must concentrate, but I also must answer the question: how did they trick me into not calling my shot? I have to remember this for the next game.

Cocky that he ruined my rhythm, my opponent walks around the table, vainly chalking his stick. A simple little mini-bank shot, barely having to brush the rail to bounce a mere half inch, at most, to tap his ball into the corner pocket. He makes it. He makes the next shot. He hits a hard bank and looks at the eight. It is not a gimme, but is certainly routine.

I say nothing. Reaching into my pocket, I jingle my change to alert the gods. I have plenty of quarters, but for dramatic effect, I get a dollar out of my wallet and put it in the change machine. After a slight hesitation, the quarters clank one by one as they drop. I have already put my stick in the rack and ordered a beer. I don't watch. I want the pool gods to truly believe that I know I have lost. That is how to beat them.

My opponent aims. He pulls back his cue, shoots and banks the eight ball toward the near corner. He yells, "Yeah!" That was his mistake. These ornery old pool gods don't like bravado. The cue ball crosses the table and redirects the eight.

I abandon the change from my drink sitting on the bar. I must make it look good. They cannot turn on me now. I need my little devils to save me. If they suspect anything, they will make me miss, or look like a fool... or both. I don't plan to have to wait an hour between games. Discretely fumbling with several sticks before finding the one I was using, I try to fool them. I can't let them know I planned this. I act distracted when the bartender sets my beer down a few feet away.

Tapping the eight ball into the pocket at the opposite end of the table. I wait. I wait for the impending scratch. I put my stick up. The cue ball stops just short of the pocket. I have beat these little imps again.

Thank you my pool gods. You have helped me win yet again. Without you, I am nothing.

Of course there are no pool gods, nor any gods at all; but it still helps to have a strategy, psychological or godly. At the end of a hard day, the results are the same.

LETTERS

Letter to the editor, Stuart News*

(*Accepted, Published)

Dan Vignau, Stuart
Nov. 15, 2011

Following Religious Reasoning to its Logical Conclusion

Any critical-thinking atheists, such as my Humanist friends, have to be amused by the convoluted reasoning of the religious right. For once, let's carry this reasoning further.

Guest columnist Karen Ray wrote that we do not have to follow the antiquated rules of Leviticus and Acts, saying that the prohibition of eating lobster ended with refrigeration. Science! Cool! She says Jesus healed (worked) on Sunday because God told him to do it. (Cringe!)

Sigmund Freud proved that these diseases were not bodily illnesses, but problems with the mind. He cured them without medicine, too. Science of psychology!

She states the reason God forbade braided hair was to prevent women from looking like prostitutes. Braids are OK now that the science of sociology has shown us cultural differences around the world. Finally, she states that God's prohibitions are actually allegorical: we should not necessarily "take God literally ... by outward observance ... but by a transformed heart."

When Leviticus prohibited homosexuality, it was because large families were needed to have enough survivors for the next generation. This is where science failed. By eliminating or curing a plethora of diseases, healing injuries, and discovering what to do and eat for a healthier life, we have overpopulated the Earth.

The failure of science was to let the undereducated and religious fanatics have too many babies. The landmark seven-billionth child born shows us that we have to slow down population growth.

Jesus would love the transformed hearts of his followers if they stopped hating homosexuals and other birth-controllers. Abortion could become very rare, being the exception, instead of the stop-gap measure we now use for people who believe in ghostly creators instead of science.

So everyone, use birth control, eat lobster, and be gay ... for science

POETRY

Time is Not Necessarily Nutritious

Gloria Cosgrove Smith

Time is not necessarily nutritious
not like the casserole we prepare for supper
not trendy like the menu
in that little European restaurant
nor is it always generous
as a nurturing mother's servings.

Time may present itself up the table
to be sampled and examined
by an Einstein or a Hawking
but in matters practical
it's a fickle chef who feeds
us joyous holiday feasts
but also dishes out frustration
to our youthful longings
and distasteful acceleration
to our years of aging.

Yet we are told by way of definition
that the only time we'll ever really have is now
that we can add oregano
to our minestrone lives, stir and simmer
or opt for cuisine that's more exotic.

But inevitably there's little choice
we must accept both sweet and sour
and do our utmost
to keep on cooking.

The little planet that could (but I couldn't)

9 May 2016, 3:22 pm

Ed Zillioux

Mercury transiting the sun!

Got to see this

Need the proper filter

Two layers of exposed film will do it

Fumbled through sleeves of old 35 mm negatives

Found exposed tail end long enough to double

Outside, leaning back against my car

Carefully position the film over eye

Can't see mercury on sun surface.

Mercury too small, gave up, put film away.

Wait, binoculars will do it!

Got binoculars, fumbled again to find film

Outside again with binoculars and film filter

Still can't see it. Guess I'm just too shaky.

Just have to watch it on line

Went to UK's Royal Astronomical Society page

Noted transit lasts from 11:12 to 6:42

Oh shit! That's in Greenwich Mean Time!

I was an hour late.

COMEDIC CORNER

New Experiences Still Available

Bert Mautz

Virtually never avail myself of public toilets. This provisioning run to BJ's was to be an exception. Furthermore, I was to roll into that stall, as large as the entire bath, tub, and all at home.

First impression: Spartan, low lighting, nicer materials at Cine-Max, still two rolls of t.p., seat covers available, soap dispenser is full, power dryer, all is serviceable, latch the door.

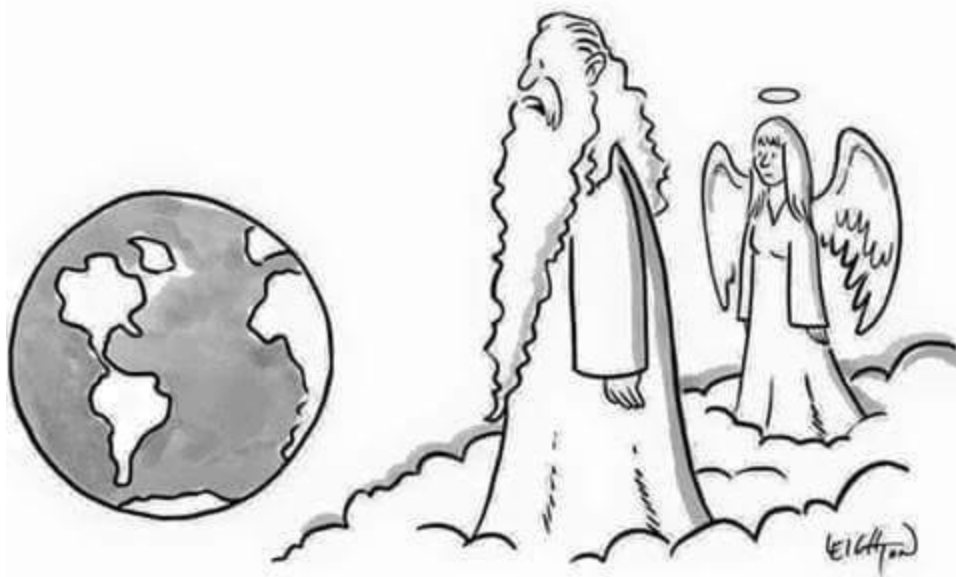
What the hey, we're going to employ a seat cover. As an exercise try the ADL class, lateral transfer, no problem. Judging by the shoes and socks the fellow briskly doing his business next to me isn't having as much fun as I am. Tell myself, no need to hurry. Reverse the transfer, trousers and belt drill. Electronic faucet dispenses warm water, so choose to lather up and give the creaky old hands a thorough scrubbing. Wet hands get no grip on the wheel rails, so dry thoroughly and roll back out the door.

Complete the self-check-out and pay routine and roll back out to my Toyota waiting in the lot. Stack the bagless purchases before heaving the sport chair into the back. Have a couple purchases next door at Aldi, so drive over to another parking lot and proceed to unload my chair.

What the hell is that? In the shadow of the bright morning sun, I'm sporting some kind of tail, blowing in the breeze. Flail at my behind, to find, yes, an eighteen-inch gossamer tail of toilet seat cover tissue tucked in my belt. My parking place where all this fun is happening is directly at the main entrance. People are streaming in and out. This ridiculous elderly fellow struggling with his wheelchair is additionally pathetic with his toilet tissue blowing in the wind. Oh, the humiliation of that moment. Nobody mentioned it to me, "Hey, you might want to get rid of the tissue," or something like that.

On a purely theoretical level, I understand the design of the tissue toilet seat cover. Properly placed, it will dispose of itself upon flushing, no further touching required. Could it be I failed this critical detail? Did it backwards? In and out of the car, it hung in there for this moment of embarrassment.

With the sweep of a hand the banner of gentrification was wadded up, gone, handled. You know, at this point I had to laugh out loud.



"I'm starting to prefer the ones who don't believe in me."

Contributed by Bert Mautz



Contributed by Dan Vignau