

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.2, No.1
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-- Produced by the TC Secular Writers --

INTRODUCTION

Ed Zillioux

Happy New Year! We start off 2017 with the second volume of the AOTC Newsletter. I really try to get this done and out to our members and friends on or close to the first of each bimonthly period that the newsletter pertains to but, as most of you are aware, I have been overwhelmed by life changing events, not to mention the falling accidents. Maybe in this new year I will learn to be more careful as befitting the old guy I have become. But when you've lived your whole life plunging into that next adventure or challenge shaking off any physical mishaps as if they never happened, it's just damn hard to change.

So back to what is. And I can't go on without acknowledging the support I have received from all the Aware Ones, with particular indebtedness to Rick and Sandra and Dan and Charlie and Joan for their incredible efforts and just plain hard work of extracting me and Ivy from our past brought about through the sale of our commercial bldg and donation of my sailboat. It's now behind us save for toting the residues to IRSC and thrift shops. Whew!

Sunday coffee has sorted itself out with all on board with the outside café atmosphere at Importico's. Great coffee and food, and a wonderful staff working to make every Sunday a special event.

As usual, this issue of our newsletter is indebted to the contributions that made it possible. Authors include Dan Vignau, Jim Longo, Gloria Cosgrove, Sandra & Rick Burkhart, and Bert Mautz. I had some fun with it too. Bert also helped me gather up the Events & Member News sections. From the serious to the frivolous, enjoy!

MEMBER LIST

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

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Meetings

Sunday Coffee – Every Sunday, Importico's Bakery, Stuart, 10 a.m.'ish, outside when weather is tolerable, i.e., no snow.

TC Secular Writers – Every other Thursday, Jensen's House of Brews, 6:30 p.m.; January 12 & 26; February 9 & 23.

Events

December 21, Wednesday, Winter Solstice celebration.



And a heads-up for the Vernal Equinox celebration on Monday, March 20.

Details to follow, but finger food pot luck sure worked out just fine on 12/21.

Monthly Potlucks

January 28, Saturday, 1 pm.

February 18, Saturday, 3 pm.

MEMBER NEWS

This section is password protected. Complete access limited to AOTC members only.

The Burkhart's Postcards from Paradise

20 December

"Dear friends. Family, and supportive people:

Yesterday, on Monday, we drove south and had dinner in Coral Springs with old sailing friends, eating outside the restaurant with our dogs at our feet. Only a hundred or so people came by and petted them, so they enjoyed the evening as much as we did! These kind sailing buddies presented each of our dogs with a brain-teasing dish which requires that they turn an arm and lift a lid of one of three dishes to get a treat. We will tell you how long it takes them to figure it out!

Today, Tuesday, we drove south. We forgot to bring our SunPass, but we bought a new one so our return trip will go faster than driving US 1 through suburban Miami for three hours. We arrived at our charming "resort," an overgrown elderly motel whose foliage was rampant, exuberant, and practically shouted at us "old is good, have fun too!"

The dogs were delighted to discover the feral cats the landlady feeds. We mediated several interactions and all are well.

We had a lovely seafood dinner overlooking the sunset, which was especially glorious because there are no building here tall enough to block the palms being silhouetted against the dying gold and pink.

Tomorrow may be Swim With Dolphins Day, or Visit Turtle Hospital Day, or walk through various parks and beaches day... Paradise is doing whatever you want, whenever you want, in the company of a good friend or three.

And thank you, you made it even better by sending us your good wishes, so we are enjoying it all in your company as well!

Love to you all, and have a merry happy joyous Whatever!"

23 December

"What a wonderful world! After a splendid breakfast in a garden, with our dogs at our feet, we went to the Turtle Hospital in Marathon. There are currently 48 resident turtles, five of them permanent, because they must have a front and a back functioning flipper to get out. Most of them suffer from Bubble Butt, a situation where they get internal gas, either from eating trash or from Getting sliced by a boat motor. Then they cannot dive to get food. The hospital glues weights on them, after first using Velcro to gauge the right weight and placement. Some of them are still swimming at an angle, as the weights are adjusted. One, which had growths as large as his head, has spent a year after surgery with no recurrence of the tumors, and tomorrow morning he will be released into the ocean at a small ceremony.

The hospital is in an old motel with rows of numbered aqua rooms housing surgery, supplies, interns, gift shop, and everything else. The former swimming pool, which connects to the ocean, houses the healthier turtles, and fish swim in and out and often get eaten. There are seven types of turtles, four of which are found in Florida and in this hospital, including loggerheads, leatherbacks, green, and one whose name I forgot.

We skipped lunch, parked the dogs in front of the TV, and drove nine miles north to the Dolphin Research Center, something like 90,000 square feet of interconnected fenced ocean with over 50 resident Dolphins, plus some sea lions and a lot of wild roaming golden lizards. One tank held mother Dolphins and calves, one tank huge males, one tank young adults. When we found that dogs were permitted and even welcome, we drove back, got the boys, and brought them. It doubled our fun, and that of lots of others! Hagar got into an interaction with Rainbow, a 600-pound adult male who came to the end of the pond and stared at Hagar. Finally Hagar emitted one bark. Rainbow promptly did a head butt motion. Hagar barked again. The two of them kept it up until I stopped Hagar for fear he was bothering the dolphin. The staff assured me that the Dolphins, and Rainbow in particular, mostly like dogs and Rainbow was enjoying eliciting responses!

We saw several "Dolphin Encounters," where people paid about \$200 each to be in the water with the Dolphins. Mostly they stood there while the Dolphins did their splashing jumps, so there was actually. Minimal contact. Every "trick" the Dolphins were taught was actually a necessary behavior for getting their cooperation in their medical treatment: extending a fluke for a blood test, opening their mouths for vitamins, etc. The place made you feel the Dolphins were having a ball: at the end of each training session, even

after the trainers had packed up the fish containers and equipment, the dolphins were still leaping around, putting their chins on the teaching platform, wanting to play some more!

We had another wonderful dinner at the Sunset Grille, a place I recommend highly. We also like the LazyDays Cafe, but we loathe the Castaways, where we got a slight mention of seafood in pounds of breadding, all in a crummy atmosphere. All three were recommended, but some reviews have more merit than others.

Rick is worried everything will be closed for Xmas and Xmas Eve, and we will starve, so he bought minimal groceries. I have faith everything will work out superbly, as usual. We'll let you know!

Sandra"

24 December

"This Christmas Eve day the turtle Casper was released from a year's care at the Turtle Hospital. He is a large green turtle, weighing over 300#, and his shell is probably 2.5 ft by 3.5 ft.

Only about 500 of his closest friends showed up this morning for the splash down at beautiful Sombrero Beach in Marathon. It was a lesson in Incivility: seniors waited 90 minutes, then kids came at the last minute, said "Excuse me!" and pushed in front of them. Volunteers tried to lay blue lines on the sand to open a path down the center of the crowd to the water, so the volunteers hauling Casper's heavy tub could get through. The waiting seniors complied, then the middle of the aisle filled with young adults. The only way we knew the turtle hit water was from the crowd cheer. Well, I wish Casper a good life, probably devoid of any future human contact. Volunteer organizations generally seem to lack an authoritarian voice directing events like this.

Xmas decoration in Florida! Well, of course there are electric lights in the palm trees. The Sea Grape is hung with balls and stockings and other decorations. There is a ten-foot inflated Santa beside the swimming pool. An inflated snow globe with Santa on his sleigh bobs to recorded Xmas music by the beach. The juxtaposition is artful!

We decided we have had about all the fun we can stand for the moment, and we are driving back home tomorrow. Yes, it will be Xmas Day, but as Rick points out, we have better odds of getting fed at home than in most restaurants down here on Xmas day.

We wish you all a wonderful holiday, and we will see most of you soon. Have a happy!

Sandra and Rick"

COMMENTARY

"The time has come," the Walrus said, "To talk of many things..."

Is AOTC Sustainable?

Ed Zillioux

I first sent this out to the Aware Ones on 25 September with a promise to include it in Vol.1 No.4 as a commentary. Somehow it missed its original target, so I include it in this issue. The e-mailed preview initiated a few positive discussions and no negatives, but more discussion is needed and solicited. So here goes....

To some, the term sustainability may be simply a buzz-word of the moment. This would be a gross misconception. There are many **scholarly journals and at least 15 popular magazines currently devoted to the** environmental, cultural, economic, and social **sustainability** of human beings. My own business card carries the logo "Sustainable Solutions." So it is in keeping with this idea that we consider our own sustainability.

Each AOTC member knows how special our circle is: our Sunday Coffees; our monthly potlucks; our semimonthly TC Secular Writers' meetings; our bimonthly Newsletter; our love and laughter – what is there not to cherish? But in a group whose median age is north of 70, I have to pose the question, is this sustainable? Such a discussion fits well with the plea urged by John Lynch that we need to discuss end-of-life issues (previously noted in our last issue's [Vol.1 No.3] tribute section, particularly by Dan Vignau).

Having lost first Bob Schiller and now John, we would have to be in total denial not to realize that our group's sustainability is in jeopardy without some form of intervention.

This question begs the complementary questions: 1) Are we concerned about AOTC sustainability? and 2) Are we concerned enough to want to do something about it? My attempt to answer these questions follow.

Q 1. Are we concerned about AOTC sustainability? Personally, I think it would be extremely self-centered of me not to be concerned about the continuation of the group after I die. I *do* care that the Aware Ones itself does not die as a consequence of its being totally dependent upon the last member standing. Yet this is exactly what will happen if we do nothing as one by one, we blink out. What we have has been described by Bert and others as "we don't find this stuff anywhere else!" From the Humanist perspective, quoting from Paul Kurtz' *Neo-humanist Statement of Secular Principles and Values*, we "need to develop...a sense of responsibility for (our) own well-being, but also for the well-being of (our) friends and colleagues, and indeed for all persons within the community at large, and beyond to all of humankind." How can we do this if we don't plan for the preservation of what we fought to establish?

Q 2. Are we concerned enough to want to do something about it? I submit that if we respond positively to Q1, it follows almost by definition that we would want to do something about it, that is, to affirm that AOTC should be sustainable by design. But what manner of design might ensure the sustainability of this organization? The most obvious answer is that such design must include an incentive for growth. Without the addition of new members, our demise will be defined by a simple arithmetic function.

Several Sundays ago Roberta Synal joined our gathering and passed out her business card identifying her as a HUMTC officer. Gloria mentioned that it would be nice if we could have member cards for the AOTC so we could let others know who we are. I suggested that it would be more effective if it could include the URL to an AOTC web page that describes us. There followed a short discussion of how that could be accomplished but there was no follow-up.

We have enough going for us that we don't have to become active proselytizers. If the right people find out about us they will come. In the short time since we declared our independence, simple word-of-mouth has brought us some of our most enthusiastic members; two of whom will be hosting this year's Thanksgiving celebration. In the same time period, we have lost about the same number simply because they were not a good fit, and that is exactly how it should work. But our growth curve needs to stay in positive territory.

As our newsletter's editor, I acted upon a general agreement that our modest literary enterprise should reach others beyond our Sunday Coffee gang. On August 14, I sent out a "Call for Submissions" to the newsletter to all AOTC members as well as to an expansion of the usual mailing list to

include an additional 12 non-members, somewhat arbitrarily selected. I also included an attachment of Vol.1 No.2 by way of introduction for these non-members. In addition, I included the caveat that if anyone did not wish to be included in future mailings of the newsletter to please e-mail me with the word "delete" in the subject line. To date, I have not received a single delete. More to the point, one of the non-members attended the last TC Secular Writers meeting and went out of her way to praise the tribute we put together to honor John Lynch, which occurred in Vol.1 No.3.

It was a beginning but it's not enough.

Developing our own web page would be a simple, non-laborious way to get the word out on our existence with a clear statement of who we are. This should be followed with the aforementioned business cards and a bumper sticker giving our name, a short descriptor (e.g., "Progressive Humanists"), and the URL of our webpage. End of story. A one-time collection spread across our current membership would amount to chump change. But it might just mark the beginning of a sustainable AOTC.

THE WAY WE WERE

Music Lessons

Dan Vignau

Ed is not the only person in this group to take music lessons. In fact, one of our commonalities is that we pretty much all took such lessons. I took a series of 12 trumpet lessons, but that is not the focus of this story.

I also took piano lessons. Was it a great teacher who inspired me to greatness? Did I excel in dexterity to master the instrument? Did I enjoy it? Hell No to all the above! My piano teacher played organ at her church. That SHOULD be all I need say!

It is humiliating enough to go to a small county high school, especially following years at Oak Ridge, where we regularly visited the Atomic Energy

Commission, and played with a lot of toys not available to my newest classmates. The mechanical hands through the wall was my favorite. It was how scientists, real scientists, grabbed radioactive material, poured it, mixed it, heated it, cooled it, etc. without being exposed to deadly invisible death rays, death rays available at shoe stores in Knoxville: Step up onto the X-Ray machine son, and look at the bones in your feet for a few minutes.

My second favorite science device in Oak Ridge was The Van de Graaf generator. It was really cool. A belt spun inside a metal globe and rubbed against a comb looking device, which was simply called a comb. Zillions of electrons collected inside the surface of the sphere, providing a high voltage and, more importantly, practically a zero amperage, bolt of lightning akin to what we see in Frankenstein movie labs. When a person stands on an insulating mat and grabs the globe, his hair stands on end.

Another demonstration I remember well is the clear Coca Cola. When we poured it through activated charcoal, the color was absorbed, but the taste was the same. I am working on a version for tea to get my teeth back to white, without stopping my gallon of tea every day.

Scientists also showed us their lunch. One day, it was pork chop sandwiches that had sat out for days without refrigeration. Oak Ridge scientists really liked to brag about this experiment. One would show us a sandwich that was left in a hot window sill for days. Then, he would take a bite out of it, usually finishing it.

Their secret was irradiating the sandwich to kill all of the germs so it did not spoil. My great-grandfather had simpler solutions. He hung hams in a smoke house to cure them.

Now, here I was working very hard to learn to play trumpet, with more science background than any of my teachers, riding my bicycle six miles down US 11 to go to a nutty, Christian Church Organist's house to learn to play piano.

Lest you think I am being a smart ass by claiming my science background in high school was better than my science teachers, consider this: The year before I transferred to Loudon County High School, their science and chemistry teacher was badly burned when he entered his classroom/lab while smoking a cigarette. Someone had entered the lab earlier and turned on the gas lines. KaBoom! A whole wall of windows was blown to smithereens and the teacher refused to return, forever.

Sooo! The Home Ec teacher taught science and chemistry. Our principal said, "What's the difference? It is all just mixing stuff together." This is when I quit being the best little boy in the world.

During a demonstration of a soda-acid fire extinguisher, a teacher trusted me when I told her and the class that if she turned it upside down and let it spray a bit, that when she turned it back over, the stopper would go back in the little jar of acid, and it would stop. I knew all the acid would immediately drain and the device would keep spewing. Also, we had unscrewed the mesh cover under a lab sink and installed a class change bell from another building. As she stood gaping at the extinguisher, she could not put it down or the hose would flop around and spray everywhere. We turned on the bell and walked out of class, trying not to laugh as we filed out.

From then on, she picked on me, mostly by telling my main crush and me to stop holding hands in class, but he was so damned cute. She said that we were going to have to stop playing handsies and try to learn from her.

They had the same problems hiring a band director. No one would move there for what was offered. Luckily, a nice Christian man, who had a jazz band that toured around the South, was coerced into just filling in for a year. He learned to love it and maybe the small but steady stipend helped his decision to stay for several years. He took the best of his students to classical and jazz concerts in Knoxville where I saw and heard my first live and importantly, non-Looney Toons or Lone Ranger classical music. Before this, to me, classical music was the theme to The Lone Ranger, and Elmer Fudd's Wagnerian rendition, "Kill the Wabbit, Kill the Wabbit!"

A term I have learned recently from a Winton Marsalis interview is "Practicer," and boy, did I practice! I did not really master my trumpet, but I could practice and learn to play almost anything within reason. The band director would give me clarinet pieces to sight read as he played faster and faster on his clarinet. This gave me an incredible upper register range on my trumpet.

Piano was different. I had no comprehension where my fingers were, and absolutely could not place them on the correct keys without looking. Later, I even had to add my feet into the equation, because this ancient teacher thought I might eventually replace her on the organ at her Church of God's Sacrament of Flesh and Blood, or some such crappy religious , f this.

It was bad enough that I had to take piano lessons while attending my new, seriously retarded school, but I had to tell my redneck classmates that not only did I do this, and that I had learned to play a stomping version of "How Great Thou Art", which their parents always made me play for them; worse, my parents wouldn't even let me drive to the lessons.

I was fifteen. I had been driving four miles into town for errands at least two years. But no! I had to suffer the indignity of riding my bicycle six miles down US 11 to Philadelphia, Tennessee to study religious piano.

Jeez! So to speak. BTW, when I say "Jeez" I am no more referring to an imaginary savior than I am to poop when I say, "Shit."

Worse, the crazy piano teacher decided that I should learn to play the organ. Not only did my fingers not cooperate, but now I had to add the toes.

ARTICLES

Nothing

Jim Longo

"The truth is I have nothing," He said, at the table of the greasy spoon diner. Two co-patriots from different offices hoping to get to know each other better who met for lunch.

"That begs the question what is truth?" She said.

"Or it could beg the question what is nothing?" He said with a chuckle taking a bite of breakfast at lunch time.

"To paraphrase Bill Clinton, "That depends on the meaning of the word is?" She said doing a bad imitation of the former president. They both laughed.

"Well is my truth the same as yours?" He said taking a sip of dirty brown water that the waitress called coffee, but would probably require a chemist to prove it by most accounts.

"Is it truth we are talking about or perspective?" She said taking a sip of her sweet tea, which was all sweet, and little to no tea.

"To paraphrase Shakespeare, "There is the rub."

"Isn't it all perspective?"

"So the question is, "Is my perspective the same as yours?"

"Similar but not the same," she said, taking a bite of her Cobb salad.

"How is that?"

"I'm a woman."

"I forgot," he said rolling his eyes.

"No, no, no, it's not like that. Every person brings a unique perspective to every situation," She said sounding slightly frustrated.

He raised his hands in surrender with the fork in one hand and the knife in the other, "Sorry."

"There you go again, you male chauvinist fool."

"Excuse me, you feminist feline fanatic."

"Well," she said, taking a bite of her salad chewing it loudly.

"Well," he said, cutting his eggs with vigor. They ate in silence for about a minute.

"You know I do get it. Each person on this planet is the center of their universe, and because of that they see the world from their own unique perspective. That perspective is based on a thousand variables, from past experience, to cultural bias, to geographic bias, race, color, creed, sex, age, height, weight." He said in a soft soothing tone.

She looked up from her salad put down her fork down reached across the table took his hand and said in the sweetest of voices, "I'm so happy you're not a total cretin."

He reached out with his hand, took hers, "Me too," and started to laugh.

"What's so funny?" She said almost in a huff.

"That's me, not a total cretin. To get along in this world one must perform continual Jiu-Jitsu changing one's perspective to match others, holding only [Agnosticism](#) above all else, the only exception is when my ball of knowledge is greater than the other person's."

"That's sick, that's manipulative, that's just wrong." She said, in total disgust.

"That's the truth."

"That's not the truth,"

"Whatever someone else believes is true, is true in their eyes. Why fight with them?" he said as matter of fact.

"You're a sociopath."

"I'm empathetic."

"You're not empathetic you're pathetic."

"Why are you attacking me? I gave you an honest perspective on how I see human relations, and it is so different than yours, that it has upset you."

"It hasn't upset me." She said too quickly and returned to her lettuce.

He returned to his greasy home fries."

They were almost done and the waitress came around with more bad coffee. He declined. The waitress offered desert. They declined, both having to get back to work. They paid the bill. They walked silently to their respective cars.

She turned to him as they both stood by their driver side door, "So what you said was, the truth is you have nothing, what you meant was the truth is nothing."

"It feels that way in the early twenty first century."

She was quiet and stared at him.

He broke the moment, "You want to do this again sometime?"

"I don't know. I'll call you." They both got in their cars and started them up.

He said to himself, "'Know' means no. I guess I won't be dating her anytime soon. She has issues."

She said as she started her car, "He comes off as congenial, but he's intense. He has issues."

As they pulled out onto the street they both said at the same moment, "Hell, who doesn't."

LETTERS

Environmental Consequences of a Trump Presidency

Letter to the Op-Ed Editor, New York Times
(Rejected, 11/16/16)
Ed Zillioux, Fort Pierce, Florida

Some supporters of Hilary Clinton view Trump's win philosophically, like it's a temporary setback to the collective sanity, like if we just wait 4 or 8 years, we'll have our turn again and the Trump legacy will just fade away, a footnote in history. But reading the NYT article, "Climate Policy Faces Reversal by New Leader," of 11 November 2016, it became clear to me that, barring some miracle, this is not the case.

I agree that most of Trump's changes would eventually be overcome. We may be talking about generations, but eventually they would. This includes: economic shifts in favor of those who need it the least; no significant increase in minimum wage; the disruption of families owing to deportation of their undocumented immigrant parents; the lost dreams of a college education by those who might have excelled but whose parents just couldn't afford it; etc. I could go on about the sociological damage that we may well be facing if Trump runs true to his commitments. But I agree these are probably "temporary" setbacks (that is if we don't consider the increased potential for a nuclear Armageddon). Maybe my great-grandchildren will read about his "movement" in some future history class.

But if he screws around with the environment, particularly America's key role in achieving hard-fought climate initiatives, as he has promised to do, we could be looking at damage that could easily be "permanent," very possibly tens of thousands of years. And Trump supporters, at least those who believe, as Trump himself believes, that human-caused climate change is a hoax, would not care. They, and their immediate children would hardly be affected at all, perhaps a mere inconvenience (read blinders). It's not just the fact that he considers global warming a hoax, but that, as the NYT article

reminds us, he is likely to “cancel’ last year’s Paris climate agreement...and dismantle Obama’s domestic climate change regulations.”

Nearly as important, “he has vowed to dismantle the Environmental Protection Agency ‘in almost every form.’” This latter boast may be out of his reach, at least in terms of total dismantlement. I say this hopefully, but in the context of experience. I was at EPA when Reagan appointed Ann Gorsuch to roll back EPA’s research initiatives (i.e., effectively dismantle the agency), and James Watt to do the same with the Department of the Interior. I found myself in the middle of Gorsuch’s Hatchet Team’s efforts to chop or totally cancel program after program of cutting-edge research out of EPA’s 14 Environmental Research Labs and Centers across the country. I had senior project managers come to me virtually in tears, asking if my Branch couldn’t find some way to keep their research program alive. But after eight years, EPA and DOI were still intact, albeit bruised and bloody. With a new administration, Gorsuch was gone and we witnessed the remarkable image of Watt, astride his horse, riding off into the sunset. I have often cited this example to folks who complain about Washington bureaucracies. By their sheer size alone they have proved remarkably resilient to demise by any one administration. Although we are surely in for serious environmental setbacks, including the total loss of some crucial initiatives, let us hope that Trump will be at least no more successful than was Reagan.

Pipeline Protest Wasn’t Necessary

(original title: Army Corps of Engineers’ Delayed Response to NEPA Law)

Letter to the editor, TC Palm News
(Published 12 December 2016)
Ed Zillioux, Fort Pierce, Florida

12/12/2016

THE PALM BEACH POST REA

THE DEBATE STARTS HERE

CARTOON VIEW DAVID HORSEY



day), about PIP's demise, I wonder how all the other states without PIP (Personal Injury Protection) have any cars on the road.

As for every car carrying liability insurance, it is a stretch. A lot of drivers have no license, let alone insurance.

I am forced to pay for insurance for which I already pay a hefty health insurance premium, and being injured, cannot claim any money for lost wages.

In my opinion, PIP should be replaced by some kind of restriction on lawyers chasing every little accident they can find. This smells like tow trucks chasing ambulances.

CLIFF COXBILL,
OKEECHOBEE

Pipeline protest wasn't necessary.

After the much-publi-

cized and prolonged protest in opposition to the Dakota Access Oil Pipeline led by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, the Army Corps of Engineers has decided that alternate routes will be considered.

This protest never should have been necessary. Nor should the protesters have suffered the atrocity of being sprayed by water cannons in sub-freezing temperatures.

The National Environmental Policy Act requires that an Environmental Impact Statement be prepared for major federal actions that are determined, in a preliminary assessment, to potentially cause significant environmental impacts.

Both the assessment and the more detailed EIS are required to consider alternatives to the proposed action, including alterna-

tive routes in the case of pipelines. Since a pipeline that crosses parts of four states could not qualify for a categorical exclusion from these requirements, the Corps deferred to the pipeline's developer, Dakota Access LLC, to perform its own assessment. Predictably, the developer's EA found "no significant impact," thus serving the EA preparer's own self-interest.

It's safe to assume that if the Corps had originally fulfilled its obligation under NEPA law, the confrontation between thousands of protesters and law enforcement officials, and the water cannons, rubber bullets and tear gas from one side versus reports of slingshots from the opposing side, all might have been unnecessary.

EDWARD ZILLIOUX,
FORT PIERCE

[And let's not forget this one that showed up on Nov 14. Authenticity unknown.]

Yuge!

Hi Losers!

It's me! DJ Trump! As the WHOLE world knows, I'm the Pres Elect of the US of A! It's YUGE! Like everything I do! I'm the STAR! Actually, it was one of the easiest things I've ever done. All I had to do was to find the biggest bunch of voters that no one else cared about and then talk just like them, you know, locker room stuff. As soon as they figured I was one of the guys, I couldn't lose! Women? Hell, any woman that marries a stupid white guy wouldn't dare go against her MAN! So, for every SWG I landed outta that bunch, it was a twofer! And the guys loved the way I talked about women! Especially the raunchy stuff! Like I said, I just had to talk like them, and for me that was just natural. I let the other side worry about the intellectuals, the progressives, the Latinos and Blacks and M0000slems, and all those uppity women – Just do the arithmetic! Put all those losers together and you can't come up with as many votes as I could get just playing up to the SWGs! But they're not all stupid, you know, some are just ignorant! All I got to do now is figure out what to do next. But that's easy, 'cause I know how to WIN. Besides, if I get stuck I'll just ask my buddy Putin. Oops, gotta go, I hear Melinea calling me. Now there's a babe! But don't go thinkin' that I kowtow to her, It's just that I like to grab her...well, you know. Heh, heh...

Oh yeah, and don't be misled by the addressee on this e-mail. It was just a random hack so I can't be blamed for any off-message stuff. Putin showed me how to do it! Now there's a smart guy!

DJTrump!!!

POETRY

STARS

By Gloria Cosgrove

One wonders what the stars must think
About this time of year
When Christmas lights on planet earth
Suddenly appear.

Are they impressed by our creation?

Flattered by our imitation?

Threatened by the competition?

Fearful that it's ammunition?

Or do they simply realize

Our terrible fragility

And strive to hover over us

Protectively?

NEW YEAR'S REQUEST

By Gloria Cosgrove

I'd like to request a space

Between December thirty first

And January one.

A space of modest size

But one that would give me
Time to catch my breath
Change my shoes
Think about what
I should or shouldn't do
Before having to make
the instant leap
from the bottom of one year
to the topmost calendar
page of the next.

COMEDIC CORNER

My Wackiest Dream

Ed Zillioux

(There is no invention here, every word and vision is
exactly as experienced those 43 years ago)

I was on staff at the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science at the time. A graduate student named Ken was busy studying the common sea slug, or sea cucumber, a Holothurian. Basically, a straight tube of contractile tissue, mouth at one end, anus at the other. But not really an anus in the normal sense, but a cloaca. That is, a terminal space, analogous to a rectum, into which all metabolic products, waste and reproductive, are excreted.

At that time, there was a debate as to whether the Holothurian cloaca served as a safe space for commensal species. I know, not very exciting stuff, but among students, particularly in the occasional haze of recreational substances, it became something of a hot topic. So Ken had several specimens of these particular slugs that he was observing, sitting for hours in front of his aquarium with Hasselblad at the ready. If it was true that a slug's

cloaca was indeed a new ecological niche he would need photographic evidence.

The day came when he was seen running around shouting "I've seen it! I've seen it!" The little fish that he recorded emerging from the slug's cloaca was actually a heretofore unidentified species. In short, it was an event.

That evening I related the happening to my then-spouse. Later, going to bed, falling into deep sleep....

There I was, a young though rather large slug, talking with my mother, who, of course, was also a slug. She was telling me about what might be characterized as the facts-of-life.

"You're going to have a difficult time in child bearing," she was saying.

"Why?" I asked.

She continued, saying rather matter-of-factly, "Well, there's a little fish that lives up your cloaca." This I did not believe and I told her so.

"You will see. You will see," she kept saying.

Then I was alone. Thinking of the absurdity of what my mother told me, when all of a sudden I felt something down... well, down there.

Yes! Something swam very slowly out of my cloaca! I recognized it as a fish, but the scroungiest looking specimen you could possibly imagine. Swimming erratically, its fins all torn and frayed, with scales soughed off and covered with shit!

This is when I woke up, nearly weeping in laughter! And I'm still laughing!
