

# **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.5  
September/October 2017

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-- Produced by the TC Secular Writers --

# INTRODUCTION

Ed Zillioux

We are soon to complete another year of AOTC newsletters. But who's keeping score? It's enough that we are who we are, all of us standing by and for each of us. Semper fidelis lives!

For example, I recently had some pre-op medical procedures performed over two successive days at Martin Memorial Hospital at an ungodly (just kidding) hour in the morning. Bert Mautz immediately volunteered to transport me to and from (with Dan Vignau as his worthy back-up) and even organized a gathering at his house to celebrate my passing the tests. And now that I've cleared those hurdles, both Bert and Marsha Banks are standing by to help me through the knee surgery that necessitated all this prep. Aren't friends wonderful? It's what our brand of humanism is all about.

As soon as Joan Auerbach returns from her annual sojourn in Germany, she will be completing official AOTC cards for all our members to be handed out at our individual discretions. Which is a good segue to remind all readers of this newsletter who are not yet members of AOTC, that we want you to consider joining and, moreover, that *we want you*.

We are anxiously awaiting the return of our Sunbirds. We have carried on with our Sunday Coffees and bimonthly writer's meetings, as stimulating and joyful as ever, but gee it'll be nice to get back to full complement. Hurry back, you guys and gals!

This paragraph added post-Irma. It seems everyone made it through with minimal damage – mostly trees pruned and fences down but nothing major. As most of you already know, I busted my thumb in a fall when trying to put my canoe on top my jeep. It shall now live there until I get another car to put under it. And, oh yes, the fact that this Sept-Oct newsletter is coming out so late is all Irma's fault. I accept no guilt!

In closing, I feel compelled to mention that we are living in trying times. Every day we are shocked by the political divisiveness of our country; the proliferation and increasing boldness of hate groups; senseless military, yes, even nuclear, brinkmanship on a global scale; natural disasters that may be aided or abetted by human actions; and the frequent denials of science itself. I believe, even though we are small, every voice raised in opposition to such atrocities counts.

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## AOTC MEMBERS & FRIENDS

### Members

Joan Auerbach  
Marsha Banks  
Rick Burkhardt  
Sandra Burkhardt  
Paul Carlos  
Gloria Cosgrove  
Barbara Lange  
Jim Longo  
Bert Mautz  
Charlie Thompson  
Marlynn Thompson  
Dan Vignau  
Ed Zillioux

### Friends

Amar Almasude  
Joanna Almasude  
Toni Gandel  
Marilyn Graton  
Stretch Graton  
Bob Haskins  
Virgil Thorp

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## MEETINGS & EVENTS

### Meetings

Sunday Coffee – Every Sunday, Importico's Bakery, Stuart, 10 am<sup>ish</sup>,  
outside when weather is tolerable, i.e., no snow.

TC Secular Writers – Every other Thursday, Jensen's House of Brews, 6:30 pm; September 7 & 21; October 5 & 19.

## Events

### Monthly Potlucks

#### September

Dan Vignau will be hosting a potluck on Wednesday, September 27, 2348 SE Monroe St. Stuart, FL 34997, starting at 6:30.

Dan adds the following notes: Although my dog is ill, my new dishwasher will not arrive in time, and my air is out... Not to mention... My house is trashed and the hurricane put me behind, I am hosting a potluck. I must do this NOW! BECAUSE I was told I would cancel. You had better come, dammit, or I will be like Jesus, who died for nothing if you don't sin: I will hate you if I throw enough crap away to get to where I can clean house for nothing.... It is just west of US1, barely past Walmart, Ford, and Honda. Turn West at Sunoco Station. From the South turn is a few blocks past Harley and Fireworks. On your left is a hedge. I said on your left, not at the end of the road. My house is next to the nice one. Park in my driveway or the swale next to the hedges. Front yard is OK, too: My lawn guy already killed the sprinklers.

#### October

There will be a party at Barb and Jim's house, **October 21st** at 7pm at 9031 SE Duncan St. Hobe Sound.

Costume would be nice, rsvp also, but neither are necessary. But it would be nice to see you all. This will be a combination of Potluck, Barb's 50<sup>th</sup> b'day party and their annual Halloween Party.

Queries, directions or just correspondence, call or text 772-214-0339, home, 546-1143 e-mail [longojames@yahoo.com](mailto:longojames@yahoo.com)

Jim adds, "THE BEST GIFT WOULD BE YOUR COMPANY."

## MEMBER NEWS

Ed spent the first week of August in Helsinki at the latest conference of the International Society for Environmental Indicators, which he founded in 2005. Besides getting a little bit of his expenses covered, they presented him with an equally little plaque, not a big deal except for the first three words of its inscription: "Lifetime Achievement Award." Well, that's pretty cool, though he takes it to mean he probably won't achieve anything else in this "lifetime" that'll be worth a hill of beans (at least by comparison). Now, one doesn't get these things very often, so he took it home wondering what to do with it not having a professional office anymore, then he thought of the perfect location, and hung it over his toilet.

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Joan was in Germany for 2 weeks visiting with her 3 sisters. This is the annual "chick week" event.

They rented a large house on a lake in southern Bavaria from which to take sightseeing trips.

Following her return to the US, Joan will visit her family in UT and attend her grandson's high school performance of Macbeth.

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Sandra and Rick can be expected back in about five weeks. Sandra promised glorious pictures of the turning of the leaves, but seems I didn't delay publication of this rag long enough.

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## COMMENTARY

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

### THE COLOR OF LIFE

By Jim Longo

Haven't written in so long the keyboard is dusty. Where is my muse? Has she left me for greener pastures? Everything that surrounds me was the

culmination of someone's imagination, and I can't visualize a fart in a windstorm.

Even my horoscope chides me, "Scorpio what are your wishes today?" I could only come up with three, breakfast, lunch, and supper. Maybe it is lack of caffeine, forgot coffee yesterday and not allowed it today, flipping and flopping my circadian rhythm, another day lost to double sleep.

Ever notice we use colors to describe moods. She's blue equals she's depressed. He's yellow means he is cowardly. She's in a black mood. I don't know what that means but you know you want to stay away from it. He's green with envy. No one has ever seen envy so how do they know it is green. She is pure white.

Now with Trump can we add another one. Can we equate orange with what - stupidity, arrogance, collusion, criminality, bigotry, insanity? He's orange crazy. Maybe "he's orange" should be synonymous with narcissism.

Listened to Deepak Chopra last week, and found a way of looking at the world where everything is connected. Even the people places and things that don't seem connected are connected. Rejoice, we are all in this together. Even the people that act like we are foreign, or are hateful to us, are connected. We just need to make that connection, and if we can't, so sad for them, maybe next time.

Read the other day that how many jail cells are projected to be needed has some correlation with how many eleven-year-olds can read at an eleven-year-old level. It reminds me of the Fram oil filter commercial. You can pay me now, or you can pay me later.

Last night at dinner, our host said, "I had a hole in my soul."

I responded, "Who doesn't?" and the conversation changed directions.

When I got home I suggested to Barbara, "I'd rather be a soul in your hole, than have a hole in my soul."

Barb said, "Shut up and go to work."

So I went to work, and as I was driving there I thought, "What the fuck does that mean you have a hole in your soul?"

My soul has no hole,  
but my psyche has some issues.  
My soul is quite whole,  
and my psyche needs more tissues.  
What the fuck is a soul anyway?

A better analogy would be: I'm a vampire raised by werewolves, lurking in the night sucking the life force out of chemical zombies, as a more powerful vampire sucks the life out of my soul.

Maybe Deepak had it right, we are all intertwined, but he suggests it is all symbiotic; what if it is all parasitic?

How do you get society to stop sucking your life force, and would you want it to? Would that be a good thing? For some reason, I don't think so.

Maybe I'm just crazy orange.

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## THE WAY WE WERE

### THIS GETTIN' OLD IS SOME TOUGH WORK

By Bert Mautz

Every couple of weeks, Doug, my neighbor, will catch me out front smoking, stop, get out of his white Ford F-250 to visit for a couple of minutes. The usual, "How are ya?" and I inquire about his favorite topic, fishing. Surprisingly, Doug complained that fishing off shore was getting to be not so much fun as his knees were too painful having to compensate for the constant rolling of his boat in the wave action. "Gotta look for calm days, or it's too much." Doug, a virile good-looking guy who recently turned sixty; no gut, got his hair, young wife, in landscaping/lawn care business with his son. Twenty years with United Parcel in a prior life, that is hard work.

We've known each other since he and his younger bride rebuilt a home down the street. Our conversations early on, were principally macho teasing, his commenting on the variety of vehicles seen in front of my house, some there overnight. Professing the "pathetic bachelor," routine and allowing few details would award me with a good natured, "Fuck you then," in place of "See you later." Doug celebrated his sixtieth recently, together with the declining knees, we communicate on a whole new level, that is, getting old together. Competitive bravado replaced by pleas for mutual commiseration, a little empathy from a fellow old guy.

Richard, a sailing buddy, referred by a mutual friend to help with my renovation projects from way back when relocating to Florida. We raced his

sailboat on Saturdays until he got a bigger boat, awkward for me to move about when tacking and I regretfully retired. Richard and I are the same age. He is fit, still an active, "can do anything, small time contractor and handyman."

The other day he helped me out with a kitchen faucet install. Drove to Home Depot to select a replacement, stopped for lunch at Bonobos where our conversation was about friends, dead and dying, and returned to my kitchen for the install. This is never a pleasant task physically, which is why plumbers charge what they do and we are willing to pay them. "I'm not going under there." Getting out from under the sink would produce groans. Another awkward and uncomfortable job, but he can still do it, make himself do it, not succumbing, in spite of aches and pains.

A theme is emerging: changing tone of manly conversations, competitive boy talk, manliness becoming commiserating seniors acknowledging aches and pains in common. Rooster-crowing bravado evolving into humility, seeking empathy.

Did we, twenty years ago, pay such close attention? Watching senior friends age and self-delusional perceptions of own deterioration? Count the indicators and how we notice:

- Youthful hair, complexion, wrinkles, growing ears, sun exposure damage;
- Lose our hearing, maybe only one ear, impacting cross-table conversations;
- Teeth, good grief;
- Back pain for no apparent reason and essentially untreatable, no relief;
- Knees and hips go after a lifetime of tennis, or jogging in bad shoes;
- Body and mind less capable, "Drive that street weekly, and still can't recall its name, Monterrey, in conversation," can't come up with that one word, so important to your thought - Pickle jar lids humbling;
- Biological and medical breakdown of body systems occurring with age, BP meds, or something more serious like looming diabetes;
- Ending in ultimate system(s) failures and death.

How do peer women regard us? They are going through their own, unique to females, appearance/beauty obsession crisis. Friends and socializing with them is everything, sharing mutual support, empathy, encouraging, but what about this other half of the human race? Counted four or five gatherings of middle age females at the bar on Wednesday afternoon. There were no such male gatherings. The remainder were senior couples. My buddy and I were the only single/unaccompanied men present. Socializing patterns are noticeably different.



My, how the priorities shift, from spouse, family, career, parents to a self-absorption of decline and diminished capabilities and interests. It's a good thing this degradation takes a couple decades, or a sudden onset would be catastrophic, unbearable, and.... What is the solution to inevitable demise? Acceptance is the only alternative. Brush your teeth, watch the weight, take the aspirin every day, and get out and enjoy friendships. Learning to compensate, or simply acknowledge the diminution and go on without, clinging to youthful self-image in spite of waning capabilities, maintaining social impression of normalcy, "Everything is fine over here." When these minimal maintenance chores are no longer enough, one can reasonably decide, it is enough.

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## ARTICLES

### THE DONALD - My Nightmare

By Virgil M. Thorp

Late one night about a year ago, as I hovered in drowsiness with MSNBC on as a droning cure for my insomnia; as Donald Trump, The Donald, spoke (harangued?) about what he'll do about immigration, the border wall and who will pay for it, my thoughts wandered to a question about what were my relatives in Dusseldorf, Germany doing in 1933 when Adolf Hitler had acquired the chancellery.

What were they thinking? What were they hoping for? Were they proudly deplorable, feeling that at last, there was someone to lead them from their economic malaise and make them feel that it wasn't their fault? That they hadn't been responsible for the humiliation of the railroad car armistice or the greed-fueled deutsche mark collapse that had made their lives so difficult and miserable? Are we like them, the lowest of the low, that the blame could be laid at a specific door..., but not us? Anyone but us?

I had learned that all over Germany, on the night that Hitler grabbed that powerful position one step down from Hindenburg, that there had been raucous celebrations in the streets in nearly every town. Did any of my kinsmen participate? Was it fear or joy? Would they have done it again if they could have seen into the future?

Like an orange führer, all through his speech, The Donald made weird and wild assertions. He bludgeoned with a staccato listing of percentages and numbers that were bewildering and impossible to verify. A true word salad of doom and dread. Were they true? They sounded bad, real bad. The country was in a death spiral and he made it sound like no one in government wanted to do anything more than to make you, me and all Americans suffer. He made it sound like there was a criminal conspiracy to leave us more bereft than any bomb, cyclone or earthquake could do.

He repeated himself over and over, making the status quo look like status gloom and the only hope was him. Would anyone check the figures? Would anyone challenge his alternative facts? Are there those who want to believe him like the Dusseldorfers wanted from their messiah? The repetition of enough lies to stagger Joseph Goebbels? The cynical manipulation of the great unwashed? Through an eye-slit it appeared that his followers were wiggling like happy puppies in delighted approval, the floor slick with their euphoric gushes.

How close to "fire in the theater" is this, my mind wondered? He might as well be mass mailing anthrax packets to every listener, every boy and girl. But The Donald has an answer. It's him. Believe him, trust him, worship him. His posturing, like an angry, duck-faced potentate makes me wonder when the sieg heils will commence. The television is now full of poison, its' phosphorescent glow looking more and more like a bright, angry, malignant tumor festering and growing on a pet scan.

Maybe it was when The Donald made the assertion that he was going to build a "special unit" for ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) that caused me to stop nodding off and sit up and take notice. What would this special unit do? What would this special unit be? Who would this special unit deal with? Would this be a private army? Jackboots and death heads? Does the word "Gestapo" mean anything to you? Would anyone know the difference between ICE and ISIS or ISIL; SUNNI, SHIA, SUFI, SHIITE or AHMADIYYA or anything but fear and loathing and nodding and grunting benignly in bamboozled confusion..., especially if it can be made to sound exotic and diabolical.

Do you remember earlier in the campaign when he was talking how vulnerable we are to terrorism because of Barack Obama? Oh yes, he was quite certain of it. The wishy-washy Kenyan man disgracing the White House couldn't deal with terrorists. Obama was weak. They were too much for him.

But not Saddam Hussein, no sir. Saddam was strong and brutal. The Donald admires strength and resolve. The Donald admires Saddam.

Saddam didn't put up with terrorists. You never found terrorists in Iraq. Funny, you didn't find any dissenters either. I can't ever recall hearing about terrorists when Saddam was in control but I did hear that the only people he was killing were dissidents and the families of the virgins he and his sons raped. Is that what The Donald was referring to?

Now we have pious Donald in an African-American church, spreading the Christian faith like cheap jelly, quoting verses Two Corinthians and all that. Having an obscene love fest with the antecedents of Jerry Falwell and Billy Graham. Being anointed by the Bachman-Palin Overdrive as the choice of God. A real apostle like the man they used to call Saul before the Damascus Road Experience (Acts 9:1-9; Acts 22:6-11; Acts 26:9-20) and changed his name to Paul. Funny, I can't think of any other men more opposite of "the sermon-on-the-mountain Jesus" than The Donald and Paul.

Shit, now I'm starting to feel sorry for Christians, but the way they fawn and gush over him it is more like pity. The ultimate irony of Christians in league with the devil. Sounds like cannon fodder recruitment to me.

Normally I wouldn't give much of a care but I have witnessed, like my German relatives, a clown who has moved through various positions to where he actually occupies a position that those notions he's been espousing could become a reality. The cheers from the television echoed the "Triumph of the Will" cheers I had seen in newsreels from Nuremburg 75 years before.

Is the only option to the fears tyrants conjure the renouncement of freedom and instead to scurry for protection by those same tyrants? Repeating history like patricians did in 70 B.C. when they gave the richest man in Rome, Marcus Licinius Crassus, the power to crush the slave army and sacrifice Spartacus to the ancient demons they had mistaken for Gods.

The time when, after Hindenburg died and the democratic governmental structure collapsed, a swaggering, death-head special force began making those midnight calls and rooting out the unworthy and the perceived enemies of the state. Was it the collective fear and the anger that let them get away with it? To embrace and suck conflagration and destruction with bloody vampire mouths?

After the collapse of the Reich, when the Hitler monster committed suicide and all the gruesome crimes of his special forces were discovered, what did the surviving members of my family do after they were left holding the bag? Were they escorted to the death camps to look at the evil they had allowed and agreed to? To walk through the overwhelming stench of the slaughtered innocents? Had they been a part of the genocide or had they

been swept up and annihilated along with the detested Juden, the Gypsies, the dissenters, the homos, the trade unionists, and whoever else they wanted to kill.

I think some survived. I have never tried to contact them. Did any of them regret not speaking up years before? Or, did anyone say, "hey, look what we did?" What will I do now? I feel dirty and a shower would be nice. But no, NO SHOWER. Don't go into the shower! Will I wake up before I go into the showers?

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## LETTERS

Sorry, nothing this time.

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## POETRY

### US OR THEM?

By Jim Longo

It's all a dichotomy,  
It's either cooperation or competition,  
Are you someone to cooperate with?  
Are you someone to compete against?  
It's always us versus them.  
Are you one of us or one of them?  
All my pain and suffering in life,  
comes from being one of them.  
Never wanted to be one of them.

They are just not like you.

Want to be like you.

Want to be us.

Every time I turn around,

someone's telling me,

you are not like us.

You're not black.

You're not LGBT.

You're not rich.

You're not poor.

You're not a woman.

You're not my religion.

And so on and so on.

But I'm a being,

You're a being,

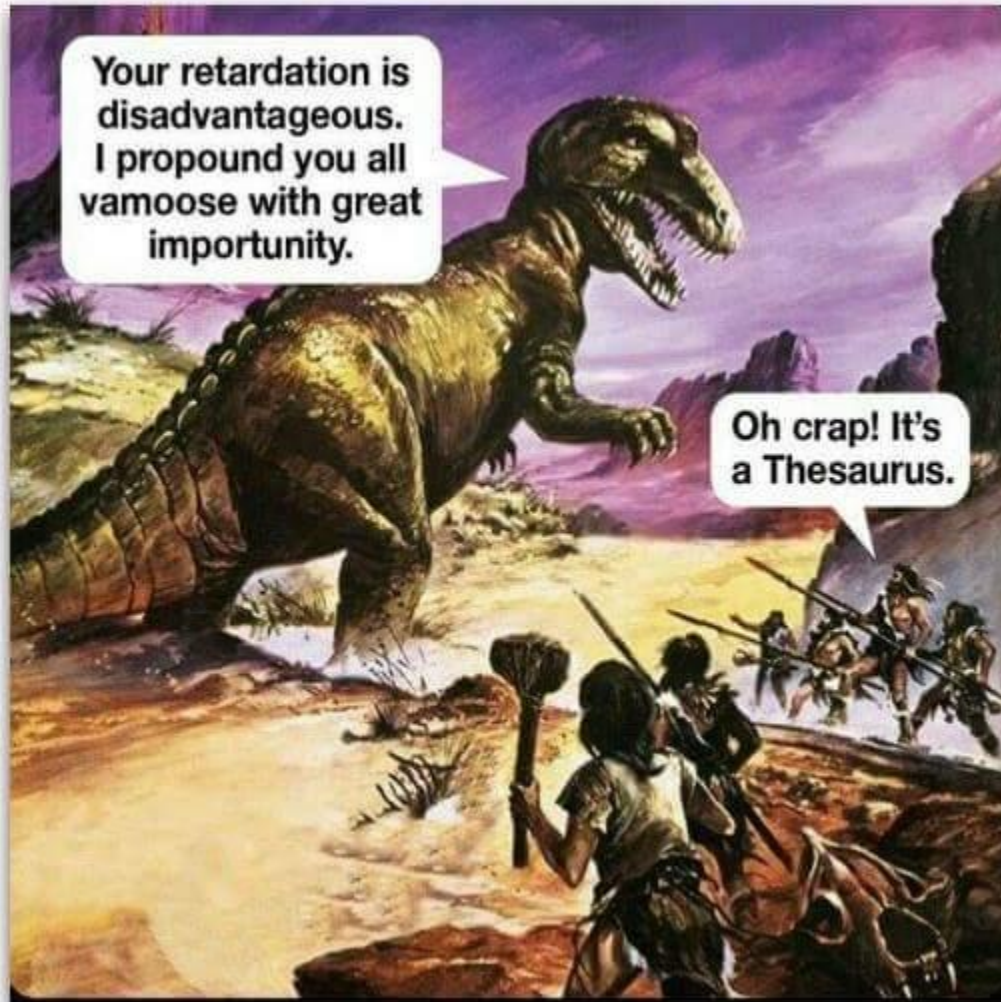
We are both trying to be.

We are us.

And so are them.

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## COMEDIC CORNER



Contributed by Dan Vignau

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