

AOTCJournal

Welcome to the **Journal of the Aware Ones of the Treasure Coast**, a secular humanist gathering, providing companionship, conversation, support, and good times, within honest and objective atheist, agnostic and freethinking values.

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May/June 2020

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**- Produced by the TC Secular Writers -*/*

INTRODUCTION

White Washing?

Aware Ones, there is a saying, "third time is the charm" and this is the third time I've attempted composing this introduction. First time I was so insipid that I threw it away, the second time turned into a story on its own (*A Precious Diamond in the Rough*), so this one will have to do.

At the moment everyone's world(s) is upside down and we've had to cope with a distraction that has the potential to be deadly and I'm not just talking about Covid-19. If you saw the recent news coverage from Lansing, Michigan, Columbus, Ohio and North Carolina, you saw armed protestors behaving like Hitler's stormtroopers blockading the state capitol buildings, local highways and hospitals like spoiled, fascist brats, sneering like their orange douche-bag messiah who refuses to take any responsibility for the crisis or the dismantling of the government agencies designed to address the conditions we, and our fellow Americans, are facing.

TEA PARTY-MAGA PROTESTORS AT THE COLUMBUS, OHIO STATEHOUSE BREAKING QUARANTINE AND DOING THEIR ZOMBIE IMPERSONATIONS.



From what I saw, with the Confederate battle flags mixed with MAGA banners, how can I conclude anything else but that we're on the verge of resurrecting the Civil War? Is the South actually rising again or, is it simply purification of down and dirty racism? *Kristallnacht* anyone?

“[Frances Langum](#)



[Retweeted](#)



[Nancy](#)

[@focused4USA·Apr 16](#)

That ugly MAGA protest at the MI statehouse today, dubbed Operation Gridlock, was organized by the MI Conservative Coalition & MI Freedom Fund- a DE VOS Family Conservative Group MI today had nation's 3rd highest DEATHS. None wore masks.”

Or, is it something more sinister and repulsive? Surreptitious fascism, perhaps? Could it be that someone is stirring the pot of the discontented with selfish intentions, taking advantage of the discontentedly disaffected. Some say the Bolsheviks did the same thing in Russia and Orwell described it so accurately in *Animal*

Farm. If so, that is much more serious. Is this not a literal "Fire" screaming in the crowded theater? Or, is it the chaos that comes when there is a literal fire that has crept uncomfortably close?

What it does show is that there is more than a little evidence of organized strategy and implemented with mob tactics. This is very disconcerting to people who have never experienced armed government takeover like so-called "banana republics" have.

One thing is certain, Covid-19 does not have a political agenda. It is no hoax. It only seeks to infect and replicate, letting the reactions fall as they may. No amount of distortions or lies will deter Covid-19 from its appointed rounds if we fail to heed the wisdom of scientists.

Hey, I understand the need to re-open our commerce. I used to be a proprietor and am acutely aware that any disruption of cash flow is a severe emergency for any business, small or large.

Every day, every hour compounds the pressure as bills come due, accounts must be settled and landlords recompensed. What will we conclude lives are worth? What will we see in the next sixty



"WHITE WASHING?" COVER-UP OR SUPREMACIST

days? Will we be here in sixty days? As Floridians we are used to weather related disturbances, but this is a global pandemic and even the Catholic church ironically realizes the holy water should be turned off for public health.

Despite of my fondness for rebels and rebellion, the cynical part of me sees cannon fodder. Just like the ranks of rebels who fired on Ft. Sumter around this time of year in 1861.

Fasten your seatbelts, sports fans and I present with pride, the latest artistry from the Aware Ones of the Treasure Coast.

We continue the process of increasing the distribution of this Journal in the hopes of attracting new members. If you are new to the Aware Ones and would like to know more about us please visit our website at <http://www.AwareOnesOfTheTreasureCoast.com>. You are also welcome to join our table at Importico's Bakery, 555 S. Colorado Ave., Stuart, where we gather every Sunday *around* the hours of 9:30 to 11:00 to share ideas and challenge your mind. Members are encouraged to share and spread what is becoming a very interesting magazine. Outside criticism and contributions are welcomed.

If you do not want the journal and wish to have your address removed, please email vmthorp@outlook.com for confirmation.

AOTC MEMBERS

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Joan Auerbach | Stretch Graton |
| Marsha Banks | Bob Haskins |
| Ernie Breud | Barbara Lange |
| Eddie Buitrago | Jim Longo |
| Rick Burkhardt | Yashi Nozawa |
| Sandra Burkhardt | Roberta Synal |
| Paul Carlos | Lucy Thorp |
| Gloria Cosgrove | Virgil Thorp |
| Ray Duryea | Dan Vignau |
| Marilyn Graton | Ed Zillioux |
| Gail Baker | Linda Webb |
| Bert Mautz | Betty Tewksbury |

HISTORY REMEMBERS EVEN IF THE STUPID DON'T



In the Middle Ages, when pestilence appeared in a country, holy men advised the population to assemble in churches and pray for deliverance; the result was that the infection spread with extraordinary rapidity among the crowded masses of supplicants.

Bertrand Russell, What I Believe, 1925

MEETINGS & EVENTS



Meetings

Sunday Coffee – In limbo. Reschedule TBA Stuart, 9:30 amish, outside when weather's agreeable and the virus transmutations allow.

TC Secular Writers – In limbo. Reschedule TBA Every other Thursday, Jensen's House of Brews, 6:30 pm; May TBA, June TBA.

Social coffee and writers' meetings may become regular with "Zoom", a laxative for your mind. Check your e-mail for notifications of virtual gatherings.

Events

Postponements – Damn near everything; Theaters, Concerts, The Olympics, *Oktoberfest*, Baseball, Basketball, NASCAR, The Masters golf tournament. Worst of all, AOTC Potlucks all TBA.

May – National Barbeque Month (with no restaurants open, it better be!)



May 4 – Star Wars "May the Fourth be with you!"

May 5 – Cinco de Mayo (Taco Tuesday – Cinco de Mayo coincide – it's taco day! Too bad there's no Mexican restaurants open ☹).

May 8 – No Socks Day. Let your feet fly free!

May 10 – Mother's Day. Also, "Clean up your room day."





May 18 – 1980 Mt. St. Helens Eruption. Nature vs. Man, Nature wins.

May 25 – Memorial Day. Watch re-runs of the Indy 500 all day on ESPN.

June – LGBT Pride Month (Another great

parade cancelled ☹).

June 4 – Aesop’s birthday (the date and the person may be a fable).



June 10 – AOTC Journal 5-4 contributions deadline.



June 19 – “Juneteenth”, African-American Emancipation Day.

June 20 – Summer Solstice

June 21 – Father’s Day.

June 30 – 1966 National Organization for Women (NOW) founded. Equality Now!



Atheist Conference

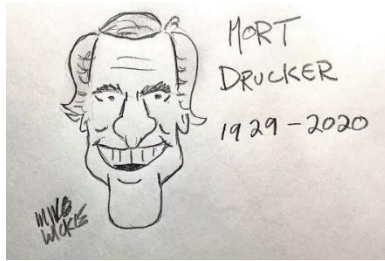
Aug 14-16 – *Skepticon goes virtual!* “Due to the Covid-19 wildness, **we’re taking Skepticon 12 remote!** – Lauren Lane, Team Skepticon

Thoughts from Daily Ingersoll

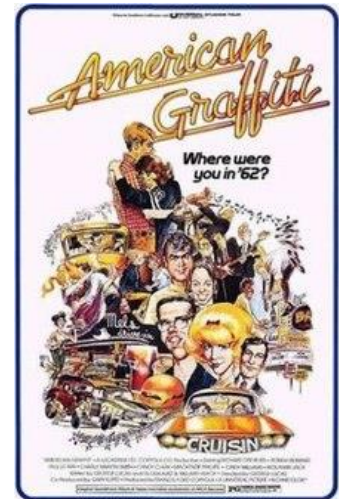
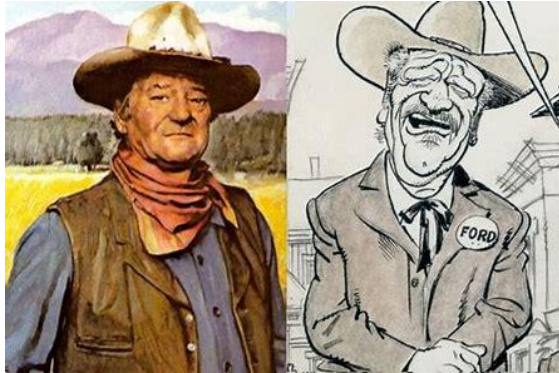


The church hates a thinker precisely for the same reason a robber dislikes a sheriff, or a thief despises the prosecuting witness. – *Robert Green Ingersoll*

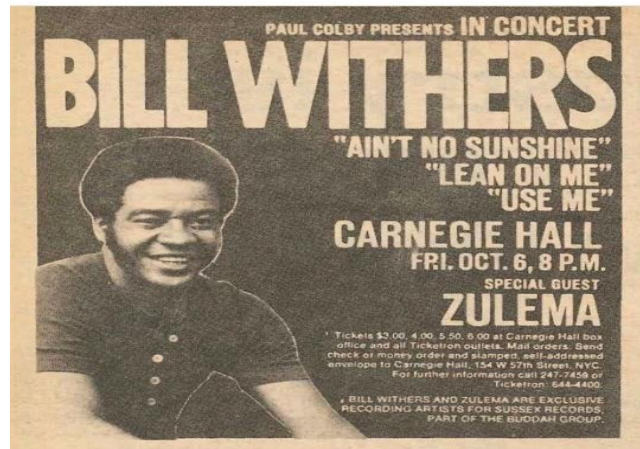
Passings – People and things we'll miss ... or maybe not miss.



Mort Drucker Iconic artist and caricaturist, Mort's drawings graced many movie posters and Mad Magazine parodies for most of our lives.



Bill Withers July 4, 1938 – Mar. 30, 2020. Multi Grammy Award winner for his smooth-soul sound, Withers was only active as a songwriter/musician for 15 years before pursuing other activities. Inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2005. "I was able to write songs that people could identify with ... not bad for a guy from Slab Fork, West Virginia."



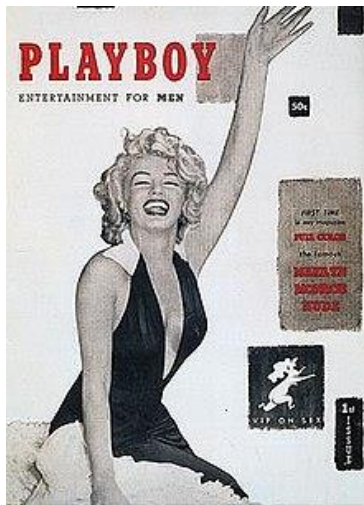
Linda Tripp Nov. 24, 1949 – Apr. 8, 2020. Notorious for revealing confidential secrets from her friend, Monica Lewinsky, Tripp was crucial to the right-wing conspiracy that was dedicated to impeaching President Bill Clinton and slandering his wife, Hillary, by exposing the Oval Office trysts between Bill and Monica. Many people have thought, "with friends like

Tripp, who needs enemies."

Katherine Johnson

Aug, 26, 1918 – Feb 24, 2020. African-American mathematician who was critical to the success of the space program in the early days of NASA. Katherine Johnson's life was depicted in the motion picture, *Hidden Figures*. She was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2015.

When Katherine Johnson was little, she loved to count things. By the age of 10, she was in high school. In 1961, she calculated the trajectory of NASA's first trip into space. She was so consistently accurate that when NASA began to use computers, they had her check the calculations to make sure they were correct.



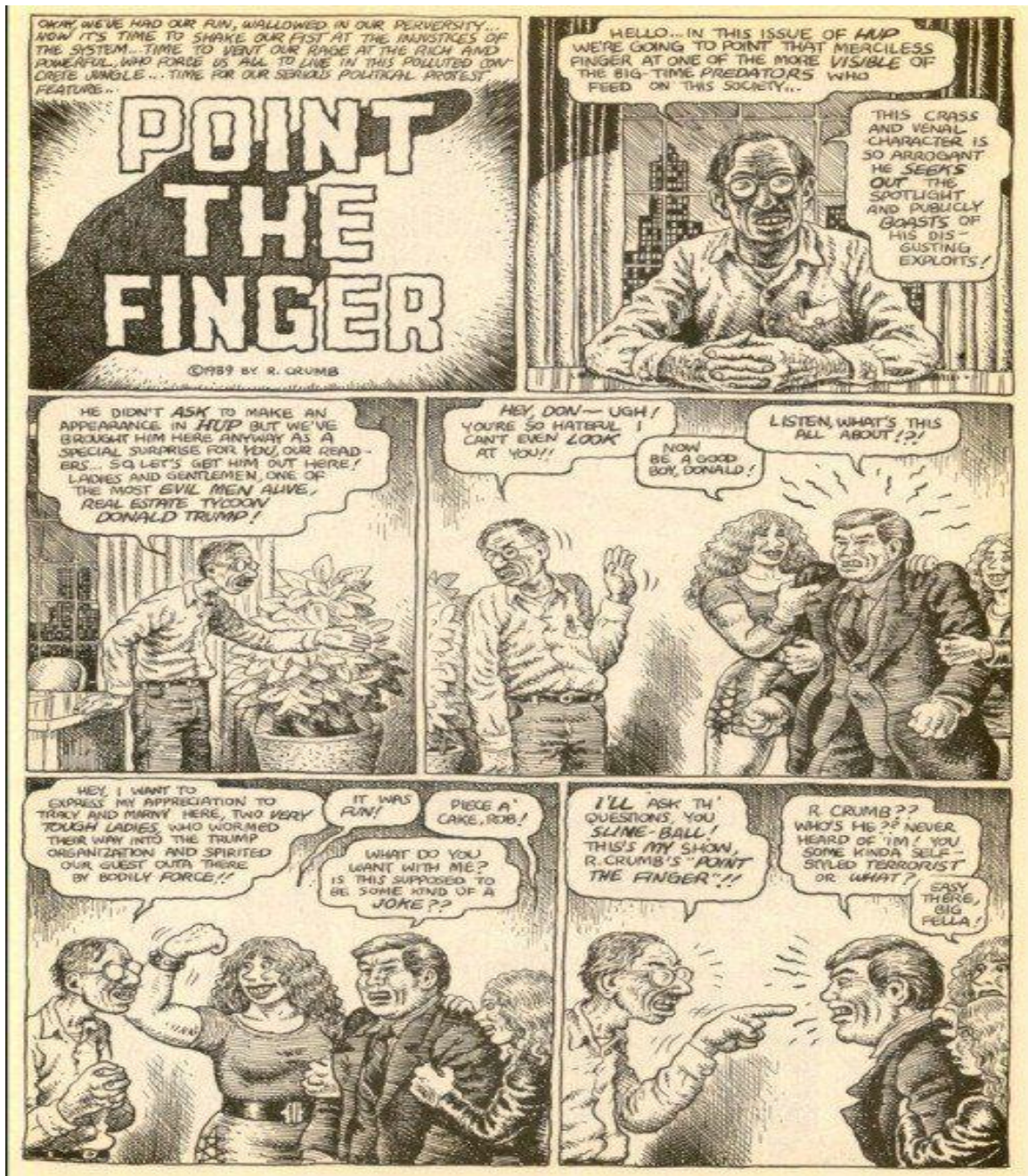
Playboy Magazine Dec. 1953 – Spring 2020. Once the "go-to" magazine for the 18 to 35-year-old male demographic, sexual freedom icon, Hugh Hefner's zaftig baby had dwindled in circulation since the advent of the internet. Just a shadow of its former self of bunny mansions, bunny clubs and bunny jets, distribution drastically dropped off after Hef retired and turned it over to his daughter who changed the magazine by dropping full frontal nudity from its pages along with ribald cartoons.

Phyllis Lyon Nov. 10, 1924 – Apr. 10, 2020. LGBTQ pioneer, Phyllis was Co-founder of the Daughters of Bilitis and with long time partner, Del Martin were the first same-sex couple married Feb. 4, 2004 in San Francisco by then mayor Gavin Newsome. Newsome had this to say on her passing: "Phyllis—it was the honor of a lifetime to marry you & Del. Your courage changed the course of history. Rest in peace, my dear friend."



COMMENTARY

If we knew then what we know now:



CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE?

The Satanic Temple, The Church of Satan, and *The Media Scare*

By J. Dan Vignau

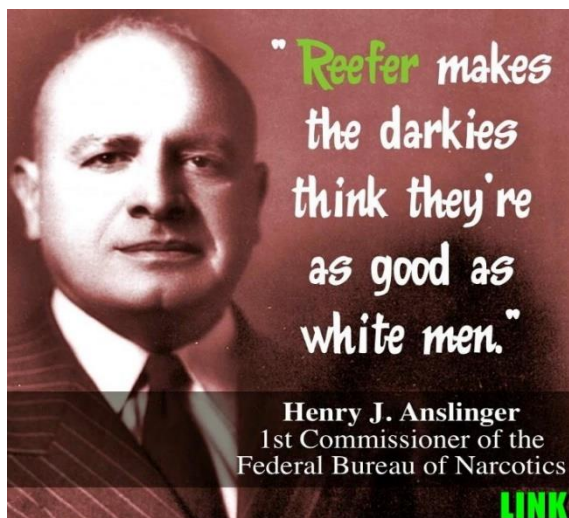


Like all other corporate-sponsored-media brainwashed children who became aware in the 1960's, I was convinced that The Church of Satan had Devil worshipers doing horrible things to children and other animals, all in ritualistic orgies of excess, all in the name of Lucifer, the Christian's god's estranged favorite angel.

Before white people began to join the previously blues enlightened black citizenry, a cultural exchange allowed blues, gospel, jazz, and folk music to be blended into the beat movement for some, and rock and roll for others. These art forms of spirit and protest morphed into music that could be played on white people's radio, with a huge bit of it totally co-opted from black culture.

Of course, there was a backlash from our government, especially from the newly formed Federal Bureau of Narcotics (Later called The Drug Enforcement Administration), which provided bigoted posters that portrayed different races with their respective chosen drugs of Satan. The head of this group of thugs was Harry Anslinger, who distributed this:

"There are 100,000 total marijuana smokers in the U.S., and most are Negroes, Hispanics, Filipinos and entertainers. Their Satanic music, jazz and swing result from marijuana use. This marijuana causes white women to seek sexual relations with Negroes, entertainers and any others."



Since the Good Book of Fables said that Lucifer was cast from Heaven for having a black heart, we know that his skin was black. ERGO: Darkies are the spawn of Satan.

This intense campaign against drugs, especially marijuana, provided and distributed dozens of different posters to portray this menace, concentrating on the racist element: pot for Blacks and

Browns, opium for Chinese and whiskey for native Indians.

In 1966, Anton LaVey officially founded The Church of Satan and later published his book, "The Satanic Bible". The members did not believe in Satan, *per se*. In fact, the beliefs of this group were totally non-spiritual, at least as far as ghosts and spirits, but did have a savior, Ayn Rand. Yep, that one. The group beliefs were strongly influenced by the intolerant sect of Social Darwinists, while paradoxically stating that individualism and hard work can overcome birth status. LaVey himself once described his conception of Satanism as "just Ayn Rand's philosophy with ceremony and ritual added." Strangely, he did believe in magic, but attributed its power to ritualistic forces, but not necessarily to supernatural beings such as Satan.

It was this group, with its rituals and magic, that the press jumped on, with wild stories of various Satanic murders, evil spells, and exorcism of the Devil, which was neatly portrayed by popular movies like "Rosemary's Baby" and "The Exorcist".

In a 2005 book about that fateful New York summer, *Ladies and Gentlemen, The Bronx is Burning*, author Jonathan Mahler writes of the impact that Son of Sam had on the media:

"The frenzied [media] coverage fanned the growing sense of fear; the growing sense of fear fanned the frenzied coverage."

Mahler's observation about the media feeding this mass panic would ring true well into the next decade, when heightened religious fears and stranger danger coalesced into a new breed of mass hysteria. (from *"The History of Satanic Panic in the US"*).

Through it all, Christian fundamentalism and the rise of a literal belief in angels and devils was on the upsurge. Fundamentalist preachers like Jerry Falwell and his Moral Majority, founded in 1979, gained prominence across the country, passing along a literal fire-and-brimstone style of Christianity.



The evangelical movement was not alone in its growing occult obsession and fearmongering. The media, too, played a huge role in stoking the public's fear and fueling misconceptions surrounding occult practices. In 1988, Geraldo Rivera's lurid documentary *Devil Worship: Exposing Satan's Underground* became the highest-rated televised documentary to air up to that point.

There remain people in prisons from false convictions of Satanically inspired rituals and sexual crimes against children, at the schools and day care centers where they taught. The list is long; Kern County, Faith Chapel Church and McMartin in California, Oak Hill in Austin, Texas, Fells Acres Day Care in

Massachusetts, Little Rascals in North Carolina, Country Walk in Miami and even locally, with the Montessori day care in Stuart, Florida. These witch hunts were not in Salem hundreds of years ago, but in the 1980's and 90's during the epidemic of Satanic ritual abuse fueled by ignorance, envy and false memory syndrome.

This mentality was recently paralleled by the absurd beliefs of many Americans who are certain that presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, ran a child trafficking ring from the basement of a pizza parlor. At least, (some of) the next generation of judges now recognize that 'guilty until proved innocent' is not always a given, plus many police interrogations are now recorded, including the interrogation of children, who are easy to convince to say whatever the adults want to hear. Lives have been ruined and yes, people are still in prison purely based on the "statements" given during the mental torture of children.

What about The Satanic Temple? This group is an actual social action organization, probably more akin to The Freedom From



Religion Foundation (FFRF) than to The Church of Satan. Like FFRF, it works diligently to remove religious icons from tax funded public places, icons such as The Ten Commandments displays, Christian Crosses, and Christmas manger scenes. The Satanic Temple's Florida group has been at the forefront of claiming space for the rights of other religion's icons, such as

their Tallahassee display placed beside the Florida capital's Nativity creche display. This group does not believe in any superstition, and actively fights to protect and enforce the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment, The Separation of Church and State, as well as the documented abuse of children through Bible-based Christian corporal punishment.

Our corporate media still sensationalizes anything to do with the occult, including Christian propaganda, all the while minimizing

the craziness of all that goes on in Jesus' name. But if you really watch, especially the non-corporate sponsored, liberal news programs, such as Free Speech TV, Democracy Now!, The David Packman Show, and Gay USA News, you get to witness a lot more nuttiness from the right, with interviews from psychiatrists, psychologists, political scientists, and democratic heroes around the world.

Below is a chart with the differences between the inactive, ritualistic Church of Satan, and the politically active Satanic Temple, who, like Pastafarians (aka, followers of the Flying Spaghetti Monster or FSM) are totally immune to spiritual bullshit, but with a socially conscious conscience.

| Kidz Kwik Reference Guide | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| a handy dandy visual guide to the differences between the two most prominent modern Satanic Organizations that for some reason people keep mixing up | | | | | |
| |  |  | |  |  |
| | The Satanic Temple | Church of Satan | | The Satanic Temple | Church of Satan |
| Founding Dates | 2013 | 1966 | | | |
| Officially recognized as a Tax Exempt Church by the IRS | ✓ | ✗ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| taken seriously by credible religious scholars as a Manifestation of Modern Satanism | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✗ |
| belief in an ACTUAL Satan | ✗ | ✗ | | ✓ | ✗ |
| belief in Magick | ✗ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Foundational Texts | Vast Literary Canon | the writings of Anton LaVey | | | |
| Political Views | "a non-theistic movement aligned with Liberty, Equality, and Rationalism." -Lucien Greaves (TST Co-Founder) | "just Ayn Rand's philosophy with ceremony and ritual added." -Anton LaVey (CoS Founder) | | | |
| Fights for Secularism | ✓ | ✗ | | ✓ | ✗ |
| Defends Reproductive Rights | ✓ | ✗ | | ✗ | ✓ |
| Has a Physical Headquarters | ✓ | ✗ | | ✗ | ✓ |
| Has Local Chapters | ✓ | ✗ | | ✗ | ✗ |
| Actively Growing | ✓ | ✗ | | ✓ | ✗ |
| | | | Holds regular meetings and events | ✓ | ✗ |
| | | | In the News Talking about Satanism | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | | In the News for their Activities (Civil Liberties Campaigns, Litigation, Public Events) | ✓ | ✗ |
| | | | Socially and Politically Active | ✓ | ✗ |
| | | | Accepts Donations | ✓ | ✓ |
| | | | Membership Fees | Ø (\$25 for Membership Card) | \$250 |
| | | | Baphomet Monument | ✓ | ✗ |
| | | | After School Satan Clubs | ✓ | ✗ |
| | | | Authoritarian | ✗ | ✓ |
| | | | Believes men who prefer blue cheese dressing must be homosexually inclined because the odor is reminiscent of a Locker full of well-worn jock straps. | ✗ | ✓ |
| | | | Topic of a Major Documentary about Modern Satanism being released by Magnolia Pictures in 2019 | ✓ | ✗ |

SPECTRUM OF BEVERAGE PREFERENCES



By Bert Mautz

Imagine for a minute a range of all beverages on a scale of sweet versus bitter, or simple versus sophisticated tastes required. When does experience with some of these options begin and progress? To what extent does one sample from the entire spectrum, versus settling on a few favorites for the rest of one's life?



Could chocolate milk, the quintessential childhood favorite, hold down one end of the beverage continuum? And if so, what drink is at the other end, the flavor choice of connoisseurs, a learned taste? For the sake of this argument, let us give the other continuum end to years-old unblended scotch served neat.

Recall your first impressions, reactions even, to a strong cheddar, a hearty cabernet, a Budweiser at the ballpark? A better restaurant in Philadelphia, my guest was a nurse met doing interviews consulting with a surgical department. Carried a card ranking red wine vintages in

her purse, so realized a cover to my ignorance, asking her to order. Deferred when the sommelier proffered the taste for approval. Then the unavoidable first sip. Swirled, and examined the “legs” like I had a clue. Looking back this was a pretty good French Bordeaux. Swallowed and the full aroma left me literally shaking my head in wonderment. So much to learn. So little time. Is taste for fermentation; cheese, beers, wine, alcoholic beverages a natural progression accompanying maturation? Blue cheese crumbles on salads for instance, extra sharp Wisconsin cheddars? Classic account of Mexican child, tears streaming down her face, eating highly spiced food.



Some would tell you their taste buds, their favorites have, and continue to evolve. Did many of us start out with a sweet tooth as children? Was chilled chocolate milk the most favorite flavor of the immature? Oh yeah, must acknowledge “mother’s milk,” life



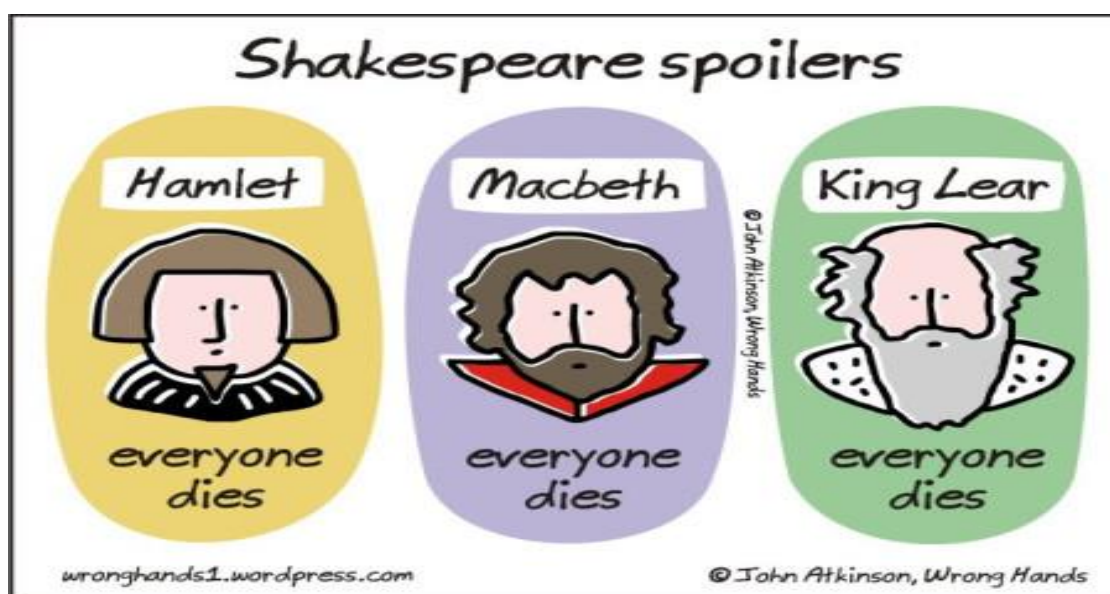
sustaining nectar from the breast, or commercial formula, must be included in any complete accounting. Sugar loaded and artificially sweetened soda pops would obviously be found at the sweet end. Would whiskeys be assigned out there with scotch? Then what about the world of beers. The limitless spectrum of white and red wines. Sweet rums and liquors like Baileys, do they belong with the other liquors, or further in the sweet end of the spectrum?

All coffee drinkers have a way they like it. Coffee – with and without sweetener, and or cream – sweet, smooth, or bitter. Some ridiculous, really strong brewed French roast laced with cream and sweeteners to become a child's breakfast drink.

First beer, second beer, getting easier, and then at once it is July in the Wrigley bleachers and find your beers thirst quenching and delicious. Coor's Lite ranging to Guinness, the ridiculous to the sublime may be a spectrum within the greater spectrum.

First alcoholic drink – Personally it was a vodka tonic with lime in the Salamander Bar off the Hotel Pontchartrain lobby, suggested by a beautiful blonde who walked me over from the office. Glistening, black grand piano. A large black man in tuxedo, tinkled in the background. A beginner's first try; not too strong, not too sweet, but a suggestion, "Just try it. See how it feels and tastes."

Awareness of one's tastes/preferences evolving. Why do we actively try to learn to like Scotch? Ideally, pleasing one's sensory perceptions can be a lifetime's pursuit. It might happen. I could learn to like Scotch. My friends drink Scotch, even have their favorites. The beverage spectrum is broad, endless. Explore. Enjoy.

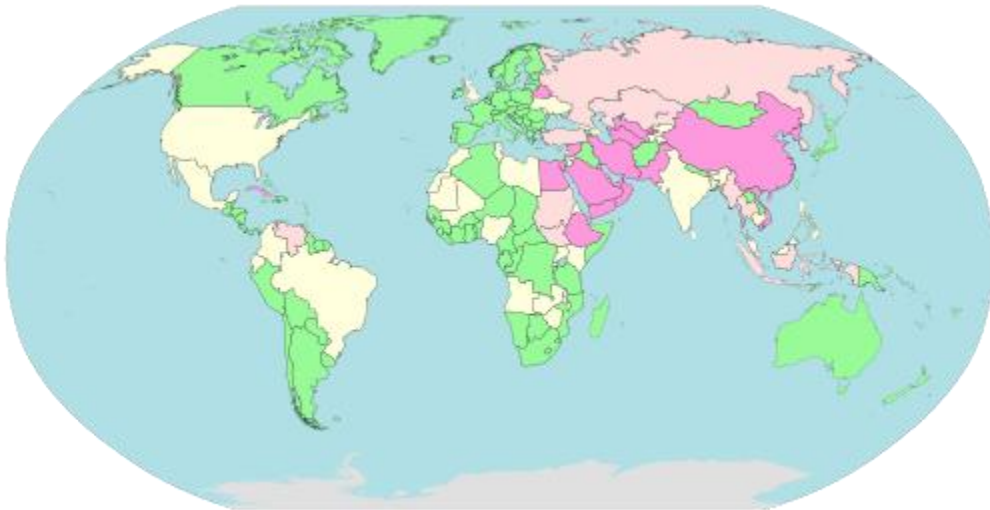


Fuck Censorship

By Virgil Thorp

I disagree with censorship. Vehemently. It is the same thing as prohibition. I absolutely despise prohibiting a substance or a thought no matter how wise or foolish such things can be.

The idea that there is something so totally depraved that it cannot be looked at, read about, or dreamt of, under penalty of law, is a greater anathema to me than whatever subject is being suppressed. My disagreement is rooted in the stubborn Missouri trait that I do not like being told there is something I cannot make up my own mind about.



[Internet censorship and surveillance by country \(2018\)](#)

■ Pervasive
■ Substantial
■ Selective

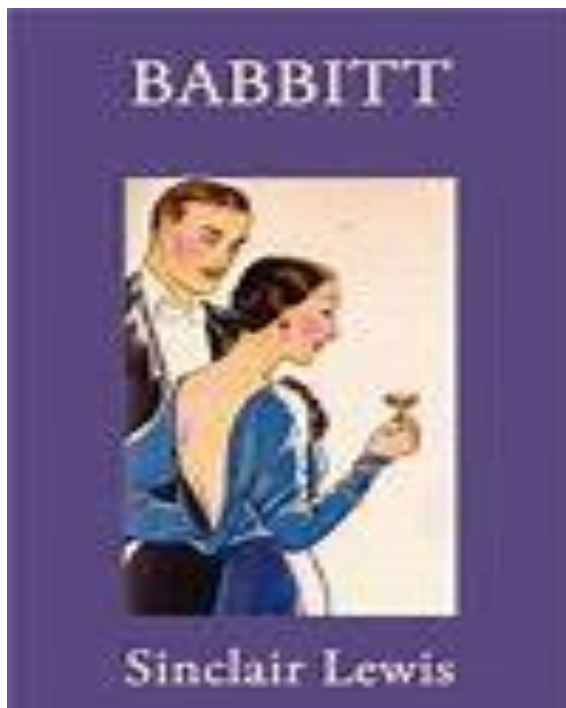
■ Little or no
■ Not classified / No data

Prohibiting an idea or practice may seem like a great solution to a perceived problem, but in actuality, it never works, and history

shows that making something taboo, only promotes the same and results in more negative behaviors than it seeks to restrict. Primarily, censoring and prohibiting will not lessen the desire to learn about a taboo and they are simply futile and will not work no matter how disgusting or disagreeable a thing may appear or be.

Let's not forget what the consequences were during prohibition from the 1920's 18th Amendment and the resultant Volstead Act, there was no agreement within the population to stop imbibing intoxicating beverages. Oh, on the surface, overtly, it seemed the majority, especially with the upright community leaders marching and waving temperance banners, there appeared a total consensus in the war against demon rum. But was there a bona fide accord or simply closeted hypocrisy?

Sinclair Lewis debunked that overt notion with his humorous criticism of morally upright, righteously dry America in the early days of the 20th Century with the 1930 Nobel literature Prize winning novel, *Babbitt*. His materialistic protagonist, Georgie



Babbitt, that paragon of family values, a true republican in the mythical, republican city of Zenith, (many midwestern cities proudly claimed they were the model not realizing Lewis was parodying the archetype) who always had booze available and while disparaging bootleggers in public forums and church pews, supported them with his business, was the epitome of that hypocrisy which condemns out of one side of the mouth while enjoying the taste of sin with the other side.

Ironically, Prohibition was considered so noble an experiment that instead of legitimate businesses operating in the open, organized crime found it the shot in the arm it needed to gain a substantial foothold in the nation. Very few who demanded the law respected it and most people felt that prohibition was an intrusion into their liberties and patriotically broke the law at every opportunity. That unintended consequence has remained as a reluctant populace is plagued by confounding and insincere statutes that continue in some of the more backward communities to this day.



This blue-law notion also applies to other controlled and prohibited substances such as psychedelics like marijuana, psilocybin, mescaline, LSD; narcotic and chemical dependency drugs like Morphine, Cocaine, barbiturates, methamphetamine – booze, demon rum – does anyone think the cost of a five cent beer is actually five cents considering the damage it was alleged to have done to women and rosy cheeked toddlers; and lastly, my favorite, pornography! All are issues that organized crime happily found exceptionally profitable once they were censored and prohibited.

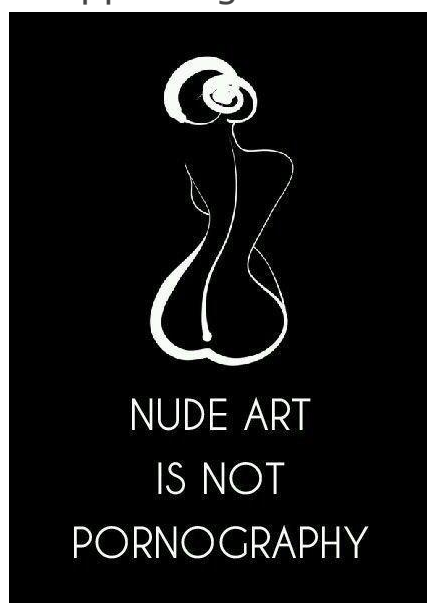
Okay, fine. But we are no longer in the 20th Century. We have had an exponentially technological advancement that precludes the quaint hamlets of Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and northern Florida. I don't even want to disclose what I found festering in Kansas, hideous as it



is to me personally. What do these areas represent? They are what is accurately described as the bible belt. Strongholds of fundamentalist religion where, paradoxically, moonshine bootleggers flourish, meth labs blossom, divorce and illegitimacy thrive, and the only people inconvenienced are thirsty out-of-state travelers. How can this condition be if this is truly holy, a bible belt of godly and righteous people? Can they not control their prurient interests?

I know, I know, some people have a problem with prurience. Its very existence causes emotional upheaval.

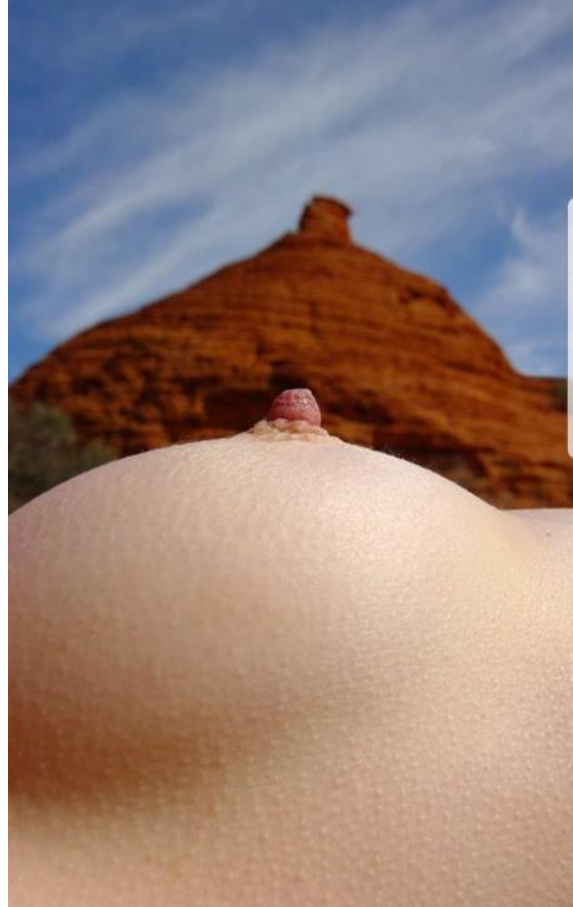
But it is the semantics related to it that cause the most detrimental plunge into hypocrisy. Definitions range from "Prurient interest is an appeal to a morbid, degrading and unhealthy interest in sex, as distinguished from a mere candid interest in sex." To, "marked by or arousing an immoderate or unwholesome interest or desire; especially: marked by, arousing, or appealing to sexual desire."



People who have this prurient interest syndrome are so lucky and I am green with envy! Just listening to the synonyms make me jealous. Delight to how raunchy they sound: *salacious, licentious, voyeuristic; lascivious, lecherous, lustful and lewd; libidinous, lubricious, depraved and debauched; degenerate, dissolute, dissipated and concupiscent!* Oooooo, how deliciously sinful such words sound. Do they make your ear rank, do you feel rank for hearing such words? Do they make

you shiver with anticipation and visceral eagerness? It is all I can do to keep from drooling.

Sometimes authorities are convinced we must be saved from ourselves. The state of California declared, ostensibly for the protection of the participants, that all professional pornography actors and actresses use condoms in their staged fornications. The result was fewer viewers of that pornography and fewer positions to be filled – if that isn't too much a mixed metaphor – because simply, nobody (even those in Zenith, whatever) wants to vicariously masturbate while watching



condom wrapped dicks in unprotected married white pussies. That just does not work for the fantasy! It must be hot, long, throbbing, black thug cock plowing the pure ivory fields of spread thighs and buttering that viscous seed in torrents of bukkake facials. Nothing less will do!

Everything dangerous, everything forbidden is what the public wants and what they will pay for even if it is a curious specialized fetish for closeted perverts like incels (involuntary celibates, or in some circles, priests) have for stretch marked bellies and dominatrix models speaking insults to their manhoods in lowland Dutch. Maybe they aren't getting anything at home, so they don't want to be reminded of all the restraints they have to toe the line for release. Dammit man there is just so much a person can withstand. No, no! That titty is too pretty, too round, too perfect and how can I resist the pucker that my brain sends to my lips

when my eyes behold such a succulent nipple. Just a little suckle, please.

Substitute what you are turned on by and be damned. And, for a heterosexual condemnation, has anyone seen the prurience in a perfectly butterflied, spread opened pork chop? It looks like smooth inviting lips with a little, peeking nub so much like a clitoris. If you've seen it, how can you forget it but what kind of depravity is it that makes a person want to fornicate with their own dinner?



However, I'm speaking about those things that are still with us despite a reluctance to spotlight degeneracy. I speak about the Catholic church and the barbaric practice of the Hebrew and Muslim religions – ritual circumcision – that allows disgusting travesties because no one is bringing out into the open or allowing the perversions to be mentioned. By ignoring these things are we not allowing them to be condoned and to flourish?

The Manson family women discovered that if they fellated their babies, those children ceased their Zen-shattering disharmonious screeches and would gurgle with joy as they suckled in return. A truly disturbing image I'm sure all would agree. Roman Catholic Priests – well, we know what they have done and continue to do



with the aiding and abetting of the avowed celibate in the Vatican. But, is there any difference between the Manson family sluts and Vatican vicars or the Hebrew mohels or the Muslim female family members who restrain the little girl as her clitoris is barbarically removed?

How many Greek myths should be censored? Did Leda really fuck a swan? Is it true that Zeus could not keep his unmentionable



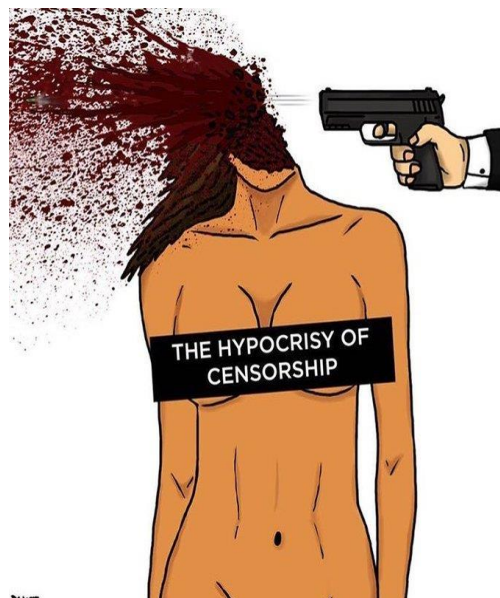
truncheon of pleasure in his pants or swaddling robe? Are any and all artistic depictions to be censored and, like the Bamiyan Buddhas, destroyed because someone's sensibilities were offended? Will anyone call for censorship of a book that has a chapter permitting a father to sell his daughter into slavery?

Could it be, in our zeal to make everything antibiotic with

censorship and prohibition, are we inadvertently stopping up the pressure releases that are the safety valves of human nature? Or, should I be properly stoned for bringing up such noxious realities in mixed company. Maybe, I'm condemned to reside in the antiseptic hell of tumblr for eternity. Who knows what it will be called? Zenith, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Kansas City, Cincinnati? Oh please, *not Topeka!* Harlan Ellison says, "*Bad things happen in Topeka!*"

Someone has a challenge with language, but it is not me. Someone has a problem with guilt, but it is not me. Someone has an overdeveloped sense of sin, but it is not me.

The prayers are launched upward from a seething pesthole of lust. "Oh lord, how will we divert ourselves if the quarantine lasts into the summer? And what will people think of me if they find out?"



ARTICLES

(How AO's Deal with Covid-19)

WALMART *(during the crisis)*

By Betty Tewksbury

Shopping at Walmart — or *Wally World*, as I sometimes call it — under “normal” conditions is bizarre at best. You can get almost anything at *Wally World*, a one-stop shop with groceries on one end, toys and sports at the other and everything else; from tires to electronics, screwdrivers to flip-flops and fill-in whatever else you can think of, in between. They also have a nursery if you are into gardening. As they say, “if Walmart doesn’t have it, you don’t need it.” But the current covid-19 crisis has upped the ante



Walmart can be compared to a parody of life, our lives. It is, indeed, a place where everyone shops and who we must rub elbows with regardless of station, ethnicity, or belief. Shopping patterns explain a lot about our culture. For instance, there is *Cinco de Mayo Saturdays* because many of our Latino workers get paid on Friday afternoon, and then there’s the wacky

and bizarre, “Walmart Live Show” from midnight to dawn when the creatures come out. It is a place where older ladies shop in their PJs and fluffy slippers; and yes, there are many exposed butt cracks meandering up and down the aisles.

Now, after describing the normal Walmart shopping days where there always is an abundant display of items on the shelves, let me try to describe the unimaginable sights I witnessed on my last visit to the south Stuart store since we realized the reality that we have something worse than a hurricane to deal with.

Like during the interval before an impending storm the parking lot was abuzz with so many cars, driven by crazed drivers. Shopping carts were on short supply; I really should have known what awaited me once I made the decision, crossed the threshold and stepped inside. It was a frenzy that combined the perils of Black Friday bargain hunting, Darwinesque survival shopping and a depression-era bank run spree.

The usual Walmart shopper had gone totally wild. The



shopping carts were moving at a speed usually reserved for the Daytona Raceway during the 500-mile demolition derby. Literally, a person had to take their life in their own hands to dodge the wild-eyed and fear-

crazed souls racing to grab any supplies to sustain themselves and their families. Most of the carts had already been filled to an

overload level. I had to ask myself on more than one occasion, *'what in the hell are they going to do with all that toilet paper?!?'*

As I passed the pharmacy, I could not believe my eyes once again. The entire bank of shelves that displayed the plethora of various over-the-counter cold medications were completely stripped.

I had come to Walmart to pick up a prescription, longer than usual lines there also, but thought I should pick up some hand sanitizer while I was in the area. Wrong! The hand sanitizer and anything resembling it was completely sold out. I settled for a few bottles of 91 percent rubbing alcohol. I spotted an opening between shoppers and darted to the aisle that usually housed cleaning and laundry products. You guessed it, the two aisles of shelves were practically barren, and I watched for a moment as an elderly woman about my age (who me? I'm not elderly!)



considered buying a damaged box of detergent that had a small leaky corner. *'Leaky was better than nothing'* she must have decided and set it upside down in her cart to conserve what remained of the contents. I did purchase two gallons of bleach, but the Clorox wipes shelves were dusty and empty, even the

damaged packages were long gone.

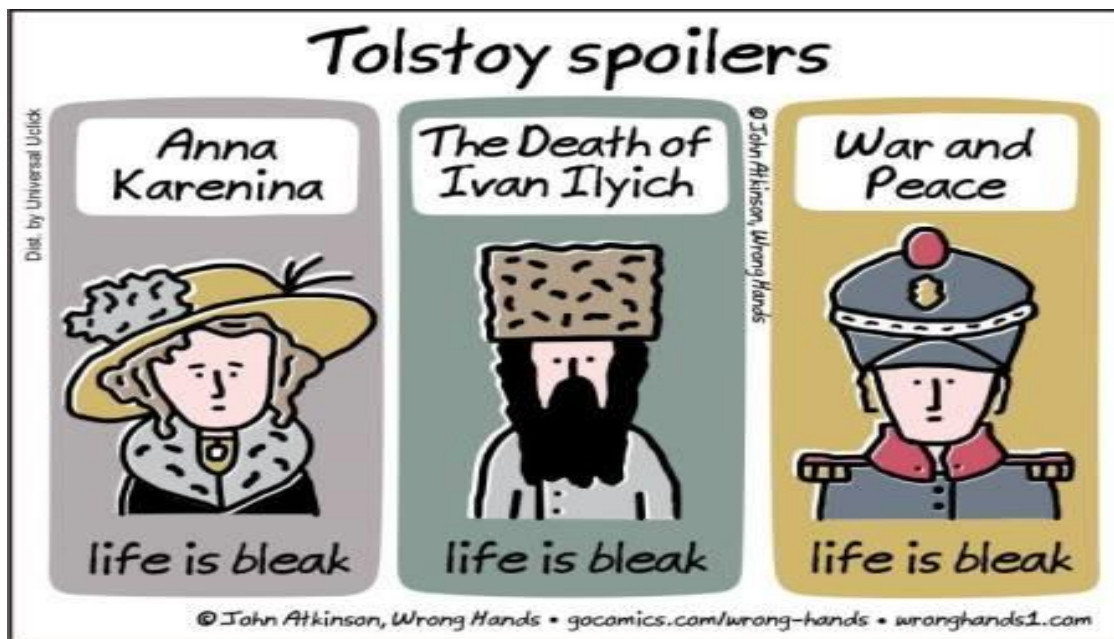
I decided, I had all the fun and excitement I could stand for one day and looking both ways at the junction of aisles, cautiously headed toward the checkout area. Normally, after seeing the long lines with the over-the-top piled carts, I would have abandoned my own cart and left the building. *'Screw it! Not worth my time!'*

'Not today,' I thought, for who knows what it will be like on a return shopping trip. I think I stood in line for over 20 minutes, to complete a task that on a normal trip to *Wally World* only takes me less than five, that is, to scan and self-pay for my few items.



In-grab-pay-out, quick as a wink.

I fear I will be making a return trip tomorrow for another prescription refill. I will not be holding my breath that the shelves will be restocked, and Walmart will be back to normal once again. *Good grief, did I just say the shopping experience at Walmart was normal?*



The Information Processing Machine

by Bert Mautz

A psych prof at Michigan preached the human mind, the brain is an information processing machine, a mechanism that feeds on, requires desperately input/information to chew on. Curiously this need can be satisfied by;



flickering flames in the fireplace



windblown leaves



waves on the water



clouds moving across the sky

and best of all, people watching



Hence, boredom is a particular hell to endure. In this age an Xfinity subscription goes a long way toward occupying the brain.

As determining of human behavior is the need to socialize, to be with others, to converse. While I curse at the flat screen, it doesn't yell back. We need connection. It takes two, or more. Family, multi generations, aunts and uncles, cousins. We need friends at lunch. Sequestering needn't be solitary confinement. But one has to make the effort.

Kay reported on a fun and happy Easter Sunday. Her assisted living community has locked its residents in their small apartments. The communal dining room is closed. Meals are left outside their door. Should they walk to the mail room, they are to wear a mask and keep their distance. She vigorously maintains social connections with her children, grandchildren, and friends accumulated across a full life. Said she had been on the phone most all of Sunday and enjoyed a visit and gifts from her daughter's family, midafternoon.

What the hell will we do

Is it an unavoidable condition of the sorry ass senior citizen, the retiree, those of us enjoying our golden years, to have way too



much damn time on our hands? After breakfast, I don't have to go anywhere. What the hell will we do for fun today? This pandemic flips that assumption on its head, because we can't go anywhere. Bars, restaurants, movie theatres, the usual hang outs are closed. btw - Bonefish Grill's take

out menu is pretty good, but no social component whatsoever. Customers making pickups wait in their cars until the coast is clear, and then step inside for an abbreviated transaction.

for fun today?



The ultimate distraction cannot be ignored

Read a good book recently?
What are you reading?
Subscriptions to two of the
countries banner newspapers,

a news summary magazine, and two social commentary, literary/humor magazines get me through each day and each week. (*full disclosure; Car&Driver, Road&Track monthly*) Spurring conversation with periodicals is accomplished by giving gift subscriptions to friends so we can talk about the cartoons, the cover art, the editorializing within.

Don't feel sorry for yourself. Get online! Be safe out there



The obvious, the ultimate distraction cannot be ignored, our online connection, our computers. It combines our communications, our amusements and distractions, information and news, even for some a tool of creativity. Tuff to be bored with oneself with this cornucopia before you on the screen, a magic carpet at one's fingertips ... getting a little crazy here. Have written elsewhere about *YouTube.com* and the music it makes available.

So, don't be feeling sorry for yourself. Get online, find Maureen Dowd's latest column. Trump's dumpster-fire of a press briefing will be on this afternoon. Be safe out there.

A PRECIOUS DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

By Virgil Thorp

Aware Ones, we've had a tough two months of social distancing, toilet paper conservation, life disruption and sadness as sometimes it is personal as with relatives and friends and sometimes it is no less painful as with idols, no less impersonal and yet, helpless.

I felt that vulnerable sorrow and grief tonight (4/7/2020) when I



heard that musician, poet and philosopher, John Prine died of complications from Covid-19. On television news, on websites there were pictures of John at 73, wrinkled, weathered, balding and looking like every year of those 73 were spent at a breakneck speed of

drugs, alcohol and literally burning the candle at both ends. A scary picture of what happens, before and after, fragile and frail.

I met John damn near fifty years ago when he was young, just a few years into the folk music scene, very rakishly handsome and beginning to make his mark in the country-folk music community. Kristofferson heard John troubadouring it in a Chicago folky coffee shop and declared he had beheld the reincarnation of the next messiah, the next Dylan. In those days, in the hierarchy of talent, you could find many aspiring messiahs with guitars on their backs and pouches full of harps, soloing in parks and street

corners, coffee shops and clubs, anywhere to make a couple of bucks. Some could make it to the big time, but most could not. It was matter of luck if you could and you better have the talent if you wished to stay in that hallowed company plus, you had to be something special. John Prine had that and more.

It was in Mountain View, Arkansas in cowboy singer, Glenn Ohrlin's house where I stumbled into a guy named John Prine. Glenn had semi-retired from making a living at the music business and invested in a ranch away from the degeneracy of Nashville and Memphis. Although Arkansas's northern counties are dry, there are as many empty beer cans along the side of the road as there were churches and there were hundreds of churches, almost as many as there were rocks.

It had been at our folk organization's (the Foolkiller) spring



campout, a long weekend party with counter-cultural speakers and events and lots of music. I was rarely without a beer in those days and had been drinking all day at the small rocky farm the Foolkiller owned. That evening I ended up in Glenn's front room with a bunch of other people, all folk musicians, some local, some not. It was a folk fan's wet dream as we went around the room each taking turns singing a song or songs or joining in on the chorus. It was one of the charms of the area, these were folk songs

untarnished by commercial influences. Branson was merely a three-way stop with a gas station back then. It was old but also

fresh and at the time, we suspected that there were recording companies touring dirt roads around the back hollers with their tape recorders and automatic copyrighting machines mining mountain culture. Other people, not so covetous, came to absorb what they could and let the mountain rhythms influence them.

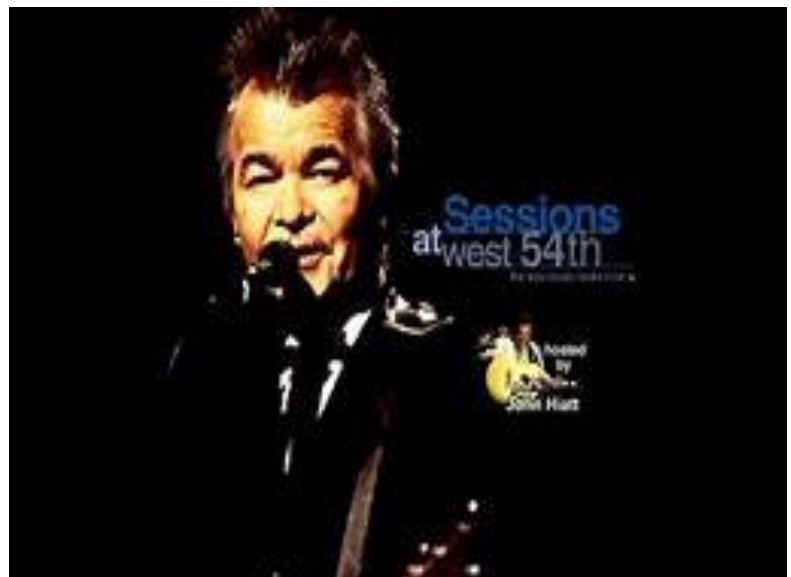
I suppose that's why John Prine happened to be in Glenn's front room that night next to a drunk guy who had no beers but did have cigarettes. We were both vets, shaggy-haired and mustached, so we shared a couple of smokes and beers, like we had been in Vietnam together, and listened to some fine music from traditional to progressive, lullabies to blues, hillbilly to honkytonk, murder ballads to hymns.

I had just popped a top on one of John's beers when Glenn handed him his guitar and said, "let's have a John Prine song."

"Okay, sure," John smiled and after a little tuning and then some cord strumming, he began, "Sam Stone came home to his wife and family after serving in the conflict overseas" and I followed the lyrics like they were a novel. John knew Sam and so did I. We knew that "the time that (Sam) served had shattered all his nerve and left a little shrapnel in his knee." It was a vital story to tell and John weaved it in sharp focus – "a purple heart and a monkey on his back" – true to life and detailed from experience.

So many damaged acquaintances had holes in their lives and "a hole in "daddy's arm(s) where all the money goes."

Now I can't remember or swear if "Sam Stone" was the first song he sang that night. It could have been "Paradise" he



started with. I know we all got a big kick out of "Dear Abby." Yet, when I concentrate I can still hear echoes of the group in that front room as we joined in to harmonize the choruses with John, loudly singing to "take me back to Muhlenberg County, down by the Green River where paradise lay." With the power of John's words, if Mr. Peabody had shown up in Glenn's house, we'd have tarred and feathered the sum bitch and told him where he could stick his goddamned coal train. What a night!

John's songs cut through the shit. They were so now, so like I was, still trying to sort out the life changing experiences we'd been thrown into and now tried to recover from. It was a kinship. It was Illegal Smiles, topless dancers, dirty bookstores and the theft of the paradise we thought we had been promised we'd inherit. We knew all those gods were all the same and that your flag decal wouldn't get you into heaven anymore; an answer to those who had sat at home and bragged about how patriotic they were.

His lyrics rang so true and hung on so tight I felt they could have been written about me:

There were spaces between donald and whatever he said.
Strangers had forced him to live in his head.
He envisioned the details of romantic scenes
After midnight in the stillness of the barracks latrine.

That's from Donald and Lydia, the only song I've heard that made masturbation sound romantic. I get chills when the words make love with a melody and I rejoice at the music in the English language. John was a natural at mixing those elements together. So, I must say my favorite John Prine song will always be his wistful vision of our nation and our environmental heritage:

Paradise

When I was a child my family would travel
Down to Western Kentucky where my parents were born
And there's a backwards old town that's often remembered
So many times that my memories are worn

And daddy won't you take me back to Muhlenberg County
Down by the Green River where Paradise lay
Well, I'm sorry my son, but you're too late in asking
Mister Peabody's coal train has hauled it away

Well, sometimes we'd travel right down the Green River
To the abandoned old prison down by Airdrie Hill
Where the air smelled like snakes and we'd shoot with our pistols
But empty pop bottles was all we would kill
Chorus

Then the coal company came with the world's largest shovel
And they tortured the timber and stripped all the land
Well, they dug for their coal till the land was forsaken
Then they wrote it all down as the progress of man
Chorus

When I die let my ashes float down the Green River
Let my soul roll on up to the Rochester dam
I'll be halfway to Heaven with Paradise waitin'
Just five miles away from wherever I am

Thank you, John.
You'll be missed
Mr. Prine.

"Hello in there ... hello"



What I missed

By Gale Baker



I have a tendency to duck talking about my past or what my adventures or misadventures might have been. But hibernating has given me a chance to reflect on a past that I hardly noticed as it flew by.

When I was a wee one, I remember being allowed to stay up and watch *The Show of Shows*. High School kept me busy at night with basketball and cheerleading and all the other activities I could join to keep my mind busy. So, I vaguely recall television at all from High School, except for watching *Dark Shadows* when I came home for lunches.

By seventeen I was on the road either soloing or fronting a group around the country. By twenty I recorded my first album and was touring. By twenty-one I was in Europe entertaining the troops in Officer's Clubs and Enlisted Men's Halls. By thirty I was in Vegas in a show that had a hundred-foot proscenium, showgirls coming out of the ceiling and Siegfried and Roy hiding their tricks from us.

By thirty-five I was in the Far East and Africa, still onstage. I spent my forties in Hollywood working sets from five a.m. until after dark and flopping exhausted most days. Then in my fifties I trod the boards in theatres across the country, and so the list goes on and on.



What I'm trying to say is my lifestyle didn't leave much time to watch prime time TV. There was no TiVo and for the most part no VHS during those early years. I became addicted to *Star Trek* only after it went into daytime reruns in the sixties, the same with *Cheers* later. I did see a lot of the *Carol Burnett Show* when I was in Africa as they only had one station

and two shows at the time. So, I actually didn't really know much about nighttime TV, except for *Saturday Night Live* [which always played during long intermissions] until I was in my sixties. That was when *NCIS* premiered. I still watch reruns and rant at the loss of Ziva, Tony and Abby. I am unable to fall in love with *Bull*, because of that.

So, during my hibernation, I have decided to see what I missed. So far, I have caught up on *Magnum PI* and *JAG*. This week I move on to *Murder She Wrote*. If this thing lasts, I plan to move on to *Diagnosis Murder*, *Matlock*, *Hart to Hart* and possibly a couple that my sister touted whose reruns are nowhere to be found, *Mannix* and *Nero Wolfe*. I'm hoping this binging spree will take me through the social distancing process. If not, I may have to start singing in the shower.



The Mystical law of Cause and Effect –



Thoughts on the future

By Jim Longo

"The mystical law of cause and effect," Reggie Procedo said, sitting on the back porch drinking coffee and watching the squirrels chasing each other.

"What the flip are you talking about now?" Patty Potens said sitting down next to Reggie with her own cup of coffee.

"Going back to normal after being locked away in quarantine for thirty days," Reggie said.

"We will just say crisis over and everybody go back to the way it was."

"That's probably what they will do."

"Yeah who dies, dies, on the whole they were going to be a drain on society anyways. Most of the people who die of Covid-19 are over 60. If they weren't a drain on society, they were going to be," Potens said taking a sip of her coffee.

"Well, there is a better way."

"Yeah, it is probably expensive and we can't afford it. It probably requires a lot of testing and we don't have the time or the money, we need to get the America back to work. We got what we wanted out of this crisis. We got two trillion dollars, five hundred billion without any meaningful oversight. What more can you ask for?"

"You ever hear the line 'a penny of prevention, is worth a pound of cure,'" Procedo said, taking a slug of his coffee.

"We're businesspeople, we'd rather spend the pound on the cure, there is a higher gross," Potens said with a sardonic smile.

"Look even the powerful can't be that evil and or stupid, we're all in this together."

"You ever hear the line

'a penny of prevention,

is worth a pound of cure,'"

"That's not how we see it," She said with an evil little giggle.

"Can I just tell you how to solve this immediate problem of ending the shutdown?"

"If you must, but I already know we aren't going to do it."

"Wow your open-mindedness is amazing, but never mind that. You are right the key is testing and documentation. There are basically three groups; unknown status thus potentially contagious, those who have the disease and are definitely contagious, and those who have had the disease, recovered and are therefore, not contagious anymore."

"Tell me something I don't know."

"So, we have these three groups, and we want to put as many people in the non-contagious group. Well, to keep the uninfected in the non-contagious group you require testing every two weeks. So why not sell subscription to bi-monthly testing and let them get with their lives. If and when they come down with the disease you isolate, track down everyone they have been in contact with in the last two weeks and isolate them via an app that has already been developed."

"Tell me something

I don't know."

"And if you haven't been tested?"

"You're still under quarantine."

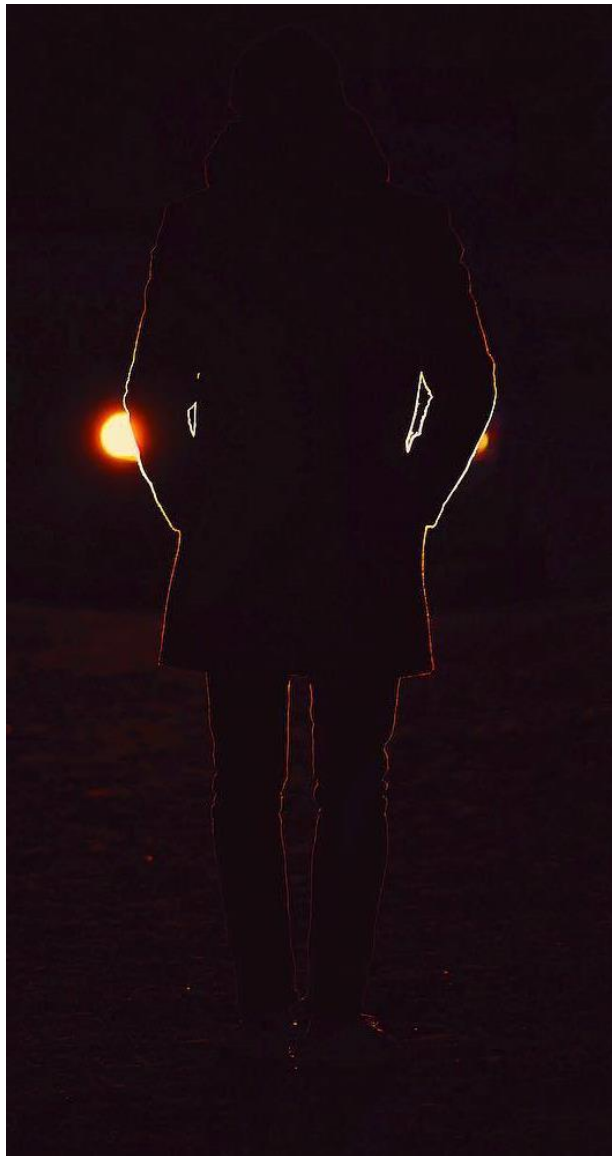
"And how do you stop the person that is out and about but hasn't been tested?"

"I don't know. You are required to show your documentation anytime you are going to break social distancing rules or be in a location of more than ten people, with no exceptions including essential services."

"It sounds very big brother like. I don't believe the American people would allow it. Besides I can see people forging their own paper's so they can have the run of society."

"Yeah that is true, but I imagine, you can write the rules where if someone does that, and someone gets sick or dies, you can charge them with murder or attempted murder."

"But God forbid, we aren't going to put anyone in prison anymore. They are a well spring of disease." Potens said with a sardonic grin.



"How about house arrest and are required to be a medical guinea pig for the good of society?" Procedo said with a nervous smile.

"I like it, but the ACLU would never let it fly and we'd have to have trials, and God only knows how long that would take."

"Call them domestic terrorists and send them to Gitmo."

"I am sure we can come up with something."

They both laughed, finished their coffee and went to their appropriate offices, her to wield power and him to find a way to find the process to make it work.

THE WAY WE WERE

REMEMBER LONG PLAY STEREO?

By Bert Mautz



LaVelle Henderson was a biochemistry professor, husband, father, and a good friend of our family. His and Maureen's three daughters were a never-ending aggravation. I would never do as well in school *as Janet did*, reminded my Mother daily. He hung the speaker in a closet door. Led off his hi-fi demonstration with Harry Belafonte wailing "Day-O." Dad was entranced by the notion of high-fidelity sound.



LaVelle had built the massive amplifier with glowing vacuum tubes from a kit. Dad built the same kit, added a British, Garrard record changer. The speaker brand fails me. A bulky blonde cabinet and best sound I've ever heard. Load a stack

of LP's and walk away, that record player would go on making music for hours. Bought my first LP album for that "sound system," and began paying attention to fidelity and the technologies making the beautiful noises possible. Stereo came next.



The old system went to the cottage, and then another stereo system, or maybe just better speakers. With my own home and family, beginning with grad students' apartments, never had a living room without a stereo and music collection. Fortunate to have been taken to live concerts as a child through young adulthood by Irma Hedgcock, resulting in a sophisticated ear.

With this background with live music ranging from Yo-Yo Ma on cello, Rudolf Serkin on piano, to the Chicago Symphony and



everything in between, would never be satisfied. Music sources started with 33 1/3 rpm LP records, pressed with ever finer fidelity, but it was still a groove in the plastic, traced by a needle just like Edison invented in 1877. Plate glass turn table, precision tone arm, and the needle cartridge costing hundreds. Tapes; open

reels, four tracks and cassettes. By now must own several hundred compact discs, including the complete works of Mozart. The technology progression would not be ignored.

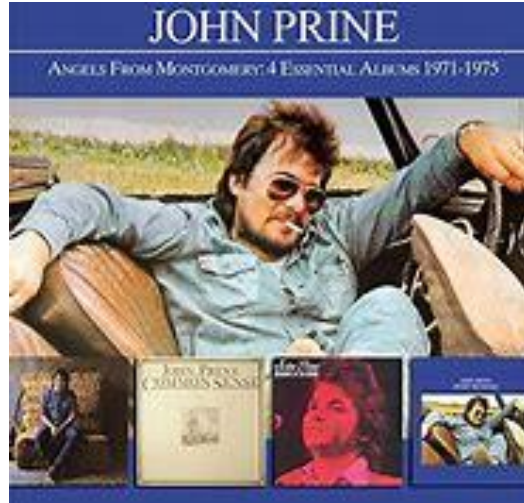
Right after fidelity came purity of sound. A Canadian outfit, Bryston, made the critically acclaimed best amplifiers. The power amp had only an off-on button, believed knobs and dials create distortion, weighed forty pounds, pure as can be.



Dahlquist Phased Array speakers believed the cones' vibrations needed to be geometrically parallel. Sounded good to me. Set this up on the north porch with the wicker and paper plants. Serenaded the throngs walking back from the beach in the dark of July 4th. Yup, I had it all back in the eighties. Last



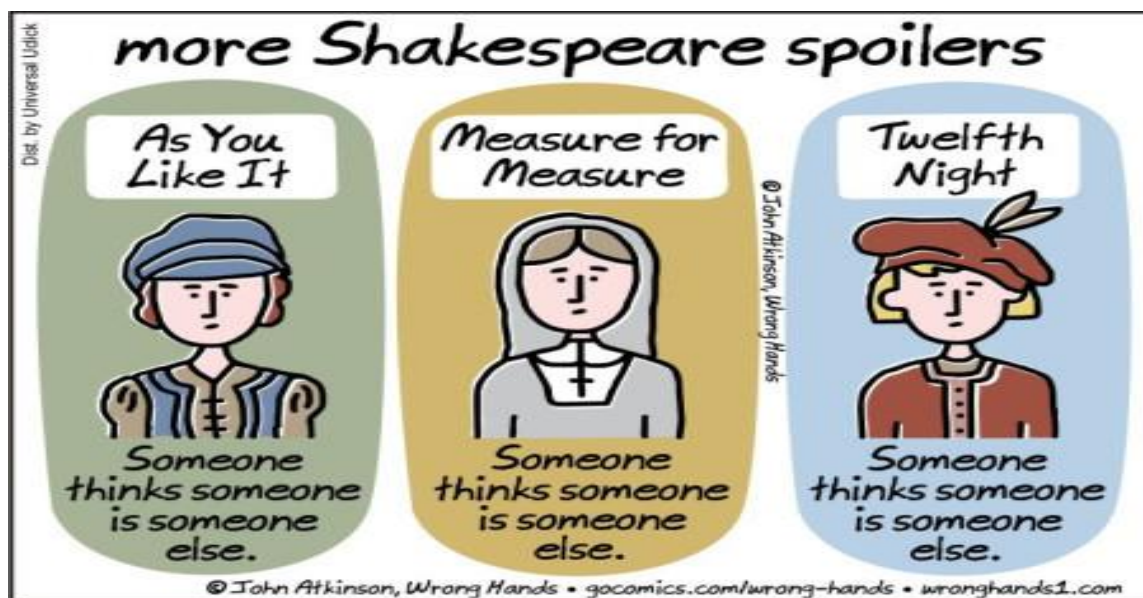
speakers were column a built-in power woofer. Live in a house, all the concert volume. Bryston the big coned was good while it



Bose boxes in a configuration with amp for the free-standing better to enjoy live. Inevitably, those amplifiers blew out speakers, but it lasted.

More recently, necessary for especially bass. Sound reproduction systems keep getting smaller. The sound bars accompanying flat screens are a good example. That final sound source is digital. Albums are released online. And then, wonder of wonders, a subscription to *YouTube Music* and a virtually infinite variety is immediately available. For example, John Prine, legendary songwriter passed away yesterday. Not all that familiar, so looked him up and set playing his lifelong playlist. The current compact Bose speaker running on blue tooth, fill this little house with guitar strumming and amazing songs.

Life is good – pandemic be damned.



Dublin 1956



By Ed Zillioux

This morning my mind was wandering as it often does, and I found myself thinking of a pleasant visit to Dublin back in my Navy years. I thought it was a story worth telling, at least for my own pleasure, so here goes.

Upon completing my tour of duty in Puerto Rico, I put in for sea duty. I was 20 years old at the time. I was assigned as lead Sonarman aboard the Destroyer (or Tin Can as we called it)



Robert K. Huntington (A.K.A. the *Bouncing Bobby K.*). The ship had a complement of 212 sailors plus officers. It was a good time to be joining her since she was imminently leaving for a Mediterranean cruise with our sister ship, another tin can, and

from there, a tour through the North Atlantic and then down to the Navy base at Guantanamo, Cuba, or "GITMO" as we sailors called it for training maneuvers. In the Med we had a week layover in Valencia, Spain (our sister ship went to Barcelona).

Upon leaving we steamed back through the Strait of Gibraltar. The "Rock," one of the two Pillars of Hercules, really does look like the Prudential logo, from the appropriate angle. And it really impressed me. It's a mostly limestone monolithic promontory having a sharp crest peaking up to 1,398 ft. with over 200 caves that, over the ages, have accumulated hundreds of marine and other fossils including ample evidence of Neanderthal habitation and at least one intact skull of a Neanderthal woman.



But now we're past the Rock and steaming into the North Atlantic toward our destination, the Dublin harbor. Through incredibly rough seas we pitched and rolled until we rendezvoused with a huge tanker that was making slow headway waiting for us to come alongside to refuel. This was my first experience with a refueling-at-sea operation and it was a doozy. The tanker, which sported a clever wag's sign stating, "We give S&H Green Stamps," was steaming aside us as calm as a floating hotel. But our relatively small ship was in one instance level with the tanker's main deck and in the next fallen into a trough so deep we could see the bottom of its hull or at least its Plimsoll line. In these circumstances, when at tanker deck level, the Duty Bosun's mate heaves a throwline with a weight attached to one end



encased in a monkey's fist knot to avoid serious headaches, this line is then retrieved and secured to sequentially larger and larger lines to the final hawser that will bind the two ships together. When the hawser is finally brought aboard our ship, it is fed down the port side through the hands of a line of sailors, me among them. The concept is we pull the hawser tight to

maintain a given distance between the two ships. This is followed by other lines, the first being that of the fuel line. After fueling was complete, the last hurrah was the transferring of a passenger in a bosun's chair from the deck of our tin can to the deck of the tanker. That was almost a heart-stopper. The chair plunged down into the engulfing trough within inches of the racing torrent of water separating the two ships, then snatched back up and by some miracle, it seemed, was delivered to the deck of the tanker where waiting hands snatched the passenger to safety.

Don't worry, I'll get to Dublin soon – just gotta catch these things as they dance through my hippocampus (a word most recently introduced into our collective lexicon by Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch).

And so, the seas subsided into calm on a bright sunny day as we steamed into Dublin Harbor. (Our sister ship was sent to Belfast. We definitely got the best deal.) The first thing that caught my eye was the incredible greenness of the grass covering the well-tended hillsides running away from the wharfs. The second thing was the smell of the nearby cheese factory, a point of great vocal irritation to the Chief Bosun's Mate, but he was a total philistine and a person I happily and religiously avoided. Our wharf was stacked high with kegs of Guinness draft awaiting loading onto cargo ships.



Certainly, a good sign of things to come. Dublin was a total joy. The first few days of our week in port I was out every day and evening with my buddies in the Irish pubs. Unlike any bars I ever

experienced, these were gems. They were always packed with seriously happy people. Girls with lyrical voices sprang into song at the drop of a hat. All of the good old Irish songs that we all remember: "When Irish Eyes are Smiling", "Danny Boy", "My Wild Irish Rose" and many others as well as more recently penned melodies from this musical island. It was simply joyous, the only word I can think of for it. None of



us had *civies* so we came in our dress whites, which turned out to be perfect because everyone in Dublin it seemed were celebrating the coming of the American Navy ship. And the pints flowed, and I got hooked on Guinness for the rest of my life.

The morning of the fourth day I was out early with a couple of shipmates when we encountered a wedding just as the bride and groom left the church along with a big crowd of celebrants and friends. We were across the street just standing and gawking when one of the wedding party crossed the street to where we



were standing and invited us to join them at a huge reception. Of course, we went. We were transported by reserved buses to a castle at the edge of the city called Cliff Castle, which was converted to host large parties in order to pay the high taxes. We danced and

drank and ate and caroused and drank and drank some more. I

totally overindulged in brandy, which was my common condition in those days, and I went into a blackout. I woke up the next morning to find that some good Samaritan had bundled me up to a private bedroom in one of the towers of the castle. They/he/she had the decency to remove my outer clothes, fold them neatly on a chair, and put me to bed. When I stumbled out of bed the next morning without a clue as to where I was or how I got there, I noticed my wallet on the dresser top. It was a special wallet made of unborn calf skin and I had apparently mistaken it for an ashtray since several cigarettes were stubbed out on it. Yes, I smoked then. I must mention though that my money was all there, and, from the treatment I had been receiving so far, I would have expected nothing less.

The problem now of course, was that I was AWOL (Absent With Out Leave, a serious breach of naval discipline). But it turned out to be the best AWOL of my entire career of AWOLs. Looking out the window, my circumstances became apparent. I showered and got presentable and went down the long circular stairs to the main dining room, which at that time was virtually empty except for the cleaning crew. I was met there by a gentleman who asked if he could be of help.

I explained that I needed to get back to my ship and was in need of a taxi.

On the way back, we passed the main Guinness brewery. I was only briefly tempted but my better angels kicked

in and I continued on to the ship. I noted that the driver needed no directions and I left him a suitable tip. I don't know whether



Dubliners were used to tipping because he seemed quite surprised and expressed his thanks.

I was stopped at the top of the gangplank by the duty officer as expected and taken to see the captain's executive officer. My punishment was restriction to the ship for the remainder of our stay. Period. No counts against my record which meant I might yet make petty officer 2nd class. I didn't.

I was given the rather pleasant job of escorting visitors around the ship. During our stay in port a good share of the Dublin population had come to visit the ship. On my second day of restriction, I got up early, anxious to meet new visitors. There was no one at that time on the dock except one rather pretty, young girl, short, with flaming red hair and huge freckles. She came up the gangplank and was handed off to me since I was the only escort then available.

There seemed to be no accountability to monitor the visitors, so I spent a good part of the day with Kayleigh, as I learned her name was. "What a pretty name!" I had exclaimed.



"Oh, thank you. It means slim and fair."

"And you are." Her blush nearly matched her hair.

I took her to every conceivable corner of the ship that was not off limits such as the crews' quarters. But even there I let her sneak down the ladder to give her a quick peak of my own quarters after checking to be sure it was clear. After she had gotten very comfortable

with me, I took her to see the inside of one of the 5-inch gun turrets. I closed the hatch and we were completely alone. I tentatively asked if I could kiss her and she responded positively along with a repeat of the flaming blush. I can only say that we had a rather intimate hour together, which was more than I ever expected would be possible aboard ship. But I was very respectful and she returned my caresses. It was a very happy AWOL restriction indeed. We exchanged addresses and promised to stay in touch, which actually lasted for most of the time I had left in the service.

She was back the next day and she was put with another escort.

"No," she said emphatically, "I want to go with him," meaning me. So, we spent more quality time together with more guarded intimacy.

"Kayleigh," I finally said, "We will be shipping out tomorrow and I'm afraid I won't have a chance to come back. I don't want to leave but I'm not in charge of course."

"I know, but I really, really enjoyed the time we've had and I promise I will stay in touch. Maybe someday..." her voice trailed off and she left the ship.

That evening as we were getting ready to depart, the sonar officer, Mr. Solo, came by. "I noticed you enjoyed your restriction," he said with a smile.



"Yes sir. Thank you, sir," I grinned back. He was a good guy and actually helped me with a loan later to get me started in a

photography business after I was discharged. (He was rich, heir to the Solo cup company.)

It took about two weeks to steam from the North Atlantic to



Cuba. On the way to GITMO the most interesting and fun thing that happened was while I was on the sonar stack and was able to give positive identifications to a series of whales. The captain always broadcast the sightings through the ship's intercom to the effect that crewmen crowded on the railings and the ship had a positive list,

heeling to the side where I had called the sighting. Although the pings were similar to submarines, whales were easy to identify since no sub can change course so abruptly.

The Navy is very solicitous in their efforts to keep mail coming to ships at sea in order to keep the morale up. So, when we arrived at GITMO, the first order of business was Mail Call. And, sure enough, there was a letter from Kayleigh waiting for me.

Enclosed in her letter was a clipping from *The Irish Times*, Dublin's leading newspaper. It had published a poem that lauded the arrival of the U.S. Naval Ship the Robert K. Huntington and the wonderful camaraderie among and between the ship's crew and the Dublin population. Dublin was great. Joyful, gracious, and, yes, memorable.

The Last Haircut



By Yashi Nozawa

This article is part of my memoir covering the period of the Pacific War. The events of this article took place a few days after the fire-bombing of Tokyo, March 10, 1945 – Yashi.

Preface

Starting in the fall of 1944, a small number of Super-fortress B-29 bombers raided the Japanese mainland every day during the daytime. I remember that I could not see aircraft, but I could tell they were enemy planes from several white streaks of vapor trails getting longer and longer on the background of the bright clear blue sky. Since these bombers seemed to head to aircraft factories outside of Tokyo and never dropped any bombs on the

city, we watched them every day without worry. Damages on both sides were minimal because the planes flew at high altitude, which Japanese anti-aircraft guns could not reach.

Furthermore, most of the Japanese fighter planes never had a chance to intercept American bombers because they took too long to climb to the necessary altitude. When they reached the right height, all enemy bombers were gone. Since high altitude bombing was not accurate, almost no bombs hit their intended targets.

This situation suddenly changed on the night of March 10, 1945. Hundreds of B-29s flew in the night sky over the city of Tokyo at a low altitude and dropped thousands of incendiary bombs. These bombs were concentrated in the lowland areas of the city where many small factories existed. The residents of the area like other citizens, had trained and practiced fighting against incendiary attack, and tried to extinguish these fires. Unfortunately, they had been trained to fight against sporadic fires -- like one major fire per block. Everybody was supposed to extinguish a fire at his own house first, then to help neighbors' fires.

*The night of
March 10,
1945.
Hundreds of B-
29s flew in the
night sky over
the city of
Tokyo*



However, that night, the number of incendiary bombs was far beyond their expectation. Multiple bombs struck each house. Intense fires overwhelmed all volunteer-fighters, mainly older men and housewives, killing many of them. Only a small number of lucky survivors escaped from the firestorm. Since many neighborhoods were entirely wiped out, we never knew the exact numbers of deaths, but some estimated that more than 200 thousand were killed during that fateful night. If the estimate was correct, the number of fatalities of these fires was more than that of the Hiroshima atomic bomb.

"Good afternoon," I opened the taped glass sliding door of the barber shop slowly.

"Come in! You won't need to wait too long, Yashi-chan," Yamazaki-san said.



Intense fires overwhelmed all volunteer-fighters, mainly older men and housewives, killing many of them

the bench. Yamazaki-san is talking to the customer on the chair, and also, to the man waiting.

Only one man, probably 60-plus-years-old, was waiting on

"Yes, it was terrible. I was conscripted for special duty last week. Well, I am 54-years-old, but I am still a member of the fire fighter's auxiliary. Nobody less than 45-years-old is in the auxiliary now. All the young men are gone. Our special duty was cleaning up the burnt debris in the *Honjo-Fukagawa* region. You know, the same area where the biggest disaster in Japanese history happened during the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. About 150 thousand people were burnt to death in the region. I wasn't in Tokyo during the earthquake, but I heard from a survivor of both disastrous fires that damage from fire-bombing was worse than that from the earthquake fire.

"Do you know what the phrase 'cleaning up of burnt debris' means? It means 'cleaning up of charred corpses.' Thousands of dead bodies! Every one of them was unrecognizably blackened and burnt. We handled bodies like half-burnt logs and piled them up on a hand-pull wagon. We loaded each wagon with probably twenty corpses.

*"Do you
know what
the phrase
'cleaning up
of burnt
debris'
means?"*



"It was heavy. Two of us pulled, and the other two pushed the cart. But the hardest part of our job was pushing of the cart. We had nothing to hide the pile of the blackened bodies. We couldn't stand the sight and smell of the load. The stink was disgusting and unbearable. We had to cover our mouths with handkerchiefs.

We had to take turns as pushers and pullers. We dragged the loaded wagon to the designated place, a big hole.

"In the beginning, we felt sorry for these dead people. They couldn't go to the *Western Paradise* (Buddhist's heaven) and had to wander around the halfway point because their bodies were not cremated completely.

"According to a story we heard, the authorities wanted to finish cremation, but there wasn't enough fuel to cremate these thousands of bodies. So, they decided to bury them simply.

"You know the region; it is the western part of downtown Tokyo. The water table of the area is so high that there aren't many places to dig holes. Any mounds or small hills became graveyards. We dug holes and buried bodies as many as possible in each hole.

"About five hundred of us worked a whole week picking up bodies, piling them on wagons, and dumping them into a pit. Once the hole became full, we went to find other higher ground for the next grave. Then we dug a hole with picks and shovels.

"I was in a body-gathering group and collected bodies hour after hour and day after day. I don't know how many corpses we gathered. Probably thousands. My sense of smell and even my feeling toward a human body became numb. In the end, I didn't feel anything anymore. We just worked like machines that handled burnt logs."



*I don't know how
many corpses we
gathered.
Probably
thousands.*

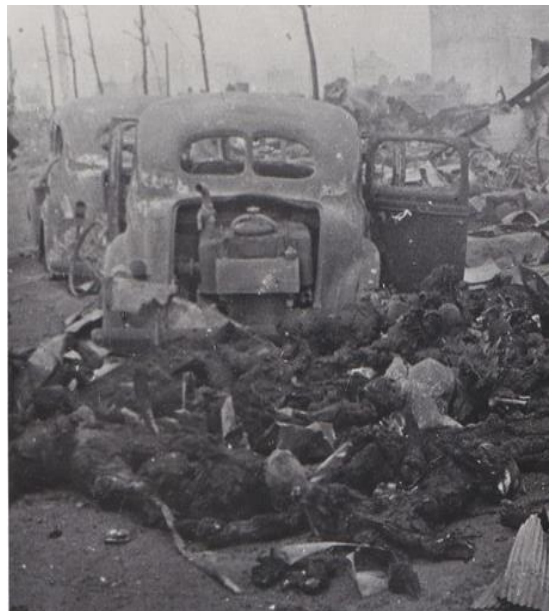
Yamazaki-san never stopped moving his hands, cutting hair, while he was talking passionately. Both customers were awe-stricken, and almost no word came from them.

Eventually, the man waiting on the bench said, "Whoa! Was it that bad!? I heard the *Honjo-Fukagawa* was damaged very badly, but I didn't know it was that bad. The radio said the western part of Tokyo suffered some minor damage during the night raid of March 10, 1945."

"Minor shminor, there was nothing left. Everything burned down. You know that in a normal fire, some structures would remain standing after the fire burned out. But this time there was nothing left. You can see mile after mile, and nothing remains. All burnt down. Even trees and electric poles burnt down to the ground. Only 3-inch stubs remain. Occasionally a reinforced concrete building remains, but just a shell only. No insides. There were many small factories in the region. These factory buildings were made of steel with corrugated tin roofs. But the metal structures were all melted or softened and came down to the ground.

"I had a chance to meet and talk to some survivors, mostly older men and women. They said that all able volunteers courageously tried to extinguish fires, faithfully following standing orders from the authorities. These people are all dead because they didn't have any chance to escape.

*These people are
all dead because
they didn't have
any chance to
escape.*



"The flames were intense. It was not an ordinary fire, but a firestorm or fire tornado. It was everywhere, all around you.

"Survivors were people who had been instructed to escape from the beginning because they were not able to help firefighting.

"They said that the firefighting drill, especially the bucket brigade, is child play, useless and dangerous. It was better to abandon the house and try to escape in future fire-bombing. There is no chance to fight an incendiary bomb fire.

"They said their survival was more important, they could rebuild their house someday, but nobody could buy back their lives once they were dead. So, I might be uncooperative and unpatriotic, but I would escape without fighting back if my house was fire-bombed."

"How is this style!" Yamazaki-san changed his tone and held a mirror to the customer's head.

"Yes, it's perfect. Thank you. Fifty *sen* isn't it?" the customer said while standing up.

"Yes, inflation's bad, our official price was raised again this month. I feel guilty. No more soap, no more hot water, no more hair tonic, and the price doubled from three months ago," Yamazaki-san said.

The flames were intense. It was not an ordinary fire, but a firestorm or fire tornado

"Don't feel bad. I am lucky I still can get my hair cut, instead of being a half-burned log."

"Did you purify yourself?" the next customer asked Mr. Yamazaki.

"Well, yes and no. We wanted the normal purification process, but we had no hope of finding it. There was no single drop of *sake* anywhere. When I came home from the cleaning up duty, I yelled to my wife, 'Sprinkle salt to purify my body.'

"Do you know what she said? She said that salt was too precious to sprinkle. Our ration had almost run out. After my repeated insistence, she sprinkled a couple of grains of salt on me.

*In the
end, I
didn't feel
anything
anymore*



"I scrubbed myself many times with cold water, but I still felt unclean. I could smell the terrible stink. I could hardly wait for the opening of a public bath. In these days, the public bath opened only twice a week. So, I went to the public bath a half-hour before opening time to get in a clean tub. I was surprised to see almost 20 people had already lined up. Some of them were my colleagues from the fire auxiliary. We stayed nearly an hour in the bath to scrub ourselves with a small scrap of soap, which was our last ration. So, I don't think I smell of dead bodies anymore. Do you smell it?"

"No, no, you don't smell of anything, just a normal barber smell," the man on the chair said.

"I am already 65-years-old, so I shouldn't be around here, according to the authorities. But I have no place to go. My house will be demolished soon due to the new Fire Prevention Zone Creation directive. How about you?"

"Yes, this store has to be closed soon. This entire neighborhood was designated as a demolition zone. We intend to move to the country, *Gunma* Prefecture. My brother is still alive, and he has a small farm there.

"You probably know already. The farm was too small to support all siblings, so I left there 35-years-ago and came to Tokyo. I became a barber after a hard life of apprenticeship and opened this store 27 years ago. I had good luck in this place and made a comfortable living.

"Now I have to abandon this business and to ask my brother to take us back. I am not looking forward to going to the country. I knew how hard country life will be. I am not sure my family can survive there, but we have no other choice.



*I thought
we started
this war to
save us
from our
misery*

"I hope this war will end soon, and we will

be able to come back to Tokyo. If it happens soon, I may be able to open another barbershop. I have no other skills. I was once conscripted as a factory worker, but they dismissed me as unusable. My daughter is still young, *Yashi-chan*, are you in the same grade as my daughter?" He suddenly turned toward me.

"Yes, I am in the seventh grade the same as your daughter *Sadako-chan*."

"See, I have to wait several years more to find a suitable groom for her. Hopefully, they can support us when we get old. We own this shop, but the demolition will destroy us. I know the authorities said they would compensate us, but this inflation will eat us alive. Well, I shouldn't complain. I'm glad I am still alive after I saw the tragedy of the *Honjo-Fukagawa*. I thought we

started this war to save us from our misery. Now we are in a much worse situation than before. I have no hope for the future.

"Did you hear the latest slogan; *A hundred million fireballs?! They started saying that all imperial subjects, all hundred million of us, should take arms and fight to the death until the last man. What kind of nonsense is that!*" Yamazaki-san said.

"Hey, hey, watch your mouth! If the police hear that, they will arrest you as a spy or unpatriotic. I also lost hope of winning this war. First, Guadalcanal! The Army said it was a strategic retreat, but I knew it was a complete defeat. Then the Navy!

"They were quiet, but rumor said they had a big naval battle somewhere in the Pacific and suffered a significant loss. My son is, hopefully still is, a sailor on an aircraft carrier. My wife and I objected to him becoming a sailor, but he went anyway, saying that this was his duty as a royal subject of the emperor, which overrode his filial duty as our son.

"He knew we were unhappy about his choice, so he wrote to us periodically to comfort us. Naturally, he couldn't say too much about his mission because of Navy restrictions. At least we knew he was alive when we received his letters. The last letter we received hinted that he would go to the most significant naval battle, decisive to the war. After the message, we didn't hear anything from him. We also didn't receive anything from the Navy either. So, we hope he is still alive since if he were dead, the Navy would notify us.

"At the same time, we noticed that our situation in the Pacific was rapidly deteriorating, Guadalcanal, Saipan, and now Iwo Jima. This timing roughly coincided with what my son called the 'decisive naval battle'. I guessing the Japanese Navy had been defeated in a fight, even though the authorities haven't made any announcement of it.

"One day, we received a letter from a close friend of my son, who is also a sailor but on another ship. The letter said that my son was still alive, but he was on a special mission and couldn't

communicate directly with us. So, I think my son's aircraft carrier was sunk, but hope he has survived somehow.

Now we are in a much worse situation than before. I have no hope for the future



"However, the authorities didn't want to disclose the defeat, so they shipped out all survivors somewhere under the guise of a special mission. 'Special mission' in the Navy usually means a death warrant. Nobody in the special mission expects to come back alive. Even if they survive the special mission, then they will send the survivors to another special mission until all survivors die out. That's the way they operate. I am hoping now that this war will end soon before my son is killed. Well, I also should watch my mouth rather than warn you. Ha, ha..." the man said.

To be continued

POETRY

For whatever it is worth!



By Jussara Morsani

*An Imagined Letter from
Covid-19 to Humans:*

Stop. Just stop.
It is no longer a request. It is a
mandate.
We will help you.
We will bring the supersonic,
high speed merry-go-round to
a halt
We will stop
the planes
the trains
the schools
the malls
the meetings
the frenetic, furied rush of
illusions and "obligations" that
keep you from hearing our
single and shared beating heart,
the way we breathe together, in unison.
Our obligation is to each other,
As it has always been, even if, even though, you have forgotten.
We will interrupt this broadcast, the endless cacophonous
broadcast of divisions and distractions,
to bring you this long-breaking news:
We are not well.



None of us; all of us are suffering.
Last year, the firestorms that scorched the lungs of the earth
did not give you pause.
Nor the typhoons in Africa, China, Japan.
Nor the fevered climates in Japan and India.
You have not been listening.
It is hard to listen when you are so busy all the time, hustling to
uphold the comforts and conveniences that scaffold your lives.
But the foundation is giving way,
buckling under the weight of your needs and desires.
We will help you.
We will bring the firestorms to your body
We will bring the fever to your body
We will bring the burning, searing, and flooding to your lungs
that you might hear:
We are not well.
Despite what you might think or feel, we are not the enemy.
We are Messenger. We are Ally. We are a balancing force.
We are asking you:
To stop, to be still, to listen;
To move beyond your individual concerns and consider the
concerns of all;
To be with your ignorance, to find your humility, to relinquish
your thinking minds and travel deep into the mind of the heart;
To look up into the sky, streaked with fewer planes, and see it, to
notice its condition: clear, smoky, smoggy, rainy? How much do
you need it to be healthy so that you may also be healthy?
To look at a tree, and see it, to notice its condition: how does its
health contribute to the health of the sky, to the air you need to
be healthy?
To visit a river, and see it, to notice its condition: clear, clean,
murky, polluted? How much do you need it to be healthy so that
you may also be healthy? How does its health contribute to the
health of the tree, who contributes to the health of the sky, so
that you may also be healthy?
Many are afraid now.
Do not demonize your fear, and also, do not let it rule you.
Instead, let it speak to you—in your stillness,

listen for its wisdom.

What might it be telling you about what is at work, at issue, at risk, beyond the threats of personal inconvenience and illness?

As the health of a tree, a river, the sky tells you about quality of your own health, what might the quality of your health tell you about the health of the rivers, the trees, the sky, and all of us who share this planet with you?

Stop.

Notice if you are resisting.

Notice what you are resisting.

Ask why.

Stop. Just stop.

Be still.

Listen.

Ask us what we might teach you about illness and healing, about what might be required so that all may be well.

We will help you, if you listen.



Sara





oath

Jesus died for
somebody's sins
but not mine
melting in a pot of
thieves
wild card up my sleeve
thick heart of stone
my sins my own
I engrave my own palm

Sweet black X
Adam placed no hex on me
I embrace Eve
and take full responsibility
for every pocket I have picked
mean and slick
every Johnny Ace song I've
balled to





long before the
church

made it neat and
right

So Christ

I'm giving you the
good-bye

firing you tonight

I can make my
own light shine

and darkness too is
equally fine

you got strung up for my
brother

but with me I draw the line

you died for somebody's
sins

but not mine

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photos by Robert
Mapplethorpe



aware ones and friends

by bert mautz

Another ordinary saturday
morning in the hood.

Three of them on the walk
across the *cul de sac*.

One is pushing a wheelchair overburdened with bags of all sorts
and colors.

Continue watching as i fasten the seat belt, adjust the a.c., and
start'er up.

Not sure why, but just to get a better look, take the long way
around the *cul de sac*.

Deeply tanned and wrinkled likely from a life
outdoors, she's riding in the chair.

Skin and bone, he's pushing her, sweat
stained hat, same sun burned skin.

The littlest guy was leading the parade.

Tight silver curls down his back to his waist.

Jesus Christ, these folks are homeless. Where were they last
night?





I'm gonna give them some money.

They're walking remarkably fast. Gotta catch up with them before Federal.

Fumbling for my wallet in my shirt pocket, yeah, gonna catch 'um.

Pull over to the walk side of the street. They see me now. Lower the window.

"Good morning," stupid thing to say.

Skinny dude pushing her chair approaches, sees me and my wallet.

"We don't need nuthin. Looky here, got all we need," gesturing the overburdened chair.

She's giving me this big toothless smile. Now they're all smiling.

Pull out a couple twenties, shoving them toward him, arm fully extended.

Now they all see the cash, "Thank you, thank you very much."



"You all be careful," and pull away.



COMEDY CORNER

"THE LUBE ZONE"

A Baby Oil Party

By H. Nietzsche*

Someone, I don't remember who, proposed a fantasy – a particularly wicked fantasy – one that perked up all ears, male and female alike of our special group.



I think it was Mikey who seconded it and in a unanimous chorus of voices the fantasy was passed with undisputed acclaim. We were going to have a baby oil party at the next swingers' club hotel social!

If there were cooler heads amongst the lucky contingent who had invitations, no reluctance was ever recorded and afterwards none was given. It was that kind of successful adult recreation that left everyone with happy and weary grins and sleek and supple epidermis. In simple terms, everything was simultaneously covered and uncovered. The event was the monthly hotel social sponsored by the wonderfully named, *Spirit of '76* adult social club, or, swingers.

I know, I know, swingers have a dismal reputation and have been characterized as shallow, over-aged, over-weight "beautiful people wanna-bees". Often, that was the case but there was also, at least during the golden era of the late 70's and early 80's, those "beautiful people" who not only had discarded the heavily religious prohibitions against open sexuality and the enjoyment thereof, but did exist, were attractive and we did believe that by enjoying sexual freedom we were indeed patriotic!

It was difficult deciding whether to eat 'em or to fuck 'em

Besides the patriotism however, there were restrictions to participation and to be invited to a party of this magnitude, it was necessary to have passed what could be called an impromptu audition. When new couples showed up at the monthly socials they were often intimidated by the amount of people and the variety available if they so wished to partake, not unlike a buffet of succulent pastries and spicy charcuteries all beckoning to taste and interconnect with. It was difficult deciding whether to eat 'em or to fuck 'em ... if I'm not being too vulgar.



... if I'm not being too vulgar

The sights and sounds of these gatherings were shocking to some people and almost overwhelming for the newbies. The noise of the band, the racket of the people talking, laughing and flirting; the amount of undress and allure, the dirty dancing, so much sexuality; where to look first, how to keep from mouth-gaping stares, how to keep from running away and well,

how to keep from looking like the proverbial kid drooling in the candy store. Eat it or fuck it, indeed.

There were fears like “how can I measure up?” from both sides of a relationship. Novice women often had thoughts of envy at how easy the veteran swinging ladies had overcome their indoctrinated inhibitions and flaunted their sultry sexiness without guilt. As attractive the scene appeared to be, it was not easy to relax enough to appreciate the promise of unfettered hedonism they had dreamed about possessing.

For this particular group of swingers, there was a designated couple who liked their swinging leisurely and comfortable. “Only go as fast as the slowest person” was their motto. This was the couple who newbies were directed to and lovingly broken in by, before being introduced to the rest of the group. Conversely, if a couple were not acceptable, that is, did not adhere to satisfactory levels of hygiene, manners and enthusiasm, this was the couple to discreetly dissuade them from continuing their escapade into the erotic world of selective promiscuity until they were ready ... if ever.



There were nearly two dozen lucky people ... who'd been invited to join in the baby oil debauchery

That couple was Fonda and – yours truly – Herman, the Nietzches. We were the gatekeepers – in a sense – of our little group of hedonistic sybarites. It was our audition a couple had to pass although we were more like the gentle horse-whisperers

who didn't so much break-in a couple as attenuate them to prepare for the joys that were available if the couple were willing to trust us and others.

Tonight, there were nearly two dozen lucky people (mostly committed couples and including a single male or two) who'd been invited to join in the baby oil debauchery. Yes, it was to be an orgy for all time and only a few people reluctantly declined the temptation much to their dismay.

We had rented a two-bedroom suite with the large bedroom set aside for the orgy. The twin beds had been pushed apart and the mattresses set on the floor between the bedsteads and box springs and took up most of the room leaving only a narrow walkway around the edges. An enormous black plastic drop covering had been spread over the disassembled beds and tucked to hold any excess lubricant from spreading over the carpeting. It looked very much like a bowl.

Nakedness reigned and Herman along with his grinning buddy, Jo-Jo, were armed with a case of a dozen extra-large bottles of delightfully warm Johnson & Johnson baby oil. As each couple entered the "lube zone" they were anointed, not unlike how it was in a biblical passage, on their heads, arms, legs, butts, tits and bellies. Herman and Jo-Jo were harmonizing Chubby Checker's "come on baby, let's do the twist." And with a bottle in each hand, the smirking pair dutifully soaked a line of willing accomplices with an encouraging refrain of, "around and around and an up and down we go again."

The now consecrated associates were encouraged to start spreading the oil across their skins and group hugs became slick





and slippery while bodies shimmered in the soft lighting that enhanced even the most stretched marked belly and other imperfections.

Participants were strongly advised to be careful with their balance and their steps and most simply started slickly crawling over and around the other gleaming bodies giggling in the discovery of how much fun there was to have. Like a bowl of viscous liquid, there was a tendency to spin and churn and every so often a couple or group might unfortunately find

themselves nudged off the “lube zone” and have to literally, dive back in.

The heat increased incrementally as more and more people desperately searched for traction. There was a heaving and a swirling, like currents searching for the embrocated path of least resistance. A penis here, a titty there, sometimes just settling into a greasy crease that promised intimate satisfaction. Eddies formed in the mass of bodies and sex became very innovative. It appeared three couples had joined together not only by the genitals, but arms hooked legs and vice versa at the elbows and knees and they screwed in circles like a crab making doughnuts.

Eddies formed in the mass of bodies and sex became very innovative

Aversion to same sex touching was discarded and a male-female-male trio figured out sex would be possible in a zero-gravity environment as the males gripped each other’s forearms



and the female between them experienced a delightfully wicked dual penetration made so much more comfortable by the abundance of lubricity.

Shrieks of pleasure, groans of release and oaths to known and unknown gods blended in sharp contrasts with the pleasant background music and the orgasmic waves broke across the room in splashing ecstasy.

*Our bodies melded into quivering
and engorged erogenous zones
that responded to the oily
lubrication like well-designed
racing engines*

My partner, I believe her name was Shirley, and I had overcome the slippery surface by accomplishing a neat reverse cowgirl when we started to slip perilously close to the edge of the box springs and dangerously toward the bodies screwing on the mattresses below us. It was a helpless feeling as I slid closer and closer to the conjoined crotches of sweet Emily and big John, the black guy. It may not be appropriate, but sweet Emily was the wife of a guy I was a classmate with when we had gone to kindergarten and first grade at a local Lutheran grade school. Small world. However, at this rate of sliding I was going to get a closer gynecological examination than I had been prepared for and as we went over the edge, Shirley and I completed a clever tuck and roll, almost like tandem divers crow hopping off the high board and we both arrived face to face at the juncture of the glorious image of the rampant cock being consumed by the juicy

pussy. We agreed, the stark beauty of the vision of black and white was erotically more vivid than we had ever imagined!

I realize that it sounds like I am bragging and the only shame I have is that my description can barely approach the combinations and the exquisite pleasures as our bodies melded into quivering and engorged erogenous zones that responded to the oily lubrication like well-designed racing engines. Up down, in out, a soulful tongue kiss, orally or vaginally, sometime simultaneously, dirty delicious wet dreams but a conscious reality that could only be shared with, as confessions in letters to be opened only in the event of death.

Exhausted participants would swim to the edges and seek assistance in standing up. A generous number of towels had been



provided and the satiated colleagues would catch their breath on the sidelines. Often the salacious view would encourage them to cast away any hesitancy and they would plunge back into the pile for another dip into the lube zone.

Reluctantly it was implied I had to redact the next few paragraphs of description of the orgy at this point in the narrative if I wanted to keep my

balls intact and I really can't communicate this scene in any more detail – it would sound redundant to some and immodestly conceited to others. You must rely on your own active minds to imagine all the possible combinations that were attempted, failed and achieved. I will say that the party lasted long into the night before the drop cloth was rolled up and the excess oil, spit, Bartholin secretions and ejaculated semen was left to drain into the bathtub. Personally, I felt it was only right to leave a healthy tip for the staff who had to clean up our residues. I do not believe the pillowcases and bed sheets were usable again.

It was late in the morning when we all checked out of the hotel and met for our traditional after-orgy Sunday breakfast at a Shoney's buffet full of after-church believers. Our skins felt so soft and smooth, matching the sheen of our hair. We marched, some of us more than a little gingerly and slightly bowl-legged, to our reserved table. In other words, we looked like we had fucked all night long. In our conditions, we really didn't pay much attention to the gawking looks and stares from the aghast diners so fresh from their morning benedictions.

Our skins felt so soft and smooth, matching the sheen of our hair

Our appetites however were ravenous, and we filled our plates with scrambled eggs, cut fruit and bacon, lots and lots of bacon. We refused to restrict our conversations and one waitress was always hovering close by to make sure our coffee cups were filled so she could eavesdrop on some scandalous detail of the previous evening. She was very cute, and it was tempting to ask if she'd like to take a night off and attend our next get together. I'd give her an audition to remember!

Outside we shamelessly said our goodbyes with tight hugs and soulful kisses before parting ways. The after-church believers lining the windows were totally horrified and we, as libertine men and scarlet women, jaded as we had become, were fine with that.



As Fonda and I watched our friends depart after our wonderful experience, I was reminded of John Dryden's translation of an appropriate ancient ode by the Roman lyric poet Horace:

*"Happy the man, and happy he alone,
He who can call today his own:
He who, secure within, can say,
Tomorrow do thy worst, for I have lived today."*

*aka Virgil Thorp



Gifts from God to a man who doesn't drink



God: Hello Donnie.

Donald Trump: Who is this?

G: It's me, God.

DT: Why didn't you send a text?

G: It was important. And I knew your thumbs would be too busy to read.

DT: Well, I am busy campaigning. What do you want?

G: Just check to see if you REALLY believe in me.

DT: I said so in my campaign speech, didn't I?

G: Mm. Hmm. Do you go to church?

DT: Of course. Don't you see the pictures? I'm photographed going to church very often.

G: And do you pray?

DT: I gotta tell you God. When I pray, I expect something, a gift or something. And I expect it even if I don't pray.

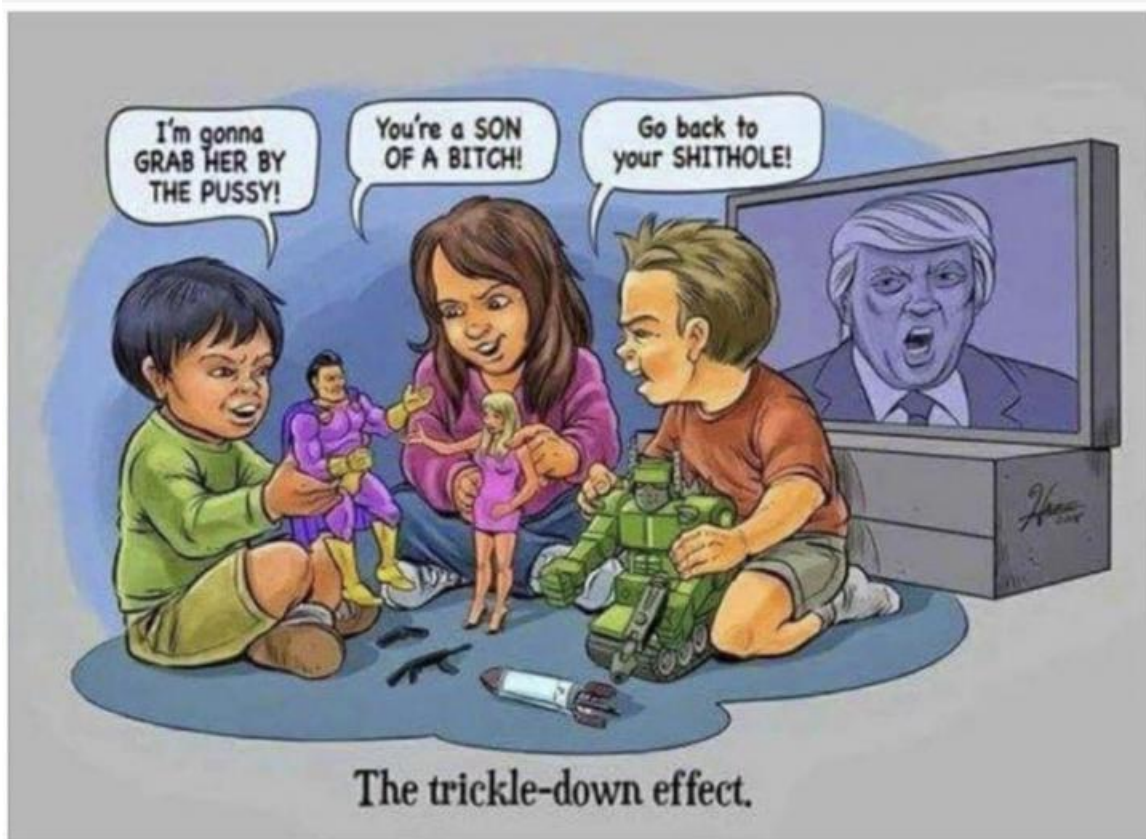
G: I see. Well then Donnie. I'm going to send you a little gift.

*DT: Wow!
Terrific. I'll bet
it's beautiful,
the best gift
ever. What is it?*

*G: It's called
Covid-19. But
you can call it
Corona for
short.*

*DT: Crap!
Another gift I
can't use.*

(Provided by Gale Baker)



INTERNET IDYLLS

Jesus is going to kill us all

I just glanced at the front page of deadstate.org, and then I had to close the window before the rage overwhelmed me.



deadstate.org

We're doomed. As long as Christians, and especially evangelical fanatics, have any influence at all in this country, they're going to destroy us.

From Pharyngula 04 03 2020

There's only 1 rule in learning English.
1.) Their our know rules.



[driftglass](#)

[@Mr_Electrico](#)

[19h](#)

Reminder: It has been 183 weeks since

[@realDonaldTrump](#) promised, "You're going to have such great health care, at a tiny fraction of the cost -- and it's going to be so easy."

4

Breaking: FCC Suspends Rules Against Swearing on the Public Airwaves for the Duration of the Pandemic. "During this time of crisis, Americans need all the relief they can get whether that relief comes in the form of a \$2T stimulus package, or the freedom to call Donald Trump..."

10:24 AM · Apr 1, 2020 · [Twitter Web App](#)

[driftglass Retweeted](#)

[Joe Biden](#)



[@JoeBiden](#) Patients need ventilators. Nurses need equipment. And Donald Trump is attacking people who dare to do something about it. I thank God every day for people like [@GovWhitmer](#), who are doing the

work he won't.

Quote Tweet



Governor Gretchen Whitmer

[@GovWhitmer](#)

· Mar 26

Hi, my name is Gretchen Whitmer, and that governor is me

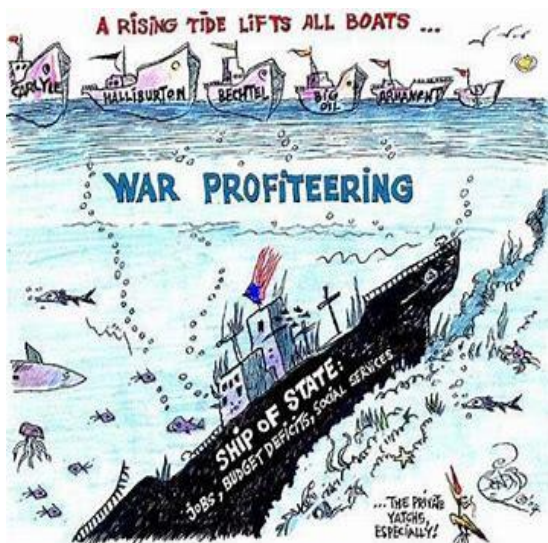


I've asked repeatedly and respectfully for help. We need it. No more political attacks, just PPEs, ventilators, N95 masks, test kits. You said you stand with Michigan — prove it. [twitter.com/ddale8/status/.....](#)

Show this thread

What The Hell?

April 02, 2020 By: Juanita Jean Herownself



Would somebody please tell me how this is different from war profiteering?

By the end of the day, roughly 280 million masks from warehouses around the U.S. had been purchased by foreign buyers and were earmarked to leave the country, according to the broker — and that was in *one day*.

Do you think Harry Truman, FDR, or even Elizabeth Warren (yeah, I'm bitter) would put up with this kind of crap? Nationalize the damn medical supply companies and let them sue me later. From jail. They can sue me from jail for profiteering.

The whole article is an interesting read and will get your blood to boiling.

Thanks to Art for the heads up.

I am one of those odd folk who watch the morning news on one of the basic stations, i.e. NBC, CBS or usually ABC instead of Cable or an I-phone with Facebook, Twitter, etc. [all which I do not use]

Sometimes I turn the sound off because I prefer to read the banners.

So this morning, I got my first laugh of the day reading the banner on Good Morning America, when I saw this interesting item [edited for clarification].

"Pres. Rump blames Stock Market etc....."

And I laughed and laughed and laughed at the accuracy of the morning news.

Gale Baker email

AT&T

6:09 PM

100%



bob timmerman

@SquatloBob

Someone asked why I bother to bash Trump on social media, since those who love him are never going to be swayed by anything I say. This sums it up perfectly.

A reporter once asked A.J. Muste, a Dutch-born American clergyman and pacifist who protested against the Vietnam War, "Do you really think you are going to change the policies of this country by standing out here alone at night in front of the White House with a candle?"

Muste replied softly, "Oh I don't do this to change the country. I do this so the country won't change me."



Two blondes were sunning themselves on a California beach. One looks up in the sky and asks the other, "Which do you think is further away, the Moon, or Florida?" "Florida" her friend responds. "Why?" she asks. "Duuhh - you can't see Florida."

@ProLeftPodcast



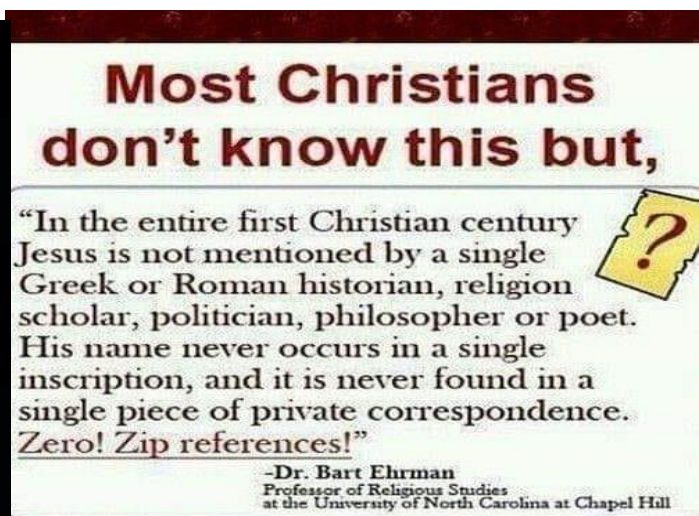
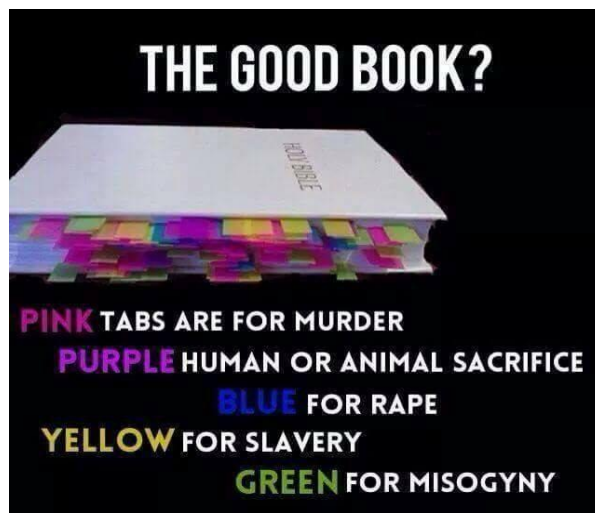
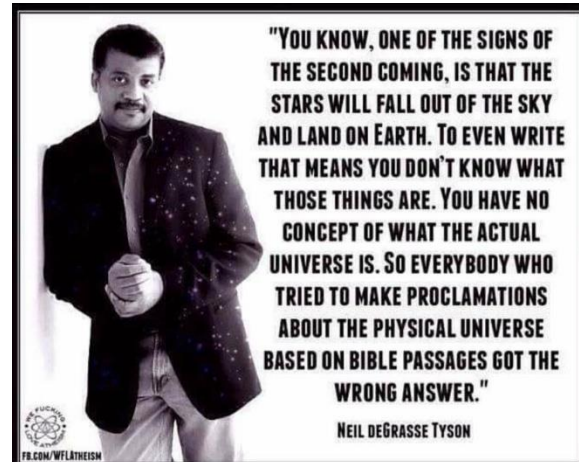
driftglass

@Mr_Electrico I would probably watch a show in which the Mnuchin family is forced to get by on \$1,200 for 10 weeks. I would *definitely* watching it if it was called "Donner Party: The Home Game".

—A priest, a minister and a rabbi are discussing when life begins. The priest says, "It begins at conception."

The minister says, "Life begins at 24 weeks gestation."

The rabbi says, "You are both wrong, Life begins when the kids move out of the house and the dog dies."



Bluegal · I wrote the piece linked in the SUMMER of 2016, months before Trump was elected. Because yep, husband and I knew TV Pundit Republicans would try to escape the stain of Donald Trump and his racist band of base voters. It's what they do.
Quote Tweet



driftglass@Mr_Electrico · Apr 15

The word has clearly gone forth on the set of #MorningJoe that "Thou Shall Not Refer To The Shithead Republicans Who Elected Donald Trump as 'Republicans'". It's all "Trumpers" and "Trumpists". Which is exactly what we warned you would happen.

- PZ Myers
- 16 April 2020
- Race, Society, and Social Justice

Do these people know pro wrestling is fake?

My confidence in our government declines apace. Florida governor **Ron DeSantis** thinks **pro wrestling is an “essential business”** and has announced that they can continue to put on shows during this lockdown.

Now **Trump** has taken on **Vince McMahon** as a financial advisor.

We're doomed.

The zombies have finally risen

They're pounding on the walls and windows, trying to get in! Don't let them!



That was the scene in Ohio, where people in MAGA hats and waving US and Confederate flags were protesting the restrictions that are supposed to save their lives. They were also shrieking in Michigan over the discomfiture of isolation.

These people were representative.

He's blubbering because he *needs his lawn fertilizer*. *She needs to get her roots done*. *Jesus*.

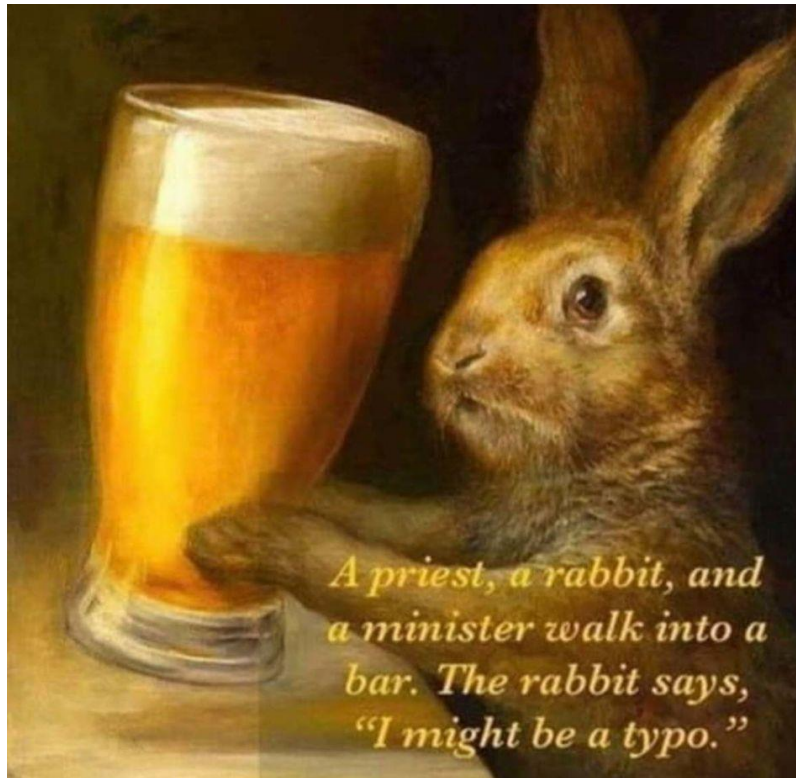
They've got middle-class suburbanite syndrome real bad. I've seen this . It's a kind of virtue signaling — you have to keep your lawn green and uniform and well-tended, or the neighbors will look down on you. He's terrified that he might lose the most superficial, trivial form of status. These are complacent, pathetic people who are not prepared to sacrifice anything for their community.

Zombies, every one.

message history theme

I want to undress you, vulgarize you a bit.

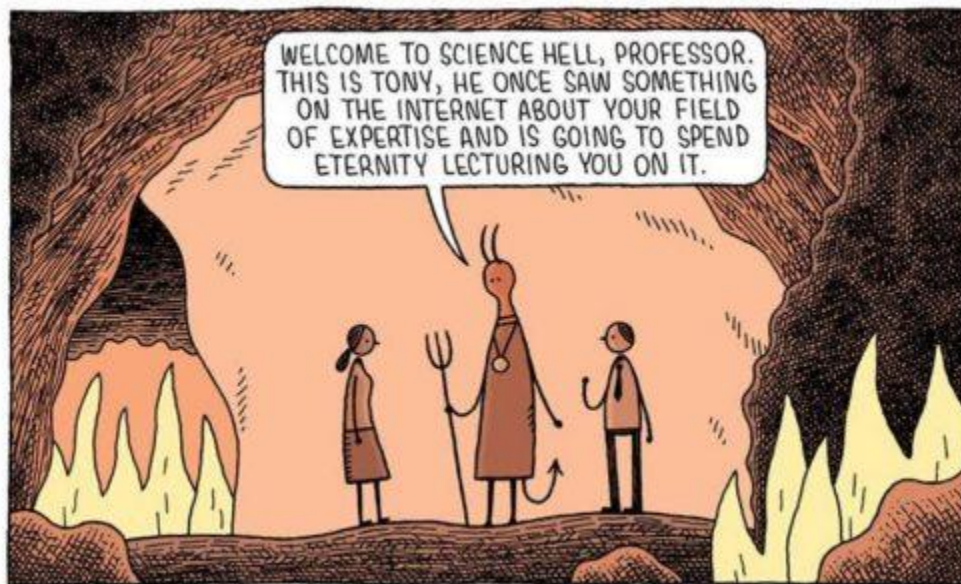
— Henry Miller, *A Literate Passion: Letters of Anais Nin & Henry Miller, 1932-1953* (via [louveseul](#))



*A priest, a rabbit, and
a minister walk into a
bar. The rabbit says,
"I might be a typo."*

Drink water
Declutter your mind and home
Call family and friends
Don't touch your face
Stay moisturized
Read more books
Wash your hands
Only buy what you need
Help others
Take naps
Cook
Meditate
Masturbate
Love yourself

BLESSED ARE THE WEIRD
AND MISFITS: THE ARTISTS,
WITERS AND MUSICIANS,
THE DREAMERS AND IMAGINERS,
FOR THEY LET US SEE THE
WORLD DIFFERENTLY.



Tom Gauld

Postscript:

The Ten Commitments



This life, in this world, is our central defining focus. Each one of us is responsible for the collective welfare of humanity, other beings, and the resources of our shared planet. We value freedom, reason, and tolerance, and it is our responsibility to develop this heritage for ensuing generations. The Ten Commitments represents our shared humanistic values and principles that promote a democratic world in which every individual's worth and dignity is respected, nurtured, and supported, and where human freedom and ethical responsibility are natural aspirations for everyone.

Altruism

“I will help others in need without hoping for rewards.”

Altruism is the selfless concern for the welfare of other living beings without expectation of reward, recognition, or return. The collective welfare of our communities and society depends on the welfare of each individual person. We should always seek to alleviate the suffering and hardships of others with compassionate action. By caring for others around us and lifting each other up, we reinforce healthy connections and contribute to the betterment of our community, society, and the world.

Critical Thinking

“I will practice good judgement by asking questions and thinking for myself.”

As we are each bombarded with a constant stream of information, it can become challenging to decide what is accurate and true. Thinking critically allows us to make sense of all this information and reason our way to good judgments and effective solutions to the problems we face while rigorously avoiding pitfalls like rationalization, conformity, and stereotyping. This process forms the basis of the scientific method, which opens the door for new discoveries through hypothesizing and experimenting. Critical thinking is a skill that requires continued attention, practice, and reflection. Exercising our minds to build these skills enables us to challenge biases in ourselves and in others, paving the way for a fair, open-minded, and autonomous perspective that fosters a multicultural worldview.

Empathy

“I will consider other people’s thoughts, feelings, and experiences.”

Empathy means entering imaginatively into another’s situation in an attempt to understand their experience as though we are experiencing it ourselves. Empathy requires us to step outside of our own perspective to consider someone else’s thoughts, feelings, or circumstance from that person’s point of view. In many ways, empathy is the first step to ethical behavior as it allows us to respond

compassionately to the suffering of others and exercise good judgement when our actions may affect someone else. Understanding another's perspective is not only critical to building better relationships, but also makes us better citizens in our local and global communities. Empathy promotes tolerance, consideration, and compassion amongst us all.

Environmentalism

“I will take care of the Earth and the life on it.”

Regardless of our individual identities, we all share the same home: planet Earth. Just as we depend on the planet to sustain us with its precious resources, this planet's ecosystems depend on us to be good stewards and take responsibility for the impact human activity has on our shared planet. Disregard for the large-scale impacts humans have on our environment has caused extensive harm to earth's ecosystems. Despite this, humanity is also capable of positive environmental change that values the interdependence of all life on this planet. Each of us must acknowledge our collective and individual mistakes, repair past damages, and purposefully work toward cultivating rich, diverse, and resilient ecosystems.

Ethical Development

“I will always focus on becoming a better person.”

The key to understanding ethical development is acknowledging that nobody is perfect or has all the answers. Ethical development is a never-ending process that requires constant reflection and evaluation of our personal choices and the consequences they have on others. Fairness, cooperation, and sharing are among the first moral issues we encounter in our ethical development as human beings and are often embraced intuitively, but each new day carries with it new challenges and new moral dilemmas. We should continually adapt and rebuild our moral frameworks with the goal of becoming ever better human beings.

Global Awareness

“I will be a good neighbor to the people who share the Earth with me and help make the world a better place for everyone.”

We live in a world that is rich in cultural, social, and individual diversity—a world with rapidly increasing interdependence. As a result, events anywhere are more likely to have consequences everywhere. Global awareness broadens our knowledge of cultures and perspectives that are outside of our own experience. A true global awareness includes attention to both current and historical events, and acknowledges how we affect—and how we are affected by—the interconnected social, political, and economic systems in which we reside. The end-goal of global awareness is global citizenship, which recognizes our personal responsibility to foster a healthy and dignified life for everyone in our global community.

Humility

“I will be aware of my strengths and weaknesses and appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of others.”

Humility means displaying modesty about accomplishments, talents, gifts, or importance of self. It acknowledges we humans are fallible and have limitations in what we know and can do. Being humble isn't about having low self-esteem or denigrating oneself. Humility at its core is robust self-awareness—awareness of our strengths and weaknesses, our faults and our merits. Humility involves setting aside personal pride and overcoming our egos to embrace gratitude for what we have and appreciate others for who they are. In being humble, we recognize our own value in relation to others; inherently, we are neither better nor worse than anyone else.

Peace and Social Justice

“I will help people solve problems and handle disagreements in ways that are fair for everyone.”

True peace involves an intense commitment to social justice and affirms the human rights and personal autonomy of all people. Any level of injustice against groups or individuals signifies existing conflict, even if the conflict isn't immediate or obvious. We attain peace only by consistently responding to injustice through

thoughtful conflict resolution that aims to repair harms and ensure a fair and equitable society moving forward. This kind of conflict resolution is known as restorative justice. In order to achieve a just, peaceful society, we all must take claims of injustice seriously and ensure that those who are impacted most by rights-violations determine the best course forward.

Responsibility

“I will be a good person—even when no one is looking—and own the consequences of my actions.”

Every day, each of us makes choices. These choices, large and small, all have consequences—for ourselves and for the world around us. Moral responsibility involves taking conscious ownership of one’s intentions and actions, and being accountable for the resulting consequences. Although we all live in a society with various cultural values, expectations, codes of conduct, and social mores, ultimately, we all decide for ourselves what is right and wrong. Being a responsible person involves steadfast attention to what is right and willfully bearing the blame or praise for our own actions.

Service and Participation

“I will help my community in ways that let me get to know the people I’m helping.”

Service and participation means putting values into action in ways that positively impact our communities and society as a whole. It fosters helping others, increasing social awareness, enhancing accountability, and many attributes of the other nine commitments. Engaging in service doesn’t just make the recipients better off, but those who serve can develop new skills, experiences, and personal satisfaction that all promote personal growth. We must all recognize that we are members of a group and engaging in service to benefit the group and the other individuals in it makes us all better off.

From The American Humanist Association, Center for Education website at https://americanhumanistcenterforeducation.org/?page_id=14747

**...if you get a link called
'free porn' don't opin it.
It is a virus wich
deactivates your
spelcheck and fcuks up
you riting. I also
receibed it but lukily I
don't uatch porn so I
dint opin it. Plaese warn
yu frends. Wanks.**

