

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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September/October 2020

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

INTRODUCTION

Denouement

(or, "person, woman, man, camera, tv?")

Fans of theatrical French Farces always anticipated the denouement, the surprising revelation at the end of each play. We are like those audiences as we approach this November 3 (remember, 'Flush the Turd on November 3rd'), the national

election where it will be revealed whether we have resolution or a continuation of eternal Trumpian hell.

Four years ago, I was in total disbelief at the result of uninformed voters electing a repulsive snob for the leader of our country, so I cannot in good faith think there will be anything different this year. I do know, that as long as we have events like Sturgis, where 250,000 bikers gather in a conjunction of drunkenness and social interaction (i.e. fucking) in the middle of a pandemic, there is a good chance the absurdities will continue. What would Moliere make of it? It is a human comedy that we must inhabit with the foolish and the damned while avoiding the syphilitic.

I do not offer any idea of an ending, but I will guarantee lots of drama and lots of irony along with some outright, hearty guffaws. We do know that some people, who are particularly orange in hue, have a wonderful recipe for failure. The denouement could be spectacular! And, as the body count escalates, I am not confident I can take anymore greatness of America again.



Meanwhile, we Aware Ones continue to adapt, like the good Darwinists we are, to our changing environments. This issue of our journal shows we have plenty to say about where we are and

what we will do and we say it so well. This is – in my humble estimation – the finest group of contributions I’ve had the honor to edit and layout (and I thought last issue was great, too!). Thank you everyone.

Please enjoy this little voice we create and share with others if you deem fit.

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>.

If and when social distancing is rescinded, you are also welcome to join our table at Importico's Bakery, 555 S. Colorado Ave., Stuart, (currently on Covid hiatus) 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 interesting contributions are welcomed. Everyone is welcome to join us on the Sunday 11 am Zoom meeting.

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

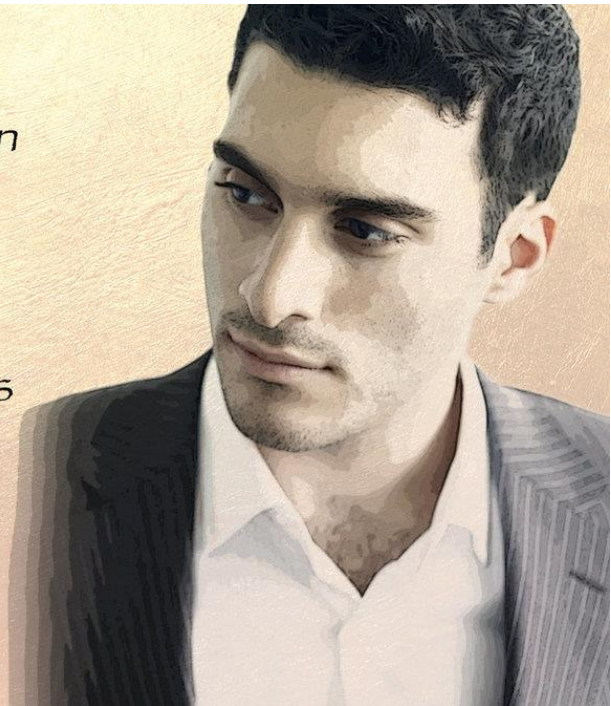
AOTC MEMBERS

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
Gale Baker	Linda Webb
Bert Mautz	Betty Tewksbury
David Dorenzo	Gil Guadia

"When people say '*The Golden Age of Islam*' I try to correct them. I say it was the Golden Age of Arabs, not of Islam, because the Arabian scientists were scientists in spite of Islam, not because of Islam."

– Armin Navabi

@AmericanDreaming
Deviantart.com/AmericanDreaming



MEETINGS & EVENTS

Meetings

Sunday Coffee – Still in limbo.

Reschedule TBA Stuart, 9:30

amish, outside when weather is agreeable and the virus transmutations allow. Or, when the bridge is fixed.

TC Secular Writers – In limbo. Reschedule TBA Every other Thursday,

Jensen's House of Brews, 6:30 pm; August TBA, September TBA etc.

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



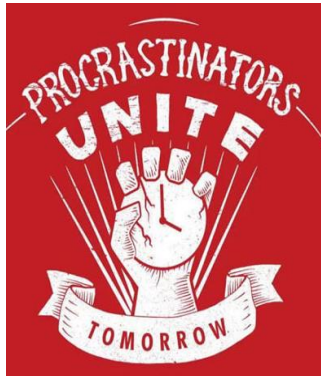
Events

Sept. 2 – VJ-Day. WWII ends with Japanese unconditional surrender.

Sept. 5 – Freddie Mercury (tn. Farrokh Balsara) b. 1946 – Nov. 24, 1991. Lead vocalist for the operatic rock band, *Queen*. "Fat Bottom Girls, They Make the Rockin' World Go Round."



Be Late For Something Day. Procrastinate going to appointments.



Sept. 6 – Fight Procrastination Day. 400th anniversary of Pilgrims sailing from England to Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts, 1620.

Sept. 7 – Labor Day.

Sept. 11 – 9-11 Remembrance Day. D.H. Lawrence b. 1885.



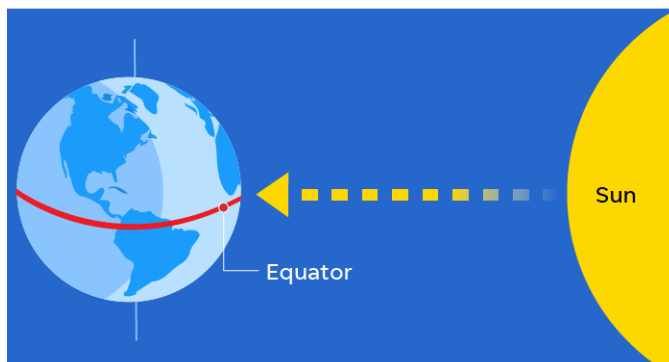
Sept. 13 – Defy Superstition Day. Avoid walking under ladders by not going to church.

Sept. 18 – Rosh Hashanah. Jewish New Year. Moscow destroyed by fire, 1812. Napoleon's *La Grande Armee* starves.

Sept. 19 – National Talk Like a Pirate Day. "Harrrrr Aaarrrrrggggghhh."

Facts about the Fall equinox

On Saturday, the center of the sun will be directly over the equator at **9:54 p.m.** EDT, marking the **fall equinox**. In the Northern Hemisphere, the sun will continue to get lower in the sky and days will become shorter until the winter solstice on Dec. 21.



Sept. 22 – Fall Equinox.

Sept. 28 – William the Conqueror invaded England, 1066.

October – National Pharmacist Month. Hug your dealer today.

Oct. 1 – Homemade Cookie Day and/or World Vegetarian Day. Cookies are not made of meat, pig out.

Oct. 4 – Russia launched Sputnik 1, 1957. Beginning of the “Space Race”.

Oct. 7 – AOTC Journal 5-6 deadline.

Oct. 8 – National Poetry Day. Slouch toward Bethlehem with W.B. Yeats. Don Larson of the New York Yankees pitched the first perfect game in the World Series, 1956.



Oct. 16 – Noah Webster born 1758. National Dictionary Day.

Oct. 19 – Thomas Edison demonstrated the electric light, 1879, after purchasing patent from Canadian inventors, Henry Woodward and Matthew Evans.

Oct. 24 – Make a Difference Day. Neighbors helping neighbors. 1929, Black Thursday worst stock market crash ushered in Great Depression.

Oct. 31 – Halloween.

Nov. 3 – Election day. “Flush the Turd, November 3rd.”



Thoughts from Daily Ingersoll



To Paine, Jefferson, and Franklin, are we indebted, more than to all others, for a human government, and for a Constitution in which no God is recognized superior to the legally expressed will of the people.

Robert Green Ingersoll – “Individuality” (1873)

Passings – **167,012+ Americans** from Covid-19 as of August 12, 2020, 1:49pm est.

Mary Kay Letourneau (Jan. 30, 1962 – July 6, 2020) the Seattle teacher who was convicted in 1997 of raping a 13-year-old student she later married, died of cancer. She was 58.



Rep. John Lewis, Ga. (Feb 21, 1940 - Jul 17, 2020) Freedom Rider, Civil Rights activist in the turbulent 60's and 70's, Rep. Lewis was 80 and had



fought pancreatic cancer for the past several months. Lewis said, "Speak up, speak out, get in the way. Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America."

We are made in the image of God, and then there is John Lewis. — Joe Biden

Charles P. Pierce -- He was the bravest man I ever met. Rest in peace, John Lewis. It's up to the rest of us to get all the way across that bridge.

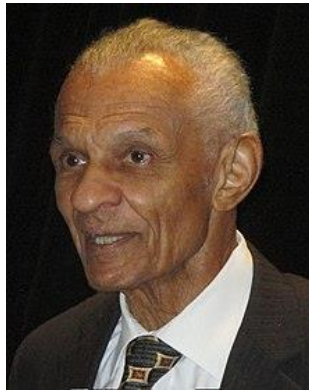


Tess Martin of Melbourne, Florida concluded a testimonial editorial on John Lewis, "John Lewis was a remarkable man who left this world infinitely better than he found it."

"My philosophy is very simple: When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to stand up and just say something. You have to do something. I got into good trouble, necessary trouble. Even today, I tell people, 'We need to get in good trouble.'" — John Robert Lewis.



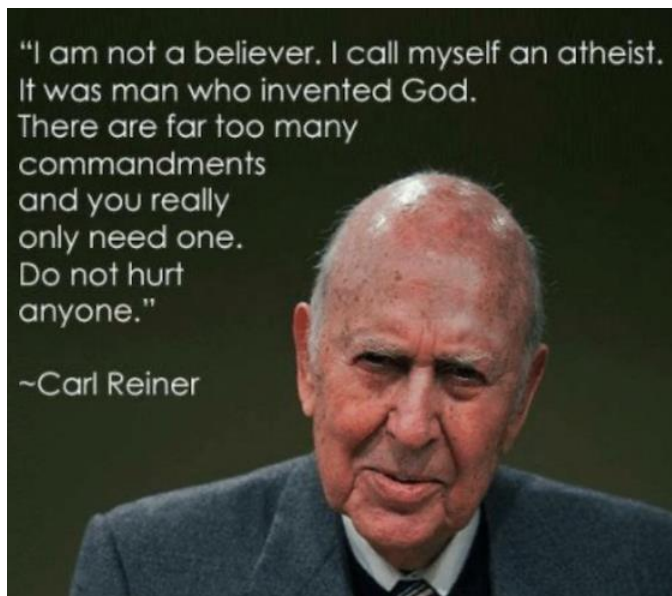
Cordy Tindell Vivian (July 30, 1924 – July 17, 2020) was an American minister, author, and close friend and lieutenant of **Martin Luther King Jr.** during the **Civil Rights Movement**. Vivian resided in **Atlanta, Georgia**, and founded the C.T. Vivian Leadership Institute, Inc.



Ava Duvernay.

Jul 18

For those of us who mourn John Lewis today, he would also want you to remember his friend Reverend C.T. Vivian. A fellow lion for justice who journeyed home to glory just hours before the Congressman. Together again now.



Carl Reiner (March 20, 1922 – June 29, 2020) legendary American comic actor, a director, producer and recording artist. Reiner won nine Emmy Awards, three as an actor, four as a writer and two as a producer. He also won a Grammy Award for his "2,000-Year-Old Man" album, based on his comedy routine with Mel Brooks



Olivia de Havilland – (July 01, 1916 – July 26, 2020) One of the leading actors of her time (1935 to 1988), Dame Olivia Mary de Havilland appeared in over 49 feature films with other stars from Errol Flynn to Bette Davis. She was one of the last surviving stars of the Classical Hollywood cinema.

Dubious Achievements

Darwin Oops Award – RIP

“Mad” Mike Hughes attempting to prove the planet is flat in his steam-powered rocket. Too bad the parachute jettisoned on launch and Hughes augured in before he reached optimum altitude to validate his ‘flat earth’ theory.



Racists of the Month – Ft. Pierce, Fl. SEAL Museum. Navy SEAL Museum used a



Navy SEALs Used “Kaepernick Stand-In” For K-9 Demo

© August 3, 2020 ■ Military, Racism

Maersk Alabama, as a Halloween pumpkin (along with the sniper bullet holes that killed three of the Somali pirates holding Captain Richard Phillips hostage). The desecrated boat was displayed outside the building, next to Highway A1A for several weeks. The hateful decorator was never identified.



used a Kaepernick Stand-in for a K-9 demonstration continuing questionable custom of callous and disrespectful behavior with displays and exhibits since someone associated with the museum decorated the orange lifeboat from the hijacked container ship,

Courageous Reply

Sports Quote of the Week

“When civility leads to death, revolting is the only logical reaction. The cries for peace will rain down, and when they do, they will land on deaf ears, because your violence has brought this resistance. We have the right to fight back!” ~**Colin Kaepernick**



Local Heroes Clean Atheist Adopted Highway

Ray and Eddie,

Would you be willing to take on the cleanup of Prima Vista like you did last December? No rush, anytime within the next two weeks. Let me know. We miss you guys.

Thanks,

Bob



On Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 3:19 PM Ray Duryea <rayduryeaed2@gmail.com> wrote:

Hey Bob: Miss you and our fellow A group. Yes, we can do the cleanup on Prima Vista. Looking forward to the day when we can all meet again. Take care, Ray and Eddie.

On Thu, Jul 2, 2020 at 4:52 PM Robert Haskins <bobhaskins37@gmail.com> wrote:

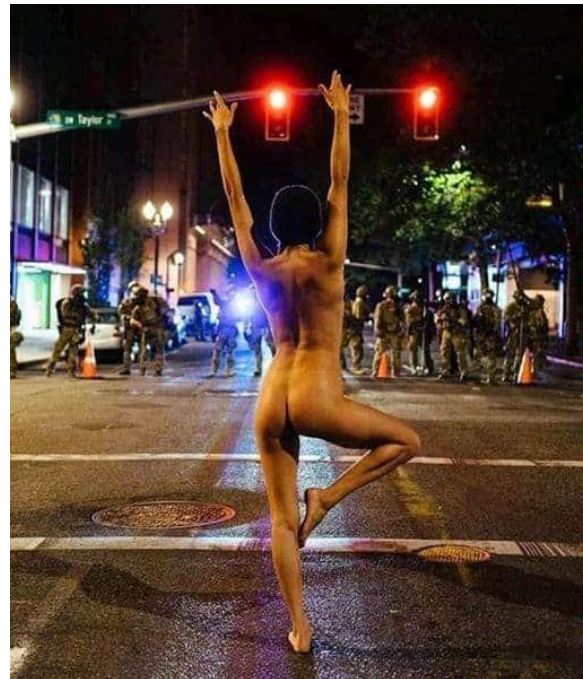
Great, thanks!

"A long memory is the most radical idea in this country" - Utah Phillips



Heroine The anonymous naked lady who faced down A.G. Bill Barr's Gestapo during the Portland, Oregon BLM demonstrations. Her yoga poses utterly disarmed the fascistic horde and made them retreat – clutching their manhoods? – leaving the street to the demonstrators.

Heroes the Moms and Dads with leaf blowers of Portland who stood between the demonstrators and the federal Gestapo and blew the tear gas away.





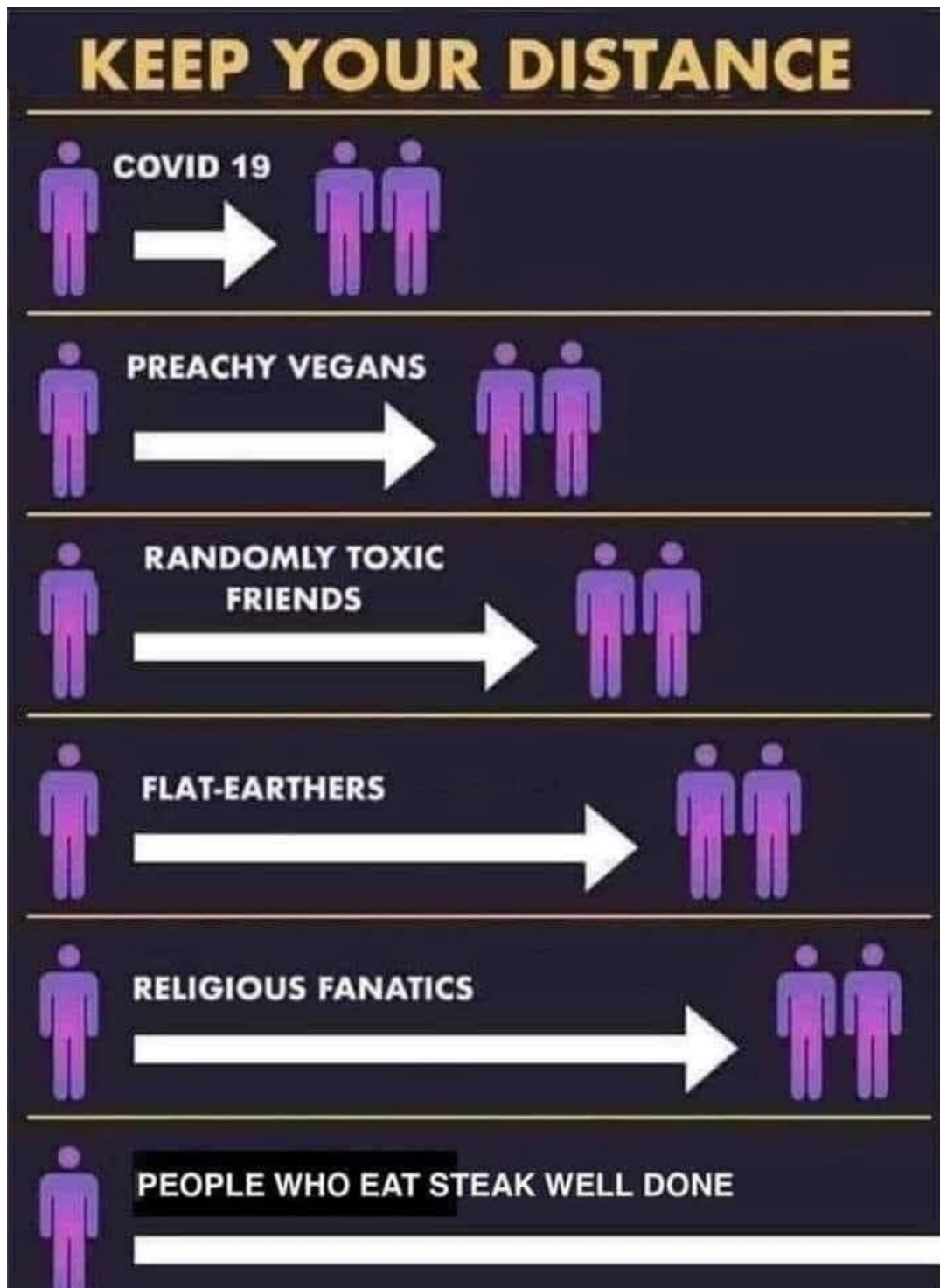
Secular Quotable

"Everything I do is somehow rooted in humanity. It's always about people; it's always about ego. It's always about desperation. It's quite existential.

You know, 'Am I leading a good life?' That might be because I'm an atheist, and I think this is all we've got, so you better be nice. And have fun."

~ Ricky Gervais





COMMENTARY



Heaven, Paradise, and Utopia

By Yashi Nozawa

We are in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, and I am semi-isolated from the rest of the world. In addition to the pandemic, I have a personal health issue that prevents me from going out. Like many other people, I wanted to take full advantage of this new environment and decided to write about the future of our society. NASA people used to say, "Think Big." I never did anything significant. This time might be the last chance for me to accomplish something worthwhile. As a personal project, I accepted NASA's suggestion and decided to write a blueprint of an ideal human society which we could build for the next one thousand years. It is not a prediction like many futurists and technologists make, but my idea is a goal which we might like to achieve. It is an idealistic human society in which every constituent is happy, and everybody lives in harmony. The first job of this project is to assign a proper name to the community.

What shall I call such a society? There are three synonyms to describe such an organization or community: Heaven, Paradise,

and Utopia. These three words describe a desirable place to live,



but there is a subtle difference among them. Heaven and Paradise are associated with religions. For instance, the word "Heaven" appears 582 times in the Bible. The distribution of the word is divided almost half and a half between the Old Testament (55 %) and The New Testament (45 %). According to James Strong, Heaven was created by God to declare God's glory, and righteousness and also to reveal God's wisdom. Heaven is the place of everlasting bliss and inhabited by God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, Angels, and Just men. In Heaven, Joy, Rest, Peace, Righteousness, Service, Reward, and Glory are abundant, but marriage, death, Flesh and Blood, imperishable, sorrow, pain, curses, night, wicked people, and end do not exist. To enter Heaven, people must be righteous, changed, saved, called, obedient, or holy. Heaven is not a monopoly of Judeo-Christianity. In Islam, there is more than one Heaven. There is a total of seven Heavens at the different levels. Judging from the usage of the word "Heaven", it is exclusively related to God, and it is not a correct word to describe an ideal manmade society.

How about the word "Paradise"? It also has some connections to God, but it is a very light association. Only three times it appeared in the New Testament and never showed up in the Old Testament. Its usage is limited to pointing to Heaven, specifically to the Garden of Eden or similar place. So, Paradise is occasionally referred to as a manmade community. I believe that some cities in Florida, California and other States carry the name of "paradise." The Paradise in California attracted countrywide attention when the whole community burned down because of a power-line sparked wildfire. Therefore, we can also use the name Paradise as a part of our ideal society.



In contrast to Heaven and Paradise, the word "Utopia" always indicates a manmade society. When we hear the name "Utopia," we take it as an ideal place or the most desirable place to live, but that is not necessarily correct. The word utopia was coined by a sixteen century Englishman Sir Thomas More (1478 - 1535). He published a book titled "Utopia" in 1516 which described an imaginary island kingdom that he considered to be an ideal

state. He created the word "Utopia" by combining two Greek words, "EU (no)" and "Topia (place)". So, the first Utopia did not implicate any good or bad place and said, "no place". However, More considered the kingdom had an ideal political system, then the interpretation of "utopia equals a good place" became popular. Furthermore, someone invented the word "dystopia" from the Greek word "dys (bad)" and "topia (place)" to describe an unfavorable location, namely opposite to a utopia.

Strictly speaking, Utopia should never mean either favorable or unfavorable places, but it merely means no-place. However, I will

stick to majority use, namely Utopia, for the right place and Dystopia for the wrong place. In reality, an actual society can be considered to be either Utopia or Dystopia, depending on the individual. A community that some people called a Dystopia can be seen as a Utopia. For instance, in the United States, a majority of people thought Soviet Russia under communist rulers as a typical dystopia. When the old regime was replaced with a new democratic republic government, a few people longed for the communist rule. They liked the old system because, under the communist regime, your life is secure, even though its living standard and personal liberty were far inferior to Western standards. More recently, many Chinese people are happy under the communist rule, but the same regime is Dystopia for the residents of Hong Kong.

We can see a similar situation in North Korea, too. Some defectors from North Korea to South Korea wanted to go back to North Korea. They cannot cope with the fast-paced modern Republic of Korea's lifestyle. Under dictator rule, life is easy for some people. You follow the orders of the boss, your life is guaranteed, and you do not need to make any decision. If you are a follower and not an independent thinker, a life under the dictator is easy. So, for these followers a dictatorship is a Utopia, even though many independent thinkers consider the dictatorship is Dystopia. Based on these considerations, our ideal society should be identified as some utopia. After considerable contemplation, I chose "Global Utopia" as the name of our dream society.

Furthermore, I drafted the charter of the Global Utopia. It is not the final form, but a temporary place holder. As we go, we will re-examine the charter and will revise whenever we encounter a substantial obstacle.

1 Charter of Global Utopia (First Draft, June 16, 2020)

1, All human inhabitants on the Earth are citizens of the Global Utopia, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, and intellectual and physical capability.

2. Global Utopia is a secular institution.

3. Global Utopia guarantees to provide the minimum standard living to all citizens.

4. To reach Global Utopia is a time-consuming and challenging process. It is necessary to implement several intermediate semi-utopian societies.

5. Transition to progress into the final Global Utopia, including intermediate utopian societies, will be peaceful processes; revolution, civil war, and any other armed conflict will not be used.

6. No death penalty will be included in penal codes of any intermediate and final utopian societies.

7. All utopian societies: intermediate and final Global Utopian societies will be governed by the principle of the agreed-on universal human rights and universal moral standards.

8. Every fundamental human right and civil right in all utopian societies will have a limit which is set by civil codes.

9. In the global utopian society, the right of institution, corporation, and any other legal entity is differently controlled from the human and civil rights of persons.

10. The political system of Global Utopia is based on a refined democratic system.

11. The economic system in Global Utopia is a modified capitalism.

12. There is a taxation system, even in Global Utopia, based on a progressive rate to avoid excessive accumulation of wealth in individuals.

13. In Global Utopia, the government must provide a job to all individuals who wish to work.

Criticism and comments welcome. Send e-mail to yashinozawa@aol.com with subject line: global utopia.

DEALING WITH IT, FINALLY



By Bert Mautz

Following the daily pattern of Trump's lying has reminded some of us, about life's honesty lessons learned at our parents' knee and how subsequently we incorporated these moral patterns in our daily interactions with family, or colleagues. "Gotta run, I'll call you back when I'm finished." Or, my favorite, "Honey you look great in that skirt. The stripes don't make you look fat." How much of considerate social behavior involves these "little white lies" to smooth things over, to get past an awkward moment? We learned the difference.

Lies of omission are another category. Simply not reporting on the assumed evening at the library, when actually spent hanging out doing joints with your buds. You didn't lie overtly, you just

didn't fully disclose, because, what the heck difference does it make?



The deception flourishes in every competitive sport when the offense is trying to get the next play, or the next pitch past the defense and get that first down, or a runner on first. Curiously, those same sports founded on offensive guile, have rules placing limits on how far the deception may be taken, where it becomes instances of "cheating." Say, reading a catcher's

signaling the pitcher on the next one and relaying that to your batter by banging on a garbage can lid elsewhere in the ballpark.

On a more personal note, overt honesty was espoused by a fundamental Christian family. A severe health challenge, polio in the fifties, seemed to prompt friends and family to inquire to an invasive degree, at least so it seemed to a ten-year-old, as to how I was feeling. "I'm fine. I feel o.k." were what they wanted to hear, and if so responded would stop asking me uncomfortable questions. My son tells of his four-year-old lying about whether or not she needs to go to the bathroom before starting a car trip. She always says, "No," and requires a stop only after the family is underway.

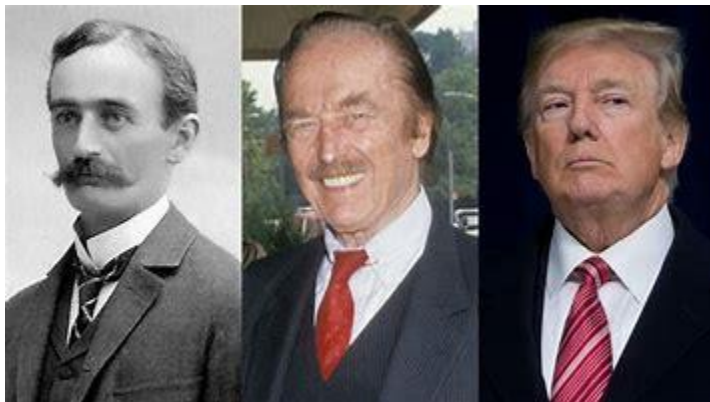
Honesty in architecture school, addressing what I didn't know to elicit helpful suggestions from a design professor worked great. Admit what you don't know. Don't bluff it.

Early in my professional life I observed superiors addressing clients' questions with, "Sure, we can do that for you." In our

post presentation team pow wows, the bravado was admitted. "Now what do we do? We haven't done that before." The part of customer service I was learning was to tell 'um what they want to hear and figure out how to get it done before the next presentation. Besides, with any luck and a little extra creativity, the work being requested can be billed as add on dollars to the original contract.



Mary Trump's family 'tell all' book explains Fred Trump's demands of his sons were so strict, so unpleasant that the boys learned to never tell the old man the truth and glide on through. Tell him what he wants to hear. A life altering lesson, reinforced many times, became an habitual and automatic behavior. To the point where Donald



never met a number he couldn't improve, even when no improvement was needed. Michael Bloomberg said, "I'm from New York, I know a con man when I see one."

Our Truth Is Marching On!



Thoughts from One Too Many Cups of Joe

By Jim Longo

"Caffeine will drive you crazy, champagne will make you lazy, ain't nobody's business but your own" or maybe, "what a day for a day dream what a night for a nightmare, what

kind of day for a wet dream, a rainy day."

If you cannot tell from the first couple of lines, I either have too many ideas running around my head or not enough. It can happen to me, it can happen to you, it can happen to everyone eventually. Let's hope not.

If it looks like shit, smells like shit, tastes like shit, it is probably shit, and we shouldn't step in it. In the United States today, we still prefer to step in it, because someone is telling us it isn't shit, just to see if they can make us believe it or is it for their own political ends? Welcome to the wonderful world of gaslighting.



Here is a thought. Your existence could have ended up in any of the seven billion that now live on this planet. So how can any of us look up to or down on anyone? They could have been us, or we could have been them, with just a little cosmic twist of fate.

So, what makes each of us so bleeping special, our environment, our decisions, or who influenced us? Probably all of the above.



Isn't the meaning of life, each of us getting to decide what the meaning of life is for us? Well it's nice to have choices. I have one, do I become a pharmacy whore going from store to store, working with more people in a week than most do in a year, in the time of plague, or do I stop working, develop a routine of biking, reading, writing, cooking, cleaning, fixing up the house and God knows what else.

I read this week there are three essentials to happiness, something to do, hope for, and love. I love doing what I do, and there is the hope I'll stay out of trouble if I keep doing it. I also read change is hard. It would be idiotic to die in a job you didn't have to do. On the other hand, is the fear of change greater than fear of death?

In America we ask our children, "what do you want to be when you grow up?" We never ask, "who do you want to be when you grow up?" We define ourselves not on who we are, kind, gentle, happy, or humane, but what we do.



I know what I do, but I really don't know who I am. If I let go of what I do, and I find out I am a sad little man, a nonentity; could I handle it? I know my life is tiny, a job, a mate, a house, a yard, a cat, and couple of hobbies. Could I handle losing a third of my life, to potentially avoiding losing life itself?

What is the risk of losing my health or my life from Covid-19? No one can really tell you. The general population won't take the most basic of precautions to avoid transmissions. The company has the least amount of plexiglass they can get away with. Why bother discussing the joke how the federal, state and county is dealing with this pandemic.

Every decision comes down to risk versus reward. The risk of dying of Covid is about a 1 in 500 shot on any given day I show

up for work – the best I can figure. How risky is that and compared to what? How correct are the numbers I used to determine that 1 in 500? Hell, was my math even correct? Let's say for the sake of argument I'm correct.

Benefits of working over staying home are something to do, a paycheck, it makes Barbara happy, it makes me happy, and company-based healthcare.

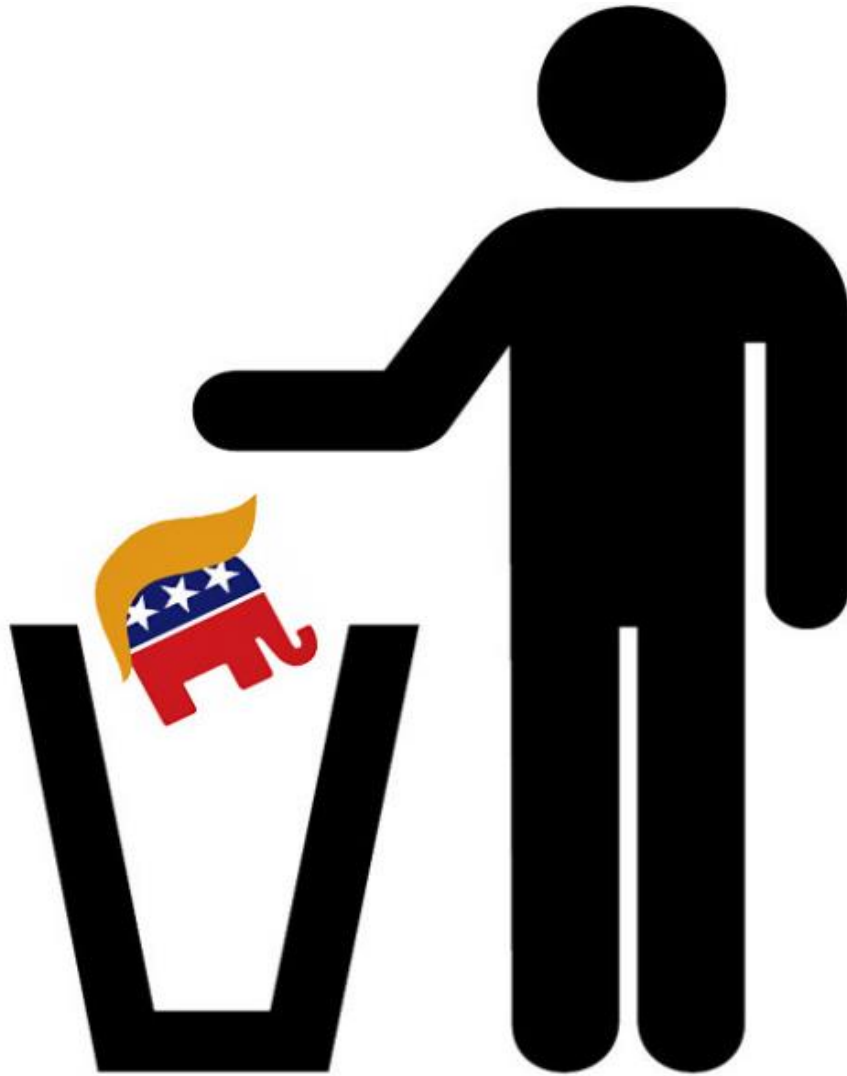
Benefits of not working are: would have plenty of time to do hobbies, and the honey do list.



Who knew that my life would come down to, "Give me liberty, or give me death, and I am leaning toward death? Am I brainwashed?

Tar & Feathers

By Virgil Thorp



It is time. The line of decency has been crossed and now is the time if it ever will be. It just depends upon the brainwashed to wake up, put their vanity in the closet and realize how badly they have been duped (or how badly they swallowed the hook, line and sinker, the suckers).

In a way, the disciples of the great orange shit-for brains are like a seduced and abandoned virgin. They went to church camp and

this ogre tickled their fancy. Why he seemed so attractive must have been because there was a dearth of handsome man-like camp councilors to choose from. But they were so starved for affection it did not matter that there was a huge difference between masculine and simian.

In the primary debates he made up derogatory names for every opponent and made fun of them to their faces. He was like a comedian. He chased a girl around the stage and made rude faces at her – wasn't he funny!

"You're a puppet," she said.

"No, you're the puppet." Har-de-har-har.

Because they were the disgruntled, they craved for love and when it was apparent the gigolo was winking at them, those poor disgruntled deplorables gifted their adoration and this cad took the earnestness of it and made it gross and repulsive. They even believed him while he was screwing them. He made promises so deceptive that they believed he had delivered them. They wanted a messiah and all they got was a foul-mouthed jerk.

To realize this rejection is harder for cult members than the non-cult members. They made an investment and paid every due demanded of them. And now, how does one respond when the image has been found to be bogus? The MAGA hat reveals itself to be a dunce cap. The believer resists. "This can't be happening," they tell themselves. "I gave him everything and he loves me, he really, really loves me!" The reality that they have been used is terrible to behold and more difficult to accept.

There has been a switcheroo not unlike when New Coke was introduced. The similarities are humorous. Lousy taste, lousy smell, and who knows what lousy tooth and body destroying chemicals were added. If change is necessary, change should be for the better shouldn't it? Not for the convenience of the producer. At the gala presentation, the Coca-Cola reps couldn't

understand why people took a taste and spit it out. Then they had to go on a desperate journey to find something to take the foul flavored residue out of their mouths. New Coke tasted terrible and that's why nobody bought it and Coke junkies hoarded truckloads of the old Coke and had stacks of the classic lining their bedrooms and hallways.

The believer resists. "This can't be happening," they tell themselves. "I gave him everything and he loves me, he really, really loves me!"

It has been said that gullibility is a powerful drug. Well, I said it, but it is because those who have been deceived don't want to admit it and resist truth even going so far as to declare war and bear arms. "Do not take my happy pills away from me!"

A false prophet is what? A con man? A thief? A really terrible person? Uh huh. Yes, he is, that and more. More like a chigger, a termite or a mosquito spreading disease that threatens health and harmony, all to the deceiver's advantage.

What is bad for the true believer is that they never see betrayal coming. When it does, they don't want to believe it even when their nose has been rubbed in it multiple times. There is agony in the humiliation and they don't want to accept the reality that they were willingly drawn to evil. I try to tell them it was a disguise and yes, they fell for it. Take heart, we've all been there at some time in our lives. But now that you know, don't fall for his fucking lies again.

The law of entropy, like the reality of Covid-19 cannot be ignored. The crumbling of the hypocritical edifice will deteriorate incrementally until there is a sudden and dramatic collapse. A crack happened midway through Trump's term when former CIA

Director John O. Brennan accurately described Trump's presidency as a "kakistocracy" (which is a system of government that is run by the worst, least qualified, and/or most unscrupulous citizens..) Always holding a grudge, Trump responded by rescinding Brennan's security clearance and publicly announced it to the nation in an act of deceitful vengeance.

The intelligence community was aghast and Admiral William McRaven, the man who led the assault that resulted in the death of Osama bin Laden, in an "I'm Spartacus" moment, responded back to Trump's devious dismissal of his friend. McRaven wrote:

"Former CIA director John Brennan, whose security clearance you revoked on Wednesday, is one of the finest public servants I have ever known. Few Americans have done more to protect this country than John. He is a man of unparalleled integrity, whose honesty and character have never been in question, except by those who don't know him.

"Therefore, I would consider it an honor if you would revoke my security clearance as well, so I can add my name to the list of men and women who had spoken up against your presidency.

"Like most Americans, I had hoped that when you became president, you would rise to the occasion and become the leader this great nation needs.

"A good leader tries to embody the best qualities of his or her organization. A good leader sets the example for others to follow. A good leader always puts the welfare of others before himself or herself.

"Your leadership, however, has shown little of these qualities. Through your actions, you have embarrassed us in the eyes of our children, humiliated us on the world stage and, worst of all, divided us as a nation.

"If you think for a moment that your McCarthy-era tactics will suppress the voice of criticism, you are sadly mistaken. The criticism will continue until you become the leader we prayed you would be." I wish he had added, "or, are removed from office."

Brennen himself responded in an interview after his admonishment that is prophetically chilling:

"[the country] is in a crisis in terms of what Mr. Trump has done and is liable to do. Are the Republicans on the Hill who have given him a pass – are they going to wait for a disaster to happen before they actually find their backbones and spines to speak up against somebody who clearly, clearly, is not carrying out his responsibilities with any sense of purpose and common sense from the standpoint of national security?"

"Therefore, I would consider it an honor if you would revoke my security clearance as well, so I can add my name to the list of men and women who had spoken up against your presidency." – Admiral William McRaven to Donald Trump

Some comedians cannot stop telling old jokes even when those jokes have lost their humor. Mr. Trump, "you're fired!" is fucking old and stinky, not to mention, stupid. No one is laughing any more. No one thinks you are clever. I'll tell you what many people are thinking and more are thinking it every day, you are about to replace Benedict Arnold at the bottom of the list of traitors who have conspired against the constitution and this country.



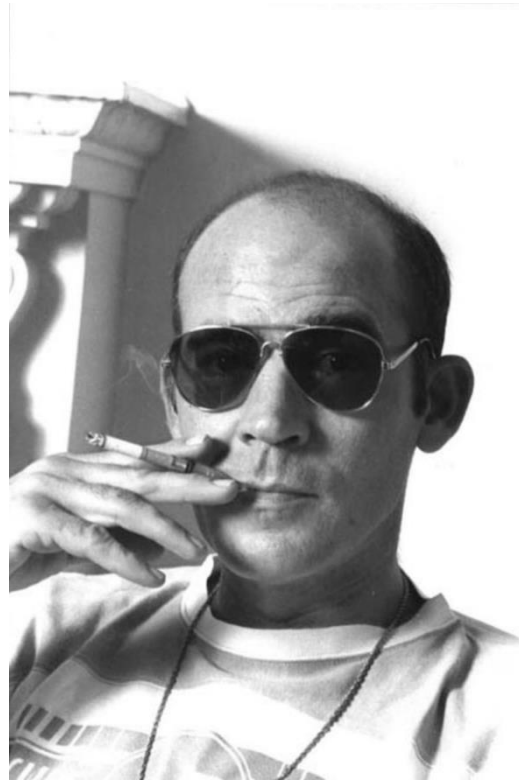
So today, where do we find ourselves? Disaster upon disaster. We are first in the pandemic in terms of contagion and death. This shows how his policies that have dismantled the safety net that had been constructed over years of learning and experience, all to our collective detriment. Our democracy has become imperiled by the deceit from this false prophet and phony patriot. There is no empathy from the corrupt regime shown to those who are losing their businesses, their jobs, their homes and their lives. Foreclosures and evictions are just beginning. There are long lines of the dispossessed for food and shelter. We have discovered that the president's staunchest ally (or is it his puppeteer?) has been funding a bounty against our troops in Afghanistan and who knows where else? Who does it help if American troops are withdrawn from Europe? Who does it benefit if NATO collapses? I know, you know, he knows. We are becoming an international pariah in addition to being a laughingstock and any American travelling to Europe must undergo 14 days of quarantine before they will be allowed to mingle with those citizens. Hell, we Floridians cannot go to New York without a quarantine period.

We keep asking, "When will the deceived Trumpers wake up, unleash that righteous anger and resort to the old tried and true method of disposing of a crook and a despot?" The feather that breaks the camel's back cannot come soon enough. It is time for the tar and the feathers and the rail to ride this charlatan – and those Quislings who have enabled him – out of town!

The Good Doctor – (a flash from the past)

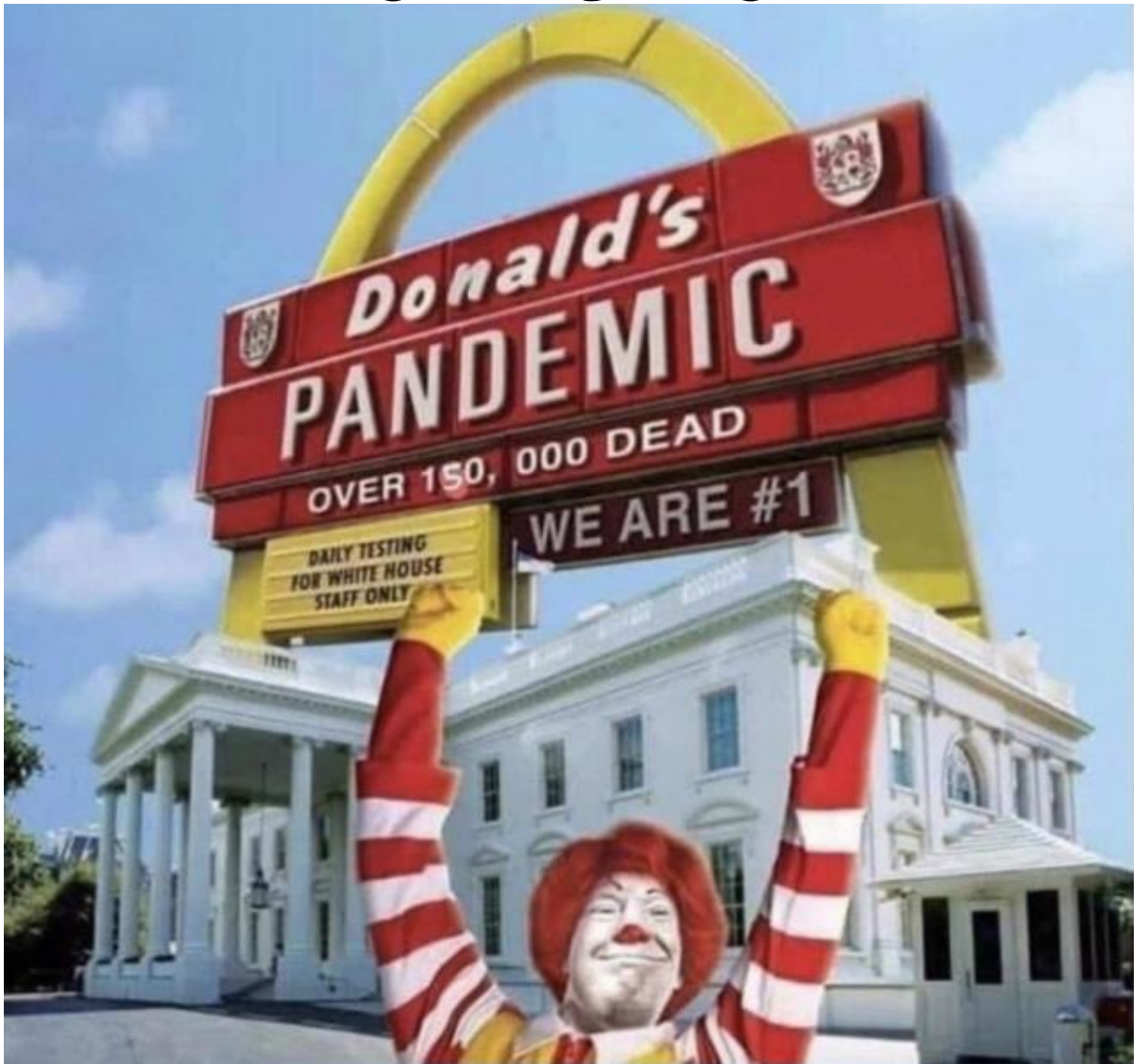
Hunter S. Thompson, New York City.

"We have become a Nazi monster in the eyes of the whole world—a nation of bullies and bastards who would rather kill than live peacefully. We are not just Whores for power and oil, but killer whores with hate and fear in our hearts. We are human scum, and that is how history will judge us.... No redeeming social value. Just whores. Get out of our way, or we'll kill you. Well, shit on that dumbness. George W. Bush does not speak for me or my son or my mother or my friends or the people I respect in this world. We didn't vote for these cheap, greedy little killers who speak for America today—and we will not vote for them again in 2002. Or 2004. Or ever. Who does vote for these dishonest shitheads? Who among us can be happy and proud of having all this innocent blood on our hands? Who are these swine? These flag-sucking half-wits who get fleeced and fooled by stupid little rich kids like George Bush? They are the same ones who wanted to have Muhammad Ali locked up for refusing to kill gooks. They speak for all that is cruel and stupid and vicious in the American character. They are the racists and hate mongers among us—they are the Ku Klux Klan. I piss down the throats of these Nazis. And I am too old to worry about whether they like it or not. Fuck them." — Hunter S. Thompson, "Kingdom of Fear: Loathsome Secrets of a Star-Crossed Child in the Final Days of the American Century"



PANDEMIC

07.29.20



By Bert Mautz

Several months ago, when Dr Anthony Fauci was recognized and listened to as an international expert of infectious/contagious diseases, and key member of the Administration's Coronavirus

Task Force he predicted a national death toll of two hundred thousand by the fall. Such realism, such negativity could not be endured by the Trump White House, and Fauci disappeared, was robbed of his podium. His vision of where current failures in masking, social distancing, and self-quarantining was taking the country was not to be tolerated by Trump's blind/stupid/mystical optimism.



Yesterday one hundred and fifty thousand deaths total in the United States was reached, along with over four million diagnosed virus cases. A resurgence (experts will not call this a second wave) is currently underway creating a thousand deaths per day fatality rate. Since April ninth have recorded daily death totals on my calendar/diary. The total deaths in America that day was eighteen thousand.

Forgive obsessive record keeping. Every day since, have googled a world total web site and recorded total deaths increase. My calendar is a spread sheet of my own formatting. Months exist in parallel columns, four weeks high/tall. Yesterday, there it was. Scanning to the left two months previous, almost to the day, the death total was one hundred thousand. Admittedly a round number comparison, but there it was.



The virus death total in the United States increased fifty thousand in two months, approximately sixty days. Fauci was correct in his prediction. At the current, thousand deaths per day rate, in another couple of months, allowing for some fluctuations, we are looking at two hundred thousand total virus deaths in the United States.

Today Trump touted "regions of the country have the virus under control." This is not true. Maybe twenty states are seeing worsening infection rates if testing exists to find them, and deaths, first responders dying, PPE's inadequate, ICU beds unavailable, and Fauci's prediction, a thousand deaths per day.

Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach counties are in dire conditions, hottest of the hot spots of infections, deaths, and crowded hospitals. Is our own Martin County, very much in south Florida, next as the virus insidiously moves up the east coast of Florida?

How will this end?



A TESTAMENT OF HUMANITY

By John Lewis

Mr. Lewis, the civil rights leader who died on July 17, wrote this essay shortly before his death, to be published upon the day of his funeral.

July 30, 2020



While my time here has now come to an end, I want you to know that in the last days and hours of my life you inspired me. You filled me with hope about the next chapter of the great American story when you used your power to make a difference in our society. Millions of people motivated simply by human compassion laid down the burdens of division. Around the country and the world you set aside race, class, age, language and nationality to demand respect for human dignity.

That is why I had to visit Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington, though I was admitted to the hospital the following day. I just had to see and feel it for myself that, after many years of silent witness, the truth is still marching on.

Emmett Till was my George Floyd. He was my Rayshard Brooks, Sandra Bland and Breonna Taylor. He was 14 when he was killed, and I was only 15 years old at the time. I will never ever forget the moment when it became so clear that he could easily have been me. In those days, fear constrained us like an imaginary prison, and troubling thoughts of potential brutality committed for no understandable reason were the bars.

Though I was surrounded by two loving parents, plenty of brothers, sisters and cousins, their love could not protect me from the unholy oppression waiting just outside that family circle. Unchecked, unrestrained violence and government-sanctioned

terror had the power to turn a simple stroll to the store for some Skittles or an innocent morning jog down a lonesome country road into a nightmare. If we are to survive as one unified nation, we must discover what so readily takes root in our hearts that could rob Mother Emanuel Church in South Carolina of her brightest and best, shoot unwitting concertgoers in Las Vegas and choke to death the hopes and dreams of a gifted violinist like Elijah McClain.



Like so many young people today, I was searching for a way out, or some might say a way in, and then I heard the voice of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on an old radio. He was talking about the philosophy and discipline of nonviolence. He said we are all complicit when we tolerate injustice. He said it is not enough to say it will get better by and by. He said each of us has a moral obligation to stand up, speak up and speak out. When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must do something. Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help build what we called the Beloved Community, a nation and world society at peace with itself.

Ordinary people with extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America by getting in what I call good trouble, necessary trouble. Voting and participating in the democratic process are key. The vote is the most powerful nonviolent change agent you have in a democratic society. You must use it because it is not guaranteed. You can lose it.

You must also study and learn the lessons of history because humanity has been involved in this soul-wrenching, existential struggle for a very long time. People on every continent have stood in your shoes, through decades and centuries before you. The truth does not change, and that is why the answers worked out long ago can help you find solutions to the challenges of our time. Continue to build union between movements stretching across the globe because we must put away our willingness to profit from the exploitation of others.

Though I may not be here with you, I urge you to answer the highest calling of your heart and stand up for what you truly believe. In my life I have done all I can to demonstrate that the way of peace, the way of love and nonviolence is the more excellent way. Now it is your turn to let freedom ring.

When historians pick up their pens to write the story of the 21st century, let them say that it was your generation who laid down the heavy burdens of hate at last and that peace finally triumphed over violence, aggression and war. So I say to you, walk with the wind, brothers and sisters, and let the spirit of peace and the power of everlasting love be your guide.



ARTICLES

Hey, Pops

On Sun, Jul 12, 2020 at 11:12 AM bert mautz wrote:

robert & gina,

*yes, we constantly worry
and wonder.*

*nurses are
being infected and
dying.*

*how you manage day by
day?*

*gina's family must be a
tremendous help, and
still must protect itself.*

*we watch the national infection numbers, icu bed availability, and
deaths.*

*we have in common our home states leading the nation in all the
wrong and terrible ways.*

how much longer? you must ask yourself.

the kids need school.

you and gina need rest.



*we love you and fear for you
pops*

Date: Mon, Jul 13, 2020 at 1:23 AM

Hey Pops,

I have been chipping away at this email for a while now. I think there is a lot that Gina and I just don't talk about anymore

because it is hard and takes too long to unpack. We need a shorthand. In the hospital you hear a lot, "It is what it is." Which is a way of saying, "This is a really hard time. The intangible risk we are taking, our lack of control over the moment, and our inability to protect our families is suffocating. We would like to not do it anymore but feel compelled to keep it up..."

We are coping. I don't think we are as aware of the stress we are



experiencing since it is a daily occurrence. I ended up in the ED two weeks ago because I thought I was having a heart attack; sharp crushing pain in the chest radiating down left arm, HR and BP astronomical. No indications my heart muscle was

hurt/damaged, thank goodness. I am following up with cardiology as an outpatient. I didn't mention it to anyone because we still don't know what it was.

The children are bouncing off the walls and we have to be really creative to give them physical outlets. Tonight, we pretended the tile and carpet were lava and so we had to get around the upstairs by strategically lining up pillows and books.

Over the last month at Scripps Chula Vista, we are having a lot of nurses, about two dozen, showing symptoms and testing positive for covid. One of the RNs gave it to her husband and he passed away in our ICU. "Is it better to be good or lucky." I still think Gina and I are fortunate rather than good at personal protection and that it is just a matter of time. As long as the cases of covid are not decreasing, we will continue to need an entire floor just for covid patients. With the continuing exposure, it is just a matter of time.

Gina's family is a tremendous help. Our children are not easy and for them to watch them when Gina and I are both working is significant. Alex is currently not returning to school until the end of August. We can't send him to summer camps, and virtual camps through Zoom just don't have the kinetic component he needs. Put a seven-year-old on house arrest and he will exhibit hyperactivity disorder. (I did take Alex camping. I need to share pictures and anecdotes.)

We are starting to look at returning to some sustainable life rhythm. We had a birthday party for Miri yesterday, Saturday. She will be four on Tuesday. We had six households in attendance (all family), everyone practicing social distancing around the pool. Some of them we had not seen since March. It was strange but also the beginning of the new normal. Miri also restarted pre-school. Her social and academic development is more impacted by this disruption than Alex. The preschool is taking a list of precautions (face coverings for teachers, surveying students for temperatures or sick family members, smaller classes, no materials, lunch bags. getting the swim lessons, obvious that additional was not worth risk.



sharing of disposable We tried kids back into but it was even with precautions it the increased

How are you all doing? Florida is in the news daily for a new day of record-breaking outbreaks. (That sentence would make Dr. Seuss proud.)

Big Love,
Rob, Gina, Alex, Miri, Ben



Dispatches From the Hinterland

By Sandra & Rick

I sewed us each two new masks, one the rectangular pleated kind you can put a coffee filter into, and one the more oval shape. Surprise, the pleated one actually fits better! They are washable, but both Rick and I prefer our N95 masks, a box of which we bought years ago for sanding wood. We know the first pair we used are probably used up by now, but we are exposed

only rarely and the masks dry out in sunshine after each use, so we keep using them. And the ones I sewed are oval ones – black lined with hideous pea-green old sheet fabric, and pleated – Rick’s hospital white and mine pink with black ties (how 60s!). All considered, we will probably use the white N95s as long as we can...

Our project today was first to water the vegetable garden in this heat. Twelve buckets of water from the pond lugged to the garden. Most thrown thru the fence at the plants, but some taken into the garden and carefully poured on smaller plants. I pulled up the radishes which were too strong. The tomatoes are three inches across and starting to turn red. The peppers, hot and mild, are ripening beautifully, and we will have sausage-stuffed peppers for dinner tomorrow.

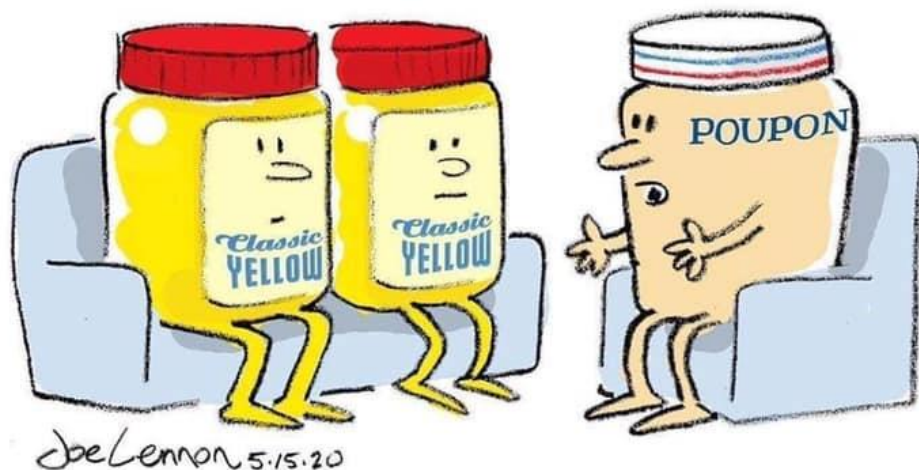
Then we attacked the huge stump again. We cut down the dead tree last year, but the stump, about two feet across, stuck up about two feet and made mowing difficult. So I hand-dug around

the roots until I had a ten-foot circle two feet deep, and we saw we had six major (foot across on top) roots, each TWO feet deep into the dirt. So, we have been taking bites out of them with the chain saw, with me hand digging to try to keep the blade from grinding thru too much dirt. Today we got two more 80 lb. chunks cut out of the roots, which was very hard work, and we quit because it's 85 degrees and the puppies, sitting in the shade on the golf cart, were hot and thirsty.

We spend most days, to complete responding to your query, doing yard work of one sort or another. I email mostly women friends. We read, Rick car magazines and me online library mysteries. Did you know Covid lives on books for 3 days?! And only Palm City Library quarantines its books for three days before recirculating them.

Rick wants me to look up something, so — everyone tell us what YOU do with your days!

Sandra



MOM, DAD... I'M GREY.

A TALE OF TWO CONFESSIONS



By

Gil Gaudia

I have no way of proving this, of course, but I have often thought that everyone has committed some crime or, at least, done something

illegal or unethical in their lifetime. I certainly have, more than once. I don't say this with pride, but rather as an admission, it could even be called a confession. When I was younger, especially, I did lots of things that could be considered illegal, but in this true story I am about to recall, I was almost forty years old.

I was an instructor at a small college in western New York State in the late 1960's. The Master Plan of the State University included a program to provide assistance to every minority student who wanted to enter a school of higher education, and thus was born the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP).

Rosalee Williams was one the few African American students in the entire college and she showed up in my classroom in September of 1969. The college had embraced the program and I was determined to help it to be as successful as possible, and Rosalee was part of its first experiment.

She struggled. The sixth of nine kids, she had received little “at home” preparation for college and had earned a high school diploma with only marginal success.



Since I was considered an “easy” grader by the students, meaning it was easy to get an “A” in my classes and even easier to pass the course, that might have been why she enrolled

in it. But it wasn’t easy for Rosalee, and when I took the final exam papers home to be graded, I started down the path leading to this confession.

The exam was a 50-item, multiple-choice test with the usual answer sheet upon which the students entered their answers by filling in with a pencil the circle alongside an A, B, C, or D choice. They were easy to grade because we used a template placed over the page and the correct answers showed through the punched holes. Most of the kids preferred them and if you had been in class and read the textbook, it was not a problem.

Rosalee was the only one who did not earn a passing grade. She missed it by two incorrect answers. I hesitated for a moment and then without consideration of any of the issues surrounding my action, I erased two of her wrong answers and penciled in correct ones. So, she got a “C” in the course.

I am well aware of what objections others could make, putting aside the obvious unfairness to some of the other 29 students who could have gotten a “B” instead of a “C” had they received two extra points, or an “A” instead of a “B.”

However, I did it. I felt okay with it. I never even considered that in an inverse manner it was racist because I would not have done it for a White student and that in fact it was a disclosure of my feeling that she “needed” some help because she was Black.

At the beginning of the next semester I was summoned to the department chairman’s office one day and when I entered, I saw Rosalee and a Black man seated in front of the chairman’s desk. My immediate thought was that it was related to the test and that I had been caught in my deception.

I felt the blood rise above my shirt collar and the tempo of my pulse doubled. Well, it turned out to be related to the test alright, but in not quite the way I had expected.

“This is Mr. Charles Roberts and you know your former student Rosalee,” the chairman began. “Mr. Roberts is the head of the local EOP program, and he has come here to assist her in her complaint that you treated Ms. Williams unfairly in assigning her only a “C” in the course.”

I began to experience disorientation, like trying to land a small airplane at night with no lights for reference to the ground. Where was I? What about the black pencil marks I had erased and changed last semester?

“We believe that she was discriminated against because of her race and the fact that she was an EOP student,” was Mr. Roberts’ opening gambit, “and since EOP is a federal program, it could be a big problem for this college’s funding.”

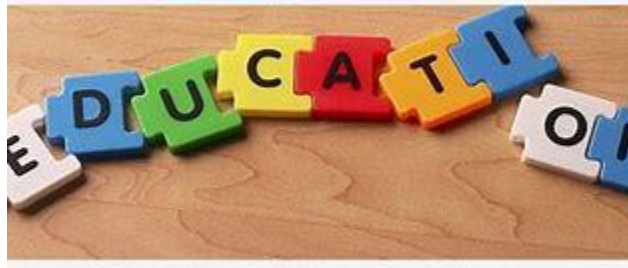


I cannot recall most of the ensuing discussion because all I could think of was the irony in the fact that I had expected to have to defend or deny what I had actually done and instead I was being criticized for the exact opposite. Either way, I stammered my way through the next ten minutes or so, and at the end we all agreed to give Rosalee another chance to get a better grade by taking

the test again in the chairman's office, under his supervision. I felt as if it had been discovered that I was a secret member of the KKK.

"Well, Gil, she flunked it badly," the chairman said the next day as we both went over her test in his office, "and now you have to decide how to deal with it. Of course you can take other factors into consideration in assessing her final grade, such as attendance and class participation." I got the message.

To tell the truth, I don't remember if I stuck with the original grade of "C," raised it to a "B" or lowered it to a "D," because I wanted to put the entire incident out of my mind and to some extent I have repressed the memory of much of that dismal episode.



My office was in a run-down ancient building called "Old Main", a remnant of the original campus, and as I was leaving it late one winter day, when the lights were dimming and the hallways deserted and gloomy, a figure stepped out of the shadows beside my door. It was Rosalee Williams. "Dr. Gaudia," she murmured in a soft voice, "I have a confession to make to you. I am so sorry for what we put you through last semester and I want to apologize. It was not my idea to complain about you, but the people at EOP put me up to it. They said they wanted me to have a higher grade so the program would look better and I just went along with them. I want you to know that as far as I'm concerned you treated me very fairly."

"That's okay, Rosalee, forget about it," was all I could think to mumble as she turned and walked away down the long, dark corridor.

THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT



*Saint Francis Borgia performing an exorcism as depicted by
Francisco Goya*

THE VIABILITY OF FAITH HEALING, EXORCISM, AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

By J. Dan Vignau

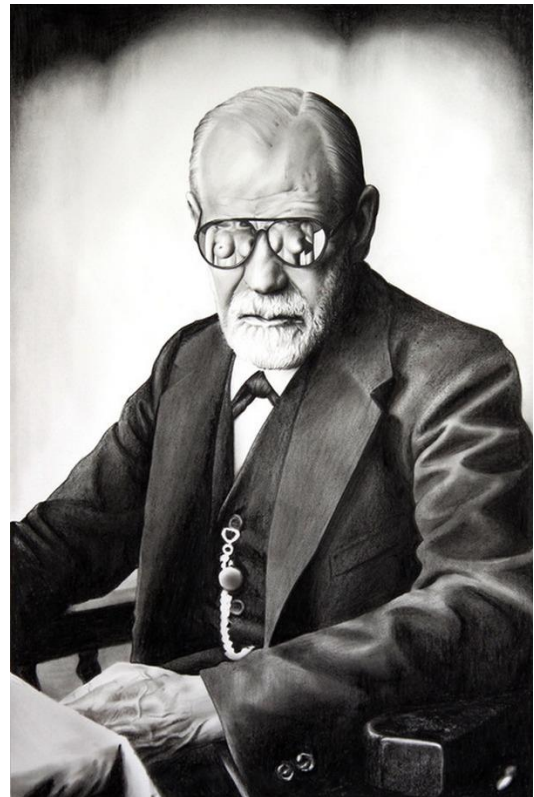
Nearly all true freethinkers would agree on one thing: There is no such thing as faith healing or exorcism. The purpose of this article is to allude to such “cures”, as not only successful, but possibly the best-case scenario for certain patients. This is also true of psychotherapy. Consider the old joke: How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb? Only one, but it takes a long, long time, and the light bulb must really want to



believe it can change. The psychologically damaged religious believer really wants to change, too. Using insights of Freudian thought, I propose that faith healing and exorcism can work for certain psychosomatic conditions. The success of most counseling and psychotherapies are no different in their lack of use of scientific thought, or the ultimate truths of their applications and treatments.

First and foremost, Sigmund Freud studied neurology, specifically the sexual anatomy of eels, as well as the physiology of fish nervous systems. Later, he did research on cerebral palsy, neuroanatomy, and most importantly, aphasia: the loss of sensory perception. During the Victorian Era, he revolutionized the scientific study of what was then thought to be possession by demons, pioneering his theory of psychosomatic illnesses.

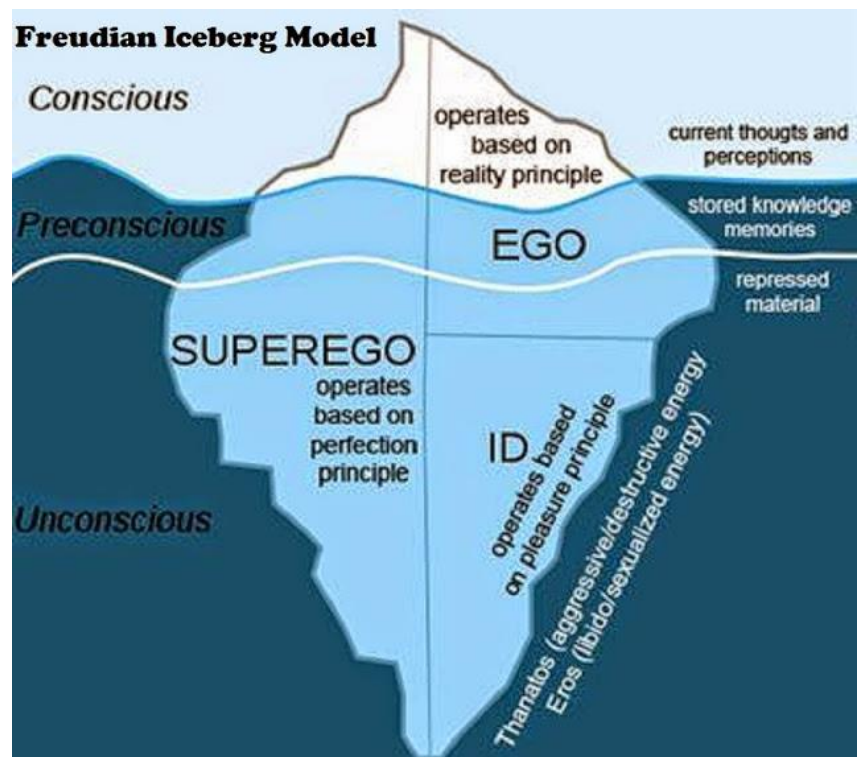
As a bona fide neurologist, he recognized that many of his patient’s sensory losses, including the lack of use of appendages, could not be explained by existing nerve pathways. The most quoted example is “glove paralysis”, a condition where a person has no feeling in his hand from the wrist down, precluding the use of this hand.



Freud's knowledge of neuroanatomy allowed him to see that that this glove paralysis was not a physical injury. It is impossible for the wiring of the hand to only be affected from the wrist down, unless the entire pathway is severed. An injury to one of these nerve pathways to the hand and finger leaves a trail of injury and/or numbness, trailing down the arm, thereby only affecting certain fingers, and certain parts of the wrist.

Imagine drawing a line from each fingertip to the shoulder. That is how we are wired. There is not a cluster of nerves that only controls the area from the wrist down. Using his knowledge of neurology, along with the insight he gained from his constructs regarding ego defense mechanisms, he concluded that the lack of use or sensory perception, could be psychosomatic, that is: of the mind, rather than of the body. This "glove paralysis" had to be psychological, rather than physical, simply because we are wired as described. Since something like this does occur, it is certainly no stretch of the imagination to realize that there could be traumatic, psychologically caused deafness, blindness, muteness, and other conditions.

Freud saw aphasia as having to do with trauma of the ego, one of the many of his terms we still use today. In addition to his hypothetical constructs, Ego, Id, and Superego, we still use his Ego Defense Mechanisms, many of which were derived from his extensive knowledge of Shakespearean plays, but that is a discussion for another day.

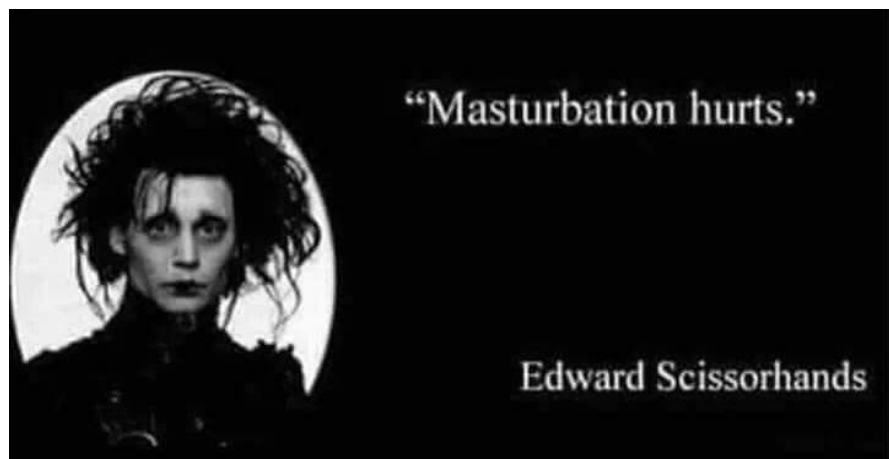


Let us consider the oft cited glove paralysis symptom, say in a person who saw someone stabbed. Freud considered this to be such a traumatic event, that to the self, or ego as Freud preferred, that the person's mind cannot bear to let one's hand be used, lest it do something just as terrible. I like to add that Freud might have sometimes totally missed the real point here: Maybe the mind cannot let some hands be used like this ... again! The patient might have committed the murder. But I digress.

If psychological trauma can stop one's hand from functioning, it could certainly disable the eyes, ears, or use of speech? After all, if a child saw a much loved parent kill the other parent, could not this memory be so repressed, hidden so deeply to such an extent that the thought of the crime witnessed actually precludes the use of the hand that killed, the eyes that saw, the ears that heard, or the legs that ran?

When Freud wrote, largely starting in the Victorian Era, sex thoughts were considered to be so terribly dirty that piano legs were covered with skirts to keep men from being aroused by their erotic shape. Seriously, you ask? Because beautifully carved piano legs might remind one of a woman's leg and cause a sinful arousal. Simple!

Glove paralysis? What about the hand that was caught masturbating? I vote for this sin as the reason Glove Paralysis was so prevalent during Freud's lifetime. It is no wonder modern critics say he was obsessed with sex. That was his culture!



In the thought experiments about Jesus' life and culture, there was rampant poverty, slavery, and discontent. He was said to have given sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and good health to the ill. Jesus supposed biographers also claimed that eternal life was possible, albeit some of it in a very bad place. What could have been a better way to ensure one's ascension into a heavenly paradise, than to follow a leader of men who both cured the afflicted, and guaranteed eternal comfort? The alternative, eternal fire and damnation for one's sins, must be summarily avoided. We can imagine that this might have seemed quite important to slaves and other discontents of any culture in an era of very harsh living conditions.

Of course, there is also the fantasy of religious morality. Even George Washington, who was not a believer, thought that religion was necessary to provide a moral base for most of mankind, suggesting that it might be worthwhile to try on Native Americans.



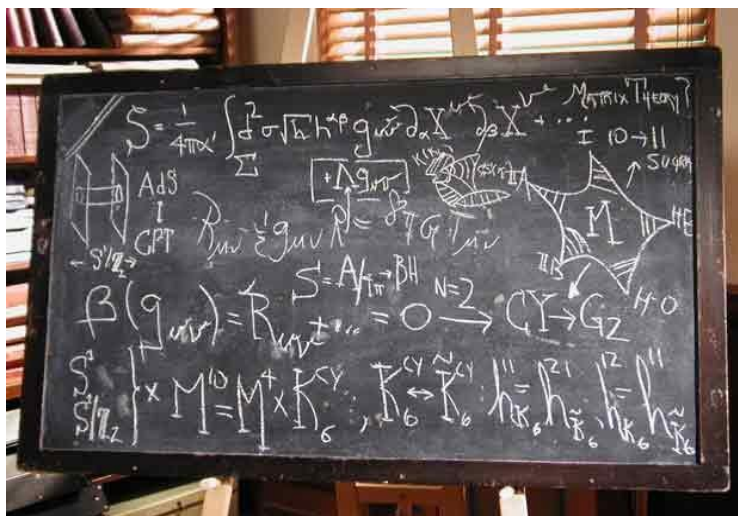
Freud convinced patients to believe in his concepts of the ego, id and superego, which he posited as the primary constructs of the human mind, along with its system of protection, the ego defense mechanisms. He reasoned that these insights into the defenses of the mind could be understood and used, even to return sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and motor skill to aphasics, at least when there is no physical cause.

Why would religion be different? Cannot we imagine that convincing someone of the belief in Supreme Ghosts, such as Christ would do the same? The riddance of an imaginary devil, or beliefs in other demonic possession, is just as plausible to a believer in Satan or another imaginary spirit, as is the elucidation of theories of the mind. After all, rather than demons, we skeptics

see these afflictions as only psychological manifestations of inner turmoil.

During early women's rights movements, Freud was heavily criticized for his blatant sexism, to the point that Firestone and Figs claimed that he did not discover literal truths, but only wrote about his, "poetic metaphors".

For the current discussion, this distinction does not matter. It does not matter which constructs we believe, Freudian, Exorcism, or Faith Healing. All that matters is that psychological assistance is provided to the afflicted. When a problem is psychological, we can use the therapist's belief in hidden defense mechanisms, the priest's faith in demonic possession, the sinner's eternal guilt and punishment to remove, or at least alleviate through understanding, these psychosomatic illnesses. The literal truth of the particular belief system of the individual does not matter. Who are we to say our constructs are the only correct ones? Because they work? We are psychologists, not physicists, and even they argue about which metaphorical constructs to



use. String Theory: Definitely a metaphor for something still unknown, but we always need ways to refer to our ideas about both our gains and the flaws of our findings. "String Theory" is a useful, metaphorical construct that enables us to do thought experiments concerning

our current thinking about reality, and not much more.

For centuries, religious belief systems have been used to cure psychosomatic illnesses, whether by attempting to cast out demons, by subscribing to fears of eternal torture, or by providing mental constructs, possibly analogous to thought

experiments, of how we acquired our inner demons, and most importantly, how the trauma associated with them can be alleviated, if not outright removed.

The mistake too many purveyors of religion make is the belief all diseases can be cured by faith, not just psychosomatic ones.

These believers in the reality of stone aged fairy tales that were modified until writing was invented and beyond, miss this point. Of course, if our religious healers believed in psychoanalysis, faith would no longer be necessary, and the healers and priests would be out of work; however, shrinks have needs and bills, too, as do astrophysicists! All are intellectually, ethically, emotionally, and financially compelled to believe that their knowledge is real.



Whether metaphors or not, we all use our current cultural lore, psychological constructs, and our extant scientific knowledge and theories to continue to learn in order to understand the universe, and to solve the myriad of human problems. Some thinkers, such as like Freud, Newton, Galileo, and Einstein, innovated like no one had dared before. They changed human knowledge and truths. For the religious, the traumatically damaged mind can be changed through faith. The truthfulness of a theory does not matter. The belief in the truth of their constructs is everything. After all, both psychology and religion, as well as science, are nothing more than very smart monkeys', yearning to understand, while continually howling at the moon!



IF IT WEREN'T FOR BAD LUCK ...

"LOW GRADE DEPRESSION"

By Bert Mautz

With Michelle Obama's admission to suffering from the nation's state of affairs/condition as a kind of depressing experience, she gave permission to many of us to acknowledge we weren't feeling that good ourselves. "Not fulfilling times spiritually," she continues, Racial unrest, economic stress, and the overlying threat of the coronavirus while quarantined make for an unhappy time.

Could we agree we are enduring a national funk? The tens of millions facing foreclosures and evictions this, the last day of federal unemployment assistance that was heretofore paying the rent while moms and dads are out of work. Driving our collective unhappiness, aggravated by Trump's inability to do anything about it is the virus, now sweeping the

BREAKING: Fauci discusses new life-saving face mask.



globe. Beyond belief the United States is leading case and death totals. The quick explanation is the utter lack of a nationwide, a coherent plan to identify and limit the virus' occurrence.

Doc Fauci projected 200,000 as possible. Noted the daily rate of Covid 19 deaths for the past two months from my recording and made my own projection, that indeed the 200,000 deaths within the year is highly likely without nationwide adoption of virus avoiding behaviors. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation's Covid 19 death projections, just this week, are now at 300,000 by December. Compared to my round number projection calculations, do these assume a higher daily rate, a horrible possibility? Three and a half months, starting now in mid-



August, adds 125,000 to this morning's total of a 164,00, at a thousand a day, for 290,000 by December.

Jesus Christ! Kemo Sabe, my amateurs' take on this is within a hair of the scientists at the Institute. Our rates of incidence are not all that different. We're seeing the 1,000 a day as a sustainable average. Your reporter is coming to you from South Florida, of which he takes ever less pride or comfort. Florida, under the leadership of Gov. DeSantis, a Trump

sycophant is and has been for some time in contention for the worst state numbers in the nation. Higher percentages of elderly and black and brown peoples contribute to Florida's exceptionally high numbers.

So, you feeling sorry for yourself, and Mrs. Obama made it O.K. to complain? Go right ahead, let it out, we're all in this funk together.

THE WAY WE WERE

A Summer Day, 1945



by Ed Zillioux

I was nine years old and spending the summer at the modest camp that my Dad had built from recycled lumber in Sylvan Beach, New York, on Oneida Lake. It was primitive; like no-

electricity-primitive. My two older sisters were away, maybe staying over with relatives, but I don't really remember, and my Dad was working and could only come to the camp on weekends, so for the time being, I was alone with Mother.

Mother loved to swim and on many week days the high point of our day was a walk to the beach, unless I was off fishing in one of the nearby creeks or killing time picking wild huckleberries that grew in the woods behind our camp. It was worth the effort since Mother's deep-dish huckleberry pies were to die for. Mother didn't drive so we walked everywhere between the weekends. On this day, it was raining in the morning so when the rain stopped in the afternoon, I asked, "Can we still go swimming today?" Daylight savings time was in effect, so Mother answered, "Sure, it doesn't get dark now until well after eight o'clock."

It was about a half-mile walk along a dirt road to the beach. Once we crossed the wide strand and entered the water, we still had to wade about 50 yards before we got into water deep enough to swim. Mother had taught me to swim on previous summers, so she was free to just float. Mother was a cork. She was so buoyant that she frequently fell asleep while floating on her back. One time when she was alone, she fell asleep and drifted north for about an hour until someone on the strand saw her and thought it was a dead person. He found someone close by that had a rowboat and they went out together to retrieve the body. When they got close, Mother woke up and raised her head to say hello and scared them half to death. Conversely, I was a sinker and spent most of my time underwater, swimming back and forth under Mother, pretending she was a log.

So on this day I was swimming like that and when I popped up to breath, I heard horns blowing with the pealing of church bells adding to the sudden bedlam. It was so much noise I figured everyone in town that owned a car was blowing their horn at the same time! I asked, "What's happening? What's it all about?" Now Mother had the happiest look on her face that I think I'd ever seen.

She said, "It's V-J day! The war is over! Hurry! We need to get back to camp and get dressed to go downtown. We don't want to miss the celebration!" Now it was pretty clear that she had been expecting this, yet I didn't know that it was imminent. I read a lot in those long summer days, usually lying in a hammock tied between two trees along-side our camp, with action comics or adventure books (I had a whole collection of Frank Merriwell Jr. novels). We got the Sunday paper so I kept up on the war news, but just didn't know that it could be today. It seemed I was always left out of things like I wasn't grown up enough to be



included. Nevertheless, thanks to my school principal, I was engaged in the hours leading up to the V-E day, or Victory in Europe, proclamation on May 8th. Classes had been suspended and students were all ushered into the auditorium where a television was set up on stage bringing us the news as it unfolded. It was the first time most of us, including me, had ever seen live television! On the morning of May 9th, President Truman tempered the jubilation somewhat in his radio address. He called it "a victory only half won" since the war against [Japan](#) had not yet been won. But now it had! I was excited along with everyone else and just wanted to join the celebration!

It was the 14th of August. President Harry S. Truman had just announced on a nation-wide broadcast that the government of Japan had accepted the conditions of unconditional surrender as dictated in the Potsdam Convention. It wouldn't be official until General Douglas MacArthur accepted the formal Japanese surrender aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on September 2nd, but today's announcement by the President kicked off one of



the biggest celebrations in world history. Germany and their allies had already surrendered three months earlier, so V-J Day, or Victory in Japan, would be the official end of World War II. It was three years, eight months and seven days since Sunday, December 7th, 1941. Ironically, one of the two escort destroyers that accompanied the USS Missouri into Tokyo Bay on the day the Japanese formally surrendered was the USS Robert K. Huntington, the same ship that I would serve on eleven years later as its lead sonarman.

Starting at a very young age, I remember clearly certain aspects of the war that impinged upon my limited perspective. I

remember when at 5 years of age, I was home sick from my kindergarten class at St. Bridget's school, lying on the sofa in the living room with an earache. Mother had been dusting in the adjoining dining room; it was just past noon on Monday, December 8th, and the radio was on. I don't remember what a voice was saying on the radio (it was President Franklin Delano Roosevelt) but I remember Mother crying. I asked, "Why are you crying? What's the matter?" With some difficulty she answered, "Japan has bombed Pearl Harbor, we are going to war."



At that time, we were living in Watervliet, New York, where we had moved because Dad landed a job at the Watervliet Arsenal. He was a tool and die maker and in demand during the very early period of ratcheting up our "war effort." They made him boss of the 90 mm division. This later presented a problem. At the declaration of war, men under him enlisted in the Navy, and, because of their mechanics' skills, were immediately given the rank of Chief Petty Officer. So Dad went down to the recruiter's office to see what he could get. I'm sure the romance of seeing the world, getting away from Mother, and being free to sample other venues was not far from his mind. But they told him his job

was frozen for the duration because he was needed more where he was at the arsenal. This was bittersweet. The sweet part was that for years to come he delighted in telling the story over and over again: that he, as boss of the 90 mm division, was too valuable for our war effort to simply be drafted or enlisted into the military.

I remember clearly on a downtown shopping excursion in nearby Albany, Mother and I witnessed a woman on the street screaming in agony. When I asked what was wrong, Mother told me she had just received news that her husband had been killed in the war. After that, I remember numerous other similar stories of local men killed in the war that were broadcast over the radio or read from the newspaper. Mother cried each time.

I remember the rationing, and the ration stamps that were doled out to families, and how Dad always managed to garner more than our share.

I remember one Christmas Eve party at my maternal grandparents when my Uncle Neil was able to call on a special hook-up from Guadalcanal where he was stationed. I think it was 1943. We all queued up to take our turn to talk directly to Uncle Neil, and I was included! I had probably less



than a minute to talk but was thrilled when he called me by the special nickname that only he had assigned to me. Uncle Neil was cool. Mother's youngest brother, he was the only person in our immediate family to serve during the war.

What strikes me most poignantly now, is what I don't remember. Why don't I remember hearing of what other children were going through at that awful time? Where are my memories of the children forced to evacuate London during the blitz? Where are my memories of the children of Belgium, of France, of Poland, and those who starved in the siege of St. Petersburg and, yes, the innocent children of Germany and Italy and Japan? I have no direct memories related to the Holocaust. I did hear about what happened just a few days prior to V-J Day because Dad read all the newspaper accounts aloud over the dinner table. Savoring with nationalistic pride the great technological achievements in mass destruction, he read accounts of atomic bombs dropped on



*Hiroshima, August 6th, and Nagasaki, August 9th. 135,000 people died in the Hiroshima bombing; about half, the lucky ones, died instantly and the rest from radiation sickness later. Another 64,000 died in Nagasaki. And how many were children? That's when I began to realize how lucky we were. **But we dropped the bombs!** We are told later that they had the intended effect of ending the war so maybe they saved a lot more lives in the*

long run than what the Japanese lost on those two infamous days. But it is also argued that the end of the war was inevitable anyway, especially after the Soviet Union's invasion of Manchuria in the previous week. Although coincidental with the dropping of the atomic bombs, the Manchurian invasion had been planned long in advance and followed a long-term buildup of Soviet forces in the Far East.

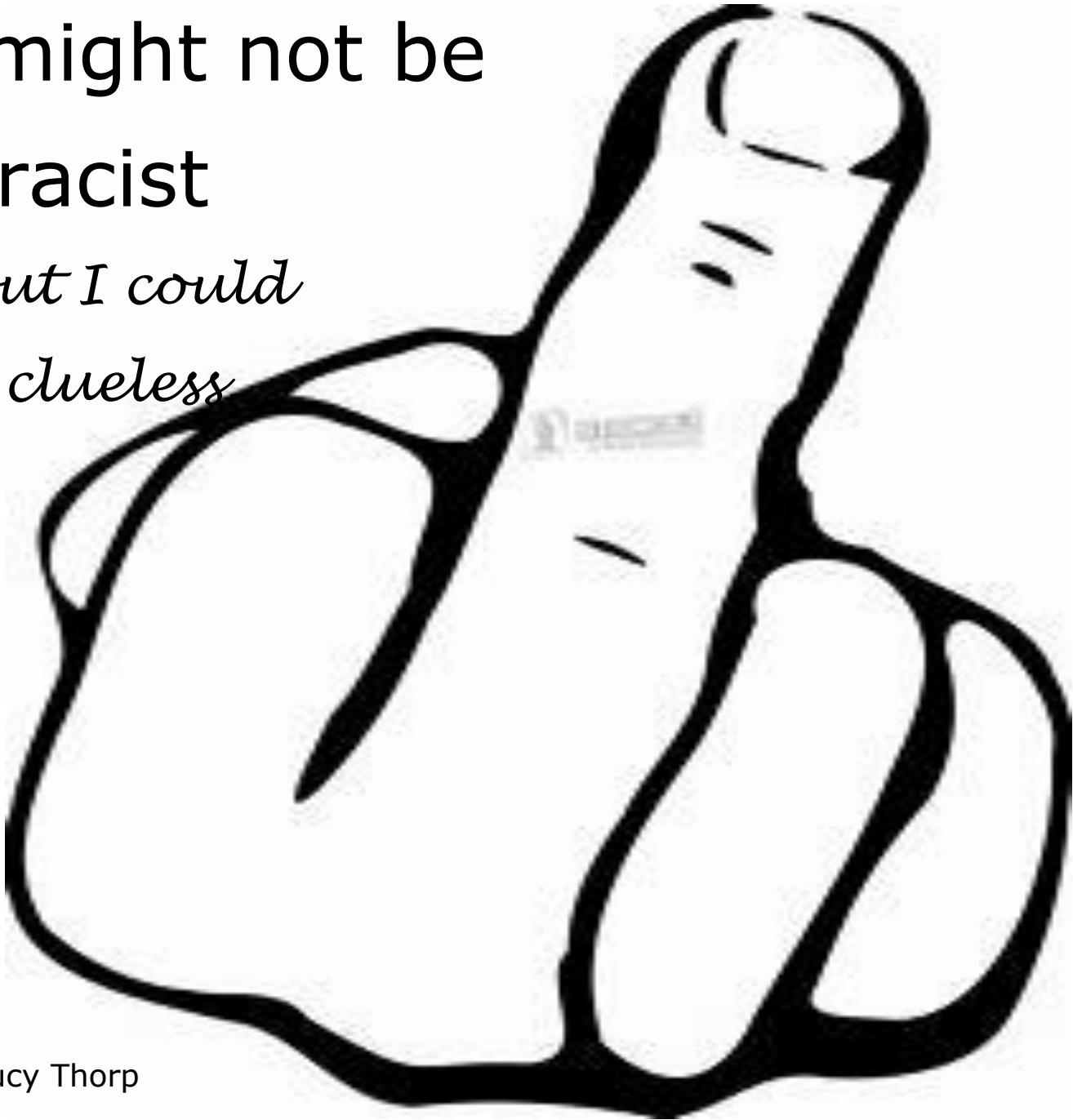
Mother and I arrived in the downtown center of our little resort town within the hour of hearing the first blare of horns and chiming of bells. There was hardly any room to walk; it seemed like everyone was screaming, laughing, shouting, and greeting all their friends and neighbors, whether they liked them or not. Eddie, the owner of the popular stand in the middle of town and a good friend of Mother and Dad, was giving away free ice cream and hot dogs. After we left Eddie's we walked or pushed our way several blocks south to the Midway Amusement Park where everyone was acting kind of crazy and I loved it. All the amusement rides were opened to anyone who wanted to climb on. Normally I was only given enough money for one ride but today was special and Mother let me go on any that she didn't think were too dangerous; of course, I wanted to go on all the others.

Huge celebrations erupted in cities all across America and throughout most of Europe. The largest crowd in the history of New York City's Times Square gathered to celebrate.

My thoughts today, 75 years later, run counter to a celebratory reaction to a war's ending. How much better would it be if we could one day celebrate the end of war? I would like to believe that our species will one day evolve to where war is unthinkable, where love, as a universal human trait, transcends all cultural and, particularly, religious differences that may remain. I must believe this in order to keep my faith in humanity. If we survive that long, it may take another two thousand years, perhaps more, but I chose to believe that it will, someday, come to pass.

I might not be
a racist

... *but I could
be clueless*



By Lucy Thorp

My mother often told a story about my foolishness as a 3-year-old that resulted in a family emergency.

"Lucy and her brother, Ricky, were playing a game they called 'Elevator'." (Daddy was an "elevator man" and the kids imitated

him). The closet was their elevator and Ricky was the elevator operator. Lucy was the passenger."

Our game went like this:

Ricky: "Elevator is ready ... what floor?"

Me: (entering the closet) "4th floor," and Ricky would close the door.

Ricky: "4th floor!" and he would open the closet door and I would walk out! *Hey, give me a break. I was 3, he was 4.*

Mom continued, "They would play this for hours but one day I



hear screaming and when I rushed in, there Lucy stood with part of her middle finger on the right hand almost severed."

I remember why that happened. I got into the closet and before I told my brother which floor I wanted to go to, I had a thought. 'What would it feel like if I put my finger

(the middle one on my right hand) into the door jam.' Door closed; I scream in pain the tip of the middle finger was hanging there.

Mother's story continues, "The lady in the apartment upstairs was a nurse and she did first aid on Lucy, but she needed a doctor's

care. Neither one of us had a car so I went to the telephone yellow pages to find a doctor that could come to the house. I got to the B's and a Doctor Brown said, 'Yes Ma'am, I can come to your house. But I must tell you Ma'am that I am Doctor Brown, colored.' I screamed at him "I don't give a shit if you're purple, my daughter needs help!"

I don't know how true this story is, but it was told often and, knowing my mother, it sounds right. I don't remember much after that except that after being reattached I would show people my middle finger on my right hand by sticking it straight up and saying proudly, "Look at my finger!" (I was 'flipping the bird' at three years old). Meanwhile, that finger is still funny looking.

I was 5 when we had moved to Denver, Colorado from the white-white state of Iowa. Denver was where my grandparents lived. They employed a black woman as a housekeeper twice a week. Except for Dr. Brown, who was only a faded memory, I had never seen a person who was not white. So, there we are, momma and me at Grandma's house. The housekeeper walked into the room and was as surprised to see us as we were to see her.

"Momma" I cried, "What is wrong with her?"

"Well," momma said, "nothing. She's just different. Like, you have blonde hair and Ricky's is brown. It's just different."

"Yes," I answered.

"And your eyes are green and Ricky's are brown. It's just different"

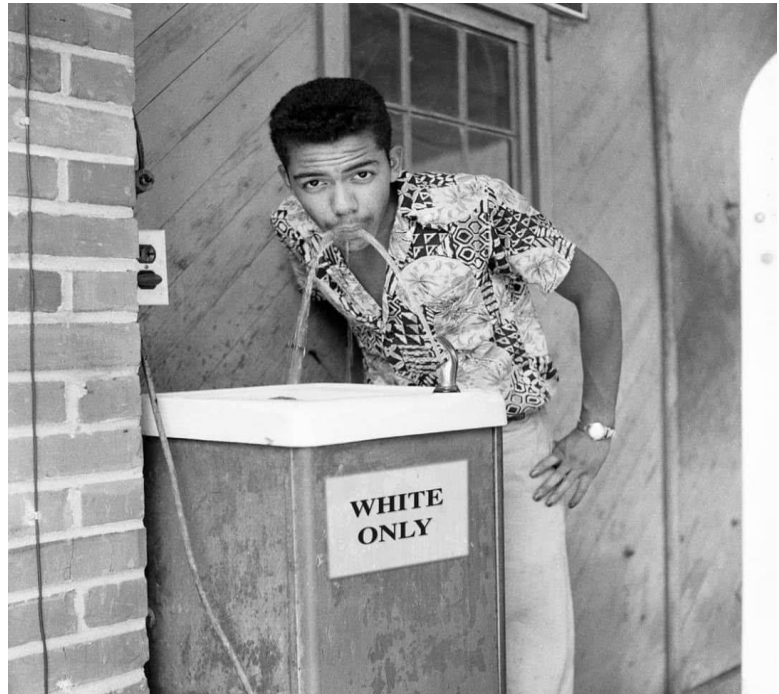
"Uh, huh."

"So, she has dark skin and you have light skin. It's just different."

"Yes ... Just different." Okay, that was settled and there was never another strained moment with the woman. I fail to recall her name, but she took good care of Ricky and me when we

stayed with Grandma and Grandpa when Dad was temporarily sent to Houston, Texas.

When second grade was let out, we went to Houston to spend the summer. I remember it was so hot the pool was the place to stay. I also found out that when it rained hundreds of icky frogs came out of the ground. My brothers thought it hilarious to fling them at me. The other thing I found out was the difference in



water fountains. We were at the park, it was HOT and I decided to partake of some nice, cold water out of a fountain. As I slurped happily a white man came up to me and said, harshly, that I was drinking out of the wrong fountain. Confused, I looked to where

he pointed. "COLORED" it read. Then he pointed across the way. "WHITE" it read.



"What", I asked, "is the difference?"

"One is for whites! One is for coloreds!!" he shrieked.

"So", I asked, "why the difference?" I kept drinking out of the same fountain. He stormed off. Not bad for an eight-year-old. (I probably should have asked him to look at my finger).

Meanwhile, I never saw another person of color until I was 10 years old. My neighborhood elementary school right across the street was all white. My neighbors were all white. My grandparents' neighbors were all white.

After seeing the movie *101 Dalmatians* all of us kids demanded a dog, so we became proud owners of an adorable St. Bernard puppy. Because it is my family, we decided to move to Golden, Colorado and my folks started Coberlin Kennels, breeding St. Bernards.

We were now in the country and only had two neighbors, an old, grouchy couple next door and a Japanese family, the Saiki's, whose house was behind our acre lot. Lorel was a year younger than I and had a younger sister and brother. We became fast



friends. Good thing. The next closest house was 2 miles away. Lorel's grandparents emigrated from Japan after WW1. Her father was born in Chicago, her mother in Hawaii. During WWII Lorel's dad was in the service (not sure doing what), but her Mom ended up in a notorious

'relocation' (a euphemism for 'concentration') camp in California. She wrote a book called "From the Lanai" about her childhood. Lorel did the illustrations. The Saiki's were a close family and I quickly became the "other daughter". They went on ski trips and camping trips; I went with them. My family was dysfunctional on many levels and the Saiki family was an anchor for me. Lorel was very creative, outgoing, smart and likeable. I was creative, smart and terribly shy. When she became a cheerleader, the other girls told her she couldn't be friends with me because I was not in their "crowd". She politely told them to "fuck off". It shocked the shit out of me, but I was so grateful.

It was many years later, after we had gone our separate ways, that I found out she never had a date in high school. Lorel was popular, pretty, smart and outgoing. But she was not white. The clueless part is that even though her dad used to joke that he was the "token minority" at Coors Brewery it never dawned on me that Lorel was being discriminated against. I wanted to *BE* her.

Meanwhile, my mom threw herself into producing the best dogs she could. So, the kennel produced 11 champions in 7 years. She also had Best of Breed winners. Our champion stud, Newton, was on the cover of Dog World Magazine (kind of like making the cover of Vogue). Mom was the founder of the Rocky Mountain Kennel Club that went on to become an AKC sanctioned dog show producer. Coberlin Kennels and my Mom were becoming well known in the dog world.

In the fall of 1965 the former world heavyweight boxing champion, Sonny Liston, came to the Kennel. He said he had really wanted to see St. Bernards and had heard that this was the best kennel to visit. My folks weren't home, so I took him out to the kennel.



Our kennel consisted of a large fenced in exercise yard with 8 gated pens. I took Sonny into the yard and when Newton saw him, the dog went nuts. The other dogs were agitated, but he

was lunging at the gate of his pen, trying with all his might to get out. I had never seen him act that way before. Newton was a

loving animal to a fault. He would hop into any car with an open door given the opportunity. I climbed over the fence (no way I am opening the gate) and Newton instantly calmed down, rolled over on his back and begged for a belly rub. I promptly obliged. I climbed back into the yard and Newton went bonkers once again. I apologized profusely, "Mr. Liston I have no idea why he is behaving like this. I am so sorry."

He replied, "There aren't many things in this world I am afraid of, but if that dog gets out, I am running like hell!" In hindsight, he was very gracious about the whole thing.

I told mom about the encounter and asked her why Newton behaved so badly. She looked at me and marveled, "Lucy, Sonny Liston is a VERY large black man and Newton has never seen a person like him. He was just trying to protect you from whatever threat he perceived."

"Does that make Newton a racist?"

"Of course not. His instinct is to protect you and he saw something today he had never seen before. He just needs to learn 'different'."

Different. And now, I am sure, *I am clueless*. How could I not see it?

Even though I lived in a white bread world, the television brought me all the strife and chaos of the following years. I saw the riots. I saw Freedom Riders and lunch counter sit-ins beaten and abused. I saw the Bloody Sunday attack when 23-year-old John Lewis led a march from Selma to Montgomery and got beaten senseless on the Edmund Pettis Bridge by Alabama state troopers. I saw Watts go up in flames. I listened to Martin Luther King's 'I Have a Dream' Speech. I heard Malcolm X demand justice. I saw Black Gold Medal Olympians raise their fists in protests. But, I thought, that is the south. That is LA. This is not the America I believe in. Even after John Kennedy, his brother Robert and Martin Luther King were murdered I had hope.

Clueless? Not just me. It seemed the people in the marches were so black. Not too many white people showed up to take the hosing, the dogs, the billy clubs.

The Police and the National Guard beat American citizens and white people tsked, tsked but, you know, they need to keep in



their place. On May 4th, 1970 four young Kent State students were gunned down by the Ohio National Guard during a Vietnam War protest. It was then that white people had a reaction against repression. Maybe, now, I was a little less clueless. But, very disturbing, was the idea that those four white students seemed more valuable than a whole bunch of Black students and Civil Rights Activists.

Late in my sophomore year my folks pulled the plug on the kennel and we moved back to Denver

and Lorel's family moved to California. It was 1969 and racial tensions were high. But, I was still in a white bread world. I finished my year at Thomas Jefferson High and the dividing line was Hampton Avenue. South of it.... rich. North of it.... not rich but very middle class. Very white. Nobody was poor. The next year I took advantage of the voluntary bussing program and went to Denver's East High School. It was a beautiful, very old building in the inner city, right across from a city park with an enrollment around 1200 students. 85% were Black, 10% Hispanic and the remainder, me, were white. I was very liberal and so I wanted to be in the minority and see what it was like. I had no problems with the black students. The Hispanic guys liked to get *uber* macho and give the white girls, black girls and Hispanic girls a (little) hard time. In my case, my black friends would always jump to my defense. Years later a black coworker teased me that

they were just protecting the little white girls 'cuz we were so clueless. And, in the beginning I was clueless.

East High had a great principal and he made sure he knew every student. He was black as were most of the teachers. They treated their students with respect. East High had open campus lunch and students could go to the burger stand down the road and sit on the Esplanade in front of the school and had great conversations along with our burgers. When the police would come by and give us a hassle, the principal would chase them off. I had never had police ever hassle me and never ever at school. But they seemed to have a problem when white and black students were sitting around together talking and eating burgers. I was getting a little less clueless.

In my Senior year I had to work after school and so East High was out. I returned to Thomas Jefferson and what used to be a white bread world. Voluntary bussing was replaced with mandatory bussing. I was thrilled to find some of my friends from East High at Thomas Jefferson. Many of Thomas Jefferson students, parents and teachers weren't so thrilled.

One day I saw a teacher yell at a student, "Take your black ass back where you came from. We don't want you here!"



I was shocked and appalled. Black students had stood up for me when I was at East High. So, I found my backbone and went to the principal's office to let him know what I had heard. I was righteous and indignant and sure he would do the right thing.

"Damn right we don't want these niggers here." The pitiful excuse of a principal and human being responded, totally surprising me.

I was shocked and appalled and getting a lot less clueless.

Graduation and life went on. I married my ex (this is how I know you don't fall in love at 17). I divorced my ex and moved to Kansas City, Missouri because my folks moved there. I fell in love with my soul mate and 46 years later, I still am. We urban homesteaded a beautiful old house (built in 1908) that was in an "iffy" part of town. But it had leaded beveled glass windows, tons of solid oak wood and 3300 square feet for \$18,000. (In the suburbs that money bought a 1000 square foot, 2-bedroom shanty with one bath.) We sold it in 1981 to go into the grocery business in Concordia, Missouri. (Population 2100. Blacks.... 2 – and students at the Lutheran college at that!) and promptly went broke.

We moved back to KC into another integrated neighborhood. The only remarkable thing that happened was when our "friend and neighbor" Bob Berdella, was discovered to be a serial killer. He was white. None of our black neighbors were serial killers that we were ever aware of.



It was 1991 and we were on the verge of moving to Florida when along comes Rodney King being pulled out of his truck and beaten senseless by police. Video cameras were gaining popularity but not widespread like the cell phones today. We saw Mr. King being bloodied in an outrage of violence. I

was again shocked and appalled. How could anyone be treated that way? Yes, he was driving drunk, but how many times had my dad been pulled over driving drunk. In the olden days if you could afford a good attorney and if you were white you got away with a fine. My dad did it 5 times. He was never beaten. Then the police who beat Rodney were not convicted of anything. Nothing! I was shocked and appalled (AGAIN!). How could a jury see the video I saw and then find these awful men NOT GUILTY?

I was still clueless.

But now, I hope, we might have turned a corner.

In 2012 Trayvon Martin was killed in Sanford, Florida by a cracker asshole, George Zimmerman. Trayvon was short-cutting across a gated community with Skittles. Not really trespassing but George gunned him down. And, once again, because Florida adopted an idiotic, "Stand by your ground" law, the asshole went free. So, although a lot of people said "Enough!", it wasn't enough.

The litany of murder goes on: Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Eric Harris, Freddy Gray, Reshaun Washington, Anthony Green, Philando Castile, Atatiana Jefferson, Breonna Taylor and many, many more and then ...

George Floyd.

We all saw his murder. Suddenly, there are a cadre of white people who are as outraged as their black neighbors. They are marching with their black neighbors. They are being gassed and tased and taking rubber bullets with their black neighbors. Why the difference? Why did it not happen after Eric or Freddy or Breanna were killed?

For me it was that for the first time in my life I watched as a man was murdered. Over and over. On TV. He was not murdered by a foreign adversary in war, but by member of the police who are supposed to protect and defend their citizens. Crime? Possibly passing a counterfeit \$20 bill. I did not know that was a capital offence. Even more horrific, the killer looked straight into the camera phone that was recording him and smirked. That smirk screamed to me "So, whatch'ya gonna do about it?"

Black Lives Matter and America has responded.

White America has awoken to the realization – obvious as it may be – that if Black Lives do not matter then NO lives matter. People of color have the right to live day to day not worrying

about doing something 'while black'. Walking, driving, jogging, shopping, living.



Acknowledging others' equality does not diminish the privilege you already have. So, now we see Moms of all colors holding arms in front of young protesters to protect them. We have Dads of all colors with leaf blowers blasting tear gas back into the fascist thugs tossing the gas. We have Americans of all colors standing up for each other. We may,

finally, become neighbors.

I will do my best to no longer be clueless.

Most importantly, why did the thug who murdered George Floyd smirk as he knelt on his neck and choked the life out of him? Because the asshole in the White House told him he could.

To quote Barack Obama, "Vote!"



THE RELUCTANT RACIST – *not a porn story, maybe*

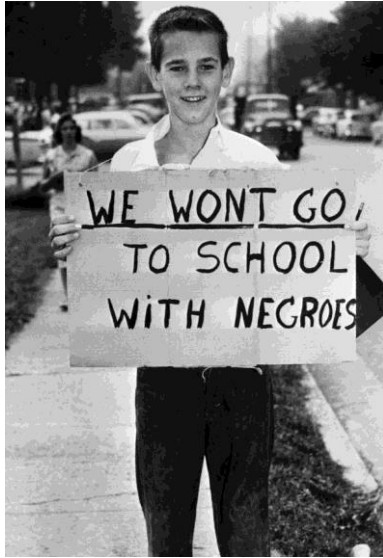
By Virgil Thorp

I am a racist. I know it and I do not offer any equivocation or excuse. I am white and will always be. I accept my race fomenting the despicable evil of slavery as well as being cultivated to believe in the notion of “superior” Christianity that allowed and defended that depravity. However deplorable Christianity and my ancestors might have been – and some currently are – I can only do my own small part in a special way to overcome the burgeoning ignorance and stifling fear of racism that has been a plague to humanity. Allow me to explain.

I am not color-blind. I see colors. I love colors. I also see differences. How remarkable the differences are!

I was nurtured to acknowledge the distinctions between my white, blue-eyed body and a person of dark-skin, dark-eyed persuasion. It was a “that’s them, we are us” type of identification. The fact that I find some dark-skinned, sloe-eyed females exotically lovely in





a stimulating, biblically carnal sense, does not excuse me from being – at heart – a racist, albeit a racist in reverse.

I must add that I did not support Kanye West in his bid for president even though some people would say that this labels me a racist (Although Kanye's campaign is more likely it is part of a devious strategic election disinformation plan to drain votes from Joe Biden and therefore help Trump by some devious Breitbart reptile). Kanye, like many

self-proclaimed Christian candidates before him, (mostly non-negro aspirants like current Texas senator Ted Cruz, former Minnesota congresswoman Michelle Bachman, TV God-huckster Pat Robertson and the late, hapless African American, Herman "suckie-duckie" Cain) declared that God told him he should be president.

After I stop laughing, I cannot support this nebulous, medieval idea of divine nomination. No, this can only be attributed to my atheism and concern for my country. I would, however, fully support Susan Rice, Val Demings, Kamala Harris and, especially, Stacey Abrams which attests to my open-mindedness and racial liberalism plus my support for Black Lives Matter, notwithstanding. I may be a racist, but I am also an atheist.



Ghettoization, or segregation, contributed to my racism and perhaps your racism, too. How could it not? The first discovery of – "oh, my, those people look different. Why?" – I am sure, made my education difficult. Not for me so much, as for my parents.

For one, I took the “love your neighbor” thing literally. It seemed so perfectly blended with the simple Sunday school lessons I had been indoctrinated with. However, it confused me when I figured it out – by myself, through dispassionate, empirical observation and not the bible – that despite Jefferson’s declaration, some of god’s creatures were not treated as equal – and never would be if bigoted white people had their way. I wondered, “because they were not neighbors, should they not be loved?” How can one explain to the little sponge the different and subtle nuances between black, white, good, bad, fear, prejudice and who God really loves and truly wants to reward without sounding like a monumental hypocrite?

In 1955, the newly purchased television in our house was little help as there was only stark black and white dots on a phosphorescent screen. Most personalities on variety shows were white (or should I say, blank?), which, with my limited experiences, I identified with ice cream, deliciously vanilla white!



One show, however, was never to be missed and that was “Amos and Andy”, the situation comedy ostensibly providing a glimpse into 1950’s negro life in America. Some say it was a *Stepin Fetchit*, *Jim Crow* segregated society that the powers that be wanted shown as a contented, complacent community – separate but equal. There were no Black Panthers then. We had not heard of Elijah Mohammad or Eldredge Cleaver, names that brought apprehension and dread for white folks. There wasn’t any Martin Luther King or John Lewis either. No, there was no Malcom X stirring up trouble by calling out “white devils” and Stokely Carmichael declaring that “black is beautiful!” It was very evident that the characters in the melodrama knew their place with a variety of safe role models like the decent Sapphire and the

caricaturized exaggerations such as Kingfish. I thought it was ironically interesting that their trials and troubles were very similar to white situation comedies.

Imagine that.

I was slowly becoming aware that there were other people different from the individuals I saw every day and at every venue from school to store to church. If I did see a person of another race, it was a brief glance as they wielded a broom or a mop. But I saw plenty of white men who had all the traits of the rascally venal and bombastic Kingfish.

The World Series was broadcast on the television that year and although the Brooklyn Dodgers and the New York Yankees had a smattering of colored players (Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier only a few years earlier, starting at first base for the Dodgers in 1947), the medium did not quite make the contrasts that were there, that evident. Maybe it was the size of the screen. It wasn't until the following year that I was at last old enough to attend a professional baseball game in person that I began to appreciate the starker contrasts and the results of mixing and shading.



On the trip to the stadium I felt like Ulysses on the long journey to Ithaca. What would it be like? What would I see? Would there be Charybdis hazards and Scylla monsters to evade? We traveled from the suburbs into the city, deep into the dark-dark center of the town where the beginning of the "white-flight" migration to the suburbs had started. It was my father, my older sister and

me riding in a tank of an Oldsmobile to 18th and Vine, Kansas City's old Municipal Stadium, where the negro league, Kansas City Monarchs once played but had since been displaced by the Athletics who had recently fled Philadelphia.

The Athletics were an old crew and, although designated as a major league baseball team, were essentially replacing the minor league, Kansas City Blues, an actual farm club for the New York Yankees where up-and-coming players got exposure to big league pitching until they were called up to the Yanks. Mickey Mantle, Phil Rizzuto and Billy Martin are some K.C. Blues players who became Hall of Famers when they were called up to New York and Bob Cerv and Roger Maris being two of the most notable Athletic players I recall who went to the Big Apple just as they reached their prime. The Blues moved the franchise to Denver and became the Bears. The negro league Monarchs quickly got pushed out of the way and, since Jackie Robinson broke the barrier, there was no longer a need for an association for negro athletes to play baseball and, just as quickly, were forgotten.



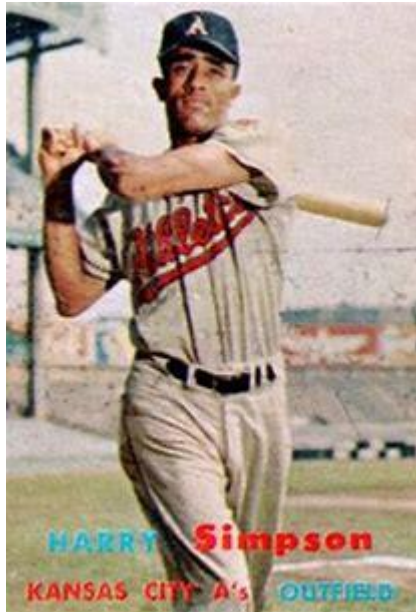
As we neared the stadium and traffic slowed with congestion, I noticed there were people like I had never seen before. Their skins were all shades of brown and some of them

were beckoning baseball fans to park their cars in their yards for 'a dolla'! I was probably wide-eyed at the strange looking people and like any juvenile, securely held my precious baseball glove I had brought in case any foul balls were hit my way very tightly and stayed close to my father's leg as he paid the man the money to watch our car.

I saw more dark people as we walked to the corner to cross the street to the stadium. They were lounging against a shack that had a sign on the roof declaring "Uncle Roo's Finest Ribs n'

Chik'n"! The aroma was salivatingly good and even though we had had supper before we left the house, the aroma made my mouth water and my stomach growl. I wondered if I'd see Amos or Andy or even Kingfish amongst the patrons. I will never forget the look my father gave me when I asked if we could eat there sometime as we stood on the curb waiting for the light to change. I would compare the shock on his face to biblical Abraham's when God told him to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Askance cubed!

One of the most interesting Athletic players had me very



confused. Not because he played baseball with a nickname of "Suitcase", but because his skin color was not the deep mahogany of the person who was watching our car or of the brawny Athletics' first baseman, Vic Power, but a noticeable "high-yeller". Why was the Herculean, statue-like Power so dark, almost onyx black, and the lanky Harry "Suitcase" Simpson so jaundicely light? Why daddy?

"Uh, uh, there's ... ummmm."

"A reason?" I interjected with a face full of sincere youthful curiosity. "How come?" I wanted to know.

"Those players are negros," he finally said. "Some are very dark, and some are very light, almost white. But they are still negros."

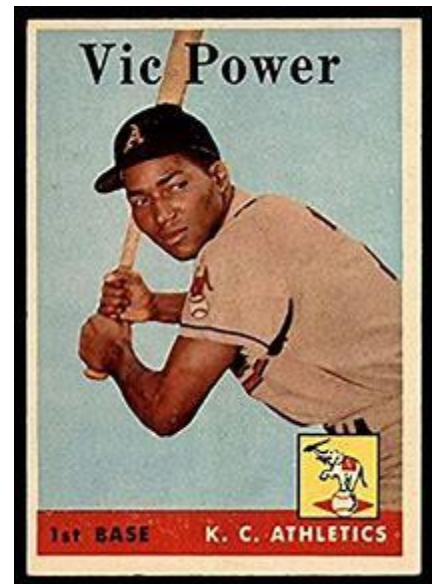
"Why, daddy?"

"Someday you'll understand," he said. "That's their race, they're not like us." he concluded and directed my attention back to the ballgame as one-eyed Jim Finigan took a called third strike down the heart of the plate to end the inning with the bases loaded.

Like any question coming from an adolescent concerning the birds and bees, his reply sounded like an evasion to me, but it

also seemed like somewhat a reality that children were not supposed to know or ask about and it was best not spoken of. I was going to experience many of those as I grew up. It only stoked my speculation and I still wondered to the how's and the why's. It wasn't until much later that I discovered the how of what 'slavery' really meant and why it was so shameful.

Harry "Suitcase" Simpson remained a negro (or "nigger" as many on my father's side of my family referred to the race despite the pale mocha shading from some unidentified pallid antecedent. Sometimes they said, "damn niggers get everything, and it is we who have to pay their way!"). I heard that "n" word at family gatherings all through the fifties and into the sixties. It made me wince at the witless vitriol that came out of their mouths that sometimes gave me kisses and prayed to an omnipotent god for material blessings.



Conversely, at the time, their pronunciation of the word "tomato" embarrassed me much, much more. They called the nightshade fruit, "Maters." It was said with hungry affection, but it screamed shitass illiteracy. It screamed like fingernails across a blackboard. It made me feel there wasn't any difference between our family and those they slandered as "stupid, lying, thieving, stinking niggers who think of nothing more than to have their way with white women." I realize now my family was deceived by a compulsion to feel superior and it made us obnoxiously stupid and yes, racists. Oh, yes, ignorance is, as ignorance mispronounces words.

That's the problem, the ignorance. The gall to make a judgement so general that it begs for repudiation. But it seldom is. Usually, there's a shrug and an acknowledgement that "some of them are

good people" ... with the condemnation of an entire race left hanging in the air and ignored like it wasn't there all the time.

What is the remedy? It is so easy and almost too simple. Get to know those you despise. Gandhi had it right, but I don't know if the movie overly glamorized it. He said to



Nahari, a Hindu man who confessed that he had murdered a Muslim infant during a genocidal riot, of how to evade the tortures of hell he was afraid he was condemned to for his heinous act:

"I know a way out of Hell." Mahatma began sagely. "Find a child, a child whose mother and father were killed and raise him as your own. Only be sure that he is a Muslim and that you raise him as [a Muslim would his own child]."

Wow, what an idea! Of course, that means knowing, having empathy, believing in the equality of yourself and those you give the side-eye to.

So, what is keeping you from doing that? Not the side-eye, but the equality. Is it what the Ku Klux Klan said about integration and "the separation and purity of the white race" at a cross burning rally in Mississippi just about that same time in the evening as we were singing "take me out to the ballgame" while we were standing for the seventh inning stretch?

"They want to throw white children and colored children into the melting pot of integration," the Grand Dragon shouted and

gestured with rancorous animosity. "Throughout of which will come a conglomerated, mullata (sic) mongrel type of people!"



On my mother's side of the family, my bushy-browed, first-generation, German grandfather one day when we visited the family farm, enquired if I had a girlfriend. I

answered with my typical shrug and said, "yes."

"Is she white," he followed with a deadpan expression?

"White! What?!?!" My total, sputtering bewilderment at the question tickled him so greatly he turned a considerably vibrant shade of crimson, redder in the face than I was as he shook with mirth and came close to spilling his ever-present glass, full of sweet iced tea. That he would think I would have a black girlfriend left me completely off balance and speechless. Would I ever fall for a black girl? Absurd! Watching her slowly take off her clothes, exposing her body to my eager eyes one lacy undergarment at a time? Inconceivable! Sleeping close, cuddled naked together on hot nights? Unthinkable! I guess it was funnier than I remember, but he was a notorious tease and I still miss him.

But thoughts come whether you want them to or not and gosh, maybe he did plant a seed. That seed sprouted after I had viewed the epic motion picture, *Mutiny on the Bounty* with Marlon Brando and the exotic Tahitian beauty, Tarita, discovering the wonderful differences between races and cultures in the heat of the tropical



paradise that is the South Pacific. So much desire along with more than a little envy. The seedling was nourished further when my father's silent business partner returned from a Tahitian vacation. His eyes waxed over moistly with fond memories as he recalled

his cocoa vision, "soft skin, they have brown skin, soft, velvet-brown skin, the Tahitian maidens have." He spoke like a drooling Yoda. It made me hungry, too.

That was so long ago but I know better now. I rejoice at the variety of humanity that there is, and I have gotten to know. It might have been my grandfather's suggestion that I made it a holy quest to become intimate with every racial archetype and mixture, to find out who they were and what we may have in common. What I found by doing that was a simple truth. Inside, we are all the same. We all have the same hopes. The same fears. The same desires. There is no better. There is no worse. There is an equal percentage of good people and assholes in every race. And on the outside? Well, *viva la difference!*

In spite of my exploratory fornications and serial cohabitations, it could be said that I remain a racist because the woman I chose to be a companion with and took home to mom and dad as my wife, was not black. She was not Latino, Asian or Polynesian. She was and is very blonde with willowy Scandinavian bloodlines (very

vanilla ice cream in her own way. Yum!). She is also an atheist and I am not certain my parents would have been happier with a Christian lady if her heritage were African American or not. I do not want to ask.

So, I must admit that I may still have racist tendencies that inherently will never go away, but I kind of like the variety and physical differences. And, as a solution to the KKK fears of racial contamination at the cross burning, I counsel using some form of contraception if you just want to screw for fun and are concerned with unintended, lasting memories and triangular garments that may require to be fastened on with a safety pin.



FICTION



Entanglement

By Ed Zillioux

PREFATORY NOTE

The 20th century saw two giant leaps forward in the annals of science. The first is well known, or at least recognized, in most societies throughout the world. It is, of course, the special and general theories of relativity developed virtually singlehandedly by Albert Einstein in 1905 and 1915, respectively. The other, quantum theory, is nearly as well known, but remains less understood, and is the product of many of the world's top physicists. The fictional piece that follows tells briefly how the shared, albeit incomplete, knowledge of these theories shaped

the relationship between two students, each privileged in different ways, born near the turn of the 21st century.

"Hi Venus! Are you ready for the next semester?", Carl asked upon seeing one of his Freshman classmates from their first semester calculus class at University of Miami.



"Hi Carl! I'm ready! I'm excited!"

"What did you do during Spring Break?"

"Oh, I had a lot of fun, but I was also reading a lot to get prepared for second semester."

"I normally read a lot too, but I was glad to get away from all that during the Break. I had a blast! What are you preparing for? Do you know what you want to do after college? We didn't get to know each other during the first semester." Carl was just making conversation with a pretty girl.

"Of course, we didn't. We were only in the one class together and you sat in the back row while I was in the front. I'm going into the sciences. I think I want to be a physicist."

"That's pretty definite. You sure you want to be a scientist?"

"As sure as I know that space and gravitational field are the same thing," Venus threw this out simply because she wanted to get rid of this guy and figured this might do it.

"Wow! That's Einstein! That's the General Theory of Relativity! How do you know about that?"

"Well, why shouldn't I? I might ask you the same thing."

"But, but, I mean...uh, I mean you're a girl," Carl blurted out.

"Bingo! At least you got that right. My mother is an astronomer. I grew up with science all around me. And, by the way, your fumbling around about my sex would cause my mother to brand you as a male chauvinist pig! I understand she used that phrase a lot back in the 60's."

"I'm sorry, Venus, honest I am. That was just stupid of me. It's just that I never met a girl before that I could talk to about this stuff."

"So, what rock have you been living under?"

"I grew up on a small farm in north-central Florida. My mom and dad were the owners and co-managers with about six to eight employees, depending on the season. They were very good at what they did and ran a successful operation. It was always a given that I would go to college and there was always enough money, so I won't have any student debt to worry about."

"That sounds like a neat way to grow up, Carl. I'd love to talk to you some more about it, but, getting back to our original subject, I'm even more curious about how you got interested in Einstein's theories on relativity."

Carl laughed. "My dad was always taking me over to the local library. Both he and mom read a lot and they taught me to love

reading. When I was in High School, I discovered Richard Feynman. The first book I read by him didn't teach me much about science, but it was really funny. The name of it was, *Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman*. Here was this guy who won a Nobel Prize in physics, yet he had this wonderful sense of humor. I laughed all the way through it. After that, I got hold of all of his books that weren't too deep for me and began to learn a little about what the theories of relativity and quantum mechanics were about, of course at a very basic level."

"That's a wonderful story, Carl. I'm sorry I misjudged you. Feynman was one of the founders of quantum mechanics, but a lot has happened since he died. Have you read any of the more recent literature for lay audiences?"

"Not much, only what I've picked up in some magazine articles."



"Well, if you don't mind, I could suggest some really great sources. But, please be honest with me. I'll back off immediately if you feel like I'm being pushy," Venus said in all sincerity. But then she added with a grin, "After all, I'm only a girl."

Carl laughed, "I deserved that last remark. But no, I will gladly accept your suggestions."

"First off, just type into your computer, 'Brian Greene Lectures', and then take your pick. Greene is a physics professor at Columbia University and a superb teacher. And then there's a book by Carlo Rovelli, entitled *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics*, that has just been translated from the Italian, and guaranteed to blow you away. By the way, what classes are you taking in the second semester?"

"I'm taking World History, a course in English Composition to spruce up my writing skills, an elective I haven't decided on yet, and Advanced Calculus."

"Oh good. I'm taking Advanced Calculus too."

"Great! We could do our homework together," he smiled. How did you make out with last semester's Calculus?"

"I got an 'A'," Venus said with a tinge of pride, since there was a high drop-out rate.

"Me too," Carl said offhandedly.

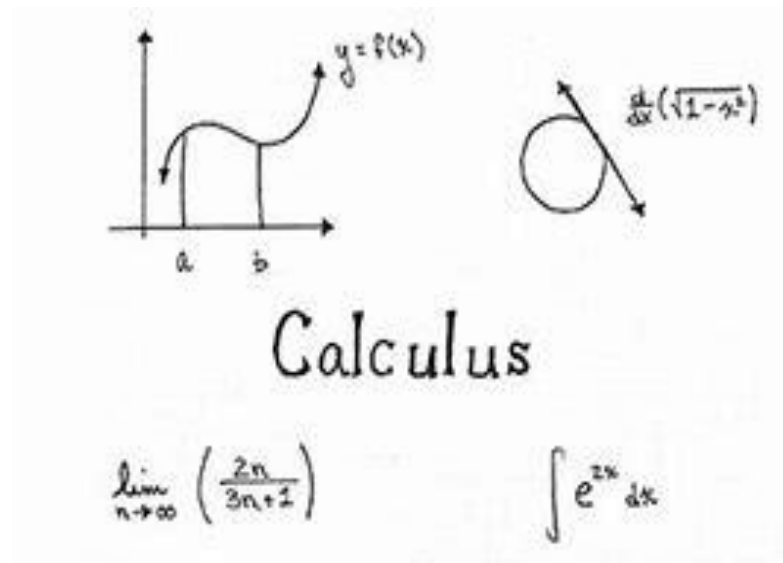
Venus thought: 'I *like* this guy'. Then she said, "I have to get back to the dorm. Tomorrow's going to be a busy day. I've really enjoyed talking with you."

"Same here. See you in class," Carl said and was gone. Venus was left wondering, was his "same here" referring to getting to his dorm, anticipating a busy day, or that he enjoyed talking with me?

Classes didn't start until Monday of the following week. Carl's history class started his day, followed by Calculus at 10. At 9:58 he walked in and spotted Venus, as usual in the front row, and took the desk beside her. "Good morning," he said in a low tone.

"Hi Carl, I was wondering if you'd make it on time."

The instructor was walking in, leaving him just enough time to ask, "Can we do lunch? I want to talk to you." Venus answered



with a vigorous nodding of her head.

Following class, they walked across campus to the student union for a quick lunch. Venus started with, "It's been almost a week since we talked, did you manage to complete your course..."

"Yeah," he interrupted, "we can talk about that later, but first I want to thank you for your recommendations. As soon as I returned to my dorm, I looked up Carlo Rovelli on Google – that guy is amazing! Did you know he was listed as one of the 100 most influential global thinkers? I ordered his book immediately and got it delivered on Saturday. I spent all that night reading it and when I finally woke up, I started reading it again. And his writing is so lyrical parts are almost like poetry."

Venus was beaming. "Yeah, that's exactly how I felt. But you better start eating, or you'll be late for your next class. Have you thought anymore about your goals?"

"That's the other thing I want to talk to you about. I've always been interested in engineering, probably because I worked so much with engines and various mechanical machinery on the farm. But now I'm thinking more about space engineering."

"Wow! That's my father's field. He loves what he does. But there are so many branches. Have you considered what specialty you would focus on?"

"Well I'm still pondering that, but, so far, astronautical engineering might be where I'll land. I've got plenty of time to decide."

They finished lunch and continued to chat as Venus headed for her first physics class. Carl walked with her, immersed in conversation until Venus broke through by saying, "This is where my class is. You better get going. You don't have much time."

"What do you mean? I'm here. Oh, didn't I tell you? I picked physics as my elective."

In a spontaneous gesture, Venus threw her arms around his neck. "You know damn well you didn't tell me; you bum! Welcome to the real world!"

And so, Venus and Carl became a fixture around campus. They studied together, laughed together, argued together, and eventually shared sex together. The latter happened first after they attended a Hurricanes football game. At a particularly exciting play, Carl said, "I'd like to tackle you like that."

"Well, I might have something to say about that."

"What would you say?"

"Try me and see. I honestly thought you'd never ask. And don't worry, I'm on the pill."

That night in a little motel on U.S. Hwy 1 in South Miami, after being confronted with a desk clerk who asked if they were going



to spend the whole night, and Venus complained with a giggle, "What did you do, take me to a hot sheets place?" they barely got into the room before their clothes were off and they jumped into the shower together, taking special care in washing each other's bodies until Carl's erection kept getting in the way until he put it away where it was always meant to be.

The following morning they sat smiling at each other over a breakfast of fried plantains and eggs in the diner next door. "Now I really know you," Carl said.

"And I you, every square centimeter," Venus smiled back.

"Sorry about the venue, next time I'll find something more regal."

"Oh, you already think there's going to be a next time? She asked with feigned indignation. Then quickly added, "You know I'm only kidding, Carl. I know a place on Key Largo," She offered. "It's a

bit pricy but we could split the tab so it wouldn't blow our budgets."

"I think we need a full weekend for that," Carl said.

"How about after midterm exams?"

"Perfect," he replied.

Weeks later, Carl and Venus made love in a villa on Key Largo. Dawn was emerging as they laid back in the total bliss of sexual exhaustion.

After a long moment of stillness and utter silence, Carl looked at Venus and asked, "What are you thinking?"

She said nothing at first, but then turned and looked at him with a very serious expression and said, "Carl, do you remember the lecture on entanglement?"

He said, "Of course. I could never forget it. The closest thing to a miracle in physical science."

"Tell me again," her voice, he thought, sounded odd and distant.

"The theory implies that two particles, say photons, sometimes interact in such a way that they form, in a true sense, one system, so that whatever happens to one particle is instantly reflected in the other regardless of the distance between them, that is with no mechanism or possibility of information transmission between them. Einstein had a difficult time accepting this, calling it 'spooky action at a distance'."

"Yes, but Einstein was unable to falsify the theory and he in effect laid out its foundation in his own theories of relativity when he forced us to change how we think about nature."

"Ok, what are you saying?"

"Well, I'm thinking, maybe we have not yet gone far enough. Our bodies also are composed of subatomic particles and under certain conditions perhaps these particles may interact..." Her voice trailed off and she smiled at Carl, "Remember, what is reasonable doesn't always work. I believe that our minds and



bodies and thoughts and consciousness itself are intrinsically and inseparably and permanently in a fixed state of entanglement." As she looked at a dumbfounded Carl, she couldn't contain herself any longer and broke out in peals of laughter.

Carl finally got it. Laughing himself, He scooped up Venus's body in a passionate embrace that defied time and space and reality itself.

POETRY

pulse

only voices in the dark

I wake up to a blue light,
my phone's warning of a news alert:
50 people are dead

I rub my eyes and grab my glasses
because I must have read that wrong:
50 people are dead

I start opening articles, grogily
hoping to find a lower count, but
50 people are dead

it wasn't until the third link
that I read the whole title:
50 people are dead
in an Orlando gay bar, club,
a safe place, accepting, and
50 people are dead
because one man's hate
can shoot a machine gun into a crowd until
50 people are dead

in a place they came to be themselves,
their acceptance was met with violence and
50 people are dead

my community is grieving again
striving for strength to not sink in the
stats and
50 people are dead

already politicians offer
prayers and thoughts but
50 people are dead



they blame a religion
to not talk about hate, but
50 people are dead
for being gay
and there are “christians” celebrating
that
50 people are dead
“because at least they were perverts”
because gay means it’s okay that
50 people are dead



conservatives are quick to complain
“don’t politicize this tragedy” cause
50 people are dead

but they’ve politicized gay lives,
governed their love, but now that
50 people are dead
this is not about politics.
blame Islam and ISIS, not guns, but
50 people are dead



the deadliest mass shooting
and the US can only acknowledge that
50 people are dead
more injured, struggling
and their family can’t help them because
50 people are dead
but it’s still illegal for a gay man
to donate blood



50 people are dead

one man, two guns,
and he didn’t break a law until
50 people are dead

Only 49 people were killed, but I wrote this when everything was still in chaos. I am not going to edit the poem, because this is a poem about the emotional reaction to finding out your community was attacked. This poem was written while sirens were still singing, and my heart is no less broken now that they’ve stopped. -Jade Asta Quinn

Do you dream?

By Gale Baker

Do you dream? What do you dream about?
When I was in my 30's and 40's I would dream these magnificent dreamscapes with lots of action and insight.

I was never in these dreams,
just an observer.

I would swear in my sleep
that I would recall them so
I could put them into a
script when I awoke.

BUT - when I woke
up, I could never
quite get the plot again.
I still dream a lot.

Now my dreams are about people. Sometimes they are actors
getting ready for the curtain.

Sometimes, they are friends at an outdoor affair or we are
embarking on some quest. Sometimes, I am not quite sure where
they are, but I am always with them and we are partaking in
these actions together. They are my friends and we converse
quite comfortably. They are an important part of my life.

However, when I wake up, I realize that I don't know them at
all. I try to bring their faces to mind to see if I am inventing a
likeness of someone very close to me. But I find that is not the
case.

Then, I think perhaps these are an amalgamation of
acquaintances and faces I have seen in my life and travels, and
that I have now personalized them in some way.

Any way. How about that Gohmert? I have asked myself how he
and certain others I see speak ever got elected. Can his
constituents think he is smart or perhaps just smarter than them?

COMEDY CORNER

THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE

By Scotty



Hi! My name is Scotty.

I am a Shetland Sheep Dog, or Sheltie. Waffles is my best friend. Have you ever seen a Shetland Sheep Dog?

Our ancestors, or great great great great great great great grandparents lived in the Shetland Islands, north of England, near Scotland. That was hundreds of years ago. It is very cold there. That is why we have so much fur, to keep us warm.

Do you have grandparents?

My best friend is Waffles.

We are little Collies. Waffles is the most beautiful dog in the world. She is called Waffles because of her colors, tan like an uncooked waffle and brown like an overcooked one.

I am black and white. Waffles has a furry white mane on her chest and white feet, like me.

Because the Shetland Islands are very cold, animals there grow lots of fur to stay warm. Dan and Steve keep our thick fur brushed to look good.

Little sheep live there, too. They are small, like Shetland Sheep Dogs and Shetland Ponies.

Have you ever seen or ridden a Shetland Pony?

The sheep's wool keeps the shepherds warm in winter.

My ancestors would herd these sheep together for the Shepherds. They could run circles around the sheep all day without getting tired.

Shelties also bark if something threatens the sheep, like a wolf or big cat.

Waffles and I chase balls for Dan and Steve.

It is a lot of fun! We circle around and chase anything that moves. We can run and jump for balls all day long.

Our instinct is to herd animals together.

Do you know what an instinct is? It is something you are born with, like seeing or smelling.

This story is about our camping trip in the Great Smoky Mountains.

Steve's girlfriend went with us and brought her little Sheltie, Haley. Haley is really cute, just blond and white without the dark colors like Waffles and me.

Haley doesn't run fast or catch well, but she is very sweet and likes to run in circles when we play ball.

Do you like to play ball?

Dan and Steve put up a tent big enough for all six of us.

Susan got some wood and made a campfire. We ate hot dogs and kibble.

During the night, we could hear animals outside the tent.

Waffles, Haley, and I sleep with our butts touching.

If something comes from any direction, one of us tells the others. We felt safe all together in the tent: Even with the noises from the woods.

Have you ever camped out?



After sleeping most of the night, the sun started showing through the tent.

I really needed to go potty and so did Waffles and Haley.

Steve unzipped the door to the tent. When we looked out, there were deer all around us.

When they saw us, they took off running through the woods.

All three of us chased them. We chased them for hours and finally came to a clearing in a field. There were woods all around us.

There were dozens of deer, all loose and running in every direction.

Have you ever seen a deer run into the woods?

I was afraid a wolf or bear would hurt them, so I started to circle as many as I could to bring them together. I kept looking at Waffles and Haley, and we worked together.

Finally, we had all of the deer together, where we could watch out for them and keep them safe.

I realized that I was really thirsty. All three of us were hot and drooling. We were all really thirsty for a drink of cold water.

But we had to keep the sheep safe. Whenever a deer would try to leave, we three Shelties would chase it back to the herd.



Do you know what a herd is?

It seemed like forever before anyone came toward us. The park ranger had Steve and Dan riding in his truck with him. Susan drove behind them, in our van. A few deer were frightened by the truck. They began to run toward the woods.

Waffles outran them, and I circled to help bring them back to the other deer. Haley ran her heart out to keep them from going the other way.

I looked at Waffles and then Haley. We all knew we had saved the Deer from the dangers in the woods. Our family would be soooo proud of us.

Are your parents proud of you?

When they were out of the truck, the ranger yelled at Dan and Steve. Susan was laughing. Then Steve and Dan laughed. Finally, the ranger laughed and said, "I am supposed be very mad at you for letting your dogs loose, but this is one of the best things I have ever seen. I can finally count how many deer we have in the park."

He got us some ice water, and it was awesome. We had to stay on leashes the rest of the day.

In the evening we made a fire, ate hot dogs, and roasted marshmallows on sticks.

Have you ever roasted a marshmallow on a stick fire?

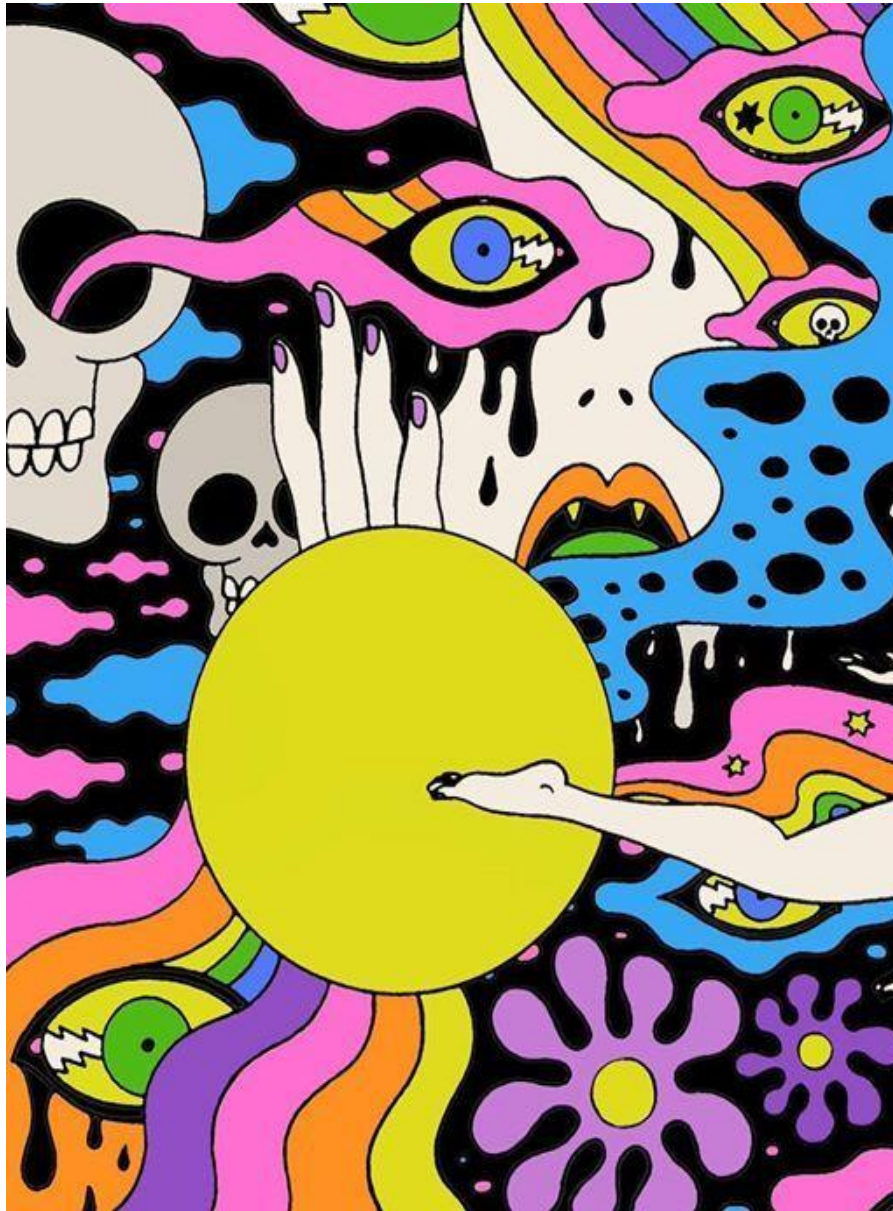
Dan, Steve, Susan and the Park Ranger talked for hours while we all watched the fireflies.

Have you seen a firefly flash his light?

I never had so much fun! It was the best day of my life! We were so tired we fell asleep without playing ball.



Scotty (aka Dan Vignau)



My Second Most Favorite Leg

By Virgil Thorp

The black marks the nurse drew on my leg with her Sharpie indicating the extent of the cellulitis infection are faded and almost worn away this

morning, a mere week after I had painfully limped into the emergency room and told the nurse at the desk, "I think I have a problem." The way her eyes bugged-out at the sight of what some people could mistake for a purple bucket with toes on it, told me there was more of a predicament than I had thought.

Originally, the sharpie marks appeared artistic, similar to Japanese Calligraphy with graceful swaths and curves



along joints and muscles. Now, I see only a few faded marks just below my knee and along the side of my foot where my arch once was. I did not know that outlining the infection was standard operating procedure for cellulitis but it made a lot of

sense at the time and even though the nurse did her best not to make it tickle, I wasn't able to control the reflexive response and some of the lines did turn out a little herky-jerky around my toes. The line was a gauge to tell whether we (that is me and the medical team) were winning or losing the battle of septicity. It was a good sign that the discoloration had retreated from the lines that had caused me so much discomfort and anxiety.

There were other marks beside the Sharpie ones. The bruises, the needle tracks and other marks from IV's, the adhesive tape residue, the venous blood draws and every blood-sugar prick from the swarm of angry bees, all masked, gloved and plastic shielded, that lined up outside my room every night from 2am to 6am. Every day, for four hours, they patiently wait and take their turns to disturb any dream I may have been enjoying. A Poke here, a pinch there. Buzz, buzz, buzz. Raise your arm, make a fist. Thump, thump, thump. Where's that vein? Little





prick, little prick, just a tiny, little stick. I am not awake or is this suddenly a bad dream. I cannot get away, no matter how I try!

What? No Brownie! I'm on a special diet? Is this food edible? Was it ever alive? These French fries are so numb there isn't enough ketchup in Vero Beach to save them. Dead food. Dead turkey sausage, dead herbed pork chop. I've eaten shoe leather more tender and tastier than this. I'm surviving on club sandwiches, fresh fruit and baked Lay's chips. I want more coffee damn it. And

another day runs into night. Tatyanna brings me fresh ice water in a Styrofoam cup with a smiley face and a 'rise n' shine' message. Thank you Tatyanna, you're so sweet.

One bee leaves another bee enters. The light from the television makes her mask and face shield appear like an Arthropodic mandible. More pokes, more pinches. Buzz, buzz, buzz. Sometimes two enter with tandem taunts. Both arms are being occupied and I feel like Christ with an elevated foot. Index finger numb from blood sugar pricks. Can't find the vein and a series of needle thrusts

penetrate my skin in vain but not the vein, damn it.
Ouch! Little black bee so afraid she hurt me. Latex gloves pat my arm and the constant yawn of CNN rocks me back to REM sleep. And no honey, it does not hurt you more than it hurts me and I'm sorry I scared you.

I am getting sleepy; person, woman, man, camera, tv.
Repeat the chant and all your troubles will doze away.
Say it right and get bonus points, maybe some ice cream. Take me home country roads. Buzz, buzz, buzz, and another pair of bees begin with the torments again. Beware the bees in the purple scrubs, they're the blood suckers. Antibiotic drips into my arm to fight the rampant bacteria eager to consume my leg. I have more holes in me than St. Sebastian. That last IV the bartender bees gave me was so good I believe I'll have another and what the hell, why not make it a double!

The reality is that there are few things more boring than to sit in a chair with your leg propped up on a surface that is "heart-high" and not move all day. Tick, tock, tick tock. I'm just fortunate that I don't have an itchy cast that I can't get under to scratch.

Days have passed, tissue is returning to normal size and color. At last, the ordeal becomes a distant memory and I think I'll mow the yard. I love you, my second most favorite leg.



A REMOTE



RELATIONSHIP

By Bert Mautz

"Shit, where did I put the damn thing?" Struggle out of the breathing mask, fumble to hang it on the lamp in the dark. Nope, not under my pillow. Must be on the floor. Gotta turn the light on. "There it is. Goddamn it, the lid is off, where have the batteries rolled to? Under the bed for sure. Yup all the pieces. Joe and Mika in a couple minutes." Chilly in here this early in the morning, so turn off the stupid fan. Now where the hell is that control?

Joe and Mika begin their show with a twenty-five, or so minute segment. All the rest are six, or eight, or less, separated by lots and lots of commercials. The same asinine commercials you've seen countless times before, and will see countless times again, *unfuckingbearable*, so we mute the suckers, or go to the weather channel. And come back when the screen goes to black and then flashes a brilliant orange "Morning Joe" name plate.

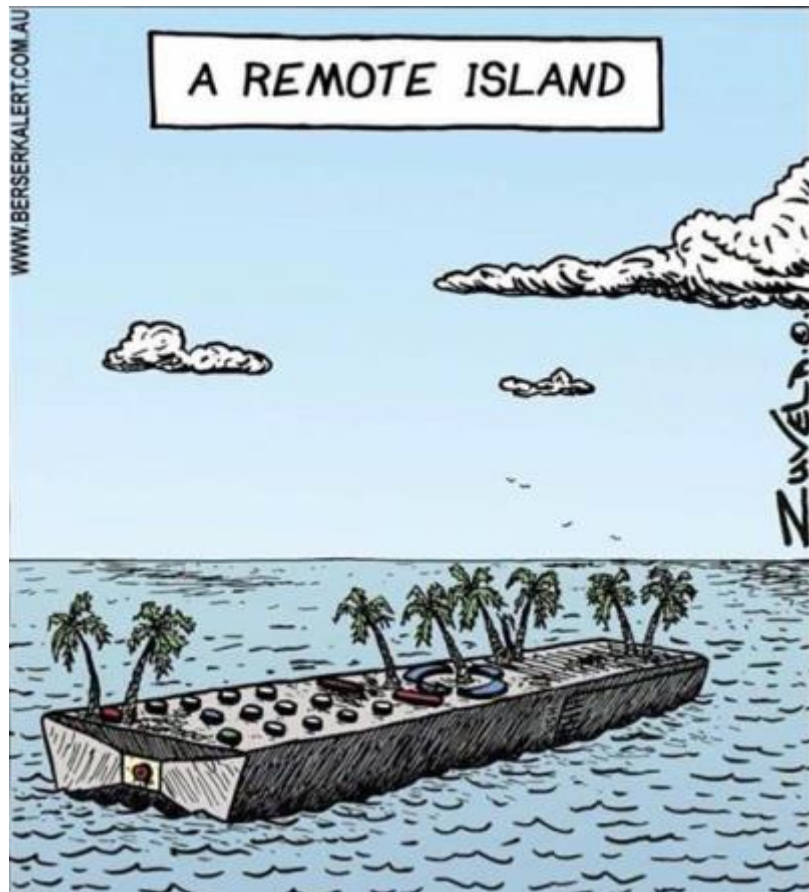
Obsessing on not missing a second of their return, one finds himself clutching the remote, index finger poised above the mute

button, gripping the remote so hard you find yourself hurting your hand with its sharp edges and corners, but you won't miss a second. Emerging from the bedroom to begin the morning rituals of coffee in the kitchen with "Morning Joe." The day begins with more remotes. Get the television going and the ceiling fan, each with its own remote. At least these are not lost among the sheets and pillows.

Later in the morning, customizing my working environment with the addition of music brings me to confront another, yup, another remote. The Bluetooth sound system is supplied via iPad and YouTube subscription. On/Off and volume are controlled by remote, of course. I like real performance volume level Miles Davis on trumpet. That is too loud for phone conversations, so just

when everything is about right, I get a call. "Can you turn down that music?" she insists. "Sure, gotta set the phone down and roll over to the table where the remote is." "Damn it to hell, just when I had everything cookin'."

Hence emerges an habitual behavior. We now watch television clutching the goddamn remote in one hand and a Black Bourbon Manhattan in the other. Watching Nicolle Wallace's "Deadline White House" in mixed company has implications for possession of the remote. My house, so the muted commercial rules apply,



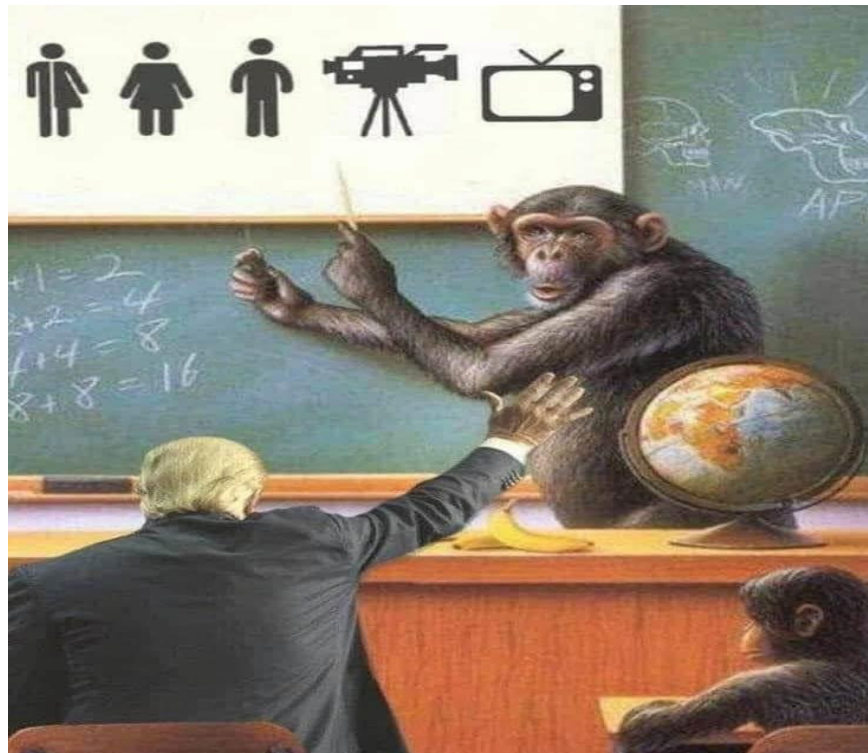
but try getting the volume just right for everyone. "A little louder, please, I can't hear what she's saying."



Predictable as days begin with a remote in hand, so days end, fumbling aggravations included. The behavior patterns involve sleep's onset while TV continues playing at low volume. Sports broadcasts are a virtual mothers' lullaby. Awaken by the flashing screen images, hours later somewhat startled, pawing about the quilts and pillows, "Shit, where is the damn remote?"





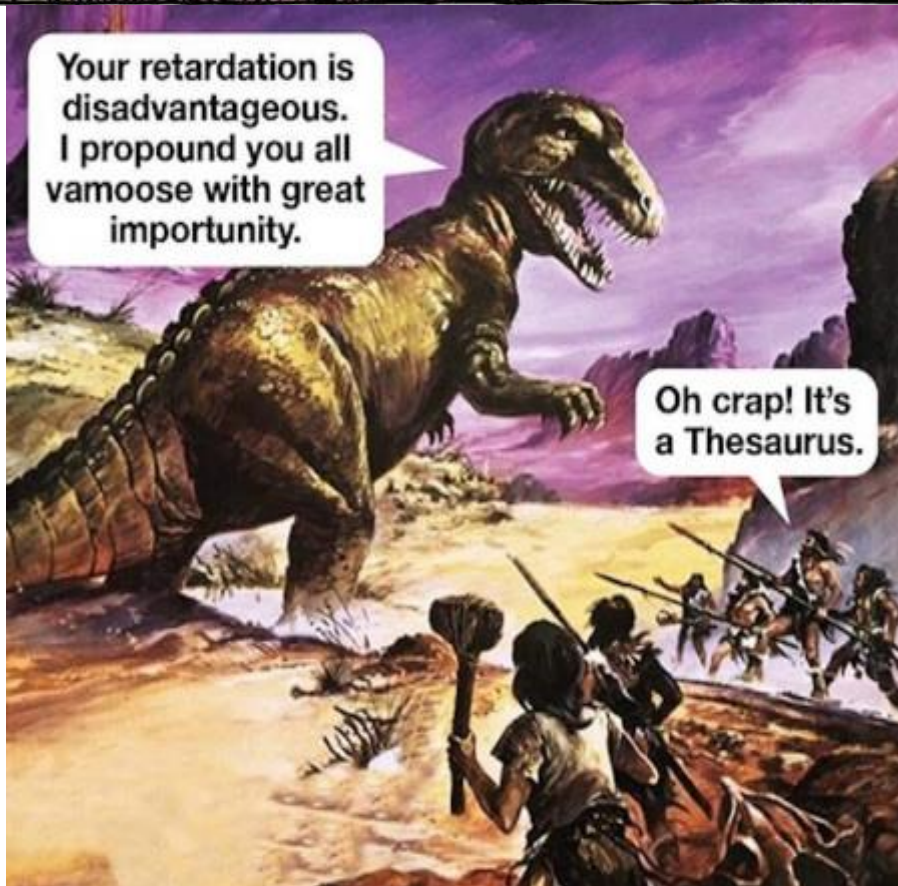


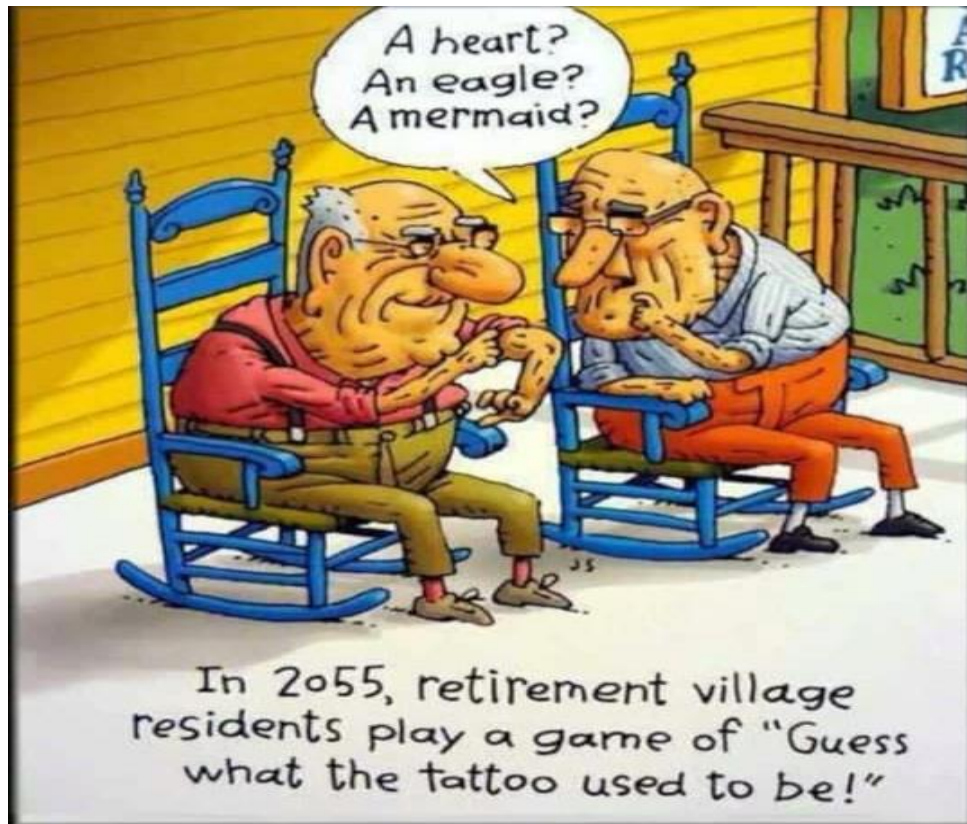
C'mon. I hardly think we need to mention that these rights also pertain to transgender citizens when we're writing it in a roomful of men in high heels and wigs.

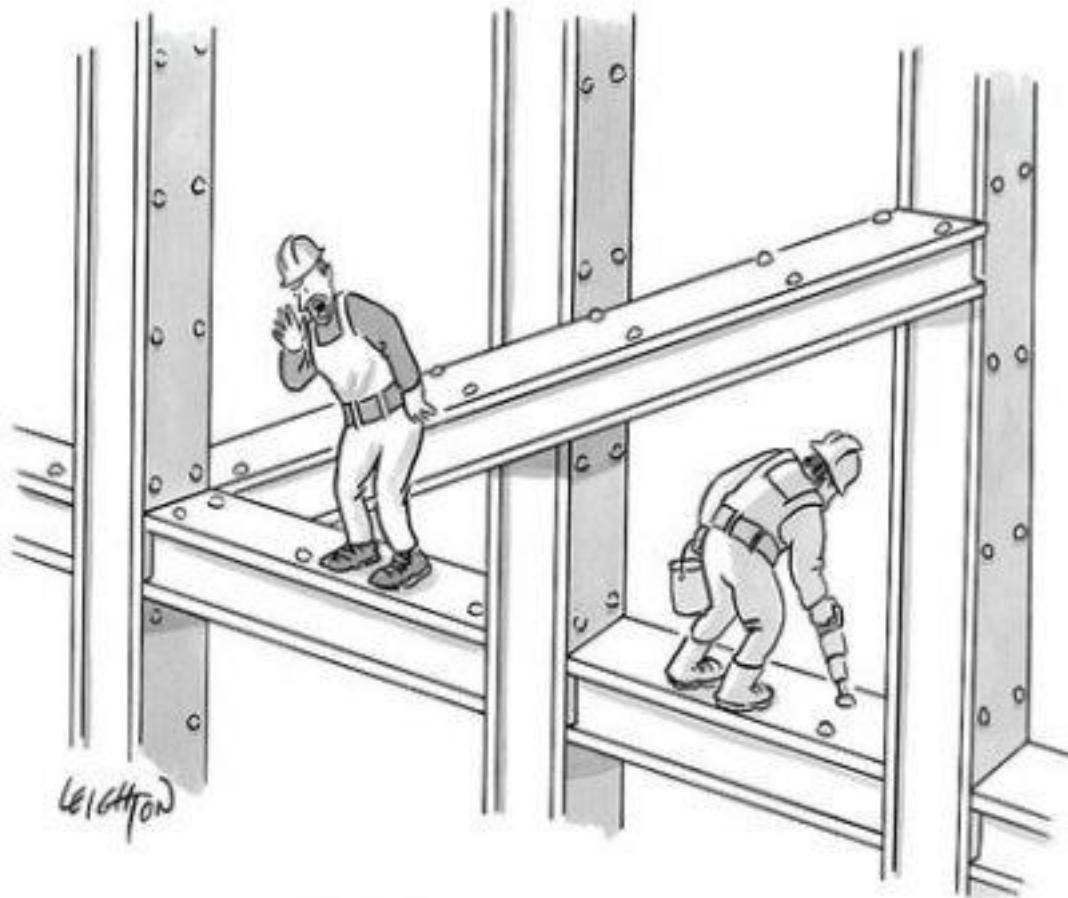


Your retardation is disadvantageous. I propound you all vamoose with great importunity.

Oh crap! It's a Thesaurus.







"Escher! Get your ass up here."



BE SEEING YOU