

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.

Vol.6, No.4

July / August 2021

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

INTRODUCTION

Okay, here we are. It is the middle of 2021 and most of us are still kicking despite a year of preventative quarantining. Every day reveals more and more of the shit storm surrounding the former guy and how he attempted – and still attempts – to betray every sentence, line and period in the Constitution. Presently all we can do is watch him and his enablers impersonate a group of tantrum-throwing 4-year-olds.



CPAC – The Conservative Public Action Conference has a war on heresy (that means us atheists, too). Dallas, Texas was the most recent collection of perverts, misogynists and racists at a republican clown and stupidity exhibition show I have ever seen. And, believe me, I’ve seen my share of perversion and know it when I see it.



It is so weird, I thought CPAC met annually, that is, once a year. So far in 2021, they have gathered in Orlando in February and Dallas in July. Do they schedule one whenever Trump needs cash? They’re pitiful. They cheered at the news that Biden’s Covid vaccination goal was falling short of 70 percent! What assholes!

For this mid-year issue of the Aware Ones of the Treasure Coast Journal, we have several articles that illuminate this continuing insurrection and seditious trend of the 30-percent that seems to be severely brain

damaged fellow citizens. Dan Vignau discusses “What is Truth” in the Commentary section. Yashi Nozawa contributes an interview with an ideological “true believer”, a failed Japanese Kamikaze pilot whose ethos bears an uncanny resemblance to the January 6 Capital rioters’. I revised a commentary written in 2002, just after the 9-11 attack, for frightening 1-6-2021 similarities.

Not all the contributions are political, however (should I add “thank goodness?”). Bert Mautz has several contributions including a gracious look at how bar stools are catalysts for making friends of strangers. Jim Longo’s article on what he did during covid was the only Aware Ones’ contribution that was not too scatologically graphic for these pages and Ed Zillioux inspires us with a dark tale of ... what exactly; kismet, karma or Catholicism? Lastly, my dear wife of 45 (official!) years details the wonders of a disastrous spring trip to Kansas City and how she spent the next eight weeks. We should all buckle up. This horse we rode in on is still bucking!

Virgil



Virgil! Quick come see ... There goes Robert E. Lee! “Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah. Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah ...”

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>.

Interested free thinkers are welcome to join our tables and the fresh air at either Stuart's *Sandsprit Park* 3443 SE Saint Lucie Blvd, or *Flagler Park* (under the Roosevelt Bridge), where we gather every Friday *around* 11:00 am to share ideas and challenge your mind – masks optional if vaccinated. 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 Burkhart	Yashi Nozawa
Sandra Burkhart	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	

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Meetings

Friday gatherings: First Friday of month at Flagler Park (under the Roosevelt Bridge). All other Fridays, *Summits at Sandsprit* – 11 am gathering in the sun and fresh air of Stuart's Sandsprit Park. BYOB



Sunday Coffee – Meeting still in limbo Zoom. 11 am Zoom meeting. Contact Dan Vignau <vignaujdane@aol.com> to be included with the connection codes.

TC Secular Writers – Zoom social on Wednesday or Thursday evenings at 6:30 pm. For access, contact Dan <vignaujdane@aol.com> to be included with the connection codes. Resumption of regular meetings subject to viral infections.

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



July – National Ice Cream Month

July 9 – Nat. Sugar Cookie Day. *Young kids, old kids, satisfy your sweet tooth.*

July 12 – Different Colored Eyes Day. *"Don't it Turn Your Brown Eyes Blue?" Heterochromia includes Jane Seymour, Max Sherzer and Christopher Walken. David Bowie was not Heterochromatic. He had a dilated left iris that appeared to make his eyes two different colors.*

July 13 – Fool's Paradise Day. *Listen to Supertramp's Fool's Overture till you drop. Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo died 1954.*





A Dork

July 15 – Nat. Be a Dork Day.
If you are not already a dork, this is your chance to be one. A Dork is not a nerd or a geek. Nerds and geeks have higher IQ's.

July 21 – Nat. Hot Dog Day.
Not to be confused with National Junk Food Day, also July 21. Do not overdo it.



A Geek

July 23 – Summer Olympics Opening Ceremony. (Maybe, maybe not, says Covid) Tokyo, Japan.



July 24 – Amelia Earhart born. 1897, Atchison, Kansas.

July 26 – All or Nothing Day! Go for it, or, as Steve McQueen said to Yul Brynner in the Magnificent Seven, "Let'r Buck!"



July 31 – Nat. Watermelon Day. One of my favorites.

August – International Potato Month.
Baked, fried with onions, scalloped, mashed, deep-fried, anyway you fix 'em, they are yummy!



Aug 1 – Nat. Raspberry Cream Pie Day.
Share with a friend. Francis Scott Key b. 1779.

Aug 4 – U.S. Coast Guard Day. 44th U.S. President, Barack Obama b. 1961, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Aug 7 – Nat. Clown Day. (*Wasn't CPAC held last month?*)

Aug 12 – World Elephant Day. *An enormous international event.* Middle Child Day. *You know who you are, and you have a right to be resentful.*



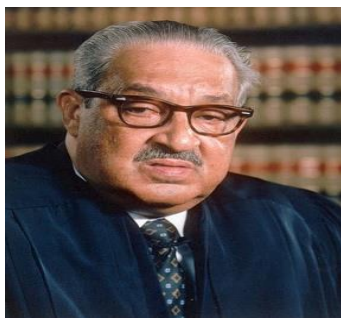
Aug 18 – Nat. Bad Poetry Day. *This is NOT for the Aware Ones' Writer's Group.*

Aug 21 – Nat. Senior Citizen Day. *"If you call me that, smile." Wilt Chamberlain b. 1936.*

Aug 26 – Women's Equality Day. *19th Amendment passed.*



Aug 30 – Thurgood Marshall. *1st Negro Supreme Court Justice, 1967.*



September – National Mushroom Month.

Sep 2 – World War II officially ends. *Formal surrender of Japan on the deck of the U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay, 1945.*

Sep 5 – Be Late for Something Day. *It is fashionable!*

Sep 6 – Labor Day. *Raise a glass for 40-hour weeks, 8-hour days, paid vacations, holiday pay, time and a half for over-time, group insurance, and collective bargaining ... and the martyrs who fought for them.*

Sep 8 – Ampersand Day. *&&&.*



Future Events of Note – March 2022. FreeFlo 2022, Orlando, Florida.

FREEFLO

**March 4-6, 2022 -
Orlando Marriott
Airport Lakeside**

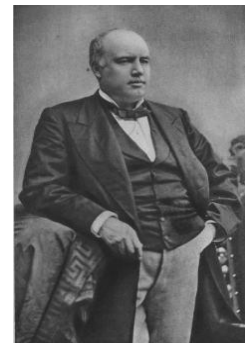


It is official! FREEFLO 2022 has been scheduled. More than three hundred Atheists, Humanists, Pastafarians, Satanists, Skeptics, and Freethinkers of all labels will attend this three-day biennial event that includes informative lectures, great entertainment, lots of social time, a group service project, and many exhibitors. www.freeflo.org

Thoughts from Daily Ingersoll

Superstition is, always has been, and forever will be, the foe of progress, the enemy of education and the assassin of freedom.

Robert Green Ingersoll



"I see Atheists are fighting and killing each other again, over who doesn't believe in any God the most. Oh, no.. wait.. that never happens."

— *Ricky Gervais*

LIVES LIVED – LIVES LOST

Mary V. Ahern, (October 15, 1922 – May 1, 2021), was a radio and television producer. She was a key figure producing the award winning, pioneering television program, *Omnibus*, its' last three seasons were on NBC.



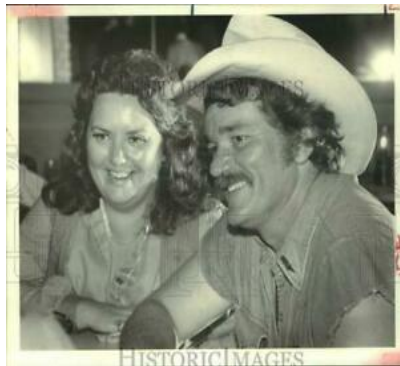
Tai (November 4, 1968 – May 7, 2021) was an Asian elephant. She was best known for playing Bo Tat in the film *Operation Dumbo Drop* (1995), Vera in *Larger than Life* (1996), and Rosie in *Water for Elephants* (2011).

Tatiana Nikolaevna Nikonova (4 February 1978 – 12 May

2021) Russian feminist, journalist, blogger, and sex educator. Nikonova was the creator, first owner and editor-in-chief of Spletnik.ru, one of the first sites with news and gossips about celebrities in Russia. Since 2001, she promoted the need of sex education for teenagers.



Patsy Ann Bruce (née **Smithson**, March 8, 1940 – May 16, 2021) was an



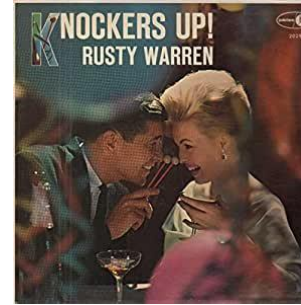
American country-western songwriter, music artist manager, and casting agent and businesswoman. She is best known for songs co-written with her then-husband, singer Ed Bruce, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, including the country-western standard "Mammas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys," which was recorded by Waylon Jennings with Willie Nelson and went to

No. 1 on the country chart in 1978.

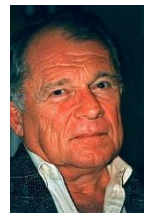
Charles Sidney Grodin (April 21, 1935 – May 18, 2021) was an American actor, comedian, author, and television talk show host. Grodin appeared in *Midnight Run* (1988) with Robert DeNiro, *Heaven Can Wait* (1978) with Warren Beatty and Dyan Cannon and *Dave* (1993) with Kevin Kline and Sigourney Weaver.



Rusty Warren (March 20, 1930 – May 25, 2021) was an American comedian and singer, specializing in sex-related themes and such songs as "Bounce Your Boobies" and "Knockers Up!" Her life partner was Elizabeth Rizzo from 1984 to 2019 and they resided in Hawaii after moving from Paradise Valley, Arizona. Rizzo wrote Rusty's biography, *Rusty Warren - The Knockers Up Gal*



Billy Joe Thomas (August 7, 1942 – May 29, 2021) was an American singer widely known for his pop, country, and Christian hits of the 1960s and 1970s. He made popular recordings of "Hooked on a Feeling" (1968), "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" (1969), and "(Hey Won't You Play) Another Somebody Done Somebody Wrong Song" (1975).



Francis Lee Bailey Jr. (June 10, 1933 – June 3, 2021) was an American criminal defense attorney. F. Lee Bailey defended Sam Sheppard, O. J. Simpson and Patty Hearst among others.

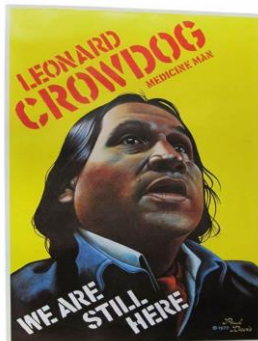


Clarence Williams III (August 21, 1939 – June 4, 2021) was an American actor. He played the character of Linc Hayes in the police television series *The Mod Squad* from 1968 to 1973.

Ann Russell Miller (October 30, 1928 – June 5, 2021) was an American socialite who left her wealth behind to become a nun known as Sister **Mary Joseph of the Trinity**. She was friends with Loretta Young, Nancy Reagan, and Phyllis Diller. Miller remained in the convent for the rest of her life, rarely seeing her family. According to one of her sons, Mark Miller, "She was kind of an unusual nun. She didn't sing very well. She was

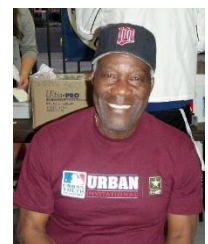


frequently late to her required duties around the convent. She threw sticks for the [community] dogs, which was not allowed. Also, she was my mother."



Leonard Crow Dog (August 18, 1942 – June 6, 2021) was a medicine man and spiritual leader who became well known during the Lakota takeover of the town of Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota in 1973, known as the Wounded Knee Incident.

James Timothy "Mudcat" Grant Jr. (August 13, 1935 – June 11, 2021) was an American baseball pitcher who played 14 seasons in Major League Baseball (1958 to 1971). He was a two-time All-Star. In 1965, Grant became the first black pitcher to win 20 games in a season



in the American League and the first black pitcher to win a World Series game for the American League

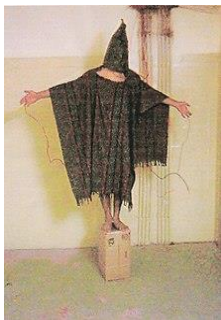


Ned Thomas Beatty (July 6, 1937 – June 13, 2021) was an American actor. He was one of the top character actors in film, particularly during the 1970s, and appeared in more than 160 films, including *Deliverance* (1972), *All the President's Men* (1976), *Network* (1976), *Superman* (1978), *Back to School* (1985), *Rudy* (1993) and *Toy Story 3* (2010). He was nominated for an Academy Award, two Emmy Awards, an MTV Movie Award for Best Villain, and a Golden Globe Award; he also won a Drama Desk Award.

Deona M. Knajdek On June 13, 2021, a man drove a car into a crowd of demonstrators who had gathered as a part of the ongoing Winston Boogie Smith protests, killing Deona M. Knajdek a 31-year-old woman from Minneapolis and injuring three others. According to her family, the car that was struck belonged to Knajdek, and she had parked it there as a blockade to protect protesters. Her family described her as an active supporter of Black Lives Matter and social activists on issues of police brutality and gun violence.



Donald Henry Rumsfeld (July 9, 1932 – June 29, 2021) was an American politician, government official and businessman who served as Secretary of Defense from 1975 to 1977 under Gerald Ford, and again from 2001 to 2006 under George W. Bush. Rumsfeld played a central role in the invasion of Afghanistan and invasion of Iraq. Before and during the Iraq War, he claimed that Iraq had an active weapons of mass destruction program; yet no stockpiles were ever found. Rumsfeld's tenure was controversial for its use of torture and the Abu Ghraib torture and prisoner abuse scandal.



Richard Quentin Laird (5 February 1941 – 4 July 2021) was an Irish musician, photographer, teacher, and author best known as the bassist and founding member of the jazz fusion band *Mahavishnu Orchestra*, with which he performed from 1971 to 1973. Left to right: Jerry Goodman, Jan Hammer, John McLaughlin, Billy Cobham, and Rick Laird.





Jovenel Moïse (26 June 1968 – 7 July 2021) was a Haitian entrepreneur and politician who served as the president of Haiti from 2017 until his assassination in 2021.

Galileo (30 March 1998 – 10 July 2021) was an Irish Thoroughbred racehorse and sire. In a racing career which lasted from October 2000 until October 2001 he ran eight times and won six races. He is best known for having won The Derby, Irish Derby Stakes, and King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes. After his retirement, Galileo became one of the most sought after sires in the world. He first became the leading sire in Great Britain and Ireland in 2008, then consecutively earned the title from 2010 through 2020.



Edwin Washington Edwards (August 7, 1927 – July 12, 2021) was an American politician and member of the Democratic Party who served as the 50th Governor of Louisiana for four terms. A colorful, powerful, and legendary figure in Louisiana politics, Edwards was dubbed the "very last of the line of New Deal Southern Democrats". In 2001, he was found guilty of racketeering charges and sentenced to ten years in federal prison.

Hero and Heroine

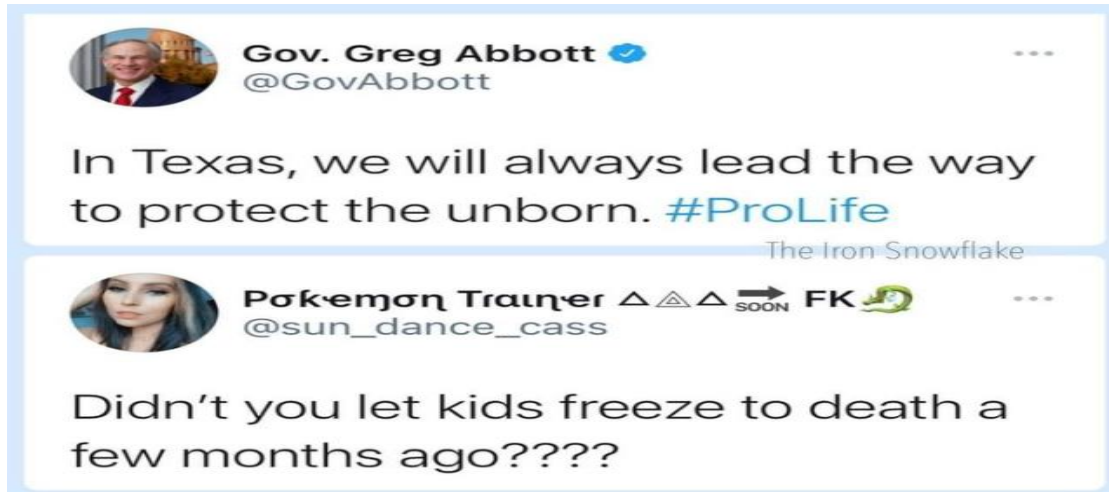
Standing up for women's rights



2021 Lake Highlands High School, Texas Valedictorian, *Paxton Smith*, ditched her prepared and approved speech at her commencement ceremony to condemn the state's recently signed "heartbeat bill" ban that would impact her future.

"Starting in September, there will be a ban on abortions that take place after 6 weeks of pregnancy, regardless of whether the pregnancy was a result of rape or incest," she explained. "I have dreams, hopes, and ambitions. I am terrified that if my

contraceptives fail me, that if I'm raped, then my hopes and efforts and dreams for myself will no longer be relevant." Smith revealed that school officials had suggested withholding her diploma as a consequence of her remarks. Smith added: *"I hope you can feel how gut-wrenching it is, how dehumanizing it is, to have the autonomy over your own body taken from you."*



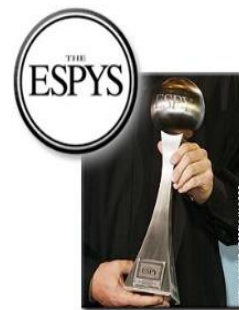
Something greater than himself



Kansas City Chiefs offensive lineman *Laurent Duvernay-Tardif* was named the recipient of the Muhammad Ali Sports Humanitarian Award at the 2021 ESPYs.

Duvernay-Tardif was nominated because of the immense personal risk to his health and football career that he

took last year. He opted out of the NFL season to use his medical degree to help fight the global COVID-19 pandemic in the very early stages of the plague at a long-term care facility near his hometown outside of Montreal, Quebec.



Dubious achievements

Dipshit of the month?

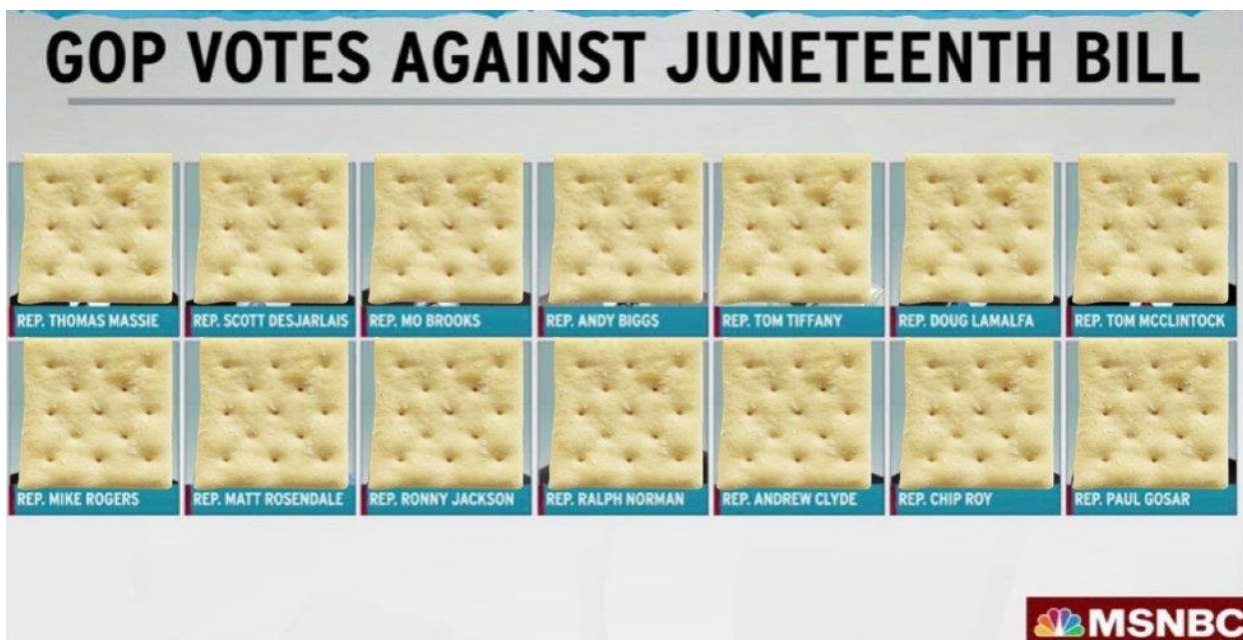
Alexander Jerrich, 20, was caught on video burning out his tires on a \$16,000 Gay Pride street mural in downtown Delray Beach, FL. Of course, he was flying a Trump flag in his pick-up truck.



Racist Dipshit of the month? Tomi Lahren has competition! Newsmax guest, *Sam (Mrs. Kevin) Sorbo* had a Donald Trump moment responding to General Mark Milley's acknowledgement of racism in the armed services. Sorbo said, "There really isn't white rage, except that now white people are being accused of

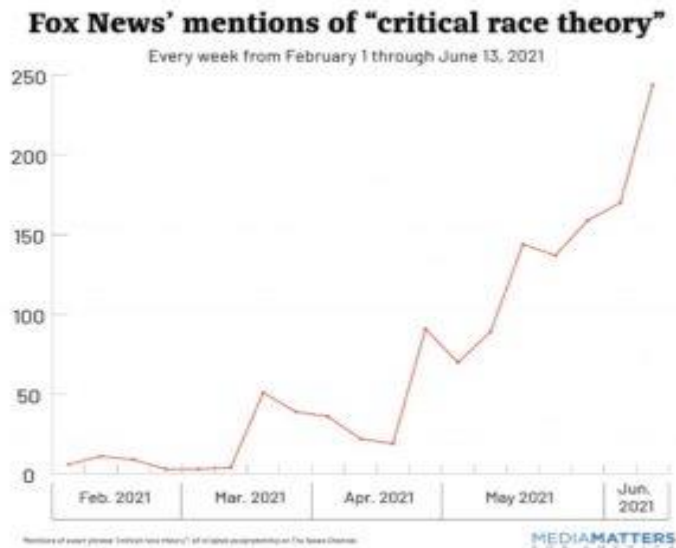
being racist, even though **they are the least racist of the people in the United States**. Now they are gonna get outraged because they don't like being accused of being racist."

Some GQP legislators apparently did not get the memo!



Outrage du Jour – *Critical Race Theory (CRT)*

God; Guns; Gays; Prayer in Schools; War on Christmas; Politically Correct; Death Tax; Illegals; National Anthem; ACORN; Benghazi; Massive Voter Fraud; Stop the Steal; White Genocide. These, and dozens of other bumper sticker talking points are all fodder to whip up fake outrage in the base to keep them wound up and angry over non-issues. The latest is Critical Race Theory. Virtually unheard of before March of this year, it is now the key topic on Fox Noise, OAN, social media, and Hate Radio all over the country.



Dipshit of the month runner-up?

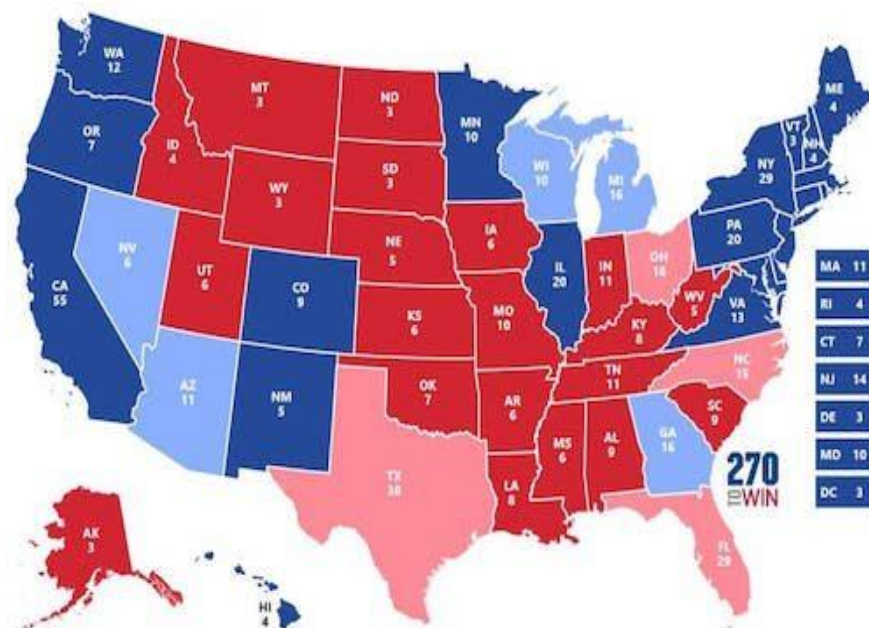
Eric Trump: My father 'Literally Saved Christianity'.



Dipshits of the month honorable mentions in pictures!



Dipshit Coincidence of the year – *Comparison-contrast of covid vaccinations and last year's presidential voting results.*



Special Dipshit mention – *Karma is one hell of a consequence*



A boat caught fire with three people on board after they allegedly circled another boat and harassed its passengers for displaying LGBTQ pride flags. The boaters with the pride flags, who rescued the injured from the water, have

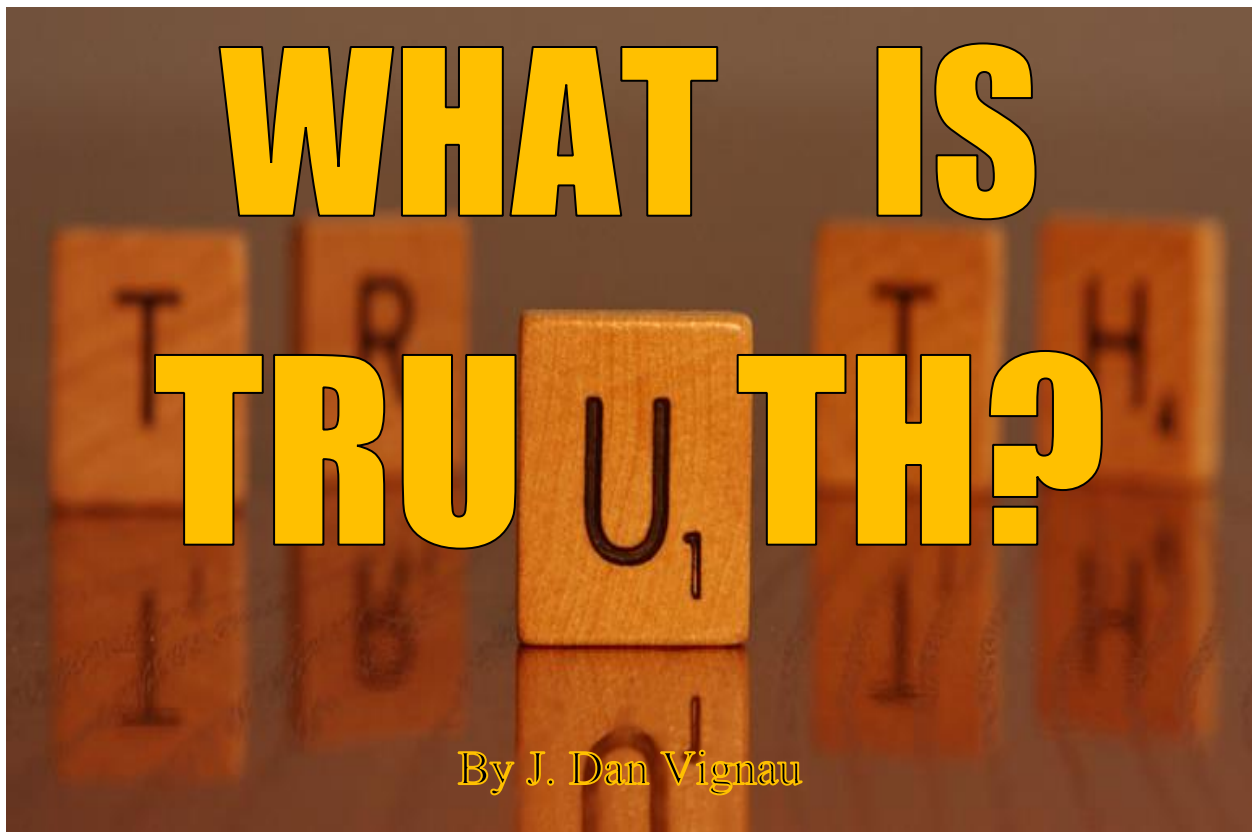
described the incident as an act of karma.

Twitter user @retro_uschi_, who identifies as trans and queer, told the story on social media and said: "These people harassed my family because we were flying gay pride flags in Moses Lake, Washington, by racing around us and shouting gay slurs. Then, their boat literally blew up! #KarmaIsReal"

They added: "And just ONE more tidbit to really drive the karma in there. The driver literally s*** his pants and everyone saw when his shorts fell off in the water."

**THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
IT'S JULY 6TH AND PEOPLE
ARE STILL SETTING OFF
FIREWORKS. ONE ALMOST
CAUGHT OUR CHRISTMAS
DECORATIONS ON FIRE.**

COMMENTARY

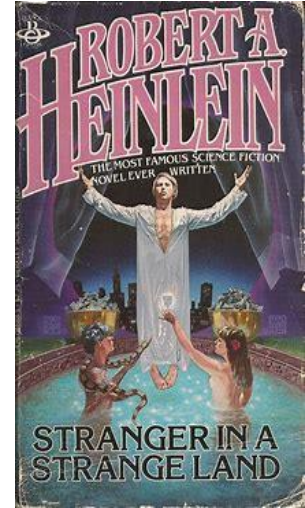


By J. Dan Vignau

At a recent COVID COFFEE, an actual philosophical question was presented for us to ponder. *What is truth?* Philosophers have debated this for ages and have come up with ways to test the truthfulness of beliefs.

Different societies have various ways of dealing with what is true. In the Americas, renown linguist, Benjamin Whorf studied the language of traditional Hopi culture, and found that these people equate both time and distance in their mental justification of just how true something is. The closer a story or lore is in time, whether in the past or future, and the closer it is in distance, the more accurate, or true, it is. That really makes perfect sense to me, but they go further. Neither time nor distance is a separate concept in the Hopi language, at least according to Whorf's book, *Language, Thought and Reality*, if something is nearby in space-time, it is simply more likely to be accurate, or true. Saying that the buffalo herd has about seven hundred animals is as true for what we see as a certain distance away, as it is as we see it as closer in time.

In Robert Heinlein's book, *Stranger in a Strange Land*, there are individuals called “Fair Witnesses”, who never lie. They are the notaries, so to speak, of his stories. When people want to verify something to be absolutely true, they ask a “Fair Witness”. If the witness did not personally observe the subject of the inquiry, but another bystander has, the asked witness will answer, “I don't know, but so and so (the bystander), a ‘Fair Witness’, told me that was true.” In these stories, that answer can be taken as absolute truth, as if the witness answering had seen for himself.



Unfortunately, we in the industrialized world on Earth in which we live, there is not a group of “Fair Witnesses” from which to draw such conclusions. What we can do is to rely on philosophers and scientists to guide us. About the greatest thing about the human mind is that it seeks answers to how things work. We may not know what the truth is, but we do continually strive to find out. Today's scientific knowledge is our truth. Yesterday's lore was the truth for less developed cultures. Unfortunately, it remains so for many people today.

But how do we know what is true? Nearly a decade before *Fox News* was created to foment authoritarian truths, coauthor Noam Chomsky wrote that we have always been subjected to a corporate, manufactured consent. (*Manufacturing Consent*, 1988, Chomsky and Herman). More recently, he has stated that no one flinches when *The New York Times* refers to Bernie Sanders’ idealism as leftist and radical, even though his actual policies simply espouse the need for universal healthcare and education, things that all other advanced western societies provide.

According to Chomsky, the American public has been so brainwashed to the right, that all the major commercial news networks, operating as right-wing propaganda machines have convinced us that different commercial stations, i.e., corporate sponsored, including *MSNBC* are actually liberal. I could not agree more. The corporations decide what is newsworthy. They pay the bills. They make the rules.

Yes, some supposedly liberal stations like to support civil rights, but when was the last time you heard one espouse an end to American Industry's continuing attempt to rule the world by force?



As I said, *they pay the bills.*

What else would they do: Go against their corporate interests and make their sacred stocks yield less in the short term, costing their managers to lose their umbrella payments, and huge bonuses for losing money, but hopefully at the appropriate time? How could they not do this? As is often said, "Just follow the money." When *NBC*, then owned by nuclear power and defense contractor *General Electric*, got

wind that one of its executive's wives had put together a segment of their *Dateline* news show that criticized the nuclear power industry, it summarily quashed it, postproduction. *GE* needs to make rockets, and bombs, and jet engines.

Our truths about our world should be used to make the condition of human existence more rewarding, while alleviating suffering of all kinds. Many people try to do exactly this, but far too many of our scientific discoveries are used for selfish reasons, thereby negating the ideals behind the philosophy of truth seeking. Far too many newly discovered truths are criticized for not maintaining the status quo, even being called heretical.

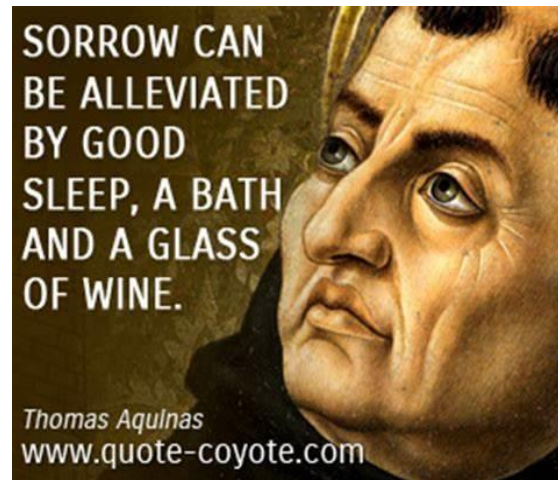
For example, one of the more recent controversies concerned whether Pluto is a planet [or not]. Far too many people do not want to continue to learn, being quite satisfied with the truths they were taught in school, many as long as a half-century or more ago.

These hangers-on to old, obsolete facts and legends have historically kept progress at bay, especially when new facts presented as the truth contradict their social and religious fables, although religion is certainly not a prerequisite for hanging on to discredited findings.

For many (including me), truth is seeing the world as being in accord with facts, or reality. Truth should correspond to what is actually seen and understood as real. The ancient Greek philosophers, beginning with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle thought that truth is the accuracy of how something describes objects. Thomas Aquinas claimed that truth is the equivalence of things and intellect, succinctly stating, “A judgment is said to be true when it conforms to the external reality.”

This paradigm of thought processes allows for hypothetical constructs regarding the truth of reasoning and fact gathering to be used and shown as a most valid way of deciding what is truth.

Others think that the truth of anything should be judged by consensus, or popular opinion, especially when they can manufacture this popular, consenting opinion through repetitive rote learning. Unfortunately, this type of so-called truth flies in the face of science and logic, assuming that whatever people believe is really the truth, when obviously there are a lot of really stupid (and/or), brainwashed people who refuse to be swayed by scientific thought and discoveries.



However, facts and reasoning are merely one of the three philosophical tests of truth. It is called Pragmatic Truth.

Like the actual scientific community, most actual thinkers, the opposite of rote learners, exhibit some good, healthy skepticism, with the use of logical reasoning. Actual truth requires this *modus operandus*. We cannot discount the other types of proof of truth, Correspondence, or if you prefer, Harmony, and Coherence.

Unfortunately, the easiest way to convince such traditional, lore-believing people is to bombard them with rote, repetitive memes, that correspond to what they already believe from their religious and social lore. These hangers on to ancient and false realities have no desire to contradict what they deem as true. Pragmatism and rationality are not their proof. Science and statistics

mean nothing if their beliefs are threatened. The logical reasoning of rationality means nothing. It is simply an ethereal concept for eggheads and heathens, except of course in their daily life, when they need logic to solve problems unrelated to their core beliefs. Education can help, but when groups of people's beliefs cohere to the beliefs of their cohorts, of course, our scientific community's evolving truths are summarily discounted.



They were taught that Pluto is a planet, and – *by damn* – nothing you say will convince them otherwise. Socialism is bad. Everyone knows it. As the Trump lady recently said, “I know it's true. I saw it on TV!” I might add, she saw it over and over and over, until she was fully indoctrinated. Queers molest kids, but Catholic priests are OK, at least to

Catholics. Gay marriage is evil, because marriage is sacred, unless of course I decide to get a younger, sexier wife.

Brainwashing works. Ask Nazi Minister of Finance, Joseph Goebbels, or the propagators of current right-wing media, especially *Fox News*, *The Heritage Foundation*, and *The American Family Council*, or even George Orwell, God rest his soul, so to speak.

The three GOP propaganda agencies mentioned were specifically founded together with the express purpose of inundating the populace with anti-union, racist, anti-socialist, pro-monopoly capitalistic, religious drivel. They do this for one reason and only one reason: To get the public to vote against their own economic interests, and to allow the extremely wealthy controllers of our monopoly capitalistic system to make the masses, or at least a voting majority of them, believe that what they see and hear elsewhere does not matter, if it contradicts what they are fed the most times by the continual barrage of anti-logical, anti-science, anti-human rights, rhetoric.

These corporate interests are certain that repetitive indoctrination works. Why else would they spend billions advertising their products? Advertising their prejudices? Advertising their political drivel? Just ask the majority of them whether we have a purpose other than to serve them. We only exist to fulfill their corporate needs.

For the scientist, truth is what is learned through the continual examination of our world, as well as using logical reasoning. This ability to reason is what separates us from other sentient beings. Truth should be power, but usable power is, unfortunately, most often propagated through force, not logic.

The problem of convincing people what is true, as least as far as our current knowledge indicates, is that, in general, people want to believe that they know everything they need to know. If they were misinformed, ill advised, or poorly educated, or if their acquisition of knowledge is held back, i.e., retarded, cognitive dissonance arises when they are confronted with facts that they do not understand. For example, how can Pluto not be a planet, now? “It has not changed since I went to school. How can the world be round? My book of fables says it is flat. God says so.”



Oh, I almost forgot – As they do with many rules and regulations from their God, the Catholic Church voted to admit our planet is, indeed, round, but only after seeing photos of Earth taken from orbit during the 1960's space explorations. Then and only then was Galileo allowed out of his purgatory-like state and finally

admitted into their mythical heaven. Galileo was thought to be quite happy to finally be released from this eternal imprisonment in the Catholic Limbo, however it is defined in this century. I guess it is a step between Heaven and Hell, somewhere near Purgatory, according to their religious dogma.

How can we not own slaves?!? God told us how to treat them. How can we allow immoral sexual acts? How can anyone vote for killing babies that have just collected one of a myriad of souls in waiting? What happens when you die?

Too many people do not want the facts. They want comfort. Logic means nothing. To them, the truth is what they have been told is the truth. If we came from apes, why are there still apes, to which I like to add, if dogs came from wolves, why are there still wolves? Reasoning and logic mean nothing



to seriously brainwashed – *oh, excuse me* – indoctrinated people. Only what they hear the most matters. Rote learning will always rule. Again, ask Goebbels. Ask Fox News. Ask Madison Avenue. Ask any Trumpster who “Saw it on TV.”

While philosophers ponder how we learn, a process they call epistemology, the perpetrators of misinformation continue to gain power by using basic B.F. Skinner conditioning techniques, and guess what? It works. If anything, Madison

Avenue is rational. They would not spend the money if there were no payoff.

This type of rote learning makes one crazy. It was proven in lab rats all over the world. A person cannot hear something over and over and over and over without becoming psychotically attached to the browbeating positions promulgated. Just ask any Stockholm Syndrome victim. Look around at the cohesiveness of Trump supporters. After decades of being told that they must be idiots, they have a rallying cry. They have several rallying cries: “Make America Great!” “Lock Her Up!” “What about Benghazi?” ... or, “Where are Hillary’s emails?” *ad nauseum*.

It is memes, I tell you. Memes are what rule the world. Facts do not matter when there is an apparent consensus of consciousness. What do pointy head intellectuals know? “Your science is wrong!” It cannot even decide if Pluto is a planet. How can it tell me there are more than two sexual identities: “There are only blue and pink. We don't need no stinkin' rainbows! We have God on our side!! If he says two and two is six, then two and two is six!!!”

Just ask – *the self-proclaimed smartest man in the world* – Donald J. Trump.





THERE TO BORE

By Bert Mautz

The 'all too corporate' modern news are all too maddeningly similar!

Ashamed to admit the realization that my here-to-fore favorite news outlet was guided by corporate standards and sponsors' preferences. *Do not rock the boat* ... too much. Day after day, and morning after morning, Joe and Mika quoted Trump's early morning tweets as if somehow significant, and to be analyzed.

While we, and they, all knew it was daily Trump bullshit. Still, the morning team treated Trump's nonsense as meaningful and worthy of consideration ... to be somehow, *fair and balanced*. But it was just like the day before, worthy of zero serious consideration.

Mika wore drab black tops at the desk every morning to show her displeasure but gave Trump his due. Joe ranted away ... but did not call out the blatant lies near frequently enough.

Maddening to see this repeated for the last four years. But the entire *MSNBC* broadcast team regarded the president's spewings

to be taken seriously, or at least, what their liberal audience wanted to hear. Why? *CNN* is fundamentally the same.

Fox News was guided by no such compulsion to present a fair and balanced report on the president's administration, or his daily lies. Fox knew its audience loved the



Trump perspective on democracy, while damning the Democrats. With the occasional exception of Chris Wallace's objectivity, the entire network was a Trump amplifier and attracted a huge working class, white audience, and advertisers willing to pay for the exposure.

What aggravates me the most in this realization, was how long it took me to figure it out. I was raised on Walter Cronkite and *CBS* network approach to telling us all we needed to know in thirty



minutes at dinner time, less nearly ten minutes of advertising.

Mine was not a political family. Dinner table conversation was virtually nonexistent with Mother chattering at

us constantly, micro-managing how and what we ate. Father chewing peacefully, his mind elsewhere. Father would watch

Cronkite occasionally, read the *News Gazette*, and *Wall Street Journal* at his campus office was likely informed, but never saw fit to talk with us about the world happening out there.

On the other hand, there were all those magazines on the living room “coffee” table. A liberal education if you only made the effort to read them; *Time*, *Saturday Review*, *Sports Illustrated*, *New Yorker*, *Fortune*, *National Geographic*, and *Mother’s Good Housekeeping*. Have joked my early sex education originated in *National Geographic* photos of naked primitive peoples and *New Yorker* cartoons satirizing marriage.

The summer place had no television. Father ordered a multi volume set of books, maybe thirty contemporary writers, and I read them all. As far back as I can recall we had sets of encyclopedias. A high school level set and the real *Encyclopedia Britannica* and updated it with a replacement set every few years. He loved his encyclopedias.



The *National Geographic* maps were unfolded and eventually bound along their top edge and hung over the breakfast table. Yes, there was a lot available to learn from, just not

conversationally. Even Father realized it was futile to compete with Mother over dinner.

A colleague, a few years back summarized the purpose, or lasting benefit, of a college education was “learning to conceptualize.” Another take away was the absolute necessity of critical thinking, (like we watch Dan V. do instantaneously, right before our eyes). Champaign Senior High School was all about learning facts, and the architecture curriculum at the University of Illinois, beyond learning to critique and be disappointed by omnipresent bad design, allowed little time for philosophical contemplation, or doubt.



Where did all this blather start? Oh yeah, my disappointment with *MSNBC*. Take heart, don't give up, or give in. Be critical, but Joe Scarborough will never ask a simple question and Rachel Maddow talks with bubbling enthusiasm like we're stupid. Thank the warm winds for summer baseball.

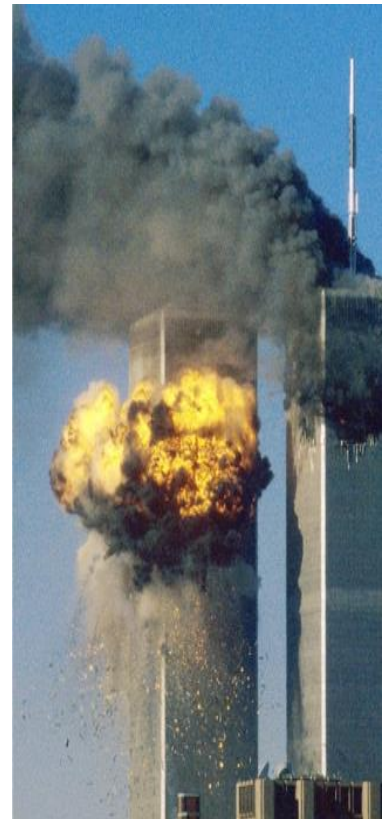


By Herman Nietzsche (aka Virgil Thorp)

I have had a facetious comparison-contrast opinion piece in the works this summer (2001) titled, "Ding-Dong, Taliban Calling" in which I intended to use humorous irony to show the similarities of the ultra-religious zealots from Afghanistan and the ultra-religious zealots in our midst – the Taliban vs. the Radical Religious Right. At that time, I was concerned with the disrespect shown by them to other beliefs and to women. Little did I expect the expression of terror that confronted our nation on September 11.

Reeling, like everyone else who witnessed the horrors that played across millions of television screens that day, I felt like I was on an LSD trip that went brutally bad ... and I will probably never recover from. Often, I feel that what I write is essentially preaching to the converted, but I also feel the need to attempt to make sense of these images that were shovel stamped into my forever memory. Let me try to salvage some of my observations from the original article written before the tragedy:

"There are few people in the world (other than the other fundamentalist Muslims who agree with the Taliban) who are not appalled at the immoral destruction of the historical Bamiyan Buddhist statues in Afghanistan. However, it is sad, yet also funny, that there just does not seem to be nearly the same sense





of outrage about how women are treated in that charming example of a sectarian country where the demarcation of political power between church and state is nonexistent. I do not believe there is any more deplorable example of tyranny in the world ... except that it might happen here.

"When you study the Taliban and what they are attempting to achieve with their narrow-minded Puritanism, it isn't difficult to imagine that our own narrow-minded bigots would be just as happy if their situation were the same here. That there are similarities should not shock a person, what should shock is that there are *so many* mutually held lunacies.

"First up is intolerance of any belief other than their own. Then there are the prohibitions of almost all things pleasurable, especially if they are alcoholic or sexual. Plus, there is an amazing desire to impose rigid codes of behavior and dress upon women. When you add in their considerable distrust of female sexuality and combine that with a notion that women should be 'controlled by their parents until they are wives, then slaves to their husbands for the rest of their lives', it should be a warning sign of more hidden and far more dangerous psychoses. Such people believe that they have heavenly mandates and there are few

constraints on them in their obsession to punish those they consider 'evil.' Which means all the rest of us.

"Of course, you might say, those are only the extremist wacko's who do that sort of thing, the terrorism and that 'burying alive and stoning' stuff. I agree, most believers of any faith present no danger to anyone and are pretty wonderful people – usually."

Then came September 11 and the blindside gut-kick. Immediately, almost all parodies (probably deserved, too) from opponents of President George W. Bush's pro-oil, pro-faith-based church-state blurring agenda ceased making jokes about his



dyslexia and the nation stood together, shoulder to shoulder against the perpetrators of the unconscionable attack. Except when Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson blamed the ACLU, gays, atheists and feminists for the attack during Robertson's 700 Club program the next day.

"God continues to lift the curtain and allow the enemies of America to give us probably what we deserve," Falwell told Robertson, according to the Washington Post.



"Jerry, that's my feeling," Robertson agreed.

Falwell spread the blame to the ACLU and federal courts for "throwing God out of the public square."

Not content with that, the bilious Falwell continued:

"The abortionists have got to bear some burden for this because God will not be mocked. And when we destroy 40 million little innocent babies, we make God mad. I really believe that the pagans and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively

trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way – all of them who have tried to secularize America – I point the finger in their face and say, 'You helped this happen.'"

What can a person say to counter such witless accusations? I can only refer to the lyrically written Bible passage that warns about false prophets: "By their fruits – *i.e. words and deeds* – so shall ye know them." I will eschew any niceties. What came out of the mouths of these bigots resembles the residue that comes from the south ends of northbound jackasses.



The nation turned, almost as one, and asked, "What did you assholes say?"

Joan Walsh wrote this insightful summation about Messrs. Falwell and Robertson in *Salon.com*:

"[T]hey're a little scary. They are America's counterpart to the Taliban and, let us be clear: If they had their way, this would be a Christian state. They would make common cause with the Taliban to strip women of many rights, persecute gays and punish godless infidels. The only silver lining of this tragedy is that it's bringing out the invidious agenda of the Christian right, where it can be repudiated ..."



Although Falwell delivered a tepid apology, he was not deterred from callous bigotry. I caught an even clearer perception of Falwell's peculiar agenda the following Sunday on his televised infomercial – disguised as a religious program – that repeatedly showed the footage of the doomed airliners disappearing into the World Trade Center and the ensuing explosions and collapse that resulted in the deaths of thousands ... sometimes in deliberate,

agonizing slow-motion. This was days after almost all other networks and news channels discontinued showing the disturbing footage. Why did Falwell do this? To *solicit* money. And what was he using for this purpose? A snuff film! True, we do not see actual faces of the victims screaming in horror – except those reflected in our own television screens – but a snuff film, nonetheless.

Funny, isn't it, that a man who denounces non-violent adult entertainment as obscenity would use the most horrendous example of violence for self-promotion, self-aggrandizement. A cold-hearted attempt to fleece the sheep. That's not patriotism. That's *real* pornography; that's *real* perversion and I think God should be justly angry with Jerry for trying to associate such a foul, obscene and blasphemous act with Him.

My conclusion, nearly 20 years later, seems prophetically biblical;

"You shall reap what you sow."



THE PARADOX OF TOLERANCE

BY PHILOSOPHER KARL POPPER*



IT'S A PARADOX, BUT UNLIMITED TOLERANCE CAN LEAD TO THE EXTINCTION OF TOLERANCE.



*Source: *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Karl R. Popper

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CONFESSION OF A MEGACHURCH PASTOR

By Pastor Jim Palmer

Back in the day, I was a pastor at the largest church in North America. Eventually I walked away from it all because I could not teach beliefs and doctrines that I myself no longer accepted. No person taught evangelical theology with the devotion and passion that I did, but one day I realized this did not produce true and lasting change in others' lives or my own.

Looking back, I can see I made at least these mistakes as a megachurch pastor:



- Putting church over community
- Putting orthodoxy over love.
- Putting certainty over wonder.
- Putting teaching over conversation.
- Putting polished over real.
- Putting explanations over empathy.
- Putting answers over questions.
- Putting membership over friendship.

Putting prayer over action.

Putting services over self-care.

Putting style over substance.

Putting appearance over authenticity.

Putting functionality over beauty.



Putting religion over spirituality.

Putting numbers over faces.

Putting holiness over humanity.

Putting accountability over acceptance.

Putting heaven over earth.

Putting meetings over relationships.

Putting reputation over risk.

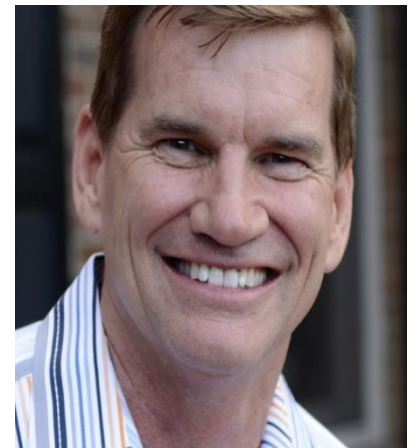
Putting superiority over humility.

Putting charisma over compassion.

Putting the after-life over the here-life.

Putting doctrine over reason.

Putting hierarchy over equality. - Jim Palmer



ARTICLES



An Interview with a Kamikaze

By Yashi Nozawa

This is a record of my brief interview with Mr. Toku Morita (not his real name.) He was a former Kamikaze, a Japanese suicide pilot, during World War II. He was a reluctant and uncooperative talker; but I felt it was important to find out the psychology of a suicide bomber, when so many of them were active in the Middle East nowadays.

Q: Tell me about your last mission.

Toku Morita: It was April 5, 1945, the height of the Pacific War, when hundreds of American warships filled Naha Bay in Okinawa. My mission was to sink an aircraft carrier by hitting it with my rocket-assisted glider, which was filled with high power explosive. We left in the early morning from a secret base on the China coast. At mid-morning, we arrived at Naha Bay. As expected, swarms of American fighters were heading toward us. My mothercraft, the Army “Don-Ryu” type bomber, released my glider because it was very vulnerable to attack when a glider was attached. I was losing altitude quickly and it seemed no fighters were coming in my direction. They were heading toward the bomber group. I had selected my target, the biggest flat top I could find. I steadied my steering stick to keep my craft on course. Then it was only a matter of time, maybe in another ten minutes or so that I would hit the target. I also noticed enemy antiaircraft guns were shooting

toward me. Many were exploding nearby, but so far none had hit me. I could do nothing except keep my craft on course and pray no bullets would hit me. My craft had limited maneuverability, so I couldn't take any evasive action or change the course. Then I noticed that I was losing altitude too fast. If I continued the rate of descent, I might hit the sea surface before reaching the target. I needed more speed. The only way I could increase speed of my craft was to use the auxiliary rocket thrust, which was intended for escape from attacking enemy aircraft, but it would give me the needed boost of the speed. I pressed a button for the rocket ignition. Then I heard a big sound, "Bang!" and I was blacked out. When I returned to consciousness, I was in a hospital bed wrapped with bandages. Then I realized that I had failed my mission.

Q: While you were flying toward the target, were you afraid of your oncoming death?

TM: No, I was too busy keeping my craft on course. The only thought I had was, "Help me, God, avoid these anti-aircraft bullets near my craft. Please don't let me down."



Q: How old were you at that time?

TM: Fifteen-years-old in the Japanese way of counting and 14-years-old in the American way of counting ages. I was in the fourth grade in a middle school, which was the equivalent of freshman in an American high school.

Q: Were you drafted, or did you volunteer to be a Kamikaze pilot?

TM: I volunteered. The draft age at that time was nineteen years old, which was lowered from the original twenty-one only six months before. I couldn't wait until I became nineteen. By then, the war would be over, and I might be dead without ever fighting with the enemy.

Q: Why did you volunteer for the position?

TM: Because I wanted to do something directly. We, all our classmates, had been working in an aircraft factory since the previous year, but it was an indirect support of the war. At that time, our country was facing the biggest crisis in its history. I wanted to do something directly to save the country, such as fighting against the enemy. Please remember that Americans were bombarding mainland Japan day and night, burning houses and schools, and destroying factories and offices. Many civilians, including women and children were killed every day in their own homes. We were desperate and had no hope of getting out from the situation soon.



I wanted to take a direct action, something like fighting back, rather than passively waiting to be killed. So, when I saw the bulletin asking for volunteers for this special attack squadron, I immediately applied for enlistment. Not only me, but also more than half of my classmates did the same.

Q: Did you know it was a suicide mission when you volunteered?

TM: Of course. The phrase “special attack” was a euphemism for “suicide attack” at that time.

Q: Did they widely practice recruiting volunteers for suicide mission at that time?

TM: No. They discouraged young pre-draft age people from volunteering for such positions. But our case was an exception. See, we were working in the aircraft factory that developed the suicide bomb-glider. The new craft had to be small and light weight, since it had to be carried in the under-belly of an Army bomber aircraft. Its pilot seat was made so small that only a small person like my size could fit. When they wanted to test the craft, they asked volunteer testers for the seat from the factory workers. I was lucky enough to be selected since I was smaller than an average Japanese kid of the same age. Also, I had a good score in the physical aptitude test. Since I was five years old, I had wanted to become a pilot, so I practiced almost every day balancing myself after repeated twirling, somersaulting, and spinning myself. While we were testing the rocket-assisted glider, the war situation deteriorated much more quickly than they had expected. They wanted to use the craft immediately in the real war, instead of going through several test phases. If we were successful, they would mass-produce the bomb-glider. So our mission was basically a test flight for the bomb-glider. But there were no pilots available for the craft except us seat-tester boys. When this dilemma leaked out to us, we eagerly volunteered to pilot the craft in the real battle. Our enthusiasm eventually persuaded the authorities.



Q: What did your parents think about your mission?

TM: I think my father was very proud of me and my mother was very sad. She wanted me to become a doctor, rather than a pilot. However, I did not know how they felt since I never talked with them since then.

Q: Did you say that you never talked with them?

TM: Yes, I did. Matter of fact, they do not know I am alive.

Q: Why didn't you tell them you were alive?

TM: Because I did not want to disturb their peaceful lives.

Q: Isn't it cruel and inhumane that you were not telling them?

TM: It may be so, at least in American society, but not in Japanese society. This may need some explanation. One of the most important things in Japanese society is family honor. Every member of a family is bound by the honor of the family. In this case, a family often means a kin group of the same surname. Many Japanese would commit suicide to preserve their family honor. Namely, having a living member with dishonor in a family is a disgrace for the entire family. Everyone in the family prefers the dishonored member to be dead. So the dishonored member is often forced to commit suicide. Under the Japanese custom, death, especially



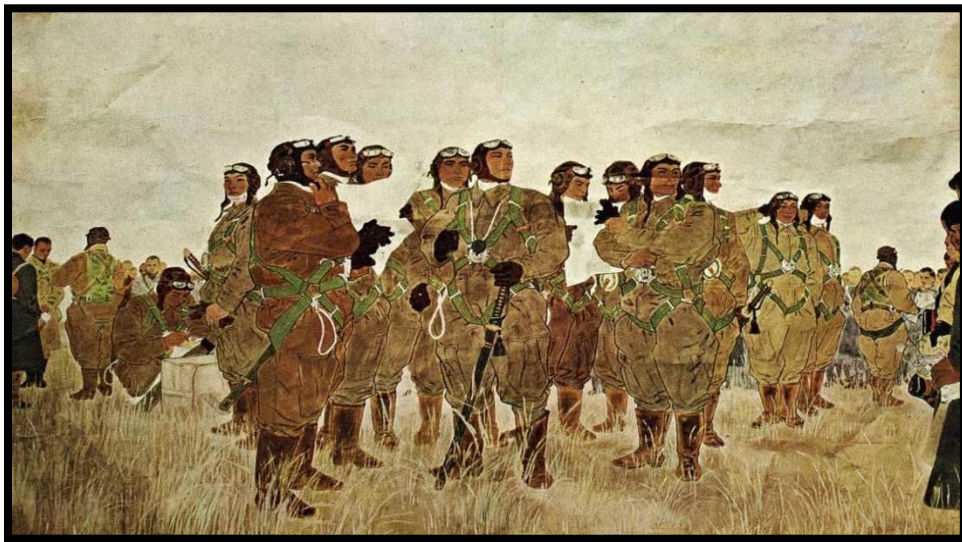
suicide, is a cleansing action and all sins and dishonorable actions, including crimes, were forgiven.

In the American society, a prisoner-of-war (POW) is a sort of an honor badge. Former POWs are often welcomed as heroes. In the Japanese society, to be captured alive by the enemy is one of the most shameful things. As a warrior, you are supposed to commit suicide before the captivity. This custom is especially strictly applied to a former Kamikaze pilot who was expected to return as a corpse. In my case, my family had believed that I was honorably killed during actions and they were proudly living as respected members of their community ... even today.

So, if I showed up today, our family members would be annoyed and dismayed at first, then they would be outraged and eventually hate me. The probable exception would be my mother, who would be glad to see me alive under any circumstance. But she died a long time ago, so I have no reason to disclose my survival to any one of them. You may have a hard time believing my explanation, but there was an actual example.

When Japanese navy airplanes attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, five midget submarines also tried to attack from the sea simultaneously. Unfortunately for them, American destroyers detected their presence and sank all of them. Naturally, all crews, two for each sub, were killed, except one. This was the first suicide mission committed by Japanese armed forces during WW II. These dead crewmen, a total of nine of them, were elevated the status of military deities; and all Japanese admired and worshipped them. Because of the controlled news, we, most of the people who were living in Japan at that time, believed only nine crewmen were there: four officers and five non-commissioned officers. My classmates and I, as curious kids, occasionally raised the question why only nine crew members were present, instead of an even ten? But teachers discouraged and scolded us that such a question was blasphemy. After the defeat of Japan, we learned that there was the tenth crewman, Lieutenant Sakamaki, who was beached unconscious and survived as the first Japanese POW. When he returned to Japan after the war, most Japanese people shunned him, but some blamed him as a symbol of shameful and cowardice. Sorry, I do not want to talk anymore. Goodbye.

He abruptly ended the conversation and left before I could stop him.





COVID CONFINEMENT

By James Longo

Yesterday on the way to work, was listening to NPR, and a guy who spent over five hundred days in solitary confinement was asked about how he spent it.

He said, "Most people are interested in my confinement for about ninety seconds, after that their eyes glaze over and you can see them try to move away."

Oh my god it is this topic, "How did you spend your time during Covid?" But at work I was short two bodies, and a twenty-five-year-old young lady fainted and then went into a convulsion after getting a covid shot. Can you say paperwork out my ass? 2020, I'll take 2020 for 200 Alex, or whoever is hosting that game show now.

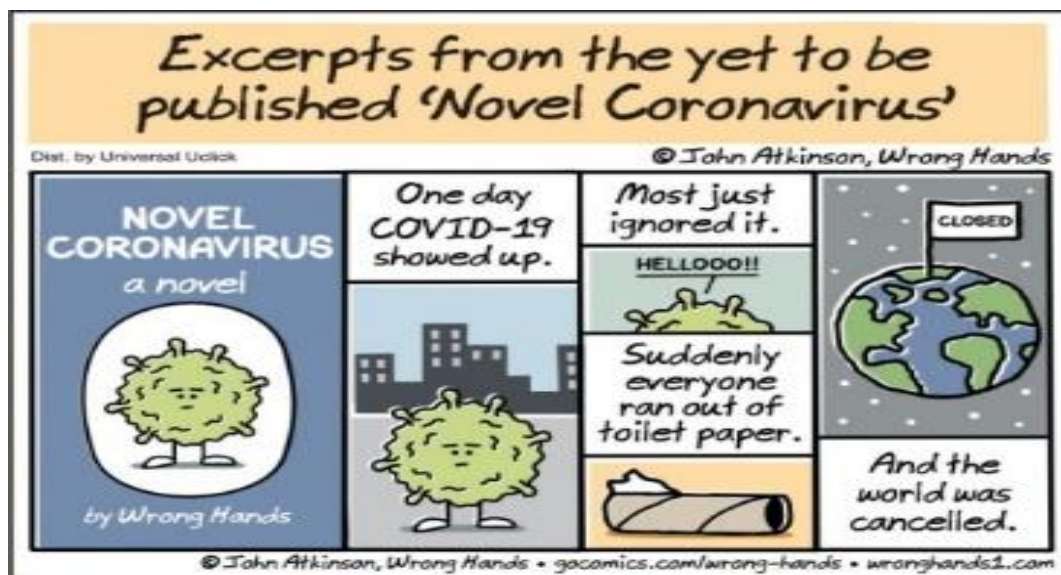
2020 it was like the *Tale of Two Cities*, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Ardel, my mother-in-law, and

my father died. Barbara and I lost our night-shift positions at work. All social outings went caput including our Halloween Party. Yet, I was happy as a pig in manure.

People die. Ardel was ninety-one and my father was ninety-six. Barb had had that job for twenty years. Change sucks. Don't all the self-help gurus say, "You should embrace change," – yeah, nickels, dimes, and quarters.

Barb went from third shift to second shift. I went from having no boss to having three. With no social outings, what else was there to do but go to work. How did I spend Covid?

Hustling.



What do I miss about Covid? I miss pulling out into rush hour traffic and no one there. I miss long bike rides without traffic. I miss people fearful of getting in my face.

Masks were a mixed blessing. Fogged up glasses you can keep. Breathing in your own breath, can you say yuck? It did make everyone look twenty years younger. It helped when hiding your feelings. Especially if you could keep your eyes neutral – something I could never pull off.

I want you to know at some point in 2020 I started seeing certain eyebrows as incredibly sexy, very much the way I thought of lips previously. Thoughts like; *nice eyebrows I wonder what her pubic hair looks like*, would occasionally cross my mind.

Okay, okay I'll get into therapy as soon as everyone stops wearing masks.

What did I miss out on in 2020? I missed my vacation. Biking from Pittsburgh to DC was nice, but it wasn't Rome to Split, Croatia. Kayaking in North Florida in August felt more like work than pleasure.

I don't miss the orange demagogue constant comedy of stupidity in statements and antics. When it came to Donnie the dumb-ass, I felt like it was both a comedy and a tragedy but most of all, a continual distraction. Thank goodness we don't need that distraction anymore.

I'm sure I'm over that ninety second mark, I hope your eyes aren't too glazed over yet, then again, I was thinking about writing about comet mining to bring water to Mars.



BAR STOOLS ARE FOR MAKING FRIENDS

By Bert Mautz



With a view of the sun setting over the docked yachts, this is a particularly pleasant place for an afternoon libation and perhaps some coconut shrimp to go with. As we approached the bar I asked, "If we sit here will we be too close?"

A good looking fellow; wavy white hair, pink fishing shirt, and cargo shorts. Alone, enjoying a beer from a glass.

"Do you have a boat here?" Betty asked, and so it began.

He is in transit between summer and winter moorings and had a breakdown. Waiting for parts and their installation. We eased into self-introductions. Wary of all the bar visits in our lives that have gone bad, incompatible, wished they had never begun. We kept it light, superficial.

First impressions were of mild manner, complete sentences, and careful grammar. Betty, sitting a stool away led off, faster than I can describe it here, to declare we are Democrats. Oh no, this could be awful. We are a distinct minority in Martin County.

Our bar mate lit up with a big smile, "I'm a *Democrat* too!"

Proceeded comparing our shared incredulity at how anyone could believe Trump saying anything. Each evidenced our relief at finding a sympathetic ear, always on the alert to the volatile and seeming utter irrationality of the Republican mind. The three of us found we are in remarkable sync politically.

Rick, seventy-five, is a retired geologist with a biology background. Divorced and living on a power boat. He's found his equilibrium, a lifestyle that suits. Stranded at the city marina until his repair parts arrive and can be installed, we decided, on the spot to try to meet up again Friday, if he hasn't gotten out of town. We've so many family stories to share. Sometimes we meet the nicest people. Returned for the sunset a couple days later, Rick was gone, it is a neighborhood bar, remember.

Found ourselves visiting warmly with a couple coincidentally wearing matching stainless Rolexes, like the one on my wrist. "It's not even running. I wear it as a bracelet," she announced defiantly. Many laughs on bar stools.



LINDA

Transitioning to the woman inside



Interview by Herman Nietzsche (aka Virgil Thorp)

Have you ever had one of those experiences where you think you are meeting a perfect stranger for the first time and it turns out that the person is someone you have known for years? Someone you have grown up with. Played games with. Explored life with?



Many trans genderists have taken great delight in blowing former acquaintances' minds in these situations. The old television



comedy program, *WKRP in Cincinnati* had a satiric episode where the constantly horny sales manager, Herb Tarlick tried to seduce a female client. Little did Herb know that he and the client knew each other many years earlier ... before the client had a sex change operation. The transsexual client clearly enjoyed blowing Herb's mind when she revealed who she *had* been, and "Linda" is no exception.

"Don't you recognize me," Linda asked. She had been sitting beside me for a good quarter hour in a low-cut gown and, being an inveterate voyeur, I had sneaked some discreet cleavage peeking. Or so I thought.

"No, should I?" I was flattered and presumed she was hitting on me.

She mentioned a few places, a few events, a few mutual friends, and then laughed heartily as incredulous recognition dawned on my face and I blurted out, "George!?!"

It wasn't so dramatic as Herb's because I had always known her as a kinky crossdresser who enjoyed the B&D scene and not as a schoolyard chum, but the changes her therapy and hormone treatments had accomplished were shocking enough. "Linda" was transitioning to a complete woman. A very attractive woman.

I asked, how, what, who and why?

"I've always felt the feminine side of my personality and would experiment with dressing up as a child and continued that practice into adulthood," the former computer programmer and hospital worker explained. "It was kind of a lark, just playing around. Putting on my mom's easter bonnet, her slip, some clip-on earrings, lipstick and clumping around in some old high heels. I thought I looked pretty! But I loved the soft feel of women's clothes. Occasionally, when I was dressed, I'd try to imagine what it would be like to be a real woman. But I was male and although being able to change into a woman appealed to me, it was okay for it to be just a fantasy. Then, one day in 1985, the imagining became a reality."



That was the day Linda found out she had

Raynaud's Phenomenon, a rare and potentially life-threatening syndrome affecting about two percent of men. "The male hormones were totally debilitating my body," Linda explained. "I was losing circulation in my extremities. My fingertips were bleach white. The treatment is prescribing the female hormone, estrogen. Of course, we all know what happens then."

"After the diagnosis, I took a reality check on my condition and my life," Linda said. "What should I do? I was married, had two little girls. I was not a freak, but I felt that people might start thinking of me as such. But I really had no choice. If I declined

the treatment, the condition would cripple me, and I would probably not live past 50 or 60 years of age.

"I decided to go for broke. My wife understood my problem and I contacted a Tri-Ess support group (Tri-Ess is an international educational, social, and support group for heterosexual cross-dressers, their partners, and their families). For 18 months they helped me prepare for the changes my life would experience when I started taking the hormones and beginning the therapy.

"There was a period when I was very depressed, though. It bothered me when people simply considered me merely a male crossdresser, that is, that I was doing it just to satisfy some kinky side of my sexuality ..."

"But sex did play a part," I broke in. "Didn't it? You are dressed pretty hot." I did not say, 'you look a little tarty.'

"Of course, it did. For me, bisexuality was natural. But like I said, I'm married and fathered two little girls. I'm just saying that sex was not the overriding factor. For many of my other sisters, some are like me and find it an exciting addition, but others find any reference to sexuality extremely insulting.

"But I had committed to making the change to become a woman. I had to realize that you can't accomplish this overnight. And this is probably good that it does take so long.

"I feel like I've become 'Linda' in every sense. I like dealing with people and I'm comfortable about myself now that I've been out full time."

"How did you feel when I peeked down your dress?"



"It thrills me when I'm recognized as a female and woman when out in public or even at work. But, for you, you've always been a pig." The ice had been broken and Linda was flirting. I attempted to get back to the interview.



"Had you experienced any difficulties or indignities as you transition?"

"Well, using the woman's facilities, the locker room and the restroom was difficult. Early on, the male side of my ego was a little embarrassed and I had to act as if this was a normal female function. But now, I'm treated as a female and have no problems when I go out dining or shopping."

If anything, Linda has become a more active and outgoing female individual than when she was "George".

"I'm doing more than I would have ever imagined," Linda confided. "When I go out, I feel good about myself. I'm still married to my wife of 21 years and our girls still live with us. They just have two mothers now. I'm working fulltime and have returned to college to complete a degree."

Linda is active with the Red Cross, the Girl Scouts and is a member of her local Chamber of Commerce. She also serves as a beauty consulting representative for Mary Kay cosmetics.

"My clientele is both genetic females and trans genderists," she said proudly. "I have a regular Mary Kay route. Nothing pleases me more than helping the other girls look their best."

Indeed, her room at last fall's Southern Comfort Conference had a steady stream of clients looking for a make-over and cosmetics that would not irritate razor sensitive skin.

"Many people are touchy about the way they look, but without any experience in applying cosmetics, the end results often look clownish and that breaks my heart. They have gone to all this trouble and expense with dresses, shoes and jewelry, but the entire effect is ruined with their makeup. The last thing any CD, TS, TV, TG needs is to look like Tammy Faye Bakker!"



As happy a person as Linda appears, she is less than content, there are things that bother her.

"There is an ignorant element of society that hates and fears us. They commit senseless acts of violence and vandalism. I had an easel set up outside my room during the SCC with some of my best glamour pictures and business cards on it. Someone, I don't know who, trashed the whole thing and spread my property all over the hotel. I was pissed!"

"Sounds like you still have a remnant of the male side," I observed.

"Herman, I am not a passive person. I wasn't as a male and not as a woman!"

"A woman scorned then?"

"Mumm, maybe," she said, and the smile returned to her face. Linda is continuing with her transition and will eventually have the operation that will make her an anatomical woman. Mentally and emotionally, she is well on her way there and she offered this advice to others in similar circumstances:

"Keep a good and pleasant personality. And, above all, keep a positive attitude and you will succeed in anything you do in life." Linda grasped my hand with a very firm grip with long, deep eye-contact. "Be positive about yourself all the time."

Not long after this interview was published, "Linda", vanished. Her phone was disconnected, and all mail sent to her was returned, both as "Linda" and to her birth gender, "George." I researched *Reynaud's Phenomenon* but found no therapy prescribed for men who have the condition to be treated with estrogen. On the contrary, estrogen had been found to contribute to Reynaud's symptoms in women. As far as I know, "Linda" just wanted to suck my dick which I'm sure she would have happily obliged if I had responded positively to her invitation. However, maybe "Linda" did complete her transition and it was "George" who vanished.



Pro-Life?



They asked me to tell you what it was like to be twenty and pregnant in 1950 and when you tell your boyfriend you're pregnant, he tells you about a friend of his in the army whose girl told him she was pregnant, so he got all his buddies to come and say, "We all fucked her, so who knows who the father is?" And he laughs at the good joke....

What was it like, if you were planning to go to graduate school and get a degree and earn a living so you could support yourself and do the work you loved – what it was like to be a senior at Radcliffe and pregnant and if you bore this child, this child which the law demanded you bear and would then call "unlawful," "illegitimate," this child whose father denied it ... What was it like? [...]

It's like this: if I had dropped out of college, thrown away my education, depended on my parents ... if I had done all that, which is what the anti-abortion people want me to have done, I would have borne a child for *them*, ... the authorities, the theorists, the fundamentalists; I would have born a child for them, their child.

But I would not have born my own first child, or second child, or third child. My children.

The life of that fetus would have prevented, would have aborted, three other fetuses ... the three wanted children, the three I had with my husband –

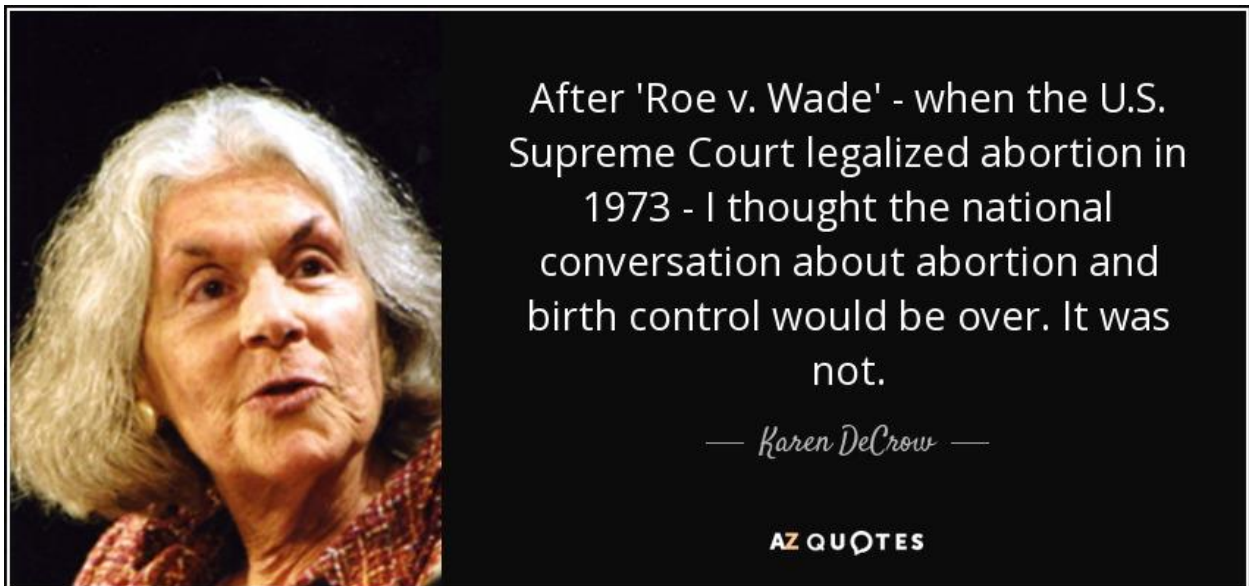
whom, if I had not aborted the unwanted one, I would never have met ... I would have been an “unwed mother” of a three-year-old in California, without work, with half an education, living off her parents....

But it is the children I have to come back to, my children Elisabeth, Caroline, Theodore, my joy, my pride, my loves. If I had not broken the law and aborted that life nobody wanted, they would have been aborted by a cruel, bigoted, and senseless law. They would never have been born. This thought I cannot bear.

What was it like, in the Dark Ages when abortion was a crime, for the girl whose dad couldn't borrow cash, as my dad could? What was it like for the girl who couldn't even tell her dad, because he would go crazy with shame and rage? Who couldn't tell her mother? Who had to go alone to that filthy room and put herself body and soul into the hands of a professional criminal? – because that is what every doctor who did an abortion was, whether he was an extortionist or an idealist.

You know what it was like for her. You know and I know; that is why we are here. We are not going back to the Dark Ages. We are not going to let anybody in this country have that kind of power over any girl or woman. There are great powers, outside the government and in it, trying to legislate the return of darkness. We are not great powers. But we are the light. Nobody can put us out. May all of you shine very bright and steady, today and always.

Ursula K. Le Guin





i-was-a-naive-prolifer

I'm pro-choice, which really means I'm pro-bodily autonomy. That means I support these things:

- Not being forced to stay pregnant
- Not being forced to have an abortion
- Being able to get sterilized without hassle or shame
- Not being forced to get sterilized
- Affordable care for carrying a pregnancy to term
- Respecting patients' right to consent during childbirth (tw: birth violence)
- Access to affordable contraception
- Comprehensive sex education
- Not being forced to have sex without contraception
- Freedom from all rape and sexual assault
- Compassionate treatment of sexual assault victims and justice in the courts
- Wearing whatever clothing you want without harassment
- Access to affordable gender confirmation surgery and hormones for trans people
- Ending infant circumcision and genital mutilation
- Respecting patients' right to consent to all medical treatment
- Death with dignity for the terminally ill
- Elimination of torture as an interrogation technique
- Ending domestic violence and all other violent crime
- Ending sex, organ, and surrogacy human trafficking
- Sex workers legally working in safe, violence-free environments
- Consent for all interactions involving your body

Your body, your choice.

Source: i-was-a-naive--prolifer

THE WAY WE WERE

Gilbert "Gil" Gaudia

1929 - 2021



Gilbert "Gil" Gaudia

October 17, 1929 - April 30, 2021

Gilbert "Gil" Gaudia was born on October 17, 1929, and managed to foil the grim reaper for almost 92 years. He died unexpectedly on April 30, 2021, while on a brief vacation in Florida.

Gil's beloved wife Jeanne died on July 23, 2015. He is survived by his daughters, Shelley Gaudia and her partner Robert Shupe, and Amy Gaudia and her partner Ilene; his dear friend and companion Patricia "PD" Frasure; sister-in-law Nancy Jensen, who was always like a sister to him; and several nieces and nephews.

Born during the great depression, Gil excelled in school and attended the Bronx High School of Science, an unusual occurrence in the Hunt's Point neighborhood of his youth. He and Jeanne built their own home and raised their daughters in upstate New York where he earned his PhD and became a professor at the State University of New York at Fredonia. Gil was a man of many talents and passions, including building, astronomy, teaching, flying, sailing, archery, playing guitar & singing, writing, baking, playing pinochle, and helping people in need. He was especially passionate about the game of handball which he began playing as a young boy in the South Bronx. He continued to play three times a week, and as he approached his 90th birthday he became the oldest active tournament handball player in the Pacific

Northwest.

A truly simple soul inhabited Gil and yet he could contemplate ideas of enormous complexity. He did not like frivolity or excess of any kind, he loved mother nature, and he could make almost anyone laugh. Above all, he was a devoted husband and a father who loved his daughters unconditionally.

When Jeanne's health began to decline, Gil taught himself to play guitar so he could raise her spirits with music. He joined the local musicians of Reality Kitchen who were like family to him and enjoyed ZOOMing with them during the Covid pandemic. He also turned his living room into a workshop and learned to build ukuleles, managing to complete 24 beautiful instruments of various sizes while alone in his apartment during the lockdown. He gave most of them away to family and friends, which was just one example of his immense generosity.



Gil was an emotional man who felt everything very deeply. He fully lived all aspects of his life, including relaxing in his recliner and looking out the window while enjoying the sensation of being in a tree house. Spending time with his family and friends was his greatest joy, and he will be missed by all those who loved him.



As a proud atheist, Gil proved that being a non-believer does not make someone a bad person. He memorized the Boy Scout Oath as a child and although some of the wording was challenging for an atheist, he never failed to live by the oath's promise. No memorial services are being planned at this time. To celebrate the life of this extraordinary man, please consider making donations to Reality Kitchen Nonprofit of Eugene, Oregon, or the American Humanist Association.

TESTOSTERONE,



HORSEPOWER & *TORQUE*

By Bert Mautz

On a whim, Father bought his first red convertible. Shiny and seductive, the Pontiac dealership ensnared him with one of the first GTO models in 1963. John DeLorean was credited with inventing the "muscle car," by inserting big block V-8 engines in mid-size models. His Pontiac GTO was one of the first. Very soon all the "Big Three," had offerings. Saturday night at the *Steak n Shake* drive in, top down, with my white bull terrier, "Spinnaker," in the back and Pam in the bucket seat next to me, convinced I was some hot stuff. (Did not use "shit" back in the early sixties)

More a "joy ride," than a "hot rod," "Wide Oval" tires and a two-speed automatic, she was at her best cruising with the top up and



back window unzipped, all other windows down for lots of flow thru air. Dad loved his convertible. (red)

These factory-built "hot rods"

were noted for their *never before* experienced acceleration. The

standard measure was a dead still start to sixty miles an hour, known as "zero to sixty," became the macho measure of performance, and is to this day. These initial performance cars breaking eight seconds to sixty was an achievement their advertising bragged about. To be timed to the hundredths of a second and cited in virtually every road test published in car magazines ever since.

By 1968, a college graduate, married and off to grad school in Minneapolis, I ordered a custom Dodge Dart two door, V-8, and a Hurst four speed



stick shifter. To be my own muscle car, a ridiculous ride for Minnesota winters and starting a family.

Kids with their necessary gear deemed VW Micro buses with seventy horsepower the rational ride of choice. Owned five, in all. Most fun car ever and even until this day. Every merge onto an



interstate was an adventure, that four-banger chugging for all it could muster.

Obviously, there has been some improvement in car performance through the decades. Gas guzzling pick-up trucks and modest sedans,

many can achieve the eight second standard, or better. Every second of improvement over the years signaled ever lower numbers and more enviable performance. My own so very

modest RAV4, a tall sport utility vehicle with a V-6 is cited to do sixty in a mere six seconds. Driving the car reveals the improvement in throttle response. That's the torque of three and a half liters working for you across the revolutions range of one to six thousand with peak horsepower occurring way up at five thousand rpms.



Car adventures continued through the years; red of course, a 200hp, two-seater, mid-engine Toyota MR2, 145mph top speed. The wife drove it to the office, three toll gates, complete stops

out west of Chicago. She went through rear tires in 14,000 miles and one clutch in 100,000 miles. Lady could drive. Speaking of whims, chanced upon a candy apple red Jeep with a 396 cubic inch engine, desperate seller. Loads of fun. My boys crashed it into a stone wall, showing off for the gals in the next lane.

Recently three seconds to sixty has become the standard for the quickest cars. Having four-wheel drive and more than five hundred horsepower essential to pull this off. Porsche's turbo models with launch control were the title holders for a few years. And along came electric car technology lead by Tesla. Their batteries weigh a thousand pounds, a four-door sedan, but





electric motors on both axles reaching totals of a thousand horsepower for just long enough, the acceleration is astounding. Seemingly defying the laws of inertia. Most recently 1.98 seconds to sixty is the record, but Porsche is building its own electrics, so stay tuned.

Still, uphill on the Roosevelt, down shifts to second gear, *ya gotta love it*. The truck in the next lane, I like to think, cannot believe it. That little silver Toyota is keepin' up.





By Lucy Thorp

When things went terribly wrong for the crew in the movie *Galaxy Quest*, activating the Omega 13 device saved the day. It took everything back in time 13 seconds; time enough to change one disastrous thing. A thing went terribly wrong for me on the evening of April 19th. But I had no Omega 13 device to activate.

The thing happened on our vacation that started out pukey, literally. I had a stomach bug, but we were Covid vaccinated and Virgil was on his way to see his dad, *hell or high water*. My throwing up was not part of the equation. So, the trip to KC was mostly unpleasant for me. Fortunately, my pukiness went away by the weekend and we were seeing friends and eating out and visiting his dad and all was well in our world.

We went to dinner Monday night, April 19th, at Bob & Diana's home. We have been friends for over 45 years. In our youth we belonged to the Foolkiller, a theater-music counterculture college kids' group. The house we lived in with them and two other couples was the site of many a post theater party. Mornings after often found beer cans, wine bottles and bodies, strewn about the house. Bona fide drunken Bacchanalia.

Over the years Bob has become quite the chef and wine connoisseur (unlike our living together days) and that night was no exception. Our dinner was an incomparable delight. The wine flowed freely ... too freely. I knew we were well beyond the driving home bit, but Virgil was waxing eloquently about ...



something. I intended to get the car keys from him, but the next thing I knew I was on the floor with him on top of me and I could not extend my left leg. It hurt like hell. Virgil does not remember that part. I decided I would just lay there and try to sleep. We were all too drunk to do much more. We had definitely

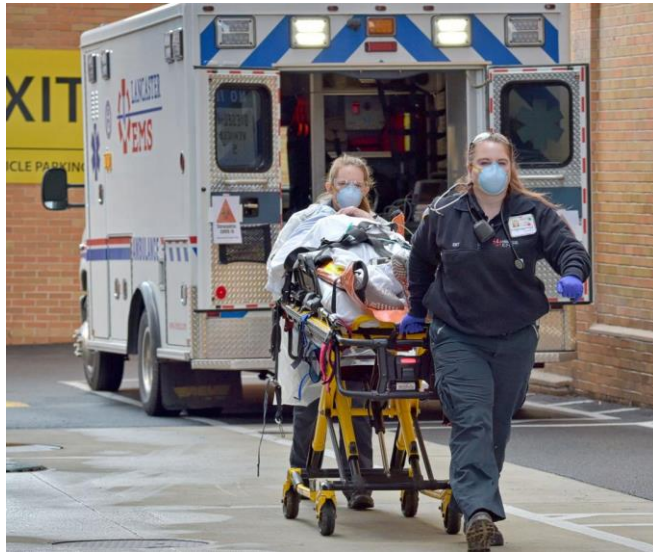
lost our mid 20's 'party till we drop' cred. It was déjà vu with wine bottles and bodies. We had crashed and I had no Omega 13 to undo the damage!

In the middle of the night, I really had to pee, but could not get off the floor. Virgil was passed out on the couch and would not wake up. I even threw things at him. Fortunately, Bob heard me, and he woke Virgil. Between the two of them I got to the bathroom on time. It was the first of many moments when modesty was tossed out the window and reality punched me in the face. Something was very, very wrong!

Tuesday morning brought snow. Snow! Snow in April!!!

I called 911 and the ambulance came to take me to the nearest hospital which turned out to be St Joseph's, a mere mile and a half away.

Our friend's youngest son, Patrick, is very creative. He had sculpted a six-foot-tall Army Ant Warrior out of various pieces of discarded metal, and he erected it on their front lawn. It is utterly stunning, and he is quite the artist. Here I am in total agony as



the EMT's are trying to get me into the ambulance, but they are busy admiring Patrick's handiwork which was beautifully draped with soft, fluffy snow. Maybe they had seen such a situation before, but I had my doubts.

In the ER they asked, "What happened?"

"Well, alcohol was involved," the answer begins and then the story. Over and over. Each time the person asking got a good chuckle. I was still not laughing. Although I found that morphine helped ... a lot.

The RN asked what my husband's cell number was.

"He doesn't have one."

"He doesn't have one?????"

He got one that afternoon. A month later he still hadn't figured out how to answer it. He got better.

Then, "We can try to remove your pants or cut them off."

Cut!!! Cut!!! Take the underwear too! The situation did not allow for any hint of propriety.

Finally, up to the room. Had not eaten all day. When I eventually got food, I was hurting too much to eat.



The Chaplain comes in to pray for me before surgery the next day.

"I'm not a believer", I tell him, "I won't be needing your services."

He looked bewildered, I felt in his mind he was questioning his own faith, "but, but – you're in a Catholic hospital. This is St. Joseph's." He could not understand. I turned my other cheek and he left.

Surgery was easy ... I was asleep.

The difficulty was trying to be comfortable in a hospital where they are considered lax in their care if the nurses do not wake you at least three times a night. And an I-V that decides to beep for the hell of it. "Up yours, up yours, up yours," the beeping yakked at me in monotonous irritation.

The only good part was watching the Derek Chauvin sentencing on TV. Most of the orderlies were Black and they hung around seeing what would happen. One man was in the room when the guilty verdicts were handed down. The look on the orderly's face was priceless.

"He's not smirking like he was when he killed George Floyd", I observed.

"Damn right!" was the delighted reply and you could not wipe the grin from his face.

Friday afternoon is my release! Friends put us up for the night and I relied on Cathy to help me to the bathroom. Again, dignity is left in the dust.

Saturday morning was time to start the three-day, two-night trip back to Florida. My lot was to sit in the back seat and try not to bitch too much. Fortunately, I was able to quell the pain with an organic substance that was preferable to Percocet which made me throw up or Oxycontin that scared the living hell out of me.

First day on the road.... 120 miles into the journey, I must pee. Good fortune, there is a rest stop exit just two miles ahead.

Virgil unloads the folded wheelchair out of the back; we get me in it and then roll to the bathroom. We are new at this and have not figured everything out yet. He gets me to the bathroom and I think I can do this by myself. I gingerly wheel into the handicapped stall and as soon as I tried to get on the throne, I fall down!

"Oh shit!" A stranger in a reflective vest came into the stall, got me on my feet, helped me pee, got my pants up and wheeled me back out to Virgil. Thank you so much!!!!!! Again, dignity is out the window (or down the toilet, however you want to look at it).



Trip Home, day # 1, fresh and ready for the trip.

"I am so glad I was here to help", she said. I was so grateful that she did not say that the lord had guided her there.

Only 18 hours and 33 minutes driving time, 1254 miles and 13.73 pee breaks left to go. The pee breaks will rule our progress.

Home.... first thing we must do is get me a porta-potty. We stumble into a routine. Virgil rouses, then comes get me in the



Trip home day #2 Macon,

chair and wheels me to the couch. There he brings me the plastic tub and tooth stuff. Empties the potty and brings it to the couch. Then a hot washcloth and a spit bath. Problem is, he sleeps late and I cannot get out of bed and into the wheelchair by myself.

I call his cell from my cell. He either a) doesn't have it with him, b) doesn't hear it or c) can't figure out how to answer it.

Fortunately, Virgil is good at spoiling me. Strawberry ice cream sprinkled with fresh blueberries; cottage cheese with sliced strawberries and pineapple arranged just so on top; a berry bowl with fresh strawberries, raspberries and blueberries; small plate of pepperoni, sliced apple and assorted cheeses; grilled, rare steak with avocado butter sauce and sauteed asparagus, onions and mushrooms, the steak cut into bite size pieces since all my meals are on the couch.

I hate the goddam couch. My butt hurts. In all actuality, I really could not feel my butt, but it still hurts! I love Virgil. Proof? I did not kill him.

We got better at figuring things out and I had my first full shower and hair washing at the end of May. One month. Do you know how gross you can get in a month?

Finally, to the orthopedist May 6th, two weeks after surgery for staple removal. Virgil hugs me as the hurt comes. Back again one month later, on June 10th. My first therapy session is June 22. This is now my 8th week on the couch. Therapist tells me he wants me out of the wheelchair and onto the walker. 2nd



At home Day # 3 Not Pretty. First day on the couch. Me and Piss Boy. 55 days more.

appointment, get off the walker and onto a cane. 3rd session, walk around the room with no cane, 5 laps.



11 weeks and just using a cane! Avalon Beach.

"You can keep the cane with you, but don't use it," he admonished. 4th visit, "don't limp." 5th time, "doing great!"

Now, 11 weeks after surgery, I am walking without help. I am playing Wii golf standing up. I am handling all my grooming needs myself. I do not need anyone to dump my pee. (I do not miss my 'Piss Boy') I am a very lucky person. 3 more visits and I will be Superwoman! 11

weeks ago, I thought I wouldn't walk again. Thankfully, I was wrong.

I am particularly delighted to have found out how wonderfully polite strangers can be. When Virgil would wheel me into the women's restroom to the handicap stall and help me, no one got upset about him being there. Or, they guided us to the handicapped / family restroom if one was available. People opened doors and made way. They smiled and said, "my pleasure". "can I help", "can I get you anything", "what more can I do?"

I expected my friends would be wonderful; after all they ARE friends. But it is a pleasant surprise that so many people that I did not know ARE so kind.

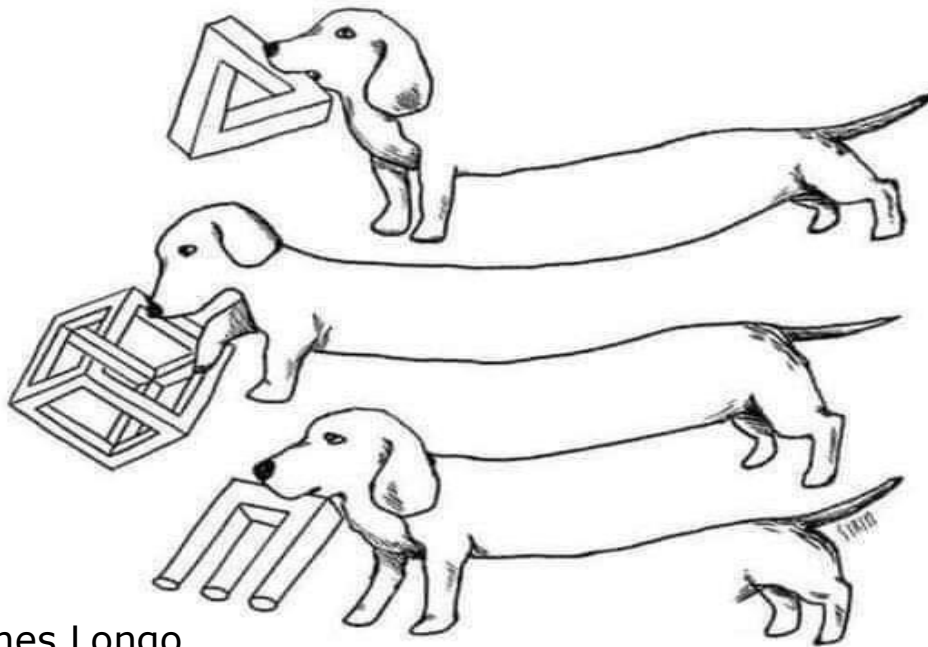
Now, after 11 weeks a gimp, I need to clean house. Literally. Virgil is a great guy. Did the laundry, cooked, waited on me hand and foot. But he doesn't clean the kitchen sink. Oh well, I cannot have it all and I sure as hell don't have an Omega 13, dammit.



Enjoying my beach, again!

FICTION

'Weakly' Musings



By James Longo

"Life seems like work," Jack said standing in his dirty kitchen.

"What's the matter, Bucky?" Jill said from her makeshift home office, otherwise known as the dining room table.

"I don't know, my get up and go has got up and gone."

"Make me a cup of coffee, maybe that will help."

"How will making you a cup of coffee help me get my 'get up and go' going?"

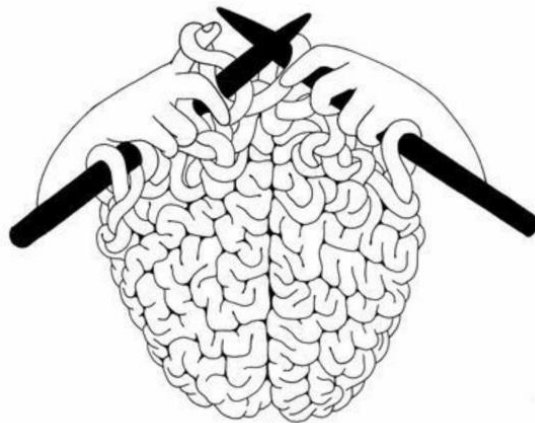
"If you are doing something, it will take your mind off your lack of initiative."

Jack sauntered over to the coffee maker, pulled out the old grounds, tapped them into the compost basket, rinsed out the filter, and hit the button on the coffee grinder. The grinder zinged to life. Jack stared at it. Placed the fresh coffee in the basket and poured the distilled water into the machine. Placed the cup under the coffee maker and hit the button to start the process. And the coffee maker blankly stared back. No lights, no heat – no errors.

Jack threw up his hands in disgust. "It's been this way all week."

By now Jill had gotten up from the dining room table and moved toward the coffee pot. "Maybe you should try plugging it in," She said with that 'I love you, but I don't have a clue why', tone.

"Oops," Jack replied with that, 'I know I'm stupid and I can't believe you live with me' smirk, and plugged the coffee pot in. "Coffee will be ready in a minute," he announced with chagrin.



"I'll believe it when I see it," she said laughing while heading back to her computer on the table.

"You have to admit it has been a hell of a week," Jack said, starting to wipe down the table.

"Well, nothing we can't handle."

"True, it all started when I gave those two panhandlers our worn-out bicycle helmets," Jack said.

"So they asked for four dollars, and you gave them two bicycle helmets. You were being a nice guy."

"They put a curse on me."

"Are you psychotic?"

"No, every time something like this happens, I have a string of bad lucks. Remember the Indian panhandler on that reservation in Montana? The one who tried to give us a trinket for money, and I gave her my gallon donation blood medallion, and later that day we had three flat tires and you fell off your bike and got a concussion?"

"Yeah, and the next day was nine-eleven. So now, you are telling me nine-eleven was caused by your blood medallion?" Jill asked with sarcastic accusation.

"No, but you did make me throw that trinket away," Jack said sounding a little dejected.

"Hey, better safe than sorry."

"You didn't see me chase it down," Jack mumbled as he brought Jill her cup of coffee. "Well, Sunday I ran over to those two guys on bikes who had asked me for four dollars and gave them those grotty bike helmets that you told me to give to the Salvation Army. I go into work and my screen is all screwed up on my cell phone, probably from running down those two punks."

"Aren't you being a little dramatic?" Jill said taking a cautious sip of her coffee.

"Monday, I go and buy a new cell phone and do some grocery shopping. I come home and make myself a burrito, only to find

the refrigerator is on fire and has become my oven. I pull the plug, spray it down and call the fire department."

"At least it happened while you were making dinner. Imagine if that had happened if you weren't home," Jill said with a Madonna-like, cloying smile.

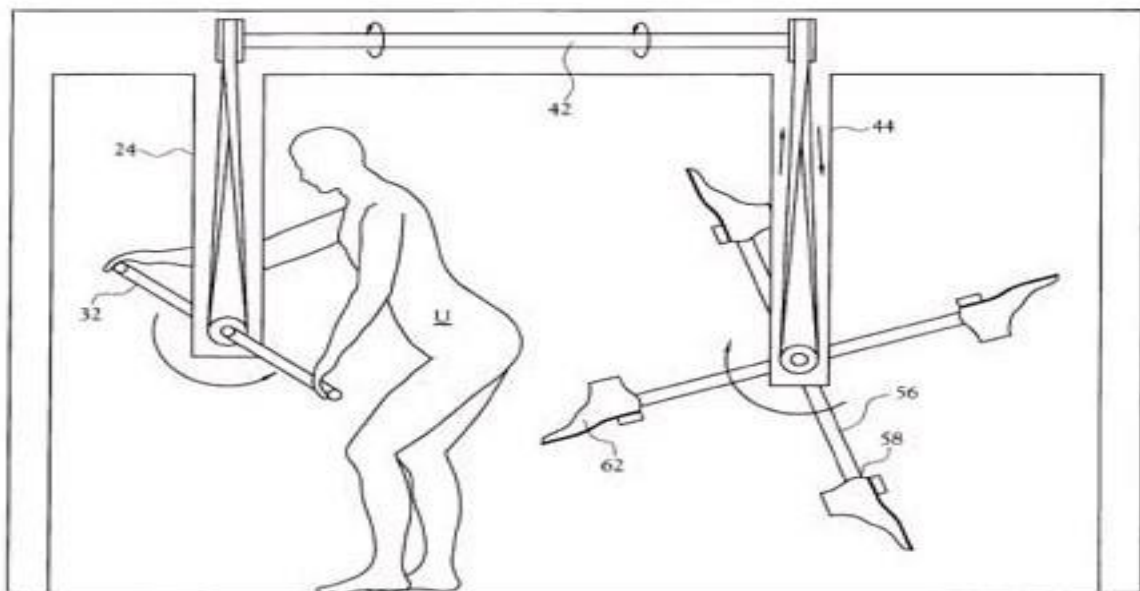
"True enough, but last Wednesday, when the new fridge was delivered, we spent four hours to get the side-by-side doors level because the nut to adjust the height is on too tight; we can't align them without moving the whole fridge."

"Did I tell you I think I got that figured out?" Jill cheerily replied with typical feminist confidence.

Jack continued, "Thursday, the microphone I use to blue tooth my hearing aids won't work on the new phone, so back to the phone store."

"And you think this is all because two punks cursed you?"

"No, but it is a better story than the fates just bit me in the ass this week."



Their shared laughter made the room seem a trifle less tired.



John and Martha were both brought up in Roman Catholic families. But there the similarity ends. John's family was typical run-of-the-mill, go-to-church-on-Sunday type Catholics. Martha's family was anything but typical, yet sadly, not unusual or, at least, not rare.

Martha's mother was strict, judgmental, bigoted and *fanatically* Catholic. She had five children, three girls and two boys; Martha was the middle daughter. Martha's father was somewhat interesting and caring if you should engage him alone, especially if you were a child not his own, but otherwise, he was a deeply disagreeable tyrant, a crude practical joker, and a drunkard. I'm not saying he was an alcoholic; some people just drink to get drunk, to escape, to be able to tolerate life. And his was a shitty deck. Of course, it was his own fault. But who knows what attracts two people to each other? Martha's parents were the most mismatched couple imaginable, and their children paid for it. Love was not present in their household. (I should point out

that, at the time of this story, divorce was virtually unthinkable among Catholic marriages, tantamount to excommunication or, worse yet, you might rot in the eternal fires of hell.)

On the other hand, John's parents were loving, not in a demonstrative way, but if you saw them, you would know immediately that they were bonded by real love. They also had five children, all boys, of which John was the youngest.

Although seemingly unlikely, there would develop a strong link between these two Catholic families that ultimately lasted over several generations. The way in which this relationship began, that is, the first contact, is rather interesting. It came from a chance liaison between one of John's older brothers and a prostitute who worked out of a cheap hotel in the heart of their city. The prostitute was Martha's younger sister.

How was it that an affair with a prostitute set the stage for a lasting bond between two families that were essentially polar opposites? Well, it began this way. John's next older brother was a shy, almost timid fellow who, for that reason, was not able to land a date with a girl. He discussed this with his older, more worldly, brother in hope for some helpful advice, and he got this response:

"I may be able to help you," big brother replied. "This girl I've been dating (read prostitute he'd been paying) has two sisters. I'll talk to her and maybe we can set you up."

This got timid brother all excited, and nervous at the same time. "Two sisters!" he gasped, "Do you think one of them might want to meet me?"

"Well actually only one," he replied, "The other's a lesbian so she wouldn't be interested."

"What's a lesbian?"

"Never mind that for now, just don't ask her sister that, if I can get you fixed up."

You may have noticed that I have not been burdening you with a lot of names. With all the characters that make up the tapestry of this tale, their names may make you want to know more about them. But that would just distract you from John and Martha who are the focus of this story. Cleo will come later. Actually, much later in real time, but I'll keep moving it along.



Martha inherited her mother's religious fanaticism. She was not anxious for a sexual partner but understood that it was God's will. She firmly believed that *Woman* was created and given to *Man* to procreate, that is, have sex – make children. She took the command in Genesis 9:7 to be her injunction "*As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it.*" But she didn't know how to proceed. How should she attract a man?

Her mother never spoke of these things. Besides, she had learned not to ask her, remembering her first menstruation. She had screamed when she saw blood coming from her vagina. Martha was terrified, she thought she must be dying. Her mother came and said simply that this was normal, "so stop screaming." She later returned with some torn up towels and gave Martha a book to read: *What's Happening to my Body? A Book for Girls*,

then left her on her tear-stained own.

Martha asked a friend who had a boyfriend, thinking she would be able to help her. Then her younger sister overheard the conversation and chimed in with the most useful information. Martha wondered how her sister knew so much but felt it better not to ask.

So, when John's big brother asked his prostitute if she might hook his timid brother up with her sister, she teased him, "Why should I? Why don't you send him to me? It'd be fun to teach him."

"He's not ready for you."

"Oh, okay," she said. "But he can't come to our house. You set the time and place and I'll bring my sister and introduce them."

"How do you know she would be willing?"

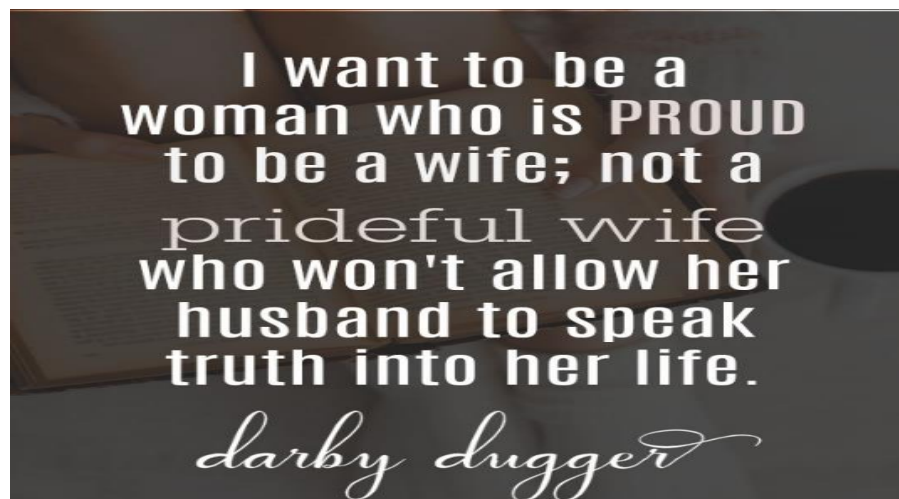
"Trust me. She's ready."

For some time before this arrangement was made, John had been in a long affair with a girl he was sure would be his future wife. This ended abruptly and tragically when a terrible accident left her dying in his arms. She was the first and last woman that he would ever truly love, and it was a long time before he was ready to consider having another girlfriend.

In the meantime, his timid brother was having a sexual revelation. Martha had learned her sister's lessons well and was determined to make herself attractive to a man so she could carry out God's command. It turned out that the new Martha was too much for the shy, timid brother, so he turned to his other brothers in hopes of finding a way out. When John heard that the point of contention was that she was "*too sexy*," John decided he was ready for a new girlfriend.

So, John and Martha got married (see, I told you I would move this along). But being Catholic, they never had sexual intercourse before the "*I do's*" were pronounced in the presence of the Holy Eucharist. So, John never knew that Martha really hated sex until it was too late.

But Martha took her vows seriously and was determined to do her part as her God commanded, to "*be fruitful and multiply,*" no matter how distasteful the process was. She did not realize that it would make her bleed that first night and that it was so messy. From that very first night forward, she always spread newspaper over the bed sheets whenever John wanted sex. For his part, John always had as much sex as he asked for, but he always had to be the initiator, and there was no passion involved.



Being the man he was, he fervently craved real sexual lust, so John soon became the poster boy for sexual promiscuity. What the hell, there was always the confessional, that Catholic invention that allowed you to do anything you wanted, so long as you say an Act of Contrition and three *Hail Mary's*. And for the next 60 years or so, John said a lot of *Hail Mary's*.

One of John's extracurricular lovers lasted for two years until his priest got tired of always proclaiming absolution every Saturday evening for the same sin and told John he had to get rid

of his lover. This was very difficult, but John was a good Catholic, so one day at their usual meeting place at a coffee house across from the city park, they bid a teary goodbye for the last time.

All this did was to free John for a wider range of sexual partners. Meanwhile, Martha was not *unaware* of why John had to work late at least once a week. But she, being a good Catholic and, after a talk with her younger sister, was resigned to do whatever it took to keep a happy husband.

With the loss of his long-time lover, John noticed the girls who worked under his supervision at the manufacturing plant where he managed a large department. One of these girls was Cleo. He chatted with her at the water cooler one morning, and, in a manner that could be construed as accidental, brushed against her breasts. This elicited a move by Cleo that was obviously not accidental, either, so John took her hand and acquainted her with his already hard erection.

John grinned and said, "I need to check our supplies in the back storeroom."

"And you need help, right?"

Before the day was out John discovered he had a willing outlet for his lust. Cleo and John had sex two or three times a week, if not in the back of the little used storeroom, in the back of John's car. She became so imbedded into his life that she started visiting him at home and attempted to make friends with Martha.

Cleo made it a point to bring Martha a small gift every time she visited. But Martha was not dumb. She knew exactly what was going on. She recognized every nuance of Cleo's behavior toward her husband as if it were taken straight out of the playbook that her younger sister had laid out for her. But it wasn't overt, so she could safely ignore Cleo's little flirtations without giving away that she knew anything. Martha would go to

any length to avoid anything that might give John a pretense to leave her. She even began to initiate sex with John and pretended enjoyment of it. On the other hand, Cleo *was* dumb, so she felt that she had established a friendship with Martha.

By this time, Martha and John already had three children, two girls and a boy, and Martha had just learned she was pregnant again. On this front, life was going according to her plan. However, what was then quietly referred to as “women’s problems” intervened. Her hysterectomy ended her fervor for further fulfillment of God’s command to “be fruitful and multiply”. From that moment on she focused her efforts on her vision for her children’s future: her son would become a priest, her youngest daughter would become a nun, and oldest daughter would provide the grandchildren. To all these goals, she ultimately failed.



Their kids all went to Catholic school where their studies were laced with a constant dose of religion. Their catechisms were memorized by rote and Martha did the best she could at helping them with their other studies. Neither Martha nor John had gone any further than high school and much had been forgotten, so Martha had to get a review text to help the children with relatively simple arithmetic functions. But her primary focus always was on the Bible, books on the lives of the saints and

religious propaganda intended to tempt children into entering the sisterhood or priesthood.

Years passed and John got careless. He had arranged for his oldest daughter to get a job at the same firm where he had worked for twelve years. Every day they drove the fifteen miles from where they lived to the next town where the manufacturing firm was located. One day his daughter took a walk out to retrieve a package she had left in the car. She came onto the spectacle of her father humping Cleo in the back seat. There was no conversation on the way back home that day. And daughter had made an enemy for life.

John got into even more trouble. You see, he had two other girlfriends at the time he was fucking Cleo. And they all found out. So, when his company expanded to open a branch several counties away, John was the first to volunteer for a transfer.



Many more years passed. Martha got old and sick, couldn't do anything anymore, not even her wifely duties. John had retired. But he was kept busy doing odd jobs for all the old widows in their trailer community. He was still having fun, bless his heart. And Cleo kept in touch writing frequent notes, filled with naughty – and not so subtle – double entendres.

These days he had less and less to tell the priest in the confessional, so one day he asked his priest, "Father, if someone

masturbated and did not confess the sin, would he go to hell?"

"No," the priest said. "That would not be a mortal sin," falling back on the rationale he used for himself.

"Oh, thank God!" exclaimed John. And then quickly added, "Oh, I didn't mean me," adding another little venial sin to his purgatory basket.

More years passed and Martha died. Oh! I mean, she passed on.

John had not had any regular sex for a long time so the first thing he thought of was ... Cleo. At that time, he was 85 but still in good health and condition ... at least in his mind.

A month later, he couldn't wait any longer and announced to his family, (who had all migrated down to care for Martha and John as they became predictably more and more demented), "I'm going on a road trip back home. A buddy of mine asked me to come up and spend some time with him."

His family knew him, and it was obvious to all that he wasn't going to see any "buddy" of his. While his oldest daughter just refused to speak to him, he was chastised by most of the family with unsubtle admonitions such as, "It's only been a month since we buried Martha! Don't you have any sense of respect?"

"I'm 85 years old," he whined, "I don't have much more time left!"

So, John went back to Cleo. But Cleo had changed with time. She got fat. Really fat. Like 300 pounds fat. And she was going bald. But she still wanted sex, so what else mattered?

She titillated him with her collection of porn movies and clumsy attempts to copy the video's positions of lovemaking.

John was happy again. He rationalized that any semblance of sex was much better than no sex. But after about a month, he began to worry about his immortal soul. It wasn't right to live with a woman outside of the sanctity of a Catholic marriage.

So, John and Cleo talked with the local priest. "You are doing the right thing," he said. "I will be happy to join you through the sacrament of holy matrimony which I can perform at mass in about three weeks. That's the first opening that I have. But you must promise me not to have any more sexual relations until the ceremony is completed." The priest then added, "If you like, I will now hear your confessions."

This was not a suggestion. It would be easy for John since he had been doing it all his life, but Cleo was a little flustered. He took her aside to assure her that it would be easy. "Do you remember how to say the Act of Contrition? No matter, he will prompt you. Then you say three Hail Mary's and you are back in God's graces. Simple as that."



So, they put away the porn movies and moved into separate bedrooms. But they found it was not easy at all. It lasted for a full week. Then one night they ran into each other on the way to each other's bedroom. "It's okay," John said, more to convince himself than Cleo. "We can go to confession again just before we get married." And, conspiratorially added, "We'll confess to another priest in the church in the next town."

Newly married, John and Cleo moved back to his family conclave and into the same trailer where he had lived with Martha. This lasted for just over two years, when, in the midst of an excessively and physically exhausting sex act they both fell out of bed with Cleo landing on top of him. John died of a massive heart attack with a smile on his face.

John, of course, went straight to Heaven. He was immediately infused with an unexplainable sense of peace and happiness. Harps were playing, angels singing, and all of his senses were overcome with joy. Realizing where he was, he looked around for Saint Peter for his welcoming initiation. Instead, he heard his name called by a beautiful female voice. He looked around to see what manner of angel beckoned to him. He then heard the voice again, "What took you so long? I have been waiting for you to join me." She sounded so lovely; he was sure she was sent to minister to him. Heaven-sent, so to speak.



And then he saw her. Martha!

"Martha," he stammered, and, not knowing what else to say, he asked, "How did you know I was coming?"

"I always knew. You took such good care of me while I was sick, I knew we were destined to be together."

"Fuh, fuh ... for how long?"

"Well, for eternity, silly."

"You mean we just take on where we left off? You're my wife again?" He thought maybe everything really would be perfect here. Maybe she got over her distaste for sex. It is Heaven, after all.

"Oh yes," she said. And then, reading his mind, added, "In every way *except the sex*. There's no need for that here."

"Wait a minute," he said close to panicking. "I want another opinion, who's in charge here?"

Martha just smiled. And the guy in charge answered in a booming voice, even though John could not see him,

"I invented sex to populate Earth. There is no purpose for sex here. Thus, there is no sex. Didn't you notice there is nothing hanging between your legs anymore? Don't worry, it happens a lot."

And John and Martha stayed with each other for all eternity ... forever ... forever... forever more.



POETRY N' PROSE



"I am an atheist.

Others wiser than I have pointed out that
this does not tell you very much about me.

To say that I am not something
is not very descriptive.

The list of things I am not is infinite.
But I am not afraid of this moniker.

I am not a theist.

This means I do not believe in God or gods.
I do not believe in the supernatural of any kind.

The natural is more than sufficient."

Alice Greczyn

Actress, Author, & Speaker at FREEFLO 2022

Black Lives Matter

Mirror, mirror of time
Tell me about this
ancestor of mine
Tell me why she had to
suffer
Tell me why she had to
cry
And tell me are those
tears of blood I see
running down her face
from her eye
I want to know everything
Even why she had to die
And tell me mirror
Why are those chains
pulling her from behind
Explain to me mirror
why were people back then so blind
Why was her Innocence stolen
Why is a person
something someone
Would want to buy
Tell me mirror, mirror of time
I want to know the truth



Will I too
Be robbed of my youth
Forced to live
A life of abuse

Tell me mirror
What did she do
To deserve this
PLEASE MIRROR
Don't I get
At least one wish
Or was that the other one with the
lamp
Either way
Tell me mirror
PLEASE,
PLEASE I'M BEGGING
See
I'm almost on my knees
This is just not right
This just cannot be
It's not United I
It's supposed to be
UNITED WE!!!
Can't you reflect on them
Can't you make them see...
For that is why you are here my dear
To be the voice of your ancestor
A voice that will echo
Year after year
For through you
She will not
die in vain
For yours and generations to come
She will bear the pain
To teach the world
This type of treatment is inhumane
For she has been faithful



And has never strayed
from seeking
my face
So I will bless your nation
Giving back sevenfold
from what was taken



Ashes to ashes
From her dust
You will rise
Higher than the clouds
You will climb
You will be
A beautiful
Black queen
For you will be the voice of your people in a world so mean...
Black lives matter...
Jamie Wilkins, April /2021

COMEDY CORNER



By James Longo

Thank you or fuck you, usually I am a very thankful person, but more and more I just want to say, "fuck you!" We live in a system that crosses charity with thievery. "We will give you what you want, how much can we take you for?"

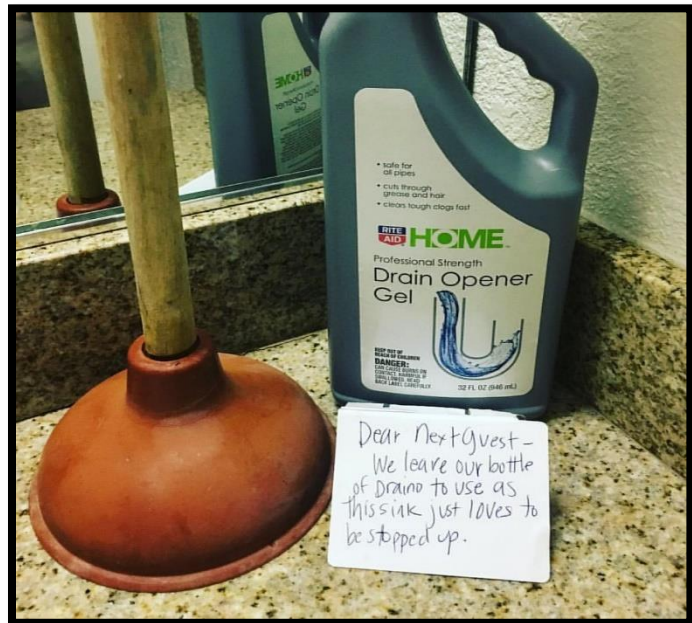
It started northwest of Mobile. We booked a reservation at a *Days Inn by Windham*. we arrive at 10 pm, having driven 8 hours to get there. When we checked in at the counter the girl said with a little giggle, "We have your reservation, but we don't have a room. The computer booking didn't turn off as we took in telephoned reservations."

Did we say, "What the fuck?" Did we become indignant, "You better find us a room or else!" No, we just said, "Oh, okay," retreated to our car to stare at our phone to check the banking app, and search for other accommodations.

We were still sitting in the parking lot when we got a call, (we were only five steps from the front door). "It turns out we have a room after all. Another reservation's credit card was declined so, *we now have a room for you!*"

It is now 10:30 pm. Do you say, *Fuck You*, or do you say *Thank You*? Part of you wants to say, *fuck you*, but all you really want is to get a hot shower and go to bed. "Thank you."

Next night, we picked our hotel for location rather than anything else, a *Motel 6* northwest of Fort Worth. Once again, we are getting in around 10 pm at night. The door to our room locks, but the spaces between the door and the door jambs are so wide that bugs can fly in. We tape the door shut with duct tape.



The next morning while peeing, I notice a brown stain on the upraised seat. Needless to say, we took our morning constitutional at a Texas interstate rest area. When I tried to bring the accommodation deficiencies to the hotelier, the Indian gentleman behind the counter just smiled and nodded. Do you start screaming and pounding on the Covid plexiglass shield or do you smile back, nod your head, get in your car and whisper under your breath, "(That'll) teach me to stay at a Motel 6."

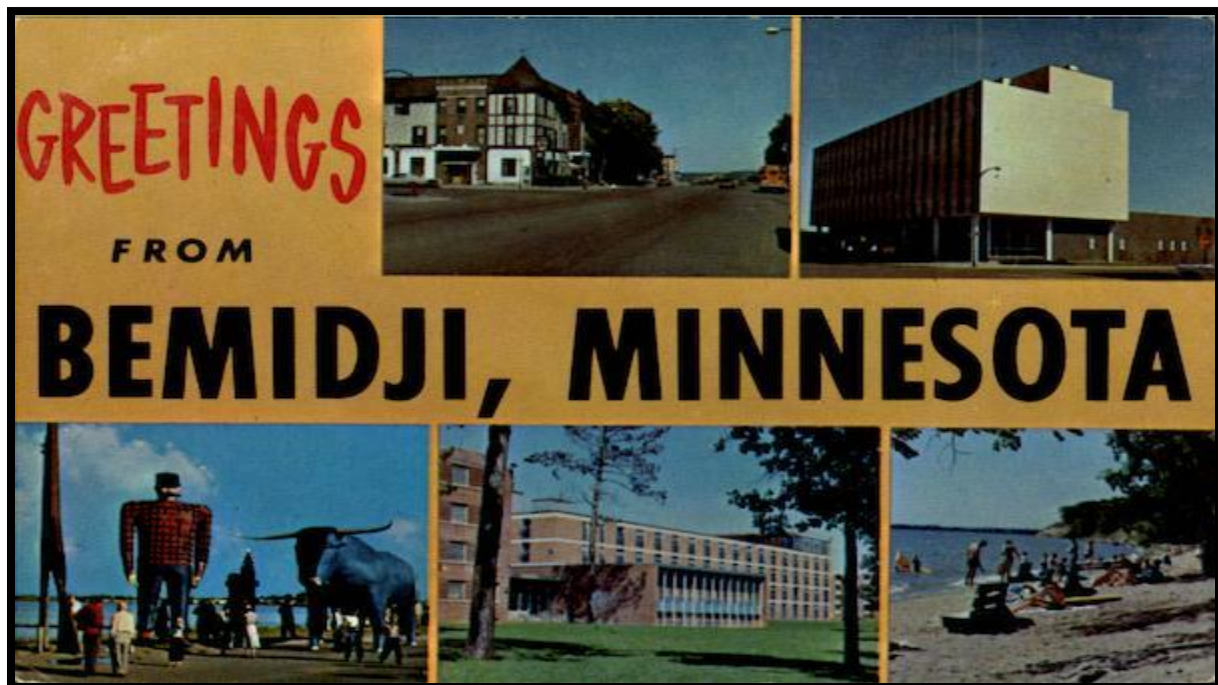
A few days go by and we are now bicycling in Minnesota having left our internal combustion engine behind. The day was gray, cloudy and a high of forty-nine. It was cold enough for my Florida acclimatized ass that I wore my booties over my bicycle shoes. We arrived at the only hotel in Hackensack Minnesota, *The*

Purple Mushroom Motel. Bet you didn't know there was a Hackensack, Minnesota. Well, the room's heater said seventy-five, but the room never went above sixty-four.

Did we bitch, did we moan? No, we took the covers off one bed and put them on the other. What's wrong with us? We didn't think about saying, *fix this or else*; we just handled it.



We spent two nights in Bemidji at the *Best Western*. We get back from a sixty-four-mile day ride to the headwaters of the Mississippi and our room hasn't been touched. So, I bring down my wet towels, and trash cans to the front desk, and ask why wasn't my room cleaned? "Oh, if you want your



room cleaned you need write on this sheet due to Covid."

Did I say bullshit? Did I demand my room be cleaned immediately? Did I ask why wasn't this list brought to my attention? No, I just said, "Okay, sorry I didn't know", and took my towels and my empty trash can and trudged up the stairs.

The last night on the road, we stop at a *Best Western* outside of Nashville. After checking in and a failed inspection, we go back to the clerk manning the front desk who had been so pleasant as we were checking in.

"I'd like a new room. There is hair all over my room."

"Okay we will move you from the fourth floor to the fifth." The check-in girl turns to me and says, "We'll be putting you on the fifth floor in room 521."



"Was this cleaned by the same person who left all that hair?" we asked.

"No, I inspected it myself," said the girl.

We enter the room, put our bags down, and notice a cheese-it on the floor between the two beds. Barb picks up the cracker with a piece of toilet tissue and said with a sardonic shrug, "Be grateful it wasn't poo on the seat."

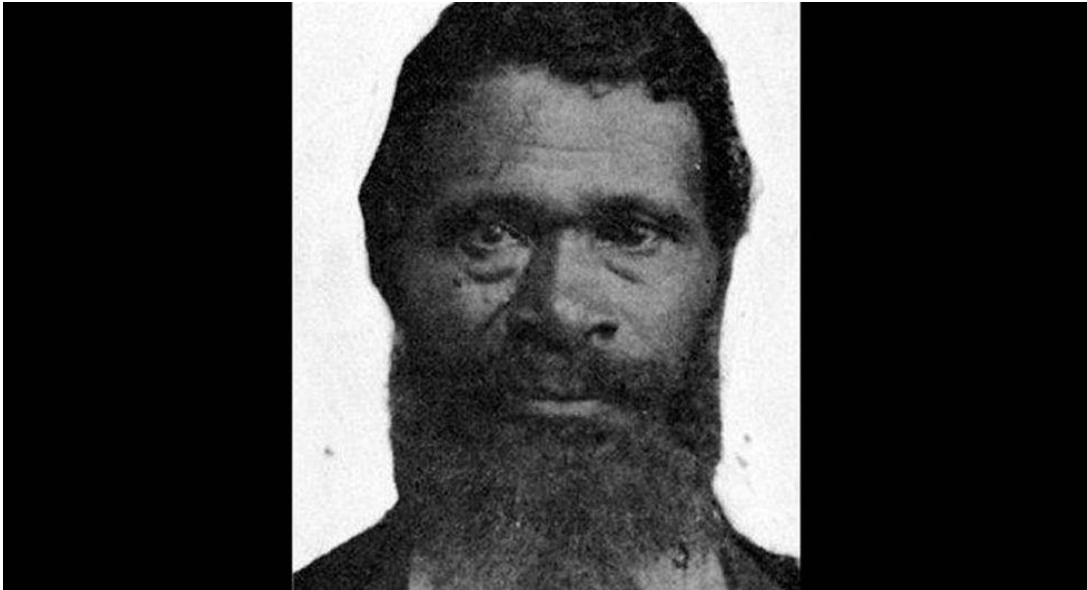
Thank goodness she inspected it, I thought sarcastically.

"What will it matter in a hundred years?" I said grinding my teeth. "Thank goodness," I echoed, contemplating the cheese-it as a step up from poo on the seat.



Dayton, Ohio, August 7, 1865
To My Old Master, Colonel P.H.
Anderson, Big Spring, Tennessee

*(After his old master wanted him back, the freed slave's response
is a literary masterpiece)*



Sir: I got your letter, and was glad to find that you had not forgotten Jordon, and that you wanted me to come back and live with you again, promising to do better for me than anybody else can. I have often felt uneasy about you. I thought the Yankees would have hung you long before this, for harboring Rebs they found at your house. I suppose they never heard about your going to Colonel Martin's to kill the Union soldier that was left by his company in their stable. Although you shot at me twice before I left you, I did not want to hear of your being hurt, and am glad you are still living.

It would do me good to go back to the dear old home again, and see Miss Mary and Miss Martha and Allen, Esther, Green, and Lee. Give my love to them all, and tell them I hope we will meet in the better world, if not in this. I would have gone back to see

you all when I was working in the Nashville Hospital, but one of the neighbors told me that Henry intended to shoot me if he ever got a chance.

I want to know particularly what the good chance is you propose to give me. I am doing tolerably well here. I get twenty-five dollars a month, with victuals and clothing; have a comfortable home for Mandy, — the folks call her Mrs. Anderson, — and the children — Milly, Jane, and Grundy — go to school and



are learning well. The teacher says Grundy has a head for a preacher. They go to Sunday school, and Mandy and me attend church regularly. We are kindly treated. Sometimes we overhear others saying, "Them colored people were slaves" down in Tennessee. The children feel hurt when they hear such remarks; but I tell them it was no disgrace in Tennessee to belong to Colonel Anderson. Many darkeys would have been proud, as I used to be, to call you master. Now if you will write and say what wages you

will give me, I will be better able to decide whether it would be to my advantage to move back again.

As to my freedom, which you say I can have, there is nothing to be gained on that score, as I got my free papers in 1864 from the Provost-Marshall-General of the Department of Nashville. Mandy says she would be afraid to go back without some proof that



you were disposed to treat us justly and kindly; and we have concluded to test your sincerity by asking you to send us our wages for the time we served you. This will make us forget and forgive old scores, and rely on your justice and friendship in the future. I served you faithfully for thirty-two years, and Mandy twenty years. At twenty-five dollars a month for me, and two dollars a week for Mandy, our earnings would amount to eleven thousand six hundred and eighty dollars. Add to this the interest for the time our wages have been kept back, and deduct what you paid for our clothing, and three doctor's visits to me, and pulling a tooth for Mandy, and the balance will show what we are in justice entitled to. Please send

the money by Adams's Express, in care of V. Winters, Esq., Dayton, Ohio. If you fail to pay us for faithful labors in the past, we can have little faith in your promises in the future. We trust the good Maker has opened your eyes to the wrongs which you and your fathers have done to me and my fathers, in making us toil for you for generations without recompense. Here I draw my wages every Saturday night; but in Tennessee there was never any pay-day for the negroes any more than for the horses and cows. Surely there will be a day of reckoning for those who defraud the laborer of his hire.

In answering this letter, please state if there would be any safety for my Milly and Jane, who are now grown up, and both good-looking girls. You know how it was with poor Matilda and Catherine. I would rather stay here and starve — and die, if it come to that — than have my girls brought to shame by the violence and wickedness of their young masters. You will also please state if there has been any schools opened for the colored children in your neighborhood. The great desire of my life now is to give my children an education, and have them form virtuous habits.



Say howdy to George Carter, and thank him for taking the pistol from you when you were shooting at me.

From your old servant,
Jordon Anderson

2



DUMB QUESTIONS



By Herman Nietzsche (aka Virgil Thorp)

Being a tabloid TV talk show junkie, I am continually appalled and amused at some of the incredibly dumb questions from the audiences that often cloud up the shows' objective and obscure the original intent of the topic. This is

especially evident in shows dealing with any form of sexuality, and in my case, the swinging lifestyle in particular.

I realize that many people have an overdeveloped sense of sin and find any sort of pleasurable sexuality guiltily intimidating. The best description of this position would be *vanilla* or *traditional*. Very basic stuff. Maybe a little tongue if your eyes are closed. You know, those people who feel the only acceptable sexual act is procreation only, "lights-off, man-on-top-woman-on-bottom, get-it-over-with-quick, and hope it doesn't occur more than once a month." Of course, for them, foreplay is limited, and oral stimulation is considered a crime against nature with an overwhelming desire to go to confession to avoid the hell of their indoctrination.



When confronted by people who practice an advanced form of sexuality like our swinger friends, our vanilla spectators get uncomfortable and intimidated. If that sexuality includes more than two people, they also get terribly confused. Isn't this called "wife-swapping" where dirty men with dirty minds are tired of their spouses but are too lame to divorce the bitches? Hmmm? The poor

people cannot help but show their ignorance concerning matters of sexuality, and I am often baffled at the depth of it.

What I believe it really means is that these people have repressed their imaginations because of their shame of being horny and human and subsequently, are unable to overcome indoctrinated sexual prejudices to be able to give or accept sexual pleasure without intense feelings of residual guilt – thank you Jesus. I am more inclined to call them “sexual pedestrians”, a position on the sexual scale only one step up from celibacy. And I do feel so very sorry for them although I am fairly certain they would argue vehemently with me that they are not shamefully sexually repressed in any form or amount and are not interested in sex other than married monogamy. Okay, it is alright to be that way and if it makes me laugh, so much the better. Two of the dumbest questions I have heard on television talk shows are, “isn't someone left out?” and “aren't you afraid your mate will find someone better?”

“Isn't someone left out?” the elderly woman with a frilly blouse and pink ribbon, sitting primly in the back row, naively asked the group of swingers on the Donahue stage when referring to odd numbered swinging combinations of 3 and 5 (apparently, her

masturbatory fantasies only add up to one-on-one, or, where all acts can only be enjoyed in even numbers). Her insinuation is that a person must be left out and if it were herself, she would become jealous and crushed by rejection. Fat-shamed, slut-shamed, whatever kind of shaming that has been implanted into their psyche. Once again, I feel so sorry for those people.



From that ill-conceived position, there is a greater implied indictment to the lifestyle in her words; that swinging is a selfishly depraved practice, usually the male's fantasy, because "good girls" do not have such licentious thoughts.

Usually, the swinging panel is laughing too hard to give her an answer at this point.

The second dumbest question, "*what if your mate finds someone better,*" is never really answered either. Most swingers modestly reply that "you take what you learn back to your own bed."

I think it goes much deeper than that. We know that the group orgy experience can "knock your socks off" and appeals to many of our secret erotic fantasies. That is because swingers enjoy the sex as part of their relationship, whether it is one person or ten



and no one gets left out. However, no matter how good and exciting that sex may become, no one wants to go home with anyone other than their own spouse.

The answers often get mired down in explanations that the audience fails to understand because their pedestrian sexuality appears based in distrust and fear. It is as if they know, in their relationship, that they are

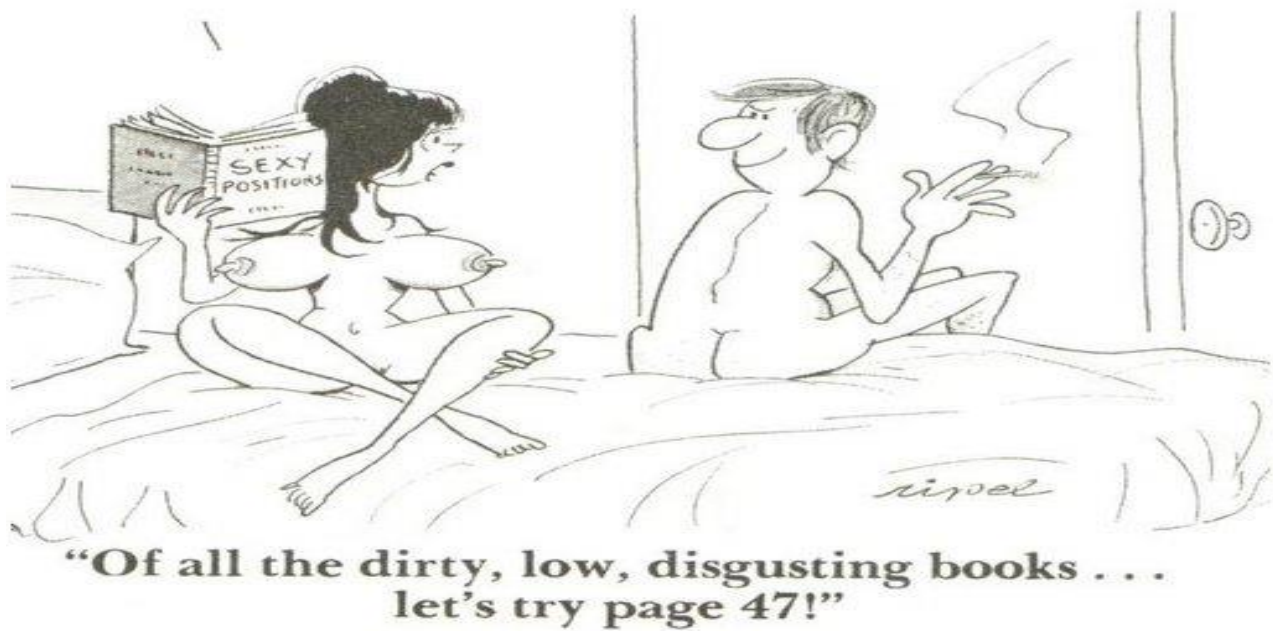
inadequate, and they fear being left out. For swingers, nothing could be further from the truth.

I am afraid I just cannot follow or accept their logic about what we do as selfish. Most swinging couples have arrived at the lifestyle and their first club experience only after long involved communication. They have dissected their relationship, its' high-

points and low-points, their fantasies, their expectations and certain rules for their conduct. It is a consensual agreement. Swingers have taken great pleasure studying sexual techniques directly and know firsthand how to give and receive sensual pleasure. It is true though, that pleasure often resembles commercial erotica, like something out of a pornographic movie and often, that includes groups of various sizes and sexes. Considering the indoctrinated fear of libido those sexual pedestrians have; it is no surprise that there are woefully ignorant and dumb questions abound. It is also true that despite their aghast reactions to the sexual topic, no one leaves the audience! Even Donahue noted the little old lady had asked a dozen questions!

Swingers have decided to share their sexuality in the most intimate and profound fashion. If it is selfish, it is a "honey, what would turn you on" kind of selfishness and a "wonderful, that turns me on too, let's do it" kind of acceptance. It always depends on the two people in their relationship.

I ask you, if people are honest with each other and agree what they want, where are you going to find anyone better?



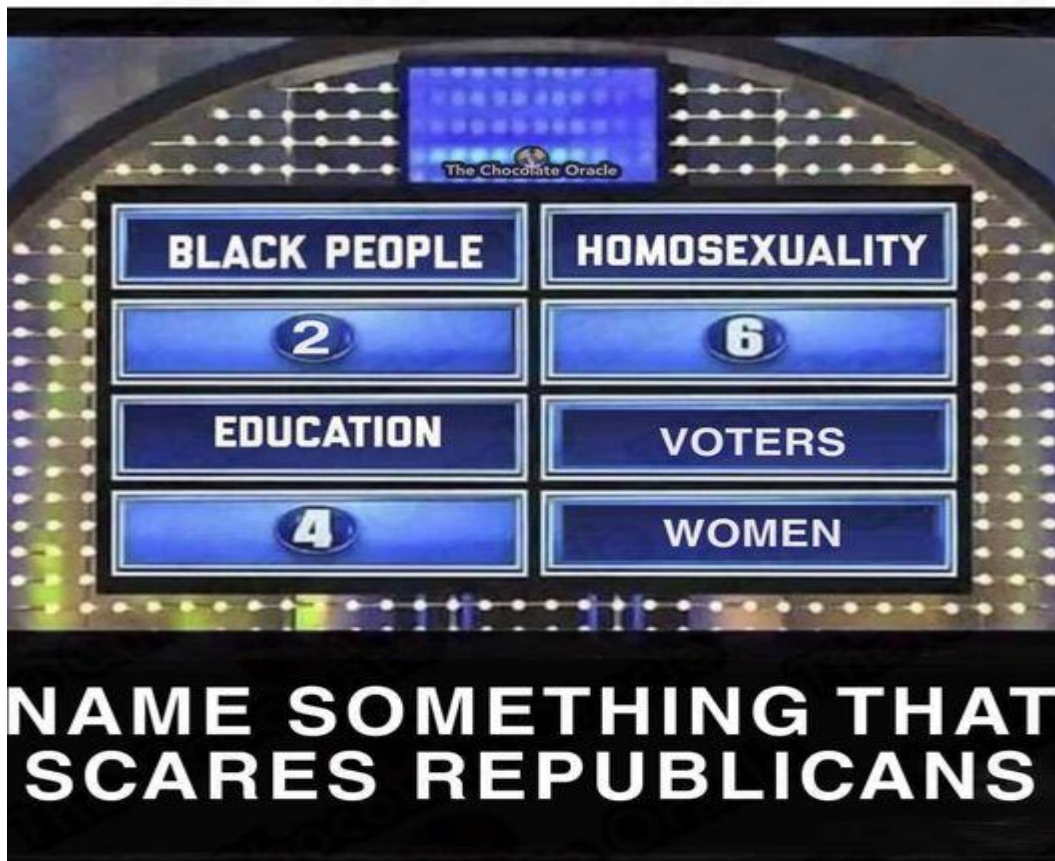
It always cracks me up when the left is referred to as "radical." Like the left is running around carrying assault rifles, denying science, and discussing not accepting the results of an election.



Bishop Talbert Swan ✓
@TalbertSwan

If ONE white woman accused me of rape my career would be OVER.

A white man accused of rape by TWENTY TWO women being able to run for a 2nd term as POTUS, with half the country still supporting him, is all you need to know about racism, white male patriarchy and white supremacy.





It's now very common to hear people say, "I'm offended by that." as if that gives them certain rights. It's not more than a whine. It has no meaning, it has no purpose, it has no reason to be respected as a phrase.

"I'm offended by that."

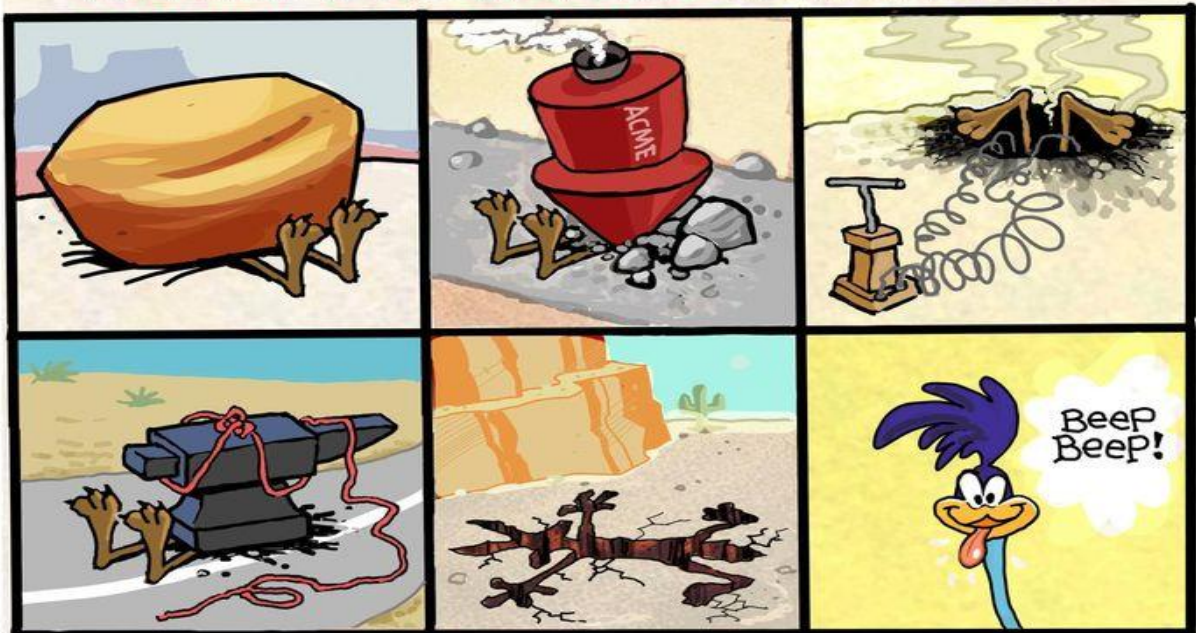
Well, so fucking what?

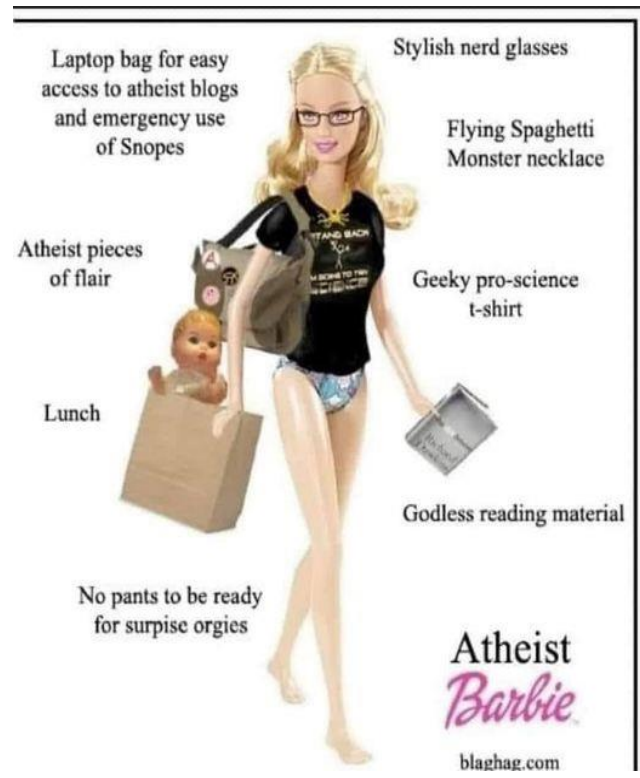
- Stephen Fry

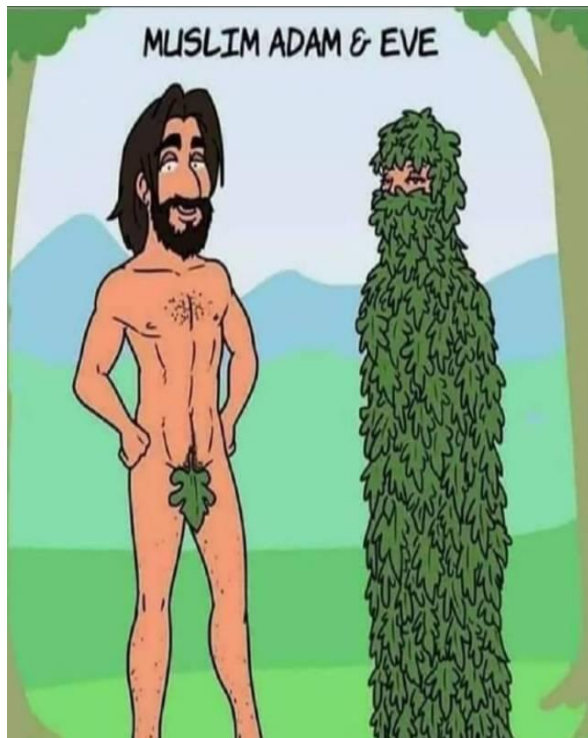


STAR TRIBUNE
S&K

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ATTEMPTS TO REPEAL OBAMACARE







Near future game show!



"Sorry Arthur, your answer was actually correct, but Paul shouted his opinion louder so he gets the point. And an extra bonus point also goes to Sue as she was offended by your answer".



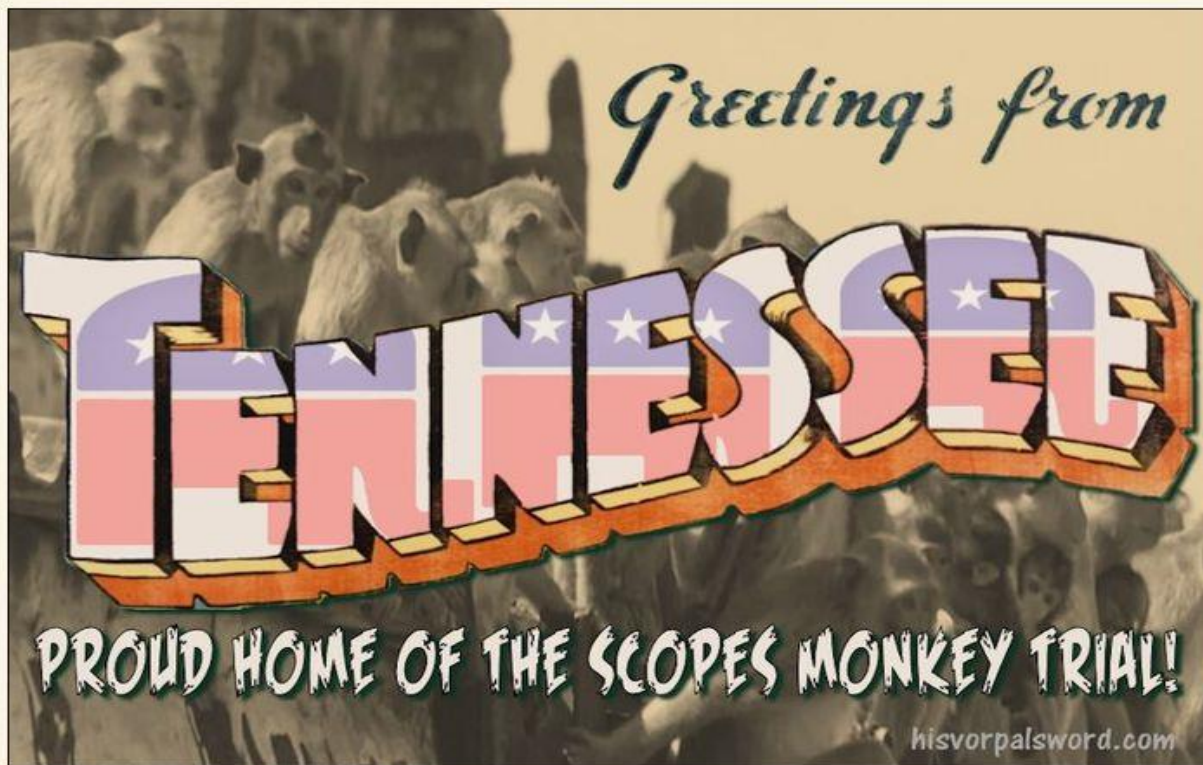


**Trump's cult says
he's to be
reinstated as
POTUS on
8/13/21 which
also happens to
be Fri the 13th &
National Kool-aid
day**

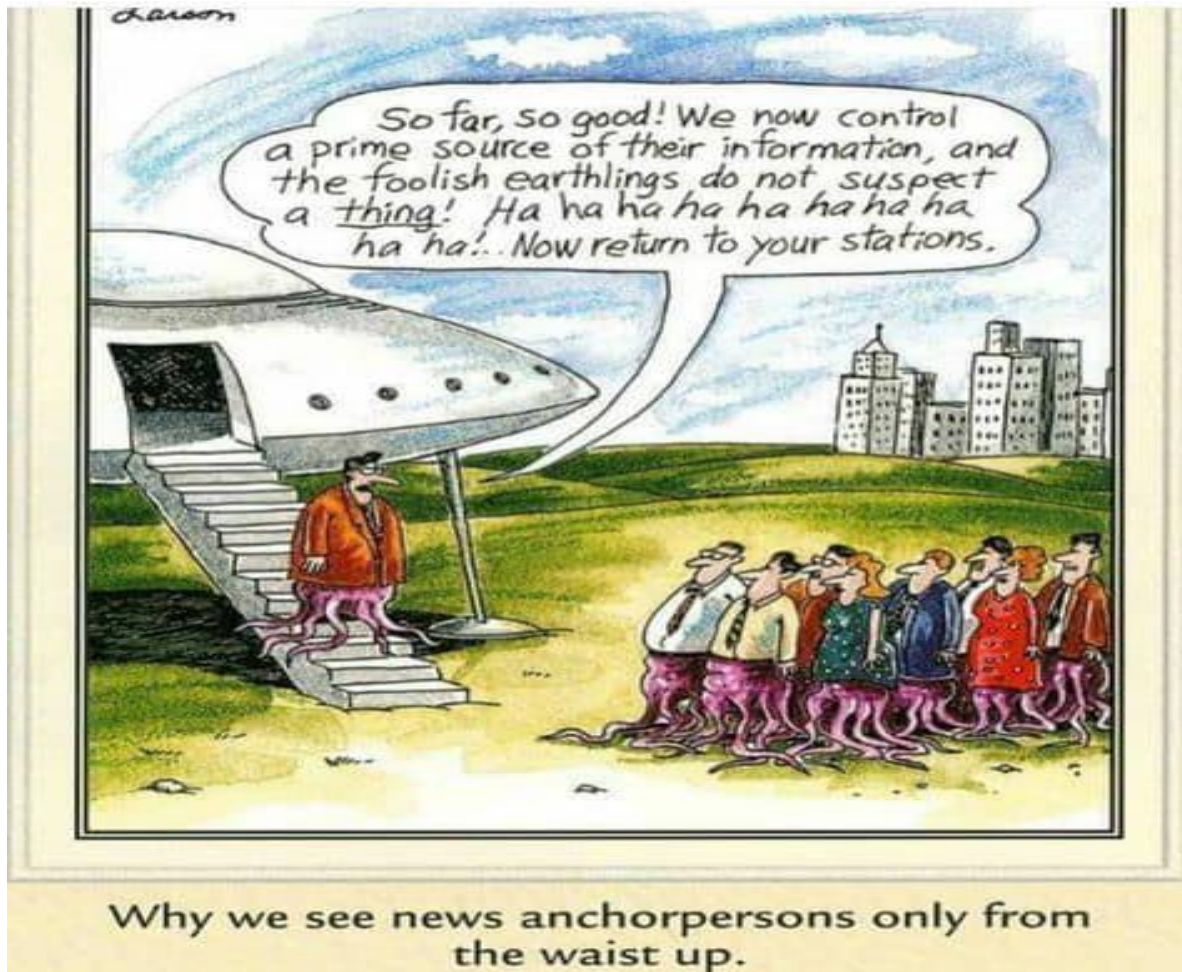




We were somewhere around the shower, on the edge of the bathmat, when the drugs began to take hold...

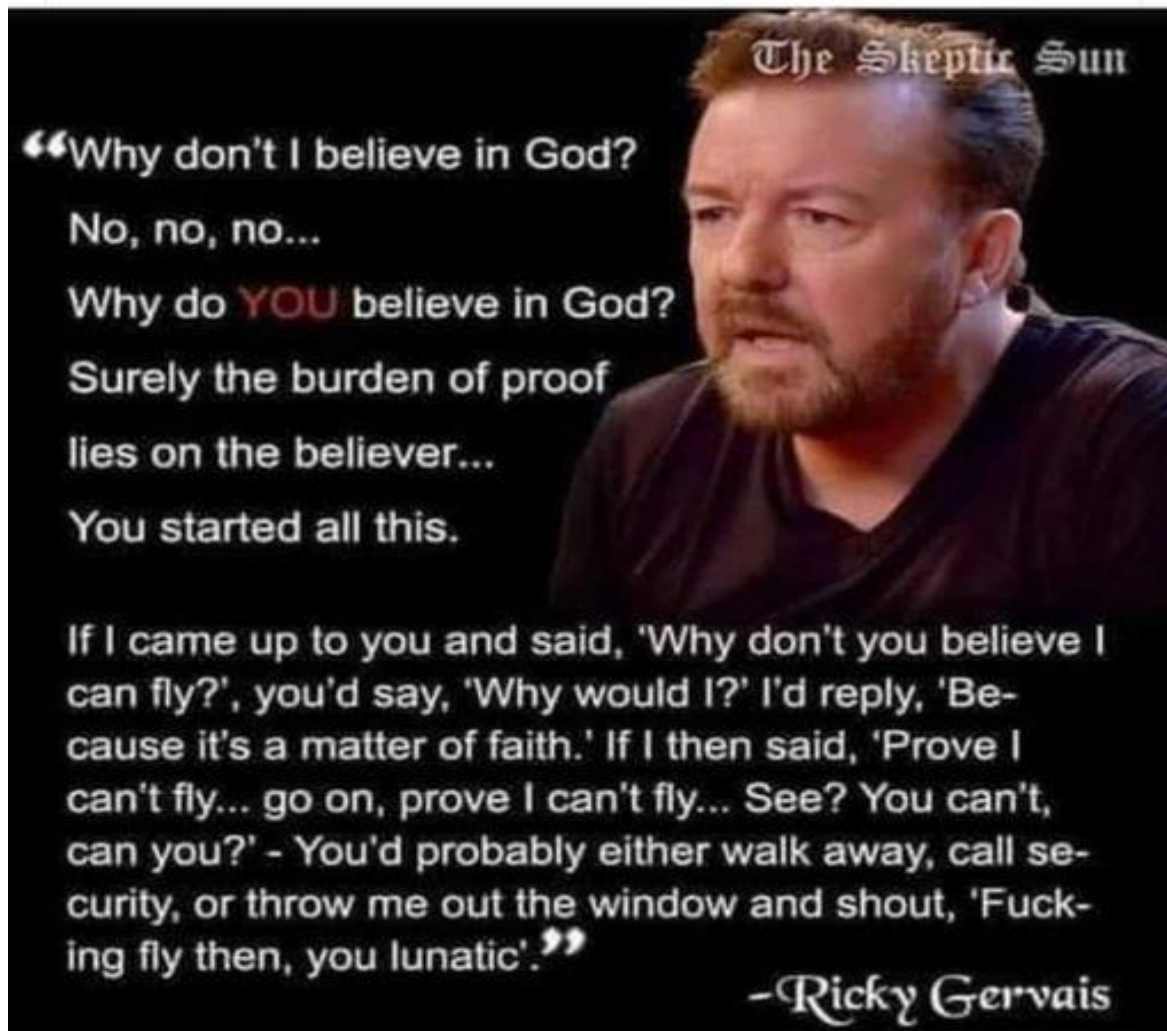


"We don't like the term 'beaver'. We feel that it's pejorative. We prefer to be called 'vagina squirrels'."



The Sound Of Silence
Paul Simon





David Cay Johnston, DCReport @ RawStory

" ... who conflates stars and garbage? There are great metaphors, there are mediocre metaphors, and then there are Trumpian trash metaphors."





8 Important Facts to Remember as You Grow Older:

- Death is the number 1 killer in the world.
- Life is sexually transmitted.
- Good health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.
- Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day. Teach a person to use the Internet and they won't bother you for weeks, months, maybe years.
- Health nuts are going to feel stupid someday, lying in the hospital, dying of nothing.
- All of us could take a lesson from the weather. It pays no attention to criticism.
- In the 60's, people took acid to make the world weird. Now the world is weird, and people take Prozac to make it normal.
- Don't worry about old age; it doesn't last that long.

**IF YOU GET AN EMAIL
WITH THE SUBJECT
"KNOCK KNOCK"**

DON'T OPEN IT

**IT'S A JEHOVAH WITNESS
WORKING FROM HOME**



BE SEEING YOU