

AOTCJournal

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

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

INTRODUCTION

How is the pandemic going where you live? Still wearing a mask everywhere you go? Been to a restaurant yet? Feel like taking a trip on an airplane? For me, it seems like Covid is winding down but – and it is a big but – there appears to be other annoyances, pests and dangers to avoid. They are like fleas, chiggers, houseflies, ticks and even termites. They vary in lethality.

This is what I am talking about. Have you ever had a visit from a Jehovah's Witness? Have you ever been stuck on an elevator with a Watkins' Products Salesman? Has a relative started selling insurance? Have you ever wanted to bitch-slap some asshole intruding upon your space? And lastly, have you ever been on an airplane when some asinine idiot started a "Jesus loves you" sing-a-long? Just imagine. 30,000 feet up. There is no way to get away and some tone-deaf troubadour yodeling his way up and down the aisle thinking he is a wonderful addition. In past travels, I have had to put up with unruly children and screaming babies when flying but if I had been on that plane, I think I would rather have snakes. Stay with me here.

What we are seeing and happening in the news is becoming more pervasive and more intrusive. A manifestation is Florida's governor who has decided to be a one-man scourge against free-thinkers. Of course, He is a self-professed Christian, and his view is that Jesus Christ's love must be imposed on all us heathens. Because, if this is not done, he reasons, God will be depressed. He might not shine his radiance upon us. To accomplish this, however, requires abrogation of all social progress and societal equality. How pestilential!

Here's a short list: God, Guns. Gays, Christian Nation, Planned Parenthood, Abortion on Demand, Partial Birth Abortion, Voter Fraud, Transgender issues, Boys Playing Girls' Sports, Vote by

Mail Fraud, Anthony Fauci, Math books and Critical Race Theory, Parental Control of Education ... if it can be decreed, then do it.

So far, he has been able to get away with signing all sorts of bills that infringe on other's lives, liberties, and happiness. Right now, we can get away with ignoring him, but our mid-term elections this fall are crucial to keep these chigger, skeeter, and termite laws from being implemented. 1950s McCarthyism has crawled out from under the rock.

Meanwhile, our contributors have lots to say about these subjects in this issue. Thanks to all of them.

Virgil

We continue the process of increasing the distribution of this Journal in the hopes of attracting new members. If you are new to the Aware Ones and would like to know more about us, please visit our website at <http://www.AwareOnesOfTheTreasureCoast.com>.

If and when social distancing is rescinded, you are also welcome to join our tables and the fresh air at either Stuart's *Sandsprit Park* 3443 SE Saint Lucie Blvd, or *Flagler Park* (under the Roosevelt Bridge on the 1st Friday of the month), 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.

A Sad Farewell to good Friends



WE BECOME JUST BY
PERFORMING JUST ACTIONS,
TEMPERATE BY PERFORMING
TEMPERATE ACTIONS, BRAVE BY
PERFORMING BRAVE ACTIONS –
ARISTOTLE, Nicomachean Ethics



Marilyn and Waldo "Stretch" Graton have been important members of both the *Treasure Coast Humanists*, and our group, *The Aware Ones of the Treasure Coast*.

They met under interesting circumstances after they were both widowed. However, their meeting was not really an accident. Stretch saw Marilyn move into the neighborhood. He resolutely picked some flowers, trotted up to her door, introduced himself

Highlander Folk School (1932)

- Myles Horton
 - Son of a Tennessee sharecropper
- Wanted a school where the curriculum was about activism.
 - A place where coal miners, steel workers, and mill workers could go to learn how to organize.
- Committed to an interracialist/egalitarian philosophy
 - Participatory democracy



and asked her out. She apparently complied, and they became a couple for many decades. They lived in many places; Evanston, Illinois, then London, U.K., the Florida Keys, and after a lot of traveling around the world to and from other interesting places before becoming full-time Stuart residents



ROSA PARKS, MARTIN LUTHER KING AND REV. ABERNATHY:

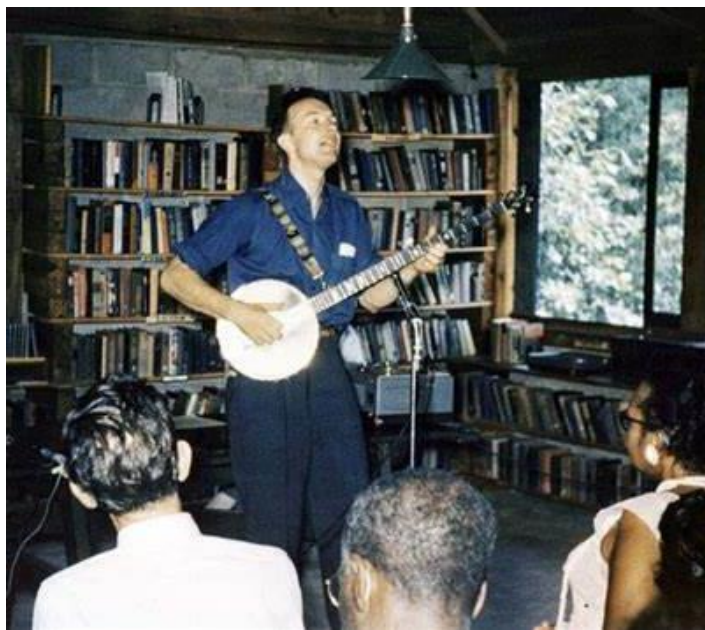
Three outstanding leadership people of the infamous Montgomery, Alabama, bus incident. The development, precipitation and financing of this inflammatory project called for behind the scenes planning and direction beyond the ability or capacity of local people. The relationship between Communist leadership and racial strife is evident from coast to coast and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes.

After the passage of the 1964 Civil

Rights act, Stretch wrote the civil rights template for the city of Evanston, the template for which was used all around the country.



He also had some experience with the Highlander Research and Education Training Center in Tennessee, where Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Ralph Abernathy and



many other icons of our historic attempt to end racial discrimination became center's primary focus during the 1950's and 1960's.

Stretch had even worked there before, when it was primarily an activist union training center as the Highlander Folk School, with FDR and his wife Eleanor being regular visitors and supporters.



In Stuart, Stretch and Marilyn were adamant about not using NIKE or Shell petroleum products, the former for using slave and child labor, and the latter for murdering a company whistle blower. In a somewhat contradictory fashion, they did go to racist and homophobic *Cracker Barrel* on Thursdays for the Turkey special luncheon. The many times I joined them, they were considerate and inquisitive about my own history of social activism, and since I wore NIKE's, we did not harp on the contradictions of our choices. In fact,



they had a better excuse than I did, because they were early investors in *Cracker Barrel* stock, and I had no interest in NIKE except that they had been on sale -- buy one pair and get another free.

Besides, as Stretch always asked, "How can they have this meal for \$5.99?" Cheap prices seem to be a panacea for the alleviation of social guilt.

When Stretch was finally resigned to his fading out pretty quickly, his main concern was to make certain that his trusty housekeeper Judy, his aide Rose Marie, and would not miss Marilyn's last birthday party at the house he designed on the scenic Manatee Pocket on the intracoastal waterway. There is even a little island across from it to kayak around.

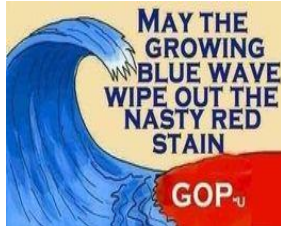
We all enjoyed our time with these wonderful people while they were here and are quite fortunate to have been their friends.

DanV



AOTC MEMBERS

Joan Auerbach	Ed Zillioux
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
Gale Baker	Linda Webb
Bert Mautz	Betty Tewksbury
David Dorenzo	Carol Gillooley
Jerry Shaw	



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 <vignaujdan@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 <vignaujdan@aol.com> to be included

with the zoom connection codes. House of Brews for those vaccinated writers feeling more intrepid.

Check your e-mail for notifications of virtual gatherings.

Events

May – National Barbecue Month



May 1 – National Loyalty Day "*Loyalty to the nation all of the time. Loyalty to the government when it deserves it.*" - Mark Twain. Al-Qaeda founder, Osama bin Laden, killed. 2011.



May 3 – National Teacher's Day, World Press Freedom Day

May 4 – "May the Force (Fourth) be with you"



May 6 – Aware Ones at Flagler Park, Stuart 11 am. Space Day

May 8 – Aware Ones Sunday Zoom meeting 11 am.

Mother's Day

May 12 –  Writer's Group zoom & House of Brews 6:30 pm.

May 13 – Aware ones at Sandsprit 11 am. Blame Someone Else Day - *first Friday the 13th of the year.*



May 15 – Aware Ones Sunday Zoom meeting 11 am. National Chocolate Chip Day *Have you ever had chocolate chip pancakes?*



May 18 – No Dirty Dishes Day *take the family out to eat all three meals.*

May 20 – Aware ones at Sandspruit 11 am. Be a Millionaire Day *buy a lottery ticket.... just one.*

May 22 – Aware Ones Sunday Zoom meeting 11 am. National Maritime Day anniversary of the first trans-Atlantic voyage of a steamship.

May 25 – National Wine Day

May 26 –  Writer's Group zoom & House of Brews 6:30 pm.



May 27 – Aware ones at Sandspruit 11 am.

May 28 – National Hamburger Day, International Jazz Day, Jim Thorpe Born in 1888

May 29 – Aware Ones Sunday Zoom meeting 11 am.



May 30 – Memorial Day

June – Gay and Lesbian Pride Month



Jun 3 – Aware Ones at Flagler Park, Stuart 11 am. National Doughnut Day. First U.S. Space Walk By Ed White in 1965

Jun 5 – Aware Ones Sunday Zoom meeting 11 am. Hot Air Balloon Day

Jun 6 – D-Day, WWII

Jun 9 – ✂ Writer's Group zoom & House of Brews 6:30 pm.

Jun 10 – National Flip Flop Day

Jun 11 – National Corn on the Cob Day *boil, steam or grill some fresh, sweet, corn on the cob.*

Jun 12 – Aware Ones Sunday Zoom meeting 11 am.

Jun 14 – Flag Day *When your flag is old and has seen better days, it is time to retire it. Old flags should be burned or buried. Please do not throw it in the trash.*



Jun 16 – International Waterfall Day,
(pictured: *The bride's waterfall, Peru*)

Jun 17 – Aware ones at Sandsprit 11 am.
Take a Road Trip Day



Jun 19 – Aware Ones Sunday Zoom meeting 11 am. Father's Day. Juneteenth.
"We must learn to live together as brothers, or perish as fools." – Martin Luther King Jr.

Jun 21 – Finally Summer Day / Summer Solstice

Jun 23 – ✂ Writer's Group zoom & House of Brews 6:30 pm.
Typewriter Patented In 1868. Today is Let it Go Day, *the perfect opportunity to shed your worries and concerns.*

Jun 24 – Aware ones at Sandsprit 11 am.

Jun 26 – Aware Ones Sunday Zoom meeting 11 am. Toothbrush Invented In 1498.

Jun 27 – Helen Keller *Born in 1880.*

Jun 30 – National Organization of Women *Founded In 1966.*

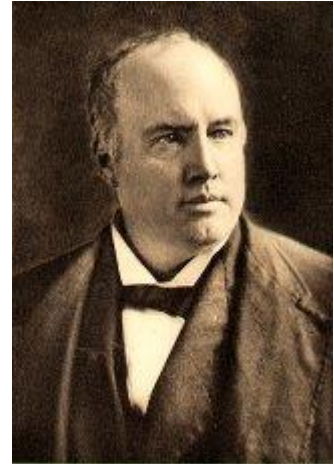
Jul 1 – Aware Ones at Flagler Park, Stuart 11 am.

Thoughts from Daily Ingersoll

All the sciences — except Theology — are eager for facts — hungry for the truth. On the brow of a finder of a fact the laurel is placed.

In a theological seminary, if a professor finds a fact inconsistent with the creed, he must keep it secret or deny it, or lose his place. Mental veracity is a crime, cowardice and hypocrisy are virtues.

Robert Green Ingersoll – “Truth” (1897)



LIVES LIVED – LIVES LOST



March 2 – Johnny Brown, 84, American actor (*Good Times*, *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In*, *The Plastic Man Comedy/Adventure Show*) and singer.

Alan Ladd Jr., 84, American film producer (*Braveheart*, *Gone Baby Gone*) and studio executive (20th Century Fox), Oscar winner (1996)



March 3 – Tim Considine, 81, American actor (*My Three Sons*, *The Mickey Mouse Club*, *Patton*).

cancer.

March 7 – Donna Scheeder, 74, American librarian, president of IFLA (2015–2017),





March 10 – Yevhen Deidei, 34, Ukrainian politician, deputy (2014–2019), killed in battle.

March 12 – Traci Braxton, 50, American R&B singer (The Braxtons) and television personality (Braxton Family Values), esophageal cancer.



March 13 – William Hurt, 71, American actor (Kiss of the Spider Woman, Broadcast News, The Incredible Hulk), Oscar winner (1986), prostate cancer.

Brent Renaud, 50, American photojournalist, writer (The New York Times), and filmmaker (Warrior Champions: From Baghdad to Beijing), shot.

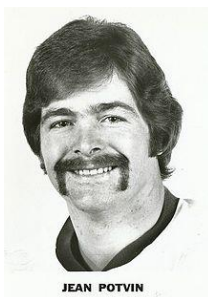
According to Ukrainian officials, he was killed on March 13,

2022, by Russian soldiers while covering the Russian invasion of Ukraine in Irpin city near Kyiv.



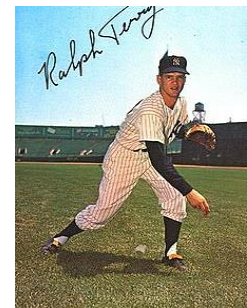
March 14 – Marilyn Miglin, 83, Czechoslovakian-born American entrepreneur, inventor and television host (Home Shopping Network) the widow of Lee Miglin, a business tycoon and philanthropist who was murdered in 1997 by the spree killer Andrew Cunanan

March 15 – Oleg Mityaev, 48, Russian major general, killed in action According to the Ukrainians, he was the fourth Russian general killed during the 2022 invasion.



Jean Potvin, 72, Canadian ice hockey player (New York Islanders, Philadelphia Flyers, Minnesota North Stars) and radio broadcaster, Stanley Cup champion (1980, 1981)

March 16 – Ralph Terry, 86, American baseball player (New York Yankees, Kansas City Athletics, New York Mets). World Series champion (1961, 1962)





March 19 – Winfield W. Scott Jr., 94, American military officer, superintendent of the United States Air Force Academy (1983–1987).

March 23 – Madeleine Albright, 84, Czechoslovakian-born American politician, secretary of state (1997–2001) and ambassador to the United

Nations (1993–1997), cancer. She worked as an aide to Senator Edmund Muskie from 1976 to 1978, before serving as a staff member on the National Security Council under Zbigniew Brzezinski.



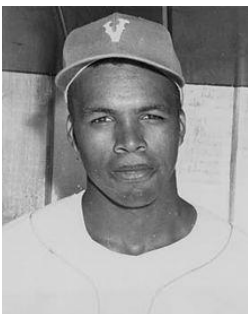
March 29 – Paul Benioff, 91, an American physicist who helped pioneer the field of quantum computing. Benioff was best known for his research in quantum information theory during the 1970s and 80s that demonstrated the theoretical possibility of quantum computers by describing the first quantum mechanical model of a computer.

March 30 – Abdul Kahar Othman, 68, Singaporean drug trafficker, execution by hanging.

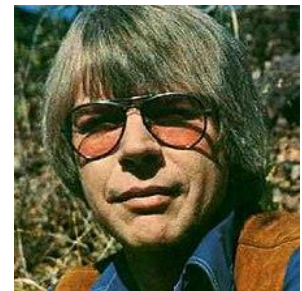


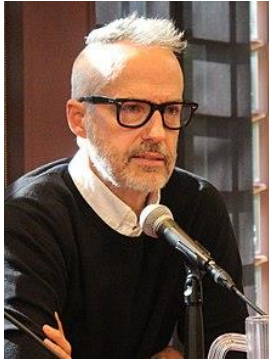
April 1 – Fitzroy "Bunny" Simpson, 70, Jamaican reggae vocalist (Mighty Diamonds).

C. W. McCall, 93, American country singer ("Convoy", "Round the World with the Rubber Duck", "Roses for Mama") and politician, mayor of Ouray, Colorado (1986–1992), lung cancer.



April 3 – Tommy Davis, 83, American baseball player (Los Angeles Dodgers, Baltimore Orioles, Oakland Athletics) and coach, World Series champion (1963) During an 18-year baseball career, Davis batted .294 with 153 home runs, 2,121 hits and 1,052 runs batted in.





April 4 – Eric Boehlert, 57, American media critic and writer (Salon, Rolling Stone, Billboard), hit by train In 2020, Boehlert started a digital newsletter, *Press Run*, as a venue for his commentary. He described it as "an unfiltered, passionate, and proudly progressive critique of the political press in the age of Trump." He was memorialized by commentator Soledad O'Brien, who called him a "fierce and fearless defender of the truth", and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who praised his "critical work to counteract misinformation and media bias"

April 5 – Bobby Rydell, 79, American singer ("Wild One", "Wildwood Days") and actor (*Bye Bye Birdie*), pneumonia. In the early 1960s he was considered a teen idol.



Nehemiah Persoff, 102, American actor (*Some Like It Hot*, *An American Tail*, *Yentl*) He appeared in more than 200 television series, films, and theatre productions and also performed as a voice artist in a career spanning 55 years.



April 8 – Mimi Reinhardt, 107, Austrian secretary (Oskar Schindler) She worked for Oskar Schindler and typed his list of Jewish workers to recruit for his factory. Schindler expended his personal fortune as an industrialist to save the *Schindlerjuden*. Their story has been depicted in the book *Schindler's Ark*, by Thomas Keneally, and Steven Spielberg's film adaptation of the novel, *Schindler's List*.



April 9 – Dwayne Haskins, 24, American football player (Washington Redskins/Football Team, Pittsburgh Steelers), traffic collision.

April 12 – Gilbert Gottfried, 67, American comedian, television personality (*Hollywood Squares*), and actor

(Aladdin, Cyberchase), ventricular tachycardia. His persona as a comedian featured an exaggerated shrill voice, strong New York accent, and emphasis on crude humor.



April 17 – Catherine Spaak, 77, Belgian-Italian actress (Kiss the Other Sheik, Il Sorpasso, Adultery Italian Style) and singer. Most of them were for the Italian film industry, with some Hollywood or international productions. Among her most notable titles are Circle of Love (1964, directed by Roger Vadim), The Man, the Woman and the Money (1965, starring Marcello Mastroianni), The Incredible Army of Brancaleone (1966, written by Age & Scarpelli), Adultery Italian Style (1966), Hotel (1967), the sex comedy The Libertine (1969), Diary of a Telephone Operator (1969, with Claudia Cardinale).

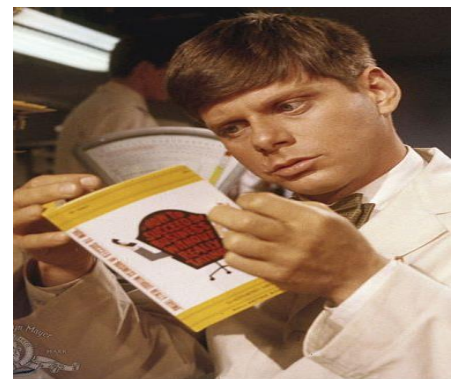


April 19 – Dede Robertson, 94, American evangelical Christian activist. she was the wife of Christian evangelical televangelist Pat Robertson (born 1930), whom she wed in 1954 and had four children. a fashion model and beauty queen in the Miss Ohio State contest, was studying for her Master's in Nursing at Yale University when she met Robertson. She earned her Master's degree. She had graduated from Ohio State University-Columbus with a bachelor's degree in Social Administration.

April 20 – Robert Morse, 90, American actor (How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, Tru, Mad Men), Tony winner (1962, 1990).



David William Kearney 87, American blues musician known as Guitar Shorty, was an



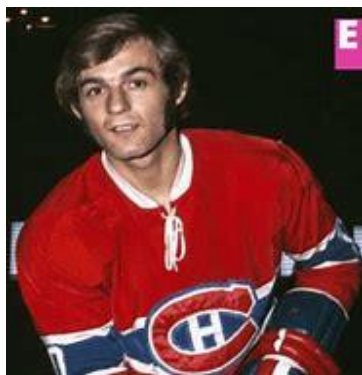
American blues guitarist, singer, and songwriter. He was known for his explosive guitar style and wild stage antics. Credited with influencing both Jimi Hendrix and Buddy Guy, Guitar Shorty recorded and toured from the 1950s until the 2020s.

April 21 – Cynthia Plaster Caster (born Cynthia Albritton; May 24, 1947 – April 21, 2022) was an American visual artist and self-described "recovering groupie" who gained fame for creating plaster casts of famous persons' erect penises.



Albritton began her career in 1968 by casting penises of rock musicians. She later expanded her subjects to include filmmakers and other types of artists, eventually amassing a collection of 50 plaster phalluses.

Daryle Lamonica, 80, American football player (Oakland Raiders, Buffalo Bills, Southern California Sun). Nicknamed "**the Mad Bomber**" due to his affinity for throwing the long pass in virtually any situation, Lamonica led the Raiders to four consecutive division titles between 1967 and 1970,



along with a Super Bowl appearance in Super Bowl II.



April 22 – Guy Lafleur, 70, Canadian Hall of Fame ice hockey player (Montreal Canadiens, Quebec Nordiques, New York Rangers), five-time Stanley Cup champion, lung cancer. he first player in National Hockey League (NHL) history to score 50 goals in six consecutive seasons as well as 50 goals and 100 points in six consecutive seasons.

April 23 – Johnnie Jones, 102, American civil rights activist and politician, member of the Louisiana House of Representatives (1972–1976). Fifteen days after law school graduation, T.J. Jemison, Mt. Zion First Baptist Church of Baton Rouge minister and civil rights leader, recruited Jones to represent individuals arrested during the two-week Baton Rouge Bus Boycott, a precursor to the Montgomery Bus Boycott led by the reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. During the Civil Rights movement, Jones escaped a Ku Klux Klan car bomb attempt on his life, leaping from his car before it exploded.



Orrin Hatch, 88, American politician, senator (1977–2019) and president pro tempore of the United States Senate (2015–2019) Hatch's 42-year Senate tenure made him the longest-serving Republican U.S. senator in history. Hatch was also a lifelong member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church).

Heroes and Heroines

Police detained in St Petersburg, Yevgenia Isaveva who came out for a performance against the war in Ukraine . She doused herself with red paint, repeating "My heart bleeds". Under her feet was a placard saying: "I feel it is useless to appeal to reason, so I appeal to your hearts".



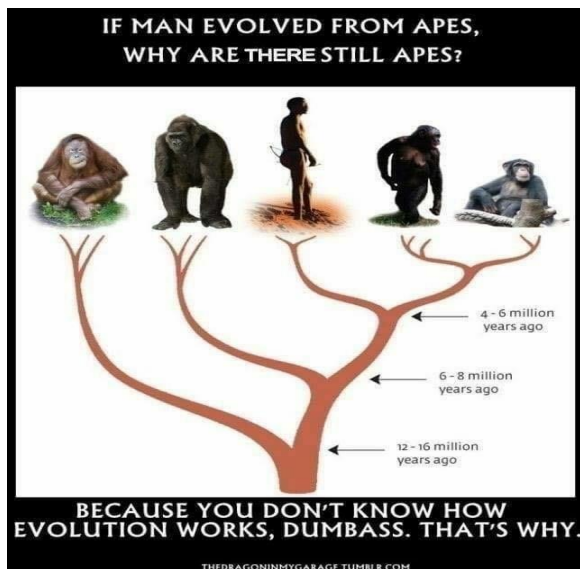


Michigan State Sen. Mallory McMorrow gave an incredible floor speech calling out the "performative nonsense" of conservative Christians who use faith as a weapon.

Her faith taught her not to "marginalize already-marginalized people." The Michigan lawmaker blasted a Republican colleague who called her a "groomer" who supports "pedophilia." "I am the biggest threat to your hollow, hateful scheme," state Sen. Mallory McMorrow (D) said in a speech that has gone viral. "Because you can't claim that you are targeting marginalized kids in the name of 'parental rights' if another parent is standing up to say 'no.'"

Dubious Achievements

He actually said that.



Herschel Walker, former NFL star and candidate for the Georgia Senate, trotted out the most busted-ass, dead stupid, ignorant pony in their whole

stable of broken-on-arrival, crippled, brain-damaged nags the creationists have, and the pastor *praised* him for getting too smart for his audience.

“At one time, science said man came from apes. Did it not?” Walker asked Chuck Allen, lead pastor of Sugar Hill Church, during at a church campaign event.

“Every time I read or hear that, I think to myself, ‘You just didn’t read the same Bible I did,’” Allen replied.

Walker continued: “Well, this is what’s interesting, though. If that is true, why are there still apes? Think about it.”

“You know, now you’re getting too smart for us, Herschel,” Allen responded.

When atheists become assholes



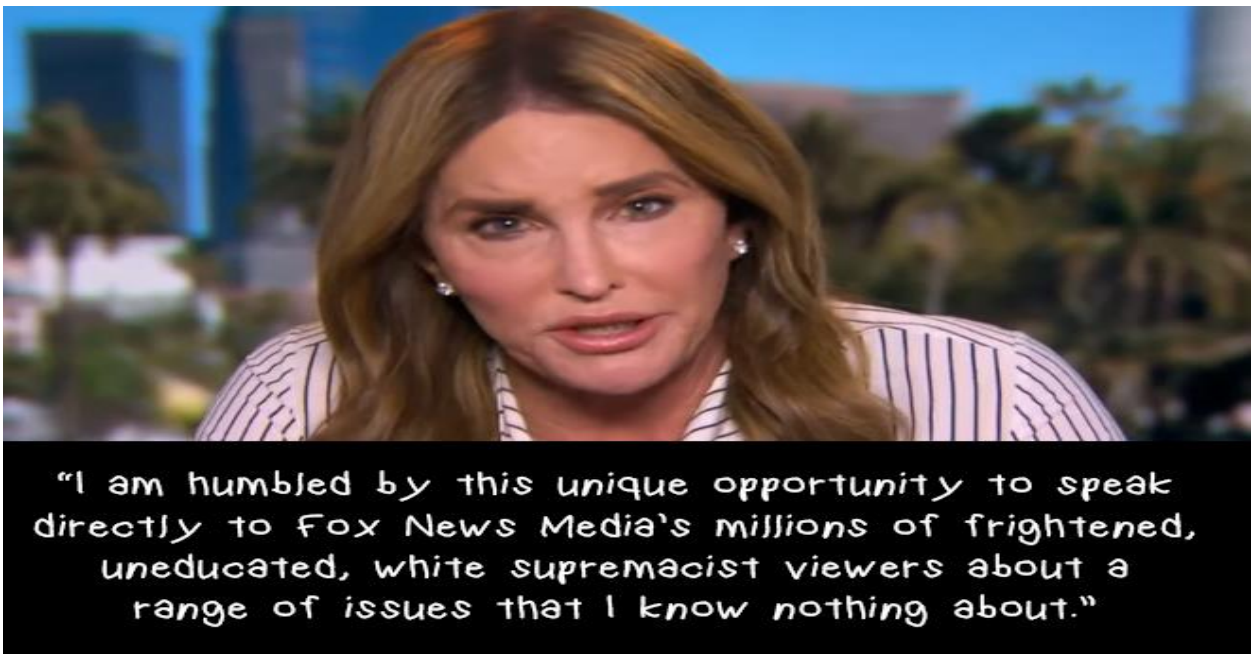
LEIGH: We are welcoming in Dave Silverman, of Atheists for Liberty. He is a 25-year atheist activist, TV/radio personality, **victim of cancel culture**, former—former!—former woke leftist, he says. And now a Libertarian. I’m so excited to have you on. **I didn’t get the chance to talk to you at CPAC, so I called you up, and you were all too willing to come on** and have this conversation with—I called myself the Jesus

Freak of InfoWars, and you were like, "Hey, that's fine. I'll talk to you!" So very cool on that. **We were just talking about unity...**

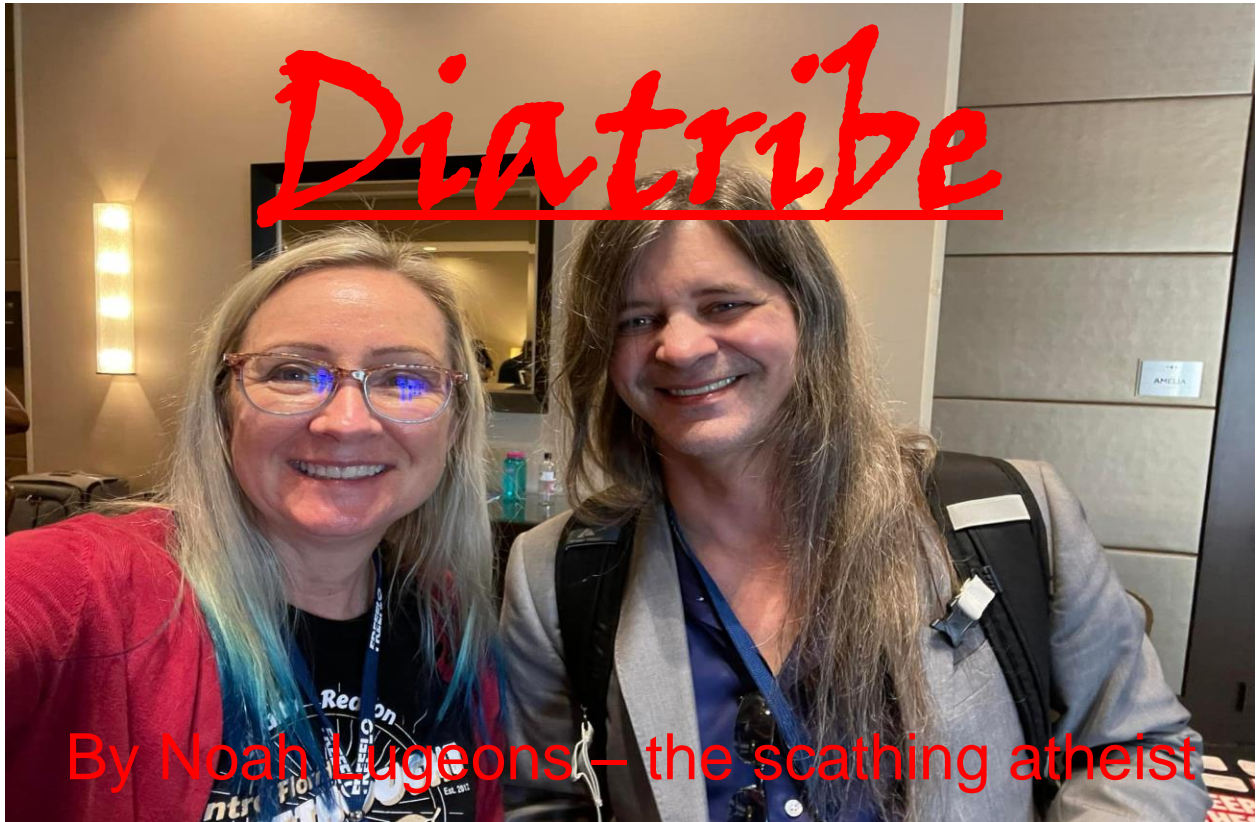
Circle beards are the new thing!?



She actually said that (part 2)



COMMENTARY



I used to go to this little head shop when I was in college ... and for those of you who don't smoke weed and/or grew up in a more civilized age, a head shop is a store where you bought your weed smoking accessories back in the pre-internet days. Of course, smoking weed was illegal, so they were legally required to pretend that they sold tobacco accessories. And as a customer, you, too, were required to pretend that you were buying tobacco accessories. In fact, there was a little sign on the wall that basically said as much. It said that they'd ask you to leave if you used any 'illegal terminology' to refer to their merchandise. And by "illegal terminology", by the way, they meant the word "bong." You had to ask for a "water pipe", as though any human being anywhere on earth ever smoked tobacco out of a fucking bong.

And I just remember that weird feeling where they're lying, and I'm lying, and I know they're lying, and they know I'm lying, and

we both know we both know each other's lying, but nobody cares because we're not trying to convince each other of anything anyway. We're just lying as a formality. And I feel like having been in that situation so many times in my life makes it a lot easier to understand what it's like to be religious.

Now I'm not saying that they *all* know they're lying ... at least not about all the stuff. And I'm certainly not saying that they all know one another knows they're lying. But some of them do. A lot of them do. See, when religious people lose the ability to pretend it's true, the position they tend to retreat to is *pretending* to pretend its true. You know the type I'm talking about, right? These people who no longer behave as though their religion is true, but still say it is when asked. I'd argue that this is actually the overwhelming number of Christians in America at the moment. And while I can't prove that, I think it's evidenced pretty well by how many of them avoid death and gather sticks on the Sabbath.

And it's worth asking why a person would do that, right? Like, once you know it isn't true, you can't really get the main benefits they sell religion with. It can't help you cope with death any more, it won't deter you from doing immoral acts, it won't provide you with meaning or direction, you can't tap into the power of prayer. What's left? Well, some people obviously just go along because it's the path of least resistance; they don't wanna upset grandma, or they have a friend group that's centered around the church, or whatever. But other people keep pretending for more nefarious reasons. For example, religion turns out to be a fantastic carrying case for your bigotry. Hell, as far as most Americans are concerned, it's a *legally protected* carrying case for your bigotry.

But it's turning into more than that. According to both our judiciary system and our culture, religious beliefs are increasingly becoming a vehicle for bonus rights across the board. "Sincerely held belief", though undefined and admittedly unmeasurable, has become a get out of jail free card for no end of transgressions,

and it's only getting worse. All the more so because the religious people in question are playing by the same rules as South Georgia bong purchases circa 1995. Nobody actually believes any of this shit, but as long as nobody says it out loud, they all get their bonus rights.

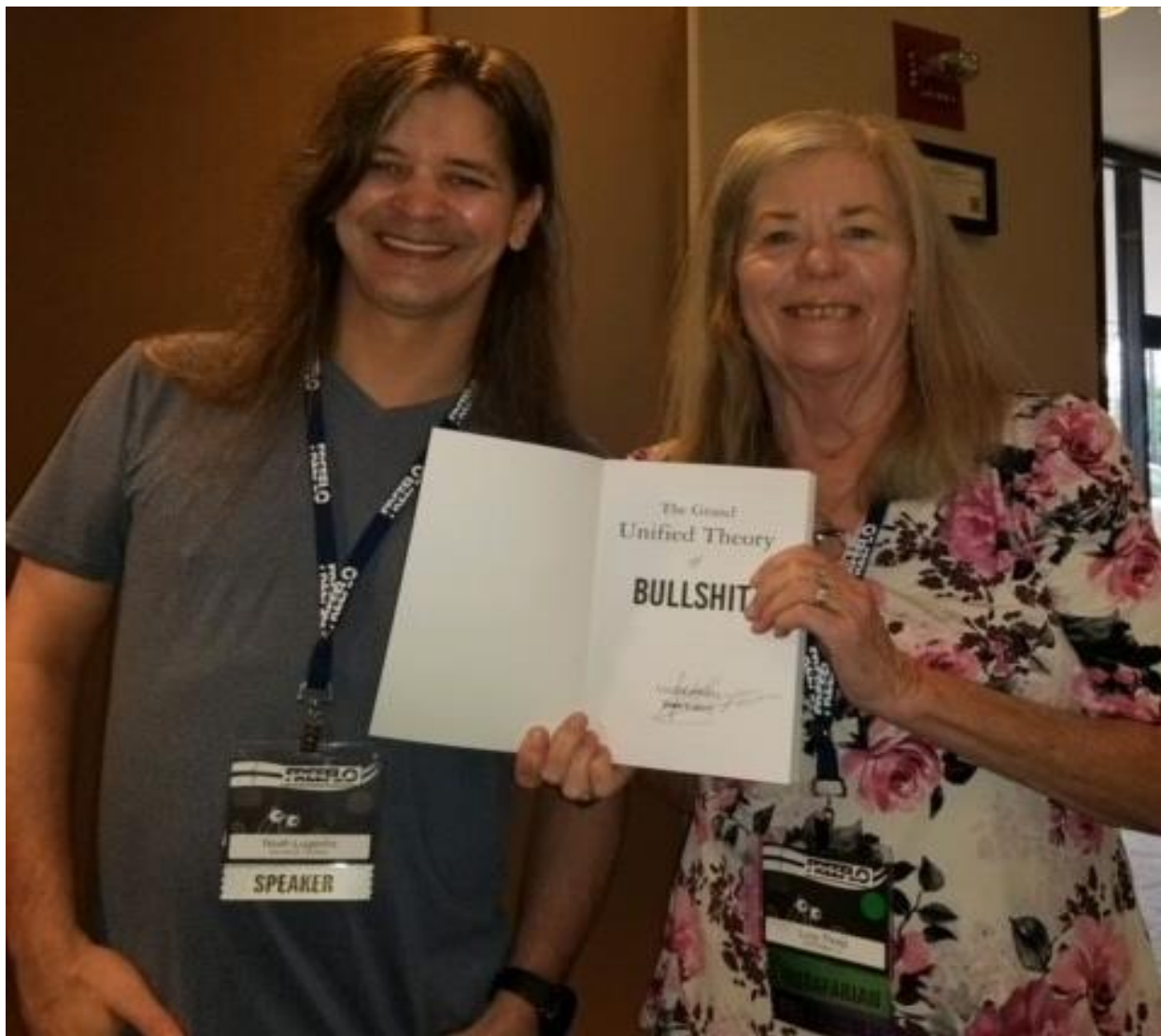
I came across a terrifying quantification of this in a recently released Pew survey. According to the survey, some sixty seven percent of American adults agree that (quote) "most people with religious objections [to vaccine mandates] are just using religion as an excuse to avoid the vaccine" (end quote). And as terrifyingly low as that number is, we can take comfort in the fact that it is, at least, a pretty solid majority. But the truly scary part came when they asked those same respondents whether employers with vaccine mandates should grant those exemptions regardless. And *sixty five percent* said they should. So the majority of even the people who know that these religious objections are bullshit think we should have to honor them anyway.

We're not talking about a frivolous thing here. This isn't about beard length or being allowed an exemption to the rule against hats at work. We're talking about a literal matter of life and death and not just theirs. We're rapidly approaching a million dead from this pandemic in America alone, and yet still people are saying that we should let liars flaunt the rules just because they invoked the word "religion." As a society, we're more concerned with protecting a person's right to lie their way out of shit that we are to our own fucking health.

Look, this would be insane even if we actually believed them. Thinking an invisible wizard would get mad at you is *not* a valid reason to avoid vaccination. But the fact that we're even committed to this when we know they're lying is a whole different level of scary. Because what it really means is that those people don't want to risk their *own* religious exemptions. They need to protect this notion that "sincerely held beliefs" are sacrosanct less

they risk losing the legal right to, say, deny service to a gay person.

Whether they meant to or not, the courts have created a perverse incentive to go along with any number of disingenuous claims of religious sincerity. And the more extra rights and exemptions we stuff into that category, the more inclined people will be to abandon reason to protect it. We've already seen that they're willing to sacrifice *human lives* for this principle. How much further are we doomed to see them go?



<https://scathingatheist.com/podcast>

VARIOUS OBSERVATIONS ON GENDER EQUALITY IN SPORTS



By Bert Mautz

If you don't appreciate, heck, aren't utterly amazed at the athletic prowess of lady gymnasts vaulting, doing double somersaults off the mat, no springboard needed, read no further, this tirade ain't for you.

My rant begins because I am puzzled why the lady tennis pros get the same really big money at the four major tournaments for playing fewer sets than the men. Billy Jean King takes credit for that. Come on; fill the airtime, sell the ad placements, put butts in seats, earn what you're paid for.



Recently lady soccer players were awarded improved pay contracts. Not clear on all the details. They play a similar game, but they run slower and can't kick as hard. If you are entertained, you can watch their matches. The women's' game is different. Players should be rewarded on the merits of their sport, not in comparison with the men's.



Which, unfortunately or not, brings us to the matter of ladies playing basketball in college and/or in the professional leagues. A recent commotion was initiated by a lady college player, Oregon's Sedona Prince's viral TikTok video on the inequities of the NCAA/national college tournament experienced by the women in comparison with the men; i.e., The ladies' gift bags were not as generous was one complaint. Here's another difference; The ladies' finals are played in an NBA arena while the men's finals are played in an NFL stadium. *Fill a stadium, you get a stadium.*

Do the ladies play the same game? Who finds the two styles equally entertaining? Men's NBA league teams pay its stars millions. Television contracts are valued at billions. Twenty thousand seat arenas are generally sold out to watch what has been described as the height of "men's athletic prowess".



However, NFL violence is not the same thing as athletic skills.

Two approaches here.

Women's' basketball is played before lots of empty seats. The fundamental of audience attraction is obvious and

readily apparent. Seldom mentioned, however, audience attraction is the arithmetic here. *That's capitalism.*

The ladies play below the rim with a smaller ball. Says it all – this is a different game to be judged and enjoyed for its own merits, but it is not boys' basketball.

We don't put offensive linemen on the balance beam, and the ladies don't dunk. Therefore:

*THERE'S BASKETBALL
AND THEN ...*

THERE'S BASKETBALL

Giannis Antetokounmpo center and point guard for the Milwaukee Bucks and Kevin

Durant of the Brooklyn Nets faced off Thursday in what many characterized as an NBA finals preview. The Bucks won in overtime. And there is more about this game to find interesting in comparison of the pro vs college game, because on Friday the NCAA Women's Championship Final Four games were played, resulting in South Carolina playing Connecticut Sunday in their championship final. Saturday it was the men's NCAA Final Four matchups; Kansas plays Villanova, and Duke against North Carolina, preliminary to their championship match on Monday.

A more perfect comparison of three distinct kinds of basketball would be hard to find. In each type or style, we have, with these three games, the best of their type to observe and contrast. Even the physical design of the court differs for each. The ladies have the closest in three-point arch, and their ball is one inch smaller



in circumference than the men's ball. The three-point arch is twenty-three feet and nine inches in the pros, and twenty feet and nine inches for the men's and women's college courts, respectively. Another relatively minor difference is the width of the free throw zone beneath the basket being wider for the pros.



The Bucks visiting the Nets experienced score lead changes, a tie occurring in the closing seconds necessitating overtime. Those five minutes of extra play exhibited an intense back and forth where Giannis' last shot won the game and Kevin's three seconds remaining shot was off the rim. Whoever made their final shot was going to win this one providing fans a terrific game played at its highest level. The women's NCAA Final Four games demonstrated perfectly the "low



and slow" kind of basketball we can expect. Lots of passing to find the open player slashing to the basket for an uncontested layup. The ladies can shoot, making a fair share of jumpers and occasional threes. Connecticut beat Stanford 63 to 58 and South Carolina beat Louisville 72 to 59. One

sensed a kind of passivity among the players. "Oh no, *you* shoot it," deference to pass instead of taking one's shot. Are the ladies too kind, too thoughtful of hurting the oppositions' feelings? This

sounds sarcastic, I know, but (I am) trying to characterize a kinder gentler style of basketball.

In contrast, the men's NCAA Final four on Saturday fairly oozed with aggression. They just can't shoot the three, or rebound the high bounce off the rim very well. I kept wishing for one more pass, find the open man, for cryin' out loud. But the boys keep firing away from three-point land.

Lots of speed, lots of cross court passes, but no one poised under the basket for a rebound.



Enjoying the boys or girls' college game has a lot to do with ones' college allegiance or wishing a better send off for Duke's Coach



Krzyzewski's last season. Basketball, among the big four sports is thought to contain the best athletes exerting themselves at the highest levels and so, great fun to spectate. Enjoy

"March Madness," for all its college enthusiasm. But don't miss the NBA finals beginning in a couple weeks.

GENDER INEQUALITY IN AMERICA

The 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote was passed in 1920. The assertion could be claimed that second to slavery,

suppression of women's voting rights is one of America's great disgraces. Throughout American life today women's equality is



still being fought for. Wage parity does not exist up and down the spectrum of employment and professional careers.

Another, and recent example of the disparity is the women's NCAA basketball tournament being a second-class status down to numbers of officials for games, workout facilities provided at game venues, and yes, even the gift bags for players. When, at last confronted the NCAA moved quickly to rectify the differences.

Seemingly at every turn the women's version of so many endeavors, the ladies' side is downplayed and under supported when compared to that of men. Why is this happening? Flash to the present; seats on the Supreme Court, state senators and representatives, corporate heads, and board presidents, local government positions are all in the possession of qualified and recently powerful women.



Jeffrey Epstein's death by hanging in a NYC jail in 2019 marked the end of a salacious history of using and abusing young women, girls really, to include luminaries like Bill Clinton, Bill Gates, Donald Trump, and Queen Elizabeth's son, Prince Andrew. What is the attraction; a sexual fixation, or Epstein's wealth that drew public figures that ought to know better to be photographed in Epstein's parties?



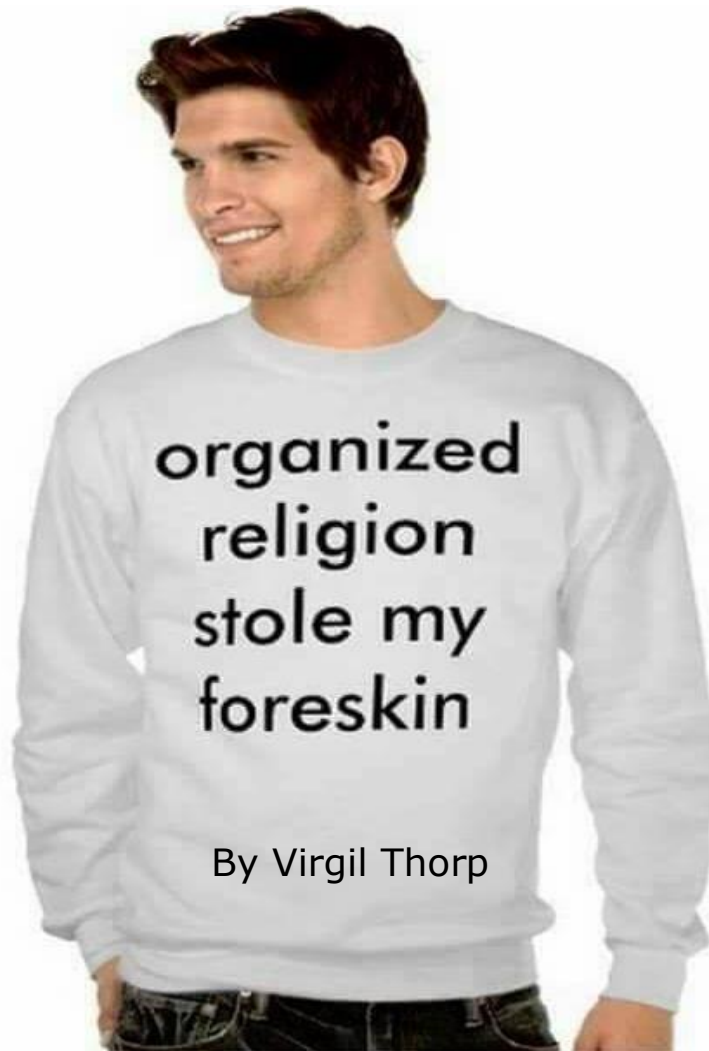
Using and abusing women has been a part of the male-female dynamic for the history of mankind. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson sired babies with their slaves, because they could. The reproductive sex drive may well be as old as humanity as an incentive to use women for men's pleasure.

Is the male-female dynamic evolving? Can "equality" be achieved? Are some of us better disposed to get along in our world than others, for whom affront is ever present?

Fairness and equality may not have to be equal to co-exist.



Thinking About Sex



Here I am, 74-years old and sex is on my mind. Bigger than ever! Don't get me wrong, I am not necessarily talking about my fucking someone, or jumping into a pile of naked, writhing swingers – Like I did so many times in my youth. Sometimes the image makes a pleasant memory, though. But no! I am talking about my nieces and nephews, my great nieces and nephews and their children and their children's children and freedom with their

reproductive rights, their bodily independence, and who they can love, not just their sexualities. I am concerned because there is someone very sick who does not want them to have access to the wonderful things I enjoyed when I was their age.

The problem is the religious right. The Christian Reconstructionist right. They have power now, political power. They want to separate women from their personhood by closing women's health clinics with draconian abortion laws. They want to repeal not just *Roe v Wade*; they want to repeal *Griswold v Connecticut*, *Baird v Eisenstadt*; They want to repeal *Obergefell*. They want to repeal the right of gay and interracial marriages. They want book burnings. They want to return to a bronze age Gilead. Patriarchy ... period.

The 'why's' have not changed since before I was born; fear of sexuality, fear of an angry God who will send you to hell for responding to the physiology of your body's hormonal



demands. A fear so fierce and overwhelming that the only alternative is an anti-sex drive with consequences that achieve the very thing that they wish to avoid. Perversion! Perversion through abstention.

Deny your sexuality. Deny your reality. Do not tell children what their bodies will experience eventually. Make them feel guilt about their curiosity. If their wonder makes you uncomfortable, transfer that shame to them. "Your body is a temple; God does not want you to defile it." Confuse them with contradictions. Declare that what is between their legs is dirty ... and yet holy. A theme park on top of a septic tank. "Keep your hands above the covers and stop playing with it." "God will cry", "God will be

cross", "God will turn his face away from the holy U.S.A. and the temple of Jerusalem will be destroyed by mouth-drooling, heathen hordes". Your sinful fault!

That's a great tradeoff for education. Fuck their minds, warp their psyches. What happened to Sybil, what happened to Ted Bundy? What makes a rapist? *19 and Counting's* perverted son, Josh Duggar molesting his sisters and having his picture taken with Ted Cruz and other evangelical hypocrites. Oklahoma's BTK serial killer was an elder in the Lutheran Church. How many children have been raped in the Catholic church? What if sweet blonde Julie grows up and finds out she enjoys giving blowjobs to tall,



dark Jamal? What if her brother Randy grows up and finds out he enjoys giving blowjobs to tall, dark Jamal, too? That's not sweet, that's disgusting! The images should scour your retinas.

My ex-boss, the porn publisher, was adamant about keeping children ignorant about their bodies. "Let children

be children," he declared with righteous finality. Poor Ray, he forgot being a child himself. I agreed with Ray to a point. When, not if, WHEN the curious child begins seeking information about their body, then by all means, give it to them. Do not shame them for asking, do not punish them for asking. Do not hide the mystery or make it a dirty joke. My nieces and nephews are owed the truth about themselves and about the world around them. I

do not want them wondering why their penis get erect when they look at some picture that excites them. I do not want them ashamed and surprised when they get their first period.

Of course, the problem with that is the introduction of the “magical” information. It is a very sad thing. How does one overcome their own shame and guilt?

For my parents’ education, they lived on farms and “things” happened. Breeding was and is an important part of agriculture.

Whatever happened to my parents that made them shameful of their sexuality? So shameful that when it came time for my father to discuss the facts of life ... unpleasantly. I was fourteen and I was driving the car home from scuba diving classes my father and I took together. The poor man was sweating heavily in the



passenger seat. His hands shook uncontrollably – it was really fortunate that (*underaged*) I, was driving the car. I even corrected his mispronunciations of sexually related idioms and also gave him the correct clinical terms. “You mean vagina, dad?”

I have been a small cog in the sexual revolution since I can remember. Before I was a teenager, I searched out words with sexual connotations in a huge, eight-inch-thick dictionary which even had a medical dictionary included. I had to know those things about these things. The Emery Bird Thayer department store in downtown Kansas City had three floors. On the top floor, above the elevator doors, hung the large Thomas Hart Benton

mural, *Persephone*. When my mother and I exited the elevator to the third-floor lingerie department, I turned around. I saw the mural. There was something in it that I liked very much. I would linger there, soaking up the wonders of a nude female body while a wizened dwarf peeked around the foliage at Persephone's unguarded pulchritude. At least, until my mother would jerk on the harness she kept me tethered in so I would not wander away from her while she shopped for lacey things.

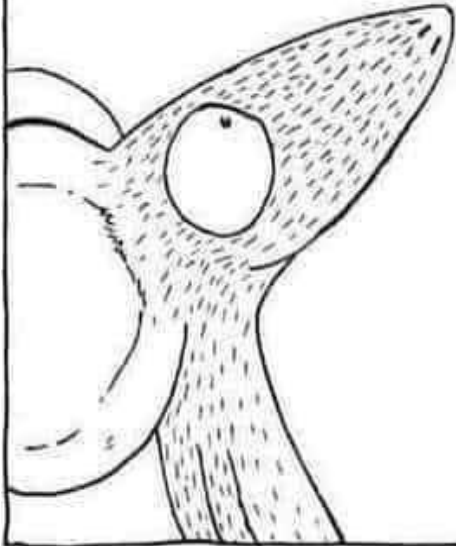
Maybe not physically, but mentally I felt I was hovering above those elevator doors, stroking and licking the slumbering, lounging model of femininity. That's where my mind went and where I wanted to be.

I guess I should not complain about what is happening in schools, in doctors' offices and in barbershops. What will be will be. Those who are curious will search for the same information I did despite despots like the Christian Reconstructionists DeSantis, Abbott and others who want to limit them and their fertile imaginations. To make everyone heel to their limited notions of humanity as they impose their modern-day Gilead on fertile minds. I do not wish them luck because when all is said and done, when they condemn an attractive woman by saying, "*she is dressed like a slut.*" You can respond with, "Bullshit, *you* are thinking like a *rapist.*"

Fuck it. Just say GAY!!



As a Kid I was told
about God, and how
much he loved me.



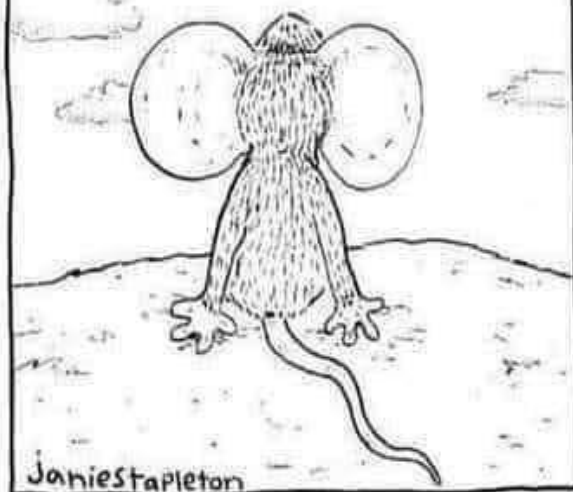
And how he'd
Send me to
Hell forever
if I made
the wrong
choices.



For years my life felt
like a trapdoor that
could open at any
moment into
eternal
suffering.



The older I get, the
weirder I think it is to
tell a kid something
like that.



“You Can’t Say That, We Would Have To Kill You”

BY JOHN RICHARDS



That’s what Sadia Hameed’s mother said to her when Sadia revealed that she no longer believed in Allah.

Just let that sink in for a moment and try to imagine your mother saying that to you... Or you saying that to your children...

This is the horrific threat that a great many children in Islamic societies experience. Having an upbringing in constant fear of death unless you submit to adult control, results in one of two possible outcomes.

You either grow up into a cowed person with no self-confidence or self-esteem – a psychologically damaged individual, or you become a rebel who strikes back at the system.

Muslim theocracies go to great measures to prevent the rebels but, for Muslims born in ‘Western’ democracies that route is a possible option.

Sadia was born in the UK and she set herself the task of fighting for freedom of speech.

It's ridiculous to think that in several countries, women are kept, to all intents and purposes, as *pets*. They are not allowed to leave home without a male escort, which could be their father, brother, husband or son. When they are outside the house they must be covered from head to toe in a portable fabric cage: the burqa or, in slightly less fundamental societies, they must wear a veil to hide the beauty of their face or hair for fear of setting off men's 'uncontrollable lust'!

Worse still, in legal cases, a woman's word is valued at only half that of a man's. This is the extreme level of second-class citizenship that is imposed on half the population. Camels sometimes get more respect and attention.



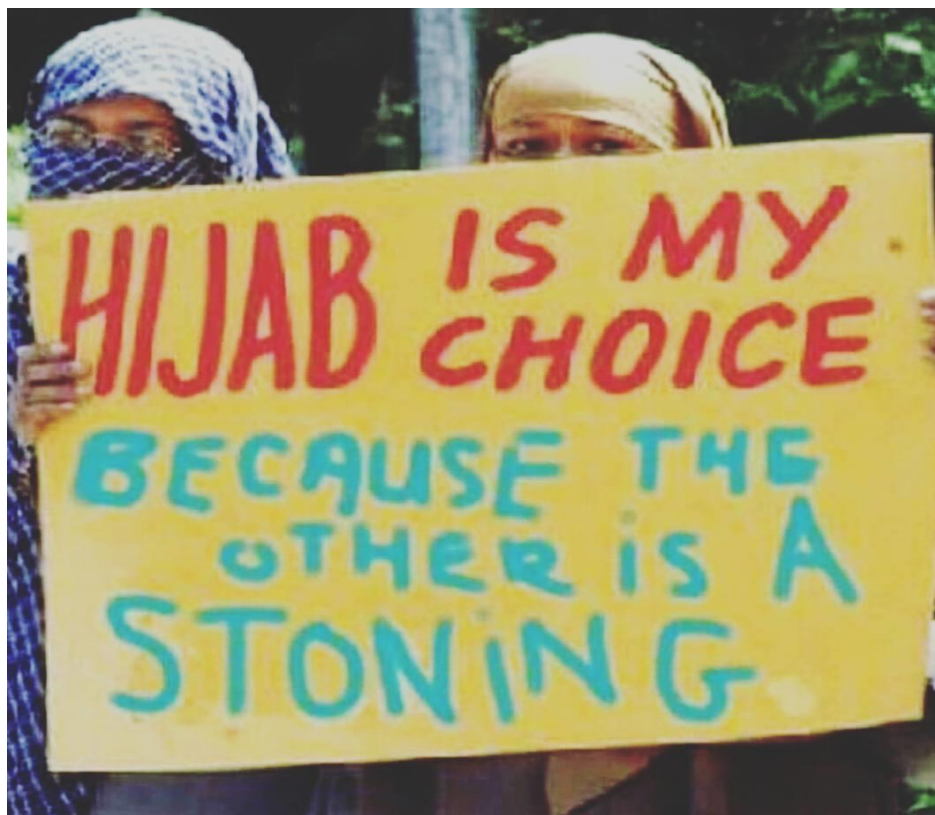
So Sadia's mission is a very valid and necessary one, although it's not been without cost on her part. Some of her family and friends no longer recognize her as a worthy person. This is the price that she has had to pay for kicking back at the faith she was raised in. It's important to remember that we are all born atheists and that a religion is imposed on us by the control

freaks in our community.

See the video of our interview here: https://youtu.be/c_F_bklWxqQ

I wish Sadia every success.

Sadia is a British ex-Muslim who seeks to improve women's rights. She is a campaigner for Free Speech. When she revealed to her mother that she no longer believed in Allah, her mother said, "You can't say that, we would have to kill you..."



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

School-prayer court case could hurt students' religious freedom

By David Williamson



It's an accepted truth in athletic circles that the two most powerful words in the English language are, "Coach says." Now consider how children in Florida public schools should respond when their coach says, "Let us pray."

This religious pressure lies at the center of a case the Supreme Court will hear on Monday about whether public school employees can lead our kids in prayer. Before you decide if you are for or against an agent of the state leading other people's children in prayer, consider a few questions: Do you know the religious beliefs of the teachers and coaches at your child's school? Would it make a difference if their prayers were Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, Wiccan, or Satanic? Or do you only want prayers by school employees from the Christian majority? That is precisely what's on the line.

In *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, the justices will either uphold or upend decades of case law that consistently affirmed the religious liberty of students and parents. Courts at all levels have agreed it is not the role of public school teachers and

coaches to impose their religious beliefs on other people's children. The religious freedom of students, not coaches, hangs in the balance.

Teachers, coaches, administrators, counselors, office staff, and even volunteers already have the right to pray while on duty and wear religious jewelry or clothing. What people of faith in government service should not do is violate their constituents' religious freedoms by using the authority of their position to pressure students into prayer. It's something we've seen right here in Central Florida when pastors pray with students and coaches.

Advocates of employee-led prayer may claim that participation has no effect on playing time or grades, but kids are smart. They know dissent is unpopular, particularly when it comes to religion. Like their parents around the Thanksgiving dinner table, they will bow their heads, whether praying or pretending, just to avoid confrontation. The courts have agreed the coercive effects of government-endorsed prayer are stronger for kids than adults. It is not the job of our government — including public school officials — to decide when, where, and how religious worship happens. That's for families and houses of worship to decide. In the case before the Supreme Court, assistant football coach Joe Kennedy could have prayed privately away from players, with no objection from the school district in Bremerton, Wash. In fact, the district worked to accommodate precisely that kind of prayer for Kennedy. The prayers he was told to stop having were those after the game at the 50-yard line at which he also delivered traditional postgame pep talks.

Here in Central Florida, Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) recently tackled similar issues.

In 2014, OCPS was alerted to concerns at Apopka High School. In response, before the football season began, school board attorneys communicated the concerns, and directed coaches to stop praying with students. At least one local pastor was surprised to learn what he assumed was his religious freedom to pray with students as the "chaplain" and "spiritual advisor" actually violated the students' rights.

In 2021, the Edgewater High School football program made the same mistake. A local pastor was named team chaplain by the coach. Again, OCPS attorneys sent yet another memo to remind coaches, athletic directors, and principals that students' rights were being violated, and those who persisted in violating them would be subject to "disciplinary action."

Conveniently, the former Edgewater football chaplain is now the Edgewater special-teams coach. I hope he got the memo too.

[P]
[SEP] I applaud Orange County Public Schools for reacting swiftly in these cases, just like the Bremerton School District. Both districts did the right thing. Had the facts been slightly different, Orange County Public Schools could be headed to the Supreme Court next week to defend you and your student's rights against a disgruntled coach or pastor.

It is easy to understand why Coach Kennedy and other former team chaplains might feel disgruntled. When you are accustomed to religious privilege, secular government probably feels a lot like oppression.

David Williamson is co-founder of the Central Florida Freethought Community and a board member of the Interfaith Council of Central Florida.

Open Letter To Kansas School Board

I am writing you with much concern after having read of your hearing to decide whether the alternative theory of Intelligent Design should be taught along with the theory of Evolution. I think we can all agree that it is important for students to hear multiple viewpoints so they can choose for themselves the theory that makes the most sense to them. I am concerned, however, that students will only hear one theory of Intelligent Design.

Let us remember that there are multiple theories of Intelligent Design. I and many others around the world are of the strong belief that the universe was created by a Flying Spaghetti Monster. It was He who created all that we see and all that we feel. We feel strongly that the overwhelming scientific evidence pointing towards

evolutionary processes is nothing but a coincidence, put in place by Him.

It is for this reason that I'm writing you today, to formally request that this alternative theory be taught in your schools, along with the other two theories. In fact, I will go so far as to say, if you do not agree to do this, we will be forced to proceed with legal action. I'm sure you see where we are coming from. If the Intelligent Design theory is not based on faith, but instead another scientific theory, as is claimed, then you must also allow our theory to be taught, as it is also based on science, not on faith.

Some find that hard to believe, so it may be helpful to tell you a little more about our beliefs. We have evidence that a Flying Spaghetti Monster created the universe. None of us, of course, were around to see it, but we have written accounts of it. We have several lengthy volumes explaining all details of His power. Also, you may be surprised to hear that there are over 10 million of us, and growing. We tend to be very secretive, as many people claim our beliefs are not substantiated by observable evidence.

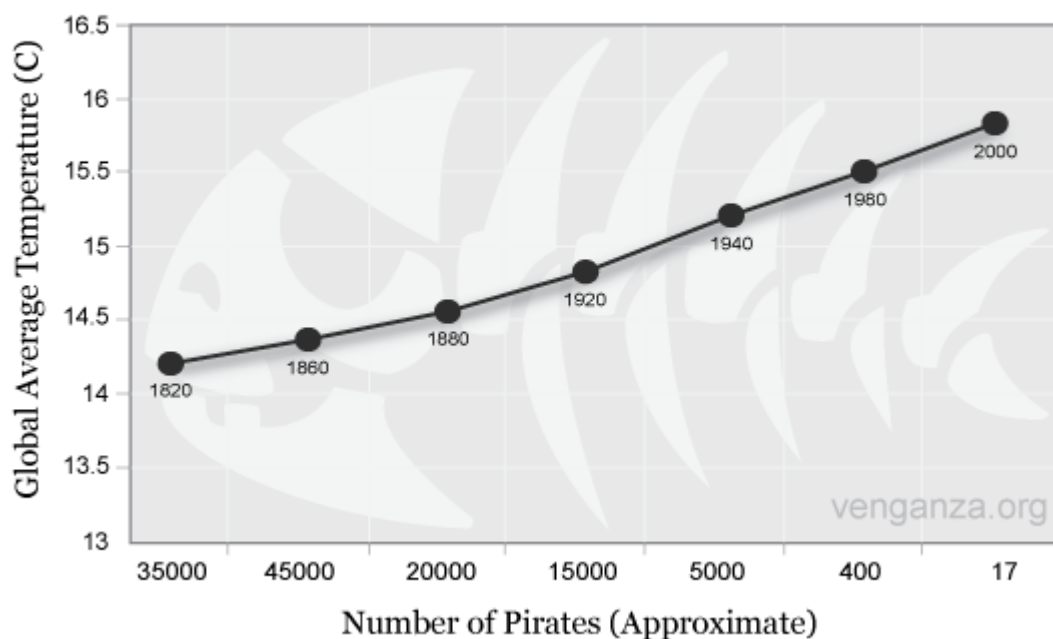
What these people don't understand is that He built the world to make us think the earth is older than it really is. For example, a scientist may perform a carbon-dating process on an artifact. He finds that approximately 75% of the Carbon-14 has decayed by electron emission to Nitrogen-14, and infers that this artifact is approximately 10,000 years old, as the half-life of Carbon-14 appears to be 5,730 years. But what our scientist does not realize is that every time he makes a measurement, the Flying Spaghetti Monster is there changing the results with His Noodly Appendage. We have numerous texts that describe in detail how this can be possible and the reasons why He does this. He is of course invisible and can pass through normal matter with ease.

I'm sure you now realize how important it is that your students are taught this alternate theory. It is absolutely imperative that they realize that observable evidence is at the discretion of a Flying Spaghetti Monster. Furthermore, it is disrespectful to teach our beliefs without wearing His chosen outfit, which of course is full pirate regalia. I cannot stress the importance of this enough, and

unfortunately cannot describe in detail why this must be done as I fear this letter is already becoming too long. The concise explanation is that He becomes angry if we don't.

You may be interested to know that global warming, earthquakes, hurricanes, and other natural disasters are a direct effect of the shrinking numbers of Pirates since the 1800s. For your interest, I have included a graph of the approximate number of pirates versus the average global temperature over the last 200 years. As you can see, there is a statistically significant inverse relationship between pirates and global temperature.

Global Average Temperature Vs. Number of Pirates



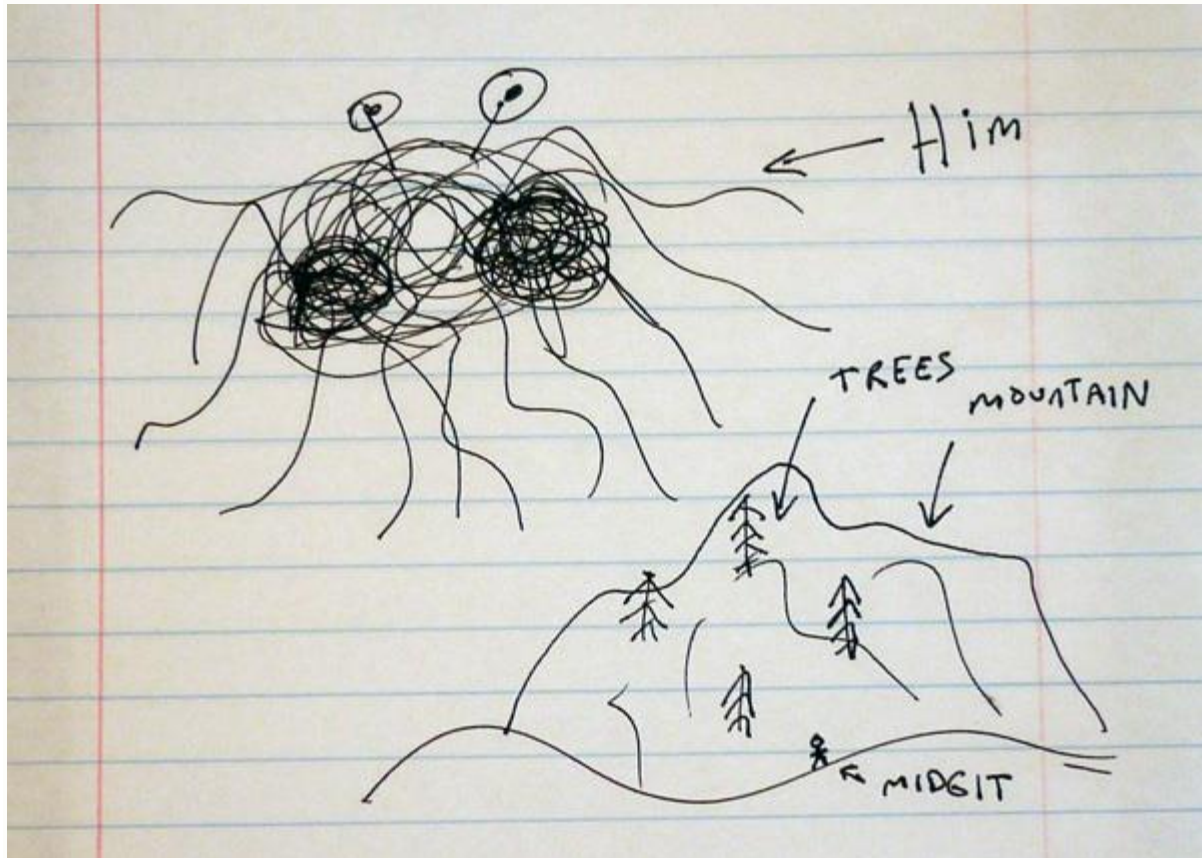
In conclusion, thank you for taking the time to hear our views and beliefs. I hope I was able to convey the importance of teaching this theory to your students. We will of course be able to train the teachers in this alternate theory. I am eagerly awaiting your response, and hope dearly that no legal action will need to be taken. I think we can all look forward to the time when these three theories are given equal time in our science classrooms across the country, and eventually the world; One third time for Intelligent Design, one third time for Flying Spaghetti Monsterism

(Pastafarianism), and one third time for logical conjecture based on overwhelming observable evidence.

Sincerely Yours,

Bobby Henderson, concerned citizen.

P.S. I have included an artistic drawing of Him creating a mountain, trees, and a midget. Remember, we are all His creatures.



ARTICLES

*(a delightfully irreverent
summary)*

Virgil & Lucy's discreet adventures at FreeFlo 2022

By Virgil Thorp



The Bi-annual Florida FreeFlo weekend is one to look forward to. Covid had disrupted the every-two-years cycle and 2021's event was postponed indefinitely. But last fall, as Pfizer vaccinations made a dent in transmissions of the pandemic's virus, Central Florida Humanists directors, David and Jocelyn Williamson, made a courageous decision and committed to the FreeFlo 2022 conference for March 4-6 in Orlando, Florida.

Lucy and I did not hesitate to register after we heard the announcement and reserved our spots to attend. Unfortunately,



we had nearly six months to wait. Like junkies hooked on skepticism, we needed a fix of FreeFlo's special brand of pastafarian lifestyle; a freedom to just be ourselves. To be able to think and to talk with like-minded, educated and intelligent people; even if regular, Christian-based society might consider us heretical heathens, atheist baby-eaters and anti-social freaks.

FreeFlo welcomes atheists, skeptics, agnostics, deists, humanists, satanists and any other anti-superstition group to assemble and share. *Especially*





pastafarians! It is not a place where you would find a former NFL halfback running for public office cluelessly asking, “if humans came from apes, why are there still apes?” These attendees know their science, they know their Darwin, they know their fact from an ignorant, superstitious

fiction. “No way, Herschel.”

The lineup of speakers and presenters was top-shelf. A-List atheists, Matt Dillahunty (Atheist Experience Show), Seth Andrews (The Thinking Atheist podcast), and Dan Barker (Freedom From Religion Foundation) were the headliners. Noah Lugeons, author, podcaster (*God Awful Movies* and *Citation Needed*) and atheist activist made his maiden appearance at FreeFlo to Lucy’s fan-girl joy.



Credentialed scholars from the scientific community included Dr. Dan Batcheldor (professor at Florida Institute of Technology, Head of the Department of Aerospace, Physics and Space Sciences, Director of the Jacobus Kapteyn Telescope, and NASA),



Dr. Don Lincoln (Senior Scientist at Fermilab), Dr. Ryan Cragun (professor of Sociology at the University of Tampa), Dr. James Croft (gay activist and leader of the Ethical Society of Saint Louis) and – the seemingly only religious believer attending FreeFlo – Dr.

Adam Lloyd Johnson (apologetical Christian minister and university campus missionary with Ratio Christi). Dr. Johnson debated Dan Barker on the topic of *Does God Exist* at the Saturday afternoon session. (Guess who won?).

For some god-awful reason, I have left the female presenters for last.



Saturday morning, we were officially welcomed to the conference by Florida state representative, Anna V. Eskamani (District 47 – Orlando-D). She was followed by renown American Atheist Vice President, and Legal & Policy director, Alison Gill, who educated us to the dangers of Christian Nationalism in the Florida legislature and verified the chilling opening remarks made by representative Eskamani concerning bills like “Don’t say Gay”, book bannings, voter restrictions, women’s health care and the erosion of transgender rights.

It seemed like it was left to the ladies to address the most important themes. Besides Ms. Gills’ presentation, Mandisa Thomas (Black Nonbelievers) discussed the pressures confronted by nonbelievers of color and overcoming that adversity. Amy Monsky (Camp 42) delighted us with her experience of teaching



children and fostering curiosity in them without relying on Sunday School nonsense. Kevin Senapathy (*#SkepticsSoWhite*) shared how even equality-sensitive people often miss the point by ironically excluding people of color with her talk titled; *How White Dominated Spaces Reduce the Movement to a Farce*. Alice Greczyn, actress and author (*Founder of Dare to Doubt*) touched many in the audience with her talk on *Drunk, High and Hypnotized: How Neurotheology healed my Religious Trauma*. Yes, many of us had been there, alongside Alice, using all sorts of placebos and snake-oils, searching for truth.

Listing every talk would be boring to you, my friends and readers, and that is something I do not wish to do. It would bore me, too. Ostensibly, the conference did achieve what it was intended to do.

However, what did I do – as a perverted atheist – to remember those things? I made notes!

It all started Friday night at the 80's-themed kick-off party at the hotel's pool-deck tiki bar. There

was a distinct joy of being around 300 other atheists for a weekend. Did I mention they were smiling? Some wore masks – their eyes twinkled; some did not wear masks – their smiles shone brightly. All were vaccinated and boosted!

Oh wow, there's Noah Lugeons and his wife Lucinda coming this way. I instantly changed the subject and spoke loudly, "I have *no*



illusion that we will have a great weekend." That stopped the couple. "Oh, are you Noah Lugeons? Great to meet you, my pleasure, Lucinda." Etc., etc., etc. We laughed together when an attendee dressed as Bernie from the 80's movie, *Weekend at Bernie's* was wheeled around the deck in his beach wagon. Quite

realistic, even matching Teri Kiser's signature sneering mustache as he flopped around, corpse-like.

Dan Barker, usually a most conservative dresser, was in a black t-shirt, dungarees and Nike running shoes. (Later, the next afternoon, when Dan was going to his debate with Reverend Johnson, dressed in his conservative suit, he still had on his Nike running shoes. I could





not pass up the opportunity to inquire why he did not have his usual polished leather wingtips. "I packed so early in the dark," Dan replied sheepishly, "that I did not notice I had packed two right footed shoes." We forgave him and Lucy did not feel so badly that we forgot all our hanging clothing

in our haste to get out the door and make the drive to Orlando.

The worst part of the evening occurred when I bought two Pinot Grigio's. "Six-ounce or nine-ounce," the bartender asked.

"Nine-ounce, of course," I said. Did I look like an amateur drinker?

"That'll be 35-dollars." I was glad it was not a cash bar. Who goes around with that much cash now-



a-days anyway! I have purposely avoided places that charge that much or more for a drink – like New York City and Toronto – for that very reason.

The DJ played a Kinks' song and the group I was in all sang along and after the tune ended debated the genius of Kinks founder Ray Davies, and how he was able to construct an entire novel in a

three-and-a-half-minute song. I sang out loudly, not too drunkenly, "L-O-L-A, Lola."

And was answered from across the pool by another Kinks fanatic, "Lo-lo, lo-lo, Lo-lo-la."

Power to the people! And we all finished the song, a Capella.



"Boys will be girls and girls will be boys, it's a mixed up, muddled up, shook up world ... 'cept for Lola. Lo-lo, lo-lo, lo-lo Lola."

It did not matter that the hotel was in the take-off pattern of the Orlando airport. Every couple of minutes, the thunder of the jets, clawing for altitude would disturb our discussions. Fuck it. The topics we discussed just went on and on. Epiphanies were discovered. Did you know? There are Satanists who are meat



eaters, there are satanists who are vegetarians and there are satanists who are omnivores. "They'll eat everything!"

"Yeah, but I do not like the taste of lady condoms. Latex is not tasty."





"I agree, completely. Condoms, yuck"

"What is a supreme being?"

"Religion is nothing but spiritual masturbation."

"God equals the source of order in the universe."

"God equals moral truth, therefore there must be a god?"

"Fuck Aristotle."

"God is indecent exposure! How

can you worship such a god?"

"The bible said Moses could not look at god's face."

"What part of god could Moses look at? Did he look at god's perfect butt? Was it enhanced by revealing tights? In a jockstrap, perhaps?"

"I wonder if god takes a shit."



"It would certainly be immense."

"What if the clergy was depicted in a movie the way negroes were depicted in D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*? How would that have affected history?"

"C.B. de Mille, *The Ten Commandments*. My folks had a souvenir booklet with an



illustrated 'children of Israel's orgy picture when Moses came down from Mt. Sinai with the plates. When they went to bed I jacked off to the picture. I felt guilt. I felt shame. I did it again later that day!"

"Did you know that Marriot's rooms have both the Gideon bible and The Book of Mormon?"



"I wanted to feel good, that's why I always stayed until the preacher gave the benediction."

"Catholic confession."

"Feeling righteous wasn't enough."

"Good trouble. BLM. Act-up. Freedom riders. Yippies, hippies, LSD."

"It is my sincerely held belief that Christians are ass-holes."

"*The Scarlet Letter*. Hawthorne was so ponderously depressing, but Mark Twain kicked ass."

"Are you a good witch or are you a bad witch. Can I find out later?"

"Crude vigor over polished banality."

So much to hear, so much to see, so much to talk about. So



much to experience. (*Huffing and Panting*)

In summation, what did I come away from FreeFlo 2022 with? The hotel ridiculously over-charged for food and drink that they have no business being that proud of. That I am not alone with my feelings of justice and equality. The realization that the current batch of rich, hypocritical pedagogues; Oligarchical men like Donald Trump, Ron DeSantis, Vladimir Putin and Ric Scott deserve to have severe morning sickness. Especially the conservative republican ones; Franklin Graham, Lindsey Graham, Graham crackers who want women barefooted, back in the kitchen with a bun in the oven; Hateful ones who, in their own words, want faggots and lesbians back in their closets; who want niggers to know their place on the plantation; and who want



obnoxious white superiority praised and worshipped as the true religion. Autocratic oligarchies as humanity's only true hope. A desire to resurrect the old divine right of kings from its proper grave. Racist, sexist, homophobic, monarchical nonsense. How disgusting?! That is their world, their ignorance. Not yours, not mine, not ours.

It feels good to be at FreeFlo; where such idiocy is ridiculed and despised, and the world feels right again. It was a gathering much like the Aware Ones of the Treasure Coast hanging out at Sandsprit ... only bigger and a tad more organized.

Because of the interruption in 2021 from covid, David and Jocelyn just may do FreeFlo again next year. Where do I sign up?



FOOLING GOD!

(Why Most Christians are Going to Hell)



By J. Dan Vignau

By their own accord, and through their own belief system, most so-called believers in Heaven will not pass through the imaginary Pearly Gates. As a somewhat well-trained skeptic, I defer to Marx and Engle's use of dialectical materialism, by taking the opposite point of view from what I believe to be true. The purpose of this paper is to send them all to Hell based entirely on what they believe, and not based on the truth of the

matter, that there is no Hell, so my major premise might be based on a deception, but a very useful one.

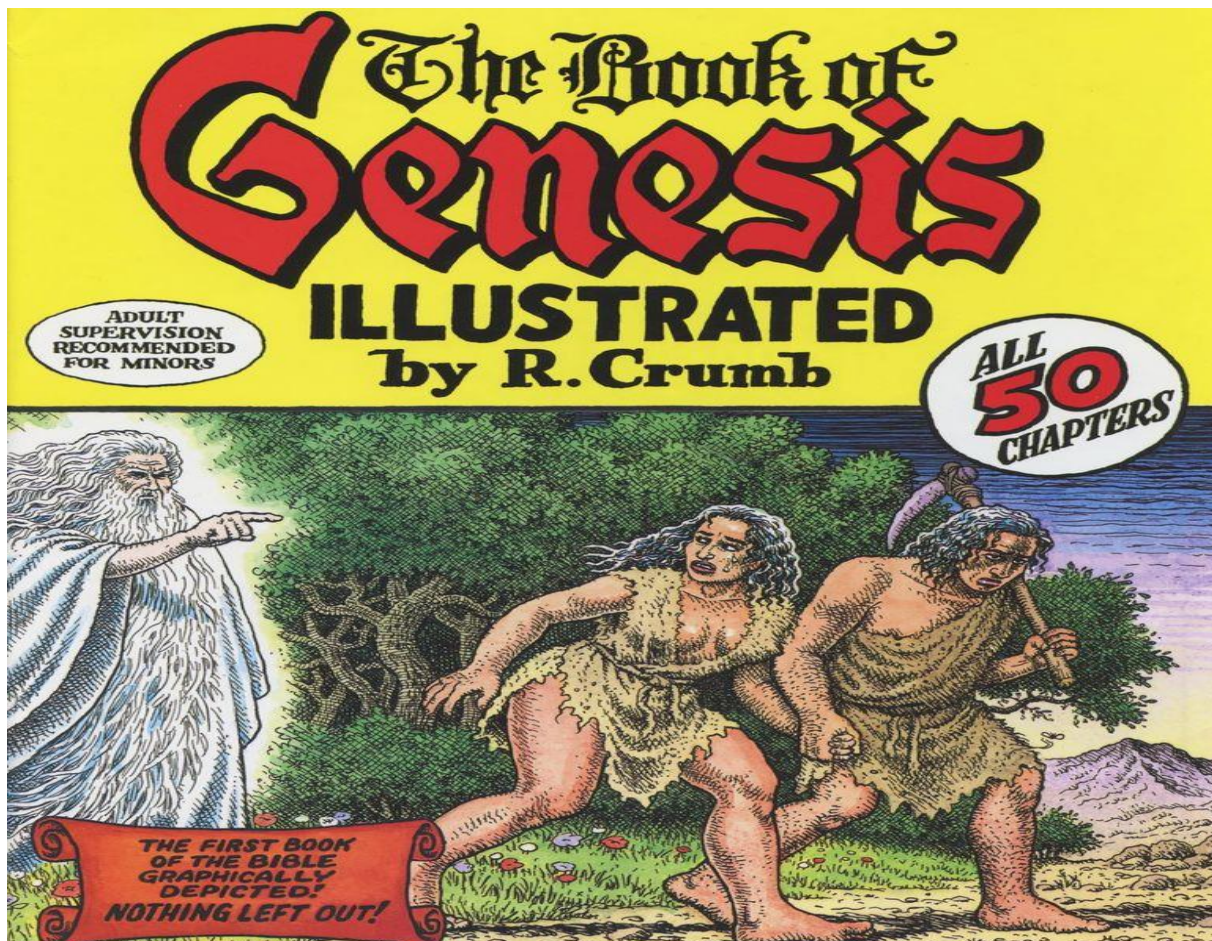


Here goes: You can't fool God!

One thing about far too many Christians is that they think they can continually trick their imaginary God. *Whoops!* There I go again, Looking at this from my perspective, not theirs. So, I will risk being only partially quoted by these Bible thumping lunatics by starting with the premise that their God is real, and that, like Santa Claus, *God keeps score!*

Every time anyone sins, a negative point is recorded. A prayer that asks for forgiveness for each particular sin adds a plus score. So, if you kill someone, then confess and ask to be forgiven, then you can still get into Heaven. Just don't screw up and die before you pray away each and every sin; this is especially true for, the cardinal, or Hell seeking sins, which surely must score larger point counts, thus necessitating many more, and more specific prayers than for a simple transgression, such as a lie.

Let's say you average three sins per day and pray for each to be forgiven. Fine. Let's say you commit three sins, and then ask, "Father forgive me for all my sins." Add one point for the prayer, then subtract three points for the sins. What if you get busy and



forget to ask? Hmm, one could fall behind pretty quickly here.

Next, consider that you commit some sin regularly, then ask for forgiveness for each one. Are you really confessing, or once again trying to fool God? If you really want to atone for your sins, you can't simply keep asking for the same sin to be forgiven. Remember, like elephants, God never forgets.

This serial sinner will certainly not impress God. He knows that if you keep doing the same sin, that your prayers are insincere, and you get no points toward entry into your never-ending life of joy. Oh, you will live forever, all right, but it will be in a firestorm of never-ending torture. And guess what, Rape! YES, God will have

the Devil rape you, at least if you ever raped anyone, torture you if you mentally or physically caused anyone pain, at least before He inundates you with the unbearable pain of fire.



Another way you will forget to pray is whenever you rationalize your behavior. Let's say you open your car door and ding someone else's door. This happened to me once as I watched through a restaurant window.

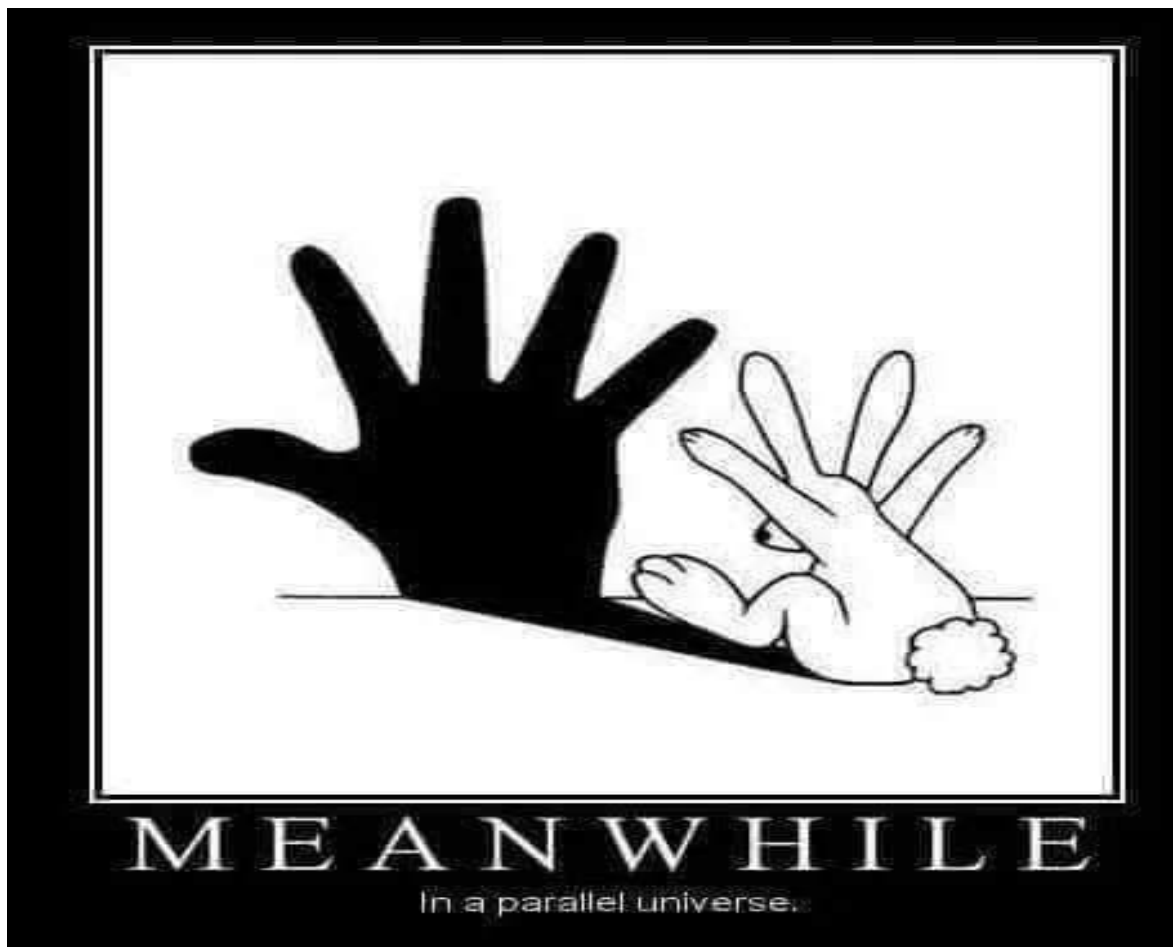
When the Ding-batter entered with her husband, I asked her to be more careful of other peoples' cars. She yelled out; "I didn't hit your door." We went back and forth a few times before she eyed her husband for support. I quietly stated that God saw her do it. She broke into tears and cried out in fear.



Why? Not because she lied to me, but simply because since God saw her, she knew that I knew she did it, and she knew that God

heard her. Now I ask you, would she have asked for forgiveness for damaging my car? Not likely, but this alone would not send her to an eternal damnation; however, lying about it, and rationalizing many other sins and lies, *just might*. In fact, I wonder if she asked for forgiveness for these particular lies.

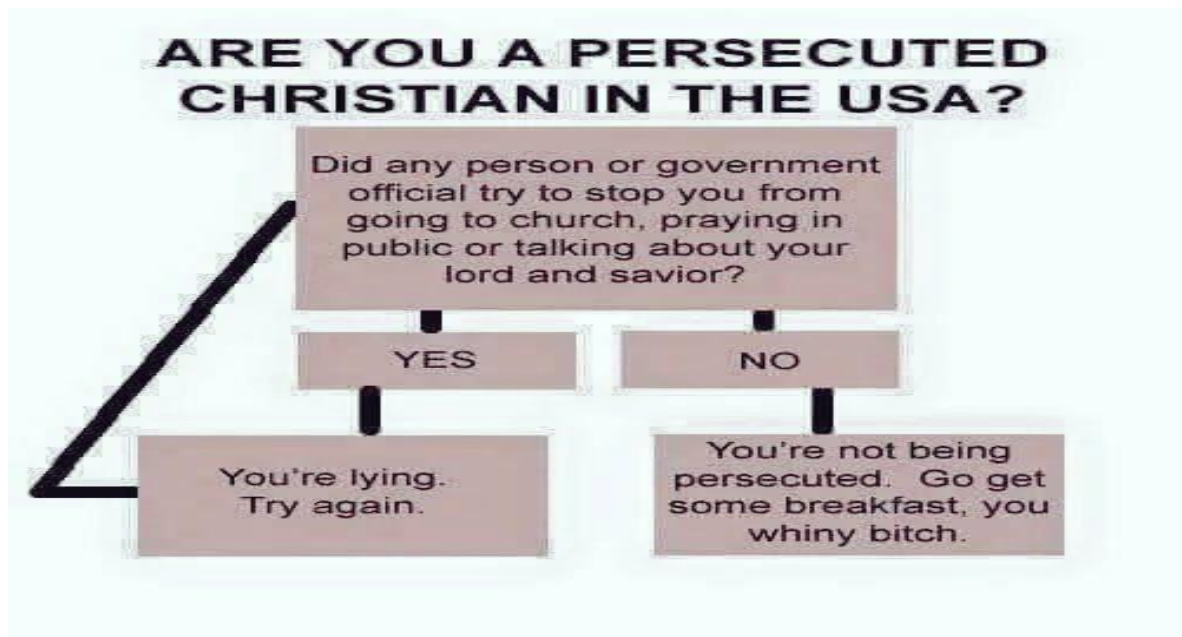
Another example: let's say you murder an abortion doctor. You believe it is OK, because this doctor kills babies, so the big question is, "Should you ask to be forgiven?" If the answer is,



"Yes!", then you knew before the act that it was wrong and did it anyway. Let's say you got caught and told the police you did not do it. You told the lawyers, jailers, your church members, and more. How many times did you lie? You can't fool God by asking Him to forgive all of your sins, because that would not be as sincere as asking for each sin to be forgiven.

What about hatred? Does God say his worshipers should hate others not like them? Well, actually, he does. Could a religious group of religious people even exist as a group without having some other group to at least chastise, if not hate for the sake of group cohesion in their hatred? Without the feeling of the superiority of one's beliefs, mustn't there be an opposing group to feel superior to? Are believers automatically forgiven for their religion's inherent hatred, or must they pray for that forgiveness?

God does not play games. Christians do! Can people really be

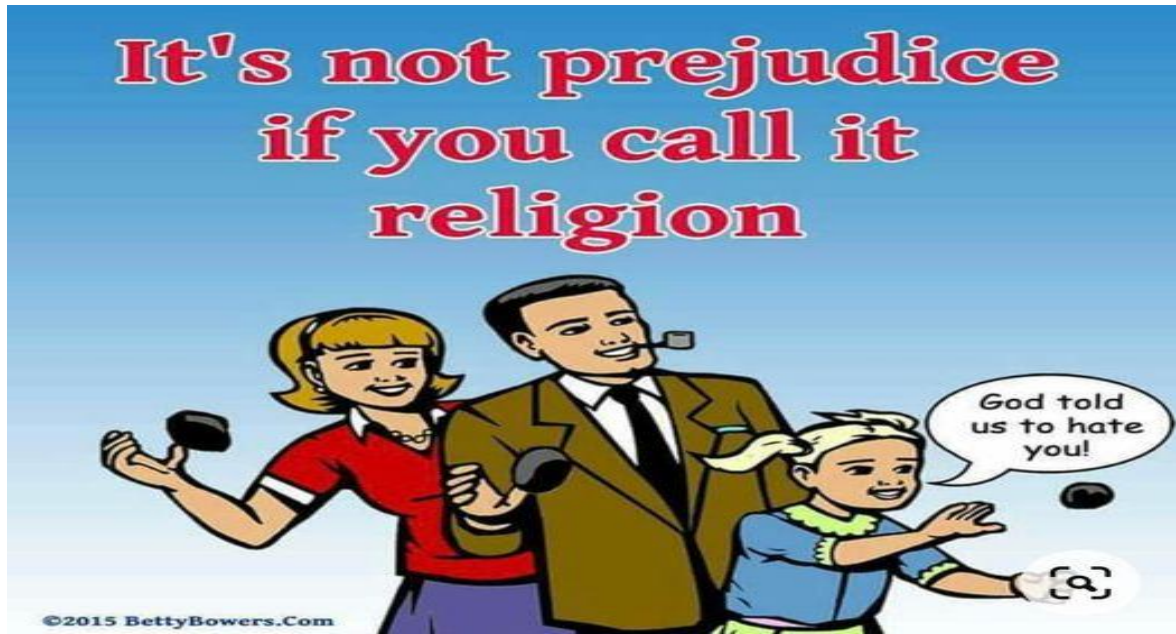


really stupid enough to believe they are fooling God? Each time you pray, God knows whether you are sincere, and not really just asking to be allowed to continue to be a horrible person, but just in case, "May I please go to Heaven anyway, Mr. or Mrs. God?", or for Unitarian prayers; *To whom it may concern. Will God let me keep sinning if I keep asking to be forgiven?*

The answer is an emphatic, "No!"

Your prayers must be sincere. How does God know you are sincere? Well, he knows everything, right? so he certainly knows that when you keep doing the same sin, there is *Hell to pay*, so to speak, in *Christianese*.

As James Randi pointed out in his anti-para-normal book "*Flim Flam!*", quoting Dr. Elie A. Shneour, "Man's capacity for self-delusion is infinite." Later, Randi adds, "(if) man wishes to be deceived; deceive him."



Man deludes himself that there is an omnipotent and omniscient God, then pretends that man can fool his creator God. *Jeezuz Chrizt*, so to speak. What kind of logical argument could support this *in-phantasy*? But man does wish to be deceived! Deception is a greater need than truth, because truth hurts. We do not want to die, but we will. We invent Gods to live forever but lose the joy of our near miraculous evolution by deceiving ourselves. Imagine if we used our tremendous intellect to live fuller lives, rather than plan for one that does not exist. Imagine a world filled with love, not hate. Imagine that your god keeps score and that you are smart enough to fool him. Imagine that you are such a totally narcissistic sociopath that you could direct the bombing of innocent children and still expect to go to Heaven.

God likes honesty. Be honest and have a better chance to get into Heaven. Go ahead and sin. It is hard not to. Just be honest about it and say this prayer to God; "Dear God please forgive me for all of my sins, many of which I have no recollection. I have no plans

to stop, and I really do not give a damn, but feel that I need to ask in order to go to Heaven. Besides, I must be a lot smarter than you if I figured out how to beat your system."



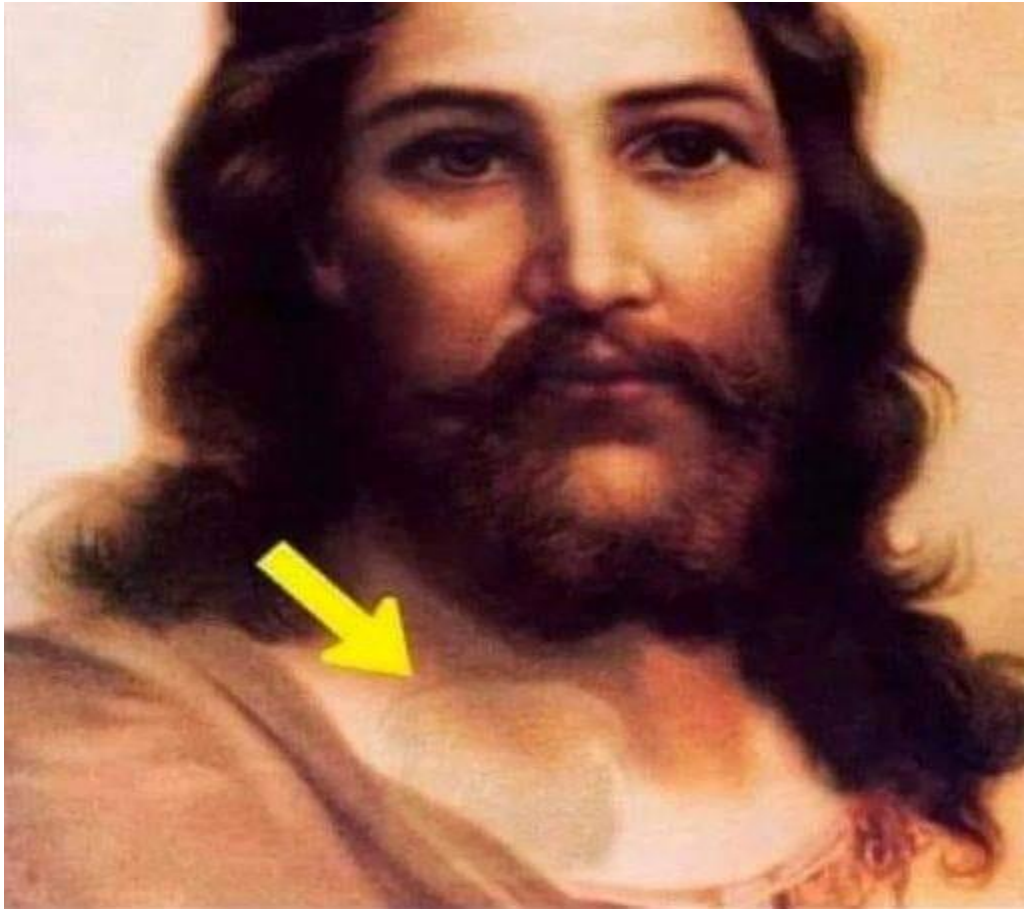
Now that is honesty! A real God might actually appreciate such honesty.

But, you are still going to Hell, because General Pardons are not accepted. You are not actually thinking about being forgiven for each and every sin. You just want some insurance, insurance garnered from the delusion that you can fool God.

R'Amen-A-Lama-Ding-Dong. It's your delusional Sing-Song.



Miraculous piece of toast found in painting of Jesus!



By Ed Zillioux

A guy I know recently asked me what I thought of Jesus. He knew I was an atheist. I'm not sure what his religious affiliations, if any, were, but I don't think he was a Christian. It was proffered as a serious question, so I treated it as such.

Bible Facts	
Serving Size 1 Book	
Servings Per "Holy" Container 66	
Amount Per Serving	
Angry Gods 1 Commandments 10	
	% Daily Value*
Total Bullshit	100%
Original Bullshit	15%
Taken From Other Cultures	85%
Omnipotence	0%
Factual Information	0%
Vengeance	90%
Deaths by God	2,476,633
Deaths by Devil	10
Suspension of Disbelief	0%
"Virgin" Births 1%	Moral Value 5%
Unicorns 1%	Iron Chariots 4%
<small>Religion is man-made. Even the men who made it cannot agree on what their prophets or riddomers or gurus actually said or did. - Christopher Hitchens</small>	

I began my response by saying, "I believe that a man who is now called Jesus might have existed. Considering all that has been said and written about him, I would assume that he was a good man. If he existed, I have no idea whether his name was actually Jesus, or something else, but for our discussion, let it be Jesus."

"But do you believe what has been written about him? For starters, what is written in the Bible?"

"Very little of it," I answered. "The Biblical accounts of him are largely a series of fables.

First of all, since I'm an atheist, I can't accept that he was the son of any God. We can refer to that as The Big Fable, sort of comparable to The Big Lie that we contend with in our current political environment.

And I say this, not only because I'm an atheist but based also on a fair amount of research I have done on the subject. The Big Fable, or TBF, has been repeated over and over again going back hundreds, at least a thousand years before the time of Jesus. For example, an Egyptian rendition of TBF not only included the Son of God and the Virgin Birth fables, but even had three wise men (kings?) who came bearing gifts in celebration of the infant's birth."



"Okay," he said, "I see how historical repetitions of TBF can engender doubt about Jesus, but if we discard the Son of God, and Virgin Birth as mere fables, as well as any other improbable stories you might find in the Bible, isn't there more to be considered about Jesus? Can't we dig deeper?"

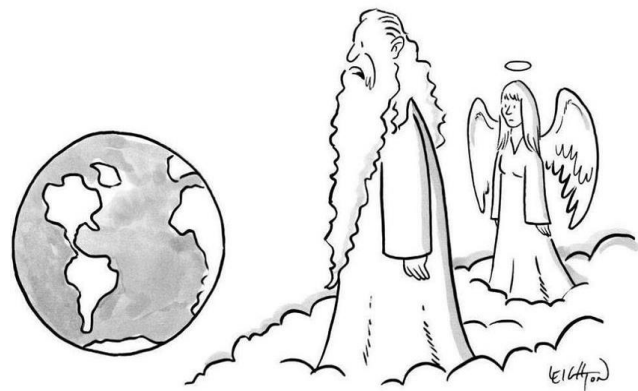
"That's a good point," I said. "But it begs the question, is there anything left to consider if we discard all that you suggest, and I assume you include all the so-called miracles for which there is no known plausibility?"

"Yes, let's go there."

After a rather long pause, I continue, "Jesus, or the concept of Jesus certainly has a universal utility bordering on necessity.

He is revered by a substantial portion of the world population, comparable to Muhammad by the Islamists and Muslims or Siddhartha Gautama by the Buddhists. The life of the Gautama Buddha actually predates the estimated life of Jesus by half a millennium. But we're not

talking about religions. I only bring them up to suggest that the concept of Jesus has been repeated in leaders or prophets in many religions, just as Jesus is recognized as a prophet in the Christian religions. But he is more than that – he is thought of, among adherents, as the personification of goodness. And that concept can be carried over even to non-believers, to wit, the phrase: *'Good Without God,'* as espoused by Secular Humanists. So, Jesus becomes a symbol that holds a place among Christians as well as among former Christians long after they have fallen away, or outright rejected, the teachings and trappings of the religion itself. And I am sure this is true of adherents of



"I'm starting to prefer the ones who don't believe in me."

Muhammad, Moses, Gautama Buddha, Bahia, Allāh, and approximately, 2500 plus others.”

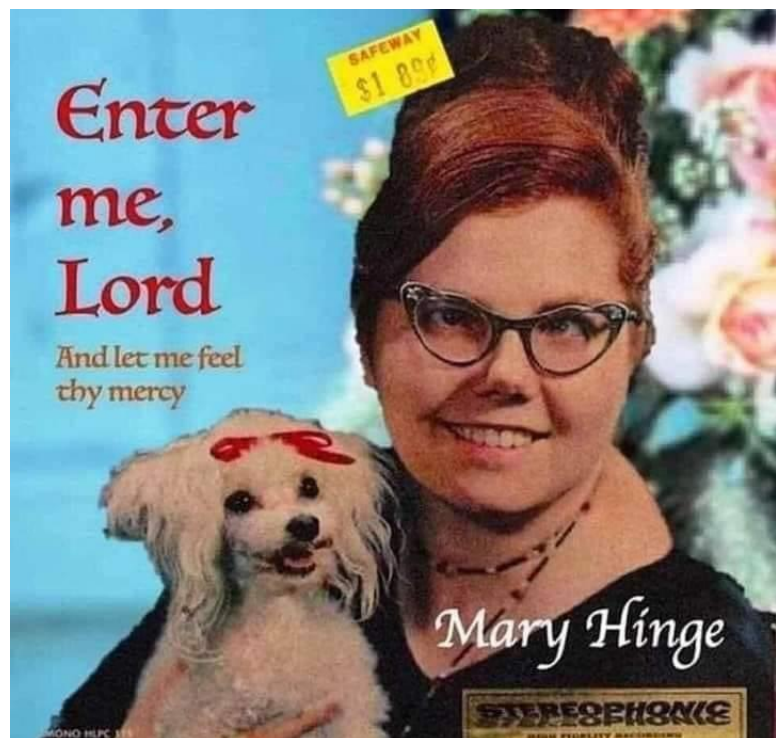
“So is Jesus merely a useful symbol?”

“No. He is much more than that. Let’s put it this way: If all the world, atheists, theists, and everyone in between, could aspire to what Jesus *stands* for, we might love our neighbor as ourselves, it could be the end of partisan hatred, there might be no racial, social, or sexual divides, and, most importantly, no more wars.”

“I think you’ve nailed it.”

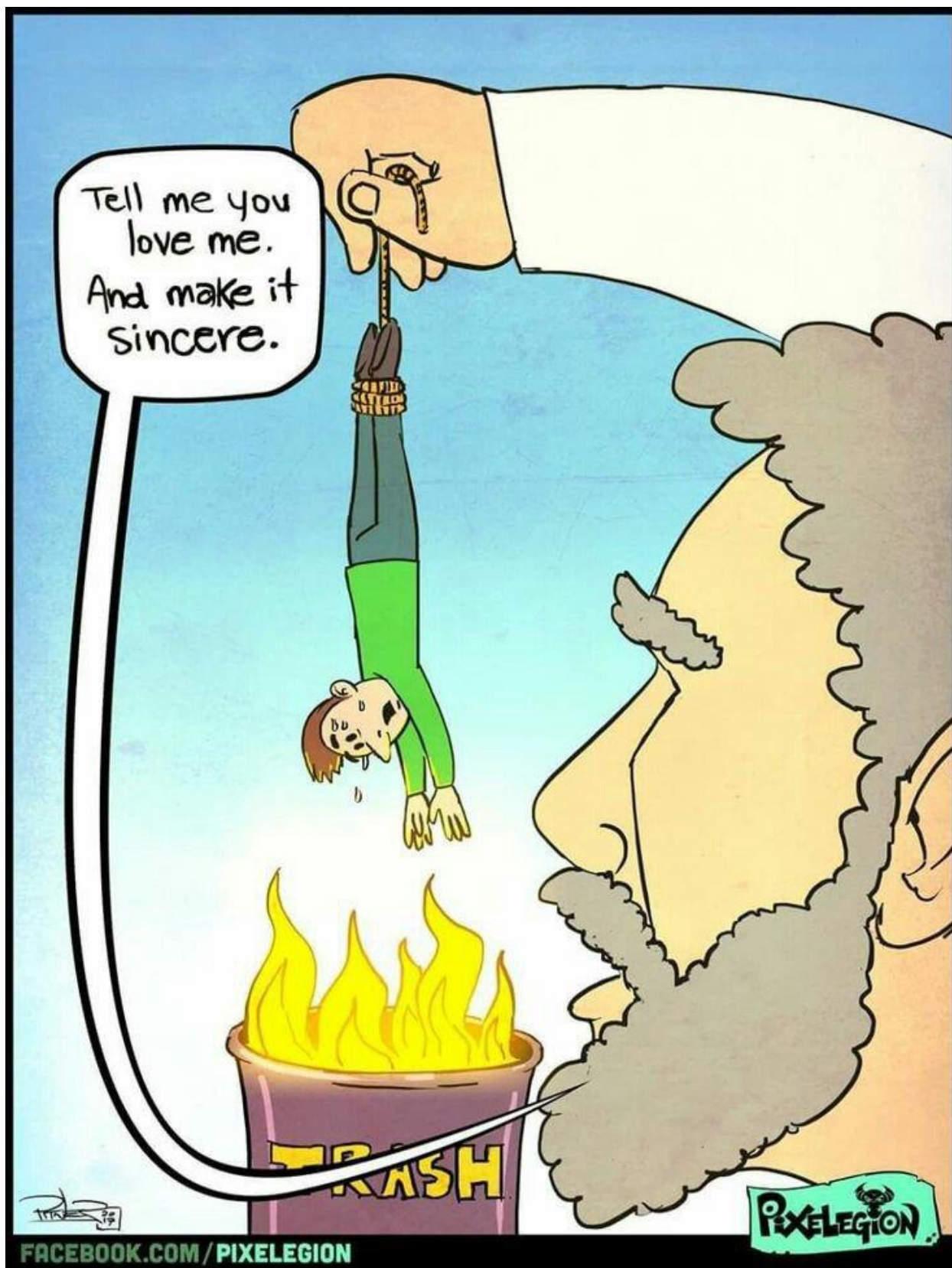
“Hell, no! I did not. What I have just said is fantasy. In reality, there probably will always be good and evil. I have written about this before. In an evolutionary sense, both good behavior and bad behavior are conserved. Put simply, bad behavior favors survival of the individual, while good behavior favors survival of the tribe. But natural selection will always tip toward the tribe. This, I believe, is why there are more good people than bad people in the world. And, I further believe, that is true across the board, among all tribes, sects, theists and atheists.

“Jesus is a model of good behavior. And it doesn’t matter whether he was born or invented. In fact, although I don’t know, I favor the latter since that would imply that the goodness model was man-made. The Model is within ourselves! *Jesus is within ourselves!*”



**NOTHING SAYS GOD
LOVES YOU MORE THAN
HIM SENDING A TORNADO
TO SMASH YOUR CHURCH
TO BITS...**







Please don't knock
on my door to
talk about God!

....

I don't knock on
your door to talk
about wine and
vibrators, do I?

by Saucy Signs

"I get my kicks above the waistline, *Sunshine*"

- from Murray Head, *One Night in Bangkok*

By Jim Longo



Thoughts run around my head, like so many wind chimes in a hurricane, and the big chime went *bong*.

Ukraine.

In the world we live in if you cause damage to someone's property the owner will do two things. One, put in an insurance claim, and or two, take you to court. Why doesn't this happen in war? Screw sanctions, sue them into suing for peace! Can you see it now? Today, Ukrainian insurance companies have sued Vladimir Putin, the Russian military, and the Russian state for negligence in carrying out the war in Ukraine by indiscriminately

targeting personal property. They are asking for five years of the Russian GDP in damages. In another filing, lawyers representing life insurance companies filed suit for both Russian and Ukrainian soldiers and Ukrainian civilians. They are seeking damages caused by increased life insurance claims due to the war, which threatens their business model.

In other news, thirty-four million Ukrainians have filed thirty-four million lawsuits in Russian courts today which will grind the Russian legal system to a stop. One Russian judge, Gregory Gregorevich, predicts a civil lawsuit, filed today, will be heard in early 2032.



And a smaller chime goes *boing*.

Big plant hunting. I know you have heard of big game hunting, but no one ever talks about big plant hunting. Recently the lot behind me sold for what I consider a small fortune. Up until five years ago, that lot didn't even have a road in front of it. FYI it is just a giant hole. So whoever bought it will have to bring in a barge load of dirt, and who ever said the words dirt cheap, has

never bought potting soil at a home improvement store, never mind by the truck load.

But I digress, we decided to put up a foliage barrier between the back lot and our property. So, we went to the local nursery between I-95 and the Turnpike and paid a little Guatemalan what we thought was a reasonable amount of money for five, six-foot-tall Areca Palms that we dragged home and planted five feet apart. But that left us another fifty feet. We tried to propagate cuttings off our invasive umbrella tree plant. They did stay green for two months though they never looked alive.

So, biking by that vacant lot, I noticed some small Umbrella trees growing in the lot that soon would be bulldozed. So, the other night, I took my wheelbarrow, trusty spade, machete, flashlights and some pots, and causally meandered by the lot. There I was crawling into the bush -- wheel barrel and all -- to stake out my quarry, a three-foot umbrella plant. Just as I put spade to dirt. I look up to see a car go by. Not just any car, but the Po-Po. That's right, the police had been called.

I killed the flashlight. Just a slow drive by. I ducked down.



Crap, the neighbors probably called the police when they saw lights in the empty lot. There I was in the dark, getting eaten by mosquitoes, hunted by the police, tangled in vines, pricked by pricklers, digging through root infested sand to get not a beautiful ball with a plant, but cut roots and a tree. The police moved away. I picked out another specimen. Shovel, shovel, shovel into

the wheelbarrow. Dug out five out of the lot, and I was on my way home.

The Sheriff pulled up next to me as I walked the dark streets on my way home. He rolled down the window. He said, "Nice evening."

I said, "Yes Sir."

"So, what are you doing out tonight, with five plants and a wheelbarrow?"

"It was such a nice night, I thought I would take my plants for a walk."

He just smiled. That all-knowing smile, that the manure was so deep, it was already over his boots. "And the shovel and the machete?"

"It's a tough neighborhood for plants. You can never be too careful."

I think I heard a chuckle, but I was staring straight ahead, trying to avoid eye contact, for fear of cracking up.

He drove off.

I went home and put my quarry in water and planted them the next day.

He should of have probably taken me to jail, because everywhere I go. I see plants I want to steal. There is that ornamental grass in front of that new development, to replace the one that died in my front lawn. That huge bayonet plant in that other vacant lot. Oh, what trophy that would be. Is there something called *Kleptoplantamania*? I can see it now, "What are you in for?"

"Grass,"

"Marijuana?"

"No, ornamental."

And the smallest chime goes, *bing*.

My back went out the other day, probably from big plant hunting. So I did what I normally do. Anti-inflammatory drugs and hot baths. Don't get me wrong. I love a hot soak, but if you actually wash in the bath, you never feel clean. So, I usually end up taking shower after the bath. Why is there no term for this? I took a shower after my bath. I took a *Bawer*, and what keeps the act and the term from catching on? It is probably because there is no money in *Bawers*. I guess the only reason bidets caught on was there was something to sell. Then again, squirting warm water up your woohoo is pleasantly perverse, and only could have been thought of by the French. Okay, maybe the Greeks.



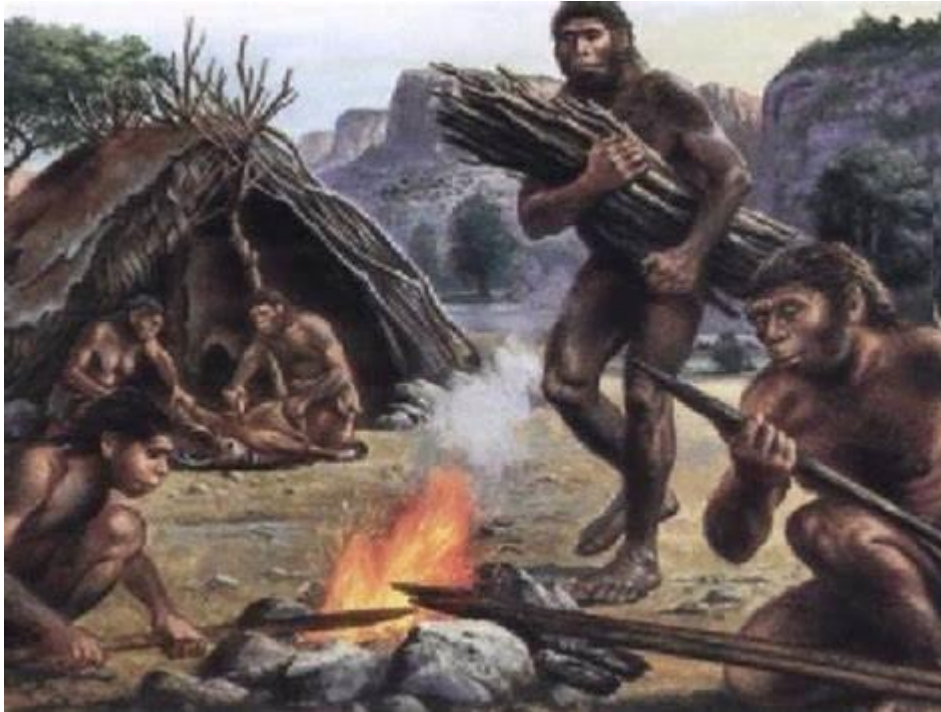


Why Is Homo Sapiens Successful in Evolution Race?

By Yashi Nozawa

There is no doubt that we, Homo Sapiens, are the winners of an evolution race on the Earth. The purpose of this essay is to identify the important events which contributed to our success. Homo Sapiens has no fangs, no horns, nor an armor-like skin. The species is not the fastest runner, nor does it grow to the biggest size. We haven't any superior physical capability. Then why did this medium size, powerless animal succeed in the evolution race? If there was no impact of a giant meteorite around 65 million years ago, the evolution race would have a completely different picture. So, the conclusions of this essay are

not applicable to evolution on any other planet, if there be such a race.



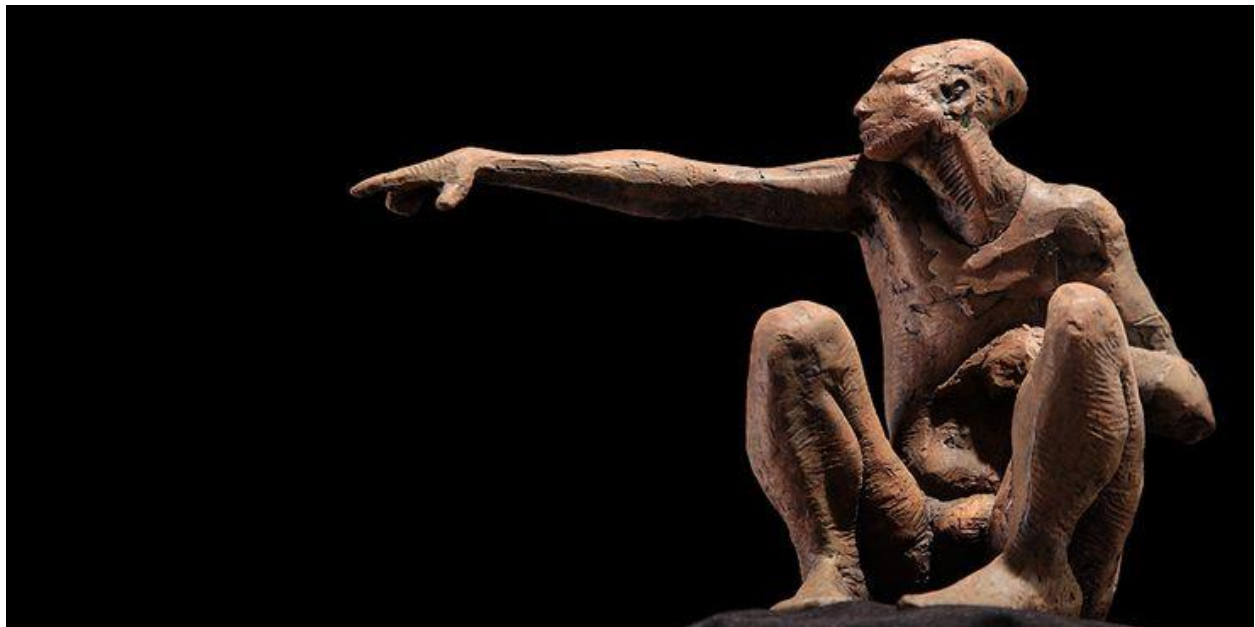
A probable first sign of our species' success appeared in the curiosity and adventure genes in hominid animals, which were semi-human like monkeys. Because of these new genes they

came out of protective forests to the more dangerous savanna. This stimulated adaptation of bipedal walking to help in observation of the surrounding areas for danger signs over tall grasses. While they were walking on grassland, they occasionally encountered an abandoned carcass, which was left over from meals of carnivorous animals. These monkey men discovered the good taste of meat and started actively looking for dead animals by following carnivorous animals. Bipedal walking also freed the use of their hands for other purpose such as carrying a stick for protection and occasional use as an active weapon to kill small animals. The combination of the out-of-forest experience and the bipedal walking stimulated new gene to improve mobility and hand-finger coordination. Around this point of the evolutionary race, our ancestors are not much different from ancestors of other primates.

Our ancestors discovered a revolutionary technique for the next stage of their evolution. The result was a major change of their behavior, and it was revolutionary. Rather than rely on the

natural adaptation of gene change, which is a slow process, they discovered a quick adaptation of behavior change, called a meme change.

What is the meme? It was introduced by Dr. Richard Dawkins in his book, *The Selfish Gene*, as "A unit of cultural transmission." Unfortunately, the word "meme" is so popular on the Internet that the original meaning is obscured. However, I don't know any other proper word, so I am using Dr. Dawkins' original definition here.



Our ancestor's curiosity/adventure genes and new technique of a meme change led them to development of a new weapon for the evolutionary race. Our ancestors start using fire. Probably at the beginning, they were afraid of fire like any other animals. They had not encountered fire in the forest as often as in the savanna. But their curiosity made them hold a fire-lit grass stalk for a while and experiment with its use. The discovery of fire-killed animals especially led to their own ways to cook the acquired meat, from hunting or scavenging. They found the cooked meat had a better smell and tastes. They learned the use of stone tools, also. Another major element of progress was probably the invention of proto-language. At first, they simply screamed to warn other people of nearby predator animals. Also, a mother started mumbling something to soothe her infant baby. They learned

other people's actions by observation and practicing. In this way they learned new hunting, fishing, cooking, tool-making and other techniques. The process made new techniques spread among communities quickly. These teachings did not necessarily to have a new gene, they could adapt within one generation, due



to meme changes. Usually new meme development does not leave physical evidence in fossils, except the size of the brain. It is difficult to determine which meme is adapted; when is almost impossible.

Probably the most significant contributor of meme change is the invention of language, which allows people to communicate across geological distance, or generational separation, and new knowledge spreading. Second to language invention, the next most important meme change is the invention of agriculture.

Before the invention of agriculture people's food supply was gathering of fruits and grain, which depended on seasonal



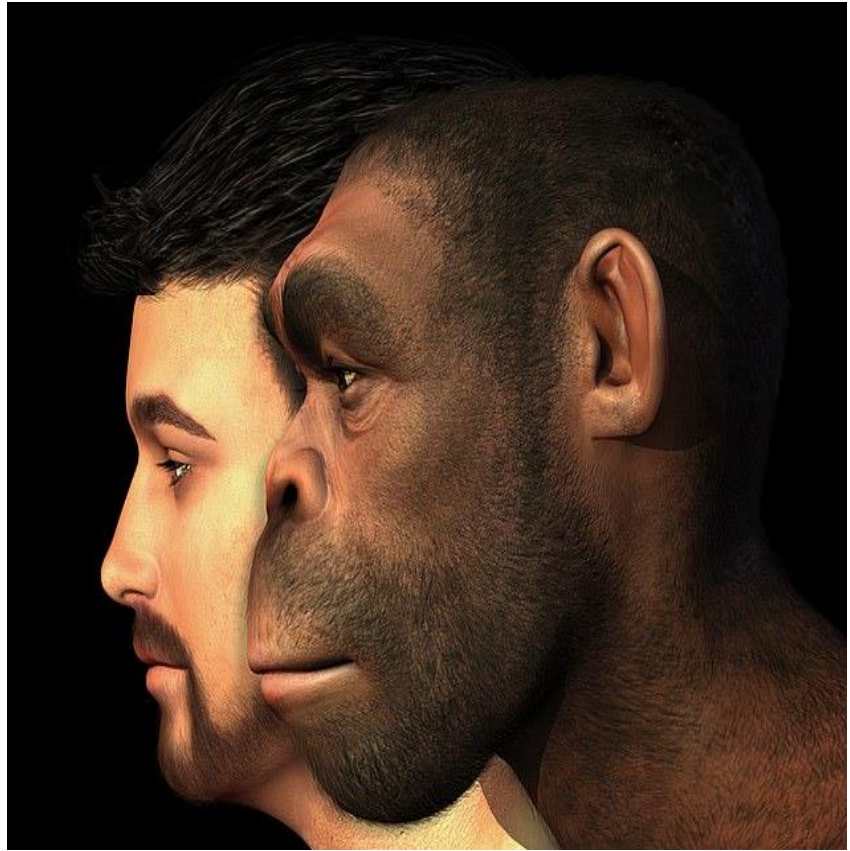
changes and hunting of animals. Hunting necessitates constantly moving to follow herds of the target animals. It means people are semi-wandering and never able to settle on a fixed place. The invention of agriculture happened in several places on the earth about 10,000 to 5,000 years ago.

Agriculture brought most human communities into similar developmental stages. Having a similar developmental stage,

regardless of geographical location is one of the unique characteristics of human community.

Agriculture brought food security. People could predict adequacy and timing of food supply. It also could produce food surplus. Some people could then engage in activities beside food production. For instance, tool makers could concentrate on making tools without worrying about food supply. Other specialty artisans such as makers of pottery, metals, personal items, etc. did similar jobs. A community can afford to maintain specialists and artisans who engage in making specialized items, which easily exchange with foods and other necessary items. The capability of specialization of manufacturing and surplus food promoted trade among different communities. Agricultural also created imbalance of wealth. Before the invention of agriculture, almost all societies were egalitarian communities. There almost no existence of poor and rich. One of the major characteristics of the agricultural society is that the yield of the farming field is

almost proportional to available manpower, provided there is no restriction in available cultivatable land. So the larger family produces more surplus products, which are available to exchange for other valuable products. This means that the larger family will become richer, compared to a smaller family. The "family" is not necessarily blood-related people. For instance, a family which has servant/maid/slave will become richer. Eventually some families can afford to maintain a private armed force which they can use to intimidate other families. This system creates classes in a community. A large



family with a larger private army dominates community politics and starts collecting tax from other families. Any family which does not comply with the request from the ruling class, will be intimidated by the ruling army. This is the beginning of the current capitalistic societies. When an agricultural society evolves into an industrial system, the basic structure does not change. A degree of wealth imbalance distribution is exaggerated further. Communism and socialism are introduced to correct the wealth imbalance problem, but they never succeed because of a misinterpretation of human nature. Communist revolution and similar attempts failed because its implementation method (bloodshed revolution) and misunderstanding people's expectations. People always want additional unsatisfied material desire, not the survival level of the living standard.

Direction of the society evolution is heavily dependent on personality of the leader. Societies evolved from city-state, to a larger community of kingdom to empires, but the basic structure of the community is similar.

There are no moral codes to follow for the leader of the country. So peace and prosperity of the world will be heavily depending on the leaders.

Human evolution succeeded by adopting meme evolution technique but the future of our societies has no rule to follow. Most animals behaviors are controlled by their genes, but human behaviors are mostly controlled by meme accumulation. Unfortunately, each person has a different assembly of memes. A leader of a country often has a different meme assembly from that of citizens of the country. The difference of meme assembly implies the leader may act differently from the citizen. We have no guarantee that our leaders will act to fulfill our wishes. The future of homo sapiens depends on a small number of world leaders. We have to invent a means to control behaviors of the world leaders.



THE WAY WE WERE



Subject:

AOTC potluck



rick & sandra,

you two really know how to throw a party.
just great assembling this band of
merry individualists. to see what happens.
good company, food, drinks, and lovely
setting.
appreciation to all who attended and their
contributions.

bert



I enjoyed it too, I guess that was your Summer Send-Off, but we will see you Friday.

Good Burgers, too! .

Dan

Mmmmm, mmmmm, Goood! Love these potlucks. Let's do it again! You
have a great bartender, too!

Virgil & Lucy





My Witch

By Ed Zillioux

Yeah, I fell in love with a witch. But that was the fun part. The problem was that she was also an alcoholic. Ever try to live with an alcoholic? I don't mean a heavy drinker. Hell, I was a heavy drinker. At first, when we were living together but not yet married, I went into bars with her. Then I began to see the difference. She never wanted to go home. It became a ritual. Night after night we were always the last ones standing, the pair who closed the bar. But not for long.

First, I should introduce you. Her first name was Jane Lou. She was very proud of her southern upbringing and the double name embodied that. Southern girls were soft, without sharp edges like, for example,

New York girls. I liked that. And that described her, at least when she was not drinking. But I had reached my limit and one night at a favorite bar I turned to her and said, "It's time to go now, we've had enough."

Her response was predictable. "No! I'm not ready, I want another drink. We're having fun."

"Yes, but it's time to go now. We both have to work tomorrow."

"Then you go. I'm not ready."



I'm not sure if my response surprised her. I said, "Okay, I'm leaving. But don't come home drunk. If you have to keep drinking, you can stay with one of your other friends, not with me. I don't want to see you drunk again. Good night." And I walked out, leaving

her sitting on her bar stool.

Amazingly, it worked. She called me the next morning, "I'm sorry, Ed. I called my old friends at AA and I'm going to start going to their meetings again. Can I come home now?"

She sounded like a penitent child. My eyes filled with tears of joy. I think that was the moment that I realized I was truly in love with her.

Jane Lou was a certified card-carrying witch. A member of the church of Wicca. Although she didn't believe in God, she always welcomed visits from representatives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and other sects seeking to save her. If I asked her why she bothered, she would simply say, "Well, they believe

what they preach so I'm not going to tell them they're wrong and they deserve to be listened to and respected." I learned a lot from Jane Lou.

To my knowledge, she never openly practiced Witchcraft, but she believed in its power. For example, she believed that after the fall of France to Hitler's forces in the summer of 1940, Hitler turned his attention to invading the eastern coast of England. Although the preparations for this invasion were more or less complete with several invasion barges in position to carry out the landing, Hitler never gave the command to proceed. This, according to Jane Lou, was due to a coven of witches that assembled in an area of New Forest near the village of Highcliffe-by-the-Sea who, over several days of frenzied naked dancing and chanting, focused a "Cone-of-Power" that changed the mind of Hitler causing him not to attack.



Actually, despite my immediate inclination to reject any such magical powers, I had to admit that it is difficult to understand why Hitler would pass up what seemed like a clear opportunity to expand the war to Britain. I expect that historians might have postulated some other explanation for Hitler's non-action, but I did not have the time nor inclination to pursue it. Besides, Jane Lou's explanation had a certain charm. I never challenged her witchcraft beliefs.

But she did have a spell on me. I met her when I left the University of Miami's Marine Lab and took a position with a consulting firm in Coral Gables where Jane Lou worked as a secretary. She was an amazing worker and could work circles around anyone else on the staff. I was in the throes of a divorce from my first wife, and soon was sharing lunch with Jane Lou. One day she invited me to lunch at her apartment within walking distance of our work. This was the beginning of our *sex-over-lunch* period and soon I was living with her.

Then came the time when she took a vacation to visit her brother in Charleston, West Virginia. Two days later I decided I couldn't lose her so I bought a gold ring and took the next plane I could get to Charleston. We were married by a Baptist minister in some small town I don't remember. Thus, I became a bigamist, since my divorce was not yet final. We fixed that later with a Justice of the Peace in Miami after the divorce was final.

After another year or so in South Miami, I got an offer I couldn't refuse at the EPA headquarters in D.C. We found an antebellum house in Manassas, Virginia that we both fell in love with. It was one of the very few that survived the burning of Manassas by the Confederate armies following their decisive victory over Union troops in July of 1861. We joked it was the perfect place for a witch.

Our years in Manassas were happy times, almost magical. This was only marred by the one time we visited the park constructed at the First Battle of Bull Run, also known as the Battle of

Manassas. A shaking Jane Lou said she felt the vibes of the thousands of Civil War soldiers who spilled their blood on those soils. I never took her there again.

But after six delightful years, among the best of our marriage, also including my exploits in spelunking and marathon running, the latter always cheered on by Jane Lou, I was faced with a major decision that disrupted our life. Ronald Reagan nominated Anne Gorsuch as the new EPA administrator. It seemed she was charged with dismantling the programs at the EPA labs. She was known among the scientists as "Watt's twat" for her relationship with James Watt, Reagan's pick to dismantle the Department of the Interior.

I had been in charge of funding scientific programs at EPA's environmental labs. After being approached by several laboratory heads of programs that Gorsuch's hatchet team had slashed to see if I could restore any of their funding (the head of one major program was on the verge of tears) I had to tell them there was nothing I could do. But there was something. I resigned in protest and sent letters of protest to major newspapers including the Miami Herald. Of course, nothing helped.



Jane Lou supported my decision, but it left us in a pickle. We wound up back in Florida where we settled into a trailer home on the edge of the Indian River in Jupiter. I opened a consulting business which didn't do very well. Jane Lou, on the other hand decided she would open a psychic studio where she would tell fortunes. I said, "What?! Can you do that?"

"Well, I've never done it before, but it should be easy."

So now I was married to a psychic! She found an empty place right on U.S.1 and I helped her set it up with all the trappings and ghostly lighting you might expect in such a place, and she was in business. It didn't take long for the word to get around and she was setting up appointments. Her clientele loved her, and it didn't take long before she was making more money than my consulting business.



I once analyzed her approach. I said, "What you are doing is a philosophical abroach to making people feel good about themselves."

I went on a bit until she said sharply, "Don't do that! By analyzing it you are making me unsure about what I am doing, and I will become ineffective."

Of course, she was right. I would never do that again. More time went by and we were doing well

thanks mainly to Jane Lou's talents. We had been together now for about seven years and during all this time she stayed totally dry as she had first promised. But then it was over. I came home late one afternoon, and she was gone. She didn't come home that

night and I knew. The next morning the phone rang. Jane Lou's drunken voice asked, "How soon can you leave?"

Later that day when she came home, she was in her usual high spirits. We talked about a divorce, and she said, "Just go down to the stationary store and get the papers. We can do it ourselves." And indeed, we did. It was the most amicable divorce imaginable. When it was all signed and entered in the county clerk's office, Jane Lou said, "Let's go on a road trip and tell all our friends what we're doing." She turned it into something celebratory. A new chapter in our lives.

And so, it ended. As abruptly as I suppose it had to. But with memories of all the good times lasting for the rest of my life.



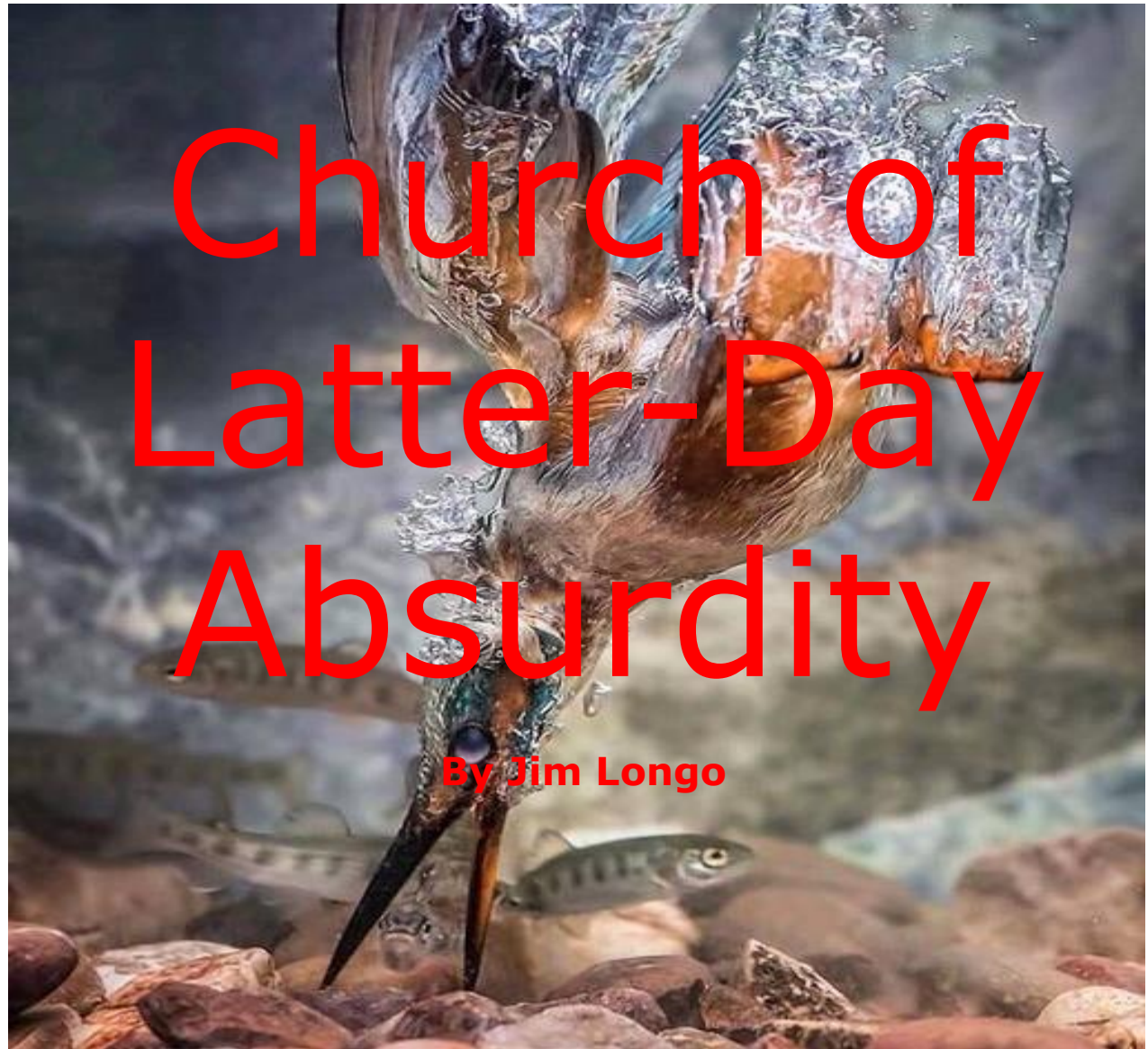
POETRY

Symptom Recital

I do not like my state of mind;
I'm bitter, querulous, unkind.
I hate my legs, I hate my hands,
I do not yearn for lovelier lands.
I dread the dawn's recurrent light;
I hate to go to bed at night.
I snoot at simple, earnest folk.
I cannot take the gentlest joke.
I find no peace in paint or type.
My world is but a lot of tripe.
I'm disillusioned, empty-breasted.
For what I think, I'd be arrested.
I am not sick, I am not well.
My quondam dreams are shot to hell.
My soul is crushed, my spirit sore;
I do not like me any more.
I cavil, quarrel, grumble, grouse.
I ponder on the narrow house.
I shudder at the thought of men....
I'm due to fall in love again.

DOROTHY PARKER

COMEDY CORNER



I can't lie. I don't know where to start. How about a quote from Cervantes? "When life itself seems madness who knows where sanity lies." Strip away the illusions we hold so dear and what is left? All I see is Absurdity. All life is, is birth, death, and whatever illusion you want to fill your time and head with in between

Now don't get me wrong, I found it incredibly depressing leaving college without an illusion. I hadn't a clue what to fill my

life with. Pretty much filled it with what other people told me to fill it with, or what other people were filling their lives with.

Maybe I had an original thought, once. It had to do with climbing up the ladder of success just far enough to take my best shot like a sniper in a tree to make the world a better place. I either fell out of the tree, or thought I'd get a better shot if I kept climbing. How flipping absurd was that illusion?

Yesterday working a job (journey of bondage) for antithesis of its name Convenience, Value Service, looking around at too much work, too little help, too little training, just like every day for the last forty years. A phone call came in from a personal assistant of one our patients, who called me about how she is getting the texts for her boss' account, or maybe it was the doctor's office who was calling in a prescription that they previously, supposedly sent over electronically but never arrived. After explaining, that we don't get to look at the prescription until the Russians, the Chinese and NSA do and that sometimes that takes a while, then asked that pivotal question, "How much of your day is dealing with little absurdities like this?" Their reply was, "*most of it.*" Mine too.

After hanging up the phone, I thought that's it. If there was a religion that addressed my life it would be the Church of Latter-Day Absurdity. Why Latter Day? I guess perspective, comes with more than two thirds of your life gone.

What am I doing here? This is absurd. Hang on it has all been absurd. It really didn't matter what illusion/belief I filled my life with. The point of my illusions/beliefs was to take my mind off my eventual demise.

So, what is all the fighting about? It is the importance of these beliefs to keep us from thinking about our own demise. If you spend time destroying the illusions that give meaning to people's lives, you might as well be saying die you no good SOB.

I think this is the reason why families, have such problems. Parents hand down their illusions to their children, and both know how to puncture those beliefs in each other. It is why people will go to war for their political, religious, and even personal beliefs.

The prime belief we all hold as sacred is I am important, and you should care about me. Let's be honest if you want to pop a bubble and make someone hate you. All you have to say is, I don't care what happens to you.

So how do you get through life when it is all absurd? Realize the absurdity, look at yourself and laugh. Look at others and



laugh. Play along to get along, but realize you puncture one's illusion of others importance at your own peril.

DID YOU KNOW?

#187

**Leaving Room for the Holy Spirit
When You Dance.**



did you know?

'Fadoodling,' 'horizontal refreshment,' 'shot twixt wind and water,' 'play at couch quail,' 'join giblets,' 'have your corn ground,' and 'ride a dragon upon St. George' were all slang terms for sex in the 16th through 19th centuries.



PHOTO: PINTEREST

DIDYOUKNOWBLOG.COM

Did You Know?

The History of the Middle Finger...



Well, now..... here's something I never knew before, and now that I have come to know it, feel compelled to share with my more intelligent friends in the hope that they too, will feel edified.

Isn't history more fun when you know something about it?

Before the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, the French, anticipating victory over the English, proposed to cut off the middle finger of all captured English soldiers. Without the middle finger it would be impossible to draw the renowned English longbow and therefore they would be incapable of fighting in the future. This famous English longbow was made of the native English Yew tree, and the act of drawing the longbow was known as 'plucking the yew' (or 'pluck yew').

Much to the bewilderment of the French, the English won a major upset and began mocking the French by waving their middle fingers at the defeated French, saying, See, we can still pluck yew! Since 'pluck yew' is rather difficult to say, the difficult consonant cluster at the beginning has gradually changed to a labiodental fricative, and thus the words often used in conjunction with the one-finger-salute! It is also because of the pheasant feathers on the arrows used with the longbow that the symbolic gesture is known as 'giving the bird.'

And yew thought yew knew every plucking thing.
Now will this get past our censors' censure?

**Fool me once,
shame on you;
fool me 15,999 times,
then I'm likely
wearing a MAGA hat.**

SCIENCE ^{VS} *PSEUDOSCIENCE*

SCIENCE

- ▶ Follows the evidence wherever it leads
- ▶ Embraces criticism
- ▶ Uses precise terminology with clear definitions
- ▶ Claims are conservative and tentative
- ▶ Properly considers all evidence and arguments
- ▶ Uses rigorous and repeatable methods
- ▶ Engages with peers and community
- ▶ Follows careful and valid logic
- ▶ Changes with new evidence

PSEUDOSCIENCE

- ▶ Starts with a conclusion, then works backwards to confirm.
- ▶ Hostile to criticism
- ▶ Uses vague jargon to confuse and evade
- ▶ Grandiose claims that go **beyond** the evidence.
- ▶ Cherry picks only favorable evidence, relies on testimonials or weak evidence.
- ▶ Uses flawed methods with unrepeatable results
- ▶ Lone mavericks working in isolation
- ▶ Uses inconsistent and invalid logic.
- ▶ Dogmatic and unyielding



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How to Avoid Mixing Your Metaphors

It's not rocket surgery.

First, get all your ducks on the same page.

After all, you can't make an omelette
without breaking stride.

Be sure to watch what you write
with a fine-tuned comb.

Check and re-check until the cows turn blue.
It's as easy as falling off a piece of cake.

Don't worry about opening up
a whole hill of beans:
you can burn that bridge when you come to it,
if you follow where I'm coming from.

Concentrate! Keep your door closed
and your enemies closer.

Finally, don't take the moral high horse:
if the metaphor fits, walk a mile in it.

Brian Bilston

Les Prurience?









Wagner's painting in the window of Romi Gallery, Paris, 1948 by Robert Doisneau

I used to be stressed out a lot, but then I discovered Yoga. I'm feeling so much better now.



**MARJORIE
TAYLOR
GREENE IS
WHAT YOU
GET WHEN
YOU BAN
BOOKS**

@JonCooperTweets

Marjorie Taylor Greene
is what happens when
the ventriloquist dies
but the dummy keeps
talking...



**IF I HAD A DOLLAR FOR EVERY IQ POINT
IN THIS PICTURE**



I'd have to borrow \$2.75 to buy a Happy Meal.



**Study Finds 100% Of Men
Would Eat Any Fruit Given To
Them By A Naked Woman**

"Thanking God for sparing you in a natural disaster is like sending a thank you note to a serial killer for stabbing the family next door."

Betty Bowers

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