

# THE JOURNAL

JANUARY / FEBRUARY VOL. 9, NO. 1



2024 – The Year of the Gaslight! P. 8

Heart attack - Science Saved Me  
*... not your god! P. 41*

The Aware Ones of the Treasure Coast

# AOTCJournal

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

Vol.9, No.1

January / February 2024

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

[awareonesofthetreasurecoast.com](http://awareonesofthetreasurecoast.com)

# DEDICATION

Reprinted from the November 23 newsletter of the Humanists of the Treasure Coast.

## Yashi Nozawa

**1932-2023**

We are saddened to let you know of the passing of long-time and Lifetime Member, Yashi Nozawa who died in early October. Yashi was also a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Stuart, and the Rev. Bob MacDonald informed us of Yashi's passing. Yashi was an accomplished individual and ardent humanitarian who showed concern for the welfare of others. He reminded us in a recent meeting how essential it is for us to care for one another. Yashi was 91 years old.



Yashi Nozawa was born in Tokyo, Japan. He came to the United States for graduate studies and received M.S. and Sc.D. degrees in Aeronautics and Astronautics from MIT. After his retirement from engineering, he began writing as a second career. He wrote in two different fields: the genre of biographical fictions and memoirs, and science and religions, specializing in the rational explanation of religious phenomena. He has written several dozen articles in both fields for periodicals. He has also published, *"Temporary Permanence"*, subtitled "My Life in America: Humorous Short Stories Based on Experiences of a Japanese Engineer," a collection of autobiographical short stories. Readers of the book have praised his O. Henry-style writing and made it a local best seller. *"Don't Be Afraid of Air Raids"* is the second book in his memoir series, but the first book dealing with the war experience.

In the science-religion series, he published, *"The Spring Connections:*

*Easter, Passover and Others,"* (as Dr. Yasushi Nozawa). The book is about the deep-rooted tradition of spring celebrations and their interaction with calendar systems. He also disclosed his new interpretation of the meaning of the Israelite's Exodus from Egypt in the book. *"Betrayal, Resurrection, and Conversion: Three Christian Miracles Explained,"* is his second book in the science and religion field.

## EULOGIES

I would like to say that I was acquainted with Yashi on several occasions, especially through the Treasure Coast Unitarian Universalists. He was a kind and gentle natured person who was hard as heck to communicate with verbally. But his writings were splendid. I especially want to cite the chapter in his book, "Temporary Permanence" entitled "Mr. Silver, Chief of Internal Control" where he describes an occasion in which he was part of an internal control team on an aspect of a NASA space telescope project that was already terribly behind schedule. Any more delay would probably result in cancellation of the project, and therefore the dismissal of many, including Yashi who had a young child and wife to worry about.

One day his supervisor told him not to worry, all the inspection has been done, so just sign off your approval. Yashi felt it was his duty to do his job and inspect, and sure enough, he found some imperfections that should call for a postponement until it was corrected. He called a meeting of the team for a discussion of the matter, and everyone on the team, including the supervisor, was willing to pass over the imperfection and give approval---except Yashi.

"After a few minutes of meditation, I reached my conclusion. I



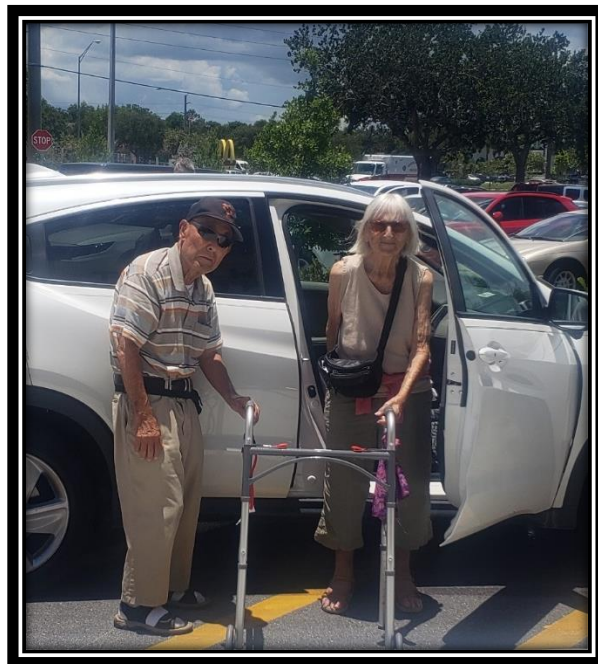


had to live my life with a clear conscience. I should take the course that made me feel good, not compromising out of greed, fear or worry. I rejected the wash tub [part of the project]. Reaction was immediate. Almost everyone was angry and upset. They tried to persuade me to change my mind. I said, 'No way I will change my mind. I believe this is the best decision for me, for our project and the future of space astronomy'."

There followed three months of anguishing delay, but the project was thoroughly reviewed, the imperfection was fixed, and NASA ended up doing a major overhaul of management techniques and personnel. And the successes of NASA's projects are well known to all.

So Yashi WAS A MAN WHO DID THE RIGHT THING. Oh, how I lament his going away. Oh, how I wish I could witness more ladies and gentlemen JUST DOING THE RIGHT THING. And ME!

Sincerely,  
Jerry Shaw



*Great minds talk about ideas, average minds talk about events, and small minds talk about people. – Eleanor Roosevelt.*

When at University my Nigerian study partner Sam and I used to study at the mathematics library on the fifth floor of the URL building, a converted

pharmaceutical house bought by the University. We'd check out the math female post-docs, and Sam said one day, "See her, she can see infinity, and that one that she lives there."

Yashi, *owned* infinity. He wrote *on* it and tried to explain some of the theories to us, mere mortals. What else could you expect from an MIT trained engineer who worked for NASA. Yes, Yashi was a bleeping rocket scientist. *Infinity* was probably his job.

All his writing was expansive, half dissertation, half wild ideas always thought-provoking. He wrote on the perceived history of Christianity trying to figure out fact from fiction, the sociology from the psychology. Probably because he grew up in a different religion in a different country, and this was a way to help him assimilate. Talk about picking at a Gordian knot(!), especially for the non-religious. But he did it anyway.

Yashi's writing excelled in compositions about his childhood in World War II Japan. The perspective was so different and so enlightening. His recollection of history will be sorely missed.

The writing group spent a couple hours every other week with this man. I already missed him when he stopped coming due to the infirmities of his age. I miss him more because he is no more. Yashi was a kind, decent, quiet man who put out what felt like an incredible effort to me to spend time with our little group until it became too much. I will miss him.

Yes, Yashi Nozawa was a great man simply because he loved ideas, was willing to explore them, and most of all tried to explain them to us. He is probably dancing on the other side of infinity plus one. Too bad, he isn't here to explain it to us.

James Longo



(See p. 62 for Yashi's WWII memory of a child in 1942 Imperial Japan)

# Japanese Wisdom:

If it's not yours, don't take it.  
If it's not right, don't do it.  
If it's not true, don't say it.  
If you don't know, shut up.



# INTRODUCTION

## A PREDICTION:



## ***THERE BE GASLIGHTING IN 2024***

Welcome to the premier issue of the *Aware Ones of the Treasure Coast Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 1. I believe you will find we are consistent with our group's appraisal of current dynamics influencing the direction of our society, our community and our country; and what will we Aware Ones do whether it will be sophisticated mature reactions or adolescent schoolboy retorts.

Of course, I, your editor, have a penchant towards the adolescent, complete with metaphors of actual "gaslighting" like we used to do at scout camp when we would literally light the gas we processed from the amount of legumes we were served and consumed in the mess hall three times a day. It is true, we took great glee in lighting our gassy emissions, our farts. "Firing it up" took on a whole new giggling meaning in those days. Just to see a small glowing blossom would indemnify our budding masculinities. A huge bloom would be looked upon with delight and awe. Sometimes it was the difference between lucky and unlucky. The forgotten and the legendary.

Fortuitously, we had few unfortunate results that registered above first degree. One ill-fated kid lit his underwear on fire but we were able to extinguish him with only a few patches of second-degree severity. That is,



the outer layer of the dermis, shiny blisters and all. I will specify, none of us volunteered to apply his ointments twice a day. But luckily, the unfortunate was able to achieve a certain amount of ambidextrousness before he left for home and family. Indeed, it was gaslighting that – more or less, considerably less of more than more of less – it was relatively harmless.

What makes 2024 worse than other years? It is an election year. Gas will be more than abundantly free. We will be facing nearly an entire year of gaseous trade-offs that will excite, enthrall and revile. It will come from thousands of twitching assholes. I wager most of them (if not all, at least the majority) will be republican in nature. It will be a year with multiple judicial prosecutions and judgements scheduled all around the country. We will hear fantastical claims, we will hear false accusations, we will hear all degrees of flammable ignitions... It will be the difference between 80 proof, 100 proof and Bacardi 151.

The gaslighting will be overwhelming. Critical Race Theory, Election Fraud, Cancel Culture. Transgender rights (and wrongs). Good heavens, children being convinced they are not the sex they were born to; leading to surgically resectioned biology. The liberal mainstream media. We'll be draining the swamp, building walls and blocking the deep state.

There will be falsehoods, there will be misstatements. There will be lies, there will be damned lies. There will be scary, there will be disappointing, there will be disgusting. Shock and awe, if you will. Butt-clinching terror if you won't. Just depends on how lucky or, unlucky we are.

Right now, I need an overdose of pink. I crave distraction! Yes, I am going to watch Barbie on HBO. A movie that is a combustible combination of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* and the seasonal *Die Hard*, only Bruce Willis' teats are bigger than Ken's and Ken's are a match for Barbie's. A total perversion of Stanley Kubrick's *2001*.

The future months promise a plethora of gaseous sources. I encourage you to avoid despair. Enjoy 2024, tremble at the noise, thrill at the fireworks, delight at the results. We have five issues to go in the march to 2025 and no other alternatives. I also advise strapping in. Trust me, something will explode.

*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>.

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 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month), where we gather every Friday *around* 11:00 am to share ideas and challenge your mind – masks optional. 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 at 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](mailto:vmthorp@outlook.com) for confirmation.*

## AOTC MEMBERS

Joan Auerbach	Ed Zillioux
Marsha Banks	Bob Haskins
Ernie Breud	Barbara (Lange) Longo
Eddie Buitrago	Jim Longo
Ray Duryea	Jerry Shaw
Rick Burkhart	Sandra Burkhart
Roberta Synal	David Dorenzo
Paul Carlos	Lucy Thorp
Gloria Cosgrove	Virgil Thorp
Carol Gillooley	Dan Vignau
Gale Baker	Linda Webb
Bert Mautz	Betty Tewksbury
Betty Kasoff	Mark Kasoff

# MEETINGS & EVENTS

## Meetings

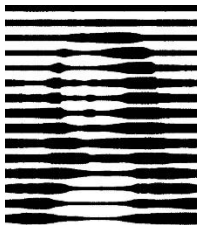


Friday gatherings: First Friday of month at Flagler Park (under the Roosevelt Bridge). All other Fridays, *Summits at Sandsprit* – 11 am gathering in the sun and fresh air of Stuart's Sandsprit Park. BYOB (See *Burkfeast* p. 84).

Sunday Zoom – 11 am Zoom meeting. Contact Dan Vignau <[vignaujdan@aol.com](mailto:vignaujdan@aol.com)> to be included with the connection codes.

TC Secular Writers – We have returned to Jensen Beach at the *House of Brews* (3311 NW Main Ave, Jensen Beach, FL 34957) on every other Thursday evening at 6:30 pm.

## Events



### January Monthly Celebrations

National Bath Safety Month

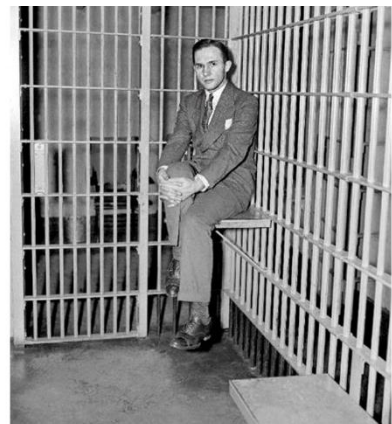
**January 1** New Year's Day. Also, National Hangover Day. Photo -- Grand Central Station, New York City 1940.



**January 2** Run up the Flagpole and See if Anyone Salutes Day. 1935: Bruno Hauptmann goes on trial for the murder of Charles Lindbergh, Jr., infant son of aviator Charles Lindbergh.

**January 5 – Aware Ones at Flagler Park, 11 am.** National Bird Day

**January 6** Cuddle Up Day



**1946 - Syd Barrett** - guitarist for Pink Floyd ("Another Brick In The Wall"), **1953 - Malcolm Young** - rhythm guitarist for AC/DC ("You Shook Me All Night Long"), **1959 - Kathy Sledge** - vocalist for Sister Sledge ("We Are Family"), born.

## January 7 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

First U.S. Presidential Election held, 1789. **1946 - Jann Wenner** - founder, editor, publisher of Rolling Stone magazine, **1948 - Kenny Loggins** ("I'm Alright"), born.

**January 8** 1966: The Beatles' Rubber Soul tops the Billboard Album charts for six weeks. The album sold 1.2 million copies within nine days of its release. Bubble Bath Day. **1931 - Bill Graham** - concert promoter, **1935 - Elvis Presley** ("Jailhouse Rock"), **1940 - Anthony Gourdine** - lead singer of Little Anthony and The Imperials ("Tears On My Pillow"), **1942 - John Peterson** - drummer for The Beau Brummels ("Laugh, Laugh"), **1946 - Robby Krieger** - guitarist for The Doors ("Light My Fire"), **1947 - David Bowie** ("Fame"), born.

## January 11 – ✍️ Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.

**January 12 – Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.** National Pharmacist Day. Author **Jack London** born, 1876.

**January 13** International Skeptics Day

## January 14 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

The Revolutionary War ended (1784) **1967 - Zakk Wylde** - lead guitarist for Ozzy Osbourne, **1969 - Dave Grohl** - drummer for Nirvana ("Smells Like Teen Spirit"), born.

**January 15** Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday.

First Super Bowl Played in 1967. Green Bay (35) defeated Kansas City (10). **1948 - Ronnie Van Zant** - guitarist for Lynyrd Skynyrd ("Sweet Home Alabama"), **1952 - Melvyn Gale** - cello for Electric Light Orchestra ("Telephone Line"), born.

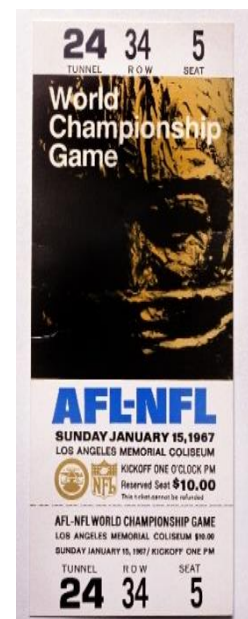
**January 16** Prohibition began in 1920

**January 17** Ditch New Years Resolutions Day



Imagine a faith so empty that you think bringing prayer into schools is following Jesus, but bringing free lunches is not.

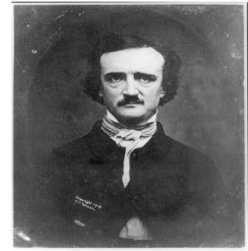
I've often wondered what people have against the horse I rode in on 🐾





## January 19 – Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11

**am.** National Popcorn Day. **1809:** American author, poet, editor and literary critic **Edgar Allan Poe** is born in Boston, MA. **1939 - Phil Everly** of the Everly Brothers ("All I Have To Do Is Dream"), **1943 - Janis Joplin** ("Me & Bobby McGee"), **1946 - Dolly Parton** ("Nine To Five"), born.



## January 21 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

January 21-29, 1958: Teen Couple's Killing Spree in Nebraska.

Their story began in December 1957 when 19-year-old **Charles Starkweather** killed a gas station attendant for refusing to sell him a stuffed animal on credit. Then, on January 27, 1958, Charles and his 14-year-old girlfriend **Caril Ann Fugate** began an eight-day murder spree that started with the murder of Caril's parents, 2-year-old sister, and eventually led to ten total deaths before they were captured on the highway outside Douglas, Wyoming.



## January 24 Beer Can Appreciation Day.

**41:** 28-year-old Roman emperor Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, also known as **Caligula**, is assassinated by his disgruntled Praetorian Guards.



## January 25 – **Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.**

## January 26 – Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.

**1945:** Soviet troops liberate Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland. Photo: Camp prisoners watching arrival of Soviet

troops



## January 28 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

### National Kazoo Day

**January 30 1933:** President **Paul von Hindenburg** names **Adolf Hitler**, leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party, as chancellor of Germany.



## February Monthly Celebrations

Black History Month -- **1962: James Meredith** becomes the first African-American student admitted to the segregated University of Mississippi after the intervention of the federal government.

### February 1 National Freedom Day


Saigon, February 1, 1968: South Vietnamese Chief of

National Police, **General Nguyen Ngoc Loan**, executes a Viet Cong officer (Nguyễn Văn Lém) with a single shot to the head. Carrying a pistol and wearing civilian clothes, the Viet Cong guerrilla was captured near Quang Pagoda, identified as an officer, and taken to the police chief.

### February 2 – Aware Ones at Flagler

**Park, 11 am.** Ground Hog Day.

### February 4 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

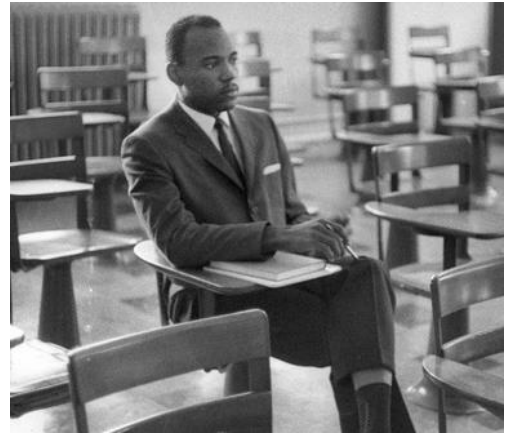
February 8 –  **Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.** Author **Jules Verne** born, 1828.

### February 9 – Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.

**1964: The Beatles** make their first appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show in New York City, performing to a record-setting 73 million viewers.

**1939 - Barry Mann** ("Who Put The Bomp?"),  
**1942 - Carole King** ("It's Too Late"), born.

February 11 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.** National Inventors Day. **Thomas Edison** born, 1847. Superbowl Sunday – Superbowl 58,



**Mrs. Betty Bowers**  
@BettyBowers

QUESTION: What's the difference between Atheists and Evangelicals?

ANSWER: Atheists are honest about not following Jesus.



**February 12 Darwin Day** is a celebration to commemorate the birthday of **Charles Darwin** on 12 February 1809. The day is used to highlight Darwin's contributions to science and to promote science in general. Darwin Day is celebrated around the world.

**February 13 Mardi Gras / Fat Tuesday**

**Abraham Lincoln** born, 1809 (16th President). First Barbie Dolls for sale (1959)

**February 14 Valentine's Day.** Also Ash Wednesday. Celebrate what is important to you.

**February 16 – Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.** Do a Grouch a Favor Day

**February 18 – Aware Ones Zoom 11**

**am.** National Drink Wine Day

**Pluto**, Discovered by Clyde Tombaugh in **1930**. **1939 - Bobby Hart** - of Tommy Boyce And Bobby Hart ("I Wonder What She's Doing Tonight"), **1947 - Dennis DeYoung** - keyboards / vocals for Styx ("Babe"), born.

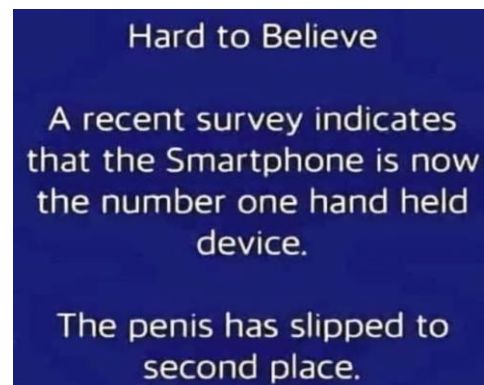
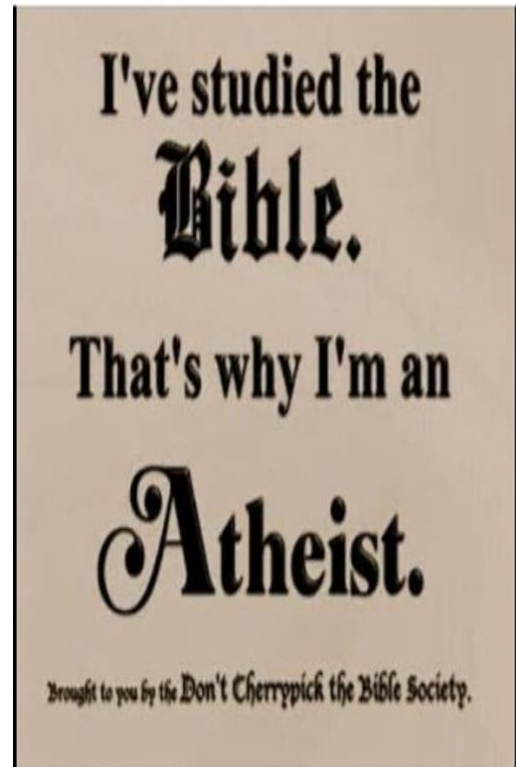
**February 22 –  Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.**

George Washington's Birthday

**February 23 – Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.**

**February 25 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

**1841 Artist Pierre Auguste Renoir** born,. **1943 - George Harrison** - lead guitarist for The Beatles ("Something"), born.



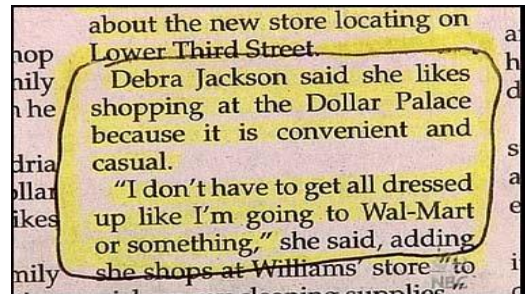


**February 27** No Brainer Day – this day is for me!

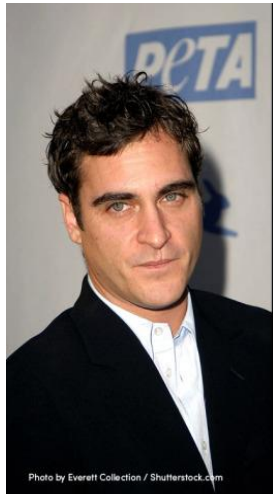
**1807.**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow born, **1902**

**John Steinbeck** born,

**February 29** Leap Day – Yes, 2024 is a Leap year with an extra day in it.



## *Atheist Quotes*



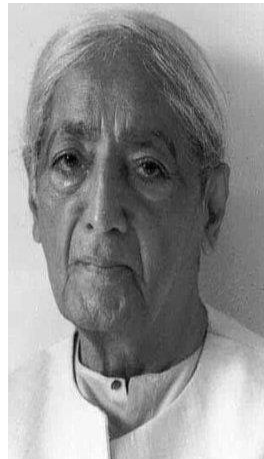
### **FREETHOUGHT OF THE DAY**

"I don't believe in god. I don't believe in an afterlife. I don't believe in soul. I don't believe in anything. I think it's totally right for people to have their own beliefs if it makes them happy, but to me it's a pretty preposterous idea."

**Joaquin Phoenix**

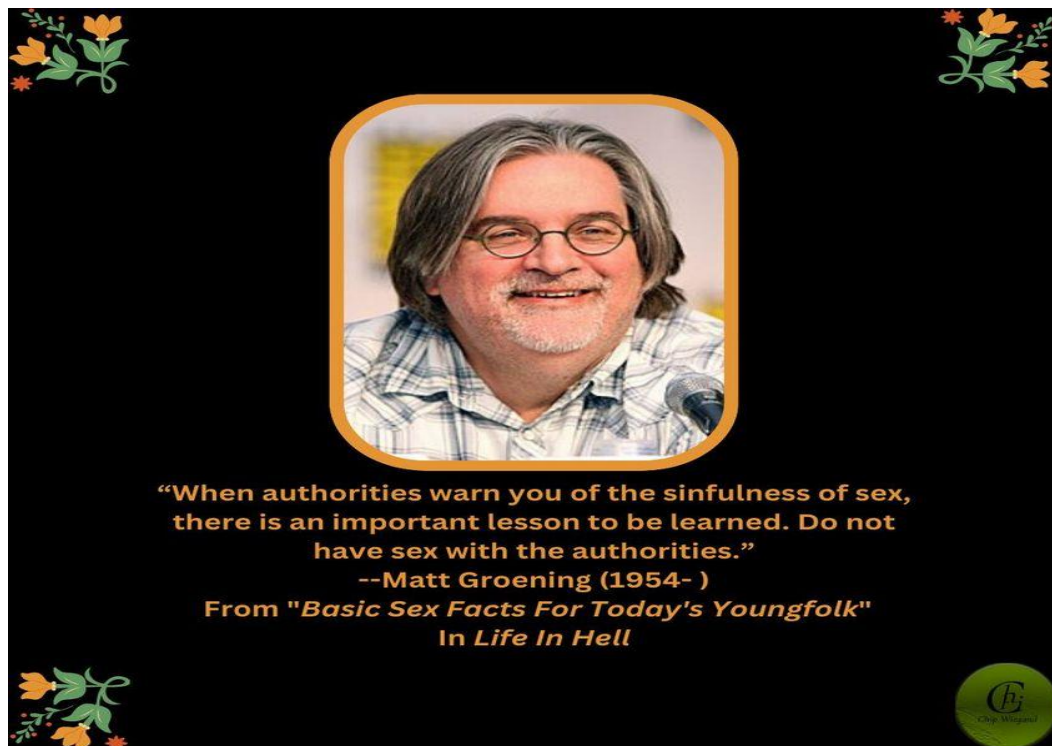
Nylon Guys magazine (2008)

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Religion is merely mumbling words, going to the temple, or practicing a discipline – which is all repetitive, copying, imitative, habit forming. And what happens to your mind and to your heart when you are merely imitative? Naturally, they wither, do they not? ... Therefore, emotionally, inwardly, there is no creation, there is no creative response – only dullness, emptiness.

Jiddu Krishnamurti





## LIVES LIVED – LIVES LOST

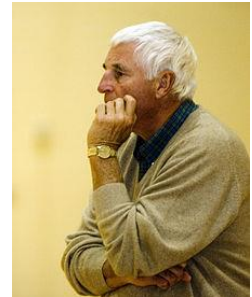
### November 2023

**1 Bob Knight**, 83, American Hall of Fame basketball coach (Indiana Hoosiers, Texas Tech Red Raiders, 1984 Olympic team).



**4**

**Karen Davis**, 79, American animal rights activist. American animal rights advocate, and president of United Poultry Concerns, a non-profit organization founded in 1990 to address the treatment of domestic fowl—including chickens, turkeys, and ducks—in factory farming.



**7**

**Frank Borman**, 95, American astronaut (Gemini 7, Apollo 8) and airline executive (Eastern Air Lines), stroke



**12**

**M. Russell Ballard**, 95, American Mormon leader, member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (since 1985). Ballard was recruited by the Ford Motor Company to become the first Edsel car dealer for Salt Lake City. According to Ballard, after praying for guidance, he had the "clear impression" not to sign the franchise. He did anyway and incurred a huge loss, "without doubt the darkest period" of his business career.



**19**

**Rosalynn Carter**, 96, American mental health activist, first lady of the United States (1977–1981), and of Georgia (1971–1975), complications from dementia. Throughout her decades of public service, she was a leading advocate for women's rights and mental health.



**23**

**Steve Jurczyk**, 61, American engineer, acting administrator of NASA (2021), pancreatic cancer. Jurczyk received several awards during his NASA career, including two NASA Outstanding Leadership Medals, the Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Executive in 2006, and the Presidential Rank Award for Distinguished Executive in 2016—the highest honors attainable for federal government leadership.

- **Greg "Fingers" Taylor**, 71, American harmonica player, complications from Alzheimer's disease. Taylor's nickname, "Fingers", was given to him in 1969 by John "Johnny Rock" Buffalo (so nicknamed by Taylor) during their time in The Buttermilk Blues Band in Jackson, Mississippi.





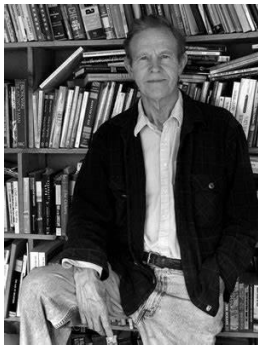
**26**

**Tim Dorsey**, 62, American novelist (*Florida Roadkill*, *Hammerhead Ranch Motel*, *Orange Crush*). He is known for a series starring Serge A. Storms, a mentally disturbed vigilante antihero who rampages across Florida enforcing his own moral code against a variety of low-life criminals.



**27**

**Mary Louise Cleave** (February 5, 1947 – November 27, 2023) was an American engineer and NASA astronaut. She also served from 2005 to 2007 as NASA Associate Administrator for the Science Mission Directorate.



- **John Treadwell Nichols** 83 was an American novelist. He was known for his "New Mexi83, co trilogy" of novels: *The Milagro Beanfield War* (1974), *The Magic Journey* (1978), and *The Nirvana Blues* (1981). (*The Sterile Cuckoo*, *The Wizard of Loneliness*,

**29**

**Henry Kissinger**, 100, German-born American diplomat and politician, national security advisor (1969–1975), secretary of state (1973–1977) and Nobel



Prize laureate (1973). Kissinger pioneered the policy of détente with the Soviet Union, orchestrated an opening of relations with China, engaged in "shuttle diplomacy" in the Middle East to end the Yom Kippur War, and negotiated the Paris Peace Accords, which ended American involvement in the Vietnam War. For his role in negotiating the end of the Vietnam War, he was awarded the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize under controversial circumstances.



- **Victoria María Aragüés Gadea** also known as **Vicky Leyton** and professionally as **Sticky Vicky**, was a Spanish ballet dancer and illusionist known for her vagina magic show. Sticky, 80, Spanish dancer and illusionist (*Benidorm*). After the death of Francisco Franco and the easing of sexual censorship, Leyton experienced difficulties; the public wanted more sexually explicit shows, and employers began to hire foreigners willing to perform nude. A magician suggested that she perform a magic act by removing unusual objects from her vagina. After practicing with simple objects (such as handkerchiefs), Vicky premiered her show in Barcelona

cabarets. The show was successful, and she performed in cities in northern Spain and many variety theatres abroad. Sticky Vicky's show began with her undressing slowly to background music. She later pulled several objects from her vagina, including ping-pong balls, eggs, handkerchiefs, sausages, razor blades, and machetes. The lights dimmed, and Vicky pulled out a lit lightbulb. She concluded her act by opening a bottle of beer with her vagina, pouring it on the stage. Leyton did not characterize herself or the show as pornographic: "To do what I do you must have a lot of delicacy. It is necessary to give it a touch of elegance".



# December

1

**Daniel Langlois**, 66, Canadian computer graphics pioneer and businessman, founder of Excentris and Softimage. He was founder and inaugural president of Softimage Inc., which is recognized in the fields of cinema and media creation for its digital technologies, in particular its 3-D computer animation techniques. Its software was used to create 3-D effects in such films as The Matrix, Titanic, Men in Black, and Jurassic Park.



- **Sandra Day O'Connor**,

93, American jurist, associate justice of the Supreme Court (1981–2006), member of the Arizona Senate (1969–1975) and chancellor of the College of William & Mary (2005–2012), complications from dementia and respiratory illness. O'Connor was the first woman to serve as a U.S. Supreme Court justice.<sup>[6]</sup> A moderate conservative, O'Connor was known for her precisely researched opinions. Her majority opinions in landmark cases include Grutter v. Bollinger and Hamdi v. Rumsfeld. In 2000, she wrote in part the per curiam majority opinion in Bush v. Gore and in 1992 was one of three co-

authors of the lead opinion in Planned Parenthood v. Casey that preserved legal access to abortion in the United States.

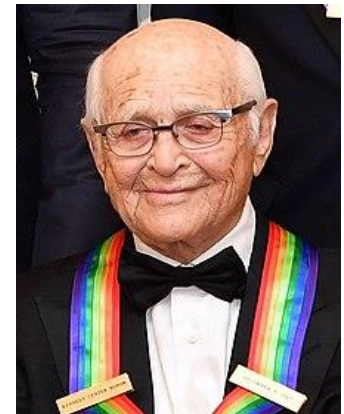


3

**Myles Francis Goodwyn** was a Canadian musician. He was the lead vocalist, guitarist, and principal songwriter of the rock band April Wine.

5

**Norman Lear**, 101, American Hall of Fame television writer and producer (All in the Family, Maude, The Jeffersons), cardiac arrest. Lear created and produced numerous popular 1970s sitcoms, including All in the Family (1971–1979), Maude (1972–1978), Sanford and Son (1972–1977), One Day at a Time (1975–1984), The Jeffersons (1975–1985), and Good Times (1974–1979). His shows introduced political and social themes to the sitcom format. Lear was known for his political activism and



funding of liberal and progressive causes and politicians. In 1980, he founded the advocacy organization People for the American Way to counter the influence of the Christian right in politics, and in the early 2000s, he mounted a tour with a copy of the Declaration of Independence.

8

**Ryan O'Neal**, 82, American actor (Love Story, Barry Lyndon, Paper Moon) and boxer, congestive heart failure. O'Neal was in a relationship with actress Farrah Fawcett from 1979 to 1997. The relationship was

tumultuous due to his infidelity and volatile behavior. O'Neal and Fawcett reunited in 2001 and were together until her death in 2009. In 2001, O'Neal was frequently seen at Fawcett's side when she was battling cancer. He told *People* magazine, "It's a love story. I just don't know how to play this one. I won't know this world without her. Cancer is an insidious enemy."

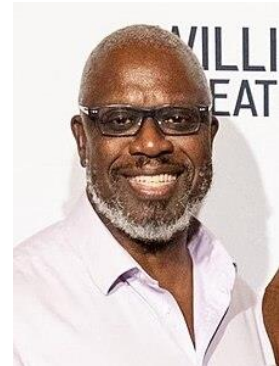


**10**

**Shirley Anne Field**, 87, English actress (*The Entertainer*, *The Damned*, *Alfie*). In 1960, Field's breakthrough came when she was chosen by Tony Richardson to play the role of model Tina Lapford in *The Entertainer* (1960), starring Laurence Olivier, distributed by Bryanston Films. Half a century later, she clarified that she did not owe her break to Olivier: "It was Tony Richardson I owe it all to."<sup>1</sup>

**11**

**Andre Braugher**, 61, American actor (*Homicide: Life on the Street*, *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, *Glory*), Emmy winner (1998, 2006), lung cancer. known for his roles as Detective Frank Pembleton in the NBC police drama series *Homicide: Life on the Street* (1993–1999) and Captain Raymond Holt in the Fox/NBC police comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* (2013–2021). He won two Primetime Emmy Awards and was nominated for two Golden Globe Awards.



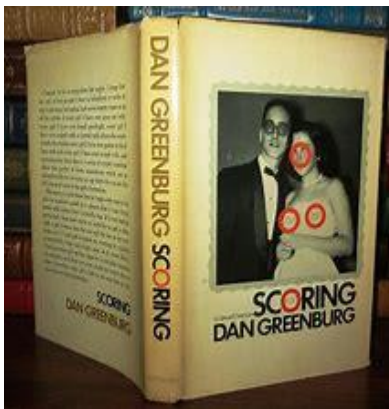
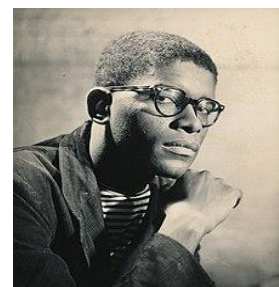
**12**

**Yitzhak Ben-Bashat**, 44, Israeli IDF officer (Yiftach Brigade, Paran Brigade), killed in action. He was among 10 Israeli soldiers killed 12 December 2023 in an ambush by Palestinian fighters in Shuja'iyya.

**16**

**Richard Hunt**, 88, American sculptor. In the second half of the 20th century, he

became "the foremost African-American abstract sculptor and artist of public sculpture." Hunt, the descendant of enslaved people brought from West Africa through the Port of Savannah, studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in the 1950s. Hunt has created over 160 public sculpture commissions, more than any other sculptor<sup>[2]</sup> in prominent locations in 24 states across the United States.



**18**

**Dan Greenburg**, 87, American writer (*How to Be a Jewish Mother*, *The Zack Files*, *Maximum Boy*), complications from a strokeHis best-selling books for adults include the non-fiction books *How to Be a Jewish Mother: A Very Lovely Training Manual* (1964), *How to Make Yourself Miserable: Another Vital Training Manual* (1966, with Marcia Jacobs), and *How to Avoid Love and Marriage* (1983, with Suzanne O'Malley) – all satirical self-help books – as well as the novels *Love Kills* (1978), *Exes* (1990), and *Fear Itself* (2014).



**19 Ed Budde**, 83, American football player (Kansas City Chiefs). Budde and the Chiefs won two American Football League Championships (1966 and 1969) and a world championship in Super Bowl IV after defeating the NFL's Minnesota Vikings 23–7.



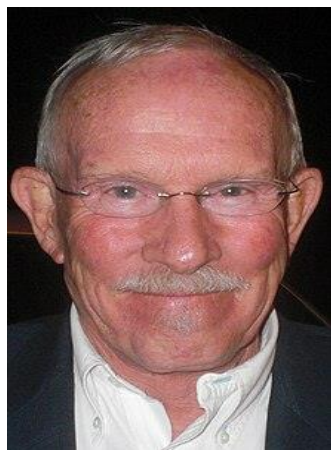
**22**

**Laura Lynch**, 65, American musician (Dixie Chicks), traffic collision.

**23**

**Hugh Aynesworth**, 92, American journalist (Dallas Times Herald, Dallas Morning News, The Washington Times) and author. Aynesworth was reported to have witnessed the assassination of John

F. Kennedy in Dealey Plaza, the capture and arrest of Lee Harvey Oswald at the Texas Theater, and the shooting of Oswald by Jack Ruby in the basement of the Dallas Police Headquarters. In a 1976 Texas Monthly article, William Broyles, Jr. described Aynesworth as "one of the most respected authorities on the assassination of John F. Kennedy".



**26**

**Tom Smothers**, 86, American comedian, musician (Smothers Brothers) and actor (Get to Know Your Rabbit, Serial), lung cancer. Tom Smothers negotiated creative control over their next CBS show, a variety show entitled The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour in 1967. The documentary Smothered describes how the brothers (particularly Tom) fought CBS censors to sneak in references to religion, recreational drugs, sex, and the Vietnam War. Tom Smothers is widely quoted as having said: "The only valid censorship of ideas is the right of people not to listen." The brothers' oppositional politics led to their show's demise, with David Steinberg later claiming "The most innovative variety show on television shut down because of political pressure". During the

same years, Tom wrote and recorded mainstream songs, such as "Can't Help Falling in Love with You." Tom later stated, "When the Smothers Brothers came on the air we had no political point of view or social consciousness, it just evolved as the show was on the air."



**29**

**Gil de Ferran**, 56, French-born Brazilian racing driver, CART champion (2000, 2001), 2003 Indianapolis 500 winner. He suffered a heart attack while driving at a private event with his son at The Concours Club in Opa-locka, Florida.

- **Sandra Reaves-Phillips**, 79, American actress (Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, Round Midnight, Lean on Me), writer, and singer.



## Heroes



More than three decades after Yusef Salaam and four other Black and Latino men were wrongfully convicted of brutally assaulting a woman in New York City's Central Park, Salaam will be joining the council of the largest city in the United States following his victory in Tuesday's election.

His progressive policy platform centered housing justice including eviction prevention; economic justice; "equitable public safety measures," including investments in community programs and alternatives to incarceration; and environmental justice.

Two decades after he and the rest of the "Central Park 5" were exonerated by DNA evidence, Salaam said before the election that his opportunity to join the New York City Council, representing parts of Harlem, "means that we can really become our ancestors' wildest dreams." -- Julia Conley, Common Dreams

## Singer Pink To Give Away Banned Books At FL Concerts



FLORIDA — Pop singer Pink is teaming up with PEN America, a freedom of expression and literary arts organization, and South Florida bookseller [Books & Books](#) to give away 2,000 banned books during [her upcoming concerts](#) in the Sunshine State. Pink is dedicated to education and representation for all races and sexual identities, according to a news release from [PEN America](#).

**CENTRAL BUCKS' NEW SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT WAS SWORN IN ON A STACK OF FREQUENTLY BANNED BOOKS.**



As she was sworn in to

another term on the Central Bucks school board Monday night, Karen Smith placed her hand not on a Bible, but a stack of frequently banned books.

Smith, who was chosen as the president of the new Democratic-led board Monday, wanted to make a

symbolic gesture — setting a new tone after the former GOP-dominated board passed a policy prohibiting “sexualized content” that led to bans of two books and paved the way for challenges of 60 others. The books Smith chose: ***Night*, by Elie Wiesel (Holocaust), *The Bluest Eye*, by Toni Morrison** (describes a character being raped by her father), ***Lily and Dunkin*, by Donna Gephart (transgender protagonist), *All Boys Aren’t Blue*, by George M. Johnson (growing up black and queer), *Flamer*, by Mike Curato (graphic novel about a teenager grappling with his identity), and *Beyond Magenta*, by Susan Kuklin** (about the lives of six transgender teens).

*Heros of the Year 2023, Rosalynn & Jimmy Carter*





### Assholes of the Month

This image was posted by @DerrickEvans4WV who was sentenced to jail for participating in the January 6th insurrection.

Here he has posted decorations on a tree hanging Democratic leadership including former President Barack Obama and the Current President Joe Biden.

He is now seeking a house seat. Under section 3 of the 14th Amendment Derrick isn't qualified to hold any public office. 🇺🇸



**Derrick Evans** ✓ @Evans4WV · 5h

...

Merry Christmas!



## Ayaan Hirsi Ali is a Christian now



In a totally unsurprising announcement, **Ayaan Hirsi Ali renounces atheism and declares herself a Christian**. I half-expected this to happen — she's been working at the Hoover Institute with a lot of wealthy conservative Republicans, it was just going to take time to realize who was buttering her bread. I've read her autobiography, and it was clear that what drove her was in large part a resentment of the terrible Islamic authoritarians who controlled her life for so long. Well, now she's come full circle and is identifying with a different set of terrible authoritarians.

As an atheist, I thought I would lose that fear. I also found an entirely new circle of friends, as different from the preachers of the Muslim Brotherhood as one could imagine. The more time I spent with them — people such as Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins — the more confident I felt that I had made the right choice. For the atheists were clever. They were also a great deal of fun.

After leaving Ayaan's keynote speech at the 2015 American Atheist convention and repeatedly seeing her spread talking points from a right-wing think tank, I realized that while she was an atheist, she wasn't a humanist and was primarily looking for a way to combat Islamism. I mentioned this to Beth Lomeli at the time.

Humanism and right-wing thinking just don't go together and because of that, she wasn't ever going to find a good fit with the broader atheist community.

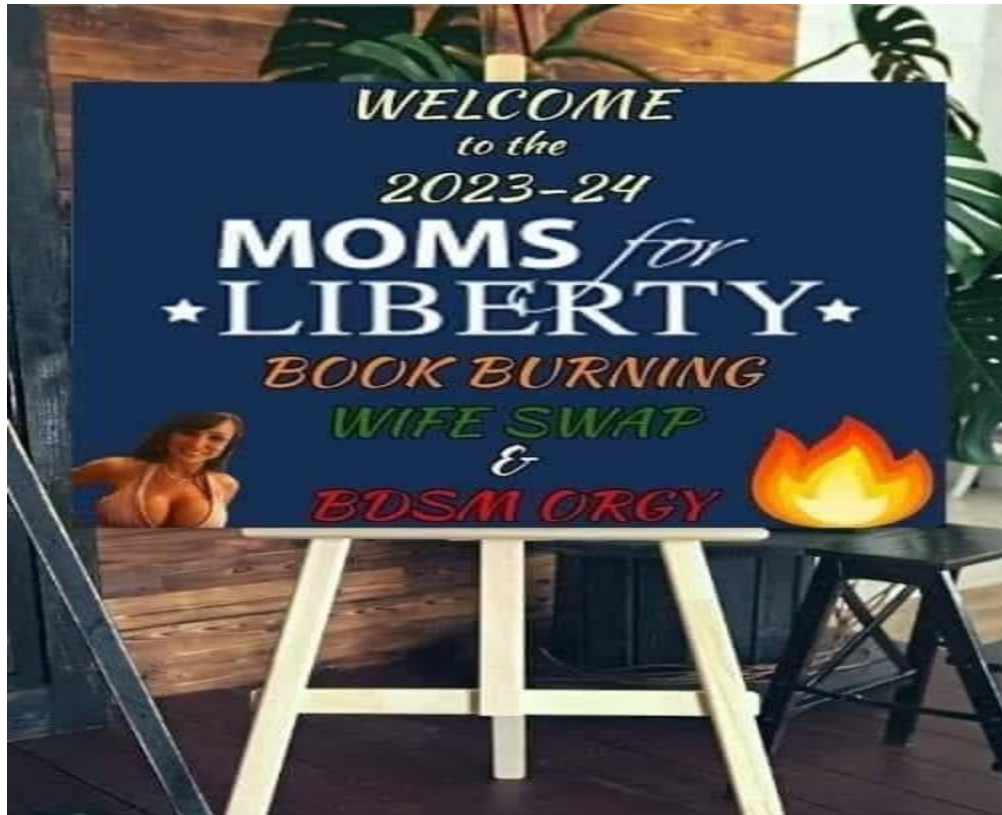
One year later, in 2016, Theresa McBain, who had been thrust into the atheist spotlight at the 2012 Reason Rally, returned to her former faith because she missed the music... and, perhaps, because she lied on her resume and needed to slip off into more comfortable environments. Some people fall into atheism because some religious ideology failed them, but that same religion also set expectations that atheism can't fill... nothing can, because the expectations aren't tied to reality.

Atheism has never been the solution, it's merely a facet of the solution along with skepticism and humanism.

~Matt Dillahunty



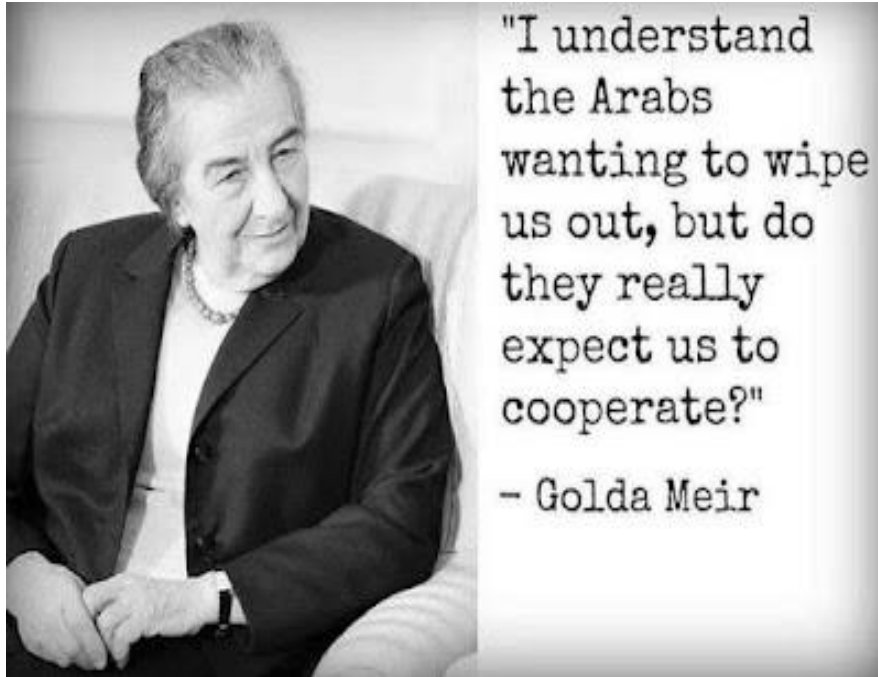
# ASSHOLES OF THE YEAR!!!!

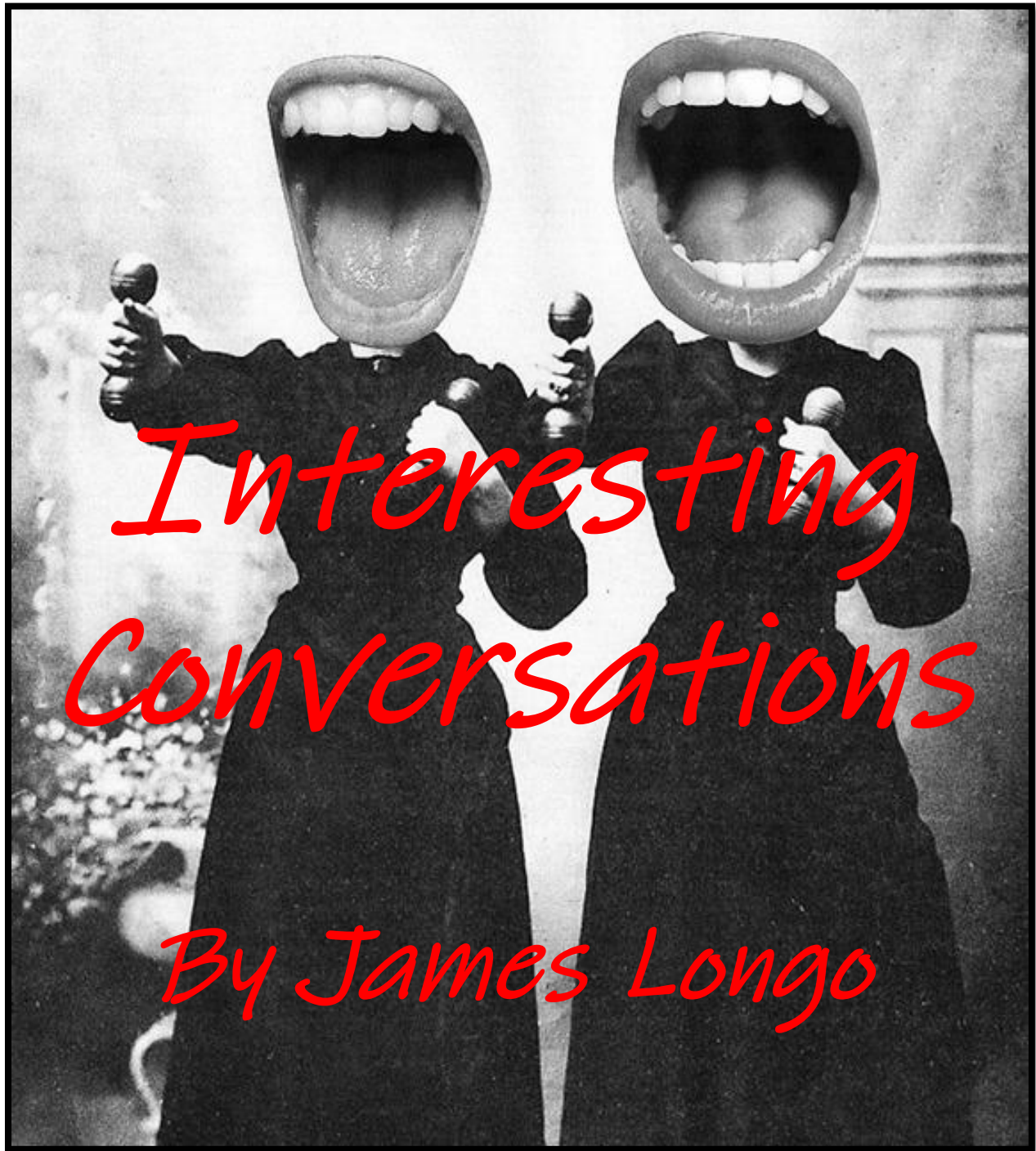


Whether Bridget Ziegler or her husband, Christian have multiple videos of her having sex with other women isn't important. It's the blatant hypocrisy of the pair of them. And at this point, I wouldn't be at all surprised to hear that Bridget Ziegler has an OnlyFans account for lovelorn MAGA women tired of acting as a beard for their spouse.

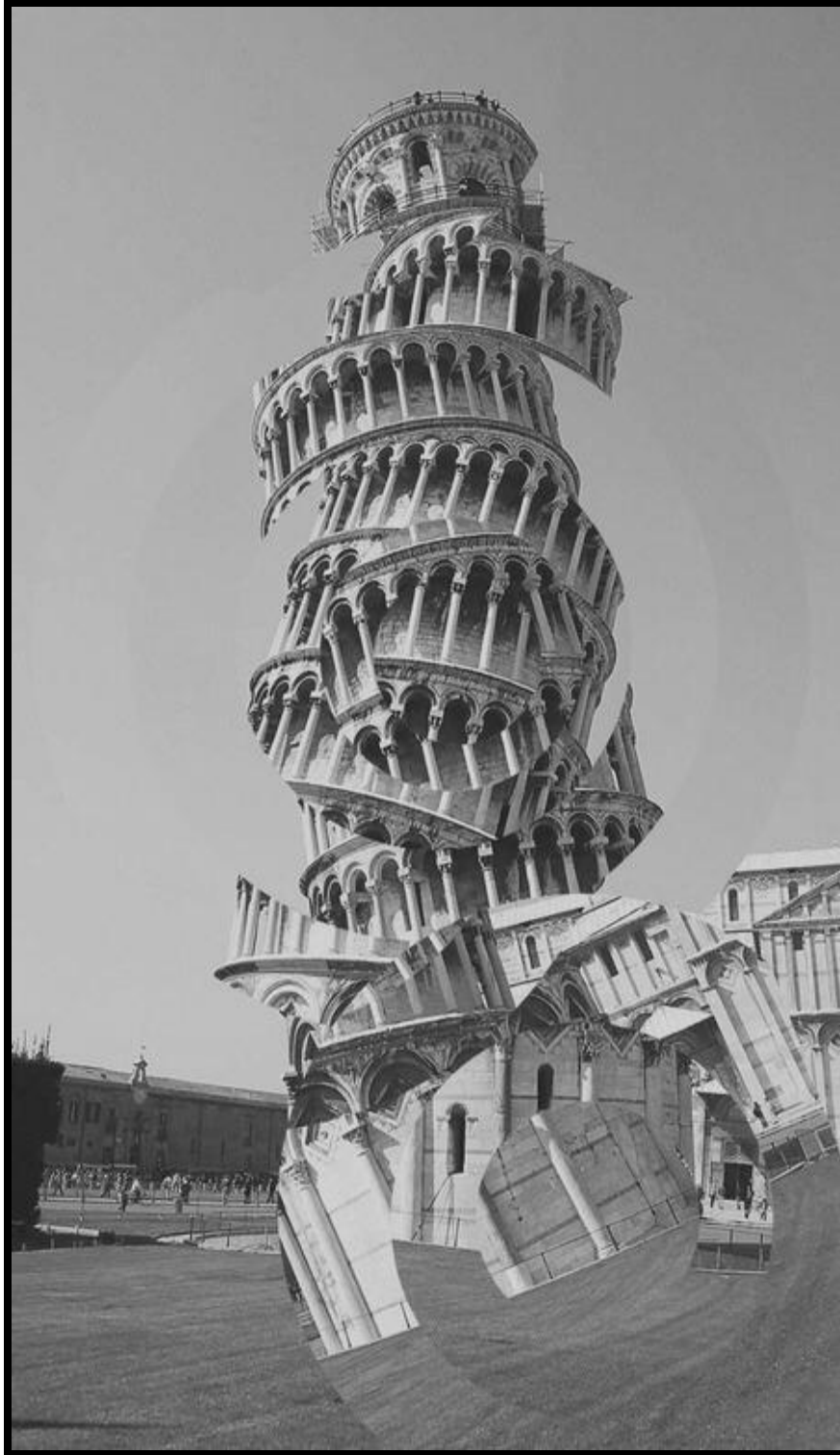
It is not known if the woman in the video is the same woman who has alleged she was sexually assaulted by Christian Ziegler. – *Ed Scarce*.

# COMMENTARY





I struggle with what to write because I don't write often, and I don't read enough. Recently, I was berated for not having anything interesting to say. I agreed, but at that moment, *I wasn't that interesting*. It happens.



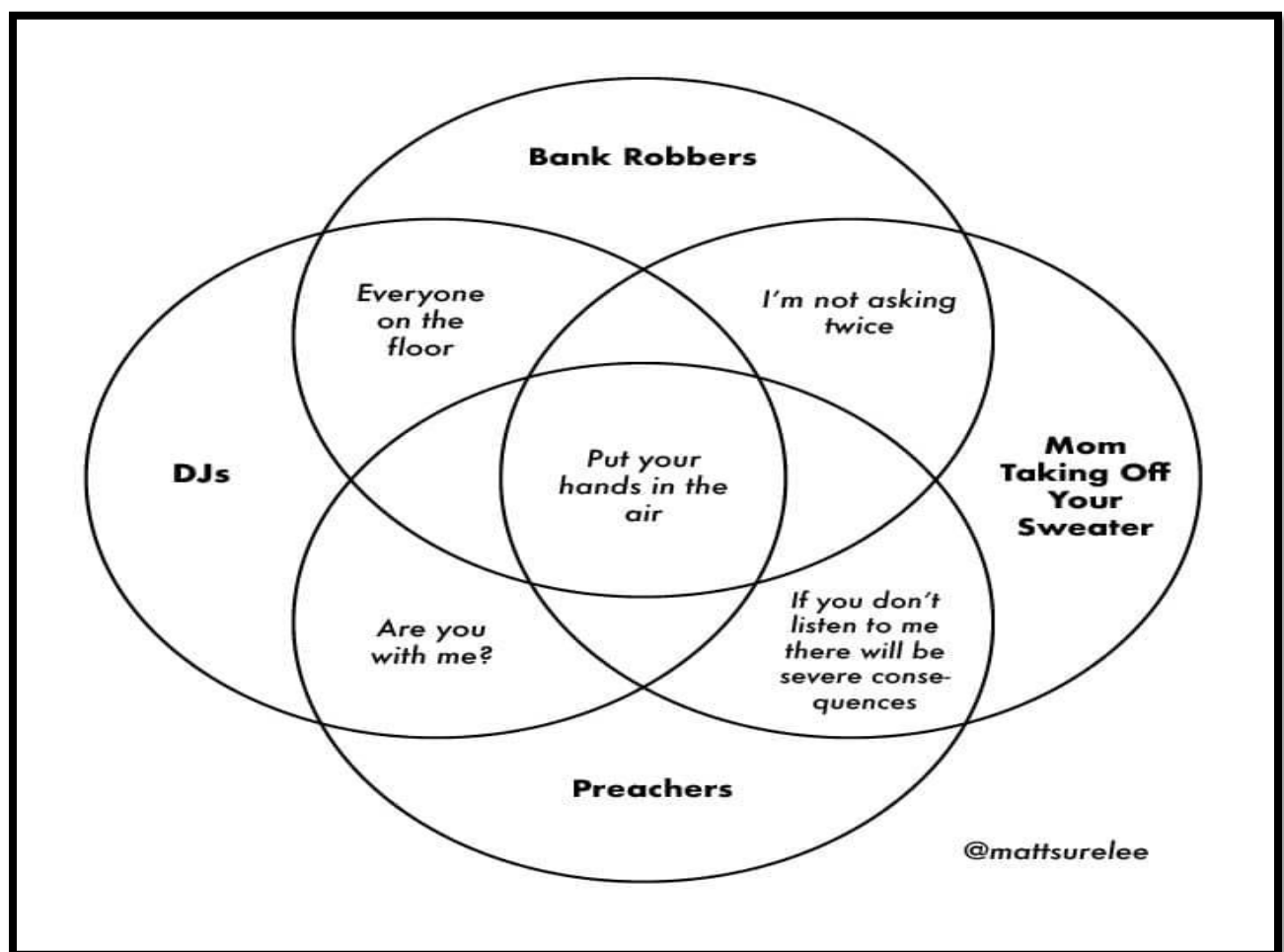
All good writing and all great conversations come from conflict. When it comes to conversations, sometimes I don't want the headaches. Besides, today a lot of people hold their beliefs (their best guesses) so strongly, that they can't discuss them without getting angry. You don't believe what I do. How dare you?

I grew up at dinner parties, where my mother would make an outrageous statement, and I'd be forced to take the opposite position. The next week she would take my position to its extreme and I would be forced to argue her previous position. It never got contentious, unless we attacked each other personally, which I realized early on wasn't a good idea.

We knew we were playing to the rest of the guests. We were smiling, hoping we were entertaining, which we probably weren't.

My dinner parties aren't like that, probably because I don't have a fifteen-year-old smart-ass kid at my dinner parties. If I did he would probably spend the whole meal texting his friends under the table or just staring at his phone.

This asks the question why can't we have intelligent disagreeable civilized conversations? Is it due to the fractured mass media? If you watch Fox or News-max chances are you're not watching CNN or MSNBC. Is it due to the algorithms of social media? I hit YouTube. I watch a video, next thing I know I have twenty similar videos. Yippee, I have a world perspective. Not a very good or nuanced one, but I have a point of view.



The Venn diagram of ideas is so separated, that there isn't any overlap. You watch Fox or News-max and they are talking about the criminality of the Biden family, and if you watch CNN or MSNBC they are talking about the extreme criminality of the Trump family. The government should be funded. No close it down. Most conversations happen in gradients in that overlapping



portion of the diagram. You have to agree about something before you can disagree about everything.



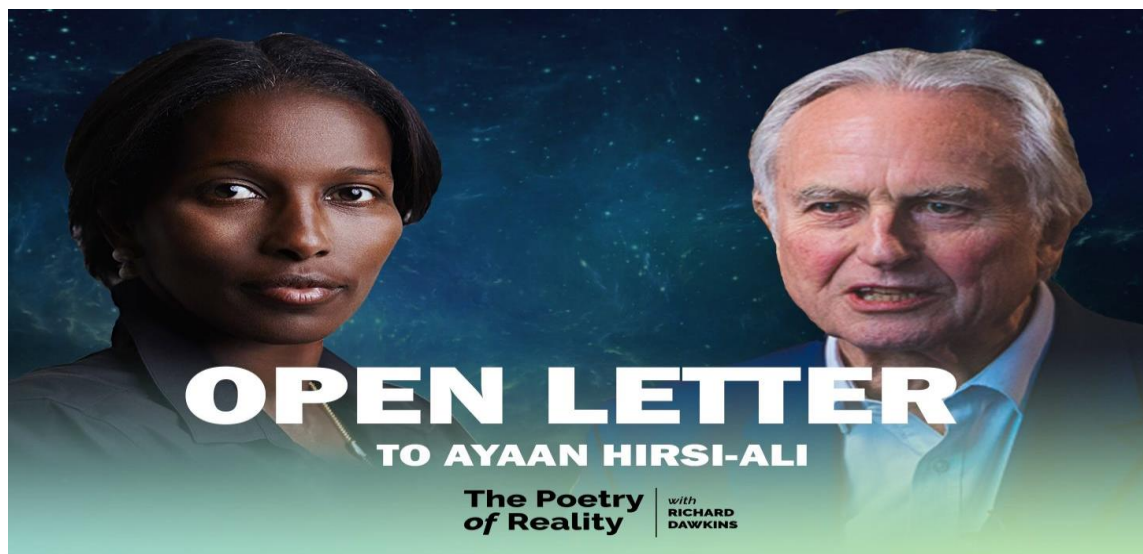
Where does that leave us? I don't know. Now there is an interesting point. Can't argue with that one. Forgive my cynicism.

After being berated for not being engaging enough, I promised myself I would only discuss things I was interested in or the other party was interested in. I want you to know at the next social gathering I failed miserably. I don't think I even got close to that kind of an interesting topic, or interesting engagement I was shooting for.

This leaves me only one tact, say the most absurd outrageous things, and hope someone takes the bait. Holy Crap, I just became the Republican front-runner for president. Just shoot me now. Oh, I am supposed to say the most outrageous thing. Just shoot him now.

ways to fix writer's block

- try turning the author on and off again
- let them talk, they might talk themselves out of their own mess
- if they're crying, put them in a bag of rice
- say "give up then" in a comforting way and watch them get back to work out of sheer spite



Dear Ayaan

As you know, you are one of my absolutely favourite people but . . . seriously, Ayaan? You, a Christian? You are no more a Christian than I am. I might agree with you (I actually do) that Putinism, Islamism, and postmodernish wokery pokery are three great enemies of decent civilisation. I might agree with you that Christianity, if only as a lesser of evils, is a powerful weapon against them. I might add that Christianity has been the inspiration for some of the greatest art, architecture and music the world has ever known. But so what? I once got into trouble for extolling the beauty of Winchester Cathedral bells by comparison with the “aggressive-sounding” yell of “Allahu Akhbar” (the last thing you hear before the bomb goes off, or before your head rolls away from your body). I might agree (I think I do, although certainly not in its earlier history) that Christianity is morally superior to Islam. I might even agree that Christianity is the bedrock of our civilisation (actually I don’t, but even if I did . . .) None of that comes remotely even close to making me – or you – a Christian.

I have seen a very recent filmed discussion in which you described me as one of the most Christian people you know. This came after you quoted Roger Scruton as saying to you that you act like a Christian, you behave like a Christian, therefore you are a Christian. But Ayaan, that is so wrong. How you, or I, behave is utterly irrelevant. What matters is what you *believe*. What matters is the truth claims about the world which you think are true.

For that is the whole point. Christianity makes factual claims, truth claims that Christians believe, truth claims that define them as Christian. Christians are theists. They believe in a divine father figure who designed the universe,

listens to our prayers, is privy to our every thought. You surely don't believe that? Do you believe Jesus rose from the grave three days after being placed there? Of course you don't. Do you believe Jesus was born to a virgin? Certainly not. Someone of your intelligence does not believe you have an immortal soul, which will survive the decay of your brain. Christians believe in a frightful place called Hell, where the souls of the wicked go after they are dead. Do you believe that? Hell no! Christians believe every baby is "born in sin" and is saved from Hell only by the redemptive (pre-emptive in the case of all those born *anno domini*) execution of Jesus. Do you believe anything close to that nasty scapegoat theory? Of course you don't.

Ayaan, you are no more a Christian than I am.

You make an additional claim, which my respect for you finds more incredible: "I have also turned to Christianity because I ultimately found life without any spiritual solace unendurable — indeed very nearly self-destructive." So you need a religion of some kind, and Christianity seems the least bad alternative? Ayaan, I have always thought of you as one of the bravest people I know. How could you succumb to such weakness?

"Atheism failed to answer a simple question: what is the meaning and purpose of life?" For my part, I have found various things that give my life meaning and purpose. There's science, and my books have expounded my lifelong quest to understand the meaning and purpose of all life. Then there's human love, there's the beauty of a child, a tropical swim under the stars, a ravishing sunset, a Schubert quartet. There's the art and literature of all the world. The warmth of an intimate embrace.

But even if all such things leave you cold – and of course they don't – even if you feel a ravenous need for more, what on Earth does that have to do with the truth claims of Christianity or any other religion? Even if life were intolerably bleak and empty – it isn't, but even if it were – how could you, how could anyone, twist a need for solace into a belief in scriptural truth claims about the universe, simply because they make you feel good? Intelligent people don't believe something because it comforts them. They believe it because, and only because, they have seen evidence that supports it.

No, Ayaan, you are not a Christian, you are just a decent human being who mistakenly thinks you need a religion in order to remain so.

With my love

Richard



*IT WAS THE  
BEST OF  
PLANETS*

**IT WAS  
THE  
WORST OF  
PLANETS**

By J. Dan Vignau

Current humans should be grateful for living when we do; especially those of us who rarely, if ever, have had to really toil for a basic subsistence.

Our current House Leader, Mike Johnson, has stated that we need to stop abortion in order to produce more good little workers. For years, I have said this from a sociological viewpoint: More workers mean more competition for peasant wage jobs that are dangerous and non-rewarding. We have a lot of unemployed people in the world, including here in the USA. If all of our greedy robber barons paid decent wages and benefits, there would be plenty of workers available to still enrich the coffers of the outrageously wealthy. I am not speaking at all about comfortably well-off people who gave large parts of their lives to the robber barons for pretty fair compensation. I am



speaking for the current citizens who would like to do such, at least if it were a bit more rewarding.

Corporate America speaks. Just listen to them:



*Let's outlaw abortion in order to increase the numbers of new, much poorer wage workers. Let's outlaw any information or medication that keeps the numbers of workers down. If they must beg for any job, at any wage, corporate America needs them. Let's get rid of healthcare for those who cannot continue to help the mega-corporate, infrastructure billionaires buy bigger and bigger yachts, rocket ships, islands, castles, and half-million or more-dollar watches and*

*jewelry. Let's get rid of Social Security so that the older, non-productive workers die off sooner.*

Who needs them after having served their tenure and made more babies?

Let's get rid of education for the sake of education. Ignorant workers are easy to fool. They will revel in the jingoism that we offer instead of actual news. They will hate those we deem unnecessary for our goals. They do not need to know that the reason we have immigration problems is that we, specifically corporate USA, have systematically devastated not only our own environment, but also the land and animals of other countries and continents, all to feed our fat-cat economy. Way back in 2015, the academic journal, "Science", noted that since the dawn of human civilization, more than 83 percent of the biomass of wild animals had





decreased. At that time, the number for Earth's biomass of marine mammals lost was 80 percent, and for plants 50 percent.

Now, livestock accounts for 60 percent of animal mass, with the mass of birds now at 70 percent being domesticated, with only 30 percent being the mass of wild birds.

What about humans? We are now at 36 percent of the mass of Earth animals of all kinds.

Of course, we now have constant warfare. Our troops have infiltrated most of the Western World, as well as the Third World regions. Our religious troops, if I may call them such, have aided in creating more workers by spreading lies concerning birth control. Our destruction of other countries' economies and environments has created a mass of people who have no resources to support themselves.

Putting up a wall is a band-aid to mask the symptoms, not a cure for this disease of rampant monopoly capitalism.

What about our planet? It supports everyone, including the wealthy. It is truly terrible that we do not care about people, but to destroy the planet so that a few families can amass fortunes never imagined is as criminal as anything ever imagined, especially when we use genocidal methods, which we do.

Multi-zillionaire Elon Musk says we can move to other planets, specifically Mars. I suppose that even he realizes the folly of unbridled consumption and environmental destruction.

As just about anyone who has ever heard of Thomas Malthus has learned, population growth is exponential. People produce way too many offspring, who produce multiples of their own. Even our liberal members Stretch and Marilyn left fourteen progeny, who themselves are producing multiple of those.

Agriculture cannot keep up.

**MAJOR BREAKING**

**That Florida man who bought a \$700,000 boat with PPP funds has been found guilty and faces a maximum of 140 years in prison.**

**Anything to say to him?**

CALL TO ACTIVISM



Mother Nature does fight back. It is in her genetic makeup. When a population gets too big, disease is more easily transmitted. Property disputes arise and cause deaths from war. Scientific progress feeds even more of us, causing even worse over-population, which leads to massive wars for the diminishing resources available. Vaccines help the human population explode.

Maybe we need to quit educating scientists and doctors? After all, without vaccines and medicines, operations and other healthcare, some overpopulation could be thwarted through pandemics. Maybe our multiply indicted ex-Presidente was right? We need

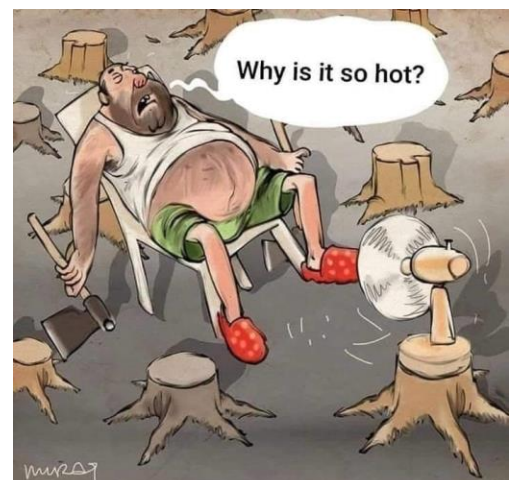
more wars to kill off the meek and those whom he called, "Stupid" and "Losers" for joining the Armed Services, with little to gain by simply dying for the fat-cats. Maybe, just maybe, Musk, Bezos, and others, including all the older families who have grotesquely profited greatly from others' misery for centuries, can move to Mars after they destroy or otherwise ruin human life on Earth.

Our ex-member, Charlie, thought we humans would eventually be able to put our memories into computer storage, thereby allowing us to think forever; well, forever until the sun dies.

A Mars colony of thinking computers with the stored brainpower of the robber barons might be a just reward for them. Imagine how much good a million-dollar watch, a billion-dollar yacht, a 90-million-dollar Ferrari, or a zillion-dollar castle could enhance their new lives on Mars.

A Hellish existence on Mars awaits them with open arms. I hope they take their iPhones to their new campground. Maybe we will be able to put memories and thought onto computer chips. Maybe, the New Martians can watch Earth's forests regrow, and watch animals and plants repopulate the Earth. Solar electricity on Mars could keep them thinking for nearly an eternity.

Eternity sounds quite boring to me.





# The Age of Persuasion is Over



By Driftglass

It's been over for a long time now.

The zombie Right now exists in a continuous state of aggressively rejecting basic observable reality and the craven Center refuses to entertain the idea that Both Sides aren't equally terrible.

It's still a free country and you are still free to spend your precious time and energy as you see fit, but I would humbly suggest you stop trying to persuade bigots and imbeciles that they should stop being bigots and imbeciles, because by thunder, it turns out they just fucking **love** being bigots and imbeciles. Either that or they're grifters making a buck feeding poison to bigots and imbeciles.



And stop trying to persuade the congenital fence-straddlers and 3rd party twats that Republicans – that whole fucking party, from top to bottom – is, in fact, a lethal threat to democracy and Democrats just aren't. This was obvious +30 years ago, and if they haven't figured it out by now, it means they've either made a religion out of being willfully obtuse...or they're grifters making a buck off of these credulous cowards.

And, finally, in general, stop staring into the abyss and insisting that it should just stop being so abysmal. If you want to put the word "should" to productive use, write alternate history science fiction.

If you enjoy preaching to the choir ... or declaiming to an empty auditorium, great. Have a blast. There's an app that used to be called Twitter that is full of like-minded people. It's mostly an overflowing toilet of fascism and Temu ads, but you might find some comfort there among people who spend a lot of time indulging in these verbal calisthenics.

But, at this moment in history, if you expect any material change to the world to come of it, you are wasting your time.

Because however well-intentioned this preaching to the choir ... or declaiming to an empty auditorium may be, in the end, all of it is, to quote cap'n Mal, " ... a long wait for a train don't come."



([www.professionalleft.blogspot.com](http://www.professionalleft.blogspot.com))

# By Gale Baker

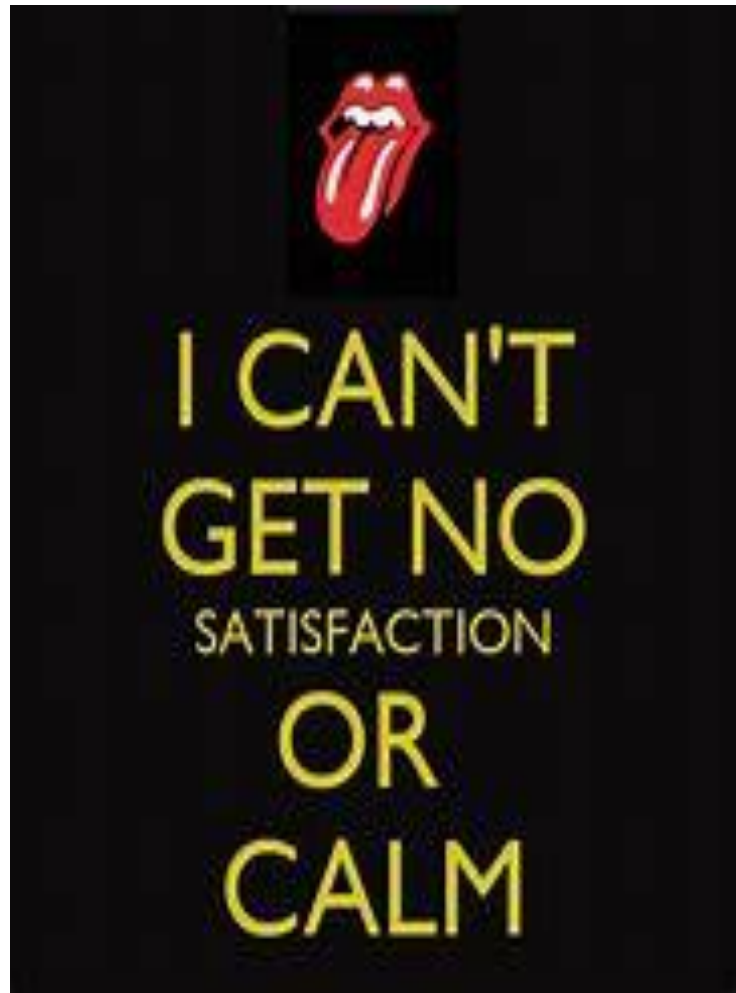
The human race is suffering from a terrible sickness. It is called dissatisfaction, it seems that no one is satisfied with what they have, the pleasures available to them, the abundance of luxury goods they have. Too bad they cannot see what their parents went through. Too bad they don't know that once here was no garbage pickup or recycling. Once old cans and garbage were recycled by amassing them in a pile to be burned on a monthly

basis. Once water came from wells, not spigots or plastic bottles. Light came from coal oil lamps and heat from stoves or fireplaces.

Now it seems humans only know how to complain about how little they have compared to their neighbors. They ignore the others sleeping in cars and on the streets and demand the government remove them. They have become lazy, thinking they can work as little as possible and get paid as much as they want.

They have found guns, rockets, bombs and want to use them against anyone who disagrees with them, or who they conceive has more than them.

Yes. The human race is in a terrible place. We are racing fast into annihilation. Will AI save anyone? I think not. But when humans are gone; AI won't have a use, will it? Is there an unemployment line for artificial intelligence? Probably not.





# Science Saved Me

**... Not Your God**

**By Noah Lugeons,  
the Scathing Atheist**

It's so weird. Even with so few people praying for me, I still got better. I saw the Cardiologist yesterday and he said I was about as healthy as a person can be two weeks after a heart attack and I said, "Man, that is one mysterious way."

Of course, what I lacked in prayers, I more than made up for in thoughts. I have to imagine the messages of support and well-wishing have reached into the thousands at this point. And I've read every single one of them ... I think. There are so damn many ways to get in touch with me online that I can't be sure, but I think I got all of them. And instead of limiting themselves to vague offers to magically wish for me, there were a ton of offers for genuine, material support.

But, of course, reading through all those messages meant that I also had to read the bad ones. Now, to be clear, they were absolutely *drowning* in the good ones. There were a hundred messages of heartfelt sympathy for every asshole telling me that it was my own fault for getting the COVID vaccine, but those ones *were* still there. As were a baffling number along the lines of "Now do you believe in god!?" Which seems grossly misplaced since, at least in their worldview, god was the one that tried to kill me and science is the



one that thwarted him. Like, seriously, hours after watching modern science save my life, I literally got a message that read (quote) “do you still worship science now?” That would be like me trying to “told you so” Christians in line at the pearly gates.

But I don’t want to dwell on those assholes. If they’re good at following instructions, they already fucked themselves to death anyway. Instead, I wanna dwell on different assholes. Specifically, a few well-meaning friends and family members who wanted to make sure I knew that, had I died, God would’ve let me into Heaven on a technicality. The technicality? That I was never *really* an atheist. They wanted to make sure that I knew that despite ten years of daily proclamations of just how sinful I am, they never *really* believed I was gonna spend eternity burning in hell.

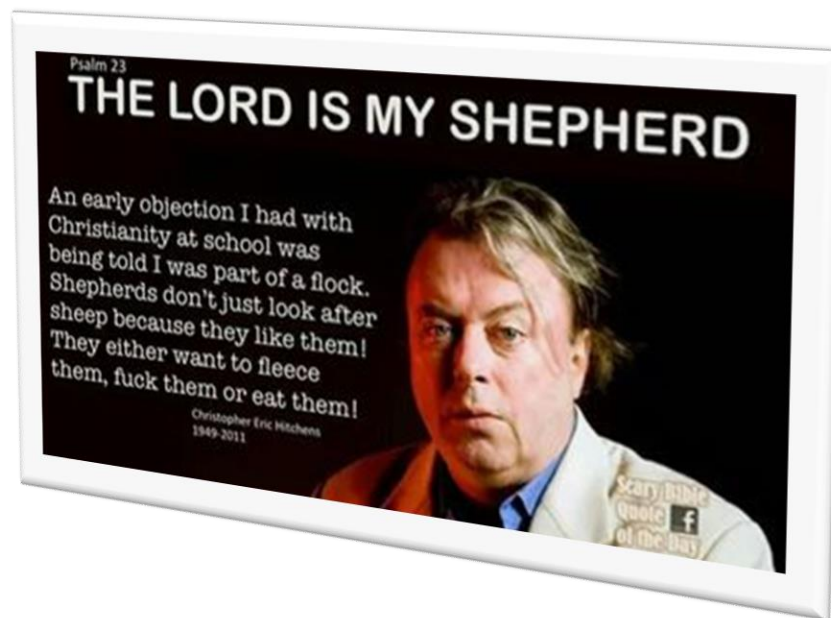


I think it’s fairly obvious why this is a dick move, but in case it’s not clear, just flip it around. Imagine the roles are reversed. Imagine that when religious people had close brushes with death, atheists took that as an opportunity to challenge their worldview. “Hey, I can’t help but notice that the universe isn’t acting in a loving and benevolent way towards you these days. Almost like there’s no omnipotent deity looking out for you. Anyway, I just want you to know that if you *did* die, there would’ve been no Heaven to go to, and if there was enough of you left to realize it, you’d be really



disappointed that you spent so much of your life worrying about what god wanted instead of what *you* wanted. But I'm sure you already knew all that, after all, you were never *really* a Christian to begin with."

Total dick move. Well-meaning — in a roundabout way — but still a dick move. Because here's the dirty secret behind those messages; they weren't for me. They weren't trying to change my mind about anything or reassure me of anything. The whole purpose was for my loved ones to try to rescue their poisonous worldview by assuring *themselves* that their god would never throw me in hell, even if he explicitly says otherwise. A lot.



Now, I should point out that the people sending me this shit are your typical "buffet Christians." They don't subscribe to any particular denomination, and probably don't know the doctrinal differences from one to another. They have their idiosyncratic form of Christianity based on childhood Bible stories and intuition. But just because they've cherry picked which elements to believe doesn't mean they believe them any less. And one of the few universal truths in all of those smorgasbord forms of faith is that Heaven is for *us*, not them. Because what would be the point of Heaven if Muslims got to go?

And here I am, fucking up their whole thing. Because, unlike literally any Muslims, these people *know* me. Many of them have known me for decades. I mean, all but one of them were members of my family. And let me tell you, when you start a charity drive that raises a million bucks for needy families, you get the family reputation for being one of the good ones. These are people I've been there for their whole lives. People who know me well

enough to know that if their god would send me to hell for eternity, he's not a very good god.

So, when a perfectly good non-Christian dies, how do they reconcile it? Well, plenty of them just say "that motherfucker's burning in hell, sucks for them." But if that's too harsh, you can always just pretend that at the last second, I converted to Christianity in my head and managed to sneak in on the "vineyard worker" loophole. But, of course, that doesn't work when someone just *almost* dies. Because in that case, the person can be there to tell you that no-the-fuck they didn't.

So, what's left? Well, the escape clause du jour seems to be to just ignore that objection altogether; to tell yourself that, despite vociferous and well-reasoned arguments to the contrary, your loved one never *really* rejected the holy spirit. Sure, they might have specifically said things like "I deny the holy spirit", but our god can see into their heart, and inside their heart (hiding somewhere behind all the arterial plaque, presumably) is a love for Jesus that never abated. And since God can hear that way louder than all those *actual* statements, he'd probably just chalk it up to a tantrum and waive the normal requirements.

I mean, don't get me wrong, I still think it's sweet that they're willing to write me into their postmortem Jesus fanfic, but it's still a pretty egregious insult to my character. And to your faith. You wanna espouse the shit? Well then you have to take the whole fucking thing, bones and all. You don't get to dismiss my life's work in defense of your fairy tale. So, for the record, if I die and god shows up and he's like "Yeah, somehow, despite all logic, I exist", and then offers me Heaven, I'll refuse. I wouldn't wanna hang out in some genocidal sociopath's house anyway, no matter how good the harp music was. So, if you want me in your Heaven you have to imagine not must your god forgiving me, but me forgiving him. And that's a bit I still have say over.



# ARTICLES



How to shop in Tel Aviv today

# Dreams deferred



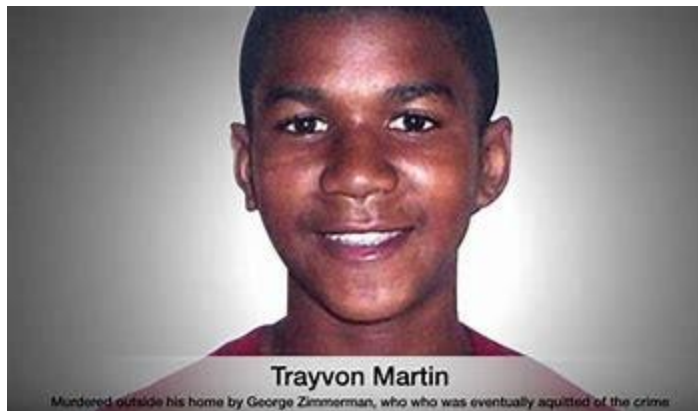
are about to

explode!

*By Edward Zilloux*



The civil rights movement was never brought to completion; it just lost its steam. But the endemic inequality in America never went away.



You might think that Michael Brown or Trayvon Martin or Eric Garner or Tamir Rice has, each in his turn, become the latest "poster child" of the protest driven unrest that has long been simmering just below the threshold of the national consciousness. But I think it's more than that. I think we may

have reached the flipping point, the moment of critical mass that triggers the explosion.

Initiatives intended to educate police, to track injustices and to enforce compliance with race conscious, common sense rules to stem the appearance — as well as the two infrequent reality — of police brutality will help.

Real progress, however, will be achieved only when society deals effectively with the root causes of inequality.



Blaming the police won't help; they often must deal with people who are trapped in an inequality that can boil over with little provocation, and police are only human.



The root cause approach is longer term, requires a greater commitment, is often politically unpopular, is expensive — many would say too expensive — and must be sustainable across opposing political platforms.

We need a national commitment. Unfortunately, solving the problem just might take an epidemic of protests and riots such as we have been seeing in Ferguson, MO., New York and other cities.

I may be wrong in calling this current unrest a quote “tipping point.” But if it is not, it is surely coming unless we have the will to recognize it and to address inequality in all its systemic guises.



Think of the relationships between unwanted children, poverty and crime. Think of reforming our public education system with meaningful increases in teacher pay — as well as qualification requirements — and using independent review boards to replace the tenure system.

Think of other programs to provide equal access to cultural and educational opportunities -- now only minimally available to lower- and indeed, the lowest income families. Think of higher education opportunities and access to financial grants, based solely on merit.

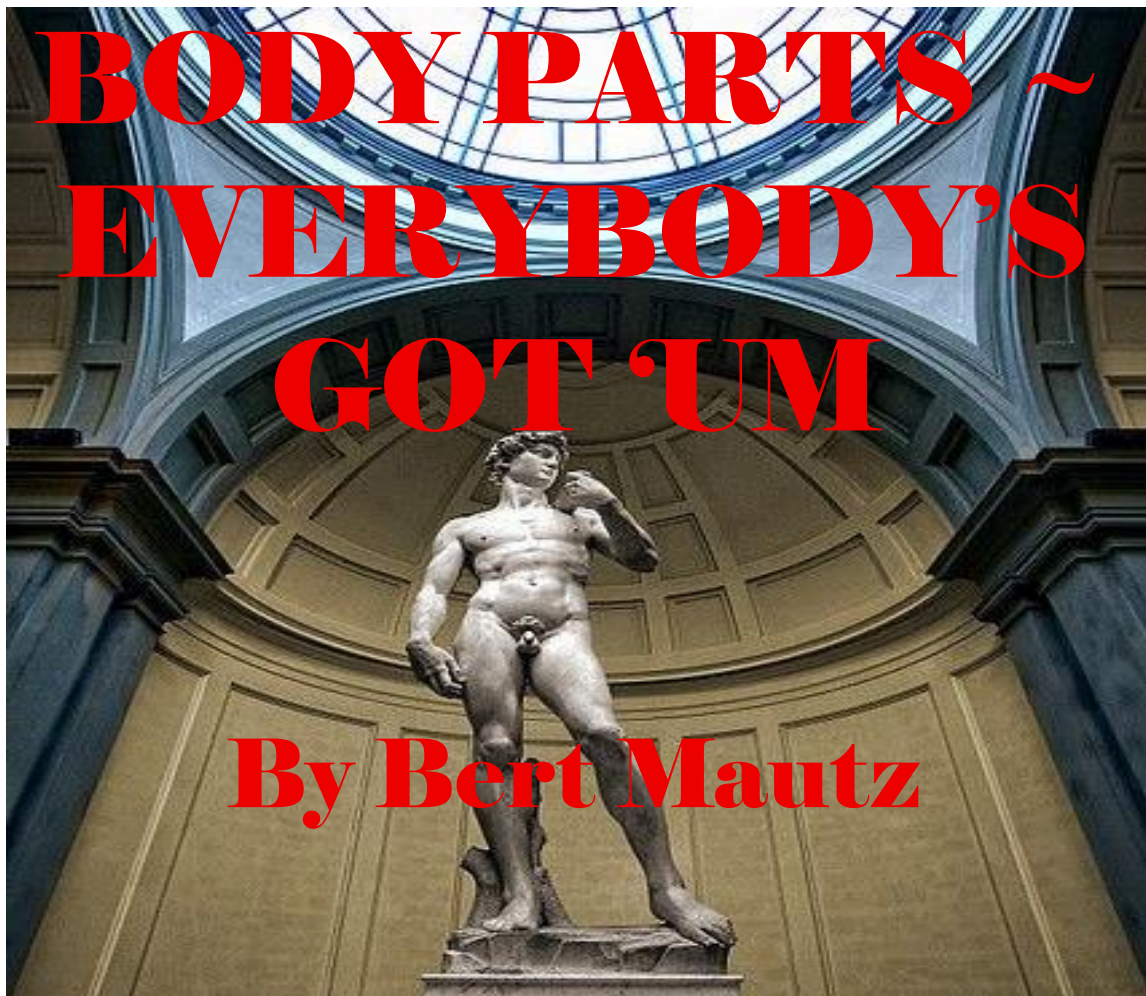
Think of establishing an equitable justice system that treats minor crimes the same for the poor as for the rich, and where the specter of incarceration depends upon the severity of the crime rather than on one's ability to pay for top legal advocacy.



Think of a system devoid of privatized jails — which link profits to the maintenance of high rates of incarceration for minor offenses.

We must address these and other root causes that sustain inequality before we have a chance of reducing the social ills that burden, oppress and, too often, kill the youth of our minority populations.

*Reprinted from the Palm Beach Post Letters to Editor, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015*



How did universal physical features; male and female become something to hide?

Michelangelo's David on display in Florence, Italy is thought to be the perfect male figure, complete to his pubic hair. A fountain in Rome with chubby urchin atop the center spire peeing into the pool below is adorable. Humans universally engage in sex for pleasure and procreation, why ashamed?

Four of them; two men and two women gathered around the plexiglass table discussing the oncoming football game. Standard fare, see it all the time. The men wearing nondescript business attire; suits and bad ties. The white woman wore a black shirt buttoned to the chin. The far more glamorous black woman wore a white sun dress revealing just the right amount of cleavage. The four talked for fifteen minutes with the camera moving to each speaker, zooming in close, but for one. For the entire program the camera never provided a close up of the gorgeous black woman in the sun dress.



Who made the editorial/censorship decision? The audience, judging by the beer and burgers commercials is male. And the director/producer denied us the pleasure of female body parts. Where does this censorship standard originate? What is the general population assumed to be afraid of?

Taking the question further several contradictions exist with regard to our discomfort with nudity, partial or whole. Hugh Hefner published Playboy for decades, mixing spectacular naked women with serious thought and some good writing. The world of broadcast television has been strictly censored, per the example above while the pornography industry flourishes unencumbered to every teenagers' bedroom laptop. The industry goes beyond satisfying universal male lust to the unfortunate and ugly perversions that also have an audience.

Much of Renaissance sculpture features the human form unclothed. Michelangelo's David on display in Florence, Italy is an excellent example. My teen age sister could not bring herself to look directly at David, so up tight regarding male nudity, likely the prohibitions of her Mormon upbringing. I had made a virtual pilgrimage to take the family to see the masterpiece in person, so to speak.

The Christian Scriptures make virtually no reference to censorship. The contradiction of confessing ones sins to priests who abuse choir boys to get their own lusts satisfied/managed is awful, but the Church is full of moral contradictions.

Censorship, whether originating in religion, like Muslim dictates of women's literally hiding from view in their ground sweeping burkas come and go; American Christianity, the white evangelical zealots disapprove of public nudity, whatever; art, magazines, movies, television sitcoms. Lust is evil. While others regard lust as natural and inevitable. Likely humanity will be forever conflicted.







## *Inheriting the Wind*

*By Virgil Thorp*

Well, sports fans, *they* are starting to die again. The cultural civil war is commencing to take casualties. Who are these casualties? Women you dummy, women. Why? Because some wealthy assholes who think feudal benevolence, a society where they are on top and everyone else are beneath them, is the way their god intended life to be.

This snarky sarcasm comes from a person who is fed up with self-righteous, so-called “holy-warriors”, mis-named “do-gooders”, refusing to subscribe to the timeless adage of George Santayana, “Those who forget – or ignore – the past, are doomed (in this case, I prefer “condemned”) to repeat it.

It has only been a little over a year since the conservative packed Supreme Court took the ill-advised step of overturning the landmark Roe v. Wade decision on a woman’s right to control her reproductive autonomy with the infamous Dobbs decision written in pre-renaissance language by Justice Samuel Alito. In brief, ***Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization***, No. 19-

1392, 597 U.S. 215 (2022), is a landmark decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in which the court held that the Constitution of the United States does not confer a right to abortion.



**Middle Age Riot**  
@middleageriot

Republican lawmakers in Missouri want to charge women who have abortions with murder, as if living in Missouri wasn't punishment enough.

The court's decision overruled both Roe v. Wade (1973) and Planned Parenthood v. Casey (1992), returning to individual states the power to regulate any aspect of abortion not protected by federal law. – Wikipedia.

And just like that, after years and years of whittling away personal rights in a state-by-

state program, a civil right has vanished into the night with the wind. The Pro-life “holy-warriors and sanctity-martyrs” rejoiced. Babies will not be sacrificed to a pagan and a permissively and ungodly humanism. Blasphemous secularism will be halted. All will become well in the land. The holy ghost will not abandon us, leaving the nation open and unprotected from the nearly all-powerful Satanically socialist communism. All opposition to a theological state will no longer be tolerated and the state will have all individuals secured by their genitals.

Great, the dog has caught the car. Those “holy-warriors” now have permission to impose their superstitions on the rest of society. Good-bye freedom of thought and deed, and, as John Wayne bragged in his Davy Crockett speech in 1960’s The Alamo, “people can live free, talk free, go or come, buy or sell, be



drunk or sober, however they choose.” The “holy-warriors” have not considered that there will be consequences to their actions.

What is missing is, of course, the reasons why a decision like Roe v. Wade was judged as necessary in the first place. For those scratching their heads, wondering what I am referring to, it is simply this historical fact: When abortions were prohibited and criminalized, people died. More specifically, women died. By the hundreds and maybe the thousands because accurate numbers were not taken by a blue-nose state that believed that only bad girls do and usually, many of the women who did die, were not white. It was only when society acknowledge that indeed, white women were dying, that courageous women advocated for gynecological rights that the Roe v. Wade compromise was decided.



And now, for the last year, we are finding out that history can repeat itself. Women are dying from abortion prohibition once again. Difficult, and unfortunate, pregnancies lose not only fetuses and mothers, but you can also have an unfortunate result that willing mothers may become unable to bear any children. They will find their medical situation not to be progressive, it will be regressive.

The Center for Disease Control source noted that before Dobbs and coincidental Covid pandemic complications, in 2019 754 maternal deaths were recorded. It was 861 in 2020. In 2021,

1,205 women died. An unpleasant increase to be considered. The National Center for Health Statistics report on Infant and Maternal Mortality presented last March 20, 2023, suggested that Maternal Mortality rates should return to normal, but then came state governments run by republicans and deaths and fear of deaths have increased. You could say women have noticed. Well, white women have really noticed now that such policies are affecting them. Again.

Our latest outrage is what is happening to Dallas, Texas middle-aged, upper-middle class, white, housewife, Kate Cox. You see, Mrs. Cox has a problem pregnancy. Her fetus is not going to develop. It has defects and the resulting aberration of nature, may just kill her in the act of giving birth. However, science and medicine can alleviate such dangers by aborting the potentially lethal tissue and letting Mr. and Mrs. Cox start over again once she heals up.



But, there are a couple of flies in the buttermilk. The governor of Texas, Greg Abbott and his attorney general, Ken Paxton – both Christian Nationalists – are complicating Mrs. Cox's health and making her life miserable by insinuating themselves between Mrs.



Cox, her husband and family and her doctor who has taken an oath to first do no harm. They will do all in their power to punish her and that doctor if they take the necessary steps to save her life. (The death penalty for gynecologists performing abortions has been mentioned, which would probably hurt more than the \$100,000 fine. Say goodbye, Texas doctors! Run away!)

I knew this would happen. It had to. Mother nature will not be fooled, as they say. Life giveth and life taketh away if you embrace that sort of metaphysical nonsense. It is almost biblical: *Remember the wisdom of Solomon in the book of Proverbs. "He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind."*

Another unfortunate result of this desire for medieval nonsense is that nearly every progressive discovery and social advancement achieved since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century is being attacked with superstitious malarky. The fanatics are furious, the rabble has been roused! Books on just about everything these troglodytes disagree with are being removed, banned and burned. God help you if you are not absolutely straight, absolutely white or absolutely deluded by superstition. Or, "get back in your closets, you queer, baby-eating heretics!"

One of my favorite movie quotes is from Spencer Tracy when he portrayed the agnostic Clarence Darrow character, Henry Drummond in Lawrance & Lee's insightful drama on the Scopes Trial about teaching evolution in Tennessee high school science classes, *Inherit the Wind*.



- [Drummond](#): *Can't you understand? That if you take a law like evolution and you make it a crime to teach it in the public schools, tomorrow you can make it a crime to teach it in the private*

*schools? And tomorrow you may make it a crime to read about it. And soon you may ban books and newspapers. And then you may turn Catholic against Protestant, and Protestant against Protestant, and try to foist your own religion upon the mind of man. If you can do one, you can do the other. Because fanaticism and ignorance is forever busy, and needs feeding. And soon, your Honor, with banners flying and with drums beating we'll be marching backward, BACKWARD, through the glorious ages of that Sixteenth Century when bigots burned the man who dared bring enlightenment and intelligence to the human mind!*

Where the fuck do these people like Greg Abbott, Ken Paxton and Mike Johnson, our new speaker of the house who thinks he is Moses, get off? They are doing their best to make America anything but the land of the free and the home of the brave. Are you hearing the wind blow now? I think they're coming for your contraceptives next.



# Thoughts on Modern Monetary Theory (MMT)



By James Longo

I am not an economist, don't even play one on television. Didn't even stay at a Holiday Inn Express last night. Have friends who are economists, am sure they will enlighten me. But you have to say something wrong to be corrected, to further your understanding. So let's do this.

How did we get money in the first place? According to **Warren Mosler**, a Modern Monetary Theory academic, money came from taxation. Tax payments are (*were?*) only accepted in the coin of the realm. Thus, the realm has a monopoly on how they are paid. Thus, the realm has a monopoly over the currency.

This monopoly allows it to produce as much – or as few – units of currency to do what it needs to do. As long as they use their currency, as long as the country's currency is the only legal tender, the government can produce as much money as it needs to build infrastructure, fund a war, feed it's poor, and so on and so on.



Ever notice we always have enough money for the military, or tax cuts, but not to lower the high cost of housing, or decrease poverty? It is because those things are not a priority for the country.

This begs six questions. What are taxes for? What is the individual to do? Are deficits important? Does the US government prescribe to this theory? What about inflation? How does this end?

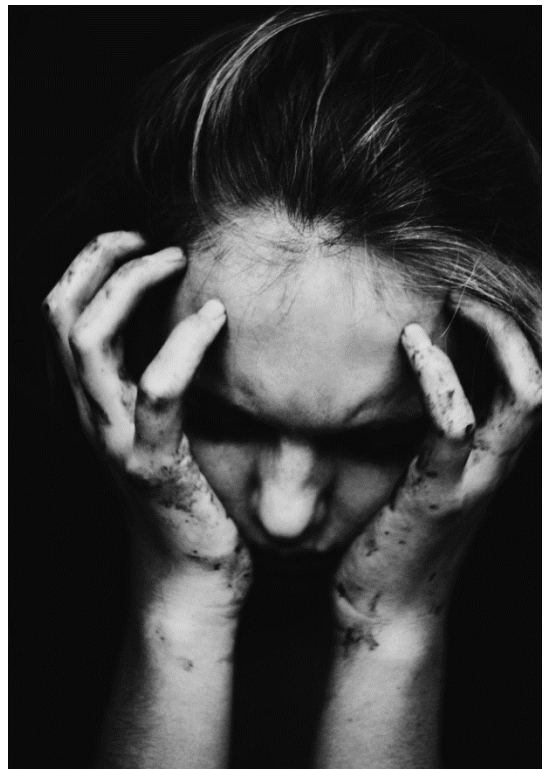
Taxes are to keep the whole ball rolling. Taxation isn't about the federal balance sheet. It is to keep everyone just scared enough that if they don't pay their taxes, the big bad tax man will come and get you. My understanding of Mosler is that taxation

is the main reason for production, along with food, housing, and ... sex.

What is an individual to do? In a word, *produce!* According to Mosler, the only thing worse than war is unemployment. Unemployment means that the economy isn't running as efficiently as it should, and that unemployment is wasting resources.

Are deficits important? Mosler says, "*no.*" He says it is a closed system. If you run a government deficit, it means that the private sector is running an equal surplus. So, every dollar the US government produces has to go somewhere, and it either goes into the private sector or is sold back to the government in the form of bonds or paid back in taxation.

Does the government already prescribe to MMT? Where have all the deficit hawks gone? They are blowing in the wind. Both parties prescribe to this theory. Look at the Trump tax cut. Look at pandemic spending. Look at Biden's infrastructure. Inflation Reduction Act. Not to mention 800 billion for the





military. Yes, both parties use the deficit as a political football when it suits them. Look at the Congress holding up raising the debt ceiling. According to Mosler, it is all political theater.

This begs the question, “what about inflation?”

By definition, inflation in microeconomic terms is, *too much money chasing too few goods*. If you produce too much currency and it chases even the same amount of goods, you get inflation.

Coming out of the pandemic we had too few goods to boot. The price of goods couldn't help but go up. During the pandemic, both parties threw too much money via direct payments, and PPP loans at too many people, because the economy was closed. Add to that too many industries have too few players, which allowed them pricing power, and you wonder why we had historic inflation.

This leaves us with the last question, how can the federal government screw this up? It says it right in the realm's legal tender. *In God we Trust*.

Everyone else must pay cash. This all comes down to faith. When other countries say, “I'm sorry that currency isn't good for us, do you have something else?” The gig is up. We become Argentina. They have to tie their currency to ours.

At that point, the US has one ace up its sleeve, and it is paid for in dollars. Eight hundred billion dollars a year. It is called the US military. So, Tommy Tuberville, don't screw with my money.



# What Is An Atheist?

December 4, 2023 [Nan Atheism](#), [ReligionAtheism](#), [atheist](#), [non-belief in god\(s\)](#)



There are many people (especially Christians) who have a mistaken definition of an Atheist. They offer all sorts of (inaccurate) descriptions –quite frequently accompanied by negative remarks– most of which are colored by religious teachings.

From my perspective, I tend to think this happens because those who believe in god(s) are simply unable to understand/accept that there are

individuals

who view life ... As It Is.

In other words, there are innumerable people who do not harbor ANY thoughts about Invisible Entities directing and/or influencing what happens in their lives. They simply go about their daily living as Nature intends. They eat. They sleep. And during their waking hours, they fill their time with personal activities and/or responsibilities.

Absent from their lives is any dependency on some “outside” force to help them if they experience sickness, accidents, loss, disappointments ... even daily upsets. Nor do they concern themselves with events that are said to occur After Death.

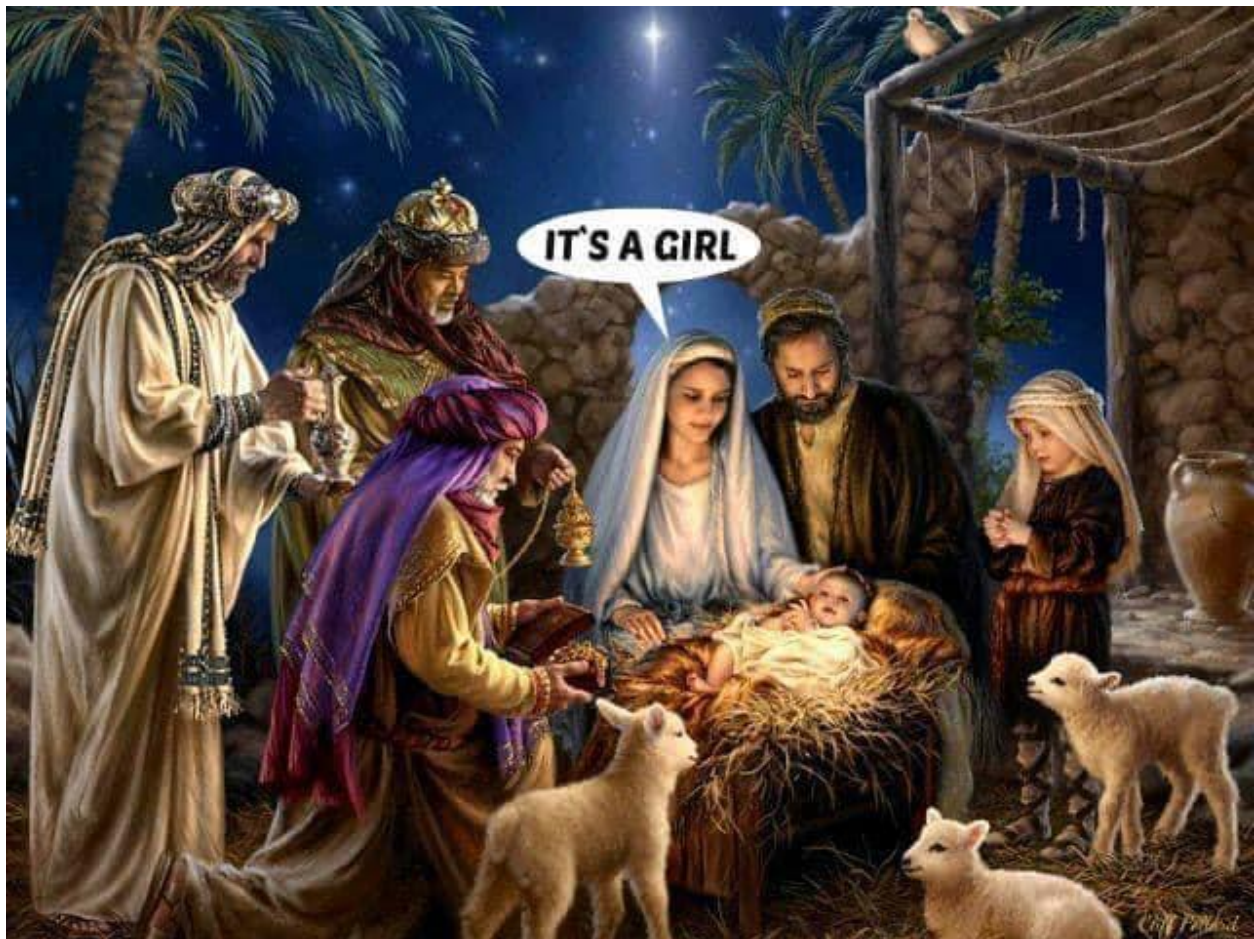
Instead, they are confident in their abilities to face whatever comes their way. Good or Bad. Simply put: They feel fully capable of confronting whatever life has in store for them.

**Merriam-Webster Definition of Atheist**  
**A person who does not believe in the existence  
of a god or any gods.**

sayitnow.wordpress.com

**NAN'S NOTEBOOK**

*Things I want to say about this, that, and the other thing.*



# THE WAY WE WERE

LIBRARIES ARE ABOUT FREEDOM.  
FREEDOM TO READ, FREEDOM OF IDEAS,  
FREEDOM OF COMMUNICATION.  
THEY ARE ABOUT EDUCATION,  
ABOUT ENTERTAINMENT, ABOUT  
MAKING SAFE SPACES AND  
ABOUT ACCESS TO INFORMATION.







# *METAL RECYCLE MOVEMENT*

(Memories of a young boy in 1942 Imperial Japan)

By Yashi Nozawa

S ometime in the summer, we received a strange announcement from the routing board of our *tonari-gumi* (neighborhood association). It said that we would have a farewell celebration for our beloved, nameless but familiar, forgotten friend for his departure to the war front. Everyone was encouraged to attend the celebration, which would be held in the *Ryoan-ji* temple. Why did this seem strange? First, the description of the conscripted person was puzzling. Secondly, the temple was usually associated with a funeral; it was not a place to have a soldier's farewell celebration. That should be held at a Shinto shrine.



Further reading of the announcement revealed that the conscripted one was not a real person, but the *bonshou* (temple bell.) Why did I remember this event? You might have considered it an insignificant event. The temple bell, which we sometimes referred to as the *tsuri-gane*, (hanging bell) is a unique symbol of Far Eastern Buddhism, with a special meaning for the Japanese. The event's significance is equivalent to the removal of all the

crosses from every church to use the materials to make weapons and bullets.

Especially in Japan, the temple bell was tightly integrated into our daily life because it was used to announce the time of day until the modernization of Japan in the late nineteenth century. The traditional Japanese time system was unique, a variable-length-time system. It meant that the length of one hour varied, depending on the season, and more precisely, it changed daily. The reference points of daily time were *ake-mutsu* (6 o'clock of dawn) and *kure-mutsu* (6 o'clock of dusk). A day was divided into twelve traditional hours. So, each traditional hour was approximately two present hours. A temple bell was used to inform us of the time every hour of a day. Due to its role, sounds of a temple bell were made so that they were loud, would reverberate for a long time, and would reach far places.

**A**fter the adoption of the modern time system temple bells became idle in most times, but they still played an important role, which was to announce the end of a year. Every temple would hit its temple bell to produce *joya-no-kane* (bell of the last night.) This Japanese annual ritual is practiced even today (early 21st century). In America, the end of the year ritual is a falling ball at Times Square in New York, but in Japan, it is the 108 temple bell sounds. Japanese bell ringing on the last night consists of 108 separate sounds and represents the entire repertory of human desires. Each bell sound was supposed to eliminate a listener's desires one at a time. By the end of 108th sound, the listener would be ready to start a New Year with cleansed mind.

I asked a Buddhist monk about this when he came to our school and gave a sermon.

"Sir, I always wondered, how did you get 108 different desires in the bell sounds of the year- end. Do you count every desire I have? For instance, if my desire for a chocolate candy is counted

as one desire, then why only 108? The total should be far more than 108. Even my parents or our teachers did not have an answer to my question."

The monk replied, "It is a wonderful question. Buddha had infinite wisdom and sometimes ordinary people could not easily comprehend his idea. The 108 human desires encompass a full range of human desires. A human being has six basic sensing mechanisms: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Each sensing mechanism has three different levels of perceptions: good, bad, and neutral. Therefore, there are a total of eighteen combinations of desires. However, each desire can be classified as clean or dirty.

Furthermore, humans could exist in three different worlds, namely the current world, the previous world, and the next world. Then a total of three times thirty-six would equal one hundred eight different types of human desires. To achieve nirvana, we have to eliminate all of them. To help people to achieve nirvana, Buddha created the 108 sounds of a temple bell. And also it signifies the beginning of the New Year. A total of 107 sounds will be generated during the old year, and the 108th one indicates the arrival of the New Year."

"Thank you, sir," I said, but I was not sure whether I fully understood his statements or not. At least I knew his arithmetic seemed to be correct.





On the specified day, I went to *Ryoan-ji* temple. People gathered around the bell house. The bell house was an independent building and stood on a three-foot-high stone base. The building was not high enough to be called a bell-tower in the Western sense. The height of the building is close to other utility buildings of the temple, probably similar to conventional single-story houses in America. The main structure was simple and consisted of four vertical columns that supported a roof and a bell-hanging beam. There were no walls. At the center of the building, a large bronze bell was hung from the beam. The bell was about six feet high, four feet in diameter, and slightly tapered at the sides of the cylinder. There was no curved skirt, unlike a Western bell. Its top was closed, and the bottom was open. The wall of the bell was about three inches thick. Several selected areas of the surface were covered with neatly arranged, wart-like structure. There was no conventional clapper in the bell. The bell was sounded by hitting it with a horizontally swinging six-inch diameter wooden log, called *shumoku*.

At the specified time, three Buddhist priests appeared in a single file. They climbed up a stair to the floor of the bell house and stood in front of a temporary altar near the bell. The chief priest hit the small brass bowl on the altar with a small stick. Its metallic sound was sharp and clean. After a brief prayer, he started to recite texts from one of the sacred books. His voice was soothing, but the meaning of his words was incomprehensible to me because they were not in Japanese but Sanskrit. While the priest was reciting sacred texts, many people prayed by putting both hands together at their chests and slightly bowed their heads, just like an Indian greeting gesture. When the priest's reciting was finished, a local official made a small speech.

"Thank you to everybody who came here today. It is a special day for this community. As you are well aware, we were fighting a sacred war, which we have to win. It is not easy to win; it will be difficult to win. To win, we have to make lots of sacrifices. We

have to provide a sufficient amount of weapons and bullets, and that means we need more iron and copper. We used to import all necessary metals, but we cannot do that anymore, due to the ABCD encirclement of a trade embargo. So, in the last year, our beloved Emperor ordered a voluntary donation of any unnecessary copper and iron objects for recycling toward weaponry. As you may notice, many park benches, lamp posts, manhole covers, and iron objects were substituted by non-metallic materials such as concrete and wood. Since the recycling movement was successful, the authority expanded the program beyond general household items. On May 9, 1942, the authority issued the conscript orders for bronze objects in all Buddhist temples in Japan. The exemption was any temple bells, made before the year 1652, the beginning of the Edo period, due to their historical value.



"We have studied the origin of our bell in this *Ryoan-ji* temple; it was manufactured sometime around 1800. So, it was not exempt from conscription. Representatives of our community and priests from this temple had decided to respond to the government order and to submit our son, the *Ryoan-ji* temple bell, like many other parents of soldiers and sailors, to fight against our enemy."

Finally, he concluded his speech by saying, "Like many patriotic parents, we should give three cheers for our son; *Ryoan-ji Temple Bell*."

He shouted, "*Ryoan-ji Temple Bell Banzai*,"

We followed his lead and repeated three cheers, "*Ryoan-ji temple bell, banzai, banzai, banzai*."

Then, the chief priest said, "We will now hear the bell's reply, which will be his last word."

He made a waving gesture, and a bellringer appeared and took his position. He prayed a while; then, he waited for a signal from the chief priest.

The priest raised his *hossu*. (animal hair mace of a priest)

The bellringer pulled the rope of the *shumoku* (horizontal hitting log). The log hit the bell. The bell produced a loud sound, "Gwaaa...nnnnn."

The sound lasted almost ten seconds. It seemed that the bell was saying goodbye. Some ladies – who might be mothers of soldiers at the front – were sobbing.

Then an assistant priest said, "This concludes the farewell celebration, but now we have to dismount and to transport the bell to a specified place. Spectators are welcome as long as they are not in the way of the workmen. Thank you for coming."

**I** stayed and watched. The bell weighed probably a ton or so. I was curious as to how the workmen could move it safely. Several elderly workmen, who were all retired *tobi*, appeared along with Kashira. He gave prompt orders to the workmen. They started to assemble a wooden structure which consisted of several square timbers, just like four-by-fours. Workmen systematically piled up the timbers immediately below the bell until their top reached only an inch from the bottom of the bell. Then they pounded two wedges into the pile of four-by-fours,

from both sides of the pile. The bell has gradually raised a fraction of an inch at a time with every pounding of the wedges.

When the bell was raised about three inches, one of the *tobi* climbed up with a ladder and unhooked the bell from its support beam. Now the bell was free from its building and sat on the top of a pile of four-by-fours. Next, workmen tied up the bell onto the top layer of four-by-fours so that four pieces of the top layer of timbers and the bell became a single solid object. Then, they brought out a two-wheeled pull wagon; we called *daihachi-guruma*. They placed the wagon next to the bell house. They put on the wheel cock on both wheels and made sure that the wagon would not move. A big board was placed between the wagon under the bell. Workmen used levers and ropes and gradually transferred the bell onto the wagon. Finally, they securely tied the bell to the wagon. Then, Kashira produced a red shoulder band, which was usually given to a departing soldier, and placed it on the top of the bell. When they finished, the spectators clapped their hands and praised the workmen. A total of eight workers started to move the wagon: four guys to pull and four guys to push. I don't know how far they had to go, but they would have hard work ahead. When the wagon started to move slowly, spectators spontaneously sang, "*Katte kuruzo to isamashiku...*" (When I left home, I swore to people that I would come back with a victory...) It was the song that we always sang for a departing soldier. The only difference this time was that the departing soldier did not respond with a military salute.







There once was a young man who loved a flag. A flag of bright colors. A symbol of something great and good. His country's flag. The flag his father and his father's father had served and bled under. It was the flag he looked forward to serving and, perhaps, maybe, bleeding under it himself in defense of a noble cause of diversity, equality and inclusion.

He pledged his allegiance. he saluted. He swore eternal honor and devotion to it. He put facsimiles of the flag on everything he owned. His shirts, his shoes, his underwear. There was strength in the flag's simple design. There was nothing else like the patriotism he felt as he painted the stars and stripes on his car, on his boat. If he could have afforded an aeroplane, he would have adorned it with the celestial white stars on the blue field of the tail and the indomitable red and white stripes along its eagle-like wings.

Red, white and blue. It was his flag, it was his country, it was his being: the best in all humanity, the leading light for freedom and glory, the best in all the world! It was a flag that everyone should salute, revere and – if it is not too irreverent – something that should be worshipped ... it was almost that sacred.

The villainous day of 9-1-1 had produced a surge of patriotism not felt since the infamous day of December 7, 1941. America had been viciously attacked. Americans had died ... for their flag ... for their hallowed honor. From that very moment on, nearly everyone bought a flag. Usually (and strangely ironic), a flag assembled and produced in a foreign country. But still, they displayed the flag in their front yards. They pasted the flag on their car's bumpers. On some cars you could not see out the back window for the number and size of the flags. They had their bank make new checks with a flag background. They flocked into tattoo parlors and walked out with flags on all parts of their bodies – some flags permanently adorning in places unmentionable – yet, all for the support of national identity and native patriotism. The fervor that approached a holy Jesus fixation. We were pissed! Someone would surely suffer the consequences for striking saintly, godly, pious, sanctimonious America. That is what the flag transubstantiated to and thus, what they stood for.



How virtuous the banner of Francis Scott Key's flag had become. It made such a stirring sight as the breeze caressed it when it was displayed atop a large pole. The larger the pole the better. The bigger the flag the better. It



was a symbol of virility. It was a symbol of “don’t fuck with us!” (Not if you knew what was good for you, you S-O-B’s).

The flag became the symbol of the alpha and the omega, of righteous divinity. And, oh yes, we have a great selection of made-in-Japan sedans and SUV’s to sell you.

Peace was discarded as a virtue. Onward Christian soldiers marching as to war gave such fabricated comfort. The cross of Jesus would be the standard the flag would be attached to and all, all would bow. “Stand for the flag, kneel for the cross”. Oh, how devout, oh how stirring ... oh how dreadfully repressive. The very antithesis of freedom of thought.

By the dawn’s early light, many months hence, what entropy will we gaze upon? What condition will all the flags in front of the mansions and hovels on Indian River Drive be? Will they be strong and new? Starched and straight? Will they be bold and bright? Proud and brave?



Or, out there in the forefront of the elements, after sun and wind and rain has had their erosive sway, will you no longer see it as you wish it to be? Will you ask yourself, “where did proud and brave go?” Will the flags become a slacker’s flag; dull, faded and stringy, a picture of neglect? Wind whipped to shreds. No longer rugged, but ragged.

Will your freedoms be as those tattered flags of malignant inaction, threadbare to a wisp of what they once represented? This would not be battle scars. This would be the deterioration of a symbol from procrastination – a blight on the holy badge of freedom.

Oh say, will our flag still be there in dawn's early light? Would this be what Tom Paine spoke of when he compared the summer soldier and the sunshine patriot with the winter soldier who stayed with founding father George Washington in frigid Valley Forge. When times were tough and the future of the 1776 revolution looked bleak and dismal?

I challenge you; take a trip down Indian River Drive – or even around your own neighborhood – and what will you see? Flags are everywhere. Flags promoting conflict and division. Flags in various states and conditions.

Too often you will see the stars and stripes desecrated with the blasphemous image of an orange-tinted traitorous dog. "Dog", that is *his* word, the traitor's word. For people *he* hates. For derision. "Dog", spoken with disdain.



How ignorant.

Below the defiled flag behold other flags with messages of vulgarity, disgust and loathing. A flag on the pickup truck says, "Joe Biden Sucks". How infantile. Outright lies like: "Stop the Steal!" *What steal?* Which fraudulent voters? Have you got evidence? Did you make it all up? *Do you want a lie to become truth?*

Flags that subjectively proclaim, "Make America Great Again" to whimsically "Take America Back" and "Let's go Brandon" to the vulgar, "No More Bullshit" to the blasphemous "God, Guns & Trump". To the most repugnant incivility, "FJB" a shorthand acronym for "Fuck Joe Biden". Classless schemes so incompetent that only the most bigoted would immerse their dignity in shameless degrees of blatant discrimination.



How easy it is to make prejudice a virtue. How simple is it to reduce equality to a negative. How wonderful to exclude – instead of “include” – the undesirable, the different, the detestable from the safety of the constitution. The elevation of intolerance. How pitifully tarnished my country’s emblem has become.



I say to those who display spuriously false content, to those who display sickeningly perverse slogans, to those who don’t care whether or not their message contains a shred of truth. To those phonies who attempt to disguise their racism with jingoistic patriotism I say, for shame.

There is only one thing to answer such mendacity: A middle finger salute to a vandalized banner that no longer waves over the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And now, no longer a young boy, an outraged man sardonically thinks, “How easy it is, to lose sight of a noble end.”



*In case anybody Gives a Rat's ass*

*By Gale Baker*

**TSUNAMI 2024**



**RIDE the BLUE WAVE**

I lived in NYC in the 70s.

Half gallon of milk was \$3.85.

In 2005 in SC it was +\$3.00.

It's now \$3.91 at Publix. Outrageous, right?????

I bought a house in the 80s in LV. The mean mortgage rate then was 8.75%

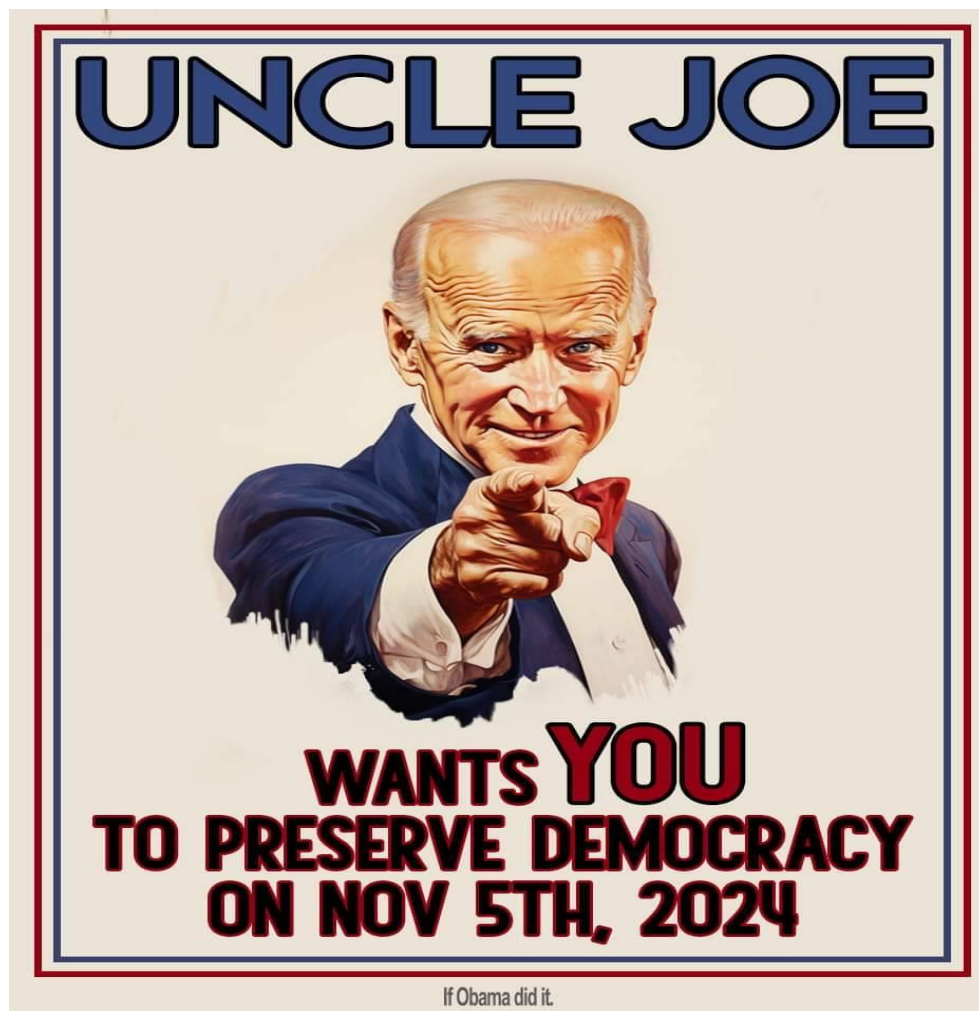
Now rates are in the 7 percentages. Outrageous, right?????

I did not work for an hourly rate - but back then it was \$5 to \$5.75. [And you were expected to show up and work hard for it.]

Now most hourly rates are no less than \$15. Outrageous right????

If you think today's economy is outrageous; then you are a spoiled brat.

Get your head out of your butt and smell the roses.



# POETRY

*“Hurt an artist, and  
@letsbelonelytogetherr  
you'll see masterpieces of  
what you've done.”*





# Phenomenal Woman



Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.  
I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size  
But when I start to tell them,  
They think I'm telling lies.

I say,  
It's in the reach of my arms  
The span of my hips,  
The stride of my step,  
The curl of my lips.

I'm a woman  
Phenomenally.  
Phenomenal woman,  
That's me.

I walk into a room  
Just as cool as you please,  
And to a man,  
The fellows stand or  
Fall down on their knees.  
Then they swarm around me,  
A hive of honey bees.

I say,  
It's the fire in my eyes,

And the flash of my teeth,  
The swing in my waist,  
And the joy in my feet.  
I'm a woman  
Phenomenally.  
Phenomenal woman,  
That's me.

Men themselves have wondered  
What they see in me.  
They try so much  
But they can't touch  
My inner mystery.  
When I try to show them  
They say they still can't see.  
I say,  
It's in the arch of my back,  
The sun of my smile,  
The ride of my breasts,  
The grace of my style.  
I'm a woman  
Phenomenally.  
Phenomenal woman,  
That's me.

Now you understand  
Just why my head's not bowed.  
I don't shout or jump about  
Or have to talk real loud.  
When you see me passing  
It ought to make you proud.  
I say,  
It's in the click of my heels,  
The bend of my hair,  
the palm of my hand,  
The need of my care,  
'Cause I'm a woman  
Phenomenally.  
Phenomenal woman,  
That's me.

—Maya Angelou👉

# Old and Wise

## The Alan Parsons Project

As far as my eyes can see  
There are shadows approaching me  
And to those I left behind, I wanted you to know  
You've always shared my deepest thoughts  
You follow where I go  
And oh, when I'm old and wise  
Bitter words mean little to me  
Autumn winds will blow right through me  
And someday in the mist of time  
When they ask me if I knew you  
I'd smile and say you were a friend of mine  
And the sadness would be lifted from my eyes  
Oh, when I'm old and wise  
As far as my eyes can see  
There are shadows surrounding me  
And to those I leave behind, I want you all to know  
You've always shared my darkest hours  
I'll miss you when I go  
And oh, when I'm old and wise  
Heavy words that tossed and blew me  
Like autumn winds, will blow right through me  
And someday in the mist of time  
When they ask you if you knew me  
Remember that you were a friend of mine  
As the final curtain falls before my eyes  
Oh, when I'm old and wise  
As far as my eyes can see  
Songwriters: Alan Parsons, Eric Norman Woolfson. For non-commercial use only.





## WHO DECIDED?

how did  
civilization get to  
the point where;

a glistening penis  
sliding  
into a luscious  
vagina  
is obscene?

a dinner fork  
spilling  
turkey and  
mashed potatoes  
is celebratory?

who decided?

bert



## The Little Old Lady in Lavender Silk

I was seventy-seven, come August,  
I shall shortly be losing my bloom;  
I've experienced zephyr and raw gust  
And (symbolical) flood and simoom.

When you come to this time of abatement,  
To this passing from Summer to Fall,  
It is manners to issue a statement  
As to what you got out of it all.

So I'll say, though reflection unnerves me  
And pronouncements I dodge as I can,  
That I think (if my memory serves me)  
There was nothing more fun than a man!

In my youth, when the crescent was too wan  
To embarrass with beams from above,  
By the aid of some local Don Juan  
I fell into the habit of love.

And I learned how to kiss and be merry—an  
Education left better unsung.  
My neglect of the waters Pierian  
Was a scandal, when Grandma was young.

Though the shabby unbalanced the splendid,  
And the bitter outmeasured the sweet,  
I should certainly do as I then did,  
Were I given the chance to repeat.

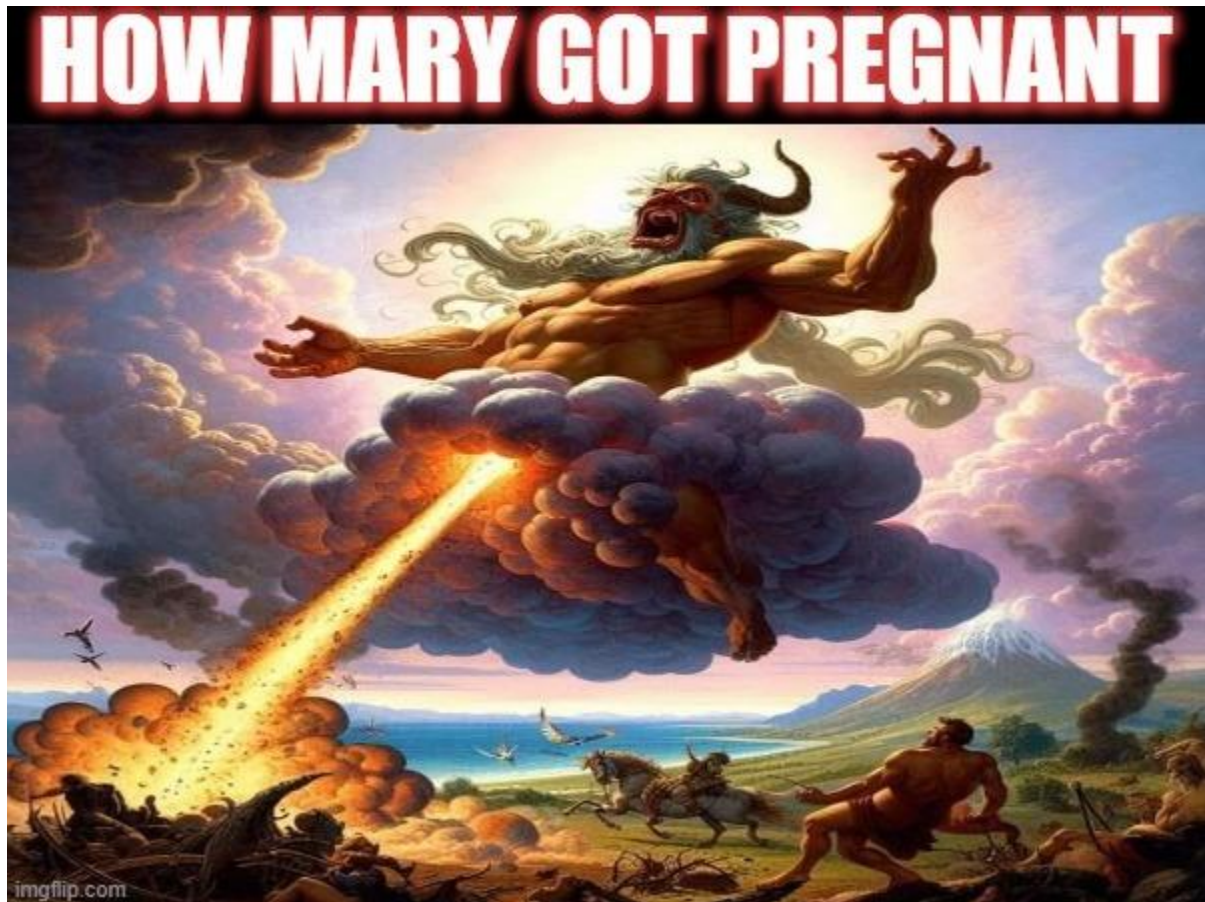
For contrition is hollow and wraithful,  
And regret is no part of my plan,  
And I think (if my memory's faithful)  
There was nothing more fun than a man!

DOROTHY PARKER

[facebook.com/DorothyParkerQuotes](https://facebook.com/DorothyParkerQuotes)



# COMEDY CORNER



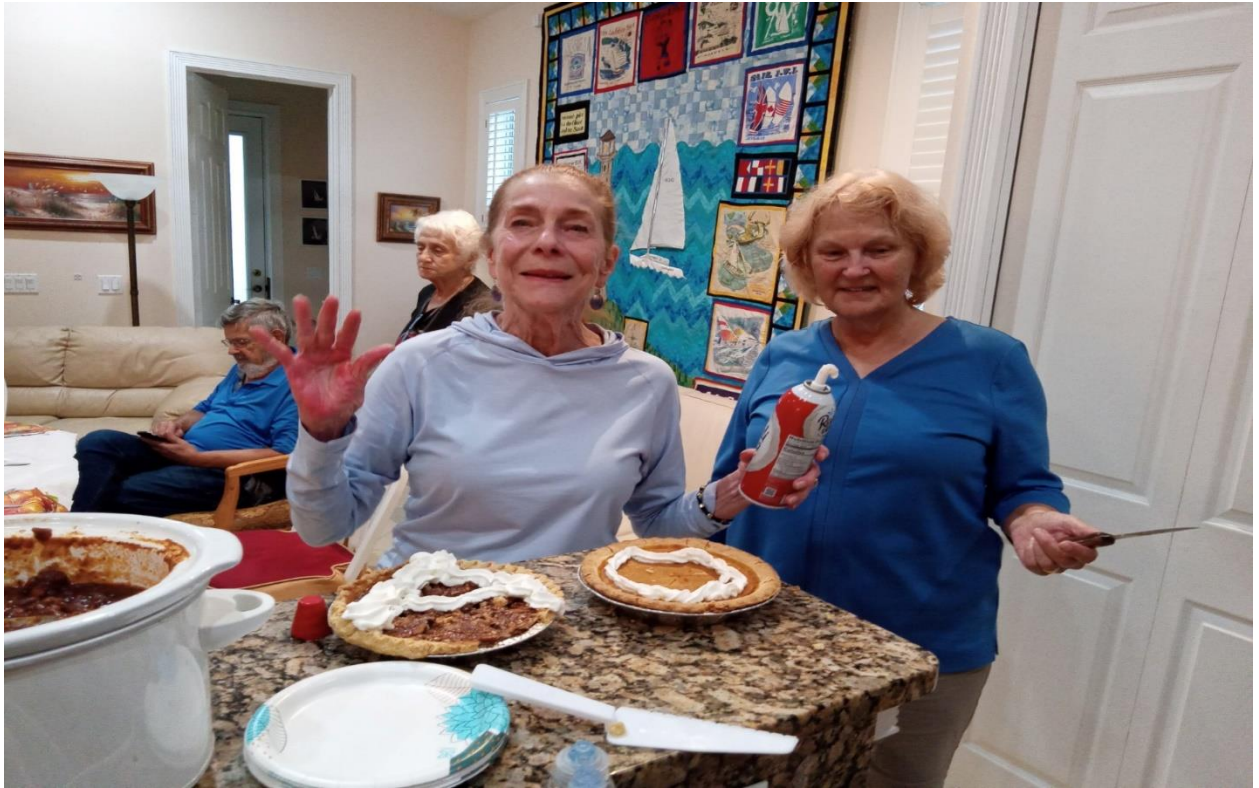


# Burkfeast: *Thanksgiving 2023*

It is time to salute Rick and Sandra Burkhardt for sharing their home and hosting our last couple of gatherings. The gregarious couple provided their home and a wonderfully roasted turkey for us the day after Thanksgiving.

It was not exactly Thanksgiving and it was not exactly ... well, it is just not exactly anything that I can call it except; *Burkfeast*.









Once upon a time. The Aware Ones had annual potluck gatherings. Then came Covid-19 and we put these wonderful occasions on hiatus (this



is the first time I have actually used the word, "hiatus" in this magazine) sheltering in place and, unfortunately, got out of the habit. That was a shame because we had shared such great dishes and got to learn more about each one of our hosts.

Judging from the accompanying pictures I am sure you can see what a great time we all had. I hope their example will encourage the rest of us to step up and begin to host more Aware Ones gatherings. – *Virgil*

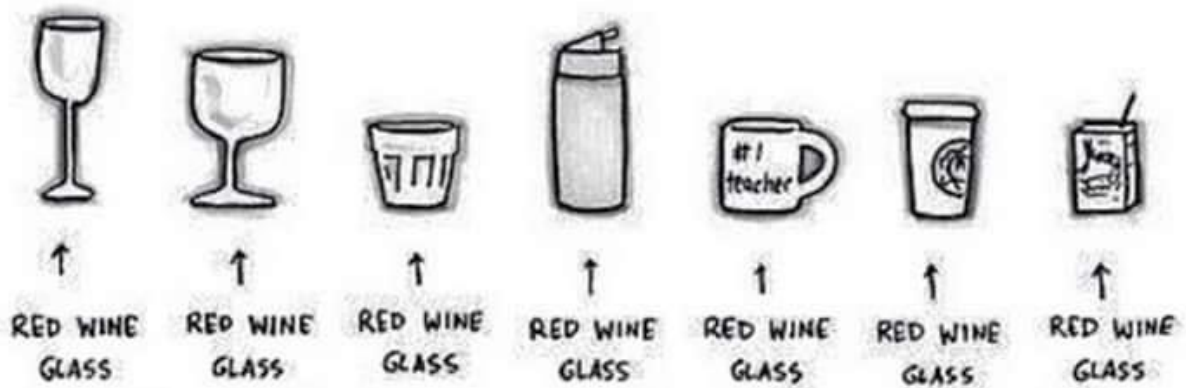








## TYPES OF BEVERAGE GLASSES







# WHEN SIXTY-FOUR-YEAR-OLDS FALL, THEY BREAK

By James Longo

How could I be so fucking stupid?" Jack said.

"No argument from me," Jill said.

"Why didn't you try to stop me?"

"I did."

"How?"

"I gave you *the look*?"

"Sometimes *the look* doesn't work."

"Especially when you ignore it, because you really want to do something," Jill accused, shaking her head.

"I was just being a smart ass."

"I know."

"I used to be an excellent skater," Jack said.





"I know, but the keyword there is *used to be*," Jill said making the sign of air quotes around *used to be*.

"I know, I know, I am a fucking idiot."

"Yes you are, It was okay to go roller skating, but did you have to go out for the speed skate?"

"Yes, you are right," Jack said in contrition.

"It was okay that you went out for the speed skate, but did you have to fall?"

"Do you think I meant to fall?"

"No, I guess not, but you didn't have to hurt yourself."

"Oh, now I meant to hurt myself," Jack said sounding more than a little defensive.

"No, but piss poor decisions, couldn't have led to anything but calamity."

"Hang on, it was your friend's idea to go skating."

"Yeah, but you jumped on the idea, like a rodeo cowboy on a bronking bucko," Jill said.

"Well before I met you, I used to skate a couple of times a week."

"What was that like thirty years ago?"

"Closer to thirty-five," Jack said.

"And you thought you could just show up after thirty years and do the same things you did thirty years earlier," Jill said. She really sounded perturbed.

"Yeah, pretty much," Jack said, with a stupid grin and a shake of his head.

"The other thing you didn't take into account, is that you are 35 years older. Next month you will be sixty-four. And, when sixty-four-year-olds fall, they break," Jill said sounding angry as she pantomimed breaking a stick.

"Yes dear," Jack said and then was quiet, left the room, then came back.

"The thing that really bothers me isn't the separation of my clavicle from the top of my shoulder, but will that decrease my range of motion, and keep me from doing things I enjoy? It is like in an instant I went from being a young man to an old man."

"You should have thought about that before you went out for that speed skate," Jill said sounding as irritated as Jack had ever heard her do.

"Who could have predicted I would fall?"

"I could have, and anyone with half a brain could probably have, but not you."

"You can't change the past, believe me, if I could, I would."

"Yep, you can't change the past, but I am the one who has to live this present, and your stupidity," Jill said sounding more livid than Jack liked.

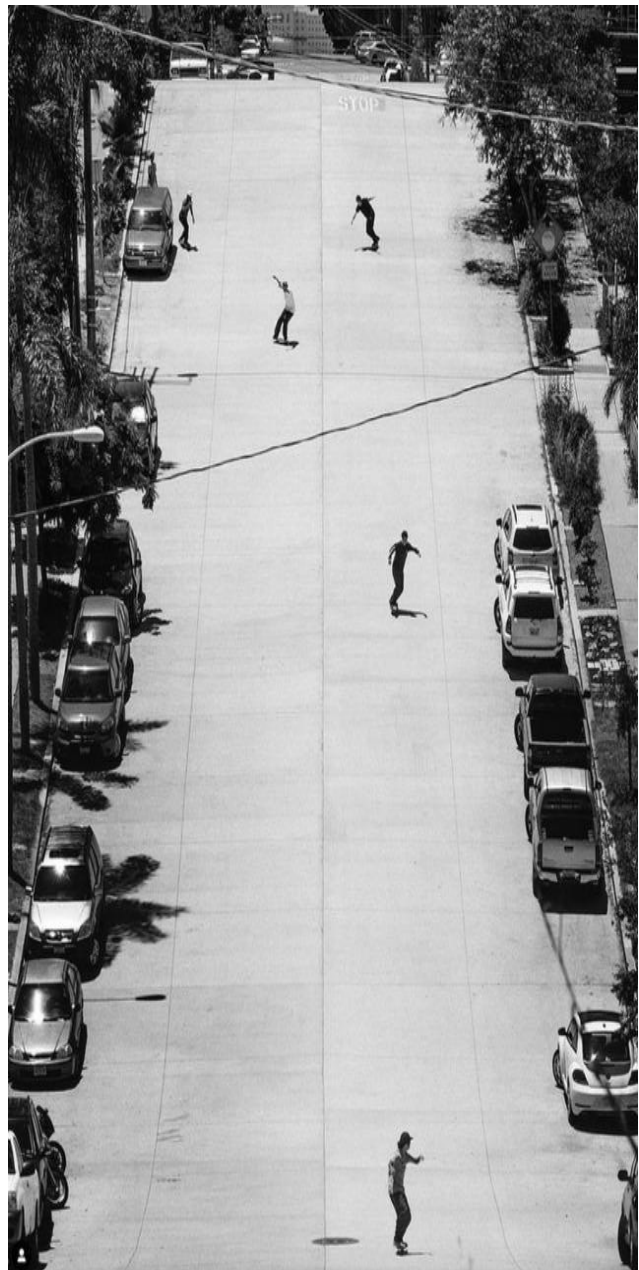
"Where's my phone?" Jack asked as he checked his pockets.

"What are you doing?"

"I am calling around to see if I can find an earlier MRI. I don't think I can wait two weeks for an MRI and another week to find out the results," Jack said.

"Good luck with that," Jill said, with a spousal eye-roll.

Jack turned away and started dialing the phone.

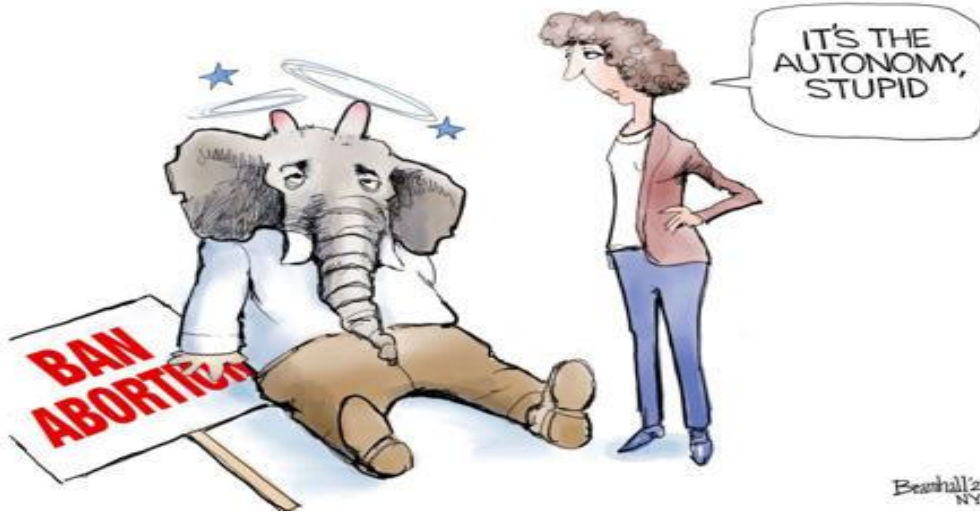


**I used to be stressed out a lot, but then I discovered Yoga. I'm feeling so much better now.**

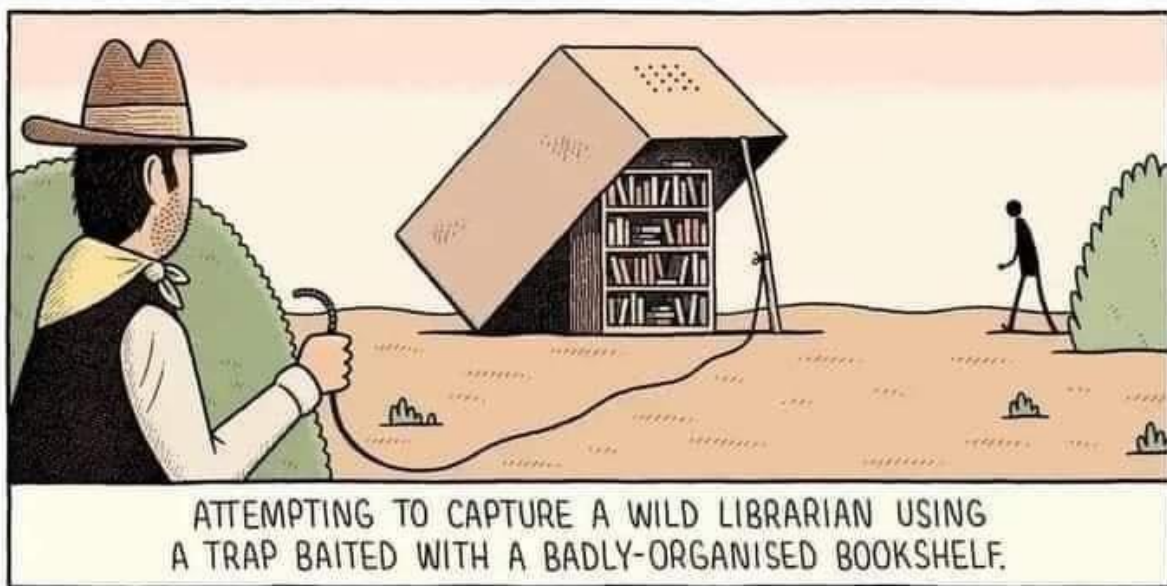


**LAUREN BOEBERT BEING ESCORTED OUT OF SEAWORLD.**









ATTEMPTING TO CAPTURE A WILD LIBRARIAN USING  
A TRAP BAITED WITH A BADLY-ORGANISED BOOKSHELF.

TOM GAULD







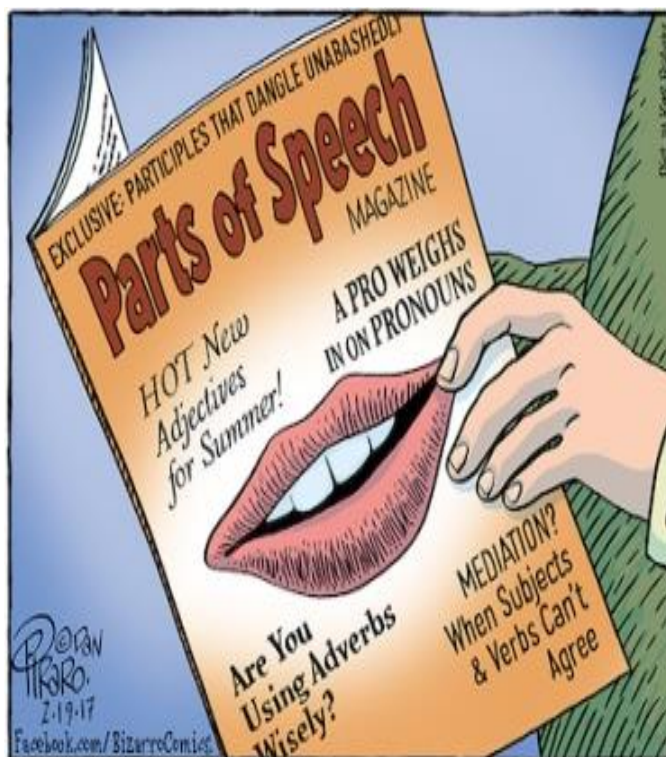
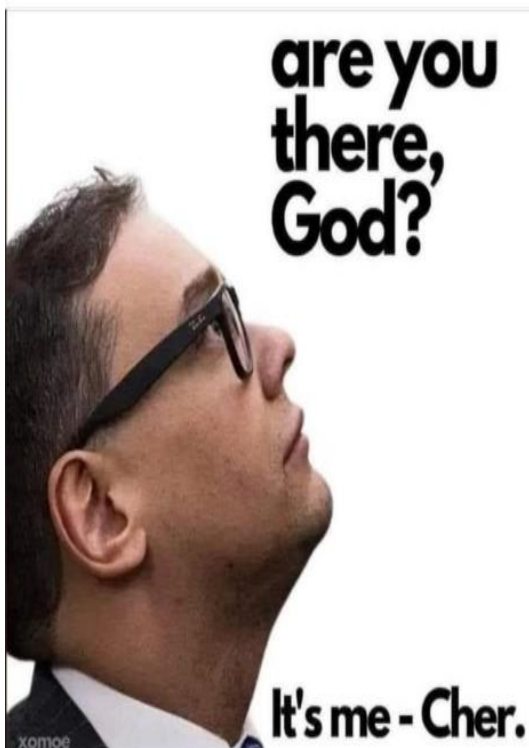
*"I'm starting to prefer the ones who don't believe in me."*

**EVERY TIME I SEE A HOUSE LIKE THIS I FEEL  
SO SAD FOR THE PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS**



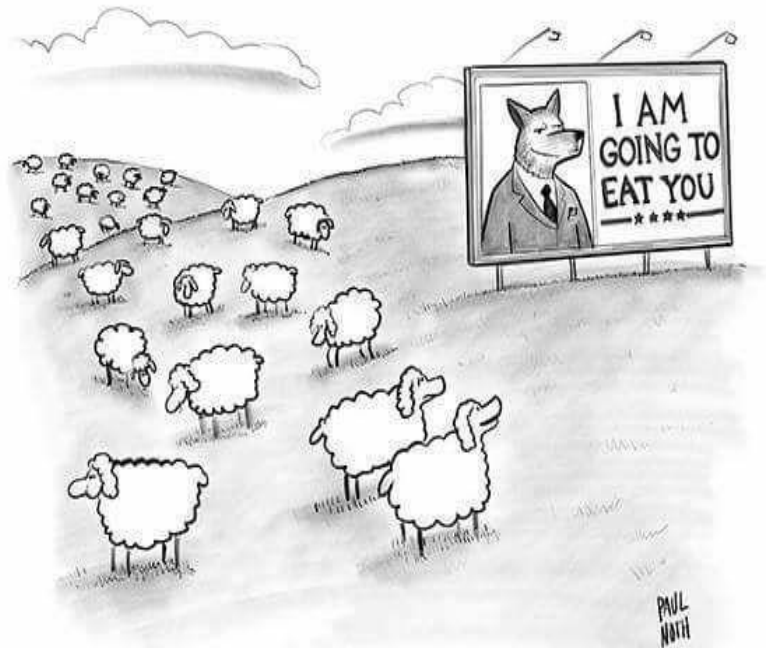
[HTTP://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/PHILOSOPHICALATHEISM](http://www.facebook.com/PhilosophicalAtheism)

**WHO ARE FORBIDDEN TO CELEBRATE THEIR  
RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY BECAUSE OF THAT NASTY  
"WAR ON CHRISTMAS"**



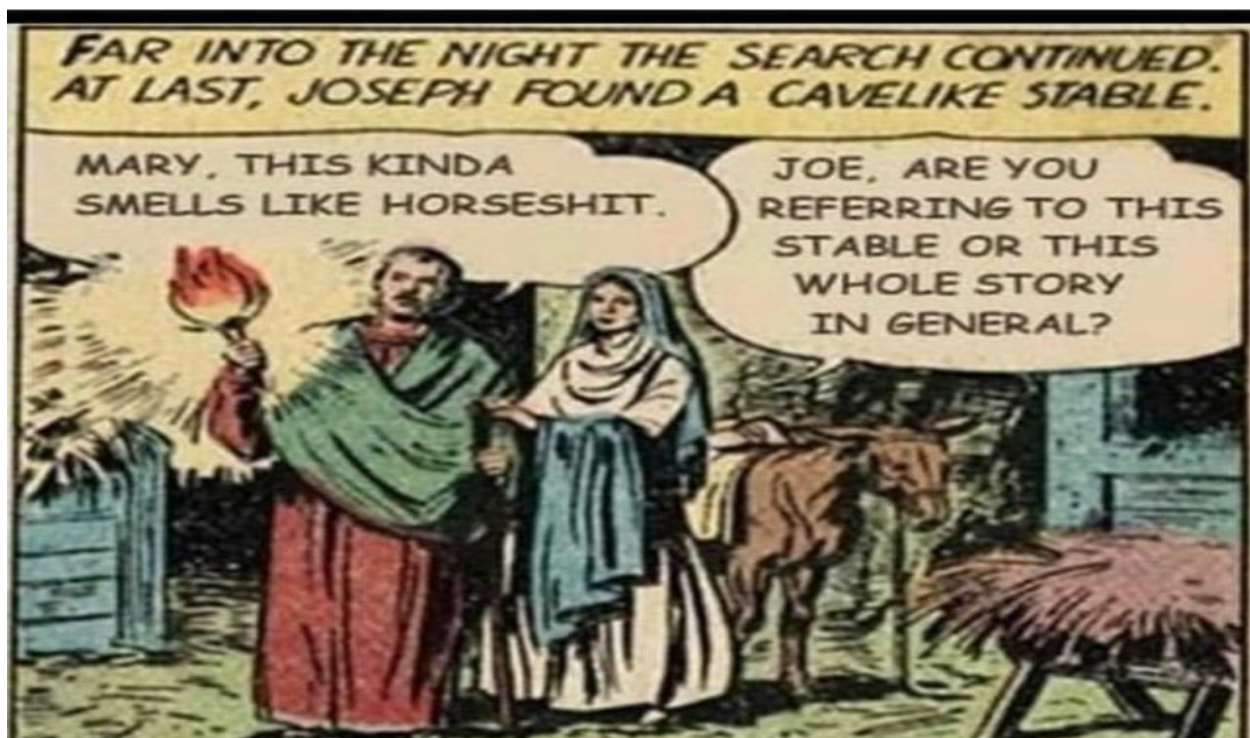
**“My brother and I are both atheists, but we observe any holiday involving cake.”**





*"He tells it like it is."*

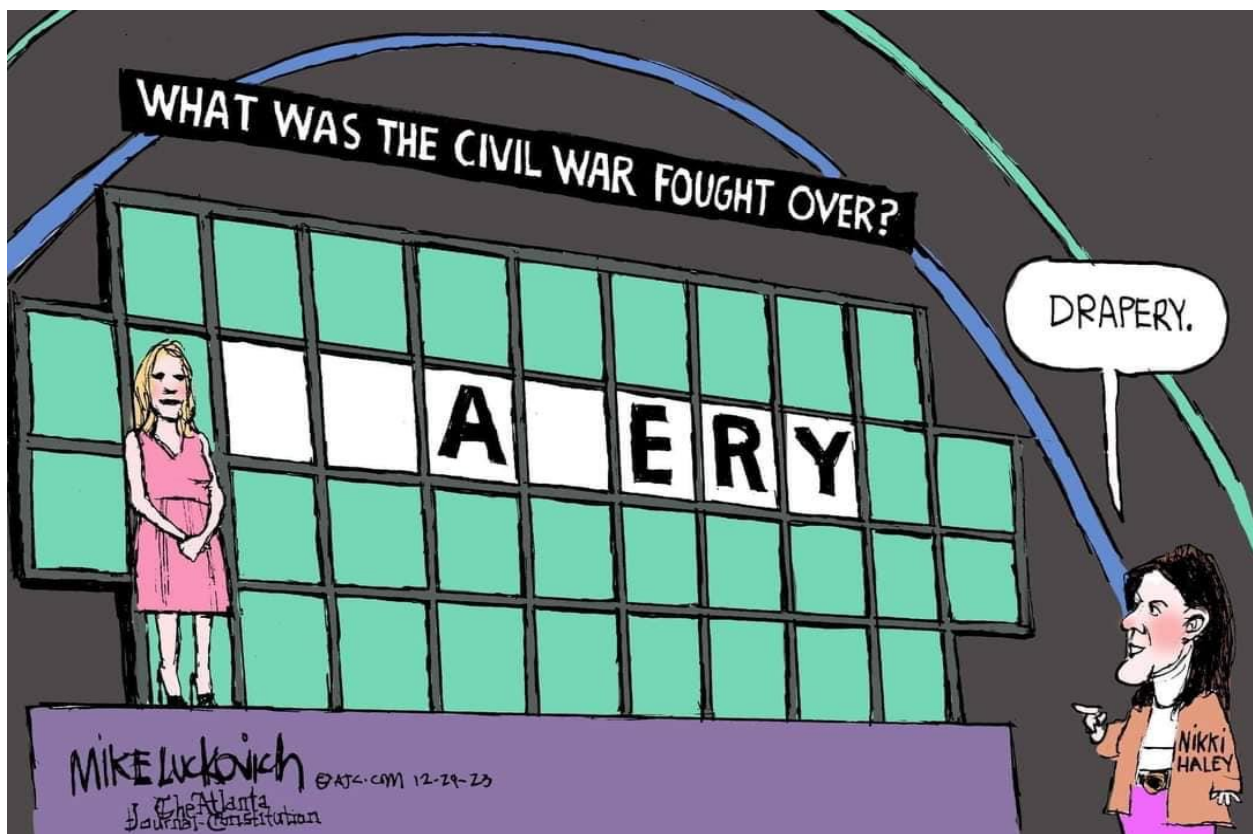
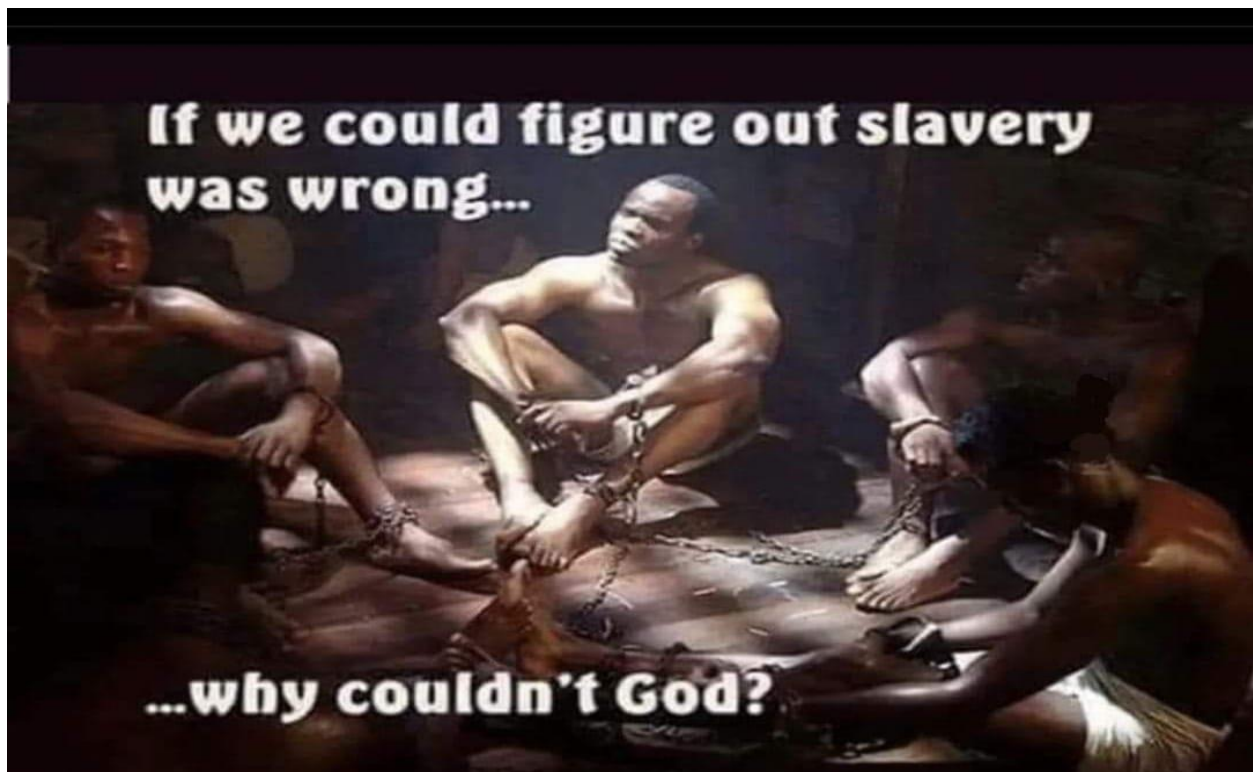












## Sophomore Dies In Kiln Explosion

Flinnage, PA (Associated Press) Tragedy struck the small, close-knit Emily Dickinson College community Thursday when a kiln explosion on campus took the life of one of its students.

Fawn Liebowitz, 20, a sophomore Home Economics major from Ft. Wayne, Indiana, was working near one of two large kilns in Meredith Hall when it exploded, killing her instantly. Flinnage Fire Chief David Hawkins confirmed that over sixty pieces of pottery were being fired for the first time in the DuKane Craftmaster when the mishap occurred. "We have no knowledge of any problems with the unit ever," he said.

Students and faculty are mourning the untimely passing of Liebowitz. "She was a spirited, vivacious, intelligent girl with a beautiful smile and always a kind word," said Shelly Dubinsky, Liebowitz's roommate. "I loved her like a sister and will miss her like one, too."

Boyfriend Frank Lymon of nearby Faber College, who had just talked to her last week, was devastated as well. "We were engaged to be engaged," he said. "She was going to make a pot for me."



Liebowitz Only a Sophomore



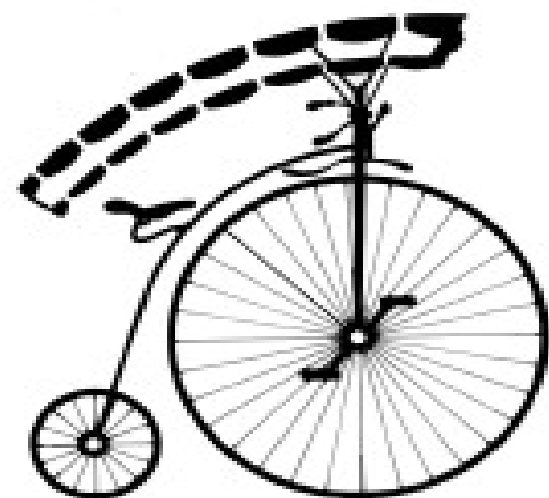
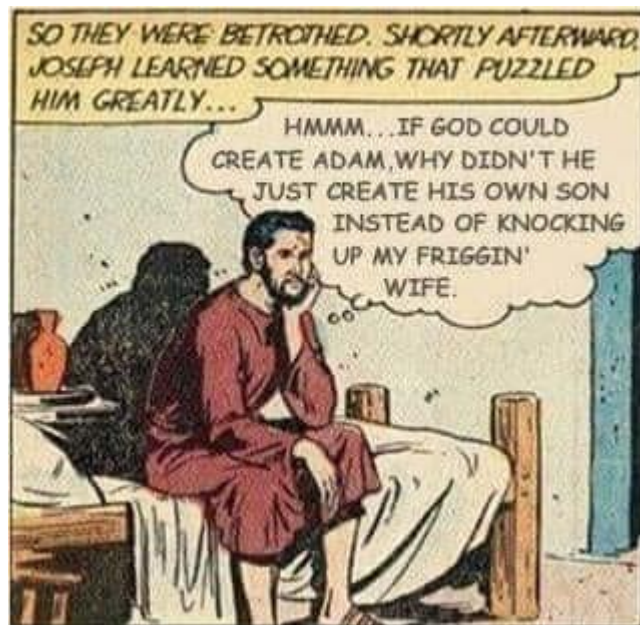


Scientist: my discoveries are useless if taken out of context



Media:

Scientist claim their discoveries are useless



BE SEEING YOU