

THE JOURNAL

MARCH / APRIL 2024 VOL. 9, NO. 2



President Joe Biden – Executive Cooooool!

There's only so much "sky is falling" a person can take,
even when the sky is really falling – p. 22

My Years of Forced School Prayer – p. 69

What Most Americans (MAGA Evangelical)

Believe to be True – p. 89

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.2

March / April 2024

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

awareonesofthetreasurecoast.com

INTRODUCTION



Seen on the street in Kyiv.

Welcome to the 2nd edition of the 9th volume of the Aware Ones of the Treasure Coast's journal. Ta-Daaahhhhhhhh! (Wait for applause)

Thank you, thank you, thank you and you and you. Have a Commander, welcome aboard. Alright, who said this is the good ship Lollipop? If I had a hammer, I will stand no mutiny, I will stand no procrastination. (Wait for cheers and confetti)

If you have been reading along in your handbook, you will remember that I have warned about the seriousness of the gaslighting we will be facing this coming election year. And guess what. The volume of gas is beyond my ability to measure it and we still have 7 to 8 months to go before this baby breaks loose. (Wait for sustained laughter)

But seriously folks, I am not kidding. I just watched a 5-minute compilation of oral scatology from the most recent CPAC

conference that looked more like a federation of disgusting misogynists, drooling racists and closeted homophobic fascists. Their blathering is constant and intended to flim-flam the ignorant and mystify the terminally gullible. (Wait for mutters and general growling to subside)

And these assholes sincerely believe they are the chosen people and seriously wish that the rest of us will languish for eternity in a fiery hell. This is not my father's Christianity. (Nod to the murmurs of approval)

But they are not going to win. I am convinced we, the Aware Ones, are going to have work together on this thing to keep one another from becoming screaming dipsomaniacs. We have to.

One thing I am certain of is: We are the Aware ones and Aware equals "woke." And "woke" equals "observant," and "observant" equals "intelligent." I am woke. You are woke. WE ARE WOKE. Being woke means you know things from observation. Empirical things. Being woke means you are empathetic to others' problems. Being woke means that you know that caring for your fellow humans is a good thing and misogyny, racism and fascism are bad things even for the people who are misogynists, racists and fascists their slimy selves. (Wait for whistling and yells)

I cannot believe that the political party of my father is sucking up to and encouraging these crooks, liars and, and, (Take deep breath and look off into the horizon wistfully) ... I just hope, at the end of the gestation period, the baby doesn't look like DJ Trump!

And if I hear another "both sides" BS comparison I... I ... I will have a very nasty accident. Meanwhile heed these words of advice. (Run off stage, dodging and ducking hurled selections of rotten vegetables and fruit)

WORDS OF ADVICE:

"If Something Seems To Be Too Good To Be True, It's Best To Shoot It, Just In Case." – Fiona Glenanne

*"The Mob takes the Fifth. If you're innocent, why are you taking the Fifth Amendment?" – The TOFF **

"Foreign Relations Boil Down to Two Things: Talking With People or Killing Them." – Unknown

"Speed is a poor substitute for accuracy." – Real, no-shit, fortune from a fortune cookie

"If you believe that you are talking to G-d, you can justify anything." – my Dad

"Colt .45s; putting bad guys in the ground since 1873." – Unknown

"Stay Strapped or Get Clapped." – probably not Mr. Rogers

"The Dildo of Karma rarely comes lubed." – Unknown

"Eck!" – George the Cat

* "TOFF" = Treasonous Orange Fat Fuck, A/K/A Dolt-45,
A/K/A Commandante (or Cadet) Bone Spurs,
A/K/A El Caudillo de Mar-a-Lago, A/K/A the Asset., A/K/A P01135809

The TOFF Explained in One Quote

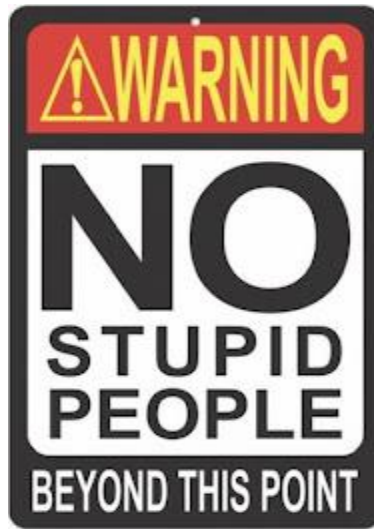
"If you can convince the lowest white man he's better than the best colored man, he won't notice you're picking his pocket. Hell, give him somebody to look down on, and he'll empty his pockets for you."

What LBJ said to Bill Moyers in 1960. It is what Republicans have run on since then: Goldwater, Nixon, Reagan, right up to the TOFF in three elections.

POSTED BY COMRADE MISFIT ON OR ABOUT 12:05 

LABELS: THE CONFEDERACY PARTY, THE PARTY OF HATE

AND ONE LAST THING:



eb-misfit.blogspot.com

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 1st 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 ymthorp@outlook.com for confirmation.

AOTC MEMBERS

Dan Vignau	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
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.

Sunday Zoom – 11 am Zoom meeting. Contact Dan Vignau <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

March 2024 Women's History Month


March 1 – Aware Ones at Flagler Park, 11 am.

Yellowstone National Park Established (1872)

March 3 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

Inventor **Alexander Graham Bell** born, 1847.



March 7 –  Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.

National Crown Roast of Pork Day

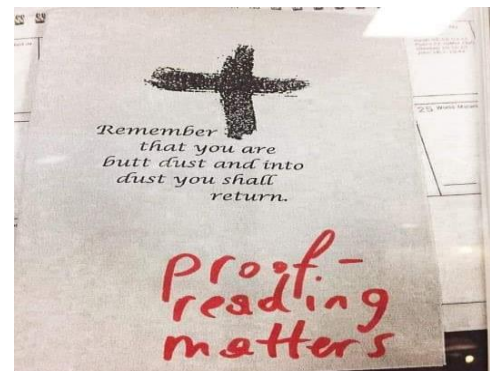


March 8 – Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.

International (Working) Women's Day

National Proofreading Day

1946 - Randy Meisner - bass and vocals for The Eagles ("Take It To The Limit"), **1947 - Michael Allsup** - guitarist for Three Dog Night ("Joy To The World"), **1948 - Little Peggy March** ("I Will Follow Him"), born.



March 10 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

Daylight Savings begins at 2:00 a.m.

Abolitionist Harriet Tubman Day 1822

1935 - Dexter Tisby - vocalist for The Penguins ("Earth Angel"), **1940 - Dean Torrence** of Jan And Dean ("Dead Man's Curve"), born.

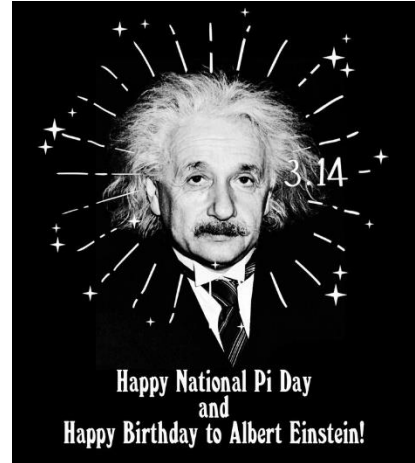




March 14

National Pi Day – Why today? Because today is 3.14, the value of Pi.

Scientist **Albert Einstein** born, 1879. **1933 - Quincy Jones** - record producer ("We Are The World"), **1943 - Jim Pons** - bassist for The Turtles ("Happy Together"), **1945 - Walt Parazaider** - sax player for Chicago ("Saturday In The Park"), born.



March 15 – Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park

11 am. Ides of March

1912 - Samuel John "Lightnin'" Hopkins - influential Blues guitarist ("T-Model Blues"), **1940 - Phil Lesh** - bassist for The Grateful Dead ("Truckin"), **1944 - Sly Stone** - keyboards / lead vocals for Sly And The Family Stone ("Everyday People"), born.

March 17 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

Saint Patrick's Day – Everyone's a little Irish today. Senator John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Kennedy at the St. Patrick's Day Parade in South Boston - March 17, 1958. (Photo: Paul J. Connell/The Boston Globe)



1941 - Clarence Collins - vocalist for Little Anthony And The Imperials ("Tears On My Pillow"), **1944 - John Sebastian** - guitar / lead vocals for The Lovin' Spoonful ("Summer In The City"), born.

March 19

Spring (Vernal) Equinox; Earth Day



March 21 – **Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.**

March 21, 1965: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. leads 3,200 people on the start of the third and finally successful civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. (Photo: James Karales)

1949 - Eddie Money - ("Baby Hold On), **1950 - Roger Hodgson** - vocals and guitar for Supertramp ("Give A Little Bit"), born.



March 22 – **Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.**

1943 - Keith Relf - vocals and harmonica for The Yardbirds ("For Your Love"), **1943 - George Benson** ("On Broadway"), **1944 - Jeremy Clyde** of Chad And Jeremy ("Yesterday's Gone"), born.

March 24 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

1948 - Lee Oskar - harmonica / vocals for War ("The Cisco Kid"), **1951 - Dougie Thomson** - bassist for Supertramp ("Goodbye Stranger"), born.



March 29 – **Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.**

Good Friday

March 29 1973: The last United States troops left South Vietnam, ending America's direct military involvement in the Vietnam War.



Photo: American POW soldiers line up at the Hanoi Hilton prior to their release March 29, 1973, in Hanoi, Vietnam (David Hume Kennerly/Getty)

1945 - Speedy Keen - drums / vocals for Thunderclap Newman ("Something In The Air"), **1947 - Bobby Kimball** - lead singer for Toto ("Rosanna"), born.

March 30

Artist **Vincent van Gogh** born, 1853. **1945 - Eric Clapton** ("Tears In Heaven"), **1942 - Graeme Edge** - drummer for The Moody Blues ("Nights In White Satin"), born.



March 31 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

Easter Sunday

Mathematician **Rene Descartes** born, 1596. **1955 - Angus Young** - guitarist for AC/DC ("You Shook Me All Night Long"), born.



April 2024 **International Guitar Month**

April 1

April Fool's Day; Atheist Day

1946 - Ronnie Lane - bassist for The Small Faces ("Itchycoo Park")

April 4 –  Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.

1951 - Pete Haycock - guitarist for The Climax Blues Band ("Couldn't Get It Right"), **1952 - Gary Moore** - guitarist for Thin Lizzy ("The Boys Are Back In Town"), **1955 - Mick Mars** - guitarist for Motley Crue ("Live Wire"), born.

April 5 – Aware Ones at Flagler Park, 11 am.

Educator **Booker T. Washington** born, 1856. **1928 - Tony Williams** - vocalist for The Platters ("Smoke Gets In Your Eyes"), **1932 - Billy Bland** ("Let The Little Girl Dance"), **1939 - Ronnie White** - vocalist for The Miracles ("The Tears Of A Clown"), born.

April 7 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

1938 - Spencer Dryden - drummer for Jefferson Airplane ("Somebody To Love"), **1947 - Patricia Bennett** - vocalist for The Chiffons ("He's So Fine"), **1949 - John Oates** - guitar / vocals for Hall And Oates ("Sara, Smile"), born.

April 12 – Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.

1944 - John Kay - lead singer of Steppenwolf ("Magic Carpet Ride"), **1950 - David Cassidy** - lead singer of The Partridge Family ("I Think I Love You"), **1951 - Alex Briley** - the sailor in the Village People ("YMCA"), born.

April 14 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

Webster's Dictionary Published, 1828

**Holy wars
should make
everyone
an
Atheist.**

**YOU CAN SAY PLEASE AND THANK
YOU A MILLION TIMES AND YOUR
TODDLER WILL NEVER REPEAT IT**



**BUT SAY "ASS FACED
MOTHERFUCKER" JUST ONCE.**



**F.Y.I. You pee on a
jellyfish sting not a
jelly stain. Again my
apologies to the lady
at the Waffle House
this morning.**

1945 - Ritchie Blackmore - lead guitarist for Deep Purple ("Smoke On The Water"), born.

April 15

Titanic Remembrance Day; Income Taxes Due

Artist/Inventor **Leonardo Da Vinci** born, 1452. **1933 - Roy Clark** ("Yesterday When I Was Young"),
1937 - Bob Luman ("Let's Think About Living), born.

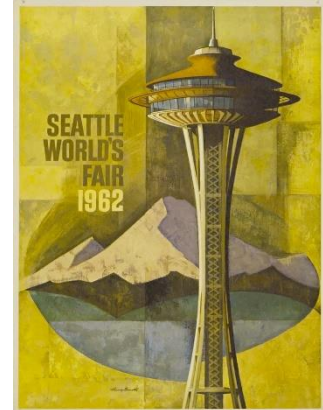


April 19 – Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.

Revolutionary War began (1775)

April 21 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

1962: The Seattle World's Fair (Century 21 Exposition) opens. It is the first World's Fair in the United States since World War II.



April 23

1985: Coca-Cola changes its formula and releases *New Coke*. Within weeks of the announcement, the company was fielding 5,000 angry phone calls a day. By June, that number grew to 8,000.

William Shakespeare born, 1564. **1936 - Roy Orbison** ("Pretty Woman"), **1939 - Ray Peterson** ("Tell Laura I Love Her"), **1947 - Glenn Cornick** - bassist for Jethro Tull ("Bungle In The Jungle"), born.



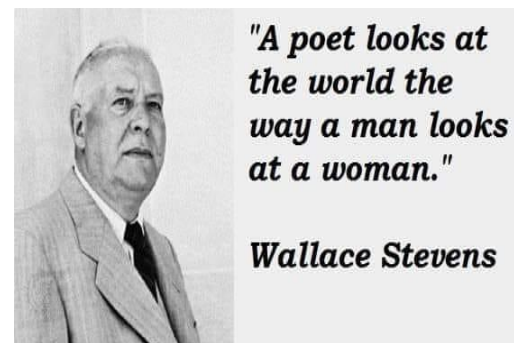
April 26 – Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.

Richter Scale Day

Seismologist **Charles Richter** born, 1900. **1938 - Duane Eddy** ("Rebel Rouser"), **1941 - Claudine Clark** ("Party Lights"), **1942 - Bobby Rydell** ("Volare"), **1943 - Gary Wright** ("Dream Weaver"), born.

April 28 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

Great Poetry Reading Day; Kiss Your Mate Day – guys, do not forget this one. Kiss her, then read her some poetry.



James Monroe born, 1758 (5th President)

April 30

International Jazz Day; Hairstyle Appreciation Day

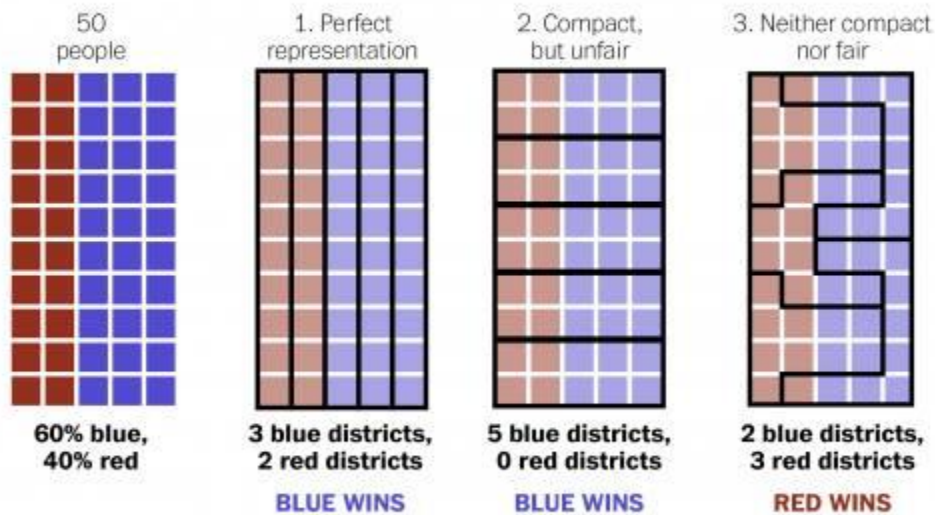
1975: South Vietnam surrenders.

1933 - Willie Nelson ("You Were Always On My Mind"), **1941 - Johnny Farina** of Santo And Johnny ("Sleep Walk")



Gerrymandering, explained

Three different ways to divide 50 people into five districts



WASHINGTONPOST.COM/WONKBLOG

Adapted from Stephen Nass

Atheist Quotes

FREETHOUGHT OF THE DAY

"So many wars and strife are borne out of opposing religious views. If people don't have kindness, respect, tolerance, and compassion at the core of their beliefs, then their religion is pointless."

Annie Lennox

Interview, Wall Street Journal (2007)

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Creator of the universe went to great trouble to create the foreskin. Then insisted that you cut it off.
Makes sense.

Richard Dawkins



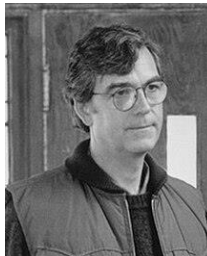
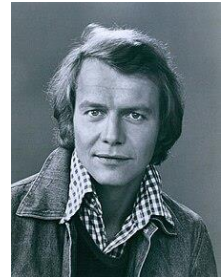
LIVES LIVED – LIVES LOST

January 2024



4 Glynis Johns, 100, British actress (Mary Poppins, A Little Night Music, The Sundowners), Tony winner (1973). In 1973, Johns was in the original cast of A Little Night Music, written by Stephen Sondheim, which premiered on 25 February at the Shubert Theatre in New York. The song "Send In the Clowns" was written with her in mind.

- **David Soul**, 80, American-British actor (Starsky & Hutch, Magnum Force) and singer ("Don't Give Up on Us")



5 Brian McConnell, 81, American actor and writer (SCTV Network, Saturday Night Live, National Lampoon), complications from Parkinson's disease. During the early 1970s, McConnell was one of the main writers for National Lampoon, where he authored and co-authored many articles. He left the magazine after four years, but as Rick Meyerowitz commented in the book Drunk Stoned Brilliant Dead in 2010, "...[McConnell's Lampoon work] is well loved, here on Earth, and on his home planet."



7

Franz Beckenbauer, 78, German football player (Bayern Munich, national team) and manager, two-time world champion and Ballon d'Or winner (1972, 1976). Nicknamed *der Kaiser* ("the Emperor"), he is widely regarded as one of the greatest players of all time, and is one of nine players to have won the FIFA World Cup, the European Champions Cup, and the Ballon d'Or.



11

Bud Harrelson, 79, American baseball player (New York Mets, Philadelphia Phillies, Texas Rangers), complications from Alzheimer's disease. Harrelson was inducted into the New York Mets Hall of Fame in 1986. He was the only person to take part in both of the Mets' World Series championships and appear in the first three World Series for the team; he won in 1969 and appeared in the 1973 World Series as a player and in 1986 as a coach.



14

Dominick Cirillo, 94, American mobster (Genovese crime family). Cirillo rose in power to caporegime, then briefly served as acting boss for imprisoned boss Vincent "Chin" Gigante, before stepping down to serve as consigliere.

16

Peter Schickele, 88, American composer and musical satirist (P. D. Q. Bach). Schickele developed an elaborate parody around his studies of P.D.Q. Bach, the fictional "youngest and the oddest of the twenty-odd children" of Johann Sebastian Bach. Among the fictional composer's "forgotten" repertory are such farcical works as The Abduction of Figaro, the "Unbegun"



symphony, "Pervertimento for Bagpipes, Bicycle and Balloons", "No-No Nonette", *Canine Cantata: "Wachet Arf!"*, *Good King Kong Looked Out*, the "Trite" Quintet, "O Little Town of Hackensack", *A Little Nightmare Music*, the cantata *Iphegenia in Brooklyn*, the *Concerto for Horn and Hardart*, *The Stoned Guest*, "Hansel and Gretel and Ted and Alice", the *Concerto for Two Pianos vs. Orchestra*, the dramatic oratorio *Oedipus Tex* and *Einstein on the Fritz*, a parody of Schickele's Juilliard classmate Philip Glass.

17

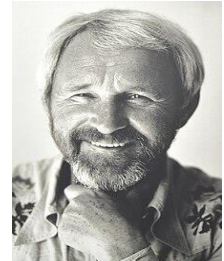
Toni Stern, 79, American musician and lyricist ("It's Too Late"). an American musician. She collaborated with Carole King. Stern wrote the



lyrics for several songs of King's in the 1960s and early 1970s, including It's Too Late

19

Mary Weiss, 75, American singer (The Shangri-Las), best known as the lead singer of The Shangri-Las in the 1960s. Their single "Leader of the Pack" went to #1 on the Billboard Hot 100 charts in 1964. chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.



20

Norman Jewison, 97, Canadian film director he was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Director three times in three separate decades, for *In the Heat of the Night* (1967), *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971), and *Moonstruck* (1987). He was nominated for an additional four Oscars, three Golden Globe Awards, and a Primetime Emmy Award, and won a BAFTA Award. He received the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences's Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award in 1999. (*In the Heat of the Night*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Moonstruck*).

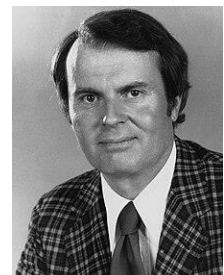


23

Melanie, 76, American singer-songwriter ("Brand New Key", "Lay Down (Candles in the Rain)") and guitarist, Emmy winner (1989). When first released, "Brand New Key" was banned by some radio stations because some inferred sexual

innuendo in the lyrics. I wrote ['Brand New Key'] in about fifteen minutes one night. I thought it was cute; a kind of old thirties tune. I guess a key and a lock have always been Freudian symbols, and pretty obvious ones at that. There was no deep serious expression behind the song, but people read things into it. They made up incredible stories as to what the lyrics said and what the song meant. In some places, it was even banned from the radio ... My idea about songs is that once you write them, you have very little say in their life afterward ... People will take it any way they want to take it.

- **Charles Osgood**, 91, American news anchor (CBS News Sunday Morning), complications from dementia.



25

Kenneth Smith, 58, American convicted murderer, execution by nitrogen hypoxia. His last words were said to be, "Tonight, Alabama causes humanity to take a step backwards. Thank you for supporting me. Love all of you."

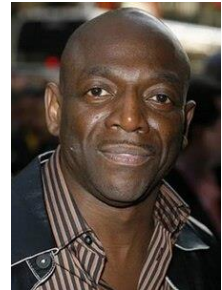
26

Jimmy Williams, 80, American baseball player (St. Louis Cardinals) and manager (Boston Red Sox, Toronto Blue Jays).



29

Hind Rajab, 6, Palestinian child, airstrike. Her story gained significant media coverage in February 2024, after her emergency 3-hour phone call with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society was released, in which she told the dispatcher, "I'm so scared, please come. Come take me. Please, will you come?"



30

Hinton Battle, 67, American actor (*The Wiz*, *Dreamgirls*, *Miss Saigon*) and dancer, Tony winner (1981, 1984, 1991).



- **Chita Rivera**, 91, American actress (*West Side Story*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *Chicago*), Tony winner (1984, 1993) She was the first Latina and the first Latino American to receive a Kennedy Center Honor in 2002, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009. She won the Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2018.



February

1



Pearl Louise Berg (née Synenberg; October 1, 1909 – February 1, 2024) was an American supercentenarian and the 9th oldest living person in the world, as well as the oldest Jewish person alive. She resided in Los Angeles, California, and died on February 1, 2024, at age 114. Pearl Berg resided in Los Angeles, where she died on February 1, 2024, at the age of 114 years, 123 days.



- **Don Murray**, 94, American actor (*Bus Stop*, *A Hatful of Rain*, *The Plainsman*).

3

Aston "Family Man" Barrett, 77, Jamaican musician (Bob Marley and the Wailers, The Upsetters)



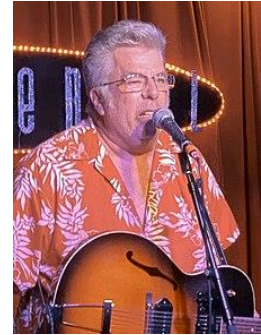
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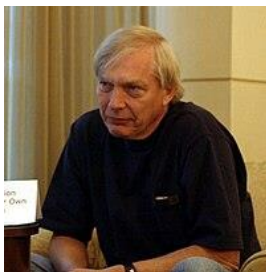
Toby Keith, 62, American country singer ("Should've Been a Cowboy", "How Do You Like Me Now?!", "Red Solo Cup") and songwriter, stomach cancer.

7

Neill Kirby McMillan Jr.,



Aka Mojo Nixon, 66, American musician ("Debbie Gibson Is Pregnant with My Two-Headed Love Child") and actor (Super Mario Bros., Great Balls of Fire!). His style could generally be defined as psychobilly, a musical genre which blends rockabilly with punk rock. Nixon hosted *The Loon in the Afternoon* radio show on Sirius XM.



10

Bob Edwards, 76, American journalist (NPR) and radio host (Morning Edition, The Bob Edwards Show), Peabody Award winner (1999), bladder cancer and heart ailment. He hosted both of National Public Radio's flagship news programs, the afternoon All Things Considered, and Morning Edition, where he was the first and longest serving host in the latter program's history.

- **Angela Chao**, 50, American businesswoman, traffic collision. She was the youngest of six sisters, one of whom is Elaine Chao. Her parents were born in China, but fled to Taiwan in 1949 due to the Chinese Civil War. Chao went to Harvard for her undergraduate degree, which she completed in three years, graduating with a degree in economics in 1994. She went on to receive her MBA from Harvard Business School. She was a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.



11

Randy Sparks, 90, American musician (The New Christy Minstrels, The Back Porch Majority) and songwriter ("Green, Green")

12

David Bouley, 70, American-French chef and restaurateur (Bouley), heart attack. Bouley worked in restaurants in Cape Cod, Santa Fe, New Mexico, France and Switzerland. While in Europe, after studies at the Sorbonne, he worked with chefs Roger Vergé, Paul Bocuse, Joël Robuchon, Gaston Lenôte, Frédry Girardet, and Paul Haeberlin. Bouley returned to work in New York City in leading restaurants of the time, such as Le Cirque, Le Pèrigord, and La Côte Basque, as well as spent time as sous chef in a restaurant opened by Roger Vergé in San Francisco. In 1985, he became chef of Montrachet restaurant, awarded three stars in its first three weeks by the New York Times. In 1987, he became chef/owner of his namesake restaurant, Bouley, in Tribeca overlooking Duane Park, which earned a four-star review in the New York Times and won several James Beard Foundation awards, including Best Restaurant and Best Chef.



13

Kasha Rigby, 54, American competitive skier and pioneer of telemark skiing, avalanche. Rigby joined The North Face Ski Team in 1995 and has since skied in America, Canada, South America, New Zealand, Russia, Asia, Europe, India and even the Middle East. She skied first descents of some of the world's tallest/hardest peaks, including the Five Holy Peaks in Mongolia.



16

Alexei Navalny, 47, Russian lawyer, opposition politician and political prisoner. A Russian opposition leader, lawyer, anti-corruption activist, and political prisoner. He organized anti-government demonstrations and ran for office to advocate reforms against corruption in Russia and against President Vladimir Putin and his government. Navalny was founder of the Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK). He was recognized by Amnesty

International as a prisoner of conscience, and was awarded the Sakharov Prize for his work on human rights.



21

Andrey Morozov, 44, Russian war correspondent and milblogger, suicide by gunshot. On 18 February 2024, Morozov published a post in his telegram channel telling about Russian casualties during the Battle of Avdiivka. Two days later, on 20 February 2024, he deleted the post, claiming to have been forced into doing so by Vladimir Solovyov. The next day, on 21 February 2024, he posted a suicide note, blaming Solovyov, and took his own life with a firearm; he was 44.



22

Roni Stoneman, 85, American Hall of Fame bluegrass banjo player and comedian (Hee Haw). As a member of the Stoneman Family, she won the Country Music Association Award for Vocal Group of the Year in 1967. She was inducted into the International Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame in 2021 with the rest of her family.

26

Jacob Rothschild, 4th Baron Rothschild, 87, British investment banker and peer, member of the House of Lords (1991–1999).



27

Richard Lewis, 76, American comedian and actor (Curb Your Enthusiasm, Anything but Love, Robin Hood: Men in Tights), heart attack

Heroes



Paul McCartney
**Age: 81 - Still Making Music,
and Still Touring the globe**



Mick Jagger
**Age: 80 - Still Making Music,
and Still Touring the globe**



Harrison Ford
**Age: 81 - Still Acting,
and being Fabulous**

tb

Green Day's Billie Joe Armstrong altered the lyrics in "American Idiot" to sing, "I'm not a part of the MAGA agenda," during the band's performance on Ryan Seacrest's New Year's Rockin' Eve.



This incredible photo marks the end of Matador Torero Alvaro Munera's career. He collapsed in remorse



mid-fight when he realized he was having to prompt this otherwise gentle beast to fight. He went on to become an avid opponent of bullfights. Even grievously wounded by picadors, the bull did not attack this man.

Torrero Munera is quoted as saying of this moment: "And suddenly, I looked at the bull. He had this innocence that all animals have in their eyes, and he looked at me with this pleading. It was like a cry for justice, deep down inside of me. I describe it as being like a prayer - because if one confesses, it is hoped, that one is forgiven. I felt like the worst shit on earth."

Assholes of the Month



Missouri MAGA candidate films herself taking flamethrower to LGBTQ books

Matthew Chapman

A pro-Trump candidate in Missouri posted a video of herself to X on Tuesday, using a flamethrower to torch books with LGBTQ themes.

"This is what I will do to the grooming books when I am Secretary of State," Valentina Gomez said in the video, before lighting up the flamethrower and burning two books to cinders, while rap music played in the background. "These books come from a Missouri public library," she added. "When I'm in office, they will burn."

Republicans across the country have pushed for new laws to allow citizen challenges to books that have racial or LGBTQ themes in school libraries. However, sometimes these crusades have extended to public libraries, and on one occasion, even a lawsuit filed against the private bookseller Barnes & Noble to restrict the books from being sold.

Missouri Rejects Rape Exceptions, Senator Says Forced Birth Can Be 'the Greatest Healing Agent'

Missouri was the first state in the nation to ban abortion and seemingly remains determined to be as cruel as possible.

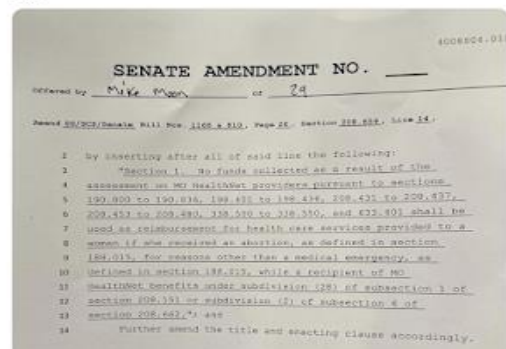


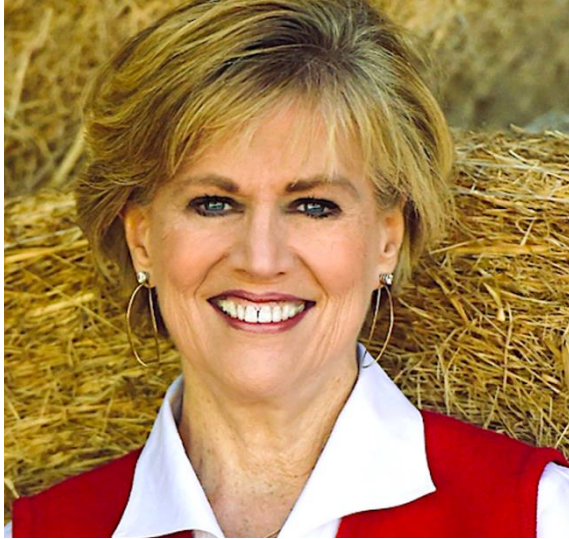
piper_for_missouri

36 m ...

Missouri Senator Mike Moon has drafted an amendment to ban women for life from accessing Medicaid if that woman has ever had an abortion.

Mike Moon also advocates for child marriage .





A white Republican legislator who's seeking to ban diversity programs in Kentucky schools told a mostly Black audience that her father had been a slave. State Rep. Jennifer Decker (R-Waddy), who sponsored a bill to eliminate educational opportunities and programs based on race, went before the Shelbyville Area NAACP a week and half ago and made a startling claim during a question-and-answer session, when someone asked if her family had played a role in the slave trade, reported the *Courier-Journal*.

"My father was born on a dirt farm in Lincoln County," said Decker, a 68-year-old attorney. "His

mother was the illegitimate daughter of a very prominent person who then was kind enough to allow them to work for him as slaves. So, if you're asking, did we own slaves? My father was a slave, just to a white man and he was white." Decker's father was a white preacher born sometime around 1933, which was 68 years after the 13th Amendment ended slavery.

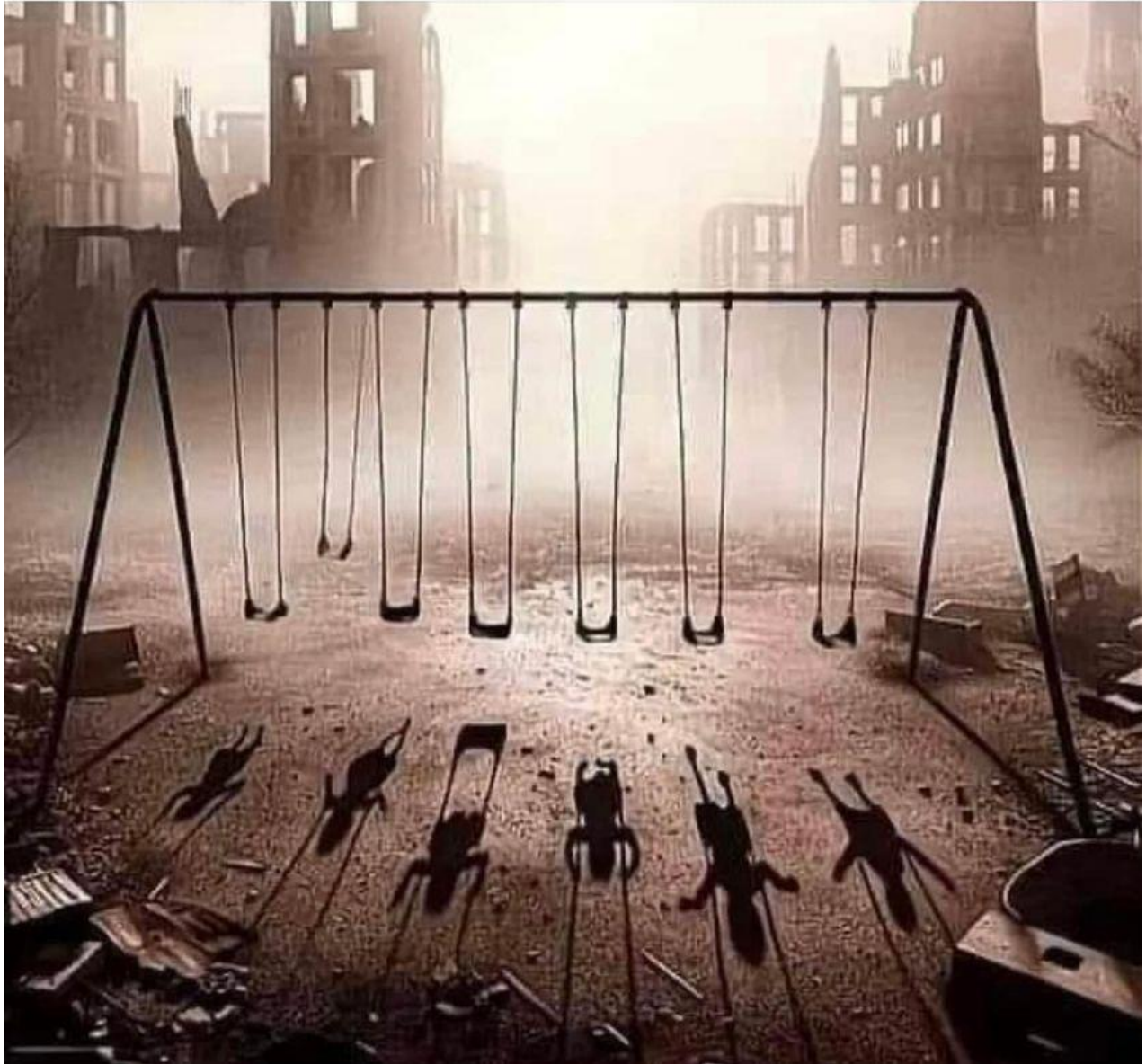
"It was a moment that, in many ways, proved how badly diversity, equity and inclusion programs – this year's chosen bogeyman of Kentucky's right-wing politicians – are needed in Kentucky's schools," wrote columnist Joseph Gerth.



Meanwhile, in Nashville, TN, Feb 18, 2024 ...

COMMENTARY

Banksy, Gaza (2023)



"I'm so scared, please come. Come take me. Please, will you come?" — *Hind Rajab*, p. 16

SOUNDING THE ALARM AGAIN!

By Noah Lugeons – the Scathing Atheist

If these preachers get control of the [GOP], it's going to be a damn problem. These people frighten me. - Barry Goldwater (1965)

One of the real challenges we face every week on this show is that we're trying to get you all the relevant news that's important to atheists, but we also have to do so in a way that doesn't scare you off. Let's face it, there's only so much "sky is falling" a person can take, even when the sky is really falling. And so every time I've gotta start talking about Donald Trump shit again, there's a part of me that's going "haven't you had enough?" But you haven't. Because for some fucking reason, the media is barely covering the terrifying promises he's making every time someone puts a microphone in front of him.

On the day this episode drops, Trump will be speaking in front of the world's largest assembly of Christian media executives in Nashville, Tennessee. And while I don't know exactly what he's gonna say, based on what he's been saying on the campaign trail, my guess is that we're gonna hear more about the fight against Christian persecution that he claims is so rampant in modern America. In a December speech in Iowa, he promised that, upon taking office, he would (quote) "create a new federal task force on fighting anti-Christian bias" (end quote). Maybe he could call it the "Sacrilege Squad."

Now, you might be tempted to dismiss this as akin to his "voter fraud task force." Remember that? When he promised he was

gonna set some people to work finding all the fraud that cost him the popular vote? And then they diddled their dicks for a few months and eventually released a report that said “yeah, there’s no voter fraud.” Well, surely there’s no more Christian persecution in this country than there is voter fraud, so mightn’t this new task force wind up in a similarly dick-diddling situation?



But, of course, that’s a dangerous fantasy to entertain. Because it’s been a long damn time since a Christian said “Christian persecution” and meant “the persecuting of Christians.” Christian persecution has become code for “made me acknowledge the humanity of LGBTQ people.” So when this task force goes out in the world looking for “Christian persecution”, it’ll find restaurants being forced to serve gay people. It’ll find pride flags on display. It’ll find trans people trying to take a shit in a public restroom. And more. Because this trick works on *all* political beliefs. Remember how quick their objection to masking and vaccines became religious in nature? So that task force will also find women exercising their reproductive rights. And stores making contraceptives freely available. And schools teaching about the history of slavery. And all of that will be called Christian persecution — *IS* being called Christian persecution.

See, team Trump and the sycophantic GOP that follows him are often faulted for not having a platform. How serious can a political party be if they have no platform? How could you even know what you’re voting for? People look at this and they often see the very definition of a naked power grab. They want power

for the sake of power, and by failing to establish a platform, they're admitting as much.

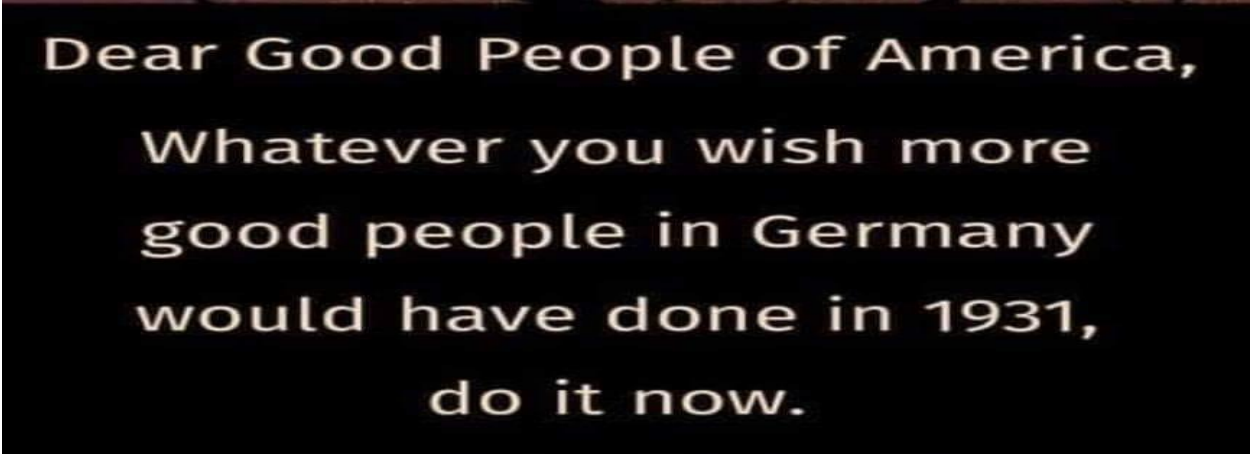


But it's actually *worse than that*. The people who say they're just after power for power's sake are actually being too kind. They're after power *to do evil shit with it*. The reason they don't articulate a platform isn't because they don't have one, it's because writing it down would rob their supporters of any kind of plausible deniability. What they really want is so bigoted and backwards that writing it down would sever any chance they had at appealing to the disengaged centrists. Hell, even most of their ardent supporters don't want to admit to some of that shit publicly.

But some of them do, which is why we can so confidently guess what they're after. Russell Vought, who was Trump's director of the Office of Management and Budget and is widely seen as Trump's most likely Chief of Staff if he wins a second term, produced a series of bullet points on what he wants out of the second Trump administration. And one of the bullet points is just the words "Christian Nationalism." He also wants to place religious restrictions on immigration, limiting it to people who (quote) "accept Israel's God, laws, and understanding of history" (end quote). Trump's also talked openly about bringing Michael Flynn back into the government. Last time we saw Mikey, he was touring the country using Qanon conspiracy theories to recruit what he called "an army of god." William Wolfe, another Trump

insider helping shape the agenda for the next go-round, openly advocates for the outlawing of same-sex marriage, a national ban on abortion, and a strict reduction on *access to contraception*. This is a guy who wrote in a Daily Caller piece (quote) "Jesus Christ wasn't an open-borders socialist" (end quote), despite that being (a) wrong on both counts, and (b) *completely irrelevant to the shaping of immigration policies*.

See, what happened here is that the white, protestant, Christian bigots who enjoyed the top spot in America's caste system for the last forever took a look at the future, and they realized that there was no damn way that their views were ever gonna regain the majority in their lifetimes. So they took their list of political beliefs, they scratched out the word "political" at the top and they wrote in the word "religious." So forcing them to submit to the will of the majority is no longer "democracy", it's "persecution." Of course, the only way to make that stick is with a government that's willing to wink along with your imaginary plight. And the only way to get that is with Christian nationalism.

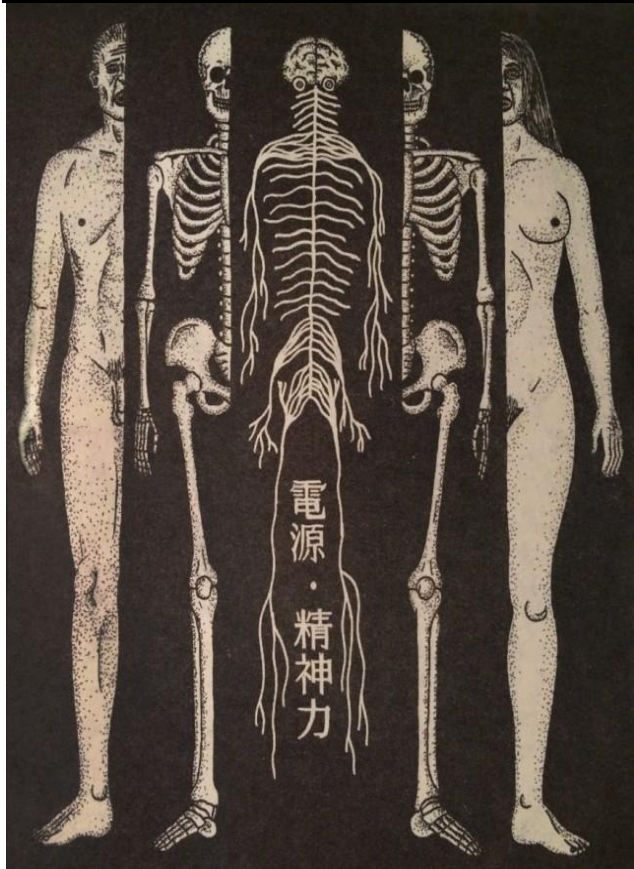


Dear Good People of America,
Whatever you wish more
good people in Germany
would have done in 1931,
do it now.

So, sorry for sounding the alarm while your ears are still ringing from the last time, and sorry for the fact that I'm just gonna keep doing that for the next nine months. We're fighting against no less than a theocratic dictatorship, and I'll be damned if I'm gonna err on the side of "too quiet" about that shit.

God is Dead!

and I Don't Feel So Good Myself



By James Longo

God is dead - Nietzsche.

... And I don't feel so good myself

- Lewis Grizzard.

*Did God make man in his image, or
did man make God in his?*

- Dr. Snyder. (H.S. Opera teacher)

The exact quote is "God is Dead, and we killed him," but exactly what did we kill? If Dr.

Snyder is right, we killed ourselves, or our invention. God is dead, and what is left? Nihilism, (life is meaningless), Existentialism, (you decide), Rationalism (living life based on reason), or Absurdism (life is funny).

God is dead and we are free, but to paraphrase Stan Lee, with great power/ freedom comes great responsibility. No longer society is bound by a single yoke being whipped, manipulated,

and maneuvered by the religious and powerful. Humanity is now more like a herd of cats.

By the way, to wrangle a herd of hungry cats, just walk in front of them with food. I think I just solved the immigration problem, without legislation. Meow.

Life is meaningless. I am sorry, this might be the truest, but also the hardest to live.

"Why was man born to suffer and die? Why not?"
- Bob Schorr. (H.S. chum found hung up on the coat hook of the H.S. bathroom door. "*Help me out, please?*")

To quote Nietzsche again, "When staring into the abyss, the abyss stares back." If life is meaningless, you may have already jumped into the abyss. Trust me don't go there.

Existentialism is where each individual decides what gives his life meaning. How American. What is the meaning of life? You decide. You want to be a religious fanatic, go for it. You want to be a racist, homophobe, gun-toting, rectum, and that is what gives your life meaning, fine. Please understand the pushback. If being a transexual transvestite from Transylvania gives your life meaning, great! Please understand the pushback from parties one and two, but you decide.

Existentially, what gives my life meaning is to try to make other people's lives a little less miserable. I used to try to make them happy, but I've lowered my expectations. As for the few people I



make less miserable I might as well go back and begin staring into that abyss. I hate it when it stares back.

A life based on reason seems reasonable. The trouble is, humans are not reasonable or rational.

To quote Eric Aronson, "Humans aren't rational animals, we are rationalizing animals, who want to appear reasonable to ourselves."



Sorry Mr. Aronson, you're no Mr. Spock. I knew Mr. Spock and believe me, you're no Mr. Spock.

I have done this myself. When buying a house, I came up with an elaborate mathematical formula to buy the best house for us. Then I made sure the formula gave me the answer I wanted by inputting subjective numbers where appropriate. I am a rational human being. Or am I?

If God is dead and we killed him, life is meaningless, except for the meaning

we rationalize or the meaning we arbitrarily decide on. Doesn't it seem a little absurd?

My mother used to say, "If you can learn to like pain and suffering, you'll love life."

I am sure at some point Sisyphus started to laugh as the boulder [he'd been pushing] started back down the mountain. Is Sisyphus' life all that different from our own? Life is absurd, we might as well enjoy it.

What doesn't kill us, just makes us stronger – Nietzsche. Or does it just keep us entertained?

New Year's Resolution

January 05, 2024 By: Nick Carraway (*from juanitajean.com*)

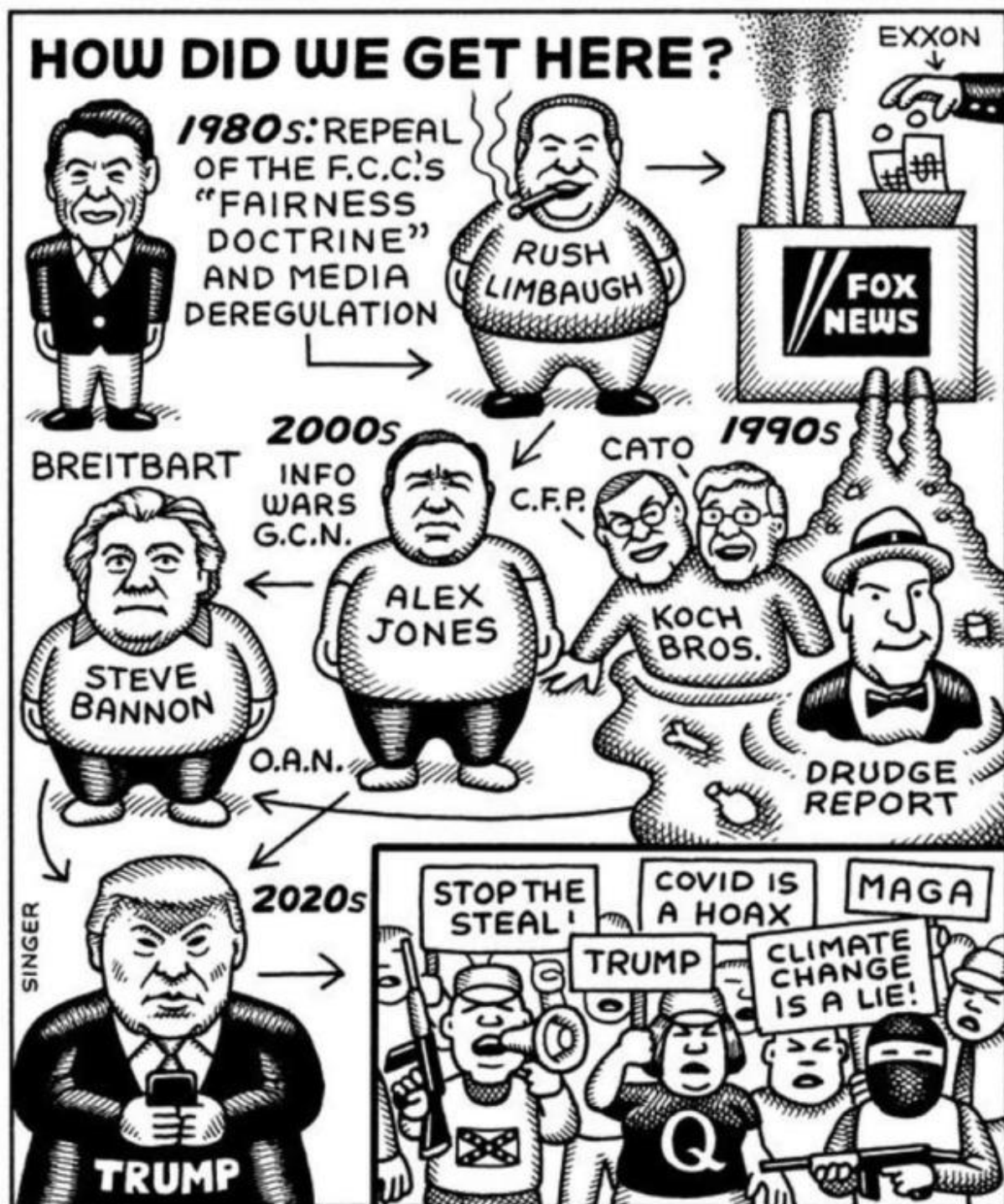
I should start though by acknowledging the calendar. The family and I embarked on a cross country trip to Florida to visit Disney World. We have been there before, but driving there is an entirely unique experience. I remember doing it as a kid; but doing it in this day and age brings new experiences and realizations you don't get when you fly.

The secret to all demagogues is fear. That shouldn't be a revelation. Fear is a powerful motivator. There are a number of people that are afraid of any number of things. It usually comes down to an "us" versus "them" situation. The "them" just changes depending on who you are talking to. It could be all of the immigrants pouring over the border with drugs, mayhem, and the ability to work for cheaper wages. It could be the LGBTQ+ community as it seems to grow by the minute. It could be racial or ethnic minorities that seem to want more and more things. It could be women and their desire for bodily autonomy and equal rights. It could be the so-called *woke* mob that seems to want to indoctrinate our kids with whatever nonsense they have. I could go on and on.

When we see terms like liberty and freedom being misappropriated, we see exactly what is going on. People are afraid THEIR freedom will go away because more of THEM are appearing in their lives. When you are being bombarded daily about invasions and mobs of woke people then you think your rights and your freedoms are being threatened. Therefore, it becomes paramount that you pass laws that protect your way of life by limiting those other ways of life – [*allegedly* – ed.].

This is how demagoguery works. Someone takes those fears and absorbs them like some kind of evil antibacterial cream they can rub into the body politic. They rail against those people. They hate those people. They promise to fight for you and your values.

They promise that those other people (whoever they may be) will never succeed in changing your way of life.



So, we get to the part of constructive suggestions. I've said this before, but it bears repeating. The lunatic fringe has 35-40 percent fairly entrenched and ready to vote based on their fear.

Trying to convince them otherwise is a waste of time. It is important to understand where they are coming from if only to navigate our relationships with them. If you know the motivation then you can tiptoe through conversations and family gatherings without too much incident. That is of course unless you enjoy the fireworks.

The key group is not the right or the left. The key group are the people we might label as the "I don't cares." I'm not calling them undecided voters anymore. They rarely vote because they don't see the relevance to them. They are unengaged by their own choice. They see this as a both sides are corrupt kind of deal. So, the key thing is making them see the distinct difference between what both sides view as freedom. How do we define freedom? What realistic limits do we set on freedom and why? Most importantly, how does it impact you?

The key is in identifying who these folks are and targeting them with repeated messaging. It is about bodily autonomy and not just abortion. It is about what they want to censor next and not just a few books in the library. It is about what will happen to you if THEY deem you as unfit. Are these fear tactics? Sure they are. We should be afraid, and we need to make sure everyone sees what is at stake.

TRUMP FLAGS



BIDEN FLAG





THE AGE WE LIVE IN

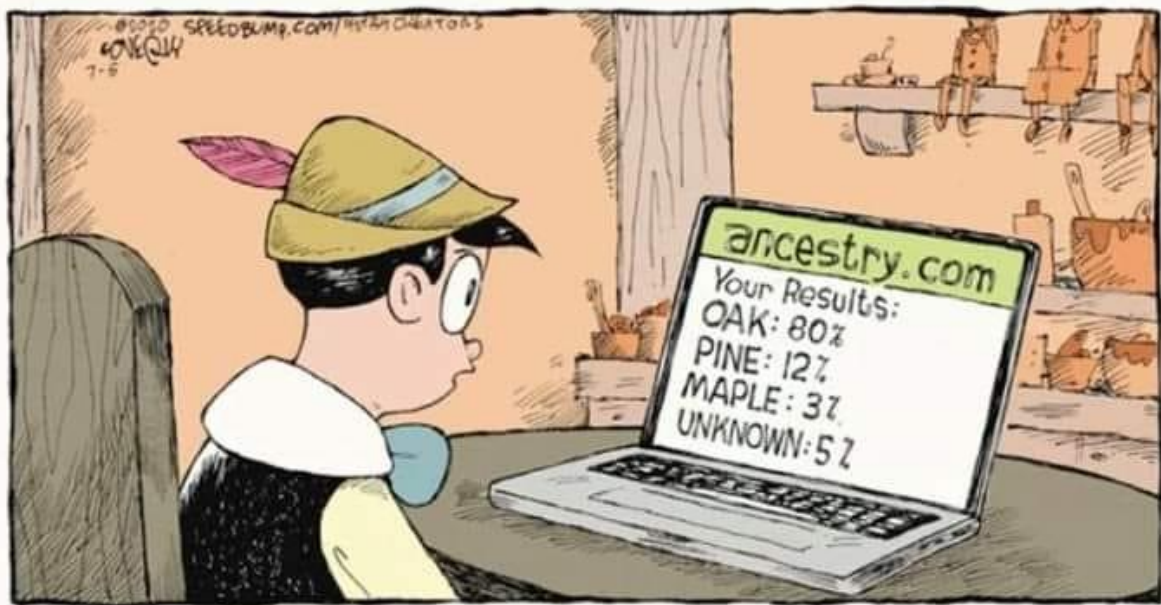
By Bert Mautz

Do you recall the time when the family telephone was kept on a small table in the front hall? It had a four-digit number, then a five, followed by a seven. The addition of area codes heralded that the big time had arrived for phones. A cousin had her own phone – an extension in her bedroom – a beige princess model.

In the eighties my sales position included a company car and a mobile phone comprised of a window clip antenna, a satchel in the back seat, plugged into the lighter, and the phone itself riding in the front seat. A clumsy combination to install or haul in from the parking lot. And then those Apple geniuses gave us the smart phone and the world changed.

In '51 a summer spent in a spacious rental on Long Island provided the first exposure to television. The offerings were

modest. National presidential elections were being covered. General Dwight Eisenhower was not terribly intriguing for an eight-year-old. The family's first television was a twenty-one-inch black & white screen on a wrought iron pedestal. Father watched "Gunsmoke" on Saturday night. Marshall Matt Dillon, Doc Adams, Chester, Miss Kitty, and later, Festus comprised a lively cast. It would be years before figuring out what Miss Kitty (actually) did for a living.



One of the world's first (and biggest) computers, "Illiac" (*Illinois Automatic Computer*) was an immense, five ton, 2800 vacuum tubes, creation living in a corner of the University of Illinois football stadium. The transistor and computer chip brought change and applications unimaginable.

Recall a project meeting among several architectural firms joining forces to design Detroit General Hospital. A member of the Toronto firm, my age, came into the conference room, took his place at the conference table, and with some ceremony took out his five function Texas Instruments calculator. This fellow thought he was hot stuff. In a few years the desktop and computers generally would affect virtually all aspects of professional life.

Sputnik spurred competitive satellite development and the rockets to transport them. The possible intercontinental ballistic attack rockets added to the urgency. Moon landings and Mars exploration by robots brought the world's superpowers into intense intergalactic competition.

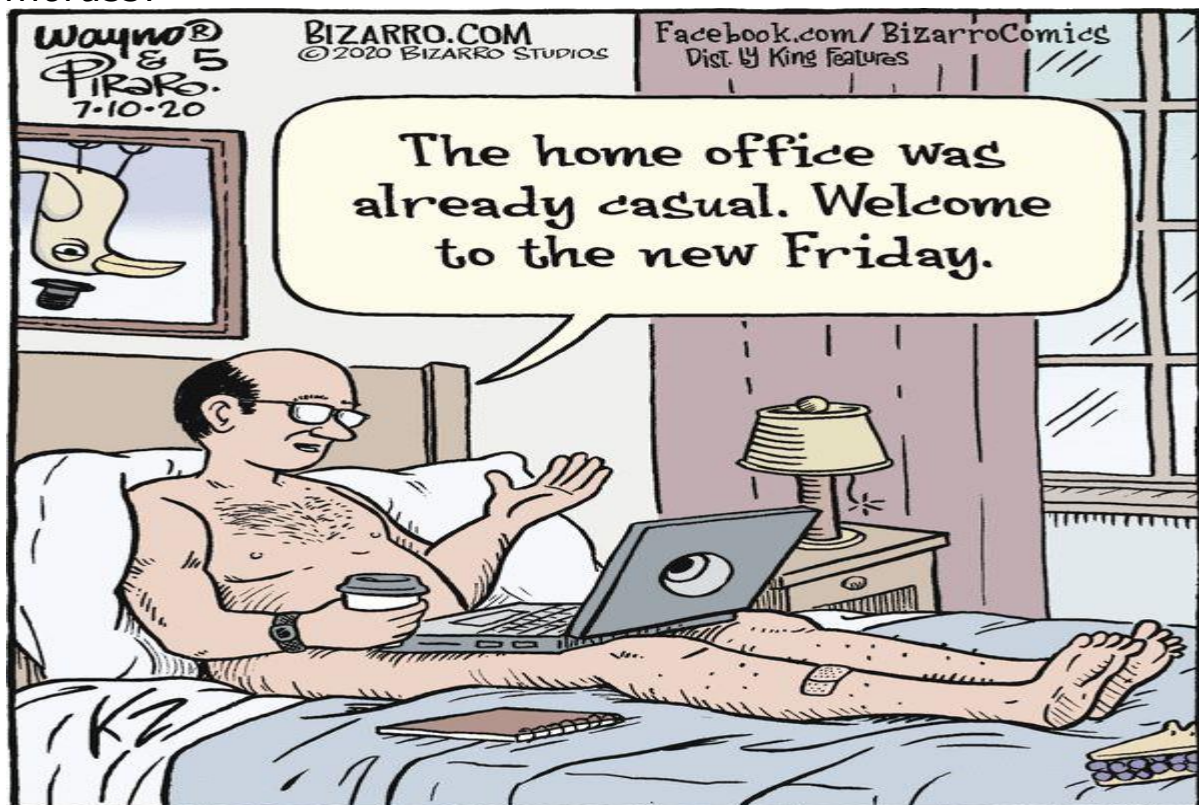
Began wearing glasses for nearsightedness at an early age. Dr. Hedgecock had a wooden tray of lenses which he would hang in a glasses frame on my nose asking when I could read the bottom line of fine print on the chart on the wall in his dusty office on the third floor downtown. Compare with the massive eye exam apparatus we squint through today.

I rode the city bus across town for my piano lesson, walked across campus to meet up with Father and a ride home. When Mother needed a car daily, Father tried riding a bicycle to the university. That was too sweaty for a professor who conducted class in a coat and tie. Next, he tried commuting on a Lambretta motor scooter, but sold it quickly to head off my killing myself driving it all over town on Saturdays with a girlfriend on the back seat. A generation later three rusty VW Beetles were parked out front of the house. Each kid required his, or her independence and ride to school or work. Yes, there are very many changes in my lifetime.

Hi-fidelity – the families' first 78rpm record player was primarily used to play marching music – effective in wearing out the living room carpet. At some point the parents got their own record player, a truly portable 45rpm which they took with them to parties. A Ph.D. biologist friend of the families assembled a high-fidelity amplifier, hung a large speaker in a closet door and *voila!* pretty good music. The demonstration was Harry Belafonte wailing "daylight come and me wanna go home" – the *Banana Boat* song. Father was smitten and proceeded to acquire and assemble a high-fidelity vacuum tube amplifier of his own. Added a British Girard record changer, and a speaker in a free-standing cabinet and we had serious music volume in the family room.

Stereophonic sound was yet to appear on the scene. By the time I had a home of my own, stereo records and FM radio were pushing the envelope. Further, the pursuit of concert hall reality was driving recording technology to the fidelity limits of grooves cut in vinyl discs and diamond styluses. Magnetic tape, followed by compact discs, did away with those styluses, while providing a consistent level of fidelity realism. Speakers were another frontier of sound production. Phased array cabinets of five speakers each, suspended in space so as their sound coils were in the same plane were the ultimate technology extravagance. Serenaded neighbors walking home from lake front fireworks on the 4th. Car radios evolved into hi fi disc players. High quality music became available most everywhere.

Since WWII our society has experienced a remarkable surge of technology and the arts have occurred for our enjoyment, drastically altering our quality of life. My basic question is: *Will the next generation experience similar progress, or recede into global warming, and inter-nation conflicts into a catastrophical morass?*



ARTICLES



A couple dancing at Tiananmen Square
before the tanks rolled in,

1989 by [KaamDeveloper](#)

HELL IN A HANDBASKET

(OR, IMPOSSIBLE)

By James Longo



"The United States is going to hell in a handbasket," Julie, the college student said, looking up from her news feed.

"Why do you say that?" Jack, her father, asked sounding indifferent.

"From Fentanyl to pedophile priests, to teachers not teaching and kids not learning, to media corporations more interested in profits than truth, a legal system that seems to be more interested in persecuting the poor than prosecuting the powerful. Politicians more interested in their donors than their voters. Don't get me started on the economy, which the Fed, the Federal budget, and

oligopolies manipulate to keep moving the fiscal goalpost farther and farther away for the American people to keep them from reaching the American Dream.”

“Wow, but tell me how you really feel?”

“I’m serious Dad,” Julie responded with a smirk.

“Let’s look at your statement a little closer. You are saying, that every institution that makes up our society is FUBAR (F’d Up Beyond Any Recognition). According to what I’ve read, seven institutions make up a society FERPELM, Family, Education, Religion, Politics, Economics, Law, and the Media. And you just took a swipe at all of them.”

“All these institutions aren’t working for us.”

From Fentanyl to pedophile priests, to teachers not teaching and kids not learning, to media corporations more interested in profits than truth, a legal system that seems to be more interested in persecuting the poor than prosecuting the powerful ...

“Why do you think that is?”

“They are corrupted by powerful people and have become ineffectual.”

“So how do you fix them?” Jack asked.

“We need to rebuild trust in our institutions,” Julie said.

"And how do we do that?"

They both sat quietly for a few moments.

Then she said, "We could tear them down and start over again."

"And that worked out so well for the Chinese, with Cultural Revolution, the Russians, in the Russian Revolution, Germany, with the Nazis, the French, Cambodians, and on and on."

"Do you think the Orange Jesus is the answer?" Julie asked



"If you want to make things worse. Let's take corrupt institutions, hand power to people who haven't any respect for any institutions and only for their agenda, and watch this country go to hell without the handbasket."

"So what do you propose?"

"Good question, teach people to trust?" Jack said with a wince, rubbing the back of his neck.

"How?" Julie asked.

"Bleep if I know, trust starts with relationships, and our first relationships are with our family." Jack declared. He looked like he was pondering an answer. "Look at the American family divorces, single parents, and disposable partners -- not exactly a bellwether of trust. Trust is built on saying what you'll do and doing what you say."

"Isn't that the reason people love Orange Jesus?" She said.

"Yeah, he did what he said, on some things, like tax cuts and increasing military spending, which blew up the Federal budget. He did stack the SCOTUS to take away women's rights. He did say he would build a wall on our southern border. He built a whole 52 miles of it. It is what he said and then did that is so disqualifying. As early as 2016 he said he would never accept any election he did not win, and he did just that in 2020."

We are told what to think and think what we are told, depending on the media outlet we chose and the algorithm that's chosen for us. You think you are screwed when all they are doing is screwing with your fears ...

"But these institutions have lied to us for years, sometimes lifetimes, how many wars has the US government either lied their way into or just allowed them to happen: Pearl Harbor, Gulf of Tonkin, the Domino Theory, Yellow Cake Uranium, maybe even 9/11 just for starters. Never mind, *you can keep your doctor,*" Julia said, ticking them off her fingers like a child learning to count.

"You can't argue with that, but what is the other choice replace the devil we know with the devil that says crazy stuff and is willing to do even crazier stuff."

"So, what is a mother to do?" Jack asked.

"We have a bunch of institutions that don't care about the American people, and the American people have responded with ignorant apathy until recently, and when presented with no choice or a bad choice, a whole bunch of people want the bad choice."

"Yeah, but you haven't answered the question, how do we stop going to hell in a handbasket?"



"I could bullshit you, but the honest answer is; it is going to take a whole lot of work in a whole lot of institutions and a whole lot of people demanding better ... or we can look at the little bit of good these institutions do and ignore the bad."

"What are you saying, 'see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil' as the country circles the bowl?" Julie asked.

"Reality is this country is better than we think. It isn't Gaza, it isn't Ukraine, or Sudan. Inflation here is less than in Europe."

"That's not saying much," Julie blurted derisively.

"Or, are our expectations overblown?" Jack asked.

"Why does it feel that all hell is about to break loose?"

"We are told what to think and think what we are told, depending on the media outlet we chose and the algorithm that's chosen for us. You think you are screwed when all they are doing is screwing with your fears."

"How can we stop it?"

What are you saying, see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil as the country circles the bowl???

"You have nothing to fear but fear itself," Jack said with air quotes while quoting FDR.

"That's your answer?"

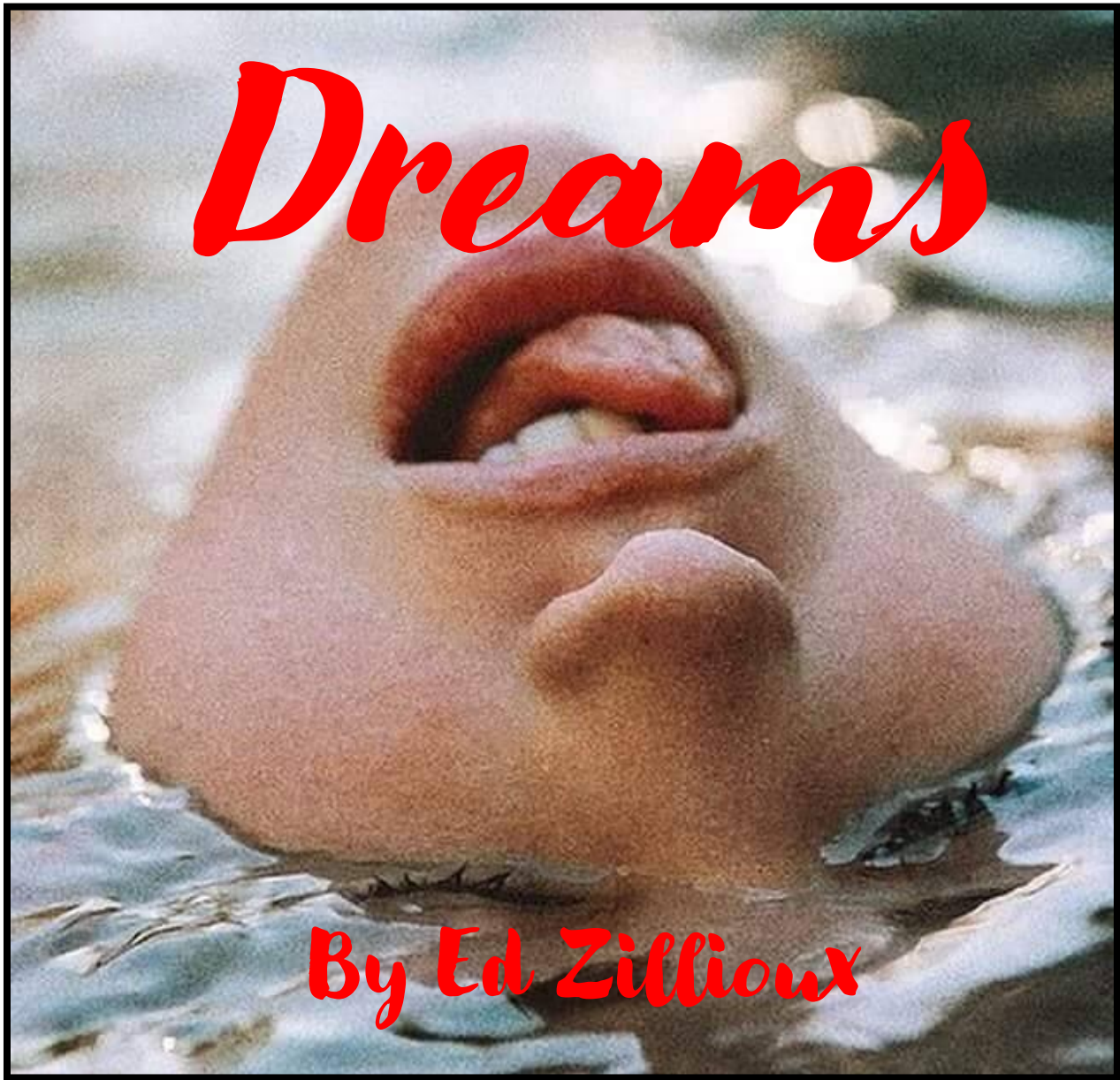
"Pay attention to the things you can control ... and ignore the rest."

"That won't change the world for the better," Julie said, looking upset.

"Even if you change it, how do you know it will be for the better?"

"You're impossible!" And Julie stormed out of the room.

All artwork, "North American Purgatory" – Edgar Jerins



Sue was already up when Jack came stumbling down the stairs, still blurry with sleep.

"Strange dreams," he muttered to no one in particular.

"What kind of dreams?"

"Oh, the usual stuff," he answered. "You know, meaningless stuff."

"All dreams have meaning," Sue declared, as if citing a simple truism.

"No, they don't." He was still grumpy with sleep. "But it's funny that they seem so important when you're dreaming ... and then you wake up and they were all just ... mindless fragments."

"Dreams do have meaning," she responded with feminine surety. "I went to a dream analyst once and he was able to interpret my dreams. They all either related to something that had happened in my life; or something that was going to happen."

"Oh, get real. That's like those people who find meaning in ink blots." He always felt skeptically disagreeable before his morning caffeine.

"You don't believe in anything you can't touch see or smell," she replied with an edge of self-righteous irritation.

"Guilty as charged," he said as he poured his first cup of coffee.

"I just wish you had more of an open mind," she said.

"You mean about dreams?"

"I meant about anything, but dreams are a good place to start."

"OK, I dreamed about *you* night before last." It was a concession to her fascination with the spiritual melding with the metaphysical. And, the reality that she was a verifiable hotty.

"That's a good start," she smiled. "What was your dream about?"

"I dreamt we were having sex."

"Now we're getting someplace." She had found that she adored the spirituality of the act of love. She wanted him to tell her more.

"In a battery box."

"Why do you have to ruin everything." Her eagerness deflated like a burst balloon.

"Me? I had nothing to do with it." He was feeling particularly irascible this morning. "And it's a good example of my premise."

Dreams are just fragments. Kind of like brain farts." *See there, my dear!*

"Well, at least I rated a fragment." She wasn't going to let him win easily. She decided to challenge him. "How was it?"

"Great," Jack lied. "As always." He couldn't let her win easily. "Just a little bit uncomfortable in that damn battery box."

"It's a lot better in bed," Sue teased, stressing *"in bed"*. Her eyebrows waved like Odysseus' Sirens beckoned ancient mariners, and – *like them* – she knew how to capture his soul.

"What the hell," Jack grinned, finally getting Sue's spicy invitation. "I haven't been late for work in a month."

The couple bounded back upstairs to the bedroom, shucking their clothes as they went.



Just as their torrid embrace was on the cusp of a mutually climactic sublimity, Sue asked with a gasp, "but what about all those near-death experiences?"

"Mmmmmm ... what a way to go!" Jack muttered dreamily, not missing a stroke.



Be Seeing You

By Virgil Thorp

Jerry was more than a little stoned. He had smoked a joint on the way over to classes at Jr. college and the cannabis was kicking in. Getting stoned was a habit he acquired in Vietnam and continued once he rotated back to the good 'ol US of A. It was something he discovered which helped him cope with the world's nonsense. It often gave him thoughts and ideas. Insights into what he observed of the world and, despite all of the indoctrination he had experienced, an appreciation of the common term, "Bullshit."

After his discharge, he had the GI bill and he decided (after toking some premium Thai Stick) to give college another try.

Right out of high school, he was too much a giddy and horny kid to settle down and study to succeed and he had flunked out spectacularly. He did not feel confident going to a big school, but he'd take a chance on the local Jr. college. After all, he felt, the discipline he had learned in the service might just help him make it to classes on cold mornings, like this one. It was working out. To his great surprise, his grades were top of the class, and he had been chosen as the editor of the school's newspaper, the *Slugline*, a four-page newsprint that few people at the college – if any – took time to read. At the moment he was content with the

situation and there was plenty of time to worry about choosing a major before transferring to a four-year institution.



Metropolitan
Community College
Longview

Jerry wondered why there was a backed-up line of cars to turn into the newly paved Jr. college parking lot. Could hardly be anything more than a fender bender. Sure, the school was pretty rinky-dink, just a bunch of temporary Quonset huts and a gymnasium set onto what used to be a horse pasture; gifted to the county as a tax dodge. Like a land-grant institution by the family of a long-dead local, gilded age, lumber baron; but what was the delay this morning?

As he crested the slope he could see the reason; a couple of well-dressed men in polished dress shoes, topcoats and closely cropped haircuts were stopping cars and talking to the drivers. *What the fuck is this?* He wondered. There was no other choice, everyone had to slow down to make the only right turn into the student parking area. Damn, he was running late and had lots to



do before his first class of the morning.

It was the early 1970's and tobacco was still legal, no-smoking sections had not been establish and sometimes, believe it or not, samples were freely distributed. He had seen it often at

different places, lately. Kind of what he was seeing now. Long queues would form at the opening of parking lots. Sometimes

there would be pretty girls with sizable, exposed cleavage handing out small, 4-packs of off-brand cigarettes to people as they slowly crept by. He hoped that was the reason for the delay. *I could use some more smokes*, he thought.

It was an exasperating bottleneck. Some cars would slowly drive through, others would stop, talk and then take a giveaway item. Jerry was getting annoyed and slightly paranoid. Of course, they could be checking for dope. It would be just like some narc school board member to attempt to make the campus 'drug free'. "Fuck 'em." Just to be safe, he slid his stash into a hidden pocket under his dashboard. Then he saw what looked like a book being handed to a student.

"Oh my god," he exclaimed. "It's the *fucking* Gideons having a bible give-away."

"Good morning!" one of the shiny gentlemen cheerily greeted. "Please accept this holy book to give your life meaning" (or something dumb to that effect).



He gave the man a quizzical, unfocused look as he rolled to a stop and lowered his window. "Wha'cha got?"

"Young man, we'd like to offer you this book of divine revelation," the man's teeth shone with gleaming inspiration. Too shiny. Had to be the cannabis.

Jerry took the proffered book and turned it to and fro, looking at the title on the front and then tilting it up and reading along the spine. "Wow, I'll be damned." He said, gingerly shaking the book like he was guessing its' weight. "It's the bible."

"Yes, it is." The man answered with a slight frown. – Must have been the 'I'll be damned,' *gets them every time*. – nevertheless, the man continued with his sales pitch, "Let me ask you a question."

"Go for it, I got a little time ... not sure about the people behind me though." Jerry said chuckling to himself as he glanced back over his shoulder at the line of students in their cars eager to get educated. His mind started putting 2 plus 2 together.

"Have you accepted Jesus into your heart?"

The lightbulb in his head ignited. "Equals four." Jerry said, more to himself than to the god salesman. "Say man," Jerry had to squint, looking at the man, eastwardly into the glare of the rising sun. "Does the college know what the hell you are doing? What the hell you are giving away on college property?" The second "hell" was clearly emphasized.

The man was taken aback. He was doing holy work. His confusion at the accusation was palpable. "Well, of course they do. We would never do anything without permission."

The Story of Gideon



The cannabis was definitely kicking in. "Oh, kind of like inviting a vampire into your house?" Jerry implied, *'you don't know what you really are, do you'* hung like an accusatory finger.

"What?" The man almost shouted. He was clearly not used to dealing with stoners.

Jerry had just finished reading Bram Stoker's Dracula which he had found darkly delicious with various parts still vividly active in his mind. He wasn't proud of it, but some of the more explicit passages had given him an erection. "Didn't you know? Vampires cannot come into your house without being invited." Jerry looked

up and down at the man with suspicion, then leaned back in his seat and pressed down the door lock. Jerry smiled back at the man. Best to keep him off-balanced if possible.

"No, no, no," the man sputtered. "We are merely sharing our faith with the student body." The face of a hypocrite beseeched affirmation.

"Yeah," Jerry said as he rolled up his window half-way. "That's what the vampire said just before he bit the girl on the neck."

The man's lips pursed at the driver's quirky rudeness. It was hardly expected.

"By the way," Jerry said. "I wouldn't plan on staying too long. I've got to see a college dean about the rules of separation of church and state."

Since his return from 'Vietnam, Jerry had noticed a rising tide of disgustingly hypocritical holier-than-thou-ism. His chosen college was not exempt. He had recently been informed from one of the Gidget-like *Slugline* reporters that the Physical Education instructor's office had been consecrated as a holy place where they could save souls, heal spirits and seek answers through the laying on of hands. Damn, *They* seemed to be sprouting up everywhere, and this Gideon bullshit was the last straw.



"Be seeing you." The young man in the car replied with his thumb and forefinger forming an 'O' over his eye. It was gesture Jerry had picked up from watching Patrick McGoochan's surreal, secret-agent-man tv show, *The Prisoner*, and sped off to the administration building, stonedly muttering to himself about vampires, garlic and religion. Little did he know it would be his first step to becoming a gate-keeper himself to imposed, creeping hypocrisy.

The man shouted as Jerry rolled away, almost like a plea. "We're not doing *anything wrong!*"

Jerry decided to hit on the young dean of students, Jimmie – "my door is always open" – Johnson rather than the school's nominal, – older gentleman with a red nose – president who was usually occupied with a bottle of scotch whiskey.

The Vietnam war produced a lot of militancy in the returning vets. There had been bullshit rumors that shell-shocked vets could go psycho at any second. They had a reputation of being unpredictable and he found he could use that to his advantage. Jerry shivered with pleasure as he realized he had finally found his calling in life.

He slouched toward the dean's secretary. As editor of the school newspaper, he had almost instant access to the school's hierarchy, and he was very familiar with all of them. "Hi, Julie, Dean Johnson free?" He could see through the cracked open door that Dean Johnson was sipping at his steamy morning coffee, reading the sports section of the newspaper. Without waiting for an invitation, Jerry walked on into the dean's office like he owned the place.

Jerry gave his best John Wayne impression. "Howdy, Dean. I have to talk to you about something very fucked up." Again, as a veteran, he found he could also get away with as much profanity as he wanted. "I think you need to do something about it right the hell now."

As he hunched himself down in the leatherbound chair across from the dean, he smiled broadly, like he, himself, was giving away Gideon Bibles. It was just a little thing, saying no to god, but who knew where such resistance would lead.



Wait a fucking minute. No. Oh shit, No. Fucking no! The story did not play out this way. Not at all. This part of the story sucks. This narrative feels so fucking contrived, I'm ashamed of it. It is bullshit. The idea that Jerry would march into a dean's office unannounced and uninvited is stretching credibility. I apologize to my readers (listeners).

To the best of my recollection, here's what really happened. Let's try this again, much better.

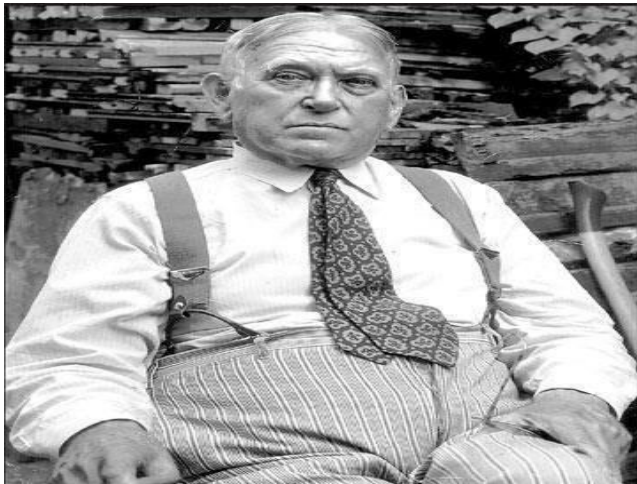
... the cannabis Jerry smoked left him very stoned, and authority figures always left him uncomfortable and a little nervous. He wouldn't go to the admin office. He parked in the student lot and went to the *Slugline* office instead. The faculty adviser, the English Composition 202 instructor who bore a striking resemblance to a young Groucho Marx, was seated at his desk, proofing the copy intended for the next edition. He smiled when he saw who it was, entering the room. He liked his student editor, the maturity of his work and leadership made the job of advisor so much easier. However, he, like most of the school's instructors, were indeed intimidated by this veteran of the Vietnam conflict.

"Really liked what you did with your editorial for this issue." The instructor said. "Your writing style is improving."

"Thanks, Bill, but we're going to save it for later. It ain't goin' in *this* issue. I got something else. Something much more important!" Jerry replied and sat down in front of the office typewriter (no word processors in those days) and began to

compose. He had something to say, and this was a “hold the presses” moment.

Jerry had an essay in him, angry to get out. It was an essay “against mysticism, against superstition, against religion misapplied to where it had no business being.” (Carl Sagan, *Demon-Haunted World* p. 38 – Jerry had read that book, too.) It flowed out of him, through the typewriter onto the paper, “click-click-clickity-click” that the bible’s magical thinking was the antithesis of what this budding institution was all about. In Jerry’s opinion, the bible was an evil book – purporting to be the final answer to the questions of the unknowable universe. That it fell so goddamned, fucking short. Yeah, great cannabis! The story would start a gigantic brou-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. Fucking, great cannabis!



"Morality is doing right, no matter what you are told. Religion is doing what you are told, no matter what is right."

H. L. Mencken (1880 - 1956)

The faculty advisor bent over Jerry’s shoulder and started to read. “Oh my God!” And, wondered if he would still have a job after all was said and done.

The following Monday, multiple copies of the *Slugline* were placed in the Jr. college president’s, the vice-president’s and the various deans’ in-boxes. Every department head and instructor got copies, as well. Stacks were placed on the tables next to the three entrances into the Quonset hut that served as the student union.

A movement began as people started reading. Most people – the stoner students – didn't seem to give a shit. But in the admin offices, the people whose jobs depended on smooth sailing, the shit starting hitting fans. The faculty advisor was summoned to the president's office. The various deans were summoned. Heads of departments trailed in and out. And – like Hendricks' version of a Dylan song – somewhere, in the cold-cold distance, a wildcat began to howl.

The following morning, at the *Slugline's* office, a crowded confrontation was held. The school's president, the vice president, the various deans, the heads of departments, the student reporters, the student editor and the hapless, Groucho Marx lookalike faculty adviser attended. It is not remembered if there were any Gideons included. Jerry had a quorum. Even at this little school – this blip of academia – the first amendment and the separation of church and state-run colleges were the topics of the day.

To make a longer story shorter, the first amendment held forth and the only thing to do was a compromise. Jerry had proposed the solution. If the Gideons stopped distributing bibles, he, the college's editor, would not distribute *Sluglines* to churches. It seemed fair.

Thus, the Gideon obstructors at the gate disappeared. But all was not yet well. There remained the P.E. instructor's malignant, stinky-sock, sanctified P.E. office. The belligerent evangelical born-again weren't satisfied as using it as a holy place to "lay hands" on people. They were branching out into the student union.

Jerry had his next target. He recalled with fondness what the school's president had said to him the day before about how he did his job as editor. "I am going to be a gadfly." He said happily. Not bad for a stoned-out drop-out.



As he stepped out of the student union, Jerry ran into the P.E. instructor leading a bevy of naïve sky daddy acolytes – some of them girls who

were pretty cute and considered themselves, grown women – for their afternoon prayer and bible beating session complete with an altar call.

Someone had to stop this hypocritical bullshit-shit. Jerry looked the instructor in the eyes and softly said. “Be seeing you.” Jerry went out to his car for an afternoon joint break and started planning for it.

That resulting incident became another story with sacred songs and fervent prayers and stark confrontation, and sex. Lots of sex. His Gidget-reporter had invited him to a revival-type meeting the born-again were holding off-campus in another Gidget-student’s parent’s basement. The P.E. instructor would be there conducting the meeting. The time was right for a stark confrontation of right and wrong, between those that believed and those that did not.

“Be seeing you.” Jerry said to himself. And the cannabis began to howl.





This week in Misogyny by Lucinda Lugeons

Well, as much as I hate to start the year off with bad news, I wouldn't exactly be doing my job

if I didn't, so here's a not-so-fun fact to kick off 2024 with: In the wake of Roe being overturned, at least 16 states have agreed to funnel more than 250 million dollars in taxpayer money to "Crisis Pregnancy Centers."

You know these fucking things, we've talked about them a lot on the show. They're these places that trick people into believing their abortion clinics, but they're actually unregulated, unlicensed religious facilities that try to convince people not to terminate their pregnancy. The very fact that they exist is already worth vomiting over. The fact that they're now state-funded is worth punching someone else until *they* vomit over.

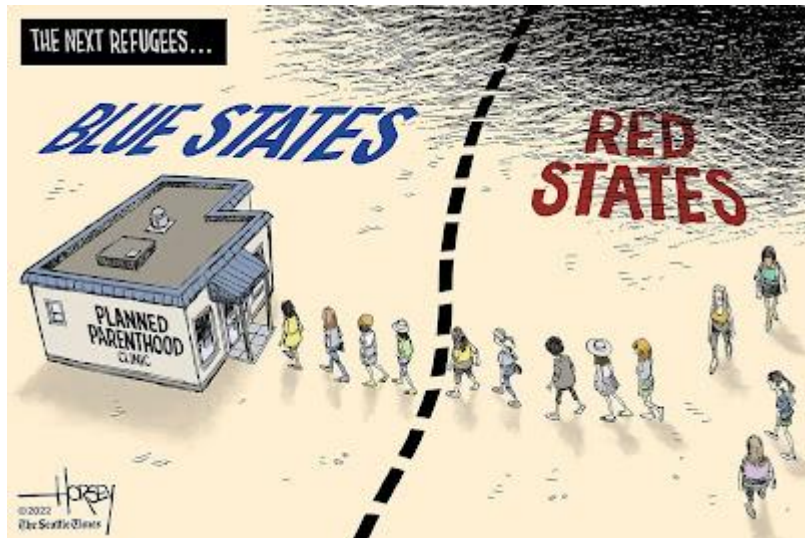
Now, to be clear, this isn't exactly new. States have found ways to fund these despicable *bait and switch* operations for years. But since the overturning of Roe, states have become way more brazen about pissing our money away on this shit. And, of course, those are the same states



that are working hardest to make abortion unobtainable, so they're the places where Crisis pregnancy center victims will be most desperate.

And, of course, I shouldn't have to tell you that these operations aren't exactly known for their commitment to truth. According to the news story I saw, there are more than 2500 "crisis pregnancy centers" in the US, and not a

month goes by where I don't see at least one story about them, like, telling women that abortions cause breast cancer, or exaggerating risks of infertility and shit like that. So we're literally paying these assholes to lie to us. And last year, we gave them one hell of a raise.

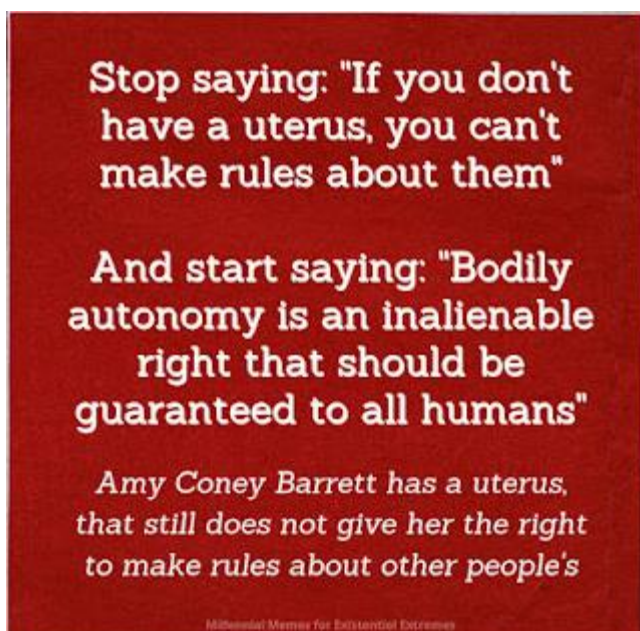


And I hate to say it, but I'm not *just* gonna give you bad news from now. I've also gotta reach back into last year and take away good news I gave you then. You might remember me talking about Saint Mary's College in Indiana, a Catholic all-women's school that caused a conservative meltdown by announcing that it would start accepting trans students.

Well, it turns out that meltdown was successful. The commitment

the assholes had to freaking out was greater than the commitment the college had to trans humanity, so the school's board sent out an email last week reversing its policy and promising to keep discriminating for the foreseeable future.

But don't worry, I *am* gonna make with a silver lining before me and my dark cloud push through. With a quick thanks to Dan, who sent this one to us at Scathing News (at) gmail (dot) com, I'm pleased to announce that in 2024 New Jersey residents will no longer need a prescription to buy birth control pills. Which is great. But like all good news that we've ever heard on TWIM, it

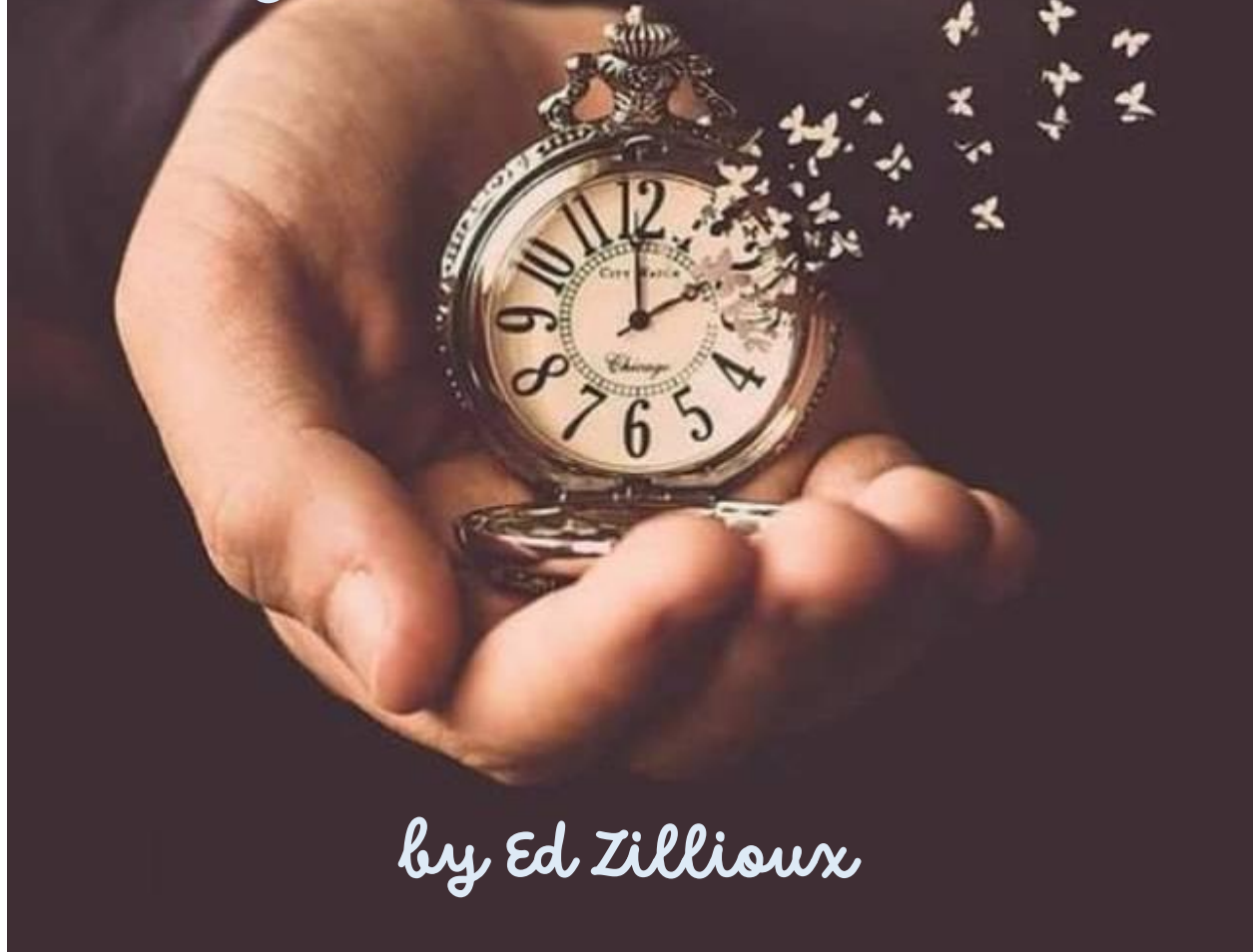


comes with the "what the fuck took you so long?" caveat. I mean, seriously, the most popular birth control for men is *literally available in vending machines*. But the most popular one for women you still have to pay somebody to give you permission to buy it from a judgy pharmacist who can't just stand at the same goddamn level as everybody else.

THE WAY WE WERE



A year in passing



by Ed Zillioux

No one can deny that losing one's spouse is not traumatic. Perhaps less so for an atheist, who can, perhaps, more easily objectifies the event as a natural ending of another life, the end of suffering, the moving on for the partner still awaiting that finality, into a new, perhaps even exciting, phase of his or her life.

For me, I passed that one year milestone on 16 June 2018, one year after her death. I'm not sure why I am writing this. Perhaps (there's that word again) it is because I know that roughly 50 percent of us will experience the death of a spouse in our lifetime and there might be some value in hearing how another


experiences the event, and its aftermath, or copes with it. Or, perhaps, it is more personal. After one year, I still hear my name being called out in an empty house, "Ed!" Yet knowing I am hearing nothing other than the detritus of my consciousness.



It's the little things that keep triggering auto responses: I see a new blossom in my yard and my brain says quote "I'm must tell ...", or, "I must take a photo to show ... " or my dogs do something that amuses me while on one of our frequent walks, and I can't share it. I have lost the wherewithal to share the insignificant things that used to evoke a smile.

I think a lot about the long process of her demise. How could it have been otherwise? The end-stage renal disease that required her feet to be constantly elevated; the loss of bodily functions; getting up at 3:00 AM to present her for antibiotic infusions to fight bacteria that had mutated into superbugs; hemodialysis thrice a week; and then the long series of hospitalizations, hearing her doctor tell me, "every time I see her something else has broken down," and ending with my distributing copies of her

living will at every nursing station and to each of her doctors, and yet, when she could no longer speak, they came to me to ask if they could proceed with another with another life-extending procedure. In anger I say, "damn it, don't ask me, ask her she has made her wishes in her living will. Have you even read it!"

	
Florida Living Will Declaration	
Declaration, made this _____ day of _____, 20____	
I, _____,	
willfully and voluntarily make known my desire that my dying not be artificially prolonged under the circumstances set forth below, and do hereby declare that, if any time I am mentally or physically incapacitated and:	
_____	I have a terminal condition
[initial]	
or _____	I have an end-stage condition
[initial]	
or _____	I am in a persistent vegetative state
[initial]	
and if my attending or treating physician and another consulting physician have determined that there is no reasonable medical probability of my recovery from such condition, I direct that life-prolonging procedures be withheld or withdrawn when the application of such procedures would serve only to prolong artificially the process of dying, and that I be permitted to die naturally with only the administration of medication or the performance of any medical procedure deemed necessary to provide me with comfort care or to alleviate pain.	

I talked to my son this morning. He lost his wife to aggressively metastasizing breast cancer eight years ago. Much too young. I tell him about my automatically wanting to share the little things that happened, and he tells me the same experience has never left him.

This is what you must expect.

There is more to the story, of course. Basically, it's what happens to your mind when you realize you're about to die. Toward the end, I saw fear in her face as I tried to cheer her up by telling her about her beloved dogs and the events in my day.

The worst time came next to her last hospitalization. It was shortly before they fitted her up with a colostomy bag. This was always a horror to her, and in the past had fought it vociferously when it was suggested as a temporary procedure to allow time for her cancer to heal, some 15 years ago. No bag, no way!

Her oncologist, knowing her revulsion at the idea, said, "no You don't have to." He was her hero. But now, there was no other option.



She looked at me and plaintively asked, "do I have to?"

I replied, my heart aching. "Yes. You have to." I felt like the world's biggest asshole – a hero no more.

Even today, I hesitated before speaking of this ultimate affront to her dignity. She would not have wanted anyone to know. But she has gone and can't be hurt any more.

A few days later, after I had been a daily visitor over five months of four successive hospitalizations interspersed with two brief stays in nursing facilities, she looked me deeply in the eyes and said, "kiss me, Ed. On the mouth." A simple request that I

immediately responded to, but was struck by how uncharacteristic this simple intimacy had become.

On what was to be her last full day of cognizance, my daughters came to visit her. I was not present until later. I was told they had a good visit. But I was not told everything. I was not told until long after my wife's death, that she had reached out to my eldest daughter on that last day and asked, "do you think your father will ever return to the church?"

I was stunned! She knew I was an atheist from the time we first met 35 years ago and always presented herself as an agnostic. We both had been brought up in devout Catholic families but "the church" was never part of our lives together. I had no idea how her early indoctrination in the Catholic Church still held its grip on her.

Now, finally, I understand where her fear of death came from.



There for the grace of God...



Via the grace of God go I. For those who find the concept of God or for that matter, Gods, unsettling, via the grace of the universe or, even the fates, go I.

I shouldn't be here four times over. Once, I was late to work on a rainy two-lane. I went to pass a car, and a Volkswagen Rabbit was coming at me head-on without its lights on. Evasive actions, I ended up killing a few small trees, but if this had happened a couple of miles down the road, I would have ended up in a canal and surely would have drowned. *Can you say gurgle, gurgle, gurgle?* I continued to work but remembered being incredibly happy and couldn't do anything right all day.

The second time, I should have died. I was coming down a mountain pass in Austria on my bicycle, the cyclometer said sixty miles an hour, but at the end of the run, there was a sharp right turn to connect with the main road. I hit the brakes but ended up on the wrong side of the road just as an old truck turned the corner to start up the mountain. I somehow missed it. *Can you say splato?* Counted myself lucky and headed the wrong way at the turn.

The third time, the lady in front of me hit a horse, which flew into the other lane. A Ford Explorer trying to avoid the horse flipped into my lane. Yes, I was hit by a flying SUV. The only thing that saved my life was that it hit the rear door of my sub-compact and not the driver's door. *Can you say life is a game of inches?* Approximately six. I am sure I thought hard about my near death, but also about how glass ended up in my underwear. Eventually, it didn't change anything. Life is funny that way. It just goes on.



Recently I pulled out into traffic where I saw a car, then it wasn't there. I pulled out, and it was. He missed me, but what if he didn't? I'd be dead now. The weird thing is before I got into my car that morning, I had a premonition that I needed to be extra careful on my drive that day. I should have paid more attention to that feeling. Next time, I definitely will.

I started thinking. Why would the fates nearly kill me and not? I know it's not my time. If I was egotistical and a believer, I could conclude that I wasn't killed because I was still here to do something. But what?

I decided to run with it. I decided to put it out to the universe. I thought about it just before I went to sleep. I dreamt about receiving two cardboard boxes at my front door one contained a Panda, the other a one-year-old female Asian child.

I woke up. I told my partner that I wasn't killed so we could adopt a child because of this dream.

She said, "If we adopt a child, I am out of here."

I said, "Okay, no kid, got it."

Yesterday, I started filling out an application to adopt a Panda.





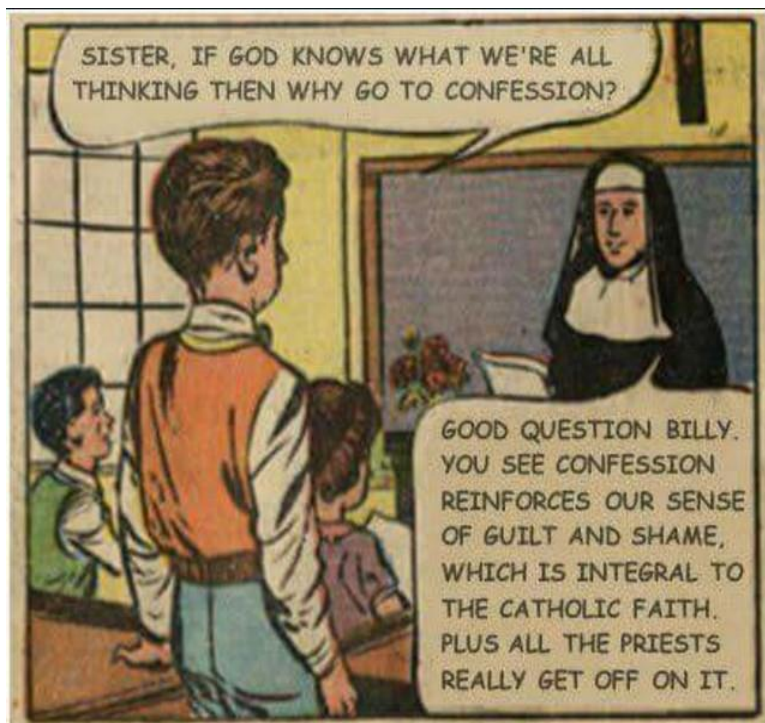
My years of forced school prayer

By Amit Pal



During my school years, official prayer was always there. No one was granted any right to object. God was incessantly called upon to bless assemblies, school ceremonies and sporting events. Teachers seemed to claim the power to compel God's attention, or to change his mind for him in case he hadn't been planning to bless their occasion in the first place. They gave the distinct impression that they had God's ear.

This impression is one of the hidden motives of school-prayer advocates. They feel that children should be made aware of the apparently direct line adults have to the mind of God, a little step up from the threat "I'll tell your father on you." No matter how trivial or dire the subject, God was listening. Whether you feared failing a test, or your little brother had a serious case of rheumatic fever and might die, in either case you were supposed to get help if you were sufficiently and properly abject. If it didn't work, well, it wasn't his will. This always made me wonder: Why



bother with prayer at all, since God was going to do whatever he wanted to do anyway?

And I was always bemused by the implication that God was malleable, so open to manipulation by humans. Along with Omar Khayyam I wondered, "Who art thou to teach, and he to learn?" If God had made up his mind to do things a particular way,

to lead us into temptation on that particular day for example, who are we to talk him out of it? Was he really so weak and malleable that a few words from some insignificant humans could change his intentions? And if he was not so, whatever was the point of all the prayer? It was an insoluble puzzle.

School prayer served little purpose other than to bore me, and for me to hear those sonorous voices of praying school officials with something like pity because I thought they might be trying to convince themselves that they were being heard by someone other than an audience of itchy, impatient children who were just waiting for it to be over.

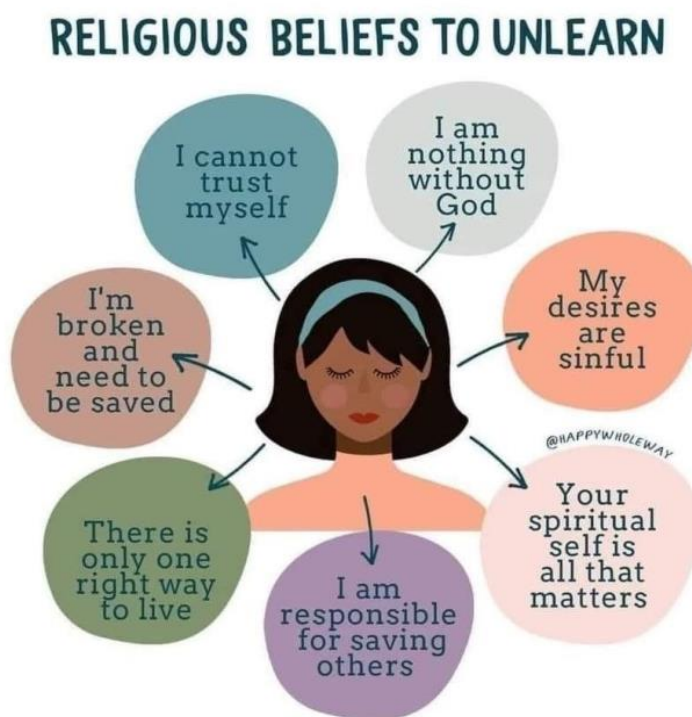
Of course, as churchmen through the ages have known, God must be presented and presented and presented ad nauseam to children in their formative years, if they are to become truly believing adults. What sinks into the child even through boredom can become fixed, and the resulting adult never really knows the origin of the concept that he thinks self-evident. School prayer is really belief manipulation. Advocates think children ought to hear grown-ups expressing belief in God and never wonder where the

concept came from, or how there could be so many portraits painted of the bearded man in the sky, when no one had ever really seen him.

In thus brainwashing children by rote and repetition, we have forgotten how evil a dominant, domineering, legislated religion can be. Separation of church and state was one of the best ideas put forward by the Founders of the United States, who knew all too well the horrors perpetrated by European theocracy.

Unfortunately, many Americans today have lost touch with this history.

Children need to be protected from forced beliefs. Instead of training them to call on an outmoded emotional construct, they should be taught to trust their own foresight and responsibility, to change what they can change, and to accept what they can't — and, naturally, to possess the wisdom to know the difference.



AMITABH PAL is the Communications Director of FFRF. Prior to joining in February 2016, he was the Managing Editor of The Progressive magazine for more than a decade. He was also the editor of the Progressive Media Project, an affiliate of The Progressive that sends out op-eds through the Tribune Wire Service to hundreds of newspapers in the United States and other countries.

freethoughtnow.org

All Night Long

*The most fun you can have in the whole wide world –
fornicating while on lysergic acid diethylamide ... or LSD*



By Virgil Thorp

There is a thing that is accessible by nearly every person in the world. Something that the rich can't keep to themselves (god

knows they try). Something that is almost as spiritually ecstatic as a holy roller in a trance. That thing is: fucking while tripping on acid.

Confound it, I could not do it. I could not continue to use clinical terms for this story. I tried so hard. But, LSD won't let me. LSD tells me that writing "fornicate" instead of "fuck" is phony. It is disingenuous. LSD tells me that honesty is the best policy and the honesty is; that fucking on acid is *the* most fun a human being can have in the whole goddamned wide fucking world!

How do I know? I have done it, many times. True, such an expenditure of writhing energy was exhausting – but it was wonderful. It is not an easy thing to do. It takes a special commitment. But, once you put that blotter under your tongue, you have made a covenant with the fabric of the universe. The experience won't stop until it is done.

There's plenty of distractions. Psychedelic distractions. Once you get past the side-effects of getting high; like unrestrained giggling, unfortunate flatulence, other acidic things like "trails", and "shivers", you begin to experience erotic, psychedelic (for want of a better word) *jubilations*. Every synapse in your body is alive and waiting. The result of an intimate relation with a canthardic aphrodisiac that strips away restraints of indoctrinated inhibition and puts you right on track for a hurley-burley of tempestuous delirium.

The loins swell, the juices flow, the pelvis begins to thrash, flail and squirm. Simply put, there is a primitive urge to penetrate or be penetrated. For males, there is a "twang your magic twanger, Froggie" moment that is better than magical, ground-up Narwhal tusk. For females I sincerely hope there is an enticing desire to profoundly suck the male into the center of her silky, yearning depths. The really good part? *All – night – long.*

There is pure joy in taking an expedition around your companion's body when you trip on acid. The things you will see.

The things you will marvel at. The things you will want to taste. Oh yes, take your time. Investigate all those little nooks and crannies you've been curious about but never taken time to explore before.



Accept yourself. Divest shame and guilt. Immerse yourself into something so special your first reaction will be, "there must be a god." But, of course, god would be nowhere near the omniscient, anthropomorphic being touted by a church – or some tight-ass religion that thinks sex is a sin. That being would consider the god of fuck as loose and vulgar. It is just the opposite. The god of fuck is a true messiah. The god of fuck will free the spiritual, to be more densely compressed for the storms in the atoms in the brain to achieve critical mass in the genitalia. The god of fuck wants you to fuck!

All you have to do is give it a few minutes. No more “little blue pill”. Everything your partner does is erotic and beautiful. You will be captivated by it. Every part of their body is erotic and beautiful. It is so beautiful that you will want to throw your own body into it and graciously feel each and every nucleus of every single cell of every single tissue that beckons ejaculation. And, it is *all – night – long*.

For those who have yet to take the expedition, either with acid and/or a willing partner, I will explain with an obvious example. One of my favorites. The boob and all the sensuality that those charming orbs embrace (I know, you may have thought I’d say, the clitoris, or even, the penis, but be patient, one step at a time. You have *all – night – long*).

When you realize you are tripping, you will have many things to concentrate on. Everything is sensuous. Fill up a hot bathtub. Get naked. Get in. Invite others of the opposite sex to join you. If not hetero then invite others of the same sex to join you. Dim the bathroom light. Light a candle. You will of course, see a nipple (or two). A nipple attached to the body by the delightful tissue known as a breast. There is the nipple, the aureole, the breast tissue the nipple is mounted on. Something to climb, something to conquer. Some are large and seem jelly filled, some are smaller, a wrap of hide around a squishy, tight sponge. Looks like a welcoming hillock that you want to cast yourself upon, doesn’t it? One is functional, the female – the other, the male, is tits on a boar hog.

Responses by female and male are similar, however. Concentrate on the nipple. Touch it. Give it a friendly push. It inverts, then bounces back. Maybe a little more noticeable in turgidity for every tweak. Blow on it. Watch it crinkle. Oh, poor nipple. It looks so cold, and your mouth is so warm. Cover it. Taste it. Feel it throb against your tongue, slightly at first and then stronger in response to your love. Be tender with it, the nerves are sensitive. Don’t be afraid to flutter your eyelids across the protrusion. Until you do it, or have it done to you, you won’t believe how delightful



such
thrilling
stimulation
can be. You
will find that
there is a
hungering, a
longer
quiver and a
leaning
forward into
the kiss.
The
paroxysms
you
encounter
cause your
eyes to
close with
thrilling
ecstasy.
Enjoy
sensation.
No need to
hurry. By
this time,
you will
know what I
mean by –
all night

long. The acid won't allow you to quit, even if you try. Let us
praise Biochemistry.

Open your eyes and experience the majesty of the view. Have
your partner recline, face down on the bed. Lay your head on a

shoulder and look toward the south. Observe the landscape of the body. The gentle hollow of the back, the sleek curvature of the buttocks, the incredible stretch of the legs. You may feel tiny yourself. Every caress, every time your touch strokes the skin, you see a response of cellular welcome. Invert positions. Draw a line along the belly. Lightly run your finger from one side of her abdomen, circle around her belly button to a diametric end point. Can you see the path? Can you see the tiny, tiny hairs erect? Can you see the symmetry of the sparks as your finger strums across the taut flesh? Can you feel them? I am pretty sure the color of the sparks depends on the quality of the acid you took. I can vividly recall the spectacular flashes from the original Owsley I had first dropped in the ancient history of 1969. Flames of hot purples, incandescent greens and cool oranges.

Now, kiss the path you drew with your finger. Slowly trail your lips so they can taste the sweet and the salty. An effusion of humid female perfume, a flavor of primitive earthiness that resuscitates primeval suppressed instincts.

Drool if you must. You will need it later. You must strain. You must rub. You must grasp. You must feel how exquisite you are. Listen to the breathing, the gasping, the groans of desire. Because, you are tripping and you must penetrate, you must envelop, you must thrust, you must engulf. Vow to smother this body in kisses. Gaze on the rainbow trail of your saliva. Can you appreciate the humanity you have just consumed?

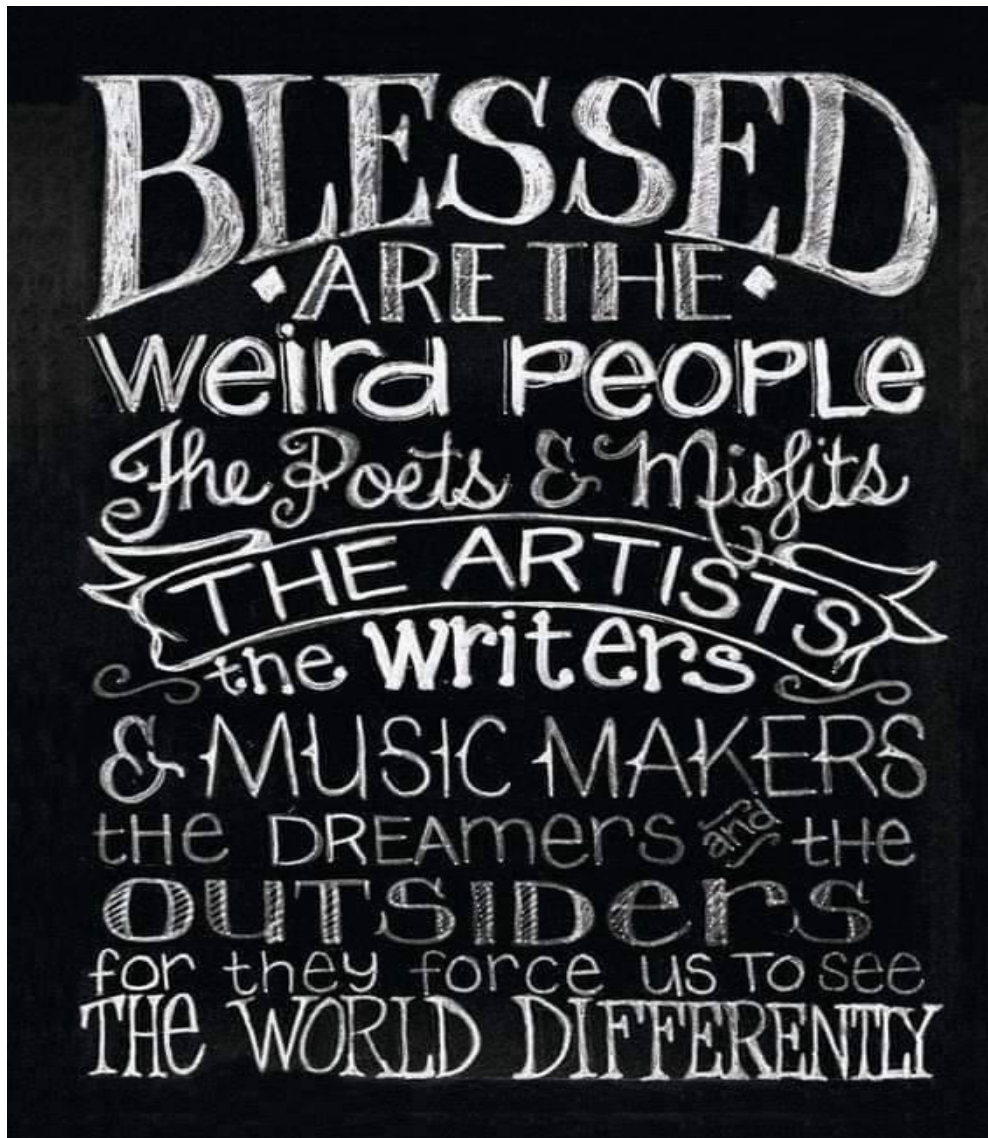
Reluctantly, I glance at the word count and must limit the size of this essay. And I have yet to attempt to describe the elegant sensations experienced with penetration and reception, the blessed communion in the glorification of the god of fuck. Your nipple is only one small part of the body. It is like a musical instrument, this body you are ravishing, your body as you are ravished. The beauty makes you breathless. The beauty makes you hungry. The beauty makes you desire more.



I may act normal now but honestly, I believe I never came down. Embrace the improper. Let the indecent clasp you back. It is the only way to be human. Once you do – you won't want to go back to normal. Don't forget, you are in the middle of an acid trip, and you cannot get away. It makes sense to stop resisting and dive into the glories of human copulation.

There is no way I can recount an entire trip of fucking on acid without writing a book. The body on acid is a universe to explore and appreciate. It can be the most fun you will ever have. But *you, you have all – night – long.*

POETRY





Get Drunk


By: CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

Always be drunk.
That's it!
The great imperative!
In order not to feel
Time's horrid fardel
bruise your shoulders,
grinding you into the earth,
Get drunk and stay that way.
On what?
On wine, poetry, virtue, whatever.
But get drunk.
And if you sometimes happen to wake
up
on the porches of a palace,
in the green grass of a ditch,
in the dismal loneliness of your own
room,
your drunkenness gone or disappearing,
ask the wind,
the wave,
the star,
the bird,
the clock,
ask everything that flees,
everything that groans
or rolls
or sings,
everything that speaks,
ask what time it is;
and the wind,
the wave,
the star,
the bird,
the clock
will answer you:
"Time to get drunk!
Don't be martyred slaves of Time,
Get drunk!
Stay drunk!
On wine, virtue, poetry, whatever!"



"I wish I wrote the way I
thought;
Obsessively,
Incessantly,
With maddening hunger.
I'd write to the point of
suffocation.
I'd write myself into
nervous breakdowns,
Manuscripts spiralling out
like tentacles into abysmal
nothing.
And I'd write about you
a lot more
than I should."

— Benedict Smith,
*I Wish I Wrote The
Way I Thought*



To The Ghost of Jim Morrison

By Vampyre Mike Kassel



Jim,
you were right to take that header in the bathtub.
If you had lived, they would have made you
better.
They would have
tossed you into Betty Ford,
force fed you Antabuse,
bathed you in healthy thoughts,
made you jog.

They would have dressed you in a
three piece black leather business suit
and taught you about real estate.

They would have made you
crawl across the pages of *People* magazine,
write autobiographies,
hug Phil Donahue.

They would have made you
suck big Jesus dick,
do benefits for the Cirrhosis Foundation,
kiss the patent leather hooves
of Madd Mothers
and Parents' Music Resource Harpies.

They would have made you
eat wheat germ and shit,
judge poetry contests,
talk at high schools.

They would have made you
live in a better house and garden,
save a rain forest,
sing a duet with Linda Ronstadt.
They would have made you write
three thousand times on the blackboard of your soul:
"I WAS A BAD LIZARD."

They're beating on the walls of my bunker, Jim,
shouting:

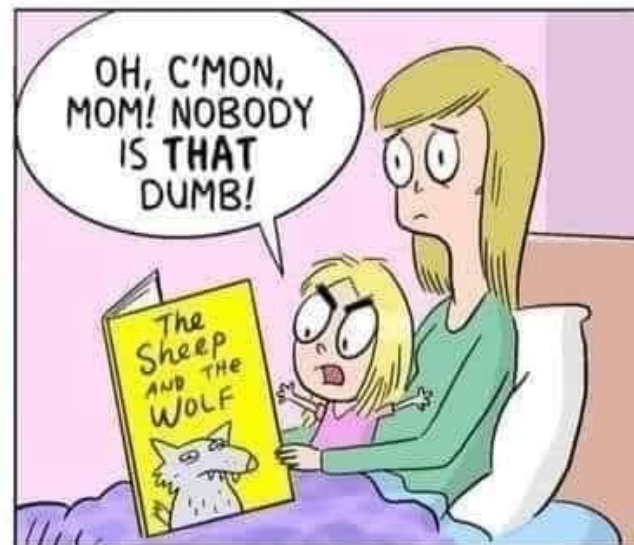
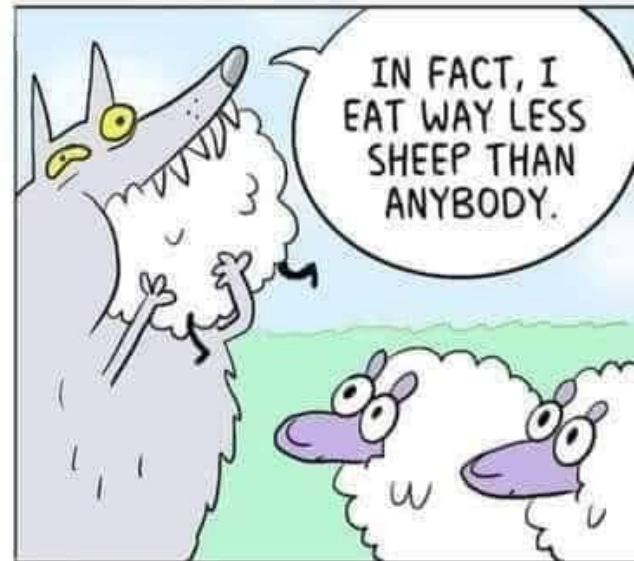
"Ecstasy can be cured!"
"You're not living up to your end
of the social contract!"
"Do you know what that cigarette is
doing to your lungs?"

There's cracks in the walls.
The Good Health Police
and Citizens for a Sane and Sober Society
have broken out the stun guns.
They're shouting something about safe sex and crack babies.

They want to help me, Jim.

Splash over one side, there,
I'm climbing in.
This bath tub has
a familiar ring.

COMEDY CORNER



© JimBenton.com



High on Life?

By James Longo

The fifteen minutes to figure out dinner, the ten minutes to find the recipe. The twenty-minute prep time, and God forbid if I need to go to the store because I am missing ingredients. Never mind the time for the stuff to cook. Let's not discuss clean-up time. It doesn't matter how much time I take to make dinner. The food disappears in a fraction of that time. Other than nourishment. Why? Cause I am addicted to eating. Let others eat to live, I live to eat. Those dopamine receptors scream "feed me" like Seymour in Little Shops of Horrors.



I know I piss away a couple hours bicycling daily, and when you add motivating myself to get my ass out there, the post-shower and nap. That's three hours gone, but there is that good feeling. Hopefully helping me maintain my health and the buzz, the endorphin buzz. I don't want it. I need it. *Holy Morphine Batman.*

Getting ready and commuting takes an hour and a half. Let's not forget the commute home. Work is a waste of time other than selling time for money. So why do I do it? The wind down(!), and my wind down includes real wine. There I go again, stimulating those Dopamine receptors.

If we are talking about pissing time away, why aren't I including sleep? No, I love to sleep. I even love nightmares. Sleep is never a waste of time. Give me Serotonin. Lots of Serotonin under the moonlit sky above. *Holy Sandman Batman.*

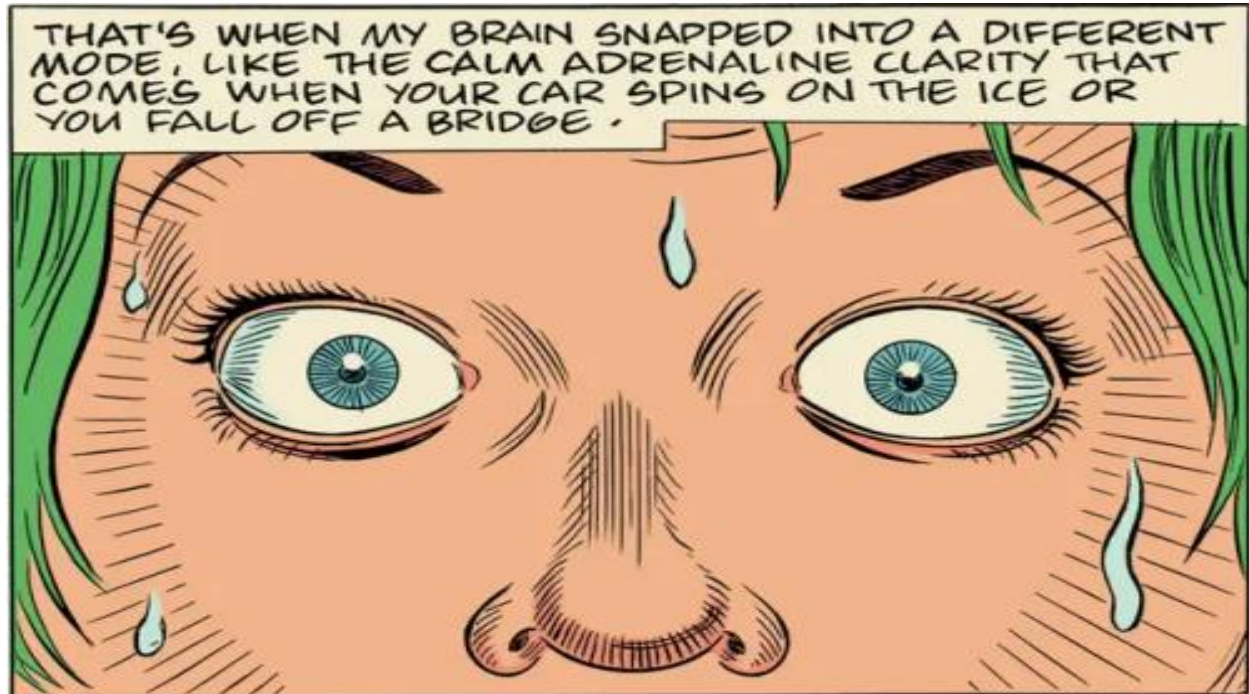
Socializing; is it a waste of time or a necessary evil? They say that those who socialize the best, live the longest. Are my neurons screaming for a little oxytocin? Hug me baby. *I need my oxytocin.*



Sitting, petting my cat is a waste of time. Trying to pet my mate after thirty years together is a definite waste of time. But those

oxytocin receptors need to be touched. Touch me, baby, touch me, or even better *let me touch you*.

We won't even discuss the time wasted to reach an orgasm, but am I wasting time or reaching for a massive shot of Serotonin? The important squirt-squirt seems to be happening in my brain, not my pants.



Fishing is a total waste of time, except when that fish hits that line and your adrenal gland spikes. *Can you say epinephrine rush?*

Am I procrastinating my life away, accomplishing nothing? Or am I spending my days feeding the neurons in my brain? When I started this writing, I thought I was addicted to wasting time, but now I realize I am spending my days getting high just by living. Holy crap, am I high on life? No just addicted to it.



What Most Americans (*MAGA Evangelical*) Believe to be True

By J. Dan Vignau

The Bible is all true to MAGA Evangelicals. It is *the* word of an omniscient and omnipotent God. In the beginning, this omnipresent being in the sky, created a man from dirt and a woman from the man's rib. They were called *Adam and Eve*. There is no explanation about how Eve got female DNA to make her babies.

This creator put them in the most idyllic place ever imagined, calling it, *The Garden of Eden*. Next the god created an apple tree, said to be full of knowledge, but forbade his creations to learn from it by eating its apples. Next, a talking snake was put in the garden, to tempt the man and woman to eat a magic apple, and thereby gain their first true knowledge.

When the woman did eat from the tree, the god in the sky then totally altered his creatures' position in society, for the disobedience of trying to learn something. He was so mad that he kicked them out of this most idyllic place (presumably a mere

step down from heaven!), then allowed them to fornicate to create other inbred people, only to condemn them to a fiery hell for eternity...

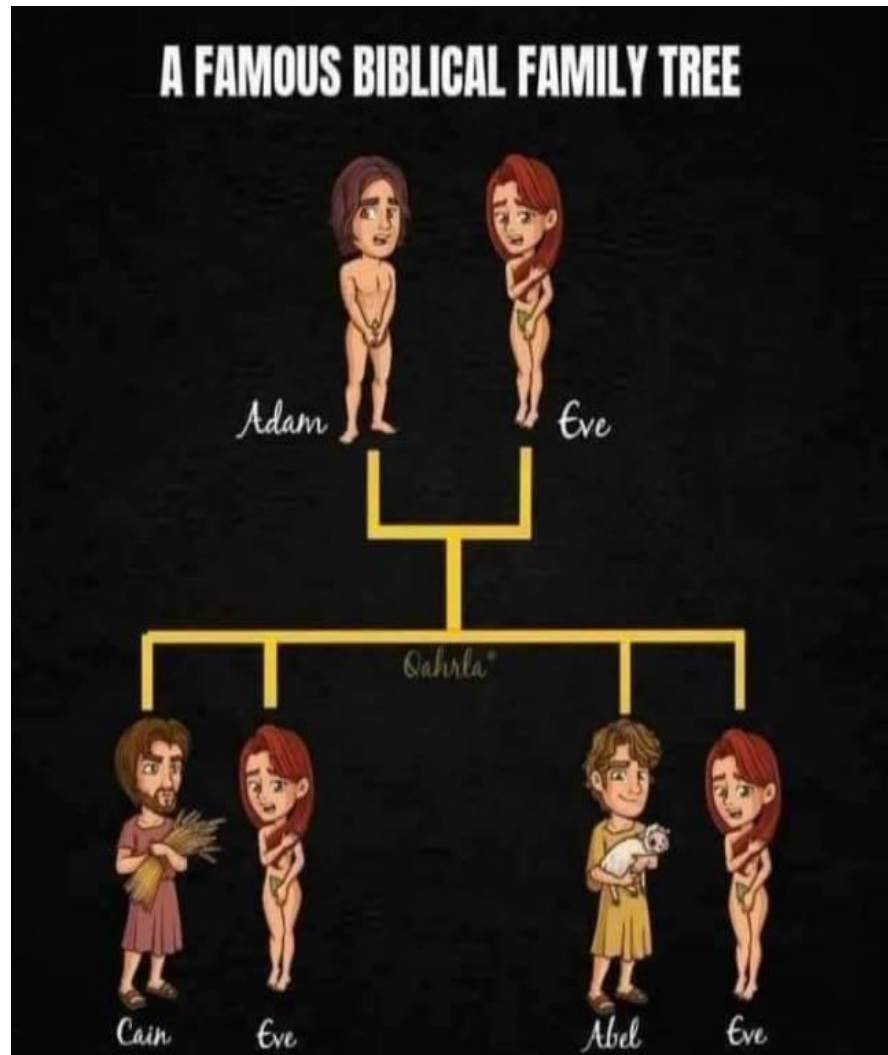
unless they waited 2000 years for a Savior.

At that time, they would have to believe that a pregnant woman – who was only trying to keep from being stoned to death for adultery – was

still a virgin. She actually had the audacity to tell her husband, (for whom she apparently never put out) that she was made pregnant by god (*an immaculate conception*). Maybe the real father, who led her astray, was a very sexy and handsome godlike Roman centurion. But, she was definitely not going to let the villagers stone her to death.

The god in the sky apparently liked her story, and let the so-called messiah tell everyone to believe in him, or go live an eternity in a fiery place if they did not. *Jeez!*

But! This career of wandering messiah certainly beat the drudgery of desert carpentry.





Circa 9 months B.C., Joesph returns home from work early, but hearing Mary in fervent prayer, decides to come back later.



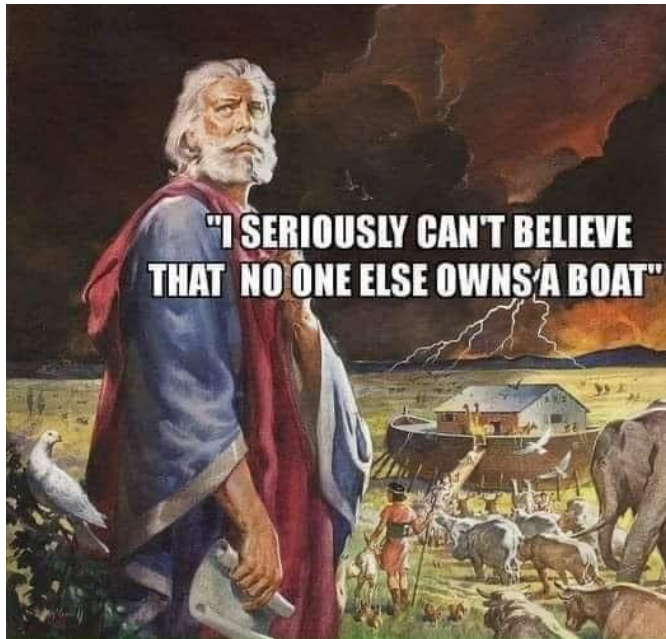
In between these two episodes of that ensuing book of religious tenets, a leader named Moses emerged, got lost and walked across arid deserts for 40 years, while the faithful followed for lack of anything else to do. They had little to eat but desert plants and cactus, some of which were undoubtedly hallucinogenic. They saw images in a burning bush. They saw a snake when their hallucination made a stick seem to be writhing. In a flooded plain, they saw a widening path as the waters receded, imagining that the body of water was separated by the gods, rather than simply ebbing following a flood or tide.

This may sound crazy, but just wait.

Between these events of the creation of Adam and Eve, and the leader of the children of Israel, Moses, the god decided to kill every land-based creature with a flood, except the family of a man named Noah. Being a desert nomad. Noah had no idea of how to build a boat, but the story gets much weirder than that.

This boat, called the Ark, was designed and built by desert nomads, most of whom had never even seen a boat, much less a large vessel. The ship had to be bigger and better than all the ships ever built by the plethora of seafarers throughout centuries of seafaring. Noah was then charged to gather two of each

creature – one male and one female – of each and every type of animal on the planet.

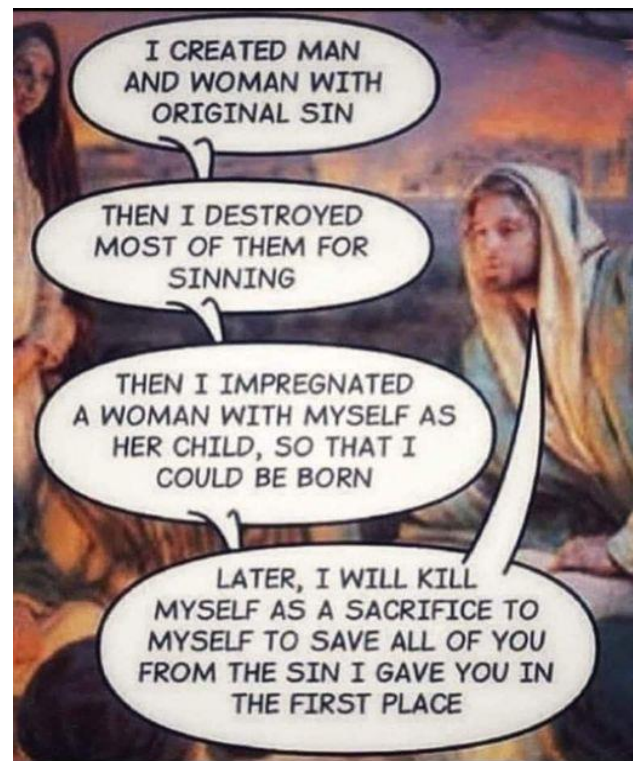


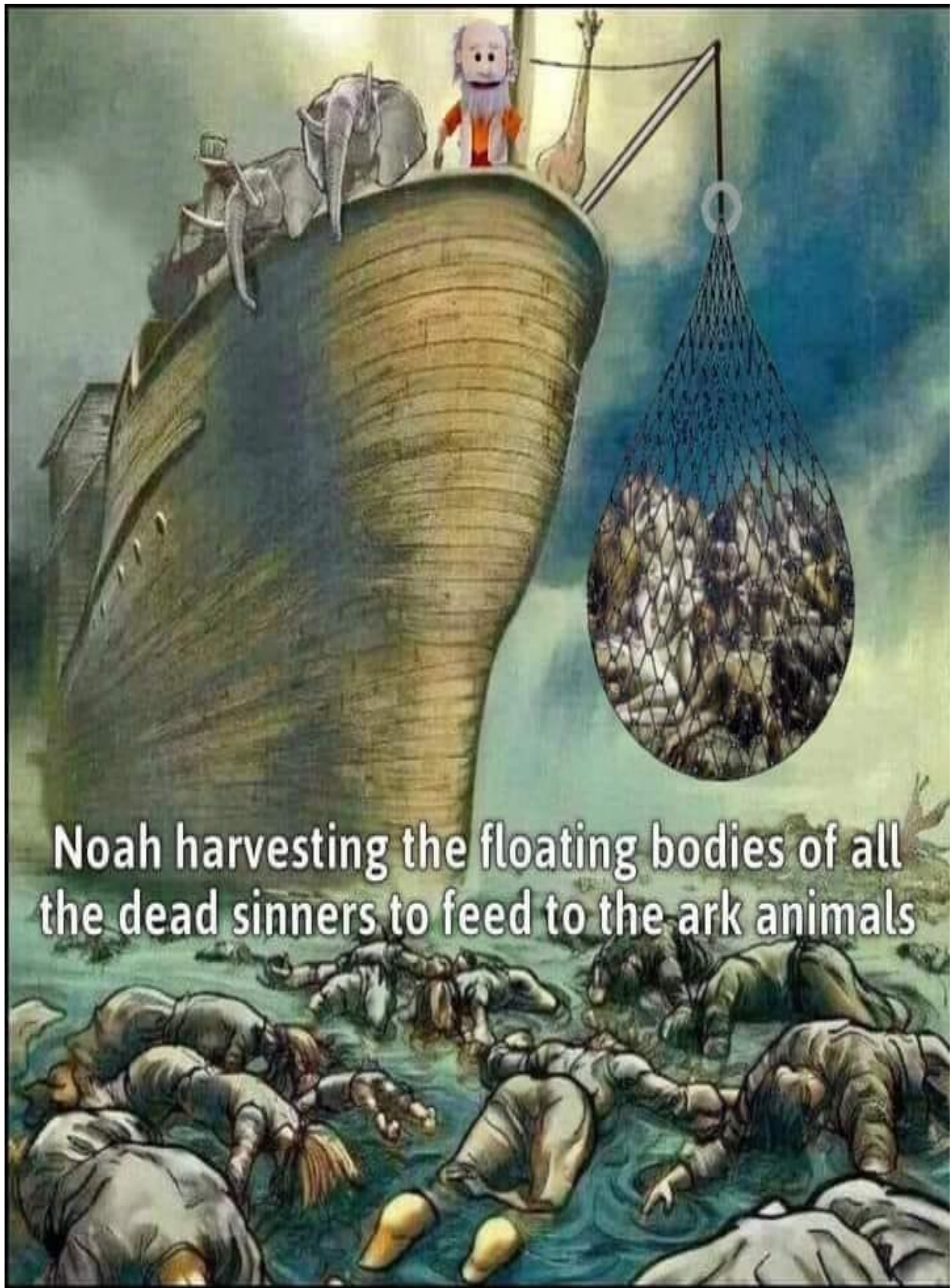
Noah had to gather penguins from the yet undiscovered Antarctic, as well as kangaroos and wild dogs called dingoes from Australia, whatever that was. Over five-hundred species of salamanders arrived from the Appalachian Mountains in an undiscovered and unnamed continent! In addition to the proverbial Dorothy's Lions and Tigers, and Bears, were jackals, and ocelots and a variety of snails.

Obviously, transporting these, as well as millions more pairs of animal species was a job for the pros. It could have only been accomplished by one group, *Amazon...*

After receiving at least these millions of species into the ark – along with plenty of food and dung remover – the nomadic, desert dwelling boat builder, Noah, had to care for and feed these animals, not to mention keeping them from eating each other, or – *horrors!* – reproducing.

The flood was not really that deep in some places. Animals





Noah harvesting the floating bodies of all the dead sinners to feed to the ark animals

too big for the Ark, such as the taller dinosaurs, retreated up to the peaks of the tallest mountains, in order to keep their heads above water. How do I know? Quite simply, there is no other ways the zillions of animals contained on the Ark could have enough food for 40 days and nights. Noah would have undoubtedly followed the coast as the waters rose above everything except the heads of the tallest animal, the Brontosaurus. Large felines and other big predators must have been tossed out to kill these behemoths to consume, before returning to the ark. The Bronti's also provided plenty of food for Noah to feed his family, as well many of the other animals (unless, of course, they dined on the flesh of drowned corpses that the (un)merciful god destroyed). *Ugh!*

Eventually the floods receded, and the animals had to be returned to their old homelands, finally using Amazon to return them to their native environs. Farfetched, you say? Is Amazon the part of the story that bothers you? Besides, the one thing true about the above account is that Amazon does have free returns.

RHYMES WITH ORANGE

BY HILARY B. PRICE



Subject: Frank's Scrotum

The pastor asked if anyone in the congregation would like to express praise for an answered prayer. Suzie stood and walked to the podium.

She said, "I have some praise. Two months ago, my husband, Frank, had a terrible bicycle accident and his scrotum was completely crushed. The pain was excruciating, and the doctors didn't know if they could help him."

You could hear a muffled gasp from the men in the congregation as they imagined the pain that poor Frank must have experienced.

"Frank was unable to hold me or the children," she went on, "and every move caused him terrible pain." We prayed as the doctors performed a delicate operation, and it turned out they were able to piece together the crushed remnants of Frank's scrotum and wrap fine wire around it to hold it in place with metal staples."

Again, the men in the congregation cringed and squirmed uncomfortably as they imagined the horrible surgery performed on Frank.

"Now," she announced in a quivering voice, "thank the Lord, Frank is out of the hospital and the doctors say that with time, his scrotum should recover completely."

All the men sighed with unified relief. The pastor rose and tentatively asked if anyone else had something to say.

A man stood up and walked slowly to the podium. He said, "I'm Frank." The entire congregation held its breath.

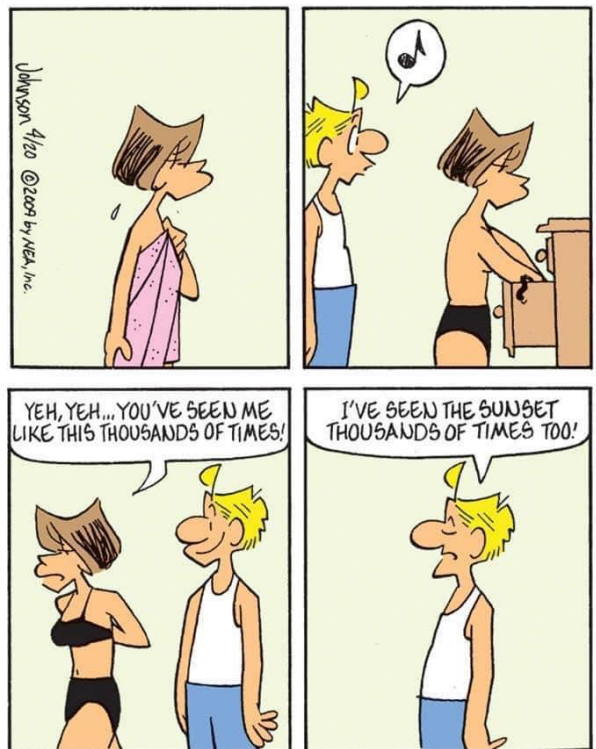
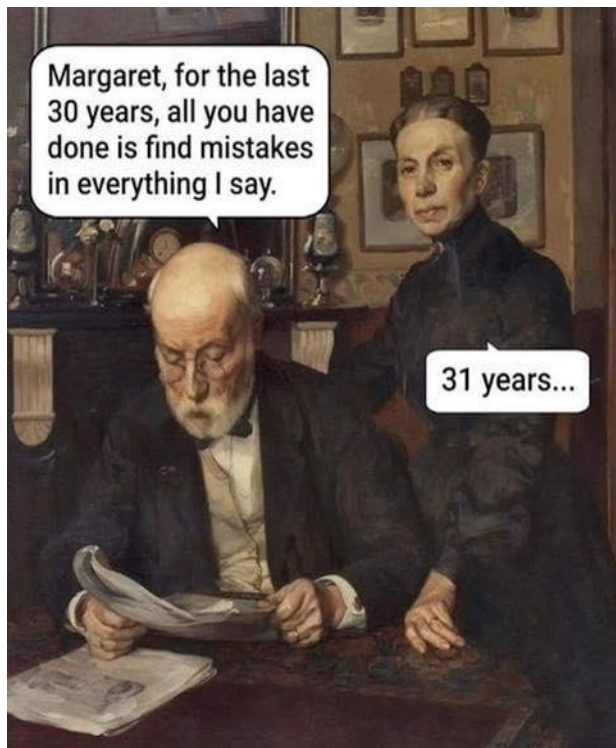
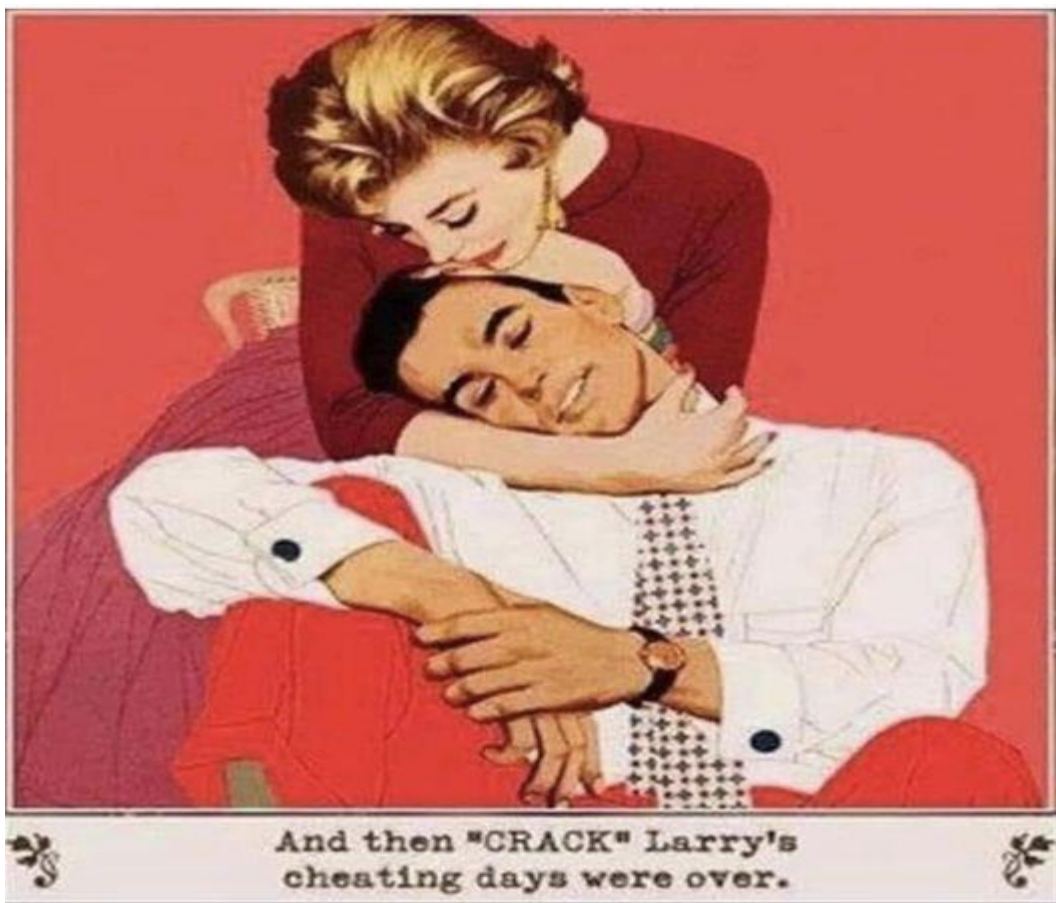
"I just want to tell my wife that the word is "sternum."

Math problem
of the day:

If George is 73
and his
girlfriend is 26.
How much
money does
George have?









**“Those who don’t study history are doomed to repeat it.
Yet those who *do* study history are doomed to stand by
helplessly while everyone else repeats it.”**



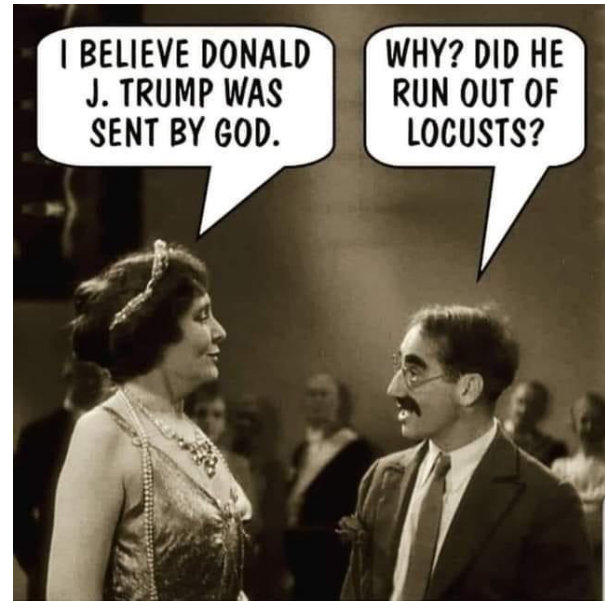
***“The two things that really drew me to vinyl were
the expense and the inconvenience.”***



A BLACK MAN RODE PAST MY HOUSE TODAY ON A PUSH BIKE...I THOUGHT THAT LOOKS LIKE MINE



SO I RUSHED TO THE GARAGE TO CHECK...LUCKLY MINE WAS STILL CHAINED UP ASKING FOR FOOD.



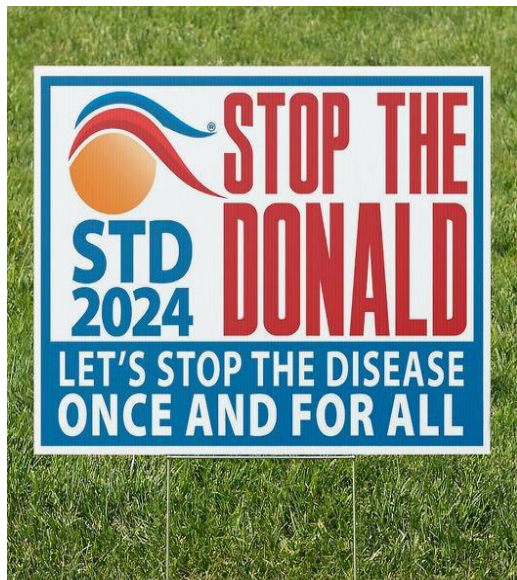
Balm Threat
@balmthreat

My 72 year-old mother just informed me she is going to her first "sex party" and doesn't know what to bring.

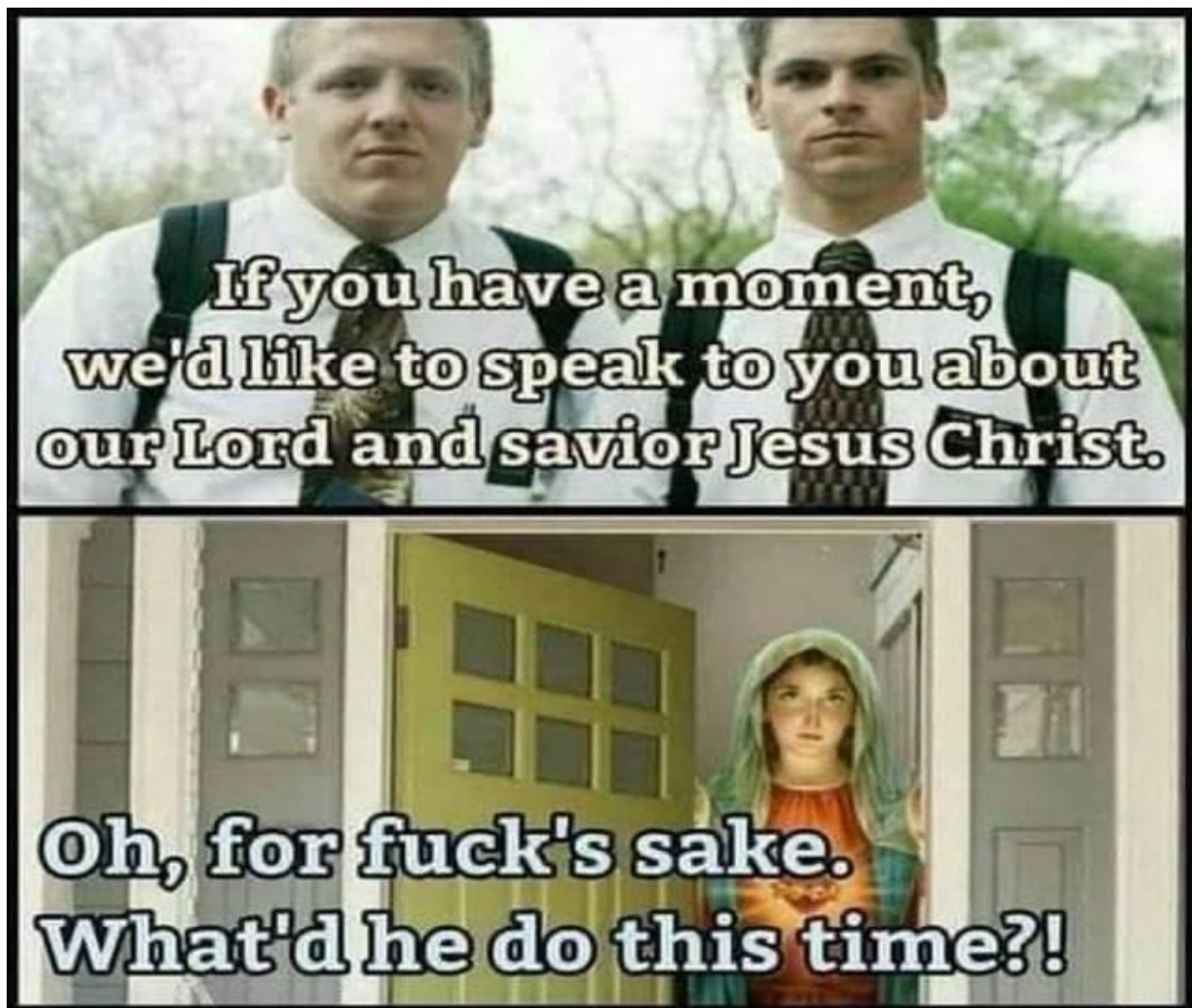
After some delicate questioning, "Gender Reveal, Mom. It's called a Gender Reveal."

4:38 PM · 6/15/20 · [Twitter Web App](#)





Pronoun Chart					
	Subject Pronouns	Object Pronouns	Possessive Adjectives	Possessive Pronouns	Reflexive Pronouns
1 st person	I	me	my	mine	myself
2 nd person	you	you	your	yours	yourself
3 rd person (male)	he	him	his	his	himself
3 rd person (female)	she	her	her	hers	herself
3 rd person	it	it	its	(not used)	itself
1 st person (plural)	we	us	our	ours	ourselves
2 nd person (plural)	you	you	your	yours	yourselves
3 rd person (plural)	they	them	their	theirs	themselves



CAT FACTS...

CATS LIKE TO BE INVOLVED IN WHATEVER THEIR OWNER IS DOING...



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