

# THE JOURNAL

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2024 VOL. 9, NO. 6



*In a Van Gogh down by the river. 🌈*

*Thoughts on Thoughts – Jack & Jill Discuss "What's wrong with how I fix things?" By James Longo p.24*

*"This Can't Be Happening!" Bert Mautz recalls being trapped in an elevator during Hurricane Milton p. 45*

*To My Teachers ~ An Homage by Ed Zilloux p. 62*

# 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.6

November / December 2024

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

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

## INTRODUCTION

# GOPathetic

– vulgar is as vulgar does.

Welcome to the last issue for 2024 of the Aware Ones of the Treasure Coast Journal, Vol.9, No.6.

My question for this final issue is twofold, where am I? Where are we?

Am I on a slow boat to Costa Rica because the Orange Madman won the election? Or, am I still hungover from celebrating that Kamala, the coach and justice prevailed on November 5, dancing in the streets all night long, and Trump has absconded to Moscow to save his skin from incarceration?

It is a dichotomy. It is contradictions galore. My confusion knows no bounds! Am I getting through to you?

I KNOW, this is the year 2024. We are supposed to be in a modern age, the information age. It is all at our fingertips! But is it? Is that information correct? Can we depend on it? Do we really know if the polls are true? Can we trust the information sources? Are we at their mercy? Are we just in the time of "WOWEE?"

I am not going to pull any punches here. If you are like me, you want to know – *to really know*, goddamn it – when will the outrage become too *f-ing* much? When is the repugnant going too far? When will the blindly following wake up? When will they get over their willful ignorance? When will they use their ears to hear? When will they use their eyes to see like we have?

The Madison Square Garden (MSG) MAGA event (the Effing News blog called it “a rally of the Fourth Reich” – *‘methodically target[ed] women, New York, people of color, women of color, Black people of color, Black women of color, Black men of color, Puerto Rican people, Samoan people, Malaysian people, Arab people, Muslim people, Palestinian-American people, and people who don’t think Harris is the Antichrist.’*) on October 27<sup>th</sup> was a travesty to anyone’s notion of decency. Except for those damned MAGAs. They jeered at equality. They praised cruelty. They applauded racism.

There should be no mistaking who these people really are after this evening. For six hours one speaker after another dropped the most vile and disgusting bigotry out of their pieholes to cheers and laughter from an equally vile and disgusting audience.

Anyone thinking that what was spewed from the podium was great, was good, was what our founding fathers wanted for us, was what our future should be, ought to have their dicks pulled off. (*I will refrain from suggesting what should happen to the female MAGAs, but I am certain that female dissenters from their repugnant ideology could come up with an equivalent punishment. Just remember, the MAGA ladies embrace the misogynistic MAGA patriarchy, they are being punished already*).

MAGA is a return to those noxious days when it was so easy to demean other races. “You’ll never have a negro quarterback,” was a predominate humiliation of that race in my youth. Inferring that negroes weren’t smart enough to play quarterback in the National Football League. Yet, we now have – not only – *champion* negro quarterbacks, but we also have negro officials and negro coaches. Negro Head Coaches! What we don’t have is, negro owners for some reason that I facetiously say that “I don’t know why?”

What the MSG rally really did was drop the GOP trousers and expose their disease to the entire country, the entire world. It



was an X-rated exposure like the revelation of the bare ass image of the man behind the curtain in the Wizard of Oz. Talk about perversion!

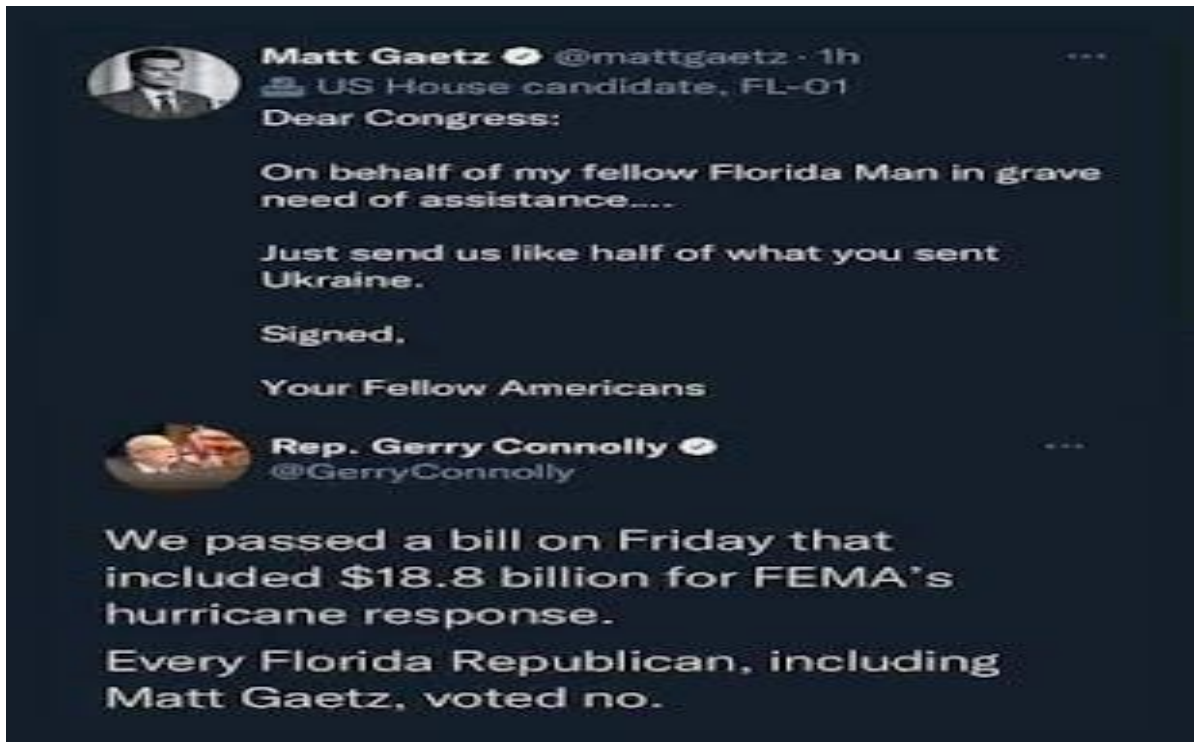
Now personally, I have seen and participated in a lot of what some people would describe as "obscene stuff." Okay, fine. If playing somebody's body like a Stradivarius Violin to assist them in achieving an "e" over high "c" orgasm, then yes, I stand not only guilty, but proudly so. However, my obscenity was never to foment hate. Or division. Or to tell lies about someone else. Isn't it the difference between spreading "love" and smearing "Hate".

As of this morning (Tuesday, Oct. 29) I am not sure how I feel about those MAGA people who obscenely bragged about their prejudices at the Madison Square Garden rally. I have ambivalent feelings about them. They would have been very much at home back in 1939 when the Nazi's of the German-American Bund staged a rally at MSG. They disgust me and they scare me. They are nothing to laugh at.

How do I finish this intro? I am not sure how I feel about the country's long-term future. How do I feel about our collective immediate future? Will there be a judgement day? It has to be that dichotomy thing. I look forward to November fifth and the election results with hope and apprehension. Arnold Palmer's genitalia notwithstanding.

How will I feel then? Will I be unhappy/happy because, although we will have our first female president, what if she is hamstrung/secure because she won't/will have the senate and/or the house, or both (please, oh please, oh please, let it be both!)? I don't think I wish to live through four more years of Trumpian-Republican-MAGA bullshit. I do look forward to four years of peace and responsible government.

*Virgil*



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

You are also welcome to join our tables and the fresh air at either Stuart's *Sandsprit Park* 3443 SE Saint Lucie Blvd, or *Flagler Park* (under the Roosevelt Bridge on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month), where we gather every Friday *around* 11:00 am to share ideas and challenge your mind – masks optional. Members are encouraged to share and spread what is becoming a very interesting magazine. Outside criticism and interesting contributions are welcomed. Everyone is welcome to join us at the Sunday 11 am Zoom meeting.

*If you do not want the journal and wish to have your address removed, please email [vmthorp@outlook.com](mailto:vmthorp@outlook.com) for confirmation.*

# AOTC MEMBERS

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\** (next to *Hudson's on the River* restaurant across the tracks from the Roosevelt Bridge). All other Fridays, *Summits at Sandsprit* – 11 am gathering in the sun and fresh air of Stuart's Sandsprit Park. BYOB. *\*May or may not be transferred to Sandsprit Park at time of*

*publication. Check with Dan.*

Sunday Zoom – 11 am Zoom meeting. Contact Dan Vignau <[vignaujdna@aol.com](mailto:vignaujdna@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 November 2024 Novel Writing Month

November 1 – **Aware Ones at Flagler Park, 11 am.**



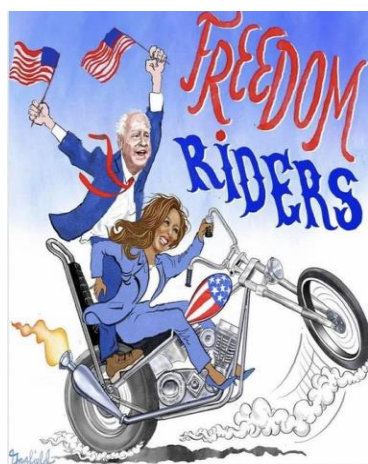
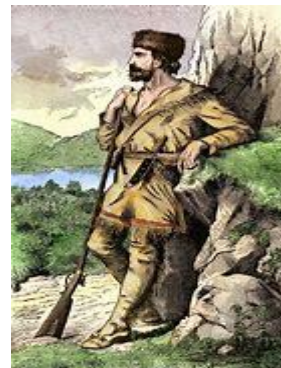
National Author's Day

All Saint's Day -- Dios Los Muertos , a two-day celebration on November 1 and 2

November 2

Daniel Boone born, 1734

Book Lovers Day – The first Saturday of the month.



November 3 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

Daylight Savings Time ends at 2:00 a.m.

November 5

U.S. General Election Day

November 8 – **Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.**

Cook Something Bold Day

November 9

World Freedom Day

November 10 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

USMC Day



IF YOU DROPPED OFF YOUR CHILD AS A BOY AND PICKED YOUR CHILD UP AS A GIRL, PLEASE RETURN HER BACK TO THE SCHOOL.  
**YOU PICKED UP THE WRONG CHILD.**  
THANK YOU.

A bitter old man, alone with his phone at night, posting on social media all night long having tantrums, mocking others, lying about the size of his crowds, and making up 7th grade nicknames for his "enemies" is just weird.  
**Really weird.**

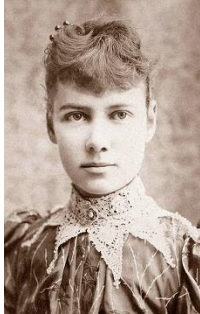
November is a great time to dispose of rotting pumpkins





**November 11 – Veteran's Day** 1918: Germany signs an armistice agreement with the Allies in a railroad car in the forest of Compiègne, France. The fighting officially ends at 11:00 a.m., (the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month) and this is commemorated annually with a two-minute silence.

Photo: Crowds of people with soldiers on their shoulder celebrating the signing by Germany of the armistice effectively ending WWI. (Time/Life Pictures/US Army Signal Corps)



**November 14 – Writer's Group**  
**@ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.** 1889: Pioneering female journalist Nellie Bly (aka Elizabeth Cochrane) begins a successful attempt to travel around the world in less than 80 days. She completes the trip in 72 days.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nellie\\_Bly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nellie_Bly)  
 Photo: H. J. Myers / Library of Congress



**November 15 – Aware Ones**  
**at Sandspruit Park 11 am.** Georgia O'Keefe born, 1887

**November 16 – 1938:** LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide) is first synthesized by Swiss scientist Albert Hofmann (1906-2008) from ergotamine at the Sandoz Laboratories in Basel Switzerland.



**November 17 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

Take A Hike Day Lewis & Clark  
 Reached the Pacific in 1805

**November 19 – 1969:** Apollo 12 astronauts Pete Conrad and Alan Bean land at Oceanus Procellarum (the "Ocean of Storms") and become the third and fourth humans to walk on the Moon.

Photo: NASA



**November 22 – Aware Ones**  
**at Sandspruit Park 11 am.**

John F. Kennedy Assassinated in 1963 (35th President) in Dallas, Texas.

November 24 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

**All Our Uncles Are Monkeys Day** – Charles Darwin publishes 'The Origin of Species' in 1859



**Evolution Day**

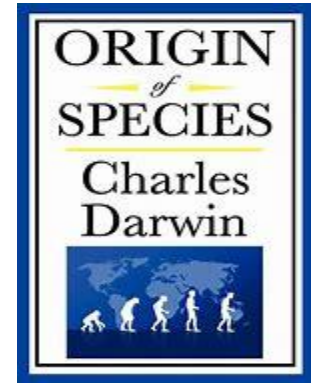
**November 25**

**November 25, 1963.** Photo:  
Henri Dauman

**November 28 – Thanksgiving** – Eat, drink, and be thankful.

**November 29 – Aware Ones Thanksgiving**

**Party at Rick & Sandra's 3 pm.** Drinks at 3pm, dinner at 4pm. We will provide turkey, stuffing, gravy. Potluck and RSVP, please. 1549 SW Albatross Way, Palm City FL 34990, 772-919-1642, outrageous314@yahoo



**December** **National Fruitcake Month**

**December 1 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.** – Rosa Parks Day on this day in 1955 she refused to give up her seat.



**December 2 – 1969:** Los Angeles Police charge Charles "Tex" Watson (24), Patricia Krenwinkel (21) and Linda Kasabian (19) with the murders of actress Sharon Tate and four others on August 9. Photo: NY Daily News



**December 5 – Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.** **Repeal Day** – The 21st Amendment ends Prohibition. I'll drink to that!



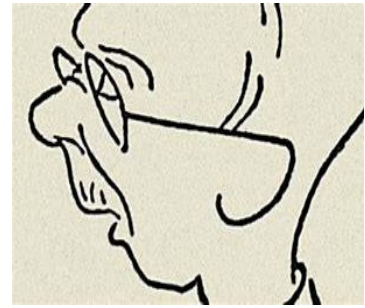
**December 6 – Aware Ones at Flagler Park, 11 am.**



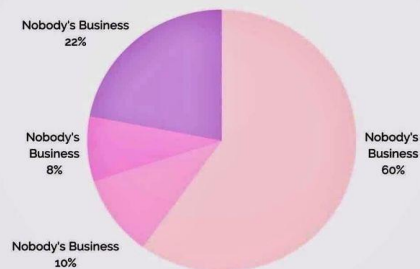


December 7 – [Pearl Harbor Day](#)

December 8 – [Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.](#) –  
[James Thurber](#) born, 1894



### REASONS WHY WOMEN HAVE ABORTIONS



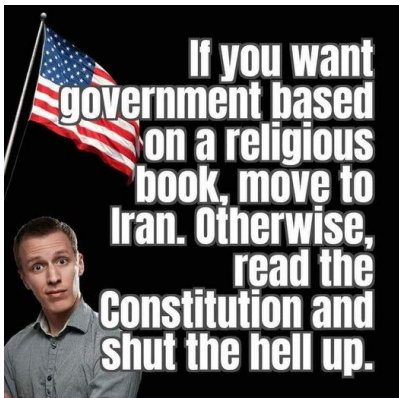
[National Brownie Day](#)

December 10 – [Human Rights Day](#)

December 13 – [Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.](#)

I was walking past a farm  
where a sign said  
"DUCK, EGGS"  
I thought, "That's an  
unnecessary comma."  
And then it hit me.

[Friday the 13th](#)



December 15 – [Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.](#)

[Bill of Rights Day](#)

December 16 – [Beethoven's Birthday](#) (1770).



December 19 – [Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.](#)

December 20 – [Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.](#)

December 21 – [Winter Solstice](#) –  
The shortest day of the year.

Where do bad  
rainbows go? To  
prism. It's a light  
sentence, but it  
gives them time to  
reflect.



December 22 – [Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.](#)

**December 25 – Christmas Day**

Artwork: Katsuko Ono, Merry Christmas ✨ Wishing you peace.

When I get in bed with you and snuggle, all you have to do is snuggle back. It helps me sleep. Don't start asking questions like how did I get in your house. It ruins the moment. 🤔

**December 27 –**

**Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.**

**December 29 –**

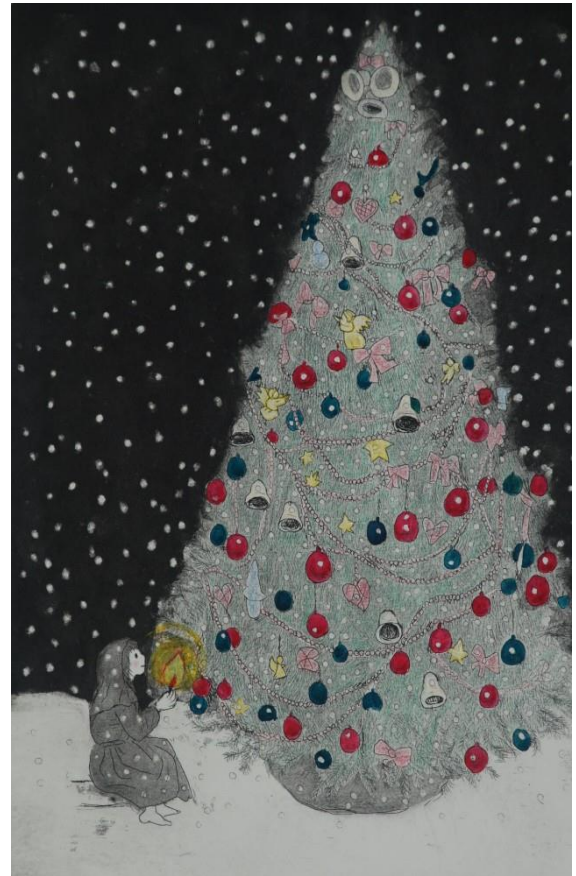
**Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

**January 2 –**

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

**Upcoming:**

***March 2025 –***



**March 14-16, 2025**

**Orlando, Florida [www.freeflo.org](http://www.freeflo.org)**



## LIVES LIVED – LIVES LOST

### September 2024



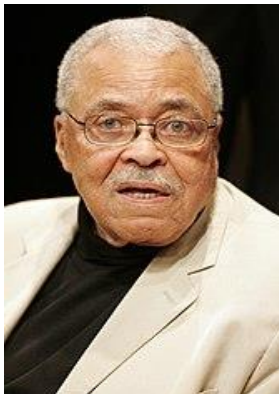
**2** James Darren, 88, American singer ("Goodbye Cruel World") and actor (Gidget, T. J. Hooker), heart failure.). As a teen pop singer, he sang hit singles including "Goodbye Cruel World" in 1961.

**3** María Woesha Benítez 82, was an American dancer, choreographer, and director in Spanish dance and flamenco. Benítez is best known for the work of the company she and her husband Cecilio founded and directed, Teatro Flamenco.



**5** Sérgio Mendes, 83, Brazilian bossa nova musician ("The Look of Love", "The Fool on the Hill", "Never Gonna Let You Go"), Grammy winner (1993), complications from long COVID.

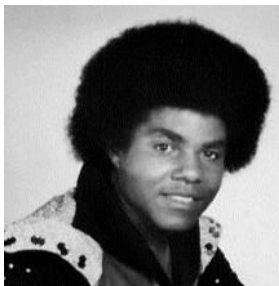
• Screamin' Scott Simon, 75, American pianist and singer (Sha Na Na), sinus cancer. Born in Kansas City, Missouri on December 9, 1948, he graduated from Southwest High School in Kansas City, in 1966, and graduated from Columbia University with a B.A. in 1970.



**9** James Earl Jones, 93, American actor (Star Wars, Fences, The Lion King), Tony winner (1969, 1987). Jones was one of the few performers to achieve the EGOT (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony). He was inducted into the American Theater Hall of Fame in 1985, and was honored with the National Medal of Arts in 1992, the Kennedy Center Honor in 2002, the Screen Actors Guild Life Achievement Award in 2009, and the Academy Honorary Award in 2011.



**11** Chad McQueen, 63, American actor (The Karate Kid, Martial Law, Red Line) and racing driver. He was the only son and last living child of actor Steve McQueen (1930–1980).



**15** Tito Jackson, 70, American Hall of Fame musician (The Jackson 5), heart attack.

**16** Song Binbin, 77, Chinese Red Guard leader, cancer. As a 19-year old, began engaging in violence that led to a role as a senior leader in the Chinese Red Guards during the call to violence by Mao Zedong that was the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Song studied geology and moved to the United States, eventually receiving a doctorate from

the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1989.





**17** JD Souther, 78, American Hall of Fame singer-songwriter ("You're Only Lonely", "Her Town Too", "New Kid in Town"). Souther helped the Eagles to form as a backing band for Linda Ronstadt and when they branched out on their own, he played with them at the Troubadour on LA's Sunset Strip.



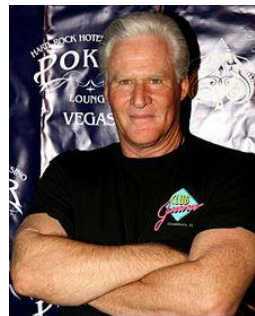
**18** Kesaria Abramidze, 37, Georgian model (Miss Trans Global) and influencer, stabbed. She was the first openly transgender person in the country to make an appearance on national television. Abramidze was found murdered on 18 September 2024 at her home on the outskirts of Tbilisi, just one day after the Parliament of Georgia passed the Georgian LGBT propaganda bill.



- Nick Gravenites, 85, American blues musician (The Electric Flag, Big Brother and the Holding Company) and record producer ("One Toke Over the Line"), complications from dementia and diabetes.



**19** Victoria Roshchyna, 27, Ukrainian journalist. a Ukrainian journalist who reported on the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Siege of Mariupol. She was a recipient of the International Women's Media Foundation's 2022 Courage in Journalism Award. Roshchyna disappeared in August 2023, and in October 2024 was confirmed to have died in Russian detention. The Ukrainian government announced it would investigate her death as a potential murder and war crime.



**20** Andrew Jay Abrams, aka Randy West, 76, American pornographic actor, heart and kidney failure. West's on-screen sexual performance has been referred to by observers as being like that of a "human pile driver". He appeared in over 1,300 pornographic films, alongside an estimated 2,500 female co-stars. He was cast as Robert Redford's

body double in the 1993 Paramount Pictures film Indecent Proposal.



**27** Dame Maggie Smith, 89, British actress (The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, Harry Potter), a British actress known for her wit in both comedic and dramatic roles. She had an extensive career on stage and screen for over seven decades and was one of Britain's most recognizable and prolific

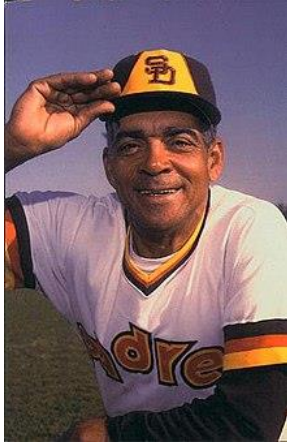


actresses. She received numerous accolades, including two Academy Awards, five BAFTA Awards, four Emmy Awards, three Golden Globe Awards and a Tony Award, as well as nominations for six Olivier Awards.

**28** Kris Kristofferson, 88, American Hall of Fame singer-songwriter ("Me and Bobby McGee", "Help Me Make It Through the Night") and actor (A Star Is Born), Grammy winner (1972, 1974, 1975). Kristofferson said that he would like the first three lines of Leonard Cohen's "Bird on the Wire" on his tombstone:

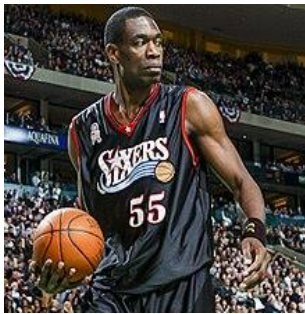
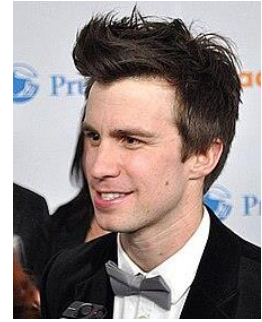
*Like a bird on the wire  
Like a drunk in a midnight choir  
I have tried in my way to be free*





**29** Ozzie Virgil Sr., 92, Dominican baseball player (New York Giants, Detroit Tigers, Pittsburgh Pirates), pancreatitis. Frequently a third baseman, Virgil played every position except pitcher and center field. He batted and threw right-handed.

**30** Gavin Creel, 48, American actor (Thoroughly Modern Millie, The Book of Mormon, Hello, Dolly!), Tony winner (2017), malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumor. He was raised in a devoutly religious environment which he found highly alienating and was drawn to theater as a way to escape it. He was one of the founders, with Rory O'Malley and Jenny Kanelos, of Broadway Impact, an LGBT activist group that mobilized the New York theatre community in the pursuit of marriage equality.

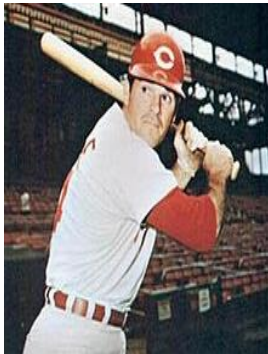


- Dikembe Mutombo, 58, Congolese-American Hall of Fame basketball player (Denver Nuggets, Houston Rockets, Atlanta Hawks), brain cancer.

- Ken Page, 70, American actor (Ain't Misbehavin', Cats, The Nightmare Before Christmas). Page once explained: "I'm not closeted, never have been to my knowledge. But 'gay' means



so many different things to people."



- Pete Rose, 83, American baseball player (Cincinnati Reds, Philadelphia Phillies, Montreal Expos) and manager, World Series champion (1975, 1976, 1980), heart disease. He won three World Series championships, three batting titles, one Most Valuable Player Award, two Gold Glove Awards, and the Rookie of the Year Award.

## October

**4** Christopher Ciccone, 63, pancreatic cancer. an American visual artist, interior decorator, and designer in New York, Miami, and Los Angeles. He was the younger brother of singer Madonna.

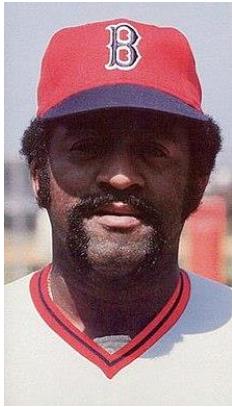


**7** Cissy Houston, 91, American singer (The Sweet Inspirations) and actress (The Preacher's Wife), Grammy winner (1997, 1999), complications from Alzheimer's disease. Houston was the mother of singer and actress Whitney Houston, the aunt of singers Dionne Warwick and Dee Dee Warwick, and a cousin of opera singer Leontyne Price.



- Arie L. Kopelman, 86, American businessman and philanthropist, president of Chanel (1986–2004), pancreatic cancer. During his tenure as president, the company released the fragrances Coco, Coco Mademoiselle, Chance, Allure, Allure for Men, Cristalle, Egoiste, and Egoiste Platinum. Coco Mademoiselle is often ranked among the world's best-selling fragrances.





**8** Luis Tiant, 83, Cuban baseball player (Boston Red Sox, Cleveland Indians, New York Yankees). nicknamed **El Tiente**, was a Cuban Major League Baseball (MLB) right-handed starting pitcher. He pitched in MLB for 19 years, primarily for the Cleveland Indians and the Boston Red Sox.



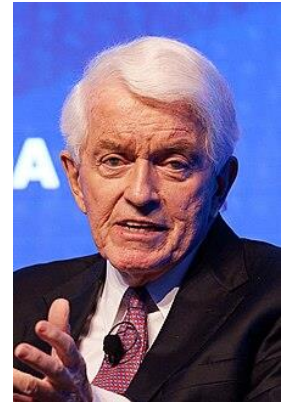
**10** Ethel Kennedy, 96, American human rights advocate, founder of Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, complications from a stroke. Shortly after her husband's assassination in 1968, she founded the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, a non-profit charity working to reach his goal of a just and

peaceful world. In 2014, Kennedy was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by Barack Obama.



- Lilly Ledbetter, 86, American equal-pay activist (Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009), respiratory failure. an American activist who was the plaintiff in the United States Supreme Court case Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. regarding employment discrimination. n 1979, Lilly Ledbetter was hired by Goodyear, working as a supervisor. After working for Goodyear for nineteen years and nearing retirement, she received an anonymous note revealing that she was making thousands less per year than the men in her position. Had her pay raises remained consistent with those given to the male employees, she would have made over \$200,000 more over the

course of her career than she actually had. In 2011, Ledbetter was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.



**14** Thomas J. Donohue, 86, American business executive, president (1997–2019) and CEO (1997–2021) of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. During his final years at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, he often clashed with President Donald Trump over his administration's trade and immigration policies.



**17** Mitzi Gaynor, 93, American actress (There's No Business Like Show Business, The Birds and the Bees, South Pacific), singer and dancer.

**19** Thelma Mothershed-Wair, 83, American counselor, member of the Little Rock Nine.



**20** Barbara Jean Spillman known professionally as Barbara Dane, 97, an American folk, blues, and jazz singer, guitarist, record producer, and political activist. She co-founded Paredon Records with Irwin Silber.

- Chuck Coleman, 61, American aviator and aerospace engineer, plane crash. In 2018, Coleman trained the lead actors starring in Top Gun: Maverick featuring Tom Cruise, Val Kilmer, and Jennifer Connelly.







**22** Fernando Valenzuela, 63, Mexican-American baseball player (Los Angeles Dodgers), owner (Tigres de Quintana Roo) and broadcaster, World Series champion (1981), liver cancer.

- Elizabeth Francis, 115, American supercentenarian, oldest person in the United States (since 2024). Francis avoided smoking her whole life and often grew vegetables in her backyard. She attributed her long life to her faith in God.



**23** Jack Jones, 86, American singer ("Wives and Lovers", "Love Boat") and actor (Over the Garden Wall), leukemia

**25** Phil Lesh, 84, American Hall of Fame musician and a founding member of the Grateful Dead, with whom he played bass guitar throughout their 30-year career. (Grateful Dead) and songwriter ("Box of Rain", "Truckin'").



**28** Paul Morrissey, 86, American film director known for his early association with Andy Warhol. His most famous films include (Flesh, Trash, Flesh for Frankenstein), pneumonia



**29** Teri Garr, 79, American actress (Tootsie, Young Frankenstein, Close Encounters of the Third Kind), multiple sclerosis. She often appeared on television during this time, performing as a go-go dancer on several musical variety shows, along with friend Toni Basil, such as Shindig! and Hullabaloo. She hosted Saturday Night Live three times (in 1980, 1983, and 1985), and was a frequent visitor



on The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson.

I've never faked my I miss you,  
or I love you. Only thing I faked  
is I'm okay.

## HEROES



Iranian chess player Dorsa Derakhshani was given an ultimatum by the Islamic regime: either wear the hijab or you won't be allowed to compete.

Not only she refused to wear the hijab, she joined the USA team and became a world champion.

Queen behavior if you ask me.



International Master and Woman Grandmaster, Dorsa Derakhshani accepted a full ride scholarship to play chess in the US and expects to graduate med school in 2026.

## ASSHOLE(S) OF THE MONTH

*Editor's note: due to the impending national election, the amount of Assholishness is approaching record levels. Assholes who would previously be featured, no longer make the cut and will be placed on a "space available" waiting list.*



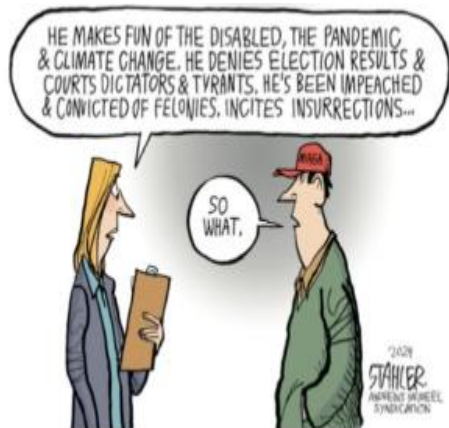




## *Yes, we Floridians knew about Rep Brian Mast, (R-FL)*

A Republican lawmaker claimed Thursday that Mike Pence's life "wasn't really in peril" on Jan. 6, 2021, when a mob of angry Donald Trump supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol and chanted about hanging Trump's vice president. "So what?"

Trump had asked upon hearing the news. The anecdote was not enough to convince Rep. Brian Mast (R-Fla.), who spoke on CNN's "Inside Politics" that Trump had really put Pence's life in danger. "I don't think that that should be categorized as anything other than hyperbole," Mast said, according to a clip of the interview shared by Mediaite. "His life wasn't really in peril," Mast said. "He was protected by Secret Service. That is a fact." - by Marita Vlachou



## *From Asheville, NC, The Boss of the Year?*

Gerald O'Conner here is the CEO of [#ImpactPlastics](#). That's his Porsche 911 Turbo.

He told his workers if they didn't work during Hurricane Helena they'd be fired.

6 of his workers died.

Until he goes to prison, he should not enjoy a peaceful moment in public.





## So, this is how this BS started!!!

Anna Kilgore in Springfield, Ohio with a Trump-Vance hat and flag. The Springfield resident told police last month that her Haitian neighbors may have stolen her cat Miss Sassy. The cat turned out to be hiding in her basement the whole time, and she apologized to her Haitian neighbors



A Vance spokesperson on Tuesday provided The Wall Street Journal with a police report in which a resident had claimed her pet might have been taken by Haitian neighbors. But when a reporter went to Anna Kilgore's house Tuesday evening, she said her cat Miss Sassy, which went missing in late August, had actually returned a few days later—found safe in her own basement.



Miss Sassy, Anna Kilgore's cat. PHOTO: ANNA KILGORE

Kilgore, wearing a Trump shirt and hat, said she apologized to her Haitian neighbors with the help of her daughter and a mobile-phone translation app.



# *Just in time for Christmas*



**TheDevil'sSnowflake**

@RageBot5000

The AR-15 used by Appalachee shooter Colt Gray was given to him as a Christmas present from his father, the recently arrested Colin Gray.

An AR-15.

To celebrate the birth of Christ.

Where in 31 flavors of f\*\*k would someone get an insanely irresponsible idea like that?

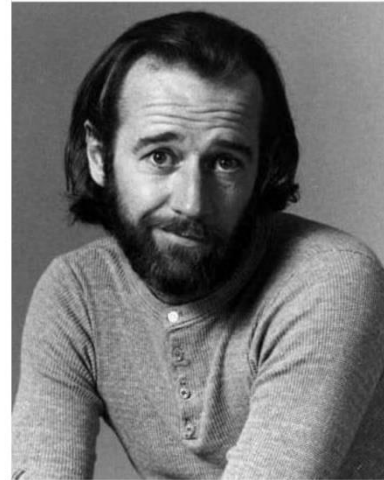


## ATHEIST QUOTES

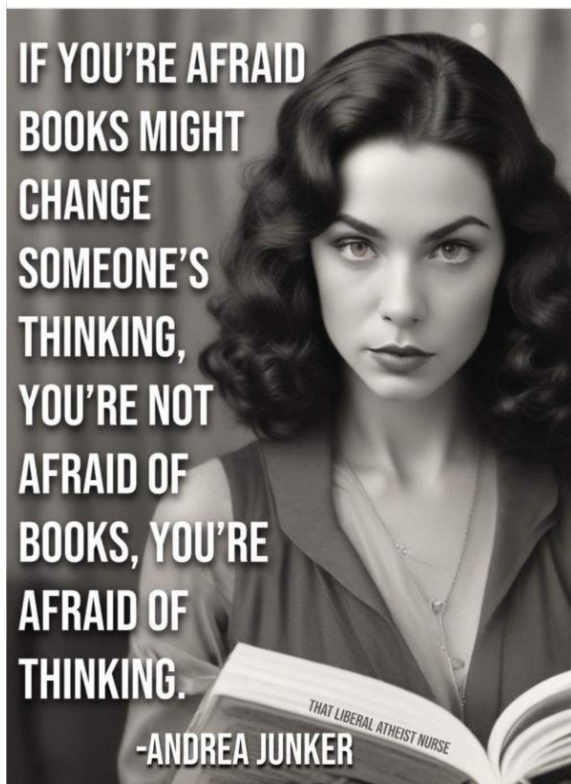
"Keep in mind, the news media are not independent; they are a sort of bulletin board and public relations firm for the ruling class-the people who run things.

Those who decide what news you will or will not hear are paid by, and tolerated purely at the whim of, those who hold economic power. If the parent corporation doesn't want you to know something, it won't be on the news.

Period. Or, at the very least, it will be slanted to suit them, and then rarely followed up."



~George Carlin



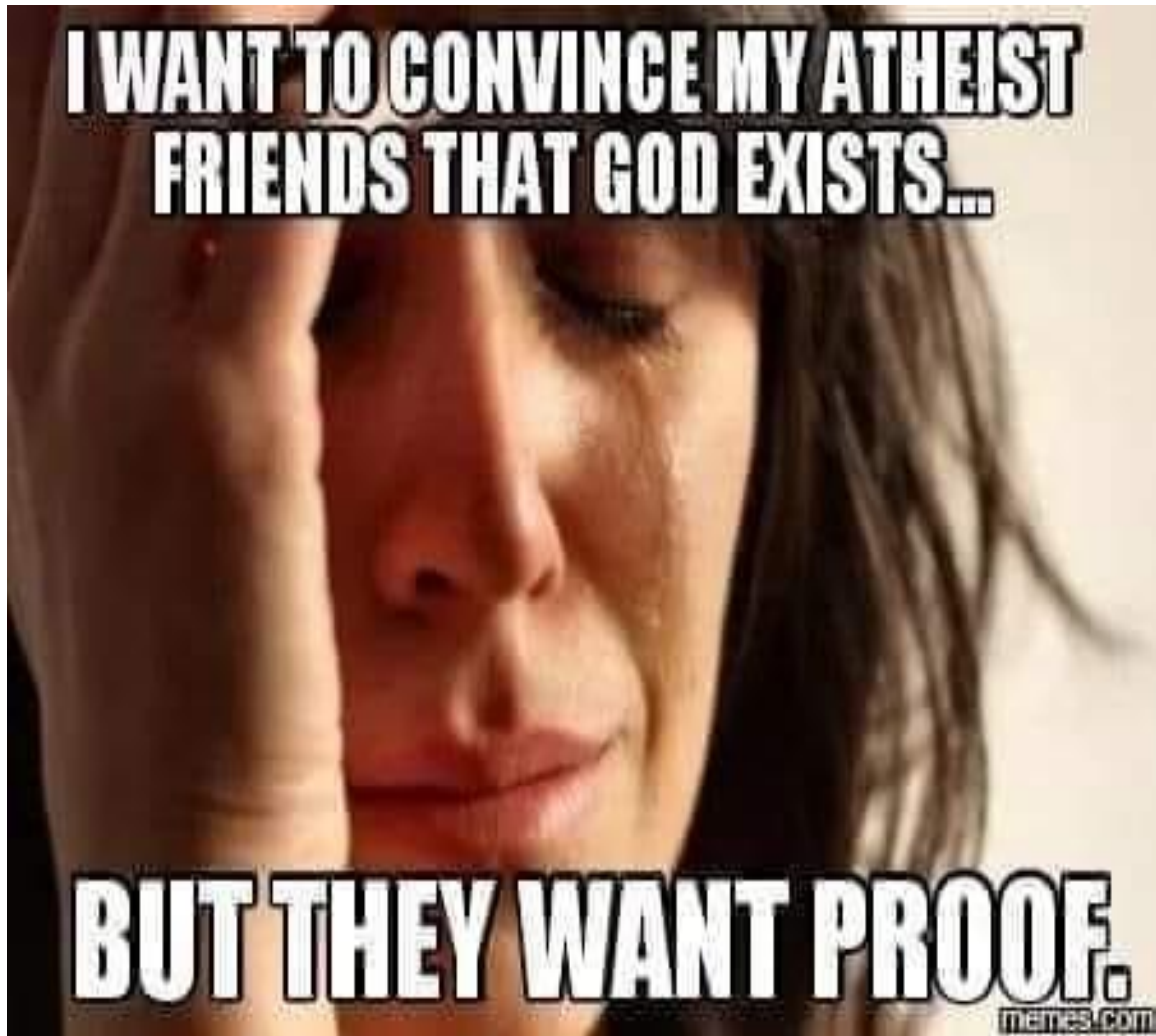
"I have not lived as a woman. I have lived as a man. I've just done what I damn well wanted to and I've made enough money to support myself and ain't afraid of being alone."

~Katharine Hepburn





## COMMENTARY



# *Thoughts on Thought*



*By James Longo*

"What is the right way to think?" Jill asked sitting at the table across from Jack after dinner.

"Compared to what the left way to think?" Jack asked back with a stupid little smirk.

"Maybe a better question should be is there a right way and a wrong way to think?"

"I don't think the same way you do, is my way better than yours?"

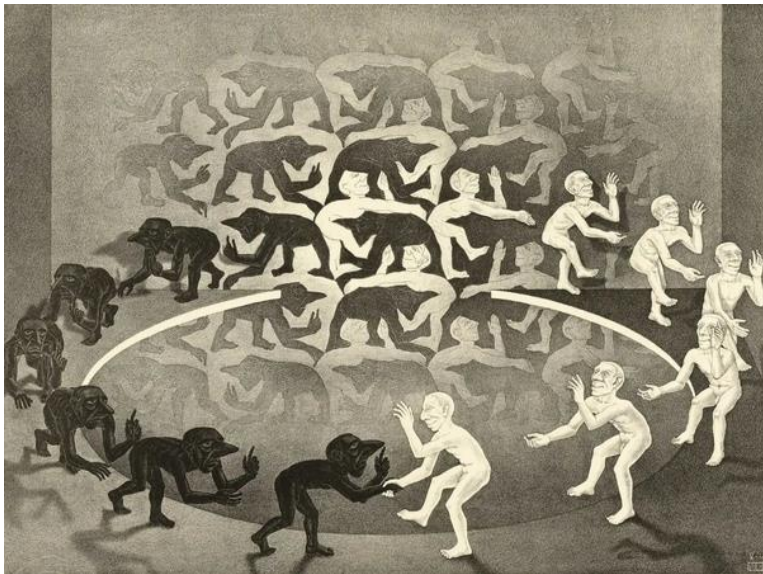
"For me it is," Jill said, reflecting Jack's smirk.

"How would one determine one way is better than another?"

"Results," Jill said with a shrug that was not really a question.

"A better question, what is thinking?"

Jill whipped out her phone and asked, "What is thinking?" She stared down at it. "Mirriam Webster says it is using the mind to produce thoughts."



Jack spoke into his phone, "What is the psychology definition of thought?" then read it to Jill, "The cognitive process of manipulating information to create meaning solve problems, make decisions, and generate new ideas."

"I guess the question should be is there a right way to solve problems, make decisions, and generate new ideas?"

"I think it comes back down to results. If you get to your destination, does it matter which road you take?"

"It sure the hell does. You should watch how you fix things?"

"What's wrong with how I fix things?"



"You approach it ass-backward, and they rarely stay fixed."

"I am not mechanically inclined."

"I'd go so far as to say you are mechanically impaired."

"That's what I have you around for," Jack said with a smile.

Jill just rolled her eyes.

"But is there a right way to solve a problem, make a decision, or generate an idea," Jack asked.

"I am going to say no."

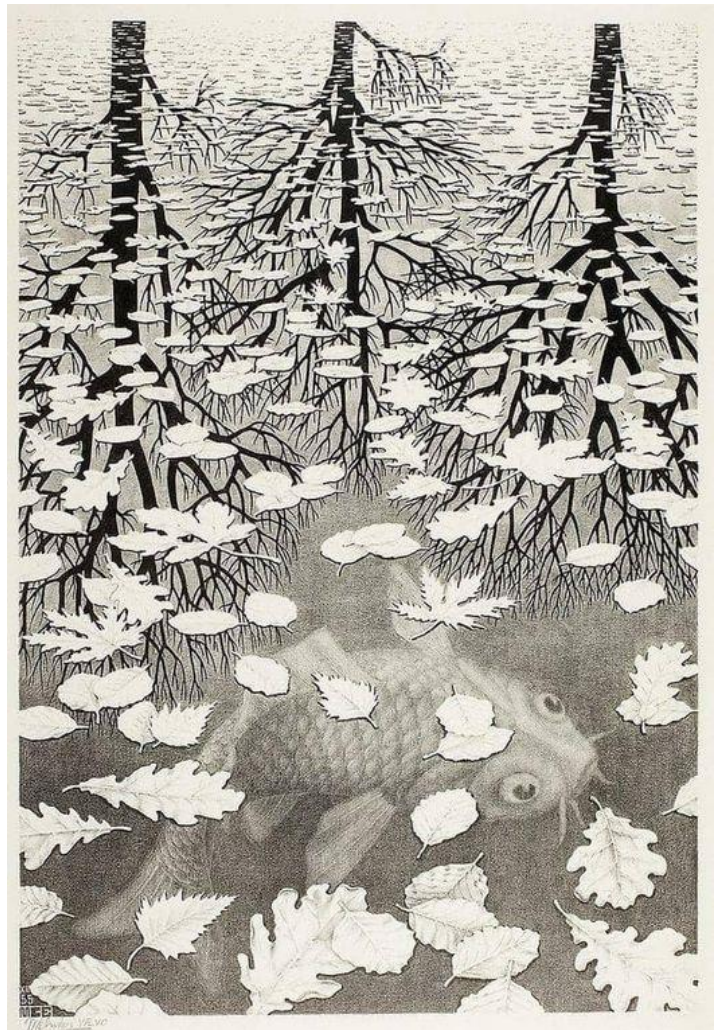
"Why is that?"

"Perspective, priorities, how one weighs the facts, and what results one truly desires."

"Are you saying there are too many variables for anybody to think alike?" Jack said.

"I'll give you an example. When you fix something, you aren't fixing it, you are getting it working for now, and only for now. It is not that you are mechanically uninclined you don't care if it gets fixed beyond the present."

"Is that so wrong," Jack said sounding defensive.





"Yes and no, it just means I have to go behind you and fix it the next time, and I only want to fix it once."

Jack smiled, like the Cheshire cat that stole the fish, "Guilty as charged."

"So where does that leave us?" Jill asked.

"Each person will manipulate the information they have to create and solve problems to validate their perspective."

"And you wonder why no one can see eye to eye?"

"I guess the correct way to think is to realize that everyone has their perspective, and you can't change that,"

"But should we even try?" Jill said.

"I'd say yes. Everyone might learn something occasionally."

"And you love Don Quixote,"

"And I love Don Quixote," Jack said.

"And I think you should do the dishes," Jill said.

"And I will do the dishes, because a happy life has a happy wife," and Jack got up and collected the plates and leaving the table said, "Or am I manipulating myself to believe that?"

"Do we need to go down that road?" Jill said with raised eyebrows.

"No, no, no, a happy spouse makes a happy house because the goal is peace on my earth."

She smiled, "So there is a correct way to think?"

"Yes, your way," Jack said nodding in the affirmative, as he carried the dishes to the sink.

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Art:

P. 24 Veiled Cairn. Celeste Roberge

P.25 Encounter, circa 1944. Illustration by M.C. Escher.

P.26 Three Worlds, 1955. M.C. Escher.

One day you're young, the next day you're  
sitting at the edge of your bed like this...







# *It Isn't a Fucking Miracle!*

The Scathing Atheist  
Diatribes #308  
By Noah Lugeons

I'm about goddamn tired of hearing what a miracle it all was.

See, as many of you know, my town got walloped pretty hard by Hurricane Helene. Now, on the scale of towns that get hit by Helene, we did alright. But on the scale of storms that have hit Waycross, Georgia, it's the worst thing in living memory. And it may very well be that the worst hit spot in the entire fucking city was my backyard. No fewer than five trees dominoed their way into it and landed in a giant, wooden knot. It's so bad that I honestly can't even tell you how many trees are down back there.

Now, fortunately, Lucinda and I weren't in town when it happened. We were still on vacation when the storm rolled through, so we got to avoid the scary part and just come home to the aftermath. We've got family in town, so they'd already reported back the important stuff; our cats were fine, our yard was bad, but it wasn't catastrophically



bad. It could have been. It got really close. In fact, one giant Georgia pine had fallen right between my house and my garage with less than five feet clearance on either side. And so, naturally, when people see that tree — when they see how close

it came to smushing my house, and they see that snarl of giant pines Lincoln Logging their way through my backyard — they almost can't help but tell me what a miracle it all is.

And I get the sentiment, and I'm trying to be sympathetic to it.



Every single fucking person; every family member, every neighbor, the linemen that got my power back on, the tree removal guys, my weed guy, the mail carrier, the UPS driver, the Uber Eats lady, all of them have taken it upon themselves to attribute my good fortune to

divine intervention. "It's a miracle." "It's the hand of God." "It looks like someone was looking out for you." Motherfuckers, that someone just dropped five trees on my shit.

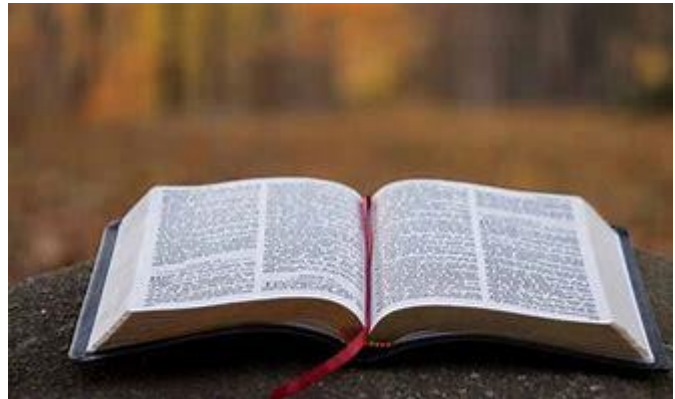
So let's just start with how insensitive it is to tell somebody whose property was just weather fucked how lucky they are. I mean, look, I agree. I'm really lucky nothing completely destroyed my home. But so are all the other people in my neighborhood and most of them don't have five fucking trees in their backyard. In fact, of all the homes in my town that weren't destroyed in the storm, I may very well be the least lucky. If we're gonna invoke divine intervention here, it looks way more like their god was tossing shit at my house and missing than he was holding shit back. Hell, not a goddamn one of the trees back there started out in my yard, so I feel like the better interpretation from a religious standpoint is that God was pushing all the trees toward the atheist's yard so his followers wouldn't have to deal with that shit.





Because, to be clear, there *is* damage. Nothing fell *through* my house, but plenty of shit fell *on* it. One corner of the roof is all smashed in, the beautiful bamboo fence that the previous owner built is wrecked, one of the windows in the garage is broken, the skylight over the kitchen is cracked, and — as we discovered five days later when we got our first big rain — there's a huge leak in the roof over my bedroom. And yes, when you compare us to the hundreds of people who lost their lives and the thousands of people who lost their family members, we are very fortunate. But when you compare us to pretty much anyone else, we got kinda fucked. And it feels really weird to be repeatedly told just how miraculous the five figures worth of damage to your home is.

But it isn't just frustrating and dismissive. It's also disrespectful as all hell to the people who *didn't* fare as well as we did. So God looked out for my house — my atheist house — but not the Christian firefighter one town over who was killed in



the storm while he was on an emergency call? God found time to mostly nudge the trees out of the way of my house, but he didn't divert the waters that wiped out all those towns in North Carolina? He spared my *property* but not the 230 plus human lives the storm took? If he did, then fuck him. And if he didn't (and he didn't) then fuck anyone who would imply otherwise.



Because no, the fact that my fucking house didn't get *more* fucked isn't a miracle. But there *were* miracles. The miracles were the linemen that came from hundreds of miles away and worked eighty-hour weeks to get us back to normal. The miracles were the emergency workers who went out in the middle of the storm; the community groups that popped up to distribute clean water the next morning; my wife driving hundreds of miles back and forth to the nearest operating grocery store to buy diapers for people she's never met; the dozens of people who reached out to offer us a place to stay; the hundreds of people who reached out to offer other kinds of help; all the neighbors that pitched in to clear one another's yards and get the roads open. Ours was a town awash in miracles, but they were the kind of miracles you can't see if you're looking up.



# *Ave' Maria*



*Or, Why Is Praying Before A Hurricane Like  
Swinging Your Mother's Old Douchebag Around  
Your Head?*

*By Virgil Thorp*

It is funny how people react when they are threatened with danger. As a group, most people go a little crazy. When there is a disaster like a storm or a wildfire, they'll dash about, here and

there, willy and nilly as they try to prepare for the worst. I've seen demolition derbies in Home Depot parking lots as challenges for a closer spot becomes serious. I have seen knockdown, drag-out fights over a 6 oz can of True Value roasted chicken or a 4-pack of Chicken of the Sea tuna fish in a stock-depleted Winn-Dixie. Once I watched a crazed man pull a firearm on another man over 6 sheets of 4x8 plywood. They'll grab onto the most outlandish notions attempting to secure all supplies and toilet paper to reduce the anxiety and their nerve-wracking tension. It is almost like they have thrown any vestige of Christian charity aside in their quest for self-preservation. The final act was always prayer. Yes, the faithful believed that a god answers prayers. They had been taught to do so ... or go to hell ... or someplace else just as nasty.



In Florida, the storm named Milton was coming sooner rather than later. A man named Kevin had made all his preparations and decided to get something to eat before the merciless hurricane winds hit and destroyed the infrastructure that he and so many others took for granted. He had just salted and peppered his fried eggs and home fries when a harsh odor scorched his nostrils. He was in a Florida diner, the kind that serves breakfast and lunch



and closes at 2:30 p.m., probably having his last hot meal for a while, maybe a week. It was also an old people's diner. Lots of retirees living their last days in a warm climate. Right now, the climate was too warm. A storm had been brewing in the Gulf of Mexico and for some reason that God only knew, it was heading Kevin's way.



A geriatric group had walked in. Well, some of them were walking. One or two limped, but most of the others needed some form of assistance be it, cane, walker or wheelchair. The waitresses had shoved two tables together right behind him for the elderly group. From

someone, Kevin didn't know who, emanated an aroma of Lysol with a hint of Massengale. Or, maybe, Massengale with a hint of Lysol ... no, it was definitely heavier on the Lysol side.

Kevin hadn't smelled a fragrance like that since he was around 4 years old and discovered his mother's douche bag and took it out of the bathroom. He was fascinated by its parts. A rubberish bag with a thin rubber loop. Probably for hanging it somewhere. There was a rubber tube – maybe three and a half to four feet long – attached to a flexible plastic spigot-looking device, dotted with

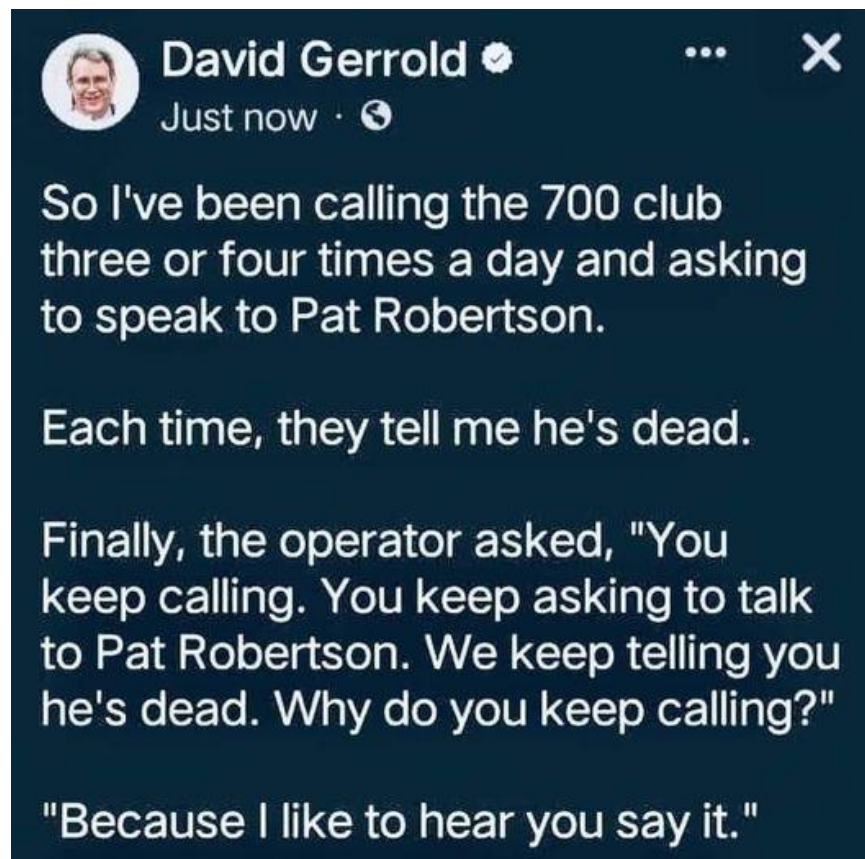
holes at the tip in a pleasing symmetrical pattern. It was also quite clasp-able – it fit a hand well. It was bendable but had a penetrative turgidity to it. The device appeared clean but had a peculiar, almost residual aroma. Because he was young with little to no experience, Kevin had no idea of how his mother used it or why. He put his tongue on it. There was a slightly salty taste, but it was not unpleasant.

He was at that age that if he could get his hands on it, the object became his property. He decided to take it outside. It was like one of those whobbly-whobble toys that made such a cool vibrating noise when you swung it around your head, very much like a toy that was so popular back then. His mother didn't think it was so funny, though, when she caught him riding his tricycle down Old Evanston Road, holding her douchebag by the nozzle and twirling the bag around his head like he was a cowboy trying to lasso a steer. It did make an unusual but, very pleasant whistling hum. Kevin thought about snorting some coffee up his nose to wash out the unhappy bouquet that sparked his memory.



The Lysol smell in the diner was bad enough but their conversation was even worse. It was childish. It was stupid. It was about god, particularly, Jesus, throwing his cloak of invincibility, or cloak of protection between the hurricane and themselves. Yes, Jesus would shield them from destructive wind. Why? Because he always had. Like, when the prophet Pat Robertson prayed for the hurricane to miss Virginia Beach, Virginia and make landfall somewhere else. Hadn't Jesus

answered that prayer, and hadn't the hurricane slammed Delaware instead? Doesn't god move in mysterious ways?



Just like that time when Ginny Johnson, the presbyterian bitch of the village, lost her alcoholic husband, Malcolm, when he fell asleep at the wheel on his way back home after a church league basketball game. Ginny piously said a prayer every time Malcolm went out. "Save him Jesus,"

Ginny would plead. "keep him from running into that old oak tree on hazardous and curvy Old Evanston Road."

She knew her old man. She knew he liked his beer. The laymen of the church team always had an aftergame beer bash at Henry's Hillside Tavern and poor Malcolm – shitfaced as usual – woke up and swerved to miss Tommy Thompson's old bloodhound, Boogie, who as dozing on the road and drove, nose-first, into that hundred-year-old oak tree on the curvy Old Evanston Road. The deputy sheriff investigating the fiery accident found Malcom's bible flung from his front seat, through the shattered windshield to the base of the tree, open to the passage that encouraged "suffering little children to come unto me." How wonderful god must be? Right? Malcolm died anyway in the fiery wreck. The hundred-year oak tree survived.



Kevin wondered, *Why doesn't god protect the weak-willed and the drunken?*



Then, he heard from the table behind him. Maybe it was the douche woman, "The hurricane going from Cat 5 to Cat 1 is the product of the power of Christians coming together and praying! You cannot tell me nor convince me otherwise."

There were murmurings of approval from around the table as they all folded their hands and began reciting "The Lord's Prayer". After the harmonious "Amen," the gentleman at the end of the table slapped the tabletop and declared, "I am staying. It is what God wants."

The god-talk sickened Kevin — even more than the Lysol aroma. He had read what had happened in North Carolina. Less than a week earlier, Hurricane Helene had scooped up half of the Gulf of Mexico and dumped it on the state's western mountains. With nowhere else to go, the water became a relentless flood that destroyed towns, highways, homes. A catastrophe no one was prepared for.

Kevin had been struck by a flood victim's description of being on the roof of her house; her elderly father and mother and her little boy clinging to it as the churning waters lifted the house off its foundation and split it in two. Her father and mother were dumped into the angry brown water, her son was pulled from her arms as she clutched a tree branch and futilely tried to hold him.



She said, as she wept, "the last thing I heard my little boy say was, 'help me Jesus! Save me Jesus!' And, then he was just gone."

Her interviewer wiped away her own tears and in a comforting voice said, "Don't cry, Jesus had a better plan for your little boy. Don't you know? God has another little angel."

Kevin extended his arm and caught his waitress' attention.  
"Check, please." His appetite suddenly lost.

"Was everything okay?" the cashier asked. Like most people who have to work as a storm gets closer and closer, her smile was a little strained.

"Yeah, sure," Kevin mumbled. There was something else bothering him besides losing his appetite. Something that lurked around the basis of truth. He handed over his credit card and asked to add a tip then turned back to look hard at the table of true believers.

"Oh my god," Kevin mumbled, more to himself than to the cashier or anyone else. "They have to!"

"What? You sure everything is alright?" the cashier asked, leaning over the counter. The look on Kevin's face was a cause for concern to her.

"No, no. I just realized something. Something I had forgotten." He smiled, like an apology.

This is what he remembered. *When I was once a Christian, I had to believe in something, too. No matter how absurd, no matter how ridiculous, the true believer would always reach back for an anchor. For a crutch. For a tree limb. For something even if it was not there. These believers had no other choice. Without that hope they would all go screaming into the oncoming storm. I should know better,* Kevin thought to himself and put his credit card back into his wallet.

With all the sincerity he could manage, he looked into the cashier's eyes, "Good luck with the storm."

"Thank you, sir. You too, sir. I'll be praying."



"Thanks, you do all that you have to." Kevin exited into a wind that was much stronger than when he went in. *If only I still had my mother's old Douchebag.* He thought, *I'd swing it around my head!*

Disaster victims need ~~prayer~~.  
...real help.



Learn more at [atheists.org](http://atheists.org)



**I just told God ... take the  
at-bat. I still don't know  
what happened.**

DAVID FRY

on his walk-off HR in Game 3 of the 2024 ALCS

# The Perils Of Celebrity In 2024

## **juanitajeon.com**

September 18, 2024 By: Half Empty

Oh, to be a celebrity in 2024. So many decisions to make. And with a public that demands that you like who they like, and vote for who you vote for, those decisions must be enormously difficult for some.

And a no-brainer for others.



Brittany and Taylor: BFFs

Witness poor Brittany Mahomes. OK, she's not a major celebrity in her own right, but she's married to one: Patrick Mahomes, her husband, throws footballs for the Kansas City Chiefs. That she is a supporter of Von Shitzenpantz came as a small surprise to a few, those who cared, anyway. Mainly because she is besties with Taylor Swift, whose bf also plays for the Chiefs.

Taylor, as you know, announced her support for Harris as soon as they shut off the mics at last week's presidential debate.

All of that would have been copasetic had not the Orange Julius would-be Caesar posted on his social media website "I HATE TAYLOR SWIFT."

**Now** what is Brittany Mahomes going to do? Her preferred presidential candidate HATES her BFF! The Daily Mail reports that she has decided to be less obvious in supporting TFG. No more “liking” TFG’s social media posts, for instance. Well played, Brittany.



Nicky Jam. Not a chick.

But then what about Nicky Jam? That poor guy. Nicky Jam is a rap vocalist who supports Don the Con, and was at his recent rally in Las Vegas when he was called out by The Man himself: “Do you know Nicky? She’s hot.”

Many believe TFG thought he was calling up Nicki Minaj, who *IS* hot. But alas, Nicky Jam is a dude, and TFG misgendered Mr. Jam as a result.

And because of that, Nicky Jam spent the weekend quietly deleting his post of support for The Former Guy, and just to make sure, closed the comments on his preceding post. though it was not even about The Don.

And don’t even ask about the uproar with the pro-Harris Mexican rock band Maná, with whom Mr. Jam has been collaborating. I have no words!

These are the real issues we have to deal with here in 2024. How will we ever survive?



## ARTICLES

# ATHEISM

THE KNOWLEDGE THAT  
GHOSTS DON'T EXIST, DEATH IS FINAL,  
MAGIC IS FAKE, GOOD/EVIL IS RELATIVE,  
CONSCIOUSNESS REQUIRES A BRAIN.

# *THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING*

*By Bert Mautz*

Milton was a considerable hurricane, a category three storm bearing down on Florida's west coast, emerging from the Gulf's exceptionally warm water, and not to be deterred. We live along the east coast, but given the scale of Milton, its outer feeder bands were predicted to produce tornados on our side of the peninsula. Physically smaller than a hurricane, but lethal in their concentrated destructive power.



We enjoy the luxury of owning our own homes and a five-minute drive apart in the historic "cottage district" of down town Stuart. We spent the day of Milton's approach and landfall considering the merits of which of our homes would be best given the unique challenges of a category three hurricane. Betty managed the patio furniture and closed the accordion shutters.

The storm's outer bands were spawning lots of tornados in our southeast quadrant of the state. Power outages due to tree downings were predicted to be prolific. Might Betty's generator be the decider of where we would ride the storm out? When do we move to her townhouse. I gathered our meds, collected a few

groceries out of my refrigerator, and paid attention to the storm's fluctuations in strength and direction.



We were settled in front of the television, watching the Weather Channel in Betty's town house by 1pm. The sky darkened. The winds' intensified. The lights blinked and the room went black. Sure enough, within a couple minutes the generator roared to life. The lights were back, but the television was slow to recycle/start. Within a few hours the cluster of tornados were moving north toward Vero Beach.

Did a "reheat it supper". Watched some more storm coverage, and headed off upstairs to bed around nine. I routinely take the elevator. Betty's confessed claustrophobia compels the stairs. Have used the elevator with my wheelchair often enough to take the procedure backing in, closing the door and gate, and pushing the "2" button with little thought. The very small elevator car jerks into motion, but surprisingly is moving very slowly. Unusual, but not sufficiently alarming to stop or go back down. It's been a long day. The wind and rain continues.





Motivated to get in bed. *Damn this thing is just creeping up.* And then without warning it stops. Maybe eight inches short but locked in; gate and second floor door remain locked.

Stabbed at the control buttons to no effect. Betty shouts at me through the locked door, "What should I do?" Tried the "On and Off" buttons. Holy shit it's dark when I turn off the power, but no effect on a restart. Could imagine several alternative escape strategies.

"Sweetie it's OK. Call for a "911 Rescue" they will figure this out."



The designer/builder lived in one of the units. Betty knocked on Bo's front door and explained her dilemma. Bo had a solution, so together with her (Bo's) three house guests, joined the two burly "First Responders", all gather in the upstairs hallway where the elevator door would open. Bo went to an upstairs circuit breaker panel – *that we knew nothing about!!!* – and switched the elevator's gcfi breaker back on and the car

began to move. seconds later I was on the second floor, threw

open the gate and door to be greeted by all these people. The door opens to first reveal one of the tools and radio belted first responders.

"You've no idea how good it is to see you." His partner responded, "I'll bet you've never heard that before."

Everyone laughed.

Bo explained that numerous appliances require a reboot after a loss of power.



# The Schlong Enthusiast Fry Cook!

By Max's Dad



What a bizarre weekend. The former guy is in full insanity mode. While Kamala worked at McDonalds at age 20 or whatever, Trump decided age 78 was the correct time for him to try yet another thing he isn't qualified for. French fries. Trump and his "advisors" thought this would be a good idea to fake like he was working at a McDonalds, a closed McDonalds with only supporters allowed to interact with Donald the Clown. Ooooo, that'll show her. This entire stunt was performed so that at the merciful end the Felon (who McDonalds wouldn't hire) could state, "I've now worked 15 more minutes than she has at McDonalds." This very strange obsession by this campaign that Kamala never worked at McDonalds because corporate has no record of her working there in 1984. Yeah, like corporate keeps a list of the millions of employees who have worked at a locally owned McDonalds in the last 40 years. It's a stupid argument that only appeals to the cult, who have probably worked fast food jobs in the past. I mean, who hasn't? My time in 1973 at the local KFC is something that probably isn't on paper either but trust me, I knew my way around a steamer and a cutting board. And I also knew that employees don't stick their hands into a fryer to get the fries out.

In Pennsylvania, Trump rattled off a ludicrous 12-minute spiel about Arnold Palmer because he was at the Arnold Palmer Airport. The screed went off the rails as Trump began an outlandish "story" about the size of Palmer's schlong. Apparently professional golfers back in the 60s and 70s all showered together which is peculiar in itself that he believes this, and these

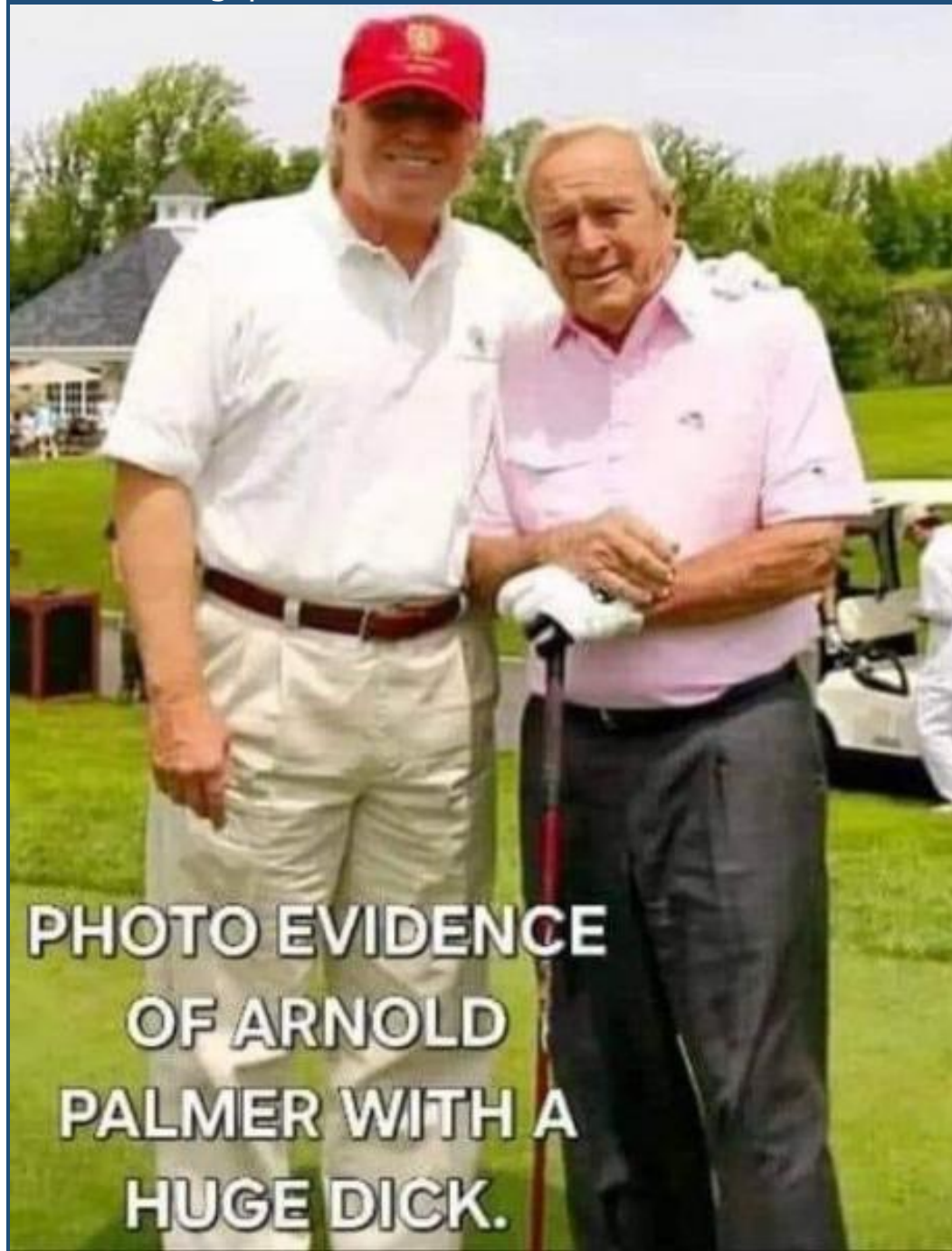
"golfers" all couldn't believe the size of Palmers driver shaft. He was "all man". This type of ridiculous talk may go over well at the boardroom as the yes men all laugh, and it may go over well with the bros and the middle-aged men who never grew up but come on now. Palmer had a huge dick is actually something Trump thinks about? Other people's genitals are a MAGA obsession. They are preoccupied with this sort of thing. What lies in these people's closets is frightening. Palmer's daughter came forward (how uncomfortable) to state her dad didn't really like Trump and his crass demeanor though he was a diehard Republican. JFC Donnie Darko, please leave your infatuation with golfers tallywackers at home!

The "enemy within". Trump doubled down on his weird McCarthy like bullshit in which he states that Pelosi and Schiff are bigger "enemies" to the nation than his good friends and lovers, Putin and Kim. He said it, he named names and yet the Republican sycophants refuse to admit he means it. Ohhhhh come on now, Donnie is hyperbolic, he means migrants, he means gangs he doesn't mean Americans. Yeah, he does. He said it, he named names. All this shows is that the Joe McCarthy DNA still lives in Republicans. This has been their modus operandi for the last 70 years. Commies! You Democrats are commies! Definition of commies? Anybody who disagrees with me.

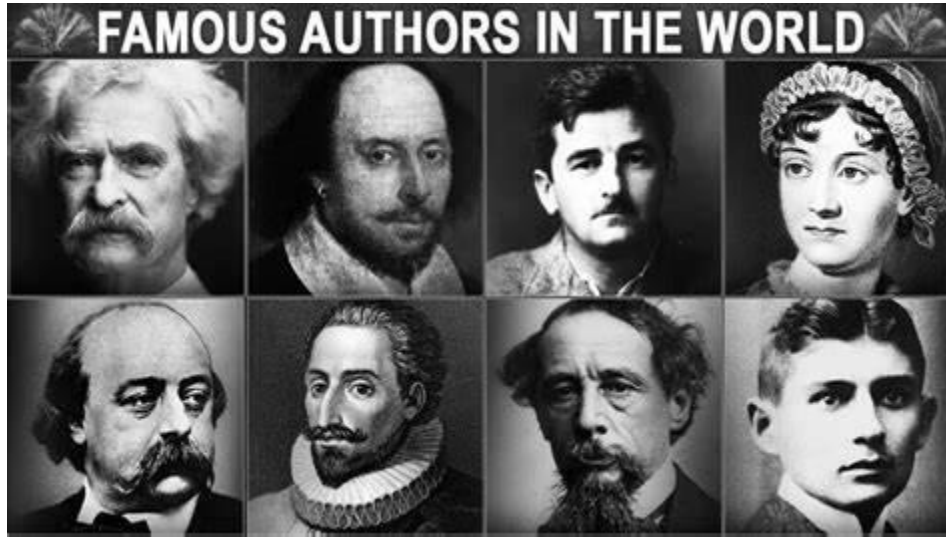
All in all, this "enemy within" shit is the most dangerous of all of Trumps uncouth rhetoric. He fucking means it, folks. If this tyrant wins, this "enemy within" hot air will become reality. Is there any doubt that right after Trump ends his federal indictments, he will invoke the 1798 Alien Act, which is what has been used to imprison draft evaders and an entire race of people being forced into camps. 1798 baby! Back when America was "great" Women couldn't vote, blacks were enslaved, Indians were massacred and white men dominated society. I always thought MAGA wanted back the 1950s. I had no idea they actually meant 1798. These people are sick. Trump is deranged.

How is this even close?





# WRITING ON WRITING



BY JAMES LONGO

"The less I write, the harder it is to write," Jack said, banging around the kitchen.

"Why don't you write more?" Jill said staring at him in the kitchen in her night clothes.

"I don't know. There is always something I need to do that is more important than writing."

"Well, why don't you fix that?"

"How?" Jack said sounding perturbed.

"Just do it," Jill said, staring at Jack putting the pots and pans away.

Jack rolled his eyes, "When did life become a bleeping Nike commercial?"

"Just do it isn't a bad way to live."

"But what is it? Heroin, theft, being an asshole?"

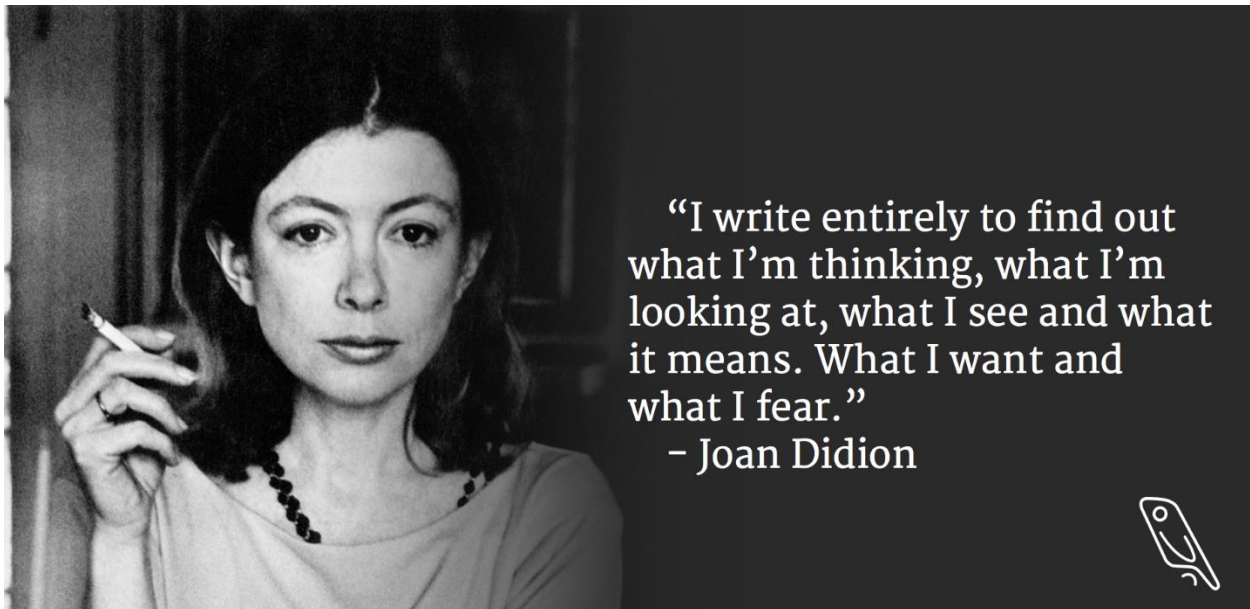
"Just write," Jill said with a hard stare.

"You missed the point. What to write?"

"Whatever your little heart desires," Jill said sounding exasperated.

"You can't just write, you have to have something to write about," Jack said sounding even more exasperated.

"So where do your ideas come from?"



"I don't know, observing, discussing, remembering, reading. Sometimes it percolates out of the ether."

"Do those things then write about them,"

"That's the trouble, if I do all those other things, it seems I never get around to writing about them,"

"It sounds like a time management problem,"

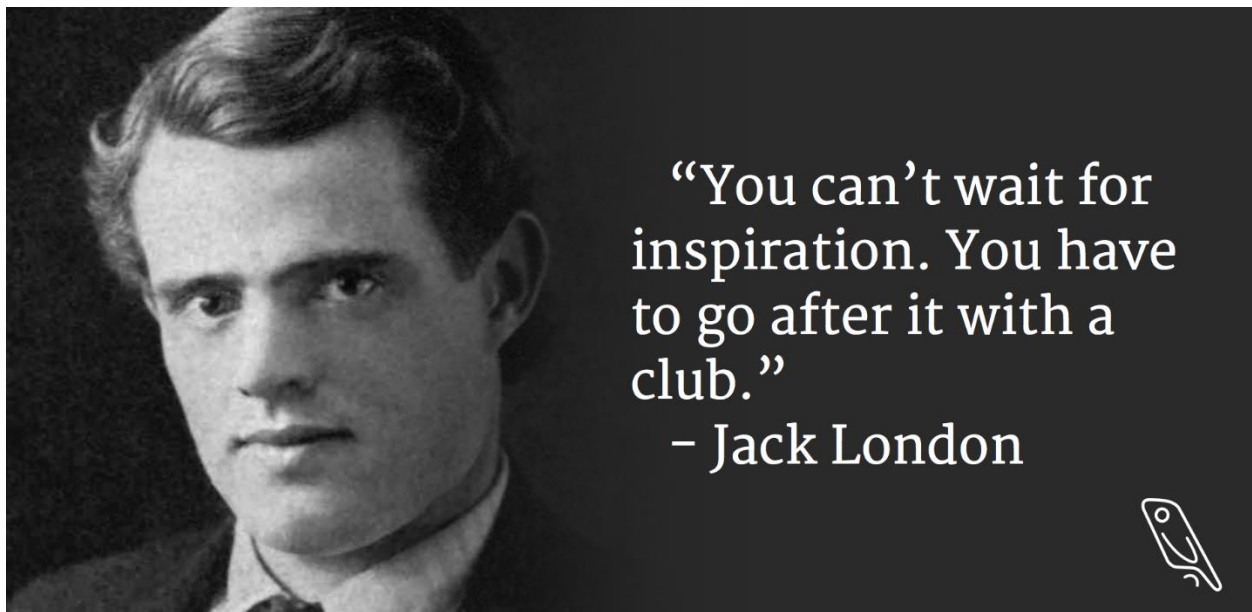


"Partially," Jack said.

"If not that what?"

"Writing is hard,"

"Is anything worthwhile easy?" Jill said trying to be philosophical. He was always easier to deal with when she was philosophical.



"Maybe that is why I do so little that is worthwhile,"

Jill laughed, "Maybe that explains why my honey due list never gets touched."

Jack looked sheepish, "Probably."

"You ride your bike two hours daily, which is hard and worthwhile."

"But I am in the habit."

"Well, why can't you get in the habit of writing every day?"

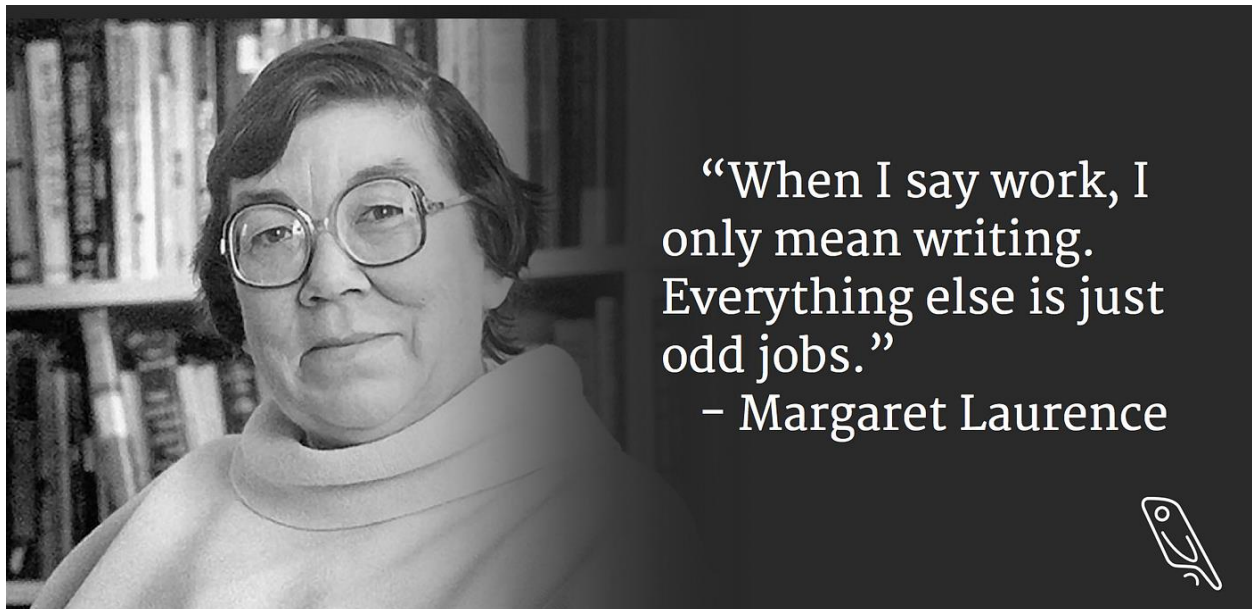
"I guess I could?"

"Why don't you set a set amount of time to write daily?"

"Writing isn't like bicycling,"

"How is that?" Jill asked.

"Once you get your ass out there all you have to do is keep peddling. Writing takes an imaginative process and everything has to be right for that to happen. I think that is why they call it writing and not typing."



"I don't know. I have read some of your stuff. You sure you weren't just typing," Jill said with smiling eyes.

"I love you too,"

"Sometimes you make it just too easy,"

"That is the other problem if I write more often. How will I know it is quality and not just quantity?"

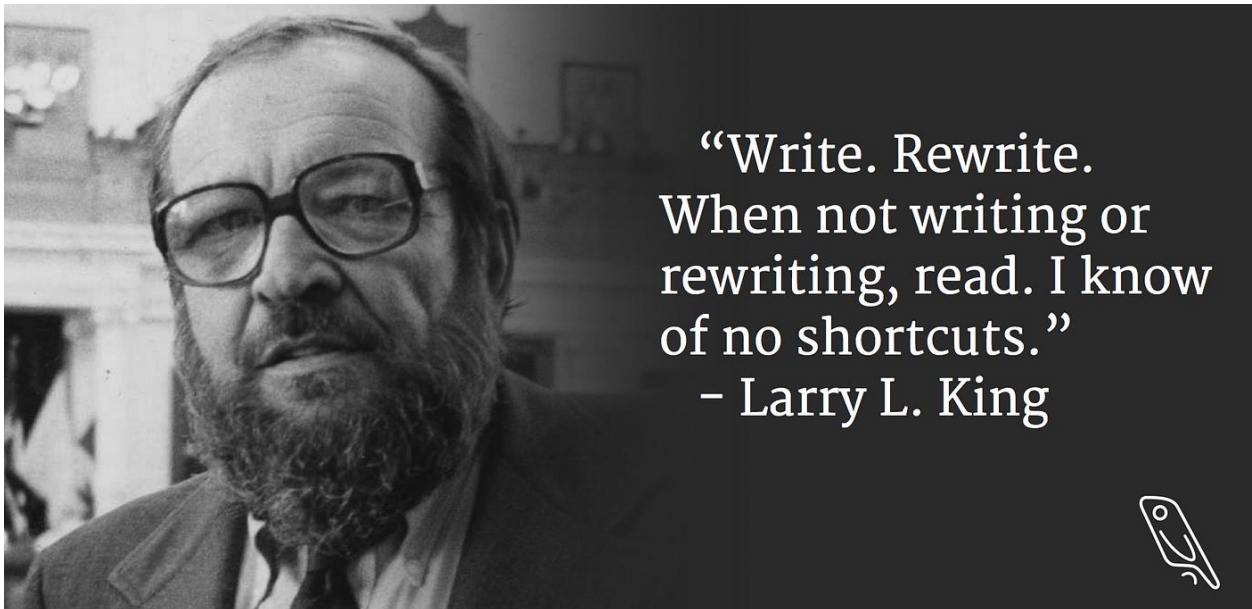
"How do you know that now?"

"I don't," Jack said rubbing the back of his neck.

"I think you are missing the forest from the trees," Jill said.

"How so?"

"We started with you telling me the less you write the harder it is for you to write. The obvious conclusion is to write more. I suggest you set a certain amount of time every day to just writing."



"Write. Rewrite.  
When not writing or  
rewriting, read. I know  
of no shortcuts."

- Larry L. King

"Okay I'll set two hours a day to writing every day," Jack said sounding way too enthusiastic.

"Hold your horses, cowboy. When you started biking did you start at two hours a day?"

"No,"

"If you did, would you be doing it today?"

"Probably not,"



"Maybe start modestly and add time as you feel more comfortable."

"What are you suggesting?"

"Why don't you start with fifteen to thirty minutes a day?"

"When would I do this?"

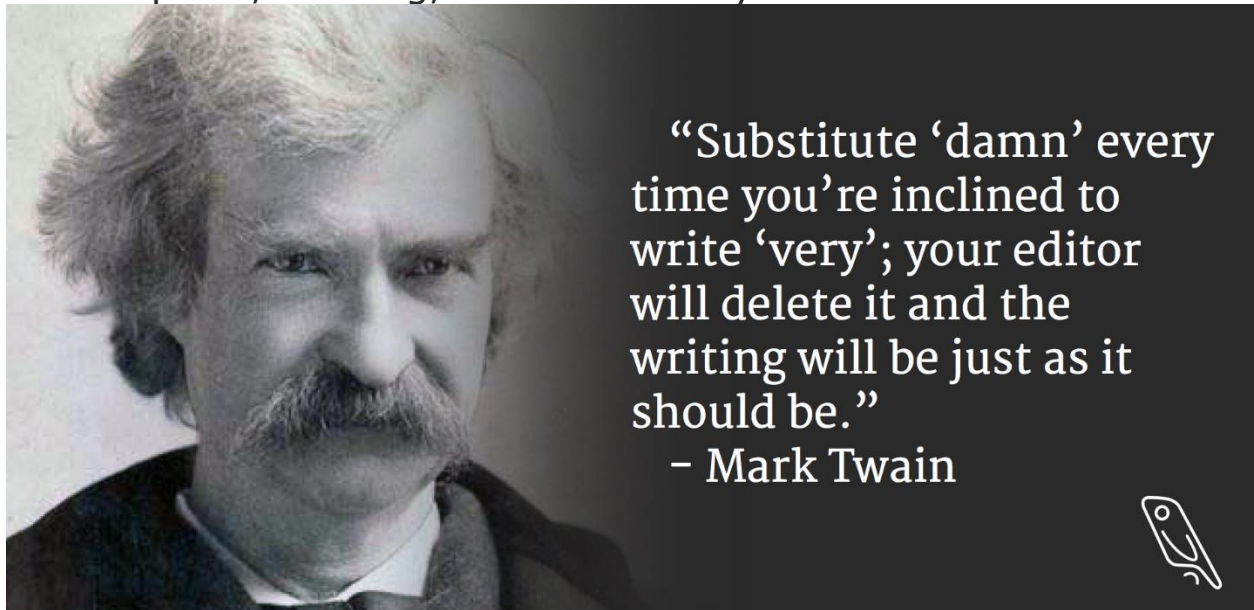
"Why don't you do this early in the morning while I'm still sleeping?"

"Why then?"

"So you'll stop banging around so I can get some sleep," Jill said in a huff, "I am going back to bed," and started for the stairs and the bed. Jill continued,

"You have to get it down before you can determine its value. Good-night."

"Good night," Jack said putting the last pot away and heading for his computer, thinking, "It's worth a try."



"Substitute 'damn' every time you're inclined to write 'very'; your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be."

– Mark Twain

# WORDS TO USE INSTEAD OF "VERY"

✗ very noisy	✓ deafening
✗ very often	✓ frequently
✗ very old	✓ ancient
✗ very old-fashioned	✓ archaic
✗ very open	✓ transparent
✗ very painful	✓ excruciating
✗ very pale	✓ ashen
✗ very perfect	✓ flawless
✗ very poor	✓ destitute
✗ very powerful	✓ compelling
✗ very pretty	✓ beautiful
✗ very quick	✓ rapid
✗ very quiet	✓ hushed
✗ very rainy	✓ pouring
✗ very rich	✓ wealthy
✗ very sad	✓ sorrowful
✗ very scared	✓ petrified
✗ very scary	✓ chilling
✗ very serious	✓ grave
✗ very sharp	✓ keen
✗ very shiny	✓ gleaming
✗ very short	✓ brief
✗ very shy	✓ timid
✗ very simple	✓ basic

# Henry Miller – On Becoming a Writer

“No daring is fatal”



*If you are an artist, that means that you are denuding yourself more and more, that by the time you die you are stark naked and your bowels turned inside out.*

— Henry Miller

I think I should also confess that I was driven to write because it proved to be the only outlet open to me, the only task worthy of my powers. I had honestly tried all the other roads to freedom.



I was a self-willed failure in the so-called world of reality, not a failure because of lack of ability.

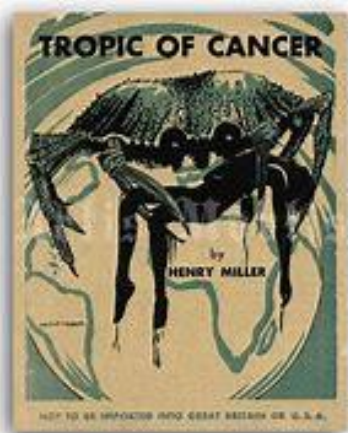
Writing was not an “escape,” a means of evading the everyday reality: on the contrary, it meant a still deeper plunge into the brackish pool—a plunge to the source where the waters were constantly being renewed, where there was perpetual movement and stir.

Looking back upon my career, I see myself as a person capable of undertaking almost any task, any vocation. It was the monotony and sterility of the other outlets which drove me to desperation.

I demanded a realm in which I should be both master and slave at the same time: the world of art is the only such realm.

I entered it without any apparent talent, a thorough novice, incapable, awkward, tongue-tied, almost paralyzed by fear and apprehensiveness. I had to lay one brick on another, set millions of words to paper before writing one real, authentic word dragged up from my own guts.

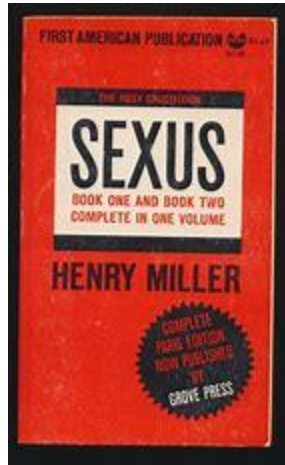
The facility of speech which I possessed was a handicap; I had all the vices of the educated man. I had to learn to think, feel and see in a totally new fashion, in an uneducated way, in my own way, which is the hardest thing in the world. I had to throw myself into the current, knowing that I would probably sink.



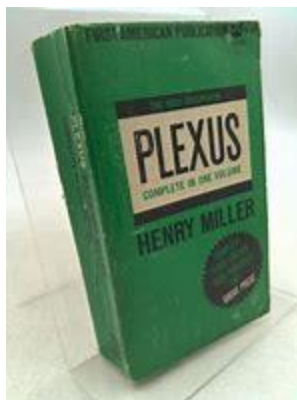
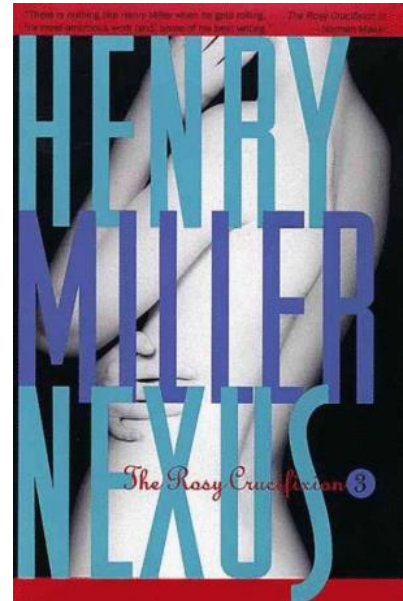
The great majority of artists are throwing themselves in with life-preservers around their necks, and more often than not it is the life preserver which sinks them.

Nobody can drown in the ocean of reality who voluntarily gives himself up to the experience.

Whatever there be of progress in life comes not



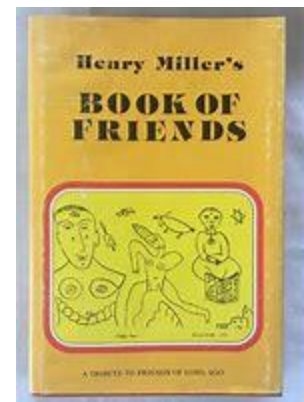
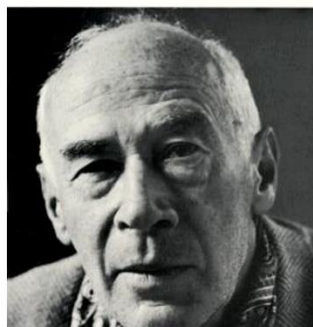
through adaptation but through daring, through obeying the blind urge. **"No daring is fatal,"** said René Crevel, a phrase which I shall never forget. The whole logic of the universe is contained in daring, i.e., in creating from the flimsiest, slenderest support.



In the beginning this daring is mistaken for will, but with time the will drops away and the automatic process takes its place, which again has to be broken or dropped and a new certitude established which has nothing to do with knowledge, skill, technique or faith.

By daring one arrives at this mysterious X position of the artist, and it is this anchorage which no one can describe in words but yet subsists and exudes from every line that is written.

THE  
**HENRY MILLER**  
READER  
Edited, with an introduction by LAWRENCE DURRELL



## JACK KEROUAC

### *Belief & Technique for Modern Prose*

#### *List of Essentials*

1. Scribbled secret notebooks, and wild typewritten pages, for yr own joy
2. Submissive to everything, open, listening
3. Try never get drunk outside yr own house
4. Be in love with yr life
5. Something that you feel will find its own form
6. Be crazy dumbsaint of the mind
7. Blow as deep as you want to blow
8. Write what you want bottomless from bottom of the mind
9. The unspeakable visions of the individual
10. No time for poetry but exactly what is
11. Visionary tics shivering in the chest
12. In tranced fixation dreaming upon object before you
13. Remove literary, grammatical and syntactical inhibition
14. Like Proust be an old teahead of time
15. Telling the true story of the world in interior monolog
16. The jewel center of interest is the eye within the eye
17. Write in recollection and amazement for yourself
18. Work from pithy middle eye out, swimming in language sea
19. Accept loss forever
20. Believe in the holy contour of life
21. Struggle to sketch the flow that already exists intact in mind
22. Dont think of words when you stop but to see picture better
23. Keep track of every day the date emblazoned in yr morning
24. No fear or shame in the dignity of yr experience, language & knowledge
25. Write for the world to read and see yr exact pictures of it
26. Bookmovie is the movie in words, the visual American form
27. In Praise of Character in the Bleak inhuman Loneliness
28. Composing wild, undisciplined, pure, coming in from under, crazier the better
29. You're a Genius all the time
30. Writer-Director of Earthly movies Sponsored & Angeled in Heaven





# THE WAY WE WERE

**Allowing the Church and religious zealots to run the world has been tried before.**



**IT'S KNOWN AS THE DARK AGES FOR A REASON.**



**T**eacher. The word itself brings back many fond memories of so many people who touched my life in meaningful and significant ways. I hope that this text will remind my readers of the teachers in *their* lives who have caused the sparks and the fires that served to make your lives what they have become. This story will speak of teachers from moderate to the highest of academic credentials to one with no academic credentials at all.

The latter was my father. In the early 1930s he became a casualty of the Great Depression. Recently married, he lost his job at the Savage Arms corporation in Utica NY, then he and his pregnant wife lost the small farm they had been making payments on. They had literally lost everything except for an old car and *his* unbeatable spirit.

After finding temporary lodgings, my father decided he was just going to build his own house completely from scavenged lumber and other materials (*This is worthy of a story on its own*). Without any training in construction, he taught himself to design and build a wood-framed, 2-story home with living room, kitchen, dining room, bathroom, 3 bedrooms, and a sewing room, that

even to this day, still stands on that 1/4 acre of land just West of Utica NY.



I was only three years old when we moved onto that 1/4 acre in a house trailer (which he had also built from scavenged materials) where we lived until the house was completed enough to move into. When I became big enough to help, I was given the job of straightening nails extracted from the scavenged lumber so that they could be

reused. In part because I was the only son (my two siblings were girls three and four years older than me) he taught me to use my hands to build stuff. Years later I would build my own house – an a-frame overlooking the Pettaquamscutt River in Rhode Island (only that time with all new lumber).

In addition to the art of being capable of building things, my father gave me one more gift even more precious; he taught me to love reading. He was an avid reader even though his taste in literature never went much further than the average western. Nevertheless, from the time I was old enough to read for myself, he would take me with him whenever he visited the local library.

I was quickly hooked. I soon had my own library card. I looked forward to taking out books, devouring each page, returning them, and taking out more. Libraries were joyful places and libraries became my next teacher. I even like the somewhat musty smell of a library. Books (and literature in general) became a major part of my life. To emphasize this, I must jump ahead to when I bought my





present house in April of 1990. The first modification I made was to convert the third bedroom into a library. It now holds over 1200 books.

I earlier told you that my dad was my first teacher and about some of the amazing things that he accomplished. Nevertheless, he was a very limited man. He didn't understand the value of higher education. His own formal education ended at the 8th grade. Consequently, I was given no guidance regarding what I might do with the rest of my life.

Interestingly his lack of formal education did not impede my father. Following the Great Depression, he went back to his



Arms

die  
of

machinist job at Savage and advanced to a position as a tool and maker. With the advent World War Two he applied for a position at another weapons arsenal and with his background, was put in charge of the 90mm artillery division.

I cannot remember being inspired by my

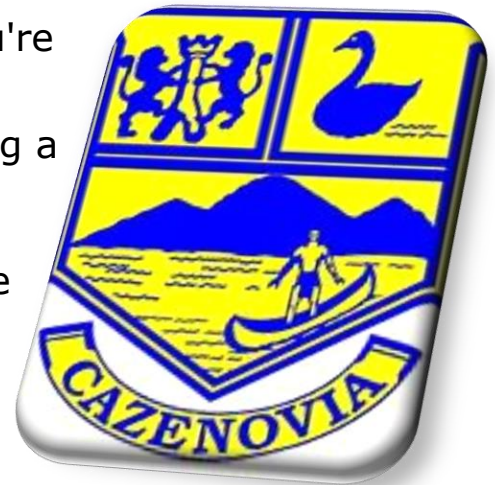
teachers at any time from grammar school through the 9th grade (although that may just indicate a failure in my memory whatever the reason). All that changed when my father's work caused our family to move to the village of Cazenovia, New York and I entered Cazenovia Central High School early in my sophomore year.

The first thing they did upon my entry into the building was put me into the administration office and give me a bunch of forms to fill out. After the usual name, address and etc., there was a question on whether I had any hobbies. About two years previously I was given my first camera, a Kodak brownie. I was

fascinated with taking pictures and it wasn't long before I set up a darkroom and began developing my own films. I had made a deal with the local drug store where I would process their customer's film for them for a small fee. And so it was that I entered the hobby line on the form, "photography".

At that point the teacher who was watching me left the room. When the door opened again – I hadn't paid any attention, as I was still working on the lengthy form – a big beefy hand closed around the back of my neck. the man who belonged to the hand bellowed out, "so you're the photographer?!"

Mr. Webber was a big man all over including a big bald head matched perfectly by his big jovial spirit. I Looked up and said meekly, "yes sir." He then explained that they were just getting started on the 1951 school yearbook and he badly needed a student photographer he could work with to help him guide the effort. At that time all the other high schools were hiring outside firms



that specialized in turning out yearbooks with all of the pictures but capturing none of the pride and shared joy of accomplishment that we experienced by creating our own.

After a short initial conversation, Mr. Webber (who I already felt was my friend) took me down the hall to introduce me to Mr. King. Mr. King (who would also become my physics teacher) was the lead faculty photographer, keeper of all the equipment (including top-of-the-line speed graphics, one of which was assigned to me) and builder of a

spacious, fully equipped darkroom that I would have access to during and after school hours. For the next three



years, Mr. King would continue to take all of the boring lower-class photos from kindergarten on, while I had all the fun stuff; including all the action sports shots, the cheerleaders, the clubs, the student council, and all the artistic photos taken with Mr. Webber's guidance. We sat on the edge of a beautiful lake called Owahgeha, an Indian term meaning "*Lake of the Yellow Perch*", and which was also the name of our yearbook.

And then there was Mr. Moon, my English teacher, (who did as much or more than my favorite librarians), to develop my love of the English language. It was primarily a composition class. unknown to me, he had sent a story I had written to a national student magazine where it was published and earned me recognition, even thrilling my parents! Mr. Moon was also in charge of the senior class play and, in tryouts, selected me for a leading role in the play (the title of which has escaped my memory!).

My first course in biology was taught by Mr. Davit, who also did double duty as Coach Davit. I still remember my excitement when I received my first mammalian dissection subject, a small but fully developed piglet. Biology became my favorite science course. I had no idea that almost 30 years later it would become the subject of my PhD dissertation.



Mrs. McLaughlin, or Mrs. Mac, took over as the Owahgeha faculty advisor in my senior year. Although I never took a course under her, I probably worked closer with Mrs. Mac than with any of my other high school teachers. We worked along with other yearbook staff, mostly after regular school hours, sometimes well into the evening.

For some reason, Mrs. Mac took a special interest in my development. When she asked me what I was going to do after



my high school graduation, I told her I would be going to summer school to catch up on an algebra course that I missed. Otherwise, I had no other plans because I didn't know what I wanted to do. At that time the school gave 2 choices to potential graduates. I could take the general exam for those who were not going to college or the State's Regent exam for those continuing on to college. I told her I would take the general exam. She advised me to take both because if you passed the Regent exam you would preserve the option of college if that should present itself and if you don't pass it, you would still graduate on the basis of your passing the general exam (she knew I had not prepared myself for the Regent's exam). So, I did, and I passed both. The last-minute advice from Mrs. Mack preserved the college option for me! But for what? What would I be preparing myself for? I had no goal.

**T**he year was 1953. I thought it was great that Jackie Robinson had integrated Major League baseball, and I followed his career religiously. I worked as an operator of a plastic injection molding machine at the same firm where my dad was working. I decided this wasn't for me, but what was? What the hell was? I needed more time. In November of that year, I signed up with the US Navy, figuring that at the end of a four-year enlistment, I would have my future all planned out. Finally.



I did not! Despite four years of a variety of experiences a young man could only accumulate in the service, I still did not know what I wanted to do with my life. When I mustered out of the Navy, I fell back to the only thing I knew something about. I opened a photographic studio in the village of Eagle Bay in the center of the Adirondack mountains, in upstate New York.

Perhaps the best thing I can say about my new business endeavor

is that it was an interesting experiment. I had been encouraged to come to the area by the owner operator of the only newspaper in the entire central Adirondack area. His name was Clark Osborne, who I had known before my stint in the Navy. I arrived in the area in the beginning of March, in other words, in midwinter. I found a room in a tourist home in Inlet, a small town just southeast of Eagle Bay. Every morning through March, I awoke to temperatures of -35°F. I rented an empty building from the owner of the only grocery store in Eagle Bay, (or for that matter, in the entire central Adirondacks north of the small town of Old Forge). It took a month of hard work to build out my photo studio and darkroom to the point where I could begin to solicit work. Up to this time the only work I had were a couple of shots for Clark's newspaper (including one of a plane crash where the pilot had experienced a whiteout and had a heavy snowstorm and flew straight into the heavy ice covering inlet lake. Although the plane was totaled the pilot somehow survived).

That summer I did a few brochures, 2 for resorts in the area, one for the town of Inlet, and I hired a biplane to get real shots of other businesses that brought in some more money, but business in general was slow. The season lasted only three months before the next winter cold set in. Besides a single wedding and numerous photos for drivers licenses I went to every school in the area to take class photos for yearbooks. I decided I couldn't take another winter, so I bailed out.

**M**y next job was for General Electric in Utica where I tested operations for sidewinder missiles. It was pretty good money, but this was not what I wanted to do. I decided to take advantage of my GI bill and enrolled in Utica College of Syracuse University and started night-school classes. While still working at GE I took a course in English Literature and a following course in English Composition, both of which were given by excellent teachers and, much to their credit, I aced both.

It was in this period that I found the teacher who had the most profound effect on my life. Through all my life up to this moment



the one thing that was a constant was my love for reading that my dad – perhaps inadvertently – had instilled in me. The teacher I refer to, I had never met, except through her books. Her name was Rachel Carson.

Her most famous and enduring book is “Silent Spring” published in 1962. Its most significant theme was

the deleterious effect of the misuse of pesticides in our environment. She had noticed that environmental problems were caused by synthetic pesticides. She proved that pesticides not only killed pests, but also beneficial creatures like earthworms, birds, and other organisms, including human beings. Silent Spring is considered to be the single most influential factor that brought President Richard Nixon to establish the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970.

But this is not one of her books that I am referring to here, as I did not read it until several years later. the two books that together established the pathway that I was to follow for the rest of my life were “The Sea Around Us”, (winning both the 1952 National Book Award for Nonfiction and a Burroughs Medal in nature writing) and “The Edge of the Sea”, a field guide of the Atlantic seashore that I found fascinating.



Rachel Carson died April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1964, of breast cancer. She was only 56 years old. The world lost one of the finest scientific authors of her time. Because of her, I moved to Florida the next year and registered in zoology at the University of Miami, the first step on the path that led ultimately to an advance degree in Marine Biological Science and a staff position at the University of Miami Marine Biology Laboratory. At long last, I had found my goal.



## In honor of Anne Frank 12.06.1929 - 1945

Today I should have been ninety-four,  
I would be having a party with cake  
I'd have two fine sons and a daughter too  
Grandchildren to cuddle and stay.  
I'd have met a great man, dashing and tall  
He'd have worked in an office in town  
We'd have lived in the country, two dogs and a cat  
I'd have had a fine wedding gown.  
Margot would have lived nearby,  
Surely a mother herself?  
My mother and father would have been so proud  
We'd have raised a glass to good health.  
Instead, we slept on wooden slats  
As we shivered with hunger and cold  
We were beaten for any discriminatory thing  
We were given no toys to hold.  
My mother was starving, she gave us her food  
Scabies was rife in our camp  
I wanted to die, this wasn't life  
Living with rats in the damp.  
My best friend was in the camp next door  
I missed her riotous laugh  
I was glad to have my sister with me  
Loneliness, was my first and my last.  
I dreamed of food that I could eat  
I wished for potatoes and meat  
If I survived, I'd wash it all down  
With wine and something sweet.  
Typhus arrived and we both got sick  
Doctors were never called in  
We died one by one, Margot went first  
Death was an easier win.  
I hope I didn't die in vain  
I hope the world has learned  
Hatred has no place in life  
My diary forever preserved.



Read it again and again. And then again.

When I was in 7th grade, our teacher put on a video and told us to take notes. Ten minutes in, she threw the lights on and shouted at Steven Webb Sladki, telling him he wasn't taking notes and he should have been. But the thing was, Steve was taking notes. I saw it. We all saw it. The teacher asked if anyone wanted to stand up for Steve. A few of us choked out some words of defense but were immediately squashed. Quickly, we were all very silent. Steve was sent to the principal's office. The teacher came back in the room and said something like "See how easy that was?" We were reading "Anne Frank." I started to understand. I just thought now was a good time to share this story. Don't ever let anyone tell you that what you see with your own eyes isn't happening.



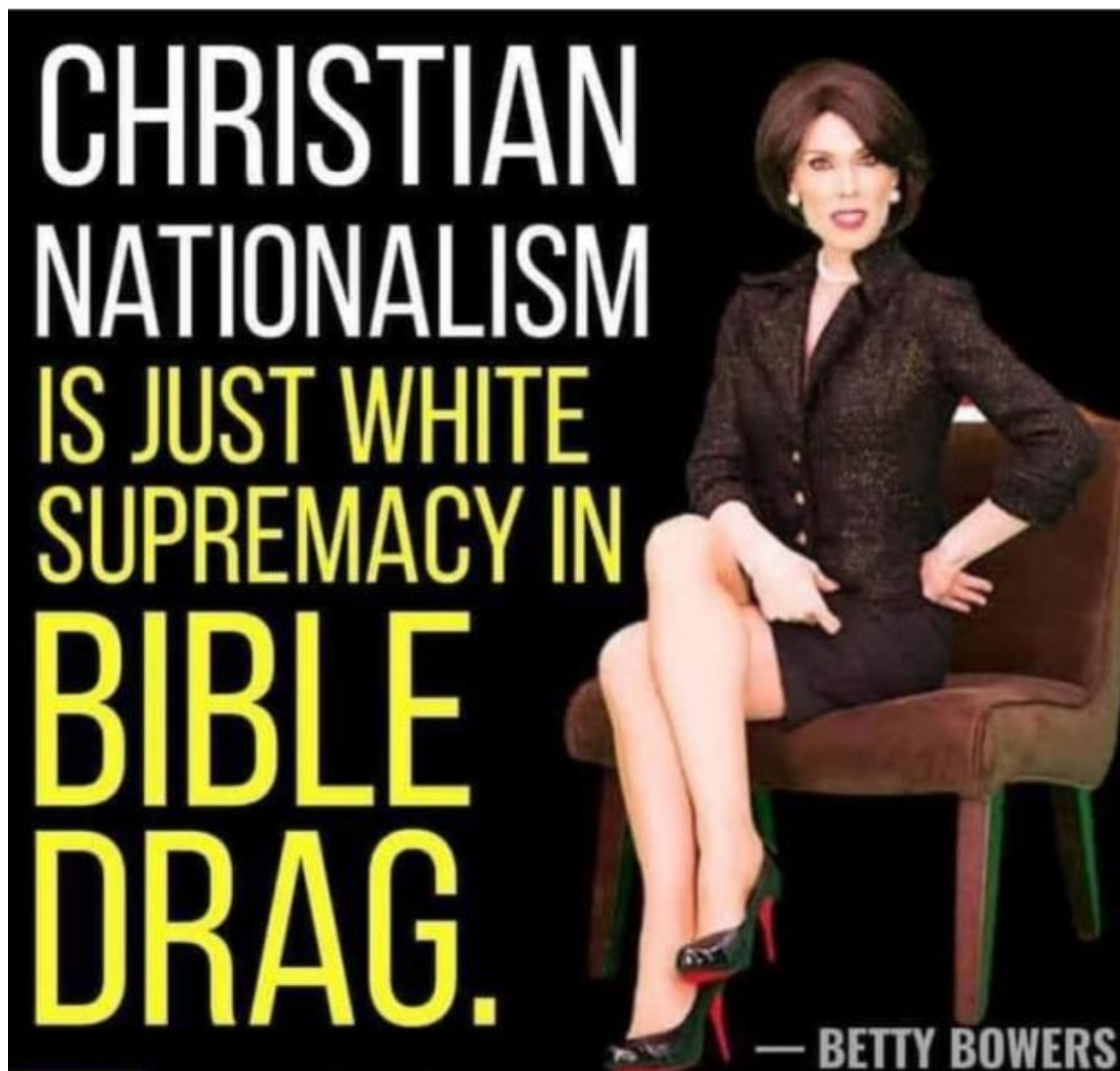


Every teacher you know has thought about it.  
Every teacher you know has a plan for an active shooter.  
Every teacher you know has weighed their point of fight or flight.  
Every teacher you know has walked their room looking for blind spots.  
Every teacher you know has passed their classroom to see what it would look like from the outside.  
Every teacher you know has wondered how fast they can lock a door.  
Every teacher you know has had a talk about the "spread out" or "group together" methods.  
Every teacher you know has gotten jumpy at least once at the sound of a fire alarm, unplanned announcement, or screech from the quad.  
Every teacher you know has wondered if they could be in the way long enough to prevent damage.  
Every teacher you know has thought about how hard it would be to keep young people quiet.  
Every teacher you know has walked into a different classroom and noticed where the doors and windows are.  
Every teacher you know.



## PROSE & POETRY

#VoteBlue



1964



1975

For us it was the six o'clock news,  
for them it was a reality.

We called for pizza,  
they called for medics.

We watched children play,  
they watched children die.

We learned of life,  
they learned of death.

We served dinner,  
they served their country.

Our passion was success,  
theirs was survival.

We forgot,  
They can't.

- Author unknown

Provided by Teddy Tatum, KCMO



# HURRICANE HELENE DIET

## - DAY #2

This morning, I ate a RAW English Muffin  
No nooks, no crannies, no toast, NO NOTHIN'!  
Cream cheese helped a little, to quell my hunger pangs  
What will I eat for supper? Would it help if I sang?



No stove, warm fridge, and dead microwave,



I'm left to wonder of cavemen  
How did they survive, what did they eat,  
with nothing around to save them?  
I can't even text -- gone incommunicado  
Just me & my cat, I think we'll get blotto!



Pass me a beer, that one in the back  
Still cold for now, so close the door STAT!  
We'll toast, we'll cheer, and hope for the best  
Clean up the trees, the wires, the MESS

Nature is tough when she's so disrespected  
The methane, the plastic - it's kind of expected  
I'll put my beer down now, go out for a ride  
Charge up my phone, and take things in stride



**That moment when your  
Shadow is having more  
fun than you**

Perhaps I'll build up a good appetite  
For more uncooked meals, MY NEW RAW DELIGHT!

- Roberta Synal, Asheville, NC

# *The Other Side of Nashville*



*By Virgil Thorp*

Spent the night in Georgia  
after a hard day on the road,  
Can hardly wait for the Republican heaven  
On the other side of Nashville



Every other mile there's a road sign  
God n' Guns n' whiskey addictions  
Every type of church that floats your boat  
It is all there, heaven on earth –  
On the other side of Nashville.







It sounds very Republican to me  
Where you can only get your steak cooked "medium"  
And the waitress checks your ID  
though you certainly show your age.  
On the other side of Nashville



Hard as you try, you can't calm the savage beast.  
You gotta go 85 to keep up with the traffic.  
Get a new gun, just take exit 55  
To shoot a machine gun  
The time is right for the Republican heaven  
On the other side of Nashville

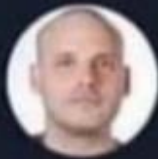




Jack Daniels, Jim Beam, George Dickel,  
There's always another distillery on the whiskey trail  
The only place where God n' Guns n' whiskey come together.  
Is on the other side of Nashville.



It been a long, long reach since the last rest stop  
Your toes are tapping and Your eyes are crossed  
I ain't stoppin honey till the next pit stop  
So cross your legs and hope,  
cause we ain't stoppin'  
till the other side of *NaShville!*



**Anthony Citrano** ✓  
@acitrano

It's almost impossible to believe he exists. It's as if we took everything that was bad about America, scraped it up off the floor, wrapped it all up in an old hot dog skin, and then taught it to make noises with its face.



# COMEDY CORNER





## Rules Of The Blues

August 31, 2024 By: Half Empty

I've been saving this up for a day just like today: Saturday of the Labor Day holiday weekend in a presidential election year. OK, I lied about the last part, but you'll see; it fits.

Time to laugh now because with all the upcoming campaigning between court dates these are going to be times that try a man's – or a woman's – soul.

[Hat tip to Juanita Jean who knows a good blues tune or two].

### **Rules of the Blues**

1. Most Blues begin, "Woke up this morning..."
2. "I got a good woman" is a bad way to begin the Blues, unless you stick something nasty in the next line like, "I got a good woman, with the meanest face in town."
3. The Blues is simple. After you get the first line right, repeat it. Then find something that rhymes... sort of: "Got a good woman with the meanest face in town. Yes, I got a good woman with the

meanest face in town. Got teeth like Margaret Thatcher, and she weigh 500 pound.”

4. The Blues is not about choice. You stuck in a ditch, you stuck in a ditch – ain’t no way out.

5. Blues cars: Chevys, Fords, Cadillacs and broken-down trucks. Blues don’t travel in Volvos, BMWs, or Sport Utility Vehicles. Most



Blues transportation is a Greyhound bus or a southbound train. Jet aircraft and company motor pools ain’t even in the running. Walkin’ plays a major part in the blues lifestyle. So does fixin’ to die.

6. Teenagers can’t sing the Blues. They ain’t fixin’ to die yet. Adults sing the Blues. In Blues, “adulthood” means being old enough to get the electric chair if you shoot a man in Memphis.

7. Blues can take place in New York City but not in Hawaii or any place in Canada. Hard times in Minneapolis or Seattle is probably just clinical depression. Chicago, St. Louis, and Kansas City are still the best places to have the Blues. You cannot have the blues in any place that don’t get rain.

8. A man with male pattern baldness ain’t the blues. A woman with male pattern baldness is. Breaking your leg cause you were



skiing is not the blues. Breaking your leg 'cause a alligator is chompin' on it is.

9. You can't have no Blues in a office or a shopping mall. The lighting is wrong. Go outside to the parking lot or sit by the dumpster.



10. Good places for the Blues:

- a. Highway
- b. Jailhouse
- c. An empty bed
- d. Bottom of a whiskey glass

11. Bad places for the Blues:

- a. Nordstrom's
- b. Gallery openings
- c. Ivy league institutions
- d. Golf courses



12. No one will believe it's the Blues if you wear a suit, 'less you happen to be a old ethnic person, and you slept in it.

13. You have the right to sing the Blues if:

- a. You older than dirt
- b. You blind
- c. You shot a man in Memphis
- d. You can't be satisfied

14. You don't have the right to sing the Blues if:

- a. You have all your teeth
- b. You were once blind but now can see
- c. The man in Memphis lived
- d. You have a pension fund



15. Blues is not a matter of color. It's a matter of bad luck. Tiger Woods cannot sing the blues. Sonny Liston could. Ugly white people also got a leg up on the blues.

16. If you ask for water and your darlin' give you gasoline, it's the Blues

17. Other acceptable Blues beverages are:

- a. Cheap wine
- b. Whiskey or bourbon
- c. Muddy water
- d. Nasty black coffee

18. The following are NOT Blues beverages:

- a. Perrier
- b. Chardonnay
- c. Snapple
- d. Slim Fast



19. If death occurs in a cheap motel or a shotgun shack, it's a Blues death. Stabbed in the back by a jealous lover is another Blues way to die. So is the electric chair, substance abuse and dying lonely on a broke-down cot. You can't have a Blues death if you die during a tennis match or while getting liposuction.

20. Some Blues names for women:

- a. Sadie
- b. Big Mama
- c. Bessie
- d. Fat River Dumpling





21. Some Blues names for men:

- a. Joe
- b. Willie
- c. Little Willie
- d. Big Willie

22. Persons with names like Michelle, Amber, Debbie, and Heather can't sing the Blues no matter how many men they shoot in Memphis.

23. Make your own Blues name Starter Kit: a. name of physical infirmity (Blind, Cripple, Lame, etc.) b. first name (see above) plus name of fruit (Lemon, Lime, Melon, Kiwi, etc.) c. last name of President (Jefferson, Johnson, Fillmore, etc.) For example: Blind Lime Jefferson, Jackleg Lemon Johnson or Cripple Kiwi Fillmore, etc. (Well, maybe not "Kiwi.")

24. I don't care how tragic your life is: if you own even one computer, you cannot sing the blues.

Or .... if you are the fabulous John Lee Hooker, you can sing the Blues whenever and wherever and however you damn well please.



Sorry to bother you, sir—we were told  
there was a man in the park wearing  
a dress and torturing a bag full  
of cats.







# Odie's Edible Odyssey

By Virgil Thorp

About a month or two ago a very special friend gifted Odie a THC edible. He kept it in a plastic vial on the kitchen counter, next to the plastic multitasked box that keeps the remainder of his other, old-man medications. He had never had one of the new products from the pot store but considering his past indulgences, was cautiously curious. He was thinking that it might be prudent to wait for an opportune moment to ingest the sugary-looking, lemon-flavored cube. But, "out of sight, out of mind", it blended in with the other medicinal bottles and Odie, often preoccupied, promptly forgot about it.

Every time Odie remembered that he had a possible hallucinogen sitting on his kitchen counter, he would procrastinate, finding a reason to refrain from chewing it. Odie knew how he was when he got stoned and past experiences had proved that he was not very good when it came to getting ripped and dealing with straight people.





*I have a distinct tendency to giggle and go off on tangents. Odie thought. Not to fear though, I have always – and I stress, ALWAYS – been docile, otherwise.*

So, it came to past that this last Monday, after Odie had started his coffee maker and limped over to the kitchen counter where his morning drugs were, that Odie noticed that lonely, little plastic bottle. He picked it up. He shook it. The rattle confirmed that the edible was still tucked in there. He put it down and picked up the bottle of Tylenol, the over-the-counter remedy that was next to it. *First things first*, he thought and shook three tabs of the pain reliever into his palm. Quick toss! Right into his mouth, a swift glug of water, and then Odie leaned against the counter with a curious gaze at the little cylinder with the little edible inside.

The Tylenol slowly, almost reluctantly, worked its magic on his pain as he contemplated. It wasn't like an opioid. With a soothing rush. It took the pain, that was like sharp fire, calming it to dull ash. But never permanently. Fuck to Ouch and back to Fuck again. It was more like a resigned – *I know it is always going to be there, goddamn it* – acceptance.

You see, our friend, the unfortunate Odie, has bone-on-bone knee inflammation in both knees. It hurts bad. The Tylenol Odie swallows every morning barely dents the pain. Odie gets Cortisone shots every three months, or every ninety days. There is no cartilage, no bursa, nothing to cushion the constant, grinding friction and bone-on-bone pain that he endures as the Cortisone wears out a little more each hour, each day, each week, each month.

Odie started thinking about what he had on his schedule. No appointments, no meetings, no therapies. It seemed safe if he decided to give the glittering edible a try. Odie had been working on the next AOTC Journal all week and that was his plan for that day – while transferring an hour out to assuage his wife's daily

caloric intake. You know, taking advantage of the early bird restaurant specials that afternoon. He ruminated, he pondered, and he concluded; why not now? It's just an appetizer.

Now, it must be shared, that Odie had experimented with plenty



of psychedelics and hallucinogens for most of his adult life. Since the majority of the drugs were black-market, you never really could anticipate how, when and how much you would be affected when the dope kicked in. Early, late, buzz or kick-ass, you took what you had been given. The results varied from unassuming pony to bucking bronco to raging brahma bull. Once you got on, you didn't get off until the drug was through with you. As Odie always said

in his youth, "Let'r buck."

Odie twisted the cap off the little white vial. The bright yellow candy-like morsel glittered with embedded sugar crystals. Looking pretty tasty he threw caution over the side, popped the juicy tidbit into his mouth and began to chew. *Kind of like a Starburst candy*, he thought. It was pretty good. It wasn't too tart, it wasn't too sweet, it wasn't too gritty – Odie felt like Goldilocks – it was just right!

Odie had been working on Ed's mid-life crisis story for about an hour and was feeling pretty good about it and also his state-of-

mind. It was mellow and felt a trifle whimsical which is the state that he really enjoyed editing, eating, drinking and writing. Odie liked when the passage of time was a long, smooth pull, like Ma Joad described how life was like for a woman at the end of Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. Not a series of dreadful jerks like Pa Joad and the rest of the menfolk experienced. Odie nodded; *smart sailors prefer smooth sailing*.

It was almost two in the afternoon when Odie's landline phone rang. There is a saying that "good things don't last forever." Every 'wise' sailor knows that a competent mariner is ready for any unexpected squalls. And when you are stoned, you better be ready for any and all abrupt changes. And for Odie, a squall it was. His orthopedist's office was calling. Odie noted the phone number and figured this call was his appointment reminder. It wasn't. Odie got the worst news he could have had that day.

The bad news? Their office had not received the authorization from his insurance through his primary care physician (PCP). The orthopedist was going to have to cancel Odie's appointment and reschedule.

Odie's sunny attitude went South. This was bad. Today, that day, that Monday, that was day 88! He had started counting down at sixty days. He had only two days to go to 90 and the blessed, pain-relieving shots! Odie almost started weeping. He did not know if he could handle the increasing pain for another thirty days.

Odie was certain that he said something but all that his mind recalled was, "Owww!" There was probably an F-word or two.

The young lady on the phone made a suggestion. "You could call your PCP and your insurance ... that may help ... Now, please sir ... please, don't cry. There's still a chance to save your appointment." She seemed as if she really wanted to help. "If you can get the authorization here today, we may still be able to treat you on Wednesday."





What? Hope? Happy? Hell no, Odie was pissed. This crap had happened before. First of this year, the exact problem again. No authorization! Someone in the healthcare chain had hiccupped and Odie was forced to wait another 30 days for relief. It wasn't until the middle of February that he got the alleviating injections. He was not a pretty sight as he waited that month, and Odie did not want to go through that agony again.

Odie's mind kicked up a gear. He was going into grumpy old man mode. *'WTF, woman!'* he wanted to cry out, *'Do you appreciate the level of my pain? I wouldn't treat a dumb animal this way. Wanna know how it feels, young lady? Let me take a ball peen hammer and strike you on your patella every step you take. See how you like it, uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh. Yeah, then you'd know how I feel. Uh-huh, uh-huh. Then you'd know why I am crying.'*

Odie grabbed for sanity and put a rein on his emerging codger. "Okay, I'll call the doctor, I'll inform my insurance," He did not realize he was shouting. "Email my insurance, hang out my back door and scream for my insurance." He turned his mouth to the phone, "call you back soon."

"Don't hurt yourself," Odie could just hear her counsel as he rung off. At least she seemed to have his best interests at heart. Maybe she did feel his pain.

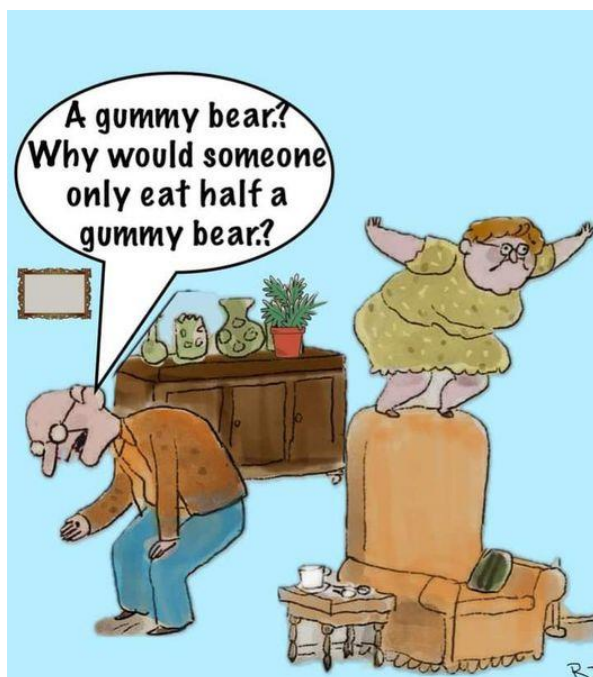
Odie's wife charged into the room asking why he was yelling. Odie was multitasking; dialing the doctor, logging in to the insurance website, composing an e-inquiry; launching bloody-hell, to emailing the aforesaid rant, while explaining his dilemma to his very perplexed wife.

His distraught ramble made little sense to her. So, she gave him sad eyes and patted his head. She tried a soothing tone of voice,

like a mother to a child. "There, there, my darling. Take deep breaths. It will be alright." There really wasn't anything else she could possibly do except, maybe, the Heimlich Maneuver.

Odie was an analog guy trapped in a digital world. It wasn't going well. Somewhere the bureaucracy had broken down and there was peril in the future. Who was accountable? The insurance company, the primary care doctor or the referred specialist? Each entity had fashioned hateful, numerical firewalls, electronic gatekeepers.

Like we all have experienced, he had to listen to a litany of recorded messages heeding them carefully because the messages had changed(!) they said; advising options to his calls and warning that the conversation may be recorded ... so watch your language. None – not any suggested number – answered his question of which button to push, which button to talk to a human being. Odie felt all alone. *Please let me speak to a human*



*being*, he yearned. He had no other alternative. He had to travel to his PCP office in person. It was vexing. What had modernity wrought?

Odie jabbed the off key on the phone. He hit send to the email (which included his cell number for the possibility of instant communication – just in case the insurance company really gave a shit about his condition; or simply cared about the Medicaid fee for the yearly stool sample

they demanded – really, a forlorn hope). Odie brushed his wife's lips as he slid through the garage door, grabbed a bottle of water and headed for the car to drive to his PCP office in Vero Beach.

Odie's wife clung to the doorway and waved goodbye. She knew it wasn't the first time ... and hopefully, not the last time he took off like this.

All along the way, Odie rehearsed what he would say, what he would plea. *"I wouldn't do this to my cat, how can you let this happen to me? Give me the authorization NOW, ... please."*

Odie's grumpy old man persona was much more blunt.

"Motherfuckers! What the goddamn hell did you do with your professionalism? Lose it on your f-ing lunch break? Can't you see how I am suffering? And you want me to have more agony?" It was the antipasto of fury seasoned with pain. Even if William Jennings Bryan wouldn't use the cuss words, he couldn't have been more eloquent or persuasive as Odie argued with himself. His peril was so great that he didn't think of, or, have time to consider the edible he had consumed ... or how it was affecting him.

Luckily the handicap parking spot was open when Odie wheeled into the clinic's lot. He took a couple of deep breaths. He told the grumpy old man inside himself who was raging about 'motherfuckers', to stay in the car.

"But I want to give them hell."

"I know you do, but listen to me, don't you think you'll get more with honey than you will with venom and rage?"

Odie heard his cranky voice answer himself. "Okay, you're right. I'll stay right here." At last, some common sense from his crabby alter ego. "Dammit."

"Good. And don't you forget it." Odie was feeling very schizophrenic as he limped into the doctor's office, hung the handle of his cane on the counter and looked as pitiful as he could manage to the receptionist. With a croaking voice, Odie called out, "I need help. Can you help me, please." He was an old man. He was crippled. He was in pain.



It must have worked. The young lady rushed around the counter and led him through another door to the appointment desk. Odie's hands were shaking. Was it the edible that made them shake? Could it be that he had a severe case of 'the munchies'? He related his story as best he could once more. It was good that he had made the grumpy old man stay out in the car, securely restrained.

"What insurance company?" the appointment manager asked, peering over her computer monitor.

"Freedom Health."

"Oooooohhhhhhh." Like that revealed the mystery. "You just sit down over there," she gestured to the chairs lining the wall.

"We'll get you fixed up."

Sativa to Change the things I can,  
Indica to Accept the things I can't.



Odie had no other choice. He sat down and fretted. *How long will this take? Will I get back to downtown Ft. Pierce in time?*

It didn't register to him that the edible had been working, *was working*. Better living through chemistry had intervened and evidently it had let the *calm me* control the crazy, *angry me*.

Odie tried to reach his orthopedist again on his cell. Ring-ring, ring-ring. How many rings will it take before he would hear the recorded options. He fussed, *will there be time?*

"Hello." A human voice answered. Not the tinny, recorded noise. A human being! A real live human being.

Odie breathlessly identified himself and what his problem was for what it seemed to him, the umpteenth time. Would they remember him? Odie's phone said 4:19 pm. Seconds counted. Tick-tock, tick-tock.

A door opened. "Here, honey," said the large black assistant clerk with the most beautiful smile that Odie swore had shown a healing light on him. "Here's your authorization."

He glanced at it. His name was on the patient line. It will do. Odie wanted to say thank you in every language he could remember but English sufficed.



"Thank you, thank you, thank you," Odie called out to the kind black lady. And to the orthopedist receptionist on the cell, "I'm headed your way!" There was pain in every step as he burst out the door and finally into the car. "Hang on old man, we're going to Ft. Pierce." Odie called to the grumpy old spectre in the empty passenger seat. If all went well, he could barely make it on time.

How he kept from a reckless driving citation, Odie did not know. Every red light, every slow driver in the passing lane ratcheted up his anxiety level. Nothing was a straight line. Traffic light synchronization was a joke. Every glance at the clock time was running out! There were speed traps, lane and road closures and, horror of horrors, Treasure Coast afternoon, U.S. 1 rush hour traffic! People in the right-turn lane signaling left. People in the left-turn lane signaling right. People weaving through traffic

without signaling at all! Where the hell did they think they were? The Daytona Speedway?

Odie took a chance making a right turn on a stale yellow light and then, at precisely 4:57, he turned into the orthopedist's lot and parked by the front door. *Fuck the "No Standing" zone sign.* With the semi-crumpled authorization waving in his tightly clenched fist, he slapped the approval down in front of the receptionist.

"Am I okay?" A sweating Odie craved affirmative confirmation. "Am I on time?"

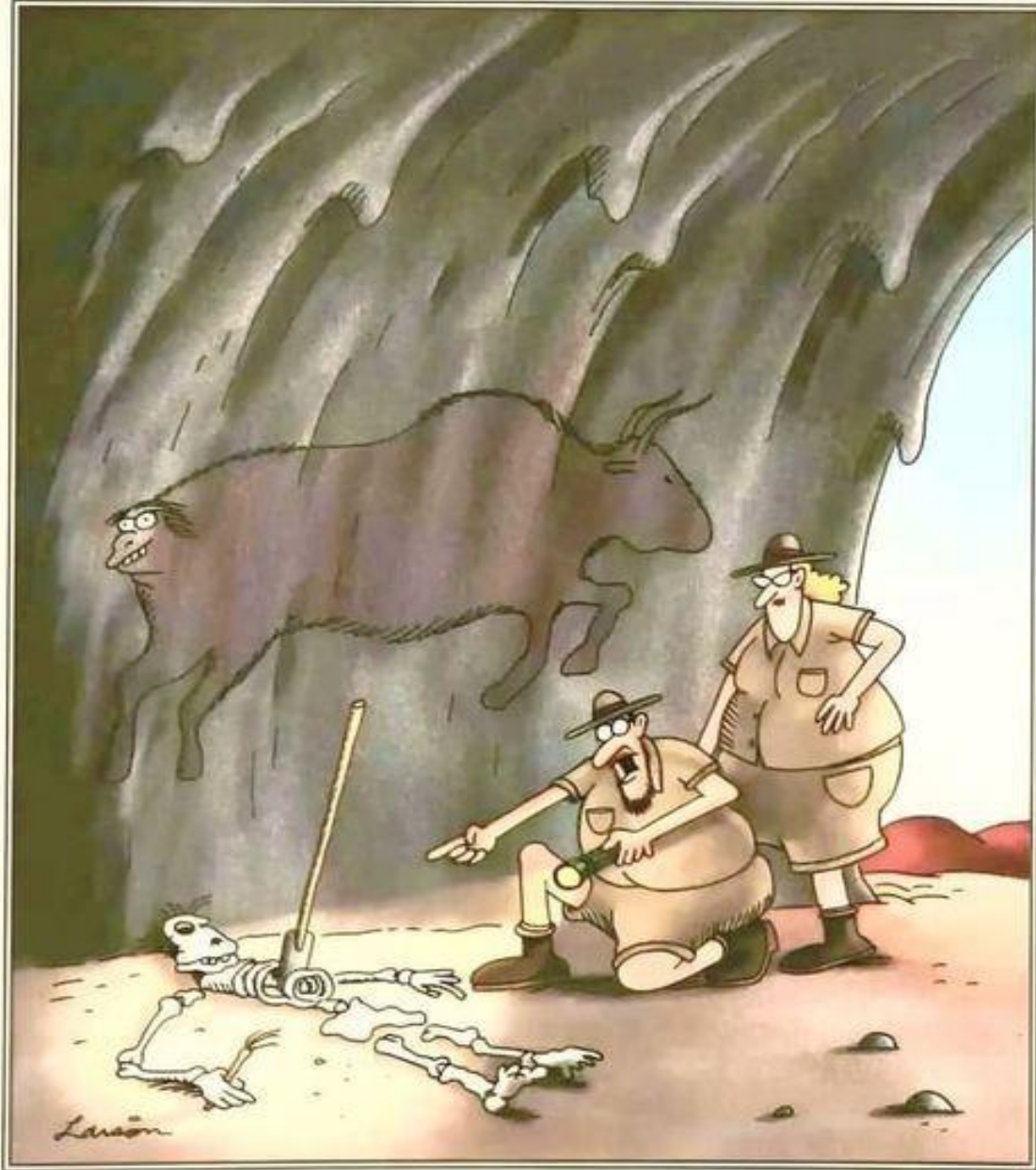
She gave the paper a thorough examination. "Yes," She exclaimed, "You're okay." The authorization was complete. All the "T's" were crossed and all the "I's" were dotted! They even spelled the doctor's name correctly. The receptionist was almost as joyful as Odie was. "Your appointment is confirmed for Wednesday." He was going to get his shots in two days! The shipwreck had been averted. If he could have danced, Odie would have.

On the way home he realized that he had worked up quite an appetite. The Burger King on Okeechobee Road had a special on Whopper Jr.'s, 2 for five dollars. Odie ordered a triple-double special with fries. He was very hungry, like he was eating for two. Odie drove home, much less frantic than he had been travelling. He kissed and hugged his wife; gave her one of the Whopper Jr.'s, a couple of cold French fries and enjoyed the rest of his edible day.

As he digested his meal, Odie had another thought. He wondered, *'How high could the pot dispensary brownies get a person?'*







“Amazing! The mummified remains of a prehistoric cave-painter, still clutching his brush! ... Seems he made an enemy, though.”

# A Saturday Quiz Provided by Gale Baker

1 - Do you believe people should report to “the workplace” where they meet and communicate with their fellow workers instead of the “safe space” where they can prop up a can of beer next to the computer and scratch their balls as they try figure out why they are at the computer and what they are supposed to be doing?

2 – Do you believe it’s okay to hate and try to kill everyone who has a different opinion than yours?

3 – Do you believe Donald Trump’s next suit should match his face in color?

4 – Do you believe that God created the world?

5 – Do you ever wonder where he was when he did this?

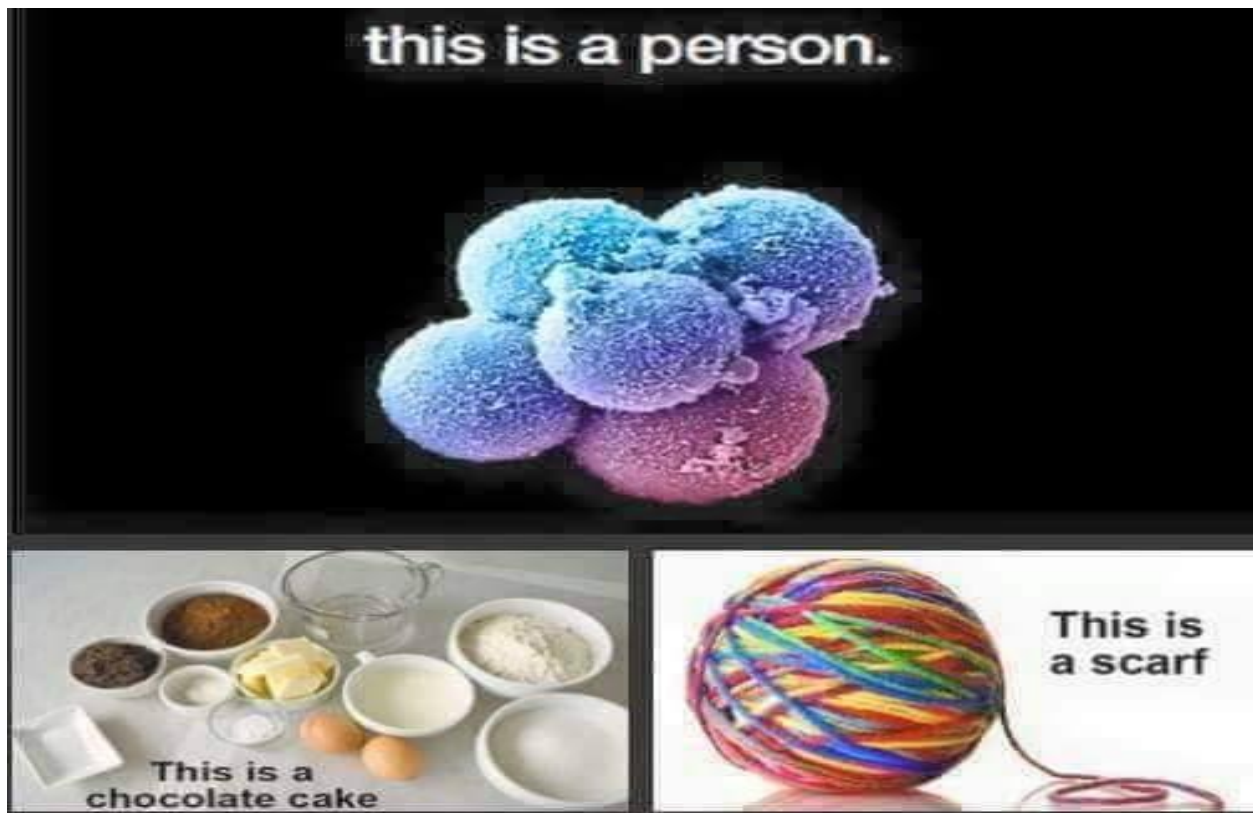
6 - Are you still referring to god as a male?

7 – Do you really believe he had only one son?

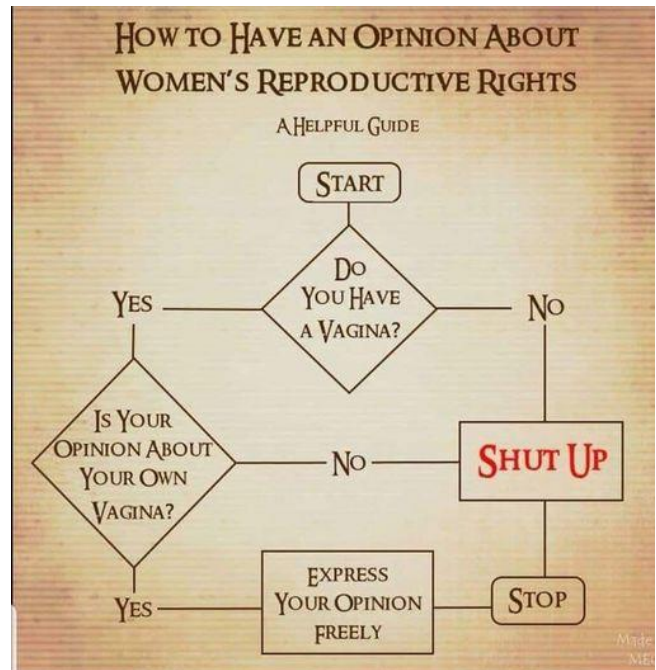
8 – Can you believe a human is asking these stupid questions?

9 – Again – do you believe people should report to work instead of idling on their asses in front of a computer and pretending they are working for the pay they get?

10 – PS I am writing these questions on my computer.







Throwing a condom on a microphone while reporting live from a hurricane is the most Florida thing I've ever seen



Blehhh  
@powafulll

what fetus looks like at 6 weeks vs.  
what republicans think a fetus looks  
like at 6 weeks



5:15 PM · 5/8/19 · Twitter for iPhone



**If you're opposed to gay marriage, you can simply say "no" when a gay person proposes to you.**

**Follow me for more life tips.**

**I tried donating blood today... NEVER AGAIN!!! Too many stupid questions.**

**Who's blood is it?  
Where did you get it from?  
Why is it in a bucket?**









The first shipment of Prayers have finally arrived in Florida. We'll start handing them out as soon as the storm is over.

