

THE JOURNAL

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2026 Vol. 11, No. 5



"My Dolly Parton Story" Yes, she was that good of a person! By Noah Lugeons p. 12

"The Bar at the End of My Psyche" – Nietzsche, Diogenes, Marcus Aurelius, Sartre & Camus come for drinks and dinner By James Longo p.46

"Sometime Death Comes Too Goddamned Fast" – A recollection By Virgil Thorp 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.11, No.5

September/October 2026

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

awareonesofthetreasurecoast.com

INTRODUCTION

SNAFU In the Gulf of Trump

The Navy has a severe morale problem in the Persian Gulf. The U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln, a floating city, with 5,000 sailors, marines, and airwing personnel are pissed off. I knew it was coming. You don't keep a carrier group out to sea for months (more than half a year without a port call) without having problems. And, I fear the problems are a lot deeper than what we have been hearing.

I make no secret that I despise and distrust the current administration. They have an aversion to the truth. They do not want to hear that the war Trump started and has fucked up is what was once termed in the military – *SNAFU!* an acronym for "*Situation Normal ... All Fucked Up.*"

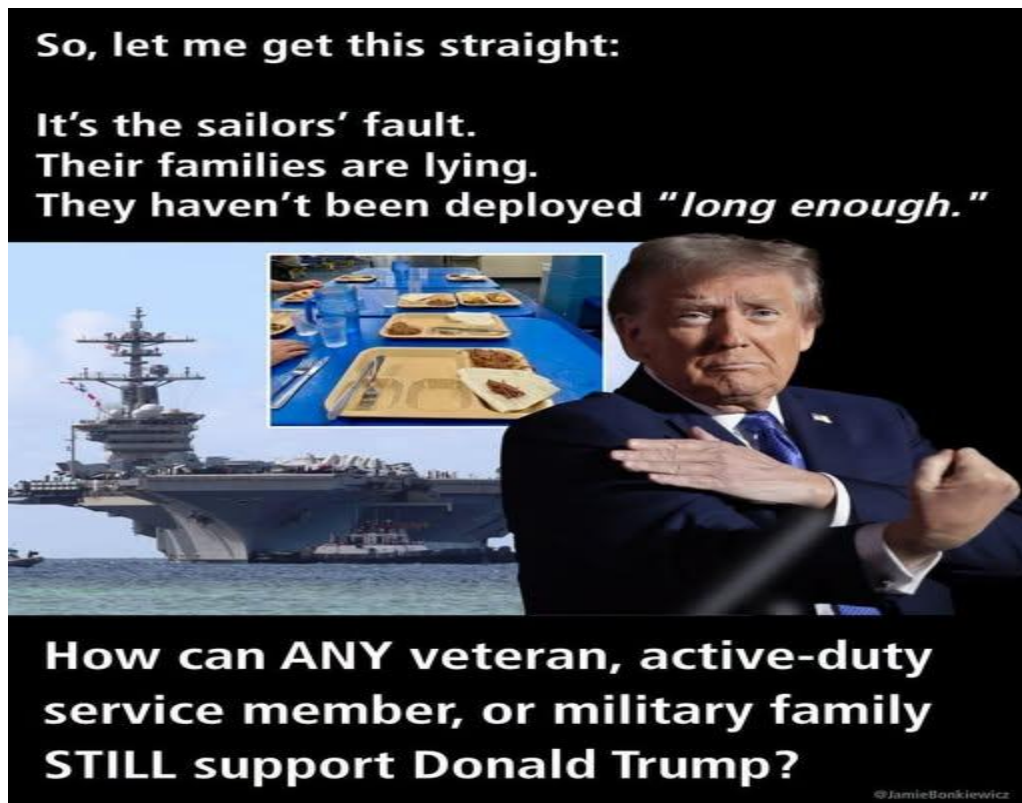
Donald Trump's comment concerning the men and women stationed in the Persian Gulf on the supercarrier, was egregious. When asked about their predicament. He said, "Not nearly long enough." i.e. "they haven't served enough time."

Just what I would expect from a spoiled brat, rich kid, bone-spurred, draft dodger. He doesn't know what it is like for the peasants. He imagines himself as a hero, a swashbuckler. He's posted enough AI pics like he's a god. But he isn't. He just doesn't care about the lower ranks.

What would you call it if you were trapped in a ship that never touches land for a port call? What would you call it if the inadequacies get overwhelmed? The toilets overflowing, the water so limited that showers spew cold salt water. Your pants fill with the sweat you expired until they dragged the deck and frayed. Sometimes you were so tired you couldn't wait to shower. You slept in your stinking dungarees.

I think my father once said that to an old army chum when I was just a toddler. "SNAFU". They nodded together and laughed. It remains an appropriate sobriquet for the military and its corporate leadership. The thing is, if there is too much SNAFU, you could also have another nautical term – MUTINY – on your hands.

Virgil



The Aware Ones 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 Stuart's *Sandsprit Park* 3443 SE Saint Lucie Blvd, 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 for confirmation.

AOTC MEMBERS

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

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Meetings



Friday gatherings: *Summits at Sandsprit* – 11 am gathering in the sun and fresh air of Stuart's Sandsprit Park. BYOB.

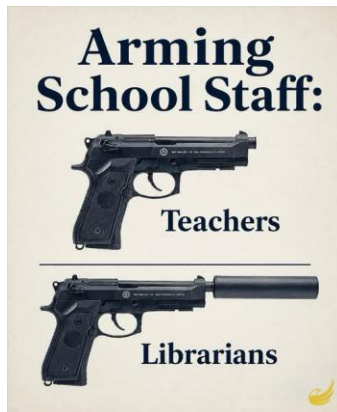
Sunday Zoom – 11 am Zoom meeting. Contact Dan Vignau <vignaujdna@aol.com> to be included with the connection codes.





TC Secular Writers – We are currently meeting at Ed Zillioux's house in White City (4411 Sunrise Blvd) as he heals up from his accident. We will return to Jensen Beach at the *House of Brews* when he is better (3311 NW Main Ave, Jensen Beach, FL 34957) on every other Thursday evening at 6:00 pm.

Events



September 2026

Arming School Staff Month

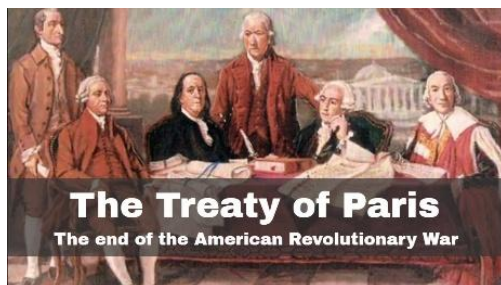
September 1 World War II began, Hitler invaded Poland, 1939

September 2

VJ Day, WWII



September 3 – Writer's Group @ Ed Zillioux's house, 6:00 pm.



Treaty of Paris Signed, 1783

September 4 – Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.

International Bacon Day

September 5



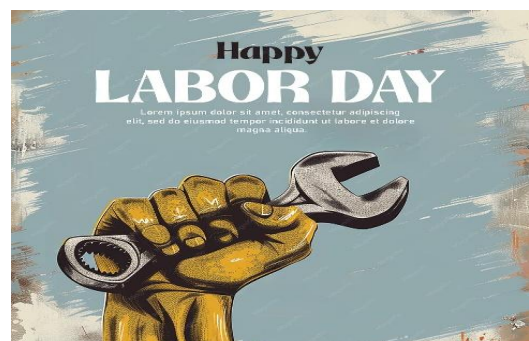
September 6 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.



Pilgrims set sail from Plymouth, England (1620)

September 7

Labor Day The first Monday of the month.





September 10

National TV Dinner Day

September 11 – **Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.**



911 Remembrance World Trade Center attack in 2001

Rosh Hashanah – Begins at sundown.

September 13 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

Uncle Sam Day – His image was first used in 1813.



September 16

Mexico Independence Day

September 17 – **Writer's Group @ Ed Zillioux's house, 6:00 pm.** Constitution Day



September 18 – **Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.**

The New York Times was first published in 1851

National POW/MIA Recognition Day

Trump's development was obviously arrested around the 7th grade.





September 19

Oktoberfest begins in Germany

September 20 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

Yom Kippur – It begins at sundown.

Yom Kippur



September 22

Autumn Equinox – Fall begins!

September 25 – Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.



Balboa discovered the Pacific Ocean in 1513

Sukkot– The holiday begins at sundown.



I'll be voting for the party that wants to give fourth graders free lunches instead of the one that wants to force them to give birth.

September 27 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.



September 28 William the Conqueror Invaded England, 1066

National Public Lands Day

"Government is instituted for the common good: for the protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness of the people; and not for the profit, honor, or private interest of any one man, family, or class of men." - John Adams



October

October 1 – **Writer's Group @ Ed Zillioux's house, 6:00 pm.** Henry Ford

Introduced the Model T (1908)



October 2 – **Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.**

October 4 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

Sputnik I Launched in 1957 (first space vehicle)



National Taco Day

October 5

World Teacher's Day

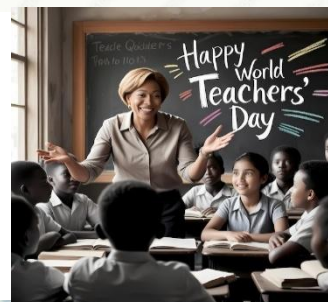
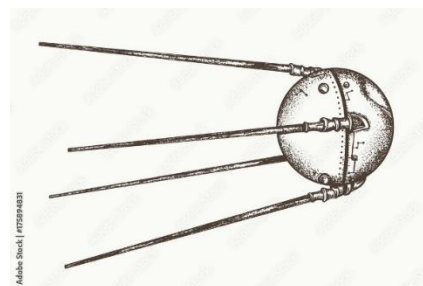
October 9 – **Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.**

Leif Erikson Day

October 10

National Motorcycle Ride Day – The second Saturday in October.

October 11 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.** Eleanor Roosevelt born, 1884



Don't believe what you see in the cartoons. No matter how hard you throw toilet plunger, it won't actually stick to someone's face. Don't ask me how I know this.



October 12 Indigenous People Day -The second Monday in October. *(Used to be called, "Columbus Day" – that murdering, enslaving piece of shit).*

October 13 International Skeptics Day

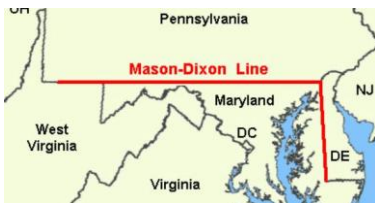
October 14 Dwight David Eisenhower (34th President) born, 1890



October 15 – Writer's Group @ Ed Zillioux's house, 6:00 pm.

October 16 – Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.

October 18 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.



Mason-Dixon Line Established (1767)

October 20 International Chefs Day

October 21



International Nacho Day



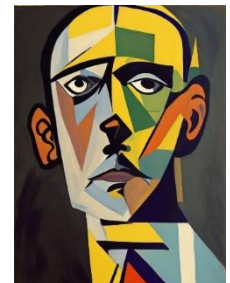
October 23 – Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.

October 24 United Nations Day

October 25 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.
International Artist Day



Pablo Picasso Born in Spain in 1881.





October 26 Hillary Rodham Clinton born, 1947.

October 27 Theodore Roosevelt born in 1858.

October 28 Statue of Liberty dedicated in 1886.

National First Responders Day

**October 29 – Writer's Group
@ Ed Zillioux's house,
6:00 pm.**



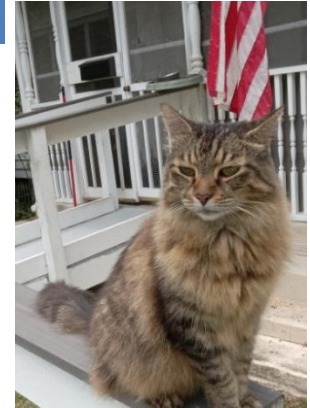
National Cat Day

**October 30 – Aware Ones at
Sandsprit Park
11 am.**

John Adams born in 1735.



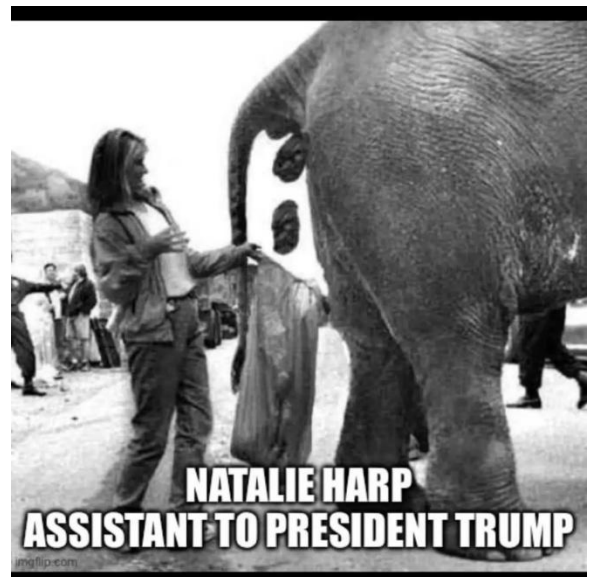
National Candy Corn Day



October 31 Juliette Gordon Low Born in 1860, she started Girl Scouting in the United States in 1912.

Halloween – *Be careful where you do your 'trick or treating'!*

**God is the first lie
parents teach their
children.**



Heroes

My Dolly Parton story: By Noah Lugeons

I knew Dolly Parton was gonna be pretty cool before I met her.

My job selling pseudo hacky sacks had taken me to the Dollywood theme park. And Dolly spent enough time there that most of the long-term employees had a chance to meet her at least once.

Without fail, they all had glowing reviews of what a nice person she was.

Granted, when we have these small interactions with celebrities, they're scripted, they're phony, they're contrived; it's an effort to portray the celebrity's brand in a positive light. But at a certain point you are the things you do. So whatever her motivation was, however genuine the interactions weren't, it was still important to her that every underpaid ticket taker in the park felt like she valued them personally.

I met her twice. The first time I was walking next to her in a parade playing with my skill toy. She said it was neat and asked me what it was called. I told her, then I gave her a bright green one that matched her dress. The whole interaction lasted maybe 15 seconds.

Two years later, I was back in the park working for the same company. Shortly after the park opened, I popped upstairs to my secret smoking location -- I never wanted the kids I entertained to catch me sucking on a cigarette, so I always smoked far from prying eyes -- but on this day, a security guard was barring my way. He told me I couldn't go to the place I always went and told me to use a smoking section in the park.

I explained to him that I didn't want the kids to see me smoking because I had one of those "I wanna be just like that guy when I grow up" jobs. But he told me the area was off limits for the day. He wasn't allowed to tell me why, but I soon learned that the reason it was off limits is because Dolly was



there and her bus was parked in the rear of the building I always smoked behind. It turns out I wasn't the only one looking for a secluded spot away from prying eyes.

But while I'm arguing with the security guard, Dolly catches wind of what's going on and comes out of the bus (looking like a million bucks) to tell the security guard that she knows me and I was okay. She said, "You do the hacky sack, right?"

I met her for fifteen seconds two years earlier, and she remembered me. That's a level of humanity you can't pretend to have.

I don't cry over many celebrity deaths, but she earned it.

Iranian girl Fatemeh, whose video went viral after she courageously removed her hijab during the January protests, was reportedly executed by the Islamic regime for demanding freedom, equality and dignity for Iranian women.

The mainstream media will not give this story the attention it deserves, but the world needs to know what is happening. Her story must not be forgotten. ❤️



Kaepernick, Springsteen Receive New ACLU Award For Activism In Arts, Business, Science And Sports

Former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick has received a new award from the American Civil Liberties Union recognizing contributions to American thought and culture.

NOAH TRISTER

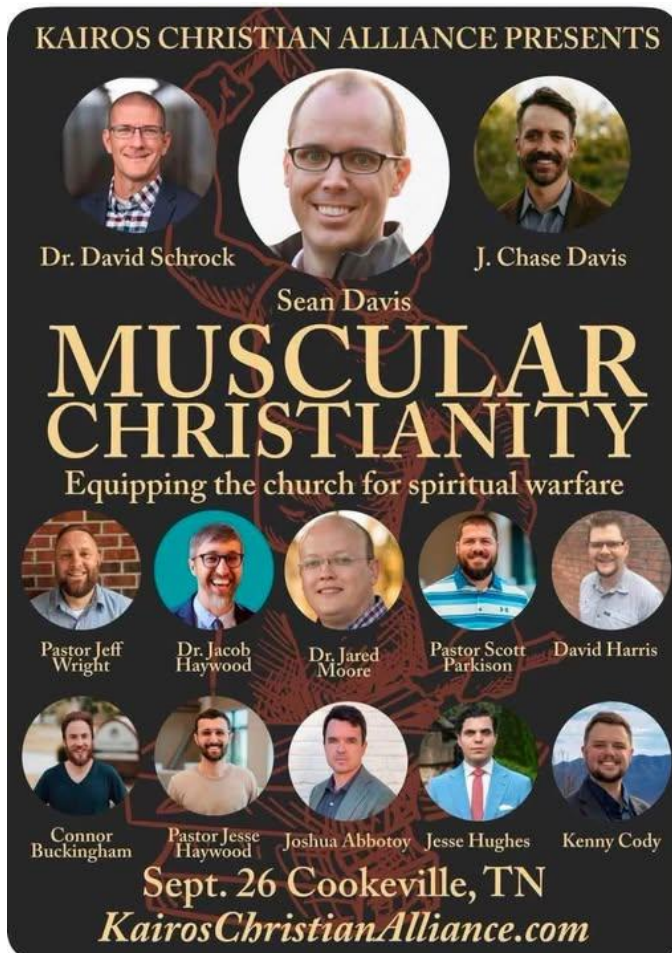
WASHINGTON (AP) — Former

NFL quarterback [Colin Kaepernick](#) received a new award from the [American Civil Liberties Union](#) recognizing contributions to American thought and culture.

Kaepernick and rock star [Bruce Springsteen](#) were honored Friday night with the ACLU Ralph Ellison Award for Defenders of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties in the Arts, Business, Science and Sports. The honor comes a decade after Kaepernick knelt during the national anthem in protest against police violence and racial inequality.

Asshole(s) of the Month

KAIROS CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE PRESENTS



Dr. David Schrock Sean Davis J. Chase Davis

MUSCULAR CHRISTIANITY

Equipping the church for spiritual warfare

Pastor Jeff Wright Dr. Jacob Haywood Dr. Jared Moore Pastor Scott Parkison David Harris

Connor Buckingham Pastor Jesse Haywood Joshua Abbotoy Jesse Hughes Kenny Cody

Sept. 26 Cookeville, TN
KairosChristianAlliance.com



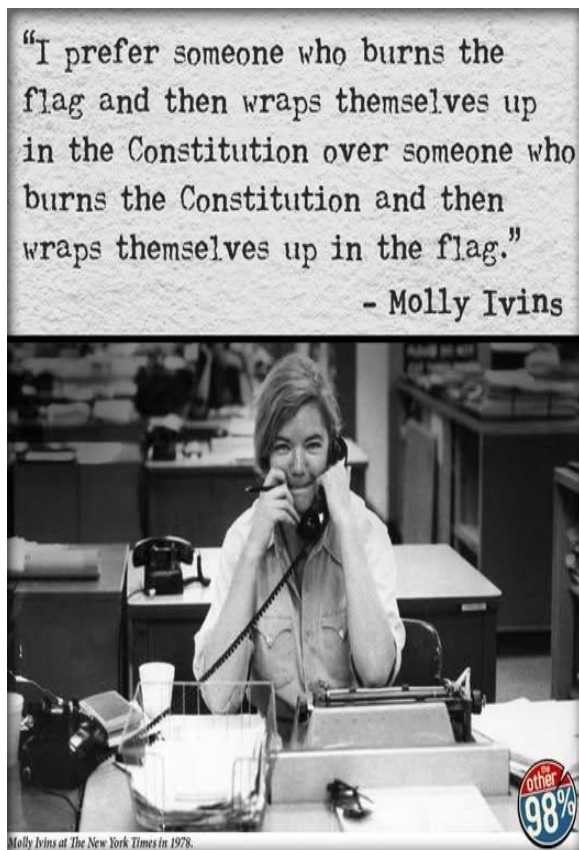
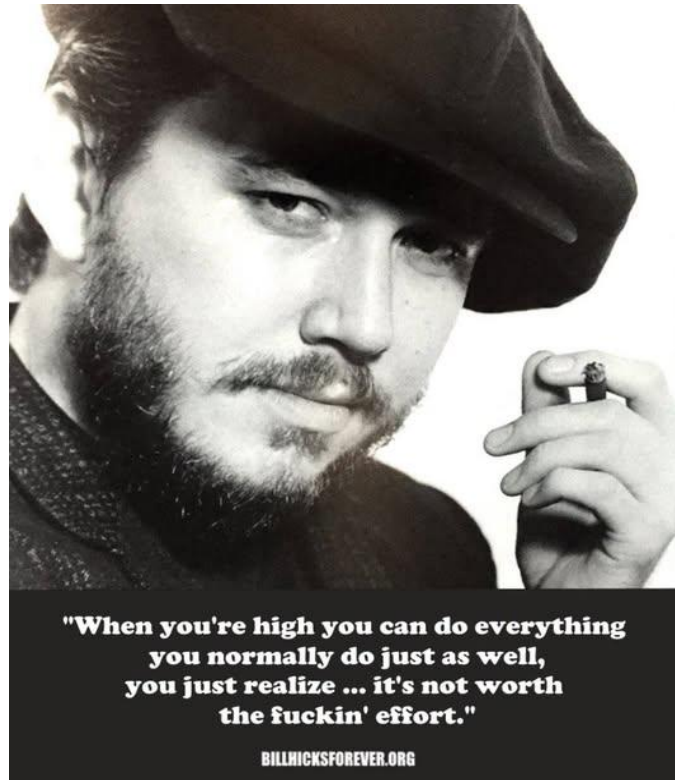
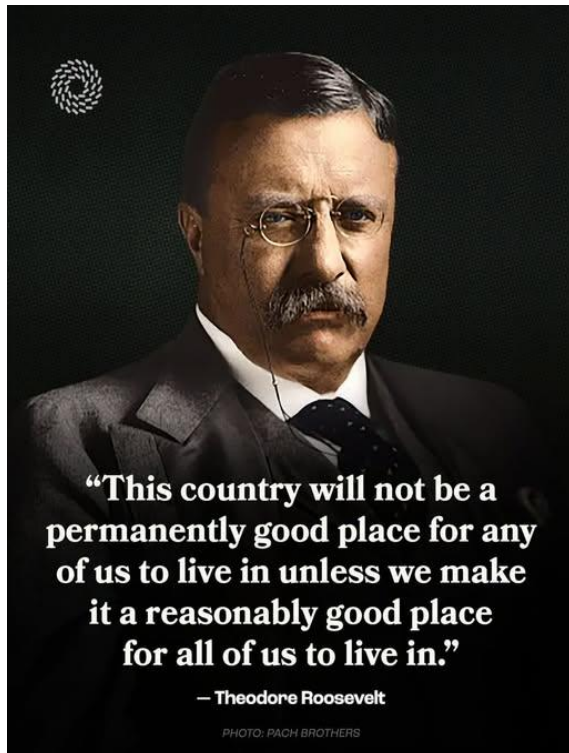
On July 13, 47 House members wrote a letter to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) imploring a "review of the TV Parental Guidelines to ensure that children are not being indoctrinated with radical gender ideology behind their

parents' backs." Some of the GOP members who signed on included Andy Ogles (Tenn.), Lauren Boebert (Colo.), and Randy Fine (Fla.).

Men-only gyms seek to protect Christian men from lust



Humanist Quotes



I think the trouble with being a critical thinker or an atheist, or a humanist is that you're right. And it's quite hard being right in the face of people who are wrong without sounding like a fuckwit. People go "do you think the vast majority of the world is wrong", well yes. I don't know how to say that nicely, but yes.

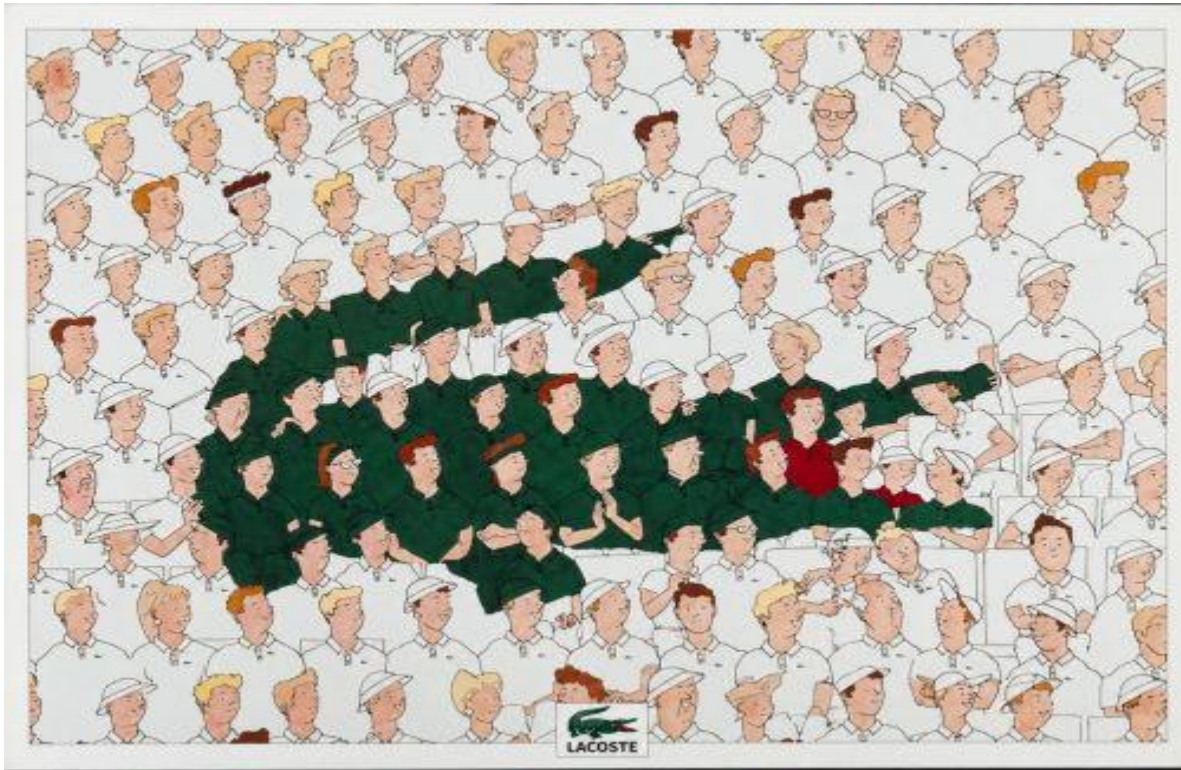
Tim Minchin

COMMENTARY



HELLO ON THE BEACH

By James Longo



"Good morning, how are you?" The elderly gentleman said to Jack. As Jack caught up to him, walking on the beach, both were trying to get their ten thousand steps in for the day.

"Excellent, excellent, every day is better than the next, then you drop dead, and nobody knows after that, and if they say they do, they are lying. How about you?"

"A simple good, how are you? Would have sufficed," The lanky gentleman said with a quick glance at Jack.

Jack thought about it for a moment, then said, "Good, how are you? Isn't that so cliché? It's so conventional. Why would we want to be those things?"

The gentleman thought for a moment and said, "It's effortless, mindless, acceptable, and most of all expected."

"How often is it the truth?"

"For me, most days, by the way, I'm Joe,"

"Jack, do you do this often?"

"What walking? I try to do it every day."

"I think you are one of my 'hello' people," Jack said.

"What is a 'hello' person?"

"People whose faces are familiar from seeing them regularly, but I don't know who they are, but I say 'hello' because I recognize them."



Johnson Tsang

"Why would you do that?" Joe asked.

"Why wouldn't you do that? I say 'hello' to people I see regularly, acknowledging our mutual humanity. In a world where I am

becoming an ignored person because of my age. Why wouldn't I do anything in my power to stop that?"

Joe gave Jack a sideways glance. "Let me get this straight: you believe saying 'hello' to strangers will do what exactly?"

"For starters, they aren't exactly strangers; I see them walking the beach every day. I just don't know them yet. I think saying 'hello' to them is a good thing, because we are acknowledging our mutual existence."



"What if they don't acknowledge you?"

"No hair off my ass," Jack said with a shrug.

"Aren't you worried about your safety?"

"What, someone is going to mug me for saying 'hello' to them?"

"Why would you bring attention to yourself?"

Jack was silent for a couple of minutes. "Joe, most cruelty human beings do to each other comes from their inability to see some other human being as human and not like them. Acknowledging their humanity by saying 'hello' to the old man, the gay guy, the

brown worker, the obese girl, and the floor sweeper decreases the chance of me dehumanizing them."

"Do you really think that will change anything?" Joe asked.

"I don't know. I hope it does. What's the other option? I dehumanize them and see them as less than myself."

"This is my turnaround point. It was nice talking to you." And with that, Joe turned

"I've got to go a little farther. It was nice talking with you."

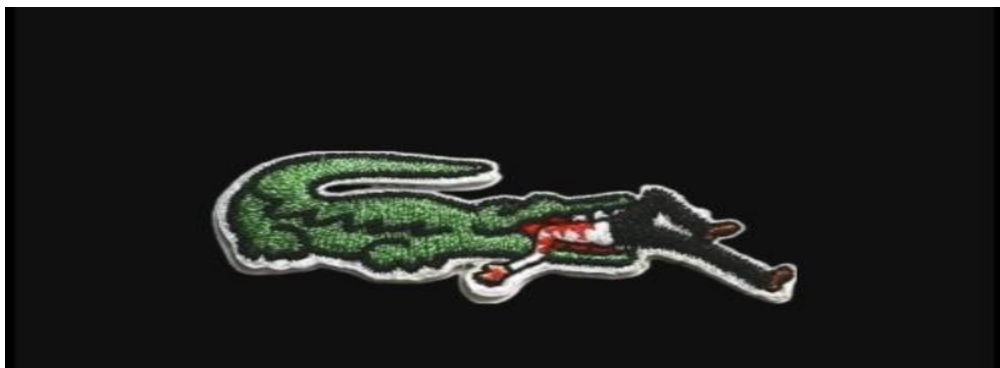
"Yeah, see you," Joe said, already turned and made a face and rolled his eyes.

Jack continued walking, eventually turning around and heading back to the parking lot. He eventually caught up to a woman walking on the beach in the same direction.

She asked Jack, "How are you doing?"

Jack said, "Excellent, excellent, every day I try to be excellent; most days I fail, but I keep trying."

She sped up. He got the hint and slowed down. He said under his breath, "You win some, you lose more; it is just the way it is," and stopped to jump into the ocean to make the woman feel more secure.



Pete Buttigieg's Ordeal Is a Frightening New Form of Political Harassment

People considering a role in public life should not have to worry about the risks to their children.

By Quinta Jurecic



The news that former Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg was investigated by Child Protective Services for a false allegation of child abuse was surprising. Not that an accuser would attempt such a cruel form of harassment—this, unfortunately, is not shocking at all—but because nobody seems to have aimed this particular tactic at a prominent politician before. Even in these unimaginative days, Americans are still capable of new innovations in cruelty.

“Someone decided to hurt our family this week,” Buttigieg wrote in a Substack post last week. Buttigieg, the first openly gay Cabinet member

and a likely Democratic presidential contender, wrote that state police and a CPS worker arrived at his home in the last week of June to investigate an anonymous report that Buttigieg may have harmed his 4-year-old twins. The matter was quickly resolved, but only after Buttigieg was separated from his children for 24 hours and CPS had interviewed them. State investigators in Michigan, where Buttigieg lives, determined that the tip had been false.

Life as a public servant in America requires an escalating tolerance for danger. Politicians, judges, election workers, school-board members, and librarians face online abuse, threats, true risk of physical violence, and bullying—persistent, creative torment that emerges from unexpected corners and darts back and forth across the line of physical and psychological peril. Now people considering a role in public life have a new nightmare to consider: the possibility that a malicious hoax will lead the state to take away their children.



FROM *THE ATLANTIC*.



ON BEING AWARE

By J. Dan Vignau

Far too many people see the world in Black and White, with no room for nuances. Although many liberals complain about the evangelical right wing of our political system, overly "WOKE" people do the same thing, far too often seeing only the black and white extremes of debates.

Our self-image, or ego, as Freud named it, is formed by what we experience as we are socialized into our respective cultures.

Humans are truly great at pattern recognition, far too great at times. We see causation because of correlation.

One of my favorite examples of apparent causation occurs when someone decides that something must cause something else. People cite irrelevant facts, as well as irrelevant misinformation.

Yes, our ancestors survived by making choices based on sensing something that may or may not have been there, such as a rustling in the weeds behind them. This is a win-win situation. If one decides to run away because the rustling might be a predator that could eat us, they win. If it is not a predator, we have lost a lot less than if we do not make the connection and stay. Therefore, making an erroneous connection more often than not is an evolutionary plus, especially considering the alternative, being eaten or otherwise harmed.

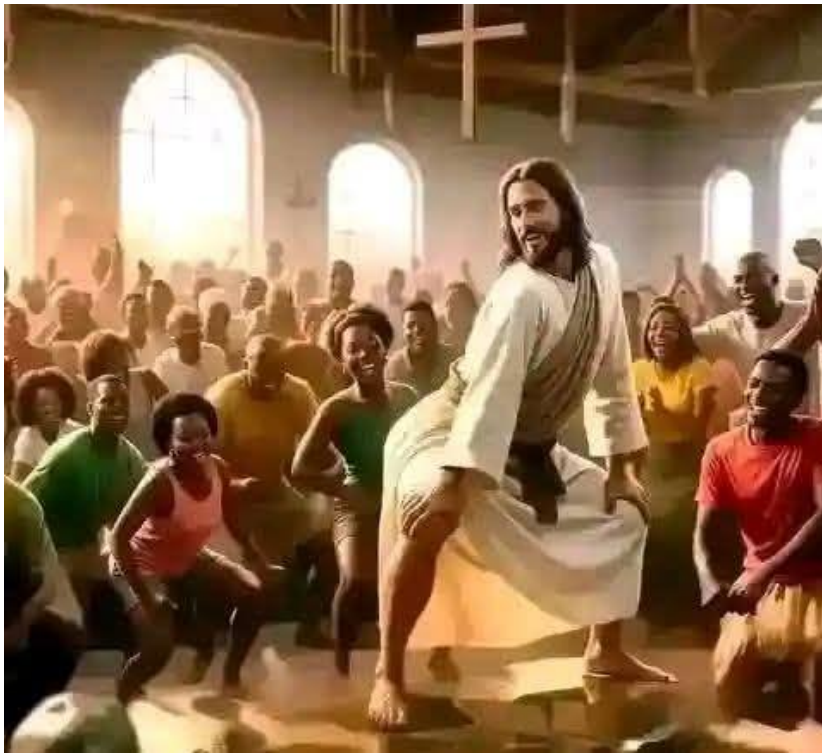
The difference between a cognitively astute person and one who has simply learned by rote to believe various authority figures, such as teachers, politicians, preachers, or internet trolls, is usually called "Intelligence". Too many of us equate that characteristic with IQ, our Intelligence Quotient on a standardized exam.

Although this article delves into the evangelical right wing of the GOP, I am also calling out left leaners who are not astute enough to differentiate facts from needing to err on the safe side of being called a bigot.

For example, the less aware of us seem to believe we must butcher the English language by referring to "trans-sexuals", as well as everyone else as "they" as a singular pronoun. These pseudo-woke people also jump at the chance to do really stupid things such as equate a term such as "Redskins", with "Indians". When the aforementioned Washington football team changed its so-called truly offensive team name to "The Commanders", the wannabee-woke lesser minds claimed we had to change the name "Indian", too!

There were even Woke-Blinded people suggesting the Florida State Seminoles change their self-perceivedly offensive name.

In fact, these wannabe-left-wing arbiters of language also insist on calling all descendants of the original humans on our continent, "Native Americans". One such person, my baby sister, also chided me for stating I was going to an Oriental Grocery store, stating that I should call it, "Asian".



I have a question for these memorizing non-thinkers, those learn-by-rote, non-thinking woke folks: Did you ever as an Indian or an Oriental give a shit what they thought?

Our society's woke posers have no room to think they are always better than those to whom they refer to of as Trump-tards.

An "LA Times" reporter wrote an extensive article about this Inane "Asian" controversy. He asked, "Did you ever ask an 'Oriental'?" I like to add, did you ever think that if you call the food, "Asian", you are then equating, Russian, Indian, Thai, food, etc. with Chinese food?

And how about the Indians. Yes, they use that term. They identify with that term. If you don't believe me, ask my old pals Chief Henry Osceola, his son Rudy, and his great-nephew Max. They all use the term, as do all of their tribe members. They prefer not to

be called the stereotypical Movie Western derogatory term, "*Natives*".

That word brings forth images of frantic tribes dancing around a fire: yes, drum beating, psychotic warriors ... you know those *Wild Injuns* in old cowboy movies and television shows.

You know what else? Indians are very proud that their tribe is honored by the Florida State athletic teams. They all love seeing Chief Osceola, an Indian, by damn, prancing his beautiful steed around the football field, then triumphantly plunging his spear into the ground.

So, when you hear me call them Indians, please realize that I am being acutely aware of their feelings, and not simply using the term that the overly-woke, but truly ignorant rote learners, have been taught.

Now the fun part, for me, but possibly not for some of you. I don't mind if you say, "Well, it takes all kinds!"

People who continually cite the Bible should read it. All of it, not just the sections that preachers harp on.

I taught some kids from bible-thumping families in my sociology classes. I brought several representatives of various subcultures to speak and take questions. My favorite response of all time came from a young girl, fresh out of Appalachia. She was not a stupid young lady but was totally ignorant of the intricacies of our country's various cultures.

A minister of the organization, The Metropolitan Community Church, and his second in command spoke for a while, then asked for questions. This church describes itself as an international LGBT-affirming mainline Protestant Christian church, founded in 1968, and a member of the National Council of Churches since 1992.

The sweet little mountain girl asked, "Are you saying that the only difference between you and us is who you sleep with?"

The minister chuckled and asked, "What did you expect, a devil with horns and a tail?"



She blushed and answered, "Well I guess I did?"

Far too many right wingers see liberals in a similar light. Far too many conservatives believe in something akin to the girl's former opinion.

Most people on either side of the political spectrum do not have the cognitive ability to use logic and reason. Others, whom I call the "willfully ignorant", don't use their intellect. Too many do not. They follow the blind faith of the leaders of whichever

cult or province of thought they agree with. There are no intricacies for debate. Everything is either Black or White. Good or Bad. Right or Wrong. Best or worst. Smart or dumb.

Their self-image is a constant. When they routinely learn something, nothing can change their minds. They refuse to be corrected. "Pluto is a planet." "Immigrants are causing crime rates to go up." "Video games cause violence."

I like to add, "Did you know that 98 percent of bank robbers are regular potato eaters?" Should we equate eating potatoes with bank robbing?

For the idol worshippers on either side, there are two classes of facts: (1) Those that massage sensitive egos; and (2) lies.

They do not adapt to knowledge. They are certain they know as much as anyone about anything that matters.

Uninformed and misinformed people use only one debate tool: OUT-YELLING the person who is trying to hurt them. Yes, their egos could be damaged by what they perceive as false facts.

"You know nothing. Therefore, *you* must be evil."

There are no subtleties. When actual knowledge is presented for them to ponder, all they know how to do is to repeat themselves a bit louder, and louder, and even louder.

They interrupt because they cannot reason. They scream because power, not reason, wins.

They cannot think abstractly. Ask them, "Can we try a thought experiment?"

"What are you, a damned commie?" Is a common response.



Like most of us, I have fallen into this trap of thinking that I know more than I do. For example, I used to claim that the existence of dark matter was not a proven fact. Yes, I understand the effect the gravitational pull of the idea of dark matter, but to me, when we cannot prove something, we might consider revising our theory. Some day we will, perhaps.

I did rescind my dark matter skepticism; not because I was shown unequivocal evidence, but because we need a name for our hypothetical constructs in order to talk about them.

My advice? Don't be overly woke. Don't simply follow the propaganda presented to you. Try to see subtleties. Ask yourselves why might that person hold that belief?

"Why might some of my own beliefs be suspect?"

Think for yourselves. Question everything; even when it contradicts your self-image or beliefs. Especially when it contradicts *your* beliefs! Simply, be *eff-ing* aware.



Scathing Atheist Diatribe

SHENEMAN TRIBUNE CONTENT AGENCY



"I KNOW I'M SUPPOSED TO HATE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHY."

By Noah Lugeons

Godless communists? Really? Why does everything have to be a remake or a reboot or a sequel these days? And I bet *this* red scare won't have anywhere near as good of hats.

But yeah, in case you missed it, this came to us from His Royal Lowness, Schmuck L'Orange during a speech at a Faith and Freedom Coalition conference. A couple of days earlier, a few Mamdani backed Democratic Socialist candidates won their primaries in New York. And if there's one thing that scares Republicans more than New York, it's Democratic Socialists. And if there's one thing that scares them more than Democratic Socialists, it's Zohran Mamdani. So Trump saw it as a trifecta of terror for the MAGA blue-hairs in his audience. So he reaches all

the way back to the other phase of his life where he had to wear diapers to yank out the phrase “godless communists.”

And “godless communists” is just the tip of the bullshit iceberg here. The entire speech was cribbed directly from that guy who gets a whole subway car to himself. During the course of the speech he said he godless leftists wanted to — and these are all direct quotes — “completely destroy the traditional American way of life,” “resume the transgender mutilation of children”, and “restart the war on Christianity and churches.”

LET'S BE HONEST.

**THERE ARE NO COMMUNISTS
RUNNING AMERICA'S MAJOR CITIES.**

**THERE ARE NO COMMUNIST CANDIDATES
TAKING OVER STATE GOVERNMENTS.**

**THERE IS NO COMMUNIST WAVE
SWEEPING THE UNITED STATES.**

DONALD TRUMP KEEPS SHOUTING
“COMMUNIST” BECAUSE **FEAR IS
EASIER TO SELL THAN SOLUTIONS.**

**WHILE FAMILIES WORRY ABOUT THE
COST OF LIVING, HOUSING, HEALTHCARE,
AND WAGES...**

**HE'S TRYING TO CONVINCE AMERICANS
THEY'RE UNDER ATTACK FROM AN ENEMY
THAT ISN'T RUNNING THE COUNTRY.**

**FEAR IS A CAMPAIGN STRATEGY.
FACTS ARE NOT.**

Notice the word “restart” there, because in the fantasy land sold to him by his religious liberty commission, before Trump took office the you could barely press two hands together in prayer before Joe Biden’s communist gestapo would pry them apart.

And as ever, the speech was replete with dehumanizing language. After first insisting that he gets

to declare people communist regardless of how they describe their own political beliefs, he goes on to call those communists “animals” and “very troubling people” who “hate our country and our people.”

But the half of “godless communists” that really scared his audience wasn’t the communist part, so he leaned in and told the conservative Christians he was talking to “All communists are godless. They do not believe in God. These ruthless communists attack all religions, but in particular Christianity. They always do. They’re after Christianity more than any other religion.” Adding “They will close your churches in this country. They go communist — and they’re trying to — they will kill your people and that’s what they’re about. They want to end religion. They have to end religion because their ideology doesn’t work if you have strong religion — people like you that are so incredible and love our country so much and love God”.

And look, as prone as Trump is to stream of consciousness speech babbling — or, as he

calls it, “the weave” — it might be tempting to dismiss this as the outrage du jour before he moves on to insulting some other group of people tomorrow. But based on the elements of the speech that Speaker of the House (and intergenerational porn-buddy) Mike Johnson echoed, it was clear that this represents a strategic shift the Republicans are trying out for the midterms. They obviously love using Zohran Mamdani as their new boogie man — he’s like if AOC was a Muslim! — so they’re trying to tar

How religion grows

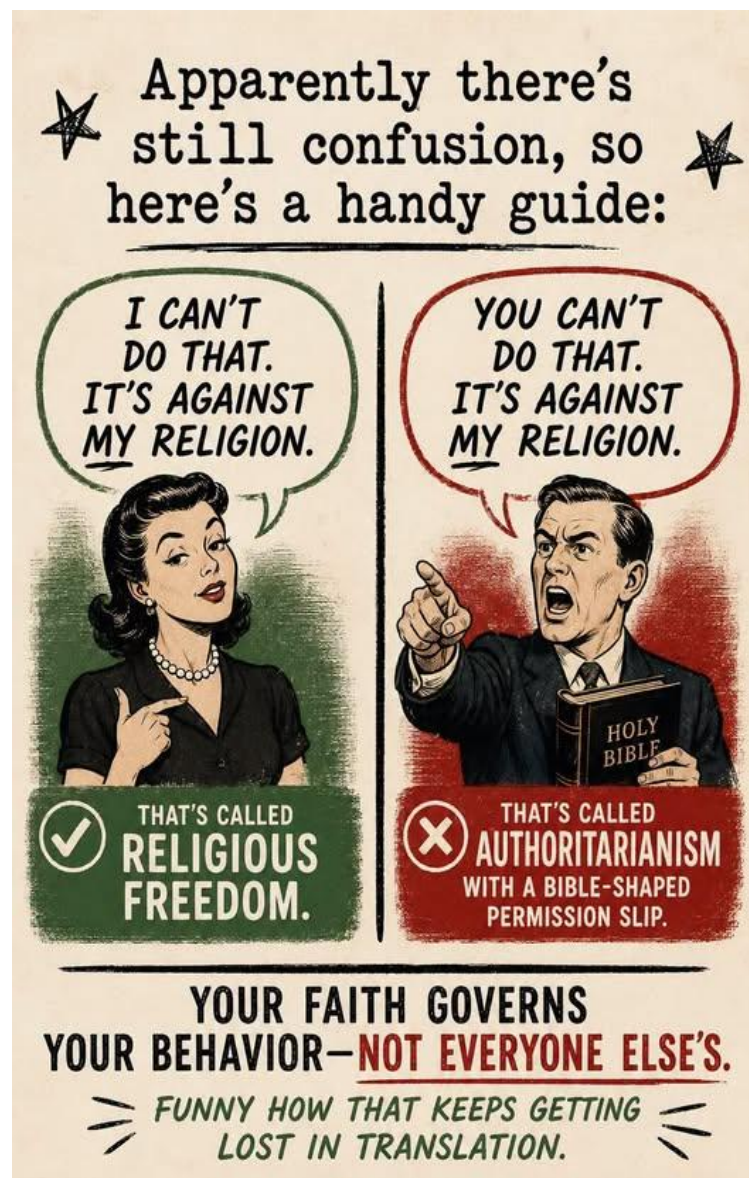


How atheism grows



the entire Democratic party by tying them to ... one of the most successful mayors in the country so far. But a brown one with a weird name that scares racists.

Now, you might think they'd be undercutting their own bigotry by smearing the Muslim guy as godless since, you know, he kind of



has to be one or the other. But Mamdani, for them, exists in some kind of weird quantum bigotry superposition where he can be both atheist and Muslim at the same time, just like he can be a radical progressive who wants to trans up your kids when you're not looking... who's trying to implement Sharia law.

But regardless of the contradictory bigotry, I think all the atheists in the room really need to sit up and take notice when "godless" becomes the smear of choice. Because, of course, in Trump's telling, inherent in godlessness is the

need to "come for the churches" and declare "war on Christianity." After all, if America is founded on Judeo-Christian values, then to be godless is to be anti-American.

It can be easy to forget sometimes that we're in their crosshairs. Because, let's face it, their crosshairs are pretty damn crowded. But the national campaign strategy right now seems to be an emphasis on how godless the Democrats are. And a prerequisite to that is scaring people about the very concept of atheism. Look, we may not be the daily special yet, but we're on the fucking menu. And the instant it becomes a political advantage to them to turn their sights on us; we'll have been the problem all along.



ARTICLES



A Male Chromosome Remembers Eve



By Virgil Thorp

I suppose it is because I have the precise number of alphabetical male chromosomes, that I have developed an innate prejudice when it comes to Male/Female reality. I would also say that after nearly eighty years of experiences, I find those prejudices so full of shit that I must speak up.

Let's go back to the alleged beginning. After creating the universe and the earth, God saw that it was good. Not really a measurable

quantity. I know, this story is pretty farfetched but stay with me on this.

I know that as we advance – even as we are trying to shove the square peg of creationism into the round hole of authenticity – the universe cannot be measured. What we know can be mapped after a sort, depending on your point of view. Each time we think we have found the outer edge, we notice a further series of galaxies and black holes, currently standing at a number somewhere around 2 billion trillion, or a 2 with 23 zeros after it. Which is a pretty accurate number give or take a few billion or until another super telescope is invented.

But according to the bible, Earth was at its center. That's point of view (POV) and with that idea, why wouldn't you believe you were the center? What a nonsensical concept. But, also understandable considering that back then, there wasn't anything known about light pollution. The sun crossed their sky and then hid until the next daybreak. They could not feel any movement. They watched other stars move across the sky. To them, the Earth was solid. Everything revolved around the Earth! So simple, so clear, so plausible.

To explain this more turgidly, God was invented and inserted into the story. He evolved into his own superior entity. Hey God. You're #1! Ladies and gentlemen, I present "GOD" the biggest and *goodiest (sic)*. The kindest and the most unforgiving bloody tyrant in this universal quadrant – never admitting he ever fucked anything up, God. You might think God had it all. But, no. God got lonely. Maybe he asked himself, "why am I all alone?" He rolled up his sleeves and began to do something about it.

Apparently, there was a world without form – whatever that could be. "Let there be light," He commanded. And, like an explosion, there was the sun (a star) and the moon (a secondary body whose gravitational influence not only stabilized earth's rotation but also provided tidal influences – who knows how things would

have turned out without that lesser light that rules the night!). Of course, the rest of the universe evolved despite the indifference from the flora and fauna of a barely noticeable dot on the lurid edge of the Milky Way galaxy.

The Circumcision of Abraham. A reminder that not every Bible story needs to be depicted in art.



Then, after populating the earth with plants and animals, God decided that these creatures weren't enough for his intellectualism. He wanted something that could talk, that could pray to Him, that could worship him. Can I say that God's ego was so brittle that he demanded a creature that would do such a thing? So, the almighty says I will make a man out of –

wait for it – dirt. When you consider it, such a creation is very poetic. "From dust you came and to dust you will return."

He called the creature (I mean) man, Adam, first of his kind. He made this man "in his own image." Which is kind of kinky and also kind of weird because God does not like prepuces and, presumably, Adam did, or did he not, have a foreskin. It is, indeed, a very Jewish thing. I am left to wonder, just where did God develop his animosity towards the male foreskin?

So, here we are, a first man, a male man, Adam. Most stories say that Adam was beloved by God. He charged Adam with a quest. "Name all the animals here in the garden known as Eden."

"Okay, over here is Bobby, over there is June ..."

"No, no, no," God admonished Adam. "What *kind* they are. I'll start, the one with the antlers, that's a deer. Now go on."

"Oh," Adam exclaimed, "I have been calling him, Bertha ..."

It was hinted at, in a book that was forbidden to be included in the Bible by the Council of Nicaea, that God slapped his forehead in fear that Adam's penchant for bestiality could have dire and unforeseen consequences.

The animals had no foreknowledge of mankind, what it was, what it would do to them. Many animals however, especially the ruminants, cuddled up to Adam and he petted them and caressed their woolly bodies. Adam not only named their species, he ignored the almighty and still gave them personal names. A friendly ewe he called Lilith, or Lilly for short. She backed her hindquarters against Adam, to hopefully receive a generous tickle just above her tail. To Adam, her hindquarters looked inviting. Adam gazed into her soulful doe-eyes. He thought she looked pretty? He touched gently and Lilly wiggled sensuously. Let me pause here and say this; for those of you without sin, if you didn't know any better, and you had a hard-on, would you? Wouldn't you have wondered, "will it fit?" But, at that time, there was no sin, at least Adam had no concept of it. God would get supremely irritated every time Adam would play "the peek-a-boo game" with that disgusting foreskin of his.

"How could I have been so stupid," God blurted out and then looked around furtively making certain that another of his misguided creations, Satan, had not heard himself denigrating himself. Yeah, there is more than one reason that Hebrews (who

advertise themselves as "God's chosen people!") have such problems with schizophrenia, self-image and foreskins.

I think it is proper to ask, "Was Eve created to just be a bimbo?" Was she simply a sperm receptacle? A gestation capsule? An alternative to Adam's predilection for sheep and donkeys? But I have it on good authority that it wasn't until God saw Adam humping a giraffe that He was encouraged to create an appropriate mate.

Even though Adam admitted carnal knowledge, he proudly let God know, "I call it, a giraffe."

But, God fucked up again! After He pulled the rib out of Adam to make her, He found out that Eve was not necessarily, a bimbo. Oh, she did like being a sperm receptacle every so often. She found copulation a kick! But she also had a capacity for learning.

"I have a clitoris," Eve said aloud to no one in particular. "I mean, everything is pretty sensitive down there anyway, but this is something special and I would like to know more about it and what it does and does not do."



Eve was dissatisfied with the role God would have her play. "What kind of asshole would expect a dominant creature to remain as an ignorant oaf?" Eve reasoned. Satan recognized her assets and statistics right away.

Eve Talking To A Serpent



"Eve," the dark angel whispered sinuously and seductively. "You know the things between your legs can be very persuasive if you play your cards right. By the way, if you lean forward, and move your arms almost together, I guarantee you will create a picture that Adam cannot possibly ignore. One other thing, see that tree with juicy fruit hanging from it?"

"The one with the fruit that resembles the things between my husband's legs that he sometimes sits on and yells out in pain?"

Eve replied. She learned quickly.

Satan gave her a salacious wink. "Play with those. Take your time. See what happens when you rub them."

"Oh my," Eve blurted out, "something is growing."

"Bite it! It's delicious."

"Sweet and salty," Eve said as the drool dripped from her chin. "Yummy!"

The human male was reduced to putty in the slender fingers of female pulchritude. It could be said that Eve had developed a fondness for things that resembled appendages.

Me If I Ever Hear A Snake Talking



Thus, was born the image of woman being either saint or slut. Virgin or vixen. Homemaker or homewrecker. Until menopause. After menopause, woman became the shrew, the barren witch, no longer fit for reproduction. It was a very barbarous reaction, and women have suffered under chauvinists ever since.

The biblical apologist would then say something that also denigrates females, because, you know, that part of women's bodies is either lusting for a manhood or it is denying entry to a manhood or, Heaven forbid, *laughing* at a manhood. And thusly, it is the main cause of erection dysfunction and/or premature ejaculation. Everything that has gone wrong in a man's life challenges his ego. Whose fault is it? God, Adam, Lilly the promiscuous sheep, or is it, Eve.



The conclusion? It is all woman's fault. And God kept his mouth shut. He never said he was fair. He just made Moses wander around the Sinai desert for forty years looking for a country to rob and occupy. In other words, "any Hittite virgin will do."

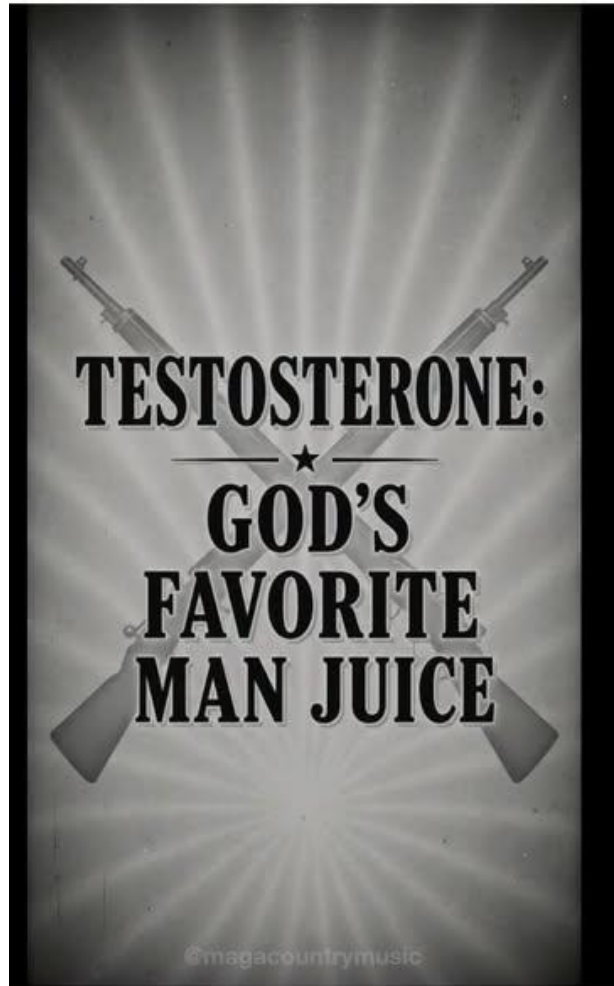
This Week in Misogyny

By Lucinda Lugeons

Alright folks, we have GOT to talk about Pete Hegseth's testicle obsession. So, as you may already know, one of Hegseth's first moves when he became Defense Secretary was to order a review of women in combat, with the obvious goal of removing them from it.

See, in 2015, the US Army lifted its longstanding restriction on women in combat, and (lo and behold) it changed virtually nothing. All of the chicken little excuses that men made to keep us out of their he-man woman hater's club turned out to be bullshit and, in the near decade since, women have shown themselves to be every bit as effective in combat as men. For anybody following the science, the issue was settled.

But nobody ever accused the Trump administration of "following the science," so Hegseth ordered his little review. But he made the mistake of handing it to actual researchers. I mean, obviously there are plenty of well qualified research centers the military uses for this kind of shit. So they turned to one of them, a group



called the Institute for Defense Analyses. But then, in April, Hegseth abruptly yanked the study out from under them and handed it to an applied physics lab at Johns Hopkins that has no relevant experience at all.

So why the shift? Well, it turns out that lab is headed by a



woman who has been a vocal critic of women in combat. So clearly the analysis he ordered wasn't giving him the result he wanted so he went with a different one. And he'll keep going to different ones until he gets the results he was looking for.

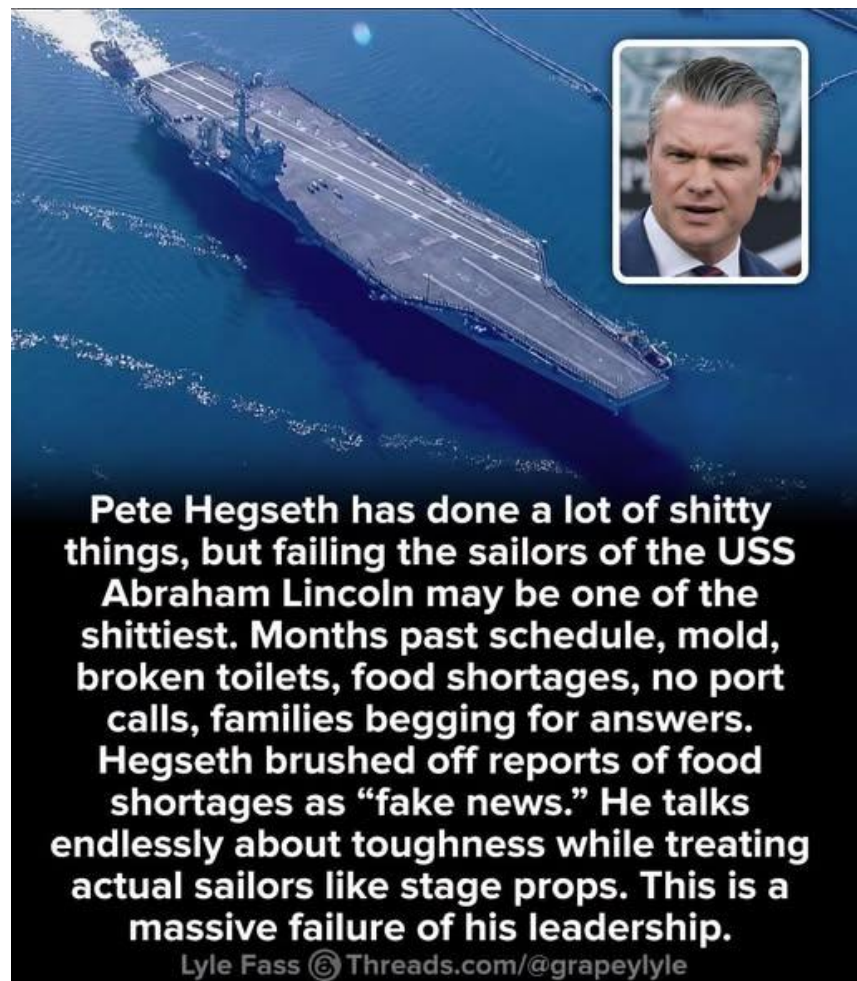
And in the meantime, as he's trying to push women out, he's trying to make the men even more manly. I'm sure you've heard about his latest insane push to pump up the army's testosterone levels. He announced last week that the US military

will start testing the testosterone levels of some service members and recommending hormone therapy if they're not chocked full of enough man-juice.

Of course, a lot of trans people and their allies were like, "Oh, so you guys are into gender affirming therapy now?" And that's not just a fun rhetorical gotcha. It's also a thorny legal issue. Because Hegseth has ALSO barred the military from paying for *exactly this treatment* for its trans members. And one of the people who noticed was a judge. So now US district judge Ana Reyes (who is

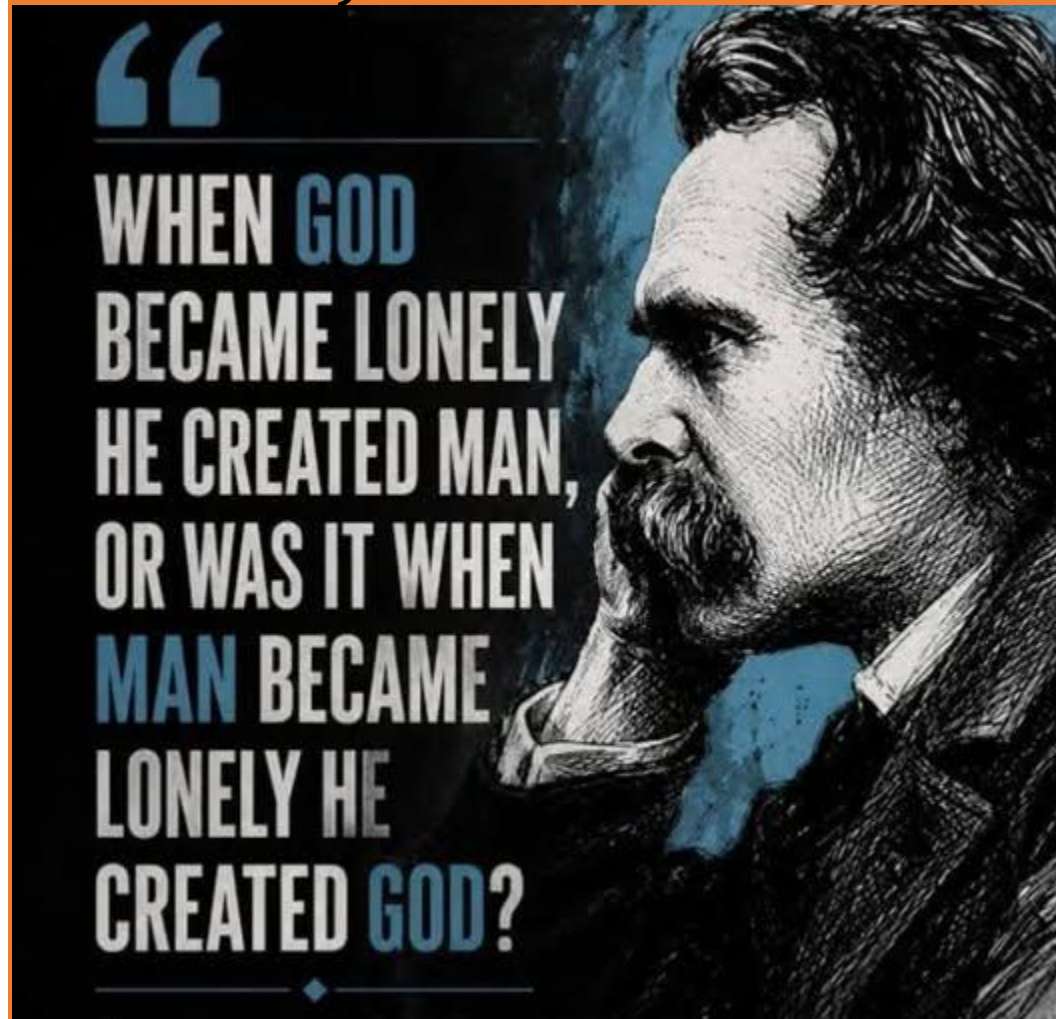
overseeing a legal challenge against Trump's transgender military ban) is demanding an explanation from the Pentagon.

Anyway, I've got one final story for you this week, and it's another one of those that should leave you with a smile on your face. I mean, I'm normally not a fan of our nation's medieval prison system, but I'll make an exception when the people suffering through it are Andrew and Tristan Tate. That's right, the rapist human traffickers that the Trump administration specially negotiated on behalf of are back in prison and — if all goes well — headed to England to face justice for all the women they abused for a living. And from what Andy High-Waters' social media team is posting on his behalf, it's going GREAT. In the sense that he's mostly been in solitary confinement and the guy in the next cell over is a cannibal that screams through the night. And I, for one, love that for him. Kinda sucks for the cannibal though.



The Bar at the End of My Psyche

By James Longo



I was working at the bar at the End of My Psyche when Fredrich Nietzsche sat down. I recognized him by his mustache.

I took some liberties, "Hey Freddie, how are you doing?"

"God is dead, and I'm not doing too good myself."

I didn't have the balls to tell him he was dead already, "What can I get you?" as he perused the menu.

"I'll have a stout and the soup," Nietzsche said.

It only figured, with a mustache like that. He could take half of it home without asking for a doggy bag. I put the order in. I brought him his beer.

I was in one of my moods. "If God is dead, what is left?"

He took a sip of the beer, looked me straight in the eyes, and said, "Nihilism."

"Isn't 'nothing' worse than a God."

"You have to start with believing in 'nothing'. Any belief except 'believing in there is no meaning to life', belongs to someone else, and if you are truly looking for meaning in your existence; you have to face Occam's Razor that 'the simplest answer is the correct one.'"



A couple of Mediterranean types came in and sat in the corner booth. I excused myself and brought them over a couple of menus, told them, "I'd be back in a moment," and came back to Nietzsche with his soup.

"Mr. Nietzsche, I don't mean to be rude. (My wife always says I always say that when I'm going to be rude) Isn't admitting life is a meaningless existence very effing depressing," I said.

"What doesn't kill you will make you stronger," Freddie said with a twinkle in his eye.

"Aren't you the guy who said if you stare into the abyss, the abyss stares back?"

"Yeah, and I meant it. If you stare into the abyss, two things can happen: you can be swallowed up in unending life-shattering depression at the meaninglessness of life, or you can decide to find meaning in your life."

I walked away, shaking my head and headed over to take the two guys in the corner orders. One was dressed in a loincloth, the other in a very elegant tunic. We did have a no-shirt, no-shoes policy, but I doubt the health department even knew we existed. Besides, the guy looked like he had been living on the street (with dogs) or something. I really didn't want to get into it.

Well-dressed said to loincloth as I walked up, "So D, was being an a-hole really worth it?"



"Well, Emp, I am remembered more than that hypocrite Antisthenes whose ideas I took to the next level."

My gears ground for a moment; holy cannoli, it was Diogenes of Sinopes, and the other guy was Marcus Aurelius!

"Well, gentlemen, what can I get you guys?"

They both spoke in unison, "That guy is no gentleman," and they both laughed.

They both ordered the barley and wine soup (*aka Pulte*) and a couple of heated red wines. I looked at Diogenes with an odd look. I expected him to order tap water.

"What with the cynical look?" Diogenes said with a laugh, "The Emp here is paying," he said, waving at Marcus Aurelius.

Diogenes continued, "You know I was too good an asshole. I pointed out every hypocrisy in my society, and now cynicism means skepticism, mistrust, doubt. What it was about was living in sync with nature, rejecting societal conventions, material goods, and living an ascetic, simple life."

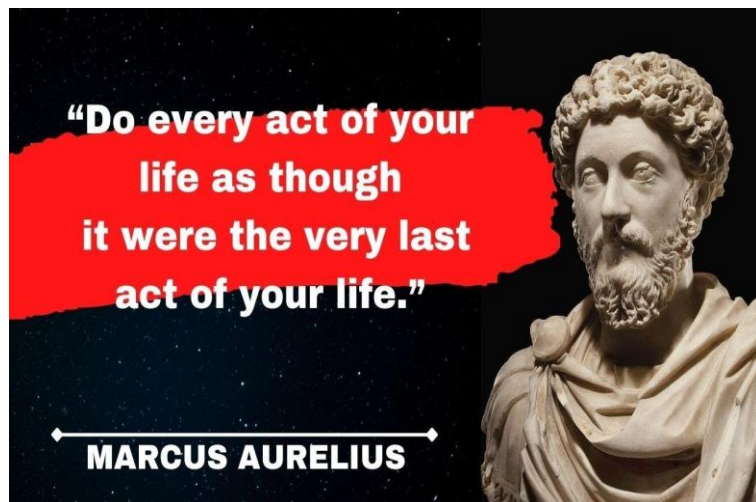
I nodded my head and said, "Things never made me happy."

Marcus chimed in, "You can only control what you can control."

Diogenes said,
"Spoken like a true
Emperor."

I said, "Spoken like a
true Stoic."

Diogenes gave me a
dirty look. I excused
myself, put in their
order, and brought
their wines. I took two steps away and couldn't help myself. I just
stood there eavesdropping.



Diogenes said, "Virtue is the only true good; the only way to reach it is by stripping away all conventions in society and getting down to brass tacks: food, water, minimal housing. The only way to virtue is asceticism; most everything else makes society crap."

"And there it is, and you wonder why everyone thinks of your philosophy as skepticism. If you throw out societal baby with the bath water, all that is left is mistrust of everything."

"Everything except the bare necessities should be mistrusted,"
Diogenes said.

"Look, we agree that virtue is the only true good, but my virtue is different than your virtue. We believe you should be indifferent to

all the trappings, and realize they all could be fleeting, and that we should fulfill our duties and regulate our emotions."

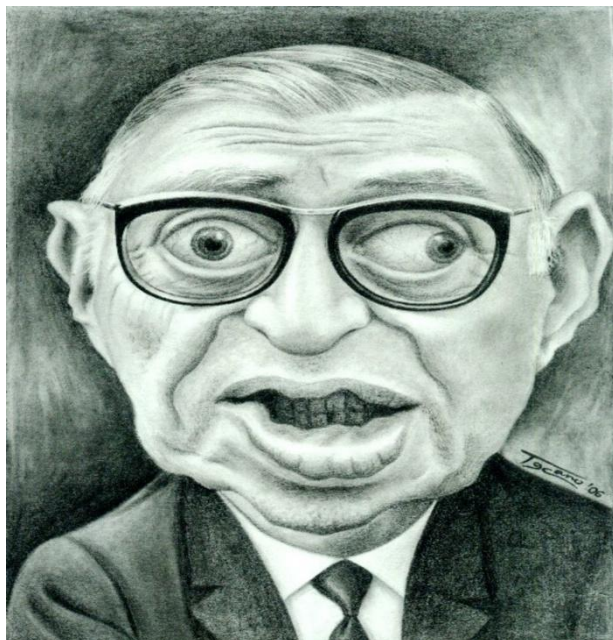
Diogenes said, "My philosophy might be seen as skepticism; yours is known as the philosophy of grin and bear it, or BOAT, *bend over and take it.*"

Marcus caught me standing there taking it all in and said, "What do you think?"

I stared at them for a minute, eyes wide, jaw open. "Can you hold two beliefs at the same time? I am skeptical of society and believe you should remove as many conventions as you can afford; on the other hand, I believe you should hope for the best, prepare for the worst, and be happy with what you get. Don't mean to paraphrase Shakespeare, but Stoicism feels like it is better to love and lose, and Cynicism is to never have loved at all."

They turned to each other and smiled. I went and checked on their Pulte. As I brought back their meals, two Frenchmen walked in, wearing sport jackets and scarves, smoking like a chimney.

One of the Frenchmen was a short, squat cock-eyed chap with



thick glasses, the other a tall, dark, handsome guy who could have passed for Humphrey Bogart if you didn't look at him too closely.

I approached them with menus to get their drink order. I realized the short man with the one eye going off to the right was Jean Paul Sartre, and the other, looking at you, was Albert Camus.

I handed them the menu. I couldn't help myself. "I thought you hated each other."

"We disagreed with each other, but we never hated each other," Sartre said.

"Most of our disagreements were more political than ideological," Camus chimed in.

"I believed the ends justified the means. You can't make an omelet without breaking some eggs," Sartre said.

"He believed it was okay for people to die for a greater good, and I believed if innocents are dying there won't be a greater good."

"Naive," Sartre said under his breath.

"Elitist," Camus said.



I interrupted, "So gentlemen, can I get you something to drink?"

They both ordered red wine from Bourdeau. I came back with their wines and asked, "Are you ready to order?"

Camus ordered the French onion soup, and Sartre the Quiche Lorraine. I put in their order and came back to the two staring and silent. Well, at least three of the four eyes. One of Sartre's eyes was looking someplace else.

I thought I might need to break the impasse: "So gentlemen, how are your philosophies any better than nihilism?"

Sartre spoke up, "Everything in life has an essence except human beings. Man is born without an essence, a purpose. He exists without a purpose, and so he must find meaning for his own existence. We each decide what is meaningful to us, and because we have such freedom, we are responsible for those choices."

"The answer to the question of what is the meaning of life?" I asked.

"You decide," Sartre said, nearly jumping out of his seat.

Camus took a sip of wine, lit another cigarette, and took a puff. "He believes you can create meaning through freedom and personal choice. I believe you will search for that meaning, not find it in this indifferent universe, and still find joy in life and this absurd situation."

I left to get their meals and returned with quiche and soup. Sartre asked me what I thought. Once again, I stood dumbfounded. Here are two of the greatest minds of the mid-twentieth century asking me what I thought.

"Can't I have it both ways? I think every individual choosing what gives meaning to their lives is admirable and reasonable. I love the idea that I get to decide; on the other hand, I realize what gives meaning to my life is probably meaningless in the big scheme of things, yet I still find joy in doing it."

At that moment, another couple came in and took a booth in the back. I excused myself to let them eat in peace and headed to greet my new arrivals.

it's easy to think of Ayn Rand as a terrible person with an evil philosophy, but if you've ever read her books you'd know she was also a terrible writer.



“

*The difference between
genius and stupidity is:
genius has its limits.*



-Alexandre Dumas Jr.

”



Ugh. Puritans.



By James Fell

If you ever wondered why Americans are so damn hung up about sex, these folks had a lot to do with it. Don't wax poetic about the Mayflower traveling to America, because that was the Puritan invasion.

–On This Day in History Shit Went Down: August 5, 1620–

History now refers to the Puritans arriving in America—aka the New World that was just the regular world to millions of Native Americans for multiple millennia, but it's new to us and we're gonna fucking steal it—as “Pilgrims” who began the Plymouth Rock colony. But before they began with the land-stealing, they were being assholes back home in England, although I guess that interpretation depends on your perspective.

In the sixteenth century the English Reformation happened, which was the Church of England saying fuck you and adios to the Roman Catholic Church. The Puritans saw that and said, “Not

fucking good enough” and broke away from the established church even further. They wanted to be even more “pure” in their worship of a book that was compiled and edited by a bunch of dudes in funny hats thirteen centuries previous.

Anyway, the Puritans weren’t real popular in England, so many decided to fuck off to Holland first, and then to America, because who wouldn’t want a bunch of colorless cocks taking over their continent? It was on August 5, 1620, that the Mayflower departed for America. But then, well, fuck. That stupid other boat with them, Speedwell, sprang a leak and they had to turn back almost immediately. They sailed again, another leak, and finally a fuck this and the Mayflower left them behind, departing with 102 passengers and 30 crew. They spent a grueling ten weeks at sea before making landfall at the tip of Cape Cod.



They considered this their “Promised Land,” but the land was all “Fuck you, have some winter.” And half of them died before spring arrived. The local Native peoples taught the colonists food gathering and other survival skills, without which they all would

have gone on to the Great Certainty the next winter. The following fall they celebrated the first harvest with the Native Americans via a massive feast, followed by the men unbuttoning whatever the seventeenth-century version of pants was as they slipped into a turkey coma while the women did all the cleanup muttering motherfucker motherfucker motherfucker . . .

As for the sex stuff, the Puritans loved and encouraged it, so long as it was within the confines of a heterosexual marriage. As colonization/genocide expanded, the Puritans were extremely influential on American culture and values, which is why so many see monogamous heterosexual intercourse solely between married couples as the only right and proper way to bump uglies. You've heard of that icky purity culture and purity balls and purity rings bullshit? The Puritan influence on people's sex lives still dominates much of American society.

NOTE: This piece was researched and written by a human, not some bullshit "ai" plagiarism software.

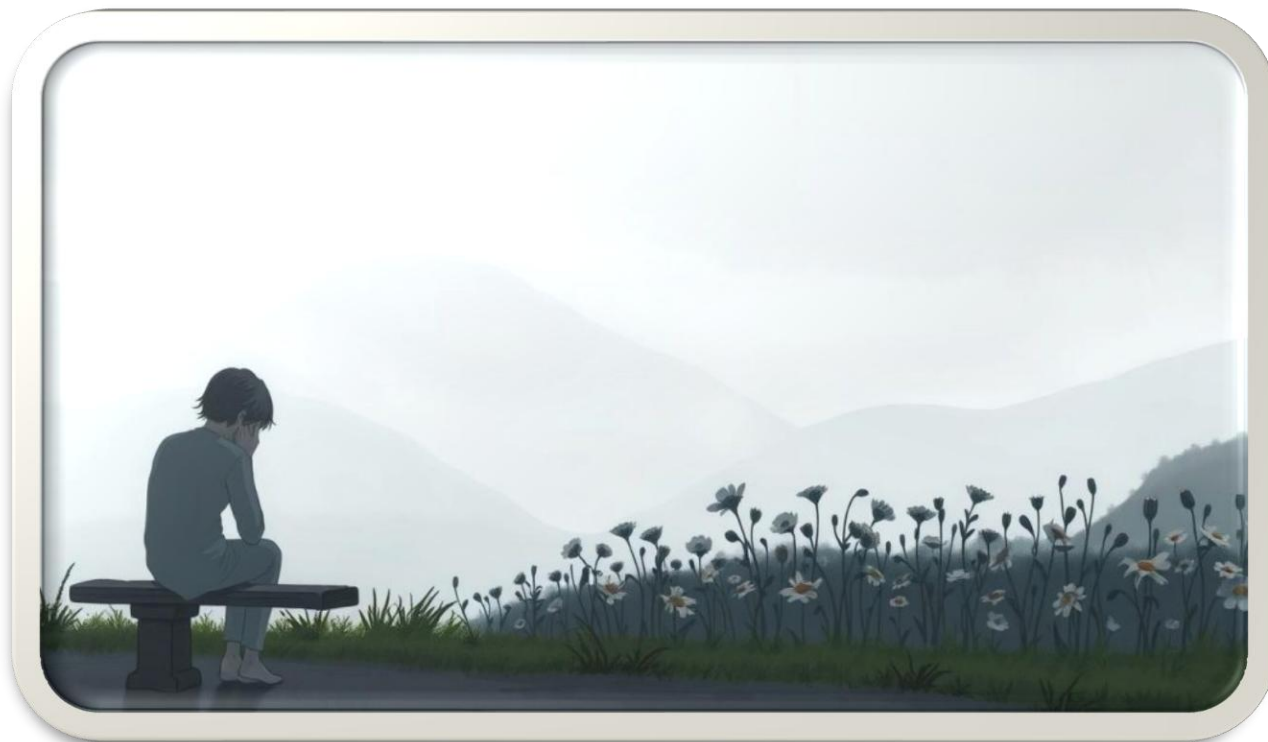
Those who cannot remember the past need a history teacher who says "fuck" a lot. Get both volumes of ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY SH!T WENT DOWN at JamesFell.com/books.



THE WAY WE WERE



A Year in Passing



by Ed Zillioux

No one can deny that losing one's spouse is a traumatic experience. Perhaps less so for an atheist who can, perhaps, more easily objectivize the event as the natural ending of another life, the ending of suffering, the moving on for the partners still awaiting that finality, into a new perhaps even exciting phase of his or her life.

For me, I passed that one year milestone on 16 June 2018, one year past my wife, Ivy's death. I'm not sure why I am writing this. perhaps (there's that word again) it is because I know that roughly 50 percent of us will experience the death of a spouse in our lifetime and there might be some value in hearing how another experiences the event and its aftermath ... or copes with it. Or perhaps, it's more personal. After one year I could still hear

my name being called out to an empty house, "Ed!" yet knowing that I am heard nothing other than the detritus of my consciousness.

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



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

Although I distributed copies of her living will to every nursing station and to each of her doctors, even when she could no longer speak, they came to me to ask if they could proceed with another life extending procedure!

In anger I'd reply, "damn it, don't ask me, ask her. She has made clear her wishes in her living will. have you even read it?!?"

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

"This is something that you must expect."

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

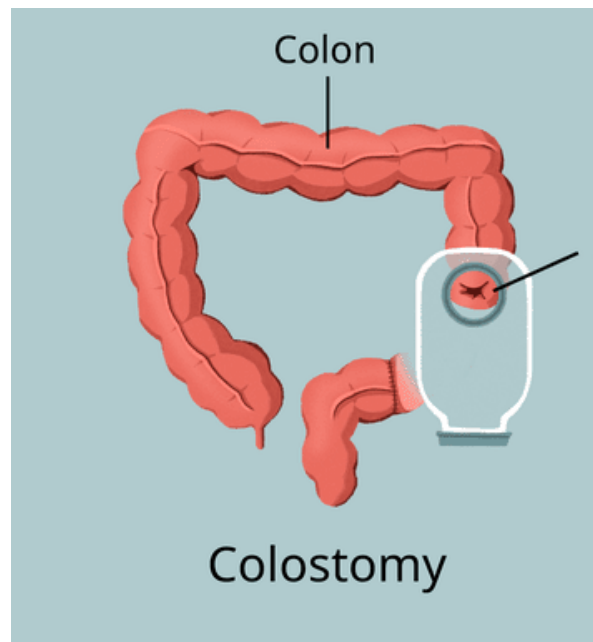
The worst time came next to her last hospitalization. It was shortly before they fitted her up with a colostomy bag. This was always a horror to her, and in the past she fought it vociferously when it was suggested as a temporary procedure to allow time for her cancer to heal. "No bag, no way!" Her oncologist, knowing her revulsion at the idea, said. "No, you don't have to." he was her hero that day.

But there came the day there was no other option. She looked at me and asked plaintively, "Do I have to?"

I replied, "Yes, you have to." I felt like the world's biggest asshole – a hero no more. Even today, I hesitate before describing this ultimate affront to her dignity. She would not have wanted anyone to know. But she is gone and can't be hurt anymore.

A few days later, after I had been a daily visitor for over 5 months of four successive hospitalizations interspersed with two brief stays in nursing facilities, she looked at me and said, "Kiss me Ed. On the mouth."

A simple request that I immediately responded to. But I was struck by how uncharacteristic this simple intimacy had become. Something was bothering her and I didn't know what it was.



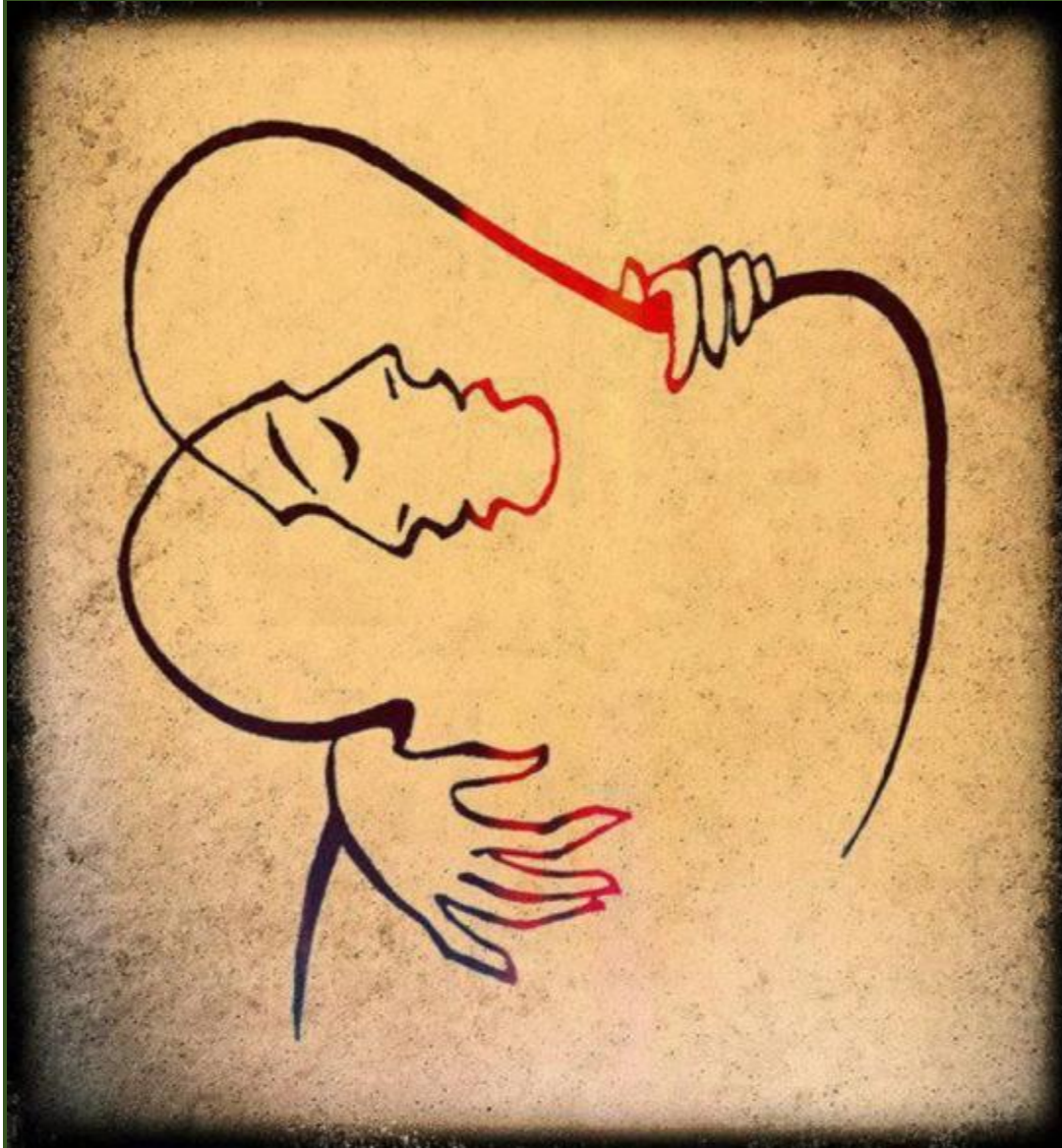
On what was to be her last full day of cognizance, my daughters came to visit her. I was not present. I was told they had a good visit. But I was not told everything. I was not told until long after Ivy's death that she had reached out to my eldest daughter on that last day and asked, "Do you think your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

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

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



Sometimes Death Comes too Goddamned Fast



Artwork – Josef Kunstmann – The Embrace, 1949

A Recollection Story by Virgil Thorp

What should I do? I am in shock. Nothing is real. The woman I lived with for more than fifty years was in a coma. She had a tube down her throat. She could not breathe on her own.

I had trusted science to fix her; I had trusted doctors who would say with great big grins, "Of course, she, she's responding



nicely". Each day I visited, I expected a progression to health. Something positive. For her to wake up and weakly smile, saying, "I love you. I am sorry I am sick. Can you forgive me?" then, a tilt of the head and a Marlena Dietrick request, "Give me a kiss."

But nothing positive was happening. No improvement. Every day, lungs still full of fluid. Filling as fast as they were sucking

it out. I saw the X-ray. I got worried. No one would tell me why she wasn't getting better. I kept saying to myself, "C'mon medicine. Do your stuff! Don't you know this woman is very important to me? I want more years, more time ... I want more kisses."

Then came the day the doctor told me the news I did not want to hear. "We can keep her alive artificially. Would you want to do that?"

My mind heard, "she will be a vegetable for the rest of her natural life." It was one of those things lovers often share with each other. "If I am in a state of distress and the only alternatives are live artificially ... or let me go ... I beg you to then be merciful, let me go with what little dignity I will have left. But know this, I will love you until the end of your time."

I could hardly think. It was the most terrible thing I had ever heard except when I was 16 and my father told me my mother's condition was terminal, her uterine cancer had spread, and she was dying. It was only a matter of time.

I remember stepping into a large walk-in freezer that terrible day at our grocery store and punching out a case of frozen vegetables. There were peas and carrots all over the floor when I was done. The news had wrecked me. I couldn't cool-off even though the freezer was kept at minus 10 degrees. I told my dad that I had to leave. I couldn't stay there at the store. I think he just shut his office door and cried for his wife, cried for his son, cried for himself. He was devastated too. "Do what you have to do," he said. But nothing more could be done.

Praying did not help. Praying did not stop time. Time continued on, time was running out. Most of that day was lost in disbelief and other emotional fury. The one thing I do remember was traveling down highway 71 in the dark at over 100 miles an hour before the cop stopped me a little after midnight. That day was nearly my last. I wanted to hit someone, something. I didn't care if I lived or died myself. I wanted to get into my car and crash it into a bridge or a tree. I wanted to do that the day the doctor told me about Lucy, too. "Do you want us to disconnect her?" He could have just said, "do you want to see her die?"

"Why are you going so fast?" the cop said, more like an accusation than a question. He had me step over to his squad car. "Well," he said. "Why?"

"I just found out my mother is going to die from cancer." I looked at him and tried to be belligerent. But the pain washed over me at that moment and I simply collapsed in grief from the confrontation of the reality. I vaguely remember the cop holding me, petting me. After all these years, I think he said he had lost his mother too. He

let me go. He understood. I keep questioning myself. How did I get here? Why did this happen? Why her? Why me? Why my mother? Why my wife? Worst of all, why us?

Even now, sometimes I wish I was the one who died. I was supposed to. I was the one who had the life insurance policy to take care of final expenses. Sometimes I do feel like I want to die. If it weren't for my cats, I think I just would go to bed, pull the covers over my head and tell the world that you cannot find me. Open a vein and bleed out. Then I would hold my breath,

Diseases eradicated or decimated by science:



1. Chicken Pox
2. Diphtheria
3. Measles
4. Pertussis
5. Pneumococcal Disease
6. Polio
7. Tetanus
8. Typhoid Fever
9. Yellow Fever
10. Smallpox

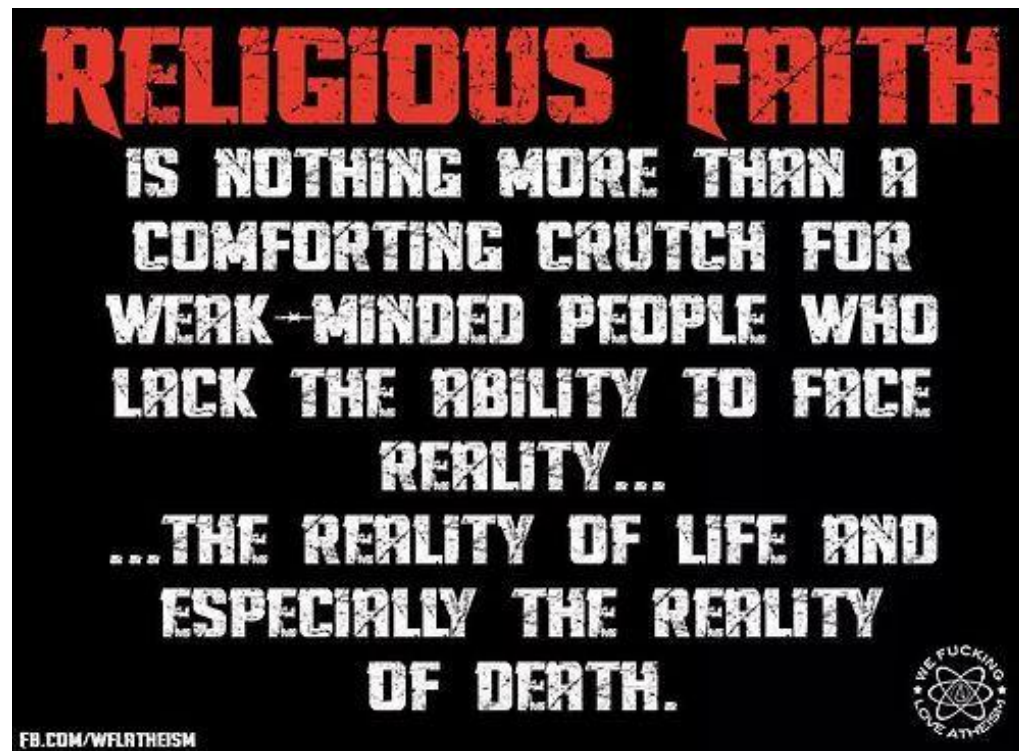
Diseases eradicated or decimated by prayer:



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

turn blue and delightfully pass into another dimension, into oblivion. But that's not how it works. It is not that easy. Lucy was in a condition I told her I never wanted to see her in. Laying in the bed, pitifully helpless, lungs full of fluid, blocking the precious air. A sensation similar to drowning. I had been there once, 27 years before. Tobacco had gotten to me.

It was the day I was able to scare the shit out of her by telling her that we had to give up our nicotine habits. Between then and



the day she picked me up from the hospital, she puffed every cigarette in the house. I couldn't blame her. But breathing was a lot nicer

feeling. And we did it. No more cigarettes. Maybe we did get more time together because of that. No, I am certain we did. But I can't help but miss her so much. And then the thing that I had feared happened. It was her turn in ICU.

There she was, in deep sedation. There were IV trees surrounding her bed, pumping antibiotics and sedative drugs into her body. She was intubated. She had a broken arm; it was still in the sling. Her other arm was restrained so she wouldn't attempt to pull out the breathing tube.

"Mr. Thorp," the doctor said in his most serious tone, "your wife is very, very sick. We did a bronchial (I don't know what the technical term he used was) and her lung was abscessed, full of pus. We sucked it out. There is also a mass behind it. During the procedure, her vitals fell off and we were forced to intubate her. She was unable to breathe on her own. There is also necrosis of lung tissue."

"Fuck." Was all I could say. I knew what necrosis meant.

"Yes," the doctor replied with a stony face. "Fuck."

When someone you deeply love is going to die; you don't believe you heard it at first. *Repeat that, please.* The second time you hear it, it is even worse. "The breathing tube is all that is keeping her alive." The doctor said. It is the finality that overwhelms. The epitome of helplessness. You want to scream. "What the fuck do you mean? Do something. Try anything. I can't live without her." In my head I can almost see those words projected on a wall and melt away. Then you realize there is nothing to be done except make a decision. The final decision. Things were moving too damned fast.

That last day was my worst. I got to the hospital and checked in. There was no problem at the visitor's desk and Debra the clerk, gave me another pass. I thought all was well considering. I hoped for a couple more days. Lucy was scheduled to be transferred to hospice that morning. I wanted to be there when she was moved. I resolved to stay with her until our journey together ended.

When I got to the ICU something was wrong. Her room was empty. Her bed had clean sheets on it. I felt like I had been punched in the face. I almost screamed. "Where's my wife?" The nurse asked me if I was sure of the room number. Of whom I wanted to see. "Has Lucy Thorp been moved to hospice?"

"Why don't you go to the waiting room and I will find out."

I knew that wasn't good. As the head nurse was breaking the news to me, I went into a trance-like state. I was so angry with myself. How could I have let her die alone?

"Her body was ready to go," the nurse said, it was a hollow attempt to ease my pain ... my guilt.

And then, in my trance, almost like an echo, I could actually feel Lucy's voice, "I love you, goddamn it."

I truly believe that I will always hear her tell me that and when I do, I will call out to her. "I love you too, goddamn it.'

Death is the inevitable thing we all face. It usually comes slowly, day by day, but sometimes it comes too goddamn fast.



POETRY



Hey you!!!

by Elizabeth M. Murad

Hey you!

open your ears,

your arms,

your mind,

your heart,

cause here I come!!!

I am sleeping with gladness

and dancing along with eagerness;



I'm ignoring all the
obstacles between us;

full of joy

and life

and plans

Open to me!

then when I'm there

close around me,

join me,

and together

We can run towards
tomorrow

COMEDY CORNER

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

AMERICA 2026: GREATNESS LIKE NOBODY'S EVER SEEN BEFORE!

THAT EXPLOSIVE DIARRHEA OUTBREAK

WOW, SOMEBODY SHOULD REALLY DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT! I GUESS.

I'LL SEE IF GROK HAS ANY IDEAS!

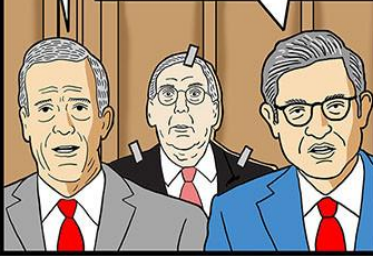
MAYBE IF WE JUST IGNORE THE WHOLE THING, IT WILL GO AWAY!



THE MYSTERIOUS CASE OF THE VANISHING SENATOR

SENATOR MCCONNELL HAS BEEN SENT TO A FARM UPSTATE, WHERE HE CAN RUN FREELY THROUGH EXPANSIVE, ROLLING MEADOWS!

IN THE MEANTIME, WE'VE PREPARED THIS LIFELIKE CARDBOARD CUTOUT TO STAND IN FOR HIM!



SCHRÖDINGER'S WAR WITH IRAN

I DON'T UNDERSTAND, PROFESSOR-- IS THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ **OPEN** OR **CLOSED**?

BOTH, YOU FOOL! THE STRAIT IS IN A QUANTUM SUPERPOSITION, SIMULTANEOUSLY **OPEN AND CLOSED**--UNTIL THE PRESIDENT **POSTS** AGAIN!



THE RITE OF SUCCESSION

I, LINDSEY GRAHAM'S SISTER, SWEAR TO FAITHFULLY OBEY AND DEFEND DONALD TRUMP NO MATTER WHAT-- JUST LIKE MY **BROTHER**!

WELCOME TO THE UNITED STATES SENATE, SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM'S SISTER!



ELECTION INTEGRITY IS OUR TOP PRIORITY

LOOK, IT'S **SIMPLE**! DUMOCRATS **DIDN'T** CHEAT WHEN THEY WERE IN CHARGE AND **I** WON--BUT THEY **DID** CHEAT WHEN **I** WAS IN CHARGE AND SUPPOSEDLY **LOST**!

TRY TO KEEP UP, TINY BRAINS!



THE WAR AT HOME

AS A **TRUE** AMERICAN PATRIOT, I AM **PROUD** TO SERVE IN THE PRESIDENT'S ROVING PARAMILITARY EXECUTION SQUADS!

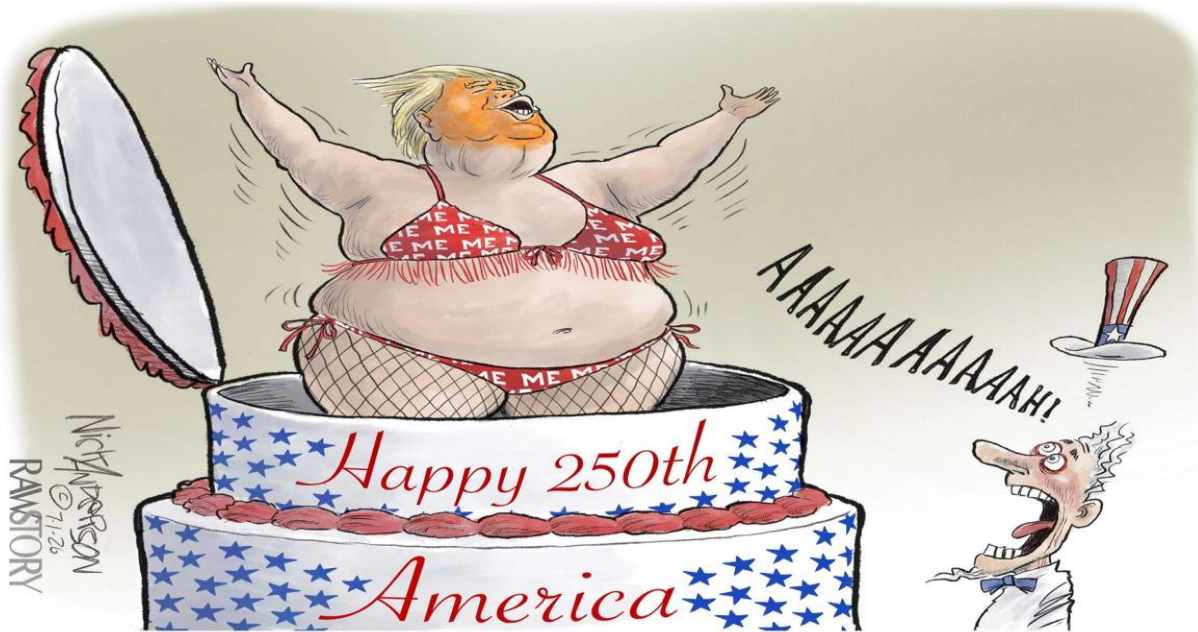
WE'LL RESTORE LAW AND ORDER TO THIS COUNTRY IF WE HAVE TO BURN THE PLACE DOWN IN A BRUTAL ORGY OF LAWLESS **VIOLENCE**!

GOD BLESS THE U.S.A.!



NEXT: GREATER GREATNESS THAN YOU EVER IMAGINED **POSSIBLE**!

Tom ToMoRroW © 2026-07-20 ... JOIN SPARKY'S LIST: thismodernworld.com/subscriptions



"OF THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE"
 "HOME OF THE FREE BECAUSE OF THE BRAVE"
 "FREEDOM IS NOT FREE"
 ALL THE SLOGANS REPEAT EVERY YEAR.
 AND AROUND THIS TIME, IT'S ALL WE HEAR.
 BUT SOMEHOW, WE JUST TURN OUR EAR
 THE OTHER WAY...ON THIS DAY.
 IT'S HOT DOGS AND GAMES AND FLYING KITES.
 AND BREAKING OUT INTO USELESS FIGHTS.
 FORGETTING WHO FOUGHT TO SECURE OUR RIGHTS.
 TO FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY.

The world's oldest standing representative democracy is the Iroquois in the Americas developed between 1142 and 1660.

According to some historians; the longest sustaining democracy was 300 years in Ancient Athens.

America now falls far short by both of those, and we wonder if we can make it.
 While we see our beloved monuments bulldozed, our long-cherished structures rebranded, giving
 way to cheap imitations, apathy rules.
 We see incompetent leaders rush us into wars with no exit strategy; Then choose appointees for
 loyalty to a man instead of merit.
 We see greed as the primary trait of the "new" America.
 We see our greatest deficit is caused by unwanted wars. It is not just America.
 The whole world appears to be run on the cost of arms development.

Yet we let administrations slash benefits and support for our veterans.
And what do we do about it except complain?
Can we hope for democracy's return?

If we could only talk to our neighbor as a friend and not let the hate and greed that flows down like hot lava from the top; perhaps democracy could live for another 250 years.

At 250, can we please remember what the slogans say?

"HOME OF THE FREE BECAUSE OF THE BRAVE"

"FREEDOM IS NOT FREE"

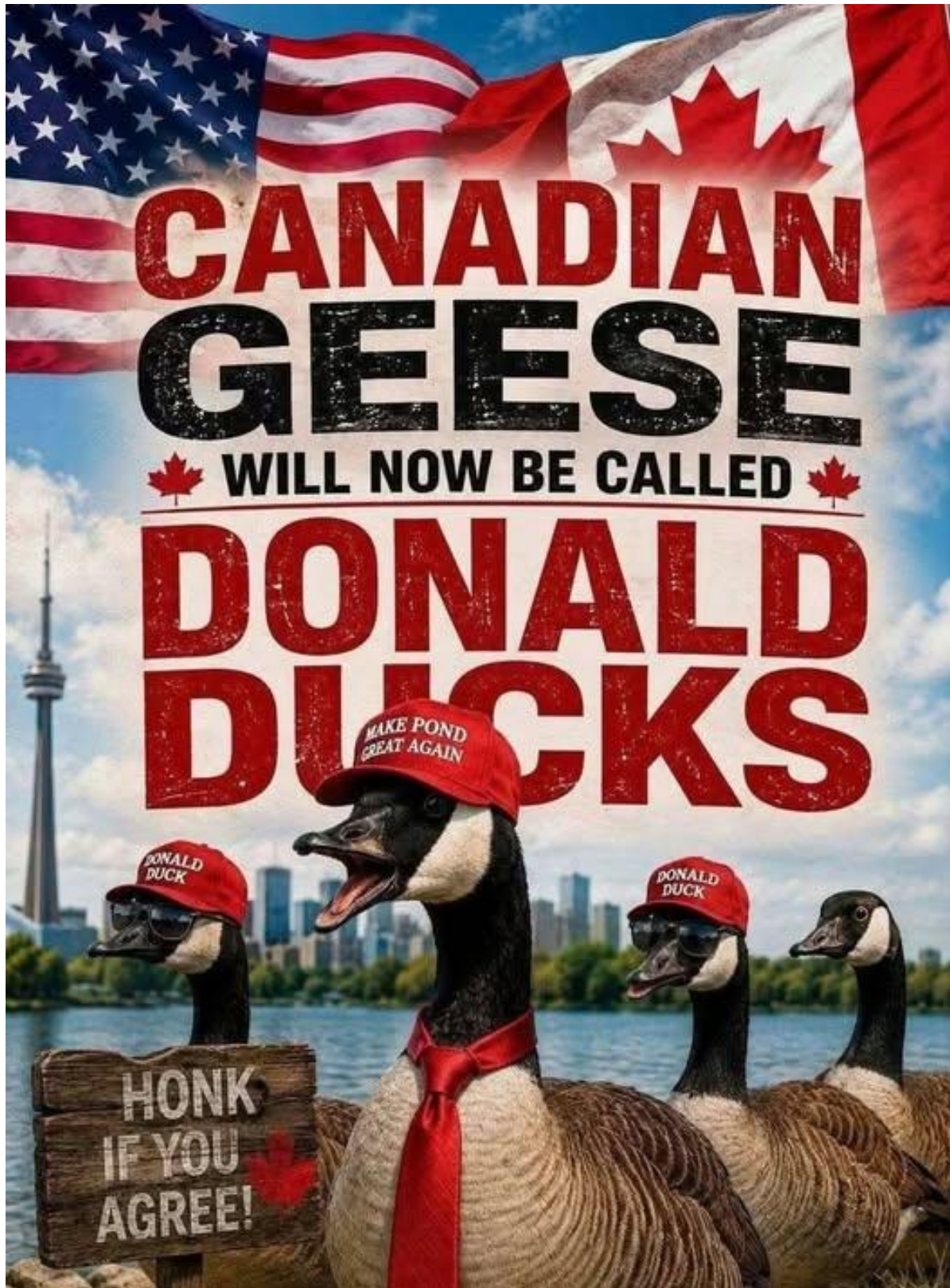
"OF THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE"

We plead for Democracy - not autocracy.

On this birthday for our country; let us hope that sounder minds and better angels can save our democracy from the greed and hatred that flows down on us like hot lava.



Provided by Gale Baker



Really, Really?

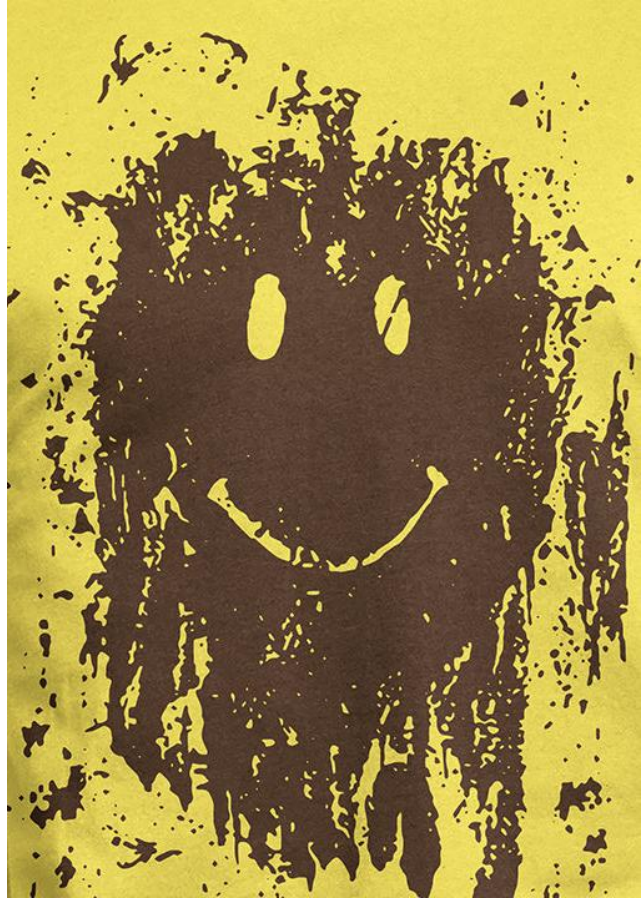
By James Longo

*Life is made up of moments.
A good life is made up of more
good moments than bad.” – Rabbi
Harold Kushner.*

*“Nothing bad ever happens; it is all
just material.” – Deck Deckert*

“Shit happens.” – Winston Groom

“It’s not what happens; it is how you react to it that matters.” – Epictetus.



Yes, I have flies in the ointment of my life, but they are few and easily dealt with so far. When the fly lands in my ointment, my first words are really, really, you can't make this stuff up.

I had just pulled into a parking place about to walk into work. I took my sunglasses off, and one of my hearing aids fell off. It falls in a hole the size of a quarter that only appears when the parking brake is engaged. Really, really, you can't make this stuff up.

I looked in the hole and couldn't see it. I gave up and went to work, where I tried everyone's patience, including my own, for nine hours being half deaf. At work, I was Googling how to take

the console apart. I drove home after my shift and decided to take another look at it.

I broke out a flashlight and looked at it again. I realized the hole is part of a rubber piece and the rubber piece moves. I moved the rubber piece aside, and *voila*, there sat my hearing aid.

I held the light, and Barb took a dull pair of scissors and pulled it out.



The next day I go for my daily bicycle ride early. I came home just after Barb is leaving for work. I caught her on the street. Wished her well.

"Honey, I don't mean to be short, but I really need to crap," I peddled away from her with butt-cheeks *vice-gripped* clenched. I get home and find ... Barb had locked me out.

Really, really, you can't make this shit up. Well, doesn't this give new meaning to the word *shit-fit*? I called her; she opened the garage door via an app. Technology what a wonderful thing.

And yes, I made it to the porcelain. Crisis averted.

The next night we met for our nightly hike. I pulled all the way up to the curbstone in the parking lot. We go for our hike. When pulling back from the curb stone. The undercarriage guard under the car caught on the curbing and pulled out, where it looked like a cow guard on one of those old locomotives.

Really, really, who knew this could even happen? First thought was to take it off, then Barb suggested I drive forward, and it might go back to where it belongs. It does, but it drags. So, I drag it the ten miles home. The next day we put a couple of nuts and bolts to hold it in place, but no going all the way up to the curbstone for me anymore.

The next day I have an appointment for a blood test in Jupiter. I go to *Quest Diagnostics*. I arrive fifteen minutes early and can't sign in for another five minutes. I wait and wait. Minutes tick off. I finally sign in. But, My name doesn't show up on the board. I finally get someone's attention.

Turns out I made my appointment at *the other* Quest office in Jupiter. Who knew there were two offices in Jupiter? I rush down the street. I arrive sixteen minutes late.



Talk to another attendant. "I'm sorry we only hold an appointment for *fifteen minutes*."

"*Really, really*, you have to be shitting me." I am tempted to leave a present on their doorstep, but I had already taken care of

that bodily function. I went home and made another appointment and then, went for my daily ride.



I am out for my daily ride. I see some mangoes that have fallen off a tree in the neighborhood I am bicycling through. The mangos lay right by the street. I dropped my bike. I selected eight mangos, filling the back pocket of my bicycle shirt. As I pedal away, I realize my right shifter won't go up but only goes down.

Really, really karma sucks.

I continue on my ride with a now three-speed bike, only using the front

rungs. In my infinite wisdom, I decide that if I put the bike in the shop, I can have it back quicker. I walk home in ninety-degree heat.

I get a call from the bike shop an hour later. "We can't fix your bike because we can't buy the correct shifter. You'd have to buy the shifter; we can't get it from our sources. But if we could get the shifter, we couldn't fix your bike unless we replaced both derailleurs and your chain."

All I want is the ability to shift. So, I go collect my bike. "That will be twenty-five dollars."

I pay them and think. *Really, really*, thank you for charging me to tell me you can't help me. I am growling. Remind me not to do business with you again.

I went back home, got one of Barb's bike running. I am riding that now. It's a little smaller but also a little quicker. I need to fix one of the brakes. Who needs an extra brake anyway.

On the whole, I have it good. The flies keep showing up around the ointment of my life, and I keep swatting them away, and yes, nothing bad ever happens; it is all just material.

Or maybe Epictetus had it right. "It's not what happens; it's how you react to it."

But *really, really*, you can't make this stuff up.



PERSUADING FONDA

Herman & Fonda dip their toes into an alternate lifestyle



By Herman & Fonda Nietzsche

There's a delightful image I recall from our early swinging days when we first introduced ourselves to what was called; the swinging lifestyle. Or, a more vulgarly chauvinistic term, *wife swapping*.

In early 1977 we attended a hedonistic swinging social in one of the suburban hotels. Couples – married or not – would rent rooms on an exclusive floor and gather in a large meeting room for flirting, drinking and dancing to a live band. After the dance concluded, the guests would adjourn to their rooms to entertain or walk through the hall looking for an orgy to join. It was practical adultery, technically a sin. But how could such mutual consensuality be called a sin?

**Turning your
naughty fantasies
into reality
is one of the
most exciting
things you
can do together
as a couple.**

KINKYQUOTES.COM

Impenitent or not, we, of course, Fonda and I, were wide-eyed and scared shitless. What should we expect? Would we immediately be labeled as a scarlet woman and a libertine man? Have a replica of Hester Prynne's red capital "A" for adulterer sown on all our clothes? Become infected with a disfiguring social disease? Limp around at our jobs the

following Monday with love scratches, bite marks and hickeys with co-workers asking us embarrassing questions about what the hell we did last weekend? Would the world end and the triune god burst into this pit of degradation and send us all to hell?

Nope, not for us. Like the kid who has been told not to touch the hot skillet, our curiosities had to be assuaged, and we ignored caution and jumped right into the fire.

I recall this incident with pleasure because Fonda had issued a firm warning of her own that this step in our marriage was my idea and if she didn't like it, I would spend a lot of dead time in husband purgatory. However, if she did like it, too bad for me if I felt uncomfortable seeing her intimately aroused by another man. The vow of exclusivity had been amended. A permanent hall pass had been issued. She let me know she'd be doing it again. And

often. The goose would be turned loose! In other words, be careful what you wish for, buddy. Oh by Jove yes, I did wish for it!

Apparently, she was concerned, afraid of jealousy and a loss of trust. She was about to learn a thing or two about the nuances of my libido. And, hopefully, hers too. But, of course, I was the instigator. We had reached that magical seven-year-itch thing. Was it because we had become so familiar with each other that there was an urge to sample outside our relationship? Or was it something else? Perhaps it was that my libido had experienced such omnisexual proclivities – i.e. the joys of tantalizingly sweet group sex – before we had met and tied a knot ... and I yearned to take my sweetheart into such delicious, delightful, decadent perversions with me. I had convinced her to go with me this far, but I felt she needed further persuasion.



We dressed differently for that evening; not like the mundane rut we had evolved into. We wanted to look sharp and sexy. We selected clothes we seldom wore. Lacey see-thru panties for Fonda and a Leopard print speedo for me were the underwear we chose. We were young and slim then. Fonda looked yummy. High heels, a snug mid-thigh miniskirt and an elegant silky shirtwaist blouse with a slight décolletage with two buttons open; we looked like we did when we'd dressed up for a date. Admiring ourselves before a mirror, we cleaned up pretty well. We were ready for a new adventure!

All went well when we entered the dance. No one was crude enough to try to cop-an-unwanted-feel on Fonda's body or take a

bite out of us. With only a few minor gulps of inhibition, we soon felt like we were comfortable enough to accept invitations to dance or to invite others to dance with us – although, the latter seemed far-fetched at that moment. We were still dealing with a mild case of *sheepish bashfulitis*. Some dancers were newbies like us, not sure how to act and swayed stiffly, like they were at a jr. prom and had left room between them for the holy ghost. Others – regular card-carrying members – were damned near screwing on the floor.

We thought all was pretty cool although Fonda was taken aback by a blowjob that was being performed under the table behind ours. She gave me a sharp elbow to the ribs.



"My god," Fonda said *sotto voce* while gawking at the pair with unbelieving eyes. "she's sucking his dick!" Nobody else cared, really.

"He looks happy, I think she knows what she's doing," was my jaded response.

"Wow!" Fonda exclaimed.

"She took it all." I think she was impressed with the lady's deep throat technique. And also wondering to herself how a person could be so slutty ... yet, in a pretty way.

Fonda attracted lots of masculine attention. She was asked to dance often. And she did. One of the male swingers I saw dancing with her that evening looked eerily familiar to me. I knew him from somewhere. They danced to a fast song and stayed on the floor for a slow one. He was dancing pretty close to her, and she was smiling at him, not pushing him back. They were belly to belly! No room for the holy ghost was left between them. I saw Fonda move her hand on top of his when he tried to pat her on her ass. She didn't move it though. She just kept his hand on a

rounded buttock. Watching that was incendiary! I felt a twitch in the pit of my stomach. Was I jealous? Was I turned on? Yes, to both!

Fuck, I breathed. Will she, or won't she? I asked her when she returned to our table if she was enjoying herself. "Oh, yes, I haven't danced this much in years." She smiled as she said it. "Frankie is a good dancer. We talked some, too."

"Frankie?" And then it hit me. I remembered where I knew him from. He and I went to Lutheran grade school together. It was so weird! "I know him from 20 years ago, we were in 2nd grade!" I took Fonda's hand and got back up on the dance floor. Frankie was dancing with his wife, Wanda. We two-stepped over to them.

"You look very familiar to me; do we know each other?" I asked as an introduction. I decided to blow his mind. "In 1955 did you go to the Lutheran school on 75th and Holmes ..."

Frankie's knees nearly buckled. Wanda struggled to hold him up. I *HAD* freaked him out at that reference. "No, no, no," he responded as I described the church, the tortured S&M Jesus' statue on the cross over the church's entrance. I recalled a certain situation we had shared as second graders. I named names, who did what to whom ... and where. Little things that only someone would know if they had been there. He said "no", not so much as a denial but more like an admission of not believing he had encountered someone from the past.



The question: "What if I see someone I know?" is one of the biggest dreads a person can have of attending such an event. That is, it is probably a greater truth to say, "I won't believe who

I will see!” (Just for the record, such a thing happens more frequently than not. For instance, I have heard on occasion, “Mom, dad? What are you doing here!!!!” I mean, what do you do when it was mom and dad who were hosting the event.) Such awkward greetings also happen in many gay bars and retail liquor stores, especially if you are a thirsty, cross-fit, Southern Baptist.

As Frankie calmed down and stopped hyperventilating, I did notice my new old friend was giving Fonda more appraising looks as he had when they danced. Although her ensemble was attractive; I will repeat: high heels, mid-thigh miniskirt, elegant



silky blouse with two buttons open; discreet compared to most of the other ladies. Fonda was also blessed with long attractive legs, an hour-glass figure and a lovely OMG set of boobs. Her pretty face promised joy and fun. She got his attention, big time. I suspected he was imagining how the rest of her would look without clothes.

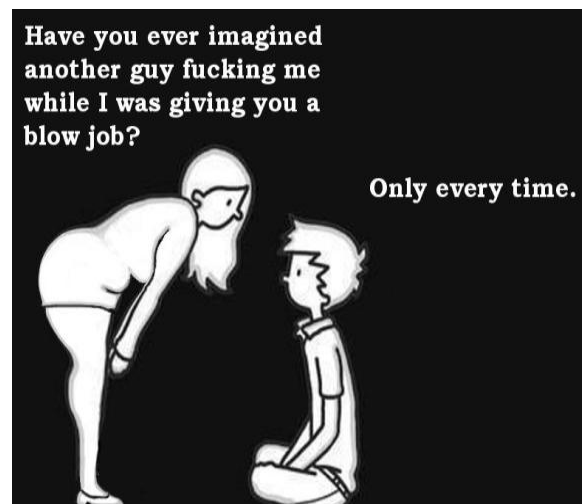
Let's be real. Fonda was *HOT!* I took pride that she inspired such lustful eyeballing. I hope she wasn't disappointed that I didn't resent him enjoying how tasty she looked. I got the feeling her ego secretly appreciated being admired and even being leered at. For Fonda's benefit, Frankie was a cute kid back then and now, he was tall and cutely handsome. Just her type.

Frankie and Wanda had been in the lifestyle for three years. Their marriage was very open. After the dance, Wanda hooked up with other friends and went on to tour the party rooms, looking for a warm, writhing pile of swingers to quiver into. It wasn't long before Frankie showed up at our door – I later found out, with Wanda's encouragement – to hopefully convince us, as a couple,

to enjoy a more adventurous lifestyle. He was to be our guide. I know he hoped to enjoy Fonda and I was pretty sure she was considering returning the favor. How freely modern can you get?

It all started as a comfortable discussion. Fonda and I sat very primly in the chairs and my old schoolmate sat on the luggage settee with the little lamp table we set our drinks on, between us ... and the bed. Without the noise of the band, we could talk normally. It wasn't intimidating, it was nice. We relaxed.

Frankie answered a lot of our questions, and nothing lasciviously overt was happening at that point. He had patience. He was a perfect gentleman. He shared with us what he and his wife enjoyed about the lifestyle. He recounted how they got started and some humorously awkward situations they had delighted in when they were newbies. We laughed at most of them. He did not say something morbidly crass like; "Mind if I take my pants off?" That would have shattered the erotic spell that was building between the three of us.



We were curious, we were still apprehensive, but not so much as we had been. An electric feeling of raw edginess began shooting jolting bolts of excitement through our bodies. If I was feeling it, I knew Fonda could feel it, too. Despite that, no one looked at or gestured towards the bed. We maintained our swinging virginity. I did notice Fonda's blouse was now three buttons open. Her beckoning cleavage resembled a soft, welcoming playground!

Unfortunately, (or fortunately, it all depends on your particular point of view) we had (he or me) neglected to shut the door completely leaving the entrance to our room open an inch or so.

The protocol of those hotel social days was that if a door was open – even that tiny inch – it was a party room; you were welcome to come in. You were welcome to politely watch. If you received a welcoming nod or grunt, you were welcome to get nekkid and jump into the quivering, writhing pile. Before we knew it, several couples had peeked in, spied the empty bed going to waste, and proceeded to invite themselves into our room. They sat on the bed but did not seem interested in the topic. It was as if they had heard it all before ... and, probably, they had.

Excitedly horny and growing bored with the newbie talk we were having with my schoolmate, they began stripping each other down and stimulating each other – raw, unbridled fornication – on our bed without waiting for a welcoming nod or grunt. It was like they said with salacious honor, *"enough with the procrastinating chit-chat, here's some hands-on OJT! This is how you do it! Watch carefully and learn, newbies."* You had to admire the sexually liberated chutzpah they had! Was it simple hubris? Or, was it our own first humorously awkward sexual swinging situation?

The amorous couples on the bed didn't seem to mind us or the fact that the lights were on! We couldn't believe an orgy was taking place in our room, right in front of us. We tried not to, but couldn't help but stare, mouths open. There are those who would call their actions rude but on the other hand, someone has to get the party started! Live sex, right here in our laps.

These people were married ... just not to each other. They unequivocally decided to piss on society's restrictive norms. Shirts, bras, shoes and panties fell like snowflakes, littering the room. Naked flesh – male, female, hard cocks and wet pussies – were on display everywhere!

One bold, naked lady pushed her equally naked partner down on the bed and guided his erection into her vagina and proceeded to copulate with him reverse cowgirl style. She was facing us. She

arched her back in her squishy pleasure. The friction of his hefty organ made her grunt and groan. Could we ever do something salacious like that? He squeezed at her clinching ass cheeks. It posed a picture like a living sculpture that renown renaissance artist, Gian Lorenzo Bernini would be proud of. It was an orgy straight out of Fellini's *Satyricon*! How could she do that with all these people around?

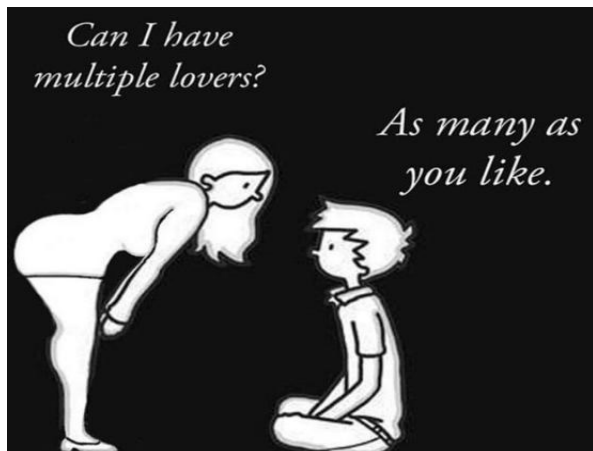
Our eyes widened but were not shut. This is what had charged our curiosity, wasn't it? This is what we had come for, wasn't it? Oh hell, they were screwing like bandits, and I saluted them for it.

We were in the middle of it now. The rowdy lady didn't seem to be aware of or care about having an audience. Did she enjoy showing off her sexuality? Yes, she did. She cupped



her breasts while looking at us in the eyes and impishly licked at her nipples! She teased our newbie-ness. It was like blowing us a challenging kiss; *Take that, newbies! This can be you! Get naked if you dare!* I believe at that moment Fonda was envious of the flagrant display of unrestrained exhibitionism. *Let her buck*, as the brash, earthy saying goes!

We were turned on. Very turned on. Fonda took my hand. Her palm was moist. There was something primally beautiful about fornicating bodies just an arm-length away. A reminder that we were, indeed, animals. It was better than watching porno videos. *OMG this is what it looks like in person* fluttered through my head! Fonda hopefully found it naturally beautiful as well. She



squeezed my hand every time the lady shuddered, achieving another level of orgasm, and I squeezed hers back. We blushed at the challenge.

As erotic as it was to watch the couplings, however, things were moving fast, perhaps too fast for us newbies. What if one or more of the naked revelers got carried away by their frisky rutting and reached out to pull one or both of us into the writhing, quivering, copulating mass. Would Fonda be so intimidated that she would run away; dragging me with her? What if she took her clothes off herself? Would she stay and party? Would she take me with her? Frankie sensed our introverted discomfort and suggested we move to another room. We agreed. It may be a pedantic admonition, *but swingers are supposed to only go as fast as the slowest person when dealing with the uninitiated*. We left the lights on for them.

In the hotel hallway we ran into a gregarious couple who generously loaned us the keys to their room. Frankie explained why we had bailed out of our own room. They laughed at our awkward sexual situation as they passed the key to Frankie. The happy-go-lucky couple told us they were going to wander the hall and maybe hook up with another couple or four! We three could have a room for ourselves for a good while – if we wanted.

Fonda and I felt a visceral excitement of sexual anticipation and anxiety as we entered the room with my schoolmate. Of being intimate with someone new. Our breathing had become faster. It had been so long since we had felt that eagerness. In a way, paradoxically, we wanted to hide but yet, we were feeling an instinctual impulse to fuck. How would we feel if we did this? What would we discover about ourselves? It is so easy for old married couples to yearn for that feeling. It is certainly a clue into the popularity of the lifestyle.

This time, we all sat on the bed, Fonda in the middle. We sat close. All our knees were touching. Fonda's nipples stood proudly aroused through her silk blouse, yearning to be exposed. Were we ready now? Free of the sexual circus our room had become, Frankie asked so politely, that Fonda couldn't refuse his offer. "Do you want to try?"

The "careful what you wish for" moment had arrived. She looked at me, saw I was game, then looked back at Frankie and nodded hesitantly. She did want this too, even though, just like a cat, she remained a tad spooky. She puckered her lips to receive a kiss. A kiss not from her husband. It was a gentle kiss. A little suction, a little tongue, not overwhelming or choking. It clicked Fonda's "start" switch. There was a good chance someone was going to get screwed that night. 3-2-1, ignition and ... lift off!

After breaking the kiss, she turned her face back to me. There was a hotly quizzical look in her eyes. What would I do? Would I act hurt and angry that she kissed another man? That his kiss nearly took her breath away? Like I had predicted, she did like it!



The question at the moment of truth was ... would I disappoint her?

Or would I encourage such a thing? Oh yes, I did! I kissed her passionately as I was nearly boiling with lusty urges. Our lips touched and shared a volume of mutual information as compatible couples are often able to do. She returned the kiss with enthusiasm. It was like I freed her conscience from guilt and shame. It would be okay. I wanted her to take that step. She



sucked my permission from my mouth and returned to give my approval of what would happen next as she kissed my friend. We could almost hear the tinkle of society norms shattering and striking the ground.

That next kiss they shared matched my passion. Fonda

was feeling a sensation of aching arousal. To push the barrier of throwing caution to the wind and getting naughty. She went so far as to place his hand over her breast. Our breathing rate skipped to the top level. I touched her shoulder as I opened the remaining buttons on her blouse and felt the tingling she was experiencing. Parts of her were absolutely vibrating. So wicked!

Fonda was tugging at our belts; she was eager to stroke our two hard cocks. Always a major part of her erotic dreams. We proceeded to undress quickly; I helped my buddy gently pull Fonda's lacy panties off – that last barrier to her modesty dropped to the floor with the remnants of society's norms. The sparkle in the eyes of my schoolmate as he beheld her body, satisfied the question I had earlier. He liked what he saw. She was deliciously naked. We were kissing, caressing, feeling. Lips,

legs, titties, earlobes and thighs. My friend started worshipping her right nipple with his tongue and lips.

Fonda responded with the passion I knew was deep in her soul. Especially when she had both hands full of turgid, *circumcised* male organs. If I were religious, this is the kind of woman I would have prayed for! It was like her body had become one large erogenous goosebump. Her pelvis made an involuntary forward thrust. Like a neutron hitting a nucleus. One action resulted in a reaction which resulted in another reaction and on and on, just like an atomic fission bomb. It was sexual chaos gone nuclear.



Nobody was left out. I was erect and hard, he was hard and erect, and she was beyond moist. Positively gooey. She evaluated each organ with critical mirth. She liked what she saw! My friend's penis was a bit longer than mine but not as thick. It had a slightly upward and right-leaning curve. Mine curved to the left. She had affectionately named it, "*my Hookie*". The head of Frankie's, however, was large and throbbing. It was a new male organ to her, and she admired how sturdy it was. Matter of fact, she found it difficult to take her eyes off it.

I think Fonda was becoming intoxicated with the visual and visceral thrills she was experiencing. It made quite the picture. I was elated when she gave the head of his penis a kiss and then took it deep into her mouth. She came up for air. His glans glistened like a ripe Driscoll strawberry – one of Fonda's favorite dishes. Frankie's eyes were fluttering. He hadn't prepared for Fonda's oral move. Sure, Fonda was a "swinging newbie", but in no way could he say she wasn't an expert cocksucker. Something

had clicked in her head. It was like her vagina told her brain; "You are so lucky girl. Let this fucking thing happen." I had seldom seen her more arouse! Her body was writhing on the bed in anticipation like the biblical Salome when she teased King Herod for John the Baptists' head. No more persuasion was necessary.

"After you." I offered Frankie. I felt I was being courteous.

"No, after you." He replied, deferring to an ancient notion of husbands first.

"No-no, I insist, you lead the way." There was a crazy concept spinning in my brain. *'Really, you brought us all this way tonight. You should have the honor of taking her swinging virginity'.*

He smiled like it was his birthday. "Well, if you insist."

"Please, please," came a feverishly anxious voice from the bed.

"*Somebody go first!* I want your dicks (plural)!"

I think she might have said, "goddamn it," too. Who could ignore such an urgent, direct command! A threshold had been passed. Inhibitions were kicked out of the room. Base desires took over. She opened ... We plunged ... She sighed ... We took turns... She moaned ... We spit-roasted her ... She rejoiced! Shameless, blatant fucking ruled!

Sometime during that unholy three-way raw dogging, the generous couple returned. Fonda was all laid out like a banquet – and ready to be consumed.

Following the protocol I had just learned, I made an inviting motion that it was okay if they wanted to join in. It was their room after all, and they looked hungry. The guy was straight, but the lady was delightfully bi. I saw her moisten her lips with her tongue just before she gave Fonda her first female-to-female kiss. It was a tense moment. "But I am straight," Fonda panted in

protest! She could say nothing more as her clitoris was being expertly teased by Frankie's lips and tongue.

The sloe-eyed lady countered with a pretty smile, "so is spaghetti ... until it gets wet." Fonda gasped at the touch of the lady's lips and sucked on the invading womanly tongue. *Oh, what the hell* flashed in her mind. Fonda let her hand discover the softness of another woman's breast. *What a night of firsts!* I am unable to express how erotic things had become but I remember looking up at one point from between Fonda's thighs. We had licked and lapped around Fonda's body several times at that point; juicy secretions were dripping from my chin. All the scrumptious sights and sounds. It was all fluid and motion. The four of us were surrounding her, feasting on Fonda's delicious body like it was the center of the solar system birthday cake and we were sugary points of the decorative star. It was a throbbing portrait of gentle degeneracy.

Fonda's eyes were nearly closed into slits, only the bottom whites were visible as she often had them – rolled upwards – when we experienced ecstasy together. Her skin was flushed hot pink from her head – ears, face, across her titties – and down her shoulders, almost to her elbows.

I whispered when I got back to her ear, "you doing okay, baby?"

Fonda was drunk from pleasure! She couldn't speak, she couldn't form words, but her response was a grin! And a deep, naughty giggle. The grin rivaled the biggest grin that I had or would ever see her make! Not too different from the grin the reverse cowgirl lady we had watched earlier had. That stuck in my head only this time it was Fonda's face, Fonda's body and Fonda's giggle in feminine heat.

We had taken that perilous step. This wasn't a degrading wife swap. We weren't cheating on each other. We were sharing each other's desires! Lewd and lustful with a spicy sprinkle of decadent indecency. An erotic fantasy of Fonda's that she was more

frightened to admit to than be ashamed of had become a reality. One of those – “why did I wait so long?” – moments we all experience from time to time.

She was clearly transported into swinging heaven. And that gave me then and gives me now, a wonderous feeling of peace of mind. A couple could be non-monogamous and still be in love and devoted to each other. Which we did for over 50 years. We agreed that after that exhilarating night, we would leave monogamy for the “timid and the shameful”. We had freely joined the shameless. The only sin we could commit; would be if we were too inhibited or lazy to gratify a sexual partner. We had joined a lifestyle that would bring us so much fun and so much pleasure.

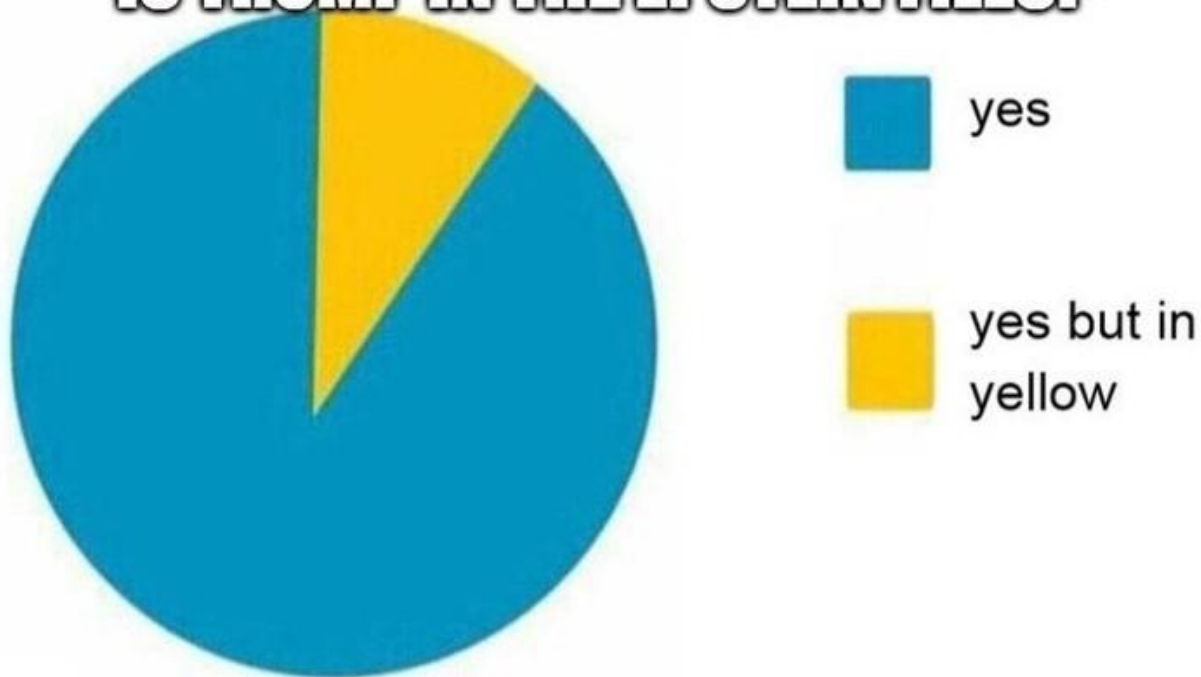
When I die, I hope the last thing I see is that image of Fonda, on that bed, surrounded by male and female libertines, smiling that beautiful, contented grin of hers, as my last thought before I pass into oblivion. The inspiration would be better than watching home-made porno movies! You might even call it ... Karma?







IS TRUMP IN THE EPSTEIN FILES?







Class Exercise 11/07/2026

- State 3 words that end with "ool".
 - a) Fool ✓
 - b) Pool ✓
 - c) Tool ✓
- Use one of the words to form a sentence.

My teacher is a fool. ✓
- State 6 words you can spell correctly.
 - a) State ✓
 - b) Words ✓
 - c) You ✓
 - d) Can ✓
 - e) Spell ✓
 - f) Correctly ✓

10
/
10

See Me!!

