

All This Underwear, All These Twists

Written by Alex Baer

Saturday, 04 August 2012 15:24

You never know what will get the group's boxers and BVDs in a bundle. Topics range pretty far and wide, like always, down at Hack's BBQ Shack, in our usual booth.

There was the usual chit-chat first -- checking the temp on club members' relationships, jabbering a drizzle of baseball, tallying injuries from any DIY jobs, and finding out where everyone else's job search was pegged for the week on the Barf-O-Meter.

We talked shop -- blogging for free, from home. We don't talk about the crank-it-up, on-demand, enforced gold mine of the Olympic games, thank goodness. No-one's much interested in corporate somersaults, or in teevee.

Half of our members are likely using their sets as boat anchors, paperweights, or goldfish bowl display cases. The other half probably doesn't yet know that there's been a transition to digital, and that their old analog sets will now only get static from Mars.

I chewed on an old, favorite bone, the all-but-cancelled space program, and its catastrophic loss to the nation and to knowledge. "We now have no way into space. Our astronauts have to hitch-hike up with the Russians, at 60 million bucks a seat!"

It was a shame, all right, everyone said. After all, how would poor ol' Willard Romney find his way to planet Kolob to see if his god was there yet, so Willard could be made one, too? Mittens was hustled off the conversational Lazy Susan at our table, for being a twit on 83 separate levels, then bundled off in his magic underpants, while we twisted our own undergear with current events.

Already teed up, a group favorite: the cult of religion and other by-the-numbers madness. It required a cursory test of our wings over the Chic-fil-A flap. "I can't believe people still focus and snoop on who-does-what-to-whose fleshy protuberances," Randy said. "What is this, the procreation tyranny of the First Century? What happened to 'Hey, whatever consenting adults want to do...'" He waved his hand back and forth, temporarily out of gas, took a swig of beer, looked at the half-full glass and scowled.

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Proprietor Hack is married to Wanda, Randy Sammon's baby sister. Randy can do no wrong in her eyes. We should all probably pay Randy dues for table space, as he's why we get to set root here as much as we do. They're good people, the Hackenworthys, and the free pitchers of beer -- whatever old "whiz-water" Hack says he has to get rid of -- don't hurt.

Pondering the chicken circus, Chance piped up. "I thought they hawked processed chicken, not religion and Fascism." He gave himself a *D'oh!* forehead hit with the heel of his hand. Then, we again toasted the notion that they were in fact the same thing.

"Well, you have to remember," Otto remarked, "that the psycho-babbling religious goofballs have no interest in peace, love, and kindness. They're not into their Jesus -- they're heavy into fear, firepower, and getting the world reshaped their own way, at any cost." Otto, like the rest of us, is still recovering from being raised in and around religion, and speaks from experience.

I shored up my old, preachy saws: "We're all still monkeys, just with car keys and credit cards. We still celebrate war, we think competition's great and wouldn't try out cooperation on a dare. We still have a system of money that's easily manipulated by greed-heads and its high priests." Randy slid in, with his put-on drawl, "No wonder them aliens ain't never done landed yet!"

Chance hopped back in, as I contemplated my second beer, having drained the current pitcher. It was something damp that tasted of smoked cork, musty peat moss, burnt resin, and stale, mixed-berry Pop Tarts: old "whiz-water" indeed. A real eyebrow-raiser, but it was wet and it went down.

"We don't make anything anymore, which is the only way you get real wealth, not this phony paper wealth from moving numbers around on screens all day. You take raw materials," he said, hopping his paired hands left to right, down an invisible production line, "and create something new. We're not going to 'austere' ourselves out of this damn Bush Depression, like these Teabag hose-heads think." Chance used to work in investments, but got canned for not meeting his quotas. He was too honest, and he paid the price.

"Not gonna give each other haircuts, piercings, tattoos, manicures, or set tanning bed

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appointments back to our former glory in the U.S.," I'm pretty sure I heard myself say out loud. (I am out of college training by quite a long shot, and am now a pretty cheap date, as it was once coldly said.)

It takes very little for us to get off on a tear of interactive ideas. It's the writers' equivalent of a musician's spontaneous jam with others in the band. In broadcasting, it's hell trying to get a word in edgewise in a group of people who talk for a living, whose single most crucial life imperative is to fill any microsecond of dead air with chatter. Writers are much more relaxed. There's time to ponder notions, and jot down fleeting thoughts for use later.

Somewhere in there, we all agreed that people were stupes, being so easily stampeded to go feverishly stuff money in Chic-fil-A's cash registers, voting thumbs-up with their money for intolerance, bigotry, repealing civil rights and other's humanity -- rallying to support the idiot owner who simply wants to mercilessly beat unconscious with his Bible some members of the American public who do not agree with his Hitlerian outlook.

We all wondered what Jesus would make of that loving, Christian behavior. We wished the protesters well at their kiss-in. Finding love in this world is tough enough, without having to explain it to anyone or convince anyone it was real. We figured Jesus would agree, and kick Chic-fil-A's ass all around the parking lot. Religious folk never follow their own leader.

And, we agreed it was a lame PR stunt and moneymaking scheme. It was a non-issue, which meant the mainstream media would be fanning the flames on this one with bellows only King Kong could work. But, what the hey -- posing outside a fast food joint on the *Channel Five Action News* doing fluff-headed, live-remote pieces is a lot easier gig than hard-nosed investigative reporting.

It was unanimous: *Live and let live* has gone by the boards, *fare thee well*. Otto nailed it when he said, "Seems to me, if you don't want to have a gay relationship, or an abortion, or a ham-and-cheese sandwich, then you ought not to have one."

Otto swirled one of his steak fries in some sauce, then waggled it at us idly, a drooping pointer, and concluded, "Doesn't mean you should go on the dang warpath to make sure nobody else ever has one."

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We always solve all the world's problems in our big, round booth.