

2 or 3 Reasons to Not Vaporize Us - Yet

Written by Alex Baer

Tuesday, 29 October 2013 13:57

Welcome to the sequel: Monday, Part 2 -- The Non-Incredible Sameness of It All.

Oh, sure. We could mist up some, get all starry-eyed, get down on one knee, mutter a hazy, uncertain prayer, and utter our eternal gratitude, all because our elected representatives in Washington finally started doing (gasp!) their jobs. Avoiding a national and worldwide financial meltdown was a side bonus, of course.

Somehow, I'm just not there, way off in Blissful Gratitude Land somewhere. It just doesn't seem like that much of a bargain or blessing.

Of course, we're not currently engaged in hand-to-hand combat in the streets, with the prize being the dubious but life-sustaining reward of dining on weeks-old dumpster fare. That's a Good Thing, that whole Avoiding Apocalypse business. I'm glad House representatives are finally allowing the country to do as its laws say, and actually honor the debts they have approved all along.

But, you and I both know that the stubborn, obstinate, intransigent, pig-headed twits doing all that suicidal grandstanding are still in their elected offices. We both know they haven't changed their deranged, demented agenda: They've labored long and hard to gain office -- gerrymandering, propagandizing, and gushing money all the way -- just so they could bring it all down around them. And us.

No, it's not like we've suddenly awoken from the right-wing nightmare that's continually plunged our country into near-madness and insolvency ever since a kindly old, union-busting, deficit-bursting, fading-away actor became president and brought us a host of plagues that won't go away and, in fact, have just kept increasing.

No, those wars of convenience -- hot and cold -- are still on the national credit card. Those who ensured those debts be placed there, for the benefit and blessing of holy commerce and an unending armada of wealthy benefactors, are still squirreled away in office, doing endlessly squirrely things in the great squirrel cage they, and we, have come to call Running the Government.

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While they've busy playing with their nuts, these squirrels haven't yet noticed they've been running government all right -- right into the ground. And us right along with it.

No, House Republicans are still in office, as are their supposed Republican Lite counterparts, Blue Dog Democrats. It's not like there's been any great House cleaning of any sort. No insightful separations of wheat from chaff at the national voting booth, no sudden start of awareness, or startled consciousness, on the part of the electorate.

No, Fox News and Rush, and all the other acidic, hate-based echo chambers are still running, and running off at the mouth, eager to tell you what you think -- so that you can then regurgitate it all back to friends, family, and acquaintances as Your Own Personal Opinion, helping keep the Perpetual Emotion Machine of Dunderheadedness alive, rolling, and well.

That whole *watchdog press* stuff and that business of a *concerned and informed electorate* the founders called essential to the nation's continuance? Well, that was all long before we had the absolutely essential ability to tweet our deep, insightful commentaries of, say, an Emmy Awards show, a Miley Cyrus concert, a showing of

Fast and Furious 6

or

G.I. Joe: Retaliation

while it was in progress

--

right?

Much better to let right-wingnuts frog-march the nation into wars, spending like there's no tomorrow, then abruptly feign surprise and hydrophobic dismay over the alarming debt that they themselves have created, thereby providing leverage to slash and cancel funding for real human need.

We keep throwing this ancient Republican dogma a bone, over and over again, and there's no end in sight. We never have a bone to pick with that whole way of proceeding in life. We make no bones about it, *any* of it.

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OK -- so we kicked the financial can a few yards down the financial road. Big deal. We barely dodged one speeding, out-of-control armored car that was psychotically careening down that highway. That slim miss doesn't mean we're no longer on the same financial road to ruin. There's lots of other Republican armored cars revving their engines, red-lining their tachometers at the light, waiting for it to turn green, even as we turn whiter and whiter shades of white-knuckled pale.

Yeah, we dodged a bullet, just barely, from House Republicans this time. Just like we did All the Other Last Times they shot off that same gun, along with their mouths. And we'll continue to face more lethal armored car pursuits dogging our collective butts. They'll jump the curb, hurtling from highway onto sidewalk and right into our livingroom, too. Unless we do some House cleaning. And that will take an en-masse awakening.

Frankly, I don't see that awakening happening in our lifetimes. Here's why: Humans change only when there is no other road open, when all other paths are clogged, when all other bridges are out. As a species, we change only when we have to, only when we are forced to. That's always meant Crisis has had its way with us as a motivator. *No crisis, no change.*

Thing is: We've kept encountering crisis after crisis in this country, and there's still been no change -- not through multiple wars, mortgage mayhem and the related home-and-savings thefts, a yawning chasm of a gap between *have-everythings* and *have-nots*, the near-collapse of the nation's financial structure...

I'm sure there are a number of scholarly theses we could all take a stab at writing as to why it is that there's been no real change. My own attempt at summary would go something like this: *It hasn't been bad enough, for long enough, for enough people -- not yet.*

Oh, we've had a few unending, perpetual wars, and a handful of wannabe wars, along with some major scaling-back of social programs, and lots of who-cares-style procrastination of the national and local infrastructure. We've suffered a string of pinheaded fools who briefly held the United States -- and all of its people -- hostage, along with the rest of the planetary financial system. My, my. *Yawn.*

No change. No change, despite some intense crises. What to make of that?

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Well, we still have our credit cards, our bacon cheeseburgers, our laundry dryer sheets, our iPhones and iPads. Our TeeVees and alcohol, thank goodness, are still flowing, and over-flowing, like there's no tomorrow. We still have our blockbuster culture and belly-buster cuisine. We can still get body-piercings and tattoos and an artificially-healthy, machine-bred, tanning-bed glow going, 24-7. We still have our factory outlet, *Banana Republican* stores...

We continue to have plenty of meringue but less meat all the time. Plenty of froth and howl, but less meaningful, coherent action. The terrible-twos of *rock-a-bye-baby* Republicanism have been rocking our national cradle -- hard, fast -- and no adult supervision or presence is anywhere apparent.

From the near-overthrow of the government by fascists and financiers during FDR's presidency, through Reagan's tripling of the deficit, and on through the supercharged re-doubling of that break-back effort under Bush the Junior, we've been playing along with these crack-heads.

Could it be that, under it all -- *even underneath my own long, seething, ongoing outrage* -- we all realize that we're just junkies to a much larger, even more inescapable system than just Republican-based mind control, and its related loss of mind? Is it possible that we all have a sneaking suspicion that the Chamber of Commerce is just one big crack-house to Capitalism -- and that we all, all of us, actually need to live right next door to that crack-house, just to maintain our supplies, just to insure our national veins and arteries don't collapse?

* * * * *

I really hate thinking about such things, and honestly detest asking such questions. I've done my eight years in the military. I've paid a few rounds of dues, for me and some others, I suspect -- even sung my share of cancer blues. I'd much rather tune out, enjoy whatever life is left to me, and let someone else drive this bus of concern from now on. I go back and forth on it all like a crazed lab rat, amped up on an anger drug one minute, and then desperately seeking a *h arsh-free* mellow zone the next.

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Long term, I place my faith in a predictable set of cycles -- in the inexorable grind-and-gnash of history's gears: Given time, and a planet not crudely, cruelly scoured by extinction-level events interrupting our chances, the cycles have no choice but to slowly repeat. The destructive greed and wars of one cycle have no choice but to slowly give way and be replaced by a more altruistic, inclusive cycle of building, renewal, and growth.

Oddly enough, and despite definite appearances to the contrary, I also place my faith in human beings and in human nature. Given time, and opportunity, we will rise and meet our better angels. It's painful, but it's also helpful, to realize we're simply stuck in a cycle and era of bitter avarice and greed, with all manner of moneylenders running our temples -- running our basic need fulfillment and our desired entertainments and escapes -- and running the complete temples of our lives.

* * * * *

I am not so highly evolved that I am not tempted to see the similarities between House Republicans and, say, Hoover Windtunnel Hot Air Bagless Uprights, though -- and in a variety of ways. But, you know: Some self-important, self-inflated blowhards don't suck -- or blow -- and are handy to have around. Even useful.

* * * * *

Despite my temple-throbbing diatribes, I could come up with two or three reasons why the human race should not be immediately obliterated or vaporized, should a powerful and advanced alien race show itself and demand such proofs. There are still a few things that I think humans can do, and could do, better than any other civilization or species. Two of them are Music and Laughter.

I'm tempted to toss in a third, Love, even though the ones with the *atomo-vaporizers* would likely say I'm just confusing the reflexive, chemical reactions for mating, or the instinct for protection of the young, or self-survival via creation of a sustaining tribe, or...

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Well, so be it. I'll toss Love in anyway, and let the aliens make of it what they will.

That's two, at least -- and maybe three. Best I can do, most days.

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Music and Laughter are getting me through cancer. They're getting me through this era and cycle, too. I recommend both -- the Music and Laughter, that is. Not the era and cycle. This era and cycle have all the grace of a cornered badger or rabid wolverine.

* * * * *

I used to joke that chemotherapy had its unintentional upside: For one thing, the hair loss kept me from pulling it all out by the handfuls myself, day by day, and news report by news report.

Hope can be a powerful thing. Without it, we should all simply queue up at Lemmings' and Lovers' Leap, and go off on a parachute-free plunge. However, Hope cannot be forever unrequited. (Please take note, Mr. President.)

Should you desire a little soil enrichment for your own garden of Hope, here are two gifts -- one of Laughter, and one of Music. Interestingly enough, both videos involve the same song. They take about one coffee break's length of time to enjoy one time through:

Music (with some acapella smiles): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjbpwlqp5Qw>

Laughter (with more music): <http://www.wunderground.com/news/oil-rig-workers-cover-africa-toto-20131018>

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Not bad, I guess, for a species whose main job, not so long ago, was growing a thick pelt and trying to survive long enough to mate...

... and then, learning to live long enough to learn how to love.

With any luck, that'll keep the vaporizing aliens off our tails long enough for us to come around to our senses -- and also help keep us from losing hope that any helpful, meaningful change is still possible.

Even with music, laughter, and love filling our hearts and sails, I still think a thorough House cleaning is in order. Maybe *because* it's filling our hearts and sails.

P.S., Part 1: Speaking of human contradictions: Yes, I'm aware of the lemmings-leap myth, even though it's embedded in our language and seemingly "scientific" awareness:

<http://www.snopes.com/disney/films/lemmings.asp>

<http://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2004/04/27/1081903.htm>

Hard to imagine that Mickey's dad, Uncle Walt, would lead us astray. At least his corporate offspring is giving us plenty to laugh about in all those Pixar animated films.

Part 2: Thanks for the "oil rig workers" link, Chris.

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Part 3: □ Singing a song might not be so hard, even an acapella song -- even in front of an audience, right? □ OK, then: □ Try singing lyrics in a foreign language, too, and see how far you get! That one fact alone helps me appreciate what Perpetuum Jazzile' s done here. □ As you can hear, there are other reasons, too.

Oh, and: □ Remember to laugh -- and sing -- with the ones you love. □ --Cheers