

Aping Nuclear Wisdom with Monkey Business

Written by Alex Baer

Friday, 14 November 2014 17:58

The fun thing about humanity is that there's always something brand new to deliver ground-breaking terrors right to your front door. Sometimes it's a concept that rocks the boat or quakes the bedrock beneath us, Other times it's left to inventions, products, and gizmos to break the ground out from under us, pitching us into our self-made quagmires and quicksand.

As a bonus, we comfort ourselves by reassuring our consciences that there's never any direct charge for free delivery of such nightmares and broad-daylight terrors. Some part of us knows the delivery price is always worked into the cost, and then, we hope somebody *else* pays the cost -- and also pays the price.

These are the kinds of soil-yourself situations that come along when we decide to become suddenly, stupidly schizophrenic, and believe in the power of magical thinking, misplaced optimism, and a kindly, benevolent, self-correcting Fate Fairy. However, to keep ourselves from really panicking, Nature provides us instincts -- to kick in and silence our nagging sense that nobody's minding the *Ye Olde Species Store & Sanity Shoppe*.

And nobody is. There's jobs for all kinds of stuff, including keeping track of passing, near-Earth objects in space that might whack into us... jobs tracking the more than half-million pieces of space junk whizzing around in orbit... jobs tracking the search for extraterrestrial life -- but no jobs called Species Watcher, or Humanity Survival Insurer, or People in Charge of Making Sure We Don't Off Ourselves.

When it comes to not blowing ourselves into star dust, we have to rely on -- and here's a letdown -- ourselves. And, *Hoping For The Best* is not a comforting nuclear policy to maintain -- unless you have access to ample stores of drugs and alcohol, and an underground bunker stocked with crates of canned chili and room freshner.

Even then, drugs and alcohol provide only short-term coping aids -- in this case, for a decade or two -- and then, *Bam!* There you are, back to Square One, with the original problems, and with one *helluva* headache besides, along with a fuzzy, jagged, roaring inability to even find out which one of those tricky, fast-moving squares zipping all around you might in fact be Square One, so you can run after it, pounce on it, hold it down, and precariously stand tall upon it once again, wobbling, while un-mussing your hair, trying not to fall off -- *and, hey, why am I shaking so much and why do you all look like neon starfish with zebra*

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heads?!

So much for mixing short-term coping aids.

As completely-*bananas* members of the Primate Family Circus & Monkeyshines Sideshow, our human monkey business routinely ensures we randomly bulldoze a pallet of figurative monkey wrenches into the works. Humanity's always busy monkeying around with something, unable to see the forrest of monkey bars for all the monkey puzzle trees -- but the real monkey on our backs? Going along, doing our own thing, blinders on, having as much fun as a barrel of monkeys, thinking no one will make monkeys of *us* if we just keep busy, keep tinkering with things, and never leave well enough alone -- you know, the *usual* Monkey's Uncle definition of Progress that we subscribe to.

I suppose we shouldn't expect too much from ourselves, having just fallen off the Primate Family Tree, and having taken bad knocks to the head on every branch, the whole way down.

For example, which thing are we to feel worse about here -- that we're going to have to spend tens of billions more dollars to fix an aging arsenal of *homeworld*-destroying weapons, or that we're just about fresh out of enemies to swap mutually assured destruction with? Or, maybe, we should feel terrible that we created a vast inventory of planet-cracking weapons in the first place, then put monkeys like ourselves in charge of them -- which created an even larger, more heart-stopping array of issues, like scandals involving overseers swinging from tree to tree, babbling and squabbling over bananas, grooming each other, swinging on tires on chains, instead of minding our operational chains, down at The Friendly Nuke Store?

Or, maybe we should feel horrible that we could spend perhaps 20 billion -- but maybe not 30 billion, maybe, to quote confused experts -- dollars on fixing ramshackle equipment and zoned-out personnel... or that we don't really *know* how much we'll spend on this or *anything*, not with monkey accounting skills like ours... or, that 20 billion dollars is a huge sum of money in *my*

own personal retirement plans

, or that, a billion hours ago, our ancestors were mucking about in the stone age, trying hard to remember not to eat rocks, and had not yet had the pleasure of considering how vast a billion of

anything

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truly is.

... including the number of rules and notions of common sense we routinely violate, as a species, and as individuals, ever-hopeful in our purchase of lottery tickets and attempts at red-light roulette.

I mean, the buzzword of the century in military circles is *Operational Readiness*. Well, that just falls flat, giving us banana pudding all over our faces, when you realize we've had 50-plus years of nuclear missile silo doors that won't shut, operators sleeping or out partying, and nukes that have been -- oo

ps, slipped, my bad!

-- dropped on U.S. soil and in oceans around the world, luckily without the nasty *click-bang-FLASH-WHOOOSH*

usually associated, rightly so, with nuclear weapons...

... and more. For night terrors, I personally enjoy the tale of crews who maintain the country's 450 ICBMs having only *one* wrench among them that attaches the nuclear warheads. Then, too, for comforting thoughts, consider that the computer in your iPads and i-
anythings

is only about a thousand percent more advanced than the computers used in the launch silos watching over, aiming, and holding the leash on a very large, very angry, very determined pit bull with lusty, single-minded visions of

continent-biting

-- which should

alone

make you incontinent.

Or, perhaps, it may be helpful to realize we have had so many unexpected nuclear *Oopses* that we had to coin a term --

Broken Arrow

-- to help keep track of them. (Generally, I am a big fan of not having "oops" and "nuclear" appear in the same sentence, but I realize I am likely alone in this opinion, unreasonable stickler that I am.) By the way? I think we're up to 32 of those

Broken Arrow

thingies -- but there's some prickly speculation that says the number is closer to twice that. Not that anyone's counting, of course. I mean,

no one in charge

, or anything like that. No one who would, could, or

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will

do anything to change things, especially not human nature, in all its primate-enhanced forms.

But, then: *In for a penny, in for an accidental thermonuclear detonation*, I always say.

Or, maybe you'll enjoy knowing the number of nuclear warheads we've... *um....* lost. And without finding them again. On that, I think we're six nukes short of a full mental inventory, so to say, but we could have passed the dozen mark -- or more -- without anybody being the wiser. Or daring to say anything.

Then, for a fun round of Pin the Blame of the Monkey, there's the number of times that aircraft, and other vehicles, have moved nukes around, completely unaware until later on that nuclear weapons were in fact on board and in the belly of the beast, or up on the flat bed, under the tarp.

It goes on and on like this. The more you read up on these monkeyshines, the more you may want to ask your doctor if *Mizz-an-thro-pee* is right for you. (If so: Take a handful and call me brother in the morning.)

This whole state of affairs also makes me want to insist the TSA stop pawing through my underwear and microscopically examining my two ounces of shampoo, and get on the nuclear stick instead.

(Note to anyone else who may be flying Curmudgeon Class today, like me: ☐ If you're looking for a good place to give off a self-satisfied harumphh, this is probably it, although other flights of fancy are scheduled up ahead...)

Of course, when it comes to things that are as useless as sure-fit gloves with opposable thumb grips, for monkeys, the TSA springs right into mind.

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Note to TSA reps updating the No Fly List: Please be sure to spell my last name as B-A-Y-Y-E-R.)

Note to any *Alex Bayyers*: Sorry about that. Oh, and, don't tell the TSA they can't spell for beans, or you'll be on the Mandatory Hydraulic Cavity Search List every time you even *think* about air travel, or anything remotely sporting wings, even in the comfort of your own home, and by the nation's latest foray into mandatory-participation kabuki theatre: roving bands of kimono-clad, white-faced SWAT-TSAers brandishing military-grade, aloof travel witticisms and luggage-threat packages.)

Where were we again? Oh, right -- *nukes, monkeys, humans not falling far from the monkey pod tree, tree-branch concussions...*

So -- just to keep the scoring straight: We can't keep track of our nukes, but we know which terrorists had Pumpkin Pie Pop Tarts for breakfast? Is no one concerned that the... *uh...* lost nukes... could,
um

.... No, never mind. Forget I said anything. The *Magical Primate Firebird Angel Fairy Personage* will tend to all such things and helps us all to never, ever connect the dots.

Speaking of things-pumpkin-y, -- how is Starbucks going to run their proposed coffee delivery service? Drones? Maybe, like those Mumbai-bicycle-style lunches? Rickshaw bike-carts? Surplus nuclear missiles?

* * * * *

Perhaps we should take comfort in the non-nuclear accomplishments of the Primate Family:

- There is now an actual college course for underwater basket weaving.
- A drunken power-company crew started breaking up a bar when owners started cutting them off -- then the crew retaliated further by busting up the bar and cutting off electrical

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power... to the bar *and* to thousands of homes and businesses.

- Someone in Qatar bid 55 million dollars for an online auction of personalized car license plates.

- Belgian chocolate company ISIS had to change its name to avoid terrorizing confused customers (and perhaps, rabid TSA agents).

- Cat Mania: There's a new cat cafe in Oakland... *Black Panther* will have a spin in Marvel's franchise limelight... Buzz about Lykoi cats looking like werewolves... A new TV show based on internet sensation Grumpy Cat...

- Vertical Food is the *hotnew* cuisine, apparently: A pizza chain has piled up Fritos and chili on its pizzas, and is proud of that... just as there is a way-tall pizza recipe from BuzzFeed... and, there's an accidental Meat Mountain from Arby's (Pavlovian-trained American customers lusted after a marketing poster displaying a towering selection of meats, so, of course, we had to have that *same* tower, just placed between two buns)... and, for dessert, how about a standing, life-size cake of Jennifer Lawrence?

- In sandwich land, there's a ramen-burger now -- *why, Flying Spaghetti Monster, why?! --* in our nation's capital, already dazed from the notion that Republicans might start doing some work again... and, there's an alluring site with these incredible, mouth-watering, *fashion* PornBurgers...

Plus, there's a new Pee-wee Herman movie coming out -- which, all by itself, should put us at DEFCON Eleventeen.

Uh... Forget I said anything about reducing the monkey factor by looking at other human activities.

* * * * *

Well, our *monkey natures* will keep us all on our toes, providing our *monkey nukes* don't vaporize them first.

So far, the best use we have for our nukes is to fight off movie *Outer Spacians*, or to use in a sort of cosmic carny game, where we try to shoot pool with incoming comets threatening us,

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using our nuclear billiard balls in a memorable round of high-stakes, sweat-soaked snooker.

And these day-to-day antics don't even begin to get us into the howler-monkey category of nuclear energy concerns, also run by members of our very own Primate Family Business Models, Inc. (If we touched on those concerns, we'd probably have to create new terms for *those*

accidents, too -- something like
Glowing Arrow

,
Atomically-Melted Arrow,

or

Mutant Arrow-like Thing

, and so on.)

I *dunno* about you, but with a nuclear family like ours, that bunker full of chili, booze, and prescription-strength *Dammitol* is looking pretty good right about now.

Today's Info: For white-knuckled relaxation, pick a search engine and look up Lost Nukes and related topics. Meanwhile:

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2014/11/14/364042684/hagel-to-announce-billions-in-upgrades-to-nuclear-deterrent>

<http://www.businessinsider.com/list-of-broken-arrow-nuclear-accidents-2013-5>

How much is a billion? <http://mathforum.org/sanders/geometry/GP10BillionEtc.html>

Tall pizza? Sure, that's a Pizza Cake!

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2014/09/29/352507263/sandwich-monday-the-pizza-cake>

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Ramen burger: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/express/wp/2014/06/12/68478/>

Porn burgers: <http://pornburger.me/>

Meat Matterhorn:

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2014/09/08/346859997/sandwich-monday-the-arbys-meat-mountaintain>

Jenny cake: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-birmingham-29966570>

Golden plates: <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-30041957>

Drunk on power: <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-30002186>

Today's Animal Bonuses:

Monumental Cat Discovery!

<http://happyplace.someecards.com/cats/the-internet-comes-full-cat-circle-with-cat-circles/>

Monkees, re: dogs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFGjTX98mk> x

Monkees, re: Randy Scouse Gits: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmG5hd1glbs>

Bonnie's salute to monkey business: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxIXI23ijX8>

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Bonus Cranky-Curmudgeon Crack: Save your money on *Interstellar* -- it *ain't*. Between McConaughey's ever-increasing overuse of mush-mouthed mumbling, plus wildly cherry-picked physics, totally impossible repopulation schemes involving frozen eggs and one stranded woman, and with balderdash science assumptions aplenty, with story holes the size of galaxies... **and**

lobotomized finales that takes

preposterous

to a whole new dimension.... Well, I

wanted

to like it. I really,

really

did. (There's disengaging your disbelief for entertainment's sake, and then there's shipping your brain out for steam-cleaning while you wait.) Verdicts: Story: C. Visuals: B. Sound: B-.

Plausible science: C-. Relativity demo, time division: B+. Gravity demo, black hole division: D-.

Planetary write-off, Earth division: A+.