

Down the Rabbit Hole, into the Job Jar

Written by Alex Baer

Wednesday, 14 March 2012 20:50 - Last Updated Wednesday, 14 March 2012 20:55

Every time I look up from what I'm doing, another Republican is charging off into some self-made fray, seated backwards, on a mechanical pony -- the kind bolted to the floor, requiring a quarter to rock back and forth -- shouting incoherently, trying to make the metal animal charge faster, trying to make it back up, all the way.

The screeching and screeds are usually about mandating religion in the schools and some neo-creationist harangue, or else revising the history books to show how wonderful and not-at-all demented they themselves are, or about GOP men's rights to dictating vaginal probes into women's vaginas and their God-given rights in specifying women's health care, or else it's some frothy meringue regarding how the non-job-creating but-still-so-called "job creators," corporations and the rich, should be spared paying any taxes as their forbears once gladly did.

They yelp madly astride the pony, rocking back and forth on their overly-meaty haunches, until it's time to feed in another quarter when they discover they haven't gone anywhere.

The Democrats usually opt for the 25-cent boat ride, next to the pony, and let this blather from next door all glide about, let it push them around on their little ship of state, making them slip and slide like mad, all over the soaped and pitching main deck in a hurricane -- *a real bad one out there, they imagine it must be, not ever really knowing, all of them forever and always, safely back in home port*

-- and are hurtful slapstick to see, all out at sea, falling over, crashing around, dancing with deck chairs by the faceful, while believing they're successfully piloting, one-handed, highly mirrored, eerily becalmed seas.

So, when people ask how I'll be voting, the reply's gotten pretty standard, the response settling itself into a rut, and I'll hear myself say, "Well, as it always comes down to Psychos or Wafflers, guess I'll stick with the Wafflers." Sometimes I'll add, "At least, the crash will be in slow motion, so everyone won't be killed right straight off." Then, I contemplate if that's the best course -- maybe it's better to go with the Psychos, give 'em the keys, let 'em irresistibly plow the whole thing into the side of an immovable mountain, so we can get busy sweeping up, and then putting something else in place that might actually work.

I could be just feeling out of sorts, maybe a cold or the flu coming on, some restless, not-quite-right feeling that's talking here, along with emptying out the Job Jar for a look-see onto

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the table, seeing what's been put off -- as long as I'm feeling miserable already, anyway, I figure. *Glutton for punishment?* □ *Well, I dunno, but it's a good point* -- could be that's the way to go, do everything all at once -- chore-checking and national revamping, too -- check the list all at once, take the pain full-force, head on, just get it out of the way. Problem is, slow and steady and bit-at-a-time is how we got this far, so it's difficult, changing. In any case, hard to know where to start first, so we're probably in for more endless rounds of puttering about, although, you have to admit: Running a bulldozer through some of this stuff --
not knowing
crapola from
Shinola, just gunning it --
would certainly cause quite a thrill!

Of course, on the national level, all of these prescriptions are all pre-scripted at about 39 steps above the pay grade of the President, way on up there, in uber-penthouses, where the One Percenters live, where the mega-big-boys always threaten to filibuster or drop bunker-busters on us until they broker and break anything and everything that gets in their way, in order to simply get their own way. Always have plenty of bunk, these boys, always trying to break the bank, going breakneck speeds, driving themselves, and us, to the brink, all running for the bunkers. *Life must certainly be interesting, living so high above the curve of the Earth, peeking into backyards way across oceans, peering into the backyards of other nations from here.*

Still, here at home, you get lobbyists purchasing lawmakers, running revolving doors from Congress to K Street -- everything compromised by the stench and stain of money needed, *running as fast as you can to stay in the same place*, or trying to get ahead, as defined by all manner of indefinite definitions. Then, add in some rigged elections -- no paper trails, see, all the programming codes are private, proprietary and corporate property -- and, well, you know: At some level, it fails to matter in the same way as it once did, as there's just no winning for losing, no getting rid of that sick, swooning emptiness in the gut.

I have no idea if any of these realizations of *the fix being in* on this poor, broken game is the cause for the malaise, ennui, and stupor that's befallen voters in our nation -- tuning out in dropped-out apathy rather than turning out in pumped-up droves to go vote. Could be it's why we sent Congress a report card that would cause any reasonable child to instead flee, go join the circus, rather than bring the thing home.

My personal opinion, sifting through all these scraps of paper containing put-off chores, slipped into the Job Jar for later, possibly more favorable review? No one is looking in the Real Job Jar

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in this nation, no one's ready to settle down and get back to work, get anything of any value done. Everyone's full up with Flexible Flyer-loads of quarters, loose and in rolls, plenty more to fund charging around on mechanical ponies wielding cardboard swords, being cardboard cutouts of themselves. Lots more coins in store to help keep wrenching the toy wheel this way and that, hooked to no tiller, thrilling to trilling motor-boat noises we make with our mouths and lips, bubbling and babbling away, hooked up to nothing but noise.

You have to admit, it's a lot more fun for our leaders, being rich kids, armed with fortunes in quarters, swaggering around on phony-pony battlefields and swaying in some unchartered, far-off, fictitious bay, than putting on work clothes and working away to remake a tired and most-trying, drained-out nation, stolen blind by hordes of easy-money cutthroats on greed's warpath, the land left to rot by those who feel no responsibility to others, abandoning it all like rubbish in a demolished, burned-out, post-riot, fire-hardened and charred, abandoned, city street block.

But, having and expressing humor helps, in these constant crash dives of reality, in all these well-timed bubbles and busts, we keep experiencing: Some of us, we are all just human, just doing what we can. So, in that spirit of gallows humor, to get a laugh and try to get by, I will suggest here and now that *Malaise, Ennui, & Stupor* would be a fabulous name for these worthless consultants -- the ones we are currently using in our country, the ones pretending to try and help us tackle all these backed-up chores of domesticated nations, and being our make-believe, fixer-upper partners, in order to help the country back up on its feet, back to its former, glorious self.

Of course, like the Job Jar, you can find yourself sliding right down the rabbit hole, wishing on moonbeams, wanting for sunshine, trying to get a little daylight between done-and-to-do, between us and them, getting somewhere happy, midway between Boom and Doom.

Once, a million years ago, in an ad agency building, there was a sign, a brass plaque, that said: "*Speed, Quality, Price -- Pick Any Two.*"

This always impressed the heck out of me, the wisdom and succinctness of that small jewel. That spotted plaque led to my own interpretive invention, to my own holy trio, which seems to plague me and the country and all of our Job Jars, which is this one small rule:

"Time, Money, Energy -- Good Luck Getting Any Two of Them Together."

Time to go break another dollar, get some pigeon-feed, some chump change, to stay on the

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merry-go-round a little longer, playing hooky from the Job Jar. Our leaders, after all, are such *very excellent* role models, wouldn't you say?