

A Little Something Under the Ol' Electron Tree

Written by Alex Baer

Wednesday, 25 December 2013 02:49 - Last Updated Wednesday, 25 December 2013 11:53

All I want for Christmas -- now that I have a range of functional teeth up front -- is a memory that's not a sieve. There's always some body part deserving of its own song as one ages, I suppose, and as the meaty vehicle we all find ourselves traveling in as humans starts to slowly unwind, hiccup, and fade.

However, this year, and every year, there are many other things I'd like to see slipped under the tree -- and under the radar of watchful and disapproving conservative forces. Contrary to wistful bumper stickers and erstwhile, old-fashioned sentiments, I'd like more than a helping of whirled peas, please.

A little basic economic fairness, say, from the money-go-rounders would be a nice holiday touch. A giant scoop would be even better, but I dare not wish for such miracles -- not even from the Christianity-espousing moneylenders long since seeped into the temples of our democratic discourse.

I suspect there are more members of American religions enlisted for the pre-Facebook social-and-business-networking opportunities than for worship. You can give this hypothesis a whirl, if you like, by measuring what these same people *say* they believe in, and what they actually *do*.

My hat, meanwhile, is continually off, and eagerly doffed, to all those whose actions are seamless with the words and directions they believe have been spoken by their deity or deities not merely as suggestions but as commandments on how life is to be lived. It is with great sadness I must humbly report that my hat spends a great deal of time on my head, however eagerly it looks forward to getting a breath of fresh air and being tipped.

Yes, of course -- as people, we are all imperfect. (My own awareness on this one point is extensive beyond all bounds, and continually carries with it a pack-along sting of salted iodine into which it is routine dumped into the wounds of my failures.) However, there is a wide gap between trial-and-error, or trial-and-failure, and just showing up to the latest meeting of the sleepwalkers club.

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And, no -- I do not begrudge people the freedom to believe as they wish, to seek balms of all kinds for the wide assortment of wounds we all suffer in this world, nor do I look down upon those who need the comfort that only blind-clinging and autopilot-following can provide. For some people, superstition, tradition, and rote, lock-stepped belief steeped in ritual folderol works best. For others, it is that belief that facts, logic, science, and a fair application of these strengths, can make a positive difference for humanity.

To each his own. Happy *tom-ah-toes*. Merry *tomatoes*. As they say: *Whatever gets you through the night*.

(Songs provide insight along with their startling truisms: I am surprised, for example, to find that a motif of 60s-era, free-love anthem has been adopted by banksters and other shufflers of bogus paper wealth. *If you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're with*. Of course, you'd have to -- just as they do -- swap out the G-rated, commercial-radio-approved concept of *love* with something significantly steamier, and far more descriptively relatable of the financial acts they'd dearly love to commit upon our persons.)

Oh, I don't expect the One Percenters -- or even the duped, have-not Republi-droids and dittoheads -- to suddenly snap out of their assorted delusions and reeling concussions, proposing a sudden-but-calm return to sane levels of patriotic taxation and overall fair play. Not in this season or in any other do I expect such world-changing miracles.

I would enjoy living in a world, however, in which such thoughts are not totally out of the question, but might find themselves on life-support, in hopes of historical cycles coming around, like karma, and wiping clean blackboards, slates, and ledger sheets, in order that some lifestyle and era might be achieved -- one not entirely toxic, noxious, odious, or crushing.

I do not have the advantage of Scrooge, say, in that I do not have any gravy to blame for such gravity of thought, nor any pudding on which to hang such a paucity of panache. My gruel, such as it is, contains no hallucinogens.

Nope, I fully expect that the level playing field that conservatives love to recommend with eager lip service will remain tilted, downhill, and at a dangerously sharp angle, and will remain aimed

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to the far, far right -- with the *horizon line of no return* stretching far, far beyond the outer marker buoys of psychosis.

I also imagine the beloved Invisible Hand of the Marketplace will, like the Holy Ghost, continue to operate in mysterious ways -- but Republicans will continue to find full favor in the belief they themselves are the chosen few upon whom are heaped the bountiful blessings of Adam Smith.

I am tempted to attempt a theatrical sigh -- one that might be heard in the back rows and cheap seats -- and aimed to show a general exhaustion at the constant collision of facts and logic against belief and fear. But, you know, there is just so much humbug that anyone can battle this time of year and still rescue some holiday cheer from the fray.

For the moment, I'm taking a small measure of holiday hope from one small outcropping of hand-rubbing, glee-based amusement: The possibility that low-power FM radio and internet broadcasting might actually be the platforms on which a semblance of progressive, liberal ideas might again seep back into communities.

Such reasonableness and discussion of actual facts and creative ideas for America's problems was long ago banished by corporate radio in favor of rightwingnut propaganda radio, and by non-news, anti-news, and outright, provable and verifiable, broadcast lying.

Such a humble, populist, democratic vehicle as internet streaming radio might help bring balance back to airwaves and their equivalent -- something so far impossible to achieve when an overwhelming majority of broadcast outlets are owned and operated by those who, by their actions, make Ronald Reagan seem downright reasonable, rational, and cuddly.

Fact: Very few liberals own and operate radio and television outlets. **Fact:** More corporate ownership -- via takeovers and waves of consolidation -- has reduced the number of voices in our country's electronic media.

Fact:

An overwhelming number of these voices are astroturf cattle herded by a very few.

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Fact: *Liberal* is a term of proud, positive quality; it is not the slur that conservatives have desperately tried to make it. Do some reading and research -- find out how and why this country's greatest achievements were part of so-called liberal agendas. (Hint: Search for "What have liberals done for us.") The term *liberal* used to be equated with fairness, with patriotism, with solutions to problems that were far more inclusive for regular citizens and far less exclusive of them. Liberals were not robber barons or elitists -- they were, and are, regular people, like you and me. It has always been so, despite right-wing smear campaigns to the contrary.

(If you'd like to *really* educate yourself, followup your research on liberal achievements with those made by unions in this country. Prepare to have your mind blown, however, by actual facts and tangible truths. There's a link below to help you get started.)

In contrast, ask yourself the number one question that causes Republicans to immediately change the subject, and/or storm away from conversations, feeling trapped and threatened by a simple question that they have not been repeatedly, exhaustively briefed multiple times each minute, hour, and day, on how to answer by the FoxRush machine: *What have Republicans ever done for the regular person in this country?*

Meanwhile, for an example of progressive radio's possible comeback on the scene, after a kneejerk removal by right-wing forces of that format from radio stations all over the country, immediately following the election of President Obama -- strange coincidence, huh? -- check out the Kickstarter program for Portland, Oregon's Xray-FM. (The link's down below.)

If you have some spare holiday cash, their effort, and others like them, might come into your world view and national focus as a very good investment for the future of real, actual, verifiable, truthful information flow in media in this country.

Of course, you can stick with the liars and bubbleheads at Fox -- after all, Fox pioneered the lawsuit that forced courts to rule that *there is no obligation to tell the truth during newscasts*.

Ever wonder why Fox fought so hard for the right to lie? Yeah, well -- join the crowd.

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So, if you're in a holiday mood to slip a little something extra under the ol' electron tree, you might not find a better investment for America than supporting the return of liberal, progressive radio, in all its forms. Truth is a fine, all-seasons sonic present that a person can really get their ears -- and minds and hearts -- around.

From our free airwaves to our net pipelines, and from our tubes and transistors to our fiber optics, it's time to vote with our wallet on what we want to be fed in our country -- hallucinogenic gruel, or something a lot less toxic and far more nourishing and real.

Oh, and, by the way: Without getting really deeply into that whole feed-the-hungry, house-the-homeless, heal-the-sick sort of sentiment -- any notion on whether Jesus was a liberal or a conservative?

Just asking.

What have liberals ever done for us? Here's a quick, starter-kit look:

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2005/10/14/156663/-What-Have-Liberals-and-Democrats-Ever-Done-For-Us#>

The Worst Question You Can Ask a Republican: <http://www.thomhartmann.com/forum/2010/11/thanksgiving-debate-ammo-what-have-republicans-ever-done-letter>

What have unions ever done for us? Here's a quick, starter-kit look:

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2012/05/15/1092027/-Thanks-a-Union-36-Ways-Unions-Have-Improved-Your-Life>

Kickstarter Radio example:

<http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/4023949/xrayfm-the-little-station-with-big-ideas>

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Bonus Humor for your season:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZmK5Qd071U>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSZNPc1ANUM>

(for more goodies, head to YouTube and search for Roy Zimmerman Christmas)

And, in a spirit of inclusion, please let me say:

Happy New HunnaKwanziCovenMussRamaMoonBoxingSolticeWiccaPaganFestYear Eve!