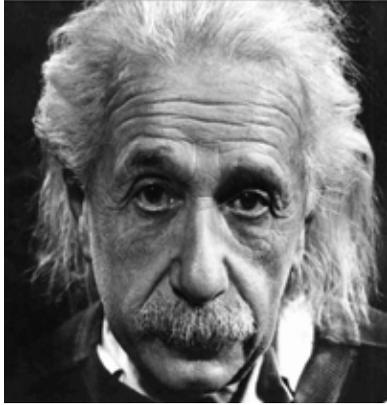


mudd...continued



need him?

And let's not shortchange the fellow who figured out the Meaning of Life (42): "A common mistake that people make when trying to design something completely foolproof is to underestimate the ingenuity of complete fools," Douglass Adams.

Kurt Vonnegut! "And what is literature but an insider's newsletter about affairs relating to molecules, of no importance to anything in the Universe but a few molecules who have the disease called thought." (Bluebeard)

"Perhaps the time has come to cease calling it the 'environmentalist' view, as though it were a lobbying effort outside the mainstream of human activity, and to start calling it the real-world view." E.O.Wilson, America's most rational biologist.

I could go on for hours. So why not? It's digital ... 0101010101....

"... fear is an irrational emotion that floats from an object like a helium balloon that you touch with your fingertips."

James Lee Burke (Tin Roof Blowdown)

Yes, he can keep that kind of eloquence going for 400 pages.

"I don't trust the answers or the people who give me the answers. I believe in dirt and bone and flowers and fresh pasta and salsa cruda and red wine. I don't believe in white wine; I insist on color." Charles Bowden

It's hard to imagine a tougher, more existentially grizzled, hard scrabbled, work booted American writer than Bowden. I heard him speak in Albuquerque awhile back; the man left no doubt in anybody's mind that he is not to be trifled with, or ignored. His prose cuts hard, as it should.

And when in doubt, turn to John D. McDonald: "... when you suddenly look around you and see that - life itself is the basic magic, the real miracle, then we might have a chance. You are trying to impose your sense of order and fitness on the randomness of people and the illogic of fate." (The Last One Left)

If it wasn't for McDonald, we wouldn't have Travis McGee. And if we didn't have Travis McGee, we'd be screwed!

Zen, anyone?

"Our mind is like a television set with thousands of channels, and the channel we switch on is the channel we are at that moment," Thich Nhat Hanh.

Suffice it to say, it doesn't take a spy satellite to see the profundity of Master Hanh's insight. Of course, he's speaking to us from the broadcasting tower of Buddhism, urging us to see into the nature of our nature. Which is, in fact, nature.

Let's switch that cosmic channel!

Hillbilly music fragment:

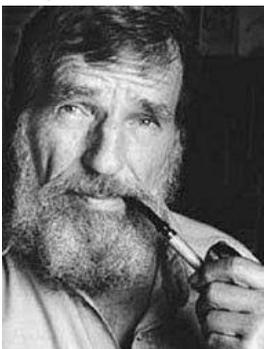
I'm driftin' round in a circle
alone in the universe.
I came in with a holler,
I'll be leavin' in a hearse.

"The greatest obstacle to pleasure is not pain; it is delusion."

Stephen Greenblatt (The Swerve: How the World Became Modern)

This just in: "New research suggests that when, and how much, light beams through your eyes may play a quiet and unrecognized role in determining your dress or pants size."

I got that one from Barbara Natterson-Horowitz and Kathryn Bowers (New York Times). As an experiment, I've decided to quit wearing dark glasses for two weeks and see if my belt needs tightening. Stay tuned....



We are now required to quote the Lonesome Dove himself, Larry McMurry: "There's one big problem with old..... it ain't reversible."

Nobody's going to argue with that. Especially me, now that I've officially reached the 4th quarter in the game of life. And a word to my young friends out there on the fruited plains: Don't blink, or you'll freaking miss it!

.....

Eldorado (convertible)

Everybody knew I'd eventually get around to the voice of the Desert Rat Brigade,

Edward Abbey. Few people could match wits with Cactus Ed, especially when he turned his gaze towards the vibrations of eternal wisdom: "I sat on a rock in New Mexico once, trying to have a vision. The only vision I had was of baked chicken."

Abbey defied the gravity of human logic. His mind shined like a hall of mirrors, filled with contradictions that, to this day, cause many of his readers to drool on their tired ideologies. Want to see reality? Take a hike. Literally. Outside. Preferably far from the maddening American crowd. Which is now 300 million and counting.

"Wilderness is not a luxury but a necessity of the human spirit, and as vital to our lives as water and good bread. A civilization which destroys what little remains of the wild, the spare, the original, is cutting itself off from its origins and betraying the principle of civilization itself." (Desert Solitaire)

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The fat sizzles

Meanwhile, according to a recent Vital Choice newsletter: "...the average American downs more than 65 pounds of high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) per year." (Citing the USDA).

Is that possible? The fact that Americans have no idea how to feed themselves has been known for decades. The Land of the Free isn't the obesity capitol of the galaxy for nothing! But 65 pounds of high fructose corn syrup a year?

The same article goes on to state that, "Fructose also promotes cancer growth....., including altered cellular metabolism, increased generation of free radicals, DNA damage, and inflammation."

Who needs Obamacare? At the rate we're going, many of us won't be around long enough to enjoy it. The monkeys are loose; close the asylum gates!

It's hard to fathom how a country of educated, media saturated, socially networked cyber-jockeys could allow themselves to become the world's most glaring example of how not to live. It's as if we swallowed the blue pill and now wander the virtual matrix in blissful ignorance of the most basic functions of human biology.

The scant research I've managed to accomplish has convinced me of one simple algorithm: Shooting yourself in the foot hurts. Repeatedly shooting yourself in the foot is the definition of crazy.

A nation of collective crazies is in for a rude awakening. Perhaps sooner than later.

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Jazz

Let's switch the channel again and have some fun. And to do that, we look to one of my favorite socio-cultural gurus: Thelonious Monk. Arguably our most singular jazz composer, surviving decades of pop culture's fickle taste buds, Monk was also more than capable of making perfect sense - "You know what's the loudest sound in the world, man? The loudest sound in the world is silence." (Straight No Chaser)

But Monk didn't limit his philosophical musings to the realm of sound waves. In fact, the man was downright mystical: "One is one, two is two, nothing is something."

What a zinger! Reminds me of "First there is a mountain, then there is no mountain, then there is." On second thought, Monk doesn't remind me of anything. And that's the way it should be.

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End credits

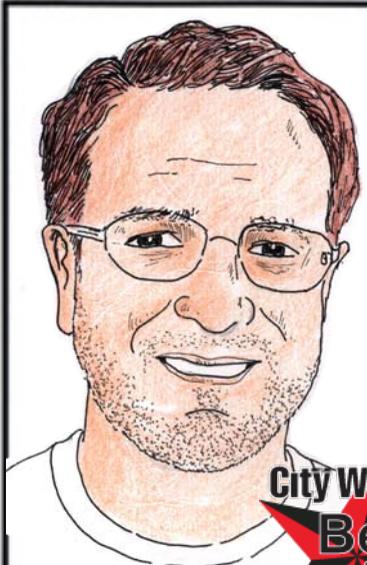
There's plenty more where this came from. An infinity of primate nerve noise is currently rebounding throughout the cosmos and ready for download. Which isn't necessarily a good thing. As the wise man said: "Too much of a good thing is not a good thing." On the other hand, many a wise man has been known to be wrong.

But in the interest of being kind to my readers, I'll wrap this party up with a final nod to the genius of Homo erectus asphaltus' incessant utterances. So, let's return to our old friend, Mr. Anonymous (not to be confused with the cyber punks behind the recent rash of goofy data hacking):

"It will all be OK in the end ... so if it's not OK, you're not at the end."

Salut!

NE MUDD lives in Birmingham, Alabama. He can be reached at: vezere@aol.com




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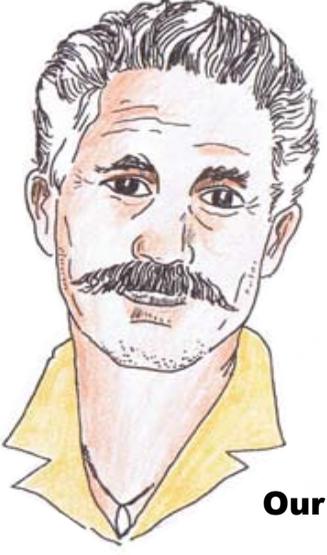


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 Thomas Jefferson

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