

Good 'n' Plenty

Written by Alex Baer
Friday, 05 February 2016 19:03

This way to the time machine: Back when one had to fight pterodactyls in the schoolyard at recess, in order to keep hold of one's snacks, there was a terrible candy called Good & Plenty. It was white and day-glow, neon pink, before there was day-glow anything, and only just as neon was itself being tamed to do electrical tricks.

It was terrible junk -- a chalky outer shell with a hard, black licorice center -- but, it was dirt cheap. It was also pay dirt for the non-discriminating 5-year-old on a budget.

Yes, the downside was that it was horrible, but the upside was that there was a lot of it. Somehow, the combination worked. *Such is youth.*

Now, if you'll step over here, back to the future, and up through the *Now Tube* into today again, where we left it a sec ago, there's an even better winning situation at hand, and I expect the radical right -- *are there any non-radical right-wingers left?* -- will be shrieking good 'n' plenty about it.

The big fuss? *Gummint* daring to intrude again, telling people what they can and cannot do, trying to fix everything, going where they have no business being...

Yes, just imagine the outrage: minimizing the downsides and maximizing the upsides -- *how dare they!*

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Now that you've been warmed up on the subject, and warned a bit, here's the reason for all that pent-up hostility and rage you'll soon be reading about on both sides of the pond, as they say.

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Let's say you've got a population where every person throws away 40 to 65 pounds of food per year. Let's also say this represents a loss of \$13 to \$22 million annually.

Let's make the thing more palatable, and understandable, sort of, by stipulating that this 1.3 billion tons of food given the heave-ho into the landfill is perfectly edible -- edible, it should be repeated, and not the Dangerous Forbidden Planet-X Science Experiments we all nurture and nudge along toward the back of the fridge.

Over a year, let us also say, this massive amount of waste represents various economic losses of \$750 billion, for example, and significant damage to the environment as well.

Now, then -- what should be done about it?

[Please break off into small groups now.

We'll be back in a bit to take everyone's temperature on the subject.]

*

OK, then: *Mainstream* Republicans? Right, allow the invisible hand of the marketplace to level the playing field and help society haul itself up by its own bootstraps (left to the current generation tax-free, of course, by the previous 23 generations).

Teabaggers? OK, got it -- you don't like questions and thinking, and suggest the only way to handle anything... *everything, really....* is to just pout, say NONONONO! while kicking and screaming, until it's time for your nap. Otherwise, blockading and log-jamming any discussions about same, and holding your breath, is also fine with you, too. Got it.

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Libertarians? All right, then -- you don't care what is done so long as someone else pays for it, and, what's that? Oh, right -- it would be best if people could feel deep personal satisfaction, and dominion over nature, while doing all the wasting.

Evangelicals? Oh, sorry -- of course, of course. *PRAY* it away. Naturally. If we were meant to know how to... *and so on.* Yes. Got it.

Democrats? Hmm? Create a bipartisan commission, on the basis of us all being Americans, and all honorable people, and all wanting to do the right thing, as we once did, after World War Two, and how we worked with each other to achieve reasonable compromise?

Really?

Are you people high? Bi-partisanship? Working together for the good of the country? And re-experience the last eight years, and more, of a Republican Party which would rather employ do-it-yourself brain surgery with a broken beer bottle, an aspirin, and a rearview mirror -- millions of rearview mirrors, in fact -- than sit down with an opponent, use diplomacy, discussion, and the art of compromise to find solutions for the everyday American?

Are you completely *MAD*?

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[a little while later, once interviewer decorum had been re-established...]

Well, it's been an interesting session. I'd like to than -- *what's that?*

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Oh, right. Sorry. (*Cough, cough.*) We don't mean to overlook anyone -- it's just that we don't have much experience these days with people actually wanting a participatory discussion, exchanging and offering good and helpful ideas into the conversational mix. Much more used to my-way-or-the-highway rhetoric, and Molotov cocktails, and grenades, and flame-throwers, because of the way ambush journalism, TV, and right-wing media all work anymore...

So, pardon us, *Independents* -- what would *you* say at this point? Go ahead, you have the floor...

What's that? You'd be fine with government outlawing the destruction of unsold food items? Banning waste in big supermarkets? Enforcing an even broader law about energy waste? Wow -- I'm not sure what to say, we -- what's that? *There's more?*

The law would be that any unsold food that is still edible, must be donated to charity, used for animal feed, and/or used as farming compost? And that all large supermarkets must sign contracts with charity groups to help facilitate those donations?

And, further, that supermarkets must stop pouring bleach all over these edible foods, in order to *keep* them edible?

Whoooo - I'm feeling all woozy and faint here.... I might even....

[Ka-plop.]

[Is there a doctor in the house?!]

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Yes, back in the world of the conscious, and those with conscience, such measures have *already* been slipped into place, even though there was objection, mainly that the "large" supermarkets represented only five percent of the food wasted.

Still, it is a start.

The law discussed here? It passed the Senate *unanimously* -- another stunner in itself.

What's that you say? You mean, *THIS* Senate, ours -- the *Senate of the United States*? Oh, my -- that's a good one.

No, no, please

-- we could

never

do anything like this. And acting unanimously on

ANYthing

-- naw, that sort of stuff went out with the 1950s, unless it's

war

you're talking about.

The United Nations, meanwhile, says a *third* of all food on this planet is squandered or spoiled before it is consumed by people.

third of all food...

A third of it -- a

Oh, sorry, day-dreaming there for a sec -- the name of the *country* with such intrusive *gummint* rules, and such forward-looking, practical, noble, and humane goals?

France.

You might remember them. They've been our allies for a long time. Helped us win our own freedom not so long ago. We have a splendid gift from them, in fact, on Liberty Island, in New York Harbor -- we point to it all the time as one of our national symbols of hope and freedom.

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You might also remember how we have tended to repay them for their guidance and friendship over the years.

So, when and if a few lawmakers muster a fraction of courage here, on these shores, and try to replicate the deeds of the French, and do a little **Good** with all our **Plenty** here, in this country...

Well... Don't be surprised if we have to endure *another* round of portly, pork-barreling members of Congress deciding to suddenly outlaw French Fries, French Toast, and French Vanilla Ice Cream, to begin with, because of the *damned French commies and that damnable new Food Bill brought before the Committee* *da*

...

*

Ironically, of course, all those newly-banned foods from the Congressional cafeteria will wind up in our landfills -- again. Like the last time we got ticked off at the French, and had those idiot right-wingers renaming things *Freedom* fries, and *Freedom* toast, and so on.

You know: Irony is painful at times. It is also no teacher for those without a sense of humor. Or a sense of heart. Or conscience.

Just remember, once the latest French Food Fight starts -- we're the United States, and no country on earth can teach us a single damn thing.

Let freedom ring!

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... and that's why you have to go bed hungry tonight, Tommy. □ But, there might yet be breakfast at this particular shelter, Janey -- you never know. □ We've never been to this one before. □ Some

of them must still have breakfast... they just

must

...