

When Weird Just Isn't Enough

Written by Alex Baer

Wednesday, 10 August 2016 23:17

We're not even into the tail-end, dog days of August and most of the country is already howling at the moon, scratching like mad at imaginary fleas, twitching and itchy all over, bothered and bewitched.

Oh, and, since exporting Industrial-Strength Gonzo-Crazy seems to be our new role in the global economy, let's add the rest of the world to the ranks of the queasy and squeamish.

I'm looking at some bookmarks and clippings heaped here and there, trying very hard to divine any signs of sanity. Perhaps sanity no longer makes news, which is why it is not being reported.

Of course, it could be that sanity no longer exists -- another reason it might not show up in any counts or recounts of the day's news.

Hmmm. How to measure The Crazy if The Craziness Measure is missing, or if the units of measurement change faster than our ability to keep up with them, or keep abreast of the latest calibrations?

This is probably like the tail-chasing, exponential mayhem of hiring fact-checkers to keep up with Trump's outright lies -- *21 of them, just in his acceptance speech* -- and then discovering no one's footing the double-checking bill, by the time fact-check #14,238,391 comes around, and having to file bankruptcy and dissolve the fact-checking company. (There's a certain weird balance to that, given the four or six or fourteen or 96 bankruptcies of the man, depending on whom you ask, how you count, where you place the asterisks...)

I feel a beer-thirty chiming on my inner body-clock wall. Back in a sec.

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I've become a bottle-beer-only snob. I smelled the cap: *Thursday*, I think -- a fine day for beer-making. None of your Friday slap-dash, and none of your Monday-falling-in-the-vat antics.

You know, with my cap-sniffing out in the open now -- I just came to realize that I, too, could run for President... if I someone would help me learn to lie outrageously, offer invisible childcare to employees, if I had any, and threaten people with assassination. Things like that.

Heck, if I could just get some relatives to give me a few million, so I could pull myself up by my bootstraps... why, I'd be able to find the time to get hypnotically, hydrophobically bonkers...

Sorry, hang on. That's crazy talk. No politics this trip. Let's leave that whole nest of fire ants behind. Speaking of being nuts, I forgot to get any. *Beer nuts, then?*

* * *

OK, so: From the looks of things, Normal, Usual, and Regular have all fled our part of the continent, and way beyond. Without even glancing at the American Political Scene, in all its Infected, Mutated Glory from what the Founders might have envisioned, let's take a quick survey in search of wind patterns, or whatever, in other parts of our semi-conscious world, for odd goings-on, as part of our Misery Loves Company, and Distraction, Tour:

- In Florida, a 110-year-old, 15-pound lobster was whisked off the dinner menu and donated, still gurgling and fine, to an aquarium in Maine. Coals to Newcastle and Lobsters to Maine; Oranges to Florida, next?

- Also in Florida, home of **[your turn to fill in the blank]**, the word "SCHOOL" was painted on a roadway as "SCOHOL." Twice. Outside a high school. (This is, by the way, an excellent beer. Already, I have had to squint a little at "SCOHOL" and make sure I was not accidentally spelling it incorrectly or correctly, if you know what I mean.) Investigations were to be promised, as it's always said, but no actual promises were made, as is usually meant.

Further north, in Kentucky, where sanity is also thin on the ground at times (except for the bourbon industry, one could hope, in this hour of our nation's need), 100 million dollars has

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been spent! Yes, spent! Invigorating, isn't it! A pallet of hundreds! Wow! Making a giant ark! You know, ark -- as in cubits, 300 by 50 by 30. (Yes, that was *cubits*, not *Bitcoins*. Right. All right, then. Onward.)

I wish them all luck, as they go off *arking around* in the 6,000-year-old seas, and hope they get their share of thousand-year-old, 195,000-pound lobsters, which they can drop off in the Creation Museum, handily located also in Kentucky, where the state bird, luckily enough, is the *Bourbonus Splendifori Falldownicus*

Meanwhile, South Korea is trying to sort out its share of madness by launching a multi-lingual task force to unconfuse its menus. It gets tricky when translating dish names into English, Chinese, and Japanese, from Korean.

One dish was called "roast grandmother," and another "spicy and weird soup." A pollack fish course at one spot was called "dynamic stew" while steak tartare at another was called "six times," which could be an opening gambit for a follow-up Abbot and Costello to *Who's on First?*

If that's not confusing enough, imagine the state of the Chinese man who was told by the government that he was executed ten years earlier -- even though he was allowed to apply for a travel permit, live everyday life with no problems, and no tell-tale indications of his personal death. "All these things are just puzzling," he told Guangdong Radio and Television Network.

I imagine so. But, no more so than the Chinese tourist in Germany who tried to report having his wallet stolen, but ended up mistakenly applying for asylum. The man, who spoke no English or German, spent two weeks in a migrant hostel before the linguistic snafu was untangled by a Mandarin speaker and the Red Cross.

However, if you're looking for real answers in life, here's one: **250**. That's the number of judges required, apparently, to inspect 5,000 varieties of cheese for the International Cheese Awards in Britain. Categories of judging:

flavor, aroma, texture, and appearance.

Nothing about bathing suits, no performance art segment, and no Masters' theses discussions by contestants in their eclectic fields of endeavor, such as Cheese Cosmology -- thankfully.

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OK, now that you're warmed up, we'll go with the Lightning Round of Weird:

- Two were arrested at a pawn shop in Tennessee when they tried to sell stolen items in a pawn shop -- to the proprietor, who was the owner of the goods in the first place, stolen from him, by the same two trying to pawn them. Voila! Instant Karma!

- Philadelphia party-block residents have been told to stop swimming in "dumpster pools." Puts a new spin on Dumpster-diving.

- India is now offering Ganges holy water at their post offices. People can also have it delivered to their mailing addresses. Odd: The water sales dipped when the company bottling it began *filtering* it -- but sales picked back up again when they *stopped* offering the *cleaner* water.

- A sign at a Virginia cafe offered discounted prices for customers who offered a greeting and a "please" with their coffee order -- \$1.75, versus up to \$5.00. (It was a small joke. No one was really charged \$5.00 for a small coffee, although I imagine the temptation was tremendous with some fussy, demanding, grumpy customers.)

- If there were any fussy, demanding, or grumpy coffee customers in Hugo, Colorado, they must have been from out of town. Why? THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, was found in some of the town's feeder wells. (OK, that's my own little joke, this time, along with this one: *I bet bar fights were down 97%*

.) Do-Not-Use orders went out from the water people, lines were flushed, and the mystery continues -- especially as cannabinoids are not water soluble.

Weird.

Finally, to end on a stinky note, to help you re-acclimate to reality again, after this nice break we've had, away from The News: For the first time since 1937, the *Amorphophallus titanum* bloomed at the New York Botanical Garden at the end of July. Native to Indonesia, it can grow 12 feet tall in its native habitat, but 6 to 8 feet in,

um, uh

, captivity.

When it blooms, the flower smells like rotten meat -- hence its popular name, *corpse flower*.

Just imagine: The last time this flower bloomed was right around the time financiers and fascists tried to overthrow the U.S. government, in the 1930s! Perhaps it's just a coincidence,

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then, that...

No -- no, hang on: I said we were going to stay away from politics. Let's land this thing on a softer runway:

The 30 million dollar, seven-story, "Big Basket" Longaberger building in Ohio is being sold. Architects made it look exactly like a picnic basket. If there is any justice in this world, a division of YogiCo or BooBoo Industries will pick it up, just for giggles.

Beer's done. Hello again, cruel world.

Today's Bonuses:

Creation Museum: ☐ *If you can't attend, at least spend some quality monitor time here checking out how Creationists Do Better Science, or the new Aliens - Fact or Fiction? show:*

<http://creationmuseum.org>

Who's on First?

<http://www.wimp.com/whos-on-first-by-abbott-and-costello/>

Not surreal enough? ☐ *With my apologies for the site's politically-incorrect naming convention, this humorous site offers an avalanche of amusing language confusions:*

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<http://www.english.com>