

Oz Plus One Equals Pi

Written by Alex Baer
Friday, 24 July 2015 15:59

Here we go again: I freely admit I have backtracked, softening my previous, hard-line pledge to ignore the current rerun of clowns-n-circuses at the media's sleazy carny show. Yet, here I am again, enjoying the bread-n-circuses spectacle of hyperbolic GOP candidates already frothing at the lip-line, competing in a Presidential election still a far cry -- although a much nearer, full-blown panic -- down the road.

The thing is: This is a lot like exploring a fingertip with tweezers, tracking a wily, elusive splinter you'd swear was actively avoiding you. It's like getting all the sun-baked duct-tape residue off a glass-fronted storm door. It's like chasing cancer around your body with glowing Mad Scientist Rays and Big Pharma's Top 100 Greatest Hits: These things are all theoretically possible -- even technically possible -- just be ready for some DEFCON-2-level pains in the patootie, the temples, and elsewhere.

So, here I go again: ☐ Hello, my name is Alex, and I am a recovering political innocent...

(To be clear: Far as I can see, there has been no change since yesterday. This is still Oz, there is still no peeking behind the curtain allowed, we are all still in the same handbasket, and the GOP candidates on the yellow brick road are still scrambling around, trying in vain to rustle up some brains, some heart, and some courage. We join a portion of our show already in progress...)

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I used to have much higher hopes for our fine country, having been brought up optimistically, and in optimistic times. That's probably the trouble, right there: No flying cars, and no more shared optimism or community spirit -- just grubbing in the dirt for whatever leftovers you can get, for whatever crumbs fall from the table, whenever the Trickle Down Gravity has been suspended.

Meanwhile: The Poster Boy of Ignorance and Arrogance, The Donald, continues to gather garlands of appreciative dolts and wreaths of adoring *maroons*, veritably *hyp-no-tized* by the billions in his paper wealth, by the alien Tribble trembling atop his peaked head...

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Nowadays, I am often no fan of reality. This is especially true when I consider that I share this incredibly wonderful planet with a great many fog-bound crazy people whose heads have been dipped in an invisible Republican sealant.

This coating allows air in and out, and other regular functions, like showering, and so on, to occur without, *um*, washday tragedy -- but that coating somehow cripples and blocks all independent critical thinking. This coating hates logic and fact, and keeps out these terrible, anti-Republican contaminants. The coating, however, encourages talking-point lip service, lock-step maneuvering, and rote learning.

The coating might also prevent us from seeing that the Coated are no longer human, are in fact the Lizards of Oz, or whatever -- a startling thought, I know, but one worthy of exploration. For all I know, Republicans are carrying on the proud tradition of sci-fi alarmists everywhere, and are doing the War-of-the-Worlds Tango and the Pod-People Two-Step while humoring the humanity around them, en route to taking over the world -- one state and one gubernatorial post at a time, one presidency and country at a time.

You have to admit, a generous helping of the Coated seem quite alien, when they get to cheering some of the people and ideas that get them so inexplicably excited. Go listen to Trump, or any of them, then come back and try to tell me the alien invasion hasn't already happened, right under our noses...

The fact that all of the Coated People are Republicans should kick-start an investigation of some kind, or at least trigger some new educational research, but there's been no such activity begun or announced. Just like the Coated People themselves, the first step to *solving* a problem is admitting you *have* a problem.

There's been no such admitting going on, not that I know of. And, like all good conspiracy theories, the fun and frustration of the thing is trying to prove a negative. Add in a little spice of National Security Seasoning, in which everything is kept absolutely secret for no reason whatever, and for hundreds of years, and you have a fine old Gordian knot throbbing at attention.

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Police everywhere will tell you that the amount of eyewitness accounts varies according to the amount of witnesses on hand, and at pretty much one-for-one ratio. You have 50 witnesses to a bank robbery, and you'll have almost as many versions of what happened.

Thing is, the eyewitness accounts will all still be about a bank robbery, although the details of numbers of people or dress or where everyone stood, or spoken remarks made will vary.

With the Coated People, even though they look like us, and still eat and sleep and so on (at least we still think that's what they're doing, although it's hard to tell with that invisible coating what's *really* going on in there), their versions will be all over the map.

Some will be convinced they've witnessed an attempt to overthrow the sanctity of marriage. Others will swear they've just seen a bid to nullify the Second Amendment. More will say they just saw some people try to smother corporations being made people, an attempt to demand that money isn't speech. Still others will insist they just saw a demand by government that all people have a right to medical care.

Bank robbery? □ How many gunmen? □ Which way did they go?

Nah -- different planet. The Coated People and the Uncoated People can't even agree on the basic interpretation of events and actions, so of what possible use are details, or nuance, or ameliorating influences?

To quote Bill the Cat: *Aaacck. □ Thbbft!*

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Bloom County has been having some fun with The Donald for the last couple days, bringing up the family's Lhasa Apso -- the humorously named Goldy Tinkles -- along with the resemblance of head fur on the Trumpish noggin, and the possibility that canine hair plugs are involved. The dog appeared in the comic strip, from our of the famed Anxiety Closet, triggering mass laughter hereabouts -- especially on a note of the dog returning home "for dinner," and of Trumpy enjoying some "dog drop soup."

Truly, it takes *wokking* the dog to a new level. (Urp.) There is also, today, a bounty of two million bucks if Trump can prove no genetic relationship between his head fur and that of the dog's.

- It is on days like this that I am glad I have so far beaten the Reaper via military service, a couple car wrecks, heart attack, lung cancer, and a brain tumor. How I, or any of us, survived this long, desiccated interval with no *Bloom County* is an utter mystery.

(You know, I still look at Trump and think about making my first billion dollars, by making a line of Political Inaction Figures, more-or-less lifelike, after the more-or-less lifelike candidates themselves. Then, too, in daydreams, I look at Trump and think, cah-ching: *Shiatsu Chia Pet!*)

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People who think money is speech and corporations are people, and that towering bales of dollar bills -- identified and sourced, or not at all -- should be freely allowed in politics, should look at Trump and celebrate their ideological victories:

- *This is how it looks when money is absolutely no object.*

Trumpy's a billionaire and could afford to run forever, keeping us mesmerized and puzzled about endless pronouncements. Even if this were the case, I have no hope whatsoever that the Coated People will suddenly shock themselves awake, realizing that bottomless pits of campaign war-chest money are not very helpful in running a democracy, nor its politics.

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Trump has been given credit for running a spectacular and emotional campaign. I see this in the same light as giving humanity credit for inventing H-Bombs, train wrecks, orphanage fires, Gulf oil spills, nuclear power catastrophes, and plans to drill in the Arctic.

The lack of fact and the surplus of emotion has kept the porch light of the Coated People clogged with moths, however -- a measure they use to determine success.

At least we are being given some instructive, rational light by Bernie Sanders to offset Trump's bombastic heat. It's actually quite stunning, being able to view *both* extremes of the spectrum in *one* race -- the most heart and the most smarts at the one end, guiding us to look upward, at the stars and re-imagining our country, with Trump at the other, chewing his foot.

Like chewing gum and soda pop, and many other products, there's really nothing of substance to talk about, so anything that is said in advertising is automatically hype and empty verbiage. Thing is, ballyhooed brouhaha and promotional razzmatazz draws crowds. Me, I like substance. I also like front porch lights, but am not big on moths, either.

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Maybe the Universe has an algorithm running in the background, one not yet discovered, in which we have to endure a certain number of dumbasses before we get to have a bright bulb among us in the darkness. Maybe the formula says we need 200 million Trumps before we get a Sanders. And, if you want an Albert Einstein or Leonardo da Vinci -- well, hang on to your hat: You have a wait coming, and some fools to suffer, gladly or not.

Still, I can't shake the feeling that everyone is needed on this planet, that we all fit the Big Picture Puzzle just right, with no extra pieces left over.

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The Universe has an absurd, surreal sense of humor. I sometimes think I will never come to understand or appreciate all its jokes -- especially the ones it keeps pulling on me and mine.

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Rick Perry has started to yank on Trump's chain, urging him to pull back from the teetering edge of insanity. Perry is himself no bargain, and no advertisement for sanity, and his motivation for urging restraint comes at a time in which Perry can benefit from appearing to be reasonable, while selling himself -- even if Perry will, like all GOP candidates, in time find benefit from being unreasonable, and sell himself out.

But, I always enjoy seeing some measure of reason in play, even if on lightweight, fluffy issues. Who knows? If reason is exercised often enough, even by mental lightweights like Perry and Trump, reason might again bloom in the United States on big issues, too -- which would really be something to see.

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I'm changeable. I bounce back and forth like a ping pong ball in a room filled with mousetraps, shooting off in one direction, then come back to Earth, just long enough to spring another trap, and off I go again, shooting off in a different direction.

After the last moderate Republican slipped from the face of the Earth -- the bones are yet to be found in dinosaur digs, so the time and place of the passing are not yet solidified -- I viewed the GOP with disdain, fear, laughter, disbelief, dismay. I have been full circle, from a desire for positive, smart, heartfelt action from our leaders, to one of "at least, do no harm," to one of "all right, you clowns -- blow it all up, and let's get the tedious waiting out of the way, and get to rebuilding sanely."

Now? I dunno. Politics is the art of compromise, and the middle is where we all used to

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reasonably meet. The middle is long gone. It will not be returning anytime soon -- although you can check back on this one after the Big Comet hits, and we'll probably be ready to huddle together for meeting group needs again, in the smoldering wreckage of civilization.

Now, however, the choice is, where do you want to dwell -- on which opposite end of the spectrum? I know which end has been getting all the attention, and I know the end on which I want to live. These two haven't been the same thing for the entire time I've been alive and allowed to vote.

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Politics is now like NASCAR, I continue to see. Both groups have access to a closed course not open to the public. There are sponsorships, money changes hands. There are complicated rules, and starting and finishing lines, and designated positions assigned. Everyone goes around and around in a circle, chasing their own tails, faster and faster. Teams are involved, along with us-or-them, do-or-die mentalities. Cheers and jeers erupt periodically, and apparently at random moments...

Nothing much gets accomplished, but both groups insist on chest-beating rights for all their accomplishments. And so on.

In mathematics, which is to say the world of logic, Pi is an irrational number, even though a circle is a perfect form. Those relationships are locked together for all eternity.

Insanity might well be permeating everything now. (I will always blame the Coated People, but I'm starting to see some hints of the Universe placing in motion a set of opposites, perhaps to act as a Heat Pump, as Perpetual Motion Machines never caught on.)

Even more hopelessly now, at this moment -- contemplating Trump, media's coverage, our own rushed, sound-bite mentalities and needs -- I try to envision myself, or anyone, attempting to explore the exits off this racetrack. I sense the best we can do is a figure-eight.

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In one way, that figure-eight track is a Mobius strip with the initial illusion of progress. In another way, that same figure-eight track, shoved on its side, is a Googolplex -- an infinity of a equally perplexing order.

You pays your money, as they say, and you takes your choice. That seems to be the end of it, outside of picking which end of the stick -- or the political spectrum -- you want to live on.

However, please don't expect me to be satisfied, living in a world where all the doors are labeled either *damned if you do*, or *damned if you don't*.

Surely, some new exits off this race track are worth seeking.

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(I know, stop calling you Shirley. And, sorry, but it's really hard to hear you, over George Jetson's panicked shouts, over and over, "Jane! Get me off this crazy thing!")

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Postscript:

- Geez -- all this madness, and no one along the border thought to "invite" Trump to an "undisclosed location" for a serious "conference."
- A real shame, how so many opportunities go by the boards, wasted.
- > Sigh. <

Post-Postscript:

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- Sign on a roadside, with a phone number to call:
- *Septic tanks pumped*
- *Swimming pools filled*
- *Not same truck.*

The Coated People are not yet everywhere, as this sign, and *Bloom County*, clearly prove.

Let there be music in the streets, and dancing -- even though the Pod-People Bunny-Hop and the Trump-Two-Step are the most popular numbers at the moment.

Fads, *thank Zeus*, change.

And that's as close to Hope as I'm likely to get anytime soon, so pour me a drink.

What kind?

"Well," he said knowingly, about to pull in a sensory favor from the film, *When Harry Met Sally*, "I'll have what she's having..."

Today's Bonuses:

Bloom County bounty-hunting: <https://www.facebook.com/berkeleybreathed?fref=photo>

Perry's appeal: <http://hotair.com/archives/2015/07/22/rick-perry-unloads-in-speech-trump-is-a-cancer-on-conservatism-and-i-will-not-stay-silent-on-his-mean-spirited-politics/comment-page-1/>

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Stop this crazy thing (original loop) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2N3gyhgHhe8>

Stop this crazy thing (updated mix) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEHp3JRZgKM>

WHMS Clip: [https://www.youtube.com / watch?v=F-bsf2x-aeE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-bsf2x-aeE)