

## **STUFF THAT SEEMED INTERESTING AT THE TIME**

Hello Family and Friends:

Another Sunday...

...and...

...some Stuff that Seemed Interesting at the Time...

All the best...

Don

### **STUFF TABLE OF CONTENTS**

This week our curiosity brings us to:

<b>STUFF THAT SEEMED INTERESTING AT THE TIME</b>	<b>1</b>
STUFF TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
REMINDER ON DONTURNER.WORDPRESS.COM STUFF	1
POST-ELECTION GOOD, BAD, AND I DON'T KNOW STUFF	2
WHEN I SAID 'CHANGE' WHAT I REALLY MEANT STUFF	3
STUFF THAT FOLKS SAID THAT MADE ME LAUGH STUFF	5
A PERSPECTIVE ON OUR UNIVERSE STUFF	6
ABSOLUTE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY STUFF	10
1491 BOOK STUFF	10
STUFF FOLKS HAVE SAID THAT MADE ME THINK OF MY STUFF STUFF	14
WHY FOLKS DO WHAT THEY DO STUFF	15
EXCERPTS FROM A DOG AND A CAT'S DIARY STUFF	16
INTRODUCING BLACKMAX – BLACK HOLE SIMULATOR STUFF	18
WHY, WHY, WHY STUFF	20
THIS IS TRUE STUFF	20
WAYS OF DEALING WITH THE BURDENS OF LIFE STUFF	21
FINAL THOUGHT STUFF	22
EXPLANATORY – YET POIGNANT - DISCLAIMER	24

### **REMINDER ON DONTURNER.WORDPRESS.COM STUFF**

Folks, as I've mentioned before, "Stuff" now sits up every Sunday – give or take - at the following URL:

<http://donturner.wordpress.com/>

Typically "out there" by noon on Sundays – sometimes earlier, sometimes later.

Presently, I send out a blind cc from one of my gmail accounts to notify folks – but this often gets “kicked out” as potential SPAM by some of the Corporate and AOL filters. That is the reason I don’t send it from my primary account.

Therefore, though I will continue to send a “bcc” to folks on my mailing list over time I would suggest you simply check that site for the latest or learn how to establish a RSS feed.

## POST-ELECTION GOOD, BAD, AND I DON’T KNOW STUFF

Okay, we’ve elected the most liberal, unqualified, person ever to run for the most important position in the land. Yet, hey, the majority have spoken – that is what they want.

What do I take away from this adventure into political looney-land? Well...

### The Good

- We’ve elected a person of African-American descent. About time. A truly monumental achievement and testimony to the possibilities that exist in the greatest country the world has ever known. Think there was a lot more qualified folks than he, but at least we can ‘check that box’ off and not have ‘race’ come into the political picture anymore. Frankly, I’m tired of hearing about racial divides in this country. Now if we could only elect a left-hand Hungarian recovering Engineer with an eclectic view on life the Universe would be in harmony.
- I’m assuming the ‘Reverends’ Jackson and Sharpton are out of a job of creating racist schisms for any event from a flood in New Orleans to an alleged rape in NYC. As two of the biggest media whores and – at least in ‘Reverend’ Jackson’s case when it comes to counseling Presidents on sexual escapades – blatant hypocrites these two should just shut up and sit down, period.
- As a segue from the aforementioned point, The ‘race card’ is no longer an option. Yep, t’is gone, finite, nada, no longer a backup ploy when logic and common sense aren’t lining up the world just as you would prefer it be. Sorry Bucko, just can’t pull that one out anymore and shove in the face of America. I had the ‘race card’ played on me this year. Yep, by a young, very bright and talented individual who graduated from a top engineering school. I never really had anyone of African-American heritage do that to me. I consider it to be one of the most insulting things anyone has ever said to me – and folks, I’ve had some real ‘zingers’ thrown my way. Bottom line, if I hear the ‘race card’ again I’m going to give that person a good ole arse-whoopin!
- I no longer have to give raises to those folks who make less than \$250k per year. The government will be lowering their taxes to such a degree while both increasing mine and my company’s that they can take their tax cuts as raises.
- I no longer have to tip 15% for meals. Those folks are getting a tax break, I’m not – that simple.
- Apparently, most of America will not have to worry about money, mortgages, college funding, corporate collapses, terrorism, healthcare, psoriasis, post-nasal drip, stuffed up toilets, etc. The new “Big Brother Government” has officially been voted by the majority.
- The Republicans got their butt kicked in such a conclusive manner that they are going to have to rethink the entire party. They have lost their way starting in 2000 and are not even close to the political group that I USED to be a card-carrying member. I’m a fiscal

conservative, a constitutional conservative, a moral and Faith-based conservative. Unfortunately, at this time there is no political party I can associate with.

### The Bad

- We have a President-Elect who talked about 'change' but whose transition Team and appointees to date look like the old Democrat guard. Nothing really new other than they now have the White House, Senate, and House.
- We have a majority of Americans who have officially endorsed bigger government and a much larger role of the government both in the public arena and it is only a matter of time to have them include what is behind your own front door. It is this simple, those of President-Elect Obama's political persuasion have a fundamental belief that they know what is better for you than you know yourself. I'm not throwing a jab here - that is just the way they think boys and girls.

### The I Don't Know

- I don't know how quickly the President-Elect Obama Administration can turn the United States of America (USA) into the United Socialist States of America (USSA) – it is possible to significantly move forward his Socialist agenda in four years? Eight for sure.
- I don't know how easily President-Elect Obama will be manipulated by both sworn enemies and enemies of indifference like French President Nicholas Sarkozy who seems particularly interested in becoming Obama's new Best Buddy.
- I don't know how long it will take for the 20 and 30 something's to realize there is no way Obama can deliver on his campaign promises without totally destroying the capitalistic foundation of this country.
- I don't know how emboldened Al Qaeda will become now that – with the Surge – we've got them on the ropes. Now, knowing that Obama is pulling us out of Iraq as quickly as he can, they can tell their followers, "hey, Hussein, just wait a year or so and we'll have fertile ground to turn Iraq into the next fundamentalist Islamic country."
- I don't know if the Republican Party – or maybe a new Conservative Party – can get it's act together fast enough to put up any kind of challenge in 2012. My voice may be like an acorn falling in the forest with no one around to hear it.
- I don't know what the long-term effects of all of this will be for the core values of this country. We have now – via President-Elect Obama – a populous-endorsed voice changing the basic tenets of this country from one of "protecting the rights of the individual" to "expanding the power of the government and subordinating the rights of the individual." I'm told I'm now supposed to sacrifice more? Sounds like the opening lines of Adolf's speech to the German people circa late 1930's. Of course, it was the same guy with the strange mustache that said, "***How fortunate for leaders that men do not think.***"

As with all things, time will tell. I will continue to pray for the country, pray for my President, yes, even pray for my President-Elect. However, I can only imagine what possible political horrors are ahead of us as we gently lay down in the bed of which we've made by our votes last Tuesday.

## WHEN I SAID 'CHANGE' WHAT I REALLY MEANT STUFF

Thanks Harvey

Okay, at least I have some context here. All through the election, President-Elect Obama said he would bring 'change' to Washington. However, countless times I asked his supporters what that change was and they couldn't answer.

Now, unfortunately, it looks we are starting to see how this 'change' will be defined.

+++

## OBAMA'S 'CHANGE': BACK TO THE DEMOCRATIC WASHINGTON INSIDERS

By DICK MORRIS & EILEEN MCGANN

Published on DickMorris.com on November 7, 2008

Printer-Friendly Version

What's with Obama's choice of old-time Clinton cronies and recycled Washington insiders to run the transition to his new politics of change?

Can't the anti-Washington insiders President-elect find anyone who isn't a Beltway has-been?

Judging by the appointments to his transition committee and leaks about possible top staff and Cabinet choices, Obama appears to be practicing the politics of status quo, not the politics of change.

Obama based his innovative campaign on an emphatic and convincing commitment to change the culture of Washington and bring in new people, new ideas, and new ways of doing business.

But now, Obama has definitely changed his tune. As president-elect, he's brought back the old Washington hacks, party regulars, and Clinton sycophants that he so frequently disparaged. Like Jimmy Carter, the last President who ran as an outsider, Obama has reached out to the same old folks who dominate the Democratic Party and represent the status quo.

His Transition Committee looks like a reunion of the Clinton Administration. No new ideas of how to reform the system there. The Chairman, John Podesta, was Clinton's Chief of Staff. He presided over the outrageous last minute pardons and his style is strictly inside-the-beltway and make-no-waves.

Then there's Carol Browner, Clinton's competent former EPA Administrator who became the consummate Washington insider. She's Madeline Albright's partner and recently married mega-lobbyist and former Congressman Tom Downey. During the uproar over Dubai taking over U.S. ports, Browner brought Downey to meet with Senator Chuck Schumer to plead Dubai's case. Downey was paid half a million dollars to push Dubai's position. He's also a lobbyist for Fannie Mae, paid half a million to try to cover their rears on the subprime mortgage mess. Is his change?

Federico Pena was Clinton's Secretary of Transportation and of Energy. The President felt he was unduly soft on Air Florida after their crash and lost confidence in him. Now he's back as a Transition Committee member.

Bill Daley, Clinton's former Secretary of Commerce and the brother of the Mayor of Chicago, is the epitome of the old Democratic establishment. Clinton appointed him to the Fannie Mae Board and his son worked as a lobbyist for the agency. Aren't these the kind of folks that Obama ran against?

Larry Summers, President of Harvard and former Clinton Secretary of the Treasury is not exactly an outsider either. He's also alienated more than a few with his bizarre suggestion that women may be genetically inferior to men in math and science.

Susan Rice, Assistant Secretary of State under Clinton advised John Kerry and Mike Dukakis. Does that tell you enough?

Obama has named one of his big bundlers - Michael Froman, an executive at Citigroup. Is this supposed to symbolize change?

Obama's choice of a spokesperson for the transition is also surprising; hers' is definitely not the face of reason and new politics. Stephanie Cutter is the brash and combative former Clinton, Kerry, and Ted Kennedy mouthpiece. The liberal DailyKos.com once described Cutter as "a moron to the nth degree" when she tried unsuccessfully to force the New York Times' Adam Nagourney to treat her unsolicited email criticizing Howard Dean as "background" without mentioning her name.

Speaking of brash, Rahm Emmanuel, the new White House Chief of Staff, makes Cutter look timid. Rahm is also a former Clinton White House staffer - and a very obnoxious one. He spent his White House years leaking to the Washington Post whenever he didn't like what the President was doing. Even Bill Clinton stopped trusting him. Any hopes of Obama keeping his commitment to reach across the aisle would go right out the window with Rahm's appointment. Instead of extending a hand to the opposition, it would be like raising just one finger. And Rahm's strident demeanor laced with the 'f' word in every sentence will do little to elevate the bipartisan dialogue in Washington.

Christopher Edley, another member of the transition team, is Dean of the Berkeley Law School. He's a former member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission under Clinton and his wife, Maria Echaveste was Clinton's Deputy Chief of Staff.

Transition committee staffer Christine Varney was a Federal Trade Commissioner under Clinton and worked in the White House.

Throughout the early debates, Obama criticized Hillary as part of the inside-the beltway establishment that needed to go. But now he's reaching out to these exact same folks. Some change.

**STUFF THAT FOLKS SAID THAT MADE ME LAUGH STUFF**

The mother of three notoriously unruly youngsters was asked whether or not she'd have children if she had it to do over again.

Sure," she replied, "but not the same ones."

-----

My wife seems to be losing her sense of humor for no apparent reason.

Why just the other day, she got mad when she announced that she was going to the beauty parlor.

I asked, "Are you going in for an estimate or are you going to get the work done?"

-----

A husband and wife were at a party chatting with some friends when the subject of marriage counseling came up.

"Oh, we'll never need that. My husband and I have a great relationship," the wife explained.

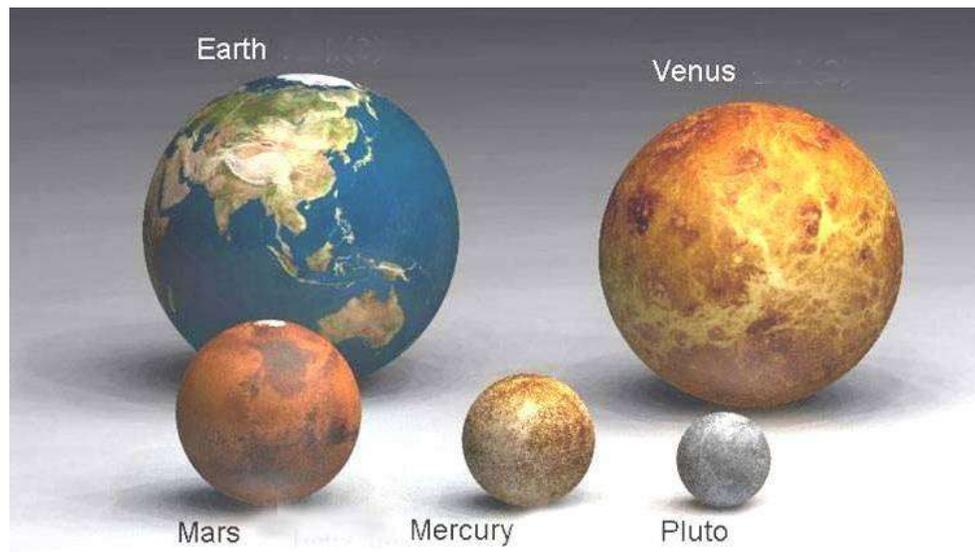
"He was a communications major in college and I majored in theater arts. He communicates real well and I act like I'm listening."

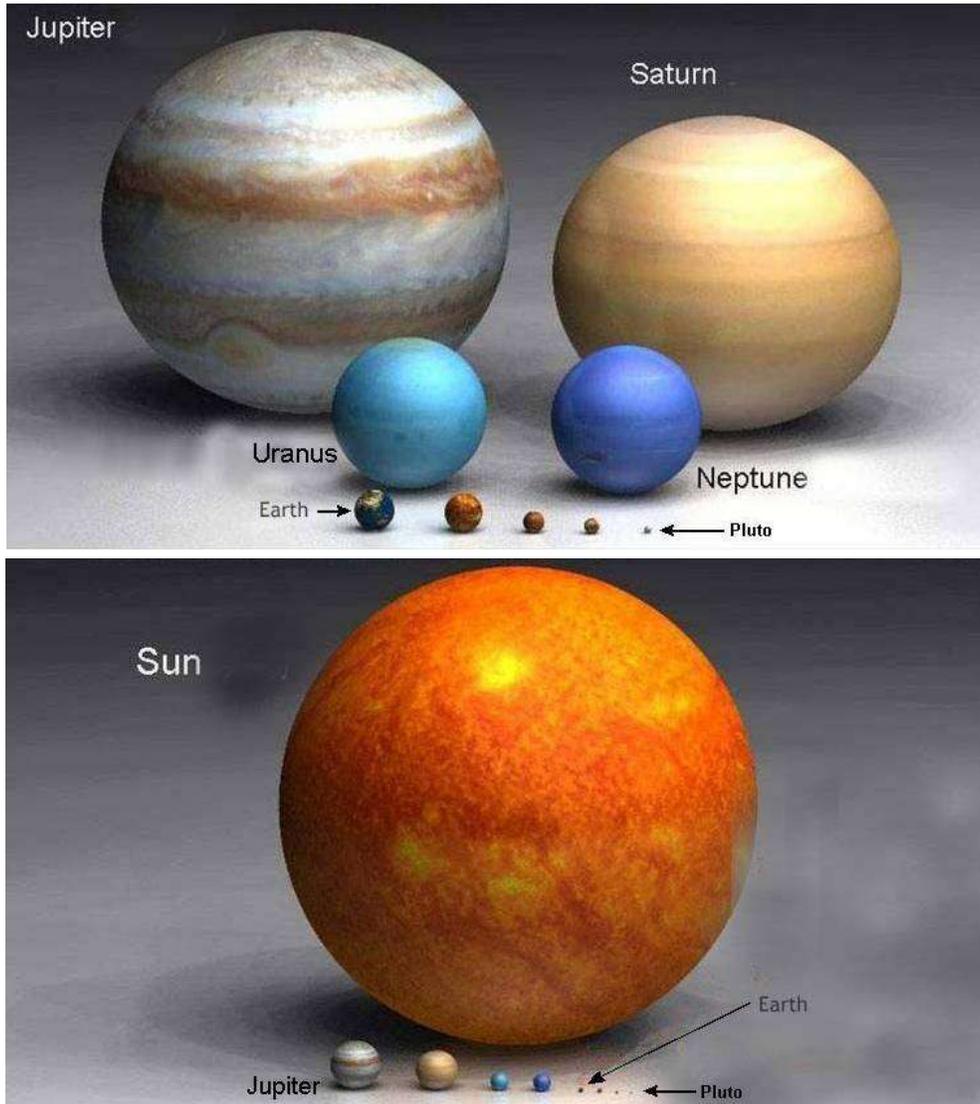
## **A PERSPECTIVE ON OUR UNIVERSE STUFF**

Thanks Uncle Dick

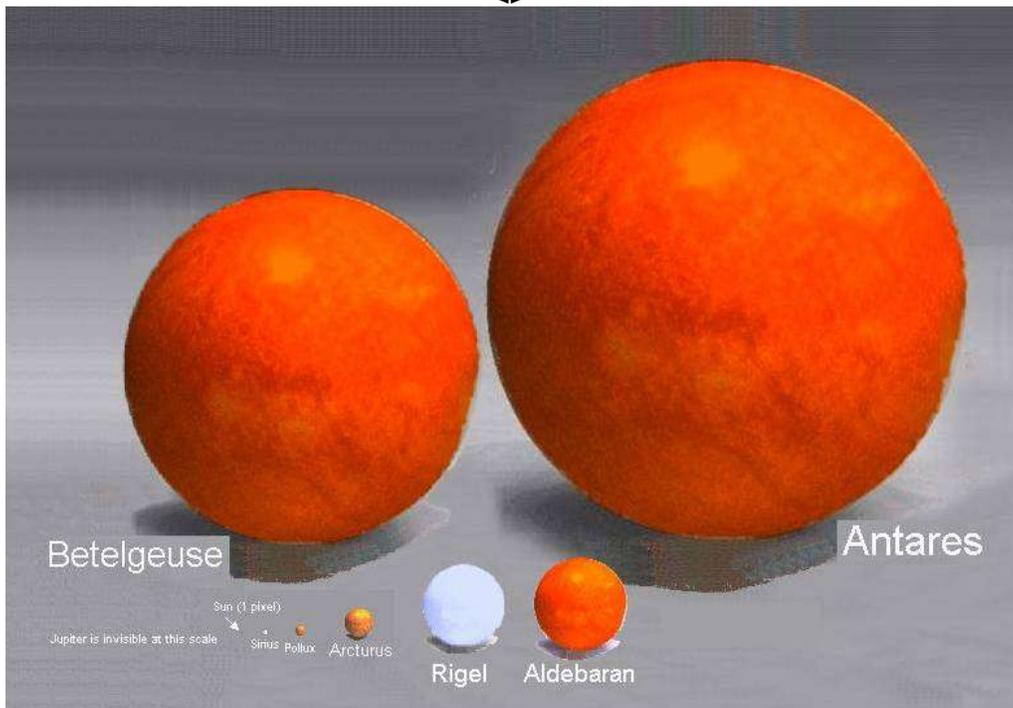
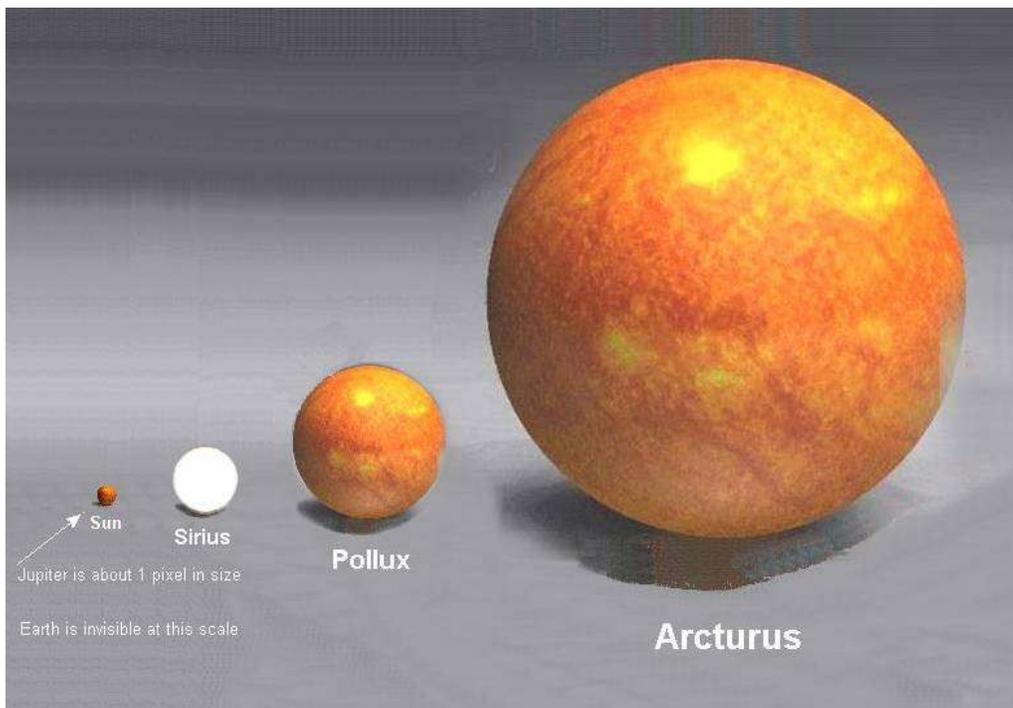
I'm sure some of you have seen this-it's humbling and worth seeing again! It puts the election and we earthlings in somewhat of a different perspective!

Enjoy!





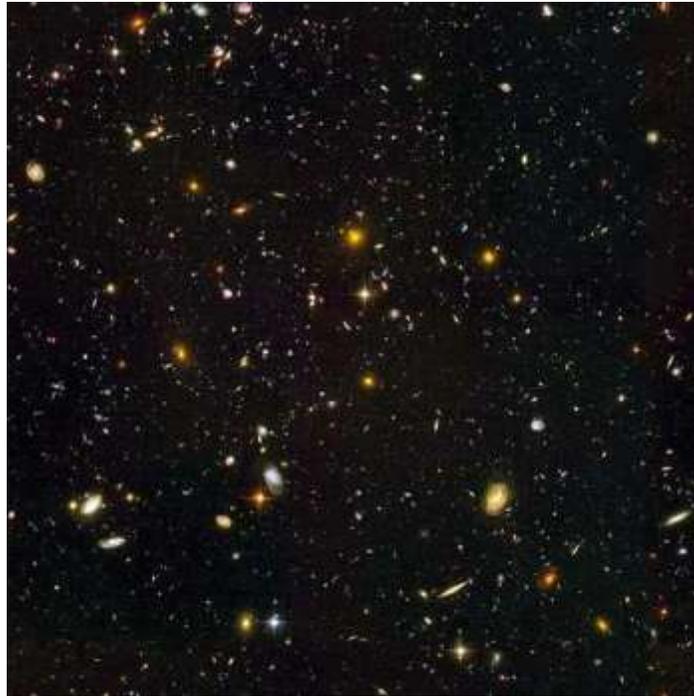
I certainly thought this was enlightening. Beyond our sun.  
It's a big universe.



Antares is the 15th brightest star in the sky.  
It is more than 1000 light years away.  
Now how big are you?

Now TRY to wrap your mind around this.....

This is a Hubble Telescope Ultra Deep Field Infrared View of countless 'ENTIRE' Galaxies Billions of Light-Years Away.



Below is a close up of one of the darkest regions of the photo above.



Humbling, isn't it?

Now How Big Are You?

And how big are the things that upset you today?

Keep life in perspective

Be Happy...

...and don't sweat the small stuff!

### **ABSOLUTE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY STUFF**

A U.S. Department of Water representative stopped at a ranch and talked with an old rancher. He told the rancher, "I need to inspect your ranch for your water allocation."

The old rancher said, "Okay, but don't go in that field over there."

The Water representative said, "Mister, I have the authority of the Federal Government with me.

See this card? The card means I am allowed to go **WHEREVER I WISH** on any agricultural land. No questions asked or answered. Have I made myself clear? Do you understand?"

The old rancher nodded politely and went about his chores.

Later, the old rancher heard loud screams and saw the Water Rep running for the fence and close behind was the rancher's bull.

The bull was gaining on the Water Rep with every step.

The Rep was clearly terrified, so the old rancher immediately threw down his tools, ran to the fence and shouted out.....

"Your card! Your card! Show him your card!"



I like that one!



### **1491 BOOK STUFF**

Just finished reading a phenomenal book entitled "1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus. A fascinating read that is a real eye-opener when it comes to the indigenous folks from Canada to the United States, through Mexico, Central America, and down through South America.

Someone once said that "history is written by the victors" and that is certainly true when you look at how Europe recorded the America's for prosperity.

Anyway, summary from Wikipedia is below – if you want a fresh perspective on history I highly recommend this book.

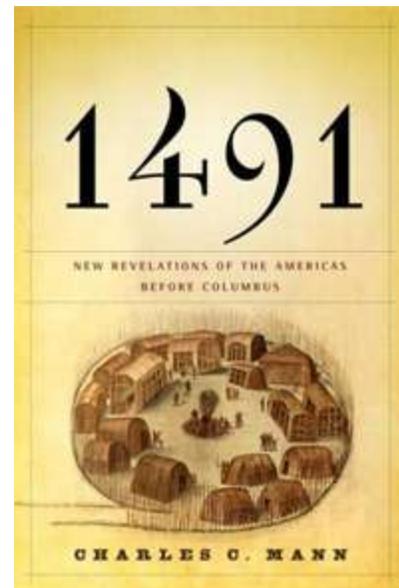
+++

1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus is a 2005 non-fiction book by American author Charles C. Mann about the pre-Columbian Americas. The book argues that there is evidence accumulated over the last several decades suggesting that human populations in the Western Hemisphere - that is, the indigenous peoples of the Americas - were larger in number, had arrived earlier, were more sophisticated culturally, and controlled and shaped the natural landscape to a greater extent than had been previously thought.

### Book summary

An indicative map of the prominent political entities extant in the Western Hemisphere c. 1491 C.E., as presented in 1491. The past 140 years have seen scientific revolutions in many fields, including demography, climatology, epidemiology, economics, botany, genetics, image analysis, palynology, molecular biology, and soil science. As new evidence has accumulated, long-standing views about the pre-Columbian world have been challenged and reexamined. Although there is no consensus, and Mann acknowledges controversies, Mann asserts that the general trend among scientists is to acknowledge that

- (a) the population levels were probably higher than traditionally believed among scientists and closer to the number estimated by "high counters"; (b) humans probably arrived in the Americas earlier than thought over the course of multiple waves of migration to the New World (not solely by the Bering land bridge over a relatively short period of time);
- The level of cultural advancement and settlement range was higher and broader than previously imagined; and
- The New World was largely not a wilderness but an environment controlled by humans (mostly with fire).



These three main foci (origins/population, culture, environment) form the basis for three parts of the book.

### Introduction

Mann was inspired to write this book because he was taught in high school that "Indians came across the Bering Strait about 13,000 years ago, that they had so little impact on their environment that even after millennia of habitation the continents remain mostly wilderness." He examines what he terms "Holmberg's mistake", named for the anthropologist Allan R. Holmberg, who lived among the Siriono in the 1940s and came to the conclusion that they were the most "culturally backward peoples" in the world. Mann writes that Holmberg's theory was in fact a mistake, because smallpox and influenza devastated Siriono villages during the 1920s, and the Siriono were the "persecuted survivors of a recently shattered culture."

### Part One: Numbers From Nowhere

Mann first tackles New England in the 1600s, and the idea that European technologies were superior to Indian technologies. Guns were a prime example, as they were seen by Indians as nothing more than "noisemakers," and they were difficult to aim. Famous colonist John Smith

even noted that "the awful truth...it could not shoot as far as an arrow could fly." Indian technology was actually more impressive, such as the moccasin, which was far more comfortable and sturdy than the boots Europeans wore, and were actually preferred by most of them during that era because its padding offered a much more silent approach to warfare. Canoes are also a prime example that disproves the myth of superior technology of the Europeans. The canoes made by Indians were faster and more maneuverable than any small European boats.

By the 1960s, Henry F. Dobyns researched records in the central cathedral in Lima, Peru, and found that upon European arrival, there were far more burials than baptisms recorded. "The Spaniards arrived and the Indians died – in huge numbers and incredible rates." Dobyns changed the way pre-Columbus America was looked at, particularly the Native Americans themselves.

Mann attempts to piece together how exactly the Inca Empire fell, if their population numbers far exceeded the armies of conquistadors like Francisco Pizarro. Heather Lechtmen explains that Europeans took metals and optimized their value by using them for their "hardness, strength, toughness, and sharpness," while Indian cultures such as the Inca used metals for "plasticity, malleability, and toughness." Simply put, Europeans used metals to produce materially resilient arms and assorted weapons ("swords and armor, rifles and cannons") whereas metal for the natives was more common within decoration and the creation of arts and craft. Although both cultures had access to and made use of metal, it was for differing purposes: "Europeans used metal for tools [while] Andean societies primarily used it as a token of wealth, power, and community affiliation."

The horse was also thought to have been an advantage for the Europeans, but in cases such as the Inca, switchback roads made them vulnerable, but any anti-horse inventions were not used efficiently enough to successfully stop the Spanish intruders. The Inca Empire collapsed because by the time Europeans arrived, smallpox and other epidemics had already swept through cities quite easily, thanks to intricate road systems and huge population movements. Dobyns concluded that "the Inca were not defeated by steel and horses, but by disease and factionalism," referring to the civil war that came before clashes with the Spanish. From that point on, Dobyns became a "High Counter" (those who thought the number of Native Americans was close to 100 million) by estimating that more people lived in the Americas than previously thought. The Aztecs were also more advanced than previously conceived. Their societies had tlamatini, analogous to the Greek



An indicative map of the prominent political entities extant in the Western Hemisphere c. 1491 C.E., as presented in 1491.

"thinker-teacher," and "the disintegration of Native America was a loss not just to those societies but to the human enterprise as a whole."

There were critics of the High Counters, most notably was David Henige, who wrote *Numbers from Nowhere* (1998). Was it possible to just invent millions of people that there was no way of proving existed? Yet "Low Counters" commit the "intellectual sin of arguing from silence." The invention of carbon dating in 1949, made it possible to find out how old bones were, with the Clovis culture in New Mexico being one of the first to be examined. The culture first appeared between 13,500 and 12,900 years old, which was "just after the only time period in which migration from Siberia seemed to have been possible." Essentially, archeologists have spent the time since pushing back the date at which Indians were first present in the Americas, and the battle between High Counters and Low Counters went on.

### **Part Two: Very Old Bones**

Evidence linked to the Lagoa Santa skeletons that were uncovered in caves in Brazil, proved that Indians could have been living there for many thousands of years. Indians in this area come from the same haplogroup as natives in Siberia, making the conclusion "that Indians and Siberians share common ancestry."

Agriculture is another focus of this section, as Mann explores Andean and Mesoamerican cultures. A huge piece of that equation was the agricultural development of maize. Indians basically bred maize from scratch, as it had "no wild ancestor." Maize was grown on a milpa, an intricate system of planting multiple crops in one area that would be "nutritionally and environmentally complementary," and also promoted "long-term success." The development of maize was a pivotal part of Mesoamerican life that promoted high culture in civilizations such as the Olmec.

Evidence that some Mesoamerican cultures used calendars, and even the use of the wheel were discovered proving how far Indians had come. However, the wheel was only used for small toys, and not in advantageous ways. "Every society missed out on obvious technologies," and Mesoamericans did not have the luxury of "stealing" inventions from others, since they were geographically isolated in comparison to Eurasia. They also lacked the beasts of burden and the land was typically wet and boggy, thus limiting further advancement from the invention of the wheel.

### **Part Three: Landscape With Figures**

Mann attempts to bring it all together in the third and final section of 1491. He focuses on the Maya, whose population growth was about as rapid as its decline. Why did they disappear? Sylvanus Morley gave the best-known theory that "the Maya collapsed because they overshot the carrying capacity of their environment. They exhausted their resource base, began to die of starvation and thirst, and fled their cities en masse, leaving them as silent warnings of the perils of ecological hubris." This pattern is common among many Indian cultures. However, the myth that Indians were not active in transforming the land is untrue.

Most Indians shaped their environment with fire. Fire burns shrubs and trees, opening an area to sunlight, thereby benefitting plants that need sun, while inhibiting others. Burning encourages abundance of certain animals, while discouraging others. By using fire in this manner, William Cronon explains that "people accustomed to keeping domesticated animals lacked the conceptual tools to recognize that the Indians were practicing a more distant kind of

husbandry of their own." Indians simply domesticated animals and plant life differently than their European counterparts.

The single biggest missing link to the past was a lack of voices to the past. Europeans held biased and sometimes racist views of Indians, in addition to not speaking a common language. This fact led to people being misled with the result that they misunderstood Indians unjustly. In *Amazonia: Man and Culture in a Counterfeit Paradise*, Betty J. Meggers suggests the "law of environmental limitation of culture," meaning they "reached their optimal level of environment." Whatever Indians did before slash and burn the logic goes, had to have worked thanks to the acres of healthy forest seen before Europeans.

Mann concludes that Indians were a "keystone species," one that "affects the survival and abundance of many other species." By the time the Europeans arrived and settled in the Americas, the "boss" (Indians) had been almost completely eliminated. Disease ran rampant and killed off the Indians, disrupting their control of the environment. When Indians died, animal populations, such as that of the buffalo grew immensely. "Because they (Europeans) did not burn the land with the same skill and frequency as its previous occupants, the forests grew thicker." The world discovered by Christopher Columbus was "largely an inadvertent European creation."

Mann concludes with the idea that we must look to the past to right the future. "Native Americans ran the continent as they saw fit. Modern nations must do the same. If they want to return as much of the landscape as possible to its state in 1491, they will have to create the world's largest gardens."

+++

Sure seemed interesting at the time!

## STUFF FOLKS HAVE SAID THAT MADE ME THINK OF MY STUFF STUFF

Optimists make the best of it when they get the worst of it. -- Author Unknown

+++

You are not happy because you are well. You are well because you are happy. You are not depressed because trouble has come to you, but trouble has come to you because you are depressed. You can change your thoughts and feelings and then the outer things will come to correspond. Indeed, there is no other way of working. -- Emmet Fox

+++

Be kind to unkind people. They need it the most. -- Author Unknown

+++

We are at the very beginning of time for the human race. It is not unreasonable that we grapple with problems. But there are tens of thousands of years in the future. Our responsibility is to do what we can, learn what we can, improve the solutions and pass them on. -- Richard Feynman

+++

Perseverance is a great element of success. If you only knock long enough at the gate, you are sure to wake up somebody. -- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

+++

Life isn't about how to survive the storm, but how to dance in the rain.< BR>-- Author Unknown

+++

I run great risk of failing. It may be that I shall encounter ruin where I look for reputation and a career of honor. The chances are perhaps more in favor of ruin than of success. But, whatever may be the chances, I shall go on as long as any means of carrying on the fight are at my disposal. -- Anthony Trollope

## WHY FOLKS DO WHAT THEY DO STUFF

ScienceDaily (Nov. 9, 2008) — Why do some of us always do the right thing while others only seem to be out for themselves? Research by the universities of Exeter and Bristol offers a new explanation as to why such a wide range of personality traits has evolved in humans and other social species.

'Game theory' is used to predict the behaviour of individuals when making choices that depend on the choices of others. First developed as a tool for understanding economic behaviour, game theory is increasingly used in many diverse fields, ranging from biology and psychology to sociology and philosophy.

Using a mathematical model developed by Professor John McNamara from the University of Bristol, the team adapted the theory to allow individuals playing the 'game' to have some variation in their personalities to start with, and to monitor each other's cooperative tendencies as the game was being played.

McNamara described what happened using this new variation of the game: "What we found is that watching each other's behaviour produced individuals who were more socially aware, which in turn exaggerated the personality traits of both players. Some became more cooperative – because they became aware of the impact their decisions were making on their reputations – while others became less cooperative and exploited trusting individuals for personal gain."



In evolutionary terms, this trend is self-perpetuating: variation begets more variation, increasing the gap between those who trusted and co-operated, and those that exploited trusting individuals.

Dr Sasha Dall from the University of Exeter's School of Biosciences (Cornwall Campus) explains: "Our model showed a 'positive feedback' loop in which variation encourages social awareness,

which favours greater personality divergence, maintaining the need for social awareness. In other words, because people operate in such different ways, we need information to decide whether or not trust to them. This encourages a really diverse range of responses which, in turn, makes social awareness all the more important.”

Although the model focuses on individuals, the findings have implications for understanding whole societies. They are also significant because they offer an explanation as to why variation has evolved in human beings and other social species.

The findings are published in Proceedings of the Royal Society B.

## EXCERPTS FROM A DOG AND A CAT'S DIARY STUFF

Forget about racial, political, or college sports divisions amongst homo sapiens. When it comes to the very basic categories of folks on this third rock from good ole Sol there are basically two types of standing bipeds...

...Dog people...

...and Cat people...

(ED: Yes, I know I have four exotic birds, but I've had dogs and I'm a Dog person in temperament and preference.)

Not quite sure what is involved intellectually or emotionally but there is just something different about Cat people...

...How do you ask?...

...well, let's just take a look at the diary of each four-legged friend and see if we can discern this difference...

Enjoy!

+++

**Excerpts from a Dog's Diary.....**



8:00 am - Dog food! My favorite thing!

9:30 am - A car ride! My favorite thing!  
9:40 am - A walk in the park! My favorite thing!  
10:30 am - Got rubbed and petted! My favorite thing!  
12:00 PM - Lunch! My favorite thing!  
1:00 PM - Played in the yard! My favorite thing!  
3:00 PM - Wagged my tail! My favorite thing!  
5:00 PM - Milk bones! My favorite thing!  
6:00 PM - Oooh, Bath . Bummer.  
7:00 PM - Got to play ball! My favorite thing!  
8:00 PM - Wow! Watched TV with the people! My favorite thing!  
11:00 PM - Sleeping on the bed! My favorite thing!

### Excerpts from a Cat's Diary. ..



Day 983 of my captivity.

My captors continue to taunt me with bizarre little dangling objects.

They dine lavishly on fresh meat, while the other inmates and I are fed hash or some sort of dry nuggets. Although I make my contempt for the rations perfectly clear, I nevertheless must eat something in order to keep up my strength. In an attempt to show my disgust, I once again vomit on the carpet.

The only thing that keeps me going is my dream of escape.

Today I decapitated a mouse and dropped its headless body at their feet. I had hoped this would strike fear into their hearts, since it clearly demonstrates what I am capable of. However, they merely made condescending comments about what a 'good little hunter' I am. Bastards.

There was some sort of assembly of their accomplices tonight. I was placed in solitary confinement for the duration of the event. However, I could hear the noises and smell the food. I overheard that my confinement was due to the power of 'allergies.' I must learn what this means and how to use it to my advantage.

Today I was almost successful in an attempt to assassinate one of my tormentors by weaving around his feet as he was walking. I must try this again tomorrow -- but at the top of the stairs.

I am convinced that the other prisoners here are flunkies and snitches. The dog receives special privileges. He is regularly released - and seems to be more than willing to return. He is obviously retarded.

The bird has got to be an informant. I observe him communicating with the guards regularly. I am certain that he reports my every move. My captors have arranged protective custody for him in an elevated cell, so he is safe. For now...

## INTRODUCING BLACKMAX – BLACK HOLE SIMULATOR STUFF

Long-time readers of this weekly diatribe know of my love for astronomy, space, time, 'other' dimensional stuff. The following was a nice warm peanut butter sandwich with strawberry jam to the ravishing of a curious 'space' mind.

+++

ScienceDaily (Nov. 9, 2008) — A team of theoretical and experimental physicists, with participants from Case Western Reserve University, have designed a new black hole simulator called BlackMax to search for evidence that extra dimensions might exist in the universe.

Black holes are theorized to be regions in space where the gravitational field is so strong that nothing can escape its pull after crossing what is called the event horizon. BlackMax simulates these regions.

Approximately two years in the making, the computer program enables physicists to test theories about the production and decay of black holes and takes into account new types of effects on both the creation and evaporation of black holes at the new Large Hadron Collider (LHC) currently being commissioned at the European Center for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva, Switzerland.

For example, black holes created at the LHC would be expected to start off spinning.

The spinning of the black hole increases the fraction of the black hole's mass that is dissipated as gravitons—elementary quanta of gravity, which could be used to provide a clue to the existence and structure of extra dimensions. Black holes are being studied with BlackMax by members of the ATLAS Experiment at LHC, one of the two principal large particle detectors at the new collider. Case Western Reserve physicists working with Glenn Starkman on the project are his former doctoral student Dejan Stojkovic, now a visiting professor on the faculty of the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo, and De-Chang Dai, who recently graduated with his doctoral degree in physics, and is now a postdoctoral fellow working with Stojkovic. Other collaborators are experimental physicists Cigdem Issever and Jeff Tseng of Oxford University and Eram Rizvi from Queen Mary College at the University of London.

ATLAS works much like investigators who search the site of plane crash, and then piece together the debris to find the cause of the plane's disintegration.

BlackMax, by predicting how those pieces will fall, should allow physicists looking at data from the ATLAS experiment to see whether the pattern of particles released into the detector matches what one would expect when a black hole is produced and then falls apart.

The ordinary non-gravitational collisions predicted by the Standard Model of particle physics tend to produce fragments of the proton clumped into a small number of jets.

Decays of black holes should produce more particles than usual. These particles should also come out unusually isotropically—in every direction—and the mix of particles should be more democratic - including for example electrons and similar particles that are not found within the proton.

Under certain circumstances, black hole decay should also produce many gravitons that would themselves pass unnoticed out of the ATLAS, but which would make the remaining emitted particles looking asymmetric and carrying less than the full event energy.

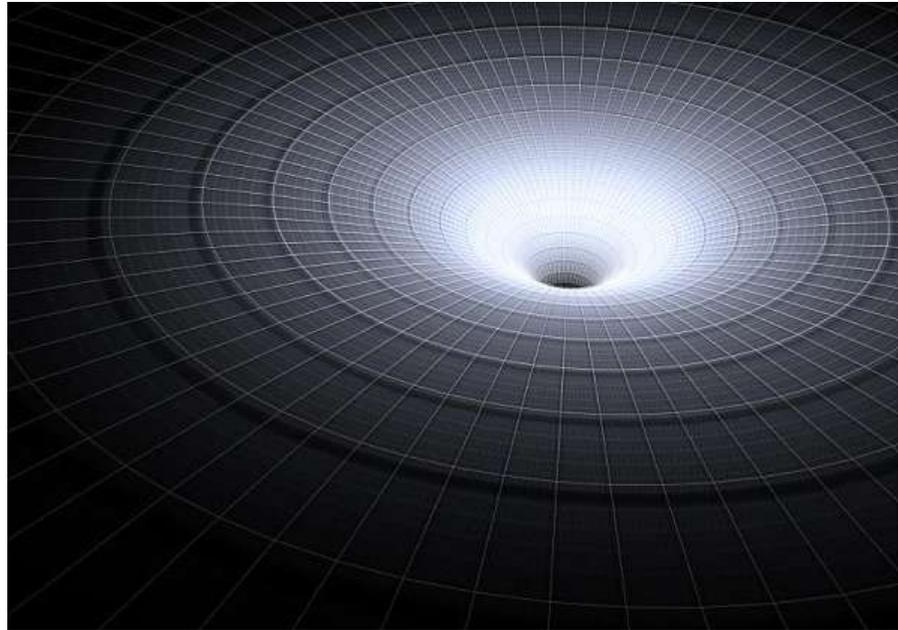
Starkman said that if black holes are found at the LHC it will enable scientists to understand the connection between gravity and quantum mechanics, resolving the inconsistency between two of the great intellectual triumphs of the 20th century - quantum mechanics and Einstein's General Theory of Relativity.

It would also mean the existence of other dimensions to space, and explain why gravity is such a weak force compared to the other three fundamental forces of nature—electromagnetism and the strong and weak nuclear forces.

According to Starkman, the black holes under study at LHC will be very small, extremely hot at more than billion times the temperature of the sun, and their lifespan will consequently be so short that they will decay within tiny fractions of a second of their creation.

He added that there is not enough time for the black hole to cross a human hair, "never mind leaving the detector," he said.

"What's more important is that the universe has been doing this experiment for billions of years by bombarding the earth's atmosphere (not to mention all the myriad stars) with cosmic rays. So we know if black holes are made at the LHC, they are entirely safe," said Starkman.



**WHY, WHY, WHY STUFF**

Thanks Jan

Have you ever simply sat down and asked “why?” Hmmm, if you did you might be there for awhile. Case in point:

- Why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are almost dead?
- Why do banks charge a fee on 'insufficient funds' when they already know there is not enough money?
- Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars; but have to check when you say the paint is still wet?
- Why doesn't Tarzan have a beard?
- Why does Superman stop bullets with his chest, but ducks when you throw a revolver at him?
- Why do Kamikaze pilots wear helmets?
- Whose idea was it to put an 'S' in the word 'lisp'?
- If people evolved from apes, why are there still apes?
- Why is it that no matter what color bubble bath you use the bubbles are always white?
- Is there ever a day that mattresses are not on sale?
- Why do people constantly return to the refrigerator with hopes that something new to eat will have materialized?
- Why do people keep running over a string a dozen times with their vacuum cleaner, then reach down, pick it up, examine it, then put it down to give the vacuum one more chance?
- Why is it that no plastic bag will open from the end on your first try?
- How do those dead bugs get into enclosed light fixtures?
- When we are in the supermarket and someone rams our ankle with a shopping cart then apologizes for doing so, why do we say, 'It's all right?' Well, it isn't all right, so why don't we say, 'That really hurt, why don't you watch where you're going?'
- Why is it that whenever you attempt to catch something that's falling off the table you always manage to knock something else over?
- In winter why do we try to keep the house as warm as it was in summer when we complained about the heat?
- How come you never hear father-in-law jokes?

And my FAVORITE.....

- The statistics on sanity is that one out of every four persons is suffering from some sort of mental illness. Think of your three best friends -- if they're okay, then it's you

**THIS IS TRUE STUFF**

Further empirical evidence that truth truly is stranger than fiction.

ZERO TOLERANCE IN REAL LIFE, UTAH DIVISION: Ryan Turner, 30, lives next to a city-owned lot in South Salt Lake, Utah. City workers had left a trap out for a pesky skunk, which caught it -- on

a Saturday night. Turner came out of his house and noticed the skunk suffering in the morning sun, so he moved the trap into the shade. "It's just a matter of that's the humane thing to do," Turner said. "Leaving an animal to die in a metal trap over the weekend isn't humane." But a police officer scoffed at that explanation, and Turner has received a summons charging him with criminal trespass. He faces a \$652 fine. Still, Turner says, "I would rather be in the situation I'm in now than not do anything." (Salt Lake Tribune) ...The ultimate moral defense to zero tolerance.

**PROPHETIC WORDS:** After seeing Christian ads on placards on the sides of London buses purchased by a web site promising non-Christians will go to hell, British writer Ariane Sherine, 28, suggested atheists should buy ad placards for a more reassuring message. The British Humanist Association agreed to collect donations to buy the ads, and the 5,500 pound (US\$8,700) goal was met after just 10 hours. More than 109,000 pounds (US\$172,700) have now been collected, even though most atheists disagree with the proposed ad slogan -- "There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life." -- because the word "probably" isn't strong enough. While many British Christian groups think the banners are a good idea since they will stimulate thoughtful discussion (one has even contributed to the campaign), Stephen Green of Christian Voice predicts the displays will be quickly defaced by graffiti because, he says, with no hint of irony, "People don't like being preached at." (London Times, AP) ...Hey, remember: he said it, not me!

**DIRECTIONLESS:** Two men stopped a police officer in Louisville, Ky., to ask for directions. While talking to the men, the officer noticed a mask on the seat of their vehicle, and realized the men were probably responsible for a robbery minutes before at a gas station, a police spokeswoman said. Lavarr A. Milton, 21, and Guy O. Walker, 18, were arrested on robbery charges. (Louisville Courier-Journal) ...See, ladies? Some men do ask for directions. Extremely stupid men.

**THAT'S INFLATION FOR YOU:** Cold, rainy weather resulted in lower beer sales at the Oktoberfest in Munich, Germany. Six million visitors drank only 6.6 million liters, a reduction of at least five percent from last year. The cold weather apparently encouraged visitors to snuggle up a bit more, though: condom sales were through the roof. Manufacturer Durex reported 1.5 million were sold in just the first two weeks of the festival. "With that kind of turnover," exclaimed Durex marketing manager Gerald Schreiber, "maybe we should think about developing a special Wiesn condom!" (Germany Local) ...Now that a liter of festival beer has broken 8 euros, all the attendees will be needing one anyway.

## WAYS OF DEALING WITH THE BURDENS OF LIFE STUFF

Thanks Jan

Ways of dealing with the burdens of life

- Accept that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue.
- Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.
- Always read stuff that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.
- Drive carefully. It's not only cars that can be recalled by their maker.
- If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.
- If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.

- It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.
- Never buy a car you can't push.
- Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you won't have a leg to stand on.
- Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
- Since it's the early worm that gets eaten by the bird, sleep late.
- The second mouse gets the cheese.
- When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
- Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.
- You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.
- Some mistakes are too much fun to only make once.
- We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names, and all are different colors, but they all have to live in the same box.
- A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.

## FINAL THOUGHT STUFF

Random Thoughts (as if I have any other)...

...yep, been listening to Christmas music a lot of lately – particularly Mannheim Steamroller and the Trans-Siberian Orchestra...I love Christmas music...

...in fact, love Christmas...love the reason for the season...the movies...families getting together...everything about it...

...except the crass commercialism, using Santa in commercials to endorse something, anything...

...as mentioned, just finished reading “1491” – highly recommend it...

...now I’m starting “50 Battles that Changed the World” by William Weir...starting with the battle of Marathon in 490 BC all the way up to the Tet Offensive in 1968...tell you more when I finish it...

...as always, also reading several other books concurrently – yep, I know the burden of an eclectic, curious, and seeking mind – including “Switching from the Mac to the PC” and a great Sci-Fi series by Elizabeth Moon...hmmm, also a couple of Association Management books given that is the industry of which I know work in...

...thinking long and hard about switching to the Mac either at Thanksgiving or Christmas...

...everyone agrees it is better hardware – one of my Developers says Vista runs faster on his Apple MacBook Pro using Boot Camp than it does on his PC...

...also think the GUI is simply a better experience...I was a Mac Fanatic in the mid 90’s having a house built with AppleTalk so I could have eight Macs spread around the house...had to switch to the PC in the 90’s and have always kept one eye on what is happening in the Mac world...

...now it appears as if the file sharing between the two systems is pretty much ubiquitous – tried it out the other day and it does work...

...best testimonial for great technology is what it does for the masses...

...take my bride for example...I love that woman but she has always been somewhat of a technological Luddite...

...this is the woman that might go weeks if not months without turning her computer on and didn't even know how to input a number into her phone's address book...

...well, about a month ago I bought her an iPhone...

...within a week she was text messaging for the first time in her life...she started doing her email on the phone...downloading applications...I mean, this was a turnaround of technically profound proportions...

...so I bought her a MacBook and she picked up the book "MacBook for Dummies"...well, let me tell you Bucko, she is on her computer every day, loading applications, moving stuff around, it is really cool to see her use the computer like that...

...in fact for a recovering Engineer with technological nerd tendencies still being repressed it is a "turn on" to see her join the 21<sup>st</sup> century...love that woman...

...and love the technology that brought her into the electronic Universe...

...what else is running through my head? Yep, still listening to Christmas Music...

...will be watching Christmas movies pretty much every night in my hotel room...taking a portable DVD player and some movies to watch each week...

...good youtube montage on Christmas movies can be found at...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpqg5XfhFuo&feature=related>

...well, trying hard not to bash the President-Elect – the majority have spoken... however, as one who believes in the sanctity of our Constitution and the principals of our Founding Fathers I will be studiously watching what is going on. I will be particularly focused on those actions that:

- Put government power over individual rights
- Reduce freedom of the markets and undermine capitalism
- Redistribute the wealth in a manner that is overtly Marxist

...I'll leave you with the Chinese quote that is BOTH a proverb and a curse (ED: Yes, I know Virginia, most folks don't know that) and comes from "时势造英雄"(pin-yin:shi shi zao ying xiong),:

**"May you live in interesting times"**

Have a great week folks, pay attention, breathe deeply, take the time to think, the time to pray, and leave some time to simply "be" – for yesterday truly is nothing but a memory, tomorrow a promise, and it is only in the "now" of today that one can make a difference in themselves and the world around them.

Reflectively Yours,

Don

**EXPLANATORY – YET POIGNANT - DISCLAIMER**

For those new to this mailing, this Stuff memo is an ongoing email that I periodically send out for no other reason than to synthesize all the "stuff" I read as well as express my views on the world in general and life in specific.

It serves as an intellectual catharsis, an emotional catholicon, and a spiritual revivification.

Bottom line, this is simply the way that I soothe the synapses.

If you decide you don't want to receive, simply reply with a "Thank You, No Thank You" and you'll be removed from the mailing list.