

Interesting Juxtaposition

Tweet 1 posted by an atheist 3 hours ago:

Some things are so complicated for me to think and feel about, they make me want to throw up...

Tweet 2 posted by a Catholic priest 1 hour ago

“When a man devotes all his thoughts to the praise and service of the Lord, he proclaims God’s greatness.” Ven Bede on today’s feast.

Hard Work and Determination

I just skimmed an article in The Guardian by Suzanne Moore that lamented the economic inequalities faced by the young adult generation in England. It claims that “...’leaving home’, finding the one job for life, the one partner for ever, getting married, having a baby, buying a home, these remain the sum of desires, however unrealistic they may be.”

Unrealistic?

I don’t know about England, ’cause I don’t live there. But Ms. Moore claims the problems exist in the US as well, and I do know about that. So assuming Ms. Moore is correct about the congruence between the worlds on either side of the big pond, then I can speak to this from my experience here in the States.

The economic problem is much less capitalism than it is entitlement. The social problem is not that the goals are

unrealistic, but that the expectations are.

When young people talk about “buying a home,” they seem to be thinking about 2 story, 2 garage, perfect lawn suburbia, right out of college. When they talk about “the one partner for ever [sic]”, they mean a high IQ, sexy until death, perfect roommate, never changing, Barbie or Ken. When they think about “getting married” they imagine a Princess Diana wedding and a honeymoon in the tropics that doesn’t ever end. “Having a baby,” means, to them, when they have just the right amount of money and spare time, producing the perfect, flawless child of their preferred biological sex that will generate in them warm feelings of parental ecstasy, and when they look for that “one job for life,” they mean the job that will pay them more than their work is worth on the first day of work while ensuring them a lifetime of pride and fulfillment.

That’s what these young people expect. That is unrealistic. The truth is, and always has been, that “buying a home” means purchasing a modest house that is not beyond ones means, often a one-story brick ranch with no garage (and maybe a single car carport) and a lawn that looks more a patchwork quilt than a meadow, and most often, after having rented for years after college. The truth is that “one partner for ever [sic]” means sticking with the same person no matter how rough it gets or how imperfect he/she turns out to be when the honeymoon glow dissipates. The truth is that “getting married” means a wedding where it might rain and a reception where people serve themselves and a honeymoon in Myrtle Beach rather than Hawaii (unless the couple happens to live in Hawaii, then it means a honeymoon in Hawaii rather than Myrtle Beach), and “until death do us part” even when one partner takes on new interests, gets fat, suffers brain damage, or turns out to have a hot temper or gets depressed daily over newspaper headlines. The truth is “having a baby” means getting whatever the genes toss up when the sperm hits the egg, along with any genetic abnormalities that happen to occur, and it

means choosing to make time and sacrifice luxuries in order to have the money so that the time is right now, and it means as much parental frustration and exasperation as it does parental ecstasy, and realizing that both are equally precious. The truth is, that “one job for life,” means finding a place of employment where one can get paid a fair wage for the work one does in a job that is sometimes or even often unpleasant, and sticking with it while doing ones best for life, and starting with a low salary that hard work and dedication over years turns into a good salary rather than always chasing the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

Ms. Moore asks this question:

“For all these things are interconnected, and in an age of student debt, a labour market that is keeping wages low, insane rents and clear evidence that having a baby does not produce huge happiness, or even relationship glue for many couples, why are these things the measure of adult life?”

To which I answer, because the measure of adult life is not what one gets, but what one gives. It isn't about wealth, mansions, self-gratification, and personal happiness: it's about responsibility.

And that is something the world truly possesses in short supply.

Candy Wrappers

God speaks to me through Dove candy wrappers. Really. The first time I got my paws on one of those Dove chocolates with the almost pithy phrase printed on the inside, I had just prayed asking God to affirm for me that my decision to be

confirmed in the Catholic Church was the right choice. I was received into the Church on the evening before Easter, at the Easter vigil Mass, like many (most?) people who become Catholic as adults. The following day at the weekly meeting of the group I joined with, there was a reception. As I was going through the food line I was thinking about whether I had done the right thing, figured I'd just ask God for some encouragement if I had, and that's when I picked up a Dove chocolate, unwrapped it, and discovered this phrase printed inside: "Believe in the power of a magical night."

Since that day, I've approached Dove chocolates with reverence. I don't buy them, I wait for them to be given to me. I only eat one a day. I say, "Well, let's see what the Lord has to say to me today!" whenever I unwrap my one, free Dove chocolate.

I was given about a half a dozen for Easter this year. Every now and then I eat one. Since Easter I have been told:

- "Do what feels right": I wore a tail. It felt right.
- "Quote your dad": I could only think of two "I never get sick," and "I have to do everything myself." I don't think these are what are meant. I've asked my mom to try to recall some things he said. He's dead now, so I can't ask him. I consider this one to still be in progress.
- "Leave your phone behind": I did that often anyway, now I do it more frequently.
- "Coin a new catchphrase": This took awhile, but finally, "I'm on vacation!"
- "Get dressed up with no place to go": I haven't done this yet, so it is pending. I need to fix the jaw hinge on my fox mask before I can.
- "Get lost on purpose": I can't seem to succeed at this one. So it is in progress.
- "Walk to the beat of your own tuba.": I've always done this one.

I'll post updates on those unfinished ones.

Has God sent you a message?

Naked

Last night I had a dream I was visiting a very crowded hospital and walking the halls completely naked. The only people I had to avoid were those in my family. It was a great dream!

Tea Bags of Love

Many years ago, I bought my mate, a wonderful wife and mother of 5'2", a pump pot for Christmas. The next day, I brewed it full of hot tea, and ever since that day, I have been filling it with fresh hot tea every morning I possibly can and she is at home, which is most of them. I explain to her that it is my way of saying "I love you" without actually using words, and that the day I do not make her tea when she is at home and I have pump pot, hot water, and tea bags at my disposal is the day I have stopped loving her.

The Bunn-O-Matic Corporation was founded in the 1950's, maybe 1957, by George Regan Bunn. After a painstaking 15 minutes of Internet research, I was able to trace the lineage of George R. to the famous food service tycoon, Jacob Bunn. George R. of Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin was the son of Willard and Ruth Bunn, also of Chippewa Falls. The Bunns must really like

Chippewa Falls, incorporated 1869. Willard Bunn, Sr., George R.'s daddy, was the son of George Whitfield Bunn. George W. (not the Bush, the Bunn) was the son of Henry Bunn and Jacob Bunn's brother. That makes George R. some sort of grand-nephew or something.

The pump pot I bought was a genuine Bunn, and it lasted several years before my wife finally wore out the pump. That's the quality of a Bunn product: years of pumping pleasure. That's also an indicator of how much tea she drinks and how much love I have demonstrated. After the pot broke, I immediately bought her another one: an identical Bunn.

Jacob Bunn was a close, personal friend of Abraham Lincoln, who acted as attorney for his bud Jacob. John Bunn, Jacob's bro, was his partner in business and also a friend of Abe, and a multimillionaire. I couldn't find much about George R. despite all my painstaking research, but I think that his numinous flair for naming companies is demonstration enough of his greatness. Were there a George Regan Bunn around today running for US President! But, alas, we're stuck instead with a poor and frightening facsimile and that email server mistress.

The only complaint I have about the Bunn pump pot is that it doesn't dispose of the tea bags, which I refer to as "love bags." In the morning, before I brew the fresh pot of tea, I dump out the old, stale tea (which, by the way, remains warm for at least 48 hours in the Bunn pump pot), and out come yesterday's tea bags with it, like clumpy clods of sweaty love, plunking into the sink afloat the bitter burnished umber of bygone's acrid affections.

George's inventiveness was due to his coffee obsession, which inspired him to found a division of Bunn Capitol Wholesale Grocery Company devoted to developing a device to brew coffee in a way that kept the grounds out, because they tickled his throat or something. But it is a testament to his God-given

gifts for invention that they also serve equally well for use with tea.

Today, when I got home from my day job, which does not involve inventing beverage dispensers, but usually involves quite a bit of coffee, I found yesterday's love bags in a clammy mound on my desk next to my keyboard and the new US flag that came in mail today for donating some money to the USO. The thank-you letter accompanying the flag mentioned funding morale-building snacks, which I'm sure include coffee, with my donation. I hope our troops overseas are provided with Bunn equipment along with their morale snacks.

George was a veteran of the US Marine Corps and served during WW II. I think George would smile as wide as a hungry lion in an orphanage if the US military supplied its overseas troops with Bunn beverage equipment.

Yesterday's love bags have been a source of tension in my house for some time now. After years of emptying, filling, emptying, filling, emptying, filling the pump pot of/with tea, I got kind of tired of having to do both the emptying and the filling seeing as I rarely ever drink even a mouthful of the tea found therein. The tea in the pop is unsweetened and decaffeinated. I don't comprehend tea like that, and it doesn't comprehend me, so we avoid one another in the interest of domestic tranquility. It would be like drinking something other than black, caffeinated coffee or drinking non-alcoholic beer – what's the point?

By the way, George is credited with introducing the flat-bottomed coffee filter. Perhaps he was inspired by watching barges as a tot in growing up in Chippewa Falls as they made their way up and down the Chippewa River. We'll probably never know, because George died in 2002, probably taking the secret of his inspiration with him to heaven.

My wife has more than once promised good-heartedly and with

the most sincere intentions to empty her pump pot nightly, and to her credit, every time for several days after she succeeds in a most admirable fashion. Eventually, however, the trials of staying up late and doing all the things she does to ensure the house runs smoothly despite the inadvertent, deleterious misadventures of the rest of us, catches up to her and the pot-memory switch flips off. After a few on/off cycles, I determined that I should help her keep the switch on, so I suggested that I leave the love bags in the sink if it so happens I have to empty the pot myself. I assured her this was in no way indicative of a faltering love, but just the opposite: a loving hand to assist her in rising above the vexations of my inadvertent, deleterious misadventures.

The tea bag was first commercially produced in the early 1900s by Thomas Sullivan of New York before George R. Bunn was born, so George may have had the same problem I do after he invented a beverage dispenser and expressed his love for his wife, Nancy, daily by preparing her a Bunn-O-Matic pot full of tea every morning! What a coincidence!

Unfortunately for me, my oldest daughter is disgusted by finding my love bags in the kitchen sink. She's complained for some time now to me about it, to no avail, because I simply explain that I didn't leave them there, her mother did, as it is her mother's responsibility to empty the pot, and thus, any part of that activity that I undertake to complete is just helping her out: a sort of additional expression of love.

George was a Catholic and member of Christ the King Parish (probably in Springfield, Illinois, the town, coincidentally, where Abraham Lincoln is buried. How's that for full-circle?). He was probably pious and devout, because he was endowed with blessings of inventive giftedness (inventiveness is Divine) and was a chronic philanthropist. He and Nancy were married 62 years, also probably because he was a devout and pious Catholic who really meant "until death do us part" when he said it.

I suspect my daughter, in a vengeful rage, put the clammy love bags on my desk to spite me. I didn't think much of it, chuckling and simply moving the muculent mass 6' 5" to the right onto my wife's desk.

Tomorrow will be another day. Love bags will slurp into the sink anew and a fresh Bunn-full of hot tea will brew. The world will turn and turn and turn, and warmth of wife and children will remain, and the legacy of George Bunn will forever be at the center of the love we lavish and pour out upon one another in a kind of perpetual Christmas. God bless us, every one!

Novena to the Sacred Heart

I combined the text of the Sacred Heart Novena with the text of the traditional prayers so they are conveniently together on one page:

Efficacious Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

I. O my Jesus, you have said: "Truly I say to you, ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you." Behold I knock, I seek and ask for the grace of..... *(here name your request)*

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be to the Father...**Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you.**

II. O my Jesus, you have said: "Truly I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you." Behold, in your name, I ask the Father for the grace of.....*(here name your request)* Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be To the Father...**Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in**

you.

III. O my Jesus, you have said: "Truly I say to you, heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away." Encouraged by your infallible words I now ask for the grace of....(*here name your request*) Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be to the Father...**Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you.**

O **Sacred Heart of Jesus**, for whom it is impossible not to have compassion on the afflicted, have pity on us miserable sinners and grant us the grace which we ask of you, through the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, your tender Mother and ours.

Hail, Holy Queen...St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus, pray for us.

– St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

Our Father

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as it was

in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.

Hail, Holy Queen

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our sweetness, our hope, and our life.

To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sorrows, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.

Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

What is a Drop-in?

This past Sunday, my mate, a wonderful wife and mother of about 5'2", announced that we would be dropping in for a drop-in after church to celebrate some kid's First Communion. The kid turned out to be the child of a friend, which if I had paid attention the day before when I was first informed of this drop-in thing, I would have known. Later that afternoon I was informed there would be no supper at our house because nobody wanted any due to the fact that my mate was full from the drop-in. I informed her that the assumption that everyone was full because she was might possibly be false and should I make something, and if so, what ingredients might I drop in the pot, that were not encumbered for a future planned meal. And that brings me to today's topic: drop-ins.

According to the USDA, Americans consumed 24.1 billion pounds of beef in 2014 from 30.1 million head of cattle. Nobody really can seem to figure out the percentage of Americans who are vegetarians. The estimates range from 1.9% to 13% depending on who's asking Americans if they eat meat. Let's

say it's 2%, that means about 312 million Americans shared that 24.1 billion pounds of beef, which means each of us ate about 77 lbs of beef.

A few of our pups and I indicated by verbal expression, grimacing, sulking, fits, self-mutilation, and other forms of communication that we were not on-board for giving up Sunday afternoon for a drop-in. "But it is only a drop-in, you jerk," you say. Ah, but you are not privy to some important facts.

"How long will we be there?" one of the pups asked me.

"As long as your mother keeps talking," I replied.

"You jerk!" you shout.

My neighbor, who served in some war and was honorably discharged and who is a vegetarian, sometimes, ironically, makes beef jerky. He flavors different batches different ways and cooks it at 200 degrees Fahrenheit in his oven. It takes him all day. He gives most of it to my family. It is the best jerky I've ever tasted in my entire life.

"A drop-in," I explained, "is an event that is scheduled to run from a certain start time to a finish time and you stop by briefly to offer your sympathies or congratulations or whatever some time of your choosing during that span, snack a little, and leave. You don't stay long."

Boy was I wrong!

We arrived at the kid's house at the scheduled start time so that we could be back home to maximize the amount of time free into a single contiguous block. We ate, and we talked, and we played some games or something. Then we did that again and again.

77 lbs of beef means that each of us eats 308 quarter pound hamburgers each year.

People arrive at a drop-in at different times and leave at different times. They all don't arrive when it starts and they don't all stay until it ends. If they all arrived at the start and stayed until it ended, you couldn't call it a drop-in: you'd call it a "party" or a "cookout" (if the main course was cooked and eaten outside, which, in this case, it was) or maybe you'd call it a "prom". I don't care what you'd call it, but you wouldn't call it a drop-in.

After my neighbor cooks his jerky, he puts it in separate baggies according to flavor, then he puts the baggies in a tin with a lid on it, maybe a tin left over from Christmas, and then he knocks on our door with his offering and we briefly discuss his jerky. I tell him how thankful I am for the gift and gush over the delightful flavor and ask him how he makes it. Then he leaves and we don't see him again (except occasionally over the fence, at which time I wave a stick of jerky at him and smile happily) until he makes more jerky, or we offer him some baked goods as thanks for having served in the military to guarantee our right to choose to eat meat or not and make jerky even if we don't and give it to neighbors. He always smiles and waves back. He was in the marines.

So we arrived at the scheduled start time for the drop-in. So did everyone else who was invited, except one couple who were late because they went to a later Mass (we're all Catholic), but who got there as near the start time as they could without skipping out before the last hymn. Then, they too joined in the eating, talking, and playing at some games or other or not. We watched some older kid shoot tennis balls over the house with this home-made compressed air cannon he brought. Why he brought a cannon to a First Communion drop-in is a bit of a mystery to me. The only reason for bringing it would be to show it off, but since the event was a drop-in, he wouldn't be there long enough to get it all out and show people before he and they left. In order to show it off, he'd have to arrive at the start time and stay until the end time and schedule

numerous demonstrations in order to give everyone a chance to comment on how impressively high the tennis balls went. The compressed air cannon would have been a clue to me that this was either not your typical drop-in or not a drop-in at all, but the kid didn't get the cannon out until long after we should have left, by which time the fact that we were still there, eating, talking, and playing at some game or other, had already clued me in to the unorthodoxy of this particular drop-in.

My friend smoked meat outside and we ate on his deck or anywhere else in the house or yard we wanted to. The meat he smoked was not beef, nor did he cook it long enough to make jerky. It was shredded pork, which was served with our choice of one of two sauces (or both, or none, as we saw fit, thanks to my neighbor) to pour onto our pork or not. We spent quite a while eating the pork and sundry sides (chips, potato salad, cole slaw), on buns or not, with or without sauces, all of us together at the same time, and then talking extensively about pork bar-b-cue, imagining adventures road-tripping around the state visiting bar-b-que places, and watching the pups and kits and cubs play at some game or other. Everyone went back for seconds so we could do it all again, but we subconsciously staggered our returns for seconds so that the eating, talking, and watching could go on and on and on again and again. Some people went back for thirds. No one seemed to be leaving as the afternoon wore on and the drop-in dragged on and on with no one dropping in or dropping out, even long after everyone had ceased eating and we were all just talking and watching. I was mostly just listening and waiting.

Finally, at some point after about three hours, my eldest daughter pointed out that she needed to get home to finish some homework she had due the next morning. "That," I said excitedly in reply, "is just the thing I needed!" I immediately found my mate and intimated in a less than subtle and more or less direct way, but in no more than a raised

whisper, that our eldest daughter needed to get home to finish some homework she had due the next morning and that since the event was a drop-in we could leave at any time. To my surprise, my mate zinged me with her ocular tazer powers. However, she could not deny that, though she clearly had more talking to do, in this particular case leaving was necessary and not entirely my idea, and so she quickly turned off the tazers, and I stopped convulsing under her gaze.

We did not take any food home with us. All the other guests left when we did.

When my neighbor brings us jerky, he is just "dropping by" to give us a little gift he can't eat because he is vegan for health reasons. I do not know if the beef counts as part of his 77 lbs or mine, or if it is split equally. In any case, he shouldn't get even a quarter pound hamburger of the 24.1 billion lbs of beef anyway because he is a vegetarian and is throwing off the numbers by buying and cooking beef. But I'm glad he does it. And I'm glad he understands that "drop by", unlike "drop in", does not mean "visit for hours."

When we arrived home, I rushed through the chores I had to finish and my daughter rushed through her homework. Some time in the midst of that I brought up that it had been several hours since we'd eaten and asked what my mate what her weekly meal plan had on it for Sunday night. That's when she informed me that she was still full and that therefore everyone else was also still full and we were not going to have any supper. I replied that I thought that maybe some of our appetites might operate independently of hers and would she like me to make something just in case and could she please tell me what ingredients were not a part of any upcoming meals in the meal plan which only she was privy to. I walked away having heard words but feeling that somehow I was no closer to food or how to acquire any. I was outvoted by everyone: they all said they really weren't hungry because they were full from the drop-in, so I guess my mate was right about that. Shortly thereafter I

had picked up with my chores when my mate came out and stacked leftovers from the fridge on the counter and informed me I should feed there. Everyone else trickled in and we all ate something, maybe except her.

I learned two things from my experiences on Sunday:

- I am confused about what a drop-in is
- Even though I think I might be getting hungry, no one else is

Next time I'm invited to a drop-in after church, I think I'll decline with the excuse that I have to stay home and make jerky instead.

A Guy With Glasses

Based on 2014 data, the population of the USA is 318 million people. Of those, 76.9% are 18 years or older and 49.2% are male. Thus, Approximately 120 million of those people are male. 58% of men do not wear glasses. That's 70 million men. Assuming the same percentage holds for clowns and the number of clowns who are members of the World Clown Association (2,500 clowns) is a decent rough estimate of the number of clowns in the USA (which it isn't, but it's good enough considering how few clowns there are), and all registered clowns are adults, then there are approximately 1,230 male clowns in the USA. That means there are only 713 clowns that I can punch in the face (or anywhere else), except that, as I established years ago in an essay I have now lost, clowns have no gender, biological or otherwise. And that brings us to today's topic: punching men in the face.

When I was just a little tyke and didn't give clowns much

thought, there were a few things I was certain were true and would always remain true: the sun rises in the east, the moon has a face, my brother is a reckless nut, and having a penis meant I should use the men's restroom. But as I've grown older, I've discovered things are never so certain as we might expect. The sun still does rise in the east, but I rarely see a face in the moon now that I now there is a fox in there. My brother is still a reckless nut, but I'm not sure my penis means I should head for a room with a urinal when my bladder is full.

Now before you get upset with me, realize I have nothing against men who want to be treated as women or against women who want to be treated as men. I'm happy to call you whatever you want to be called. Heck, I'd like to be a fox. So, this essay has nothing to do with anyone's personal gender whatevers – I'm really not that interested in what is in your pants. In fact, this essay isn't about you at all. Don't be so vain and just get over it.

Important fact: a fox belongs to the same family as the common dog, along with wolves, jackals, dingoes, tanuki, etc.: Canidae.

Unless we've lived under a rock, we've all heard the adage, "Never hit a guy with glasses." Now that is what I want to examine today, because it impacts my ability to defend myself. Even more troubling is the sister adage, "Never hit a girl," and the laws that state I can't hit children. Together, these rules severely limit my opportunities for punching people (also, by the way, if I'm going to punch someone, I'd prefer to punch him in the face). So, now, Let's break it down, even though I did that already in the introduction.

First, I'm not leaving the USA in the foreseeable future. Since no one can really see into the future and the future includes the next fraction of a second into which we are moving **plus** all other seconds onward to forever, that means

the foreseeable future is 0 seconds into the future – and beyond! Thus, I'm not leaving the USA in 0 seconds or beyond. That is, I'm never leaving the USA. Therefore, I can only punch people in the face who are in the USA.

Second, by law I can only punch adults. Thus, that limits the population I can punch to people 18 years and older, because, as I established already, I'm stuck in the USA and in the USA people are adults at 18 and they remain that way (for now) until they die.

Third, by the old adage, "Never hit a girl," I cannot punch girls. By "girls" is really meant "all human females," which (for now) includes women. That limits the people I can punch in the face to males (which, for now, are still the opposite of women).

By the way, when you see a sign that says, "No dogs allowed," what is really meant by "dogs" is "all members of kingdom Animalia belonging to the family Canidae." But that would be too much to put on a sign: "No members of kingdom Animalia belonging to the family Canidae allowed." Not to mention, some members of kingdom Animalia don't know what kingdom they belong to, much less what family. Heck, some Animalia Chordata Mammalia Primates Hominidae Homo sapiens sapiens don't know what kingdom or family they belong to, and Animalia Chordata Mammalia Primates Hominidae Homo sapiens sapiens invented the taxonomy! Isn't that a riot? Makes you shake your head and chuckle, doesn't it? So confusion would ensue and thus we keep it simple for the masses: "No dogs allowed."

Fourth, by the adage, "Never hit a guy with glasses," I cannot punch males with glasses. Contact lenses are not glasses, and so I assume I can punch guys with contacts. After all, if I could not, the adage would be, "Never hit a guy with corrective lenses," which it clearly is not, so male contact lens wearers are fair game.

Summary: I can only punch people in the face who live in the USA, are males 18 years of age or older, and who do not wear glasses.

The formula for this is: US population * .769 * .492 * .58.
The formula for clowns I can punch assumes only adults in the population estimate and thus is: US clown population * .492 * .58.

Running the numbers, I can punch 70 million people in the face. Of those, 713.4 are clowns. I'm not sure how I'd punch less than half of one clown, so we'll give one a by and say I can punch 713 of them. The percentage of the population who are clowns I can punch is 0.00022%, which seems negligible, unless you happen to be at the World Clown Convention, which in 2017 (the next one I could possibly be at as of this writing) will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, which means I cannot possibly attend it because I haven't the means to travel to Bangkok in the foreseeable future, which we established already means "ever." So, my chances of an opportunity to punch a clown are pretty slim. I suppose I could hire one and then when it arrived I could punch it, but I'd have to specify on the phone, "I'd like to hire a clown with a penis who does not wear glasses – the clown, not the penis." Much confusion would ensue, because, as I have mentioned, clowns are genderless (because they do not reproduce sexually, as I discussed in the essay I lost). So I'll abandon that plan and assume my chances of an opportunity to punch a clown are effectively 0.

The number of transgender adults in the USA is 0.3% of the population, or 954,000. I tried to run the numbers, but wasn't sure how to apply "guy" or "girl", so I gave up. The population of my town is 13,905 permanent residents. Assuming an even distribution across all cities (that can't possibly be true), then there should be 41.715 transgendered people in my town. It's probably much less than that, so we'll give one a by to eliminate that fractional person and say 41. That's 1

transgender person in every crowd of 339 residents. I don't even think I know 339 people in town, so my chances of punching any transgendered person are effectively 0, so gender is moot anyway because $0/2=0$. That's science because it has math.

The number of computer programmer jobs in 2014 was 329,000. Since you can't really be a computer programmer unless you are working as a job as a computer programmer (that's not entirely true, either), we'll just say that the number of computer programmers in the USA is 329,000. Assuming the percentages are the same (which is a big assumption, I realize, since more men than women are programmers), then the number of computer programmers I can punch in the face is 94,000. I am employed as a computer programmer and a good number of people I do know are programmers, so my potential for punching one is really high. In fact, since I am a programmer, I could always punch myself in the face in a desperate pinch, which makes my opportunity to punch a programmer 100%.

I could go on and on. But why would I? And why would you keep reading? Why have you read this far?

Now here's my problem: **I have no interest in hitting anyone, not even clowns!**

Also, I really have to go to the bathroom and I have a human penis (for now), but I want to be a fox and the sign says, "no dogs allowed," so which restroom do I use?

Lost and Found Plot

Development

Yesterday I finished taking an online course through the fine people at [One Story](#). The course was presented by Assistant Editor Ann Napolitano and covered a “new way of looking at plot.” The approach focuses on first determining what characters in the story are “missing” from their lives, and then proceeds to follow them through their search until they find what they are looking for. It wraps up by teasing out what disappointments remain after their search is over.

The course was very good, and well worth the modest \$60 fee. During the discussion exchanges with other classmates, I learned about Pixar’s 22 rules for story telling, which I had not heard of before. That led me to articles on the “Story Spine.” Combining the Lost and Found approach with the Story Spine shed all new light on the novel I am currently working on, helping to isolate the most important characteristics of the story from the secondary, supporting ones.

Over all, a very good experience that added useful tools to my writer’s toolbox. I’ll be adding them to the [“Write Minded”](#) section of my site as well as posting more specific to my use of them in future posts.

Spend the Rest of Your Life on Vacation

While I was on vacation at the beach in May 2016, I was sitting on the back deck of the house we rented staring over the dunes at the ocean. I decided then and there that I wanted to spend the rest of my life on vacation.

I began writing down a few principles that captured the essence of the vacation feeling, reasoning that if I could foster a vacation attitude at all times, the rest of my life would feel like one long vacation.

Even while on vacation we have to do a little work: keep the house neat, cook meals, service our offspring. But on vacation, those chores do not spoil the vacation experience. Thus, I concluded, it must be possible to sustain the vacation essence even into the ordinary work-a-day world.

Over the rest of the several days I had on vacation, I expanded and refined my original list. I continue to tweak it, but [here it is: Graowf's principles to enable him to spend the rest of his life on vacation](#). I hope some help you as well!

[Click Here for Graowf's Principles for Living the Rest of His Life on Vacation](#)