

## THANKS TO THE FOUR SISTERS

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*... and Sam, for a stellar 60th-birthday barbecue*

... and Virginia from next door, who got stuck as Benjamin Netanyahu in the guessing game. [I think Virginia figured out it was the Prime Gangster of Israel, but didn't know the name.]

Thanks for the barbecue, Maria. Sorry Bill couldn't be back from the Great White North, but you and your sisters—Rose, Therese, Katy—truly made it a 60th birthday to remember. Special regards to my former dormer and significant other, Rose, who created a bulletin board with some of my old letters from the 1970s and 1980s—railing against government schools and others trampling on human rights: “you mindless whim worshippers”—and more recent efforts... including my books.

I especially liked the page, “What Things Cost in 1949”

Car: \$1680

Gas: 26 cents/gallon

Bread: 14 cents/loaf

House: \$14,500

Average Annual Salary: \$3,400

Dow Jones: 200

So another piece of 60-year-old evidence that inflation is built in to the system. Get out your Fed auditing kits; we need to get Ron Paul's Fed-Audit bill passed. The big boys definitely seem worried. The day Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke has to open up the treasury's books to the American people will become a national holiday: on that day, instead of turkey, all government officials will dine on crow.

Thanks a million, baby, it was terrific.

My good friend in corporate communications from the old EDS 'hood in Troy and Southfield, Michigan, Sam Mills, also shows up to fete yours truly. (No, this Sam Mills is not the Pro Bowl NFL football linebacker who played for the new Orleans Saints and Carolina Panthers—and actually died recently, sadly from intestinal cancer... but he is a poet of note in my book. [This “editorial department” piece is one of my all time favorite gems, written when we were on the other side of 40, for sure.]

So we play the game where you put on your back a sticker with the name of someone who died or was born in 1949; then through yes or no questions you try to determine who it is. I was Bill O'Reilly of all persons. Rose was Ghandi, then Jacqueline Kennedy, Maria was Twiggy, Sam was John Belushi. [Does anyone remember that Twiggy was in the movie *The Blues Brothers* with John Belushi?] Anyway, that was really great and Rosi put it all together. Again, thanks so much, dear, for the effort and attention.

Then all the bells and whistles, nary a gag gift. Indeed, Katy the so-slightly-older-most of the Four Sisters, went to the trouble of delivering to me a beautifully framed copy of Gerhard Fuerst's *The Freedom Bell*. Katy introduced me to Gerhard recently, whom I definitely feel has CC guest columnist potential written all over him. In addition to *The Freedom Bell*, this latest week, we have posted an open letter to the illustrious FEMA-camp/911-Truth denier (I think), Glenn Beck. You remember, the FOX talking head who wanted to French-kiss Ron Paul back in the 08 presidential campaign? (!)

People like Katy and Gerhard, both naturalized citizens originally from Germany, mean a lot to me. They carry an earnestness, a seriousness, and a sincerity about political freedom in the United States that is rare among the native born. It sometimes comes off to many as corny or square to hold up the Bill of Rights and the Constitution as practically holy documents. The fact that their eyes glisten when they do so makes me want to be a better citizen... redouble my efforts to reclaim humanity (especially American humanity) from the alien space lizards and podpeople.

All right, you're probably thinking, why does he always do that? Therese, Rose's twin, in particular, states that in my columns I need to tell people what my special terms are and make sure everyone knows the acronyms. Well, I'm thinking of making "alien space lizards and the pod people (ASLPP)" my new metaphor for the Kleptocons (the power elites who kill and feed on normal humans).

But due to popular demand—Rose insists my columns are way too long and didactic, Katy brings a dictionary to my writings (but says she still enjoys reading them), Maria basically prints them out for later but seldom gets back—I hereby resolve, as a post-60-milestone, to sell my stuff from the "lighter side of Sears."

Interestingly, Therese for my birthday has given me Jon Stewart's book, *America (the book): A citizen's guide to democracy inaction*. Well, let me tell you, Jon is a hard act to follow. Not only is it difficult to treat horrendous current affairs with humor—how do you pass off the Israeli government's concentration camp of the Gaza Strip as a punchline?—but it's difficult to emulate someone who is so funny you're rolling on the floor laughing most of the time.

The book has a foreword supposedly written by Thomas Jefferson. From the final paragraph: "... Well, our purpose was to create a living document based on principles that transcended the times we lived in, and I think we did that. We created a blueprint for a system that would endure, which means your lazy asses shouldn't be coasting on our accomplishments...."

Very well put, Jon. And I think coming across with a little more humor, without so much length, is a goal for the ol' Coaster de Coffee to strive for. I shall do the best I can. The rest of the evening was spent in conversation with the Four, who were working the wine into some reminiscences of the old neighborhood [interrupted by Rose's Mary Kay cosmetic lesson to Mary on how to use rubber cement for sagging flesh]. (Katy had also a couple of weeks ago sent me quite a letter of thanks in response to my 'human interest' piece on the Detroit experience.)

The night got late, and I did convey my general political worldview to Katy—basically we need the Sacred Nonaggression Principle to overcome the alien space lizards. It occurs to me that many naively take the given mass-media environment as some form of intellectual authority: "they wouldn't lie to us." The process of unlearning this misplaced and betrayed respect takes time.

During the Four Sisters Reminiscence Fest, some memories of which did not seem wholly positive, I thought to try to insert a Tolleian appeal to learning to be more comfortable with the present. But I kept it to myself, and kept my own presence by petting Mary's old cat and commiserating with him: "I feel your pain, dude, your ears must be ringing with all this animated chatter."

Finally, just before we broke up, I got a nod from the ex regarding something I did back in the day to pick her up. She was taking a calculus class and it was rough. The day of

the final I wrote her a note, ending with, "Don't rush, don't panic, I'll love you regardless." In fact, she posted that letter I wrote—which I had placed on the dining room table before going to work that day—on her little bulletin board display she made up for this, my 60<sup>th</sup> commemoration evening.

Sweet. Nice end to a 60th birthday party. I feel much prouder for that gesture of help and concern than for a dozen highly emotionally charged cause-oriented letters to the editor. Maybe, when you get to be 60 it's time to start mellowing out some.

Everyone else, we missed you. I encourage everyone to send me a note, contribute on the Coffee Coaster Blog, Digg something on the Coffee Coaster, or check out my books that are becoming more classic than, like, ever. I'm turning over a new leaf.

Brian

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*Birthday Party | Sam Mills | Turning 60 | Jon Stewart | Blues Brothers | Kleptos*