

THE DIOGENES REPORT
The Wit, Wisdom & Wituperation of Emanuel L. Strunin
“A few steps ahead of the curve”
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(Items marked with an * were written by Diogenes.)

THE MEAN STEPMOTHER SAGA CONTINUED*

In Vol., VI, #3, you had my take on the potential dangers to American consumers—personal and business—from the revival of the Bell System personified by Ma Bell, the “mean stepmother.” In Vol., #4, you read the contrary opinions of one of my readers. He claimed: “all the king’s horses and all the king’s men could not put Humpty Dumpty back together again. That applies equally to those former evil empires, the Soviet Union and Ma Bell.”

Unfortunately, neither of those two evil empires was as fragile as Humpty Dumpty. I fear that we have to fear the reincarnation of both of them. Sometimes we celebrate too soon, like when we tore down Saddam’s statue.

To complete my reader’s opinion: “Floundering AT&T, with nothing left but some cash is not going to be able to recreate its glory days by owning a regional operating company while being forced to offer other long distance carriers to its customers.”

That’s my reader’s opinion, but Leo Hindrey Jr., former CEO of AT&T Broadband and the YES Network disagrees. In the March 20, 2006 issue of Business Week, he writes, “who says you can’t put Humpty Dumpty together again? With AT&T’s acquisition of Bell South, Ma Bell will (almost) be back. The stated justifications for this huge new merger are to save \$2 billion a year in expenses on a \$120 billion combined revenue base...and the result will be more products, better services and better prices.”

Hindrey further notes, “I’m so skeptical because every time a major cable-systems merger was proposed in the past, the justifications were essentially the same: modest cost savings that would fuel more services and better prices for consumers. But these never materialized.”

Diogenes has long contended that if management of a \$60 or \$50 or even a \$30 billion company claims that they have to acquire a competitor in order to compete in the marketplace, that management should be fired and replaced with more competent managers. How much more so does this apply to an \$80 billion company. Remember how the American consumers were hornswoggled by the “we must have a merger in order to compete” argument by Exxon and Mobil with the connivance of the Clinton Administration.

The only argument that I may retract is calling this the reincarnation of Ma Bell. According to Maria Bartiroma in the same issue of Business Week, the reincarnation

should also be viewed as a sex change. Her headline is “Papa Bell Sure Seems Certain.” Ma’s son SBC has been working on the new Bell System for years.

TRADITION...TRADITION!!!*

President Bush has cleverly extended the stay of American troops in Iraq into the next presidency. And based on the Viet Nam model, we can’t accurately estimate how many presidencies beyond the next one that might be.

We must recognize that bringing democracy to Iraq is a long-term proposition. In the Muslim world, tyrannical military, tribal or religious dictatorships—like Rome—were not built in a day. They will not be changed to democracies in a day either. The Muslim countries or tribes have a long tradition to uphold.

Let’s keep a sharp eye on the compromise this administration, or the next one, or the one after that may make about only being satisfied with somewhat less than democratic governments in Iraq or Afghanistan. America also has long traditions and one of them is to support tyrannical military dictatorships throughout the world. Many examples of this policy have littered the history of Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia.

There is always a rationale for our support of these undemocratic governments in the face of powerful moral and ethical reasons why we should not provide such support. Even now, we are building rationales why we should finance the Hamas-Arab government that is out to destroy Israel. Financing Hamas would only be a humanitarian gesture to help the local Arab population. Why should humanitarian aid go to the people who voted for this very unhumanitarian organization?

Of course, for the European and American officials who claim to be opposed to terrorism, have no problem with rationalizing that terrorist attacks on Israel by the Palestinian Arabs are not terrorism. The logic, ethics and morals of the world leaders are very flexible when it comes to attacks on Israel or Jews.

THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT

In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth and populated the Earth with broccoli, cauliflower and spinach, green and yellow and red vegetables of all kinds, so Man and Woman would live long and healthy lives.

Then using God's great gifts, Satan created Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream and Krispy Crème Donuts. And Satan said, "You want chocolate with that?" And Man said, "Yes!" and Woman said, "and as long as you're at it, add some sprinkles." And they gained 10 pounds. And Satan smiled.

And God created the healthful yogurt that Woman might keep the figure that Man found so fair. And Satan brought forth white flour from the wheat, and sugar from the cane and combined them. And Woman went from size 6 to size 14.

So God said, "Try my fresh green salad." And Satan presented Thousand-Island Dressing, buttery croutons and garlic toast on the side. And Man and Woman unfastened their belts.

God then said, "I have sent you heart healthy vegetables and olive oil in which to cook them." And Satan brought forth deep fried fish and chicken-fried steak so big it needed its own platter. And Man gained more weight and his cholesterol went through the roof.

God then created a light, fluffy white cake, named it "Angel Food Cake," and said, "It is good." Satan then created chocolate cake and named it "Devil's Food."

God then brought forth running shoes so that His children might lose those extra pounds. And Satan gave cable TV with a remote control so Man would not have to toil changing the channels. And Man and Woman laughed and cried before the flickering blue light and gained pounds.

Then God brought forth the potato, naturally low in fat and brimming with nutrition. And Satan peeled off the healthful skin and sliced the starchy center into chips and deep-fried them. And Man gained pounds.

God then gave lean beef so that Man might consume fewer calories and still satisfy his appetite. And Satan created McDonald's and its 99-cent double cheeseburger. Then said, "You want fries with that?" And Man replied, "Yes! And super size them!"

And Satan said, "It is good." And Man went into cardiac arrest.

God sighed and created quadruple bypass surgery.

Then Satan created HMOs.

Thought for the day.... There is more money being spent on breast implants and Viagra today than on Alzheimer's research. This means that by 2040, there should be a large elderly population with perky boobs and erections and absolutely no recollection of what to do with them.

AMERICANA

"You know you're a redneck when....."

1. You take your dog for a walk and you both use the same tree.
2. You can entertain yourself for more than 15 minutes with a fly swatter.
3. Your boat has not left the driveway in 15 years.
4. You burn your yard rather than mow it.
5. You think the "Nutcracker" is something you do off the high dive.
6. The Salvation Army declines your furniture.
7. You offer to give someone the shirt off your back and they don't want it.
8. You have the local taxidermist on speed dial.
9. You come back from the dump with more than you took.
10. You keep a can of Raid on the kitchen table.
11. Your wife can climb a tree faster than your cat.
12. Your grandmother has "ammo" on her Christmas list.
13. You keep flea and tick soap in the shower.
14. You've been involved in a custody fight over a hunting dog.
15. You go to the stock car races and don't need a program.
16. You know how many bales of hay your car will hold.
17. You have a rag for a gas cap.
18. Your house doesn't have curtains, but your truck does.
19. You wonder how service stations keep their rest rooms so clean.
20. You can spit without opening your mouth.
21. You consider your license plate personalized because your father made it.
22. Your lifetime goal is to own a fireworks stand.
23. You have a complete set of salad bowls and they all say "Cool Whip" on the side.
24. The biggest city you've ever been to is Wal-Mart.
25. Your working TV sits on top of your non-working TV.
26. You've used your ironing board as a buffet table.
27. A tornado hits your neighborhood and does a \$100,000 worth of improvements.
28. You've used a toilet brush to scratch your back.
29. You missed your 5th grade graduation because you were on jury duty.
30. You think fast food is hitting a deer at 65 mph.

HEADLINES AND COMMENTS*

Headlines from the world's press. Comments by Diogenes.

FBI Outlines \$425 Million Computer Upgrade

Wouldn't it be cheaper just to buy a new Dell?

Iraqi Parliament Opens, With A Warning

It's the equivalent of the U. S. Senate opening with a prayer,

The Mayor And The Imam

The Times, of course, lauds the mayor for going along with the incitement with jihad propaganda of convicted Muslim criminals in New York jails. Diogenes wonders what would the Imam do if he was the mayor and the mayor was the Imam. The Imam-Mayor

would likely declare a jihad and throw Bloomberg into solitary or worse. Would the Times also laud the Imam-Mayor. With its Third World outlook it probably would.

Mike Wallace Says He Will Retire From '60 Minutes'

This may be the only thing he ever said that I approve of.

Israel Exports Apples To Syria; Syria Sells Them t To Gulf States

The Syrians insert the worms.

Nixon Library Joins The Club

Now we're going to have another National Archives Library to kick around.

Bush Still Upbeat On Outcome In Iraq

That's easy for him because no one has mistaken the White House for a Shi'ite mosque.

PM Candidate Binyamin Netanyahu Opened Tuesday's Session Of The Jerusalem Conference With A Review Of Islam's Attempts To Conquer The World....

Diogenes presented this same review over three years ago.

(Copy available on request)

Purchase By Israeli Firm Called Off

It was called off because the same government committee that approved the Arab port management acquisition was dragging its heels on the Israeli acquisition. Were the committee's qualms legitimate or am I being paranoid?

Stamford's Schools Bring Obesity Fight To The Classroom

Do they plan to place vending machines in each room and have the students battle over who gets the last bar of Snickers?

Hamas Makes Statements To Western Press, Denies Them In Arabic

As always, Arab speak with forked tongue.

Talks For Lucent May Signal End For 90's Symbol

Another Arab-style takeover? But this time it's French. At least it's not Israeli.

Russians Helped Iraq, Study Says

Anyone that believes the evil empire is gone for good does not understand Russia.

A Holocaust Denial

The Germans and their Swiss friends are refusing to open holocaust archives that belong to the international community. I'm glad that they were not members of the party or they probably would destroy the archives. For old times sake they may destroy them anyway.

Help Wanted As Immigration Faces Overhaul: Businesses Worry About Finding Workers

Are they worried enough to pay the Federal minimum wage or above?

**No Legal Rights For Enemy Combatants, Scalia Says
'War Is War,' Justice Tells Audience**

Can we extend this concept to the supporters of enemy combatants like the Saudis, Kuwaitis and other Arabs in the Gulf region?

QUOTES I LIKE

Diogenes considers them clever and/or informative,
Not that he necessarily agrees with them. Not even his own.

You may have a fresh start at any moment you choose, for this thing that we call “failure” is not the falling down, but the staying down.

- Mary Pickford

Way back when, we were hunters and gatherers; since the war on terrorism started we have become gatherers (of information) and hunters (of terrorists).

- Diogenes

The real problem is not whether machines think but whether men do.

- B. F. Skinner

What we can expect in Iraq: a Tet offensive.

- Diogenes

The only difference between a saint and a sinner is that every saint has a past and every sinner has a future.

- Oscar Wilde

God will provide—if only God would provide until he provides.

- Jewish proverb

This land is your land,
This land is my land,
From California,
To the New York island;
From the redwood forests,
To the Gulf Stream waters,
This land was made for you and me.

- Song refrain

The urge to save humanity is almost always only a false-face for the urge to rule it.

- H. L. Mencken

Adolescent psychology is a controversial topic. Is teenage behavior a dangerous societal phenomenon possibly leading to other illnesses? Or does it only cause insanity in parents? Recent research from experimental psychologists revealed that living in a teenager's bedroom has been known to cause cancer in lab animals. However, these results are questionable due to the government's restriction for using human subjects to duplicate the experiment. I prefer the Oriental philosophy of the Chinese who, in their ancient text the "I-Ching," state the only treatment for adolescence is A-Ging.

- David Zuccolotto (The Truth About Psychology: Dr. Sickman Fred's Case Notes and Diary)

Our deeds still travel with us from afar,
And what we have been makes us what we are.

- George Eliot

B.D. Would you explain this crazy war (Viet Nam) to me? I don't get it! A bunch of Harvard graduate thought up this whole war.

- Doonesbury (c. 1970)

Mark: Think you'll get any service here? I've heard they're mighty low on gas at these stops.

Truck driver: Nah...They'll usually give it to you if you ask..

Attendant: Hey, buddy there's nothin' left..

Truck driver: Gimme 50 gallons of diesel fuel or I'll climb down from here and break your collar bone.

Attendant: Oh...OK.

Truck driver: "Course you gotta be firm...

Mark: 85 Cents a gallon! What a gouging.

- Doonesbury (c. 1974)

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Comments welcome. e-mail to: editor@diogenesreport.com