

MEANWHILE, IN NEWPORT.....

ALEX LAFOLETTA

"How come, you guys come over here and in just a few years, you got a big car, a fancy house and own your own business? I been here all my life and I can't do that."

The questioner was what I would call a militant native Oregon-American. The gentleman questioned is a regular visitor to Newport whom I like to think of as, The Gentleman from Hanoi.

His catholic family fled ahead of the communist takeover of that city when he was a child, eventually gaining U.S. admittance when he was a teenager.

He attended University of Oregon during the height of the Vietnam uproar on campus and speaks of the great joy he derived from naming his natal city when asked where he was from.

"Either radical or ROTC," he says, "the reaction was always entertaining."

He turned to his questioner. "We succeed because of our religious superiority."

"What?!" The local was instantly outraged. "You think your religion is better than ours?"

"Not at all, only in one sense more logical."

"Let me explain." Here he reached into his pocket and extracted a coin. He placed it on the bar.

"It is written in the bible that the love of money is the root of all evil. We Orientals believe money is sacred."

"You see, money is stored energy. Energy, the thing that life is made of. Take this glass of beer." He held it up.

"When I buy it I buy the time and energy of those who grew the barley and hops, those who hauled, malted and brewed them, even the energy of this most attractive lady behind the bar. For their energy I trade money I, in turn, spent energy to get."

"If, my friend, life is sacred, it must follow that, since life is made of energy, this coin, this symbol and storage unit of that energy must be sacred also."

"That is the whole of our secret. We do not frivolously waste money. We spend only what we must and put the rest to use to make more."

"Well," said the local, "if money's so sacred and all that, how come you're blowing it on that beer?"

"Ah, my friend," smiled the Gentleman from Hanoi, "East or West, North or South, only a barbarian could believe that money judiciously spent on a convivial glass of beer was money wasted."



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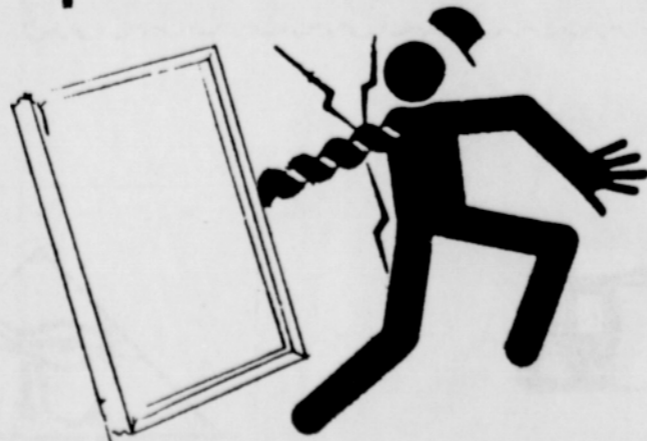
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Come February, with dawn unable to restrain itself, walking out the door to walk to work is a bit easier, mostly because I can see where I'm going. It's a bit less cold, the mornings are gradually lighter, it's more fun to believe in the planetary rhythm and watch the shifting tides.

It seems that the overlay of natural rhythms, from the orbital and tidal to the cyclic changes in other populations, to our very breathing and heartbeats weaves a rhythmic tapestry.

The visions and sounds which describe these rhythms are missed by most of us until we've lived in one place awhile. If we're lucky, we notice the changes -- bird populations are an easy place to start, and if we live long enough and observe well, we become aware of more and more of the tapestry.

Two musical notes of different pitch played together are heard as the individual notes, the notes that are the sum and difference of their frequencies, as well as multiples of all these frequencies. Perhaps the complexity of natural rhythms fosters a similar richness that demands wisdom to perceive.

It's as if the earth, in stately fashion, tilts us back toward the sun to the accompaniment of a slow drum the size of Australia, while the tides splash in and out like tablas playing in a different meter, 13 beats while the bass plays 12. It's not easy to count the pulse, especially for those who are counting money, but it's the biggest dance in the neighborhood, it never ends, and it's free.

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Richard Nixon

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