

WE FOUND THE PLUM PUDDING!

Sorry I've been absent of late—been either driving or celebrating with family. I did, however, go on a Twitter rant yesterday about the various means of tracking Santa. You can read most of it here.



I hope you're all well and – for those of you on the East coast – enjoying Climate Change Christmas with its balmy temps.

Merry Christmas, and thanks for sharing in our little community here.

[Joinder From bmaz] I was actually just setting down to do a Christmas post when I saw this. No reason to split Christmas up into multiple posts, so we will keep it all here. I too have been fairly busy and on my mobile in stead of computer far too much of the time. But very much want to wish one and all a Merry Christmas.

There is also a more melancholy note I yearly make. A remembrance of friends we have lost. I always pick Christmas Eve or Christmas day to do it because that is when we lost our beloved Mary. Mary died at her farm, with her beloved horses and dogs, on Christmas Eve, 2011. It was a profound loss that longtime friends here know, and one that I wish newer friends could know. We have also lost many other great voices like SisterSara, MadDog, Bob Schacht, John Chandley (aka "Scarecrow"), Susan Kent Davidson (aka "Skdadl"), and many more that are not coming to mind at this moment.

So, as we rejoice in the friends we have, please take a moment to think fondly of those we have lost. Cheers, and salute! to one and all.

“RIGHTEOUS:” NOAH’S ARK’S FUNDING WOES

The Noah’s Ark Amusement Park plan may collapse by February because of funding woes.



A Kentucky theme park to be built around a full-scale replica of Noah’s Ark may sink unless investors purchase about \$29 million in unrated municipal bonds by Feb. 6.

The northern Kentucky city of Williamstown in December issued taxable debt for affiliates of Answers in Genesis, a Christian nonprofit, data compiled by Bloomberg show.

Even though \$26.5 million of securities have been sold, the project needs to sell at least \$55 million in total to avoid triggering a redemption of all the bonds, Ken Ham, the nonprofit’s president, said in an e-mail to supporters yesterday. Without the proceeds, construction funding will fall

short, he said.

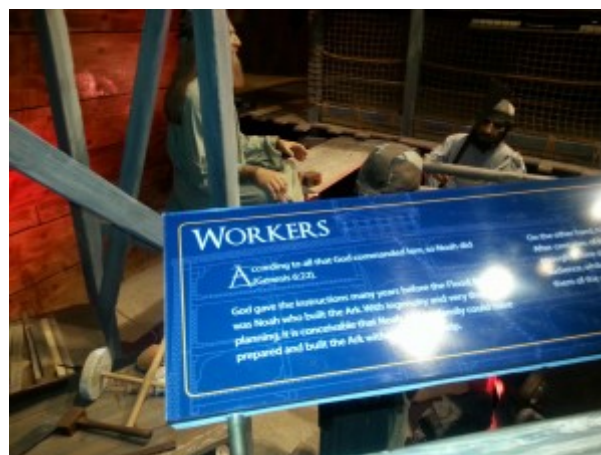
“We still need those Ark supporters who weren’t able to purchase the Ark bonds at closing to prayerfully consider participating in a secondary bond delivery at the level they had indicated to us,” Ham said. “Will you please step out in faith with us?”

Proceeds are intended to help build a 510-foot (155.4-meter, or 300 cubit) wooden ship, the centerpiece of a planned biblical theme park called Ark Encounter.

I find the possibility that Noah’s Ark may go unfunded remarkable, given one of my favorite details from the affiliated Creation Museum.

As the picture above shows, the Creation people believe the dinosaurs marched onto the Ark along with all the other 2-by-2s. Somehow, that helps them prove the dinosaurs were killed in the Flood rather than killed off by natural selection or a meteor or climate change.*

But once you’ve got dinosaurs (and giraffes) on the Ark, you create another problem: the Ark must be veryvery big. I forget how big they said it was, but it was veryvery big (510 feet? That wouldn’t fit dinosaurs!).



And that creates another problem.

How did Noah and his family build such a veryvery big Ark by themselves?

One exhibit provides some possible answers, but doesn't claim to know. God gave advance warning to Noah, you see, so maybe he and his sons really did build such a veryvery big Ark by themselves.

With ingenuity and very thorough planning, it is conceivable that Noah and his family could have built the ark without any help.

The exhibit went to the trouble of inventing another possible solution, complete with mannequins depicting it: labor.

On the other hand, his family did not have to build the ark alone. After centuries of righteous living, Noah may have been wealthy enough to hire shipbuilders. Paid workers may have been his audience, while Noah, a "preacher of righteousness," warned them of the coming judgment. [my emphasis]

The Creation people didn't consider another likely solution, if Noah had help, which is that he had slaves. Perhaps they didn't consider it because it would conflict with another explanation the Museum offers, that only a distorted view of the Bible would justify slavery (implying too that the many societies that enslaved in the name of Christianity have nothing to do with the nice Creation people).

But even if Noah actually paid his workers, it seems, he would have been the kind of boss who lets his employees slave over building a veryvery big Ark for months and years, but then leaves them to die in a massive Flood right after they've built it.

You know? A "righteous" employer.

The other thing we learn from this exhibit, of course, is that righteous people get the money they need to build their Arks.

*No, I don't understand how the Flood killed off the dinosaurs if they got on the Ark, as depicted in one of the dioramas at the museum prepping for the Ark Park. If they got on the Ark, wouldn't they still be running around? Maybe Noah's family ate them?

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Tap tap.

Is this thing on?

I understand the blog (or rather our host) went down for several hours today. The outage lasted from Youngstown to Toledo in my world. Sorry about that!

But now Mr. EW and McCaffrey the MilleniaLab and I are safe in our home, surrounded by .75" of ice under the 2" of snow that fell while we were gone, relaxing and eating vegetables after 10 days full of meat and cookies and chocolate, hunkering down for a quiet night to celebrate the New Year (I'll be in bed long before 2013 will be).

May you all have a safe and happy evening. May the BIG prevail tomorrow.

And may the New Year bring just as many wonderful and smart readers as those who graced this blog all year. Thanks for making what we do possible!

Happy and safe New Year to all!

THANKSGIVING: SCARCITY AMONG BOUNTY

Some
of you
may
have
already
y
grown
tired
of my
tweets
expressing



awe that, rather than the 15 pound turkey I had ordered from our farmers, I came home Tuesday with a 21 pounder. They just didn't have any smaller birds this year, it seems.

So there she is, our enormous bird, all slathered with bacon, also from Jill and Mary, far more than we need but enough that we'll be enjoying (frozen) leftovers until summer.

It somehow feels appropriate that the turkeys are so big this year.

Last year, the farmers in Michigan – and those of us who purchase directly from them – seemed to reach Thanksgiving with a shocked worry. The summer of drought had devastated key Michigan crops, especially the state's tart cherries. You couldn't find Michigan pears and other orchard crops were similarly scarce. Meat farmers, even those who rely on local grains, had to cope with CAFOs from Indiana buying up all Michigan's straw and grain; people thinned herds because there wasn't enough food to make it through the winter. A number of the farmers we rely on seemed worried whether they would make it.

So while this year's record floods brought new worries, when the crops all came in in order, and in great bounty, it was a relief. Fat Al

Gore hadn't done us in yet! I had enough tart cherries to dry and will still have MI pears in the fridge for several weeks yet. A local craft cider maker recently told me that scores of farmers with orchards of old, forgotten (but tasty!) apple varieties could save those orchards because they had a buyer for their boom harvest this year. And for Mr. EW and I, in the home we moved into the day before Thanksgiving last year, we've even still got green tomatoes, kale, and carrots from our garden.



The harvest was especially generous this year.

But I'm also acutely aware that so many Michiganders – my neighbors – enjoy little of that bounty. MI was in a depression before the economy crashed, and too many people have never recovered. Because our unemployment remains among the highest, Michiganders will have access, still, to somewhat extended unemployment benefits. But every one of those long-term unemployed represents a family that may never recover from financial setback. Add in the cuts to food stamps, and I worry that what Mother Nature has spared (thus far), our dysfunctional society has condemned to suffer.

And so as we sit down to our MI wine and turkey and bacon and brussel sprouts and spuds and sage-and-sunchoke-stuffing and cranberries and pumpkin pie and cream, I will be grateful for this year's bounty. I will be thankful for the gifts my family provided me and the support and community our readers have given. I will be grateful for that enormous turkey.

But let's remember those who face scarcity among

the bounty.

Updated with pic of done turkey. Before the 7.5 pounds of leftovers, I mean.

EMPTYWHEEL FUNDRAISER — HALFWAY THERE

We're halfway done with the Emptywheel Two Millionth Visitor Fundraiser. We've had a great response so far, but that number represents just a fraction of regular readers. If you value what we do, please consider a donation. You can donate via PayPal here: [Donate](#)

Or send snail mail to:

Emptywheel, LLC
P.O. Box 1673
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501-1673

Thanks to all who have donated generously in the past – and for those who can support us now.

THE EMPTYWHEEL TWO MILLION VISIT FUNDRAISER

I've been so busy covering the Syria war effort and NSA spying

that I almost missed it: on September 6, we will receive our two millionth visitor. To celebrate that fact – and to ensure we can keep doing this work – we’re going to have a week-long fundraiser. You can donate via PayPal here: [Donate](#)

Or send snailmail to:

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Thanks to all who have donated generously in the past – and for those who can support us now.

GONE ~~FISHIN'~~ HIKIN', HAM, AND BOURBON-IN'

[youtube]h0xz-jyDwr0[/youtube]

It’s that time of year: when Mr. EW and I celebrate St. Pattys, his birthday, our anniversary, and my birthday (and, this year, our friend Catie’s birthday, too).

We’ll be doing it, for the next 5 days or so, in KY’s Red River Gorge – sandstone like you’d expect to find in the Southwest, but with rhododendrons growing everywhere instead of saguaros.

Then we’ll be heading on a Bourbon and ham pilgrimage. We’re not Bourbon drinkers, so include your advice in comments!

Thing is, while Red River Gorge is beautiful, it also is one of the places in the US that still has godawful Intertoobz and wireless connectivity. Blame Mitch McConnell for screwing his constituents, I guess.

So I'll probably be mostly absent from these parts until Wednesday and only somewhat present until whenever we decide to return home to Beer Mecca from Bourbon Mecca.

Sadly, bmaz (and Jim and Rayne) will have to make do with whatever leftovers are in the likker cabinet until I can stock it with Bourbon again. I'm sure he'll make do!

THANKS TO MICHIGAN'S FARMERS FOR THE BOUNTY



Every
year
on
this
day, I
thank
the
great
Michig

an producers—and for some years, I've been cooking Thanksgiving using only Michigan producers, with just a few ingredient exceptions—who bring us our meal.

Our food was brought to use by many of the same farmers and artisans as last year, though I made my pie crust with whole wheat pasty flour from the Jennings Brothers, and we'll be drinking Bells and Bowers Harbor this year instead of Founders and Brys Estate.

But I want to focus on the eggs that will go into our pumpkin pie.

You see, it's been a really tough year for eggs in MI. Many chickens died in the heat wave in June. Then, with the drought, pastured chickens had to work harder to eat and weren't producing

much as a result. And naturally raised chickens are going to be laying almost no eggs this time a year: Mother Nature gives her chickens more time off than Wal-Mart gives its workers?

Mind you, I've still been able to get eggs. But eggs—along with stone fruit, particularly tart cherries and peaches, which were devastated by our spring heat wave followed by frost—eggs are one of the things that made an urban girl like me realize how devastating the weather was.

If I had to work hard to remember to ask for eggs ahead of time, think how hard the farmers were working to keep their chickens healthy?

So it was mighty humbling the other day when our farmer handed me eggs. Humbling, because I didn't think there'd be eggs for purchase in any case. Particularly humbling because she just gave them to me. "Here, don't tell anyone." (So I'm telling all of you, just "protecting my sources"!))

Something as prosaic as eggs, become a precious gift due to the rhythm of nature but also the very unnatural thing weather has become.

The food we share on this holiday is always precious, whether it comes from a local farmer or a big supermarket. It's the sharing, after all, that makes it precious. We're probably going to need a lot more of that sharing in the years to come.

Thanks to all of you for sharing with us here—may that gracious sharing continue through the next year!

**EMPTYWHEEL: OVER 1
MILLION AMAZING**

READERS SERVED

Sometime after 2AM ET last night, emptywheel.net received its 1 millionth visitor.

I had planned a big party to celebrate the milestone, but have been buried, as always and missed the event.

But I do want to thank all of the readers here who contribute so much to the discussion. And thanks to Jim and bmaz, who help keep the site hopping.

If you're so inclined, please consider donating so we can keep this site going for another million readers.

TRAVELING WHEELS

Hello one and all, and greetings from lovely downtown Providence, Rhode Island. Marcy and I are both here for Netroots Nation; she has been in town since yesterday, and I just arrived this morning. We will both be here through Sunday afternoon.

So far Marcy and Jim have kept up regular posting, which is fortunate because I had a literal clusterfuck of problems rain on me yesterday which I was supposed to be providing content and getting ready to go. I have no idea what substantive posting we will do, so Jim may be piloting the ship. I'm a gonna guess he may want to be trash talking about Alabama, an SEC team, finally breaking through and winning the Women's College World Series in softball. Credit where due, they rolled the two other best teams in the brackets, Oklahoma and ASU.

More importantly, if any of you are at Netroots, or in the vicinity, we would love to say hi. Leave a note here, or just find us – we are wearing stinking badges!

We will be around, but if there is any hot breaking news, and we don't look to be around at the moment, put it up in comments and let fly with the analysis. In the meantime, since these Wheels are traveling, some traveling music for you from Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band.