



The sluggish season is hard upon us, y'all – that lazy, languid time of year when thinking deep thoughts can be so terribly draining. So allow me to offer up a few *shallow* thoughts, instead, as we all wade inexorably into the hot, thick soup of another Lowcountry summer. At best, this miscellany of anecdotes and observations might bring you a moment of mild pleasure while you're dangling in a hammock somewhere. If not? Those of you reading it in print can always use it as a fan. Or peel shrimp on it.

By their fruit flies, ye shall know them...

Recently, I left our farmers market bounty on the kitchen counter a day too long, and we ended up with a minor fruit fly infestation in our kitchen. Who knew such a thing was possible? Not me. A Google search revealed that these buzzy little buzz-kills need nothing more than a soft, damp place in which to congregate, and before you can say "speed dating," they're busy being, um, *fruitful*

and multiplying. It's an easy enough fix – just a scrub brush, some boiling water and a little bleach annihilated the no-tell motel they'd set up in our kitchen drain. Then I made a few rudimentary traps to catch the stragglers who'd been so unceremoniously evicted. Here's how you do it: Pour apple cider vinegar into a jar, add a drop of dishwashing liquid, cover the top of the jar with plastic wrap – sealed with a rubber band – then poke a few small holes in it. The

flies are irresistibly drawn to the fruity smell, they enter the jar through the holes, loiter around blissfully in the sweet, decadent vinegar for a while, then find themselves unable to escape. It's fascinating to watch, in a morbid sort of way. My daughter was chagrined; she thought the traps were "mean." I just kept thinking how much fruit flies remind me of people.

The Royal Wii... and the Stupid Us

My daughter's Wii has been out of commission for almost two years. It simply stopped working one day. We tried everything – plugging and unplugging, wiring and rewiring, changing the batteries, etc. Her dad, the family fixer, even opened it up and fiddled with its innards. Nothing worked. Amelia was bereft and we were ticked off. The thing was expensive! And she'd only had it about a year. We couldn't decide whether to send it back to Nintendo for repairs, or just spend a little more money – and a lot less energy – and buy a new one. Of course, Jeff and I weren't too keen on doing either, so we hemmed and hawed, procrastinated and prolonged. Meanwhile, Amelia moped and mourned and worked the poor-pitiful-me angle every chance she got. This went on for quite some time – to no avail – until finally, the kid just gave up. Lost her will to Wii. That was probably a year ago.

Then last week, out of the blue, Amelia announced, "Mom, I miss my Wii so much, I'm just gonna turn it on and see what happens. Maybe it just needed a break."

"Ah, the optimism of youth," I sighed, bracing myself for her disappointment.

But you know what happened? The dang thing worked. After all this time! I'd like to say the "break" made the difference, but as it turns out, my daughter suddenly realized she'd been putting the game discs in backwards. In other words, the Wii had not "simply stopped working" after all. Amelia had "simply stopped using it correctly." Then... simply started again. To her credit, she was appropriately sheepish. As for her parents... well, we could dwell on what idiots

we were for overlooking something so obvious, but we've chosen, instead, to pat ourselves on the back for holding out indefinitely, against all apparent hope, thus avoiding the considerable cost of a new Wii. It's about time our cheapness and procrastination paid off for a change!

The Magic of Mushrooms...

Mushrooms intrigue me. They are like nothing else in the world of living things. You take your eyes off your yard for an hour or two, on a certain kind of day, and they just... materialize. Fully formed. One minute they're not there...the next minute they are. Kind of like presents under a Christmas tree. But has anybody ever actually seen one of these suckers come up? In real time, I mean? One of these days, I'm determined to witness this phenomenon! (Of course, I've been saying that about Santa for decades. So far, no luck...)

Rock of the Aged

You know how you'll sometimes hear it said, of a certain dog or cat or whatnot, that "it's so ugly, it's cute"? Well, for months now, I've been watching trailers for "Rock of Ages" – based on the Broadway musical about the LA rock scene in the late 1980s – and thinking it might be one of those movies that's "so awful, it's awesome." Having seen it yesterday, I am happy to report that I was right. Against my better judgment, and any semblance of good taste, I absolutely adored this movie! By the final production number (Journey's "Don't Stop Believing") I was smiling so hard I thought my face might break. Nevertheless, I hesitate to recommend "Rock of Ages" to

you, dear reader. I suspect that you had to come of age in the awful, awesome 80s – as I did – to fully appreciate the movie’s cheesy goodness. A love of musicals is helpful, too... and sappy romances... and over-the-top rock ballads. And questionable taste is a must. (But I repeat myself.) If you fall into this dubious demographic – or just fancy hearing Tom Cruise sing “Dead or Alive” in backless leather pants – you might enjoy this raunchy, ridiculous, deliciously nostalgic summer confection. But don’t say I didn’t warn you; there’s a lot of awful in this awesome movie.

Market Analysis

Much like with 80s rock music, it’s easy to be snarky and cynical about Farmers Markets. A whole host of clichés has arisen around them, and there’s a common notion that many people flock to these gatherings in order to “feel good about themselves”... or even – dare I say it? – to *look* good to others. Indeed, it’s all too easy to cultivate a sense of self-righteousness when shopping at the Farmers Market. But isn’t that true of any activity that’s so clearly and obviously... righteous? (Church comes to mind.)

How to avoid this unhealthy sense of self-satisfaction that can literally ruin your otherwise joyful and life-affirming Farmers Market experience? It’s easy! Just remember what’s in it for you. We have several fantastic Farmers Markets in the Lowcountry, and supporting them is not just some altruistic, selfless sacrifice to the gods of Green. Sure, it’s “the right thing to do”... but it’s also the smart thing to do... and the fun thing to do. Yes, shopping at the Farmers Market is for the greater good... but it’s also for your own good. And it’s a darn good time. Just keep all this in mind next time you start feeling all prideful and greener-than-thou while browsing the melons.

And if that doesn’t work, do what I keep doing. Forget to bring your eco-friendly shopping bag and use plastic. It’s like walking around with a scarlet letter on your chest.

Summer Sidetracks

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