

The Passing Parade

Written by Margaret Evans, Editor

Sunday, 28 July 2013 14:13 - Last Updated Tuesday, 30 July 2013 10:20



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Dear Reader,

Your weary correspondent is writing to you from the middle of Water Festival. No, I'm not sitting smack dab in the center of Waterfront Park; I'm at my house. But it's Wednesday morning – the festival's halfway point – and I am already very, very tired. Downtown at our office overlooking the park, we've been partying like it's 1999. I was much younger in 1999.

Since I've been busy groovin' on a Sunday afternoon, wastin' away again in Margaritaville, and basically pretending I'm on an extended college weekend, I've had less time than usual to ponder the existential plight of human beings in the early 21st Century. I have, however, managed to muster up a few observations on the passing scene...

First, the royal baby name. George Alexander Louis? I'm neither hot nor cold. I wasn't expecting Jude or Tristan – or even Sebastian – but I was hoping for something with a bit more flair. Edward, for instance! Edward sounds very regal to me – a proper king's name – while maintaining a slightly exotic, romantic air. Or maybe it just seems that way, ever since those immanently-silly-yet-oddly-watchable 'Twilight' movies propelled a dreamy young vampire of the same name to iconic status. Oh, well. Much like Bella and Jacob, it wasn't meant to be. And George is a fine name, really. I know many Georges, and I even like some of them. King George has an authoritative ring about it, too. Just ask the Founding Fathers . . .

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Speaking of whom – isn't it interesting that we Americans are so fascinated with the British royals? Who they marry? What they wear? What they name their babies? Is there something in us – even the most democratic, liberated, freedom-loving us – that unconsciously longs for a monarchy? Or is it, perhaps, a longing for a world that seems more chivalrous, more dignified . . . more noble? Looking at our trashy pop culture – and even Great Britain's trashy pop culture – that answer seems plausible. But who knows? Maybe we just like weird hats.

Continuing along this trivial path . . . What to say about Anthony Weiner? I almost hate to say *a* *nothing*

. It's so petty and distasteful to pile on. But, I'm weak from all the aforementioned wine and dance, so here goes:

Really,

Congressman Weiner?

Really?

You're staying in the race?

The cable news natterers keep talking about Weiner's "poor judgment," which seems like an understatement to me. Or maybe just a euphemism. (We're not allowed to say "perversion" anymore, are we? Too puritanical?) The fact that his "sexting" habit continued to flourish for a year after its discovery forced him out of office suggests that this problem goes way beyond "poor judgment." We seem to be talking about some kind of addiction, here . . . some kind of illness. (That's better than a perversion, right?) Now, normally, I take pity on sickly people. I have compassion for the afflicted. But this time around, it's a real challenge – and not just because the affliction in question is so . . . creepy. No, it's because Weiner's not acting like a sick man who desperately needs help. He's acting like an ambitious man who desperately wants to be mayor of New York. (Wait, maybe they're one and the same?)

And then there's his wife, the lovely and accomplished Huma Abedin. Unlike many folks I've spoken with, I understand her decision to stick with her husband, the father of her child. (Just barely.) What I don't understand is why she's supporting him in a run for mayor while he's still in . . . recovery. Why not encourage him to lie low for a while? Reflect? Look inside? Heal? Whatever psycho-spiritual jargon floats your boat. Is there a 12 Step Program for recovering sextaholics? If so, surely one of those "steps" is to *step AWAY from the smart phone*. But a political candidate can't do that! It's a necessary appendage. (Ugh. Bad choice of words.) I can only assume that Huma has a touch of the ambition bug, herself, and this is a wily calculation on her part. Or maybe it's just . . . poor judgment.

(Oh, I feel so snippy! I haven't felt this snippy in ages. It's this Water Festival, I tell you. I've been making way too much small talk and getting way too little sleep. Also, I think I've lost partial hearing in one ear and several hundred brain cells. I really can't spare any brain cells.)

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Turning to another news item: Despite having rescued four people from a wrecked car – *and* having a royal baby named after him – things aren't getting any better for George Zimmerman. My Facebook newsfeed is full of conjecture that Zimmerman staged the car accident himself. This seems patently insane to me – either on the part of Zimmerman (if he did it) or those accusing him (if he didn't). I don't know which is crazier – that someone would go to such lengths to redeem himself in the public eye . . . or that the public would go to such lengths – by conjuring this theory – to keep from cutting this man any slack. (Collective craziness scares me more than the individual kind, and there's a lot of it going around.) As of press time, the Gerstle family, whom Zimmerman reportedly rescued from an overturned car a few days ago, were refusing to talk to the press out of fear for their lives. Though reportedly grateful to Zimmerman, they didn't want to get involved. "Mark (Gerstle) has two young children and has to live his life round here," a friend told the Daily Mail. "Why would he want to mark himself out? Whatever he says could be taken out of context. If he praises Zimmerman then people will say he is making him into a hero. It is easier if he says nothing."

Seriously? Is this seriously the world we want? A world where one man can't thank another man for saving his family because the very mention of the second man's name – in positive terms – might endanger the first man's children? (Even though said second man has been found 'not guilty' in a court of law?) Are y'all okay with that? No matter where you stand on the Trayvon Martin case . . . are you really okay with that?

Darn it. This column just took a turn for the less-than-trivial. I didn't mean to go there. Seriously, I didn't. I meant to speak only of royal baby names and congressional sexting, teenage vampires and Kardashians and such. But, as Woody Allen famously said, "the heart wants what it wants." And my heart, apparently, always wants to ask questions that will get me in trouble with at least half my readers. (Woody's heart wanted Soon-yi, and that caused him some problems, too . . .)

But enough of these dark musings. I have a Water Festival to finish, and I'm in the homestretch! For now, I will forget about this media parade, and turn my mind toward Saturday morning's *actual*

parade . . . toward children on floats with water guns, homecoming queens on convertibles, marching bands and step teams and men in tiny cars with funny hats. Indeed, the heart wants what it wants. And right this minute, more than anything in the world, my heart wants a small town parade.

Epilogue: Since the writing of this column, the media landscape has shifted . . . but the Beaufort Water Festival Parade went off just as planned.

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