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# The Buzz

## Human Nature?

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The Old School  
Inc. 2012

### “WHY CAN’T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG?”

by Glen Birbeck

Once I enjoyed surreal dystopian themes in fiction. It is no longer fiction. It is life. Shouldn't be surprising. Fiction, especially the dystopian Science Fiction, predicts. It extends trend lines from the present into tomorrow. Since I am talking about human society the future is not infinite. Human nature will set bounds on what can be. I can't recall any science fiction that predicted a sane, altruistic society without violence or greed. Space ships? fine. Decent people? let's not be silly! One is probable, inevitable even. The other, a world without war for example, unimaginable. The fault, to appropriate the bard, is not in getting to the stars, but in being better people.

But wait, it's fiction, why be limited? Why is a decent society literally unimaginable? Something impossible to conjure even by professional conjurers? Because it would be boring! The audience is human. Is it surprising that violent themes put butts in seats? We no sooner win a terrible war than we are preparing for another. Or watching movies about war. Or playing "First Person Shooter" games on our computers. The culture of human society is mostly intense PR to hide our true nature. Humans are nasty, vicious, greedy and selfish. Not you and me, we are the exceptions. I mean the eight billion out there in the world. Did I mention our being liars and hypocrites? Why was Rodney King derided and mocked for asking, "Why can't we all just get along?" A reasonable question if you believed our self image as rational, reasonable caring creatures. But we all know we are not, that's just what we tell ourselves. The question is naive. It is like the honest and direct question asked by a child. The question ignored by the adults. The child hasn't developed the machinery of hypocrisy. Their innocence is cute but not appropriate in an adult. "Why can't we all just get along?" Answer, because we evolved in a jungle where being nice got you killed. It wasn't encouraged. It wasn't selected for by evolution. It survived as an idea. Its a great idea but not practical. Human nature hasn't changed but our tools have. Our favorite tools are for killing. The first tools we made were for killing. At designing those tools we are genius. When the trend lines of human nature cross the lines of Improved killing tools we arrive at the ultimate dystopian theme, our demise.

Why do the mass killings in the USA get the reaction they do? The absolute number of dead is small when compared to other causes. It is because we are forced to look. For just a moment we see the truth, that this murderous defect is in us and that it will be our end. Is this too harsh a view? More cynical than realistic? News is punctuated by these violent mass murders. Frequent set performances of violence. In reaction one group points at guns. Another points at mental problems in the shooters. Both these groups are misdirecting attention away from the violence at our core. The psychologists point out that as a group these mass murderers don't stand out when evaluated by the "sanity" check. Wait a minute!, isn't murdering dozens of strangers crazy by definition? Think about this, it is criminal but it isn't crazy. We struggle to enlarge the gap between them and us.

One of the things we avoid looking at when these questions are brought up is Military Nuclear Doctrine. Have I drifted off the subject? No, human nature and tools for killing people is the topic. MAD, Mutually Assured Destruction is at the heart of this doctrine. If you launch all your warheads at me I am as good as dead, there is no defense, I am powerless to prevent the incineration of millions of my people. What do I do? I double the number of dead by launching all of my warheads, assuring the death of millions of your people. The brightest minds in the dozen countries with these killing tools have agreed. The



Illustration by Glen Birbeck

response to a million dead is to kill another million. Rational? Sane? of course not. Human? yes, very human. The human being 1.0 is not a viable life form. I will end this with a hopeful note. The Earth will abide, humanity will not.



Farmers' Markets: Camden Saturday Market: 9 a.m. to noon at Tannery Park... Rockland Thursday Market: 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Harbor Park... Union Friday Market: The music August 16 will be by Dusty, Joanna, & Friends. 3-6 p.m. on Union Common... Waldoboro Saturday Market: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the town office.

- New Schedule for Rockland Public Library: Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sundays 1 to 5 p.m. The Book Stop is open from 10-1, Monday thru Saturday. Your source for good books at great prices!

FRIDAY, AUGUST 16:

- Cushing Historical Society's Arts in the Barn Show and Reception, Friday, August 16, from 5 to 7 p.m. Christine Neville's watercolors, Candace Briere's pottery and Jim Nyce's photography. The show runs Saturday and Sunday, August 17 and 18, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- 42nd Annual New England Auto Auction at Owls Head Transportation Museum, Friday, with doors opening at 9 a.m. and the auction starting at 11 a.m., and Saturday, doors at 7:30 a.m. and auction at 9 a.m.
- A Summer of Science wraps up at Rockland Public Library, for kids in grades three to seven. They're invited to join 4-H leader Kathryn Jenkins from 10:30 a.m. to noon for the final session, with the theme "Stretch Your Potential." Register for classes at the front desk or call the library at 594-0310.
- Lincoln Street Center Open Studios, the arts center at 24 Lincoln Street in downtown Rockland, from 5 to 8 p.m. Over a dozen artists open their doors and invite the public to see their spaces.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17:

- Children's Book Fair by the Sea at Camden Public Library, 1 to 4 p.m. Midcoast authors and illustrators will give readings and presentations from their works in the library rotunda every 20 minutes throughout the afternoon, including Kara LaReau, Hazel Mitchell, Wendy Ulmer, Katie Coppens and Fran Hodgkins.
- "Mastering the Art of iPhone Photography," 10:30 a.m. at Jackson Memorial Library, Tenants Harbor. Led by Gary Harmatz, a wildlife, nature, travel and underwater photographer for 30 years.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18:

- Quantum Electronica in Camden Amphitheatre, 2 p.m. Jason Dean and Michael Whitehead and their "electric electronic music blending dance music with film score and a jazz flair." Free, bring a chair or blanket
- Whitehead/Dean Group at Fog Bar & Cafe, 328 Main Street, at 7 p.m. Funky, jazzy, soulful sounds from Mike Whitehead on trumpet, Jason Dean on drums, Glen DuBose on bass and Mitch Markowitz on guitar.
- Sunday Jams in Rockland, Sail, Power, & Steam Museum, 75 Mechanic Street, 1:30 p.m.

MONDAY, AUGUST 19:

- Free Adult Art Classes at Rockland Public Library, 11 a.m. Catinka Knoth leads the free Monday classes – with a focus on drawing in color – open to all, with all materials provided. August themes include sailboats and lighthouses
- Monday Jams at St. George Grange, at Wiley's Corner, 7 to 9 p.m. through October. Country, gospel, folk, bluegrass.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20:

- Free Children's Drawing Classes at Rockland Public Library, 4 to 5 p.m. Tuesday. Catinka Knoth leads the Let's Draw Together! series for kids 6-plus (under 11 with an adult – adults invited to join in). All materials provided. This month: "Let's Draw August Memories!"
- Tuesday Jams in Thomaston, Federated Church, 8 Hyler Street, at 7 p.m. Folk, country, blues, gospel. FMI: 273-2914.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21:

- "Decline of Forage Fish in the Gulf of Maine," 5 p.m., Project Puffin

Visitor Center, 311 Main Street, Rockland. Learn how one of the most productive marine ecosystems in the world is declining and what that means for Maine's seabirds, from Karen Alexander. RSVP: 596-5566.

- "Stranger Things" Teen Event at Camden Public Library, 4 p.m. Young people are invited to enter the Upside Down and be challenged to solve puzzles, open locks, follow clues and try to escape from the flipped environment. Kids are invited to come dressed in their favorite '80s garb.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22:

- "Math-tastic Pajama Party" at Camden Public Library, 5 to 6 p.m. Miss Amy hosts the bedtime math games, which will challenge children from kindergarten through fourth grade and warm them up for the coming school year. Kids are encouraged to wear PJs and bring friends.
- New Hope for Women Pop-Up Shop, 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at the Yellow Barn, 20 Winter Street in Rockland. New and gently used women's clothing and accessories. Thursday is VIP Night and requires tickets: 594-2128 or NewHopeForWomen.org. Friday and Saturday are free and open to the public.
- Thursday Jams in Warren, Saint George River Cafe, 310 Main Street, 6 p.m. and Friday Open Mics, second and fourth Fridays, at 6:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23:

- Apprenticeshop Community Sailing, 655 Main Street, Rockland. Summer youth sailing runs 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays to Fridays. Ask about sibling and multiweek discounts and financial aid: Apprenticeshop.org or 594-1800.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24:

- St. Giles' Fundraiser with Auctions and a Yard Sale, Saturday, August 24, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Giles' Episcopal Church, 72 Gardiner Road, Jefferson. The silent auction ends at noon and the live auction starts at 12:30 p.m. With a pie sale, including dozens of fruit varieties.

Around Town is compiled each week by C.O.H.Gifford, Jr.  
Please submit calendar items to [gowfr@gmail.com](mailto:gowfr@gmail.com)  
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