

EASTER EGG

2020



Robert Middleton



Giovanni Boccaccio and the ten Florentines who fled from the plague
Master of Bruges-ca 1485

I purpose, for the succour and solace of ladies in love (unto others the needle and the spindle and the reel suffice) to recount an hundred stories or fables or parables or histories or whatever you like to style them, in ten days' time related by an honourable company of seven ladies and three young men made in the days of the late deadly pestilence, together with sundry canzonets sung by the aforesaid ladies for their diversion. (Giovanni Boccaccio 1313-1375, *Proem to the Decameron*)

ã Robert Middleton 2020

Cartoons from *The New Yorker*

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Visit my website www.pamirs.org

All editions of *Christmas Pudding* can be found on
<http://www.pamirs.org/Christmas-Pudding.htm>

EASTER EGG 2020

In this time of self- or compulsory isolation, I propose *Easter Egg* as an alternative to the never-ending litany of bad news on television and in the press - and also as thanks to all those, wherever they are, who have stayed in touch and shared their experiences: from a retirement community in Palo Alto, a mountain hideaway, a student hostel in London, or from the other side of the street - together with my family, and colleagues from work, tennis and golf. I am forcibly reminded of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*, a book containing 100 tales told by a group of seven young women and three young men sheltering in a secluded villa just outside Florence to escape the Black Death, that was raging in the city. Boccaccio wrote the *Decameron* after the epidemic of 1348. It had a major influence on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.



John William Waterhouse, *A Tale from the Decameron* (1916)

I fear our confinement is likely to last much longer than the ten days that make up the *Decameron*, so please heed my advice for tasting my *Christmas Pudding* "It is still good a long time after the first serving and is not heavy if enjoyed sparingly." I have divided the egg into sections so that you can stop and come back to it - a total of 137 'tales'.

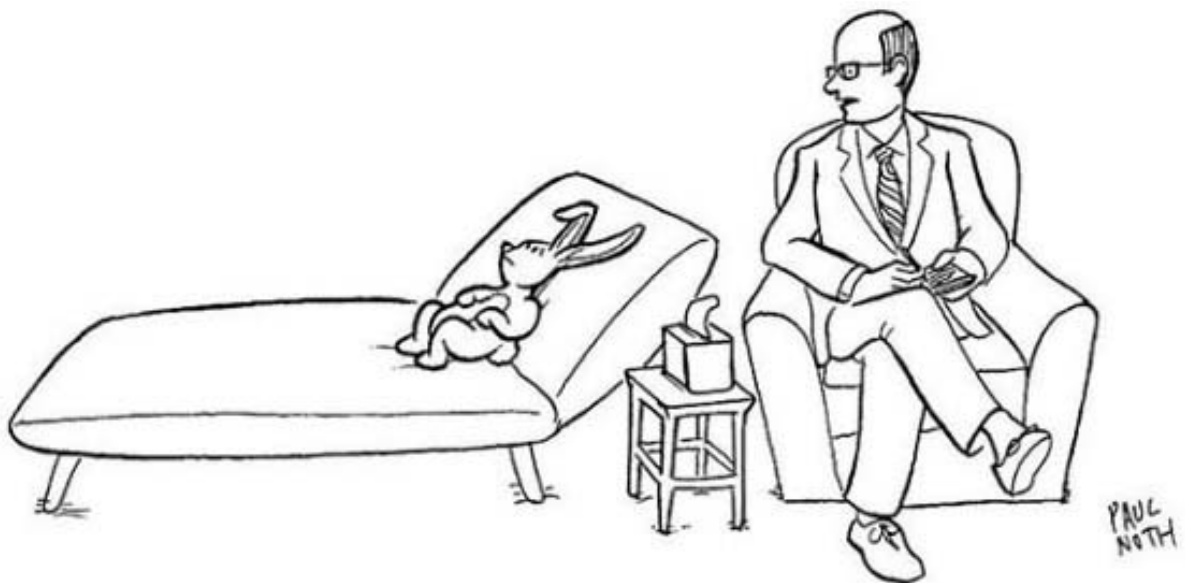
We inherited a German book of cartoons, *Die Lachende Welt*, that occupied our children on rainy days and long weekends when they were very small. I hope *Easter Egg 2020* can serve a similar purpose: but don't ask me, as my children did, why, like *Fledermaus*, *Lachende Welt* has to die.

Enjoy!

Subway map for staying at home (Matt, *Daily Telegraph*)

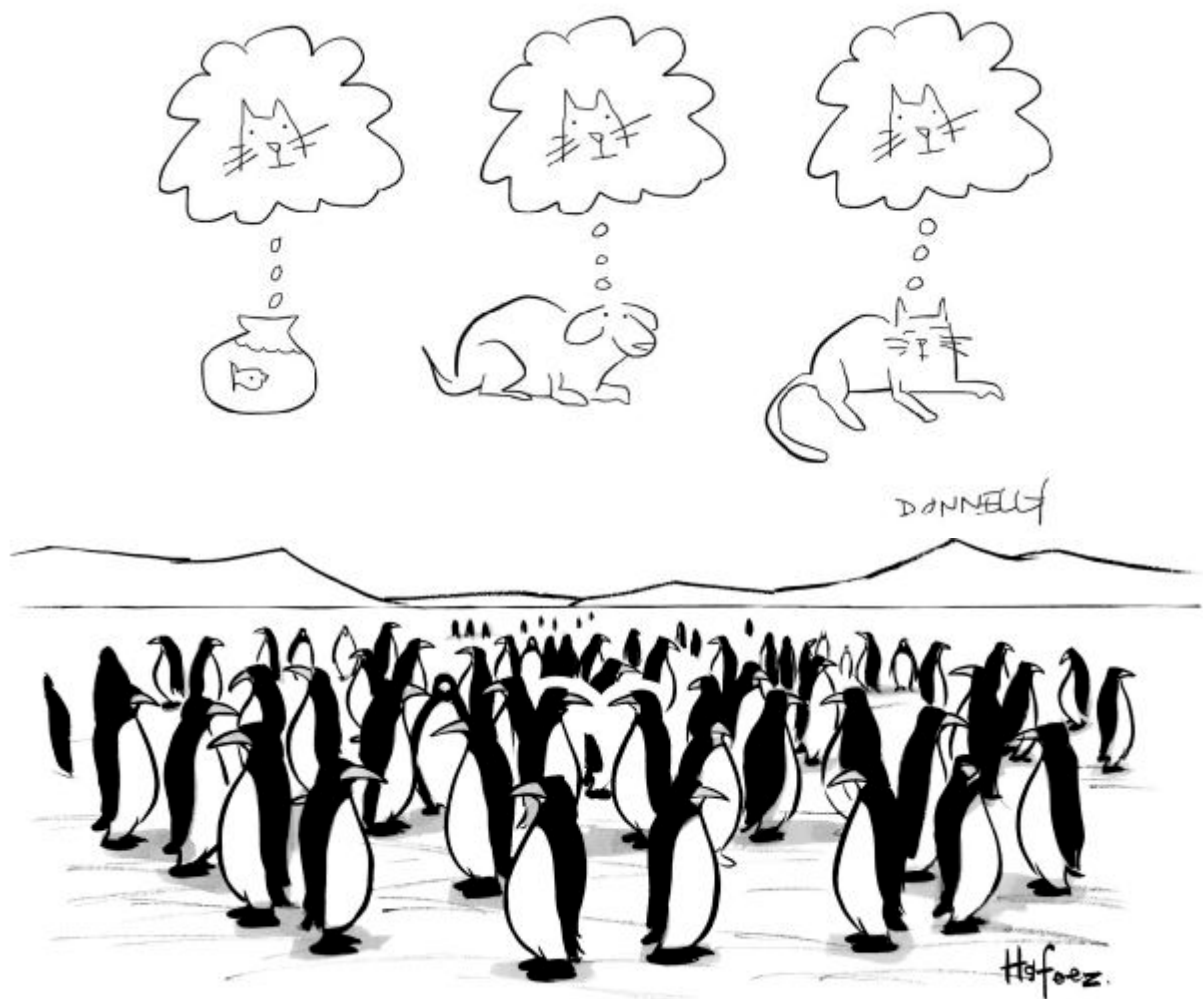


Animal Antics

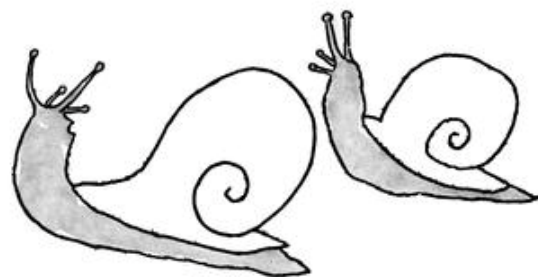


"I'm more interested in hearing about the eggs you're hiding from yourself."



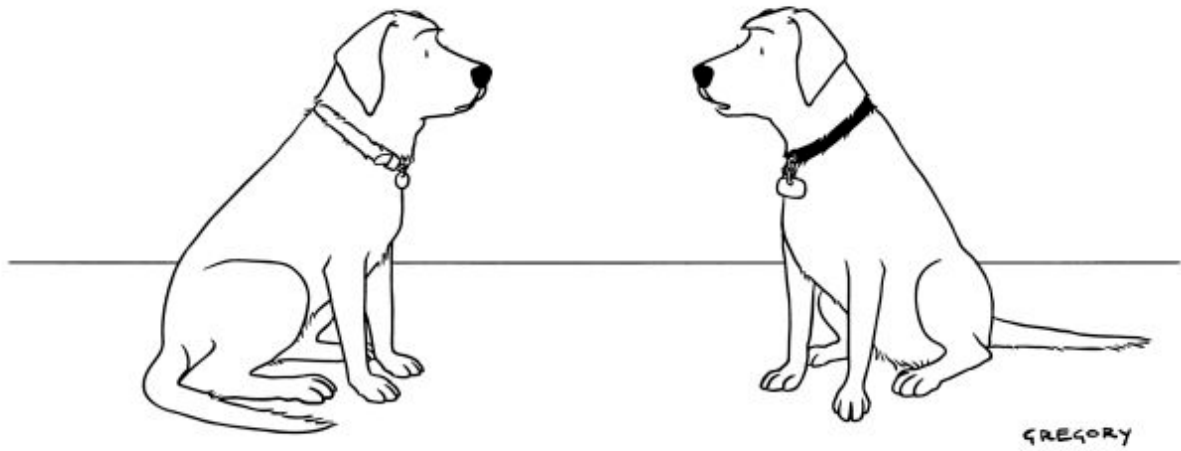


"Which one of us is me?"



S. GROSS

"I don't care if she is a tape dispenser. I love her."



"I had my own blog for a while, but I decided to go back to just pointless, incessant barking."



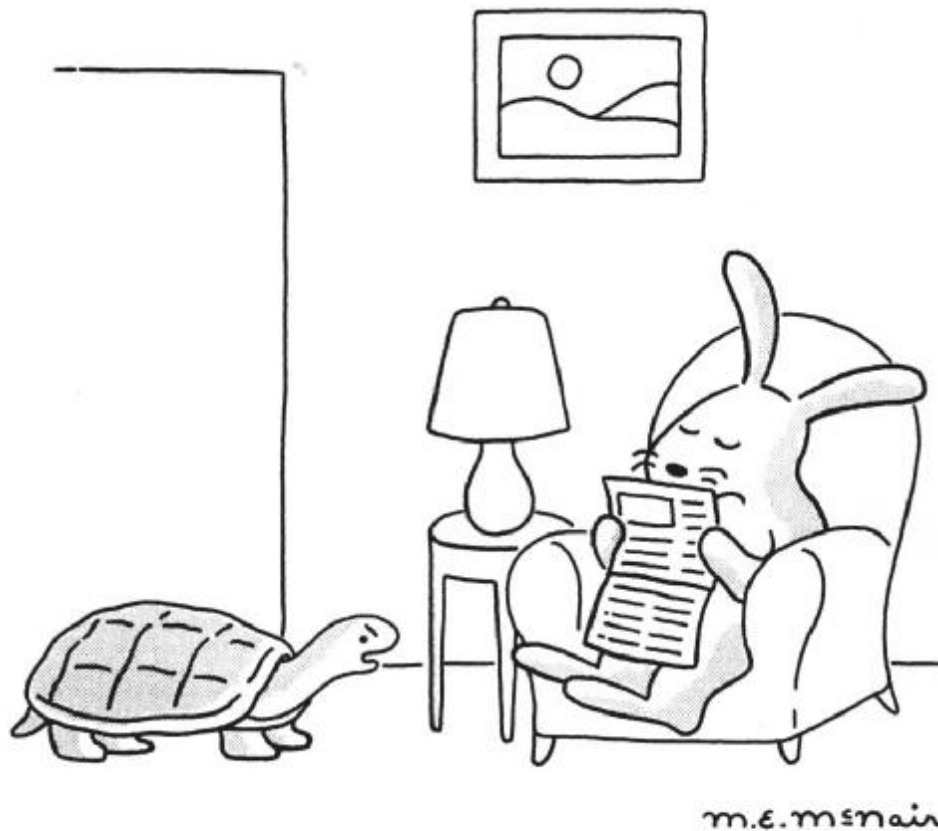
"Have you been trying to fix this yourself?"



"I got a job."



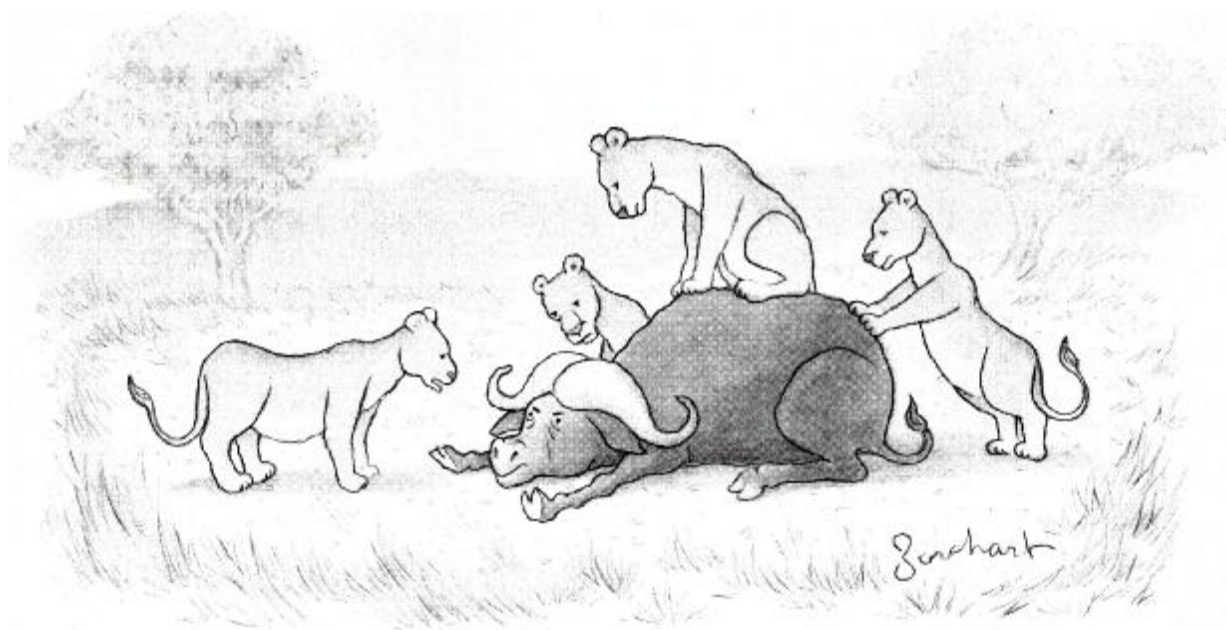
"I wish he enjoyed being our dog, and didn't treat it like a job."



"You know that if we're late they're going to blame me."

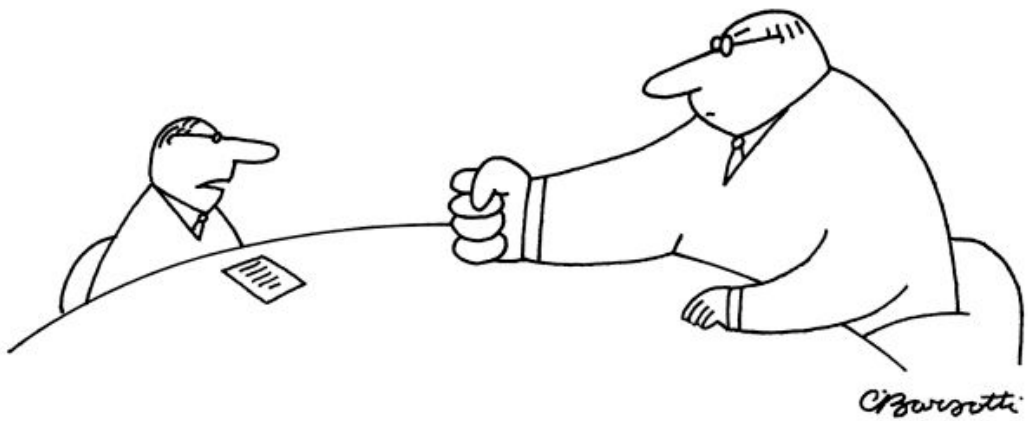


"And somebody's been listening to my Berlioz!"



"Do you know why we pulled you over today, sir?"

Office Life - don't you miss it?



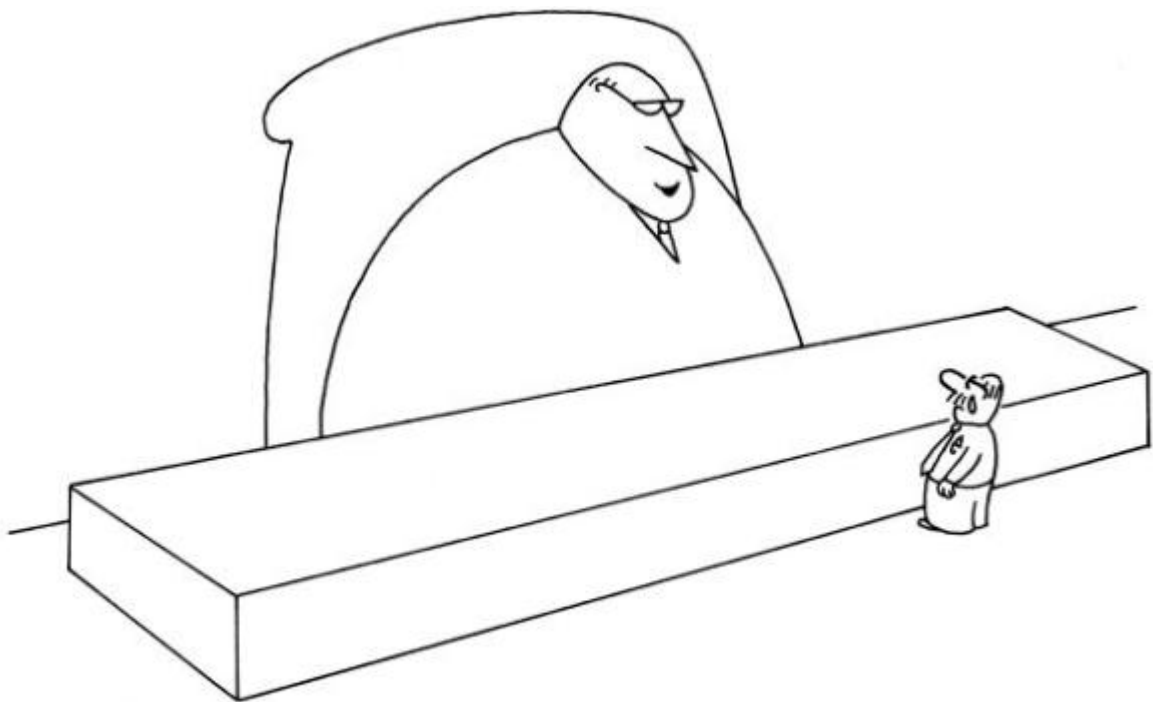
"O.K., if you put it that way."



"Sorry, sir—we seem to have lost five million dollars in the fog of accounting."



"The new piece of paper you like to keep on your desk came in."



C. Barnette

"Kids in college? Well, won't it be nice to have them home?"



C. Barnette

"It's ten to five. Please raise your seatback to its full upright and locked position."



"Skip to the part where the princess climbs to the top of the corporate ladder."

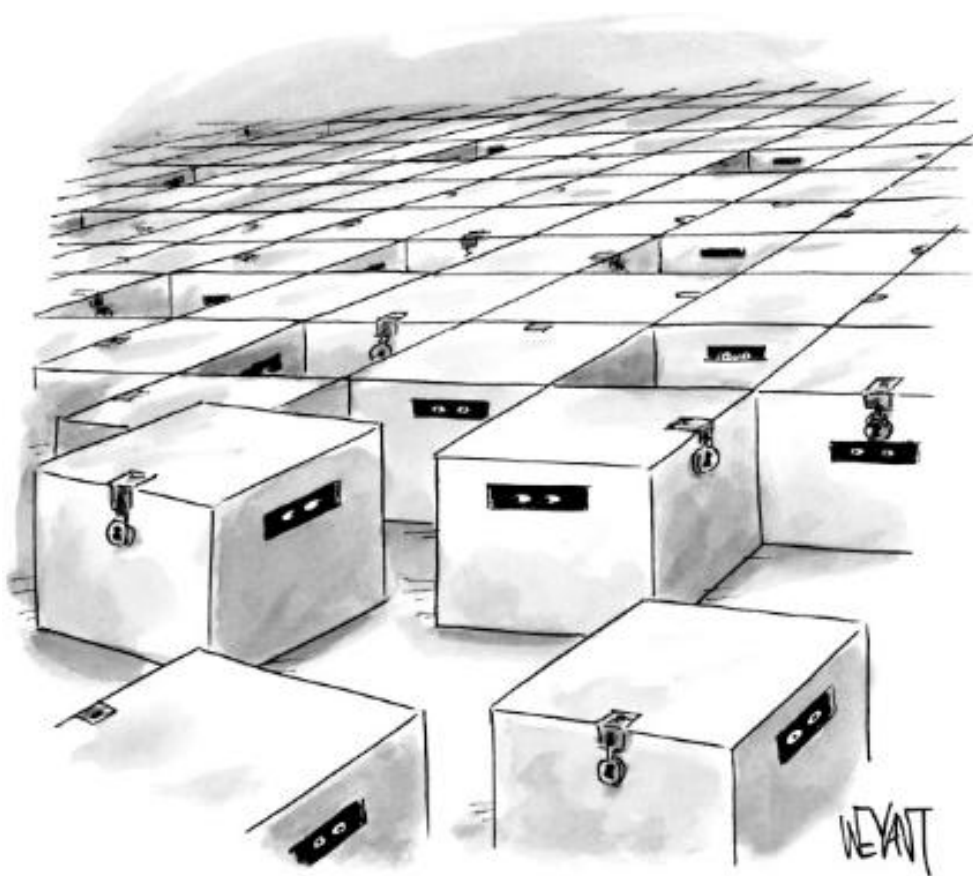


"Fire somebody!"



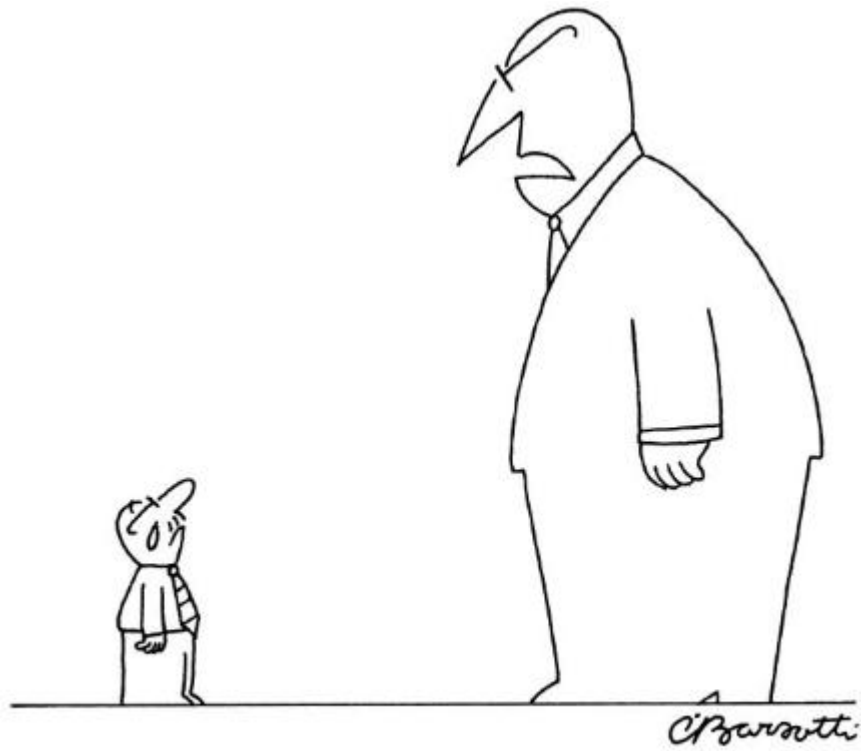
K.O.
Allen

"Ever since lunch today, I've been thinking about lunch tomorrow."

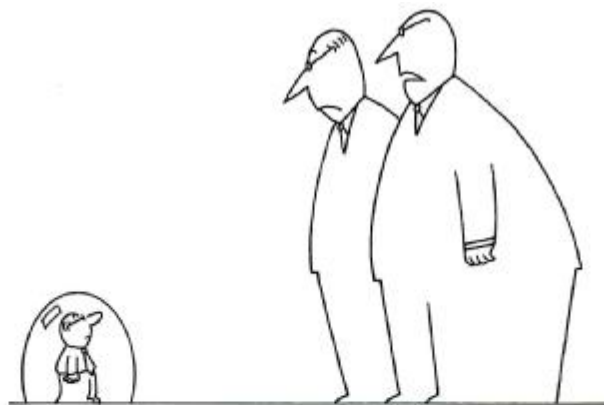


WEANT

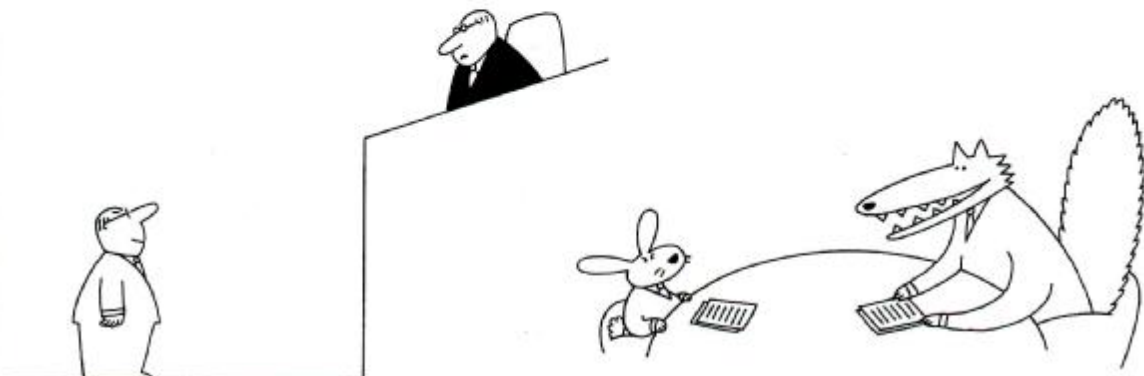
"I miss the old cubicles."



"Oh, that's right, Stanwick, cry—mock my inability to empathize."



"Middle class—we thought we should keep one."



"Oh, yeah, I forgot about the law of the jungle—not guilty."

"I've never understood—what is the difference between morals and ethics?"

Climate - let's keep thinking about it



"Now show him projected sea levels on his golf course."



"I told you to listen to the climate science."

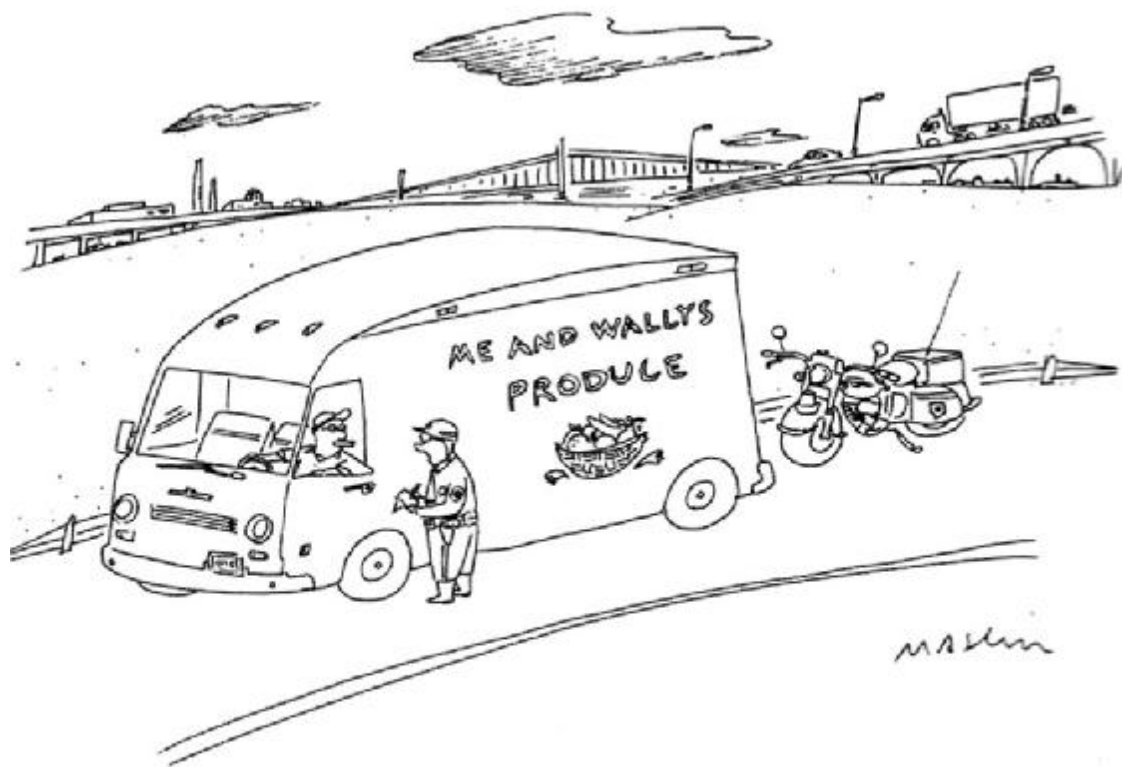
Language etc.



"O.K., but change 'Her tawny body glistened beneath the azure sky' to 'National problems demand national solutions.'"



"Do you know you've had your caps lock on for the last ten miles?"



"Sorry, but I'm going to have to issue you a summons for reckless grammar and driving without an apostrophe."



"And remember — no more subjunctives where the correct mood is indicative."

Doctors (please stay healthy)



"You may believe you've been overcharged, but, remember, you're overmedicated."



"I'm a doctor—I can add 'ectomy' to any word I choose."

INSIDE THE FDA



"These medicines all taste pretty good—let's approve them."



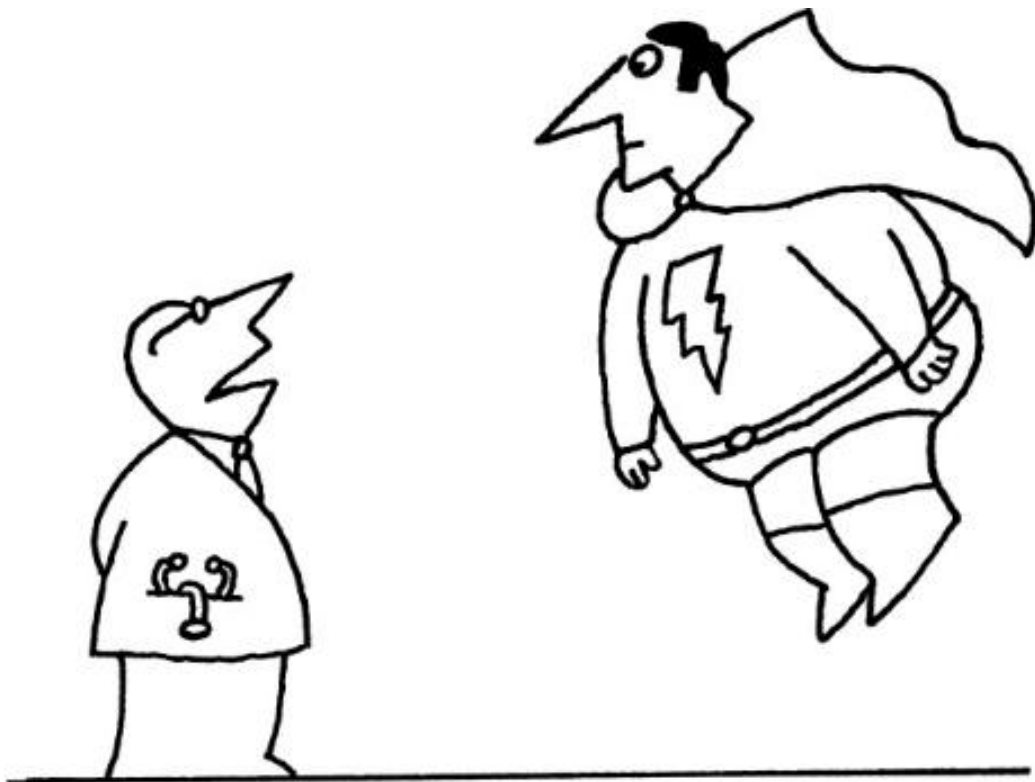
"You should relax less."



"He's waking up! Places, people!"



"Dead? He gets that a lot."



C. Burdotti

"That's great, but you still have to walk more."



PAUL
NORTH

"Your best cholesterol lacks all conviction, and your worst is full of passionate intensity."

Food and Drink - Enjoy (with as much moderation as you can manage)



"For what it's worth, 'Yo ho ho and chilled pinot grigio' actually rhymes."



"Which entrée raises the fewest ethical issues?"



"It tastes and smells just like a glass of wine!"



"Do you have any tooth-whitening vodka?"



PAUL
NOTH

"If he didn't mean us to eat it, why did he wrap it in bacon?"



"They know me here."



"I still enjoy running my winery, but these days my real passion is the meth lab."



"Let me get this, but keep in mind that you'll pay for it in other, more subtle ways later on."





"And that's how you make a peanut butter sandwich."



"How much do we have to leave to avoid a social-media incident?"

God and Co.



GOD FINDS ALL THE PRAYERS OF
MANKIND IN HIS SPAM FOLDER.



Kanin

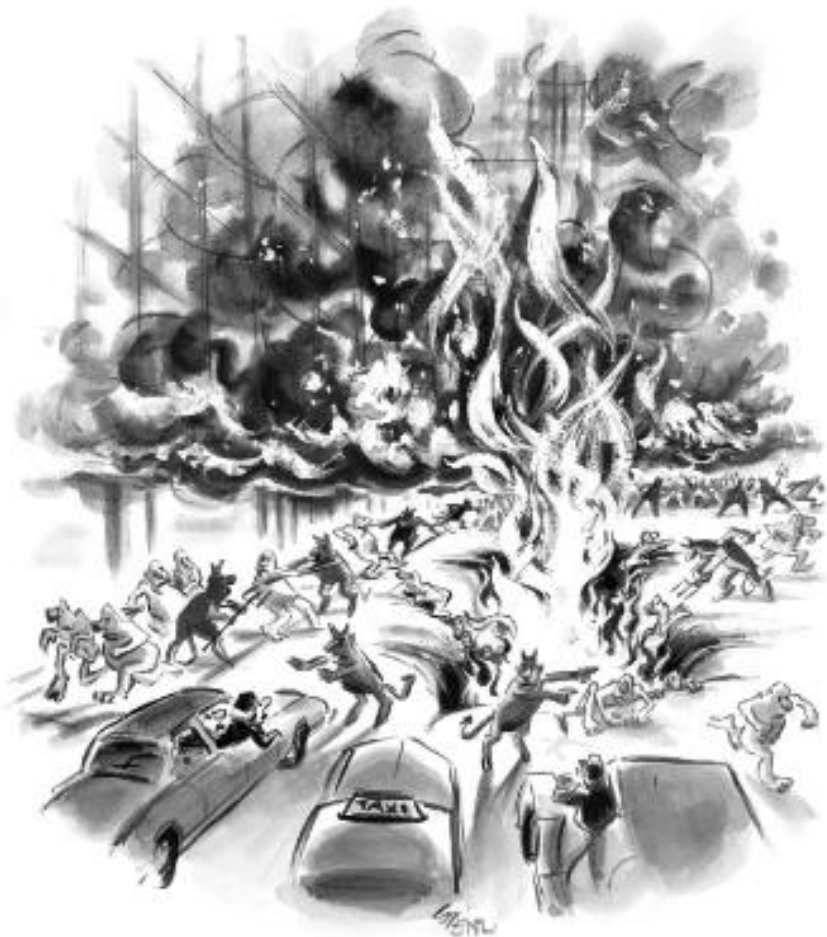
"We're spending August with his parents in Hell."



"Must I sacrifice family for career?"



"Wait. Don't look. O.K., over my left shoulder—is that God?"



"It doesn't look like a ruptured gas line to me."



"It always takes me a couple of cups of coffee to feel the rapture."



Kanin

"I feel like every time I turn into a swan there's this expectation of sex."



Kanin

"Look, I know you think you've got the stuff, but I'm telling you: walk God."



"I hear he turned water into wine, but it was a rather poor-quality Mesopotamian Cabernet."



"Wait for it."

Guns

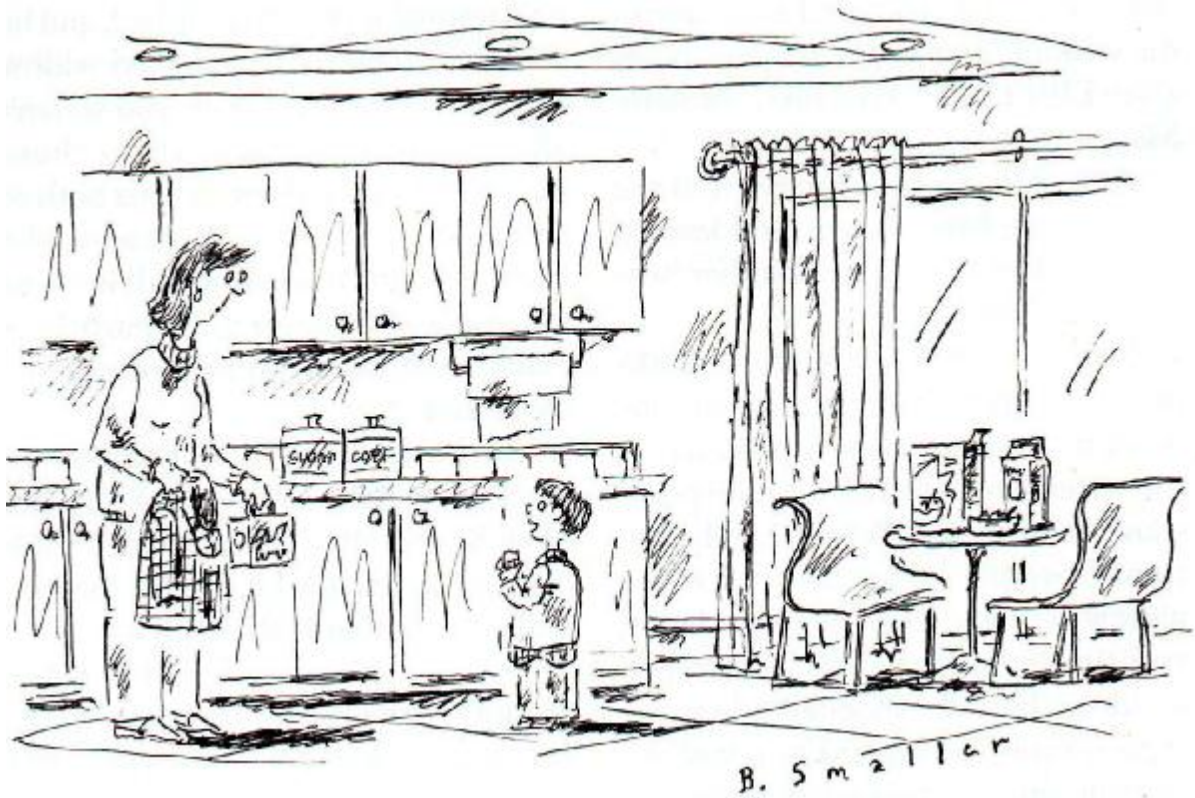


"But part of me hopes there never is an Armageddon."



"The media says there's a war on Christmas, and St. Nick isn't in the business of losing wars."

Kids (better get used to them being at home)



"I've decided to work from home today."



"Don't you want to have parents who can brag about their children?"

Soccer-Parent Coach



"O.K., big cheer here, but nothing that might be construed as pressure. Quiet now, but a supportive quiet. Watch your body language."



"Can we please go back to playing on our phones?"

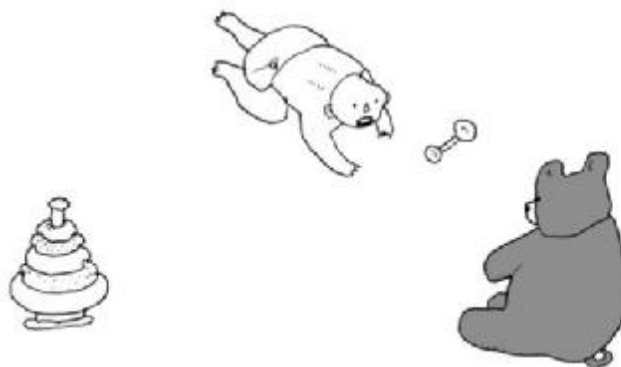


"I always ask for a pony for my birthday. I find it gives the most bargaining room."



"If you can hear me, give me a sign."

Finck



"At this age you're lucky if any of your friends have been born yet."



"Daddy's taking us out to buy a snowman!"

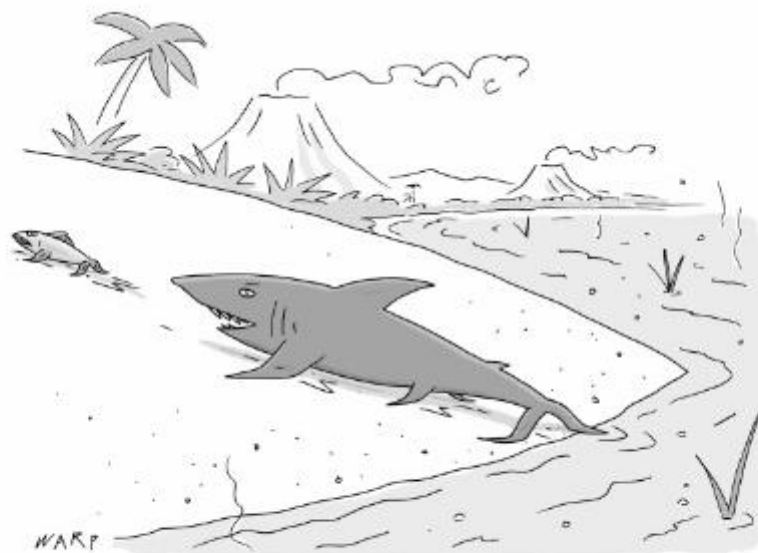


"Will you be putting her in day care or bringing her up artisanally?"

Lawyers - love them or leave them



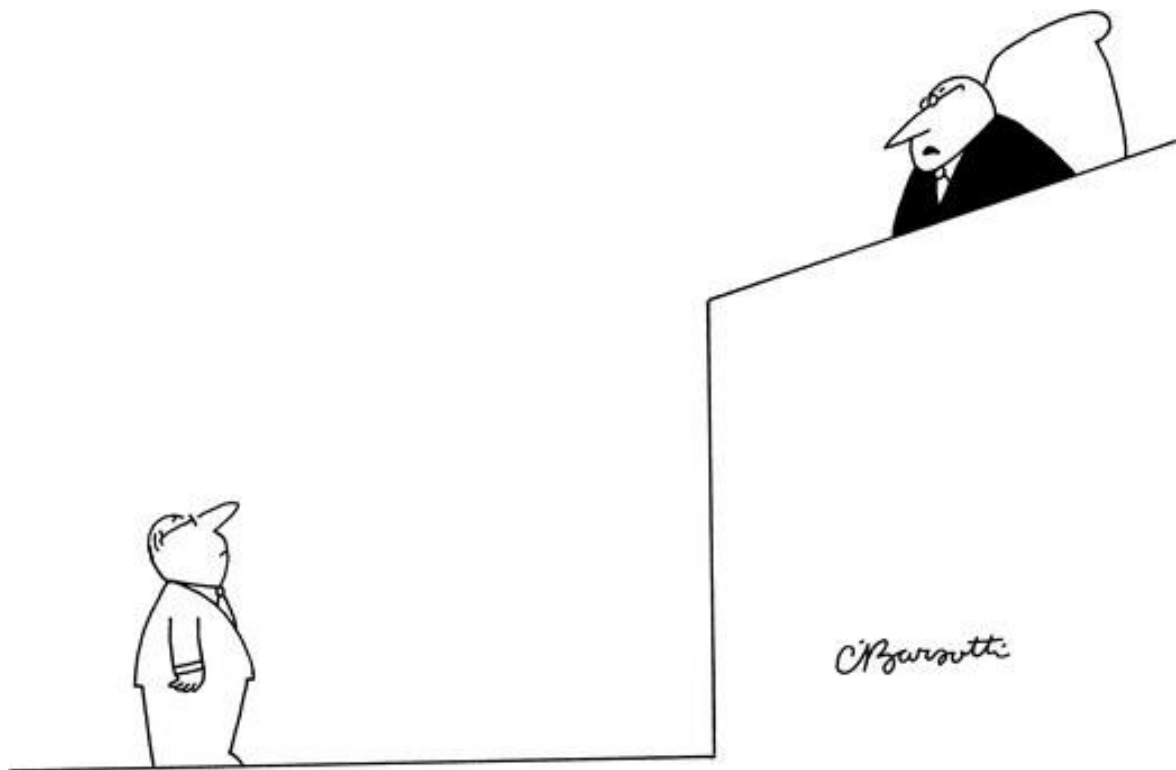
"Give a man a fish, he'll eat for a day. Teach a man to sue, and he'll eat for a lifetime."



"Trust me, you're going to be very happy you brought along legal representation."



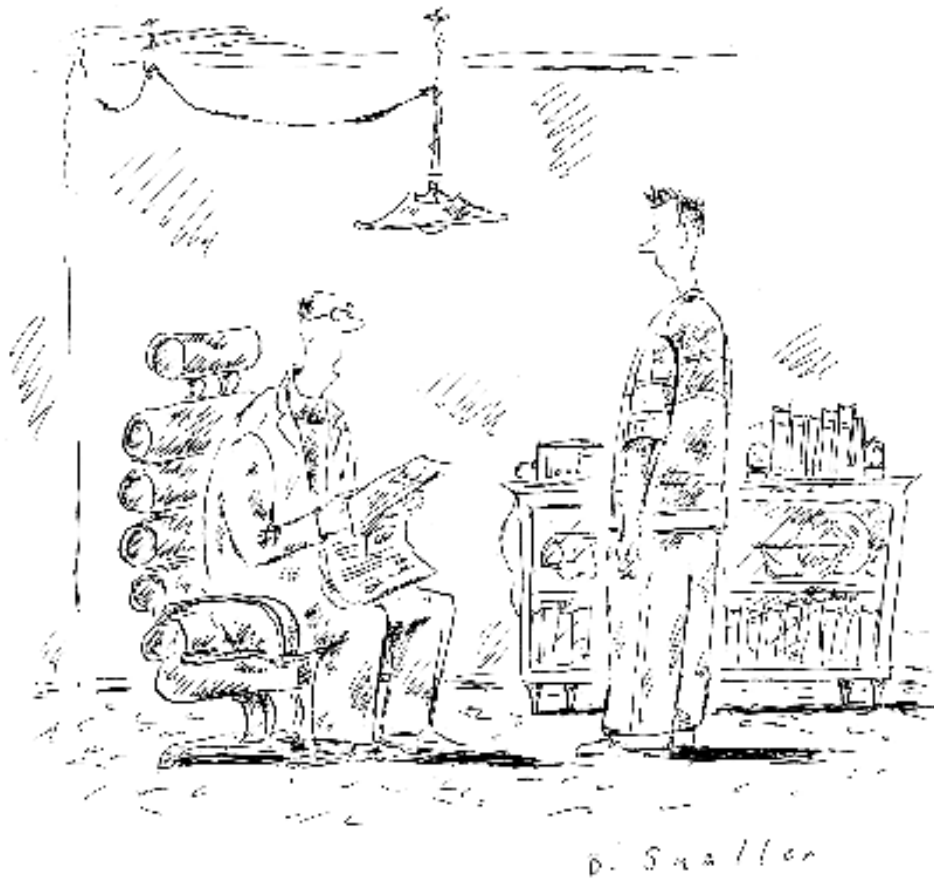
"Melanie, find me a little pro-bono case to cleanse my palate."



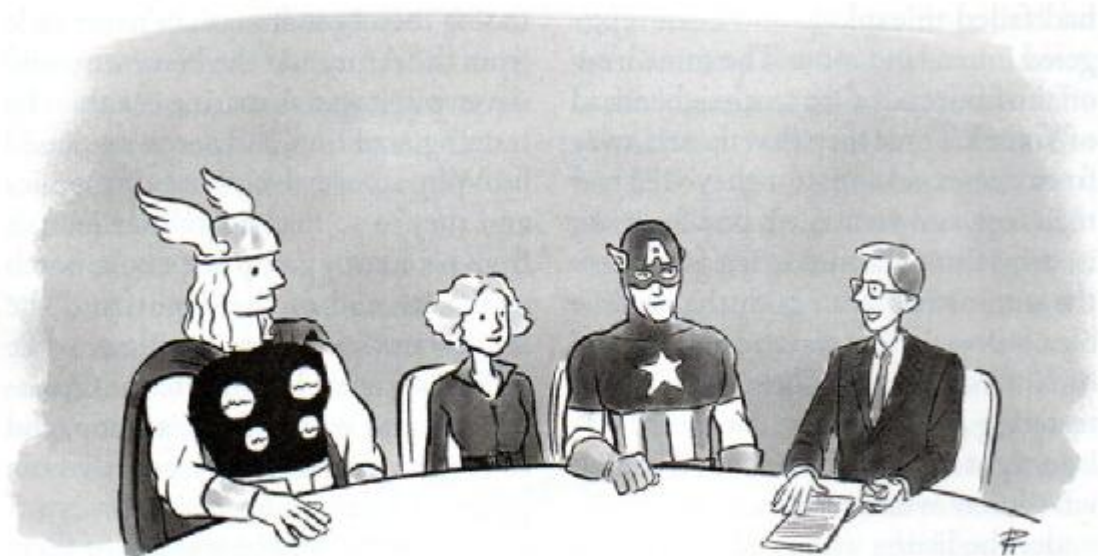
"'Small potatoes' is no defense."



"This is what happens when ethical standards are set artificially high."



"You can make your own mistakes, when you can hire your own lawyer."



"Well, I was bitten by a radioactive lawyer and ended up with the power of attorney."



*"You have a pretty good case, Mr. Pitkin.
How much justice can you afford?"*



Kanin

"Yes, Peters, it is just legalese. It's all just legalese. We're a law firm."



SIMPRESS

"We'd prefer a beheading, but we've decided to sue you instead."

Marriage and Love (we need all we can get)



"Larry and I invited you here tonight to take our focus off each other."



"I want to get rich while you're still beautiful."



moslin

"Oh, what the hell. Sure, I'll have a little more marriage."



"Wherever he is, I know he'll be upgraded."



Dad

"Remember, they're just as afraid of you as you are of standing up to your mother."



P. BYRNES.

"Is there anything else I can do wrong for you?"



"Come out, honey. I found the sunscreen."



"Even your sleep is curmudgeonly."

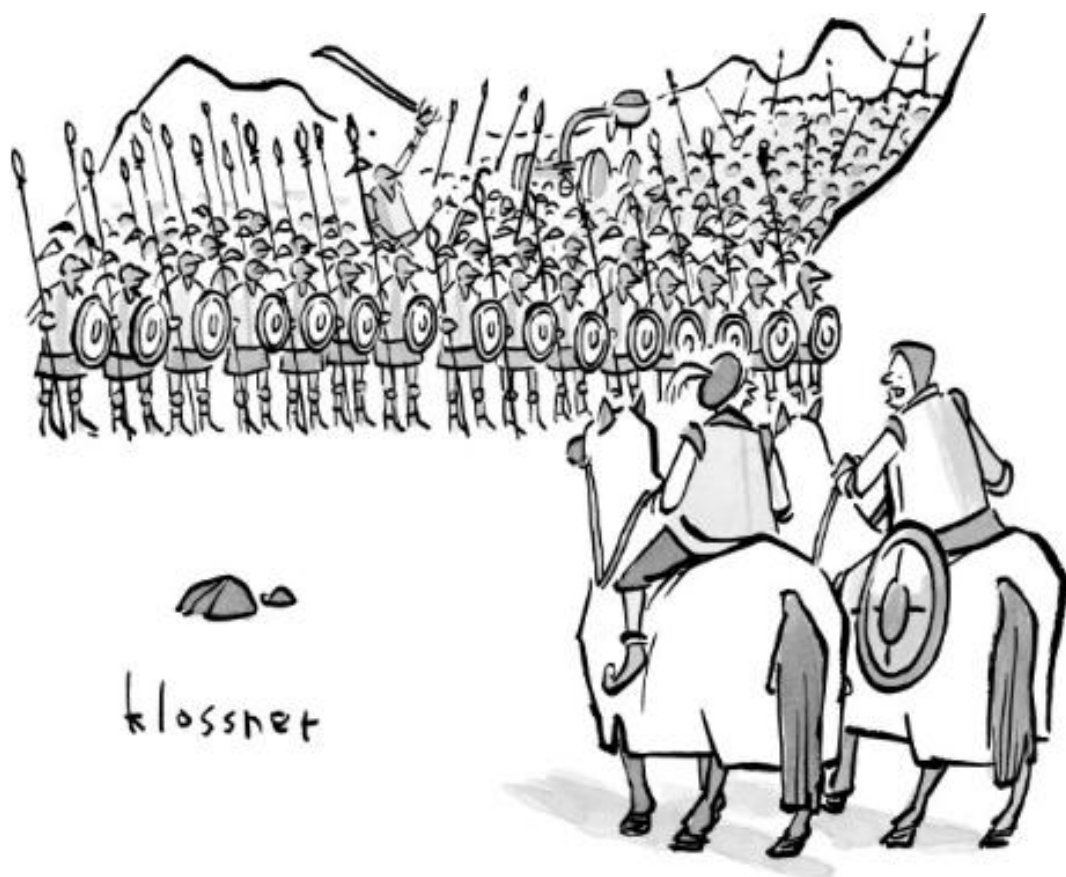


"I'm married, but it's not serious."

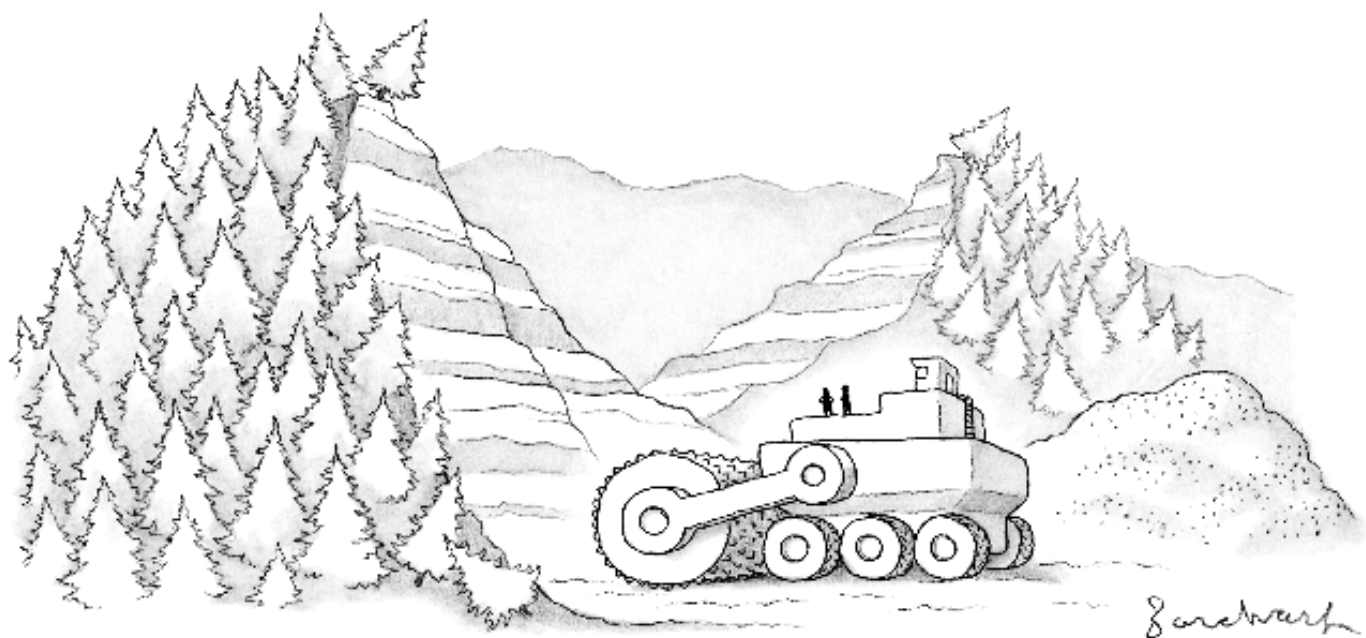


Modern Living - we need a reboot





"Maybe you shouldn't send out e-mails when you're tired."



"No coal here, either—but you never know until you look."

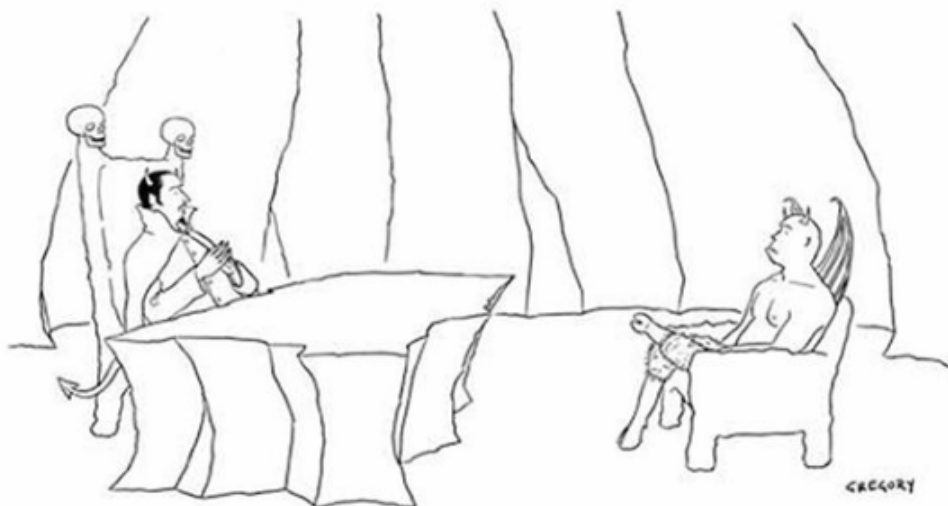


"No, this is correct—you're both in 28-B. We no longer offer individual seats."





"I know how expensive women's shoes are, but take the goddam jewelry!"



"I need someone well versed in the art of torture—do you know PowerPoint?"



"I'm working part time, but I'm hoping that once I finish my master's they'll up my hours to full time."



"A.T. & T. sent this drink over in hopes you'll consider switching your long-distance provider."

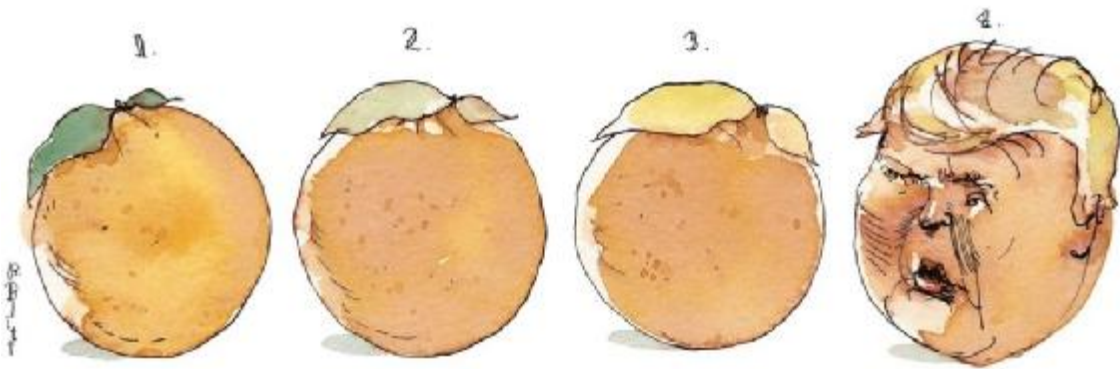
Politics - heaven help us



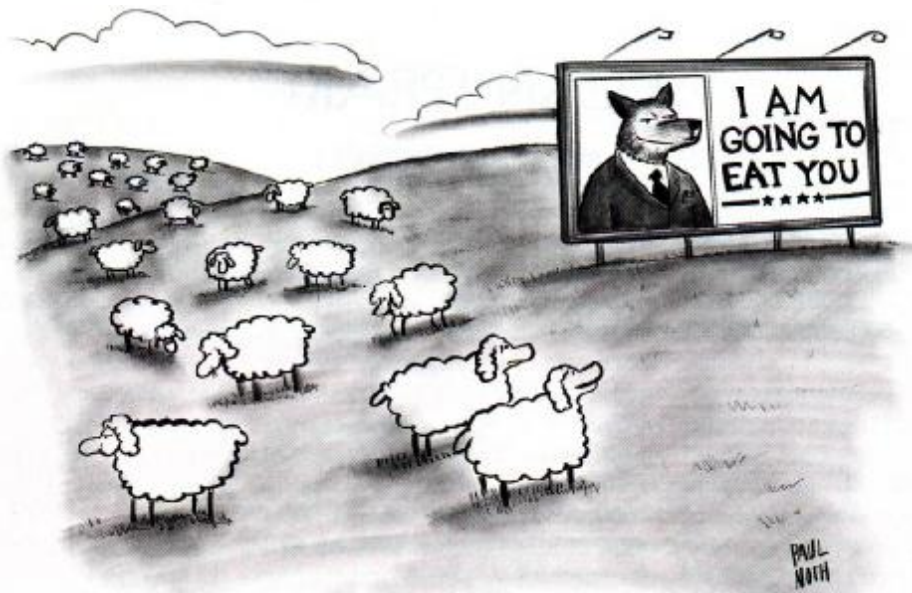
"Isn't this political ad wonderfully false and misleading?"



"Have you figured out how I can be on the right side of history without being on the wrong side of now?"



The Oranges of Species



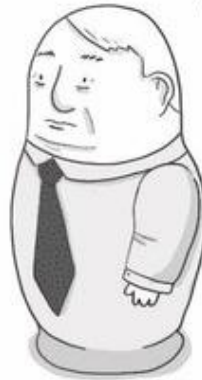
"He tells it like it is."

THE WHITE HOUSE
LAWYER

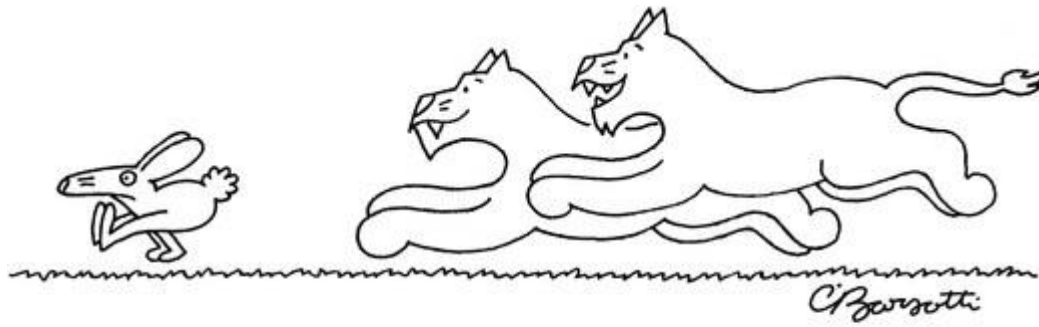
THE WHITE HOUSE
LAWYER'S LAWYER

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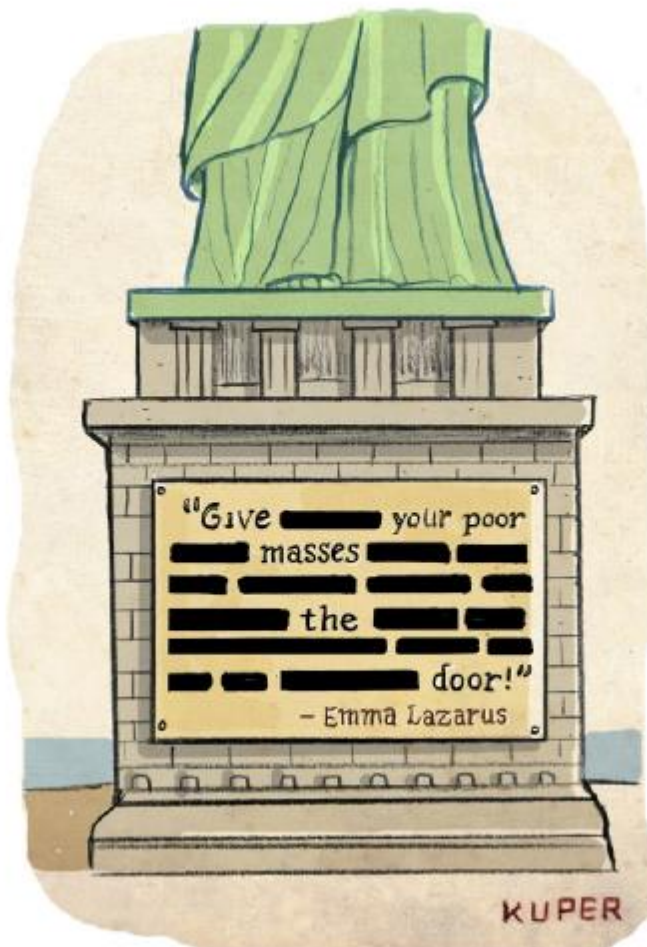


"The system's not perfect, but, by God, it's transparent."





"Hear that? No Trump."





"I have the new list of approved tweets."

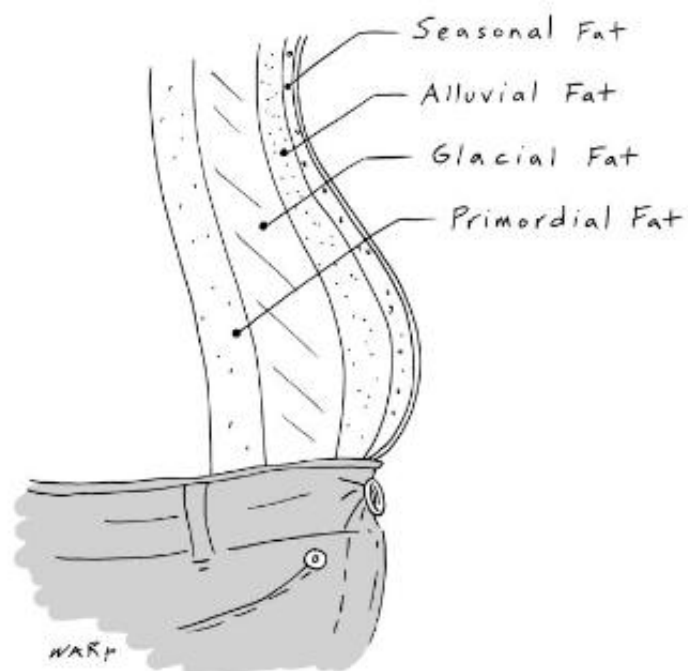


"No, the economy isn't growing slowly. It's growing mindfully."

Aging and Retirement - no comment



"I'm not losing my memory. I'm living in the now."



The Problem



"Actually, I'm pretty sure aging naturally and aging gracefully are mutually exclusive."



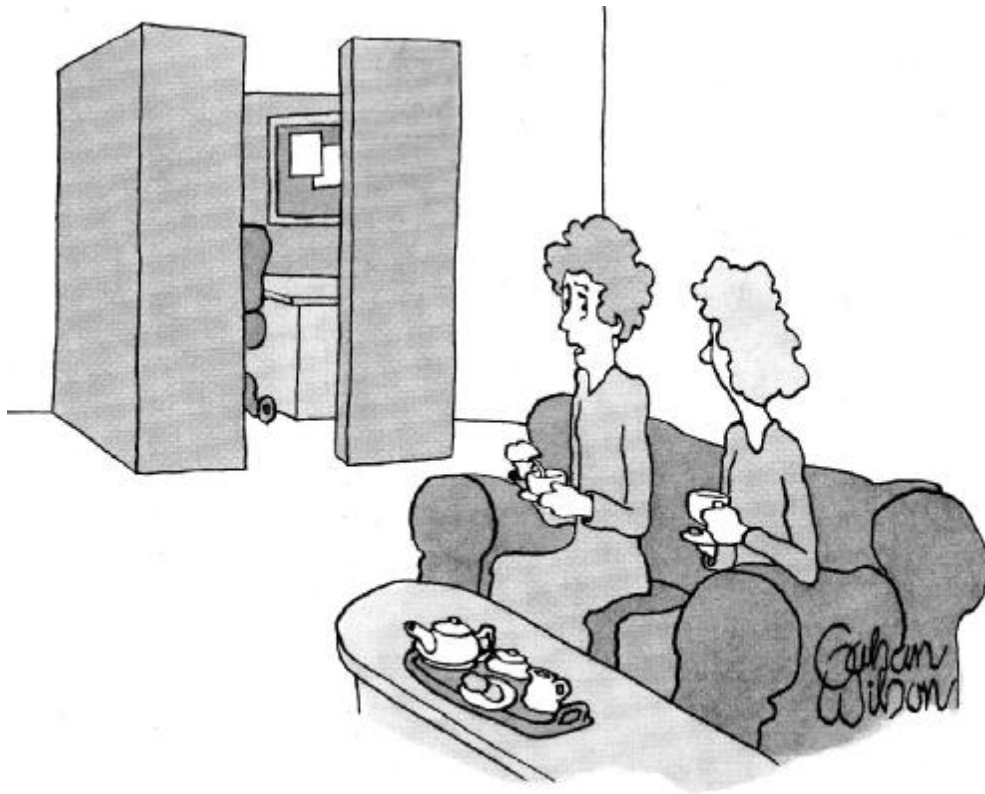
"I said, was it Manet or Monet who had syphilis?"



"I sure hope we can sign up for health care before we die of natural causes."



"Retirement suits him. He can be distracted for half a day by two minutes' worth of mail."



"Harry seldom leaves his retirement cubicle."



"Your contents have shifted."

Security and Military - not a top priority



*"We're from the Department of Homeland Security.
You left your damn door unlocked."*

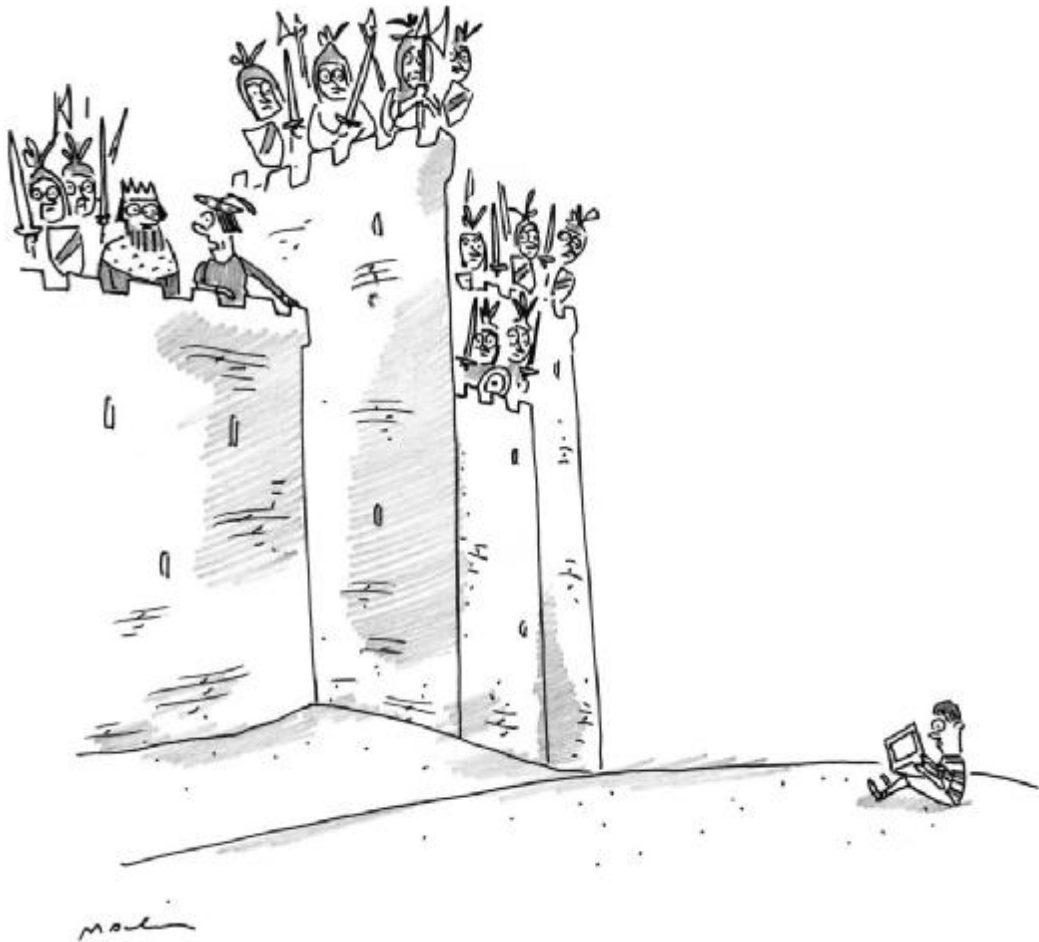




"Russia's always bigger than you think."



"I can't really talk about it. They're all for secret sexual stuff."



"Bad news your Majesty, it's a cyber attack."



"I accidentally picked up my daughter's backpack this morning."



"I thought he was about to be knighted, too, didn't you?"



"I know—let's call this one Operation Lowered Expectations."



"Get me everything on everybody."

Some Good Advice

1. Stay in touch and be healthy.
2. I just read the following News Flash: "Donald Trump, having run out of ideas for tackling the Covid-19 crisis, has asked the Dalai Lama for help. His Holiness advises that the first essential for combating the virus is internal peace; to reach this state, he says, everyone should begin by concluding all things that have already been begun."

I had a look around me and found a half-finished bottle of St. Émilion and an opened one of Sancerre; then most of a cottle of boognac, shum schnapsh and a fask of whishky.

Youb no idy hu mush bidder im aready feeing. Peashe tell a yor fends the wheay to inner peas.

3. Take time to read *The Decameron*, especially days 7 and 8.

<http://gutenberg.org/ebooks/23700>

4. And *The Canterbury Tales*, especially the Miller's and the Reeve's Tales.

<https://www.sparknotes.com/nofear/lit/the-canterbury-tales/>

5. Send this *Easter Egg* to all your friends; there will be no print edition.

6. Look up back numbers of *Christmas Pudding*

<http://www.pamirs.org/Christmas-Pudding.htm>

7. Greet everyone with a wave and a smile.

8. And don't forget to take a subscription to *The New Yorker*:

<https://www.newyorker.com/>