

Tijuana-type flu restores a 'running' faith in humanity

Nothing particularly upsets me this morning.

It first occurred to me while I was shaving, and I panicked just enough to cut my chin. If it had the common decency to at least bleed profusely, I might have been upset enough to write this week's column. It didn't, and I'm not.

michael
zangari

This would tend to lend credence to changes that have been thrown my way several times in the last few weeks by my second favorite critic. My first favorite critic is the one who so barbarously cut my chin this morning with a razor.

Critic No. 2 would have lowered the

razor about 2 inches.

He claims that I get paid to be angry. If this column is fueled by anger, then I'm running on empty.

I don't get angry often. I do get amazed frequently, but not well enough to accept a check for it.

Critic No. 2 has been trying to get me to go on a verbal rampage for two years on the evils of converting Fahrenheit to Celsius. Evidently Critic No. 2 has a great deal of latent anger.

On the other hand, I am quite calm and serene, and as I mentioned earlier, not particularly upset at anything.

In fact, if anything, I'm somewhat flushed with victory this morning. You see, for the first time in 2 days I walked to the bathroom this morning instead of running. After a two-day bout with a flu virus—undoubtedly not the Russian flu, it felt more like a Tijuana strain—I may never get upset again.

I followed some sage doctor's advice without even knowing it. I stayed in bed—as if I could get up, and drank plenty of fluids—as if I could keep anything else down.

I lounged around, generally felt miserable and questioned my existence. If my existence answered, it was drowned out by the rumblings in my tummy.

You get a unique perspective on life when you feel it draining from you. When the 24-hour bug decided to extend his (or her visit, as the case may be) for a day, the thought occurred to me that I might die.

Feverishly I grabbed some typing paper to do my column, not wanting to miss the newspaper deadline, and began hacking away. Then I began to type.

I tried hard to be amazed. I failed. I tried to be angry about something. I failed. I tried to be upset. I headed for the bathroom. I ran every liberal cliché

through my head I could think of. When that didn't spark anything I ran every conservative cliché I could stomach through my head. Nothing.

In a flood of sudden realization, it struck me that I didn't care. I didn't give two hoots about anything except the Kracatoa east of my breast bone.

I raised both arms skyward to the apartment above me and screamed, "Who gives a purple poop!" I am much better now.

Although it was somewhat less than a religious experience, I thought I'd share it with you. (I don't get paid to be angry or amazed. I get paid to be self-indulgent.)

After two days of isolation—no television, newspapers, junk mail or seeing a human face other than the green one in the mirror—I've come before you with a new outlook.

After being alone for two days, I have a new faith in humanity.

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