

Three wonderful men influenced my life: My father, Tibor (Ted) Schwartz was born in 1915 and came to the US from Hungary, ahead of nazi terror. He died when I was a boy. My adoptive father Hans (John) Tanner, born in Switzerland in 1898 emigrated to the US in 1925. And my Uncle Harry Connick Sr.

Sadly, late in January of the year we lost uncle Harry, who would have turned 98 in March. He and his wife, Dan's Aunt "Babe" (his mother's sister), cared for Dan for a year at their first home in New Orleans when he was in his mid-teens. Below are photos of Babe and Harry, one from 1970 and another self-captioned from when we were in New Orleans for the wedding of Jill Goodacre to Harry Connick Jr. Aunt Babe (actual name Anita) died in 1981 after battling cancer. Uncle Harry eventually remarried, a wonderful woman named Londa, happily, for many years. He was a major influencer in my life. I could not have had a better one.



Also, sadly, on March 28, Dan's friend and former work colleague David Hill passed away after a long, brave battle with Parkinson's disease. We greatly admired David's character. He was 80 years and 9 months old. He leaves his wife, Irene. David brought Dan into his mass storage/data protection consultancy at Aberdeen Group, where they collaborated pleasantly and successfully for several years.

On a happier note, we completed a major addition to our home on Cape Cod. We had purchased it in September 2022. We needed an affordable house with total first-floor living. The Cape Cod style house met our requirements, but with a somewhat superfluous second floor containing two bedrooms and a full bath. It had a bedroom and bath of the first floor too, but we found the bedroom too small to our liking and we also wanted to be able to accommodate guests in our age bracket downstairs. So, we added a new first-floor master suite (bedroom/bath/walk-in closet), sun room, and enlarged garage with toolshed. Our project is documented in a slide show at <https://dantanner.jalbum.net/Addition/>.



I feel that I must relate to you the **SAGA OF THE TOILET BOWL**. We wanted a wall-mounted commode in our new master bath, and found that we could get the same one we had had in North Carolina for about eight years. We liked it because it was sleek, easily cleaned, and with no floor foot, and easily cleaned under. It looks like this. However, ordering it from Amazon rapidly became a disaster. Then, an exacting building inspector rejected it on a technicality, after Amazon's return window closed. I had to escalate the issue to get a refund, but after that the vendor balked because it was no longer in the original box. Then Amazon shipped us another set of the in-the-wall part and the vendor shipped us another seat, both by mistake – and both told us to just keep them! It all took months.



Moving on to nicer things, Ruth completed this quilt, “Plovers,” in March. It is now on the sunroom wall in our new addition. We also now have sufficient wall space to hang several of her other quilts.

May 6 was the date of the Sandwich Annual Town Meeting. Since we moved here, Ruth and I noticed the prevalence of littered “nip” bottles. They are evidence of drinking while driving, as a “workaround” to the state’s “open container law,” which stipulates a \$500 fine and license suspension for operating a motor vehicle while in possession of an open container of an alcoholic beverage. With a “nip,” one can drain the 50 ml (about a double shot) quickly and immediately after toss it out the window.

I gathered town voter signatures sufficient to get an article banning nips on the Town Meeting Warrant. I made a presentation at Town Meeting. (Contact me if you would like to see it.) But I failed to garner a winning vote at Town Meeting, although the vote for it came close to winning and was encouraging. I had done it all solo, and did not reckon with the well-financed opposition from the liquor industry.

After Town Meeting I was approached by several people who had supported my Warrant Article and who, I expect, will form the core of an effort to get the same article passed at next year’s Town Meeting. And we will be organized and formidable at the 2025 Town Meeting.

On May 10, we saw this article <https://www.psypost.org/study-reveals-widespread-bipartisan-aversion-to-neighbors-owning-ar-15-rifles/> “Study reveals ‘widespread, bipartisan aversion’ to neighbors owning AR-15 rifles.” The only thing surprising is the word “bipartisan.” It is why we moved out of North Carolina in 2022. Our neighbor began to fire hers in her yard.

On June 3, we had to euthanize Coco our calico cat. She was 14 years old, and had developed a large internal mass. She was not eating. She quit doing most of her usual things, such as playing with Moxie



and coming to our bed at night, or to Ruth’s lap in the evening, and she was suffering. We had rescued her, a runt feral kitten nearly dead, in Dominica (photo on right, about a week after we saved her. We gave her thirteen years of life



longer that she would otherwise have had, plus enjoyment during her lifetime.

On June 6, we finally moved into our new bedroom in our new addition. We also moved our clothes, which had been dispersed in several small closets throughout the house, both upstairs and down, into

the nice ample walk- in closet in our addition. Our coats went into a closet on the hallway next to the entrance to the house from our garage, and all our other clothes and shoes are now neatly and conveniently at hand in the walk-in bedroom closet. We also moved some of our furniture (which we replaced in August) into the bedroom and sun room, and our desk into the area we had planned for it at the hallway entrance to our bedroom, in a passageway in front of the bathroom. We added our own towel bars, robe hooks, glass shelf, and vanity cabinet to complete our bathroom. There was not much more remaining to be done to the house, except for landscape recovery, adding rain gutters, restoring the original downstairs bathroom, which suffered some cosmetic damage during construction, and touch-up to the old original downstairs bedroom and moving our flat screen into it. We hope to find a larger screen to replace it in after-xmas sales.

We got the rain gutters done quickly. Digging and laying culverts for those was a do-it myself job. Restoring the old bathroom was done as part of the project. We plan to improve the landscaping over time. We also plan to redo the walls and floors in the original house section soon, probably in 2025. The walls in the old bedroom are already done as part of the project.



Just in time! On June 10 we began to enjoy a three-night visit from my sister Naomi and brother-in-law Larry Sr. We had a wonderful time reminiscing, visiting some nearby Cape Cod sights, and having great meals, both at home and out. Here, Naomi and Larry wave to us from the top of the three-story treehouse at the Heritage Garden and Museum in our town of Sandwich MA.

While here, they enjoyed latkes (potato pancakes), challah (braided bread), and passion fruit juice that I made, plus tasting the “prisoner pear” liquor that we brought home from France in 2022. Naomi showed us collections of her archived family documents, including the 1953 Neptune High School yearbook, which had a lovely of our mother. Mom had had to leave high school some twenty years earlier, during the Great Depression, to take a job at a bakery to help the family. She returned high school in person (there was no private GED study available in the 1950s), to complete her last two years, doing so while I was in 7th and 8th grades and our sister Joyce was in kindergarten and 1st grade. The only concessions given to her were that she could drive herself to school, skip home room (to get Joyce to school), and not have to take either physical education or home economics (which would have been rather silly for a married mother of three in her thirties).

Naomi brought our mother’s high school yearbook with her. It was the 1953-4 school year, when I was in 8th grade and Joyce was in 1st grade (Naomi would be born in 1956), Here is Mom’s 1954 Neptune HS yearbook photo. GAA is Girl’s Athletic Association. Honor Society.

On July 11, Ruth had total knee replacement surgery of her left knee. The knee had become extremely painful and was limiting and disabling her. We had hoped to make it through the summer before the surgery, with its long recovery period, but could not. She had a tough time in post-operative recovery, because of a bad reaction to the pain medication, and instead of being discharged from the hospital late on the afternoon of the 11th, she spent that night and the next in the hospital.

MATHILDA TANNER
SOCIAL WORK
“Matil”
“The Secret of Success Is Constancy
To Purpose”
GAA 1: Chess Club 1: Dramatic Club
1, 2, 3: Cheerleader 2, 3: Honor Society
2, 3: Glee Club.





On July 18, I performed with Jon Waterman in a multimedia musical history of railroads in America, given at the Sandwich Center for Active Living. I had done the same with Jon a year earlier, the performance then being about slavery's legacy in American music. I met Jon on-line via Facebook when we were living in Dominica. I must give credit to Ruth for letting me go do this only one week after her knee replacement surgery. It was the first time I left her side since the surgery. This is Jon and his wife Li. She plays guitar and bass, and sings. Jon writes many of his show's songs.

By August 4, Ruth had a milestone in her recovery, managing to walk a few steps on sand and sit at a picnic table to join the regular summer Sunday group of Lakewood Hills "old timers" who meet for Sunday "bring something to eat" picnics at Spectacle Pond, our neighborhood fresh-water beach.

On August 8, we received the new bedroom furniture for our addition. We love it. Besides beauty, the new bedroom furniture makes the room seem more spacious while providing more storage than before. In addition, we also have the storage of the old chest of drawers and dresser, which we have moved into the old bedroom (now the TV room/downstairs guest bedroom).

And on August 13 (which was the 105th anniversary of my mother's birth) Ruth surprised both herself and me by walking around the block, a distance I estimate to be a half mile. She also began to walk around in the house without even using a cane. On August 16, thirty-six days after knee replacement, Ruth walked around the block using her cane only sometime. Then she made biscuits to go with our dinner. The walker was folded and retired to our garage. Two weeks later (August 27), Ruth was finally able to both bend and extend her knee enough to pedal a stationary exercise bike.

We had a fright on August 26 around noon we experienced a lightning flash and stupendous thunder crack. Shortly thereafter we heard sirens in our neighborhood. We live at 11 Mill Road. The lightning struck about 250 feet away at 19 Mill Road, setting that house afire, damaging that house's electrical system. Fortunately, nobody was hurt and the fire was quickly extinguished with limited damage. Fire and police companies from our town of Sandwich and from neighboring Mashpee as well as from the Joint Military Base on Cape Cod responded. When Ruth went to her physical therapy session on August 27, she learned that the woman who lives at the house that was struck had had to call-in and cancel her own PT appointment the day before because of the strike and fire! A story about soon appeared on-line: <https://www.yahoo.com/news/lightning-strike-ignites-house-fire-202841062.html>



On August 30, we took a walk with Moxie, along the Cape Cod Canal and happened to see the largest ship going through it that we have ever seen in the canal, the "Seabourn Quest", a 650-foot luxury cruise ship bound from Boston to New York City. The walk was particularly good because Ruth made it, all the way over to the water's edge without even using a cane. She is very nearly over her post knee replacement surgery recovery. She began to use the shower in the bathroom of our addition instead of the walk-in one in our guest bathroom. That is notable because the new bath tub is a whirlpool/soaking tub that is 22 inches high.



Also, on the same day we hung a new quilt "Beach Dreams" on the hallway wall near one our entrances. Ruth makes nice quilts.

We learned in August that an old friend, Charles Davis, of Martha's Vineyard and Wilmington NC, died. Aged 80, he and Joan had been married 60 years. Charles had knee replacement surgery the same week that Ruth had hers. But Charles fell at home, his wound became infected, and he died of sepsis.



Ruth made this on September 4 using "sea glass", shells, and pebbles.



In the evening of September 5, as I petted Moxie, I felt a lump on each side of her neck. The next morning the veterinarian pointed out similar lumps on the upper inside of each of her hind legs. She is eight years old. We learned on September 12 that Moxie has large cell lymphoma. She began 18 weeks of chemotherapy on September 16. A biopsy in January will reveal the treatment outcome.

And I learned on September 16 that I had contracted Covid-19. I have had seven covid shots. It is hell. On September 19, Ruth came down with it too. Having cared for me, she wisely waited until I recovered, so that I could then care for her!

A 3-day rain & wind storm also began that day and brought this visitor from our backyard neighbor. I cut part of the tree up a little at a time using my wimpy little 10-inch battery powered chainsaw, taking multiple recharges to do it. I tossed the pieces back over the fence. It took a real gas- powered chainsaw to cut up the main trunk. A friendly neighbor with one came did it. I had predicted the tree would fall, and the direction, just not exactly when. It broke at ground level, the roots rotting. I was able to straighten the wire fence.



On September 29, rain from Hurricane Helene caused a terrible hurricane flood in western North Carolina, where we had relocated from. The photos below were taken in the town of

Black Mountain where I used to go weekly to perform at an open mic, at the aptly named Flood gallery as the waters receded. See the mud? The ground had been saturated from earlier heavy rains. The gallery sits on low ground between a creek and the Swannanoa River. The home we sold two years before fared much better. We had removed trees that could have fallen on it. It had a propane powered generator. The town lost power and its water system, but the house had well water and generator power for the well pump.



On October 10, I left for a 6-day/5-overnight trip to the mid New Jersey shore to visit my best friend Roger and his wife Rita. Here are Roger and Rita with a berry bowl from Chilmark Pottery, Martha's Vineyard, that we gave them for their 56th wedding anniversary on October 12. I also managed to briefly visit my sister Naomi and see her youngest grandchildren Jack (two and a half) and Ace (11 months). Roger and Rita were going to visit us in September, but his health would not permit him to make the trip. We suffered the same disappointment the prior year. Ruth stayed behind because we believed that her recent total knee replacement surgery would have made the 6-hour car trip difficult for her to endure. Also, if she had not stayed behind, it would have meant an interruption in Moxie's chemotherapy sessions. Instead of driving, I would have loved to have used the Acela train and mass/public transportation, but the inconvenience and cost made it impossible. "American mass/public transportation" and "American public health care" are, sadly and outrageously, oxymorons.



On the trip, I stopped by to look at the house my parents bought in 1951 and in which I and my two sisters were raised in. (Me from age 10 until entering the Navy when 17. Joyce from age 5 to her marriage at 18. Naomi from birth to her own marriage at age 19.) Here, the present owner, is standing in front. Our yard had been a botanical showplace. electrical system must surely have been redone, because I installed it at age 11! The lean-to greenhouse in the back is gone, the front deck is new, as are the roof and siding. We had bought the left side at 20X20 feet (400 sq. ft.) and added the right side of 16X30 feet (480



sq. ft.). The new owner told me that he fell through the rotting floor of the old section twice! What we bought in 1951 for \$3,000 sold a few years ago for \$297,000. Yes, 99 times the price.

Here I am with Roger on the "Grand Stairway" of the Great Hall of Monmouth University. We are graduates of the Class of 1967, when the school was Monmouth College. Now a National Historic Landmark, the Great Hall was completed in 1929, just before the stock market crash heralding the Great Depression. Somewhere, perhaps in the archives of the Asbury Park Press, is a photo of me with five other students (four men and a woman) who had made a JFK 50-mile hike (it was a craze) from West Long Branch to Time Square in NY City in February, 1962. The hike took us 18 and a half hours.



I took Roger, his younger brother Gary (on the left) & Rita, out to dinner for their wedding anniversary. Gary had been Best Man at the wedding. I had taken wedding photos using a Kodak Instamatic snapshot camera, but they came out well, and Roger & Rita still have a little album holding them. Earlier that day Roger, Rita, and I saw their oldest grandson Dominic play in his final high school football game. He is a varsity wide receiver and played well while the team trounced the opposing high school. The next day we three went to see their granddaughter Danica play well in a girls' fast-pitch softball tournament game. She plays catcher and caught in five games in two days!



Near the midpoint of Moxie's chemotherapy course, Ruth took this photo of me prepping Moxie's puzzle with treats while she looked on in eager anticipation. To reach a treat, she must turn a cover then slide a peg containing a treat over the hole, then slide the peg back to uncover the treat. There are seven such combinations on the puzzle. Moxie usually gets all seven treats in about a minute, unless a cover jams up a peg. Then she bats the jammed peg with her paw until it becomes free. She gets to do her puzzle every Sunday. Fortunately, dogs tolerate chemotherapy far, far better than humans do.



In the 2024 US Presidential Election, the people of the United States, shockingly and sadly, chose fear over hope and elected a bully and coward, known liar, convicted felon, probable traitor, serial rapist, racist, and malignant narcissistic sociopath to the highest office in the land. Thanks to "The Presidents and the People" by Corey Brettschneider, we learn that four previous US Presidents have succumbed to

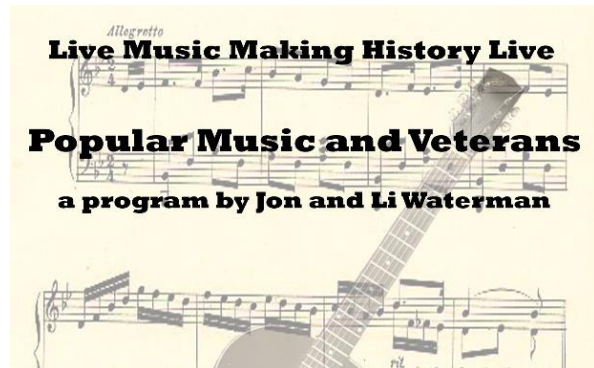
authoritarian urges, yet the nation recovered. And that of the twenty-two oldest democracies, twenty have rejected the American model – they are less rigid parliamentary systems; a Prime Minister who loses confidence may be replaced at any time.

My worry is existential: The misfit elected in 2024 is crass and immature and fully capable of somehow triggering a nuclear war. And of dismantling democracy in the US. Plus ruining the economy and elimination the Veterans' and Social Security Administrations, upon which we depend.

November 10 was reasonably warm, in the mid-50s Fahrenheit in mid-afternoon. Ruth's knee is improved to the point where she can take moderate walks. And Moxie loves a stroll. So, we took a walk in a land preservation reserve about a mile from home. It is really nothing special, but one can always find interesting things in nature. Ruth spotted this collection of mosses growing on the stump of a broken off pine. Look closely and you will see pastel green, dark green, and a bit of bluish moss.



On November 16, I again performed with Jon Waterman, joined by Li in their show at the Jonathan Bourne Library in Bourne, MA. Jon and Li were kind enough to list me as a special guest in the publicity announcement and on the title slide. I had twice previously played with Jon in his multimedia musical history shows at the Sandwich Center for Active living. I had the singular honor to play along to three songs. The 1 hour11 minutes, and 22 second presentation, recorded by Sue Barlow of Bourne Community TV, is at the link. I am on Jon's composition "Sultana" (11:01-17:24), and, with Li singing, covers of "St. Louis Blues" (43:47-47:01), and "Lily Marlene" (47:56-50:42). <https://youtu.be/a3UhkllwdIs?si=1KYqTi7B5unYfj4->



Chemotherapy for Moxie is roller coaster ride. On December 9 she seemed a bit listless, and the next day she was positively dragging, with none of usual vigor or interests. The veterinary oncologist had us cease her chemotherapy medication and give her an anti-nausea pill. It worked almost immediately, much to our relief! She will go onto a new chemotherapy agent on December 19.

We had a great Thanksgiving, joined by Jon and Li, and her twin sons, Joe, and Arthur. Here are



wild turkeys seen through our front bay window on Thanksgiving morning, and Ruth and Moxie sleeping in on Saturday of that weekend.



This is a photo of Moxie taken by Veterinary Cancer Specialists of New England in the treatment room. They call her “a sweet girl.” The photo appears on a rotating image display on the waiting room wall. On December 2 we learned that Moxie will be on chemotherapy until the end of February or early March. That is because the veterinarian had to change her medication in November because the first medication was ineffective. On December 5 we learned that the second medicine was also ineffective, and that it would be December 19 before a third medicine can be tried, because of drug interactions. The new one will be one of four remaining medications that can be tried. If none cause remission, our sweet girl will have only about a month left.

All in all, 2024 was, for eventful, with ups and downs. We lost two people we cared for very much. We lost our cat. We may be losing our dog. Ruth had to go through knee replacement surgery. But we completed our home addition and a nice visit from my sister and a nice Thanksgiving with friends.

This is the year-end status of Moxie’s illness. She has lymphoma, which is a cancer of her immune system. Because the disease is systemic, neither radiation nor surgery are options; only chemotherapy is available. Lymphoma is incurable. The best that can be hoped for is remission – a pause in the disease’s progress. Chemotherapy drugs are tried in descending order of their effectiveness, although each patient’s results may vary. Two drugs have failed and on December 19 a third was administered intravenously. She will have a complete blood count taken on December 27 and the results will be sent to the veterinary oncologist. Moxie has an oncology appointment on January 9, at which time we will learn if she is in remission. This drug is generally about 40 percent effective. If she is in remission, she can be stabilized for an indeterminate period, but the cancer will inevitably become aggressive again. If she has not entered remission, there remain three further chemotherapy drugs to be tried. Barring Moxie beginning to go into decline and suffering, we will try everything possible and available, and hope for remission – a long one. Typical remissions last about a year but there have been very rare cases where it has lasted significantly longer. So, we have hope.

We have come to the sad realization that at our ages, we simply cannot have another dog. Below is a montage of the miniature schnauzers we have had since 1968. We also cannot adopt another cat, or bird. These have been our pets: http://www.dan-ruth-tanner.com/Tanner_Family/Miscellaneous/pets.html



I plan to distribute this Holiday Letter between Christmas and New Year. What is written above is recollections of 2024. That which follows are prognostications on 2025 and beyond.

Sadly, it is a near certainty that we will lose Moxie in 2025. Ruth may need to have another total knee replacement, this time on her right knee. The USA will see a new government comprised of traitors, fascists, clowns, and grifters holding the Executive and Legislative branches (at least for two years) and most of the Judiciary.

I was born early in 1941. By actuarial statistics in the late 1940s, my life would probably end at in 2004 at age 63. I grew up wondering whether I would live to see the 21st century. Now I am a handful of days from seeing the end of the first quarter of that century. And, I am convinced that a fascist USA run by human beings will not last long before machines running AI software

will be controlling the world. I will be lucky to not live to see that. I suggest reading “Nexus” by Yuval Noah Harari; then you will know why I believe as I do.

We will conclude this missive with an account of our Christmas Eve. Here is Moxie, six hours before Christmas Eve. Her straight tail, is hanging down. It is usually carried up and curled in a pom-pom. When it is straight it shows that she is totally relaxed.



And here she is as Christmas Eve commenced, just after sundown.

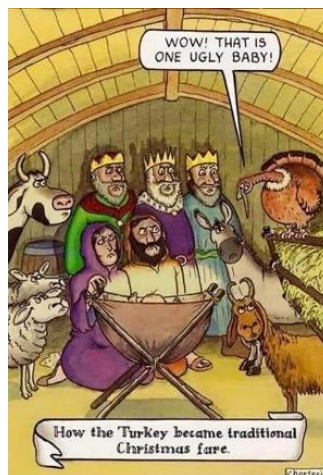


She did not quite know what to make of the turkey with squeaker toy that we gave her for Christmas.



Happy Holidays and best wishes.

Here are this year’s collected Christmas cartoons:





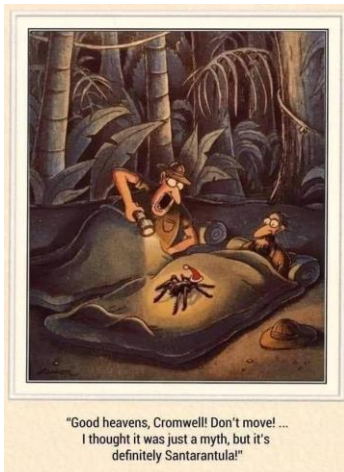
SORRY, MATE, YOU WANT WHOVILLE.
THIS IS THEWHOVILLE.



"The bone, chew toy and treats aren't a problem.
Getting your testicles back will pose a challenge."



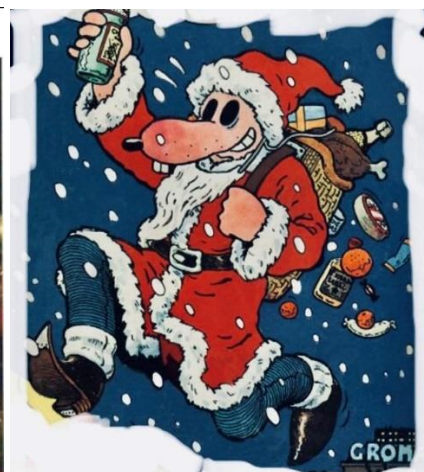
All Creations by
FelixTheUberSchnauzer

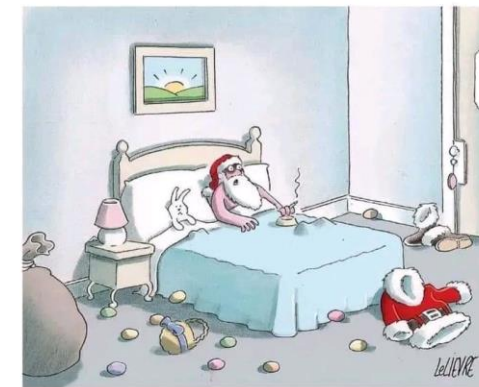
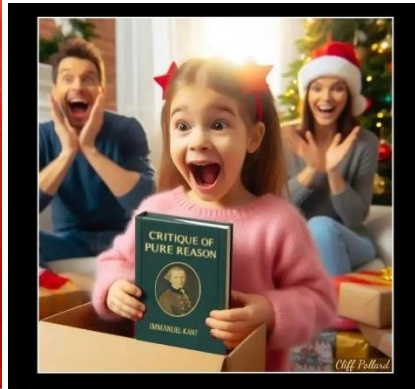
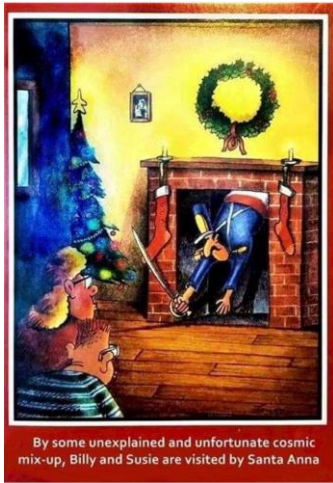


"Good heavens, Cromwell! Don't move! ...
I thought it was just a myth, but it's
definitely Santarantula!"

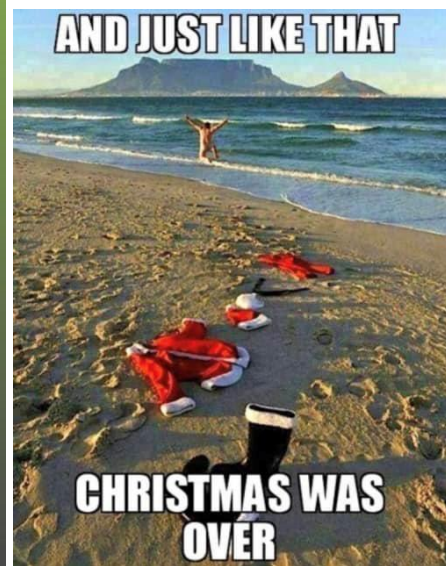


It's 1980 and Santa smells
like Whisky and Marlboro 100's

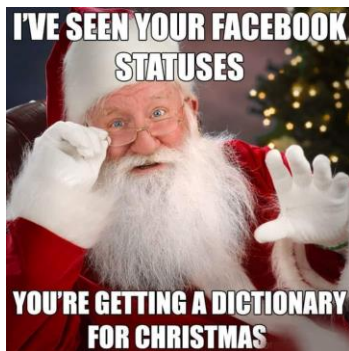
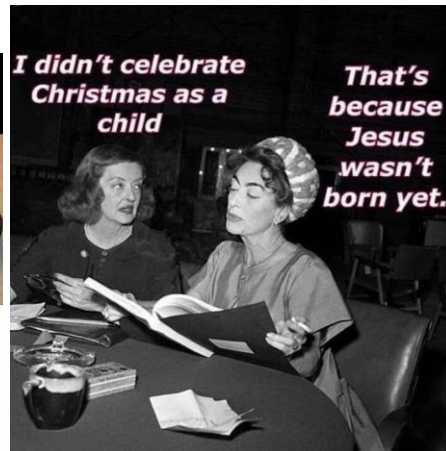
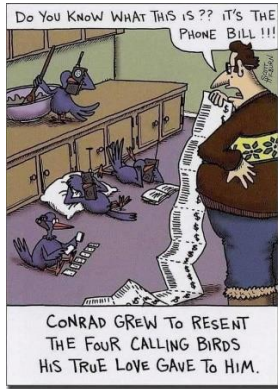


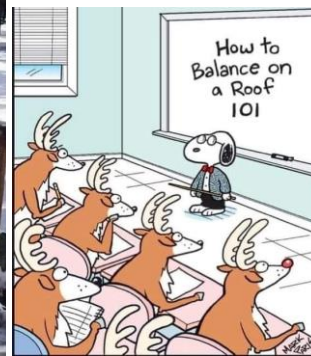
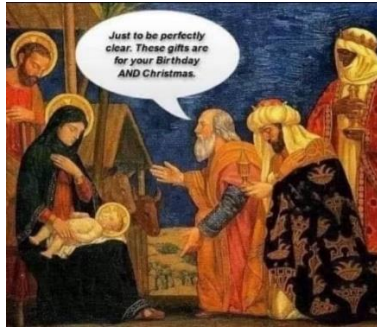


Great to see Mary on Keyboard and Joseph on vocals, on this year's Christmas Stamp









& one political one:

