

#1222
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1. Reflections

If you're reading this via Facebook or LinkedIn, please be advised that you will get it quicker if you get it via email. Another advantage: You'll never miss it that way because you may not have logged in for a day or two. And in the unlikely event you're not already a subscriber, all you need to do is send an email to: bgmbn@aol.com and put SUBSCRIPTION in the subject line.

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I:

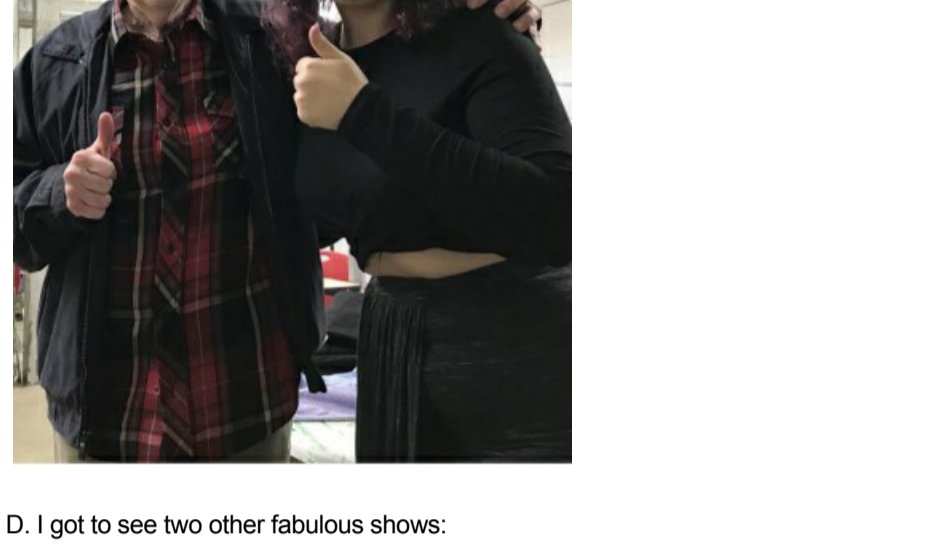
- (1) Had the pleasure of hosting her sister and brother-in-law, Joyce and Marty Litchman, on their visit from New Jersey. We first got to celebrate Joyce's birthday at Hemingway's Cuba Restaurant & Bar where we had a delicious dinner.



- (2) We continued the celebration the next night, joined by our friend Judy Ray, at Strada Italiano where we had another excellent meal.



- (3) From there, we all went to THE FANTASTICKS at Asheville Community Theatre. Here's what I wrote about the show on Facebook: Thumbs up to Mark Jones (left) for his deft direction of THE FANTASTICKS, as well as to Chris Oaks (right) for his always friendly job of ushering... Catch this timeless fable of love to see why it has earned the distinction of being the longest-running musical in the world. ... It was great to see many of my Facebook friends in it, including actors Dillon Giles, Kaylee Lorenzen and Lucas York, as well as musicians Rob Blackwell and Misty Theissen. I also admired Rob's music direction, Jessica Garland-Lowe's choreography and Anne Garren's stage management... Kudos to all the other musicians, cast and crew members who helped make the production the success that it was... The show runs at Asheville Community Theatre through March 1. For tickets, please click: [Here](#).



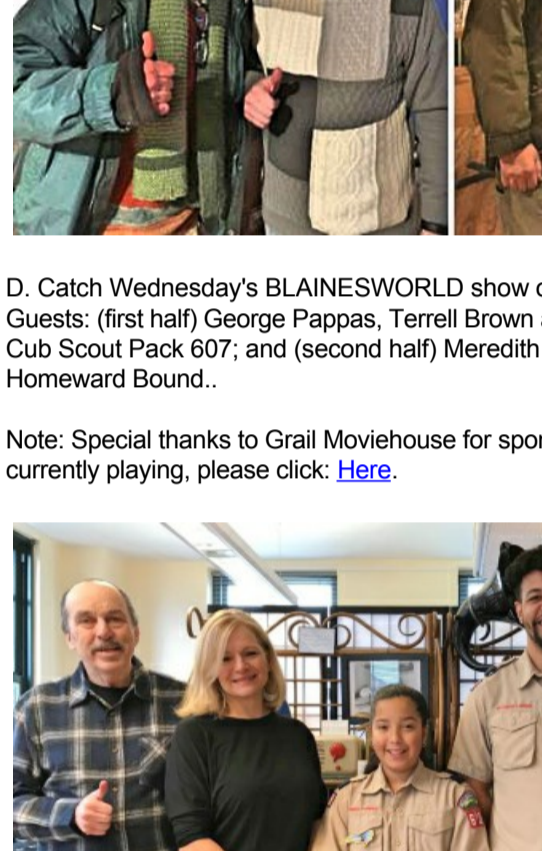
B. We both loved being able to vote early today for our choice in the 2020 Presidential Primary Election, as well as for Terry Van Duyn for Lieutenant Governor and several other fine NC candidates. You have until Feb. 29 to vote early, so you don't have to wait in line on Election Day on March 3. ... For more information, please click: [Here](#).

My two cents: I'm glad that I got to vote early, especially after recalling how I had to wait three hours to vote in the Gore-Bush election of 2000. But that said, I think the 15 days of early voting at 10 different sites in Buncombe County is on the excessive side and could easily be cut in half--thus saving taxpayers a lot of money.



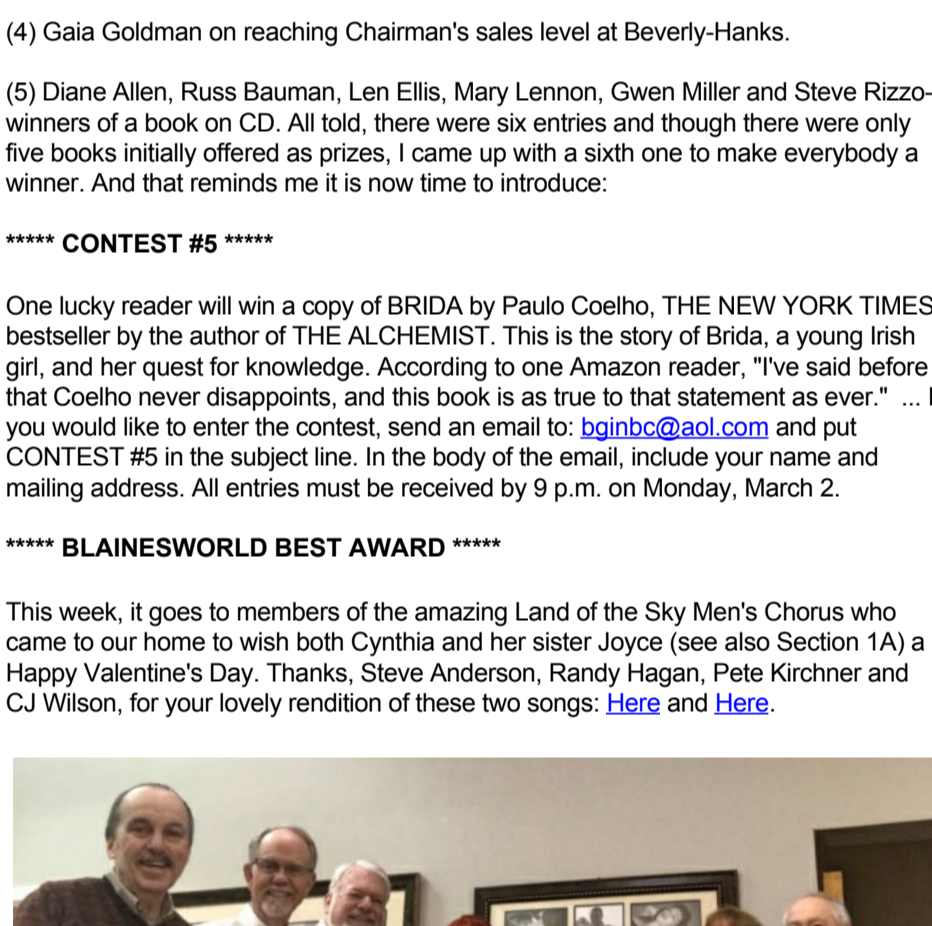
C. SNEAK PREVIEW ...that's me with Samantha LeBrocq, costume designer extraordinaire, with my "look" for the play that I'll be in: TRAITOR. ... This modern adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE follows the fate of a small suburb and its newly opened charter school... It runs from March 13-20 at The Magnetic Theatre. For tickets, please click: [Here](#).

I hope you can see the show!

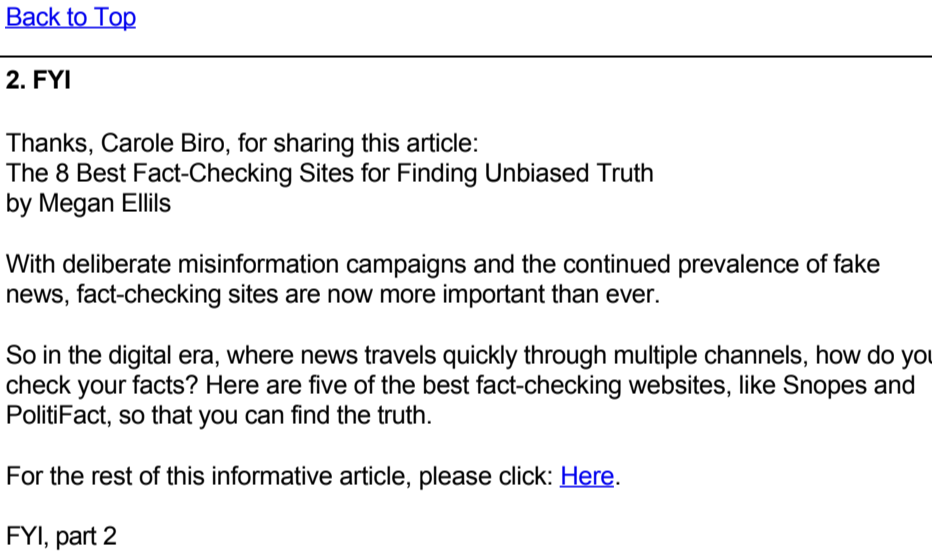


D. I got to see two other fabulous shows:

- (1) Do yourself a favor and catch A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM. A joyful, tuneful musical running at Hendersonville Community Theatre through March 1. ... You'll love the singing and dancing of all those in the talented cast: Brent Schlueter, Bob Pompeo, Cody Piero, Jonathan Forrester, Bob Reese, John "Tim" Ross, Mark Lieberman, Jordan Wright, Troy Bowgren, Zachary Eden, Ellen Pappas and Tasha Pepl, as well as the performances of the courtesans: AB Walton, Shannon Kenast, Morgan Pero, Tessa Martin, Claire Estes and Claire Packer. ... Jim Walker's direction was spot on, as was Trissa King's musical direction. And kudos to Sara Hassinger for her work as stage manager. ... For tickets, please click: [Here](#). #audiencereview



- (2) You're in luck, in that the world premiere of JEEVES SAVES THE DAY has been extended through March 1 at NC Stage Company. If you want to laugh--make that, laugh a lot--catch this hilarious comedy for terrific performances from Maria Buchanan, Charlie Flynn-McIver, John Hall, Peter Thomasson, Scott Treadway and Callan White. Angie Flynn-McIver's direction was spot on. ... For tickets, please click: [Here](#). #audiencereview



D. Catch Wednesday's BLAINESWORLD show on WPVM by clicking: [Here](#). ... Guests: (first half) George Pappas, Terrell Brown and Itzayana Gomez Axencio with Cub Scout Pack 607; and (second half) Meredith Switzer, Executive Director at Homeward Bound.

Note: Special thanks to Grail Moviehouse for sponsoring the above. To find out what's currently playing, please click: [Here](#).



E. Condolences to:

- (1) Dave Earnhardt and family on the passing of Gene Earnhardt, Dave's father.
- (2) Shari Azar and family on the passing of Arla Winona Waters McNally, Shari's grandmother.
- (3) Seth Abbott and family on the passing of Seth's mother.
- (4) Arlene Lorimer Ditzler and family on the passing of Serena Anne Lorimer, Arlene's niece.

F. Congratulations to:

- (1) Tom Swyers, one of my favorite authors, on being featured on the following podcast: [Here](#).
- (2) Boyd Phillips on being named Agent of The Year for the Charlotte New York Life General Office.
- (3) Brent Russell on reaching the Gold sales level at Beverly-Hanks.
- (4) Gaia Goldman on reaching Chairman's sales level at Beverly-Hanks.
- (5) Diane Allen, Russ Bauman, Len Ellis, Mary Lennon, Owen Miller and Steve Rizzo--winners of a book on CD. All told, there were six entries and though there were only five books initially offered as prizes, I came up with a sixth one to make everybody a winner. And that reminds me it is now time to introduce:

****** CONTEST #5 ******

One lucky reader will win a copy of BRIDA by Paulo Coelho, THE NEW YORK TIMES bestseller by the author of THE ALCHEMIST. This is the story of Brida, a young Irish girl, and her quest for knowledge. According to one Amazon reader, "I've said before that Coelho never disappoints, and this book is as true to that statement as ever." ... If you would like to enter the contest, send an email to: bgmbn@aol.com and put CONTEST #5 in the subject line. In the body of the email, include your name and mailing address. All entries must be received by 9 p.m. on Monday, March 2.

****** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD ******

This week, it goes to members of the amazing Land of the Sky Men's Chorus who came to our home to wish both Cynthia and her sister Joyce (see also Section 1A) a Happy Valentine's Day. Thanks, Steve Anderson, Randy Hagan, Pete Kirchner and CJ Wilson, for your lovely rendition of these two songs: [Here](#) and [Here](#).



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2. FYI

Thanks, Carole Biro, for sharing this article: The 8 Best Fact-Checking Sites for Finding Unbiased Truth by Megan Ellis

With deliberate misinformation campaigns and the continued prevalence of fake news, fact-checking sites are now more important than ever.

So in the digital era, where news travels quickly through multiple channels, how do you check your facts? Here are five of the best fact-checking websites, like Snopes and PolitFact, so that you can find the truth.

For the rest of this informative article, please click: [Here](#).

FYI, part 2

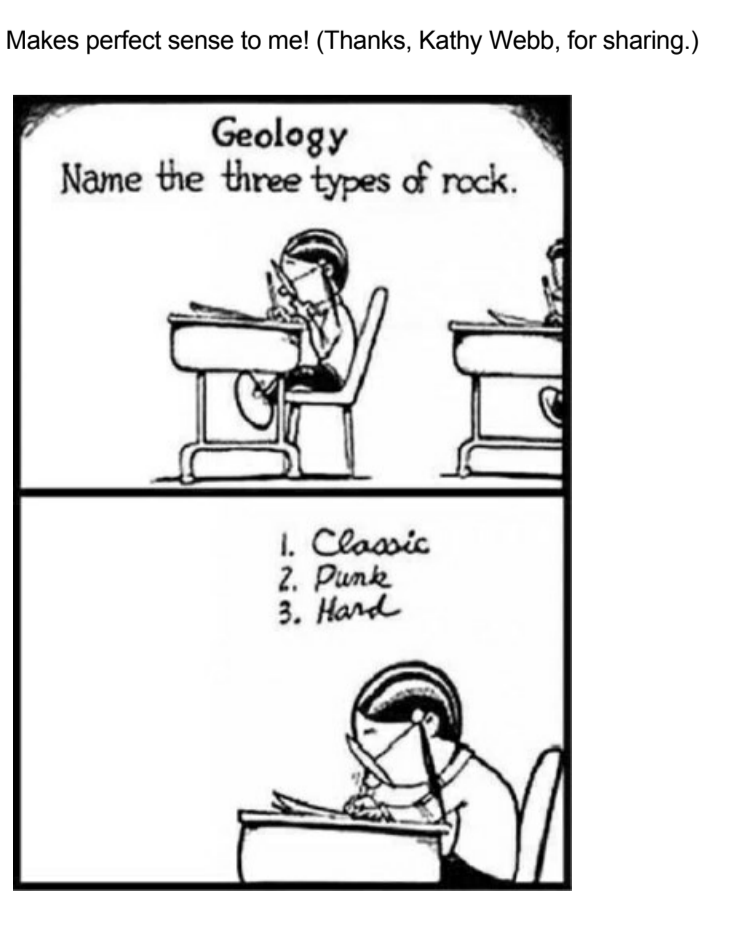
To read each of the following contributions in full, please click: [Here](#).

- (1) Trissa King: How to Find Yourself through Your Perception of Others. (2) Chandler Smith: Scared of going to the cinema alone? Don't be: it's a brilliant form of self-care.
- (3) Janeen Ravkin: in reference to your mentioning of self check out registers: I shop everyday, and I refuse to use them for that exact reason. (4) Carole Biro: The Six Friends Every Woman Should Have.

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3. Joke 1

Soooo cute! (Thanks, Ron Peyton, for sharing.)



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4. Reviews

A. Find ZION, a short documentary, on Netflix. It is the story of Zion Clark, a young wrestler born without legs who grew up in foster care. I found it both powerful and moving--and only wish it had been longer.

B. READ THE ROSUL OF KINDNESS: THE SURPRISING SECRET THAT GENERATES LONG-TERM RESULTS (Inspire Kindness) by Brian Biro and Mac Anderson. This short, powerful book shows you how kindness can transform your brand, your customer, your success in attracting and retaining fantastic people, and your organization into something much greater than what currently might be the case. Perhaps more importantly, you'll also be able to get ideas from it on how you can apply the concept to your personal life.

As noted by the authors, "Serving as a Chief Kindness Officer is not rocket science. In fact, it is best to adhere to the KISS principle--Keep It Simple Superstar--to master this role. There are seven powerful habits of kindness to develop as a CKO. They are as important at home with family as they are at work with teammates and customers."

You'll learn each of these seven habits, as well as to apply them in my favorite section of the book that gives advice on how to combine kindness and gratitude to create an unstoppable combination. For example, it can be as simple as commemorating the day a co-worker joined your team by sending him or her a hand-written card that said something about how they were such an important member of the team.

I also liked the many quotes throughout the book, including this one from Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart: "Appreciate everything you associate with for the business. Nothing else can quite substitute for a few well-chosen, well-timed sincere words or praise. They're absolutely free and worth a fortune."

Lastly, the book concludes with stories about some remarkable leaders who helped build their businesses with kindness. In particular, I liked reading about how Howard Schultz, the founder of Starbucks, helped build his business by offering his part-time employees a rate of pay that was more than the going wage and health benefits found nowhere else in the restaurant industry.

Note: To order a copy of this excellent book, please click: [Here](#).

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5. TV alert

A. HUNTERS: Now on Amazon Prime Video
Al Pacino stars as a Holocaust survivor who leads an eclectic team of Nazi hunters in 1977.

B. HONEY BOY: Now on Amazon Prime Video
From a screenplay by Shia LaBeouf, based on his own experiences, award-winning filmmaker Alma Har'el brings to life a young actor's stormy childhood and early adult years as he struggles to reconcile with his father through cinema and dreams. According to critic Brad Wheeler, "LaBeouf's script crackles with penetrating dialogue. His acting--LaBeouf portrays a version of his own father--might be the finest of his career."

C. ZOEY'S EXTRAORDINARY PLAYHOUSE: Sundays at 9 p.m. on NBC
An introverted computer programmer, living in San Francisco, begins to hear the innermost desires of the people around her through song. I've seen two episodes and am enjoying the show.

Note: See below, Section B(3), for a song from the show.

D. THIS WEEK AT THE COMEDY CELLAR: Fridays at 11 p.m. on Comedy Central
Hip comedians can be seen doing stand-up at New York City's famed club.

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6. Joke 2

If you're like me, and you celebrate all holidays, HAPPY PRESIDENTS' DAY. .. And to get you in the mood, the following was one of Lincoln's oh-so-profound quotes. What you may not know ... he was also the inventor of the selfie!

"The problem with quotes on the Internet is that it is hard to verify their authenticity."--Abe Lincoln

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7. Clips/Websites

A. Video of the week

Elsten Torres' first single from his upcoming album. It is terrific. See for yourself by clicking: [Here](#).

B. And also check out these other clips at your convenience:

- (1) Some of my all-time favorites ... songs from THE HAPPY TIME, a fantastic musical starring Robert Goulet that I'd love to see sometime in Western North Carolina. (Hint-hint): [Here](#).
- (2) Nina Denninger: First NYPD Officer with Sign Language as First Language: [Here](#).
- (3) Mark Jones: I Wanna Dance With Somebody -- Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist: [Here](#).

C. For a very simple 60-second meditation tool, check out Txiel Thoughts. This exercise will help you get rid of anything that's bothering you. To try it yourself, please click: [Here](#).

D. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running. ... to view it, please click: [Here](#).

E. Are you on Facebook? In the unlikely event we have not yet connected as friends there, please feel free to send me an invite by clicking: [Here](#).

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8. Technology tip

From Camera Roll to Canvas: Make Art From Your Photos by J. D. Biersdorfer

Tired of the usual attention-getting filters you use to make your photos pop with stronger contrast or deeper color saturation? If you want to make a different type of eye-catching picture, consider an app that turns your images into artwork.

With the right app, you can render your favorite photo into a digital version of paint on canvas, giving it a whole new look and feel. But you don't have to stop there: You can print your creation on canvas for home display or as a unique gift. And you can do it all on your smartphone or tablet. Here's how.

For the rest of this informative article, please click: [Here](#).

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9. Joke 3

Makes perfect sense to me! (Thanks, Kathy Webb, for sharing.)

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10. A quote I like

Thanks, Bob Player, for sharing this one: "The real reason that we can't have the Ten Commandments in a courthouse: You cannot post 'Thou shalt not steal,' 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' and 'Thou shalt not lie' in a building full of lawyers, judges and politicians. It creates a hostile work environment."--George Carlin (1937-2008), American stand-up comedian, actor, author and social critic

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11. Thought for the day

Thanks, Paul Marks, for this terrific video on kindness: [Here](#).

Note: For a print version of the above and/or to get more information about it, please click: [Here](#).

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12. Advance planning department

To read about each of the following events in full, please click: [Here](#).

A. NC events

- (1) Jimmy Ferraro: HAPPY DEATH DAY 2U. (2) Jason Scholder: COMEDY IS NOT PRETTY. (3) Jason Hall: GREAT FALLS.

B. PANJ event

ActorsNET: MRS. WARREN'S PROFESSION.

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