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OCTOBER 2015



By "Jammer" Don Conyngham

Handwritten signature of Don Conyngham.

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Chatterbox

The calendar middle month of fall is upon us. October, the month of chill nights but still warm days, the real changeover when the leaves earn the title "fall", after giving us Mother Nature's glorious all natural fireworks display. This is based on measuring the seasons by the calendar, December-February; winter... March-May; spring... June-August; summer... September-November; fall. I prefer that system over the astrological seasons; the two solstices & equinoxes. I am still bemused many feel the equinox-solstice system is the "more modern" of the two, being somehow "more accurate". Know your history! The astrological equinox-solstice system dates back at least 10,000 years, invented during the Stone Age, when megalithic sites, such as Stonehenge, were constructed to track the solstices & equinoxes. The calendar system is only 425 years old, dating back to Pope Gregory's reforms in 1582 to get everyone on the same page, & stop everyone from eventually celebrating July 4th on lunar Christmas eve (the older Julian Calendar, invented by Julius Caesar in 46 BCE, had drifted off by 11 days). So if we're going to insist on using the older astrological seasons, we should also use the lunar calendar that was used back then; 12 months of 29 days + a bunch of extra periods averaging 2 days a month to keep it tweaked. If you're serious about trying to do so, I suggest taking two aspirin before beginning & call me in the morning! ☺ Meanwhile enjoy your October friends, get out on some family walks, go play in the leaves with the kiddies. Sooner than we care to imagine, Jack Frost & Mother Nature are going to drive us inside to huddle together & await Spring; no matter which calendar you use.



the school in police custody after teachers mistook the device for a bomb. The incident triggered allegations of racism online that quickly spilled into the most powerful offices in the land. President Obama tweeted "Cool clock Ahmed, want to bring it to the White House?" Which, imho, is pure bull-ony. No one should know better than our President if any kid, let alone a Muslim kid, showed up at the White House with a home made digital clock, how quickly the Secret Service would have him & his clock "detained I'm sure this kid is exactly what he appears, a science nerd who wants to go into engineering. But *had the school* respected his privacy & *had it turned out to be a bomb*, some of these same posers would have been crucifying the school for not stepping on it sooner. We live in a country where almost 100,000 people a year die from excessive alcohol consumption, where almost 1/2 a million Americans die each year from smoking related causes, yet 17,000 people die *globally* every year from terrorism. We watch the gov spend billions upon billions every year on it. I have no problem with that, per say, I just think it is time & past time we have an honest national conversation on exactly where we want this country to end up, & the path to take to get there. Without animosity, or jingoism, or "Right & Left", "Liberal or Conservative", basically do we want a Nanny State that takes most of our rights away, returning the benefit of more safety? Or do we want our rights protected, while accepting the burden of being more responsible for our own damn safety? Meanwhile, may I suggest every teenage science geek who can, build a homemade clock & go to the White House; I'm betting any who show up get to hear "Are you crazy!?" Make sure you show them the Prez Tweet! After all, you were invited!



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Here is another piece of fascinating if useless history; when the Gregorian calendar was first introduced spontaneous riots broke out from people protesting the loss of 11 days of their *lives*. While today we might smile at their "foolishness", back then it was widely believed the Lord appointed the day of our birth & our death... so in their eye losing 11 days really did subtract 11 days from one's life. Of course, were they magically among us today, they would look upon so many of us too busy typing into a small, strange, possibly devilish object, while missing another one of God's glorious sunrises or sunsets, & call us fools. Deep in my heart of hearts, I'm not so sure they are wrong; The cell phone invention that was *supposed* to be my tool, too often has delusions it is my Master! Sometimes I suspect my i-phone smells faintly of Sulphur! This 1st week of October, shut your cell off & enjoy a sunset with your family at least once.



"The time has come the walrus said "To talk of many things: Of shoes, & ships, & sealing-wax, Of cabbages & kings, & why the sea is boiling hot, & whether pigs have wings."

I was privileged to work with my Dad for 33 years. Over those years Guthrie taught me so very much about business, & people, respect & service... So why, looking back as I enter the fall of my own life, do I so clearly remember him saying that Lewis Carrol 1871 poem from *Through the Looking Glass* (aka Alice in Wonderland), every night at bedtime when I ,was just a wee tyke? Dad is passed over 7 years now, & I miss him each & every day. Remember that none of us know how long we have family, or what they will remember about us when we're gone... Treat each day as the rare & precious gift it is, even if some days seem like a piece of coal. Someday some of them will be your very own diamonds. Speak to you again in November friends.



Ahmed Mohamed a 14 year old student in Irving, Texas walked into MacArthur High School on Monday, September 14th, with his own invention. Ahmed was eager to show off to his engineering teacher his hastily assembled home built digital clock. Hours later, the ninth-grader was escorted out of