There are days when I imagine the main purpose of The News is to get our blood raging to check the strength of the vein walls, or to have us self-check the gnashing positions of our upper and lower jaws to test the limits of the bullets we're biting on, or maybe, to make us drag our funny bones out of storage to give them a random tickle and jolt, via a semi-vicious half Nelson.

These past couple days, checking the headlines, I think all of that is trying to happen at once. No, it's OK -- I get it: Life is simply trying to see how much Krazy it can stuff into the Klown Kars of Reality before everything goes Ka-Boom.

I dunno about you, but I always keep my leather bite tab handy. See, mine doubles as the key fob on my set of keys that go to the Scream Room, the Isolation Tank, and the now-abandoned, 1950s-era, Anti-Armageddon Bunker. (I closed off that last one a number of years ago. It used to double as the Rumpus Room, but you just can't find high-quality Rumpus anymore -- about the same time Formica was no longer mined, and Naugas went extinct, and their hides got harder to find...)

Anyway: If you were to put me under oath and ask how full the *Klown Kar*'s getting, I'd be obliged to tell you *we're gettin' purdy close to bein' all topped off and then some.*

Before we have to go look around for roof racks, let's start off easy:

The latest round of eye-opening truth-sharing moments -- events most people shorthand as "those WikiLeaky things" -- has placed the backs of our French allies into a pointy little corner of embarrassment. Having had *their* nation's sovereignty and friendship with *our* nation yanked into question by U.S. spying into France's presidential communications, there is a Major Ripple in the Force of international pecking orders and such.

As such, in our animal kingdom of human nations and human relations, a show of outrage and reassertion of strength is now required. Diplomacy might well be redefined at that meeting, in which a certain amount of chest-beating and desk-pounding must be accomplished, as *the art*

of warring without actually touching off a war.

Trusting that you've re-established *trust* is a tricky business, too -- right up there with, "No, really, it's true, I'm no longer lying to you as much as I used to, not now, not anymore...."

Serious business, to be sure, having a nation getting its national rights and friendship-feelings stomped on. It's one thing to be almost 100% sure you're being spied on, for example, and another matter entirely for the whole world to know it as actual fact. There's the *everybody knows* element to life, and then there's the much more serious, No -- everyone *knows* .

Communication is a tricky thing. No wonder it's best left to the professionals. (Sorry -- I didn't mean to laugh-snort part of my sandwich onto your shirt...)

But it is also funny -- *amusing? peculiar? both?* -- how we human always forget we are ourselves only animals, however much we want to forever be distanced from that link, to be seen as far above it, far apart from it, to think of ourselves as being better in so many ways than the wild roots from which we come.

(The peak levels of primal wildness are generally saved, in our world, for the music played for and by the young bucks, in the mating antics of our celebrity herd members, and from any war-trainees currently camouflaged as participants of sports which specifically require *our* guys to go a little *ape poo-poo* , so to say, and batter down, bust up, break apart, and bash flat *their* guys. It's only *Jungle 101* , y'know.)

To that particular ala carte ensemble of humans vying for The Primate Cuckoo-ness Awards, I can only think of one other group requiring an urgent add-on: *Republicans -- especially those*

running for President.

Thing is, there will never be any shame showed by GOP politicians and race runners -- not ever. For these folks, each and every one thinks he or she has personal ownership of the total supply of *BatCrap Crazie 3000* (TM) in the universe (one of the many powerful substances yet to be discovered in dark matter).

Not only that, each contender has it on excellent personal authority -- direct from angels on high, don't you know, wink, wink -- that the only way to win the contest is to take that acceleration pedal connected to the really big tank of high-octane *Crazie,* and stomp down on that pedal, hard, and try, if at all possible, to push the pedal right through the metal chassis, right onto the macadam, and just smoke the tires right down to the hubs.

Such is the power of a primate politician who believes in the anointed ownership of a personal hot-line from God. (Or ownership of battleships filled with war-chest campaign cash from questionable sources -- the next best thing.)

The political race differs from the American ambassador being called on the French carpet, in that the ambassador must show a modicum of shame -- or a scrap of humiliation, at least, for having gotten caught. This is a standard diplomatic rule, according to the unwritten, unspoken script everyone is supposed to automatically understand and abide by in such matters of national dignity, pride, and blithering pratfalls.

Basing actions on unwritten, poorly understood rules which can vary from culture to culture, is not generally thought of as good policy for those with nuclear weapons.

(However, it is perfectly OK for a Russian newspaper, for example, to quote a crazed Texas secessionist at wild, imaginative length for the folks back home -- who themselves long for lost power owing to the breakup of their former empire, and see the crumpling of U.S. coherence as a lovely comeuppance thing, second only to the antics of their darling strongman, *Count* Vlad Putin, who really knows how shove people around.)

However, in one area, GOP Presidential contenders and our ambassador to France have one thing in common: If caught doing something illegal or wrong or bad or harmful or stupid, one must show immediate submission, and temporarily stop, but only because one has gotten caught. (This is true even if one claims to have seen The Light -- usually only a keen, short-term optical phenomena of retinal dementia and/or perceptual double-take.)

The wrongful act itself, of course, is without consequence, leaving participants free to return to the herd and carry on in whatever mayhem they wish. (Most participants are left alone to continue taking instructional hotline calls from God as to what everyone *else* around them should be doing.)

Welcome to the Moebius Strip of Inverted Moral Deniability. The Strip has its own rules. Roughly speaking, both sexual misadventures and fiscal corruption are both perfectly acceptable, even when caught outright. However, repeated patterns of misbehavior, and/or a failure to grovel convincingly for a whole 36 to 48 hours (given media cycles and competing events), can result in ejection from places of privilege, and temporary revocation of the *Lifetime Get Out of Anything Bad for Free, and in Fact, Get Out Far Richer After You're Caught* card.

* * * * *

I sometimes joke we are, none of us -- myself absolutely included -- very far away from our primate histories and natures. This is why I can be heard puttering around the house muttering things like, "Anyone else care for a banana?" or "How about a Simian roll?" to no one in particular.

So far, the explanation of my confusing "Simian roll" for "cinnamon roll" has kept me out of the rubber bungalow. I have no idea how long this ruse will last.

* * * * *

In other outbreaks of sanity, or insanity -- depending on how far you wish to go, and whether

you pop out again on the other side, Alice-like -- it looks like Sarah Palin has finally out-crazied even Fox, who's dropped her like a high-voltage electric eel family, towing trailers filled with Socialist boll weevils and Communist scorpions hopped up on marijuana-toking tequila worms.

But, not to worry, boys and girls -- there are still plenty of opportunities for her, and anyone else, to haul in three times her weight in cash and new clothing every year. Let this be a lesson to you: The path to success lies three things -- in getting elected to public office then quitting, and in writing on your hand, and in saying outrageous things which can initially sound *just like actual language usage.*

On the offhand chance you'd like to know how many seriously confused people there are sharing this very same planet with you, here are just two sobering stats: Sarah Palin has 4.5 million fans, just on *FacePlace*, uh, *Book*. Rand Paul has 1.15 million stalkers, I mean *obsessives* -- no, sorry, I mean *followers* -- on Twitter.

That's all the math I can take for today, even with Dramamine, antacids, an anti-psychotic preventative, a self-administered tranquilizer dart, and an hour's beer-meditation-therapy as a head start.

* * * * *

I understand we're now almost up to 13 GOP Prez-wannabes. We need a new collective noun for such things, if we're going to keep fielding such numbers. (Lessee now: A *gaggle* of contenders? No. A *stampede*? Nah. A *panic*? Hmmm -- *closer*. A *nausea*? A *stinkbomb*

? A
hurl
? A
coughing-fit
? A
bumble
? A
stumble
? A
grumble
? A
twiddle-dee-dum
?)

Still, I am amazed that this many are able to run, seeing as how almost none of the contenders has sufficient life skills to find his or her own derriere with two hands, a flashlight, a forklift, and twelve lobbyists -- each with searchlights and laser pointers.

Of course, it is no longer known anymore just who or what is dumping loads of cash into contests, buying outright the candidates, offices, and process wholesale -- thank you, SCOTUS -- so, all any dolt needs to do to run is to wobble a head, drool a little (to show signs of life), have someone help hold the candidate's pencil long enough to co-scrawl an X on an election application, and we're off to the prepaid races!

(While expressing my surprise at 13 candidates -- which is getting to be a regularly anticipated parade after the last few turns -- I should probably also express even surprise that I am still *mos tly*
sticking to my notion of avoiding comment on this brain-numbing baboon fest, on this tangled heap of two-headed, three-tongued, vipers-in-training (no offense meant to non-human primates or reptiles, you understand).

However, as a brief aside, in exchanging emails with friends, I can tell you we're up to about 347 mini-tirades, each, regarding the nature and safety of our nation, humanity, and the way we elect our leaders -- plus, what these leaders (cough, cough) are actually saying.

Content or lack of content: Which is more horrifying? (I suspect Shakespeare might have said

this, had the poor man had the misfortune to have been alive in our century.)

It's a new era. People who are as bright, interesting, and charismatic as week-old toast enthusiastically jump into races these days, despite the unrestrained outpouring of ennui, if not outright revulsion, from the populace. Clearly, they must understand -- being still capable of drawing breath, therefore harboring some minimal brain function -- that they have no chance whatsoever of winning. However, being power-mad (or just plain garden-variety mad), rich egomaniacs already, running provides plenty of feel-greats with no downside:

- More spotlight & attention (just what an oversized ego needs to be fed!)
- More *Feel Important* (adoring crowds! big money! Secret Service protection!)
- More high living (all free! paid for by someone else! tax deductible!)
- More solo-shrieking close-ups (the crazier the opinion, the better for standout!)
- Plus! New, Improved, Post-loss Credibility as an *elder statesman* or *stateswoman -and- as a news channel consultant / spokes-head worth another 6 or 9 figures per season!*

Ah, early summer: I can already feel the balmy, bated breezes, and the numbers of old men hacking and coughing, demanding Sarah run, at least as Veep, now that she's free of any pesky legal tangles at Fox. (After bottomed-out ratings, this was the likely reason she was dumped. Hey, it worked for Huckabee -- better to play the I'm-Special-and-I'm-Running card than the I-Got-Dumped-for- Crap-Ratings card.)

Them's that can't "cut the crazy" in TeeVee can still limp along in a 13-legged Presidential sack-race run , as they always say.

* * * * *

An informed and engaged electorate, it says. *Keep it if you can*, it says. *Right.*

* * * * *

Other than humans, off the top of my mind, I know of no animal which uses money, requires power for its own sake, takes more than it needs, kills for the heck of it, or despoils where it eats, drinks, and sleeps.

Good thing we humans work so hard trying to keep the animalistic distinctions clear between *us* and *them*. Otherwise, they'd sue us back to stone tools for bringing such discredit and shame on the once-proud *animal* name.

* * * * *

Then, there's the inexplicable awakening -- never thought I'd see the day, truly -- that the Confederate flag might actually be considered divisive and racist. And, in the south! Well, *that* only took 150 years to bubble up, after our bloodiest single war yet. So that evolution took -- about, what? Six generations or so, or seven? Magic number moment, maybe, so I'll go with seven, to sooth superstitions.

Perhaps tragedies *can* drive positive change, although I'd still hate to think we're such slow learners. Even though Wal-Mart isn't carrying Confederate-flag goods any longer, as this is such an historic, all-American moment -- they're not carrying the trend to extremes. Wal-Mart is still stashing its profits all around the world to avoid payingits fair share of taxes at home.

Now *there's* some fancy flag-wavin' for you. Like right off a greeting card, the only letters Americans write and mail anymore, in the standard tri-corner colors: *And a Happy-dang-Independence-Day, while you're at it!*
(In your mind's eye, you can put any flag you like on that card, no extra charge -- although, the more creative the better, mental-exercise-wise.)

Ah, well, tax-dodging is the fault of the tax law, as we all know -- and the law is made by politicians. Politicians are then free to yell and scream back at anyone screaming about making

everyone pay a fair share, saying how helpless they are to change the rules. This, say the politicians, is because they have no support from constituents -- who are the people yelling and screaming in the first place about getting everyone to pay a fair share.

(People who believe they know how reality works are urged to stay out of politics, where logic is a tortured land of alternate universes, crap shoots, and parallel timelines on Bizarro World.)

Makes as much sense to me as 21 members of the GOP voting against a ban on torture. (Florida's Marco Rubio didn't vote, as he was too engrossed in lacing-up for practice laps to be Prez.)

In all, 21 GOP senators failed to vote banning torture. This makes as much sense as Congress voting to fast-track the latest implacably-unfair, most Draconian trade policy impacts to all regular Americans, gutting any expectation of everyday citizens getting a fair economic shake in our country...

...then some members of this Congress turning right around and voting out the other side of their mouths, supporting a workers' aid bill to offer a heavenly, although cryptic, styptic-pencil solution to stem the Stygian bleeding they themselves caused.

These situations are no stranger than the federal government prosecuting as lawbreakers any users of medical marijuana in states in which it is legal to do so... but giving orders to no longer prosecute families who choose to pay ransom to kidnappers.

In its simplest form, such actions bow to forces in the marketplace, just not the same forces -- to competition, to capitalism, to an entire train of *damned if do / damned if I don't* line of thinking.

If you allow people to pay kidnappers, that's allowing competition in the marketplace, and allowing commodities to set their own value. If not, you risk chopping off the invisible free hand of the marketplace -- itself a fictitious construct when built, as it is, on a wildly un-level playing field...

But, perhaps that's the secret -- don't play to win, or to do what is just or right: Just play to a purposeful draw, where all sides wonder if they won something, and all the players suspect they may have gotten their perceived money's worth -- at least, in their own little section of purchased governance, and in their own little piece of cashiered law.

Wow. And I started out trying to be lighthearted for you in this outing. Well, maybe I can salvage this yet for you:

How about those Kardashians, huh? Aren't those 200-hundred-thousand-dollar Birkin purses something, huh? How about that baby-baby-baby*, auto-tuned hip-hop, huh? Whaddya say about those 72-hundred-dollar Nikes on ebay, now that they're not allowing Confederate flag stuff on there now? Whaddya think about them...*

I mean: *Simian roll, anyone?*