

OrionWorks Sonova Quark

Brought to you by Steven Vincent Johnson and Darlene P. Coltrain, mailing address: 6666 Odana Road, 213, Madison, WI 53719. Email Steve: svj@orionworks.com. Email Darlene: dpcoltrain@gmail.com Web: <http://OrionWorks.com>. All material is Copyrighted © by Steven Vincent Johnson and Darlene P. Coltrain unless otherwise specified. Quark is brought to you by *OrionWorks* with occasional help from **Grasshopper Press** when I feel an inspirational mood overtake me. Final layout is assembled in InDesign CS5. Some might be asking how do you pronounce "Sonova Quark"? There isn't one.

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Completed (*somewhere around*) on November 21, 2015

Warning, Mad Researcher at Work

First things first! Let's fix those margins!

My apologies for setting my inside margins too close to the appa spine in the last month's installment. Hopefully future QUARK installments will not involve force-splaying TURBO to read the inside column. I'm also experimenting with the cleaner appearing Ariel font. I increased the font size too. (I had less to say this month.)

Errata:

In issue #352, the photograph of *Yours Truly* (see Fig 1) stated it was taken when I was approximately four and a half years old. In retrospect any parent can clearly determine that the physical appearance is of a child closer to three to three and a half years old. Unfortunately, there was no documentation on the back of the photo, and I'm not terribly experienced in determining the age of toddlers and young children. Neither am I good determining the age of lobsters crawling across the living room carpet. (That may due to the fact that I'm allergic to crustaceans.) I first speculated that the photo was taken when I was about two years old. I showed Darlene the photo. Unfortunately, she was highly distracted preparing dinner, a stir-fry entree. (Do not mess with the chef when she's working.) She briefly glanced at the photo and speculated I must have been around four years old. Later Darlene got back to me said the photo was probably taken when I was about three to three and a half years old. Unfortunately my Turbo installment had already been printed up by then. Guess I should have taken the average between my original estimate and Darlene's.

I wonder if plaid jackets, short pants and white shoes will ever come back in style. Should I start a new trend? Perhaps I should just embark on my November essay and forget about being a trend setter.

The future of social security is its eventual transformation into basic income.

My first retirement anniversary is quickly approaching. Less than a month to go. I'm happy to report my new environment as a formally employed state employee does not seem to be a problem for me. I'm busier now than when I was working full-time. It would seem that boredom is a rare luxury.

Having been a state employee for more than three decades I had often found myself thinking about how in the future our society will perceive government's role in financing programs like retirement, particularly Social Security. How will our society handle future funding of this institution? How will retirees and ex-employees who are perceived as no longer contributing to the economy be treated by the rest of the working force still paying into the system?

Among certain conservative sectors of society there does seem to exist a particular perception that many social government programs like social security have become too much of a financial burden on the national budget. For example Michele Bachmann has stated she would like to do away with Social Security altogether. While graciously (and honorably) keeping faith with old farts like me and my generation who have already paid into the system, she would like to wean subsequent generations off of social security altogether. In Michele's case, the genesis of this POV apparently happened early in her life around the time when she received her first paycheck. She didn't like all the taxes being deducted out of her net pay. She particularly didn't like social security taxes. Michele has stated she would have preferred to have managed her own retirement planning rather than allow government institutions and politicians manage them for her. While I can appreciate, perhaps even admire the I-can-do-it-all-myself entrepreneurial spirit Michele seems to express it does not strike me as taking into account the fact that there are many smart talented and exceedingly gifted

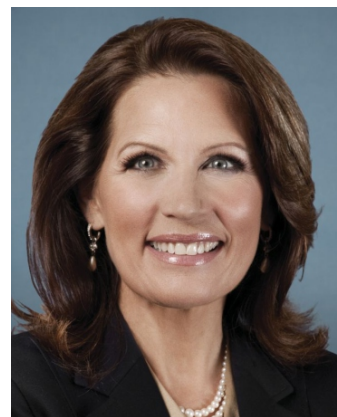
The Vision of Michele Bachmann



The eyes of Michele Bachmann, cropped from a cover of Newsweek magazine. Michele's eyes made the rounds, causing some interesting commentary. I suspect they creped out many liberals already predisposed to finding fault with the U.S House of Representatives member. Conservatives complained bitterly that Newsweek deliberately selected the most unflattering photo of Michel they took of her for their cover story. Conservatives may have a point.



Here's a copy of the original cover from Newsweek.



Here's an official photo of Michele taken from her Wikipedia page.



And here's a cropped version of Michele's official eyes. I have to agree with the conservatives on this one. The official eyes really do look less creepy. Let me repeat: *less* creepy. Hey! I'm a liberal. What do I know.

Fig 1

people in this world, many who have made valuable contributions to this country, who don't know how to balance a checkbook let alone plan for their retirement. And then, there are, due to no fault of their own, the not so well gifted and less talented people in this country. I think Obama said it best when he used the term "Social Darwinism" to describe ongoing efforts to reign in, curtail or even do away with safety nets like social security and Medicare. This rugged individualist perception certain conservatives express seems to boil down to wanting to make sure that the smartest and savviest members of society receive every opportunity the government can afford them (which typically involves the government looking the other way) so that they can rise to the top of the economic pyramid. As for the rest... the little people, screw'em... not my problem.

On a related matter, that's pretty much how I perceived Bush Junior's attempt to privatize social security. I was steamed. Privatizing social security would end up primarily benefiting those who know how to invest their money wisely. In my view it would ultimately leave too many who are less savvy about investing less well off when it comes time to collect their social security checks. We are prone to gloss over the fact that when we go on shopping sprees buying stocks and bonds it's always a gamble. When we buy, someone ends up selling. If we are lucky enough to make a profitable gain from our purchase that translates into the inescapable fact that the previous purchaser was unlucky when he sold. He lost out in the profits we made. When we boil all such transactions down to the essentials its really nothing more than a form of sanctioned gambling, a form of economic Darwinism being played out over a person's retirement fund. I always thought the institution of the presidency implies that the symbol we elect to the highest office should equally administer to the needs on not just the rich but also the poor, the advantaged *and* the disadvantaged.

Some might perceive it unrealistic, even naive of me, to subscribe to a belief that social security will eventually evolve into an economic organ that administers to the nation's wealth distribution needs. It will become more powerful and absolutely necessary to the economic health of our nation than how it is currently perceived. It's not just the fact that as society continues to automate and robotize, throwing more and more out of traditional jobs and into the ever growing pool of the unemployed (or underemployed), institutions like social security may turn out to be the only practical way to ensure that our nation's wealth continues to be redistributed fairly among everyone. I think society will eventually come to the realization that the institution generates far more incalculable economic benefits than being a drain on it. It may actually help grow the economy in ways that its absence would actually hinder. In a sense social security as it is administered today is a form of receiving "basic income", a distribution concept that several countries are actually beginning to experi-

ment with. There have been surprising results. For the curious Google "basic income" to read up some of the fascinating work being done in this area.

My personal manifesto on retirement.

The way I look at my retirement, I'm essentially being paid to do what I want to do with the rest of my life. It's as if I'm still receiving a monthly salary. As long as I remain within the means of what I'm being paid on a monthly basis, combined with whatever additional cash resources I might have been able to squirrel away, I'm free to work on a number of activities I might not have been able to pursue before. Here's an incomplete list of self-employed activities I could be paying myself to perform:

- ✿ I could be paying myself to sit in front of a TV watching reality shows, eating Cheetos and ding-dongs until my arteries seize up and my heart gives out.
- ✿ I could be paying myself to explore the psychological dimensions of depression. I can ruminate over the fact that I no longer seem to have a purpose in my life. Eventually I'll take an overdose of prescription pills washed down with a pint of Jack Daniels and stumble through a strange Tunnel of Light that leads me to a blinding landscape I find incomprehensible yet strangely familiar. Damn! Where has this place been all my life!
- ✿ I could be paying myself to hang out in a bar, watch football with cohorts, eat greasy foods and get stinking drunk until one day I stagger out the front door and trip over the curb and splatter my good looks generously across the grill of a speeding car driven by another drunk. Oh no! Not another strange Tunnel of Light. OMG! This one's coming straight at me too!
- ✿ I could be paying myself to mope around the house practicing the art of driving my spouse insane. My monthly goal turns out to be waiting for my next social security check to arrive so that I can log onto eBay and buy more useless trinkets in the hope that getting them will resolve my depression.
- ✿ I could be paying myself to apply for a part-time job at McDonalds. I'll pick up some extra cash and at least feel like I'm doing something useful with my life other than slowly transforming into a beached sofa whale watching reality TV court cases all day. At least I would be getting some useful exercise while giving my spouse relief time from babysitting me all day.
- ✿ I could be paying myself to help take care of a grandchild. Perhaps it turns out that my own adult child can't afford to send her own child to day-care. Working full time at a fast food restaurant simply doesn't pay enough to take advantage of such luxuries. If my adult child didn't work she would have to

go on welfare and I would likely end up picking up more of the tab for my grandchild's welfare.

- ✿ I could be paying myself to volunteer at a retirement community center to help those less fortunate than I because there isn't enough government funding to pay salaries or wages to elder helpers and assistants.

- ✿ I could be paying myself to do art. Perhaps I could paint some more paintings. I did a lot of that back in the 80s. If I can afford to buy canvases, paints and brushes, at least I'll won't have to worry about selling them. I'll pretend I'm the reincarnation Van Gogh. Besides. My middle name is Vincent! I'll keep both ears this time around, thank you.

- ✿ I could be paying myself to make regular contributions to an APPA in an effort to stir up trouble and discontent among the natives. Translated as: More adult child stuff to hash out.

- ✿ I could be paying myself to watch a beautiful sunset as fingers of sunlight caress their way through satin sheets of crimson strata. Later, an encore of the Aurora Borealis.

- ✿ I could be paying myself to help mentor someone in programming languages or computer applications. I could be paying myself to mentor someone who can't afford to get the mentoring he or she needs – someone who could turn out to be the next Stephanie Jobs.

- ✿ I could be paying myself to participate in community theatre projects. I could pay myself to act, build sets, or do both. I could be paying myself to participate in community projects where the sense of a community is badly needed.

- ✿ I could be paying myself to take long peaceful, contemplative walks in the woods. I could be paying myself to snap photos of fauna and wild life, all just for the enjoyment of it all.

- ✿ I could be paying myself to help someone out in need, someone who might be seriously depressed and just needs someone to talk to. Perhaps this person eventually decides not to kill himself and instead gets around to writing an engaging book on the pathos of misplaced guilt which sells 2.5 million e-book copies. His royalty: A dollar a download.

- ✿ I could be paying myself to practice meditation once, twice, or as many times a day I think is necessary... each day is another day.

- ✿ I could be paying myself to laugh or cry, and not necessarily in that order.

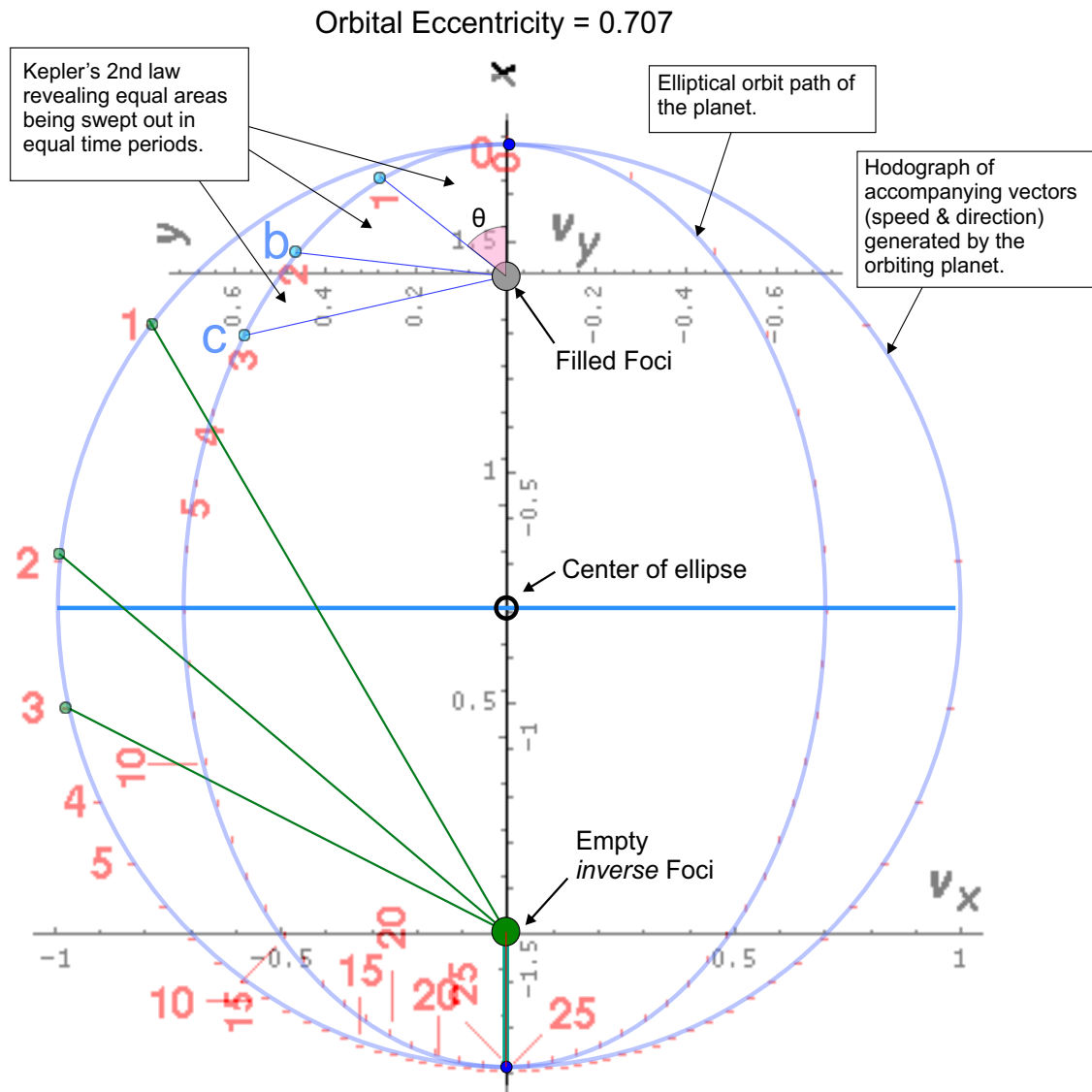
- ✿ I could be paying myself to perform detailed research on a mathematical astrophysics subject that has interested me for more than 35 years.

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This is just a tiny number of activities countless retirees have been doing now and will continue to do in greater numbers each year. Many of these "to do" items end up benefiting the economy in incalculable ways difficult to place a specific dollar amount to. They are tasks that need to be tackled, some desperately so. Congress, in the collective sense, due to a lack of wisdom and short-sightedness refuses to adequately fund many of these "to do's". But then, something unexpected happens. It turns out covert undocumented funding mysteriously arrives. It arrives incidentally, indirectly, from another institution like social security or from out of our retirement funds. Money from these funds end up picking up the tab for doing what must be done. I'm sure this trend will only increase. So will the growing importance of funding institutions like social security.

These days I'm paying myself to do research on Kepler's laws of planetary motion. I know damned well that no educational institution or think tank would do me the favor of funding my current predilections. I can pretty much hear what the holder of the purse strings would say, presumably out of my hearing range: Run that past me again? This guy wants to be paid to look at circles and ellipses? WTF! The dweeb is obviously ignorant of the fact that we already know everything we need to know about orbital mechanics and ellipses. Tell him to go away and stop bothering us. He can go draw idiotic circles on Facebook and get it out of his system there.

Fortunately, I'm dense. Over the centuries I suspect many scholars and researchers have puzzled over the fact that the three laws, as written down by Kepler, seem incomplete. I'm pretty sure Kepler himself knew there was more to uncover. Alas, he ran out to time. More recently, Richard Feynman pondered the mystery. I sensed that incompleteness when I first encountered Kepler's definitions more than 35 years ago. After numerous fits and starts over the decades I finally managed to secure sufficient quality time to more seriously start investigating the matter starting about 18 months ago. I encountered many, MANY blind alleys in my research. Then, last month while I enjoying a culinary diversion at Noodles & Co. (involving a Chicken Caesar salad while flipping through copious diagrams scribbled on pages of notebooks) I believe I pieced together what looks to me to be a new unrecognized Kepler law, a new honorary law. Took me damned near 35 years to discover this geometric relationship. I realize I could be wrong on this point but I don't at present believe anyone has discovered this particular relationship. If someone had already discovered it I believe they would have published its significance somewhere in an appropriate prestigious journal and in the process generated a fair amount of notoriety due to the utter simplicity of what it depicts. Ok... Time to torture a few TURBO readers. Can anyone tell me what the following graphic implies? See Fig 2.



The above image is an assemblage of two generated graphics I deliberately superimposed on top of each other. I added a few extra lines and some text in order to hint at additional correlations. The two original graphics were created by the physics department of College of St. Benedict St. John's University through the use of Mathematica. Other than superimposing the two graphics I have not doctored the original contents in any way. There are specific reasons why I have superimposed these two graphics over each other in this seemingly odd manner. I have also deliberately left out a few additional connecting lines that would help reveal the astonishing reason why I was compelled to do this. Please note I have placed the origin of the hodograph graphic of vector values squarely over the "empty" foci location. It fits! That is a HUGE hint! There is a reason I'm calling the "empty" foci the "INVERSE Foci". Can you guess where the missing lines should be positioned and what their significance reveals? You can review the contents of the original source document out at: <http://www.physics.csbsju.edu/orbit/orbit.2d.html>

Fig 2

Mail Bag:

I apologize for not including very many comments. It's not that I haven't read everyone's installments. I have. It's more a matter of trying to find something intelligent or just plain useful to say. As some may have already suspected, I seem to exhibit a lot of obsessive-like self absorption in my writing style. It's all about *me* rather than commenting on the activities of others. I seem to be getting better at accepting my quirky traits. Back in my teens and early adulthood there were times when I felt extremely uncomfortable with myself. I feared I might possess an undiagnosed obsessive disorder. I feared I might possess a psychological cognitive defect that if I didn't constantly guard against it would rip me away from the delicate fabric of what I believed was the true reality of my environment. I feared I was defective and that I wouldn't be able to fix myself so that I could fit in, and feel safe. I finally managed to get a diagnosis of this malady. It's called feelings of loneliness and isolation. It was a tremendous relief to get a proper diagnosis.

I suspect I may end up following the honorable tradition other TURBO members take advantage of by contributing on a more-or-less bimonthly basis. I may burn out if I don't due to the fact that much of my orneriness commands me to constantly be a perfectionist. Being a perfectionist can be a bit taxing on the soul when it comes to writing and being a part-time dyslexic, and not having access to an editor who can catch grammatical errors I'm oblivious to. Alternatively, the Van Gogh within me has suggested that perhaps I might enjoy contributing a few covers - and in the process give the literary/intellectual portions of my synapses a welcome rest. Darlene is thinking of doing a cover or two as well.

Wait I minute! According to my *In Design* layout, I still have a blank page staring back at me. Perhaps I can make a couple of comments after all:

REDACTED

* * * *

I'll end with a scene lifted out of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* revealing a quick and efficient solution to the Social Security problem:



I'm not dead yet!

Until we meet again.

— Steven Vincent Johnson