

Orion Works Sonova Quark

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What a Year

The end is near? It certainly will be for 2024. Darlene brought to my attention the following meme.

*Before I agree to 2025
I want to read the terms
and conditions.*

I'll second that.

Or

Begging It's that time of year when we gather with friends, family, and chosen family, exchanging gifts and sharing company. Meanwhile, begging on the streets doesn't pause for the winter festivities. There are socially acceptable forms of asking for help, such as donating to the Salvation Army, which I'm happy to support despite ongoing accusations of discrimination against the LGBTQ community, claims the organization denies.

Then there's professional begging—street performances at intersections where cars stop for red lights, or in parking lots where unsuspecting individuals are stalked. Occasionally, the parking lot beggar holds a small child wrapped in a tattered blanket to emphasize their need. Growing up in the 1960s in places like Taiwan and El Salvador, begging was a common sight on the streets.

Witnessing these acts isn't easy to ignore. While many transactions are staged, there's no doubt that most of these individuals genuinely need assistance. Of course,



**Greetings, by Steven Vincent Johnson, 1979
15"x20", acrylic on illustration board**

there are professional scammers—some even with college degrees who realized they could earn more by the hour begging than working low-wage jobs slinging burgers at McD's or folding pants discarded to the floor at Macy's. However, I suspect the vast majority beg because they feel they have no other options left to them after having exhausted available resources.

I feel guilty every time I choose not to engage within these targeted performances. I feel even guiltier when I don't donate. I know full well that I've given more than I wish I had, knowing I've been scammed more often than I'd like to admit.

The irony of the growing gap between the wealthy and the impoverished is the fact that we actually have the

resources to provide food, shelter, and aid to every-one in need, and particularly within our own country. However, to achieve a sustainable future, we, the planet, must address overpopulation. Experts predict a decline in global population within the coming decades, particularly as baby boomers take their final bow and exit stage left. But also because, world-wide, women have finally gained access to birth control and education. It has empowered women with the realization that they are no longer the property of men who value them solely for the sons they can bear. Curiously, I gather it's not the women who seem most concerned about declining population growth—it's men.

Our new administration may renew efforts to deport "aliens" under the pretense that many are criminals, rapists and god knows what else can be pulled out of a hat. This rhetoric ignores the irony that these "aliens" often fill labor-intensive jobs that most U.S.-born citizens refuse to do, as being beneath them. They also pay taxes for which they will never benefit from.

So, what's a sharecropper to do? Look the other way and hire undocumented workers at below-legal wages to keep produce affordable. It's a system where we ignore exploitation to maintain low prices at the grocery stores while supporting policies that aim to deport the same workers we depend on. Those who remain and who get through the barbwire will fences seek jobs that typically pay a pittance, because a pittance of something is better than a pittance of nothing. We must thank the undocumented laborer for much of our cheap produce.

Not to be gloomy, but thank you for allowing me to spout off a bit. Perhaps it's leftover feelings of:

"Oh no, not again."

Or

In other news Thank you, **Elizabeth, Jeannie B, Jim, Andy Carrie, Steve** (the other one), **Pat**, and **Luke** for all for the lovely compliments on my unfinished

Kepler presentation, shown on "the big screen" at **Luke and Julie's** establishment. A special thanks to Luke and Julie for allowing me the privilege of sharing my work at their venue.

I especially want to thank **Jeanne Gomoll** for suggesting I contact Richard Russel, the Library, and various UW departments, such as History of Science, Medicine, and Technology. I had already planned to check out the School of Engineering to see if a group of students might be interested in creating 3D-printed models capable of more accurately predicting planetary orbital positions better than the famous 2,000-year-old Antikythera Mechanism. Then, there's the Math Department, where a grad student might find a dissertation-worthy project. But, before I start reaching out, I want to complete two more of my orbital presentations. That should keep me busy through the mid-terms—though I hope to finish a *lot* sooner.

Done some additional work on my presentation. It's now essentially complete except for the necessary checking of uncrossed "t's" or undotted "i's" - and some insertions of accents, and tidbits of humor to lighten up some of the more turgid-infested sections. I plan to publish it out on my YouTube channel before the end of 2024. I'll link it to one of my Orion-Works.com subdomains. Technically, the presentation will be accessible to anyone who has access to the web, but in practice, it will remain (by lack of word-of-mouth) a private showing meant primarily for those hearty souls who (I hope) will point out my misspellings and grammatical errors I need to fix.

Thank you all in advance for your eagle-eyed editing mojo!

Or

