

My Favorite World #20



When I was a wee sprite of 5, my parents took me to the 1964 World's Fair. I honestly do not remember much of that day, but a couple of episodes stand out.

Leastly...

We rode the train from my grandparents' house in Hartford into the city, with many transfers and such. In retrospect, I imagine this must have been a stressful day for my Southern born and bred parentals, having to negotiate for the first time the wilds of New York City and its bizarre underground choo-choo trains, with an easily distracted little boy in tow. On the train back from the big day in the Big City, I needed a bathroom so I was delivered to the on-train loo. When I flushed, the toilet opened and delivered my production directly onto the tracks. I was mesmerized, and flushed that damn toilet about twenty times to confirm my discovery. Satisfied, I emerged, and yelled the length of the traincar to my parents:

You can see the tracks!!!!

They cringed, everyone else laughed, and I was confused by it all.



For good damned reason.

Luckily, we were travelling at full clip, allowing my effluvia to distribute across a greater distance. An early, formative event in My Favorite (albeit somewhat nasty) World.

But more epically...

Aside from the giant globe that still stands in Queens (see it up top), the only thing that remains in memory is the Sinclair Dinoland.



What miracles await?

Way before you young whippersnappers had your hippity hoppity Jurassic Park rigmarole, we had life size dinosaur exhibits of our own. Sure, they didn't move much, and they didn't really make any sound. But we liked it that way!

The big feature of the exhibition was Sinclair's mascot dinosaur, the brontosaurus. Oh, it was big, but it was gentle

<fn>Eating only plants, not humans or Baby Jesuses or some such.</fn>, a friendly beast. Best of all, from a corporate imagistic / synergistic <fn>Anachronistic in this context, yes, but still reflective of intent.</fn> angle, the brontosaurus reminded us every step of the way of the benevolent goodness of our corporate betters who paid good money to advance *science* with no concern for their own advantage save to keep their corporate logo in our sights for an entire afternoon.

Why, I even went home with a plastic model of Bronto, molded in a machine before my very eyes!<fn>The irony of creating, and then owning, a replica of a dinosaur made out of actual dinosaur stuff went unremarked at the time.</fn>



My petro-based dinosaur friend.

It was warm to the touch for a long time after I received it, and I think I probably undermined its scientific accuracy a bit with my active little hands. My bronto pal always had a slightly crooked neck. Alas.

Oh, and how they loved them their brontosaurus. From the narration at the exhibit:

Sinclair uses the brontosaurus as a symbol to dramatize the age and quality of the crude oils from which Sinclair petroleum products were made, crudes which were mellowing in the earth millions of years ago when brontosaurus and other

dinosaurs lived.

They make it sound like a fine whiskey.

<http://www.immunetoboredom.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/09-Brontosaurus.mp3>

Coincidentally, my maternal grandfather spent long years as a field agent (salesman) for Sinclair, driving the backroads of the South endlessly to spread the good word about Sinclair's mellow crude. The Sinclair sign was a beacon for us, a family connection even when we were far from home.



A friendly beast who did not eat children.

We would get angry at the parents if they stopped at other stations, especially those animalistic demons from Esso.

PUT A TIGER IN YOUR TANK!

Watch the Esso Short on NBC-TV
Check local listings for time and date.

NEW POWER-FORMULA ESSO EXTRA GASOLINE BOOSTS POWER THREE WAYS:

- 1 Cleaning Power!** Dirt can clog even a new carburetor in a few months of normal operation—causing hard starting and rough idling. Your very first tankful of New Esso Extra will start to clear away these deposits—in new engines or old—to improve power and mileage.
- 2 Firing Power!** Spark plug and cylinder deposits can cause misfiring, pre-ignition and hot spots. New Esso Extra neutralizes these harmful deposits—to help your engine fire smoothly, to help preserve the power of new cars and restore lost power to many older cars.
- 3 Octane Power!** New Esso Extra has the high octane that most cars now need for full smooth performance without knocking. You'll get all these extras with New Power-formula Esso Extra gasoline—it puts a tiger in your tank! *Happy Motoring!*

HUMBLE AMERICA'S LEADING ENERGY COMPANY... MAKERS OF ESSO PRODUCTS

Esso

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A child-eating demon.

We were less opposed to Texaco for some odd reason.



Cross-dressing
petrochemical skill.

Alas, the brontosaurus was eventually decreed *not a real dinosaur* by actual scientists who get to decide these things.
<fn>Just like those wankers who cut Pluto out of the planet club.</fn> And an entire generation of people like me were left bereft and crestfallen, our trust crushed and our dreams but a mere wisp.

“And so,” say the two or three readers<fn>I’m an optimist.</fn> who hung around this far to find out how in Hade’s Handbag this could exemplify My Favorite World, “how in Hade’s Handbag &c.?”

Well here’s how.

Science, and the stuck up sticky beaks who get to decide what we all are supposed to know, has changed its mind. At long last, the brontosaurus resumes its rightful place in the hall of reptilian behemoths! Excelsior!

And so today, the Unisphere is all that’s left of the World’s Fair, and Shea Stadium (you can see it in the background up top there) is gone.

But the brontosaurus is back, bitches. You can’t keep a good

beast down.

My Favorite World.<fn>Not to mention, it should give Pluto hope for redemption.</fn>

The Dog Ate It



That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

Or perhaps this happened again.

Or maybe this happened.



Make it stop.

Oh well. Could be worse...



Could be raining.

**My Favorite World #19: The
Old Man's Beard**



Let's talk about the old man's beard. No, not that one up there. This one:



Chionanthus retusus, aka Old Man's Beard

Spring is here, full force. That lovely above is *chionanthus retusus*, more commonly called Chinese Fringetree. Other names for it in the South are *Grancy graybeard* and *old man's beard*.

It lives in our front yard.

Here's how the US Forest Service describes it:

The pure white, fragrant flowers, emerging just as the dogwood flowers fade, hang in four-inch-long, spectacular terminal panicles
I had to look this word up. 'A panicle is a much-branched inflorescence. Some authors distinguish it from a compound spike, by requiring that the flowers (and fruit) be pedicellate.' Now I need to go look up 'inflorescence' and 'pedicellate'. I'll get back to you.
which appear to cover the tree with snowy white cotton for two to three weeks. Flowers emerge at the terminal end of the spring shoot growth flush. This differs from the native Fringetree which flowers before leaves emerge."

Here's a detail shot:



Old Man's Beard

I love this little tree. My Favorite World.

Also, too...the springtime sunset light makes me look huge. My shadow strides My Favorite World like a colossus.



The Shadow Knows

MFW.<fn>inflorescence – n. An *inflorescence* is a group or cluster of flowers arranged on a stem that is composed of a main branch or a complicated arrangement of branches. Morphologically, it is the part of the shoot of seed plants where flowers are formed and which is accordingly modified.</fn> <fn>pedicellate – adj., having a pedicel. Oh swell. I'll get back to you. Hang on...</fn> <fn>pedicel – n., one of the subordinate stalks in a branched inflorescence,

bearing a single flower.</fn> <fn>The circularity of the definitions is awesome. I'm dizzy without being one iota smarter.</fn>

Now It's a Party



Lots to say this week, but no time to get it down on whatever it is that passes for paper these days.

I blame that lovely beast pictured above.

I have been unable to play since October. Because reasons:



Two weeks ago I had a witch doctor inject a load of Lance Armstrong-ish stuff in my wrist. And lo and behold, the brace is gone and I can play guitar again.

I should qualify that. I can pick up, hold, and coax some noise out of a guitar. After five months of not playing, it sounds like shit. Just terrible. Damn, it makes me happy.

Naturally, the return to “playing” the guitar spurs all kinds of thoughts about what it means, about the significance of a 46 year, 6 month, and 21 day<fn>My first guitar lesson was on Sept 9, 1969.</fn> love affair with this *thing*. And as I was scraping and buzzing notes left and right, I thought of all

kinds of deep observations and critical theories about art and aesthetics and how the pursuit of same can lead us into preposterous excess and obsession. Also, too, there arose a flood of jocular *bon mots* guaranteed to elicit chuckles and knowing nods of recognition.

But I couldn't be bothered to write any of it down. There was a guitar to tickle, don't you see.

Perhaps next week. In the meantime, here's some minimal evidence of what I used to be as a musician.

I'm coming back. Look out world. Now it's a party.