

# It's Elementary.

Anthony Element

## Who's stupid??

I sat with my friend Harvey out in his shed – I've told you about him in an earlier column, Vietnam vet, thousand yard stare, graying ponytail, expanding er, midsection, fanatical Grateful Dead fan and DIY philosopher... you remember!!

He climbed to his feet, went to the fridge, rescued a can of Fosters, ripped the ring pull off and stood at the entrance to his shed, peering out.



A storm was brewing. Heavy, bruised clouds hung over us. On the horizon, the setting sun was momentarily trapped between earth and clouds, giving our suburb an unnatural glow. One could almost imagine that the end of the world was drawing nigh.

It really was the most amazing sight.

After all, Harvey has drunk only Forex as long as I've known him. He lowered his power plant's, I mean, stereo's volume knob, quietening Gerry Garcia's solo down to a long, passionate plea for insanity.

The paint on the shed wall slowly stopped bubbling.

"Have you noticed," He said, "how we're all getting stupider."

"Speak for yourself," I replied.

"No mate, it's happening to all of us. It must be." Harvey paused and took a long slug. "Look, when I was a kid I worked all summer, saved up and bought a .22 rifle. A quick lecture from the old man, and me and me mates were off all day, shooting."

"Those were the days," I opined.

"Now, have a squiz at that mower behind you. It's got a bloody big yellow and black sign which says, ***'Do not allow body parts to come in contact with the blades while the motor is running.'***"



"So?"

"So, in one generation, we've gone from a teenager being smart enough to handle a gun unsupervised to grow ups having to be told to keep out of the way of bits of steel going round at the speed of sound."

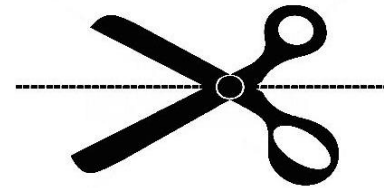
I began to see Harvey's point.

"On the other hand, though," he said, thoughtfully, "They sure are taking the fun out of mowing." He reached into a drawer under his workbench.

"Now see this." He waved around one of those sealed plastic packages. "I bought this pair of scissors, the other day. Check out the warning sign, '**Beware, included item has sharp edges.**'"

Harvey drained his can. "Scissors have sharp edges," he mused. "Who knew?"

"And have a look," he continued, "See the dotted line at the end, with a pair of scissors above it. It's telling me to use a pair of scissors to get into the pack. Well, if I already had a pair of scissors..."



"Of course, now that some bureaucrat's made sure I know that scissors have sharp edges, well that's it, they're staying out here in the shed. I'm not having anything that dangerous in the house."

He reached for another tinnie. "My wife's curling iron," he said, "has a warning on the side, '**For external use only**'. The missus looked at it for a fair while when she first unpacked it. Then she turns to me, and says, 'I wonder why you'd want to do your hair curling outside. And, anyway, where would you plug it in?' "I said, 'I don't think that's what they're talking about, love."

"To this day, I don't think she's figured it out. Meanwhile I've been laying awake at night, wondering which body orifice they think you might try sticking it in to use it internally."

I probably should have warned you that Harvey does spend a lot of his time thinking about really weird stuff.

"Maybe," Harvey said, "people get even stupider than usual in the bathroom."

I wondered where he was going with this.

"The wife's underarm deodorant can has a warning, '**Caution: Do not spray in eyes.**'"

"Well that makes sense," I said, unless..."

"Yeah, I know," Harvey finished, "Unless your eyeballs start sweating."

"I don't talk about this stuff much," he said, "But now and again, I use sleeping pills. Although I generally find if I have enough of these," he held up his Fosters, "I'm okay." "The thing is, the pack they come in has a warning on the side, in big red writing, '**May cause drowsiness.**' Well, I should bloody well hope so." "See this began decades ago."



It was clear that Harvey was warming to his subject. "Really?" I said.

“Sure,” He replied. “Back in the Sixties, the great Roger Miller warned us that you can’t roller skate in a buffalo herd.”

“Yeah, I remember that song.”

“Well, that’s where it all began. Politicians, bureaucrats, they got the idea then. Evidently, we’ve got to be warned about this stuff.” “So, anyway, that’s my theory. The government and all these companies have figured out that we’re too stupid to look after ourselves and they’re trying to do it for us.”

I thought about it. “You could have a point,” I said.

“Thing is,” Harvey continued, “This is only going to get worse.”

“You’re kidding!”

“No way, mate. I reckon they’re just getting started, Look, I’ve made this list of warnings we haven’t seen yet, but I’m sure we’re sure going to.” He handed me a crumpled sheet of paper.



- Do not wear golf shoes on the water bed
- Do not read ‘101 Fun Things To Do with Gelignite’ while flying
- Do not use toilet bleach as a dental cleaner
- Do not lick the beaters while the mixer is running, even if it’s chocolate; and, most important of all
- Do not urinate on the spark plugs while the engine is operating.

Harvey pointed at the paper. “You make my words mate, it’s only a matter of time.” “Of course,” he continued, after draining his beer, “They could save us all a whole lot of grief if they’d just settle for one big sign.”

I rubbed my chin as I thought about it. “What would it say?”

Harvey belched luxuriously, rubbed his capacious gut and smiled. “Just don’t be stupid.”

My uncle believed in reincarnation!  
In his will, he left everything to himself

## From our useless information department

### Is it *Muslim* or *Moslem*?

When Baby Boomers were children it was *Moslem*. The *American Heritage Dictionary* (1992) noted, “*Moslem* is the form predominantly preferred in journalism and popular usage. *Muslim* is

preferred by scholars and by English-speaking adherents of Islam." No more. Now, almost everybody uses *Muslim*.

According to the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, "Moslem and Muslim are basically two different spellings for the same word." But the seemingly arbitrary choice of spellings is a sensitive subject for many followers of Islam. Whereas for most English speakers, the two words are synonymous in meaning, the Arabic roots of the two words are very different. A *Muslim* in Arabic means "one who gives himself to God," and is by definition, someone who adheres to Islam. By contrast, a *Moslem* in Arabic means "one who is evil and unjust" when the word is pronounced, as it is in English, *Mozlem* with a z.

For others, this spelling differentiation is merely a linguistic matter, with the two spellings a result of variation in transliteration methods. Both *Moslem* and *Muslim* are used as nouns. But some writers use *Moslem* when the word is employed as an adjective.

Journalists switched to *Muslim* from *Moslem* in recent years under pressure from Islamic groups. But the use of the word *Moslem* has not entirely ceased. Established institutions which used the older form of the name have been reluctant to change

A wife and her husband attended a very important business party thrown by her boss, where the husband may have had one or two more than he should have. On the way home from the party, the woman said to her husband, "Have I ever told you how handsome and totally irresistible to all women you are?"  
 "Why no," said the husband, deeply flattered.  
 "Then what gave you that idea at the party?" she yelled.

## Entertainment Vietnam.

Many famous and less-well known Australian entertainers volunteered to perform in South Vietnam. Their contribution to lifting the morale of men and women who faced a year in a war-zone was inestimable. Motivated by patriotism, or a simple desire for adventure, and willing to brave the obvious dangers one could face in Vietnam, hundreds of Australian performers made the trip, many more than once. Between 1967 and 1971 some 50 troupes left Australia for Vietnam.

*Right, Mick Deecke and Jack Donlan*



Some, like Little Pattie and Col Joye, who were performing at Nui Dat on the day of the Long Tan battle, brushed up against significant military events. Mostly, however, the performances took place on less well-remembered occasions. Lorrae Desmond, whose fame endured well beyond the Vietnam years, travelled to Vietnam five times. She had already performed in war zones for the British Foreign Office, but until Christmas 1967 had never performed for her own countrymen on active

service. More important than the shows, she felt, were the less public moments when she visited men in hospital or simply spent time sharing a meal or chatting with troops.

There were several ways by which Australian entertainers could get to Vietnam. Commercial agencies contracted performers, volunteers could make the journey through government sponsored Forces Advisory Committee on Entertainment (FACE) or the Australian Forces Overseas Fund. They received a daily allowance, transport, accommodation (often rudimentary indeed) and a security guarantee. The latter, of course, was a serious concern and the



possibility of coming to harm in a country where violent death was commonplace sufficed to deter many performers from visiting Vietnam. Sadly, one Australian entertainer was killed. Cathy Wayne (left) died performing at the United States Marine Corps base at Da Nang when she was shot in the chest. The sergeant accused of the killing was convicted but served just two years before being released, leaving the killer's identity and motive a mystery.

Many other Australians also found themselves performing for American audiences, fortunately with less tragic results. After auditioning in Sydney, Don Morrisson's band, Xanadu, were contracted to play a series of shows at US bases. Ironically the band felt that they had no choice but to go overseas when two of their members became eligible for national service, 'running away to a war to avoid one' is how Morrisson later described it. Many of those who played shows before US personnel found that the racial tensions which bedevilled many American units remained close to the surface. A performer's choice of song could determine the tenor of a concert. Soul music, songs by Aretha Franklin, Diana Ross or Otis Redding, for example, pleased African American troops but drew the ire of some whites, while 'white music' annoyed African Americans. Those performers who experienced such tensions found playing for the more racially homogenous Australians a far less fraught experience.

Whoever their audience, most entertainers endured a gruelling schedule of performances in a hot, humid, uncomfortable environment. Three shows of more than an hour each per day was not an unusual schedule. Performers' who went to Vietnam with a commercial agency did not have the benefit of organised transport and accommodation, they had, instead, to travel by whatever means were available. Low on the list of priorities, they could be forced to wait long and empty hours for a lift or a flight.

Whatever motivated entertainers to be there, performing a series of shows in Vietnam lacked the glamour that might have been associated with playing in Australia. But the musicians, dancers, comedians and others who put on shows for military personnel in Vietnam brought an hour or two of normality to men and women whose lives were consumed by war.

You can see an excellent documentary on Entertainment in Vietnam [HERE](#)

## **Doomsday Cannon.**

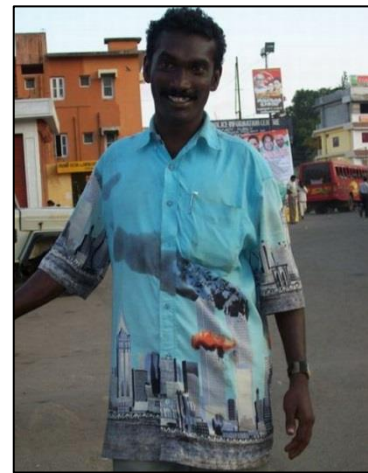
Fans of "Battlestar Galactica" will instantly warm to the concept of railguns, which use electrical energy instead of gun powder to fire projectiles at very high speeds, destroying their targets with kinetic energy rather than conventional explosives. It works by sending electric currents

along parallel rails, which creates the electromagnetic force needed to fire projectiles at a higher rate of speed than traditional powder-powered cannons. Railguns also have a much greater range, as much as 200 to 250 miles. This allows ships to fire deep into enemy territory while staying safely out of harm's way. Because they don't require gun powder, railguns are inherently safer than conventional cannons, and free up storage space aboard ship. They also provide a more uniform power charge, which gives them greater accuracy. The U.S. Navy is currently testing early prototype railguns to replace their conventional weapons aboard ship and hopes to have a full-capability prototype by 2018.

## **Hypocrisy - Alive and Well.**

Adrian Heinrich

This photograph of a man wearing what appears to be a 9/11-themed shirt is the first such item we've seen of this nature, so we don't know anything about the background of type of shirt — where they're made, whether they're custom items or mass-produced ones, who the manufacturers are, or where they're typically sold. Contextual items within the photograph indicate it was likely taken in India, not the Middle East. Aside from that aspect, we have no way of determining ancillary details such as whether the man pictured is a Muslim, why he's wearing the shirt, where he obtained it, etc.



Every day Shirts like this are mass produced, marketed and sold by street vendors throughout the Middle East and it's simply OK. The mass-murder of 9-11 is a celebrated event by millions of people. That's OK, just don't burn or deface the Koran!!

Funny how racism and offending other races only applies to whites !!!

The pic has been around for at least 12 months.

## **The Entabulator**

This is how you need to look and sound when you're talking way over your head. How this guy manages to keep a straight face is beyond me. I was waiting for him to start cracking up, but it sounds so reasonable.

Many years ago, Rockwell International decided to get into the heavy duty automatic transmission business. They were preparing to tape their first introductory video and, as a warm-up, one of the stage crew began a monologue that has become legend within the training industry. This man should have won an academy award for his performance.

Now keep in mind, this was a rehearsal for camera, lighting, and stage crew, and he had no script! This is all strictly off the cuff, nothing is written down, and nothing he says is true. It's just meaningless drivel made up as he goes along.

It's unreal – see [HERE](#)



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