

A Census of Alligators

A while back I encountered a news item about an alligator being killed by a golf cart in Florida. It was, one would presume, a very young alligator, because those things are practically armor-plated and they have been around since the time of the dinosaurs. It would be bizarre if these creatures survived the meteor that slammed into the earth near Yucatan, the ice age, and sundry other geodisasters only to be exterminated by Florida's bluehaired widows from the Bronx and old French-Canadian guys with tell-tale wet smoker's cough and packs of Players and Macdonald's in their pockets. Florida is the only place in the USA I know where you can buy Canadian cigarettes at the corner store.

That news item gave figures on the alligator population of North America, which set me to wondering: who goes around counting alligators? What do they do, take a census?

It is just about as hard to determine how many jazz record "sales" actually occur. What are we measuring here, the "popularity" of jazz or the ability of its artists to make a living from their craft? How many people copy CDs from the CDs of their friends? Do we count these figures? Or are we counting alligators?

Artie Shaw cracked me up when he said that his records had been so extensively pirated, and he so distrusted record-company sales and royalty figures, he was thinking of starting a company to steal his own records. He said he'd have a skull and crossbones as its logo and call it Buccaneer Records. I encouraged him to do it, but he never did. Tony Bennett once told me the record companies kept two sets of books, one showing low sales with which to con the artist and the Internal Revenue Service, and the set of books that only the company ever saw. I'm not sure that was a joke.

How do you indeed count alligators and pirated records? My friends Alan and Marilyn Bergman put out a beautiful four-CD package of their lyrics performed by various singers. It was a private not-for-sale issue made for their friends and perhaps too for promotional purposes. Marilyn, who is president of ASCAP, learned that somebody had swiped the whole package and put it on sale on eBay.

A few years ago, someone in Holland put my *Jazzletter* article on Frank Rosolino on the Internet as his own writing.

Someone urged me to sue the guy. I said, "Where? In what jurisdiction? In Holland? Who'll pay the legal fees? And if I win, will the guy have any money to pay the settlement?"

So let it go. I have been asked why I don't put the *Jazzletter* on the Internet. The reason is that anyone receiving it simply has to push the Forward button on the computer to distribute it to countless acquaintances. Such is today's technology that someone can scan a printed copy of the *Jazzletter* into a computer and disseminate it to hundreds, maybe thousands, of people. Within days of J.K. Rowling's newest Peter Potter book, bootleg copies were available all over the world, including a Chinese edition. Stephen King had a shot at distributing his writing by the Internet, but he apparently has given it up.

I am sympathetic to the young people attempting to distribute their music through the Internet. But once it's out there, it is susceptible to easy theft. And it will be interesting to see if one can build a name by such efforts. When Stan Kenton set up his own label, Creative World, he had a name and a catalogue of well-known material. In Stan's era, music was exposed — and hugely exposed, to the saturation point — on the major radio networks. It was almost impossible to avoid not only jazz but all kinds of music, including what came later to have the polite name of Country and Western.

Bill Kirchner is right that what jazz needs is an audience. That means the jazz appreciation should be part of college and even high school curricula. When occasionally I've suggested jazz courses for schools, I've been advised that "survey courses don't sell."

And even such courses would not be a match for the mass mess American broadcasting has become. In Germany, Roger Kellaway mentioned the composer Guillaume de Machaut to some young people. To his surprise, they were familiar with his work. They said they heard it on (state-funded) German radio, required by law to play such music. The United States is, as far as I know, the only "civilized" nation that has no nationally-funded broadcasting system, just as it is the only one with no national health care system.

When I first arrived at *Down Beat* in May, 1959, the publisher, Chuck Suber, introduced me to the jazz education movement and the people who were developing it, such as Eugene Hall and Don Jacoby. I enthusiastically supported

the movement with my writings. A few years later, at *High Fidelity*, having written yet another encomium to it, I got a letter from a teacher who headed one of the high-school jazz bands, who thanked me but added: "I have to wonder, however, whether we are doing these kids a disservice. Where are they all going to work?"

That sobered me up. There were supposedly 5,000 "stage bands" in the educational system, some of professional caliber. Since each band contained fifteen or so musicians, that amounted to 75,000 players. The professional bands, of which there were only a few left, and the studios, couldn't absorb all of them. What would become of them? They couldn't all be Marvin Stammers. Well, if they all went into other professions, I consoled myself, they would become a superb audience. Some fifty years later, that audience doesn't seem to have materialized, and nothing could stop the offspring of those young musicians from becoming enthusiasts of rock and roll and later rap and hip-hop.

Woody Herman was the first one I heard say that the jazz education movement contained too many teachers without professional playing backgrounds. Nor did I mean to impugn Bill Kirchner's abilities. But people get very touchy about anything that calls their means of making a living into question. A few years ago, I was on a panel at some sort of conference of "intellectuals" in Colorado. Another panelist was Roger Ebert, the film critic. I made a point that criticism in the arts achieves absolutely nothing, and I was speaking from a background in film and drama criticism as well as music. It does not raise the standards of the arts; it doesn't even slow their decline. It doesn't influence the artists who for the most part ignore it. Its only possible purpose is to educate the audience, I said, and it didn't even do that.

Roger Ebert, a pompous sort anyway — in England he'd be called a Colonel Blimp — went into high dudgeon, and attacked me. But of course! If I were correct, his life had no purpose, criticism being his only trade.

Well, Ebert hasn't stopped the decline of the movies. An industry that once gave us *All About Eve* has become the purveyor of comic strips. And instead of a true discussion of the merits of movies, we get box-office figures, heavily touted on television shows (owned by the very companies that made or distribute the movies) chronicling their financial standing. The occasional good film goes comparatively uncelebrated. And the film-industry pundits wonder why box office is 'way down.

No matter what the jazz education movement achieved, there were still all too few jobs for its graduates — as, incidentally, there are too few jobs for those trained in classical music. Even such entry-level jobs as playing

weddings and bar mitzvahs have withered away: the newly-weds don't want live musicians, they want disc jockeys playing the current pop favorites.

Jazz itself came into existence for political reasons and in a social context. In the nineteenth century, New Orleans had a considerable body of "colored" "classical" musicians, many of them living in full integration in white society. When by edict those with even the smallest element of African "blood" were defined as Negro, they lost their social position and their work, and became a part of the body of musicians playing in cabarets and bordellos. They brought with them their instrumental skills and their knowledge, and infused their less privileged colleagues with it. The one photo of the Buddy Bolden band shows its bassist with his left hand on the neck of the instrument in the correct classical position, with the two middle fingers together and the index and pinky fingers outstretched. *Somebody* taught him. Those New Orleans musicians were often much more than the gifted, instinctive, but uneducated darkies of jazz mystique.

Music has through much of its history been an adjunct to something else — church services, for one obvious example. You cannot fully understand Bach unless you know that his music's characteristics are at least in part determined by the physical circumstances in which it was played: churches. The stone pillars and vaulted Gothic ceilings were inimical to homophonic music, which tends to become mush in the echoing ambiance of such buildings. The clear, multi-linear character of much of his writing cuts through all that clutter.

And what about Beethoven? He dedicated his third symphony to one of his heroes, General Napoleon Bonaparte, which is why it's called the *Eroica*, and withdrew the dedication when Napoleon crowned himself emperor.

Mozart's operas contain hidden Masonic references. Tchaikovsky wrote his *1812 Overture* to celebrate Napoleon's defeat. André Chenier wrote inflamed denunciations of the Terror in France, for which Robespierre sent him to the guillotine. The Italian composer Umberto Giordano made him the protagonist of his opera *Andrea Chenier*. These are but scattered examples. You could fill a book with them.

This leads us to another political question. Why did the Jews contribute so little to European classical composition, and so much to the American? This paucity was pointed out to me by the late Joseph Schildkraut, the great Viennese actor and an informed music lover. Over dinner one night, as we discussed Jewish music, he asked me to name the great Jewish composers of Europe. After I named Mendelssohn (who actually became a Protestant in childhood), Bloch, Mahler, Anton Rubinstein, and Schoenberg, Schildkraut urged me to continue. I was stopped. The Jewish contribution

to European music lay in performance, he said, not composition. I thought a lot about that. The great majority of major violinists were not only Jewish, they were Russian, and either they or their families came from Odessa, such as Yehudi Menuhin, Mischa Elman, David Oistrakh, Yasha Heifetz, Nathan Milstein; and many of the major pianists, including Horowitz and Arthur Rubinstein.

Why should this be so, when in the United States the vast body of art-song level popular music, both music and lyrics, with the exceptions of Cole Porter, Johnny Mercer, Hoagy Carmichael, and Harry Warren, was created by Jews? So too much of America's "classical" music, that of Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, and the underpraised David Diamond. Why did the Jews explode with musical talent when they got to this country? I asked various Jewish songwriters why this should be so, and all of them, including Yip Harburg and Arthur Schwartz, recoiled from the question as if they'd been touched with a cattle prod. Their fear, of course, was that if I wrote this, I would make them look like a clique, particularly since most of the music publishers were also Jewish. But Max Dreyfus sponsored Harry Warren and Cole Porter as well. Later, my editor (and friend) at *High Fidelity* magazine, himself Jewish, Leonard Marcus, said that the Jews didn't want to be distinguished — that is, noticed — as a separate group for anything. After the recent experience in Nazi Germany, this is hardly surprising.

But in due course an answer suggested itself. Music in Europe was through most of its history the product and property of the Church and the aristocracy. A Jewish composer would not have been allowed in the door. But in America, the chief employers of composers were the New York theater and the Hollywood movies. Hollywood studio heads and owners were entirely Jewish. Hugo Friedhofer, who wrote his first movie score in 1929, and I figured out one day that at least sixty percent and perhaps more of the major Hollywood film composers were Jewish, including Alfred Newman, Bronislau Kaper, Elmer Bernstein, Jerry Goldstein, Johnny Mandel, and David Raksin. Recording David's music for the movie *Will Penny*, the engineer asked in jest why Jewish composers were so good at scoring westerns. David, who had a very rapid wit, said, "It lies in our tradition. You know. *From the Steppes of Central Utah*."

But the very depredations of the Nazis immeasurably enriched America's musical landscape, because of all the composers, Jewish and otherwise, (not to mention scientists), who fled here when the evidence of Hitler's intentions became obvious. Arnold Schoenberg, Igor Stravinsky and Darius Milhaud, joined Sergei Rachmaninoff, who was already here, and many film composers, especially Bronislau

Kaper, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, and André Previn, whose father got the family out of Berlin barely in time, also settled in America, mostly in California.

Richard Wagner must enter our considerations. Wagner was a vicious anti-Semite who once told a Jewish composer that the best thing he could do for himself was to commit suicide. I recognized the intelligence of Wagner's music, but grow impatient with his treatment of its leitmotifs. Once in London I attended a performance of *Parsifal* at Covent Garden. I fell asleep. Next day at lunch with Bob Farnon and the conductor Muir Matheson, I mentioned that I grew tired of Wagner's interminable developments of thematic material. "Yes," Matheson said in a lofty British tone, "I always want to take a blue pencil to him." Mark Twain said, "Wagner's music better than it sounds."

But one should never underestimate the range and scope and power of his influence. Wagner's music celebrates the Nordic myths of the great Teutonic heroes and gods. Wagner spread his anti-Semitism by word and deed and by his music. He left his money to anti-Semitic causes, and must be considered not only the composer of the underscore of the Nazi movement but one its precursors and founders. Wagner was a leading inspiration of the ineffable human slaughter of the Twentieth Century. Music is not political?

Then there's Antonin Dvorak. From 1892 to 1895 Dvorak was head of the American National Conservatory in New York. Dvorak was fascinated by Negro music, and wrote some music in that style, including elements in his *New World Symphony*. One of his students was the brilliant young violinist Will Marion Cook, whom Dvorak introduced to Joseph Joachim, the violinist and close friend of Brahms. Cook studied with Joachim. Dvorak was much involved in the nationalist musical movements in Europe, with composers tapping the folk music of their peoples for inspiration, leading in time to fervently national styles of composition. Dvorak urged his students to utilize such elements of American music, particularly Negro. Cook embraced that esthetic, and when it became obvious that he would always be considered a "Negro violinist," he turned to composition. In the 1920s Cook was Duke Ellington's most important mentor. You want to know where the *Black, Brown and Beige* suite comes from? You might look to the *New World Symphony*.

One of the most notable examples of the political effect of music on a populace is Sibelius's *Finlandia*, which evokes the look and feel of the lakes and forests and folklore of Finland. So powerfully did it evoke feelings of nationalism in the population that Czarist Russia, which then occupied Finland, forbade its performance.

And the Bush administration is talking about cutting out the funding for PBS and public radio, already pathetically short of the European government-funded cultural networks. This would help pay the cost of the Iraq war. And you think politics have nothing to do with music?

The Greeks believed the modes of music affected character as well as passing mood. If music did not have spectacular persuasive effects, there would be no military marches — a reality Irving Berlin recognized in 1911 when, in *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, he wrote, "He can play a bugle call like you've never heard before, so natural that you want to go to war." And there would never been the *Horst Wessel Song*.

Before the 1950s, popular song in America was about monogamy — the search for that perfect love that would last a lifetime, the finding of which was the ultimate boon and the loss of which the ultimate tragedy. Whether these songs were unrealistic is somewhat irrelevant: it was what they celebrated, setting up an ideal that was to be sought after. And it was, it seems in retrospect, sweetly innocent, which much of it was:

*Will I ever find
the girl in my mind,
the one who is my ideal*

And:

*I had the craziest dream last night,
yes I did,
I never thought it could be
but there you were, in love with me.
I found your lips close to mine,
so I kissed you,
and you didn't mind it at all*

And unrealistic or not, they set a standard that I think helped cohere our culture and I include all the western nations in that thought, including the French, although some of their lyrics were by American or English standards a little racy, and sometimes funny.

All this began to unravel with the rise of rock-and-roll, *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, and the opportunism of Gloria Steinem.

Rock-and-roll was the start of the long and relentless descent to today's down-on-your-knees baby era of perfunctory sex. It has reached the point of what the young people call "party sex," meaning the blow job, and girls are often expected to do it in front of others. Only coition is considered "real" sex. Perhaps Bill Clinton inspired this national standard.

There has been a little-noticed parallel between what has happened in the development and installation of pornography and the decline of popular music into savagery. Each came about not suddenly but by increments through the past fifty years. In the 1950s, the hottest stuff available in the Times Square shops — "your local El Sleazo," as Paul Desmond called them — was the likes of black-and-white photos of Bettie Page, a really quite beautiful girl. Along came Hugh Hefner and his "Playboy philosophy" whose highest intellectual achievement was its encouragement of perfunctory and irresponsible sex. Bob Guccione topped *Playboy* when it began to show pubic hair on its girls. Meantime, the Danes and Swedes were progressing much more rapidly in "hard-core" photo books. Then the girls in *Penthouse* began opening their legs to offer a better view and then But you get the picture. Meantime, the letters to the editor featured lurid descriptions of sexual encounters, always non-monogamous and certainly unromantic. Supposedly they were from readers, but the similarity of language and tone suggested that they were staff-written. Al Goldstein published *Screw* in New York, and went beyond even Guccione. The first porn movies hid their intent in the disclaimer that they were "educational" and intended to foster a healthy attitude toward sex.

Now, I have long had certain reservations about the First Amendment to the Constitution.

In 1962, in Managua, Nicaragua, I was told by the editor of the country's leading newspaper that to placate and, yes, deceive the United States, the Somosa regime did allow "freedom of the press", but it didn't mean much to a people who were largely illiterate. But the Somosa family did tightly control radio.

The First Amendment states "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press" But that was written in a time of a small and mostly illiterate population, by men who could not possibly foresee radio, movies, television, sound recording, the Internet, and the universal dissemination of some destructive stuff, from the rantings of Nazis and serial killers to the hardest of hard-core pornography. If you can't find the pornography on your computer, ask some kid, who'll find it for you in two or three keystrokes. The only thing that impedes me from favoring a rewrite of the Constitution is the thought that the present breed of politicians could and would only make it worse.

In the 1960s, record industry executives and flacks bruted it about that I was a nut case and a right-wing fanatic when I wrote in my columns in *High Fidelity* that if the major labels allowed their rock stars to continue advocating drug use, through their songs or by their well-publicized personal

examples, we would have within a generation a pandemic of drug addiction that would bring this country to its knees.

The record companies denied that many of the songs were about drugs, even though Capitol had to remove from the stores a Beatles album cover showing marijuana in the foreground. With an oh-my-goodness! affectation of innocence, the record company P.R. directors affected to distance themselves from all those groups — like The Lovin' Spoonful (you cook up heroin in a spoon) and the Jefferson Airplane, which was a term for the y-shape split-end paper match with which you could hold the last trace of a burn-out roach — as if these “musicians” were merely naughty children playing little games that didn't mean anything since the fans didn't understand the argot, such as “isn't it good, Norwegian Wood”, anyway. Oh yes they understood it. Only a year or so ago, Paul McCartney said he liked heroin better than cocaine; but by then he had his knighthood.

Columbia Records was in the forefront of making drug records. Everybody in the business knew it. The a&r people at RCA were increasingly worried about this, because of the financial jump Columbia was getting on the market. The a&r men had a meeting with the president of RCA, begging for permission to get in on the bonanza. It was granted. (I had a friend who was in that a&r meeting; I had a report on it within an hour of its ending.) And of course at Columbia, things went on apace until Clive Davis was fired for alleged misappropriation of funds and rewarded with his own record company. At Columbia, executives provided Janis Joplin with needles and heroin right on the record dates.

What I foresaw and wrote about was an epidemic of drug use sweeping America. I wasn't worried about pot. I had hardly a friend among jazz musicians (and some journalists and classical musicians) who didn't use it or hadn't in the past. I still favor full legalization. And whenever I hear some ignoramus repeating the mantra that it is an gateway drug to heroin, I could frow up. I have known people who used it as a gateway drug *out of* heroin. As a matter of fact, I believe in the legalization of heroin, under strict medical controls. That will kill the poppy fields of Afghanistan. But drugs are a subject unto itself, which I may some day address.

The rockin' went on, and so did the everybody-must-get-stoned propaganda. Meantime, of course, the hypocrites of the show business world said entertainment could not affect public behavior, even as television raked in its profits from advertising that proved it could.

Recently Brian “Head” Welch, erstwhile guitarist for the rock group Korn (“The name says it, man,” in the immortal phrase of Stan Freeburg), had himself baptized in the River Jordan. According to the Associated Press, this historic

happening came “just weeks after quitting his band, drug habits and rock-and-roll lifestyle for religion.”

Welch (and we all know what “head” means; jazz musicians were using the term at least sixty years ago) was one of twenty Christian pilgrims from California who were immersed in the Jordan's waters by their pastor, Ron Vietti. Something like those religious devotees who followed Jim Jones to British Guyana and remained there? An AP photo that accompanied the report showed Korn with long curly hair, a pendant crucifix, and a beard.

Though I am not religions, at least conventionally, I found quite distasteful the description of one sleazy rock musician and some dumb pastor from, God save us, Bakersfield, emulating John the Baptist and Jesus in a river that has deep meaning to three religions, particularly when it was done with the full publicity apparatus (including AP) in place to chronicle this earth-shaking event. Head has Jesus tattooed across his knuckles and Matthew 11:28 tattooed across his neck. Head said that the ritual of baptism had washed away his anger. “You know,” he announced in self-congratulation, “when you get angry and it builds up? I felt like hurting someone before, now I feel like hugging people.” We can all breathe easier.

Korn announced Head's resignation after thirteen years with the “band”. Head said he had been increasingly depressed and drug-addicted in recent years, but that religion had helped him quit.

Aye, and there's the rub, and the evil of it all. Preacher Vietti said, “In recent weeks people have committed their lives to God because they're so inspired by his story.” Wait a minute. Whose story? God's? Where in the Bible is that story told? Has this putative preacher even read the book?

Head said, “My songs are God saying things to me, him talking to people.” Good heavens, another Billy Graham, who is all the religious phony I can use for one lifetime. And we're awash in them, from Pat Robertson, with his unctuous affectations of sincerity, on and on. Having apparently received a preview video from on high, Head said, “He's going to use me to heal people and people are going to be drawn to it. Just watch, they will be.” Send this man to John Ashcroft! They can write and sing their hymns together and drape cloth over aluminum boobs.

When the famous, or infamous, depending on whether or not you favor the survival of the American society, Woodstock rock concert occurred, it was filmed. I saw that movie with my late friend Roland Gelatt, editor of the equally late *Saturday Review*, and I remember standing afterwards on Third Avenue just north of 42nd Street, talking. It remains vivid in my mind. He was fascinated by the film;

I was horrified, and once again predicted what this drug propaganda, first in records and now in the movies, would do to America within a very few years. And it did it.

This phenomenon of stoners being saved by Jesus is hardly new, and not worth the space AP gave it. You have for some time been able to find piteous junkies on street corners and park benches, hugging and rocking themselves and murmuring things like, "Jesus loves me." The invisible good luck charm. I know a woman in her early fifties who grew up on sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll. She burned out so many brain cells that she is now, as the saying goes, rowing with one oar. But lately she has been able to function, more or less, for as she will endlessly tell you, Jesus is always with her. What a staggering client list he must have on this earth. When I was a little kid, I wondered how Santa Claus could visit so many kids in one night, and decided he couldn't, and he followed the tooth fairy and the Easter bunny out of my life. How does Jesus manage all this communication. Does he make telephone calls? Or, perhaps, conference calls for efficiency? Or do the ex-dopers just hear him in their heads, like schizophrenics? And what language does he speak? Aramaic? Greek? Or — amazing — modern American mumble, such as "like, well, y'know, man."

At least twenty years ago, the late Steve Allen, who seemingly read *everything* and kept ring-bound books of clippings on the subjects of his unbounded interests, used to send me articles by or about right-wing Christian groups who abandoned trying to take over the government at the top, deciding that the more effective tactic would be to infiltrate the country's political system at the lower levels, aldermen, school-board superintendents, county supervisors, and the like. They did. Then they began moving up.

And a rich recruiting ground was the huge body of stoners who could only get off their drugs with the help of Jay-zus.

I have a lot of trouble with these concepts of intervention from a "higher power," including what was apparently the first organization to embrace it, Alcoholics Anonymous. The minute you stand up at an AA meeting and say, "Hi. My name is Jim and I'm an alcoholic," you have abandoned personal responsibility and given power to the drug. I once asked an AA advocate, "What does an atheist do?" He replied, "It doesn't matter what the higher power is. It could be a doorknob."

How many people do you know who worship doorknobs or the face on a grilled cheese sandwich, although there could be some somewhere, comparable to the members of the Cargo Cult of Melanesia and New Guinea?

I heard a Congresswoman say she had never met a former

addict who believed in legalization of heroin and marijuana. I said to the TV set, "How many junkies have you known, lady? I've known scores of them, maybe even hundreds, and I never knew one who quit who *didn't* favor legalization."

As for the quitting part, of the many, many musicians I have known who did so, I can't think of one (well, maybe John Coltrane) who did it through an organization or with the help of Jayzus or a doorknob. They all did it on their own lonely decision, Zoot Sims, Howard McGhee, Lou Levy, Al Cohn, and Gerry Mulligan among them. Gerry did consult a psychiatrist. I could cite others, but they are still alive. I had Mulligan's express permission to talk about his drug experience in any purposive context, but I still won't discuss drug use by friends and acquaintances who are still alive.

I came in time to a conclusion. Whether the phrase is mine or something I read that became part of my own thought, it is this: There is no such thing as will; there is only desire. When you desire the one thing, such as sobriety, more than you want the other, you will act on that desire.

But there are millions of people who are not capable of that kind of massive and overwhelming desire, and they have to turn to doorknobs or phantoms for help. If they believe it will help them, it will. And it is provocative that when they succumb to right-wing Christianity, they so often come to reject scientific Darwinism while embracing the economic Darwinism promulgated by John D. Rockefeller and the present administration and its economic dismantling of the United States and a ghastly money-grubbing war. If you object to the way it handled the Gulf Coast crisis, don't blame it on Karl Rove. Blame it on the pontificating of Bob Dylan, the preachments and example of the Lovin' Spoonful and the Jefferson Airplane, Gracie Slick, Janis Joplin, and John Lennon, minds dissolved in the corrosive of incomprehensible success and wealth and the attendant power. John Lennon said the Beatles were more popular than Jesus and he was undoubtedly right. One of the members of Peter, Paul and Mary (I think it was Peter Yarrow, their resident intellectual) said that they could swing an election and he too was undoubtedly right. These people all recognized their power, even if Lyndon Johnson didn't, and they used it. They were collectively the advertising agency of the narcotics industry.

I have no idea how many religious fundamentalist ex-stoners there are in this country. I have no way to find out, though I recognize their sinister expanding power.

But then I don't know how to take a census of alligators either.