

GLEANINGS — January 4, A.D. 2015  
Progress

*Today's Gleaning, a "mini-play" with critical analysis all on one page, was written in February, A.D. 2012. Amazingly, it's final paragraph is already outdated. Like lemmings after the pied piper, most states in the union now have done what only a few had done less than two years ago!*

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A man and wife pulled into a gas station, and the man began to fill up their car's tank. They did not live in New Jersey or Oregon, the two states in which it is illegal to pump one's own gas.

"What's taking so long?" asked the impatient wife.

"It's pumping slowly for some reason, dear, but...we're making progress. There! All done."

Late that night, two boys wearing black ski masks snuck onto the couple's property. While one watched for pesky neighbors or the fuzz, the other began siphoning gas from the newly filled tank of their car.

"What's taking so long?" hissed the lookout.

"These tubes are pretty skinny...I told you this would take a few minutes", he whispered back. "But...we're making progress. There! All done!"

In this mini play, both the married couple paying hard earned money for gas and the two partners in crime stealing it considered themselves as making progress in their respective scenarios. I have no argument with some one who asserts that they do not want progress, only incredulity. Everyone is a progress-ive.

But the question which must be asked about the progress of civilization in this nation (or anywhere) is: BY WHAT STANDARD? By what standard, that is, do we determine that which is progress and that which is regress...deterioration...retrogression.

Citizen Jones wants to see his beloved country make progress as he understands it. Citizen Smith wants to see his beloved country makes progress as he understands it, namely exactly contrary to Jones in diverse ways. Whose ideas are comparable to those of customers, and whose ideas are comparable to those of petty thugs? By what standard do we determine whether or not America is making progress?

Two states in America have determined that its residents cannot pump their own gas. Is this avant-garde wisdom which should be adopted at once by the other 48, or an oppressive, nanny-state regulation that should be discarded by the minority of two?

A few states in America recently have enacted laws that seek to radically redefine marriage, an institution which not only predates the existence of those states and our nation itself, but has been the basic building block of civilization for millenia. Is this progress? Is this avant-garde wisdom which should be adopted at once by all the states, or is it absurd, self destructive folly, tantamount to dousing one's society in petroleum and tossing in a lighted match?