



Dave Barry

Dave Barry's 2011 Year in Review

by Dave Barry

(Continued from 01.09.12 edition)

MAY

As the month draws to a close, a Twitter account belonging to Anthony Weiner — a feisty, ambitious Democratic up-and-comer who managed to get elected to Congress despite looking like a nocturnal rodent that somehow got a full-body wax and acquired a gym membership — tweets a link to a photograph of a pair of briefs containing what appears to be a congressional member rarin' to filibuster, if you catch my drift. This member immediately captivates the nation, although, surprisingly, President Obama fails to deliver a nationally televised address about it. The drama continues to build in ...

JUNE

... when Weiner denies that he sent the photo, although he admits he cannot say "with certitude" whether the member is or is not his. He finally confesses to sending the photo, and, as the pressure on him to resign becomes overwhelming, he is left with no choice but to declare his intention to seek the Republican presidential nomination.

No, I'm kidding. Weiner resigns and takes a full-time position in the private sector admiring himself in the mirror.

Meanwhile the Republican field does in fact continue to

grow as Michele Bachmann, Rick Santorum, "Mitt" Romney, the late Sonny Bono and somebody calling himself "Jon Huntsman" all enter the race, bringing the Republican contender total to roughly 125.

In Washington, Congress is under mounting pressure to do something about the pesky federal debt, which continues to mount as a result of the fact that the government continues to spend insanely more money than it actually has. Congress, after carefully weighing its three options — stop spending so much money; get some more money somehow; or implement some combination of options one and two — decides to go with option four: continue to do nothing while engaging in relentlessly hyperpartisan gas-baggery. Incredibly, this does not solve the debt problem.

The economic crisis is even worse in Europe, where the Greek government sends out an email to everybody in its address book claiming it was mugged in London and needs its friends to wire it some emergency cash so it can get home. This prompts Moody's to change Greece's credit rating to, quote, "a word we can't say, but trust us, it's worse than rat mucus."

But perhaps the month's most disturbing development takes place in the Middle East when Iran, which is believed

to be close to developing nuclear weapons, test-fires 14 missiles, including some capable of threatening U.S. interests, as becomes clear when one of them plunges through the theater roof during a matinee performance of the troubled musical "Spider-Man: Turn Off The Dark."

Speaking of disturbing, in ...

JULY

... the eyeballs of the nation are riveted on Orlando, Fla., where Casey Anthony is on trial on charges of being an attractive young woman who is definitely guilty of murder according to millions of deeply concerned individuals watching on TV. The trial becomes an obsession for hundreds of people who are not in any way connected to the victim, Caylee Anthony, but are so distraught over her death that they feel compelled to travel to Orlando and lurk around the courthouse expressing anguish, as opposed to doing something that might actually help one of the many living children who are at risk but who, unfortunately for them, are not featured on TV. In a shocking verdict, Anthony is acquitted of murder and set free, only to be attacked outside the courtroom and have large clumps of her hair yanked out by outraged prominent TV legal harpy Nancy Grace.

Speaking of drama: In Washington, as the deadline for raising the federal debt limit nears, Congress and the Obama administration work themselves into a frenzy trying to figure out what to do about the fact that the government is spending insanely more money than it actually has. After hours of intense negotiations, several walkouts, countless press releases and of course a nationally televised address by the president, the Democrats and the Republicans are finally able to announce, at the last possible minute, that

they have hammered out a historic agreement under which the government will continue to spend insanely more money than it actually has while a very special congressional committee — A SUPER committee! — comes up with a plan, by a later date, that will solve this pesky problem once and for all. Everybody involved heaves a sigh of relief and basks in the feeling of satisfaction that comes from handling yet another crisis, Washington-style.

But things are not so rosy in Europe, where the debt crisis continues to worsen with the revelation that Greece has sold the naming rights to itself, and will henceforth be officially known as the Republic of Burger King. In response, Moody's lowers Greece's bond rating to the point where it is no longer represented by words or letters, just a brownish stain on the rating document.

In England, the News Corp. media empire comes under scrutiny for alleged phone hacking when an investigation reveals that calls to Queen Elizabeth's private mobile number are being answered by Rupert Murdoch speaking in a high-pitched voice.

On a positive note, NFL owners and players are finally able to settle their dispute, thereby averting the very real danger that millions of Fantasy Football enthusiasts would be forced to develop lives.

Speaking of threats, in ...

AUGUST

... Standard & Poor's makes good on its threat to downgrade the U.S. credit rating, noting that the federal government, in making fiscal decisions, is exhibiting "the IQ of a turnip." Meanwhile Wall Street becomes increasingly jittery as investors react to Federal Reserve Board Chairman Bernanke's surprise announcement that his personal retirement portfolio consists entirely of assault rifles.

With the stock market in a steep nosedive, economic growth stagnant and unemployment relentlessly high, the White House, moving swiftly to prevent panic, reassures a worried nation that President Obama will once again be vacationing on Martha's Vineyard, where he will recharge his batteries in preparation for what

White House Press Secretary Jay Carney promises will be "a real humdinger of a nationally televised address."

In political news, Texas Gov. Rick Perry announces that he will seek the Republican nomination with a goal of "restoring the fundamental American right to life, liberty, and a third thing." But the early GOP leader is Michele Bachmann who scores a decisive victory in the crucial Ames, Iowa, Straw Poll, garnering a total of 11 votes, narrowly edging out Ron Paul and a heifer named "Widget." In what will become a pattern for GOP frontrunners, Bachmann's candidacy immediately sinks like an anvil in a duck pond.

Abroad, a wave of riots sweeps across England as thousands of protesters take to the streets of London and other major cities to strike a blow against racism and social injustice by stealing consumer electronics and designer sneakers.

As the end of the month nears, a rare 5.8-magnitude earthquake, with its epicenter in Virginia, rattles the East Coast, shaking buildings from South Carolina to Maine but causing little damage, except in New York, where a theatrical set depicting a building topples over onto the cast of "Spider-Man: Turn Off The Dark." The producers, determined to escape the bad luck that has haunted the current theater, move the entire production to New Jersey, which unfortunately turns out to be directly in the path of Hurricane Irene.

Speaking of disasters, in ...

(More Dave next week.)

(Dave Barry is a humor columnist for the Miami Herald. Write to him c/o The Miami Herald, One Herald Plaza, Miami FL 33132.)

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True North Brass to perform

The Island Concert Association will present True North Brass Tuesday, January 24 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Simons Presbyterian Church, 205 Kings Way St. Simons Island. The concert is free and open to the public. For information call 912.638.2220 or islandconcertassociation.org. □

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