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The last few weeks have been busy weeks, indeed. I've not been writing as much or as frequently. Oh, the ebb and flow of time while teaching a class in the fall semester and attempting to put some focus into some more expansive writing projects.

But do not fear, oh faithful readers. It is a momentary episode of radio silence. Trust me, the thoughts and ideas are percolating!

And, of course, there is always rhubarb to be found on a daily basis. So let's forge ahead with another episode of the Rhubarb Report ♦ number 76, to be exact.

1. Somehow I managed to make a successful transition to the digital era. But with that said, I would probably be considered a little "old school" on certain topics. Remember, I grew up in an era in which people actually wrote letters and sent them via snail mail. Strange concept these days!

Those were the days when "courting" involved hand-written love letters combined with actual face-to-face interaction and connection. The **pursuit of love** has changed quite dramatically in the past couple of decades. When it comes to love in the digital age, we can now quantify what it takes, interaction-wise, to fall in love. A [title="Just 224 tweets for modern-day couples to fall in love"](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/social-media/10305856/Just-224-tweets-for-modern-day-couples-to-fall-in-love.html) recent study indicates that it takes modern-day couples just 224 tweets, 163 text messages, 70 Facebook messages, 37 emails or 30 phone calls to fall in love.

Is this a sign that we have more options for successful interaction? Or is it making our pursuit of love more superficial over the long term? Many artists and thinkers have attempted to describe love through the ages, and it often defies description and criteria for success. Maybe this just confirms it yet again.

2. I made it to opening night of **"Rush"**, Ron Howard's latest movie about the 1976 Formula One World Championship. Yes, you heard that correctly. I had a hard time believing that F1 was appearing in a major motion picture. But I can say that you couldn't write a story line like the one that real life drama created for us in 1976.

As a fan of F1 for decades, I can say that Howard truly does justice to the sport, the characters, and the story line. It was a tremendous movie - for the quality of the film itself and for the memories it brought back to me in full living color. Case in point: a scene from the 1973 US Grand Prix in Watkins Glen, New York. This was my fourth Formula One race - but notably the first time that my parents were faced with explaining the death of a Formula One driver (Francois Cevert) to an 8 year-old. Niki Lauda was one of my childhood heroes as well so I distinctly remember not only his horrific crash and spectacular recovery but also the season finale at the Japanese Grand Prix.

Many thanks to Ron Howard for bringing this epic story to the big screen ♦ and for bringing back some touching memories of my youth.

3. Finally, a few thoughts on the **impending government shut-down**, or the threat of it. Democracy requires many checks and balances to function correctly. However, that balance is easily thrown asunder when you have agendas at play that have no relationship to the actual function of the democracy.

Now I understand that democracy is a process. And I understand how the majority rules the roost. But to be hyper-vigilant about one particular focus point, at the expense of the function of the country as a whole - Obamacare or otherwise, Republican or Democrat - is incredibly ridiculous and short-sighted. Not that that surprises me these days, but I digress.

So

Written by Allan Besselink
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here's a thought for our legislators: go back to elementary school, learn how to play nicely with others in the sand box, and stop repeatedly attempting to throw the republic under the bus. We'd all be better off for it.

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