

# INDIANAPOLIS

Review

Summer 2021

DARWIN'S  
HOUSE  
of CARDS  
FRANKE, p. 14



To Cancel  
or Not  
SCHANSBERG,  
p. 28

## The War Against Thinking

"Something's eating away at the national memory, and a nation or a community or a society can suffer as much from the adverse effects of amnesia as can an individual." — *David McCullough*

*“When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes: and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government and to provide new guards for their future security.”*



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## A FUTURE THAT WORKS

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Our mission is to marshal the best thought on governmental, economic and educational issues at the state and municipal levels. We seek to accomplish this in ways that:

- Exalt the truths of the Declaration of Independence, especially as they apply to the interrelated freedoms of religion, property and speech.
- Emphasize the primacy of the individual in addressing public concerns.
- Recognize that equality of opportunity is sacrificed in pursuit of equality of results.

*The foundation encourages research and discussion on the widest range of Indiana public policy issues. Although the philosophical and economic prejudices inherent in its mission might prompt disagreement, the foundation strives to avoid political or social bias in its work. Those who believe they detect such bias are asked to provide details of a factual nature so that errors may be corrected.*

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# Wednesday Whist

## And the Waves Still Won't Recede

Everyone is excited. Your city is getting a new mixed-use hotel, dining and entertainment district where once only dilapidated buildings stood. Adjacent will be a new baseball park and maybe down the road a basketball arena or soccer stadium and luxury condominiums.

The mayor put together a public-private partnership with a big-time out-of-state developer. There will be plenty of money to realize his vision of the most up-to-date city for the most discerning citizenry. He can be proud once again to show the town to visiting friends and dignitaries.

Whoa. Let's back up a bit. What was that about a "public-private partnership"? Did your mayor mention that there are two kinds of partnerships?

We feared as much.

It turns out that only the one kind attracts new investment. The other is something of a shell game or fiscal dance. The problem as a matter of policy is that the "public" in this public-private equation rarely knows which is which.

If the deal includes an "availability payment," then it is the shell game. There is no owner, no real investor, nobody with a direct incentive to maintain the property and ensure that it succeeds.

The private consortium only designs, builds and finances the construction of the asset. After construction, it will operate and maintain the asset for the life of the contract. In exchange, the government may provide completion payments during the construction period, and afterward pay those annual availability payments, based on a predetermined formula covering both the developers' costs and profit expectations.

The private "partners," then, are only managers, and the deal does not represent anything like free money or new money. The often mysterious financing arrangements must be paid back by the government (the citizens) from the

same revenue sources for which all infrastructure is funded: taxes, tolls and user fees.

Ultimately, that new mixed-use hotel, dining and entertainment district differs only slightly in its financial DNA from a plain old municipal parking garage — a sophisticated Potemkin village.

Randal O'Toole, an economic analyst for the Cato Institute, calls this the evil public-private partnership:

"In the evil P3 the government contracts with a private operator to build and operate a facility and agrees to pay the private party, out of tax dollars, whether anyone uses that facility or not. Where most of the risk of a demand-risk P3 is borne by the private party, the risk of an availability-payment P3 is almost entirely borne by the taxpayers."

Indeed, if you read the fine print in many of the economic-development deals in Indiana you will learn that the "investors" get paid up front whether or not the project succeeds, whether modifications have to be made down the line, whether there are unexpected maintenance bills or a falloff in usage or attendance. A friend of this foundation, the late Don McCardle, liked to say that if city councilmen are going to pretend to be real-estate developers then we're going to have to elect smarter city councilmen.

The problem, again, is it would take a team of bankers and lawyers armed with subpoena power to unravel the details. Today's media has neither the will nor the means to do the job. It simply accepts the promises and helps boost the project over the political finish line. And the handful of politicians and officials who understand to the point of complicity will be retired to the Gulf before it all falls apart.

The cost? In a disturbingly predictable ratio, once it becomes known that nobody is paying for it, construction estimates triple the assessed value. But the saddest thing, when the town realizes the fraud, is how it deflates what was a sincere though misdirected sense of civic pride.

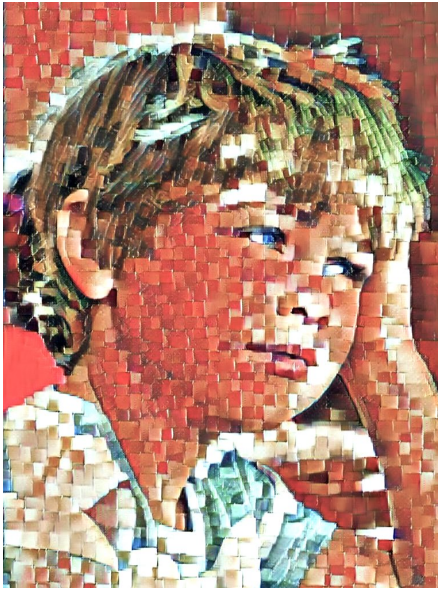
Nobody ever tallies that up. — *tcl*

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# The War Against Thinking

*There is no subject, stretch of history, work of literature, piece of art, marble statuary, political statement, movie or issue that Identity Politics cannot explicate. The fall of Rome? Dr. Seuss? Charter schools? "Gone With the Wind"? The Industrial Revolution? All examples of racism.*

**A** FRIEND LIKES TO SAY he was present at the beginning of Critical Race Theory. It was a seventh-grade bible study in the early 1960s in a small town on the Great Plains.

A young woman from a nearby college was teaching the study and, hoping for a moment of agonizing self-appraisal if not spiritual

awakening, she asked each of the students to say whether they would drink after certain others at a water fountain. She hoped to uncover some wrong thinking in her little troop of callow Baby Boomers.

But none of the youths there knew what to say. The few families in town that met the teacher's description of questionable water-fountain imbibers were ranchers or railroaders like everyone else. The thought of not drinking after them had never occurred.

Nonetheless, the session sparked a lot of thinking, although not what was intended. Several would wonder if there was something they hadn't been told, something about these "others" that was dangerous somehow. Some would question why, if the water fountain was open to anyone at any time, the question had to be asked at all.

## Introduction

But this essay does not take up Critical Race Theory per se, an ever-shifting and difficult to define state of mind, an attitude at best, dogma at worst.<sup>1</sup> Rather, we explore the 20-year fillip behind it and how it is intellectually hobbling an upcoming generation of Hoosiers, particularly that ultimately impressionable group from kindergarten to grade 12.

What some students are learning today is only perversely related to fairness in dealing with race, sex or other differences. And for argument's sake, we group this new pedagogy into what we will call Identity Politics, the idea that entire groups can be characterized as good or bad, greedy or kind, in the same way as one might identify an individual.

This approach to equality sacrifices the unlimited opportunities of freedom in the search for an impossible ideal, a concern written into this foundation's mission statement 32 years ago.

William Voegeli, reviewing the life work of Thomas Sowell brings us up to date:

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed description of Critical Race Theory, see the American Bar Association's "A Lesson on Critical Race Theory": [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human\\_rights\\_magazine\\_home/civil-rights-reimagining-policing/a-lesson-on-critical-race-theory/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/civil-rights-reimagining-policing/a-lesson-on-critical-race-theory/)

“Constant state interventions will be needed to minimize the consequences, good and bad, of individuals’ choices, habits and dispositions. For the sake of group equality, the disciplined, responsible, and ambitious will be penalized so that those who can’t or won’t manifest these qualities are rewarded.”<sup>2</sup>

It is as the economist F.A. Hayek predicted: In its drive for social justice, Identity Politics would create an ultimate irony — a system that to treat people equally must treat people unequally.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, it will be contended here that the engines driving this movement, despite its high-minded egalitarian rhetoric, are the eternally recognizable ones of envy and power.<sup>4</sup>

Teachers instead should be focused on providing their students a full context regarding any subject entwined in those two base human motivations, that and model the trusted adult that everyone needs in their life.

That is the person who will help them to develop the soft skills nurtured in a nuclear family, regardless of whether the student belongs to such a family. That is the person who will teach them what it means to be a citizen of this constitutional republic, regardless of how they got here.

### The Woke Pedagogy

A recent study by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation found only one in three Americans can pass the U.S. citizenship test, which asks the most basic questions about our history and how our system of government works. Among the wrong answers:

- Seventy-two percent of respondents either incorrectly identified or were unsure which states comprised the original 13 colonies.

- Only 24 percent could correctly identify one thing Benjamin Franklin was famous for, with 37 percent believing he invented the lightbulb.
- Only 24 percent knew the correct answer to why the colonists fought the British.
- Twelve percent incorrectly thought WWII General Dwight Eisenhower led troops in the Civil War, while 6 percent thought he was a Vietnam War general.
- While most knew the cause of the Cold War, 2 percent said it was climate change.<sup>5</sup>

What explains this fall in civic education? For starters, Identity Politics is easier than history.

A roommate in college came across a dictionary of ancient symbols and myths in his freshman year. From that moment onward every paper he wrote was based on one or more of the 1,000 or so archetypal references collected in that book, all of them obtuse and unrelated to the actual subject at hand. No professor challenged him, however, because the citations were so obscurely but impressively sourced.

Identity Politics works that way. There is no subject, stretch of history, work of literature, piece of art, marble statuary, political statement, Hollywood movie or policy issue that it cannot explicate. The fall of Rome? Charter Schools? Dr. Seuss? “Gone With the Wind”? The Industrial Revolution? Immunizations? All examples of racism.

Thus equipped, a teacher can say be damned to the classics. Indeed, there is no need to consult even contemporary authors. Here is a short list of those who are now anathema:

Arnold Toynbee, Paul Johnson, James M. Buchanan, George Gilder, Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher, C.S. Lewis, T.S. Eliot, Tom Wolfe, Robert Bartley, Marvin Olasky, Thomas

<sup>2</sup> William Voegeli. “Thomas Sowell’s Inconvenient Truths.” Claremont Review of Books, summer 2018.

<sup>3</sup> See Jon Miltimore. “Hayek: Social Justice Demands the Unequal Treatment of Individuals,” the Foundation for Economic Education, Nov. 13, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> See Heather Mac Donald. “The Bias Fallacy.” City Journal, Autumn 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Jarrett Stepman. “Americans Are Woefully Uneducated About Basic History.” Daily Newsletter. The Foundation for Economic Education, Oct. 14, 2018.

Sowell, Charles Murray, E.O. Wilson, Mark Twain, Robert Tombs, Heather Mac Donald, Amity Shalaes, Tom Bethell, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, John Keegan, Donald Davidson, Angelo Codevilla, Peter T. Bauer, Dan Hannan, James Q. Wilson, Dinesh D'Souza, Jude Wanninkus, David Mamet, Helmut Schoeck, F.A. Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, V.S. Naipaul, Rudyard Kipling, Russell Kirk, Harry Summers, Jr., Henry Hazlett, John Lott, Joseph Epstein.<sup>6</sup>

Those thinkers and many, many more are blacklisted by educators today not because their work is discredited but because they would complicate the sense of moral superiority that accompanies Identity Politics.

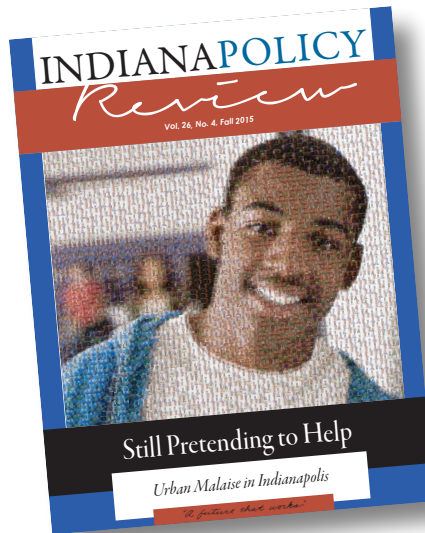
### A 'Racist' Nation

"As soon as I am 18, I am moving to Canada," a student told one of our members, a teacher. When asked why, the answer was, "Because the United States is racist."

Another story from the same classroom: A student makes the claim "America is the greatest country in the world" and an uproar ensues.

"These were 13 and 14-year-olds offended by a classmate who describes the United States as great," the teacher lamented.

We can assume that such views are molded at home or at school or both. Wherever, racism is acknowledged in some way in every aspect of today's curriculum. In the earliest grades, students learn about themselves in relation to their families, neighborhoods and larger communities. They learn that people have different types of "families," some with two moms or two dads, different skin color, religion, cultural background and so forth.



It becomes problematic when the teacher advances American history as merely a story of people of white skin enjoying privilege over people of dark skin. Our teacher friend explained the effect this way:

"From a very early age, this notion of victims and oppressors is cemented in their consciousness. I have noticed that our youngest students read books about slavery.

'Henry's Freedom Box' comes to mind. This is a very well-done book about a little boy who devises a way to escape to freedom, but it is presented in my school and I imagine all schools without any historical context and before students have taken U.S. or Indiana history. This book is just one of many examples. Ironically, to my mind, this begins to breed the very clouds of inferiority that *Brown vs. Board of Education* cited as the primary damage done by racial segregation in the schools. When this approach is compounded over many years of schooling, race (and gender, too, now) becomes the primary focus of American History."

To be sure, race is an important part of any U.S. history curriculum, and slavery does shape the American story, beginning with 1619 and Jamestowne. But the "1619 Project," a curriculum promoted by the New York Times, suggests that the United States was born with racial inequality and white supremacy as its DNA and that this genetic marker has not changed.

So in Rockwood, Mo., a fifth-grade teacher recently gave students a handout with written excerpts by Alicia Garza, co-founder of Black Lives Matter. The writings included this:

"Disruption is the new world order. It is the way in which those denied power assert power. And in the context of a larger strategy for how to

<sup>6</sup> I ask the reader's forgiveness for merely pulling names from my bookshelf. It is conceded that there are other even more pertinent authors.



contend for power, disruption is an important way to surface new possibilities.”<sup>7</sup>

This is despite five decades of aggressive and preferential affirmative action — so much so that today the military has plans to select Navy Seals and fighter pilots by skin color rather than merit.

### Curriculum and Context

Given all of that it should be no surprise that our education system, when contorted by Identity Politics, engenders disrespect for America’s own heritage and embeds hatred for its own citizenry.

Proponents see this as a righteous war on wrong thinking. Others see it as an envy-driven grab for power.

“Something’s eating away at the national memory, and a nation or a community or a society can suffer as much from the adverse effects of amnesia as can an individual,” says David McCullough, the historical biographer.

That is what we mean by context. Many of us who have seen our children maneuver the maize of a formal education now realize that the danger was not that they blithely accepted the propaganda they were being fed in the classroom. Rather, it was that their life opinions were being formed without even a glancing introduction to a sea of competing facts and ideas.

Some of the most respected U.S. historians (McCullough and Gordon Wood come to mind) have pointed out the flaws in the previously mentioned 1619 project. The more accurate and contextualized way to teach the landmark year 1619 is to point out its paradoxes.

In 1619, the Virginia House of Burgesses met for the first time, the first representative assembly in the colonies, a moment that would lead to the movement for independence and the pursuit of full constitutional government.

Yes, that was also the year the first enslaved Africans were transported to the colonies. But ever since, U.S. history has been the story of expanding rights and liberties to apply to all people regardless of skin color, gender or national origins.

Told this way, it is an uplifting, hopeful and exceptional story unlike any other.

Told this way, students understand why immigrants from all over the world strive to come here.

Told this way, students can understand why their nation is factually and truly exceptional regardless of political view.

Increasingly, it is *not* told this way.<sup>8</sup>

Identity Politics takes away all the heroes of our past who promoted the freedoms we claim to love. It makes Thomas Jefferson most remembered for his hypocrisy as a slaveowner rather than as the wise wordsmith behind the Declaration of Independence and Virginia Statute for Religious freedom, documents that have inspired freedom revolutions and appreciation for religious liberty of all faiths around the globe. It transforms Andrew Jackson and his Age of Democracy into a period of native American genocide, World War II is reduced to the Tuskegee Airmen.

Again, a good historian teaches the whole truth, warts and all, but Identity Politics breeds in young scholars a negative view — yes, even a hatred — of their own country.

That whole truth would mean making clear that the 1964 Civil Rights Act stipulated that its prohibitions of discrimination on account of race, color, national origin, etc., applied to *all* persons or *any* individual. “The law refused to enact gradations of the rights it conferred on the basis of demographic identity or degree of historical

<sup>7</sup> Erica Sanzi. “The Monster Is in the Classroom.” City Journal, April 30, 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Note: Spokespersons for several Indiana school districts deny that Critical Race Theory by name is being taught but students and parents report that it is guiding classroom instruction. (Dwight Adams. “What We Know About Critical Race Theory,” the Indianapolis Star, May 11, 2021.)

victimization,” argues Voegeli, author of “Never Enough: America’s Limitless Welfare State.”<sup>9</sup>

And taken to its full application, Identity Politics infuses today’s English curriculum in choices about literature and in writing assignments.

Most K-12 schools, public and private, have abandoned the classic canon. Rather than provide the necessary historical context to teach Mark Twain or Ernest Hemingway, teachers are pushing contemporary POC (people of color) authors. The rationale is that students need to read books about and written by people who look like they do.

On the surface, it is a valid point, as all reading lists should include a range of genres, styles and characters to which young people can relate. The result, however, is that many of the required books focus exclusively on race and identity — issues that divide rather than unify.

As an example, our teacher friend asks us to consider in this discussion “The Marrow Thieves” by Cherie Dimaline:

“This book is highly regarded for both its style and substance. It is a dystopian story in which indigenous people are being hunted for their bone marrow. Gripping plot? Absolutely, but one that reenforces the worldview of oppressors versus victims, haters verses hated, and this is standard fare for middle-grade literature.”

Finally, there is an ugly side to this. In March, a group of concerned Zionsville Middle School parents gathered in support of a school resource officer suspended for posting a video on his personal Facebook page. The video was of people singing the National Anthem at a Trump rally.

The officer later was dismissed as a result of a separate incident that also apparently violated the school’s sense of Identity Politics. Here is an account from a member of our foundation whose child attends the school:

“According to witnesses, the officer saw a disturbance in the Zionsville Middle School cafeteria involving a student yelling anti-police statements at other students. This student (who is white) then began to direct her outburst toward one student, telling that student that she should fear the police and that, because she was of a certain ethnicity, she would face discrimination and lack of opportunity in her life. The officer reportedly sought to calm the situation, assuring the students that the police were there to keep them safe. He encouraged the attacked student, telling her that she could be anything that she wanted to be in America. For this, the officer was permanently removed from the school and may face discipline from his department. All of this occurred without the police department or the school conducting a proper investigation or interviewing any of the independent eyewitnesses to the incident.”<sup>10</sup>

### Envy and Socialism

“Thinking is difficult,” wrote the psychiatrist Carl Jung, “that’s why most people judge.”

Earlier we discussed the obvious reason for the new pedagogy, that it is merely easy. Here is the complex reason: Moral superiority is not just a feature of Identity Politics, it is its *raison d’être*. For behind that is the timeless human temptation to resent the more prosperous “others” of the world is an egalitarian impulse more commonly and Biblically understood as envy.

To be clear, this is not the envy that spurs competition and extra effort. It is the envy that

<sup>9</sup> Voegeli. “Racism Revised: The Way We Hate Now.” Claremont Review of Books, fall 2018.

<sup>10</sup> A March 29, 2021, email from Jim Holden, a member of the Indiana Policy Review Foundation since 2011. Holden, a parent of a Zionsville Middle School student and an organizer of the rally supporting the officer, said this in a statement to the media: “Our schools should be teaching students to respect the police. Instead, (the principal) is teaching the opposite by giving in to the extreme anti-police attitudes of a small part of our community and ‘canceling’ (the resource officer).”

enlists authoritarian power to break a society down to a base denominator — envy for envy's sake.<sup>11</sup>

One scholar has this field to himself. He is Helmut Schoeck, author of “Envy: A Theory of Social Behavior,” a book that would be out of print except for the philanthropy of the Indianapolis-based Liberty Fund.<sup>12</sup>

Schoeck connects the dots between the new Identity Politics and the old socialism. He argues that the world and indeed history can be divided between societies where envy is institutionalized, that is, where government enforces a right to envy your neighbor, and between societies where it is not.

The latter are often Christian societies where envy is recognized as inherent but treated as a sin for which the individual should ask forgiveness. And perhaps not coincidentally, inner-city Christian churches have had the most success in programs guiding youths there to productive lives.<sup>13</sup>

It is odd, therefore, that you will not be able to find mention of a Christian church in the final report to the Indianapolis mayor by the staff of the multi-year, much-lauded “Young Lives Matter” campaign,” a campaign that professed to be a community-wide effort to rescue young black men from lives of crime.<sup>14</sup>

The Indianapolis program followed the secular philosophy of Identity Politics, with envy tacitly justifying a push for equal outcomes. If everyone is miserable then nobody can be either faulted or privileged seems to be the thinking.

Individuals, societies and even neighborhoods that rise above the default setting of mankind, that prove exceptional, are denounced and

assumed to have prospered at the expense of the rest. Ignored are the economic, medical and social advances that the envied contribute to their city, nation and world, advances that otherwise do not occur.

Peter Wood, president of the National Association of Scholars, explains, noting the irony that a feeling of envy can increase along with prosperity:

“Socialism inevitably straddles an impossible aspiration and an inescapable reality. It can manage that only by summoning up fierce feelings of injustice. Its engine is unbridled envy. That sort of will-to-destroy is at the heart of socialism, and Schoeck’s clarity on this point probably goes a long way towards explaining why envy never became a key text in modern social science. But if it is ever to have a break-out moment, we have surely arrived at it. Schoeck holds up a mirror to our egalitarian movements. The more we prosper as a society, the more envious people become of the small differences that set us apart. People grow belligerent in wanting to erase ‘privilege’ even as they seek to establish a punishingly exact new hierarchy of virtue. The unacknowledged (because it is *unacknowledgeable*) force behind such movements is envy.”<sup>15</sup>

### The Demographic Tangle

On top of the above stated problems, Identity Politics will soon have to face the question of whose identity is whose, to untangle the nation’s identitarian knot, to sort its *sorites paradox*.

This was dramatized recently in body-camera footage of a black driver (a college professor) berating a hispanic police officer during a traffic stop for wanting to be white and disparaging him

<sup>11</sup> Consider that Aaron, the villainous Moor from “Titus Andronicus,” attributed to Shakespeare, personifies this character trait.

<sup>12</sup> Helmut Schoeck. *Envy: A Theory of Social Behavior*, the Liberty Fund, Indianapolis 1987. This writer and the late Bill Styring, who chaired the event, represented the foundation at a two-day Liberty Fund seminar on the book shortly after it was republished.

<sup>13</sup> See Marvin Olasky. “Christian Faith Once Opened Doors in Indianapolis.” *The Indiana Policy Review*, fall 2015.

<sup>14</sup> See Patrick Oetting. “Still Pretending to Help.” *The Indiana Policy Review*, fall 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Wood. “Wanting the Worst.” *The Liberty Fund*, Oct. 16, 2019.

as a “murderer” and a “Mexican racist.”<sup>16</sup>

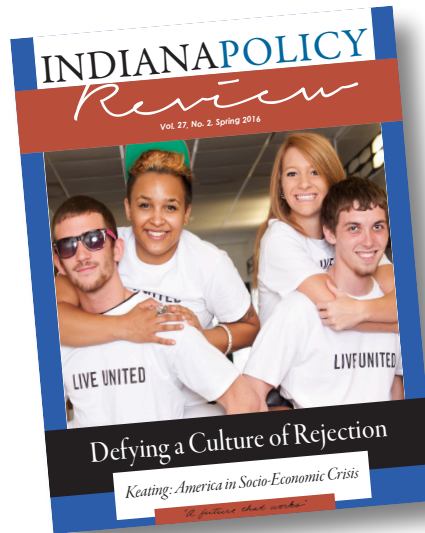
David Azerrad of Hillsdale College comments:

“Identity politics in effect invites us to embrace racism, but to do so in the name of anti-racism,” writes “and it asks us to believe that this anti-racist racism, because it is in the service of a good cause, will lead not to a race war but to healing our divisions and bringing us together.”<sup>17</sup>

A book published this year, “The Great Demographic Illusion” by Richard Alba, shows how official policies distort America’s debates about racial and ethnic identity. This is from the review in *City Journal*:

“Minorities are not being recruited into a white power structure, as critical race theorists describe in the case of earlier Southern and Eastern European immigrants. ‘Assimilation’ implies that a minority group melds into the majority and becomes part of a homogenized whole. Instead, Alba argues, immigrants and their children are joining a mixed, visibly nonwhite mainstream and changing that mainstream in noticeable ways. Groups are ‘de-categorizing’ themselves or, as in the case of ‘white Latina’ Anya Taylor-Joy (star of ‘The Queen’s Gambit’), blurring familiar boundaries.”<sup>18</sup>

And interesting is the move of young black Christians to the Republican Party. Only a decade ago fully 75 percent of young black men who went to church weekly were Democrats. Today, it is but 60 percent, reports the columnist Byron York.



“For women, it’s more subtle — maybe down eight points from the peak. But it’s still there.”<sup>19</sup>

York quotes Ryan Burge, a political scientist who confirms that that black Protestants are drifting toward Republicans: “Romney got 3 percent in 2012. Trump got 7 percent in 2016. Trump got 9 percent in 2020. This is something to keep an eye on.”

Meanwhile, the differences among ethnic groups in family structure complicate the racial discussion.

Richard McGown, writing in this foundation’s quarterly journal, noted that in Indiana 67 percent of black children live with only one parent and 28 percent of white children live with one parent:

“The media could be more inclusive and complete in reporting about family structure and success by children. It may not serve some media outlets’ agenda to note that poverty diminishes in black households, as it diminishes in white households, when a married couple is part of the family.”<sup>20</sup>

Contrary to the BLM narrative, a majority of black conservatives (62 percent) and a good percentage of black liberals (47 percent) prefer a society where minorities have grown so confident that racially offensive remarks no longer affect them rather than one where the price for being racist is so high that no one makes racially offensive remarks anymore.<sup>21</sup>

A study this spring found no racial group wants to prioritize social justice concerns over a real

<sup>16</sup> Yael Halon. “Driver Calls LA County Deputy ‘Murderer’ in Racist Attack.” *Fox news.com*, May 3, 2021.

<sup>17</sup> David Azerrad. “The Social Justice Endgame.” *Claremont Review of Books*, spring 2020.

<sup>18</sup> Kay Hymowitz. “Coloring Outside the Lines.” *City Journal*, March 25, 2021.

<sup>19</sup> Byron York. “The Daily Memo.” *The Washington Examiner*, March 30, 2021.

<sup>20</sup> Richard McGowan. “Black Lives *Need* to Matter.” *The Indiana Policy Review*, winter 2021.

<sup>21</sup> Eric Kaufmann. “The Social Construction of Racism in the United States.” *Manhattan Institute*, April 21.



diversity of views. Sixty-nine percent of white respondents opted to expose students to a variety of perspectives rather than a narrow progressive worldview. The number in support of a multiplicity of views dropped to 44 percent among black respondents but that 44 percent was the plurality among blacks, for just 29 percent of black respondents want the progressive idea and another 27 percent were unsure. Similarly, 51 percent of Hispanic or Latino identifiers selected viewpoint diversity with 33 percent wanting a narrower view and 15 percent unsure.<sup>22</sup>

A Minnesota school-choice movement founded in the black community there aims to challenge the narrative that America is structured to undermine the lives of black Americans.

TakeCharge Minnesota says its objective is “to inspire and educate the black community and other minority groups in the Twin Cities to take charge of their own lives, the lives of their families and communities, as citizens fully empowered by the Constitution.”<sup>23</sup>

Victor Davis Hanson, writing for the Independent Institute, puts a cap on it:

“In truth, the Mexican-American tractor driver in Gilroy has more in common with the white auto mechanic, and both with the black truck driver, than any of the three has with the woke Jorge Ramos, Oprah Winfrey, Mark Zuckerberg, or the Antifa and Black Lives Matter hierarchy. America is not a sinful racist mess, but a great experiment as the only multiracial, self-reflecting, and self-critical democracy in history that did not — yet — descend into tribal chaos and violence.”<sup>24</sup>

We circle back to Peter Wood who in a recent article for Claremont says our educational

institutions have become the least open, least free places in the nation:

“Genuine debate about abortion, affirmative action, feminism, Islam, Israel, racism, sexual assault and transgender identity has been rendered difficult, if not impossible. And we are awash in new euphemisms for censorship: trigger warnings, safe spaces, free-speech zones, fill-in-the-blank-phobic slurs, micro-aggressions and verbal violence.”<sup>25</sup>

### The Tragedy of the Innocents

Early in this essay, the point was made that the damage done by Identity Politics in schools is that it pushes out facts and ideas the student needs to form a healthy life view, one that doesn’t merely divide everyone into haters and hated.

And yet, individuals can overcome even such an education. Life can teach them the lessons they need to know, albeit the hard way.

But there is *irreversible* damage done by Identity Politics. It diverts attention from a far more serious problem than perceived inequities and hurt feelings. That problem, as we have written here before, stems from the continued prevalence of fatherless and broken homes.<sup>26</sup>

Elementary school teachers without special knowledge about any particular family can tell you which of their students do not have fathers in the home. Many can tell you to the day when a particular student learned that his or her parents would be separating. The teacher can see it in the student’s face, the impact on the child’s sense of well-being, self-worth and security being that profound.

Addressing this tragedy of the innocents is the great and immediate challenge for elementary

<sup>22</sup> Samuel Adams. “Americans Do Not Want the Woke Racism our Schools Are Peddling.” American Council of Trustees and Alumni, April 23, 2021.

<sup>23</sup> Susan Berry. “Minnesota Black School Choice Movement ‘Explicitly Rejects’ U.S. Is Racist Nation” Breitbart, May 10, 2021.

<sup>24</sup> Victor Davis Hanson. “Is Racism Moral Now?” The Independent Institute, March 30, 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Wood. “The Rise of Campus Authoritarianism.” Claremont Review of Books, summer 2015.

<sup>26</sup> Again, see Richard McGowan’s essay in the winter 2021 Indiana Policy Review.

education in America today, not the impossible mission of social leveling.

The Indiana Policy Review has been tracking a small school in Columbia City, Indiana, that may have found an answer.<sup>27 28</sup> But brace yourself, it will take a lot more energy and money than merely striking books written by dead white males from your reading list, changing the picture on pancake boxes or, for that matter, bringing a celebrity to town to speak to your conservative choir.<sup>29</sup>

TROY (Teaching and Reaching Our Youth) boasts a student body on which the education system, even its woke sector, has given up — bad actors, individuals identified by authorities as headed for a dead end.

But they graduate thanking their lucky stars they were rejected. For in the words of one of the graduates, the school taught her what a family “looks like.”

The school has discovered, or perhaps rediscovered, the key to more effectively educating not only troubled children but all children — along the full range of difficulty, poor or wealthy, prejudiced or privileged, loved or not, from nuclear families as well as from the alternative arrangements of what has become a social hodgepodge. For the generation headed our way, to quote the school’s director, “Comes from a very mixed bag and with a lot of baggage.”

Again, less than half will have been raised in a family that can even be loosely described as intact. Even fewer — far, far fewer — will have been properly introduced to the values that have guided our civilization for the last two thousand years.

Considering disfunction of such magnitude, you might expect those who manage our school

systems, who design the methods we use to civilize the next generation, to make adjustments. It is their job, after all.

But if you have read the state’s anachronistic Indiana Collective Bargaining Act,<sup>30</sup> you will not be surprised to hear that they have not made those adjustments. Despite sincere attempts at reform, the classroom too often is essentially unchanged from the one-room schoolhouse — 20 or so students facing the instructor at the front of the class “teaching to the test.”

If a student rebels at this dismal prospect, he or she is out of luck — reclassified, or given a degraded degree, or simply graduated (thrown overboard) to make room on what is a sinking ship.<sup>31</sup>

An indication of how poorly this is working were the tortured attempts to manipulate ISTEP and other achievement measures once meant to test the efficacy of the system. It seems like every officeholder is desperate now for statistical evidence to say things are “getting better” even if the evidence has to be manufactured.

In fact, things are getting worse. Some are cynical enough to believe that those in the upper strata of the education establishment are OK with that. They have figured out how to make a career out of perpetual failure. High-minded allegiance to “equity” and Identity Politics now provides them cover for their malfeasance.

But even if you don’t care about the students themselves, you might be interested in what this failure of educational method is doing to your economy.

The problem is not only that great numbers in the entry-level labor force are not proficient in adding, subtracting, spelling or even the most

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<sup>27</sup> Nicole Trier. “A Policy of Persistent Love.” The Indiana Policy Review, spring 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Craig Ladwig. “No-Nonsense Schools. The Indiana Policy Review, spring 2016.

<sup>29</sup> March 2021 phone conversations with Erin Tuttle, Indianapolis-based author of *Deconstructing the Administrative State*. A group of parents in Indianapolis, activated by the excesses of Identity Politics at Park Tudor School, plan to bring Candace Owens to the city this summer to talk about Critical Race Theory.

<sup>30</sup> Charles M. Freeland. “Public Education Without Romance.” The Indiana Policy Review, winter 2001.

<sup>31</sup> For an alternative system, see Lisa Snell, “Decentralized Schools: A handbook for Those Serious About More Accountable, More Effective Schools,” The Indiana Policy Review, fall 2016.

rudimentary history of our civilization. They do not have the “soft skills” required day to day in a workplace.

Even factoring the vagaries of ambition and work ethic, we are in danger of ending up with a workforce whose members cannot communicate and get along with their fellow workers, accept supervision or criticism, stay on task and complete jobs on time. Productivity with such a workforce will be out of the question.

Those soft skills are what they teach at TROY school along with the expected academics necessary for an accredited high school degree.

Formerly, most students learned those “soft skills” from trusted adults, sometimes parents, but not necessarily. Those skills cannot be summoned on demand from a fairy godmother, they cannot even be assigned or hired in time to make much of a difference in a child’s life.

For if you don’t have a trusted adult in your life, you are going to have to figure out things on your own. And that little Columbia City school has worked out a system to help young people do just that.

Again, TROY shows lost or rejected children what it “looks like” to have a trusted adult nearby. No, that does not replace missing, derelict or overwhelmed parents. It does, however, put children in a position of hope for long enough to be taught what they will need to know to live constructively in a free society.

If this strikes you as expensive, you are correct, but there is little choice. The sources quoted in this essay paint a grim picture of the societal division and misery that will otherwise ensue.

## Conclusion

Identity Politics as a way of thinking has nothing to offer the student but rationalization and resentment. In one of his last articles, the economist Walter Williams decried the poor academic performance of students in our larger, woke school districts. “In two city schools,” Williams wrote of a district in a neighboring state, “only one student tested proficient in math and none were proficient in English. Yet, the schools spent a full week learning about ‘systemic racism’ and ‘Black Lives Matter activism.’”<sup>32</sup>

Identity Politics focuses immense energy rooting out what it labels as wrong thinking. What if that energy could be redirected to addressing the lessons being learned at TROY?

It has been five years since we featured the school on the cover of our quarterly journal. During that time, Gov. Eric Holcomb has made a show of naming the state’s first ever “chief equity, inclusion and opportunity officer.” There has been nary an Indiana politician, Republican or Democrat, who has dared challenge the sentiment behind Identity Politics even as it pervaded the public school system.

The small school, meanwhile, plugs along, independent, privately funded, officially unrecognized and untitled, developing and improving its method.

You would think someone in the governor’s office would find time to get up from their swivel chair and drive the 120 miles from Indianapolis to Columbia City where they “equalize,” “include” and make “opportunity” in real life instead of just talk about it.

But you would think wrong. — *tcl*

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<sup>32</sup> Kerry McDonald. “Woke Educators Release Letter Declaring Objective Math a Form of ‘White Supremacy.’” The Foundation for Economic Education, March 4, 2021.

# Eric Schansberg

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## Virtue Hoarders: The Case Against the Professional Managerial Class

Catherine Liu, author of "Virtue Hoarders The Case against the Professional Managerial Class" is a bona fide "liberal." She's opposed to cronyism, intolerance and hypocrisy. She values free speech and robust inquiry. She's passionate about the working poor and the middle class.

All of this means that she can't stand Democrat leadership and "the elites" on the Left.<sup>1</sup> There are so few liberals (and conservatives) these days. We need many more people like her — principled, persuasive, aggressive, and willing to call out others in their camps.

Unfortunately, Liu is a "Socialist" — hard-core by her own description. But who knows what that means? She's also a Bernie fan (6) and he's not much of a Socialist anymore — in the textbook sense of government owning the means of production. She also confuses "capitalism" with "crony capitalism" and its rent-seeking (4). Then again, Liu is a professor of "film and media studies," so one might not expect her to know too much about economics.<sup>2</sup>

Still, Liu's comments in "Virtue Hoarders" on politics seem spot-on. Her chief target is the "PMC" — the "professional managerial class." As an academic, she is in the PMC but is disturbed by its

norms. White-collar, upper-class in terms of education and income, and often ideologically on the Left, she describes the PMC as engaged in class warfare against the lower classes.<sup>3</sup>

Worse yet, the PMC sees itself as vastly superior to "powerless" people who they ignore — or objectify as they try to save them from various sins and pitfalls. The PMC defines virtues and then attempts to "hoard" them through "virtue signaling." Its members create "moral panics" over violations of these virtues. They turn politics and policy battles into "individual passion plays." (1-2)

The approach is deeply disunifying and destructive. The PMC condescends against "deplorables" and attacks those who disagree. As Geoff Shullenberger expresses it in his review: "The politics of virtue hoarding is anti-universalist. Rather than pursue shared public goods, its function is to fortify the class's dominant position by morally distinguishing it from the underclass." This pursuit of power and privilege — by already-powerful and privileged people — is profoundly offensive to Liu as a Marxist.

Liu is upset at their methods, but there is a practical problem as well: a political backlash from blue-collars and other common folk. "Ordinary people without college degrees have rejected PMC technocracy in favor of populist authoritarianism because they no longer believe..." (74) They don't trust that "the elites" have their best interests in mind and otherwise find them somewhere between annoying, blind and despicable.

This explains much of the recent popularity of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. Certainly, the GOP is looking to capitalize on disdain for the elites. To Liu, the Republican reaction is "pure media theater." (4) While the GOP is an anticipated obstacle (12), she has much higher hopes for the Democrats (26). Unfortunately, such expectations are a fool's errand these days. Democrat politicians aren't liberal (on military interventionism, civil

<sup>1</sup> One would guess that she's not fond of the media and Democrat partisans who enable both.

<sup>2</sup> She does take a warranted and welcomed poke at Elizabeth Warren, but the point is actually undersold. There are many other good reasons to be troubled by Warren's approach to politics. (See: my article in The Independent Review.)

<sup>3</sup> Liu points to 1968 as the turning point (3). I concur with that assessment here and here.



liberties, or the working class) any more than Republicans are conservative on fiscal matters.

Liu is particularly upset at the PMC's elevation of race, gender, etc. over class through "identity politics" (4), since she sees class as the dominant lens to understand the world. She discusses "the 1619 Project" as a key example in this regard (28-31). Addressing race to some extent is not problematic. But elevating it over class is not in line with reality or thus, ultimately helpful.

Sociologically, elevating class over race is a common mistake. Race matters, but class matters more. Consider this thought experiment: Is it easier for you to talk with someone of a different race but the same class — or someone of the same race but a very different class? For me and most people I ask, the latter is much more difficult.

Class also matters much more in policy terms. Race and culture can connect to preferences and behaviors. But class-based differences routinely emerge, especially with means-tested policies. To note, in *Losing Ground*, Charles Murray observed that welfare changed "the rules of the game" for the poor — in terms of working, forming a family, saving money, getting an education, etc. With the War on Poverty, the elites dramatically changed incentives for the poor, especially for family structure.

Along these lines, Liu's two chapters on children and family are important, but illustrate a strange disconnect in her thinking. She notes that the PMC preaches that marriage and traditional families are not important; they argue that concerns about family structure and stability as overblown or even irrelevant. But then in their personal lives, they treat marriage as highly desirable and productive. (Charles Murray addresses this with Belmont versus Fishtown in *Coming Apart*.)

Ironically, Liu's discussion of welfare ignores class-based explanations! (42) She perpetuates the myth that Reagan slashed the social spending. And she confuses "demonizing the poor" with the critique of Reagan and Murray about what government was doing to the poor (15). She's old enough to remember when liberals also criticized welfare programs — for dehumanizing the poor

through bureaucracies, but maybe she wasn't paying attention back then.

The more-recent obsession on race (over class) has often had an exceedingly negative impact. Liu is helpful here too. As with "fragility" (White and Black) and the most popular applications of "systemic racism," the PMC practices a terrible form of religion (2) — with a nasty "rhetorical tone" (9) and various forms of "asceticism" (10a). Its members "police each other to enforce the sort of social and intellectual conformity required by their class." (73)

The result of this "woke religion": guilt without the Cross, "original sin" but only for certain groups, scapegoats without salvation; hypocritical virtue signaling (a la Matthew 6:5-18) without socially-beneficial virtues. Joshua Mitchell calls this "a fourth religious awakening" — unfortunately, without God, forgiveness, or redemption.

In all of this, I agree with Liu when she exhorts her readers: "We must be heretics. We should blaspheme." (77) For Christians, this false religion is not only wrong but hostile to basic freedoms. So, we pray for our leaders so "we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." (I Timothy 2:1-2) But this isn't just about Christianity. If our country does not have enough liberals who will engage in heresy and blasphemy against the Left's now-dominant religion and its PMC values, our future will likely be bleak and merciless.

## To Cancel or Not? That Is the Question

**I** wonder if I'll get "canceled" someday. I could trip up and say something awkward or inappropriate — and get crushed for it. It could be a phrase in a Facebook post or a newspaper article like this. It could be a slip in the classroom that gets reported by a student. It doesn't bother me a lot. I know I'm not perfect in word, deed, motive, or thought. And I don't worry much about what others think about me. But it'd be painful and would hurt those around me.

Today's "Cancel Culture" is not entirely new. Political Correctness started in the 1980s and prompted people to speak more carefully about certain topics. If you crossed the line, some people

would call you out and make life difficult for you. But there was a relatively healthy balance between valid concerns and silliness. Some people took it too seriously, while others would respond with eye-rolls.

Cancel Culture is Political Correctness on steroids. The approach is similar — increased sensitivities for better and for worse — with a heavy dose of fascism. Its practitioners rely on a powerful combination of public policy, social stigma and economic consequences to enforce the regime. If you transgress today, you may lose your reputation, your job and your career.

You might also think of Cancel Culture as similar to the recent emergence of #Karen — a light social-media poke at aspects of middle-aged, middle-class, social conservatism. Cancel Culture is a type of #Karen on the Left. But while there's a tongue-in-cheek humor to #Karen, Cancel Culture is deadly serious with much more at stake.

Cancel Culture starts with principles that range from legitimate to debatable and incoherent. Its practitioners can quickly get insistent and dogmatic. It's a religion that lacks mercy and grace, forgiveness and redemption. As any other religion, it's never any fun arguing with its fundamentalists. It wars against civil liberties, free speech and free thought. It is a threat to institutions ranging from higher education to comedy. It is stunningly illiberal. (Labeling it "liberal" is a terrible and ironic error.)

So, Cancel Culture is highly problematic and ought to be canceled itself. But canceling is a matter of degree. We can all agree that some things ought to be canceled — for example, sneezing more than two times in a row; the Teletubbies (at least black-and-white photos of them); and microwaving fish at work. Even so, as C.S. Lewis notes, we should try to love the sinner and hate the sin — as we do this so well with ourselves.

And there is a time for some people to be cancelled — if not overall, then in terms of their supposed membership in certain groups. If you support military interventionism or oppose school choice for the poor and middle class, then you might well be on the Left or a run-of-the-mill

Democrat, but you should quit calling yourself a "liberal."

If you said little or nothing about massive spending and debt under the last two GOP presidents or you routinely advocate federal government solutions to state-local problems, then you might be an ordinary Republican, but you should be cancelled as a "conservative."

What if you're against abortion as a personal matter, but don't want to impose your views on others to protect the lives of the unborn? You change policy to take money from current and future taxpayers to finance abortion. And you choose a prominent Cabinet member who played a prominent part in suing a bunch of nuns — to require them to have birth control in their health care coverage. Shouldn't you be canceled as a Catholic?

In Christian circles, this is often called "church discipline." In Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus says "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector."

This is terrific counsel. If someone wrongs you, talk with him. Maybe it was a misperception on your part. If not, hopefully, he will apologize and repent. If this doesn't solve the problem, bring in a third party to mediate.

Often, the additional person can be more reasonable and objective in arbitrating the dispute. If this doesn't work, bring it to the group — and cancel the wrongdoer if he won't repent.

We should never try to cancel people from their humanity. And we should rarely cancel them from their livelihoods. But we should cancel people from groups when they insist on violating its tenets and norms. ♦

# Maryann O. Keating

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## A Minimum Wage Closes Doors

**J**ob availability for inexperienced workers is the primary reason why most economists object to raising the minimum wage.

The proposed Raise the Wage Act of 2021 (H.R. 603) would raise the federal minimum wage in steps to \$15 an hour by 2025. Presently, most states have set a higher minimum wage, but this plan would eliminate a sub-minimum wage that allows businesses to pay teens less during the first 90 days of work. Going forward, it would become a crime both for anyone to accept or anyone to offer a position below the Federal minimum wage.

Yet, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office indicates that, if the bill were passed, young, less-educated people would account for a disproportionate share of the expected 1.4 million workers losing their jobs over the next four years. The unemployment rate for those between 16 and 19 hit almost 32 percent in April 2020 and remained elevated at 13.9 percent in February 2021 compared with an overall jobless rate of 6.2 percent.

Indiana reports that out of current high school students, without disabilities, approximately 131,683 will fail to graduate. Presumably, most of these will enter the job market sometime during the next four years.

Although 18 percent of Indiana high school students are enrolled in Career and Technical Programs, colleges and universities is the dominant post-high school path. Over 70 percent of high school graduates in the U.S. enroll in

college. Those prepared for college will succeed but college remains a somewhat risky investment for many students, parents and state. For those enrolled, 50 percent will drop out.

A recent study analyzes high school graduates who choose not to attend college. Unsurprisingly, these students share similar characteristics with those enrolled in college and university who are least likely to complete an undergraduate program.

For many high school graduates, the potential earnings from attempting but not attaining a degree are too low to justify the risk and costs of enrolling. Unless there is a dramatic increase in college preparedness, premiums earned by those actually obtaining a degree will result in household incomes becoming more unequal (Athreya and Eberly, "Risk, the College Premium and Aggregate Human Capital Investment," *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics* 2021, 13 (2)).

The solution to long-term income inequality is not to in any way impede skill acquisition for those lacking a college degree. A rough estimate suggests that over 60,000 young Hoosiers every year enter the labor force without a degree; yet, each of them have unrealized potential. These entrants might initially welcome a \$15 an hour position, but this is insufficient to maintain a household, marry and raise a child. Admittedly, such a lifestyle would be a stretch even for two full time workers.

Entrants into the labor force need a career ladder to earning a good income, not a floor in terms of a minimum wage. Certain employers, if it were legal, would be willing to negotiate on the job training and compensation commensurate with a worker's productivity. One entrepreneur indicates that she is willing to hire 10 temporary employees annually knowing that she is likely to recover her total investment with approximately two of these new hirers. Of course, once these two attain transferable skills they seek higher salaries elsewhere!

Consider those without a relative in the trades or lack family acquaintances to offer them an

unpaid internship. They must hit the help-wanted ads and try to get their foot inside the door. The goal over time is to learn how to generate value that exceeds what an employer is willing and able to pay.

The best advice that Charles King, director of South Bend's YMCA Urban Youth Services, received was: "If you are going to take a job and not go to college, you need to stick to that job and make sure that you are excellent and above average" ("Following in his Mentor's Footsteps," South Bend Tribune, March 29, 2021, A1).

How does a person negotiate in good faith and display excellence? Who is watching his or her back? Career paths do not often proceed in a straight line. In retrospect, we recall when organizations offered us a helping hand. Valuable employment information was often conveyed by trusted associates in social organizations.

Previously, hospitals and trades offered rigorous apprenticeship programs with small stipends. The telephone company, affectionately called "Ma Bell," oriented certain workers on the line towards professional training and upper management. Unfortunately, most companies now rely on families, universities and government to finance the training of new employees.

Military service formerly was also an option. Presently, the U.S. Army permits up to 10 percent of candidates for recruitment to have a GED or alternate secondary school certificate. However, the most viable route to enter the armed services is to have a high school diploma or at least 15 college credits.

Therefore, the majority of young Americans earn their first paychecks working in restaurants, hotels and personal care. International visitors to the U.S. often comment on the excellent service provided by friendly competent young workers. Unfortunately, opportunities to work in the service sector are extremely vulnerable to restrictive policies.

Nader Masadeh, CEO of Buffalo Wings & Rings, suggests that employers would, if the Wage Act passes, first attempt to raise menu

prices. Then, if they had to cut staff, teens and other unskilled inexperienced workers would be the first to be let go ("Wage Floor of \$15 Is Seen as an Obstacle for Teens," The Wall Street Journal, March 29, 2021, A2).

It is necessary to question whether household income inequality is primarily the fruit of government policies. Has the flexibility of employers willing to hire and train inexperienced youths been unnecessarily reduced? If so, we must seriously reconsider all state policies, including occupational licensing, that keep people down.

Economists do not have a model for gainfully employing everyone, but they do know that a mandated wage rate exceeding the value added of inexperienced workers destroys job prospects and reduces life-long incomes for those on the bottom rung of the ladder.

## The Political Parties

"I am a freeman, an American, a United States Senator and a Democrat, in that order," said Lyndon B. Johnson

Not everyone identifies as closely with a political party as did President Johnson. We experience conflict between positions taken by parties, be it either Democrat or Republican. In fact, we may ask, "Why do we even need political parties? Aren't we divided enough?" In his book "Edmund Burke: The First Conservative," Jesse Norman presents Burke's case for responsible party politics.

Burke was not starry-eyed about political parties but rather feared the alternative, political connections degenerating into factions. Burke realized that when bad persons combine, the good must associate. His goal was to show how party associations have the potential of translating into good government.

First and foremost, Burke believed that parties bring stability to politics, permitting power to pass peacefully from one party to another. Also, they allow for the consistency of voting required to advance complex legislation — or to oppose it. Moreover, unlike factions, parties do not



disintegrate when they lose power. In fact, they remain united around a core of principles, for which they continue to make the case. Parties give legitimacy to those voted out of office and can turn a “loyal” opposition into a respectable and even honorable calling.

A party’s platform generally focuses on the national interest. Otherwise, the fact that its policies are designed to serve a particular group becomes quite obvious to everyone. Nevertheless, parties do have an important role in channeling popular discontent by addressing and resolving issues through legislation.

A significant advantage of effective political parties is that they eliminate the need for exceptional statesmen. Rather, they encourage people of ordinary decency and ability to share information and play a role in government. As with all institutions, parties are rooted in personal friendship, shared values and the human impulse to socialize. For example in South Bend and La Porte, Dyngus Day, celebrated with festivities and speeches at local party headquarters, marks the official beginning of the primary campaign season.

Parties act as a valuable testing ground for politicians, allowing them to demonstrate their experience and build relationship with colleagues, as they hammer out policies based on shared beliefs. However, parties must not be composed of Washington politicians whose job is simply to spread the party line back to their constituencies. Otherwise, they become excessively partisan, losing sight of the public interest, and thus undermine the deliberative function for which they were elected.

The ultimate goal is that factional interests are moderated through parties which are not tied to the electoral cycle. Parties are meant to reflect a range of views, various interests and differing priorities. The hope is that this will encourage a collective vision and long-term perspective, without which a nation perishes.

Party loyalty does not mean invariably ignoring the personal consciences of either voters or elected officials. Nevertheless, party discipline is a

concern, as is the dominance and control of two major parties.

A “whipping” system is designed to ensure that members of a political party vote as a block. John Thune (R-SD) and Richard Durbin (D-IL) presently serve as whips for their respective parties in the U.S. Senate. Politicians who tend to vote with the whip are sometimes denounced as lickspittles and those who defy the whip, as traitors concentrating on their own careers.

In his book, Jesse Norman suggests that the low regard of Americans for whipping may result from interest-group pressures associated with a two-party system. Two parties may not be optimal, but here Norman warns against the terrible experiences of countries with a single major party and, on the other hand, countries fractured by a multiplicity of different parties.

Indiana has open primaries. Any registered voter can participate in primary elections, regardless of political party. If you are affiliated with either the Democratic Party or the Republican Party, you are entitled to vote for candidates of that party at the primary election. However, you must state which party you are affiliated with by asking the poll workers for the ballot of that party. You may only vote for candidates in the party whose ballot you select. If you are not affiliated with either of these two parties, you are still entitled to vote on a public question that is held on the same day as the primary without asking for a party ballot.

Late 18th-century government in Edmund Burke’s time consisted exclusively of maintaining public order, managing foreign affairs and trade and waging war. The welfare state was small as was spending on social security, education or pensions of the kind seen in most modern political economies. Opinion polling was not available. The stakes are higher now and the challenges of avoiding factionalism greater. However, parties continue to play a role in preserving and enhancing social order in the long term national interest. ♦

# Leo Morris

Leo Morris, columnist for The Indiana Policy Review, is winner of the Hoosier Press Association's award for Best Editorial Writer. Morris, as opinion editor of the Fort Wayne News-Sentinel, was named a finalist in editorial writing by the Pulitzer Prize committee.



## Are Mere Citizens Trustworthy?

*(May 17) — Who's in charge here?*

In a constitutional republic, the answer should be obvious. The people are. We have inalienable rights merely by our existence as human beings, and to protect them we create a limited government, and those who inhabit its hallowed halls are there to represent us, not dictate to us.

But that is the civics answer, which is barely even taught in schools anymore, let alone used as a touchstone by the officious functionaries who take such delight in hectoring the commoners.

Such as Rochelle Walensky, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, who recently made the shocking-to-some, common-sense-to-others announcement that people who are fully vaccinated do not need to wear masks outdoors and can mostly avoid wearing them indoors.

"What we're really doing," she said, "is empowering individuals to make decisions about their own health."

Oh, my. They are empowering us. I would have thought it's supposed to be the other way around, but never mind. I am pleased to learn that I am in charge of my own health. Neither Adam Smith nor Friedrich Hayek will be rolling over in their graves for a change.

But, wait.

Faced with a storm of anguished howls from those quite comfortable professing their allegiance to the collective, Walensky felt compelled to go on all the Sunday talk shows to defend the CDC's decision.

"... [T]his is not permission for widespread removal of masks," she said on one of them.

Whew. Thank goodness she cleared that up. Wouldn't want a hunger for freedom and autonomy to seep into the public consciousness. Let's not go around believing we have permission to live our lives.

While this national drama is playing out, Indiana has been wrestling with how to fit its Covid response into its convoluted Home Rule protocols.

Home Rule is just the official name for local control, sensibly giving communities the authority to deal with local issues using all their available resources. State officials always preach Home Rule but usually take away more local control than they grant.

This past session, for example, the General Assembly set statewide rules for communities trying to establish wind and solar energy and told all Hoosier police departments how they must deal with transparency and accountability. It even forbade Indianapolis from expanding its bus service, despite the project passing a voter referendum.

But it did approve measures – then overrode Gov. Holcomb's vetoes of them – allowing the General Assembly to call itself into special session if needed to check the governor's emergency orders and permitting city and county councils to override overly zealous edicts by appointive health officials.

The novelty of it. The decisions directly affecting citizens will ultimately be in the hands of legislators, the elected officials closest to the people and the most subject to their control

Such audaciousness cannot stand, so naturally the issue will go the Indiana Supreme Court, and the final decision will be based on the will of five justices who were not elected and answer only to their own consciences.

On one of those Sunday talk shows, the host harangued Walensky about the anarchy about to be unleashed on the hapless citizenry. What about the poor, beleaguered business owners who have to decide whether to drop mask requirements or

to demand proof of vaccination for those who try to enter maskless?

The unthinkable alternative, the host suggested, would be to rely on an honor system, and do we really trust each other enough to make that work?

Heaven help us that such a question would even be asked.

If we can't trust each other – our businesses to decide how to operate, our local officials to set reasonable rules, our friends and neighbors to look out for us and care about each other – there is no point to it all.

It wouldn't matter who's in charge, because there would be nothing to be in charge of.

## A Neighborhood Political Count

(May 9) – I still take the Sunday New York Times, though God knows why; I never actually read it anymore.

Its motto should probably be changed to “All the news that fits one side of the narrative.” The newspaper has taken sides in the ongoing cultural-political war, and I don't want to subject myself to its abdication of journalistic integrity.

I still stumble across its online stories on occasion, however, and I saw one last week that got more of my attention than I really wanted to give it. “Do you live in a political bubble?” was the provocative headline.

“One in three Americans are completely isolated from the opposite party,” the story said. “Republicans and Democrats are increasingly isolated from each other, rhetorically and geographically.”

There is the Bay Area, for example, “the country's most Democratic enclave,” where the election of Donald Trump must have been quite a shock. On the other hand, the residents of Gillette, Wyo., “where about 9 out of 10 voters are Republicans, might have equally been shocked by President Biden's victory.”

See what I mean? Having invested so much in the country's bitter division, the Times wants to

make sure people never forget which side they are on.

I should have left the story after those few paragraphs, but, unfortunately for me, it included an interactive map. I am a sucker for interactive maps. Just ask anybody.

If I entered my address, the story said, the map would tell me how the 1,000 people nearest me vote and I could discover if indeed I live in a political bubble.

I did, of course – that's what suckers do.

“Many of your neighbors – 64 percent – are Democrats,” the map told me. “You don't quite live in a bubble, but we wouldn't say your neighbors are politically diverse, either.”

Not a big surprise to me, actually. Though I live in one of the reddest states, with a Republican governor and GOP supermajorities in both legislative chambers, my house is in a neighborhood near downtown Fort Wayne. We all know Democrats like to huddle together, dutifully sorting out their recyclables and regretfully calling Uber when their beloved mass transit lets them down.

The Republicans flee to the newest suburban haven as soon as they can, to escape the filth, crime and drugs the Democrats don't seem to mind, where their children can walk safely through nearly treeless streets fronting the houses that all look the same.

Just like the map tells me: “There's a ZIP code eight miles away from you where only 23 percent of the average Republican's neighbors are Democrats.”

I'm not sure what an “average” Republican is, but I get the point. Out there in the 'burbs beats the true conservative heart of Hoosierland.

Even without the map's help, I could have pretty accurately estimated my neighborhood's makeup, just by counting masks.

Everything has become political these days, the science of public health included – thank you, New York Times – and we all know now that Democrats love wearing their masks and Republicans hate it.

I even heard the other day about a Democrat who had been fully vaccinated and knew he was safe, but always double-masked, even outside, because he didn't want to be mistaken for a Republican. And can you imagine the cognitive dissonance of the germophobic Republican who never takes his mask off despite being shunned by his judgmental suburban cronies?

Is it futile to ask that we try to keep neighborhoods as one of civilization's most reliable redoubts, fortresses to which we can retreat, leaving all the frustrations and fears of the real world outside?

Call me old-fashioned. I don't care whether my neighbors are Democrat or Republican, Presbyterian or Muslim, gay or straight. I just care whether they are casually friendly, keep their yards up and don't try to sell me candy to fund band camp.

And I want to judge them in the conventional, time-honored way, with but a glance through the filter of my prejudices and preconceptions,

That young guy with visitors at all hours – has to be a drug dealer. That old woman alone – bet she has a dozen cats. That young, frazzled couple – their holy terror kids better stay off my lawn.

And that prickly geezer, the one everybody wonders about, who parks in the back and is seldom seen at the front door, with two months' worth of Sunday New York Times on the porch . . .

Oh, wait. That's me.

Yes, I voted. Don't ask me for whom, and I won't tell.

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## One Son's Mothers Day

(May 3) — When Ann Jarvis died on May 9, 1905, her daughter, Anna Reeves Jarvis, began a

campaign to honor her mother as a way of celebrating all moms as a group.

On May 12, 1907, she held a memorial service at her late mother's church in Grafton, W. Va. Within five years, almost every state observed the day, and in 1914 President Woodrow Wilson made the second Sunday in May a national holiday.

But Anna became disillusioned with her creation, because what had begun as a day of sentimental tribute soon became an overly commercialized extravaganza of card sending and gift giving.

"To have Mother's Day the burdensome, wasteful, expensive gift day that Christmas and other special days have become, is not our pleasure," she said in 1920. "If the American people are not willing to protect Mother's Day from the hordes of money schemers that would overwhelm it with their schemes, then we shall cease having a Mother's Day."

So, she spent the last years of her life trying to undo what she had created.

Alas, she failed.

Mother's Day in America is now a \$25 billion-a-year holiday, according to 2019 figures from the National Retail Federation, with \$5 billion each spent on jewelry and special outings, and about \$6 billion going for flowers, cards and gift certificates.

For some reason, that story tickles me no end.

Perhaps it is because you can draw whatever lesson you like from it, depending on your needs. If you seek to wallow in your insecurities, you can learn that you should be careful what you wish for. If you want to reinforce your sense of autonomy, you can learn that it's perfectly fine to change your mind and that if you do so, no need to be shy about it.

I don't know that my mother ever came to regret what she'd wished for, but I'm sure she had moments when she was frazzled to the limit by her decision to have children.

There was the time as a toddler when I almost set the kitchen on fire by playing with matches near the kindling box, and locked her outside. I



was too young to understand what fire could do, but I knew precisely what the wrath of a mother could do. Finally persuading me to unlock the door – now, that was some fine parenting.

There was the time a few years later when my cousin Frank and I invented the concept of Frisbee with a coffee can lid, and I stood before my mother, hand to my sliced ear and blood dripping down to my elbow, crying, “It wasn’t my fault!”

There was the time in high school when, exasperated by my repeated brushing off of her commands, she said, “I’m telling you for the last time to clean your room,” and I replied, “Oh, thank, goodness, I thought you were going to go on about it all day.”

Somehow, she made it through the stage when she could only wring her hands and got to the place where she could use them to applaud at my high school graduation, to pull me into a hug when I got back from overseas during the Army, to pick up scissors and cut my articles out of the newspaper when I became a reporter.

I’m not saying my mother was a saint, exactly.

Oh, who am I kidding? Of course, she was a saint. She had to be. She raised me.

And she had to learn on the job. She married at 16, had me at 17, and never read a parenting book or how-to magazine article. She just did the best she could, based on what she learned from the way she was raised, lessons passed down, generation to generation, to her parents.

And she did it with patience, tolerance, forgiveness and a grace that comes with the territory and cannot be replaced by all the government spending in the world if it is absent.

All those qualities and more are wrapped up in the single word – “nurturing” – that we have used so easily over the years and that our cultural revisionists would so easily dismiss. Everyone needs someone in life to be the nurturer, and forgive my nod to tradition, but I nominate mothers. My father taught me how to be a good man. My mother taught me how to be a better person.

On further thought, I think I know what motivated Anna Reeves Jarvis.

Her mother had tried twice to get a Mother’s Day started in the mid-19th Century. One effort, spurred by own experience in losing all but four of her 13 children to the Typhoid fever that raced through Appalachia, was meant to educate women about proper hygiene. The other was to get former Union and Confederate soldiers to meet for reconciliation and was tied to Juliet Ward Howe’s unsuccessful push for an international Mother’s Peace Day.

So, Anna was trying to honor her mother by carrying on her work. She wanted to make her mother proud, and she then tried to undo her success because she thought it would not live up to her mother’s expectations.

I know what I would say to my mother if she were still here, and it’s what any mothers still living would like to hear from their children:

“You did all right by me. Thank you. I’ll always try to make you proud.”

They probably won’t even mind if it’s in one of those billions of filthy, commercialized cards. Those hordes of money schemers have mothers, too, after all.

## Numbers Are What You Make of Them

(April 26) — One of my favorite jokes involves an election in a mythical town in which there are 1,000 Christian voters and 250 Jewish voters. There is an election for mayor featuring a Christian candidate and a Jewish candidate, who get, respectively, 1,000 votes and 250 votes.

“Boy,” says one Christian voter to another after the results are announced, “those Jews sure stick together, don’t they?”

That’s just a silly, throwaway gag, but there is a real-life example, cited by John Allen Paulos in his invaluable book, “A Mathematician Reads the Newspaper.”

In the New York City mayoral race between Rudolph Giuliani and David Dinkins, claims were made that blacks voted along racial lines more than whites did. The evidence cited was that 95

percent of blacks voted for Dinkins, the black candidate, while only 75 percent of whites voted for Giuliani, the white candidate.

“This failed to take into account, however, the preference of most black voters for any Democratic candidate,” Paulos wrote. “Assuming that 80 percent of blacks usually vote for Democrats and only 50 percent of whites usually vote for Republicans, one can argue that only 15 percent of blacks voted for Democrat Dinkins based on race, but 25 percent of the whites voted for Republican Giuliani based on race.”

The point of both the fictional story and the real one is that we interpret numbers the way we do everything else, through the prism of our own experiences and preconceptions. And because innumerate journalists pass along without scrutiny numbers that advocates use to deceive as much as illuminate, we should be especially wary of numbers in the news.

I advise this as an addendum to last week’s column, in which I, one of those innumerate journalists, threw out numbers willy-nilly. To show that politicians and the media have tried to scare us witless over Covid, I listed a number of other ways to die with worse odds than dying of the virus.

And was quickly taken to task by an Indiana University emeritus professor of biology, who urged me to recheck all my alarming statistics, specifically calling attention to my numbers on the flu (1 in 63 chance of dying from it) and plane crashes (1 in 205,552).

“According to the CDC,” she wrote, “the death rate for the flu in the U.S. is 1 in 6,579, not one in 65.” And, “Only about 400 Americans die in plane crashes per year, and in all but a very few years, they are all in private planes, not commercial.”

The air crash odds I must confess to. I found the 1-in-205,552 number in more than one place, but no cites for the source. Other, more realistic odds I found ranged from 1 in 5 million to 1 in 11 million to “too few deaths in 2019 to calculate the odds.”

But the other numbers I got from the National Safety Council, where it was noted that these are “lifetime risks” calculated by dividing the “2003 population by the number of deaths, divided by 77.6, the life expectancy of a person born in 2003.”

So I will leave those numbers, noting only that they served my purpose. I wanted to make a point about misperceiving risk, so I deliberately chose some of the highest risks I could find.

I had an agenda.

So do all those in the news stories we read who use numbers for anything but relaying the specifics of a particular incident. They are trying to tell a bigger story, which means they are trying to sell us something – a position, a philosophy, a world view.

So we should be mindful of what they’re not saying, search for the hidden context, the missing perspective. If City A has more crime than City B, is that in raw numbers or a per capita percentage? If we’re supposed to be alarmed about a new “surge” in Covid, what numbers are being surged from and to, compared to the initial surge? If a family of four can’t live on the minimum wage, do we know how many families of four actually have to try to do that?

If there is a 1 in 2,535 chance of choking on food, are those the lifetime odds or is it the chance we take with every bite?

No, don’t discount numbers. They can be interesting, entertaining and even informative when individual ones are used to show us a potential pattern. But view them with great skepticism when that supposed pattern is used in an effort to prescribe or proscribe our activities.

## Doomsday Clock Is Running Slow

*(April 19)* — Tick, tick, tick.

It’s 100 seconds till midnight. Scared yet?

I guess we’re supposed to be.

That’s the current time on the Doomsday Clock, which was created in 1947 by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, a group of University of Chicago scientists who worked on the Manhattan

Project to help develop the world's first atomic weapons.

"Midnight" is when the world ends, or at least life as we know it ceases to exist. The Atomic Scientists, never known to be a cheerful, optimistic lot, initially set the time at seven minutes to midnight. That seems barely enough time to pack our metaphorical bags, let alone get our affairs in order, not that, you know, there would be anybody left to care about our affairs anyway.

They moved the time ahead just two years later to three minutes to midnight after the Soviet Union successfully tested an atomic bomb.

The time has been moved slightly ahead or back once a year ever since as the Atomic Scientists added other worries besides atomic annihilation to the mix, including political unrest, cyber mischief and global warming, er, "climate change."

The safest we've ever been, they told us, was in 1991, when it was set at 17 minutes to midnight because of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the U.S. and U.S.S.R, which resulted in a reduction in the countries' nuclear arsenals. Remember heaving a sigh of relief?

Why having slightly fewer bombs that could destroy the world would make the use of them less likely is beyond me, but then I'm not an Atomic Scientist.

The time was moved to its scariest setting of 2 minutes to midnight in 2019. I don't remember why. I guess I could look it up, but I'm already nervous enough. They knocked off 20 seconds in 2020.

And this year, they left it there at 100 seconds, even though they added Covid-19 to the list of potential catastrophes, noting that the outbreak has "revealed just how unprepared and unwilling countries and the international system are to handle global emergencies properly."

Seems like a missed opportunity there, considering how much our pandemic overlords in government and the media have tried to scare us over the virus.

I mean, really.

A fraction of 1 percent of the U.S. and world populations have died of Covid, and that's without taking the elderly and those with certain underlying conditions out of the mix. Yet, economies have been crashed, millions have lost their livelihoods, our children have lost education they will never get back and communities have been reduced to don't-breathe-on-me enclaves of huddling, quivering recluses.

And just as vaccination seems on the verge of liberating us all, it is discovered that one of the vaccines has resulted in blood clots in just six patients out of 7 million shots given. Simple math says that means less than a one-in-a-million chance of a blood clot, but the vaccine was removed for further study.

Isn't all that fear-mongering heaped on top of our already risk-averse society worth at least a few seconds off the Doomsday Clock? Come on, Atomic Scientists, do your job.

Just for perspective, consider all these other chances of dying, posing far greater risks than Covid or vaccines, that so far don't seem to bother most people.

The odds of dying:

In an airplane crash – 1 in 205,552.

By fireworks – 1 in 340,733.

Being struck by lightning – 1 in 114,195.

In a car accident – 1 in 84.

By flu – 1 in 63.

Look at that list too long, and you might just decide to stay inside for the rest of your life. Of course, you also have a 1 in 2,535 chance of choking on food, a 1 in 1,547 chance of being taken out by fire or smoke, and a 1 in 106 chance of falling to your death, so good luck with that.

The fact is – and I really hate to be the bearer of such bad news – your chances of dying are 100 percent.

Tick, tick, tick.

## Curbing Executive Power

(April 12) – During my tenure as president of one of the nonprofit boards I served on, there was a dispute between board members and the

executive director over something the director proposed to do.

He thought – and about half the board agreed with him – that the action would be consistent with his duties under our bylaws. About half the board, including me, thought he was overstepping his authority.

As the board took action on his proposal, his side was feeling pretty confident. Their votes totaled one more than half, and since they knew I could not vote as president unless there was a tie, their wish would carry the day.

But what they thought they knew was wrong. I understood Robert's Rules of Order, which our bylaws required us to use, better than they did, or at least had read it one page further than they had, and knew I was allowed to vote if that vote would change the outcome. I voted no, creating a tie, and the proposal failed.

I relate that incident to make a point beyond the obvious one of putting my humble bragging on display, a temptation to which I modestly admit succumbing on occasion:

The executive of an organization carries out the orders of board members, who must follow the bylaws of the organization in issuing those orders.

That's pretty straightforward, and it should hold whether the organization is a nonprofit organization, a multinational corporation or a government.

But it can get complicated in a hurry, as we have seen in the ongoing dispute over the constitutionality of Gov. Holcomb's forceful and numerous "emergency" edicts during the Covid pandemic.

No, you and I are not the board members for the state; there are between 6.5 and 7 million of us, and putting everything to a statewide vote would be as unwieldy and it would be unwise. So, we elect people to be our voice on the board – one representative for about every 65,000 of us, based on the 2010 Census, and one senator for about every 130,000.

All we can ask is that our surrogates pass laws faithful to the bylaws, as embedded in the Indiana

Constitution, and that the executive faithfully execute them so that citizens clearly know what the rules are and that they will not change in the middle of the game.

Instead, if my conservative readers will forgive me for quoting former liberal Democratic State Rep. Christine Hale, they have created an "epically awkward" mess.

A majority of the Republican supermajorities in the House and Senate have said the governor's edicts went too far, and they gave themselves the authority to call special sessions whenever it might be necessary to curb his power. "Foul!" cry Constitution watchers – only the governor has permission to call a special session.

But others have said the Legislature acted unconstitutionally in the first place by essentially giving the governor sweeping power to make law instead of merely carrying out the law and, further, that the mask mandate was especially egregious because it was not specifically mentioned in those sweeping powers.

The whole thing seems destined to end up before the Indiana Supreme Court, and that's fine. Arbitrating disputes between the other two branches is a core function of the court. And given how cavalierly some treat the U.S. Constitution, it is gratifying to know that so many show the state one a little respect.

But surely there is a better option: Read one page further into the bylaws so you might realize you don't know them as well as you think you do and that some of them could benefit from clarification.

In giving the governor sweeping emergency powers, legislators clearly envisioned an emergency of short duration, like a flood or tornado, not something that lasted for months on end. Our part-time legislators meet only briefly, and the governor is always there, so the longer a situation lasts, the more he is able to make up the rules as he goes.

So, change the Constitution to stipulate how exactly the governor and legislators must interact when and if an emergency lasts beyond a specified



duration. Things might not be as simple as citizens would like, but they don't have to be as complicated as leaders sometimes seem to want them.

An amendment to the Indiana Constitution would need to be passed by two successive sessions of the General Assembly, after which it would go to the citizens for a vote.

And that would give a say in the rules of the game to all Hoosiers, the ones for whom and in whose name the bylaws were drafted and the laws are passed. A little power would return to those who need it most and be taken from those who wield it too freely.

### Facebook 'Friendship' Is Qualified

*(April 5)* — None of my best friends are black.

OK, I apologize. I did that just to get your attention. We have become so race conscious in the last couple of years, I figured that sentence would cause everybody to read further, if for no other reason than to see if I would say something irredeemably stupid.

What I really want to talk about is friendship, specifically what it means to be a friend.

If I remember my comparatives and superlatives, it goes good, better, best. That means I would need at least three friends to designate one of them my "best" friend, and I don't think I qualify.

Well, I did have two best friends in high school, one to go bowling and fishing and girl-ogling with, and one to sit around with and talk about how smarter we were than everybody else. But that came from the passion of youth, when we had the deepest, most earnest feelings about the silliest, most superficial things.

As an adult, I've been more discerning. I've come to see friends as those you can tell anything to, who will always have your back and know you will have theirs, who will never judge you but accept you as you are, flaws and all.

A friend is someone so special as to be rare, worth the world to find and too precious to let go of. It's not just a likable acquaintance you hang

out with when there's nothing better to do. If you're lucky, you'll have but a handful of them in your whole life.

What brings this up is that I have finally joined Facebook, apparently after everyone else in the known universe.

It was sort of an accident.

I went online looking for a barbershop, since my previous one did not survive the great Covid lockdown, and ended up on one shop's Facebook page. Suddenly, there was a popup box asking if I'd like to join, so I started filling out the form. Be a good place to schedule haircuts, I thought, and maybe pick up some tidbits of the gossip barber shops are famous for.

Turns out it was a Facebook signup form, though. Since I was almost through it, I thought, "Oh, why not?" — you know, like we did back in high school — and before I knew it, I had my own page.

Upon which I started getting all these friend requests, at first from people I know and then from people who know people I know and then from people who know people who know people I know — as Facebook happily tells me, "You have five" or 20 or 45 "mutual friends!"

Before I knew it, I had nearly 100 Facebook "friends," which gets more absurd the more I think about it.

They're a motley bunch, blue collar and white, liberal and conservative, spiritual and cynical, shy and ostentatious, sort of like the cross-section of people you'd find in a high school homeroom or waiting with you to go next at the BMV.

And they're judgmental, I notice. Any time I post something, someone can come along and click on "like" or ignore it, leaving me despondent. Now, that's something I will take from people I think of as "friends" by my admittedly narrow and exaggerated definition, because I know they have my best interests at heart. But I suspect that someone on Facebook who doesn't like my opinion of the General Assembly is not nudging me to be a better person.

Speaking of which, I notice Indiana government has its own Facebook page. I do not

think I will friend Indiana government. I still think of government as a necessary evil, and that's not a healthy attitude to take into a new relationship.

I will consider individual politicians, though – they're people, too, after all. I've already friended one city councilman with whom I've played bridge and another one who represents my district and I hope will take my calls when I complain about the potholes in my alley. Hey, we're buds, right? Pals. Chums. Compadres.

I'm still thinking about Governor Holcomb.

His page is a little bit of a turnoff, all those photos of him standing solemnly in front of an American flag. But if we become Facebook cronies – oops, bad word, sorry, Eric – I can kindly point out to him, strictly in an effort to nudge him to better personhood, that his new beard really isn't as cool as he thinks it is.

Besides, I can then say proudly that the governor is one of my besties. We have 6.8 million mutual friends, after all.

## Collecting Can Get Squirrelly

*(March 29)* — I've been trying to make sense of NFTs, those digital creations called “non-fungible tokens” that can sell for millions of dollars.

So, naturally, I thought of the squirrel.

It showed up one day underneath the tree that stood in the outdoor break area for Fort Wayne Newspapers, the umbrella company for the morning Journal Gazette and afternoon News-Sentinel. Only JG columnist Frank Gray and I were there at the time, and the squirrel walked right up,

One of us, I don't remember which, threw down a bite of a snack brought out from a vending machine, and the squirrel ate it. For the next several days, Frank and I kept going to the tree with snacks, and the squirrel kept coming up to accept them.

Then one day, the squirrel just wasn't there, having gone the way of other squirrels, to a tree in a better neighborhood or to meet his destiny as the blue plate special at the roadkill café.

But he was already destined to become legend. So, on my next birthday, Mary, one of my office pals, gave me a stuffed squirrel as a present. I whipped out my Swiss Army Knife and cut off the tag, which caused Mary to gasp in horror so loudly that I thought she might be having a stroke.

“You have destroyed its value!” she screeched.

Turns out the critter was a Beanie Baby, and Mary was a collector.

Beanie Babies, some of you might recall, became a craze in the 1990s when people started buying them not just as toys but as an “investment” sure to keep increasing in value, which they did, until, of course, they didn't.

A few people got out at the top of the bubble, when Beanies were selling online for 10 times their original cost and some rare ones went for six figures, making a killing. Their creator, Ty Warner, became a billionaire.

But many more people held on too long until the bubble burst, their thousands in investment suddenly a relatively worthless pile of pellet-stuffed toy animals.

Think of NFTs as the digital equivalent of Beanie Babies. They have no physical reality, existing only as images in the cloud and visible only through electronic devices. When people “buy” one, they are in essence just buying a ticket proving they “own” the original, even though the creator might retain the copyright and millions of reproductions might be viewed for free by anyone with a laptop or a cellphone.

That makes no sense at all.

On the other hand, neither does paying millions of dollars for the original of “Starry Night” or “American Gothic” when anyone can enjoy a perfectly good copy for a few bucks. They're not paying that much because they appreciate art but because they believe the art will appreciate.

I had a print of Edward Hopper's “Nighthawks” on my office wall for 30 years and looked at it every day, and I now have it at home. The painting's sense of bleak isolation speaks to something primal in me. I went once to see the original at the Art Institute of Chicago and,

frankly, it didn't impress me any more than my copy.

As for collectibles, I think they should have some intrinsic value other than their potential to whet my greed.

I once had about 100 cookbooks, until a storm took out a window in my sunroom and they were drenched in rain. Of course, anytime I needed a recipe I googled it, but the books were always there for me to browse, food porn for my depraved gastric needs.

My sister collects cookie jars in the shape of cats. Of course, she doesn't keep cookies in any of them, but I don't see her rubbing her hands together in glee and plotting to buy an island in the Caribbean when she sells them off. She just likes cats.

I have my tagless Beanie Baby squirrel at home, now, too, sitting beside my laptop. It's a reminder of a few pleasant days under a tree and serves as a warning not to get stupid with money. If somebody tempts me with an NFT of a squirrel under a tree, eating peanut butter crackers from somebody's hand, I will resist. What's worth \$200 today and \$69 million tomorrow will just be worthless pixels the day after tomorrow.

My brother the computer programmer (who collects guns, which he actually shoots, at his own range) once told me a saying from the early digital age: If you computerize a mess, you just get a faster mess.

That wisdom still holds. If you computerize investment stupidity, you just get faster stupidity.

## Police Reform

*(March 22)* — You probably know what you think about murder, rape, arson and all sorts of other abhorrent crimes. But how do you feel about jaywalking and littering?

It's not as trivial a question as it might seem.

Laws against jaywalking save lives. It is true that most car-pedestrian collisions happen at intersections, but more pedestrians are killed when they are hit while jaywalking. Since pedestrian deaths now account for a higher

proportion of traffic fatalities than they have in the past 33 years — going up 27 percent just from 2007 to 2016 while overall traffic fatalities decreased by 14 percent, all according to the Governors Highway Safety Association — more than a few lives are at stake.

On the other hand, jaywalking is among a whole class of selectively enforced offenses — loitering, spitting on the sidewalk and curfew violations among them — that have routinely ignored unless somebody in authority wanted to target some “undesirable” individual or group for whatever reason. Such arbitrariness and capriciousness have contributed much to disrespect of the law in this country.

So, keep jaywalking laws or ditch them?

Littering is among the lesser offenses targeted by officials under the “broken window” concept of law. Minor violations such as graffiti, shoplifting, petty vandalism and “fare-jumping” on public transit are vigorously enforced on the theory that criminals will move on to more major offenses when they notice the minor ones aren't being prosecuted.

The practice has yielded dramatic results in a significant reduction of violent crimes in large cities across the country, especially in New York where it was pioneered. But it also resulted in a significant increase in the number of young minority men jailed in the cities where it was used, leading to, among other things, fuel for the Black Lives Matter movement.

Is the broken-window theory worth the effort, or are the costs too high?

I raise these examples as a caveat to consider amid the apparently universal adoration for the police-reform bill just out of the Indiana General Assembly.

It was passed unanimously by both houses of the legislature, has the approval of law enforcement organizations, is supported by various civil rights organizations and will be undoubtedly signed by the governor with magniloquent praise for everyone involved in this brave step forward for Hoosier decency.

But my suspicion is that something so widely accepted might not have been that closely examined, and I worry about what might be missing.

Please don't misunderstand. The bill is aimed at greater accountability and transparency for police. It covers everything from use-of-force training to body-camera funding and disclosure of officers' backgrounds.

And that's a good thing. We are all at the mercy of police, who have the power of the state behind them and the lethal force to uphold it. We have to trust them to respect them and respect them to obey them. Our police should be the best among us, not just professional but as honest and fair as they are tough.

But we can't just praise the police and let it go, any more than we can admire a great army without caring whether it fights in support of a constitutional republic or a despotic tyranny.

Police work to enforce a body of laws on behalf of a community. It matters what the laws are and what the community expects from police and allows or forbids them to do. Police are just the point of the spear. We must also be watchful of those who control the spear and to what ends they use it.

Will police, for example, really be allowed to see just the breaking of a law, with all lawbreakers treated equally? Or will they be asked to replace one group that used to get favored treatment with a different group now owed greater deference?

When will they be asked to look the other way? Some cities have already tried this with lax enforcement of anti-prostitution laws, never mind how that trade might be linked to human trafficking. With Illinois and Michigan approving recreational marijuana use, some will pressure Indiana police to back off from enforcement here, never mind how much traffic safety might be affected.

And what about a court system that uses arrests as mere fodder for plea bargaining, to the point where minor offenses often get greater sentences than heinous crimes, some hardened

criminals go scot free and others are pressured to plead guilty just to avoid bankruptcy?

Speaking of laws, how about taking a look at their proliferation? There are so many offenses being added every day, often with the stroke of a pen rather than by vote of a legislature, that attorney Harvey Silverglate once noted that the average American inadvertently commits three arguable felonies in a given day.

The examples could go on and on, but the point is that police on the front lines are just one part of a vast criminal justice system so broken that it needs rethinking locally, statewide and nationally, from top to bottom.

So, the proper response to police reform in Indiana is not, "Great job." It is, "Good start; now what?"

## Confessions of a 'Republican'

*(March 15)* — One day a colleague, whose intellect I had admired up to that point, confessed that she had some conservative instincts when it came to politics.

"But I just can't go there, considering the people that would associate me with," she said, referring to some of the rogues in the Republican Party who offended her delicate sensibilities.

So, I thought but did not say, there being no point, "You're OK with the thieves, thugs and drooling half-wits on the other side of the aisle?"

One of the most important lessons in Logic 101 is that an idea cannot be responsible for who holds it. The idea must rise or fall on its own merits, regardless of what your friends or enemies think of it. It is either valid or not. Period.

To forget that lesson is to fall victim to the ad hominem fallacy, perhaps the most prevalent logic fault. This is the personal attack disguised as a rational argument. When an unwelcomed idea is presented, instead of offering evidence for or against it, you demean or belittle the person who offered it. Conversely, an idea presented by someone on your side must be accepted as gospel, no questions allowed.



If you embrace ad hominem, you will be a star on Twitter and other social media platforms and be enthralled with cable news, venues where ideas exist solely as fodder for idolatry and character assassination.

But if you resist it, you might be ready to join a political party. Democrats and Republicans offer, in broad strokes, two competing visions for this country's future. You choose the one that best suits you, knowing you will find a lot of like-minded thinkers but also some people you don't really care for.

I've never called myself a Republican, but I have voted for them so often I guess I might as well be one. That party comes closest to embracing the two ideas that most inform my political views.

I call myself partly conservative because I think we should be careful we don't need them before abandoning traditions, and partly libertarian because I want the smallest, least intrusive government possible. I could hardly expect satisfaction from Democrats, who hardly ever encounter a tradition they like or a tax they don't, so I have mostly voted for Republicans.

But with more and more misgivings as time goes on.

Maryann O. Keating, a fellow columnist for the Indiana Policy Review and one of its adjunct scholars, wrote recently about the role of a two-party system in preserving and enhancing social order in the long-term national interest.

She especially emphasized Edmund Burke biographer Jesse Norman's warning against "the terrible experiences of countries with a single major party and, on the other hand, countries fractured by a multiplicity of different parties."

I appreciate that strength of two parties, but I wonder how long we will have them or, if, indeed, we still really do.

I see Republicans trembling before cancel culture and apologizing to social justice warriors and acquiescing in the dismantling of institutions and demonization of long-held values and wonder if, somewhere, there is still a central vision being

pursued, let alone an appreciation of social order in the long-term national interest.

I especially cringe at the GOP's complicity in the growth and reach of government. I realize – I really do – that without Republicans, there would be no resistance at all, but their enthusiasm for the fight does seem to wax and wane.

Congressional Republicans proclaimed proudly that they were unanimously opposed to President Biden's \$1.9 trillion grotesquely misnamed "Covid relief" bill. But a number of them were happy to vote for grotesquely misnamed Covid relief packages when one of their own was president. All those bills added to the yearly deficits and national debt, which did not get to \$28 trillion without earnest bipartisan effort.

And Indiana, we are told, will get nearly \$6 billion from this round of relief, after getting \$2 billion last time around.

While the state will "seek clarity" on what it's allowed to be spent on "we're certainly not going to turn that money down," said Republican Senate President Pro Tem Rodric Bray. No, of course not. Would any Republican vote to turn it down?

Thieves, thugs and drooling half-wits. They're everywhere.

## The Card Game Resumes

*(March 8)* — We're about to have our first weekly bridge game after a year-long hiatus, and I admit to some trepidation.

We're old geezers, so we will gather with Covid-vaccination protection, but our pandemic overlords have insisted that we stay masked and do social distancing until the Earth's core cools or the Sun explodes, whichever comes first. So, we might be a little nervous at first as we imagine the possibility of getting raided.

I imagine we might have a lookout, just like the Speakeasies used to employ (but we will be known as a Breathe-Easy), perhaps the 30-something hanger-on who hasn't had his second shot yet.

He will yell, "Cheese it, the cops!" if the Covid Task Force arrives, giving us time to hide the evidence, the way bookies used to swallow the

betting slips and pretend to be doing something benign, like, well, playing bridge.

(Note to younger readers: A “bookie” was the seedy lowlife who facilitated gambling, when it was immoral and illegal, before the state took it over and declared buying a lottery ticket an honorable act of sacrifice to fellow Hoosiers.)

So, if The Man shows up, he will find us not huddled close together over a bridge table, but sitting in the four corners of the room, properly masked, using our reach-it sticks to deposit our cards on a blanket in the middle of the floor.

“Yes, officer,” one of us will say in all innocence, “may we help you? Is there a problem?”

(Note to woke readers: “The Man” is slang for “police officer,” not meant to evoke the hurtfulness of the man-woman paradigm back when we lived in a binary, judgmental patriarchy.)

Failing such an interruption, I suspect the match will go smoothly, with one or two minor hitches.

One of us might slow things down a bit, rushing to the bathroom between every deal to wash his hands over and over.

Another might get the shakes when he accepts a glass of iced tea and realizes how close the host came to touching his hand.

The first person who clears his throat will be suspected of coughing and glared at until he sticks his head in his armpit and pretends to do the right thing.

And I might get a little impatient.

“Will you please shuffle faster? My God, you’re going to wear them out.”

“Hey, I’m an old man, my shuffle ain’t what it used to be. You’ve been playing bridge online, haven’t you?”

“Yes, and the cards show up immediately. I could play five hands in the time it takes you to deal.”

I need to decide what to wear – it should probably be something other than my ratty bathrobe. Somewhere in the back of my closet, I know I have a pair of pants that aren’t blue jeans

and actual shoes that don’t look like house slippers.

And I really ought to get a haircut and a beard trim. I’ve noticed lately that the mail carrier backs slowly away when he sees me through the front door.

I’ve been practicing my social skills. If I remember correctly, people in informal gatherings once filled the silence with small talk, idle chitchat about the weather and sports and pets and family, even venturing into politics and religion if they felt brave enough.

I’m a little rusty, but I have a few good lines.

“Hey, have you seen the governor’s new beard? It is very nicely trimmed.”

“Read any banned books lately? You aren’t consorting with any canceled people, are you?”

And, if I feel brave enough:

“Hey, how about that virus, huh?”

## Commonsensical Self-Defense

(*March 1*) — I will defend myself.

I do not claim that as a “right.” I merely state it as a fact. It is a biological imperative – is it not? – for an individual to decline to submit meekly to the murderous intent of others.

To that end, I possess a license to carry a handgun issued by the state of Indiana. I know many of my fellow licensees dislike revealing that, but it’s a matter of public record, so I don’t see the point. As to whether I actually carry a handgun, that will remain my secret, for the time being.

Now, the Indiana House has voted to allow “constitutional carry” in the state, meaning no license would be required for walking around with a handgun. The Senate and governor have yet to weigh in, but the topic has been opened for discussion.

And I admit to mixed feelings, which might surprise the gun-control crowd and alarm my gun-rights friends.

At this point, I know, those of you always calling for “common sense gun laws” are screaming about historical context and the Founders’ real intent.

So, fine, let's see if we can disambiguate the Second Amendment a little bit, shall we? (Which annoys me no end, by the way. On any other important policy, you're all for a "living, breathing Constitution," but on this issue and this issue alone, you suddenly care about "original intent"? Please).

Suppose I were to concede that the Founders, by prefacing the "right to keep and bear arms" phrase with the "well-regulated militia being necessary" qualifier did actually intend a collective right rather than an individual one, that they truly meant to arm citizens as members of state militias.

But then we have to examine why they did that.

The Second Amendment, indeed the whole of the Bill of Rights, was aimed at curbing the power of Congress, insisted on by Constitutional Convention delegates profoundly afraid of too much centralized power. One of the strongest transfers of power from the states to the federal government, in comparing the Constitution to the Articles of Confederation, was the creation of a standing army controlled federally. So, the states demanded control of their own militias.

And by extension, if you follow this "original intent" argument, the states would control the keeping and bearing of arms, with no "infringement" by the federal government.

So, gun control was meant to be a state issue. Can you acknowledge that, even if you don't like it?

The Indiana's Constitution's language on guns is clear and direct. Article I, Section 32 provides that "the people shall have a right to bear arms, for the defense of themselves and the State." No namby-pamby qualifier there. People have a right, yes, an individual right, to defend themselves.

Within the bounds of common sense, of course.

The Indiana Supreme Court has on numerous occasions ruled that the right to bear arms is subject to "reasonable regulation," and "reasonable" is a subjective term we may argue about all day. On the one hand, the court ruled

that a person's mere possession of a gun is no reason to detain someone while it is verified whether the person has a carry permit. On the other hand, the court has validated the state's "red flag" law that allows at least temporary confiscation of the guns of someone merely accused of being unfit.

So, while it is reasonable for the state to require carry permits (and the court has so ruled), it is also reasonable for it to end the requirement.

And, as I said, I have mixed feelings.

Removing the requirement should not affect public safety. The people not allowed to carry now (such as perpetrators of domestic abuse) still would not be able to carry. And those of who are law-abiding citizens won't have to pay fees and go through hoops to earn our self-defense.

But I can see the move making things harder for law enforcement, and it would also complicate things for gun carriers crossing state lines. It is already necessary to figure out which states have a reciprocal agreement regarding Indiana's carry permits. Trying to deal with interstate travel without a permit would be even more problematic.

So, whichever way it goes, I can accept it. I can deal with it.

What I will not do, with or without a state-issued permit, is give up my ability to defend myself. Why that is not a universal sentiment is a true puzzle.

Estimates vary, but there are at least 400 million guns in America, more than 100 million of them handguns. We will never get rid of them, and, furthermore, we cannot wipe the knowledge of guns out of our collective human consciousness.

So what matters is who has the guns and what they intend to do with them. "Gun control" should more properly be called "gun owner control." Most policies I've seen that are called "common sense" would make it harder for law-abiding gun owners and easier for the predators who use guns against the rest of us. So, tell me about a policy that wouldn't in effect disarm the wrong people, and I'll listen. To state legislators only, please.

## Winter Is a Matter of Perspective

*(Feb. 22)* — Profound apologies to my brother.

It was just a couple of weeks ago that I wrote of hating him for basking in 70-something sunshine in Texas while hapless Hoosiers were shoveling through several inches of snow and preparing for sub-zero temperatures.

Mere days after my outburst, the Lone Star State was slammed with a massive storm of historic proportions. My brother lost power and had to carry water into the house from the rain-collection tanks. One minute he was a happy 21st century man, popping a pod into the Keurig and binge-watching Netflix, and the next he was Pa in Little House on the Prairie.

It's not that I tempted fate and called the wrath of the weather gods down on him. It was just a slightly exaggerated form of the taunting we usually do – he fake-sympathizes with me in winter, and I return the favor when he's sweltering in August.

It's more like it turned out that I was preemptively rubbing salt in his wounds. I could have made him feel worse about his predicament only if I were, say, a nationally famous U.S. senator who sneaked off to Mexico while his constituents huddled in shivering misery.

(Speaking of which, I can name a politician or two in Indiana for whom, if they expressed a desire to flee to Mexico, I would gladly buy the tickets, if they promised not to come back in the spring.)

What has been happening in Indiana, as challenging as it might seem, is just normal winter. Mother Nature is being typically fickle, and, dare I use such a currently politically charged word? – divisive. She goes along day after day being agreeable, even pleasant, then turns on us.

What hit Texas was once-in-a-generation, life-altering, Wrath-of-God weather. It was the kind of event that turns your world upside down and lives

forever in the stories you tell your grandchildren. The tornado that destroys a block, the tsunami that takes out a village. Being in the path of a flood or a forest fire.

For me, and for all Hoosiers old enough to have been here at the time, such an event was the Blizzard of '78.

I was living in Michigan City, and my friend Mike, the city editor of the paper we worked for, and I drove to South Bend to watch a Notre Dame basketball game. On the way home afterward, one of us remarked, "Boy, this snow is getting heavy."

Yeah, well. The next day I got up and saw that our city had virtually disappeared, sucked into a raging vortex of white fury. My wife and I lived just a few blocks from the newspaper office, so we decided to walk there, the only mode of transportation possible.

If memory serves, it took us almost an hour to walk those few blocks. We kept getting turned around in the blowing snow, and most of the time we weren't even exactly sure where we were. It is sobering now to think we might have died in that storm, just a few hundred feet from the newspaper office.

I remember that days afterward, we walked in awe down the middle of a once-busy street, with snow on both sides stacked up above our heads. I felt like being at the bottom of a deep canyon on an alien, frozen planet.

Living through something like that is, or at least should be, a humbling experience.

We can get so puffed up with self-righteous indignation about our own superiority and the moral failings of weaker mortals. We need to remind ourselves occasionally – or at least pay attention when the universe reminds us – that we are all fragile creatures often at the mercy of an indifferent environment.

"We're all in this together" is not just a Covid-19 cliché. It is a sobering and humbling fact. ♦



# Backgrounders

Margaret Menge is an adjunct scholar of the Indiana Policy Review Foundation and a veteran journalist living in Bloomington. She has reported for the Miami Herald, Columbia Journalism Review, InsideSources, Breitbart, the New York Observer and the American Conservative. Menge also worked as an editor for the Miami Herald Company and for UPI.



## Untrustworthy Health Reporting

(April 22) — The media reported that the reason the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was pulled was because just six women out of 7 million people who got the shot had a blot clot.

I don't think this is true.

If you look in the VAERS database where health-care providers, patients and families report possible side effects, you'll see many disturbing cases just in Indiana, including a man in his 50s who apparently had a stroke right after getting the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.<sup>1</sup>

"Patient presented with AMS (Altered Mental State)," the narrative begins. "History provided by father at bedside. For two days after vaccine patient reported not knowing what he was doing and where he was. Father brought him to emergency department after having breakfast together and son didn't know how to pay or what foods he liked. Was unable to recall his father's name."

The disturbing narrative continues, with the person writing the report, presumably a health-care provider who treated the man at the hospital, naming the drugs that were administered — "DAPT with ASA and Plavix x 21 days and then transition to Plavix 75 mg daily, atorvastatin 80 mg."

Then it says in parentheses "stroke treatment" and ends with "Outcome: TBD [to be determined]."

It has not been reported by any media organization that an Indiana man had a stroke after getting the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

I'm not sure why.

I called two television stations last week and gave them the information, but neither has reported on it. I also sent the information to a reporter at my local newspaper. He told me he thought it would be irresponsible to report it as it couldn't be verified.

I think it's irresponsible — outrageously so — to withhold information from people about something they may be getting injected into their bloodstream — something as important as this.

Because while the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, produced by the company's pharmaceutical arm, Janssen Vaccines, was taken off the market in Indiana and other states at the recommendation of the CDC, Dr. Anthony Fauci indicated last Sunday that it's expected to be returned to use as soon as this Friday.

As of April 21, a total of 622 "adverse events" — possible side effects — were reported to VAERS, the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting system, after the J&J vaccine. Just in Indiana.

VAERS is run jointly by the CDC and the FDA and serves as the early warning system for the government and pharmaceutical companies, who watch to see what side effects people seem to be experiencing after a vaccine, and make adjustments accordingly.

The information in VAERS, the government warns, is not verified. Still, these are first-hand accounts, and doctors' accounts, of potentially serious issues with vaccines. People deserve to know what they say before they decide whether to get the shot.

When I started looking in VAERS a month ago, I had no intention of spending much time in it, but the more I read through the narratives, the more disturbed I became.

As of this week, six people in Indiana have been hospitalized after getting the J&J vaccine, including the man in his 50s who had a stroke.

One is listed as a female between the ages of 7 and 16 who appeared to have a severe allergic reaction to the shot, went into shock, and had to be stabbed with two EpiPens before being taken to the emergency room.

“Blisters on the tongue, followed by itching,” the narrative reads, “and anaphylactic shock from 11:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Benadryl and 2 Epi pens were used and then at the hospital steroids and IV Benadryl were utilized. Benadryl was used for the next 24 hours and then steroids prescribed outpatient.”

Another person in Indiana, a man in his 50s, was hospitalized after having uncontrollable nosebleeds after getting the J&J vaccine, and another, a woman, was admitted for pancreatitis.

A woman age 65 or older was admitted to the hospital with “fever, chills, nausea, shaking, vomiting.”

A woman in her 50s was admitted to the hospital after getting an “immediate rash in chest and face” after getting the vaccine, and by the time she was admitted to the emergency room 20 minutes later, she also had a swollen eye and throat. She was treated and released, but went back to the hospital 14 hours later with a rash on her chest and face again and also a swollen tongue and throat.

The sixth person who was hospitalized in Indiana, a woman, reported rib pain and “severe general body pain.” The person taking the report wrote that the event is “unassessable” (sic) and “has unknown scientific plausibility.”

Looking at the longer list of the 622 cases where Indiana residents reported possible side effects after the J&J vaccine, the most common symptoms seemed to be headache, body aches, fever, chills and nausea. One man in his 50s reported a “skull-crushing headache.”

On its website, the CDC says possible side effects from the J&J vaccine are: pain, redness and swelling in the arm in which the vaccine is administered, and throughout the rest of the body: tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever and nausea. But it also notes that the vaccine “could cause a severe allergic reaction.”

It recommends that people report side effects to the VAERS system, either by going online or by calling a toll-free number.

But how many people do this?

How many people even know about VAERS?

It’s interesting that public health professionals never seem to mention it.

I sent an email to the Indiana State Department of Health a few weeks back, to inquire whether they are tracking side effects, and they replied that VAERS is the only place that side effects experienced by Indiana residents are being reported and tracked.

My original searches in VAERS a month ago were for all Covid vaccines and I was shocked by what I found. Several people appeared to have died right after or soon after getting either the Moderna or the Pfizer vaccine. The narratives were hard to read. They were describing the last moments of a person’s life on earth, and it was difficult not to be overcome by sadness, and to wonder whether the vaccines are doing more harm than good.

Should we really be vaccinating people in their 90s whose health is frail? People with several existing ailments, or who are on several types of medication?

In some cases, it seemed like the vaccine delivered the death blow – that it was just too much for the person’s body to take.

There are a total of 34 deaths in Indiana following vaccination reported to VAERS.

This includes some deaths that happened many days or even a month after the person got the vaccine. Of the 34 people who died, 22 had gotten the Moderna vaccine, and 11 the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. In the remaining case the vaccine manufacturer is listed as “unknown.”

In all but three cases, the person who died was 65 or older. One was a man in his 50s and another a woman in her 50s. There was also one person who died who was between the ages of 60 and 64.

The information on most of the deaths is limited. For a woman 65 or older who got the Moderna vaccine in January, it just says, “death by hemorrhagic stroke.”

For another woman 65 or older it just says “Kidney failure and death,” and then adds, “Patient heart labs were good.” She’d gotten the Moderna vaccine in February.

Most other entries are more descriptive.

One tells of an elderly lady who had a stroke after getting the Pfizer vaccine, likely in March.

“Patient received the injection May 2 [probably meant March 2]. Following the injection, we noticed an increased weakness and general achiness (sic). On the 8th she was so weak that we purchased a gait belt to assist her. We were not super concerned as we were expecting the second shot to cause body aches or flu-like symptoms, based on what we had heard from others who had received both vaccine shots. She continued to be unsteady and we found that she has a mild UTI which we had begun treating with prescribed antibiotics. Late afternoon on the 11th, mother suffered a major stroke. We did not take her to the hospital because we had already been told that they would not be able to do anything at her age should she suffer a stroke. On the 12th I called the doctor’s office and asked for them to send Hospice to the house, as we could tell that she was dying. Mother died on the 13. Just a week prior to her death I had spoken with Dr.\_\_\_\_ and we had discussed that she was declining in health but that she was not even close to needing Hospice, yet she is dead a week later. Less than 2 weeks after getting her second Covid Shot.”

There are several cases where a person, though elderly, seemed to be in good health before getting the vaccine.

An 81-year-old woman is reported in VAERS to have died suddenly from a “widow maker” heart attack, where a main artery became completely blocked. It was three weeks after she’d gotten the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

A doctor, who’d removed the blockage and placed a stent in the woman, reportedly said she did not have any excessive plaque and that “The blood clot likely came on and caused the cardiac event within roughly an hour...”

“The patient had no prior symptoms and no comorbidities for blood clotting and was full of life

and energy on March 5, up to when she went to bed that night. She died March 6, 2021,” the narrative reads.

There are more. But perhaps this is enough. Enough information. Enough to provide a small amount of balance to the relentless stream of news stories that hype the vaccines, without giving any indication that there may be cause for concern.

I don’t know what conclusions can be drawn from the information in VAERS. That the vaccines are saving some while harming others?

Would you feel better if your grandmother died from the vaccine, rather than from Covid-19? I would not.

I’d also be quite angry if my parent or grandparent died very soon after getting a vaccine and I came to find out only afterward that serious side effects, including death, were always a possibility, and not as remote a possibility as I was led to believe.

It is for this reason that I am writing this piece.

I should note that the VAERS data is thought to represent only a small fraction of side effects people experience, with a 2010 study by Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Inc – affiliated with Harvard Medical School – finding that only 1 percent of “adverse events” following vaccination are reported to VAERS. Perhaps it’s time we started asking our public health professionals, and the media, to be more honest with us about the risks, as well as the rewards, of the Covid vaccines. Hoosiers who are sitting around trying to decide whether or not to get it deserve to have full information before the needle is jabbed into their arm.

*Note: The CDC asks people to report possible side effects from vaccines to VAERS by going to: <https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html> or by calling 1-800-822-7967. All reports submitted to VAERS can be accessed by running a CDC Wonder search at: <https://vaers.hhs.gov/data.html>*

Nathan Collins lives in Charlestown, Indiana. He wrote this for the foundation.



## Vaccination Mandates

*(April 21)* — As the effects of Covid-19 begin to diminish, a new rallying cry is beginning to echo throughout the nation. The Biden administration and the media establishment are promoting the idea that Americans should willingly relinquish sovereignty over personal health choices. If that were not enough, Americans are also being encouraged to participate in a potential electronic vaccine tracking system — a “vaccine passport.”

Proponents have indicated that access to daily activities such as attending concerts, baseball games, public transportation or even going the grocery store could be restricted or prohibited for those who do not participate. Often, resistance to these types of mandates and requirements are quickly dismissed by proponents as “anti-science” or “anti-vax” — and in some cases those accusations may be true. But for most people, the crux of this debate is what it means to live freely and exercise personal liberty in America without discrimination.

Many have argued that Americans should roll up their sleeves and “take the shot” for “the greater good.” The idea of sacrificing for the greater good may sound noble but it is not the same as “promoting the general welfare,” as written in the preamble of the United States Constitution. Promoting the general welfare leads all members of a nation toward the blessings of Liberty; in contrast, sacrificing personal freedom and liberty for the greater good leads a nation closer to communism and dictatorship.

We do not have to look too far back in human history to observe examples of governments who were confident their horrendous actions were for that greater good and the benefit of humanity.

In 1947, as a result of one nation’s experimentation and exploitation of an entire people group, the Nuremberg Code was written to set forth legal and ethical constraints and standards for experimentation.

In the case of our current “emergency authorized Covid-19 vaccines,” many elements of the Nuremberg Code have been ignored to take action in response to the pandemic. Obviously, no government agency in the United States is forcing anyone to take a Covid-19 vaccine; no one would approve of that. Instead, government agencies are proposing a vaccine passport system or requiring proof of vaccination to participate in normal daily activities, which are, in essence, methods of coercion and constraint.

It is important to remember, the Covid-19 vaccines are being administered under emergency authorization of the FDA and are considered experimental. The vaccines have not undergone the normal extent of clinical trials or animal testing. The manufacturers of these vaccines are not liable in civil actions for damages resulting in injury or death. And the Moderna and Pfizer “vaccines” are categorized as gene therapy, (mRNA).

In a state of emergency some or all of these steps may be prudent. But requiring anyone to take a Covid-19 vaccine is, in effect, requiring the recipient to become a human guinea pig.

Recently, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was paused as a result of deaths related to blot-clotting issues. Many medical professionals who have expressed concerns regarding vaccine safety and side effects have been silenced. This is also true for many others in the medical field who have attempted to promote alternative treatment methods.

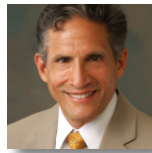
As we continue to study Covid and the vaccines, we may discover additional side effects and consequences. Why force the issue, especially for healthy people?

With the increased availability of Covid-19 vaccines, the threat of vaccine discrimination is becoming more likely. If people have a healthy immune system and rarely get sick, why should they be required to take an experimental gene-therapy injection to work? This is outrageous. Those who choose not to take the vaccine may face state-mandated quarantines or complete prohibition of certain activities altogether.



One practical consideration will probably make it prohibitively difficult to impose a mandate. It is critical to avoid discrimination against individuals who should not take the Covid-19 vaccine due to underlying health issues, e.g., auto-immune conditions, or individuals who have naturally acquired antibodies from exposure to Covid-19. But the stark reality is this: Any government that can coerce its people to take an experimental vaccine will have virtually no restraints in the future. If we fail to fend off this mandate, collective freedom and personal liberty may be lost forever.

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## Hamas Jihadists Can Count on U.S. Media

"We are shocked and horrified that the Israeli military would target and destroy the building housing AP's bureau and other news organizations in Gaza." — *AP President Gary Pruitt, May 16, 2021*

(May 17) — On May 14 2018, the 70th anniversary of the birth of the state of Israel, a modern day miracle, the U.S. under President Donald Trump, fulfilled a promise made by Congress in the 1995 Jerusalem Embassy Act, passed by a 95-3 vote in the Senate to move our embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the Jewish people. That bill unfortunately came with a Presidential waiver, and every president since including Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Hussein Obama promised to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem but failed to do so. Only one, Donald Trump, a modern-day Cyrus and eternal friend of Israel and the Jewish people, kept his promise.

Simultaneously, 45 miles away from the festivities in Jerusalem, at the Gaza border with

Israel, the so-called "March of Return," an annual event inaugurated in 1998 by arch-terrorist Yassir Arafat, had been going on for weeks and culminated on May 14. It commemorated what the Palestinians call the "Nakba" or "Catastrophe," their self-pitying reference to Israel Independence Day. Fifty thousand Palestinians, most of them Hamas terrorists, attempted to breach the border with Israel, for the purpose of killing or kidnapping Jews in neighboring Israeli villages. Women and children, the "human shields" for which Hamas is famous, accompanied the marchers to maximize civilian casualties for the compliant press.

The peaceful Marchers, as instructed, brought guns, knives, pipe bombs and grenades and hid them under their clothing. They also brought fire-kites to inflict damage on Israeli fields and crops. More than 60 of the invading Palestinian terrorists were killed at the border, dutifully reported with glaring split screen images of the chaos in Gaza and the events in Jerusalem, designed to tarnish the embassy event, President Trump and Israel.

Israel abandoned Gaza in 2005, every Jew dead or alive, including those buried, were evacuated. Israel left behind elaborate greenhouse and other infrastructure and synagogues, all which were destroyed in scenes reminiscent of Kristallnacht. In 2006, Palestinians in Gaza voted in Hamas over the Palestinian Authority. In June of 2007, Hamas launched their military takeover of Gaza, killing hundreds of their Muslim brothers in the Palestinian Authority by dragging them through the streets chained to cars, throwing them off roofs or shooting them in the head in front of their wives and children.

Hamas is a terrorist organization, recognized as such by the U.S. and the European Union. They call openly for the destruction of the state of Israel and do not recognize the right of Israel to exist within any borders. They are the Palestinian offshoot of the Muslim brotherhood and as such do not seek only the destruction of Israel but all of Christendom and Western civilization including the U.S. and the establishment of a global caliphate. Since taking over Gaza, they have done

nothing to help their citizens build the institutions of a civil society, to promote normal democratic discourse, or to develop a free market economy, preferring instead welfare dependency based on international aid. In the process, they have inflicted great suffering on their citizens, running what is in effect an open-air prison state for 2 million people. There is high unemployment and poverty, poor sanitation and inadequate healthcare. Gaza, with its proximity to Israel's high-tech economy, ports, trade, beaches and tourism and a willingness by the nations of the world, business interests and aid-organizations to help them develop their private sector, should have been Singapore on the Mediterranean. Instead it is Afghanistan. Israel blockades Gaza because Hamas is an Iranian backed terrorist organization that engages in acts of terror. They use their assets and plentiful aid to build tunnels, fire missiles at Israeli civilians and breach borders with armies of armed terrorists to kill, maim and kidnap. Egypt blockades them for the same reason.

Israel is a first-world nation that provides for its citizens the highest standard of living in the Middle East, equivalent to that of Western Europe. It is an open democracy governed consensually by the rule of law, with human rights, free speech, religious freedom, a free press and a world-class free market economy. It boasts the best hospital, universities, museums and symphonies in the world and leads the planet in any number of cutting edge technologies. Its more than one million Israeli-Arab citizens are the freest Muslims in the Middle East. None are interested in joining their Muslim brethren under the benighted Palestinian Authority or Hamas, preferring instead to keep their citizenship in the Jewish State – for good reason.

Hamas, on the other hand, like its secular terrorist counterpart in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria), the Palestinian Authority (PA), are corrupt, kleptocratic, genocidal extremists. Of all the nationalist movements around the world, the Palestinians, Hamas or the PA, are the least

deserving of a state – and should not be given one. The world scarcely needs another dysfunctional, terrorist regime. There is no difference between either of them and ISIS or Al-Qaeda except that for “intersectional” and anti-Semitic purposes, they enjoy good press from a left-dominated media – as long as it is Jews engaging them.

The Assad regime, for example, in the ongoing Syrian Civil War, have killed thousands of Palestinians in the Yarmouk Refugee Camp in Damascus, the largest Palestinian refugee community in Syria, transforming it into a “death camp,” engaging in wanton acts of barbarity far worse than anything Israel has ever committed. But you never heard about this because it involved Arabs killing Arabs – not Jews, and therefore of no interest to the Left.

There is one card the Palestinian Jihadists know they can always play. That is the support and positive spin of their egregious behavior by the international left including the media, the EU, UN, the U.S. Democrat Party and many liberal-leftist American Jews and their various anti-Zionist organizations (J-Street, Jewish Voice For Peace and many others).

They will discredit the Israelis, delegitimize them, hold them to an impossible double standard, and continually advance the Hamas narrative of brutal IDF soldiers cutting down innocent, defenseless Palestinian Muslims – despite Israel having the most moral and honorable military in the world, one that goes well beyond any other fighting force to protect innocent life, often at huge costs to its own soldiers.

The media and their political functionaries thus create and perpetuate the crisis. By supporting the Jihadist narrative, they encourage more of the same and avoid putting pressure on Palestinians to create a functioning, viable state. The media and the rest of the anti-Israel cabal can be relied on to defend genocidal Islamic terrorists.

Hamas sees dead Palestinians as a photo-op. No media, no dead Palestinians. Yes, our media and their leftist allies have blood on their hands,

rivers of blood, most of it Palestinian. It is they, not Israel, who prolong the agony, suffering and death.

### Red States: the Last Bastion

*(April 16)* — These are treacherous times. Our principal institutions have been overtaken by the Left. We are fast approaching French Revolutionary levels. However dysfunctional and disturbed they may be, members of the Left rule us, and they grow more authoritarian and imperious as we speak.

The latest example of their audacity and command of our dominant institutions is the response to Georgia's modest election law (SB202 or "The Election Integrity Act"). It included ID requirements for mail-in ballots, banned the practice of giving food or water to voters in line at polling stations, limited the number of "drop boxes," and shortened early voting, none of which was racial or restrictive in the least. But the carefully orchestrated mass rollout of hair on fire outrage was classic Leftist agitprop, perfected through the decades. So absurd were the accusations that, absent an utterly compliant press, a political movement or party could never get away with it.

Shortly after Governor Brian Kemp signed the bill into law, President Joe Biden on ESPN referred to it as "Jim Crow on steroids" and supported Major League Baseball moving the All-Star game out of Atlanta where it was scheduled this year. MLB, indeed, rolled over instantly, moving the event to Denver. Not insignificantly, this year's summer classic also planned to honor the memory of Hank Aaron, one of baseball's greatest players, who passed away recently and played with the Atlanta Braves. That Hank Aaron was a black man and that Atlanta is a black majority city that would be negatively impacted by the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars seemed not an afterthought. Biden later called the bill "sick," "un-American" and an "atrocious." Former President Barack Obama agreed with the sentiments as did the entire Democrat Party apparatus and its poodle media.

"Voting Rights" activists called for boycotting Georgia-based and other companies if they did not condemn the legislation. Prominent corporations and professional sports teams folded at breakneck speed. AFLAC, the Atlanta Falcons, Atlanta Hawks, Coca Cola, Delta, Home Depot, JP Morgan Chase, Facebook, Citigroup, Merck, Cisco, Apple, Wal-Mart, Under Armour, Google, Twitter, Este Lauder, HP, Microsoft and ViacomCBS all succumbed to a sudden attack of wokeness and vigorously denounced the bill. Thus far, nearly 200 major corporations joined in. A group of 72 prominent black corporate executives, in an open letter published in the New York Times, condemned it. Several black "civil rights" groups including the Georgia NAACP, "Black Votes Matter" and Stacey Abrams' "Fair Fight," condemned the law as well. Lawsuits have been filed. The National Black Justice Coalition called on the PGA Tour to pull the Masters Tournament from the Augusta National Golf Club in Georgia where it has been played since 1934.

LeBron James, NBA star, co-owner of the Boston Red Sox, and otherwise oppressed billionaire, too, voiced his support for MLB's decision to move the summer classic out of Atlanta, stating that he was now a proud "part of the MLB family." LeBron and many of the coalition of the irate have had no trouble doing business with the democratic Chinese Communist Party and their slave empire. Prominent liberal sports writers and figures, including the reliable Al Sharpton, also got on their soap boxes.

American Airlines and Southwest came out against a similar such election bill in Texas.

The various election laws passing through Republican states are a result of the election debacle that occurred on Nov. 3, 2020. Particularly in battleground states, election laws were unlawfully changed in the lead-up to the election, because of lawsuits by Democrat lawyers, generally bypassing the state legislatures who constitutionally have the final say on election law. Criticisms by leftist groups and the Democrat party invariably accuse the bills of being

“restrictive” and causing “voter suppression,” by which they mean the suppression of blacks and other minorities.

The bills, of course, did nothing of the kind. They were intended to prevent election fraud, which Democrats depend on to win elections.

The over-the-top reaction to the Georgia legislation, however, is merely a prelude to the passage of the “For The People Act” (HR1 and S1), in which Democrats at the federal level, engaging in typical doublespeak, seek to nationalize election law and enshrine the changes they engineered in 2020 for perpetuity, thus ensuring a one party nation under Democrat rule forever.

How should conservatives respond?

It is up to the red states.

And the response should be vigorous and unapologetic. Each state dominated by Republicans, where Republicans hold both houses of the state legislature, of which there are 31, and then the trifecta, which would also include the governorship (24 such states), should pass election integrity laws. All should eliminate unsolicited mail in ballots, something done unnecessarily because of Covid, but allow for “absentee” ballots, as always, which must be verified well in advance with proper explanation (illness, disabled, out of state, in the Military). Eliminate same day registration and motor-voter registration. Abolish computer systems. Return to paper ballots, hand counted with poll watchers from both parties present. Require proof of citizenship. Limit early voting to two weeks or consider eliminating it all together. Mandate one election “day,” as was standard until relatively recently, not election “season.” Declare it a holiday. Clean up voter rolls regularly. And, of course, mandate photo ID, something that for Democrats, is akin to daylight for vampires.

The Democrats may never win a national election again.

But there is more.

No longer can conservatives allow companies and sports entities, professional or otherwise, to bully and abuse us. It is time for red states to pass

“anti-bullying” legislation against the Left and their corporate minions. Any company, sports entity and individual athletes or celebrities that disrespect our nation and flag or threaten to or implement a boycott of a red state for passing entirely legitimate legislation should be banned from all future and existing state contracts, tax breaks, set asides, anti-trust protections (where appropriate), and further business dealings with the state.

Legislation considered within the purview of the state, wholly reasonable, would contain laws and protections involving religious liberty, protecting children and students from the various and sundry depredations of Leftist theories and policies including such gems as transgenderism and Critical Race Theory, bogus refugee and illegal alien resettlement, and, of course, ensuring the integrity of our elections.

Consider also forbidding companies, athletes, sports leagues and entities that have business ties with China’s totalitarian regime from business relations or other benefits, tax breaks and contracts with the state.

Attorney generals of red states should aggressively litigate against leftwing corporations and Big Tech that infringe on the rights of their state’s citizens including the enforcement of speech codes, censorship of conservatives, “canceling” (also known as crushing and destroying) individuals who espouse conservative or traditional beliefs, and otherwise prohibiting normal, free and open expression.

Similarly, they should file suits against corporations that engage in boycotts and threats against the state. Red states must coordinate their efforts. In particular, states like Texas and Florida, with their large populations and economic clout and with supportive governors, notably, Ron DeSantis of Florida, can take the lead, but any state so inclined can move aggressively.

Finally, Republican officials at all levels, state and federal, should demand that woke corporate hypocrites boycott the 2022 Olympics in Beijing.

The conservative, pro-founding, pro-American, nationalist movement has for decades been



inattentive to our culture and commanding organs, including corporate America. As a result, it has largely ceded them to the Left who have been diligently infiltrating them. They have completed their long march through our institutions and now control them, as they do the nation. But we still have power at the state level. We must fight back as viciously as the Left using the tools that we have.

That means the red states.

It is time to save the country, if it is to be saved at all.

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## Canceling Baseball's Unwoke Heroes

(March 26) — In April, 2003, Hall of Fame President Dale Petroskey canceled a Cooperstown event celebrating the 15th anniversary of the movie “Bull Durham.” Petroskey, a former Bush administrator, did not want its stars, Tom Robbins and Susan Sarandon, famous for their opposition to the Iraq war, to appear or speak.

As Petroskey put it, “There was a chance of politics being injected into The Hall during these sensitive times, and I made a decision to not take that chance.” The cancellation generated over 28,000 email responses, around 90 percent of which were negative. One Hall staffer observed the email showed that people were “simply upset by the blatant disregard for the First Amendment.” As the editor of *Elysian Fields Quarterly*, the premier baseball research journal, put it, “the clearly partisan nature of Petroskey’s actions against actors Tom Robbins and Susan Sarandon seems unprecedented — and unwarranted.”

In other words, “clearly partisan” behavior, especially where the First Amendment is

concerned, should not happen. For the record, I strongly agree with that statement.

Therefore, anyone familiar with Hall of Fame voting and baseball history might well question sportswriters for not enshrining Curt Schilling this year. On the face of it, Schilling’s non-election was outright politically motivated and “clearly partisan” and based on his questionable comments and remarks. His exclusion is not based on his baseball record.

Since 2014, sportswriters have voted in seven starting pitchers to Cooperstown: Greg Maddux and Tom Glavine in 2014, Randy Johnson and Pedro Martinez in 2015, Mike Mussina and Jack Morris in 2018, and Roy Halladay in 2019. The most important (and complicated) metric or data-point for baseball players is the WAR (Wins Against Replacement). Schilling’s WAR is 80.5, dwarfed by Greg Maddux’s 106.6 but better than Glavine’s 73.9, Halladay’s 65.4 and Morris’s 43.6. In fact, Schilling’s WAR is better than 31 pitchers enshrined at Cooperstown.

Schilling ranks 15th among the 18 members of the 3,000-strikeout club. All are in the Hall except for CC Sabathia, who is not yet eligible, Justin Verlander, who is still active, and Roger Clemens. Clemens is not in the Hall because sportswriters, who vote for Hall of Fame candidates, suspect him of steroid use. If the sportswriters are correct, Clemens’s on the field behavior was egregious, since baseball fans could not trust that they were watching fair competition, thus disgracing the game.

Schilling never did anything but put forth an honest, best effort — think ‘bloody sock’ — unlike Bonds, McGwire and the Black Sox (or Eddie Cicotte would be in).

Schilling got insufficient votes because of comments well after he retired from baseball. His off-the-field and well “out of the game” comments were held against him.

The irony is that many players who were exemplary in serving their country are not in the Hall of Fame. For years, I tried to get some of those players into the Hall. Virgil Trucks is a

borderline candidate and the only player to pitch two afternoon no-hitters in one season. Dom DiMaggio was a seven-time all-star and, as one Hall of Famer said, “My brother was a better fielder than me.” Mickey Vernon had 2,495 hits and won two batting titles. Three-time, 20 game-winner Don Newcombe had a winning percentage of .623 at 149-90. None of the four accumulated

enough success to have a high WAR; all of them lost seasons in their prime years, plural, to military service. If what happens off the field is meaningful for exclusion from the Hall, then it should also be meaningful for inclusion. And if the First Amendment is as important as 25,000 baseball fans think, Schilling gets a plaque. ♦

## Horatio Bunce Has a Word with Davy Crockett

*The storied explanation of Horatio Bunce, a Tennessee farmer, to Congressman Davey Crockett on why he did not intend to vote for him again (courtesy of the Foundation for Economic Education).*

**T**hough I live here in the backwoods and seldom go from home, I take the papers from Washington and read very carefully all the proceedings of Congress. My papers say that last winter you voted for a bill to appropriate \$20,000 to some sufferers by a fire in Georgetown. Is that true?

“Well, my friend; I may as well own up. You have got me there. But certainly nobody will complain that a great and rich country like ours should give the insignificant sum of \$20,000 to relieve its suffering women and children, particularly with a full and overflowing Treasury, and I am sure, if you had been there, you would have done just as I did.”

It is not the amount, Colonel, that I complain of; it is the principle. In the first place, the government ought to have in the Treasury no more than enough for its legitimate purposes. But that has nothing to do with the question. The power of collecting and disbursing money at pleasure is the most dangerous power that can be entrusted to man, particularly under our system of collecting revenue by a tariff, which reaches every man in the country, no matter how poor he may be, and the poorer he is the more he pays in proportion to his means. What is worse, it presses upon him without his knowledge where the weight centers, for there is not a man in the United States who can ever guess how much he pays to the government. So you see, that while you are contributing to relieve one, you are drawing it from thousands who are even worse off than he. If you had the right to give anything, the amount was simply a matter of discretion with you, and you had as much right to give \$20,000,000 as \$20,000. If you have the right to give to one, you have the right to give to all; and, as the Constitution neither denies charity nor stipulates the amount, you are at liberty to give to any and everything which you may believe, or profess to believe, is a charity, and to any amount you may think proper. You will very easily perceive what a wide door this would open for fraud and corruption and favoritism, on the one hand, and for robbing the people on the other. No, Colonel, Congress has no right to give charity. Individual members may give as much of their own money as they please, but they have no right to touch a dollar of the public money for that purpose. If twice as many houses had been burned in this county as in Georgetown, neither you nor any other member of Congress would have thought of appropriating a dollar for our relief.

# Mark Franke

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## Biden's 100 Days of Missed Opportunity

*"At the very moment our adversaries were certain we would pull apart and fail, we came together. United. With light and hope, we summoned new strength and new resolve."* — Joe Biden's address to Congress, April 28, 2021

(April 30) — Joe Biden has officially completed his first 100 days in office, an artificial but important benchmark to judge a new presidency. It is a yardstick to grade the new president's legislative success under the assumption that he will have his highest level of political support right out of the gate.

The term was coined by Franklin Roosevelt to publicize an ambitious list of legislative actions he proposed as antidotes to the woes of the Depression. He first used the term in a radio address, taking advantage of this new communication medium to sell his agenda to the nation. And to sell it to a Congress that contained opponents on both the left and the right.

He got Congress to pass 76 bills, 15 of them major in scope, during these 100 days, a number that is both amazing given today's gridlock and frightening to those of us who despair of relentless government bloat with its concomitant assault on individual liberty.

So what's the deal with the first 100 days as opposed to any other arbitrary period of time? I guess it has a nice cachet, which pundits like.

I have vague recollections of the term being used in 1961 with John Kennedy's inauguration. I was in grade school back then and mostly attracted to or perhaps distracted by the Camelot images pushed by an adoring media.

Unfortunately for Kennedy, about the only thing remembered now from his first 100 days is the Bay of Pigs fiasco.

Moving into my adult years, I don't remember the term being used much although it could have been when Bill Clinton announced his massive government health plan. That didn't pass, at least not in 1993.

Ronald Reagan entered office with an ambitious plan for his first 100 days. He didn't have much success initially with that, at least to the disappointment of this pro-Reagan voter, but eventually he did accomplish three of his major initiatives: elimination of runaway inflation, significant tax cuts to stimulate a recessionary economy and a military buildup that pushed the Soviet Union onto the "ash heap of history."

We heard the term again when Barack Obama, another media darling, took office. He didn't have all that much success either, other than getting a stimulus package passed for "shovel-ready" projects which stimulated more pork being barbecued than dirt being turned. Later there was Obamacare, all 906 pages, which eventually passed although in an unpublished version until after the vote. This was followed by over 33,000 pages of federal regulations, but who's counting?

By historical standards Joe Biden hasn't done too badly in comparison to his predecessors. Congress stands ready and willing to pass any spending bill that can be fobbed off as stimulus and the Federal Reserve is willing to crank up the dollar printing presses as necessary. He opened the southern border to increased immigration while successfully deflecting the resultant problems to somebody else, apparently to be determined at a later date. He has cranked out executive orders at a truly impressive rate, should you like government by White House fiat.

From Biden's perspective he can take pride in his first 100 days.

My perspective is different.

I didn't expect to like most of his actions and proposals. I simply hoped that he would honor his campaign speech and inaugural address promise to unite the nation. He assured us he would "be a

president who does not seek to divide, but unify.” This meant to my way of thinking that he would not be slave to the most extreme faction in a party increasingly under the control of extremists.

So which of his actions were undertaken to unify rather than reinforce division? I can’t think of any. Since Biden himself emphasized his goal was unification, one can’t but conclude that he failed his 100 day test using his own standard.

I wrote back in January that this could be Joe Biden’s hour if he truly believed what he said about unifying. Most of my acquaintances told me that I was being naïve, if not delusional. Naïve, certainly. Delusional, not really as I wasn’t taking any bets.

All I wanted to do was give Biden a chance. I can’t say I am surprised that he didn’t avail himself of this opportunity.

Not surprised, just saddened. And fearful of what the remaining 1,460 days will bring.

## Not Your Grandfather’s GOP

*(April 21)* — It was the fall of 1988 and my entire family was together. The conversation turned to the upcoming presidential election between George H. W. Bush and Michael Dukakis.

My father held forth on what he believed, which tracked quite consistently with that year’s Republican platform. So I asked him if he were voting for Bush. Of course not; he would be voting for Dukakis because the Democrats stood for “the little man.” When I pointed out this inconsistency, his response is best forgotten.

What had happened, unbeknownst to Dad, was that he remained faithful to his beliefs. It was the national Democrat party that changed, moving significantly to the left even back then. Dad was truly a Reagan Democrat; he just didn’t know it.

Ronald Reagan, himself an erstwhile Democrat, understood what these “little men” dreamed for their families. We used to call that the American Dream before our language succumbed to the post-modern inferno.

What began as the Reagan revolution among blue-collar voters has continued. The Republican party is becoming the party of affinity for much of the middle and working classes. Consider some voting blocks that the Democrats have taken for granted but which are becoming more voting booth diverse.

Blue-collar workers, even union members, are voting Republican in increasing numbers. As many union members classify themselves as strong Republican as self-classify as strong Democrat according to a recent poll. This identification is even more pronounced among younger union members.

In New York City Donald Trump received about 200,000 more votes in 2020 than he did in 2016, while Joe Biden polled fewer votes than Hilary Clinton four years ago.

Hispanic-Latino voters are shifting rightward, particularly in large cities with significant immigrant populations. A New York Times map of 2020 voting in Chicago clearly demonstrates this shift.

Even among black voters, particularly men, a shift is evident. While still overwhelmingly Democrat, black voters are marginally moving Republican — enough so that the Democrats can’t take black voters for granted.

Note that these new Republicans are not all rural or low income or poorly educated as media stereotypes would have us believe. They are poster boys and girls for the Protestant work ethic, to use another micro-aggressive phrase.

What is equally interesting is to examine which groups are moving leftward toward the Democrat party. Let’s start with the wealthiest Americans, the despised one percenters. One datapoint is to look at the top 100 political contributors for their party affiliation.

Fifty-seven of the top 100 contributors in 2012, the first year of data available at the OpenSecrets.org site, were Republicans and accounted for 70 percent of the total donations. In 2020 these numbers reversed, with 53 of 100 being Democrat. This may not seem significant

but it does put the lie to claims that the GOP is the party of the rich.

Total political contributions for federal elections in 2020 was almost \$10 billion and favored the Democrats by nearly 2:1. Is it a coincidence that liberal clarion calls for getting big money out of politics have suddenly gone quiet?

One thing I learned in my first semester economics class is that people act rationally in their own interest as they see it. This infatuation by the super rich with politicians pushing confiscatory tax proposals, constraints on Bill of Rights freedoms and seemingly unquenchable government grasp for unlimited power just makes no sense to me — unless the self-interest is that of the corporate execs personally without regard for that of their shareholders. Short-sighted and self-delusional, to say the least.

Comrade Lenin is quoted, likely apocryphally, as bragging that capitalists will sell him the rope he uses to hang them. Perhaps it is time to display that quote prominently in America's corporate boardrooms and in Manhattan penthouses.

Meanwhile, the Republican party must figure out how to reconcile what is left of the moneyed Romney-Bush wing of the party and the energetic Tea Party-Trump wing. This reminds me of 1964 and several election cycles after that when a Goldwater conservative minority arose to challenge the Rockefeller moderate-liberal majority, eventually resulting in a conservative ideological and electoral victory largely due to Ronald Reagan's attractiveness to middle America.

That middle America is still there, or perhaps has reawakened. The GOP's problem is that it doesn't have a Ronald Reagan to unify the party and lead it at the national level. The party is still the stronger one at state and local levels so I wouldn't bet against a Republican election night resurgence in 2022. The Democrat excesses may just hand it to them regardless of what the GOP does.

But do something the GOP must to communicate its message...especially without the Great Communicator at the top of the ticket.

## The Masters Golf Tournament Prevails

*(April 14)* — I have a love-hate relationship with golf.

It started in my pre-teen years when I got my first regular job as a caddie at the nearby country club. I could earn \$2.25 plus tip for carrying a single (one bag) or \$5 plus tip for a double. Somedays I was lucky enough to “go out” a second time and earn twice as much. The only downside was that I had to report to the caddie shack at 6:30 every morning to get signed in, this being the order in which we were sent out. The downside was really my dad's since he had to drive me there as I was only 11 years old.

This was good training for me, instilling in me a work ethic that included rising early every day . . . a habit I continued through my professional career and now in retirement. I also learned how to save money even though I earned only about \$15 per week in those first years. After all, what could a grade-schooler spend money on back then?

After I reached high school, I got promoted to working in the pro shop cleaning clubs for the members who stored them on site. I would caddie in the morning, being an “A Class” caddie and getting the best assignments, and then work in the back room until closing time. Eventually I went full-time in the pro shop, working sunup until sundown six days per week and making \$8 per day.

That was the love part. The hate part developed only in the last years as my work hours were such that I could not avail myself of the top benefit accorded country club employees — free golf. The course schedule was rigid with certain days and times reserved for men only, women only, couples and whatever was left for kids and employees. Monday was employee day but I found myself running the pro shop on Mondays so that the golf pros could have the day off. What golf I played was a few holes late in the evenings when we were waiting on the last members to finish.

I don't think I ever played a full 18 holes the last several years of my employment there. Then,



one college semester when I didn't have enough money to pay tuition, I sold my golf clubs to re-enroll. College students and their parents today probably can't even imagine a time when a used set of golf clubs covered a semester's tuition.

Still, I never lost my fascination with golf even though I no longer play and have absolutely zero desire to take it back up. My connection is now living on a golf course. Summer mornings will find me at 6 a.m. sitting on my patio watching the greenskeepers groom the course for the day's play.

What brings this all back to mind now is the unseasonably warm weather this past week which had my residential course hopping with play. And the Masters tournament. The Masters is in a class by itself among sporting events, maybe equaled only by the Kentucky Derby and the Indianapolis 500. I followed the results closely back in my caddie days, rooting for Arnold Palmer who seemed to own that tournament.

Why Arnold Palmer? Perhaps it was due to the fact that he earned his first PGA paycheck at the Fort Wayne Open in my hometown. More likely it was because his Masters caddie, nicknamed Ironman, got publicity for being a caddie. We need to root for our own, don't you know.

This year, the Masters reinforced its preeminence by refusing to succumb to political pressure from the woke mob. While Major League Baseball pounded another nail into its rapidly closing coffin, the Masters rose above the political din and demonstrated why such icons are part and parcel of Americana.

I didn't watch any of the tournament as I find television golf quite boring compared with the full experience of walking a course. I don't know much about current PGA players, with Arnie and Ironman both gone, so I have no favorite player. But then, the Masters is the Masters.

If my financial situation ever finds itself in such dire straits that I need to find a part-time job, I will probably walk over to the nearby pro shop and apply for a position. I have the experience, the work ethic and enough remaining

love for golf that I should prove an exemplary employee.

On the other hand, let's hope that the stock market doesn't crash so I can spend my remaining summer mornings with a cup of coffee watching the greens getting mowed and the sand traps raked. That will keep golf where it belongs — in my increasingly selective memory of the good old days.

## Baseball Has Lost its Jingle

*(April 7)* — “Baseball, hot dogs, apple pie and Chevrolet.”

Recall that advertising jingle from 1974? It had quite a catchy tune and was a successful advertising campaign by all accounts.

Think back to what America was like in 1974. There was the Watergate scandal, resulting in the resignation of an elected president. The Vietnam War was theoretically winding down, but the only winding down was America's military presence there, paving the way for a North Vietnamese military conquest. Inflation was picking up due to government deficit spending. It seemed that if anything could go wrong, it did.

What Chevrolet hoped to plant in the consumer psyche was that it was America's car, a national icon like baseball, hot dogs and apple pie. These were non-controversial images, ones that we could all agree on even as the nation was splitting into hostile opposite camps.

Chevrolet was, and still is, one of America's best-selling car brands. There is something almost patriotic about buying Chevrolets, as many of my friends have lectured me, especially given the fact that Silverado pickup trucks are manufactured right here in my hometown.

What about the other three icons in the jingle? Apple pie is my wife's favorite so no more needs to be said on that. Even hot dogs continue to be sold at every sporting event and offered at backyard barbecues from coast to coast. And baseball, if you had asked me last week, still is uniquely All American.

That was last week, before Major League Baseball (MLB) reimagined itself as no longer a cultural and social unifier but rather just one more political interest group pushing a partisan, controversial agenda.

I had always put my allegiance in baseball as the symbol of American unity. I've read several essays and more than one book which demonstrated how outstanding personal antagonisms could be checked at the front gate as people became fans unified in rooting for their favorite team. Think of a situation where a father and his teenage son could forget their running fight over nearly everything when they take their seats in the outfield bleachers.

Those days are gone by official decree of Major League Baseball. MLB is jumping into our toxic political environment with both feet. If your state's elected officials pass a law not meeting MLB's puritanical standards, beware. Retribution is forthcoming as the city of Atlanta has learned to its hurt. This summer's All Star game must go elsewhere.

Presumably an in-depth legal review of Georgia's voting law was conducted deep in the corporate bowels of MLB's New York headquarters. Some commentators have argued that Georgia's new requirements are less restrictive than those in MLB's home state of New York. Does MLB know that?

Surely they reviewed their own policies at Will Call windows across MLB cities which require presentation of a legal ID before picking up pre-purchased tickets. Will the Commissioner mandate elimination of this requirement at all 30 MLB stadiums? Or is ticket fraud too much of a threat to our democracy to go unchallenged?

If Atlanta is too un-American to host the All Star game, what about the 81 home games played there by the Atlanta Braves? How long can this be tolerated? Perhaps Mr. Manfred will order the Braves back to their original city, Boston, which can be trusted to hold acceptably progressive views.

Maybe I'm being too hard on a sport I have loved during all my seven decades. Professional

baseball is facing a daunting task in its attempt to recover from Covid's devastation of its ticket revenues in 2020. Surely the MBAs and JDs occupying those high-rent offices in Manhattan have developed a plan to welcome families back to the ballparks.

They have. Baseball's answer: Raise opening day ticket prices by 50 percent to an average of \$162 per seat. \$162 for one seat! I don't have the courage to ask what a hot dog and a beer would cost me.

They need the money, obviously. The stratospheric free-agent contracts signed during the off-season are past understanding to the average Joe Fan. Signing contracts exceeding \$300 million barely make the headlines.

This is also the first season after MLB's hostile takeover of minor league baseball. My hometown minor league team was told its 2021 season would be shortened. No negotiation between parties, just a dictate from those plush Manhattan offices. This leaves the local ownership trying to figure out how to replace the revenue from the lost 10 home dates, so ticket and concession inflation will undoubtedly head northward. At least the local increase won't take a single seat up to \$162.

Now that all loyal fans are feeling lighter in the pocketbook, the owners and player association are making noises of a bitter master contract fight after the season. We all know what that may mean: a strike or lockout, depending on which set of oppressed multimillionaires you care to believe.

And all these woes are self-inflicted.

The sentiments of that advertising jingle are gone, especially the line which followed "Baseball, hot dogs, apple pie and Chevrolet." It went like this:

"They go together in the good ol' USA."

Not anymore. Not in my USA.

## The Importance of a Tradition

(*March 24*) — "You should always go to other people's funerals, otherwise they won't come to yours."

Yogi Berra was, to my way of thinking, one of the two most significant philosophers of the 20th century. He had a simple, direct way of looking at life and summing up its highest order principles in his own elegant way. He was extraordinarily deft at applying the famed razor of William of Ockham.

To someone like me who grew up in a blue-collar home in a small northeast Indiana town, Ockham's Razor can be understood as: "Cut the crap and get to the point."

Which I will try to do.

Several weeks ago, I lost another cousin to a premature death. This is the third one, all younger than I, to predecease me. I descend from several quite large German immigrant families who settled Allen County well before the Civil War. I have at least 30 close cousins, by "close" I mean they were part of our Christmas gatherings and whose birthdays were an opportunity for us all to get together on one of the farms or at a city home.

We were a fecund tribe, something that has been lost in the demographic crisis of declining childbirth rates. I have second and third cousins, once and twice removed, whom I don't even know. (A word to the wise: Don't ask me to explain the difference between a second cousin and a first cousin once removed. I know the difference and can hold forth on the subject for hours.)

One of things I enjoy most in my dotage is to talk to someone who, unbeknownst to either of us, is my third cousin. This has happened more than once and it can be simultaneously both exciting and embarrassing to learn that a friend of many years is a relative.

Yogi is reminding me of his muse Ockham's Razor right now so let's get back to funerals.

My wife and I attended my cousin's funeral and of course we were in the procession going to the cemetery. Funeral processions are a community ritual, more so in small towns but even in my Fort Wayne. There are still enough of us traditionalists around that we understand their significance. It is a procession of the family and friends of a member of our community who is being laid to rest. Reverential respect is the order

of day even though we very likely never knew the deceased.

Even in semi-metropolitan Fort Wayne, protocol is observed. By that I mean oncoming traffic pulls over and stops until the procession has passed.

This funeral procession was not large but it needed to travel from one side of town to the other so that my cousin could be buried in the large Lutheran cemetery close to his parents. We went through downtown and traversed several rather busy thoroughfares. Nearly everyone stopped while we passed.

Everyone, that is, but for one driver with a rather inflated concept of self-importance whose time is much more important than everyone else's. This impatient person pulled into the oncoming lane and passed the entire procession at a high rate of speed, running the red light at the next intersection. Fortunately the cars in the other lane had pulled over to the curb and those at the intersection were stopped to allow us to pass through so this self-important person was able to speed by without incident.

Perhaps this person was rushing a sick family member to the hospital or had been called to an emergency, so I should not be judgmental. Much more likely is that the driver just couldn't be bothered to show respect for the deceased and his grieving family and friends. Even so, I am more saddened than angered by the fact that there are those so self-absorbed to feel no obligation to observe long-held social customs if it involves the least bit of inconvenience.

A positive take on this is that almost everyone else pulled over and stopped. Our midwestern ethos is still defending itself against the anti-culture barbarians at the gates. We are not Portland. There is comfort to be had in that.

### Whose Children Are They Anyway?

*(March 17)* — The pandemic has disrupted much of our daily lives, sometimes out of necessity or too often due to governmental overreach. Be that as it may, Covid has certainly opened fault lines in our society that were already

there but hidden. One such fault line is at the education of our children.

There was a time when our schools reflected a civil consensus of what being an American meant. Back in the golden age — and by that I mean the 1950s when I was growing up in the best decade ever — there was a general acceptance of the reason for a free public education system. Fundamentals (the three R's) were taught and an instruction in civics education leading to the duties of citizenship was uniformly present. At least that's what I recall through admittedly rose-colored glasses.

Remember the Melting Pot, the principle that every immigrant group adds a little to the American culture but takes much, much more out? Or the American Dream, the motivator for the incredible waves of immigration as America offered a chance for everyone that the “old country” couldn't promise? That's why my family emigrated from Germany in the 1840s. America wasn't perfect then but it stood out among the nations of the world for its adherence to a creed of liberty and opportunity. And most everyone bought into that.

Something has gone terribly wrong in the last decade or so. Consider this sampling of news stories, the most egregious in a catalog of progressive hubris:

The San Francisco school board couldn't find time to develop a school reopening plan as it was focused on obliterating the names on buildings when the namesakes could be found with any human failing according to a puritanical list of unforgivable sins.

A group of parents at a New York city school raised funds to finance French as an option. This was obviously racist, according to the New York Times, because it doesn't address the cultural needs of the minority students at the school, who apparently shouldn't be enticed to waste their time learning a foreign language even as an elective.

A private school in Los Angeles has set an academic theme for its fifth-grade class as “Identity and Power” in order to redirect history

teaching to focus solely on a racial prism as a means of indicting a “White ethnostate.”

The Buffalo city schools are asking young students, grades two through four, to compare today's Covid pandemic to the alleged deliberate spread of smallpox to Indian tribes during the colonial wars of the eighteenth century.

The Oregon education department is encouraging teachers to take training to avoid “ethnomathematics,” which apparently is racist since it requires students show their work.

Where are the parents in all this? Mostly disenfranchised. And marginalized. And deprecated.

One wonders how many other school boards have made the same kind of disparaging comments about parents that one group of California school board members were caught saying, unaware that their meeting was being live-streamed. Oops.

One underlying tenet of public education, according to 19th century progressives, is that the government has a legitimate role in fashioning our children. Maybe, assuming that we have a consensus of what that means as I wrote above. As school boards and teacher unions become farther and farther detached from the public they represent and serve, trouble rears its ugly head. One should not be surprised that parents are organizing to take back control of their children's education.

It is no wonder that private and parochial schools, home schooling, public charter schools and similar options are getting serious consideration by frustrated parents. Voucher programs and tax incentives for non-public school tuition payments are being considered for implementation or expansion in 16 states, including Indiana. Parents want choice, especially when they feel they have no control over what their children are being taught, or indoctrinated into.

Parents are also voting with their feet or, I should say, with their children's feet. Public school enrollment has dropped by 155,000 in California and 43,000 in New York City. Covid is

the proximate cause but it might better be understood as the catalyst for turning rising disgruntlement into action.

I don't know where this eventually will land but the national trend toward canceling our culture and the authoritative imposition of offensive ideology must create a reaction from the silent majority. There are nearly 100,000 school board members in the nation, mostly elected I assume, but certainly all local enough to be approachable by John Q. and Jane Q. Citizen.

First, though, we need to understand whose responsibility it is to provide education for our young. With this responsibility comes the authority to set standards. The answer is obvious if the right question is asked.

I submit that the salient question is this:  
Whose children are they?

### They've Come for Dr. Seuss

*(March 10)* — "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this anymore!"

This iconic line from the movie "Network" has been repeated so often that it no longer has any effect. However, I can positively assert that this is the first time I've used it. In fact I had to do a Google search to learn where it came from as I don't watch movies, not wishing to be mind-numbed by the tripe that comes out of the intellectual wasteland called Hollywood.

That said, I couldn't stop myself from thinking of this quote when I learned that the cancel culture brigade has issued a dictat that Dr. Seuss is a racist and his books are not to be read in our schools. President Joe Biden, for whom my hope that he will be guided by his basic decency and not the extremist wing of his party grows dimmer each day, apparently succumbed to the thought police trolling the West Wing and conveniently failed to mention Dr. Suess in his Read Across America proclamation.

The irony here is that Read Across America Day deliberately is promoted on . . . guess whose birthday? Right, Theodor Geisel, the real name of Dr. Seuss. For a further dose of irony, it was

President Barack Obama who popularized Dr. Seuss on this day by calling him "one of America's revered wordsmiths" and that he "used his incredible talent to instill in his most impressionable readers universal values we all hold dear."

How can Dr. Seuss be blacklisted like this? Even those entrusted with his legacy caved to the torch-and-pitchfork mob storming the castle and removed six of his books from sale, and now eBay is trying to block any resale of the banned six. Their decision caused Dr. Seuss books to hold nine of the top ten spots in Amazon's best seller list last week, so maybe the suits at Dr. Suess Enterprises in reality are crazy like a fox.

I grew up with Dr. Seuss. I read every one of his books my small school library possessed and begged my parents to buy the missing ones. My wife and I read these books to our children and grandchildren at bedtime. I suspect nearly every parent and grandparent in America can say the same.

So what's the problem? They claim some of the cartoon images are racist. They certainly are strange, at least some of them, but they pull the mind's eye into an imaginary world of escapism that is the refuge of all school children. Is it his poetic style they find offensive? How many times can Dr. Seuss rhyme the name "Sam" in "Green Eggs and Ham"? A stunning number of times, as we all know. Keats and Byron may have nothing to fear artistically but then how often is their stuff read to kindergarten children?

Then there is "Horton Hears a Who!" This heart-warming story is an effective parable about the relative insignificance of outward differences, something that doesn't play well in our age of identity politics. "A person is a person, no matter how small." I submit that President Obama got it exactly right, and fortunately this title hasn't been canceled, at least not until somebody decides it is guilty of sizeism.

It's time to draw a line in the sand, at risk of stirring the censorship beast by using an Alamo meme. I have been pushed too far. I can ignore being called all sorts of nasty epithets due to my



skin color, my gender, my religion and my voting preferences. I really don't care what the coastal elitists see as my birth and character deficiencies. My seventieth birthday is rapidly approaching and I am content to continue living my life as I always have, fortunately here in the Midwest where sanity still prevails — most of the time.

But I absolutely will not stand for having my enjoyment and, more importantly, my grandchildren's enjoyment canceled by a bunch of neo-Puritan killjoys. Maybe that's just me in one of my many senior bouts of grumpiness but I have yet to find anyone who disagrees with me on this.

"I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this anymore!" Whew! I feel much better now and I promise never to quote that line again.

What I will do is pull out a Dr. Seuss book and gather my grandchildren. Maybe I better lock my doors and pull the shades, just in case Big Woke Brother is lurking in the bushes. But then, he probably already has enough evidence to cancel me all the way into eternity.

## Spring and Baseball

*(March 3)* — I watched my first baseball spring training game last Sunday and was immediately transported back into the mists of memory, that of a young boy at the first sign of spring heading outside with his glove, baseball and pitchback contraption.

First, a word about that pitchback. It was a metal frame with netting strung across it and a strike-zone target. An aspiring pitcher, I would deliver a repertoire of pitches at the target and the netting would rebound the ball back into the pitcher's glove. That was the theory but it required that the pitch actually find the target and be thrown with enough velocity to generate adequate return energy. I was neither fast nor accurate back then, so theory did not meet reality in my backyard. At least the ball landed somewhere close to my make-believe pitcher's mound and not in the neighbor's yard.

I knew it was spring when the local newspaper began reporting the scores of spring training games. That was all I needed to get myself into

mental shape for the upcoming summer baseball league hosted at the local junior-high playground just across the sand dune near my house.

It also meant that the new series of baseball cards were now available at the small grocery up the hill. It was only a nickel for a pack of five cards, if memory serves, plus a piece of industrial strength bubble gum that was an existential threat to the structural integrity of my teeth.

That was 66-plus years ago and my pitching arm is even less capable today of both speed and accuracy, let alone the ability to throw more than three pitches before requiring physical therapy. Fortunately, the boyhood love of baseball remains, albeit in spectator-only mode.

My local minor league baseball team, the Fort Wayne TinCaps, just announced their 2021 schedule. This is a clarion call to a banquet of baseball sustenance for a famished fan, terribly undernourished after the cancellation of minor league baseball last year. Covid has a lot to answer for, if I could just figure out whom to blame.

The TinCaps are the High Class A affiliate of the San Diego Padres. I'm not a Padres fan; my prejudice is to ignore any sports franchise that did not exist in 1959. I do respect the Padres organization for its policy of growing internally through talent development within its minor league system. Even though I pretend not to follow the Padres, I do watch for ex-TinCaps on the big-league roster.

How can a baseball fan not follow Fernando Tatis Jr.? He just signed a 14-year contract, locking him into a lifetime commitment to the Padres and an expectation of banking \$340 million over that time. That's more than the annual budget of over 30 countries in the world although less than an hour's worth of profligate deficit spending in Washington D. C. It's all a matter of perspective, although certainly not any kind of perspective understood by this retiree.

When my wife told our four-year-old grandson that the TinCaps would be playing soon, his response was, "Will Papa take me to the games?" He loves to go to the ballpark and actually watches

an inning or two, wondering why he can't go down onto the field to play. Eventually the siren call of the concession stand and the kiddie playground entices him. I'll credit the TinCaps for understanding how to make the ballpark a family outing venue.

Maybe I am reverting to my childhood or perhaps I never grew up, Peter Pan style. Or could it be that baseball is so integral to American culture that it bridges ages, social classes, educational level and whatever else the cancel culture mob uses as a wedge to destroy our ethos as a united community? Several books have been written about father-son bonding when differences were pulling them apart. (For a humorous take on this, read "Are We Winning?" by Will Leitch.)

Meanwhile, I'm watching the last of the snow melt away and counting down to opening day, both for the majors and for the TinCaps. And, to an extent, reliving my younger years vicariously through today's professional players such as Tatis Jr.

I just hope I am still going to games in 14 years when Fernando cashes his last paycheck of that \$340 million.

## The Blessings of a Fixed Income

(Feb. 17) — One thing we geezers, I mean senior citizens, are not so lovingly known for is constantly whining, I mean commenting, about being on a fixed income. Every time the price of gas goes up at the pump or groceries seem to cost more at checkout, an irritating choir of voices is heard about the unfairness of having to live on a fixed income.

Back when inflation was a real concern, there was some truth to this. Pensions, social security and other retirement incomes lagged by a year in giving cost of living increases and what did come was typically viewed as too little, too late.

Of course the other problem was the questionable accuracy of the federal consumer price index in calculating what the typical household paid in prices for its so called market basket of goods and services. Given that retirees

purchase different items on different frequencies than a young family, this could work against seniors. At least we all thought it did.

I will refrain from using that tired term, the new normal, but the times they are a'changing. Inflation is little more than an unpleasant memory, at least for most things. My cable TV and internet bill somehow goes up every six months or so and our local mayor wants to increase the food and beverage tax by a full percentage point, but I will stop there with the grouching.

Rather, I think this is a great time to be on a fixed income.

Think of the people who work in the restaurant, hospitality and tourism industries. Most are trying to live on significantly reduced incomes and many have lost their jobs, perhaps permanently. Then there are those who work for companies such as food wholesalers and equipment manufacturers which supply these hard-hit businesses. Which, in turn, affects those they buy from and those they buy from and so forth.

A friend who manages an American Legion post told me that he was able to bring all his employees back after the mandatory shutdown last spring but he estimates that their annual income was reduced by 20-25 percent due to lost hours and reduced tips after reopening to limited seating. Other posts, he said, permanently reduced staff and several never reopened. While this is not an empirical study on my part, one can easily extrapolate that across a large swath of the U. S. economy.

Sure, there were forgivable loans offered to employers and stimulus checks sent to workers and non-workers alike. A lucky group was able to collect unemployment benefits in excess of their regular wages, thanks to the economic geniuses who write laws in Congress. Americans who weren't suffering income loss responded by donations to charities and helped where and when they could.

My small part has been to tip 30 percent when at a restaurant or picking up carryout. That may

seem like a lot, especially when my wife insists on going to up-scale places rather than the not so up-scale places I prefer like that American Legion post I mentioned above. It only costs me a few dollars a week but it can mean a lot to the struggling employees at these establishments.

I am not nominating myself for sainthood or a presidential citation since I just admitted that this hasn't cost me much. Think, though, how much it would do for these workers if everyone increased tipping by even a dollar each visit?

Many are, as evidenced by a story in my local newspaper, which quoted a waitress as thankful

that her customers were tipping as much as 20 percent. This, she said, compared to her normal tip of only 10 percent. We Hoosiers are frugal, and I can think of several less complimentary terms for it, but we can and do respond when we see our neighbors in need. As well we should.

We seniors can share the blessing of a fixed income during a time when so many others deal with a reduced and uncertain income.

And then there has been those unexpected stimulus checks that most of us seniors received.

So much for a fixed income. ♦

## Let's Hear It for Anglo-Saxon Values

**W**ere the principles of the new American republic truly prefigured in Anglo-Saxon England, a relatively advanced state by the standards of the early Middle Ages but nonetheless one in which few people reached their 50s?

Actually, to an astonishing degree, yes, they were. What Adams would call “a government of laws, not of men” would have been a recognizable concept in 11th-century England. Other places had coronation oaths in which kings would promise to rule justly. But England was exceptional in not leaving it up to the monarch to decide whether he was doing so.

When, two centuries later, the authors of the Magna Carta sought to bind the crown to a form of conciliar government rooted in “the law of the land,” they were drawing consciously on that past.

Most 20th-century historians have shied away from this truth: It seemed altogether too triumphalist. But works by James Campbell on the late Saxon state and by J.R. Maddicott on the rise of parliament tend to vindicate those Victorian scholars who traced Anglo-American liberty to the century before the Norman conquest.

Does that make it a racial concept? Of course not. Sources differ on how many Angles and Saxons crossed from the continent to England and on the degree to which they displaced the indigenous population. But genetic studies bear out what common sense would suggest: that there was a significant mingling of populations and that the English are (in ethnic terms) Anglo-Celtic. Right from the start, the principles that would later turn into common law and limited government were developed in a multiethnic context.

Later still, the same institutional model would take root in more distant lands, differentiating Singapore from Indonesia, Bermuda from Haiti, and Israel from Syria. Anglo-Saxon values are, in fact, a perfect demonstration of how institutions transcend race. Isn't that the most American ideal of all?

— Dan Hannan in the May 17, 2021 *Washington Examiner*

# The Bookshelf

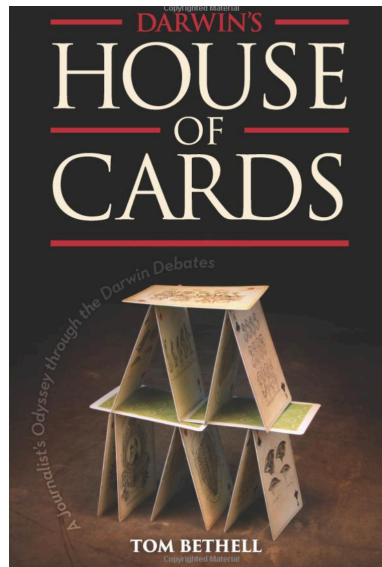
## Darwin's House of Cards

I know little about science, which is more a reflection on my school-day interests than the quality of instruction back then. Fortunately I have a 10-year-old granddaughter who loves this stuff so I can always ask her when I need to know something scientific.

My one exception is the whole issue of evolution versus creation. In the interest of full disclosure, I am a lifelong Lutheran and we take the Bible at face value, including the Genesis account of creation. I do, therefore, begin any analysis of evolutionary theory with a healthy dose of skepticism. Even after discounting this bias, I just can't buy into the incredible leap of faith evolution requires to accept it *prima facie*. It just looks too much like a house of cards to me.

As it does to Tom Bethell, whose last published book is entitled, appropriately, "Darwin's House of Cards: A Journalist's Odyssey through the Darwin Debates" (Discovery Institute Press 2017, 257 pages plus notes, \$22 paperback). Bethell, who died this past February, was a renowned journalist who also wrote what I consider the seminal work on property rights.

Bethell became acquainted with Darwinism during his years at Oxford but didn't think much about it until he came to America and read his first book that advanced the Intelligent Design (ID) thesis. This sparked his journalistic interest and so he did what professional journalists do, or should do, and that is read the published literature and interview the key thinkers in the field. This book is the result of his years of research and contains extensive quoting from their writings and their interviews. In fact he quotes Darwinists extensively, some of whom are themselves critical of much of evolutionary theory.



The book covers the well-known facets of evolution: natural selection, the fossil record, speciation, extinction, etc. He also examines some of the more esoteric fields of evolutionary study: homology, systematics, cladism, genomics and sociobiology. Much of this is beyond my previous knowledge but his evidence is clearly stated and I could follow it. Still, I needed to read the book twice just to be sure I got it.

Bethell's point of departure is that Darwinism arises from an uncritical, whole-cloth adherence to the philosophy of materialism, i.e., only matter exists so therefore everything that exists must have come from other existing matter. Bethell points out that Darwin withheld his evolutionary theories from publication for about 20 years, needing full acceptance of materialism by Britain's learned class in order to have a foundation that would not be questioned. Was this a matter of self-confidence or simply shrewd marketing?

What the neo-Darwinists succumb to is the logical fallacy of begging the question. This term, frequently misused to mean asking the obvious question, in fact refers to assuming the conclusion as a premise to proving the conclusion. (While I avoided science classes, I did take two in logic from the philosophy department. This was on a test and fortunately I remember the answer.) "It is true because it must be true" is too often given as a defense, and Bethell provides numerous examples of this argumentation.

What disgusts me is the surrender of science to politics; witness all the claims and counterclaims during the Covid debates that had more to do with what Donald Trump said than any honest scientific conclusions. The same has happened in so-called climate science; i.e., "the debate is closed." It is now occurring in sociobiology, Darwinists fighting a losing battle against intelligent design proponents. How do they



counter them? By the Left's tried-and-true method of "cancelling" them within university faculties, academic publications and the media. The unforgivable sin is giving ammunition to the enemy, as one such scientist charged. Another called attacking Darwin "the sin against the Holy Ghost," using a rather impious analogy to Christian doctrine but still making the point quite nicely.

Where macroevolution falls flat is its inability to convincingly explain the origin of life or show any transitional life forms that document the changing of one species into another. Recall the Tree of Life diagram used in many publications. This graphic is presented frequently to show a common ancestor for all life on earth but none of the nodes connect. It is a parade example of begging the question.

One thing we hear incessantly is the rapid extinction of species due to mankind's behavior. The facts, as Bethell points out, are that only about 860 extinctions have been recorded since 1650 or two per year on average. This is against a total speciation of anywhere from 8.7 million to a trillion, and who knows how many more that are undiscovered. Even here Darwinists face a paradox: natural selection is given credit for the rise of species but then it must be a failure as well due to extinctions.

Someone with more scientific background than I, and that includes nearly every sentient being, will find Bethell's discussion of DNA, amino acids and proteins quite informative. These are the building blocks of life and key to evolutionary theory . . . except the math doesn't add up. The probabilities against all these pieces arranging themselves into an appropriate complex order is something to the magnitude of  $1 \times 10$  to the 74th power, according to one scientist quoted by Bethell. These odds are slightly better than my chances of winning the Indiana lottery, but then I've never bought a ticket.

Darwin can be classified as a fellow philosophical traveler with Marx, fair enough, but Darwin also considered his theory to be a biological sibling to Adam Smith's theory of

laissez-faire economics. I found this point disturbing at first blush but then the obvious question helped me get past it: If natural selection is simply free enterprise in the wild then what explains its "invisible hand" other than intelligent design?

This may be the touchstone for the ID alternative to natural selection. Even Darwin admitted that he couldn't explain the origin of matter. He simply assumed its existence and then launched his theory of evolutionary progress. So I ask: Where did the original matter come from that somehow combined against astronomical odds to create a simplistic life form and then billions of years later evolve into human beings? Bethell makes clear that evolutionary biology cannot provide the answer.

It is important to note that intelligent design does not equate necessarily with Biblical creation. Most ID proponents quoted by Bethell don't believe the Genesis account but at the same time can't offer a coherent alternative. I guess this means they leave the door open but concede they will never "prove" God by any scientific means. As well they shouldn't; He is above and outside that.

Bethell's chapter on fossilization is interesting even to a non-scientist. Apparently most Darwinists believe the fossil record is nearly complete but can't be used to explain Darwin's theory. In fact as more fossils are discovered, expected evidence for transitional life forms not only fails to appear but actually is disproved by the new fossil findings.

The simple fact remains that Darwinists cannot point to any transitional life forms in the fossil record nor in observation in the current world. Neither has there been any successful creation of life or consciousness in the laboratory. Glowing claims for artificial intelligence notwithstanding, robots still can't think for themselves. And they never will, at least as Bethell's human intelligence tells him.

Bethell attributes the stubborn support of Darwinism to an unholy alliance of progressivism and materialism during the 19th century. The irony is that progressivism, which postulates that

mankind is continuing toward perfection, has been totally discarded by the radical environmental movement, which considers mankind to be an evil species that must go extinct to save the planet. So the fittest species, humans, cannot or must not survive in contradiction to Darwin's cherished theory of natural selection.

In the final analysis, Darwinism is incapable of answering several fundamental questions. How did the original matter come about? Where are the fossil records for transitional life forms? Why haven't we observed even one species evolving into another, different one? Why hasn't modern science been able to recreate (pun intended) the origin of the first life on earth?

If we are all honest with ourselves, we will accept that both evolution and creation are based on premises not empirically provable but capable of inference drawn from our own observations and our inherent biases. Either is a matter of faith. I simply am incapable of having enough faith to worship at Darwin's altar.

*Recommendation:* Read this book. Better, buy this book and keep it handy. If you are a creationist or a secular intelligent design adherent, you will find it quite the handy reference source when facing evolutionists. If you are a Darwinist, study it to learn what a house of cards your theory is.

## Nuclear Folly

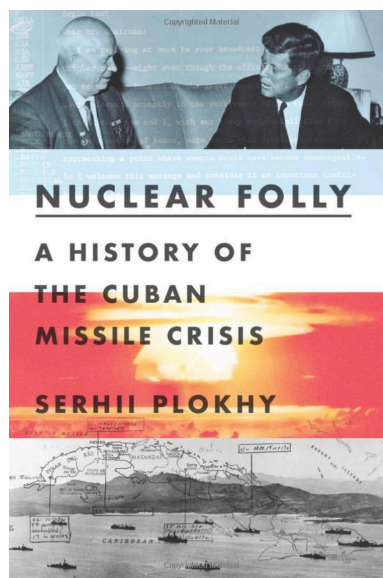
I was old enough in 1962 to follow the Cuban missile crisis in the news but not old enough to understand what was at stake. Since then I have read several journal articles about it, each deepening my understanding. After reading Serhii Plokhy's "Nuclear Folly: A History of the Cuban Missile Crisis" (W. W. Norton & Company 2021, 363 pages plus notes, \$29 hardcover), I realize I should have been really frightened back then. Plokhy, best known for his Ukrainian

histories, leads the reader through the crisis as an eavesdropper on the highest-level councils of the time. This isn't a history of the "boots on the ground" participants so much as the story of the leaders who put them there and who could have placed them in the middle of a shooting war or worse.

The book is heavily oriented toward the United States and the Kennedy administration, likely due to the abundance of source documents available. Even so Khrushchev and the Soviet Union are sufficiently covered and to a lesser extent Castro and Cuba. The lesson taught is that the world was on the brink of a nuclear war, perhaps globally, because of the personalities of the key actors and the nature of their regimes.

Khrushchev comes off as an emotionally unstable bully, perhaps manic-depressive if I understand that diagnosis. He was a gambler with a large ego subject to immense cognitive dissonance. Kennedy, on the other hand, was indecisive but subject to influence by his advisors. Castro was clearly unstable, in Plokhy's opinion, and willing to risk nuclear war to satiate his fear of being seen as inferior as a leader. Castro actually demanded that Khrushchev launch the nukes to prevent an assumed invasion.

What saved the world was Kennedy's and Khrushchev's heartfelt desire to avoid nuclear war at almost any cost. Unfortunately the confusion on both sides left subordinates unclear as to expectations. One example is the Russian submarine commander who tried to fire his nuclear missiles but was thwarted by his superior officer. A movie and a recent historical novel have dramatized this event but there was also the low-level Soviet officer who violated no-fire orders and shot down an American U-2 plane over Cuba. In an age without instantaneous communications, it is a wonder that actions like these did not



escalate things. Plokhy provides a good runup to the crisis by documenting the importance of the Berlin crisis in setting the stage for the one in Cuba. The USSR wanted West Berlin neutralized to detach it from the West, something NATO could not condone. Both sides misjudged the situation there, according to the author, leading to unfortunate results in Cuba.

It is interesting to follow JFK's indecision during this period. Some might call it waffling as he moved among responses of wait-and-see, surgical strikes against missile sites, full scale invasion and every perceivable permutation of these. I think Kennedy came off well by his refusal to be rushed into a prescriptive decision that couldn't be walked back. He was being pushed to a military response by most of his advisors, including his brother Robert.

The key stumbling block to the agreement was inspection of the missiles' removal by U-2 overflights, something Castro adamantly refused to allow. There were also tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba as well as bombers, considered offensive weapons by the Americans. But the big problem was Castro, who became more belligerent even as the crisis was supposed to be winding down. Until Khrushchev could bring Castro into line, the risk of escalation was a Sword of Damocles hanging over both super-powers. Plokhy does a good job of maintaining this tension until the end of the book.

The book mentions several times how Kennedy referred to Barbara Tuchman's "The Guns of August" and her account of how the world slipped into war when no one really wanted it. (This is an outstanding history of the summer of 1914 and highly recommended.) This cautionary example allowed Kennedy to avoid accepting military options so long as diplomatic ones remained. He moved from indecisive to negotiating from a position of strength as the blockade began to work and world opinion shifted positively.

Why was Khrushchev so difficult for the U. S. to decipher? Plokhy makes an interesting point. We tend to think of the USSR as an absolute dictatorship in the Stalin mold. Not so for

Khrushchev. While Kennedy appointed all his advisors and therefore had their personal loyalty, the Soviet system had multiple organizations—party, government, KGB, army—all with independent authority. Khrushchev had to work with advisors who were also opponents and constantly maneuvering to reduce his power or even bring him down, which they eventually did in 1964 citing his failed adventurism in Cuba for cause.

I did learn two things, one a correction of what I thought was true and another a complete surprise. Most know, or think they know, that the crisis ended because the U.S. agreed to remove Jupiter missiles from Turkey in exchange for the ones in Cuba. This actually was a side issue, only added late in the negotiations. These missiles were considered obsolete and planned for eventual removal anyway. The issue was the political fallout in NATO and Turkey if they were removed unilaterally. Hence the secret protocol to remove them months after the crisis ended.

The surprise? When one thinks of Russian interference in an American presidential election, Putin and Trump and 2016 come to mind. That theory has been sufficiently debunked but what about 1960? Soviet documents quote Khrushchev as discussing international moves the USSR could make to discredit Richard Nixon and assist Kennedy's election. He also discussed how to influence the 1962 elections to preserve the Democrat congressional majority. He clearly misjudged his man, as Kennedy proved to be a foeman worthy of Khrushchev's steel, as the old saw goes. Did Khrushchev have an effect on the 1960 election? Who knows, but Kennedy's campaign theme of an unfavorable missile gap, clearly false but supported by Soviet propaganda, had to help him.

Plokhy ends with this statement: "John Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev managed to avoid nuclear war after making almost every mistake conceivable and every step imaginable to cause it." It was the belief by both leaders that a nuclear war was unwinnable that made the difference, according to Plokhy. He then

concludes with a sermon-like exhortation against nuclear proliferation which he sees happening now, led by the United States and Russia. Will national leaders or bad actors with their hands on nuclear buttons conclude that nuclear war is still unwinnable? His is not an optimistic outlook.

*Recommendation:* An excellent insight into the minds of national leaders and a chilling reminder of how close the world came. I intend to read more of Plokhy's histories, which is the highest recommendation I can give.

## Evening in the Palace of Reason

"Old Bach is here."

So announced King Frederick the Great of Prussia to his assembled courtiers one evening in his palace of Sans Souci. He did not say it with joy.

That's how James R. Gaines begins his book, "Evening in the Palace of Reason: Bach meets Frederick the Great in the Age of Enlightenment" (HarperCollins 2005, 273 pages plus notes, \$21 hardcover). While both men lived during the Enlightenment or Age of Reason, they were at opposite ends of the philosophical spectrum; Bach dedicated all his talents in praise of God while Frederick's varied talents were used for war and the worship of human reason.

What prompted the visit was an invitation by Bach's son Carl Philipp Emanuel, one of Frederick's court musicians and devotee of the "modern" style of music. The idea was to present the father with a musical challenge to create a three-part counterpoint fugue out of a long and complex musical line. Bach did, on the spot. Frederick then asked him to make a six-part fugue in a double-or-nothing sort of challenge. That one took two weeks as Bach had never written any six-part composition before. Still, he succeeded within two weeks. Gaines wonders if son Carl was

really behind the mean-spirited tests as an expression of filial rebellion.

I know little about music and have no ear for differentiating notes in four-part harmonies but I do have a real appreciation for the other-worldly magnificence of Bach's sacred and secular music. So much so, that this is the second time I have read this book and now have an opportunity through IPR to write a review of it.

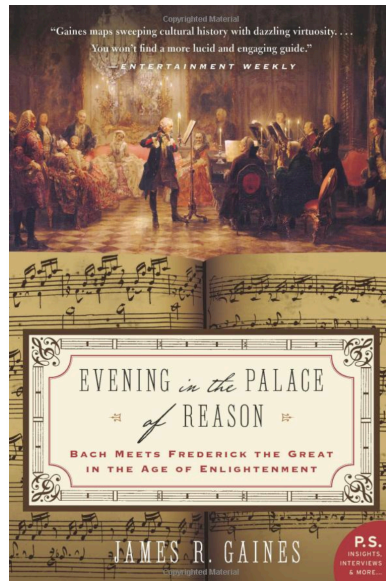
The book is written as a parallel but contrasting pair of biographies, the early chapters focusing on each man's youthful years and their struggles to escape intellectual confinement, Frederick by his brutal father and Bach by being subordinated to lesser court musicians.

The alternating chapter approach to the two biographies sets clearly what was at stake in the early eighteenth century: Frederick's rationalism over against Bach's spiritualism, Frederick's

Enlightenment in conflict with Bach's anti-Enlightenment. While Frederick's ultra-rationalism may appear to have won that battle, Bach's transcendent outlook still holds on with many today in the face of twenty-first century postmodernism.

Gaines is quick to point out the dissonance of Bach's reputation then and now. He got his position at Leipzig's St. Thomas School, his longest held position and scene of his greatest compositions, only because all other candidates dropped out. "A second-rate man," Bach was described by one town councilor. After the first performance of his St. Matthew Passion, it was described as an "opera-comedy" and his salary was reduced.

"The greatness of great music is in its ability to express the unutterable." No one has ever done that quite like Bach, as Gaines points out. Bach did this in such a way that he "turned music on its head." Gaines provides highly technical





explanations of how Bach composed as he did, weaving musical themes that evoked a story even without words, all the while drawing on every compositional trick in the book. I freely admit to not understanding most of this but still stand in awe of what the man did.

Gaines is much less charitable to Frederick. Frederick the warmonger, Frederick the callous bully, Frederick the grumpy old man all serve to offset what genius he did show. While neither man was liked during his lifetime, one senses that Bach at least was likeable. Although it took a few years, composers who followed Bach freely copied his technique in acknowledgement of his genius. This includes even those like Wagner of the Romantic period. Frederick, on the other hand, seemed to have his posthumous adoration limited to Adolf Hitler, perhaps an unfair characterization by Gaines.

*Recommendation:* Definitely worthwhile for anyone interested in the Enlightenment, music or German history.

## First Principles

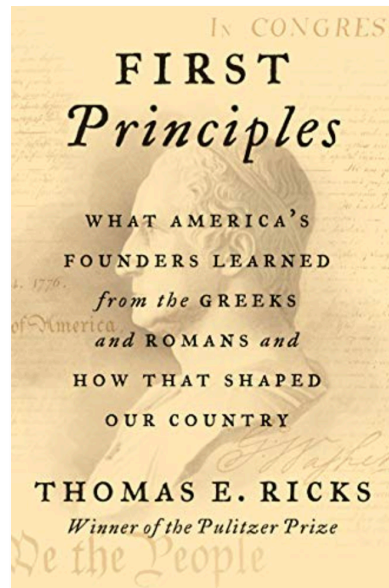
I spend a lot of time contemplating what I consider first principles, those values of the highest order upon which all lesser ones ought to align. It was a given, then, that I would read “First Principles: What American Founders Learned from the Greeks and Romans and How That Shaped Our Country” (Harper 2020, 292 pages plus extensive notes, \$19 hardcover) by journalist Thomas E. Ricks. It was not the best decision I made this spring.

The full title of the book drew me in and Ricks does discuss the Greco-Roman influences on our Founding Fathers. He calls Washington the American Cato and Adams our Cicero. He devotes sufficient space to explaining why the Founders generation abhorred any action that appeared to reflect Caesar or Catiline, both considered anti-republican based on their attempts—successful in

Caesar’s case—to bring down the Roman Republic.

His Greek references were somewhat more obscure to my thinking but then my ancient study has been focused primarily on Republican Rome. My sense is that he has a rather elevated respect for the efficacy of Athenian democracy, which ultimately collapsed into mobocracy.

In addition to Washington and Adams, Ricks covers Jefferson and Madison. This is due partly to his observation that the American political ethos changed after Madison, one based less on classical models and more on homespun American democracy. After these four one does not find national figures quoting Greeks or Romans much.



Virtue was the driving force for our classical forebears and this was fundamental to the Founders. Back then virtue meant more than female chastity, in Ricks’ words, encompassing one’s whole motivation for public service and behavior during it. Washington, whom Ricks heavily criticizes early in the book, rises to be the exemplar of virtue in his actions at the end of the War of Independence to head off an officers’ revolt over defaulted pay and then to voluntarily resign his commission as commander in chief. Washington is no longer Cato but Cincinnatus returning to

his plow, to extend the Roman analogy.

What gave me pause about my time investment in the book is Ricks’ statement in the preface that he wrote it as a consequence of trying to understand how Donald Trump could have been elected given his absolute antipathy to American ideals (my characterization of Ricks’ anti-Trump attitude, not his). He sees the Trump movement as distinctly un-American yet praises the Jacksonian grass roots movement from the 1820’s. Somehow those were true Americans giving definition to democratic republicanism.

Trump supporters were anything but, although Ricks never gives a reason. It is just understood, don't you know.

Ricks concludes with ten things he insists must happen to restore America to the Founders' ideals post-Trump. The ten include the usual progressive mantra against the evils of property rights and corporate campaign contributions.

He calls for a return to a true understanding of happiness as meant in the Declaration of Independence, which he defines as of the mind and spirit and not of the flesh, or as how Jefferson the Epicurean meant it to be understood. He insists that America's founding was fundamentally flawed by slavery

and requires constant vigilance against always present attitudes of white supremacy. (Shades of the 1619 Project? Ricks is a book reviewer for the New York Times but maybe that is just a coincidence.)

He makes a few points that classical liberals can agree with. He takes Congress to task for letting the executive branch supersede it. He calls for more respect of controversial views in public discourse, including an end to canceling speakers with unpopular beliefs. Still, his prescription for restoring America is mostly along traditional progressive lines.

*Recommendation:* I wish I had given it a pass.

— Mark Franke

## Wealthy and Woke

The richest in America — the families who own and operate Amazon, Apple, Bloomberg, Facebook, Google and Microsoft — are the most likely to voice their derision for its unwoke lower- and middle-classes.

Ditto the multimillionaires of politics — an Al Gore, Dianne Feinstein, John Kerry or Nancy Pelosi. The richest celebrity billionaires such as Jay-Z, George Lucas, Paul McCartney or Oprah Winfrey weigh in a lot about the oppression of a supposedly rigged system they mastered, rarely about the plight of the less-well-paid in their own professions.

So wokeness is medieval. Sin is not given up as much as atoned for — and excused — through loud confessionals.

Self-righteous elites rant about carbon footprints, needless border security, defunding the police, gun control, and charter schools. But they rarely forgo their own private jets, third and fourth homes, estate walls, armed security guards, and prep schools. Apparently to rant about “privilege” means the less you need to worry about your own.

Wokeness is an insurance policy. The louder the damnation of American culture, the more likely a career will be saved or enhanced.

Wokeness is classist and elitist. Those who made a fortune, got the right degree at the right place, made CEO or four-star rank, live in the right ZIP code, or know the good people, believe they have earned the right to decide what is moral for their inferiors.

So some of them have created an entire vocabulary of deplorables, irredeemables, clingers, dregs, chumps and Neanderthals — for the peasants and “losers” who must do what they are told.

Wokeness is not really about fairness for minorities, the oppressed and the poor, past or present. It is mostly a self-confessional cult of anointed bullies and hypocrites of all races and genders, who seek to flex, and increase, their own privilege and power. Period. — *Victor David Hanson in American Greatness, April 7, 2021*



Thomas Hoepker, Sept. 11, 2001

# The Outstater

## 'Reimagining' Public Safety

*"Hogsett Announces 'Reimagining' of Public Safety through New York University Partnership." — headline in the Indianapolis Star, Jan. 15, 2020*

(April 27) — Early in my journalism career my path crossed that of a city councilman who represented a district with a crime problem. People were coming to church and finding dead bodies in the parking lot and that sort of thing.

An election was upcoming and the councilman had scheduled a meeting with our editorial board. The conversation soon got around to crime and what policies he would introduce if reelected.

He said there would be no policies as such. Rather, he planned to meet with certain of the drug dealers, pimps and gang leaders and negotiate an acceptable level of mayhem. In effect, he told us that the mechanisms of our so-called Western Civilization would not be needed, thank you very much. He planned to handle matters without benefit of due process, common law, subpoenas, property rights, uniform sentencing, warrants, etc., and certainly without aggressive policing or prosecution.

At the time, I dismissed the conversation as crazy talk. Surely it was just another example of hubris momentarily overcoming judgment, that

the views expressed did not represent any sizable opinion in the district.

Looking back, though, the man was a prophet. He was "reimagining," as they now say, public safety.

That was over 30 years ago. How did it work out?

Not well. It turns out that only criminals invest in such places. And the only people who live there are those who cannot leave — they and the politicians who feed off them. Crime is rampant. How could it be otherwise?

The data supporting that grim assessment is undeniable. Last year, the nation saw the largest percentage increase in homicides in recorded history, all thanks to the approach pioneered by our councilman, an approach now coupled with the "de-policing" movement.

Only two-fifths of those convicted of felonies in state courts are actually sentenced to prison, according to John Pfaff's "The True Causes of Mass Incarceration." Of the rest, about half received no incarceration and half were sentenced to a short term in a local jail.

"At any one time there are more than twice as many convicted offenders on probation or parole — that is, not incarcerated — as there are in the nation's prisons or jails," comments Joseph Bessette of the Claremont Institute.

And last week, the Biden administration rescinded guidelines establishing commonsense preconditions for when the federal government can open a "pattern-or-practice investigation" of local police departments. It is an expensive, time-consuming process that effectively cancels local control as well as those thousand-year-old mechanisms of civilization.

Anyone who watched this reimagining of public safety in its early stages is not surprised by its popularity. It is an adolescent's dream come true, i.e., "stick it to the man." What is surprising is that after all these years it is not understood to be a disaster. Indeed, it is thought rude to even compare the before and after, a slur on the hapless people trapped in its hogarthian misery.

Several years ago another type of councilman gave me a tour of my city's most depressed neighborhoods — crime-ridden commercial wastelands all. He pointed out that even though the streets were unsafe during certain hours, the infrastructure was sound and free of debt. He argued that human capital had survived in these neighborhoods, with many of the residents resourceful, productive and hard-working.

My councilman friend insisted that if given a chance those living in his district would be willing and capable of investing in each other and building up their neighborhoods, and they can do so without any help from Washington, the Statehouse or City Hall.

But that chance won't happen, he said, until the political leadership, particularly woke mayors and prosecutors, restore law and order, to use a quaint phrase from the 1970s. If you are tracking the elections in places like Indianapolis and Fort Wayne, you know that won't be anytime soon.

### A Different Kind of Politician

(April 16) — This is a bit uncomfortable. I am going to laud the performance of a professional politician. And in full disclosure, he is a longtime friend to some of us here. Nonetheless, it has to be done.

Close observers of the political scene have noticed something different about Jim Banks. Unlike that from the rest of Indiana's congressional delegation, some of his emails and posts actually include useful information independent of any political aspiration, indeed some of it countervailing. It is information that helps constituents understand the challenges facing our society and the options available to it.

As suspicious as it may sound, Banks, who represents the Third Congressional District, seems to be fulfilling an ideal of American office — representing his constituency as a friend and neighbor, not as an amoral agent sent to Washington to press our interests in exchange for wealth and sinecure.

On my screen is a FaceBook post from the representative dated yesterday. I have not seen anything like it in almost 50 years of covering politics. The man is calling out as liars the most powerful lobbying influences in our state, telling them in effect to stop trying to manipulate the democratic process and mind their own business. Here it is:

*"Eli Lilly intensely lobbied against State Sen. Erin Houchin's election security bill S.B. 353 at the Statehouse. They focused on criticizing the part of the bill that required ID verification for absentee ballots.*

*"Right now in Indiana, ID is required to vote in person but not for absentee voters, and a majority of Republicans, Democrats and Independents support voter ID requirements for all types of voting.*

*"But that didn't stop Eli Lilly from implying the voter ID provision is racist and claiming there have been no accusations of voter fraud in Indiana, so the bill is a "solution in search of a problem."*

*"Unfortunately, their smear campaign worked. The watered-down version that eventually passed the House doesn't require ID verification of any kind for absentee ballots requested by mail.*

*"I'm glad to hear that Senator Houchin dissented on what the House passed and intends to continue her efforts to strengthen voter ID laws in our state.*

*"Eli Lilly's campaign against S.B. 353 was a shameful disinformation campaign.*

*Here's the problem: the most common forms of voter fraud target absentee ballots. Absentee voting should have more stringent security measures than in-person voting, not less.*

*"And there have been proven and consequential instances of voter fraud in Indiana involving absentee ballots. In 2003 Indiana's Supreme Court overturned the 2003 Democratic mayoral primary in East Chicago because of widespread absentee ballot voter fraud. 47 people were either convicted or pled guilty for*



*playing a role in absentee ballot voter fraud in Indiana.*

*“Hoosiers should be very wary of corporations that lie in order to make our elections less secure. They don’t care about voter representation and they don’t care about democracy. They are trying to sabotage both.”*

Wow. And in addition, Banks in recent months has consistently defined as his central political position the protection and repair of the Middle Class — yes, us deplorables.

Now, agreed, all this may be a trick, a sneaky way of getting re-elected. Banks, an experienced and accomplished political tactician, may be merely assuming the stance envisioned by the Founding Fathers, that is, to challenge the inevitable attempts by the powerful to centralize authority and impose their particular brand of tyranny,

Well, so be it. If Banks is a professional politician, he is my kind of professional politician.

### **When Your Speaker Sounds a lot Like George Babbitt**

(April 13) — I found myself at a luncheon some time ago where the speaker was a local businessman. The speech was like many I have heard in recent years: a mix of crony capitalism and social justice with a splash of mercantilism toward the end.

In his talk, civic progress depended on public-private partnerships (where risk is borne by that amorphous entity, the future taxpayer). Civic health depended on providing “equity” in hirings and appointments to rectify past wrongs, real or perceived, immediate or distant, and to act reflexively on any charge of racism or sexism, however shifting and expansive the definitions.

And, of course, be sure to wear a mask.

Afterward, I sat silent wondering how such a smart fellow could so blithely make recommendations for his community that if

applied judiciously to his own industry would drive it to ruin. (See Eric Schansberg’s review of *“the Virtue Hoarders”* on page 16.)

Nonetheless, the applause was sincere and the businessman had reason to be pleased with his performance. “Solid,” pronounced the man next to me with the Rotary pin. I wondered if he knew that a hundred such executives at the national level are now taking a position relaxing local voting laws.

Right here I need to correct myself. The speaker was neither “local” nor a “businessman.” Rather, he was a corporate manager dispatched from afar, and although possessing a Masters in Business Administration hadn’t engaged in actual business (sales, marketing, production) for several decades, if ever.

What he does is manage people and budgets, lots of people and big budgets. Nor is his job to make the company as efficient as it can be or even as profitable. His job is to meet the quarterly goals set by headquarters — no more, no less. That and of course accept luncheon speaking invitations from the natives.

“The most privileged CEOs of corporate America — those who sell us everything from soft drinks and sneakers, to professional sports and social media — now jabber to America about its racism, sexism and assorted sins,” writes the historian Victor David Hansen. The rules of CEO politics are transparent, Hansen says, “(They) never fear offending the conservative silent majority, who are assumed not to boycott or protest.”<sup>1</sup>

A former editor of mine referred to these as the new Babbitts, quoting a few lines from the famous opening of the Sinclair Lewis novel as he left for his own luncheon club:

*“His name was George F. Babbitt. He was forty-six years old now, in April 1920, and he made nothing in particular, neither butter nor shoes nor poetry, but he was nimble in the*

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<sup>1</sup> Victor David Hansen. “Wealthy and Woke.” *American Greatness*, April 7, 2021.



*calling of selling houses for more than people could afford to pay.”<sup>2</sup>*

But the comparison is unfair; Babbitt actually sold things. Nor is this to disparage our luncheon speaker. He works extremely hard. He is highly intelligent and often kind — charitable, his friends say. Women find him handsome and he possesses admirable people skills.

It is fair, though, to challenge the speaker's presumed role — or perhaps assigned role — as our unelected moral and economic leader. And that challenge, please know, is made not to his abilities but to his incentives.

Consider how you would make community decisions if your income and that of your children and grandchildren depended not only on the prosperity of your business, the one you own as the sole proprietor, but on the prosperity of the surrounding community for generations to come.

Now consider how you would make those decisions if you had been flown into town by a widely held corporation with limited, short-term goals and in a few years would be headed to retirement on the Carolina coast.

Such men and women can be thought of as “occupiers,” and that seems to apply whether or not their corporation was originally home-grown. And as Hansen suggests, it might make tactical sense for such a man or woman to entertain the views of the noisy and radical in the community, those most likely to disrupt the assuring, copacetic trajectory of those quarterly reports to the global shareholders.

So McDonald's decision to quit fighting the \$15-an-hour movement had little to do with sympathy for a hypothetical living wage and a lot to do with a newfound ability to automate and cut its labor force by half.<sup>3</sup>

Being a CEO, you see, is all-consuming. The competition within and outside a company is brutal. Few have the time or inclination to personally research every policy issue that might

come before a community. And once outside the details of running a large organization, the thinking can run surprisingly shallow. Several thoughts expressed by our luncheon speaker sounded as if they were formed in a late-night bull session in the sophomore dormitory — inchoate at best.

Finally, the world-wise corporate executive swims in social circles that are ironically parochial compared with the generations of community- and state-wide connections that affix to a local family business. Our speaker's brain trust on local issues might be nothing more than his wife's guest list for the last dinner party.

None of this is to suggest that when the corporate executive stands up to speak at your next event or council meeting you shouldn't listen with respect. He or she has earned it, for in their field they are knowledgeable and influential.

Also know that the frumpy fellow in the corner in the porkpie hat and sloppy golf sweater whose great-grandfather built the corner grocery store may have a better handle on things generally.

## The Unmaking of a Solipsist

*“Expectations were created that with the government of President Biden there would be a better treatment of migrants. And this has caused Central American migrants, and also from our country, wanting to cross the border thinking that it is easier to do so.” — Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador*

(March 25) — The mayor of my city, a Biden man, has made clear in the past that he welcomes the world's immigrants — all of them, seemingly, even in numbers so high as to make assimilation difficult.

It is reasonable to ask why.

<sup>2</sup> Sinclair Lewis. *Babbitt*. Bantam Books, 1922.

<sup>3</sup> Jon Miltimore. “Why McDonalds Gave Up the Minimum Wage Fight.” Foundation for Economic Education, April 29, 2019.

One answer, trying to be charitable, rejects any plot to pad Democrat voter rolls or to create a pool of cheap labor. Rather, the mayor is a hopeless solipsist; he can't see past the end of his nose.

I was introduced to the word in a Charles Krauthammer column more than 30 years ago. A solipsist holds the view that the self is all that can be known to exist. Krauthammer was using it to describe any politician who imagined that the rest of the world operated pretty much like suburban Boston.

So when our mayor hangs out a welcome sign to Somalis, Guatemalans, Salvadorans, Mexicans, etc., he is thinking of a manageable influx of gardeners, waitresses and housemaids. He has no idea how many thousands of people might risk life and limb to relocate here. Given an open door, they would come to live in tents, assign their children to cages, even without hope of jobs or prospect, all to escape a much grimmer future in the Third World.

Now there's another term that begs review. The Third World excluded both the free West and the old Soviet bloc. It was thought to be the undeveloped parts, not the ideological ones.

That is not exactly the case. The historian and Peruvian-born Dan Hannan challenges the stereotype that the Third World is poor for lack of resources, human or otherwise. Rather, he blames its socio-political organization.

In the United States, Hannan argues, one is relatively free to invest money or energy in anything that the government has not expressly forbidden. Elsewhere you can only invest in what the government has expressly approved.

There's a big difference.

Another Peruvian, the economist Hernando de Soto, sharpens the distinction: There are those who have the right of private property and those who do not.

De Soto's Institute for Liberty and Democracy estimates that about two billion people in the world have full rights to the property they live in and the land they farm. The 5.3 billion who do not are unable to leverage their resources to create

wealth. Their assets become "dead capital" which cannot be used to generate income or growth.

As a result, he says, Third World nations remain trapped by the "tragedy of the commons" where their unregistered assets can be stolen by powerful interests, hurting individuals and broader economic development.

If the poor in these nations were allowed to earn clear titles to land, homes and unregistered businesses it would unlock \$9.3 trillion in assets, De Soto estimates.

"There is no such thing as an investment without property rights that are negotiable and transferable," De Soto warns. "The question is: Do people own things in such a way that they can be brought into the global market and make (their nation) wealthier?"

And he says this right is absolute, that there is no such thing as "sort of" property rights. Indeed, most Third World countries boast constitutions promising property rights. The fine print, though, reads, "or as his excellency may permit."

The obvious solution, the one that many would doubtless prefer over a long, arduous emigration, is to stay put and see their fortunes reversed, to experience at home the property rights and related freedoms that have made the neighbor to the North so prosperous.

That, my mayor will tell you, is supremacist talk, and he won't stand for it.

Nonetheless, it might be something that future property owners ponder as their city, state and federal governments tax them to ruin paying for solipsism gone bad.

## The New 'Obviousness'

(*March 12*) — A friend pulled out an apt George Orwell quote for the week's events: "We have now sunk to a depth at which restatement of the obvious is the first duty of intelligent men."

Yes, Oprah's interview with the Duchess came to mind but we were challenged to apply it to local public policy, particularly economic development and race relations.

Herding a group of cronies into a regional authority and then allowing self-interested schemers to manipulate government funding does not result in general prosperity. Nor is it progress. Rather, it is mercantilism, a system of limiting economic choice and opportunity dating back to when the Tudors were on the throne.

Look, if prosperity were simply a matter of a mayor or governor commanding taxpayer resources to attract investment . . . well, everyplace would be rich.

Along the same lines, if a workforce is deemed underpaid, why not proclaim the desired wage? Or if rents are too high, declare a ceiling? The Indianapolis City Council recently entertained a motion to limit restaurant delivery fees. Gov. Holcomb famously suspended property rights (evictions).

And King Canute ordered the waves to recede.

None of that works. Productivity, efficiency and honest contracts are what drive economies, not official decrees. And the choice is a stark one: a free economy or a corrupt one. Please know that at any given moment your community is headed toward one or the other.

Switching to race relations, have you noticed that the woke crowd doesn't mention "equality" anymore? It raises the question of whether they want that equality in terms of opportunity or in terms of results. Troubling. Instead, the word in government hallways and the fancier dinner parties is "equity," which has a better ring to it.

So the Republican president of the Fort Wayne City Council suggests that key committee assignments be filled by Democrats in the interest of racial equity (and in violation of process and the electoral will).

At the same time, the newly installed equity and diversity officer in an Indianapolis private school encourages retribution. His/her premise is that the legal and governance systems in the U.S. are inherently racist and retain economic and political power for white people by oppressing people of color.

It may be that all of this appeals to the ruling class because it diverts attention from the mess they have made of ruling — that and it gives them a sense of superiority pretending to rescue what they imagine to be the downtrodden. (Did the Duchess of Sussex say she keeps "rescued chickens"?)

Whatever, it is nonsense. The United States and Great Britain are the historic models for racial freedom or any other category of individual freedom. And skin pigment, although a simple way for the powerful to reorder society, does not predict behavior or character, or differentiate between the patriotic and the treasonous.

Obviously.

### The Fall of Indianapolis (cont'd)

*(March 5)* — Every once in a while public policy meets an absolute, that is, where no compromise is possible between two conflicting options. Such is the case now with law enforcement in Indiana's metropolitan cities. City councils in the next few years will have to make a hard choice. Yes, politicians hate that but it cannot be avoided in this case.

One choice is being made in Indianapolis and Fort Wayne. Police and fire fighters are offered a local version of Critical Race Theory. That can mean individual officers not only must sit still for sessions of extreme philosophical propaganda but be asked to acknowledge and apologize for their supposed thoughts of white supremacy.

It is not difficult to imagine that their responses, or even an absence of enthusiastic agreement, will be noted in the next round of promotions.

The basis for this is the decades-old theory that crime is caused by poverty and general social disadvantage, conditions that must be corrected before laws can be effectively enforced. It is quite popular. The sociologists describe it as ADI (Avoidance of Disparate Impact), meaning that crime is defined on the streets by skin pigment rather than law.

And there is the rub. If laws cannot be enforced, then those who do not subscribe to the root-causes theory of crime must pay the wages of

lawlessness until problematic, complex social strategies have had time to be formulated and to take effect — many years, in the most optimistic scenarios, and more probably many generations.

Indeed, the result after at least three generations has been anything but civic peace. We have created a new and separate urban culture that is in civil war with the more general one.

Again, proponents of this idea brook no dissent, demeaning opponents as racists. And the police are told they must generally and specifically back off, that they cannot pursue their most basic mission, i.e., to go where crime is being committed. And again, despite more than five decades of social engineering and experimentation, there is no evidence that such a perverse strategy works.

Indeed, the evidence, although routinely dismissed as the apologetics of white supremacy, is to the contrary.

Last year in New York City, the laboratory for this sort of thing, there was the highest percentage one-year increase in homicides in U.S. history. A crime expert there, Heather Mac Donald, explains the situation:

“In order to protect law-abiding minority residents, officers have to operate more intensively in minority areas. There is no middle ground. In New York City, blacks made up over 74 percent of all known shooting suspects in 2019, though they are only about 23 percent of the city’s population. Non-Hispanic whites were a little over 2 percent of all known shooting

suspects, though they are about 34 percent of the city’s population. Those suspect identifications come from the victims of, and witnesses to, shootings — overwhelmingly minority themselves. Shooting victims were over 71 percent black in 2019 and 2.5 percent white.”

The police do not wish these facts into existence, Mac Donald continues, they are the reality of urban crime. “A good economy is not the precondition for lowered crime,” she concludes, “lowered crime is the precondition for economic vitality.”

All of this played out in the downtown Indianapolis BLM riots last spring. Rick Snyder of the Indianapolis Fraternal Order of Police says officers were ordered to stand down as more than 8,000 emergency 911 calls went unanswered during the first 48 hours of the riots. Almost a year later, the mayor’s office still is withholding the tapes of those calls.

“It wasn’t the police that failed our city; it was our politicians,” Snyder told the Hammer and Nigel Show radio show this week. “It’s the political leadership that abdicated their responsibilities, they required our officers to take a compromised posture, and that resulted in the destruction of over 100 businesses and four people getting shot, two of whom lost their lives as a result.”

Oh, that’s another thing that Indiana mayors and councilmen should consider if they choose the ADI option: They will have to be prepared to cover up or lie about the facts, a daunting task even considering today’s purblind media. — *tcl*



*"The Battle of Cowpens," painted by William Ranney in 1845, shows an unnamed patriot (far left) saving the life of Col. William Washington.*

## INDIANAPOLICY *Review*

A journal of classical liberal inquiry observing its 30th year