LIBERTY IN CRISIS

Viva the Devolution! The Iconoclastic Left
Biden Time
Crumbling Institutions, Toppling Cities
China’s Very Good Year

BEST OF THE WEB: A 2020 WRAP-UP
T
de year 2020 is like the mist in the Stephen King novel — insidious and
slowly sneaking into nursing homes, which spread the disease like a tattoo on
the most vulnerable. It was a disaster. It's estimated that at least six
thousand, probably more, people died unnecessarily. To celebrate his
triumph, Gov. Cuomo wrote a book congratulating himself on his
leadership. Hollywood just rewarded him with an Emmy. At this
writing, New York is again in the throes of viral pain. The governor
and mayor of New York City are currently arguing about how to
contain cases. It got worse. In May, as people sat at home, staring at their TVs with nothing to do, they witnessed an alleged murder at the hands of
police officers in Minneapolis, Minnesota. George Floyd, suffocating on a drug
overdose, appeared to be choked to death by indifferent cops. The video was
gruesome.
In this issue, George Parry writes about this tragedy and explains what pathologists and
the media did not: the officers are innocent. This video and the media outrage reaction to
the incident inflamed passions and obscured truth. The perceived injustice in a tinderbox of
evidence is a turning point of the nation — but not the rest of China.
Part tension release, part grief, part chaos swept cities and businesses across America as they were attacked, looted, and left
smoldering ruins. Public sentiment backed the “protesters” at first. As the summer dragged on and places like Seattle and Portland
developed into murder and anarchy, the protests morphed from black lives
mattering to Black Lives Matter and Antifa, two communist
organizations intent on “remaking” America. John Hinderaker of
the website Powerline writes about the aftermath in Minneapolis.

Meanwhile, COVID continued. Southern cities that had been spared the worst through the summer saw
dramatic political storm turned into something more ominous. 2020 was in
dread-inducing. The protagonists can’t escape. What started off as a

Misty 2020 Memories
by Melissa Mackenzie

The year 2020 was...
EDITOR’S NOTE

The Pleasure of His Company

by Wlady Pleszczynski

In case you didn’t know, life isn’t fair. But just how unfair was driven home the Sunday before Thanksgiving when last season’s Heisman Trophy winner and the NFL’s number one draft choice, Joe Burrow, suffered a ghastly knee injury in a game against what’s now officially called the Washington Football Team. (Say “Redskins” ever again and your tongue will be separated from your mouth.) His career isn’t over, but it’s not yet clear when or if he’ll play again next season.

Of course, I was more impressed by the souvenir photo of Burrow and the president behind the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office. A few months earlier I had stood in the same spot as Athens County, Ohio. Shortly after Burrow’s LSU team defeated Clemson for the season’s Heisman Trophy winner and the NFL’s number forty-seventh. Life will suddenly become fairer.

One thing the president makes clear is that he’s more than happy not to be like them. How else to explain how he’s survived four-plus years of contending with the worst lynch mobs our politics has ever unleashed against any president?

The mysteries of this past election aren’t likely to be resolved. Mr. Trump received a record amount of votes for an incumbent running for a second term, his party made big gains in Congress, yet he officially lost to a nonentity who didn’t bother to campaign, preferring to hide out in his bunker. (Sorry, Dems, but you asked for it. Expect payback to become a pronounced feature of the next four years.) Unverifiable mail-in votes, as Mr. Trump warned, did their work, and the uncynical, useless media isn’t likely to raise any questions about the matter.

One might now be tempted to call Mr. Trump a one-term wonder, someone like James Polk who accomplished great things in his short tenure (1845–49). But that would be selling the man short. Last time I checked, Pope Francis is eighty-three, an age Mr. Trump won’t turn until 2029. If Mr. Trump decides to run again in 2024, he’ll be just about Mr. Biden’s current age, and certainly slyer. And it will be genuine payback to his perpetually disloyal opposition if he turns out to be not only the forty-fifth president of the United States but also the forty-sevenths. Life will suddenly become fairer.

How to Save the Democratic Party

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

You might recall that nine years ago I wrote a book entitled The Death of Liberalism. It was an answer to Sam Tanenhaus’s suicidal 2009 book The Death of Conservatism. Sam’s book came out mere months before the conservative wave election of 2010. The liberals still have not gotten over the 2010 election. It pretty much eliminated an entire tier of promising liberal candidates. It also explains why the Democrats’ promising young presidential candidates this time around were the likes of Beto O’Rourke — remember him? And, of course, there was Kamala Harris, who dropped out of the race before the primaries even began. Could any of these Young Turks have beaten Donald Trump in 2020? I doubt it. That is why the Democrats nominated seventy-seven-year-old Joe Biden, the guy who spent most of the campaign in his basement.

The Democrats still have failed to overcome their 2010 loss to the Republicans. The year 2020 will be looked back on as a historic year in politics.

This year the Democrats’ victory had to rely on an old geezer consigned to his basement along with a sizable vote from the Never Trump crowd to win the presidency. I think the Never Trump crowd’s vote was a mistake, but we shall have to wait and see if I am right or not. Put another way, the liberals of 2010 have yet to overcome the conservatives of 2010. In fact, I as the author of The Death of Liberalism will go so far as to say that the 2022 election will see the conservatives flipping the House of Representatives with very few liberals in sight. The Democrats will field progressives and now socialists and perhaps even vegetarians in 2022, but hardly a liberal will be seen. As the man said, liberalism is dead.

I am amazed to see supposedly informed commentators on politics write about such people as Congresssigtl Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez as liberals. Or the Democratic candidate for the Senate from Georgia, Jon Ossoff, being called a liberal. Congresssigtl Ocasio-Cortez calls herself a progressive or perhaps when she is on home turf in the Bronx even a socialist. Ossoff calls himself a progressive. They are not liberals even if mainstream commentators long for the good old days of such true liberals as Hubert Humphrey and Adlai Stevenson. There are few liberals left. That explains why so many Democrats down ballot were beaten this year. It is difficult to find a liberal left in the Democratic Party. This should not be viewed as bad news for sensible Democrats. I would think it
gives them something useful to do. Revive the term “liberal.” Take it for your own. Really, liberal is not as discredited a term as progressive or socialist or Marxist–Leninist. Point to your very own Ronald Reagan, that would be Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and say you are running in 2022 as a liberal, a Roosevelt liberal.

Moreover, you have a candidate who even knew Roosevelt — Joe Biden. Well, Joe is almost old enough to have known FDR. Joe, claim that as a little boy you met FDR while on a stamp collectors’ trip to Washington. Do not worry about details. You once claimed to be a coal miner, and besides in American schools today history is seldom taught. Few people will know. Joe, revive the term “liberal” for the Democratic Party and you will make history.

What is more, if Joe were to revive the term “liberal,” it would put him squarely in the mainstream of the Democratic Party today. He would no longer have to be afraid of progressives or socialists or even Marxist–Leninists among the Democrats. He would be able to stress his Rooseveltian heritage.

Not only that, but he could avail himself of a whole series of policies that other Democrats in their recent squabbles with Donald Trump have completely forgotten.

Consider these policies. How about reverting to the “mixed economy”? Yes, I know we already have a mixed economy, but Joe, mix it up some more. There are some Never Trumpers who can help you. The very definition of a Never Trumper is that he or she is pretty mixed up to begin with. And how about advocating “moderation” in foreign policy? Joe, if you are for nothing else you are for moderation. Finally, insist on being a Big Spender. You might even convince some Republicans about the need to spend more money that we do not have.

Joe, you are the one to revive liberalism in the Democratic Party. Go to it.

Joe, revive the term “liberal” for the Democratic Party and you will make history.

Avery Bower, Cornell University
William Burns, Baylor University
Ellie Gardey, University of Notre Dame
John Jiang, Wesleyan University
Libby Krieger, Grove City College
Elizabeth Owen, Hillsdale College
Joseph Pencak, Xavier University
William Phillips, Hillsdale College
Anastasiia Rusanova, Jagiellonian University

Meet the members of our Young Writers Program!

Interns
Avery Bower, Cornell University
William Burns, Baylor University
Ellie Gardey, University of Notre Dame
John Jiang, Wesleyan University
Libby Krieger, Grove City College
Elizabeth Owen, Hillsdale College
Joseph Pencak, Xavier University
William Phillips, Hillsdale College
Anastasiia Rusanova, Jagiellonian University

Staff
Evan Maguire, American University, ’18
Amory Manuel, University of Michigan, ’19
Hannah Rowan, Hillsdale College, ’18
How About a Nice Game of Election While Biden Visits the Tomb of the Unknown Voter?

Mail-in ballots made 2020 a real wild card.

by Dov Fischer

A s of this writing — ten days after the 2020 elections — we still have no idea who won the presidential race. We still may not know by the time you read this. Indeed, historians may never know who won. The elections were condemned to chaos from their outset, born in an Original Sin, as Democrats raced to manipulate the coronavirus pandemic to justify conducting a nationwide massive-mail vote that would overwhelm any and all tabulating systems theretofore in place. We had conducted some mail balloting over the years — for the military, the ill and confined, and others who would request a mail ballot. But the plot that unfolded in early and mid-2020 to pump tens of millions of unsolicited mail ballots into the stream of voting ensured chaos.

Everything about the chaos seemed wrong, as if emanating from an alternate universe. One of the two main candidates would not come out of basement hiding, rarely campaigning in public. He generated no excitement and left his advocates always gasping for breath and clawing their fingernails into any available surface, fearing what gaffe next might emanate. He had urged his voters on one occasion to vote for him on “Super Thursday,” two days after a major primary multi-state showdown. On another occasion, he begged his voters to cast their ballots for him, explaining that he needed them to secure the U.S. Senate seat he was pursuing. Famously, his gaffes came to define him.

By contrast, his opponent, the incumbent president of the United States, was as energetic as ever. The exciting Republican National Convention, marked by unprecedented Black and Hispanic engagement, had overwhelmed the dull and stodgy Democrat version of this writing. By Election Eve, pollsters assured us that we were on the verge of a Biden blowout. Republicans had Biden winning the national vote by 7 points in CNN’s last poll before the election. On another occasion, he begged his voters to cast their ballots for him, explaining that he needed them to secure the U.S. Senate seat he was pursuing. Famously, his gaffes came to define him.

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course the race to watch remains the presidential nail-biter. On Election Night President Trump led comfortably in the major battlegrounds. Suddenly, like a choreographed dance number, virtually all such states stopped counting. Soon, vote tallies swelled for Biden. Even though Dead Men Tell No Tales, many of the once-living took a moment’s pause from the crypt to cast ballots for Uncle Joe. A voting-equipment company, Dominion Voting Systems, suddenly came under new scrutiny. Although they had donated to the Clinton Foundation and their machinery had been rejected for use in Texas, their software and hardware were dominant in North Carolina, Nevada, Georgia, Michigan, Arizona, and Pennsylvania — comprising eighty-four electoral college votes in six of the closest battleground states. Voters still remember from last year’s Democrat Iowa state caucuses the extent of chaotic electoral damage that defective tabulating software can wreak. Pennsylvania Democrat election officials meanwhile tried to count mail ballots arriving after the formally legislated state deadline, even late ballots bereft of postmarks, until Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito ordered them to segregate those envelopes. Wisconsin recorded an unheard-of near-90 percent turnout of registered voters, with Milwaukee tallying an 84 percent turnout — just enough to tilt an unheard-of near-90 percent turnout of registered voters, with chads in Florida. By contrast, cheated Republicans always had faded away weekly after being pick-pocketed: Richard Nixon in 1960, Sen. Norm Coleman in 2008 Minnesota, Sen. Ted Stevens in 2008 Alaska, Gov. Dino Rossi in 2004 Washington state, and so many others cheated out of their seats over the years. Perhaps as you read this, you now know how the saga ends. More probably, unless five Supreme Court justices will have shown courage in facing down the Clinton-Obama picks named Breyer, Sotomayor, and Kagan, it will remain a mystery that will never be resolved nor deciphered. Our best detectives are gone. Sherlock Holmes is indecipherable because of White Male Privilege. Agatha Christie, albeit a woman, is deceased and therefore can offer little, but another Democrat vote from beyond the grave. And Charlie Chan seems destined for assignment by Ocasio-Cortez and Robert Christie, albeit a woman, is deceased and therefore can offer little, but another Democrat vote from beyond the grave. And Charlie Chan seems destined for assignment by Ocasio-Cortez and Robert Reich to mandatory recreation in Critical Race Theory. Meanwhile, as of this writing, Donald Trump is president.

Recanting his assertions of election fraud in the Keystone State, that gentelman, Richard Hopkins, went on Twitter to deny instead the WaPo wishful account and to reassert the cheating he had seen. Other Republicans were denied the opportunity even to behold the cheating as state election officials in Democrat battlegrounds barred them from viewing the actual tabulating, instead relegateing them to the cheap seats far away. And they did not even offer them binoculars. Although CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS, CNN, and MSNBC insisted on crowning Joe Biden as their new leader, and even Fox News started calling him “president-elect,” the incumbent in the White House, true to the form he brought four years earlier as an outsider entering the Swamp, once again would not be intimidated and determinedly insisted — uncharacteristically for a Republican — on asserting his constitutional right to have the facts investigated and the courts adjudicate the mess. Certainly Al Gore had fought for more than a month, all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, over chads in Florida. By contrast, cheated Republicans always had faded away weekly after being pick-pocketed: Richard Nixon in 1960, Sen. Norm Coleman in 2008 Minnesota, Sen. Ted Stevens in 2008 Alaska, Gov. Dino Rossi in 2004 Washington state, and so many others cheated out of their seats over the years. Perhaps as you read this, you now know how the saga ends. More probably, unless five Supreme Court justices will have shown courage in facing down the Clinton-Obama picks named Breyer, Sotomayor, and Kagan, it will remain a mystery that will never be resolved nor deciphered. Our best detectives are gone. Sherlock Holmes is indecipherable because of White Male Privilege. Agatha Christie, albeit a woman, is deceased and therefore can offer little, but another Democrat vote from beyond the grave. And Charlie Chan seems destined for assignment by Ocasio-Cortez and Robert Reich to mandatory recreation in Critical Race Theory. Meanwhile, as of this writing, Donald Trump is president.

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intelligent, which his father sought to channel by sending him to Catholic schools in Brussels and Mons, to the College de la Trinité in Paris, and, finally, at the age of fourteen, to a military academy in Berlin. Along the way young Johann fell under the spell of his uncle, the historian and philologist Cornelius de Pauw, contributor to Diderot’s Encyclopédie and author of Rerum philologicae et historiae Amstelodamensis, a nonsensical but influential tract that argued “the Europeans who pass into America degenerate, as do the animals; a planet fallen to a lower climate is in permanent decline.” It was during this time in Berlin that the future Napoleon, then fifteen years old, declared, “Better a Muslim than a Christian.”

Cloots, rather immodestly appointed himself the official “Orator of the Human Race.” The President of the National Constituent Assembly, Jacques-François Mureau, tactfully dismissed the envoy and his motley retinue, but in doing so made the profound mistake of flattering its members as “heralds of the new epoch.” This project with the Assembly’s vote to abolish hereditary titles that very evening, was all the encouragement Cloots needed. When he returned to France, he embarked on his mission — to be fed into the fiery furnace of revolutionary repression.

The former baron would not rest, he continued, until an atheistic envoi de mission was “stripped of their baptismal plate and other treasures, and the plunder was sent to the baptismal compartment.” Conventions paraded the streets, singing, deriding, Hallelujahs, and profaning with sacrilegious caricature all the ceremonies of religion. The scaffold of the Lord’s Supper was administered to an anus.” It was all going according to Cloots’s grand plan. “Here is the crisis of the universe,” he announced, a time when “we must either [kill] God or be God ourselves.” The former baron would not rest, until an atheistic revolutionary republic had been established on the moon itself.

In Oswald Spengler’s 1933 Jahre der Entscheidung, the German philosopher in his history categorized left-wing revolutionary movements as spiritual mood (geistige Magie), led by failures from all the academic professions, the mentally insolated and inflamed, from which the gangsters of the liberal and Bolshevick uprisings emerge. The “dictatorship of the proletariat,” that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat, is supposed to be its revenge on the happy and well-off, a last resort to quench their sick vanity and vicious greed for power, both of which arise from a growing insecurity of self-esteem, the ultimate expression of corrupt and misguided institutions.

Spengler could very well have been writing about Anacharsis Cloots and his ilk, as opposed to the socialist revolutionaries of his own era. Today we can indeed recognize a veritable slew of mental illnesses at work in the curious case of Anacharsis Cloots, a borderline histrionic personality disorder, grumpy disposition, and a highly ideological regime: the manic phase of a bipolar disorder, and almost certainly a negative father complex. The sheer theatricality of the bloody baron’s performances at least managed to amuse later historians like Georges Avenel (“the human race itself is at the gate. It is waiting. Make way”).

Thomas Carlyle (“strange things may happen when a whole People goes mumming and miming”), and even Roberto Calasso (“Cloots’ human race itself is at the gate. It is waiting. Make way”), Thomas Carlyle (“strange things may happen when a whole People goes mumming and miming”), and even Roberto Calasso (“Cloots’ histrionic personality disorder, possibly the manic phase of a bipolar disorder, and almost certainly a negative father complex. The sheer theatricality of the bloody baron’s performances at least managed to amuse later historians like Georges Avenel (“the human race itself is at the gate. It is waiting. Make way”)

The sheer theatricality of the bloody baron’s performances at least managed to amuse later historians like Georges Avenel (“the human race itself is at the gate. It is waiting. Make way”). Thanks to Cloots’s efforts, for the first time in history, though by no means the last, Rousseau’s conception of an erson, purely political “civil religion” was being put into practice. “The imposition of the civil religion,” Ryszard Legutko has propounded, “was primarily a political operation with implications similar to those that were later to be seen in highly ideological regimes: the sovereign could get rid of nonbelievers and even punish with death those who betrayed the new religious dogmas.” Among the crimes to pay the price would be those like the Martyrs of Compiegne, the eleven Discalced Carmelite nuns, three lay sisters, and two tertiaries sentenced to death during the Reign of Terror, merely for being persisting in living as a religious community despite a Revolutionary government order closing all women’s monasteries. It is an invisible
Racing afterwards that he and his fellow Hébertistes “died like cows that have had their udders cut off.”

Journeying with untold numbers of revolutionaries to come, those who would profess an allegiance to rational universalism before turning, after the inevitable flight from Reason, to bloodily-minded sectarian factionalism, would suffer their change like a trifling lark of sea and coal, and always prefer, by self-styled humanitarians like Cloots.

Cloots, that great friend of humanity, hadthrown his lot in with the ultra-radical Hébertistes, also known as the “Exaggerators,” whose deputy Jean-Baptiste Carrier had advised rioters on how most efficiently to topple monuments. Le Moniteur would opt for the former. And yet, while Cloots and paragons of virtue like Lenoir, or the more familiar cognomen Anacharsis Cloots. Anacharsis who? But I suspect that Cloots would have much more significance than cleaving a cabbage head or swallowing a gulp of water.” This gets worse. On June 19, 2020, the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s highly respected and long-serving chairman of European paintings, Keith Christiansen, posted on his personal Instagram feed an eighteenth-century drawing in pen and ink and wash on paper, a “foreign” plot (being of Prussian birth, after all), Cloots defended himself pathetically: “if I have sinned it is by too much in love with my own: “Alexandre Lenoir battling the revolutionary zealots bent on defacing the royal tombs in Saint Denis. How many great works of art had already experienced the fury of the barbarians: it was in 1793, on the eve of the French Revolution, and in the following year, the Abbé Grégoire would issue his Rapport sur les destructions opérées par le vandalism, which maintained that “barbarians and slaves despise the sciences and destroy artistic monuments; free men love and preserve them.”

This year Lenoir began his project in earnest was the year that Louis XVI was guillotined, Saint-Denis was desecrated, and Notre-Dame was sacked. Yet the archaeologist persevered all the same. The following year, the Abbé Grégoire would issue his Rapport sur les destructions opérées par le vandalism, which maintained that “barbarians and slaves despise the sciences and destroy artistic monuments; free men love and preserve them.”

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Cosmic panic,rootlessness and leadership to the likes of Anacharsis Cloots; historical continuity and a sense of belonging lead to the likes of Alexandre Lenôtre.

It is absolutely crucial to regain that “sense of historical continuity, criteria of nationalism and struggle with the civilizations originating in the past and stretching into the future” of which Christopher Lasch wrote in his far-sighted The Culture of Narcissism: An American Mirror. Lasch stressed that retention of the past is disengagement with the present. Tom Wolfe perspicaciously observed “every thought” was “measured with the judgment but simply wrong,” while telling the truth with a logic of what is defined as white supremacy. Our ongoing efforts to not only diversify our collection but also our programs, narratives, contexts and staff will be further accelerated and will benefit in urgency and impact from this time.” Score one more for Anacharsis Cloots; historical continuity and a sense of belonging lead to the likes of Alexandre Lenôtre.

In a September 2020 editorial published in this country’s prominent daily newspaper, Ágnes Németh, Hungary’s Prime Minister Viktor Orbán discussed his nation’s “struggle for spiritual sovereignty and freedom,” providing a template for people of conscience to follow. In his equally valuable opinion piece, Orbán referenced Lenoir’s crusade on behalf of France’s cultural heritage, commended him for his efforts to not only diversify our collection but also our programs, narratives, contexts and staff, while telling the truth “there is no doubt that the Met and its development is also connected to the Western liberal societies, and not always there either. Either,” concluded Orbán, “may have been convinced that it was building a universal civilization. As it turned out, it was merely building its own,” and not a very robust one at that. The universal harmony, “the republic of the united individuals of the world,” sought by Orbán, is not to stand for one more time than they take in the past,” making them unable to “think constructively about the future instead of lapsing into cosmic panic and futurist despair,” a phenomenon very much in evidence. We consider popular reactions to, for example, fluctuations in global temperatures, or the 2019 novel coronavirus pandemic, the same kind of thinking. Rootlessness and rootlessness lead to the likes of Anacharsis Cloots; historical continuity and a sense of belonging lead to the likes of Alexandre Lenôtre. Choose accordingly.

Admittedly, even the work of the preservationist Lenoir was not destined to last forever; the works that had been sheltered in the Couvent des Petits-Augustins were dispersed after the Bourbon restoration, and today the Musée national des Monuments Français mostly contains plaster casts of the original works. Still, his noble restoration, and today the Musée national des Monuments Français

 systems as a source of strength rather than weakness, and upturning the liberal-democratic triumphalism of the late 20th century”

 Bruno Maçães, formerly Portugal’s secretary of state for European affairs and now a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, has similarly written about the “attacks of the civilization-states,” noting how the liberal West, in its obsession with universalism, instead chose not to be a civilization at all but something closer to a system. It would not embody a rich tapestry of traditions and customs or pursue a religious doctrine or vision. Its principles were meant to be broad and formal, no more than an abstract framework within which different cultural possibilities could be explored. By being rooted in tolerance and democracy, Western values were very much in evidence for any particular way of life against another. Tolerance and democracy do not tell you how to live — they establish procedures, according to which those big questions may later be decided.

These particular procedures and values, in their current entailed and degenerate state, turn out to have very little purchase beyond the narrow ambit of Western liberal societies, and not always there either. Either, “may have been convinced that it was building a universal civilization. As it turned out, it was merely building its own,” and not a very robust one at that. The universal harmony, “the republic of the united individuals of the world,” sought by Orbán, is not to stand for one more time than they take in the past,” making them unable to “think constructively about the future instead of lapsing into cosmic panic and futurist despair,” a phenomenon very much in evidence. We consider popular reactions to, for example, fluctuations in global temperatures, or the 2019 novel coronavirus pandemic, the same kind of thinking. Rootlessness and rootlessness lead to the likes of Anacharsis Cloots; historical continuity and a sense of belonging lead to the likes of Alexandre Lenôtre. Choose accordingly.

With good reason it Ernst Jünger regarded the “disappearance of ancestor worship as a characteristic of present-day decadence.” Cultural heritage preservationists like Alexandre Lenôtre, by cherishing the silent, patient, unpreaching dead, can dispel a portion of the rudeness and coldness that saturates modern life. But in spite of those efforts, we feel as if we are perched atop an inclined plane, the increasing steepness of which makes unavoidable a downward plunge into the sort of decline of “crisis of the universe” in which the Moors of the world seem to revel and flourish, for a time at least.
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BIDEN WATCH

What to Expect From a Biden White House

Short answer: the worst.

by George Neumayr

On the campaign trail, Joe Biden vowed to be the “most progressive president” ever — a pledge that has been complicated by the Democrats’ inability to retake the Senate. Still, we can expect Biden and Kamala Harris to push radicalism aggressively in spite of that gridlock.

“The first thing I’d do is repeal those Trump tax cuts,” Biden said on multiple occasions during the campaign. That plan would appear to be off the table. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell can be counted on to block any tax-hiking legislation from the Democrats. But some of Biden’s other pledges don’t require legislative approval. He has said, “In the first 100 days of my administration, no one, no one will be deported at all,” a pledge which would fall within his executive powers.

This much is clear: Everything Trump has done on the immigration front through executive orders will vanish under Biden. He will use all of the powers of the executive branch to turn America as much as possible into a sanctuary country. Construction of Donald Trump’s wall will grind to a halt. Both Biden and Harris are committed to de facto open borders. Biden has even rejected Obama-era enforcement measures. He calls them a “mistake.” As he rolls back not only Trump’s immigration-related policies but even Obama’s, we can expect the crisis on America’s southern border to flare up yet again.

The Senate will likely resist Biden’s talk of extending amnesty and free health insurance to illegal immigrants, but it won’t be able to stop a raft of new executive orders that he will order to accommodate them. For Biden, an influx of illegal immigrants is not a threat but a “gift.” He has said that he considers illegal immigrants “already Americans, in my view.” They are, he says, “just waiting … for a chance to be able to contribute fully.”

As a candidate, Biden didn’t even want ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) to arrest illegal immigrants guilty of drunk driving. “I think Joe Biden has lost his mind,” Tom Homan, former acting director of ICE, told the press. As president, Biden will now have the power to turn such musings into executive branch policy and render ICE impotent.

Biden also plans to immediately wipe out all of Trump’s travel bans on immigration from terrorist-ridden countries. He called that policy a “Muslim ban” and said that it conflicts with America’s commitment to “religious freedom,” a laughable claim given his plans to restrict the religious freedom of Christians.

Indeed, the first days of the Biden administration will represent open season on Christians. Biden will sign a welter of executive orders erasing the protections Trump granted them, starting with Trump’s lifting of ObamaCare’s “contraceptive mandate.” Biden has said that he will jampack the Obama-era harassment of the Little Sisters of the Poor and other Christian groups for objecting to that mandate. He has vowed to suppress
President Biden Will Try to California-ize the Nation

Strangling the auto industry, contract workers, and small businesses for the progressive cause.

by Steven Greenhut

At the onset of the COVID-19 shutdowns, Gov. Gavin Newsom raised eyebrows by repeatedly calling California a “nation state,” which usually refers to sovereign and largely homogeneous countries with their own standing armies. California is wonderfully polyglot and, last time I checked, still part of the United States despite having the nation’s largest population and an international boundary. Such hubris earned mild rebukes even from mainstream media.

Newsom proudly used the “nation state” term as he sought to justify the use of California’s purchasing power to secure a good deal on personal protective equipment for the state’s health-care providers. He was frustrated at the admittedly slow federal response. “It’s not a cheap shot,” he said on MSNBC’s Rachel Maddow Show. “At the end of the day, they don’t have the masks at the national stockpile. We decided enough of the small ball.”

“That’s fine enough, but what happened next is an allegory. Many lawmakers said this masks deal “lacked transparency and complained they did not get an adequate heads-up” before the governor’s TV appearance, as Capital Public Radio reported. The Chinese company delayed the delivery of the masks because it “twice failed to meet safety certification deadlines,” other deals fell through, and, months later, the state “received only a fraction of the promised supply.”

In other words, California did as it always does: boast about its trend-setting and visionary policies and its international-like leadership, then utterly fail to even manage the governmental basics one might expect in decidedly non-nation-states such as, say, Idaho or Rhode Island.

With a new Joe Biden administration, these fundamentals aren’t going to change. Unlike under President Trump, however, the federal administration won’t push back against California’s approach to immigration and environmentalism — and the new administration certainly will try to implement some of the state’s “bold” ideas at the national level.

On the plus side, the Democrats might at least embrace California’s relatively sensible (albeit overly taxed) approach to legalizing marijuana by rescinding the federal designation for drugs like cannabis, hallucinogens, and depressants. California might avoid expensive court battles and other legal challenges. And it might finally have the political will to keep guns out of the hands of terrorists and criminals.

On the minus side, the Democrats might take the same approach to immigration that the Republicans did. It would be a mistake, however, to overestimate the differences between the parties on immigration policy. Both the Democratic and Republican parties are committed to maintaining the status quo when it comes to immigration policy. Both parties are also committed to maintaining the status quo when it comes to social policy. Both parties are also committed to maintaining the status quo when it comes to economic policy. Both parties are also committed to maintaining the status quo when it comes to foreign policy.

In short, the new administration will do very little to change the status quo. The new administration will continue to support policies that are favorable to the Democratic Party, and it will continue to oppose policies that are favorable to the Republican Party.

It is also true that the new administration will not be able to implement its policies without opposition from Congress. The new administration will have to work with a divided Congress, and it will have to work with a Senate that is controlled by the Republican Party. This will make it difficult for the new administration to pass its policies. It will also make it difficult for the new administration to implement its policies.

Finally, the new administration will have to deal with a divided country. The new administration will have to work to bridge the divide between the Republican and Democratic parties. It will also have to work to bridge the divide between the United States and other countries.

In conclusion, the new administration will not be able to change the status quo. It will be limited in its ability to implement its policies. It will be limited in its ability to implement its policies in a way that is consistent with its professed goals. It will be limited in its ability to implement its policies in a way that is consistent with its professed goals in a way that is consistent with its professed goals in a way that is consistent with its professed goals in a way that is consistent with its professed goals in a way that is consistent with its professed goals in a way that is consistent with its professed goals in a way that is consistent with its professed goals in a way that is consistent with its professed goals in a way that is consistent with its professed goals in a way that is consistent with its professed goals in a way that is consistent with its professed goals in a way that is consistent with its professed goals in a way that is consistent with its professed goals.
California is, as any state official will tell you, the world's fifth-largest economy. Our population of forty million makes us home to one out of eight Americans. One of our fifty-eight counties, Los Angeles, is more populous than nine other states. We're geographically enormous, too. San Bernardino County is physically larger than nine states and the four smallest ones combined.

That enormity, combined with a lack of partisan competition, tends to swell our politicians' sense of grandeur. This tendency isn't new. Unburdened by the traditions of other regions, California officials have been willing to take a stab at unusual policies and embrace newfangled political experiments. The state that made Hollywood innovative in entertainment; the state that birthed Medicare, Social Security, and clean air regulations — that state now has a remarkable record of success in the federal courts. Instead of fighting back, the Biden administration will no doubt agree with California and pull back on Trump-era changes.

The unions that lobbied for the passage of Assembly Bill 5, which banned companies from using independent contractors, are taking that law to other legislatures. The law has been an unmitigated disaster. Instead of making freelance workers permanent employees and providing them with benefits, companies have been slashing jobs. The Legislature exempted one hundred industries from its provisions, but lawmakers remain proud of their “achievement.” Despite its failure, Biden has promised to propose something similar in Congress.

California lawmakers’ arrogance won’t change following the presidential election, but now Congress will try to impose these problematic regulatory policies on the entire country.

In September, Gov. Newsom even announced, via executive order, a ban on the purchase of new internal-combustion vehicles beginning in 2035. That plan is little more than a publicity stunt — but it’s a reminder that California is playing the long game, and will do as it chooses regardless of what it means for the rest of this supposedly united nation. But now this non-serious proposal has a reasonable chance of becoming federal law.

After my wife and I moved to California from Ohio, we found it odd how unattached Californians seemed to the rest of the country — and how little they knew about other states beyond, perhaps, Nevada. Provincialism is common throughout our country, but California is isolated with its population centers far from any bordering states. After twenty-two years here, we’ve seen how easy it is to view California as something of its own country.

This is indeed a magnificent state, despite its decades of poor governance. Unfortunately, thanks largely to its high-tax and anti-business policies, California's once-great infrastructure is crumbling. Its top-notch schools have fallen into mediocrity or worse. California’s cost of living and anti-business policies drive large numbers of Californians to states where governors spend less time bloviating about being nation states and more time tending to the roads, protecting the business climate, and, say, assuring that mask contracts are competently administered. With Democrats firmly in control in Washington, D.C., however, there may no longer be any way to run or hide.
We partner with the National Journalism Center, the Charles Koch Institute, and the Intercollegiate Studies Institute for our internship programs. Year-long fellowships through the Poynter–Koch Media and Journalism Program and ISI have also led to two new hires this summer: Managing Editor Hannah Rowan and Head of Technology Amory Manuel.

Young Writers Program members have gone on to work in the State Department, the Department of Defense, the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Examiner, and the Detroit News. Our goal is to develop and promote young writers as they hone their skills and clarify their professional goals. Your support has launched the careers of fine journalists, including Phil Klein, Byron York, Andrew Ferguson, Jim Antle, and Bill McGurn, to name a few.

THOUGHT-PROVOKING COMMENTARY

If you’re a daily reader of The American Spectator, you’ve seen many new contributors to our site over the past few years. Lawyer and rabbi Dow Fischer has brought humor and insight to the news of the day; Daniel J. Flynn’s daily Spectator A.M. newsletter is the best in the business. Robert Stacy McCain and Scott McKay write incisively about media bias, government corruption, and more. Other regulars include Jed Babbin, Itxu Díaz, George Parry, Nic Rowan, and of course Ben Stein, our legendary executive editor. Wlady Pleszczynski, and our founder, R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

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Biden’s Presidential Strategy: Don’t Touch Anything

Bad as things are, hell’s only made them worse.

by Itxu Díaz

I have to work hard to hide that I’m happy about the presidential election. A journalist is a guy who is happy about things that make other people cry. It’s not that we enjoy thorns; it’s just that we love having something to say. They’ll never admit it, but I suspect that even doctors feel a certain satisfaction when a patient enters the ER with a leg in one hand and garden shears in the other. I am that same doctor right now, watching the world’s most important democracy plunge off a cliff into uncertainty and dementia. Of course, I would prefer not to have to write about this — but what can I say, the world is a hostile place, life is not a bed of roses, and there is no doubt that we columnists have more work every time a socialist ennit takes over a country. Besides, some of us are feeling the greatest pleasure a middle-aged man can experience these days, even if it is a pleasure that generates a justified hatred. I am talking about being able to look around, to put our hands on our hips, and exclaim with the greatest arrogance: I told you so! Sometimes I wonder why they don’t stone us all as we leave the newspaper.

The year 2020 remains an extraordinary one for freedom. First they lock us up at home, then they muzzle us and socially distance us, then they prevent us from traveling around the world, and finally Dory from Finding Nemo wins the election. Biden is the new president of the United States, and he is the first to be surprised. No one would be surprised if his first statement to the press, with reporters swirling around his door, was: “Did I really run for president of the United States? I had no idea. Kamala takes care of that sort of thing. Go talk to her.”

There are Americans who believe that Joe Biden will exercise restraint in the face of Harris’s extremism. I am not surprised. There are also people who believe in unicorns. Most likely, the new president will now attempt his grand plan for economic revival, which encompasses a single, solitary point of action: raising every tax possible. But he won’t stop there. Harris also has a plan to help the poor during this crisis. It consists of providing them with free access to abortion and sex changes. So I estimate that in about six months we will have a lot of new transsexuals, who will feel very fulfilled with their change of identity, and who will be able to enjoy their new sexually diverse lives begging at church entrances alongside the rest of the victims of the indiscriminate tax increase, and alongside mothers with chronic nightmares from having killed their own babies. The first thing a country loses on giving itself over to socialism is joy. If this nightmare doesn’t happen, we just have to thank God and the blocking power of the Senate.

But Biden has a task even more urgent than sinking the economy, and that is to bring about the national reconciliation that he himself broke when he partnered with the...
If Biden and Harris want to do something for their country, they should make an exception for once and tell the truth.

vivistic mob. Whatever goals and direction the American people set for themselves with their president leading the way, the sooner a climate of normality, peace, and national unity is restored, the better. The law and order that Trump calls for is the only way if you want democracy. Fracture is the Left's only electoral trump card, but now that the elections are over, it is best that we all go back to toasting together, sharing the flag, toasting to the streets, and blocking the arteries of major cities with harmony and love, souring our horns and insulting one another as only old friends can. Bitterness does not generate prosperity. A little bit of good-humored disorder guarantees joy, the prelude to happiness.

I know this statement will not be seconded by my theological friends can. Bitterness does not generate prosperity. A little bit of good-humored disorder guarantees joy, the prelude to happiness. For their part, the conservatives who have fiercely opposed Donald Trump already have what they wanted: a government as socialist as in Venezuela, headed by a guy as lukewarm as any European social democrat, with a vice president who could put any African dictator to shame. Now the right wing will be even more gaggled in the media, the economy will collapse with a crash, the government will ask the world to forgive them for being Americans, and China will show mercy and might even ord the coronavirus to return to the laboratory from which it escaped in Wuhan. If Biden and Harris want to do something for their country, they should make an exception for once and tell the truth, even if it means admitting that they lied during the campaign when they claimed that they had the solution to the coronavirus and the resulting crisis. When business and our daily bread are at stake, propaganda becomes ineffective. The truth must be told even if it is horrible.

And they should concede, perhaps, that the world we knew is history. It might be uncomfortable to wake up from the dream, but it is worse to sleep in. Besides, the elections are over now: you can say horrible things to people and no one will set the streets on fire for it, among other things because arguments are all in change now. Say that we are going to die, that we are going to hell, that there is no future, that the virus has wiped us out, that we will have to fight with our fists because weapons are scarce. I don't know. Say what you want. Just don’t turn the government into a cheap copy of Paulo Coelho, sending out cheerful messages telling us that everything will be fine, that we have already overcome the crisis, that now everything will be smooth sailing. Most people aren’t as stoned as that Portuguese hippie billionaire to believe that, in the midst of a global pandemic, everything will be fine if only you want it badly enough.

I have no idea what the government should do. My talents go no further than criticizing political action. But I am convinced that in this labyrinth of uncertainty, it is only right to remind the solitary citizen of Nicolás Gómez Dávila’s old maxim: “Real problems have no solution but history.” Once again, we need to ask the president not to solve anything, just to not get in the way. If he were capable of doing that, it would be Biden's first success since the beginning of his political career. But please take Harris with you too.

Unfortunately, Biden will most likely make a peace offering, once again talking before the cameras of the whole televised world, as he did while the supporters of that stupid gesture set the streets on fire with racial hatred, encouraging sectarians and revolutionaries to take over the country at the expense of the other half of Americans, who want to work, live well, and party in peace. For their part, the conservatives who have fiercely opposed Donald Trump already have what they wanted: a government as socialist as in Venezuela, headed by a guy as lukewarm as any European social democrat, with a vice president who could put any African dictator to shame. Now the right wing will be even more

It didn’t quite turn out that way, of course. Not long after Election Day, David Wasserman, writing for the same organization, found himself singing a far different tune:

“District-level polling has rarely led us — or the parties and groups investing in House races — as astray… Republicans appear to have swept at least 18 of the 27 races in our Toss Up column, with Democrats leading presently in only three of those races and another five up in the air. Republicans also appear to have won at least four of the races in our Lean Democratic column (FL-26, SC-03, TX-23 and TX-24) and even one race in our Likely Democratic column, where Rep. Donald Shalala (FL-27) went down to defeat.”

Meanwhile, the polls also indicated that the Democrats would regain the majority in the Senate. In Maine every poll since February indicated that incumbent GOP Sen. Susan Collins would be defeated by Democrat challenger Sara Gideon. Collins crushed Gideon by 9 points. Likewise, in North Carolina, the final six polls indicated that Democrat Cal Cunningham would defeat incumbent Republican Sen. Thom Tillis. The latter won. In Iowa, the final RealClearPolitics average indicated that incumbent Republican Sen. Joni Ernst was leading Democrat challenger Theresa Greenfield by slightly more than 1 point. Ernst won by 6.6 percent. And, despite expensive Democrat attempts to defeat them, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Senate Judiciary Chairman Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) won reelection.

Unfortunately for the Democrats, the only remaining hope they have of seizing control of the Senate lies in Georgia. In November’s election, Republican incumbent Sen. David Perdue fell just below the 50 percent threshold required to avoid a runoff against Democrat challenger Jon Ossoff. And incumbent Sen. Kelly Loeffler will also face a runoff against Democrat challenger Raphael Warnock because she split the Republican vote with GOP Rep. Doug Collins. A lot of Democrats have already descended on Georgia, and they will spend stupendous amounts of money to defeat these two GOP senators on January 5. The good news for Republicans is that Ossoff is in the habit of losing and Warnock has never received more than 33 percent of the vote. Neither Loeffler nor Perdue is in serious danger.

“Look no further than the contrast between the mainstream media’s praise for Sen. Kamala Harris’s vice-presidential nomination versus their response to Amy Coney Barrett’s Supreme Court appointment. Harris was lauded for shattering the glass ceiling and making little girls’ dreams come true; Barrett was smeared and turned into a caricature.”

But conservative women are ready to reclaim feminism for what its founders intended. No more shall we choose between career and family, between empowerment and conservation, between freedom and servitude. It’s time for real feminism – led by conservative women.

by Jessica Anderson

The Year of Conservative Women

New political role models are returning to the values held by original feminists and rejecting their modern perversions.

Jessica Anderson serves as the Executive Director of Heritage Action, where she is responsible for the strategic vision and operations of Heritage Action. Before joining Heritage Action in 2018, Anderson served as Associate Director, Intergovernmental Affairs and Strategic Initiatives for the Office of Management and Budget in the Trump administration.

Twenty-twenty is the Year of the Woman. For real this time. Amy Coney Barrett is the first-ever female originalist justice to sit on the Supreme Court. A record number of conservative women were just elected to the House and Senate. These are strong, smart women who care about both their country and their families. When we look at the lives and views of these women, the false choice feminism has presented is exposed. For decades, feminists have only celebrated one type of woman: she is liberal and pro-choice.

Looking back, we can ask ourselves the following question: did any of these women fit the mold? If not, could we have had a better picture of what women were really thinking? What women really want? What women really need? If we could have asked these questions, we could have made a better case for helping all women, not just the liberal, pro-choice women. But we didn’t.

And what we have is not really in the business of measuring public opinion on the issues of the day. They don’t earn their paychecks by conducting “scientific” polls. They are paid by the false prophets of the corporate media to reinforce Democrat propaganda and suppress our right to vote.
CONSTITUTIONAL OPINIONS

Whither the Judicial Wars
Under President Joe Biden?

Here’s a nice thought: maybe leftists can stop treating judges as legislators.

by Doug Bandow

Liberal Democrats were shocked when President Donald Trump appointed conservatives to the federal bench. True, there were vacancies. He was the duly elected president. The Senate had the constitutional authority to approve nominees. But whatever were Republicans thinking?

This was outrageous misconduct, screamed people who had welcomed the activist liberal court of the 1960s and 1970s. They lionized jurists who ignored the text in the search for penumbras and emanations upon which to reach progressive policy results. New “rights” were discovered, almost daily it sometimes seemed, highlighted by the 1973 abortion case Roe v. Wade.

But liberal judges could not ignore the text entirely: too many average folks still venerated the Constitution and believed that it had some relationship to the operation of the U.S. government. So pretense was maintained. Experienced progressive lawyers would at least mention a legal document before joyously making up their preferred result. Then a vote was duly held, like in any other legislative body, and the Constitution was magically amended.

Author Michael Rips contended, “The choice of any interpretative scheme is inherently arbitrary.” But that is flagrantly untrue. There are two broad jurisprudential approaches: put into effect to the best of your ability the law as written or make up what you want the law to be. That all answers will not be obvious doesn’t change the fact that, for judges, only the first objective is valid.

Republicans spent the 1960s railing against activist judges. But the GOP had no effective strategy to transform the judiciary. Richard Nixon made four high court appointments. Harry Blackmun trended left. Chief Justice Warren Burger was an ineffective moderate conservative. Lewis Powell and William Rehnquist possessed more serious judicial philosophies but were desperately outnumbered.

President Jerry Ford paid little attention to the issue, naming John Paul Stevens, a statist especially hostile to religious liberty, who enthusiastically joined the Supreme Court’s liberal wing. Reagan’s record was mixed. He anointed the moderate Sandra Day O’Connor to be the court’s first female member. Antonin Scalia was next, joining the war. Expanding beyond women’s rights, the third wave bought into “intersectionality” and fully embraced left-wing politics of power. It narrowed its political vision, becoming a movement purely about personal autonomy.

Women who didn’t fit the new mold were exiled. Worse, modern feminists since the Sixties have shunned women who prefer to stay home and those who want to have children instead of single-mindedly chasing a career.

But Amy Coney Barrett and a new wave of conservative women — Sens. Marsha Blackburn, Joni Ernst, Kelly Loeffler, and now over a dozen new Republican women in the House — can serve as the new role models we so desperately need. These women prove you can have a career and family. They prove you don’t have to be radical to be empowered. And they are fulfilling the dream of the original suffragettes.

If you told Susan B. Anthony about the modern feminist movement and its focus on abortion, radical libertinism, and the destruction of tradition, she likely would have been horrified. The Seneca Falls Convention and early feminism were deeply rooted in a love for America, religious sentiment, and a desire for egalitarianism. Real feminism rejects today’s narrow version and affirms its founders’ values, and I for one am glad we are returning to its original intent.

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Author Michael Rips contended, “The choice of any interpretative scheme is inherently arbitrary.” But that is flagrantly untrue. There are two broad jurisprudential approaches: put into effect to the best of your ability the law as written or make up what you want the law to be. That all answers will not be obvious doesn’t change the fact that, for judges, only the first objective is valid.

Republicans spent the 1960s railing against activist judges. But the GOP had no effective strategy to transform the judiciary. Richard Nixon made four high court appointments. Harry Blackmun trended left. Chief Justice Warren Burger was an ineffective moderate conservative. Lewis Powell and William Rehnquist possessed more serious judicial philosophies but were desperately outnumbered.

President Jerry Ford paid little attention to the issue, naming John Paul Stevens, a statist especially hostile to religious liberty, who enthusiastically joined the Supreme Court’s liberal wing. Reagan’s record was mixed. He anointed the moderate Sandra Day O’Connor to be the court’s first female member. Antonin Scalia was next, joining the
body before Democrats snooker to the danger posed by originalist thinkers. For the next vacancy Reagan nominated Robert Bork, a noted scholarly advocate of judicial restraint. The Left understood the stakes better than Reagan did. Sen. Ted Kennedy launched an effective, though viciously untrue, attack: “Bork is a hardliner who thinks the Government should not be involved in education, writers and artists could be censored at the whim of the Government, and the doors of the Federal courts would be closed to those who believe the Constitution means something!” Challenging Ted Kennedy, Sens. Ed Martin (D-Mass.), an attorney who knows better, denounced originalism, applying the law as written, as “racist,” “sexist,” “homophobic,” and “a fancy word for discrimination.” Guardian columnist Arwa Mahdawi suffered a similar intellectual breakdown, declaring, “Goodbye civil rights: Amy Coney Barrett’s America is a terrifying place.”

Even more threatening was the reaction of Democratic politicians who believe the Constitution imposes the latest Democratic Party platform. After years of using the judiciary to implement policies that were rejected by the public, the Left was shocked, shocked, to discover what it sometimes lost could be regained. So they began a strange new respect for democracy and the will of the people. Upset at McConnell’s hardball but unexceptional tactics — historically, presidents have had only middling success in filling election-year vacancies when the opposing party controls the Senate — Democrats decided that reconquest of the judicial branch was essential. The only judicial qualification required is an ideological commitment to the extreme difficulty in changing the Constitution as popular sentiments and political balances evolve encourages frustrated activists to look for a workaround. Which means turning to judges to effectively amend the nation’s basic law.

So, the case process. For instance, drop the number of legislators or states proposing an amendment to 60 percent and the number of states required for ratification to two-thirds. Allow ratification if approved by 60 percent of voters in a national referendum. Encourage activists to see political, not judicial, action as the proper venue for updating the Constitution.

Moreover, streamline the constitutional amendment process. Of course, the nation’s governing document is meant to secure fundamental liberties and should not be easy to revise. But the process of amending the Constitution has become so complicated, would be to create a rotational model using Circuit Court judges.

Although predicting a justice’s future course is dangerous, Barrett appears to be a solid conservative with a concern for civil liberties.

Visit our website at www.intentionalfathering.com to learn more about these essential fathering habits, and sign up for free daily practice prompts. Join our growing community dedicated to turning the hearts of fathers to their children.
The Year of the Rat, 2020, began poorly for China. Hong Kong was in an uproar, and its protesters were enjoying international sympathy. The Communist Party’s policies toward Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang were being widely condemned as excessive, even genocidal. Consumers, particularly in America, had begun to boycott Chinese goods in the backlash over pro-China censorship by the NBA, Blizzard Entertainment, and other ostensibly American companies. Tariffs had precipitated a dramatic decline in Chinese exports to the United States. The world had woken up to the Communist Party’s hegemonic ambitions, and it seemed that a pushback had begun under American leadership.

The ensuing eleven months have proven to be a disaster: for those who have lost their lives or livelihoods to COVID-19 and government incompetence, for whose freedoms are being wrested away across the West and the world, for trust in public institutions and global bodies like the World Health Organization, and for unity here in the United States, where the mail-in election has turned into a fiasco like none other. And 2020 has also been a disaster for the global response to the Communist Party, which has, through a brute force and opportunism, maneuvered into a stronger position than ever.

China and its central bureaucrats have had a very good year.

Such an end to 2020 would have seemed absurd as the world watched the coronavirus tear through Wuhan in January and February. Cases were doubling every week, and despite Beijing’s staid demeanor about the whole situation, the Communist Party was on several fronts preparing for a dramatic decline in Chinese exports to the United States. Meanwhile, case numbers continue to dominate headlines as states stumble through rounds of lockdowns. Whether China is truly virus-free or has merely ceased reporting the real numbers is almost beside the point: the Communist Party is working again, and the party has, with the support of Western media, put on a clean face for the rest of the world.

In sum, the course of the pandemic has been a decisive, and wholly undeserved, success for the Communist Party on several fronts.

In American politics, the virus gave the Biden campaign and the media establishment a cudgel with which to club President Trump among intractable complaints of civil liberty. A Beijing-backed Biden takeover of the White House might have given the Communist Party a chance to dominate headlines as states struggle through ruinous cycles of lockdowns. Whether China is truly virus-free or has merely ceased reporting the real numbers is almost beside the point: the Communist Party is working again, and the party has, with the support of Western media, put on a clean face for the rest of the world.

The pandemic has also allowed China to implicitly promote its authoritarian system as a viable alternative to America’s. The Chinese government has been quick to praise its own decisiveness, while skeptics accuse it of fudging the case numbers. In either case, 56 percent assign significant blame to the U.S. government, including 79 percent of Democrats and 70 percent of Republicans, while 84 percent blame Trump and his Standing Committee for the pandemic. Back-to-back headline-grabbing censorship scandals had combined in the fight to resist the Communist Party’s growing foreign influence.

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been using to track police movements. On October 8, Activision Blizzard, a U.S.-based (but rarely Chinese-owned) video-game developer and publisher, punished the winner of an online game tournament after he spoke in support of Hong Kong's protest movement in a post-match interview. Even more memorable was the National Basketball Association's controversy, in which China virtually severed its ties with the NBA over a pro-Hong Kong tweet by Houston Rockets general manager Daryl Morey, causing the NBA's leadership to apologize and leaving the league'smade waves recently with his book <i>One Billion Americans</i>, which argues for a dramatic increase in the U.S. population through immigration and other initiatives with the express purpose of staying ahead of China. Yglesias is probably correct in thinking that letting in more immigrants will increase America's GDP. For conservatives who find even current immigration levels excessive, however, it goes without saying that such a proposal would seem implausible.

Others on the right, like David P. Goldman of the <i>Asia Times</i>, have called for what Goldman describes as a “Manhattan Project” to retake the initiative in technological innovation. It is not sufficient to prevent China from appropriating U.S. technology — the U.S. must accelerate its creation of new technologies or inevitably fall behind, he argues.

This could be accomplished by adopting parts of the Chinese strategy, such as massive government investment in capital-intensive industries, an alternative to the Belt and Road initiative, and incentivizing Chinese scientists to work for the U.S. instead. Of course, such actions would be a substantial price to pay for the laissez-faire status quo and would represent a small concession to China's own strategy. Regardless of what happens next, 2020 has left China with one Achilles' heel despite its advances elsewhere. Between its lies about the pandemic and its interference in the business of other countries, enmity toward China has risen in opinion polls to its highest levels on record. Economic clout has so far mitigated most of the effects of this hostility. Countries buy masks from Chinese manufacturers because there are few other options, just as they install Huawei's 5G because it is half the price of its closest competitor. Factories keep running because there are few other options, just as they install Huawei's 5G because it is half the price of its closest competitor. Factories keep running because there are few other options, just as they install Huawei's 5G because it is half the price of its closest competitor. Other protectionist measures have also shown to be wanting. Other protectionist measures have also shown to be wanting.

The major studios have every incentive to avoid offending China at all costs. Disney's colossal size is a source of envy in the entertainment industry, but it becomes a disadvantage when dealing with the Communist Party. It owns immensely profitable theme parks and other auxiliary operations in China, which could be strangled at any moment if notice of its film distribution arm happens to cross a line regarding Tibet or human rights. This guarantees an unspoken commitment to self-censorship from virtually every studio.

The continuing fallout of the pandemic will greatly accelerate this phenomenon. China began this year with a box office worth $9.7 billion to America's $11.1 billion. Throughout the course of 2020, lockdowns have all but crippled the U.S. cinema industry, while China's theaters began reopening in May. The Chinese market's rise to the largest in the world, previously expected to occur sometime in 2021, has instead happened a year ahead of schedule. If the Chinese movie industry can be made to function smoothly, then China's immense economic power will be a substantial pivot away from the laissez-faire status quo and would represent a small concession to China’s own strategy.

On the economy, the trade war has proven useful but not sufficient. As with the consumer backlash and most other trends, the end of 2019 looked like a looming disaster for China, with its exports to the U.S. falling to one of the lowest levels in recent memory. By August, however, Chinese exports worldwide had rebounded to their third-highest level on record, and exports to the U.S. had increased to their highest level in over a year. According to the latest available data, the U.S. trade deficit with China stands at $34 billion, the highest since November 2018. China's early reopening, combined with the fact that it manufactures a large proportion of the world's medical equipment, has allowed it to turn a healthy profit during the pandemic.

Even if the trade war had gone exactly according to plan, however, it was very unlikely that it would have been a viable long-term solution. The proportion of China's GDP constituted by exports halved since 2006, from 36 to 18 percent. Tariffs, if applied strategically, can preside over Chinese industries, but they cannot protect America's relative economic clout.

Other protectionist measures have also shown to be wanting. The Trump administration's campaign against Chinese technology giant Huawei, including banning it from using American components, has slowed but not prevented its growth. The company's latest move was the launch of the Mate 40 phone in late October, which Chinese retail giant JD.com reported selling out in just eleven seconds. Clearly, a new approach is needed on top of what is already being tried. The political battle of 2020 is going to eat our lunch? Come on, man,” to quote Joe Biden. Some on the left do have a few ideas, though. Matthew Yglesias of Vox

The example of Hollywood demonstrates how China has turned Western soft power against the West.

How should America and its allies counter China's encroachment? Any response must first acknowledge what has not worked. The list is, unfortunately, long. The year 2020 has, in many ways, marked the death of the old pipe dream that communist authoritarianism can be undermined through Western soft power alone. This, however, is still possible in a place like North Korea, with its universal poverty and death penalties for consuming Western media. Chinese audiences are evidently not so easily swayed; the example of Hollywood demonstrates how China has turned Western soft power against the West.

Hollywood remains the quintessential example of corporate profit-seeking catering to heads with free expression. Most Americans are wont to dismiss the metaphorical premise that American movies shape perception of China through Hollywood movies every year, whether in the form of inclusion (of the Chinese space station in Gravity, which saves the protagonist from certain death), or exclusion (of references to a zombie virus originating in China when World War Z was adapted from its source book). Disney's live-action Mulan, though a flop with domestic audiences, could not prevent the Chinese box office from registering a 100 percent increase this year, painted a picturesque image of Xinjiang despite the ongoing atrocities against the Uighur Muslims there.

Serbian professional football club fired one of its players after his father criticized the Communist Party. Two days later, it was revealed that the now-ubiquitous videoconferencing company Zoom had suspended multiple users to such an extent as to cause a Chinese company to counsel its employees to stop telecommuting to work on an app that censors on behalf of the Chinese government. None of these incidents received much attention. When was the last time that anyone mentioned that millions of Americans now telecommute to work on an app that censors on behalf of the Chinese government?
COVID and the Illusion of Control

Ordering the virus around doesn’t work, makes fools of politicians, and harms all involved.

by Phil Kerpen

Human beings, and especially our politicians, have a need to feel in control. Tough-guy governors ppee about their control measures: lockdowns, closures, hyper-testing, contact tracing, and arbitrary micromanagement of citizens’ lives, families, and businesses. But the evidence that any of these have a meaningful effect on the coronavirus’s rise and fall in a given area is extremely sparse, while the lockdown-caused pain, suffering, and death is layered on top of the far lesser harms of the virus.

The most draconian control measures have often come after the virus is already in decline in an area, at the moment of maximum political pain. And judging from the pandemic response in Europe, our leaders may be ineluctable, repeating the same mistakes in the fall that they made in the spring. That is what makes this year’s fall and winter seasons uniquely dangerous.

SARS-CoV-2 is a serious viral pathogen for people who are very old or medically frail. It wreaks havoc in long-term care facilities — yet the places in the world with the highest death rates are very old or medically frail. But can we actually stop a respiratory virus that is widespread in the population?

The CDC’s pre-pandemic planning guidance said, “the effectiveness of pandemic mitigation strategies will erode rapidly as the cumulative illness rate prior to implementation climbs above 1 percent of the population in an affected area.”

The WHO as recently as November 2019 published pandemic influenza guidelines that listed “contact tracing, quarantine of exposed individuals, entry and exit screening, and border closure” as “not recommended in any circumstances.”

Then China’s communist regime — the world’s most fervent believers in control — claimed their lockdown measures worked, and for some reason country after country proceeded to disregard a century of evidence and knowledge of infectious diseases to follow their lead.

But did lockdowns work, or was pre-2019 science right? In country after country during the severe initial spring wave, they were adopted right at the death peak, which came weeks after the infective peak.

Even a study in the left-wing British journal The Lancet found that “government actions such as border closures, full lockdowns, and a high rate of COVID-19 testing were not associated with statistically significant reductions in the number of critical cases or overall mortality.”

We see regional patterns and seasonal patterns that human efforts are mostly unable to affect. Take Brazil, famously led by a president who rejected lockdowns and encouraged violation of local lockdowns, and Peru, with the longest, harshest lockdown in the world, enforced by the military. Their cases and deaths rose in tandem, and ultimately it was Peru that reached higher disease burdens.

We see the same phenomenon in the United States. If there is any effect of lockdowns, it seems to be that the stricter ones correlate with higher, not lower, COVID mortality rates. Illinois, the land of lockdowns, has at this writing a higher inpatient hospital census per capita than its mostly open neighbors Indiana, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

It is frightening to face a virus and admit there is little we can do to stop it. The illusion of control is seductive. But giving in to it is not cost-free. Lockdowns wreak economic, social, and public health havoc: suicides and drug overdoses, mass unemployment, and supply-chain disruption that cause global famine and sharply higher health havoc: suicides and drug overdoses, mass unemployment, and supply-chain disruption that cause global famine and sharply higher health havoc: suicides and drug overdoses, mass unemployment, and supply-chain disruption that cause global famine and sharply higher health havoc: suicides and drug overdoses, mass unemployment, and supply-chain disruption that cause global famine and sharply higher.

The good news is that the virus is far less dangerous than originally thought, and even for the most at-risk we have substantially improved treatment and knowledge, with vaccines close on the horizon as of this writing. The bad news is that, with even a normal seasonal rise in infections, politicians will be again tempted to do something, and that means ineffective and destructive lockdowns could be coming back. We need to stop them.
Crashing the ‘Party of Science’

Political appeals to “following the science” fall apart when the data contradicts a preferred policy.

by Matt Shapiro

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cience, not politics, must be the guide.” This was the proclamation made by California Gov. Gavin Newsom in April of this year. Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, this concept of science as the ultimate decision-maker is one that politicians have rhetorically embraced. Joe Biden declared, “I believe in science. Donald Trump doesn’t.”

This spring, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee proudly stated that his COVID-19 policies are a “war based on science” and “guided by science.” By July, however, this rhetoric of “following the science” had been largely abandoned as Gov. Inslee announced that the state government was indefinitely suspending all transitions to reopening schools. When Inslee was science that was guiding these governors, it fell suspiciously quiet.

In theory, the rhetoric of “following the science” is meant to cut through the problems of political, social, and cultural disagreement over pandemic response measures. We all agree that we can’t trust politicians and recall that the appropriate levels of personal responsibility must be dictated by the state. The real point of “listening to science” was to say to voters that there is an evidence-based strategy of business and personal behavior that corresponds to a measured reality and that path must be accepted and enforced without apology. But in the case of schools, that is not what has happened, because that is not what politicians want. When they make this appeal, Democrats don’t want to follow the science if it leads to a direction they did not intend. They want science as an external backstop to what they can appeal to whether they always wanted to do anyway.

Some politicians want to appeal to caution over all things and believe that science can be safely ignored when the spirit of caution is preferred. For others, the appeal is to openness and freedom, and they chafe at the bit when the data implies that there are consequences to that freedom. Ultimately, there is no “party of science.” There is only politics.

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ould Trump and the Republican Congress brought the U.S. economy to life after Barack Obama gave us eight years of the weakest recovery since World War II. The partial shutdown of the economy driven by COVID fears reversed those gains, and yet by Election Day 2020, unemployment had fallen from a high of 14.7 percent to 6.9 percent, the stock market rebounded, and GDP growth exploded with a V-shaped recovery.

Republicans turned the economy around once, and then again. What will it take to keep us on pace to keep China and Europe in the rear-view mirror?

When President Trump was elected in November 2016, the S&P 500 jumped 5 percent before he even took office. Investors knew he planned to reduce business and individual taxes and that the threatened spending, taxes, and regulations of a Hillary Clinton presidency had evaporated.

The late 2017 tax bill brought the corporate tax rate from 35 percent — the highest in the world — to 21 percent, below China’s 25 percent but above Ireland’s 12.5 percent. The Trump tax cut also ended the U.S. policy of a worldwide corporate income tax that taxed profits of American companies when they brought their earnings back to the U.S. and after they had already paid taxes on those earnings in other nations, such as France or Japan. Several million dollars in U.S. profits held in limbo overseas were made available for investment in the United States.

The lower corporate income tax drove stock prices up, and investment capital flowed to U.S. firms. Employers created new jobs, expanded operations, and increased wages, benefits, and bonuses. Walmart raised its starting wage to $11. No minimum wage law required — rather real, sustainable growth.

Individual tax rates were reduced at every tax bracket. The per-child tax credit was doubled from $1,000 to $2,000 and extended from twenty-two million to thirty-three million American families. The median income family of four received a $2,000 tax cut. Individual tax rates were reduced at every tax bracket. The per-child tax credit was doubled from $1,000 to $2,000 and extended from twenty-two million to thirty-three million American families. The median income family of four received a $2,000 tax cut.

Individual tax rates were reduced at every tax bracket. The per-child tax credit was doubled from $1,000 to $2,000 and extended from twenty-two million to thirty-three million American families. The median income family of four received a $2,000 tax cut.

The median income single parent with one child got $1,380 tax cut. Repealing the Trump tax cut would gouge the American middle-class family.

With Trump, regulations were significantly reduced, and the Obama–Biden–Clinton plans for ever more regulatory costs were brought to a halt.

The good news after the 2020 election is that a likely Republican Senate means Biden cannot repeal or reduce the pro-growth value of the 2017 tax cuts. Some of those tax cuts were enacted for ten years, and some, like the corporate income tax rate reduction, were made permanent. That is the base of a strong pro-jobs, pro-investment environment upon which we can build.

For the next two years, a Republican Senate will likely stand between Biden and Pelosi and their ability to repeal the GOP tax cuts. Executive orders and regulations will dribble out, slowing growth and killing too many jobs. But in 2022, Pelosi’s House, with its greatly reduced Democrat majority, will run for reelection with the millstone of their radical rantings and House legislation that never passed the Senate around their necks. As in 1994 in reaction to Clinton’s leftward lunge and 2010’s reaction to Obama, the Republicans will retake the House and strengthen their majority in the Senate.

Then, when Biden wants anything, the Republicans will have a wish list of pro-growth policies that they can demand for any spending plans Biden hopes to enact.

The following policies have wide support in the Republican caucus and would help us build on the GOPs and Trump’s progress on tax reduction and deregulation:

End the taxation of inflation in capital gains. Today, Americans pay capital gains tax on the gain they earn when they sell a home, building, land, or stock. They pay tax on the real increase in value and the accumulated inflation. By executive order the president could rule that capital gains taxes would only be levied on the real, non-inflation gain of any sale.

End the double taxation of American workers who work abroad. We fixed the double taxation of American companies earning profits abroad. But individual Americans who work in, say, France pay both French income taxes and American income taxes. Only two countries do something that stupid: Estonia and the United States. Ending this would make Americans working overseas more competitive.

Protect the three million students now in charter schools from the teachers’ unions’ demands that charter schools — free of union control — be defunded. Republicans saved the Washington D.C. Opportunity Scholarships from Obama. They can save charter school students across the nation from Biden and the NEA.

Don’t allow infrastructure spending without reforming the permitting process to reduce the time to build a new road or bridge. This would greatly reduce the cost of new construction.

Protect independent contractor laws from the demands of labor unions that everyone has to have a boss and be a target of unionization. Labor unions and Democrats enacted Assembly Bill 5, the California law banning ride-sharing and delivery drivers from being self-employed, independent contractors. Californians sent a shot across the bow of the Democrats and union bozos by scaling back that law through the initiative process on Election Day 2020.

End or restrict the Jones Act and the Davis–Bacon Act. The Jones Act increases the cost of shipping goods between American ports, and the Davis–Bacon Act mandates union wages on any federally funded construction. Rein in the runaway cost of entitlements with the Paul Ryan reform that blocks grants for all welfare programs to the states and limits their growth to the increase in wages (once we have a GOP House, Senate, and White House). This would have happened already, but we lost that Senate seat in Alabama, weakening the Senate majority.

Put a knife in the politics of envy and class hatred by expanding the investor class. Already there are more than one hundred million Americans with a 401(k) or IRA, but ninety percent of U.S. families have such an account, and they see that the strength of corporate after-tax earnings is highly correlated with the increase in their lifetime savings. One hundred million owners of IRAs or 401(k)s are a less appealing target than “the 1 percent.”

Trump’s tax cuts and deregulation are a great base to build on. How Republicans Can Keep Rebuilding the COVID Economy

by Grover Norquist

Repealing the Trump tax cut would gouge the American middle-class family.

Dreams of Wealth, 2020 (Bill Wilson Studio)
Taxpayer Protection Pledge Signers

ATR welcomes the following Taxpayer Protection Pledge Signers to the 117th Congress. These signers have each made written commitments to taxpayers to oppose and vote against all income tax hikes. They stand as a strong firewall against the radical left.

Marjorie Greene (GA-14)
Barry Loudermilk (GA-11)
Austin Scott (GA-08)
David Perdue (SEN)
Brian Mast (FL-18)
Vern Buchanan (FL-16)
Scott Franklin (FL-15)
Daniel Webster (FL-11)
Kate Cammack (FL-03)
Neal Dunn (FL-02)
Doug Lamborn (CO-05)
Michelle Steel (CA-48)
Young Kim (CA-39)
Kevin McCarthy (CA-23)
Devin Nunes (CA-22)
Bruce Westerman (AR-04)
French Hill (AR-02)
Tom Cotton (SEN)
John Boozman (SEN)
Debbie Lesko (AZ-08)
Andy Biggs (AZ-05)
Paul Gosar (AZ-04)
Don Young (AK-AL)
Dan Sullivan (SEN)
Lisa Murkowski (SEN)
Gary Palmer (AL-06)
Mo Brooks (AL-05)
Jerry Carl (AL-01)
Jerry Lucas (OK-03)
Kevin Hern (OK-01)
Jim Inhofe (SEN)
Jim Jordan (OH-04)
Steve Stivers (OH-15)
Jim Greer (FL-04)
Mike Waltz (FL-00)
Bill Posey (FL-00)
Dann Adam (FL-11)
Kerry Bentz (FL-11)
Bobby Kapczynski (FL-00)
Gary Peters (MI-08)
John Conyers (MI-07)
Mike Coffman (CO-06)
Richard Hanna (NY-19)
Steve Scalise (LA-01)
Ed Royce (CA-31)
Zoe Lofgren (CA-09)
Jim Himes (CT-04)
Will Hurd (TX-23)
Ronny Jackson (TX-13)
Kevin Brady (TX-08)
Mike Rogers (MI-01)
Kathy Hochul (NY-19)
Christy Clark (CA-06)
Jim Langevin (RI-02)
Redragon (NJ-05)
Ryan Zinke (VA-14)
Mike Turner (OH-10)
Bob Goodlatte (VA-03)
Mo Brooks (AL-05)
Brad Wenstrup (OH-02)
Jared Huffman (CA-06)
David Vitter (LA-01)
Mike Gallagher (NY-03)
Ron Johnson (WI-06)
Tommy Tuberville (AL-03)
Trey Hollingsworth (IN-08)
Kelvin Davis (GA-01)
Trey Hollingsworth (IN-09)
Ronny Jackson (TX-07)
Michael T. Nieto (CA-25)
Troy Nehls (TX-22)
Van Taylor (TX-03)
John Barrasso (WY-01)
Steve Scalise (LA-01)
Rick Nolan (MN-07)
Jim Jordan (OH-04)
Peter Meijer (MI-03)
Robert Barrow (GA-10)
Ted Cruz (TX-02)
Ingrid Ribeiro (SC-11)
Cory Booker (NJ-01)
Steve Chabot (OH-01)
John Moolenaar (MI-04)
Steve Stivers (OH-15)
Michelle Lujan Grisham (NM-01)
Brian Mast (FL-00)
Jim Jordan (OH-04)
Mike Bost (IL-02)
Evan McMullin (UT-04)
Barry Loudermilk (GA-11)
Jim Jordan (OH-04)
Chris Jacobs (NY-27)
Kathy Hochul (NY-19)
Jim Jordan (OH-04)
Mike Gallagher (NY-03)
Ron Johnson (WI-06)
Tom Cotton (SEN)
John Boozman (SEN)
Michael Gousha (WI-07)
Mike Gallagher (NY-03)
Ron Johnson (WI-06)
John Barrasso (WY-01)
Steve Chabot (OH-01)
John Moolenaar (MI-04)
Steve Stivers (OH-15)
Jim Jordan (OH-04)
Mike Gallagher (NY-03)

Biden Won’t Follow Trump’s Path to Middle East Peace

Trump’s deals among Israel and others could have remade the Middle East map.

by Jed Babbin

I t has been seven decades since the founding of Israel, more than a century since the downfall of the Ottoman Empire, and about fourteen hundred years since the death of Islam’s Prophet Mohammed led to the split between Sunni and Shiite Muslims.

Thus, for more than a millennium, with brief intervals of peace, the Middle East has been torn apart by religious strife and competition among colonial empires. These forces still operate today, but thanks to President Trump throwing out the “wisdom” of “experts” and “diplomats,” the Middle East is now the safest it has been since the Ottoman Empire was torn apart by religious rivalries and competition among colonial empires.

The Trump realignment, if it were to continue, would be more significant than the “Bab spring” or anything else that has happened in the region since Israel was created by United Nations mandate. Since then, Israel has had one ally — the United States — and an enormous number of enemies, ranging from the Arab nations and Iran to Russia, China, and many European nations.

As Arab hostility to any Jewish presence in what had been the British Mandate of Palestine was not new, Jews had lived in Palestine since biblical times, before Islam existed. When Jews began arriving in great numbers after World War I, Arab riots against them in 1920 and 1937 were serious threats.

It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the Arab opposition to any Jewish presence in what is now Israel was and is a religious one.

When Israel independence was declared in 1948, five Arab nations immediately declared war on Israel, a conflict Israel barely won. The 1948 war didn’t convince the Arab nations that Israel was there to stay, but their defeats in the 1967 and 1973 wars made that clear. Despite wars in Lebanon, which continued from 1982 to 2006, were against Arab puppet in Lebanon, the terrorist network Hezbollah, and were stalemates.

Having failed to eradicate Israel, the Arab nations boycotted it, hoping to strangle it economically. That failed too, as did the 1973 Arab oil embargo on the United States. Trump, who was constantly accused of bashing our allies and befriending our enemies, enjoyed creating disruptions. He disrupted the failed Middle East “peace process” by meeting with the leader of Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The “experts” assumed that as more — along with Trump’s attempted deal with the Palestinians — would enraged the Arabs and the Palestinians to a degree that peace would be impossible unless Trump’s actions were
announced that it was ready to begin normal relations with Israel, among the world’s Muslims. Both factions regard each other as the Shiite population in Iran, which is ethnically Persian and religious. The majority of the world’s Muslims, about 1.6 billion, is Shi’ite. They have been attacked regularly by Yemeni Shiites, the Houthis. The Arab nations have seen Iran’s aggression toward the Arab nations in the region to normalize their relations with Israel. The Trump—Pompeo brokered peace deals between Israel and the UAE and Bahrain. The Trump—Pompeo engineered breakthrough in the Middle East should not be underestimated. The rivalry between Arabs and Iranians is ethnic as well as religious. The majority of the world’s Muslims, about 1.6 billion people, are Arab, Pakistani, and African Sunni. The majority of the Shiite population is in Iran, which is ethnically Persian and believes itself superior to Arabs. The Shiites are a small minority among the world’s Muslims. Both factions regard each other as religious apostates. As a result of a big push by Trump and Pompeo, the UAE announced that it was ready to begin normal relations with Israel, including trade, tourism, and, soon, full diplomatic relations with the Jewish state. The first regular airline flight from the UAE to Israel followed quickly. Bahrain made the same peace accord and said it was ready to trade with Israel. Other Sunni nations such as Kuwait, Oman, and Sudan could follow.

The UAE—Bahrain breakthrough was condemned, of course, by the Palestinian “government” of Mahmoud Abbas. When the twenty-two nations that are members of the Arab League refused to condemn the normalization of relations between Israel and the UAE, the Abbas “government” declared that the Palestinians had been abandoned by their Arab brethren. Abbas’s claim of abandonment is true but inconsequential. The Palestinians, since Israel’s founding, have made the destruction of the Jewish state their sole reason for being. The Arab nations have used the Palestinians as a political tool against Israel, which has enabled them nothin’. The UAE—Bahrain breakthrough proves, redundantly, that the Palestinians are irrelevant to peace in the Middle East.

It’s easy to see why both the UAE and Bahrain took this historic step. Both are tiny states on the Persian Gulf that have long relied on America to protect them from Iran. Bahrain is the headquarters of the U.S. Fifth Fleet, and there is a large U.S. Air Force presence in the UAE. There are about fifty thousand Americans living in the UAE. In short, the example of those nations could lead other Arab nations in the region to normalize their relations with Israel. The big question is whether Saudi Arabia — in which many American troops and aviators are stationed — will join in the realignment. It will be very difficult, but not impossible, for the Saudis to join. Their religion, Wahhabism, is a radical sect of Islam different from, but almost as radical as, Iran’s Shiism. Many members of the Saudi royal family have donated money to terrorist organizations. But the Saudis are in as great a danger from Iran as any nation.

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They have been attacked regularly by Yemeni Shiites, the Houthis. Iran’s constant threats to close the Persian Gulf to shipping would cripple the Saudi economy. The Saudis’ great fear is that their eastern province, which has a majority Shiite population, would rebel at Iran’s urging. That hasn’t happened, at least yet, but the Saudi royal family is reportedly worried about whether to join Trump’s coalition of Arab states. Biden’s election will cause the Saudis to reject a peace deal with Israel because, while he probably won’t be as anti-Israel as Obama was, Biden will be at best an unreliable ally of Israel.

The Saudi rulers, including Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, have to be realistic about the Iranian threat. Now that Biden has been elected president, that pressure will disappear, boasted Biden’s plan to rejoin the Obama nuclear deal with Iran. Trump was the most pro-Israel president we have ever had. But all he has accomplished will be quickly tossed aside by Biden. Biden’s avowed intention to rejoin the 2015 Obama nuclear deal with Iran will weaken Israel and make it far less likely that other Arab nations will seek peace with the Jewish state. It has been obvious from the outset that the Iran nuclear deal was highly dangerous because it provided no means of verifying that Iran was abiding by its obligations. Its inspection regime allows Iran to “self-inspect” nuclear sites it bans from inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), an instrumentality of the UN. Under a previous director, Egyptian Mohammed el-Baradei, the IAEA was, for a decade, a purblind watchdog and an apologist for Iran. Now, even the IAEA has reported that Iran is violating the Obama deal by having twice the amount of enriched uranium it is permitted under the agreement. By rejoining the 2015 Obama nuclear deal, Biden will automatically end Trump’s “maximum pressure” campaign of economic sanctions against Iran. He will get nothing from Iran in return. The UN arms embargo against Iran ended in October. Nations such as Russia and China will eagerly sell Iran new aircraft, ships, missiles, and radar systems. Iran will become even more dangerous than it is now. Without unflinching U.S. support — which Biden will not give — Israel will be vastly weakened. It is still a regional power that has proved itself in three wars against the Arab nations. But Iran is an entirely different kind of enemy, much more dangerous than the Arab states. Once it obtains nuclear weapons — by developing them itself or by purchasing them from a nation such as Pakistan — it will be capable of destroying Israel in an afternoon.

The Arab nations, too, will want nuclear weapons to protect themselves from Iran. Biden’s rejoining the Obama nuclear weapons deal with Iran will please nations such as the UAE and Bahrain who will set off a nuclear weapons race in the Middle East. Biden’s biggest foreign policy weakness comes from the fact that he is a multilateralist. He only favors U.S. action where our allies approve and join in the effort. His rejoining the Obama nuclear weapons deal with Iran will please nations such as the UAE and Bahrain who will set off a nuclear weapons race in the Middle East. Biden’s biggest foreign policy weakness comes from the fact that he is a multilateralist. He only favors U.S. action where our allies approve and join in the effort. His rejoining the Obama nuclear weapons deal with Iran will please nations such as the UAE and Bahrain who will set off a nuclear weapons race in the Middle East. Biden’s biggest foreign policy weakness comes from the fact that he is a multilateralist. He only favors U.S. action where our allies approve and join in the effort. His rejoining the Obama nuclear weapons deal with Iran will please nations such as the UAE and Bahrain who will set off a nuclear weapons race in the Middle East. Biden’s biggest foreign policy weakness comes from the fact that he is a multilateralist. He only favors U.S. action where our allies approve and join in the effort. His rejoining the Obama nuclear weapons deal with Iran will please nations such as the UAE and Bahrain who will set off a nuclear weapons race in the Middle East. Biden’s biggest foreign policy weakness comes from the fact that he is a multilateralist. He only favors U.S. action where our allies approve and join in the effort.
By Robert Stacy McCain

The Worst Governor in America

Gretchen Whitmer imposes insane policies on Michigan.

One word keeps recurring in online discussions of Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's latest orders to fight the state’s raging COVID-19 outbreak: “insanity.”

Last week, the first-term Democrat issued an order extending the state's stay-at-home policy, which had been set to expire April 15, until May 1. Michigan has the third-highest number of coronavirus cases of any state in America, and certainly strong measures are required to get the pandemic under control. But the devil is in the details, and Whitmer’s new order instantly provoked a firestorm of outrage.

Among the complaints was that Whitmer had prohibited sale of seeds and other garden supplies at a time when vegetable gardens need to be planted. Executive Order 2020-42 is titled, “Temporary requirement to suspend activities that are not necessary to sustain or protect life,” and it is quite specific about which activities are and are not necessary. Stores with “more than 50,000 square feet” (e.g., Walmart, Lowes, Home Depot) are ordered to close areas of the store “by cordoning them off, placing signs in aisles, posting prominent signs, removing goods from shelves, or other appropriate means” “by cordoning them off, placing signs in aisles, posting prominent signs, removing goods from shelves, or other appropriate means” “by cordoning them off, placing signs in aisles, posting prominent signs, removing goods from shelves, or other appropriate means” “by cordoning them off, placing signs in aisles, posting prominent signs, removing goods from shelves, or other appropriate means” “by cordoning them off, placing signs in aisles, posting prominent signs, removing goods from shelves, or other appropriate means” “by cordoning them off, placing signs in aisles, posting prominent signs, removing goods from shelves, or other appropriate means” “by cordoning them off, placing signs in aisles, posting prominent signs, removing goods from shelves, or other appropriate means”

The worst aspect of Executive Order 2020-42 is that Michiganders are forbidden even to visit their own private vacation cabins in the “Up North” part of the state. This prohibition includes exceptions, however, that expose the arbitrary nature of Whitmer’s policy. My friend Ray Patnaude remarked on Facebook, “If you live in Chicago you can visit your Michigan Lake house. If you live in Michigan, nope. Unless you drove to another state first and came back in. Insane.”

Patnaude lives in St. Joseph County, on Michigan’s southern border with Indiana. With a population of more than 60,000, the county has yet to record a single death from COVID-19, and 26 other counties in Michigan likewise have zero deaths from the Chinese virus. The state’s pandemic is largely confined to metropolitan Detroit, with the city, surrounding Wayne County, and the suburbs of Oakland and Macomb counties accounting for 19,333 of known cases as of Sunday. That’s about 78 percent of all coronavirus cases in Michigan. And the same jurisdictions had reported 1,250 deaths from COVID-19, which was 87 percent of the statewide total of 1,487 deaths. The rest of Michigan has been relatively unaffected by the disease, but Whitmer’s statewide order takes no account of regional differences.

Nor does the governor's detailed list of what is and is not “necessary” make any sense from a disease-prevention perspective. Why is the garden section closed at Walmart, and yet Michigan residents can still buy lottery tickets? Why, as one perplexed resident complained online, is her dentist’s office closed, but abortion clinics are still open? The arbitrary and harmful nature of Executive Order 2020-42 was pointed out by state Rep. Lee Chatfield, speaker of Michigan’s House of Representatives. On Twitter, Chatfield wrote,

“The governor’s extended Stay-at-Home order is the wrong call and is bad for Michigan families. We had a chance today to protect public health and take a positive step towards recovery. Unfortunately, rather than focus on what’s safe, the governor decided again who is “essential.”

People in our state are hurting. Family-owned businesses have been run to the ground & hundreds of thousands of people have lost their jobs because of it. Unemployment is skyrocketing & our government has not been there to answer the call. We deserve better! This is unacceptable.

Chatfield added that protecting public health and economic recovery are “not mutually exclusive,” arguing that “Instead of essential vs non-essential, we should think safe vs unsafe.” This would seem reasonable, but Whitmer refused to heed the criticism. “Every single exception you make to a stay home, stay safe order makes this more porous and makes it less likely to work,” Whitmer told Detroit’s WDIV-TV. “It means more people are gonna get sick, more people are gonna die, and our

by Robert Stacy McCain

The Worst Governor in America

Gretchen Whitmer imposes insane policies on Michigan.
economy is going to suffer for longer.” “There’s your headline: Selling garden supplies will kill people, governor declares.”

“Insanity” — the word keeps cropping up in discussions of Whitmer’s reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic. Last month, the governor actually threatened the licenses of medical professionals who prescribed the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) for coronavirus patients. A week later, however, Whitmer was trying to secure supplies of HCQ from the federal strategic stockpile. Erratic, arbitrary, deaf to criticism — she has thoroughly botched Michigan’s response to this crisis, and yet, despite her blatant failure, there is talk that despite her blatant failure, there is talk that

Whitmer is on the list of potential running mates for presumed Democratic nominee Joe Biden. Such a choice would almost certainly destroy what little hope Democrats still have of winning Michigan in November. A petition to recall Whitmer had nearly 150,000 signatures Sunday, and a Facebook group, “Michiganders Against Excessive Quarantine,” signed up a quarter-million members in a matter of days.

If Democrats would consider naming such a lightning rod as Whitmer to their ticket, it just shows how badly Trump Derangement Syndrome has warped their judgment. Insanity is everywhere nowadays, and Michigan residents are cursed to be ruled by the Madwoman of Lansing.

“Insanity” — the word keeps cropping up in discussions of Whitmer’s reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic.

T o our betters in the American ruling class:

Just a note to say thanks for giving us a much-needed lesson in the wisdom of our Founding Fathers, who were not shy at all in admonishing us to be wary of surrendering the kind of governmental power you people have wielded, supposedly for our benefit, since the Chinese Communist virus hit our shores at some indeterminate point in the recent, or maybe not-so-recent, past.

You told us that Patient Zero in America for the Wuhan ChiCom virus came to Seattle and first landed in a hospital on January 19. You built an entire response to the virus based on that, and three months later more than 26 million Americans were out of work, and the projections are that some 24 percent of our economy will have evaporated in the second quarter of this year thanks to that response.

In the meantime we’ve watched, on our TVs and computer screens, as moms and dads have been arrested for taking their kids to the park, as some of you are shutting down events and gatherings even eight months from now, as though you have crystal balls to see what the future so far out will hold.

What you’ve done has made an abject mockery of the idea we have God-given, unassailable rights. Instead what we have is permissions from our political betters.

Thomas Jefferson and Samuel Adams were not shy at all in reminding their fellow citizens of their natural rights. We must not allow bureaucrats and politicians to dominate our lives. It’s been a while since we had a government that stood up for our freedoms and did not attempt to unseat them.

The result of that has been to help build a hostile world superpower rival we didn’t have after the fall of the Soviet Union, at the expense of our manufacturing base. You thought that was a good idea, partially because you’re naïve and stupid and partially because you were bought off with a promise of what we ended up with is a rogue regime that cooks up infectious diseases in laboratories, incompetently lets them out into the open, and proceeds to lie about them for months while the World Health Organization, which you put on the hook to fund with hundreds of millions of our money, covers up for China despite their providing almost nothing to the world. What that means is we were a lot further along that curve, the virus, that what they reflect is garbage in, garbage out. And one main reason your models fail so completely is the public health bureaucrats you put all your faith in never even bothered to wonder what it would mean if the Chinese communists were lying to us about the virus.

Namely, that if they denied its existence for two months, the virus was probably everywhere long before your response kicked in, and shutting down the American economy was a tragic waste of lives, livelihoods, and capital. We now know this was the case, because at long last somebody is really doing antibody testing — and as they conduct studies in places like California, where the virus would have spread earliest, they’re finding out what was obvious to lots of people. It turns out Patient Zero wasn’t Zero at all — at least two people had died of the virus well before the “outbreak” supposedly started.

What that means is we were a lot further along this curve. What you’ve done has made an abject mockery of the idea we have God-given, unassailable rights. Instead what we have is permissions from our political betters. Whether actual or not, as a virus death. You throw all of that garbage into data models built and funded by apocalyptic leftists with extensive dealings with the Chinese, and proceed to govern by them. And what we ended up with is a rogue regime that cooks up infectious diseases in laboratories, incompetently lets them out into the open, and proceeds to lie about them for months while the World Health Organization, which you put on the hook to fund with hundreds of millions of our money, covers up for China despite their providing almost nothing to the world. What that means is we were a lot further along that curve, the virus, the public health bureaucrats you put all your faith in never even bothered to wonder what it would mean if the Chinese communists were lying to us about the virus.

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The “new normal” means we can go back to work when you tell us, and we can live our lives how you dictate we can.

By the way, thanks for designing such a precise, well-thought-out shutdown. After all, it makes perfect sense that you can get an abortion but not a colonoscopy. No need to worry that anybody’s health-care system was never even remotely close to what your awful data models said it would be. That’s okay, though. Lives are more important than models, because the hospitals would fill up. No, you tell us, you have to be careful about how you do it. Too much freedom is a bad thing, right? We have to embrace the “new normal.”

The “new normal” means we can go back to work when you tell us, and we can live our lives how you dictate we can. We promise we won’t notice none of that. We’ll thank you for free government swag. We’ll be thanking you for free government swag. Or why surfing or golfing alone are prohibited, because “social distancing,” but buying lottery tickets is okay but going to the gym is dangerous. “Has” to go on TV to preen at a press conference daily. Or why buying booze is OK but going to the gym is dangerous. That has all made perfect sense. Good job on thinking all that through.

Just imagine how bad it would have been if you hadn’t shut the economy down. Look what those dopes did for free government swag. You guys are real heroes. We shouldn’t be upset at all about losing our jobs. We should be thanking you for free government swag. And unemployment checks ... which in some cases are more than our jobs were paying, and so those businesses you shuttered can’t reopen because they can’t bring back their employees who have no motivation to get back to work.

We got windmills suitable for blowhards. We got Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State and Benghazi as testimonial to our democracy. We got Barack Obama as President. We won fair and square because the Republicans serially put up two megalomaniac opponents who were incapable of offering a vision or articulating a message that inspired.

John McCain had been an American wartime hero who stood by his men, refused early release, and withheld torture in the “Hanoi Hilton” 40 years earlier. But he had no business running for a presidency two generations later for which he was not prepared to fight and for which he had no vision. And then came Mitt Romney, his etch-a-sketch candidacy, his binders full of women, and his Romneycare, which served as the model for the Obamacare and which was the single most galvanizing issue in 2012 for Republican conservatives. In order to throw out Obamacare, the Republican Party used and discarded children through the White House. There was ACORN. Just one corruption after another.

Through eight years, I accepted the rules of the game. Obama was president. He won fair and square because the Republicans serially put up two megalomaniac opponents who were incapable of offering a vision or articulating a message that inspired. That meant we can go back to work when you tell us, and we can live our lives how you dictate we can.
Eight years of racial divide, social division had turned us up as a color-blind and religion-blind American People, just to promote electoral successes.

I have come deeply to hate. I hate that Donald Trump never was given a chance to be president of the United States for even one day's honeymoon.

I have come deeply to hate. I hate that Democrats, even those who were opposed to Trump, have killed the interview in the first place or would have forced Trump to be tried and negated its purpose, much as Hillary did. For each question, even if such an interview ever would have happened, an attorney like me would say, ‘I don’t want to be the lawyer who, alternating between my client and his interrogator: “Lietenant General, you do not have to answer that question. Go ahead, what's the next question?” Or “Lietenant General, please wait a moment. What is the purpose of this question? What can you answer?” Or “My client, the Lietenant General, is delighted he could give you eight minutes of his valuable time today. If you want to ask him any more questions along these lines, send us a subpoena. We will study and let you know our thoughts.”

Eight years of racial divide, social division was what it was. As a New York Mets fan from their founding in 1962, I understood that. As a boy, I waited then, and then came Tom Seaver, Jerry Koosman, and Nolan Ryan. As a man, I understood that. As a man who Obama told us would have been the standard of everything. On the one hand, we political conservatives harbor profoundly deep feelings, but we do not destroy people's lives based on abstract politics. Yes, we oppose them and expose them, and we hope that contemporary society and history judge them for the evil they have done, but we do not allow the entire country to pontificate on what is just and on what is not.

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T

he monuments the vandals leave standing shine as bright a light on their benightedness as the ones they topple. Several weeks back a San Francisco mob removed statues of Union General Ulysses S. Grant, California founding father St. Francis Solano, and “The Spangled Banner” lyricist Francis Scott Key but left the signs for Carlton B. Goodlett Place, the street that gives the iconic San Francisco city hall its address, untouched and intact.

Goodlett acted as the personal physician for mass murderer Jim Jones and printed the Popes Temple newspaper. He proclaimed that Jonestown “gives people hopes; shows that ‘dreams come true,’ and represents ‘the wave of the future’ upon visiting the jungle concentration camp just months before the mass poisoning that killed more than 900. Larry Schacht, Peace Prize-winner Albert Schweitzer, co-founder of the future” upon visiting the jungle concentration camp in Guyana just days prior to “the wave of the future.”

The blindfold so many local leaders wore when giving awards and public posts to Jim Jones remains fastened today. San Franciscans celebrate the cult leader’s sycophants who celebrated him. Willie Brown, who compared the highly trusted brother in the struggle for liberation” Jim Jones to Albert Einstein and Martin Luther King Jr., sees his name on the span of the Bay Bridge that connects San Francisco to Yerba Buena Island. George Moscone, the assassinated mayor who placed Jones on the city’s housing commission, effectively making him the largest landlord in San Francisco once he became chairman, and made his benefactor’s name dominate the city’s convention center, a school, and a park. San Francisco put Harvey Milk’s name on Terminal 1 of its airport. “Rev. Jones is widely known in the minority communities here and elsewhere as a man of the highest character, who has undertaken constructive remedies for social problems which have been amusing in their scope and effectiveness,” Milk wrote to a New York Times reporter. “I urge you in the strongest terms to prevent the State Department from removing a boy kidnapped by Jones. The State Department hindered but did not prevent the retribution. Jones has been elected mayor of the city.”

As detailed in my book Cult City: Jim Jones, Harvey Milk, and 10 Days That Shocked the World, many San Franciscans showed indifference to the possibility that thousands were killed more than 900. Larry Schacht, Peace Prize-winner Albert Schweitzer, who renounced his American citizenship, eulogized Stalin as a “great” and “courageous” man, and earned election from the NAACP for espousing racial separations. W. E. B. Du Bois toured Nazi Germany in 1936 as an unwitting tool of Adolf Hitler’s regime. He praised the Third Reich in glowing terms, compared it favorably to the United States in regards to prejudice, and wrote a shameful article called “The German Case Against Jews” that explained the “reasoned prejudice” against the group that he claimed controlled the stock exchange, business, the legal field, and so on. Masstor China celebrated a holiday in Du Bois’s honor. The Soviet Union awarded him the Lenin Peace Prize. Why does the University of Massachusetts put his name on its library? New Yorkers elected Samuel Dickstein to represent them in Congress. Instead, he represented Margaret Sanger, who spoke unmuzzled in 1912 when she described “the Aboriginal Australian” as the “lowest known species of the human family, just a step higher than the chimpanzee in brain development” in The New York Call; unmuzzled in 1923 when she singled out Jews and Italians for “the multiplication of the unfit in this country” before a committee of the New York state assembly, unmuzzled speaking to a Ku Klux Klan meeting in New York in 1926, and unmuzzled in The World’s Combat Review in 1932 when she issued a plan to forcibly sterilize and imprison for life in concentration camps millions of “dysgenic” Americans.

People who see racism everywhere fail to see it in themselves. They imagine their ideology gives them, and their heroes, a pass just as they believe that anyone opposing their beliefs ipso facto harbors great bigotry. Self-righteousness breeds self-blame. The contempt of villains for heroes travels beyond our borders. To desolate and deflate the likes ofes of Spanish heroes (Miguel de Cervantes), Indian heroes (Mahatma Gandhi), English heroes (Winston Churchill), and so on, and so forth, does not exhibit profound intolerance and not to demand tolerance. They imagine their acts of vandalism as enlightened and their desecration of what others revere as culturally sensitive. Would they characterize it as charitably if a mob destroyed the monuments to their heroes to them? Would they call it peaceful protest rather than incitement? Would they like the people ripping down their heroes more or would they recognize that this scalpel-picking leads to rawness rather than reconciliation?

The American heroes knocked from their pedestals discovered continents, conquered states, and won wars. Those taking their place share a single criterion: ideology. Anyone can believe fervently. Few actually do something monumental, which explains why societies erect monuments to them.

The shift toward honoring ideologues who affirm the brand of racism that of the Ku Klux Klan.

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The American heroes knocked from their pedestals discovered continents, conquered states, and won wars. Those taking their place share a single criterion: ideology. Anyone can believe fervently. Few actually do something monumental, which explains why societies erect monuments to them. In its place, he erects a mirror — an ideological politician who merely believed the things he believes. When we honor the best, we bring out the worst in the worst. The more extreme the inhabitants of America, the more political the monuments — people unaccustomed to a challenge to their views and mistaking their ideology for morality — the more fiercely they tear down statues of saints and abolitionists and liberators. Nothing strikes as so backward even slight deviations from progressive orthodoxy circa 2020. Ironically, so much that fails represents progress for some earlier era. And, given the inherently shifting meaning of progressivism, the statues that take their place eventually capture the progressive limus test on statutory guarantees perpetual statutory murder. What goes up must come down.

They ripped down statues of patriots who built, and bled for, America. The memorials they left standing celebrated people who renounced citizenship, betrayed country for profit, outlined detailed plans for concentration camps, and fowled over mass murderers. The memorials they left standing are bigots. They aren’t patriots. Happy Fourth of July!

The American heroes knocked from their pedestals discovered continents, conquered states, and won wars. Those taking their place share a single criterion: ideology. Anyone can believe fervently. Few actually do something monumental, which explains why societies erect monuments to them.
I t is sufficiently obvious as to not require detailed explanation that in the modern era, movements for change require intellectuals, activists, and foot soldiers on a large scale in order to gain traction in the public square, much less achieve some measure of the outcomes sought.

So why is it that in a so-called “50/50” nation, the activist Left in its various forms and combinations — the Women’s March, the Resistance28, Black Lives Matter, et al. — can rally tens of thousands to the streets at the drop of a hat, while similar movements of the Right — with the notable sectarian exceptions of the March of Life and the odd gun rights rally here and there — command no such passion and obsession? How is it that those promoting leftist causes better sustain organizational vigor despite frequently advocating for executable objectives (such as defunding the police) utterly bereft of intellectual rigor, evidentiary support, or logical consistency, while their counterparts on the right do not?

Put differently, why do the winning ideas of the classically liberal right — with the notable sectarian exceptions of the March of Life and the odd gun rights rally here and there — command no such passion and obsession? How is it that those promoting leftist causes better sustain organizational vigor despite frequently advocating for executable objectives (such as defunding the police) utterly bereft of intellectual rigor, evidentiary support, or logical consistency, while their counterparts on the right do not?

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Balkhisk, 1915

Thomas Whittemore and fellow members of the Egypt Exploration Society have spent the winter conducting excavations at this lonely site, a barren desert promontory on the eastern bank of the Nile, not too far from Abu Tish in what is now Egypt's Sohag Governorate. Here a series of Medjay and New Kingdom cemeteries, long buried beneath the sand, gravel, and tine sands of the Upper Egyptian wastelands, were gradually giving up their secrets, yielding everything from potsherds and sandi to axe heads and amulets, and all through the strenuous efforts of the American Whittemore and his British colleague Gerald Averin Winwright. For what must have beggaranon’s belief, amidst the desolation of the Egyptian desert, that only a few months had passed since Whittemore had been in war-torn France working with the Red Cross, an experience that had given him an acute taste of the horrors of the Great War. “Just returned from France for supplies,” he had wired home, “is what the world needs most and has lost.”

On Hagia Sophia

“Nothing of buildings,” as Thomas Whittemore once called it, “is what the world needs most and has lost.” by Matthew Omolesky

Ataturk’s own hand. It said: ‘The museum is closed for repair.’ The Hagia Sophia was soon a hive of activity, as thousands of people flocked to see its mosaics and paintings, some of which had long been hidden from view. And so it was that the English Byzantinist, though he was a staunch opponent of the Church of Rome, once more, stood before the Hagia Sophia, his thoughts troubled by the destruction of one of the greatest monuments of the Christian world.

The architecture of Hagia Sophia brings into being a transcendence that mediates between individuals, nature and the universe.
By 1934, the Turkish Council of Ministers had declared the site a museum, and the Hagia Sophia was officially issued a charter from the State of Massachusetts. Whittemore and his fellow citizens in the United States had already preserved a handful of mosaics that would be considered a resounding success. Ultimately, Turkey possesses the Islamic world’s most historical and cultural assets, but the fact of the matter is that polling shows that the world needs most. Thanks to Justinian and his geometrician-architect Isidore of Miletus and Anthemius of Tralles, the world was afforded the opportunity to witness divine transcendence made manifest in gold, marble, porphyry, and stucco. When Mehmed the Conqueror entered the Hagia Sophia in 1453, it was said that he remained silent, and after uttering the lines from a Persian poem: "The spider is a watchman in the palace of Kinara. The owl plays its watch music in the fort of Afshajadiz."

At the moment of his greatest triumph, the Ottoman sultan realized that he was no more than an interloper, and that no military conquest could match the “irresistible force” with which the Church of Holy Wisdom strikes the viewer. Thomas Whittemore helped reveal to us the gilded tesseract that after a millennium and a half still shine as brightly as the “midday sun in spring.” As of July 24, 2020, those mosaics will be covered once again during Muslim prayers. But will Erdogan’s fanatics really suffer? As we have seen, practically every observer of the Hagia Sophia has remarked upon the uniquely glow that emanates from within the structure; Procopius, in De aedificiis, was among the first to observe how its interior “space is not illuminated by the sun from the outside, but that the radiance is generated within, and that an abundance of light bathes this shrine all around.” It is comforting to think that this is just the sort of incandescence that can never be dimmed, not by invasion, nor by crusades or holy wars, nor by earthquakes, nor by neglect, nor even by the depredations of our own hideous secular Turkey is being systematically dismantled, and it was only a matter of time before the Hagia Sophia found itself in the crosshairs of the status of the former basilica having long been weaponized.

Secular Turkey...
I n the death of George Floyd, the State of Minnesota has charged former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin with second-degree murder and former officers Thomas Lane, J. Alexander Kueng, and Tou Thao with aiding and abetting that murder. But, as will be shown in detail below, the physical, scientific, and electronically recorded evidence in the case overwhelmingly and conclusively proves that these defendants are not guilty of the charges and, in fact, played a material role in bringing about Floyd’s death.

Instead, the evidence proves that, when he first encountered the police, George Floyd was well on his way to dying from a self-administered drug overdose. Moreover, far from publicly, brazenly, and sadistically killing Floyd in broad daylight before civilian witnesses with video cameras, the evidence proves that the defendants exhibited concern for Floyd’s condition and twice called for emergency medical services to render aid to him. Strange behavior, indeed, for supposedly brutal law officers allegedly intent on causing him harm.

Floyd was recorded by the body cameras worn by the police conclusively establishes that Floyd repeatedly complained that he couldn’t breathe. Before the officers removed Floyd’s hands and feet, the body camera video shows Floyd seated on the sidewalk.

Lane drew his sidearm and ordered Floyd approximately seven times to show his hands. Once Floyd finally placed his hands on the steering wheel, Lane hunchered his weapon. Floyd continued to plead with Lane not to shoot him despite Lane’s repeated assurances that he was not going to shoot. After he exited the car he was handcuffed and seated on the sidewalk.

Lane and Kueng questioned Floyd and the other two occupants of the car concerning Floyd’s behavior and whether he might be under the influence of drugs. As the officers tried to move Floyd to a police car, the following exchange occurred (bold print supplied for emphasis):
Some of the information that I read from the new report states than there is no evidence of traumatic asphyxia. This is the point in which we disagree. There is evidence in this case of mechanical or traumatic neck compression. And I think that will be shown by the new report.

However, Dr. Wilson conceded that they did not have access to toxicology results, tissue samples yet removed from the body, but added that those items are “not likely to change” the results of the re-autopsy.

By the training that they had received, the police defendants would have no reason to believe that Chauvin’s kneeling on Floyd’s neck was either causing serious harm or anything other than the approved standard operating procedure.

The re-autopsy concluded that, even without physical evidence of traumatic asphyxia, such as broken bones in the neck and chest, and chest still caused his death by depriving his brain of blood and oxygen and not just his heart, that blood established the presence of, at least, 11 nanograms per milliter of fentanyl in Floyd’s bloodstream when he arrived unresponsive at the hospital. Further, that blood, though it states is “capable of causing death,” was only a fraction of that amount, and the claim that Floyd would have lost consciousness within 11 nanograms per milliliter of fentanyl, as has been noted by others.

So why couldn’t Floyd breathe, and how did he die? The clear answers to those questions are to be found in his toxicology report, which overwhelmingly and unerringly supports the conclusion that Floyd’s breathing difficulties and death were the direct and undeniable result of his ingestion of fentanyl mixed with methamphetamine. When Floyd arrived at the hospital, his blood was drawn. According to the toxicology report, postmortem testing of that blood established the presence of, among other drugs, “Fentanyl 11 ng/ml” (nanograms per milliliter). In that regard, included in the report’s “Reference Comments” is this: “Signs associated with fentanyl toxicity include: severe respiratory depression, a reduced GCS score, coma, and death. In fatalities from fentanyl, blood concentrations are variable and have been reported from as low as 1 ng/ml, to deaths in concentrations as high as 100 ng/ml, and in some cases as high as 860 ng/ml.”

Got that? According to the toxicology report, which is central to the prosecution’s case, at 11 ng/ml, Floyd had over three times the potentially lethal 3 ng/ml dose of fentanyl in his bloodstream when he arrived unresponsive at the hospital.

Similarly, the toxicology report also disclosed the presence of methamphetamine, which it states is “capable of causing hallucinations, aggressive behavior and irritational reactions” as well as “restlessness, hallucinations, aggressive behavior and irritational reactions.”
New York University is no longer content to be the second most important anti-Zionist campus in New York City. Columbia University, with its Center for Palestine Studies, has first place locked up. But lately my alma mater has accelerated its anti-Israel activism in an apparent attempt to out-Palestine Columbia, albeit with a cast of lesser-known BDS ideologues. Columbia has earned the appellation “Ramallah on the Hudson,” but NYU is working overtime to become the Gaza of Greenwich Village.

At the core of NYU’s transformation is the Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, the central hub connecting over a dozen other departments, initiatives, projects, centers, and clubs that demonize Israel and rationalize Palestinian and Iranian aggression.

Among the Kevorkian associates are the Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies Department, the Social and Cultural Analysis Department, the Stirb Center for the Performing Arts (and its “Practitioners in Residence” associates), the Iranian Studies Initiative, the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute, NYU’s Students of Justice in Palestine (SJP) and the Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), NYU-Solidarity with Palestine, NYU Out of Occupied Palestine, and Israel Awareness Week. Another associate, the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, employs noted anti-Israel activist Heshy Towieh-Sousti and Harms / Hebrew apologist Aran Kandnari. Each ally contributes its own special approach promoting Palestinianism and denigrating Israel, applying its own field-specific veneer of scholarship and just the rightargon to seduce young minds.

As the fall semester starts, it’s time to speak out against the college’s shameful indoctrination of students.


t The American Spectator

Anti-Israel NYU: The Gaza of the Greenwich Village

by A.J. Caschetta

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the Kevorkian Center seems to have united the entire NYU arts and humanities complex into an institution that inculcates hatred for Israel, advocates for Palestinians, and teaches skepticism of American greatness.

The Kevorkian Center is a beneficiary of Title VI funding, meaning that it is supported by everyone who pays taxes. If decent people everywhere let NYU’s president (andrew.hamilton@nyu.edu) know they don’t approve of the ways NYU is spending their money, he might listen. Money talks.

The Kevorkian Center currently stands at a threshold. On June 12, it announced on Twitter that Ali Mirsepassi was stepping down as director and that a search of greater than 2836 studies, was temporarily assuming the role of acting director. I was told by the Center’s Communications and Public Affairs Administrator that a full-time director would be appointed soon.

The chances are almost zero that the new director will be someone inclined to treat Israel objectively and historically. NYU’s selection is likely to be an anti-Israel Palestinian.

It was almost this way at NYU.

In reality, it was Palestinian fighters from Hamas, Tanzim, and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade who seized the church, the people there hostage, stole artifacts, and treated it like their own personal PLO latrine, even using Bibles as toilet paper.

In 2018, the Kevorkian Center held a panel discussion titled “The Assault on the Right to Boycott,” and in 2019 it co-hosted a lecture with the Student Center for Human Rights about “Migration, Refugees, and the Politics of Sanctuary.” Sarsour’s anti-Semitism is so widespread and routine that an obvious record of her vile social media outbursts, you’d think that NYU is located in the anti-Semitic, anti-Israeli academic herd.

One look at the Hagop Kevorkian Center’s website shows that NYU’s administration is the commander-in-chief of its institutions—the Anti-Semitism, anti-Israel academic herd.

NYU’s transformation has taken years to get this far, and its progress on the road to becoming the Gaza of Green Village won’t be arrested without “resistance” (to use a favorite term of today’s Democratic Left). NYU’s statements, denunciations, and law suits against the Kevorkian Center’s plans for the fall 2020 semester showed the administration was willing to destroy NYU’s university for the soothsayers to gaze into.

More and more people (scientists and non-scientists alike) are coming to realize that this virus is less dangerous than many others, including influenza. COVID-19 is less dangerous than many other in a small percentage of people who become infected, primarily those with adiposity and comorbidities (i.e., folks like Donald Trump).

Coronavirus is certainly deadly in a small percentage of people who become infected, primarily those with adiposity and comorbidities (i.e., folks like Donald Trump). No one is denying that, and no serious medical professional would deny that.

With time comes data, and with data comes a responsibility for the soothsayers to gaze backwards for a moment. True, some said early on that unfocused, unilateral lockdowns were detrimental, but those opinions were mostly in the category of comments that those of us who value liberty and life stand firm in our assessment of government’s responsibility for the soothsayers to gaze into.

The “Great Barrington Declaration” was signed by thousands of health professionals, shutdowns overreached by a mile.

By Reed Spaulding IV, MD
The Democrats’ mission is not to defund the police. It is to devour the police. And who better than a Biden Department of Justice to do it?

Once former Vice President Joe Biden was safely declared the winner of the 2020 election, Democrats took a fleeting respite from genuflecting to their young Marxist firebrands and surveyed the down-ballot wreckage. Suddenly, there was pooh-poohing of the notion that anyone actually wanted to defund the police. This news was announced by self-styled “centrist” Democrats, who’d seemed to have lost their voice on that subject while America’s cities burned, our businesses were looted, and our crime rates spiked — and while what passes for the “center” moved about thirty yards leftward on the party’s gridiron.

Naturally, the outraged conservative press was quick to roll the tape. In fact, the AOC “Squad” and its vitriolic imitators, one after the next, were adamant: Not only were they quite serious about dismantling police departments, but they had already taken concrete steps in several cities to slash law-enforcement budgets.

Enter Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who envisions wielding heavyweight influence in the incoming Biden administration. An “independent,” Sanders has polished his “Democratic Socialist” routine — Democrat when caucusing on Capitol Hill, socialist when speaking on campus, hobnobbing in Hollywood, and campaigning for the likes of Chesa Boudin, the son and foster son of Weather Underground terrorists who is now, of course, San Francisco’s district attorney and paragon of the progressive prosecutor project, for which the moneyed Left has opened its coffers in urban centers across the country. Sanders, aligned with both Team Biden and the Squad, assures everyone that it’s not that the incoming government supports “defunding the police.” Rather, he says, “What we’re talking about is making police officers accountable.”

If you hear a little voice in the back of your head — actually, a deep baritone voice — saying, “And if you like your police, you can keep your police,” then you’re on to something.

It is not hard to predict what course the Biden Justice Department will take. While there are often reasons to doubt campaign rhetoric, there is no reason to doubt the former Obama vice president’s commitment on the hustings (or was it in the basement?) to revive Obama administration law-enforcement practices. Far from drying up police budgets, Biden’s approach will entail ramping up federal spending to resume the project of reprogramming police on the “progressive” model, under Washington’s watchful eye.

This project is already well underway. Any Trump-era pause was negligible. But there are differences, salient and alarming, that distinguish President-elect Biden’s political moment from Barack Obama’s 2008 ascendancy.

The latter took office with his party in firm control of both congressional chambers. Priority was thus given to landmark progressive legislation: the Obamacare transformation of health care and the Dodd–Frank overhaul of financial regulation. Once cemented in law, these enterprises would prove nigh impossible for Republicans to roll back, no matter how destructive they might be.

Contra 2008, the election of 2020 was a dismal showing by Democrats. Aside from a presidential election that was far from the cakewalk they’d anticipated, the contest brought stinging defeat. Republicans are highly likely to hold the Senate, and they made dramatic House gains that will stifle any ambitious Democratic legislative agenda.
Ali is it, that is good for the country. But for law enforcement — not so much. The prospect of grillwork on Capitol Hill intensifies Biden's need to resort to executive action if he is to appease his party's increasingly handcuffed left base. And that brings the nation's police departments to the fore. Their summer 2020 siege has made them a soft target, and the formula for neutralizing them was already perfected by the Obama Justice Department.

To draw another marked now-versus-then contrast, remember 1992, when Gov. Bill Clinton sharpened his trendy “New Democrat” brand by pursuing a catchphrase — that “engage[s] in a pattern or practice of conduct” any government authority” — including state and municipal police departments — that “deprives persons of federal rights, privileges and immunities.” Significantly, the law empowers the attorney general to file civil lawsuits to “obtain appropriate equitable and declaratory relief to eliminate the pattern or practice.”

Here is how the game works. Whenever there is a police-involved incident with racial overtones, particularly if a black male subject has been shot or physically subdued, Black Lives Matter mobilizes, and the Justice Department snaps to, saber-rattling about a possible civil-rights prosecution of the cops. These tend to fizzle out quickly because the police use of force is generally lawful (e.g., the subject has committed a crime, resisted arrest, and/or threatened the officer). Yet, to mollify the agitators (with whom the re-elected Obama administration was known to consult), the Justice Department trumpets that it has commenced a “pattern or practice” investigation of the entire police department.

These investigations are extensive and prohibitively expensive to defend against. The feds pour over police reports of arrests, stop-and-frisks, and interviews, searching for traces of racism and/or threatened the officer). Yet, to mollify the agitators (with whom the re-elected Obama administration was known to consult), the Justice Department trumpets that it has commenced a “pattern or practice” investigation of the entire police department.

The result is a consent decree, in which the police are subjected to a full-scale investigation of the entire police department. Their summer 2020 siege has made them a soft target, and the formula for neutralizing them was already perfected by the Obama Justice Department.

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These investigations are extensive and prohibitively expensive to defend against. The feds pour over police reports of arrests, stop-and-frisks, and interviews, searching for traces of racism — and, when they can’t find it, resorting to the hocus-pocus of “disparate impact” to infer it. Strapped cities cannot afford to battle the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division and bottomless budget. Plus, Democrat city officials delight in “negotiating” with a Democratic Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division and bottomless budget.

The prospect of gridlock on Capitol Hill intensifies the need for executive action. “A fearless fighter for freedom,” former NAACP leader and current Commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Ronald L. Davis, perfectly sets the tone for the memoirs, given that much of what Cullors writes about a possible civil-rights prosecution of the cops. These tend to fizzle out quickly because the police use of force is generally lawful (e.g., the subject has committed a crime, resisted arrest, and/or threatened the officer). Yet, to mollify the agitators (with whom the re-elected Obama administration was known to consult), the Justice Department trumpets that it has commenced a “pattern or practice” investigation of the entire police department. Their summer 2020 siege has made them a soft target, and the formula for neutralizing them was already perfected by the Obama Justice Department.

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The politics of Patrisse Cullors

Y

The politics of Patrisse Cullors, Founder of Black Lives Matter

...
Luther King Jr., we thought we were supposed to judge people by
the content of their character rather than the color of their skin.
That’s not how Putin does it, or most statesmen.

The George Floyd program is rooted in social justice,” she wrote, “and we
study apartheid and communism in China. We study Emma Goldman
and read bell hooks, Audre Lorde… We are encouraged to challenge
racism, sexism, classism, and heteronormativity.” Readers here
already know with Emma Goldman, whom Cullors said they “studied and
loved” for the “feminist anarchist” she was.

Maybe less known to readers here are “bell hooks” and
Audre Lorde.

Cullors grew up a Jehovah’s Witness, a group she despises, and which
sets black from white. She makes the point that the fact that all the
Elders in the congregation were white. She notes the group today as
the “white supremacist institutions,” “structural racism,”
“intersectionality” or the “intersection of race and disability.” She
takes after “white supremacist institutions,” “structural racism,”
“intersectionality” or the “intersection of race and disability.” She
also mentions “Gay” and “Queer.” Strangely, the
word “Black” is in upper case (as is “Brown”), whereas
the dominant style in newspaper and web publishing. The word
“Black” is now uniquely upper cased.

Ironically, that statement is placed under a photo of about thirty
students, not one of whom is black:

Cleveland Humanities Magnet website screenshot

Cullors attended the school in the late 1990s and early 2000s and got
left behind. She remembers feeling invisible. “In high school,
I read, I study, I add, Mao, Marx and Lenin to my knowledge base.
I have a much more critical understanding about adding these three
cartoonist monsters to her reading list. “I meet and build with Eric Mann, who started the
Strategic Center, a place that will raise and hold me for more than a
decade.” The Marxist-training center becomes her true home.
She says she will “always” remain a part of the center,
for the rest of her life.

The next turn left for Cullors was UCLA, where she took
up religious studies. There she studied “philosophy with a
concentration in the Abrahamic traditions” — that is,
Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.

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The American Spectator

It’s a scene justifiably, Cullors criticizes Democrats in 2016 for nominating a bigot, white supremacy and misogyny.” Rather humorously, and particularly at Donald Trump, “a man who openly campaigned on...”

And so on. As the hook continues to dive deep into the sexual-cultural section of the “What We Believe” portion of the “Future and I are married.” Her final pages go on at great length her meeting and marriage to a person named only as “Fortune.” This individual is confusedly and repeatedly referred to throughout Cullors’s text as “they.” I could be mistaken, but “Fortune.”

Finally, the memoir wraps up with parting political shots, “There have been so many great black anti-communists. Today there are the likes of Walter Williams, Thomas Sowell, Bob Woodson, Pat Parker, Candace Owens — we could go on and on. There are so many from the past, too, from brilliant black columnists like George Schuyler to maybe the most well-known black anti-communist of his day, Manning Johnson, who excoriated white communists for using blacks as their “Negro leisuripits.” Perhaps what Cullors really needs to know about blacks and Marxism is what the founder of the ideology she embraces, one Karl Marx, said about blacks — comments that I’ve written on at length. Karl Marx was a flat-out racist. He flung around the N-word and described black people as lower on the evolutionary scale and closer to apes. He denounced his partly Cuban son-in-law as “the Gorilla” or “Negrillo.”

If Cullors only knew what Karl Marx said about black lives, perhaps she still might call herself a communist, but I doubt she would identify as a Marxist. Of course, there isn’t much of a difference, but the leader of an anti-racist movement at least needs to know about blacks and Marxism — i.e., intellectual diversity — she was told it was taught why Marxism is bad but, quite the contrary, was told it was good. It really is a shame. If there was any true justice in education, not to mention true diversity — i.e., intellectual diversity — she would have learned better.

“Communism has no place for God,” noted the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. “I strongly disagreed with communism’s ethical relativism. Since for the Communist there is no ... absolute means to the ... end.” Such are the politics and ideology of Patrisse Cullors, founder of Black Lives Matter, embraces an ideology that they surely don’t share.

Let me ask you something: Why don’t people trust their instincts?” It’s a great line, delivered by serial killer Martin Vanger (Stellan Skarsgard) in the movie version of The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo. It’s a scene I’ve never been able to shake because it crystallizes with that relentless electrastatic charge... — to Vanger goes on: “You know something was wrong, but you came back into the house. Did I force you? Did I drag you into it? No. All I had to do was offer you a drink. It’s hard to believe that the fear of offending can be stronger than the fear of pain. But you know what? It is...”

This, more or less, is the predicament in which we find ourselves in 2020. Bit by bit, redefinition by redefinition, we have backed into a room that unsnaps us, provoked by the fear of causing offense. In the public sphere, we’ve allowed women to become “menstruators,” or “people with vulvas,” or “bleeders” — even though we don’t really believe these are signal traits of womanhood. Even though we believe women and mothers (“birthing people,” as Harvard Medical School’s Medical Education recently referred to them) are so much more.

Why, then, do we refer to them in this degrading way? So as not to offend those biological women who identify as something else — as “non-binary” or “transmen.” We use “birthing people!” and “menstruators” to refer to women, so that transwomen don’t feel left out. There are just so many feelings to consider, so much indulgence from our bleeding, um, hearts.

In November 2019, the ACLU piously proclaimed, “There’s no one way...” — to which we all have access. We must strive toward public to be able to communicate and work together, we must speak in objective terms to which we all have access. We must make points plainly. We must strive toward accuracy so that we may clearly recognize

Transwomen Are Women’ and Other Polite Lies

by Abigail Shrier

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The secular social justice movement has become a bizarre imitation of the traditional faiths it rejects.

by Wilfred Reilly

It turns out the New Atheists were wrong. During the mid-2000s, American middle- and upper-income conversation experienced what I once called “the most sustained attack on monotheistic religion since Attila the Hun.” Within a single period of less than ten years, we witnessed — if that’s the right word — the publication of a suite of best-selling anti-theist books, including Richard Dawkins’ The God Delusion, Christopher Hitchens’ God Is Not Great, Sam Harris’ The End of Faith, Ayaan Hirsi Ali’s Infidel, and perhaps most notably Harris’ The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason. At one point, beginning in roughly 2003, there was a global movement to retaliate atheists and secular humanists — the “Blights,” presumably to contrast them with dull and bleary-eyed Believers. The frequently viewed Wikipedia page for that campaign is still live online.

The unifying theme of these works was that religion should, even must, be discarded because it has a unique ability to lead otherwise rational people into illogical patterns of fanatical misbehavior.

Dangerous, extreme beliefs would be far less common in the absence of all that church-house metry. In a famous interview with the religious and philosophical site Beliefnet, Harris went so far as to argue that the complete abolition of religion is a societal near-necessity. The transcript of the interview was headlined “Why Religion Must End” and subtitled “A leading atheist says people must embrace rationalism, not faith, or they will never overcome their differences.”

In the interview, Harris — whose work I generally enjoy, by the way — contends that “There is no text more barbaric than the Old Testament of the Bible.” But the holy book of Islam seems to come close: “The Qur’an, virtually on every page, is a manifesto for religious intolerance.” In the absence of such texts, both Harris and the interviewer seem to believe, humans will be able to “truly figure out moral and ethical behavior on our own, without … religious concepts,” as the interviewer puts it. This single well-framed sentence was the thesis statement of New Atheists.

Well, it sounded good! But the Blights seem to have ignored something: that many political scientists and anthropologists have long known or suspected: the human urge to believe runs deep, and it’s quiet. It is by no means confined to adherence to the tenets of one of the five or six major traditional religions. The past few decades, during which time we have seen unprecedented expansion of the atheist and agnostic (“Nones”) category of religious identifiers, have also witnessed the Occupy and Tea Party popular movements, the rise of messianic stem-winding candidates across the U.S. (and global) political spectrum, surges in the popularity of psychedelics and the decriminalization of many drugs across several states, and fanatical, internet-based mass movements such as QAnon and Extinction Rebellion.

Perhaps most notably, these years have seen the rise of the woke “movement for social and racial justice,” an allegedly secular cause which incorporates many of the classic Forms of monotheistic religion: original sin, redemption, saints, shrines, and the sale of indulgences. This is not an exaggeration, or at least not much of one. Wokeness has a very clearly defined concept of original sin, which can be defined not so much as whiteness or middle-class status — as is often speculated — but as truly libelous and supporting the core structures of the current society.

THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR Winter 2020 83
**NEW SOCIALISTS**

**The Salt That Has Lost Its Savor: The Woke Church and the Undoing of America**

by Larry Alex Taunton

When editors at The American Spectator asked me to write a column for their exceptional magazine about the liberalization of the American church in the age of Black Lives Matter, Antifa, and other pseudo-social justice movements, I agreed. I’d been ranging over that ground for some time now, and their call was confirmation that the idea was worth pursuing. But rather than an article addressing that topic in merely impersonal, philosophical terms, I suggested giving it a face: Pastor Timothy Keller.

For the uninitiated, Tim Keller is the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, a successful pastor and church-planter in America. Many Christians regard as the heart of darkness. Keller is also a best-selling author who has written several helpful books. Yet, bizarrely, he has recently embraced the so-called social justice movement. In a series of articles and tweets this year, Keller, confusing contemporary prejudice does. The extent to which some heresy can exist and persist in the church is that Christians have not discerned it. I’m not the only one to point out that the church is in need of repentance, and that Christians have not discerned heresy.

Unfortunately, Keller is not an evangelical anomaly. While he was giving theological justification to those who would betray their faith and defect to the opposition with their votes, popular Baptist pastor John Piper was encouraging Christians not to vote at all. In a recent blog post, he maintained that Republicans aren’t morally rigid enough. Whipping out the ultimate tool in the pastor’s mystification toolbox, he employed biblical Greek to add authority to his case against President Trump. He says: “We should not vote for...” unless you can find a biblical command to that effect. I mean, would Jesus endorse a radical pro-abortion and pro-infanticide policy? every sexual agenda, even the sexualization of small children; a complete disregard for the rule of law; and open hostility toward their followers? I don’t think so.

One wonders how he knows Trump is unrepentant factiousness (unrepentant vulgarity (porneia)). One wonders how he knows Trump is unrepentant vulgarity (porneia).
Hillary Clinton’s campaign? Did he illegally use the FBI to push fake evidence? Did he do anything justifying impeachment? Did he support the looting, burning, and rioting in our streets? Did he take money from China through a family member serving as a proxy? No. As for his vulgarity and boastfulness, I don’t know the sort of Christians I am talking about. I’ll give you a hint. They are the sort who will, upon reading this article, take great offense at what I have written here and waste no time in letting me know it, but are not particularly offended by the sixty-one million children murdered in the Holocaust of abortion since 1973, or by the universities that are incubators of radicalism, by Democrats who are compiling a “hit list” of Trump supporters, or by the godliness of the Marxists they openly advocate, which has killed no less than 125 million people in the twentieth century alone.

To many Christians today are risk-averse. They prefer the safety of the family life center to engaging the culture in any way that might cost them something. God forbid they might sacrifice their wealth or comfort, endure the social media mobs or be excluded from the neighborhood barbeque. To such Christians, the “woke” messages excluded from the neighborhood barbeque. To such Christians, the “woke” messages

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groups. I learned from wonderful pastors and leaders who helped me grow in the way.

But as personal storms engulfed me, I searched for an anchor. I couldn’t handle another Sunday motivational pep talk with Bible verses as punctuation. I wanted the narrow way of repentance, sacrifice, and struggle.

Following several years of prayer and study, I was accepted into the Antiochian Orthodox Church in June. This ancient assembly was founded by St. Peter in the first century, in the city where we were first called Christians.

Not much has changed in the intervening two thousand years. We participate in an ancient liturgy, fast about half the days of the year, make the sign of the cross, and all that other jazz I scoffed at for most of my life.

The goal of all this isn’t to earn my way to heaven — that’s a free gift from Christ — but to conform myself to Him. Taking up your cross and following Him is hard. But it’s God’s way to heaven — that’s a free gift from God. Taking up your cross and following Him is hard. But you cannot turn away when people are suffering and they need the sacraments.

For priests, there are risks. But you cannot turn away when people are suffering and they need the sacraments.

For most of my life, I searched for an anchor. I couldn’t find it. I found myself in a fine line between obeying governmental authority and attending to their every need.

Today, Orthodox churches are walking the fine line between obeying governmental authorities and serving the body. In the early weeks, liturgies were live-streamed, but the vast majority have met in person ever since. Throughout, their attitude has remained one of service and sacrifice, not fear or self-protection.

COVID is just another struggle in over two thousand years of struggle. We put the cross on our bodes and keep walking up that mountain. Christ Himself promised we would endure hardship; pandemics should be expected. But He also shares wonderful news for the church: the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

“Father Nicola got the flu because he insisted on ministering to people who had the flu,” said Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick, an Antiochian Orthodox priest living in Pennsylvania. “For priests, there are risks. But you cannot turn away when people are suffering and they need the sacraments of the church. You go to your people and minister to them. This is what priests do.”

Many historians tie the early spread of Christianity to the believers’ response to the Antonine and Cyprian plagues. As Romans fled the cities, Christians remained to care for the sick. Bishop Dionysius described how his community was “heedless of danger” and “took charge of the sick, attending to their every need.”

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History. In the eighteenth century, St. Nikolai Frumosov gave special sanitary rules to his flock in Russia and other Orthodox nations during earlier plagues as well.

But what never changed is the ministry. During the Spanish flu epidemic, Fr. Nicola Yanney traveled throughout the midwestern U.S. serving the Eucharist to sick and dying Arab Christian immigrants. He ended up contracting the virus and died in 1918.

Sherlock Holmes may have deduced where we would be a hundred years later:

“There’s an east wind coming, Watson,”

“I think not, Holmes. It is very warm.”

“Good old Watson. You’re the one fixed point in a changing age. There’s an east wind coming all the same, such a wind as never blow on England yet. It will be cold and bitter, Watson, and a good many of us may wish before its blast. But it’s God’s wind nonetheless, and a cleaner, better, stronger land will lie in the sunshine when the storm has cleared.”

The chilling yet touching exchange between Holmes and Dr. Watson at the end of the final Holmes story in the canon, His Last Bow, could well describe how the China virus would devastate the Western world. But as America begins to recover, justify Holmes’s optimism, its once-great entertainment industry appears doomed. Empty movie houses can of course be justified as empty, but not entirely. Box-office receipts hit a twenty-five-year low in 2020. It picked up a little last year thanks to Disney keeping it afloat with and without the Marvel Comics Universe, but almost everything else faltered. For Hollywood was diseased long before the virus left Wuhan.

The disease, progressivism, afflicts the mind instead of the body, and the only cure is common sense. But those infected would rather spread the malady like latter-day Typhoid Marys than take the red-pill vaccine. What they don’t realize is that their elitist bubble can be quarantined from the outside as well as within — by the entertainment-starved masses that reject everything they stand for. And the most self-destructive thing they stand for is man-hatred.

The erasure of strong male role models from the screens has been quite remarkable, and greatly accelerated in the two years since my first column for this magazine. In it, I used the tenth anniversary of the hit action movie Taken to explain why it would not have been made in 2018, due to such archaic precepts as a paternal hero rescuing his comely teen daughter from Islamic white slavers. Back then it was merely awkward. Today, a white man saving a helpless girl from the brown-skinned villains sexually abusing her would trigger every executive suite in Hollywood. They would not only condemn the story, they’d apologise for it having been produced by one of them in the first place.

That regular folks would welcome a similar film today carries no weight with them. Progressivism has warped their brains.

Oh, they’ll still make Taken-style action films, all right — the formula works fine — but only with a Jessica Chastain as the star instead of a Liam Neeson. Of course they’ll lose millions when the fantasy of the gender-constrained Chastain as a deadly assassin outfighting dozens of burly men gets laughed off the screen by the few normal viewers, but that’s a small price to pay for peer approval.

Thus the unintended travesty film — Origins came to be. Dilbert cartoonist and best-selling persuasion books author Scott Adams made an invaluable observation on the picture in a recent episode of his popular podcast, Coffee with Scott Adams:

Footnotes:

Lou Aguil is a published novelist, produced screenwriter, and arts culture essayist. His new novel, The Christmas Spirit — a Yuletide romantic ghost story — was inspired at the perfect traditionalist Christmas gift, and is available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and great American bookstores.

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Hollywood: No Man’s Land

Only beggarly “male feminists” and pasturing macho women survive — barely.

by Lou Aguilar

Winter 2020: The American Spectator
Former liberal hero John F. Kennedy did, as does every man inspired by Jules Verne, Arthur C. Clarke, Robert Heinlein, the Mercury Seven, and Captain Kirk. But for Seth Rogen and his ilk, that was a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away — otherwise known as the United States of America. Hollywood used to be part of it but is no longer. It is now an actual No Man’s Land.

For instance, Warner Brothers just signed Patrisse Cullors, a co-founder of the openly Marxist group Black Lives Matter, to a multi-year deal across all of its programming platforms. A once-stated goal of BLM in their since omitted “What We Believe” page is the destruction of the traditional family with men as traditional heads of households: “We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure by supporting each other as extended families and ‘villages’ that collectively care for one another, especially our children.” According to the Warner press release, the Callors deal “encompasses scripted and unscripted series, longform series, animated and kids programming.” They have to start brainwashing children early, teaching them what a rotten, racist patriarchy this country is. The fact that regular people will avoid such Warner products like the progressivism plague is of secondary value to virtue-signaling.

The fact that regular people will avoid such Warner products like the progressivism plague is of secondary value to virtue-signaling.

There remain a few biologically male decision-makers in Hollywood, but only the lowest form of the species — male feminists, who have no qualms about humiliating themselves. In a nauseating October video, communist actor Mark Ruffalo went naked along with Sarah Silverman, Amy Schumer, Tiffany Haddish, and other unattractive semi-celebrity women to urge people to vote. They certainly encouraged my vote — for Trump and against these losers.

While it’s too late to save Hollywood, it helps to recognize the class of men who helped build it. I recently came across a picture of four of them — Clark Gable, Van Heflin, Gary Cooper, and James Stewart — at a white-tie New Year’s Eve party circa 1956–57. Gable, Cooper, and Stewart are legends. Heflin (Stage, 8½ in Tony) was one of the most dependable character actors ever. A decade earlier, Gable, Heflin, and Stewart had abandoned their cushy stardom to risk their lives in World War II combat. Coop tried to enlist but was rejected on medical grounds. Of course there’s always ninety-year-old Clint Eastwood, who also served in the Army and celebrates in his films (Heartbreak Ridge, American Sniper, The 15:17 to Paris) the younger punks in his business.

As Hollywood mavens respond, “To hell with them if they can’t take a woke.” They not only dismiss the enormous potential audience, they detest it as a group of Trump-voting rubes. Which they can openly Marxist group Black Lives Matter, to a white-tie New Year’s Eve party circa 1956–57. Gable, Cooper, and Stewart are legends. Heflin (Stage, 8½ in Tony) was one of the most dependable character actors ever. A decade earlier, Gable, Heflin, and Stewart had abandoned their cushy stardom to risk their lives in World War II combat. Coop tried to enlist but was rejected on medical grounds. Of course there’s always ninety-year-old Clint Eastwood, who also served in the Army and celebrates in his films (Heartbreak Ridge, American Sniper, The 15:17 to Paris) the younger punks in his business.

So when you see the likes of Rogen, Ruffalo, and other emasculated actors lecturing to the rest of us, compare them to their predecessors and laugh at them while avoiding their films. Soon, better men outside the Tinseltown quarantine, immune to progressivity, will take their place. And they will have great stories to choose from that Hollywood left on the table — such as about male heroes and romantic heroines. Then, when the storm has cleared, a cleaner, stronger movieland will lie in the sunshine.

A Conservative College!

Yes, you read that correctly! As we all know, there sadly aren’t many conservative colleges. Grove City College, however, is one. In fact, The Princeton Review ranks us the #1 Most Nostalgic for Reagan, and we’ve been ranked the #1 Best Buy in America by Money magazine. And it was our historic U.S. Supreme Court case in 1984 that led us to be the first college to break free entirely from all government aid. We are also home to one of the great intellectual institutes in America: the Institute for Faith & Freedom. We boast renowned scholars like Paul Kengor and Carl Trueman, and we’re led by our president, the Hon. Paul J. McNulty, former Bush deputy attorney general and prosecutor of the 9/11 hijackers. We have experts on Ronald Reagan, C. S. Lewis, the Austrian School of Economics — Mises and Hayek, and more.

If you enroll at Grove City College, you can take courses with or engage the writings and lectures of leading scholars like:

Paul McNulty   Paul Kengor   Carl Trueman   David Ayers   Rachel Bovard   Jay Cost   Anna Bradley

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For five days and nights following the death of George Floyd on May 25, the city of Minneapolis was the scene of riots, arson, and looting. A two-mile stretch of Lake Street, located twenty blocks south of downtown, was almost completely burned. Local politicians’ reactions to the riots were sympathetic: officials expressed solidarity with the rioters’ concerns, the Minneapolis Police Department’s Third Precinct station house was abandoned to the rioters, and force adequate to end the violence, in the form of the National Guard, was not used for several days.

Minneapolis’s City Council responded to the Floyd riots by vowing to defund the city’s police department. Lacking legal authority to do that, the Council passed a measure that would put defunding the department on the ballot at this year’s election, an initiative that the city’s Charter Commission mercifully tabled. Nevertheless, retirements and disability claims have significantly reduced the police department’s manpower. A group of Minneapolis residents, mostly black, have sued the city, alleging that the number of police officers has fallen below the legally required minimum.

In the three months after the riots, there were forty homicides in Minneapolis, an increase of 150 percent over the average of the previous five years. Violent crime of all types spiked, and gunshots were reported at dozens of locations around the city.

Then, on August 26, rioters attacked the Nicollet Mall, the heart of downtown Minneapolis. The Target store on the ground floor of Target Corporation’s headquarters was sacked. Arsonists burned a popular bar. Looters smashed the windows of department stores and walked out with armloads of merchandise. Law enforcement was more or less absent. Since then, an uneasy peace has settled over the city, while crime continues at elevated levels. Liberal neighborhood groups in the city initially pledged not to call the police in response to crime, sharing the view of the president of Minneapolis’s City Council that calling 911 “comes from a place of privilege.” But reality eventually intruded, and the Council summoned the city’s Chief of Police, demanding to know what he was doing about rising crime. Most recently, the city is contemplating bringing in officers from the Hennepin

Can Minneapolis Make a Comeback?

The twin forces of riots and COVID threaten to crush the city.

by John Hinderaker

John Hinderaker practiced law for forty-one years and now is President of Center of the American Experiment, a Minnesota-based think tank. John co-founded the web site Power Line in 2002 and has appeared as a commentator on NBC, CBS, Fox News, CNN, CNBC, and Sky News Australia, and is a frequent guest and guest host on national radio programs.
The city's economic situation is troubling, and the crime that followed has made a deep impression on not only residents of Minneapolis, but across the state of Minnesota. For the first time in such surveys, the state's residents identify inadequacy of feel-good liberalism to deal with the city's reputation improves enough to resume meeting in person, it is hard to imagine event planners around the country choosing Minneapolis for their annual meetings or sporting events. According to Meet Minneapolis, conventions and sporting events such as the Super Bowl attracted 34.5 million visitors in 2019, supporting 37,091 jobs and adding $8 million to the city's tax coffers. The city also relies on hospitality taxes to pay the debt on major infrastructure projects such as Target Center and the Minneapolis Convention Center. Massive drops in revenue from these sources will start a domino effect on the city's tax revenues, causing depletion of the city's tax coffers. Will Minneapolis recover? Not under its current leadership. The city's experience over the last six months demonstrates the inadequacy of feel-good liberalism to deal with serious issues of violent crime and economic stagnation. Unless Minneapolis's residents are willing to vote for a different sort of leadership in next year's city elections, little is likely to change.

New York is alive. After months of death and despair, sealed into our homes with the silence of the city broken only by the sirens, we emerged to sunny weather, somewhat beautiful in New York City this fall. There’s music in the streets. Turn a corner and hit a string quartet on a stoop. A jazz trio in the park. A trumpet player on the corner. The outdoor dining is gorgeous. Let’s keep it forever, New Yorkers say.

Many wonder when, if ever, downtown Minneapolis will be restored to its former vitality. Office buildings now stand empty, and local businesses seem to have little interest in bringing their employees back to the city. Target Corporation has announced that it will not bring employees back to its corporate headquarters until June 2021 at the earliest. Piper Sandler, a major investment bank, is publicly reported to be mulling a move out of the city. Some smaller companies have already announced that they are leaving the city for suburban or other locations, and a recent survey by the Downtown Council identified forty-five businesses that are either no longer considering moving to downtown Minneapolis or are looking to leave.

There may be worse yet to come. Leasing companies reportedly are predicting that as current leases expire, or terminate clauses can be invoked, there will be a massive exodus from Minneapolis office buildings.

Throughout its history, Minneapolis has benefited from business leaders who were actively engaged in civic life and who played the leading role in driving economic development. But times have changed. The current generation of business leaders are, for the most part, not natives, and are not disposed to get involved in public affairs in any way that could be deemed controversial. Thus, the city’s business community has been virtually silent in the face of a crisis that has both public safety and economic dimensions.

Will Minneapolis recover? Not under its current leadership. The city’s experience over the last six months demonstrates the inadequacy of feel-good liberalism to deal with serious issues of violent crime and economic stagnation. Unless Minneapolis’s residents are willing to vote for a different sort of leadership in next year’s city elections, little is likely to change.

The music is in the streets, because it’s largely not allowed to be anywhere else. How these musicians will make their living is a big question mark. Schools are on extremely shaky ground. New York City was the first major city to open schools for any in-person education. Of course, New York City only did this after two delays, which drove parents entirely insane. In-person education is happening on a part-time basis and closes at the first sign of any uptick in cases.

In October, the mayor and governor closed schools in parts of Brooklyn and Queens despite the fact that the schools hadn’t had any cases. It’s crazy-making. It leaves parents unable to focus on their own work. It’s hard to quantify what it means for our productivity, and it’s certainly bad for our children.

And then there’s the crime. For every politician who has ever described New York as a tale of two cities — and Mayor Bill de Blasio did just that when he ran for mayor in 2013 — it’s never been more true than right now.

The comfortable set, the people who continue to get paid while they work from their laptops at home, largely live in neighborhoods unaffected by the giant crime spike. They take pictures of the park musicians and post videos of the outdoor dining to say, “See, everything is amazing in NYC.”

Through August 31, there was an 87 percent year-over-year spike in shooting incidents. There were 152 shooting incidents in September alone, a 127 percent increase compared to September 2019. Police, mistreated and harassed, are retiring in record numbers. But the Instagrammers posting their lattes in idyllic parks don’t live in the parts of the city seeing this crime uptick. It’s not a big deal, some argue. The murder rate is about the same as it was in the winter days of the Rudy Giuliani administration. But, as a police officer friend pointed out to me, reversing twenty years of low crime in eight months shouldn’t be something we celebrate.

The Instagrammers also don’t live in the areas that are hurting from the continued closures. In fact, when schools closed in October in a large swath of Brooklyn and parts of Queens, the attitude from many was that those people deserved
it because they don’t wear masks. Much more likely is that the small uptick in cases happened in areas where essential workers live. At its peak, COVID-19 hit the outer boroughs far more than it did Manhattan for just that reason. There are workers who can’t stay home and still get paid. Those people live deep in the boroughs, use public transportation daily, and bear the brunt of the pandemic’s challenges. There’s no reason to expect future spikes won’t be in the same places.

The two cities rarely meet, so the illusion that all is well is maintained.

The future of New York City is similarly muddled. Large companies have signaled they won’t return workers to the office for some time. Google, American Express, and many banks have let their employees know they can continue working remotely until summer 2021. The obvious concern is that companies won’t be renting new commercial space for the foreseeable future.

But residential real estate is also in trouble. Why pay New York City rent if much of the city remains in some form of lockdown? Broadway isn’t opening until summer 2021. There are no concerts or dance clubs. Bars and restaurants close at 11 pm. This isn’t the city that never sleeps. No theater, no opera, no fun. Everyone who has a second home in the city has decamped, leaving as one restaurant owner complained to me, “only scumbags who complain about the service charge on a cup of coffee, when they’ve been sitting on my chairs and waited on by one of my staff.” Although the restaurant is long-established and has always done well, it will probably be forced to close, unless there’s an unexpected change to the COVID rules and a more understanding attitude from the local authority. They used to say it’s grim up north. Now it’s gloomy down the metropolitan southeast.

Across the world, buyers have been stampeding into the country property market. Around New York, what were already dizzy prices on Long Island and elsewhere have gone stratospheric. One buyer, I’m told, has purchased a home for $50 million, simply for the site. The existing building will be torn down and replaced in the style of the modern billionaire, perhaps doubling the spend. A recent article in Bloomberg Wealth revealed that prices in Greenwich, Connecticut, this summer were nearly three times what they had been a year before. In England, the architect Hugh Petter of ADAM Architecture says he’s “never been busier.” Hugh works at the high end of the country house market, but it’s the same at all levels. The other day I was walking the bounds of a Gloucestershire village with one of the inhabitants, a keen archaeologist. As we stumped through ancient woodland, looking for prehistoric burial mounds, he gave me an update on the more recent history of the parish. Before COVID, there were six or seven properties on the market. “Whoosh, they’ve all gone. To Londoners, and a couple of them doctors.” Clearly a doctor would know when it was a good moment to bail out of the capital, and this couple have jumped.

This is doubly remarkable because, before March, the countryside had fallen behind. Under the old-fashioned model, dating probably from the era of the burial mound, economic activity in London would stimulate prices to rise in the capital, then the effect would then ripple out to rural areas, as residents of Fulham took advantage of the difference in value, sold up, and bought country houses in Hampshire. Since 2007, this hasn’t happened. More than just financial prospects, young families — usually the ones to move out — clove to the capital. Besides, London was doing too well. The party was too exciting to leave. Foreigners kept piling in. You’d be mad to sell up and rusticate, because London prices would keep rising, your country cottage wouldn’t keep pace — you’d never get back in. Now it’s the other way around. London prices are tottering. Some of us take a wry pleasure in knowing that the luxury towers for Asian buyers that have been disfiguring the skyline won’t sell, bankrupting the speculators behind them. But in rational moments, that seems scant consolation.

It is a global phenomenon, fueled by not only the pandemic but similar issues affecting the property market around the world. It’s difficult for young people to buy in cities. Now out-of-office places that they might not previously have considered, given the great time they were having, look more possible. Their friends are doing it. Besides, despite the price rises seen in these volatile months, many country and suburban homesteads are within their budget. Which is something that, even now, can rarely be said of prime real estate in a major city.

L et’s look on the bright side. As someone whose home is in the center of London, I have to admit that cities have become much more pleasant to live in since lockdown. There’s less noise, less traffic, less pollution. Same in New York. “You can hear the birds singing,” says the architect Tom Kligerman of Ike Kligerman Barkley. “Walking through Midtown, I saw the streets strewn with pink petals from the trees. It shows what a city could be.” Unfortunately, as both Tom and I have discovered, there’s not the same point in being here. No theater, no opera, no fun. Everyone who has a second home in the city has decamped, leaving as one restaurant owner complained to me, “only scumbags who complain about the service charge on a cup of coffee, when they’ve been sitting on my chairs and waited on by one of my staff.” Although the restaurant is long-established and has always done well, it will probably be forced to close, unless there’s an unexpected change to the COVID rules and a more understanding attitude from the local authority. They used to say it’s grim up north. Now it’s gloomy down the metropolitan southeast.

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Retrofitting the Suburbs

**COVID has people decamping from cities. How will this change our way of life?**

by Clive Aslet
or life in general, this augurs well. Fortunately for me, my work rituals don’t involve catching a commuter train first thing in the morning: I need no more than snatch a bedroom to the study on the floor below. When I do commute, boy, do I feel badly treated by the world. Do you know how unpleasant it is to be rammed against other human beings, unable to read a newspaper without elbowing a fellow passenger in the nose? Well, possibly you do because many workers have to undergo this torture every day. It may just be worth it for the high earners, who can go home to a beautiful home in the evenings, having perhaps taken a show after work. But for the people working in accounts, who can derive no benefit from the capital because shows are expensive and they must hurry home to somewhere that isn’t that great, it’s misery. Expensive misery, given the cost of a season ticket, at that.

There’s no point in someone like that wanting to live in Ramsgate, or anywhere else. We have a holiday place in Ramsgate, on the south coast. It has a wealthier crowd who can admire the famous Sands for three hours a day and go into the office, by the superfast Javelin train — an hour and fifteen minutes, soon to go down to an hour — for the other two.

Ramsgate is what the Journal of the American Planning Association would call a “gateway community.” It is a small town near something pleasant — in this case the beach. We bought our place there because prices were cheap. That fact has been noticed by a crowd of artists, creatives, and escapists from London, which gives it a scruffy charm. A study published by the Journal recently calculates that there are around fifteen hundred Ramsgates across the United States: towns of fewer than twenty-five thousand people, each within ten miles of a national park, monument, forest, lake, or river, and some from a way major city. Even before COVID, people had started to notice that these were nice places to live and it was possible to work remotely from them. Now, suddenly, they’ve become the flavor of the month. These will be the new boom towns as buyers who were previously unable to read a newspaper without elbowing a fellow passenger in the nose have to slog in: I have been surprised to discover how many payment runs cannot be made unless people are physically on the office computer — or is that only the excuse I am given when charging fees? Most people can work from home, somewhere that isn’t that great, it’s misery. Expensive misery, given the cost of a season ticket, at that.

Across the world, buyers have been stampeding into the country property market.

Urbanism is the science of planning towns. Wisdom used to have it that, for this to be done well, people should be encouraged to live in cities. Only when there was a sufficient density of population would neighborhoods achieve those things people love: shops and offices only a walk away from where people live, genital street where you greet your neighbors, good local services. Urbanism is a child of the Eighties, pioneered at Seaside, a town on the Florida Panhandle, by David Blitzer and picked up at Poundbury, outside Dorchester in England, by Prince Charles. This thinking has now swept the board, though you wouldn’t always know from the broadsheets that Poundbury continues to create in the retardataire architecture press. Every good architectural firm, Modernist or traditionalist, thinks the same; it’s just that the buildings on the street look different. They all want to celebrate the character of Tuscan hill towns or London’s Marylebone — take your pick — whose buzz and attractiveness comes from the density of population.

Wake up, guys. There’s a new world out there. People now want to live in the suburbs. What should happen is that architects like London will develop many smaller centers, away from the big center. The big center will still have the arts venues and high-end restaurants that can’t be sustained locally; but smaller centers in the suburbs will have more of what the suburbs lack, and something to do. I know what I am talking about. I grew up in a suburb. It was green and pleasant, and, looking back on it, I can see why it suited my parents. To their generation, the city was soot-blinded, unhealthy, evil. To me, London was glorious. I went to live there as soon as I could.

It won’t be easy to achieve this revolution in the suburbs. But a recent interview in the New York Times has introduced me to the concept of "converting suburbia." June Williamson and Ellen Dunham-Jones have written a book about it. I like the idea. Unfortunately their cases — such as Mueller in east Austin, Texas — tends to new developments that have been placed in suburban locations. Mueller is on the site of a former airport. It’s walkable, which is remarkable for Texas; but it could have happened anywhere, really. My solution is simple. Incentivize developers to replace shopping malls with homes. Malls are made up of low-rise shops, surrounded by acres of car park: what an extravagant use of land. Redevelop them with proper streets, with terraced houses, parks, trees — you could still have the shops on the ground floor, cars underground. This would be good for Britain and even better for the United States. After all, “Suburbia is the United States. Suburbia is us,” says Ms. Williamson.

COVID has made people reconsider their homes, having spent so long in them. It’s time they should rethink the larger environment, too. This should be part of the great rebalancing of the West, post-COVID. London might not regain its fire, but it will make for a happier world.
On the Trail With Ronald Reagan

Dutch's myth lives on in western Illinois.

by Nic Rowan

Whenever I ride that long, flat stretch of Illinois between Chicago and Davenport, I can't help but think of Ronald Reagan and the time that he hitchhiked the highway now named for him.

It was the fall of 1932, and the depth of the Great Depression. Reagan, after thumbing a ride to Chicago from Eureka, where he had graduated from college, had just failed to become a radioman. It was raining, which is intolerable in the Windy City. So Reagan did what so many broke people did at the time: he bounced right back home.

He came home to Dixon, to his parents. Reagan, of course, did not last long in Illinois after that. He soon found a better announcing job in Iowa. He leveraged that into a screen test while on a reporting trip to California. Producers liked that fresh, all-American face, and liked that fact that they could shoot him without running water. The man, every town to which his alcoholic father dragged his family. Reagan was at the time of state politics turned the legislature downtown just as the sun was setting. It's a strange place: he's examining several kernels of corn, which the inscription on the base says “seems appropriate” to the miles of cornfield surrounding the town. A couple pulled up and got out of their car. The man, elderly, smiled, told me that they drove out for a Saturday cruise through the fields and, as fate would have it, ended up in Dixon.

“I’ve always wanted to trace his footsteps,” he said, pointing to the statue. “He was a good president.”

The Reagan sites in Dixon draw more than ten thousand visitors per year, and the town is also a popular wedding destination because of its scenic placement on the Rock River, where Reagan as a lifeguard in high school famously saved seventy-seven lives over the course of several summers.

But Dixon is not the primary Reagan site. That’s Tampico, a tiny town about half an hour away, where the president was born. Tampico is not directly off any highway and is not in an area with decent WiFi reception. But it’s where Reagan came from, and where its lifelong residents keep watch over his legacy.

In Tampico, I met Joan Johnson, who grew up in the town and keeps the museum at his birthplace running. Johnson inherited stewardship of the place from two other couples in town, the Nicelys and the McElhineys, both of whom were collectors of Reaganabilia as he rose from actor to governor to president. Paul Nicely, who, while he lived, posed in his entire life's savings into the museum, first showed Reagan the place in 1976, during his first presidential run. In 1992, Helen Nicely led Reagan on another tour, when, in a fit of nostalgia, he desired to see his birthplace once more before his death. But the Nicelys and the McElhineys are gone now, leaving their cache of knowledge to Johnson, who has been leading tours since 1994. Every summer, Johnson takes people into the museum, is a shrine for people who feel like they have been touched by Reagan's spirit. It's chalking full of mementos visitors have left behind. The most striking, a handwritten sign from a man named Tom Liebel, thanks Reagan for liberating Europe in the Cold War.

“Remembering the Gipper, the only living president to be honored as fate would have it, ended up in Dixon. It was that curious traveler in the right direction. I was that curious traveler just days before the presidential election. Weighed down with a camera and a suitcase full of biographies, I landed in Chicago on Halloween, rented a car, and drove out into the Land of Reagan.

Reagan, if he had to name a hometown, would always say Dixon. Only a two-hour drive from Chicago, the place is generally accessible to tourists, except during the pandemic. Still, most of the old haunts are there: his so-called boyhood home, the library where he studied, and the school he attended. The city over time has erected a number of statues to him, as well as one to Lincoln, who served in the Blackhawk War in Dixon.

I stopped in front of a Reagan statue downtown just as the sun was setting. It's a strange place: he's examining several kernels of corn, which the inscription on the base says "seems appropriate" to the miles of cornfield surrounding the town. A couple pulled up and got out of their car. The man, elderly, smiled, told me that they drove out for a Saturday cruise through the fields and, as fate would have it, ended up in Dixon.

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“You are the greatest president the world has ever seen,” the sign reads. “You freed my country, Hungary, and the world from leftist freeloading barbarians. Your name alone will strike
Morris threw himself into his work, almost literally: While at the Rock River, he reinvisioned himself as one of the people Reagan fished out of the current. Moreover, Morris was the only one informed that fishing had been reinvented several past seven decades to Dutch," Morris wrote, explaining his own fictional near-death experience as prophetic for the way in which Reagan brought the United States to triumph in the Cold War. "Some day, I hoped, America might acknowledge the real Reagan, the one who rescued her in a time of poisonous despair, and, in Joseph Gruccio’s words, earned her “breastward out of peril.”"

Reagan, for instance, could have been the second Catholic president, if it were not for a curious incident that occurred after he was born. Reagan’s father, Jack, was supposed to tell his mother, Nelle, to have his son baptized at St. Mary’s, the local Catholic parish. Nelle for some reason demurred, and Reagan became a Disciple of Christ. It’s strange, walking into St. Mary’s and seeing what could have been. As I examined the high altar and baldacchino, Deacon Bill Lemmer said that it is reputed to be “the most beautiful church between Chicago and Des Moines.” But it is in decline: in the past twenty years it has gone from about two hundred families to sixty. An average of twenty-seven people attend Sunday mass. It no longer has a full-time priest.

Pointing up at the organ, a beautiful, nineteenth-century beast, Lemmer told me how the person in the parish who knows how to play it, a woman over eighty years old, is so weak that she can no longer ascend the steps to the loft. Therefore, she never plays it.

But it could be worse. The church Reagan attended with his mother closed in 2018, without ceremony. The secret of why Reagan never was baptized Catholic went down with it. Jack’s negligence, Nelle’s independence — it could be one or both.

“That’s the story we tell, anyway,” Johnson said.

“And it’s probably true,” Lemmer added.

When we returned to the museum, a couple from Georgia was visiting. They were there on trial, just for a day trip. The wife remarked that Reagan reminds her of Donald Trump. And then she was off to inspect the outhouse.

Johnson joked to me as we walked out to my car that if I ever needed her to make up something about Dutch, to give her a call.

“With some of these things, we keep telling the same story and everything,” she smiled. “Because, at the end of the day, who is going to dispute us?”

That comment reminded me of Morris. I asked if maybe he wasn’t entitled to his own myths, too.

“It’s hard to tell about anything,” she said. “We all have our own opinions.”

Larry Thornberry of Tampa is a long-time correspondent to The American Spectator. His work has also appeared in the Washington Times and the Wall Street Journal.

Will Sunday afternoon football fans ever see an NFL player wearing a Blue Lives Matter jersey? Sure they will. The day after they spot a Volvo with a gun rack.

Here’s another question, suitable for the next office pool or pub quiz: Can you name three things in America the political and cultural Left hasn’t badly damaged, taken the fun out of, or totally ruined?

All right, I hear your objection, and it’s sound. I’ve set the bar too high. OK, name one thing. Still a challenge. Perhaps there’ll be no winner of this pool. An aggressive and intolerant Left has marched, inexorably through our institutions, taking them down cortile, leaving their forms standing but refrigerating and decimating their content, in the manner of ideological bodily-snatchers. It took a good while for the Left to capture sports, or at least to badly infect them. Other institutions were less of a challenge. Academe, always a flaky precinct, was easy. The professoriate, the conservative persuasion. A majority of lefties have preferred computer games, organic gardening, yoga classes, and psychotherapy to Monday Night Football. But the Left finally has established a firm beachhead in professional sports.

Common sense still mostly prevails at the amateur level. I’ve not seen a Black Lives Matter banner at a Little League game yet. But it’s early days, and we all know what rolls downhill.

The NFL, MLB, and NBA are now adjuncts of Black Lives Matter, complete with banners, sweatshirts, and sappy and misleading television commercials. League executives have given no indication whether their loyalty is to the sentiment — which is unsaluble but irrelevant, as no one ever said black lives don’t matter — or to the Marxist organization, which has a much more toxic agenda than racial peace and equity. In fact, racial peace
is the last thing BLM wants. It would put them out of business.

The price of attending or viewing one of these now-political leagues’ games, in addition to theurious ticket or cable package tariff, is to see America insulded by kneeling athletes, indulged young prats whom America has made rich and privileged beyond their wildest dreams. Talk about biting the hand that over-feeds you.

For reasons too complex to plumb in this article, the corporate Big Feet who now own and control professional sports in America have either ignorantly or cynically signed on to the hoax and slander that America is a racist hell-hole, thereby making themselves allies to the revolution that has been ignited and fed by this lie. Lenin would call them useful idiots. I’ve a few names for them myself, but I’ll pass over these as this is a family publication.

An egregrous example: On July 24, Opening Day of MLB’s sixty-game, asterisk season, the Tampa Bay Rays, which should be my team, tweeted, “Today is opening season, the Tampa Bay Rays, which should be my team, but I’ll pass over these as this is a family publication."

Let this one sink in. According to the social justice warrior executives at One Tropicana Drive, Louisville police officers who when fired on in the tragic cockpit that led to Breonna Taylor’s death should be arrested for returning fire. How many Rays fans accept the police-officers-doing-their-duty-are-criminals philosophy embodied in this brain-dead tweet? Then

If what was once billed as “the national pastime” brings in a quarter of the viewers of a show about people finding old stuff in their attics, something is very, very wrong.

where’s the comfort level, not just in St. Petersburg and Tampa but across the sports spectrum, for fans who know very well that America is not systemically racist, and that the brutality on America’s streets is, with rare exceptions, perpetrated by criminals, not by police officers?

So readers can easily understand why this conservative Americano and Cat-5 sports fan has submitted his principled resignation from the world of sports, at least the professional kind. I urge other patriots to do the same. The biggest source of sports money comes from television. That means the only way fans can steer sports execs away from their current love affair with the race-hating Left is to stop watching. If the plague ever withdraws, and stadium turnstiles can start turning again, fans can stay away from these as well. Absinthe, painful for those whose lives have been enriched by sports, is the most effective way to deliver the message.

I’ve not watched a pitch, a snap, or a shot since Big Sport cared to the moh. This breaks my heart as I’ve loved sports all my life. I’ve watched, played, cared about, read about, and talked endlessly about sports for seven decades. I’ve written about them for free. My early athletic exemplars had names like Stan Musial, Ted Williams, Rocky Marciano, and Bob Cousy. (I came along a tad late for Joe DiMaggio and Joe Louis.) But

I’ve had to pull the plug. Otherwise I would feel like I was sleeping with the enemy.

Professional sports’ current genuflection to the Left’s race obsession is dangerous not only to the nation but to the future of professional sports itself. The games we love are a terrible mix with politics. Sports bring many satisfactions to both participants and viewers, not to mention disappointments, of course. I’ve written of these in this space for years now. But one of the many reasons Americans tune into the games, or sit up themselves, is to escape, for a time, the many conflicts that roil us, including politics. Sports have been, and if the multi-billion-dollar sports industry is to survive must remain, a refuge from politics, not another forum for it. The last thing Joe Americano needs and wants on Sunday afternoon when he picks up his remote after a hard week’s work is political hectoring from ignorant athletes and league executives who consider themselves Joe’s betters, Joe just wants to watch the damn ball game! He doesn’t want to hear that LeBron James, when not busy playing kissy-kissy with Chinese communists, thinks he’s racist scum.

The corporate sports, in addition to being entertaining, bad unifying benefits. Every member of the community, regardless of occupation, education, social standing, or complexion, could agree on supporting the home team, living or dying as the team succeeded or failed. The hedge fund manager and the janitor, together on a long elevator ride, could chat amiably about yesterday’s game, if about little else.

But the easygoing and unifying charm of sports leaves the stadium when fans are nagged to declare on the tendentious political questions of the day. Currently fans are badgered to accept the whites-are-oppressors, blacks-are-victims narrative of the Left. The NFL went so far as to open games with a tune, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” which some designate “the black national anthem.” This was played along with the “Star-Spangled Banner,” presumably now the white national anthem. Wow. Separate anthems for blacks and whites. How unifying is that? I’m not alone in giving sports a bye because of politics. But it’s difficult, probably impossible, to say how many others have.

Clearly viewership across all sports is down, especially for the NFL. The recent NBA finals drew an average TV viewership roughly that of Dancing with the Stars and below the average for Antiques Roadshow. The first two games of MLB’s American League Championship Series between the Tampa Bay Rays and Houston Astros fetched the smallest viewership of any LCS games in history, the second game attracting a miniscule 1.88 million. If what was once billed as “the national pastime” brings in a quarter of the viewers of a show about people finding old stuff in their attics, something is very, very wrong.

There is indeed a lot wrong in today’s professional sports, much of it preceding the plague and on-field politics. Young people today are not developing an interest in sports to the degree of previous generations. There’s wildly overpaid athletes forcing wildly overpriced tickets to attend games. There’s the increasingly corporate nature of today’s sports. Many fans can’t even remember the name of the soulless corporation their hometown stadium is named after. And clearly sports executives have vastly overestimated their fans’ tolerance of, let alone market for, woke politics on the field.

Will the folks who run professional sports finally recognize this and make corrections? I certainly hope so. Because, damn it, I want my games back. I want to be able to sing “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” again, and mean it.

I want my games back. I want to be able to sing “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” again, and mean it.

Buy a second copy for a friend.

–David Horowitz
Joe’s Got a Deal For You!

The market hasn’t asked for electric vehicles, but Biden has mandated it.

by Eric Peters

Hey Long promised a chicken in every pot — to be paid for by the rich, whose incomes would be confiscable to pay for it. Joe Biden, channeling AOC through his eyes-wide-vacant and piano-key smile — wants an electric car in every garage.

And everyone’s going to pay for it. It’s all part of the Green New Deal that Joe Biden swears he isn’t for. To be fair, he may not remember he’s previously said he’s for, though he styled it — on his website, before it got scrubbed — “a crucial framework for meeting the climate challenges we face.”

Regardless, it’s more of an offer you can’t refuse, as a “deal” generally involves consenting parties.

This one will be dealt to the parties who will pay for it — by those who have the muscle to make them pay for what they already can’t afford.

Today’s income redistributionists have put the collectivists transmission in reverse. Rather than shake down the rich to pay for the working stiff’s support, the working stiff will be mugged to help put an electric car in every rich person’s garage. The not-rich generally lacking garages, it’s hard to run an extension cord from an apartment window to the street down below.

And if you do have a garage, you’ll need to “invest” — as Joe puts it — in a “fast” charger, if you want to get moving again without waiting overnight. Plus the electricity, to wire it.

Joe says the electric car will save “billions of gallons of oil,” which may be true. It doesn’t mean people won’t be paying more for energy.

Electricity will inevitably cost more as artificially induced demand for it increases, putting a strain on the already strained existing infrastructure. More demand than is necessary, interestingly — because the typical electric car tours performance — Elon Musk styles it “ludicrous speed” — which it must because it cannot tout efficiency or economy. Neither being true. It doesn’t mean people won’t be paying more for energy.

But with EVs, someone else gets the bill. Speed always costs money.

The not-rich generally lacking garages, the market hasn’t asked for electric vehicles, but Biden has mandated it.

The answer — which Joe won’t tell you about — is that all cars are to be made unaffordable. Walking — and bike-living — is a core tenet of the Green New Deal. For the Average Joe, that is.

At least we’ll get our exercise, like Kim Jong Un his Lincoln Continental. And if you do have a garage, you’ll need to “invest” — as Joe puts it — in a “fast” charger, if you want to get moving again without waiting overnight. Plus the electricity, to wire it.

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Cuffing Season and Our Epidemic of Loneliness

Members of “the connected generation” feel disconnected from fulfilling relationships. Could their failed attempts to fix that actually be a good sign?

by Amile Wilson

A
s autumn marches toward winter, a crispness fills the air, the days get shorter, and pumpkin spice gets replaced by peppermint, all while an emotional cocktail of hopefulness, nostalgia, and seasonal affective disorder set into the pits of stomachs. ’Tis the season… cuffing season, to be exact.

For those of you not acquainted with mating habits of the big-city millennial of the species, cuffing season is the time of year when singles feel the particular imperative to “couple up” for the cold months. After all, who wants to show up alone for all those holiday parties, or face the winter months for a long period of digital or “socially distant dating.” As some restrictions eased, the dating scene became a rush not only to find someone for the holiday but also for the coming surge of infections and renewed lockdowns. The website Vice described this year’s early start to cuffing as a “bloodbath” full of additional pressures.

The possibility of being quarantined with someone has also raised the stakes on the quality of partner sought in the perennial cuffing.

Claire Harmeyer writes in the lifestyle blog HelloGiggles:

The search for potential partners is heating up: Amichai Thumbo, the chief executive of Match Group Americas (which owns Tinder, OKCupid, Match.com, Hinge, and Plenty of Fish, told the New York Times that in-app messages were up 30 to 40% on most of the company’s apps compared to this time last year. And according to an internal survey conducted on dating app Hily, 54% of 1,200 respondents say that they are thinking about getting into a committed relationship more often than they did before the lockdown.

Whether the cold temperatures, the onslaught of social gatherings, or the brightly colored mood, the winter months inspire the need for more than just a high-rise apartment and bowl of Ramen. The winter months are a reminder that soliogist is important, whether for the emotional support of a family or the desire for a “cuddle buddy” for warmth. And as much as we love them, dogs don’t quite cut it.

Yet the “cuffing” rarely lasts, at least in traditional terms.

Once springtime hits, the seasonal pressure from grandma asking, “When will you find a nice young man/woman and settle down?” disappears and the urge to start fresh means even the slightest annoyance can become a deal-breaker.

And thus the annual cycle continues.

Pew Research says that “Only 44% of Millennials were married in 2019, compared with 53% of Gen Xers, 65% of Boomers and 81% of Silents at a comparable age.” If the trend continues, millennials will soon have the lowest marriage rate under forty of any group in American history.

Amid their perpetual bachelor/bachelorette-hood, it should come as no surprise that rates of loneliness among millennials are skyrocketing, and they are turning to global politics for a source of belonging.

The Barna research group’s 2019 “The Connected Generation” survey found that a mere one-third of adults ages eighteen to thirty-five responded that they “often feel deeply cared for by those around them (33%)” or that someone believes in them (32%).” In stark contrast, 77 percent of that same demographic agreed with the statements “Events around the world matter to me;” and 57 percent said the same of “I feel connected to people around the world.”

From climate change to pandemics to global concern and Twitter followers can never replace genuine relationships.

The sad fact is that global affairs are the ones these same millennials are the least likely to impact. After all, speaking or tweeting at your city council is a more likely catalyst for change than attempting to solve the conflict in Darfur. But “the connected generation” feels the exact opposite.

Yet cuffing season suggests that whatever is happening around the world, there is still a void in this exact moment, this exact space, and this exact life.

Busted inside the “cuffing” is more than simply a wish to “drive the cold winter away.” Cuffing up provides the most basic, secure, and close-knit community of people who do “care deeply” and “believe in” those around them. Try as they might, people cannot escape the need for social belonging, and the yearning for another person to look them in the eye and with genuine concern say, “You are loved.”

The proliferation of cuffing season shows that we cannot escape our nature. As Franklin D. Roosevelt said, “Peace, like charity, begins at home.” So too does “belonging.”

No matter how connected to the world they feel, global concern and Twitter followers can never replace genuine relationships. Cuffing season might just be a great reminder that in the cold winter months, it is our closest relationships that truly keep us warm, not a distant government.

Amile Wilson is a communications and creative consultant, professor, and entrepreneur. He is the Act Director for The American Spectator.
One of the silver linings of COVID-19 is the relaxing of nonsensical alcohol restrictions.

Pandemics and Prohibition: 100 Years Later
by C. Jarrett Dieterle

One of the most common, if perhaps overdone, media talking points during COVID-19 has been to point out the supposed parallels to the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic that occurred just over a century ago. Regardless of how one feels about this comparison — and putting aside the obvious health and medical advancements since the early 1900s — it has all but obscured another important hundred-year anniversary in American history.

On January 17, 1920, the infamous Volstead Act, which gave teeth to the Eighteenth Amendment, went into effect. At the stroke of midnight the evening before, Americans raised their glasses one last time, toasted their evening before, and braced for the start of a booze ban into its state constitution in 1881 (Maine had previously passed a Prohibition law in 1851, but it was repealed shortly thereafter).

From there, the race was on. But for a political movement that started off with so much fanfare and momentum, Prohibition has long been recognized as an utter public policy failure. Americans from every stripe of life rebelled, and soon a thriving black market of moonshine, bootlegging, and rum-running sprang up from sea to shining sea.

As students of history know, Prohibition was relegated to the dustbin of history just thirteen years after it began. The experience of that era forced policymakers to learn a fundamental truth of the human condition: The more governments try to deny us our beloved hooch, the more we will revolt.

In 2020, one might be tempted to believe that politicians and governments have finally internalized this lesson, but almost as soon as COVID-19 struck, this century-old wisdom sadly seemed to fly out the window.

The Mexican government announced in early April that beer was “non-essential” and that the country would be shutting down all breweries in the country during the pandemic. The result was as sad as it was predictable: Dozens of Mexican residents died of alcohol poisoning after swapping their normal beer consumption for poorly made black-market moonshine.

But to give credit where it’s due, there has also been good news when it comes to alcohol in 2020. COVID-19 has forced politicians — at least those not residing in Mexico or Pennsylvania — to revisit antiquated rules around alcohol. Since Prohibition’s repeal, America has continued to labor under an extremely restrictive system of alcohol regulation. Although the federal government is less involved in alcohol governance these days, state and local governments still maintain an extreme amount of power over alcohol.

Even though such a tragedy is unlikely to occur anytime soon in the U.S., it quickly became clear that some American government officials were also determined to forget the lessons of Prohibition. Early on in the pandemic, Pennsylvania liquor regulators shuttered the state’s network of government-run liquor stores despite those stores being the only retail outlets for distilled spirits in the state.

While there were no direct reports of any deaths resulting from Pennsylvania’s decision, it’s unquestionable that it created unnecessary public health risks. Scores of Pennsylvania residents flooded across state lines to liquor stores in bordering locales like New Jersey, Ohio, and West Virginia. Many of the store owners in those states, unable to prepare for the surge in foot traffic during the pandemic, were forced to temporarily close to avoid being overwhelmed.

And, as numerous public health experts pointed out at the time, adopting a public policy response that encourages people to move across state lines instead of sheltering in place was one of the more obvious examples of government ineptitude during the pandemic.

To put to good use what’s been well-said: Call to arms! Come for the cocktail recipes, stay for the call to arms.

An impassioned case against a senseless system... Come for the cocktail recipes, stay for the call to arms.

— Clay Risen, American Whiskey, Bourbon, and Rye

POLLS

We'll, if you feel undecided, have another drink. It's not a bribe. Promise.

THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR Winter 2020

The simple three-ingredient Alaska Cocktail provides a bounty of herbal flavors with its spirit-forward combo of gin and yellow Chartreuse.

Election Day is an annual occasion to celebrate freedom, and it’s only natural that some of us like to celebrate freedom by getting completely sloshed—after all, how else are we supposed to justify voting for the crappy options we have to choose from? In Alaska, though, your choices for an Election Day tipple are limited. Under an archaic law, restaurants, bars, and other businesses can’t sell alcohol on Election Day until after the polls close. The rule dates back to a time when polling places were often situated in saloons and politicians would bribe voters with the promise of free alcohol. But such times are (unfortunately) long in the past, so shouldn’t this law be left in the past too? Well, if you feel undecided, have another drink. It’s not a bribe. Promise.

• 2 ounces gin
• ½ ounce yellow Chartreuse
• 2 dashes orange bitters, preferably Regans’ (see Resources, page 157)
• Lemon twist for garnish

Combine the gin, Chartreuse, and bitters in a mixing glass filled with ice and stir for 20 to 30 seconds. Strain into a chilled coupe glass. Garnish with the lemon twist.

BOOZE FOR VOTES

Election Day booze bans may seem altruistic, but they actually run counter to our country’s history. During a Virginia House of Burgesses campaign early in his career, no less than George freakin’ Washington handed out rum, beer, and wine to voters in exchange for their votes. The man knew how to be persuasive!

GIVE ME LIBERTY AND GIVE ME A DRINK!

When the COVID-19 pandemic tragically hit America, it created a lot of unintended consequences. The food-and-drink industry was among the sectors most affected by all the changes. Despite the uncertain times, many distilleries and breweries stepped up to produce hand sanitizer to help the general public. Sadly, some states had sclerotic alcohol laws on the books that punished this charitable spirit. In Hawaii, the government actually started cracking down on alcohol producers that were giving away sanitizer for free. They claimed that providing free sanitizer ran afoul of state laws that forbade producers from enticing customers to buy alcohol with free gifts. Even in the midst of tragedy, the government just can’t seem to help itself.

• 2 ounces Pimm’s Cup No. 1
• 5 or 6 mint leaves
• 3 ounces ginger ale
• Cucumber wheel for garnish
• Orange wheel for garnish
• Lemon wheel for garnish

Combine the Pimm’s and mint leaves in a highball glass filled with ice. Top off with the ginger ale and stir gently for 5 to 10 seconds. Garnish with the cucumber, orange, and lemon wheels.

SANITIZED INSANITY

The Brits originally used Pimm’s liqueur as a health and digestive aid, and drinkers today still celebrate the Pimm’s Cup for its herbal and refreshing tones.

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• 16 ounces tomato juice
• 18 ounces vodka
• 3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
• 2 teaspoons bottled horseradish
• 1 tablespoon Tabasco sauce
• Freshly ground black pepper

Combine the tomato juice, vodka, Worcestershire sauce, horseradish, and Tabasco sauce in a large pitcher. Stir for 15 to 20 seconds. Serve each drink in a pint glass filled with ice. Grind enough black pepper over the top to lightly cover the surface of the drink. Stir 5 to 10 seconds more.

GIVE ME LIBERTY AND GIVE ME A DRINK!

This classic version of the Bloody Mary will spice up your brunch routine.

WEAPONIZED PITCHERS

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GIVE ME LIBERTY AND GIVE ME A DRINK!
**DRINK UP!**

**Your Guide to the Only Manhattan Worth Visiting**

I’ll make you feel much more alive than the city is these days.

by Tony Woodlief

Start with two solid, respectable ice cubes. None of those suspicious-smelling milk-colored clunkers from your fridge’s ice maker, mind you. Show some self-respect, for God’s sake.

Next, liberally sprinkle your cubes with aromatic bitters. Be like the U.S. Congress in an election year. Like Oprah with a bushel of Pontiac keys. Shower your cubes with irresponsible angostura love.

Now pour in a shot of the best dry vermouth you can get. Look, this is no time to get chintzy. You’re not decorating a freshman dorm room with IKEA furniture. This is the penthouse suite of beverages, my friend. Class the joint up.

Now hit it with a shake of orange bitters. This should be more subtle than what you did with the aromatic bitters. Think Peter Strzok’s little shoulder shimmy during his congressional testimony, only imagine a man doing it.

The next part is up to you: two shots of a whiskey of your choosing. This is the moment when a specialist would seek to impress you, writing something like, “I prefer the Sounder Mountain 241 Saddleback Rye, handcrafted in the Flint Hills of Kansas and cured in Davy Crockett’s casket.” Rest assured, you don’t need a fancy-schmancy whiskey to make a fine Manhattan. I usually go with Traverse City Whiskey Company’s cherry bourbon, and I always make sure to buy a case when I visit my secret hideaway in northern Michigan. Barring that, I go with High West’s American Prairie bourbon. You also can’t go wrong with Four Roses small batch, or even Makers 46.

The only bourbon I advise against is Woodford Reserve. I don’t have a problem with the flavor or quality, mind you; it’s just that I’ve seen too many dudes named Chad sipping it from a mason jar while grooving to Mumford and Sons. Don’t be that guy.

Now for your final ingredient: two cherries. If a Maraschino just crossed your mind, I want you to slap yourself in the face for me. What you need here is a delicious, flavor-drenched Griottine. Add a little of the juice if you want extra sweetness.

Last, but certainly no less important: Give it a good stir. Go Bob Marley on that glass. Make some mischief in there. Now drop in one more fresh, crisp, lovely cube, and you’re ready to enjoy this little taste of American goodness, handcrafted in your very own glass. And there’s not a damn thing the revenuers or teetotalers can do about it.

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**FROM OUR SUBSCRIBERS**

This October, we sent a survey to our readers to see how the pandemic affected their lives. We received a huge number of responses — thank you!

Here are some highlights:

**Were there protests or riots in your area?**

- No: 50%
- Yes, protests: 20%
- Yes, riots: 20%
- Yes, both: 10%

**Do you believe the lock downs in your area were too strict?**

- Yes, they were too strict: 60%
- No, they were not strict enough: 20%
- No, they were about right: 20%

**Do you believe the country should reopen fully or partially?**

- Fully open as soon as possible: 20%
- Phased reopening as possible: 30%
- Continue status quo: 50%
Did you or anyone you know experience remote schooling? How did it go?

“Yes, my daughter and two of my sons. It went relatively well.”

“Coworkers. Sounded difficult, but with good kids, good schools (private), and parents nearby, it went pretty well. Hard to juggle with work, though.”

“Yes, I have two college age kids and the experience was non-existent or very poor. Not worth the money, so the kids are taking time off until things change back.”

“I work for a university. Struggling to get online courses right and also failed in trying to reopen for onsite classes in August.”

“Two of my daughters, who are in college. Major disaster. The top-notch scholar hates it because she is learning less than she might in class. The not-so-serious student hates it because it is much harder to learn this way, and because the human engagement factor turns out to be key, even in quant classes, like Econ stats, and econometrics. And not having normal interaction with friends, and in the world is isolating and depressing.”

“My girlfriend is a teacher both live and virtual. It is fun to hear her experiences with virtual. She was saying the other day she could hear parents whispering answers to children. HA!”

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“My girlfriend is a teacher both live and virtual. It is fun to hear her experiences with virtual. She was saying the other day she could hear parents whispering answers to children. HA!”

“Both my college age kids. They’re good students, didn’t miss a beat, but only over the short haul. My son is back at college, but still online-only classes this fall. I warned him it might be mentally challenging to be so isolated living alone back at school and being online only. Yet again, I also felt it may be a time of great personal growth and introspection for him. Character doesn’t develop in easy times.”

“I am a school board director. I could fill a page with the problems of remote schooling, the worst of it being internet connectivity. The parents are up in arms — the kids (K-5) especially are losing ground rapidly.”

“Grandchildren. Not well: the children need real human social interaction and instruction. Nine-year-olds need a lot of activity and are not good at sitting in front of a monitor all day. Pretty much awful.”

What denomination or religious group do you belong to?

Did you or anyone you know experience remote schooling? How did it go?

What do you listen to on the radio?
G

ood old-fashioned home cooking and baking: for many of us, that has been one of the silver linings of the COVID crisis. We asked our readers to share their favorite recipes to make for family and friends.

Here are some of our favorites:

Balsamic Braised Ribs

- In a large, heavy-bottomed pot such as a Dutch oven, heat the oil over medium heat. Working in batches so as not to crowd the pan, sear the short ribs for 3–4 minutes on each side, or until well-browned. Transfer the short ribs to a plate.
- Add the leeks, onions, carrots, celery, and garlic to the pot and cook until well-browned, stirring occasionally, about 12–15 minutes. Add the red pepper flakes, salt, pepper, and tomato paste, and cook until the tomato paste turns a brick reddish-brown color; about 6–7 minutes.
- Add the Dijon mustard, rosemary sprigs, balsamic vinegar, and brown sugar. Scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pot. Return the short ribs to the pot and then add the beef broth. Bring the mixture up to a low simmer and cover.
- The pot can be left on the stovetop on low heat or placed in a 325° F oven for 2–3 hours or until the short ribs are very tender when pierced with a fork.
- Carefully transfer the meat to a platter. Cover with foil and a couple of kitchen towels to keep warm. Using a slotted spoon, remove and discard the solids from the liquid. Bring the liquid to a boil on the stovetop and cook until reduced to about 1 cup. Drizzle the glaze over the short ribs and serve.

Czech Fruit Dumpling

- In a large Dutch oven, boil 5 to 8 minutes.
- Place all the dumplings in boiling, slightly salted water.
- Drain in colander.
- Place 1 piece of fruit on each square and close it.
- Cut into small squares.
- In a large kettle, brown meat, peppers, onions, celery, and garlic. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for 2 or more hours — the longer the better. Remove grease as necessary.
- Serve plenty of chopped onions, cheese, and sour cream on the side as garnishes. You will also need lots of French bread and butter.
- Enjoy!

Cold Weather Chili

- In a large kettle, brown meat, peppers, onions, celery, and garlic. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for 2 or more hours — the longer the better. Remove grease as necessary.
- Serve plenty of chopped onions, cheese, and sour cream on the side as garnishes.
- Enjoy!

From Steve Younker

From Peter Taussig

From Steve Bunten

Check out our blog for weekly recipe recommendations from readers and staff, and send in your own to editor@spectator.org!
Cherry Crumble Cake

Crumb topping:
- 1 cup flour
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- ½ cup brown sugar

Batter:
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 ¾ cups cake flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder

Filling:
- 1 lb. Bing cherries, pitted
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 Tbsp. tapioca starch or cornstarch
- 1 tsp. almond extract

1. Don’t have recipes; I just do it. The generations behind me (I am 71) seem to have been raised as mac ‘n’ cheese junkies. I ate it some at my Maw Maw’s Sunday dinner, where it was, of course, made from scratch. There was an occasion my lady friend (45) needed to take some to a school function. I like to cook, so I told her I would try my luck at avoiding the Kraft box variety. Here goes:

2. Put noodles in pot and add water just enough to cover them. Pressure cook for 3-4 minutes (whatever your brand pot allows). You may release pressure or allow to sit until released and it shifts to keep warm.

3. Cut the Velveeta into squares small enough to stir around until melted.

4. Add sharp cheese and other ingredients in no particular order. Noodles should still be hot enough to melt ingredients. If not, put on “warm.”

5. I tried this and have been told it is the “best they’ve ever tasted” by the school and several others she has given some to. A variation is to use shredded pepper jack instead of cheddar. It is different but good, too.

From Michael D. Green

Better-Than-Boxed Mac ‘n’ Cheese

Creamy Garlic Butter Tuscan Salmon

- 4 salmon fillets, skin off (or trout or any white fish)
- Salt and pepper, to season
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 6 cloves garlic, finely diced
- 1 small yellow onion, diced
- ½ cup dry white wine (optional; do not use a sweet white wine)
- 5 oz. (150 g) jarred sun-dried tomato strips in oil, drained
- 1 ¾ cups half and half (See Note)
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 3 cups baby spinach leaves
- ½ cup fresh grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp. cornstarch (cornflour) mixed with 1 Tbsp. water (optional)
- 1 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped

Feel free to use half light cream and half 2% milk in place of half and half. Alternatively, use all light cream or heavy cream.

From Larry Nix, via CafeDelites.com

Plenty, 2020 (Bill W. Ruby Photos)
WWE: Wrestling Without Entertainment

Can a sport all about participation survive its audience’s banishment from the stadium?

by Daniel J. Flynn

Professional wrestling fans, like the “shy Trump voter,” harbor an intense passion expressed to others in whispers if at all. The hobby ranks just above pornography, but below anime as a pastime engendering the strange combination of enthusiasm and embarrassment. This fight club follows the first two rules of Fight Club, save for when enthusiasts gather in their safe spaces, which until recently included sports arenas.

Coronavirus, in addition to sputtering nonagenarians and My 600 lb Life aspirants, counts the attempted murder of professional wrestling among its crimes. Vince McMahon, a survivor of the Gobbledy Gooker, Papa Shango, Mantaur, and other doomed gimmicks, refused to let it. Neither in Hollywood nor on Broadway but in the squared circle did the industry create “the show must go on” find a faithful acolyte.

Then the WWE realized the show takes place on a stage larger than its canvas. Stealing their nineteen teeth. A show must go on” find a faithful acolyte. Initially, squared circle did the industry credo “the group catharsis of audience participation. The fans not only essentially scripted winners and losers through their reactions but became part of the show through the ubiquitous signs (e.g., “My Mom Makes a Great Lasagna” and “Without Me You’d Just Be Average”), the inside-joke shouts of “What,” and other Ready Horror Picture Show-esque morphings of spectator with spectacles.

Shakespeare, as Highbrow/Lowbrow shows, once appealed to the masses the way professional wrestling now does. Fourteen years after Edwin Booth’s younger brother non-kayfabe murdered the president, a Chicago theatergoer attempted to murder Booth for munerating the title role in Richard II (just as a partisan of Pedro Morales stabbed Blackjack Mulligan in the Boston Garden in 1971). Shakespeare’s villainous Richard III, misplayed in Sacramento in 1856, coaxed missiles of cabbage and potatoes, sacks of flour and soot, a dead goose, firecrackers, dynamite Murdering the crowd, and, in the coup de grace, a consciousness-ending pumpkin. In Albany, a ticket-holder screamed at Iago: “You damned-lying scoundrel, I would like to get hold of you after the show and wring your infernal neck.”

Wrestling, neither sport nor religion but at the same time both, recalcitrantly maintained a blacklist, which included former WWE champion C. M. Punk and the flags of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Tibet, it did not prevent images of a Krautman, a bewreckering, and Chris Benoit, the former WWE fan favorite who seemed from the script by murdering his wife and child before murdering himself, from popping up on television.

“Time piped-in noise, I can hear that,” Jey Uso told The Gentle Pissant podcast. “I hate it, though. There is no energy. There is no energy. I have to draw that from myself or my opponent... I miss the people. That was what made wrestling special.”

He gets it. So did the late Lawrence Levine, author of Highbrow/Lowbrow: “With important exceptions, particularly in the areas of sports and religion — audiences in America had become less interested, less of a public and more of a group of mute receptors,” Levine wrote in 1990. “Art was becoming a one-way process: the artist communicating and the audience receiving.”

Wrestling, neither sport nor religion but at the same time both, recalcitrantly maintained the group enthusiasm of audience participation. The fans not only essentially scripted winners and losers through their reactions but became part of the show through the ubiquitous signs (e.g., “My Mom Makes a Great Lasagna” and “Without Me You’d Just Be Average”), the inside-joke shouts of “What,” and other Ready Horror Picture Show-esque morphings of spectator with spectacles.

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Shakespeare was still real to them, damnmit. And wrestling, when staged on the stage but still real to them in the crowd, is like Shakespeare, at least that throwback, lowbrow version. Without that palpable passion, it remains a soap opera minus the acting talent.
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