

HERMIT HERALD

VOL 1 ISSUE 7

APRIL 2, 2020

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“Brazilians can be dunked in raw sewage and don’t catch a thing” Brazilian president Bolsonaro in explaining why he isn’t putting on restrictions to slow the virus. I’d follow this man into a volcano- not!!

31 DAYS OF MARCH, COVID-19 HISTORY:

Dear readers, I promise not to spend a lot of time on this issue as we are all like force-fed geese with the 24/7 news coverage. TV media, however, seems concerned only with what has happened the last several days, what’s happening today and what the future might look like. I may, from time to time report on something that strikes me as very different, or I may pass on a phrase or anecdote that may border on gallows humor or some of the ridiculous things that people are doing. That’s

not to be insensitive, it's to reflect our need to ever so slightly lift this level of anxiety.

On to the 31 days of March. To give you a perspective about the danger of this virus, on March 1st there were only 70 cases in the entire country- On March, 31 there were 183,000 cases and 3,700 deaths and, ominously, it is estimated that up to 25 % of infected people are totally asymptomatic. You can get just as sick from them as from anyone evidencing full blown symptoms.

BOOK NOOK:

HH reader, Bill, suggests , "RUNNING WITH SHERMAN" by Christopher McDougall.- non fiction. Christopher rescues a little gray donkey who is near death. He nurses the donkey back to health and, being a distance runner himself, decides the best rehab for Sherman would be training for the famous man/burro racing championship in Colorado. As stated by a reviewer, "This is a charming story of rehabilitation, teamwork, athleticism and the healing power of love between people and their four legged companions."

“SAPIENS” BY Yuval Noah Harari.- non fiction. My selection. First published in 2014, Sapiens has been on the best seller list 97 weeks, most recently, just this past Sunday. It is a very thought provoking book. I went to see if there might be a concise review that would create better interest on the part of our HH readers than I could elicit, especially since it has been three years since I read it. So what did I find? A five star review by P.Schuyler who says, “I don’t do book reviews too often, but this was definitely one of the most important books I have ever read. For me it was a massive shift in perspective that cleared up a lot of confusion I had about history.... The thesis is simple and profound- what makes homo sapiens so different from the rest of the animal kingdom, and why are we so dominant? “

Well all of that is really quite interesting and takes up about the first third of the book- you never knew there were so many sapiens and wannabes. Then comes the hard part where Harari challenges so many of our hardcore beliefs described as the “Fictions” of homo sapiens. Schuyler goes on to comment, “So

what are these fictions? They are our languages, our gods, our nations, our corporations and much more. Money is a kind of shared fiction that establishes trust. Brands and companies are fictional inventions and so are religious or philosophical ideologies and idols. Our most cherished rituals and beliefs that we assume to be 'true' are the most powerful of all our Fictions."

Where Harari takes the reader with these various topics is spell binding and from what you just read of Schuyler's review might lead you to think Harari is an atheist or agnostic. I honestly don't know, but I caution against drinking the Harari cool aide. He is described as being from a secular jewish family. I know the Rector of my old prep school would not have the book on the summer reading list, nor would any Catholic High School. Regardless, Harari will get you contemplating things you have never thought about before. The range of topics is astonishing. We are even exposed to how we raise animals and fowl for food- could turn you into a vegan pretty quickly. In my opinion- a dare to read book- you'll learn a lot, but also, question a lot of what you read.

“TALKING TO STRANGERS” by Malcolm Gladwell- non fiction- also on this week’s best seller list. Some of you will remember Gladwell as the author of “The Tipping Point” and “Blink”. This is another of my selections. Gladwell’s purpose is to point out a lot of inane things people have done which he posits is the result of not knowing how to talk to strangers. He points out how Fidel Castro fooled the CIA for a generation. Why did Neville Chamberlain think he could trust Hitler? How did Bernie Madoff get away with his deceptions for so long?

So Gladwell would have you believe that the tools and strategies we use to make sense of people just don’t work. As he keeps reiterating this point throughout the book, I found myself disagreeing more and more. What he fails to address is that chapter from Psychology 101, “You perceive what you want to perceive” There is an aspect of that that applies to every chapter he writes and yet, he seems to miss it. I found this a good read ,and it was kind of fun finding myself at odds with a highly acclaimed author, especially since I might be right. But

then, I'm probably perceiving what I want to perceive.

"APROPOS OF NOTHING" By Woody Allen- autobiography. Do not read this book, but do read the review by Dwight Garner- "Books on the Times". Of course the talented Allen has self destructed and, in my mind should be shunned, but this review is really good. Garner is so readable, starting off with, "Volunteering to review this book in our moral climate is akin to volunteering for the 2021 Olympic javelin-catching team....My wife and daughter stared at me as if I had announced my intention to find the nearest functioning salad bar and lick the sneeze guard." Well, on it goes in similar vein.

Remembering a time when we liked Allen; in virtually all the movies in which he appeared he was neurotic about his health. So it's hard to suppress a smile when we read this quote. "I'm 84; my life is half over. At my age I'm playing with house money. Not believing in a here-After, I can't really see any practical difference if people remember me as a film director or a

pedophile or at all. All I ask is my ashes be scattered close to a pharmacy.”

CULTURE CORNER:

**HH reader, Toni Garrison, with husband Bob, have long been active with the Philadelphia Orchestra. She advises there are some wonderful videos-\
**

can be picked up by going to facebook and searching for PhilOrch/videos.

“FLORIDIOTS:”

Frank Cerabino of the Palm Beach Post brings us the tale of two idiots. Hope the wagon is coming to take them away soon.

First we have the handiwork of televangelist Rick Wiles blaming the pandemic on the jews, “The people who are going into the synagogue are coming out of the synagogue with the virus” and further on, “God is spreading it in

your synagogues! You are under judgement because you oppose his son, Jesus Christ.” And, finally, “That is why you have a plague in your synagogues. Repent and believe in the name of Jesus Christ, and the plague will stop.” Sick, sick, sick.

Then there is another televangelist, Rodney Howard-Browne. Fortunately, the wagon has already come and taken him away for packing his large congregation into their Tampa meeting hall in the midst of the contagion. His excuse- well he has these 13 virus killing machines to keep everyone safe. “If somebody walks in the door, it’s like, it kills everything on them. If they sneeze, it shoots it down at like 100 mph. It’ll neutralize it in split seconds. So we have the most sterile building in, I don’t know, all of America.”

An updated version of Christ feeding the masses with five loaves and two fish is presented by Howard-Browne as he promises the toilet paper miracle.

“What you have in your hand will multiply, and every day there will be multiplication...You’ll

look at your toilet paper, and you'll think, ' I'm gonna run out of toilet paper', but you have another roll where that one was...You think you're going to run out and when you look again, there's still enough. That's supernatural sustenance." Geez!!!

WORLD'S MOST EXPENSIVE GLASS OF BEER:

This just in- a man in Taiwan was under the strictest form of quarantine- absolutely no leaving your residence. But, no- smarty pants had to go out and have a beer at a local pub, got caught and fined \$33,000.

HELPING TO KEEP OUR DEAR READERS SAFE:

We have all been told that a major cause of the virus results from touching our faces. It was observed that by having a glass of wine in each hand the problem was greatly reduced. I'm pleased to announce that after two weeks of clinical trials, two martinis were found to have the same effect.

Your faithful scribe

PB