

HERMIT HERALD

ISSUE 114

MAY 16, 2021

QUOTE FOR THE DAY

“I don’t think anybody is questioning the legitimacy of the presidential election. I think that is all over with.” Representative Kevin McCarthy, Republican minority leader.

SAY WHAT??

Yes, Mr. McCarthy said that to reporters on May 12th as he brushed off a question about comments by Representative Elise Stefanik, who had echoed some of Mr. Trump’s claims about widespread voter fraud. (she is taking the number three position in the Republican side of the House).

Ever since the election, there have been a large number of Republicans who have treated the words of Mr. Trump as a fundamentalist treats the words of the Bible – the absolute truth. Those Republicans who failed to do so were

considered to be not sufficiently in the Trump camp; their conservative values, suspect.

Mr. McCarthy's statement is a sea change, a repudiation of that idea; essentially saying you can be a strong supporter of Trump's programs and not buy into his conspiracy theories - must have a lot of Trump fundamentalists in a state of consternation.

FROM THE DEMOCRAT'S SIDE OF THE AISLE

A storm of protest has arisen over the \$300 per week additional Federal Government payments, rammed through by the Democrats in Congress for the unemployed, being cited as a disincentive to work. This program will last until Labor day, and many speculate it will be continued. In any event, all those recipients will have at least another 120 days of these extra benefits while employers cannot fill 8.1 million jobs.

Let's look at the math: The average weekly unemployment benefit in the U.S. is \$387. With the Federal subsidy it's \$687. A typical work

week at McDonalds is 25-30 hours. In response to the worker shortage, the McDonald company owned stores (represents only 5% of all McDonalds) have raised the hourly wage to \$15. At 25 hours, that's \$375 per week. At 30 hours, that's \$450 a week. Would you rather get \$687 a week for sitting on the beach or \$450 a week for smelling French fry fumes all day? So you can see where the log jam is coming from. The various states are responsible for administering the disbursement of the Federal funds and eighteen states have ceased the distribution of the extra \$300 in an effort to encourage people to get back to work.

President Biden, seeing that the \$300 additional payment is meeting with stiff resistance, is now trying to coerce more people back in the workforce by requiring the unemployed to present proof they have sought work before payments can be made. As the pandemic abates, the president wants such requirements put in place, "as health and safety conditions allow." But, not so fast, Mr. President. Alexa Tapia of the National Employment Law Project (an advocacy group)

says your policy is racist, her position being that such requirements perpetuate systemic racism by trapping people of color, especially women, in underpaid work with few benefits. She states the requirements are, “just another barrier being put to claimants, and it can be a very demoralizing barrier.”

The pressure on employers is severe and, in some instances, is working to the benefit of employees. At six hundred Sheetz Convenience stores, for example, they are paying as much as \$18.50 an hour to attract workers, \$4 more per hour than at the beginning of the year. For a 30 hour week, that’s \$555, so the beach is still looking like an attractive alternative.

Of course, to the extent that employers raise compensation, which, face it, is necessary in the fast food service sector, the increased operating expenses will get passed on to the customers. While we’re here, let’s take a moment to look at those people (not just fast food workers), but everyone who toils at low paying jobs in the U.S. Consider these statistics: In the last 40 years the percentage increase in productivity in the U.S. is 70%.

Over the same period there has only been a 12% increase in hourly wages. The Federal minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour and the average pay of top CEOs is \$21.3 million. What's wrong with this picture?

A real conundrum,(take the fast food industry for example), is that all McDonalds, not just the company owned stores, should be paying \$15.00 an hour, or better yet, \$18.50, like Sheetz. What has to happen then? A Big Mac with cheese, fries and a coke currently selling for \$5.99 has to sell for \$6.99. Who do you think, on the economic ladder, represents the biggest portion of fast food customers? If everything that is made has to be sold at higher prices to compensate for wage increases, then you have to hope or, preferably, ensure, that wage increases stay ahead of personal expenses, giving hourly workers an opportunity to economically move ahead, rather than treading water.

Along with all the other stimulus infusions throughout the country we get what? Inflation of course. Inflation has now jumped to 4%, a thirteen year high, Mr. Powell at the Fed has

calmly told us all along not to worry about inflation. He has said the Fed has effective ways to deal with it. Expecting some type of magic potion, I was surprised to read the remedy is the same as it always has been – raise interest rates at the risk of watering down a rebounding economy.

A lot of knotty issues at play here, but looking at the numbers, the wisdom of the \$300 more per week, is questionable without a strict, “search for work” requirement.

WHEN SHOULD YOU BE PARTISAN?

When it feels good, of course – the facts be damned. So here we are today with one of the major partisan arguments – transgender women in athletics. On the left, the primary weapon is the accusation hurled at anyone who would disagree about any aspect of transgender life. To voice disagreement means you are anti transgender and, for that matter, probably anti LGBTQ. This topic should be taken out of the partisan world and viewed through the lens of fairness and science.

“Finished. Done” said Olympic Track and Field coach, Linda Blade. “The leadership skills, all the benefits society gets from letting girls have their protected category so that competition can be fair, all the advances of women’s rights—that’s going to be diminished.” How diminished? Well, women’s issues writer Abigail Shrier, tells us exactly how and president Biden would do well to understand the science/biology. As Ms. Shrier points out, “In contests of strength and speed, the athletic chasm between the sexes which opens at puberty, is both permanent and unbridgeable. Once male puberty is complete, testosterone suppression doesn’t undo the biological advantages men possess: larger hearts, lungs and bones, greater bone density, more oxygenated blood, more fast twitch muscle fiber and vastly greater muscle mass.”

That statement does not come from someone who is just out there making things up, but we should all listen to anyone who can invalidate the points made above. From what I haven’t seen in the media, the silence is deafening.

Into the fray steps Caitlyn Jenner, arguably, the most famous transgender woman in the world, who, as Bruce Jenner, won the 1976 Olympic Decathlon. She says, “ It’s a question of fairness, that’s why I oppose biological boys who are trans, competing in girl’s sports. It just isn’t fair, and we have to protect girl’s sports in our schools.

You won’t be surprised to know, Caitlyn has been derided as a political hack angling for votes because she is running as a conservative Republican for Governor of California. To illustrate how they can devour their own when disagreed with, members of the Trans community have labeled her a. “Transphobe”.

Happy to change my views when someone can approach this topic from a scientific/biological perspective, refute the above points and climb off their partisan wagon.

THIS WEEK’S NOD TO CANCEL CULTURE

While Columbus Day remains a national holiday, the Department of Education in NY City put out its school calendar for the coming

year with Columbus Day being replaced by Indigenous People's day. Seems the Board hadn't checked with Gov. Cuomo, Mayor DiBlasio or the 2.6 million people of Italian heritage living in the NY area. In the aftermath of the uproar, the result is another shared holiday, with the Board renaming Columbus Day as, "Italian Heritage Day/Indigenous People's Day." Looks like Chris gets the boot.

Dr. Voddie Baucham, a black minister rails against the, "religion" of antiracism sweeping the country. He goes on to cite many examples in a recent article, but you get the gist when you learn that the antiracists in Chicago prevented a school from being named after former president Obama because, "he didn't do enough for illegal immigrants."

WHO WE ARE

The U.S. by the #s: number of white Americans- all backgrounds, 230.3MM; Latinos, 60.6MM; Blacks, 42MM; Asians, 18.9MM.

By specific country: Mexico, 36.6MM; Ireland, 32 MM; England, 23.5 MM (makes no sense, but

sources stick with that number – mathematically impossible as it is reported there are 35MM descendants from the MayFlower); Italy, 15.7MM; Poland, 9.1MM; Native American, 4.5MM.

GOTTA LOVE THESE SCHOOL BOARDS

If they're not stripping names off of schools or renaming holidays, they are pursuing the dumbing down of America whole heartedly.

In the interest of achieving their definition of “equity”, the California Department of Education rolled out a framework for teaching math to students K-12. Kids are no longer to be grouped by ability, nor will algebra be taught to eighth graders, and calculus for high schoolers? – forget it. In a natural follow on, gifted children will not henceforth be called, “gifted.” Predictably, parents who are clamoring for more challenging work for their children are being called, “racist.”

An issue that many educators feel has legitimacy is the recent decision by the University of California to no longer consider

SAT and ACT scores in the admission process as it is believed, “these tests are biased against poor and mainly black and Hispanic students.” It is said, that as a result they are being illegally discriminated against. Today, 1240 institutions have become test optional including: Brown, Caltech, Carnegie Mellon, Columbia, Yale and UVA. A lot of study has gone into these decisions about which I have no knowledge, and therefore accept the conclusions. However, in the several articles I have read, not a single one discusses what new metrics or standards are taking the place of testing, surely, it has to be better than, “Hi, I’m Stan Jones and I really like Harvard. Please send my acceptance to”

Let’s not forget the need for a genderless college experience. Penn State is the latest to follow the new trend in going, “Pro Noun.” Pronouns such as he/him/hers are being replaced with they/them/theirs. Freshmen and Sophomores become first year and second year. The reader is informed, “Terms such as Freshman are decidedly male specific. While terms such as Upper classman can be interpreted as both sexist and classist. Terms

such as Junior and Senior are parallel to western male father-son naming conventions.” Dear readers, here’s what I see evolving in our new genderless world. On campus, sexes will no longer be differentiated – no cashmere sweaters and circle pins for the girls. No penny loafers and chinos for the boys. Actually some form of unisex jump suit like they wear in prison will be more appropriate. Penitentiary orange not allowed except for Syracuse. But no blue for boys and pink for girls. Everyone gets desert brown. Dating between sexes is strongly discouraged, so Susie and John have to be extremely discreet about their behavior. Thanksgiving is approaching and Susie wants to take John home to meet her mom and dad. The e-mail reads, “Dear Parents, I’d like to bring, ‘it’ home for Thanksgiving, OK? Sincerely, Your child.”

Realizing the need for gender neutrality, one wag, noting that, “Nittany Lions” is a very male term, has suggested, “Eastern Cougars.”

Moving from campus to the political world, Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO), who is an ordained minister, gave the opening prayer for

the new Congress. Thinking to end the prayer in a neutralized gendered way, he concluded with, "Amen and Awomen", apparently unaware that amen is not a gendered word. From Hebrew, it translates, "So be it." Oh, well

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT

On 9/15/2020, presidential candidate, Biden, said it was up to the people of Puerto Rico to determine if they wanted to become the 51st state, saying that, "The U.S. Government must respect and act on that decision." In the November General Election 52.52% voted for statehood. Now here's the surprising thing. Puerto Rico is a U.S. Territory, so the path to statehood is quite simple, unlike the District of Columbia. For a Territory to become a state all that is required is a simple majority vote by the House and the Senate - should be a chip shot. Why hasn't the president acted on his words? D.C., on the other hand, requires a two thirds majority vote in both the House and the Senate - wishful thinking on the part of Democrats, but is not going to happen.

Your faithful scribe, PB

PB