

HERMIT HERALD

ISSUE 123

AUGUST 4, 2021

QUOTES FOR THE DAY

“There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so.” William Shakespeare.

“First, do no harm.” The Hippocratic oath taken by all medical students.

AMERICA, THE CHANGED

Remember when there were absolutes in law, religion and, as a reflection, social norms. Over the past fifty years that has morphed into, “You can do whatever you want as long as you don’t hurt anyone else.”

So we have the anarchist in Los Angeles who I reported on last year who claims burning down buildings in protest is not a crime because no one gets physically hurt. A good

example, but I digress, as today I'm speaking of Covid 19 and the Delta variant.

There has been a wide spread school of thought of, "Live and let live" regarding the virus. People who say, "I'm vaccinated. I'm 95% safe so if others don't want to get vaccinated, I feel sorry for them, but I don't have a problem." Now what happens with the Delta variant, which we are told is 100 times more infectious than the original Covid 19, more contagious than the common cold? We are informed that with the variant, our vaccinations are only about 75% effective. Even though medical experts think that previously vaccinated people who contract the variant will not get sick to the point of having to be hospitalized, they can, however, become very ill.

Point being, the unvaccinated are now in a position of inflicting harm on the vaccinated. So unless a person is immuno compromised or other medical reasons exist, it's time for the unvaccinated to get their shots. Alarming to read that 47% of Republicans are resisting vaccinations and only 6% of Democrats. You folks out there, Red and Blue alike- just do it!!

THE SCENE: PRIVATE SCHOOL IN N.J. SUBURBS

“OK everyone, backs against the wall over there.” Says Gloria Haversham, a white, 29 year- old home room teacher for 35 third graders aged eight to nine.

They are in the gymnasium at this expensive day school in an affluent community, and this class has nine minority students (on scholarships) and twenty-six white students.

Back to Ms. Haversham: “Now children, we are going to play a little game which will teach you a very important lesson, so please follow my instructions exactly.”

“All of you who live in a house as opposed to an apartment, take one step forward. All whose family own one car, one step forward. All whose family own two cars, one step forward. All who have two white parents, one step forward. Everyone with one parent who graduated college, one step forward. One step forward if your family belongs to a club.” And on it goes for about four more questions at which point Ms. Haversham says, “Now everyone turn around, what do you see?”

The setting and Ms. Haversham are fictitious. The incident is not. Folks, this is actually happening as various schools push forward with Critical Race Theory (CRT). What exactly is the purported take away from this exercise? Some white children are three quarters of the way across the gym looking at the minority children, classmates who have barely moved from the wall. Surely the white children realize they are privileged, but do they now realize they are also oppressors? And, the minority children, yes they know they are poorer than their white classmates, but are they aware that they are also victims? How do any of the children benefit from this demeaning exercise, and how does it improve relations between different races?

To many, CRT is like a drowning man grasping at straws. Minority communities and their residents have been marginalized for so long that the combination of poor health care, poor inner city education, poor housing and a lack of recreational facilities, exacerbated by the spate of white police officers killing blacks has brought frustration to a boiling point, and CRT is believed by some to be a way to defuse the tension, educate the uninformed and cause the

minorities to assume a quieter mode because they believe they are now being heard and great changes are on the horizon. Just not so. President Biden's societal infrastructure plan is essentially on the cutting room floor, with the hard (bridges, roads, broad band) infrastructure projects being given priority status. In the meantime, CRT, is not making us a better nation, bringing us together through heightened awareness of our fellow man. It only further divides us, leaving many with strong feelings of resentment.

Additional gestures, renaming, streets, cities and schools, and removing statues- what do they accomplish? Like a dog chasing a car, what does he do when he catches it? Point being, how do these activities move the black community to improve on a 17% high school graduation rate? How are black families strengthened where 83% have no father in the household?

A SAD OBSERVATION

I was seated on the porch at private club several days ago.

Down on the lawn, below the porch, was a group of nicely, casually dressed young men and women having a cocktail party. I asked the manager what was going on and was told it was a cocktail party for one of the top four investment banking firms in New York.

This was obviously a “Team building” function. I suspect for new hirees, who, these days, are starting their careers at a salary of \$100,000. Six samovars were set up for either heavy hors d’oeuvres or dinner- never found out because no one touched the food in an hour and a half. A more abstemious group you have never seen. It was a rare sight to see one of the attendees go for a second beer, and arms folded across the chest was the general posture du jour.

Anyway, I’m looking over this group of about sixty people and could easily spot the leaders- two older guys, both wearing baseball caps- one blue, one red- got all the political bases covered- neither of whom was doing anything to make the event more welcoming. Then I thought I’d do a little diversity check. People were generally in groups of four or six chatting about, whatever. I saw the lone black male at the gathering, circling through the groups, but

neither speaking with anyone nor, more importantly, was anyone seeking to engage with him. I mean, it was just embarrassing.

Finally he went over to a stand at, high top where one other white was standing, flipping through his I phone. They just nodded at each other and the young black man pulled out his I phone and proceeded with the same engagement avoidance exercise. A minute later the white man left. So there stood the only black attendee for about five minutes before being joined by two friendly female attendees, both Asian – the only other minorities at the party. For the first time the young black man smiled – a sad occasion.

TRIBALISM

Your scribe was at a dinner recently when this word came up – offered as an explanation as to why there is so much racism in the world, not just white to black.

The dictionary defines tribalism as being, “Behavior and attitudes that stem from strong loyalty to one’s own tribe or social group.” The

caveat is added, “Can lead to bigotry and racism.”

This leads to the related and supposedly updated term, “Neotribalism” defined as, “a sociological concept which postulates that humans have evolved to live in a tribal society as opposed to mass society...”

Your scribe has no answers in this area, but many questions. It seems we are being told that it is human nature to congregate with others who are most like ourselves, and that today’s social scientists are attempting to break/ reorder those ties, which are pretty deep in the DNA after tens of thousands of years. In New York, the Syrians have their own neighborhood, just as dozens of other ethnic and religious groups. What group could be more tribal than the Hasidic community?

Tribalism, however, does not have to rely only on ethnic or religious background at all. It is very much a matter of shared experience that brings people together as a tribe.

A recent NY Times article by Karla Villavecencio refers to, “Latinidad”, a basket, if

you will, of a huge variety of latino people from many different countries and skin colors of brown, black and white. According to the author, “Latinidad is the shared language, childhood references, music, food, inside jokes and idiosyncratic TV Spanglish. It is the sameness that unites us no matter where we grow up and no matter where our parents were from.”

Mr. Villavecencio laments that all is not well in the “Latinidad” community/tribe, as there are many who are less than welcoming of the black skinned members.

He goes on to illustrate how a tribe can be multi racial, given common areas of distrust and dislike. “In my neighborhood (Queens) nobody looked the same and we shared common enemies- landlords, I.C.E., the cops, the blackouts, Giuliani, the new young white people who drove up rents. I feel that kinship with other Latinos, with Black people, with Asian people.”

“Because they were my neighbors. We shared the fire hydrants in the summer. We needed

each other to make a life worth living for ourselves.”

I came across this writeup. “Describing neotribalism, the French sociologist, Michel Maffesoli, predicted that as the cultures and institutions of modernism declined, societies would embrace nostalgia and look to the organizational principles of the past for guidance and that, therefore the post modern era would be the era of neotribalism.”

Or is that really, “retro tribalism?” Our country is beset by so many problems above and beyond racial issues that people are circling the wagons, buying guns at an epidemic pace and tribalism is stronger than ever, having a negative impact on the betterment of race relations and heightening the animosity between political parties. A large percentage of Americans think the country is heading in the wrong direction. Reflection of some of that fear explains why Mark Levin’s newest book, “American Marxism” is number one on the best seller list.

MOVIE CORNER: BLACK WIDOW

My curiosity was piqued when it was reported that Scarlett Johansson, the star, was suing Disney for \$50 million because they were offering the movie on streaming at the same time they were releasing it in the theaters, failing to note, that she has already pulled in \$20 million. In fairness to the actress, there were 20 people in the 300 seat theater when we attended.

The Rotten tomato critics give the movie 81% approval and the audience, 92%; clear evidence that your scribe should not be permitted to go to the movies. This was just about the worst movie I have ever seen- dumb and dumber in every regard- save for a couple of action scenes. 5% on the Scribeometer!!

Your faithful scribe, PB