

In 2023 I combed through the files on my old computers looking for blogs I had made. I used several of vehicles: just email and a couple of blog sites.

This is the third installment, emails from April 2020 to December.

I'm posting them in pdf format on my web site for several reasons. One, at 81, there are several reasons why it is better now than later. Secondly, they provide an insight into what I saw, as a resident of Kyiv, during the Yanukovych, Yuschenko, Poroschenko and now Zelensky years.

Graham Seibert  
February 12, 2024

9-Apr-20 --- Long ramblings from Kyiv, to entertain you during the lockdown Beautiful spring da...

Beautiful spring day, 70°. I'm sitting outside listening to the birds, smelling the fruit trees in bloom in our yard and doing nothing.

We are fortunately situated going into this lockdown. As a retired guy. I don't have anything to do. Oksana had quit her job in anticipation of other projects so she hasn't been doing much for a few months anyhow. So what's the virus interrupting? Basically, not much.

It has allowed me to take long walks through the neighborhood with Zoriana in the mornings. Interesting how much I did not know about the area within a half mile radius of our house. There are dead-end streets that I had not investigated. We have walked down all of them. There are several streets that are barred with gates and locks. It turns out that some of those are locks only in appearance. If you go up to them and fiddle around a little bit. You can get through them. So we've been through locks looked at all the houses.

In this area that I'm describing, between the 15th and the 25th lines – that's between the center of Russanovsky Sad and the new Metro line going through – and between the river and the railroad. There is quite a variety of neighborhoods.

Those neighborhoods that are behind lock and key can be really very tony. There are some houses that must be 3 to 4000 ft.<sup>2</sup>. Three stories. Very nicely constructed out of brick in many cases. The most attractive ones are made out of full timbered – log construction like we see some places in the states. The more expensive houses back up against lakes. Our whole area is dotted with lakes, meanders of the Desno river after it was cut off by a dike.

As I wrote the more expensive properties seem to abut lakes. I ask myself if that's what I would want – the answer is no. I don't think a lake is a good thing to have if you have little kids. Besides that you can't do anything except look at it. I have never seen anybody swim in them. You can't grow flowers or vegetables. During this quarantine we are expanding our garden. We will have a record crop if everything comes up, so we will know how to feed ourselves somewhat if things get bad.

Yesterday I was out for about a 10 mile bike ride out to the last Metro station – the eastern city limits of Kiev. There are no buses, jitneys electric trains or metros running. However, much to my amazement, the old Soviet era trolley lines that go north-south along this east bank of the Dnieper were running. When I first saw trolley car. I couldn't believe my eyes. I thought he must be heading for

the depot to be worked on. Then another one rolled by and I saw some people waiting at the trolley stop. This is in defiance of all logic that I know for the quarantine.

Whatever the case, the people one could see through the windows were occupying every other seat, one to a bench, all wearing masks. They seem to be pretty good citizens. I imagine that this makes good sense. The old people have no way to get around now except obviously for these trolleys. Those parts of town don't have a whole lot in the way of services. So this is a way to provide people with mobility.

As far as the people on the streets, despite a in order that everybody wear masks, only about half of the people were wearing them. Only perhaps 1/3 of the bicyclists. I was among that third for a while, but it got suffocating and it strikes me that you're not going to catch the virus riding along on a sunny day on a bicycle. So I didn't worry about it.

The question is, will the police stop you? I don't know where they are but they have better things to do than bother us in our neighborhood. There was not a policeman in evidence anywhere. I rode by several of the neighborhood markets that I like most. They were all locked tight. I expect that the big chain food stores are applying political pressure to put their competitors out of business. I am not sure if the little mom-and-pop stall markets will reopen. I certainly hope they do. One of the things I love most about Ukraine is the personal relationships that we develop with the people in the markets.

One good thing I have discovered is that there are a few small stores over by where Eddie takes tae kwon do about a mile from us to the east. We hadn't gone there because you have to cross over an embankment that carries the railroad track. There's no way to get there by road, so the buses don't go there. Instead, riding the buses we usually go 3 km south to Livoberezhna.

However, with no buses running the logical thing to do is ride a bicycle one mile east to the stores and that's what I've been doing. I had discovered them just last year when Eddie started taking tae kwon do and rather like the people and the assortment of groceries. Despite the fact that they're not very big. We have gotten to know each other much better over the past month or so as I go there regularly. I stopped yesterday on my way home from my long ride and got the fresh stuff that are mom-and-pop stores in the neighborhood don't carry – oranges, bananas, radishes, tomatoes, and cucumbers.

I noticed that the meat store is also open. This is kind of a one-of-a-kind. Not very big. Perhaps 1000 ft.<sup>2</sup>, if that. But they have amazingly good prices and they always have a line inside the store. The line is now outside, spaced out of the social distance. At any rate, I'm glad to see that there still open. We went into this coronavirus thing with quite a bit of meat in the freezer and corned beef marinating in anticipation of a shutdown. However, it may in another month be that I will want to visit them.

And that brings me to the topic of coronavirus. Ukraine's caseload has been inching up 100 or so cases per day, hitting about 1850 last night. What this I explained to Eddie that this is an arithmetic progression – 150 a day for the past week or so – which is certainly something you'd rather see than a geometric progression, growing exponentially with a fixed ratio between one day and the next.

The new cases now in Kyiv are mostly transmissions among local people here rather than people returning home bringing it. Probably a good sign – they closed the borders three weeks ago so there would not be many imported cases. I expect that social distancing is doing what it should, but the fact that people are not all wearing masks. Maybe they are skeptical as I am of the effectiveness of masks. At any rate, social distancing, avoiding crowded situations seems to be universal. So I expect

that the experts are right to predict that we will see the number of new cases peak in a week or two and then see things return to some semblance of normal.

Ukraine's economy, like every one in Europe, and in fact the world, is suffering a downturn in this lockdown. They seem to have the will to accept the economic damage in order to curtail the virus. I am glad of that, speaking as an old person.

As I sit here I see the two magpies who have decided to make a nest in our jasmine coming and going. That's a happy sign. Two years ago they made a nest and abandoned it. The remainder is still in the tree. The new nest is a little bit higher up, about 10 feet off the ground. The jasmine is so thick that I cannot imagine anything getting to it, certainly not a cat. I don't think there's any other carnivores around that would even try. So I hope we have some little fledglings before too long.

Yesterday's Zoriana and I walked down to the end of the street that runs behind our property. We saw a squirrel which is a great big deal to a two-year-old. The squirrel uses the telephone line that runs down the street as a highway journeying back and forth among the trees.

Returning to the topic of cats, I don't know how he manages it, but the cat that we feed, the one we call Raccoon, keeps getting beat up. A month or so ago. I think I mentioned that he got his two paws badly mangled and that some good Samaritan had apparently taken him to a vet. We deduce that because he showed up with his front paw shaved, which he couldn't of done on his own. This time he got his face all cut up. His eye has been swollen shut for about a week. However, the swelling is going down and he seems to be recovering.

In any case, whatever he does for medical attention, he manages elsewhere. We feed him once a day with dry food and give him whatever scraps we have. He comes around pretty regularly. I'm quite sure that he's enterprising enough to have other people treat him and take care of him.

There are moral questions raised here. Would it be better to take the cat inside the make him a house cat? He would have to sacrifice his manhood in a case like that. I look at it from my own point of view. That's not a sacrifice I would make. I will project the cat would not either. So he lives his risk-fraught existence with a handout from us and the wish of good luck, but no curtailment on his freedom.

Part of the time we spend with Zoriana is done with jigsaw puzzles. I made a video of Zoriana doing her first one about four months ago, 12 piece Little Toot that she got from Eddie. She got up to where she can do 30 or 40 piece puzzles by herself. But that's not what she likes. Doing a jigsaw is a social thing, so she's become very effective at pestering us to get out the 160 piece puzzles and do them together.

I don't think that she has the patience to get all the way through one. What she really loves is to be working with an adult on the puzzle so will get it halfway done and then she'll kick in and finish it. But if we walk away, she'll give up too because she's not interested in the mental challenge as much as the attention.

She demands attention in other ways. She isn't exactly as potty trained as might be expected at this age. She will sometimes take herself to the potty and tell you that she needs to be wiped. That's all smiles. But at other times she'll poop in her diaper because she likes to have daddy change her and fuss over her, and it is daddy who does the cleaning and changing of this 35 lb girl.

She will even at times pee while sitting on daddy's lap, which I know she could control because she goes all day without a diaper and mostly without incident. Peeing on daddy is a way to get attention.

The fact it is negative doesn't count against it. So she is ready one of these days to just decide on her own that she is potty trained and leave mommy and daddy out of the picture altogether. It will be on her terms, and when she's ready to do it.

I just finished reading Robin Hood to Eddie. He is a chip off the old block. When Robin Hood dies in the last chapter there was not a dry eye around the table. The 1883 Howard Pyle version is a beautifully written book. I loved it as a kid. Now I find the inventions ask a bit too much credulity. The scrapes Robin gets into are beyond belief.

There are anachronisms. This is supposed to be 12th-century England where the king is Henry with Elinor of Aquitaine as his bride. The outlaw band comes across windmills, which were just introduced to Europe about that time. All of the royalty seems to be dripping with silk and soft velvet, which were also just getting started in that century. Moreover, the amount of gold in circulation for Robin Hood to steal seems to be incredible, and a lot of it is identified as golden angels, a coin which didn't come into circulation until three centuries later. Nonetheless, it's a lovely work of fiction and it engrossed Eddie for three weeks.

I reminded Eddie that it is time for him to start reading on his own and I got down our 5-volume boxed set of Dr. Seuss. After just a little bit of hemming and hawing he zipped right through the simplest ones Hop On Pop and One Fish Two Fish.

Zoriana loves to be read to also. And of course, like any little sister she loves anything that is her brother's. So she gets her hands on Dr. Seuss and runs away with it whenever she can. She insists that I read to her also. She has no idea what the books are, but picks out a pretty color. The most attractive color to date seems to be The Cat In The Hat. Eddie will come and listen as well.

We also have books in English which she likes me to read to her. She understand some of it. We have books in German that Oksana has bought and I'll read them to the kids in English. They like it because the story is a little different every time. If I'm reading English. I read the same words but if I'm translating as I go the story comes out different. Eddie's sharp enough to catch me on it. I also read some of the children's books in Russian that we have from Eddie's early years, when Russian was the household language, and a whole spate of new Ukrainian books. I'm getting better at reading the Ukrainian but I'm still not on a par with Russian. So the kids are getting quite a smattering of languages and most important, they are really quite book-oriented. Video is not much a part of their lives. And I'm happy of it.

Zoriana is a very determined little girl. My first two daughters, Naomi and Susie were determined as well. When you have a headstrong kid, you have to meet force with force and impress on them that things are going to be done your way. One of my regrets in my first family was that my wife would not support me in this. She would intercede if I tried to discipline the kids. As might be expected, they grew up without discipline. It has not served them well.

Gentle discipline takes a little bit of physical strength. All little kids seem to inherit the same bag of tricks. One of them is the "dead weight" trick. If you are trying to take them someplace they don't want to go, they will fold their legs and make you drag them. Fine with me – I'll just drag her long, and hope that the scrapes and bumps don't bother her too much. She will have a tantrum – scream bloody murder, lie down and refuse to do anything. Usually I will simply let her lie on the floor and fuss and ignore her until she gives up. If it is incredibly inconvenient I will lift her up with one hand and give her a good smack on the butt with the other one and tell her to behave.

The main thing is not to let the kid win. My grown children, with their mother on their side, got used to winning. They could get away with lying, stealing and being lazy. Oksana may not want to discipline the kids, but she does not object when I do.

The time was, long before my day, when it was assumed that “father knows best” and dad’s word would prevail in any case. I imagine that was back in the times when most men farmed or worked as craftsman and they spent a lot of time with their kids. Dads had to teach kids their own trade, and work intimately with them. In the century and a half since paid employment became the standard the guys just are not around to do that anymore, and women have been taught not to believe what the guys say anyhow.

In any case, it is a strange and pleasant position to find myself as the true head of the household, able to say how things are going to be run. All of the evidence is that we are doing things pretty well. It turns out that now that I am free to be the kind of parent that I always wanted to be, I actually know how to do this. We can ignore the unfortunate evidence of my first family.

That is how it is going with our coronavirus episode. I am spending just about all day every day with the kids and like it. Oksana is free to study her German and practice her piano. I am not writing nearly as much as I used to, and don’t have much else to do on the side. It is a pretty good time for us.

I am changing my sign off a little bit. It now reads as:

*And that is the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the kids know the difference.*

Graham

[13-Apr-20 --- A weighty topic —what to expect from your children.](#) Some of you have written to as...

Some of you have written to ask why I am critical of my grown family. They have their lives; I have my life. Shouldn't we all be entitled to do what we want with our lives?

I don't think so. We have obligations. I'll go with Edmund Burke who said that our current generation has an obligation to fulfill the expectations laid upon us by generations past, and an obligation to future generations to preserve our culture and our very essence.

I grew up with the feeling that there are mutual obligations between me and the society I was born into. Society's obligation to me was to form me into a workable human being, educate me and protect me. My obligation to society was to return the favor when my turn came. They came through – it is now my turn.

The quid pro quo was simpler when I was a child. I belonged to a society of people like myself. It seemed fairly self-evident that supporting their interests was in my own interest, and vice versa. We were open about the fact that we shared values. It went unsaid that we were of common blood, at least to some degree.

I recently read Frank Salter's book *On Genetic Interests*. In a somewhat cumbersome academic way, he articulated what I merely felt in my gut. I did a [video review](#) of his book in which I tried to make the concepts a bit more accessible.

You may remember the intellectual ferment spurred by the sociobiologists in the 1970s – E.O. Wilson at Harvard, Robert Trivers, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett and Steven Pinker among many others. Dawkins 1976 book "The Selfish Gene" made the point that while our bodies are certainly perishable, genes are immortal. He said, "the phenotype (your body) is simply your genome's vehicle for reproducing itself."

My body is the only instance on earth in which 100% of my DNA is represented in one place. That notwithstanding, fragments of my DNA are pretty widely scattered throughout the gene pool of the United States, Germany and elsewhere. There are enough piece parts of my DNA scattered about to replicate me many times over.

To go back to Salter, my genetic interest is in the well-being of all of that DNA scattered throughout the world. It is most highly concentrated in my siblings and my offspring – that's where my focus should be. But I have an interest in my fellow citizens, and they and me, to the extent that our genome's overlap. By extension, I have an interest in whether or not they have kids, and they in whether or not I have kids. More controversially, the interest lies in having kids within our own gene pool. That means the gene pool of people who have more in common with me than mere membership in the human race.

This is Salter's key argument. Our genetic interests lie with people to whom we are related, in concentric circles of family, clan, tribe and nation. Immigration by people who are not like me is detrimental to my genetic interests. Salter goes into arithmetic assessments of the extent of the damage. I will simply say that it is in a person's interest to marry within his own group. This was mere common sense to the Chinese, Japanese and Jews I grew up with.

It turns out that the genetic distance between Ukrainians and other Europeans such as my German, English and French ancestors is not that great. We are all of one body. I feel this in are family. At a gut level, we understand each other – for better and worse – because our temperaments are fashioned of the same DNA.

Returning to the point of departure, I do feel let down by my grown children. They are not having children, not representing me in future generations. In a way, I let my parents down by not marrying my own kind. In my defense I'll have to say that my mother always had a great respect for the Japanese and Chinese and had no reservations whatsoever about my marrying a half Japanese woman. Japanese are smart and accomplished people, but as I was to discover, temperamentally they are different. This is not the place to go into the ways in which we differed, though I have written extensively about my life on my website if anybody is interested.

I am not bashful about impressing on my new family my hope that they will marry and give me grandchildren. Despite all of my misadventures, I think that the best way to spend one's life is within a marriage relationship. I think that the greatest satisfaction in life is to be found in fulfilling the obligations that Burke expressed above – those to the generations preceding and following our own. By passing on our bloodline and our culture.

Those are the weighty considerations that undergird my approach to the minutiae of everyday life: cooking, changing diapers, giving baths, taking the kids for walks, grocery shopping, reading bedtime stories and helping with homework. Also, putting up with snotty kids who talk back, run away, and leave messes. It's all part of the chain of life. Participating it is my reason for being here.

In this time of coronavirus, I'm glad I get along with all the other participants. Pundits have written that instead of a baby boom nine months from now we are more likely to see a surge in divorces in the interim. It won't happen here.

And that's the outlook from Lake WeBeGone, where the women are good looking, the men are strong, and the children are delightfully normal.

Graham

16-Apr-20 --- [What now, Chicken Little, after the sky has fallen?](#) Not much market for second-ha...

Not much market for second-hand Cassandras. The worst thing that can happen to a doomsayer is to have their predictions come true. It puts them out of business.

Al Gore has had a long and lucrative career as a climate alarmist. His secret is that the temperature never goes up despite his best exhortations. Just as Paul Ehrlich has done well crying about the population bomb for 50 years, as the developed country population is shrinking all around him, Grandmother Greta will be rolling in dough half a century from now. She will have coined, instantiated and copyrighted the Swedish interpretation of chutzpah.

As for me, it looks like I'm in trouble. I've been predicting a crisis. And here it is. What now?

Diverse authors whom I respect and have reviewed – Ken Rogoff of Harvard, James Rickards, Matt Taibbi of the Rolling Stone, and Guillaume Faye – have long written that there would be such a crisis. And it will put the Great Depression in the shade. They didn't know what would precipitate it, but they saw a number of vastly unstable edifices that could not stand having their foundations shaken hard.

Under the onslaught of COVID-19 the foundations have cracked. Every minion and mouthpiece of the establishment is working overtime with glue, tape and Bondo to hold the kludge together, but it will not work. Jim Cramer will find that there are simply not enough greater fools out there to BTFD and prop up the financial markets against the deluge of selling by insiders who have so thoroughly hollowed out corporate finances that they know enough to scam while the getting is good.

The government will soon send me a couple of thousand dollars with Donald Trump's name on it to try and placate me. Big whoop. At the same time it is spending trillions to buy total crap assets off of the books of big banks, hedge funds and the donor class in order to keep the fat cats solvent. One can only hope that the whole rotten system will collapse and be replaced.

Unfortunately, it would take smart people to engineer a replacement system. We have fewer and fewer of those. Those that we have appeared to be looking out more for number one than for their fellow citizens. An insoluble part of the problem is that we have more and more dumb people who have little useful to offer in the way of marketable skills, and a workplace that requires increasing amounts of intelligence to navigate.

Most of you to whom I write are Baby Boomers and fellow members of the silent generation. Those of us born before the age of Aquarius can count our blessings. It was our game and we made the rules to suit ourselves. Defined benefit pension plans, unreasonably rich Social Security, healthcare for us when we needed it – to hell with those who must drink the dregs after we have drained the keg.

Our byword might be "I'm spending my kids inheritance," like it says on the bumper stickers. However, that would only apply to that half of us who had kids in the first place. Without significant changes, the number of workers per retiree will fall below 2:1 before too long. That just won't work.

Fortunately I'm on the silent generation side of the divide. On account of the Boomers following me, the system will probably continue to pay me until it is absolutely flat broke. I'll take the money – I am, after all, raising the next generation of taxpayers – but I cannot help but laugh at the absurdity of it all. We are all attempting to live at the expense of the other guy. It won't work for anybody except the fat cat middlemen who handle the redistribution and the skimmers who sit right next to the federal money printers.

My career is a doomsayer about the economy is coming to an end. Soon you will all agree with me and I'll have to shut up. My next theme, and really my most compelling one, is having kids. Once it becomes clear the government will not be able to take care of us in our retirement maybe we will get back to doing things the old-fashioned way. Relying on family members to take care of each other, and children to support their elderly parents.

Enough of these dark topics! Next week I'm going to look at the house for sale by one of our neighbors. It is about 1100 ft.<sup>2</sup> on a bit under 1/6 of an acre. Asking price is \$60,000. Another neighbor, who has seen the house, says that the major liability is a low ceiling on the first floor. Situated on our floodplain, it was originally a one-story house on stilts. After they built a dike to keep the waters out the owners enclosed the downstairs area. It must be livable – the woman who owns it is taller than I am. Besides, our first projected use would be to rent it to Eddie's school to run a kindergarten. I will let you know what we see.

Eddie is spending his time learning the CorelDRAW package and reading. He reads easy Dr. Seuss books and Ukrainian fairytales to Zoriana, and I in turn am reading Huckleberry Finn to him. He loved Tom Sawyer and Robin Hood. Huck Finn deals a bit more with adult themes, and of course the theme of race in a very sympathetic way. Both kids are spending a lot of time helping in the garden. At 8 ½ Eddie is finally kind of useful. At 2 ½ Zoriana wants desperately to be helpful but the way it works out she's almost always in the way. We love her spirit and work around her. She will be earning her keep before long.

I'm spending most of my time with the kids these days. And here, at the closing of the letter, is the most interesting piece. The reason is because Oksana's morning sickness is lasting longer than one would expect. The second trimester is supposed to be the best of the three, but she still feels queasy and listless from time to time. Today seems to be a pretty good day – she has spent most of it in the vegetable garden putting in the fruit trees, grapes, and seeds that we got yesterday by mail order.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children mostly still look up to their parents.

Graham

[19-Apr-20 --- Welcome happy morning age to age shall say Today is Orthodox Easter. The kids g...](#)

Today is Orthodox Easter. The kids got up and ran downstairs to get the Easter cake. You see them here with the paska in the foreground and the kids looking hungrily.

The kids are dressed for springtime in Hawaiian shirts. This is a tradition that dates back 50 years to my days in Saigon, as some of you readers well know. The story is like this. IBM's Saigon office was run out of Honolulu. In Hawaii there is a tradition of wearing aloha shirts every Friday. Inasmuch as our managers, Dan Feltham, and Bruce Tomson came from the Honolulu office, they brought with



them the tradition. Those of us who had come from the mainland adored the tradition and have kept it up ever since.

I bought Eddie his first Hawaiian shirt more than three years ago and he wears them every day. Literally. He wore short sleeved Hawaiian shirts to school all through this winter. Admittedly it was not a very cold weather, but it's his signature.

We had kind of a small question, who would want Eddie's old shirts when he's outgrown them? As of this week we have an answer. Zoriana loves them too. When they are hanging up after being washed. Zoriana grabs them and wears them. Like an adoring little sister should do. I think we've solved the problem. At any rate, here they are thus attired, beaming on an Easter Sunday morning with the paska cake in the foreground.

After cake and oatmeal for breakfast. Oksana and Eddie sang Ukrainian Easter music, a couple of songs that Eddie has been learning in his vocal music class, and that Oksana teaches to her classes. I responded with my best renditions of Jesus Christ is Risen Today and Welcome. Happy Morning. I do miss being in a choir. In any case, we all had fun.

It was a pretty morning, though cold. Kyiv this year is rather like San Francisco, a warmish winter with no particular snow, following a cold fall and followed by a very cold spring. The seed packages that say do not plant until April 15, after danger of frost, are wrong this year. It still freezes. And we have not put in our garden. Nonetheless, Oksana was out there after breakfast digging away and the kids followed her. I took this excellent moment to do what I rarely do, take a family photograph.

After a few minutes in the garden we set out for a walk. Here's a picture of Zoriana on her favorite perch on daddy's shoulders and mommy and daddy walking happily hand-in-hand.

I have recently written about the discoveries that Zoriana and I have made in this time of the quarantine. The gates that are only apparently locked but will open up if you use the right combination. I introduced Oksana to the complex of what looked like a summer camp. She gave me the history. It's an old sanatorium. It's probably still in the hands of the government. By the looks of the place the cabins must be 30 or 40 years old, certainly from Soviet times. There was new construction that appears to have stopped about 12 years ago. I would guess the crisis of 2008 when money dried up. The whole affair is frozen in time. Oksana finds this quite typical of Ukraine. Things just stop and assets go to waste. At any rate, to me it's better to have this old ruin that's quiet and a little bit intriguing than the high-rise apartments that will probably replace it someday.

We walked together only a little further. In her fifth month, Oksana is starting to show, and doesn't have a great deal of energy for outings. Her stomach hurts. So she encouraged us to keep on going, giving her an opportunity to have an hour or so by herself. She went back to the house. The kids and I kept walking over to the river. As I've mentioned before, it's a little bit more than a half a mile away. Here's a picture of the kids down by the river bank.

We saw some interesting things such as a newly hatched butterfly, squirrels and morel mushrooms. Eddie has learned quite a bit about wildlife and was fascinated to see a morel, which he could identify from photographs in school.

After that we headed home. Arriving in time for lunch. Zoriana had a long sleep and then we wound up working in the garden some more. It has been a delightful Easter day.

Graham

[26-Apr-20 --- Of the differences between academics and wise men](#) On February 20 I wrote about...

On February 20 I wrote about Andrew, a landscape architect introducing himself to us on the bus as he heard Eddie and me conversing in English. He and his bride Kate had just returned from a couple of months in the United States.

Andrew is a recent graduate of a Polish University, in the process of refurbishing a house that his father had given them as a wedding present here in Russanvosky Sad. He is starting up a home based landscaping business.

I was looking for somebody to straighten out the situation with the lawn we put in seven years ago. It is increasingly studded with dandelions in the moles have really chewed it up. It was time for a professional.

Oksana has a few good old boys who come around to trim the fruit trees every spring and do odd jobs on demand. She recommended them. I was inclined to start a relationship with this young, intelligent couple and see what they could do. Since the lawn is in my domain, that's the way it went. As we were laying out a statement of work Oksana indicated that she wanted a plastic greenhouse as well. So they came to kill the broadleaf weeds, reseed the lawn, and put up a greenhouse.

Although he sprayed the lawn 1 1/2 weeks ago, the dandelions still smile at us every morning. It looks like he will need another go. He picked the greenhouse kit up from the local equivalent of UPS a week ago with the plan to put it together in an afternoon. He got everything unwrapped and laid out on his own, and then he and wife Kate started putting things together. Eddie is always curious about what the grown-ups are up to, and he was Johnny on the spot as a sidewalk superintendent

Looking out casually from the balcony, I observed that his only tool was a Phillips screwdriver. That can't be very efficient. When Eddie came in, I suggested that he volunteer our electric drill with a Phillips bit to speed things up. They readily accepted.

After a long afternoon they had the five metal arcs framing the greenhouse put together. They said they would come back the following day to finish. I'd never done one of these things before – I assumed they knew what they were talking about.

The next day they spent putting together the cross braces that hold the thing erect, the frames holding the doors on the end, the footings that go into the ground and so on. It took most of the day and went into the evening. They asked if I had a drop light, which I did, and they continued until about nine at night.

The third day they buried the footings in the ground and put the plastic over it. I had not thought about how it might go together. The plastic is held between the curved frame of the greenhouse by some curved pieces of ribbing that screw through the plastic into them. Another fair amount of work that I wouldn't have imagined and I don't think they did either. They finally got it done, only to discover that the footings were not deep enough in the ground. They had to use our shovel to bury them about 9 inches deeper. Fortunately we had already turned over the soil so it was kind of soft.

They completed the job about evening. Andrew gave me an invoice for the lawn work and the greenhouse. He had estimated \$40 for his labor... woefully insufficient. I figured that the bulk of his extra time could simply be credited to on-the-job learning, but paid him about \$70 for the labor. I was impressed by his openness in acknowledging that he was learning on the job and his resolve to do it right rather than cut corners.

I hope this turns into a long standing relationship. You like to do business with people who are more or less like yourself. Andrew and Kate are educated, well-informed and curious. Has interesting taste for Ukrainian – he was playing American rock from the 1970s most of the time. He was fascinated to hear that my brother Duncan had served as the (sound technician?) for Creedence Clearwater revival in the early days. He and Kate work together easily as a team – another trait I find very attractive.

He is happy to share his university education with Eddie on matters concerning biology. We talked about classifications of plant life: angiosperms and gymnosperms, and within the former (i.e., flowering plants), monocotyledonous ones that should survive the broadleaf herbicide and dicotyledonous ones such as the dandelions that were supposed to die. Such discussions prompted Eddie and me to talk about simpler forms of plant life such as our mosses (bryophytes) and ferns (pteridophytes). Though they may have appeared earlier in evolution, it turns out that their spore-based lifecycle is anything but simple, alternating between single and double chromosome forms. As best I recall from my review a couple years ago of "How the Earth Turned Green."

On another matter concerning academics, my favorite heretic Ed Dutton did a piece on [couples with significant age differences](#).

That's a topic on which I have a bit of personal expertise, having three times married women quite a bit younger than me. Dutton described all sorts of characteristics to the kinds of women who enter such relationships, most pithily put as "golddiggers." He prognosticated that such relationships are not terribly durable and not characterized by great deal of affection or mutual understanding.

I observed in the comments that Kyiv is an exception. I could count six May and December relationships I know of here, all of which are stable and loving, at least as much as any other marriages. I went out of my way to include a link hyping one of Dutton's books.

He kind of pooh-poohed me in the comments, saying that six observations are statistically insignificant. He contended it would take thousands.

I emailed him privately to disagree. Just as it took only one swan – a black one – to make Nicholas Nasim Talib's case against all swans being white, I argued that if in my sample of six such marriages here in Kyiv, all six were successful, it very strongly refutes his case. After a bit of back-and-forth he backed off.

Giving people PhD's tends to make them a bit arrogant. Dutton, however, has made his entire career fighting idiot PhD's and their support of the status quo. He should be a bit more tolerant of us unwashed, un-pedigreed masses. He should also show a bit more respect for the guy who has written the top ranked Amazon reviews of four of his books.

There was a bit of a history to this as well. I did a video a while ago on why [smart people on the average have children less intelligent](#) than they are.

Not only was this my observation as a longtime parent and trustee in private schools, it has to be so in order for the distribution of intelligence within the population to remain stable.

Researching this theme a few years back, I came across an impressive paper by Caltech polymath Stephen Hsu. More recently I find it confirmed by intelligence researcher James Flynn, of the Flynn effect. It had irked me when Dutton blew me off without even looking at the video, standing behind his claim in "[At Our Wits End](#)" that children's intelligence is about the same as their parents'.

There you have it. One of the intellects that I most admire in this age gets a couple of things demonstrably wrong (if anybody's interested, I will forward the argument I sent about the six marriages here in Kyiv). I trust Dutton a whole hell of a lot more than I trust anybody in government. They are mostly all just making it up. This includes all world leaders including Donald Trump, and most disastrously in this age, the central bankers.

What lessons can I take from this for my kids? Simple modesty. People will respect you when you have the integrity to do your best to try to solve difficult problems, and the humility to admit when you are wrong.

We took a break last night from reading Huckleberry Finn to read Solomon's wisdom in the Proverbs. Good stuff to pass on to your kids.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women good-looking, and if the kids don't know their place, at least nobody minds if you tell them.

Graham

[29-Apr-20 --- Looking back in sorrow, not bitterness, as a springboard to looking forward in hope ...](#)  
I am proud of my kid. Eddie was dragging his feet Sunday night doing his homework assignment. As is often the case, it was like pulling teeth even to find out what he had to do for his Ukrainian class.

My initial understanding was that he had a writing assignment. I remember dreading them myself. I was unsure about my penmanship, spelling, grammar and that stuff. I was terrified at the prospect of making up a story. So I offered him sympathy and help.

It turns out that Dad got it substantially wrong. The assignment was to make up an Easter skit animated with puppets. We talked about the various animals that might take a role in such a presentation. Chickens to donate the eggs, rabbits to distribute them, a goat to steal them, and of course children to receive them. We talked about personalities for each of the characters. Zoriana had stuffed renditions of all of them.

Eddie got into it much quicker than the youthful me would have done. After discussing the characters for about 15 minutes, I showed him how to use the Audacity program to record himself. He put on a headset and dictated the story. In Ukrainian of course, so I didn't really understand. It didn't matter – I was very pleased that he was doing something. He was into it.

After he dictated the story two or three times he was fairly happy with the way it flowed. And then it turned out that he had to make a movie of his presentation. Oh by the way. Moreover, all of the girls in the class had already made their movies a couple days ago. Another oh by the way.

Fortunately, I make videos all the time. We got him set up. He had pulled together some pretty nice props. I have a good camera and light – God knows what the other parents do – and right about bedtime we were ready to go. Turns out to be a pretty short production – two and a half minutes long. After the first time through I recommended that he look at the camera a bit more, which he did. Take two is what we went with.

We then edited it. At his insistence we spliced in a couple of still shots saying "that evening" and "10 minutes later." He knew how to create them in Corel Draw; I showed him how to get them into the Movavi movie software.

And [here's the result](#). Not bad for a first outing.

Yesterday I had a delightful trip to the market. My favorite grandmotherly vendors had gathered outside of the locked doors of the farmers market, continuing business despite the quarantine. They were as glad to see me as I was to see them. They all had masks, although as often around their necks is around their noses. I am heartened to see their commitment to staying in business. They will soon enough be obsoleted by sterile modern European style grocery stores. I tell my kids to enjoy this experience while they have it, because it won't last until their adulthood.

Last night's weather was good and I suggested that we might make a barbecue. I had just found a meat store with sausages – this coronavirus has been an inspiration to learn more about the neighborhood. Oksana insisted that I go out and buy some mackerel to go with it.

Fire being a man's domain, Eddie was ready as always to make the barbecue. He did it without any help. He is justifiably proud of himself.

The great thing about this coronavirus is that I have a lot of time to spend with the kids. I have to spend it with them – they can't have contact with anybody else. Zoriana and I walked down by the lake once again. I have described it before. This time I brought a camera.

Here are the two of us alongside the lake, looking up toward the new bridge.

Here is Zoriana down by the small grassy beach where we swim. Depending on the weather, we may be in that water within the next three weeks.

Here is Zoriana by one of the dilapidated cabins in the old sanatorium that I wrote about.

That's about it for happy news. A couple of you expressed concern about my writing bitterly about my former family. I consider it merely matter of fact. Needless to say I have given them a lot of thought – that family represents one third of my life, from our meeting in 1979 until my leaving in 2006 after the first two kids were out of college. In any case, I am sending a following email with my ruminations on that topic. If you don't like dark, please skip it.

Graham

29-Apr-20 --- [Light and fluffy stuff. Heavier fare comes later.](#) I am proud of my kid. Eddie was dra...

A couple of you used the word "bitter" to describe the way I characterized how my grown children got away with lying, stealing and being lazy in my letter of April 9. I consider myself objective, not at all bitter. I am fully involved with a wonderful new family, and don't have time for regrets about the old one.

On the other hand, they do represent a full third of my long life. I can't just forget them. More than that, my former family represents the kind of wealth of experience on which no other parent of young

children whom I know can draw, I would be a fool not to reflect on how to apply what I learned to my life going forward.

My writings here are the least of it. I have been tacking together an autobiography bit by bit since I moved to Kyiv. My website links to a master document that in turn links to pieces on substantial elements of my life – childhood, career, and of course the grown family.

As one goes through life, one thinks of new ways to phrase things, new perspectives on old events. The only recent events with regard to my former family have to do with people ignoring once again my attempts to get in touch. I would actually be surprised if they had taken up my offers. If I am guilty of anything, it is attempting to make them confront their hypocrisy.

It is broader than that. What I write about my grown children is in large part an indictment of their generation. As such I hope I am addressing a topic of broader interest. You can look forward next week to stories about gardens and kittens and little children. Sorry if this is a bit of a downer. For better or worse, here it is.

## Contempt

My former family treats me with contempt. My ex-wife has not talked to me for ten years. My children (in birth order) for nine, three, and ten years. This includes not answering the telephone, not answering emails and not answering letters. Absolute silence.

Prior to that they expressed contempt for my opinions on just about everything. My taste in music, the things I read, my pride in my country and my ancestry, my church attendance, my opinions on every topic addressed by political correctness, and my respect for traditional values.

Contempt is a lazy approach. These grown children have never been intellectually curious and could not mount arguments against me. But contempt is easy. All you have to do is assume a posture of moral superiority, sneer and ignore. And that's what they chose to do.

Contempt has a long track record on the left. In 1964 the Free Speech Movement at the University of California expressed contempt for the University administration. They simply called them morally inferior and shouted them down. University administrators such as Clark Kerr – the names are forgotten – caved in quite contemptibly. The only name one remembers is that of Sam Hayakawa of San Francisco State, who refused to give in to them and famously pulled the plug on their megaphone.

At any rate, as Tom Wolfe reported in *Radical Chic & Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers*, contempt proved itself to be a viable tool. Saul Alinsky championed it. It worked.

These adult children were schooled in contempt. Their teachers presented them with a litany of historical evils committed by white men, from slavery through colonialism to wife beating, which the children readily absorbed. They contemptuously rejected my attempts to give context to such teachings.

Their legions of high-priced therapists and counselors favored similar theories regarding the shortcomings of us white progenitors. Parental discipline, even if well-intentioned, was presumed to be misguided. Our children, like all their classmates, learned that they could smugly parry parental efforts at discipline. Such resistance was particularly effective in our case, as I was the only parent making the attempt. My wife sided with the experts.

The children expressed contempt by never supporting me or the family. They rarely helped with housework such as by doing the dishes. Their rooms were a perpetual mess. Whatever cleaning up was done was the work of housekeepers, babysitters or parents.

When I needed help in the yard, they simply weren't there. At the time I owned a string of rental properties and could have used help maintaining them. They never participated, never as much as visited a rental property. They never got interested in the investments that I managed or my business affairs.

They had contempt for their father's money. They steadfastly, strongly resisted any help from me on schoolwork. Instead, they were content to waste Daddy's money on tutors, whose advice they also rather contemptuously ignored. The tutors dragged them through the schooling process, without much willing participation on their part. And certainly, with no regard for the waste of resources.

They were contemptuous of money we spent on luxuries. We sent my son to snowboarding camp on Mount Hood, clear across the country, every summer. There were no thanks for that. We took them on expensive vacations, which they regarded as a birthright. They contemptuously ignored their bodies. They did not do anything in the way of physical exercise. Their mother was complicit in wasting my time having me drive them places to which they should've walked.

Their contempt was broad, spreading beyond merely "the old man" to "the man" in general. They accepted as their birthright a free ride through their first-choice colleges, all of them out of state, not supported by the financial aid for which they could not have qualified in any case. Two of them contemptuously rejected suggestions that they should prepare for some sort of careers, choosing instead to major in philosophy. My fears were valid: neither of them has ever worked for "the man" in a professional capacity.

Having grown up with contempt, the children are at home with it. They were never schooled to look at the world any other way.

Contempt is a lazy approach. It doesn't require any justification of one's position. Not only does my former family not talk to me, but people whom I considered to be mutual friends, people who would describe themselves as liberals, show solidarity with the former family by likewise refusing communication. My having cut my losses by leaving appears to have been an unforgiveable sin. We conservatives should patiently endure being educated and improved by our more woke spouses and offspring.

Am I really that toxic? Am I that contemptible? People who read what I write know that I hold positions that are not consistent with those of any political personage, anyplace on the spectrum. But I am willing to discuss almost anything.

Conversely, these children never wanted to discuss anything. Contempt serves as a cowardly way to avoid thinking about issues. And, I am afraid, this characterizes most of the acquaintances I mention who have also refused to maintain contact. It is a debilitating disease of the liberal character.

Some of my correspondents have expressed concern that I am burning bridges. I am taking a position that will make it hard for my children to reconcile themselves to me.

I attempt to describe things as I see them. My analysis of the situation, and of the children's upbringing and its shortcomings, hews as close to the facts as I can manage. I say it like it is,

avoiding words of blame. I am in error on any facts, nobody has called it to my attention. Rather, people express concern that I would utter such truths, not questioning their veracity.

At this point I must ask, why not? It looks highly unlikely that any of them will try to reestablish a relationship. Why should I care? They are not successful in life. They are utter failures in relationships. They are not going to give me grandchildren. They're not going to be of any comfort to me in my old age. A hard-eyed assessment of the situation says that I have nothing to gain by reestablishing relationships with them.

Will they outgrow this contempt? Will they manage to suppress it and attempt to rebuild a relationship with me?

I don't care. Perhaps I have become contemptuous myself.

## Postscript

I note that although all of the people who have cut me off have better relations with their grown children than I do, none of their children are doing particularly well. They don't have careers and they haven't produced grandchildren. By my [primordial, biblical concept of success in life](#) they have just about all failed. The difference is that I call it failure and am trying to do something about it. To merrily mix metaphors, they are following the 21<sup>st</sup> century Pied Pipers of liberalism, happily marching to extinction like lemmings, to leave no trace in the evolutionary record.

Most are married, some 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> time around. I guess they are happy. For me, life would not be as meaningful without children or grandchildren around.

Enough on that topic. I have to discipline myself to shut up about it.

Graham

[4-May-20 --- THAT Michael Moore? And you agree with him? I should be proud of my enterprisi...](#)

I should be proud of my enterprising, industrious 2 1/2-year-old daughter. Instead I am merely forbearing. I didn't give her the thrashing I thought she deserved.

I baked an apple pie this morning and set it on the kitchen counter. I stepped away for a few minutes to help Eddie scan his homework and upload it for his virtual class today. While I was gone, Zoriana shoved a chair up against the counter – a no no in my book, her mother is more tolerant – got herself a bowl and a fork and served herself some pie.

She doesn't exactly have the technique down for serving pie. Instead of leaving a clean pie shaped hole, she left it looking rather like Dresden morning after the British visit. Here it is.

I told her it was the wrong thing to do but left it at that. She got hand smacked later in the day for climbing up into one of the cabinets, getting the bag that we use to



microwave popcorn, and attempting to do that. Misusing a microwave could result in serious damage.

Along the way, I did a bit of work in the garden. Oksana is beside herself with joy. The garden is producing the greens she likes. Here's the salad she fixed for lunch: dill, parsley and a bitter salad leave she calls chevril but seems to me closer to arugula.

In other news, the woman who has listed her house for sale simply is not returning my calls. I don't want to force the issue. I'm looking at other properties in the neighborhood, in the expectation that as the crisis becomes more pronounced the sellers will become more highly motivated. I want to have a list.

One of Eddie's favorite teachers can't work because of the coronavirus quarantine. We got wind of the fact that she was looking for a babysitting job. We jumped right on it – she will come over Thursday to discuss it. I learn from Oksana that she earns 200 hryvnya per class. I don't think she teaches more than four classes a day - \$30 or so. She may like the self-image of a teacher better than a babysitter, but my bet is that she'll make more money babysitting. There might be a twofer here – a tutor for Eddie as well.

On to another topic...

After five recommendations, I brought myself around to watch Michael Moore's new documentary [Planet Of The Humans](#). It's incredible. This is environmentalism as I knew it is a student at Berkeley 60 years ago. Real conservatives like to, well, conserve things. So does Michael Moore.

He has one telling sentence in it. "It is not the CO2 molecule. It is us." It isn't just fossil fuels, it is our whole way of being.

Moore rips into the major players in the environmental scene for their hypocrisy. The biggest ones are Al Gore, Bill McGibbon of 350.org, and the Sierra Club. Certainly, among many others.

On the misguided notion that it is simply a question of carbon dioxide. They have perverted the movement and are actually destroying the earth in many many ways, the biggest canards being solar power, wind power, and biofuels. Moore demonstrates conclusively that all three of them are damaging and they do not deliver the promised results. They don't even come close.

As an aside, he says that nuclear is the only truly clean power source there is. He doesn't go any further. Wish he would

He says that there are simply too many humans and doesn't go any further. I would like to take it a bit further.

When people say there are too many humans, the default assumption is too many white people. That widespread notion makes me a little reluctant to embrace Moore.

But we more developed peoples, if I can be so bold as to say that, we people of European extraction and Northeast Asian extraction are not reproducing ourselves,. We are solving the problem by bringing our own numbers down. We need to recognize that and applaud our own success.

We who are being responsible need to refrain from encouraging other people to continue reproducing. A good alternative will be to stop bringing in immigrants from countries that do not control their population. Stop foreign aid to countries that do not control their populations. Make it a quid pro quo that we will not financially support families and countries that do not limit their own fertility.

So with that said – connecting the dots back to Michael Moore's movie – let me say that I think it's a good movie. I heartily recommend watching it. I think it is a game changer. There are no easy, feel good solutions.

Graham

[13-May-20 --- The uses of a lockdown — and thoughts on vaccines in general, Doctors in Black in ...](#)

When we gather for meals, we hold hands and say grace. Three of us sitting on adult chairs and Zoriana in her highchair. She doesn't want to be left out. If three of us hold hands she'll scream and yell till she gets included. We usually say the blessing. Occasionally I'll sing the Doxology, but more frequently we sing its equivalent in Russian or Ukrainian.

We have a great deal to be thankful for. I've written that all through my life I've been one step ahead of the curve, benefiting from the demographics of the silent generation. I was a bit too old to be caught up in various troubles and manias such as the drug revolution, the Vietnam draft and forced multiculturalism. My colleagues only 10 years younger have suffered from all of these.

And now I'm one step ahead of Covid19. Comfortably retired in a safe place. Backwater that it is Ukraine has been largely spared from the coronavirus. Total deaths are only around 450. We don't go out much anyhow.

With all the attention it's been getting during the lockdown our yard is doing great. Here are row upon row of vegetables. I doubt we'll be able to eat them all. Perhaps we can barter.

The head of Eddie's school wants to start a kindergarten next year but doesn't know where to put it. I had suggested we might buy a house down the street. The owner has rented out for the summer and doesn't want to even show it now. I don't think she's serious.

I would hate to be in that head of school's position. We don't know whether schools will open in the fall, under what restrictions they will open, and whether or not people will have the money for private school tuitions.

The Ukraine Business News estimates that half the restaurants in the country will not reopen after coronavirus. Other small businesses are similarly stressed. That will mean huge levels of unemployment. People will simply not be able to afford things.

I think the world is in a phony war with regard to the economy. A fool's paradise, in which said the fools rush in to prop up the stock market while the smart money gets out., All the signs are that business is collapsing right and left, but we are whistling past the graveyard.

So what does that mean for the schools? It was already an open question in my mind whether Eddie's school would be able to operate next year. I had put the odds at less than 50%. The idea of their starting up a kindergarten seems a little foolhardy.

We are better positioned than anybody. Social Security will never go away. It will have to atrophy, being inflated away, and that will probably take years. We could homeschool Eddie, and we can invite some of his classmates to join him if it works out that way. Between Oksana and me we can teach just about everything.

Another alternative, or perhaps wrapped in with the same. We have the room to run a four or five kid kindergarten here. That would be all that we would really want. That's enough for one hired teacher with us to oversee. One way or another, I have a feeling our kids will be taken care of, and we will be busy next fall. I am sure that our certainty would be very reassuring for other people.

I mentioned that Natalia, one of Eddie's favorite teachers, had offered to babysit during the quarantine while she cannot get to her regular teaching assignments. She is a delight. Here she is with Zoriana and one of the herd of goats that graze in our neighborhood.

While on the subject of Zoriana, here she is up in an apple tree. She loves to climb and loves to be photographed. As one of you wrote to mention, she is a serious girl and should smile more. This was the best smile out of a dozen pictures.

I watched the video [Doctors in Black - Plandemic](#), about the corruption in the United States medical establishment. It addresses the coronavirus and charges that the numbers are being juggled. The powers that be are alleged to be manipulating the crisis in order to maximize their own profits from patents they hold on vaccines. This is most evident in their suppression of potential solutions such as hydroxychloroquine that don't funnel money into vaccine makers.

The video got well over a million views on YouTube before they banned it. It got reposted about three times. YouTube was busy just finding it and shutting it off. Like a mushroom, it keeps popping up. I have seen it again on Vimeo.com, Banned.Video, and Bitchute. It's a message that seems to really resonate.

The video excoriates the medical establishment and the pharmaceutical companies. I heartily agree that far.

Prior to Covid19, Judy Mikovits, had written a book entitled Plague of Corruption. She certainly makes some good points about the dangers of vaccines and the unscrupulous methods that the government and the pharmaceutical companies use to suppress bad news.

However, nowhere can I find balance. You have to say that overall vaccines have been a pretty good thing for public health. Fewer people get sick than used to. However, to claim that they are all safe, as the NIH, WebMD and WHO sites do for things like the HPV vaccine, the flu shot, the measles,

mumps and rubella, and so on, is also wrong. The anecdotal accounts of injury don't square with it. Neither does the \$3 billion paid out so far by the Vaccine Court.

Mikovits makes the very good point that if vaccines were safe, they would not have needed to set up the Vaccine Court to replace normal judicial process, having the federal government adjudicate parental claims on their own. Mitkovits describes how the processes is stacked against parents. Each parent one-on-one against the government, with very limited legal discovery, no class action possibility, and no way to use one case as precedent for another. And despite all this, the government has still had to pay out that \$3 billion.

You can't say vaccines are totally safe. They aren't. But that's not the question. The question is, is it better to be vaccinated or not?

My take is that it really depends on which vaccine and which disease. The parents have to find good information. However, with the government lying to us about vaccines as they do about the Russians, the schools, the economy and everything else, we can't know.

Vaccines are terribly tricky. The adverse effects don't show up until years, often decades after the immunization. Causality can only be established statistically, not in individual cases. And likewise the benefit is counterfactual – is what didn't happen. It is a terrible thing to adjudicate. The kind of thing that the courts are manifestly unsuited to handle, and yet it is thrown to the courts.

Ultimately it is up to us parents to decide, on a shot-by-shot basis, whether or not to vaccinate our kids. I try to read everything and make up my mind. It is not an easy problem. Whether you support vaccines or not, I think anybody will find it a source of interesting information.

We all know that vaccines are made from cultures of animal tissues. Those animals may be mammals such as mice or chimpanzees or even human embryos. They may also be chickens or other vertebrates. What the book claims, and I have not seen refuted, is that viruses endemic to these animals come along for the ride. In other words, when we are injected with a shot made from animal cultures, we not only get the antibodies we are supposed to, but we get the animal viruses along with it.

Some of these are retroviruses which have a way of secreting themselves in your system remaining dormant for a long time. The AIDS retrovirus is said to do just that, just waiting opportunistically until events such as frequent and unsafe sex practices or drug usage provide an opportunity for it to act, coming to life when the organism gets stressed.

Mikovits says that this is the mechanism by which children may get autism and other autoimmune diseases. If the vaccine is given to the wrong kid, who is under the wrong stress, the retroviruses get activated and play havoc with the system.

Anecdotally, among Oksana's friends there is a mother with an eight-year-old daughter who has rheumatoid arthritis and there is another with a son somewhere on the autism spectrum. Goodness knows where these diseases came from, but we note that they were both vaccinated.

She is especially harsh about the vaccines for diseases that are mostly just inconvenient. She claims that the vaccine for chickenpox, a minor disease, can trigger shingles – the same disease in a more damaging form. The vaccine for measles prevents a kid from developing the healthy natural immunity that comes from getting that bug, which immunity can prevent other diseases later in life. She, like other authors such as Stephanie Seneff, is particularly harsh about the HPV vaccine. There are lots of anecdotes of kids' lives being ruined by this one. It is especially troubling because if the kids simply

practiced chastity – kept their pants on the way we were taught – they wouldn't be exposed in the first place.

The author darkly suggests that these same mechanisms could be the underlying triggers for other later life diseases that we have seen proliferate within the last couple of decades, chronic fatigue syndrome and Alzheimer's disease. They cannot make a compelling proof that this is what's happening, but they raise interesting questions.

I would suggest that people who want to suppress voices such as Mikovits are on the wrong side of science. Science seeks the truth. These are areas in which we should be looking for the truth. We can be happy if these alarmists turn out to be wrong, but somebody should be investigating.

To gauge the depth of their hate, check out Judy Mikovits on Wikipedia, or read the plethora of nasty reviews on Amazon. Their venom is matched only by their vacuity. I haven't read any piece, including this in the [MIT Review of Technology](#), that attempts to rebut her points. Maybe she is onto something.

Meanwhile, we cannot ignore the benefits that vaccines bring. Everybody has to do their own cost-benefit analysis. My take would be that it's probably a good idea not to get vaccinated until your kid is more than two years old, past the stage of extremely rapid brain growth – and autism risk. And to work to keep the medical establishment honest. Mikovits' case that they conceal information and lie to us is very strong. That should end.

One of the things that the book brings out is the severe conflict of interests that the principal players have. Bill Gates owns a portfolio of vaccine patents. He has a great financial interest in the vaccines that he's pushing. Likewise, Anthony Fauci owns vaccine patents. Isn't that a conflict of interest? Likewise, Mike Bloomberg is heavily invested. We should suspect these men's motives, and certainly strongly question whether or not they are seeking the truth. Do they suppress hydroxychloroquine because it doesn't work, or because they want something else to work that will put money in their pockets? Inquiring minds want to know.

A riff on Bill Gates, I have recently started using Windows 10 and Microsoft Word 365. I have been using Microsoft's products for 35 years now. They continue to get worse. There are things I could do in Windows 7 that I cannot do in Windows 10. Hell, there were features in Microsoft Word 30 years ago that were better than the product today. More than that, Windows 10 is bound so tightly to the Internet that I am sure that Gates can investigate my innermost secrets by scanning my documents. It tries to force my documents onto his cloud server whether I want or not. I wish Bill Gates would get out of my life. I do not trust his software, and I certainly do not trust his motives when it comes to handling viruses.

On a happier note, I recently made online contact with a French guy who has read one of the translations that I posted a couple of months ago. That made my day. I am quite sure that Mikovits would be thrilled to see *Plague of Corruption* translated into European languages. Given that the European Union's health regime is just as corrupt, sclerotic and incompetent as those of the World Health Organization and the United States, she should welcome it. In any case, if you ask in a couple of weeks, I may have a copy of the book available.

I'll close with that. I am not an anti-VAXer, but I do like the truth and I don't trust bureaucracies much.

Graham

16-May-20 --- Coronavirus in Ukraine, and God save us from our saviors — a follow-up on Bill Gat...

It looks as if the disease is about set to level off here in Ukraine. The blue in the graph below shows the total number of current infections; red is deaths and green is number cured. Ukraine deaths are 476 in a population of 35 million or so.

Hungary is a bit ahead of Ukraine on the curve. They have 448 dead out of a population of 10 million. Europe gives their Prime Minister Orban crap no matter what he does, and they claimed his approach was all wrong and that he was using Covid19 as an excuse to seize power which he would never give back. Wrong and wrong. Hungary fared better than the nations to the west of them, and Orban is relinquishing the extra authority he exercised during the lockdown.

Rule of law is somewhat more relaxed here in Ukraine than the West. Only about half the people you see on the street are wearing masks. The market should open and buses start to run again in a couple of weeks.

Ukraine, like the rest the world, doesn't have much choice. As it is a significant fraction of our small businesses, especially restaurants and leisure time, will never resume operation. I expect that those with deep pockets will be able to take advantage of the elimination of weaker competition.

As an indication of the relaxation, as I took Zoriana down a new street on a walk two days ago five dogs started barking at us. As Zoriana apprehensively grab my leg, the owner came out to see who it was. It was Larissa, the clerk from the mom-and-pop store on our corner. She did the Ukrainian thing – invited us in for a cup of tea.

So we had a lovely half hour's conversation. Her house is extremely modest – one of the original dachas, 550 ft.<sup>2</sup>, uninsulated, and unlandscaped. But Larissa is an intelligent woman. That's one of the uses of adversity – people in the middle strata of Ukrainian society are pretty competent by and large. Zoriana enjoyed playing with her son Ivan (Vannya), six years old. On more gentrified streets the properties are all behind high fences. This kind of social interaction wouldn't take place. This kind of interaction I was one of the things I most missed when we moved from Washington DC to Bethesda 31 years ago.

I gave the sanitary considerations a brief thought. I do business with Larissa all the time, both of us wearing masks. But those masks aren't all that effective, and nobody either of us knows has ever gotten the virus, so it seems like a tolerable risk. On top of that, the quarantine is going away shortly but the virus will certainly not. We have to resume living ordinary lives at some point. Why not now?

When we got home, I found Oksana was more concerned about the chocolate cookie remains around Zoriana's mouth than she was about exposure to the virus. Smart woman. At some point we have to stop panicking, and this seems like a good time.

But meanwhile you have prominent citizens in the West inciting panic. Nonetheless, with everybody in the blogosphere writing about coronavirus, occasionally you get something intelligent said. First, if you [rush to judgment](#) you're likely look like a fool. Second, common sense and [obvious statistical analysis](#) will tell you a lot. Here's another [valuable piece](#) sent to me by Rob Moore, an interview with Luc Montagnier, Nobel prizewinner for the discovery of the AIDS virus and author of a glowing cover blurb for Judy Mikovits' book Plague of Corruption. I am doubly pleased. First, that my French

remains good enough that I can skate without the subtitles much of the time, and second that this imminent scientist emanates such cool common sense.

My favorite billionaire is Larry Ellison. He spends his money on 12-meter yachts to compete in the America's Cup. It works – in 2013 he was behind the New Zealand team by 8 to 1, one race away from a drubbing, and came back to win. He does not sing with the SJW choir in Silicon Valley and occasionally even says a nice word about Donald Trump.

Compare that with Bill Gates, upon whom I rified last time. He stole QDOS from its developers fair and square and turned it into a marketable product MS-DOS, capitalizing on the open architecture that IBM pioneered. Engaged by IBM to write their OS2 product as a competitor to Apple's graphic mode Macintosh, he and Steve Ballmer stole the notion to create their own Windows. The first couple of releases were disasters, but Windows 3 actually worked. As much as anything, it is the foundation of Gates' great wealth.

Gates managed to acquire other products to round out his product line – Excel to compete with Lotus 1-2-3, Word to compete with WordPerfect and others, and PowerPoint for presentations. He turned them into a suite of products each of which was adequate. The integrated suite, and integrated marketing gave them a compelling advantage. Within about five years they became the industry standards.

His fortune secure, Gates set out to make his name in other areas. Curing the problems with American education, curing endemic diseases in Africa, and creating vaccines for diseases that plague America. It turns out that being a ruthless competitor is not the best of attributes in these areas.

He did make progress in reducing malaria in Africa. He had no plan for what to do with the newfound surplus of Africans. Note to Bill: shipping them to Madrid, Paris and Berlin is not a viable long-term solution. You need what Progressives would call a holistic approach.. no externalities.

Education in America has always been done at a local level. Federal involvement has been a disaster. Federal intervention to integrate the schools, something that neither Blacks nor whites wanted, has been an all-around catastrophe. Here is a two-part ([here's 1](#), [here's 2](#)) perspective on what happened in Los Angeles.

No doubt in my mind that the epidemic of what they call [Deaths of Despair](#) among white Americans has a lot to do with the willful destruction of their neighborhoods by the federal government. The same thing is happening in Europe through widespread immigration. I have just finished rereading Robert Putnam's "Bowling Alone" in preparation to write about social capital, and the relentless assault on same in the name of diversity.

Jimmy Carter's Department of Education serves no useful purpose and generally gets in the way. when I was in the University of Maryland's Graduate School of Education 2004 – 2006 the only issue of interest was the relative performance of minorities. Nobody really cared about the best ways to teach kids. As an outspoken straight white man, I was roundly loathed by the professoriate and students alike and jumped from the doctoral program in education to that of statistics after a few months. Humorous incidents reported on my [website](#).

The Bill and Melinda Gates foundation was a driving force behind the adoption of the Common Core Curriculum by state education associations. The federal government did not have the power to pull the states in line behind a common system of instruction, but foundation money did. Notice the parallel here between education and Internet "standards of decency," multiculturalism, climate

change and other liberal pets. If the government cannot force it on you, they delegate the task to their very competent private sector enforcers.

The long and the short of it is that Common Core was supposed to improve the education of minority students. Bring them up to the standards of white kids. It turns out just the opposite.

Local school boards and teachers hated it. They lost control of the curriculum – deciding what children were to be taught and how teaching was to be delivered. They hated the politically freighted messages that were woven throughout the program.

While white kids have barely held their own, the performance of minority students under Common Core has plummeted. [The Pioneer Institute](#), which has dedicated itself to fighting Common Core since its inception, gives the details.

New reader Marc called my attention to the fact that "The Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) Program, funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, was established in 1999 to provide outstanding African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Pacific Islander American, and Hispanic American students with an opportunity to complete an undergraduate .." It would be manifestly unfair for the government itself to discriminate against white people, so they delegate the task to deep-pocketed Bill Gates, who no doubt earns considerable tax credits for doing so. How wonderful.

If Gates [believes so strongly](#) in the inherent talent of these minorities, why doesn't he hire [inner-city Americans](#) instead of legions of Indians on H1B visas? Can anybody offer an answer? Hypocrisy come to mind?

Gates is also "on the side of the angels" with regard to climate change. Although climate science is more complex than that of human evolution, I think that Gates is smart enough to realize that what Michael Moore, Patrick Moore, Steward Brand and other formerly left-leaning environmentalists have come to believe is true. The problem is not CO<sub>2</sub>, and the "solutions" even if it were the problem, are immensely profitable, virtue-signaling boondoggles. When one considers externalities, they are highly polluting and don't much reduce CO<sub>2</sub>. And, by the way, it may all be a mirage in the first place: [Global Cooling!! Low Solar ` To Cause Temperatures To Plummet, Say Scientists](#)

My understanding is that Gates wants to vaccinate every American and provide us with passports to demonstrate our immune status. Maybe even implant microchips, so we can be scanned on the run. You can't board the bus were airplane without a passport. It gives me the shivers.

Bill Gates get out of my life! Go build a yacht, climb a mountain, anything but trying to help mankind. You have been a disaster.

[17-May-20 --- I am blessed to have intelligent correspondents like Marc, Al, Dennis and Dale You...](#) You have offered a wealth of links with opinions opposed to those that I posted on coronavirus and vaccines.

My musings addressed two separate topics. First, what is the consensus on coronavirus and vaccines? I think we can all agree that there is no consensus. There are differing points of view.

The second is whether dissenting points of view are being suppressed. Nobody addressed that in what you wrote.



The evidence that Judy Mikovits presents in [her book](#) and in her video "[Plandemic – Doctors in Black](#)" for having been forcibly shut up is compelling. The simple fact that YouTube has tried so vehemently to get it erased from the Internet, and her [Wikipedia entry](#) has been so thoroughly trashed is evidence enough for me. I believe that people ought to be allowed to be heard, allowed the right to be wrong. NB: I link to contrary points of view as far as the science goes below.

The instances in which the government forcibly shuts people up are legion. We have the Chelsea Manning, Julian Assange and Edward Snowden cases with regard to the intelligence community. A vast number of people have been fired for having incorrect views on climate change. Holding politically incorrect views on the subjects like diversity can get you fired anywhere in America. Search on "Google's ideological echo chamber" for (now fired, of course) James Damore's view on the subject.

I know quite a bit about the science of human evolution and of climate change, enough to convince me that people who are on the "wrong" side of those issues politically are probably right. I am not as widely read in vaccines, and certainly not about coronavirus. But I do know the signs of totalitarian repression, and what I see and read leads me to believe that the people who are being suppressed probably have a point and should be heard.

There are a few writers who, like me, take a broader look at people who are being systematically shut up. One of them is [Jim Rossi](#), whose "Cleantech Con Artists" I reviewed last year. Rolling Stone writer [Matt Taibbi](#), whose incipient book "The Great Russia Cap" I have [translated](#) is another. Glenn Greenwald is another.

I will go with Rossi, Greenwald and Taibbi. The greater issue is not who is right or wrong about the issues – vaccines, coronavirus, human biodiversity or Russian interference in American elections – but the broader issue of whether or not we have lost the freedom to freely speak about them.

Freedom of speech concerns me as well. Amazon has stopped carrying many of the books that I have reviewed, and has refused to post my reviews of others. Almost all of the Internet sites that I find most useful have been delinked from Twitter and Facebook. Several have been deplatformed. This is a disaster. I will survive, but our republic, absent the freedoms on which it was founded, may not.

All that said, in the interest of free inquiry I am including here links provided by correspondents Marc, Al and Dennis with rebuttals to what I posted about Bill Gates, coronavirus and vaccines. Dale, you had good comments but no links. I'll be glad to post what you send as well.

From Al:

*Hi Graham,*

*This article sure paints a different picture of Bill gates than you portray.*

*Full article: [https://www.wsj.com/articles/bill-gates-coronavirus-vaccine-covid-19-11589207803?shareToken=st0b6bcf6c791049ef9d249db90a3ddaf6&mod=pck\\_165](https://www.wsj.com/articles/bill-gates-coronavirus-vaccine-covid-19-11589207803?shareToken=st0b6bcf6c791049ef9d249db90a3ddaf6&mod=pck_165)*

*Al*

*Five years ago, Bill Gates warned that the biggest potential killer the world faced [wasn't war, but a pandemic](#). The billionaire spent hundreds of millions of dollars to find faster ways to develop vaccines and create disease-tracking systems. He urged world leaders to build national defenses against new infectious diseases.*

*Looking back, Mr. Gates said, "I wish I had done more to call attention to the danger." The Microsoft Corp. co-founder is now squaring off against the scenario he sought to forestall.*

From Dennis

*As for the various fringe commentators that you mention, I enjoy researching those that I do not know much about. I am familiar with Judy Mikovits, who enjoys a certain popularity locally among the hairy-legged hippy moms. A small but very vocal group on NextDoor. Recognizing your fondness for those on the fringe, I don't expect to change minds here. The truth is that Ms. M has had a tendency to play fast and loose with her resume and makes scientific mistakes that would get a freshman biology student kicked out of class. Many comments have been made about her lack of understanding about the differences in RNA between Covid-19 and previous Corona-viruses. Despite her claims, none of her HIV/AIDS research appears to have had any impact on the treatment of HIV/AIDS. Her one claim to fame was her research on Chronic Fatigue Syndrome until her work was found to be not replicable. Other researchers found that all the positive specimens from CFS patients were contaminated with XMRV plasmid DNA, while the control group had no such findings. At this point Mikovits clammed up and refused to discuss her finds further. More recently, she has been running from a \$15m judgement resulting from her theft of confidential material from a previous employer. An excellent summary of her scientific errors can be found at <https://www.medpagetoday.com/infectiousdisease/generalinfectiousdisease/86461>. A thorough debunking of Luc Montagnier's claims can be found at <https://www.europeanscientist.com/en/big-data/no-sars-cov-2-does-not-contain-hiv-genetic-code/>.*

And Marc offers a factual correction:

*Word and Excel, as well Access, OneNote and Outlook, were developed internally not acquired. On the other hand, PowerPoint and FrontPage were acquired.*

There we have it – a free interchange of ideas among intelligent people.

If any of you have a defense of totalitarianism – locking up, firing, and bankrupting people for their opinions I have yet to see it.

On a lighter note, even a silly one, it tickles me to death that Eddie is so intrigued with puerile humor from long ago. Yesterday I taught him our El Cerrito High School Gaucho football cheer

Rah Rah Ree

Kick Em in the Knee

Rah Rah Rass

Kick Em in the Other Knee

Completing the lines from a Calvin and Hobbes strip, I gave him the words to On Top of Spaghetti (tune of on Top of Old Smokey):

On top of spaghetti

All covered with cheese

I lost my poor meatball

When somebody sneezed

For two or three years we have been singing

Nobody likes me

Everybody hates me

I'm going out and eat worms

Long skinny scrawny ones

Short fat juicy ones

Itsy-bitsy fuzzy-wuzzy worms

The words to the whole song are on the Internet if anybody cares. Having kids is wonderful. You get to relive your childhood. Childish Pete that Janitor jokes, shortest book jokes, dead baby jokes and so on available on request.

Graham

23-May-20 --- Riffing on the environment — local and global perspectives I have a meaning for qui...

I have a meaning for quite a while to beat my chest about my environmentally virtuous family. We don't drive a car. We don't directly use any fossil fuels. Indirectly, about half of our electricity comes from hydrocarbons, the other half from nuclear. That same percentage would apply to propulsion for the Metro and the electric buses. The 20-passenger jitney buses do (gasp!) burn nasty old diesel fuel – about as much as a 2-passenger car. Our house is well insulated. Bottom line – our carbon footprint is somewhat under the world average of 5 tons per person. Or at least it will be when the fifth member joins the family in September. I doubt that any of you tree huggers even come close to these numbers.

The garbageman stopped coming at the beginning of the coronavirus crisis. Very well – we started to bury the wet garbage in the garden, burn the flammable, and save the rest until service resumed. This raises a couple of questions.

First, burn the flammable? Doesn't that, like, create smog? Yes, it does create particulate waste. It would do so wherever it got burned. If it were not burned it would get buried. Our experience turning over the soil for our garden demonstrates that plastic can remain buried for decades without decomposing. To me it is merely a question of timing. Burning or decomposing plastics is an ugly business whenever and wherever it takes place. There isn't much downside doing it here and now.

We are fortunate to be situated downwind from some sparsely populated countryside. Airborne particulate matter – smog and air pollution – goes away faster than it can be renewed. It would only be a problem if the concentrations were to rise enough to create a health hazard. That doesn't seem to happen here – just not enough to be really noisome. So I burn it with a clear conscience.

On the subject of plastic, I am afraid that here in Ukraine as everywhere in the world little plastic bags are ubiquitous. If you buy strawberries and potatoes in the market, each one goes into its own little plastic bag. We are conscientious about reusing them – I let bread dough rise in them and pie dough sit in them in the refrigerator. We collect wet garbage in them before taking it out to be composted. Even after that, there still remain soggy used bags to be burned.

I almost never use big plastic shopping bags, the kind you have to pay for here in Ukraine. I still have my Trader Joe and Edmund Burke shopping bags. Here is my setup as I go out shopping: a backpack, with the shopping bags folded up in one compartment of the backpack. That's good for something like 30 pounds of groceries. I have a cheap old suitcase on the back of the bicycle that's probably good for another 40. I take it all into the store with me, load it and strap it on the bike with bungee cords.

I bought cloth diapers when Eddie came along, and used them until Oksana rebelled and said it was Huggies or else. You men out there know which parent wins these battles. Disposable diapers it is, and will be the third time around as well.

That is how things stand. We have very few cans and bottles, so the bulk of the garbage is disposable diapers. My suggestion that we let them dry out in the far corner of the backyard and burn

them was met with strong disapproval. Our garbage collection has resumed, and we give them one large plastic bag of disposable diapers about every three weeks. Not too shabby all things considered. We may not be gold star citizens, but we can compete for the bronze.

Of course, none of that matters. However virtuous my actions, I remain egregiously guilty of thoughtcrime. I just don't believe the climate change propaganda. Lump me with Timothy Leary – I question authority.

There are several reasons I started this blog in lieu of Facebook. First – don't give money to Mark Zuckerberg. Second, make posts long enough to say something. Third, don't do anything that brings out the worst in other people, or even worse than that, the worst in myself. Facebook flame wars are stupid.

So I am careful not to insult you readers. Actually, I think I have pretty good taste in people and you are acquaintances I have retained for 70 years in some cases. Your comments are quite well considered. However, some of you forward my missives to other people. I don't have to be quite so careful with their comments.

One of you forwarded remarks from a highly credentialed friend of his with regard to climate change. Here are the excerpts from the friend's remarks in the left-hand column and my observations on the remarks of this self-styled expert:

<i>...causes and effects, implied rates of change, dates for events and figures are . inaccurate...</i>	Claims I got it wrong. Let's see.
<i>I am speaking as a Research geologist, Historical geologist, Palaeontologist and Palaeoecologist.</i>	Argument from authority. Ethos, per last week's philosophy discussion.  Am I impressed? Need to see how authoritative he sounds.
<i>Someone coming out of my intro-level classes would not make some of these errors if they had been paying attention in class.</i>	Nice way of calling me stupid. I wonder where he teaches?  Errors? As if there were absolute certainty? More humble would be differences of opinion. It's pretty clear that he would not want to hear these opinions expressed in his class.
<i>Climate change is a reality.</i>	
<i>We are living through the fastest extinction event the planet has ever witnessed.</i>	This is a non sequitur. Extinctions are a different theme than global warming. Throughout this discussion he confuses extinctions, increased carbon dioxide, and global warming. They are three separate arguments.  We have never had anything like a complete census of all the species on earth. The number of enumerated extinctions is relatively moderate. Nonetheless diminution of habitat is a very real, observable situation. If you recast the question I'll be in agreement.
<i>We are seeing species extinctions of colossal proportions at every level of the food chain in a couple of hundred years.</i>	Excuse me, please name some species.  Extinction is a part of nature's plan. Especially frequent among plants and animals that have evolved into vulnerable niches, such as islands, isolated volcanic mountains and such.

	<p>Even at that, though we see populations under pressure, we simply cannot count that many extinctions. I would challenge this expert to name a few.</p> <p>Having named them. next comes the question of when they occurred. The best known ones – the dodo, the moa, the passenger pigeon, the ivory billed woodpecker... went extinct before there was any significant rise in atmospheric CO2 or question of global warming.</p> <p>There are very few (Costa Rica golden toad perhaps? 1980s?) in the era in which climate change has been an issue.</p>
<p><i>The Permian extinction event that took out 90% of all known species at the time took 10 million years to occur.</i></p>	<p>This claim calls into question his professional competency.</p> <p>Even in real time extinctions are hard to pinpoint. For instance, somebody has supposedly recently seen the supposedly extinct ivory billed woodpecker.</p> <p>Yes, the Permian extinction did take a long time. Exactly when during that time the extinctions actually occurred would be impossible to peg.</p> <p>And why is this relevant?</p>
<p><i>The K/T boundary extinction event took anywhere between 30,000 and 100,000 yrs to occur before the dinosaurs and tons of other organisms met their ultimate demise.</i></p>	<p>This is the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago.</p> <p>As far as I know the timing is an open question. Some hold that the extinctions took place relatively soon after the collision of a meteor into the Gulf of Mexico, with a global winter brought on by huge dust clouds.. Others think it was triggered by the huge volcanic events in India, the Deccan Traps, which may or may not have been triggered by the meteor.</p> <p>Experts don't agree. And you, sir, don't sound like much of an expert.</p>
<p><i>Ice core data from the deep Antarctic ice cores since the last ice age, and ocean floor sediment data from when the current oceans were formed indicate that the current change in global temperatures is happening faster than anything we have seen in the last 120 million years...minimum.</i></p>	<p>Ice cores do not measure temperature. Idiot. They capture fossil air. You can measure CO2 in the air. But, as the graph in my last post showed, you can't generally infer temperature from CO2.</p> <p>Ocean floor sediments are laid down over millennia. Anything they show could not have been caused by anthropomorphic global warming</p> <p>Temperatures have fluctuated. See the diagram below. These swings, of up to 20 degrees F, had nothing to do with people..</p>

My take would be that you should take most PhDs with a grain of salt. Especially a guy who sounds as certain as this one. I am no more than what I claim to be – an educated layman. But I have a pretty good nose for BS. And this is BS.

Our lawn is another environmentally sensitive topic. Lawns have become as much of a no-no as fur coats. I've rolled lawns around in my brain.

Xeriscaping makes sense for those of you in parched parts of the country such as California. Plant native species that don't require water. I'm good with that. However, our water table is about 4 feet down and shows no sign of retreating. We're not going to run out.

Then there's the question of weed control. We did use some glyphosate (Roundup – gasp) to kill the weeds before we seeded the spot we had previously used simply for parking. You in the Americas eat glyphosate in the GMO grains in your cornflakes every morning. There is growing evidence that it isn't good for you, but if it were all that poisonous we would all be dead by now.

The virtue signaling Europeans have protected us from GMO's. I would not be surprised, however, to find that Ukrainian farmers use glyphosate the same way American farmers do – to kill their wheat, GMO or not, so it will dry out and be easier to harvest.

We also used a broadleaf (dicotyledonous) weedkiller to tackle the dandelions. If there are dandelion huggers among the tree huggers out there, you will be pleased to learn that the dandelions seem to have come through just fine. Dandelions and cockroaches are pretty hardy stock.

We are also dealing with the mole holes. Even after studying them for six years I flat do not understand moles. They tore the lawn to shreds last fall, necessitating widespread reseeding this spring. However, nary a mole has poked his head so far this year. Andrew, our landscape guy has a reasonably humane approach. He proposes some stink bombs that make the moles simply want to go far far away. I am sure we will have a chance to deploy them sometime and see if they work.

Whatever we are doing is not hurting the wildlife. We have seen hedgehogs as long as we have lived here, but always one at a time. They are solitary creatures. However, Oksana saw two together yesterday. More than that, they were chatting with each other. I had always assumed they were mute.

A follow-up on our magpies. They are kind of secretive, but I think that they are brooding eggs in the nest in the top of our jasmine bush. You see them coming and going, furtively using roundabout approaches. Last week I saw two of them gang up to chase a crow away from the jasmine. I expect they are protecting something.

At any rate, the lawn looks better than it did last year. This afternoon, as we reopen for company with a couple of moms and toddlers, the kids will be able to run barefoot as always.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children appreciate the difference.

Graham

[1-Jun-20 --- Summer camp, summer reading, and summer rioting](#) The quarantine ends just as s...

The quarantine ends just as school is out. I hope that Zoom schooling is only a passing memory for these kids as they grow up. They really like being with each other.

I wrote that Eddie's math teacher Natalia was working for us as a babysitter this summer because her other work had not materialized due to the virus. The school has always run a one-week summer camp after the school year. This time, however, they had no place to do it.

Oksana volunteered our house. Here they are, Natalia with eight kids plus Zoriana. In this picture they are playing an obstacle course game. The kids are split into teams. One kid at a time runs out, crawls through a cloth tube, grabs a plastic brick, comes back through another fabric tube and tags the next member.

Zoriana can't play, but she loves being around the older kids. The upshot is that we have the benefit of a babysitter for Zoriana and entertainment for Eddie for the entire week for the cost of letting them use our family room and kitchen and paying a discounted tuition for Eddie to attend the summer camp.

The school is scrambling to find another five families to make itself viable next year. Separately, they are trying to get a kindergarten going. One way or another, whether we are homeschooling Eddie, hosting a kindergarten or something else I expect our house will be full of kids.

This is Eddie's summer to read. Oksana and I are having him read Lars the Polar Bear in Ukrainian. He knows the book – I have the identical thing in German and have read the five Lars stories to him many times. One major challenge remains reading and recognizing words that he knows in Ukrainian. Writing is a related challenge – we ask him to summarize what he reads.

If it were printed, or typed on a computer, I could read the Ukrainian. Ukrainian handwriting is beyond me, but the Ukrainian educational system doesn't consider their product finished unless he can write fluently in cursive. Therefore, Oksana has to be the judge of how well he has done it.

English is my sphere. I used *The Wayside School* as a text when I taught English two years ago. I extracted the vocabulary and produced a dictionary. It is totally appropriate for a third or fourth grader. Eddie knows most of the words in English, but he still has a hard time deciphering them as they are written. There's no substitute for hard work – just doing it. This is going to be Eddie's summer of doing it.

The riots in Minneapolis and nationwide bring me back to 1965, I went on an expedition to Los Angeles with my good friend Edward Kinney, on this distribution and after whom our Eddie is named.

We were on our way to National Guard summer camp at Camp Roberts, down by San Luis Obispo, three quarters of the way from San Francisco to Los Angeles. While we were en route, a black motorist got pulled over for reckless driving and got into an altercation with the LA police.

Riots ensued. The Los Angeles-area National Guard were the first ones on the scene after the police department lost control. To my knowledge, the Guard never fired a shot. There was a total of 34 deaths, most of them among the rioters themselves. We were rerouted to back up the Los Angeles Guard units.

We were camped at an elementary school at the corner of Exposition and Western streets in the Watts neighborhood, the epicenter of the riots. It was an unusual position. We were surrounded by 15-foot cyclone fences, kept apart from the neighborhood. Curious little black girls came over to the fence and looked at us like we were prisoners. They had probably never seen such a concentration of white people before.

The action had ended before we arrived. I recall a very boring week in our bivouac within this elementary school complex. We went out once driving through the neighborhood. I was at the wheel of a 2½ ton truck with a bunch of other soldiers in the back. All of them had weapons. None of the rifles had bullets. Thank goodness the National Guard leadership was smart enough to see to that.

Of course, the rioters had no notion of our capabilities. They left us totally alone. We didn't see anybody on our drive through the neighborhood. I, the driver, had the worst of it because there were very large 1950s era American cars parked at crazy angles all along the street and I had to miss them. Edward assures me that there was an active prostitution business going on across the street, but I was oblivious to it.

The next year, the National Guard offered us rifle practice in our Alameda armory every Monday night. I was a regular. I had gone over in my mind whether or not I would be able to shoot if it came down to us against them. I was firmly on the side of us.

There were once again riots in 1966. We were called out, this time spending about a week in the National Guard Armory on Mission Street below Market in San Francisco. It was a bad neighborhood. Again, absolutely no action and nothing exciting. We didn't even get out to see the neighborhood. Edward and I managed to get our clocks cleaned playing pool with a couple of lesbians in a bar down the street called Mona's, but I'm pretty sure that was on another occasion.

I later found out more about what Los Angeles was like. I joined IBM in 1966 and spent six weeks there for my training. A group of us went out after our studies for a beer. The police came over to ask for my identification – to make sure I was over 21.

I'd always had good relations with the police. I handed a cop my wallet with the driver's license showing through the plastic. He took it to the next room, presumably, where there was better light while another policeman watched me. I got up to follow my wallet. The cop who stayed behind challenged me. Did I want to fight? I said, certainly not, I just want to see what you're doing with my wallet. There's money in it. As my fellow students sat and watched, they hassled me more than they should have, and eventually I got my wallet back. However, after that I found complaints against Chief Parker's notorious Los Angeles police to be credible.

That was back in the days when newspapers were much more significant and much better at reporting news, instead of merely giving you opinion, and the Los Angeles newspapers regularly carried accounts of the rough LA cops. They brooked no nonsense from anybody. The citizenry of Los Angeles liked it. There were fewer police per capita than any major city in the United States. They managed this by developing a reputation for being tough. You didn't want to cross them. I took that lesson to heart.

I'll add another riff on the police of that era. The bully down the block when I grew up, Kim Stoddard, went into the Richmond California Police Department upon graduation. Denny and I ran into Kim again at our 35th high school reunion in 1995. He described his job as "busting black ass." Richmond is a predominantly black town and the police followed the tried-and-true method of being tougher than the people they policed, keeping them in order. Though it seemed to work, it was violently at odds with the reigning civil rights ethos, and it has certainly changed since.

What has happened in the 55 years since our adventure? Black Africa, just gaining its independence in the 1960s and proclaiming democracy in every instance, has deteriorated economically under dictatorships. No success stories have emerged. Countries such as Kenya, South Africa and Rhodesia, peaceful and successful despite significant inequalities, certainly became worse places for



whites. Even many blacks agree that they were better off with the stability and technical talent of white administrations.

In the US, a swath of Black Americans have improved their financial conditions through affirmative action. However, home ownership rates and family net worth are about the same. The “black/white education gap” remains unchanged – black high school graduates test approximately the same as white eighth-graders. Both have gone down. Schools and neighborhoods remain segregated because, whatever the opinion of the elites, people are most comfortable living with their own kind. Rates of criminality among Blacks remain at levels many times those of whites and Asians, and significantly above those of Hispanics.

Most Western European countries have become markedly more diverse than they were in 1965. There is not a single one in which the relationships among East Asians, South Asians, Africans and whites are comfortable. Many big cities have developed “no go” zones that police and firemen enter only reluctantly, if at all.

I lived in Frankfurt in the mid 1970s when it was beginning to dawn on the Germans that the Turkish guestworkers were not going home. The Turks have never been a very menacing minority, but everybody noticed that they were neither leaving nor integrating. Their (numerous) grandchildren often still don't speak much German.

What could Ed and I say to the National Guard in the year 2020? Good luck! You don't understand them, they don't understand you, and your grandchildren will be back in 2075 to confront the same issues. Assuming that the republic is still intact.

Wiser heads than ours, men such as Thomas Jefferson and Alexander de Tocqueville predicted today's conundrum 200 and some years ago. Race relations in the United States represent the kind of problem that is never solved. It will only go away when it is swept aside by even worse problems. There seem to be quite a few such candidates on our horizon at this juncture.

Meanwhile, I will counsel my Ukrainian acquaintances not to even think about taking on racial diversity until they manage to resolve the problems they have with diversity among their fellow Slavs. Russians top the list today, but Ukraine in the past fought the Polish and the Lithuanians. We aren't all virtuous, and to signal a virtue that isn't there doesn't serve anybody well. Even worse is to project our supposed virtue onto people for whom such virtue was never a thought in the first place.

Nah. We'll be doing well if we can make Ukraine work for Ukrainians. If we ever manage that, I hope we're modest enough – or selfish enough - not to try to share our magic with the rest of the world. However, it is not a conundrum I expect to encounter in my lifetime.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and adults can still tell children the truth without fearing a visit from the thought police.

Graham

[5-Jun-20 --- Summer camp, music and the rise of the Jacobins](#) We are ending a week of summ...

We are ending a week of summer camp at our house. Nine kids – give or take. Two overnights – give or take. Younger siblings came and went, sometimes kids went home, and Sasha spent Wednesday night with Eddie because it was inconvenient for her parents to come get her.

The kitchen has been chaos. I continually reached for bowls, knives, plates and such that Natalia had commandeered for the summer camp. About the only constant was dirty dishes in the sink. As always, I had to wash dishes before I could do any cooking.

Rambunctious as they may be, the kids are as well behaved as any group of eight and nine-year-olds. I'll be working at the sink and a kid will step right in front of me, almost pushing me out of the way to wash his hands. That is any eight or nine-year-old, my own included. They just aren't civilized yet. But they do usually murmur something polite such as "excuse me."

There is a lot of learning going on with their crafts. They have made some interesting things out of paper, woven some stuff out of yarn, and made things out of sticks. The older kids graciously accept Zoriana for the most part. Like any young primate, she is more than eager to learn from her somewhat older conspecifics.

The plan Wednesday night was that Sasha would sleep in Zoriana's room. It didn't turn out that way – she emerged from Eddie's room in the morning carrying her sleeping bag. My observation is that if you let nature take its course, kids learn more on their own about the relationship between the sexes than Montgomery county could ever teach. Little Sasha is a lady, not whatsoever forward, and I am sure that between the kids' common sense and the messages they have gotten from their parents nothing untoward went on.

I contrast this with life in these United States. I was looking through my genealogy to see if some ancestral names might be appropriate for the coming daughter. While I was there I noted that cousin Adam, who cut off communication in 2016 because of my politically incorrect opinions about Merkel's opening Germany to a flood of immigrants, had been married to a woman named Lauren Szyper.

I know that a child had been born during their brief marriage. I don't have a whole lot of family so on a whim I thought I'd chase this shoestring relation. I might have known. [Here's who she is](#), a child of our times.

There wasn't any email address given. I left a voicemail with my phone number, pleasant as I could be, in the absolute certainty that I will not hear back from her. People of her worldview almost invariably have no interest in people who see things differently. My mere desire to make a family connection probably marks me as "the other."

My Reed College alumni magazine showed up this week as well. The opening article is entitled "Listening To Your Stories," by incoming Pres. Audrey Bilger. She assures us she wants to hear from everybody, and in closing says "Cheryl and I feel welcomed, accepted, and a strong sense of belonging."

So I [searched on her name as well](#). Well, surprise surprise. She, like Lauren above, is extremely active in LGBTXYZ politics. She made it her career. I can only speculate what this means for the future of open inquiry at Reed College.

I would guess that Audrey would rather listen to almost anybody's story rather than mine. Nonetheless I will send the college a birth announcement and a short squib about my life in Ukraine. It is bound to be antithetical to every value now held dear by my alma mater. Let's see if they publish it.

This week's news is hardly cheery. My prognosis is that whatever happens in the election in November, the revolutionary forces will not be satisfied until the United States and other countries of

what was once called Western Civilization have collapsed and fallen into the hands of others without the taint of a melanin shortage.

My observations on the political scene are not going to change anything. They would merely serve to identify me as part of the reactionary bourgeoisie to the Jacobins when they come to power. Better just to shut up and focus inward, on my family. To that end I am going to devote more effort to making Eddie fluent in reading and writing in all three languages. I plan to systematically study music.

Parents in Ukraine are very interested in having their kids study English from an early age. I have always been skeptical. However, teaching them songs in English appears to be a good technique for killing two birds with one stone.

Five houses down the street are owned by related families. Naming them will aid my recollection and give you a glance into the sociology of Ukraine. Natalia at 35 is the mother of Katya at 37. Next up are Dima, Elena and their daughter Katya, about 16. Across the street are Sergei, son Artyom, new wife Katya and their son Marco, almost 2. Born in the US – a hedging bet. Across from us are Sasha and his wife Elena, mother Sveta, son Timofy, about 11, and twins Dima and Artyom, about 3.

I got to talking with them as I took Zoriana for a walk Tuesday night. They were celebrating the end of the lockdown drinking beer in the driveway. They invited me to join and we had a great conversation. My resolution is to use their interest in English and music to wrap them into our lives.

Our incredibly cold, rainy spring is lasting into summer. This has been good news for farmers – it had been a dry winter – and for our newly seeded lawn. On the other hand, I have not gotten out to swim. It has not broken 70° yet.

I will note that this weather is consistent with the sunspots theory. Just to repeat: no sunspots, more cosmic radiation, more cloud cover, less heat. We will have to see if this theory fits the data any better than the greenhouse gas theory. Given the incredible number of variables that govern weather, it would be quite a surprise if either one explained any significant fraction of the variance in weather and/or climate.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women good looking, and kids are free to just be kids.

Graham

[11-Jun-20 --- What kind of people are there here in Ukraine? Let me tell you about some friends. ...](#)

Summer arrived suddenly. Temperatures jumped from the mid-60s to the high 80s.

The whole family has taken advantage of it. We go swimming every day. The lake remains a little bit cold – I tolerate it even though it aggravates my lower back pain. New babysitter Natalia is wonderful, taking Zoriana down there and watching her.

Yesterday our long-time babysitter Anna came by on a very pleasant mission. She just received the final installment for her third surrogate motherhood, which allowed her to buy an apartment. Last time she had bought a room in a house – I didn't know you could subdivide real estate that far – and it had brought headaches. She sold that room and has a place of her own which is, she assures us, a 22-minute walk from where we live.

I don't know the exact address, but it's close to the school where Eddie takes tae kwon do and the market where I have been shopping. It's a decent neighborhood, and she has stressed that she wanted to be close to us so she could continue to work with us.

She had asked if we could loan her \$3000 to complete the transaction. I said, sure, let's put it in writing but let's do it. And she did the kind of thing that elevates my trust immeasurably. She computed that she only needed half that amount, and that's what she took. Two years to pay it back, no interest. She got her husband to sign a quitclaim – it is not community property.

I had hoped to get Oksana a bit more involved, including her name somehow, but it didn't work. My objective would be to knit these two women together a bit more tightly. Anna has business sense. The kind of friend Oksana needs. I am glad, nonetheless, that Anna is looking forward to being around for a long time to come.

This week I got involved in another deal with a friend. Dima works with high-end ophthalmology products. He's buying a machine from the United States and wanted to transfer money over there. That's good with me, because I have an ongoing need to send money the other way. So I paid his obligation with a US-based bill payer account. Upon writing this, I logged in to see if the money had gone. It has not. I'll give it until the middle of the workday in the United States and then call to follow up.

Another example that you wouldn't see in the United States. You know that we had a one-week summer camp here for kids from Eddie's school. The headmaster wanted to introduce some prospective parents to the school. She could not show them the Sunflower School because it is rented to somebody else over the summer. Besides that – the school is the people, the teachers and the students.

So, calling us Friday morning, the last day of the camp, she said that three prospects were coming. So they did. They brought their kids, who mixed in with the summer camp kids and got along just fine. Three nice families, and a pleasant surprise. The brunette shown in this picture here is somebody that Oksana knows from teaching Orff music according to Orff pedagogy. The woman with jeans and a strawberry colored top is another prospective mom, and Anna, the headmaster, is on the right.

Another measure of our laid-back society is that Anna – the headmistress - gave everybody directions, left her one-year-old fourth child with the other kids, and came down by bicycle. I offer these three examples of the way that people work together here in Ukraine.

Following the theory that coronavirus doesn't thrive in sunshine, we have organized a barbecue next Sunday for a few friends from Toastmasters. I will write to you about it later. I mention it only as a pretext for including these pictures from barbecues of three and four years ago. I love these pictures.

With regard to the events in the United States, I have that heavy, wistful feeling that Soviet émigrés must have felt in 1991 and Rhodesian émigrés a decade earlier. The world I knew is crumbling. I am glad to be long gone, but sad that I may never feel welcome again in my homeland.

My people continually apologize and abase themselves before others who are in no way morally superior but are certainly more self-confident. My people lost faith in themselves long ago. They no longer defend their beliefs, their persons or their property. They instruct their children, if they have any, on how evil their ancestors were. Perhaps my people do belong on the dustbin of history, which is certainly where they are being pushed.

We descendants of the founders are being disenfranchised, chased out. The founders' dreams are in tatters. Our inheritance is being taken over by ungrateful multitudes descended of those whom our ancestors freed, if once enslaved, and otherwise simply, naïvely invited. And (you are sure to demand that I recognize) pushed aside, after their many attempts to educate and assimilate them failed.

Continuing to write on the subject seems increasingly pointless. Could be dangerous as well. As one of the few who still believes in his heritage and has children to whom to pass it on, I must narrow my focus to educating those children, preparing them for life in a hard and uncertain world.

But if a Ukrainian asks me if their country should seek to enjoy the benefits of diversity and multiculturalism....

That's the word from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children have pretty much recovered from the mold and mildew that afflicted them after our unseasonably cold spring.

Graham

I've collected these writings in pdf format at [www.grahamseibert.com/Kyiv\\_blog.pdf](http://www.grahamseibert.com/Kyiv_blog.pdf).

15-Jun-20 --- [Barbecues, bicycles and Daddy Derangement Disorder](#) The barbecue yesterday w...

The barbecue yesterday was wonderful. As early as yesterday morning the weatherman was saying there was an 80% chance of rain all afternoon. People were calling to ask if it was still on.

Living in Washington I got a lot of experience barbecuing in thunderstorms. Let it roar! And so it did, just enough to cool things off. Just after Eddie and I got the two grills going it started coming down quite hard. We lifted them up onto the back porch and kept on cooking.

We finished grilling just as company arrived. By the time we were ready to eat, Vitaliy proposed we move dinner out onto the lawn. So we did. The rain came back after we were through with dinner. The topic of the pictures I had sent last week came up, and we decided to do another one in the rain, like the 2016 one. Here we are. The smiling lady between Vera and Ruslan is Natalia Baliuk, whom some of you old-timers will remember from the Dniepro Hills club.

I have written before that I took Eddie to tae kwon do a few times a week. I don't know if it came through that my heart was not in it, just as my heart had not been in Capoeira a couple of years ago. There are certainly kids for whom this kind of sport is wonderful. If Eddie were one of them, we would have found out long ago. In other words, he would've looked forward to going instead of constantly seeking excuses not to.

Why wouldn't he want to go? He might be kind of like me. I never had the coordination to pull that kind of thing off. I just couldn't execute the moves well. I have a restless mind and I got bored

standing around waiting for something to happen. This kind of sport seems like an awful lot of preparation time readying for relatively little action.

I had developed a bad attitude about my former family's participating in swim club dive contests. We parents spent an inordinate amount of time driving them all over Montgomery County, Maryland so other parents could judge their form as they jumped into the water three or four times. Ribbons were duly awarded – very seldom to our children. No athletic form ever formed.

I looked at the whole thing is a stupid waste of time, gasoline, and energy. You know my attitude about exercise. Just get out and do it! As I have been swimming every day this week. Until yesterday, of course.

Which brings me up to yesterday's tae kwon do. I had thought that Eddie's last lesson was Friday, and was glad to be done with it. It came as news to me that there was going to be some sort of a competition yesterday. Eddie had to go. I said, no way! We're having company over and I have to cook. So, for the very first time, Oksana took him. She took Zoriana along as well. She had previously pleaded that she was not up to taking him, but since I was adamant, and had an ironclad excuse, it worked.

She would've liked Eddie to continue tae kwon do this week, but I said absolutely not. Eddie and I are going to get some real exercise. We bicycled down to Hydropark, the large Soviet era amusement park on some river islands, and went trekking through the maze of dirt roads. There was an incredible number of large land snails about. A source of wonder and fascination for budding naturalists. We came across a horse grazing contentedly in the field. We rode down as far as the beach where Eddie and his friend Lolika were caught in a thunderstorm of biblical dimension when I took them out rowing last summer. We had a wonderful time, got more exercise than he would have lashing out his feet at imaginary enemies, and it didn't take a whole lot more time than it used to take me making two trips back-and-forth to take him to tae kwon do.

I am now committed to taking him bicycling every day. I am also committed to making sure that he reads English. This may be Oksana playing a bit of mental jujitsu on me, putting the work of bringing up Eddie on my shoulders. I accept. I like my kid, and as I often tell Oksana, "If you want it done right, do it yourself," I am not in a position to complain.

On the theme of families, present and former, here follows my contribution to the field of psychiatry. I discuss Daddy Derangement Disorder. I think the concept has a wide application.

I first took note of it when my Millennial children entered their teens a quarter of a century ago. There were a number of symptoms:

- They found that every opinion escaping Dad's lips was unutterably wrong. Such terribly flawed opinions did not rise to the level of discussion; they could be dismissed out of hand.
- Such a flawed being as Dear Old Dad had no claim on their labor to apply to such mundane tasks as cleaning their rooms, doing the dishes, or God forbid, mowing the lawn.
- Their antediluvian Dad had no notion whatsoever of how the learning process worked. His requests that they do homework before television, let him read their written work, or even (gasp) take advantage of his expertise instead of paying tutors were absolutely beyond the pale.
- The fossil who had spawned them knew nothing about sex and relationships. His notions about mutual respect, restraint and chastity were hopelessly old school.

- Dear Old Dad, a bug on physical fitness, a bicycle commuter with an exercise bike and a workout machine in the basement, exasperated the children with his (futile) harping on the idea of walking places instead of being driven.

The children appreciated the fact that their mother was fully up-to-date on the mores of contemporary Bethesda, an amalgam of memes spun together from Saul Alinsky, Dr. Spock, and Dr Dre. Mom would never say no. In fact she encouraged such up-to-date behavior as starting birth control pills at the onset of puberty, nominally to "prevent acne" and belly dancing because it was "totally non-erotic – a wholesome form of exercise." She was convinced that driving children to swimming pools all over Montgomery County so they could jump into the water a few times at dive meets served as wholesome exercise.

The kids might have considered themselves fortunate again in that the legions of therapists in their lives – multiple psychiatrists, school counselors, tutors, speech therapists, college admissions counselors and the like were in accord with their mother, their friends, their friends' parents and every employee of every school they attended.

Dear Old Dad stood out rather like the subject of an anthropological study of a vanishing tribe. I read incessantly and eschewed movies and television. I went to church, believed in marriage – even in monogamy and fidelity, believed that I stood at the end of a long evolutionary chain that had brought my ancestors to a dominant position in the world, one which I thought they had done a respectable job of managing.

Dear Old Dad was also given to investigating scientific explanations. If the cri du jour was that girls were being shortchanged in school (see Finding Ophelia), you could count on Dad to research the numbers of female valedictorians, female admissions to college and female graduation rates. If you insisted that all peoples were equal, you could expect Dad to do something stupid such as ask if there were any proof forthcoming from psychometricians, evolutionary psychiatrists and the like. If you claimed the world would soon be aboil because of global warming, you could count on Dad to bone up on the science to figure out how that might happen. The kids would never do such research on their own. They simply learned to discredit and ignore whatever Dad found.

Dear Old Dad was not frugal with his opinions. On those rare occasions when he joined the family in the TV room, upon hearing something egregiously stupid from Connie Chung or whoever, he would argue back. The family was resolutely uninterested in even considering whether his blasphemies against such a sacrosanct fount of knowledge had any merit.

Suffice it to say that Dad was on a different wavelength. The older children tolerated his opinions but lived according to those of their peers until they went away to college, after which they kept communication to a minimum.

Nobody would examine the proposition that Dad's advice might have been applicable. Although the three children took license to do as they wanted with their sex lives, none of them established stable relationships. Dad's observations on the virtue of treating your partner courteously were scornfully rejected.

They likewise rejected Dad's observation that an objective of a college education was to prepare for a career. Two of the three majored in philosophy. This was the period in which Dad authored four books. They ignored the observation that the ability to express their thoughts on paper would be valuable, and resolutely refused to let Dad ever see anything they had written.

The final rupture was rather abrupt. After youngest daughter Susy harangued Dad for half an hour with a rant of very predictable feminist accusations, as mom sat passively and said nothing, Dad simply decided to cut his losses. His mission was at an end; there was nothing to be done with this family.

The divorce was fast, clean... and costly. Despite the fact Dad had contributed most of the assets, Mom came away with the lion's share. Dad rented a new house, moved his stuff, and never went back. Not wanting to ask people to take sides, he did not contact their few mutual friends.

That's the history. Now to describe Dad Derangement Disorder. Derangement, or cognitive dissonance, is the inability to reconcile a belief system with reality. All of the kids were affected.

Mom and Dad represented one reality. Both had been raised in lower middle class families. Both benefited from parents who provided examples of the work ethic. Mom and Dad had worked hard and were successful.

Their great difference of opinion concerned passing such values on to our children. Dad strongly believed in traditional values – honesty, hard work, chastity and the like – and considered it his responsibility to pass them on to the children. He was vocal on the subject. Mom was inclined to subscribe to the pieties of the day. Be concerned with the little dears' self-esteem. Don't ask too much of them. Respect their opinions, however uninformed and ill-founded.

The children could observe the difference in achievement between themselves and that minority of kids who did work hard. They were presumably not blind to the benefits their friends enjoyed of keeping their bodies fit through exercise, reading, and joining social groups. Whatever they may have seen, they remained resolute in their ironclad, constitutionally guaranteed right not to do any of that stuff.

They could see the difference between their relationships and even that of Mom and Dad, which was, although not warm, at least civil. They could judge the quality of the relationships enjoyed by their friends' parents – those who were divorced, cheated, and argued as opposed to those who showed appreciation for one another.

That was the dissonance. They could readily observe which behaviors worked and which did not. However, the behaviors that lead to success entailed hard work and discipline. More than that, such discipline would contravene the incessant messaging from all quarters to the effect that they had been born with the right to do everything their own way.

The family did not formally renounce me after the divorce. Rather, individual members simply stopped returning my calls, emails and letters. Youngest daughter Susie spent a fairly pleasant two weeks with Oksana and me over Christmas of 2009, during which time she snookered me into buying her some inappropriately expensive presents and since which she has absolutely, totally refused to communicate.

Mary Ann had been against Suzy's trip in the first place. When she screwed up, ignoring a boarding call, Mary Ann placed the blame on me. She likewise has refused all contact since that time.

Jack is the very definition of a snowflake, a product of the self-esteem school of schooling. Talking to him, always like walking on eggshells, became increasingly difficult as the magnitude of his failure manifested itself. I tried to see him nine years ago, the last time I was in the United States. He took offense at every sentence I spoke over the telephone. We did not meet, and have had no communication since.



Naomi, our older daughter, has run hot and cold. She would cut me off for a year or two at a time but then reestablish communications. She was speaking to me as she was going through the travails of ending her first marriage, stopped abruptly when her second husband to be entered the picture, resumed after that second divorce, and then ended again after an hour-long conversation in 2017 during which I mentioned that Oksana was pregnant.

Why do I characterize this as Dad Derangement Disorder? I am sure that at some deep level they recognize that their parents' success in life has been due to their adherence to traditional virtues: honesty, hard work, sociability, open-mindedness and so on. The very fervor with which they renounce the virtues I seek to exemplify convinces me that they fully appreciate the fact that, lacking such virtues, their own lives are shallow and unsatisfying.

It goes way beyond the children. As noted, their mother refuses all communication. So likewise do female friends of the former family.

Throughout the marriage these people had frequently told me what a wonderful husband I was. Good provider, good manager, deal well with the kids, invited my father-in-law to live with us the four last years of his life, loaned money to all of the in-laws. And suddenly, poof! Nothing! I suppose I am lucky that they don't incriminate me for imaginary crimes against my former family. They simply shun me.

I find cognitive dissonance to be a plausible explanation. They know that Mary Ann is not a warm woman, and they can see that our children are not successful. I impute that by their catechism a husband should be stoic and accept such things as fate.

There is also the matter of their own lives. Their children were brought up according to the same schools of thought and have turned out only little more successful than Mary Ann and mine. Their marriages had collapsed before ours, and their subsequent unions have not been all that happy. My moving on and forming a successful new family must be an unpleasant mirror upon which to fix their eyes.

There are political dimensions, spoken and unspoken. They are liberal, I am conservative. I would like to see the police enforce order and immigration laws respected. I hold the traditional family in traditional respect. They espouse an "anything goes" ethic, refusing to pass judgment on people who transgress against the norms of society. They accept situational ethics and moral relativity.

The chasm was already broad when I left in 2006. It widened appreciably through the Obama years. The differences came into sharp focus when the "deplorables" found their voice during Trump's campaign and the Russiagate brouhaha, Ukrainegate, coronavirus, Black Lives Matter and other media manufactured crises.

I can afford to be amused by the hypocrisy of my former family and those whom I generously considered to be friends. I am in a far better situation than any of them. Here I have good friends, a good wife and appreciative children. As George Herbert wrote 400 years ago, "The best revenge is living well."

I have no recourse but to chuckle at Daddy Derangement Disorder, whether directed at me writ small or manifesting itself at a societal level. I have to let them drop off. If they did want to resume communication, I have no idea what we would find to talk about.

26-Jun-20 --- What to do with kids on summer vacation; after the fall (make that, Fall), what next?...

All of a sudden Eddie and my bicycles look old and shabby. Since the arrival of the coronavirus everybody has run out to buy new ones.

Eddie's is a cheap six speed 20-inch model that we bought a bit over a year ago. The seat is already coming apart. The deal we have is that he will ride it for a few more months, at least until he figures out how to mount a bicycle by putting his left foot on the pedal, kicking off and swinging his leg over the seat.

We went to a bicycle store last week and specked out a 26-inch bike. Still little bit big for him, but the guys in the store convince us it's the right one. This time will be a bit better quality – aluminum frame, 21 speed. It will also have a luggage rack so he can carry his books back and forth to school.

Meanwhile, these are our rides.

We rode this morning to the Dnieper. Here's Eddie opposite some of the city's major landmarks. Face in the shadow; the squint when he took his hat off was not very photogenic.

Here is a much better picture of the kid in a more natural setting – with a Coke in his hand. The inset is a snail we found munching on the tree as we leaned against it.

This has been a great summer for being with my kid. The English instruction at school was hit and miss. They had a succession of first-time teachers. Not only that, Eddie already speaks the language. He continues to have difficulty reading it.

My summer project is to get him to read Louis Sacher's *The Wayside School* all the way through. I printed out the first three chapters, expecting to get through them fairly quickly. Wrong. He is still stumbling over simple words that he should have already recognized for a couple of years now. He tackles words such as "teacher" and "laugh" phonetically. You can't do that – everyday vocabulary you should just recognize.

I reflected on how well he reads Ukrainian. He is not an exceptional reader, but much better with that language than English. I take comfort in the fact that this is probably not a deep-seated problem, simply a matter of doing it.

The approach we have taken for two weeks now is that I give him one chapter at a time in a dual language format, big English letters on the left and small Ukrainian on the right. It works out to a little over two pages per chapter. Then we read through it a couple of paragraphs at a time and underline the words that he doesn't know. That is the key step. We underline the words that he doesn't know and he writes each of them 10 times. It gives him practice writing and spelling, which he needs, and also fixes the appearance of the word in his mind.

In any case, that's my theory. We are making progress. I think the fact that I'm working alongside him is quite important. My spending the time reinforces the importance of the process in his mind.

I am also thrilled to see that Eddie continues to read whatever he finds around the house. He has been poking away at a Russian edition of *Robinson Crusoe*. The babysitter was reading him a

humorous book about bullfighting, presumably something she likes to read to kids Eddie's age. Without the distraction of electronic entertainment, he just seems to gravitate to reading. Evenings we are reading Mark Twain's *Roughing It*.

Anyhow, back to English, I think that the fact that he is doing it consistently and with a good attitude is more important than whatever speed we may be making getting the job done. He will always be kind of an odd duck, speaking English much better than his schoolmates, using a larger vocabulary, but not much further ahead in terms of reading and writing.

I am extremely lucky to have the support of my wife and the school. There is no one right way to teach a language. I have studied enough of them, under enough teachers and enough systems, to appreciate the diversity. I have been through enough "magic bullet" solutions such as Rosetta Stone, online courses and the like to say with confidence that there is no substitute for hard work.

I could not get Eddie to work hard unless I had my wife's support. Every kid will look for an easy way out. If mom or the school gives him one, placing their faith in some sort of magic bullet or pedagogically endorsed solution, dad will be reduced to a voice in the wilderness. But if they support dad, it may turn out well. There is no ideal way to teach, and dad's way may work. We will see how it works this summer.

The world is awash in anger. I lost another reader last week on account of my sentence to the effect that elements of the current brouhaha may be manufactured. The left is angry and looking for people to save them from Trump. The right is angry and looking to Trump as a savior. Both wrong, in my opinion. I think Trump is merely a symptom.

The people whom I think understand what's going on are a diverse crowd. There are too many to name. Today I add Robert Kiyosaki. I had not known. Others include Matt Taibbi and Glenn Greenwald on the left, Mish Shedrock, Scott Adams and Charles Hugh Smith more or less in the center, and the eclectic assortment from all over the map at the Unz Review. I mention Fred Reed and Linh Dinh. If I mentioned three per blog I would probably never run out of names.

Most of these pundits concern themselves only with the present generation. Most of you readers are members of the silent and Baby Boomer generations. Looking back in history, folks in our position survived the collapse of the Soviet Union, the collapse of the Russian Empire, the collapse of the Roman Empire, the French Revolution and such not in one form or another. The future of our civilization will be in the hands of our children. We need to raise them to be self-sufficient. I don't hear that message frequently at all.

When the Greek civilization collapsed, the Roman was mature enough to carry on its intellectual and literary traditions. That continued until the fall of Rome.

After the Western Roman empire fell the Eastern Empire, in Constantinople, survived for another millennium. The culture of knowledge was preserved. Moreover, the Muslim scholars of the Middle Ages adapted and expanded on Western knowledge, and the Roman Catholic Church kept things alive in the west. Thus the Renaissance, a thousand years after the fall of Rome, had a foundation upon which to build.

How will our civilization be preserved? There is no doubt that the scholarly work of this age will be available in digital format. It was produced in such profusion that the question will be one of separating the wheat from the chaff. Which thinkers in our age had something ageless to say, and which were only captive to the intellectual climate of our times? Much of the most interesting science

of our time – genetics, evolutionary psychology, climate dynamics – has been heavily influenced by government. Much of it requires large amounts of funding, and that funding comes with an agenda.

I expect that the anti-intellectual spirit of this age will persist even as my children grow up. If I'm lucky, I can give them some grounding in the classics, and more than that in logic and common sense. The scientific method. Epistemology – how they can know what they think they know. The challenge will be finding a community of untainted scholarship.

I'll add a short note on medicine here in Ukraine. I am getting better acquainted with the doctors – that a guy my age should do so is hardly news. I have been having pain in my lumbar vertebrae for years now. It got to the point that I finally went to see a doctor. My experience is instructive about medicine here in Ukraine, and probably worldwide.

The doctor had me get an MRI of my lower spine. I was impressed at how much they could see. I was also rather pleased that it cost only \$60.

The diagnosis is wholly unsurprising. Some of the discs are a little bit deformed and intruding on the nerves. State-of-the-art remedies involve cutting your spine in order to give the nerves more room. It's pretty radical stuff, a little bit dangerous, and not guaranteed. In short, mine is the kind of problem you generally want to live with rather than fix.

Living with it involves medications to relieve the pain, primarily, and ease a bit of swelling. The doctor prescribed a list of five (5!) medicines.

- Movalis
- Muscomed
- Nucleo CMF
- Dexalgin
- Deep Relief

Doctors here in Ukraine, like everywhere, have a tendency to overprescribe. Moreover, like doctors worldwide, they don't tell you what each one is for or much about the counterindications. I researched them on the Internet. The results may interest you.

First, according to drugs.com most of these are not available in the United States. They are manufactured in countries from Mexico to Moldova. You have to ask if your FDA is protecting you or the pharmaceutical companies if they are not available in the USA.

Second, reading the pharmaceutical companies' descriptions they all seem to do the same thing – relieve pain. That's the state-of-the-art for treatment. Even the one that is supposed to restore the myelin sheath and help the nerves regenerate puts pain relief as its first objective. From this I inferred that there's not much hope of really fixing the problem. Just live with it. I decided to skip the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> on the list, since they all do the same thing.

Third, the prices of all of them are pretty modest. \$27 for a week's supply of the three I will be taking.

If you have time to waste, you may want to do an Internet search on these medicines just to demonstrate how you in the United States have narrower choices than those in the rest the world. Almost all drugs here are available without a prescription. In the cases in which the active ingredients are also available in US brand medications, I'm quite sure that prices here are significantly lower.

Drugstores simply don't carry narcotics like OxyContin or amphetamines. On balance I think that's a good thing, though I will concede that these drugs have their uses. If I were to investigate, I'm sure I could find them without much trouble. Just as guns are illegal, but those who want them have them.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children still have a bit of respect for their parents.

Graham

1-Jul-20 --- [The \(beautiful\) calm before the storm. How does evolution account for this?](#) This is ... This is an achingly beautiful day. Perfect weather. Eddie and I went bicycling this morning; the kids are at the beach now with returning babysitter Anna.

It would be the perfect summertime idyll if it were not for the Internet. Wave after wave of news makes it feel like the opening scenes in the Sound of Music, in which the von Trapp family is singing at an outdoor chalet in the Austrian Alps, enjoying family life and *gemütlichkeit*. As some darker clouds blow overhead, the music gets a bit more ominous, and handsome Aryan soldiers in German uniforms enter the scene to announce the Anschluss of Austria by Germany.

The international Black Lives Matter affair seems to carry the same dark potent. Their agenda is far broader than what is claimed. It is a Jacobin effort to overthrow the system of government evolved by my English ancestors over centuries and put into place in the Americas 240 years ago. I fear that the insurrection will be successful, and that before it is all over the instigators will discover the same harsh truths as the French Jacobins of the 1790s. The mob is already turning on members of the liberal establishment who fail to keep up with the latest dogma.

As you know, I am a student of evolution. I have started to write my thoughts on the matter. As I do so, I reflect on the consequences. Is anybody really interested in the truth? If the mob turns on me, can they hurt me? With that in mind, I have stopped writing. I offer the introductory paragraphs for your review. You can appreciate how expanding on my thesis would enrage the mob. How would that benefit me? I quiesce.

*This is not going to be a popular article. The world is seething with anger. Everybody is looking to blame somebody else, persons or peoples, for the impending disaster.*

*I see no need to blame anybody. What we observe can be explained by evolution and human nature. Readers will not like this because:*

*(1) Evolution is the process of differentiation. Modern dogma demands that we resolutely refuse to notice the differences among peoples.*

*(2) Evolution is a matter of competition among groups. Though there are clades at other levels, the most obvious human groupings are by race. We evolved to be tribal, and we are.*

*(3) There are no solutions to be found within the political realm. The body politic is made up of human beings, and as Walt Kelly had Pogo say two generations ago, "We have met the enemy, and he is us." We cannot escape who we are.*

*(4) Evolution is about perpetuation of and gradual adaptation of a genome to a changing environment. It does not give a damn about individuals. Western society is intensely individualistic. Many of the people most concerned about the problems that beset us do not have children or grandchildren and have precious few kin in the rising generation. They will not take kindly to my suggestion that they simply shut up because they have little stake in the future.*

After this introduction, the piece goes into the observable differences among groups of people. Such observations have been made since before Herodotus' time. Utter them now and you get canceled. I don't need that. My family needs me.

My conclusion is that what we are observing is all part of the human comedy, or human tragedy if you prefer. The situation is compounded by an observation I think I still can make without being shot (Mike Judge did), that [mankind is getting stupider](#).

On the subject of peoples, Zoriana's crocs (rubber shoes) disappeared while we were at the beach Sunday. As there were two families of Gypsies there, Oksana immediately concluded what had happened and didn't even seriously look for them. I did, but came up with nothing. I lost a pair myself a couple of years ago, and we have had minor annoyances such as having newly planted roses stolen from in front of our fence. Some egghead researcher (conveniently smothered by Google) did a paper recently on the validity of stereotypes. I didn't want to argue with her. Next time we need to keep a better eye on things.

Closer to home, Coronavirus has put us in the delightful position of having two excellent babysitters who both want full-time work. Eddie's math teacher Natalia has been working four days a week. Anna is back. The compromise is that we will give them each three.

It looks like it may morph into something else. We will be looking for a kindergarten for Zoriana next fall. Why not continue to use these two women and do it at our house? It will take no more than two or three other kids to make it a viable proposition.

Coronavirus statistics continue to mount here in Ukraine, although we still don't know anybody here who has personally caught it and secondhand accounts remain relatively infrequent. The Kyiv Post, in lockstep with the NYT and WaPo, continues to beat the drums of fear. Nevertheless, the odds against business as usual schooling next fall seem to be rising. I expect I will continue teaching Eddie to one degree or another. Others may want to join us.

Several of you wrote about my squib on medicine. Dick Arneson wrote to ask about Lioton, an over the counter pain relief gel he gets from overseas. It turns out to be quite a bit cheaper here.

Another wrote to defend the FDA for having more rigorous standards for approving medicines. What we have seen recently with coronavirus, especially the hydroxychloroquine vs Remdesivir controversy, is that the system that protected us 50 years ago from thalidomide appears to be compromised. There is nothing magic about double-blind tests or statistical analysis with a large number of subjects. The Europeans can do that as well as Americans. It is a question of who has the will to do it right, and the power to resist the corrupting influence of money. In that I don't think we can trust anybody anymore.

On the plus side, there is a wealth of information about established medicines available on the Internet. While they may be able to capitalize on fear, uncertainty and doubt when it comes to treating something new like COVID19, and thus wring out unwarranted profits, I don't think they have much scope for doing so with something so mundane as my back pain.

I have started giving some thought to the birth announcement to be sent out in September. Yes, even birth announcements are political these days. Very few will come out and say as much, but the idea of bringing European babies into the world is not greeted with universal joy.

The announcement will be simple for you readers who are familiar with what I'm up to. Name, date, weight, and a few details on the delivery, which will almost certainly be via the same midwife as last time.

I'm going to send announcements as well to the large community of woke folk who have refused to answer my mail for the past couple of decades. It will be not so much out of a warm human desire to ask them to share our joy as to rub their noses in the fact that my unreconstructed, traditional life is more satisfying than their bleak, woke, virtue drenched existences, from the heights of which they refuse to condescend to acknowledge my own continued existence.

And of course I will send a note to the [Reed College](#) magazine. What were my parents thinking when they sent me there? My current plan is to send a bland announcement with just the essentials. The mere fact that a member of the class of 1964 has the temerity to continue to pollute the world with the wrong kind of babies should be enough. However, I may rub it in by submitting a class note for the succeeding issue, something like the following:

*Graham deserted the ramparts defending the Old World Order for exile in Kyiv, where he shares a white picket fenced, rose covered cottage with a wife who is content to be just that. He reads Hop on Pop nightly and occasionally appears as Ozzie Nelson or Ricky Ricardo in Bethesda children's nightmares. His resolution to remain himself has seen his correspondence obligations diminish vastly.*

Is that too juvenile? Too sophomoric? You still have time to bring me to my senses.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children are just folk, not whatsoever woke.

6-Jul-20 --- Things going right — a Fourth of July barbecue — prudent paranoia As I walked bac...

As I walked back from the beach Friday afternoon a somewhat younger neighbor stopped me with a concerned look on his face. He said my son Eddie had been at his house that morning and had hit his granddaughter Anna. I needed to have a stern talk with Eddie about how you treat girls. I assured him I would do exactly that.

Our babysitter Anna had been in his house with the kids but wasn't aware of what went on. Her daughter Sophia saw it happen. Babysitter Anna and I absolutely agreed that we needed to inform Eddie in no uncertain terms that such behavior is not to be tolerated. Babysitter Anna said she would ask Sophia exactly what happened between Eddie and little Anna.

This is how things should be. A conversation between male heads of household on the department of their children. Quite specifically, a father should tell his son what it means to be a man.

This means instructing Eddie on the double standard. At the age of eight or nine little girls are just as strong as little boys. Little girls are already aware of their somewhat privileged position in society. They can hit the boys but the boys aren't supposed to hit back. On top of that they are pretty adept at giving verbal offense to the boys. This little Anna is no angel. I have seen all of this behavior in her.

All of that notwithstanding, we adults have an obligation to prepare the children for their future obligations to society. Little boys do grow up to be men, and men are stronger than women. Eddie needs to learn now to control himself. More than that, he needs to learn to protect women.

Women need protection because nature has put them in a vulnerable position as the weaker sex and also the mothers of our children. A man's evolutionary, biological role is to father those children and ensure that they grow to adulthood in an uncertain world. The chivalry everybody involved here – Oksana, babysitter Anna, grandpa and me – agree that Eddie should show to little Anna is in preparation for his role in life.

I had the talk with Eddie. He was appropriately contrite and said he won't do it again. I repeated the Russian proverb that babysitter Anna quoted to me. Just avoid boors. If a girl is too unpleasant to be around, don't get even – just go away. Otherwise just put up with it – it is the way of the world. The world is unfair. But unfair works both ways – there is always a shortage of properly civilized men on the marriage market. He will be appreciated. As a bottom line, there is never an excuse for hitting a girl.

Fourth of July was a beautiful day for barbecue. We had six families, three headed by American guys. Two grills going, with barbecued ribs, sausages and vegetables. Seven kids altogether, toddler to 13, running and playing on the grass .

We guys' conversation was unusually serious. Though we have different backgrounds – schoolteacher, journalist for the mainstream media, and computer guy – we are all concerned that things are spinning out of control in the United States. Anarchy should not be tolerated to the degree that it is. Moreover, the overt hatred being shown to white people may finally be enough to stir us from the comfortable delusion that we can wait this thing out. Our people may be roused to do something. Without the three of us of course – we are all grateful to be gone.

As a corollary, several of you correspondents whom I consider to be very middle-of-the-road have written me about the need to own some sort of firearms. That was my decision two decades ago. The National Guard had made me witness to the chaos of race riots in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Buying a shotgun was one of the many events leading up to my divorce. My observation was simple – a shotgun is cheap, my military background has made me comfortable with guns, and in any time of real need they would be impossible to get. I kept the gun in one place and the ammunition someplace else. Nonetheless, when my wife found it there was hell to pay.

Very few people own guns here. The permitting process is rather arduous. I don't want one. I do not fear my fellow citizens, and in the case of serious warfare with a power like Russia I and my family would undoubtedly be in more danger trying to fight them off with a popgun than simply submitting. On top of that, little kids are naturally curious and would be inclined to mess with them. Lastly, as everywhere, there is a black market that would probably serve us if we really, really wanted one.

I gave a speech at Toastmasters entitled "All Lives Matter." It is frightening how such a benign statement could be considered hate speech. However, everything is now considered hate speech. My advice to my Ukrainian audience was the same as Washington's – avoid foreign entanglements, especially with Washington. They should not whatsoever trust the media if they are being enjoined to storm the American Embassy with BLM placards, join in noisy parades on behalf of gays and transsexuals supposedly being persecuted here and there, or climate change.



The subject of climate change is especially germane because so many leading lights have changed their minds within the last while.

- First was Stewart Brand, originator of the Whole Earth Catalog, with his decade old "Whole Earth Discipline."
- A couple of years ago it was Patrick Moore, one of the founders of Greenpeace, arguing that a lot of what environmentalists were doing was counterproductive.
- Earlier this year it was firebrand documentary filmmaker Michael Moore, whose "Fahrenheit 9/11" got everybody concerned decade and a half ago. In his recent "Planet of the Humans" Moore is arguing that supposedly green technologies are not very efficient and actually do more damage to the environment than the fossil fuels they replace. They are a gigantic scam.
- Just last week "Apocalypse Never," a book by a longtime environmental crusader Michael Shellenberger came to my attention. Shellenberger lambastes both the impracticality of the supposedly green methods – solar panels, wind energy and biomass – and their outright damage to the environment. Shellenberger is well known in environmental circles. He wrote a long article for Forbes magazine, timed to accompany the release of the book, and they refused the article! Shellenberger also exposes many gigantic scams, including extremely well-known names.

The media really don't want you to hear second thoughts on climate change. But there are more and more of them out there. I will be writing a long review of Apocalypse Never. The battle lines seem more firmly drawn than ever – there is a good chance that Amazon will not ever show you the review. But I will.

I have not, incidentally, made the video of my Toastmasters speech public. The vituperation in the United States has made me paranoid. I'm sure that's part of their objective. Anyhow, I have nothing to gain by making it a public video. Ask and I'll send you a link.

I'm pleased that some brave souls will still speak the truth. Here is a squib from Mark Jeftovic in which he references a conversation with my longtime correspondent [Charles Hugh Smith](#).

### [AxisOfEasy Salon 10: When Maximum Pessimism meets Irrational Exuberance](#)

Last week on the AxisOfEasy Salon #10, Charles Hugh Smith, Jesse Hirsh and I discussed the bizarre quantum superposition we seem to exist in these days, a Schrodinger's Cat-like existence where we exist simultaneously in a state of Maximum Pessimism and Irrational Exuberance. We eagerly await some external observer to collapse the wave function into one reality or the other, but until then, humanity seems to be experiencing both!

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women good-looking, and the children are taught to grow up to be real men and women.

Graham

10-Jul-20 --- Home economics. Be prepared — for Covid 19. The magnification of small things in ... We buy plastic bags of milk about 5 L at a time and put it in the freezer. Surprisingly often the milk is sour when we open the bag. No problem – in fact, a cause for celebration. The kids love sour milk pancakes. 1/3 cup flour, 1/4 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoons soda, one egg and sour milk until it's the right consistency. That's what we had this morning.

Lots of good things grow in our garden. We are out of strawberry season, into cucumbers, peas, and currents. This morning there was a pint of currents sitting on the table that the kids had picked yesterday. We threw them into a pot with some sugar and had homemade jam on our pancakes.

Interesting how the culture shapes the language. Here there are two words for cherries – sweet and tart. Two words for currents, red and black. And two words for strawberries, wild and cultivated. You can buy them all in the markets. On the other hand, they make do with one word where in English would be almost impossible without two. Start with the body. They have a single word each for hand and arm, leg and foot, and toes and fingers.

For the discerning, we had blackcurrant - smorodina - jam on our pancakes this morning. Here are the happy children afterwards.

We Americans mostly grew up trusting doctors. We accepted the fact that the professionals knew best and didn't question the fact that we needed prescriptions for any serious medications. I had never given the matter much thought until we got to Vietnam. There they had a serious kind of diarrhea that kind of mocked Imodium. John Siniscal's French/Vietnamese fiancée Jeannine introduced him to something you could buy over-the-counter – Vietnamese were not circumscribed by AMA dictated laws – that really worked. Pretty soon we were all taking it. It was an eye-opener.

Fast forward 50 years to Covid 19. There is a lot of discussion about hydroxychloroquine – whether it works or not. Okay – it may not work. What's the downside?

Here's the regimen, from the guy that Trump said knows what's going on:

1. Hydroxychloroquine 200mg twice a day for 5 days
2. Azithromycin 500mg once a day for 5 days
3. Zinc sulfate 220mg once a day for 5 days

Chloroquine is a prophylactic against malaria. We all took it when we were in Vietnam. Azithromycin is a common, well-established antibiotic. Zinc sulfate is over-the-counter, used to strengthen the immune system. Bottom line to me, nothing dangerous here. Not much risk. The guy that initiated it, Dr. Vladimir (Zev) Zelenko claims zero hospitalizations, complications or deaths among 669 cases. Establishment mouthpiece Snopes has nothing negative to say – they simply call it unconfirmed. Several other studies throughout the world call it promising.

On the premise that something is better than nothing, and all the drugs have been around for a while, I went shopping. The second two on the list are readily available here over-the-counter. Hydroxychloroquine, the key ingredient, is listed as backordered by just about every pharmacy in town. However (the advantage of a less developed country) you can get it for a price. Six times the listed price to be exact.

Given that six times the listed price was less than a doctor's visit in the United States, I bought some just to have on hand.

The Centers for Disease Control gives a list of symptoms that may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure:

- Fever or chills

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Dr Zelenko claims his regimen works if you get started within seven days of noticing the symptoms. Ukraine is Johnny-on-the-spot in responding to Covid19. You call the medical emergency people and they will have a team out to test you immediately. Just like in most jurisdictions, if you test positive they want you to self-isolate at home.

So here's our plan. If anybody gets sick, get tested. After testing positive, start the regime immediately. By all means avoid hospitals. A lot of people there have diseases you don't want to catch. Likewise, avoid doctors to the extent possible. With regard to this disease no doctor here will know more than you or I. We are all reading the same stuff.

As people get older their horizons and their budgets alike shrink. Things that used to be trivial grow in relative importance. Yesterday's delightful experience was with my bicycle.

Yesterday morning I had a flat tire. Again. I fixed it and went out to buy hydroxychloroquine. By the time I got there it was flat. Yet again! I looked the tire over but couldn't find anything. Eddie volunteered to help. He has sharper eyes than I do and found a 1/2 inch piece of thin steel wire poking through the inner tube. Exactly the kind a wire that they use in steel belted radials. I think they are also present in bicycle tires.

The tires were as old as the bicycle – 10 years. Replacing them seem like a reasonable gamble to reduce the inconvenience of flat tires. Eddie and I went to the bicycle shop to buy new ones, front and back.

It's always a treat to watch bicycle mechanics at work. With a car mechanic all you see is his bottom clad in dirty overalls bending over a car. With a bicycle you can watch everything. Eddie drank it all in. The guy mounted the two new tires and introduced us to a new innovation called "Slime." You put the slime in the inner tube and it will automatically seal small punctures. Seems to me like a deal. We bought the slime, a better pump – Schrader only – so I can handle roadside repairs, and a couple of new inner tube just in case.

In selecting tires, they confirmed that I use the bike as basic transportation in the city. Instead of knobby tires they gave me kind of smooth ones, a bit narrower. The rolling resistance has gone down remarkably. If I had known, I would have done this long ago.

So, for \$100 in parts, labor and accessories I have almost a new bicycle. On top of that, it occupied Eddie for a couple of hours and he learned something.

In other small economies, Zoriana broke the dustpan in our broom and dust pan set in the kitchen. It had a 3 foot long chromed steel handle. That struck Oksana as just the thing we needed to put above the garbage container under the sink to hold miscellaneous bottles of drain cleaner, cleanser and the like. Under Eddie's watchful eye I got out my tape measure, hacksaw, circle saw, crosscut saw and

so on and fashioned a couple of braces to hold it up and then fashioned the thing that Oksana wanted. It works perfectly. There is a special pleasure in doing it yourself.

Sometimes you do need outside help. The electricity in this house has been a problem for the seven years we have lived here. The spring we installed a voltage regulator that cuts out when the juice on one of the three phases falls below 200 V or exceeds 250. It probably does that once a week.

The fecal pump in our septic system goes out often enough that we keep a repaired one up in the attic just in case. A month ago it went out again. Our house became the talk of the repair shop. The pump was so thoroughly shot that they absolutely could not fix it. The wire was burned through, the electricians were fried, and the motor busted. Although it was still under warranty, the guys pointed out, rightly I believe, that this was an act of God, nothing to do with their repair work. They will bring us back a new one. I have convinced Oksana that we should be willing to give them a couple of hundred bucks as a gesture of goodwill to keep them coming. Having a reliable repair guy is worth far more than that.

We were luckier when the immersion pump in our freshwater system went out. It went out on a Sunday night, and the guy was here by noon on Monday. I had hauled the replacement pump down from the attic but he didn't need it. The problem turned out to be a capacitor that was blown. We had an extra capacitor on hand, so we got by with \$20 labor. That was it.

Those are the issues living in our rural setting. Things go out. The outages are never as long as they were in Bethesda. There, when the wind blew over tall oaks and tulip trees the power could be out for a couple of days. Though our outages are much more frequent, I can't recall one lasting more than 12 hours.

Even living in apartments here in Kyiv we would be without power for a few hours at a time. More inconvenient, every spring they would cut off the hot water for a week at a time to recondition the system. That was a planned outage and you could do nothing about it. I think it is still like that.

The problem of the hour is our electric stove top. We bought a very cheap one, anticipating that we would convert to gas when we install gas heat. The gas company took two years (!) to hook us up, by which time we were quite comfortable with our electric boiler. Nonetheless, now that we do have gas I think it is prudent to install a gas stove top. That way we will be able to cook when the electricity goes out, and be able to keep the house from totally freezing if it is out for a long time.

Those are the thoughts of the week from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women good-looking, and the children appropriately curious about everything that the adults are up to.

Graham

[11-Jul-20 --- A quick follow-up to my most recent email.](#) The Internet has been abuzz for months...

The Internet has been abuzz for months about the corruption pervading the entire Covid 19 episode. There is evidence of corrupt incentives for reporting both the incidence of infections and the cause of death. There is evidence of corruption in identifying appropriate preventative measures: contact tracing, masks, social distancing, isolation, travel bans remaining indoors versus outdoors and so on. Political agendas in lockdowns, and the lifting of same.

One major contention has been that the inexpensive, off-the-shelf treatment of hydroxychloroquine - the one I have prepared for our family - has been denigrated in order to promote the use of a much more expensive medication, rimdesivir (\$3,200 a course), the patents of which are owned by Gilead medical sciences. A great many big players – Anthony Fauci and Donald Rumsfeld to name two – have a financial interest in Gilead.

Rimdesivir has been a solution in search of a problem for the couple of decades since its inception. Gilead jumped on the opportunity to try it for the treatment of Covid 19. Although it appears to be moderately effective, hydroxychloroquine appears to impartial observers to be somewhat more effective. Moreover, it is cheap – not patent protected.

Here is [a story](#) with much more detail.

<https://www.zerohedge.com/political/lancetgate-scientific-corona-lies-big-pharma-corruption-hydroxychloroquine-versus>

In other news, I had a very pleasant hour-long conversation with my old friend Rich Fisher. Rich is a conflict resolution counselor in Seattle Washington who has been pulled in to the Black Lives Matter, CHOP and other issues there. He is both temperamentally and professionally obliged to see both sides of the story, to seek resolution rather than attribute blame. It is satisfying to me that a person of his stature and experience is allowed to participate in the process. There may be a reasonable resolution yet.

Some of you note that I always seem to be upbeat about Ukrainian people. For a change of pace, let me note the couple of things that annoy me.

There is a lack of foresight here. Every time I plan to cook something I try to ensure that I have the ingredients I need in the kitchen. Since I am the primary cook, and for the most part the only one to plan ahead and use recipes and stuff like that, I would expect people to ask. Nope, they don't. If they need lemons, eggs or tomatoes they simply take what's there. Oksana knew that I was planning to make tabbouleh today. Nevertheless, the lemons went into lemonade before I could use them. I keep asking in vain to have a little respect for the chef. I don't think what I see is disrespect – I think that's just the way things are here in Ukraine.

Another complaint is about putting things back. There is a knife rack in the kitchen. The knives I need are almost invariably someplace else. There is a pair of kitchen scissors and a place to hang them up. They can usually be found in the garden, the bedroom, the bathroom or anyplace except the kitchen. Grrrr. Everybody in the household makes use of my tools. Right now I can't find my soldering iron. Everybody swears they had nothing to do with it. Grrrr.

Such practices certainly must bleed over into other sectors of the economy. Back in 1983 I did an assessment of the data processing requirements for the Panamanian

national telephone company. They had a similar problem. Since nobody trusted their inventory system at all, their practice was to allocate all of the materials that they needed for each project and put them in separate places in the corporate yard. However, since they were inevitable shortages, they had a practice of informally borrowing from projected plans. The result was chaos. Every time they initiated a project that found that they didn't have the materials needed to complete it. This is simply the way things are and backward societies.

My conclusion is that Ukraine needs a good injection of Germans. My bet is that if they came, such Germans would leave in droves, in short order. This place seems to be antithetical to order.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children will probably turn out to be just like them, for better or worse.

13-Jul-20 --- [That's my son! Notes on Covid19, profits in the fog of uncertainty, and taking care o...](#)  
Yesterday was a big day for Eddie. He, Zoriana and I took the bus to Victory Park in the morning. While Zoriana played on the children's playground with the other toddlers and I chatted a bit with the young mothers, Eddie spent an hour on three separate zipline traces in the treetops. Like this one – I didn't have a camera.

In the afternoon Eddie and I went swimming in our beautiful lake. Together we made about half a mile, Eddie at least keeping up with my pace. I don't know how fast he is relative to other kids, but I never see other kids swimming quite that distance. He will be outdistancing me on a bicycle, too, by next summer. Especially with a new bike.

His last success was the fan. Since my days in Vietnam I sleep by a fan to keep the mosquitoes off during summer. This fan is unduly complicated – it has a shut off timer, which serves no purpose I could conceive, and three speeds. Such buttons are a magnet for little fingers. Zoriana cannot resist pushing them. Chinese design these things for adult use, not as playthings, and when Zoriana fiddles with them too much they break. Last winter was my space heater, this week it was the fan.

Eddie and I took it apart and examined the wiring figure out how it works. He cut the leads free from the timer, twisted them together, soldered them and covered them with insulation and then put the thing back together. It worked!

I'm spending a lot of time on the hydroxychloroquine question. It fits with my long-held views of the medical establishment. Doctors don't know, and the medical establishment's interests are not the same as yours. A person has to be responsible for his own health.

My mother and father died just short of their 82nd and 88th birthdays, respectively. Not bad for lifelong smokers. Their estates included a couple of very full drug cabinets. Mine will not – I have a different view of medicine.

My mother inherited her faith in drugs from her own father, a doctor. I was overtreated as a child. As grandma had a goiter, my mother herself had a basal metabolism test. They diagnosed a thyroid deficiency, to be addressed by high dosage pills – 500 mg a day. She had me diagnosed as a child and I was also taking large doses.

My mother wore eyeglasses. On some pretext, I forget which, she had my eyes tested. My school pictures from about the fifth grade have me wearing glasses, as often as not with the bridge broken and held together with adhesive tape.

As a child I had frequent nosebleeds. Her father the doctor tried to stop one episode by putting cotton in my nose. The bleeding didn't stop and I drank so much of my blood that I vomited. The family doctor proposed another approach – cauterize the inside of my nose with an electric needle. He did it several times, painful and to no effect. On my own, somehow, I read what you do. If your nose is bleeding, pinch the nose until it stops! If it starts again after you let it go, pinch it again. Oh.

When I went away to college I lost my glasses. I never replaced them. Life went on as normal. Glasses had somewhat improved the focus in my weaker left eye, but not enough to offset the inconvenience of wearing them.

I got a physical examination about the time of my first job. I told the doctor about the thyroid. He exclaimed, "What!" and told me to stop. I asked, incredulously, "Cold turkey?" "Yes!" And nothing happened.

The drug revolution of the 1960s extended the use of all kinds of drugs – ethical drugs such as Valium, Quaaludes, Dexedrine and the like as well as cannabis, psychedelics, cocaine and party drugs. We discovered that the wisdom on the street regarding these drugs was usually at least as reliable as certified medical opinion. We were each on our own. The downside of drugs was hubris. If there was a risk we couldn't handle, we shouldn't try it. People thought they could handle stuff they couldn't. Lots of friends and acquaintances lost themselves, some of them their lives.

The doctors – and I was at one time a patient of Nixon/Ford Drug Czar Dr. Robert DuPont's daughter Carolyn – talked about gateway drugs and took a Nancy Reagan "Just say no" approach. It didn't fly when so many people we knew took a lot of drugs and continued to function. Lee Coldren, whom I can mention because he is a decade dead, earned a Rhodes scholarship while ingesting inconceivable amounts of LSD. He went on to a distinguished career with the State Department. My point is that we learned to trust other sources than the medical establishment.

In my eight years living overseas, and subsequent two decades traveling frequently to Latin America, I got use to buying what I needed directly from a drugstore. I use to keep Cipro on hand because it was great at treating diarrhea. I still keep doxycycline on hand because I get strep throat about twice a year.

Drugs have their downsides. A doctor here in Kyiv prescribed levofloxacin, a relative of Cipro, five years ago as a treatment for what we diagnosed as walking pneumonia. Bang – a ligament in my leg broke. I read the counterindications for the medicine and that is one of them. He wasn't even interested in hearing my problem. And that's the issue in a nutshell. The doctors very seldom tell you about counterindications as they give you a drug. You are truly on your own.

Another doctor, an andrologist, tried to prescribe another Cipro relative. My wife had asked me to see him because she had a recurrent infection. On the theory that I might be harboring it and passing it back to her, the doctor prescribed a raft of antibiotics, and wasn't interested in hearing about the counterindications. I refused to be his guinea pig. I just said no.

Doctors have prescribed shelves full of medicines for other problems. Ten years ago it was arrhythmia. My heartbeat is irregular – the same as my father and my brother. On the theory that blood could collect and clot in some ventricle or another they told me to take a bunch of blood thinners. I am in good health – I simply refused.

My gallbladder bothered me and/or I had indigestion off and on for more than a year. The doctors prescribed me just about everything you see advertised on the nightly news, including proton pump inhibitors. I read that those things are not good over the long term. I stopped eating as much and cut out drinking until it went away. I now drink only one beer a day. If the problem comes back I'll simply have to stop. No meds!

Those are this slightly older guy's observations on medicine here in Ukraine. I don't think it is much different in the United States. The doctors are inclined to overprescribe. The mindset seems to be that if I came to them for advice, they had damn well better give me some advice - and a prescription. Otherwise I'll feel cheated. It just is not in their playbook to tell you that they can't do anything – you just have to watch what you eat and drink, and make sure you get your exercise.

Since we don't have a system of prescriptions here in Ukraine, I do not think that there are medical detail men running around to the doctors giving them free samples to give away and offering them trips on Jeffrey Epstein's yacht as incentives. Nevertheless, doctors are still prone to look for pharmaceutical solutions to every problem.

A side note on Anthony Fauci's magic bullet Remdesivir. It appears to be approved for use against hepatitis C and hepatitis B [in Russia](#), as well as Covid 19. The cost is about \$100 a pill. That still makes it far less than the \$3000 being discussed in the United States for a course of treatment.

\$3,000 for a course of treatment may seem to be exorbitant, but it is chicken feed compared to what else is in the works. This [article from the Unz Review](#) says that taxpayers will be on the hook for many multiples of billions when and if the powers that be are able to force vaccines on everybody.

This is not to consider two related factors – the fact that flu shots have been generally far less than 100% effective in the first place, and vaccine injuries, however rare, do occur. There is likely to be fairly widespread resistance to mandatory Covid19 vaccines.

That's in the developed world. Here in Ukraine, like India, Brazil and other countries, vaccines would be a nonstarter at the proposed cost of a few hundred dollars per head.

Meanwhile, from a link I sent last time and repeated in this Unz Review piece above, hydroxychloroquine seems to do the trick if you start the regime immediately. A little research shows that it is available by mail order in the United States – two weeks delivery time. *Generic Aralen (Chloroquine) 500 mg x 60 pills \$97.59*. Since it is intended as a prophylactic against malaria, it comes in 30 and 60 tablet boxes. The treatment regime I found online requires only 10 pills. If I lived in the United States I would probably have one box of this stuff to share around as necessary. It looks to me like cheap insurance.

Dick wrote from Georgia to say that he and his wife currently have Covid19. Their course of treatment included a four day hospital stay and doses of steroids (to reduce inflammation) and antibiotics. Certainly no magic bullets. For the time being, my conclusion is that hydroxychloroquine may not be perfect, but it is as good as any alternative out there.



Let me put in an aside on the [Unz Review](#). Their subhead puts it exactly right: “A Collection of Interesting, Important, and Controversial Perspectives Largely Excluded from the American Mainstream Media.” Unz publishes things that I know are right about human evolution, human biodiversity, and climate change but others have become too timid to touch. He publishes things that would invite immediate lynching by the ADL were they said by a Gentile. His contributors accept that they do not agree with one another. Therefore when his articles get into something like Covid19, I trust that they are probably correct, and in any case written in good faith.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and neither the children nor anybody else are paid skills of the generic pharmaceutical manufacturers. We're cheap, but they still couldn't afford us. That's the way I like things.

16-Jul-20 --- [Getting the kids involved. Follow-up on Ukrainian medicine and foibles. A two-year-...\\*](#)

A two-year-old always has to have something to do. Zoriana also wants to be useful. Today we managed both. I got Zoriana to come with me as we gathered grape leaves from the garden to make dolma – stuffed grape leaves. Here in Ukraine they call them golubtsi, little doves, whether they are wrapped with cabbage or grape leaves.

The original recipe called for a jar of pickled grape leaves from Trader Joe's. No Trader Joe's anywhere close. They do sell pickled grape leaves by weight in the market, but it is easier to make your own. Fill a gallon jar with leaves, add 1/4 cup salt and fill it with water. It's ready to go after about three days.

The special treat for Zoriana is sitting on my shoulders with a pair of scissors and collecting the high up leaves. She likes everything about it. We have found that it takes about 80 grape leaves to make the dolmas small, like Oksana likes.

Here's the recipe: First the substantial ingredients

2 cups rice, soaked 30 minutes, drained	Then blend the whole spices.
1 lb ground lamb/veal/beef	1 tsp black pepper
2 teaspoons salt	1/2 tsp coriander
6 cloves or more minced garlic.	1/2 tsp clove
juice of 1 big lemon	2 tsp cumin
90 grape leaves	1/2 tsp cardamom
	1/2 tsp nutmeg
	and add the already ground spices
	1/2 tsp cinnamon
	1 tsp paprika
	2 tsp turmeric

Put a tablespoon of the mixture into each grape leaf, wrap, put in an 8-quart pot, then cover the whole thing with water. Cook 1 - 1 1/2 hours.

These make a perfect summer dinner. They are cold, and not too heavy on your stomach. Zoriana likes them especially because she got to play an important role in making them.

One of you readers, Elaine, a devout liberal got into trouble last week by naïvely posting on Facebook that All Lives Matter. I, just as naïvely, didn't see anything whatsoever racist about that claim and said so. We were both promptly set straight. It could've been worse – a young mother in Indianapolis got shot to death for just those words. My Ukrainian acquaintances don't understand. I think that is all for the best. This week's understanding becomes next week's grievous error. The times they are a'changin. Fast.

I spend too much time on Covid 19. Though Ukraine is straining as hard as any country to maximize its statistics, as of today they can only claim 1427 fatalities out of 55,000 total cases. Not much worse than a standard flu season.

I have completed my preparations. I have scotch-taped together boxes of the three meds I plan to take – hydroxychloroquine, azithromycin and zinc.

I thank you for continuing to send me your observations on the subject. John Leussler provided [this link](#) to the effect that herd immunity is only a pipe dream, something I had seen elsewhere. It appears that people can get infected again and again. Immunity wears off in weeks. If this is so, treatment is more relevant than the quest for a vaccine.

I am attaching a document with statements from the American Medical Association and the American Association of Physicians and Surgeons. They are strongly at odds. My read is that the AMA is the voice of the medical establishment and the 76-year-old AAPS remains independent. The vehemence with which Wikipedia slanders the AAPS leads me to believe they are probably on the right track.

In my last message I mentioned the Unz Review, which seems miraculously impervious to the cancel culture. This week they have an [article](#) on just that topic – why the New York Times, the ADL and other opinion leaders leave them alone. In fact these publications have an editorial policy of never mentioning Unz, despite the fact that it is a highly popular website.

My longtime Kyiv friend Mark Taylor, now living in Berlin, had some pertinent comments on Ukrainians and planning ahead.

*Last winter, a friend of mine from TM came to Berlin to deliver a talk on reforming the bureaucracy in Ukraine. It was a small gathering of Germans. Artem and his friends did their talk, and then I asked a question. I was the first to speak up about issues that I had seen in Ukraine. It turns out that the room was filled with German people who had gone to Ukraine from the beginning to help Ukraine improve their lot. They found that Ukrainians were worthless about planning ahead. In fact, I heard that mostly Ukrainians say yes, and then do what they want. They take the money and promise to reform and don't do squat. My experience is that nobody plans ahead.*

*When I was first in Kyiv, I knew a girl who was teaching English at the same school as me. She was frustrated with all Ukrainians because they don't think ahead. She used one example. When a group of Ukrainians come down into the metro off the escalator, they go to the first spot on the platform and wait. Like me, this girl used to think about where she was going, which station, what change needed to be made. I thought about which end of the train was crowded when it got to my station. No one, not one of my Ukrainian friends, ever considered going to a different place to wait. They just stood there like robots, even the smartest kids in TM.*

*You know, the big building right outside the Livoberezhnaya station, the giant unfinished hotel. You see buildings like that all over Ukraine. Why? Builders ran out of money and didn't finish the job.*

I enclose my own picture that encapsulates the mentality. It is a grand house that was under construction eight years ago when we moved to Russanovsky Sad. It remains empty. The owner still doesn't have money to finish it. He drives a Mercedes 600 sedan, which is usually parked with a bent fender beside the house. My take is that his dreams exceed his means. He is married to a very pleasant woman and has a son Eddie's age to take care of. They live in a 550 sq ft Soviet dacha next door to their unfinished dream.

Ukrainians assume that since I am an American I must be rich. I have been tapped many times to see if I would loan money for this project or that. I ask them if they have a business plan. They never do. I tell them what a business plan is. Nobody has ever produced anything more than one page in length. They have absolutely no idea what a pro forma income statement is.

I recently mentioned my small loan to our babysitter Anna. It is the first such loan I have made. She is an exception to the rule, and I made the loan mostly to cement our relationship.

Here are some of Mark's comments on medicine in Ukraine – and how the corruption works in here.

*When I was in Ukraine, I taught English at a generic drug company, and they had posted on their wall a map of Ukraine with average drug expenditure per oblast. They were directly targeting the spending habits of average Ukrainians, comparing them to average spending in the US per capita. For them, it showed a huge potential for growth. Not once did they mention the idea of improving health or benefitting Ukrainians. It was all about profit.*

*Among the incentives offered doctors in Kyiv were bonuses based on increased sales of certain drugs in clinic pharmacies. They paid bonuses to doctors on the basis of sales. I'm not sure how they calculated the sales or what they based the bonuses on. They also had a cash system which paid incentives to doctors to recommend their drugs. It's common knowledge that doctors make a commission when they order expensive tests, especially in private clinics. The doctor got a percentage of the price of an injection or a test, especially the tests that had to be flown to Germany to generate results.*

*When I had my eye trouble, I went to at least a dozen different doctors. Every diagnosis was incorrect. All the treatments were wrong, but all the doctors who sold the treatments would get commissions. I didn't do most of the things recommended because I had no confidence in the treatments proposed. Some tests were \$700 or more and some treatments were priced at as much as \$5,000. As I have probably told you, the problem didn't get properly addressed until I went to the US where I saw a retinologist who had the right diagnosis and did the right treatment. It was my mistake to wait so long in Ukraine before going home to have it properly looked at. The vision in my right eye is still not 100% and it's my fault for not going to the US right away.*

Following up on a previous theme, I have not taken the medications prescribed to me for my back. Simply treating the pain just seemed wrong.

I went to my love/hate source, Amazon, and found a book entitled "Treat Your Own Back." It is very much in sync with my own philosophy. Active solutions – you do it instead of having it done to you. Change your lifestyle instead of using medications.

Their take is that the manipulations of masseurs, chiropractors, osteopaths and so on, although they may provide temporary relief, do not provide any permanent solution. You need exercise in order to reestablish the flexibility of your back. These are not strength but flexibility exercises. No weight

training or anything like that. Most important, you need lumbar support. Something pushing on the small of your back as you sit down.

I'm trying all this stuff. Although I find this approach philosophically appealing, the proof is in the pudding. I will let you know how it works out.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong (if no longer terribly supple), the women are good looking (even when very pregnant) and the children are about 200% as helpful as you wish they were.

21-Jul-20 --- [Your religion has too many devils. My life matters, dammit. Moussaka recipe](#) Old wi...

Old wives' tales are the hobgoblin of the Ukrainian husband's life. Since we had yet another liter of sour milk, this morning I wanted to make pancakes for myself and the children. Eddie had made homemade currant jam last night. Everything was in place.

Wrong. I heard, yet again, that Zoriana's young stomach should not have fried food such as pancakes. Even if I cook them in an almost dry pan.

I gave Zoriana oatmeal as I cooked pancakes for Eddie and me. She was of course unhappy with the news that she was excluded. She ran screaming for mommy, who had retreated upstairs to get some more sleep. It didn't bother me too considerably that Zoriana's caterwauling would wake her up.

We come across these devils, these superstitions all the time. I cannot leave a marinade to sit on the counter overnight. I cannot make a casserole, put it in the oven and leave it to cook for dinner. Microbes will attack it. We cannot eat out of plates that the cat has eaten out of. Ever in his life. Those devil microbes again.

The devils are out to get the children. If it is under 70° it is the snow devils waiting to freeze them. They have to wear jackets and long pants. If it is over 75° it is the sunstroke devils. They have to wear baseball caps and bonnets to protect their heads.

But let me say a word about our devils. We can live with them. The devils you face in the United States – white privilege, unintended microaggressions and impending climate disaster impact your lives a whole lot more than the devils here impact mine.

Devils are part of every human's mental menagerie. The women in this family may be a little bit crazy, but I prefer their brand of crazy to the kinds of crazy running around elsewhere.

Portland, home of my long ago and very leftist alma mater Reed College, has been beset by urban riots for 50 days now. Excuse me, "peaceful protests."

I have a perverse, morbid curiosity whether any of my erstwhile classmates have been involved. Or, for that matter, my estranged son Jack who was curiously drawn to Portland after graduating from Humboldt State College in Northern California. Are they part of this madness? Do they condone it? Do they have reservations? I don't think I'll ever know. Nor, should I care. But I do. If anybody knows, please write.

Perversely, they never express any curiosity about what has become of my life. My hunch is that they do not want to know that I am doing quite well. It would invalidate their elaborately constructed world views.

I touched, gently, I thought, on all lives matter. One cannot touch gently on an open sore. Dennis and Dale wrote back to bring this old fogey up-to-date. In logic, if  $A \Rightarrow B$  and  $B \Rightarrow C$ , then  $A \Rightarrow C$ . Thus, assuming they were normative statements, All Lives Matter should encompass Black Lives Matter. Both self-evidently true. Not so. It is a matter of the nuances, (you idiot), they imply. Black Lives Matter is a political slogan, not normative at all. Intended to be inflammatory, and it is. Logic has nothing to do with it.

As you try to drag me forward, let me drag you backwards into the world of objective reality. In everybody's lives, the people who matter are the people who share and will promote our interests. To go more deeply, support our genetic interests. I think we lose sight of that. I'd like to provide this link to my [review of a thoughtful book](#) on that subject.

Going further on this topic, since Augustine wrote his "Confessions" we often wonder how other saints spent their childhood years. Wonder no more! [Here it is on TV](#). How did the MSM miss it?

This is been a quiet week. No Covid19, but the whole family and all of Oksana's students besides seem to have summer colds. A cough that is not serious but persists for a long time. On top of that I got strep throat. I pulled out the doxycycline that I keep for just such exigencies and it went away quickly. The cough is milder, but still very much with me.

A couple of you wrote to thank me for the dolma recipe. Denny reminisced about Ladies Home Journal. Sigh. I think it gave way to Cosmopolitan, and perhaps Cosmopolitan has given way to Teen Vogue. Anyhow, the ladies are no longer sharing food recipes the way they did in my childhood. Now it seems to be sex recipes. Time for us guys to turn things around.

Two of Oksana's friends asked me for my recipe for moussaka. Such genuine flattery I cannot resist. Since the recipe has migrated a long ways from the Food Network Kitchens original, I offer it here in closing. Translated from metric to English measures... let me know if it seems screwy.

This recipe will serve about 12 people. It consists of

- eggplant
- meat and tomato sauce
- béchamel sauce

Make it in a fairly large baking dish, 8 X 12 X 2 ½ in or a bit larger.

Step number one: bake the eggplant and bread

Cut four or five eggplants lengthwise into ½ in slices. Oil them and salt them – about 2 tablespoons of oil and 1 tablespoon of salt altogether. Add zucchini if desired.

Cut about eight slices of bread as thin as possible – ¼ in. Lay them down and cut them into cubes of ¼ in on each side. Put them in an ovenproof bowl.

Bake the eggplant/zucchini and the bread side by side for half an hour at 450°.

Step number two: mix the spices. Into a blender put

- 1 ½ teaspoons of oregano
- half a teaspoon of whole allspice

- about five cloves
- 1 teaspoon of black peppercorns
- three bay leaves

Blend them until they are fairly small. Add

- 1 tablespoon of cinnamon
- salt to taste – 1 teaspoon or more

Step number three – prepare the tomato sauce. Take apart a small head of garlic – eight or 10 cloves. Peel them and chop them finely with a knife. Chop a medium onion into small pieces. Sauté the onion and the garlic together until the onion is translucent. Chop about four medium tomatoes (2 in diameter) and add them. Cook over high heat until half the liquid boils away. Take it out of the frying pan and put it into another bowl.

Step number four – brown the meat. Put one pound of ground veal – or any other ground meat – into the frying pan. Cook until it is more or less brown.

Step number five – add the spices from step two and the tomato sauce from step three to the browned meat. Stir it.

Step number six – make the bechamel sauce. Use about 1/3 cup of butter and a bit over 1/3 cup of flour. Stir the flour into the melting butter until it is pretty much all absorbed. Then add about ¾ quart milk bit by bit, stirring constantly with a fork to keep the sauce smooth. Use between ½ teaspoon and 1 teaspoon of salt. Some people like to add ¼ teaspoon of nutmeg.

Step number seven – combine everything. Grease the baking dish if it is not already greasy from having baked the eggplant. Lay the breadcrumbs on the bottom of the baking dish. Put in alternating layers of eggplant/zucchini, meat and tomato sauce, and bechamel sauce.

Step number eight – bake it in a 350° oven for 30 minutes. Sprinkle cheese on top and bake it for another 15 minutes to melt the cheese.

Ingredients:

Vegetables:

Four or five medium eggplants (15 cm long, not too big around)  
four medium tomatoes (5 cm diameter)  
one medium onion (6 cm diameter)  
one medium head of garlic (3 cm diameter)

Meat: 1/2 kg of ground veal, beef, or something else

Spices:

oregano  
cloves  
whole peppercorns  
ground cinnamon  
whole allspice  
bay leaves

salt

Bread  
vegetable oil

Butter  
flour  
milk  
cheese

[29-Jul-20 --- Here we are at Camp Granada / As time goes by / What's next with the virus?](#)

Summer camp is going well. Zoriana sleeps with me. The double bed mattress in the master bedroom is too soft for my back, besides which I like to sleep with the fan on to keep the mosquitoes off. Though her crib is in my room, she much prefers to snuggle with me in the single bed.

This morning we got up half an hour late, so as not to go downstairs and awaken the children sleeping in the living room. The rest of them slept in a tent. I made a cup of coffee and quickly retreated back upstairs. Zoriana stayed and played with the kids and had breakfast. Only when the chaos was over did I venture back down and make myself some bacon and eggs.

I love primary school teachers. Most that I have known are children at heart. Many spend so much time speaking at a second grade level that they don't fully switch cadence when they are talking with the grown-ups. Moreover, if they were fully capable of planning and organizing at a corporate level they would probably be doing that rather than teaching school.

Last night they told me they were going to have a barbecue dinner. That's all: no mention of the menu, the shopping or the preparation. Assuming we were not included, Oksana had me by some sausages so we could cook our own dinner.

Eddie could have set everything up himself, but I hastened the process by getting out the barbecue grills, charcoal and kindling myself to give him a head start.

Not enough. At 7 o'clock they were still at the beach. I started the barbecues and put our sausages and zucchini on to cook. When they finally dragged in at 7:30 there would have been no time if they had to start from scratch, but the grills were already going and our food was already on the table.

They took frozen sausages out of the refrigerator. Still frozen? Thinking ahead here? I threw the frozen sausages on the grill. They started cutting zucchini, mushrooms, eggplants and other vegetables to grill. A lot of them. And then there was kind of a faint complaint that the fire that I left for them wasn't hot enough – and needed more charcoal. Bemused, I piled on more charcoal.

Eventually, like everything here in Ukraine, it seemed to work out. But not by dint of thorough planning.

We had a replay today. They planned to cook their lunch at the beach. Just as I was getting back from the store buying groceries for the family, there was an "oh by the way" request to take firewood up to them. I shortly arrived by the beach with a bicycle and firewood. The bicycle would be convenient for their getting back – I left it with them. And oh by the way, they had a leftover tent for me to carry as I came back by foot.

You have to be philosophical. God put me on earth to deal with things like this, and if they were better at it they would not be teaching school. They are good schoolteachers. All is right in God's heaven.

Things are heating up on the virus front. Dick, whom I had never seen post anything political, forwarded this

Here's [Bill Gates with a sort of response](#). I'm not a psychologist, but his eyes evading the camera, his roundabout, mealy-mouthed way of addressing things is consistent with, um, lying. Of course, IMHO that's how Gates built his empire. He is a genius programmer who got power, and has used it for three decades to keep his mediocre products dominant in the market. I am new to Windows 10. Every day I find myself swatting away another tentacle as it attempts to wrap itself around my life. Grrrr.

Meanwhile, a group calling themselves America's Frontline Doctors put together a [powerful video](#) on what they have found works, in contrast to what is being put out there by the mainstream media and the likes of Bill Gates.

These are doctors who treat Covid19 every day. The group includes two very Black doctors, a Nigerian woman, the other an eloquent Black American man. They give the lie to a slew of liberal presumptions. Among other things, the guy absolutely gives the lie to [Rutgers University's](#) assertion that Blacks cannot be expected to use the English language properly.

The video was extremely popular. It was immediately shut down by Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and the other powers that be. Their americasfrontlinedoctors.com web site came down within hours. The excuse is that the American people cannot handle such misinformation. Balderdash.

Still on the political, I think that Atty. Gen. Bill Barr acquitted himself admirably before the House Judicial Committee. I have to confess to have watched sympathetically edited snippets of his testimony, but I cannot imagine anybody but the most rabid partisan would see the Democrats as having scored points. Of course, Nancy Pelosi claimed just that. Two sides are committed to seeing the same things from radically different perspectives.

The progressives appear to be hell-bent on destroying the institutions of American government. I do not see any plans for restoring or replacing them. Whether or not they defeat Trump in November, the country appears to be in for a long period of chaos. The talk seems to be in favor of an endless string of entitlements and preferences, with no thought given to how the wealth they want to pass around will be created. It looks to me like ever more rancorous disputes over how fewer and fewer resources are redistributed. Fewer, because there are significantly fewer millennials and Gen Z people who are able and prepared to create value –products and perform services that other people will pay for.

As an interesting aside, the biggest corporations in America – Amazon, Google, Twitter and Facebook don't generally produce anything. Microsoft's product is ephemeral. Apple and Tesla, which do have product, are very richly priced, based on immense expectations that are patently at odds with the impending recession/depression. If we fall back to a barter economy they will all have very empty pockets.

Thinking locally, I increasingly frequently hint to Eddie that a job in agriculture would make sense. Ukraine's agricultural exports grow by double digits every year. They continue to implement more highly productive crops, techniques and equipment. And, by the way, our garden isn't doing badly.



While the rest the world is actively shunning China, Ukraine is building a profitable trade in agricultural products. While there appears to be some justice in the claims about China's unfair trade practices, these would seem to apply more to intellectual property than to oats peas beans and barley. I rather like the idea of China having a vested interest in Ukraine's maintaining an arm's length relationship with both the European Union and Russia.

I'll close with an account of a tempest in a teapot. Eddie and my reading this year included Tom Sawyer, which starts out with an account of Tom jilting Amy Lawrence in favor of Becky Thatcher and the games the children play with each other. It turns out that camper Sasha has a crush on camper Eddie, and Eddie was spending too much time with camper Sophia. No need to be jealous – Eddie isn't committed to anybody and Sophia, whom he has known since they were infants, is kind of like a sister. Oksana asked me how can we tell that to a sulking Sasha. I don't think we can or should. I will talk to Eddie, but as all of you know eight-year-old boys (and some much older) can be surprisingly obtuse.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children are predictable in the ways described long ago in "As Time Goes By."

Graham

You must remember this  
A kiss is still a kiss  
A sigh is just a sigh  
The fundamental things apply  
As time goes by

And when two lovers woo  
They still say, "I love you."  
On that you can rely  
No matter what the future brings  
As time goes by

Moonlight and love songs are never out of date  
Hearts full of passion, jealousy and hate  
Woman needs man and man must have his mate  
That no one can deny

It's still the same old story  
A fight for love and glory  
A case of do or die  
The world will always welcome lovers  
As time goes by

[30-Jul-20 --- Kyiv summer scene is normal / Hydroxochloroquine and liberal racism / kids everyw...](#)

We go to the beach every day. After an unseasonably cool spring, we have a delightful summer. Days range between the high 70s and the high 80s.

Very few people are wearing masks. To see somebody wearing one is rather like seeing a businessman still wearing suspenders and a hat. Some people just don't get it. Meanwhile, nobody we know is sick.

Among the facts that seem undisputed is the observation that children rarely get the disease. They are not a vector to carry it to adults. We are not worried about sending Eddie to school in the fall. Of course, whether or not school will open is another issue.

As I have mentioned previously, the Ukrainian media is in lockstep with United States. [The Kyiv Post](#) seems to be an outpost of the NYT and WaPo. They have had Coronavirus at the very top of the news for months now.

That's an interesting feat, given that the country's total deaths to date are 1673, on a par with a good day in New York City, and seem to be fairly stable. Here, like everywhere else, most of the deaths occur among people with comorbidities. Life expectancy overall being somewhat lower in Ukraine, the greatest number of deaths occur in people between 50 and 70.

I was pleased to note in this graph

that Ukraine is included among the countries that use hydroxychloroquine as a primary treatment. I had not seen that in the news here, but it is consistent with my experience trying to get some of the drug for myself.

The true racists have now stepped forward, condemning [Dr. Stella Immanuel](#) with phrases such as "demon sperm," "sex with witches" and so on. Has the world totally lost its sense of hypocrisy? Of irony?

As usual, they totally gloss over the question of whether or not the doctor is right. She claims to have successfully treated 350 Covid19 patients. Did she? Did it work? Nobody asks. They are too busy undermining the Nigerian educated doctor with ad hominem arguments. It would be too funny for words if it weren't so tragic.

What about the five other Americas Frontline Doctors in the video? Never a mention. Why don't these good liberals concoct racist slurs against the extremely well-spoken, equally black, Harvard educated Dr. Joe Ladapo of UCLA. They totally ignore his remarks, 33:00 into [the video](#). Liberal racists such as these might snidely observe that affirmative action helped him, but nothing short of intelligence can make a person so articulate. Don't they just hate it when a smart Black strays off the plantation, scrubs the "Property of the DNC" tattoo from his flanks and starts asking questions?

By the way, in today's news [Madonna endorses the movie](#). Has the world gone mad? Doesn't she hate Donald Trump with enough passion?

Here in Kyiv, our lockdowns have ended and we are returning to life as usual. The economy seems to be coming back reasonably well, though unemployment does remain somewhat elevated. My opinion is that, left on its own Ukraine would do fairly well. However, that will not happen. There is a huge overhang of unemployment, pending evictions, unserviceable debt and so on in the West. When the West falls the flow of remittances will diminish and Ukrainians will return home. There will be less demand for Ukrainian IT services as capital investment shrinks in the West.

Another irony is playing out in my favor. As the United States dollar loses strength relative to other world currencies, the Ukrainian hryvnya is falling even relative to the dollar. My Social Security will keep us even with inflation for a few months. My prognosis would be that the hryvnya will fall significantly further as the crisis unfolds and people flee to the supposed safety of the US dollar.

However, at some point in the not-too-distant future the light will go on and people will realize that the dollar is being printed with mad abandon. At that point things should reverse. Assets here in Ukraine such as housing, farmland, and factories that produce tangible products should hold their value.

Transferring money is bound to become harder as governments everywhere try to make sure they know where it is so they can grab it. It is time to redistribute one's assets in favor of places where you hope you can hang onto it. Probably before the election.

Some forms of transactions, such as buying precious metals, are already extremely difficult. Nathan Rothschild said that the time to buy is when there is "blood in the streets." What we are seeing in Portland and Seattle is a preview, but I believe that the canny Mr. Rothschild would at this moment in time still be hanging onto his purse and waiting. Much more is to come.

We seem to have kids everyplace. On Monday I bought tomatoes at 25¢ a pound to make tomato sauce. Yesterday the kitchen seemed to be occupied all day. Today I seized a free moment and got started, only to find myself overrun by kids, teacher and babysitter as I was sautéing the onions and garlic. Nonetheless, it is done.

I'm happy to report that little Sasha seems to be in a fine mood today. She's wearing a lovely new outfit, which always gives a girl a lift. I haven't had time for my talk with Eddie, who still seems oblivious. It will probably go by the boards.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children are not ducking under their desks, turning their heads away from windows, or quaking at the prospect of jackbooted Nazis, Antifa, or Covid19. They are just being kids.

Graham

In answer to the question about Camp Granada:

(A Letter From Camp) Allan Sherman, 1963

Hello Muddah, hello Fadduh,  
Here I am at Camp Granada.  
Camp is very entertaining,  
And they say we'll have some fun if it stops raining.

I went hiking with Joe Spivey.  
He developed poison ivy.  
You remember Leonard Skinner.  
He got ptomaine poisoning last night after dinner.

All the counselors hate the waiters,  
And the lake has alligators.  
And the head coach wants no sissies,  
So he reads to us from something called Ulysses.

Now I don't want this should scare ya,  
But my bunk mate has malaria.  
You remember Jeffrey Hardy.  
They're about to organize a searching party.

Take me home, oh Muddah, Fadduh,  
Take me home, I hate Granada,  
Don't leave me out here in the forest, where  
I might get eaten by a bear.

Take me home, I promise I will not make noise,  
Or mess the house with other boys.  
Oh please don't make me stay,  
I've been here one whole day.

Dearest Fadduh, darling Muddah,  
How's my precious little Bruddah?  
Let me come home if you miss me.  
I would even let Aunt Bertha hug and kis me.

1-Aug-20 --- Things are moving at a furious pace on the HCQ front just, within the last two days ...

- 1) America's Front-line Doctors [released their video](#) a couple days ago. It became by far the most viral video of all time.
- 2) Google/YouTube, Facebook and Twitter removed the video as fast as it was posted. Repeatedly.
- 3) americasfrontlinedoctors.com lost its web host
- 4) Dr. Simone Gold got fired. Her employer said the video was "embarrassing."
- 5) She appeared on [Fox News with Tucker Carlson](#).

But – this is America

- 6) Several other hosting services were appalled at the travesty and offered to bring them back online. They are back up at <https://americasfrontlinedoctorsummit.com/>. The search engines can't find it yet. If they ever will.
- 7) The doctors did another video in which they vow that big tech will not shut them down. It appears on the new site above. The truth will out.

The point that they make repeatedly is that hydroxychloroquine is safe. It has been around for 65 years. It is based on quinine, which has been in use for three centuries or so. It is listed by the CDC – Centers for Disease Control – as an approved prophylactic medicine for malaria.

Coincidentally, Covid19 is almost nonexistent in countries where people take HCQ because malaria is prevalent. I took the predecessor chloroquine for all four years I was in Vietnam. Everybody did and I knew of no adverse reactions.

Studies critical of hydroxychloroquine safety appeared in The Lancet and a leading American medical journal. Both were retracted – an unheard of occurrence. The science had been faked. Dr. Fauci cast aspersions on its safety and utility. There are some very long knives out to kill this drug.

Nevertheless, on the basis of the retracted studies many state governments have forbid pharmacists from filling orders for hydroxychloroquine - jumping in between doctors and patients. Legislating medicine. Ohio just reversed their ban Friday.

Contrary to what Dr. Fauci has intimated, there is no shortage whatsoever. These doctors say there are 65 million courses of treatment available in the United States. The claim that it should be rationed for the benefit of people who need it for other conditions was simply false. It is cheap and easy to make.

Hydroxychloroquine is over-the-counter in many countries, including Ukraine. It is the standard of treatment in many places such as India. A graph I have previously shown, by [gummibear737](#), shows that the case fatality rate is dramatically lower in such countries.

An interesting aspect of this contretemps is that Paul Joseph Watson on his [Summitnews.com](#) provides links to interviews that [Bill Gates](#) and [Dr. Fauci](#) give to sympathetic media such as CNN and MS/NBC. Watson provides no introduction and no comment, allowing their words to speak for themselves, confident viewers will conclude that they are transparent liars! Neither one has ever that I know of disputed claims that they have a financial interest in vaccines. Bill Gates has said, in a roundabout, mealy-mouthed way that gives me no comfort that he does not intend to microchip the whole world. Perhaps not. He will probably be content simply to sell the software that other people need to do it.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the house is empty after a chaotic week of children everywhere. They assure me that they all had a good time. It was worth the inconvenience.

Graham

[2-Aug-20 --- A Sunday stroll in the park For the third Sunday in a row Oksana and I took the wh...](#)

For the third Sunday in a row Oksana and I took the whole family to the park on Sunday morning. It would be about a 40 minute walk from our house (red dot) or 15 minutes by bike. We walk 10 minutes across the railroad track (black line to the right of our house) and take a cab for \$1.60. While a couple of old tanks and an artillery piece remain the centerpiece of Victory Park, the rest of it has been significantly improved over the last decade.

The first place we headed was to a children's playground. And, the first thing you notice is that it is full of parents and children, nobody wearing masks. We saw only one all morning. People aren't exactly in a state of panic here.

A closer look at this playground will show you things you probably wouldn't see in the United States. In this picture there is a boy on top of the gazebo, about 15 or 20 feet off the ground, with no safety net or anything. If he does something stupid he could fall and get hurt. But the truth of the matter is that they don't give out too many Darwin awards here in Ukraine. The kids take chances – like Zoriana hanging from the bar of a jungle gym 6 ½ feet off the ground – and they seem to get away with it. We don't have that many lawyers, and many of those we do are delightfully underemployed.

Eddie and Zoriana kind of hogged the swings. They will do that, especially if Zoriana can get somebody to push her.

The kids mix easily with other children. That is one of the positive aspects of homogeneity – a lack of diversity. People of a shared culture share expectations of behavior and are not too often disappointed. Moreover, when they are they are not afraid to talk about it. At least not to their husbands!

There are no unruly teenagers with boom boxes and menacing aspects. Not here in the park, and in fact, nowhere I go in Kyiv. As you can see from the map, Kyiv is very compact for a city of 4 million. About twelve miles across. Most people live in high-rise apartments. There are absolutely no “no-go” zones in the city. I tell Ukrainian friends that there is no public transit I would not ride at any hour, nowhere I would not walk at midnight. They roll their eyes a bit, but have to acknowledge it is safer than any big city in Western Europe or the USA.

I had some playground equipment that I hadn't seen before, such as this trampoline on a swing. With mom on board the kids aren't bouncing.

As I mentioned above, Ukrainians are not above remarking on less than exemplary behavior by their fellow citizens. Graffiti is the theme of the collage below. Oksana was distressed that people would desecrate such a beautiful park. I note that (1) there isn't that much of it, and (2) it is mostly just “Kilroy was here” sort of stuff. Lastly, (3) in anticipation of graffiti the park installed blackboards which are extremely well used, and also didn't so far as I could see contain much bad language.

As you can see, most Ukrainians are less than thoroughly panicked about the virus. However, Olga, who brought her young daughter Oksana over for music lessons yesterday said that there have been 15 cases in her international IT company, including one guy on a respirator. She has a concern, though not enough to have her wear a mask.

In Ukraine as everywhere else the advice is been all over the map with regard to masks. I don't think I've ever seen in an N95 level mask here, and at least half the people who wear them have them cover only their mouths. You know, a mask makes it hard to breathe? To me the mask is kind of a “Yeah, I understand” sort of symbol. It may remind people to social distance. I don't think it does much in the way of impeding viruses.

Joanne commented that with regard to America's Frontline Doctors we live in a "post-truth world." Shutting them down would be unconscionable even if hydroxychloroquine were dangerous. But it is not! The claims made against it were not that severe in the first place, and they were faked – bogus – not true – made up in the second.

Joanne provided a link to yet another website showing that [countries that rely primarily on hydroxychloroquine](#) are doing much better in combating the virus than others. Isn't it almost criminal to deny people access to the drug when the evidence against it is so sketchy – read, fraudulent - and there is nothing better available? Can it be true that so many people in high places put their interest in making a buck on vaccines, or getting Biden elected, above the lives of their fellow citizens? That's how it seems.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the kids are having a wonderful nap after long morning in the park.

Graham

5-Aug-20 --- Diversity in Germany and Ukraine Several of you readers - Livia, Ron, Al, Dick, El...

Several of you readers – Livia, Ron, Al, Dick, Elaine, Spike, John, Mary, Steve, Bill – lived in Germany during the 1970s. My recent description of a day in the park here in Kyiv described pretty much the experiences that we all had back then.

I revisited Zweibruecken and Bad Homburg with my first family in a house exchange in 1992. My wife of that time, Mary Ann, muttering something about "Nazis" found an excuse to quickly return to Washington, leaving me with the three kids. We had a delightful time in the local parks and swimming pools with the German kids.

Germany had been mildly multicultural even in the 1970s. There were Turkish guestworkers, though we rarely rubbed shoulders with them. Our IBM office on Elbingerstrasse employed two Arabs, Hani and Khalil, who were competent and delightful to work with. As I recall Khalil was married to a German and Hani to an Arab. He would joke that although the Koran allowed him up to four wives, the proviso was that he would have to treat them all equally. That being impossible, he was totally happy with just one.

There were few enough Arabs in Frankfurt that they had to get along with the Germans. They did – they understood the culture, spoke the language, and did what they needed to fit in. My guess is that Khalil and Hani have had something of a difficult time of it as more and more Arabs came to Germany. They probably felt obliged to take sides, and it was likewise probably dangerous should they choose to take the German side. I would guess that they are smart enough just to have shut up.

My major client as I worked with IBM in Vietnam and Germany was the United States Army. Truman had desegregated the Armed Forces in 1948. The system of promotion on the basis of competitive exams and Officer Efficiency Reports remained intact. Among the officer ranks at least, the insignia on a man's shoulders was a good indication of the person's merit. The same was pretty much true among Department of the Army civilians. There are friendships among all races of more than half a century's standing among the Army people from [Zweibruecken](#).

In my view, it has been somewhat the same with minorities in the United States. When I started work it was an overwhelmingly white culture. Blacks working alongside me accepted that and conformed pretty much to our culture, adopting the workplace ethos of the white majority. Many had been hired before affirmative-action.

IBM was glad to have competent people whatever their color or creed, but it wasn't until the 1970s that they started to constrain themselves with quotas and the like. With less than happy results. A guy named Ed Mann, an equal opportunity hire disappointed with his progress in the company, crashed his Lincoln Continental into the front door of the office and came out firing, as I recall killing a security guard. I, finding myself working with people of dubious competence, simply left to start my own consulting firm in 1980.

To wrap back to my starting point, Germany in the 1970s was a comfortable place to live, without a great deal of tension. Included here is an excerpt from what my longtime Kyiv friend Mark has written about today's Berlin, where he has lived for four years.

*In Berlin, there is so much graffiti that it is an abomination. I hate it and it's everywhere, at least in this neighborhood and in Little Istanbul, NeuKöln, the neighborhood to the south of me. The parks lately have been filled with Blacks from Africa. They have a special corner in the park across the street from my flat. Yesterday, the boom box was going so that the whole hillside of the park got the pleasure of listening, even if they didn't want to listen. I often go to the river and sit on the benches there. On Tuesday, there was a grab bag of Africans on a bench with a little boom box. I wanted to pick it up and toss it into the drink, but I thought it would be wiser not to do that. I have had my run ins with the drug dealers who haunt the metro station where I have to change trains. You can't walk by them without them propositioning you. It works like this: they have dealers everywhere by the overhead station, and there are look outs with phones on all the connecting streets to warn them if the cops come. There is one black kid always on each platform in case the cops come. There is a park nearby where you don't dare go at night. I walked through the area outside the park one-night last year and got propositioned about 20 times. I think if Germans from 100 years ago came here, they would feel that they had been transported to Legos or Istanbul, but Istanbul is prettier. When I take the bus from one part of my area to another part, at first everyone shows their bus pass and they are polite and follow the rules. Then, we get into the nasty part of Kreuzberg and no one pays, the kids take pride in beating the system. There is a certain defiance to the rules. They feel it's beneath them to respect others and follow the rules. As you know, after a certain number of the wrong people inhabit a place, they begin to affect the kids around them. Germans in my experience know the rules and follow them so the society works pretty well, but the new residents from Turkey, Syria, Iraq, North Africa and beyond don't follow the rules. They feel it is beneath their dignity to conform to German rules. Of course, they came here for a better life, but they brought their old life with them and are turning the German cities into African and middle eastern slums. Of course, they can't see that.*

*I live just beneath that hill with the monument on top of it. I walk through that park a couple of times a week, but I stopped going to the steps and monument because the kids trash it with graffiti and broken beer bottles, and I found it so offensive that I didn't want to go there anymore.*

*Two years ago, I went to the yard where I used to take (my subteen daughter) Polina when she was little. There was a nice little playground there, but when I went the last time, it had been broken down and wrecked. Nothing was usable anymore. The playground which you show in the photos is wonderful and very nice. They have pathetic little playgrounds here, but it's not as bad as the US where they can't put up anything possibly dangerous or they will be sued. It's pretty sad.*



Author Malcolm Gladwell writes about a "tipping point." Although the formula was more closely guarded than the secret ingredients in Coca-Cola, when I was a trustee of two Washington area private schools in the 1980s and 90s I noticed that their enthusiasm for minority scholarship kids was rigorously bounded at 15%. In other words, at that level the Jewish and white kids could continue to set the culture for the student body. Beyond that they would lose control. The culture of boomboxes and shaking down other kids for lunch money would take over.

As Mark writes, Germany is beyond the tipping point. Here in Ukraine I see very few Africans. Though there are quite a few more swarthy types that I take to be middle Easterners – I think I recognize Arabic when I hear it – there are apparently not enough to establish practices such as "grooming" susceptible white girls. I encourage Ukraine to keep its defenses up. Don't invite immigrants, and by all means, don't encourage them with welfare support the way the West has done. I think we are poor enough to stick with such a program.

And here is a delicious irony. Our poverty may well be due to rapacious oligarchs. If, in the long run, those oligarchs make this place unattractive to immigrants of vastly different cultures, it may protect us in the end.

Those are my musings from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the question of when and how much of these weightier considerations to share with our children continues to weigh on our minds.

Graham

8-Aug-20 --- [Prophylaxis against coronavirus. Multiculturalism pro and con. Musical and mechani...](#)

One of you wrote in defense of multiculturalism, "I wouldn't trade my experiences or their experiences of learning about different cultures or learning to live with, get along nicely with, make lifelong friendships with and appreciate kids from different racial, cultural, economic, sexual orientation and religious backgrounds for anything."

On the surface there's nothing wrong with this. As a toddler I had gay babysitters and we had Chinese neighbors. We got along just fine. Growing up with the faculty kids from the University of California I certainly got to know my share of Jews. Many of whom followed the intellectual fashions of the 50s, so in a twofer I got to know Buddhists as well.

I'm not exactly a virgin when it comes to multiculturalism. I've lived overseas for 25 years and have 30 years of experience with Oriental mothers-in-law, another 10 with a Ukrainian mother-in-law. I've had the opportunity to assess how wonderful it is. Mark's experience in Berlin is the rule, not the exception. There is a tipping point at which neighborhoods, schools, governments and cities become uncomfortable places for those of us of European extraction.

Tolerance is a virtue. So is openness. We should welcome the opportunity to get to know new people. On the other hand, we have a perfect right to defend our genetic interests and our own ways of life. Theodore Dalrymple has an excellent article this week on why [diversity doesn't scale well](#) and we can't afford to let emotions set government policy.

I recently mentioned that we rescued Eddie's first bicycle. We had given it away when he outgrew it, and the recipient let it sit in the front yard and rust for a year. I strapped it to the back of my bicycle and brought it home to fix up for Zoriana.

Eddie was enthusiastic every step of the way. Inflating the tires, we discovered that one of them was flat. I bought a new innertube. Removing the wheel we found that the rim strip was shot. The shop didn't have a replacement, but they recommended that we wrap electrical tape around the wheel instead. We did that and finally got it inflated, got the brakes adjusted, got everything oiled and she was on it. Yesterday babysitter Anna brought an old pair of training wheels which Eddie installed immediately. We are good to go.

Oksana had been reluctant to tell her mother about the baby. Mom worries about everything. True to form, she provided a catalog all the good reasons not to have another one. Not the thing you want to hear when you're already halfway down the road. Mom is coming to visit us for the first time since the Covid 19 business got started in March.

Now Oksana has gotten worried about the virus. Suppose Mom catches it on the bus coming up here? To me the odds are small. On the other hand, there are measures you can take. Masks being the least of them – all of the evidence is that they don't do very much.

Reflecting on the matter, I decided that if I could handle hydroxychloroquine as a prophylactic against malaria 50 years ago, I could certainly handle it again for the dread Covid 19. The box I bought had 60 tablets; the recommended course of treatment if you actually get the disease is only 10. That left 50 available for prophylactic use. I started taking them yesterday.

Interesting that the scare propaganda against hydroxychloroquine as a treatment if you get the disease never mentions zinc or erythromycin, the other two drugs in the treatment cocktail.

They recommend that you take the zinc sulfate along with hydroxychloroquine as a prophylactic. It turns out that there are just about no counterindications for zinc (zinc sulfate 124 mg, which includes 45 mg of metallic zinc) and it has long been established as a pretty good defense against all sorts of nasty bugs. Why have the doomsayers focused on spreading fear, uncertainty and doubt about hydroxychloroquine? Couldn't they have recommended at the same time, take zinc in any case? Yes, they could have. No, they didn't.

So that's my plan. Prophylaxis for myself, and have a course of treatment on hand for my mother-in-law Nadia if she feels she has any sign of the symptoms. She doesn't believe in the virus and wouldn't know what to do with the pills if I gave her a package to take-home, but we can get them to her in less than a day if she needs them. Meanwhile, I've ordered some more hydroxychloroquine over the Internet. For list price – \$20 instead of the \$100 that I paid the first time around. The much ballyhooed worldwide shortage seems to be as made up as everything else.

Which brings me to my next topic. Ukraine may be connected to the world via the Internet, but our postal connections leave a lot to be desired. I just sent a second follow-up email to the company that sends me my Hawaiian shirts. We ordered some in late June and heard that they left Frankfurt, Germany on July 9. At which point they seem to have dropped off the edge of the earth.

That's the Ukrainian Postal Service. Nova Poshta, The local version of United Parcel Service, is supposed to deliver three pairs of shorts that I ordered three days ago and the above-mentioned hydroxychloroquine. The vendors have sent me text messages to the effect that the shipments are on their way and given me tracking numbers. When I went down to pick them up this morning I got a lady who must've been trained in customer service by Joseph Stalin himself. The packages weren't there. She could make no sense of the numbers that I had, but she told me that unless I had an SMS from

Nova Poshta, not the vendors themselves, there was nothing she could do. Sure enough, just as I write this I get that SMS telling me to come get the pills.

Today is a busy day chez Seibert. Oksana has a music lesson going on downstairs. Here's a picture of her and Zoriana waiting for the students to show up.

She asked me to prepare a moussaka for the moms and kids after the lesson. I used the same recipe that I sent you, substituting zucchini for half of the eggplant.

This is the time of year for zucchini. Gary Jenkins tells the story about this time of year among the Mormons. He says you had to lock your car door or else you would return to find a basket of zucchini on the seat and a note explaining that you had been chosen to share God's bounty. Zucchini have to be the most rewarding crop in the world.

Tonight we're having a couple of old friends over for a barbecue. As usual we have about three times more groceries than we need. Oksana got a great recipe for shashlik (shish kebab) from her brother Igor and we have had it three times this week. It is a wonderful change of pace. And we are going to outdo ourselves, with her shashlik, my barbecued ribs, sausages and grilled vegetables. In addition to tabbouleh and my mother's potato salad. I went to bed very tired last night after getting it already, happy in the knowledge that we won't have to cook much for the next two or three days.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the media-deprived children are driven to amusing themselves with musical and mechanical instruments. It's a wonderful life.

Graham

[13-Aug-20 --- Grandma's visit. Reminiscences of tenants past in Montgomery county 20200813 ...](#)  
Grandmother Nadia has been here for a couple days and Zoriana is climbing all over her like a young monkey, the same way she does with me. She likes to be held, and held **just so**. When she sleeps with me she will move my arms until they are in exactly the most comfortable position for her. Big girls do the same. I don't recall boys ever doing so... somebody correct me if you think otherwise.

Eddie had a sleepover with Sasha, the little girl who has a crush on him. I stuffed his head with fatherly advice about being especially nice and paying attention to her. Make her glad she invited him. Turned out so-so. She had another girl over and they got wrapped up in video games. Eddie was bored. They brought him home early. While I wish he'd been a bit more gracious as a guest, I'm happy that he just wasn't into those games.

Grandma surprised me. She is taking boxes of hydroxychloroquine and zinc home with her, to go through her own prophylaxis. Even though she doesn't know of any cases in their town. If she stops, an even money bet, at least she'll have some left if anybody gets sick.

Pregnant women get food whims. Oksana has been cooking up a storm, and as I mentioned, got a recipe for shashlik from her brother. With grandma here we made it for lunch. Delicious.

One of you correspondents writes from Montgomery County, Maryland "*Genetic interests!? Wtf? I could care less. Sounds like Nazi Eugenics to me.*"

I have written a response about genetic interests – a deep subject. As I lived in Montgomery county for 30 years and owned rental properties there, it is one of my major points of reference. But I'll save it for next time.

My personal stories I have from being a landlord in Montgomery county will be at least as interesting as my observations on genetic interests, and it will provide a background for the deeper essay. So I'll use this blog to give you those.

My first observation is that Montgomery county is a very liberal place. If I ever rented to a Republican, he was very silent about the matter, probably embarrassed to mention it. I kept my own sentiments to myself and enjoyed many long conversations with my tenants.

Though I owned properties in Howard County, Washington DC and Fairfax County, those in Montgomery County were definitely the most interesting. I bought two rental properties pretty much in a rush, upon returning from Germany in December, 1976. There was a single-family house converted into two flats at 11 Philadelphia Ave. and a six-unit converted house at 232 Manor Circle, both in Takoma Park.

I don't remember many Manor Circle tenants. There were some that didn't pay their rent very frequently – quite a few. There was an African-American mother whose daughter shook down another tenant, an Indian family, who complained to me about it. There was nothing I could do but recommend calling the cops.

But I do remember my ex-wife's sister Denise and her husband, Paul von Behren. They were good tenants – always paid the rent, which was somewhat below-market because of the relationship. But the real star was Bruce Duffy who lived in the largest of the units, the main living unit of the former house.

Bruce was a tall, handsome guy with an attractive wife, Marianne. His main concern was that he wanted it to be quiet. He frequently complained about the noise that the other tenants made. And I would somewhat reluctantly tell the other tenants to please keep it down. Meanwhile, I enjoyed good conversations with Bruce because he is a very intelligent fellow. Then, quite surprisingly, I saw his name appear in the Washington Post as the author of the new book, *The World As I Found It*. A fictionalized biography of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Bertrand Russell, and a couple of other philosophers of that era. So that was why Bruce would want it quiet. He was working on a book. Well, flushed by the success of the book, he moved out and onto other things.

Now, 40 years later, I looked him up and didn't have much trouble finding him through the title of the book. I learned from Wikipedia that Bruce has two daughters. No mention of a wife. He was a sort of a exacting fellow. Interesting, but I suspect not terribly easy to live with. The other thing that comes out is that although he's published books since, nothing he had done since has equaled the success of the first. He's kind of like another J.D. Salinger, a man who had one great book in him, and it was his first. Bruce, I am sure is a good Democrat, as were all of my tenants. I would like to talk to him about his observations about growing up in Montgomery county and the changes he seen.

The tenants I remember best from my other house, 11 Philadelphia Avenue, were Laureen Summers and her husband Earl Shoop. Laureen was a smart, bright-eyed and engaging woman with cerebral palsy. Earl was a stable, solid sort, who worked as a bicycle messenger downtown. And, surprisingly, after they had lived in the house for two or three years. Laureen got pregnant. I was excited for her. I'm sure the pregnancy was hard work for a woman who had trouble walking, but it was also perhaps the biggest achievement of her life and something that she could do even as a handicapped person was to give birth to a normal daughter, which is what she did.

After Maureen was born, Lorraine's father gave them money to buy a house. I was sorry to see them go as tenants but I was delighted for them as people to be able to move out on their own. And start their own family. Now, after 40 years. I find that they are both in their 70s and living in Silver Spring, not far away. Their daughter Maureen is listed as a relative. And, as one would expect, they are listed as registered Democrats. What else in Montgomery County?

I had one other tenant in that house who had children. Joanne Stato had had three before she decided she was a lesbian. She was the editor of a publication called Off Our Backs, a feminist newspaper. Although I saw her children from time to time, they didn't live there. I don't know what her family situation was, except that once she decided that she was a lesbian, she went at it wholeheartedly. Yet she still knew how to be pleasant to a man like the landlord. I liked her.

That house saw quite a few gays. After Joanne, the next upstairs tenant was Joyce Schoeppick. Joyce was a large woman who worked as a carpenter for Montgomery County Public Schools. She wanted nothing more than to be accepted as one of the guys. As she was intelligent and engaging, I accepted her as one of the guys. We would sit in her apartment and talk for extended periods about this and that.

Joyce grew a funny weed, tall and spikey with jagged leaves, in the back yard. I as a landlord did my absolute best not to notice and not to know what it was. However, on one occasion she offered me some of that weed to smoke and it was pretty good. It cemented our relationship as landlord and tenant.

Joyce went on to marry a quite attractive femme named Anne. I think Anne also worked as a carpenter because she knew lots of them. As my ex-wife Mary Ann had insisted over a long period of time that we redo the living room in our large house on Mohican Place, even though nobody ever use that room, I mentioned it to Anne and she put me in touch with Maurice, a guy that she knew who was a skillful finish carpenter. Maurice came over to our house in Mohican Place and did a really expert job of gilding the lily. Even after he was done, however, we rarely used the living room because the house was simply too big. We didn't need the space. But it was beautiful to look at. As a postscript, Mary Ann still lives, by herself I think, in that house that five of us could not fill.

Anne and Joyce got married with great fanfare. We attended the wedding and wished them well. My understanding is that it only lasted a couple years.

Those are the tenants with whom I formed a personal relationship, whose names I remember after forty years..

Aside from Joanne's three and Laureen's baby, we never had kids at 11 Philadelphia. Likewise very few at Manor Circle. And that's the point I will get into in my next piece, addressing genetic interests. Montgomery County even back then was not a place where you saw a lot of kids.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and if the children are not any more above average than in Montgomery County, they are definitely way more normal. More on Montgomery County in the next issue.

15-Aug-20 --- [Genetic Interests Under Pressure in Montgomery County, my Home of 30 Years.](#) ID...  
Dear readers –

Today I'm asking your indulgence as I go deep into a somewhat controversial topic. If you are inclined to tag posts as TLDR (crib for my contemporaries: Too Long, Didn't Read), this would be the time. See you next week.

And now we take the plunge...

One of you correspondents writes from Montgomery County, Maryland "*Genetic interests!? Wtf? I could care less. Sounds like Nazi Eugenics to me.*"

I reply that we all have genetic interests. Start with staying alive- keeping our own genome going. Also having children – passing on our DNA. A minority, who either have no choice or have convinced themselves that DNA is interchangeable, opt for adoption, avoiding the discomfort of gestation and lactation.

Such people may enthuse that human beings of all backgrounds are equally endowed by the Creator with the virtues of intelligence, ambition, compassion and diligence. Following from that questionable premise, it shouldn't matter whether or not the children you raise are biologically yours. Although experience demonstrates over and over that it matters a lot, dogma is a powerful force. People willfully ignore the obvious.

Genetics aside, most people want their kids to be like themselves. I modestly offer that if this correspondent's daughters started to like my blog, to hold opinions like mine, he would have conniptions. He might even demand a DNA test, suspecting that kids with outrageous ideas such as mine could never have sprung from his loins.

Taking genetic interests a step further, we have an interest in our children growing up around people who are similar in ability, values and outlook on life. This pretty much means people who are genetically similar to us. This [positive ethnocentrism](#) has been particularly powerful among traditional outsider minorities, holding together diaspora communities such as the Jews and Gypsies.

There are sad examples of peoples who die out because there aren't similar people around to protect them, marry them and to sustain their culture. Language is a proxy for culture; look at the Wikipedia article on endangered languages.

Back in the 1950s my mother, Janet Seibert, edited the most moving anthropological study I ever read. Theodora Kroeber, the widow of one of the founders of the field of anthropology, in "Ishi, The Last of His Tribe" describes a half starved Indian who was picked up scouting for food around a railroad junction in Northern California. Prof. A.L. Kroeber took him to his home in Berkeley and learned his language, his personal history and the history of his tribe. Nevertheless, Ishi, all alone in the world – no genetic interests – succumbed to disease after only about four years.

For comparison, look at the situation in Montgomery County Maryland, where I used to live. That story is not as bleak as Ishi, but it's worsening quickly.

Public school enrollment is dominated by minorities. A fair percentage do not speak English as a native language. A large percentage are simply not interested in learning. The standards for all students have had to be reduced in order to accommodate the majority.

The teaching profession is dominated by the teacher's unions. The teachers themselves are increasingly minorities. While they hold the required educational credentials, their educational backgrounds are not as strong as the retiring teachers whom they replace. Also, the curriculum increasingly spreads the leftist notions of economics, history, and social justice that dominate in schools of education. These SJWs put the interests of all others ahead of those of white kids. They have open contempt for parents with traditional notions of civics, religion and sex. My correspondent, in general agreement with the teachers, sees nothing wrong with public schools. I resented the indoctrination my first family received two decades ago – climate, sex, immigration, etc. - and would even more strongly resent what they teach today.

As Richard Arum wrote a decade and a half ago in "Judging School Discipline," schools have increasingly abandoned the idea of keeping order in the classrooms so serious students can study. There are fewer and fewer serious students, and as lawyers have been stridently pointing out, when classroom discipline is enforced it falls hardest on minority students. Administrators find it far easier to close their eyes to the detrimental impact on education and not enforce discipline.

Now comes Covid19. County officials shut the schools down all spring and have decided that they will not be open for the fall semester. They will use online teaching. Experience showed that it is not as effective. Marginal students simply blow it off; better students put in some effort but they don't learn as much as they would in a classroom.

The teachers are all in favor of the shutdown. Why not? They get paid for doing far less work. Teaching online is easier than dealing with real kids in a classroom, and many of them won't show up online. More than that, the political bet is that the chaos favors Joe Biden over Trump. A twofer. I see a danger to them in that it will become increasingly apparent that the schools are expensive and ineffective in the first place. Home schooling will undoubtedly increase. One might hope (against hope, alas) that it would be enough to dampen the power of the teachers' unions.

As to genetic interests? Better off Jewish, Eastern Indian, North Asian and white parents are more inclined to proctor their children to be sure that they do their online homework. The children who didn't take school seriously in the first place are able to more completely ignore it. As many educators, public health officials and sociologists have noted, the devil makes work for idle hands. Kids don't use the time freed from school to further their education. The educational gap between the social classes is growing wider.

There is an alternative for the upper middle class. Make that, wealthy. St. Andrew's Episcopal school, which my grown children attended, now costs \$45,000 a year. That's pretty rich. Same as the other Washington area private schools.

There is a brouhaha now as Montgomery County is working to shut down the private schools as well. The liberal parents who voted in these politicians want good educations for their own children. I expect that the private school parents will put up a fairly strong fight. I doubt that Montgomery County would go so far as to vote for Trump in November, but some voters would be Severely Disgruntled that their children were missing out on that \$45,000 per year liberal indoctrination that is supposed to prepare them for Harvard. And... that the kids are home on their parents' hands all day.

The genetic interests of white parents in Montgomery County have been hammered from all sides. Immigration has increased the demand for housing, which in turn pushed up the price of housing in desirable neighborhoods. Private school tuition growth has far outstripped inflation. Private schools flaunt their virtue through diverse admissions, which obliges them to keep standards low enough that subpar performers are not too severely stigmatized. Moreover, the political bent of the teachers and political climate of the Washington area ensure that the teaching has a socialist slant. Granting favored status to every group of employees other than straight white males has made it harder for them just to make enough income to support a family.

The impact has been especially severe on people without a college degree. People like that rented from me when I owned properties in the county starting in 1976. Most could barely afford marriage and a child even then. But Montgomery County schools were generally good and their kids did okay. That would not be as true today. Spanish is the dominant language in the neighborhoods where I owned affordable housing. Zillow estimates that the smaller of my former properties, which cost me \$54,000 in 1977, would be worth \$740,000 (6.3% compound annual increase over 43 years – far more than income went up) and would rent for \$3,100. A working-class family spending half their income on rent would still find their children in public schools set up to do what they can with minority kids, not foundational Americans.

That's not a recipe for raising kids who will give you grandchildren. They are less likely to be educated to get good jobs. They won't be encouraged to have pride in themselves or their ancestry. They will constantly experience reverse discrimination. They won't meet marriageable mates and carry on the culture. No – they will die out. The survey of former tenants I gave in my last blog reveals few kids. They were already dying out even when things were much better than today.

In conclusion, [genetic interests are real](#), and ignoring the genetic interests of the descendants of the founding stock of America has certainly not been good for them. Inasmuch as it is them, above all, who incorporate the values that the country defended in its wars and led patriots to romanticize about the USA being “a beacon to the world,” the interests of the country have been damaged as well.

I voted with my feet. With each passing day I am more content with my decision.

That's the news – or perhaps you would say, the slant – from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women good looking, and the children's teachers, who share their students' genetic interests, are highly invested in doing their job right.

[19-Aug-20 --- On dealing with oligarchs on both sides of the Atlantic Our household is in the midd...](#)

Our household is in the middle of a totally avoidable crisis. The electric company, which was a state-owned business in Soviet times, has changed hands a couple of times since. Most recently it was acquired by Rinat Akhmetov, Ukraine's richest oligarch. Like all the oligarchs, he tends to squeeze as much money out as he can through leverage, asset sales and lack of investment.

Our neighborhood suffers widespread electric outages every couple weeks, usually not more than an hour or two at a time. Sometimes half the circuits in our house go out, as one of the three phases that we get from Kyivenergo goes dead.



We have always been plagued with inexplicable problems. I mentioned the fecal pump from our septic system. It was under warranty, but what happened to it looked more like a lightning strike than anything wrong with the repair.

We had our electrician install a voltage regulator that cuts the power off temporarily when the promised 230 V falls below 200 or goes over 250. This happens every two or three days. It is an inconvenience. Among other things, we have to reset the temperature after the refrigerator goes out or else everything freezes.

I have listened as Oksana nattered on about this forever, assuring her that this is simply the way life is in Ukraine. Be thankful we have electricity and that it's not out for long enough to do any serious damage. Also, that our monthly bill is only \$100 or so. It could be worse.

Without asking me, she made an appointment with the electric company to go complain. I wished her good luck. She was shocked and surprised that they treated her rudely and sent her away empty-handed. She then talked to the other four families who share our transformer and found that they generally suffer the same problems. Together they got the company to send a guy out. He was here this morning, reassured Oksana that everything was okay and that it wasn't their fault, and left.

I had known he was coming but stayed at my computer. Oksana could have gotten me if she wanted to. After he left she berated me for not having been there.

I now have another senseless task on my hands. The transformer that serves the five families has two locks. A little key unlocks the top part where you can read the meters. Yes, we have to climb a ladder, read the meters, and report usage ourselves so they can bill us. The bottom lock is for the transformer itself. The key is something that a jailer in Dickens' time might've carried. There is only one copy, in the hands of the family that led the transformer project. Oksana wants me to get it copied. In the interest of continuing to frustrate ourselves trying to get service from a Ukrainian oligarch, heir to the Soviet system.

I can regard this as a fool's errand, which it certainly is, or a treasure hunt. For the sake of my sanity I choose the latter. If I manage to get it duplicated I will demonstrate to myself – nobody else gives a damn – that I really know my way around the city.

Back in the US, the powers that be are very good at disappearing people from the Internet. You remember Judy Mikovits who put out the viral video "[Plandemic – Doctors in Black](#)" in May, the one that had the major social media companies scrambling to erase as fast as they could?

If you do a search for her today you find almost nothing. Big tech has rendered her pretty much an un-person. However, she remains alive and kicking and occasionally

giving interviews. You can search for her on a very far-from-mainstream web site: "fort-russ.com mikovits".

"America's Frontline Doctors" has done a little better on the Covid19 front. You can still find them, although the search brings up a great many articles defaming them. They may have lost their jobs, but not totally lost their voices.

The bête noire of the hour is Millie Weaver, who has a new video entitled "Shadowgate" about John Brennan, General James Jones and the deep state, among many other things. Search on "'Millie Weaver' Shadowgate bitchute'. If that doesn't work, substitute banned.video for bitchute.

She has suffered the same kind of relatively inexplicable arrest and jailing that Judy Mitkovits did. The powers that be play a dirty game with anybody who opposes them. For those reports search on "'Millie Weaver' Zerotrade.com'. I know some of you will question my use of conservative sources, but to my shock and surprise the mainstream media has not covered these gross abuses of citizen rights.

[Here's the story of the arrest](#). A squabble with her mother over a cell phone several months ago, long forgiven by mom. And this warranted a sealed indictment and arrest by a SWAT team? Something fishy going on. Stephen Stills was (weirdly) singing [the right song](#), but at the wrong party's national convention. BTW, [Still's original](#) was far better.

Time to insert a story of my own brush with the deep state. I left IBM in 1979 when it became clear that I would be washed overboard as flotsam or jetsam in IBM's diversity deluge. I wasn't very systematic. I went next door on East-West Highway in Bethesda to Booz Allen and Hamilton. I knew little about them. They were the only company I talked to. They offered me a 10% raise, which I took.

They put me to work on the Saudi Navy Expansion Program, SNEP. Since I was an expert in IBM computers, they had me size the computer needed to manage spare parts for the Saudi Navy.

I had a lot of experience with managing spare parts for the US Army and Navy. I sized out the machine, which would've fit in an average bathroom and cost about \$50,000. Wrong answer! The right answer turned out to be a large 370 computer running the most complex operating system, costing a couple of million dollars and filling a big living room. My expertise was absolutely ignored.

The Saudis who were supposed to oversee things were young, inexperienced, not terribly well educated and probably not that smart. When one asked me how we came up with that sizing, I indiscreetly made a gesture to suggest that we had pulled it out of the air. Within a week I was on my way to Buenos Aires to work a contract with

Automoviles Renault. That was the Booz Allen Hamilton of 1980. They would ruthlessly do anything for a dollar, with no concern for the client's interests.

As I look back on the morality of the situation, I would have to ask, who was the client? Was it the U.S. Navy? The US government? The Saudi Navy? The Saudi government? Each of these had somewhat different interests. If our objective was to claw back some of the money that the Saudis had been raking in since creating OPEC in 1973, it could be that the Navy was on the right side. I don't handle such moral dilemmas well.

I spent six months in Argentina, perfecting my Spanish, and writing up a set of recommendations in Spanish that were well received by the customer. I got no end of crap from the Booz Officer in Charge and the Principal overseeing me. They subscribed to the seagull philosophy of management – fly in, crap on everybody, and fly away. Fortunately Mike McCullough, the OIC, didn't speak Spanish and never really knew what was going on.

I concluded that I did not have what it took to make a career at Booz. I maintained "If I am worth \$100 an hour with their management, I am worth \$200 without it." Money was not my god. I quit, and with no prospects on the horizon sought my fortune as an independent consultant.

Booz Allen Hamilton has become more and more dependent on the government. Edward Snowden worked for Booz – the corruption has been well documented by Glenn Greenwald in "Snowden – the Inside Story."

I find Millie Weaver's documentary ShadowGate, about what they have morphed into, to be very plausible. I find the fact that people like Millie will not be shut up despite threats of severe consequences to be a great testimony to the American values I grew up with.

Please note that the whistleblowers are disproportionately us foundational Americans. Après nous, le deluge. There are a lot of foreign-born executives, and a considerable number of CEOs in America. I don't see many whistleblowers among them. The culture that made America great has always been rather unique. It is crumbling before our eyes – we are becoming like everybody else.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children innocent of all these machinations. How and when do we tell them about the real world?

[21-Aug-20 --- Where's our summer? Medical misinformation. Shadowgate and Ukraine Here in K...](#)

Here in Kyiv, we have been unseasonably cool since winter. The spring was cold, and summer has only rarely touched 90°. For two weeks in July I was about the only one to brave the cold waters to swim in our local lake.

This does not keep the locals from complaining. As Eddie and I set out for a farmer's market on our bicycles we got a stern admonition to bring lots of water with us and wear baseball caps under our helmets to keep the sun off. We laughed and ignored them. It was in the low 80s.

The cool weather has played some interesting tricks on us. Those peaches that looked so delicious are almost gone. They were not nearly as sweet as in years past. However, the cherry plums which have always been too sour are delicious. Go figure.

Let me bring you up-to-date on some health issues. On June 26 I wrote that I had seen an orthopedist about the pain in my back. He did an MRI and gave me a list of five drugs to buy. I bought three of them, read the literature, and didn't take any. I then went on Amazon to look for a book on how to treat your own back, and I found one by Robin McKenzie with exactly that title. It had sold millions of copies and had thousands of reviews. I bought it.

It made sense. Your spine hurts because it has lost its flexibility. You need to do exercises to make it more supple. The book gives a list of exercises, which I started to do.

Despite the fact that it hurt when I switched from horizontal to vertical coming out of the water, I kept right on swimming and simply allowed a few minutes for my back to sort itself. Between the swimming and the exercises it seems to be improving. The medications in my bottom drawer will become part of my estate.

This is consistent with my philosophy of avoiding pharmaceuticals whenever possible. In October 7, 2019 I wrote about how I had treated my recurrent gallbladder pain with *Silybum marianum* (milk thistle). After the pain went away I kept taking the stuff. I developed another stomach pain – it seems that too much of a good thing can also hurt you. I am now taking nothing at all for my stomach and it's okay. It is even tolerating beer again.

The other change in my regimen has been simply to eat less, especially in the evening before going to bed. Small dinner, not too much alcohol, and voilà, no need for Maalox. Pretty simple stuff. As a side benefit my weight has fallen to just what it was in high school.

Quite a few of you have been writing me about hydroxychloroquine. I stumbled [on a site](#) that has links to a lot of useful articles, starting with one last March by the site owner, Dr. James Todaro, on the benefits of hydroxychloroquine. He got mad when Google immediately took it down. One of the most interesting articles is "[Twenty-one billion reasons to discredit hydroxychloroquine](#)." It is about how the pharmaceutical industry will sacrifice your health in pursuit of the almighty dollar. We already knew that. Just look at their TV ads.

One of you recommended that I buy the book "Lies My Doctor Told Me, and What You Can Do about That" by Dr. Ken Berry. People love it – it has thousands of Amazon reviews. However, because I think I already agree with him I didn't bother to buy it.

He has a [YouTube video](#) that gives the essence of his thesis. The valuable part is his explanation of why doctors (1) don't know the state-of-the-art and (2) are highly inclined to reach for the prescription pad when they ought to tell you to change your behavior. Berry is hyping the keto diet and debunking decades of admonitions about cholesterol and the like.

Once again, I didn't pursue it because I already believe him. I have always eaten what I wanted. The digestion process so thoroughly breaks down whatever you eat in order to create molecules small enough to pass into the bloodstream by osmosis that whether the source of fats or carbohydrates was would not seem to matter. It is what the amino acids scattered throughout your body do to assemble that stuff into tissue that counts.

A simple thought experiment: how to starve on a 20,000 cal per day diet. Eat sawdust. You will starve, because your body can't digest it. It can't digest grass either.

The body's mechanisms are more complex than the models – which generally simply burn up a sample of some foodstuff and count the amount of heat given off – have anticipated. The question calls for statistical analysis, controlled experiments. Do away with your preconceptions, carefully control diets and see what happens. That seems to be what Dr. Berry and his colleague Nina Teicholz, author of "The Big Fat Surprise," have done. I feel some gratification that I already knew intuitively that the doctors were full of hot air.

This morning I enter my third week on the prophylactic regime. So far no adverse reactions. One of the take away points from this Medicine Uncensored blog is that HCQ does not absolutely prevent getting Covid 19. The prophylaxis reduces the likelihood, and reduces the severity if you do. Likewise, taking the course of treatment early after getting infected reduces the impact of the disease. It is all a matter of statistical likelihood. When you stumble across [scare propaganda like this](#), you have to understand there are no guarantees.

I neglected to mention some key points about [ShadowGate](#), Millie Weaver's documentary. A lot of it focuses on the corruption here in Ukraine, and a lot of the corruption in Ukraine comes right back around to Joe and Hunter Biden. Here's what the Trump campaign has done with the [China connection](#). I am sure we can expect at least as much with respect to Ukraine.

One of the most interesting aspects to me of ShadowGate was the allegations of the way that the intelligence agencies have been able to use the vast database of

behavioral information to guarantee the outcome of trials. Roger Stone is an example. What are the odds that a jury would be impaneled in Washington DC consisting entirely of college-educated white people? I spent two weeks of 1977 at the DC courthouse waiting in a pool of potential jurors to be put on a case. They never empaneled me. I want to assure you from my background in statistics that the odds would have been astronomical against having picked an all white jury, much less one of college graduates.

Millie Weaver's interviewees contend that the jury pool itself was preselected to include only people highly likely to find Roger Stone reprehensible. That would not be hard to do in Washington DC even if you knew nothing about the jurors in advance. But if you knew things such as their party affiliation, their record of donations to political causes, their memberships in organizations such as the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace or American Civil Liberties Union, it is a lead pipe cinch you could guarantee a conviction.

These are only contentions. However, there is no doubt that the intelligence agencies have had the ability to collect such information and form such databases. It would be a surprise if they did not use them. Ethics would not constrain them (giggle!). I would recommend that you watch the movie. There must be a reason why they so strongly want you not to.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children are looking forward to going back to school with real live classmates in a real schoolhouse.

[25-Aug-20 --- Our House as Hogwarts. New York refugees land on our doorstep. The deeper star...](#)

Harry Potter is the theme of this week's summer camp. Natalia found some Hogwarts school banners to hang up, shown in this picture.

The kids are sewing wizard costumes.

There will be another camp for the first week of school, this time on the school grounds, after which school get started in earnest. That will give us a week from the time they give us a list of the required books and supplies until Eddie actually needs them.

A lot of things are still up in the air. They are still trying to attract students. They are only teaching two grades this time – first and fourth. One of the school families is going to live upstairs in the building and they will hold classes downstairs.

There is some intrigue in that regard as well. Two years ago I had a long talk with the headmistress about the fact that the school needed some structure, some written policies, more people involved than just her. She gave me a polite listening and what was supposed to be a sympathetic ear. Without much faith that anything would happen, I drafted a set of bylaws for how a private school ought to run. I had been on the boards of two of them for a total of 12 years – treasurer of both

schools – and did what I think is a pretty good job between what I remembered and models I could find on the Internet.

I was immediately stymied. Eugene Matveyev, the guy who was supposed to put it on the Internet simply never did. Anna, the headmistress, shrugged her shoulders and didn't push the issue. It told me what I needed to know – get what we can out of the school, but don't invest my time in it – and I let it go.

The intrigue this fall – and a typical Ukrainian intrigue it is – is that Eugene is trying to start a rival school. Absolute stupidity! Not only does he not know about schools, but he doesn't have a cadre of loyal teachers such as Anna possesses. If he wants a good education for his kids, he should absolutely band together with like-minded parents instead of trying to do it himself.

How did I find out? He called Oksana asking if she knew any places for rent as a school. Oblivious to the notion that he had given me quite an affront couple years ago.

I told Oksana to answer that she didn't know of any place, and to absolutely stay out of it. Anna may not have done much to earn our loyalty, but we certainly don't want to be perceived as being on the other side. We just want Eddie to get a good education, and he is in Anna's school with Natalia as a teacher.

That is Ukraine's tragedy. The inability of people to work together, to trust one another in a joint enterprise, plagues the national government and businesses of all sizes.

Expatriates this far removed from the United States are an unusual group. This week we add another story. We were introduced to Charlie and Suzy by my old friend from Vietnam, Rob Moore. They sold their apartment in Brooklyn Heights within walking distance of the Brooklyn Bridge. They will be living out of five suitcases in a B&B for the next three months as they work out their next moves. We look forward to seeing them fairly frequently. Charlie will continue working remotely, as most of New York has been doing for the past half year in any case. But that's only the lead into a more remarkable story!

I would like to thank Edward, after whom our Eddie is named, for forwarding pieces from the Wall Street Journal. As the New York Times is abdicating its role as the newspaper of record, the WSJ seems to be rising to fill the void.

I had heard that the McCloskey's, the gun toting St. Louis couple who defended their property against the BLM mob, would be at the Republican convention. I had to search hard to find the video. The two of them are lawyers, so it is not surprising that they are articulate. The poignancy of their situation, along with the national coverage of the riots that threatened them and the fact that they, not the rioters were charged by the authorities, gives their [endorsement of Pres. Trump](#) great authenticity. No wonder Big Tech made the piece so hard to find.

I had been wondering if my long-ago alma mater in Portland, Reed College, played a role in the Antifa uprisings there. So I looked it up and found the most likely activist group would be Reedies Against Racism. Reading about them I found an article in The Atlantic magazine from 2017. Reading that, I was surprised to find that some members of the Reed community had had enough of social justice and just wanted to study. Amazing! Both for Reed and for the Atlantic.

Searching to learn about the author, Chris Bodenner, I found that he has been working for three years for Andrew Sullivan of The Dish. Sullivan is a gay, anti-Trump Obama supporter who calls himself

conservative. Oh, really? You have to give him this – he is prolific and a talented writer. Anyhow this Chris is apparently a co-owner of The Dish.

The Atlantic piece, [The Surprising Revolt at the Most Liberal College in the Country](#), cleared up a couple of other mysteries. A couple of years ago I received notice that Reed was discontinuing its renowned humanities program, the Hum 11 course that all of us freshmen had had to take. It was a well-done, deep dive through the history of civilization. The people of color had gotten up in arms and insisted that it be removed. To their credit, some resisted.

The email I got a couple years ago, gauzed up with all of the appropriate fuzz-words, had said that times had changed in the course was no longer relevant. Coincidentally, or perhaps not, John R. Kroger stepped down as president. He was replaced by Audrey Bilger, who made her academic career as a militant lesbian.

I read some other pieces on The Dish by Sullivan and Bodenner. While I don't agree with them, and don't think that gay folks writing about big-city issues are going to solve all America's problems, I will read them. They, like Matt Taibbi, our independent, subscriber supported journalists at [substack.com](#). That's another trend that I like – journalists becoming free of the moneyed interests that own the media.

Yesterday babysitter Anna and I put together a chest-of-drawers for the baby room. The diapers, rubber sheets, baby clothes etc. are in place. It's getting real.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong (but don't discount Anna with a hammer!), the women are good looking (even with their sleeves rolled up) and the children are delightfully normal.

Graham

[31-Aug-20 --- September song; Man bites dog; Oksana's birthday, conspiracy theories Autumn is ...](#)  
Autumn is gently approaching. The sky is sunny and the temperatures in the high 70s to high 80s. Today 90. The air is clear, as always. It is been absolutely beautiful for swimming. I have made it to our lake almost every day for my 40-minute swim. With luck I have another three weeks or so before it gets too cold.

In a rather chaotic fashion, we celebrated Oksana's birthday on Friday. The kids from the summer camp were leaving as I was fixing dinner. It was garlic shrimp, just as Oksana had asked. I planned for six, including babysitter Anna and her daughter Sophia. We got eight: Natalia, camp leader and her teenage daughter Alisa.

Extra mouths are distressing for a chef. I had enough shrimp and corn for three adults, not five. It came off somehow satisfactorily. I ate bread instead of corn, and they made the shrimp stretch.

They don't use too many sauces here in Ukraine. My garlic/butter/olive oil/lemon juice concoction – with a few capers and some parsley – was new to them and they were happy to put it on everything. Thank goodness I had been generous with the butter.

Kids go through growth phases. Our Edward, our fair-haired boy, has been exceptionally rude and obtuse over the last few weeks. Yesterday he pushed me aside rushing upstairs. This morning he yelled at his sister for playing with his fishing rod, when the fault was 100% his own for not having put it away. I got a report that he curtly refused the request of a couple of fishermen on the beach to hunt



for frogs down at the other end and not bother them. Suffice it to say that Rousseau was wrong. They are not born angelic, only to fall from a state of grace. They have to be civilized into being human. That is our job as parents. And it doesn't work with everybody.

I have been in a low-grade depression on account of all of the chaos in the United States – the rioting and the Covid19. It makes absolutely no sense. These affect me less than anybody I know. I have a kind of a dark foreboding that this will not turn out well.

It is an old journalistic chestnut that "dog bites man" is not news, but "man bites dog" is worth reporting.

If Kyle Rittenhouse a gotten killed by the armed mob in Kenosha, his name would have been forgotten immediately. "Dog bites man." The fact that, however improbably, he managed to kill his attackers is what makes it newsworthy.

There is outrage. Why was a 17-year-old kid on the street with a gun? Where were his parents?

Those are good questions. You could ask those questions as well of the rioters. Why were they there? Why were they allowed to be there? Where were the adults?

The adults in charge, at the state, county, city government and police department level, were nowhere to be seen. If they had been on the streets, imposing martial law or simply making their presence felt, there would have been no mayhem.

It was of course left to the alternative media to provide biographical data on the three guys who got shot in Kenosha. Three white guys, two with prison records and one with merely felonies. The odds of a white guy in the United States having been imprisoned are three in 100, a felony conviction eight in 100. Therefore, multiplying them together, the combined probability of this Kyle Rittenhouse having shot random citizens with CVs like theirs is 7 in 100,000. Not to mention the ethnic aspect. It is whispered that none were Gentiles.

They were not random. This is reminiscent of the thugs that Vladimir Putin assembled in his attempt to set up people's republics in eastern Ukraine. Thugs he had gathered from all over. Some are recruited, some of them simply attracted to the chaos. And in the chaos in the United States, some of them undoubtedly paid by sinister forces.

There is little doubt in my mind that the intelligence community knows pretty much who the leaders of these mobs are. They have all the tools: facial recognition, voice recognition, cell phone tracking, license plate tracking and so on. Why don't they share this intelligence with the local police and prevent this chaos? For a wonderful conspiracy theory about the spooks' capabilities, which must be somewhat true judging from the alacrity and viciousness with which it was shut down, see Millie Weaver's "[Shadowgate](#)." For a theory on why, try [Tucker Carlson](#).

Some of you have criticized me for the sources that I choose. Millie Weaver, above, is hosted by InfoWars. I would've passed a link from YouTube, except that it was no longer available. One of you sent a link to a piece denigrating the McCloskey's of St. Louis, recounting how the rabbi next door called them bullies for wanting beehives that were being used to teach children removed from the property. I read it; it was rather balanced. In return, I asked him to watch an account of the various black men who have become causes célèbres after being shot by police, and of white victims of black murderers. He absolutely would not watch it because it came from [American Renaissance](#). Tainted from the start, he would not accept that it might contain an iota of truth.

It is a mistake not to listen to all sides of an argument. In the interest of time you have to be willing to ignore things you have heard before, or cut it off when it actually contradicts common sense, but one should never dismiss an argument out of hand.

A point on conspiracy theories in general. The term was invented by the US intelligence community to pooh-pooh suspicions about what they are up to. However, so many such theories, such as the suppression of HCQ (see "[Plandemic](#)"), the lack of demonstrated effectiveness of masks, the widespread data fudging on climate and such, that these days one is surprised to hear something from the media or official sources that actually rings true. Science has been corrupted; your research paper doesn't pass peer review unless it is consistent with the narratives being pushed by the powers that be. It is reminiscent of the stories that were told about the Soviet Union. It is no coincidence that Ron Unz calls his column [American Pravda](#). It is a comedy, like commissars of old running in circles to keep up with Stalin's latest pronouncements, working to forget the latest unperson and how history had last been changed.

Let me just project that the characterization of these "peaceful protesters" as thugs is probably right and the powers that be know it. I doubt there is much difference between these three random rioters in Kenosha and the average rioters in Washington DC, Portland or elsewhere. They are not drawn by the nobility the cause so much as by the opportunity for mayhem.

It raises some other questions. Part of America's sickness is that young men of all colors over the past several decades have had a hard time finding a place in the world. When my grown children face this problem, it was called "failure to launch." The combination of a lack of opportunity in society, and the incessant drumbeat of antiestablishment propaganda from schoolteachers and the media makes them antisocial. I heard it coming from my kids' expensive private Episcopal schools. I encountered it in a very virulent form as I attended grad school in education at the University of Maryland 2003–2004. We pondered what might come of it. Now we see.

The New World Order is oppressing white men, increasingly favoring everybody else. This federal employee had enough and put together a [long video about it](#). He will almost surely be fired, but he is not going gently into the night.

I gave a Toastmasters speech on [Clarence Thomas](#). His autobiography, "My Grandfather's Son," is as inspirational an American story as you will find.

Clarence Thomas believes that an individual should succeed on his own merits. That is absolutely at odds with the reigning doctrines of this age. I concluded that Thomas and other Blacks like him are tragic figures. The events in modern America, and Europe as well, are forcing them to choose sides within their own societies based on color. This is antithetical to everything they believe, and profoundly uncomfortable.

My evaluator giggled me for having a conclusion that was not consistent with the story. She was right. I advocated that Ukraine strenuously limit immigration so that the problem of having diverse populations never arises. Diversity and multiculturalism are leading to chaos in North America and Western Europe. The lack thereof is one of the considerable strengths of East Asian countries, one which I expect will help them survive many other deficiencies. At any rate, Ukraine should avoid diversity until some country, somewhere proves that it can work over an extended period of time.

Last night we had the first meeting of an English conversation club. It is a project I've been talking about for years but never got underway. I was prodded by a member of Toastmasters. It included Charlie and Susie, recent expatriates from Brooklyn Heights who joined me, Alex, and a handful of other Ukrainians at a shashlk restaurant. More of an account in the next installment.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women good-looking and the children remain innocent. Wasn't it wonderful when we could all remain innocent, content to deal with our own small problems, unmoved by events on the other side of the world?

Graham

1-Sep-20 --- Epistemology. How do you know what you think you know? And how to try to convin...(

In my last issue I discussed how you know things. Epistemology. I suggested that you should be open to reading everything from every source.

*"It is a mistake not to listen to all sides of an argument. In the interest of time you have to be willing to ignore things you have heard before, or cut it off when it actually contradicts common sense, but one should never dismiss an argument out of hand."*

However, being open to reading is not the same as reading. We simply don't have that much time. So how do you make a quick judgment whether something you receive is worth reading or not?

Here are my factors.

1. First, consider who sent it to you. Is this person well-informed in general?
2. Second, consider the link itself. Is it a reliable, unbiased source?
3. Third, does the sender have any thoughtful remarks about the piece? Or are they simply passing something on?
4. Fourth, what is my history on this issue with whoever forwarded it? Have we gone over these things before? Have we resolved anything? Have they previously changed my mind?
5. Fifth. How long is the thing? How much time will it take me?

Let's take a specific case in point. One of you readers have sent me a link to an article in [The Atlantic](#) saying that the national electric grid is not up to snuff, which we know, and that the Trump administration spiked a program to upgrade it. They claim it's too bad, supposedly because this upgrade would have reduced carbon emissions. Should I invest the time to read it? This time I will, just to demonstrate how one's instincts are usually right. I'm willing to have my mind changed, but I don't think it'll happen this time.

What do I like? I have known this correspondent for more than 40 years. He is one of the most talented professionals I worked with. Furthermore, he is a math guy; taught high school in retirement.

What puts me off?

1. First, it comes from The Atlantic, which I already know to be firmly on the side of global warming.
2. Second, the idea seems to be that our objective is to reduce carbon emissions and not to just improve the reliability of the electrical system. These are two distinct goals which are often antithetical. It seems to me perverse or unlikely that a single solution will address both.
3. Third, I already know the science and the technology of the alternative power sources pretty well. Solar energy and wind energy being the big ones because hydroelectric is pretty much maxed out.
4. My correspondent has not responded to material I have asked him to watch or read, most especially my video on climate change – link below.

Even progressives have come around to protect criticizing solar and wind. Arch-liberal Michael Moore's, [Planet of the Humans](#) does so. Longtime environmental activist Michael Shellenberger's book [Apocalypse Never](#). I have written to this correspondent about these and I have never heard anything. So far as I know he has never watched or read them. It raises the question, why should I read the stuff that he is sending me?

He never commented on my own video, [Global Warming on a Coffee Break](#). Let me recap my case against everybody dying of global warming.

Global warming is the theory of the greenhouse effect. Greenhouse gases are only one of many things that affect climate. The global warming crowd's focus has been mostly on only this single one.

Focusing just on greenhouse gases – carbon dioxide. We get into a question of arithmetic. How much carbon is there in the whole world? Where is it? Only a tiny fraction remains locked up in fossil fuels.

In my video I do a thought experiment. Suppose we were able to locate and dig up 100% of these fossil fuels. How much would it raise the temperature? The IPCC's estimates of how much a doubling of carbon dioxide in the air would raise the temperature are amazingly imprecise: 1.5 ° to 4.5 ° C.

Assuming we could burn all of the remaining fossil fuels, it would quadruple carbon dioxide and raise the Earth's temperature by between 4° and 13°C. But that could never happen. Among other things, nobody thinks we could recover more than 35%-40% of what's there, over decades. The IPCC – structured to be alarmist – puts the maximum temperature increase at 5° C over the next 80 years, with CO<sub>2</sub> levels double today's.

As noted in my movie, carbon dioxide levels have been several times higher than that in geological history. That happen from massive volcanic activity five times in the last half billion years, leading to great extinctions. It could happen again – it is threatening in Mount Vesuvius, and especially in Yellowstone. We can't do anything about that. CO<sub>2</sub> in the air has been 15 times greater than it is today, far above what fossil fuels could possibly produce, due to factors over which we have no control. Life went on.

How about temperature? Paleoclimatologists are able to estimate what temperatures have been like in the Earth's history. They have been more than 5°C warmer than they are today. Life went on. Moreover, there has been almost no correlation between temperature and CO<sub>2</sub> levels over the past half billion years. Despite some very heavy thumbs on the scales, measured temperature has not increased much since 2000 despite a significant increase in CO<sub>2</sub>. The models have all been wrong. Quite wrong.

Before anybody opens a discussion about global warming with me, I would ask them to please watch my movie and tell me where I'm wrong. Don't come at me with something new and wonderful from the Atlantic and tell me that it changes everything. The Atlantic is among other things, not a scientific journal. With regard to climate change and many other topics it is a journal of liberal advocacy. I am confident that I know as much about climate, and have read vastly more, than whoever wrote the article. See the bibliography in my movie and my Amazon reviews.

Climate change is an only slightly toxic topic. You are still (somewhat) allowed to cite people who disagree with Al Gore – denigrated as “climate deniers.” The differences among people – human biodiversity – is a much touchier subject. People who hold that the lineages of mankind might be measurably different for evolutionary reasons are farther off the reservation. Online publications such as [American Renaissance](#) and the [Occidental Observer](#) are strictly forbidden. The SPLC and all

right-thinking (viz, left-thinking) people strongly exhort that you not poison your minds by reading them.

It is obvious that after four centuries of grappling with the race issue in United States, more than half a century since the civil rights efforts having made it a top priority, we haven't solved anything. Common sense would say that one should listen to all sides of the argument. The irony is that the above journals advocate what had been common sense from Herodotus' time up until the 1960s. There is no new science to disprove it. Quite the opposite – all recent science of which I know reinforces long held views. See [my Amazon reviews](#). It has become extremely unfashionable, and increasingly dangerous, to talk about it.

So here's a request for people who forward me things to read.

1. Tell me what is new, what information you think that I am not already familiar with.
2. If I respond, and give you something to read in turn, please do me the courtesy of reading and commenting on it.
3. This means, trust my judgment that I will not waste your time asking you to read pointless political screeds, even though my sources are widely disparaged.

I have completed this before opening the link to the Atlantic Article. After writing this, I downloaded and annotated the piece, which is attached.

What follows below are my brief notes on what I read.

With regard to the Atlantic article, the first thing I find is that the author is [Peter Fairley](#). He is a well-established climate change advocate. Looking over the list of articles on [its website](#), I do find one that I might agree with – that the supposedly environmental benefits of cross-laminated timber have been overblown. He has a fairly predictable piece on healthcare workers leaving their jobs rather than face Covid 19. Another one goes on about the resurrection of the hydrogen fuel cell concept in an article in Scientific American. I am skeptical of that. In my opinion Scientific American and MIT Technology Review have sold out to the Washington narrative. I dropped my subscriptions to both over the past decade.

Therefore, before I start to read this actual piece I have a fairly good notion of what I'm going to find. I would ordinarily cut my losses at this point. I don't think I'm going to see anything new. But in this case I forge on...

And what I find it does not surprise me whatsoever. Peter Fairley assumes that the reader is on board with the notion that climate change is an immediate crisis, that the solution to climate change is alternative energy such as wind and solar, that Europe is paving the way (disregarding Germany's skyrocketing energy costs, grid problems and the like), and that any and all objections to alternative energy are based solely on the economic interests of the fossil fuels industry.

No, no, no! Read the guys on your own side, the environmentalists such as Stewart Brand, Patrick Moore and the above-mentioned Michael Moore and Peter Shellenberger. Then read the long-standing opposition. I have reviewed most of their books.

So the bottom line is, if you, dear readers, want me to take a look at an opinion piece such as this, please do your homework. Read it yourself. Get familiar with the science. Tell me what is going to be new. Don't waste my time.

Graham

[2-Sep-20 --- Outings and Expeditions; Famous Ukrainians; Reputation mining I have been talkin...](#)

I have been talking about getting together a English language conversation group for several years. It took a prod from Toastmaster Alex Krisky to get it going. We met in the Limpopo restaurant, an indoor/outdoor shashlik place in Hydropark that Oksana and I like.

It was Sunday night, and we were the only people in the place. Coronavirus has had an impact. Not, however, on us. Nobody bothered with masks. The group included Alex and me; our new friends Susie and Charlie who have recently arrived, having sold their house in Brooklyn Heights, and are considering relocating here; Greek diplomat Yannis from our Toastmasters club, and four other people that I did not remember having seen before.

Ukraine had just celebrated Independence Day, which involves military parades, though not nearly as big as they were when I first got here 13 years ago. Alex and Max, the guy next to me, were pretty well-informed on the history of World War II. Here it is called the Great Patriotic War. Alex had some off-the-wall conspiracy theories about how America had led Churchill into the war in order to exhaust Great Britain and take over as the number one hegemon. Max was more down to earth. I was pleased that he had read Patrick Buchanan on the subject. Buchanan believes that Hitler really didn't want a war, but the bellicose Churchill, pushed by financial interests, made it impossible to avoid.

At any rate, we were there from 5:00 until 8:00, had a wonderful dinner washed down with an adequate amount but no excess of beer. We will do it again.

An added plus was that we have a new babysitter. Dasha, whom I taught two years ago as a sixth grader, is now a ladylike eighth grader and her mom proposed that we use her to watch Eddie, Zoriana and Charlie and Susie's son Luca. I gather that she didn't have too much to do. The three kids played well together. But that is neither here nor there – you need to have somebody watching them, and she seems to be pretty responsible.

Our talk about going to the zoo the next day with Charlie and Susie turned into a comedy of errors. They couldn't do it in the morning. Oksana said it had to be morning because Zoriana naps in the afternoon. Well and good.

We took half an hour longer than we should have to get organized. The difference between an outing and an expedition is a standing joke in our house. It's an outing when daddy leads it. It's an expedition when mommy comes along. There must be food, drink, changes of clothes, hats to protect against the sun, and bathtubs. Only the last one is made up. It takes forever.

Daddy suggested taking the bus and the Metro. The Metro is a straight shot – it goes right through the high bluff on the right bank of the river, runs under downtown, and goes right out to the zoo. Mom is however concerned about exposure to coronavirus on public transportation, masks or not. So we had to walk 15 minutes to where the taxis will meet you in this time of coronavirus.

The taxi driver first asked if he could drop off a bouquet at Lva Tolstova. That's the Metro station only a block away from the street that leads to the zoo. I said, okay.

Then it got complicated. Instead of going to the closest bridge, the logical bridge, the one that any other driver would use, he headed north toward the Moscow bridge. I mistakenly gave him the benefit

of the doubt, figuring that he was listening to traffic reports and knew how to avoid the traffic jams. Nope. Not only was his route about 50% longer than it should've been, but there were traffic jams all the way.

We then got to the Lva Tolstova Metro, where I expected he would drop off the bouquet. Wrong again. We drove several miles along Lva Tolstova Street, a long way out of our way, until he double parked outside of a huge office building. We waited five minutes during which I prayed that nobody would rear end us, and then proceeded to the zoo. The half-hour trip had taken an hour and a quarter. The taxi driver strongly hinted that I should give him a tip. I should have given him a tip in the form of strong advice, but I refrained. I was damned if I was going to give him a monetary tip.

And... the zoo was closed. I knew that the zoo operated from nine until five. Oksana, who was planning the expedition, asked me as we were pulling together the bathtubs and the ski jackets to confirm the hours. I glanced at the Cyrillic information and saw 9-to-5 on their site. However, upon returning home, I find that in the fine print it said "except Mondays – 12 until 5."

Kyiv Polytechnic University is across the street, and there is a fair-sized park there. We went to look for squirrels. A lot of oak trees, but no inhabitants. However, walking a bit further, through the campus, we found some things of interest. This is the premier technology university in the country. There were statues to great engineers, including Sikorsky, who emigrated to America and invented the helicopter.

We also found some artifacts, including this old locomotive. Looking at it, I guessed late 19th century. Wrong! 1954. If I had given it more thought I would've noticed that it was diesel instead of coal powered. However, the heavy, angular construction appeared to be from an earlier era.

At any rate, the kids loved it. Zoriana has no fear. She climbed clear to the top, 15 or 20 feet up, without the slightest concern about falling. Eddie followed her. We turned around after we coaxed her down, and darned if she wasn't back up there again.

They exhibited other Soviet firsts, such as the first lightly armored utility helicopter. Whatever that means. It dated from 1960. And we saw a Yak40 airliner, a crude knockoff of the Boeing 727. I had flown on one of these to Crimea in 2008. I have been on some pretty primitive airplanes before, such as the DC3 and C-130 military transport, but this one had them all beat for lack of civilized comforts.

After our tour the campus we caught another taxi for home. This fellow really knew the city, figured out how to skirt traffic jams when he encountered them, and made it in just over half an hour. Nice tip for him.

Things are quiet on the home front. Eddie started school on Tuesday. This is the year he is old enough to bicycle on his own. Most days. Today I went along, lugging a suitcase full of zucchini, apples and grapes, a gift from Oksana's garden for the kids' lunch. The weather remains warm – 90° today – and we will savor the last few weeks of swimming.

In my yesterday's blog I asked that you readers be willing to read posts that are out of the mainstream. Not approved by the ADL or the SPLC. These liberal organizations have seized the societal high ground and attempt to tell you what Internet content is not fit to read.

The same thing has happened with academic credentials. Many of the books that I review are written by scholars from second-rate institutions. Right off the top of my head they include Victor Davis

Hanson, of Fresno State; Kevin McDonald of Long Beach State; J Philippe Rushton of the University of Western Ontario; Edward Dutton of Oulu University, Finland. Michael Woodley of Menie of the University of Utrecht, Netherlands.

There is nothing wrong with these guys' minds. It is simply that they are not conforming to the mainstream of intellectual thought defined by Harvard, Princeton and Yale in the US and Oxford/Cambridge in the United Kingdom. The gatekeepers at these elite institutions find them dangerous, somewhat heretical. They are not invited into the courts of the mandarins.

Robert Ploman, author of [Blueprint](#), and Richard Haier, author of [The Neuroscience of Intelligence](#), are at the forefront of research on human intelligence. They are at, respectively, King's College, London and the University of California at Irvine. Richard Lynn is at The Ulster Institute. None of these are in the top tier of universities by reputation. Yet, these are among the most influential writers alive today.

People who are at the top universities like Steven Pinker are for the most part my contemporaries. They rose to fame despite political correctness, over the resistance of the cultural Marxists such as Stephen Jay Gould who wielded disproportionate power. E. O. Wilson, who founded sociobiology at Harvard, was loathed by Gould. Gould and other academic Marxists did their best to kill that baby in its crib. Some brilliant scientists, such as Pinker, had the advantage of being Jewish, which in my anecdotal observation is a fair leg up in academia.

Let me also venture the opinion that the top-tier universities have been coasting on reputation. The more Harvard, Yale and the others put ethnicity and social justice ahead of academics, the quicker they will forfeit the reputations they have built up over centuries.

The fall will take some time. There is an interlocking system of rich benefactors on the Boards of Trustees, the businesses these trustees run, the scholarly publications that would publish academic papers, and the governmental bodies that control the flow of research money to the institutions. On top of that, they all work in the English language, which is the sine qua non in science, rather like Latin of three centuries ago. However, the rot has set in and there are few countervailing forces to remedy it.

Who comes next, and when, will be interesting to observe. My guess is that the physical University will diminish in importance as ideas can be easily exchanged over the Internet. Scholarly communities are already starting to become virtual, so the University campus is no longer needed to bring fertile minds together. Scholars do, however, need access to certain physical resources such as laboratories.

In the past few decades, grant money has become a significant force in scientific research. A pernicious force, because the donors usually have a vested interest in the research findings. A global reset, in which money becomes scarcer, could lead to a resurgence in honest scholarship. Other powers such as Russia and China are unlikely to support pure, unfettered scientific research. They are, nonetheless, not encumbered by the social justice notions that dog Western universities. China, for instance, hosts leading researchers in the area of human intelligence.

The same kind of rot has already deeply set in at newspapers, such as, for instance, the Washington Post and the New York Times. Trading on their hard-earned reputations to push dogmatic agendas, they have ruined them. Their credibility is gone. The grey lady is a laughingstock.

I'll add that this also happens to companies. Half a century ago, when I worked for IBM, it was the most widely respected computer company in the world. They leveraged that reputation to win and



retain clients who would have been better off buying computer equipment from somebody else. They have used it in a similar way in the computer services business. They retained employees with the expectation of promotions that wouldn't come and retirement benefits that didn't fully materialize. As the Americans were displaced by Indians on H1B visas. The process is called "reputation mining," and it is not at all unique to IBM. Unfortunately, it seems to have affected most of the major American manufacturing companies and quite a few of the marketing and distribution companies as well. It has as of yet hardly touched the FAANGS, but it will; it is just a matter of time before their attention to agendas other than providing great service, and recognizing employees solely on the basis of merit, turns around to bite them.

Lastly, such changes affect countries. Quite a few people here in Ukraine still want to emigrate to the United States, the supposed land of opportunity. However, the number is dropping rapidly as the magnitude of civil unrest in the United States becomes evident. People are quite familiar with the draconian lockdowns imposed in the name of coronavirus; the fecklessness of the elected officials and police in the face of mob violence; the political correctness; jailing for free speech and the like. Ukraine doesn't look so bad by comparison.

The Anglosphere – Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Great Britain itself – seems to be especially hard-hit. Within the past couple of years it has become forbidden to ask any questions with regard to the chaos caused by parasitic, destructive asylum-seekers. There are hefty fines for questioning the wisdom of the interests of coronavirus lockdowns and for not wearing masks.

Yesterday a correspondent wrote to say that at the rate at which world trade is collapsing there will certainly be increasing food shortages throughout the world. Nevertheless, individual English citizens can be found guilty of "food hoarding" if they react logically and fill the pantry. Moreover, police in all of these countries increasingly have the right to simply walk in and check for themselves to see whether you are wearing masks indoors, hoarding food, homeschooling your children or whatever.

The Anglosphere authorities have been pretty much able to suppress voices raised in resistance to this oppression. These countries are being quietly scratched from Americans' "Plan B" lists. What countries will replace them is a good question. Martin writes that the Southern Cone countries of which I had written favorably have changed significantly. Not only do they have traditionally corrupt governments, but they have been invaded by impecunious refugees from their north. My bet would be central Europe, where things are getting better, and the former Soviet republics which look increasingly good if only by comparison.

That's the news from lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children can still experience a normal childhood. If "normal" can be stretched to mean something that seems to be no longer normal anywhere else in the world.

[7-Sep-20 --- An outing to the farmer's market. Dinner with new and old friends. School and Covi...](#)  
Instead of our usual Sunday outing to the park, Oksana suggested that we go to the farmer's market. Oksana particularly wanted to buy raspberries. She wanted to make jam for the winter.

I wound up carrying 15 kg – about 33 pounds – of groceries a mile back home. See photo below of me laden like an elephant. Note the Trader Joe and Burke School bags. Also –the kids at breakfast.

The prices were fantastic. Here you see pictures of tomatoes at 15 hryvnya kilo., That's 25¢/lb. You see eggplants and peppers at 13¢. And you see the raspberries at a \$1.26. All of it extremely reasonable, and hence the 15 kg. My guess is that Covid19 has thoroughly tangled customs and

border crossings, so produce grown for export must be sold locally. Not a good portent for the long run, but great for us now.

And here's a picture of Eddie, immediately put to work making the raspberry jam.

Oksana and I have been busy the past couple weeks making other stuff. Here's a picture of some tomatoes and some pickles. The tomatoes are one jar of four so far. After today's haul there will be more. And the pickles are one jar of three. We are pretty much set for the winter. The sauerkraut is something that we make all the time. Cabbage is available year-round, and we just do it as we need it.

Last night we had company over for dinner. Susie and Charlie arrived about three weeks ago on a very unusual mission. They had arranged a surrogate parentage. It turns out that they had two fertilized eggs, so they'll have fraternal twins born of different mothers. They already have one child, Luca, just turning five years old. Luca is a delightful kid. He was at our house a couple weeks ago. If the new ones turn out to be as sweet tempered as he is, they will really have a wonderful life.

We had not seen our friends Gary and Alyona Goble since Christmas on account of coronavirus. Everybody's been kind of hunkered down. We invited them too, as they have a similar story.

Charlie and Susie's story is this. As they were planning to come over and pick up the kids, they looked at the prices. A nanny in New York costs \$25 an hour. That is a ridiculous expense that they simply could not afford. Inasmuch as Charles can work from anyplace in the world, why Brooklyn Heights? They sold their apartment and committed to staying here for the three months of paternity leave, to see how it works.

It turns out that on account of coronavirus his company will not be operating from a physical office in any case, at least through the end of the year. They're happy to let him work remotely, and it rather looks like it'll be an ongoing deal. This could be the best of all possible worlds. Earning a decent New York salary and living in Ukraine.

Gary's story is somewhat similar. He is a Sybase database engineer. Sybase is a competitor to Oracle, which is how I made my living until retiring 23 years ago now. His clients are mostly in Germany.

Both he and Charlie have been squeezed by Indian immigrants. It's interesting how this diversity thing works. We foundational Americans are all told to celebrate diversity, to appreciate having people of different nationalities in the workplace all around us. And above all, never to discriminate.

The Indians, however, are a rather parochial bunch. They discriminate like mad. They seek to bring in as many other Indians as they can, and to hell with the native-born Americans. Gary feels the pressure more than Charles does, but everybody notices that the Indians have been brought in throughout both Europe and the EU. Nobody finds them to be generally as competent as those whom they replace, but they are docile and they work cheap.

This is reminiscent of what the robber barons did in the latter part of the 19th century. They would bring in immigrants, at times setting them up working in groups together where they had internal cohesion so that they would form a group of people who understood each other, or they would purposely mix the nationalities so that they could not get together and unionize. They were very

diversity conscious, whether promoting it in one instance or thwarting it in another. When it comes to white people, diversity has been very one-way. It is used to squeeze guys like Gary and Charles. They don't have any bargaining strength. They are on the outside looking in. That's the way the powers that be seem to want it.

As I have reported, the handwriting was on the wall back in the mid-90s, but I was ready to retire, always one step ahead of the game. It has not been pleasant for those who remained.

Gary and Alyona lived in Germany for several years. They and their kids speak German. They moved out because multiculturalism in the German schools meant that the quality of education was sinking and they were surrounded by children who were neither German nor like them. It was unpleasant. Since Alyona's roots are Moldovan/Russian, it was easy for them to relocate here. They are building a house.

Susie is from Basel. It turned out that everybody at dinner, with the exception of Charlie and Eddie, and of course babysitter Anna and her daughter Sofia, spoke a little bit of German. We ricocheted around with German conversation for a while before settling back to English.

Susie and Charles had an interesting experience Saturday at the hospital. The first baby was born of the surrogate mother last week by cesarean section. Ukrainian law requires that if there is a cesarean section, both mother and child remain in the hospital for a week. That certainly made no sense, inasmuch as the child is not going to belong to the birth mother but to Susie. However, their agent didn't display much strength in dealing with the authorities and caved rather readily to the arbitrary decisions of the hospital administration.

Thus, we had Charlie and Susie sans baby for our barbecue. Yes, I had invited them for barbecue. They had both been here for barbecues and they were a bit disappointed to find that this time was not on the grill. The weather report said that it would be kind of cold and perhaps rainy. It turned out to be absolutely wrong. It was a beautiful day, good enough that I went swimming in the afternoon. However, we had already cooked moussaka and prepared tabbouleh the night before.

Here's the leftover tabbouleh and the moussaka. The tabbouleh still looks pretty inviting. I wish I had taken a before picture. The cold and jumbled moussaka looks like a dog's breakfast. You'll have to take my word for the fact that it still tastes good, at least to Oksana and me.

Luca remembered the sausages from last time and he asked, with a long face, where they were. Anna got a couple of act couple out from the freezer and put them in the microwave. We are mindful of the fact that everybody likes our barbecue and next time whatever the weather, come rain or shine we will have a barbecue again. I appreciate the vote of confidence.

Yesterday was our first face-to-face Toastmasters meeting since early March. There were only 13 people. We had just two speakers. As I recently reported, we had also had a speech contest in a face-to-face format, so this wasn't absolutely the first time we'd seen each other. The meeting came off well and we will have another such next week.

I should add, patting myself on the back, that I won the best speaker in table topics - impromptu speaking. Usually the award goes to either a new speaker, because we like to encourage new people to join, or to one of our truly outstanding speakers such as Vitaliy Rulov or Vera Oleneva. I don't often win, and I have to say it's a thrill to do so. The question I got was on who I would like to meet if I could meet anybody in the world. I said, the guy who put together the Covid 19 bug in a laboratory, wherever he did it, Wuhan, China, or Fort Dietrich, Maryland, and strangle him in person.

I had an interesting contretemps. As I was getting on the bus coming back from the Toastmasters meeting the bus pulled up and there was a car parked where the bus needed to get, with the driver chatting obliviously on his cell phone. A couple of other waiting passengers were pounding on the passenger-side window trying to get his attention. I walked around to the driver side where I could see an open window and started to shout at him. I had two objectives. First, to make it so loud that he couldn't talk on the phone, and second to let the other party on the conversation know that he was being an absolute boor by squatting in a bus zone.

I don't do that kind of thing very often. I have had mixed experience in the past. But to shout at a guy in a car one has a bit of an advantage. He is hostage to his machine. And in this case, I had half a dozen allies ready if he wanted to mix it up. He moved and the bus driver let me on. I was rather hot under the collar and forgot to put my mask on. Probably a quarter of riders don't wear masks and nobody gets worried about it.

Let me add a note about Gary Goble. He is the only other guy that I know who has taken measures against Covid19. He has put together some hydroxychloroquine, azithromycin and zinc, and he plans to use them immediately if he or anybody in the family get symptoms of Covid19. I'm one step ahead, taking it as a prophylactic. But it's pretty much the same deal.

I repeat for anybody interested; the cost is only \$30 for the entire course of treatment. Cheap insurance, especially given the fact that in the United States people are unable to order hydroxychloroquine when they need it. I had expected some of you to let me know that you had ordered it. So far nobody has.

The mother of Eddie's best friend Yarema is concerned about his English education. Oksana tells me that the English teacher that the Sunflower School has hired comes with pretty good recommendations. I'm bit skeptical. However good the teacher, the school needs a culture of hard work supported by the administration. I don't have high expectations. As I have previously written, when I taught sixth and seventh grade English the kids simply didn't do their homework. I will wait and see if Eddie feels any pressure to do his.

I had suggested that we might teach English songs to these kids. Music is a different approach. I remember the French songs I learned in the eighth grade pretty well, and of course know the vocabulary that went with them. Many people learned English from learning Beatles songs and German from Ramstein.

Mom was not terribly interested in that. I made a second proposal. I read daily to Eddie, the last three books being from Mark Twain. I proposed that I might find some books that would be a little simpler. Interesting to Eddie and Yarema and leading to some English conversation. What I have in mind is a Smithsonian book of natural history written for children. The vocabulary is simple and the topic matter engaging for boys. We'll see if we get a take on that.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the kids are all above average. At least in homework avoidance.

Graham

[8-Sep-20 --- Old boys and Indians. Raising children on the fringes of Western civilization. Zorian...](#)

My piece about Indian H1B visa holders in the United States touched a nerve. Several of you shared similar observations. And a few cuss words I can't repeat here. I offer a few anecdotes from my experience before leaving the United States.

In 1979, the year I worked for Booz Allen, one thing I never understood was why they tolerated an employee named Lachman Balchandani. The standing joke was that he was always assigned to two projects at the same time, and whenever you looked for him he was "at the other project." You hated to give him any assignment, because it would be more work to untangle than it would be to do it yourself in the first place. Little did I realize that he was the tip of the iceberg.

Back then I was a landlord. At the peak I owned six rental properties with a total of 12 units. As a good citizen I did not discriminate by race. Experience quickly showed that doing exactly that would have been in my economic best interest. While I can't give the particulars of every group in a family blog, I think it is safe to relate a story about Indians. I developed a maxim. When the number of Indian tenants went up, it meant that I had set the rents too low. They have an absolute genius for sniffing out bargains.

In 1996, shortly before folding our company, I had a project in Tysons Corner, Virginia, with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, a bureaucracy akin to government. We were one services provider among many – the others increasingly Indian. John Rodman of our company adopted the name Jonni Roddiman, with an Indian inflection. At the time it was funny. The two of us were kept pretty busy fixing things that the Indians had screwed up. I doubt he is laughing as much these days.

As a consultant, I developed another maxim. You have two types of clients – those that will make you famous, and those that will make you rich.

You get famous by solving difficult problems for appreciative clients. You get rich by working endlessly on meaningless problems for clients who have deep pockets but no ability whatsoever to discern quality. That is a pretty good definition of the average government client. They can understand the dollars and cents of hiring an Indian. They have little means of figuring out whether he is producing anything of value.

Charlie and Susie, Gary and Alyona, Oksana and I are doing several things unusual for foundational Americans (normal white folks who identify as American rather than with the countries from which their ancestors emigrated). And we are facing several unique difficulties worth talking about.

The first thing odd that we are doing is raising kids. Not many of the 100 or so of you to whom I'm writing are raising children. Of those with grown children, a striking percentage don't have grandchildren. So, the three of us here, old enough to be grandparents and then some, are rather unusual in that we are raising children.

We are raising our children in a culture other than our own. Throughout history the best place to raise children has generally been among people like yourself – people from whom the children would absorb the culture. Gary and I have very consciously decided that the culture where we come from is too poisonous to take that risk. We are consciously raising children in a culture significantly different from that in which we grew up.

We are rearing children in a materially poor society, not renowned for its educational system, healthcare or job opportunities. We are essentially trusting to the fact that a poor but honest child will be able to make a better life in this world than one who is materially well off in a society so corrupt that a person living there cannot afford to tell the truth. In my case, I am betting that the status quo in the West is unsustainable and that the discrepancies in wealth will shrink sooner rather than later.

The most significant of our difficulties is that we are not embedded in communities of like people. We don't have mutual support from church groups, babysitting cooperatives, Boy Scout troops, PTAs or any of those sorts of things. Those props were immensely useful to my parents as I was growing up. They had become hollow and useless as I was raising my first family in Washington DC. The social capital for people like us has been thoroughly gutted, enough so that in abandoning it I am losing almost nothing.

The logistic difficulties we face can be kind of daunting. The most significant is language. Gary and I get along pretty well with Russian. It came easily to him; he had learned German while serving in the military. I had learned several languages through the course of my work overseas.

The systems are different. Plumbing and electricity work differently. You don't find the same things in our Epicenter store that you do in a Home Depot. The sizes are all metric; sometimes they even express sizes differently. We use electronic banking in place of checks, debit cards in place of credit cards and so on. Nobody sends invoices – you have to go online, figure out how much you owe, and pay it yourself. When you forget – the phone or the Internet simply stops working.

Most legal work is done through notaries instead of lawyers. The legal system is not based on traditional case-based English law. It seems more similar to French law, the Napoleonic system in which everything is written and the judge applies the written law without recourse to precedent. There are different hierarchies of courts handling different kinds of law. On top of all this, as you have read elsewhere, the system is arbitrary and corrupt. Until recently (get out of jail free for BLM rioters, Jussie Smollett, Assange, Snowden, Flynn etc.), we savored the notion that justice was more fairly administered in the United States.

The K–12 educational system has been deteriorating since Soviet times. Teaching used to be a better paying, more highly respected profession. Now, as in the United States, less well prepared teachers are dealing with classes of 25 or more students. Gary and our babysitter Anna report that there is quite a bit of bullying. The teachers, not having the resources to squelch it, either don't see it or turn a blind eye. Thank goodness they don't have to deal with the issues of diversity! Thank goodness also that homeschooling remains an option.

The "nuclear family" of an expatriate living in Ukraine is truly nuclear. We have to do almost everything ourselves. The tragedy is that the nuclear family back in the United States also finds itself all alone as a function of the deterioration of American social capital. Those of us here in Ukraine, unlike most in the United States, recognize our situation and take measures to cope with it. Part of the coping mechanism has to do with maintaining connections back in the United States. That will be a topic for another blog.

Zoriana turned three yesterday. We had shrimp in garlic sauce, the same as we had had for Oksana's birthday. This time there were only four of us, and we became quite sated with the delicious shrimps and two side dishes, spinach and rice, that go well with the sauce. Followed by apple pie. I chose to make another one, as there had been none left for me on Saturday night.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women good-looking, and the children are all above average. In their own minds, of course. We encourage them to grow into those expectations.

Graham

Oksana is downstairs with a guy dealing with the electrical problem. Our voltage regulator cuts out when the voltage on any of the three phases falls below 180 or goes above 255. That happens fairly regularly. When it does, usually we are without electricity for a few minutes until it stabilizes. However, it can be as much a 20 minutes before things settle out.

Why is it unstable? This appears to be a widespread problem for the electric company. As I have written previously, they have promised Oksana it would be fixed. I have my doubts. My attitude has been, let's be thankful we have electricity and simply live with it. Her attitude is that I'm just being lazy.

At any rate, to this point she has invested a couple of weeks working on the problem, occasionally glowering at me for not having gotten involved in fixing it myself. Br'er Fox, he lay low. If she wants to drive herself crazy, I'm not going to get in the way.

We have learned a little bit about the problem. First, as mentioned, it is widespread. Secondly, what most people do is to widen the tolerance on the voltage regulator until it stops cutting out. My guess is that that defeats its purpose. Third, we have heard from a couple of sources that a voltage stabilizer is the real trick. That's a device that takes whatever electricity you get and converts it to the proper voltage.

Since they apparently use a lot of them in India, it is easy to read about them in English. They have two size ranges, one for an individual appliance, most often mentioned being a refrigerator. The other would be for a whole house. That I have found a supplier that specializes in them tells me something.

Looking at the bright side, I'm glad that Oksana is taking the lead in learning something about how the house is put together and how to deal with contractors. While this problem may be something that could be ignored, there are many that cannot. Given the actuarial likelihood that she will have to deal with them on her own some day, this is probably as good a time as any to get started.

The "Overton window" of permissible punditry is moving somewhat to the right. Here are links to articles on Black Lives Matter written by a [Jewish guy on a Gentile website](#), and a [Gentile on a Jewish website](#). They are inching closer to the truth, which is that there is no way to satisfy the protesters and there will be no end to the chaos short of a radical explosion.

At the heart of the matter is the tension between facts and dogma. The fact is that evolution has made the populations of mankind quite different. The dogma is that differences don't exist. As indicated by the links in my [blog of September 2](#), the science more and more strongly confirms the hows and whys of the differences. Events this summer have made it clear that the dogma is simply not tenable. At any rate, I commend the two linked articles above as good samples of the (rapid) drift of contemporary thinking.

The last couple of blogs I did on Indians working in high-tech inspired me to finish an article I have been tinkering with for a couple of months. [It advocates that Ukraine rigorously limit immigration](#) before the elites of this country decide to agitate in favor of it. Ukraine is still in a position to protect itself. The United States and Western Europe can no longer do so, and the tragic collapse of both is increasingly evident.

Unfortunately, I can't think of any place to send this article for publication. In the first place, it is somewhat long. Secondly, Ukraine simply doesn't have an organized alt-right looking out for the interests of the ordinary citizen. I will be grateful to any of you who read it. In the meantime, I suspect

it will remain an orphan article on my website. Alas. However, having once formulated the thoughts I am sure I will find ways to use them here and there.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and we are waiting for the school to send the first grades home to find out how far above average the kids actually are.

[11-Sep-20 --- Please contribute to our Social Capital. Sucked into the electricity mess Social Cap...](#)

### Social Capital

There is an old Russian saying "better 100 friends than 100 rubles." The Russian Empire frequently experienced bad times. People who were well-connected came through better.

Those hundred friends amount to social capital. I recently reread Robert Putnam's well-known book on social capital entitled "Bowling Alone." He goes on at length about the ways in which we have become separated from one another, atomized, focused on our own individual interests and pleasures.

Putnam is a good liberal. He describes what is and attempts to attribute causes to it. I think that he deliberately overlooks a few obvious factors. Why is it that so many of the rioters who are raising hell during this BLM chaos have German, Anglo-Saxon and Jewish names? What has turned these people so against the society that spawned them? I would propose that our social capital didn't just erode, it has been under concerted attack for quite some time. Putnam doesn't investigate that question.

But that's a story for another time. Social capital had already been pretty much dissipated when I was raising my grown family. Although they are not rioting in the streets of Portland (to the best of my knowledge) those kids certainly aren't standing on street corners extolling the virtues of the founding fathers.

My concern is for my new family. I am gratified that Oksana has a relatively large circle of friends. They support each other in small ways – helping find things on the Internet, exchanging baby clothes, lending bicycles and stuff like this.

My first large question is how Oksana would cope if something happened to me. Who can she count on? Obviously, our babysitter Anna would stand by her. The two of them have been close friends for nine years. And, of course, there is enough money to keep on paying Anna. Between the two of them they have the experience to grapple with most problems that come up on this side of the Atlantic, such as dealing with the electricity, the well, the septic system, the appliances and so on.

The bigger question is how she would deal with affairs in the United States. The children are entitled to supplemental Social Security until they are 18 years old. Oksana doesn't have a clue how to deal with the bureaucrats in charge. We need to involve some Americans who understand the system. Right now that includes my brother Duncan and our good friend Dennis Krentz. These guys are, however, my age. We really should have somebody of the next generation in the loop.

There are related issues. Oksana would own investments in jointly titled accounts in the United States. She would be entitled to – be obliged to – continue to draw money from my 401(k). Even though I have written instructions as completely as I can, she has no idea how in the world to do this.



She would have to show the instructions to somebody, presumably an American, and ask them to help her through the process.

Then there are some tangled messes. We own a handful of Bitcoins. The computer on which they were hosted went south about three years ago. I haven't been able to visit them, though I think I have all of the codes needed to get them back. Once again, I have left written instructions where to look for stuff, but she wouldn't know what to do with it.

This is exactly the kind of thing for which most people would depend on family. However, my grown children and former spouse are absolutely not talking to me. No help there. My brother Duncan is about the only one, and as mentioned he is almost my age. We really should have somebody younger.

Those are our needs. Now let's look at yours. Many of you don't have ascending descendants in my kids' generation. You might have a yen to get to know a few. And, you might have a yen to travel to distant lands – Ukraine is pretty far from most of you – and see new things and meet new people. We are pretty good hosts and we enjoy company from abroad. This is an invitation to come on over and get to know us better.

That's my entreaty. Let's build a little social capital in this capital poor era.

I tried to avoid dealing with our electrical problems. No use.

Let me repeat the history. We have had some quirks. Our fresh water pump and fecal pump have failed more often than they should. Last time the fecal pump died, the pump guy said it looked like it'd been blasted by lightning. He had never seen that kind of damage to a pump before.

Our heating system needs constant attention. The guys who handle it, Valery and his son Alexi, are not terribly expensive. We just put up with it. However, Valery suggested that unstable electricity might be contributing to the problems we had with the boiler. Taken together with the pump problems, it made sense.

He installed a device that is in Russian called a "relay." I haven't been able to locate the proper English term. I'm calling it a voltage regulator, that's probably wrong – cutoff would be a better term.

What it does is shut off the electricity when the voltage gets out of spec – too low or too high. Our contract with the electric company says they will deliver  $230\text{ V} \pm 10$  percent in each of three phases of our 380-volt system. We have the tolerances of this device set at 180 volts at the low end and 255 at the high-end. The electricity is still unstable. The voltage on each of the three phases is different, and from time to time one of them goes out of spec and the system shuts down the electricity to the whole house.

When the "relay" was first installed the electricity would go out for five seconds and come back on. However, these electrical glitches were not mere transients. The thing would switch the lights off and on like mad. We adjusted it to wait a minute before retrying. Even at that it often takes quite a few tries before it comes on and stays on.

The problem solving technique to this point is what I call folkloric. Everybody involved makes a different guess, nobody writing their guesses down, systematizing facts, or doing any analysis to see if they might be right. I have initiated the radical measure of attempting to draw pictures and write down what we know. You can't eliminate an option unless you thoroughly understand it, and you can't thoroughly understand it unless you do a written analysis.

## Wire Size Theory

The last guy we talked to, Sasha, opened up our junction box and said that we had two sizes of wires. That was probably the problem.

That was a theory I could research. They rate electrical wires by their cross-sectional area. When Oksana pressed him, Sasha gave us actual numbers. He said we had 50 sq. mm wire coming into the junction box and 25 sq. mm going out. More than that, the wires are aluminum. Should be copper. There would be too much of a voltage drop.

This was something I could work with! As labeled in the diagram, the 50 mm cross-sectional wire corresponds to American wire gauge one (AWG 1) and the 25 to AWG3. Wire diameters of 1/3 and 1/4 inch, more or less. That's what I see. We know the lengths of each wire run: 800 feet and 150 feet. The total voltage loss from the transformer at 380V would be only about 6 V. It would be constant, and figured into the 230 V they contract to deliver. That's not consistent with the problem we had. Besides, we have to assume that the power company knew what they were doing. Sasha was blowing hot air.

## Overloaded Transformer Theory

Another theory was that other people on the transformer were overloading it. We talked to them, and that seems unlikely. Most didn't even know there was a problem.

My guess is that the transformer has some mechanism to protect itself if aggregate demand exceeds 75 A @ 380V. Otherwise I expect that the windings would overheat and it would destroy itself. Transformers on utility poles used to, in my memory, occasionally blow up. I would like somebody to confirm that. If a protection mechanism is there, the transformer itself could probably not be the cause of a drop in voltage.

I read that a transformer operates at a fixed ratio of input to output voltage. In other words, if the voltage going in is low, the voltage coming out will also be low. If this is the case, the reason for our low-voltage would be that the high-voltage lines leading into our transformer are below their rated voltage. It is a systemwide problem. The fact that lots of people seem to have this it would suggest this may be the issue.

There are six people on the 380 V, 75 ampere, transformer. Each user should thus get 12.5 amps at 380 V, or  $380 \times 12.5 = 4.75$  kilowatts. Oksana heard, and I'll go with, the idea that we get 12.5 amps on each of three phases at 240V. That would be  $12.5 \times 3 \times 240 = 9\text{Kw}$ . We read that the circuit breakers on each line are 40 A, consistent with the  $12.5 \times 3$  theory.

My guess is that the transformer is too dumb to restrict any individual user. The transformer would only be overloaded if the aggregate demand exceeded 75 A at 380V, or  $3 \times 12.5\text{A} = 225\text{A}$  at 240V. I don't understand the arithmetic, but that jibes with the total load we place on the system. I'll go with it.

I looked at our historical usage. The maximum is about 3000 kWh in midwinter. Figuring about 720 hours per month, that would mean an average load of 4.1 kW.

You calculate Kw as volts times amperes divided by 1000. That would be either  $380 \times 4.1 / 1000$  or  $240 \times 4.1 \times 3 / 1000$ , depending on which formula is correct. However you do it, we are well within spec.

More than that, assuming the transformer doesn't have any intelligence to allocate power among the six users, and given the fact that nobody else uses all that much anyhow, we should not be overloading the system.

I can see five of the six meters in the box where I read our meter. None of them have rolled over since the transformer was installed in 2014. Our total usage in six years has been 154,000 KwH. The total of all five is 330,000 KwH. We have taken almost half of it. We can't blame the neighbors or an overloaded transformer. Even if I'm wrong, and the total capacity is 75 not 225 amps, the aggregate load remains below that. Another theory shot.

### Fluctuating High-Voltage into the Transformer

Oksana had bugged the electric company enough that they replaced our electric meter with one of their own devices for three days. Their device maintained a log of the voltage over time. That was exactly what we needed. Unfortunately, they keep giving Oksana the runaround as she asks them what they figured out. HmMMM.

### Diagnosing the Problem

I can open up our junction box when our voltage is low and put a voltmeter on the leads coming from the electric company. This will confirm that the problem is with the electric company and not in our house. This is the most likely situation. My RadioShack voltmeter won't handle that voltage, but it appears that for five dollars I can buy one at the market. That's my next step.

### A Voltage Stabilizer?

I don't have much faith in the electric company. Our neighbor, the one who recommended Sasha, had had him install a voltage stabilizer. As best I can tell that amounts to a variable transformer that takes whatever input voltage you get and moves it within spec.

These things are fairly expensive. From what I've seen of Sasha, I don't trust him to come up with the right specification. But there is a store that specializes in selling them. I think that's where I'll go if I need to.

We don't have much room in the house. However, since the thing would sit right in the middle of the electric line, obviously you don't have to plug it in for power. It could go anywhere. Since it incorporates a transformer it probably gives off heat and is better off sitting outdoors anyhow. Without investigating the matter, my guess is that we would put it out by the junction box and it wouldn't take any space in the house.

Before I invest in a voltage stabilizer, I want to understand how damaging low voltage is to our heat system and our pumps. I'm perfectly willing to believe that it can be problematic, but I'd like to hear it from somebody who knows.

### Switch to Gas?

We had planned to have natural gas heat from the start. However, the gas company took two years (!?) to get it hooked up. In the meantime, we had installed an electric boiler. The gas boiler is installed and waiting to be connected. I do not know how much plumbing would be involved in rerouting the hot water pipes from the electric boiler to a gas boiler.

The gas pipe ends right outside the kitchen wall. Every month the gas company sends around two lovely ladies to read the gas meter. The reading is always the same – absolutely zero. At the moment they are trying to bill us for the labor involved in coming to read the same thing every month.

There would be some advantage to getting gas heat. The belt and suspenders approach – rely primarily on gas heat, with electric space heaters if the gas went out. In any case, gas service is a good deal more reliable than electric.

I prefer a gas stove top to electric. The heat is instantaneous, and you can see what you got. The downside is that little kids can mess with it. They have improved the safety somewhat, but it is still inherently more dangerous than electricity.

Countertops are a related issue. We got relatively cheap countertops, and they are chipped. Oksana doesn't care. I'd like to get something better. There are a few small factories in the area making granite and marble countertops. In my mind it would make sense to get them installed at the same time.

### Where we stand

That's my analysis. I seriously doubt that the electric company will fix the problem. We will wind up throwing money at it. We will have to agree on what the problem is, and then agree on a solution.

My bet is that we will tolerate electrical outages for a while to come. Some of you probably actually know how electricity works. I would love to hear from you.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and we are trying to teach the kids to be systematic in solving problems. Unfortunately that doesn't seem to be part of the culture.

Graham

15-Sep-20 --- [Where are the good men? A birthday in the park. Always looking for input from you,...](#)  
The weekend started out inauspiciously. I went out Friday to buy groceries for the weekend and on my way to the market I rode over some gravel. The bike went out from under me and I went down. I have a patch of skin about 3/4-inch square gone from the palm of my hand and a bang on my ribs. I figured that the market wouldn't refuse to sell me things because I was bleeding a bit. I went on made my purchases and came home. That was a cold day. I would've quavered about swimming, and I used this excuse not to. The three days since have been better. The water is getting colder, but there is still some sun.

The second face-to-face meeting of our weekly Toastmasters group was a success. We had about 25 people, including some new men. That is, in my opinion is what the club most needs. Give the club some balance.

We had three excellent speeches. I evaluated one by Timor Berezhnoy entitled "36.5," intended to be intriguing. As he hit a half-year birthday he reflected on the collective wisdom of his age. He had good observations on education, the fair sex, and what is success in life. As an evaluator I had to tell him I doubt that his observations will be much more profound at twice his age.

Timur's advice was that you should never chase a woman. In my evaluation, I stated the same principle another way. We men have a tendency to take a woman for what she thinks she's worth instead of for what her true value. We need to be careful.

The other piece of advice that I would give to any man is to stay free. Don't remain in a relationship just because it's comfortable. Once you can see that it won't last forever, cut your losses and make yourself available for something new.

I reflected on the girls in the club. They are beautiful, each in their own way. Kate has amazingly good moves. She spoke about tango at the meeting, and I can readily see that she knows what she's talking about. Anna has absolutely beautiful smile and the most pleasant manner. One Yuliya has perfect proportions, the other is smart, competent, pleasant to be around and gets things done. Inna is intelligent and inquisitive.

All women have their good points, but yet there is no ideal partner. Expanding on that thought, the holy grail of our age seems to be ideal sex, a very ephemeral goal. Every girl makes love differently, differently even every time, and individual tastes may vary. To make the quest for an ideal lovemaking session your life's goal is a fool's errand.

It is only a small, almost inconsequential part of a complete relationship, and that relationship, one appreciates more as one is married, encompasses raising kids, supporting one another in a household, just being good company. We have in this modern age have allowed ourselves to adopt false and, unattainable goals.

The perfect is the enemy of the good. There is no ideal mate. At some point you have to make a commitment and get on with the business of life. Benjamin Franklin said a man should keep his eyes wide open before marriage and half shut afterwards. Nothing will be perfect, but you can make it pretty good. The key factor is you, not the other person.

Sunday we were going to meet our babysitter Anna and her daughter Sophia in the park to celebrate Sophia's birthday. Our present was the hour-long combination of three zip line courses through the treetops.

Oksana wasn't feeling good so I took Zoriana and Eddie. We all had a good time and I'm sure that Oksana enjoyed being by herself. We all agree that the ice cream in the park is good, but one of the real attractions of the European Union is that they have the world's best ice cream in Hungary in the Baltics. As it was Ukrainian father's day, Anna took the following photos.

One of the pleasures of being a very minor Internet personality is that people write to me and I still have time to respond. Sunday I got an email from Greg who lives north of Seattle. He is retirement age, married to a Ukrainian, and is looking for some peace and quiet and a place where his money will go farther. He wrote to ask about Ukraine. I was able to write back that his instincts are perfectly correct. This is a cheap place to live but most of all, it doesn't have any of the types of chaos that are enveloping the United States now. He asked reasonable questions about the threat of a Russian invasion, cost-of-living, medical care, and the language. Language is really the most difficult problem, but I have seen people survive here for decades without learning it. With a Ukrainian wife, it works.

John confirmed that a transformer is a simple device. The ratio between input and output is the number of coils wrapped around the iron core on the input side versus the number wrapped around

the some core on the opposite side. The amperage adjusts automatically as a function of the voltage, so the wattage out equals the wattage in, minus of course, the conversion loss which is not that great.

John also writes that he had a voltage stabilizer in Vietnam. You had to manually move a contact up or down to change the number of wiring wraps on the input side of the transformer in order to produce the desired voltage on the output. My understanding about modern voltage stabilizers is that they automatically move the contact for you.

Denny confirmed that low-voltage damages electric motors. Makes them run hot and eventually burn out. We do need to fix this. He writes, in fact he shouts, that I need to hire a qualified electrician. He goes on to say that he can guarantee that they exist. I totally agree with both points. Now the question is, what is a qualified electrician?

Things work differently here than in the United States. In the US we have the successor to the guild system in old Europe. US unions have apprenticeships. An apprentice spends a certain amount of time working with masters to learn the craft. After he has served his apprenticeship, there some sort of a qualifying exam, and he becomes recognized by the guild or union as a journeyman. After more such he is recognized as a master. Therefore, what I want is a certified master electrician.

However, I know of no independent Guild or union system here. Unions were part of the political structure. In the Soviet Union you were simply assigned a job by the state and you did it. So all workers were the same in theory, and levels of expertise would probably not have been designated with quite the same rigor.

At any rate I know of no apprenticeship programs here and have never seen or heard about any certification of expertise (until today – see below). You get what you get.

Another complicating factor is that the most talented plumbers, electricians and such have gone to the west to look for work. I don't know how they integrate themselves in with the existing union organizations in the West, but the stories of Polish and Ukrainian plumbers in Great Britain are legion. So not only do we not have consistent credentialing systems, but there has been a strong incentive for the best and brightest among ours to go West.

So we have done what we can. We use experts in several areas:

- Electric, obviously
- Heating system
- Plumbing
- Septic systems
- Well pumps
- Landscaping

That's just to name six. I should also say that these questions apply somewhat in medicine. Here, to the best of my knowledge, a person graduates from medical school and can be hired someplace and work as a doctor. Obviously the employers recognize the difference between the new ones and experienced doctors, but not all go through anything as formal as internship and residency here.

We see the upshot in this in medicine in the flood of foreign doctors going west. The English National health service is overrun with doctors from India and Pakistan. They are credentialed, whatever that means, in their home countries, and those credentials are for the most part taken at face value by the NHS. It seems unfair to British and American-trained doctors who have gone through the whole rigorous system, but that's how it is.

Even back when I was a kid, as Denny will remember, my neighbor Joe Lozano, a Mexican doctor, was working for the Kaiser Permanente system. Whether his credentials were comparable to an American, who knows? He was probably relatively inexpensive. It wasn't a typical doctor's neighborhood.

So that's where we are. Without credentialing, how do you know if a professional knows what he's up to? Fortunately, I know a little bit more than the average citizen about most of these things, but certainly not enough to qualify as an expert. So I will listen to these guys talk, and judge on the basis of what they say, whether they know what they're talking about. It is a hit and miss system.

The guy who installed our septic system was a very convincing talker. His septic system has had to be reworked two times until it finally seems to work. By other supposed experts, by the way. The electrician who wired our house, Sasha, was an alcoholic. When I called the builder's attention, several times, to the fact that the electricity was shaky, he never once mentioned Sasha's credentials. I doubt he had any. Had this been the United States, he would have needed to have been a credentialed electrician, and there would've been some sort of a state inspection of the job to make sure he did it right. Here, there was none of the above.

I mention that Gary, who is also building a house, has had problems similar to mine. It comes down to the question of who can you trust? What you have to go on is your own assessment of whether a guy knows what he's talking about, recommendations from friends, and whatever organization the guy is associated with.

Let's talk about a case that worked – third time around. We have a water filter system in our house. I got it from an outfit that sold the Eco-Soft brand but didn't really know about it. The system they installed didn't work and they didn't want to stand behind their work. I went online and I found a Dr. Water (Доктор Вода) who wrote articles about this stuff. And it turns out that he is the owner of the whole Eco-Soft franchise in Ukraine. So we hired his firm, they changed some of the components, and things have worked ever since. I think we finally have our water filter system in order.

After going through about four, we finally have a plumber who seems to know his stuff. Dima is a guy about 30 who rides a fancy BMW motorcycle and is quite quirky, but he fixes everything we need. His prices are reasonable, and he will do things that most plumbers wouldn't. Last time he was here we had him deal with non-plumbing issues such as getting the toilet seat straight, fixing the rod that holds the showerhead to the wall, putting the skirting back on the bathtub, as well as fixing a leaky drain. He did a good job and didn't charge too much. Most usefully, he tinkered together a device that you can use to hook the hot water directly to the drainpipe to clear a blockage. I blessed his name as I used it this morning. Of course, if the guy who installed the plumbing in the house had ensured that the pipes were the right size and the drop on each run of pipe was the right distance, we probably wouldn't have the problem in the first place.

We are reasonably happy with the six experts we have on call for the areas bullet-pointed above. The only one with any credentials of which we know is Andrew, the landscaper, a young guy who just graduated from college in Poland. Valery, who does the heating, appears to possess only about 75% of the knowledge to which he would pretend. My eye is out for somebody who gives us more confidence – quite likely the electrician, when and if we find him. But, on the other hand, Valery reliably comes when we call and gets things working again.

There is a different balance here between capital and labor. Labor is cheap. The labor to fix broken pumps and so on is not exorbitant. Our solution to the problem that pumps burn out has been to keep spare pumps up in the attic. When one of them craps out, we call the repairman to put the other one

in and get the broken one fixed. True, it is an annoyance. But this approach is not nearly as expensive as it would be in the United States.

It has been two weeks since Oksana last bugged the electric company about providing the results of their measuring our power by replacing our electric meter with their own, which included a recording device. They have not given us the results, and the problems continue.

I have an appointment tomorrow night with a Sergei from the outfit that sells voltage stabilizers. He has posted this license from a government inspection agency on his website. Although the website looks professional, on the phone he comes across as "just a guy" who will come by when he can. We will see.

I hope I understand the situation well enough now not to get whiffle-dusted.

Last week I bought the voltmeter and have been experimenting. Here is a chronicle of my observations, which I am sure anybody who knows electricity could have told me. But they didn't. And I kind of enjoy the learning.

The voltage between any two of the three leads of the 380V power coming from Kyivenergo is just over 400. The voltage between any of the three leads and the wire fence, in electrical terms, the ground, is 230 to 240.

Conclusion number 1: my RadioShack voltmeter didn't work because it only goes up to 400 V. I was measuring the voltage between two phases at almost 240 each, which would be just over 400..

Conclusion number 2: 380 V is the potential between any two of the three leads coming from the power company, individually rated at 220 or 240.

Conclusion number 3: characterizing it as a 380 V system makes sense, because no electrical appliance takes three input leads. Since you would never use all three, there is no need to express the combined voltage of all three.

Diagrammatic approach: I use Excel to create a graph of a three phase systems. I have it add up the distance between the curves (any two of the three phases out of 380, in this case Phase 2 and Phase 3) to confirm that they are in the proper ratio to the potential between any single lead in the ground. Seems to work. The three phases (red, yellow, grey) are at 220. The combination (viz, distance between) orange and grey shows 380 volts. Hallalujah, I think I somewhat understand European electricity.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children promise to grow up to be like them.

[18-Sep-20 --- Summer ends. September songs. First real-live Covid19 case. Waiting on the baby. ...](#)  
Summer ended abruptly yesterday. I paused for five minutes entering the lake, basking in the 85° sunlight before embarking on a 40 minute swim. By the time I got out it was winter. Threatening clouds, strong winds, and much cooler. On my return lap I had waved to Oksana and Zoriana, at the beach halfway to the end of the lake.



By the time I finished my shower, warming up from the cold breeze, rain was pouring down. First thing I did was to see if they were home yet. Just as I opened the front door they dragged in, soaked to the bone. I got Zoriana undressed and hustled into the bathtub. Today is dreary and overcast; it will not break 60.

I am at that point in life where the songs that come back to tickle my memory are ones that most people around me have never even heard. In September they are the Fantasticks' "Try to Remember," and an even older standard from the 1930s' Knickerbocker Holiday musical, though sung more recently by Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald, "September Song."

Both reflect the wisdom of old age. The first is a song of mellow reflections of youth, love and pain. The second is an older guy addressing a younger woman, lyricizing on the advantages of a May and December marriage. They date back to the epoch when great songwriters, great singers and great dancers were three separate categories. Not surprisingly, each pursuing their own specialty, they produced wonderful results. Better, IMHO, than today's offerings.

We are marking time, waiting for a daughter who is due tomorrow but will, of course, arrive when she will. I had a bit of a preview Monday, when I met Susie, Charles and their baby Mila for lunch. Newborn babies are incredibly small, delicate, helpless things. How they change! Zoriana jumps all over me, not content simply to be held, but wanting to scale me like an alpinist, use me like a trapeze, run at me as if I were a tackling dummy.

Last week I printed out an article on potty training and put it under a refrigerator magnet. I absolutely insist that with this new girl we will not even try to start until she gives good indication that she is ready. We have spent the last two years frustrating ourselves trying to make something happen that simply didn't want to. Now that she is three, Zoriana is ready. She and I often go together on two hour walks and she never even mentions that she wants to pee. However, when there is a woman in the party asking her every 10 minutes if she wants to go, she of course does.

This is a quiet time, the calm before the storm. There is nothing I really have to do, so I'm taking care of all of the odds and ends that have been put off. Replacing light bulbs, renewing Oksana's tax ID, following up on this interminable voltage stabilizer problem and the like. The arrival of a baby requires a lot of bureaucratic steps – getting the birth certificate, seeing the pediatrician, getting that counselor certificate of birth abroad, getting a passport and so on. I'll be busy enough.

One of Oksana's preschool music students had to cancel. Her father has Covid 19 – the first case among people I actually know. Mom is somewhat concerned. They have a one bedroom apartment, so dad is sleeping in the corridor. Hardly isolated.

We had an exchange on measures dad can take to keep from getting seriously sick, and mom can take as a preventative measure. I found that the [prophylactic protocol](#) has been broadened. People at low risk levels don't require hydroxychloroquine – everything they need for protection is available at health food stores. Just by virtue of my age I am at high risk, so I'll keep on doing what I'm doing.

And that's a slow news day from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women good-looking, and the latest child is taking her own sweet time arriving in this world.

Graham

23-Sep-20 --- Marianna Pauline Seibert. 3:15 Today. Yet to be weighed and measured. Crying an...  
Marianna Paulina Seibert was born at 3:15 this afternoon. Mom's moans stopped coming through the door, and there was the cry of a baby voice. I knocked and Oksana said to come on in.

Childbirth is a woman's thing. This is Oksana's third, babysitter Anna has her own child and has been a surrogate three times, and God knows how many Sveta has delivered. Men are superfluous. I was glad to be useful in the kitchen making pizza dough, quiche, and other stuff to keep the family fed. All the women have more important things to do.

The process is incredibly natural. It evolved to be absolutely free – women just did it. For us it has been close to free. Oksana is scandalized by the inflation because Sveta is charging €2000 this time. The whole pregnancy has cost probably \$4000.

It is incredible how modernization has made the business of raising children so expensive. I and my siblings were born in hospitals, but I cannot imagine that the cost was more than \$1000 pre-inflation. Raising kids was a matter of food, clothing, dues to organizations such as the Boy Scouts, occasional outings to the movies and the swimming pool, presents on birthdays and Christmas, and not much else. Working families could afford to have kids and they did. The public schools – attended by people like us, taught by people like us, paid for by taxes on people like us – were pretty good.

My understanding is that it costs somewhere between \$50,000 and \$100,000 to have a baby these days, what with all of the prenatal care, tests, hospital stays and so on. I am sure that these measures reduce risk somewhat. The other side of the equation doesn't get measured. What other risks does the family assume in order to come up with that amount of money? Working overtime, neglecting the kids that are already there, bearing the stress of a hurried existence?

The kids of my first family, now all in their 30s, grew up among well-to-do children and attended what were nominally the best of schools. The downside was that their families were in many cases occupied with things other than children. They got shuttled from pillar to post by Latin Ladies. As I have written, my informal, long-distance surveys don't reveal that their classmates have turned out to be terribly successful by most measures.

Getting back to Mariana Paulina, in my mind, the midwife makes sense. There will be a marginally higher incidence of infants dying. Even that may not be a bad thing – those that don't survive will be disproportionately the ones with some organic problem that would have handicapped them in life in the first place.

This baby cannot avoid a few risk factors. As a function of paternal age she stands a higher likelihood of inheriting some deleterious mutations. A good many of those would have worked themselves out through spontaneous abortion, but there are some that could manifest themselves later in life. That's the chance she takes with a daddy like me. The simple fact that I have survived to this age and am still having children is evidence that my genetic makeup is fairly robust. The fact that a woman still wants me as the father of her children is a good voucher. On the other hand, you can't deny statistics. Life is a crapshoot.

Is it better not to throw the dice at all? That is the option that a great many people of my generation, and even more the baby boomers, Gen X, and millennial's who followed, have taken. It is the people who are able to think these things through who are most determined not to take the risk, not to have kids. That mitigates their individual risk, but collectively they are putting our whole ethny – people like us – at risk. Fewer people to nurture, protect, and marry the children that we do have.

So here she is. Launched into a turbulent world, on the cusp of a worldwide economic downturn, amidst both domestic and international turmoil. But this has been the fate of man through the ages – the notion that it was otherwise has been a uniquely American delusion through a fortunate couple of centuries. Perhaps an unfortunate delusion. My Ukrainian family seems to have a better appreciation for the preciousness of life itself. Being born into hard times may make better people out of my children. That's what I hope. It is what it is.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the baby looks normal. Thank God for such a miracle.

[25-Sep-20 --- The calm after the storm. Statistics and administrative procedures. A solution to our...](#)  
A newborn demands feeding and changing every few hours. No sleep will be a fact of life for Oksana for the next few months. She asked babysitter Anna to stay the last couple of nights. I have been cooking, although our eating schedule is rather irregular.

Zoriana is fascinated by Marianna. Oksana has let her push her around in her toy baby buggy. Zoriana is right there, drinking it all in, as she nurses the baby. Zoriana is fully involved and she hasn't been demanding any more attention than usual. Which is, I have to concede, a great deal. She is not what one would call an easy child.

The pediatrician came today to set things in motion administratively. He first told Oksana how much easier it would have been (for the administrators!) had the baby been born in the hospital. Oksana quite firmly told him that this was the third homebirth in the family and the hospital wasn't even a consideration.

That settled, they developed a pretty good relationship. Oleg chose to move out of Donetsk on account of the war. Most professionals did. Oksana gave him high marks for thorough and conscientious execution of what he had to do. He weighed the baby, measured her, felt her all over to make sure everything was the way it ought to be. She weighs 3.3 kg – 7 ¼ lb. The midwife had said 3.8. It is normal that they lose a little bit of weight right at the beginning, among other things when

they poop the stuff that was in their tummies when they were born. She is 55 cm long – 21 inches and a bit.

I have to go down Monday to pick up Oleg's report. Next come several administrative steps to register the birth with the civil authorities. As a third time mother Oksana is in line for some benefits. Ukraine needs babies.

Once we get the Ukrainian birth certificate, I go to the US Consulate to apply for a Certificate of Birth Abroad and a passport. There are no benefits available upon the birth of a third child to a Social Security beneficiary, so I am spared that hassle.

It is gratifying to hear from as many of you as I have. As with every mailing list, I'm not even sure that the email addresses are still alive. Thank you for your cards and letters sending your best wishes.

Off on a totally different tangent, I am keeping my eye on real estate in our neighborhood. Now is not the time to buy, but my spider sense tells me that the powers that be will not be able to sustain the American stock market for much longer. They want to keep it looking good through the election. After that, look out below. Prices in Ukraine usually echo those in the United States. There will be bargains shortly, but not now. This is the time to research the market and have a list ready.

The first house I looked at might be a bargain. It is a small two-story house – 1000 feet altogether, built with love by an old couple. It is quirky. Only about half of the thousand square feet consist of living space. The rooms are small – most of them about 10 ft.<sup>2</sup>. There are not many windows. On the other hand, the finish is first rate, the appliances are good, and all of the systems are in working order.

They sent me the floor plan. I'm far from an expert in this, but it seems to me that it would be possible to almost double the usable space by knocking out walls, enclosing the two-story notch out of the rectangular form taken by a high ceilinged porch, and converting the attic into living space. The asking price is \$140,000. My guess is that for another \$20,000 you could have something worth \$60,000 more.

There is a second consideration. Eddie's school does not have a good permanent location. It is conceivable that we might be able to expand this house to serve the purpose. It has, among other things, a well-built, fireplace-heated summer house of about 250 ft.<sup>2</sup> in the yard. Easily another classroom. The yard and the plantings are also in good shape.

In real estate you should never fall in love with the first thing you see, but it is probably a good thing to get my mind in gear. The long-term objective would be to have a piece of rental property that would provide Oksana some income, and Eddie some management experience over the next decade.

On to another subject, I think we have a solution to our electric problems. Seeing this house reconfirmed what we were in the process of discovering. The power we get from the electric company isn't reliable. We need a voltage stabilizer. Last week I mapped out our fuse box, identifying which phase powered each outlet in the house. I concluded that each of the three phases of our 380 V power drives something essential.

The "just a guy" I wrote about a couple of blogs back came by to look at our situation. He is more impressive in person than on the phone, and his proposed solution – independent voltage stabilizers for each of the three phases – appears to be exactly what we need. With input from you, neighbors, Sergei and articles I found on the Internet, it was not difficult to make the decision. They are putting it in next week.

Tomorrow we have another face-to-face Toastmasters meeting. Eddie asked to come along again. The impression I have from the powers that be here in Ukraine is that the country simply cannot afford another lockdown. If lockdowns are even effective – the evidence on that seems to remain mixed. We will probably continue to meet in person. I look forward to it. We simply cannot afford to be interminably held hostage by this quixotic virus.

Sunday I am getting together for lunch with new friends Charlie and Susie Spell. The shape of the meeting isn't yet final – I proposed that I take Eddie and Zoriana and meet them and their five-year-old son Luca for morning in the park beforehand. It will give their three week old baby Milla a bit of air on a day that is supposed to go up to 75°. And, it will give Oksana time to be alone with Marianna.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children are above average. Ours at least, numerically speaking.

Graham

[30-Sep-20 --- Back to school night; Rainy day in the park; Electrical experts again; back to the ex...](#)

Tonight wasn't your usual back-to-school night. For one thing, every family in the fourth grade was represented. Along with a few younger siblings. We fit comfortably in the converted attic of the modest size home we rent as a schoolhouse.

Nadia, the English teacher, talked to every parent in turn via a Zoom connection. All of the conversations went in Ukrainian. I got a laugh when I asked if I could talk to her in English – most of the other parents understand it. She expressed appreciation for Eddie's help in class. She told me something I love to hear – that he writes quite a bit. I hadn't seen any evidence of that. Of course, she loves having somebody with a native speaker's accent in class.

The whole thing was conducted in Ukrainian except for once, when another parent reminded a teacher that I usually speak Russian. That teacher switched effortlessly and kept the conversation going. Thereafter it was still all Ukrainian. I understood the gist of it. After all, what gets discussed in a back-to-school night? Kids and schoolwork. Somebody else's kids in most cases – you don't have to listen carefully.

Ukrainians are more matter-of-fact than Americans about differences in talent. I heard two mothers talk about tracking, giving assignments of different levels of difficulty to different kids. It was pleasing to hear Eddie mentioned as one of the two culprits at the right end of the bell curve in math. The matter-of-fact answer was that the more talented kids can help the others, but that they have to move the class as a group.

There are some ways in which Eddie doesn't get it. Natalia the music teacher had the kids play some numbers on the recorder. Eddie seemed always to toot out of turn. I'm glad he's enthusiastic about it. He plays the recorder around home, his first musical instrument in this supposedly musical family.

With beautiful weather forecast, Eddie, Zoriana and I invited Charlie, Suzy, Luca and baby Mila to join us for a Sunday in the park. The forecast changed. Suzy said we would go anyhow, repeating a bit of Swiss folk wisdom that there is no bad weather, only inappropriate clothing.

We met on the Metro platform and walked to the park, stopping at the closest playground, where the kids goofed around a bit. It was overcast and drizzling so we had the place to ourselves. We leisurely made our way along the major alley up to where the Cold War era tank and tank retriever are stationed. The kids never tire of playing on those.

After brief detours for some ice cream and a toilet break, we made our way to the boat rental. We got something called an altanka, a huge craft that would easily seat 10. Eddie and Luca did most of the rowing. There is no way you could make a barge like that go fast, but that's not the point. They had a good time. Under a steadily increasing drizzle on our way back to the rental place we shared some ham and cheese that Suzy had brought. Pressed by both the weather and the clock, I took over the rowing as everybody else finished their snack under the umbrellas.

We had tried three times previously to get a seat at the park's shashlik restaurant. It had been either too early or the wrong day of the week. This time we made it. It was good, but not up to the standards of Hydropark.

The conversation, of course, centered around children. Suzy spent her career as a bank officer managing trusts. She has a lot of experience with trust fund babies and what can go wrong. She immediately appreciated our situation as I described it, but was circumspect enough not to offer any immediate solutions. I respect that – I don't think that there are any easy solutions. It is nice to have somebody off of whom I can bounce elements of a solution.

We got home at about 3:30, well past Zoriana's naptime. She went right down, slept an hour, and was right back on schedule.

Valery our electric heat guy came yesterday. I had asked him to get the heater ready for winter. He did, but he had a bigger agenda. He wanted to change the heating element in the water heater. That needs to be done every year or so, and he's our guy.

But his major interest seemed to be the electric system. I had called him to tell him that we were getting a voltage stabilizer. He was noncommittal over the phone, after which I said we were going ahead. But yesterday he tried to show me why the problem was within the house and we didn't need it.

I showed him the diagrams I had done of how the electricity got to the house from the street and I showed him the diagram I had done of the wiring panel, identifying which phase fed each electrical outlet in the house. It would have been politic to express appreciation, admiration or something. He didn't.

I explained that the problem did not behave as if it were in the house. The electricity would frequently cut off in the middle of the night, when nobody was using anything. The heat was off for the summer. There was never any correlation between the power going down and us switching anything on. Other neighbors have installed voltage regulators because the electric company juice is unstable – it's the same symptoms we had. Valery would only concede that these were perhaps contributing factors.

He told me that the appliances were connected all wrong. That we had too much load on phase 3. I have not confirmed his calculations, but it seems to me not to be the case. In the kitchen, we have the microwave and oven on one phase, the stove on another.

Valery took the stovetop apart to make his point. He first told me that it should be wired at 380V – using two phases. When he lifted up the stovetop to take a look, I discovered that it was labeled on the back 220 V. It had a two prong, one-phase plug, totally appropriate for what the label said.

For some reason he detached the plug from where it was connected to the stovetop to the plug in the wall. He said that the wire gauge was too small. He said that it was 2 1/2 mm<sup>2</sup> - AWG 14 it should be 4 – AWG 12. That's interesting to me because the wire was provided by the manufacturer of the stovetop. It is a cheap stovetop. He also showed me that the electrical connections could be pulled off by hand. Yes –it's got a spade on one end and lug on the other. And that's the way it's made. It's cheap but that's the way it is.

The stovetop is labeled 7 kW for four burners. We experimented to find out for sure which phase it was on. Then we experimented to see how much voltage drop would be caused by this stovetop. As Valery watched the voltmeter on his relay, I turned the four burners on one at a time on high. Valery said that with all four burners on the voltage dropped 25 V. That indicated to him that the wiring is through the walls was insufficient.

He tried several times to demonstrate to me, but I didn't see it. I don't trust Sasha, the drunk electrician who wired the house. It could well be that the wire in the wall is too small. But Valery didn't prove it. Anyhow we never use all four burners at once. The stove isn't big enough. That could not explain the problems we are seeing.

Valery tried to tell me we should rewire the kitchen. I told him that the wire that we have ran under the concrete slab of the heated floor. There's no way we could pull it up. He said yes, we would have to do it by running the wire outside along the exterior of the house.

The common sense argument that this thing has worked fine for six years didn't wouldn't have fazed him. I didn't even bring it up. But I certainly do not intend to rewire the kitchen where there isn't a problem. Somehow whenever we solve problems that aren't there we get more problems. This relay he installed is a case in point. I don't know whether or not it has protected our pumps, but its cutting out for long periods certainly got Oksana in a dither. Valery has been involved in a couple of others. We tried to fix imaginary ventilation problems and it is now worse than before.

Valery raised the concern that the boiler and the pumps that take the hot water to the radiators might be on different phases. If we have a voltage stabilizer that could cut out a single one of the phases. It could lead to problems of the boiler keeps going, but the pumps don't work. That seems to me to be rather far-fetched. We were not able to have a good discussion about the range of input voltage that the voltage stabilizer will handle, which I think is between about – 150 and 300 V per phase. In other words, he didn't acknowledge that if a voltage stabilizer does what it's supposed to do there will be, many fewer outages and they will be momentary. I think he is blowing smoke. He doesn't seem familiar with the concept of a voltage stabilizer.

And that is the problem that we have with a lot of experts in this country. Even asking directions on the street, people will tell you 150% of what they know.

So where do we go from here? As I've said before, I like Valery. He does a good job keeping our heating system going, and he doesn't charge too much money – about the \$70 for a full day's work yesterday. So that's what we are living with. And the radiators are hot, which I could not have done myself. I wanted to record this to get all my thoughts down here in the diary share with you, dear readers, and also to remember for my own record.

I write this in a dark house. Electricity has been out now for about seven hours, an unusually long period. The guys who were supposed to come install the voltage stabilizer will come tomorrow. Eddie is in school, Zoriana off with Anna to a play date, and I'm catching up doing what can be done without electricity or the Internet.

I'm resuming the stationary bicycle program I gave up three years ago. Summer is over and I'm not swimming anymore, and Eddie is old enough to ride to school by himself.

Up to the age of 75 my program was to push my heart rate up to 140 for 30 minutes, generating a pool of sweat. The hard breathing more and more frequently brought on strep throat, so I decided to make do with street bicycling and swimming.

Neither of those exercises are as strenuous. I am having to rebuild my endurance. It is coming back reasonably well, all things considered. I am back to the point of having pretty good sweat on my brow, but only a few drops collecting underneath the bicycle.

On a related note, I'm three months into the exercise regime for back pain. I have to say that "Treat Your Own Back" is a real success. I'm able to do more of the exercises they recommend, and I have less back pain and less sciatica, which I learn is related. Since the book already had well over a thousand reviews, I felt no need to write one immediately. I can do a better job of it now that I give a testimony to the effectiveness of the program.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children are generally spared the problems of trust fund babies.

Graham

[10-Oct-20 --- Marianna's birth certificate; electricity update; pups-in-blankets; Toastmasters and t...](#)  
Sergei, the government doctor who came to the house to attest to Mariana's birth, said that homebirth involves a whole lot of paperwork. We thought he was talking about work for himself and the bureaucracy. Wrong. Work for us.

He had left us an official document testifying that he had seen her. I had to take that to the Boulevard of the Enthusiasts 19 to get some other document. I still don't know what that was about.

Whatever it was, I had to take that one to Proriznaya 19, a block from where Oksana and I had lived downtown. The woman there absolutely terrified Oksana over the telephone. She warned me I would have a terrible time with her. Thus forewarned, I was appropriately humble when I approached her.

I showed her the document. I had to fill out some sort of an affidavit in longhand. She had an original from which I should copy. Noting that I did not understand Ukrainian, she wrote it out for me and I signed it. Then I went back to Boulevard of the Enthusiasts with that in hand.

The lady at the Boulevard of the Enthusiasts was satisfied that she had everything she needed. She also needed me to fill out some sort of an affidavit in Ukrainian. She gave me the original in handwritten Cyrillic. I do moderately well reading printed Ukrainian. Handwritten? It might as well be Greek. I told her as much. She gave me no sympathy and made me do it.



I'm sure it was quite comical. The sample she gave me was from another client. I copied the whole thing as best I could, understanding perhaps 80% of the written letters. Whereas the original was handwritten, I printed my copy. I can't even do handwriting in English. After hinting broadly that it was going to be a disaster, I gave it to her.

She looked it over and had me write my name and address in the place where I had mistakenly copied the name and address from the original. Aside from that she left all the errors intact. There must be 100. I signed the thing and she accepted it.

Each of these dragons in turn had done their best to assail my self-esteem, but they also needed to get rid of me without wasting too much of their time. I got what I needed.

The next step, the final step with the Ukrainians was to register the birth with the vital statistics office. They had five telephones, a legacy of the Soviet era, before they had modern PBX equipment. None of the five answered. Since I had Zoriana for the day in any case, I figured I might as well simply go there and ask. It involved a bus ride, a metro ride, and a long walk on a rainy day. Kids see things differently than we do. Zoriana loved the opportunity to splash around in her boots. She took her hat off and let her head get wet. I caught hell about that when we got home, but she had a good time. It was worth it.

The receptionist was cool but could hardly turn me away. She took my documents, disappeared for about 10 minutes, after which another Dragon lady came out and listed all the deficiencies in the documents that I had. She was thorough in what she did. I needed a notarized translation of my passport in addition to the documents I had brought. She helpfully gave me a sheet of paper with the hours and phone numbers of the birth records department.

From that point on it was downhill sledding. There is a translator in the center of Livoberezhna I have used for all the sort of work. I brought my own translation – there is no way they would have known how to properly translate the Cyrillic for Marianna's and my names into English – and for \$11 I had a notarized translation.

Friday, yesterday, Oksana phoned the vital statistics office first thing in the morning just to reconfirm that we had everything in order. We gave the pile of papers to the receptionist who told us it would be about 20 minutes. It turned out to be 40, in which time we saw three young couples come in to get married and Oksana told me that there were two in to get divorced. Modern times. We got the birth certificate.

The next step is the consular report of birth abroad with the Americans. We need another translation – the birth certificate into English – and another stack of documentation including my old passports (thank God I for some reason still have them, dating back to 1968) to establish that I have lived in the United States for at least five years.

In another wrinkle of bureaucracy, Oksana needs to renew her ITIN (Individual Taxpayer Identifying Number) so we can file a joint return for 2020. The IRS says that any of the big four accounting firms will serve as an Authorized Agent to accept and certify the validity of her documentation. All four of them have refused. Therefore we have to send Oksana's documentation to someone in the United States. It is not the way it should be, but the way things are.

We needed to renew her foreign passport anyhow and she won't be using it for a while. She has an appointment Friday to submit her documentation for a new one. When we get it we will send it by Federal Express to some middleman in the United States who will charge us \$200 for the vast labor of making a copy of her new passport and submitting the renewal form to the IRS.

As I go through all this, I reflect on how miserable it has to be for somebody who doesn't have my degree of education, facility with languages, time as a retiree, luxury of living in the capital city, and experience dealing with bureaucracy. It is amazing to me that more people don't simply go postal in the face of all such nonsense.

I went to Toastmasters alone this morning. Eddie has a light case of sniffles and Anna the babysitter was here to take care of Zoriana. Our club is getting more potential members than I can remember in our history. Beautiful women especially. I'm sure the Lord had a good reason for saving them until I am safely married and approaching 80.

Just as I am planning to adapt my [article on immigration](#) as a speech for Toastmasters, the Gallup organization tells me that the Ukrainians are already quite [skeptical of immigration](#). Wonderful that they recognize the downside. Ukrainians have long memories, and there is not a single near neighbor that has enriched Ukraine by contributing immigrants. The Poles enslaved them as serfs, the Tatars sold them into slavery, the Russians were brought in to replace the Ukrainians killed in the Holodomor, and Jewish overseers kept them in alcohol and penury. Probably the best of the lot were the German settlers around Zaporozhia brought in by Catherine the Great. At least they minded their own business. Ukraine can certainly benefit by borrowing ideas from their neighbors, but it is unlikely to gain much by admitting other peoples.

We had a speech today on "Emotional Intelligence." The 1995 book thus titled by Daniel Goleman promotes the thesis that we are each smart in our own way and that each snowflake should be appreciated for its individuality. I lump it with "Multiple Intelligences" as a way of sidestepping the difficult issues raised by the fact that not all people or peoples are of equal ability. A very useful [book review](#) appeared on just that subject this week.

I cynically conclude that Toastmasters has been co-opted by the New World Order into replacing a program that used to teach people public speaking with this kind of calm-the-proletariat pap. I resent their indoctrinating the naïve Ukrainians, and have already drafted a speech to this effect. Were I to schedule it in a United States club I'm sure they would already have selected a firing squad, erected a pole and found me a blindfold. Maybe a repurposed Covid mask would be appropriate.

Two days after the workman finished installing our voltage stabilizer, I got a very unexpected letter in the mail. The electric company says that the problem was theirs and they had fixed it. I could look at it as \$2,000 down the drain, but I am enough of a cynic to believe that the problem will recur and that we are probably just as well off with the protection.

Covid 19 has migrated eastward. When Nadia, Oksana's mother, was here a couple of months ago I gave her a bunch of pills to take back home. My expectation was that she wouldn't use them but she would have them on hand if they got sick. Sure enough, she didn't start taking the prophylactic course. But now that enough fear has been instilled by the media she was getting around to do it. She asked me again what pills to take when.

On the subject, I note that the prophylactic routine is not an absolute preventative. It claims to reduce but not eliminate the likelihood of getting sick, and reduce the impact of the infection if you do. Which seems to be exactly what happened in the spate of cases that struck the White House. I am amazed that nobody is claiming that's the case.

Riding the Metro today, I took a tally of the number of people who were wearing masks correctly. Something less than 50%. One woman was boldly barefaced. Although the case numbers here are rising, people still don't seem to be galvanized to wear them right. Even Joe Biden was photographed

with his mask awry. I'm sure there will be some wonderful books written about this episode of Covid 19 madness. May we all live to read them.

Children love novelty. Thursday night I let the kids make their own dinner. I made some whole-wheat bread dough, rolled it out thin, laid out sausages, sauerkraut, cheese, strips of bell pepper and mustard and invited them to roll their own.

It was only halfway successful. The kids were playing upstairs and I wound up rolling the pups- in-blankets myself. However, there was some mystery in the fact that every one of them was unique. The kids liked them that night, and Zoriana asked for one for breakfast in lieu of cereal. I think we'll do it again.

Eddie is in the fourth grade in his loving, supportive but chaotic Sunflower School. What comes next? There is a private school here with the pretentious title "Intellect." I had talked to a couple of parents about it, and as I mentioned, when Eddie, Zoriana and I were shopping a few days ago, a girl who attends that school came up to me and offered to help me negotiate with the fruit and vegetable lady. I was impressed with her manner and her level of English, although I will say that she was slow to recognize that I in fact knew what I was doing. I wrote the school an email and got no response. I called and it turns out that the headmaster is the only person who speaks English. However, I have an assurance that when he returns to Kyiv he will talk to me about school. Stay tuned.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking and the children have a surprisingly good attitude toward school.

Graham

[19-Oct-20 --- Two wonderful Botanical gardens. Eddie's birthday. The lack of sleep drives Oksan...](#)

The lack of sleep drives Oksana crazy. The upshot is that babysitter Anna and I wind up taking care of Eddie and Zoriana. We both welcome it. Anna loves children and would like to have more of her own when and if circumstances permit. With my first family I chafed a bit at the fact that between mother, babysitter, and multiple institutions I didn't wind up spending as much time as I would have wanted. We would have very satisfactory outings on the weekends, but during the week they belonged to somebody else or were allowed to hole up in their rooms and avoid being sociable.

Thank you, Rob Moore, for introducing us to Charles and Susy Spell, who are in Ukraine for three months receiving twin daughters born of surrogate mothers. It is a pleasure to show them the city, a double pleasure given that they are such good company and such devoted parents.

Tuesday Zoriana and I went with them to the new botanical garden to revisit that wonderful play area. Their son Luca was in school, and their second daughter Sophia wouldn't be born until Thursday, so we had just two kids.

The play area was just as delightful as before, but we pushed on to see the other attractions. There wasn't any exhibition going on at the Orangery and the small zoo was closed for the winter. We pushed up the hill to the church and monastery, where we found this old lady in this very picturesque setting.

She was slow to open up, but once she did there was no stopping her. She went on and on about kids, and pulled an endless stream of candies out of her pocket. I thanked her for the first one, told her after the second one that mommy didn't allow Zoriana too many sweets, and tried hard to put on the brakes for the next 20 pieces of candy. Not much luck. You see Zoriana here with a lollipop in her mouth. I managed to get hold of most of the excess and we threw it away when we got home.

Zoriana has warmed up to Charlie and Susie just as if they were her parents. She runs enthusiastically into Charles' arms to be picked up, swung around, and generally entertained. He loves it. It's a good thing, because with two baby girls he is certainly and for a lot of it in the next couple years.

On the way out of the park we stopped to smell the dahlias and chrysanthemums. This resonated with Susie, whose Swiss father raises dahlias in their village home.

The bus pulled away just as we got to the bus stop, so we took advantage of the 15 minute wait to have a sandwich. We got home about 3 o'clock, well after Zoriana's naptime. She was hyper, as three-year-olds will get, and went to sleep easily. The upshot was that Oksana had Marianna to herself for most of the day.

Sunday, Anna's day off, is a great day to get the kids out of the house. We rendezvoused with Charlie and Susie on the platform of the University Metro stop at 9:15, just behind which is the old botanical garden. A temperature in the 40s didn't deter the kids. As insurance against being called a negligent father I had put a hat, gloves, and a pair of jeans to go over Zoriana's tights into my backpack. There they stayed – the challenge was to keep her from taking her jacket off.

The kids had a good time on the play equipment, but climbing the trees was a bigger attraction. This mature garden, adjacent to Shevchenko University, has been around for a century and the plantings are well-established.

Charlie and Susie's second daughter Sophia was born on Thursday, Eddie's birthday as well. We had to visit St. Sophia, the oldest Cathedral in Kyiv. I had been there before but hadn't realized how much of the elaborate sculpture and art work on the altar dated to the 11th century. It's very impressive in the context of what was going on in Western Europe at the time. Though it is still active as a church, it is also a major tourist attraction. They have removed portions of the modern flooring to reveal mosaics dating back to the original construction. There is a beautiful diorama of Kyiv as it existed under Yaroslav the Wise, who planned the construction of the walled city. I was pleased at how much Eddie remembered of the history he has learned in school.

Zoriana got a bit antsy. She is a very energetic and willful child, always tugging at her leash. She protests mightily when I hang onto her hand, but she gets in trouble quickly when I let it go. After getting lectured a couple of times by the docents I took her outside to play on the lawn and trees while everybody else enjoyed the Cathedral. Some trees she can climb herself, others she needs to be plopped into a low fork as a head start.

I don't know how mothers deal with kids like this. It takes physical strength and a strong will. When we are on the Metro or waiting for a bus she plays the little kid trick of going limp and making me drag her. Which I will do, or else I will pick up one of the dragging legs and make it as uncomfortable as I can as I carry her. She tries to break loose. If I hold her tight enough to simply restrain her she screams bloody murder, inviting the world to witness this horrible instance of child abuse. Whereas I

have to convince Eddie to walk down the Metro escalators to save a little time, was Zoriana I have to chase her up so she doesn't get lost.

As we were walking from the Cathedral to the restaurant, she separated herself from daddy and walked with other people. As we were halfway across the busy intersection at Artema I looked to see who had her. Nobody! She was standing resolutely on the curb all alone as everybody else crossed. I ran back to her, grabbed her by the hand, and crossed the street shortly after the light had changed. Memo to self: keep tight control over this kid.

We went to a traditional Ukrainian restaurant at the top of Andreivskii Descent, where we shared two portions of the specialty of the house, a smorgasbord of Ukrainian delicacies. Charles the brave had bees cooked and honey, which he shared with Luca and Eddie. Suzy and I passed

We got home too late for Zoriana to take a nap. I read to her for a while as she reverted to her normal tempo. Dinner, a bath, and we all went to bed early.

We had a festive dinner Thursday in honor of Eddie's birthday – salmon with a chocolate mousse cake for dessert. He had been asking for his birthday present for more than a year – a Monopoly set. I had balked. I bought something two years ago called "Grab and Go Monopoly" for about \$12. It was so incredibly cheaply made that I vowed never to do business with Parker Brothers/Hasbro again. But for Eddie's birthday I relented.

Those guys know what a monopoly is – they own the copyright, and they charge dearly for it. We paid \$25 for something that probably cost them one dollar at most to produce. It is, however, pretty much real monopoly. For some obscure reason they upped the luxury tax from \$75 to \$100. Otherwise it looks like a faithful reproduction.

They did not, however, proofread their translation well. The board and the property deeds all name places and things that we know in Ukraine. However, the chance cards for Advance Token to Illinois Avenue and Take a Ride on the Reading are merely transliterations of the American names Illinois and Reading. I can imagine Eddie's confusion if I had not been there to read things through. Another shortcoming: the rules of monopoly are four pages in English, half a page in Ukrainian. Cyrillic is simply not that succinct. They are leaving something out.

Marianna is doing what a baby should do: eat, sleep, pee, poop and exercise her lungs. I have been bugging Oksana about getting a baby picture to share, but so far no progress. I get to hold her more and more often. Correct that: I hear "Hold her, she's yours" while Oksana takes a break to eat, bathe, brush her teeth or whatever. It's a deal so long as she doesn't spoil things by attempting to tell me how to do it. I'm not that bad, actually.

You don't really want to hear my opinions on the upcoming elections. The mayoral election at the end of the month here in Kyiv is a free-for-all. I can't count the number of candidates. If I ventured any opinions about the United States election Twitter, YouTube, Facebook or Amazon would be sure to find some way to muzzle me. I will keep my views to myself.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong (I pick up and drag around 35 pounds of dead weight many times a day), the women are good looking (getting her figure back amazingly quickly) and the children are all above normal, at least in terms of their expenditure of energy.

Graham

24-Oct-20 --- Inborn wisdom of the young. Important book on human differences. Heat problems r... It is fascinating to watch how the older children are accepting Marianna into the family. Eddie enjoys holding her and does it very gently and responsibly. Zoriana loves to spend a lot of time next to her. Although she pokes and prods unnecessarily, she seems to be gentle.

I get the same mixed treatment. She loves to be picked up, carried on my shoulders, and to get in bed and snuggle with me at night. Nonetheless she will also hit me, argue, scream and yell. She is the kind of girl known in fiction as Peppermint Patty, Eloise, or Matilda.

I contrast this with my millennial family. When Suzy arrived in December 1988, Jack (6 ½) and Naomi (5) made it abundantly clear that two children were enough. There wasn't any need for this third one. Suzy has remained forever the fifth wheel in that family.

Zoriana's treatment of Mariana is in sharp contrast to her treatment of Raccoon. She used to be the one to feed this stray cat. Now she lets me feed him while she picks him up and carries him to his food bowl. Not whatsoever gently. Like every youngster, she loves to chase pigeons in the park. For their part, they are all expert at staying close enough to tease her but far enough away not to get hurt. Which they would, if Zoriana were only able.

Raccoon has a built-in tolerance for children. He knows she is a kid, and he puts up with having his tail pulled and being carried all over creation. He rarely complains and only once used his claws to tell her to back off.

Last year a skinny newcomer joined our welfare roll. We haven't even given her a name, but she comes in after Raccoon to pick up what he leaves behind, before the magpies swoop in and clean the place out. If Raccoon is too picky to accept a piece of four-day old fish, it will nonetheless be gone by morning.

Though she looks like a kitten herself, she is already a mother of three. They live somewhere in Gennady and Valya's property next door. While I am sure they get fed there from time to time, the people live in the city and are simply not around during the week. The pussycat family comes to our yard to eat and play.

The kittens' favorite retreat is a baby stroller that sits on our front porch. They are still little bit shy and hightail it whenever I come out. Although they fascinate Zoriana, she can't ever get close to them. She does pet mama cat, but somehow knows not to subject her to anything like the treatment she gives Raccoon.

To demonstrate her appreciation of our hospitality, it looks like mommy cat chose to make a contribution to the betterment of our household. As I went to the shed this morning to get the ladder to go read the electric meter, I found this lovely offering just inside the door

A large, handsome fellow, so fresh that he bent limply as I picked him up to throw him away. Good work, cats! I brought Eddie out for a look and a discussion. Why had he probably been killed and not

simply poisoned? First, he was right out in the open and hadn't crawled off to hide someplace to die. Second, cats often like to display their value by showing you what they've killed. Another observation – he had died so recently there was no sign of rigor mortis. The kind of facts a nine-year-old mind will readily absorb. It was garbage day, so he joins his ancestors in the great garbage heap in the sky.

Two weeks ago Dennis Krentz recommended a book entitled "[The WEIRDest people in the world](#)." It appears to be one of those revolutionary books that will change the nature of the discussion in the social sciences. It advances so many new theories that while some of them are bound to turn out to be wrong, there is enough substance that the very nature of the discussion must change,

Evolutionary psychologists have contributed more useful insights over the past half-century than any other branch of science I can think of. The sociobiologists (EO Wilson, Daniel Dennett, Richard Dawkins) led us to investigate how body structure, behavior and culture coevolved. Philippe Rushton, Helmuth Nyborg, Richard Lynn, Tatu Vanhanen, Edward Dutton, and Michael Woodley among others traced the evolution of the human mind, especially behavior and intelligence.

The nature-versus-nurture, genetics versus environment division has underlain all of these investigations. There are significant vested interests within the political realm: people who want to attribute homosexuality exclusively to genes, transsexuality exclusively to environment, and racial differences in life outcomes exclusively to malevolent forces such as racism. Jared Diamond attributed a lot to the luck of the draw. He theorized that mankind made more progress on the Eurasian continent than others because cultural advances such as agriculture could diffuse themselves along similar climates falling on an east-west axis and along the course of advantageously located rivers such as the Rhône, the Rhine, the Danube and the Dniro to the west, and the Ganges, Mekong, Yangtze and yellow Rivers to the east.

This new book by Joseph Henrich navigates adroitly between them. It promotes the theory that our differences are not purely genetic, but rather more attributable to the way our brains develop in response to the culture into which they are born. He attributes much of the differences between us Western Educated Industrialized Rich Developed (that is, WEIRD) peoples and others to literacy, the Christian religion, monogamy and other cultural practices. It has long been known that for several years after birth our brains wire themselves. Henrich's theory is that much of the differences among people's can be explained by such self-wiring.

In the much more extensive review of the book that I plan to write, I will give a lot of credit to this insight while continuing to support the arguments that would give heavier weight to genetic theories. Scientific progress is made by comparing the merits of alternative explanations of how measurable phenomena came to be. I am confident that the explanations that Henrich provides will be incorporated to some significant degree in future explanations.

One final note on our heating/electrical situation. First of all, since the power company supposedly fixed the fluctuating voltage, and we installed the (probably now redundant) voltage stabilizers, we haven't had any problems with the heat. After, of course, making the proper settings on the thermostat. Why it took five experts to figure that one out is a good question. I took yet another pass at trying to scan, recognize and translate the Ukrainian reference book, but had no success. I may not need to.

I thought we might want to switch to gas heat in any case. The builder of the house came by today and (1) showed me that the gas boiler is already fully integrated into the system – all we would need to do is to turn it on, and (2) that the gas boiler depends on an electric pump. We are dependent on electricity whatever we use. Circulation in my house in Washington DC, built in 1938, depended on hot water rising and cold water descending. No pumps. Such a design is archaic today.

One of our long-time, reliable tradesmen came by to shut off the water in the garden so the pipes don't freeze over the winter. We are ready to go.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children treat each other pretty nicely.

Graham

[28-Oct-20 --- Girls and cats, boys and dogs, exercise, perception of the US from a distance, and ...](#)  
A cat's meal ticket involves certain indignities. Here are some pictures of Zoriana carrying Raccoon to his breakfast.

There is a metaphor here. How much indignity do we put up with to win our daily bread? A more probing question. How much do we put up with now for the promise of a future security that we can see vanishing before our eyes, on account of the vast money printing by the Federal Reserve and corresponding federal deficit? It has been a good deal for the Baby Boomers who wrote the legislation. It has served me as a member of the silent generation, piggy-backing on their self-serving legislation. How it can possibly be worthwhile to Generation X, the millennials and beyond I cannot comprehend. Why do they acquiesce?

Edward Kinney wrote that I am doing my son, his namesake, a great disservice by not having a dog. I reflected on that. Dogs are part of the American tradition, the Norman Rockwell portrait of the American typical American home.

How far back in time does that go? I do not recall that my neighborhood friends, David Baker, Ricky Baker, John Fitzgerald or Mike Weaver ever had a dog. We had cats; Mike one named Shoes. I don't recall that Denny Krentz had a dog either. So there we were, back in Norman Rockwell times without the obligate Norman Rockwell family pooch.

There were a couple of dogs in the neighborhood. The McKillips across the street. Sandra Sitton, the comely widow next door, had dogs. With her equally comely daughter Marsha she invited me over to dock the puppies tails. It involved a knife and a hammer. It seemed like an unusual thing to do, but cocker spaniels should have short tails, and so they did.

Only two of Eddie's playmates have dogs, Nikita has a big husky mix called Ari, and Andrew, who recently moved to Lviv, has a chow mix named Smile. That's it. These



are family dogs, whose relationship with the boys is no stronger than with anybody else.

Most of the dogs that we see in the neighborhood fall into three categories. There are big dogs like this Caucasian mountain dog that people keep for protection. Those poor dogs live their whole lives out-of-doors barking at everything that comes by and getting no affection.

Many like this one stick their noses out under a gate and act as fierce as they can. My first instinct is to throw a rock at their snarling maws, but when I consider the miserable lives they must lead I reconsider and have some compassion.

There are what my firstborn Jack, called dropkick dogs. Little yippy things that you could easily boot into the next county. They've gotten even smaller in the 30 years since he made that observation. These are usually alert breeds like Yorkies, silkies, pugs, or maybe Jack Russell Terriers. That seems a cruel fate for a spirited dog, but there it is.

The third category would be street dogs. Yurii in our neighborhood is an odd duck, a handsome guy, doesn't appear to be a drunk or have any of the standard disabilities. He seems to be fairly well educated by bits and scraps, but he is an inveterate bore. He does not work, has never worked, lives in an old shack probably inherited from his family, and will latch on to anybody who walks by to engage in conversation.

One of the benefits of conversation with Yurii is that my Russian doesn't matter. I never get a word in edgewise. He will talk to me about everything from Einstein's theory to Bolshevik history, with gaping lacunas in his knowledge that even I can recognize, but he goes on without a pause. Poor as he is, and with a little help from his friends and neighbors, he sustains a pack of street dogs.

What I don't see are dogs chasing sticks and balls, dogs running and frolicking with boys. I'm sure that's what Edward has in mind when he says that boys should have dogs. I fear that that is a largely lost part of American culture, like Boy Scout camps, loud firecrackers, and playing hooky to go fishing. Our kids' childhoods are not as rich as our grandparents, and dogs aren't the whole of it.

There is a profound difference between the right and the left in American politics. To most people on the right the upcoming is just an election. To the left, it's a religious crusade.

When I dare to touch the tender tenets of that religion, such as expressing an ounce of credence with regard to the Hunter Biden story, the faithful are sure to come at me en masse to correct the error of my ways. Conversely, everybody easily accepts it when I acknowledge Trump's faults. Nobody would imagine he's even close to perfect.

The progressives long ago adopted the motto that all's fair in love and war. They give Trump no quarter and accord him no sense of fair play. Yesterday the Trump campaign released a spate of satirical advertisements. Yes, they are vastly unfair. But fairness went out the window before the time of Robert Bork, and the ads are delightfully on target. Excuse me for laughing. Find some [here](#), and [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).

I stayed in shape by running 4 miles a day until my knees gave out in about 1984. Since then I have bicycled, swum, and used an exercise bicycle when those weren't available.

My objective was to maintain a heart rate of 140 for 30 minutes. Measuring it became a problem 15 years ago when I developed arrhythmia. My yardstick became the size of the puddle of sweat that accumulated underneath the exercise bike.

The chief problem with this regime was that all the heavy breathing led to strep throat about twice a year. I gave it up three years ago, rationalizing that biking to school with Eddie twice a day, with outings on the weekends and shopping trips to town would make up for it.

The flaw in the logic becomes clear now that Eddie is old enough to bike to school by himself. I got back on the exercise machine and found that I had lost considerable ground. It was a month before I could work up to even leaving one drop of sweat on the mat underneath the bike. Even now the puddle isn't terribly big.

This physical exercise is a good complement to the "Treat Your Own Back" exercises that I have mentioned before. After arching backwards, flexing forward by touching my toes, then hanging for a minute to stretch everything out, I get on the exercise bike for 30 minutes. I don't know why it doesn't bother my throat the way it used to... maybe it's the zinc that I'm taking as part of the Covid 19 prophylaxis. At any rate I'm building back up, though I'm still a fair way short of the 80 revolutions per minute I was able to manage three years ago.

It is a delight to find an article online that clearly expresses my point of view, and a double delight that when I said as much in a comment [on this one](#) the author, Israel Shamir applauded it. The essence of the story is that Russians, who for decades looked to the United States as the fount of progress and enlightenment, are appalled at the way it is unraveling. Ukrainians are still ambivalent. Many still want to immigrate to the United States, but they are increasingly aware that the country has huge problems

that most of its citizens refuse to see or mistakenly blame on traditional Americans such as me.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children are happily playing with each other giving me time to write.

Graham

[3-Nov-20 --- A multi-child family. Will the Great Pumpkin return? The specter of Covid 19. We ar...](#)  
We are now officially a "multi-child family," and as such entitled to a number of benefits. A one time cash payment, discounts on public transportation, on utilities, and others here and there.

The bureaucratic hurdles to receiving this largesse are amazing. I assume that the Gypsies, like the Hispanic communities and Hasidic Jews in the United States have it all worked out. They surely have gurus to lead the uninitiated through the system and gather all of the goodies to which they are entitled. For the rest of us just doing it the first time it is a headache.

Every government office seems to be guarded by a similar breed of Gorgon, jealously protecting the other bureaucrats by sending all comers to other centers of bureaucracy in the far corners of the city. The objective seems to be to wear you out.

I had to go back to the civil registration office, ZAGS, to get a copy of one of the document certifying home birth which I had obtained a couple of weeks ago by shuttling back-and-forth four times between two such offices. I was just the feet of the operation – the brains were elsewhere – and the brains didn't tell the feet to keep a copy of everything.

Oksana phoned the office and arrange that I would show up early in the morning, before any other petitioners, and get a copy of the document we had given them. When I got there the Gorgon at the gate told me it was the wrong place – I needed to go on the other side of the river. Fortunately I was able to call Oksana, pass the phone over, and get it straightened out.

At the end of the day I got everything, took some pictures (the session you see on my Facebook page) and Oksana had a successful visit to the benefits office this morning. Again I ask myself how in the world a lesser mortal, not having her husband free to dispatch, having to drag a baby and toddlers around, living far distant from the bureaucracy in some village, would possibly handle it. We have to count our blessings.

Tomorrow the people awaiting the arrival of the Great Pumpkin will know whether their prayers have been answered or whether the other Great Pumpkin will be back for another four years. I am fortunate that the Great Pumpkin does not figure in my religious beliefs.

The pundits who seem to be most on target this election day are Matt Taibbi, Glenn Greenwald and Andrew Sullivan. Their votes are split left, right and center. Their observations are similar. What a train wreck! What a catastrophe! America is in a fatal tailspin.

These three authors put more blame on the politicians than I think is due. Walt Kelly put his finger on it 70 years ago. "We have met the enemy, and he is us." Frederick Bastiat wrote in 1850 "Everyone wants to live at the expense of the state. They forget that the state lives at the expense of everyone." HL Mencken wrote "Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard."

I would contend that however deplorable the candidates are, they are representative of America. Founding father Gouverneur Morris wrote in the preamble that the Constitution was "... to secure the blessing of liberty to ourselves and our posterity...." This age has no respect for the founding fathers – no kid you could name would know who Morris was – and is not producing progeny. We care only about ourselves, and As Mike Judge depicted in Idiocracy, those selves are getting stupider by the generation.

Nobody, including me, knows anything about the written platforms of the political parties. The most pressing issues – the huge deficit, the endless wars, the fact that people are different and must be accommodated differently – are off-limits for discussion. The immense level of official, legal corruption is as sacrosanct in the United States as Ukraine. Only a stupid politician blunders into the kind of corruption that might excite the law. We do, however, produce some pretty stupid politicians.

My concern is raising children to be successful and to give me grandchildren. I need to educate them. Make sure that they learn the fundamental skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. Make sure that they learn an appropriate amount of history, about the society in which they live and about world societies. Instill in them the notion that people succeed by doing things that other people need done – that they can get paid for. And about using discretion, keeping their mouths shut.

Freedom of inquiry and discussion has been a vital part of Western success. I just reviewed a book to that effect recommended by Denny entitled "[The WEIRDest People in the World](#)". Freedom of speech is in much better shape here in Ukraine than in the United States. That alone is reason enough to raise my children here. The lower cost of living helps, and the fact that it is easier to join the work force, to get an entry-level job doing something meaningful in a low-wage society.

Covid 19 levels are rising here with the cold weather. Western Europe, ignoring the success of outlier Sweden, seems to be clamping down again. Ukrainian authorities have said they will not follow suit – they cannot afford to. Nonetheless, the media and others are working to raise the level of fear. Although many people throughout the world express common sense, they seem to be ignored and shouted down. Great Barrington (with many translations) is as good of a [summary of their thinking](#) as any.

I, for my part, wear my mask even though the evidence is that they don't do much good. I don't want ladies on the bus shouting at me. I do, however, lower it so I can breathe easily. That absolutely negates its imagined effectiveness, but it puts me in good company here in Ukraine. And, as I have frequently mentioned, I am taking hydroxychloroquine and zinc. For all the brouhaha six months ago nobody has ever demonstrated that these are dangerous. Nobody even defends the now retracted Lancet and New England Journal of Medicine articles making that claim. The people who want you to be scared simply no longer discuss them.

A lot of things never get follow-up. It was big news when everybody in the White House Rose Garden got Covid 19. It was not news whatsoever when they got over it quickly and without incident. Despite fervent prayers, nobody died.

Here is another poser. This graph shows that the number of current infections (blue - 106793) in Ukraine exceeds the number of people who have recovered (green - 87882) – and that ratio has been the same in the seven months since the inception of the graph. Yet, we know that Covid ordinarily lasts only about two weeks. How can this be?

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and for the children November 4 will not be the end of the world. It is just going to be a Wednesday like any other.

7-Nov-20 --- Values. Sweets galore. The circle of life. I bought a liter of 80 proof vodka on the w...

I bought a liter of 80 proof vodka on the way home tonight. Khlibskii Dar, The Gift of Bread. It cost 200 hryvnya, \$7.14. That would be \$5.14 per 750ml, the most common size in the USA. It is a middling brand, not the cheapest. I don't care – I buy it for the alcohol, not what my wife will think of me. She doesn't know the difference and doesn't like my drinking in the first place.

Just out of curiosity I googled Calvert Woodley Liquors, where I shopped 40 years ago when I lived in DC, to check out prices there. Liquor has always been cheap in Washington DC – the legislative and governing processes require a lot of it. Especially the lobbying part.

Here is the list of prices for 750 ml.

What can I observe from this? Any vodka whatsoever is twice as expensive there as here. More significantly, there are a vast number of brands that are significantly more expensive than Gordon's, which is a perfectly adequate vodka. Why is that?

The formula for vodka is simple. [40% ethyl alcohol, 60% water](#). Fusel oils, which give liquors their flavor, have been distilled out and further removed by carbon filtration. There is very little substance to distinguish one vodka from another. As with bottled waters, it is more matter of perception and advertising. Snob appeal.

Brand names have a powerful appeal. My dear wife Oksana insists on Borjomi bottled water from Georgia at a dollar per half liter. This is a case in which science has been a miserable failure. Oksana said that Borjomi has a special flavor due to the minerals in it. There is a list of those chemical elements: calcium, potassium lithium, magnesium, sodium, chlorine and such. Every brand has a similar list. Not surprisingly, they are the same as in ordinary tap water, from which I suspect most of the stuff derived. But I lose the argument. Oksana insists she can tell the difference with Borjomi.

Six-year-old Eddie started to insist on Borjomi. I said no. I will tolerate the foibles of the love of my life. I won't take such nonsense from a six-year-old boy. Science lost again. I do indeed take nonsense because his mother gives him Borjomi. It's an extravagant waste of money, but we can afford it. NB: in this parody photo, Божемой, Bozhemoy, is Russian for "Oh my God!"

Eddie and I have frequent talks about money. A week ago we went to the zoo. I had promised him a shawarma on our way home. It is one of the most delicious street foods here in Ukraine, a mixture of fresh vegetables and meat wrapped in Middle Eastern bread with a lot of mayonnaise and other sauce on it. A big enough one to split costs about \$3.00.

We didn't do that. Eddie wanted sushi. As it was right after his birthday, that we did. Total tab came to \$20. Eddie and I discussed how much twenty dollars can buy.

How much does an apartment cost? He had no real idea. I told him \$1000 a square meter is a good guess. And how big is that? One hundred 10 cm squares. So how much would each 10 cm<sup>2</sup> cost? \$10. Now we're getting into something he could visualize. I made a gesture with my hands to show how big two squares together would be and I told him that he had just eaten that much of an apartment. It didn't taste any better than the shawarma would have. If he had put the money into an apartment, he'd have it forever.

I hope that over the course of time these things make an impression. He is careful with money. He always has some with him, because he doesn't spend all I give him for this and that. That's to me a good sign.

Yesterday as Oksana was standing in the garden she heard a bump, then saw a woodpecker flutter lifelessly to the ground. The poor fellow had mistaken Eddie's bedroom window for a flight path and broken his neck. Eddie's bedroom is in the middle of the house and I don't think that there is any clue that it should be a through route. But there he was, still very warm and flexible with an obviously broken neck. Sad, because woodpeckers, though not endangered, are beautiful birds. This is the second time this has happened – another suicide mission took place two years ago on our balcony window.

In the vain hope that he might come to, we put him out by the edge of the garden next to a hole I had dug attempting to find a mole. We figured we would bury him later. Later never arrived. The mommy cat and kittens that I showed you a couple of weeks ago found his warm corpse and made quick work of it. All we found were a few tail feathers.

My sense of proprietorship of the kitchen is in trouble every time there are women about. I rarely get to fix my specialties because there's always something that babysitter Anna has prepared. I can't complain too loudly - it's usually quite delicious.

In pregnancy and nursing Oksana has had a ferocious appetite. Thank God she is endowed with a metabolism that can handle it. She has been cooking sweets like crazy. We have had New York cheesecake, chocolate cheesecake, three kinds of layer cakes, two kinds of cupcakes, gelatin cakes, gelatin cupcakes, and now homemade chocolate covered coconut bars. These are like Bounty in Ukraine, Mounds in the United States, but not quite as sweet and the coconut tastes much more like coconut. Absolutely delicious - here's a picture.

The downside of this is that the children swipe the sweets whenever they can get away with it, only occasionally getting reprimanded. Luckily they seem to have inherited their mother's fortuitous genes and it doesn't show on them. I'll be happy when things get back to normal, but meanwhile I'm proud of my wife, cooking confidently from recipes.

I reviewed a [spate of books this week](#). No plans to reenter Amazon's top 500, but I did want to capture the important ideas for my own use. [Like this one](#), which seems suddenly a propos.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children are thriving on a chocolate-rich diet.

11-Nov-20 --- Adele Lynch — thanks again! Hooch notes. Tribute to HL Mencken. Electricity one la... I again express my gratitude to Adele Lynch, choir mistress of St. Patrick's Church. The moment I mentioned that I was taking advantage of some prepaid singing lessons that my daughter Susy had blown off, and was enjoying it, Adele drafted me for the choir and gave me one-on-one rehearsals every week prior to the service. I learned how to sing.

The songs of my youth – my early youth, not the 60s – were extremely memorable. The music stayed with me though I didn't sing. I croon them to Marianna to calm her down and get her to go to sleep. The other kids like them as well, and Eddie is pretty good at picking up the words.

The two that ran through my mind for all of September were "September Song," from the 1930s hit Knickerbocker Holiday, and "Try to Remember (the kind of September)" from the Fantasticks.

It's wonderful to be able to look up the lyrics on the Internet. Doing so I find that those that are coursing through my brain now are from movies. "Darling Where Is Your Heart?" from John Houston's 1952 "Moulin Rouge." "Some Enchanted Evening" from South Pacific and "As Time Goes by" from Casablanca.

There are some a couple of decades older, two by Paul Robeson, "River, Stay Way from My Door" and "Old Man River."

Eddie asked me this week if they ever ask for fares as you leave the Metro. I told him that they couldn't do that, and sang him the Kingston Trio's "MTA". To my amazement I remembered every verse.

A couple of you wrote in response to my comments about vodka and bottled water. You forced me to do a little research. I include here a couple of quotes from the Internet.

*"...a 2013 study Trusted Source looked into (the taste of waters) with a blind taste test on 20 bottled mineral water samples with varying mineral contents to 25 bottled and tap water samples. The researchers found that the following four most distinctly affected taste perception:*

- \_\_\_ o  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  (bicarbonate)*
- \_\_\_ o  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  (sulfate)*
- \_\_\_ o  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  (calcium)*
- \_\_\_ o  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$  (magnesium)"*

I don't care about the taste of bottled water, but according to this, aficionados should be able to choose cheaper brands with the same flavor elements as the high priced ones. They might even be able to treat their tap water. Harder to duplicate is gasification, but even that can be handled with a seltzer bottle.

With regard to the taste of vodka, Wikipedia offers this on fusel alcohols:



*Some beverages, such as rum, whisky (especially bourbon), ... are expected to have relatively high concentrations of non-hazardous alcohols as part of their flavor profile. However, in other beverages, such as Korn, vodka, and lagers, the presence of alcohols other than ethanol is considered a fault.*

and what are these fusel alcohols? Search on "Chemistry of Whiskey" and find a long list of other alcohols that give flavor to wines and brown spirits such as whiskey, brandy and rum. But vodka? Nothing. By design.

Most people want their vodka drinks to taste like the mixers: tomato juice, orange juice, tonic water and the like, and not just vodka.

Serious Ukrainian drinkers do take it neat. Or raw. They stop at a dram shop for 100ml (2 jiggers plus) to get them started in the morning. It is usually samogon, (self-squeezed), homemade hooch.

My former housemate Yurii Karabach brought homemade stuff from his father and Maryna Jenkins from her sweet schoolteacher mother. They can't get all of the impurities out of it, but it comes out tasting good because they make their wort from good fruits. They sell a 13 L, \$100 stovetop still for such enthusiasts.

I no longer mention election fraud, conflict of interest, corruption, socialism or dementia. The answer is always the same – "But it was Donald Trump!" Can't argue that. See the Mencken quote in the last issue. Voltaire said, "If you want to know who controls you, look at who you are not allowed to criticize." Graham says, "If you want to know who controls you, look at who can vanish you from the Internet." I am glad to be gone. From the vanishers, that is, not as a vanishee.

As I write this there is an electrician downstairs remedying Valery's work. He insisted that we not remove the "relay" that cuts out power when the voltage drops. It got wired wrong and was dropping the power even though the voltage stabilizers are doing their job.

What do we learn? Not to be such a chump. When you make a personnel decision, make it! Also, the electric company didn't really fix the problem they claimed to have fixed. What a surprise.

Marianna is up to 10 pounds. Oksana is getting a little bit more sleep. Zoriana, who already had a head start, has been even more of a PIA since the baby was born. She puts her hands on EVERYTHING that is mine, rifling my drawers for pencil sharpeners, rulers, and anything else that interests her. I find them scattered throughout the house. I resolved last night she would sleep in her own room, not in mine any longer. Time to grow up.

The good news is that both Eddie and Zoriana are very interested in the baby. They love her to death. In Zoriana's case, it looks a lot like the way she loves the cat, which concerns me. But I think the affection is genuine.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, women are good looking, and the children's temperaments are above average for stability and agreeableness.

17-Nov-20 --- Quiet times since the election; a seven child confab; whither the economy?; Dr. Ed...

Kids like to be with other kids. Last Sunday Charlie and Susie brought over five-year-old Luca and his sisters Sofia and Mila, newborns like our Marianna. Eddie and Zoriana love to play with Luca, a really smart and well mannered kid. Our babysitter Anna brought her daughter Sophia, exactly Eddie's age, to round things out.

The three newborns nestled in slings as the adults talked and the older kids played. Sofia, already showing strong maternal instincts, was happy to look after babies when they came her way.

We finally had enough people for a game of Monopoly. Eddie got it for his birthday, but a proper game takes three or more people and a couple of hours. We don't usually have that sort of resource. We wound up teaching Luca and Sofia the strategy of the game rather than anybody making an all-out effort to win. It was a highly social occasion, one that worked despite the fact that Charlie and Suzy don't have a language in common with Anna or Sofia.

Zoriana doesn't understand daddy's limits. She asks me to read books and sing songs in all of the languages in use in the household. I sight read music adequately in English, almost adequately in German, but not so well in Ukrainian. We have discussions about that at bedtime, as she thrusts book after book at me to be read or sung. It was nice that Suzy recognized every song in the German songbook that Oksana bought as part of her Orff pedagogy. Hearing somebody sing a song is a better way to master it than attempting to sight read the music.

There may have been Trump partisans showing up at rallies all over the country, but they were not terribly voluble via the Internet traffic I received. I got pro Trump emails intermittently, often with political cartoons.

Facebook is another story. I suspect it would be true of Twitter, Instagram and other Internet sites to which I'm not subscribed. Democratic partisans have been over the top. And they still are, even after the election.

This reflects a fundamental divide. Whether or not liberalism has a God is arguable, but it definitely has a devil. An orange-haired devil. When that devil exits the stage I fear they will seek another, and I am uncomfortably similar to the incumbent.

What happens when they discover what conservatives already know, that Trump is an ineffectual bag of vacuous threats who has accomplished relatively little? Getting rid of him will not solve any problems because he was not dealing effectively with any. The establishment hated him because they did not own him, but he was unable to put together a team of people who were not part of the swamp.

I am a White American male with a far better pedigree than Trump. Mine goes back to the Mayflower on the English side, and a century farther on the German side. I am quite sure that the witchhunt will be ongoing, and will be looking for people like me. I am glad to be scarce.

It is interesting to me that the winning side does not even argue the issues that were so prominent a month ago, such as Hunter Biden's corruption... or Joe's; Joe's senility, unfortunate things he said in the past and so on. They don't even discuss the issues surrounding the fairness of the election. The theme is simple: "We won – give it up."

Count me among the 70% of Republicans who are convinced the election was unfair. But count me as well among the minority who do not think that the election mattered much at all. The country was on a trajectory that could not have been braked by any chief executive. Trump ran a budget deficit of 50% this year due to Covid. I don't know what their excuse will be, but I doubt the Democrats will do any better. I could not believe that Trump was successful using smoke and mirrors to keep the economy from collapsing for four years. Another four are to me impossible. Time to cross my fingers, hunker down, and raise my kids as well as I can.

The pundits are looking for deep causes, and the deepest of all are given by [Edward Dutton, the Jolly Heretic](#). He blames evolution spinning backward. Since the Industrial Revolution the unfit have been able to reproduce in the most fit have found better things to do with their energies. He has good YouTube presentations on most of his thoughts.

It is ironic to me that this absolute heretic cannot tolerate heresy himself. I have his attention because I've written the best received Amazon reviews on most of his books. But he cannot tolerate my claims that (1) regression to the mean means that [highly intelligent parents \(like him\) cannot expect similarly intelligent children](#), (2) although older guys like myself accumulate deleterious mutations that might affect our children, [it is offset by the mere fact we can still have them](#), and (3) even before the Industrial Revolution, far more than 10% of each generation were successful in having grandchildren. He doesn't even bother to argue with me, just dismisses me as an uncredentialed boor not worthy of his attention.

What do you do in a case like that? I accept the fact that he's only human, and being 90% right is far better than average. I continue to read and [watch his stuff](#) and don't get huffy about hurt feelings or anything like that.

One of his latest videos is on the downside of IVF. He cites several reasons that children born of IVF may not be as genetically healthy as others. I can accept his logic, but also observe that the people who use IVF are significantly more fit than the population average. Given that we are generally not reproducing ourselves at all, especially not the smarter people, isn't IVF better than nothing at all? I strongly believe it is.

The larger issue is whether or not heretics like Dutton should be allowed to be heard at all. The cancel culture is trending toward silencing everybody. This is absolutely wrong. I may not always agree with Dutton, but I do not wish to be deprived of his opinion.

Tomorrow I am having an early morning conversation with childhood friend Denny, who has done a pretty good job of managing his financial affairs, and lunch with Vitaliy and Vera, a couple of Ukrainian friends with a good understanding of what's going on. This seems to be a good time to move money out of the United States, over here where I can better control it and start to teach Eddie how to manage it. I have not done any investing in the 13 years I've been here. I think it is time to change.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women good-looking, and the children are going to grow up in interesting times. I fear.

Graham

23-Nov-20 --- [Statistical games; What makes you feel happy? Cynicism pays. Realistic education ...](#)

Correspondent Don Braun wrote to ask how Ukraine was doing with a 17.5% unemployment rate. It depends on who's counting. The Ukrainian Ministry of finance puts it at 9.6%. Two major complicating factors are (1) the fact that a lot of work is off the books, to avoid paying income tax, and (2) there isn't enough of a safety net in terms of unemployment or welfare to support people who aren't working.

It isn't any better in the United States. John Williams has run [shadow stats](#) for a few decades now. It is a subscription service for companies that need to know the truth and cannot afford to depend on government information. The chart below shows American unemployment: the government reports 6.9% unemployment; shadow stats reports 26.3%. Why the huge discrepancy? The official unemployment rate excludes people who are not looking for work because they are discouraged or one thing or another. Which one is most useful in making business decisions? Probably shadow statistics, because it indicates who is earning money and paying taxes. Note also that the discrepancy has widened greatly since 2010. The government lies are getting more serious.

Williams collects all kinds of data. Just as another example, here is what he shows for actual versus reported inflation. Most of you live in the real world of the American economy. Who is closer to the truth? In the world in which I live, ignoring exchange rates, his inflation figure is closer to the mark than the annual increases in my Social Security.

John Williams does not work to get into the headlines, but after I had written the above he offered this [bit of optimism](#): *"The more left we go, the more rapid will be the demise of the dollar. Eventually, it will be a hyperinflation in the United States. What I am looking at here is this evolving into a hyperinflationary Great Depression."* I have hedged with a bit of Bitcoin on the side. Though for the moment it is looking better, in the long run I'd still bet on precious metals.

You in America have a great advantage in that there are truth tellers out there, despite the efforts of government and big media to squelch them. We in the rest the world do not trust our governments' claims, but we don't have much else to go on. Here is a graph I have showed you before – the Ukrainian Ministry of finances Covid 19 statistics:

What's wrong with this picture? The most obvious thing is that 52% of all the people who ever caught Covid 19 are still sick. They started keeping track on March 13, 36 weeks ago. The virus lasts less than two weeks. There simply cannot be that many still sick.

I tried to figure it out as a percentage of the population. More statistical problems. What's the population of Ukraine? Government figures still include Crimea and the Donbas, which Ukraine hasn't controlled since 2014. Official population is 41 million, actual population is about 35 million.

What about cases of Covid 19 in the phantom portions of the country? They have figures for those areas, but they are unrealistically low. They probably reflect only the parts of Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts that are still under government control – not the cities themselves.

If you do a little arithmetic, by these statistics 1.7% of the population has already caught the disease and .93% still have it. Here we get into a bit of a problem. If this were true, we would know these people. But we don't, especially the ones that are supposed to still have it. I am sure that here as elsewhere testing leads to a lot of false positives. My guess is that they get counted as cases, but since nobody ever gets sick, nobody ever recovers.

There is also a question of who actually died from the disease. We know for sure that there are financial incentives in the United States to call any death whatsoever – motorcycle accidents, drownings and such – Covid deaths. You get government funding by doing that. I don't know the situation in Ukraine, but I would bet the same thing happens. You could be almost certain that hospitals here don't have the necessary expertise or equipment to sort out pure Covid deaths from comorbidities and deaths from totally unrelated causes. I am quite confident that they have dealt with 10,951 bodies. I am certain that nobody knows for sure what the cause of death was for at least some of them, and perhaps most of them.

At any rate, they have succeeded in terrorizing the populace. People on the buses have been scared into wearing their masks, even into wearing them more or less correctly. We are holding our Toastmasters meeting online again. When I took three kids (Sophia, babysitter Anna's daughter, Eddie and Zoriana) shopping this morning everything except the food stores were closed on account of a weekend quarantine. Not much traffic on the Metro, and the stores were likewise mostly empty. I couldn't shop for the household goods that I wanted.

Just as Ukraine is being dragooned into following the European model, more and more people are coming out and saying that Covid 19 is a giant hoax. [Europeans](#) are [starting](#) to come to their senses and [push back](#).

I am attaching audio from the Chief Executive Officer of a firm that creates Covid 19 tests in a Zoom conference with the health officials of Alberta, Canada.

The United States government and the big tech firms have been absolutely immoral in suppressing dissenting voices on the subject of Covid 19. Here are three, stricken by YouTube et al and reposted elsewhere, that I have had bookmarked for some time:

[America's frontline doctors](#)  
[Medicine uncensored](#)  
[Doctors in black](#)

Quite specifically, they have removed recommendations from doctors suggesting the preventative medicine that I am taking – hydroxychloroquine. The evidence is that it works and it would've saved millions of lives if they had spread the word about its effectiveness instead of suppressing it in the interests of the drug companies (Pfizer, Moderna) who stand to make billions with vaccines. This doctor Harkinson, attached, recommends lots of Vitamin D. Nobody going to make billions on that! I am picking some up tomorrow.

Exercise bicycles have been part of my life since the 1970s. The Tunturi, and I suspect every exercise bike ever made, uses a battery-powered device to keep track of your revolutions and energy expenditure. They all crap out so quickly that I never depend on them in the first place. I count my revolutions in my head and use a wristwatch to keep track of my time. You cannot accurately set the

resistance on any of these devices. I simply go by feel. Until about 15 years ago I used to try to keep my heart rated 140 for half an hour. Two problems arose. First, I got arrhythmia, which makes it hard to count. Second, a person slows down after 60.

I have bought a new machine about every five years because the Tunturi brand that I liked just kept rusting out on me. I sweat a lot. I thought that the same was happening to the Torneo machine that I had bought when I moved to Kyiv in 2008. When it seemed to be becoming unreliable, I just bought another one of the same model.

I put the new one in the attic, planning to use the old one until it was totally dead. But the damned thing never died! Five years later it is still perking. Last week our babysitter Anna suggested that she might like to buy the unused one up in the attic. Oksana clarified that it would really be more appropriate to simply give it to her. So yesterday she took a taxi home and took the exercise bike with her.

Meanwhile, since I quit swimming about two months ago, and no longer have to bike to school with Eddie, I have been faithfully pushing the exercise bike again. As mentioned above, there aren't any totally reliable measures of energy expenditure on one of these things. What I can measure is day-to-day progress. I'm back up to 40 minutes a day, 25 minutes spinning as I breathe quite rapidly, and another 15 minutes of one breath per power stroke, 60 revolutions per minute. It results in a puddle of sweat about half as big as they were when I stopped using the bike full-time in 2017.

I note a couple of things. The irritated throat, which used to regularly lead to strep, has not come back. I wonder if it is because of the zinc I am taking to prevent Covid 19. Second, I note that the exercise bike gives me a significantly more rigorous workout than either biking on the street or swimming. Getting all that oxygen seems good for my mood. The state of today's world would give a person a lot about which to be depressed, but I'm in a better state of mind that I was before.

I find it ominous that people who would comment on such things as Covid 19 (above), the realities of climate change, population differences, gender differences, or the history of our culture, civilization and country do not enjoy free speech. They get muzzled. The powers that be are no longer being subtle about shutting us up.

What should I tell my kids? I'm becoming cynical myself. I tell Eddie that stupidity is an inherent part of the human condition, and that people are getting [stupider by the generation](#). I can point to a number of books testifying to this fact. I can also tell him that most significant fortunes have been made by preying on human pride, stupidity and vice. Joe Kennedy made his millions in bootleg liquor. The Sackler family made theirs by selling narcotic drugs as painkillers. Al Gore and Elon Musk made theirs via the public panic over vastly overhyped global warming. Bill Gates wants to make another few billion off of this Covid 19 panic. Nothing new in the world.

The same affects the big guys: "Larry Summers really likes to ask people whether they want to be outsiders, who can speak the truth but can't have power, or insiders who can have power as long as they don't say anything that's unacceptable to the oligarchy."

This is what Yanis Varoufakis had to say in "Adults in the Room," according to my review of same. He says that among the people he dealt with, including Wolfgang Schäuble, Christine Lagarde, Mario Draghi, Barack Obama, Jack Lew, Larry Summers, Bernie Sanders, Angela Merkel, and Emanuel Macron were two types: fascinating and banal. "The banal went about their business ticking boxes on sheets of instructions handed down to them by their masters. In many cases, though, their masters –

politicians such as Wolfgang Schäuble and functionaries such as Christine Lagarde and Mario Draghi – were different. They had the ability to reflect on themselves and their role in the drama, and their ability to enter into dialogues with themselves made them fascinatingly susceptible to the trap of self-fulfilling prophecy."

Very few of us are totally free. Because I was born at the right time and am quite good at computer stuff, I have been more free than almost anybody I know. You see the evidence in the life I lead and the views that I express. Also in the fact that I am shunned, excommunicated, canceled by people who cannot accept the life that I lead or the facts as I see them. Almost all politicians – maybe excluding Ron Paul? – are not free at all. There are only a few people I do consider free – I invite your letters as to why you think I'm wrong. They include: Ron Unz, David Cole, Larry Ellison, Roosh V, Matt Taibbi and Glenn Greenwald.

So what to advise Eddie? As PT Barnum said, there's a sucker born every minute. HL Mencken said you'll never go broke underestimating the intelligence of the American public. You might feel noble attempting to raise the human condition, but you can't do it. On the other hand, if you look for examples of people exploiting human weakness and getting rich, they are legion. A cynic would tell his children that the best way to make a fortune is to arbitrage between reality, which a smart kid like Eddie should be able to figure out, and what the hoi polloi have been led to believe by the media and their government. Just keep your mouth shut about it and enjoy the money. Do like Bill Gates. Broadcast photos of yourself getting vaccinated (but don't tell the rubes it's just saline solution) and let them inject themselves with your dicey vaccine at \$100 a pop. Whatever happens to those poor fools, their herd immunity will protect you, and you don't have any moral obligation to anybody but yourself. That's 2020 morality. Right?

And that's the news (cynical opinion) from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and we wonder whether or not we can afford to let the kids remain innocent.

Graham

[2-Dec-20 --- When mom is happy, everybody's happy. Early snow. Coronavirus panic. Book review...](#)

Oksana's mother has been with us for nine days now. This is the most time she has ever spent here. More than that, it is tranquil. Mothers and daughters have the most intense relationships within a family, often with uncomfortable disagreements. Not this time.

Grandmother Nadia, who sounded a bit skeptical when we told her we were having a third baby, is absolutely in love with Marianna. Oksana is with her all night, and during the day it is babysitter Anna and grandmother Nadia. Meanwhile, dad gets to take care of Zoriana while Eddie spends his time in school.

Eddie enjoys school. I occasionally have a guilty feeling that I should spend more time with him, but he doesn't want it and seems to be doing fine without it. I expect that learning to be independent and self motivated is more important than whatever academic advantage he might have if I did work with him.

Zoriana demands a lot of attention. She wants me to read to her constantly. She is happiest when we are by ourselves. On Monday we had a five hour outing, most of which time was spent in public transit as we went to a meeting with a friend. The friend was tied up and didn't have much time for us,

but Zoriana and I had a good time on the bus, the Metro, and the tram seeing the city. She doesn't act up or demand attention, and especially does not cry or make a scene when we are in public.

Nadia dictates her behavior in ways that Zoriana is uncomfortable with. Grandmother demands that she put on more clothes than she wants. Grandmother says that she absolutely cannot go out to feed the cat in the morning. When Zoriana and I are alone, though the weather may be freezing, it is only 30 seconds to go out on the porch and pour food in the bowl. We go.

Grandmother will have none of it. Zoriana is not allowed out of the house unless she is dressed like an Eskimo. Grandmother is strict about drinking water before eating breakfast, and eating cereal rather than fried foods. Zoriana still wears a diaper at night. Grandmother requires that she thoroughly wash her nether regions after she takes it off in the morning. Very well, we don't argue with grandmother. It's going to happen her way.

I don't mind Zoriana getting a little bit of discipline, and I don't mind the fact that though I am no pushover I am the most lax of the adults around. Like a lot of little girls, Zoriana has a special relationship with her daddy, and I love it.

We tell Nadia how much we enjoy having her around, how we enjoy her cooking and how she makes Oksana's life easy. Back home she has nothing to do but take care of Grandfather Sasha, who really doesn't need help. In fact, he probably doesn't want help because it seems to come with a constant stream of advice much of which has to do with the fact that he likes a little nip every now and again. And again and again. Probably better for everybody that she's here and feeling useful.

By Ukrainian reckoning, yesterday was the first day of winter. They call the seasons by three-month blocks. It feels like winter – snow on the ground, ice on the ponds, with the sun's eight hour arc so low in the sky that you cast long shadows all day.

The seasons have been mild for a year now –cool autumn, warm winter, cool spring and summer and now warm autumn and the projection of a moderate winter. In a normal world it would all be occasion for rejoicing. The world seems to have emerged from the Little Ice Age and might even be returning to a Medieval Warm Period. What was that? Excuse me, the Medieval Warm Period is an un-event. It has been excised from the history books. Humans weren't yet burning fossil fuels to destroy the planet, so it could not have happened.

With the change in government this January, I think history is in for a few rude jolts. Rob Moore sent me [this link](#) to an interesting talk by his friend Stephanie Seneff, one of whose [books I have reviewed](#). Stephanie utters truths that the powers that be don't want to hear. They don't want me to hear it either. If you try the link from the United States it will probably work. When I try it from here I get this useless screen. Gremlins at work?

I wrote [an article about Ukraine's immigration policies](#) for VDare, which is concerned about immigration to America. The powers that be hate VDare, branding it as a white supremacist organization when it's only interest is in looking out for the interests of foundational Americans like me. My article included a link to a YouTube video, which the editors removed out of fear it would offer yet another reason to persecute them. I am sure their fears are justified. Thank goodness there are alternatives such as bitchute.com and banned.video. And maybe Spotify, above.

As I have frequently mentioned, Amazon has abruptly stopped carrying several books, orphaning my reviews, and has simply refused to post other reviews. I sense that the conservative side is finding its feet and there are a growing number of robust alternative sites. In the meantime, I'm planning to



change over to doing video reviews. I think they have more impact and there are more alternative sites for videos than for print.

The review I'm doing now is for "The Uniqueness of Western Civilization," a book that hits many of the same themes as "The WEIRDest People in the World" and "Individualism and the Western Liberal Tradition." I'm thinking about doing video reviews of all three in the same way I did "On Genetic Interests." That video has a few hundred views, and significantly, a large number of positive comments.

On the subject of things that the powers that be don't want you to read, let me return to the Unz Review. They have a couple of really fascinating articles, one on the radically new approach, vastly accelerated development timeframe, and [vastly decreased criteria for success of the Covid 19 vaccine over most immunizations](#). I don't think you have to be an anti-VAXer to be skeptical of this one.

They have [a second article](#) on the highly political nature of the United States' response to Covid 19, and in particular the unseemingly suppression of solutions that work. I have been taking hydroxychloroquine since August with no ill effect. HCQ is simply no longer mentioned. Its merits are just not considered worthy of discussion.

Despite the fact that the Kyiv Post, the local protégé of the NYT and WaPo, keeps screaming about the disease, we only know of a couple of people who have caught it and nobody has gotten seriously sick. Perhaps we live under a rock? Or perhaps there is not so much there? The lady who sold me my bacon this morning told me that the mask she was wearing was total nonsense. I loved it.

I am sure that a majority of you readers don't follow the links I give, and don't research the subject yourself. Nonetheless, as readers of English you have far better access than the Ukrainians. Despite the fact that she speaks English pretty well, Oksana is not up to reading articles such as these. I think very few Ukrainians are. For that reason I did an automated translate of these two and sent them to Oksana and some of you other Ukrainian friends to read and perhaps forward. Americans may be captive of the mainstream argument simply because they are too lazy to look for other points of view. Foreigners truly have an excuse – the English is hard to read. If you want me to forward stuff that I translate, please let me know.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and the children are not having the bejesus scared out of them by the Covid bogeyman.

[10-Dec-20 --- Observations on Covid and the world scene. They may be evil, but they might make...](#)  
Some things seem clear, many remain murky. Among the clear: The statistics on Covid 19 appear to be inflated. There is widespread agreement that the tests return a large number of false positives. A number of doctors and other health officials report pressure to inflate the counts of cases and deaths, attributing just about anything to Covid 19.

There is widespread agreement that the solutions that were supposed to "flatten the curve" in "two weeks" did nothing of the sort. Masks, social distancing, and lockdowns have not solved the problem. It seems clear that the solutions imposed by the people in charge were ineffective. Did they simply not know? Did they have another agenda? From there it gets murky, but it appears to be a bit of both.

It seems incontrovertible that there was a fair level of fraud in the 2020 presidential election. There is fraud in every election, but this time it appears to be significantly greater. However, it also appears that nobody is terribly interested in pursuing it. Not the press, and not even the people in Trump's

administration. There are reasons of self-interest, and there's the huge issue of what would you do if you were forced to acknowledge it?

It is abundantly clear that the media does not report objectively. The sources that want to report on the above issues are silenced as effectively as possible. Alternative sites are springing up for both print material and video. The problem they have is money. Facebook, Google, and Amazon have wired things so effectively that start up newcomers are starved for financing. Newtube, Bitchute, banned.video and a host of others seem to be managing it any rate.

Each set of alternative voices seems to get one shot at being heard and then to disappear.

- [Dr. Judy Mikovits](#) had her moment seven months ago.
- [America's Frontline Doctors](#) had theirs over the summer. This video is amazingly hard to find today! Freedom of expression? Not in the USA! Oops. I'm just poking around newtube.com and [see it](#).
- More recently [Dr. Yeadon England from and Dr. Wolfgang Wodard](#) from Germany came to my attention.

They each have express ideas that should spark a dialogue. The dialogue dies – there is no place online to sustain it. The many good points they raise are never rebutted, and the same arguments about numbers of Covid cases, rising global temperatures and so on go on undebated.

The voices that they can't shut up, Donald Trump and Alex Jones for two, have been so frequently and thoroughly demonized that half the population reacts in a horror when their names come up and refuses to believe anything they say. They keep talking, but the only people who are listening are true believers. The people have been led to believe they are twin incarnations of the devil who should not be given the time a day. And they are not. These two simply refused to be intimidated. Here's [Jones](#) on the topic at hand, vaccinations. All he does is cite study after study, but they are automatically tainted by having been uttered by his raspy voice.

I have to ask, what are my interests? Specifically, with regard to Covid 19 and the vaccine:

- It is clear that they are inflating numbers and that there is a concerted effort to panic everybody in the world.
- It is clear that there is an agenda to force vaccinations. The claims that public health demands it seem weak.
- It is clear that they have rushed the vaccines into production, pouring billions and billions of government money into the effort. Without a doubt, government interests are being served by the pharmaceutical companies.
- Some curiosities about the vaccines are undisputed. They contain some phosphorescent material taken from jellyfish that has no therapeutic benefit. Why did they graft that in? Probably so they can tell by a UV scan if you have been vaccinated.
- Bill Gates and Tony Fauci said long prior to 2020 that there would be another pandemic sort of like Covid 19 and that it would necessitate vaccinating the whole world population. Clips to that effect are all over the Internet.

Going from the clear to the murky, several commentators have noted that:

- The mRNA vaccines (Pfizer and others) may prime the body to attack related coronaviruses, not Covid 19, with cytokine storms. Conversely, there is evidence that people who received ordinary flu shots overreact to getting Covid 19.

- The mRNA vaccines decrease fertility. This has been demonstrated in animal studies and the mechanism described. The RNA being injected interferes with the placenta's ability to implant a fertilized embryo. The Pfizer trials accepted women only if they were on birth control. Why was that?
- Many of the most vocal vaccine advocates, including Klaus Schwab of the World Economic Forum and Bill Gates have long lamented the overpopulation of the earth and have previously advocated vaccines as a mechanism to reduce world population.

I don't trust these guys. I don't believe that the virus risk is as high as that of the vaccine, especially for the other members of my family. We'll wait and watch developments. The vaccine is not even available here in any case, though it soon will be.

What is my long-term interest in this? Grandchildren. My grandchildren may do better in a world with fewer people. I should celebrate the fact that Covid 19 has already decreased immigration pressure on Ukraine. If Bill Gates manages to decrease the fertility of the Third World, while I might quibble with his ethics, I would quietly appreciate the result.

The financial reset is going to strip assets from the middle and lower classes and redistribute them to the already rich. It is thus exacerbating inequality. People project that it is going to become a rental economy in which a person doesn't really own anything. Not his apartment, not his car. He gets the services needed. In exchange for work, or perhaps not even that. There is less and less meaningful that the average individual can do. Witness the automation now in Amazon's distribution system, that in China's manufacturing systems. We already have the precedent of "helicopter money" from Covid19 payments. The elites of the world simply don't need these people. What's the humane thing to do? Keep them comfortable keep them from reproducing. Is that the agenda?

In a democracy, the ordinary citizen's reaction would be to say, this is outrageous. They can't do that! This is unfair! The elites are controlling our lives! We hate it!

But on the other hand, where are we headed? The elites are not reproducing themselves. The less capable members of society are. The lower classes and increasingly, the middle classes are not doing anything that cannot be done by automation. They are expendable. We don't need them, and we don't need their children. What to do?

People have observed these trends coming for a long time, but our democracies are manifestly incapable of doing anything about it. However superfluous people may be, they vote.

Democracy represents the short-term interests of unintelligent, uninterested voters. More than that, those interests are filtered through the promises made and actions taken by self-interested politicians, who concoct whatever plausible lies are needed to get themselves elected. It is not a system designed to look out for the long-term interests of the population.

Democracy has proven itself incapable of dealing with race, immigration and the declining quality of school and increasing unemployment. They just fudge the numbers and life goes on. See [shadowstats.com](http://shadowstats.com)

Democracy has a mixed record in dealing with pollution. A win for the ozone layer, continuing losses for landfills, etc. Mixed for deforestation. Thank God global warming is not real, because the world has been incapable of curtailing carbon emissions. We and Europe have changed our energy appetites without greatly reducing our quality of life. China and India ignore us.

A democracy could never vote for any government programs such as euthanasia or mandatory sterilization to control their fertility, even if from a global perspective, for the long-term health of the population that might be needed. What to do?

A century ago, the eugenicists promoted the reproduction of the best specimens of mankind and the sterilization of the worst. Civil libertarians shut that down decades ago. Who decides “best” and “worst?” Democracy is profoundly unable to impose policies that would cull the human herd.

It appears that the elites may have taken the culling that they see as necessary upon themselves. They cannot of course tell us peons about it, but it looks like that might be the behind the liberal agenda of relentless advocacy of alternative sexuality, all-absorbing amusements, addiction to lifestyle pursuits, welfare dependency, drug usage, racial conflict etc. etc. Sure doesn't lead to traditional families and children. Are these sneaky devices to try to solve the problem?

You could not posit a conspiracy, because so much of what the elites advocate seems to work at cross purposes. For one thing, the elites (poster boys, Jeffrey Epstein and John Podesta) are at the forefront of alternative sexuality. The elites are quite demonstrably not reproducing themselves either. Still, they have made it hard for anybody to raise a traditional family.

What should I do? Probably just hunker down in this far country that has not been effective in implementing any of the agendas the West tries to force on them, such as gay rights parades, measles shots, or immigration. Then just shut up and keep my kids away from sharp objects, especially needles being wielded by Bill Gates, Klaus Schwab and George Soros.

And that's the observations from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and our reputation notwithstanding, it is clear that we are light years behind in the technology of rigging elections.

[16-Dec-20 --- An education plan materializes overnight. Following up your leads on Covid 19 Mo...](#)  
Monday was Zoriana's first day in nursery school. It is a 15 minute walk from our house, though we have taken the bus because ice storms made the street extremely slippery.

She is a very headstrong little girl. She's not totally comfortable with the idea of having less than 100% adult attention for most of the day. She cries and resists what we ask her to do. But it's just her bad luck that daddy has seen this before with two grown-up daughters, and has seen what happens if you cave in and refuse to stand your ground. Fortunately Lydia the head of the school is also familiar with the game.

The Happy Home Kids Club turns out to be affiliated with a primary school that is starting this year with the first grade. They will enroll new first grades for each of the coming years, and add teachers as the present students move up.

Therefore, not only is there a place for Zoriana to go just in case the Sunflower School in which Eddie is enrolled goes out of business, but this new school is a part of the Project Intellect Ukraine program.

I had a couple of surprises two weeks ago when I visited Lycée Intellect. Finding the place, it was perplexing to discover that there were other schools also called Intellect. Now I know why. I was also surprised at the enrollment – over 2000 kids in a large building.

This Intellect project is an initiative of the ministry of education to try to overcome shortcomings of the Soviet system. It is specifically addressed to the needs of smarter kids. That is the kind of initiative that one can only undertake in a homogeneous country where racial and ethnic differences are not a consideration. The Intellect project has its intellectual home at the Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, the leading technical university in the country.

The Lycée is thinly staffed. The upside is that tuition is only about \$250 a month. A downside was that they mistakenly allowed me to set up an appointment with the director of the school when I had some relatively basic questions. It took him one minute to figure out it was a waste of his time and that I spoke Russian. He gave me to his secretary. We quickly ascertained that I should bring Eddie for an interview in the April – May timeframe to enter the fifth grade, their intake point. The director did have time to say twice that the criteria for entry are knowledge of mathematics and English – Eddie's two strongest points.

All of a sudden, it appears that we have coherent plans for educating both Eddie and Zoriana. I am delighted. There are a couple of small red flags. Project Intellect acknowledges funding from George Soros. We will have to see how much influence he has on the curriculum and the textbooks. We will cross that bridge when we come to it. From our discussions of things like global warming Eddie is already aware that other people in the world see things differently than his father, and that he needs to keep his ears open and, at least sometimes, his mouth shut.

Thank you all for your feedback on Covid 19. Here is [a link](#) one of you sent to a mainstream article by Christine Amanpour on the dangers posed by Covid 19 and the need for mass vaccinations.

Here's the website of [Covax](#), a consortium of big Pharma, government, and prominent philanthropies such as that of Bill Gates. It provides a link to an [extensive explanation](#) by its Chief Executive Officer Seth Berkley

These sites all assume several premises that I will not grant. They would assert that the virus is deadly to just about everybody. Statistics say otherwise. They assume it will not disappear the way previous such coronavirus episodes as SARS and avian flu disappeared – that it will be with us forever. They assume that vaccines will be effective, whereas the record of coronavirus vaccines in the past has been very spotty. They assume that prophylactic and remedial drugs such as vitamin D, zinc and hydroxychloroquine are ineffective and dangerous, a point that I will not concede.

In summary, powerful government, industry, academic and philanthropic forces are working to exacerbate fear of Covid 19 and to promote worldwide vaccination. Why should we be skeptical?

The first reason is simply the profit motive. The pharmaceutical companies are the biggest advertisers on the planet, and the most generous lobbyists. They stand to make billions on the vaccines. Those billions are almost guaranteed – the government gives the money for research, and governments indemnify them from all claims of vaccine injury.

A second curious phenomenon is the fact that the vaccines are being approved as if they were all the same. They are absolutely not.

In particular, most of them use some sort of a dead virus approach. The most radical ones use a mRNA approach. That is to say, instead of injecting you with a weak form of the virus to which your body can react by creating antigens, they modify the genetic structure of your body so that it will create the proteins necessary to stimulate your body to make antigens. Rewiring your entire genome

could have unexpected consequences. mRNA vaccines have been contemplated for a couple of decades but never rolled out. Moreover, vaccines have never been rolled out after such a short trial period. They have not been rolled out upon meeting such a low standard for success as these. What could go wrong?

A third and more sinister motive may be population control. It appears that vaccines have been used in the past to [sterilize women without their knowledge](#). Dr. Michael Yeadon, former chief of research at Pfizer, and Dr. Wolfgang Wodard have expressed this concern in a challenge to the European Union's rapid approval of the vaccines. The Unz review has several articles highlighting these suspicions, including these two [here](#) and [here](#).

Yeadon and Wodard note that the vaccines are designed to recognize the spiky exterior of the coronavirus, attaching to it in order to destroy the virus. Coincidentally (or not) mammalian embryos also have a spiky surface which enables them to implant in the uterine wall. Will these vaccines cause sterility? Will it be temporary or permanent? These researchers raise the question. Is it a valid question? Why have women been excluded from clinical trials unless they were on the pill? The very fact that so few want to entertain this notion leads me to believe it might have some merit.

What is a guy supposed to do with this welter of conflicting information? I will not be stampeded. I am certainly not being scared away from the prophylactic measures I'm taking. I will not let my daughters be vaccinated until the safety has been absolutely assured. Fortunately, it is not yet an issue. They are so young that they run a less than negligible risk of Covid 19.

The number of reported new cases is on the decline in Ukraine, as would be expected of a normal coronavirus epidemic. We still don't know anybody has gotten seriously sick. I'm going stay the course, keeping my eyes open and waiting.

In other happy news, I have hit my stride again on the exercise bicycle, working up to a puddle of sweat about 4 inches in diameter each time I work out. Not a suggestion of the strep throat that used to plague me. Something I'm doing is working.

My favorite heretic, Dr. Edward Dutton, has released [a new book](#) so rich in unfashionable truths that absolutely nobody will read it.

And that's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and it appears that they have a program for children who are above average.

Graham

[23-Dec-20 --- To hell with Covid. The effect of guns on 10. Diversifying investments. To hell with ...](#)  
To hell with Covid! Our ArtTalkers Toastmasters club had in person meetings of about 20 people the last couple of Saturdays, and on Sunday we had a lot of the same people over for a birthday dinner. The custom here is to throw your own birthday party. It turns out we have a pretty good house for it, and a wonderful bunch of friends. This picture includes just about everybody except Lucy Povaliy, who had to leave early, and our babysitter Anna and her daughter Sofia who were off taking care of baby Marianna.

We had two Americans and one Canadian, and as one of our guests noted, every generation from Alpha (2010 and later) up through Silent (moi). It's encouraging that we all get along and converse easily without the generational segmentation or stratification one observes in the United States.

In the interests of the economy, Ukraine relaxed the restrictions on commerce for the weeks leading up to the holidays. We will be going back to Zoom meetings in January. It must be evident to everybody that no country has devised an effective program for controlling coronavirus, and that regimes everywhere have been taking advantage of the crisis to advance other agendas. We are rolling as well with the punches as anybody else.

I have often written about the Unz Review, whose raison d'être is to present points of view that otherwise are not made available. They often carry [articles on intelligence](#). One of their frequent contributors, James Thompson, writes frequently on recent findings.

Being only 30 years independent of the USSR, Ukraine has not had much visibility in international studies. Even now there have not been enough large-scale administrations of IQ tests to come up with truly reliable data. It is interesting, however, to find that they put the average IQ of [Ukraine at around 90](#), significantly below those of the United States and Western Europe. It is also below that of neighboring Poland, Russia and the Baltic countries.

Several commentators have suggested reasons why this might be so. Most notably, Ukraine's best and brightest were systematically eliminated in the October Revolution, the Holodomor, and the Second World War. Few countries suffered more during the 20th century.

Oksana's great-grandfather, a successful kulak, disappeared in the Holodomor. However, reviewing the family history we find that neither grandfather served in the Second World War. Her father's father was a soldier in the war against Finland in 1939, but was then relocated to Sakhalin Island north of Japan throughout World War II. We have to ask her mother why her father didn't serve, but there is no recollection that he did. Oksana seems to be the product of random good luck within a terrible and very risky system. Her ancestors, despite being fairly smart, were spared.

Whatever the workings, she is a product of a society in which the cruel hand of evolutionary selection operated until much more recently than it has in our societies. It was a regime in which the weak did not survive. Her great grandmother, the widow of the kulak, lived to 99. Grandmother lived to 95. To all appearances, our children inherited some of that vigor. Let us hope.

It is time to increase the diversity of our investments. I have been waiting several years for the Ukrainian real estate market to turn around. It has not – land prices have been stable as long as I have been watching. Whether or not it is time for a revival, it looks like a propitious time to take a little bit of money out of the United States. I am looking two by at least one undeveloped lot close to where we live, and to participate in a project to buy and renovate apartments. I will let you know how these things work out.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking (photographic evidence above) and the children are eager to learn from their and elders.

Graham

[27-Dec-20 --- Watching the coronavirus numbers. Mental math. Vanishing history. Learning to writ...](#)

Coronavirus cases seem to be diminishing here in Ukraine. Although the absolute number cases is at a level that appeared frightening last spring, the momentum is downward.

I'm attaching a spreadsheet that I pulled together from the [worldometer website](#) that collects international data.

The first thing that international comparisons reveal is that, my suspicions to the contrary, the data may be being reasonably consistently reported. Yes, the PCR tests are not accurate and yes, when you're looking at a corpse it is hard to know with any certainty the cause of death. Yes, every country does it differently. However, comparing countries in the same part of the world one sees fairly consistent patterns.

The second thing you notice is that however shrill the cries are from the fearmongers that want to vaccinate everybody, the trend in almost every country is downward. This despite the fact that we are just entering winter, usually the prime season for the flu. They had better get those needles to work very quickly before the problem goes away.

I like working with spreadsheets because you can manipulate them. The one I have attached, taken from the worldometer data above, is sorted by the number of deaths per million population. Column K, heading the list are San Marino and Belgium, with approximately 1.6 deaths per 1,000. The Black death it is not.

Ukraine falls in a fair way down, right in line with Poland and Russia, at about 0.4 per 1,000. Ukraine's death rate from all causes over the past decade has been about 15 per 1,000. In other words, even if the Covid 19 figures are not inflated, 40 times more people die of other causes. Don't panic! 17,000 people have died so far from coronavirus. 300,000 people die every year of heart disease. You can ask yourself how many people test positive for coronavirus, whether or not they actually get it, and later die of heart disease. How do those get counted? I think you know.

Anecdotally, one of the guests at our gathering last weekend wrote to say that she had tested positive for coronavirus. She visited the doctor a couple of days after our party on account of some bug, and they gave her the test. She has since not shown any symptoms of coronavirus and is feeling better.

My entire family has been sniffing and coughing since a couple of days after the party. I got strep throat on top of it. Another guest also has a cold. However, it is all going away. I am definitely not going to go to the doctor unless I see [symptoms of Covid 19](#). There is a strong chance they would give me a PCR test that would return a false positive, disrupt my life, isolate me and scare my family, for no reason.

For you conspiracy theorists out there, I offer this link to "[Doctors in Black](#)" which was so violently suppressed back when this whole thing started eight months ago. Was this woman right? Enquiring minds want to know. The first eight minutes deal with the AIDS crisis where Dr. Judy Mikovits developed a reputation. From that point on it deals with the Covid 19 issue and the financial stakes shaping the solution. There are tremendous vested interests in making sure everybody gets vaccinated.

There is absolutely no doubt that government, media, and the health organizations are rigorously suppressing free speech. Here is an article to that effect by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#), who has a long-established website of medical observations. Just as with Lady Chatterley's Lover in the 1950s, if somebody doesn't want me to read something, I want all the more to do so. I hope you feel likewise. For a sample of how your opinions are being shaped, search for "COVID-19 vaccine sterility." It returns a million "fact checks" but no articles telling you how it might happen. As you recall, I recently



offered a link to [just such an article](#). You will not easily find it. Here is [another](#). There are reasons to question them, but you should have the privilege of reading them.

There are two issues at play here. The first is whether or not taking the vaccine is worth the risk. The second, and perhaps most important, is whether or not we have a right to access other people's opinions to make our own informed decisions. Whether we are mature enough to make up our own minds, or whether in the interests of the polity we must allow government, big Pharma, big media and academia to tell us what we should be thinking. I write this as a guy who has been shut up often enough on topics I know well to be extremely sensitive to these issues.

As I ask myself once again if the risk of a vaccine with no long-term track record offsets the risk of Covid, I come up with the same answer. Nope, we're going to sit this one out.

The travels of Marco Polo is one of those books that everybody knows about but nobody has read. Having just finished Mark Twain's "Roughing It," and incredible account of his travels to the American West 1 1/2 centuries ago, we were up for something new. Marco Polo it is.

The Polos were a merchant family in Venice at the end of the 13th century. Marco's father Nicolo and uncle Maffeo were prevented by a series of circumstances from returning from the steppes east of Ukraine to Venice. As they lingered in this area, a member of Kublai Khan's court invited them to join him traveling to Peking. After staying there for a few years, they returned to Venice with a promise to ask the Pope to send some learned churchmen to teach religion.

Taking Nicolo's son Marco with them, they went back. This time they spent 26 years away. A couple of years after their return Venice went to war with Genoa. Marco, then commander of a Venetian galley, was captured and spent a few years in prison in Genoa. It gave him time to dictate an account of his travels.

Although copies of the book were fairly widely disseminated among learned men in Europe, it was widely discredited as pure fantasy. A "Marco Polo" has long been a schoolboy expression for a tall tale. However, in the 19th century a German scholar using the book as a guide retraced Marco Polo's travels and found that his recollection had been excellent – it played out just as written.

I inherited a huge Atlas of the world from my mother and father. I don't even know if they publish such wonderful books anymore. Eddie and I have it laid out as we follow Marco Polo's travels. So far we have been through cities that are in modern Israel, Armenia, Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Iran. Every author has his strengths and weaknesses. Marco Polo was especially interested in wildlife and gives excellent accounts of the animals and fruit. As a merchant he was keenly aware of the commercial benefits of transporting valuable goods from one place to another: precious stones, gold, drugs, ivory, silks and all sorts of artisan works.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the Mongols had conquered everything up to the Dnieper River. They had reduced the Muslim rulers of Iran to satraps. It is interesting to read Marco Polo's observations on the Islam of seven centuries ago. His accounts should quickly sober up anybody who imagines that one generation's exposure to Europe will change their character. Nope. The people he describes are the same ones that confound Angela Merkel, and that Bernard Lewis wrote about in "Clash of Civilizations." Quite specifically, they felt no obligation at all to deal truthfully with or even respect the lives of unbelievers.

The conceit of our age stands out once again bright and clear. Men of previous ages – Marco Polo, Herodotus, Thomas Jefferson, Alexis de Tocqueville, Mark Twain and HL Mencken to name six –

clearly understood the nature of the races of mankind. The notion that all are simply people of a European mentality with different colored hides, or even the same as us but superior in certain particulars, is an oddly 20th century trope. The notion that with exposure to European civilization they will become European has been tried over and over, with a uniform lack of success. The smarter ones are able to turn our naïveté to their benefit. The others are simply resentful.

Those who refuse to learn from history are doomed to repeat it. What can we say about our university system, and especially the colleges of education, that are so actively erasing and rewriting history? It will be quite a day of reckoning when these inherent contradictions play out.

Meanwhile, let me again recommend the above authors for their insights into human nature. In fact, a person would not do badly to read just about anything written more than a century ago. Kipling, Joseph Conrad, Isak Denison, Herman Melville... I haven't read nearly enough, but more than enough to appreciate that the truths that were so self-evident in those days are exactly the ones which are most vehemently suppressed nowadays. Read them quickly, before the libraries get burned. They have already been taken off of the reading lists for most American public school students. Many of you have read more than I – suggest some titles and I will mention them in future blogs.

I pick up “Secrets of Mental Math” periodically and go through the exercises just to see if my brain is losing acuity. When Eddie asked what I was doing, I told him. Then I asked him to multiply  $27 \times 84$  in his head. After a short while he said 2068. Even though the actual answer is 2268, I was thrilled because his wrong answer indicated that he was doing it right. He had simply dropped a number in carrying. When I was in the fourth grade I don't think I would've attempted it, and I don't think anybody would've asked me.

Eddie's challenge is writing. I mentioned that he won the ribbon for the best Impromptu speech for the third time a week ago Saturday at Toastmasters. It wasn't a great speech – it was far too short. My hope over this month-long winter vacation is that I can get him to come up with some two-minute speeches and write them down. That will test his creativity, his spelling, and his vocabulary. Wish me luck.

That's the news from Lake WeBeGone, where the men are strong, the women are good looking, and nobody especially cares if you try to tell the children the truth about the world. They might say you are wrong, but they will not accuse you of being morally deficient.

Graham