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QUOTE FOR THE DAY

**“There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve: the fear of failure.”
Paulo Coelho, author, “The Alchemist”**

LIKE HIM OR HATE HIM

Whichever side of that statement you share, it cannot be denied that president Trump is the, “Energizer bunny” – he just keeps at it like a dog with a bone. So it is that he has all but officially thrown his hat in the ring for the presidency in 2024, attempting to do what only one president has done previously – serve two non consecutive terms, as was the case with Grover Cleveland.

Here, a quick aside, as your scribe miswrote in issue 80 that Taft had been the one president

to serve two non consecutive terms. I have always known it was Cleveland. Let's just chalk it up to the inadvisability of imbibing and writing at the same time.

SOME INTERESTING PRESIDENTIAL STATS

Citizen Trump will have to overcome statistical odds of 4 to 1 in seeking to become the second person to have been elected to two non consecutive terms.

Four others have failed to achieve that same status: Martin van Buren lost to James Polk in 1844; Millard Fillmore lost to James Buchanan in 1856 and Grant lost to James Garfield in 1880.

With Grant, there is an especially interesting story. He had successfully completed two terms and was considering a run for a third. He was dissuaded from running for that third term and Rutherford Hayes became president.

Then, in 1880, at the GOP convention, running against Garfield and two others, Grant led on the first 35 ballots, but not by enough to secure

the nomination. Then, in a bit of political chicanery, the two other candidates, James Blaine and John Sherman, withdrew their names and threw their support behind Garfield, who was nominated on the 36th ballot.

No less interesting was the fourth presidential attempt at non consecutive terms. like Grant, Teddy Roosevelt had served two full terms. With his blessing, William Howard Taft succeeded him, but Roosevelt became disenchanted with Taft's tenure and attempted to get a third non consecutive term in 1912. The Taft – Roosevelt battle for the nomination so fractured the GOP that the election went to Woodrow Wilson.

We think of our political era as scary and convoluted, and it certainly is when combined with Covid 19, but it's fascinating to see how some of history's political battles have played out. The next four years promise many more surprises.

TO GO, OR NOT TO GO

Your Hermit scribe has not surveyed our readership, but from everything I have read, virtually all Democrats and Republicans hope, for the good of the country, that out-going president Trump will attend the inauguration of president Biden. The battle for 2024 can begin the next day, if he likes, but the majority of Americans think it important to put on display the continuity of our democracy.

Again, a couple of historical notes: presidential inaugurations have not always followed proper decorum, with a few big names on the list. John Adams did not attend the inauguration of Thomas Jefferson as he was distraught over his election loss and the death of his son, Charles. Like father, like son – John Quincy Adams did not go to the inauguration of Andrew Jackson due to long standing animosity. Interestingly, both Jefferson and Jackson were slave owners which none of the Adams were. John Quincy Adams is reported as saying, “I abhorred slavery and did not suffer it in my family.” That issue, however, seemed to have nothing to do with their boycotts of the inaugurations. Separately, Andrew Johnson, still smarting from impeachment, but not

removal from office, refused to go to the inauguration of Ulysses S. Grant.

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

President Trump has issued the death penalty(U.S. withdrawal) for the WHO which the U.S. has not only supported, but was instrumental in founding more than 50 years ago. Many feel that is a step too far, but the fact is the WHO has screwed up left, right and center with regard to the Covid- 19 crisis. Some of the Trump administration's demands for reform have included: an investigation into WHO's handling of the out break and the source of the virus, as, from the start, they have been far too willing to take China's side and explanations on everything. Another demand was that WHO must admit that, "we were right to consider travel restrictions during the pandemic- a break from the long standing advice that limiting travel would not slow the virus, but would harm economies and delay medical treatment." The Trump administration had also called upon the WHO to send a team to Taiwan (not a member of the WHO) to study why their response to Covid –

19 had been so successful. WHO had refused given the non recognition of Taiwan by China. WHO was also to have sent a team to Wuhan, China to investigate origins of the virus, but China, “never made good on the promises it made.” The head of WHO, Dr. Tedros, considers the U.S. demands unacceptable. A Georgetown law professor and longterm advisor to WHO said, “It wasn’t a negotiation, it was blackmail.” Well, that’s his opinion. Dr. Tedros has said he doesn’t want to get involved in picking and choosing views between members of the WHO, but the facts are plain, he has clearly let China lead him around like a cow with a nose ring. All of that, notwithstanding, there are just too many countries, the U.S. included, that need the structure of the WHO, as a clearing- house for information, if nothing else. President Trump’s objections are well noted and must be addressed, but not at a cost of our withdrawal from the organization.

SEEDS OF A RADICAL CLIMATE IDEA

How about artificially cooling the planet to buy humanity more time to cut greenhouse gas emissions?

A recent article made mention of the fact that livestock, principally cattle, create more greenhouse gases than all automotive combined. A snapshot by economic sector of greenhouse gases: Electricity and heat production, 25%; Industrial, 21%; Agricultural and forestry, 24%; Transportation, 14%; Buildings, 6% and Other energy, 10%.

So, here's the new concept. "One way to cool the planet is by injecting aerosols into the upper layer of the atmosphere, where those particles reflect sunlight away from the earth." Congress has awarded \$4 million to study the process. In Australia, they are studying how this technology might be employed to help save the barrier reef. OK! I'm all for the idea, but I don't understand the physics. The earth is constantly rotating, the clouds are also moving but at different speeds. So, today we fire multiple cannon loads of aerosols above the Great Barrier reef and voila, the reflected sun causes the air and water temperatures to drop

by however much – nothing but good news for the reef. But then, “Somebody moved my cheese.” – the earth has moved or the clouds have moved and cloud cover is lost for the reef. Sounds to me like two or three time a day you are going to have to shoot massive amounts of aerosols into the upper atmosphere to maintain fairly constant coverage over the reef. And, then, where do the previously seeded clouds move and what is their effect as they continue to circle the planet? Interesting concept, lots of questions.

LITERARY CORNER

Our fellow reader, Arthur Lubow, and George Lewis, have just released a children’s hard cover picture book entitled, “The Boy and the Boy King.” (Amazon)- perfect Christmas gift for children and grandchildren between five and ten. “Wonder and imagination are at the heart of this story of a friendship between a boy from New York and the Boy King, Tutankhamun.” This is just an exceptional book, so beautifully illustrated and written. I hope all interested readers will check it out.

Your faithful scribe,

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