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QUOTE FOR THE DAY

“I think our problems are inherently unsolvable. We need to change our genetic make-up or create computers that will think us out of it. I don’t think humans are able to deal with what we have.” Neill Blomkamp, film director, nominated for Academy Award.

INAUGURATION EVE

So here we are finally, with sincere best wishes for President Biden and his new cabinet. Other than some of his immediately planned actions, like rejoining the Paris Climate Accord and cancelling the Keystone XL pipeline, his first 100 days are going to be challenging.

The call for unification will largely fall on deaf Republican ears. Even the numerous day one pronouncements will have a virtually party

divided reception, with everything the president signs appealing to the Democrats and condemned by the Republicans.

While the January 6th attack on the Capitol was nothing but bad news, the amazing thing is that so many millions of Americans still think the election was stolen, notwithstanding sixty + law suits that say, “absolutely not.” a prime example of Republican intransigence.

But, what do we have coming from the blue side of the aisle? Miranda Devine, conservative columnist, observes, “Anyone who supported president Trump, voted for him or worked for his administration now has to be hunted down and purged. They’re losing their jobs, having their insurance cancelled, their book contracts and recording deals torn up. They are being banned from flying or banking or speaking on social media. A petition at Harvard University even demands Trump staffers have their degrees revoked. A feverish mood is afoot, evoking the spirit of McCarthyism and the Salem witch trials, in which irrationality and hysteria point fingers at the innocent. It is a deliberate tactic

designed to intimidate conservatives and silence their protests when Biden radically remakes the country...”

On the liberal side of the aisle, WAPO columnist, Eugene Robinson, opines, “There are millions of Americans, almost all white, almost all Republicans, who somehow need to be deprogrammed.”

Cnn’s, Don Lemon last week lumped in the 74 million American’s who voted with Donald Trump with the Ku Klux Klan and Nazis.

Not to ignore Twitter boss, Jack Dorsey, who told his staff in a leaked video, that banning Trump was just the first step in his purge of, ‘wrong think’ – this is much bigger than one account.”

And then, the new president himself, who is emphasizing unity (you’ve heard the expression ‘words that belie actions’. How about, ‘ words that belie words’? as Mr. Biden, the unifier, last week likened Senators Ted Cruz and Josh Hawley to Nazi propagandist, Joseph Goebbels.

Dear readers – not a pretty picture. The Republican party itself will be greatly fractured as they try to sort out how much, if at all, Mr. Trump be involved in the country’s future.

President Biden will not be able to unite these two diametrically opposed parties and will have troubles enough keeping (hopefully) a Democratic centrist party together.

As this is written we are reading about the first wave of asylum seekers (6,000) coming from Honduras because Mr. Biden promised no more deportations after he became president. And, not to forget his pledge to provide an eight -year path to citizenship for eleven million illegal immigrants. (not very popular with the millions who have come to America legally over the decades past). We can’t properly educate and provide adequate health care for our inner city citizenry as it is, and we are contemplating a welcoming program for millions more asylum seekers? That’s the question conservatives are asking. “Give me your tired, your poor...” is a wonderful line in

an idealistic song, but is that an ideal we can realistically pursue today? As Mr. Blomkamp states in the quote above, “I don’t think humans are able to deal with what we have.” Again, good luck to our new president- he and we, are going to need it

COVID 19 UPDATE

It appears that many of the areas where our readers reside are now starting to open for vaccination appointments. The Hermit and his frau are fortunate enough to share our inoculation at the same time as Mr. Biden’s inauguration – pretty incredible what, “Warp Speed” has accomplished, but somewhat of a downer in the actual roll out. We are all hoping that, as we get our second shots, we can all get back on the streets and support our local commerce and restaurants.

Our one nagging thought relates to the more highly contagious mutation of the virus, which is predicted to be the most common form in the U.S. by the end of March. Initially, it was reported that the vaccine would be equally effective against the mutated virus. Now the

U.S. Department of public health is suggesting that, “Theoretically, the mutations could alter the spike protein in a way that decreases the vaccine’s effectiveness.” Even so, the vaccine is the way to go – hope we don’t have any vaccine deniers out there – just do it!!

MEDICAL CORNER- LET’S TALK YUCK

Highly informative recent article in the NY Times last week by Paula Span on an alternative to our favorite medical procedure, the colonoscopy. It is pointed out that adults up to the age of 75 should be screened regularly, but that there is a very reliable test that can be taken in place of a colonoscopy, which, in any event is not recommended for those over 80, where there are increased risks, just from the test, such as a perforated intestine.

Dr. Alex Krist, Chairman of the U.S. Preventive Services task force says, “If your doctor tells you a colonoscopy is better, that’s not accurate.”

Cologard, the mail in test which we have all seen advertised on TV is OK, but is found to be less effective and much more expensive than FIT (Fecal immune-chemical test) also done with a mailer (no uncomfortable prep- no need to skip work). Obviously, if your report comes back with a warning sign, then you will have to do a colonoscopy. However, this test is said to be highly accurate. Dr. Krist again, “The data show the tests are equally effective at saving lives.”

The FIT test costs about \$20, considerably less than Cologard, and a colonoscopy can cost more than \$1,000. I’ll have to send this article to my own doctor who still says a colonoscopy is the “gold standard”, but knows nothing about the FIT test. The author of the article, Ms. Span, notes, “There’s a large financial incentive for people who do colonoscopies to do colonoscopies.” – copy that!!

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Just reading about Bitcoin gives me a headache, but this growing type of currency is getting broader and broader usage such that

the recent price of a single Bitcoin exceeded \$40,000. Originally (and still) a favored mode to move money by drug dealers and other nefarious types, there are legitimate people who think this currency is the wave of the future. So, you open an account and buy some Bitcoin. But, guess what, it isn't like your bank. "Gee, I forgot my password. Here's my ID, can you set me up with a new one?" Nope, no one but you knows your password. No tickey, no laundry. So it is that one Stefan Thomas has \$220,000,000 in Bitcoin, but can't remember his password. He has used 8 of his 10 permitted attempts to sign in. After failed attempt number 10 it's sayonara to \$220 million. Suggest he goes to a hypnotist or start a, "go fund me account."

DON'T EVER DO THAT AGAIN

In Oregon, thief steals a car – discovers baby in back seat, returns to find the mother, lectures her that he's inclined to call the police – returns child, drives off - still at large.

Your faithful scribe, PB