

The **MONTABELLO** Voice

an independent gazette

happy 2022

January 8, 2022





Don Hinman crushed the competition in this week's Montebello downhill ski race.

Photo by Sue Allen

Someone built a terrific snowman with red pepper mouth. They left two red peppers on the ground, so I assumed they wanted me to complete the snow devil.

Photo and horns by Christine Winter

Sing, sing, sing

Did you ever wonder why there are so many love songs? On our media it's nonstop, and when one dies out, two more replace it.

We don't have songs about how great it is to ski, golf, dance, and surf. To play bridge, the piano. etc. But these are things that people want to do. They don't need reminders and pep talks.

There may be an exception that proves the rule. We do have lots of songs about how great and noble it is to die in war. During the horrors of WWI trench warfare many of the war songs were peppy and upbeat, like it was all really going to be fun!

Actually, there are some French songs that tell the young woman that she's going to get married and her life is basically going to end. Not so in the USA where half of marriages end in divorce. Some have advocated for divorce parties, so, maybe divorce songs, too? – *Richard Titus* 📖

Daylight losing time

Soon after Christmas Day one is delighted to notice that the days have started to get longer. This follows months of seeing them get shorter and gloomier. While this was happening, did you ever hear anyone exclaim, "Damn, why can't it get darker an hour earlier?" But that's what happens! They call it Standard Time to make us believe that there is something weird and unnatural about Daylight Savings Time. What's actually weird is throwing away an hour of daylight in the winter.

Historically it all had to do with meeting the presumed needs of farmers and schoolchildren. I don't know about down on the farm, but today, school activities do not end at sundown. The safety of many schoolchildren could benefit from an extra hour of daylight in the evening.

If you know any anti-vaxxers, please try offering them this issue as something different to get all worked up about. Make up some bogus statistics about the stunted growth of children who drink milk from cows milked in the dark. Or whatever. – *Richard Titus* 📖

Cover photo by Rachael Bright

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Virginia has been redistricted:

Montebello changes State senators

By Paul Jameson

Under the U.S. Constitution, we have a new Census every 10 years. That also means that every 10 years the boundaries of U.S. Congressional Districts and state legislatures are adjusted to reflect shifts in population. The completion of the 2020 Census was delayed, due in part to COVID and in part due to the Trump Administration attempting (eventually unsuccessfully) to change how the Census counted people. The results were finally released earlier this year, and states got to work on adjusting boundaries of legislative districts.

There has been a movement across the United States to take the redistricting process out of the hands of legislators. When legislators draw their own maps, there is a natural tendency to make sure that they don't draw themselves out of their districts, and they will try to draw the boundaries most favorable to themselves – in other words, the legislators pick their voters rather than the other way around. Also, when one party is in control of a state government, that party will try to draw the boundaries in a way that favors that party at the expense of the other party – in other words, gerrymandering. Thus, for example, in 2020, while Joe Biden received more votes than Donald Trump in Pennsylvania, that year also saw in Pennsylvania the election of 15 Republican state senators versus 9 Democratic state senators, and 106 Republican state house representatives versus 86 Democratic state house representatives. The Republican-controlled legislature had engineered that result 10 years before through the redistricting process.

Some states have adopted using independent commissions to draw the boundaries. In Virginia, there

was also such an effort, but the end result was instead a commission consisting of legislators and citizens picked by those legislators, with an equal number from each party. In the event this commission could not agree on maps, the process would go to the Virginia Supreme Court, which would draw the boundaries. The constitutional amendment necessary to implement this process was put before voters in Virginia in the 2020 elections.

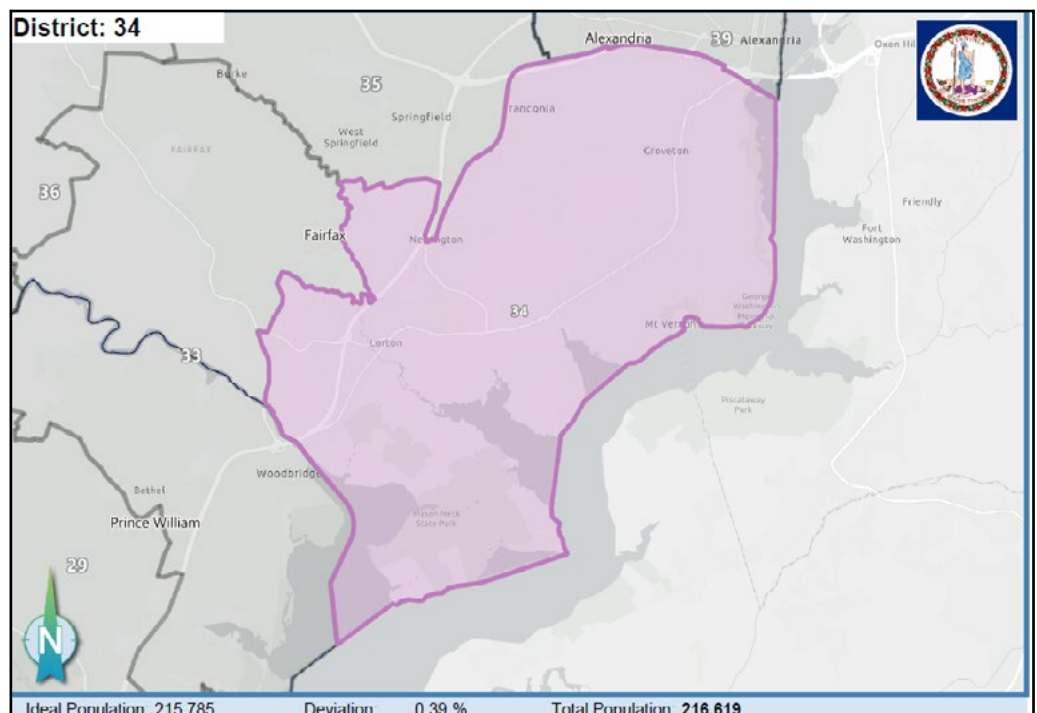
Many people thought this process would be unworkable, and in fact the Fairfax County Democratic Committee voted to urge people to vote No on the amendment. The amendment nevertheless won handily in Virginia.

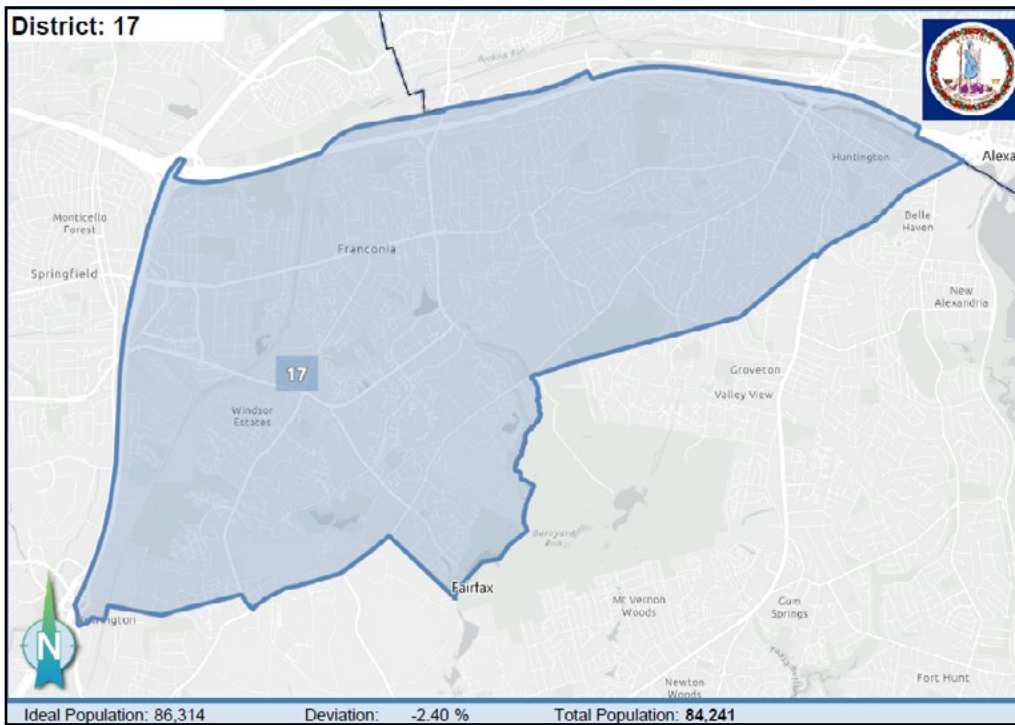
As it turned out, the Redistricting Commission was unworkable. Not to go into any detail, but the Republican legislators and their chosen citizens came up with maps that favored Republicans and the Democratic legislators and their chosen citizens came up with maps that favored Democrats, and there was no willingness to compromise and agree on a single set of maps. So the process did go to the Virginia Su-

preme Court. Democrats had long been concerned that since the majority of Supreme Court justices had been appointed by Republicans, the Court would tilt towards a Republican-favorable solution.

Each party submitted proposed names to be special masters to draw the maps. The Republicans submitted three names who were blatantly partisan. In the first sign that the Court might actually be impartial, it listened to the Democratic complaint about those people and ordered Republicans to come up with different names. The Court unanimously chose a professor of political science from University of California at Irvine from the Democratic nominations, and a Senior Elections Analyst at RealClearPolitics from the Republican nominations. Importantly, the special masters were ordered to agree on one map for each of the U.S. House, Virginia Senate, and Virginia House of Delegates, and to not consult with anyone while drawing the maps, and they were given less than a month to do it.

The two specials masters did exact-





ly as ordered, and issued a draft set of maps on December 9, 2021. These maps had districts that were remarkably compact, without all the squiggly lines that legislators typically come up with. Boundaries were very often county lines. Locally, the previous Virginia House and Senate boundaries had spill-overs from the City of Alexandria into Fairfax County, so that two precincts adjacent to our Huntington Precinct had a Delegate who lived in the City of Alexandria, and Huntington's Senator lived in the City. But Huntington precinct would have lost Mark Sickles as a Delegate, being moved into the district where Delegate Paul Krizek lives.

There followed a comment period, where people could post comments online, or participate in one of two virtual meetings. There were a very large number of comments. I would not have been surprised if the Supreme Court had said, "thank you very much for the comments, but there are too many and they contradict each other, so we're just going to stick with the boundaries that the special masters first came up with."

Instead, the special masters in fact read all the comments, and made a real effort to address them. They issued revised maps, and the Virginia Supreme Court unanimously approved the new maps on December 28. There is no

appealing these maps. These are the boundaries for the next 10 years (most likely).

It is safe to say that these maps are most definitely not what the legislators would have come up with. Mainly, there are 42 incumbent delegates (or delegates-elect) out of 100 who are paired or even tripled with other delegates in the same district. In Fairfax County, for example, Kathleen Murphy and Rip Sullivan live in the same district, as do Dan Helmer and David Bulova, Kaye Kory and Marcus Simon, and Eileen Filler-Corn and Kathy Tran. Furthermore, there are 20 incumbent state senators who are paired or tripled up. In Fairfax County, Dave Marsden and Dick Saslaw live in the same district, as do Janet Howell and Jennifer Boyasco. Similarly, there are a number of districts that have no incumbent living in them. While a candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives does not need to live in a congressional district in order to run for that seat, for the Virginia General Assembly you do need to live in the district you are trying to represent.

This leaves a large number of Delegates and Senators with the unpalatable choices of either battling someone in their own party in primary races, moving to a district that has no incum-

bent, or retiring from the General Assembly. I'm guessing we'll see all three options. I'm guessing we'll see a number of new faces in the next General Assembly.

What does redistricting mean for Montebello? For Congress, we're deep in the Eighth Congressional District, so our incumbent Congressman, Don Beyer, will remain (and he is in a very safe seat). We are now in the Virginia Senate District where Senator Scott Surovell lives (and he is also in a safe seat, and will likely be re-elected if he runs again). So we are switching our state senator from Adam Ebbin to Scott Surovell.

In the House of Delegates, a major difference (from our point of view) between the draft special master map and the final map is that Huntington and Grosvenor precincts were moved back into a district that had many of the precincts that Delegate Mark Sickles represents. And since Mark Sickles lives in Huntington precinct, he will not have to move to continue to be a delegate.

One wrinkle that has not been resolved yet is the possibility that the court will order House of Delegates elections in 2022 (they are scheduled for 2023), so that delegates will need to run three years in a row. Stay tuned.

All in all, except for those delegates and senators who have been furiously scrambling since December 28 to figure out which of the three options to pursue, the outcome could have been worse. The Virginia Supreme Court played it straight, and produced maps that don't unduly advantage one party over another (although there's a slight advantage to Democrats in the House of Delegates maps, that advantage could be overwhelmed by differences in turnout). There will be an interesting set of elections in 2023 (and perhaps 2022). 🏠

The art and science of maintaining a healthy lymphatic system

By Chester Taylor

Your lymphatic system is a central part of your immune system. It is made up of tiny tubes called lymphatic vessels, which collect lymph fluid. These vessels route the fluid through the lymph nodes, which house immune cells that kill off abnormal cells and other harmful substances.

The lymph fluid then drains back into the blood stream, which flows through the kidneys where waste is removed and passed out in your urine. Your lymphatic system has many functions. Its key functions include:

Maintaining fluid levels in your body

The lymphatic system collects excess fluid that drains from cells and tissue throughout your body and returns it to your bloodstream, which is then recirculated through your body.

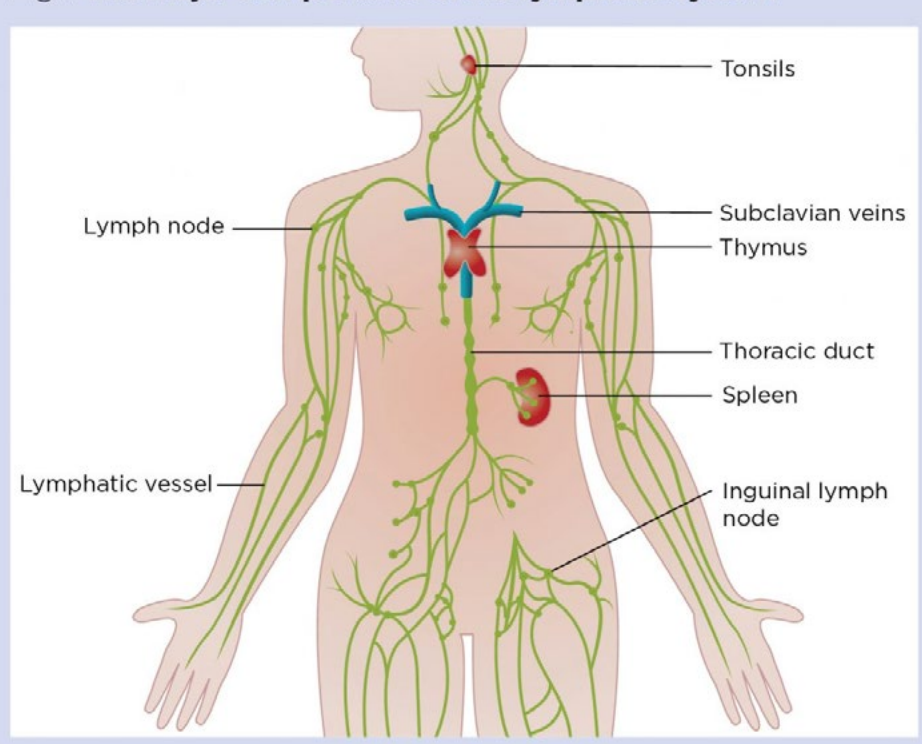
Absorbing fats from the digestive tract

Lymph includes fluids from your intestines that contain fats and proteins and transports it back to your bloodstream.

Protecting your body against foreign invaders

The lymphatic system is part of the immune system. It produces and releases lymphocytes (white blood cells)

Fig 1. The major components of the lymphatic system



and other immune cells that monitor and then destroy the foreign invaders – such as bacteria, viruses, parasites, and fungi – that may enter your body.

Transporting and removes waste products and abnormal cells from the lymph.

Any exercise is helpful for the lymphatic system. The contraction of your muscles becomes the pump that helps the fluid get around your body. Exercise under water is especially helpful

because of the pressure from the water. “The lymphatic system is stimulated by moving your muscles and getting your heart rate up,” says MD Anderson Senior Physical Therapist Sarah Cleveland. “All these things stimulate the lymphatic flow.” Your lymphatic system also works best if you maintain a healthy weight. This is another reason why exercise is helpful – it helps you keep your weight down.

Start treating your lymphatic system better by avoiding toxins, chemicals, and foods that are hard to digest, that means processed foods that are steeped in pesticides, preservatives, and artificial ingredients. Then begin adding more of these foods to your diet:

- water
- cranberries
- leafy greens
- nuts & seeds
- garlic
- ginger
- turmeric
- seaweed
- citrus 🍊





white out



Photos by Don Savage

A moment in time

By Joel Miller



Many technically acceptable, artistically composed photos seem to go in one eye and out the other. They find no place to be retained for more than an instant among the more than 100,000 that are stored in my electronic and neural networks. So why *this* one?

The Deauville Hotel (1962) at Miami Beach was quite luxurious. Ocean-front balconied rooms, huge oceanside pool, night clubs, chandeliered dining room, and even an iceskating rink (in July!). All this for less than \$20/night (with breakfast and dinner). What I'm trying to say is that there was no shortage of things to see and photograph.

Walking one morning on a deck that overlooked the pool, I noticed these four shirtless men, wearing bathing

suits and caps, playing their morning card game (probably pinochle) in the 90F Miami sun. I leaned over the railing and snapped one photo. The resulting image is not very well focused, and the composition tells nothing about the beautiful setting. It is simply four friends (strangers to me) enjoying the sun, the game, and the friendship.

This was among the first photos in which I (almost subconsciously) began candidly capturing the little life-slices that continuously drift past my days (usually unnoticed)

I've tried though the years to upgrade this image while acquiring new editing skills, but gave up once I realized that the photo in its original form also marked a place in the journey on which photography has taken me. 📷

The mighty potato

Nutrition: A medium-sized potato has just 110 calories and 26 grams of carbs, but it also provides 30% of your daily value of **vitamin C**, 15% of your **potassium** and 10% of your **vitamin B6**. Potatoes have a small amount of protein, but the protein is of high quality because of its amino acid composition and its digestibility. **Hint:** Keep the skin on when prepping your baked, mashed or oven-roasted potatoes. Just make sure to scrub your spuds thoroughly first, to remove any dirt, bugs, or other debris. A medium potato with the skin provides 7 percent of your fiber needs for the day. Every bit helps when you consider only 10 percent of us get enough on a daily basis. I like lite sour cream with some chopped green onions on top of my baked potato. — Chester Taylor 📷





By Chester Taylor

In 1019 A.D. Princess Ingegard of Sweden married Yaroslav I “the Wise,” Grand Prince of Kiev. They had four daughters; Anna, the youngest, then Elizabeth, Anastasia, and Agatha as depicted on this 11th-century fresco in the St. Sophia Cathedral in Kiev. All became queens.

Ingegard’s daughters traveled to the countries of their respective husbands. To them, being royalty was a way of life. They realized there was a huge difference between their almost fairy-tale life of luxury and that of the common people who had to fight for survival every day. Like their mother, they liked

being queens, and to marry a king was more of a vocation rather than a romantic fantasy. The sisters felt lucky to get royal husbands and were ready to give them their support and assume their role, but it came with a price.

Elizabeth married King Harald III and followed him to Norway. Although they had daughters, Maria and Ingegerd, Elizabeth had no real affection for Harald. Harald had a mistress named Tora. There was friction. Tora traveled with Harald to England. Harald was killed in battle at Stamford Bridge, England, on September 25, 1066, trying to claim the throne of England after the death of King Edward the Confessor of England earlier that year. Maria, after receiving the news that her father had been killed, died suddenly. The other daughter, Ingegerd, married first to Olaf I of Denmark, and after

his death, Philip of Sweden. Elizabeth lived at the court of her daughter Ingegerd and died at the age of 42.

Anastasia went to Hungary with King Andrew the White. They had three children, a daughter Adelaide (who becomes wife of King Vratislaus II of Bohemia) and two sons, Solomon and David. Andrew was going to name their first-born son, Solomon, king when the time came, but Andrew’s jealous brother, Béla, claimed he should be the next king. In 1060, Andrew’s brother led a successful revolt to the throne. Andrew was defeated by Béla and died shortly after the conflict. Anastasia and her children, sent to the court of Adalbert Margrave of Austria earlier, survived. Anastasia sought the help of King Henry IV of Germany, whose sister Judith had been engaged to Anastasia’s son Solomon. As the German troops

entered Hungary to assist Solomon, Béla died, and his sons fled to Poland. The young Solomon was crowned on September 27, 1063. On the occasion of her son's coronation, Anastasia presented the sword of Attila the Hun to Duke Otto II of Bavaria, leader of the German troops. Later, Anastasia and her son began to argue with each other, as she was very controlling and meddling. So, her son forced her to Admont Abbey, where she lived as a nun until her death.

Agatha married Edward the Exile who had sought sanctuary at her family's court in Kiev. Edward's father, King Edmund Ironside of England, was defeated in battle by the Dane, Canute the Great, in 1016. Canute sent Edward, then a baby, and his brother, Edmund, to the Swedish King Olof Skötkonung (Canute's stepbrother) to have the boys murdered. Olof secretly arranged for the boys to be sent to Kiev to live with his daughter, Ingegerd. In 1057, Edward and Agatha married and return to England and reclaimed the throne. Unfortunately, he was murdered within two days of his arrival by others who had plans to be kings themselves. Being queen for Agatha was very short lived. Then in 1067, after the Norman invasion, Agatha and her children fled to Scotland for refuge under her future son-in-law Malcolm III (Malcolm, son of Duncan, is the same Malcolm written about in Shakespeare's Macbeth). Malcolm married Agatha's daughter, Margaret. Margaret became the Queen of Scotland, mother of three kings of Scotland and a queen consort of England. Like her grandmother Ingegerd, Margaret was also canonized, this time by Pope Innocent IV. Her mother, Agatha, spent her last years as a nun at

Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The youngest daughter was Anna. Her marriage set the stage for the merger of the Taillefers with the French royalty. It so happened that King Henry of France needed a bride when his first wife, Matilda of Frisia, died, but because of the royal habit of marrying into other European royal families, he couldn't find a princess

five languages, including Greek and Latin. Neither Henry nor his entire court could read nor write.

Anna was accustomed to a cleaner and more modern Kiev. She complained the French did not wash themselves. Anna could ride a horse, was knowledgeable in politics, and actively participated in governing France. Her husband admired her and trusted her. He asked her to pre-approve (read) documents he had to sign. Many French documents bear her signature, Anna the Queen. King Henry's decrees bear the inscription, "With the consent of my wife Anna," and "In the presence of Queen Anna." There are no other cases in French history with such inscriptions. Even Pope Nicholas II, surprised at Anna's abilities, wrote to her, "Honorable lady, the fame of your virtues has reached our ears, and with great joy, we hear that you are performing your royal duties at this very Christian state with commendable zeal and brilliant mind."

When Anna's husband died in 1060, she served as regent for her son, King Philip, only eight years old at the time. Eventually, Anna remarried, this time to Count Ralph III of Valois. There was a scandal, since Ralph's former wife accused him of adultery, sending her charge to Pope Alexander II, who excommunicated the couple. The young King Philip forgave his mother. Anna died in 1075 and was buried at

Villiers Abbey, La Ferte-Alais, Essonne. All subsequent French kings were her progeny, and her lineage ran, from Philip I to Louis V (The Fat) to Pierre deCourtenay and to the descendants of Guillaume Taillefer I. 🏰



Princess Anna



Princess Elisaveta



Princess Anastasia

who was not closely related to him. So, King Henry sent an envoy to Kiev, and they returned with Anna, a beautiful 27-year-old princess. Henry was 43 at the time. He knew Anna was a special princess. She could read and write in

Three questions that may define you

By Bob Shea

Fiona Hill, a member of the National Security Council, made famous by her testimony as a fact witness at the first impeachment trial of the former president, has recently published a book about her improbable life's journey from a hard-scrabble northeastern English village to the inner sanctum of the White House. The title of the book, *There Is Nothing For You Here*, is based on her father's advice to her as a young girl in that blighted corner of the United Kingdom.

She describes her early life, in the terminal decay of the local economy, as akin to growing up in Appalachia when many coal mines closed, steel mills using the coal were next in line to be shuttered, closely followed by the manufacturing hubs that used the steel. Her region became the UK Rust Belt

where men with a minimum education, working with their hands and backs, were left with few occupational choices. Her father, a coal miner, became a hospital porter to support a wife and family. Men had jobs, not professions.

Setting aside her recent role in world and U.S. politics, she makes a profound point about life's options, especially in the United Kingdom, where breaking class barriers has always been difficult. However, her description of having very limited opportunities, even for a naturally intelligent young woman, made me think of parallels in this country. She describes, while as a young teen on a government-sponsored exchange program in Germany, being defined by three questions asked by her fellow British students. The answers determined in their eyes her val-

ue as a person, her friendship benefits, and how the system would probably define her in later life as she clawed her way from childhood to adulthood.

The three questions she was asked were:

1. "So, where are you from?" Answer: "The village of Bishop Auckland" (the coal-mining village).
2. "What does your father do?" Answer: "Coal miner."
3. "What school did you go to?" Answer: "Bishop Barrington Comprehensive School" (the village school).



Their attitude: Why take the time to get to know you? You are not our sort.

She also makes a point that in Great Britain, how one speaks, your local accent, defines you. What do you sound like? Eaton, Cambridge or Oxford? Manchester? Liverpool? The hinterlands of the coal mines? When you open your mouth, you can be categorized, possibly put in a forever box, and your worth instantly determined by some, simply based on how you pronounced words or your regional dialect.

Her whole premise is based on her being a disadvantaged white female seeking upward mobility. In an accurate commentary, she recognizes the additional and even more stifling burdens a person with a darker skin had to face.

While innocent sounding, she states

that the determinative trifecta of questions was a socio-economic class-sorting exercise. Depending on one's answers, you could either be accepted or written off as not worthy of closer ties even at that young age.

Her premise made me think about my own journey from a small New Hampshire town and similar "class sorting" experiences I had encountered. I would not be surprised if many of us, except those born with the proverbial silver spoon in our mouths, may have experienced the same unfounded predetermination similar to what Dr. Hill encountered.

My answers would have been:

1. Auburn, NH
2. Carpenter
3. Severance Grammar School.

This was painfully common as I tried to break the mold and struggle on a scholarship through the rarified atmosphere of a very prestigious New England all-boys prep school. My

classmates were for the most part from the upper strata of U.S. industry and the arts, names like Heinz, Rockefeller, Kohler, Trippe, and Kazan. I felt a kinship with Dr. Hill's story.

One has to ask: Is upward mobility really possible, or is it only an aberration for a select few who glimpse it and with luck seize a fleeting opportunity gap? How many are left behind, a victim of their roots and the whims of life and society, despite a possible innate ability to make a real contribution?

She made it, and so did I (to a much lesser degree), but we did it despite society's long-established habit of putting people in categorical boxes based on who we were and where we came from, ignoring from Day 1 who that person really is or could be. The Financial Times of London later called her "the

improbable Fiona Hill.” Although she eventually received a PhD from Harvard, she stresses the unequal education opportunities that all too often confirm that upward mobility is difficult with success all too often based on luck, mentors, and the whims of one’s life all weighted down by the location of your birth, your economic class, your accent, your gender, and the color of your skin.

It would be interesting if we each looked back on our early experiences and answered those same three questions. Were we advantaged or were we pigeon-holed to a status that had nothing to do with our real self? Did we rise above it via God-given intelligence and an enormous amount of luck as Fiona Hill did? It would make an interesting self-analysis. Also, by chance did we make a conscious academic and/or career choice simply as another way to break out of the box looking for upward mobility?

The last step would be to question whether we have asked those questions of others, establishing someone’s potential worth to society without really knowing who they are and what contributions they might someday make to the world. Have we created hard-sided boxes for the life aspirations of others?

Thinking about it is the first step in avoiding the three non-defining but potentially damning questions. Maybe we should ask “who are you really,” or make the effort to know who they are, hoping for the moment when societal contributions are possible despite roots, family history, or regional accent? Early prejudging can deprive society of the best and the brightest when we need them the most. Is life really fair? Probably not, especially if you were ever looking over the lid of a box to which you have been relegated.

Think about it. 📖

Pandemic humor for cold winter days

By *Erwin Jacobs, MD*

The American Psychiatric Association reports that there has been a large increase in emotional problems during the pandemic. It seems like a little humor might help the daily boring routine we are getting into.

What do you give to the fellow that has everything? Penicillin.

Do you know what a metallurgist is? It is a person who can tell pure virgin metal from plain, common ore.

The pandemic has cut down on the interpersonal contacts. To make socializing safer, we have developed the MC-UOA – the Montebello Couple Unreliable Osculate Appliance. It is a piece of soft, pliable, clear plastic 6 feet high and 2 feet wide. It can be held between two people and at the appropriate levels have openings cut so that contact could be made through the device. It can be purchased at the front desk for only \$20. If a technician is needed to make the opening and demonstrate the device, there is a deduction of \$5. It comes in clear, blue, red, and shades of gray.

After years of wanting to thoroughly clean my house but lacking the time, this week I discovered that was not the reason.

If I keep stress-eating at this level, the buttons on my shirt will be socially distancing from each other.

I never thought the comment “I would not touch them with a 6-foot pole” would become a national policy, but here we are.

When you are in quarantine, you make only inside jokes.

Knock, knock! Who is there? Do not touch the doorknob and step back 6 feet.

The heath experts lied. They said

that masks and gloves were enough to go to the grocery store. When I got there, everyone else had clothes on.

What do you call someone whose life did not change after quarantine? An introvert.

Why do they call it the novel coronavirus? It is a long story....

Finland just closed its borders. You know what that means. No one will be crossing the finish line.

Yeah, I have plans for tonight. I will probably hit the living room about 8 or 9.

At the candidate night for the condo board positions, a resident asked me, “Can you take criticism?” I replied, “Yes, I can. I was married for almost 50 years.”

A fellow was driving a lady to dinner when it began to rain. He dropped her off at the restaurant door and proceeded to park the car. When he came in, the hostess remarked to the lady, “Here comes your husband.” She replied, “He is not my husband. He is my insignificant other.”

Mark Twain wit:

Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence in society.

Familiarity breeds contempt – and children.

Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress. But I repeat myself.

It used to be a good hotel. But that proves nothing – I used to be a good boy.

Why is it we rejoice at birth and grieve at a funeral? It is because we are not the persons involved.

There is no such thing as a new joke.

The only way to classify the majestic age of some of those jokes was by geological periods. 📖



Photos by Dian McDonald

