

A forum to encourage independent thinking

The THINK Club

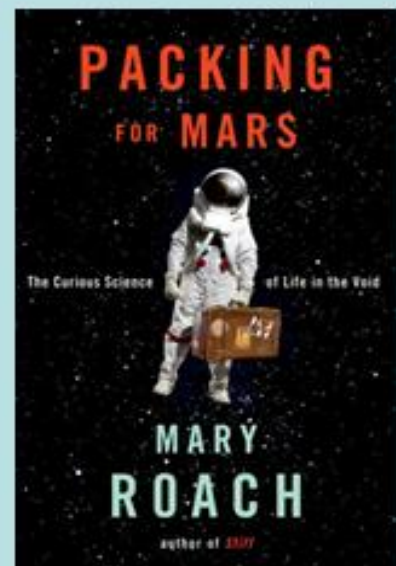
Published Quarterly

Volume 16.1 Winter 2011 \$150 Life Membership

Mood of the Nation



TheThinkClub 2010
Book of the Year



Follow us on Twitter @thethinkclub



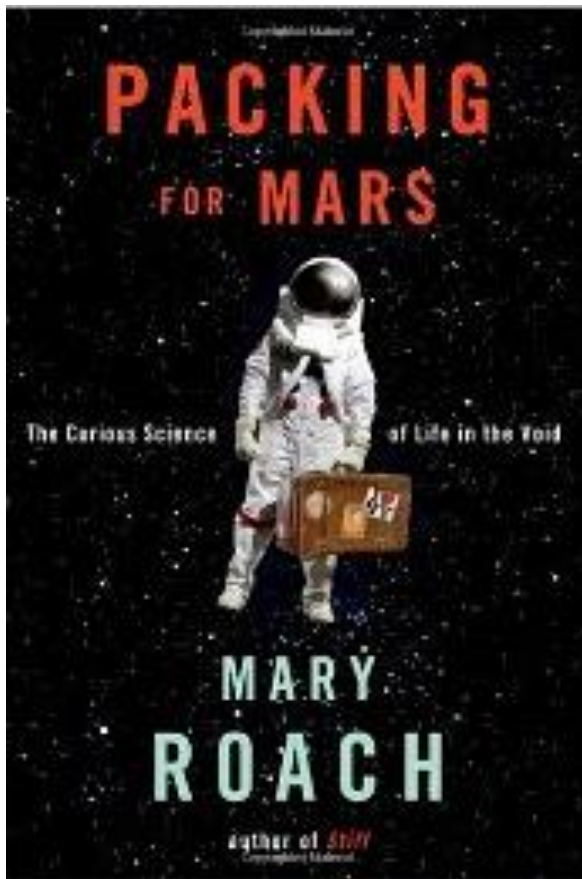
www.thethinkclub.com

Press Release

December 28, 2009

The Think Club Publication Announces 2010 Book of the Year

Bloomfield Hills, MI, December 27, 2010 The Think Club Publication has chosen *Packing for Mars: The Curious Science of Life in the Void* by Mary Roach, published by W.W. Norton & Co. as the Book of the Year for 2010. Think Club Publication is a forum to encourage independent thinking among fellow human beings. This annual award is given to the author whose idea or ideas can contribute to the resolution of contemporary human problems based on his or her original and independent thinking.



The Think Club chose *Packing for Mars* as the Book of the Year because the author provides us the facts to think independently whether “Is Mars possible” and “Is Mars Worth it?” She also gives us enough ammunition to decide whether we should be spending \$500 billion on human Mars mission or rely on cheap, reliable, robotic missions.

Roach starts with the premises that the human body is inadequately designed for a long space travel. Roach emphasizes this by listing the details about disposing of human waste, controlling body odor without washing, radiation from cosmic rays, falling sick in space and bone loss.

Besides the physical problems, Roach also elaborates on emotion and sex. After all human beings will be traveling for a year (includes time on Mars) through darkness of space cooped up with other mates who may be getting on each others’ nerves.

Mary Roach describes how it is possible to preview space without ever leaving Earth. From the space shuttle training toilet to a crash test of NASA’s new space capsule (cadaver filling in for astronaut), Roach takes us on a surreally entertaining trip into the science

of life in space and space on Earth.

But most of all, Roach explains why a mission to Mars is important for human spirit without hiding the difficulties to get there. This is as important to human endeavor and progress today as the hot air balloon expedition by Mongolfier Brothers was in 1780. Thus we present the Book of the Year award for 2010 to Mary Roach for reminding us that how spending on space program will give birth to new innovations. Roach has aptly quoted Benjamin Franklin to answer the skeptics, “What use is a newborn baby?”

Survey

MOOD OF THE NATION

“Americans are down but not out. We are resilient and have always recovered from difficulties. The present crisis is not unprecedented.”

By Anil Shrivastava ‘Musafir’

One can make an equally plausible case that the Americans are despondent, mired in personal and national debt overwhelmed by home foreclosures and high unemployment conjoined by threats to their national and economic security from abroad. On the other hand, the Americans are adjusting to a new global reality where other nations are simply getting their share of rights and riches by adapting to the free market economy. Ultimately, the Americans will benefit from now embryonic interdependence and global cooperation. So which of the two notions is the more accurate? We asked a cross-section of Americans about the mood of the nation. Among them were a politician, a TV journalist, a business executive, a retired auto employee and a young college student.

It is an accepted fact that America is in decline in key areas including manufacturing, education, technology, innovation, economic growth, global and space leadership, and military superiority. “I have seen schools struggle to keep test scores up. From state standardized tests, it is clear that the reading level and basic math skills are lacking even more than before. The economy, and the burst of the economic bubble speaks for itself. This has resulted in companies hanging on tight to their cash in turn affecting morale, and the product,” answered the TV journalist.

Everyone is not lucky enough to hold on to his/her livelihood. The national unemployment rate has been hovering near 10% for years. A former auto employee put the matter in perspective, “I lost my job. My economic stability is gone. The fear of crime is constant. Concern if my country will survive the current threats is constantly in my face.”

Economic and educational decline are not the only issues on people’s mind. National pride and the value of the American brand are tarnished in people’s opinion. “When I immigrated to the United States, it had the best expressways, most modern airports, tallest skyscrapers, the largest city, most entries in Fortune’s list of top ten global companies. Now, we can boast of none. Soon we will be hitching a ride into the space from the Russians and the Chinese, let alone going back to the moon,” lamented a business executive.

However, most of the respondents were more concerned about the loss of manufacturing jobs than losing the leadership in space. “Our leaders ask us to get higher degrees and some even want us to have PhDs. What happens if all 308 million Americans get PhDs? Will that get us employed? We need more manufacturing jobs,” was the response of a young student working on her undergraduate degree.

Many thought that political divisiveness has caused indecisiveness in our political system and institutions. “It is ten years since 9-11, we have not reached a decision on what to build at the site of Ground Zero yet.” Corporate transparency and accountability are other concerns. “What happened to all the trillions of stimulus dollars? How come we do not see new infrastructure such as mass transit, road improvements and bullet trains yet? Other nations are building them. Our country is hostage to special interest groups and clueless law makers in the state capitals and in Washington” These were among the outpouring of statements received. Here’s some more feedback, “I believe the media and interpretation of laws by our supreme court contribute greatly to the irreversible moral and educational decline of this country.”

So what is the solution? Will we ever recover from this downward spiral? In spite of all the cynicism, everyone we talked to was hopeful for America’s future. “We have seen worse times than this. We survived the Civil War, the two World Wars and the Great Depression. The Americans are down but not out. We are resilient and have always recovered from difficulties. The present crisis is not unprecedented,” this opinion was shared by a politician.

Most probably, we will emerge out of this situation due to the fact that the Americans are innovative and enterprising. Just in the last few decades, Facebook, Google, Apple and Microsoft alone have created a market value of more than half a trillion dollars. We should remind ourselves that “The most successful initiatives and companies were born in bad times.

Continued on Page 11

New Year Resolutions for the Rest of My Life

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

I never made a New Year resolution, but if I am forced to make one (happens during New Year parties), it will be not to waste my time on vagaries. Time is important to me because at 64, I don't have much left at my disposal.

- I will not waste time trying to remember names, incidents or debts owed to anybody. If important, they'll come to me.
- I will not get into an argument about what is the best way to go to the airport from my house. No matter what route we take, all of us are going to end up at the same place.
- I will not waste my time in doing the mental math in figuring out how long I have been married. I have been married most of my life anyway.
- I will not waste my time watching movies. They all have one common message, 'The End.'
- I will not waste my time pressing buttons on remote control. I rather keep on pressing 9-1 on phone ready to dial only 1 in case of an emergency.
- I will not waste my time shopping for life insurance; it is now just a waiting game.
- I will not watch my health. It is just a gimmick to separate me from my money.
- I will work 24 hours; I mean a total of 24 hours during the rest of my life.
- I will set aside time each day for prayer and meditation. That is better than sitting around and doing nothing.
- I will forget the past. Life's transmission can't be switched to reverse. We can only shift forward or be stuck in neutral.
- I will not care about succeeding in life because life will always succeed me.
- I will not waste my time finding the purpose of life. It serves no purpose.
- I will get up in the morning and go to sleep at night and hope not wake up at all some day.
- I will not like to be reborn. I rather do something new.
- I will not find the secret of life. There is no secret.
- I will have no regrets. I played my role with the limited intellect given to me.
- I will not eat with a cannibal, I rather enjoy my last meal.
- I will not waste my time thinking about answering any question. My answer always will be, "I am thinking."
- I will not waste my time going to a club. That's why I have 'The Think Club.'
- Happy New Year!



A Tale of Two Souls

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

Two souls accidentally met in the darkness and void of the universe traveling at FLT (faster than the speed of light). Since they were traveling in the same direction, they seemed stationary relative to each other and decided to chat (in English, of course).

"What will be your next assignment?" asked one soul to another.

"Don't know! Right now I am simply hurtling through the space sideways. How about you?"

"I am going to reside in the body of a 'thermophiles.' They are cursed to live at high temperatures. Unfortunately, they feel the burn but cannot get out of the situation," replied the first soul.

"Too bad! How was your last assignment like?"

"Very complex! I was stationed inside the body of a human being belonging to homo sapiens species. "

"Where was that?"

"It was on the planet earth in the Milky Way galaxy about 28,000 light years from the Galactic Center and 20 light years above the Galactic Equator."

"Why was your assignment so complex?" The second soul was curious.

"The earthlings are the most intriguing piece of machinery. They have fluctuating metabolism, puny memory. They are unpredictable and inconstant. They spend all their time worrying about water oxygen and food. They have an incalculable short life but they carry a big ego. They spend one third of their lives sleeping. And worst of all, their structure starts to break down in their midlife," the first soul outpoured his frustration.

"Well, at least you can count your blessing that you had a very short assignment," interrupted the other soul.

"Yes that's amazing. Doesn't that make you wonder that instead of letting the earthlings die so soon and having to make new ones, why can't He keep the ones He already has now?"

"That's a waste alright," quipped the second soul, "what else about the earthlings?"

"Talking of waste, they are endowed with sense, reason and intellect, but they have decided to forgo their use. As a result of their karma, I have to take another assignment now. Some call it rebirth."

By now the two souls were traveling through Galaxy NGC4414 compressing the space in front of them and expanding the space behind them. That's what naturally happens when non-matters travel at FLT.

"What about you now? Where are you headed to?" Asked the first soul.



"I don't know. I have been wandering for more than five thousand trillion years hoping to meet God. Sometimes I feel like shouting out loud, 'God, are You real or are You playing a trick?'"

"Well, tell me about your last assignment. Hopefully I can solve the mystery," asked the first soul sympathetically.

"To start with I belonged in antimatter - the mirror of this universe. Everything there was opposite to this universe. This asymmetry is also called baryogenesis."

"That's interesting! How was the creature you were assigned to?"

"Every creature of that baryogenesis spoke truth, let alone the body that I was assigned to. Everyone loved his/her neighbors. They had no desire for riches, property, honor, status or fame. They never yearned to harm others. Greed and attachment were completely absent from their lives."

"I know exactly what has happened to you," interrupted the first soul, "you are liberated from the cycle of rebirth. You won't have any assignments anymore."

"That's scary! How do I pass my time now?"

"You should stop wandering; sit at a location and meditate until you merge with God, the ocean of all souls."

"Why meditate?"

"Well that will be better than just sitting there with your eyes closed and doing nothing!"

The first soul said good bye and parted way and continued on his way to get into the body of the thermophiles.

China: Economic Crisis Ahead

(Reprinted from ndtv.com)

Shanghai: For nearly two years, China's turbocharged economy has raced ahead with the aid of a huge government stimulus program and aggressive lending by state-run banks.

But a growing number of economists now worry that China – the world's fastest growing economy and a pillar of strength during the global financial crisis – could be stalled next year by soaring inflation, mounting government debt and asset bubbles.

Two credit ratings agencies, Moody's and Fitch Ratings, say China is still poised for growth, yet they have also recently warned about hidden risks in its banking system. Fitch even hinted at the possibility of another wave of nonperforming loans tied to the property market.

In the late 1990s and early this decade, the Chinese government was forced to bail out and recapitalize these same state-run banks because a soaring number of bad loans had left them nearly insolvent.

Those banks are much stronger now, after a series of record public stock offerings in recent years that have raised billions of dollars from global investors. But last week, an analyst at the Royal Bank of Scotland advised clients to hedge against the risk that a flood of cash into China, coupled with soaring inflation, could result in a "day of reckoning."

A sharp slowdown in China, which is growing at an annual rate of about 10 percent, would be a serious blow to the global economy since China's voracious demand for natural resources is helping to prop up growth in Asia and South America, even as the United States and the European Union struggle. And because China is a major holder of United States Treasury debt and a major destination for American investment in recent years, any slowdown would also hurt American companies. Aware of the risks, Beijing has moved recently to tame its domestic growth and rein in soaring food and housing prices by raising interest rates, tightening regulations on property sales and restricting lending.

At the end of the Central Economic Work Conference, a high-level annual economic policy meeting that concluded on Sunday, Beijing promised to combat inflation and stabilize the economy. Those pledges came just days after the central bank ordered banks to set aside larger capital reserves in a bid to slow lending, the sixth time it has done so this year. And the

government reported on Saturday that the consumer price index had climbed 5.1 percent in November, the sharpest rise in nearly three years.

Analysts say more tightening measures are expected in the coming months but that the challenges are mounting. "There are so many moving pieces," said Qu Hongbin, the chief China economist for HSBC in Hong Kong. "It wouldn't be honest to say things aren't complicated." Optimists say China has been adept at steering the right economic course over the last decade, ramping up growth when needed and tamping it down when things get too hot. But this time, Beijing is not just struggling with inflation, it is also trying to restructure its economy away from dependence on exports and toward domestic consumption in the hopes of creating more balanced and sustainable growth, analysts say.

China is also facing mounting international pressure to let its currency, the renminbi, rise in value. Some trading partners insist China is keeping its currency artificially low to give Chinese exporters a competitive advantage. Beijing contends that raising the value of its currency would hurt coastal factories that operate on thin profit margins, forcing them to lay off millions of workers.

The most immediate challenge appears to be inflation, which some analysts say may be even more serious than the new figures suggest. Housing prices have skyrocketed. And prices for milk, vegetables and other foods have soared this year. "The money supply is too large," said Andy Xie, an economist based in Shanghai who formerly worked at Morgan Stanley. "They increased the money supply to stimulate the economy. Now land prices have jumped 20 times in some places, 100 times in others. Inflation is broad-based. Go into a supermarket. Milk is more expensive in China than it is in the U.S." In Shanghai, where the average monthly wage is about \$350, a gallon of milk now costs about \$5.50.

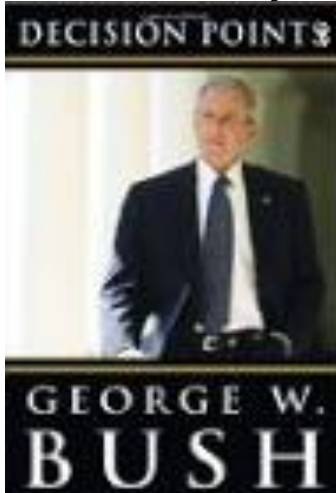
Wages have also risen sharply this year in coastal provinces amid reports of labor shortages and worker demands for higher pay. Many analysts expect more wage increases next year. That may be good for workers, analysts say, but it will also change the dynamics of the

Continued on Page 11

Decision Points

George W. Bush

Crown Publishers 2010 (481p.)



Bush has recounted his experience of the presidency most honestly and in earnest in his memoir, *Decision Point*. The book is written in a very entertaining manner. Whether one likes Bush or not, it is interesting to know how he thinks and how he made many historic decisions following two major disasters, '9-11' and Katrina.

Although this is not a comprehensive autobiography, such as Clinton's *My Life*, it is a thoroughly enjoyable read. Other than covering the events of his presidency, Bush also writes about his early life growing up in Texas with his parents, his entrance into politics, and his gubernatorial and presidential elections.

The focus of the book is on the major decisions of George Bush's presidency, including Iraq, stem cells, the surge, the financial crisis, Afghanistan, and others. In a number of instances, he admits that he made mistakes, for example, when Air Force flew over New Orleans two days after Katrina and it didn't stop in Baton Rouge. Another example, he concedes that it was a mistake to allowing the forces in Iraq to draw down in 2003/2004 from 180,000 to just over 100,000. This was done to allow the Iraqis to take control but they were not able to and security was an issue.

At times, he is defensive, as he should be when Harry Reid, after he voted for funding of the Iraq war in 2003, said in mid 2006 that the war was lost. Senator Kerry was another politician who supported the war initially and then tried to use it to get elected. The comments that Bush lied about Iraq and the Weapons of Mass Destruction are responded to quite effectively and any unbiased, rational person would agree after reading this that he didn't.

He mentions time and time again that he decided to invade Iraq because he wanted to keep Americans safe. I believe him.

The chapters on the September 11th attacks and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are very revealing. It is convincingly described that for the most part, his intentions were in the right place and he did what he believed was the right decision at the time he had to make it. Though this may not have the same effect on everyone, reading *Decision Points* will provide valuable insight into the mind behind the decisions that have affected each and every American.

Book Excerpt

It was a simple question. "Can you remember the last day you didn't have a drink?" Laura asked in her calm, soothing voice. She wasn't threatening or nagging. She did expect an answer. My wife is the kind of person who picks her moments. This was one of them.

Copyright © 2000

The THINK Club © retains copyright of this magazine, except articles that were submitted by freelance writers. Please do not reprint any part of this magazine without permission. Freelance writers retain full copyrights to their work. The officers of *The THINK Club* © do not necessarily share the opinions or views expressed in printed articles and accept no responsibility for advertisers.

Not So Quickly

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

In my past 37 years of living in these United States I have gone through the prediction of its economic demise several times. It was the Arabs buying us out in the seventies. Then came the Japanese and the Germans bulldozing us into the economic ruins in the eighties. In the nineties, the European Union ridiculed our economic system as faulty and outdated. As of the present time the Asians are perceiving us as an economic failed state. Are we in a state of denial and really failing? The fact remains that when it comes to love, religion and economics, no one knows anything.

Yes, the Asian countries, especially China and South Korea are building their twenty-first century infrastructure at a very fast rate. They are paying attention to science and education. They are innovating in the areas of renewable energy. That is all well and good – and as a matter of fact, they should have done that a long time ago. By the same token the United States is looked down upon for squabbles between business and administration, its social agenda, and partisan politics. So what's new? After all, we are a democracy and we have always recovered and progressed despite appearing misguided to our critics.

America's only folly was that it progressed too quickly after 1945. In 1945 the United States accounted for about 50% of total global output. Today it is at about half of that. Most of the industrial world was devastated after the World War. The United States practically had a monopoly. The loss of America's share is a gain for others. It is good for all humanity that the rest of the world is catching up to us. Western Europe and Japan were the first. Now China, South Korea and India have joined the club by adapting to market-based economies. This should be hailed as progress inasmuch as almost half of the world's population belong to those countries. Only an envious person will see that as a decline of America.

Today humanity is better off as the developing nations are not only competing with the United States they are also our economic partners in

progress. They want to emulate the United States' model in building middle class prosperity. There is nothing wrong with that.

There are predictions by the economists that China will pass USA as the greatest economic power on earth by the year 2035 and India will not be far behind. Again those forecasters do not see the progress as a victory for the masses of the world, instead, their focus is on perceiving that as defeat for America.

However, we are missing some points here. The forecast model of the doomsayers is based on the assumption that Asia's growth rate will perpetually remain at 10% while the United States economy will always be on a sharp decline. Not so! The United States has become relatively a low-cost, high-skilled place to invest. If someone wants to sell into the American market, it makes sense to manufacture here, as car makers from Germany to Japan are doing. This is obvious from the fact that USA's trade deficit declined and export climbed drastically in the third quarter of 2010. Additionally, the United States has a generous natural endowment; a relatively young population; the best universities in the world and a long history of business ingenuity. Biggest of all, we have political stability and a strong democracy.

We have self-correcting mechanism built in our system. I can predict that the United States will apply the Bowles-Simpson proposal as soon as the quantitative easing starts showing its effect. The United States will balance its budget as it has done many times in the past. Of course the United States has to start working on the future right away and four things they should be doing are 1. Buy US made products, no matter whoever makes it. 2. Ease EV5 visas so that foreign entrepreneurs can flock to us. 3. Create a base on the moon; if we do not, others will do it leaving us behind in innovation and national security. 4. Build subways and bullet trains. This will create jobs, and they will come if we build them.

Current Affairs

Wikileaks and Other Happenings

Obama: Work harder to beat the Bangalore challenge

Julian Assange granted bail, could leak out of prison any day.

Leak of thousands of classified documents shocks nation as readers discover secret documents are really boring.

Time Magazine names Facebook's Zuckerberg 'Man of the Year,' requires that you click 'Like' to read full article.

Snowstorm covers the Bay State, Americans on west coast try to remember which state that is.

Obama to increase travel in 2011, excited to see Air Force One's odometer turn over to all zeros again

South Korea and China move to improve relations, not quite ready to pick out curtains.

Google to introduce cloud-based printing, calls overcast Seattle "the perfect test market."

Consumer Reports says AT&T is the worst wireless carrier, calls for comment to reporter's cell phones not returned.

Winter comes early to several states, "I just opened my mailbox and there it was!" says elated New Jersey.

CEO of Pfizer resigns in surprise move, American public tries to remember what Pfizer does in unsurprising move.

Representative Rangel censured by House, must refrain from further wrongdoing until economy improves.

Arlington Cemetery finds eight bodies in one grave, insists that Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy works.

NASA discovers life form that eats arsenic, FDA to add poisons to Nutrition Facts labels

Noah's Ark to be built in Kentucky, Seattle refuses to donate more than ten days of rain.

Obama proposes pay freeze for federal workers, calls it necessary to combat global pay warming.

Remaining turkeys gather to celebrate traditional Day After Thanksgiving holiday.

Researchers say widespread use of cell phones affects opinion polls, 142 percent of Americans agree.

Netflix begins streaming-only service, McDonalds to sell "Happy Toy" meal without food.

Vatican alters policy on birth control, still no change on those funny hats for cardinals and the Pope.

Sent your comments to:

**The THINK Club,
P.O. Box 451,
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0451**

Or email to:

TheThinkClub@AOL.com

To Our Advertisers

The Think Club © publishes 3,000 copies quarterly, targeted at informed and educated readers in Michigan. A few hundred copies also go to out-of-state libraries and universities. If you want to your message to reach this group of people, send your check or money order, payable to The Think Club, P.O. Box 451, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0451 or call: (248) 651-3106 for more information.

Advertisement rates are as follows: Full page \$400, half page \$200, quarter page \$120. The above rates are for full year (four issues). (Single issue rates - full page \$100, half page \$50, quarter page \$30).

Preemptive Strikes Are Required

By Bala Prasad

The tragic events of September 11, 2001 forced us to reevaluate our country's counterterrorism policy, specifically the concept of preemptive action. Should the United States conduct preemptive strikes in the defense of our nation, our allies and their citizenry?

Yes. The U.S. "policy of preemption," and its ability to protect its citizens and interests by striking enemies who pose a significant threat before they can execute terrorist activities, is rational, and legitimate, essential for our country's security.

History shows us that the concept of pre-emptive action has long been accepted in warfare. Sir Francis Drake attacked the Spanish Armada at anchor before their planned attack against the British. Israel conducted a preemptive attack on its Arab neighbors in the Six Day War as they prepared to attack Israel. Even here at home -- Woodrow Wilson's occupation of Haiti in 1915.

Lyndon Johnson's dispatch of Marines to the Dominican Republic in 1965, and Ronald Regan's invasion of Grenada in 1983 are just a few of the pre-emptive interventions launched to protect American dominance in this hemisphere.

Even though pre-emption has been in practice, it was only President George W. Bush that explicitly articulated this practice and moved it into established government policy. And for that, he should be credited, because this country need not suffer an attack before it can lawfully take action to defend itself against enemies that present an imminent danger of attack. The greater the threat, the greater the risk of inaction – and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even in the face of uncertainty as to the time and the place of the enemy's attack.

This new era of terrorism demands a tough security strategy for defense and defensive deterrence. We are at a time and place in the world where, offensive preemption is required. Now, there will always be counter-arguments to military strategy, and of course there are risks and negative effects of conducting preemptive military strikes to fight terrorism. One real concern is that preemptive strikes risk causing potential conflicts to escalate quickly. But the risks and negative effects of not conducting preemptive strikes are even greater. The face of our enemy has changed; the nature of the threat has changed; our response to this threat, therefore, must change. In the face of the aggressive nature of current terrorism, the United States cannot rely solely on a reactive posture. Six months after 9/11, President Bush said it eloquently and best, that the new era of terrorism no longer permits America the luxury of waiting for an attack, that we must "be ready for preemptive action when necessary to defend our liberty." The world is on notice, and let it be so.

Preemptive Strike Defies Intellect

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

We have to refrain from purveying a 'Dirty Harry' ethics and John Wayne overtones at all costs. Even a thought of a preemptive strike by the powerful is evil and revengeful behavior. We should always use our intellect over instinct. In the case of Iraq we used our instinct in assuming that Iraq had WMDs (Weapons of Mass Destruction). It was a failure of our intellect and intelligence.

There are other caveats of a preemptive strike. Throughout history the imposition of will by pre-emptive strikes has generated post pre-emptive strike enemies. In several engagements, Vietnam, Korea, Somalia, Lebanon, Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States considered it fought responsibly. Those who suffered casualties claimed the U.S. had insufficient regard for enemy life. The Arab and Moslem world have been especially vociferous in reciting pains and sorrows inflicted upon them either directly or indirectly by American might.

We should also remember that the American might is not limited to its military alone. America has considerable economic might. America's real and supposed enemies know they cannot confront U.S. military might. The interdependence on foreign resources, investment and markets can deeply affect the American economy. Economic warfare is a strategy that can be adopted by those affected by the pre-emptive strategy. The pre-emptive strike strategy may result in a counter strategy of economic warfare to contain the United States. The enemies may retreat from American establishments – McDonalds, Wal-Mart, Disney World — and may switch patronage to the Chinese and European companies.

Moreover, preemptive strikes have not been real successful historically speaking. Among the most notable in recent history are Germany's stomp across Europe and Japan's strike against Pearl Harbor during World War II. Both Germany and Japan were defeated by the allied forces and the rest is history.

Those supporting a preemptive strike often state that the U.S. should take preemptive action against any rogue nation perceived to be a threat. How about the other side. They may be perceiving us as a threat too. What happens when they become powerful and decide to take revenge? The widening power and future global reach of China can be a lesson for us. Moreover, the terms 'threat' and 'evil' are a matter of interpretation more often than not. Remember, the same Afghan War fought by the Soviet Union was considered unjust. Now that we are in their shoes, it is considered a just war. In a nutshell, a preemptive strike defies intellect.

Continued from Page 3

Mood of the Nation

We must embrace this time as a challenge and work to better the future by doing the right thing now. That means investing, even when it's not easy, into the very elements that create success."

Americans are, probably, the most religious people on earth. Their belief in God is deep rooted. "You cannot separate religion and God from your laws and society. That is what brings stability and direction to a nation. As a man of faith I can only pray, hope and believe. But I also believe that sometimes things have to get to their worse before a direction is changed for the better." This was one of the replies to our question, "Do you think America will regain its old glory?"

At first blush, one would have to acknowledge that there is a strong basis for the familiar view that Americans are a relentlessly innovative and entrepreneurial people, constituents of a thoroughgoing business civilization, a culture that respects talent more than race and creed. America does not belong to any one nationality or ethnicity. This is a melting pot largely relevant to the nation's practical concerns, and therefore central to the real business of American life. Americans have always been fast to learn from past mistakes and adjust to the new realities, be that abolition of slavery, the seventeenth amendment or electing an African American as their president. America's intellectual culture is distinctively resilient which will adjust to the changing world order sooner than later.

Continued from Page 6

China: Economic Crisis Ahead

Chinese economy and its export sector while contributing to higher inflation. Beijing is now under pressure to mop up excess liquidity after state banks went on a lending binge during the stimulus program that got under way in early 2009. Analysts say a large portion of that lending was diverted to speculate in the property market.

In addition to restricting lending at the big state banks, Beijing recently moved to close hundreds of underground banks and attempted to restrain local governments from borrowing to build huge infrastructure projects, some of which may be wasteful, according to analysts. Some economists say the real solution is for Beijing to privatize more industries and let the market play a bigger role.

After the financial crisis hit, the state assumed more control over the economy. Now, state banks and big state-owned companies are reluctant to surrender control over industries where they have monopoly power, analysts say. "Inflation is not the most serious problem," says Xu Xiaonian, a professor of economics at the China Europe International Business School in Shanghai. "The most fundamental problem we have to resolve is structural. We need more opening up and reform policies. Look at the state monopolies in education, health care, telecom and entertainment. We need to break those up. We need to create more jobs and make the economy more innovative."

Zhiwu Chen, a professor of finance at Yale, agrees. "The state economy and the local governments will be where the future problems occur," Professor Chen said in an e-mail response to questions on Sunday. "They will be the sources of real troubles for the banks and the financial system." Though no economist is forecasting the end to China's decades-long bull run, many have turned more cautious.

And Fitch Ratings recently released a study it conducted with the forecasting consultancy Oxford Economics that examined the effect a slowdown in China would have on the rest of the world. Fitch expects China's economy to grow at an annual rate of 8.6 percent next year, down from about 9.7 percent this year. But the report, which was released a few weeks ago, said that if growth slowed to 5 percent, the economies of many other Asian nations would suffer seriously. Steel, energy and manufacturing industries around the world would also be hard hit, it said. Fitch analysts are careful not to forecast a sharp slowdown in China. But if one comes, they say, it is "most likely to stem from a combination of property crash and banking crisis."



Playing God

By David Gibson

The discovery of what is apparently an entirely new form of life -- a bacteria based on toxic arsenic rather than phosphorus, one of the six building blocks of all life on Earth -- has set the scientific world abuzz, prompting White House inquiries to NASA and threatening to upend longstanding beliefs about biology.

But some say the announcement also signals an end to religious faith, or at least the beginning of the end, because it implies that life can spring forth unexpectedly on Earth or even on other planets, and in unexpected forms -- developments that seem to run counter to literal readings of biblical creation accounts.

"The polite thing to say is that discoveries such as this don't really impeach the credibility of established religion, but in truth of course they really do," David Niose, president of the American Humanist Association (AHA), a leading secularist organization, said of this week's revelations about the microbes discovered in Lake Mono in California.

"The fact that life can spring forth in this way from nature, taken in context with what else we've learned in recent centuries about space and time, surely makes it less plausible that the human animal is the specially favored creation of all-powerful, all-knowing divinity," Niose said.

Another shot in the Wars of Science and Religion?

Maybe not.

The arsenic-based microbe discovery "sounds like a nice piece of work; we'll see where it goes from here," Brother Guy Consolmagno, a Jesuit and a planetary scientist at the Vatican Observatory wrote in an e-mail to Politics Daily. (Yes, the Catholic Church was doing science long before Galileo.)

"But," he added, "any scientific discovery that broadens our knowledge of creation, deepens our understanding of the Creator."

Consolmagno, who a few weeks ago made news for saying he'd be delighted to find intelligent life on other planets, is typical of religious believers who don't see faith and science as natural enemies.

Even some vocal atheists who see belief and science as inevitable opponents -- with belief the problem, not the solution -- weren't buying the AHA's arguments about the discovery's importance.

"I regret to say that the American Humanists got the story wrong," PZ Myers, a biologist at the University of Minnesota and a famously trenchant critic of religion, told

Politics Daily. Myers, who details his arguments at his blog, says the problem is their reading of the science.

"They say 'a new form of life has been discovered that apparently evolved outside the scope of all previously discovered life on Earth,' and this is not correct: the bacteria studied share a common ancestor with us, and the novelty of the discovery was not the organism, but that this entirely earthly organism was capable of incorporating arsenic into its chemistry. So no, their claims of its significant impact on our understanding of the history of life on Earth are overblown."

Myers does see a silver lining of sorts (at least from his non-believer's point of view) because the discovery "does represent an incremental increase in our understanding, just as science does every day."

"The point should be that the whole of science provides a direct challenge to religious belief, not that any one event is so definitive," Myers said.

Brother Guy would disagree with that assertion, but he pointed out that for the AHA and similar groups, "obviously this is no 'proof' since obviously they'd decided years ago, for whatever other reasons, that there was no God."

Faith, it seems, comes in many forms.

Niose of the American Humanist Association did concede that it is "unlikely that this discovery will change the minds of those who insist on a literal interpretation of the Bible."

"To them, the world is about 6,000 years old and evolution is a hoax, and no amount of scientific evidence will change that. For the rest of us, however, this discovery is indeed profound, and it adds to the mountains of evidence that already point to the humanistic lifescape as being our best hope."

Maybe the true test of the impact of the discovery will come in a few years time, when we can see whether there are more tourists visiting Lake Mono looking for the arsenic-eating bugs or more pilgrims checking out the full-scale replica of Noah's Ark that a well-known creationist group said this week it will build in northern Kentucky -- at a cost of \$150 million, including taxpayer subsidies.

Given the success of the group's Creation Museum, which drew its millionth visitor last spring, it'd be wise not to bet against the Ark.

Dreams, Racism and God

By Robert H. Bickmeyer

I guess you know the three things that “go” as we age. One is memory and...er...uh...I forget the other two. But there are three matters of concern to me that I will never forget.

DREAMS - “He got up on the wrong side of the bed” is a cliché often used to describe someone who arises in the morning in an irritable or depressed state of mind.

I contend that these moods stem from a stressful or frightening dream they experienced shortly before awakening. Dreams are easily forgotten by our conscious mind, but their effects remain in our subconscious until the realities of the day take over. The duration of these effects will vary from a few seconds for some or up to a half hour or more for others.

Children are more likely to suffer from such dreams as they have more difficulty dealing with moods. Many of us, including myself, are plagued with them frequently. If you are aware of why you “got up on the wrong side of the bed” (it was only a bad dream) you will more easily overcome your mood and are more likely to “have a good day.”

RACISM - It was recently reported that some whites fear certain businesses would attract blacks to shop and work in their town. Shame on them. I condemn them for their narrow-mindedness. If they resent affirmative action (preferential treatment for skin color) or reparation for blacks, put me in their corner. I once offered, in a Detroit newspaper, to pay \$1,000 to every former slave, but no one showed up. And I call them blacks because even the NAACP avoids that silly term African American, otherwise they would call themselves the NAAAAP (National Association for the Advancement of African American People). Further, if Ernie Els, the white golfer, and Charlize Theron, the beautiful blonde actress, both from South Africa, become citizens they would be African American.

A racist I am not. My favorite singer was Nat King Cole, basketball player Joe Dumars, fighter George Foreman. I am an ardent admirer of columnist Thomas Sowell, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and I voted for Alan Keyes over George Bush in the 2000 presidential primary - all black!

Recently, while dining in a restaurant a nicely dressed traditional family with two well behaved youngsters sat at a table near us. They were black. I said to my wife, “It

gives me a nice warm feeling to see that family living in our neighborhood.” They earned the right.

Some years ago my immediate neighbor was selling his house. I told him, “If you have the opportunity to sell to a decent black family, don’t worry about me. I won’t mind.” Shame on those whites who don’t even want blacks shopping and working in their neighborhood.

THE SAME GOD - According to a recent poll, 93 percent of Americans believe in God or a universal spirit. It follows then, that 93 percent of us are “religious,” to varying degrees of course. I have a message for the 93 percent. In discussions on moral issues such as unwed couples living together, unrestricted promiscuous sex, homosexuality, abortion, pornography and obscenities I am sometimes told, “Hey, it’s the 21st century, get with it.” My response is, “The same God who judged us 100 years ago is judging us today.”

Let us all remember: If you wake up in a foul mood, it was only a dream; moral, hard working blacks and moral hard working whites are equal with equal rights; on moral matters God is not “progressive.” He stands fast, of course, and so should we.

I Have a Dream - Martin Luther King Jr.

When we allow
freedom to ring, when
we let it ring from
every village and every
hamlet, from every
state and every city, we
will be able to speed up
that day when all of
God’s children, black



men and white men, Jews and Gentiles,
Protestants and Catholics, will be able to
join hands and sing in the words of the old
Negro spiritual, “Free at last! free at last!
thank God Almighty, we are free at last!”

President Obama's Health Care Plan

By Niru Prasad

President Obama is hoping that by laying out a compromise health care plan that largely resembles the House and Senate bills, congressional democrats will be able to join together so the legislation will pass without opposition. Under his plan each and every citizen of United States will have some health insurance.

Our health care costs are rising and over 45 million Americans are unable to afford health insurance because they lost their job and because of inflation. Approximately 80% of the uninsured are low income families who are unable afford health care coverage. Our nation faces an epidemic of obesity, chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, new threats of pandemic flu as well bioterrorism. Our citizens are unable to get proper health insurances because of high premiums. The Obama health care plan strengthens employer-based coverage, makes insurance companies and ensures patients' choice of doctors and hospitals without government interference. Under the new health care plan if you like your current health insurance nothing will change except the cost of coverage might be lower than before.

Here are some of the highlights of affordable health care plan.

- 1 The government will spend ten billion dollars over next five years to move the U.S. health care system's medical records to electronic in order to reduce paper costs.
- 2 Emphasize preventive medicine for better health outcomes.
- 3 Support disease management programs such as treatment of chronic diseases. Medicare and federal employee's health benefit program utilizes proven disease management programs.
- 4 Both public and private insurances will provide the insurers the best of services rendered by their groups of physicians and hospitals.
- 5 Reforms regarding malpractice while preserving patients' rights.
- 6 Lowering the cost of health visits and medications by taking anticompetitive actions in drugs and insurance companies. For example, while our health costs are rising the CEOs of companies receive millions of dollars as bonus.
- 7 Allowing consumers to import safe drugs from other countries for less cost.
- 8 Preventing drug companies from blocking generic drugs from consumers.
- 9 President Obama's health plan will guarantee affordable, accessible health care coverage for all Americans of all ages.

These are some of the facts to be considered for better health outcomes of our citizens..

- 1 Reduced work force productivity from illnesses and disability are to be prevented by offering work site health promotions by employers.
- 2 Providing a healthy atmosphere, healthy food choices for our school systems.
- 3 The primary care providers and public health practitioners have and will continue to lead efforts to protect nation's health.
- 4 The Federal, State and local Government will play a critical role in prevention and health promotion activities.
- 5 Finally the government must examine its own policies, including agriculture, educational, environmental and health policies. Our president has promised to prioritize all of these legislations to ensure a safe 21st century health system.



President Barack Obama signs the ARRA into law on February 17, 2009 in Denver, Colorado. Vice President Joe Biden stands behind him.

Culture of Innovation Is Still Alive

By David Beagan

The experiment in democracy here in the new world has lasted for over 200 years. Fairly young by the standards of many countries. In that time, starting from loosely organized colonies, America built itself into *the* world superpower. But over the last couple of decades its power has waned and been brought into question.

But this power has always been based on the foundation stones of a vast country of huge resources, a growing populace of moral citizens, and the Constitution. The solidity of these foundation stones has been called into question. Resources marked as off limits, such as bans on harvesting timber forests, restrictions on oil drilling, are potential missteps. But on the whole America's great natural resources continue to pay dividends. Farmlands, mineral and energy resources continue to be utilized to great benefit.

In spite of the disappointing behavior found among many, most notably our politicians, entertainers and athletes, I have been pleasantly surprised to encounter many bright people with an admirable work ethic in the many places I have traveled to as part of my work.

As for the Constitution, this document has remained as the most solid foundation stone.

With these foundation stones in place there is one more key ingredient that will allow the America to remain the preeminent power into the foreseeable future. That does not mean that others will not rise relative to the U.S. That is inevitable because they were starting from such a relatively low level. India and China have emerged as world powers. Other third world countries could emerge if they get their act together. So relatively speaking, others are growing in power. This is good and beneficial for the good of all. But it means that America will not be as far ahead as it was, but still the leader.

The abiding reserve that America continues to draw on is its resourcefulness. It continues to discover, create, concoct, invent, and innovate its way to success. Good hard work is thrown into this mix, just for good measure. The passion that burned in the heart of George Washington Carver was allowed to blossom in spite of the forces of oppression that were in place for black Americans. Wouldn't George find something like a bionic contact lens simply marvelous.

The culture of innovation continuously grinds on. It's not just the high profile inventions, iPad and the Segway, but the many and constant little innovations

that perfect a whole infrastructure of innovations as with solar and wind energy systems. We are witnessing the birth of the electric automobile industry.

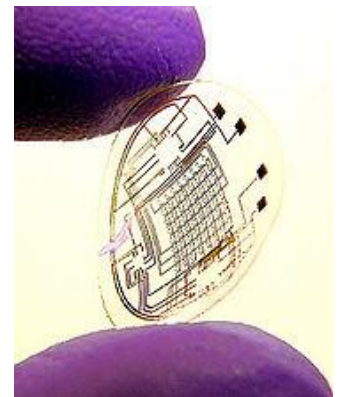
America is down, but not out. The spirit of invention has been tempered by the economic downturn but continues anyway and will reawaken in full force once the economy turns around.



George Washington Carver in his laboratory

Bionic Contact Lens

A bionic contact lens is a digital contact lens worn directly on the human eye which in the future, scientists believe could one day serve as a useful virtual platform for activities such as surfing the World Wide Web, superimposing images on real-world objects, playing video games for entertainment, and for monitoring patients' medical conditions. The bionic contact lens is a form of nanotechnology and microfabrication constructed of light emitting diodes, an antenna, and electronic circuit wiring.



Year in Sports

Spain stole the limelight



Alberto Cantador Tour de France Champion



Rafael Nadal Wimbledon, French and US Open



World Cup Soccer

Russia had the highest earning female athlete




Maria Sharapova Highest Earning Female Athlete \$26 M

India had the world's best cricketer




USA had the highest paid athlete



Alex Rodriguez \$27 M

Portugal had the world's most popular athlete



Christiano Ronaldo -Soccer

Puzzling Questions

By David Beagan

Fun Fuses

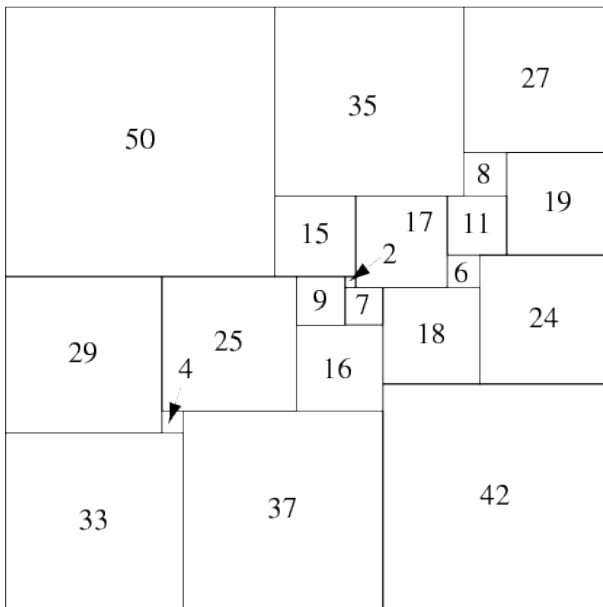
You have two fuses, and each fuse burns for exactly one minute. But the fuses are not of uniform thickness, they do not burn at a uniform rate along their lengths. How can you use the two fuses to measure 45 seconds?

Pet Shopping

At the pet store dogs cost 15 dollars, cats cost one dollar, and mice are 25 cents each. Your task is to spend exactly one hundred dollars. And you have to buy one of each animal.

Square Squared

You can easily divide a square into four smaller squares. But notice that the squares are the same size. Can you divide a square into smaller squares and every square is a different size? Yes, here it is:



21-square perfect square

So the question is, could you divide a square into smaller squares, all different size, but the sizes are all even numbers? Think about it, you have all the information that you need.

Drink Numbers

At the smoothie bar if you know a secret code you can get a free smoothie. Here's what you do. The server tells you a number. And you tell him another number. If it's right, you get a free smoothie. You see a customer goes up to the bar and the server says, "Six." The customer says, "Three," and he gets a free one. To the next customer the server says, "Twelve." The customer says, "Six," and he also gets a free one. To yet another the server says, "Fourteen." The customer says, "Eight." and once again a free smoothie. You Are next. The server says to you, "Twenty-two." What do you say?

Answers

Fun Fuses

The trick to solving this puzzle is to consider lighting the fuses at both ends. We know they don't burn evenly, but by lighting a fuse at both ends it will burn twice as fast, and burn itself out in half the time.

So to start off with light fuse A at one end, and light fuse B at both ends. Fuse B will burn out after 30 seconds. Fuse A has now been burning for 30 seconds and so has 30 seconds left to burn, so at this point light the other end of Fuse A. Fuse A is now burning twice as fast, and will extinguish after a further 15 seconds (half the time it had left to burn). Therefore Fuse A has burned for 45 seconds in total.

Pet Shopping

Three dogs, 41 cats and 56 mice.

Squared Square

If you start with the square in the illustration and double the size of every square, you have your answer.

Drink Numbers

You say nine. The answer is always the number of letters in the number the bartender says.

Can Obama Turn the Tide?

By Bala Prasad

During the Great Depression of the 1930's, America moved sharply to the political left, then stayed there. During the Deep Recession of 2008, America again moved to the left, but now seems to be moving back to the right.

Is it possible that there is any ideological shift under way in this nation? Or, is it more possible that this country, at its core, remains what it was before the recession and the 2008 election took place – a nation that stands right of center, ideologically? It is also possible, and plausible, that the Democrats overplayed their hand and moved policy too far too the left since the 2008 election, causing a knee-jerk reaction pulling the country back to the right.

There is even a broader explanation for the shifting mood of the nation: it may be a reflection of the chronic, slow and gradual erosion of confidence in big government. Twenty years ago, 42% of Americas said they trusted the government to do the right thing most of the time. Last year, that number was down to 25%. A striking 31% said they “almost never” trust the government to do the right thing.

It was in the middle of this crisis of confidence that the Democrats took control in 2008, telling the nation much of the same thing that President Franklin Roosevelt and the Democrats told the nation in 1932: that the country is a real mess, and the government can help Americans weather the storm. Of course, in Roosevelt's time, voters believed this sentiment, and evidence by the midterm elections of 1934, where Democrats actually added to their majorities in the House and Senate.

Last year, by contrast, the voters spoke loud and clear: they simply no longer believed that government could deliver on its promise to clean up the mess this country was in. So, they voted in the Grand Old Party to give it a try.

I believe that much of this yin-yang is inevitable. In 2008, the Democrats did as well as they could have imagined – in fact they probably surpassed even their own expectation. So, at some point, there was bound to be a regression back to the other side. It is simply unsustainable for a single party to keep winning elections. That said, I do believe that expectations were too high for President Obama to fix the nation's

economic problems so quickly, resulting in a predictable backlash against the party in power.

Now, what lies ahead in the 2012 election is anyone's guess. But, unless President Obama can reverse the current political tide, he will become the fourth one-term president in the last four decades, following the good footsteps of Gerald Ford in 1976, Jimmy Carter in 1980, and George H. W. Bush in 1992.

If history is any guide (and it usually is), than the economy will need to improve dramatically over the next two years for President Obama to be re-elected. Of the last nine presidents to seek re-election, none succeeded when the unemployment rate was 7.5 percent or greater in September of the year they sought re-election. The September unemployment rate in the year Jimmy Carter lost was 7.5 percent, while it was 7.6 percent for both Gerald Ford and George H.W. Bush. Today, the unemployment rate hovers around ten percent.

Now, by the start of the 1984 general election, the unemployment rate had dropped to 7.2 percent. Mr. Reagan's approval rating had improved with the economy, reaching 56 percent. The Republican based was energized and Mr. Reagan rolled to a landslide victory in his re-election bid – a win that seemed quite unlikely just two years earlier.

Of course, President Obama faces a much different political landscape in 2010 than the one encountered by Mr. Reagan in 1984. The structure of the U.S. economy has changed, and public officials are far more polarized, making the passage of legislation that much more difficult. Voters also seem to be more fickle, as evidenced by the degree of turnover in recent elections.

And so, dear reader, only time will tell whether President Obama can turn the tide like Ronald Reagan — or be swept away by it like Jimmy Carter. Either way, the mood of the nation is sure to change, and change again, with the next election.

Sincerely,

Bala Prasad

Letters

I want to give my feedback on your article on Alexander (The Think Club fall 2010 issue) as follows:

No doubt, Alexander was a Great conqueror. In your own words “ I always wondered how did he march up to India from Macedonia fighting all the kingdoms and conquering everything on his way”. In my opinion, “conquest” involves unilateral and forceful subjugation and as such it is an anti-thesis of “Globalization”, which connotes multi-lateral interactions among several nations’ citizens across the Globe on peaceful, voluntary and mutually beneficial basis.

If Alexander can be called as a precursor of Globalization, I think that Buddha, who preceded Alexander by several centuries, spurred Globalization in South East Asia without fighting any battle and it also lasted much longer than the Globalization of Alexander. Buddha truly represented and spread the non-violent and harmonious human spirit that lies at the root of Globalization that is lasting and perennial.

Rajendra K. Srivastava
Mumbai, India

I read The Think Club’s latest issue (Point-Counterpoint, Illegal Immigration, TheThinkClub Fall 2010) with interest. Immigrants come to the foreign land for employment. In many countries (such as USA), their children are given citizenship status. The problem arises when their country of origin become prosperous and they (offspring) decide to move back to the old country.

Unfortunately, we want to have it both the ways. Those of us who criticize U.K. and the U.S. for their actions against illegal immigration should remind ourselves how we feel about Bangladeshi influx.

Ashok Lal
Pune, India

I enjoyed your special on globalization (The Think Club, Fall 2010). Globalization is not a new phenomena, the base was laid long back when the Dutch East India Company and the British East India Company started trading with India. In history there were trade relations between different countries like Arab and Egypt and now in modern times that has translated into Globalization or Free Trade. It’s true that ultimately all the free trade resulted in the white man taking the burden proactively but then globalization leads to more employment and higher standard of living, especially among the developing countries. Globalization is good as it leads to efficient use of resources and benefits among all who are involved.

Steve Elliott
Indianapolis, IN

Thinking Wildly

Health nuts are going to feel stupid someday, lying in hospitals dying of nothing.

Meditating is better than sitting around and doing nothing.

All of us could take a lesson from the weather; it pays no attention to criticism.

Meaning of **Cantaloupe** (kant*e*lope) n. Gotta get married in a church.

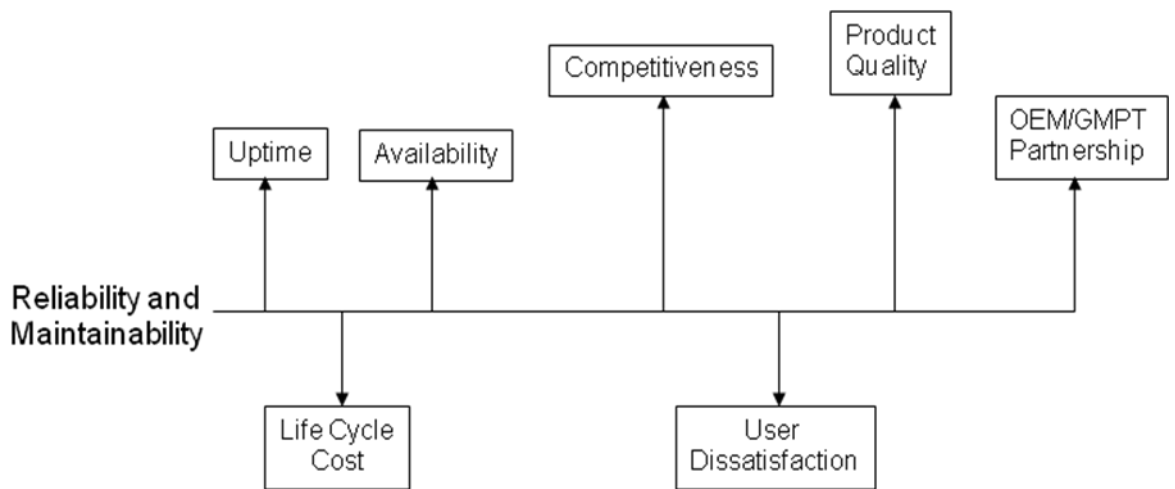
R&M Solutions, Inc.

Reliability, Maintainability, Six Sigma Quality



The application of Six Sigma concept to an R&M program will assure:

Higher Availability - Higher Quality - Higher Uptime – Lower Cost



Call R&M Solutions, Inc. today 248-320-0980

Think Club Publication
PO Box 451
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0451