

A forum to encourage independent thinking

# The THINK Club

Published Quarterly

Volume 19.1 Winter 2014 \$250 Life Membership



## A Political Phenomenon Worth Trying

Is There Such A Thing as "Human Rights?"  
**Book Review: Killing Kennedy**



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# Letters



I like the Humor column (Thanks for Deluging Me with Your Facebook Postings)... please tell me you didn't do all that!

**Spriha Srivastava  
New Delhi, India**

I read with interest your Editorial, "A Solution to Stem Terrorism (The Think Club; Fall 2013). I agree that unless and until the moderate Muslims speak up against terrorism, we cannot address this issue, but the problem is that the moderate Muslims are few and far between and are usually too scared to speak up against terrorism for fear of reprisal. Islam demands an unconditional and an unflinching support from it's adherents.

**Pradeep Srivastava  
Detroit, MI**

Either you ill informed or Anti-Muslim. Most of the muslim organizations in usa work very closely with Government agencies/FBI etc.

Your articles lately are more Anti Islamic. There are many many problems within Hindu society, cast system, sub human treatment of lower cast people, discrimination, rape, abortions of female fetus causing a huge shortage of women in near future to name a few. It will be nice if you look within first.

Please remove my name from your distribution list. I like unbiased and balanced reading.

**Sid Siddiqi  
Novi, MI**

## Thinking Wildly

Today You are You,  
That is truer than true,  
There is no one alive,  
Who is Youer than You.

– Dr. Suess

Whenever I am caught between two evils, I take the one I've never tried.

– Mae West

Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next. Delicious ambiguity...

–Gilda Radner

The greatest challenge to any thinker is stating the problem in a way that will allow a solution.

–Bertrand Russell

Manners require time, and nothing is more vulgar than haste.

–Ralph Waldo Emerson

Many complain about their memory, few about their judgement.

–La Rochefoucauld

Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.

– Ben Franklin

*The THINK Club* is published quarterly by The THINK Club Publications, a forum to encourage independent thinking among fellow human beings.

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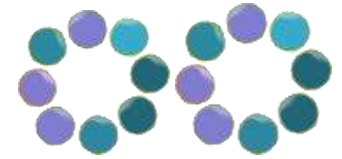
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# Editorial



## The U.S. Can Adopt Another Indian Phenomenon

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

Lord Acton said, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." That may be true in the long run, but for now the AAP phenomenon has given a new hope to the people in the state of Delhi in India. AAP stands for Aam Admi Party



(Common Man's Party) whose leader, Arvind Kejriwal – the wizard with his magical broomstick (election symbol) has come forward and taken the initiative to cleanse the rotten political and bureaucratic system in the state of Delhi.

Going back in the retrospective in 2011, what started as street protests by social activist named Anna Hazare struck a chord in the commoners of Delhi. **The term 'Aam Admi' (common man) took the shape of a political party under the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal, now the chief minister of Delhi. The Aam Admi Party (AAP) became synonymous with the common men and women who would toil hard to earn an honest and respectful living. They were fed up of the corrupt political structure of India. The people in the state of Delhi wanted an alternative to the quagmire of a rusted political class led by Congress Party (the ruling party) and BJP, the party in opposition.** The passing of the baton to AAP, which has no political experience, can certainly be termed as a unique phenomenon which India seems ready to accept.

AAP has also said that it will contest the high pitched 2014 General Election of India, but to achieve the objective one needs to have at least 272 seats in Parliament – which appears to be a distant dream in the current political scenario. Nonetheless, AAP has set an example that should at least be tried not only by the rest of India but also by the United States.

The United States Congress is dysfunctional and many of its members are corrupt. They speak and work for their sponsors and lobbyists and not for the people they ought to represent. The senators and congressmen here have lost their credibility and a sense of shame.

Voting for Republicans instead of the Democrats or vice versa is not going to solve the problem. They are two sides of the same coin. What the American public needs is a movement so that their voice is heard and noticed - a statement at polling booths. Since many of the politicians, both Republicans and Democrats are equally inept and self-serving, the American public should vote for anyone but the two prevalent parties. This will certainly send a message to both the Republicans and Democrats.

Anyone can run and govern the country better than the present lawmakers. So, why not make a statement by cleaning the house and showing them the door?

America can learn from the AAP phenomenon. The two main political parties in India (Congress and the BJP) have started to sincerely evaluate the recently changed political scenario of that country. The ruling party has, on record, admitted their follies and accepted what needs to be learned from AAP – a party formed on the basis of political paralysis and ineffectiveness of the incumbent government, a party which is strongly advocating anti-corruption philosophy and by virtue of its clean-image. The United States of America in the 21st century needs a real change. Gandhi's model of passive political resistance adopted by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. worked for America in the last century. Maybe, another Indian phenomenon, AAP will work for America in this century.



# Commentary



## True Tales of the Elderly

By Robert Bickmeyer

I've been told there are three things that leave you as you age. One is memory and ...er...uh...I forget the other two. But I always remember what gives me a good laugh.

My mother, from New York, where the city is surrounded with toll highways and its five boroughs are connected by many toll bridges, was visiting us in Michigan. On a tour of the area we drove south through Detroit into Windsor, Canada where a customs agent leaned out of his booth, asking, "What country are you citizens of? Why are you coming here?" After we answered his questions the agent smiled and told us to have a nice day as he waved us into Canada. As we drove away Mother said, "That was the friendliest toll collector I have ever seen."

As we pulled out of a restaurant parking lot I noticed a young mother folding a stroller at the trunk of her car. I remarked to my wife, who has congestive heart failure, "I'm glad we're beyond that stage of our lives. What a bother." Phyllis replied, "Oh yeah, how about my folding wheel chair in our trunk?"

At a senior breakfast we were discussing the pros and cons of the elderly shovelling snow. One man bragged, "I like the exercise from shovelling it." Another said he simply walked behind his self-propelled snowblower while another said he hired someone to remove his snow as even the cold air is bad for the heart. I reminisced, "I, too, hire someone but when I was younger I shovelled my walks and when I wisely stopped to rest my rapidly pumping heart I lit a cigarette."

After asking for her senior discount in a greeting card store the lady in front of me put three identical cards on the counter. They read, "To My Best Friend."

After our over-55 senior softball team's annual golf outing we had pizza and beer in the backyard of our leftfielder's home. As we sat at poolside re-hashing our season, making wisecracks and good conversation I noticed a teammate in his 70s, sitting hunched over, chin on his chest. I asked the others, "Is Bill sleeping? With all this lively conversation?" Doug answered, "Either he's sleeping or he died."

A friend had a heated debate with his wife about a rule in the card game, Bridge. He found the correct explanation in a book of rules on Bridge and gleefully showed her that "according to Hoyle" he was right. His wife sneered, "That's an old book."

We were lunching at our favorite restaurant after a softball game when our friendly waitress teased one of the men. He said, "You women are all alike. I have one at home." He then added, "There are two ways to handle women...but I don't know either one of them."

My wife, Phyllis, and I were taking a walk, our ten-month-old grandson in my arms. An elderly, dignified lady stopped us, saying to Phyllis, "Isn't he cute. He's absolutely adorable! How old is he?" Before Phyllis could answer, I said, "I'll be 60 in July."

# Humor



## My Conversation with a Solicitor

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

The phone rang again. "Hello," I answered.

"Is this Musafir Uncle?" It was a girl on the other end.

"Yes! Who is this?" I asked

"Uncle, this is Toon Toon from India. I want to offer you a fantastic deal on our new long distance plan."

"Oh Honey, I cannot believe that you are a grown-up girl now. Last time I saw you, you were still in your diapers. Tell me how are your parents doing?"

"Uncle, they are dead," Toon Toon replied.

"I am sorry to hear that Pumpkin. No wonder, I never heard from them. My poor cousins! They could have used your plan and could have called me at least once in their lifetime," I expressed my sorrow.

"So uncle, let me tell you more about our package," Toon Toon seemed anxious to sell her product.

"Before you go any further, I am curious to know whether your father finally adopted his illegitimate child," I dropped a bombshell.

"Uncle, I never knew that papa fathered an illegitimate child. No wonder, my mamma always doubted his honesty," Toon Toon replied in distress.

"Well Honey, your mother was no Mother Teresa either. She had a fling with your papa's boss. What was his name?"

"Do you mean Mr. Venkateshthaandavarayankulaluxmi?"

"Something like that. All I remember is that letters Q and Z were missing from his name.

"How do you know that mamma had an affair? I think you are just making up stories. You are no uncle of mine," Toon Toon sounded irritated.

"Hey, calm down! You are the one who called me 'Uncle. I didn't!'"

"OK now that it is settled, I want to give you 3 cents a minute for six months and then it will go up to 5 cents a minute for the remaining six months if you switch to our calling plan. Would you be interested in this?" Toon Toon was getting impatient with me.

"Yes, I will be interested. That will be \$7,884 for the first six months and \$13,140 for the remaining six months. That brings a total of \$21,024 for the entire year. Tell me Toon Toon dear, will you send me the checks weekly, monthly or will it be just one big check of \$21,024 at the end of the year?" I asked.

"You do not make sense to me. We will not pay you. You'll pay us."

"Come on Toon Toon, didn't you just say that you wanted to give me 3 cents a minute for six months and then that would go up to 5 cents a minute for the remaining six months.?" I was curious.

"Listen Mister! I think you are not only harassing me but are also wasting my time," Toon Toon was about to hang up on me.

"You can say it again," I replied and put down the phone.

# Perspective



## My Moments of 2013

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

The word I could not avoid using:

Selfie



Found on Twitter:

Does it take 18 months for twins to be born?  
Or 9?

Most stupid question I was asked (Yes Virginia,  
there are stupid questions!):

Did they come up with emergency number  
911 after 9/11 happened?

Nerd moment I observed in a Chicago :

A techie pressing 2 and 3 buttons on an  
elevator to go to the 23<sup>rd</sup> floor.

Worst quiz I was asked to answer:

Name a color without the letter E in it.

Most offensive bumper sticker I saw:

Monica Lewinsky's ex-boyfriend's wife for  
president.

Most annoying license plate I observed:

'1MPG' (seen on a Hummer).

Worst con job:

The Russian president Vladimir Putin stole a  
Super Bowl ring from New England Patriots  
owner Robert Kraft.



Worst Statement:

"Sonia Gandhi is mother of all Indians." –  
Foreign Minister of India



Worst promise:

If you like your doctor, you will be able to  
keep your doctor, period. If you like your  
health care plan, you'll be able to keep your  
health care plan, period. No one will take it  
away, no matter what." –Barack Obama

# Book Review

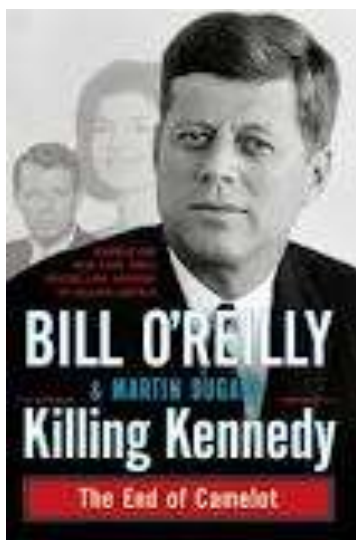


## **Killing Kennedy The End of Camelot**

### **Authors:**

**Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugart**

**Published by Henry Holt and  
Company (pg.364)**



The JFK assassination has been covered and analyzed in depth for half a century. Words, images, video - it's all there. In that sense, this book is just a rehash of tales already told.

Kennedy's womanizing is well known to everybody, but to sprinkle JFK's sex life and

indulgence into nearly every chapter in the first half of the book seems more bent on titillation than moving the story forward.

Nonetheless, *Killing Kennedy* is a short history of the Kennedy years culminating in his assassination. The writing is simple but clear and reads like a television tabloid, e.g., "the president has 40 days to live", "the president has 20 days to live." The events have an inherent drama that makes for a lively read. The familiar political events are covered in an unenlightening manner, e.g., the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban missile crisis, and the civil rights movement, but the more gossipy stuff involving mobsters, the Sinatra rat pack, and Marilyn Monroe are dealt in more in-depth. It appears to me that the great success of "Killing Lincoln" may have forced the publisher and the authors to rush this book into print without sufficient editorial oversight because it's full of errors.

Here's just a small sample: (1) a JFK inaugural party picture is captioned for 1962 when he was inaugurated in 1961, (2) the authors state that the Berlin Wall was built by the Soviet Union when the East German government built it, (3) they state that Khrushchev had been in power for 10 years at the time of the Cuban missile crisis (Oct. 1962) when Stalin died in 1953.

Probably for many readers the most important part of the book is that the authors, although hinting at selected ambiguities, take the position which seems to be ascendant among the current crop of analysts, although not among the American population at large. Some of those theories are: Oswald was the lone gunman who shot JFK less for political reasons than for self-serving reasons. Thus the conspiracy buffs who see the lone gunman thesis as a cover up have trashed this book. While the lone gunman explanation is not airtight and there exist interesting anomalies, no other explanation or conspiracy theory is more compelling to my mind. And if the JFK assassination was indeed a conspiracy perpetrated by -- take your pick -- the mob, Castro, Cuban exiles, the CIA, the Soviets, the military-industrial complex in league with LBJ, army generals intent on expanding our involvement in Vietnam, etc., then it has to be among the best planned and best organized conspiracies in human history.

Almost 50 years have gone by and no "deep throat" has emerged, no leaks have been uncovered by a ravenous media, no confessions have been heard. The one thing that history appears to have taught us is that conspiracies, like economic cartels, rarely stay intact for long.

Coming back to the book, Even though I had known the basic story for 50 years, this was nearly like hearing about it for the first time.



# Essay



## Driving Michigan's Snowy Roads

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

I love driving across long and treacherous stretches on Michigan's snowy roads. It challenges me to focus on the task, teaches me to anticipate the dangers looming in front of me, forces me to maneuver my way out of difficult situations and motivates me to reach my goal. I give little thought to anything but maintaining my place in the lane until someone spins out of control in front of me. Once I recover, I enjoy the white snow flirting with the branches of nude Michigan trees, and the slight wavy terrains inviting me to fall into their mysterious embrace.

Sometimes I purposely leave the expressways, diverting to lonely country roads, all alone because I don't have to worry for my fellow passengers. Funny how a little thing like imminent death can force you to focus on the road. I become acutely aware of the nuances on side-slope trails, every little squall of hard snow that might knock me off the lane. My stomach tightens. Then suddenly I encounter a downhill edge. My car starts slipping. I shift the transmission into second gear or even first and feel the jolt. It takes two nanoseconds to recover, but my heart and brain are shaken by a lightning strike of adrenaline. Ooh, feels so good! It isn't until a couple minutes later, the slope long past, that I start breathing again.

Traverses like this are part and parcel of my job that requires going to the different corners of Michigan. If you are going to live with snow and rough terrain, why not enjoy it? Driving sideways around the curves, sometimes through a mound of snow, is as much a part of my driving routine as walking on the factory floors or solving an engineering problem. Driving skills are an integral component of my job, as important to learn as anticipating human behavior, negotiating with problematic employees, or making a decision in a chaotic situation. The sooner I come to terms with a feral road, the better off I am. At times I have to decide between actively accelerating and taking it easy on the pedal.

That's easier said than done, of course. Yet commitment to speed brings issues all its own. I've

seen people blow some tiny corner in the blink of an eye and fly off the highways upside down. Hazards come up way too fast, and there's nowhere else to go. I remember wrecking a few cars and trucks before learning to tame the icy patches. That's called experience or learning from one's mistakes. That is the key to management. There has to be room for errors in order to learn. Of course, one has to be lucky to survive those errors.

I love them. I love the crinkling sound of traction control gripping the patches of ice. I love the uncertainties and constant changes where I am forced to apply my learned skills to simulate a situation quickly to overcome the situation. I love the chaos, the challenge of making critical decisions on the spot and deriving an exit strategy. Yes, every business planning requires an exit strategy. It gets too warm too quickly inside the cockpit. I need to breathe fresh cold refreshing air and evaluate, if I can make it to the plant on time. Invariably, I can spot a coffee shop nestled in a picturesque corner somewhere in Michigan. The hardy gals and guys in those roadside cafes always welcome me with warmth and a smile. There I get a hot cup of coffee and a cinnamon roll. I decide whether to proceed further to the distant plant or have a conference on my cellular phone.

I always prefer to reach my goal in spite of the adversities. I love to test my resolve against snow, wind, and winding stretches. I love their symbolism: snow filled roads remind me that sometimes we have to move despite resistance to get ahead. There are risks involved that may ruin our plan, but "we have promises to keep and miles to go. (with apologies to Robert Frost)

”.



# Travel Tales



## Shakespeare's Birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon

By Anil Shrivastava

Going to Shakespeare's Birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon was nothing short of a pilgrimage. The very feeling that I was standing where William Shakespeare was born and lived until his mid-twenties gave me a surreal feeling. Here lived and walked a man who communicated with the humanity without radio, television, Facebook, and Twitter. He ate meals in the hall and he slept and dreamed in these rooms. Shakespeare also spent the first five years of married life in this house with his new wife, Anne Hathaway.

For people who love Shakespeare's works or literature in general, this place is a shrine. I was transcended to his time as I experienced the world that shaped the man. The shrine is full of comments from the likes of Charles Dickens, John Keats, Walter Scott and Thomas Hardy. I got reminded of Woody Allen's movie, 'Midnight in Paris' where during a trip to Paris Owen Wilson found himself mysteriously going back to the 1920s every day at midnight. Well I went even further than him- to the sixteenth century.

I loved the live performances that goes on throughout the Birthplace and gardens all year round as actors bring to life favorite Shakespeare characters. The actors also recite famous quotes from his plays on request. My favorite was "All the world's a stage" from *As You Like It*. Lo and behold! As we walked out of the building we really found a cafe of the same name and we had a good time there.

There are nice gift shops and a bazaar surrounding Shakespeare's birthplace. Stratford-upon-Avon was really as busy and vibrant place then as it is today. Being a market town, each week people from the surrounding villages used to gather to sell and buy their goods including new spices and luxury items that came to England from far places.

As I was leaving Shakespeare's house I kept on thinking "Some are born great" and Shakespeare was certainly the one. This place should be visited by everyone who reveres Shakespeare's works. This is certainly not a place for thrill seekers.

The Shakespeare Centre,  
Henley St, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6QW,  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 1789 204016



The Author at the entrance



The Author's wife at As You Like It

# Point

## Minimum Wage Must Be Above Poverty Line

By Bala Prasad

The poverty line, the line below which a person can be called poor came in 1964, during President Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty campaign. Since then this line has moved up many times based on the economy of the nation. It takes into account only present income. The poverty line for a family of four as of now is set at \$23,550, adding or subtracting roughly \$4020 for each member of the family. Minimum wage came into being in 1938 during the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt, and started with 25 cents per hour. Never since its inception has a full-time worker on minimum wage ever gone over the poverty line. The closest it came was in 1968, but no cigar.

Discussion on the point of minimum wage based on statistics will convince nobody to change their mind. As W.C. Fields said, "there are lies, , damn lies, and then there are statistics." There are moral and ethical situations in life that were contemplated by neither our Constitution, nor the Bill of Rights, nor in any of the seventeen amendments. These should include together with many others that if one works full-time at minimum wage, he should not be below the poverty level. Granted, people below poverty level get other benefits and public subsidies like food stamps and tax rebates, to name a few. Perhaps if you had all these benefits up a person just might cross the poverty line. Well then why have the minimum wage at all? Why not just hand out these benefits? I am all in favor of Government and society giving a helping hand to less fortunate people, but why hide behind the façade of the poverty line? It is true that most people below poverty line are education and skill challenged and unless that is addressed and corrected the lot of the poor will not improve, as we all know that minimum wage is a temporary fix.

It should not be forgotten that in decades past the income difference between rich and poor has gotten wider and as the poor worker's share of the national income shrinks, a case to support the poor worker cannot be out of place. As noted earlier, many government subsidies are offered to these people but they are going to be harder to get due to many equally valid claims on the national treasury. This brings us face to face with another burning question of the day: should the rich who are defined as the ones making more than \$250,000 a year, should they share more of these responsibilities (aka higher taxes)? Leave this question for another day! So dear reader, in the opinion of this writer, if one works full-time at minimum wage and is still below the poverty level, the minimum wage must be raised!

# Counterpoint

## Minimum Wage Has No Bearing on Poverty Line

By Anil Shrivastava

The minimum wage can never be increased to offset the poverty line. The minimum wage and poverty line are mutually exclusive. There will always be people below the poverty line no matter what. Increasing the minimum wage will only increase the poverty level. In the year 1960, the minimum wage used to be one dollar an hour and the poverty line in the United States was \$3,022 for a family of four. Since then the minimum wage has increased to \$7.25 an hour, but the poverty level has shifted to \$23,550 for a family of four. Proportionally, both the poverty level and the minimum wage have increased concurrently. Please see the chart.

Supporters of raising the minimum wage argue that doing so will reduce poverty. It seems intuitive that raising the minimum wage would have this effect. Presumably, requiring employers to pay their lowest-paid employees more would lift large numbers of low-income households out of poverty. But the evidence shows that this does not happen.

The facts, however, show otherwise. Many economists have examined the evidence and come to the surprising conclusion that the minimum wage does not reduce poverty. Ohio University economists Richard Vedder and Lowell Gallaway examined the effect that increases in the minimum wage had on the overall poverty rate in the United States and on the poverty rates for groups like minorities and teenagers that might especially benefit from higher minimum wages. They found that the minimum wage had no statistically detectable effect on poverty rates.

The answer we obtain to the question of whether minimum wage increases reduce the proportion of poor and low-income families is a fairly resounding "no." The evidence on both family income distributions and changes in incomes experienced by families indicates that minimum wages raise the incomes of some poor families, but that their net effect is to increase the portion of families that are poor and near-poor

Higher minimum wages do not address the main reason that most poor families live below the poverty line. Contrary to what many assume, low wages are not the primary problem, because most poor Americans do not work for the minimum wage. The problem is that most poor Americans do not work at all.

Year	Minimum Hourly Wage	Poverty Line for A Family of Four
1938	0.25	n/a
1950	0.75	n/a
1960	1.00	3,022
1970	1.60	3,968
1980	3.10	8,414
1990	3.80	13,359
2000	5.15	17,603
2014	7.25	23,550

Source: Social Security



## The Impact of Mental Health Illness on Families

By Douglas W. Walker Ph.D.

*Douglas Walker is Clinical Director of the Mercy Family Medical Center based in New Orleans, Louisiana*

As a Clinical Psychologist who treats children and adolescents, I have the challenge each and every work day of educating parents about mental health. A basic understanding of what mental health or illness is and isn't is vital to the charge given to me by parents when they come to me asking, "Why can't my child pay attention?" "Why is my daughter washing her hands fifty times a day?" Or, "Why is my son so angry and sleeping all the time?" Before the families that I assist can begin to accept and address any formal psychiatric diagnosis and treatment plan, they have to attend my brief and basic two minute course in mental health. So before we move forward to discuss the impact of mental illness on families, here is my brief mental health tutorial:

- Mental Health is measured on a continuum. It's only when symptoms get in the way of work, love or play that formal guidance from a mental health professional is necessary.
- Mental Illness is "physical." Simply said, the only difference between someone challenged with depression and someone challenged with migraine headaches is the neurology of each individual, or how they are "wired."
- Individuals challenged with mental illness are not "weak" or "lazy" because they cannot spontaneously heal themselves.
- There is a strong genetic component associated with most mental health conditions. It is not uncommon, for instance, for children to inherit anxious or inattentive neurology from their parents.
- Genetics and environment both play a role in mental health and mental illness.
- Medication management for psychiatric conditions are useful when used for serious symptoms, and if other methods of treatment (e.g., psychotherapy) have proven unsuccessful.
- Many chronic and potentially debilitating mental disorders have their first onset between the ages of 16 and 25 years of age. Young adults seeking treatment for psychiatric conditions should be encouraged to give authorization for their parents, caregivers or other family members to be involved in their treatment.

I think that the most difficult issue for families impacted by serious mental illness is the stigma that is often attached to these types of diagnoses (e.g., Major Depression, Bipolar Illness, and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder). Even when you consider that one in five families in the United States have a relative with mental illness, amazingly the stigma persists. It will take time for our society to possess the understanding and equal treatment of mental disorders, but I believe we are making headway – even if it means having to accept "Dr. Phil" as a sign of progress toward this lofty goal.

Parents are often caught off guard and overwhelmed when it is suggested that they seek specialized consultation for their child's behavior in the form of a mental health professional. Finding a "best fit" in a mental health professional can be difficult. Considerations include type of degree and license (e.g., social worker, psychologist, licensed professional counselor, psychiatrist), years of experience, specialty and maybe most importantly – therapeutic style and interpersonal skills. Shop around, ask others, and get recommendations from primary care physicians. Mental health care is a very "intimate" business, and you have to feel VERY comfortable with the provider, and be assured that they are aligned with your goals for treatment. I believe that it is my job as a child psychologist to effectively treat and discharge children as soon as possible. I believe it is also ideal for mental health professionals to work as a unified team when treating children. If you are able, choose a mental health professional that is part of a multidisciplinary team where the treatment is shared by participating providers. A child who is in the care of both a psychologist and psychiatrist will receive an enhanced level of treatment because they are members of a formal therapeutic team who have the opportunity to communicate face-to-face to achieve coordinated care.

I have found that parents who are informed are the best advocates for their children, and I often see a measurable positive change as a result. Parents who do their own research, and arrive at my office with a notepad of questions become immediate pro-active treatment team members that are vital for success.

**Continued on page 15...**



# Lifestyle



## Facts and Myths of The Affordable Care Act

(Previously known as Obamacare for children.)

By Niru Prasad

The Obama care act of October 2013, provides health coverage to all children, adolescents, and adults up to 19 years of age. This act provides an opportunity to reach all children who are underprivileged, from poor socioeconomic groups, and will reach all ethnicities. They will have health insurance coverage from different health insurance providers, who cannot refuse them even if these kids have previous underlying conditions.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has provided online resources for our preventative health services for our pediatric and teenage patients, as mentioned by the American Academy of Pediatrics, include:

- Well baby checkups with proper immunizations
- Free vision and dental checkups
- Extensive screening for blood pressures
- Mental health services

The Affordable Care Act will allow our children all over the country to have proper care. Our pediatricians all over the United States will be working very hard, and some of the struggles they will be facing are:

- Dealing with insurance companies
- Electronic medical record implementation
- Maintaining work/life balance
- Not enough time with patients, poor compensations from the companies
- Pressures regarding maintenance of certification requirement

In summary, nothing is perfect in life. However we have to deal with these challenges with our hard work and sincerity.



# American Scene



## The Hour of Code

By David Beagan

First we had the “Three Rs,” reading, writing, and arithmetic. “Three Rs” has a nice ring to it even though only one of the words actually starts with an R. Could one more essential skill, coding, be added to list? Coding means writing computer programs.

There have been various movements afoot to encourage more young students to learn how to code. One of the latest is Hour of Code. From the website, [code.org](http://code.org), it is described as providing “an opportunity for every student to try computer science for one hour.” It has video endorsing the initiative from many famous people, Ashton Kutcher, Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates, Barack Obama, and others. This is one thing that companies normally competing with one another, Microsoft, Amazon, Google and Apple are all backing.

In general this is a good initiative. However, looking at the website there are various silly headlines, “15 million students learned to program,” “Hour of Code reaches 10 million students,” and “students wrote 500,000,000 lines of code.” Perhaps this kind of marketing is necessary to encourage further participation. Despite the great progress that one might infer from the huge numbers, here is the good that I think can come from this initiative. The U.S. and the world doesn’t need that many programmers, people who write code. But if some small portion of those students find that they are good at computer programming and pursue it as a career then this initiative will have accomplished a great success. Additionally, if those who are less capable at coding are pushed out of the profession, that would be another benefit. It is well known that the best programmers are many times more efficient than the less skilled programmers. So it is of great benefit to society when the best programmers find their way into the profession.

Additional benefits accrue when people enter the work world having a better understanding of what it takes to write computer programs well. To do it as a profession and to do it well is hard. Many times I have heard managers say, “when I used to do programming ...” and then go on to state some opinion on this or that aspect of a coding project. I suppose they are trying to build credibility and rapport with the programmers. To

programmers it sounds like they are saying, “oh this coding thing is not that hard, I could do it myself if I had a little more time in my schedule.”

An acquaintance of mine who is an engineer, surprised me one day when he said he hates to code. That’s understandable because coding is not easy -- or perhaps I should say, doing it for a living is not. Doing it as a pastime can be fun, but when you do it for a living you need to ensure that the code does everything it is supposed to do. And it is not always clear what it is supposed to do. The “what it is supposed to do” is called the requirements. A whole industry has grown up around just how to get good requirements. Often, the true requirements are not fully documented or even understood. Coding is challenging even with good requirements. Without them, it can be a nightmare. Exhibit A for this is the [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov) website.

Coding is just one part of a larger body of skills and knowledge that make up the field of software engineering. In order to do coding, the programmer generally works from a set of requirements that outline what the program is supposed to do. Most laypeople and even those involved in software development don’t appreciate how difficult it is to produce good requirements. Endless research and investigation has been expended to understand the best way to produce requirements. There are many smart and talented young minds that need to find their calling in the software development arena. If Hour of Code can inspire young minds to enter the field of software engineering and give them a better appreciation of what it takes to write code and gets them into one of the numerous kinds of positions in software development, that will be a great good for everyone. A student shouldn’t be scared off with too much information, then again, they need to be aware that there is a whole other level once they have tasted the joy of coding.

What is the best way for a student to learn coding? A friend of mine told me that his son was being taught to program in the Java computer language. It wasn’t going well. This may have been enough for him to decide to leave coding behind forever. I’m sure there are many other less optimal ways to teach programming. In one sense, it is not so important what

computer language one learns, and in fact, it is best to learn two or more for a fuller knowledge of what programming is all about. Whenever you learn, you are learning two things. You are learning the exact facts that are being provided and also learning meta information, knowledge about the facts you are learning.

But it is good not to discourage beginners. Some programming languages require more setup and knowledge to get started. As an analogy, I am reminded of two ways of teaching a musical instrument. One way that requires lots of rote memorization and numerous exercises with scales. Another way is to learn to play with chords and learn a specific song. The second way is a lot more fun and gives the student a feeling of success and accomplishment right away.

I think that the second approach can be applied to learning coding with something like JavaScript where the student can quickly build something fun, visual, and interactive. Moreover, JavaScript takes practically no setup. Use Windows Notepad to write the programs, and Internet Explorer to run them, these tools are ubiquitous. A great site to get started would be [w3schools.com](http://w3schools.com). My 18-year-old niece one day started asking me about coding, she was learning coding from [codecademy.com](http://codecademy.com). Quickly after learning the basics, the student should be directed to attempt a simple fun little project to produce something. For example, use JavaScript to create a web page that shows a “Roll” button. When clicked the button will randomly display an image of one of the six sides of a die. Just like that the student has created an electronic die. The student can build on this knowledge to create web page that rolls a pair of dice. Finally, the student can be challenged to create a web page that can roll as many dice as the user wants. This successive building of simple to complex is one of the invaluable lessons that one learns in coding.

Returning to the bigger question, should coding take a place among the three Rs? I think the notion is well intentioned, but a little too specific. Rather than coding, I would suggest computing. It encompasses a much broader discipline -- coding being just one part of it. A coding initiative like Hour of Code can be a good place to start but should also be supplemented about learning a larger body of skills encompassed by computing.



Charles Babbage is credited with inventing the first mechanical computer.



Ada Lovelace is credited with writing the first algorithm intended for processing on a computer.



Computer science deals with the theoretical foundations of information and computation, together with practical techniques for the implementation and application of these foundations



## Continued from page 11

The therapy that I conduct in my office for one hour a week is meaningless if not supported, continued or encouraged by teachers, parents, siblings and other significant people in the child's life. For parents of a child or young adult challenged with a mental illness, I highly recommend referencing the National Institute of Mental Health ([www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)) or The National Alliance on Mental Illness ([www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)) to expand their knowledge and increase their comfort level with the field of mental health. These sites taken together will offer information ranging from the latest research and treatment innovations to legislation affecting mental health care.

Patience and the willingness to make tough decisions are mandatory for parents caring for children and young adults diagnosed with mental disorders. Although positive change can come quickly via short-term solution oriented therapy or medication management, it often takes months or years to arrive at a life style that is balanced and "predictable." This delay is not necessarily the product of ineffective treatments, but the dynamic nature of development. Simply put, what works now may not work later because the bodies and minds of children and young adults are constantly maturing – and that is a positive thing. Tough decisions come by way of therapeutic roadblocks. If as a parent you know that what is in place therapeutically is not working, then you need to work with your child's treatment team in trying something else. This is often a leap of faith, a tough decision that may include starting psychotropic medication, or in cases of suicidal or homicidal behavior, psychiatric hospitalization.

I have now practiced child psychology long enough to have helped struggling first graders develop into successful high school seniors. Every hour of my work day is different and challenging in that it requires my entire focus and energy. Like an air traffic controller, I cannot lose focus. In my office, lack of attention within therapeutic conversation and play could easily lead to a missed opportunity for me to promote healing and change. Although my work can be exhausting, this is why I get up in the morning. I feel privileged to have worked with so many families over the past twelve years; it has made me a better person, father, friend and spouse. I look forward to tomorrow when I can meet a new family in my office, and help them navigate

the complex road back to a "new normal" where work, love and play is restored and the promotion of mental health is an everyday affair.

Sent your comments to:

**The THINK Club,  
P.O. Box 451,  
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Or email to:

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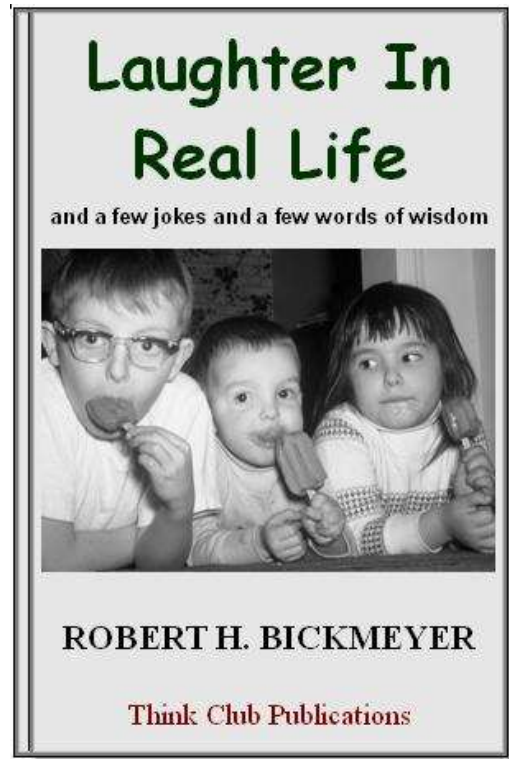
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# Mental Exercise

By David Beagan



## Party People

You have a party and each one of your guests is assigned a number based on how many other people at the party they are acquainted with. Could every guest be assigned a different number? Assume that all acquaintances are mutual, for example, if Ben is acquainted with Jerry then it is also true that Jerry is acquainted with Ben.

## Extra Coin

Smith has seven coins, Jones has 6. They both throw all of their coins simultaneously and observe the number of each of their coins that come up heads. Assuming all the coins have an equal chance of heads or tails, what are the chances that A obtains more heads than B?

## Odd One Out

Jeff Marchant wrote into Marilyn vos Savant's column, which one of these four does not belong?

- (a) large green square
- (b) large red circle
- (c) large green circle
- (d) small green circle

This one takes some unconventional thinking.

## Stuck Tight

A truck driver gets his vehicle wedged under an underpass. He can't move it backward or forward to get it unstuck. A young child standing nearby offers a suggestion. In just a few minutes the truck freed. What was the boy's idea?

## Border Connect

Every US state shares a land border with at least one other state. Find a way to connect a state on the left that shares a border with a state on the right so that each one on the left is connected to one on the right.

Maine	Rhode Island
Massachusetts	Connecticut
New York	New Jersey
Pennsylvania	New Hampshire

## Kangaroo Words

Kangaroo words contain smaller versions of themselves. INDOLENT, for example, contains the letters I-D-L-E, in order. Can you find the hidden synonyms in each of these nine words?

CATACOMB	ILLUMINATED
DEPOSITORY	REVOLUTION
DESTRUCTION	TRANSGRESSION
ENCOURAGE	UNSIGHTLY
HONORABLE	

## Road Way

A road I often drive on has four traffic lanes. On one part of the road three lanes go in the western direction on only one lane in

the eastern direction. The suddenly within a few car lengths it reverses, three lanes go east and only one west. Rarely is there a problem and no one has a problem with it. How is this possible?

## Answers

### Party People

Every guest can't be assigned a different number. Suppose there are 10 guests at the party (the reasoning is the same for any number of guests).

The most acquaintances anyone can have at the party is 9, the fewest is 0. So it seems the 10 guests could have 0 through 9 as each of their number of acquaintances, no one having the same number, but wait, if one guest has 0 acquaintances then another can't have 9, meaning he is acquainted with everyone.

### Extra Coin

Either A throws more heads than B, or A throws more tails than B, but (since A has only one extra coin) not both.

By symmetry, these two mutually exclusive possibilities occur with equal probability.

Therefore the probability that A obtains more heads than B is  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

### Odd One Out

(C) is the answer. Consider this: (A) has the only square; (B) has the only red color; (D) has the only small size. but (C) has no unique element, so it's the odd one out!

### Stuck Tight

Let just enough air out of the tires to free the vehicle.

### Border Connect

Maine	-----	New Hampshire
Massachusetts	----	Rhode Island
New York	-----	Connecticut
Pennsylvania	----	New Jersey

### Kangaroo Words

CATACOMB: TOMB  
DEPOSITORY: DEPOT  
DESTRUCTION: RUIN  
ENCOURAGE: URGE  
HONORABLE: NOBLE  
ILLUMINATED: LIT  
REVOLUTION: REVOLT  
TRANSGRESSION: SIN  
UNSIGHTLY: UGLY

### Road Way

This is what you see at an intersection. Of the three lanes going east, one turns left, one goes through and one turns right. Just across the intersection the pattern is reversed with the three west bound lanes having a left turn lane, a through lane and a right turn lane.



# Publisher's Desk



## National Health Care

By Bala Prasad

According to the Big Bang Theory, the Universe was created 14.7 billion years ago. Slowly planets formed, including the planet Earth where single cell life eventually formed in the water that originally covered its surface. The organisms needed the oxygen of the water. Slowly their system increased their ability to survive and multiply outside the water. Then came the big animals that were annihilated 100 million years ago when a six square mile size asteroid hit the Earth. Only the life of very small order and size survived.

Through centuries of modification, about 10,000 years ago, modern humans arose as *Homo Erectus*. During the first Ice Age, they wandered around and set themselves in different parts of the world. This could be done because all the land was connected with solid ice. Eventually the Ice Age was gone, the snow melted and they were stranded where they were.

Subsequent Ice Ages did not motivate them to move as by now they had established a homestead. Slowly society formed, and they learned how to cultivate plants and raise cattle. They passed through ancient times, medieval times and then they reached the modern times. Along the line, the society made great leaps. They learned to build fire and cook food, they could preserve food for the future, they could communicate and commute. The first mode of transportation was walking, followed over centuries by horses, ships, trains, and planes. Now the modern man has arrived in the modern world.

Different land masses were formed and identified. The U.S.A., as we know today, was formed in 1776 – not the land mass, but the society. We developed a constitution, formed a government, and elected a President. Merely, we moved forward through thick and thin to the 20th Century.

Until the 20th Century, our knowledge of medicine was poor; we were not able to cure many diseases and doctors earned very little. By 1920, we knew more about diseases, could treat them better and also needed to hospitalize sick people. This all cost money that many people did not have. In response, the Baylor Clinic in Dallas developed a plan that became the model for Blue Cross and Blue Shield. Initially everybody paid the same premium but later the rate varied based on different factors. Originally this was a not-for-profit outfit but later on, people and companies saw a chance to make a profit. Premiums varied and a lot of people could not pay them, but sick people had to be made well. So many safety nets were developed.

The two most important safety nets were Medicaid benefits for the poor and Medicare for older Americans. Still there was a significant number that did not fit either group. They were neither poor enough, nor had reached the age of 65 for Medicare benefits. So presently we have a society where people are insured as follows for healthcare:

- Employer Provided: 55%
- Medicare: 15%
- Medicaid: 15%
- Self-Provided: 10%
- Uninsured: 15%

The numbers add up to more than 100% as some people fall into more than one group.

What to do with people who have no health benefits and cannot afford any? They have to decide on food or medicine? And I am not talking about lobster and steak, but hot dogs and hamburgers.

Every President since Theodore Roosevelt has tried to tackle this question but nothing happened until 1964 legislation that allowed the formation of Medicare during the Presidency of Lyndon Johnson. Subsequent to that, Presidents Nixon and Clinton tried, the latter very hard, to improve the situation but nothing panned out.

Now President Obama has done something. The health care legislation is more than a thousand pages and I doubt even the wisest person will understand it all. Moreover, all predictions are pointless, only time will tell how well this thing will work out.

Everybody has his opinion. But in my opinion, this wound has been festering for a long time and something needed to be done. No doubt as we go along, shortcomings will be evident and we will improve on them. Furthermore, this is a first step toward a national health system, which I support.

In every presidency, there is a watershed moment that will always be remembered. Enactment of the Health Care Act which offers health care insurance to all Americans and tries to reduce health care costs, will be for this President.

*Sincerely,*

*Bala Prasad*

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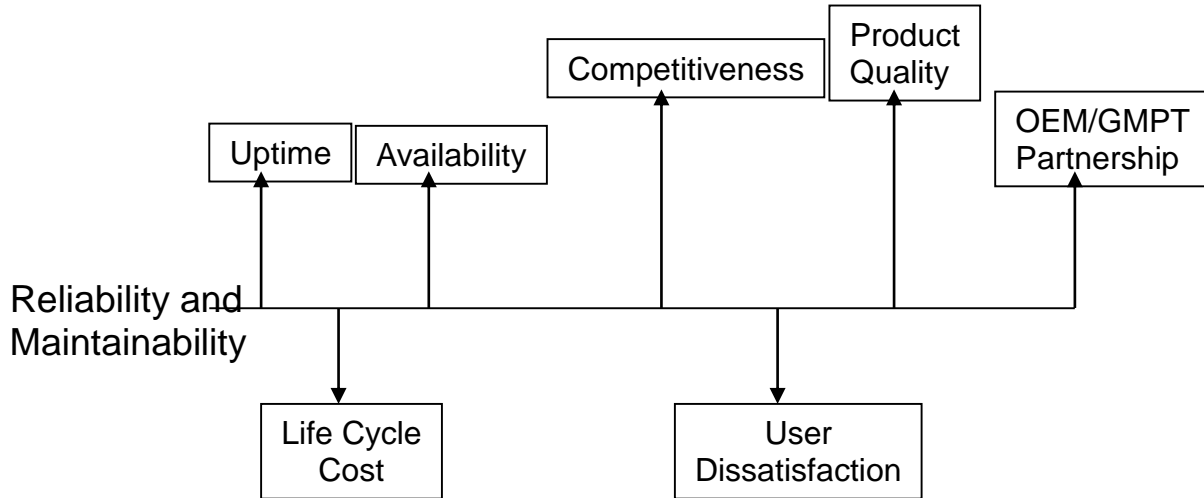
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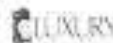
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