

A forum to encourage independent thinking

# The THINK Club

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***Jugaad***  
**A Gift of India**



**The United States of  
North America?**



**Book of the  
Year 2007**

**How Starbucks  
Saved My Life**  
**Michael Gates Gill**

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# Announcement

## Press Release

December 28, 2007

### The Think Club Publications Announces Book of the Year Award for 2007

**Bloomfield Hills, MI, December 28, 2007** The Think Club Publications has chosen *How Starbucks Saved My Life – A Son of Privilege Learns to Live Like Everyone Else* by Michael Gates Gill, published by Gotham Books for the Book of the Year Award for 2007. The Think Club Publications 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 *How Starbucks Saved My Life* for this award because the author, an Ivy League graduate discovers that no profession is menial and professes respect towards people of all ages and races. Gill preaches what he really practiced, the lessons of life he learned in his sixties from a young black woman in her twenties. Gill actually stepped down from his Yale and top-ad-exec background, to don a Starbucks apron, serving coffee and cleaning sinks and toilets.



This is a real-life story of the author himself about how he found Starbucks, or rather it found him. One desolate day, Gill filled out an application and was hired to work in a Manhattan store. He shamefacedly donned a green barista's apron and entered a world in which he was a minority: His colleagues were African-American and decades younger, and he was the least skilled person in the room. Gill becomes adept at his new job; along the way, he muses on his breathtakingly biased former self: Race, social class, age—you name it, he condescended about it from his former "position at the top of American society" as a "member of the Ruling Class."

By memoir's end, the reader will have learned much about life as a barista, from company policy to coffee tasting. Gill compares his plight to that of baby boomers nationwide, and reflects on his new perspective. This barista's story ends on an up-note, though; he transfers to a Starbucks near his apartment in a suburb, and has a movie in development with Tom Hanks as the lead. It does seem as if his Starbucks job gave Gill new hope; it will be interesting to see if he remains a barista, and lessons he learned as a Starbucks

In short the story follows the life that takes the author from being a Walter Thompson to unemployment follows the twists and turns that lead barista in a New York Starbucks respect and happiness in his new the Book of the Year award for 2007 for bringing the message that no one should be discriminated against race.

#### To Our Contributors:

Original articles should be submitted for publication to **The THINK Club**, P.O. Box 451, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0451. Our email address is:

**letters@thethinkclub.com**

Articles should not exceed 1,200 words. Longer articles, if accepted, may be published in installments. Whenever possible, send all articles on floppy disc in *Word for Windows*. Discs will be returned to the contributors.

whether he retains the employee.

changing experiences Creative Director at J and despair. The book Mr. Gill to become a rediscovering self-life. Thus, we present to Michael Gates Gill work is menial and no on the basis of age and

## Missed Opportunities

By Rishi Shrivastava

My friend Ritika went to graduate school with me. She was one of the smarter people in our class and finished her MBA when she was only 24. Ritika was now working at an investment bank in New York City. Her fiancé, Rajiv, is a man she has known for many years. Rajiv has built a successful legal practice here in Minneapolis even though he is only 31. I was surprised to get an invitation to Ritika's engagement party in the mail because I hadn't kept in touch with her very much since graduation and did not know Rajiv well at all. I figured that perhaps they had invited me because I was one of the few friends who would attend since I lived in the area.

The event was very low key and took place in the home of Rajiv's parents. All of his relatives had arrived from different parts of the country and many of them had known him since he was only a toddler. I walked into the house and did not recognize many people. However, eager to binge on some Indian snacks I walked into the kitchen. It only took two minutes for the insanity that is customary in Indian American gatherings to begin. For the time being I was lucky enough to be a spectator since I did not know many people there.

A group of old Indian women in their 60s and 70s sat around a table and spoke loudly. They were talking about Ritika and I overheard them as I was getting some spicy snacks. The conversation started innocently enough, but soon degenerated into something that would make Howard Stern blush.

Twice Divorced Woman: "It's great to see that Rajiv has finally gotten settled. Now he can be happy."

Woman with two chins: "Yes, Ritika is certainly nice. But, at only 5'3" she is a little short, no?"

Diminutive Indian woman 3: "That is OK. I think Ritika's biggest problem might be that she is not fair enough."

Woman with abusive husband: "Now all we have to do is work on Ritika's older sister Aparna. At 28 she is running out of time. Aparna! Get over here and talk to your favorite aunties."

Clueless Woman: "I'm just glad that Ritika is Indian. That's all that really matters."

I had heard enough gibberish for one evening, but could not really leave until I had said hello to Ritika and Rajiv. I found them in a nearly empty room of eight people. In the room were Rajiv's parents, Rajiv, a priest,

Ritika, and three friends. Ritika's parents had found the proceedings rather tiresome and were in the backyard. It was difficult to find a good reason after that to stick around and so I went to the backyard to catch some fresh air.

There were a group of Indian men in lawn chairs. One of them was none other than Mr. Kumar, an old family friend who I had not seen in 20 years. It turned out that he is Rajiv's uncle. Mr. Kumar recognized me and asked me to sit down. All that I could remember about him was that he was an ardent liberal and had two children who were about my age.

"So, are you still a fan of bonehead Republicans?" I found this a strange way for him to begin a conversation. He was essentially asking me whether at the age of 32 my views had changed since I was 12. I told him that I was an independent now and had moved to the left on social issues. Then I tried to change the subject to something less controversial.

"Mr. Kumar. How are your children doing? I remember that they were quite fond of football." My hope was that this would segue into some interesting conversation about hobbies and more normal topics.

"Raj and Sri are doing very well. Both are living in large houses and are in senior leadership positions. Raj is on the shortlist to win the Nobel Prize next year. So, what are you doing with your life? Are you making good money?"

I avoided the question by talking about how I was enjoying the Minneapolis area. Then I remembered that Mr. Kumar had a real passion for cars. I asked him if there were any new vehicles he liked.

"I like foreign cars only. The reason is that American cars are garbage. In fact, this whole country is going to hell and will not survive much longer as an economic superpower."

Mr. Kumar was entitled to his views, but I wondered why a rational human being would continue to live in a country that he despised when he could easily move elsewhere. Or, could he? Was the reason Mr. Kumar was staying in the US because he did not have the financial resources to live comfortably elsewhere? I wanted to ask him this, but realized that it would not be the best use of

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## Jugaad, An Introduction

By Musafir

*Jugaad* is an ancient Indian management technique which signifies attaining any objective with the available resources at hand. The practitioners of *Jugaad* use the combination of present knowledge and innovation in utilizing whatever resources may be at hand without asking or waiting for additional resources. The resources can consist of any of the 5Ms. The 5 Ms stand for manpower, material, money, machine and mind. Mind is an important resource since *jugaad* requires dissecting and learning the system very quickly. According to a famous adage, when Nikita Khrushchev visited India, he was amazed to see India functioning despite the wide-spread chaos and poverty. He allegedly quipped, "Though I am a communist and an atheist, I have started believing in God after realizing that a chaotic country like India can truly function."



**A family of six commuting on a scooter**

India managed to exist and function long before Nikita Khrushchev's visit to the land of mystique. I have seen the miracles of *jugaad* with my own eyes. Even the poor in India living on an income of a dollar a day do arrange decent marriages for their daughters and manage to give them gold jewelry as marriage gifts. They just believe in getting things done.

Once the transmission of my father's car broke in a remote village of India. Not knowing what to do, my father went to a local blacksmith for help. The blacksmith (not a car mechanic) dismantled the transmission and found a broken gear inside. He took a piece of scrap metal and crafted a gear for the transmission. Lo and behold! We were on our way within three to four hours. The total cost of repair was close to three dollars.

The practitioners of *Jugaad* are often called *jugaadis* or *jugarists*. These *jugaadis* can perform any kind of job everything from arranging for a driver's license (without ever driving a car), getting a permit to do business, and obtaining gas cylinders for cooking meals, to solving production problems on the factory floor. The *jugaadis* never say 'No.'

They just get the work done. *Jugaad*, a Hindi colloquial word is a science, art, tradition and philosophy in itself. The term *jugaad* can also mean alternative arrangement, a quick fix through the use of an unconventional but innovative method.



**Constraint is a state of mind**

### Dabbawalas of Mumbai and Six-Sigma

The operation of the Dabbawallas (carriers of lunch boxes) of Mumbai is an amazing example of *jugaad*. It is a 120-year old logistical system that entails collecting 175,000 hot lunch boxes (*tiffin*) from homes from every corner of sprawling Mumbai and delivering those *tiffins* to the right persons before their lunch time and returning those lunch boxes to their individual homes before the customer arrives home in the evening.

According to a *Forbes* 1998 article, one mistake for every eight million deliveries is the norm. How do they achieve virtual six-sigma quality with zero documentation? For one, the system limits the routing and sorting to a few central points. Secondly, a simple color code determines not only *tiffin* routing but *tiffin* prioritizing as lunches transfer from train to bicycle to foot.



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## A Detrouter in France

By Musafir

In the U.S. I am labeled as an Asian-Indian-American whereas in France I was simply treated as an American. Despite the stereotypical impression about the French haughtiness, I was treated very nicely everywhere in France. Contrary to the popular belief here in America, the French are not preoccupied with abhorrence towards the land of liberty and opportunity. Instead I found them minding their own business – commuting to work, striking against the economic reforms, wining, dining, romancing, making business deals and worrying about the environment.

I very quickly discovered that the myth about the French hating the English speaking crowd was just that, a myth. Everyone I talked to in France made an effort to speak in English. Imagine a Frenchman asking for direction in Française to someone in Detroit. Most probably, we would shrug him off by saying, “Sorry, no Espagnol.”

On a Wednesday afternoon, I visited a restaurant in Castres in south-western France with a population of 61,760. Since it was neither the time for lunch nor dinner, the restaurant was meagerly staffed. A teenage girl named Claudia was attending the shop. She did not know a word of English. “Bonjour ! Êtes-vous seul?” (Good Day! Are you alone?), she asked.

Thinking that she mistook me for someone coming from Seoul, South Korea, I replied, “No, I am from America.”

“Oui, nous servons le food Américain (Yes, we serve American food),” she answered. I misunderstood her as saying “We do not serve to Americans.” All of a sudden, I was reminded of the common notion in America about the French hating us. For a moment I thought of suing her for discrimination, but I did not know any lawyers in France. I gave up that idea altogether after realizing that in France suing for absurdity may not be common. I also feared being thrown in jail. After all, according to the French law, one is guilty until proven innocent. I did not want to mess with France. After all, I don’t do that to Texas, anyway.

Frustrated, I walked back to my hotel next door. There I saw Marie at the desk, who spoke fluent English. When I narrated my story to her, she laughed and said, “There must be a misunderstanding. I know Claudia. She is a nice girl, but she does not understand English because she did not go to school.”

Knowing that I was hungry, Marie left her desk and walked with me to the restaurant where she interpreted the menu and ordered food for me. Claudia, the waitress was very embarrassed and said, “Désolé.” I told her to write it

down on a piece of paper. Helene later translated that in English that meant “Sorry.”

I visited another small French town called Albi. A two hour drive from Barcelona, Spain, Albi is a picturesque quaint little town where the old meets the new. Most of the people I met there could speak English. Albi can be called an ancient city of bricks. The Old Bridge (*Pont Vieux*) built in 1305 is still in use today after almost a millennium of existence. Among the monuments of the town is the Sainte Ce`cile cathedral claimed to be the world’s largest brick construction. There are more churches in Albi (and all over France) than there are worshippers. I visited a few magnificent cathedrals and was tempted to play hide and seek with other tourists.

I found some contrasts between the eating habits of the French and the Americans. Americans are big eaters whereas the French are slow eaters. Americans gulp food because they are always on the go; the French relish food in small portions and take hours to finish their dinner. The Americans drink gallons of coffee while eating supper. The French, on the other hand, sip bottles of wine and wrap up with a shot of coffee. While in Albi, I went to a restaurant for dinner. “Monsieur ! Que aimez-vous boire?” (Sir, what would you like to drink?), asked the waitress.

“Coffee,” I replied.

“Ainsi, aucun dîner?” (So, no dinner?), she answered and brought me a shot of coffee with the check.

It was very gratifying to find that the people of France not only knew Detroit, they treated Detroit with respect and pronounced it perfectly (better than the Detroiters themselves). A few years ago, my pocket was picked in Paris. I immediately went to the nearest police station to report the incident. I was fuming with anger and complained to the police officer about the disgusting welcome accorded to me by the French criminals. After listening to me patiently (police in France are not fearsome), the police officer asked me, “Where in America do you live?”

“Detroit,” I answered.

“Êtes-vous de Detroit, la ville de moteur?” was his spontaneous response.

For a moment I thought that he was saying, “Look who is talking?”

The police officer repeated himself in English, “Is not Detroit the Motor City?”

I could feel his admiration for my home town, Detroit. I don’t think that many in America have that.

## Racism and Fulton

By Bryan Belrad

The City of Fulton is a small community in upstate New York, with very few minority residents. One might think, in such a close-knit small town environment, that the specter of racism would be unable to rear its head here. However, the truth of the matter is quite the opposite.

I am (mostly) white, as is the vast majority of Fulton's population, so I examined the U.S. Census Bureau data for Fulton to get a handle on the racial breakdown of the area. Since the people who live in the countryside are vital to the workings of the community, they are included herein as if they were residents of the city proper.

According to the 2000 Census, the greater Fulton area (zip code 13069) has a total population of 26,451. The city's minority population for all non-white groups and Hispanic groups combined is a minute 699.

With so few community members who are also members of minority racial groups, it seems improbable that there could even be any sort of racism at all here. After all, when I think of racism, the first things that come to mind are members of minority groups being run out of town by radical white supremacists, or minority people being denied employment *a la* "blacks need not apply."

### Government Representation

I began my research into possible racist practices with the local government itself. Fulton does not have any non-white elected officials; however, as far as public policy goes, every law that emerges from the Mayor's desk seems totally fair, as far as race is concerned. In fact, racially blind would be a better term, as no local law whatsoever draws any kind of distinction between community members based on race. Thus, it seems to me, the lack of diversity in the City Council does not prohibit them from representing the interests of the citizens in a racially fair way.

### Business Perspective

Because of that, I was forced to move my search into the civilian arena. To begin my investigation of possible discrimination in the rest of Fulton, outside City Hall, I examined every text available at my place of employment. Despite my best efforts, I was unable to locate a single one that made any reference to race in its contents, or referred to the heritage of the author. The test proved inconclusive.

I also contacted the local media organizations, all affiliates of national networks like ABC, CBS, or Clear Channel, which seem to have a diverse racial makeup. None of these local stations were willing to comment on their racial hiring practices.

Forced to dig deeper to find something that would indicate where the community's feelings about race might lie, I spoke with some area employers. The manager of a local grocery store, who spoke on condition that his identity be kept confidential, said: "Our policy is to hire minority persons who can fulfill any of our job requirements. If we have to ... we move someone else to another department to make room" (personal communication, July 21, 2007). He went on to elaborate that there were two main reasons that this was corporate policy: first, the federal government provides tax breaks to business that hire minority employees, and second, not hiring an applicant who happens to be a member of a racial minority opens the company up to a potential discrimination lawsuit, a risk they deem unacceptable.

I asked if he'd ever hired a less qualified minority applicant instead of a white person who could do the job better, despite federal law prohibiting such action. He answered with an unequivocal "Yes."

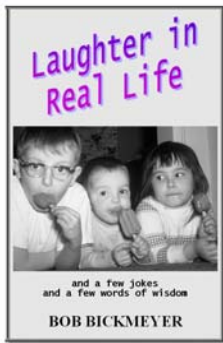
Sociologist Richard Schaefer calls this sort of practice "reverse discrimination" (Schaefer, 2006). Simply put, this is the act of excluding certain persons from opportunities largely or wholly on the basis of the fact that they *aren't* members of a minority group. This differs from what Schaefer calls "Institutional Discrimination," or when one race is inadvertently excluded from an opportunity as a consequence of a non-prejudicial act, because this form of selective hiring is, in fact, a very prejudicial act: it draws a deliberate distinction based on race. In net effect, it relegates white applicants to a secondary level of importance, or a less desirable role, and amounts to a policy of "whites need not apply" for the companies that embrace it.

### Public Perspective

To better determine how prevalent this attitude of white inferiority was within the community, I conducted a small survey outside a local grocery store on July 29th, 2007. Out of 50 respondents who were asked "Would you vote for a black man for mayor over a white man?"

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## Book Review



### Laughter in Real Life By Robert H. Bickmeyer Think Club Publications

Here we have an assortment of jokes and anecdotes collected over a lifetime. Need to get rid of a safe? You can find out a creative way to dispose of one. Or you can pick up some good natured tricks to play on your friends or co-workers. The author no doubt has a good time wherever he

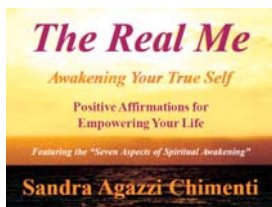
goes. Along with the laughs, are many observations about the simple things in life which many of us let rush by without notice.

There are plenty of chuckles, whether it be from dealing with a perpetually late wife or chiding a doctor for keeping you too long in the waiting room. No doubt reading about the little life moments of someone else will spur many of us to remember our own little life moments. Generously, space is provided in the book to enter your own anecdotes.

This book makes an excellent gift for any occasion.

-Reviewed by David Beagan

### The Real Me – Awakening Your True Self Author: Sandra Agazzi Chimenti Published by Creative Books and Music



Life does not come with a user's manual. Chimenti, however, has attempted to compile one based on her own thought, education and life experiences. Her book, *The Real Me (Awakening Your True Self, Positive Affirmation for Empowering Your*

*Life)* is a guide for awakening and empowering ourselves. For years, Chimenti has been giving classes on the subject of spiritual awakening and, thus, has shared her wisdom with others. *The Real Me* is an attempt to reach those who have not had the opportunity to learn from her in person.

It is true that our thoughts create our reality, nevertheless, the only thing that remains constant in life is God's love (not our thoughts) because His love is unconditional and all-pervasive. Once we accept our creator and let Him guide us on the path of life, we can rejuvenate ourselves and breathe in healing energy (exhaling all negativity). Having established that trust, Chimenti takes us to the seven aspects of spiritual awakening consisting of divine creation, communication,

apology and forgiveness, gratitude and praise, loving choices, flowing in life and sharing gifts and talents.

Her intellectual and divine energy creates very effective positive affirmation statements. Some of my favorites are: "God loves me just the way I am. Life is a process, not a product. When points of view are in conflict, I am willing to listen to others without trying to solve the problem. Thoughts have power. I am a human; mistakes may happen; forgiveness is my 'reset button.' I take responsibility for myself. I accept who I am. I see the best in me; I see the best in others. Today, I choose to live in love vs. fear." It is so inspiring that I could narrate the whole book.

The entire manual is adorned with Chimenti's love for humanity with her personalized messages such as, "I encourage you to awaken to the infinite love that is already present in each of us and in each moment to create a more peaceful, and happy life ...." Chimenti has also listed "Resources and Services" towards the end. The most noticeable are: Some Signals of Inappropriate Behavior and Index of Positive Affirmations and Statements. I recommend this book as a quick behavioral therapy for busy individuals of all ages. - Reviewed by Musafir

### The Conscience of a Liberal Author: Paul Krugman Publisher: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.



I was very curious to read this book because the author is very liberal and proud of this fact. Whether you agree with Krugman or not, you have to be impressed by his credentials and the way he argues his points. An economist by training, he is a winner of the John Bates Clark Medal. This is the second most prestigious award that can be given to an economist behind only the Nobel Prize.

Whenever he appears on news programs and is faced with a conservative opponent, he manages to win the argument and make his opponent look very foolish in the process. I have seen him do this to otherwise formidable adversaries such as Newt Gingrich and Bill O'Reilly.

The book starts out with a review of how the economic distribution has changed over time. In the 1920s there was tremendous concentration of wealth in the upper economic brackets. With the New Deal in the 1930s continuing into the Great Society in the 1960s there was substantially more parity between the rich and poor classes. He correctly points out that Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford were Republicans who were in many ways to the left of Bill Clinton on tax and welfare policy. In fact, it was Nixon who raised taxes, increased environmental regulations, and even advocated national health insurance. However, in the 1970s and afterward the

Republican Party moved markedly to the right as a result of

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# Essay

## The United States of North America

By: Musafir

It is no surprise that in a free market economy the rate of economic growth and GDP of a country are tied to its population. As long as China and India were tied down by the constraints created by rigid socialism and a closed economy, the U.S. enjoyed economic supremacy on the strength of its consumerism. Its only competitors were the European countries and Japan. We should also remember that neither Japan nor the European countries threatened the U.S. hegemony on a global scene.



either as one country (call it the United States of North America) or to form an economic union with a common currency like the European Union has done. The European Union has a population of 495,128,529 (7.43% of world's population). The combined population of all the North American countries is 484,302,300 (7.28% of world's population). Out of the above, 106,535,000 live in Mexico and 42,382,000 live in Central American countries. Their combined population of

148,917,000 needs to come at par with the U.S. and Canada. This will give greater clout to America and resolve the problem of illegal immigration. That is the only way for the North American countries to maintain economic supremacy in today's global environment.

For better or worse, this has all changed. The U.S. is facing economic stagnation at home. The real growth is in China and India and other developing nations with large populations. China's economy is growing at a rate of 9% a year and India's at 8.1%. In the last quarter, the U.S. economy grew at an anemic rate of 2.3%. The real reason for the economic growth in China and India is consumerism. Both those countries have vast populations (36.78% of world's population) with an appetite to consume trillions of dollars worth of goods. Since most of their citizens live in utter poverty, they can consume more on their way to relative prosperity. In contrast, the U.S. population is only 303,676,298 (4.55% of world's population) and mostly affluent in comparison to the Chinese and Indians. Having most of the toys, the U.S. does not have the same appetite as the have-nots in the developing countries.

Alternatively, the United States can survive and remain prosperous on its own, but its power and hegemony will dwindle just like other prosperous nations such as Luxembourg, Austria and Iceland (See the chart below).

### Most Prosperous Countries ( IMF data 2006 )

Rank	Country	Population in Millions	Percent of World Pop.
1	<b>Luxembourg</b>	0.467	0.007 %
2	<b>Ireland</b>	4.301	0.064 %
3	<b>Norway</b>	4.373	0.071 %
4	<b>United States</b>	303.676	4.550 %
5	<b>Iceland</b>	0.312	0.005 %
6	<b>Switzerland</b>	7.508	0.110 %
7	<b>Netherlands</b>	16.409	0.250 %
8	<b>Denmark</b>	5.457	0.082 %
9	<b>Qatar</b>	0.841	0.013 %
10	<b>Austria</b>	8.316	0.120 %

Let's not kid ourselves, remember that there is **power numbers**. The Chinese and Indian companies are growing in clout and are buying businesses in Europe and the U.S. every day. China and India will not hesitate in kicking out the European and American multinationals once they obtain the expertise or create their own mega corporations (Indira Gandhi did that in 1972). Their economy will survive and continue to grow despite the absence of the European and American corporations because of their own massive consumer base. At the same time, the U.S. will have a much smaller consumer base at home. The Chinese auto companies are already giving tough competition to the U.S. and the European companies in China. The Indian corporations like TATA, Reliance and others are shaping up to be like General Motors, Exxon, Procter and Gamble and Wal-Mart all rolled in one.

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The United States will need a wider population base of have-nots in order for its economy to grow. The only way for the North American countries to meet this challenge is to unite

## Looking at the Republican Race

By Robert Bickmeyer

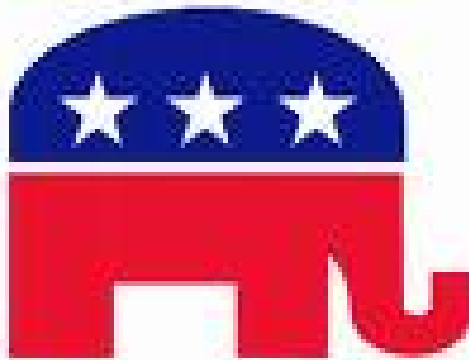
My apologies to Mike Huckabee, Duncan Hunter, John McCain, Ron Paul, Tom Tancredo and Fred Thompson, but I agree with those political experts who believe the Republican nomination will eventually be seized by Rudy Giuliani or Mitt Romney ... and Mitt is easily the most Republican of the two. Here's why.

Let us avoid the sordid details, but Giuliani's marital history is tumultuous. This alone is no reason to suspect his values, but let us consider a few more facts. Rudy has said that he personally opposes abortion which is tantamount to whispering, "So you conservatives can vote for me." But he adds that a woman has the right to make her own choice, tantamount to whispering, "So you liberals can vote for me." He believes marriage should be between a man and a woman, tantamount to saying, "So you Republicans can vote for me." But he favors a contractual union of gays, tantamount to saying, "So you Democrats can vote for me." C'mon Rudy, take a stand and knock off the political speak.

Romney has flip-flopped on the abortion issue, they say. As evidence of the fact that I keep an open mind, I cite the fact that I have changed my position on three vital issues – abortion, gun control and racism. Romney has the same right as I – and has taken a firm pro-life stance without sitting on the fence. I applaud his courage and decisiveness on this change of position.

When asked his views on gay marriage Romney showed great humor by replying, "Marriage should be between a man and a woman ... and a woman ... and a woman." In actuality, in 1890 the Mormon Church withdrew its sanctions of polygamy and Romney has been married to one woman for umpteen years. He has pledged to support a Federal Marriage Amendment aimed at protecting traditional marriage. Some say, "But he's a Mormon." I say, "So what, he is in tune with me on all moral issues." A Mormon whose values are akin to mine is preferable to a Christian who lacks some very important Christian values.

Giuliani brags about defeating Bill Clinton by convincing the Supreme Court the line-item veto was unconstitutional. His interest in doing this was to keep



Clinton from vetoing one item in a bill that would have awarded \$250 million to New York City. The line-item veto is an excellent tool for any president to have, to use to veto, for example, Alaska's "bridge to nowhere," when pork barrel expenditures are tacked on to a bill the sitting president considers important to the nation. Giuliani's interest in having this vital tool declared unconstitutional was for

the one time benefit of New York City without concern for the future of the country. Romney cut spending as governor of Massachusetts by using this tool 844 times.

They both have an exemplary list of accomplishments and have exhibited leadership qualities – Giuliani in New York City and Romney in the business world, the Olympics and governing Massachusetts – that qualify them to be President of the United States.

**BREAKING NEWS ...** And here comes Mike Huckabee, gathering support as a down-the-line social conservative. When more Republicans, those with family values, learn more about him he may very well be vying with Romney for the nomination. Stay tuned.

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## We Must Have National Health Care

By Musafir

I believe in a free market economy and the capitalistic system. However, the taxpayers have the duty to provide for some basic needs for all citizens, including things such as civil protection, national defense, infrastructure and *basic health care*. It is shameful for any nation, wealthy or poor, capitalistic or communist, democratic or monarchistic to allow its citizens to go untreated for want of basic health care coverage. It deeply saddening to mention that America's health care system is badly broken. There are 40 million uninsured citizens of America and millions more are trading other necessities of life to afford health insurance.

The crisis in health care is centered around several areas of concern. These include the rate at which health care costs have risen in recent years; the relatively high proportion of income that Americans spend on medical care; the high administrative costs of the system; and the large number of Americans who have no health insurance coverage.

Most American citizens are dependent upon the mercy of their employers to provide for medical coverage. Unfortunately many companies are either asking the employees to pay a major portion of the premium or are eliminating health care coverage altogether. Some companies have refused to cover health care for their retirees. As a result, all their pension money is spent on buying private health insurance. Some are not that fortunate and have to go without insurance. The tax code currently limits the taxpayer's ability to deduct medical expenses incurred during the year. In fact, the current law only allows an individual to deduct expenses in excess of 7.5 percent of adjusted gross income and that only as an itemized deduction.

The U.S. is the only developed country that bases health coverage on employment status. The system hurts those who are the least likely to get health coverage through the workplace — the young, minorities, and those who work for small businesses. It inhibits the ability of U.S. companies to compete in global markets, creates unnecessary administrative costs, and drives people to seek expensive and unneeded care in hospital emergency rooms.

Some people worry that universal health care will deteriorate the quality of health care. I am in the favor of a two-tier coverage to dispel that fear, a basic health coverage for all with an option to buy additional health coverage for those who can afford more.

I do not care what France, Canada or Britain have, nor do I intend to compare how good or bad their systems are compared to ours. I only intend to focus on our citizens and want them to have universal health insurance coverage. If we can pay hundreds of billions of dollars to wage war on Iraq, we can certainly afford a few billion to give primary health care to all American citizens.

## The Healthy Should Only Pay Their Fair Share

By Bala Prasad

We now spend more per person on health care than both food and housing. Insurance premiums are rising faster than inflation. Still, quality and availability of medical care in the U.S. remains among the best in the world — this would be in jeopardy if we adopted a universal government-controlled health care system.

One might think universal health care would increase patient flexibility. However, government would have to place controls on universal health care to keep costs from exploding. For example, would “elective” surgeries such as wart removal, hair restoration, and LASIK eye surgery be covered under a universal system of health care? Even if you make patients pay for elective surgery, who decides what is elective? What about a breast reduction for back problems? What about a nose job to fix a septum problem? Government control that politics will get in the way. Suddenly, every medical procedure and situation becomes a political battle. The compromises will limit patient options. Do you really want politicians determining what medical procedures they will or will not pay for?

Government-mandated procedures will also reduce doctor flexibility and lead to poor patient care. To keep costs under control government will implement rules over expensive tests and drugs. Insurance companies already tie doctor's hands — government influence only makes things worse, lowering doctor flexibility and quality of care. Consider the costs: “free” health care isn't really free, it is paid for with taxes. Health care would be paid for with higher taxes or spending cuts. Why cut out a few hundred dollars of monthly insurance premiums if our taxes go up by that much or more? Patients wouldn't curb their drug costs and doctor visits if health care is free; total costs will be much higher than today's costs. Co-pays and deductibles curb treatment of medical problems that are merely annoyances. Free medical care causes endless patient visits to doctors. Suddenly, every ache and pain experienced by every American would receive medical attention — why not, if it is free? Doctors would spend more time on non-critical care, patients needing immediate care would wait.

Consider that people with healthy lifestyles will pay for the burden of those who smoke and overeat. Universal health spreads the cost to all, regardless of one's need for medical care, which is fundamentally unfair. People who exercise, eat right, don't smoke or drink, have far fewer health problems. Why should we punish those live healthfully and reward those who do not?

Profit motives and competition have always led to great cost control and effectiveness. Without the financial incentive in a system of universalized health care, the doctors, medical staff, pharmacists, would simply be less effective without a financial reason to excel. Loss of private practice options reduces and dissuades would-be medical professionals from the profession. Without flexibility to reward the best performing workers, why would intelligent people endure the torture of medical school and residency?

A transition to universal health care would be long, painful, and involve the loss of millions of insurance industry jobs, not to mention overhauling the medical profession as we know it. This transition would affect the economics of this country in unpredictable and certainly unpromising ways. Moreover, as with any government benefit, there would be no way to curtail the costs once it inevitably spirals out of control. As costs skyrocket because of inefficiency and an aging population, politicians will never be able to restructure the system, remove benefits, or put private practice options back in the system. This country's record debt levels preclude another “untouchable” spending program, especially with costs that could easily surpass defense and social security.

Remember, the uninsured, still do receive health care. Non-profits and government-run hospitals provide services to the uninsured. It's illegal to refuse emergency medical service for lack of insurance, even to illegal immigrants. Unquestionably, uninsured Americans are an issue for total system cost, but even they receive health care — a sign of a system that fundamentally works.

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### Missed Opportunities

my time. We had taken what could otherwise have been a nice parting conversation and turned it into a verbal exchange devoid of any value.

As I walked to the coat rack and reached for my jacket I saw a group of high school students. They were being interrogated by their aunts and uncles about where they were planning to attend college. What no one was telling them was how meaningless this was in the grand scheme of their lives. Ten years from now no one of any consequence would even remember where these people went to school.

Then a thought occurred to me. In another ten years they would be grilled about other things such as their marital status and their own plans to have children. Then as parents they could look forward to additional questions about choices made by their own children. Indian American culture is seriously flawed in the sense that it is highly judgmental of people of all ages. The fact that comments made by the women in the kitchen and Mr. Kumar are inappropriate is quite obvious. What is less so is how prevalent these attitudes are and the frequency by which I hear them across vastly different Indian American gatherings.

There is one more reason why these dysfunctional conversations are unfortunate. In economics there is a central concept of opportunity cost, which is the value of the next best alternative foregone by a given course of action. I would argue that the opportunity cost of these conversations is enormous. If I see certain relatives and family friends every couple of years and many of these people are already senior citizens, then the sober reality is that I will only see them a handful more times. In the time I am being harassed about not meeting some ridiculous goal set by someone who doesn't know me well, we could be getting to know each other better by discussing interests, sharing old memories, and maybe even creating some new ones. I will not be able to make Ritika's wedding and so sadly, my last memories of Rajiv's family will be of old women gossiping and Mr. Kumar's anti-American rant.

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### Racism and Fulton

Forty-nine said yes. The sole exception responded: "It depends on his qualifications." Of the 49, the follow-up question "Why?" was asked. Twelve responded with some variant of "why not?", three said "I don't know," and the rest, 34 people (68%), said something to the effect of "A black man deserves it."

Clearly, since this community would leap to such a judgment based on racial characteristics alone, there is a serious problem with racism in this city. For the majority to conclude, based on a racial qualifier alone, that a white person is automatically less desirable than a black person, reveals the underlying racist belief that whites are inherently inferior.

### Political Perspective

I traveled to City Hall to ask passersby why, if the citizens were so in favor of black representatives, there were none. I given a universal response: "one must run for election if one is to get elected."

Apparently, the racism in Fulton runs so deeply that no blacks, or members of any other minority group, feel that they would be given a "fair shake" when it comes to an election. Perhaps these community members are afraid, and rightly so, that should they run for election, they would be voted for solely because of their race.

I went on to ask others how the city council believed it could govern fairly without having any kind of minority representation. I was only given a single response, by a secretary who refused to give his name. He said: "The Council should include minority members, to show the City's commitment to diversity" (personal communication, July 30, 2007).

I pressed on, asking how the city might go about the task of assuring that such representation would be forthcoming, considering that the council is composed exclusively of members elected by the general public. This question went unanswered, so I asked if the city should strive to hire more minority members as municipal employees, at the expense of hiring less white applicants, regardless of the ability of applicants to perform the job they are hired for. This too was not deemed worthy of a response.

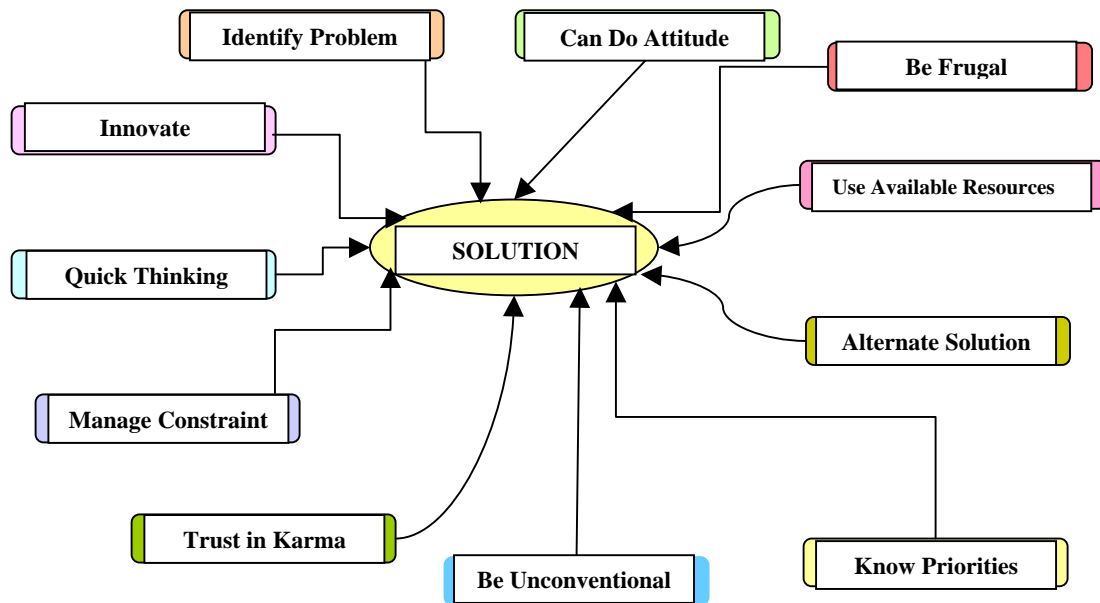
### Minority Perspective

Naturally, I had to seek out some of these rare minority persons, in order to obtain a balanced perspective. I met up with a black man, called "J.B.," went over my findings with him, and then asked for his thoughts. He said: "Blacks deserve anything they can get, whether they work, cheat, or steal. The white man owes us, for slavery, and for all the social injustice our people had to endure to this very day" (personal communication, August 2, 2007).

### In Conclusion

Overall, it seems the community at large, here in Fulton, generally favors minority persons over whites for no other reason than the fact that they are not white. Though it is not clear whether this is some form of self-hate, remorse for the actions of others who happened to be members of their own race, or another factor, it is obvious that the whites of Fulton hold strongly prejudiced views against the white race.

This racism can be seen in local hiring practices, as well as public attitudes about everything from the ability to perform a job to the suitability for elected office. Even members of the city's racial minority groups feel that discrimination against whites is socially equitable. Though there are so many whites living in Fulton, it seems the only opportunities afforded to this group of people are due solely to the fact that there aren't enough minority persons available to fill every role that needs filling. That the community believes that whites are automatically inferior to any minority person, based on race alone, says it all. Like it or not, my community is a racist community.



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**A dubbawala delivering meals on a bike/An elephant hauling goods for just-in-time delivery**

### Jugaad Models

*Jugaad* is a mixture of tradition, culture and attitude which can be adopted for solving nonlinear problems where the outcome of the problem is not inherently predictable. Jugaad can also be used in lieu of the ‘Chaos Theory’ to determine the behavior of certain nonlinear dynamical systems such as war against hidden enemies as in terrorism or adjusting to unpredictable energy supplies or global warming. Unlike any constraint-based scientific model which uses conditional statements of ‘if and then,’ *jugaad* starts with the attitude that a solution will be found by aligning behind any constraint and by using problem-solving innovation. Jugaad has mostly been used in India for survival, but jugaad can also be used more strategically by anticipating a problem before it surfaces by finding new constraints earlier in the game and by making the improvisational solution to avoid the problem altogether.

### Jugaad and the rise of India

The combination of the western style analytical thinking and *jugaad* is proving very beneficial to India. An in-depth study of *the present rise of India reveals the above points. Here are some examples:*

**1. Can do attitude:** Recently Tata Motors (part of Tata Industries) set a goal to produce and sell cars under \$3,000. The car will be on the road sometime in 2008 and is being touted as the second Model T. The giants like General Motors (GM) and Toyota could not achieve this feat despite their massive resources and more than a century of experience (especially in case of GM). While the rest of the world was busy in product enhancement and product placement, the Tatas simply decided to put 4 wheels, an engine, and a transmission together to serve the immediate needs of tens of millions of people eager to give up their bikes and own an automobile.

**2. Best use of the available resources:** Most Indians do not waste anything. Old newspapers are sold and used as paper bags. Soda bottles and cans are used to store spices and even cow dung is used as fuel to cook dinner. According to Yasheng Huang of MIT and Tarun Khanna of Harvard, “Just 2 years ago, India was put down as a second grade economy in comparison to China because of China’s massive investment in manufacturing facilities. In June 2005, India’s GDP grew at a rate of 8.1%. More impressively, India achieved this result with just half of China’s level of domestic investment in new factories and equipment, and only 10 percent of

**Continued on Next Page**

China's foreign direct investment. In 2003 and 2004 China was investing close to 50 percent of its GDP in domestic plant and equipment – roughly equivalent to India's entire GDP."

**3. Trust in 'karma':** Trust is fundamental to the Indian business system. There is a saying in the business circle of India, "The world functions on trust." Recently many world class companies have emerged from India. To mention a few, they are Infosys in software, Ranbaxy in pharmaceuticals, and Bharat Forgings in automobile components. This did not happen by accident. Infosys was founded by seven entrepreneurs with few political connections who nevertheless managed, without significant hard assets, to obtain capital from Indian banks and the stock market in the early 1990s. I don't know any other country where the major banks will lend money to unproven entrepreneurs just on trust.

**4. Be Frugal, but spend wisely:** Unlike China and other ASEAN countries, India did not believe in building world-class infrastructure. As developing countries, if they invest more in infrastructure, they invest less in other things. Typically, basic education, especially in rural areas, falls victim to massive investment projects, which produce tangible and immediate results. China made a costly mistake in the 1990s: it created many world-class facilities, but badly under-invested in education. Chinese researchers reveal that a staggering percentage of rural children could not finish secondary education. India, meanwhile, has quietly but persistently improved its educational provisions, especially in the rural areas. For sustainable economic development, the quality and quantity of human capital will matter far more than those of physical capital. India seems to have the right policy priorities and if China does not invest in rural education soon, it may lose its true competitive edge over India – a well-educated and skilled work-force that drives manufacturing success.



**Joy Ride on a jugaad**

**5. Use of innovation and independent thinking:** Now, let me describe the real jugaad to you. Jugaad is also a kind of vehicle made by villagers in India. Most probably, the wider meaning of jugaad is derived from this vehicle also called jugaad. This is how the vehicle called jugaad is made in Indian villages: The body of this vehicle is acquired free of cost or almost free by cutting down a tree. The tree is partitioned into a few planks and that makes the platform of the vehicle. A discarded engine from any junkyard is mounted in the front. The engine is connected to one of the water pumps that was supplied free of cost for irrigation by the government. The whole system is integrated to a jeep gearbox (found in plenty

in Indian junkyards called *kabada*). To get the wheels anything will do, even wooden bull-cart wheels. For the gas tank an old drum or metal is used which also doubles up as the driver seat. The vehicle is thus ready to ride.

In essence, much of India runs on *jugaad*. In India you do not necessarily go to a specialist for any work done. If you want your watch fixed or converted into a Rolex, just try to find a jugaadi. Chances are that an orphan boy, a beggar or a juggler will walk up to you and will get the job done. If you have a skin problem, you do not have to go to a dermatologist -- just try to find a jugaadi. Someone will make a compound using herb and mud and your rash will be gone. Jugaad may sound comical, but it is time for the rest of the world to adopt the philosophy of jugaad, especially, if we do not want to be left behind holding the bag while someone is going to get things done by hook or by crook.

Movement Conservatism. With time under the Bush years there has been a return to economic inequality not seen since the 1920s.

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### Book Review: The Conscience of a Liberal

Krugman cites Movement Conservatism as a primary culprit in upsetting the balance of power between the rich and the poor. In effect, Movement Conservatism has reversed much of the progress of the New Deal and has attempted to take America back to even before the Progressive Era with recent efforts to reverse the estate tax. Movement Conservatism, according to Krugman, gained footing by appealing to white backlash over desegregation, scaring Americans about the perils of communism, and aligning itself with big business. One way it has gained the support of businesses is by breaking up unions in America. From 1960 to 1999 Krugman shows that the percentage of unionized wage and salary workers fell from 30.4% to 13.5% while in Canada it remained steady at 32% during the same timeframe.

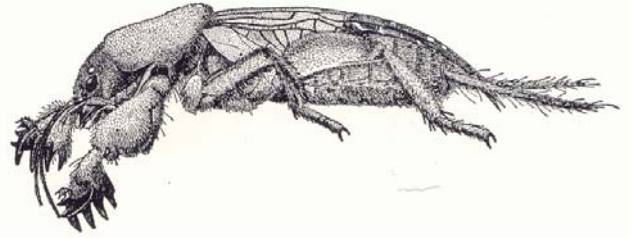
The last few chapters are the best because they provide a framework for why Americans should be liberal and how liberals can enact their agenda. Rather than merely relying on empty talking points, Krugman provides detail about how a national health care program would work. He argues that although taxes would increase under such a system, Americans would also save money by not paying so much in premiums. To counter objections that the government could not administer such a system effectively, he cites Medicare as an example of a government administered health program that Americans love.

I found the book highly informative and well written. It even changed some of my opinions about social security reform and tax policy. However, the book would have been better if Krugman had been more balanced. While he uses Massachusetts as an example of a state where every person can have health insurance, he fails to mention that the man behind that accomplishment was Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney. By contrast, he does mention leading Democratic candidates John Edwards and Barack Obama when touting their health care plans, which have not even been enacted. Krugman cites various special interest groups as culpable in hijacking the Republican agenda and moving it to the extreme right. However, he does not concede the impact that extreme groups, such as MoveOn and Drug Policy Alliance, have had on the Democrats. Some of these concessions would have made his other arguments appear even more credible and compelling.

–Reviewed by Rishi Shrivastava

## It's Raining Mole Crickets

by Bill Phyllis



The Mole Cricket is one of the most improbable looking creatures in God's universe. It is a marvel of adaptations to a fossorial existence. I love the word fossorial and needed to work it into this little story. Fossorial means a digging animal and this incredibly ugly mole cricket is a real digger, a true fossorial animal. It appears to be the misshapen spawn of some demented mole and cricket drunken orgy. Most true southerners are aquatinted with the mole cricket and accept this beast's appearance when stopped at the gas station or restaurant along I-75 while traveling south during the mole cricket mating season. It appears to be a normal flyer attracted to the lights but when confronted face to face with the Quasimodo of the Order Insecta the normal Yankee reacts with a combination of revulsion and horror. This encounter generally sends even the most hardened She-Yankees, northern womankind, into shrieking flight.

Poor mole crickets are an earthy brown with a flattened torso comprised of flying and digging musculature and front legs twisted and armored with digging apparatus. Their forelimbs are very reminiscent of the front legs of the mammal whose name they bear, the mole. This is one ugly, big "bug." Like most subterranean creatures it has developed habits that befit its underground habitat. It is in a word positively geotactic. This means that given the opportunity this creature will always move towards the dirt. It likes to go down towards its earthen home. During mating season the male Mr. Mole Cricket excavates a short horn shaped burrow to amplify their love song and then chirps seductively to attract Miss Mole Cricket. The erotically inspired female flies toward the chirping male and lands close enough to travel the last few yards on foot, on its six feet. Enough of mole cricket biology. This tale requires a modicum of mole cricket behavior but I don't want to belabor the topic.

I was once a pre-doctoral student of Entomology, the study of insects, at a university in northern Florida, Mole Cricket Heaven. One of the other pre-doctoral candidates was studying the biology of the Mole Cricket. He had a theory that he believed would revolutionize the mole cricket control techniques used by golf courses. Mole Crickets were a huge problem for the turf grass industry in Florida. They burrowed around eating the roots of the precious golf course grass. My fellow student thought he had found the cure. What if a recording of the chirping love song of the male mole cricket was played very loudly in the middle of a funnel 10 feet in diameter? The inspired female mole cricket would fly into the funnel expecting to be met by a reproductively competent, lusty, handsome, male mole cricket. Once in the funnel they could be gathered and dispatched, not only ruining Miss Mole Crickets amorous adventure but also breaking the life cycle of this pest and saving the golf courses for human pests. So came into being the infamous "Female Mole Cricket Death Funnel."

However to paraphrase an old saw: "Sometimes the best laid theories of entomological doctoral candidates oft go awry." The death funnel was fabricated, the loud speakers placed in the bottom of the death funnel, the siren song of the male broadcast and the hapless golf course owners were enlisted for the trial. Everything was in readiness and the switch was thrown. The love song was played and the female mole crickets swarmed to meet their lusty male mole cricket mate. Every female mole cricket in the township headed for the unfortunate golf course. One critical aspect of female mole cricket biology was missed – they have excellent hearing, and fly well, but their landings are inaccurate. They get close but no bulls eye. The song played, the lusty female mole crickets flew but most missed the death funnel. These hungry passionate homely little breeders literally chewed their way through acres of Bermuda grass rendering the chosen experimental golf course a vast desert. The graduate student cricket killer was an instant hero among his fellows and his story was told and retold. This story, however, is about one gallon of his crickets and their mission.

The entomology graduate students occupied one large communal office on the third floor of the "Ag" Building (short for agriculture). The room had once been a student laboratory complete with water lines and gas lines that perforated the concrete floor in three rows where the old lab benches had been positioned. These holes provided unending source of entertainment. They went through the floor to the ceiling below. The 50 or so students above to communicate visually with the world below via these vacant shafts. The world below was a similar room occupied by 50 or so beautiful female home economics graduate students. The siren song of the lovely buxom home economics students wafted up through the little portholes very much like the song of the male mole cricket. The little portholes thereby offered an unoccupied entomologist a frequently used peephole to view the lovely young women below. We were privy to their every movement. From that vantage point the most attractive of the Home Economics Department received a great deal of attention from the hidden entomologists in the room above.

One day this combination of a tittering crowd of comely young nymphs below, the lustful naughty libertine entomologists above, a stray red plastic funnel, one gallon of mole crickets collected the night before with the mole cricket trap, (the "death funnel") led to the Great Mole Cricket Indoor Aeronautics of 1975.

The entomology grad student entered the room with his gallon jar of fresh, lively female mole crickets collected the previous evening at a golf course. The mole crickets were placed in a student cubical and he exited the room. The ladies

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## The Rising Cost of Health Care

By Niru Prasad

The cost of health care continues to rise on a daily basis. Since as grow older we tend to use more and more health care services, the aging population will only continue to increase the demand for health care services. By 2030, at the peak of the baby boom retirement, the proportion of the U.S. population over the age of 65 will be twenty percent – as compared to twelve percent today.

While Medicare faces far more immediate and serious high cost pressures than social security, the real challenge our nation faces is *unnecessary* health care costs due to neglect of health among our population. In this regard, preventative health care services play a significant role in cutting the rising cost of health care.

Here is an interesting observation made by me while I was working as a plant physician at a local automobile assembly plant. As I walked to the medical department of the assembly plant at 7:30 in the morning, I was greeted by a very nervous staff nurse who had just brought an employee to the treatment room because of chest pain. Here is how our conversation went:

Doctor: Sir, how long have you been experiencing chest pain?

Patient: Doc, I was fine last night. I had a few drinks at a party, then went home and went to sleep. This morning, I drove to work and while I was working, I experienced sudden chest pain on my left side. I called my supervisor, who brought me to you.

Doctor: What kind of work were you doing?

Patient: Doc, my work does not involve heavy lifting, however the job does require bending and twisting motions with my shoulders and waist. I might have strained my chest muscles however this pain seems worse than that.

Doctor: Do you have any history of heart disease or high blood pressure?

Patient: Doc, I am only 55 years old, but I am overweight by at least 100 pounds, and was recently diagnosed as having high blood pressure and diabetes – but I am taking medicine for that.

Doctor: Do you smoke?

Patient: Yes, doc, a pack a day but I am cutting down because last month I was admitted for to the hospital for pneumonia.

By now, the nurse and I had stabilized our patient with nasal oxygen, cardiac monitor, and IV fluids.

Doctor: How do you feel?

Patient: Doc, the oxygen has been helping me, however my chest pain is still there.

Considering the fact that the patient was a high risk for a heart attack, we decided to transport him via ambulance to a nearby emergency room. Later that day, our patient returned from the emergency room with the diagnosis of “chest pain of unknown etiology.” Since his cardiac work up was within normal limits, I asked him how he felt.

Patient: Doc, I feel better but I would like to go home to rest and have a few days off to recuperate.

Doctor: Sir, I will give you some pain medication, and you will be going back to work. But, be very careful about taking good care of your health.

The patient was escorted by his supervisor and the safety department back to the plant. An hour later, I was walking through the parking lot to go him when I spotted the patient smoking a cigarette by himself. When he saw me, he threw away the cigarette and tried to hide the cigarette pack in his pocket. My last encounter with him was this:

Doctor: Sir, please quit smoking and try to take care of your health before you run into major problems in life.

Patient: Thanks, doc. I will do that.

As I drove home, I was thinking about why our medical health costs are so high. Today, we utilized the resources of doing a cardiac work-up, advanced ambulance transport, as well as the hospital emergency room work up – all for chest pains. This might have cost a few thousand dollars, and at the end of the day, we are back to square one.

While we cannot stop the aging process, we can take steps to ensure a longer and healthier life and thereby maintain some control over health care costs. These steps include:

1. Keep your weight under control because blood pressure increases as body weigh increases.
2. Be physically active since this reduces risk of heart disease.
3. Watch what you eat and drink; a healthy diet of whole grains, fish, poultry, vegetables, and nuts, combined with a small amount of red meat, sweets and fat, will lower your cholesterol level.
4. Alcohol can increase blood pressure so limit alcoholic beverages to one drink each day.
5. Exercise and maintain your weight.
6. Get regular check ups since early diagnoses can result in quicker return to good health.



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**The United States of North America**

The largest economies in the world will have the most clout in global affairs. According to the projection, China and India will have the largest economies by 2035. In terms of economic size, the U.S. will share the limelight with countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan (See the chart below):

**World's Largest Economic Powers in 2035**

Rank in 2035	Country	Population in Millions	% of World Population
1	China	1,322	19.83
2	India	1,131	16.95
3	United States	303	4.55
4	European Union	495	7.43
5	Brazil	185	2.78
6	Russia	141	2.13
7	Japan	127	1.91
8	Pakistan	162	2.43
9	Bangladesh	158	2.38
10	Iran	71	1.07
<b>Proposed N. American Union</b>		<b>485</b>	<b>7.28</b>

So, the only way for the U.S. to maintain its economic supremacy is to form an economic union with Canada, Mexico and the Central American countries comprised of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama, each having the U.S. dollar as a common currency. It may not be a bad idea for all these countries to form one affiliation. The new union would have 7.28% of the world population. Of that, about 150 million (Mexicans and Central Americans) would be the potential consumers needing new amenities to be at par with the present U.S. and Canadian consumers. (See the table below):

North American Union	Population in Millions	Percent of World Population
United States	303	4.550 %
Canada	33	0.500 %
Mexico	106	1.600 %
Central America	42	0.635 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>7.280</b>

The Europeans have done it. They have a common currency called the Euro. The European Union has 7.43% of the world's population and is already threatening the U.S. for the economic supremacy.

The theory that excess population is bad for the economy should be dismissed by its critics on the grounds that every mouth to be fed comes with two hands that can be put to work. The logic is simple. Fast population growth equals more young people, and more young

people equals a more dynamic work force. India already has an advantage over more advanced economies. The median age in India in 2000 was 24, compared to 30 in China, 38 in Europe and 41 in creaky old Japan. The U.S. is aging. It needs manpower. India's biggest export in the 21st century is going to be its manpower which includes high end, low end and even unskilled workers. Moreover by 2030 the combined Chinese and Indian population is going to be around the 3 billion mark. Thus these countries will create a large and growing labor force, which is expected to deliver unexpected spin-offs in terms of growth and prosperity.

The so-called developing nations with large population are witnessing unprecedented growth on many fronts be it in IT or medical tourism. They are striving hard, not just to maintain, but also improve their growth. Despite the population pressure, these countries are developing fast and will continue to do so in the coming decades. The need of the hour is for the North American countries to increase the internal consumer base. Forming a North American Economic Union or a United States of North America seems to be the only viable answer.

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**It's Raining Mole Crickets**

below were enjoying a lunchtime feast. All that was needed was the proper catalyst which presented itself in the form of Freddie, a farm boy/entomologist from Jennings, Florida.

Freddie immediately realized the potential of these reactants. He placed the gallon jar packed with mole crickets under one arm, grasped a large red funnel and inserted it into one of the peep holes, and dropped in the mole crickets. Mole cricket biology took over, their innate desire to return to their home in the earth. They only found dead airspace after their short migration down the neck of the funnel and into the student office filled with lovelies. It was amazing how rapidly the gallon of crickets cleared the jar. Freddy departed the room in a flash, off to view the results of his handiwork.

The home economics room exploded. Once the mole crickets had taken to flight, the maidens erupted into a screaming frenzy. It must have been quite a sight, a gallon of mole crickets pouring out of a hole in the ceiling and bursting into a noisy buzzing mass of twisted malformed half-cricket-half-mole insect demons. The horror-filled maidens sprinted, crawled and clawed their way into the hall – terror fueled by a primordial fear of all things six-legged. In the hall, they were a different assemblage than they were before. Their hair disheveled, mascara streaming down their cheeks, clothing askew. Little did they resemble the chatty, cordial tittering lunchtime females that had so enthralled the entomologists, the "Bug Boys."

It was many weeks before things returned to normal. Workmen appeared the next day to sealed the little tunnels that had permitted us to glimpse into the wonderful feminine world on the floor below. Numerous memoranda were circulated but no guilty party was ever discovered. Freddie volunteered immediately to eliminate the mole cricket invasion and remove the demonic beasts. The entomology graduate student room on the third floor had emptied almost as rapidly as the room below had emptied. The one lone figure in the entomology room when the campus police arrived was the poor mole cricket graduate student trying to locate his errant gallon jar of lusty female mole crickets.

## Mental Exercise

### *Figure It Out*

By David Beagan

**Grand Tour.** You are to visit all 48 contiguous states of the continental U.S. States. Each state is to be visited once, and you do not leave the 48 states. If you start out in Delaware, what state do you finish in.

**Mystery Object.** I am the center of nothing, and I begin a hole. I am the end of moolah. What am I?

**Uneven Siblings.** In the Newton family, all children are of the same mother and father. Each girl child has the same number of sisters and brothers, while curiously, each boy child has twice as many sisters as brothers. How many boys and girls are in the Newton family?

**Acme Widgets.** The Acme Widget company planned to move its company headquarters. When the owner was asked if he was concerned that some of the employees would have a longer commute to work, he replied, that he was not. He was certain that all would have a shorter commute. But the owner went on to say, he didn't actually know where any of his employees lived. How is this possible?

**Eight Words.** Consider the following list of eight words:

assess	banana
dresser	grammar
potato	revive
uneven	voodoo

What property do these eight words have in common? If you want a hint, then read this: it has something to do with the arrangement of the letters.

**Mission Impossible?** Imagine an alien planet that is essentially flat desert landscape over its entire surface. A base is at the North Pole where there are three land rover vehicles and as much fuel as needed. Each land rover holds enough fuel to travel to the South Pole. The land rovers can transfer their fuel from one vehicle to the other. Is it possible for one land rover to travel from the North Pole, all the way around the planet returning to the North Pole?

#### Answers

**Grand Tour.** The state of Maine only borders one other state, New Hampshire. There for the journey ends by passing through New Hampshire to the final state of Maine.

**Mystery Object.** The mystery object is the letter "h".

**Uneven Siblings.** In the Newton family there are four girls and three boys.

**Acme Widgets.** The company moved to another floor in a high rise office building. From the 20th floor to the 10th, therefore all employees would have a shorter commute, if only by a little.

**Eight Words.** All of the words have this special property: if you take the first letter and move it to the end of the word then read the word in reverse, you have the original word that you started with.

**Mission Impossible?** Imagine four points on the planet, Point 1 is one third of the way from the North Pole to the South Pole and Point 2 is two thirds of the way. Point 3 is a third of the way back from the South Pole and Point 4 is two thirds of the way back.

1. Two land rovers start by traveling to one third of the way to the South Pole. A third of a tank is transferred from one vehicle. A vehicle returns to the base, the other continues to Point 2.
2. The land rovers at the base again execute the same routine as was done in step 1. This leaves two vehicles at Point 2 each with two-thirds of a tank.
3. One of the vehicles at Point 2 returns to the base, the other traverses past the South Pole on to Point 3, leaving its tank empty.
4. The two vehicles at the North Pole go to Point 4, transfer fuel, with one returning to base the other continuing on to Point 3.
5. The empty vehicle gets a third of a tank from the other and both vehicles travel on to Point 4.
6. The vehicle at the home base can now make two trips to Point 4 to give the other two vehicles the fuel needed to get them back to base.

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## Medical Advances

By Bala Prasad

While to me it seems like just yesterday, more than five decades have passed since I entered medical school. And in the fifty years since my first day of class, it is a marvel to think of the spectacular advances that have happened in the inaccurate art that is the field of medicine.

Where should one begin? The dreaded smallpox and plague have for all practical purposes been irradiated from the face of the earth. Treatments for tuberculosis and malaria have been found. Childhood diseases like diphtheria and whooping cough are memories of the past.

These agents of death have been replaced by messengers of doom like diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, cancer, morbid obesity, and others. But medical advances have remained shoulder to shoulder with these diseases and will hopefully some day be able cure even the most deadly of diseases. For example, today we have medication for diabetes that comes in many forms. It can be taken orally, by injection, by inhalation, and by – remarkably – implantable insulin pumps. Who would have thought that day would ever come?

Only a few short years ago, treatment for heart disease included just a handful of medications. Now that we understand the disease process better, we have more opportunity to manage the disease. There is now a plethora of medications to control blood pressure and cholesterol. Moreover we have angioplasty stents and by-pass surgery to prolong life – again, who would have ever believed science could achieve such medical advancements?

For the control of obesity, we have so many alternatives. There are medications to control the appetite, to control the absorption of food once it has been consumed, and there are also surgical procedures to achieve the same.

Treatment of cancer has moved forward rapidly. Diagnostic systems have improved. Management capability both by medicine and surgery has increased.

Then there are health problems that do not decrease longevity but destroy lifestyle, to varying degrees. Great advances have been made on this front also. Nothing changes the quality of life as much as the surgical treatment of cataract. The days are long gone when one has to be hospitalized or bedfast for weeks and condemned to wear thick glasses for a lifetime. Today, cataract surgery is an out-patient procedure: you are home in a few hours and all fixed up.

Then there are the problems of arthritis – both the crippling type and the one caused by the normal aging process. Joint replacement surgery, especially of the hips and the knees, has come a long way. It can make a person

not only pain free but mobile – truly a medical advancement.

Today, there are problems that can be found through small holes in the body by using scopes, lasers, and ultrasounds. Almost every joint in the body can be reached by a scope and most of these problems can be fixed – like torn cartilage in the knee, or a torn rotator cuff in the shoulder. Even the gall bladder can be reached by using a scope through the belly button. Lasers are also used to treat many ailments in different parts of the body. Ultrasound may be used to break the kidney stones without making a cut. Years ago, the removal of kidney stones and gall bladders left scars 6 to 12 inches long. Every situation is hard to comment upon, for want of space.

That is all past, but what does the future hold? That is not ours to see but only to speculate, and hope.

I truly believe there will come a time when most of the diseases as we know them today will be tamed. Great future breakthroughs will come not so much in the improvement or treatment of disease but in its prevention. Not too far in the future, through immunization or genetic engineering or some other modality, we will be able to stop the occurrence of many diseases that are on a rampage at the present time. So keep hope for now and for the future, as the best is yet to come.

Of course, you can do your part to keep good health and to keep your mind and body sound. Keep both of them occupied, keep your weight under control, do not dwell on every little thing that goes wrong and always be optimistic. And on that note, dear reader, a happy new year to you all!

Sincerely,

*Bala Prasad*

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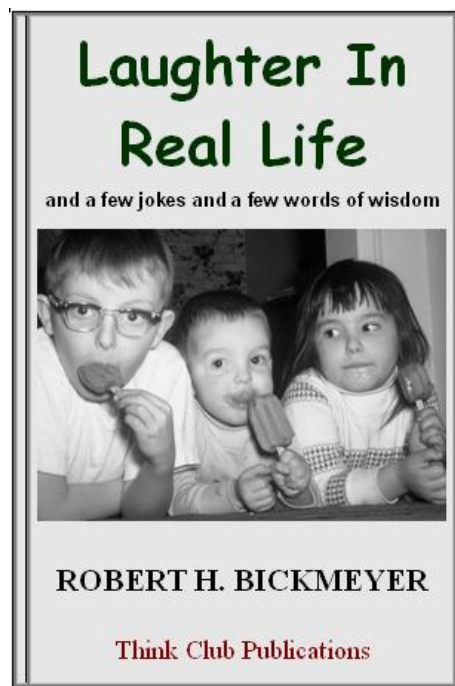
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