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DEAR FRIEND.....

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Obesity's hefty price tag

America's heaviest city grapples with costs from weight-loss surgery =o extra-wide hospital beds.

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=n a recent article in Politico Magazine by Beth Baker she=describes the operation above of a 30 year-old 330 pound female patient =E2=92=92 considered "morbidly obese" =93 with two gaping hernias holes torn in the abdominal sac that holds the =ody's major organs, as "The belly wall is not designed to =old this much weight," said by her Baptist Memphis Hospital, surge=n George Woodman.

By the operation's end, most of the patient=80=s stomach was trimmed away, leaving a much smaller "gas=ric sleeve" that will allow her to feel full after eating =nly small amounts of food. Removing a portion of the stomach also suppress=s the hormones that stimulate hunger. The operation (known as a laparoscopic sleeve gastrectom=) is now the most common type of weight-loss surgery performed in=the U.S. Woodman has conducted 6,000 gastric sleeve operations, and =id three more that morning. Memphis is the heaviest metropolitan cit= in the country, with an adult obesity rate of about 36 percent — =pproaching the rate of more than 40 percent that researchers say we=99ll reach by 2030, if current trends continue.

"There is an unlimited number of patients," he sai=.

Memphis may be the heaviest city in the country, but it isn't much of an outlier. From the trimmest state, Colorado, to the most obese, Mississippi, the entire nation has been on a perilous—and costly—upward track when it comes to extreme weight gain. Severe obesity (a BMI of 40 or more) — the kind most harmful to individual well-being and expensive to society — is rising at an alarming rate and may affect 11 percent of U.S. adults by 2030.

Dieting and exercise are the prescription for most Americans who want to lose weight, but only a minority succeed. Woodman estimates that just 3 percent of his morbidly obese patients could lose their excess weight on their own, so for most, bariatric surgery is a last-resort option. With luck, this patient will lose about 75 percent of her excess weight, putting her on track to a healthier future. "People say that obesity is self-induced," Woodman said. "But it doesn't matter. We have to do something about it."

Every five days, Woodman holds a seminar for prospective patients. On a recent Saturday, 60 people showed up. Perhaps one-third would follow through with surgery. For some, Medicare, Medicaid, or private insurers will pay, calculating that the price of the surgery is less than the cost of a lifetime of chronic disease. At Baptist Memphis, the operation costs \$14,000 — the cost is often higher elsewhere, \$25,000 or more. That may seem expensive, but it could be a bargain compared with the estimated \$200,000 in excess medical costs obese Americans can rack up over their lifetimes.

Memphis has the highest obesity rate among U.S. cities, and its appetite for unhealthy food is part of the reason.

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Pedestrians on Beale Street take in the sights, top, including the day's menu at B.B. King's famous blues club, left. At right, spectators wait for the city's famous Mardi Gras parade to pass by.

As American waistbands continue to expand, researchers and policymakers are trying to figure out just what the obesity epidemic is going to cost the nation. There are the direct medical costs of treating obesity-related diseases including Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke, high blood pressure, arthritis, and related cancers, among others. And then there are the indirect costs: lost productivity, more illness, extra infrastructure to handle heavier patients and residents.

These bills are already coming due in Memphis. Last year, extra health care costs from obesity were \$538 million — more than half the budget of the city's public school system, according to Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index. For the state of Tennessee, the annual excess health costs of obesity were \$2.29 billion — equivalent to more than 6 percent of the entire state budget. No matter how many surgeries Woodman conducts, he won't make a dent; many more Americans are tipping the scales into the obese range each year.

Endocrinologist Ja= Cohen, who treats many patients with obesity-caused diabetes, estimates t=at the average diabetic patient costs the health care system triple what a=healthy person costs. Add in their lost productivity and the price t=g skyrockets. "It's politically imperative to reduce=the obesity rate," said Cohen. Nationally, "it costs literally tr=illions of dollars to treat these conditions."

AS COSTLY AS the o=esity problem is now, its set to get worse. The baby boom generation=is the fattest on record, and they are just reaching the age where health =roblems begin to mount. Federal and state officials are growing incr=asingly worried about the steep price the country will pay for its weight =roblem.

In West Virginia, one of the most obese states, public health comm=ssioner Rahul Gupta says the preventable direct medical costs of obesity a=e \$1.4 billion to \$1.8 billion a year, with an additional \$5 billion in in=irect costs, such as lost productivity. Obese patients submit up to =even times the number of medical claims compared with normal-weight patien=s, he said. "At the state and federal levels, chronic diseas= burden is among the largest drivers of health care costs,"◆=99 Gupta said, "and among chronic diseases it comes down to the conse=uences of obesity and tobacco."

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And then there are the national co=ts. Zhou Yang, a professor at Emory University who studies the impact of o=esity on the medical system, found that obese older males spent \$190,657 m=re on lifetime health care expenses than their normal weight peers while o=der obese women spent \$223,629 more. A 2016 meta-analysis by Univers=ty of Washington researchers found that annual medical spending attributed=to obesity nationally was nearly \$150 billion — more than four tim=s the federal budget for foreign aid and nearly enough to fund the entire =.S.

Department of Veterans Affairs.

Other potential costs are harder to quantify but no less worrisome, for =atients, taxpayers and society at large. For example, researchers ar= discovering that vaccines may not be as effective in those who are obese.=C2◆ Studies have found that obese patients do not respond as well to the=HIV vaccine and the flu vaccine, leaving them more vulnerable to infection=— and to passing those diseases on to others. Over time, it◆=99s possible that a community's "herd immunity" co=ld suffer, creating the conditions for the return of diseases that were on=e controlled through immunization—and that could affect us all, ac=ording to an analyst at the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Even the milita=y is affected, as recruiters struggle to find enough soldiers who meet fit=ess requirements. The percentage of overweight and obese young men doubled=over a 50-year period and tripled for young women. According to a st=dy by the National Bureau of Economic Research, Navy recruits who were ove=weight were more likely than their normal-weight peers to fail semiannual =hysical readiness tests. In all, overweight and obese active

duty military personnel cost the taxpayer \$105 million a year in lost productivity= and \$1 billion annually on treating obesity-related illness —more=than treating military tobacco and alcohol-related illness combined, NBER =estimated.

Transportation costs, too, are rising, and not only for obese passengers who must purchase two seats to fly. Researchers at the University of Illinois estimated that 1 billion additional gallons of gasoline are consumed in the U.S. each year to ferry overweight and obese car passengers from place to place. One study estimated that U.S. airlines purchased 350 million more gallons of jet fuel because of the number of heavier passengers.

Obesity also affects the bottom line of employers. Obesity contributes to absenteeism and “presenteeism,” when people show up but are less productive. Based on current trends, the cost of obesity in lost economic productivity by 2030 will be between \$390 billion and \$520 billion annually.

Obese employees may suffer financially as well. A 2010 study found that white women had 9 percent lower wages because of obesity, “equivalent in absolute value to the wage effect of roughly 1.5 years of education or three years of work experience.” A study in the Journal of Health Economics found that some employers pay lower wages to obese workers to cover higher insurance costs.

Even the cost of dying is higher for obese people. Companies like Goath Caskets specialize in funeral products for the obese — for a price. Everything from wider grave plots to specialized hearses with reinforced chassis and heavy-duty lifting equipment must be used. Crematories are widening furnace doors and chambers to accommodate very large bodies. A “supersize” funeral costs between \$800 and \$3,000 more, notes U.S. Funerals Online. “The costs are not just related to health care,” said Gupta. “There’s a cost for people who can’t reach their full potential in terms of education, employment, mobility, physical activity and productivity.”

AT BAPTIST MEMPHIS, case managers Bonnie Jeter and Phyllis Lutz see the costly impact of obesity in the long-term acute care hospital, a special wing for critically ill patients. When Jeter began as a case manager 27 years ago, obesity was rare. Today, some 40 to 50 percent of the patients she sees are obese or “super obese.” Before opening this special wing, the rooms had to be retrofitted with hydraulic ceiling lifts and wider doorways because of the large number of obese patients. On a tour of the unit, Jeter and Lutz led visitors to the bathing room. They cannot lift their most obese patients into the extra-large tub, so these patients must be given sponge baths. The large toilet is mounted on the floor rather than the wall, to hold heavy patients.

"It can take three people to turn a super obese patient," said Lutz. Patients must be turned every two hours to prevent pressure ulcers, in addition to being moved for wound care, bed baths, and other needs. To make matters worse, "We don't have any more staff [to handle obese patients]," she said.

These patients face numerous complex medical problems. "They take longer to get better," said Jeter. "There are a lot of complications—diabetes, renal failure, terrible skin wounds, circulatory issues, cellulitis, breathing difficulties." "Providing care is not incrementally more difficult, she said, "It's a quantum leap." Not surprisingly, patients often grow depressed and unmotivated. "They're doing younger and younger," said Jeter. "It's horrific."

To accommodate the many obese patients, Baptist Memphis Hospital has had to install extra-wide hospital doors. Bariatric surgeon George Woodman, right, talks with patient Dana Brown one day after she received gastric sleeve surgery to shrink the size of her stomach. Then comes the discharge planning for patients ready for release. Nursing homes and dialysis clinics can be hard to find. "Some [clinics] have a 350-pound size limit," said Jeter. She and Lutz must plan far ahead to locate places to send the patients.

Usually, hospitals must eat the costs for expensive bariatric equipment. A mechanical lift that can hold up to 800 pounds costs \$6,000 — a bariatric lift, for up to 1,000 pounds, \$13,000. A standard hospital bed runs \$8,000 compared with a large bed for \$45,000. Everything from larger blood pressure cuffs to wheelchairs, stretchers, waiting room chairs and patient gowns must be on hand. Yet health care providers cannot charge insurers for these costs.

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"Obesity is one of the most urgent public health problems in our nation today," said Jay Bhatt, chief medical officer of the American Hospital Association. In addition to equipment costs, he said, hospitals pay for special safety training for workers. Nurses rank 4th nationally in job injuries, behind police officers, jailers and firefighters, in part due to lifting heavy patients.

Nursing homes face many of the same challenges, said Cheryl Phillips, senior vice president for Public Policy and Health Services for Leading Age, the trade association of non-profit nursing homes. "We are arguing for better reimbursement that is risk-adjusted," said Phillips. "Medicaid doesn't even meet the costs for much of the care—obesity is but one example." According to research by Yang, overweight and obese baby boomers will spend 1.3 billion more days in long-term care than previous generations, costing Medicaid at least \$68 billion.

At the end of a workday, she and pediatrician-in-chief Jon McCullers sit in his office to reflect on the obesity epidemic. McCullers was an infectious disease researcher until five years ago, when he was recruited to Le Bonheur. "It was obvious that my research wasn't what they needed," he said. High poverty levels in Memphis led to a host of urgent problems. A0 Topping the list was obesity. With an infusion of state and hospital funding, he launched the obesity program, which combines research, community outreach and a Healthy Lifestyle clinic. Most of the program's \$3.5 million annual budget is not covered by patient insurance.

What is the goal? "Not to be the worst in the country," McCullers said wryly.

The clinic has served 650 high-risk kids since opening in October 2014, the majority African-American girls. For these children a healthy lifestyle can be a new concept. Through surveys, Han's team found that two-thirds of the families they serve are considered "food insecure," despite their obesity. "So it's the types of foods they're eating — high in fat, high in sugar," she said. As for exercise, Han, whose own children go to Memphis public schools said gym class is held in the hallways, if at all.

Despite the immensity of the problem, Han and McCullers try to be hopeful. Nationally, the prevalence of obesity has remained stable for children and teens, and the rate decreased significantly among preschoolers in 2013-2014, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "We know we can make the obesity rate plateau," said Han. "Now we need to make it reverse." The challenge is finding creative ways to connect with people where they live. "Most hospitals look at who is inside their walls," said McCullers. "You have to look outside your walls, and be engaged with local and state governments and community groups."

Ultimately, they said, its clear obesity has stopped being a problem for only those affected and is now a national crisis. The country literally cannot afford the impending costs. Shifting investments toward encouraging healthy environments and behaviors rather than paying for expensive, life-threatening chronic disease is the only affordable — and humane — response. "Obesity costs everybody," said Yang. "Nobody can escape. Someone has to pay the bill."

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So True

The Reality of an American being Killed by an Illegal Immigrant

So Why are so many People Terrified of Illegal Immigrants?

Because of Fear spread by Our Leaders

Web Link: <https://www.facebook.com/marnita.schroedl/posts/10211693592115912>
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Please see the video via the above web link

Stupid Money

=p class="MsoNormal" align="center">Throwing more money at the military won't make it stronger</=pan>

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I called this piece stupid money after reading reports that President Trump is proposing a \$54 billion increase for the Defense Department, which he then claimed would be offset by large cuts in the State Department, foreign aid and other civilian agencies. ♦=A0 Trump says he wants to do this so that "nobody will dare question our military might again." But no one does. The U.S. military remains in a league of its own. None of the difficulties the United States has faced over the past 25 years has been in any way because its military was too small or weak. As then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates noted in a 2007 lecture, "One of the most important lessons of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is that military success is not sufficient to win. ♦=E2 ♦=♦ To achieve "long-term success," he explained, requires "economic development, institution-building . . . ♦=E2 ♦=♦. [and] good governance." Therefore, he called for "a dramatic increase in spending on the civilian instruments of national security," including "diplomacy" and "foreign assistance." win. The U.S. defense budget in 2015 was nine times the size of Russia's and three times that of China's.

More importantly President Trump is proposing dramatically increasing our nuclear arsenal, as if this will somehow dissuade ISIS and other terrorist. Also Trump is stuck in the 20th Century advocating large military programs like aircraft carriers who are useless against a group of bad guys with a dirty bomb or an adversary intent to poison our water supply or hack into banking system or election. But then that has already happened with the President claiming that it was nothing to do with nothing.

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Currently the United States spends almost \$600 billion yearly on its military which is almost 40% of all of the money spent globally, more than the next eight countries and 54% of all of the discretionary spending in the country. And to give you more perspective, the \$54 billion that President Trump is proposing is almost as much as the entire military budget in China. Yet we are no safer than Indonesia, Brazil, Spain, Australia or South Africa which are not in the top 10 of military expenditures.

Just to understand the wastefulness of wars you only have to look at what US military in Iraq, Just in 2011 after our politicians had declared victory and the media have largely moved on because it didn't mean we wasn't going to spend almost \$50 billion on those "non-combat troops" which remain, however. What else could we do with that kind of scratch if we just brought them home? NPP tells us it would buy:

- ◆=A0 24.3 million children receiving low-income health care for one year, OR
- <=span>726,044 elementary school teachers for one year, OR
- * =C2◆829,946 firefighters for one year, OR
- * =C2◆6.2 million Head Start slots for children for one year, OR
- * ◆=A0 10.7 million households with renewable electricity -- solar photovoltaic for one year, OR
- * =C2◆28.6 million households with renewable electricity-wind power for one year, OR
- =C2* =C2◆ 6.1 million military veterans receiving VA medical care for one year, OR

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*=B7 ♦=A0 718,208 police=or sheriff's patrol officers for one year, OR

* 6.0 million scholarships for university students for one year,=OR

* =C2 ♦ 8.5 million students receiving Pell=grants of \$5,550

It's a tragic iron= that so much of the discussion surrounding the public debt centers on ♦=80♦entitlements" like Social Security (which hasn't a=ded a penny to the national debt) when we're still paying for Korea an= Vietnam and Grenada and Panama and the first Gulf War and Somalia and the=Balkans and on and on. Estimates of just how much of our national de=t payments are from past military spending vary wildly. In 2007, economist=Robert Higgs calculated it like this:

I added up all past deficits (minus surpluses) since 1916 (whe= the debt was nearly zero), prorated according to each year's ratio of=narrowly defined national security spending--military, veterans, and inter=ational affairs--to total federal spending, expressing everything in dolla=s of constant purchasing power. This sum is equal to 91.2 percent of the v=lue of the national debt held by the public at the end of 2006. Therefore,=I attribute that same percentage of the government's net interest outl=ys in that year to past debt-financed defense spending.

When Higgs did tha= analysis four years later, he came up with a figure of \$206.7 billion jus= in interest payments on our past military adventures. And most peop=e see this number as extremely conservative.

Fareed Zakaria tells a story =hat he was surprise by the answer that General David Petraeus told him dur=ng the early days of the Iraq War and things were not going well. Wh=n asked whether he wished he had more troops. Petraeus was too polit=cally savvy to criticize the Donald Rumsfeld "light footprint♦=80♦ strategy, so he deflected the question, answering it a different way= "I wish we had more Foreign Service officers, aid professionals a=d other kinds of non-military specialists," he said. The heart of =he problem the United States was facing in Iraq, he noted presciently, was=a deep sectarian divide between Shiite and Sunni, Arab and Kurd. "=e need help on those issues. Otherwise, we're relying

on 22-year-old sergeants to handle them. Now, they are great kids, but they really don't know the history, the language, the politics."

I understand the need for a strong national defense but when you are already spending more than the combined military budgets of the next largest countries, it is difficult to believe that our military spending is bloated and more importantly full with wasteful boondoggles that suck the resources that we better use non-military specialists, foreign aid and diplomacy. As I use to say during the Vietnam War, "if we had given the Viet Cong televisions instead of dropping bombs the war would have ended years earlier." As such throwing more money in an already bloated military is not only wasteful it is dereliction to the fiduciary responsibility that our government owes its citizens.

Someone Has Got To Be Kidding?

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It is often said that Wall Street (the financial markets) is a casino, but after this week I would label it the ultimate Ponzi Scheme (named after Charles Ponzi who's company, Securities Exchange Company, in 1919 promised returns of 50% in 45 days or 100% in 90 days out of monies from newer investors) – after hearing that Tesla Corporation surpassed Ford Motor Company in value. But how can this be possible? One company is an automotive titan that has built more than 350 million vehicles over the past 115 years with 201,000 employees, sales of 6.6 million vehicles, annual revenues \$152 billion and profits of \$10.4 billion last year. And the other is only 15 years old, with 30,000 employees, sales of 76,000 vehicles, revenues of \$7 billion, pre-tax loss of \$746 million and has never made a profit. Yet the 15 year-old Tesla is now valued more than Ford.

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Someone is crazy. <

Even if one were to believe that Tesla has a more promising future, numbers don't lie. And yet a 7% surge in the value of shares in electric car firm Tesla a week ago Monday saw it zoom ahead of Ford Motor Company, in terms of its stock market value. As Wall Street closed for the day, Tesla, led by 45-year-old tycoon and futurist Elon Musk, was worth \$49bn (£38bn), compared with a paltry \$46bn for the empire built by Henry Ford. This astonishing overtaking maneuver says as much about the nature of stock markets as it does about these two very different carmakers. The old

click◆=A9 among stock market investors is that you should “buy on the rumor, sell on the fact” – the idea that investment is more about what you expect to happen in the future than the current state of play – obviously this is the case with Tesla.

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While Tesla’s investors believe that it is the standard-bearer of a battery-powered future – and Ford is the archetypal mass-production legacy car business. That is the myth that CEO Elon Musk carefully crafted for thirty-something year old Wall Street analysts who can afford to buy a \$100,000 car. But as someone who just leased a Chevy Bolt, I did so because it was half the price of an entry level Tesla, even though it is fully loaded and gets the same mileage. And I leased because in three years every major automaker from Mercedes to Renault will be offering electric vehicles that get more than 250 miles with a single charge, so who knows what is going to be my next car. And in spite the setback of a fatal crash last year, when a Tesla on autopilot failed to tell the difference between the side of a white lorry and a bright sky, the company continues to make strides towards a fully driverless car but so is Uber, Google and the other big automakers.

I understand that Tesla also has a potentially lucrative sideline in storage batteries for the home. The Powerwall is intended to allow homes to store solar power, and Tesla is also due to start installing its first solar roof tiles this year. I appreciate that Tesla’s has set a goal of building 500,000 cars in 2018 and Musk has even raised the prospect of doubling that to 1m by 2020 – except that these production targets are unprecedented in the automotive industry and as Samsung last year’s debacle with its Galaxy Note 7 cellphone catching fire =E2◆◆ pushing production delivery prior an exhausted testing has shown that a single defective part from a supplier can kill sales and stock prices faster than E.coli at Chipotle. And just like McDonald’s, Burger King, KFC which also had E.coli outbreaks but fared better than their smaller fast-food rival, should both Ford and Tesla suffer a similar misfortune, I would bet on Ford coming through quicker.

Yes, Tesla’s new Model 3 is slated to start production this year and is intended to offer a more affordable version of previous models, with a price tag around \$35,000. If successful, the Model 3 could supercharge Tesla’s growth by muscling in on the territory of mass market rivals. But Tesla’s model X crossover, while although sexy is currently not burning down the house with sales. It’s important to remember that despite the massive hype surrounding Tesla, the gigafactory currently nearing construction in Nevada will only allow the company to make 500,000 units a year by 2020. That would be fine if Tesla only wanted to sell cars to rich people, but CEO Elon Musk has been clear that the company’s mission is to bring sustainable electric transport to the mass market. To do that, an automaker needs scale. And to get scale, Tesla will need to sell millions of vehicles a year and to increase production from its current level to 1 million cars is truly wishful thinking.

Therefore to sell more vehicles and more batteries for its storage business called Tesla Energy, Tesla needs more gigafactories. Gigafactories currently go for about \$5 billion. Elon got supplier partners to pay for about 60% of this one, but we can’t assume that will always be true. Tesla has incredible growth potential with vehicles and energy storage, but people forget that this growth isn’t free. On the positive side, if Tesla can continue to reduce its battery costs, it has the potential for a cost advantage that could never be overcome by internal-combustion manufacturers. Except again, like with vehicles, there are many other people here and abroad trying to come up with the next

generation of battery technology ♦=80♦ ask Motorola which pioneered the cell phone, revolutionized again with its flip-phone and today is no longer in the business.

Today Tesla gross margin profit is more than \$20,000 per vehicle but when you add up R&D and other things it actually loses \$19,000 for every car sold, while Ford made more than \$1500 on each vehicle it sold. With the cost of expansion, which is going to be in the many billions of dollars, Tesla is years away from making money. I know that this doesn't mean much in the rarefied air in Silicon Valley and Wall Street, as Amazon didn't generate profits for its first two decades and today has a \$440 billion market cap, \$906 share price with less than \$5 billion in net revenues. But somewhere on Wall Street there has to be other people saying something is wrong when the company that loses \$746 million is worth more than a company in the same business made \$1.2 billion. If this doesn't sound fishy, I have a great deal on a bridge for you in the middle of the Sahara Desert.</=pan>

What Was Accomplished?

Like many I was not surprised when I heard a week ago Thursday evening that the US military launched 59 tomahawk missiles against a Syrian airfield to punish Syria's President Bashar Assad for allegedly using chemical weapons to attack his own citizens. This act was a dramatic reversal from Trump's pledges to limit U.S. involvement in Syria and to focus on America First, leaving Syria's neighbors and the Europeans to sort out the mess. For years President Obama had resisted growing calls to intervene militarily against the Assad regime. President Barack Obama's decision to refrain from engagement in 2013 was criticized as feckless at the time and is cited now as one of the reasons that Trump was forced to act.

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But as Neal Gable wrote this week in Moyers & Company: It is pretty amazing how quickly the media and suck-up politicians can transform a mendacious, hypocritical, amateurish, ignorant, incoherent, bigoted buffoon who is way, way out of his depth into a man of courage, which is what they did to President Trump this past weekend. All it takes is some saber rattling and launching a few dozen missiles. Granted, the Trump brand is already so tarnished that he didn't get the bounce or the adulation that the Bushes, peres and fils, got when they began their wars. According to one poll, only 51 percent of Americans approved of Trump's action, but given that Trump's favorability rating has hovered around or even south of 40 percent, this is an improvement.

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Not to be in=elicate here, but atrocities happen in the world all the time (and have happened on an even larger scale before in Syria). Humans are c=pable of unimaginable cruelty. Sometimes the victims die quickly and are made visible by media for the wor=d to see. Other times, they die in slow motion, out of sight and out of mind. Sometimes banned weapons are used; Sometimes conventional weapons; Sometime=, neglect, isolation and starvation. And sometimes it is just plain old genocide.

And the world in=general, and America in particular, has a way of being wishy-washy about which atrocities deserve responses and which one= don't. These decisions can be capricious at best and calculated camouflages for ulterior motives at worst. Ind=ed, the motivations for military action needn't be singular at all, but are often multiple, tucked one insi=e the other like nesting dolls. Acts of war can themselves be used as political weapons. They can distract attention, quell acrimony, increase appetite for military spending and give a boost to sagging approval ratings. This =E2◆◆rally--around--the--flag" (or "rally=E2◆◆) effect is well documented over the centuries.

And please realize that President =rump's decision to launch the cruise missile strike is being applauded=by the same foreign policy traditionalist of both parties — the establishment figur=s who gave us the disastrous war in Iraq — as=a show of U.S. "strength" and "resolve."= This should worry us all. Red lines and symbolic displays of f=rce do not constitute a plan or a strategy.

First of all, Syria is truly a Major 'Cluster-F@\$K'<=i>

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Web Link: <http://youtu.be/JFpanWNgfQY> <<https://youtu.be/JFpanWNgfQY>>

Syria=E2◆◆s war is a mess because after six years because the conflict is divided between four sides with each side with having foreign backers – who don't even agree with each other on who they are =ighting – or who they are fighting against. And up until this past Friday, the United States was only focused on fighting ISIS= So to understand the crisscrossing interventions and battle lines in Syria today and how it got that way you h=ve to go back to the beginning of the conflict and examine how it unfolded.◆=A0

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The first=shots in the war were fired in March 2011 by its President, Bashar Assad, against peaceful Arab Spring demonstrators. =y July the protesters started shooting back with some Syrian troops defecting from the Syrian army to

join them and calling themselves The Free Syrian Army – the uprising becomes a civil war – with extremists from across the region and around the world traveling to Syria to join The Rebels.

Assad actually encourages this by releasing jihadists' prisoners to taint the rebellion with extremism, with the hope of making it harder for foreign backers to support them. In January 2012 Al Qaeda forms a new branch in Syria calling themselves – Jabhat al-Nusra. Also around that time, Syrian Kurdish groups take up arms and informally secede from Assad's rule in the North. –A0

And that summer is when Syria became a proxy war with Iran interceding on Assad's behalf, sending daily cargo flights and hundreds of ground officers. This causes several oil-rich Arab states in the region to start sending money and weapons to The Rebels, to counter Iran's influence. Please click on the web link above to see why Syria is such a mess with no easy answers.

What troubles me is how cavalier both Congressional Republicans and Democrats with their accolades, including Senator Lindsey Graham comparing Trump to the most beloved Republican President in the modern era, the one and only Ronald Reagan. As pundits used the phrases of "strong message" and "new sheriff in town" few asked what actually was accomplished. Think about it, the US military did not target President Assad's Sarin gas stockpile. And since President Trump warned the Russians an hour in advance that he was attacking Shayrat air field, one then has to believe that they alerted their ally President Assad. Finally, most disproportionate military responses are really only made to make the aggressors feel better when they don't have a strategy.

Talal al-Barazi, the governor of Homs province that includes the air base, said at least 13 people were killed in the missile strikes, including five soldiers on the base and eight civilians in areas surrounding the facility. The figures could not be independently confirmed, but are said to include several children, which if true will provide another photo op for both the Syrian Regime, as well as terrorist around the world showing the innocent civilians killed by American aggression.

–A0

Although the Pentagon's initial assessment was that the strike severely damaged or destroyed Syrian aircraft and support infrastructure and equipment at the airfield. But within hours of the missile attack, Syrian warplanes had taken off from that same airfield and launched airstrikes against Khan Sheikhoun, the same town where at least 86 people had been killed in the sarin attack and dropped new conventional bombs. As Comedian/Satirist John Oliver pointed out during his show on HBO this week, "while it is natural to take some kind of action in response, it has to come in the context in a larger strategy or it is close to worthless. And though the strikes seem to make certain people feel better... What did they actually achieve?"

John Oliver Explains Why Trump's Syria Strike Should Make Us All Very, Very Worried."

<=b>

Web Link: <https://youtu.be/Sjb7yvWWlI0> <<https://youtu.be/Sjb7yvWWlI0>> =/b>

As John Oliver asked, what was actually achieved? President Assad's chemical weapons weren't destroyed. Neither was the airfield. And since he was able to launch an aircraft attack later in the day, obviously whatever aircraft were destroyed did not really affect the Syrian government from launching future chemical attacks whenever they want. Finally, whether Assad uses chemical weapons or conventional bombs to kill his adversaries and innocent civilians, does it really matter? Because a child killed by a cluster bomb or Sarin gas ends with the same result. Ugly and unnecessary death.

In recent days, the administration has offered conflicting statements on key questions, including whether Assad can remain in power under any sort of negotiated peace settlement. "They seem to be celebrating the strike almost as an accomplishment in itself rather than as a tool to achieve any particular strategy," said Jeffrey Prescott, who served as director for Iran, Iraq, Syria and the Gulf States at the National Security Council under Obama from 2015 to 2017. "Even days later, they are basking in the glow, but we do not have a clear sense of why this strike and to what particular end."

Furthermore, launching missiles against any nation that hasn't attacked you is an Act of War, no matter how well intentioned. And to do so, without being in any danger and not having a clear cut strategy is definitely an unnecessary Act of War. Even the President's most ardent supporters admit that the President doesn't have a strategy or a plan to end the conflict in Syria. Consequently, we are destined to enter another phase of Mission Creep, with the pointless killing of more and more people and costing billions more of US taxpayers' dollars.

It is estimated that this latest tomahawk attack cost US taxpayers' more than \$100 million dollars. And the only thing that was accomplished is that the President's supporters can claim that there is a new sheriff in town, as even the Trump Administration admits that overthrowing Assad most likely will make matters even worse. Therefore if this is true, then the only solution has to be a diplomatic one, which starts with negotiation not missiles. To put it briefly, blowing shit up does not make a President, Mr. President....

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Furthermore, launching missiles against any nation that hasn't attacked you is an Act of War, no matter how well intentioned. And to do so, without being in any danger and not having a clear cut strategy is definitely an unnecessary Act of War. Even the President's most ardent supporters admit that the President doesn't have a strategy or a plan to end the conflict in Syria. Consequently, we are destined to enter another phase of Mission Creep, with the pointless killing of more and more people and costing billions more of US taxpayers' dollars.

As Charles Blow wrote in the New York Times: It's easy to sell the heroism of a humanitarian mission or the fear of terror or the two in tandem, as Trump attempted in this case. The temptation to unleash America's massive war machine is seductive and also addictive. Put that power in the hands of a man like Trump, who operates more on impulse and intuition than intellect, and the world should shiver.

As righteous as we may feel about punishing Assad, Syria is a hornet's nest of forces hostile to America: Assad, Russia, and Iran on one flank and ISIS on another. You can't afflict one faction without assisting the other. In this way, Syria is a nearly unwinnable state. We've been down this road before. Just over the horizon is a hill: Steep and greased with political motives, military ambitions, American blood and squandered treasury. Being weary here isn't a sign of weakness; to the contrary, it's a display of hard won wisdom.

Neal Gabler again: Many of us during the campaign noted how Trump's reality TV experience affected and even defined that campaign, but far less attention has been paid to how it would affect his presidency. The narcissism, the imperial demeanor, the preening, the necessity of hyping the drama — these are now the hallmarks of his early administration.

It makes for good TV and lousy governance. The impulsiveness for which Trump is famous was built into reality TV too, which lurches mindlessly from one scene to another. Indeed, you could accurately describe reality TV as plot without content, which, not at all incidentally, is also a way to describe the Trump presidency.

So, whether it was the right thing to do to strike Assad, it was, by reality show standards, certainly the best thing to do. It got a huge audience. It made Trump look like a man of action. It won him plaudits on cable TV, which likes nothing better than some military action to boost ratings, just as William Randolph Hearst practically started the Spanish-American War to push newspaper circulation. And, not least of all, it did what entertainment is practically designed to do: It provided a distraction from the mess Trump is making of the country.

You don't usually think of warfare as a distraction; warfare is what you usually get distracted from. But Trump grasped that launching missiles would knock everything else off the front pages at a time when he needed it. And in the short term, he seems to have been right. Talking about Syria means we aren't talking about the Russian hacking of the election or the failure of health care reform or the Keystone Cops White House staff or the trashing of regulations or the myriad of other disasters in this ongoing reality show that stars the "Not Ready for Prime Time Players."

It is precisely because this new interventionism has had the desired result that we should all begin to worry. If a few missiles in Syria won him hosannas, what about some action against North Korea for the next reality show episode? And what other improvised adventures could our new action hero president embark upon to keep us preoccupied and him winning praise? War may be the force that gives us meaning. But it is also the force that keeps us entertained and distracted. With an entertainer-in-chief in the White House, someone for whom the presidency is a great vanity, that should scare us. That should scare us a lot.

To summarize: It is estimated that this latest tomahawk attack cost US taxpayers' as much as \$100 million dollars, if not more. And the only thing that was accomplished is that the President's supporters can claim that there is a new sheriff in town, as even the Trump Administration admits that overthrowing Assad most likely will make matters even worse. Therefore if this is true, then the only solution has to be a diplomatic one, which starts with negotiation not missiles. To put it briefly, blowing shit up does not make a President, Mr. President.... And this is my rant of the week....

WEEK's READINGS

Good News for California.

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California Gov. Jerry Brown (D) issued an executive order a week ago Friday that ended the drought emergency in most parts of the state. "This drought emergency is over, but the next drought could be around the corner," he said in a statement. "Conservation must remain a way of life." Brown's order maintains many of the conservation practices put in place in 2015, including mandatory reports on water usage, restrictions on using non-recirculated water in fountains and bans on watering lawns within 48 hours of significant rainfall. "Increasing long-term water conservation among Californians, improving water efficiency within the state's communities and agricultural production, and strengthening local and regional drought planning are critical to California's resilience to drought and climate change," the order says.

The drought which has affected California for a decade or so has had a significant impact on groundwater supplies in Fresno, Kings, Tulare and Tuolumne counties, and the state of emergency will remain in effect in those areas.

You can read Governor Brown's full – Executive Order B-40-17 here.

Web Link: https://www.gov.ca.gov/docs/4.7.17_Exec_Order_B-40-17.pdf

Over the past several months we have had a ton of rain, making it an historic season for California as it finally received a significant amount of rainfall this winter after five years of extreme drought. The reversal was swift: As of this week, just 1% of the state is still in severe drought, compared to 74 percent of the state one year ago. Lake Oroville, the State's Water Project principal reservoir, is 101% of average, Lake Shasta, the Federal Central Valley's largest reservoir is at 110% of average and a great majority of California's other reservoirs are above normal storage levels.

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The effects of the drought were still being felt across the state, however. The dry conditions killed more than 100 million trees, cost the state billions of dollars and helped spark or exacerbate hundreds of wildfires. It also left many communities susceptible to mudslides and other disasters during this winter's intense storm.

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Still, the good news is that on April 7, 2017 Governor J. Edmund G. Brown signed an Executive Order that terminated the Drought State of Emergency for all counties in California except the counties of Fresno, Kings, Tulare and Tuolumne. The order still maintains that Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life as well as extending a drought response in the remaining affected counties. With this aid, I love my state and thank God that he/she loves it too.

Beliefs vs Facts<=span>

There's an intriguing sociological reason so many Americans are ignoring facts lately

Many of the inaccuracies seem like they ought to be easy enough to challenge, as data simply don't support the statements made.
Consider the following charts documenting the violent crime rate and property crime rate in the U.S. over the last quarter century (measured by the Bureau of Justice Statistics). The overall trends are unmistakable: Crime in the U.S. has been declining for a quarter of a century.

There is more than one reason this is happening. But one reason I think the alternative-facts industry has been so effective has to do with a concept social scientists call the "backfire effect."

There is more than one reason this is happening. But one reason I think the alternative-facts industry has been so effective has to do with a concept social scientists call the "backfire effect."

As a rule, misinformed people do not change their minds once they have been presented with facts that challenge their beliefs. But beyond simply not changing their minds when they should, research shows that they are likely to become more attached to their mistaken beliefs. The factual information "backfires." When people don't agree with you, research suggests that bringing in facts to support your case might actually make them believe you less.

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In other words, fighting the ill-informed with facts is like fighting a grease fire with water. It seems like it should work, but it's actually going to make things worse.

To study this, Brendan Nyhan and Jason Reifler (2010) conducted a series of experiments. They had groups of participants read newspaper articles that included statements from politicians that supported some widespread piece of misinformation. Some of the participants read articles that included corrective information that immediately followed the inaccurate statement from the political figure, while others did not read articles containing corrective information at all.

Afterward, they were asked a series of questions about the article and their personal opinions about the issue. Nyhan and Reifler found that how people responded to the factual corrections in the articles they read varied systematically by how ideologically committed they already were to the beliefs that such facts supported. Among those who believed the popular misinformation in the first place, more information and actual facts challenging those beliefs did not cause a change of opinion — in fact, it often had the effect of strengthening those ideologically grounded beliefs.

It's a sociological issue we ought to care about a great deal right now. How are we to correct misinformation if the very act of informing some people causes them to redouble their dedication to believing things that are not true?=>

<=>Tristan Bridges – Business Insider – Feb. 27, 2017

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10 of America's Deadliest Jobs

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There are dirty jobs. There are dangerous jobs. And then there are deadly jobs. Sometimes, they are one in the same. Sometimes, these positions, despite the inherent element of danger, can be particularly attractive to some job seekers. They often tend to pay better than other gigs, for one. And competition can be low, too.

But the fact remains: If you sign up for a dangerous job, there's a good chance you could be horribly injured or killed. This not only can stymie your ability to earn a living in the future, but it can put the kibosh on all of your plans if you do end up dying on the job.

Even so, the odds you'll be killed at work are relatively small. Even among the most dangerous jobs, fatality rates aren't frighteningly high. It's just that you're far more likely to meet a gruesome end on a dude ranch than you are in a cubicle.

To figure out which jobs are the most deadly, we dug through data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Department of Labor. Annual numbers relating to workplace injuries and fatalities (there were 4,836 in 2015) are released by the government. And by using those numbers, we can piece together a list of the deadliest jobs. Here are the top 10.

10. Landscaping and lawn care

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, looking at data from 2015, shows occupations related to lawn care and landscaping as the 10th deadliest industry in America. The fatal work injury rate, which looks at the number of fatal accidents per 100,000 workers, is 18.1 for the landscaping industry. Although it seems fairly innocuous, there are a lot of blades, chemicals, and heavy machinery that can cause disastrous outcomes in this industry.

9. Linemen

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"Linemen" is a term commonly used to describe utility workers — specifically, those who work on power lines. The Bureau of Labor Statistics numbers refer to this occupation as "power-line installers and repairers." And these are the

men and women you see in cherry-pickers working on power lines. It's obvious this job is inherently dangerous when you're working with heights, heavy machinery, and a shocking amount of electricity.

8. Farmers

The fatal work injury rate among farmers and ranchers is 22 per 100,000 workers. So, fatal accidents aren't incredibly common, but the odds are higher than in most occupations. And again, this is a job that puts you into close contact with all sorts of potentially dangerous things. Large machinery, chemicals, and live animals can all present potential disasters, for example.

7. Truck drivers

With a fatal work injury rate of 24.3 per 100,000, drivers (including truck drivers) are the seventh-deadliest job in America. There are millions of people who make a living through driving. Whether they're delivering goods or giving people rides, this is an incredibly popular profession. And it's one that is evidently very dangerous. And let's not forget it's one that might disappear altogether <http://www.cheatsheet.com/business/5-surprising-commercial-applications-for-artificial-intelligence.html> in the near future.

6. Iron and steelworkers

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Iron and steel workers have a long and storied history in parts of the country. They've also seen their industry decline with increased globalization. It's a dangerous gig, too, and other countries don't have safety standards that are as stringent as ours. Even so, there's a high rate of deadly accidents among iron and steel workers. The fatal work injury rate among these workers is just under 30 per 100,000.

5. Garbage collectors

Emilio Estevez made the garbage man job look kind of fun. Perhaps it is — just imagine all of the fun and fantastic treasures you could find. Regardless of the fun, it's dangerous. Chalk it up to long hours on the road, dodging cars and traffic, and dealing with hazardous and toxic refuse. The fatal work injury rate among these employees is 38.8 per 100,000.

4. Roofers

Roofing is a tough gig. You're out in the elements (usually under a burning unforgiving sun) all day, and one wrong move can send you plummeting to the ground. You're also dealing with tools and machines, all of which can hack off a limb. For these reasons, roofing is a dangerous and deadly job. The fatal work injury rate among roofers is 39.7 per 100,000.

3. Pilots

Pilots and flight engineers are high on the list — surprisingly so. Although we all know airplanes crash on occasion, it's not like there are huge disasters on a daily basis. Evidently, though, many pilots and engineers are killed while on the job. The fatal work injury rate among this group of people is 40.4 per 100,000, good enough for a spot among the top three deadliest.

2. Fisherman

This one should come as no surprise. There are even TV shows — most notably, *Deadliest Catch* — that chronicle just how dangerous and deadly the lives of fishermen can be. And it's no joke. Folks working in this notoriously tough industry do die on the job at an alarming rate. The fatal work injury rate for those working in fishing and related industries is 54.8 per 100,000.

1. Logger

Stars of another reality series, *Ax Men*, work in the nation's deadliest occupation: logging. Loggers are killed on the job more often than any other worker. Falling trees, heavy machinery, exposure to the elements — there's no lack of danger in the forest. And the number of workers killed annually is way higher than any other job on this list. The fatal work injury rate for loggers is a whopping 132.7 per 100,000.

Before OSHA was created 43 years ago, an estimated 14,000 workers were killed on the job every year. Although today, workplaces are much safer and healthier still, thousands of U.S. workers die from injuries on the job. In fact, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries shows a preliminary total of 4,383 fatal work injuries in 2012, down slightly from the final count of 4,693 in 2011.

Forty-one percent of all fatal workplace injuries happened in transportation incidents, which include car accidents, overturned vehicles and plane crashes. More than half (58%) of the 1,789 fatal transportation-related incidents occurred on highways, and involved motorized land vehicles.

The second-highest cause of worker fatalities was assaults and violent acts, which accounted for 18% of deaths. The preliminary data shows that workplace suicides fell slightly in 2010 to 258 after climbing to a high of 263 the year before.

Violence took the lives of 767 workers last year; with 463 homicides and 225 suicides. (Work-related suicides declined by 10% from 2011 totals, but violence accounted for about 17% of all fatal work injuries in 2012.) Shootings were the most frequent manner of death in both.

Slips, falls and trips killed 668 workers in 2012 -- about 15% of all workplace injuries. A total of 509 workers were fatally injured after being struck by equipment or objects on the job.

There were 142 multiple-fatality incidents -- incidents where more than one worker was killed -- in 2012, in which 341 workers died.

Ninety-two percent, or 4,045 of all on-the-job fatalities were among men, and the remaining 8%, or 338, were women. This is partly because there are disproportionately more men in dangerous industries like construction and mining. Still, women face their own dangers. About 20% of the women who died on the job were involved in roadway incidents,

while more than a quarter (29%) were victims of homicides, compared with only 9% for male homicides. That is at least partly because of a concentration of women in workplaces like food and beverage stores, where a majority of all deaths are homicides.

Twenty-five percent of all work fatalities occurred among those between ages 45 and 54. Fatal work injuries among individuals under 16 years of age nearly doubled, rising from 10 in 2011 to 19 in 2012—the highest total since 2005. However, fatal work injuries among workers 55 years of age and older declined for the second consecutive year.

The private sector proved more deadly than the public sector, with private industry accounting for 90% of fatalities. Within the private sector, the construction industry and transportation and warehousing saw the largest number deaths, with 775 and 677, respectively. Not included in this survey were professional athletes -- endurance athletes (long-distance runners and cross-country skiers, for example), and power athletes (boxers, wrestlers, weight lifters) and a mixed group of team athletes (like soccer, ice hockey or basketball players) and sprinters.

Football for instance – 1 in 3 NFL players will suffer from Alzheimer's or dementia at younger ages than their peers; that they're four times more likely to die from degenerative brain diseases; that 78 percent will be broke or nearly so within two years of retiring; that they may be disproportionately inclined to beat their wives; and that they live, on average, to the age of 55 or 60.

Researchers have found an 11% increased risk of mortality among athletes from disciplines with a high risk of body collision and with high levels of physical contact such as boxing, MMA fighters, ice hockey and rugby and this is before we factor in the inevitable sports injuries sometimes require surgeries and can lead to lifelong pain for some athletes.

So next time you find yourself complaining about piles of paperwork, obnoxious co-workers and demanding bosses — remember that your work situation could be much worse. With this said, if your work day sometimes seems to consist of nothing but boring meetings, coffee spills, and computer glitches, consider yourself lucky.

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The Power of Spinach

Find out why this leafy green vegetable is so good for you. Plus, learn more about how much of it you should be eating.

What You're Eating

Spinach is one of the best sources of the B vitamin folate – a cancer fighter – and carotenoids such as lutein, which help prevent macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in older adults. One thing you're not eating: a lot of iron. The myth that spinach is rich in iron (which made Popeye strong) surfaced back in 1870 when a researcher's misplaced decimal point in a publication gave spinach an iron content 10 times higher than reality. Reality is that a serving (1 cup) of raw spinach contains only about 1 mg of iron, which is not well absorbed because it is the plant (heme) form of iron. The calcium it contains also isn't absorbed very well by your body, thanks to high concentrations of oxalic acid. But these disadvantages are heavily outweighed by other nutritional benefits.

Healing Powers

In addition to protecting your eyes from age-related macular degeneration, thanks to its carotenoids, spinach has high concentrations of vitamin K, which can help maintain bone density and prevent fractures. Spinach is also a powerful source of potassium and magnesium as well as folate, all of which can keep blood pressure low, reducing the risk of stroke. Folate also appears to reduce the risk of lung cancer in former smokers, according to some studies.

Health Tips

To absorb more of the iron from spinach, eat it along with foods rich in vitamin C, such as red capsicum or orange segments. How much is enough: 1 cup raw or ½ cup cooked spinach leaves is one vegetable serving. Have at least five serves of vegetables every day.

Buying right: Choose crisp, bright green leaves and stems with no sign of yellowing, wilting or bruising. For mild flavor and delicate texture, buy baby spinach. Remove sand or dirt by washing spinach in a sink or bowl of water. Opting for pre-packaged, pre-rinsed spinach eliminates this step, but even this spinach should be rinsed before using.

By Elaine Russell – Reader's – Digest March 31, 2017

As stated above, full of nutrients and delicious taste, spinach is a wonderful superfood. But what's the best way to eat it? Read the following surprising facts about this leafy green:

· It's wiser to choose tender baby spinach leaves. The larger the leaves, the more mature they are and more likely to be tough=or stringy. Also, spinach leaves that are placed under direct light in the stores have been found to contain more nutrients than those stored in darkness.

· =C2◆ Cooking spinach actually increases its health benefits! Just half a cup of cooked spinach will give you thrice as much nutrition as one cup of raw spinach. That's because the body cannot=completely break down the nutrients in raw spinach for its use.

* As an exception to the advice above, research studies show that taking spinach in juice form is actually the healthiest way to consume it. Blend spinach with other vegetables or fruits to create a delicious glass of juice, or try a green smoothie.

<= class="m_4977142885636407934m_-8127405716069441209m_-656486635394792824=_ -7961857543440115057gmail-m_2316529243473243556gmail-m_-24096286104043321=6m_-2898380243958664293gmail-m_8032535085150903781gmail-m_7364578844834348=9m_7214502630609316032m_-5955632774661111741m_-5561663390226941878gmail-m_=834175173281053053gmail-m_5591870416997806566m_-1350999846084077074m_-9189=60299443654177m_5611129322921874124gmail-m_-4086174604780320648gmail-m_836=756590749716069m_-6847088887303417562m_2161194578616005294gmail-m_-7951578=9410294533gmail-m_-5515300791432822094gmail-MsoListParagraphCxSpMiddle" style="text-align:left;margin-left:1in">* There's a compound in spinach called oxalic acid, which blocks the absorption of calcium and iron. An easy way to solve this problem is to pair spinach with a food high in vitamin C. Mandarin oranges and cantaloupes spring to mind here. Another way to reduce the power of oxalic acid is to boil the spinach leaves for at least two minutes.=/p>

* =A0 Freezing spinach diminishes its health benefits. The way to get the best from the leaf is to buy it fresh and eat it the same day.

· ◆=A0 Do place spinach on your 'organic shopping' list, because the leaf tends to be sprayed heavily with pesticides that don't come off with normal washing.

· =C2◆ Everyone talks about the benefits of spinach in nourishing the eyes and building bones. What few know is that it is also very good for digestion. Spinach eases constipation and protects the mucus lining of the stomach, so that you stay free of ulcers. It also flushes out toxins from the colon.

· Another lesser known benefit of spinach is its role in skin care. The bounty of vitamins and minerals in spinach can bring you quick relief from dry, itchy skin and lavish you with a radiant complexion. Regular consumption of fresh, organic spinach juice has been shown to improve skin health dramatically.

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE
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<= class="MsoNormal" align="center" style="margin-bottom:0.0001pt;text-align:center;line-height:normal">

True wisdom comes to each of us when we realize how little we understand about life, ourselves, and the world around us.

=br>

Socrates

Web Link:=C2◆ <https://www.facebook.com/TheRawStory/videos/1=154338097642235/>
<<https://www.facebook.com/TheRawStory/videos/1015433809764=235/>>

<=pan style="font-size:12.5pt;font-family:georgia,serif">In the case Ficti=n is funnier than Truth as in this instance they look like they cound the same.

Enjoy....

THINK ABOUT THIS</=pan>

Hey America<=pan>

Web Link: <https://www.facebook.com/jeffrae/posts/10155942122208569></=>
<<https://www.facebook.com/jeffrae/posts/10155942122208569>>

Please take a look (via the above web link) at this PSA on prejudice which is as true=as it was when it was created 60 years ago...

EST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

From classic his classic 2001 HBO Special, *Complaints and Grievances*, Carlin once again masterfully attacks the idiocies of religion. This was Carlin's 12th HBO Special taped live from the Beacon Theater in New York City, just 10 weeks after the tragic events of 9/11, on November 17th, 2001.

THIS WEEK'S MUSIC

Chick Corea

This week you have been invited to enjoy the music of one of the most significant jazzmen since the '60s, Chick Corea (Armando Anthony "Chick" Corea, born June 12, 1941) is an American jazz and fusion pianist, keyboardist, and composer. As a member of Miles Davis's band in the late 1960s, he participated in the birth of the electric jazz fusion movement. In the 1970s he formed Return to Forever. Along with Herbie Hancock, McCoy Tyner, and Keith Jarrett, he has been described as one of the major jazz piano voices to emerge in the post-John Coltrane era. Corea continued to pursue other collaborations and to explore various musical styles throughout the 1980s and 1990s. As one of the few electric keyboardists to be quite individual and recognizable on synthesizers. In addition, he has composed several jazz standards, including "Spain," "La Fiesta," and "Windows." He is also known for promoting and fundraising for a number of social issues. As of January 2016, Corea had been nominated for sixty-three Grammy Awards, out of which he has won 22.

Corea was born in Chelsea, Massachusetts. He is of southern Italian and Spanish descent. His father, a jazz trumpet player who had led a Dixieland band in Boston in the 1930s and 1940s, introduced him to the piano at the age of four. Growing up surrounded by jazz music, he was influenced at an early age by bebop and stars such as Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Horace Silver, and Lester Young. At eight Corea also took up drums, which would later influence his use of the piano as a percussion instrument. Corea developed his piano skills by exploring music on his own. A notable influence was concert pianist Salvatore Sullo, from whom Corea started taking lessons at age eight and who introduced him to classical music, helping spark his interest in musical composition. He also spent several years as a performer and soloist for the St. Rose Scarlet Lancers, a drum and bugle corps based in Chelsea.

Given a black tu=edo by his father, he started playing gigs when in high school. He enjoyed listening to Herb Pomeroy's band at the time, and had a trio that playe= Horace Silver's music at a local jazz club. He eventually decided to move to N=w York City, where he studied musical education for one month at Columbia Universi=y and six months at Juilliard. He quit after finding both disappointing, but liked the atmosphere of New York, and=the music scene became the starting point for his professional career.

He picked up imp=rtant experience playing with the bands of Mongo Santamaria and Willie Bobo (1962-1963), Blue Mitchell (1964-1966)= Herbie Mann, and Stan Getz. He made his recording debut as a leader with 1966's Tones for Joan's Bones, and=his 1968 trio release (with Mirosla= Vitous and Roy Haynes) Now He Sings, Now He Sobs is considered a classic. After a short stint w=th Sarah Vaughan, Corea joined Miles Davis as Herbie Hancock's gradual replacement, staying wit= Davis during a very important transitional period (1968-1970). He was persuaded by the trumpeter to start playing electric piano, and was on =uch significant albums as Filles de Kilimanjaro, In a Silent Way, Bitches Brew, and Miles Davis at the F=llmore. When he left Davis, Corea at first chose to play avant-garde acoustic jazz in Circle, a quartet with Anthony Braxton, D=ve Holland, and Barry Altschul. But at the end of 1971, he changed directions again.

Leaving Circle, =orea played briefly with Stan Getz and then formed Return to Forever, which started out as a melodic Brazilian group wi=h Stanley Clarke, Joe Farrell, Airto, and Flora Purim. Within a year, C=rea (with Clarke, Bill Co=nors, and Lenny White) had changed Return to Forever into a pace-setting and high-powered fusion b=nd; Al DiMeola took Connors' place in 1974. While the music was rock-oriented, it still retained the improvisations of jazz, =nd Corea remained quite recognizable, even under the barrage of electronics.=C2◆ When RTF broke up in the late '70s, Corea retained the name for some big-band dates with Clarke. During the nex= few years, he generally emphasized his acoustic playing and appeared in a wide variety of contexts, including separate duet tours with Gary Burton and Herbie Hancock, a quarte= with Michael Brecker, trios with Miroslav Vitous and Roy Haynes, tributes t= Thelonious Monk, and even some classical music.

In 1985, Chick Corea formed a new fusion group, the E=ektric Band, which eventually featured bassist John Patitucci, guitarist Frank Gambale, saxophonist Eric Marienthal, and drummer Dave Weckl. To balance ou= his music, he formed his Akoustic Trio with Patitucci and Weckl a few years later. When Patitucci went out on his own in the early '90s, the person=el changed, but Corea continued leading stimulating groups (including a quartet with Patitucci and Bob Berg). During 1996-1997, Corea toured with an all-star quintet (includin= Kenny Garrett and Wallace Roney) that played modern versions of Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk compositions. He remains an important =orce in modern jazz, and every phase of his development has been well documented on records.

Solo Piano: Originals -- Corea began the 21st century by releasin= a pair of solo piano records, Solo Piano: Originals and Solo Piano: Standards, in 2000, followed by Past, Present & Futures in 2001. Rendezvous in New York appeared in 2003, followed by To the Stars in 2004. The Ultimate Adventure was released in 2006. That same year, Corea released Super

Trio with drummer Steve Gadd and bassist Christian McBride. In the spring of 2007, Corea released an unlikely but ultimately satisfying duet album with banjo master Béla Fleck entitled *The Enchantment* on Concord, followed by a Universal Japan-only six-disc box set called *Five Trios* in 2008 that showcased the pianist in a handful of different trio settings. The same year, Corea and vibraphonist Gary Burton released their fourth offering together, entitled *The New Crystal Silence*.

Five Peace Band: Live – The year 2008 was a busy one for Corea. He and John McLaughlin got together for the first time since they both played on Miles Davis' seminal *Bitches Brew* album. They pulled together a band with saxophonist Kenny Garrett, drummer Vinnie Colaiuta, and bassist Christian McBride for the recording *Five Peace Band: Live* (with another former Miles collaborator, Herbie Hancock, guesting on "In a Silent Way/It's About That Time"). Concord re-released *Return to Forever's* four albums issued between 1973 and 1976 (with Corea, White, Clarke, and DiMeola) -- *Hymn of the Seventh Galaxy*, *Where Have I Known You Before*, *No Mystery*, and *Romantic Warrior* -- as a precursor for a reunion tour. This resulted in both a live album, entitled *Returns*, and a concert DVD. In 2009, Corea teamed with Japanese piano sensation Hiromi for *Duet*, followed by a live trio album entitled *Forever with Clarke and White*, culled from their "RTF Unplugged" tour. The two-disc set, issued by Concord in 2011, featured guest appearances by Chaka Khan, original RTF guitarist Connors, and violinist Jean-Luc Ponty.

Further Explorations – In 2012, Corea was busy from the start. He delivered a trio recording on Concord in January entitled *Further Explorations*; his sidemen were Eddie Gomez and Paul Motian (both members of various Evans ensembles). Corea: *The Continents Concerto for Jazz Quintet and Chamber Orchestra* was issued by Deutsche Grammophone in February. In September, another duet recording with Burton, *Hot House*, was released by Concord. In the summer of 2013, Corea debuted his new electric band with the album *The Vigil*. Its members included bassist Christian McBride (though Hadrien Feraud often plays with the group live), drummer Marcus Gilmore, Tim Garland on reeds and winds, and guitarist Charles Altura. The expansive three-disc *Trilogy* was recorded live at stops all over the world and, with bassist Christian McBride and drummer Brain Blade, appeared in 2014. In 2015, Corea and Bela Fleck released the duet album, *Two*, compiled from over seven years of their live performances.

Described by one biographer as a keyboard virtuoso and prolific explorer of jazz and classical music, Chick Corea has attained living legend status after five decades of unparalleled creativity and an artistic output that is simply staggering. In response Corea is recognized as both a DownBeat Hall of Famer and NEA Jazz Master and is the fourth-most-nominated artist in the history of the Grammys, with 63 nominations. Additionally he has also earned 3 Latin Grammy Awards, the most of any artist in the Best Instrumental Album category.

From straight ahead to avant-garde, bebop to fusion, children's songs to chamber music, along with some far-reaching forays into symphonic works, Corea has touched an astonishing number of musical bases in his illustrious career while maintaining a standard of excellence that is awe-inspiring. A tirelessly creative spirit, Corea continues to forge ahead, continually reinventing himself in the process.

Corea celebrated his 75th birthday in 2016 by playing with more than 20 different groups during a six-week stand at the Blue Note Jazz Club in Greenwich Village, New York City. "I pretty well ignore the numbers that make up 'age'. It seems to be the best way to go. I have always just concentrated on having the most fun I can with the adventure of music." With this, you are again invited to enjoy the music of one of the most innovated musicians in jazz, the master pianist on keyboards the incomparable Chick Corea.

Chick Corea – Solo -- <https://youtu.be/yUcuiU1Qs88> <<https://youtu.be/yUcuiU1Qs88>>

Chick Corea – La Fiesta -- <https://youtu.be/8eVuwsimbtw> <<https://youtu.be/8eVuwsimbtw>> <=pan>

Chick Corea & Gary Burton – Eleanor Rigby -- https://youtu.be/bxfi_g_5CiM

Chick Corea & Gary Burton – Crystal Silence -- https://youtu.be/Vn=APR_ixo4

Chick Corea Elektric Band – Electric City -- <https://youtu.be/sSJYlfHjrTE> <<https://youtu.be/sSJYlfHjrTE>>

Chick Corea Elektric Band – Eternal Child -- <https://youtu.be/fmmVisVAusE> <<https://youtu.be/fmmVisVAusE>>

Chick Corea & Stefano Bollani – Windows -- <https://youtu.be/QYWS6zcL3Cw> <<https://youtu.be/QYWS6zcL3Cw>> <=span>

Chick Corea & Stanley Clarke – Waltz For Debby -- <= href="https://youtu.be/1SRcb35eWtg" target="_blank"><https://youtu.be/1SRcb35eWtg>

Chick Corea with Esperanza Spalding & Jeff Ballard – Alice In Wonderland -- <https://youtu.be/2avN8X9w-rc> <<https://youtu.be/2avN8X9w-rc>>

Chick Corea & Gary Burton – Tiny Desk Concert -- <https://youtu.be/15IHNYq6stw> <<https://youtu.be/15IHNYq6stw>>

Chick Corea & Stanley Clarke – No Mystery -- <https://youtu.be/10ib6qtpY7=>

Chick Corea & Bobby McFerrin – 93 Spain -- https://youtu.be/_o2RS8WfcbY <https://youtu.be/_o2RS8WfcbY>

Chick Corea Akoustic Band & Bobby McFerrin – Autumn Leaves -- <https://youtu.be/5jiXQmWBXbY> <<https://youtu.be/5jiXQmWBXbY>>

Chick Corea & Gary Burton – La Fiesta -- https://youtu.be/-Uok_WpjCTc <https://youtu.be/-Uok_WpjCTc>

Chick Corea & Stanley Clarke – 93 Light as a Feather -- <https://youtu.be/u2jxCvNb6dY?list=RDu2jxCvNb6dY> <<https://youtu.be/u2jxCvNb6dY?list=RDu2jxCvNb6dY>> </=pan>

Return To Forever – The Romantic Warrior -- <https://youtu.be/IObVilGPjHc> <<https://youtu.be/IObVilGPjHc>>

Return To Forever – Medieval Overture -- <https://youtu.be/XjOYscEN6Qc> <<https://youtu.be/XjOYscEN6Qc>>

Return To Forever – School Days -- <https://youtu.be/AGNdBAoupw>

Return To Forever – San Sebastian -- <https://youtu.be/4eJJUICHcKg> <<https://youtu.be/4eJJUICHcKg>>

Return To Forever – Sorcerers -- <https://youtu.be/wSksWyHsYw8> <<https://youtu.be/wSksWyHsYw8>>

BONUS

Miles Davis Live with Wayne Shorter Chick Corea – Miles Plays The Voodoo Down -- <https://youtu.be/1Unr1FTtNEk>

I hope that you enjoyed this week's offerings and wish you and yours a fantastic Easter and a rest of the great week....

Sincerely,

Greg Brown=

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