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Fred-Talks

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Introduction to this Newsletter Issue

Hello again! Welcome to my newsletter.

I hope you enjoy my newsletter, or at least find it amusing. Or, perhaps, even irritating? I think that I am funny, but no one laughs with me. I'm becoming more verbose. Sorry.

I am also getting a little more cynical, if that were possible. Considering world and domestic politics doesn't help my cynicism much.

This is my twelfth monthly Fred-Talk. I guess I might be up to doing another year. I'm working with a colleague on a pictorial essay on the intertidal regions of the pacific west coast. I'll keep you

abreast of our progress.

If you do not wish to receive more issues, please let me know via email. You can just write STOP for the subject.

I occasionally bring up issues that are someone else's point of view, but are points that I think should be discussed.

If you have other views, I would be happy to consider including your comments in the next Fred-Talk, with or without your by-line, as you wish. Send me an email.

Inside This Issue:

Introduction	1
Dumb, Ignorant, and Stupid	1
Books I Have Read	2
The Coming Plague	2
The Sheriff of Nottingham	2
Potable Water (What is NOT in it)	3
What is a Fad?	4
Will People Ever Learn?	4
Gross Commercialism	5

Dumb, Ignorant, and Stupid

Frequently students would ask me whether the next quiz or examination was going to be hard. I would usually answer them, "Not if you have studied and learned the material". Often they would respond with something like, "But, what is going to be on the test?"

My stock reply to that was to define three words: Dumb, Ignorant, and Stupid.

Dumb meant unable to learn and/or communicate. I suggested that I already knew they were all able to learn and express themselves in one way or another. Thus, they weren't dumb.

Ignorant inferred a lack of knowledge. Gaining this knowledge was why they were in the class in the first place. This may be curable.

Stupid was when a student knew the subject of the material that would be on a test, and they elected to not study or learn the material anyway. That may be incurable.

Sometimes students would argue that they should just have to learn "material in the book." I then would ask them what they would do should they be confronted by a circumstance that wasn't covered in the "book". I suggested that perhaps the teacher's past experiences could supplement the book material.

Occasionally I would tell them the story of my learning to weld aluminum with an acetylene torch. I was having trouble when an instructor watched what I was doing, told me I was holding the torch incorrectly, showed me how to do it, and then everything went smoothly. That was not "in the book."

Finally, the students would realize that answers were not going to be given to them prior to taking the exam. With some grumbling about how hard the material was, most buckled down, studied, and remembered to take good notes.

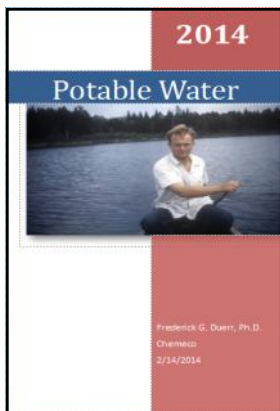
I also suggested to them, as budding nursing students, that it would not be a good thing if patients suffered because of their lack of knowledge.

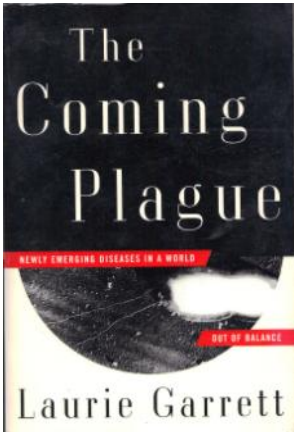
Website

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 Books I have read: "The Coming Plague" by Laurie Garrett


This is a large and interesting book, published in 1994, with an extensive index and bibliography. It describes scientific studies interspersed with essays on the people and places where the studies are performed.

My main criticism is I think the book could use more material on parasites of humans and non humans.

The book forced me to more completely re-examine my memories of my childhood in Minnesota. It was common that every family had a member who was maimed or died of a communicable disease. I had a sister who died as an infant. My wife had a brother who died at age 6. Infantile paralysis, tuberculosis, influenza, and a

host of other bacterial diseases were prevalent. Step mothers and fathers were common among my associates because a parent would get sick and die. Every one in my grade school had to have a tuberculin test to see if a student was exposed to tuberculosis.

This was in the 1930's through the 1950's. Just 12 years earlier (1918-19), more than 20 million people died of influenza (Spanish Flu).

Most people today have no knowledge of our recent past, and are ignorant that it could happen in the near future. Ignorance may be bliss, but is also foolish.

"The Coming Plague" is an eye opener!

"The Sheriff of Nottingham" by Richard Kluger

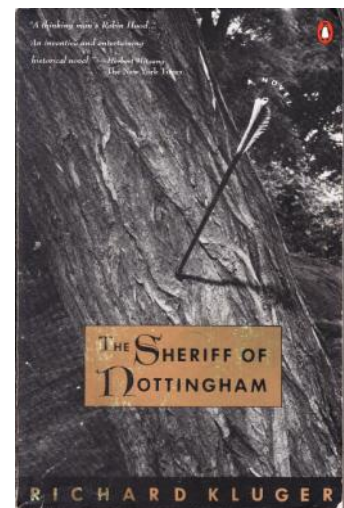
I was in the mood to procrastinate when someone handed me a book to read. The book was "The Sheriff of Nottingham" by Richard Kluger. I took the time to read it and I am glad I did.

Present populations of English speaking people have grown up with stories of Robin Hood and his Merry Men, the evil Sheriff of Nottingham, and the more evil King John of England. To my surprise and delight, the book is a well thought out and researched study of the people and places in twelfth century England all wrapped up neatly in a well-written novel.

Contrary to common belief, written records that Philip Mark, the Sheriff of Nottingham, was an honest and fair man living in a terrible feudal society in which the common person or serfs were practically slaves to the nobility. The nobility and wealthy peo-

ple won their elevated status by virtue of their battle prowess and, in some cases, sheer good luck.

You can read this book as an excellent novel, as a history of twelfth century Europe, as a treatise on sociology, and/or as a text on political science. Furthermore the book is an enjoyable read.

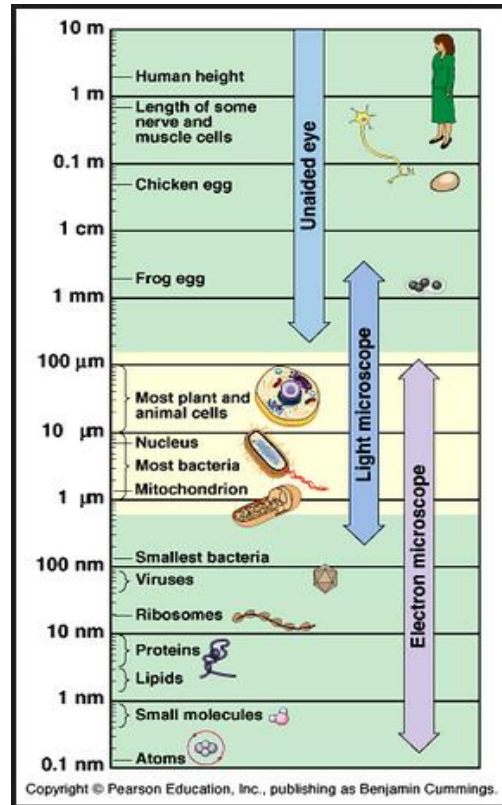


To Be, or Not to Be. What's the question?

Potable Water (What's in Your Water?)

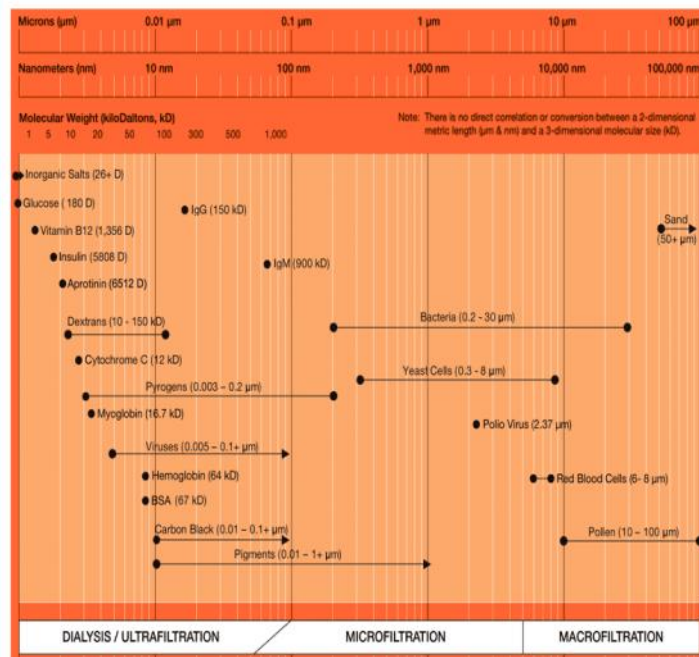
Many different things could be in your drinking water. Some of them could make you ill. Below is a list of potential water contaminants in order of their physical size:

1. Inorganic chemicals such as heavy metallic ions, and salts such as lead, mercury, and potassium cyanide.
2. Organic chemicals such as petroleum by-products and biological by-products.
3. Viruses such as influenza, SARS, and Ebola.
4. All diseases caused by bacteria such as pneumonia, typhoid fever, and cholera.
5. Protozoans such as *Giardia*, *Cryptosporidium*, and *Entamoeba*.
6. Parasites such as *Schistoma*, *Dracunulus*, and tapeworms.



Click to enlarge both charts.

Pore Size Chart



Many of these contaminants cannot be removed by simple filtering of the drinking water. Standard coffee filters have a pore size of 15 microns in diameter, but also with random 100 micron holes. The chart shows that this pore size cannot keep out viruses and small bacteria.

Special filters, mainly used in laboratories, have a pore size of 1.5 nm (nanometers). These filters need a pressurized water flow to function adequately. Reverse osmosis apparatus is one type of a pressurized water delivery system.

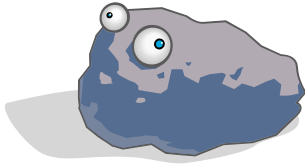
Coffee filters are a good method to pre-filter the big lumps from your drinking water. Small pore filters are expensive and may be difficult to replace. There are cheap and easy methods to make drinking water potable.

I will describe some of them in future Fred-Talks.

Procrastination is the art of keeping up with yesterday.

What is a Fad, and How would you prefer to die?

One definition of a Fad is any form of behavior deemed "neat" or "cool" developing in a population. The Fad disappears from a population when the novelty wears off, or in the case of health Fads, is shown to be false or silly. Pet Rocks were a Fad.



Various nutrition Fads appear and disappear with regularity. Some nutritional Fads appear to have merit, but many are money-making schemes by the purveyor. I have a tendency to think con artists promulgate most Fads.

It is a Fad in some circles to consider the Keystone Pipeline environmentally incorrect. Many people are against the pipeline, but are completely ignorant about it. Presently eighty percent of the Canadian crude oil is shipped via the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BMSF) to crude oil processing plants in the southern Midwest and Texas. Sending crude oil through the Keystone Pipeline instead of by rail will cause BMSF to lose about two billion dollars per year. Do you suppose that the large donations to politicians and environmentalists by

Warren Buffett (chairman of the board of BMSF) has anything to do with the delay in building the pipeline?

Then there are political Fads. Cynicism fuels my belief that most politicians seek power and wealth above all else. Have you ever wondered how beginning politicians tend to be in the lower income level, but retire wealthy?

A friend recently asked whether I thought a certain dietary regimen had any scientific merit. I explained that I would have to study the regimen a bit before making any conclusions. I did say that I tend to think that most activities that give you peace of mind, make you feel good, or make you healthier are probably worthwhile. If a placebo makes you feel better, keep taking it.

I divide harmful effects of diet or behavior into two types: one that will kill you in a few days, and one that may take years to kill you. Cyanide is an example of the former, and heavy metals (lead, mercury, etc.) are examples of the latter. I do not mean to infer that lead poisoning should not be prevented, but something like Ebola should take precedence.

We all die eventually. Is a heart attack better than a slow death by cancer? I do not know. That is above my pay grade.

Will People Ever Learn?

I have come to the conclusion through introspection and history that man will never learn. Man will always be guilty of all of the crimes mentioned in the Bible. The most we can hope for is that we survive as long and as best that we can.

I am not agnostic or atheistic. The former is not sure what religion to believe. The latter makes his non-belief into a religion itself. Curiously, many so-called atheists are demanding that their beliefs should be respected in the same manner as all religions. I am so far removed from religion that I rarely think about it.

I have already written about mobs in an earlier newsletter. Recently mobs made a mess out of a town in Missouri. Now different mobs are demanding removal of anything that offends them. An example is an atheist demand to remove a Christmas tree from a public build-

ing or gathering. They don't realize or care that a public building or private organization without a mention of religion is a monument to their god, Atheism.

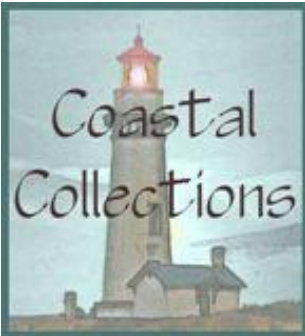
Many Jews have learned to tolerate Christmas as a time of non-religious celebration. Variations of Christians can tolerate each other. If a religion is so intolerant of "others" that they teach it is good to kill the "others", it tends to make the "others" say, "Not if I kill you first!"

Fortunately, Mother Nature always has the last word. When the human population gets too high, a plague of some sort kills off a large number of people. It is easier to tolerate distant relations than those who live with you.

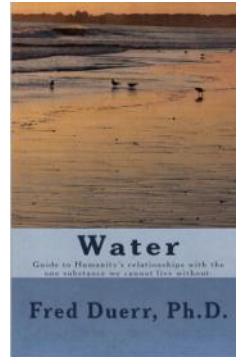
Enough for the time being. Now I am beginning to have reservations about Volunteerism.

Happy Thanksgiving!

BOOKS-BOOKS-BOOKS



Diana and I have somehow acquired several thousand books on a multitude of subjects. Click on the image at left to take you to our website, where you can search our inventory of books for sale at Biblio.com



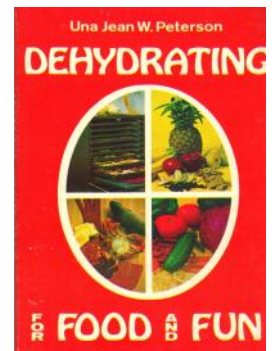
I have written a small, 54 page primer on water. It is designed to give basic information to the general public. It is available at Amazon.com as a paperback book (**Water**, by Fred Duerr), **ISBN: 1482773872** and as a Kindle, **ASIN: BOOCM13KSA**

Click on the book image to the left to take you to my page on Amazon.com.

Free Book on Dehydrating Foods

I have a few copies of Una Jean W. Peterson's book "Dehydrating for Food and Fun". These are my own personal copies, and I am willing to give these books away.

Send me an email, and you can pick up a free copy from me at the Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport, OR

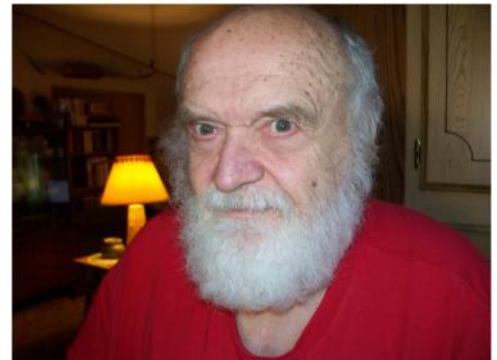


Free Potable Water Manual

I have written a very brief pamphlet on how to find potable water. You may obtain your free copy by clicking [here](#).



My son-in-law saw this picture and said that I have cataracts. That just shows he doesn't recognize an evil stare.



People who think they know everything are a great annoyance to those of us who do.

Isaac Asimov