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EAGLE FEATHER RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

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Welcome, Willkommen, Bienvenue, Bienvenidos, Benvenuto. Welcome to our last issue for 2010 in which we review the following topics: Safety of cell phones, problems with Twitter/Texting, Medical News, and the Information Gap regarding religions and terrorism.

Safety of Cell Phones. Recent scientific data suggests a radiation link from cell phones to cancers of the brain, neck, and head. European data has shown a significant amount of tumors on studies done on adults. American institutions concerned with health like the FDA are not wholly in agreement concluding that data is inconclusive. However, Dr. Michael Thun, vice president emeritus of epidemiology and surveillance research at the *American Cancer Society* acknowledges, however, that three studies related to a type of a brain tumor called a glioma “do show increased risk, two being statistically significant.” Unlike the European studies, research on cell phones and cancer in the U.S. has looked at subjects in the short term. Low level radiation is harmful after extended use. Exposure to radiation also depends on the number of calls one makes, the length of the conversation, the phone’s model, size and antennae. As significant as the European studies have been, the adult group tested did not include teenagers who are responsible for excessive use. Some countries including Germany, Switzerland, Israel, the U.K, France and even Finland, home to Nokia, are recommending limiting exposure to cell phones, especially to children. Lawmakers in Maine as well as the Mayor of San Francisco are considering some type of safety legislation. The amount of radiation that is emitted by a phone and then absorbed by human tissue—namely your face, ear and skull—is called the SAR (specific absorption rate). Children are more vulnerable because their nervous system is still developing. Some phones emit more radiation than others. Some immediate steps you can take to protect your brain is to use a hands-free device like *wired* headphones or the speaker feature in addition to buying phones with low SAR ratings which are provided by the manufacturer.

Twitter and Texting. There is an increasing body of data that is suggesting that the medium of texting and tweeting is toxic to lucid writing leading to an erosion of the English language. Additionally, studies suggest that it is placing the person at a health risk both physically and psychologically. The new trend is taking texters and tweeters into an addictive path...it is done in restaurants, while driving, during classes, when parents are asleep and even at church

services. One 13 year old accumulated 14, 528 messages in one month. Physicians and Psychologists say it is leading to anxiety, distraction in school, falling grades, repetitive stress injury and sleep deprivation. MIT psychologist Sherry Turkle, points to a shift in the way adolescents develop. Among the jobs of adolescence are to separate from your parents as they grow into autonomous adults, but technology is interfering with the normal process of growing up naturally. Being in constant touch can also interfere with peace and quiet but if your device vibrates every couple of minutes, it makes it very difficult to be in that state of mind. Any thought you may have had is interfered and lost. Being overly exposed can lead to further problems. Teenagers that text more than 125 times a day are more likely to do drugs, alcohol and sex. Just like tunnel carpal syndrome has developed by repetitive action on computers, similar dangers are present as the thumb is exposed to thousands of movements daily leading to temporary or permanent musculoskeletal disorder damage. But parents are also to blame as they indulge in cell phone or blackberry use splitting their attention as well.

Direct message on Twitter leads to an erosion of language skills. College professors see LOL speak fractured grammar, informal acronyms and emoticons crop up in essays. Teachers notice more punctuation errors, spelling mistakes and inconsistent capitalization usually found only in text messages and tweets. Students fail English exams due to a lack of basic grammar skills. Educators are partly to blame since they fail to enforce proper grammar instruction and allow SMS texting lingo in the classroom. Editors likewise, are seeing submissions from writers with butchered words like *dat* (that), *2* (two), *pases* (passes), *4* (four), *cuz* (because). Now thanks to twitter, words are being made up by corrupting the normal spelling e.g. adding an initial consonant cluster *tw* to make *twirting*. The most ridiculous non word may be Tweetsuit which is three letters longer than the original word of insult. Twitter addicts are also famous for dropping vowel sounds in words and inserting incorrect vowels in others while losing the apostrophe in others. An example of all of the above is in the following tweeter text: “BTW, did U know IMHO people on FF don’t meet FTF but send a DM to their friends? If I have to send U a RTon that, I’ll be LOL, LMK what you think. Thx.TTYL.” (If you understood that, you spend too much time tweeting). On a series on how online communication is affecting the mind, *New York Times* reporter Mark Richtel explained that those who identify themselves as multitaskers—constant users of Twitter, texting and online chatting—are less efficient at juggling problems and completing work. The more we spend consuming and exchanging rapid bits of information, the less creative we become. There was a time when Americans could spell, write full sentences and actually articulate thought on a page. Today’s college graduates have trouble writing a coherent two page essay but will get jobs in PR because they will be perceived as social media experts. But can they write effectively and coherently?

MEDICAL NEWS.

Diet and Depression. In a recent study, the *British Journal of Psychiatry* reported that people who regularly consume fish, fruit, and vegetables reduced their chances of suffering from depression. The study examined the diets of nearly 3,500 civil servants then assessed the individuals for symptoms of depression five years later. The result was a “protective effect” from a whole-food diet. Conversely, a diet of processed meats sweetened desserts, fried food, refined cereals, and high-fat dairy products “seems to be deleterious for depression.” It was surmised that it is the anti-oxidants in fruits and vegetables, that protect cells from damage; the folic acid in leafy greens, which affects brain tissue; or the omega-3 fatty acids in fish, present in certain brain membranes.

Knees and Joints. Each year 19 million Americans visit an orthopedic surgeon due to knee discomfort; it is one of the most frequently affected by degenerative diseases including osteoarthritis, a disease that 10 million have and your lifetime risk of developing it is nearly one in two. There are some things that you can do to save your knees and others to avoid like clogs and high heels: (1) *achieve a healthy weight*. Obese women had nearly four times the risk of osteoarthritis while obese men had five times the risk. (2) *Strengthen your muscles*. Women with stronger quadriceps or front thigh muscles are better protected. Do low impact exercises like leg raises, wall sits and squats. (3) *Get moving*. A lack of joint mobility is directly linked to knee pain. Regular tai chi or yoga increases one's range of motion. Add 10 minutes of stretching to daily workouts. (4) *Pick knee friendly footwear*. Clogs and stiff-soled walking shoes may feel comfortable but actually cause knee joints to carry loads up to 15% greater. High heels similarly increase the load to knee joint. Get shoes with flexible soles that protect your feet. Cheap shoes will usually do not offer protection; to the contrary they can further add problems like bunions to your feet.

Contaminated Spices and Water. After more than a decade of not listing a new water contaminant, the EPA plans to overhaul its efforts to safeguard drinking water and to tighten restrictions on four waterborne compounds that cause cancer. In the past the EPA examined potential contaminants one by one, a process that can drag on for years and drain resources. Now it will consider contaminants in groups, such as pesticides, disinfecting byproducts or volatile organic compounds. It will move to lighten limits on four specific contaminants that cause cancer because scientific advancements allow for detection at lower levels. The compounds are *tetrachloroethylene* and *trichloroethylene*, which are used in industrial and textile processes and *acrylamide* and *epichlorohydrin* which enter water during treatment process. Worldwide, more people die from polluted water every year than from all forms of violence, including war; an estimated 2 billion tons of wastewater is discharged daily. People suffering from water-related illnesses fill more than half of the world's hospital beds

After the salmonella outbreak, black and red pepper were linked to contamination; recalls of tainted spices ranging from basil to sage are in the increase as 249 illnesses in 44 states and the District of Columbia have been detected. Irradiation, steam heating or fumigation with ethylene oxide readily accomplishes preventing contamination; but apparently, they are not following through. Legislation is pending to require food companies to take steps treating raw spices to avoid contamination. Last year the House approved such action but the Senate did not act on it.

Medical Radiation. For years, Americans have been exposed to inordinate amounts of medical radiation. Patients' average lifetime dose of diagnostic radiation-excluding therapeutic radiation-has increased sevenfold since 1980. Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles discovered it had accidentally exposed more than 260 patients to eight times the normal dose of radiation for CT brain scans over a period of 18 months. In Alabama overdoses by imaging equipment were reported to at least 104 people. Some of the FDA changes include promoting a personal medical imaging history card that will enable patients to keep track of the number of images and amount of radiation they receive over time. Imaging equipment could be changed to automatically calibrate to a recommended dose of radiation for a given procedure; it could also identify the operator as a way of tracking errors. David Brenner, director of the *Center for Radiological Research* at Columbia University said it was a good start but it does not go far

enough because it does not address the central issue: too many CT scans being done without medical justification. This unfortunately, has no regulatory backup.

Connection between oral health and heart conditions. There is a link between oral bacteria and hardening of the arteries according to a study published in the *International Journal of Cardiology*. Gingivitis or Periodontitis can explain the association where disease is caused by an accumulation of bacteria or plaque in the gums. These organisms release toxins that can circulate around the body. With respect to the heart, the arterial system may be affected. According to a study in the *Journal of Clinical Periodontology*, the more severe the gum disease, the thicker and harder the walls of the arteries. This is true also for younger adults with no heart problems. Gum disease threatens more than the heart. In theory, the toxins in plaque can cause harm wherever they go. Scientists are now finding links between oral health and conditions such as diabetes, kidney disease, preterm labor, osteoporosis, Alzheimer's disease and even certain types of cancer. *The American Academy of Periodontology* states that one in three adults over 30 have periodontal disease. With deep cleaning and removal of bacterial buildup, gum disease can be reversed if it is caught in the early stages. Flossing and brushing daily should be followed up with strong irrigation. Try mixing into the tank of your irrigator a combination of filtered water, Listerine and anti-plaque solution. This will not only get rid of daily bacterial buildup between your teeth, but it will also massage your gums.

Information Gap: Religion and Terrorism

The *Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life* recently released the results of its first *U.S. Religious Knowledge Survey*. This was in response to a remark made by Boston University religion professor, namely that most Americans are "profoundly ignorant about religion." Who scored the highest? Atheists, Agnostics, Mormons and Jews scored the highest, followed by white Evangelical Protestants, Catholics and mainline Protestants. The following are some conclusions: (1) while most people know that teachers cannot lead a classroom in prayer, few know that a teacher can teach the Bible as literature or can teach comparative religions. (2) Jews and atheists, respectively, answered an average of 20.5 and 20.9 out of 32 questions correctly standing out for their knowledge of world religions e.g. they knew that most people in Indonesia are Muslim and they also knew the role of religion in public life. Blacks and Hispanics fared worse on the test overall. (3) Educational attainment was the best predictor of religious knowledge particularly if a class in religion was taken at the college level. (4) While 37% of Americans are devoted Scripture readers, they are less inclined to read other books about religion. (5) While 48% of Americans are religiously affiliated, they rarely or seldom read books or visit websites about their own religion. (6) 70 % of Americans seldom read about other religions. Americans, moreover, are deeply divided over questions of the Ten Commandments, the Islamic holy day and Joseph Smith. With respect to atheists/agnostics, 80% were raised in a faith with 75% being Christian and as such they have had time to reflect on these matters. Because Americans live in a dominant Christian culture, people who identify with other religions have a more difficult time fitting in socially. One might also conclude that ignorance historically has led to prejudice racism and violence. While there are countless of examples, the Holy Duty or the Inquisition stands out, along with the first Holy War that lasted over 200 years that was waged by Christians, now known as the Christian Crusades. The *jihad* then was not an external religious duty; rather it was internal and missionary, restricted between their own people. Thus, European Christians began the first *jihad* as it is now being described.

Today when we think of religious terrorism we think of something that is exclusive to Islam. This is a self-deluding fallacy in view of the countless of violent acts done in the name of Christianity. From Eric Rudolph's bombing of the Atlanta Olympics, a gay night club and two abortion clinics to the "Phineas Priests" who bombed banks, a newspaper and a Planned Parenthood Office in Spokane; from Matt Hale soliciting the murder of a federal judge in Chicago to Scott Roeder's assassination of abortion provider Dr. George Tiller, Timothy McVeigh destroying a federal building and 168 lives in Oklahoma City, there are no shortage of "Christians" who believe that Jesus allows them to commit murder. We now can add the Hutaree, a self-styled Christian militia in Michigan, nine of which have been arrested and accused of a plot to kill police officers in hopes of sparking an anti-government uprising. There is a strange narrow mindedness and ignorance among some 40 % of the population. It is the old myopic "them vs. us" mentality that continues in a type of modern colonialism. Within all of this is the idea of preparing for the end time battles to keep the testimony of Jesus Christ alive, so says the Hutaree Web site. The spirit of the Aramaic cultured Jesus is diametrically opposite this extremist fundamentalist position; is Jesus not the one that said that if someone hits you on right cheek, offer him your left, the one who said if someone forces you to go one mile with him, go two or the one who said love your enemies? Behind all of the justified religious violence (Christian and Muslim) is a personalization and misuse of religion with fear as a tool to incite the ignorant and uninformed masses. Power politics has always been behind the distortion of facts and history, the creation of new revisionism to satisfy new political paradigms. In Christianity it goes back to Constantine and his Roman brand of Christianity, the new Greek worldview Biblical interpretations, the censorship of countless sacred works left out of the Bible that did not fit the new Roman paradigm. We note the subsequent divisions into sects after Buddha and Mohammed died. We note further, the many divisions within Christianity. During American colonialism, a Native American asked a missionary why there were so many divisions in Christianity, noting that among Native Americans there are no divisions in their spiritual teachings. *Thayendaneia* (Mohawk, 1742-1807) similarly expressed the conflict: "Our wise men are called Fathers, and they truly sustain that character. Do you call yourselves Christians? Does the religion of Him who you call your Savior inspire your spirit, and guide your practices? Surely not. It is recorded of Him that a bruised reed he never broke. Cease then to call yourselves Christians, lest you declare to the world your hypocrisy. Cease too to call other nations savage, when you are tenfold more the children of cruelty than they. No person among us desires any other reward for performing a brave and worthwhile action, but the consciousness of having served his nation. I bow to no man for I am considered a prince among my own people. But I will gladly shake your hand."

I wonder what Buddha, Mohammed, Moses or Jesus Christ would think of people today who justify verbal, physical or religious violence and profit in their name?

PROVERBS. *All things are spun out of the same web.* (Hopi Nation)
Our first teacher is our own heart. (Cheyenne Nation)

Happy and Insightful Reading,

Arnoldo Carlos Vento, Ph.D