

Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

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Valentine greetings were popular as far back as the Middle Ages, though written

Valentine's didn't begin to appear until after 1400. The oldest known valentine still in existence today was a poem written in 1415 by Charles, Duke of Orleans, to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London following his capture at the Battle of Agincourt.

Bastille Day and French History

Bastille Day is a holiday celebrating the storming of the Bastille—a military fortress and prison—on July 14, 1789, in a violent uprising that helped usher in the French Revolution.

Part of the lore of the French revolution is the supposed quote from Marie Antoinette, "Let them eat cake" in response to the comment that the peasants had no bread. Upon being informed that the citizens of France had no bread to eat, Marie Antoinette, Queenconsort of Louis XVI of France, is said to have exclaimed "let them eat cake", or "Qu'ils mangent de la brioche". This cemented her position as a vain, airheaded woman who didn't care for the common people of France, or understand their position, and is why she was executed in the French Revolution.

She didn't utter the words at all. Critics of the Queen claimed she had said the regretful words in order to make her look insensitive and undermine her position. The words had actually been used, if not actually said, a few decades earlier to also attack the character of a different noble.



A Sensible Anti-Covid Strategy

Jay Bhattacharya, a Professor of Medicine at Stanford University, presented these thoughts at a panel discussion held by Hillsdale College in October, 2020. More details are available online at this link: [A Sensible Approach](#) (use ctrl & click)

Bhattacharya says that the World Health Organization was wrong when it said in early March that three percent of people who get Covid die from it, because we were not identifying most of the people who had been infected. The Covid fatality rate is actually much closer to 0.2 or 0.3 percent.

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He says we should be testing people for specific antibodies to find out how many actually have been infected. The median result of 82 such studies from around the world is a fatality rate of only about 0.2 percent.

What has not been sufficiently emphasized in public health messaging or taken into account by most policymakers is the huge difference between the small danger of Covid to the young and the much higher danger to the old and those with underlying health conditions.

Recently, Bhattacharya met with two other epidemiologists who concluded that the widespread lockdown policy has been a devastating public health mistake. In response, they wrote and issued the Great Barrington Declaration, which can be viewed—along with explanatory videos, and answers to frequently asked questions—online at [Declaration](#)

The declaration already has been signed by over 43,000 medical and public health scientists and medical practitioners. It recommends an approach they call Focused Protection. As immunity builds in the population, the risk of infection to all—including the vulnerable—falls. All populations will eventually reach herd immunity—the point at which the rate of new infections is stable—and that this can be assisted by (but is not dependent upon) a vaccine. Our goal should therefore be to

minimize mortality and social harm until we reach herd immunity.

Bhattacharya says the most compassionate approach that balances the risks and benefits of reaching herd immunity is to allow those who are at minimal risk of death to live their lives normally and build up immunity to the virus through natural infection, while better protecting those who are at highest risk. When we come up with a vaccine, it will help, but herd immunity is what will bring it to an end.

The Roots of Love Me Tender

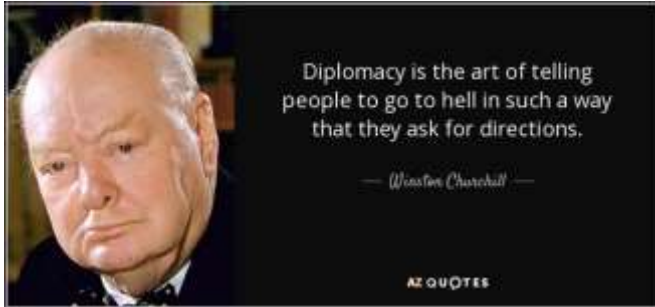
For his 1956 hit song "Love Me Tender," Elvis Presley used a melody that was written by George R. Poulton and published in 1861, with lyrics by W.W. Fosdick. Entitled "Aura Lea," sometimes spelled "Aura Lee," it is a sentimental American Civil War song about a maiden.

The original song became popular as a minstrel song, and the tune also was taken up by the U.S. Military Academy as a graduating class song called "Army Blue," with new lyrics by W. Beclaw. The Civil War began shortly after the song's release, and "Aura Lea" was adopted and sung around campfires by soldiers on both sides. In the 1940s and 1950s, it became popular with barbershop quartets. Later, Presley also used the melody in a song entitled "Violet (Flower of N.Y.U.)" in the film *The Trouble with Girls*.

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Winston Churchill



Sir Winston Churchill often made profound and sometimes witty comments on life.

Here are just a few examples:

- You will never reach your destination if you stop and throw stones at every dog that barks.
- Fear is a reaction. Courage is a decision.
- A nation that forgets its past has no future.
- There is nothing government can give you that it hasn't taken from you in the first place.
- Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.
- A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.
- One man with conviction will overwhelm a hundred who have only opinions.
- Life can either be accepted or changed. If it is not accepted, it must be changed. If it cannot be changed, then it must be accepted.

The Buffalo Theory



In the TV series "Cheers," Cliff Clavin explained his buffalo theory of intelligence to his buddy, Norm. He said, "Well you see, Norm, it's like this...a herd of buffalo can only move as fast as the slowest buffalo, and when the herd is hunted, it is the slowest and weakest ones at the back that are killed first. This natural selection is good for the herd as a whole, because the general health and speed of the whole group keeps improving by the regular killing of the weakest members. In much the same way, the human brain can only operate as fast as the slowest brain cells. Now, as we know, excessive intake of alcohol kills brain cells. But naturally, it attacks the slowest and weakest brain cells first. In this way, regular consumption of beer eliminates the weaker brain cells, making the brain a faster and more efficient machine. And that, Norm, is why you always feel smarter after a few beers."

