

## Downsides aplenty accompany digital archives

by Julian Sereno

A couple of months ago Brian Bock reached out to me with a request — that I rewrite a headline on an article about him that we ran on the front page in February 2011. The article, by Tim Keim, is positive and praises Bock, who served at the time as a Chatham County Commissioner. The subject was Bock losing his job as a financial adviser at Sun Trust because of his willingness to take stands on divisive issues as an elected official — losing his job for fulfilling his duty.

The headline on the article read: “Sun Trust fires Brian Bock for serving Chatham.” Whenever anyone has Googled him since, that headline has appeared as a subject line; click on it and you see the article. The problem, according to Bock, is that people just read the headline and not the article and all that registers is “Sun Trust fires Brian Bock”.

I thought he had a point, and went so far as to rewrite the headline to: “Brian Bock gets raw deal for serving Chatham”. Then I balked at making the change.

The reason is that it would mean changing words in the archives, and archives are the historical record. Changing archival material in any way at all would compromise their integrity. The printed paper is archived in the North Carolina section of the Southern Historical Collection at Wilson Library at UNC in Chapel Hill. The two — print and digital — need match. Historical research depends on archival material, so

if it is edited in the present, it changes history in a most dishonest way.

Trips to Wilson Library are limited to local scholars, while digital archives are available to everyone with access to the internet. *Chatham County Line* has been used in research by a doctoral student at UNC Wilmington already; I presume it was through our digital archives.

And digital archives are under assault. Brian Bock’s request was the most sympathetic but hardly the first. Earlier, a company that helps dealing with the digital afterlife requested we make a change in an article that Jeff Davidson had written on that subject. In his list of online resources, a representative of the company said that a resource Jeff had listed no longer existed and would I please remove the old name and web address and replace it with those of her company. She didn’t seem to believe in archives. To her they are websites like any other, alive and needing to remain au courant; even while dealing with death and the dead.

My worst case was 10 or so years ago. An advertising agency in England offered me \$100 to go inside an article about a music act, Shakori Hills, if memory serves, and insert the name of some European insurance company a couple of times at certain points in the article. They knew it was the historical record and they deliberately wanted to change it for the purpose of

deception and dissimulation.

The problem with digital archives is a subset of the larger problems of the new digital world order: that the whole world — good and bad — is merely a click away. In the mean time I’ll vouch for *Chatham County Line*’s archives. If you don’t believe me, you can go to Wilson Library and see for yourself.

### FOLLOW UP TO OCTOBER 2018 SILENT SAM SUGGESTION:

On Dec. 3 Chapelboro.com reported: “UNC Chancellor Carol Folt presented a four point plan for the preservation of the Silent Sam statue at Monday’s meeting. She stated that the university would prefer to move the statue off-campus, but the current law does not allow for it. Public safety concerns also made it impossible to return the statue to its former pedestal at McCorkle Place or any other outdoor location.

Folt said that, in accordance to the plan, Silent Sam would be moved to a new on-campus facility at the Odom Village site. Folt estimated the cost at \$5.3 million to build new long-term structure, which would include technology and a teaching classroom aimed at telling the “full history” of UNC.

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## Contemporary issues

by Don Lein

Now that the election is over, let’s take a look at other issues. One issue that has been around for months is the issue of the location of the second headquarters for Amazon. This is a play of multiple acts wherein, arguably the richest man in the world, Jeff Bezos, seeks tax breaks/incentives from politicians so that he can “afford” to move into their area. The politicians, on the other hand are cast in the role of ascertaining who will be the winners/losers in their game of political largesse/corporate welfare i. e., if Amazon gets a break, what other industries pay for it?? Do politicians really have an understanding of whether the money they lavish on newcomers would better be spent encouraging existing industries. After all it wasn’t that long ago that Amazon was a start-up. How many potential Amazons are being squelched by confiscatory taxes necessary to attract the richest persons in the world???

One outspoken critic of this game of political footsies is Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the Socialist wunderkind from New York, who believes that taxpayer money should not be used for such purposes, particularly with a company that is so financially successful as Amazon. If industries are to get tax cuts — why should it be only to billionaires?? Ms Cortez has not only spoken out on this issue, but has also greeted the potential new Speaker of the House with her mob of 200 youth activists who demand a “Green New Deal”. They demand that we need to be in a world with 100 percent renewables, because “our lives depend upon it.” “The IPCC... says we have 10 years left and we cannot afford to wait.”

Let’s take a look at the report by the IPCC (United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) which has triggered Ms. Cortez’s angst. IPCC Special Report 15 does claim that the “tipping point” for global disaster is just 12 years away unless the various world governments make “rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society.” Specifically, fossil fuel use must be slashed from 80 percent of global energy today to zero by 2050 — and the world must

spend 2.4 trillion per year for the next 17 years to subsidize the transition to renewable energy. The likely total bill would be \$60-80 trillion by 2036! Can you guess how many politically oriented Solyndras would be in the mix? MIT Emeritus Professor of Atmospheric Physics Richard Lindzen called the report “implausible conjecture backed by false evidence and repeated incessantly ... to promote the overturn of industrial civilization”.

How did this hoax begin and how does it perpetuate itself?? It began in 1988 with the formation of IPCC. After spending five days working with/interviewing Maurice Strong, first Executive Director of IPCC’s governing agency, Hamilton Spectator investigative reporter Elaine Dewar concluded that the overarching objective of the IPCC was political, not scientific. “Strong was using the U. N. as a platform to sell a global environment crisis and the global governance agenda.” This political agenda required some scientific credibility and in stepped U. S. Senator Timothy Wirth who was on the U. S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. He was aware of a scientist at NASA who had done work on human impact on global warming and was very certain about it. On June 23, 1988 Dr. James E Hansen testified that the greenhouse effect “has been detected, and it is changing our climate now...” In January 15, 2009 Dr. John Theon, Hansen’s former supervisor wrote to Congress “Hansen was never muzzled even though he violated NASA’s official agency position on climate forecasting (i. e. we did not know enough to forecast climate change nor mankind’s effect upon it). Indeed, as stated in the IPCC Third Assessment Report it states, “In climate research and modeling, we should recognize that we are dealing with a coupled non-linear chaotic system, and therefore the long-term prediction of future climate states is not possible.” An increasing number of climate scientists now conclude that there is no empirical evidence of human-caused global warming. There are only computer model speculations that humans are causing warming and every forecast made using these models since 1990 has

been wrong — with actual temperatures getting further from predictions with every passing year.

Alas, our country is becoming more and more polarized with “white privilege” being the chief whipping boy and “old white men” (my cohort) the absolute worst. As Sarah Jeong, newly appointed Editorial Board member of the New York Times was quoted as saying, “Oh man, it’s kind of sick how much joy I get out of being cruel to old white men.” Of course, what is white?? Many Latinos are far whiter than some Italians/ Greeks who have been considered “white” for more than a century?? Elizabeth Warren who billed herself as Cherokee and/or a woman of color was forced to reveal her DNA which showed less than a 1 percent chance she was as advertised. One wonders why the Democrats are not embracing Corey Booker, Kamala Harris and Maxine Waters as the leadership faces, thus proving their embrace of diversity. Instead we have septuagenarian multi-millionaire white elite Nancy Pelosi and near-septuagenarian professional politician Chuck Schumer. Apparently left-wing whites have assured themselves that the wave of identity politics will not break on their privileged shores.

Who will help overcome this polarization?? Apparently not the media. In a recent Zogby poll 72 percent of those polled believe the media is driving these hate-fueled divisions. The Gray Lady (New York Times) made a hard left turn during the Vietnam War and has kept tacking further and further left. Jeff Bezo’s Washington Post and most other media outlets have followed suit. Fifty-one percent of Democrats support the idea that the media exacerbates/facilitates polarization while 94 percent of Republicans do, while 2/3 of respondents indicate Trump bears some responsibility, as well. Interestingly both genders were in agreement while younger age groups (18-29) were more likely to blame the media than older age groups (70+).

We wrap up 2018 on that note. Happy Holidays!!

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## Experience the joy of doing nothing

by Jeff Davidson

“...people never are alone now. We make them hate solitude; and we arrange their lives so that it’s almost impossible for them ever to have it.”

~ *Brave New World, Aldous Huxley*

As we head into the holiday season and then the new year, perhaps you’ve noticed: Many people are like get-it-done machines with nary a moment to wind down or hide from intrusions. In this day and age, unfortunately, it’s becoming harder and harder to be alone, especially alone with our own thoughts. Dr. Timothy Wilson, a social psychologist at the University of Virginia, along with researchers conducted an experiment with student volunteers. The students were given two options.

For 15 un-interrupted minutes they could do nothing. Or, they could give themselves a small, electric shock. Roughly 67 percent of the men and 25 percent of the women in the experiment chose to give themselves small shocks, even though earlier, many had proclaimed that they would pay money not to endure such a shock.

### SHOCK IT TO ME

Why did they opt for the shock? They became

increasingly anxious for anything to do over the course of the 15 minutes. Aha, you say! These were probably millennials for whom a 15-minute stretch of doing nothing is virtually impossible.

As it turns out, the participants consisted of adults recruited from a farmer’s market and from a church. They acted in much the same way that you might expect of millennials. They felt anxious and antsy when left alone for a 15 minute stretch with nothing else to do but be with themselves.

The question today for each of us is why is it becoming so hard to take a few moments throughout the day to simply do nothing? Have we become such a driven populace that we cannot even spare a few minutes for ourselves? Do we no longer recognize the peace of mind that we can experience when we’re not fully occupied every minute of the day?

### THREE WAYS TO WEAN YOURSELF

If you recognize that you are constantly seeking to optimize every minute of the day, and perhaps are oversubscribed, over-informed, and overwhelmed, here are interlaced ideas that you can put into practice:

1) Start small. Rather than attempt a long

stretch of doing simply nothing, see if you can last for 60 seconds or maybe 120 if you’re feeling brave. It’s best to attempt this after you finish a task and feel good about your accomplishment. Marinate in your positive feelings. Perhaps before you go to lunch or coming back from lunch, or before taking a break or coming back from a break, you give yourself the opportunity to pause and, well, simply do nothing.

If you have a 15 minute break, where is it written that you can’t spend the first 60 seconds at your desk doing nothing, take a 13 minute break, then spend the last 60 seconds at your desk, once again doing nothing.

2) As you build confidence in your ability to take some time out with no thoughts or activities in mind, strive for three to five minutes. If you arrive at work early, you could spend such time in your car with the radio off, not checking your cell phone, and not doing anything, other than simply sitting there.

In at home or, more urgently, in your office, perhaps you can spend three minutes undisturbed in a conference room, corporate library, cafeteria, rooftop terrace, or somewhere else.

3) At home, where you have more flexibility, could you attempt a short weekend session? This should be no problem. During the

weekday, it’s understandable that you seek to efficiently commute to and from work although even on week nights it might be possible for you to carve out a few minutes. Think of all the times you’ve been online, or you flick through the TV channels, and how aimless that can be.

### REINFORCING YOUR NEW BEHAVIOR

As time passes, giving yourself some stretches here and there where you don’t have to do anything can become reinforcing. You have the opportunity to take a deep breath. You get a chance to reflect or to clear your mind. You have time to visualize.

Even if none of these things happen, you still get a chance to slow down. Any way you look at it, it’s a good proposition. Happy New Year!

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