
The

Szpinner

You can't change the people around you, but you can change the people around you

Vol. 8 Issue 2

FEBRUARY

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One down...February's next!

This is heart month. Think about a little self examination...*what shape's your heart is in?*

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The Editorial:

Stop the truck, I want to get off!

In its simplest distillation, each of us likely belongs to one of three social groups: the pandemically polarized, Trumpian terrorists, or the complacent silent majority. The latter poses no serious destructive threat to our way of life; the first two do.

The pandemically polarized and the Trumpian terrorists are the dangerous factions. Their goal is the nihilistic destruction of foundations of our society: government, political leadership, qualified authorities, community and social leaders.

“‘F**k’ Trudeau,” “Trudeau should step down,” “Trudeau should resign,” “Remove the b*****d.” are not prime samples of positive free speech. They are examples of hate. The kind social minorities have experienced for years and continues today, the Indigenous, Blacks, Asians, Metis, LBGT+ members, and the Jews.

The justifications offered by these two factions cannot be accepted because they are based on disinformation or inaccurate claims, but more importantly because the goals of these factions benefit individuals first at the expense of the majority of the community. Defense of personal rights trumps the welfare of the majority. This is neither reasonable, nor is it defensible. As many people as possible rather than the few should benefit from community policies and government legislation. Someone may suffer in this approach, but fewer than more seems reasonable and logically acceptable.

The goal of these two groups cannot be justifiable. It is nihilism, the destruction of social and democratic foundations created for the good of the majority. It is inevitable that some may not benefit by any law legislated by society. Benefiting every single person is impossible. All people cannot be guaranteed total benefit with any policy or law. Some will be logically omitted or overlooked. It is inevitable and unavoidable. But the good of the majority should transcend the good of the few. That logic seems reasonable and it seems to escape these factions. Their priority is self, regardless of the majority consideration.

The truckers convoying to Ottawa in support of their goals of anti-vaccination, anti-government mandates are short-sighted in their view that they are the ones impacted most severely by government policies. They are myopic in how they look at these policies; the policies are not solely Canadian; the intent of the policies is not to

restrict personal rights nor to diminish the right of anyone to earn a living. The policies are the most effective weapons we currently must defeat, or at least manage the pandemic. The policies are intended to benefit the majority of society, not impinge on the rights of anyone.

Sadly, society seems to have developed a myopic self-centered view. ‘What’s in it for me?’ seems to be the highest card in their hand and it is played first and frequently nowadays.

Our society is deteriorating and depreciating, losing respect and regard for principles, morals, and ethical values previously held in high regard and the bulwarks of daily life once. Remember the days when a policeman was a policeman, not a cop, not the fuzz, not a copper? Remember ‘sir’ and ‘ma’am’ as proper forms of addressing an adult? Remember ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ automatic prefix and suffix of the vocabulary of any youngster? Remember trying to avoid telling parents about receiving punishment at school to avoid a secondary punishment at home?

Unarguably society was far from perfect back then, but it was better by far than the current replacement. There was respect for authority, honour of institutional representatives, adherence to a set of values that held society up rather than tearing it down. We are guilty of letting those days erode, dissolve, and disappear to the detriment and possible destruction of good social foundations took millenniums to develop. Continuing our adherence to this credo doom our society as we know it to complete extinction. Change and improvement should always be considered but not at the hands of nihilistic destruction...the road we are trucking along now.

From the Ottawa and Pickering desks...



Member of Parliament Jennifer O’Connell writes...



Jennifer O’Connell

Political Affiliation:

Liberal

Constituency:

Pickering–Uxbridge

Province / Territory:

Ontario

Preferred Language:

English / French

Dear Readers,

Happy New Year!

It is such a pleasure to be back in the House of Commons as your Member of Parliament. Thank you for your continued support and trust over the years. I’m excited to continue representing our vibrant community of Pickering-Uxbridge in the 44th Parliament of Canada.

There is no question that the beginning of this year has been difficult for many. The rise of daily COVID-19 infections resulted once again in public health restrictions for us here in Pickering-Uxbridge, and for many across Canada. In response, our Government made sure that workers were protected, and businesses were able to survive through the roll-out, and extension of targeted support measures.

While many industries across our country have been hit hard by the impact of COVID-19, I’m proud that with the help of our emergency support programs, our economic recovery has remained strong. At the peak of the pandemic, 5.5 million Canadian workers were affected by the COVID-19 economic shutdown, since then the number of impacted workers has now fallen to approximately 1.8 million.

Building a stronger, and more inclusive Canada for everyone has been at the forefront of our Government's priorities, and since our return to the House of Commons in September we have made great progress.

To help ensure Canadians were protected against COVID-19, we secured enough vaccine doses for every eligible child and adult across Canada. More recently, we approved the Pfizer Paxlovid antiviral pill that will help reduce risks of hospitalizations across the country.

We banned the harmful practice of Conversion therapy and advanced our plan to fight climate change while protecting our Natural Environment.

We heard and acted on our community's concerns relating to the rising cost of childcare. Since our return to the House of Commons in September, 12 Provinces and territories have signed on to our Canada- Wide Child Care Agreements. Our National Child Care strategy will help deliver a 50% cut in childcare fees this year and deliver \$10/a day care on average in five years or less. Unfortunately, this decrease is not yet reflected in Ontario, as it remains the only province in the country that has not yet signed the agreements this year. Nonetheless, we will continue to work with Ontario to ensure we arrive at an agreement that supports our families.

With my recent appointment as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, I'm committed to building on the progress we've made to help build a stronger, and more inclusive Canada for everyone.

Nonetheless, these past few years have been tolling - especially on our seniors. The rapid rise of Omicron infections has continued to impact the well-being of our senior community. Yet, I will assure you that we are committed to being there for our seniors, the way our seniors have always been there for us.

Since being elected, I have worked hard, alongside my colleagues to take important steps in improving the quality of life for our seniors. The pandemic highlighted the serious and long-standing challenges in long-term care homes across our country. We have been working on amending the Criminal Code to penalize those responsible for neglecting our seniors in care and developing National Standards for our Long-Term Care Homes. Additionally, we invested \$6 billion in home, community, and palliative care services. This will help us address the tragedies we saw unfold both here in our community, and across Canada.

While there is more work ahead, I am positive that we are on the path towards recovery. While the scale of the challenges we face is serious, I am confident we have the capacity to work together to overcome them, and build back stronger. I will continue to push for bold, and ambitious policies, while delivering on the issues that matter most to you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer O'Connell

Member of Parliament for Pickering-Uxbridge

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure, and Communities



Councillor Shaheen Butt writes...

Councillor Shaheen Butt

City Councillor Ward 3



sbutt@pickering.ca

Dear Readers,

What a start to a New Year! Record breaking snow fall made headlines this month and it was both beautiful and challenging to say the least. I can't remember when we had this much snow. But of course we live in Canada and it is to be expected. This was snow shoveling at a different level. Snow blowers and shovels were flying off the shelves. I know it was a little inconvenient for the residents as it took a little longer to get the roads and the sidewalks plowed. Our City Staff worked around the clock to get to the major streets first and then to the inner neighborhoods. With a snowfall like this I wasn't surprised to get many calls from concerned residents regarding the plowing of their streets, and I also had a chance to visit some seniors and assisted them in clearing their driveway. I was happy to see that many neighbors were helping each other out.

The elderly, however, are particularly vulnerable to the effects of snow, ice, slush, and low outdoor temperatures. One of the best ways to be a good neighbor is to keep an eye on nearby seniors during the coldest and, for them, the most dangerous months of the year.

The three main [dangers that the elderly face each winter](#) are: slip-and-fall accidents with resulting fractures and other injuries; hypothermia, which greatly increases the chances of heart attacks and strokes; and being stranded alone after a heavy snowstorm.

In our City we have a snow program for the seniors The City of Pickering offers senior citizens and people with a permanent physical or cognitive disability a snow clearing service in order to assist them with their sidewalk snow clearing responsibilities, and access to their home.

Remember to warm up with some stretches and flexing before you dive into your snowshovelling job.

Stay safe and healthy using all the necessary precautions.

Councillor Shaheen Butt

Councillor Dave Pickles writes...

Councillor David Pickles

Regional Councillor Ward 3



dpickles@pickering.ca

‘Happy New Year! We may be starting off with the continued impact of COVID but I am hopefully it will not be as difficult as last year and we can begin to put this behind us. As I write this on a Monday I see the snow coming down again, it should not be as bad as the snow last week, that I understand exceeded 50cm in Pickering and may have been the most in we received in a short period in about 20 years. It took us all a while to dig out our own properties. Our city crews worked hard and long hours, even overnight, to clear our roads and sidewalks. I

thank our staff and for the patience of you, our residents, in such situations.

Stay safe everyone!

Councillor Dave Pickles

Councillor Christine Doody-Hamilton writes...

**Councillor Christine Doody-
Hamilton**

City Councillor Ward 2



cdoody-hamilton@pickering.ca

Ward 2 Councillor Ian Cumming passed away suddenly last year. I convey my condolences and sympathy to his family. Ian Cumming was a respected councillor, a great family man, a friend to many, a pet lover and much more. To refill his council seat was a serious challenge for the City of Pickering but Ward 2 residents needed a council representative. The process to find a new councillor gave consideration to 24 excellent and well qualified candidates. I was ultimately selected.

I am Councillor Christine Doody-Hamilton. I have been a resident of Pickering for over 30 years watching it grow from being a bedroom community to being a city in its own right. It is a privilege and an honour to serve as a councillor in this wonderful city.

Though I have an engineering and environmental management background, I am an outdoors person who really enjoys nature. Pickering has such wonderful places: the

waterfront, the Seaton Trail, the Altona Forest Loop, each offering the special beauty that nature can offer and we are fortunate to have access to such beautiful places nearby.

With the above in mind, I appreciate that we can ensure newcomers to Pickering have the opportunity of enjoying and sharing in these great places too and believe it is incumbent on us as managers of the city growth, to ensure such as preserved and safeguarded for the future.

The growth of Pickering is accelerating, primarily through intensification and urban development, but this approach is preferred to the traditional approach of urban sprawl. This growth needs to be done responsibly and prudently. This is one of many areas of councillor responsibilities that I hold in very high regard.

Serving as councillor will be very challenging. However, I am looking forward to this challenge bolstered by the hope that the constituents who I serve will be supportive and engaged.

I look forward to interaction with you, the constituents I serve and I would be grateful and most appreciative of your input, your questions and your concerns. Please contact me at Cdoody-hamilton@pickering.ca

Councillor Christine Doody-Hamilton



The Legend of St. Valentine in Roquemare, France

Did you know that "*Chateauneuf du Pape,*" the world famous wine of France, owes its life to St. Valentine?

The story begins in 1649. A blight was destroying the vineyards of the region and the city elders, in their desperation to save the vineyards, sought a miracle and turned to the Vatican.

Jean Bulbois, one of the most respected producers in their region was asked to undertake the nearly year long mission. It was a race against time. The blight was relentless.

Bulbois set off, months later arriving in Rome. He found the head of the *Guardia Svizzera* and explained his plight to Pope Bernini's audience manager. He was granted an audience for the next morning. He said the first of the many prayers of thanks he would be making on this journey.

The rag-tag crowd of petitioners jostled in front of the Pope shouldering one another for a better position for papal recognition.

The pontiff paused in front of Bulbois and extended his arm. Bulbois, kneeling before the pontiff like the others, gently took the proffered hand. He bent his head to kiss the seal.

"Welcome, my son. May the Lord bless you. What brings you?" the pontiff motioned for Bulbois to stand.

“Holy Father, I humbly thank you for granting me this audience. The land around my village of Roquemare has been cursed by Satan. The blight has nearly destroyed all our vineyards. We need a miracle...”

“I understand my son. It is a curse many are suffering throughout Europe. Perhaps some saintly relics may bring the miracle for which you ask,” the pope continued. “But we cannot answer everyone’s petition. Some will be disappointed.”

“Thank you Holy Father and beg your indulgence as our *entire* region is at stake.”

“Return tomorrow, my son,” concluded the pope as he moved on to the next petitioner.

After his dinner, Bulbois exited the inn for the Italian traditional *after-dinner passeggiata*. As he meandered the trattoria's neighborhood, he thought about his treatment so far in the eternal city. Everyone seemed civil enough but there was no warmth, no friendliness. A controlled anger seemed to simmer just below surface of what he felt was the superficial civility throughout the city. An anger and darkness in attitude everywhere.

Sporadic lightening bolts in the night’s heavy cloud covering canopy were clear indicators of an impending rainstorm. Then, an ominous silence. Suddenly, a torrential downpour. The alley gutters were inundated. In near panic, Bulbois searched for refuge from the deluge. A doorway wouldn’t do.

Bulbois spotted what looked like a small church across the alleyway. He dashed across, opened a door and rushed in. Shelter, a dark, dry sanctuary.

The votive candles and altar lamps barely illuminated the blackness. Like a dog, he shook the rain off his cloak as he searched for space. He knelt down beside a figure stooped in prayer.

The person wore some religious-like garb, maybe a nun’s habit. He could only guess but continued his assumption.

As Bulbois prayed, an idea came to mind. He leaned sideways...

“Sister, I beg your forgiveness for my bold interruption, but I need some help with *my* prayer.”

“How may I help you, my son?” she whispered.

Bulbois explained his mission and that he needed a positive outcome at the papal audience tomorrow.

“My son, the Lord will likely hear your prayers if you are more humble. Pray for what is best for everyone, not just you,” she instructed.

Bulbois changed his invocation.

The next morning, Bulbois joined the crowd awaiting the pope to descend from the throne of St. Peter, and to approach them.

Reaching Bulbois, the pope said, “I remember you my son. After much prayer, I have relics for you, relics of a San Valentino, patron saint of LOVE and HAPPINESS. May your prayers be answered.”

The Swiss Guard offered two small sacs to Bulbois who now kissed the papal ring, saying “Thank you Holy Father. All the people of Roquemare thank you.”

“Godsafe your return, my son,” the pontiff replied, simultaneously blessing Bulbois.

Bulbois could barely contain his excitement that night. Sleep and excitement tagged-teamed his night's rest. Sleep lost the match.

Bulbois had learned that returning home by sea would shorten his journey by weeks. So early the next morning, he set off for Fiumicino, the port near Rome where he searched for a suitable ship. As a landlubber, he knew nothing about ships but was told a larger vessel meant a calmer voyage, and a safer one.

"Passage for one signore, one-way,' said the sailor, marking Bulbois' hand with black dye indicating he had paid and was permitted on board.

"Red sky at night, sailor's delight; red sky in the morning, sailor's warning," grumbled the dockworker loading cargo aboard the merchanter, the '*Conte Biancamano*.' Bulbois' Italian was strong enough to understand the heavily accented grumble. Bulbois boarded the vessel without a second thought, admiring the rose coloured horizon in the eastern sky.

He understood why the fare was so reasonable once he saw his sleeping quarters in the fo'c'sle. A cabin, by the strictest of definitions, more like a cell. The boxed frame attached to the wall pretended to be a bed. A wooden bucket, the only added furnishing. Standing room only. The smell of the sea oozed from every part of the room. No matter, it was private and had a door.

He stowed his knapsack with its two precious sacs under the bed. As he sat, the

bed sighed under his weight; the knotted-ropes mattress was stretched from years of use and dampness. Nevertheless, it was 'home' for the next week as the ship sailed its route, past Elba, Corsica, Pisa, and Genoa, en route to Marseille.

Bulbois exited the cabin for the open deck. The air smelled fresh and salty. He liked it. The sky's glorious red had become an ominous deep crimson, the reds red used by Michelangelo on his famous ceiling. Sails were hoisted and unfurled to the many shouts: "áncore via." The crew winched up the anchors. The vessel drifted from the wharf. The *Conte* was underway.

Bulbois finished his rustic dinner purchased earlier dockside, some cheese, salami and a bit of chianti from a straw-jacketed bottle.

Was it his imagination or had the wind picked up since he'd come on deck? An experienced mariner would have recognized the signs of an imminent storm.

Once the sun began sinking into the western Mediterranean painting a glorious seascape, Bulbois noted the wind was stronger. The white caps crowning the waves knotted his stomach a little. Bulbois returned to his quarters for the night.

Bulbois was bashed awake by the hard bump against the wall. The bed's violent lurching up and down was frightening him. He tried getting to his feet. The reeling and swaying forced him to brace himself against the walls. He reached the door, opened it, and looked out. Water was crashing loudly. He saw great sheets of water smashing across the deck. His heart began pounding, his pulse soared. His anxiety grew. His fare had become a turbulent ticket to ride, ride an incredibly angry sea.

He closed the door in a near panic and climbed back into bed. The ship's motions worsened. The occasional lightening flashes seen through the porthole confirmed the ferocity of the storm. The erratic motions of the vessel, the muffled rumble of the thunder, and the intermittent lightening flashes were frightening. Boom, he was catapulted into the air again. 'Scaring the daylights out of him' became 'terrified of out his wits' as the fury of the storm grew. He had no idea what to do. His death grip of the pillow brought no comfort.

He realized that he was holding the two relics sacs to his lips pleading his prayer...

"Saint Valentin, please save me. Save me from this storm...please, please hear me...oh please, please, please."

His fear-fueled grip of the relics brought him little comfort. His desperate pleas continued. One hour, two, four.

The storm was subsiding, fewer lightening flashes, less thunder. Bulbois kissed the sacs in gratitude. The ship survived.

Bulbois woke. The gentle sway of the bed confirmed the storm had passed. Miraculously, he thought, the ship survived. He was saved. The next day, a deck hand confirmed the storm had been the worst ship had ever encountered. The sails were being unfurled to assess damage. The journey continued.

"Tutti a terra che vanno a terra." "All ashore who are going ashore." An unnecessary declaration as the four 'Conte' passengers were eager to get set foot on terra ferma after this trip. They watched the anchoring and docking procedures that couldn't be done fast enough for them.

The final leg of the journey. In just three days, he would be home, sleeping in his own bed, eating his own food, and seeing his family after so many months away. Bulbois disembarked quickly, bought fresh provisions, and headed for the road home.

Mid-day of the third day, Roquemare appeared in the distance. He felt re-energized and quickened his steps knowing he'd be home by sundown.

As Bulbois got closer, he encountered a young couple strolling on the edge of the village forest. They greeted him cheerfully inviting him to sit with them to hear their great news. They were to be wed the next day. The more they talked, the more jubilant and exuberant they became. Their joy was infectious.

"But we are very anxious," explained the young man, "Our family, our friends, they seem angry with us, as if the marriage is wrong."

"Perhaps casks of my wine will change their mood," Bulbois offered.

"*Monsieur*, your name?" queried the future groom.

"*Jean Bulbois*."

"*Ahh monsieur*, your wine, *Chateauneuf du Pape*, is the pride of the region. Yours is the vineyard that surrounds the ruins of the chateau of Avignon Pope John XXII."

"One and the same, young man, and your names?" Bulbois asked.

"I am Pierre, the village cooper's son and this is Yvette. We are pleased to make your acquaintance and beg you attend our wedding tomorrow. And we thank you for your generosity," the young man responded.

"I am off Yvette and Pierre. My family awaits."

The next morning Bulbois surveyed his vineyard. Blight everywhere. Row after row. Any plant with leaves confirming its death knell. Returning to the kitchen, he saw Chantal, his wife, had unpacked his knapsack placing the two sacs of relics on the table.

Bulbois opened the larger sac, clump of ashes. The other sac, he remembered contained tiny bones. He rose from the breakfast table with the larger sac in hand and went outside. Looking at the blighted destruction of his vineyard, he began to cry. His life, his family were doomed. Starvation, poverty. An angry vitriol erupted, "Why Lord? Why have you forsaken us?" Angrily, he threw the sac at his fields. The sac, its collar somehow loosened, spilled its contents into the wind. Ashes scattered every which-way. Bulbois returned to the kitchen, embraced his wife, "Pray Chantal. We have nothing left." The couple bowed their heads.

"Je vous prononce homme et femme." The marriage ceremony concluded. The expected aftermath surprised Bulbois. No cheering, subdued applause. The band sounded funereal. The guests all sat at their tables rather than jubilantly jigging the regional dances. All the attendees lacked the expected joy and happiness normally seen at such an event in the village. In fact, many of the married couples seemed at odds with one another, if not outright quarrelsome.

Bulbois had never seen his village like this. He turned to his wife for an explanation.

"This last summer of the vineyard 'spots' was the last straw. Growers everywhere had their livelihood destroyed. Some responded fatally. Their families are angered at the selfishness of the self-destruction. Anger and hate are everywhere."

Pierre and Yvette seemed less affected:

"Pierre, I hate this. So many of these people seem so angry," Yvette lamented.

Pierre responded tersely, "So? What would you have me do? I am not God, nor even a saint able to perform a miracle."

Bulbois overheard the conversation. He nudged Pierre offering him the small sac,

explaining the sac contained the bones of Saint Valentin, patron saint of Love and Happiness.

The sac slipped from Pierre's grasp as he struggled to untie the twine, opening up and spilling its content to the village winds. The dust was whisked above the crowd spreading all round.

The crowd froze, like marble statues. Pierre too, froze in mid-action as he was bending over.

In a moment, this immobility changed. He shook out the contents of the little sac. A crumbled piece of parchment fell out. Now, the crowd of guests were laughing and smiling, hugging and embracing with joy and happiness.

Pierre turned to Yvette, "My dearest, my love for you knows no bounds, no ends," embracing.

"Oh Pierre, I love you so much and I will love you forever."

The wedding festivity continued, becoming a celebration as it should be. Unbeknownst to Pierre, two additional guests now attended the festivities: *Love* and *Happiness*. The couple's day of joy became glorious. He looked for Bulbois. The man was nowhere to be seen.

A queasy feeling overtook Bulbois, an undeniable urge to see his own vineyards. As he crested the final hill bordering his land, what he saw was unbelievable. Verdant, rich green in every direction, a sign of healthy foliage. Closer examination confirmed it. Not a single pock-marked leaf. Bulbois couldn't control himself. He broke out into a run toward his land. He had to see his own vineyard.

Reaching his fields, he saw a vineyard of green healthy plants. His vineyards never looked so good, so healthy. Something had happened. A miracle.

Elated with joy and happiness, Bulbois returned to the festivities where he was embraced by Pierre.

"Monsieur Bulbois, a miracle has happened. Look what I found," offering Bulbois the scrap of parchment. Bulbois spread the parchment with his fingers and read:

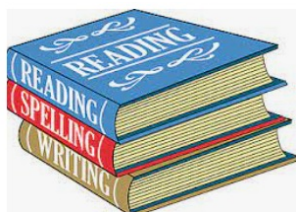
'Non c'è amore a Roma, solo paura, odio e sangue. Pertanto, ho portato via l'amore.' 'There is no love in Rome, only fear, hatred and blood. Therefore, I have taken the Love and Happiness away.' Valentino.' Bulbois realized the bones had indeed produced a miracle.

"Bones, M. Bulbois? The little sac held no bones. Only ashes. No bones." In that moment, the two men realized what had taken place and they bowed their heads in humble prayer to thank Saint Valentin.

To this day, Roquemare honours the miracle of Saint Valentin. The villagers paint hearts on walls everywhere, exchange cards with wishes of love and happiness, decorated with little red hearts and angelic cherubs. February 14th is a day of great celebration for Roquemare, bigger than Noel, bigger than Paques....and in four hundred years, the miracle of that day has spread throughout the world. Roquemare honours the saint who saved their vineyards which have never had a harvest failure again.

And there you have it, the legend of Roquemare and Saint Valentin.

Happy Valentines Day everyone!



Books:

We read a lot, a book a week certainly. It can be more, faster depending on the writer.

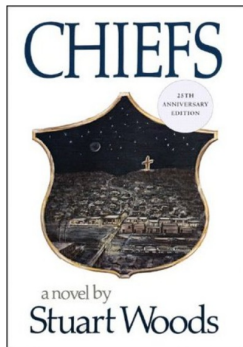
Stuart Woods

Crime, sleuthing and legalese, done a la the great writers of crime and detective stories in the 1940s, and 1950s.

Stuart writes crisply and engagingly and his Stone Barrington series will have you

coming back for more and more. It's not deep reading. No sophisticated development of plot or characters. Simply good story telling, maybe a bit dated, but nevertheless, entertaining.

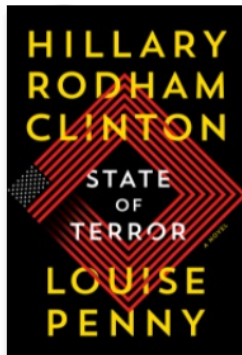
Check out my reviews of various Stuart Woods books at <https://www.szpin.ca/category/r-reads/>



Chiefs

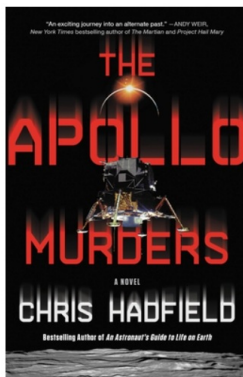
This one was ten years in the making. It shows. One of his early works and by far his best ever.

If Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* is the classic standard in tales of the southern USA, this one should be put alongside it. It is that good.



State of Terror

Collaborations are challenging. This one works extremely well: Hillary Clinton not only lent her political expertise but she must have pushed Louise Penny into refining her style of writing. This one is an excellent collaboration that works on every level.



The Apollo Murders

The 'Chris Hadfield' of astronaut fame soars to incredible heights in this superbly written suspense-filled NASA orbiting story. This man is an astronaut, a musician, a composer and now an excellent writer. Amazing !

A non-stop page turner that will have you shocked at this man's never ending talents.



COMPUTER STUFF

App: **TEXT
BLAZE**



Do you often type something repeatedly and frequently? Maybe the date, a particular phrase, a signature, a particular greeting. Well skip the drudgery of time the same thing over and over and over.

Text Blaze lets you insert text snippets you created. Then a couple of keystrokes and bang, the needed phrase is completely typed for you. Amazing! Incredibly useful! Indescribably useful and practical. And they offer a free version that could be all you need.

Text Blaze:

- **saves you time**
- **helps you eliminate mistakes**
- **Saves you energy**
- **Can be used in Gmail, MS Office, Google Docs, many places**

- **Grows in value as you learn how to use it**

Go to its site and try it out: <https://blaze.today/>

☆☆☆☆

“Wow! What an incredible time saver. I've been looking for something like this for the longest. So grateful for Text Blaze!!!”



Stephanie M

☆☆☆☆

“Excellent! I use Text Blaze every day and it's easily one of the best Chrome extensions in my collection. It works everywhere, is very reliable, and very simple to use. Highly recommended.”



Brian H

☆☆☆☆

“Extremely useful for speeding up note taking in my therapy practice... I've tried a number of autotext extensions and this is hands down the best.”



Tony L

**Site: *CloudEight*
*InfoAve***



Need computer help? Repair? This website is almost like having a nerd in your home. Excellent tips, very good help and all in a easy-to-navigate site.

Explore it to see its value for your computer issues.

Subscribe to its weekly newsletter where you can see the latest issues they are dealing with: <https://www.thundercloud.net/infoave/new/>

We have been using it for years and think it is a very useful site.

Thanks to Robert W.

Virtual meetings:

Butter



BUTTER is the new kid on the block for virtual meetings, but this fella is making a serious dent.

- *Free*
- *50 users*
- *No time limit*

Based on having used it just a few times and just learning its many features, I must admit that it is a very impressive alternative to the many virtual meeting apps currently available.

Relatively easy to use, intuitive, logical in operative procedures, this may become the new standard in virtual meetings software replacing the current king, *Zoom*.



FUN STUFF

FABULOSO

[There is a minute of commercialism at the start]

Stunning PROMO for Paris Olympics in 2024

The Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be the biggest event ever organised in France.

Can you spot the ad, "Paris 2024" created by the wheelchair athletes' arms

towards the end of the video?

It really is a performance of precision! Imagine the of rehearsal it took to perfect this performance!

Absolutely incredible...one could minimize the complexity of how it was done by saying, "Oh it was just video editing...".....Balderdash...these wheelchair participants had to learn, practice and perform this choreography perfectly, even if they did it in intervals. Just imagine the practice and memorization of the moves....absolutely stunning.

[MESSY NESSY](#)

A very interesting, informative and entertaining websites, Messy Nussy is produced by a group of young adults, likely between their 20's-40's, who live in Paris, France their regular source of engaging material. The topics they touch range from Parisian bistros and tourist hot-spots to famous women behind society's front stage and change rooms on French beaches in the very early 1900's. It is an eclectic collection of captivating tidbits, often with era photos making the site even more engaging.

For a subscription fee, the site visitor is given access to even deeper examination of the site. The free version is enough to warrant a visit:

www.messynussy.com/



And for those suffering
'cabin fever' from the
pandemic imprisonment,
something a bit heart
warming and touching...let
the ad pass and click:

www.youtube.com/watch

Upcoming events



Mar. 17: St. Patrick's Day



Happy Valentine's everyone!

*Stay healthy, save and wear your
mask.*

Best,

Richard  & *Fermo* 

And the 'Boss'