

The New Hampshire Gazette

All Will Be Well...Maybe

February 11, 2022

An unrelenting barrage of distressing news can be bad for the digestion. We have therefore prepared the following bit of good news as an *apertif*.

Human tests may soon begin on a new technology designed to help people with paralysis regain independence through the control of computers and mobile devices. Specifically, this new device will enhance the ability of paralyzed people to “communicate more easily via text or speech synthesis, to follow their curiosity on the web, or to express their creativity through photography, art, or writing apps.”

That’s just the beginning. According to Neuralink, “As our technology develops, we will be able to increase the channels of communication with the brain, accessing more brain areas and new kinds of neural information. This technology has the potential to treat a wide range of neurological disorders, to restore sensory and movement function, and eventually to expand how we interact with each other, with the world, and with ourselves.”

Sounds great, right? This technology has been tested on rats and monkeys. Recently the company, Neuralink, posted a job opening for a Clinical Trial Director to conduct human studies.

So, how does this work? Is it safe?

“[S]afety has been at the core of the design process,” says Neuralink. “In particular, the Link includes technical innovations for improving the safety of the surgical procedure....”

“There is always risk associated with general anesthesia, and that risk is reduced by shortening the time of the procedure. The Neurosurgical Robot is capable of efficient and reliable electrode insertion. Also, the robot is being designed to insert threads through a hole in the skull as small as 23 mm diameter. Combined with other advancements in robotic surgical tooling, this may allow us to eliminate general anesthesia and to implant the device under conscious sedation.”

In other words, a robot drills a .9-inch hole in your skull, connects a few wires to your gray matter, and bingo—you’re good to go. Not to get all reductionist, here, but how’d that work out for “Johnny Mnemonic?” *

We’re beginning to have second thoughts about this outfit. Who’s behind Neuralink, anyway?

Aha. Elon Musk, the man behind Tesla and SpaceX.

Associated Press, February 1: “Tesla is recalling nearly 54,000 cars and SUVs because their ‘Full Self-Driving’ software lets them roll through stop signs without coming to a complete halt.

Boston Globe, February 2: “We took a ‘self-driving’ Tesla for a spin in Boston. Here’s how it did. ... Pretty soon, things started going awry.” Artificial Intelligence seems an odd term for software that steers cars into snowbanks.

CBS News, February 8: “Dashcam video released to CBS 17 show the moment a Nash County deputy’s cruise was hit by a Tesla on autopilot in 2020.”

Space.com, February 4: “the coming SpaceX moon crash is quite different, marking ‘the first time that a human-made debris item unintentionally reaches our natural satellite....’”

Good luck to Neuralink’s test subjects. Talk about “boldly going....”

* Granted, he did survive, but....

New Hampshire In the News

It’s never a good sign when New Hampshire’s legislature gets a mention in the *Washington Post*. On January 31st, Greg Sargent wrote that the “mania for muzzling how teachers address race and other topics is only accelerating.

“We’re seeing dozens of GOP proposals to bar whole concepts from classrooms outright. The Republican governor of Virginia has debuted a mechanism for parents to rat out teachers. Bills threatening punishment of them are proliferating. Book-banning efforts are outpacing anything in recent memory.

“Amid this onslaught, a proposed bill now advancing in the New Hampshire legislature deserves renewed scrutiny. It would ban the advocacy of any ‘doctrine’ or ‘theory’ promoting a ‘negative’ account of U.S. history, including the notion that the United States was “founded on racism.”

“Additionally, the bill describes itself as designed to ensure teachers’ ‘loyalty,’ while prohibiting advocacy of ‘subversive doctrines.’”

Sargent refers to HB 1255. It would make explicit something that was already implied in a law that passed last summer. House Bill 2 inserted the following into New Hampshire law:

Section 354-A:29 – Right to Freedom from Discrimination in Public Workplaces and Education
I. The general court hereby finds and declares that practices of discrimination against any New Hampshire inhabitants because of age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, creed, color, marital status, familial status, mental or physical disability, religion, or national origin are a matter of state concern, that discrimination based on these characteristics not only threatens the rights and proper privileges of New Hampshire inhabitants but menaces the institutions and foundation of a free democratic state and threatens the peace, order, health, safety and general welfare of the state and its inhabitants.

II. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to prohibit racial, sexual, religious, or other workplace sensitivity training based on the inherent humanity and equality of all persons and the ideal that all persons are entitled to be treated with equality, dignity, and respect.

III. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to limit the academic freedom of faculty members of the university system of New Hampshire and the community college system of New Hampshire to conduct research, publish, lecture, or teach in the academic setting.

So far, so what? All is sweetness and light here—what’s the big deal?

Section 354-A:31 – Prohibition on Public Employers

No public employer, either directly or through the use of an outside contractor, shall teach, advocate, instruct, or train any employee, student, service recipient, contractor, staff member, inmate, or any other individual or group, any one or more of the following:

I. That people of one age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, creed, color, marital status, familial status, mental or physical disability, religion, or national origin, are inherently superior or inferior to people of another age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, creed, color, marital status, familial status, mental or physical disability, religion, or national origin;

II. That an individual, by virtue of his or her age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, creed, color, marital status, familial status, mental or physical disability, religion, or national origin is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously;

III. That an individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of his or her age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, creed, color, marital status, familial status, mental or physical disability, religion, or national origin; or

IV. That people of one age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, creed, color, marital status, familial status, mental or physical disability, religion, or national origin cannot and should not attempt to treat others equally and/or without regard to age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, creed, color, marital status, familial status, mental or physical disability, religion, or national origin.

Category Errors²

The problem with this new layer of legislation prohibiting discriminatory language—setting aside the little matter of the First Amendment—is this: lately some white people seem to think that they’re the victims of racial discrimination. This trend seems to have begun with *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*. Allen Bakke, a former Marine officer, applied to medical school but was rejected because, at about 33, he was considered too old. He also, according to one interviewer, “had very definite opinions which were based more on his personal viewpoints than on a study of the whole problem.... He was very unsympathetic to the concept of recruiting minority students.”

Their big gripe seems to be—or purports to be—that some mean teacher might point at little tow-headed Jimmy—or Tucker—and say, “You! Yes, you! You rotten little WASP! You’re personally responsible for the oppression of millions of enslaved Blacks, and of their descendants, down through the generations. You should feel bad about that for the rest of your days.” So far we have not heard any reports of this actually happening. This is not the first instance, though, of conservative minds trying to use the law to solve a non-existent problem. The Salem witch trials and Joe McCarthy come to mind.

Race relations have been a hot topic in recent years, largely because cell phone cameras have made police killings of Black people harder to sweep under the rug. Black people seem to resent being shot, having to worry about being shot, and and having to worry about friends and relations being shot. These concerns give rise to a legitimate question: “What is it about the American system that results in so many Black people getting shot, especially by cops?”

There is an obvious answer, of course, but it’s controversial. Systemic racism explains the shootings, suffocations, deaths in the back of police vans, &c. It’s controversial, though, because

some people are not convinced it's real. The trouble is, these tend to be the same people who don't want to hear the evidence that systemic racism is real.

This subset of white people, well-represented in the New Hampshire legislature, seem to feel that making any sort of societal change to reduce, remediate, and make reparations for these shootings would be an undue imposition. They would apparently prefer that we worry about the feelings of little tow-headed Jimmy.

This is the most generous explanation we can come up with for this situation.

On the other hand maybe they're racists.

Free Staters and School Choice

School choice is either the greatest thing since July 7, 1928—the day sliced bread was invented—or an obvious ploy to drain resources from the public school system until it withers away.

Now, finally, thanks to the Free State Project, we know which. Jeremy Kauffman, a member of the board of the Free State Project, can be heard on tape at <https://twitter.com/miscellanyblue/status/1488869650733707272> explaining how it works.”

“You kind of go through school choice as like a steppingstone towards reducing or eliminating state involvement in schools. We did just get a very expansive school choice program. ... We got school choice here and the entire program is run by Free State, right? You can get up to \$5,000 a child and you fill out a form and say I want to spend it on this. And you can say anything. And then the person who decides whether you get that money or not is a Free Stater. And so maybe you reject it if they want to spend it on something a Free Stater doesn't approve of, but if they want to spend it on something a Free Stater does approve of you approve it, right? This is the way you get in positions of power and exert your influence and continue to move things in the right direction.”

Now, where's Governor Benson? Is Governor Benson in the audience? Step right up and take a bow, Governor. You deserve a hand—a backhand, maybe—for inviting the Free State Project to choose New Hampshire for its libertarian race-to-the-bottom game show.

And Governor Sununu? Are you lurking out there somewhere? Congratulations for recently co-authoring an article for the Cato Institute with Jason Sorens, the guy with the big brain who dreamed up the whole thing.

A Brief Note on Subscriptions

We regret to announce that we are not yet ready to resume the mailing of subscriptions. Every fortnight without a mailing doubles our hatred of anti-vaxxers. The best we can do at the moment, however, is explain what we're waiting for.

First, we're waiting for the rate of daily infections to drop farther. The numbers are heading in the right direction, but they're still comparable to last December—too high.

Second, we're watching for increased availability of Paxlovid. When we do resume mailing we'll be taking every precaution, of course. Considering the age and health status of the mailing

crew and the alleged editor, though, it would seem reckless to resume while this apparently effective remedy is just out of reach.

The Rebel Girl Says...

“I fell in love with my country—its rivers, prairies, forests, mountains, cities and people. No one can take my love of country away from me! I felt then, as I do now, it’s a rich, fertile, beautiful land, capable of satisfying all the needs of its people. It could be a paradise on earth if it belonged to the people, not to a small owning class.”

– *Elizabeth Gurley Flynn*