

What I'm Reading (Nov. 22)



By *Chuck Dinerstein, MD, MBA* — November 22, 2019



Image courtesy of Seamus Darragh on Pixabay [1]

“It sounded like a good idea. If your fish population is dropping just spawn more in a hatchery and then deposit them back in their native waters.

The results were not quite what they expected.”

From Econlife, a bit of history about restocking trout, and a quick lesson in tradeoffs, the basis of compromise. [What We Can Learn From a Trout](#) [2].

For those of you living outside the New York area, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) has been an on-going scandal and disgrace. Vermin, no heat in the winter, no cooling in the summer, crumbling interiors all with promises to make the necessary corrections that never seem to occur. It was the plight of NYCHA residents that echoed in my mind as I read this [article](#) [3] from, The Conversation.

“Freedom from cruelty of course makes the list. U.S. law has required this since New York first passed an anti-animal cruelty law in 1867. Today, all U.S. states have laws that prohibit the infliction of unnecessary pain and suffering. Modern law also protects the physical well-being of animals in human care by requiring they receive food, water and often veterinary care.

But a full life requires more than basic survival, so I propose some new rights for animals in my book. Perhaps most importantly, I argue that animals need a “right of place” – that is, access to sufficient physical space to live a natural life.”

The by now, well-known problems of the Boeing 737 Max are not new; in fact, the same type of

issues have haunted American aviation since World War II.

“For all the triumph of America’s new planes and tanks during World War II, a silent reaper stalked the battlefield: accidental deaths and mysterious crashes that no amount of training ever seemed to fix. And it wasn’t until the end of the war that the Air Force finally resolved to figure out what had happened.”

Designing the interface between technology and humans is a bit of an art. Steve Jobs, among others, ushered us into the age of user-friendly design. And while that has been a step forward in safety and usability, it is sometimes hard to tell whether we or the app is really in charge. From Wired, [How the Dumb Design of a WWII Plane Led to the Macintosh](#) [4].

Finally, there is this.

“The brain is often depicted as a hungry organ. It makes up just 2 percent of our body weight but uses 20 percent of our energy. ... the brain is by far the most expensive of our organs. But it is marvelously efficient. Your brain requires only about four hundred calories of energy a day – about the same as you get in a blueberry muffin. Trying running your laptop for twenty-four hours on a muffin and see how far you get.”

It is, for a physician, like myself, a bit of a busman’s holiday, but Bill Bryson’s new book, The Body, is definitely worth the read. In a light, breezy narrative, he takes us on a tour of our ultimate home, our body.

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[2] <https://econlife.com/2019/11/trout-fish-hatcheries/>

[3] <https://theconversation.com/is-it-ethical-to-keep-pets-and-other-animals-it-depends-on-where-you-keep-them-126422>

[4] https://www.wired.com/story/how-dumb-design-wwii-plane-led-macintosh/#intcid=recommendations_wired-right-rail-popular_fc904206-9b60-4abc-9e73-5e1475edf962_cral-top3-1