

HOROSCOPE

BY SOUP
CAN SAMSTAFF
PSYCHIC

Leo (July 24-Aug. 23) The vastness of the universe can be difficult to imagine. So can the footprints of a dust mite. Focus somewhere in between.

Virgo (Aug. 24-Sept. 23) It's been 40 years since Apollo 11, the first time man walked on the moon. It seems it's been almost as long since you walked there yourself. You need a romance — not a love thing; more of a joy of sex thing. Don't wait another 40 years.

Libra (Sept. 24-Oct. 23) Now, NASA's got its sights on Mars. I wonder what kind of star Earth looks like from its surface? Are we blue-green? Does the moon orbit our planet fast enough that we appear to twinkle? Do our problems amount to a hill of beans on Pluto? Probably not, but then they often don't here, either.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) Isn't it interesting how much earthly emphasis, by way of money and human politics, goes into a space mission, when astronauts who've looked at our planet from outside have returned with a heightened sense of our world's smallness and fragility.

Sagittarius (Nov. 23-Dec. 22) Some people are pleased by the simplest things, and some are never happy. Nourish the aspects of your life that bring you joy.

Capricorn (Dec. 23-Jan. 19) Everyone makes mistakes. Learn from yours and move on. Dwelling is just a passive form of self pity, and you're better than that.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) Don't believe the conspiracy theories. Believe that humans made it to the moon. Impossibility is just a perception.

Pisces (Feb. 20-March 20) Don't deny your emotions. Everybody has them, and we all know it sometimes sucks. But that, thank god, is relative.

Aries (March 21-April 19) Be creative. Art is good for you. And don't forget Eddy.

Taurus (April 20-May 21) To confront fear and learn from it is to be a better stronger person.

Gemini (May 22-June 22) Pride is only sinful in excess. Take some time to appreciate yourself and the world at large.

Cancer (June 23-July 23) Stay away from the summer sniffles! And if you do catch them, for goodness sake, take better care of yourself than Soup Can did.

COMMENTARY

Kick profiteering out of health care debate

BY JAY THIEMEYER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Single payer" is finally being allowed to the table. In spite of Montana's bought senator, Max Baucus. In spite of the obstruction of the so-called health care industry.

The growing cry of the people is beginning to have effect. It could certainly be heard Saturday night, July 18, in the Service Employees International Union union hall where union folks and others sang along with Anne Feeney and others in the road show for single payer. The unions, except ironically for Andrew Sterns' SEIU, see the wisdom in single payer and have thrown their support behind it, even though they have their insurance. Why? Because they realize in this country, with this economy, nothing is certain, and they could be laid off and lose their coverage.

The House Committee on Education and Labor passed an amendment by the good Rep. Dennis Kucinich, allowing individual states to implement a single-payer health care system. This is how Canada came to its single-payer system. One province, (Saskatchewan) at a time. The man responsible for this "socialized medicine," Tommy Douglas, is revered more than any other in that cold country for heroes.

Who is our Tommy Douglas? Bernie Sanders or John Conyers or Dennis K? It certainly isn't our own Sen. Ron Wyden. Anyone who includes the private insurers in the reform mix just doesn't get it. Every alternative reform package, except single payer, includes the fox in the hen house! The majority of Americans gets it. How come our elected representatives don't? They themselves enjoy socialized medicine as members of Congress!

Now, in reality, Kucinich's amendment could easily be nothing more than a poison pill. Most Republicans on the committee voted for it, after all. I imagine their support for the amendment was to guarantee that there would be a massive floor fight that would make certain that Obama's objective of getting a reform bill out of the Congress by the summer recess would go begging. Just like the Republican obstruction around a really effective stimulus package, Obama would be denied. So much for non-partisanship. So much for constituents' best interest. I have faith in these clowns. It's not about the people for them; it's about job security and corporate donations to promote incumbency (which includes the best health care package in the country).

Make no mistake: The corporate control of how our health care needs are addressed will never yield to reason or need or popular outcry. It responds to a greater power: Wall Street. Health care in the corporate mind is nothing more than a commodity. Human Rights is no consideration. It's profit share.

How long will this basic human need be nothing more than a means — by virtue of its very necessity — to get money from the sick, a huckster's game, to buy Congress to promote their agenda and sell out the constituents' real needs?

When Obama campaigned on a pledge to reform how health care was provided in this country, he immediately got my attention. Health care is probably the most debilitated system serving a basic human need in this country, and the industry controlling it is the most remunerative and safest, most

guaranteed investment for its stockholders. If single payer were to win and become the law of the land, that one triumph would do more than anything else to cut the ranks of the homeless. (Excepting for some philanthrope donating 50 million yurts to the poor. But that aside, single payer would be huge.)

I figured a man like a Obama, with a "community organizer's heart" and with a Harvard law degree, could make a significant change. I was tired of witnessing, year after year, double-digit profits to the pharmaceuticals, the hospital privatization juggernaut, as public general hospitals were bought up by investor groups, the commodification of what is a basic human need, the growing power of a predatory health system, and needless suffering and death from lack of care. The bureaucrats that right-wing nuts talk about as standing in the way of you and your health care already exists in the private insurance administrators whose task is to deny your care and coverage for the sake of corporate profits.

I didn't want to be another victim of some health industry CEO who didn't care a whit for my care or well being, for whom a human right was comic, whose direction of his company meant the difference between health and happiness and loss of hope and well-being for faceless "consumers," and

even know where to begin, because we don't speak the language. And in our confusion, the corporations do what they want. Without effective intervention, or accountability, the people's interests pass by the way. We are mere ciphers, numbers their bureaucrats crunch while amassing profits and promoting their success to shareholders.

Listening to Amy Goodman's interview on Democracy Now!, I hear Howard Dean push the need for a public option, without which there can be no real reform. But what is it? If you include the private insurers in the mix, they will cherry pick healthier consumers for coverage (which their bureaucrats will then deny) and they will dump people with pre-existing conditions', chronic illness, on the public. The taxpayers funding the public option will pay for increasing costs, while the private insurers are still guaranteed their soaring profits.

Public option does nothing to contain costs. If you don't contain costs, like the Massachusetts' employer-based plan, the state budget will go bust. Other state programs, for affordable or supportive housing or treatment programs, for instance, will be defunded. The taxpayers suffer in order to get the corporations' "cooperation."

And as for individual mandate, that's nothing but another subsidy to the private

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whose sole concern was the well-being of investors. his or her job security! To paraphrase: "I ain't dyin' for NO CEO!"

I thought Obama and the people he'd bring to his Administration would take the point in the fight to rectify the system.

So what gives? The so-called reform process seems to be merely a rejiggering of the corporations' tools for clipping us. For corporate benefit not our's.

They blatantly buy out Congress, starting, but not limited, to Max Baucus, whose pockets they've been filling for years as he's approached chairmanship of the pivotal Senate Finance Committee. And now we read they are spending \$1.4 million a day in advertising against the "public option" and what's the so-called public option? It's bogus, intended to drain energy and attention from the real solution which would completely exclude corporate profiteers.

It occurs to me maybe we should define some terms. Because, just like with the finance industry, a large part of the confusion and the smoke is a result of the obscure terms, a specialized language, used by the people whose profit-taking at our expense goes on without our having the slightest idea what's happening. We don't

insurers, similar to Medicare Advantage or Medicare Part D, which was nothing but a subsidy for the pharmaceuticals. We've seen these tactics before!

The private insurers, the pharmaceuticals, the HMOs, the private hospital groups, they all must be cut out of any real progressive plan in order to guarantee health care for all residents of this country. Their profiteering should not be held sacred. You want to talk about holding life sacred, stop privatization, de-regulation, corporate license!

Do yourself a favor and check Rep. Dennis Kucinich's Web site. Check the "Health Care" link. He doesn't forget alternative therapies that work. He doesn't exclude naturopathic medicine. That alone says a lot for his focus on real health care.

Check out as well the Physicians National Health Plan site — very simple: pnhp.org.

And let those inside-the-Beltway types, Wyden, Merkley, Wu, Blumenauer, et al., know that you'll support them if they exclude the private industry and include their constituents' best interests. Allow their constituents the same healthcare they, as our representatives in Congress, enjoy.

Medicare for all.

For every dollar used
to purchase a Street
Roots, 25 cents buys
the paper, and the
vendor keeps 75 cents.

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