



Heather,

On arriving in America, your agrarian grandmother observed that Americans are 'hot house plants'. Indeed, over the last century, we have progressively become a nation of people who live in thermostatically-controlled, heated and air-conditioned, compartmentalized boxes. We leave our residential (home) boxes only to travel in our heated, air-conditioned, wheeled (mobile) boxes. These mobile transport boxes can be parked on striped concrete pads, primarily, to permit shopping and eating in completely enclosed malls or, alternately, to allow us to work in the brightly-illuminated, heated, carpeted, air-conditioned compartments, booths or carrels provided by our employers.

Throughout our periods of wakefulness, we now conscientiously listen to weather reports as assiduously as if we intended to venture outside. However, through the miracle of wireless electronic communication, it is possible to appeal for emergency assistance (help) if we are actually forced out of our mobile box while in transit between our work and residential sanctuaries.

Contributing to our national paranoia, weather reports in United States are designed to warn us of impending disaster. If there is no immediate threat or regional turbulence and the weather is disappointingly fair, weather prognosticators warn of the next foreseeable or conceivable disaster. Media personalities (a.k.a., meteorologists) caution their listeners to rivet their attention on local weather updates so as to be forewarned against sudden, unanticipated changes in meteorological conditions, however improbable. Annually, forecasters warn of or predict the 'storm of the century'.

Continually, media listeners are cautioned against venturing outside of their heated, air-conditioned enclaves for fear of becoming too hot (> 70 degrees Fahrenheit), too cold (< 80 degrees Fahrenheit), getting wet or being assaulted by brisk winds. The principal function of today's weather forecaster appears to reinforce and intensify our apprehension of being caught outdoors. Our particular, special brand of 'Disaster Weather', guided by Network-Super-Doppler radar, must be monitored on a minute-by-minute basis if one is to avoid potential predation by destructive natural phenomena, such as adverse barometric pressure.

One outgrowth of our almost universal national fear of weather is the near-absence of pedestrian traffic. Sidewalks and bicycle pathways are nearly absent, even in most highly-enriched communities. Seemingly, only

those too young to fully understand the intrinsic danger of weather or those who are obligated to undertake environmental risk to assist their pets in depositing their bodily wastes may be found at any distance beyond the grassy boundaries of their climate-controlled bastions.

Primarily, those whose labor demands external exposure (e.g., construction workers) plus those who are ordered outdoors by medical authorities as part of therapy to recover from heart or knee surgery may be observed fully immersed in our hostile external atmosphere. Also, to some degree, society's marginally productive elements, including children, joggers, political protesters, pollsters, canvassers, evangelists, environmental activists and the homeless, may also be found outdoors. Even including these aberrations, the average external exposure time for all Americans has been systematically reduced to less than one-half hour per day. In addition, as a result of technological advances in recent decades, it has now become possible for most Americans to walk as little as fifteen furlongs per day with only the smallest part of that outside their protective boxes. Even today's agricultural practitioners can enjoy climate-controlled refuge and conservative radio talk shows within the enclosure of gargantuan, War-of-the-Worlds, mobile farm machinery.

Partially offsetting the safety and security provided from adverse natural elements by our static and dynamic enclosures, are the high-speed dynamics of individually-piloted automotive transport units competing for space on a closely confined, interweaving highway canvas. This activity may, perhaps, illustrate the single most powerful indicator of the increasing irrelevance of weather in modern society. Demonstrably, the more adverse the meteorological and surface conditions become for our nation of automotive pilots, the higher their vehicle velocities and the closer and more erratic the interweaving mobile box configurations become.

Rather than a sociopathic response, this near-universal, though illegal, dangerous and irresponsible mass behavior, is believed to be justifiable because it permits more rapid docking of the nation's mobile units with their mother ships. Often, this latter docking maneuver enables most Americans to further avoid exposure to the world outside the box through the use of coded, secure, radio-controlled mobile port gate openers.

Future scientific advances and computer enhancements are expected to make it still more technically feasible to extend our control over exposure to earth's hostile environment with its unpredictable and dangerous potential for destroying precious human lives. The dangers engendered by wind, flood, lightning, storm, earthquake, tornado, tsunami, typhoon, undomesticated animals, insects, bacteria, virus, pathogenic protozoans, nematodes, helminths, acid rain, ozone, sulfur dioxide, nitrous oxides, carbon monoxide, particulates, asbestos, lead, hydrocarbons, unrestrained and unfiltered sunlight will be increasingly moderated by extending and reinforcing all our physical barriers against environmental vagaries. Increasingly, weather forecasts will be quaint relics of your ancestor's past lives.

Assuming long-term reductions in international tensions and the progressive democratization of terrorist nations, it should no longer take the threat of a nuclear holocaust to prod future generations into seeking the ultimate security of tomorrow's totally confined, hermetically sealed microcosm, our new American dream.

Someday, you may live to see, as with much of professional sports currently, even the summer and winter Olympic games, including the ski jump competition, held indoors.

Love, Dad

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