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Flowering Now: Cherry-leaved Plum Blossoms In The Neighborhood 1

For the weekend...

from Douglas E. Welch

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Join My Community On Discord.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, I have been running a Discord community for friends and family.

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Photo by [Frederic Köberl](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Our systems are too slow for our reality

Looking back over my 58-year lifetime I can see one, large, problem with today's world. Our systems -- governmental, political, economic -- have become too slow and unwieldy for the world we live in. Despite their slow evolution over time, reality has far outpaced these systems' ability to accommodate and react to the largest problems we face. We see this every day now, it seems. Whether we are talking about our reactions to the COVID Pandemic, January 6th Insurrection, Climate Change, or the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we see events quickly overrunning our ability to cope and react in a rational, yet quick, way.

Long term solutions when rapid solutions are necessary

Looking at Ukraine especially, our immediate responses were appropriate but fail to provide much, if any, relief in the meantime. Sanctions can help. Weapons and other aid can help, but these take time, energy -- and often, politics -- before they have their greatest effect. Meanwhile, people die. Our ability to react to this single, important, fact is a horrendous failure.

It is 2022 and we are still at a loss about how to handle a rogue leader or country who is determined to wage war on another country. With Ukraine, we are looking at a duplicate of Germany's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1938. One leader, along with a fraction of the people, decides that their lives are worth more than others and will risk ant costs to achieve their goals. That invasion quickly led to the genocide of entire populations.

Yet, here we are. Our attempts at diplomacy -- like Chamberlain's -- have failed because the aggressor cares nothing for sovereignty or human rights. Like any great

bully, they will continue escalating their attacks until they are stopped. We have seen this all before, and yet we are making the same mistakes again.

One would hope that we had developed new, effective, ways of stopping war, but instead, our systems grind out the same solutions at the same slow pace. A vote here. A condemnation there. An economic sanction applied. It is frustrating to me -- and deadly to the world.

It isn't just the large things

While life and death situations are certainly the most pressing, we experience similar failures on a very personal level. The January 6th Commission continues to hold hearings over a year since the insurrection, and some individuals have been held responsible for their crimes, but we still don't see the deep, fundamental, change we need to see in addressing the insurrection and the deep causes of division in the country.

We can talk all we want, but action is needed now. Leaders are needed now. As a people and country, we cannot wait. As a world, we cannot wait and those dying around the world cannot wait.

We can't even seem to act against the smallest -- yet costly -- annoyances of our daily lives. We are bombarded with spam, lose our privacy to surveillance, and allow corporatism to control our lives in ever-increasing ways.

Laws are slow to be proposed, slow to debate, and slow to pass. In some cases, topics cannot even be discussed because politicians find them too toxic to their re-election. So, to ensure they keep their job, the problems continue. Too often, change is slow or stopped by relatively few people instead of serving the democratic majority, as intended. Our current systems seem almost designed to prevent progress and leadership instead of aiding them.

Governing for the future should be done by those who will live in it

Another aspect of this slowing is the relative age of those who are supposed to represent us. When a representative of any form is no longer able to understand the realities of how our modern world operates they become a detriment to the system. In the case of the Internet, for example, we have people with no clear understanding of how it works overseeing it. Even at age 58, I can clearly see where many in Congress today have fundamental knowledge better suited to 1962 than 2022. Yes, certain truisms remain in business and government, but most are thrown on the scrap heap in a decade or so. Yet, many still hold onto the ideologies of when they were first elected. This serves no one well -- especially future generations, who will have to live in this stagnated, slow-moving, world.

In the coming days, weeks, and years, we need leaders who will attack our moribund systems, but national and globally, and develop them into systems that can react both quickly and over the long term. Otherwise, it is very possible that the long term won't be a world worth living in.

Video



Extraordinary Portraits of Insects in Flight

A viewer sent me a copy of "Borne on the wind: The extraordinary world of insects in flight" which, in 1975, published photos of insects in mid-air flight. So, I filmed a bunch of insect flight sequences in a style inspired by the insect portraits in that book! All of these sequences were filmed at 6,000 frames per second. Most play back at 30fps, but some are edited to play back faster. Multiple captures are edited together so that more than one insect appears on-screen at the same time.

Welcoming Recorded Music to the Public Domain

Via The Internet Archive

I am a big user of the Internet Archive and public domain works, in general. There is so much amazing writing, art, and music from our past just waiting to be discovered and re-mixed into new creations. - DW



Approximately 400,000 sound recordings made before 1923 will join the public domain in the U.S. for the first time due to the [Music Modernization Act](#) (read more at [copyright.gov](#)). You can peruse about

38,000 of them in our [collection of digitized 78rpm records](#).

By 1922 we were solidly in the [Jazz Age](#) – F. Scott Fitzgerald’s [Tales of the Jazz Age](#) was published in 1922, and the term was already in popular usage. [Jazz](#) migrated from Black American communities in New Orleans into the rest of the United States, having evolved from its roots in [rag time](#), [blues](#) and [Creole](#) music. In fact, 1922 was the year Louis Armstrong left New Orleans to join King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band in Chicago.

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Forget New Year’s Resolutions and Conduct a ‘Past Year Review’ Instead

via [Tim Ferriss](#)

I am always looking for different ways of looking at the world and my place in it. Tim Ferriss can have some wild ideas, but he often hits the mark when it comes to looking at new ways to define your life and career. - DW

I’m often asked about how I approach New Year’s resolutions. The truth is that I no longer approach them at all, even though I did for decades. Why the change? I have found “past year reviews” (PYR) more informed, valuable, and actionable than half-blindly looking forward with broad resolutions. I did my first PYR after a mentor’s young daughter died of cancer on December 31st, eight years ago, and I’ve done it every year since. Her passing was a somber reminder that our days here are too precious not to fill them with the people and activities that nourish us most.

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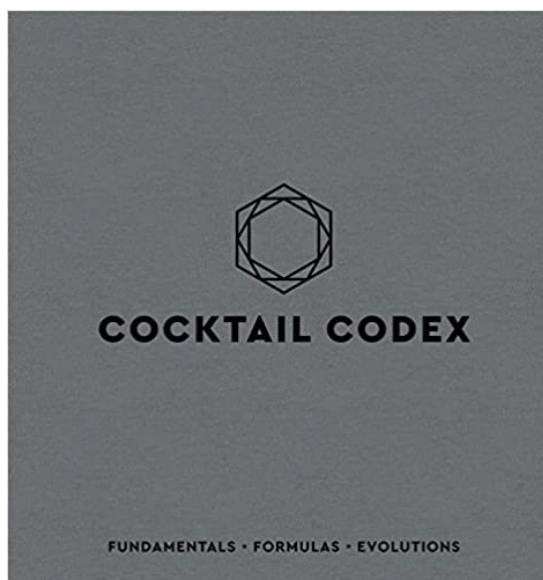
Risotto Alla Carbonara

from Food52

Once I married Rosanne 36 years ago Italian food became a big part of our lives together. In Sicily, food is, indeed, love, and making great dishes is just a deep expression of that love. It helped that I adored almost every Italian food I had found, so it was easy for me to search out the best recipes, the best products, and the best dishes — sometimes at the knee of the Sicilian Nonnas of Rosanne's family in Agira and Mascalucia. - DW



There's comfort food—then there's comfort cooking. For me, risotto falls into both. And weekends are perfect for the mindless inattention that risotto-stirring requires. This is *alla carbonara*—because for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday (and every day), what better combo than bacon and eggs?

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Cocktail Codex

by Alex Day, Nick Fauchald, and David Kaplan

Like good food, I LOVE a good cocktail. I discovered this book via the site, [Bless This Stuff](#) and immediately requested it from the library. I read everything I can find on cocktails and even tried my hand at creating liqueurs like Limoncello (that Sicilian influence, again) and hard ciders. I am looking forward to delving into the information held within. - DW

Cocktail Codex is the ultimate guide to crafting impeccable classic cocktails and creating original drinks. According to the authors, "there are truly only six fundamental cocktail recipes", and every cocktail that exists goes into six easily identifiable templates that encompass all cocktails: the old-fashioned, martini, daiquiri, sidecar, whisky highball, and flip. By studying each of the six drinks, the reader can understand the hows and whys of each, why some cocktails work and others don't, and learn the mechanics of a particular style of cocktail with important lessons in technique and ingredients that elevate his or her cocktail game.

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