

Book Reviews

Surviving the Medical Meltdown: Your Guide to Living Through the Disaster of Obamacare, by Lee Hieb, M.D., softcover, 275pp, \$16.95, ISBN: 978-1-938067-02-0, WND Books, 2015.

Expecting this book to be an economic treatise and political action primer, I was pleased to find its content more akin to a “prepper” manual for health maintenance and home medical care.

An orthopaedic and spine surgeon, and former AAPS president, the author spends the first third of the book providing a cognizant review of how the U.S. “healthcare system” came to be the medical cartel that currently exists, and predicts its further deterioration. She does neglect, however, to discuss the way employer-provided medical insurance came to be the norm in the U.S. as the result of wage and price controls in the 1940s.

In the book’s second section she discusses health optimization and disease prevention. Dr. Hieb is a proponent of strength training, meat eating, high-dose vitamin supplementation, hormone replacement, and avoiding both wheat and acetaminophen like the plague. I have no significant objections to any of her recommendations. I believe this section of the book would have benefited from the inclusion of a chapter on vaccinations similar to Dr. Donald W. Miller’s “User-Friendly Vaccination Schedule” (<http://archive.lewrockwell.com/miller/miller15.html>).

The largest portion of the book is dedicated to providing a summary of self care for illnesses and injuries. These include the stockpiling of medications and medical supplies. The author also presents recommendations for finding and keeping a doctor. Regarding the latter, I don’t believe the author adequately emphasizes the concrete and distinct differences between direct primary care (DPC), concierge, and traditional third-party-participating physicians.

The author’s medical recommendations are generally sound, although the inclusion of a section on the home treatment of open fractures seemed a little post-apocalyptic. I’m somewhat surprised Dr. Hieb did not mention the use of the “Ottawa Rules” (see [\[www.mdcalc.com/ottawa-ankle-rule/\]\(http://www.mdcalc.com/ottawa-ankle-rule/\)\) for the evaluation of ankle, foot, and knee injuries, not necessarily for the avoidance of X-rays, but more for self-triage purposes. Finally, no primary care physician today would recommend the use of azithromycin for treatment of anything because of its enormous and inappropriate overuse, and resistance rates of up to 50 percent.](http://</p></div><div data-bbox=)

The book is available in Kindle and paperback formats. I alternated reading chapters in both. For ease of use, I would recommend the paperback edition as a layman’s home reference.

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Knowledge and Power: the Information Theory of Capitalism and How It Is Revolutionizing Our World, by George Gilder, hardback, 330 pp, \$27.95, ISBN 978-1-62157-027-1, Washington, D.C., Regnery Publishing, 2013.

George Gilder is a person with a capitalist’s attitude who treasures liberty and freedom and the value of the human being and the human spirit. He advocates the benefits of limited government very effectively, explaining why regulation and statist overreach kill entrepreneurial spirit. He emphasizes that we must hold on to liberty and capitalism, or become the late great United States of America.

Gilder has written more 15 books, starting with *Wealth and Poverty* in 1981. He is fascinated with the role of innovation and information in economics, the importance of knowledge, and the energy that comes from creativity. He is well known and respected as a commentator and thinker.

Fortunately, Gilder knows that he sometimes is obscure and that his writing is tough going. He has an affection for mathematics and physics, but also invents concepts, even words, and makes a habit of turning disciplines like political science, law, and economics on their heads for a different spin, derivative of his genius and his talent, so he provides a back-pages guide to his ideas with “a tendentious glossary” on page 289, and “Notes” summarizing his ideas and references on page 295. The notes help the reader understand an ambitious book.

In 25 chapters Gilder discusses his view of economics and where we are, and where our society and economy are headed. He advocates for creativity and knowledge, exchanges of the kind that promote progress, the kind of invention that government and many businesses suppress.

Gilder focuses special attention on the concept of entropy. Boltzmann’s Entropy has to do with statistical mechanics and derives from the standard laws of thermodynamics, decay, and equilibrium. Gilder is interested in the role of entropy in information theory, Shannon Entropy, which has to do with the amount of information gained from receipt of a message. This is pertinent because Gilder sees capitalism as an information system, rather than just an incentive system. It is not completely predictable; hence, central planning does not work.

“Creativity always comes as a surprise,” Gilder writes. Surprise “is not exogenous to capitalism; it is its essence.” Additionally, “financial crises are intrinsic to capitalism and the key to its success. It is crucial to remedy them without vitiating (corrupting) capitalism.”

Gilder invents the word “regnorance” to describe the negative impact of central planning and regulatory interference. He reviews the story of Merchants and Traders Bank of Buffalo, N.Y., that went safely through the financial crisis of 2008 because it was a flat organization—one with few or no layers of middle management between staff and executives—that emphasized local branch and office control. He effectively shows in other parts of the book the negative impact of many business practices and excessive government. He makes the astute observation that socialism stunts economic growth because it suppresses freedom and creativity, as does corporate culture.

Gilder also discusses the role of gifts and altruism in capitalism.

The book is not an easy read. Some may find it as incomprehensible as calculus is to the innumerate; Gilder doesn’t think in simple terms. Don’t forget his helpful notes at the back. His insights are worth the work.

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