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IN YOUR WORDS

The kids who beat autism

As an autistic adult who has achieved a high degree of success by any standard, I see little evidence of autism “going away” in what is described in this article. Autism is not a disease, it is a way of being/personality. . . . I suppose that every form of being has its challenges. But I like who I am, and don’t want to be nonautistic. Hopefully we can someday move beyond conversation about “curing” autism and instead talk about effective ways to raise autistic children to become happy, productive autistic adults.

BOB, TEANECK, N.J.

The basic issue is the fact that “autism” is not a disorder. It is the group of symptoms for a wide variety and number of different disorders. Until we sort out the actual disorders from one another, we will never be able to truly treat autism or that matter conduct quality scientific studies.

M.S., NEW JERSEY

Oysters and climate-change policy

Pretty clear that climate-change advocates fall into two bins: ones who simply “get it” . . . and those who don’t but are forced to via economic expediency. Then there are the two bins containing climate deniers: those who “get it” but are either too cynical, politically invested or simply cold-hearted, and then those that simply don’t get it at all. This article nicely covers the first two bins; much more ink should be spilled on bin three, that is, the Romneys and McCains of the world.

ISTVAN, OAKLAND, CALIF.

As oysters die. As bees die. As frogs die. As animals and plants all over the world die. Have we received the message yet? Change or perish. That’s where we are. And the kind of car you want to drive is irrelevant. We need to do something now, today. Anything less is suicide.

SIOBHAN, NEW YORK

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IN OUR PAGES

International Herald Tribune

1914 German Army Attacks Liège

BRUSSELS The Belgian victory on the Vesdre has assumed undreamt-of proportions. Several thousand Germans were killed and wounded or taken prisoners before their hasty retreat to Dutch soil. The Prussian cavalry suffered severely. All the German assaults on the city of Liège and its forts have so far been repulsed, and the hope increases that the progress of the invaders will be arrested until the French forces come up. The German artillery is proving inefficient against the powerfully armed turrets of the Liège forts. The glorious behavior of the Belgians exceeds any dream.

1964 Russians Warn of ‘Broad War’

MOSCOW The Soviet Union tonight warned that further American “rash steps” in Vietnam could lead to a “broad armed conflict.” In a statement by the Tass news agency, the Russians called American action an “aggressive” act. Such actions, or further steps or provocations, “could lead to broad conflict with all the ensuing dangerous consequences,” Tass said. It added that the responsibility would lie on the United States. The statement was issued after a day in which Soviet news media refrained from comment, reporting only what American and North Vietnamese sources were announcing.

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Still life with weapons



PHOTOGRAPHS BY HECTOR RENE MEMBRENO-CANALES



ARMY EXPERIENCE Hector Rene Membreno-Canales, 25, served in Iraq before enrolling in art school on the G.I. Bill. His blending of classical still lifes and portraits with military objects and veterans is on display this week in “Horses and Bayonets” at Coohaus Art in New York.

“The military and

art school are polar opposites,” he says, “but I used the classroom to mitigate that difference.” Clockwise from top, “Nature Morte 1, C. 2013”; “The Empress Napoleon, C. 2014,” inspired by a portrait by Jacques-Louis David; and “Nature Morte 3, C. 2013.”

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Taking a bullet, gaining a cause: James S. Brady dies at 73

BY JAMES BARRON

James S. Brady, the White House press secretary who was wounded in an assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan and then became a symbol of the fight for gun control, championing tighter regulations from his wheelchair, died on Monday in Alexandria, Va. He was 73.

OBITUARY

His family confirmed the death but did not specify a cause.

On the rainy afternoon of March 30, 1981, Mr. Brady was struck in a hail of bullets fired by John W. Hinckley Jr., a mentally troubled college dropout who had hoped to impress the actress Jodie Foster, on whom he had a fixation. Mr. Hinckley raised his handgun as Reagan stepped out of a hotel in Washington after giving a speech.

Reagan, a couple of paces from his limousine, was hit, as were a Secret Service agent and a District of Columbia police officer. But it was Mr. Brady, shot in the head, who was the most seriously injured. The bullet damaged the right section of his brain, paralyzing his left arm, weakening his left leg, damaging his

short-term memory and impairing his speech.

“What I was, I am not now,” Mr. Brady said in 1994. “What I was, I will never be again.”

What Mr. Brady became was an advocate of tough restrictions on the sale of handguns like the \$29 pawnshop special that Mr. Hinckley had bought with false identification. “I wouldn’t be here in this damn wheelchair if we had common-sense legislation,” Mr. Brady said in 2011.

Mr. Brady and his wife, Sarah, campaigned for a bill that Congress passed 12 years after the shooting. The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, as it was known, ushered in background checks and waiting periods for many gun buyers. The Bradys also pressed for the restoration of a federal ban on assault weapons, which expired in 2004.

Mr. Brady returned to the White House occasionally. In 2011, he spoke briefly with President Obama — whom he endorsed in 2008 — on the 30th anniversary of the assassination attempt. Mr. Brady wore a blue bracelet with Representative Gabrielle Giffords’s name on it and told reporters that he had shown it to the president. Ms. Giffords had been wounded a few weeks earlier

in a shooting near Tucson that left six people dead and 12 others wounded.

Mrs. Brady said that the president agreed with “everything that we are for” but that he had told them the process in Washington took time. She said Mr. Brady had told the president, “It takes two years to make Minute Rice.”

The Bradys later sent recommendations to a White House task force on preventing gun violence, calling for universal background checks. They also recommended safety programs for the nation’s gun owners; Americans own almost 300 million firearms.

After 32 people were killed in a mass shooting at Virginia Tech in 2007, the Bradys supported a bill that closed a loophole that had allowed the gunman to buy weapons even though he had earlier been committed to a mental hospital. President George W. Bush signed the measure into law in January 2008.

When he was pressing for the Brady bill, Mr. Brady dismissed as “lamebrain nonsense” the National Rifle Association’s contention that a waiting period would inconvenience law-abiding people who had reason to buy a gun. The idea behind the waiting period was to give the seller time to check on whether



James S. Brady was gravely wounded in an assassination attempt on Ronald Reagan.

the prospective purchaser had a criminal record or had lied in supplying information on the required documents.

Mr. Brady said that five business days was not too long to make purchasers wait. Every day, he once testified, “I need help getting out of bed, help taking a shower and help getting dressed, and — damn it — I need help going to the bathroom. I guess I’m paying for their ‘convenience.’”

As the Bradys worked the phones, shoring up supporters, opposition to the

bill softened in Congress after a surge in gun-related violence across the nation and opinion polls showing crime and violence to be top priorities among voters. On Nov. 30, 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the Brady bill into law, with Mr. Brady at his side in a wheelchair.

James Scott Brady was born on Aug. 29, 1940, in Centralia, Ill., the only child of Dorothy and Harold Brady, a railroad yardmaster. James Brady grew up to be a train enthusiast with fond memories of the times he had sat in the engineer’s lap and run a switching locomotive.

Before graduating from the University of Illinois in 1962, he served as the president of the campus Young Republicans and the district governor of the state Young Republicans organization. He entered the University of Illinois law school that fall.

Eventually, he quit law school, tried accounting (but gave it up) and earned a doctorate in public administration at Southern Illinois University. He returned to Washington, where he worked for three federal agencies, the House of Representatives and Senators Everett M. Dirksen of Illinois and William V. Roth Jr. of Delaware before he signed on with Reagan.

One casualty in Israel: Dissent



Jodi Rudoren

LETTER FROM THE MIDEAST

JERUSALEM At a recent Tel Aviv demonstration against Israel’s offensive in the Gaza Strip, counterdemonstrators chanted “Death to the left” along with the more standard “Death to Arabs.” Afterward, some of the right-wingers beat some of the leftists — using large poles that had held Israeli flags.

Jerusalem, an Israeli human rights group, was blocked from broadcasting a paid advertisement reading the names of Palestinian children who had been killed in Gaza. Bar-Ilan University rebuked a professor who expressed empathy for all the war’s victims in an email to students.

And at a recent screening at the Jerusalem Cinematheque, a fading bastion of liberalism, those who stood for a moment of silence in memory of four Palestinian boys felled as they played soccer on a Gaza beach were shouted down. “Shame on you, what about our boys?” those who kept their seats

hissed, according to several people there. Stalwarts of the so-called Zionist left, which has long urged an end to Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state, count open discourse among the casualties of the monthlong war that by Monday had killed more than 1,800 people in Gaza and 64 Israeli soldiers.

Several polls have shown as many as nine in 10 Israeli Jews backing the prosecution of the war by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; when that support slipped some last week, it seemed to be because many wanted a more aggressive assault on Hamas, the militant Islamist faction that dominates Gaza. Those who question the government and military on Facebook, or even simply share photographs of death and devastation in Gaza, find themselves defriended — often by people they thought were politically like-minded.

“One of the victims of war is any nuance,” said Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman, who immigrated from New York in 1979. “The idea of having a nuanced position that recognizes the suffering on both sides and the complications is almost impossible to maintain.”

Rabbi Weiman-Kelman is the founder of Kol Haneshama, one of Israel’s largest and best-known Reform congregations, where every service ends with an adaptation of a traditional Hebrew prayer for peace that includes a line in Arabic borrowed from a traditional Islamic prayer. (Disclosure: I have occasionally attended those services.)

When Rabbi Weiman-Kelman recently circulated a petition condemning racist comments by a right-wing rabbi, a board member whose son was fighting in Gaza said the synagogue should stay out of it and “focus on our boys,” he recalled. And during services Friday night, another congregational leader with lengthy leftist credentials stood up and said he no longer felt comfortable with the tweak to a different prayer, wishing “shalom” — peace — to “all who dwell on earth” as well as to “the nation of Israel.” The man said, “There really are bad people out there who I don’t wish ‘shalom,’” the rabbi recounted. “It was a devastating moment.”

Some politicians, like the Labor Party chief, Isaac Herzog, have invoked a “Quiet, we’re shooting” ethos: When sons and brothers are on the front line, the thinking goes, unity is more important than robust debate. But the left-leaning newspaper Haaretz ran an editorial last week that referred to “McCarthyism spreading in Israel,” citing the Bar-Ilan case.

“Less and less tolerance exists for such a multiplicity of voices,” Naomi Chazan, an activist, academic and former leftist member of Parliament, lamented in a recent column. “The cohesion of Israeli society is being torn asunder as anti-Arab sentiments have gained traction and intolerance runs rampant.”

Daria Carmon, 33, who attended the Tel Aviv protest, said that slogans and viewpoints that used to be seen as extremist had become mainstream. She blames rhetoric from leaders demonizing Hamas, and Israeli news outlets that cover every soldier’s funeral but rarely show footage from Gaza.

“It’s hard to fight against such a collectivist society when all the messages are that everybody’s out to get us,” Ms. Carmon said. “It takes a lot to really resist that. It’s exhausting.”

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