

Ruminations on the State Of Things: How to Make the World A Better Place 50 Years from Now



Dartmouth Class of 1968 *“Who Are You?”* Survey

A collection of brief essays from members of the Dartmouth Class of 1968 and friends on the occasion of their 50th reunion.

The opinions expressed are solely those of the individuals.



Allan Ackerman



Better for who or what? That said, here goes:

For the world: Re-enlist the U.S.A. in the Global Climate Accords. For the U.S.A.: Repeal Citizens United, establish term limits for Members of Congress, institute compulsory national service to reduce the nation's carbon footprint and improve its infrastructure, fund public education from day care through 12th grade on a per capita basis, make 2 years of college free for all, move to a single-payer healthcare system, establish a minimum annual income for all U.S. citizens, buy back and then ban all firearms excepting shotguns, revolvers, and bolt-action single-shot rifles, establish a national firearm registry, mandatory and renewed firearm safety training to be required in order to buy ammunition. Increase the efficiency of the job retraining marketplace, improving the "demand" through publicizing the where and what of job sectors, and the "supply" through assessment and training matching where the demand is and will be. For Dartmouth: I'm out of touch, so I may be asking for an improvement that is already in place — teach every undergraduate how to make and continue to make work and life choices, both inclusive and exclusive of the tracked professions. The burden and the opportunity of choice has dramatically expanded and its rate of change is far greater than before. Establish a dynamic on-line library of role models in work and life for undergraduate use as well as online and human assessments to inform self-knowledge. This is not intended to replace what is already conferred by the Dartmouth experience, but to complement it.

Rachel Alpert



Most unfortunately, the true question is what must we do to stave off 50 years of social and political disaster? We must re-bend the American arc toward social justice and secure the promise and premise of the Con-

stitution's preamble. I have no illusions of possessing solutions, other than to arouse the passion of the populace, seize political power, reverse the judiciary, endow all people with civil rights, and reclaim individual and collective primacy over moneyed and corporate interests. 'Tis a tall task indeed, but we, each of us, must act, resist if need be, persist, and persevere.

Howard Anderson



The next 50 years can be better than the last 50 if progress in governing human societies keeps pace with advances in science and technology. Measures to achieve this are available—some of them in reviving the best of our own political culture—but progress will be slow until certain now-dominant political visions are abandoned.

Since the 17th century, advances in science and technology have far outstripped our ability to govern increasingly complex and diverse societies. Legal and political systems are still rooted in the doctrines and prejudices of earlier times. Maintaining political stability and prosperity while allowing optimal freedom for individuals to develop their potential means aligning governance to the realities of the 21st century and to what modern science is teaching us about both the limitations and potentialities of human nature.

Improving governance need not require adopting radical new doctrines. America's best political traditions, for example, contain principles that are few, timeless, and—reflecting the founders' balanced view of human nature—flexible enough to be consistent with what we are learning about how humans can adapt to change and minimize the destructiveness of their own behavior. Unlike major competing ideologies of the left and right, the best American tradition—not to be confused with what is now on display—does not require belief either in religious revelation or rigid secular ideology, nor is it designed to rationalize rule by privileged elites. Its core principles are focused more on checking the violent, destructive, and oppressive impulses in human nature than on

molding idealized citizens with prescribed characteristics.

Given the re-emergence of authoritarian political doctrines and the systematic, technology-aided promotion of cynicism, false narratives, and tribalism, it will count as an improvement if during the next 50 years we manage to hold in check the worst evils of which humans are capable.

John Anderson



I'm so thankful for great friendships and shared experiences of growing up while learning at Dartmouth. I hope that the next years will see the rekindling of some friendships that I have regrettably let slip away, and hope that all who read this are blessed with good health that continues for as many of the next 50 years as is humanly possible. I mention 50 years to be at least marginally responsive to the essay question. I'm to recommend measures to make the world better? Geez, why didn't you ask me earlier? I could have saved the world so much aggravation in these past decades.

Of course, there are no such measures. Betterment comes from within each of us and our collective voices and actions. We need to use them, and not just be voices crying in the wilderness, so to speak.

Roger Arvid Anderson



1. Life as we know it is ephemeral. The adage "dust to dust" is accurate. The sooner a person gets a grip on these hard truths the sooner you can comprehend how valuable life is and to make the most of your time here.
1. Humans are tribal and migratory. What constitutes a tribe varies and evolves, but the fact we are migratory remains a constant. Both issues result in inevitable conflicts among people, and within yourself as you are capable of belonging to a number of different tribes based for example on race, gender and sexual orientation. The value of tolerance and shared

social values is something we must learn from an early age.

2. Over-population to me is the overwhelming social problem we face in a planet that faces climate change, scarce resources and robotic replacement in the work place. Since we share this planet with many living creatures and plant life it is important to reduce our numbers so other creatures can flourish. How we go about reducing the population is a great challenge, and will challenge those who value democracy and individual liberty. We will also need to deal with the issues of genetic engineering. Since I suffer the consequences of birth defects I am open to how genetic engineering could resolve eliminating some bad genes in our physical constitution. The moral issues that arise from these engineering choices will again challenge the future of individual liberty.
3. The nature of family, marriage, gender and racial identity continue to evolve and an openness and transparency in dealing with these issues is important in meeting them.
4. Educational opportunity for all remains an ideal that I continue to subscribe to and through my estate I hope to help. Thank you, Dartmouth. You changed my life.

Russ Andrews

A series of recommendations:

1. True separation of church and state. Any ideological belief – religious, racial, economic, gender, etc – plays no role in the governing of the populace.
2. Equality of opportunity: all citizens shall have access (1) to basic but complete health-care without significant charge (a nominal charge – no more than the minimum hourly wage – may be charged for office or emergency room visits). Such universal healthcare would – like the public school system – be devoid of for-profit activities. The oxymoron of "health insurance" (similar to "education insurance", "clean water insurance", "police insurance" would disappear); (2) to education without