

# **HERMIT HERALD**

**APRIL 10, 2020**

**VOL 1 ISSUE 12**

## **COVID-19 AND NEW YORK STATE:**

**It's early Thursday afternoon and I was about to write on another matter when a comment appeared on television from the former head of the CDC (2009-2017), Thomas Frieden, stating that if Governor Cuomo had required social distancing two weeks earlier, the death rate in New York State would have been 80% lower. In other words, instead of 7,000+ deaths only 1,400 would have died. That is shocking and, in fairness, is one person's estimate. But, even if the lives saved could have been a fraction of that, what a huge difference it would have made.**

**I am reminded how, when I sent out issue 2 that I focused on the economic and health effects of the virus as being due to Force Majeure (events of such magnitude that they are out of our control). A couple of readers suggested that I didn't cite that the**

**administration could have done more, a critique with which I agree, but nonetheless contend that this was just such a virulent virus, the trajectory of which was almost impossible to stop or predict. By the way, a lot of people don't seem to be aware, but it is up to state governors, not the federal government to dictate what procedures should be followed in these type situations. Yes, the federal government can make suggestions, but action is up to the individual states.**

**So now we're back to New York State. Well, I've heard the Mayor of NYC and the Governor complain about it being such a densely packed area, how could the problem be avoided? Sounds like Force Majeure to me, which I actually believe. However, the latest allegation, as noted above, appears to be a failure to act when, in fact, mandating social distancing earlier could have had a very beneficial effect.**

**So what did Governor Cuomo have to say about Frieden's contention that 80% of the deaths could have been avoided by earlier action? "Every action I took was criticized at the time as premature."**

**And, Mayor DeBlasio on the same question."We're dealing with a virus that's only months old and science that changes by the day...hindsight is a luxury none of us have in the heat of battle."**

**And that was it for the New York Times. As if to say, "Well thank you for that great explanation." They dropped the story like a hot potato, a story that the 24/7 news cycle could have fed on for days.**

**Then Governor Cuomo is on TV Wednesday speaking of the terrible inequality in the way the virus has hit the black, latino and poor communities. He then went on to speak for another ten minutes about how these communities have always been unfairly impacted, a totally true and tragic statement, but he sounded like he was making a campaign speech, running for office, wanting to undo this harsh reality when, in fact, he has been the governor of the state for ten years.**

**Let's take a look at the shocking statistics:  
Covid death rate for Hispanics is 22 per**

**100,000; for Blacks it's 20; for whites it's 10 and for Asians it's 8.**

**There are various attempts to explain these statistics. Many of the citizens in these groups are employed in service sectors and therefore out in the public, while others (whites and Asians), are telecommuting. Or, just maybe, because of the environments in which they were raised, many of these people have poorer immune systems than those more wealthy. And, for sure, when they are sick, the same level of health care and hospital services are not available.**

**Not wanting to take up the entire issue with this topic, the reader can discover much more about what the city and state didn't do by reading yesterday's article in the NY Times, "How Outbreak kept NY a step behind- Infighting, delays and unheeded warnings". Lastly, for additional research you will want to read the broad based condemnation of the W.H.O., how they have slowed the Covid 19 investigation and that organization's close ties to China, and its support for traditional Chinese medicine, presumably, ground animal**

**horns and other animal parts. Unfortunately, many of these “medicines” are derived from endangered species.**

### **FABULOUS ENERGY NEWS:**

**Guess I just haven't been staying up to date on this sector, except that I'm loving \$2.00 gas plus I get infinite mileage since I can't drive anywhere. One statistic that had totally eluded me is that nearly 21% of the electricity used in the U.S. today is coming from renewable sources. Hooray!!**

### **NEWS FROM THE MIDEAST:**

**It's nice to find a couple of pages that don't deal with the virus. So let's talk about Saudi Arabia- what?- “Dozens of royals said to have virus.” – like, as many as 150, but not to worry, they have their own elite hospital where preparations are under way to accommodate up to 500 members of the royal clan. Perhaps Jamal Khashoggi's revenge?**

**The reader may recall my previous notes on Afghanistan where I predicted that things are**

**not going to end well there. That prediction is for some future moment in time, but in the meantime we are trying to get our troops out. Integral to this process is the release by the Taliban and the Afghans of prisoners under their control. Well, that process has broken down and a restart is in doubt. While these negotiations have been going on the Taliban have agreed to stop killing our troops and vice versa, but the Taliban has no such deal with the Afghans and the killing continues- sounds like a surefire road to peace to me.**

**Yemen: with all our problems why should we care about Yemen? Well, simply because tens of thousands of people have been killed in the civil war over the past five years and millions more have been displaced. Like the U.S., Yemen is now under attack from the corona virus. Because of the epidemic, the Saudis who are leading the fight on behalf of the government against the rebel Houthis have initiated a unilateral cease fire. This offers a glimmer of hope that such a stand down could result in serious peace talks. Haven't heard a response yet from the Houthis, but fingers crossed.**

## **FLY ME ALONG AND DREAMBOAT CRUISE:**

**I don't think so on either score. As reported today there are 10,500 commercial jets that have been parked/mothballed. Even, when and if the all clear is given, don't look for a fast uptick in passengers on these mini petri dishes. At least the airlines are getting some help from the stimulus package.**

**Not so for the big petri dish cruise ships- just a total gong show. The Carnival Corporation, which serves 11.5 million passengers a year and has nearly 50% of the global cruise market, has seen its stock price fall by 80%. Being a welcome home to Legionaire's Disease, a variety of noroviruses and, now, Covid- 19, how long do you think it will be until the cruise ships return to normal? -try never!!**

## **BERNIE AND JOE:**

**Feel the burn, that's right, the burn, as in acid reflux.**

**No original thought here, but by keeping his delegates, Sanders hopes to have a major influence on the party's platform. The fear is, if the party goes too far in Bernie's direction, the costs are going to be staggering and would likely lose the party critical Independent voters. Biden is apparently contemplating a proposal to lower the age for medicare, an idea that might gain some traction and be affordable.**

**Interesting statistic here: The citizens of the U.S. are 29% Democrats; 30% Republicans and 39% Independents.**

**SPECIAL TIME:**

**Happy Easter and Passover to all.**

**Your faithful scribe,**

**PB**

