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QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“Once you go down this rabbit hole, It’s going to make your brain bleed.” Restaurateur, David Chang.

CAN’T WAIT TO GET TO YOUR FAVORITE RESTAURANT ? I DON’T THINK SO.

Guidelines are being drawn up by various states and restaurant associations to provide a virus free environment. Hopefully, that will happen, but at what cost?

There are so many issues to be decided. One that doesn’t need debate is seating capacity. It’s going to be 50% or less. Restaurants operate on thin margins to begin with, so it’s likely many will never reopen their doors.

Then, it has to be decided whether to use paper menus or plastic ones that have to be

disinfected. Of course you have to check employees temperatures, but patrons also? What is the restaurant's liability if someone gets sick? How do you rewrite a menu to provide more safety in the tightly packed kitchens? Tables larger than four allowed? Oh, and what about air conditioning, since it is now known that that can move the virus well beyond safe distancing seating? Should you have a freshly sterilized pen for patrons to sign a health declaration form? Both waiters and patrons have to wear masks, but when patrons take off their masks to eat, masks have to be put in sanitized envelopes. All tables and chairs have to be sanitized between seatings – but of course. And let's not forget the silverware – has to be on the table in a protective wrapper.

Restaurant owner, Lindsay Jang, goes on to say, "Customers are grateful they can go out and feel comfortable. Diners get used to the awkward style of dining quickly." WHAT?? I'm going to go through all of this, spend \$100 to \$150 and gulp down my dinner? I may be safe, but for sure I'm not comfortable.

As restaurants start to reopen, it will be interesting to see how much pent up demand exists as so many are watching their expenses more closely. Georgia opens today, so stay tuned. From my perspective, I think I'm in for a long period of take- outs.

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL:

I made that point in the last issue and Bill Polk wrote to point out that South Dakota's governor, Kristi Noem, had neither ordered "stay in place", nor had she shuttered businesses, and that, as a result, South Dakota had become a hot spot for the virus.

Bill has a very good point here, but it totally relates to social distancing at one location. South Dakota with 77,000 square miles is the 17th largest state. With 885,000 residents it is the 46th most populous state.

South Dakotans have been free to mingle and do whatever they want to do about their businesses, close or stay open. The state has had 2,212 reported cases of the virus and 11 deaths, one half of one percent. On top of that,

80% of the cases (1,768) come from the Smithfield Pork facility in Sioux Falls, a perfect example, along with cruise ships, nursing homes and prisons of what happens in tightly packed, confined spaces. At the end of the day, I still think there is good reason for a lot of states to move more quickly towards normalcy than others.

TESTING, AN UNMITIGATED DISASTER:

Oh, we've got to get everyone tested. That's the key to getting people back to work and get the economy up and running. That is the mantra of the majority of our leaders. Two problems, however; firstly, it's been a very slow process in getting out test kits and secondly the existing test kits way under perform in terms of giving the information needed.

We are speaking of two different tests here, the test for whether or not you have Covid 19 virus and the antibody test which purports to show whether or not you have immunity.

With regard to the virus test, a well- respected long time ER doctor reports that the virus tests

are only about 70% accurate, missing a vast number of people who are infected but don't know it. A side note here: this same doctor recommends that we all get oximeters (the little device that goes on your finger tip and measures oxygen utilization and pulse). This is critically important because many people coming down with the sickness are not aware of what is happening to their lungs until they are dangerously down the slope. A healthy oxygen usage reading is 94-100. If your reading is below that, your lung capacity may be compromised. That is when you want to go for help. Oximeters can be found in drug stores, or, perhaps, like TP, can't be found. They can be ordered on Amazon.

Beyond the side trip we just took, virus testing kits just not getting the job done. Dr. Birx states that a huge breakthrough is needed. " We need a test that detects antigens like the test used for flu or strep. Antigens stimulate production of antibodies, and are, essentially, evidence of an immune response. We have to be able to detect the antigen rather than the actual live virus..."

Moving on to the antibody testing kits, a total gong show!

Do you know that there are 14 Antibody tests on the market today? Tests that determine if you've had the virus and/or if you have a natural immunity. Even if the tests were perfect no one knows if that initial immunity will have any preventative effect against future exposures. For many policy makers, a positive antibody report is their recipe for getting those with positive reports back in the work force.

Now we come to find that of these 14 tests, only three are found reliable; made by Sure Biotech, Wondo Biotech along with an in house, Elisa Test. Four of the other tests had false positives ranging from 11-16% and the rest were around 5%. All of these 11 tests are just unacceptable if you consider that those being told their tests were positive then blithely jump back into the work force when, in actuality, they have no protection.

A New York survey contends that because of a lack of tests, or, inaccurate tests, the true number of infections may be under counted by a factor of 10X.

Another lesson from that survey is, “NY is far from gaining, ‘herd immunity’- a proportion of the community immune to the virus that is so large that the pathogen can no longer maintain a toehold. For that to happen 60 to 70% percent of the population would have to be immune. Even then, the coronavirus would continue to spread, just at a slower rate.”

Thus far, testing in both areas has been a failure and correcting it and getting everyone tested will be a very lengthy process. We will probably see the virus arresting vaccine before then and that will be in 12-18 months.

GOLFING BANDITS:

Our golf courses in Palm Beach County as well as many other counties in the state, and across the country have been closed down due to the obvious lack of social distancing (74 players on over 200 acres – pretty ridiculous) but

probably justified by the massive gatherings at the 19th watering hole where the just missed birdies and 250 yard drives (not!) are expounded upon. Unable to reach the head of Palm Beach County, frustrated golfers have been badgering his parents with expletive laced phone calls demanding the courses be reopened. The vigilantes are now making their appearances, sneaking onto many local public courses and frequently getting away with it. The most feared sound on the golf course today is not the shouted, "Fore", but the whirring sound of a police drone just prior to the perpetrators apprehension.

AND FINALLY:

I wrote early on that HH was not going to be a political rag, of which there are more than you have fingers and toes. Rather, I was hoping to hit on many topics that I, and, I hoped, you, would find of interest. Even though HH was started near the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, I never could have anticipated that it would consume 90% of the news – digital, print and TV. That being the case, I do apologize that Covid -19 is the basis for all of

this issue. I had looked forward to bringing you snippets on March Madness, The London marathon, Wimbledon, the Masters, The Boston marathon, the Olympics, the NCAA lacrosse championships, the Delray Beach High School Senior Prom, etc, but sadly, not to be.

I think I do have a solution for football this fall: Take a 60,000 seat stadium and seat only alternate rows (now 30,000). Then, with 6 foot spacing, you wind up with an enthusiastic crowd of 10,000, or maybe 15,000. Attendance by lottery and updated immunity certificate. No leaving seats to grab a beer or hotdog. However, attendees will be given a free bottle of sasaparilla on entering. Doesn't get any better than that.

Would love to hear from loyal readers your take on where you are- what you're thinking in these weird times. I won't use your name unless you want me to. My take: This whole thing is like watching a play rehearsal and I'm hoping I don't get called on stage.

Your faithful scribe, PB

