

**HERMIT HERALD**

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**YES**

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**Who would have thought when this humble collection of ramblings was initiated at the start of the pandemic shut downs it would achieve the longevity of 50 issues?**

**Here is how The Hermit Herald was introduced to our readers on 3/19/20**

**“Finding myself intellectually challenged during this period of monastic existence (I can only read the great works of the world so many hours a day) I have decided to communicate with several circles of friends to place upon their shoulders the angst of my ennui. Hence the first issue of The Hermit Herald, which may or may not hit the newsstands again. Within this erudite publication**

**the dear reader will discover some true and helpful tidbits, some thoughtful musings and a good sprinkling of innocuous drivel. Proceed at your own peril.”**

## **THE YEAR OF THE PLAGUE AND “FIRE”, 2020:**

**The Hermit Herald was initiated by one and only one driving force – the pandemic. Little did any of us know that, with the death of George Floyd, we would be thrust into a year of the Plague and “Fire”. That appellation was first used in 1665-66 for the plague and fire in London. The difference in 2020 is that our “fire” is a social one. It’s been so amazing to watch these flames spread from rioting and BLM to the demand that anything to do with the Confederacy be obliterated, given the historic connections to slavery. And, then, like the pandemic itself, the social “fire” has spread throughout the world. And, at home, once the “flames” swirling around the Confederacy were dying down, new fuel had to be found for the “fire”. Now that Washington, Jefferson and T. Roosevelt**

**Are in that same “fire”, really, where else to go? New fuel has been found in the movement to defund/disband the police and in recent days the riots are starting again around the country, but this time the fires are all too frequently real. Yes, we are truly in the year of the Plague and Fire; The Annus Horribilis.**

**TELL ME AGAIN, WHY I SHOULD GET TESTED:**

**OK, probably a good idea if you don't know whether you just have a summer cold or are starting to come down with Covid- 19 (CV).**

**Perhaps the biggest problem with testing is the timeliness factor. “Even four days after being in contact with an active carrier, 40% of the cases that come back negative will most likely be false.” I.E., no, you're not OK, you have the disease.**

**Further, Dr. Osterholm, at the University of Minnesota says that the drive-in tests that many people are waiting 4 to 6 hours to get are, “terrible” generating lots of false-negatives and false-positives, in part, “because of how samples are collected.**

**The article from which I'm getting this information, written by Jane Brody, goes on to state, with regard to highly reliable tests, "You might think any test with 95 percent sensitivity and 95 percent specificity would be highly accurate. But, while these would be great grades on a final in Organic Chemistry, the ability of such a test to render a reliable result is extremely poor." Quoting again from Dr. Osterholm, "50 percent of the positive tests would not be true positives – you'll have to take my word on it, explaining the statistics would take half a column."**

**From the same tests which also look for antibodies frequently found in those who have recovered, and believed by many to act as a shield against further infection, Dr. Perry Wilson at Yale says, "About 30 to 40% of people who recovered from Covid- 19 did not have antibody levels significantly greater than those who were never infected."**

**In a study done at Rockefeller University in NY, it was found that 33% of people who had had the disease had too few neutralizing antibodies to prevent a reinfection.**

**Summarizing, Dr. Wilson with great understatement says, “The results here were not so encouraging.” So, in this one scholarly article, the myth of acquired immunity is shattered and we learn how unreliable testing is. Anybody want to wait in line for 6 hours?**

### **COVID- 19’s LASTING EFFECTS:**

**Before we move on to some better news, I’ll finish with one more downer. The overall mortality rate in the U.S. is 3.9%, but in England it is a horrifying 15%.**

**That 3.9% is deceptive due to the fact that a great many of the 96.1% who survive will have lasting, even life- time damage. As might be imagined, we’re looking at a sliding scale from the sickest in ICUs, to those just hospitalized, to those who have recovered at home.**

**In any event, this is not a disease where you get it and, like the flu, you’re back at the gym in three weeks. “The long term effect from Covid-19 on the liver, kidneys, brain, lungs, heart, gastrointestinal tract and mental health can be very real for people of all ages.”**

## **ENOUGH, ALREADY! !- SOME BETTER NEWS:**

**Even Dr. Fauci is excited by the results at the vaccine developer, Moderna as phase 1 and 2 testing have been very positive. Phase 3 testing is to begin this month with a 30,000 person study with hoped for results by the end of the year.**

**Another vaccine developer, Novavax, has just received a U.S. grant for \$1.6 Billion and has strong support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The company utilizes a novel way to make vaccines “by turning moth cells into tiny factories....” Too much information here- the importance is that it enables the company to produce large quantities of the vaccine quicker than other methods. Phase 3 trials are set for the fall. Kate Elder, a senior vaccines policy adviser says, “Novavax is the U.S. darling of the moment.”**

## **WHO GETS VACCINATED FIRST?:**

**Some obvious and not so obvious answers to this question. The obvious priority vaccinations should be made available for,**

**“vital medical and national security officers and then other essential workers and those considered at high risk- the elderly instead of children, people with underlying conditions instead of the relatively healthy.” What becomes less clear are those people who have a much greater infection rate- blacks and latinos. Claire Hannan, executive director of the Association of Immunization Managers says, “Giving it to one race initially and not another race , I’m not sure how that would be perceived by the public.” My thought would be to follow the preceding; those with underlying conditions get priority along with those having to work either in medical support or heavy volume human contact areas such as fast food workers. An interesting decision process to come; Ethical ?,Practical?,Political?**

## **EPIDEMIOLOGISTS- BLOWING WITH THE WIND:**

**What happened when anti lockdown protestors showed up on state capitol steps, or when Georgia started to open businesses, or when people were not allowed to go to church or to visit relatives in hospitals? Well, the**

**epidemiologists, in lock step, had strong proscriptions against such activities.**

**“However, rather than decrying mass gatherings, more than 1300 public health officials, including scores of epidemiologists, signed a letter dated May 30<sup>th</sup> supporting the protests of tens of thousands of people in the wake of the George Floyd killing”. Conscience over common sense, or falling prey to “weaponized political correctness”? Your choice.**

**AND COUNT ON THE NY TIMES:**

**We read in the last issue that, as mandated by the NY Times, blacks are no longer blacks, they will henceforth be referred to, in writing, as Blacks, even though no less a figure than Jesse Jackson thinks it is ridiculous.**

**So what is one of the first headlines the Times runs in following this new protocol:**

**“The abuse of power has plagued brown and Black people, and we have had enough.” Thank you NY Times for the perceived elevation of one group at the expense of another.**

**CALIFORNIA –STUDENTS HELD HOSTAGE:**



**Thanks to our reader, Toni Garrison, attention is brought to a recent Wall Street Journal article from which we learn that the United Teachers Union in Los Angeles has decreed that they will not return to the classrooms until Congress passes Medicare for all and gives the Los Angeles school system \$500 Billion in direct aid. Looks like A) the teachers really don't want to go back and B) the next time a nine year old gets in a classroom, he or she may well be in their seventeenth year.**

**The union goes on to say in a research paper that, "the pandemic has highlighted the country's profoundly racist, intensely unequal society." The union is refusing to return to a "normal" that "wasn't working." Also included in union demands are sharp increases in commercial and industrial taxes, and a new wealth tax, 1 to 3% on Californians making more than \$1 million per year on top of the 13.3% California state income tax, the highest in the country.**

**As the article concludes, "By now you may be getting the idea that the union really doesn't**

**want its members to return to work. Or, they're using the pandemic as leverage to extort more money from taxpayers that they couldn't get otherwise. Either way, it's a demonstration of how far left the nation's public unions have moved. They're still a self-serving guild, but they're also a political vanguard for left-wing ideological causes. Show them the money, or students can stay home and lose another year of learning."**

**Whether you agree with the author's conclusion about the union's political direction or not, the ability for the Federal Government to deliver Medicare for all and \$500 Billion by the start of this year, next, or the year thereafter, is slim and none.**

**AND FINALLY:**

**Sounds better than a defibrilator, but still not getting the job done. What's that, you ask? Stimulus checks, of course. Turns out the Administration sent out \$1.4 Billion in Stimulus checks to the deceased. Oops!!**

**Your faithful scribe, PB**

