

HERMIT HERALD

VOL 1 ISSUE 26

MAY 8, 2020

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“A ship is always safe at shore, but that is not what it’s built for.” Albert Einstein

A COUNTRY IN LOCKDOWN:

The Administration, in my opinion, correctly believes that we have to get the boat (economy) back in the water. The difficult part is that it is such a delicate balancing act. We all recognize that you can’t just say, “Open sesame”. It is a good thing that state governors have the reins in this regard. As an example, I believe Gov. De Santis in Florida is doing a good job. He is making decisions on a county by county basis. There is a lot more opening up in the Vero Beach area than in Palm Beach, and more in Palm Beach than Miami. Nevertheless, it’s almost a certainty that we will see some

increased mortality. To minimize that, social distancing will have to be the new norm in our lives. It was disconcerting when the Administration declared that the Task Force was being closed down, but definitely good news when they reversed course.

COMO SE LLAMA:

That's llama, as in (lama, ph.) instead of (yama,ph.), or, if you will, llama, the four footed camelid animal.

Apparently, llamas have long been used in antibody studies. Previous experiences have shown that llamas have strong antibodies that have countered SARS and MERS. The nature of the llamas' antibodies is such that they are easily manipulated (think designer antibodies). In any event, the researchers have found that the llama antibodies inhibit the corona virus in cell cultures.

It is hoped that the antibody will eventually be used as a prophylactic treatment to protect the uninfected from the disease.

One last word on antibodies. Back in issue 22 we had discussed how bad these 14 different antibody tests were, with only three of them being close to accurate. The FDA has just decreed that companies selling these tests have ten days to submit data proving accuracy or face removal from the market.

LET'S SAY WE HAVE A VACCINE:

It's now November, 2021 and we're ready to start vaccinating over 300 million people. It's not unlikely two injections would be necessary. Oops! Wait a minute, where are the vials and syringes? Well, thank goodness the Administration is aware of this, but even at this relatively early date some manufacturers are concerned about the ability to have an adequate supply when the time comes.

AVIGAN:

What the clinically unproven Hydroxychloroquine was to Governor Cuomo and president Trump, Avigan is to Japan's Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe; a clinically unproven drug with great anecdotal stories.

Not for pregnant women, however, as it causes birth defects.

Avigan is an antiviral drug purported to be useful in the early stages of corona virus infection and some researchers believe it would also be a good prophylactic. China has already approved the product and Mr. Abe has allocated \$130 million to triple the existing stockpile. Due to Mr. Abe's enthusiasm, 1,000 medical facilities in Japan are using the drug and the country's foreign ministry reports that 80 countries have requested it.

LAURIE GARRETT, PROPHETESS:

Ms. Garrett, a pulitzer prize winning journalist was recently covered in a Vanity Fair article and is referred to as a Cassandra. In 1994 she published her best selling book, "The Coming Plague". In that book, and in many writings since, she has predicted the global spread of more contagious pathogens. Unlike those who forecast that, with a vaccine, we'll be heading out of the woods in at least 18 months. Ms. Garret says 36 and that's, "my best case scenario."

In response to being asked, “When do we go back to normal?” Just as things changed forever after 9/11. She says, “We created a whole new normal. We securitized the United States. We turned into an anti terror state, and it affected everything. We couldn’t go into a building without showing an ID and walking through a metal detector, and couldn’t get on airplanes the same way, ever again. That’s what’s going to happen with this.”

None of us doubt that how we travel, go for entertainment, dine and greet each other has drastically changed and much of those changes will be a permanent part of the new normal .

A further unsettling part of Ms. Garrett’s future view is that she envisions coming major political disruptions. She says, “Just as we come out of our holes and see what 25% unemployment looks like, we may also see what collective rage looks like.”

MICKEY’S DROOPING EARS:

The perfect storm in America's entertainment industry- Disney. Virtually everything Disney does is to entertain the world, but the world can't afford (health wise) and, in millions of families, (money wise) to be Disney customers any longer.

14 theme parks catering to 157 million people last year – all shut down. Well, actually, it is reported Shanghai will try to reopen soon, but on a very scaled down basis. Disney has laid off more than 100,000 employees.

And don't forget about the 42,000 hotel rooms, the \$71 Billion purchase of 21st Century Fox, 312 Disney stores and four cruise ships with 13,400 passengers. All of this is just a snapshot of Disney's business, but what fiscal pain.

For the quarter ending March 31 (and mind you the company was only broadly impacted for about the last three weeks of the quarter) Disney's quarterly profit fell by 90 %. When does it all come back? Will it ever come back? Both long time CEO, Roger Iger and the new CEO, Bob Chapek emphasized a full recovery over the long term. Mr Iger said, "What we

create has never been more necessary or more important. People find comfort and inspiration in our messages of hope and optimism.” I couldn’t agree more with that statement. I only fear that “recovery over the long term” will be a longer time than they think.

“I’D LIKE TO TAKE YOU ON A SLOW BOAT TO CHINA:”

Ah, yes, the great lyrics and song by Liz Callaway. And now you may have an opportunity to do just that with your significant other as Carnival Cruise lines has announced that they may put 8 of their 105 vessels back in service as early as August. Yikes!! Did I say, “CARNIVAL”? They’ve got to be kidding.

Since the start of the coronavirus, seven of Carnival’s ships have been at the center of the pandemic. “For months, lawmakers and epidemiologists have blamed Carnival for failing to contain outbreaks on its ships and spreading the virus around the world. Its response to the pandemic is the subject of a

criminal investigation by the Australian police and a congressional investigation in the U.S.” It seems the folks at Carnival may have gotten a bit ahead of themselves as the firm quickly backed off, saying, “Any resumption of cruise operations is fully dependent on discussion with government officials.” Knowing Carnival will eventually be back in operation, I inquired how much a ten day cruise with a veranda suite might cost. I still don’t think the price is right, but they’re saying they’ll pay me \$5,000 to go. Smile.

PANDEMIC JOURNAL:

Arizona State University (ASU) has begun a project, and has been joined by forty other colleges and universities, to catalogue diaries, journals, photos etc. reflecting commentary and visual testimony during these difficult days. There are already over 3,300 submissions. Our HH readers might enjoy surfing the site. They have graciously posted all the HH issues. To access, google: “covid19.omeka.net/items/browse?” HH entries can be found by clicking “title”-Hermit Herald, or, “Curator” -Peter Bundy.

Your faithful scribe, PB