

# **HERMIT HERALD**

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### **QUOTE FOR THE DAY:**

**“Who opens the morning paper without the wild hope of huge headlines announcing some great disaster? Provided, of course, that it affects other people and not oneself.” Iris Murdoch.**

### **GUESS THAT DIDN'T WORK FOR US:**

**Yes, indeed. We awakened one morning and the disaster story was about us. One of our readers writes to suggest that we declare war against the coronavirus (CV). President Trump has already invoked war powers, but our reader's advocacy has a different twist. He points that just as the young men and women went out to fight our shooting wars, the combatants in this germ war are, firstly, the front line care providers, but, secondly, the elderly and others with conditions putting them at risk.**

**Continuing, he says, “By opening up the country too early we put at risk primarily older people, people with medical challenges and people who live in clustered situations. Is this significantly different than sending our young fighting soldiers into battle? We must fight. If we don’t then we will bring the country untold destruction of its economy and social order...” And, further on, “Locking down everything with no end game strategy other than survival and hopefully a vaccine at some ill defined date is a losing battle strategy...”**

**This is interesting, essentially saying, “Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead.” Yes, there are going to be combatants who die in the process, but worse will befall us if the economy falls into ruin. The major caveat here is that in a shooting war, our troops get the best offensive weaponry and best protective gear that can be found. Before we can truly fight the virus war, the combatants have to be properly protected. So I would modify the above by suggesting that we don’t reopen, “too early”, but reopen when the combatants are properly armed, i.e. equipment/protective gear and proper social behavior- distancing, masks, etc, with special**

**attention to those working or living in confined spaces. From what I'm reading we have made great strides in all of the above categories except for those living in confined spaces; poor neighborhoods and nursing homes being prime examples.**

**Nevertheless, agreeing with our reader, we have to aggressively get into the war, not just hang back. Some things, however, are going to be a long time coming back- big events – stadium games, Broadway shows, mega musicals and evangelical events. Why? An earlier estimate by Dr. Fauci was that up to 50% of the virus carriers were asymptomatic (not feeling ill themselves, but being able to pass it on to others.) Oh, but in the not too distant future we will have a vaccine – almost meaningless if the millions of anti vaccinators boycott the inoculation program.**

**JUST IN:**

**On May, 16<sup>th</sup> “Operation Warp Speed” was initiated. Leading the government’s vaccine development team is Moncef Slaoui, formerly head of vaccine development at Glaxo-**

**SmithKline. In his opening address, Mr. Slaoui referred to the standard line that a vaccine was 12 to 18 months away. President Trump has been pushing for one by this Fall and Mr. Slaoui, somewhat surprisingly, didn't push back very hard on that statement, pointing out that of approximately 100 vaccines in development, the goal is to get three or four of them into late stage trials this year.**

**A subtext to Mr. Slaoui's comments is the fact that he is on the board of Moderna, a Massachusetts biotechnology firm which has been in stage two human trials. Dr. Fauci is also working closely in conjunction with developments at Moderna.**

**Then, just this morning comes the news of Moderna's phase 2 trials. 45 volunteers were divided in three 15 member groups with one group receiving a weak vaccine, the next, a moderate vaccine and the last, full strength.**

**The weakest of the vaccines showed that the volunteers developed antibodies similar to people who had recovered from Covid 19. This is just HUGE!! Final stage three trials are set to**

**begin in July and it is said that it could be available for potential emergency use this Fall. We'll keep our fingers crossed as there is no precedent in history for such a fast development of a vaccine.**

**Ah, but not quite so fast all you vaccine fans. If you show antibodies to the virus, it means you have been cured and/or are immune and therefore can't get it, right? A new cloud just crossed the horizon. Remember the aircraft carrier, Theodore Roosevelt? Over 1000 of the crew had to be evacuated with the disease. As they recovered in quarantine they have returned to the ship. 13 of the "cured" crew who had all tested negative twice before reboarding the ship have retested positive for Covid 19. Reference is not made as to what antibody levels they had, but the presumption would be, if you have been cured, you would have the antibodies. For sure the experts are scratching their heads about this information.**

### **STATE BUDGETS:**

**As retail continues its long slog back to normal, and for certain it is going to be long**

**and painful, with retail sales having fallen 16.4% last month. Some of the individual categories were jaw dropping over the past two months: restaurants and bars, off by 50%-surprised it wasn't more; furniture and home furnishings off by two thirds and clothing stores, off by 89%.**

**This may all be just the tip of the iceberg compared to the problems facing many states with the losses they are suffering from lower corporate and individual tax revenues along with the demand for more special services to fight the CV. Ohio is a good example, running a \$200 budget surplus in February and a \$777 million deficit by the end of April – a \$1 Billion swing in two months. On top of that, most states are required to have balanced budgets, which, in turn, can only mean one thing – drastic cuts in government services, schools, police, garbage pick up – you name it. And, one last thing – many states have large unfunded pension obligations. All of this has five large Democrat controlled states lobbying the government for a \$1 trillion relief package. The Republicans are resisting, claiming that these states have been fiscally mismanaged for**

**years. I don't know enough to have an opinion, but what is known is that the states, retail industry, those out of work and consumers, in general, are in a real quagmire.**

## **STAND YOUR GROUND LAWS, CASTLE DOCTRINE AND CIVILIAN ARRESTS:**

**Some of these provisions are found in many states. Civilian arrests, for example, are permitted in Georgia where the tragic shooting of the young black jogger occurred last week. The ability to play law enforcement officer for a day will play out as part of the killers' defense. Then, in Florida, we have "Stand your ground" which gives a homeowner great leeway to essentially do whatever he thinks necessary to protect his property, so, shooting a fleeing thief ("I was scared for my life" says the owner) is ok. As mentioned in an earlier issue, not so in most states. As soon as that thief is no longer coming at you, when you shoot him, you become the attacker. Castle Doctrine really takes stand your ground to a mobile basis. I'm in my own little castle moving around and therefore I have no responsibility to first try to extricate myself**

**from a confrontational situation. “Sure, I shot him. He wouldn’t get out of my face.”**

**“Supporters argue that it allows citizens to defend themselves and deter crime without the risk of criminal prosecution. They also note that total violent crime decreased in some states where these laws were passed.**

**Opponents contend it leads to greater amounts of violence, that it stokes fear, feeds vigilantism and encourages people to confront others rather than retreat.” Would like to hear our readers’ thoughts.**

**Now, that parishioner in Texas who recently shot a would be mass murder in the middle of church services – a real hero, no doubt, but please, folks, no heroics. Hand guns are extremely inaccurate beyond a few feet. There’s a great chance you’ll shoot someone else by mistake, or the responding SWAT team will see you with a gun, well, not a nice ending.**

**Your faithful scribe, PB**



