

HERMIT HERALD

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READER REFERRALS/COMMENTS:

It looks like China has been burying the Covid 19 problem, not just a little, but big time. Terry O'Donnell recommends, "In hiding Covid 19 at first, China chose reputation over saving lives" Brett Schaeffer, 4/5/20- a fascinating and scary read.

Bill Polk recommends: Heather Cox Richardson@subtrack.com, 4/6/20 dealing with the Wisconsin vote for a seat on the Wisconsin Supreme Court, a vote that is likely to determine the outcome of the gerrymandering and voter id fight that has been raging in the state for quite some time. I would suggest this is mandatory reading for whatever side of the political isle you are on- an excellent primer.

NEWS TO MAKE YOU SMILE:

It's not a huge deal, but All State and American Family Insurance, realizing that people are driving much less these days, have both rolled back their premiums. All State, a 15% reduction for the months of April and May, and a 50% reduction for every car insured by American Family- a nice gesture in troubled times.

GOVERNMENT STIMULUS PACKAGE:

You may recall how I have railed against giving married couples making \$150,000, with no children, checks for \$2,400. The math on that handout comes to around \$2Billion- should have gone to further increase payments to lower income groups or, how about this, \$50,000+ to every nurse and orderly working corona virus cases.

There are so many parts of the stimulus bill that my eyes glaze over, but one part of the bill with which I have just become familiar is fantastic, notwithstanding a roll out with some glitches, which will soon be corrected.

The Paycheck Protection Program applies to all companies with 500 and fewer employees on a first come first served basis. It's a loan/grant fund of \$350 Billion. Companies can borrow from this fund as long as they promise that they will neither reduce salaries nor lay off workers. If the companies keep their side of the bargain, they will not have to repay the loans which, essentially, become grants. And, just off the wires, congress may increase this program by an additional \$250 Billion.

JUST WHEN I FINALLY LEARNED HOW TO SPELL HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE:

The squabbling continues over this drug, which is marketed under the name of Plaquenil. I think I can handle that one. While President Trump and Governor Cuomo (unlikely bed fellows) beat the drum for Plaquenil along with hospitals and doctors all over the country, because it still hasn't been officially endorsed as a treatment for Covid 19, it remains something of a pariah, but one that everyone seems eager to embrace. I have read less about it being a cure than a drug that is a

major assist in lessening the effect of the virus. One of the NYC major hospital heads, while admitting that his hospital is using Plaquenil widely, goes on to say he doesn't really know if the improvement of his patients is due to the drug, or just because they are naturally recovering. Come on! The drug is reported to be safe and has few side effects. I think tens of thousands of administered doses is more than anecdotal. Let's bring the trials that are under way to a quick conclusion. While Plaquenil may not help everyone, the testimony out there among medical professionals is that it is helpful to a lot of people. As the president said, "It can't hurt."

If we can't have a full loaf, the reason we need half a loaf (Plaquenil) is because of vaccine developmental time. Case in point: it was announced today that Lenovo Pharmaceuticals has a promising coronavirus vaccine on which they are starting, "small safety trials" and will be hoping for "initial" results by late summer. That's only the first step in the approval process. That vaccine, if ever, won't be available for more than a year.

Biggest puzzlement for me is why I have only seen a single article on the already approved vaccine, BCG, on which I reported in issue 9- great excitement on the part of the Australian medical community and nary a whisper in the U.S. press.

Most unsettling news of the day: Dr Fauci now estimates that asymptomatic carriers of Covid 19 may run as high as 50% of the infected population. The highest estimate previously reported was 25%.

THE CAPTAIN CROZIER MESS:

Surprised I didn't get any comments from our readers. Can you imagine the acting Secretary of the Navy flying 8,000 miles to give a profanity laced dressing down to the crew of the air craft carrier, Roosevelt, for having cheered their captain as he departed the ship? Oh boy, I was getting warmed up on this one and was going to start off by saying, That jerk, Modly is toast." I hate being deprived of a good rant, but just as I started writing this he resigned.

This saga, in just 72 hours, has more turns than Lombard St. in San Francisco. Modly's decision to relieve Capt Crozier without conducting an investigation appalled the Chief of Naval Operations, Michael Gilday and General Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The military may report to civilian Secretarys, but definitely not cool when you are a rank amateur, acting secretary to get a couple of pros like Gilday and Milley ticked off.

From what I have read, President Trump initially bought in to Modly's decision to relieve Captain Crozier. Modly had written a letter to the NY Times explaining his rationale which, most importantly, cited that the Captain's e-mail had, "intentionally excluded various people from his direct chain of command." Not good, if true, and certainly warranted further investigation.

Whatever rationale might have existed for relieving Captain Crozier evaporated with the optics of the crew cheering their departing captain and Modly dissing the crew of the Roosevelt.

Modly had said Crozier was, “naïve or stupid”, adding that Captain Crozier had cracked under pressure. Hours later Modly doubled down on that defending his statements and his performance on board the Roosevelt.

By this time the President was hearing of the terrible optics from either his chief of staff or from senior Naval officers, leading him to say, “His (Crozier’s) career prior to that was very good so I’m going to get involved and see exactly what’s going on there because I don’t want to destroy somebody for having a bad day.”

Within hours Modly was offering an abject apology saying such nice things about Captain Crozier that the only thing missing was an invitation to come over for a barbeque, pop a couple of beers and discuss Navy’s 31- 7 romp over Army last year. Unfortunately, Captain Crozier wouldn’t be able to accept as he has contracted Covid -19.

Within another few hours Modly resigned. At the end of the day it was Modly who was naïve

and stupid. It was Modly who cracked under pressure.

CRIME AND STAYING IN PLACE:

Great news! Because of the constraints on moving about, it is reported that felony and misdemeanor cases in NY City dropped a collective 43% from March 18 to March 24th compared to a year earlier. However, another article refers to the fact that burglaries are up by 17%, giving those new gun owners I have been telling you about an opportunity for target practice.

DO AS I SAY, NOT AS I DO:

Dr. Catherine Calderwood is Scotland's Chief Medical Officer and has been one of the most prominent faces in Scotland's, "Stay at home" campaign. Unfortunately Dr. Caldwell was photographed with her family at her country home in Earlsferry, 45 miles from her permanent residence in Edinburgh. Dr Caldwell has resigned. Oops!!

AND FINALLY:

With thanks again to Suzanne Farmer:

Sitting on the couch my husband sweetly whispered, “The best part of all of this is I get to spend more time with you.” As I looked over at him lovingly I realized he was talking to the dog.

The coronavirus has turned us all into dogs. We roam the house all day looking for food. We’re told, “no” if we get too close to strangers and we get really excited about car rides.

Your faithful scribe,

PB