

# **HERMIT HERALD**

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## **QUOTE FOR THE DAY:**

**“What good is sitting alone in your room?  
Come hear the music play.” Fred Ebb – Cabaret**

## **STURGIS, SOUTH DAKOTA RALLY:**

**As if in answer to that Siren song, 250,000 of our fellow citizens have descended for ten days on tiny (7,500 residents) Sturgis for the 80<sup>th</sup> consecutive year featuring thirty-five bands, drag races, remembering our fallen heroes, and, don't forget, the Mayor's poker tournament. The Pappy Hotel (600 acre) compound is where most camp and park their RVs. Have a look see on the U Tube live streaming site – quite a scene – looks like a very large dress down Easter Parade cum tattoos and bikes. Virtually no one is wearing a mask and everything looks totally calm and**

**peaceful. The only thing for the cops to do is to chat with each other at street corners. You know what? It really looks like a fun time for everyone, including many seniors mounted on those massive three wheeler bikes.**

**Does anyone remember those truly frightening anti cigarette ads from about ten years ago? They showed cancer victims dying from the effects of smoking- very effective in helping to quit smoking. I never knew why they stopped running the spots, except, perhaps because they were so strong, people recoiled when they saw them. It's a shame we can't have a similar message for Covid 19 (CV) because these folks in Sturgis, as nice as they seem, just don't get it.**

**Michael Brown, 47, speaks for tens of thousands of his fellow bikers. "My biggest concern is drivers. They just don't pay attention to bikes. I don't know one person in a six state radius who has had Covid. I think it's all political." Well, sincere wishes for good luck, because that is what you'll need to avoid the consequences of a "major spreading" event.**

**AND HEY, THIS JUST IN:**

**100+ people arrested, 13 police injured. Lori Lightfoot, Mayor of Chicago is on the networks saying, "This riotous behavior is felony and criminal activity." Well, Lori, so glad, after all these weeks, the veil has been lifted from your eyes.**

**AFGHANISTAN UPDATE:**

**Following from our earlier articles in issues 33 and 49, it appears the last major hurdle has been cleared to ensure the commencement of peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. The last hurdle was the unwillingness of the Afghans to release the last 400 Taliban prisoners in a prisoner swap that had already freed 4,600. The Taliban, while holding back from attacking American troops in recent months, has not held back on attacking the Afghans, wanting to exert maximum pressure for the release of the final 400. No question but that the U.S. has also been pressuring the Afghans.**

**So, why the big delay? These 400 prisoners are seriously bad people who have all been convicted of major crimes. 156 had been sentenced to death; 105 were convicted of homicide; 34 of kidnapping and 51 of drug trafficking. It has been a bitter pill for the Afghans to swallow to release them. However, this is just a major break through which should enable the U.S. Administration to reduce U.S. forces to below 5,000 by November, a real win for the U.S., and opportunity to really contemplate exiting our longest war. My prediction is little changed; Anywhere between six months and six years, the Taliban will be in control of the country. My only hedge is that control of Afghanistan may become geographically divided setting the stage for another Sudan/South Sudan break-up.**

### **LET'S JUST RELAX A LITTLE:**

**For those who have been on the Hermit Herald journey from the start, I promised that some of my entries would be little more than “innocuous drivel”. After all these months, I find that appellation too self effacing and have**

**elevated it to “Virtual learning opportunities for my esteemed readers.” – a bit like going from “Janitor” to “Sanitation Engineer” – title inflation.**

**Loyal reader, Joe Knoll, has brought to my attention some fascinating and little known facts about our past Presidents and Vice Presidents. I pass on some of these selected items to our readers, as knowledge of these points could be the final question when you appear on Jeopardy or, at the very least, make the reader a fascinating dinner companion with your knowledge of the arcane.**

**Fourteen vice presidents of the U.S. have gone on to become president: J Adams, Jefferson, Van Buren, Tyler, Fillmore, A. Johnson, Arthur, T. Roosevelt, Coolidge, Truman, Nixon, L. Johnson, Ford, and H.W. Bush.**

**We’ll start with one Vice President, Charles Fairbanks, VP to Teddy Roosevelt. He was exceptionally bright, finishing law school and passing the Bar exam in six months. At some point he did something that was very favorable to the Alaska territory. Alaska did not become**

**a state until 1959. In gratitude, Alaska named a city after him. He was invited to come to the naming ceremony, but never set foot in the state. This particular story comes to me through the introduction by Lynne Neave, one of our readers, to Tony Fairbanks. Tony is the grandson of Charles. Of further interest, but probably to only three of us, (alums of Trinity and the fraternity, St Anthony Hall), Tony's father, Richard, went to Yale where he was a member of St. Anthony Hall. A nick- name at the Hall for St Anthony is, Uncle Tony. Richard was so fond of his years at the Hall that he named his son, Tony – and that's the truth.**

**When Jefferson dispatched Lewis and Clark to explore the west, he was explicit in telling them to beware of the mammoths, which he believed still roamed the plains.**

**During the Madison presidency, his wife, Dolly, introduced Americans to ice cream. No Choc, van, straw for Dolly, she preferred asparagus, parmesan and oyster- yuk!!**

**James Polk, in an attempt to better relate to the citizens, opened the White House for**

receptions, but found them unproductive as many came just seeking jobs.

And now, a Jeopardy question: As a young man, he was an outstanding wrestler in his home state. His record was 300 wins and 1 loss (I'd love to know who he lost to) His challenge to opponents was, "Come on, whet your horns". Who was Abraham Lincoln?

Andrew Johnson got himself impeached, but was further vilified because, along with his Secretary of State, Seward, he bought Alaska from the Russians for \$7.2 million. Times do change. At the time it was called Seward's Folly, now it looks like a great deal, or we'd have the vodka sipping Russkies in our back yard.

James Garfield said, "I never had the presidential fever, not even for one day." He just happened to show up for the 1880 convention which wound up dead locked over two other candidates, and there you have it – the accidental president.

Grover Cleveland, the only President to be elected to two separate four- year terms. In

**Ohio, some called him “The Executioner” as, while Sheriff of Erie County, he pulled the trap door hanging two convicted murderers.**

**William McKinley – what a deal he had. His attitude basically said, “I’m running from my front porch and that’s it.” And, that’s what he did. The estimate is that over 700,000 people came to see him at his home in Canton, Ohio in the run up to his election.**

**Teddy Roosevelt, in his conservative zeal, refused to have a Christmas tree in the White House. His children smuggled one in and kept it hidden in a closet.**

**Calvin Coolidge loved riding horses, but the Secret Service would not allow it, so he had an electric horse installed in the white house. Apparently he loved it, as it was reported he rode it up to three times a day.**

**Notwithstanding academic excellence at Groton School and Harvard, FDR was not a stellar law student. He failed so many classes he never got his degree, but still was able to pass the Bar Exam.**

**Richard Nixon, if nothing else, was diligent in his pursuit of Pat, who would eventually become his wife. As he pursued her, only to be repeatedly rejected, he meekly chauffeured her to and from her dates.**

**Jimmy Carter – only President to see a UFO, and he doesn't even drink.**

**Obama- an exchange of gifts between important leaders is common, this gift was a bit different. On visiting the Chief Minister of Australia's Northern Territory, Obama was presented with a \$50,000 insurance policy in case of attack by crocodile.**

**You'd all better make a copy of this because it may be a long time before you can go to a dinner party and impress your seat-mate with these scintillating facts.**

**Your faithful scribe,**

**PB**

