

HERMIT HERALD

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QUOTE FOR THE DAY:

“If freedom of speech is taken away, then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter.” George Washington.

A SHAMEFUL EPISODE:

I’m speaking here about the op-ed article written by Senator Tom Cotton and published in the NY Times in which he advocated for sending U.S. troops to quell the riots of the past couple of weeks. His advocacy; invoke the Insurrection Act of 1807.

An article referred to me, written by Kathleen Parker, has this to say. “Rather than defending a U.S. senator’s right to speak his mind, the Times bowed to outrage – an over-indulged emotion in the age of safe spaces and trigger warnings.”

She goes on to relate how appalled the staffers were that they, “succeeded in pressuring the paper into issuing an apology...”

For starters, James Bennett, the op-ed editor should have been fired for gross incompetence, not for bad judgement. Why? Unbelievably, he claims he never read the letter from a U.S. senator that was published in the small, but very important, part of the paper for which he was responsible.

I happen to totally oppose Sen. Cotton’s advocacy to invoke the 1807 Insurrection Act, but, thank you NY Times, I’m able to come to my own conclusions. Over the years, I’ve read many more cringe worthy things in the NY Times. That management knuckled under in this instance is inexplicable.

Referring back to issue 36, all the military brass were totally opposed to sending in troops, but at the same time, according to the press coverage, it was made to sound like the Insurrection Act had never before been used. I’ve read no less than ten articles and not a single one mentions that the Insurrection Act

was invoked by Grant, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and George H.W. Bush.

As Parker says, “It doesn’t take much courage to join a gang and cancel an opinion or ruin a career. It does take great courage to stand alone against a tide of pitchfork wielding Twitter tyrants and defend a free exchange Of ideas, even if some of them are bad.”

STATUES, MARKERS, PAINTINGS COME TUMBLING DOWN:

You’re not going to find many who object to the statue of Edward Colston, an 18th century slave trader, being ripped down and thrown into the Bristol Harbor in England. And, no tears for the statue of King Leopold II of Belgium being defaced and removed from a public square in Antwerp. He essentially ran a private war in seizing the Congo in the 1880s and going on to take a parts of central Africa 76 times the size of Belgium. In addition, he didn’t just separate and enslave the natives. By some estimates, 10 million died because of his actions. How did it take 150 years for the

Belgians to figure Leopold was such a bad person?

So, now we come to our own backyard and the settling of scores, attempting to rewrite history, or, trying to make amends for previous wrongs – depending on your own perspective.

A college is renamed at Yale and the push is on to rename 10 Army bases named for Confederate Generals. Today's top brass, who are most totally white, are concerned that the enlisted troops, 43 % of which are people of color, will feel alienated. Those bases have been around for decades and this is only now a big sensitivity issue? I'm sure I miss a lot of stuff in the papers, but this is all news to me. And, don't forget General Robert E. Lee whose statue is to be removed from Richmond.

As Allen Guelzo wrote, "His (Lee's) own personal record on both slavery and race is mottled with contradictions and ambivalence.." Lee, who owned a small number of slaves, was conflicted, writing in 1856 that slavery was a, "Moral and political

evil.” But wait a minute, don’t we have to clean out all the General Lee rememberances? You may know that Lee graduated West Point and later became its superintendent. His memory is honored throughout the academy. “His name adorns a gate, a road and a barracks, not counting portraits of him hanging on the walls. Oops ! What is to be done about that?

The above is merely a preamble to what follows and, again, I’ll ask, what is to be done about the following part of our history?

Of our first 12 presidents, all but the two Adams were slave owners and eight of them had slaves while serving as president.

George Washington had 300, Thomas Jefferson, 175 and Zachary Taylor, 150. Madison, Monroe and Jackson had several dozen each. The other presidents had smaller numbers, with it being reported that Grant only had one.

So, there you are Mr. and Mrs. America. What are you going to do about that? For starters, call in all the Washington one dollar bills, then

the Jackson twenty dollar bills and, even if it's only small change, we'll have to call in all the Jefferson nickels. Then it's time to start renaming a lot of towns- start with D.C., colleges, street names etc. Where does this all end for our founding fathers and their legacies?

DISAPPOINTING REVERSAL:

Many of us were heartened two days ago when Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO's Technical Lead stated that it was "very rare" that an asymptomatic carrier of the corona virus (CV) could infect another person. Yesterday, she walked that statement back.

In contact tracing efforts from other countries, secondary transmission from asymptomatic individuals was rarely found she said, but then went on to say the subject is still, "A major unknown." She then goes on to say that other models vary greatly with some predicting asymptomatic people may make up to 40% of transmissions. Well, thanks for that Dr. Kerkhove. Could you please tell us who is

taking your place as Technical Lead, or is it, Technical Confuser?

HERD IMMUNITY:

Vaccine development is looking very promising for the CV, but what if the first vaccinations are some time off or, worse yet, a failure?

Experts estimate that to attain herd immunity a city would have to have about 60% of its residents with antibodies to the CV. At that level, it is said the virus can no longer spread. Sorry to report, we have a very long way to go.

Here's a quick herd immunity snap shot: NYC, 19.9%; Boston, 9.9%; London, 17.5%; Barcelona, 7.1%; Wuhan, China, 10%.

There is a nefarious reason why herd immunity numbers may continue to climb. Once you have the disease and recover, you have antibodies. As predicted when states first started to reopen, more contact means more cases and, sure enough, no fewer than fourteen

states are seeing spiking activity mirroring some of the most infectious days.

To put a little financial perspective on the pandemic, The Congressional Budget Office Projects that the pandemic would take 3% off the GDP 10 years from now. Without adjusting for inflation, the budget office says the pandemic will cost \$16 trillion over ten years.

BEAR TRAP:

Banned hunting methods have been reinstated in Alaska. Safari Club International will be sending more big game hunting expeditions to Alaska. Once again you can use dogs to hunt brown bear and black bear, and this one is kind of neat; you can use a flashlight to blind and shoot hibernating black bear mothers and their cubs in their dens. For you boaters, you can now shoot swimming caribou from motor boats. Best of all, grizzly bears just love donuts soaked in bacon grease. With that and your machine gun/AK 47, you can almost smell that grizzly meat cooking.

Your faithful scribe, PB

