

HERMIT HERALD

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NOBLE AND NOT SO NOBLE ACTIVITIES:

So here we are, or should I say, in the midst of a very major crisis, and what do we see happening? The law of self preservation prevails. Naturally we want to protect our lives, those of our family, friends and, really, everyone. So, we voluntarily agree to the social distancing, stay in place, closure of our favorite restaurants, etc. That's both noble and painful.

But, then, there are always those who seek an additional edge. To wit: many, many doctors have been writing prescriptions for themselves and for their families for (I promised I wouldn't spell it again, but, ok) hydroxychloroquine, the supposed untested drug showing only anecdotal benefits. So how come so many thousands of MDs want to stock up, depriving other people who really need it, such as lupus patients, from readily accessing

a much needed medicine? That's a peccadillo compared to what others have done.

Most notably, Senator Burr receiving a secret briefing on the danger of Covid- 19 just before February 13th and then, on the 13th sells \$1,7 million in equities before the markets collapsed. I guess a secret senate briefing is not in the same legal context as a stock tip from some friend in the market.

Interesting, however, to recall Martha Stewart teaching needle work and flower arrangement at the Bedford Women's Correctional facility for quite some time for an insider violation that looks like chump change compared to Burr's actions. I read there are quite a few others in the congress/senate also under the cloud of these accusations.

READER RESPONSES:

Two of our readers (and thanks for keeping the dialogue going) object to my explaining the virus and the economic fall out as examples of Force Majeure, believing that the administration could have done much more

And much sooner. OK, I hear that and it's worth further discussion.

A point I would make is that very early on (and sorry I can't give specific originator) either the CDC, NIH or whomever, published a chart several days in a row which showed a huge blue column representing 80% of all Americans who would be affected by COVID-19 and two little darkly colored tabs reflecting that 13% would have more serious symptoms, with 7% having very serious symptoms. With the 80% column being defined as those who might get regular flu symptoms at the worst and no symptoms, at best, It's easy to see how, not just the administration, but, we, got off to such a slow start.

Another reader and friend (there's the rub-you all are) suggests I run for president- offers to start a "go fund PB" campaign, but admits he's off to the pantry to fix his 3rd martini. OK- I'll admit the last part is fiction, but not the first- too good to pass up.

JUST THE FACTS:

Apolitical reportage:

At recent COVID 19 briefing, VP Pence mentions the President 45 times. In same briefing, President uses the, "I" word 149 times.

Latest poll shows President gets 60% approval for handling the crisis. You guys figure it out.

YOU'RE SITTING THERE ALL COOPED UP:

Dare you to find a major channel that isn't COVID 24-7, you can only read so many hours a day, the gym is closed, you can't walk on the beach, you can't walk in the park. But , you can walk around your block four times – whoopee!

**I'm going to be coming at you with a few suggestions in coming issues, but let's start with the Google Arts & Culture app(free)-smartphone or tablet.- Thousands of high resolution images from more than 1,200 museums globally. Some top selections:
Van Gogh Museum- Amsterdam
Uffizi Galleries- Florence**

**Smithsonian American Art Museum-
Washington
Museo Frida Kahlo- Mexico City
Guggenheim Bilbao Museum
Art Zoom**

**Guilty for not having already tried this myself,
but great reviews.**

A SOMBER, CLOSING NOTE:

**Everyone of us is very lucky and we know it-
gripping about being sequestered, not seeing
friends, no great restaurant meals, etc- de
rigueur. But, no preaching to the choir here.
We're all aware of the zero safety net for so
many in the U.S. One of our readers reports
the story of a local immigrant who has had a
job for 14 years, now laid off- no severance- no
unemployment insurance- now helping my
friend clean up his property, but otherwise
penniless. Another is the talented music
teacher/ performer- classes cancelled along
with performances- medical bills, rent, etc.**

**Very sad case I read today- a cleaning lady-
sole supporter of family had a number of**

homes she was taking care of. Some weeks she could make up to \$800. All but one of her customers have “temporarily” discontinued her services out of COVID fears. The one customer, “I’m concerned. Please don’t come, but I will continue to pay you anyway.” Come on, you other folks- you need a lesson how to use your own vacuum cleaner and dust mop? Open your wallets. You can afford it

I do applaud the congress, senate and WH for putting together a substantial relief package. It will even include a lot of gig workers who would not otherwise be qualified. However, there will be vast numbers of people for whom no relief is in sight- the ramifications for the impact on physical health, sanity and potential for increased crime are incalculable.

I know we are all trying to do our own thing to help and can’t be everything to everyone, but hoping we can all double our efforts to help those we know who could use our aid.

Your faithful scribe,

PB

