

HERMIT HERALD

VOL 1 ISSUE 18

APRIL 21, 2020

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“A full revival of New York City may be years away.” NY Times.

That headline hit me like a ton of bricks. For people like me, and those of our general age group, this is pretty devastating. There’s a possibility we may never see again the New York we have loved so much.

The mob at the King Cole Bar at Christmas time, the packed Broadway theaters, the fabulous single \$ restaurants to the \$\$\$\$ ones, not to be part of our lives anymore? – hard to contemplate.

Since no one realistically expects a vaccine in less than a year to 18 months, it will be at least an additional number of years until everyone gets vaccinated. That’s just the sad report for New York, but for all of us, in whatever

location; Chicago, LA, Minot, ND – on differing scales, it's the same sense of loss. Look at some of these NY City numbers:

Increase in unemployment claims, 2,627%

Number of applications for foster dogs, 3,000*

Decrease in subway ridership, 90%

More people signed up to volunteer, 288%**

***primarily due to lonely people discussed in earlier issues. One study found such people had an increased risk of early death by 26%. According to a survey just before the virus break out, of 10,000 Americans over the age of 18, three in five reported they are lonely. As stated earlier, there are many side effects of the virus that are not due to the virus itself.**

****Wow!! That's what New Yorkers are all about.**

TESTING FOR THE VIRUS AND ANTIBODIES:

If what I have read lately about the CDC's total failure to come up with a timely test for Covid-19, it would, indeed, be time for Dr. Redfield, the head of CDC, to update his resume.

A Harvard University study forecasts that to bring the epidemic under control, we would have to be testing 500,000 to 700,000 people a day until the middle of May. We are currently testing at less than 150,000.

As for the antibody testing, a great idea, except for the fact that even the most reliable tests have inaccurate findings in the range of 5% false negatives and 5% positives. However, still useful in identifying those who are asymptomatic, but can still pass the virus to others. Supposedly, good news for those found to have immunity, except that no one knows, with Covid- 19, how long such immunity might last. Now, here's an interesting social dilemma. Chile has started issuing immunity cards. Can't you just see those of us without the cards, with our noses pressed against the glass, watching the partying card holders gallivanting outside.

OUR PRISON POPULATION:

Last issue we spoke of the horrible conditions in the nation's nursing homes, but, as mentioned earlier, it appears to be as bad, or worse, in our prisons, an issue that doesn't

generate the same level of concern and sympathy as the nursing homes. The prison in Cook County has over ten percent of the inmates and staff infected and virtually no way to isolate. The new statistic is staggering; the Marion Correctional Institution in Ohio had 1,828 inmates infected by the virus – an unbelievable three quarters of the prison population.

READY FOR SOME GOOD NEWS:

The source of the good news I am reporting is from Dr David Samadi, a world renowned surgeon , who, above and beyond his speciality, urology, is frequently sought after on television and in print to weigh in on many different medical issues. The bottom line is, he is very reasoned and cautious. When he speaks people listen.

The reader may remember I wrote about the existing drug Remdesivir (a Gilead Pharmaceutical Co. product). Which just completed the first of numerous phase 3 trials with Covid 19 patients. Dr Samadi had nothing

to do with these trials, but being one of the first to report on them is significant. Dr. Samadi is cautiously optimistic, the caution coming from the fact that this trial was not done with a control group, something preferred by the most thorough medical researchers, but just an experimental group.

So, here's what they found: The trial was performed at the University of Chicago Hospital with 125 patients, 113 of who were severely ill with Covid-19. Only 2 of the patients died and nearly all others were released from the hospital within a week- mind you, severely sick patients. This same drug also proved helpful with Ebola, SARS and MERS. Trials are going on at 151 locations with 2,400 severe patients and at 169 locations with moderate cases. It appears this is a very promising drug to save lives of people who have the virus, but it does not appear to have the disease preventative qualities. For that, we need the vaccine.

OIL: DO I HAVE A DEAL FOR YOU:

We've groused before about gasoline, not the ridiculous \$1.99 / gallon price, but the fact there's nowhere to drive (actually, I remember when it was 32 cents a gallon) Anyway, here is today's shocker in a little two person dialogue. Sam says, "So, Lou, I'd Like to buy 500,000 barrels, how much?" Lou replies, "Sam, we've been friends so long, how bout I pay you \$20 a barrel instead?" As weird as it sounds that's what is happening. The futures contracts require buyers to take possession in May and very few companies have any place to store deliveries. Who knows, maybe we'll get back to that 32 cents per gallon gas.

BUSINESS TRAVEL REVIVAL:

Will it ever come back is the question. An industry travel expert recently observed, "People are social animals. A lot of business people enjoy traveling. I suspect their spouses can't wait for them to get back on the road." Well, the statement may be essentially correct, but it sure doesn't fit today's reality. A survey by the Global Business Travel Association reveals that virtually all international business travel has either been canceled or suspended

and the same for 92% of domestic travel. Not surprisingly, hotel occupancy nationwide is down to 21% from over 70% a year ago. A third of travel managers expect business travel to pick up in the next two months and 20 % say it will be three months.

The good news for all of us is that Delta, hopefully to be quickly followed by the other majors, will be fogging/disinfecting every plane before every flight in May.

HARRY AND MEGAN:

Don't know where this one is going. First they move to Victoria on Vancouver Island. Any of you folks ever been there? I have. Victoria is more British than any place in England. OK, it has been fifty years since my last visit, but they roll up the sidewalks immediately after high tea. It's about one step up in excitement from being in quarantine, so, never could figure out why they were moving there. Ah, but you know how the ladies always get their way. Megan had her eye on LA from the get go, and that's where they find themselves looking for a new house.

Their problems with the British press are well known and, at first, seemed to have good public support. Now, however, the tide seems to be shifting a bit. Harry has banned the Royal Rota, the British press pool, from following them. As Penny Junor a journalist and royal biographer said, “How will they feel if nobody is covering their new foundation or the fact they are delivering food parcels to the poor in LA?’ They are poking the bear, and you don’t poke the bear. This is a very powerful bear.”

One BBC host ruminated that this was all a bit unfortunate in the time of a world wide pandemic saying, “Can’t they just consign themselves to oblivion for a while?’

By making all the fuss at this time it is quite awkward as the papers will be covering the flap on the queen’s 94th birthday.

AND FINALLY:

A polite but firm sign:

NO SOLICITATION

WE ARE TOO BROKE TO BUY ANYTHING

WE KNOW WHO WE ARE VOTING FOR

WE HAVE FOUND JESUS

SERIOUSLY, UNLESS YOU ARE GIVING AWAY

BEER

PLEASE GO AWAY

YOUR FAITHFUL SCRIBE,

PB