

THREE THINGS: IT'S OUR LUCKY DAY

Though friends and family in Texas are still desperately miserable, we had an unusually lucky day.

~ 3 ~

Don't know about you folks but my sleep cycle has been extremely erratic during this pandemic. I'm up at 3:00 a.m. for a few hours, finally fall back to sleep, and wake again at no set hour.

Today I woke a few minutes before nine a.m. ET, launching Twitter immediately as one does while still trying to shake off the Trump era habit of checking for the apocalypse on rising.

Lo and behold, the first tweet in my timeline was the live stream of the impending implosion of Trump's shuttered Atlantic City hotel.

I huddled under my blankets in rapt attention for several minutes waiting for explosives' detonation and BOOM-boom-boom-boom-boom, there it was and I blinked and the hideous structure was gone when I opened my eyes.

WATCH: Trump Plaza casino in Atlantic City is imploded
pic.twitter.com/O8xAoKiYB2

– philip lewis (@Phil_Lewis_) February 17, 2021

Dust slowly rose into the air and sailed out over the ocean like fine confetti.

It was glorious – a sign like smoke over the Vatican, a portent of better things to come.

~ 2 ~

And there it was, the dusty oracle delivered.

One of the meanest, nastiest, most useless sacks

of flesh *assumed room temperature* today.

Right-wing talk radio blabbermouth Rush Limbaugh succumbed from complications due to lung cancer.

Don't tell me I'm being unusually harsh; I'm using the contemptible toad's own words. When homeless rights activist Mitch Snyder died, Limbaugh said Snyder *assumed room temperature*.

Nor should you imagine for one goddamned moment I will now demonstrate an iota of respect for that dead wretch because respect is earned. The racist, misogynist ignoramus who played a key role in the progress of the GOP away from a pro-democracy political party earned no respect from me.

This obituary at Huffington Post says it best, though there's plenty it left out even though it's unsparing. Michael Tomasky at Democracy Journal faults Bork and Scalia for Limbaugh's poisonous rise across our publicly-owned airwaves (there's a lesson in this).

Adios, motherfucker. Give my regards to Hades.

~ 1 ~

Good news from White House COVID-19 Response Team today

Our 7-day daily average of 1.7 million doses administered compares to an average of 892k the week before President Biden took office. That's almost double in just four weeks.
pic.twitter.com/JgRbIjMofP

– White House COVID-19 Response Team
(@WHCOVIDResponse) February 17, 2021

Doubling the weekly average is great, considering the response team had NOTHING, ZIP, NADA in the way of a federal plan for rolling out the vaccine as of Inauguration Day. The Trump Administration's plan appeared to consist of dumping vaccine on the states in quantities

which may have been rationalized by politics, and telling the states to just do it, just distribute it – if they listened to VP Pence’s team.

If they listened to Secretary Azar – like Florida’s Gov. DeSantis surely did, with emphasis added by grocery store chain Publix’s heiress’s donation – then commercial pharmacies were going to run the show.

VANITY FAIR – “A Huge Potential for Chaos’: How the COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout Was Hobbled by Turf Wars and Magical Thinking”<https://t.co/Vuh4LkrsEP>

– Coronavirus War Room (@Covid19WarRoom)
February 8, 2021

What a fucking shit show.

With luck in spite of the lingering Trumpy mess, some of you have had your first and possibly second vaccination if you’re in health care or older than 65 (age threshold depends on states’ criteria and how closely they followed the CDC’s guidance, I think, correct me if I’m wrong). Good. I won’t receive mine for another eight weeks, I estimate, based on my state’s current roll out schedule.

President Biden says that the U.S. will have enough coronavirus vaccine to inoculate 300 million Americans by this summer. Biden says Moderna and Pfizer will deliver the doses by the end of July, more than a month earlier than initially anticipated.

<https://t.co/5F0DQvmHLu>

– The Associated Press (@AP) February 11, 2021

With the announcement that enough doses have been ordered for delivery in late July, the rest of the country may expect to be vaccinated by

late summer. Depending on how the last push for vaccinations is organized and pulled off, school this fall is likely to be on campus and in classrooms once again.

That is very good news.

~ 0 ~

If you feel inclined to assist Texans who are suffering from the worst of the intersection between their elected GOP officials and capitalist profiteering, the Texas Tribune reported where help is accepted (bottom of article):

Here's how to help:

Dallas: Dallas Homeless Alliance
President and CEO Carl Falconer said donations can be made to Our Calling, who is managing the city's shelter at the convention center.

Austin: Chris Davis, communications manager for Austin's Ending Community Homelessness Coalition, or ECHO, said people can find a list of ways to help here. These donations range from sleeping bags to monetary donations for hygiene and snack kits.

San Antonio: South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless Executive Director Katie Vela said their biggest area of need is volunteers to work the overnight shifts, especially those living in the downtown area who might be able to walk to the shelters. Vela also said the shelters are also in need of hot meals beginning Tuesday. People can find the list of shelters here.

Houston: Catherine B. Villarreal, the director of communications for the Coalition for the Homeless, said people can donate to any of the organizations in The Way Home listed here.

I hope Texans are thinking ahead to the thaw when all that snow and ice will turn into flood

water, which may be as soon as Friday.

TRUMP IMPEACHMENT II - THE BEGINNING

And so it begins any minute now. Don't fret, it will not take long, because Pelosi, Schumer and the Dems have so decreed out of political cowardice. Is that politically expedient at the start of the nascent Biden Administration? Maybe! But they all took an oath to protect and defend the Constitution, not their political expediency.

So where are we at the onset of proceedings?

The tentative schedule is this:

First, there will be a debate over the "Constitutionality" of even holding and impeachment trial at all. This is a ridiculous argument, and will fail, but with much cowardly GOP Senate support.

There will be up to four hours equally divided between the impeachment managers and the president's counsel to debate the constitutionality of the trial. Again, that will fail as to Trump. Then there will be sixteen hours per side to argue their case. It will be predictable baloney from both sides, with no actual evidence submitted and admitted. And, no, "video presentations" do not count, that is simply argument by propaganda. Each party's arguments are delimited by not being able to go over two days, and cannot exceed eight hours each.

"After the presentations are done, senators will have a total of four hours to question both sides. Then there will be four hours divided equally between the parties for arguments on whether the

Senate will consider motions to subpoena witnesses and documents, if requested by the managers.

...

There will be up to four hours equally divided for closing arguments, along with deliberation time if requested by the senators before the vote takes place.”

Much of the above, though not all, came from an excellent report by Barbara Sprunt and Diedre Walsh at NPR.

Is this year another stupid and truncated show trial by Pelosi, Schumer and the Dems, in order to look like they are doing something while they are cowering? Of course it is. Same as it ever was.

There will also be discussion of an “organizing resolution”. Don’t fall for that, the parameters have already been agreed to behind the scenes.

Lastly, while joint stipulations may always be made, otherwise the general parameters are controlled by the extant Senate Rules on Impeachment. They are here for your reference.

And here is Leahy’s feckless “Dear Colleagues” letter.

**LARRY KING IS DEAD,
LONG LIVE THE KING**

Probably the world knows by now that broadcasting legend



Larry King has died at 87. He was not necessarily a journalist, per se, even if news was often broken on his show. He was a massive media presence, and a good one. Unlike so many others, he did not get in the way of his guests and interviewees letting themselves be themselves, for better or worse.

CNN is doing some larger biography, and it is worth watching for a little bit. But King brought together Rabin, Hussein and Arafat on a TV show. You don't see that every day. Then there was all the OJ Simpson charges and trial coverage. There are a lot of people still in the public view today that came out of that. Some rightfully, some not as much so.

As a parting thought, some love for Ted Turner. He took King off of late night talk radio, that I sometimes listened to on a timed clock radio while falling asleep, before his CNN TV gig, to grow the fledgling CNN. Ted Turner innovated so much it is almost silly. Elon Musk will never, even in his dreams, accomplish as much as the great Ted Turner.

Do you have any memories?

HE SLIPPED THE SURLY BONDS OF EARTH: RIP

CHUCK YEAGER



“Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of
earth,
And danced the skies on laughter-
silvered wings;
Sunward I’ve climbed and joined the
tumbling mirth of sun-split clouds –
and done a hundred things You have not
dreamed of –
wheeled and soared and swung high in the
sunlit silence.
Hovering there I’ve chased the shouting
wind along
and flung my eager craft through
footless halls of air.
“Up, up the long delirious burning blue
I’ve topped the wind-swept heights with
easy grace,
where never lark, or even eagle, flew;
and, while with silent, lifting mind
I’ve trod
the high untrampled sanctity of space,
put out my hand and touched the face of
God.”

That is from the poem “High Flight” by John Gillespie Magee, Jr. It was written in 1941, but it surely envisioned the later life and exploits of Chuck Yeager. Later that year, in December, Magee, a pilot in the RCAF, and his Spitfire collided with another plane over England. Magee, only 19 years old, crashed to his death. He could not have known the reach of his poem over all the years, nor how it might describe another

pilot, Chuck Yeager. But it did.

Yesterday, Chuck Yeager passed away at the age of 97. He was a true American hero in every sense. The first human to break the speed of sound. Arguably the finest test pilot in history.

From the early Washington Post obituary:

He first stepped into a cockpit during World War II after joining the Army Air Forces directly out of high school. By the end of the war, he was a fighter ace credited with shooting down at least 12 German planes, including five in one day. Making the military his career, he emerged in the late 1940s as one of the newly created Air Force's most revered test pilots.

...

He later trained men who would go on to join NASA's Gemini and Apollo programs. Throughout his life, he broke numerous speed and altitude records, including becoming the first person to travel 21/2 times the speed of sound.

...

His greatest breakthrough occurred on Oct. 14, 1947, when a B-29 aircraft released then-Capt. Yeager and his squat, orange Bell X-1 experimental craft at nearly 20,000 feet over California's Mojave Desert. The Bell X-1 was propelled by a four-chamber rocket engine and a volatile mix of ethyl alcohol, water and liquid oxygen, and Gen. Yeager named it "Glamorous Glennis" after his first wife. Gen. Yeager, traveling at nearly 700 mph, broke the sound barrier.

...

Not that Gen. Yeager's career lacked its frightening moments. While he was able to pull out of at least one situation in 1953, when his plane spun out of control for 50,000 feet, he wasn't so lucky in

1963 when, after reaching near space, he ejected from an NF-104 and suffered burns that required several surgeries.

After the last incident in that WaPo quote, Yeager got back in and kept flying. Because that is who and what he was.

Go read the entire WaPo obituary, it is, and this is an understatement, the stuff of legend. Yeager was also the glue that held together the famed book "The Right Stuff" by Tom Wolfe. Forget the movie, read the book. I cannot find my copy right now, but the stories in it are wonderful, and the best ones were arguably about Yeager, who trained the early astronauts but never became one. He did not want to be a proverbial monkey in a cage, so he kept on as a test pilot and fighter pilot.

As Wolfe would paint in his book:

"He was going faster than any man in history, and it was almost silent up here, since he had exhausted his rocket fuel, and he was so high in such a vast space that there was no sensation of motion. He was master of the sky."

and

"The most righteous of all the possessors of the right stuff: Chuck Yeager."

Yes. Quite a man.

THANKSGIVING DAY CHEER

Okay, the football gods did not smile on fans

today. Texans at Lions and Washington Football Team at Cowboys is about the worst schedule the NFL could put up. There was a Steelers and Ravens game for the night slot that would have been interesting, but, alas, it was rescheduled to Sunday because of the Coronavirus. Blech.

But, hey, there is a lot else to be thankful for. Especially here, thanks to all of you. And so we are thankful for all of you!

Also food. Mrs. bmaz is cooking up some great grub, and I know there is some awesome looking stuffing, some turkey (not the turducken I requested, but it will be fine). That, and that some part of it involves some of my personal stash of bacon from Zingermans (thanks Marcy!), is about all I really know. There is Blueberry Crumb Pie from the Rock Springs Cafe (as good of pies as you will ever taste), and vanilla bean ice cream. Some nice red wine, and that will do it.

What are you folks eating and thinking about? Have at it! Music today is the classic Wasted Words by the Allmans. Enjoy, and Happy Thanksgiving folks. May you have a joyous one, and stay safe.

THROUGH TURKEY GIBLETS TO THE STARS

Sorry about the lack of a Thanksgiving Day post until now. I've had my hands stuck up the backside of a 19-pound turkey much of this morning when not busy with chopping, peeling, cooking everything to accompany this unexpected behemoth. My family pod is here and trying to help with the feast but as always it seems the challenges expand to meet the people present.

Like the 5-pound bag of sugar which more closely resembled a giant sugar cube.

Or discovering the turkey still solid like a pink fleshy iceberg.

Or beloved spouse deciding to get a jump on sales and buying 10-pounds of hamburger which must be shaped in to patties and frozen right now, in the middle of the circus in my kitchen.

But I'm thankful to have all of this hubbub today generated by my pod – myself, my spouse, my two kids – all of us healthy, masked, and together for this holiday.

~ ~ ~

“Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”

– Winston Churchill

We have an opportunity to kick a fascist autocrat to the curb, thanks to the tireless efforts of people like Stacey Abrams in Georgia, and Ben Wikler in Wisconsin. Thank you to all the new voters they and others like them encouraged to register and vote, all those neophytes who saw the threat for what it was, who see the promise committing to vote can bring. We owe the chance to save Americans' lives and America's democracy to these folks.

~ ~ ~

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”

– John F. Kennedy

“Never separate the life you live from the words you speak.”

– Paul Wellstone

Going forward it's on us all to repair the damage of this last four years, to remedy base blemishes built upon over time, to scrape away the palimpsest of colonialism and contemporary racism, misogyny, and xenophobia, starting anew with better, inclusive materials.

May our efforts mirror our best intentions as we strive toward a more perfect union.

~ ~ ~

"Sometimes our light goes out but is blown into flame by another human being. Each of us owes deepest thanks to those who have rekindled this light."

– Albert Schweitzer

We've had some very dark passages and tough times. We are grateful to those who give us reason to continue to work for social justice and economic democracy for all. We are thankful for you, our community.

~ ~ ~

Per aspera ad astra. Gratias tibi.

WE'RE SO NOT THROUGH HERE

This is emptywheel, where we have frequently posted work contrary to conventional wisdom, or dissented from political leadership with indifference to party.

Each contributor here has their own voice though we're sometimes confused for each other.

Today is one of those days when you will see a wide gap between emptywheel contributors.

Specifically, I do not personally subscribe at all to Quinn Norton's belief that *the Union is done*.

I have written before, however, on numerous occasions, that the United States has not lived up to its ideals.

The concept of this union was flawed from the beginning, having launched as it did with a concession to slaveowners. That original sin dogs this nation to this day; slavery still exists in the form of a carceral state which is

heavily weighted against minorities.

The concept of this union was also predicated upon the occupation of lands belonging to pre-existing nations. I'm a product of one of those occupied nations, whose people were nearly wiped out by disease and greed white American occupiers brought to their land.

But I am also an example of what happens when disparate people come together under a singular proposition: *"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of happiness."*

I am the product of people from Nordic and middle European countries, the product of trips around the Pacific and East Asia. All my forebears came here because they perceived a freedom to pursue lives and opportunity they did not have in their home nation-states.

They found an appeal in this premise worth risking their persons as well as their fortune, meager as it was: *"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."*

My forebears stayed in spite of being erased in a number of ways – like the records of my French-Canadian family members' existence in Michigan being repeatedly obscured or deleted by majority English- and German-speaking occupants, or my Asian family losing its true name when recorded by customs, and then stranded by the Chinese Exclusion Act. Or my Hawaiian family losing the right to its own land because whites deposed its monarchy and seized the islands, in addition to spreading deadly disease.

In spite of being marginalized then and now, my forebears and family made a comfortable life and

felt it was their honor, privilege, and duty to contribute to these United States. Among my family members is a Medal of Honor winner – a second generation American who served in the Navy until he retired. My father and brother both served in the armed forces as well.

This isn't an easy country. If you don't speak English and especially if you're not white, it can really demand a steep price. Try taking the citizenship test.

Witness the harassment Ilhan Omar has faced for her race, ethnic heritage, and religion, in spite of the First and Fourteenth Amendments, yet she continues to serve her constituents as their representatives in our democratic republic system of government.

It's because of the price many Americans have faced to become and remain Americans that I'm put out at Norton's "the Union is done" essay.

I don't think she truly has a clue what it's taken for a sizable percentage of this country to hold this union together, such as it is. She may have faced misogyny but really, in which countries does misogyny not exist?

She can play with sentiment and co-opt others' pain in her argument that the Union is done, but she hasn't faced the existential threat one's skin can pose in a land founded by slaveowners and their sympathizers.

She has the unacknowledged privilege of associating with people who'd rather see people like my family dead, and yet she thinks she can declare "the Union is done."

Take a hard look at what the Black Americans of this country have been doing since voting began last month as a commitment to form a more perfect Union. Ask them if the Union is done.

Take a hard look at what Native Americans have had to do – forced to change their lifestyle, assigning addresses to places which to them are simply *Home* – in order to vote, otherwise

invalidated and erased if they don't. Ask them, too, if the Union is done.

And take note of the naturalized immigrants who are worried they and their kin will be harassed by ICE and potentially incarcerated or deported while trying to vote simply because they aren't white and have come to this country too recently. Ask them if the Union to which they emigrated, many as refugees, is done.

My Chinese family members weren't permitted to emigrate here or own land until 1943, when it suddenly became convenient to have China side with the U.S. against Japan. I tell you this Union is not done, from the house I own under a hyphenated Chinese name.

I've pointed to the words of former escaped slave Frederick Douglass before, with regard to the shortcomings of this nation:

... Allow me to say, in conclusion, notwithstanding the dark picture I have this day presented of the state of the nation, I do not despair of this country. There are forces in operation, which must inevitably work the downfall of slavery. "The arm of the Lord is not shortened," and the doom of slavery is certain. I, therefore, leave off where I began, with hope. ...

The work is slow, so often grinding. It is like farming on a'a and pahoehoe lava, which my family knows well. The biases which are foundational to the problems this country faces are older than this country. We are kidding ourselves if they won't take at least a half-life to fully end, during which time the demographics of this country will force change. Look at what has transpired, the push and pull in the dozen-plus years this site has tackled the nature of security in an open society.

But this union is by no means done and over. It's there in the lines we have seen in the streets for weeks, snaking out the doors of

polling places across this country. It's in the cars lined up in a drive-through campaign rally, queued hopefully, trustingly in a drive-through foodbank.

It was there in the streets after George Floyd was murdered.

From goose quill pen's first ink on parchment 244 years ago, this union has always been aspirational, a nation in a state of becoming, a people who must occasionally check themselves and listen to their better angels.

From the speech before a battlefield of nearly 50,000 American dead 157 years ago, we re-consecrated ourselves,

that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

The union is not over. The dream still lives, its work goes on; we will not yield.

It's simply time once again to rededicate ourselves to forming a more perfect union.

We can begin this day of all days by exercising and protecting our right to vote.

LAST TRASH TALK BEFORE THE ELECTION

Welp, we have almost made it to November 3. As I type this, there are less than 72 hours to the opening of the polls for Election Day. The long national nightmare will be very far from over, irrespective of which candidate wins. But, and this is important, the relentless onslaught of

annoying campaign commercials, mailers in your mail box and robocalls calls and texts will be over, and that will be a huge relief. I don't trust the polls, especially the national ones. State polls are a far better indicator, but even those are fraught these days, but they are far more important because the electoral college is what really matters, and that is state by state. Polling is hard now. The saw about cell phones skewing polling is really true. Some people, including me, won't answer them for random callers. It also skews more urban. So, who knows what the ground will look like on Wednesday November 4, we shall see!

There is one other bit of unfortunate news, Sir Sean Connery has passed. Here is a great obituary from the BBC. Everybody knows the various Bond movies, and they were all great in their own way. I'd like to focus on some of his many other notable roles. He won an Oscar for The Untouchables. But his work was every bit as spectacular in The Wind And The Lion and Hunt For Red October, not to mention as John Mason in The Rock (a fantastic flick). And let's not forget his portrayal of William von Baskerville in The Name of The Rose, also spectacular. What are your favorite roles and lines, here is a list? RIP Mr. Connery.

On to the games. In the NCAA, there are not a ton of really promising matchups. Texas at Oklahoma State could be one. OSU is pretty solid, and has a very decent defense. Watch out for OSU this year. Most of the national focus is on Ohio State at Penn State. Clearly the Buckeyes have to be favored, but you never know against PSU at home. Boston College is at Death Valley to play Clemson, who will be without star QB Taylor Lawrence because of a positive Covid test. I will still take the Tigers, but no Lawrence is a big wrinkle.

In the Pros, all eyes are on Scribe's Steelers at Baltimore, and that is a tossup. If they get any contain whatsoever on Jackson, which is not easy, I'd pick the Steelers. But that is a huge

if with the reigning MVP. Saints at Bears looks pretty interesting, as does Niners at Squawks. The SNF game is Dallas at Eagles. Ugh. MNF has Tampa Bay at Giants. That also looks to be an ugh.

Lastly, F1. This weekend is the “Emilia Romagna Grand Prix”. No, I do not know exactly what “Emilia Romagna” is, that is new to me. It apparently is a region of Italy with Bologna as the capital. What I do know, however, is that this marks the return of F1 to the Imola Circuit, also known as the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari, the home of the former San Marino Grand Prix. It has not hosted F1 since 2007, there have been many renovations and upgrades in the meantime. The circuit looked quite fast in qualifying, where Bottas nudged out Hamilton and Verstappen for pole. Pierre Gasly did a great job to place P4 on the grid. The two McLarens placed P9 and P10, continuing their resurgence. Should be fun.

Okay, that’s it for today. Kind of a traditional Presidential election thing around here, music is Elected by Alice. Go out and vote. Biden is not perfect, no candidate ever is, but he is light years better than Trump. Cast yer ballots, mine is already in!

THREE THINGS: BREATHING, THINKING, MATING AND COVID-19

[NB: Check the byline, thanks. /~Rayne]

Breathing, thinking, mating.

At least one of these three things are important to you, no matter your age. COVID-19 can affect one or more of them, and we don’t yet know to what extent.

More importantly, it's not getting through to the general public that COVID-19 can affect one or more of infected persons' lungs, brain, and reproductive organs even if they are young, not to mention their heart and vascular system.

And by young I mean students in school, whether K-12 or tertiary (college/university) education.

~ ~ 3 ~ ~

But first, let's talk about bad assumptions and biases.

We've heard since the earliest media reports from China that COVID-19 affected the lungs. It was characterized as a "pneumonia-like illness," and unfortunately this characterization limited the public's earliest perceptions of the disease.

"Pneumonia-like illness" allowed misinformation and disinformation to flourish – it's just another flu, the propagandists propelled, ignoring the much greater mortality rate and the insufficient data about SARS-CoV-2's transmissibility.

The health care system geared itself toward treating a "pneumonia-like illness," demanding ventilators when ventilators might be fine for pneumonia, but might pose new risks with a disease like COVID-19. Health care workers performing endotracheal intubation, extubation, noninvasive ventilation were and are exposed to aerosolized virus material, requiring much greater rigor in personal protection due to these aerosol-generating procedures and the volume of virus they are exposed to each shift.

Even with increasing awareness that personal protection must be stepped up for COVID-19 as compared to influenza, hospitals still don't have a handle on infection control. The Wall Street Journal reported:

“...Researchers at University of Nebraska Medical Center found the coronavirus in hallway air outside negative-pressure

Covid-19 rooms. The Omaha hospital revamped its ventilation system to protect people in hallways by creating negative air flow there, too. ...”

Existing negative air pressure rooms – Airborne Infection Isolation Rooms (AIIR) – might have been enough for influenza. It’s clearly not when 5,000 cases of COVID-19 may be related to inadequate infection controls in hospital settings in spite of like that used in dedicated COVID-19 treatment rooms. Hospitals would have changed their infection control protocols long ago had they seen nosocomial transmission of flu within hospitals approaching the rate of transmission with COVID-19, but perhaps the health care system has relied too heavily on annual flu vaccinations. Perhaps nosocomial transmission of flu and other pneumonia-like illness would have been much higher without vaccinations, revealing how flawed existing infection controls have been.

Our health care systems too slowly recognized COVID-19 isn’t like influenza or a pneumonia-like illness. It’s far more insidious. It’s now cost at least 600 health care workers their lives.

In addition to flawed assumptions, bias has also screwed up screening for COVID-19. Many of our community members know of people who were denied tests for COVID-19 because they didn’t meet certain criteria; one of the early criteria was whether the subject had traveled to China or been in contact with anyone who had been to China. Trump and his xenophobic followers have continued to exacerbate bias with racist framing of COVID-19.

Except that many cases of COVID-19 can be traced to Europe. It can be seen in the emergence and dominance of the G-lineage of the virus versus the D-lineage which was first common along the west coast. Everyone who had any one of the symptoms identified by China should have been tested for COVID-19, no matter where they had

been or with whom they had been in contact.

I can't begin to think about the number of lives which could have been saved had this country launched effective testing more widely, in concert with quarantine. But we didn't in no small part because of limited, faulty thinking about COVID-19.

What other biases have similarly shaped our ability to address COVID-19 effectively?

The racist, ageist, ableist bias which informs inaction because it only negatively affects *those people*?

~ ~ 2 ~ ~

We still don't know what the repercussions are for recovered COVID-19 patients, including those who were asymptomatic.

Lung damage, which initially shaped health care professionals' treatment as if COVID-19 was a pneumonia-like illness, appears to be long term.

Drillinger, M., Chesak, J. (fact checker) (2020, June 22). Lifelong Lung Damage: A Serious COVID-19 Complication. Retrieved July 27, 2020, from <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/lifelong-lung-damage-the-serious-covid-19-complication-that-can-hit-people-in-their-20s>

Damage was also seen in lungs of infected individuals who appeared to be asymptomatic or only mildly ill with COVID-19.

Prevalence of Asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 Infection
Daniel P. Oran and Eric J. Topol
Annals of Internal Medicine, Reviews 3
Jun 2020
<https://doi.org/10.7326/M20-3012>

But it's not just patients' lungs affected; more than 36% of COVID-19 patients had neurological

impairment.

Mao L, Jin H, Wang M, et al. Neurologic Manifestations of Hospitalized Patients With Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Wuhan, China. *JAMA Neurol.* 2020;77(6):683–690. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamaneurology/fullarticle/2764549>

Delirium, brain inflammation, stroke, and nerve damage occurred as well as a rare condition, acute disseminated encephalomyelitis (ADEM) – an inflammatory disorder which is sometimes fatal.

R W Paterson, R L Brown, L Benjamin et al, The emerging spectrum of COVID-19 neurology: clinical, radiological and laboratory findings, *Brain*, awaa240, Published: 08 July 2020 <https://doi.org/10.1093/brain/awaa240> <https://academic.oup.com/brain/article/doi/10.1093/brain/awaa240/5868408>

The virus causes heart damage, even in patients who had no pre-existing cardiac disease:

In this global survey, cardiac abnormalities were observed in half of all COVID-19 patients undergoing echocardiography. Abnormalities were often unheralded or severe, and imaging changed management in one-third of patients.

Marc R Dweck, Anda Bularga, Rebecca T Hahn, Rong Bing, Kuan Ken Lee, Andrew R Chapman, Audrey White, Giovanni Di Salvo, Leyla Elif Sade, Keith Pearce, David E Newby, Bogdan A Popescu, Erwan Donal, Bernard Cosyns, Thor Edvardsen, Nicholas L Mills, Kristina Haugaa, Global evaluation of echocardiography in patients with COVID-19, *European Heart Journal – Cardiovascular Imaging*, , jeaa178, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ehjci/jeaa178>

Abnormalities found included myocardial infarction (heart attack), myocarditis (inflammation of heart tissue), takotsubo cardiomyopathy (temporary deformation of heart chamber), as well as elevated natriuretic peptides and cardiac troponin.

Scientific American published an article this weekend which offered even more anecdotal evidence of cardiac damage from COVID-19 even in asymptomatic persons.

Autopsies of COVID-19 victims showed damage to testicles:

Yang M, et al. Pathological Findings in the Testes of COVID-19 Patients: Clinical Implications. Eur Urol Focus (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euf.2020.05.009>
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2405456920301449>

Based on findings, not only should kidney function and hormone levels be monitored but younger men should receive fertility counseling for family planning:

Wang, S., Zhou, X., Zhang, T. et al. The need for urogenital tract monitoring in COVID-19. Nat Rev Urol 17, 314–315 (2020). Published 20 April 2020 Issue Date June 2020
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41585-020-0319-7>
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41585-020-0319-7>

There have been many anecdotes of patients with sequelae lasting months after their initial illness. A large enough number exist for them to form groups in social media to compare notes about their experience. As the underlying SARS-CoV-2 virus is novel, we don't have years of experience to look back upon for trends. We can't yet predict whether there will be lifelong

disability though many patients have reported development of diabetes, kidney dysfunction, heart disease, neurological impairment which have lasted months after they were technically deemed recovered. Studies on COVID-19's long term effects have only recently begun and may last months to years.

We also don't know how long any immunity post-infection will last, let alone whether most individuals can expect not to be re-infected within a year of their first infection. Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro is a recent obvious case raising questions about immunity; he tested positive for COVID-19 a third time two weeks after testing positive the first time.

So much for Bolsonaro's faith in hydroxychloroquine as a therapy for COVID-19.

A British study showed immunity dropping within three months after recovery:

... In the first longitudinal study of its kind, scientists analysed the immune response of more than 90 patients and healthcare workers at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS foundation trust and found levels of antibodies that can destroy the virus peaked about three weeks after the onset of symptoms then swiftly declined.

Blood tests revealed that while 60% of people marshalled a "potent" antibody response at the height of their battle with the virus, only 17% retained the same potency three months later. Antibody levels fell as much as 23-fold over the period. In some cases, they became undetectable. ...

Longitudinal evaluation and decline of antibody responses in SARS-CoV-2 infection

J Seow, C Graham, B Merrick, et al
medRxiv 2020.07.09.20148429; doi:
<https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.07.09.20148>

We've now seen cases where persons have recovered from COVID-19 only to be reinfected and sickened by a different strain. In a Hong Kong patient who had recovered in March but was reinfected during later travel to Spain, we see the problem of making assumptions based on bias about the "China flu." COVID-19 isn't just a single coronavirus strain originating in China.

The possibility of reinfection with different strains combined with decreasing immunity over time means reliance on "herd immunity" is foolhardy, and vaccines may not work as long as intended. Mitigating the spread of the disease remains crucial until a safe, effective, and durable vaccine has been developed, tested, and prepared for global distribution.

~ ~ 1 ~ ~

If hearts and lungs, neurological and reproductive systems are permanently affected by COVID-19 even in younger patients who may remain asymptomatic, why risk exposing children and college-age students to COVID-19 by returning them back to in-classroom schooling?

You'd think white nationalists would clue in that their precious ideal of a white power future is threatened by this virus, literally neutered by testicular damage, but no – they insist students must return to school.

Worse, they insist on sports, demanding college football right now, even though athletes have been infected, sickened, suffered heart damage, and died from COVID-19 in spite of their youth and health.

Why are we even allowing in-classroom schooling at all when there has been zero effort to fund and implement modifications to HVAC systems though we have known for months now that aerosolized exhalation in poorly-ventilated

enclosed spaces is the greatest risk factor to mass infection?

The only answer seems to be in the lack of any answer at all – the choice to do nothing is a choice.

And the choice the Trump administration, GOP legislators and state governors have made is to maim and kill more Americans.

~ ~ 0 ~ ~

There's an incredibly stupid tweet making the rounds, published by Students for Trump. They share a photo of Trump standing before burned-out buildings in Kenosha, Wisconsin. The tweet reads, "*President @realDonaldTrump tours what Biden will do to America.*"

Most tweeters who comment remark on the idiocy of this projection: Trump stands before the wreckage he helped spur during the waning election year cycle as he runs for re-election.

I can't help wonder if the stupidity of the tweet is a reflection of the damage exposure to COVID-19 may have already wrought on Students for Trump.

This is the future of the Republican Party: too brain damaged to recognize their reflection in the mirror.

Too impaired to recognize the self-inflicted injury, too messed up to save themselves and their future.

.

This is an open thread, though COVID-19 content is preferred.

THE GOOD TROUBLE OF JOHN LEWIS

Another lion has left the earth. John Lewis. And that damn bridge in Selma needs to



be immediately renamed for him, as has been discussed for years. Do it now. But finally abolishing the name and specter of the Edmund Pettus Bridge will not be enough. Structurally, the Pettus is not very large, it only has four piers, but it spans the arc of civil rights. The very civil rights still at issue today. John Lewis is the epitome of that arc.

From the New York Times:

Representative John Lewis, a son of sharecroppers and an apostle of nonviolence who was bloodied at Selma and across the Jim Crow South in the historic struggle for racial equality and who then carried a mantle of moral authority into Congress, died on Friday. He was 80.

.....

Mr. Lewis's personal history paralleled that of the civil rights movement. He was among the original 13 Freedom Riders, the Black and white activists who challenged segregated interstate travel in the South in 1961. He was a founder and early leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which coordinated lunch-counter sit-ins. He helped organize the March on Washington, where Dr. King was the main speaker, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

Mr. Lewis led demonstrations against racially segregated restrooms, hotels, restaurants, public parks and swimming pools, and he rose up against other indignities of second-class citizenship. At nearly every turn he was beaten, spat upon or burned with cigarettes. He was tormented by white mobs and absorbed body blows from law enforcement.

This day was clearly coming, it was widely known Lewis was not well and in the throes of cancer. The death also comes as the racist cancer in society he fought so hard as a youth is center stage yet again. Not just in the abuse in the streets by police, not just in the Black Lives Matter movement, but in the despair of the poor and downtrodden. And, importantly, in favor of all citizens voting.

As Barack Obama said:

“Generations from now,” Obama said when awarding him a Medal of Freedom in 2011, “when parents teach their children what is meant by courage, the story of John Lewis will come to mind – an American who knew that change could not wait for some other person or some other time; whose life is a lesson in the fierce urgency of now.”

The fierce urgency of now is every bit as critical as at any time in history.