

September 4, 2020

Labor Day Weekend 2020

Today is Friday, September 4, 2020. According to [Worldometer](#), almost 192,000 US residents have died of COVID-19. With a death toll of about 1,000 per day, it is reasonable to expect that by Election Day, November 3, 2020, about a quarter of a million US residents will have died. This number is staggering and constitutes a permanent loss to the United States. We have calculated it several times in the last six months, but at an average cost of \$5,000,000 per statistical life, it is a loss of almost one trillion dollars.

Your blogger's home state of Michigan was smashed by COVID-19 in late March and early April. Fueled almost certainly by travelers into the Detroit Metro Airport from the Far East, the local economy was sent reeling, thousands were hospitalized, and thousands died. Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer, with little help from the state's Republicans, instituted severe restrictions – to date the gyms and pools have not re-opened, but guess what? They have worked. Michigan is now 18th among the states in total cases, behind Texas, Florida, Arizona, and several other states that made points of only partially shutting down, or re-opening quickly. Social distancing works ... and so do masks.

Governor Whitmer has endured constant political sniping (and in April some potential real sniping from occupiers of the State Capital in Lansing), but she maintains a high approval level. People in Michigan (for the most part) have been safe. Most of them understand why.

Not at Adrian College. David Jesse of the *Detroit Free Press* [today](#) (September 4) wrote that Adrian, a small private liberal arts college about 90 minutes southwest of Detroit reported 200 cases of COVID-19. There are currently 133 students in isolation on campus which is 5.9% of the total campus community. Yet Adrian plans to stay open. The answer apparently is sports. In an August 16 article, Free Press sports writer Jeff Seidel wrote:

“The biggest thing I tell my coaches is, ‘We have to learn how to live with this,’ ” [Adrian Athletic Director Michael] Duffy said. “It's not going away. We learned to live with the Spanish Flu. If you look at pictures back from 1918, you're gonna see people sitting in the stands with face masks on 6 feet apart. Well, guess what? That's what we got to do today. It's no different. And we survived that. And we'll survive this. But we got to be smart.”

<https://www.freep.com/story/sports/columnists/jeff-seidel/2020/08/16/michigan-college-football-adrian-lawrence-tech-concordia/5590824002/>

Today's article quoted Adrian's President Jeffrey Docking that Adrian plans to stay open, play sports, and apparently quarantine large portions of their students.

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As we approach six months of blogging, YB has spent several blogs explaining how he was right, so it is circumspect and honest to own up to his mistakes.

Dr. Leana Wen was on television (MSNBC and other locations) early and often, stating that the US could easily face 200,000 deaths by the end of the year. YB felt that she was an inveterate scold. Leana Wen was right. *Mea culpa!*

Suzanne Nusbaum, a dear friend, spoke of the dangers of air travel to anywhere, as she reluctantly canceled trips to China and to Italy. You know where this is going. *Mea culpa!*

Michael Belzer, a Wayne State economics colleague, opined in April that we would be online for all of 2020-2021. *Mea culpa!*

The great economist John Maynard Keynes was once criticized for changing his mind on important issues. Keynes responded “when I get new information, I change my mind. What do you do?”

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