

The Other Side of Covid. Part I

In the “Modern Doctor Faust, a.k.a. Doctor Fauci, et al.” essay we addressed medical and touched upon some political issues surrounding the Covid virus.

There are many other facets of pandemics that affect our lives, no matter where we live. Beside medical, these are economical, political, bioresearch and industrial implications. But also psychological, ethical and interpersonal dimensions we all have to live with. Some are local and others are global. Each one is a major subject and we cannot possibly cover them all in-depth. We'll try to give you a vivid overview instead.

Life had slowed down considerably and became more expensive. That goes for products we buy, services we use and the food we purchase or consume in restaurants. There has to be an explanation for all of it somewhere. Our guess is that there had been major disruptions in various supply chains. Companies, large and small, have been impacted by inability of suppliers to deliver on time.

We recently spoke with an acquaintance that works for a large company in California. They sell electronic equipment and used to import products by air. They can no longer do that. Everything comes via ocean freight now. Container vessels at Long Beach, CA port lay in wait for a week or so to unload the cargo. We imagine this is going on around the country, causing delays and impacting costs. Someone we know, who made his living selling off-brand laptops on Amazon, cannot obtain any merchandise for months. The supply had dried up. And when something is in short supply, we the consumers, pay the higher price.

A friend, who is employed as electrician at various construction sites, told us how his firm has hard time finding people for their projects. We saw the same on TV about a small restaurant chain. Their employees, laid off during the peak of the virus business closures, don't want to come to work at this time.

Unemployment payments they receive are very generous, in some cases more than they were making. They have little incentive to hurry back. Few people who show up to fill job applications aren't looking for work either. They do it so they can submit proof they were seeking work – to the unemployment office that pays them. How weird. At the same time, millions have been displaced when the businesses they were working for closed for good. They cannot find work at this time.

Certainly, there are many such stories out there.

Many of us are never coming back to the offices. Remote work has opened up a whole new chapter. Companies of all sizes have seen opportunity to save big bucks by relinquishing expensive spaces they were renting and moving large chunks of their operations to people's homes and much smaller offices. Walk around Manhattan and see how empty the once ebullient place is. There is an IT guy we know. He lives in NJ and was coming to the city every day. Remote work changed that. He is now thinking about moving to Florida, while continuing remotely working for the same firm. His firm has no objections. There are others like him out there. Thousands of people are moving out. The financial impact on New York City is not hard to imagine.

The UN employee we know told us they are all working from home until some time next year.

And while on the subject of New York. Our Democratic rulers in their infinite wisdom are looking to tax the Stock Exchange (NYSE) on every transaction, buy or sell. They need revenue. The Stock Exchange is looking for a new location outside of New York. "Tax the Rich" plan isn't going well with Wall Street either. New executive prospects don't want to come to live in NY for that very reason. Some financial firms are setting satellite offices elsewhere. These are just bits and pieces we pick off the Internet. There must be so much more to the picture.

JetBlue, low cost, New York's "home airline" is headquartered in Queens, a NYC borough. It is considering moving out some of its operations elsewhere, due to increased taxation and apparent Covid-induced public travel pattern changes. Who should we thank for that?

Many famous Manhattan hotels have closed down for lack of tourists (Americans, Canadians and especially Europeans who spent lavishly while visiting NY in better times don't come here now). The empty rooms are being rented by the City Hall for the homeless and destitute. The plan is to buy up the hotels and to convert them into residences for these people. Homeless people do deserve roofs above their heads, just NOT in Midtown, New York's prime real estate, formerly huge source of revenue and the pride of the city for generations. No, don't tell us to have compassion. Move them into your own homes. How would you like to live next to them? Another friend of ours does. Her Midtown apartment windows are facing one such hotel's backyard. People on the other side think nothing of throwing garbage out the windows, for rats' nourishment, below. They have loud arguments day and night; openly smoke pot (New York's latest marijuana legalization, granted by Governor Cuomo, deflecting his own political troubles).

As a tourist, would you like to live next to the smelly and noisy hobo crowd? We didn't think so. Thank our openly socialist mayor and Covid.

The New York City speed limit is 25 mph. If you drive around the city you will see speed cameras everywhere. By the end of this year there will be 2,000 of them. Go a mile over 35 mph and get a ticket in the mail. Initially touted as school safety zones enforcement, they are now a major source of city's drying up revenue. They put many on every major thoroughfare and even side streets with little or no traffic. The once carefree city has become one large speed trap (the largest in the world, to be precise). Thank our openly socialist mayor. Watch your speed if you come for a visit.

Another friend of ours told of a trip, by car, across the entire NY State, he made in late March. Guided by GPS, he drove off the major highway and went through many small towns and villages he never even heard of. The picture is the same everywhere: very light vehicle traffic, little visible activity and many-many boarded up businesses with "for rent" signs. He said it was depressing. It cannot be "doom and gloom" everywhere, but we only guess what the rest of the country looks like at this time.

As of April 1, 2021, New York State had finally lifted its quarantine restrictions upon travelers. When you fly in, you are no longer required to self-quarantine for 14 days. They will not come to check up on you, and issue a fine if you are not where you are staying. City restaurants are now open at 50% capacity. It's a small consolation to the eateries that survived. Sadly, no help to those that closed doors forever.

To be continued