

Voices From the Crowd: Using Your Mask Helps Me Stay Alive

By Jim Tierney

Today, I went into Vernonia's R&S Market during the "Seniors Hour" the business has set up for older Vernonians who are more at risk of dying if we catch Corona Virus. I was gratified to see Randy and Sharon's staff letting people know that masks are a requirement.

To be clear, a really good mask is moderately good at protecting the wearer, but any mask is terrific at protecting the people around someone who does not know they have the Corona Virus. I wear my mask to help you avoid an infection I may not know I have.

Nobody likes being told what to do, and that included several maskless customers in the Market this morning. I heard much abuse of Governor Brown for her various orders and claims made that these problems were found only in Democratically controlled states. That is so wrong, I cannot stay quiet about it.

Like most of you, I have been following the COVID outbreak since January, including doing a lot of research into the history of pandemics, like the Black Death in the 14th century and the Spanish Flu in the 20th. In all three of these events, most infections

were initially concentrated in coastal cities where people and cargo arrived from abroad. However, just like 2020 America, the germs inexorably crept into remote towns and villages infecting and killing just as viciously as they did in the port cities.

In America, most of the ports and the very large air hubs are in the highly populated, coastal "Blue States." Just as its predecessors did, COVID's infection and death data show that it is creeping into the remote parts of America. Right now, the solidly Red, Southern "Bible Belt" states are really suffering. This virus has no politics, it is killing all of us.

People say COVID is just another flu. But in fact, its infection and mortality rate are far above the SARS and Swine Flu pandemics. To explain how we know this, I must explain how we count deaths from pandemics.

There are two ways to count fatalities from epidemics. The first way – Incremental Counts – is how we are counting COVID infections and deaths. Hospitals and governments report those cases they know about and academics total them up, over time. This way is "more precise." The "more accurate"

way to count takes a lot of time and is known as the Estimated Death Count. Epidemiologists generate the Estimated Death Count by tracking all of the deaths within populations, from all causes. Those deaths that did not get counted show up as spikes above the typical year-to-year data from deaths like diabetes and pneumonia. By comparing year-to-year data, these researchers can gain a very good picture of the hidden deadly impact of a pandemic.

Here is the important point: when you read how many people died from a bad influenza, or SARS or MERS they are using numbers from this second way of counting, because it is more accurate. A really big Estimated U.S. Death Count for the flu, SARS, etc. is 50-60,000 – for the year. We are already at twice that number using the dramatically undercounted Incremental Death Count. And, our data shows only the first few months of Corona Virus's year.

So, how bad could all of this get? In other pandemics, this Incremental Count undercounts the pandemics by somewhere between 10 and 20 to 1. Another way to gauge the risk is to compare it to American Wars. In four months, our Incremental Count from

COVID is more than twice as high as American deaths during the entire First World War; it is triple our losses in all the years of Vietnam and four times the number that died in The Korean War. Known COVID deaths are approaching half the number killed in World War II. Within its first 100 days, the COVID-19 Virus death count is dwarfing every other pandemic in recent history, and it looks possible for it to pass the toll from most, if not all, of our wars, just this year.

Is wearing a mask such a burden, really? If so, think about the economy. Our economy needs workers to feel it is safe for them to go back to work. Not just safe for the worker, safe for their kids, and their elderly family members. Shoppers have the same concerns. Mask are proving to be the answer to these problems, helping to re-open businesses and eventually allowing large critical gatherings like schools and churches.

Oregon Legislators Conclude Short Session

The Oregon House and Senate met during the week of June 22 and concluded a three-day short session, in which they passed 22 bills, on June 26. Included were six bills that addressed law enforcement reform and several bills concerning the state's COVID-19 response.

In addition law makers passed several other bills dealing with a variety of subjects, including SB 1602, co-sponsored and carried in the House chamber by State Representative Brad Witt (D-Clatskanie). The bill enables a memorandum of understanding between environmentalists and timber interests, and will pursue changes to the Oregon Forest Practices laws and regulations regarding aerial spraying on state and private forests.

The six police reform bills received bipartisan support and included the following:

- HB 4203: Prohibits use of force that limits the ability of a person to breathe, including but not limited to choke holds.
- HB 4205: Requires a police officer to intervene to stop another police officer from engaging in an act that is unethical or that violates law, rules, or policy.
- HB 4208: Allows use of tear gas only after police announce they intend to use it and requires police give people time to disperse. Police must first declare a riot is occurring under Oregon law before using tear gas.
- SB 1604: Restricts arbitrators from ordering disciplinary action that differs from what was imposed by the law enforcement agency, if arbitrator finds that misconduct did occur and the disciplinary action imposed by the agency is consistent with the agency's disciplinary policies. This bill was opposed by Oregon police unions.
- HB 4201: Creates a legislative task force to create the details of a process that will require a law enforcement agency to notify the Attorney General when a police officer uses physical force

resulting in death or qualifying physical injury.

- HB 4207: Directs Department of Public Safety Standards and Training to establish statewide database of police officer discipline records.

The following bills are designed to help Oregonians impacted by COVID-19:

- HB 4213: Extends the state's moratorium on residential and commercial evictions of renters under specified conditions during emergency period.
- HB 4204: A companion of sorts to the eviction ban, this bill prohibits lenders from pursuing foreclosures against homeowners and other borrowers through September 30. Governor Kate Brown has authority to extend the moratorium past that date. Missed payments will be due at the end of a borrower's loan term, if some other arrangement is not made with the lender.

SB 1602 was negotiated by Governor Brown with timber interests and environmental and fish coalitions, and will be driven by science with federal assurances, so they will be more du-

table.

"Both the timber industry and environmental coalitions have agreed to mediation to work toward a habitat conservation plan," said Representative Brad Witt. "As Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, I am encouraged by the willingness of all of the stakeholders to come to this agreement."

"As a former timber worker who was furloughed due to the spotted owl, I am pleased to see unanimous support in the House on a bill that will end initiative petitions and costly litigation between the two groups, putting them on a path that benefits all Oregonians."

The legislation makes changes to notification and reporting of aerial spraying of pesticides, and increases buffer zones around streams, bringing them in line with other western states.

Witt has served on the State Boards of Forestry, Watershed Enhancement, and the Forest Resources Institute. He also served as co-chair of the bi-state Lower Columbia River

continued on page 6

VERNONIA'S
voice
reflecting the spirit of our community

Publisher and Managing Editor
Scott Laird
503-367-0098
scott@vernoniasvoice.com

Contributors
Ruxandra Guidi
Sye Laird
Flo Lennox
Superintendent Aaron Miller
Anastasia Selby
Jim Tierney

Photography
Sye Laird

Want to advertise?
Have an article?
Contact: scott@vernoniasvoice.com

One year subscription
(24 issues) \$35

Vernonia's Voice is published
on the 1st and 3rd Thursday
of each month.

Vernonia's Voice, LLC
PO Box 55
Vernonia, OR 97064
503-367-0098

Don't Sell it!
Pawn it!
For fast cash!



Baseline
Pawn, Inc.

2245 Baseline St., Cornelius
(Across from Fred Meyer)
503-530-8119
State Licensed PB-0388

Open
everyday
at 10 a.m.

Cedar Side Inn



Specialty Pizzas

Taco Tuesday

from opening until 9 pm
3 hardshell or 1 softshell \$4.25

11:00 am - 11:50 pm Every day

Check our Facebook page for daily specials
756 Bridge Street, Vernonia **503-429-5841**