

# Putter Day, 2020

I'm Feeling Productive, Accomplished  
by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 12/29/2019

Once again, a New Year, and this time, accompanied by a shiny new decade. How appropriate to usher in these new times with Putter Day. Let the optimism and New Year commence by puttering - with wanton abandon. (Just don't break anything. (That would be counterproductive to true earnest puttering.) Adhering to the best Putter Day traditions, I will:

Fix something.  
(Perhaps that kitchen cabinet door?)

Write something.  
(At least a page or so.)

Start something.  
(to be determined -)

The beauty of Putter Day v. setting New Year's resolutions is that it happens all at once on Jan 1, and then it's over. You're off the hook. Resolutions are optional, and if they don't work out? Well, you still got to putter.

Resolutions are often about what you will stop doing. Puttering is actionable and affirmative. If you've done it well, then you have something to show for it.

"See, honey. The cabinet door is fixed. It works now."

So, Putter Day is nigh. Crack open the toolbox and go for it. No need to thank me. I'm just puttering - it's what I do.

Perhaps I should write some Putter Day carols - "Whistle While You Work"?

May productivity and accomplishment be yours throughout the New Year.

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# Putter Day, Post Facto

So – What did I do to usher in the New Year?  
by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 01/05/2020

Putter Day hath come and gone. It hath. It is now as past tense as the word, ‘*hath*’. So, how did I do? A quick look back to last week’s declaration.

*Adhering to the best Putter Day traditions, I will:*

*Fix something. (Perhaps that kitchen cabinet door?)* CHECK 

I actually snuck up on this one and tackled it on New Year- Putter Day’s Eve. A trip to Home Depot for the right screws. A nagging problem banished in a quick fix. Feeling flush with accomplishment, I also attempted to fix a shelf hinge in the fridge. Back to Home Depot for 27.5” x 1/8”-steel rod and - where’s my hacksaw? Back to Home Depot for hacksaw. Tried to fit rod in place. No joy. Repositioned hinge rod with Crazy Glue. No joy. Even tried duct tape. No joy. Faced acceptance that there are some things on this Earth that just don’t want to be fixed. (Sigh!)

*Write something. (At least a page or so.)* CHECK 

I turned in three technically taut pages worth – complete with all the verified math and illustrative diagrams. Technical writing requires a grammatical exactitude that challenges my casual linguistics, and thus, about 2-3 hours per painstaking page to get it right. Done, and done right.

*Start something. (to be determined –)* CHECK 

I restarted an old computer – nursing its operating system back to health. I suppose this one could have been under ‘fix something’. However, a win is a win.

This New Year may you look back on many personal accomplishments and declare, ‘I hath succeeded.’

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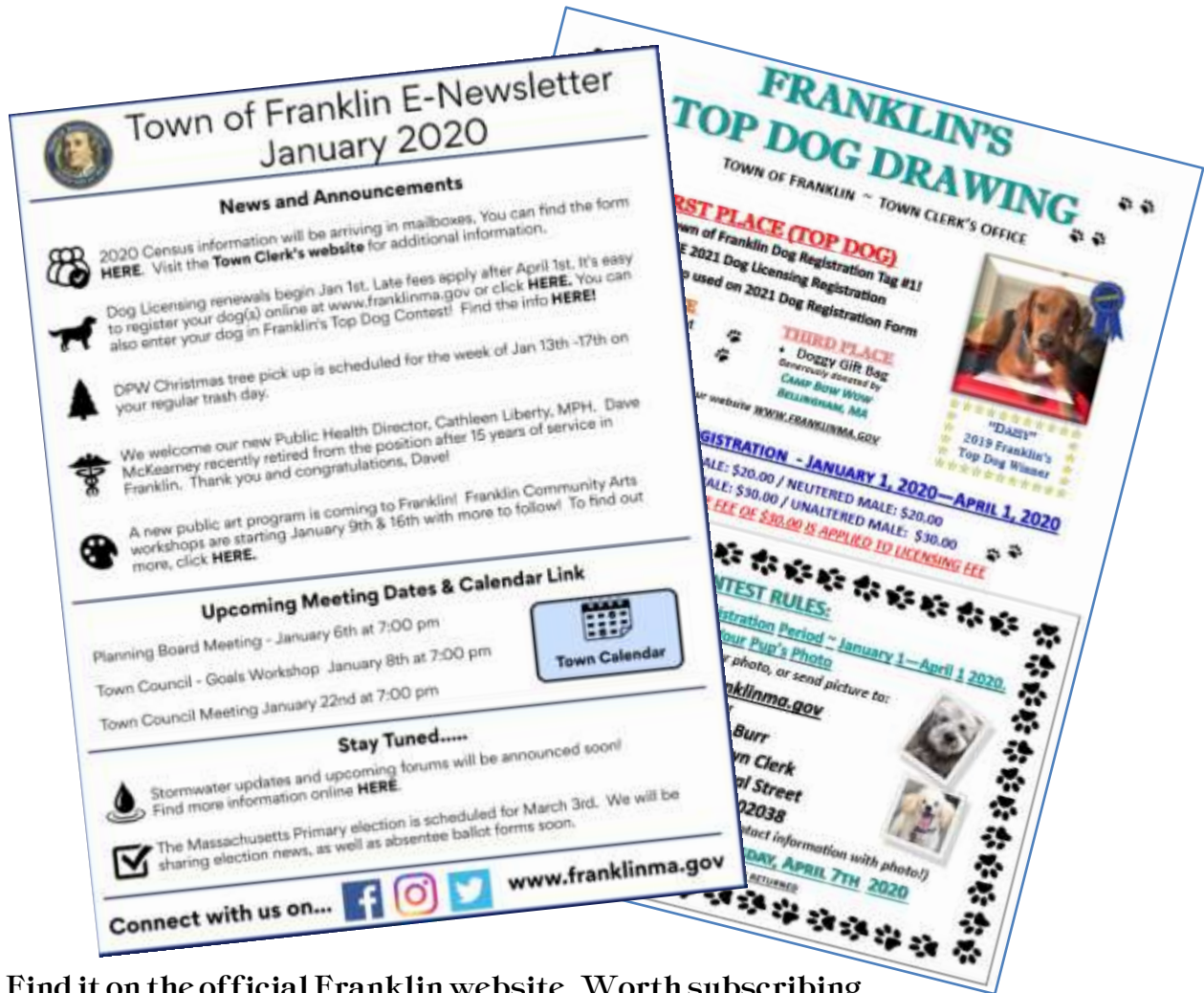
PS: I am now diligently practicing writing and typing *2020* instead of *2019*.  
Gotta retrain that habitual part o’ the brain – 2020, 2020, 2020, 2020... 

# A New Newsletter

Spread the word about the word.

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 01/12/2020

Franklin has begun publishing a new e-newsletter about our government goings-on. It's another of several good ways to stay connected to our community.



Find it on the official Franklin website. Worth subscribing.

Also stay connected to the all the latest and noteworthy with Franklin Matters.

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# Back Up

Just Do It.

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 01/19/2020

The fact that you are reading this is the result of a very bad thing – followed in short order by a very good thing. The bad thing? My computer died. It was sudden and final on Thursday. I wasn't there to witness its passing. I expected a quiet evening, only to be confronted by the Microsoft Blue Screen of Death. If ever there was a Greek or Roman god of digital stuff, that all-digital deity had it in for me. (Sigh!)

The good thing? Backup! My digital stuff – every last bit of my digital life – lives in three places. I accessed my backup files – typing this very missive and program schedule with my backup computer. Yes, I have one.

Digitally, this is not my first cataclysmic crash, nor will it be the last. How often? It happens roughly every 3-5 years. It's never pleasant, but it is survivable.

Our lives are increasingly digital. Our computers and smartphones rule our day, making our lives easier, better – until they fail.

Failure is not an option.  
Not today.

That's because backing up all my digital stuff is not an option.  
It's essential.

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P.S. It's not too late to start a New Year's resolution – backing up all your stuff.

Buy a small external hard drive. Then organize and make a backup copy of any digital files you regard as precious. Update your backup often, if not daily. Your future self will thank you.

# Jammin' in January!

Got Pectin?

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 01/26/2020



Yes, we are.

Franklin's own Mel Hamblen and her guest Kerri Bertone lived up our Friday afternoon in our Franklin.TV kitchen.

Mel brought and taught a class on how you can enjoy putting up your own tasty home-made jams from a variety of fruits.

Yum-icious! I can attest. Pass the toast.

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P.S. If you are up for jammin' and want more info - visit Mel at her Agway store.

# Prognostication!

Got shadows? I hope not.

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 02/02/2020

As I write this missive, it is early Saturday AM, Feb the first. Feb is upon us.

The best weather info tells us that Sunday AM is solid overcast with precipitation across the states of MA and PA.

Therefore, I prognosticate the following:

- **Punxsatawney Phil, no shadow = no more winter. (Yess!) Closer to home, our own groundhog – Ms. G at Drumlin Farms in Lincoln, also no shadow.**

<http://www.mastategroundhog.com/forecast/index.html>



*Punx Phil emerged Sunday at 7:28 a.m. with light snow falling, and did not see his shadow. He predicted an early spring, and the record-setting crowd in Punxsutawney cheered wildly.*

- **Past Pats alum Jimmy G & 49ers make it happen at the Superbowl.**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jimmy\\_Garoppolo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jimmy_Garoppolo)



*Oh, well – sadly, no ring for Jimmy. Congrats to K.C. Hail to the Chiefs.*

- **Those Presidents' Day car deals will be extended well beyond Feb 17th. (Like every other year)**

**Originally, as Washington's birthday.**

**Note: Celebrated in Botswana on the third Monday in July.**

**(Their president, not any of ours)**

**And – as you drive away in that shiny new car, take comfort that an early Spring is in the air.**

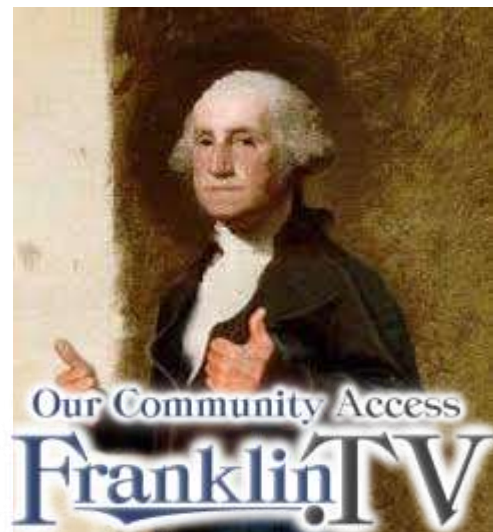
**You read it here, folks.**

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# Free Stuff? – Part 1!

Ain't No Such Thing as a Free Lunch? But, there's an app for that.

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 02/09/2020

*There's **no free lunch** is an American axiom that is well known in economic circles, though its origins seem to be in literature. ... The phrase, **no free lunch** means you don't get something for nothing, or anything one receives for **free** will be paid for in some other way.*

We all grew into the Internet culture. Or, perhaps it grew over us – like kudzu? Our online culture has led us to believe that if it's clickable, it's free. Meanwhilst, marketers work to monetize all that our Internet connectivity has to share. That sharing goes both ways as who we become increasingly public with each click.

Pay me now, or pay me later. Like every human endeavor, there is good and bad.

Let's start here:

<https://havebeenpwned.com>

This website tells you exactly how your email identity has been trolled, tracked, or worse – by hackers and others with nefarious intent. The site checks your address for free, hoping to sell you their password control software. Fair enough.

Changing/updating your password(s) is where you can begin to fight back. Going online anonymously behind a protective VPN (Virtual Private Network) service is another.

Is there worthwhile stuff on the 'net for free?  
Yes. More on this in Part 2...

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# Free Stuff? – Part 2!

Ain't No Such Thing as a Free Lunch? But, there's an app for that.  
by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 02/16/2020

I ended my last with this question. “Is there worthwhile stuff on the ‘net for free?”  
Despite my cautionary tale – there actually is.

Google Docs – Google Calendar – Google Anything. All free, but they do get to romp and rummage through all your work, your clicks, your online life. Their give & get. This is one reason why “Internet Privacy” is becoming an oxymoron.

Then there's Wikipedia, and Jimmy Wales latest pro-publica effort, WT.Social. Biiiig recommend here. These are true GNU efforts. GNU?

Start here: <https://www.gnu.org/home.en.html>  
And here: <https://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl-3.0.en.html>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GNU\\_General\\_Public\\_License](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GNU_General_Public_License)



There are people – computer engineers – software developers who strive to make the internet a better, safer and kinder place. Most of us can't write computer code. But, we can write a check. These good causes survive through your donations.

For all the bad, scary stuff that we hear about the internet, facebook, hacking, etc. there are pockets of altruism.

Compare: Google      Gmail – a great free service  
Mozilla      Thunderbird – a great free software app

For Gmail, you donate your information. For Thunderbird, you just donate (maybe). In the end, donating some money is your choice. Donating your information is not. Privacy laws in the U.S. are woefully behind those of the E. U. Start here:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet\\_privacy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_privacy)  
<https://www.aclu.org/issues/privacy-technology/internet-privacy>



Remember, when you Google “Internet privacy” – Google knows.

Next week: Actual and useful GNU licensed free stuff that I use.

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# Free Stuff? – Part 3!

Ain't No Such Thing as a Free Lunch? But, there's an app for that.

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 02/23/2020

So, where's this free stuff? I'll put in two groupings. There are trial versions of software that are either simpler or temporary in their use. The makers hope that your trial experience encourages you to buy the full or permanent version. You are under no obligation. Examples:

Editpad Lite v Editpad Pro – It's an excellent free text editor.

<https://www.editpadlite.com/>



I prepare and edit our weekly TV schedule with EditPad Pro.

Ninite – This site service sets up all the freebies you want on your computer.

<https://ninite.com/>

What do I check off? The 3 browsers. Blender, GIMP, Greenshot, Thunderbird, Audacity, VLC, Handbrake. All free. All worthy.

You should search each offering's website to learn about and compare it to others before you select one on Ninite. Note that some of my selections are media centric for manipulating pictures and audio. We're a TV studio. It's what we do.

Editing video? I also recommend DaVinci Resolve by Black Magic Design.

Unlike simpler, limited free home movie editors, it's fairly feature-rich for a freebie version. There's a learning curve, but there's a lot of capability as well.

The win for Black magic is a hope that you move up to their professional version and accelerate their software with optional video hardware.

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# Free Stuff? – Part 4!

Ain't No Such Thing as a Free Lunch? Certainly Not by Email.  
by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 03/01/2020

So – umm – If the internet has lots of useful free goodies, what's the harm?

It's about exposure. Are you comfy with exposing yourself to unwanted tracking cookies running in the background? Some web offerings load these into your browser. They track every website you visit – every click.

Learn about browser cookies here: <https://www.allaboutcookies.org/>

There are a few particularly malicious sleeper cookies that freeze your browser with a ransom message and phone number. **DO NOT CALL**. Immediately hold your computer's power switch down until you force it OFF. Then just restart your computer, and the evil message will likely be gone. Then clear out all cookies.

Email is where most web danger lies. It's the scammer's playground. Sending out thousands of emails is negligible in cost. The scammers don't need a big return. They need only a very few – the most gullible.

Your **NUMBER ONE** defense – read the sender's email address – carefully. When an email claims that your account needs an update or verification of some kind, be it supposedly from Amazon, Bank of America, or whomever – **DO NOT** assume it's legit. A legit email address from Amazon.com should end with – “@amazon.com” and not “accountverification@amazon.services.com”.

If they send a link – do not click it. If there's a phone number – do not call it. Doubts? Google the main website for Amazon or Bank of America or whomever. Find a legit customer service phone number. Ask if there is any issue with your account and inform them of the email you received and the address of the sender.

What is important is that you take control and initiate the communications with your legit service provider through their website email address or phone number. When you report email phishing scams you are helping the legitimate services and businesses that you rely on as well as yourself.

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# Free Stuff? – Part 5!

Free Lunch? Sometimes. Some Ways to Fight Back.

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 03/08/2020

Last week I mentioned the risks of email, the scammer's playground. Trojan malware, phishing, spoofing, etc. It's easy for them to spam. Hard for us to avoid. You know they have won when you approach your email with a slight twinge of trepidation. "Do I really want to bother with reading my email?"

Yes, you do. It's yours. Not theirs.

Given all the notable cyber-attacks and breaches of major companies – financial institutions, hospitals, etc., who knows what info cyber-criminals have on you?

You can start fighting back here. <https://haveibeenpwned.com/>

This is a website that researches whether your account has been compromised or hacked via one or more of the corporate cyber-breaches. What's in it for them? They are part of 1password.com, a seller of password management software. A simple free check of your accounts for the chance to introduce their service. Fair enough.

Bleachbit is another great cyber-protection and privacy tool. It's a free, GNU licensed computer cleaner application. I consider it to be a better alternative to CCleaner, a good commercial product.

Check out: <https://www.bleachbit.org/>

It offers options for scrubbing the trail of digital breadcrumbs and background files that you generate (and the cookies that websites send you) during your daily browsing and other computer activities. Bleachbit is absolutely free. It does a lot, with many options. There's a bit of a learning curve, but it's worth it.

Bleachbit is aptly named.

It's a digital antiseptic – like Purell for your computer's hard drive.

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# Free Stuff – Free Speech? – Part 6!

Free Lunch? Free Speech? A Free-for-all?  
by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 03/15/2020

“We have met the enemy, and they is us.” (Google it)

The thing that is most free on the Internet is free speech. But, quantity of content does not equate to quality of thought. Just because someone posted, re-posted, and re-re-re-tweeted it doesn't make it true. The virality of sensational, bombastic, slippery innuendo from distant, untraceable sources is a poor substitute for fact. We are awash in a roiling sea of disinformation. Critical thought requires effort.

Ready – Fire – Aim.

It strikes me as odd (and sad) that that otherwise reasonable folks can retweet, rant and rage over social media, often needlessly savaging others in less than civil discourse. Has our first amendment (1A) become weaponized? I hope not. Yet some readily shout down and suppress the 1A rights of others when asserting their own 1A rights. 1A was not intended to work that way. Opinions and ideas are not mutually exclusive. 1A is about openness, tolerance, pluralistic principles, and yes, even some considered receptivity to the considered opinions of others.

First among our freedoms – our precious freedom of speech grants to each of us the unfettered opportunity to be frivolous, thoughtless, insensitive, crass, dishonest and/or just plain flat-out wrong – at our own social and professional peril.

Thus, among our freedoms – our precious freedom of speech grants to each of us the unfettered opportunity to be thoughtful, insightful, kind, supportive, honest and/or just plain straight-up on point – by our own social and professional grace.

Given all the nefarious elements, scams and bad actors that lurk on the internet, we need not become our own worst enemies through antisocial media.

Before you speak (or type), ask yourself:

Is It Kind, is It Necessary, is It True, Does It Improve On The Silence? – Sai Baba

I typed the above with that criteria in mind. Say what you will – then own it.

When you type with wanton abandon, you can't abandon what you typed.

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# Covid 19 – Find Your Power!

Knowledge is Power. Connectedness is Community.

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 03/22/2020

They say nature abhors a vacuum. Fear often fills a vacuum – of understanding. When we don't know what to expect in trying times, we often fear the worst. The adage, 'Hope for the best. Prepare for the worst', is sound advice, but when the worst is unclear, unformed, unknown – preparing becomes more difficult, and whatever comfort and solace that effort might provide becomes more elusive.

Seek two things: Knowledge and Connectedness. Knowledge is where you begin to fight back. These are trusted world, federal, state, and local sources of knowledge.

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>

<https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

<https://franklin.wickedlocal.com/news/20200306/franklin-to-sanitize-public-buildings-over-weekend>

And, most importantly, here at home:

<https://www.franklinma.gov/home/urgent-alerts/coronavirus-information-portal-updates-here>

Connectedness. We are all stronger together than apart. Connect frequently with family and friends – even distant ones. Remember those times when you meant to contact – follow up – and didn't because your busy day was filled. While you are at home being socially distant, (and smart) this is that opportunity to connect – and reach out to others who matter to you.

Beyond washing them often, what better way to spend all that time on your hands?

If the Internet is one thing, it is connectedness. Beyond social media, there is text, email and – Virtual Visits Via Video. That's – Victory.

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# Covid 19 – Hunker Up! Write It Down!

Personal Knowledge is Public Power!

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 03/29/2020

So – Here we are. Most of us are hunkered down for the duration. I'm hunkering up in self-imposed isolation as hard as I can. So are most folks that I know and care about. Instead of hunkering in the traditional 'down' mode, I am opting to break with tradition and mentally – hunker up. If you can 'man/girl up' then you can hunker up.

How to hunker up?

Thanks to the vast interconnectedness of the Internet to all of our special people and things – hunkering up begins with a change in behavior. Stay close to those you know and care about. Contact folks you haven't been in touch with recently. That's what social media, email, video chats, etc. are for. Don't be alone.

Tackle some of those tasks around the house that have languished for so long on your 'real-soon-now' list. It is a time for puttering. If cleanliness is next to Godliness, then puttering is next to hunkering. And yes, keep those hands clean and Godly.

How to write it down?

What is 'it', exactly? Keep a simple, day-by-day casual list of those people you come into close contact with each day. Include dates.

Why? We all have imperfect memories. If you contract the virus, you have a good list of dated past contacts. This is an eee-norr-muss help in accurately tracing your movements back to others, including your possible source of infection.

Keeping a simple list is a tiny ask as a task. It's something we can do to fight back. An accurate traee-back list can help officials to stem the spread and save lives. It's empowering when we feel powerless.

Eventually, victory is assured.  
Let's all look forward to that.

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# Covid 19 – Our Trajectory

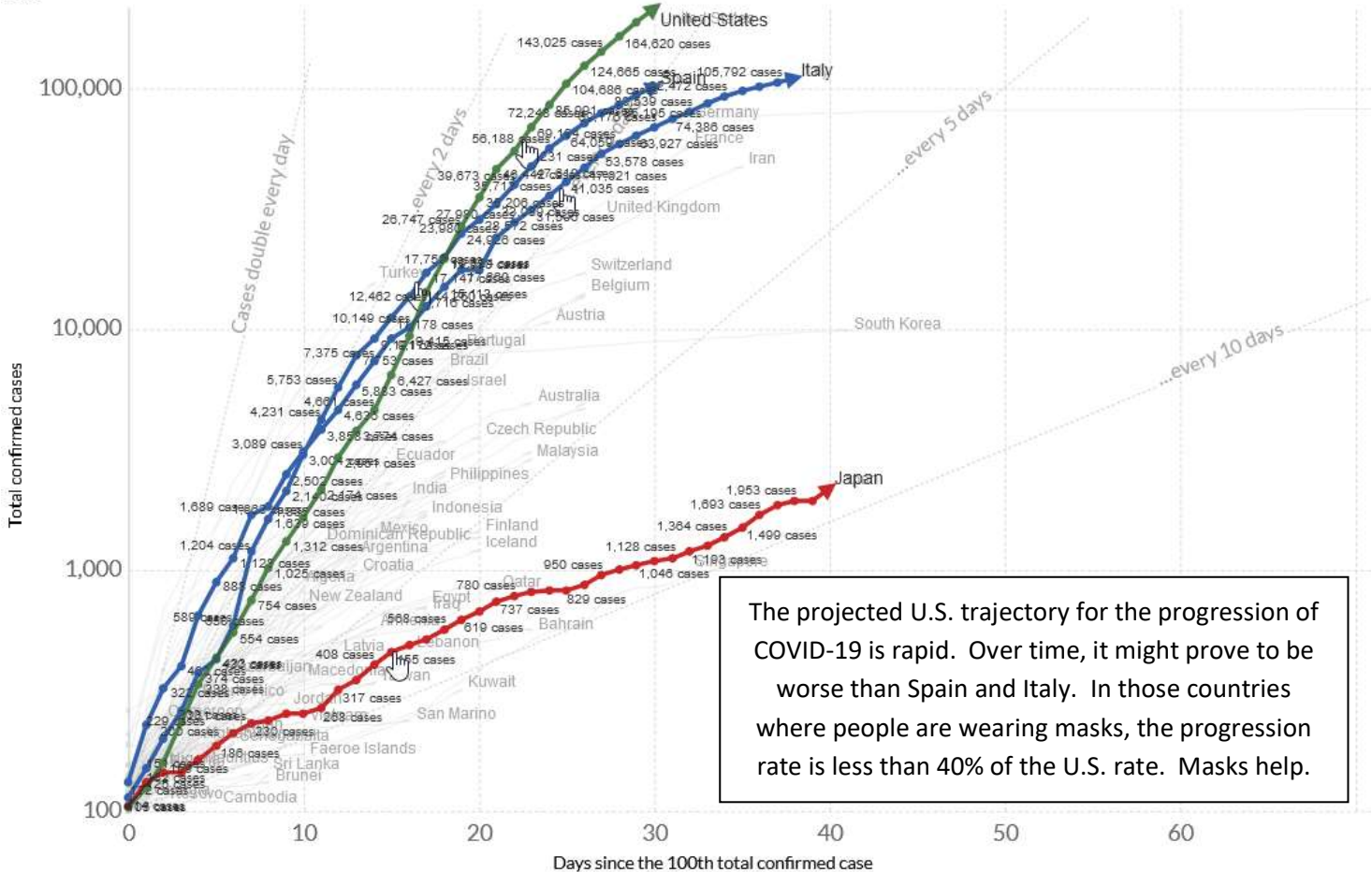
We can do better! Please stay home. Wear a mask.

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 04/05/2020

## Total confirmed cases of COVID-19

The number of confirmed cases is lower than the number of total cases. The main reason for this is limited testing.

LOG



The projected U.S. trajectory for the progression of COVID-19 is rapid. Over time, it might prove to be worse than Spain and Italy. In those countries where people are wearing masks, the progression rate is less than 40% of the U.S. rate. Masks help.

Source: European CDC – Situation Update Worldwide – Last updated 2nd April, 11:45 (London time)

Japan has long had a healthy respect for the risks of contagion. Wearing a mask in public is common. Always has been. If you have doubts, the graph tells the story. Help yourself and others. If you must venture out for necessities, find some way to mask up. And, scrub those hands – thoroughly and often.

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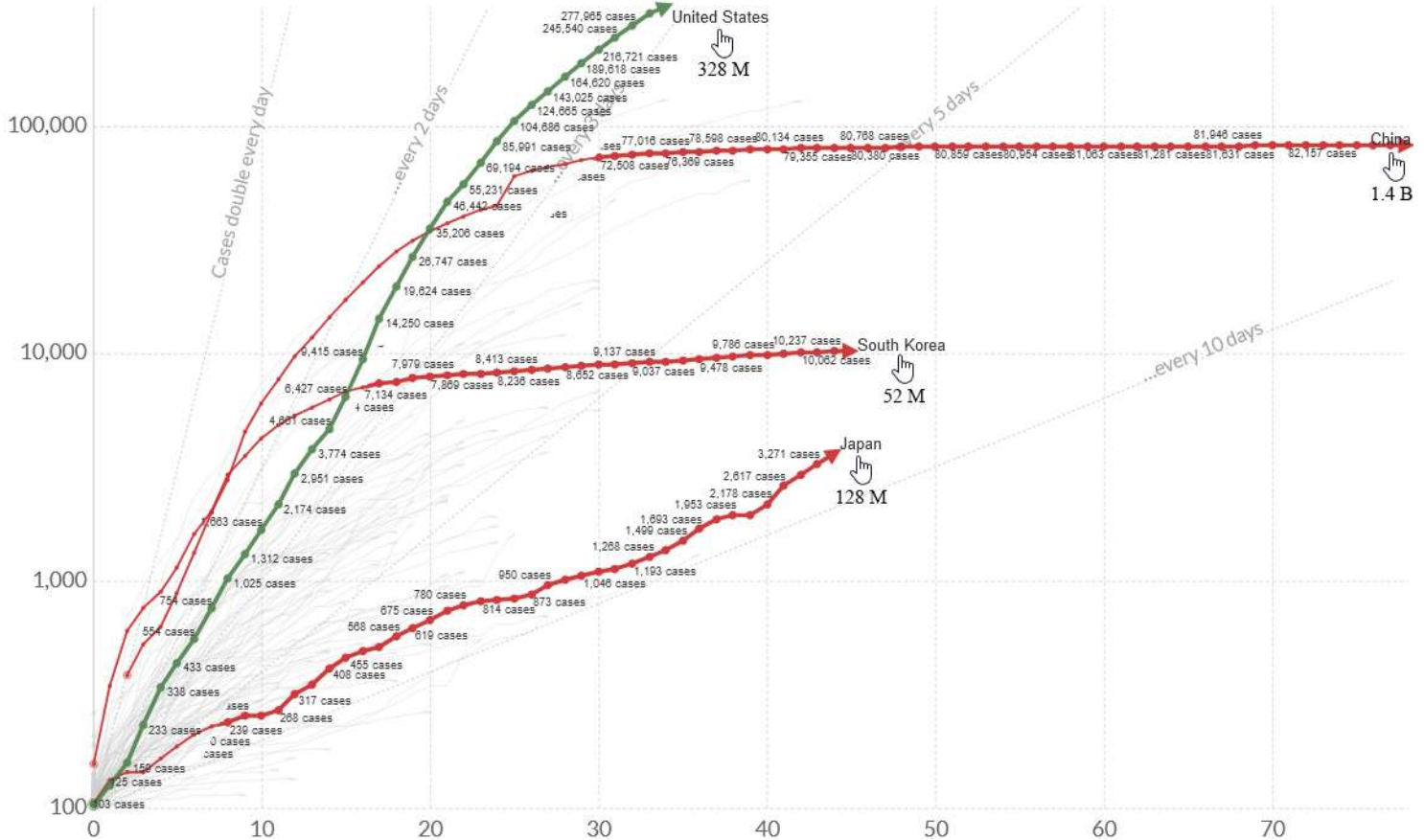


# Covid 19 – Our New Normal?

Seeking more than information. Seeking insight.  
by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 04/12/2020

Total confirmed cases of COVID-19 W.H.O. data, 04-07-2020.

The number of confirmed cases is lower than the number of total cases. The main reason for this is limited testing.  
LOG



When researching, there are two key quotes regarding numbers that I live by.  
*If you can't describe it with numbers, then you don't know much about it.* –Pythagoras  
*There are lies, damn lies, and statistics.* –unknown, popularized by Mark Twain

However, carefully interpreting and visualizing raw data offers a path to insight.  
What emerges is a story of 4 countries.

First, a word about the graph. It's not linear. It's a logarithmic progression that continues to accelerate in absolute population losses over time. The visual effect is that the progression appears to 'flatten' to zero, but that's not actually happening. Every line and vector that appears to be almost flat is still increasing – slowly yet exponentially over time – as a greater absolute increase in cases each week.



Japan: 128 million people



The first 5-days on the graph span 239 to 359 cases; a net of 120 cases.

The last 5-day span shows an increase from 1,953 to 3,271, net 1,318 cases.

At day 45 the virus is spreading 10X faster than at day 15. That's 10X growth per month. If Japan continues along this vector for another 3 months, their case count could approach 1,500,000; up to 1% of the entire population. After another month, 10% are infected. After this point, rapidly expanding societal immunity begins to slow the disease. Over the next year there is a gradual rise, leveling and fall of the progression as more of society becomes immune. However, that lengthy high point could reach a plateau of 9 to 12 million cases a month. What the graph for Japan also indicates is that their government struggles to find and implement a strategy for mitigation beyond society norms. Because Japan's progression continues to accelerate, it can't be normalized to a steady-state rate of containment. There's no flattening to a minimization norm. Aligning case inception to outcome sets the death rate at  $\approx 5\%$ . Without aggressive mitigation, up to 5 million people could die over the next year. A casual interpretation of the graph would indicate that Japan is doing better than others, but - they are not. If their current norms can't change, Japan is in trouble.

South Korea: 52 million people



South Korea's claim to viral fame is guided mass testing. Their strategy has been 'search and seize' the virus. Track and stop it wherever they find it, and find it fast. Early testing with fast case isolation and clear tracebacks, social distancing and wearing medical grade masks all add up to meaningful viral diminution and control.

Cases during the earlier 5-day sample; 7,134 to 8,413, a net of 1,279 cases.

Cases during their more recent 5 days; 9,478 to 10,062, a net of 584 cases.

South Korea is buying time - lots of it. At this new normal, it might be only 35,000 to 40,000 cases before broad vaccination and prevention in 12-14 months. Cold as that might sound, at perhaps as few as 2,000 more deaths (5%) that's a win.

Normalized to steady-state rate: one new case each week per 89,000 people.

China: 1.4 billion people



China has enforced isolation rigorously. We've seen news footage of aggressive police actions in Wuhan. While that scene might appear deplorable at face value, the results speak volumes about the need for aggressive enforcement by a government acting on behalf of the greater good- the public interest, convenience and necessity. China's full lockdown ended just this week. While some travel is now permitted, movie theaters and large public venues remain closed. No one ventures out in public without a mask. Social distancing remains in effect; their new normal. New data indicates that viral spread returns quickly with the easing of disciplines.

Cases spanning their first 5 days of mitigation; 72,508 to 78,598, net 6,090.

Cases spanning their most recent 5-day period; 81,631 to 82,157, net 526.

China claims all new cases are based on people returning from abroad.

Normalized to steady-state rate: one new case each week per 2.7 million people.

Then, there's us.

United States: 330 million people



No sugar coating. The graph informs us that we are still in deep and deepening trouble. The US trajectory has seen only middling benefit to date from our efforts at mitigation. We are facing a fate similar to Japan, but on a far broader scale.

The U.S., from the same timespan as Japan's start: 1,025 to 4,661, net 3,636 cases. Our more recent span sample: 164,620 to 277,965, net 113,345 and still rising. Everything I've stated to this point is an irrefutable product of math and science.

**IMHO-**

Dense Asian societies - free or not - live with the needs of the collective - the public. If we can't or won't become more collectively vigilant about personal isolation, vigilance might be forced upon us. Our own society could experience dire, draconian enforcement measures similar to China in a handful of weeks.

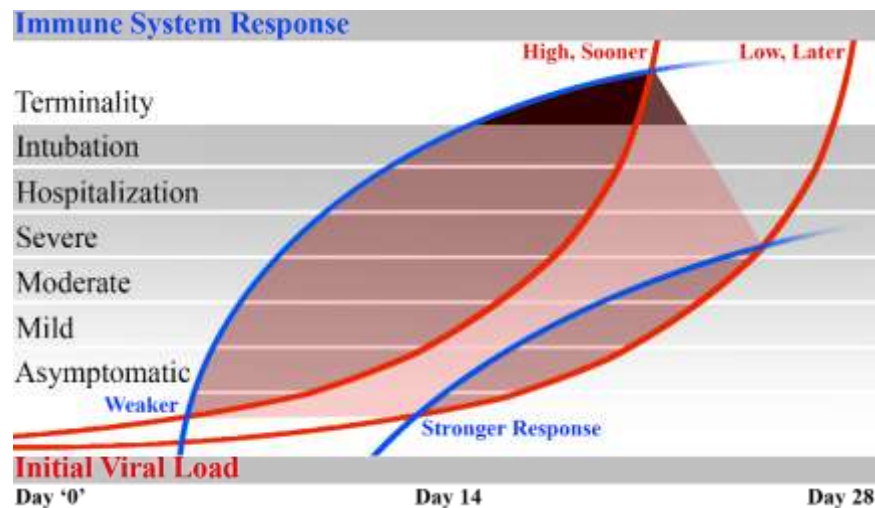
I am a First Amendment champion. That said, our very precious right of free speech and assembly is not unbounded. Just as we can't yell 'Fire!' in a theater because we can cause public harm, under current circumstances we can't freely move about and go wherever whim takes us - because we can cause public harm. Our government has the right to curfew, to sequester, to quarantine, and to act, perhaps boldly, for the greater good and the public interest. In days and months ahead, we could see actions that we won't like - sadly necessary actions well beyond our understanding of governmental limits in a free society. China and South Korea locked down and isolated their infected regions. No free movement, in or out. Japan and the U.S. have yet to enforce this extreme measure.

When our CDC talks about 'flattening the curve', even if successful in part, it's not a quick fix. It's just a necessary, agonizingly long war of attrition. This week our CDC declared that 60 deaths/day is acceptable. That's 22,000/year. Can we flatten our losses like the South Koreans and Chinese? Doubtful. It's just not in our prideful, ruggedly individualistic and entitled nature. We may take umbrage (fancy talk for throwin' shade), but COVID19 will force all of us to learn caution - and humility. Our new normal? Looking at our current trajectory, this will not be over soon. When it comes to our personal health, we will live day-to-day with individual risk management, perhaps for the next year plus, until we can deploy a vaccine at scale. We have yet to achieve broad testing and tracking. Just how grisly could it be? Good, bad, or even worse, that outcome is in our hands, individually and literally. As individuals, we must come together as one country, indivisible, with liberty, justice, and adding concern, care and compassion for all. We can seek 20/20 hindsight, investigating faults and failures ad nauseam later. For now, it falls to us - individually - to save ourselves collectively.

Back to the science.

COVID19 has a behavior profile that can be modeled and mapped. While anecdotes are not hard numbers, they can be graphed from anecdotes at scale. Visualization can convert anecdotes into action. The COVID19 virus has both a strength and weakness in one single factor. Its replication rate is slow or delayed. This is the varied delay between infection and presentation. We can scattermap the anecdotal outcomes from two key variables:

- The severity of the initial viral contact – viral load – how many were ingested?
- The robustness of a host immune system’s response, healthy or compromised.



This is a flattened map of a complex 3D model. It spans worst/best case behaviors. For stronger immune responses the effects are milder. Weaker immune responses result in worsening outcomes. What is most notable is the impact of viral loading on contact. The red virus curve is the same at both extremes. Viral loading just shifts it in time. The early virus replication rate is a constant, and a greater viral load advances the starting point for its progression timeline. That tiny load change in the lower left corner produces a wide range of outcomes. What does this mean? We assume that infection – or not – is a binary experience. It actually happens by degree. This is critical information. Practices that can reduce viral load are as important as avoiding the virus altogether. A mask – even a home-made covering – can determine where you land between the best/worst outcomes.

Help yourself and others. Find a way to mask up.  
As a fashion statement: *Mask is the new black.*

Next week: Virus Whack-A-Mole.

And – as always –

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# Covid 19 – Whack-a-Mole?

Numbers may provide truth, but we have an obligation to study – carefully.  
by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 04/19/2020

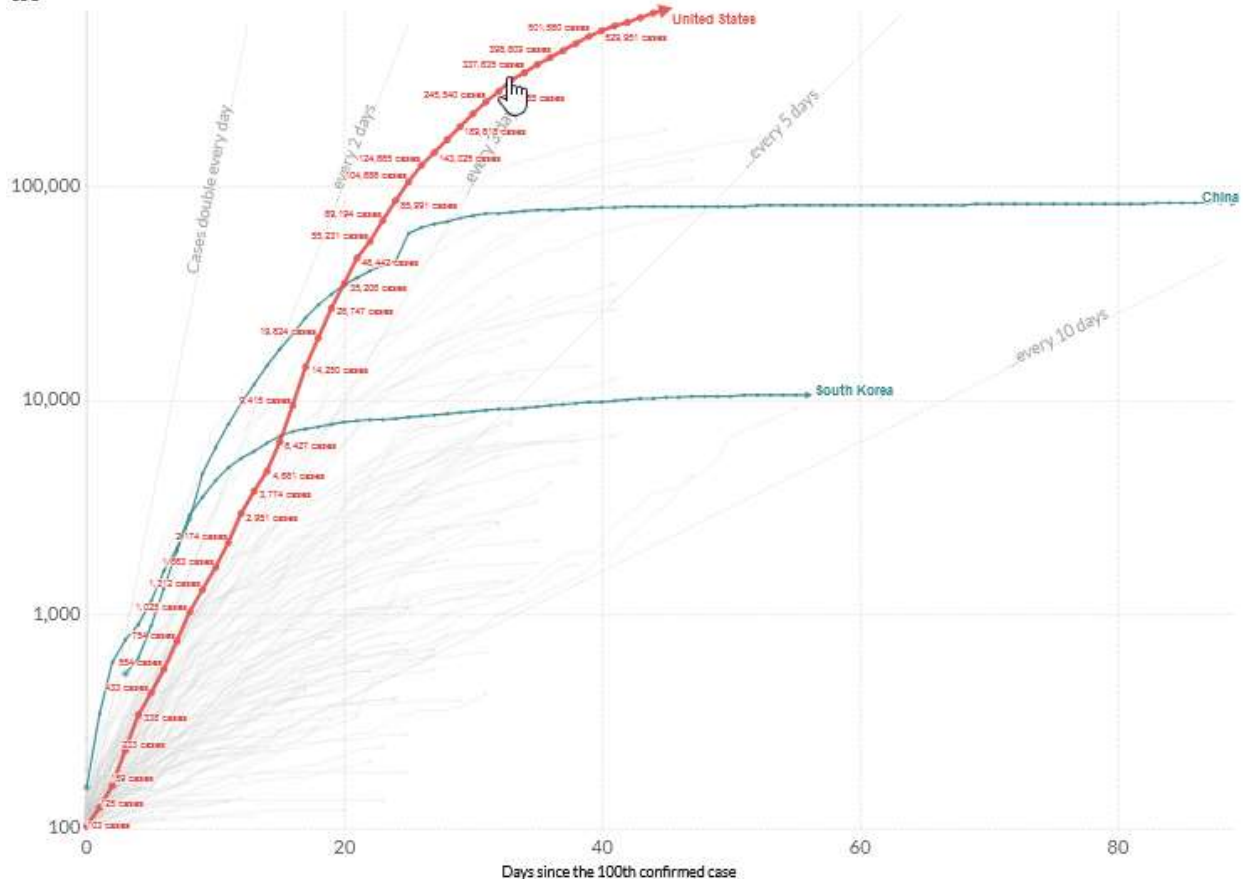
<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/infection-trajectory-flattening-the-covid19-curve/>

W.H.O. data, 04-17-2020.

## Total confirmed cases: how rapidly are they increasing?

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases is lower than the number of total cases. The main reason for this is limited testing.

LOG



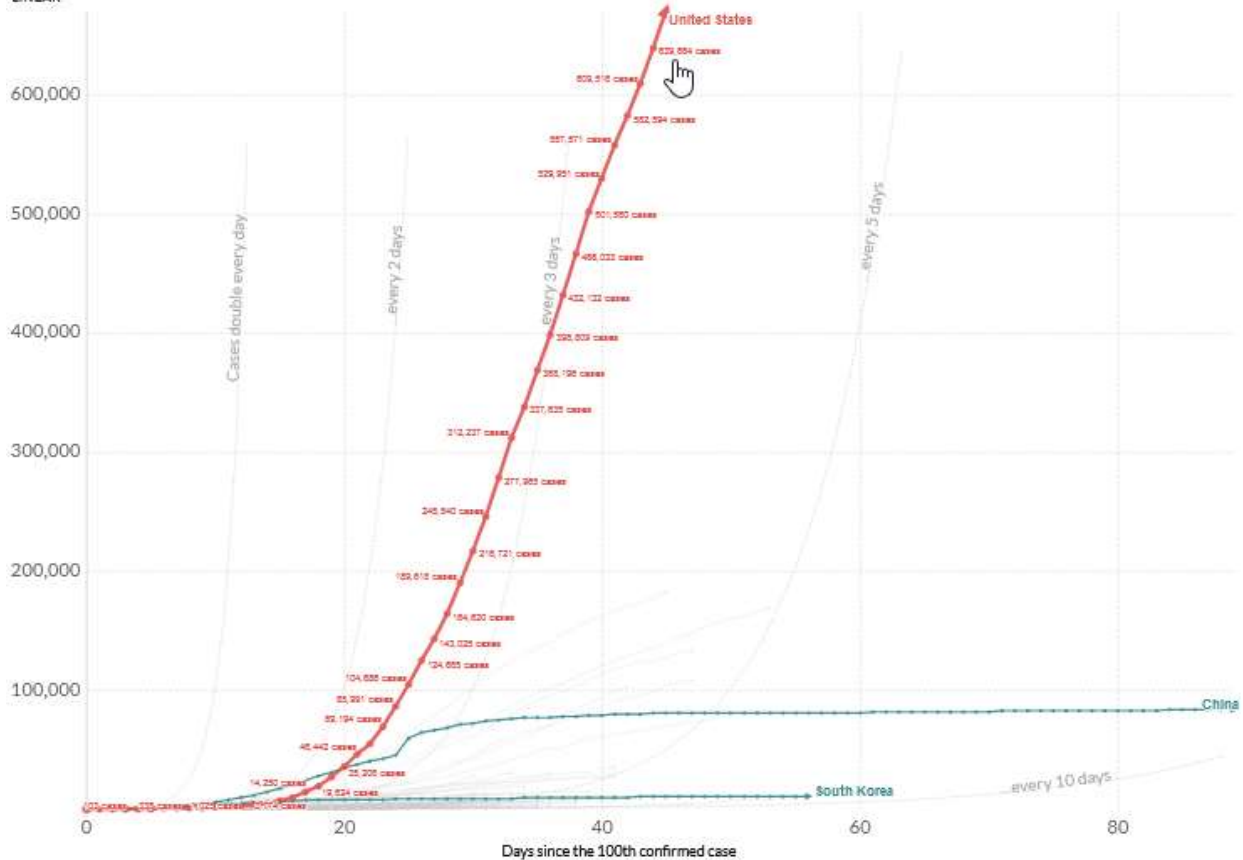
How those numbers are framed, wrapped in context and presented to us can be misleading. Here is the latest W.H.O. logarithmic scaled chart of international progress. It shows us – s-l-o-w-l-y bending the curve of viral spread.

Note that this week Dr. Deborah Birx made a pointed statement about the preferred use of the Log chart. While that presentation form has its value, you can extract a clearer understanding of exactly where we are in mitigation by studying the Linear scale as well. The Log view would have you thinking that, all in all, we're not that far off from other nations.

However, here's the eye opener. Same chart. Linear scale.

### Total confirmed cases: how rapidly are they increasing?

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases is lower than the number of total cases. The main reason for this is limited testing.  
LINEAR



This scale shows you how little progress we have made through tough mitigation. The bend is not really a bend. It's what the ever-expanding scale of a Log chart produces when you hit a steady-state plateau ( currently, above 10,000/week ). This is nowhere near the CDC's mitigation target of 420/week. This presentation indicates there is almost no 'bend' or true flattening. We have a very long way to go.

The false bend produced by the Logarithmic function creates a false impression - that we can break out the champagne and declare victory. ( Your best bottle of bubbly, please ).

Not so fast. Look at China and South Korea. That's very flat, even on a Linear scale. They got there by testing and more testing, isolation and more onerous isolation. Note that even as a flat trajectory at a very low rate compared to the U.S., their rate of new infection cases continues to double roughly every nine days or so. However slowly, the viral spread continues even under the best of mitigation efforts.

We once had 14,000 U.S. domestic flights. Even a minimum of that air traffic transports the virus at uncontrollable rates. The virus continues to spread rapidly, freely hitchhiking about the country as it will. We will be stamping out viral fires, and locking down cities here and there, only to have more fires pop up elsewhere like a deadly game of Whack-a-Mole. These flareups will be our new normal until we can test and trace rapidly.

Now the President is encouraging an impatient citizenry to “liberate states”. They gather to protest – in crowds tight enough and large enough to spread the virus. Regardless of the hopeful mathematical models and projections we embrace today, when we change the input data, we change the outcome. We change our future.

‘Stay-at-home’ be damned. The emotionally infectious bravado of a protest crowd cannot protect it – or us. If the President pushes governors to ‘open up’ the country, some will comply. Those eager states will bring hurt upon us all.

Know that you are truly on your own regarding your personal health and safety. Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home. For your own sake, stay there.

We have no testing. The current rate of testing is effectively next to zero on a per capita basis. We can’t begin to trace or treat what we can’t meaningfully test.

May I suggest that the feds need to shove the cork back in the bottle for another day – a day that’s far off in the future.

Help yourself and others. Find a way to mask up.  
As a fashion statement: *Mask is the new black.*

And – as always –

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# Covid 19 – Rolling On

The Viral Drama Rolls On.

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 04/26/2020

<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/infection-trajectory-flattening-the-covid19-curve/>

The link above always tells the story. The numbers are the numbers. The models simply ask, “What if”. The numbers tell us what was, what is, and what is most likely to continue for the near term – unless things change significantly. The web page always defaults to the LOG version when you load it, but if you click on the word ;LOG’ in the upper left, you can switch to the ‘LINEAR’ chart which offers a more stark, undistorted depiction of the same truth.

This simple spreadsheet is a snapshot of U.S. two-week rolling averages for daily infections. It’s steady at  $\approx 30,000$ /day. Steady was/is not our goal.

While much improved, even New York has hit a plateau that appears to be increasingly difficult to reduce further.

The optimistic feds embraced a model that promised only 60,000 deaths by August. (What happens after August?) It is highly likely at present rate that we will be there by next week. If this is an impenetrable plateau, we could be at a projected 300,000 dead by August.

Date	New Cases	29,588	Deaths	Percent
8-Apr	398,809	33,323		
	432,132	33,901	50,000	11.57%
	466,033	35,527		
	501,560	28,391		
	529,951	27,620		
	557,571	25,023	50,000	8.97%
	582,594	26,922		
	609,516	30,148		
	639,664	31,667		
	671,331	30,833		
	702,164	32,922		
	735,086	24,601		
	759,687	28,065		
	787,752	37,289		
	825,041	17,588		
23-Apr	842,629		50,000	

How does this happen mathematically? We just reported 50,000 deaths as of 4/23. The origin of each death begins with an infection that took place 10-14 days earlier. If we consider the two-week association, the death rate is almost 12%; much higher than the touted 3-to-4%. The 10-day originating population association is  $\approx 9\%$ .

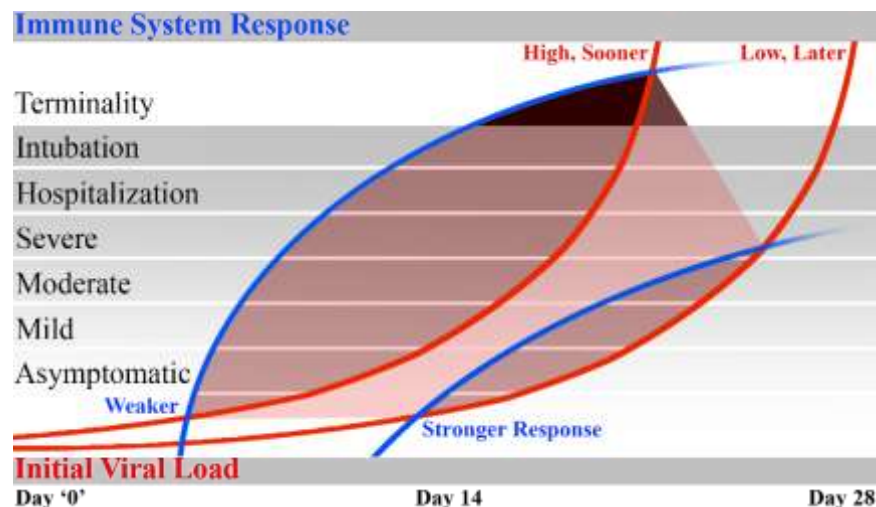
At current rate, the viral spread continues rolling across the country. With only partially successful mitigation the infected population is  $\approx 1M$  by May 1. Add another 900K each month until August. That’s another 2.7M infected population. At 9%, we add another 243K deaths to the currently deceased. In the fullness of time I do hope that I’m proven wrong on this. Human nature as a factor is also in play, and I also hope that our better, smarter angels prevail.

What happens after August? If Dr. Fauci and the CDC are correct, the fall return of the virus could be worse yet. However, all is not lost – for the wiser among us.

Recall the CDC's claim that 60 deaths/day was an acceptable position. That requires getting the infection rate down to 600/day from our current 4,200/day. Reducing infections further by a factor of 7 requires being and acting smarter – and listening to smarter scientific advice; advice that is not sugar-coated or spun – like so much cotton candy. I can understand the desire to avoid public panic. Massaging the numbers to add some topspin to our dire situation is not helpful.

So, how can we act smarter? The most recent data from both LA and NYC testing of the general population indicates that the overall infection rate might be much higher than previously known. So, what's the take-away? What does it mean?

It means that the initial viral load on infection is a big variable. At one extreme you have a broader general population that became 'lightly' infected. They remained largely unscathed. However, infection is not binary. It is by degree. At the other extreme there are the nursing and vet's homes where clearly the infections may well have been exacerbated by repeated contacts in a closed cloistered setting as multiple infection points that result in several viral assaults. Early viral loading can thus become cumulative. Minimizing infection by degree is everything.



As indicted here, a variance in the initial viral load produces a significant variance in your outcome. Seek best advice on maintaining the most sterile practices – the practices of doctors and first responders. There's 'the future', and then there's your personal future. The one that you can control.

Always remain a long basketball player apart. If you must go out, mask up and glove up. Your future is in your hands. Wash them – often.

And – as always –

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# Covid 19 – Who Was That Masked Man?

I don't know, but....

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 05/03/2020

<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/infection-trajectory-flattening-the-covid19-curve/>

The link above always tells the story. That's why it remains at the top of this page. The graph that it represents is updated daily and follows on the next page.

Here, in our new normal, I long for a, “- return to those thrilling days of yesteryear.” Each week another heroic TV episode of *The Lone Ranger* would end with someone asking in appreciative wonderment, “Who was that masked man?”

The answer was always, “I don't know, but he left this silver bullet.”  
Until the day when scientists can produce a silver bullet, we need the masks.

Some glimmers of hope are emerging. Remdesivir is proving somewhat beneficial in mitigating the disease's worst cases. There are some promising vaccines on a fast-track as well. Until we have that silver bullet, diligence is the only weapon that we can exercise. Understand this. Every single battle against this virus is personal. Statistics aside, you do not want to experience this disease.

Along with consistent social distancing, wearing a mask or facial covering in public shows others that you care and are protecting them as well as yourself. As of this week, Massachusetts has mandated wearing masks or coverings in public places. Whatever you can do - a bandana or scarf is better than nothing.

## Safety Tips:

Once you don a fresh mask and start breathing through it - *Never* touch the front of the mask where your nose and mouth are. If the mask is preventing microdroplets from entering your lungs, this is where they collect. *Always* remove and handle used masks only by their loops until they can be cleaned and sanitized.

If you don't wear prescription glasses, consider safety glasses that construction workers often wear. These prevent you from absent-mindedly rubbing your eyes.

## Comfort Tip:

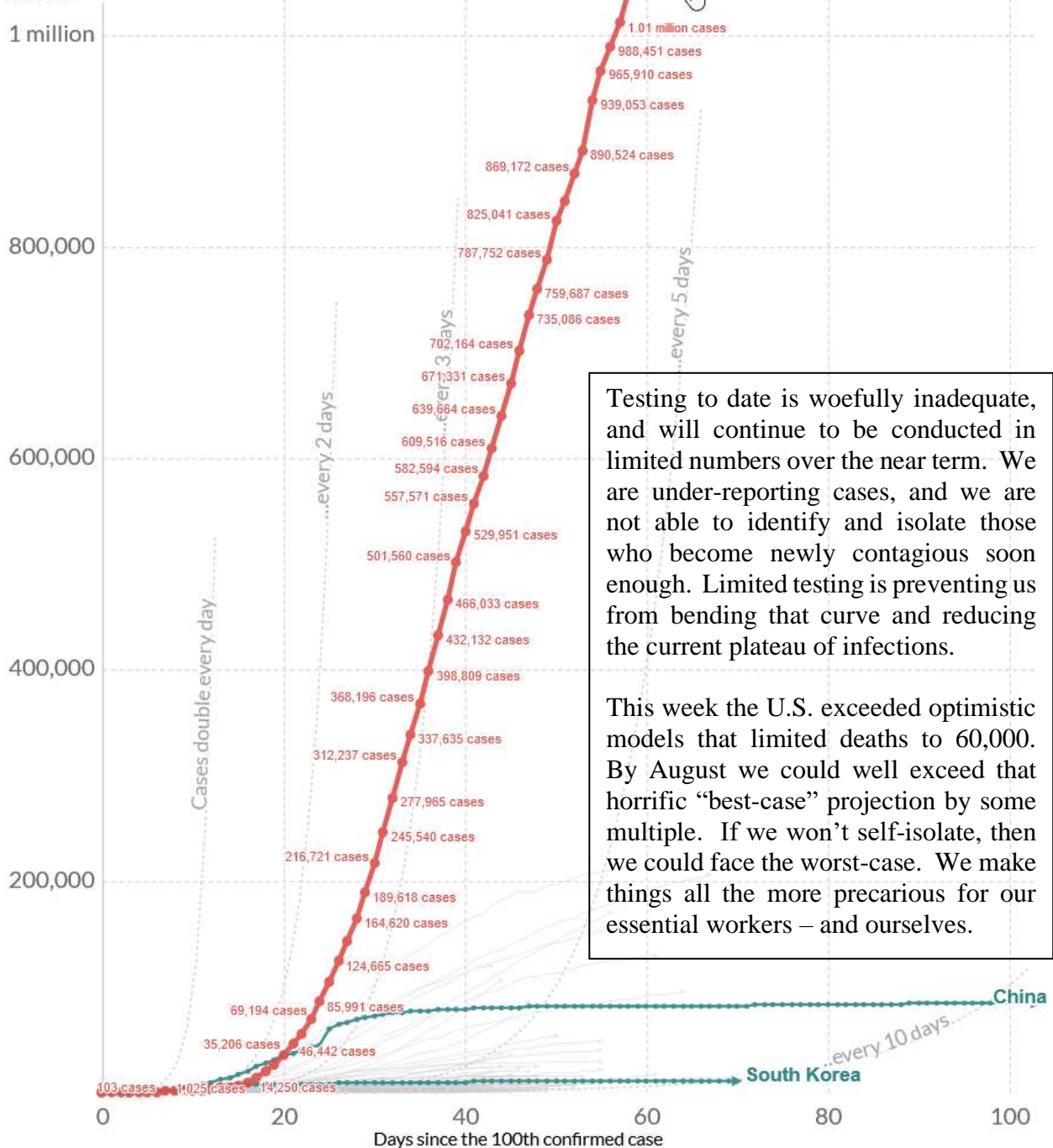
Your ears can be fatigued and painful by holding a mask in place for an extended period. Arrange a couple of those bendy hooks for Christmas ornaments on a string. Adjust the ornament hooks and string length behind your head, then pull the mask ear-loops onto the hooks. It eliminates the constant pulling on your ears.

As Americans, we love to think that we are Number One, Numero Uno in all things. If there was ever some attribute or thing where we wish regretfully that we weren't number one, this is it. No people - no country - deserves this. However, here we are. If this reality does not snap you back into survival mode, I don't know what will.

## Total confirmed COVID-19 cases: how rapidly are they increasing?

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases is lower than the number of total cases. The main reason for this is limited testing.

LINEAR



Testing to date is woefully inadequate, and will continue to be conducted in limited numbers over the near term. We are under-reporting cases, and we are not able to identify and isolate those who become newly contagious soon enough. Limited testing is preventing us from bending that curve and reducing the current plateau of infections.

This week the U.S. exceeded optimistic models that limited deaths to 60,000. By August we could well exceed that horrific "best-case" projection by some multiple. If we won't self-isolate, then we could face the worst-case. We make things all the more precarious for our essential workers - and ourselves.

Then there's this:

I saw this sign in a restaurant rest room. For reasons unknown, **WASH HANDS** was in quotes, as if they were just kidding. JK!



I suspect management was going for the opposite – the importance of hand washing. When was I actually in the restaurant? A few months ago. A prescient snapshot.

P.P.E. Tip:

Keep a supply – on hand – of those low-cost, clear poly-gloves that food handlers use. They come by the hundreds in a box and can be slipped on and off with ease.



They are exactly what you need when pumping gas, working the ATM, or for any brief contact with unknown public surfaces.

If you must go out, mask up and glove up. Your future is literally in your hands. Cover them. Wash them – often and thoroughly.

And, until then, a mighty –  
“Hi-Ho Silver, awaaaayyy.”

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# Covid 19 – 10 Weeks In...

And Counting

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 05/10/2020

<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/infection-trajectory-flattening-the-covid19-curve/>

The link above always tells the story. That's why it remains at the top of this page. Click on 'LOG' at the upper left to switch to the 'LINEAR' scale and our actual trajectory.

**2020-03-10:** The W H O officially declares the COVID19 outbreak is a global pandemic.

Last week I wrote:

*"This week (May 1st) the U.S. exceeded its optimistic models that limited deaths to 60,000. By August we could well exceed that original best case projection by some multiple."*

At the start of this week, May 10, we will be at about 80,000.

Per the Penn Wharton Budget Model (PWBM), reopening states adds 233,000 more deaths than the more optimistic CDC model — even with social distancing. This means that if the states reopen with no mitigation plan, up to 350,000 people could die by end of July.

Latest death rate: 12,000/wk. Through end of June: A rising average to 33,000/wk, and continuing. Recent scenes of hospitals at the brink could pale in comparison to the specter that lies ahead. Kent Smetters, PWBM director noted that the decision to reopen is ultimately a "normative judgement that comes down to the statistical value of life."

He explained: "That's not a crude way of saying we put a dollar value on life, but it's the idea that people take risks all the time for economic reward."

The personal mental state in play here is simple: It's denial. *I won't be the one.* There is less concern for the greater public good – or for the potential negative impact on loved ones.

Statistically, by late Summer one in a hundred could suffer, and one in a thousand could die. We will all know people – perhaps friends that we were once close to – family that we loved. Heed my use of the past tense.

Speaking and writing statistical truth – truth to power – truth to the public – offers no joy. Given these prospects, if just one person heeds these words and lives, I'll hug that statistic.

Hugging statistics is a start toward a new normal, where sadly we can no longer safely hug each other.

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# TV – No Good Can Come of It

I Beg to Differ

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 05/17/2020

I stare at a screen.

An aggregation of pixels as an aggregation of people.  
They are an apparition of colleagues and kindred – friends and family -  
arrayed and played before me like so many chocolates in a box.

I stare at a screen.

This is my new normal.  
I miss my old normal – the one we all took for granted –  
accepted as a given; now taken away.  
Gone ‘til further notice.

I stare at a screen.

For decades I watched television. Now we all participate – of necessity.  
Television is the latest deus ex machina that delivers us digitally –  
from our lesser angels; from isolated moments, toward each other.

The word 'television' – was first coined by Russian Scientist Constantin Perskyi  
at the 1900 Paris Exposition.  
It means 'to see afar'.

Charles Prestwich Scott, publisher-editor for The Manchester Guardian said,  
"Television? The word is half Latin and half Greek. No good can come of it."

I stare at a screen.

I smile. Smiles return. Smiles are universal currency.  
No word need be spake – in any language.  
I am – we are – less alone; more together.

Such is the good that comes of it.

And – as always –  
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# Graduation!

It's a Happening Thing.

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 05/24/2020

There are some things that just can't not happen. High School Graduation is one of them. It's an undeniable rite of passage, and our FHS Panthers will not be denied. Normally, we celebrate this milestone in the FHS gym for a few hours. This year's graduation will happen in like manner, but it will take place over several days.

We are working with school officials to record each and every student's moment. One-by-one, with safe social distancing, each student will walk the stage as per usual to receive his/her diploma. Each student, accompanied by his/her family, will experience that well-deserved, special moment of accomplishment. Their families deserve this celebratory moment of achievement as well.

This will take several days to record each student safely and edit all of their moments into the graduation program, scheduled to air on Friday June 5<sup>th</sup> at 6PM, and repeated several times thereafter.

Our 2020 Graduation may be happening in slow motion, but we hope and trust that all good things that spring from dedication and accomplishment will come to each and every student - not just in the fullness of time, but in the fullness of youth.

Even when we must be separately prerecorded, community television can bring us all together.

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Note: There is also a planned car parade for graduating students and families. We are in the midst of planning our coverage of this unique and fun event. As they say - stay tuned.

This event might become one memorable example of a new tradition - a new way that we can all celebrate the good moments in new ways, not just this year, but every year. I'm good with that.

Our heartiest congrats to all of our 2020 Panthers on Parade. Panthers rule!

# Civil Obedience & Heroism!

Are You a Hero? You Could be. And it's Not Difficult.

by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 05/31/2020

How many times have you seen that restaurant sign: 'No shoes, no shirt, no service'?

Have you ever been to an upscale club or venue where, 'Jacket & Tie' was required?

Golfers at many courses and clubs are expected to wear a collared shirt.

Some places of worship expect men or women to wear a hat or head covering.

These are merely norms of accepted decorum in more formal, polite social settings. No one takes issue. No one protests. There are no acts of civil disobedience. Rather, everyone chooses to be civil, obedient, even polite, and part of something better.

Then there's, 'No Smoking'. 'Buckle Up for Safety'. These were public campaigns waged to benefit the public health. They eventually became accepted behavior. They saved lives. What worked? Shaming. Smokers and scofflaws were subtly excluded - isolated, embarrassed. We live in a society where the bad personal choices that each of us makes has a negative impact on society as a whole.

I am speaking to those folks who insist on venturing out in public without a mask. If we really are all in this together, then consider others; that it isn't all about you. Yes, you have your rights. What we need from you is social courage - and empathy. Wearing a mask in public is one small thing that all of us can do for the public good.

We thank and praise our front line and infrastructure workers who keep society together by providing essential services. We call them heroes. Oprah Winfrey challenged this year's graduates - and all of us - with one simple, riveting question.

"What is *your* essential service?"

A mask dramatically reduces your risk of infecting others by ninety-five percent. It also protects you from being infected by others. Will you please wear a mask? There's a time and cause for civil disobedience. Not now, and certainly not for this.

Consider a mask as a true badge of honor.  
Wear it with pride of purpose; doing good.  
In the eyes of others - it makes you a hero.

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# A National Reckoning

Long Overdue, That Time has Finally Come.  
by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 06/07/2020



We all mourn and suffer – in three ways. All communities of color, ever more so.

We suffer the social, economic pains, and senseless, tragic deaths of COVID-19.

We suffer the social, economic pains and senseless, tragic deaths of racism.

We suffer the social ills wrought by the current occupant of the White House.

I will not hesitate to lay blame where it is deserved. Our national zeitgeist – the very soul of a once leading nation has been savaged at every turn for personal power. These great sufferings are the consequences of ‘The Donald’s’ actions and inaction. The man who claims to be our President is not of us. He may be a nominal president, but he is no one’s president, for he cares for none but himself. ‘The Donald’ readily claims a forced, faux credit for any glimmer of good, yet he distances himself, deflecting and denying all the daily dishonesties and disasters that he inflicts.

Honorable generals and advisors who tried to serve and guide his first months in office are now speaking out. Hopefully, others of integrity will add their voices. History will record this monstrous time and circumstance, wrought by a man who wantonly divided a nation to consolidate power. May he be stripped of that power at the polls in November. Only after his ouster – can we begin the necessary work to Make America Great Again.

May those who stand with him to the end also fall from grace with him in the end.

May a future Trump Presidential Library serve as a monument to these tragedies.



In fairness, if your reasoned opinion differs, I will post it here.

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# Town Council This Week

A Momentary Return to a Public Presence  
by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 06/14/2020

On Friday 6-12 several town officials gathered at the FHS gym to begin the careful and complex planning process for conducting a significant Town Council meeting to begin on Wednesday 6-17 and continuing thereafter.

Why significant? Beyond the important topic of budgeting, it will be a return to public participation - on site. Residents will be in the room. The greatest care is being taken to ensure the safety of all, and if you attend in person, your thoughtful cooperation is essential. As large a venue as the high school gym is, space is limited.

Safety for all is paramount.

Beyond those who choose to attend in person, we will also arrange for virtual participation via a Zoom meeting. A link will be provided per the meeting agenda.

Note that just as physical space is limited in the gym, virtual space - the number of connections - is also limited in any Zoom meeting.

If you do connect via Zoom, please keep your microphone muted. Background sounds, rustling and other momentary noises trigger your presence, inadvertently upstaging and disrupting the presenters. When you wish to speak, hold down your spacebar to momentarily open your microphone. This simple action is very helpful.

For those who wish to watch the proceedings but not comment, please tune to Comcast 11 or Verizon 29. You can also stream the meeting live from the Franklin website's 'live meetings' page. By watching the proceedings through these channels, you are helping - you are enabling those who do wish to comment.

We at Franklin.TV, along with town officials and Council members, are all working diligently to provide access to all as we prepare for this important meeting.

And - as always -

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# Town Council Last Week

A Momentary Return to a Public Presence  
by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 06/21/2020

Last Week when I laid out the plan to meet in the gym? Didn't happen. That's okay. Many of you expressed deep concern about holding an indoor meeting in a large venue, even with carefully planned social distancing. That careful planning and responsiveness to the concerns of all – by all – is why Franklin has maintained the second lowest infection rate statewide.



So, on Monday – new plan. This is what very large-scale social distancing looks like. We moved out to the football field. The weather gods cooperated, and we were able to accommodate all who wished to attend on site. The stats indicate that well over a thousand residents were listening to the important proceedings on both nights through 102.9 wfpr.fm, Franklin Public Radio.

As we all navigate our temporary new normal, we will continue to refine our plans for citizen access, participation – and above all, safety

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# Graduation Download

Three Programs - freely available for VOD  
by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 06/28/2020

We have recently completed the final release versions of programs for the FHS 2020 Graduation. They will be shown on our cable channels for several weeks according to our weekly schedule. These TV Program files are also available for downloading in high-definition at these links.

## Senior Awards

<http://tbf.me/a/BwXVZ5>

## Car Parade

<http://tbf.me/a/BVmlpJ>

## Graduation

<http://tbf.me/a/CFR8yf>

Just enter these links into your browser and download/save the files to your computer. These are lengthy TV programs, and downloading may take some time, depending on your internet speed. These programs will remain available for free downloading until July 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Congratulations to the Class of 2020.

And - as always -

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# Franklin•TV Annual Meeting, August 3<sup>rd</sup>

This year it's about as open as a meeting can get.  
by Pete Fasciano, Executive Director 07/05/2020

The time is approaching for our annual open board meeting. This year our meeting will be available online via Zoom on Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00pm and is open to all Franklin businesses and residents. Meet our current board and staff, and learn about Franklin•TV and wfpr•fm. We'll also review our progress during the past year, including our new services and we'll discuss plans for our future.

At our open meeting you may cast a vote for new and/or renewing board positions. There will be a vote by all who attend to extend term(s) of office for current board member(s). This year we will vote to extend Wes Rea's and Pandora Carlucci's board positions for an additional term of three years.

**Excerpt from FCCA bylaws:** (Available on our website.)

Section 15. Election of Director by the Membership (a) Members shall be notified by the Clerk of the election of a director by the Membership at the Annual Meeting. Said notice shall be in accordance with the notice provisions of Section 4 of this Article IV. (b) Any eligible voting Member may be nominated for election to the position of Director by: (i) Written notification to the Clerk no later than seven (7) days prior to Annual Meeting; or (ii) By nomination from the floor of the Annual Meeting made and seconded by no less than three (3) eligible voting members.

Our facility enables us to provide full production support for Franklin residents and groups who wish to create TV and radio programs. Thanks to our board members who contribute their time and energy to help make Franklin•TV and wfpr.fm all that a public access media facility can be.

If you would like to become involved either as a volunteer or as a producer of your own TV or radio programming on Franklin•TV and/or wfpr•fm, just send an email to: [info@franklin.tv](mailto:info@franklin.tv) with your contact information. You can also call us for more information. 508-541-4118.

Please join us at our Franklin•TV event. Our brief open meeting begins at 7:00pm. Come and connect – meet, greet, and learn all about public TV and radio in Franklin.

And – as always –  
Thank you for listening to wfpr•fm.  
And, thank you for watching.

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