

OPINION

“CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW... ABRIDGING THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, OR OF THE PRESS;”

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

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Editorial

Contrast in response

South Korea shows how a more effective U.S. response could have saved lives

If there's a silver lining in the current COVID-19 pandemic, it's that, across the country, Americans are stepping up to fill the void left by the astonishing lack of leadership in Washington. As we reported last week, small companies like Wintergreen are reaching out to hospitals in their region, in hopes of using their capabilities to help protect healthcare workers through the manufacture of protective face masks and hospital gowns.

Similar stories are now being told throughout the country. In the absence of a coordinated national response, everyday Americans are coming up with their own solutions to help protect themselves, healthcare professionals and first responders in their own communities from the dangers posed by the COVID-19 virus.

That's the good news. The unfortunate reality is that it shouldn't have been necessary. It's no coincidence that the United States is now home to nearly a third of all COVID-19 infections in the world, with more than 25,000 new cases now reported daily. At the current pace of new infection, more than a million Americans will likely be diagnosed with a COVID-19 infection by the end of April and many times that number will likely have the disease without being tested.

America will ultimately be the country hardest hit by this disease in large part due to a monumental failure of leadership by President Trump.

We don't have to wonder how things might have been different had the federal government acted more decisively. Two countries, the U.S. and South Korea, both experienced their first confirmed case of COVID-19 infection on Jan. 20 of this year. Within a week of those diagnoses, South Korea's disease control agency mounted a full-court press, mobilizing private industry to prepare for the pandemic by producing quick and effective tests. Within a week, the tests were ready to go and the Koreans efficiently tested hundreds of thousands of their residents within a month, isolating those who tested positive. By taking effective

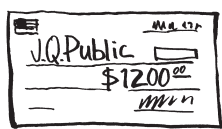
action from the start, the South Koreans have managed to keep their outbreak at a manageable level. Today, two and a half months after their first confirmed infection, that country of 50 million people is seeing new infections on the order of several dozen per day, compared to 30,000 per day here in the U.S. We have reproduced the graphs showing the rate of new infection for both South Korea and the U.S. below. The difference is striking and reflects, more than anything, the relative effectiveness of each country's response to this public health emergency.

Here in the U.S., the initial response was classic Trump: denial, followed by braggadocio. "We have it totally under control. It's one person coming from China. It's going to be just fine."

At a time when most other countries were ramping up for what most epidemiologists by this time recognized was going to be a monumental pandemic, the Trump White House dithered, continuing to vacillate between dismissing it as a Democratic hoax and touting what a masterful job the President was doing to keep it contained. "We are witnessing in the United States one of the greatest failures of basic governance and basic leadership in modern times," said Jeremy Konyndyk, who led the U.S. response to international disasters at USAid during President Obama's second term, while speaking recently to *The Guardian* newspaper. Many, many other experienced former officials have made similar observations.

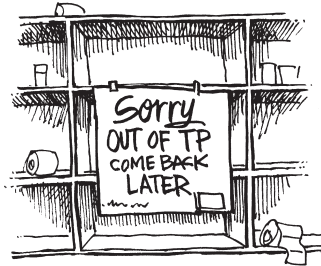
While reality eventually seeped into the tight bubble that surrounds President Trump, the U.S. largely lost this battle in the critical six weeks from that first infection in January to early March. By failing to take the action that this pandemic required, the Trump White House allowed this plague to gain a firm foothold in America, from which it is wreaking utter havoc, both on the health of millions, our overburdened healthcare system, and our economy. Americans will continue to pay the price of this failed leadership for a long time to come.

STIMULUS CHECK

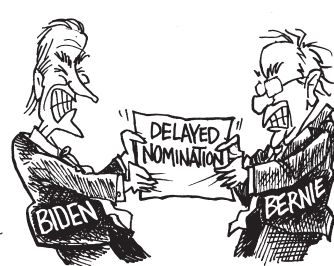


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RAIN CHECK



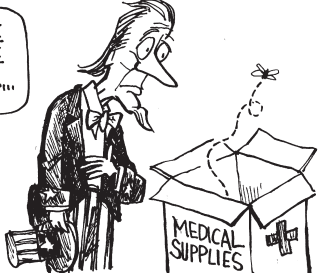
CLAIM CHECK



FACT CHECK



GUT CHECK



REALITY CHECK



Letters from Readers

The president who's never responsible

Your editorial on April was spot on. In a nutshell here...Some Americans will learn from this, but it seems others won't. I'm talking about following a leader who is a self-proclaimed expert on EVERYTHING! He doesn't listen to his experts and it seems continues to go on hunches?

In early January one of his experts sounded the alarm on this virus but it fell on deaf ears. All this President does when confronted with his ineptness is to place blame on the previous administration for their not preparing the country for something we are now experiencing.

Followers of this President won't take note of the turn of events that placed us in this situation where we could have massed resources that were available and taken steps to start the ball rolling in order to start industry in producing supplies to help the health care workers protect themselves. Too many times I have read and heard this President's followers blame the Democrats and the mainstream media for politicizing information going out to the public as does one of the commenters on this editorial. Remember folks. Early on this President stated it was a Democratic hoax. If that isn't politicizing, then I don't know what politicizing is!

**Brian LaFrenier
Embarrass**

Give me the "deep state" over Trump's incompetent state

So let's consider the "deep state" and then let's consider the chaos of the Trump administration.

The real definition of "the deep state" in my view is the competent, experienced and

honest government workers who know how a government works as opposed to the incompetent White House of the Trump administration and toadies like Mitch McConnell, that put us in this flat-footed position we are in now.

The GOP has for forty years been selling the idea that government is the problem and then set about to make it so. (Keep in mind it was our government that won WWII, the Cold War and put a man on the moon).

So now we have the GOP in charge and the government IS the problem, a problem that all those Trump toadies must own.

Trump famously proclaimed at the Republican National Convention that he alone could save us! I had to ask myself, from what? I'd sure like to go back to that world.

As it turns out it was Trump's incompetence and corruption we needed saving from.

If you are still riding the Trump train, it's time to get off and send that whole bunch packing.

**Timothy McKenzie
Ely**

Time to rein in the harm the U.S. does around the world

The coronavirus has hurt many people here in the United States. I feel for people here. So much suffering.

The world is also suffering and quite often it's the poor who are the ones living on the edge not knowing where their next meal will come from. War and economic embargoes are exasperating the situation in many countries and much of that is a result of U.S. foreign policy.

It is time for us to insist that the U.S. government cease their brutality around the world. The U.S. is at war militarily or economically which is devastating to many. The strategy of the U.S.

as it tries to change a country's government is to make life miserable for the people so that they will turn against their governments, making violent coups more likely in some cases. (Chile-1973, Honduras-2006, and Bolivia recently, are examples of ousting governments that were trying to help their poor.)

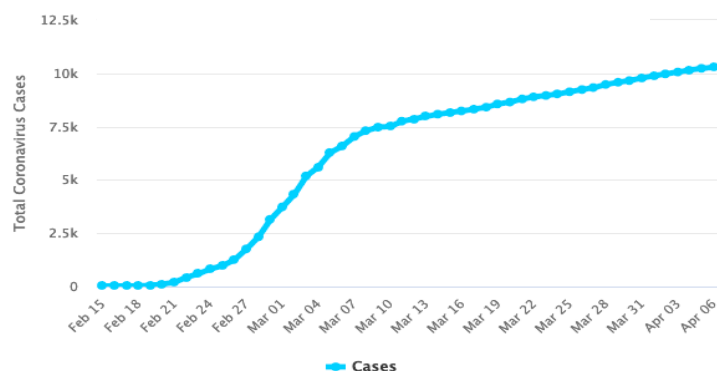
Venezuela is a prime example. Although the government there has helped poor and middle class people in health care, education, housing, and other social programs and the people have voted for President Maduro and are supporting it, the U.S. continues to try to destroy it. Same is true in Cuba and Nicaragua. In Yemen the U.S. supplies bombs that Saudi Arabia uses to kill and blockade them. They are suffering from a terrible cholera epidemic. Iran is also suffering under the embargo that the U.S. has forced on them. The Palestinians are suffering and are prisoners of Israel. Think of poor Gaza!

Now with this additional pandemic that everyone is experiencing, all the people of the countries I mentioned are really hurting and it is us the taxpayers that fund what the US is doing. We must force Washington to do what is right and stop the crimes against all of these people. None of those governments are our enemies. None of them are threats to the U.S. or to any of us. We must stop making life miserable for people around the world; we must stop the killing. America is not helping to stop the spread of the coronavirus, it is making it worse.

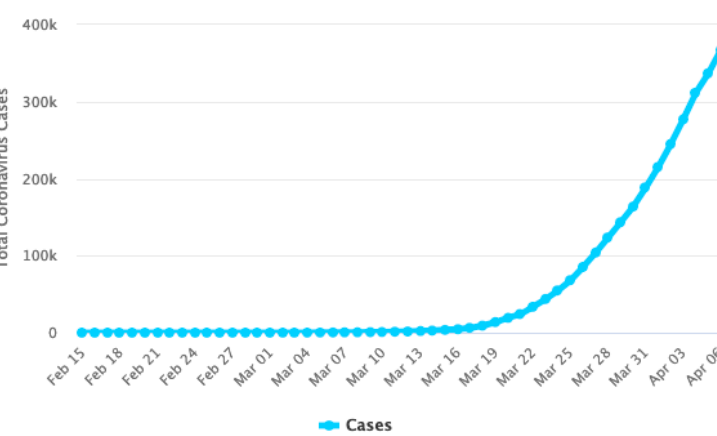
We need to rein in the horrible things that the U.S. does to the people of the world. How arrogant and criminal and shameful.

**Steve Johnson
Ely**

S. Korea total cases to date: 10,350



U.S. total cases to date: 400,000-plus

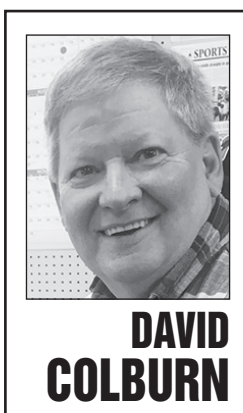


The right time to move to Minnesota

It's a curious thing to me, in the midst of global pandemic that's keeping people cloistered in their homes, that online streaming services are reporting a surge in the number of people watching, you guessed it, disaster movies.

Perhaps it's the old "misery loves company" routine. We've got it rough, but we don't yet have it meteor-destroying-the-earth, dinosaurs-crushing-my-friends, zombie-apocalypse bad.

Then again, maybe some of them are more popular because



DAVID COLBURN

they give people hope that calamitous disasters are survivable. Hint: If that's your motivation, stay away from "Seeking a Friend for the End of the World." It's one of Steve Carell's best movies, but even the star of "The Office" can't escape that blinding white meteor. Sorry,

Steve.

I'd have thought people would go more for a good romantic comedy like Adam Sandler and Drew Barrymore in "50 First Dates". What better time than now to connect with

a character who each and every day can't remember yesterday?

However, of all the disastrous cinematic possibilities that run through my mind, I keep coming back to that comedic classic from 1980, "Airplane!" It's a hilarious, gag-filled, and these days frequently politically incorrect, take on the serious airplane disaster movies of the 1970s, and yes, everyone on the flight who ate fish for dinner and got violently ill survived. It has a happy ending.

The lines that keep coming back to me weren't uttered on the airplane, however. They were spoken by a stressed-out Lloyd Bridges in the control

See **MOVE...pg. 5**

Letters from Readers

That's to everyone for making the case for our speedy return

Thank you for the amazing story on the Zaandam's plight in today's *Timberjay*... Someone on Eagles Nest just texted it to us. Well done!

Frank and I got off the ship in the VERY first group on April 2 at 7:30 pm. I wanted to be the LAST OFF the Zaandam to make sure all folks got the medical help they needed — including the sick crew. But it was NOT TO BE!

The plan to leave the ship created by Holland America — and approved by the Broward County decision-makers — was incredibly detailed and strict. Very impressive!

It could have been a logistical nightmare but instead, it was incredibly well organized and well thought out! Because we own a home in Boca Raton — we were treated as Florida residents. We told them we were NOT RESIDENTS per se — but that we could easily quarantine at our house in Boca Raton, or at a family condo in Miami Beach.

The cruise line ushered one couple at a time off the ship into the port — we collected our suitcases that had been sterilized — and were put into a 'Covid-sanitized' limo — with a driver to our condo. We are now ensconced in a two-bedroom apartment in a small art deco building on Collins Ave. It is a veritable feast of space after

being confined to our small windowless stateroom for 13 days!

Yes — this methodical process of disembarkation will take multiple days to accomplish to remove all guests on the Rotterdam and Zaandam in such a safe and orderly way. ABSOLUTELY no one at all was able to just walk off either ship — loose and on their own.

Florida residents were taken off the Zaandam first and chauffeured home couple-by-couple — to wherever they lived. Everyone got a driver and their own car from the port to their front door.

The next day, the international passengers leaving the Zaandam — were taking chartered buses to chartered flights home anywhere in the world. It will take three or four days to do this operation carefully and safely...Holland America organized and is underwriting the entire operation.

The critically ill were ambulated to local hospitals immediately when we docked. I have no idea how many poor souls were in that category... we wish them a speedy recovery

The folks who are sick — but not critically ill — among the staff and passengers — will remain on the ship for treatment with Holland America doctors.

All who got off the Zaandam must isolate and quarantine for 14 days. We will be back home in Ely in about 18 days, after 14 days of isolation in South Beach in Miami and a road-trip back to

Minnesota.

We are fine. We are Elyites, after all. My grandmother taught me the meaning of *sisu* every day that she lived!

This adventure started with a bang and ended in tragedy. We take personal responsibility for this miscalculation. We only have the greatest respect for the Holland America cruise line — and the captain and crew were heroic. Their compassionate care throughout this ordeal was nothing short of super human!

The final thing, we would like to say is 'Thank you' to Captain Ane Jan Smit of the Zaandam. While the captain had dying passengers onboard, and he was desperately and frantically begging for emergency medical help from six different countries that all ultimately said no, Captain Smit maintained his calm, professional, wise, and humane manner as the leader of the Zaandam. Frank and I would travel to the four corners of the earth with Captain Smit as our fearless leader!

We thank all our friends in Ely, and throughout the U.S., who demanded that our elected officials work for a humane resolution of the Zaandam's plight. It honestly worked! We are so grateful and touched.

The staffs of Rep. Ilhan Omar, Sen. Tina Smith, Sen. Amy Klobuchar, and Rep. Stauber checked in with us almost daily... None of them could believe how many of our friends across the country were

bugging them to get us home. And, even Elizabeth Warren was brought into it!

Thank you — Ely and the media — for keeping the plight of the Zaandam front and center, for your support, and for your advocacy! It was so deeply touching. We will never, ever forget it!

**Valerie Myntti
Frank Sherman
Eagles Nest Twp.**

Vitamin C is critical to our good health

I was somewhere in the Cook area in the 1970s when I heard a visiting veterinarian explain that dogs did not acquire heart disease as we see it in humans. He thought this could be because most animals have a special enzyme to make part of their blood sugar into Vitamin C. Evening hibernating bears keep forming Vitamin C from their slow circulation.

Perhaps we remember the British sailors who developed fatal scurvy because they lacked C-rich foods. Only cats on board survived. Humans, primates, guinea pigs, hamsters, rabbits, and fruit-eating bats rely entirely on what they eat for the protective Vitamin C.

During World War II, studies showed that one orange or its juice would not show bleeding gums (possibly beginning scurvy), so that very minimal level became the standard for all (60 mg).

Our C-deficient diets leave

us open to many diseases such as colds, dental problems, heart disease, and perhaps cancer. As Dr. Rath (MD) states in his book "Why Animals Don't Get Heart Attacks...but People Do," "Food processing, long-term storage, and overcooking destroy most vitamins in food...the body reservoir of Vitamin C in people is...10-100 times lower than the C levels in animals."

Dr. Earl Mindell, pharmacologist, states that Vitamin C is the only known anti-viral vitamin because it helps to form and strengthen collagen, a kind of glue between cells. This helps prevent viruses from piercing cell walls and making you sick. Thomas Levy, MD, a cardiologist from Colorado Springs, has lectured about Vitamin C and antioxidants. His book, "Curing the Incurable," shows how C has been able to cure or contribute to the cure of many infectious diseases. Viral pneumonia is listed as curable and preventable.

Supplemental C is best taken with a food source of C, such as oranges or other citrus, broccoli (if barely cooked), bell peppers, fresh cabbage, papaya, strawberries, and many fresh berries on the vine, and grapes (preferably organic).

Further education is needed for medical people and the general public. Vaccines are not the only cure.

**Marlyn Swanson, BSN
Virginia, Minn.**

MOVE...Continued from page 4

room, bemoaning the fact that he "picked the wrong week" to give up his vices of smoking, sniffing glue, and popping amphetamines. Remember that I warned you about political incorrectness.

I think those lines resonate now because so many of my old friends elsewhere and new acquaintances here have wondered if this Kansas native picked the wrong month, February, to move to the coldest place in the lower 48 states. Some have been gentle — "How are you doing with all the cold and snow?" they ask. Others have been more direct — "Are you out of your freaking MIND?!!!" Surely, they believed it, or I, was a disaster waiting to happen. While that may be the case if I'm around power tools, it's a different story with Minnesota and me.

Sure, it was way colder and the snow way deeper than anything I'd ever experienced when I rolled into town in my truck to come to work at

the *Timberjay*. It seemed almost as foreign as my trip last year to India and Sri Lanka.

But after a quick trip to Ely to pick up a Wintergreen coat and snow pants and a pair of Steger mukluks, cold and snow weren't a problem at all. Well, that's not quite accurate. I learned the hard way on my first weekend covering an outdoor event why snowshoes are advisable when walking on seemingly firm, crusty snow. It was somewhat akin to the time I sank in quicksand on the Navajo reservation in Arizona. Fortunately, in both cases I hit a solid bottom before being swallowed whole. And the Boy Scouts I was covering in Cook were kind not to laugh at the old man foundering in the snow, at least to my face, anyway.

Today, with schools and so many businesses closed, with churches taking services online, hospitals and nursing homes barring visitors, and people hunkered down at home,

I believe February was a perfect month to move to Minnesota and make my home in the Lake Vermilion area. Unlike our current state of affairs, February was normal.

I experienced the area at its wintery vibrant best, from North Woods Grizzlies basketball to a Nett Lake pow wow to snowmobiling. I met people everywhere I went and experienced a welcome unlike any I've had in my many moves. And I found myself in one of the best work environments ever, doing what I love — telling stories. February was the month I felt more at home than any place I've lived in the past 20 years.

It's also the month I got an inkling that in a time of crisis such as this, I couldn't have picked a better place to move, and as March rolled into April that's become crystal clear.

We're living in precarious days. Everyone has wondered at some point if they're going to be the next to catch the virus, even those who believe

the coronavirus pandemic is much ado about nothing. Business owners anxiously wonder if they'll be able to survive the hit they're taking, and unemployed workers wonder if there will be any jobs to find when this is all over. They're all wondering how to pay mortgages or rent, how to put food on the table, and simply how to survive this health and economic crisis. They're frustrated that new government assistance programs meant to help are in many cases running about as smoothly as a pig on stilts.

No one knows the true meaning of the word "neighbor" better than those who live in small-town and rural America, and that truth is revealing itself right here, right now. Neighbors are getting take-out meals from restaurants to help keep them afloat, and in turn restaurants have been finding ways to give back to their communities. Neighbors are checking in on neighbors and volunteering to run errands for those who can't get

out. Neighbors are making masks for health care providers. And on and on and on. Here, everyone's our neighbor, and that's going to be the biggest difference-maker in the weeks and months ahead.

This isn't going to have a "happily ever after" ending for everyone. There is already pain, loss, and sorrow, and there will be more that even good neighbors can't prevent. But the mark of truly good neighbors is that they will find a way to band together to prevail.

February was indeed the right month to move here. I got to see some of the best this corner of the world has to offer. And that gives me a certain hope that we'll come out on the other side of this better. Battered, bruised, yes — but better.

We get enough of the dire news from national outlets, and it's our job to report on the local angles of that as well. It's something we take seriously. But we also want to give you stories of good news, and since we don't get to

see much of you face-to-face right now, I'd like to invite you to touch base with us with ideas. I'm on Facebook under the name David Colburn Timberjay -- feel free to send me a friend request or drop a note to me there. We also have the *Timberjay* Facebook page, and we're always happy to get your calls and emails at the office.

I won't promise we'll do a story on every suggestion we get. We can't. Some things make good little anecdotes to share among friends but don't lend themselves to a full story in the paper. Sometime people throw up the "modesty wall," as I like to call it: I ask for an interview, and they reply with, "Oh, no, I don't want to make a big deal of myself, goodbye." So many great stories left untold that way.

But I can promise this: I'll listen to what you have to share. It's one neighborly thing I can do for my new neighbors.

ELY...Continued from page 3

Patrol doesn't have much to do because there are not many cars on the road, so they are actually stopping vehicles with out-of-state license plates," Novak said. Violators are subject to a \$1,000 fine.

"We don't want the virus imported into the city," Novak continued. "We have an elderly population that is highly susceptible. My job is to somehow protect the city."

Council member Heidi Omerza observed the alarming rate with which events are being canceled for this summer.

"The League of Minnesota Cities summer conference has been cancelled and quite a few other things are to follow very shortly," she said. "I'm sure city-wide functions and gatherings will probably soon be canceled. We are taking our lead from the Governor and simply not

doing these things."

She did not comment on plans for the city's Fourth of July activities, the Blueberry Arts Festival or Harvest Moon Festival.

Novak told council members that he spends a lot of time communicating with the Governor's office about the details of the shelter-in-place order.

"We are getting inundated with information to the point of information overload," he said. "Paying attention to the daily briefings coming from the Coronavirus Task Group in Washington, D.C. is important along with the Governor's daily briefings and information from the Minnesota Department of Health. If conditions worsen, most of the decisions we make start in Washington or St. Paul. We don't have much choice but to follow that.

If something happens where I have to take further action, I will," he said.

Novak said if conditions ease, the city would take actions accordingly.

Police report

Ely Police Sgt. George Burger reported to the council that as many as six methamphetamine arrests were made in the city over the last couple months.

"As many as five of the arrests were eligible for the pre-charge diversion program where the suspect can get clean and the charges go away," Burger said. Of those five cases, just one suspect is in the diversion program.

"The other four either failed out of it or did not respond to our offer," he said. "To me, that is a problem."

Two Ely Police Department officers are assigned to drug investiga-

tions, according to Burger, along with collaboration of other officers from other law enforcement agencies.

"We can't do this work in a one-hour episode like you see on television. It can take hours and days to make an arrest," he said.

He pleaded to those struggling with drug addiction to reach out for help.

"We have the resources that we can put you in contact with to get you help," he said. Burger noted that success stories do exist.

Burger reported that he is noticing an increase in mental health and domestic calls since the implementation of coronavirus stay-at-home orders.

"The biggest thing is to get out and walk and find some kind of recreation to do because it is not a fun time to be cramped up at home," he said. "Our whole life has changed."

He mentioned that the Ely Community Care Team and Range Mental Health are available to help with mental health crisis.

"Those are two very beneficial groups that we are lucky to have in the area," Burger said. "We have the ability to make referrals. Feel free to reach out to us."

Burger also recognized the efforts of local high school students in providing protective masks to the Ely PD.

"Caleb Janeksela, Luke Olson, Harry Simon, Bryce Longwell, Eli Anderson, and Emmett Faltesek wanted to do something for the community, and they bought each officer in our department a respirator mask. It was a great thing to do and we really appreciate it."

Other business

The council took the

following actions:

► Approved a Storefront Rehab Loan of \$17,500 for E Sheridan Properties LLC for work on the former Salerno Building to include sewer infrastructure and concrete work in basement, bathroom framing, and electrical wiring of furnace.

► Approved the first reading of an ordinance to amend the city code to include rules and regulations relating to refuse collection and disposal, and scheduled a public hearing on the matter for Tuesday, April 21 at 4:30 p.m.

► Considered a communication from the K America Foundation asking for a three-year extension on their six-year agreement to develop the Community Center and agreed to discuss the matter at their next regular meeting.