**Masks**

**Alaska state Sen. Lora Reinbold has asked to be excused from further votes this year, because she’s been banned from Alaska Airlines for refusing to wear a face mask. FAA rules require masks of all domestic passengers, but Reinbold says this is a “political ban” that makes it impossible for her to reach Juneau from her home in Eagle River. *(The Week magazine, September 24, 2021)***

**If 95 percent of Americans were to wear masks in public, more than 33,000 lives would be saved by the end of September, according to projections from the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. Their modeling predicts 179,106 deaths by October 1st, a figure that drops to 146,000 with 95 percent mask compliance. *(CNN.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July10/July 17, 2020)***

**As Christmas 1918 approached in San Francisco amid a continuing flu epidemic, the city was caught up in a fervid debate: Should citizens be made to wear masks? Two months earlier it had been the first U.S. city to pass a mask law, backed up with a fine of $5 or up to 10 days in prison. But resistance was wide and strong. Opponents called the masks uncomfortable, unsightly, and an impingement of their freedom, and hundreds of resisters were arrested, requiring extra police shifts. When the law expired on November 21, people celebrated and threw their masks into the street. As case numbers rose and Christmas loomed, the city reconsidered a ban, but amid fierce opposition, it was voted down on December 19. Weeks later a surge would bring a reinstatement of the ban, giving rise to an Anti-Mask League. But for Christmas at least, residents were free to go barefaced, to the chagrin of public health director William Hassler. "The dollar sign," he lamented, "is exalted above the health sign." *(The Week magazine, December 30, 2020 / January 8, 2021)***

**Housing Secretary Ben Carson says he became "desperately ill" with Covid-19 after attending mask-less events at the White House. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 4, 2020)***

**Flu cases are down 98 percent in the U. S. this year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The unprecedented decline was driven by mask wearing and other Covid preventive measures, fewer people traveling, and a record number of Americans receiving flu vaccinations. *(NBCNews.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, January 22, 2021)***

**The U. S. may be in for a severe flu season, because so few Americans were exposed to influenza last year and may have reduced immunity, the CDC warns. Due to masking and social distancing to prevent COVID, only about 2,000 flu cases were reported to the CDC last year, while the previous season saw an estimated 35 million cases. *(CNBC.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 19, 2021)***

**Bad week for: Going maskless, with news that the dining room and beach club have been shut down at former President Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort following a Covid-19 outbreak among the staff. *(The Week magazine, April 2, 2021)***

**Bad week for: Jerks on a plane, after flight attendants were offered free training on how to subdue unruly airline passengers with eye pokes, double ear slaps, and groin kicks. There have been 3,509 reported passenger incidents this year, most related to a refusal to wear masks. *(The Week magazine, July 30, 2021)***

**The 24 counties in Kansas that complied with a mask mandate issued by the governor in July amid a major surge in coroinavirus cases saw a 6 percent net decrease in new infections by mid-August, according to a new CDC report -- while 81 counties that opted out saw a 100 percent increase. The research "adds to the evidence supporting the importance of wearing masks," the CDC said. *(CNN.com, ass it appeared in The Week magazine, December 4, 2020)***

**Missouri’s state health department conducted an analysis of mask wearing that concluded it substantially cut infection and death rates, but didn’t share it with the public. Gov. Mike Parson, who asked for the study because he opposes mask mandates, didn’t answer queries about why the results were hidden. *(Missouri Independent, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 17, 2021)***

**Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts says he'll deny federal pandemic-relief funds to any county that requires face masks in public buildings. Ricketts has encouraged masks wearing to curb the spread of the coronavirus, but says that requiring masks is unacceptable. If counties want to require masks and lose millions in funding, Rickets said, "that's their prerogative." *(The Week magazine, July 3, 2020)***

**The mayor of Lincoln County, Tennessee, where Covid-19 is surging, says he is waiting for approval from "the Holy Spirit" before imposing a mask mandate. Mayor Bill Newman said the coronavirus is real, and "I do believe masking helps prevent the spread of it," but that his prayers for guidance on face masks are as yet unanswered. *(The Week magazine, December 4, 2020)***

**A Catholic school in Michigan is suing the state, claiming that face masks physically prevent students from seeing the image of God. The lawsuit from Lansing’s Resurrection School claims that “because God created us in His image, we are masking that image” by covering our faces, and mask mandates are therefore “disruptive to this essential element of the Catholic faith.” *(The Week magazine, August 6, 2021)***

**More proof that masks work: A massive study by an international team of researchers has provided the strongest evidence to date that the wearing of masks can curb the spread of Covid-19, reports The Washington Post. The ambitious study involved more than 340,000 adults across 600 villages in rural Bangladesh, with villages being randomly assigned free surgical or cloth masks along with information on the benefits of masking, or no interventions at all. Mask wearing among adults in the intervention villages went up from 13 percent to 42 percent, and symptomatic Covid infections dropped 9.3 percent compared with the control villages. When surgical masks were handed out, rather than cloth, infections were 11 percent lower overall and 35 percent lower among over-60s. Researchers said that if a higher percentage wore masks, the reduction in infections would likely have been even more dramatic. “Anti-mask people keep saying, ‘Where’s the randomized controlled trial?’” says Dr. Megan Ranney, a professor of emergency medicine at Brown University, who wasn’t involved in the study. “Well, here you go.” *(The Week magazine, September 24, 2021)***

**Between April and June, shoppers purchased $346 million worth of masks from sellers on Etsy. More than 100,000 sellers started offering masks on Etsy during those three months. *(TheVerge.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 2, 2020)***

**The tragic shortage of good masks: "Why aren't we wearing better masks?" asked Zehnep Tufekei and Jeremy Howard. In the early days of the pandemic, Americans began wearing cloth masks to reduce the chances they would spread or be infected by the coronavirus. At the time, there was a dire shortage of N95 and other high-grade masks, so those were reserved for health-care workers. But "not all masks are equal." While cloth masks are effective in blocking exhaled droplets and in reducing overall transmission rates, they lack the right fit and highly protective filters of medical-grade masks. U.S.-made N95s and KN95s from China screen out 95 percent of tiny, virus-carrying droplets called aerosols, and thus provide strong protection to the wearer. At the start of the pandemic, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong all vastly scaled up their manufacture of medical-grade masks and have been distributing them to everyone. Not incidentally, Taiwan's Covid-19 per capita death rate is 1,000 times lower than the U.S.'s. Tragically, the Trump administration maade no effort to produce high-filtration masks for the general public. The Biden administration should "provide simple, clear, actionable, and specific information" about masks, and make medical-grade masks easy to get. *(The Week magazine, January 29, 2021)***

**Two masks much better than one: Wearing two masks at the same time -- or just fitting a single mask more tightly -- substantially reduces the risk of Covid-19 infection, reports The Wall Street Journal. In a series of experiments using dummy heads and aerosol-generating machines, researchers from the Centers for Disease Control found that wearing a three-ply cloth mask over a three-ply surgical mask blocked as much as 92.5 percent of particles from a cough. That's more than double the protection offered by a surgical mask alone (42 percent) or a cloth mask (44.3 percent). In another experiment, two dummies were placed 6 feet apart to test different masking strategies. When one "breathing" dummy didn't wear a mask and the other wore a tightly-fitted single surgical mask -- researchers tied knots in the ear loops and tucked the sides into the face -- the mask wearer's aerosol exposure was reduced by 64.5 percent. When the other dummy was similarly masked, that number went p to 95.9 percent. The researchers don't yet know whether the performance of single or double masks is different against the new, more contagious Covid variants now spreading in the U.S.. "It's the same virus, so the measures should work," says John Brooks, chief medical officer of the CDC's Covid-19 response. "What we don't know is how effectively they will work." *(The Week magazine, February 26, 2021)***

**Why you should wear a mask? Scientists know that face masks can prevent infected people from spreading the coronavirus to others. Now research suggests that masks also protect uninfected wearers, by reducing the risk they'll get seriously ill from the virus -- or even catch it in the first place. Virologists suspect that people wearing face coverings inhale fewer airborne viral particles, making it easier for their immune system to fight and defeat the intruders. Different kinds of masks "block virus to a different degree," Dr. Monica Gandhi, an infectious-disease physician from the University of California, San Francisco, tells The New York Times. But they all hinder the virus from getting in. While it's estimated that about 40 percent of Covid-19 infections result in no symptoms, that rate appears to rocket in places where people wear masks. At one seafood plant in Oregon where masks were widely used, 90 percent of all cases were asymptomatic. Likewise, the asymptomatic rate was below 20 percent on a cruise where masks weren't in widespread use. *(The Week magazine, August 14, 2020)***

**Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth. (*Oscar Wilde)***

**Wrinkle-faced bats may be one of the world's ugliest animals thanks to their remarkably puckered faces. Apparently, female wrinkle-faced bats think so, too. During mating season, male bats lift a flap of furry skin over their faces like a mask, hiding their wrinkles. They then "sing" an ultrasonic song to attract females. These small bats are so reclusive that this practice of masking wasn't known until some nature guides in Costa Rica stumbled upon the bats during a midnight nature walk. *(The Daily Chronicle)***

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