

Economic Darwinism

By Pete Clark

It has been a quiet time since the beginning of covid-19 mandated social distancing and the wearing of masks and prophylactic gloves. Sheltering at home has not driven me to the edge of boredom because I find things to do and I get out once in a while to pick up grocery orders at Wal-Mart or collect prescriptions at King Soopers or Safeway. The pandemic has many lessons to provide. One part of the experience has redefined something I have long believed.

During my Senior year in High School I held a part-time job at a lumberyard with good pay, particularly for a kid. I worked after school and occasionally on Saturday, if there was a railcar of lumber to be off loaded and stacked in the bins. The job provided me with money to deposit in Postal Savings, with enough left to finance my recreational activities. It was there that I saw the first hint of what the general public can be like. One afternoon a customer came in smoking a cigarette. He dropped his smoke on the polished wood floor and ground it flat with the sole of his shoe. The owner of the business became very upset and asked the man if he did that at home. The man replied of course he didn't. The owner wanted to know why he did such a thing in the store, but the customer remained silent.

Years later I got into retail management and spent way too much time working with the American public. Most of our customers were nice people, but a large percentage of them were not. I still sympathize with janitorial workers who must clean the Rest Rooms in stores and other public places. The attitude that *If it isn't mine, I don't need to take care of it*, seemed to be very wide spread then, just as it is today. People throw trash from their cars while driving on streets and sitting in parking lots. Too many Americans, when they are away from home, act like pigs.

Now I am stuck at home, with limited access to retail shopping. The company whose website I use to order food and supplies does not list all of its merchandise online. Many critical items are listed as out of stock; others must be purchased at the store. The media refers to people who strip shelves of critical supplies as hoarders. They are not hoarders. I doubt that any of them have rooms in their homes filled with old prescription bottles, empty plastic food containers, stacks of magazines and newspapers or other various items.

Those, who still prevent me from getting Clorox wipes and made me sacrifice a white tee-shirt to cut up and staple together as a mask, are not pigs, but, hogs, pure and simple. The boars and sows flood the stores when the semis arrive and root the items from the shelves as soon as the products are in place. To paraphrase Robert C. Ruark, these two-legged swine have halitosis of the soul.