**Isolation**

**Delta, the last airline keeping middle seats unfilled for social-distancing purposes, ended the practice May 1. Air travel is on the rebound, with more than a million passengers screened daily by the TSA since March 11. *(The Washington, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 14, 2021)***

**The cure for loneliness, strange as it may seem, is not in more active involvement in the world, but in seeking active unfoldment from within of our essential, isolated self. (Eric Butterworth, in Unity magazine)**

**About 6 million children younger than age 11 have parents who suffer from drug addiction. Child welfare officials removed about 90,000 children and teens from their families in 2017 because of a parent who had a substance abuse problem. *(USA Today, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 8, 2019)***

**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)***

**The Biden administration has launched a review of the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, where 40 terrorist suspects are still housed -- about two dozen without ever having been charged. At one time, roughly 800 prisoners were incarcerated at the facility. *(Reuters.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 26, 2021)***

**Bees socially distance, too: Humans aren’t the only species to practice social distancing. Honeybees also appear to give one another a wide berth when a pathogen threatens the health of their community. A team of European scientists examined how bees behave in hives that were naturally infected with the Varroa destructor mite – a parasite that can cause colonies to collapse – compared with those in hives that were treated to kill the pest. In the infested hives, they noted that the foraging bees performed dances to indicate the direction of food sources further away from the center of the colony, where the queen and the younger bees are found. The foragers tend to be older and “are one of the main entrance routes for the mites,” co-author Alessandro Cini, from University College London, tells The Guardian (U. K.). “So, the more they stay away from the brood and the young individuals, the better it is in terms of preventing the spread of the mites.” The researchers also spotted changes in where bees groom one another, with the activity becoming more focused in the central part of the hive in infected colonies. “They’re probably concentrating their efforts toward the more important part of the colony,” says Cini, “leaving the grooming of foragers.” *(The Week magazine, November 19, 2021)***

**The 299 people on Tristan da Cunha, in the Atlantic Ocean, live on the most isolated inhabited island on Earth. Their nearest neighbors are on the island of St. Helena, 1,320 miles away. Bouvey Oya, in the South Atlantic Ocean, is the most isolated uninhabited island on Earth. It is 1,050 miles from the east coast of Antarctica. (The Usborne Book of Facts & Lists)**

**Why did the Vikings, who lived in Greenland alongside the Inuit for several hundred years, not spread European diseases like the Spaniards did several hundred years later? (Phyllis Schmutz, Nesconset, New York) Location, for the most part, says William Fitzhugh, director of the Smithsonian's Arctic Studies Center. When the Norse arrived in 985, and until they left in the 1450s, they settled on the southwest coast of Greenland, far away from where any proto-Intuit people lived. Starting around 1350, the proto-Intuit Thule people migrated to this region. But unlike in the Americas, where trade was frequent, there was minimal interaction and no cohabitation between Europeans and indigenous people in Greenland. European diseases, like measles and tuberculosis, made their way to Greenland in the 17th and 18th centuries, as Denmark started to colonize the island. *(Anna Diamond, in Smithsonian magazine)***

**Saving lives saved the economy: Now that vaccination is finally liberating us from Covid, said Noah Smith, we should thank lockdowns for saving hundreds of thousands of American lives. Copious research shows that despite strong public resistance and spotty compliance, social distancing restrictions on bars, restaurants, and indoor gatherings cut transmission rates by about 50 percent. Had we all simply gone about business as usual, the death toll would have been far worse -- more than 1 million. Research has also shown that sensible -- "fear of the virus" -- not government restrictions -- is what drove most people to avoid restaurants and other crowded spaces. A study found that store visits in Iowa, where there were no shutdowns, declined nearly as much as they did across the border of Illinois, where there were stay-at-home orders. "Nothing illustrates the benefit of lockdowns better than the case of Sweden," which refused to impose restrictions. A year later, Sweden's death rate has been more than triple that of Denmark and about seven times that of Norway -- and Sweden suffered a greater decline in GDP. The choice "between human lives and dollars of GDP is a false one." Reducing the number of infections and deaths, "helped the economy." *(The Week magazine, May 28, 2021)***

**The first recorded quarantine occurred in 1377, when Dubrovnik, a port on the Adriatic, protected itself against a resurgence of the bubonic plague by admitting no visitors until they’d spent a month in a town or islet just outside the city. A half-century later, Venice built the first of Europe’s many hospitals dedicated to quarantining, a word derived from the Italian for “40 days.” The tactic has been among humanity’s most effective methods of combating the spread of disease, but it has been easier for people to impose quarantines on others than to submit to quarantines themselves. *(The Week magazine, August 13, 2021)***

**From July through December in 2020, states with Republican governors had higher death and infection rates from Covid-19 than Democratic-led states, according to a new public health study. That reversed the trend from March to early June, when Democratic-led states on the coasts had higher incidence rates. Those states were "the initial points of entry," wrote the researchers, who theorize that "policy differences" on masking, and bar and restaurant restrictions, led to the reversal. *(NBCNews.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 26, 2021)***

**A solitary Norwegian spruce survives on Campbell Island in Antarctica. Most isolated tree in the world, that one. Nearest other trees are 120 miles away in the Aucklands. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Naughty children were sent to their rooms long before Arthur Staats took an interest in the practice. "Go to your own room, Wallace," a father commands his errant 10-year-old in Catharine Sedgwick's 1835 novel Home. "Creatures who are the slaves of their passions are, like beasts of prey, fit only for solitude. "But as a child psychologist in the early 1960s, Staats was the first to bring academic rigor to the practice and gave it a name: the "time out." A behaviorist, Staats thought spanking was "terrible" and believed in modifying behavior through rewards and consequences. The best response to misbehaving children, he determined, was to remove them to a quiet place to calm down, deprived of attention that might reinforce the misbehavior. The time-out became a staple of modern child-rearing -- and was used by Staats on his own children. "My brother jokes that I was so naughty that my dad had to invent (it)," said his daughter Jennifer Kelley, who grew up to become a child psychologist. (The Week magazine, June 18, 2021)**

**The toll of loneliness: Too much alone time can kill you. That's the conclusion of a study from Brigham Young University, which found that isolation and loneliness are as bad for a person's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day or being an alcoholic. Researchers examined data from 35 years' worth of studies on loneliness, and after accounting for participants' socioeconomic status, age, gender, and pre-existing health conditions, they discovered that people who feel lonely have a 26 percent greater risk of premature death. Living alone or being socially isolated is even more damaging to a person's health, increasing the risk of early death by roughly 30 percent. The BYU team believes the U.S. will see soaring numbers of loneliness-related health problems in the near future, because more people than ever are living alone. "We are predicting a possible loneliness epidemic," the study's co-author Tim Smith tells ScienceDaily.com. (The Week magazine, April 3, 2015)**

**On maps of the Sahara is a spot called “Tree of Tenere.” Nothing is there but one scrawny acacia tree. There is no other tree within 100 miles. (L. M. Boyd)**

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**Isolated tribe emerges: One of the last remaining remote tribes in the Amazon has tried to make contact with outsiders for just the second time in decades. Some 100 members of the Mashco-Piro – men and women, boys and girls – appeared on a riverbank near a town in the jungle and asked the local Yine people, who speak a similar language, for bananas, machetes, and rope. Some tried to cross the river to the town but were waved back by rangers. Peruvian law bans contact with 15 remote jungle tribes because they have no immunity to common diseases. (The Week magazine, August 30, 2013)**

**Contact with outsiders often spells doom for isolated tribes, said Stanley Stewart in Conte Nast Traveller (U.K.). But one such tribe in Ecuador’s Amazon rain forest – the Huaorani – is turning to small-scale tourism to bolster its chances -f survival. The tribe, just 3,000 strong and so isolated that its language bears no relation to any other on Earth, is hoping that the revenue will help it resist the efforts of energy companies to tap the vast oil reserves that lie beneath the rain forest. The tribe has partnered with an ecotourism company to create a new lodge, and I was curious about a visit: My hosts have a reputation as fierce warriors. *(The Week magazine, August 24-31, 2012)***

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**Before President Trump's ill-fated Tulsa rally two weeks ago, his campaign removed thousands of stickers placed on seats to create social distancing between attendees. The management of the BOK Center printed up thousands of the stickers -- which read "Do Not Sit Here, Please!" -- but campaign workers were videotaped pulling them off seats. The campaign also told the arena managers they didn't want signs posted asking attendees to maintain distance from one another. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 10/July 17, 2020)***

**As President Biden returns from meetings with America's allies and one of our chief adversaries, one thing is very clear: While the United States was focused inward, the world changed around us. Donald Trump promised "America First," a slogan that harked back to the isolationists of the mid-20th century. If going it alone was the promise, he delivered, leaving the U.S. alienated from Western allies and with a trade war with China that accomplished nothing. (Mark Gimein, in The Week magazine, June 25, 2021)**

**Lonely people wired differently: Pervasive feelings of loneliness can alter the brain, leading isolated people to perceive exaggerated threats and hostility in social situations, reports MedicalDaily.com. researchers from the University of Chicago monitored the brains of 38 very lonely people and 32 who weren't lonely when they were e3xposed to words such as "party," "sad," "belong," "alone," and "joy." The lonely people were much more acutely sensitive to any negativity, showing strong, immediate reactions to threatening words. The findings suggest that when lonely people walk into a crowded room, they focus on any negative facial expressions and words while ignoring smiles and words of welcome. Study authors Stephanie and John Cacioppo said that for evolutionary reasons, "being on the social perimeter is not only sad, it is dangerous." As a result, isolated people's brains become hyper-vigilant for threats. (The Week magazine, September 4, 2015)**

**When vaccinated adults refuse to see friends indoors, they're working through the trauma of the past year. When they keep their kids out of playgrounds and urge friends to stay distanced at small outdoor picnics, they are continuing the spirit of the past year, when civic duty has been expressed through lonely asceticism. That's a hard idea to give up. But some progressives have not updated their behavior based on the new information. And so as the rest of vaccinated America begins its summer of bacchanalia, rescheduling long-awaited dinner parties and medium-size weddings, the most hard-core pandemic progressives are left, Cassandra-like, to preach their peers' folly." *(Emma Green, in TheAtlantic.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 14, 2021)***

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