‘Unprecedented Hypocrisy’

Modern times being what they are, one cannot move through life without being bombarded with continuous efforts to brand, market, and distinguish. These advertising activities are so prevalent that, without even noticing it, we all begin to construct tag-lines and memes. Next thing one knows, a phrase is everywhere, is then overused to the point that it doesn’t mean anything, and then is discarded when the new fad comes along.

The expression ‘unprecedented times’ is just such a thing. First of all, these are not unprecedented times. When the black plague was ravaging Europe somewhere between 2/3 and 3/4 of the entire European population was destroyed. The Spanish Flu of 1918 killed far more people than has COVID-19 with per capita deaths increasing the fatality gap even more. Second, even advertisers are aware that ‘unprecedented times’ is overused. There are adverts playing now in which the announcer says something along the lines of “… in these, dare I say it, unprecedented times…” clearly indicating that they understand that we are all sick and tired of hearing that phrase.

Against that backdrop is the even more frustrating “do as I day not as I do crowd” from our entertainment intelligentsia. Not only do these empty heads tell us that we are living in unprecedented times, they have the temerity to tell us all to both practice social distancing and to wear a mask. The picture below, taken at the local grocery store magazine rack on August 30th of this year, shows that these pinheads, while being quite willing to lecture, are also quite unwilling to lead by example.



Not a single picture shows the ‘models’ (models of what? Certainly not good behavior) wearing a mask or separated by the CDC-recommended 6 feet (does 5 feet 11 inches spell disaster). A particularly interesting example of this hypocrisy is large blurb in white from the cover of Cosmopolitan reading “Wear a Damn Mask” position to the left of a maskless model’s hip as she poses with a come-hither look, which if acted upon, would entice the male readers to violate the proper distance. It would be emotionally satisfying to say that this in unprecedented hypocrisy but the fact that it is all to common means that we can’t even have that fillip.

Anyway, enough ranting. Now onto the columns.

[Aristotle To Digital](http://aristotle2digital.blogwyrm.com/) departs from the recent topic of classification to sport its own rant about leaky abstraction. Finally, a name can be given to one of the biggest ailments to ever be visited upon any user community. It strikes down users in their prime, leads to premature frustration, and explains why certain tools get a bad reputation.

This month’s [Common Cents](http://commoncents.blogwyrm.com/) fills in some of the details left hanging about financial arbitrage from last month’s introduction. Specifically: what assets should be used in evaluating the relative worth of a security, how are the risk premiums determined, and how stable is the algorithm to uncertainty..

One-dimensional steady fluid flow offers a really interesting laboratory for exploring how fluid mechanics and thermodynamics intersect. Central to all the ideas is the concept of the Mach number. [Under The Hood](http://underthehood.blogwyrm.com/) works through the relevant equations, presents the concept of choked flow, and sets the stage one of the most interesting practical devices – the converging-diverging nozzle that makes jet aircraft and rocket flight possible.

Enjoy!