What I'm Reading (Nov. 29)

By Chuck Dinerstein, MD, MBA — November 29, 2019

"Sitting down for a family feast, do you need to gird yourself for battle in the ongoing sociopolitical culture war? In today’s hyperpartisan United States, common food products have become proxies for conservative and liberal values. Meat-eating Republicans versus quinoa-loving Democrats. Imported-beer liberals versus domestic-beer conservatives.

Nothing showcases this proxy war better than the rise of gluten sensitivity."

From, The Conversation, Gluten-sensitive liberals? Investigating the stereotype suggests food fads unite us all.

I think of this next article as a double treat. Esquire, in its day, now unfortunately passed, was home to some of the best writing you might find. Intelligent, curious, witty. And the subject of this essay will be known to you all.

"He had already won his third Daytime Emmy, and now he went onstage to accept Emmy’s Lifetime Achievement Award, and there, in front of all the soap-opera stars and talk-show sinceratrons, in front of all the jutting man-tanned jaws and jutting saltwater bosoms, he made his small bow and said into the microphone, "All of us have special ones who have loved us into being. Would you just take, along with me, ten seconds to think of the people who have helped you become who you are….Ten seconds of silence." And then he lifted his wrist, and looked at the audience, and looked at his watch, and said softly, with a smile that seemed to come from a place not quite this world and not quite that, "May God be with you" to all his vanquished children."
It is, after all, Black Friday and could Cyber Monday be far off. Here is a cautionary tale.

"In a recent study, researchers from Princeton and the University of Chicago wanted to see how 11,000 online shopping websites try to influence our purchases. They wound up finding 1,818 examples of deceptive nudges. Called dark patterns, they intentionally trick shoppers. …The group with mild dark patterns bought twice as much as the control group while those given more aggressive dark pattern prompts purchased four times as much."

From Econlife, The Online Shopping Nudges We Should Ignore [4]

And finally, one of the best reviews of the vaping crisis to enter the mainstream media. Ask yourself this: why were there no vaping relating injuries or deaths in the years before 2019? Why are an estimated 20% of our teenagers vaping while the rate in the United Kingdom is around 2%? It all has to do with the difference between regulation and prohibition. You would have thought after our experience with the prohibition on alcohol we would have learned. From Freakonomics, The Truth About the Vaping Crisis [5], the transcript, or the audio, your choice.