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From the Director's Desk: No Matter the Title, Sometimes, a Bully Is Just a Bully.

With Impeachment hearings rapidly unfolding I request that we step back to reflect on where all this is taking us. This cult of personality and bullying being defended over the rule of law and decency has no upside for our systems of governance and demeans the faint hope of our finding common ground

Why are we failing to check a man who boldly claims to be above the law, that he could shoot someone with impunity, who brags about his sexual harassment prowess, who openly invites foreign governments to meddle in our elections, who incites violence and manages staff in a manner which would get him fired at just about any U.S. firm?

The use of intimidation to amass and preserve power is not new. We know that unchecked, bullying spreads and rapidly degrades norms of civility. Bullies divide, they don't know how to unite. Can we protect our system of governance against bullying tactics? Calls for "loyalty," quashing dissent, intimidation, threats of retaliation, inciting violence must be seen for what they are and countered. Can we prevent bullying from becoming a norm with the same bravery that #MeToo confronted sexual harassment?

I fear that bullying has worked and made us fearful of exercising our rights and protecting our institutions - including civil servants and the media. Putin must be very pleased at how easy it has been to win back the Cold War and undermine our institutions and our trust in ourselves from the inside, and from the top.

"Punch that protester" is not a far leap from "shoot my opponent." The Guardian in August of 2019 made an exhaustive list ["Dozens of supporters of Donald Trump have Carried Out or Threatened Acts of Violence. Here, the Guardian Lists Them All."](#) At political rallies, the president has called mainstream Media "the enemy of the people," a term originated by Joseph Stalin. We tend think of our nation as having a history of protecting individuals and entire countries from bullies. We agree domestically that 'might does not make right.' Right?



STOP BULLYING

STAND UP. SPEAK OUT.

This should be a wake-up call. Not only do the administration and its' apologists fail to call out hate crimes and hate groups in the United States, they actively undermine our very concept of the common truth. Both foreign and domestic attacks on reporters are skimmed over. Media is a messy and diverse, but it is a canary in the coal mine and an effective tool to counter excessive power. The evidence of bullying has amassed so quickly it is dizzying to try to catalog. It defies the scope of daily coverage. It has out-sized and outpaced outrage. Open disagreement and debate has always been a hallmark of our democracy. We disagree, but don't question each other's legitimacy.

Perhaps the most insidious aspect of bullying it's contagion. Those on the side of the bully seem to see it as a right bestowed to those most loyal followers. And even worse, is that the cancer spreads outside the confines of the power centers. To our cities, town halls, school board meetings, and other gatherings of good, decent honest people who have suddenly become infected by what they now see as OK and accepted in society. Parents bully coaches, their kids bully other kids, and we end up in town council meetings putting together 'civility rules of order' to keep them from becoming violent and unruly.

Make no mistake, cumulatively, leaving any bully unchecked justifies institutional bullying, calls into question the very structures established to protect us through the Constitution, and leads us down a road to violence and autocracy. Our lack of outrage is visibly undermining a democratic system governed by the rule of law.

No superheroes will step into this to save us from what we allow to happen. It may be that our wish for larger than life characters has brought us to where we are unmoved by committed civil servants standing up to do what's right - even as our president cannot stop himself from live-time Tweets trying to intimidate them.

The truth is that many of our most respected and powerful leaders in all branches of government are afraid of an erratic and vindictive leader with a narcissistic injury who is damaging every institution and norm within reach, even his own administration, even those who have given or dedicated their lives in patriotic duty, who have sworn to duty outside of politics.

It can only further degrade the trust built by local leaders seeking to solve local issues in a non-partisan manner, through the process, relying on non-partisan civic professionals who do their day work without fanfare or acclaim. How much will we sacrifice protecting a bully?

Jon Stavney

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[Will Your Work be Replaced by Artificial Intelligence?](#)

Finally, 14 years since an orthopedic doctor who was about to retire advised my 30-something self to "lose 30 lbs., stop skiing, and stop playing noon basketball and wait until the pain in my arthritic knee became unbearable," I'm scheduled to be operated on... by a robot.



A headline buried in Governing Magazine linking to a Los Angeles Times article, [Is Tech Stratifying and Automating Our Workforce Beyond Repair?](#) might not have leaped off the page for me if I hadn't just finished reading Andrew Yang's book [The War on Normal People: the Truth about Americas Disappearing Jobs and Why Universal Basic Income is our Future](#). Reading Yang also prepared me to accept the idea of being operated on by a robot.

A common refrain we hear is that each job is a person, but that is going to get more complicated in decades to come. We hear a lot about "smart city" technology, much of which isn't ripe. If you want a glimpse further ahead to when it has fully ripened and contemplate what it could mean to our society, I recommend reading some Yang. Right now, there is a lot of counter research, but it is happening.



The round-a-bouts at the Town of Eagle are now mowed by a robot which lives at a charging dock when not in use. For \$2,500 or so, that mowing robot probably saves more than that much in contract labor each summer. But in counter to Yang's concerns about the pace of change, the risk differential between lawn mowing and driving a truck is enormous. The LA Times article cites an Oxford University study which

claims that "as many as 47% of the jobs in developed nations will vanish in the next 25 years." Yang in his book paints a bleak picture of how Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) will make many white-collar jobs obsolete as well, including bookkeepers to Wall Street investors to lawyers to surgeons. By the way, I'm pretty sure the doc monitoring my robotic surgery has a medical degree and is prepared to step in any time, like a pilot. I'll be sure and ask.

This human oversight is why in Septembers' The Harvard Business Review, [Automation isn't About to Make Truckers Obsolete](#) article takes a more sanguine view of the effects of A.I. on the most cited industry: trucking. HBR notes "Some have forecast that autonomous vehicles will eliminate 2-3 million trucking jobs" in coming years, but this is unlikely because most drivers do local trips, and these truck drivers do much more than drive from point to point, including loading trucks which isn't soon going to be automated. I'm thinking of the Lowes delivery guys who installed my refrigerator recently. HBR also points out that while long-haul or interstate trucking could be automated with warehouse to warehouse delivery, this is only 19% of trucks.

It isn't all happening quite yet, but as Andrew Yang points out, there is likely to be a

massive displacement of workers in certain sectors which will lead to increased productivity and profits for a few, and a whole lot of us wondering why our haircut is cheaper and quicker but why we are having to talk to a robot instead of someone whose kids go to the same school as ours.



Read more about Andrew Yang's book on Jon's Blog at [A Public Observer](#).

Is a new mine "an existential crisis" for a resort town?

You know things are getting interesting when the Glenwood Post Independent reported Monday, November 18th, that Garfield County is imposing a [moratorium on new mining permits](#). Though Glenwood Springs City hall is directly across the street from the Garfield County building, leadership in the two entities don't always see eye to eye. What is going on?

Silt Town Administrator, Jeff Layman recently shared a blog [Astride Two Wests, Colorado County Faces a Tricky Economic Balance](#), by Felicity Barringer through Stanford University's The Bill Lane Center for the American West. Barringer quotes many folks that NWCCOG members know. It is worth the read. Though Garfield County and Silt are outside of NWCCOG's region, the story is a well written overview of how Economic Development on Colorado's West Slope is evolving. It avoids the typical either-or reporting we often see from coastal media outlets about oil and gas or new energy/recreation-based economies being mutually exclusive (any more than broadband or marijuana are). That is something those of us in Summit, Eagle and Pitkin Counties which no longer have any resource extraction and are entirely reliant upon tourism/recreation for our economy would be wise to remember. A whole lot of the U.S. doesn't believe the golden era of resource extraction-based economy has expired. Appointees of the Trump administration certainly don't think so. Because although "peak coal" or "peak oil" may have passed, our reliance on fossil fuels isn't waning, and there are those in power who are prepared to defend it even as the market for alternative energy is doing what incentives and symbolic gestures like Jimmy Carter putting solar panels on the White House couldn't do (Reagan took them down). In the middle of the transition, but hardly helpless are many of our communities like Silt which seems to be embracing both a past and a future.



Just down the road, resource extraction and tourism are acutely in opposition. The City of Glenwood Springs, whose officials have been quietly telling those who will listen for more than a year that there is a proposed expansion of a limestone quarry on BLM land adjacent to town which Rocky Mountain Resources wants to increase from 16 acres (hidden from view) to 447 acres within sight of downtown and world famous amenities. As the [Colorado Sun reports](#), the town is now on the record as ready to spend \$1.2 M in tax money on a public affairs campaign-as some leaders

see it, for their life. Currently, it appears to have aligned the City and the Garfield County leaders.

Death by Chocolate - a better way to go

In our July newsletter, we reported on a Grand County Aging Well task force who were to research gaps in senior services. The committee, comprised of many local community organizations including Grand County Public Health, Human Services, Housing Authority, and the Rural Health Network, along with Mountain Family Center, the Alpine AAA, and many others, worked diligently with Mary Kenyon of Impact Marketing to create the comprehensive document. As part of the plan, it was determined that many aging boomers need better education to plan how their estate will be managed when they die.

Mary presented Death By Chocolate - presented by Eagle County Healthy Aging. It was well attended, and the information presented is relevant to all of us.

Reprinted from the Roaring Fork Weekly Journal

By Mary
Kenyon



It's Halloween. What better time to think about the spooky, almost scary things that will happen after you die. There, I said it. I am going to die. We all know that it is inevitable. We want to make plans to make it easier on our loved ones (well, most people do). So why is it so difficult to ponder, prepare or finish the race by actually taking action to prepare?

Trick or treat. The treat in Colorado is that there is no inheritance tax or estate tax. The trick is avoiding long, drawn out probate. Why avoid probate? Time and money. There is nothing simple about asking a total stranger to figure out your intentions. That is what is triggered when you die without automatic transfers and a will. Depending on the ease of finding heirs and debt, it may take two years to settle and will rack up the fees for attorneys, investigators, court costs and attorneys fees. You tried to leave a little something for your loved ones and it goes into the state coffers to settle your estate. Not good planning.



Not scary enough for you? Last week, Eagle County Healthy Aging hosted a presentation called Death by Chocolate. It was an opportunity to begin the paperwork associated with your death. Maybe it was the chocolate (melting over fruit, pound cake, vanilla wafers and pretzels), but more than 30 Mid-Valley senior residents attended, some with their family members. There were a lot of good questions posed about what needs to go through probate, resources for cremation and burial, required formats of will (handwritten, witnessed, etc.),

plans for our furry friends and financial transfers upon death. As if planning wasn't frightfully difficult enough, now there are "green" burials and ways to turn remains into diamonds. I am learning that diamonds can literally be a girl's best friend - OK that IS scary!

What became clear is that we need to address these issues, desires and required planning. Now. No, not when you have a chance or have more time (wishful thinking). [We need to make this a priority, now! Read the complete article here.](#)

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)/Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) - might save you money

The Annual Enrollment Period Begins: We have geared up for our 2020 Annual Enrollment Period (AEP). This is the time of year Medicare Beneficiaries may enroll in a Part D Prescription Drug Plan and/or a Medicare Part C Advantage plan for the first time or change the current coverage they have.

The benefits to compare plans is potential cost savings to individuals and the region as a whole, the ability to change coverage level to meet changing health circumstances and avoid or stop late enrollment penalties from accruing.

In just one week, the team saved three clients substantial amounts in annual premiums: one client saved \$1883, another saved \$2286, and the third save a whopping \$4018. If you or a loved one are on Medicare, don't assume the plan you have it the best for you. Let our team help you compare plans - who knows - you may hit the jackpot too! Contact T.J. Dufresne tjdufresne@nwccog.org

Open enrollment ends December 7th.

NEXT 2019 NWCCOG COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, December 5, 2019

Full Council, EDD Board & Foundation Board Meeting

Location: NWCCOG Office, Silverthorne, CO

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Primary Agenda Items: 2019 budget revisions; approve 2020 budget; adopt 2020 meeting schedule; annual NWCCOG Foundation Board meeting.

Northwest Colorado Council of Governments

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