



Looking Outward

Dan Glode
Columnist

Fear and change

We treat people as gentlemen not because they are, but because we are.

— Steve Glode

My late father used the above expression often. I don't think he invented it but I heard it a lot as a kid. We used to have spirited political discussions around the dinner table, but his bottom line was always we were to be gentlemen in all our dealings — regardless of how different our views were from others and regardless of how they conducted themselves.

This mantra has come into play with me countless times as my career evolved from inner-city caseworker to social-worker to child-protection program manager to private-practice attorney to district attorney to international development manager.

It has saved me at each juncture.

Each turn in my life presented unique challenges to test this maxim. This election makes it more difficult than ever to follow my dad's advice.

I was born and raised in New Haven, Connecticut, and I had the chance to visit my old home-town recently. I walked the green in the center of town with my wife

and regaled her with stories about my childhood. I took her to the spot on the green where as a child I stood with my mother and watched then-presidential-candidate John Kennedy give a speech. I was in the sixth grade and she thought it such an important event she took me out of school that day to hear him, something she never did for any reason.

You see I was raised Catholic and, believe it or not, a Catholic presidential candidate was a huge deal then, and especially to Catholics. There were fears by non-Catholics that the Pope would run the country if Kennedy got elected and, as irrational as these fears were, they were very real to those who held them.

Fear worked in Nixon's favor but, happily, not enough (although he would have an encore a few years later). The fears of a Catholic conspiracy, of course, were not realized.

Anger and fear have always been a part of our politics, and I have seen it play a role in each and every election since. Once the election is over, it generally dissipates over time and we pick up the pieces and move on. Historically, candidates eventually treat each other as the gentlepeople in the above expression, and we live to fight another day.

I'm not sure that will happen this time.

There is a lot of fear in some quarters in this country over the way things are changing, and changing rapidly — from the shrinking coal mines in West Virginia to the rust belt's declining manufacturing to globalization. Our values, our culture, our economy seem to be evolving in strange and mysterious ways and with a lightning speed we cannot fathom. Change has been fast-tracked. It can be scary.

The deep-rooted fears are

coming from all angles and everywhere. I recently read the column "Flaming out" in this paper, and although at first blush my impression was the column was merely a disorganized, angry rant I now believe it came from widely held fear at the way things are changing. Heck, it even appeared on page 2, so Mr. Rullman is not alone with his anger.

This unsettling feeling is almost universal, now, on both sides of the political spectrum. We are put in a position where we are questioning everything and, mostly, we fear just letting go. I am not aware of any time when letting go was so universally worrisome.

I am far more concerned about November 9 than November 8. I write this column well before it appears in the paper, so while it is written before the election it likely will not appear until after we know the results. As of this writing one candidate has not said whether he will honor the results. Many have suggested a revolution is in order as the only way to ensure the change they seek. The more fear and anger are fanned the more entrenched and polarized we become. There will be no spiking the ball after this is over. Everyone, all of us, me and you will need to let go of a lot when this is done.

The change will not end on November 9, it will merely accelerate. Perhaps we can all take a deep breath and remember what my dad said.

Family Art Night on tap at elementary school

The Sisters Elementary School Parent-Teacher Community (SPTC) will soon host the first of three family nights this school year. Family Art Night is scheduled for Thursday, November 10, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Sisters Elementary School. There is no cost to attend.

Family Art Night began several years ago when a team of parents and teachers crafted several projects for families to complete together. The event was designed to celebrate creativity and togetherness. After a short hiatus, SPTC brought the event back in a big way last school year.

"Last year we had a great turnout — close to 250 people," said Erin Borla, SPTC vice-chair. "We wanted to host the event earlier this year so students could have an opportunity to create something they could give as a gift during the upcoming holiday

season if they so chose."

Activities at this year's event range from watercolor painting to building with clay, mask-making, sewing bean bags, making magnets and more. All together there will be 14 stations of projects, all designed for students ages 4-10.

Thanks to a grant from The Roundhouse Foundation the event is free for all participants. Families are encouraged to bring a picnic dinner and enjoy being together as a community. Food will be provided for sale from a local restaurant, and there will be desserts available for sale.

Other family nights scheduled include Science/STEM Night in January and Reading/Literacy Night in April.

For more information on Family Art Night or the Sisters Parent-Teacher Community at Sisters Elementary School, contact Haley Ellis at 971-570-2405.

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