

O P I N I O N

A higher form of leadership

By Jim Cornelius | Editor in Chief

Anyone who thought that the American crisis was going to be resolved at the ballot box November 3 has been rapidly disillusioned. The election revealed that America is — and is likely to remain — a deeply divided nation. And many of us are skeptical that our deep cultural divides and structural instabilities can be fixed simply by electing the “right” people to office.

Scholar Patrick J. Deneen wrote in 2018:

“Every institution of government shows declining levels of public trust by the citizenry, and deep cynicism toward politics is reflected in an uprising on all sides of the political spectrum against political and economic elites... It is evident to all that the political system is broken and the social fabric is fraying, particularly as a growing gap increases between the wealthy haves and the left-behind have-nots, a hostile divide opens between faithful and secular peoples, and deep disagreement persists over America’s role in the world...”

And that was *before* COVID-19.

The announcement of effective vaccines for COVID-19 is wonderful news, a magnificent accomplishment of science — but they are a ways off from implementation. Right now, we are caught in a dire new surge of the disease.

The threat from COVID-19 is real. Focusing on mortality rates distorts the picture and may have given us a false complacency toward the disease’s potential to disrupt, damage and destroy lives. Dr. Andrea Caballero, an infectious disease expert who has been on the frontlines for months treating

COVID patients talked with *Anchorage Daily News* about recovering COVID patients:

“The way that epidemiology works is that we have strict definitions of what constitutes a case and what constitutes a recovered case. We’re trying to fit the real world into a statistical analysis, and it has its limitations.

“One of the things that I think is underappreciated is that even though we have a seemingly low mortality level, some of these patients that are surviving are not surviving (and simply) walking out of the hospital back home. We’re talking about ending up with tracheostomies, which is a tube in your throat to help you breathe, a PEG (percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy) tube in your stomach to feed you, and then months and months and months of in-patient therapy.”

Health officials are right to be deeply alarmed at the current surge, particularly at the potential to overstress weary healthcare workers and break down overtaxed systems.

Government officials have a fine line to walk in taking measures to combat the spread of COVID-19. It’s not easy in such a crisis balancing public health and individual rights and liberties. But make no mistake: crossing that line creates a threat perhaps less immediate — but no less damaging — than the disease itself.

When executives, acting by fiat, seek to regulate who you have in your home — backed with the threat of law enforcement action — that is... alarming. Concern over the constitutionality and rectitude of such measures is not — at least it shouldn’t be — a fringe position. The American

Republic was founded upon deep suspicion of power vested in an executive, upon a healthy fear of the state reaching into our private lives.

The robust checks and balances of our system have been eroded by generations of executives of both parties taking more and more authority upon themselves, and legislative bodies and the courts abdicating their role to put the reins on those executives.

Are “wartime measures” necessary to combat the threat of COVID-19? Perhaps. Certainly, the wise citizen should exercise extreme caution and good judgment in the face of a surging epidemic of a virulent contagion.

Good example and persuasion, the rallying of constitutionally sound legislative backing for extended states of emergency, and treating citizens as responsible adults represent a higher form of leadership. Unfortunately, we have been conditioned by decades of abuse of executive power and our own civic disengagement to a degree that we accept less than we as citizens are owed by our government — and less than we owe ourselves.

We can regret that we did not see better example and rallying leadership at many levels at the beginning of this crisis. We can regret that a public-health crisis has been politicized and warped into yet another front in an apparently intractable cultural conflict. We can, going forward, choose to act as responsible citizens — and insist upon being treated as such.

And — always — we must support each other in our own community, where we are all under the strain of living through this terrible year.

Letters to the Editor...

The Nugget welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer’s name, address and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The Nugget reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is 10 a.m. Monday.

To the Editor:

I am not much of a communicator but I feel a need to convey some of my thoughts to our special town.

How fortunate we are to live in Sisters. I have been blessed to have lived here over 40 years and certainly have seen many changes — some I have liked and some not so much. One of the best things I have learned is that our community is always ready to step up and help. My husband, Jim, was placed in memory care last December, but before that people in town watched over him and always took care of him. The restaurants would call and let me know where he was, the barber shop would let me know, the deputy sheriffs would bring him home. Rollins Automotive has kept my car running. I could go on and on with all the great people that live in Sisters.

You now know why I love this town and why it has a special place in my heart. This has been a difficult year with so many adverse things going on but I’m so thankful for friends and the town of Sisters. I am so thankful to everyone.

Dorene Fisher

To the Editor:

I do not consider myself to be a political person. However, after watching over 25 hours of post-election TV coverage by numerous news sources over the past week, I agree 100 percent with the letter to the editor submitted by Michael Wells.

Trump is making a mockery of our democratic institution and standing in the world. Two of our most prominent Constitutional and election legal scholars, Laurence Tribe and Benjamin Ginsburg (a Republican who has represented 4 prior Republican presidential candidates), have stated that there is “no evidence to support Trump and no election fraud has been demonstrated.” As of November 11, 12 lawsuits in various states have already been dismissed. Furthermore, Trump went on TV prior to the election and told the voters of North Carolina to each vote twice for him, despite it being illegal.

Trump cronies (Mitch McConnell, Mike Pompeo, William Barr, and Lindsey Graham) are

clearly pandering to him. None of them have the guts to confront him with the reality of the election...HE HAS LOST! Many Republican senators are cowards and afraid to cross Trump and risk their base. However, several Republican governors have recently called on him to concede the election.

Based on the recent firing of the Secretary of Defense and resignation of several key individuals in the intelligence community, Trump’s actions are strongly perceived to be “reckless” for our democracy. The fact that he is also blocking GSA’s transition effort to share information is both childish and potentially dangerous.

Many world leaders have called to congratulate President-Elect Biden. He is the one looking very presidential at this time. Hopefully, reality will eventually set in for Trump, and he will ultimately do the right thing and resign.

Steve Auerbach

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Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday

Rain

46/32



Thursday

Partly Cloudy

43/27



Friday

Mostly Sunny

45/26



Saturday

Partly Cloudy

47/29



Sunday

Showers

45/36



Monday

Showers

47/34

