

OTHER VIEWS

Reassurance in the midst of coronavirus crisis

One of my many bosses in TV news once told me the media’s job is to reassure the public. I can’t remember the context, though I do remember dutifully nodding my head.

What did I know? I was 22 and reassurance sounded like a good thing.

Today, I’m not sure if reassurance is or has ever been the media’s responsibility. If it is, we’re doing a lousy job of it. I feel a lot of things when I turn on CNN or Fox News for the latest coronavirus update. Reassured isn’t among them.

 **RICH MANIERI**
SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

In fact, if I look back at my own career of covering snowstorms, hurricanes and various other emergencies, I don’t recall being very reassuring. Of course, in my defense, it’s difficult to be reassuring when you can’t feel your feet or you’re dodging a flying a stop sign.

However, here and now, as you scour the countryside for toilet paper and biscuits, I am going to honor my news director of long ago and do my very best to reassure you.

While COVID-19 needs to be taken seriously, we’re not going to run out of food or other essentials. Sure, there’s a burgeoning black market for Charmin and hand sanitizer but I’m reasonably confident the shelves will be restocked and Americans will, once again, return to the good ol’ days of practicing shoddy hygiene.

I wish we would be this vigilant all of the time, and I want to believe that the guy who leaves the men’s room stall and never so much as glances at the sink before walking out the bathroom door will transform into Felix Unger, but human experience tells me otherwise.

I’m old enough to remember the oil crisis and subsequent gas lines of the 1970s. We got through that OK, no thanks to my father, who used most of the gasoline on the eastern seaboard to fill up his Plymouth Fury and Bonneville Brougham.

World wars, economic crises, past pandemics — through it all, if Americans have proven anything, it is that we are a resilient bunch. Life can throw pretty much anything at us and we’ll keep moving forward. We adapt, we innovate, we find a way.

Under normal circumstances, our elected representatives in the House and Senate can’t work together to order a pizza. But Republicans and Democrats, with the president’s support, were able to come together and hammer out a coronavirus relief package. For the most part, they’ve put politics aside for the greater good. I haven’t written that sentence in a while.

In communities throughout the country, for every knucklehead at Costco making fists over the last roll of toilet paper, countless others are actually helping their fellow humans.

Churches are live streaming services. Concerned neighbors are running errands for the elderly. Disneyland is giving away its extra food. NBA players are donating money to team employees who aren’t getting paid during the shutdown. My school is running a food drive for international students stuck on campus because they can’t get home.

We’ll be OK.

What we can’t do is panic. There’s no need to hoard food or convert all of your assets to gold bullion. Take a deep breath, turn off the TV for a while, take a break from social media and stop watching the rise and fall of the stock market until your eyes cross.

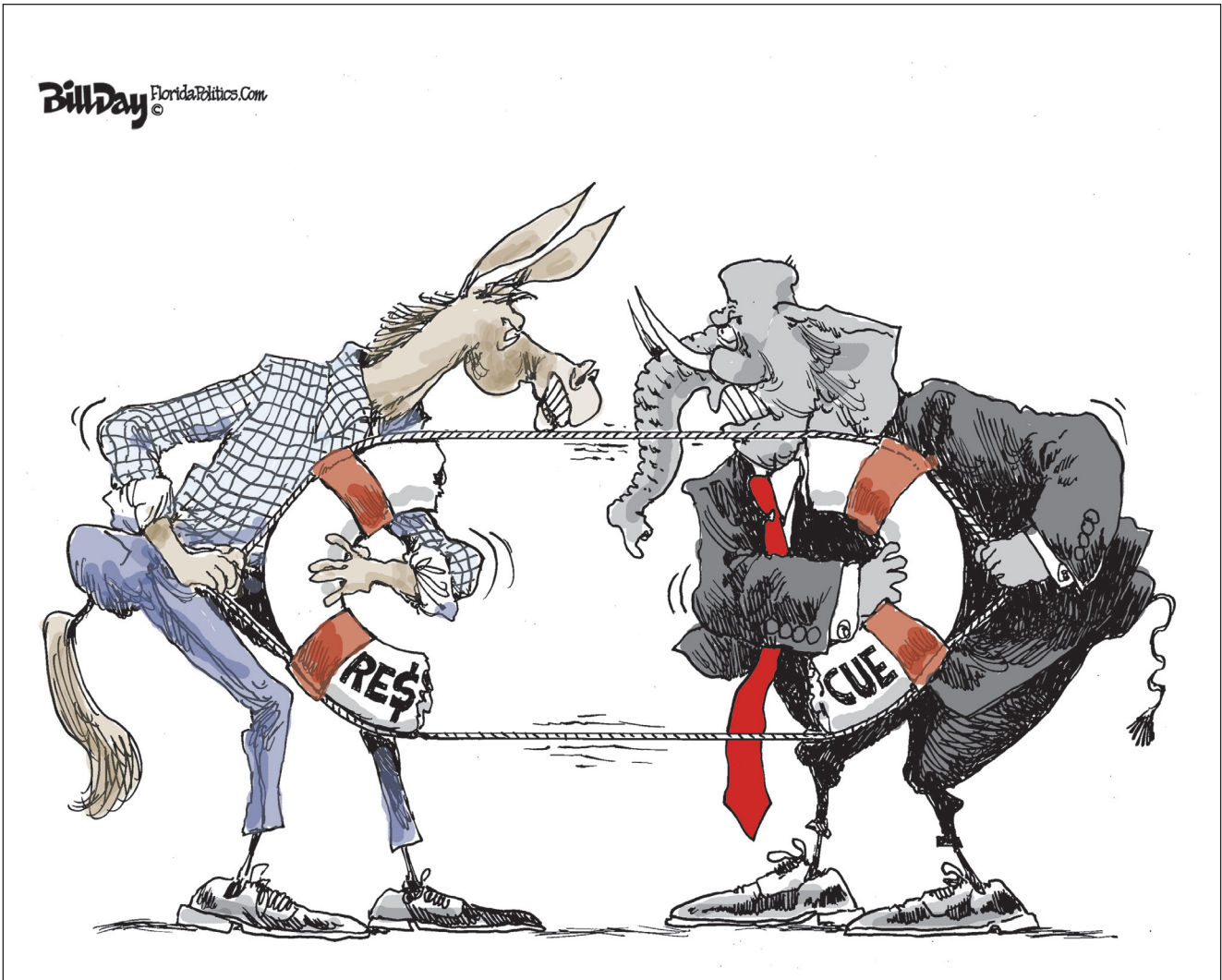
Instead, do something productive. I’ve been catching up on some household chores, though truth be told, I’m too efficient for my own good. I’ve been home three days and there isn’t much left to do and I’m afraid I’ve reached the limits of my capabilities. Whatever my wife asks me to do next is bound to be beyond my skillset.

Still, you get the idea. If home improvement isn’t your thing, read a book. Play your guitar. And there’s always Netflix, but stay away from films or documentaries about pandemics, which have suddenly catapulted their way to the top of the playlist.

History tells us this will pass and life will eventually get back to normal. In the meantime, hunker down, practice “social distancing” and relax.

Do you feel reassured yet? If not, just nod your head anyway.

Rich Manieri is a Philadelphia-born journalist and author. He is a professor of journalism at Asbury University in Kentucky. His book, “We Burn on Friday: A Memoir of My Father and Me” is available at amazon.com. You can reach him at manieri2@gmail.com.



Your views

Sheriff’s office is ready for ‘fresh eyes’

At a recent event I had the pleasure of meeting Union County sheriff candidate Bill Miller. I found him to be competent and genuine.

During my tenure in corporate America, the philosophy was to rotate managers to different departments every two years to bring in “fresh eyes.”

I tend to agree with this theory. I have no issues with Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen per se, but under extended periods of leadership, concerns can creep in and manifest.

Washington, D.C., is a good example of this.

We once referred to them as “public servants,” and now the sur-

rounding counties have become the wealthiest in the country. But I digress.

I thank Sheriff Rasmussen for his service, but perhaps it’s time for fresh eyes, and I believe Bill Miller to be a worthy candidate for that.

Craig Elshaug
Union

Bill Miller is the right man for the job

I am supporting Bill Miller for Union County sheriff.

I first met Bill when we attended Search and Rescue initial training about 25 years ago. I believe he is the only candidate who has attended the training and was certified by the

Oregon State Sheriff’s Association for SAR. Bill also worked as a sergeant/investigator for our sheriff’s office.

Bill has the experience as well as the desire to serve the citizens of Union County.

As I drive around our county, I see lots of signs that say “elect” someone. This is not an election about who has the most or the biggest signs, but it is about who has the qualifications, experience, integrity, honesty and leadership to do the job.

Bill has all of these things, and he will always do the right thing.

Please join me in voting for Bill Miller to become our next sheriff of Union County Oregon.

Bob Nelson
Cove

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