

Editor's note: Emma Edwards is taking some much-needed time off this week. Her column will return next week.



Without Limits

by Bryan Golden

Don't be taken in by the crowd

Many problems could be avoided or minimized if more people refused to follow the crowd.

Group behavior can instill fear and panic as it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Regardless of reality, the crowd is led with false premises. Followers then behave as if what they are being told is true.

As a result, their actions transform the alleged circumstances into reality.

For example, there are reports that a specific bank might be having financial problems. In fact, there is no truth to the rumor. Nevertheless, its customers panic, causing a run on the bank. Now the bank *does* have monetary difficulties.

Crowd or mob mentality is a powerful force that sweeps up many as it builds momentum.

However, this dynamic is rarely grounded in logic or reason. Group think assimilates individuals who, by themselves, normally aren't governed by fear.

A negative group mindset is as contagious as an epidemic. Individuals are subjected to peer pressure. They're chastised for any contrarian views. Mob psychology has impacted us throughout history.

People caught up in crowd mentality accept what they are told without questioning its validity. The result is a few controlling many. Just watch how a few sheepdogs can direct a heard of hundreds of sheep.

People will behave as part of the crowd in ways they would never imagine were they acting independently.

Although it's tempting to go

along with the flow, resistance is worth the effort. Giving up your individuality carries too high a price. There are some simple steps you can take to avoid getting caught up with the crowd.

Think for yourself. Ask questions. What's the source of the information and what is the bias? Is there a hidden agenda?

Consider the economy.

Historically, its fluctuations are cyclic. Perhaps there is a downturn and the crowd is yelling the sky is falling. However, you have an income and are OK financially. Why should you change your behavior and go along with the crowd?

What about the opposite situation? The crowd is gushing about a surging economy, yet you've lost your job and are struggling. In this case, you must tailor your actions to accommodate your situation.

What others say or think about you doesn't matter. Your life shouldn't be structured to seek approval. You are responsible for your actions along with the results. You can't blame anyone else for what you do.

Your behavior may exacerbate your own situation, making problems worse.

Crowd behavior and attitude is often negative.

By getting caught up in it, you get pulled down. Stay independent, remain positive, and follow your own path. You will be happier and accomplish more.

Golden is the author of "Dare to Live Without Limits." Contact him at bryan@columnist.com or visit dareto livewithoutlimits.com.

Mayor's Message

by Henry Balensifer III



Road trip allows plenty of land-use observations

Greetings from Austria!

I am on a bit of a whirlwind trip through Europe and the Middle East for my day job at LEKTRO (I am not traveling as mayor).

I enjoy travel particularly because I am continually fascinated by the design of all sorts of villages, towns, and cities across the world.

How bicycles and pedestrians safely traverse narrow roads. How urban planning works melding the rural with developed lands. What makes a good, a safe street. How do people park their cars and build their homes.

How streetscapes, downtowns and waterfronts deal with the issue of trash, bathrooms, and tourism. How housing and commercial properties are developed.

Not everything translates well from Europe to America. Culture has a part to play with that.

However, I never stop con-

sidering any good idea that could be adapted for our city.

Often it is little things that stand out -- things like trail and parks wayfinding (directional signs), or allowing sandwich signs on sidewalks without obstructing wheelchair accessibility, or how cities enable the commercialization and more public enjoyment of waterfronts.

So many things can be hard to imagine if you don't see them yourself.

Warrenton has developed differently from our sister cities in the county. There are aspects that are unique to our land and street layouts. It poses a challenge to the average land-use planner, but I view it as a positive.

We have a developed commercial district on Highway 101, and we have two small-town and relatively undeveloped downtowns on Pacific Drive and South Main Ave-

nue and a lot of potential.

Due to Oregon's rather complex land-use laws, it will take some herculean efforts by staff to ensure we don't waste the opportunity we now have to plan the future of the aforementioned downtowns.

Recently, the budget committee recommended to the city commission a budget that allows for the city of Warrenton to finally have both a city planner and a planning technician. The intent is to free up resources, giving us the capacity to do more than just process permits.

We can do more public engagement on zoning and land-use planning. This is good for both developers and residents.

While it is a positive, land use is and remains the most contentious issue in our city. But with continually improved communications from us -- and your participation -- we can build a brighter future.

Warrenton Mayor Henry Balensifer can be reached at hbalensifer@ci.warrenton.or.us or by leaving a message for him at City Hall, 503-861-2233.

Virtual school names honor students

Connections Academy, an online public school, recognized the following students for outstanding academic achievement.

Warrenton: Jacob Beardard, kindergarten; Magnus Moran, fourth grade.

Astoria: Sophia Smith and Owen Deane, both first-graders; and Trevor Alward, sixth grade.

Gearhart: Blue Young, fifth grade.

Seaside: Blair Wood, third grade.

The students were named to the honor roll for first semester 2021-22.

The tuition-free full-time virtual public school based within the Scio School District serves students in kindergarten through 12th grade throughout the state.

Special columns in The Columbia Press

Every week: Senior Moments with Emma Edwards

Week 1: Mayor's Message by Henry Balensifer

Week 2: Financial Focus with Adam Miller

Week 3: Spotlight on the City

Week 4: Here's to Your Health from CMH