

Editorials

Suffering others' opinions

Opinions will never be 'settled science'

"I don't care what people may think of me, just so long as they think." — William Loeb

This quote from former Union Leader Publisher William Loeb hangs on the wall of our office. Loeb was a complicated and controversial figure who was most comfortable stirring the political pot. This quote best exemplifies why. He abhorred complacency of ideologies, and we have several literal tons of his personal correspondences that were his way of ensuring that ideas would keep flowing.

There is a great desire by many to consider some opinions as "settled science." This phrase is a common refrain heard in the climate debate, as if a critical mass of agreement can obliterate dissenting voices. The irony here is that the study of science is designed to never be settled. If it were then the Earth would still be at the center of the universe as well as being flat. After all, there was so much consensus around these "facts" that it should have been "settled science" there and then.

Luckily for humanity that science was not settled. Opinions are also never settled. As much as many of us would like to "move past" certain topics it will never happen. Opinions are not formed by consensus; they are formed by each individual's experience of the world. Just ask the "flat earthers." They still exist.

If opinions could be treated as "settled science" then America's racial dis-

ussion might have ended with the Civil Rights Act or the Emancipation Proclamation. As the past weeks have shown, this discussion is far from over. There is clearly quite a bit about the Black experience that many of us do not understand, and thankfully the conversation continues.

We pride ourselves on presenting a wide range of opinions including those with which we, and many of our readers, may disagree. Our New Hampshire Voices sections devote more space to opinions that are not our own. Reading the opinions and experiences of others is how wider understanding is reached. Angry Facebook comments and copy and pasted Tweets have become the digital version of shouting someone down. While it may feel good to silence opinions you disagree with, it does not make those opinions disappear. Only true understanding can do that.

The internet and cable television have created too many pockets where unpopular opinions can hide and fester, free from dissenting voices that can lead to greater understanding for all. In these places you will not find the clear distinction between news and editorial opinion that you see at the top of this page. Instead you will see opinion permeating every aspect of coverage.

We think our readers are smart enough to understand the difference between our news and opinions. The only truly dangerous opinions are those that are left unsaid and unchallenged.

Once a gold standard

Sad news from Crotched Mountain

The recent news of the closing of the Crotched Mountain school and residence quarters in Greenfield was disconcerting. In today's parlance, the Crotched Mountain name would be considered a good "brand." Years ago, though, it was the "gold standard" for the care and well-being of children and adults with sometimes profound disabilities.

In a time when too many families had few options, Crotched Mountain offered hope and challenge. It sought to help disabled people and their loved ones realize their full potential rather than to give in and give up on them.

The school was fortunate to have the backing of area businesses and prominent individuals and it attracted able staff and leadership.

But times change. Competing programs and alternatives for the disabled, some no doubt inspired by Crotched, have made it more difficult for the school; and the COVID-19 pandemic and its costs and requirements finally pushed it over the edge.

For now, Crotched Mountain's name will live on in its community-based services. It will also live on as a positive part of New Hampshire history. For that, Granite Staters should be grateful.

The Dean Kamen brand

It's about a lot more than the Segway

Another New Hampshire brand, the Segway self-propelled vehicle, has had its day and will no longer be produced. It never caught on, other than as a shorthand way for some Granite Staters to describe the brilliant innovator and inventor Dean Kamen.

But the Segway hardly defines the man who invented the iBOT stair-climbing wheelchair, the portable insulin pump, a portable water purifier, and amazing prosthetic devices, to name but a few.

The Segway was but a spinoff from the self-balancing wheelchair, which Kamen achieved using tiny gyroscopes. But its media hype preceded it and when a jaded public discovered it couldn't

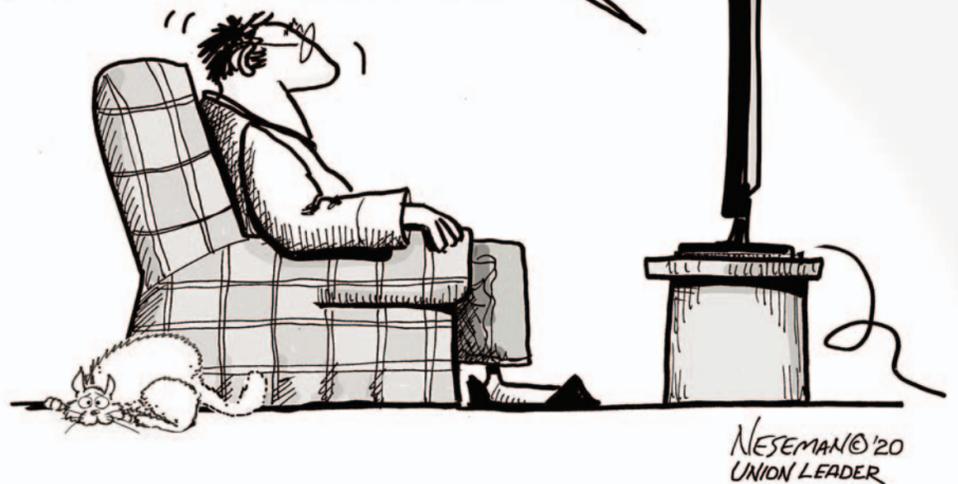
make you fly or disappear, it lost its cachet.

Kamen sold the Segway company years ago. He would much rather be known, we think, for his FIRST robotics competition that started right here in New Hampshire and is now worldwide.

And he will be known, we are certain, for the products and medical advances to come from the ARMI complex that is now transforming the Manchester Millyard. The Advanced Regenerative Manufacturing Institute is leveraging business and education in exciting new ways.

The Kamen "brand" is one of which New Hampshire will boast, and rightfully so, for a long time to come.

STATE OFFICIALS REPORTED TODAY THAT THE "GREAT AMERICAN COMEBACK" WILL PROBABLY BE LIMITED TO JUST GREAT AMERICANS, NOT THE AVERAGE AMERICAN LIKE YOU.



Our lumpen intelligentsia

A NATION'S gravest problems are those it cannot discuss because it dare not state them. This nation's principal problem, which makes other serious problems intractable, is that much of today's intelligentsia is not intelligent.

One serious problem is that the political class is terrified of its constituents — their infantile refusal to will the means (revenues) for the ends (government benefits) they demand. Another serious problem is family disintegration, e.g., 40% of all first births, and 69% of all African American births, to unmarried women. Families are the primary transmitters of social capital: the habits, dispositions and mores necessary for flourishing. Yet the subject of disorganized families has been entirely absent from current discussions — actually, less discussions than virtue-signaling ventings — about poverty, race and related matters.

Today's most serious problem, which annihilates thoughtfulness about all others, is that a significant portion of the intelligentsia — the lumpen intelligentsia — cannot think. Its torrent of talk is an ever-intensifying hurricane of hysteria about the endemic sickness of the nation since its founding in 1619 (don't ask). And the iniquities of historic figures mistakenly admired. An admirable intelligentsia, inoculated by education against fashions and fads, would make thoughtful distinctions arising from historically in-



George F. Will

formed empathy. It would be society's ballast against mob mentalities. Instead, much of America's intelligentsia has become a mob.

Seeking to impose on others the conformity it enforces in its ranks, articulate only in a boilerplate of ritualized cant, today's lumpen intelligentsia consists of persons for whom a little learning is delightful. They consider themselves educated because they are credentialed, stamped with the approval of institutions of higher education that gave them three things: a smattering of historical information just sufficient to make the past seem depraved; a vocabulary of indignation about the failure of all previous historic actors, from Washington to Lincoln to Churchill, to match the virtues of the lumpen intelligentsia; and the belief that America's grossest injustice is the insufficient obeisance accorded to this intelligentsia.

Its expansion tracks the expansion of colleges and universities — most have, effectively, open admissions — that have become intellectually monochrome purveyors of groupthink. Faculty are outnumbered by administrators, many of whom exist to administer uniformity concerning

"sustainability," "diversity," "toxic masculinity" and the threat free speech poses to favored groups' entitlements to serenity.

Today's cancel culture — erasing history, ending careers — is inflicted by people experiencing an orgy of positive feelings about themselves as they negate others. This culture is a steamy sauna of self-congratulation: "I, an adjunct professor of gender studies, am superior to U.S. Grant, so there." Grant promptly freed the slave he received from his father-in-law, and went on to pulverize the slavocracy. Nevertheless....

The cancellers need just enough learning to know, vaguely, that there was a Lincoln who lived when Americans, sunk in primitivism, thought they were confronted with vexing constitutional constraints and moral ambiguities. The cancel culture depends on not having so much learning that it spoils the statue-topping fun: Too much learning might immobilize the toppers with doubts about how they would have behaved in the contexts in which the statues' subjects lived.

The cancellers are reverse Rumpelstiltskins, spinning problems that merit the gold of complex ideas and nuanced judgments into the straw of slogans. Someone anticipated something like this.

Today's gruesome irony: A significant portion of the intelligentsia that is churned out by higher education does not acknowl-

edge exacting standards of inquiry that could tug them toward tentativeness and constructive dissatisfaction with themselves. Rather, they come from campuses, cloaked in complacency. Instead of elevating, their education produces only expensively schooled versions of what Jose Ortega y Gasset called the "mass man."

In "The Revolt of the Masses" (1932), the Spanish philosopher said this creature does not "appeal from his own to any authority outside him. He is satisfied with himself exactly as he is....he will tend to consider and affirm as good everything he finds within himself: opinions, appetites, preferences, tastes." (Italics are Ortega's.)

Much education now spreads the disease that education should cure, the disease of repudiating, without understanding, the national principles that could pull the nation toward its noble aspirations. The result is barbarism, as Ortega defined it, "the absence of standards to which appeal can be made." A barbarian is someone whose ideas are "nothing more than appetites in words," someone exercising "the right not to be reasonable," who "does not want to give reasons" but simply "to impose his opinions."

The barbarians are not at America's gate. There is no gate.

George Will's email address is georgewill@washpost.com.

Letters

Best option for Hudson

To the Editor: Having served as both a selectman and a member of the town planning board in Hudson, I've seen several projects proposed for the Green Meadow Golf Club and the Hudson Logistics Center is by far the best option we will ever get for our town.

Looking back at all the previous proposals for the site — which have included a possible casino, dozens of retail shops, additional housing complexes — all would have created additional burdens on our town, contributed little in terms of real tax revenue,

and even required us to construct a new school to accommodate an influx of new students.

The Hudson Logistics Center makes the most sense in terms of generating considerable and lasting tax revenue, creating good local jobs, and having the least impact on town services. Not to mention, the Hillwood team is committed to preserving much of the green space and create an aesthetically pleasing landscape that we've grown accustomed to at this location. This is a win-win for Hudson!

TERESA STEWART
Hudson

Words to remember

To the Editor: As tensions rise amid continuing revelations of systemic racism in our culture and the understandable resultant anger expressed by blacks as well as by those both black and white at the violent acts of looting, rioting burning and defaming perpetuated by some, in protest, I ask that you google "Letter from Birmingham Jail" written in 1963 by Martin Luther King, Jr. and ponder this cogent, well-articulated and readable epistle that addressed then so many of the issues we face today:

New Hampshire Sunday News

Our mission: To deliver trusted news, information and resources connecting New Hampshire.

William Loeb, President and Publisher, 1948-1981

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