

Our Social Dilemma — Part 9: The Human Spirit - Soon

Beverly Pestel, *Columnist*

“Our Social Dilemma” is a series of thought-provoking columns by retired local professor Beverly Pestel exploring a description and explanation of our current social, cultural and political tensions — looking at solutions and means of learning to accept one another.

...

I began my exploration of our social dilemma several years ago with the book, “Healing the Heart of Democracy” by Parker J. Palmer. As it turned out, much that I found in the book was put into context by everything I read subsequent to that. So it is fitting to finish this series with Parker Palmer while we all still struggle with the horror of Uvalde.

It seems clear that the core of our social dilemma is the hierarchical system of culture and caste. A system defined by the stories we tell ourselves of “us” and “them.” It is a history of the struggles of the “them” to realize equality and the “us” to keep their position of privilege. It is also a struggle of the “us” suspicious of and fearing the “thems”. Much of this has spilled out into the political arena, and understandably so. A democracy cannot survive in the absence of the pursuit of equal rights.

It always comes down to stories. Like Harari (Part 1), Palmer talks about stories and myths. Palmer refers to the first few lines of the Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be

self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among them are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

He then proceeds to explain how this national myth has shaped our social conflict.

“On the one hand, the people who wrote those words, and the nation they founded, fell far short of their own declaration. The founders excluded many men and all women from the “blessings of liberty,” and in this sense, America’s founding myth is a flat-out lie. On the other hand, the myth expresses an aspiration without which America would not be the nation it is.”

It is the stories within castes (Part 3) that keep us from realizing our aspirational national story of being “indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” We must learn to merge these castes into one comprehensive community, not uniform in identity, but accepting and comfortable in its diversity. Robert Wright in his book “Nonzero” addresses the difficult nature of this. “...when any...group surrenders its autonomy, submerging its identity ...to a central authority, some natural resistance has been overcome.” We need to start doing the hard work of overcoming.

Palmer maintains that the path to building community begins with a heart that is broken-open. This broken-open heart is created when we add intelligence to our emotions which



Beverly Pestel

Daniel Goleman defines as emotional intelligence (Part 6). So, the solution to our social dilemma begins not with “them” but with “us.” As Palmer states, “At the deepest levels of human life... [w]e need insights into ourselves and our world that can help us understand how to learn and grow from our experiences of diversity, tension, and conflict.” These insights into our world are what this series of columns have attempted to reveal: from equal rights (Part 2) to castes (Part 3), to resentments (Part 4), to a non-zero-sum world (Part 5), to emotions intelligence (Part 6), to exclusionary castes (Part 7), to conspiracy theories (Part 8).

The broken-open heart has the ability not to suppress conflict, but to convert

it to social progress. To those looking for techniques to use on others to solve our social dilemma, look elsewhere. I cannot put it better than Palmer. The broken-open heart...

“...is where we can learn how to “think the world together,” not apart, and find the courage to act on what we know.

If you hold your knowledge of self and world wholeheartedly, your heart will at times get broken by loss, failure, defeat, betrayal, or death. What happens next in you and the world around you depends on *how* your heart breaks. If it breaks *apart* into a thousand pieces, the result may be anger, depression, and disengagement. If it breaks *open* into greater capacity to hold the complexity and contradictions of human experience, the results may be new life...hearts [that] have been broken open, not apart, help us hold our differences creatively and use our power courageously for the sake of a more equitable, just, and compassionate world.”

So, it comes down to facing the stories we choose to tell ourselves based on the condition of our heart. If those stories come from the imagined reality of superior and inferior castes rather than an inclusive story of community,

continued on page 5

Driftless Grace — When life gives you...

Grace Vosen, *Columnist*

I never carry cash, but I felt guiltier than usual about it the other day when I walked past dueling lemonade stands. The two tables were set up across from each other on a silent back street. If they were relying on foot traffic, I would be their only visitor for a while.

As I pondered what to do, I was approached by the advance guard. A boy rode up to me on his bike from the stand on the south side of the street. He asked if I wanted some lemonade. “How much is it?” I replied, thinking there might be a neglected quarter in my wallet. But a cup of lemonade runs for a dollar these days — inflation,

y’know.

When I told him I didn’t have a dollar, the enterprising kid said, “Or it’s 75 cents.” I informed him that I didn’t have that either, but that I would come back later with the money. He returned to the stand and relayed this information to his family. Not wanting to leave anybody out, I said something similar to the girl on the north side of the street.

Now I had a decision to make. Dinnertime was coming on. If I stayed home much longer, I’d be breaking the promise I had made to those kids. This might convey the wrong lesson about adults and honesty. On the other hand, going back might teach them to trust people too willingly.

It was a complicated question (the complications, of course, all stemming from within myself).

In the end, I did go back. The northern stand sold me a chocolate



Grace Vosen

chip cookie, but the other family had packed up and gone inside. I guess that’s just how life works sometimes. What I can say, as a former kid myself, is that the young entrepreneurs won’t remember anything their customers did or said. They’ll remember waking up with the need to have a lemonade stand, sitting outside on a beautiful day with their siblings or on their own, and eating and drinking away their profits while just being kids.

Grace Vosen is a writer and conservation educator living in Spring Green. She blogs about both the human and nonhuman communities of our region at DriftlessGrace.com.

Contact us

PO Box 144
Spring Green, Wisconsin 53588 USA
(608) 588-6694
editor@valleysentinelnews.com
valleysentinelnews.com

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-Chief

Nicole Aimone

Managing Editor

Taylor Scott

Legal Editor

Gary Ernest Grass, esq.

Graphic Designer

Julianna Williams

Community Column

Grace Vosen

CONTRIBUTORS IN THIS EDITION

Commentary/Opinion Column

Beverly Pestel

Commentary/Opinion Column

Katie Green

Have graphic design experience or interested in writing and becoming a community contributor? Let us know. Thank you to all of our contributors for believing in our community.

Editorial Policy

On certain topics in areas of great community interest, the editors of the Valley Sentinel may take positions they believe best represent and serve the interests of the community. Any opinions or positions taken by the editorial board are separate and distinct in labeling and substance from the community journalism that appears in the rest of the publication and does not affect the integrity and impartiality of our reporting.

Letter to the Editor Policy

Letters submitted for consideration are subject to fact-checking and editing for space and clarity. Submissions must have a compelling local community interest. Letters to the editor must fit within a 500-word limit, and include name, city and phone number. Phone numbers are for office use only and will not be published. Letters of a political nature, without chance of rebuttal, will not be published the week before an election.

Full and up-to-date policies available at: www.valleysentinelnews.com

Column Policy

Editors may feature opinion columns written by public figures, members of the public or other publication staff. Columns reflect the opinions of the individual contributors and do not represent positions of the publication. Guest columns of an anticipated length more than 500 words should seek prior editor authorization.

Community Discussion Policy

From time to time the editorial board may select letters to the editor of a particular compelling community interest where a public figure or accountable public action is the recipient of criticism and allow, in the same issue, the subject of the criticism chance for rebuttal, with expounded independent input. The format shall be point, counterpoint and expert analysis. This community discussion shall serve as a moderated dialogue that presents multiple views of important community topics.



Est. 2020
igne conflatum
“Forged in Fire”

Valley Sentinel is a free, bi-weekly single-copy news publication, available on newsstands in the area.

Covering Arena, Lone Rock, Plain, Spring Green and the surrounding areas in Sauk, Iowa and Richland counties.

This edition printed June 22, 2022 due to its size and delays.

Subscribe

Want the paper delivered to your home or business? Subscribe online at valleysentinelnews.com/subscribe or subscribe annually with your name, phone number, address and \$30 sent to: Valley Sentinel, PO Box 144, Spring Green, WI 53588

Valley Sentinel is published in Spring Green, Wisconsin every other Thursday by Lower Wisconsin River Valley Sentinel, LLC. ISSN 2694-541X (print) — ISSN 2694-5401 (online)

Member, Wisconsin Newspaper Association

Legal Editor's Column — An analysis of Dobbs, what it means, doesn't mean

continued from page 2

filing, but from other media accounts it seems a little odd to me.

Reportedly, the suit argues that a 1985 statute regulating abortions in accordance with *Roe v. Wade* functioned to repeal the 1849 statute. They also reportedly argue that the law is just way too old, and lacks the consent of the voters. (It was passed when not even all white men had the franchise.) They reportedly expect to nullify the law.

What makes this seem peculiar to me is the case I mentioned above, *State v. Black*. Black was accused of assaulting his wife and killing the child they expected to have within the week. When he was charged under the statute, he made the same argument that it was impliedly repealed by the 1985 abortion law. The Wisconsin Supreme Court, 5-2, rejected this argument. It said that new statutes are presumed not to repeal the old ones so long as they can be reconciled. They decided that the old law clearly was intended to apply to violent acts and *not* to consensual medical abortions. So under the current understanding, the 1849 law does not really make abortions illegal at all!

Nevertheless, I can see why one would want assurance that this ruling would actually stick, or that the old law would be deemed repealed.

Other recent developments include

the governor promising to give clemency to anyone convicted of providing abortions that would have been constitutionally protected before Dobbs. There is a widespread notion that a pardon somehow requires an admission of guilt. The opposite may be true: at least in many jurisdictions, a pardon establishes legal innocence for all legal purposes, and insulates the recipient from other forms of liability.

Some county district attorneys have said they will not prosecute abortions under the 1849 law. Some governors have pledged to remove such DAs. It is uncertain whether this would really be legal. The discretion of prosecutors to refrain from enforcement has been described as “nearly absolute.” Declining to prosecute providers of reproductive care probably would not furnish the “good cause” required by statute for a governor to act.

The assurances of a friendly district attorney might be more stable than reliance on a pardon, because the state as a whole is very purple, while some counties are deep deep blue. Criminal venue generally depends on the county where the alleged offense occurred, so it would generally be under the control of the parent seeking reproductive services.

However, there would be legal ways to get around this. Wisconsin allows private prosecutions when a district attorney refuses to act.

Finally, it should be noted that

when abortion shifts from being a Constitutional right to being a criminal act, there are issues other than prosecution to be concerned about. Calling a woman who seeks to end a pregnancy a criminal would not be defamatory. Obtaining an abortion may become a legal basis to deny employment or other opportunities. It may become evidence in parental rights hearings. Law enforcement may investigate this crime even though it is unlikely to be prosecuted, obtaining warrants to search for clues regarding one's sexual and medical actions. If the father of the unborn child lives in another state which treats life as beginning at conception, the mother could conceivably be sued for wrongful death in a civil action. States that outlaw abortion may file criminal actions against out-of-state providers based on their long arm jurisdiction, and it's not absolutely clear they could not legally succeed.

Well, it feels like I've just written a short book, so I'll leave it there. If you've read all this way, congratulations and thanks.

I know there are a lot of questions I haven't addressed: Should the court be more responsive to majority views? Is it functioning properly? Can justices be impeached for misleading senators at their confirmation hearings? Are there other strong Constitutional grounds for attacking anti-abortion laws? Should we expand the court? Should we limit

judicial review? Can Biden allow abortion on federal lands by executive order? Can Congress preempt the states to make abortion legal everywhere, or illegal everywhere? Are there ways to reduce the need for abortion without infringing on basic rights? Is the right to bodily autonomy the same in the abortion and vaccination debates? Is there a eugenic basis for some wanting more or fewer abortions? How committed is the national Democratic Party to choice? Do men in Congress honestly not know how menstruation works? Is the reason why forced birth advocates want to adopt your unborn baby but will not adopt from among the tens of thousands of existing orphans because they secretly want to eat your baby and babies start to lose their flavor about a week after birth?

All good questions. Maybe next time.

Gary Grass graduated magna cum laude from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 2003 where he was on law review and won several awards for scholarship and writing. Specializing in appellate advocacy since 2007, he has argued cases before the Wisconsin Supreme Court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, won numerous reversals of convictions and other lower court rulings, and made law in published opinions that have expanded the legal rights of criminal defendants.

Our Social Dilemma — Part 9: The Human Spirit - Soon

continued from page 3

conflicts are inevitable. If we cannot summon the emotional intelligence to see the world as win-win rather than zero-sum, conflicts are inevitable. If our story comes from a heart broken apart, we will be plagued with jealousy, envy, depression, and resentment.

The real danger to our society, however, comes from those castes who see themselves as exclusionary. If the heart is so broken apart that it cannot see beyond self-interest and denies the value of others, the story becomes one that is intractable and destructive, filled with distrust, anger, and too often, violence. These castes are our

greatest danger and our greatest challenge because these broken hearts may be beyond repair.

For the rest of us, once we know our own heart, and have seen it broken open, we may be able to see into the hearts of others. Only then can we have the conversations with others that we need – and your heart will tell you what those conversations should be – only then can we hope to see a change in the world.

Writing this series of columns has been an engaging and clarifying journey for me, I hope you have found some value here. I end with the story I choose to believe in, it is my imagined

reality, one I hope will become an objective reality. It is the story of “Someday” set to music by Celtic Woman.

Someday, when we are wiser
When the world's older
When we have learned
I pray someday we may yet
Live to live and let live

Someday, life will be fairer
Need will be rarer
And greed will not pay
Godspeed, this bright millennium
On its way, let it come
someday

There are some days, dark
and bitter
Seems we haven't got a prayer
But a prayer for something
better
Is the one thing we all share

One day, someday...soon.

Beverly is a retired professor. She lives in a remodeled farmhouse and tends 40 acres of woodland in Richland County. When not in the woods she spends her time reading, writing and enjoying the beauty of the Driftless Area.

The Battle for Better Broadband Continues

Senator Howard Marklein, (R-Spring Green)

The Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC) recently announced the awards for the most recent round of Rural Broadband Expansion Grants. They awarded 71 grants worth

\$124,967,392 out of the \$125 million I fought for in the state budget.

The 17th Senate District received four awards worth \$16,601,447. These projects are in Juneau, Richland, Grant and Lafayette counties. Only 16% of the applications submitted by communities in the 17th District were selected. There were 20 other projects that did not receive awards.

I am happy for the communities that received awards. They will each have a significant impact and reach new households that have been waiting for connections. But I am frustrated by the PSC's direction and dismissal of several important projects. There were five projects for rural Grant County, proposed by TDS Telecom, that were denied for the second time. After the last grant round, TDS revamped the projects, per the recommendations by the PSC, but they were passed over again. These



Senator Howard Marklein

communities are desperate for service and continue to wait!

This is not to say that the 17th Senate District hasn't had tremendous success utilizing the Rural Broadband Expansion Grant program. Since the program started in 2014, we have received funding for 42 projects worth \$39 million in grant funding with a \$43 million match. In total, we have invested \$82 million in broadband in our communities. This funding has created or improved connections for 81,874 households and 6,848 businesses in the eight

years since the program started!

But I know there is still work to do. We must find a way to reach the areas that are tough to reach and very expensive to finance. This was clearly illustrated by the 20 projects that did not receive funding this cycle.

I believe that the Rural Broadband Expansion Grant program needs to be overhauled and adjusted to reach the households, communities and businesses that are still not connected. I am working on a proposal that I plan to bring back to the legislature in the new session to achieve our goals. I have been fighting the battle for better broadband since 2014 and I am not done yet.

Thank you to all of the community leaders, telecommunications companies and individual champions who have worked so hard to expand rural broadband into our communities. You have made a tremendous impact, but there is still work to do. I am here with you – all of the way.

The 17th Senate District projects that received funding in the most recent grant cycle include:

LaValle Telephone Cooperative

– Juneau County – Fiber to the premise to reach five business and 285 residential locations in the towns of Lindina, Plymouth, Summit and Wonewoc. This includes 290 currently unserved locations. (Award: \$2,931,908, Match: \$1,578,788) Ma

LaValle Telephone Cooperative – Richland County – Fiber to the premise to reach three business and 457 residential locations in the towns of Ithaca, Richland, Rockbridge and Willow. This includes 460 currently unserved locations. (Award: \$3,529,430, Match: \$2,352,950)

LICT Corporation (aka – Cuba City Telephone) – Grant and Lafayette Counties – Fiber to the premise service to reach 117 business and 1,604 residential locations. This includes eight currently unserved locations. (Award: \$7,955,000, Match: \$7,955,000)

LYNXX Networks – Juneau County – Fiber to the premise to reach 20 businesses and 862 residential locations in the towns of Lemonweir and Lisbon. This includes 100 currently unserved locations. (Award: \$2,185,109, Match: \$2,896,541)