

Perhaps you've had the experience of clicking a link to a video or a news story and taking a second to realize that what you're seeing is real life — life as we've known it over the past year or two: Boston Dynamics and its dancing robots, drones delivering vaccines to children in remote areas, MIT and its brain-controlled prosthetics for amputees. SpaceX nails the landing — holy smoke.

Perhaps you've had the experience of clicking a link to a video or a news story and taking a second to realize that what you're seeing is real life — life as we knew it over the past year or two: horrifying hunger in Yemen and South Sudan; police-state repression in Venezuela and North Korea; migrants in Libya captured like animals and sold as slaves; monarchies that still take themselves seriously.

It is astonishing that these things exist in the world; it is inexplicable that they exist in the same world. And it's a small world: If you want to see what conditions on the ground are like in Kazakhstan, it's only a click away. "How do people live like that?" we wonder, even as the hungry souls reaching out to embrace us from the other side of that observation see San Francisco or Miami and ask the same thing.

We know what Jane Jacobs, author of "The Death and Life of Great American Cities," thought about this: "To seek 'causes' of poverty ... is an intellectual dead end, because poverty has no causes. Only prosperity has causes."

What causes prosperity? It seems like a ridiculous question: If we know what causes prosperity, why is there any poverty? Who would choose poverty? Even the wealthiest people in poor societies, the ones who are never obliged to lift anything heavier than

champagne, still must live in poor societies and suffer the ugliness and stagnation of general poverty even if they escape the direst consequences of personal poverty.

There's a reason why all that residential real estate in New York City and London got bid up over the past couple decades, and it isn't that the people in Southern California finally discovered the unique charms of Staten Island. It's because even the wealthiest people — especially the wealthiest people — in the backward countries would rather live where there's a Whole Foods and reasonably clean sidewalks, and where they are not always living one economic downturn away from Red October. It's not like the oligarchs in China don't know the history of their own country.

Credit the division of labor

In the 1990s, we came to believe, if only for a couple of years, that "the laws of nature and of nature's God" had been replaced by Moore's

Law, the observation that the computing power practically available doubles roughly every two years. Everything that Moore's Law touched got better and cheaper every year — and it continues to do so. This has produced radical changes in how we live: Twelve years ago, there was no such thing as a smartphone, much less was there the omnipresence of handheld screens that distinguishes (and in part disfigures) life in the developed world now.

But Moore's Law is not a force of nature, and it is not the case that our items of technology and our manufactured goods must get better, less expensive and more widely available every year. They do, but they don't just.

The miracle of modern life — modern life itself, really — has one ultimate source: the division of labor. The division of labor is not just a term from a dusty undergraduate economics textbook — it is the secret sauce, the fuel in the rocket engine of capitalist development that has transformed our world. It took about 66 years to go from Kitty Hawk to Neil Armstrong landing on the moon — Jeff Goldblum is 66 years old. In the course of one Goldblum — one Goldblum so far — we went from standing on the Earth and wondering about the moon to standing on the moon and observing the Earth.

And nobody did that. An enormous number of people each did a little part.

Because of the division of labor, the people who are searching for a cure for HIV do not have to spend their days baking their own bread — or growing their own wheat, grinding it into flour, gathering the rest of the ingredients and then, finally, if they haven't starved to death in the interim, baking their

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There is no true student-loan crisis

The crisis is that too few college students graduate so they cannot afford to repay their loans, explains Robert Morris University President **CHRIS HOWARD**

College and university presidents increasingly find ourselves having to combat a number of negative misperceptions about higher education, but none has been quite so stubborn as the notion that our graduates are being crushed beneath a mountain of student-loan debt.

The issue is certainly front and center in the media. Recently I had the privilege to attend the annual Higher Education Media Dinner in New York City, which features 25 journalists and a dozen or so college and university presidents from across the country. All of it on the record, with our public relations people looking on apprehensively while the presidents bluntly answered question after question about how we could keep costs down and debt low.

The consensus among the institutions represented — which included large public flagships, private liberal arts schools and professionally focused institutions such as Robert Morris University — is that the United States does not have a student-loan crisis. Our nation does, however, have a college-completion crisis.

That may sound self-serving coming from a group of college presidents. But it's also the slowly emerging consensus among researchers who have carefully studied the issue, sifting through sensational headlines to examine the data underlying the economic fortunes of college graduates and college dropouts. It is the latter who should concern us most.

First, let's get the most important question out of the way: Is a college degree still a sound investment? The answer is clearly yes. College graduates can expect to earn at least \$1 million more during their lifetimes than those without a degree, according to the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

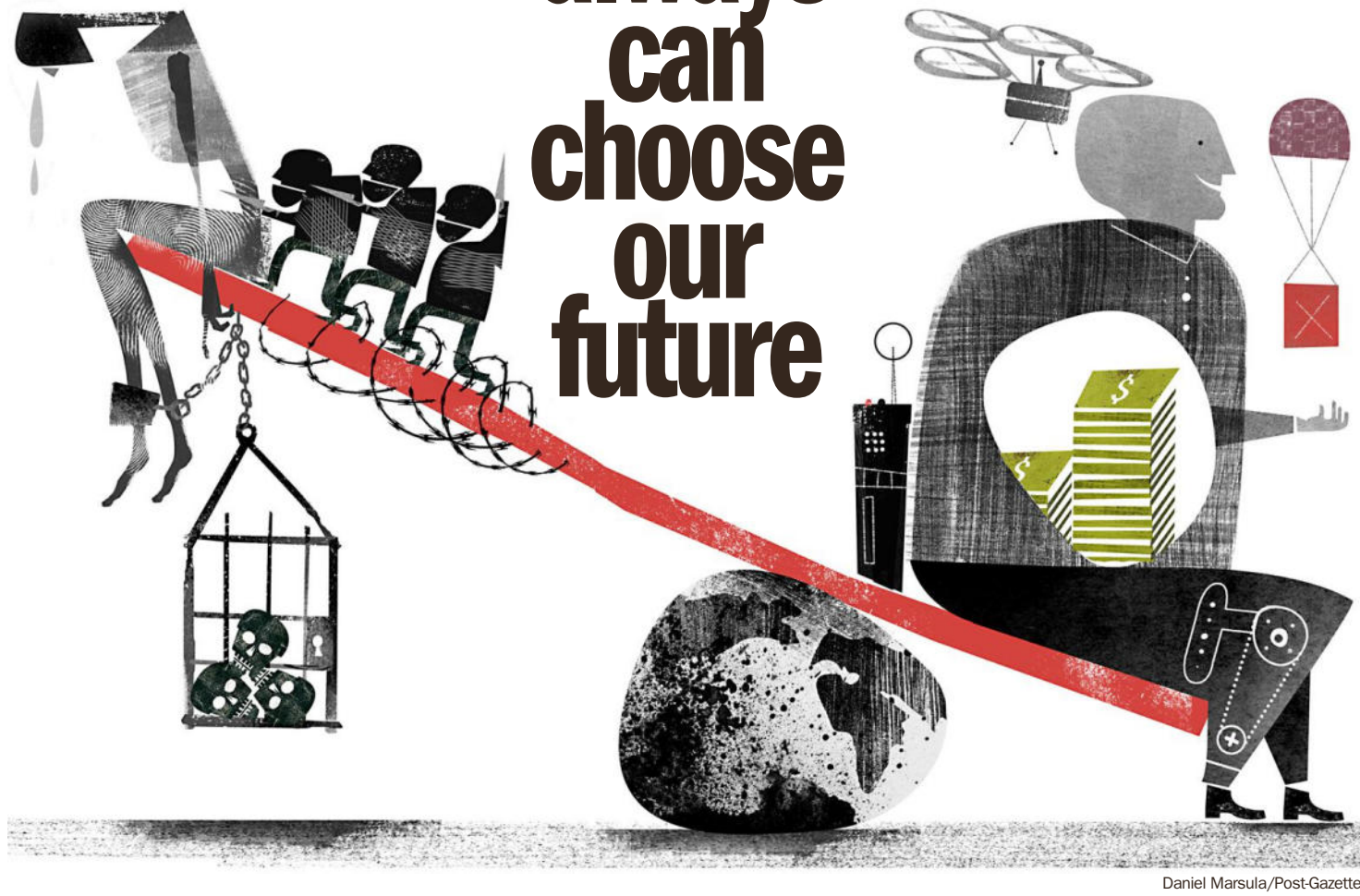
Georgia State University President Mark Becker was quick to note during the media dinner that even at the height of the Great Recession, unemployment among

SEE **CRISIS**, PAGE D-4

There is a world of miracles out there, and a darker one, too, explains the National Review's

KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

We always can choose our future



Daniel Marsula/Post-Gazette

Unfinished business from the Holocaust

As Holocaust survivors pass from the scene, we must redouble efforts to return to their families artworks stolen by the Nazis, urges diplomat **STUART E. EIZENSTAT**

During World War II, the Nazis looted some 600,000 paintings from Jews, at least 100,000 of which are still missing.

The looting was not only designed to enrich the Third Reich but also integral to the Holocaust's goal of eliminating all vestiges of Jewish identity and culture. The Allies warned neutral nations in the 1943 London Declaration against trafficking in Nazi-looted art. Art experts, the storied "Monuments Men," were embedded in the liberating U.S. Army. The looted wealth they preserved was returned to the countries where it had been stolen in the expectation that the original owners or their heirs would receive it. That hope was misplaced: Most items were sold or incorporated into public and private collections, lost to their rightful owners.

Decades later, in December 1998, we started to change that. Forty-four countries committed to the Washington Principles on Nazi-Confiscated Art that I negotiated for identifying, publishing and ultimately restoring the looted art through negotiation. To achieve a consensus, we had to permit nations to act within their

own laws, and appealed to their moral conscience to adopt a "just and fair solution." Many felt these nonbinding principles would be ineffectual. They were wrong, but the lack of legal requirement has created barriers we have yet to fully overcome.

The principles were an overdue, but vital first step. Philippe de Montebello, then head of New York's Metropolitan Museum, correctly forecast that after the Washington Principles "the art world would never be the same." During the past 20 years, galleries, dealers and museums began researching paintings that had passed through European hands between 1933 and 1945 to spot suspicious gaps in their provenance or chain of ownership. With the internet, suspected Nazi-looted art is increasingly being posted on websites. Almost 30,000 works from their collections have been posted by 179 members of the American Alliance of Museums on a portal, a single point of contact for potential claimants to find their Nazi-looted art.

Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Britain have created advisory commissions to resolve disputed claims. Austria has

returned more than 30,000 artworks, books and cultural objects, and Germany has restituted more than 16,000 from its public museums and libraries. Christie's and Sotheby's maintain full-time staffs to implement the Washington Principles, and both auction houses decline to deal in art with suspicious Holocaust-era histories. Christie's has successfully resolved more than 200 claims in the past 20 years. In 2009, the principles were strengthened by the Terezin Declaration, when 46 countries, led by the United States, agreed to extend the Washington Principles to include "public and private institutions" and broaden the meaning of confiscated art to include "forced sales and sales under duress" for Jewish families desperately needing money to escape Nazi Germany.

There have been painful disappointments. Russia and a handful of other European nations that supported the Washington Principles have largely ignored or barely implemented them. Provenance research is a low priority in Europe's public museums and nonexistent in its private

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Share in veterans' grief

It is our duty to listen to our warriors' stories and help to heal their pain, writes the Post-Gazette's **DIANA NELSON JONES**

We met before dinner on a Thursday at St. Thomas Seminary near Hartford, Conn. Each smile and handshake acknowledged that we shared a commitment for the weekend. Most of us had read "War and the Soul."

After dinner, we filled chairs in a circle in conference room A, 24 of us — veterans, civilians and a support team of therapists. Over the next three days, veterans shared their grief with civilians who listened, rapt.

That retreat was in April. Four-day retreats are among several healing events held each year by Soldier's Heart, a nonprofit founded by psychotherapist Ed Tick and Kate Dahlstedt, a clinical psychologist, in the wake of Mr. Tick's 2005 book "War and the Soul." It is a must-read for anyone

who is interested in post-traumatic growth and the moral injuries that veterans suffer.

I was so moved and affected at the retreat that, when I returned to Pittsburgh, I began raising money for a similar retreat here for local veterans and civilians to attend without having to pay.

Thanks to scores of people, most of them my friends, who gave \$20, \$50, \$75, \$200, and The Pittsburgh Foundation, which covered most of the cost, a retreat will be held April 11-14 at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

Veterans from Western Pennsylvania will be given first preference. I encourage civilians to apply, too. The application period is open until Feb. 1. Apply at www.soldiersheart.net/aprilretreat.

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THE NEXT PAGE

Poetry and prose winners from Carnegie Mellon University's Martin Luther King Jr. Writing Awards. PAGE D-7



Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

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The new urban bullies

Tech companies need to learn public engagement

Tech companies might have some great ideas, but they should spend more time consulting with the people who lives are going to be affected by them.

The need for that kind of outreach is evident in Toronto, where residents are upset with a Google affiliate's plans to create a smart neighborhood; in Queens, where Amazon has faced backlash for deciding to locate half of its second headquarters in the New York City borough; and in Arizona, where Waymo's self-driving vans have been attacked nearly two dozen times over the past two years by residents wary of artificial intelligence.

The disregard for public opinion also was evident in Pittsburgh last year as Mayor Bill Peduto and Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald courted Amazon's HQ2 with a lavish package of giveaways and used various tricks to keep the details secret for as long as possible.

The government obsequiousness once reserved for professional sports teams has been extended to the tech sector as cities compete to lure the hippest companies, create the most jobs and cut the sexiest profiles. But people already living and working in a city shouldn't have life-changing technology or highly subsidized corporate tenants foisted on them without a chance to weigh in. They shouldn't be conscripted as guinea pigs, or their community made to serve as the beta proving ground, for the next

big thing.

That's what happened in Toronto. Google affiliate Sidewalk Labs won a contract to turn a 12-acre parcel into what PRI's The World called a "futuristic neighborhood" with autonomous shuttles, green buildings and data-driven operating systems. Objections have arisen to the way Sidewalk Labs won the contract, to the vast amounts of individual-level data that would be harnessed to make the smart city operate and to Sidewalk Labs' quasi-government role.

In discussing his search for a site, Sidewalk Labs CEO Daniel Doctoroff made have intended a compliment when he said "the single place that we thought was the best was Toronto." He may have chosen Toronto, but Torontonians didn't choose him or his Orwellian vision.

A similar angst underlies the incidents in the Phoenix suburb of Chandler, where people have thrown rocks at Waymo's vans, tried to run them off the road and screamed at the vehicles and their human back-up drivers. In Queens, the objections to Amazon's impending building project are more concrete; traffic congestion, a housing crunch and other changes will turn the neighborhood upside down.

Maybe because of the nature of their work, tech companies often lack a human touch. In Toronto, Queens, Chandler and, yes, Pittsburgh, it has cost their brands more than their apps can calculate.

An incredible breakthrough

Cocktail of germs may cure childhood leukemia

To those parents waging war on dirt and germs: Set down the dustpan. Stow away the antibacterial wipes. And, that dirt under the little one's nails that you were hurrying to scrub away? No rush.

And while you absorb that information, take this in: The ear infections and runny noses that you were trying to avoid like the, umm, plague? No need.

If a medical scientist across The Pond is right:

Dirt is good.

Infant illness is instructive.

And the cure for childhood leukemia could be a cocktail of germs mixed up in drinkable yogurt.

Many years of inquiry by Mel Greaves of London's Institute of Cancer Research has led him to these (simplified for common consumption) conclusions.

And for his work, he learned in December that he would receive knighthood this year.

It is an honor richly deserved.

The professor has been on the trail of the sometimes-deadly childhood blood disorder for three decades.

While 90 percent of the cases are cured, current treatment protocols can be toxic. Mr. Greaves believes he is on the way to developing a less caustic — indeed, a potentially tasty — alternative.

But, first, how he got from there to here: 1.) A rising incident rate in his home country has been documented and the conclusion made that childhood leukemia is more of a problem in general within affluent societies. 2.) The disease begins in the womb with a genetic mutation which, later in the child's life, is triggered by another biological event that sends the child's immune system into overdrive, ultimately triggering another mutation — full-blown leukemia.

While Mr. Greaves doesn't know how to avoid to the underlying genetic mutation, he believes the trigger for its manifestation

can be avoided if a child's immune system is forced to battle infection in the first year of life. Essentially, that battle would "prime" the baby's immune system to work properly later. Hence, the concern that parents who "protect" their children from dirt, germs and infection actually may be undermining them.

He told The Guardian newspaper, "When such a baby (that has been insulated from germs and infection) is eventually exposed to common infections, his or her unprimed immune system reacts in a grossly abnormal way. It overreacts and triggers chronic inflammation." And that inflammation causes the release of chemicals that triggers the second mutation that manifests as leukemia.

He discerned how to block the chronic inflammation trigger, looking closely at the human gut, with all its bacteria, viruses and other microbes. He has found that people who live "cleaner" lives have fewer microbes. He's working now with mice to find out which "bugs" are best at stimulating rodent immune systems with an eye toward human experimentation in a couple of years. In essence, he's looking for a way to prime a child's immune system and he believes the answer is a just-right cocktail of microbes, mixed into a yogurt drink.

If it works out the way the professor expects, the microbe-laced yogurt could combat childhood leukemia as well as other conditions like diabetes and allergies.

There is a distance to travel. Mr. Greaves must complete his rodent experiments then duplicate them in humans. Then other scientists will have to replicate the results. In the meantime, his work offers hope for a major medical advancement — and perhaps some justification for a less-than-sanitized home and some tolerance for sick kids at the next Baby & Me get-together.



Senator Romney's High Horse

Letters to the editor

Returning the favor on Mitzvah Day

In most definitions, the Hebrew word "mitzvah" means "a good deed." Every Dec. 25, the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh sponsors Mitzvah Day. Its purpose is to give those who celebrate Christmas the opportunity to be with their families and loved ones. To accomplish this, hundreds of volunteers are mobilized to come together to provide services to organizations throughout the entire community.

Over 300 meals, donated and prepared by the William Penn catering staff, were served to the homeless, the hungry and the lonely by approximately 30 Salvation Army volunteers and 25 Mitzvah Day volunteers, among them my daughter, son-in-law, two grandsons and me.

While our purpose (and it was fulfilled), was to do the mitzvah — to make Christmas more meaningful and joyful and to bring relief and comfort to those who desperately need it — the over 300 hungry, appreciative and sensitive people ironically fulfilled the Mitzvah and literally did the good deed.

They recognized me as being Jewish, by my "Stronger Than Hate" (Jewish Star included) T-shirt and my yarmulke (skull cap); I was continuously greeted by those whom I was serving with all of the following:

"I am sorry for your loss" ... "Shalom" ... "May God be with you" ... "I am with you," in response to the Oct. 27 Tree of Life massacre.

This was the Christmas message of the over 300 hungry, lonely and homeless people. They expressed their concern and prayers for us, before they expressed their gratitude for the food they were receiving.

The irony: On Mitzvah Day, they performed the Mitzvah.

LARRY RUBIN
Squirrel Hill

Finally, as all fees are to be distributed back to ratepayers and administrative costs are capped, the plan is revenue neutral, thus allaying fears of those who worry about increased regulation.

The Energy Innovation Act is a forward-thinking proposal that combines concern for science with protection of our National Interests. Rep. Mike Doyle and Sens. Bob Casey and Pat Toomey should support these measures when they are re-introduced in the new Congress.

ROB SCHWARTZ
Highland Park

Honor all religions

It is very disconcerting that just a few months after the Tree of Life attack, Ross Douthat produced the Dec. 30 Forum "The Return of Paganism," which was laced with sectarian arrogance.

Even though his own religion is struggling with a pedophilia scandal and internal dissension and controversy, he thought it a good idea to insult, ridicule and label Christian heretics, fellow Americans exercising their First Amendment rights.

As America has no state religion and everyone is free to follow his own conscience, it follows that there can be no heresy in America as all religious views and interpretations are equal before the law. Also, Mr. Douthat should know that our Constitution is like a contract; it can only work if everyone supports it, especially the Bill of Rights.

Mr. Douthat also needs to remember our own history as a nation. There was a time when certain religious and philosophical

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views were not acceptable: Catholicism, Judaism, Native American religions, agnosticism, atheism and even minor Protestant groups. Politicians even opposed immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe because they didn't want American culture "tainted" by Catholics and Jews.

Inquisitions and pogroms don't just appear out of thin air. They begin when people of influence — self-righteous religious leaders, "holier than thou" politicians and even snide columnists — choose to insult, ridicule and marginalize any who think differently than they do. That just stokes the glowing embers of bigotry and hatred.

LEO NAGORSKI
Shaler

Support energy act

Regarding climate change, it is certainly true that "A nation doesn't have to exempt itself from the laws of science to protect its interests," (Dec. 30 editorial "After Paris"). However, claiming that effective climate action requires sacrifices that will hurt our economy is not accurate. Carbon fee and dividend programs that pair fees placed on polluting emissions with dividends paid to consumers can fight climate change and encourage innovation that will lead to economic growth.

The bipartisan Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (S.3791/H.R. 7173), introduced in November, includes measures that will strengthen our economy while reducing our reliance on fossil fuels. According to Citizen's Climate Lobby, a nonpartisan organization, the act is potentially effective, with reductions of emissions by 40 percent or more possible by 2030.

It is good for people, as most families will receive more in dividend than they are charged — including a "prebate" check to be distributed to payees before any fees are collected. It's good for the economy, with as many as 2.1 million new jobs anticipated. It is bipartisan, with Democratic and Republican supporters in both the House and the Senate.

Patients are overpaying for health care



I read with interest the Jan. 3 article "Hospital Sticker Prices" about the area health systems listing their charges for various procedures. As a recent patient of one of our larger local health systems, I have become convinced that our health care system is very broken. Within a span of two weeks, I was diagnosed with cancer, sent for tests, met an oncologist and was scheduled for surgery. What a whirlwind and how completely overwhelming. Fortunately for me, I have a wonderful surgeon and the other care providers were excellent.

I cannot say my experience was the same from a business aspect. Despite having very good insurance coverage, I was forced to pay upfront for my surgery or be denied care. Of course, I paid for the surgery. I have spent the past two months trying to get my over-payment back from the hospital system.

It has billed the insurance company over \$65,000 for the

outpatient surgery and care so far. The insurance company has repriced it to just over \$23,000, including my share. Seems to me that a service is worth what a service is worth, regardless of how I am paying for it. The health care system is accepting the \$23,000 as payment in full and is still making millions. So why are they billing \$65,000? Does a plumber charge more to change your water heater depending on how or who is paying the bill? I think not.

How do our health care systems get away with this completely misleading and abusive practice? It has taken the power away from the patients to make care decisions for themselves. Health care has changed from a personal interaction to one of big business and the more confusing they can make it, the better for the health care giants.

MARY E. HOERSTER
Carnegie

Sunday Perspectives

Against the current

KEITH C. BURRIS

Promise keepers

The idea of contract in politics



Associated Press

Sen. Eugene McCarthy campaigning for president in New Haven, Conn., in 1968

In 1968, after a violent Democratic convention ignored his primary victories and standing in the polls and refused a peace platform on the Vietnam War, many of his supporters urged Sen. Eugene McCarthy to launch a third party run for president.

It was probably too late. There were too many ballot-access obstacles. But when McCarthy said “no,” the main reason he gave was contract. He’d promised not to do that. He’d run as a Democrat and he felt bound. Later, so that he would not be so bound, he said he would not seek re-election to the Senate. For he could, realistically, only do so as a Democrat.

And yet, when Richard Nixon asked him to become ambassador to the United Nations, McCarthy, who had two years to serve in his Senate term, had one condition — that the Republican governor appoint a Democrat to the seat. The people of Minnesota had elected a Democrat and he felt they should have one until the next election. (Interestingly, Mr. Nixon approved, it was the GOP governor who would not go along.)

All this may seem now, as it did to many then, rarefied scruples. And maybe Mr. McCarthy did take his idea of contract a bit to extremes.

But we have gotten far away from the notion that party platforms — the pledges candidates run on — and political promises not only matter, but are binding.

It’s an idea we should renew.

Imagine if every politician asked himself: What did I promise the people and how will I fulfill my promises?

The classic example of broken, and even reversed, promises is the 1964 presidential race: Lyndon Johnson promised deescalation of the war in Vietnam and Barry Goldwater pledged escalation. LBJ gave us what Barry promised.

In the matter of contract, keeping one’s promises, Donald Trump has been a breath of fresh air. He promised to “put America

first,” and he has. He promised an aggressive trade policy and more trade equity, including re-writing NAFTA, and he has done it. He promised originalist judges and he has delivered. He promised to end foreign entanglements and he is following through.

Indeed, Sen. Rand Paul says the establishment is “petrified” that Mr. Trump will be the first president in memory to end rather than start a war.

We can argue about the merit of these positions, either as absolutes and changes of direction, or as corrections along what will be, ultimately, a familiar course.

But, they are promises kept.

He promised a wall between the United States and Mexico.

This in contrast to President Barack Obama’s broken promise to close the Guantanamo Bay prison camp — a promise as symbolically important to him and his followers as the wall is to Mr. Trump.

Or Bill Clinton’s promise to rebuild the nation’s infrastructure in 1992.

Or George Herbert Walker Bush’s promise not to raise taxes, after we read his lips.

This does not mean that the president is honorable in all or most things. Or that his personal and petty attacks on people who

leave his administration are worthy of a president. This president fails to understand presidential norms. He fails to comprehend that, because he is head of state, restraint, dignity, good manners and uplift are expected of him. The White House chief of staff, or the head of the joint chiefs, can be an unapologetic SOB. The president cannot be.

But that is a different issue.

For a politician, especially a president, to seek to keep the promises he has made, and to be the person he ran as, is honorable and good for our democracy.

At the very least, a president ought to explain when he changes his mind.

The military did change this president’s mind on pulling troops out of various foreign entanglements precipitously. But not on getting out ultimately.

To my way of thinking, he is both right in principle and right to keep his promise. Should one more fine young American die in Afghanistan? Tell me why.

Contract ought to count in politics. Politicians should feel bound by their promises and to those to whom those promises were made.

Members of Congress should not be allowed to quit midterm and become lobbyists.

If a candidate for Congress

promised to vote against Nancy Pelosi as House speaker during his campaign, he should keep his word.

Ex-presidents ought not to be able to cash in on corporate and “rain-making” opportunities when they have, as a matter of contract, accepted a de facto salary and staffing from the public.

Mr. Trump’s presidency may fail because he does not fully understand the office and his role. In this he is like Bill Clinton and Richard Nixon, two extremely capable men who somehow could not be presidential. But he will not fail because he did not do what he said he would do.

I can think of two other politicians who have bolstered the idea of contract: One is Newt Gingrich and the other is Bernie Sanders. Mr. Gingrich gave us the “Contract With America.” Much of it was bad. But it laid out a platform, a path, and a promise to fulfill it.

Mr. Sanders was not quite as explicit in 2016. But he has always been a candidate running on a platform, not a personality. Who can doubt that as president he would have pursued single-payer health care with single-minded ferocity? I would not be surprised if he lays out a detailed contract for a 2020 campaign: Elect me and you get precisely this.

My own preference is for a politician who says he has “... nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.” But we know that won’t fly.

Candidates should take care what they promise, as perhaps Mr. Trump did not. He is stuck with his wall now. Bernie should think twice about promising free college. It is not healthy and almost certainly not possible.

But Mr. Trump has changed the game for after Trump. In the future, American politicians may again be expected to keep the promises they make.

Keith C. Burris is editor and vice president of the Post-Gazette, and editorial director for Block Newspapers (kburris@post-gazette.com).

Jonah Goldberg

Dogs are bipartisan

They don’t care about MAGA or the ‘resistance’

I wanted to write this column about dogs. If you have read my work, you know that I like my dogs. I probably like your dogs, too. Because I just like dogs.

It’s a common sentiment. Dog ownership has been going up markedly for a while now. There are some who worry that dogs — and even cats — are replacing human children as the objects of our devotion.

There’s evidence to support the claim. Many young couples are more eager to have pets than kids. Expenditures on pet insurance have soared. One often sees dogs referred to as “furbabies” on social media. Two decades ago, my wife and I struggled to find hotels on long drives that would accommodate dogs (at least at a reasonable price). Now, many hotels compete for the attention of dog owners. Some businesses eager to hire skilled young workers have generous bring-your-dog-to-work policies. Some even provide “pawternity” care for new dog owners.

A survey by Sun Trust Bank found that 33 percent of first-time home-buying millennials said the desire for a better space for their dog was a factor in their decision. Only 25 percent said marriage was an issue, and just 19 percent said children were.

Psychologist Clay Routledge makes a persuasive case that dog ownership is a symptom of America’s loneliness crisis. As our society becomes more individualistic, Mr. Routledge observed in National Review, “pets may be appealing to some because they lack the agency of humans and thus require less compromise and sacrifice.”

And the problem will likely get worse because, as Mr. Routledge notes, young people report much more anxiety and isolation in the era of the smartphone, which is why anxious college students increasingly request the support of “companion animals.”

In his book “Them,” Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., catalogs America’s loneliness crisis. We have fewer and fewer “non-virtual” friends. Americans entertain others in their homes half as much as they did 25 years ago. People don’t know — never mind socialize with — their neighbors the way they once did.

There’s much to ponder and debate here. But it seems obvious that Mr. Routledge is on to something.

Which brings me back to what I wanted to write about. I post a lot of videos and pictures of my dogs, Zoë and Pippa, on Twitter. I also follow many of the hugely popular dog-focused Twitter accounts (WeRateDogs, The Dogist, Thoughts of Dog, etc.).

Dogs — and animals generally — are among the few things that bridge the partisan divide. Tragedies are a partisan affair. If someone dies in a hurricane or shooting, there’s a mad rush to score political points. Last week, a lovely young woman, Bre Payton, died from a sudden illness, and a bunch of ghouls mocked or celebrated her demise because she was a conservative.

Even babies can be controversial, because babies can touch various nerves, from abortion politics to the apparent scourge of “misgendering” newborns.

But dogs are largely immune to political ugliness. The angriest complaints I get about my dog tweets — from people on both the left and right — are that I’m wasting apparently scarce resources on dogs when I could be expressing my anger about whatever outrage the complainers demand I be outraged about.

This is one of the reasons I love dogs. Because it is an occupational hazard in my line of work to be constantly drenched in the muck of politics, dogs are a safe harbor. They don’t care about political correctness. They don’t want to Make America Great Again or join the “resistance.” They just want to pursue doggie goodness as they see it.

All these things seem connected. The increasing nastiness of our politics is a byproduct of our social isolation. We look to politics to provide the sense of meaning and belonging once found in community and religion, which is why everything is politicized. The problem is that politics, particularly at the national level, is necessarily about disagreement, which is why it cannot provide the sense of unity people crave from it.

And that’s one reason dogs are so appealing. In an era when everything is a source of discord and politicization, it’s good to have something that stands — and sits and fetches — apart. Because they’re all good dogs.

Jonah Goldberg is a columnist for Tribune Content Agency.

My point

DAVID M. SHRIBMAN

New Hampshire prepares for 2020

Democrats start to flood the Granite State in hopes of ousting Trump from the White House

HART’S LOCATION, N.H.
In our town, we like to know the facts about everybody.

The words were Thornton Wilder’s, they were written more than three-quarters of a century ago, and they can be found in the lines of “Our Town,” the quintessential New Hampshire drama — quintessential, that is, unless you are talking about the drama that just now is unfolding in small North Country hamlets like this one or in the cities in the central and southern parts of the state.

Because what began taking form last week here in the site of the first primary of the 2020 presidential election has the makings of quite a drama. As many as 20 Democratic candidates. New faces, familiar faces, some very old faces. Lust for the White House after two years of Donald J. Trump as president.

This is where knowing all the facts about everyone comes in.

Hart’s Location, with a population of 41, is the smallest town in New Hampshire and one of a handful permitted to cast ballots at the very first moment of Election Day. Everyone knows all the facts about everyone in a place like this — and everyone knows the facts about all the candidates in a state like this.

“We’re just a teeny state, but we conduct this primary the way politics should be,” says Kassandra Ardinger, a Concord activist and former state Senate candidate. “It can only happen this way in a small state.”

Before long the state will be overrun by candidates. “If politicians show up in New Hampshire this season without skis,” says Manchester immigration lawyer Ron Abramson, “they’re running for president.”

Voters here get to scrutinize the candidates in multiple encounters. The presidential race in New Hampshire — a contest to choose



the commander in chief of the most powerful armed forces in the history of the world, the chief executive of a formidable economic power — has the character of a contest for town selectman.

Before the ball fell on the revelry at Times Square, Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts declared her candidacy. This week, Sen. Kamala Harris of California essentially will do the same as she conducts book unveilings in New York City and Washington, D.C.; a political figure widely mentioned as a presidential candidate doesn’t write a biography published the year before the election if her aspirations are merely to exchange her seat on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee for one on Foreign Relations. After her, the deluge.

Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey? Certainly. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York? Bet on it. Sens. Sherrod Brown of Ohio and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota? Don’t be surprised; they just won big battles for their third terms. Sen. Bob Casey of Pennsylvania? Anything’s possible. Former Rep. Beto O’Rourke of Texas? Some of his supporters don’t know a thing about him. And that’s without mentioning those who have sat in governors’ chairs: Terry McAuliffe of Virginia and Steve Bullock of Montana. Never heard of them? Had you heard of Sen. Barack Obama in 2006 ... or Gov. Jimmy Carter in 1974?

The big questions involve two old guys, former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. (78 on Inauguration Day) and Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont (79 on Inauguration Day). Both have run for president before, and both fell short. Both are symbols of opposition to Mr. Trump, and both have big dreams.

One thing unites the Democratic activists who are just now evaluating the field but soon will constitute the ground troops of New Hampshire presidential politics. “We need someone who has built a career on unification,” says the Concord lobbyist Jim Demers, who has been prominent in the state’s politics and who already has signed up with Mr. Booker. “People are tired of divide-and-conquer leadership.”

The problem is that the 2020 Democratic nomination struggle has all the characteristics of divide without the inevitability of conquer. With as many as 20 candidates, the vote here and in Iowa, which holds its caucuses eight days before New Hampshire’s primary, will be deeply divided.

It won’t be like the 2000 New Hampshire primary, when Vice President Al Gore and Sen. Bill Bradley of New Jersey accounted for 95 percent of the vote as the only major contestants. In 1976, Mr. Carter won with only 28.6 percent of the vote, and he was running against only four other candidates, one of them (R. Sargent Shriver) with the slimmest prospects.

A field of 20 or so almost certainly will result in a winner with a small margin of victory — and little momentum for succeeding contests in Nevada and South Carolina. There’s one way for Democrats to avoid that problem, and that would be for an early entry of

Mr. Biden and perhaps Mr. Sanders. “Sometimes, if the big names get in,” says Neil Levesque, who directs the New Hampshire Institute of Politics at St. Anselm College in Goffstown, “it might suck the oxygen, which is to say the money, out of the process.”

The key is the word “sometimes.” Though Mr. Sanders’ 2016 activists have distributed a poll saying 76 percent of his convention delegates remain loyal, some of the senator’s backers are peeling away, in part because of complaints of sexism.

“There was a window for being ideological and idealistic,” says Mr. Abramson, who was host for a Sanders event at his home and was on his 2016 steering committee here. “But right now, we just need to be practical.”

Being practical in the parlance of 2020 Democratic politics means finding a candidate who can topple Mr. Trump, who came within less than a percentage point of winning this state in the general election in 2016.

There’s more than one dimension to politics 2020 here. A year-end NPR/PBS NewsHour poll conducted by the respected Marist Institute for Public Opinion showed that seven in 10 Americans believe political rancor in Washington has grown since Mr. Trump’s ascendancy. (The press does not escape blame for this development.) Will the tone of Granite State politics simply intensify that rancor?

“There is nothing that a New Englander so nearly worships,” the famous cleric Henry Ward Beecher said in 1887, “as an argument.” His sister, in the famous but possibly apocryphal remark of Abraham Lincoln, “wrote the book that started this Great War.”

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Forum

We always can choose our future

FUTURE, FROM D-1

own bread. We like to say that “all work has dignity,” and that is true, and worth remembering. But it is a much more profound observation when understood in the context of human effort as a whole: The team that cures HIV will go to Stockholm to collect the Nobel prize, but the guy who delivered their late-night pizzas, the Uber driver, the police officer, the crew that fixed the potholes in the roads, the laborers who framed and roofed their houses and laboratory buildings — they all play a part. The work we do, no matter how seemingly unexceptional, is what makes the life we live together — this remarkable, wondrous life — possible.

For some people, that's a petty point about paying taxes. “You didn't build that!” as the teacup totalitarians like to say. “Government,” they say, is just the name we give to the things we do together, but, in reality, government is only a minor part of what we do together, and far from the most important. We always emphasize the competitive nature of capitalism, and that competition is important in that it provides the means by which capital is allocated to its most effective

uses. But that competition is not an end — it is the means to the much more significant project of enabling human cooperation on a scale that had been unimaginable until the day before yesterday.

Government is a small part of that, and politics is — in theory — only a small part of government.

Small, but not insignificant. The function of the state is to protect property. Another way of saying the same thing is that the function of the state is to secure the conditions under which the division of labor may take place. That means protecting the physical security of our possessions and persons, operating courts and other systems of dispute resolution that keep us from descending into mob rule and vendetta justice, and providing such other public goods as are necessary to keeping the peace domestically and would-be marauders at bay.

Then there's the dark side

That isn't so much, really — but why is it that so few societies manage it? With the exception of the English-speaking countries and a few happy communes such as Switzerland, most of the world — including much of Europe — has been subjected to barbarism and despotism within living mem-

ory. Spain, Portugal, and Greece all have been in the grips of fascist dictatorships during my short lifetime. Those are normal countries, places where sun-seekers might go on vacation, not malarial hellholes in places we don't think about very much.

How is that possible? It is possible because, contra the good-natured delusions of President George W. Bush, it is not the case that the desire for freedom beats in every human heart. Some human hearts harbor darker stuff, and many of them are willing to pay a high price in the service of their dark appetites. It's not like the men who rule Venezuela and North Korea don't know why they're poor.

And it's not like we don't know what made us rich and blessed us with relative domestic tranquility. But we happy Americans are not immune from the darker desires. We have not been liberated from hatred, envy or resentment, and we are just dumb enough to act on those impulses, politically, every now and then.

There is a world of miracles out there: Global poverty has been plunging for decades, medical advances have come at a remarkable pace, and while we never got those flying cars, we have ro-

bots that are far more advanced than in the dreams of science fiction only a few decades ago. There's another world out there, too, one that is hungry and miserable, full of violence, vendetta societies organized not around human cooperation but instead dedicated to punishing and humiliating real and perceived enemies, even at great cost to the punishers and humiliators, who must of course punish and humiliate themselves along with their enemies.

How proud is Pakistan, really? I guess they showed those Hindus a thing or two, maybe, but nobody gets up in the morning thinking: “I wish my country were more like Pakistan!” Not Pakistanis, surely.

Ronald Reagan famously laid out the challenge: “You and I have a rendezvous with destiny. We will preserve for our children this, the last best hope of man on earth, or we will sentence them to take the first step into a thousand years of darkness.”

That speech was called “A Time for Choosing.” This, too, is a time for choosing. It always is.

Kevin D. Williamson is a roving correspondent for National Review. Copyright 2018 National Review. Used by permission.



My old cat lives a pampered life

Much like a decorative pillow on a Queen Anne chair, I have bestowed upon my cat a pampered life. Her outdoor excursions limited to sunning herself on the flagstone patio.

But on this particular morning, as we both unfold our daily routine, I spot her from the kitchen window hopping in a bed of pachysandra, alert to a gentle rustling of some rodent-like creature.

Perhaps she is listening to some intuitive message from her proud hunting ancestors on how to choose breakfast from a variety of small entrees, who by way of bad luck stumbled onto the pages of her menu.

Her playfulness reminded me of the day when I found her at the shelter, when we were both young and filled with the wide-eyed curiosity of youth.

Though my cat purrs, and I purr back, a small part of me wants to return her these years of captive atrophy.

To be the brave huntress, roaming all of nature, feared by mice from miles around.

— Francesco Pasqualino

Francesco Pasqualino is a full-time restaurateur and part-time writer living in Fox Chapel (pasqualino's.com). His stories and poems have appeared in Voices in Italian Americana, Mad Poets Review, Main Street Rag and other publications.

Unfinished business from the Holocaust

ARTWORKS, FROM D-1

collections; looted art still trades in the European market with little hindrance. Deaccession laws prevent public museums from returning art under any circumstances.

Fortunately, the Washington Principles continue to exert a moral force. With bipartisan support, Congress in 2016 created a unique federal statute of limitations preempting other defenses related to the passage of time and providing six years to file a claim after a claimant has discovered the identity and location of the artwork. In 2018, Congress passed another law instructing the State Department to report on the restitution record of all 46 countries that endorsed the Terezin Declaration. And in late November, more than 1,000 representatives and stakeholders from more than 10 countries gathered in Berlin for three days to measure our progress after 20 years and chart a road map for next steps. The Trump administration sent Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues Thomas Yazdgerdi and me to recommit to the international effort to return these personal and cultural treasures to the families to which they belong. We know this is the work of more than any single administration, indeed, more than any single generation.

France has just given the



Getty Images

French Culture minister Christine Albanel (center) shakes hands with Stuart Glyn, chairman of the British branch of Red Star of David, Israel's emergency medical service, after returning to him a painting by Henri Matisse stolen by Nazis during World War II from its Jewish owner. The 1898 painting is named “Le Mur rose, de l'hôpital d'Ajaccio” (“The pink wall, from Ajaccio's hospital”). At left is Alain Seban, head of the Pompidou art center in Paris, where the painting had been stored.

prime minister's office new authority to resolve claims and facilitate restitution. Cooperation has begun between major German and American museums. Germany has significantly increased funding for provenance research and set a goal to complete a comprehensive database of its federal museums by 2020. Germany will no longer permit its federal museums to block claims for restitution simply by refusing to participate in mediation. Ger-

many and France announced initiatives to review art taken from their former colonies, and the European Parliament is considering legislation to endorse the Washington Principles and develop rules for cultural objects stolen in future conflicts.

No self-respecting government, art dealer, private collector, museum or auction house should trade in or possess art stolen by the Nazis. We must all recommit to faithfully implementing the

Washington Principles before Holocaust survivors breathe their last breath. We owe it not only to those who lost so much in the Holocaust, but also to our own sense of moral justice.

Stuart E. Eizenstat was undersecretary of state in the Bill Clinton administration and is expert adviser to the State Department on Holocaust-era issues in the Donald Trump administration. He wrote this for The Washington Post.

There is no true student-loan crisis

CRISIS, FROM D-1

college graduates remained significantly lower than for the population as a whole. In 2009, the unemployment rate peaked at 9.9 percent, the highest since 1982, but unemployment among workers with a bachelor's degree or higher was 4.6 percent, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (As of this writing, unemployment was 3.7 percent overall and 2.1 percent for college graduates.) That's cold comfort to those who dropped out of college and thus have limited employment prospects. There is a student-debt crisis for them because they don't have the income to pay back their loans.

Talking recently on CNBC, Arizona State University President Michael Crow, who hosted the New York City dinner, noted that half of the people who have enrolled in college since 1980 never graduated. Fewer than 60 percent of students who entered college since 2011 have completed a degree, according to the Na-

tional Student Clearinghouse Research Center, though completion rates have ticked up for students who entered in the fall of 2012.

The Urban Institute reports that half of all student debt is held by households in the top 20 percent of income distribution. But student-loan defaults are actually highest among people who borrow relatively small amounts, with the default rate for people without a college degree five times higher than for college graduates, according to the Center on Children and Families at the Brookings Institution.

None of this gets college presidents off the hook. We should be held accountable for the fate of all of our students, and we have a moral obligation to ensure that each one arrives and thrives and gets through to graduation and a career.

RMU has followed the lead of institutions such as Arizona State and Georgia State in using predictive data analytics to identify high-risk students, anticipate aca-

demical problems and help faculty and other advisers craft personalized interventions to put students back on track. It's a high-tech, high-touch approach that has raised our retention rate after only one year in use.

Making the transition from high school to college is particularly challenging for low-income and first-generation college students. My friend Wes Moore calls it “the myth of the 13th grade,” and he founded BridgeEdu to help underserved students succeed in making that transition. Part of RMU's efforts to combat the problem is the Black Male Leadership Development Institute, which, in partnership with the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, brings 75 African-American male high school students to campus each summer. They spend a week living on campus, learning leadership skills and exploring career and education opportunities. They get a taste for what college will be like, and they get to picture themselves succeeding there.

RMU is not alone in trying

to open pipelines to higher education among underserved populations. Westminster College in New Wilmington recently announced a new program with the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild Youth and Arts programs to teach Westminster courses to high school juniors and seniors on site in Pittsburgh's Manchester neighborhood. Westminster and RMU are among 26 colleges and universities that offer additional scholarship dollars to Pittsburgh Promise students, bringing down the cost of college for graduates of Pittsburgh Public Schools.

It is certainly true that my fellow presidents and I wish to burnish the reputation of higher education, which is more than a bit blemished these days. But we're also committed to ensuring that our institutions remain engines of social mobility and not instruments of income inequality.

Chris Howard is the eighth president of Robert Morris University.

Civilians should share veterans' grief

GRIEF, FROM D-1

Mr. Tick has accompanied veterans back to Vietnam on healing journeys for many years. He lectures on the ways of tribal societies, how they esteem their returning warriors as elders who have a continuing role of service to their communities. Ms. Dahlstedt specializes in counseling female veterans and veterans' families.

The medical and social-service experts who intercept veterans when they come home apply professional standards that give the community no role. Veterans hold their stories in and often isolate themselves, sparing the community their grief. But the community should share their grief. We civilians should be our warriors' greatest source of strength.

During the Connecticut retreat, pain came out in spates, with long pauses. As long as the unheard energy was the veteran's next sentence, we abided for as long as we needed to.

One Iraq War veteran made it clear he was through with everything negative. But his resistance to talk, and his eyes, made it evident that he carried deep wounds inside.

What happened at our retreat stays at our retreat. I am sworn to safeguard details. But I can report that grimaces and furrows on faces that Thursday night were replaced the following Sunday by smiles and looks of relief. One of our warrior brothers reported later that he was sleeping well for the first time in 20 years.

That weekend now seems like a miracle. The quality of our days together was imbued with the hushed echoes of a seminary. We were essentially stuck there, but it was liberating. No cell phone service, no television, no news, no distractions from an intense purpose of connection.

We civilians were profoundly honored by our warriors' trust. We long for all of them to feel lighter. It is simply not fair for them to bear alone the anguish they suffer because they served our country.

Sallie Goetsch, in a review of Jonathan Shay's

“Achilles In Vietnam,” refers to the “communalization of grief, the need which those traumatized by combat have to tell their story to a compassionate and non-judgmental audience.”

One Vietnam veteran I spoke with recently had to remember only two things to choke up — the smell and the mud. Then he shut down. It was as if that memory pushed hard enough to buckle, ever so slightly, the clamped lid of an over-stuffed suitcase.

We learned at the retreat that the shut down is fear — fear of losing control, fear of judgment, or both. Veterans at our retreat surely lost control. We all fell apart, pushing 10 boxes of tissues around the circle throughout the weekend. I wept more that weekend than I have wept in all my 43 years as an adult.

The civilian's role needs to be emphasized because the civilian's responsibility is rarely discussed. It is so obvious to me now, as it becomes to friends when I talk to them about it: “My gosh, I never thought about that before.”

I have abandoned the belief that humans could reach a state of wisdom and virtue that would make war rare. But I believe we can do a lot better with the homecomings.

By sending our warriors off with love — even when we oppose a war; this is an important point — and by letting them know they matter when they return home, we can better witness their suffering. Veterans say they can't open up to civilians because civilians can't possibly understand what they went through, but how can civilians understand if we are never trusted to hear their stories?

At the Connecticut retreat, I saw firsthand how quickly that trust can be built. The more our warriors' pain becomes our own, the more we can help them heal and, perhaps, the more persistent we might become at waging peace. We owe this effort to each other.

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