

Mon Health thanks firefighters for good work

On behalf of the Mon Health Medical Center staff, I would like to thank the county and city firefighters for their recent response to an issue in an office building on our campus.

On a snowy day we had multiple employees swiftly respond to an alarm, an excellent effort in mitigating any negative impacts to life, limb, facilities and operations. Their professionalism, timeliness, attentiveness and expertise was so appreciated, and we are blessed to have superb first responders in our community.

Many thanks to our awesome first responders!
#WVPROUD

David Goldberg
Morgantown

Traffic laws must be enforced more often

Mary Wade Burnside's old and new car was practically pushing my car through the red light at the pedestrian crossings and the lack of acknowledgement from just so many drivers, points out many ways to take to ensure pedestrian safety. One that was missing was enforcement of traffic laws.

We live in town and walk a lot and all over. It is common to see cars squeezing through "pink" traffic lights. Apparently, a yellow light means speed up, not slow down to stop for the impending red. And some still barrel through the red.

We often walk through the intersection of Grand Street and Wilson Avenue, a four-way stop. Almost no one stops. Some never slow down. You know there's a school nearby, right? Lachry Lane by Mountainview Element-

ary School has a different set of issues.

Signs saying "Do Not Enter" are ignored, just like today on Clay Street. One-way streets are frequently two-ways, like Maryland Street near one city councilor's home. Turn signals are rarely used. Speeding is routine.

"Mountaineers are always free" does not mean freedom to ignore traffic laws and general safety common sense.

Why does this happen? Lack of enforcement. There is minimal risk of consequences. This is not an indictment of the Morgantown Police Department, as the three other cities here, the Monongalia County Sheriff and the State Police all share the blame.

On I-79 South last week, I slowed down as much as I could for the bridge construction at Halleck Road (the site of too many accidents recently with at least one fatality). The driver behind me was practically pushing my car through the red light at the car through; 55 MPH wasn't part of his vocabulary. Most days, I-79 is a race track — until an accident happens, and then it's a parking lot.

Law enforcement everywhere is understaffed and underpaid (my hat's off to them). But it's about time the authoritative entities do what they are supposed to do to ensure the safety of the citizenry and start enforcing the laws.

John Sofranko
Morgantown

One big concern about nuclear power

Nuclear power plants create radioactive waste.

How to dispose of it?

Maryl L. Gray
Morgantown

GROUNDHOG DAY 2022... OR IS IT STILL 2020?



Who's supposed to clear orphan roads after snow?

I know the DOH is busy taking care of main highways and secondary roads when it snows. What about people who live on what the DOH classifies as orphan roads? Are they supposed to be treated as well?

There was a DOH truck out on our orphan road, but it didn't make it up our road because it's steep and the truck had no chains on, so it slid back down into the ditch.

The DOH was called and asked if they were going to send out a truck to treat our road.

The person said that they would tell their supervisor that our road had not been treated.

The people who live on orphan roads pay our share of state taxes. Like everybody else, so our road should be treated as well as all the other roads, but that seems to never happen. All the main roads are clear, but, at the time of this writing, our road is still snow covered and closed. You can't get up our hill unless you have four-wheel drive, and sometimes that doesn't help. What I would like to know is what is it going to take to have our orphan road treated when it snows? I don't know about other orphan roads — whether they are taken care of or not — but I know our road has not been treated.

Ralph Correll
Morgantown

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EMAIL submissions to opinion@dominionpost.com
MAIL submissions to: The Dominion Post, 1251 Earl L. Core Road, Morgantown, WV 26505
INCLUDE your name, hometown and phone number for confirmation. Letters should not exceed 300 words. To be considered for weekend publication, letters should be received no later than noon Thursday.

MYTHS

FROM PAGE C-1

narrative needs to be one of economic and social progress that admits flaws and tragedies, but traces a hopeful and persistent, if jagged, story of growth and learning. Such an account, infused by more humility (and maturity) than those trumpeting our purported New World innocence and self-righteousness, can help inoculate us not only against the right kind of exceptionalism and ignorance of others' histories. It might even make us more compassionate toward our forebears, whose transgressions, we tend to forget, were not informed by our current knowledge and insights.

Our rejuvenated, more expansive public "myths" — fewer in number, but also more modest and congruent with our current understanding of the world — will require many different contributors (not simply "men of letters"), who are all part of our national mosaic. These myths will not, by themselves, dissipate the rancor that has swelled in the past decade. But they may be one way to keep our conversations more constructive.

MALCOLM RUSSELL-EINHORN teaches in the Elliott School of International Affairs at the George Washington University.

INTERNET

FROM PAGE C-1

We can no longer afford to sit around and wait. We need increased broadband connectivity right now. The push to connect rural America will benefit the last of those living in West Virginia, but the entire nation.

It will mean that children will no longer have to go to mobile hotspots to access reliable internet services. And it will allow rural portions of the nation to compete on a level playing field when it comes to job creation and economic development.

We must expand our broadband quickly to make sure that everyone can take advantage of the benefits of this service. I hope our state's leaders in Washington, D.C. will support the effort to draft these new rules, which will put the millions of dollars of investment to use in an efficient manner and speed up broadband expansion throughout the nation.

JIM ESTEP is the president and CEO of the High Technology Foundation, located in the I-79 Technology Park.

Working for a legend

BY BRIAN KUHIL

I FIRST MET GEORGE ESPEr 25 YEARS AGO IN FRONT OF THE BOSTON HARBOR when I walked over to the Associated Press office on High Street. George Espe was a world-renowned AP special correspondent who reported on the fall of Saigon made the front page of the New York Times. I was a few years out of graduate school, where I'd studied history and archival management, and George had hired me to organize his personal papers from Vietnam.

George was legendary among Vietnam War reporters for his doggedness and his facility with the telephone. He once managed to find and conduct a phone interview with an Air Force pilot, under tight wraps at a military base in Thailand, who had refused to fly more bombing missions to Hanoi. Another time he reached colleague Peter Arnett in the middle of a freighter to get the details — by calling the U.S. military commander's field phone.

When I learned of his back-

ground, I expected a big ego, probably someone demanding. I couldn't have been more wrong: George was mild-mannered and kind. For months afterward, I'd go to the AP bureau on weekends, where I worked in his office to organize his collection. After a year or so, I began helping him with stories by transcribing interviews and doing basic research. Though his wartime phone exploits were behind him, I did catch a glimpse of his skills once.

For an article at the end of 1999 about 20th-century wars, George asked me to research the official number of American casualties for each one. Reference books gave varying figures, so when we were both in his office once he suggested I call the Department of Defense for their numbers. Inexperienced and not a natural reporter, I got the runaround before being put on hold. Seeing my plight, George took the phone. When someone picked up again, he was like one of the field com-

manders he had earlier reported on. "Hello, this is George Espe with the Associated Press," he boomed. "Who am I speaking with, please?" And, forcefully but politely, he got the information.

When George retired from the AP in 2010, I moved his Vietnam collection and other files to his home in a suburb of Boston and began working there. More often than to let me be out, and he'd tell me to let myself in. "The key's under the mailbox," he'd say, referring to the magnetic key case sitting on the bottom desk that was George, trusting and open. The Vietnam papers largely finished by then, I organized notes from later articles, tear sheets, speeches, even financial paperwork. I worked at his desk, the white cat that he loved, named "Dog," meowing at the stranger in the house.

Friends and colleagues of George always spoke of his loyalty and generosity. He'd mentioned many young AP staffers, whose letters I filed for him gushed with thanks. After retiring, George taught at the journalism school at his alma mater, West Virginia University where

he trained a whole new generation of journalists.

And George's old colleagues from Vietnam were like family. Once in 2003, I was at his house working while he was there. His health had started to decline and he was feeling a bit down, saying he was tired of visiting the doctor all the time. Then AP photographer Nick Ut, whom George first met in Vietnam, called. Instantly, George lit up: "Hi, Nicky! How ya doing?" His own troubles forgotten, he fully engaged with Ut in the topic at hand.

I learned the news of George's death, 10 years ago this month, when I was in China, where I had moved in 2005. Our last contact was shortly the following year. I emailed to say I'd be back home for a short visit before taking a new job near Shanghai. If he needed help with paperwork, I was available. But we just missed each other; he'd already gone back to West Virginia for the semester. Ever the foreign correspondent, he replied, "Good luck on your Shanghai assignment. Sounds exciting."

BRIAN KUHIL is a writer and editor who was like one in New York.

Republicans should rethink idea-free campaigns

DEMOCRATS RAN IN 2020 ON A LONG LIST OF POLICIES THEY PLANNED TO ENACT AND IMPLEMENT, AND NOW THEY ARE GOING THROUGH THE AGONY OF TRYING TO MAKE GOOD ON THEIR PROMISES. Republicans have found a foolproof way to avoid that pain: They're not going to campaign on any ideas in the first place.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell is perennially averse to having his party run on a legislative agenda. He discourages Republicans' Senate candidates from campaigning on one in 2014, in the middle of President Barack Obama's second term, and has often told colleagues that the Republicans' nine-seat pickup that year vindicated that strategy.

Republicans have been following the plan not to have plans ever since. In 2016, Donald Trump ran for president with the wispiest of proposals: Building a wall and making Mexico pay for it, as was detailed as he got. In 2018, Republicans had control of both houses of Congress and the White House. They did not say what they would do if they voters kept them in power, beyond confirming judges. Trump released his second-term agenda when he ran for re-election in 2020, and the Republicans did not even produce a platform at their national convention that year. Kamala Harris reportedly told Republican donors he will not get behind a legislative agenda for this year's elections, either.

There are exceptions to the rule of Republican inactivity. Senators Mike Lee, Marco Rubio and Lindsey Graham have enacted ambitious proposals on a range of



RAMESH PONNURU

issues, as has J.D. Vance, the best-selling author who is running for Senate from Ohio. Their ideas are often heterodox among Republicans. Vance wants to break up big tech companies, for example. Where most Republicans would prefer just to complain about them. Such ideas may gain ground, especially in the absence of alternatives.

For now, though, most Republicans are sticking with the McConnell way. It seems to have worked electorally. Republicans nearly won in 2020, even with an unpopular incumbent president. They are in a strong position to take the Senate and House of Representatives this fall. Reticence on policy may help them do it. An agenda creates a target. It also creates opportunity for dissent. It distracts from the main Republican message: that Biden is a failure.

A degree of silence also fits with a conservative disposition. There are more bad ideas than good ones, more pieces of legislation that deserve defeat than support.

There's nothing wrong with running for legislative office primarily to prevent mistakes. In the U.S. political system, which has evolved to center on the White

House, there's a stronger case for running that kind of campaign during the midterms than in a presidential-election year. The presidential race sets the country's political direction while the midterms function as a referendum on how the president is performing.

The main drawback to this strategy for Republican election victories is what happens after them, or rather, what doesn't. The strategy makes it more difficult for Republicans to govern when they have the opportunity.

Consider the record of 2017-18, the only two years within the last 15 when Republicans had unified control of the government. They spent months trying and ignominiously failing to move health-care policy in their direction. Among the reasons for their defeat: They hadn't spent the previous years thinking about what to do about health care or responding to criticisms of their proposals. They decided to wait for their presidential candidate to come up with an agenda, but he preferred to tweet.

Democrats proceed very differently. They always have ideas about what government should be doing, as you would expect given their political philosophies, and they often offer many proposals



during campaigns. The Democrats won on many of their differences over health care in the campaigns of 2006 and 2008 before trying to make law in 2009, for example, and the decision to make the issue a priority was effectively taken party-wide. This difference in approach probably helps explain why, over the last generation, Democrats have done more to shape federal policy than Republicans have.

Or, to put it another way: why Democrats rule has been more effective.

RAMESH PONNURU is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He is the editor of National Review and a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.