



Up Front

Borrowing from Dickens.
By C.J. Hadley

Back in 1859, Charles Dickens wrote “A Tale of Two Cities.” His first very long paragraph sounds eerily familiar:

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.”

And 161 years later, if I could write that well, I would say pretty much the same.

This issue shows the best of times and the worst of times. You will need a hankie for Dave Daley’s story of destruction in California’s “The Bear Fire” (page 38). You might want to lobby Congress to take grizzly bears off the threatened species list when you read Dave Skinner’s “High Anxiety” (page 22). And you might want to pick up a two-by-four after you read Marjorie Haun’s “The Big Squeeze” and learn that government land agents are ignoring the law and hurting longtime ranchers while kissing up to untaxed dilettantes (page 68).

Thank God there is hope, truth and beauty scattered within these pages too, in words and

photos from talents all over the West.

Last August, I caught the nightmare—ruled COVID-19 positive—and was forced to hibernate. RANGE staff didn’t want to see me. My body ached. A few dreadful sore throats. Splitting headaches. (I don’t drink or smoke and my annual Advil intake is about six. I needed three.) My Great Danes were sympathetic. One problem was that I could only work on this issue about six hours a day, half my usual. I was ordered to drink a lot of water and sleep. No meds were offered. Within three days it was pretty much over, except for hang-on fatigue. In 10 days, a Washoe County nurse ruled me negative, safe to mingle. Now we are told that “mild cases” like mine are the norm for people without “underlying conditions.”

The fact is, bronchitis is a lot worse. I was born in the most polluted city in Europe during World War II and do not remember a year that I wasn’t suffering from it. My mother used

Who would want to be hugged by a woman with a refrigerator that costs more than your car?

to aim a steaming kettle toward me to help me breathe. My lungs healed decades later when I got to Nevada at 5,000 feet.

Many believe that the cost of the China virus in life, liberty and a destroyed economy is worse than the cure. The shutdowns have resulted in enormous societal and economic problems. Thanks to China, multimillions filed for unemployment. Businesses closed. Some of us were saved for a while with the Payroll Protection Plan. The Centers for Disease Control contradicted itself time and

again. The arrogant Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases since 1984, said in the early days, “Go on a cruise” and “You don’t need a mask.” House Speaker Nancy Pelosi wandered around Chinatown in San Francisco on February 24, hugged possible voters (who would prefer not to be touched by anyone with a refrigerator that cost more than their car) and gushed, “There’s no reason tourists or locals should be staying away from the area because of coronavirus concerns.”

Former Vice President Joe Biden disagreed with Trump’s fast lockdown of flights from China in February and tweeted: “We are in the midst of a crisis.... We need to lead the way with science—not Donald Trump’s record of hysteria, xenophobia, and fearmongering. He is the worst possible person to lead our country through a global health emergency.” Now it’s tough to find any country that fared better than ours during this worldwide pandemic.

Within weeks, Fauci had changed his tune, saying, “It’s not safe to go out, send children to school, or work without social distancing.” At the same time, he graced the cover of *Style* magazine, smiling broadly while lounging on a comfy couch at the edge of his swimming pool. Millions were still out of work with no income. Suicide, spousal and child abuse, drug overdose and depression took over. Serious operations were delayed. Cancers went undiagnosed. Too many sweat-soaked, hard-built businesses were forced to close and will never reopen. Fauci also advised, “No Thanksgiving dinners.” San Francisco Gov. Gavin Newsom told his 39.5 million serfs, “If you go to a restaurant, keep your mask on between bites.”

That is insane, yet technocrats continue to salivate over their power to control us, the frightened, huddled masses. Gov. Cuomo of New York killed more old people with bad decisions than anyone else in the nation. Massively overtaxed businesses are leaving New York in droves due to fast increasing crime, riots, private property destruction, looting and lockdowns. Cuomo begged: “Please, please, please come back. I’ll cook.” (All “No Bail” cities and states have similar exploding crime.)

Years ago, I lingered by Dickens’ tombstone in Poets’ Corner in Westminster Abbey. Dickens died on June 8, 1870, and now I wonder what he would say about America in 2020. I think it would be: “It was the worst of times, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Darkness.” With the right result on election day, we just might go the other way and relive the best of times, the age of wisdom, and a superlative season of light. ■

The Paradoxical Commandments

By Dr. Kent M. Keith © 1968 & 2001

(A similar version was written on the wall of Mother Teresa’s home for children in Calcutta, India, and widely attributed to her.)

1. People are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered. Love them anyway.
2. If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives. Do good anyway.
3. If you are successful, you win false friends and true enemies. Succeed anyway.
4. The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.
5. Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank anyway.
6. The biggest men and women with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest men and women with the smallest minds. Think big anyway.
7. People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs. Fight for a few underdogs anyway.
8. What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway.
9. People really need help but may attack you if you do help them. Help people anyway.
10. Give the world the best you have and you may get kicked in the teeth. Give the world the best you have anyway.