

Commentary

A6 | Friday, October 14, 2016 | Vail Daily

FREEDOM

"If the freedom of speech is taken away then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter."
George Washington

Vail Daily

Founded by Jim Pavelich & Jon Van Housen

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mitsch Bush for state House

With this election cycle being so contentious and difficult, we are confronted with many difficult decisions about who to vote for. In my opinion, there is one race where that decision is very clear cut. I urge you all to support someone who is a champion and advocate for all of us, regardless of party affiliation, sex, creed, race or religion.

Her name is Diane Mitsch Bush and I am proud to call her a friend and mentor. Diane's sole purpose as our representative for House District 26 since she was first elected in 2012 has been to represent all of her constituents in Eagle and Routt counties. Far from being an easy job, Diane has performed her duties admirably, ethically and, most importantly, graciously. No one can ask for more from a representative.

When I began contemplating running for Congress, Diane invited me down to visit with her during a legislative session in Denver. What I witnessed was a hard-working, tenacious legislator who was well respected by members of both parties.

I heard time and again while I was campaigning, "Steve, we need elected officials who focus on the issues with a positive, can-do attitude. We are tired of hearing about how everything is broken." This so accurately describes our current representative Diane Mitsch Bush.

Diane follows principles I myself strongly advocate, among them: Further yourself on your own merits and without disparaging others. In politics today, this alone merits our support. You will not hear Diane complain about the system or her opponents. Instead, she campaigns on her voting record and her exceptional work in our state Legislature.

Whether fighting for transportation issues on I-70, educational and economic opportunities for all Coloradoans, or to protect our environment, Diane has all of our backs. I urge you to support her. I wholeheartedly do.

Steve Sheldon
Eagle

Question for Bruce Brown

On Oct. 10, I attended the public forum/Q-and-A sponsored by the Continental Divide Bar Association, featuring the incumbent and candidates for the district

attorney seat for District 5, encompassing Eagle, Lake, Summit and Clear Creek counties, moderated by Rohn Robbins at the Sonnenalp Hotel in Vail.

My question to the incumbent, Bruce Brown, was simple:

"Mr. Brown, in the interest of transparency, can you expand on the incident that resulted in the destruction of a county car in Dowd Junction in December of 2015 and explain how you escaped any and all scrutiny by the press (Including, most notably, this publication) until it was clear that you had challengers for your office?"

I was immediately stopped by the "moderator and chief" Mr. Robbins, citing the lame excuse for the (his) need to stay on policy topics.

In case you missed my earlier mention of it, Rohn, the policy topic in mind at the time is probably the most important one in the DA's office: transparency.

Had I been allowed to go on, I would also have asked Mr. Brown why he left the scene of the accident, had the car towed immediately, yet waited several hours to report it. Sadly, I am talking about the head "legal Eagle" in four counties that clearly knows better.

So, Mr. Brown, will you answer my questions without the aid of your defense attorney, for the benefit of all, and so that we can see transparency at work ... or not?

By the way, vote Bruce Carey for DA.

Tim O'Brien
Eagle

Emergent, urgent care

Reader Joyce Pfaff astutely identified an important issue in American medicine (Letters to the Editor, Oct. 6): expanding choices for where to get care means having to familiarize yourself with the landscape so that when the time comes, you'll know your options.

Centura Health opened the Emergency and Urgent Care Center in Avon, where I serve as a physician and the medical director, precisely because we see the opportunity to deliver emergent and urgent services through a new model that takes the guesswork and stress out of choosing where to go when time is tight. (By the way, the term

Housing at crisis point

Eagle County is an amazing place to live, work and play. I am proud to call it home and feel fortunate for the opportunity to raise my two boys here. As a family, we are spoiled by how easy it is to get outside — on skis, on bikes, on foot, in the river. We make every effort to get out and enjoy all these special activities together. This quality of life is something I never imagined growing up in a city. In addition, we are surrounded by creative, generous and resilient community members. While our population continues to grow, this is still a small town, and I have seen our community come together on countless occasions to support each other.

This quality of life comes with trade-offs. Community members are determined and always looking for creative solutions to make it work here. However, finding an affordable place to live in Eagle County has gotten harder and harder. We need almost 4,500 housing units today and nearly 12,000 by 2025 to house our workforce. There is a shortage of homes for our full-time work force and their families. By 2025, my oldest son will have graduated from high school. I often wonder what the community will look like then, and if he or his brother will be able to live in Eagle County as adults, if they choose to do so.

Affordability and availability of housing has reached a crisis point and it's tearing at the fabric of our community, causing people to move away. We are losing our creative, generous community members because they cannot find a stable, affordable place to live.

Fortunately, our county commissioners, in collaboration with nearly all the municipalities in Eagle County, have put forth a solution; a .003 cent sales tax, or three cents on every \$10 purchase excluding groceries. Funds generated from this sales tax will create an affordable housing fund. This is a community issue, and it is exciting to see our leaders come together to address it.

I have seen the impacts that affordable housing can have on families and on our community through my work, during the last 11 years, with Habitat for Humanity Vail Valley. Habitat is successful because it offers families a hand up and the opportunity to provide a better life for themselves and their children. Habitat builds strength, stability and self-reliance through affordable housing. An affordable home is a strong foundation for a family, an opportunity on which they can build a better life. Strong and stable homes help build strong and stable communities. Better, affordable living conditions lead to improved health, stronger childhood development and the financial flexibility to make forward-looking choices. A decent place to live and an affordable mortgage help homeowners save more, invest in education, pursue opportunity and have more financial stability.



Elyse Howard
Valley Voices

COMMENTARY

LETTERS

From page A12

'Yes' on 1B

Eagle County Measure 1B will mean a giant leap forward in the construction of paved recreation trails in Eagle County with no increase in your property tax rate.

For the past 20 years, the ECO Trails Committee has worked to complete a paved recreation trail system that connects Vail Pass to the Glenwood Canyon recreation path, including a spur to Minturn and eventually to Red Cliff. Existing sales tax funding sources have generated an average of only \$500,000 to \$600,000 annually. We have worked hard over the years to leverage those funds with state, local and federal grants to build the core trail. We are at a critical juncture in the trails program. The final 17 miles of trail are the most expensive and complex. At current funding levels it will take more than 30 years to complete the trail.

Measure 1B, without increasing your tax rate, will give us the resources to complete the final trail sections in approximately seven years. Measure 1B expands the permitted uses of the existing open space tax to include paved trails and allows us funding options to complete the trail system expeditiously for the benefit of the entire community.

The remaining sections of the core trail are in the final stages of design and engineering. All we need is the funding to begin construction. Measure 1B will provide that opportunity.

Please vote "yes" on Measure 1B.

P.S. This year's election is a mail-in ballot format. There will be no polling places on

Election Day. Make sure you return your ballot in time to be counted.

Dick Cleveland
Chairman, ECO/Eagle Valley Trails Committee

Nice read

Thank you for your newspapers, which I enjoyed reading while staying at the Avon Sheraton Mountain Vistas last week. I always peruse local publications when my husband and I travel, especially for tourism, entertainment and restaurants. However, in addition to the usual fare, your paper features excellent opinion columns by locals and interesting news articles. My favorite perhaps is Butch Mazzuca's on the difference between liberals and conservatives — truly, a voice of thoughtful, considered reason, taking the long view, in a political season of rants and raves. I'm also impressed by the number of community committees working on housing and environmental issues.

We have watched our own area, a suburb of Dallas, morph from a countryside style, complete with cows, horses, llamas and green spaces to a paved-over, concrete and glassed-up urban strip of fast food joints and big box malls, all in service to the mighty corporations encroaching upon the metroplex. Our community meetings offer little more than lip service because the big decisions are already made with the best interests of Toyota, State Farm, Geico and Raytheon, not the people who live here.

In any event, keep up the great work, and thank you for being a voice for the people. Best wishes.

Diana Cain
Murphy, Texas

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VALLEY VOICES

From page A6

The affordable housing crisis cannot be solved overnight. It will take collaborative and creative solutions that address both affordable home ownership and affordable rentals to create long-term solutions

for workforce housing. I believe 1A is a positive step toward the solution. Affordable workforce housing is a vital piece of infrastructure needed to support a thriving community.

Elyse Howard is development director for Habitat for Humanity Vail Valley.

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