



Carmage Walls Commentary Prize

2018 Entry Form

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Is your newspaper under 50,000 circulation or above 50,000 circulation?

Under 50,000 Circulation

Please give a brief explanation of issues discussed and the results achieved. (This space will expand as you type in your comments.)

This every other week column focuses on challenges in my life and how they have shaped my perspective. It is always tied to some type of issue, concern or topic in New Braunfels. The goal is to present the information in a vulnerable manner where readers feel more connected to me and can relate to different challenges, thoughts and feelings.

Since it started six weeks ago, I have received over 300 emails, several hand-written letters and many comments. We've raised over \$11,000 for teen suicide prevention and I've been asked to moderate several community functions on behalf of the newspaper.



OPINION

IEWS FROM INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE H-Z

OUTSIDE VIEW

Declining life expectancy should lead to action

— From the Houston Chronicle

Nothing is more important than health, so consider this our recommendation for a nationwide New Year's resolution: End unnecessary deaths.

It has long been a given for advanced societies like the United States that our life expectancy will continue to improve. Each generation, as far as we've known, has a longer lifespan than the last one. In the popular mind, decreased life expectancy is tied to Third World countries battling epidemics or post-Soviet states reeling from collapse.

However, recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention should rock us out of our complacency. The average life expectancy in the United States declined in 2016 for the second consecutive year. That hasn't happened in more than a century.

"If you look at the other developed countries in the world, they're not seeing this kind of thing," said Bob Anderson, chief of the Mortality Statistics Branch at the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics. "Life expectancy is going up."

The CDC report shows that deaths caused by "unintentional injuries" were a key factor in pushing down life expectancy. A separate CDC report issued the same day made the cause of declining life expectancy clearer. Drug overdoses, particularly from opioids, increased by 21 percent between 2015 and 2016.

At current rates, more than 650,000 Americans — more than the current population of Montgomery County — will die of opioid overdoses in the coming decade.

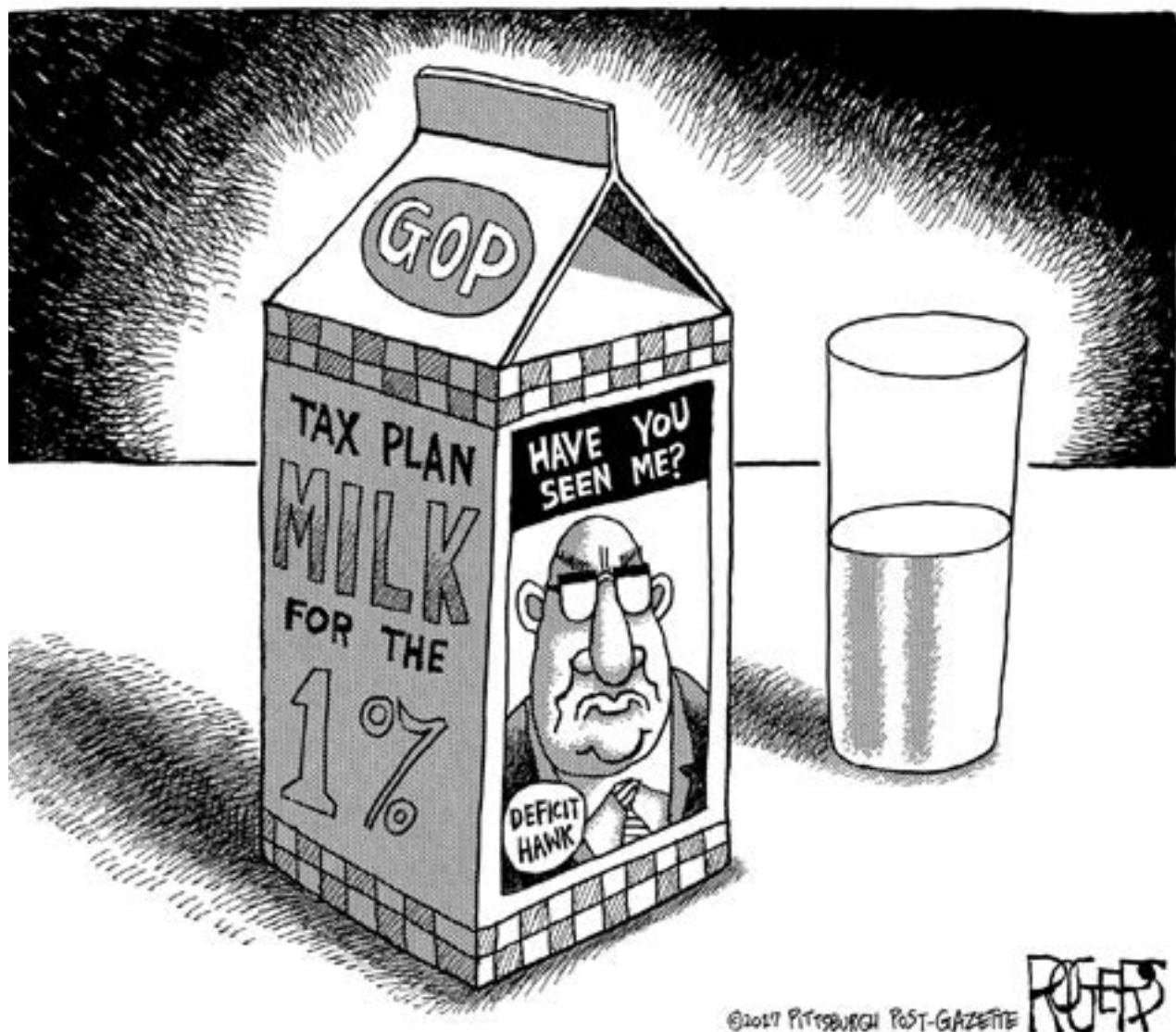
That doesn't have to happen. The opioid issue is a public health crisis, and our nation has a long history of successfully combating public health crises, from polio to auto accidents to AIDS.

The fight against the opioid scourge must address two broad challenges: treating those already addicted and preventing future addiction. In what has been a bipartisan failure, we have not yet responded aggressively on either front.

Opioid prescriptions have declined since 2010, but much more can be done. The Food and Drug Administration can increase its regulatory oversight with prescription opioids.

For those battling addiction, we must make rehabilitation easier to obtain than painkillers and street drugs. Only about 10 percent of those with drug addictions currently get such treatment.

More regulation and additional treatment are just part of the massive response required to address what is becoming a public health catastrophe in this country. The challenge is daunting, but solutions are feasible. Continuing on our current path is a death sentence for hundreds of thousands of our fellow Americans.



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MY VIEW

Honoring my son's last name

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the national suicide rate for males ages 15-19 years increased by 31 percent to a rate of 14 percent (per 100,000 population) from 2007 to 2015.

Rates for females ages 15-19 were lower than that of males but followed a similar pattern and doubled from 2007 to 2015 to 5.1 percent. The rate in 2015 was the highest for females since 1975.

This national epidemic has not missed New Braunfels as we are needlessly losing too many lives to suicide. This type of ending to any life is tragic. It is even more so when it happens to someone who barely had the chance to grow facial hair, never went to prom or even share a first kiss.

On October 8, 2013, my son, William David Compton III, was pronounced dead. He made the decision to take his own life. I delivered his eulogy a few days later on what would have been his 18th birthday.

William was the best thing I've ever accomplished and easily the best part of me. He had such a big heart, and he loved being a teammate.

I recall him sobbing after his football team ended the season. It wasn't because of the loss, but rather his love for being around his teammates.

There was one time he begged for some new bas-



HONORABLE PERSPECTIVE

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ketball shoes. The next day, he came home from playing ball at the park barefoot because he had given his to a kid who didn't have any.

He was so full of life and love. I often found myself trying to be more like him.

William was an athlete, and he was even good enough to attend football talent showcases at Ohio State, Ohio University and Notre Dame. However, he passionately loved his Longhorns and the Dallas Cowboys.

It is probably no coincidence those have always been my favorite teams.

After he was gone, I found it very easy to be angry at many things, but tried my best to keep that emotion buried. I was angry with myself for the failures of a father and mad at the doctors who didn't save him.

William was an organ donor, and I was even angry with those who took his

organs in order to survive.

I was mad at his stepfather for leaving his gun safe unlocked and angry with the girl who broke his heart.

I was mad at the people who tried to make me feel better when I actually just wanted to hurt more.

My failure to William is the same old story. I thought being a good "dad" meant working too much and pushing him too hard.

Regularly, he was reminded that he carried with him my last name. William wanted so badly for me to be proud of him, and it devastated him to let me down.

I didn't cultivate a relationship that might have allowed him to reach out to me when he needed me the most. I'm not sure I'll ever find it all the way back to true happiness without him.

Even me starting to feel better triggers immense guilt.

Our local schools have implemented some great programs like ACT (Acknowledge, Care and Tell) and others. I urge you to find out more and get involved.

Even more importantly, let your children know that tough times will pass and build pathways for effective communication. Learn to recognize symptoms of depression and learn to be an encouraging resource and not just the captain of the family pushing everyone

toward "greatness."

My life's journey brought my family to New Braunfels about a year ago. I feel like this is where we were meant to end up, in my home state, down the road from Wonka's beloved Longhorns and Dallas Cowboys.

I get to think of Wonka every time I see the Bevo logo on the car in front of me or on someone's shirt.

I still miss Wonka fiercely. I see his spirit in others, hear his words in songs and I can't stand to watch anything that has to do with suicide, gun play or someone being brain dead.

I do my very best to honor his life through the way I live mine. I try to do it by mentoring others and encouraging people the way I wish I could have encouraged him ... that one more time.

I work never to miss an opportunity he might be giving me to make him proud of my actions.

I'm profoundly aware that I now carry with me his last name.

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ALL DAY, EVERY DAY
Voice your opinion on the biggest stories of the day and comment on columns and letters to the editor 24 hours a day, every day at herald-zeitung.com.

Most read stories

- Obituary: Brandon Robert Vaughn.
- Local: CHS senior dies in car wreck Saturday
- Obituary: Wade Ashley Walker.
- Obituary: Dr. Stephen Charles Bennett
- Local: Man arrested for trespassing could be connected to other crimes.

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OPINION

Views from inside and outside the H-Z

OUR VIEW

Brockman and Besserung are a good fit

On Friday night, outgoing Vice President of Economic Development Rusty Brockman was named the Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce's outstanding citizen.

The award is bestowed upon an individual who currently is providing a significant contribution to the community through his or her civic activities.

And Brockman has been doing that, and then some, for a long time.

Brockman, who is retiring from his current position in a few weeks, has been with our local chamber

for almost 17 years after concluding a 28-year career in public education that included 15 years with the Comal Independent School District as an assistant principal, principal and central office administrator.

And during his time with the chamber, he has excelled in the field of economic development.

He also was a catalyst for bringing Communities in Schools to the chamber's Business-Education Partnership Committee in the 1990s, getting the new Central Texas Technology Center opened in 2004 and advocating for the Phase 2 expansion being added to the 2013 bond issue and working to bring numerous companies, thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of private investment to our great city.

All that in itself qualifies as a "hall-of-fame" career and worthy reasons for Brockman to win the annual Besserung Award.

But, it goes much deeper.

One example of that is Brockman serving as last year's Grosse Opa at Wurstfest, undoubtedly the best festival in Texas and one of the best anywhere.

That fun-filled event takes a lot of work to pull off, and the Grosse Opa, or "Fun Meister" is there in the center of it all.

In addition, during the past year Brockman led a workforce stakeholders group helped create NB/STEAM, which uses technology to connect industry experts with classrooms to expand students' exposure to careers and brings real world relevance to learning.

Also, Brockman has been involved with several civic organizations, boards and groups and was named the Herald-Zeitung's citizen of the year in 1993. His list of other honors and achievements is almost endless.

In other words, as chamber President Michael Meek so eloquently put it on Friday night, "He's such a community icon."

We couldn't agree more.

Brockman truly is a deserving Besserung Award winner and we salute both him and the chamber for recognizing him.

We know when he leaves our chamber in March, he will leave a void that will be extremely difficult to fill.

But when that happens, Rusty still says he has more to give our fair city, and we can't wait to see where that leads. If it turns out like everything else Rusty has touched over the years, it will certainly turn to gold.

We thank Brockman for all his hard work and accomplishments and truly consider him a true friend of the newspaper.

And, we congratulate him on a job very well done.



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Most read stories

Obituary: Thomas Porter.

Obituary: Keith Duane Soechting.

Obituary: Ross Mitchell Rogers.



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MY VIEW

The pain means we loved her enough

As a proud Texas man, I'll share with you that I feel a deep responsibility to keep my wife from feeling pain. There is no equality training that will get me to believe otherwise. When I see my wife hurt, I know I failed.

Recently, our family lost another member. There was no loss of life, but the heart-break was still significant.

My beautiful wife, Brianna, and I started fostering a decade ago. We've opened our hearts and home to 14 placements, with all of them ending in reunification with the biological parents.

There are many reasons we started fostering. Mostly, we wanted to give back to others.

When I was younger, I was scared of fostering. I imagined a scene from Annie and thought I was supposed to run from it.

All kids deserve hope. It has always felt like fostering is a way to provide it during a time when it is needed most.

We have loved every child like he or she was our own and with everything inside of us. There is just not another way we know how to do it.

In one case, we had little boy who we'll call Trenton. At the age of 9, Trenton was a natural athlete and the protector of his baby sisters. His determination was palpable.

Months later, the state decided it was time for Trenton and his two younger



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sisters to go back. We knew they were going into a less-than-ideal situation.

My wife explained to Trenton that we would remain there for him and gave him one of my business cards in case he ever needed help.

A couple of years later the phone rang. It was someone saying Trenton was in trouble.

Trenton had given them my card.

Come to find out, Trenton got up each day and put my business card in his back pocket. Sadly, I was the only person he thought he could count on.

Not too long ago, my wife called to say we were blessed with the placement of an 11-day-old baby girl.

There were many challenging times, like when baby girl was sick for her first Christmas.

My wife and I slept by her side on a little hospital couch in San Antonio.

There was no CPS worker or other family there. It was just us.

My wife refused to let baby girl wake up "alone."

There were also many amazing moments. We saw her first steps, celebrated her first birthday and heard her first word, "Daddy."

We even took her to see the New Braunfels tree lighting ceremony downtown. It seemed like a lifetime of firsts.

The legal side of it became difficult. She was placed with us in an area of Texas that doesn't have CASA. The system can get overburdened, and people trying to help can appear clearly overwhelmed.

For the first time we decided to fight. We decided we could not allow this little girl to be placed back into a bad situation.

CPS could not make up its mind and went from one day asking us if we would consider adopting her to saying there was nothing it could do.

So we fought, on behalf of her. We won several battles. We paid thousands and had several people on her side, like her state-appointed attorney and guardian ad litem. Still, we were advised that we were going to lose.

We agreed that prolonging the case would cause more hurt and decided to drop it. We arranged to return baby girl to CPS over the weekend.

CPS agreed, and then

it just picked her up from daycare without telling us or even giving anyone a chance to say goodbye.

Maybe they thought we'd flee or that it was protocol. My wife cried uncontrollably for hours, and I was helpless.

All we can think of is this baby girl wondering what happened to the people who had taken care of her for the first 16 months of her life. Does she feel like we abandoned her? Will it haunt her forever? Will it haunt us forever?

My heart will always ache for that baby girl, and I'll always wish it could have been different. But I will never regret saying "yes."

People often praise us for fostering because it is difficult.

Our phone will ring again and there will be a sad story of neglect and abuse on the other end. As a protective husband, I'll try to talk my wife out of it.

I'm not sure what will happen, but if history is any indication it will be too hard to say "no."

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OPINION

VIEWS FROM INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE H-Z

OUR VIEW

Endorsements coming soon

We believe a very important part of being a complete newspaper is endorsing candidates in elections.

Unless you've had your head buried in the sand or are just returning from a long trip to a Third World country, you know we're in the home stretch of a pretty lively primary political season.

Candidates in several races are exchanging barbs and pointing out what they think are faults in their opponents. And, of course, they're reminding everyone that they think they are the best person for the job.

Endorsing provides our readers with some helpful insight as to why a certain candidate may be better qualified to serve in a certain elected position.

Many organizations and groups also may support and endorse candidates, but a newspaper's endorsement usually carries some weight with it.

You can find many sources that indicate daily newspaper readers vote, almost without fail.

We'll say that a different way. The readers of the Herald-Zeitung vote. With a daily print readership of about 25,000 (according to National Newspaper Association calculations on about 9,000 copies distributed) and a website with more than 110,000 visitors each month, our voting readership could sway an election.

And why wouldn't our readers vote? The very reason they read the newspaper is because they care about their community.

A newspaper, like the Herald-Zeitung that has been around and covering New Braunfels and beyond for 165 years, is the trusted local information source.

Some may ask, "Why?" What makes us qualified to endorse?

The answer is in the literally thousands of hours reporting on this community. We have lots of information, probably as much as anyone. We delivered 312 issues and printed 5,858 pages telling the life story of New Braunfels in 2017 alone.

This coverage allows us a pretty decent view of community needs, agendas and potential.

Yes, it does come down to our opinion on who we think is the best qualified, but rest assured that we do our homework before making a decision and take it very seriously.

Our first endorsement came this past Sunday when we voiced that Shane Hines was the best suited to become our new District 1 city councilman. That special election - which is not part of the upcoming primary - is this Saturday, Feb. 17.

We did our due diligence, visited with the three candidates, listened to what some others had to say and made our decision.

Before the March 6 primary, we plan to publish three similar endorsement editorials that will focus on key races.

The first will be this Sunday, Feb. 18, and it will target the three Comal County criminal district attorney challengers - Deb Wigington, Joe Soane and Steven de Lemos - and incumbent Jennifer Tharp. Those four are vying for the Republican nomination for that office.

That race undoubtedly has been the most heated of any of our local races, and we're currently working on visiting with the candidates, and others, and gathering key thoughts and information.

A second endorsement will run on Wednesday, February 20, and will focus on district races for the Texas Legislature.

In House District 73, Republican incumbent Kyle Biedermann is facing a stiff challenge from Dave Campbell. A Democratic challenger, Stephanie Phillips, does not have an opponent in March.

In Senate District 25, incumbent Donna Campbell is squaring off against challenger Shannon McClendon on the GOP side while Steven Kling and Jack Guerra are seeking the Democratic nomination in the same race.

We'll also provide a little insight into the unique U.S. House District 21 race that features 18 Republicans and four Democrats.

Finally, on Sunday, Feb. 25, we'll endorse one of three Republicans seeking to become our Precinct 4 county commissioner. There, incumbent Jen Crownover is in a race with Ted Ballard and Jeanne Slupik.

So, please stay tuned in the days leading up to the March 6 primary as we cover the races, provide preview stories and endorse who we feel are the best candidates for the jobs.



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MY VIEW

Values still alive in New Braunfels

Like many, my dad passed when I was really young. I remember enough about him to know he was my hero and not enough to recall him holding my hand. I do recall him imparting many words of knowledge to me.

As I have gotten older, his thoughts have resonated more with me, possibly because of my limited time with him or maybe the wisdom just makes more sense as I mature.

He was a strict southern military man who firmly believed in accountability and having consequences for your actions. Trouble often was followed with him asking me to fetch his belt, which I often had difficulty finding.

While I don't share every value, I hold on dearly to important meanings behind some of them.

I was raised that "sirs" and "ma'ams" followed any request made of me, regardless of that person's age or social standing. I was made aware that when a female needs a seat, a man gives up his. When a female arrives at a table, I was told to stand.

When the team fails, I was trained the captain takes 100 percent of the blame with no excuses, and there was honor in being allowed by your teammates to do so. It meant your team respected you as its leader.

I was raised to hold open building doors and open vehicle doors for females



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and pull out chairs during a dinner date. When there is limited supply, the man of the family partakes last.

All reasons for failure were reclassified as excuses. I was to learn from mistakes, happily accept consequences, and take accountability without placing any blame on teammates and move forward.

Upon hearing me say a bad word, my grandmother once calmly explained to me that cursing was how people made their point who were not intelligent enough to do it another way.

I was raised to stand for our flag, without cover, right hand over heart.

I'll be honest, some of those things I do without fail, every damn time. Others, I wish I did more often.

However, I notice when I see others do and don't do them and, as bad as it sounds, I judge.

Standing for our flag is not a choice. It is an opportunity to show respect and reverence to all those who died for the meaning behind it. I grasp the sentiment, but I'll never see kneeling as a symbol of freedom. While I may acknowledge the freedom to do so, I'll still view it as disrespectful.

Giving up your seat for a lady is not a legal requirement. It is an opportunity to show good manners.

I'll never be convinced that respect is somehow chauvinistic or outdated. In fact, to me, it is the opposite. It is a way to show the ultimate level of respect.

Being raised a Texan, I was taught that the only thing worse than telling a lie is calling someone else one, regardless of the evidence.

I have told lies, but I can also say I've literally gone years between telling them. In fact, there are some people who I've never lied to over the course of decades, like my beautiful wife.

I share these things not to brag about me. I could easily fill a column with my own poor choices and bad habits.

This is a column about having values. To me, it doesn't matter if beliefs differ. It matters more that people simply care enough to have them.

Today, society places way too little importance on meaning, true accountability, sense of community and compliance to a value sys-

tem - any value system.

But maybe there are some places hanging on to values. Maybe that is what are some are calling that "small-town feel."

It appears to me that part of the reason so many are flocking to New Braunfels is because we make values a priority. Don't believe me? Look around and you'll see it.

You'll see young men giving up their seats, grown men holding doors and everyone with hand over hearts when our national anthem is playing.

Churches are growing, and new ones are opening.

Every week there is a charity event where people are giving time, energy and money.

Volunteerism is so ubiquitous that it is actually competitive here in New Braunfels.

Many people have asked me why this place so quickly feels like "home" to so many. The answer may be that people in New Braunfels care enough to care enough.

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- Obituary: Delores Millett.
- Obituary: Rudy Medina Ybarra Sr.

JUST DO ONE THING ~ by Danny Seo

If you have used appliances that are still in working order, you can donate them to the Salvation Army to help someone in need.







The organization will come and pick up your appliances, and you'll also get a write-off for tax deduction purposes. Items they

will accept typically include window air conditioners, washers and dryers, stoves, microwaves, refrigerators and modern-style televi-

sions. To find out if a Salvation Army near you can pick up, visit satruck.org.



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OPINION

IEWS FROM INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE H-Z

OUR VIEW

Candidates need something to sell to voters

The negative flavor of local political campaigns is getting to be too much.

Some of these campaigns don't even have a picture of the candidate they are endorsing. They just slam the other person.

What is that about?

When people say they don't want a politician, they are also talking about being straight forward during a campaign. Tell us why we should vote for you. Period and end of story.

While many people believe it is the only way, negative campaigns can work against you. And they should.



Discuss this editorial with a letter to the editor.

No politician should want to be viewed as an "empty suit." Consistently attacking your opponents gives the impression that you have nothing to sell. Instead, tell us about your vision for the office or the area.

We get the fact that when trying to unseat an incumbent, you have to tell people why change is needed. However, even unfairly, the incumbent should be held to a higher standard, especially in certain races.

When you already are the mayor, a judge, a district attorney, a councilman or a state representative you need to have actions that are becoming of that office. It can be done. Look no further than our local DA race.

How much "dirt" do you think our DA knows on her challengers? We bet it is quite a bit. We bet she could tell you every agenda, like who founded the Comal County Sherriff's Association, who funded the ABT signs and why certain people were let go from the DA's office.

Jennifer Tharp simply refuses to go there, even as her opponents look to try and thrash her character at every opportunity. Because of it, many think she is the one at the table who often looks like the district attorney. Good for her, and we bet her dad, Jimmy, is proud of her for those choices.

Rep. Kyle Biedermann's campaign is a prime example of deciding to go in the other direction. He rarely talks about his vision for District 73 or his priorities. His campaign is squarely focused on explaining why his opponent is "bad." He even takes many opportunities to bash his past opponent.

There is little doubt that Doug Miller is a beloved son of New Braunfels. The fact alone that you would continue to kick him, two years later, means you have zero understanding of this town or the family that is New Braunfels.

Beloved even if he is an Asulander, moving here many decades ago. Even with politics set aside, Miller has dedicated his entire life to New Braunfels.

Most see Miller as local graduate, a successful New Braunfels businessman, the former New Braunfels mayor, former New Braunfels councilman, former New Braunfels police officer, former leader of many local charity organizations, local philanthropist, cancer survivor and more.

He helped create the Edwards Aquifer Authority and served as our state representative for four terms. He has won every local award, including The Besse-rung Award (outstanding citizen), H-Z Citizen of the Year, NBISD Silver Unicorn and Small Business of the Year. He has served as president for groups such as the Wursthfest Association and the Comal County Fair. The list just goes on and on.

Just this past year, Miller was recognized as a New Braunfels Living Legend and started serving as finance chair for the New Braunfels 175th Anniversary Celebration.

We were speaking with a past president of Wursthfest, and he told us that people often forget about the rain at their event and instead remember only the sunshine. As humans, we like to reminisce with almost a romanticized memory of the past.

Well beyond politics, Miller is revered in these parts for his community service. Someone who would continue to throw stones at him, two years later, when he is not even part of the political equation, is someone who doesn't understand this community.

So, Miller introduced Dave Campbell to a few folks around town. So what? So did Carter Casteel. We double dare you to take shots at her.



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MY VIEW

Stage IV cancer can be a beginning

In 2011, I remember when I was told I had a 38 percent chance of surviving.

Not knowing what to do, on a legal pad, I wrote down instructions for my beautiful wife on how to handle some things. All the while she cried, uncontrollably.

For us, cancer showed up suddenly and without much warning. I can recall thinking that I'm not a smoker and only a social drinker. How could I get throat cancer?

They told me I was HPV positive and I was part of the 1 percent of the time that it cascades into cancer.

Within literally a few days, the mass had grown from a pea-sized bump on my neck, which I casually noticed while shaving, to an aggressive grapefruit-sized tumor that was wrapped around my carotid artery.

I was and am such an idiot with medical issues. My first question after the diagnosis was, "You said Stage IV. How many stages are there?"

The gravity of the situation started to sink in when I was told there were four.

The doctors explained all the potential long-term side effects. It was everything from losing all taste to having a "rogue" left arm, which I still don't completely understand.

Besides sports injuries, I had never really been sick.



HONORABLE PERSPECTIVE

David Compton is the president and publisher of the New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung.

Suddenly, I was facing emergency surgery the next morning where the odds were good that I was going to die.

Your entire perspective changes when you are told that you have a few hours to get your affairs in order. It was all so surreal. Just a week earlier, I was fine.

What I remember the most is the feeling of immense guilt. Who was going to look after my family? Even if lived, was I going to lose my job? Who was going to take care of my wife?

I felt so incredibly helpless and guilty for leaving her alone.

My recovery was very difficult, and all the post-surgery treatments were intense.

It included radiation where they literally "bolted" my head, with a mask,

to a board so I could not move.

At that time, I thought it was the fight of my life. I didn't realize that fight would eventually pale in comparison to losing my son, "Wonka," to suicide.

Later, I questioned God saving me from such an intense cancer, only to have me give my son's eulogy two years later. I know it sounds selfish, but his passing often had me wishing the cancer had taken me.

It turned out that I did lose my job as the company I worked for was sold while I was sick. My wife lost her job, too, because of missing so much time taking care of me.

We lost our house, and the medical treatments ate up every ounce of savings we had to our names.

My face was lopsided, and I would never play basketball again, which was an important part of my life for a very long time.

But most of those things were replaceable, and I felt blessed to be alive.

What I really learned was I did not need to worry about taking care of my wife. Nor did she need any stupid list from me.

She rarely left my side. I remember feeling her compassionate way with me and watching her yell at doctors when she thought they were not acting quick-ly enough.

She took care of our family and carried me like an angel – like a very loving, beautiful, smart, capable, loyal and protective angel.

Nowadays, there are vaccines you can get for kids between the ages of 11 and 26. Hopefully, this story will inspire you to get your children vaccinated for HPV.

I've been cancer-free now for going on seven years and we have endured other challenges.

We are grateful for the strength to endure and to move forward.

We are very proud to be rebuilding our life together here in New Braunfels. For the first time in a long time, this feels like home, and we are fully embracing every part of it.

Get used to us. We are not going anywhere.

And if I ever take a swing at you, please don't get too upset. I may not be mad at you. It just might be my rouge arm acting up.

David Compton is an Associated Press award-winning columnist and the current president and publisher of the New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung. His dad was a reporter in the U.S. Army, and he has been in the newspaper industry for the greater part of three decades. He can be reached at david.compton@herald-zeitung.com.

JUST DO ONE THING ~ by Danny Seo

If you want an all-natural (and very effective) way to prevent invasive insects from killing your flowers, trees, bushes and vegetable garden this spring, look no

further than neem oil. This botanical-based oil has a strong, pungent smell and repels insects, but also controls fungi and mites. It's safe for birds

and does not kill beneficial insects. You can find a large bottle of neem oil at your local home improvement store; just unscrew the

cap and attach a spray nozzle, then spray away to protect your lovely garden the organic way.



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OPINION

IEWS FROM INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE H-Z

OUR VIEW

We look forward to working with election victors

Well, the primary election and our endorsements are now behind us.

During the past few days, a little bit of “shade” was thrown our way, as the kids would say. Mostly, it seems many people believe that through our endorsements we were trying to pick the winners of specific races.

Some took to social media in asking us how that endorsement looked in the wake of the election when someone we endorsed lost his or her race.

In reality, we were never trying to pick the winners. That is not a big part of the equation in how or why we look at endorsing a candidate.

We are certainly aware of long shots and favorites to win, but that is not what leads us to make a selection.

Sure, we want to pick the winner. Who doesn't? However, if we were just trying to pick the eventual winners, the endorsement list might look completely different.

In Texas, it would probably feature us endorsing mostly incumbents.

The national narrative might sometimes be electing an agent of change, but we Texans are not big fans of change. Besides, incumbents win a majority of the time.

We endorse candidates based on character, competency, charisma and caring. There is obviously a lot that goes into making those decisions, but winning is not really one of them.

As a community newspaper, some of our primary functions are to promote healthy community dialogue, provide our honest perspective as we deem appropriate and tell the life story of New Braunfels as it unfolds.

We do that first and foremost by being a good community partner. That's our bread and butter.

We partner with local leaders and entities, as well as share goals centering on what is good for our community. We remain transparent and accountable.

We also absolutely will continue to be a community watchdog when needed, remembering that when our city or our county wins, we all win.

In each of our endorsements, we methodically called candidates to inform them of our decision. In most cases, that included calling the individuals we decided not to endorse.

Some of those visits resulted in tough conversations, and time and again we stressed to all of them to let us know if we could help.

We told several candidates that despite not getting our endorsement they still had friends at the newspaper who respected them for making the commitment to run, and that we would be glad, if we could, to help if they needed something.

In the end, two of our four endorsements won their primary. That means two did not.

But, that's OK. All is well, and we congratulate everyone who came out on top in both parties last Tuesday.

We certainly had some confidence that Jennifer Tharp would win the hotly contested criminal district attorney race. She has the experience, the toughness and the conviction rate on her side.

We wish her the best in the months and years ahead and trust she will continue to be one of those community partners we mentioned earlier.

We were in Donna Campbell's camp, too, as far as endorsing her to retain her State Senate District 25 seat. A good friend of the Herald-Zeitung, Campbell now will face Democrat Steven Kling in the fall.

We also wish Republican Precinct 4 commissioner winner and incumbent Jen Crowner and unopposed Democratic challenger Dorothy Carroll the best as they move on and prepare for November's general election. We trust both of them will continue to stand on their campaign issues and be community partners with us, as well as with the other leaders and entities that make New Braunfels and Comal County the great place it is.

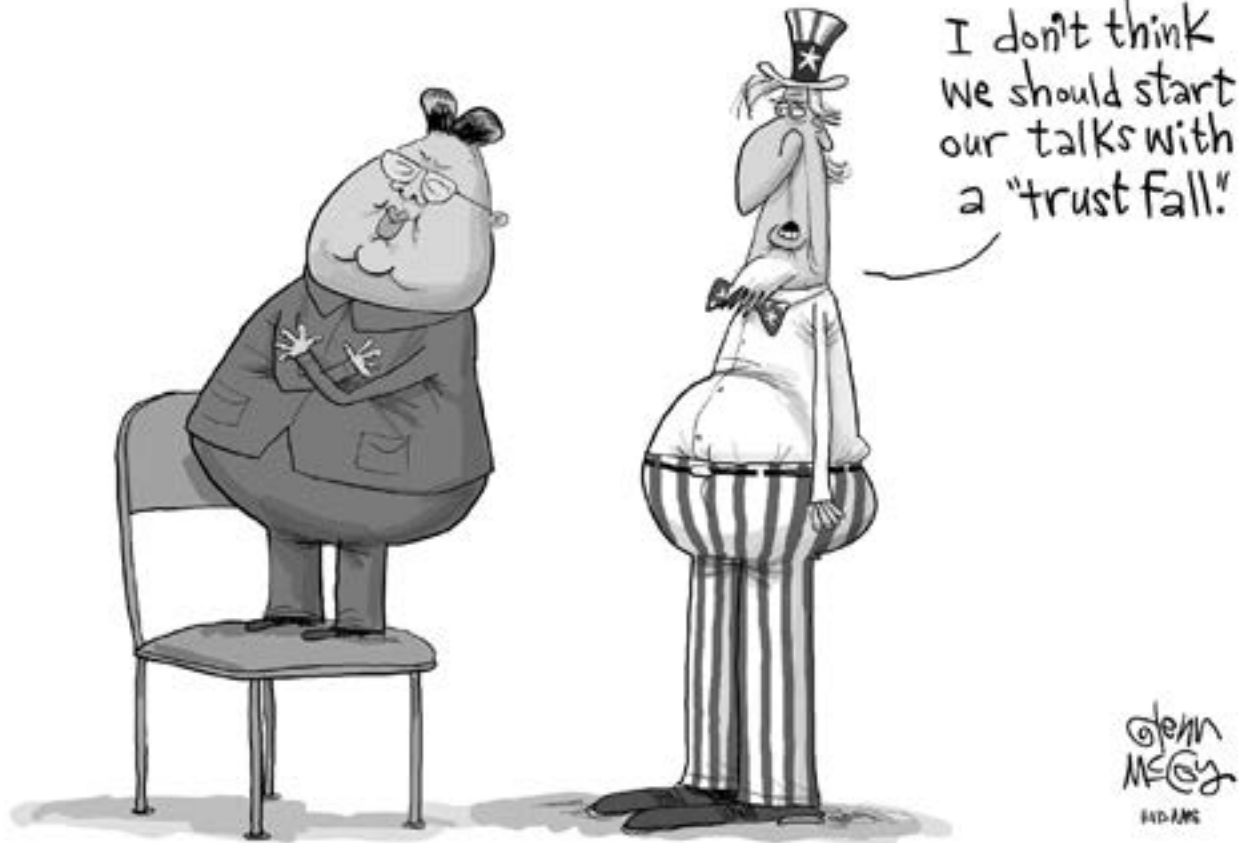
We consider both women to be friends of the paper.

The same holds true in District 73, where incumbent Kyle Biedermann survived his bid for re-election and now faces Democrat Stephanie Phillips in November.

Even though he didn't receive our endorsement, we all need Rep. Biedermann to be a friend to Comal County.

We also wish him and Phillips the best as they eye November.

And the same holds true with each and every other March 6 winner. There may be times when we can agree to disagree, but we're all in this together and we share in the passion to do what's best for New Braunfels and Comal County.



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MY VIEW

Greater purpose than Texas senator

I was homeless for a while during high school. I've always thought my mom struggled when my dad died, but looking back is was me who didn't handle it well.

I wish I could have been more of man for my mom back then. My dad asked me to do it on his death bed, and I'm trying my very best to do it now.

After my father became sick, I lived with some roommates for a bit. Soon, one joined the Army and the other moved to Austin.

At some point, I found myself alone and too young to get a job.

I was terrified of the state finding out I was homeless and putting me in a home.

To be honest, I didn't even know what that meant. However, too many movies and ignorance can make things awful scary when you're young. Combine all that with too much pride to ask for help and you get a dangerous concoction for making decisions.

I can recall sleeping beside a car when it started to rain and sticking my head underneath it to keep the rain off my face. It all seemed too difficult, and I contemplated suicide probably a hundred times but could never do it.

Eventually, I found a little storage shed that faced the fence behind my high school. I fixed it up the best I could. I had accumulated some blankets and trinkets. I made what I called a pallet for me to sleep on and decorated the shed like I imagined it was an apartment.

Early in the morning I'd hop the fence and go into the school gym, where I'd hidden clothes in empty



HONORABLE PERSPECTIVE

David Compton is the president and publisher of the New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung.

lockers, to take a shower.

I joined every school group they would let me join. I quickly learned that even being in the clubs that did things I was terrible at kept me from being alone.

I sort of made a circuit out of inviting myself to eat at the houses of friends. When I felt people getting too close to the truth, I'd stop going.

There were probably a lot of times when I didn't eat dinner, but I don't really remember them.

I also don't recall the entire experience being that bad, once I had it figured out. It was just the way it was. So, please don't feel sorry for me. It was part of my path.

During that time a teacher once asked what I wanted to be, and I told her I was going to be a Texas state senator. To this day, I'm not sure why that became my goal.

I'm certain I had very little idea of what a state senator did.

I knew they were empowered to make a difference and could make the world better. I guess I probably just wanted my world to be

easier and better.

My life has seemingly been a series of obstacles, but I've always held onto the notion that I was bound to do something great. I know how arrogant that sounds and I should probably apologize for it. However, I don't really mean it that way.

When I was 8 my grandfather told me that arrogance was believing you had no shortcomings. He added that confidence was knowing you had shortcomings and believing you could overcome them.

I am far from self-righteous. I'm not sure if there is a time limit on pleading at the pearly gates, but I'll be doing a lot of it. My life is filled with unspeakable failures.

And scars from my youth are literally all around me.

I hang onto too many material things. I require too much attention from my beautiful wife. My standards for many things like work ethic from myself and my teammates are unreasonable. I have no patience listening to people make drama out of minor inconveniences.

I'm even still a little scared of the rain.

However, I guess life experiences have shaped me and filled me with confidence.

My youth is one of the reasons it was important for me to become a foster parent. I want to be selfish and stop but just can't seem to do it.

Because I was so alone, it actually now hurts me to see kids feeling alone. My beautiful wife told me this weekend it is time for our 15th foster placement.

As damaged as I am, I

still believe I'm bound to do something great. Hopefully, I can bring that something to New Braunfels. I've started a fund in my late son's name, Wonka's Choice, at New Braunfels Community Foundation.

"Wonka" took his life in 2013 when he felt alone, and I am determined to stop teen suicide in the community that I now call home.

I was fortunate to get with a group of community leaders, like Alice Jewell, that has already made this issue a priority and has been working for some time on solutions.

We are planning a community event to bring added awareness, and we will continue to build outreach and create infrastructure to help those that need it the most ... at the time they need it the most.

It is never going to be Texas State Senator Compton, but maybe preventing even one teen suicide will be what greatness looks like for me.

I pray that I can be so lucky.

You can see a picture of William "Wonka" Compton III, read fund details and even make a donation at <http://nbacf.org/available-funds/available-fund-swonkas-choice-fund/>.

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OPINION

VIEWS FROM INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE H-Z

OUR VIEW

Our city council needs to act

It is time to move forward with the plan for South Castell Avenue.

There is nothing that will come from having the 427th public input meeting or having Andrew Douglas give his traveling dog-and-pony show presentation for what must seem to him as the millionth time.

Obviously, those are exaggerated numbers. However, we just don't see anything new being offered by anyone at this point.

Last week, several people opposing the project were ready to protest what they expected to be a vote during a council meeting. They even looked a bit befuddled to find the meeting to only yet be another presentation regarding the project.

It is time to do something.

This is not American Idol, and we are not voting on a homecoming queen. But suddenly it has become a popularity contest.

Build the damn thing or don't, but please stop this seemingly never-ending information process and let's move forward.

There is a cost associated with everything, and that includes waiting and investing in more public input. Moreover, we just don't believe anything will be gained from having a seventh public input meeting.

Our city council should be a bit embarrassed about voting for more public input.

Are council members simply waiting for people opposing the project to give up?

From our seat, those folks don't look to be going away. They are also not going to be won over by another public input meeting as they don't really seem to want to give much productive input.

Let's just face it and be honest. These people want to stop anything from happening, except, perhaps, voting unanimously to put up a wall around New Braunfels.

This entire process is sadly moving to become almost laughable and a little ridiculous.

Someone on our city council needs to stand up, be the voice of reason and be done with public input on this project.

Come on council. It is time to take some action.

Were six public inputs just not enough? What message do you think that might be sending people on your ability to process information?

The council is entrusted to make exactly these types of decisions. Members were elected to dig into critical details, ensure our history is honored and also look out for commerce and progress. We've done input to death.

This sentiment is coming from this newspaper, an entity with goals based on communication and creating healthy community dialogue. But like they say about breakfast tacos, everything is OK in moderation. Enough is enough already.

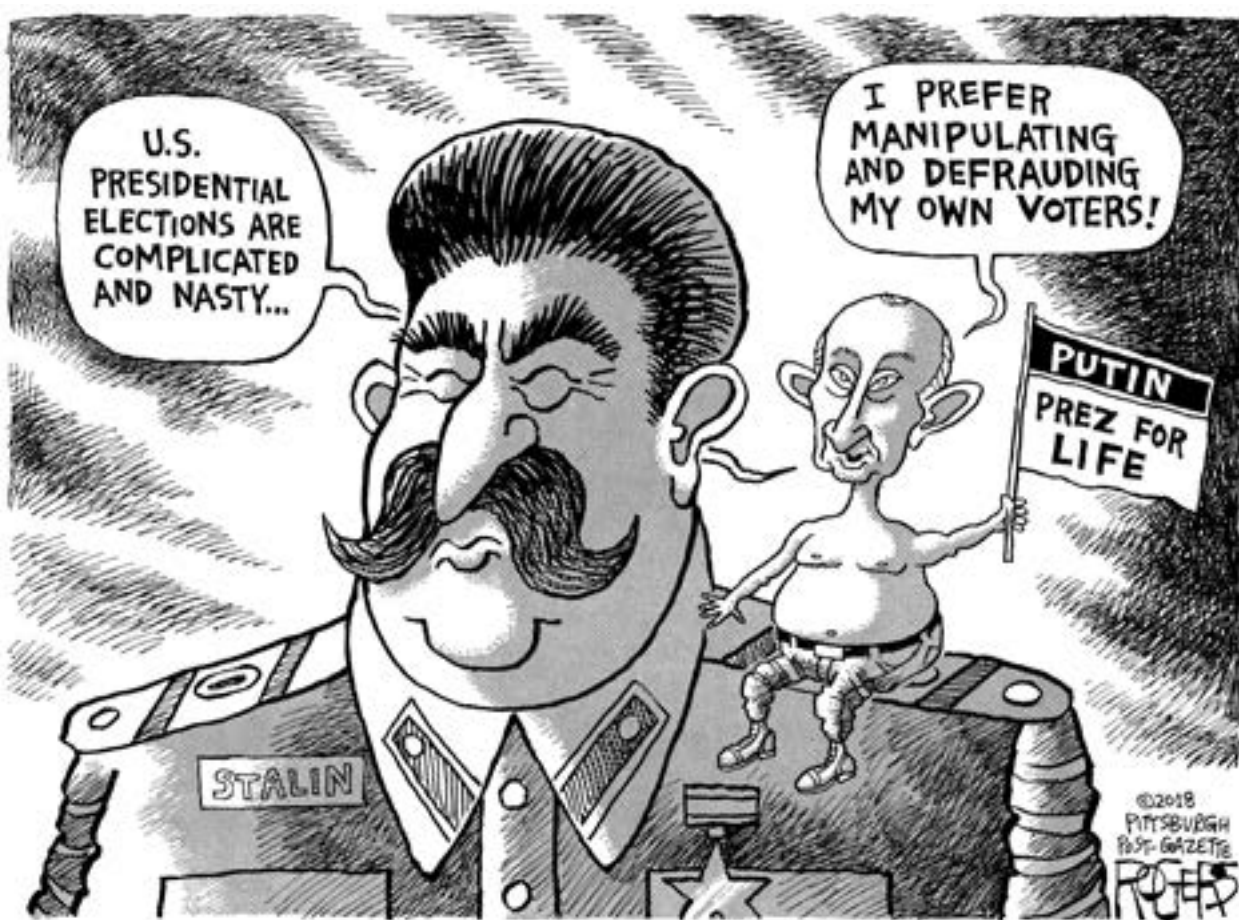
The council needs to be asking questions and debating particulars as it offers direction. Members need to be the group with the fortitude to make a call and move forward.

We are big fans of our city council. That is why we would be bewildered by it asking for any more input.

We are hopeful members just need a little push. Maybe they need someone to tell them it is OK to move forward.

Well, then hear us now. It is OK to move forward.

You got this. This is your moment. Don't put it off. Make it count.



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MY VIEW

Scars can be an improvement

Part of getting older is earning scars. Some of them are visible. I certainly have mine, like the basketball injuries I've endured with my knees and ankles.

Playing basketball for me was never easy, but still somehow I thought it was my ticket out.

I thought I'd shoot and run myself right into the NBA. I like to think back and see myself as an athlete, but honestly looking back I was always short and very "white."

But I was driven and tried to overcome not having enough basketball gifts with sheer willpower.

I would take 500 shots a day and for years spent about six hours a day "paying ball." Sometimes that willpower worked.

I certainly have some stories to tell where I had good days. However, it never got me out of the minor leagues, so to speak.

Other scars are earned through mental adversity.

We probably all have our own trust issues. When we put ourselves out there, part of the risk is that we might have our trust betrayed or our love not returned.

That can come from family, a spouse, a colleague or a friend. Even life will try to teach us at times that we can count on no one.

Once that happens on a significant level, skepticism



HONORABLE PERSPECTIVE

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enters our life and our relationships seemingly forever. That is too bad.

I can tell those types of scars have changed me.

It is not difficult to find a connection to spirituality in New Braunfels, and I'd encourage everyone to find a church to attend this Easter weekend. It might just be the thing that will fill a void in your life.

I was never very religious growing up, and I tried many flavors.

One time I attended a Catholic Mass with a girl I was dating. The entire service was in Spanish, and it was confusing with lots of standing and kneeling directives coming at me in different languages. She was cute, but I quickly decided that wasn't for me.

I went on a mission trip with a Methodist church

group to Iowa to put on a vacation bible school. I really only went because it took me away from the troubles of my youth.

On the way back, the bus stopped for lunch and I spent the time helping a stranger with her car in the parking lot. It took me the entire stop, but to the astonishment of both of us, I somehow got the car running.

Later, the bus stopped again, and the trip leader called me out for acting like a Christian. I had no clue what that meant and really think I may have only helped the lady to hide the fact that I didn't have any money for lunch and didn't want to deal with taking another pity-based handout.

I felt guilty for the praise and never went back to that church.

All that made me wonder about God. When faced with lots of true adversity, a kid wonders why someone with control would allow such terrible heartbreak and strife. People would tell me they were praying for me when I really wanted and needed them to help me.

But I was way too proud to ask for the help and resisted it when they tried. The help needed to be on my terms.

It was all pretty messed up and because of it I self-sabotaged many relationships

along my path.

For the longest time, I wondered if God really existed. Truth be told, that thought enters my mind still today. It especially does when tragedy occurs.

The biggest change is that I used to pray for people around me to improve.

When my wife and I would disagree, I would ask God to make her more understanding or appreciative. That seems so incredibly selfish that it is actually difficult for me to write. I should have been doing just the opposite.

Now, I pray for me to be a better husband, father, son and person. I'll probably always feel they deserve more than the person I've become over the years.

Possibly, that is my way of staying humble, or maybe it is just those scars talking. I realize I still have a long way to go, but some scars are pretty deep, and I'm still working on becoming the best version of me.

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Obituary: Juan Sanchez Estrada.

Local: NB man drowns in swimming accident.

JUST DO ONE THING ~ by Danny Seo

It's well-known that a programmable thermostat is an easy way to save money on heating and cooling costs in the home.

But it's imperative you know where to install

one.

Choose the room where you plan to spend the most time or where the temperature is most important to you, like a family room or bedroom.

Then make sure the thermostat is positioned away from things like a front door (which can blast cold air into the home), the sun's rays from a window or the

area above a register vent.

A false reading can cause a thermostat to overwork and waste energy.



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