

Opinions

On preserving freedom

The truth that always stands under even our noblest of political ambitions is that power itself is fundamental to the achievement of every social and political goal. Societies do not yield to reason or the enlightened awareness of a superior moral reality. They yield to power.

This is why that, after our Founders in their Declaration of Independence announced our new nation's "separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God" had entitled them, they proceeded to continue a war for the next seven years to make the point. It's why 85 years after that declaration's acknowledgment of the "self-evident" truth of the equality of all men, our nation fought the American Civil War to underline that principle as well.

Power itself, though, carries with it no necessary moral imperatives. That's the thing about power. Whoever has it can do pretty much whatever they want with power assuming they have enough of it. The American Constitution was written with that hard reality firmly in mind. The so-called "checks and balances" built into our tripartite Federal plan aimed at

limiting concentrations of power in any one branch of government.

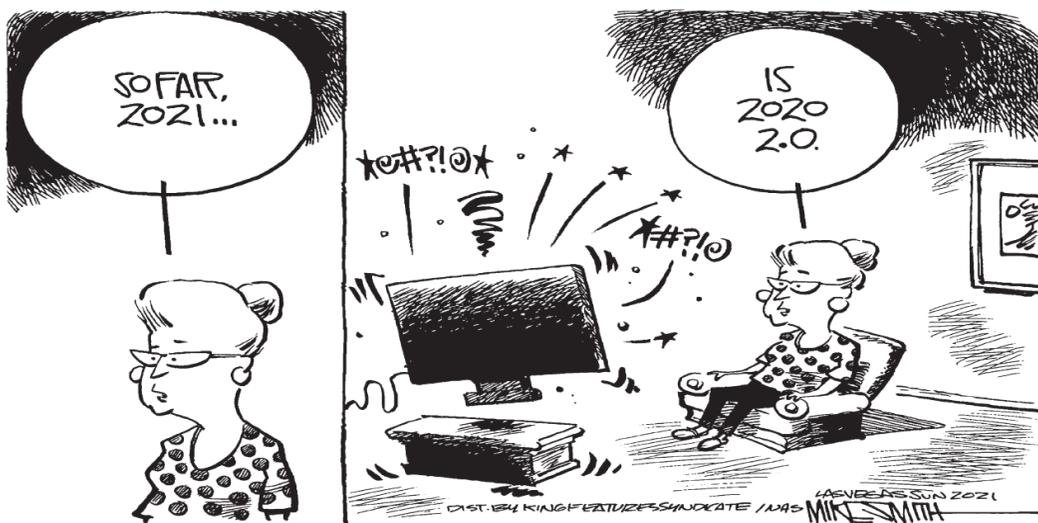
Unfortunately, it is still possible that a single political party may gain control of all three branches of government. In our present circumstances that is not quite the case, but another series of institutions are presently strongly disposed to favor one of the political parties and to act in ways that seriously prejudice the expressions of power just as though the government itself had done so. I refer here to the press, the entertainment media, and large areas of the business community. The lead editorial in the January 30-31, 2021, (Saturday / Sunday) edition of The Wall Street Journal raises just this question of the dangers present in the one-sidedness of viewpoint that prevails in the major institutions in America. This one-sidedness obviously doesn't mean that we as a people are united behind these institutional "thought leaders".

If anything, it means that those who have a different view of our relationship to our government, not to mention to "the Laws of Nature and Nature's God", face an existential

threat to "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" from the most dangerous of all places, the inside. It is a threat of a magnitude and gravity not seen since the American Civil War. What makes it especially serious is that we could succumb to this threat, as early 20th century American poet T.S. Elliott put it, "not with a bang, but a whimper". How this can happen is expressed in my interpretation of The Wall Street Journal editorial "Speech and Sedition in 2021" mentioned above.

The editorial's authors recall the Sedition Act from shortly after America's founding. The bill was aimed at outlawing, as The Journal expressed it, "false" political speech. Those who visit Facebook regularly to express their own opinions understand the model when they see their posts covered by a screen blocking it and informing would-be readers that Facebook's "fact checkers" have determined the contents to be "untrue". How far is it from using their power to protect us by censorship from "erroneous information" to protecting us from our erroneous opinions as well?

By: Leo Chapelle



JEB Tales

Due to illness and medical procedures JEB Tales will feature Lois McGuffee for the next few weeks.

CLASS C 1966 GIRLS STATE CHAMPIONSHIP (Part Two)

OUR TEAM

To say on the first day of our 1965-66 season that we would go on to become the Class C State Champions would have been a vision that we, as a team, did not see. We were just a young and less experienced group of girls that now had a chance to play because the older more experienced players were gone due to graduation. Gone were our All-State players from the previous year and gone also, was the experience and height from our former squad. Gone were our forwards Johnnie Hodges, Marlene Cassels and Shirley Ainsworth, averaging 20.4, 17.1, and 16.4 respectively. Each had been chosen All State forwards, along with Elaine Poole who was selected an All-State player in the guard position. Gone was Diane Strickland with her height and ability to rebound. We were just the "young uns" with limited experience and confidence. We enjoyed each other's company and spent time together on and off the court. Maybe that is why we formed a pretty close knit team.

Remember that in the last article, I provided a short description of the game as it was played at that time. Now let me introduce you to our routine starters. First were our guards: Mary Lou Boothe, her sister Nell Boothe, and Kathy Torrey. Our forwards were Elaine Poole, Judy Prudhomme and Lois Wyant. Our starting team was made up of two seniors, two juniors, one sophomore, and one freshman. The only two with any real experience was Mary Lou Boothe and Elaine Poole. Elaine was our All-State guard from the year before but Mr. Lewis made the decision to move her to a forward position in this season. As I write this I realize how young we were and that several of us had very little court time. Kathy, Nell, Judy and I had only substituted occasionally the year before.

Catahoula schools posted some really good teams in those years. It seemed to be a toss-up as to which team would win and which would lose each time they met. As I looked back over newspaper clippings from that year I recognized so many names. Names, locked in my memory, that still bring a smile to my face even after all these years. I considered them worthy and dangerous opponents that we would have "to reckon with" each time our teams met. While

all basketball players need certain basic skills to play, some possess above average skills that must be reckoned with during game time. Keen hand and eye coordination to score, quick hands for passing or stealing the ball from your opponent, the ability to dribble and move on the court were all important skills used to gain the upper hand on opponents. Opponents like Pat Tiffie, Margaret Burrell, and Sarah Calhoun from Monterey, Francis Spinks, Velma Spinks, Frankie Edwards and Francis Trisler from Block, Nan Brooks, Peggy and Linda Krause from Sicily Island, Billy Bartmess, Mary Gene Bartmess, and Martha Kendrick from Harrisonburg, and of course, Sue Wiley from Central of Larto; to name just a few. I know I have not named all the players from each school's roster, but I have tried to name some very notable ones and several from each school. Most of those named were forwards and usually gained recognition because of their scoring abilities. It was just as important that a coach be able to depend on strong guards that could stop some of those players. Needless to say teamwork was a key to success in most games. Teamwork means that each player has a responsibility in the game but when one of the team is not feeling well, is not playing up to their usual game or is stymied by an opponent then another team member will "take up the slack". Such was the case with our little squad.

Now I would like to share some personal memories of our basketball year.

One of our favorite tournaments of the year was held at Weston High School. We always looked forward to that weekend because it was scheduled early in the season and we played teams not in our local area. Because of Mr. Lewis's friendship with an individual from that region, our team was offered a spacious and rather nice hunting camp (a house) as an option for an over-night stay. We made some great memories in that over-night adventure, always laughing and having a good time together. Because of the time of year and warm temperatures, sometimes the floor of the Weston basketball court would sweat. This made players slip and sometimes fall, even fouling someone without intending to do so. In the huddle some of our players complained to coach and one decided to remove her shoes. After playing in that fashion for a short while, she reported to the others during a huddle that she could maintain her balance much better. Guess what? Off came most of the team's shoes and we continued

By John Ed Bartmess, Jr.

the game in that fashion. Later, we would be referred to as the team that plays barefoot.

One of my fondest memories was when Daddy chauffeured us to our games. It was common for teams to travel to the games by car. Not all schools had buses that transported teams to weekly games and tournaments. Those players assigned to ride in our car would meet at our house about thirty minutes before we had to leave. Not lacking initiative we put that time to good use. I had discovered the great sounds of the sixties and had many of the latest recordings with the Detroit and Philadelphia sounds of that period. Our little group would disappear into our oversized living room which became a great dance floor for the next 20-25 minutes. A few of our favorites dance tunes was "Mashed Potato Time" by Dee Dee Sharp, Chubbie Checkers's "The Twist" and "Dancing the Night Away with Sam Cook". Dancing to these and other tunes naturally put us in a good mood and limbered us up before driving to the game. I am told by some of my former teammates that this was something they really enjoyed. Of course, Daddy always joined us in our little dance-athon if he had time.

So many memories and so little space and time to share all remembered of that special year in our lives. Next week, I plan to write about our road to the playoffs and the competition we met along the way.

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