

Editorial

First create a problem, and then pretend to try to solve it

SHOULD THE purpose of government be to protect liberty or to promote equality?

That was the central question of the 20th century, as communism and free market capitalism competed on the global stage. And while the answer seemed to come with the collapse of Soviet-style communism in 1990 — the only way to make everybody equal, it turned out, was to make everybody poor — the topic is still hotly debated. In some parts of the world, freedom is currently on top, while in others, socialism is favored.

California is definitely in the latter camp, as evinced by its ever growing range of programs to shift income from the wealthy to the poor — everything from highly progressive income taxes, to inclusionary or subsidized housing, to food stamps and the \$15 minimum wage. And new income redistribution schemes are being dreamt up all the time.

You've probably noticed the growing movement to eliminate bail and forgive penalties and fines for people who have low incomes. And just last week, yet another front was opened when the Mercury News reported about a "new wave of studies" showing that poor people are no longer able to afford a hotel room on the coast.

One of these, the newspaper reported, was based on a poll conducted by the Coastal Conservancy, an anti-development agency of the state government, which not only found a wide economic disparity in who could afford to stay overnight in Bodega Bay or Coronado, but an ethnic one.

"While 51 percent of white California residents say they stay overnight when they visit the beach," the Mercury News intoned, "74 percent of Latinos, 70 percent of Asians and 64 percent of African-Americans say they do not."

"The coast belongs to all Californians," the Coastal Conservancy's president, Sam Schuchat, was quoted as saying. "Why should only relatively wealthy people be able to spend the night?"

The study itself and the newspaper story about it are rich with irony, of course, because the Coastal Conservancy and the Mercury News have made a living over the last 30 years campaigning against coastal development, and it's the shortage of new hotels rooms along the coast, coupled with California's surging population, that has caused prices to go up.

In the old days, cheap motels within hailing distance of the beach were common in towns like Santa Cruz and even Malibu. But since 1976, the coastal commission has made it practically impossible to build anything new on the coast, while also making it cost the earth to get one of the few permits that were issued. Meanwhile, prices of hotel rooms in California aren't controlled, and when there's a free market for something in short supply, prices invariably rise until demand matches what's available. In California, this is true of hotel rooms and all other types of housing in highly desirable places.

In other words, the Coastal Conservancy and the Merc are upset about a problem they played a large role in causing.

The socialist's answer to the situation, of course, is not to increase the supply of whatever's in high demand, but to impose some kind of price controls — especially rent control for apartments in cities up and down the coast.

And while nobody has (yet) called for price controls for the sale of real estate in prime areas, the Mercury News seemed to be itching for price controls for hotel rooms. Unfortunately, the newspaper noted, "It's illegal under state law for the government to set hotel rates."

So what's the answer? Subsidized campsites, cabins and hostels, an official with the coastal commission told the Merc.

But those things need permits, too — permits they will find practically impossible to get. It's a solution that is no solution at all.

The housing shortage along the coast is here to stay, folks, and that includes not only single-family homes, condos and apartments, but hotel rooms and campsites. Will Californians have the freedom to occupy one of those places if they want to and can afford it? Or is some "fair" way to determine who gets to stay at the beach just around the corner?

Under rent control, cheap apartments are distributed to people who happen to already occupy them, while sticking it to everybody who is trying to find an apartment. Meanwhile, there are always long waiting lists for subsidized housing projects.

Which brings us to the only possible solution to costly hotel rooms along the coast — government-imposed "fair" prices for such rooms. Of course, then you'll have to wait for your turn to get one.

Just imagine! A lovely hotel room for you and your family on a pristine beach for just \$75 or \$100 a night. And it'll all be yours in just 15 or 20 years.

BEST of BATES



"I brought my swatches."

Letters to the Editor

Why private water

Dear Editor,

Lawrence Samuels' positions have always been extreme and, shall we say, a bit "odd." Now he takes it one step further when he calls George Riley and advocates "anti-water." Public Water Now advocates that our local water distribution system be under local control of residents who are answerable to the consumers, instead of under the control of a for-profit corporation which seems not answerable to residents. We are very much pro-water, but we also believe that we should be able to afford to pay for the water essential for life on earth, instead of seeing corporations controlling water go down the same road as Big Pharma, which has raised prices of life-saving drugs up to 1,000 percent, making them affordable only to millionaires. Water, without which life on earth cannot exist, must be affordable to all.

I hope Mr. Samuels is not comparing about 85 percent of all American cities which presently have public water to the "ideologies" of "leaders of Italy and Germany in the 1930's and 1940's. Now that's crazy.

General reasons in favor of public water: There is a lack of incentive for private water companies to carry out improvements

or maintenance in water systems that will have lasting benefits beyond their contract term.

Private companies focus more on profit maximization than on the quality and quantity of service provided. Because of this, by 2000 only 15 percent of water supply remained privatized.

Privatization of water gives up governmental control of water that is essential to life, which is ethically wrong. It is high time we joined the numerous municipalities who have public control of their water, and stop paying the high water rates we are currently forced to pay.

Helga Fellay, Carmel Valley

Kildall deserving

Dear Editor,

I was very happy to read that the NPS recognized Gary Kildall. I knew Gary briefly back in the 1970s, as we both had the same passion of flying, and both owned the same make and model of aircraft. We both hangered our aircraft at the time at Monarch Aviation so we would run into one another from time to time as we departed or arrived.

I did not know who he was until years after I had left Carmel, as we only ever discussed airplanes. Being an electrical engineer (now long retired), I am well aware of his contribution to the industry and always felt that he deserved more credit. (Yes, I'm on the side of those that believe DoS is a copy of CP/M).

Kudos to NPS!
J. Filip Tripcevic, Toulouse, France

- Publisher Paul Miller (paul@carmelpinecone.com)
- Production/Sales Manager ... Jackie Edwards (jackie@carmelpinecone.com)
- Office Manager Irma Garcia (274-8645)
- Reporters Mary Schley (274-8660), Chris Counts (274-8665)
- Kelly Nix (274-8664)
- Features Editor Elaine Hesser (274-8661)
- Advertising Sales Real Estate, Big Sur - Jung Yi (274-8646)
- Carmel-by-the-Sea, Carmel Valley, Carmel & Pebble Beach
-Meena Lewellen (274-8655)
- Monterey, Pacific Grove, Seaside, Sand City ... Larry Mylander (274-8590)
- Legal Notices Irma Garcia (274-8645)
- Ad Design Sharron Smith (274-2767), Vanessa Jimenez (274-8652)
- Ad Design, Obituaries & Calendar Anne Papineau (274-8654)
- Office Assistant Hannah Miller (274-8593)
- Circulation Manager Scott MacDonald (261-6110)
- For complete contact info go to: www.carmelpinecone.com/info.htm

The Carmel Pine Cone

www.carmelpinecone.com

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

Vol. 103 No. 19 • May 12, 2017

©Copyright 2017 by Carmel Communications, Inc.
A California Corporation

734 Lighthouse Ave., Pacific Grove, California 93950

Mail: P.O. Box G-1, Carmel CA 93921

Email: mail@carmelpinecone.com

or firstname@carmelpinecone.com

Telephone: (831) 274-8593

Fax: (831) 375-5018

The Carmel Pine Cone

was established in 1915 and is a legal newspaper for Carmel-by-the-Sea, Monterey County and the State of California, established by Superior Court Decree No. 35759, July 3, 1952