

OPINION: Where's the leadership from the Oval Office during the #TrumpShutdown?

By Bruce Ditata

On the anniversary of his inauguration as POTUS, Donald J. Trump yearned for a Mar-a-Lago getaway, celebratory gala with his deep-pocketed cronies, the exhilaration of basking in praise he always yearns for.

Instead, he found himself shuttered in the White House, unable to join the opulent festival at his beloved Florida retreat. Outside the security moat on Pennsylvania Avenue, protestors chanted slogans, pounded drums, carried signs-against Trump and his policies, as well as for women's and immigration advocacy. It was one of hundreds of women's marches across the nation to coincide with the anniversary of the President's inauguration.

A short distance away from the executive offices on Capitol Hill, lawmakers lobbed verbal grenades across the aisles in the United States Senate after a vote to keep the government running, which failed on the day before Trump's anniversary.

The vitriol flowed like the champagne at Mar-a-Lago with Democratic and Republican members blaming each other for the government shutdown which, officially, began on January 20.

Democratic Senators perseverated on their unwillingness to "kick the can down the road" on the need to establish long term funding and public policy agreements to fund the Dream Act, border security, military personnel, children health insurance, medical facilities, and immigration legislation.

Republican Senators, conversely, accused their Democratic colleagues of being intransigent on issues they have always supported for the sake of one single issue- the Dream Act- the long established program due to expire in March of 2018 which offers a path to citizenship for the offspring of illegal immigrants, young people who call America their home, the only country they have even known.

Meanwhile, the stalemate in the Senate rages on and the government shutdown continues, a situation labelled as “trench warfare.” It has elicited harsh attacks against Democratic Senators by Trump subordinates, while the President has remained, mostly, silent with the exception of an anti-Democratic Party tweet and an aggressive, campaign style attack advertisement.

Where is the leadership from the Oval Office, the decisive intervention of a self-proclaimed deal maker, who railed against his predecessor, Barack Obama, for failure to bring both political parties to the negotiating table?

Without Trump working decisively to end the impasse, does this stalemate, causing the federal government to grind to a halt- the question becomes will historians in point of fact, accurately categorize it as the #TrumpShutdown?

The LGBTQ Voice – “T” in LGBTQ

On last week’s The LGBTQ Voice episode, Dan asked the youth and elders if they struggle with the “T” in LGBT.

Watch the full episode here:

<https://www.newbedfordguide.com/the-lgbtq-voice-show-episode-2-youth-and-elders/2018/01/14>

Catch The LGBTQ Voice on New Bedford Guide's Facebook page every Tuesday at 7pm.

The LGBTQ Voice – What can New Bedford do better for the LGBTQ community?

On last week's The LGBTQ Voice episode, Dan asked if New Bedford is doing enough for the LGBTQ community.

Watch the full episode here:
<https://www.newbedfordguide.com/the-lgbtq-voice-show-episode-2-youth-and-elders/2018/01/14>

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The LGBTQ Voice – coming out stories

Did you know that gay men and women were arrested for being gay in the 50's? On last week's The LGBTQ Voice episode, the LGBTQ youth and elders shared their coming out stories.

Watch the full episode here:
<https://www.newbedfordguide.com/the-lgbtq-voice-show-episode-2-youth-and-elders/2018/01/14>

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New Bedford's Martin Luther King Jr. award winning essay "Let Your Voice Lead the Change"

Here's Roosevelt 8th grader Kahja Williamson's 1st place Martin Luther King Jr. essay called "Let Your Voice Lead the Change."

mlkwinningessay2018

The LGBTQ Voice show – Episode 2 – Youth and elders

Join The LGBTQ Voice for their second episode! In this episode, host Dan Everton will randomly ask questions to LGBTQ elders and youth so we can gain insight into generational perspectives.

Catch The LGBTQ Voice on New Bedford Guide's Facebook page every Tuesday at 7pm.

OPINION: Employee Health Insurance plan shouldn't come at the expense of public employees

The following was submitted to us by Rick Porter:

"I do have a question that is not answered in your article, **"Mayor Mitchell and Councillors Push To Rein In Employee Health Insurance "Budget Buster"**. I come at this as a taxpayer (I'm not a city employee), but I also have a long held belief that we should not solve a revenue concern on the backs of public employees. It would appear that the Mayor wants to use this 2011 state law to force the Public Employee Committee (PEC) into negotiations.

My question is this: if it is just to begin the negotiations process with no way of enacting a change in employee benefits, providers, or cost-sharing arrangement, what is the Mayor looking for to bring down costs that has the employees concerned? (there must be something) I wish the article was more balanced. In trying to form an opinion on this issue, this article only provided a "pro" argument for the mayor's position. It is important to know both sides of an issue." – Rick Porter

Opinion: Use New Bedford's parking ban ticket money to fund panhandler work projects

In preparation for snow storms the City of New Bedford institutes a **citywide parking ban** so their plow drivers can easily access the streets. New Bedford police issued **593 \$50 parking tickets during yesterday's parking ban totaling \$29,650**. \$100,000 to \$200,000 in total tickets wouldn't be out of the ordinary in a full snow season. Last year, over 2,000 tickets were issued during the first four parking bans bringing the total money raised to \$100,000 in a short time.

With late fees the money could be much higher. The city does offers 39 alternate parking areas and plenty of notice, so there is no excuse. Plus unless you are new to New Bedford, you can anticipate a parking ban for every major storm. The big questions is, what should this money be used for?

There are several pre-planned options that this money will likely fund. First, and most obvious, the money could go back into the fund used to maintain plows buy sand/salt and pay drivers. Winters are unpredictable and it makes sense to put money away for future storms, which also means tax relief for tax payers.

Another idea not really considered by the City is putting this money towards work programs for panhandlers and the homeless.

New Bedford has had a significant, growing panhandler and homeless population for several years now. It seems that every major intersection in New Bedford has a panhandler begging for money. The exact number is not known, but not all panhandlers

are homeless. Many live in poverty, have a home and simply panhandle to get by – or feed their alcohol or drug addiction.

A hundred thousand dollars could go a long way to helping the homeless and panhandlers that want help. I'm talking about the folks that want to improve their situation.

Paying a wage could improve the situation of 50 people. \$100,000 could fund 9,090 hours of work at \$11 per hour. That means 50 people could get 181 hours of work. That's 22 hours of work for 8 weeks/two month, or \$1,000 of income per month.

\$2,000 of total income doesn't sound like much, but that's first, last and security for an apartment, or two months of decent living for someone that already has a place to live. \$2,000 could be the boost that gets dozens of people out of their terrible situation.

Work projects could include shoveling, street cleaning, landscaping and other low skilled jobs. The money would go right back into the local economy instead of sitting in a snow day fund. The City could institute a drug screening requirement to ensure the funds aren't being used for drugs.

Parking ban tickets are funds that can't be planned for, so they are not dedicated to critical needs of the city. \$100,000 could significantly reduce homelessness and panhandlers each year. If these work projects succeed, more funds could be dedicated to future work projects and a real impact on the homeless and panhandler count would be seen.

OPINION: Fake News Brethren : Fox News and Trump

By Bruce C. Ditata

In author Ray Bradbury's nightmarish view of the twenty-fourth century, Fahrenheit 451, Donald J. Trumpism and his symbiotic propaganda network, Fox News, have effectively won the final media war. Other real news outlets have been quashed, silenced by government media control; books have been banned and those who hide them, along with the books themselves have become subject to incineration.

Written in 1951, Bradbury's dystopia projects a future where objective truth, facts, real investigative news has been made obsolete by the slow, inexorable inability of humanity to know the difference between incessant, government controlled newspeak and measurable, empirical reality.

The willingness of our population to sift and synthesize truth from fantasy has been destroyed by the steady cadence of nonsensical presidential tweets and Fox News' menu of innuendo and conspiracy theories, replaced by a docile complacency. In Bradbury's ominous warning,

"... at a clip where you can't think of anything else but the danger...sitting in some room where you can't argue with the television. Why? The television is "real." It is immediate, it has dimension. It tells you what to think and blasts it in. It must be right. It seems so right. It rushes you on so quickly to its own conclusions your mind hasn't time to protest..."

The role of media in the minds of our founding fathers, hundreds of years ago was not as a state sponsored rationalizer of all the dubious actions of the United States President- as Fox News views its reason for being- while parroting all the familiar Trumpistic bombast.

On the contrary, media in its many forms- print, television, online websites- has an obligation to dig into the actions of government institutions and government officials to make certain their actions are lawful, ethical, and appropriate according to the mandates of our constitutional, democratic form of government.

Benjamin Franklin, writing in 1736 nearly sixty years BEFORE freedom of the press was included in the U.S Constitution's Bill of Rights, referred to it as " ... a principal pillar of a free government; when this support is taken away, the constitution of a free society is dissolved and tyranny is erected on its ruins. Republics... derive their strength and vigor from a popular examination into the action of the magistrate."

In present day times circa 2018 the head "magistrate," one Donald J. Trump, aka President of the United States, rejects completely the notion that his utterances and actions are subject to "popular examination" by anyone, especially the news outlets that dare to question his singular vision as to how "America will be great again." From the onset of his presidential candidacy and throughout Trump's first year in office, to do so is to be relegated to "fake news" status.

In the best traditions envisioned by Franklin and other founding fathers, who knew the absolute necessity for a free, unfettered press, there has been a renaissance of investigative journalism, mining all the questionable, possibly illegal dealings of the Trump election campaign, its shady, potentially treasonous conspiracy with Vladimir Putin and Russia to tilt the 2016 presidential election away from Hillary Clinton, and now the growing drum beat of his administration and lackey news outlet, Fox, to denigrate and delegitimize Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into all of the above.

It might be well nigh time for the thirty six percent of

Americans still in thrall with Trumpism and the truly “fake news” Fox network to seek a moment of lucid truth seeking as Montag did, the protagonist in Fahrenheit 451 when he realized how valuable books were and the truths therein.

Bradbury wrote about books in the way America circa 2018 ought to be assessing real media, holding Trump and his minions accountable in every way possible.

“... books are so important because they have quality... book(s) can go under the microscope...books have pores...texture...truthfully recorded details of life...”

And Bradbury wrote about Trumpism and Fox News, too, inferring these dubious types, “ want only wax moon faces, poreless, expressionless... flowers...trying to live on flowers instead of growing on good rain and black loam... bad ones leaving (life) for the flies...”

YouTube Star Records Man Hanging For Children To Watch

By Tyler Bizarro

Famous YouTuber and former Vine star Logan Paul made national headlines recently after posting a video exposing an unknown suicide victim in a Japanese forest.

The video has been removed from Paul’s channel, but not before reaching YouTube’s trending page and amassing more than 6 million views.

In the video, Logan Paul emphasized that the ‘documentary’ was meant to explore a supernatural side of ‘the suicide forest’

in Japan. But instead of combing the woods for ghosts and werewolves with his gang of 15 million pre-teens, Paul and his film crew discovered a man hanging from a tree soon after entering the forest. And he chose to vlog the entire thing. Selfie-style.

In the moment, Paul even went as far as to speak towards the camera about mental health awareness and suicide prevention-with the corpse of the man in the background of the shot. The group then recorded their reactions from outside the forest as police arrived, before they edited the footage and video thumbnail (showing the man hanging) to post for millions of people's entertainment.

While this is a national story, maybe your kids are part of the 15 million that make up the 'Logang'. So there are a couple parts that I think we here in New Bedford can take value from.



This is a man who profits off of children watching his internet videos. While some channels provide safe and educational content for kids, or even entertaining and pop-

culture videos for pre-teens, YouTube has struggled with a growing number of large channels targeting and manipulating children for financial gain. The twisted reality is that anybody in the world can start making videos for your kids or someone else's and get filthy rich while doing it.

So next time you go to give a child your phone to surf YouTube on, remember that the internet is like no other resource in the world. It is a giant black hole of information, and is overwhelming to even those who have navigated it their entire lives. It is a doubled edged sword for all who use it. And whether you have kids or not, we are all affected by how younger generations of Americans are being influenced by people like Logan Paul. While it may be easier for most of us to overlook nonsense and denounce immoral behavior, the same can't be said for many younger people. Especially on the internet. The very fact that 15 million people have subscribed to be apart of the 'Logang' would suggest there's a serious lack of accountability for what kids watch online.

The second point is that incidences like these are bound to keep happening unless platforms and revenue streams are taken away from these people. After controversy breaks for an internet star, there is usually a hit that person will take in terms of channel growth rate and short term income. But without being held accountable by YouTube or the people subscribed (in this case; children) , these people are free to keep creating and monetizing videos. And so, this isn't the first time a Paul brother has made national headlines, and it won't be the last.

Logan's brother Jake (who has 12 million followers on YouTube) made headlines after a video with KTLA in California went viral. In that video Jake Paul was asked to address neighbors who were angry with the YouTuber for continually filming dangerous stunts (like burning furniture in an empty pool) throughout the neighborhood and having his subscribers (and their parents) fill the streets.

A remorseless Jake Paul responded by physically dabbing in the reporter's face and climbing on top of the news van, chanting the name of his fan club; Team 10. Jake Paul was set to continue filming with Disney for the show 'Bizaardvark,' but the two entities mutually agreed to part ways shortly after this news broke. Paul has since been sued by residents of Los Angeles and has moved into a 7 million dollar mansion just outside of LA. He's even made headlines for revealing the private home of singer Post Malone after acquiring his address through a merchandise company and showing up with cameras unannounced.

These incidents happened just months before this recent incident with Logan, but both brothers have gained millions of followers in the meantime. At a point, a social media influencer becomes so popular as an individual entity that they are almost immune to bad press. If nothing changes and these influencers keep making money creating inappropriate content, millions more will follow in the coming months and years as more children will grow up to be ignorant, self absorbed, reckless Jake Paulers and Logangers all on their own.

So one way or another, this will be our problem.