

Sustainability: Are we up for the challenge?

Thanks to the American Warfare State and its need for fresh meat, I left the country for three years in the late 1960s. When I finally got back to my hometown Seattle, I was amazed by the new freeways and the endless, 24/7, streams of automobiles. I thought: This cannot be good thing.

It so much easier to see the changes after a break. Seattle

was no longer a quaint little city on the water; it now stretches almost from Oregon to Canada. I grew up traveling around the city on buses and trolleys. You could still do that, but it was a tiny part of the transportation. That was the beginning of my environmental concerns.

Why was it not a good thing? You've heard of CO2? Not only are all sorts of vehicles a huge source of CO2, but their proliferation encouraged sprawling development, which in turn accelerated the increase in transportation, just like it happened in this valley with the four-laning of "Killer" Highway 82. And that was a big reason for my wife and I to move to Carbondale.

Most readers know about CO2 in the atmosphere, but it is invisible and fails to make a very noticeable effect on our daily lives.

Yet!

It falls in that category of something for others to worry about. Very few people get up in the morning, look at their smiling children and think: We are making this world into hell on earth and your lives aren't going to be worth a damn.

Sorry for the harsh words. I like Noam Chomsky's view: If space travelers looked down on the planet they would wonder what the hell are those people doing down there? Aren't they going to start doing something about it? But then Chomsky gives us an equal chance of wiping out humanity with nuclear war. Seen the news in the Middle East lately? Don't let "bomb, bomb, bomb ... bomb Iran" McCain get anywhere near the switch.

A national magazine recently touted little Carbondale as a great place to live. As one local wrote: "Time to NIMBY up." And "Let's establish a status quo that reflects change without growth." Another letters-to-the-editor writer replied: stop the "negativity," and instead, "work for positive growth." The recently completed master plan for Carbondale projects a doubling of the population in the next few years. We have local government offices

named "Community Development" not "Community Improvement." People talk about "sustainable growth" or "smart growth" or, in this case, "positive growth." Do we really have any idea what these words mean?

Well, I'm in the first camp. I believe in limits, as do thousands, if not millions, who have taken a hard look at this planet. Estimates vary, but you could say that we are using the earth's resources at rate that exceeds 120 percent of capacity. Since billions of people are living at very low standards of living, our Western lifestyle might be 150 percent of total resources. The inertia to continue our comfortable but destructive life style is enormous. We have had this mantra drummed into us all day every day of our entire lives.

So the question for the future of humanity is can we change? Do we say "no" to increasing the population of Carbondale, or this valley, because we want all the good stuff to ourselves? No, we do it because it's time (long past time), to make a commitment.

In the Boy Scouts they fostered the idea of leaving a place better than we found it. We aren't going to be able to do that, but maybe we can cut the losses.

If this community can stake a flag that says we are going to do the best we can with what we have, others will take note.

The paradigm of endless growth could start to change because we will make it so, not because we have exhausted our planet. This will be the hardest thing the human race has ever done. Are we up to the challenge?

Patrick Hunter is a longtime Roaring Fork Valley resident and lives in Satank.

Guest Commentary

By Patrick Hunter

Legal Notice

ORDINANCE NO. 8

Series 2013

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE TOWN OF CARBONDALE, COLORADO, APPROVING A LOT LINE VACATION OF PLAT OF THE HOLGATE SUBDIVISION, INCLUDING RELOCATION OF EASEMENT FOR THE WEAVER LEONARDY DITCH

NOTICE: This Ordinance was introduced, read, and adopted at a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Town of Carbondale, Colorado, on June 11, 2013

This Ordinance shall take effect thirty (30) days after publication of this notice. The full text of said Ordinance is available to the public at www.carbondale.gov.org or at the office of the Town Clerk, 511 Colorado Avenue, Carbondale, Colorado, during normal business hours.

THE TOWN OF CARBONDALE

By: s/s Stacey Bernot, Mayor

ATTEST:

s/s Cathy Derby, Town Clerk

Published in The Sopris Sun on June 20, 2013.