



**WEEKLY UPDATE  
SEPTEMBER 26 - OCTOBER 2, 2021**

**THIS WEEK**

**BOS MEETING ON SEPT 28<sup>TH</sup>**

**MORE FUNDING FOR CAL POLY CORP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

**CAYUCOS VETERANS HALL GRANT AND BUDGET GAP**

**FY 2020 -21 4<sup>TH</sup> QUARTER REPORT – THEY UNDERSPENT**

**FAT COUNTY FUND BALANCES**

**HOMELESS SHACKS (PALLET HOUSES) TO BE TESTED IN GROVER  
COULD BE USED ALL OVER COUNTY**

**PENSION TRUST SEPT 27<sup>TH</sup>**

**PLANNING COMMISSION SEPT 30<sup>TH</sup>**

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS ONLY**

**APCD HEARING BOARD SPECIAL MEETING**

**LAST WEEK**

**NO REGULAR BOS MEETING**

**APCD MEETING LIGHT  
BUT IS IT MORE SYMBOLIC THAN REAL?**

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING LIGHT**

**SPECIAL BOS MEETING ON SEPT 24<sup>TH</sup>  
INTERVIEWED GROUNDWATER DIRECTOR CANDIDATES  
NO PICK REPORTED YET**

**EMERGENT ISSUES**

**COVID DOWN AGAIN  
BUT STILL KILLING**

**COLAB IN DEPTH  
SEE PAGE 13**

**REFLECTIONS ON 2020 - THE WORST YEAR IN  
THE LAST HALF-CENTURY: PART ONE**

**BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON**

**REFLECTIONS ON 2020 - THE WORST YEAR IN  
THE LAST HALF-CENTURY: PART TWO**

**BY VICTOR DAIVIS HANSON**

**THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS**

**ALL MEETINGS ARE 9:00 AM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED**

**San Luis Obispo County Pension Trust Board Meeting of Monday, September 27, 2021  
(Scheduled)**

**Item 5 - Monthly Investment Report.** The market returns have remained strong. The problem is that the accumulated unfunded liability of \$806 million is so large that it would take years of high returns to reduce and ultimately eliminate it. Contribution rates increased for the County and employees. These are forecast to tip slightly downward next year. Assuming the rates of return hold, the greatest danger is inflation. High inflation erodes the value of the fund and the value of the returns. This in turn causes the actuaries to recommend rate increases.

We wonder if the County employees who are happily spending all the COVID relief money and America Rescue Plan money ever think about how it will drive national debt and inflation, which in turn could savage their pensions.

The systems actuaries' statement on inflation:

*Inflation – The August report on CPI inflation cooled slightly from the higher than preferred rates in recent months. The CPI increase on a year over year increase in August was 5.3%. The monthly increase of 0.3% was a more noticeable drop. The core inflation rate excluding volatile food and energy prices was up 4.0% on a year over year basis. The Fed and most policy-makers have held the position that the burst in inflation this year is due to pandemic-related distortions and should prove to be transitory.*

	August	Year to Date 2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Total Trust Investments (\$ millions)	\$1,764		\$1,552 year end	\$1,446 year end	\$1,285 year end	\$1,351 year end	\$1,196 year end
<b>Total Fund Return</b>	1.6% Gross	<b>12.1% Gross</b>	8.9 % Gross	16.3 % Gross	-3.2 % Gross	15.5 % Gross	6.6 % Gross
Policy Index Return (r)	1.2%	9.8%	10.0 %	16.4 %	-3.2 %	13.4 %	7.7 %

- (r) Policy index as of Sept. 2020 Strategic Asset Allocation Policy with 2021 Interim targets:
- Public Mkt Equity- 20% Russell 3000, 20% MSCI ACWI ex-US
  - Public Mkt Debt- 11% Barclays US Aggregate,
  - Risk Diversifying 10% Barclays US Aggregate, 3% Barclays 7-10yr Treasury, 2% Barclays 5-10yr US TIPS
  - Real Estate & Infrastructure- 12% NCREIF Index, 3% Private RE/Infrastructure actual returns
  - Private Equity- 8% actual private equity returns
  - Private Credit- 7% actual private credit returns
  - Liquidity- 2% 90 day T-Bills, 2% Barclays 1-3yr Gov/Credit
- Pending annual updates to interim targets.

The system made 1.6 % in August, but inflation was 5.3%. If the system makes 12% for the year and inflation holds at 5.3%, what does that mean from an actuarial standpoint? What if the 1970's stagflation returns?

Table I-2 Change in Unfunded Actuarial Liability (in thousands)	
Unfunded Actuarial Liability, January 1, 2020	\$ 753,309
Actuarial transition	\$ 2,802
Expected change in Unfunded Actuarial Liability	(5,370)
Unfunded decrease due to actuarial asset gain <sup>1</sup>	(5,684)
Unfunded increase due to liability loss	26,101
Unfunded increase due to change in discount rate	35,700
Total UAL change	\$ 53,549
Unfunded Actuarial Liability, January 1, 2021	\$ 806,858

<sup>1</sup> Includes net loss due to contribution timing delay.

**San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, September 28, 2021 (Scheduled)**

**Item 3 - It is recommended that the Board approve the FY 2021-22 renewal agreement with the Cal Poly Corporation to support the Cal Poly - Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the amount of \$200,000 to enhance economic development.** The County has been contributing \$200,000 per year to this incubator program for a number of years.

*As of June 30, 2021, there are 7 companies in the Incubator Program, including:* • *Armadillo Designs is creating the All-Access Camper, which is a customizable camper shell with a convertible roof.* • *Blueline Robotics is working to save lives by providing first responders with cost-effective tactical robotic solutions.* • *DcubeD develops mass-customizable, export restriction-free Actuators and Deployable Structures that make advanced SmallSat & CubeSat missions possible by keeping especially the need of New Space Customers in mind.* • *Pacific Adventure Vehicles is designing the most advanced wedge camper on the market.* • *The Future is Good (FIG) is a comprehensive sustainability-centric community and marketplace that allows visitors to shop sustainable products, learn about social and environmental issues, and join a community of people excited about building a good future together.* • *Tallyfor Inc enhances online accounting software with the ability to complete business taxes by helping owners move data from source transactions to IRS filing.* • *Trees is a company that is developing software that uses machine-learning to help people.*

Several prior startups have gone on to raise venture capital and become successful. There is a report of activities attached to the agenda item. It is interesting but does not report on the key metrics:

How many companies have gone through the program each year since its inception?

How many are still in business and what is their status?

How many are still in business in San Luis Obispo County?

Absent this information, no one has any idea if the millions that have accumulatively been expended on this program have leveraged economic development in SLO County.

A separate question is: Why is the CalPoly Corporation in the economic development business? It is set up to run dining halls, book stores, housing, facilities, real estate investments, and other nonacademic services to support the University's academic mission. Student fees charged for the services support the Corporation. It is expending tens of millions of dollars per year on all sorts of supplies, utilities, motor fuels, and staffing (over 3000 employees), with a \$109 million annual budget.

**Item 17 - Request to authorize the Director of Public Works, or designee, to apply for the State Coastal Conservancy Grant for the Cayucos Veteran's Hall Rehabilitation Project.** Seemingly innocuous, the item, if approved, would authorize staff to apply for a grant to help rebuild the structure. This is part of an overall package of local and grant funds which would eventually finance the \$5.9 million project. Does submission or approval of the grant require the County to issue debt to eventually complete the project?

Exhibit A  
320089 - Cayucos Vets Hall Rehabilitation  
(Through Project Completion)

Expenditures:	Prior Year Costs through FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22 Budget	Total Budget	Estimated Project Costs	Variance
Preliminary Engineering, Environmental, Design, & Bidding	\$306,201	\$0	\$306,201	\$502,921	(\$196,720)
County Administration and Project Management	187,474	27,925	215,399	390,064	(174,665)
Construction Manager	0	0	0	200,000	(200,000)
Soft Costs Contingency (15%)	0	0	0	89,508	(89,508)
<b>Total Soft Costs:</b>	<b>\$493,675</b>	<b>\$27,925</b>	<b>\$521,600</b>	<b>\$1,182,493</b>	<b>(\$660,893)</b>
Construction	\$0	\$1,937,000	\$1,937,000	\$4,091,958	(\$2,154,958)
Construction Contingency (12%) & Inflation Factor	0	0	0	654,713	(654,713)
<b>Total Hard Costs:</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,937,000</b>	<b>\$1,937,000</b>	<b>\$4,746,671</b>	<b>(\$2,809,671)</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$493,675</b>	<b>\$1,964,925</b>	<b>\$2,458,600</b>	<b>\$5,929,164</b>	<b>(\$3,470,564)</b>
<b>Funding Sources:</b>					
General Fund	\$445,573	\$26,027	\$471,600	\$471,600	\$0
Cultural, Community and Natural Resources Grant Program (CCNR)	0	1,937,000	1,937,000	1,937,000	0
Interim Loan - Tax Reduction Reserve	48,102	1,898	50,000	50,000	0
Future Funding	0	0	0	3,470,564	(3,470,564)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>\$493,675</b>	<b>\$1,964,925</b>	<b>\$2,458,600</b>	<b>\$5,929,164</b>	<b>(\$3,470,564)</b>

L:\Project Delivery\2021\September\BOS\Cayucos Vets SCC Grant App\EDITS\320089 Cayucos Vets EX A\_Sept 2021.docx



**Item 27 - FY 2020-21 (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Financial Report)** This is a full fiscal year report that contains the year-end budgetary results with considerable detail about the puts and takes that

occurred over the year. In the end the County underran its adopted budget and generated significant fund balances. There did not seem to be any serious problems.

## APCD HEARING BOARD SPECIAL MEETING

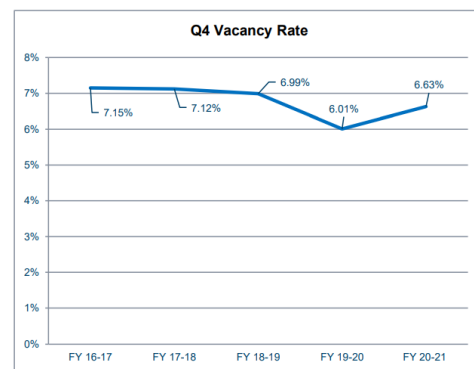
The Report also contains considerable related information about staffing changes, status of capital projects, the County’s performance measures, vehicle fleet status, and position classification changes.

Certainly, the Board has plenty of opportunity to accelerate capital projects, reduce pension unfunded liability, pave roads, shelter homeless people, and leverage housing production if it wishes to break out of the current policy paradigm, which is primarily focused on the maintenance of staffing levels, pay and benefits, growth control, and climatism.

### Position Allocation Changes

FY 2020-2021	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Quarter Start</b>	2,807.25	2,815.00	2,827.50	2,837.50
<b>FTE Additions</b>	17.75	19.25	11.50	18.50
<b>FTE Deletions</b>	10.00	6.75	1.50	4.00
<b>Quarter End</b>	<b>2,815.00</b>	<b>2,827.50</b>	<b>2,837.50</b>	<b>2,852.00</b>
<b>Net Change</b>	7.75	12.50	10.00	14.50
<b>% Change</b>	0.28%	0.44%	0.35%	0.51%

\*Does not include 124 temporary hires for COVID-19



**Item 28 - Submittal of a resolution approving FY 2021-2022 Final Budget Actions, by 4/5 vote.** The action is to allocate the General Fund surplus from last year’s operations.

Description	Sources	Uses
General Fund: Excess FBA	\$34,466,226	
General Fund: Contingencies		\$3,920,828
General Fund: General Reserve		3,000,000
General Fund: Appropriation to transfer funds to General Government Building Replacement designation		5,703,657
General Fund: Designation for COVID 19		10,442,111
General Fund: Appropriation to transfer funds to Countywide Automation Replacement designation		7,000,000
General Fund: Appropriation to Administrative Office		30,000
General Fund: Designation for Rainy Day Funds		4,369,630
<b>Total Adjustments</b>	<b>\$34,466,226</b>	<b>\$34,466,226</b>

If COVID is going away, what would the \$10.4 million COVID designation be used for? What is the difference between “Rainy Day Funds” (Perhaps a new “Government Standard Accounting Term”) and general fund reserves?

RESERVES AND DESIGNATIONS FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022  
FINAL BUDGET

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>		<b>TAX REDUCTION RESERVE FUND</b>	
General Reserve	13,000,000	Designations:	
Designations:		Tax Reduction Reserve	13,122,925
Co. Fire Equip Replace	2,956,224	SB 1090 Tax Reduction Reserve	8,704,366
Internal/Teeter Financing	4,589,043		<u>\$ 21,827,290</u>
Prop 172 Solar	843,065		
Solar Plant Mitigation	15,640,187	<b>IMPACT FEE - TRAFFIC FUND</b>	
Talent Development	1,822,394	Designations:	
Prado Road Interchange	1,435,260	Improvement Fees	<u>\$ 6,953,685</u>
SB1090 Economic Development	1,792,256		
SB 1090 Safety	2,380,731	<b>WILDLIFE &amp; GRAZING</b>	
SB 1090 Affordable Housing	3,956,164	Designations:	
SB 1090 Infrastructure	3,479,594	General Purpose	7,731
SB 1090 Roads	734,398	Wildlife Projects	34,384
SB 1090 Library	1,281,882		<u>\$ 42,115</u>
COVID 19	23,575,981		
Rainy Day Funds	4,369,630		
	<u>\$ 81,832,508</u>		
<b>CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND</b>		<b>GEN. GOV. BUILDING REPLACEMENT</b>	
Designations:		Designations:	
Facilities Planning	14,236,406	Gen Gov Building Replacement	42,911,735
New Gov't Center Repairs	1,986,400	Library-Cambria	1,698,552
	<u>\$ 16,222,806</u>		<u>\$ 44,610,287</u>
<b>ROAD FUND</b>		<b>DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE</b>	
Designations:		Designations:	
Future Road Projects	1,091,987	General Purpose	244,987
Maria Vista Estates	339,428	Systems Development	86,979
N. River Mine Reserve	105,000	Atascadero Facility	136,116
	<u>\$ 1,536,415</u>		<u>\$ 468,082</u>
<b>PUBLIC FACILITY FEES FUND</b>		<b>LIBRARY</b>	
Designations:		Designations:	
Reserve for County Fire	1,741,440	General Purpose	826,151
Reserve for General Gov't	481,905	Atascadero Library Expansion	29,755
Reserve for Law Enforcement	353,300	Facilities Planning	2,477,589
Reserve for Library	1,331,941		<u>\$ 3,333,495</u>
Reserve for Parks	1,136,807		
	<u>\$ 5,045,393</u>		
<b>PARKS</b>		<b>FISH &amp; GAME</b>	
Designations:		Designations:	
Lopez Park's Projects	200,000	General Purpose	62,276
Parks Projects	390,604	Environmental Settlement	889
	<u>\$ 590,604</u>	Fish and Game Projects	111,591
			<u>\$ 174,756</u>
<b>CO-WIDE AUTOMATION REPLACEMENT</b>		<b>PENSION OBLIGATION BOND DSF</b>	
Designations:		Designations:	
Automation Replacement	<u>\$ 16,739,470</u>	POB - Debt Service	<u>\$ 18,762,932</u>
		<b>Total Reserves and Designations</b>	<u><b>\$ 218,139,837</b></u>

What's this for?



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO  
June 30, 2021  
Proposed versus Actual Fund Balance Available

COUNTY FUNDS	Fund #	Estimated Fund Balance Unreserved/Un designated June 30, 2021	Actual Fund Balance Unreserved/Un designated June 30, 2021	Difference Over (Under)	Appropriation to Contingencies	Designation	General Reserve	General Purpose	Revenue Adjustment Inc/(Decr)	Object Level Appropriation Adjustment
General Fund	1000000000	34,535,239	69,001,465	34,466,226	3,920,828	14,811,741	3,000,000			12,733,657
Capital Projects	1100000000	-	210,635	210,635						210,635
Special Fund	1200000000	-	87,239	87,239		87,239				
Community Development	1200500000	-	55,534	55,534	55,534					
Arts	1201500000	-	395,570	395,570	200,000	195,570				
Wide Automation Repl	1202000000	-	281,738	281,738		281,738				
General Govt Building Repl	1202500000	-	188	188		188				
Risk Reduction Reserve	1203000000	-	(1,526,607)	(1,526,607)		(1,526,607)				
Special Impact Fees	1203500000	-	2,078,704	2,078,704		2,078,704				
Wildlife & Grazing	1204000000	-	5,143	5,143		2,685	2,458			
Living Under Influence	1204500000	51,000	51,637	637		637				
Library	1205000000	610,000	954,658	344,658	344,658					
Health & Game	1205500000	-	4,489	4,489		4,489				
Emergency Medical Services	1207000000	-	0	0						
State P Loans DSF	1208000000	-	(2,750)	(2,750)						(2,750)
Series Obligation Bonds	1801000000	284,000	887,274	603,274		603,274				
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>35,480,239</b>	<b>72,484,917</b>	<b>37,004,678</b>	<b>4,521,020</b>	<b>16,539,658</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>	<b>2,458</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12,941,542</b>

**Item 29 - Hearing to consider adoption of an ordinance establishing local standards and procedures for the design, site development, and operation of emergency homeless shelters at public facilities.** The actual agenda item is adoption of an ordinance that would allow the siting of emergency homeless facilities on government-owned properties. In this case, new homeless shelters, known as pallet homes, are slated to be installed on County property in Grover Beach. The County approved \$1.2 million in funding earlier in the year.

Figure 1. Pallet Shelter as Temporary Emergency Housing Option<sup>1</sup>



5CHC proposes to install 20 of the 100 square foot pallet homes, bathing and bathroom facilities, administrative offices, communal spaces, shaded eating and resting area, and a storage area. 5CHC's use permit with the County will be set for a period of twelve months, with the ability to extend at the County's discretion if the model proves to be successful. The facility would serve as a proof of concept for outcomes associated with operating a shelter for the unhoused residents in South County and surrounding communities, as well as a proof of concept of this particular pallet home method of providing shelter. The County is still in the process of working with 5CHC and other related agencies on design and operation of the temporary emergency shelter project and community outreach.

Because emergency shelters are intended to be temporary in nature, the draft ordinance will automatically expire on December 31, 2022, unless the Board later decides to extend the



*ordinance through its required public processes. The idea of the pallet shelter community is to establish a “proof of concept” for non-communal transitional housing. If the project is successful, it will help the region establish a baseline example and outcomes for similar permanent transient housing in location(s) to be later determined.*



**Special APCD Hearing Board Meeting of Monday, September 28, 2021, 9:30 AM (Recently Scheduled)**

The posted agenda lists only one item: Virtual Meetings. Perhaps they need to formalize a policy to have virtual meetings. It seems strange, since this meeting itself is virtual.

**Background on the Hearing Board:** The APCD Hearing Board is a five-member, quasi-judicial body, the purpose of which is to decide on matters of conflict between the Air District and industry and to act at the time of an air pollution emergency resulting from an upset or breakdown. The Hearing Board is an independent body, appointed at-large by the APCD Board, and consists of an attorney practicing law in California, a registered professional engineer, a member of the medical profession, and two public members.

The Hearing Board issues variances from Air District rules and regulations from Health and Safety Code Section 41701; issues abatement orders requiring a source to cease and desist from a particular act unless specified conditions are met; and resolves permit disputes. A petition for hearing is required to be filed with the APCD Clerk in order to obtain a hearing.

You might want to think of the function of the Hearing Board in this way:

- The APCD Board adopts rules and regulations (legislative function).
- The Hearing Board applies rules and criteria to specific persons and situations (judicial function).
- The Air Pollution Control Officer implements and enforces rules, regulations, permits and orders (executive function).

**Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, September 30, 2021 (Scheduled)**

The meeting agenda contains only housekeeping items.

**LAST WEEK’S HIGHLIGHTS**

**In General:** This was a very light week in terms of agency meetings.

**No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, September 21, 2021 (Not Scheduled)**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 28, 2021.

**San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) Meeting of Wednesday, September 22, 2021. (Completed)**

There were no major policy items on this agenda, which mainly consisted of reports. The real action was in Executive Session, when they discuss the pending Friends of the Dunes lawsuits related to the Coastal Commission ordering the eventual closing of the Dunes to off road-riding and freestyle camping.

**Item C-3: APCD Performance Measures.** The item contained a list of the performance measures which the APCD has adopted. There are 30 in all. They contain response, enforcement, and pollution reduction data, as well as others pertaining to the administrative management of the agency. These can be observed by clicking on the link below.

[MetaViewer.php \(granicus.com\)](http://MetaViewer.php (granicus.com))

**Some samples:**

Performance Measure	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
Grants and Incentive Programs	✓			<p>From existing and current year program approvals, \$1,701,180 has been expended to date for all active grant programs in FY 2020-2021 resulting in significant voluntary emission reductions, including the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 old car buybacks (\$49,000),</li> <li>• 35 conversions of fireplaces and wood stoves (\$71,990),</li> <li>• 11 tractor replacements (\$840,040),</li> <li>• 3 school buses (\$506,550),</li> <li>• 1 marine repower (\$50,000 – partial payment), and</li> <li>• \$183,600 on electric vehicle infrastructure.</li> </ul> <p>Staff maintained active participation in the CAPCOA Grant Committee, including working with CAPCOA, CARB and legislative staff to comment on legislation and related programmatic impacts. Requests for proposals, screening of projects, contract development, and payment for completed projects were performed in a timely manner, and staff continued to monitor implementation progress of active projects from past grant cycles and compile applicable reports to the State. Staff also maintained active participation on the CAPCOA Wood Smoke Reduction Working Group and participated in the CALeVIP South Central Coast 2021 project partnership.</p> <p>During FY 20/21, your board also authorized \$1,040,961 in new grant funding for APCD's continued implementation of our grant programs.</p>

Note that most of the ratings are good on a 3-rating scale. This means that the measures are too easy and they are not stiffening them to provide cheaper, faster, and better service and outcomes. For example, in the table below, annual permit renewals are to be completed in 45 days. Why would it take so long, given that most of them are annual and have been in the workload for years?

The inspectors come out and sniff around the barrels of red wine to determine if the wine is generating any smells or pollution? They check to see if the fermentation gases are within legal bounds? How long should that take at a winery where they have been inspecting for years? Ditto for the dry cleaners, auto paint shop, and bakery. God forbid the scones are generating too many emissions.

<b><i>Compliance</i></b>				
<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Permit Renewal and Compliance Inspections	✓			Approximately 1,064 permits were renewed during FY 2020-2021, with over 95% of renewals completed within our goal of 45 days. Over 1,295 compliance inspections and investigations were also completed in FY 2020-2021. The COVID-19 emergency continued to affect renewal completion times and inspection procedures for some sources, with staff adjusting to ensure safety protocols are implemented and minimizing risk while determining compliance.
Enforcement and Legal Actions	✓			All minor violation settlements have a goal for completion within an average of 90 days or less. Major violation settlements are to be completed within an average of six months or less. The District issued approximately 45 violations in FY 2020-2021; 100% of settlements have or will meet established completion goals.
Complaint Response	✓			Staff strive to respond to all air quality and other complaints within one day, and to complete related investigations, final actions, and reports within 10 days of the complaint. The District responded to approximately 158 complaints in FY 2020-2021, this is significantly less than the 263 complaints received in FY 2020-2021; all current complaint investigations are on target for timely completion. Smoke complaints represent about 35% of the total, dust complaints about 27%, and odor complaints 29% of the total.
Asbestos Program	✓			All work and reports on asbestos abatement projects were accomplished on time within our performance goals. Approximately 70 new projects were processed in FY 2020-2021, with staff performing 25 additional project reviews for changes to initial project applications. Staff continue to update and improve the more user-friendly web interface for homeowners and contractors, providing a central location for all asbestos related brochures, information, and resources.

Most of the measures are measures of activity – that is, how much work they do and how long it takes. A major policy question is: What is the impact? In other words, what if we didn't do this? Are the incidences of pulmonary disease down as a result? Are people living longer? What exact measured problems are we attempting to solve? Is CO<sub>2</sub> declining?

The APCD expends about \$5.8 million per year of tax and fee money levied on general citizens, business, and agriculture.

### Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, September 23, 2021 (Completed)

There were was only one minor item contained on the agenda.

### Special Board of Supervisors Meeting of Friday, September 24, 2021 8:00 AM (Completed)

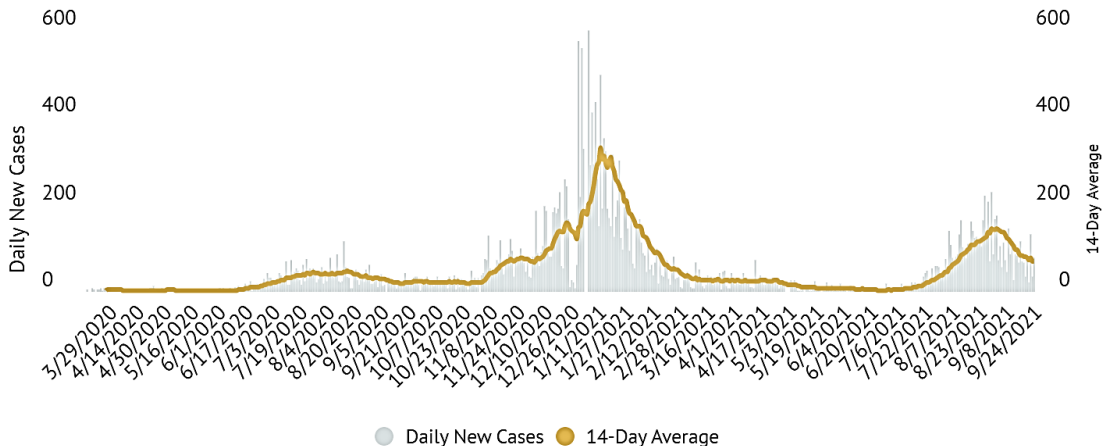
**Item 1 - Consider Public Employee Appointment for the Position of Groundwater Sustainability Director.** The Board met in closed session and apparently interviewed candidates for the position. At the end, County Counsel announced that the Board took no reportable action. Any candidate names were not made public.

**Background:** The Board had scheduled a date last week, but when they showed up, it was pointed out that the special session had not been publicly noticed. This was the rescheduled meeting. The Board majority is clearly moving the groundwater management issue along and intends to remove Public Works from the process. As we have pointed out, it will be interesting to ascertain if new management comes to significantly different conclusions about water facts and policies than those who have been running the operation for decades.

## EMERGENT ISSUES

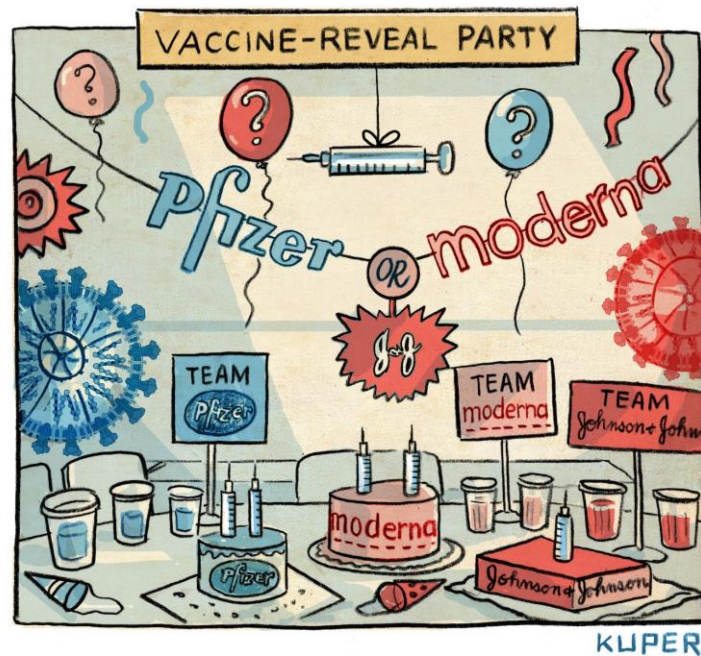
**Item 1 - COVID Status.** The infection rate plateaued at week 6 of the run up and turned down at week 7. The downward trend has continued for weeks 8 and 9. Note that the average is still higher than at was at this same time last year. The disease remains powerful, breaks though vaccination, and will now require booster shots. Public authorities are not clear about whether those who had the disease are now immune, or whether they need vaccines, boosters, or what?

Daily New Cases (and 14-Day Average)



**33 (8 ICU) \*\***

SLO County Residents with COVID-19 in Hospital



## **COLAB IN DEPTH**

**IN FIGHTING THE TROUBLESOME, LOCAL DAY-TO-DAY ASSAULTS ON OUR FREEDOM AND PROPERTY, IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THE LARGER UNDERLYING IDEOLOGICAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC CAUSES**

## **REFLECTIONS ON 2020 - THE WORST YEAR IN THE LAST HALF-CENTURY: PART ONE**

**BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON**

### *Remembering When the Woke Awoke*

Woke is not new. Consider it an old IED buried and forgotten, but even when dormant an always latent explosive that any heavy traffic—that is, 2020—could finally ignite.



Why? Decades-long devolution from citizenship to tribal ideologies explained why extremist groups found followers and felt no common ties with most other Americans, concerning either the nation's past or future.

So, in the demonstrations, protests, rioting, and looting that followed the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, the country experienced racial shocks and polarization not seen since the pre-Civil Rights era—and yet was not particularly surprised that they occurred.

Left unsaid was that the violence of 2020 was the logical dividend of years of racial separatism in the university, tribal chauvinism in popular culture, K-12 politicization of American history, and an affluent liberal elite who had virtue signaled and green lighted racial victimization as a mechanism to exempt from scrutiny their own unquestioned privilege.

At first, even before 2020 when Confederate generals of bronze and stone fell, the public stayed largely quiet.

Of course, the people did not like the mob's vandalism and nocturnal iconoclasm. But on the other hand, they also did not quite see why the nation—even in the ex-Confederate states—had honored Stonewall Jackson or Nathan Bedford Forrest in the first place. True, some were brilliant generals, but almost all were diehard secessionists who had been unapologetic about the supposedly righteous cause of the rebellious slave-owning Confederacy.

Still, most on the sidelines stayed quiet and assumed that the mobs would be satiated with destroying century-old monuments to the old idols of the Confederacy, and then soon dissipate.

But the lack of arrests or even criticism of the vandalism only wetted the beak of the mob—as did those who wrote that they agreed with the aims of the mob, but not necessarily with their means. Within days, the iconic targets metamorphosized from Confederates to almost any white male heroic figure of the past, and without rhyme or reason: the author Miguel de Cervantes, Christopher Columbus, the Union General Ulysses S. Grant, Thomas Jefferson, Father Junipero Serra, George Washington, and a host of others including African-American Civil War veterans and abolitionist Frederick Douglas. Even Mahatma Gandhi became a target, apparently given his early racialist writing while living in South Africa.

Within mere days, hundreds of monuments in major cities were toppled or defaced. And still demands grew from Black Lives Matter and Antifa to rename sports teams, towns, and change vocabulary itself. Laws were supposed to vanish without the input of the legislature. The police were to be defunded, even the concept of bail discarded.

Cancel culture, energized by social media, electrified by the Internet, and honed by the previous #MeToo frenzy, now began erasing out the careers of anyone in the past allegedly found guilty of a racist slur or insensitive act. Late-night host Jimmy Kimmel was outed, who decades earlier had worn blackface. A *New York Times* opinion editor, James Bennet, was forced out. His crime? He had allowed Sen. Thomas Cotton (R-AK) to write a guest editorial arguing that the

President has a constitutional right and duty to send in federal troops to the worst areas of urban rioting.

Celebrities wrote nauseating public apologies confessing their racial sins to reclaim their livelihoods. Star New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees had initially opposed taking the knee during the National Anthem. But as a result, he was quickly faced with the destruction of his multimillion-dollar sports-celebrity-endorsement empire. So, he quickly pivoted and made the necessary adjustments:

“In an attempt to talk about respect, unity, and solidarity centered around the American flag and the national anthem, I made comments that were insensitive and completely missed the mark on the issues we are facing right now as a country. They lacked awareness and any type of compassion or empathy. Instead, those words have become divisive and hurtful and have misled people into believing that somehow I am an enemy...”

When the combined ruthlessness and fear of the Salem Witch Trials, Joseph McCarthy’s inquisitions, and Maximilien Robespierre’s show trials now began to drive the protests, the results were predictable. Street names were changed, plazas rechristened. One day I drove into the Stanford University campus and noticed that the street beneath my office had now been renamed “Jane Stanford Way.” Gone was “Serra Mall”—named after the 18<sup>th</sup>-century founder of the California missions, Father Junipero Serra. Intrigued at the *damnatio memoriae*, I quickly checked and found that almost all of Stanford’s references to “Serra” were Trotskyized. Had we all become collectively Orwell’s Winston Smiths, who nonchalantly noticed that certain incorrect names and events simply went into the memory hole?

I recalled my high-school English teacher Mrs. Hearne of more than 50 years past, who warned us at age 16 when we read *1984*: “You’ll know 1984 not when the year comes up, but when they start changing names and dates.”

Throughout the nation barricades were put up across major thoroughfares. “Black Lives Matter” was emblazoned on main streets, often with either the help or approval of big-city mayors. Past state prohibitions about close contact and not wearing masks were utterly ignored. Tens of thousands hit the streets, oblivious to the current quarantines. They were exempted by timid mayors and governors, who had once issued supposedly iron-clad shutdowns. To square the circle of their impotence, officials now instead strangely went after small business owners who had followed suit and tried to restart their business.

Somehow race superseded even notions of public health in time of a pandemic—as over 1,200 health care professionals insisted: “We created the letter in response to emerging narratives that seemed to malign demonstrations as risky for the public health because of Covid-19. Instead, we wanted to present a narrative that prioritizes opposition to racism as vital to the public health, including the pandemic response.” The advocates of science now reinvented a new science that postulated the ideology of the outdoor-goer determined his susceptibility to the virus and danger to others.



Protestors bragged in empty fashion of far greater targets—the Washington Monument, the Jefferson Memorial, and indeed Mt. Rushmore itself. In their frenzy of revolution, the United States was declared cancerous at birth, and thus deserving of toxic surgery that well might kill the host. That the architects of the radical protests, the creators of Black Lives Matter, or the originator of the 1619 Project, or the Antifa protestors themselves were discovered to have uttered vile racist or anti-Semitic slurs in their own pasts mattered little.

Those calculating the effects on their own careers, either in fear of being outed to the Revolution, or in anticipation of gaining favor with it, began preempting the mob's wrath, with the most bizarre array of virtue signaling seen in modern American history.

University presidents promised to capitalize black as “Black,” as if new orthography alone might ease tensions or postpone their own resignations. At a time of university financial crises, due to the lockdowns and forced closures of campuses, they promised huge budget increases for segregated theme houses, new diversity facilitators and coordinators, hiring new faculty members focused on the impact of race in America, accelerated and expanded mandatory diversity reeducation for faculty and staff, and increased African-American admissions—while damning both the systemic racism of their country and warning would-be counter-revolutionaries of the wages of dissent. Some English departments promised not to enforce traditional rules of English grammar in the grading of non-white student papers.

Retired generals who had spent their entire lives revolving in and out of Forts Benning and Bragg, suddenly announced they too had been suddenly woke to the prior insidious racist messaging of once naming U.S. military bases after Confederate renegade generals. Once unaware of their own supposed complicity in racism, they now opportunely asked that their century-old bases be renamed.

Corporate CEOs, fearful of boycotts and more looted stores, outdid each other in obsequiousness—none more than Dan Cathy, CEO of the Chick-fil-A fast-food restaurant chain. He urged that white people shine the shoes of blacks in the manner that the disciples had washed the feet of Jesus. Indeed, Dan Cathy sort of did just that when in a televised moment he polished the sneakers of hip-hop artist Lecrae.

“Take the knee”—a popular culture spin-off from HBO's *Game of Thrones* in which the defeated either bowed on a knee or met their deaths—was now forced upon—or welcomed by?—police, coaches, and elected officials. Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY), the respective top Democrats in the House and Senate, led a collective knee-taking in the Capitol, replete with African Kente cloth scarves around their necks. I wondered whether Ms. Speaker would wear such things when again showing off her \$25,000 pair of refrigerators and \$13 carton of designer ice cream or sneaking in once more to her hair salon to break her own advocacy of quarantines and masks.

State and local officials wondered whether the uprising would win majority voter support. For a while at least they decided to weigh in on the side of the protestors and demonstrators. In Seattle, the mayor allowed a center of the downtown to be governed by a BLM warlord. In Oregon a

state official ordered the required wearing of masks for all the public—with blacks excepted from the order, at least until outrage at the racist pandering caused her to rescind the order.

In Seattle, mandatory racial reeducation was required of white public employees to force them to renounce further claims on their purported insidious privileges. In New York, Mayor Bill DeBlasio ordered a lockdown on all public gatherings except those organized by Black Lives Matter. It was as if the progressive Left had studied the insidiousness of Jim Crow and now sought to apply such protocols in reverse.

Sports franchise owners—themselves nearly all white, their teams overwhelmingly black—outbid each other to appear the most sympathetic to the popular furor. Some promised that players could wear BLM insignia.

Others swore that before the National Anthem was played, the so-called “black national anthem”—the early twentieth-century inspirational “Lift Every Voice and Sing” be played first. Ironically the song was written and set to music by James and Rosamond Johnson as a tribute to Abraham Lincoln (whose statues were currently being defaced). The song at its inception had served as a reminder of national redemption and victory (“our new day begun”). Unnoticed was that the song’s celebration of Christianity and optimism was oddly antithetical to the gloomy Marxism of the BLM founders.

The progressive establishment began worrying—a little bit—that the logic of the revolution they had supported and nourished was beginning to devour their own cherished icons and soon themselves as well. Losing Mt. Rushmore might be one thing but seeing the beloved Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University renamed opened up a can of worms—among them most notably careerist concerns and social status branding.

Why not then the prestigious Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. as well? Indeed, if the standard was now the racism of the past hurtling into the present to justify destroying icons, how safe could the pillars of elite progressive higher education endure—Columbia, named for Columbus, Princeton for Prince William of Orange, Yale for a slave owner, Stanford for a railroad tycoon and exploiter of Asian labor?

## **REFLECTIONS ON 2020 - THE WORST YEAR IN THE LAST HALF-CENTURY: PART TWO**

**BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON**

## *The Silicon Valley Octopus Flexed its Tentacles*

In George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984*, the author describes a soulless world created by an authoritarian cadre that controlled even the thoughts of its subjects through massive electronic surveillance. An all-powerful state bureaucracy warped language, ideas, and history to convince and coerce the residents of Oceania that a benevolent "Big Brother" was ensuring them a society of caring, equality, and fairness—despite being opposed by a myriad of purported enemies, foreign and domestic.

Orwell most often had in mind not contemporary democracies of the late 1940s. He worried far more about the postwar Stalinist Soviet Union and its everyday embrace of surveillance, propaganda, thought crimes, gulags, show trials, forced hospitalizations, and erasures of so-called enemies of the people from all historical records—all to promote a supposedly revolutionary communist agenda.

Seventy-two years later Orwell is again considered prescient because he foresaw how electronic communications in any society could intrude into the lives of ordinary people while being manipulated by the state. And these efforts would not be just to spy on citizens' thoughts and actions, but to so warp and insidiously rehabilitate them that eventually there would be no dissidents at all. All would ultimately come to "love" Big Brother.

There were two prime subtexts to Orwell's dystopia.

One, with technological progress comes moral regress—an age-old warning dating back to the 7<sup>th</sup>-century B.C. Greek poet Hesiod's railing about "bribe takers" and corruption during the ascendance of the civilizing city-state. The wizards who created big-screen televisions and electronic monitoring in *1984* were, to Orwell, no more ethical because of their spectacular technological and scientific expertise.

Two, communism, or indeed totalitarianism in general (as we see in Orwell's novella *Animal Farm*) is an especially dangerous partner of electronic surveillance and communications, perhaps even more so than right-wing dictators or oligarchs.

Leftist totalitarianism employs a sophisticated propaganda of caring, Big Brother-equality, and steady human progress that far more effectively disguises its self-interested lust for power and control.

Contemporary government often uses its power of instantaneous communications to construct not just narratives, but reinvent vocabulary to construct alternative realities, usually in the effort not to pass judgement on any particular ideology or group—except perhaps traditionalists and conservatives.

During recent years, the U.S. government, for example, rebranded terrorist operations as “overseas contingency operations.” A 2009 terrorist attack at Fort Hood, Texas soon became mere “workplace violence.” “Man-made disasters” was the term often used for terrorist strikes.

The common theme of such doublespeak was an effort not to suggest any tie between radical Islam and a propensity to kill or maim Westerners—as if such an explicit connection might incite latent racists and xenophobes to emerge and harm Muslim-Americans. If, politically driven vocabulary was merely promulgated by government bureaus, the public would not notice much.

*But when the administrative state is enhanced by mass electronic communications to a degree never seen before and controlled by a small group of corporate interests, apparently immune from anti-trust legislation, then these constructed realities can intrude into all aspects of life in “Big Brother is watching you” fashion, as new narratives can become orthodoxies almost instantaneously.*

Modifiers were often tacked on to nouns in fear that words like “racism,” “bias,” or “aggression” might no longer be familiar referents in 21<sup>st</sup>-century multiracial America. And so adjectives like “systemic,” “implicit,” and “micro” were prefixed to remind the public that just because there was no evidence of pathologies did not mean that they did not exist in woke la-la land.

The primary dangers of the Internet, social media, downloads, uploads, smart phones, laptops, satellite television, and the entire array of electronic communications, entertainment and informational science are not just that such methods will be shaped and controlled by bad actors and hackers that manipulate such services and devices.

Most people recognize rank propaganda when they experience it. Instead, rarely have so many global adjudicators of thought and expression been concentrated into such a small locale as California’s incestuous Silicon Valley and resulting in such insidious influence, wealth, and power.

Consider that seven of the world’s ten largest tech companies according to a September 2018 survey are headquartered in Silicon Valley, roughly from San Mateo to Los Gatos, California. The combined market capitalization of just these seven corporations—Apple (#2), Alphabet (#4), Facebook (#6), Intel (#7), Cisco (#8), Oracle (#9), and Netflix (#10)—has reached about \$3 trillion.

Yet the influence and sway of these tightly clustered corporations exceed even their financial clout that often shields them from traditional government supervision. Google now enjoys about a 90 percent share of all Internet searches worldwide—over 60,000 searches per second. Given that the average global consumer conducts about 3-4 searches per day, most of the world’s online information is accessed according to a single company’s protocols that decide what information first pops up on the user’s computer screen—and what does not pop up at all.

Facebook controls about 65 percent of all worldwide social media site visits. When fellow Silicon Valley social media companies are aggregated—Pinterest (#2 with 11.75 percent of

worldwide social media visits), #3 Twitter (11.43 percent), #5 Instagram (a Facebook subsidiary, 6.47 percent), #6 YouTube (a Google subsidiary, 3.28 percent)—the result is that about 99 percent of all global social media daily visits are facilitated by just five companies, all located within a 50-mile radius.

Unlike the energy, utility, communications, and travel industries, Silicon Valley's internet and social media companies remain mostly unregulated. Yet they enjoy a monopolistic control over most of the various ways citizens access information on the Internet or communicate over social media and email. Does that reality have any effect on the freedoms of the citizen?

Increasingly it does.

Silicon Valley sees its mission as twofold: to profit by facilitating the public in communicating over the Internet and to do so in such a way that people are massaged into adopting correct political attitudes that are increasingly in turn institutionalized by the state.

Next, such companies are virtual monopolies that harvest intimate personal details of their users and then sell or profit from their own users' behavior as if it was their own domain. They take for granted that consumers have few other online choices.

Yet because electronic knowledge retrieval and communications are integral to contemporary life and rely on private companies' use of the public air space, they logically deserve the same sort of oversight that has governed public utilities. Such concern is critical, given the political and partisan ways in which Silicon Valley's products in the past have been manipulated—analogue to an electric utility massaging its service to consumers to further its own political agendas.

The so-called search engine manipulation effect (SEME)—the use of search ranking algorithms that determine the order of sites that a user will encounter when he seeks information on the Internet—has been routinely manipulated by Google in an overtly political manner.

To take one example, during the 2016 election, there were widespread complaints that Google had altered its searches to reflect a bias toward candidate Hillary Clinton. Such charges were based on data analyses and perhaps due to the suspicion that followed Hillary Clinton's hiring as her chief technology officer a high-ranking Google official. In addition, Eric Schmidt, executive chairman of Alphabet (2015–17), the mother company of Google, helped to fund (somewhat stealthily), a political analytics firm, "The Groundwork," to help elect Hillary Clinton.

Of course, any private company has a perfect right to use its resources to promote any idea or candidate it wishes, if such advocacy conforms to federal election and tax laws. But is Silicon Valley a wholly private industry, or in fact a quasi-public utility?

Or is it a monopoly of a few companies that by design squeezed out all competition on the rationale it was not subject to anti-trust laws? Google, for example, seems as much a utility—or

not a utility—as are power companies, television broadcasting, radio stations, or telecommunications that provide vital public services.

Such electronic manipulation might be considered analogous to going to a public library and asking help in searching for books on a particular topic, only to encounter a library staff that consistently and by design serially directed the patron to studies by those of only one particular party. One Harvard University affiliated study found that Google’s search methodologies of ranking websites were adjusted according to political biases.

Google could not explain the criteria by which it suppressed some 300 Trump political ads by Google and its subsidiary YouTube, or whether such protocols extended in the same manner to other campaigns. When one buys something online, adds for similar products often pop up uninvited on one’s computer screen within minutes. That same sort of intrusiveness is applied to politics to help the consumer/voter make the correct decision.

Facebook, under pressure from conservative activist groups, conducted an outside audit of the various ways in which it censors content and advertisements on its Facebook pages. It agreed with third-party findings that it had shown bias in its blocking user content.

More specifically, the audit found that computer-driven algorithms that adjudicate searches had built in biases. In addition, Facebook arbitrarily had banned certain expression as “hate speech” based on its ideological content. Its standards for adjudicating political ads were not constant or transparent, but instead predicated on the corporation’s political preferences.

The Facebook workforce was found to be highly partisan and baked its own political preferences into its administration of Facebook. Translated: over six in ten using social media worldwide were subject to deliberate Facebook political manipulation.

All citizens are affected by such censorship, if only in minor and aggravating ways. In 2016 YouTube censored a short historical video I did on the various reasons why the United States entered the Korean War. The presentation was apolitical. But it was solicited by Dennis Praeger’s “Praeger University,” an online repository of brief videos on hundreds of historical, economic, cultural, and political issues, often presented from a center-right perspective. The Korean War video had no particular political content. Instead, it was flagged as “inappropriate” by partisan online viewers.

That is, no electronic algorithm caught the video due to sexual, violent, or inappropriate content. Instead a viewer or viewers simply wished either to restrict access to the video out of political dislike of me, or randomly selected a number of Praeger videos to seek to flag as incorrect or unacceptable. The result was that YouTube allowed particular viewers to exercise political censorship over content that they did not particularly agree with or simply wished to do malice to.

Again, YouTube is a subsidiary of Google. As a private company, it has a perfect right to censor any ideas or thoughts it does not particularly like. But does YouTube pose as a quasi-public



utility in the public domain? It apparently does, since it purports to massage the content of its social platforms by hiring legions of content adjudicators, whose job is to scrutinize millions of videos, and who themselves are often accused of abject bias. In any case, there is an entire corpus of scholarship devoted to warning of the dangers of the monopolies of “big tech” and the threats it poses to democracy, both by controlling a public service and ruthlessly driving out all competition—in essence depriving American citizens of equal access to their First Amendment rights of free expression.

In addition, Internet users have their information, usually unknowingly, mined by tech conglomerates ostensibly to sell to advertisers and merchandisers but also to monitor the political views of social media and internet users. In our 24/7 surveillance society, computer users have no idea who is being surveilled by whom, when, how, and to what extent and for what purpose—other than by using social media, email, and internet searches, Americans can render to data mining almost everything that is needed about how to contact, monitor, categorize, and manipulate citizens.

One reason why current political polls are sometimes felt to be biased is respondents’ fear of offering their true political views even to anonymous pollster callers or texters—in fears such answers can be banked and later used or sold to the respondent’s detriment.

Yet the online dangers to individual freedoms are not merely political or private companies using the public domain to further their own particular agendas.

Social media, such as Twitter and Facebook as well as online blogs, in one sense should be the freest of all expression. After all, there are few hierarchies that filter content and almost anyone can weigh on issues of collective interest. But increasingly “call-out culture,” “cancel culture,” or “outrage culture” function like Old West vigilantism. Given the hundreds of millions who hourly participate in the online community, an electronic mob can be alerted, organized and directed to zero in on a single tweet, email, or Facebook posting deemed unorthodox or politically incorrect. Almost immediately, without evidence, thousands can focus on the targeted victim with violence, hate speech, boycotts, and career-ending ostracism, often “doxing” the target by releasing his private contact information to millions.

Yet unlike the Old West, there is no electronic sheriff with a double-barrel shotgun to ensure the lynch mob does not storm the jail and string up his suspect. By that I mean there are no consequences when the often unnamed organize efforts to defame or libel political opponents, especially given the fact that Google, Facebook, and others have already acknowledged that they audit their own content often by standards that are most certainly not non-political. If anything, the proverbial internet sheriff is now often on the side of the politically correct mob.

Silicon Valley relies for much of its information on the media, in particular major newspapers, news agencies, television, and internet magazines, what we now know as the mainstream media. In that way it serves as a force multiplier of its sources, from the manner in which it orders search findings to the rules by which social media users must follow to communicate with others.



Unfortunately, just as in case of the deep state and Silicon Valley, the so-called media is no longer disinterested. It too has an agenda that at times is antithetical to empirical presentation of the news—and to the unalienable rights that define the citizen.

As for the technology's retort that its gift of instant access to global information has made the citizens of democracies more knowledgeable and thus more equipped to exercise their voting rights responsibly, the very opposite seems to be true. School test scores are declining along with the general knowledge of the citizenry about their very own institutions. By the 21<sup>st</sup> century it was clear that youth were using the Internet far more than watching television each week (more than 16 versus 14 hours each week)—mostly focusing on online gaming, gambling, social media communications, or pornography.

While smart phones and the Internet may not be the only culprits responsible for this new investment of leisure hours, there is ample evidence that most use these devices to electronically chat, play video games, view pornography, take and transmit pictures—and rarely to investigate and access historical, literary, or scientific knowledge. In that sense, the new online technology has offered new addictive entertainment that has crowded out reading from the average citizen's day.

Again, the result is a *1984*-like surrealism. The citizen is convinced that what he sees and hears on the electronic screen or reads on the Internet cannot in any way be supported with evidence or reason.



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