

Facts Matter

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Opinion

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“Our aim: To fear God, tell the truth and make money.”

H.C. Paddock 1852-1935

What we celebrate when we celebrate K9 Dax’s police career

K9 Dax is getting quite the public send-off as he moves into retirement as the Lake County Sheriff’s Department’s crime fighting police dog.

Dax was celebrated at a ceremony in Libertyville Wednesday amid a crush of newspaper and broadcast cameras, speeches and hundreds of well-wishers.



Jim Slusher Letter to readers

But lest you think the 10-year-old German shepherd is being singled out for all this attention merely for his status as one of man’s best friends, consider his achievements.

He is something of a celebrity among his canine colleagues, having appeared in “People” magazine as well as on national television in the “Today Show,” “America’s Top Dog,” “Hero Dogs” and more.

His list of awards would distinguish the resume of the most accomplished human police veteran. His tracking, search and protection skills have earned him top honors in national trials by the United States Police Canine Association, including six regional championships and two certifications for exceptional tracking.

And, most important, he has been a successful crime fighter. His retirement announcement credits Dax and his handler, Deputy John Forlenza, with locating more than 400 missing endangered people or fleeing felons and says he’s been involved in seizing



COURTESY OF LAKE COUNTY SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT

Police dog Dax won numerous awards during his nine-year career with the Lake County Sheriff’s Department.

“hundreds of kilos of illegal drugs, millions of dollars ..., dozens of firearms discarded by offenders, (and) dozens of... vehicles.”

Even his “end of watch” is distinguished by heroism. Dax was temporarily paralyzed in March while

helping apprehend a felon who was fleeing police.

So, yes, he deserves the honors, even if, let’s be honest, he surely doesn’t understand all the fuss. Meeting Hoda and Jenna on the Today Show in New York likely doesn’t stand

out in his mind as one of the highlights of his life, and his many plaques and certificates mean far more to us humans than they do to him.

But that is the point, isn’t it? We honor K9 Dax’s service not because it means something to him, but because it represents something to us. Courage. Trustworthiness. Loyalty. Commitment to duty. These are qualities to be found in people in any profession and certainly among the police chiefs, executives and street-level officers in Dax’s line of work.

We love Dax, and the many other K9 officers serving in police departments throughout the suburbs, because, well, they’re dogs and it takes something of a superhuman effort not to love, or at least appreciate, dogs. But we honor them because they represent the best in what we hope for in ourselves.

And that’s what qualifies for quite the public send-off.

• Jim Slusher, jslusher@dailyherald.com, is managing editor for opinion at the Daily Herald.

Your Views

Justice system must enforce accountability

Over the years, Trump has learned how to skirt prosecution and delay justice. When he gets close to losing, he either strikes a deal, as in his failed university, or he cries bankruptcy. He knows lots of tricks that he can play and has hired lawyers willing to dance with him in court. None of them have any honor. They are in it as a game to win media attention and make money.

Trump has been out of bounds for an exceptionally long time, as almost everyone agrees, so I ask, what can be done legally to rein him in? Can judges who are hearing his cases make stronger gag rules? Can the media be held accountable for their enablement of his actions? Can prosecutors, who are trying to get a case heard but who face an inadequate and subversive judge, such as Cannon in Florida, finally say enough is enough and plead with the circuit court who oversees Cannon to get another judge involved? Can the public petition the FBI to find the truck with that license plate number, showing a decal of our President as a kidnapped hostage, and arrest them for this felony which is a threat to our national security?

We live in a free society. With freedom comes responsibility. That responsibility, if not practiced, results in being held accountable by our justice system. Every American, including Trump and his followers, is subject to that simple affirmation. Our shared anger comes from our acknowledgment of the responsibility that is being ignored without accountability being applied.

Gail Talbot Huntley

Zoo parking expansion responds to community

The Wheaton Park District is in the process of building an overflow parking lot for days when the zoo has more visitors than the existing parking lot can handle. A stoplight and crosswalk are being installed at this location to allow the safety of crossing the street.

Some of my friends and former neighbors are upset about this project because they think Cosley should not change or encourage non-residents to come to the zoo. I would like to offer my opinion that I have been inviting my family and friends to visit the zoo for over 40 years. Frequently we would take guests to see this wonderful resource, particularly for the smaller children. Afterward, we’d visit downtown Wheaton to go to the Popcorn Store, watch the trains, visit a restaurant or take a stroll.

I think the park district is responding to community needs in a responsible manner. Now that I have moved from Wheaton and become a non-resident, I fully expect to continue to support Cosley Zoo, bringing my grandchildren to see a place their daddies loved. I’ve found that they love it, too. Please build the additional lot so other families can also enjoy.

Jane Hodgkinson Winfield



Disorder on the border remains a problem for Biden Democrats

What were they thinking? Did President Joe Biden and the folks who put together his immigration policy imagine the voting public would celebrate policies that resulted in a record-high number of migration encounters — more than three-quarters of a million — in the usually low-immigration months of October, November and December 2023?

Did they think letting in hundreds of thousands of people they would classify preliminarily as “asylum-seekers” and telling them to report for hearings as late as 2031 would go unnoticed?

Did they think having the government fly illegal immigrants by night into “sanctuary cities” such as New York and Chicago would go unnoticed? Did they think Republican governors in border states wouldn’t launch their own flights of illegal immigrants from Texas to New York City, or Florida to Martha’s Vineyard?

Did they ever contemplate that election-year pollsters would report that the issue brought up most often by voters would be immigration? I must imagine the answer to these questions is no. So how to explain the Biden administration’s adoption of immigration policies that amount to something difficult to distinguish from open borders?

One explanation, proffered by original and sometimes eccentric commentator Michael Lind, is that the Biden Democrats are trying to “import better voters.” Letting in several million more illegal immigrants — no one can be sure just how many — will, in time, produce, either through loose voter qualification laws or citizen children of illegal immigrants, a rising number of Democratic voters.

These, the theory goes, will replace the descendants of Ellis Island immigrants of 1892-1924 who fell away from Democratic allegiance in the 1970s and ‘80s. The problem is that

it’s not clear that “people of color” will turn out to be as unanimously Democratic as Black voters were in the years from Barry Goldwater to Barack Obama.

There’s increasing evidence, even in left-leaning California, that many Hispanic immigrants of 1982-2007 and their progeny are becoming Trump Republicans, just as many white ethnics became Reagan Republicans 40 years ago.

Another explanation is that Team Biden was misled by changing attitudes of their fellow Democratic voters that, as neighborhood signs say, “no human is illegal.” Since 2007, support for “increasing immigration levels” has increased from 10% to 40% levels among Democrats while remaining around 10% among Republicans, according to General Social Survey.

Certainly, through his 50-plus-year political career, Biden has not veered far from the prevailing opinion in his party. And within the Democratic bubble, it’s natural to believe overturning any policy associated with Donald Trump is widely popular. It’s natural to believe as well that sympathetic media will try to cover up any unfavorable news, as most media has on illegal immigration during most of the Biden presidency.

There’s another factor operating here, one that helps to explain the increasing opposition to Israel and support for Palestinians among Democratic voters: the tendency, encouraged for two generations on college campuses, to see the world as separated between the oppressed and the oppressors.



Michael Barone

In this paradigm, Trump and his America First followers are seen as the oppressors, and people illegally crossing the border are seen as the oppressed. And just as oppressors are always vicious, the oppressed are always virtuous.

In that background, eliminating border controls, as Biden did by multiple executive orders, wasn’t politically dangerous. Mexican immigration has been low since 2007, and Vice President Kamala Harris could cure any ills that might prompt Central Americans to venture overland through Mexico to the Rio Grande.

But it turns out Biden-era illegal immigrants come from multiple places and often with malign motives. They’re ready to pay off Mexican cartels to get a chance to game the system inside the United States. And they’ve surely been coming in numbers much larger than Biden policymakers expected.

The huge number of illegal crossings in late 2023, together with poll numbers, had the Biden administration contemplating a policy reversal, but Politico reports that’s now off. The plan now is to blame Trump and House Republicans for opposing the bipartisan legislation of Sen. James Lankford, a Republican from Oklahoma. “Donald Trump broke the border,” a Biden-Harris billboard proclaims.

This seems unconvincing. If there’s anything Trump is known for, it’s denouncing illegal immigration, and there was and is nothing to stop Biden from issuing executive orders reversing the Day-One executive orders that opened the floodgates. Disorder works against incumbents, and it’s hard to see how the disorder produced by Biden’s “orange man bad” immigration policies will be blamed, by anyone but partisan Democrats, on Republicans.

Student loan plan passes the buck

“From Day One, my administration has been committed to fixing the broken student loan system,” President Joe Biden said to begin a video about his latest attempt to buy the college-graduate vote.

Whenever Biden calls something “broken,” reach for your wallet.

According to the White House, Biden’s student-loan forgiveness package should result in 4 million Americans seeing their college debt wiped clean; more than 10 million enjoying a reduction of \$5,000 in debt relief; and the elimination of accrued interest for 23 million additional borrowers.

Forget, just for the moment, the cost to taxpayers. What frosts me is the left’s apparent belief that loans shouldn’t be treated like, well, loans — at least for folks who went to college. To liberals, it is just plain mean to argue that adults who benefit from higher education should pay off the loans they accepted with open eyes.

They don’t seem to notice that college grads expect to make more money than most Americans, who never saw the inside of a college classroom.

During President Barack Obama’s tenure, newspapers discovered people who had borrowed huge amounts of money to go to college; after they graduated, they had an ugly run-in with reality about the heft of their monthly payments. That was an especially painful revelation for those who enrolled in college only to drop out.

“Forgiving loans,” House Education and the Workforce Committee chair Virginia Foxx noted in a statement, is a “nonsensical term,” since the loans “don’t disappear but instead are forced upon taxpayers.”

One thing the left doesn’t seem to appreciate is that higher education is a choice. Ergo, going to an expensive school isn’t something you should expect other people to bankroll.

High school graduates are free to apply not only to pricey universities but also to more affordable institutions, including community colleges. And really, the quality of an education is a function not only of a school’s reputation but also of how much work students put into their studies and how well they challenge themselves.

The other affront to Democrats’ sensibilities is the notion that some people should go to community college. According to the highly regarded NAEP test, just 37% of U.S. high school graduates were proficient at reading in 2019.

I know the president wants to take on “income inequality,” but that’s not done with the wave of a wand when so many students graduate unprepared for college.

As November approaches and young liberals have shown themselves unenthused about the incumbent, Team Biden is spinning this scheme as a noble effort opposed by Republicans, who stopped Biden’s first effort to “forgive” student loans unilaterally by executive order.

All I can say is: Go, GOP. The right should fight against welfare for the better educated.



Debra J. Saunders