Opinion: Embracing FDR’s Four Freedoms would serve the country well

To the community,

We live in a troubled world. A time of economic depression and senseless wars. In a way the scene is similar to the mid-1930s and early ’40s. And we are in the middle of a political contest for the highest office in the land. And the political parties are in a muddle. What to do, what to do. They are not clearly framing the issues that need to be debated in clear language. But there is a way to do that.

In his 1941 state of the union address, FDR delivered the Four Freedoms. Freedom of religion, freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom of speech.



Bill Crawford

At FDR’s request, Archibald MacLeish put together a group to create a pamphlet for widest possible publication o n the Four Freedoms. The group was formed. The pamphlet was written by Reinhold Niebuhr on religion, Max Lerner on freedom from fear, Malcolm Cowley on freedom from want, and E.B. White on freedom of speech. White did the rewrite.

I believe the issues of the Four Freedoms are alive and need national attention and discussion by the political parties. We

need clear language to outline the nation’s problems. The rebirth of the Four Freedoms, what those words mean, would be helpful. If done, that might give the nation direction, purpose, and achievement at home in nation building. Political parties should lead the debate. If they do not, we will continue to muddle and drift along to our ruin.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Community support of childcare providers appreciated

To the community,

In honor of the Month of the Young Child, Choices for Children hosts an annual provider breakfast honoring our community’s childcare providers for the services they provide to families and children throughout the year.

The Early Care & Education field will come together on April 28 at the Lake Tahoe Golf Course. This year’s exciting topic: “Sticky Adventures! Implementing Sensory Experiences in the Curriculum”, is possible through the collaboration of the Children’s Cabinet agency whose trainers have volunteered their time to come present to 90 childcare providers. The highlight of the event revolves around the opportunity to connect with adults working in the same field, encountering the same joys and challenges and hearing the importance creating sensory opportunities in the early years.

CfC would like to extend a special thank you to Penny Williams, Yvette Ruiz and Audrey Branch for sharing their expertise with our childcare community and to the following businesses for their generous donations which made CFC Annual Child Care Professionals Appreciation Breakfast very special:

Thran's Flowers, MontBleu, Harvey's/Harrah's, Horizon Casino, Sierra Athletic Club, Stonefly, Overland Meat Co., Grassroots, Pier Sun Tanning, Carson Valley Swim Center, Rose Petal, Lake Tahoe Golf Course, Sorensen's Resort, Ernie's Coffee Shop, Passaretti's Italian Restaurant, Wolfgang Puck, GoodFellas Pizza, Dog Wash of Tahoe, Embassy Suites, Side Street Boutique, Freshies, Blue Dog Pizza, Fasta Pasta, Element Spa, Perfectly Polished, Hollywood Theaters, The Paradise Beauty Supply/Salon, and Heavenly Village Cinema.

Your generous support to professionals who provide childcare for our community's children and the children of families visiting Lake Tahoe is greatly appreciated.

Nadine T-Davis, CfC resource coordinator

Opinion: U.S. needs to rethink its priorities

By Fareed Zakaria, CNN

Something caught my eye the other day: Pat Robertson, the high priest of the religious right, had some startling things to say about drugs.

"I really believe we should treat marijuana the way we treat

beverage alcohol," Robertson said in a recent interview. "I've never used marijuana and I don't intend to, but it's just one of those things that I think. This war on drugs just hasn't succeeded."

The reason Robertson is for legalizing marijuana is that it has created a prison problem in America that is well beyond what most Americans imagine.

"It's completely out of control," Mr. Robertson said. "Prisons are being overcrowded with juvenile offenders having to do with drugs. And the penalties – the maximums – some of them could get 10 years for possession of a joint of marijuana. It makes no sense at all."

He's right. Here are the numbers: The total number of Americans under correctional supervision (prison, parole, etc.) is 7.1 million, more than the entire state of Massachusetts. Adam Gopnik writes in the New Yorker, "Over all, there are now more people under 'correctional supervision' in America…than were in the Gulag Archipelago under Stalin at its height."

No other country comes even close to our rates of incarceration. We have 760 prisoners per 100,000 people. Most European countries have one seventh that number (per capita, so it's adjusted for population). Even those on the high end of the global spectrum – Brazil and Poland – have only a quarter the number we do.

Read the whole story

Opinion: KidZone Museum thanks community for support

To the community,

Thank you for all your generous donations in response to our recent call for support. We've been joyfully overwhelmed by the support and kind letters on behalf of the museum. We received $20,000 in donor contributions.

The KidZone Museum board plans for a much needed campaign for a reserve fund to help us through future difficult situations. Already a supporter has donated $5,000 to begin matching funds for a reserve. Our goal and need is to raise $50,000 which would support museum operations for three months if needed. We plan to remain conservative with our current budget to help us reach this goal quickly.

On April 28 the museum will celebrate its 20-year anniversary at its annual fundraiser Big Night Out- Disco. Please join us at Dragonfly from 5:30-11pm. Tickets are $40 in advance and $45 at the door and includes three complimentary drinks (beer and wine), dinner, dance music by disc jockey Brian Hess, a silent and live auction and raffle. All proceeds go to the KidZone Museum, a nonprofit nationally recognized children's museum. Tickets may be bought by calling (530) 587.5437.

Big Night Out-Disco will raise needed funds while simultaneously, the online auction is also helping us raise funds and is accessible to those unable to attend the event. Online auction closes on April 20.

If you would like more information on the museum, please contact me at director@kidzonemuseum.org.

Again, we are so thankful for everyone's support. Your donations and kind words inspire the museum staff to continue

its hard work and to feel increasingly more passionate about being a part of such an innovative learning place for our children.

Sincerely,

Carol Meagher, director KidZone Museum

Opinion: Irony of our beliefs

By Thomas Sowell

Random thoughts on the passing scene:

How long do politicians have to keep on promising heaven and delivering hell before people catch on, and stop getting swept away by rhetoric?

Why should being in a professional sport exempt anyone from prosecution for advocating deliberate violence? Recent revelations of such advocacy of violence by an NFL coach should lead to his banishment for life by the NFL, and criminal prosecution by the authorities. If you are serious about reducing violence, you have to be serious about punishing those who advocate it.



Thomas Sowell

Have you noticed that what modest economic improvements we have seen occurred during the much-lamented “gridlock” in Washington? Nor is this unusual. If you check back through history, doing nothing has a far better track record than that of politicians intervening in the economy.

With all the talk about people paying their “fair share” of income taxes, why do nearly half the people in this country pay no income taxes at all? Is that their “fair share”? Or is creating more recipients of government handouts, at no cost to themselves, simply a strategy to gain more votes?

Some people are puzzled by the fact that so much that is said and done by politicians seems remote from reality. But reality is not what gets politicians elected. Appearances, rhetoric and emotions are what get them elected. Reality is what the voters and taxpayers are left to deal with, as a result of electing them.

Instead of following the tired old formula of having politicians and bureaucrats give college commencement speeches, in which they say how superior it is to follow a career as politicians and bureaucrats – “public service” – why not invite someone like John Stossel to tell the graduates how much better it is to go into the private sector, supplying what people want, instead of imposing the government’s will on them?

In politics, few talents are as richly rewarded as the ability to convince parasites that they are victims. Welfare states on both sides of the Atlantic have discovered that largesse to losers does not reduce their hostility to society, but only increases it. Far from producing gratitude, generosity is seen as an admission of guilt, and the reparations as inadequate compensations for injustices – leading to worsening behavior by the recipients.

Some people say that taxes are the price we pay for

civilization. But the runaway taxes of our time are the price we pay for being gullible.

Whatever the ideology or rhetoric of the political left, their agenda around the world has been preempting other people's decisions and regimenting their lives.

People who believe in evolution in biology often believe in creationism in government. In other words, they believe that the universe and all the creatures in it could have evolved spontaneously, but that the economy is too complicated to operate without being directed by politicians.

The United States now has the dubious distinction of having the highest corporate tax rate in the world. And people wonder why American corporations are expanding overseas, providing jobs to foreigners. The left may get their jollies attacking "the rich," but the real victims are other people, who want the jobs that are sent overseas to escape a hostile business climate at home.

Different people prefer different exercises. The Republicans' favorite exercise is running for the hills. The Democrats' favorite exercise is kicking the can down the road.

When politicians say, "spread the wealth," translate that as "concentrate the power," because that is the only way they can spread the wealth. And once they get the power concentrated, they can do anything else they want to, as people have discovered – often to their horror – in countries around the world.

In an old Western movie, John Wayne encounters a black man. Wayne tells him, "I don't have a prejudiced bone in my body. I would shoot you as quick as I would shoot any white man." That is what equality is supposed to mean.

Thomas Sowell is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institute and author of "The Housing Boom and Bust".

Opinion: More gambling opportunities not the answer

By Robert Reich

Anyone who says you can get rich through gambling is a fool or a knave. Multiply the size of the prize by your chance of winning it and you'll always get a number far lower than what you put into the pot. The only sure winners are the organizers – casino owners, state lotteries, and con artists of all kinds.

Organized gambling is a scam. And it particularly preys upon people with lower incomes – who assume they can't make it big any other way, who often find it hardest to assess the odds, and whose families can least afford to lose the money.

Yet America is now opening the floodgates.



Robert Reich

In December, the Department of Justice announced it was reversing its position that all Internet gambling was illegal. That decision is about to create a boom in online gambling. Expect high-stakes poker to be available on every work desk and mobile phone.

Meanwhile, states are increasingly dependent on revenues from

casinos, lotteries, and the “Mega Millions” game (in which 42 states pool their grand prize) to partly refill state coffers.

Given who plays, this is one of the most regressive taxes in the nation. In the most recent Mega Millions game – whose winning tickets were drawn last week and whose jackpot rose to $640 million – lottery ticket buyers shelled out some $1.5 billion, most of which went to state governments.

And then there’s the “Jumpstart Our Business Startups” or “JOBS” Act, which President Obama is expected to sign into law Thursday. It allows so-called “crowd funding” by which people whose net worth is less than $100,000 can gamble away (invest) up to 5 percent of their annual incomes in any get-rich-quick scam (start-up) that any huckster (entrepreneur) may sell them.

Forget the usual investor disclosures or other protections. In the interest of “streamlining,” Congress has streamlined the way to fraud. Although start-ups will have to market themselves through third-party portals approved by the Securities and Exchange Commission, this is like limiting Bernie Madoff to making pitches over the radio. The SEC can barely keep track of Wall Street let alone thousands of Internet portals. Small wonder SEC Chair Mary Schapiro has been one of most outspoken critics of bill.

The bill was sold to Congress as a way to promote jobs (note the acronym) on the supposition that small start-ups create huge numbers of them. Wrong. That assumption comes from research by the Kauffman Foundation, which counted as a “start-up job” every laid-off worker who morphed into an independent contractor.

I’m all in favor of more entrepreneurship, and it’s good to give investors another way to participate in emerging companies. But this bill doesn’t do nearly enough to protect the vulnerable.

America’s capital market was already a giant casino. Why now turn the rest of America into one?

Robert Reich is one of the nation’s leading experts on work and the economy, is chancellor’s professor of public policy at the Goldman School of Public Policy at UC Berkeley. He has served in three national administrations, most recently as secretary of labor under President Bill Clinton.

Opinion: Maybe it’s time for electronic liberation

By Terry Jeffrey

Years ago, the monks at Saint Catherine’s Monastery, which sits at the foot of Mount Sinai, maintained a dormitory for visitors. It was a rustic place, where a noisy, gas-powered generator provided the only electricity.

Not long after nightfall, the monks would shut the generator down, converting the Sinai desert into the darkest place on Earth.

Yet it was a different sort of darkness that enveloped that monastery and that mountain. When the moon was down, the stars shone as brightly at the horizon as they did at the top of the sky. With no light seeping up from any city, and no clouds drifting by, it seemed as if the atmosphere itself had slipped away. No discernible barrier stood between earth and the infinite space above.



Terry Jeffrey

There was nothing to do in a place like that but sit and think.

Today in America, we never turn off the generators. We are almost permanently leashed to electronic devices. We walk down the street with tiny telephones fixed to our ears. We sit in parks texting messages on handheld devices to people whose voices we never need to hear. We carry tablets that hook us up to the Internet and that can effortlessly bring us, whenever and wherever we want, a 50-year-old movie or the very latest pop song.

Saint Ignatius Loyola made a powerful point. “Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul,” he wrote in his spiritual exercises. “The other things on the face of the earth are created for man to help him in attaining the end for which he is created.”

In this view, virtually all inanimate things are merely tools that human beings can use for either good or evil. A razor is a good example. A person can use a type of razor to perform a surgery that saves a life – or use the same razor to slit a throat and destroy a life. In the former instance, the razor is used for great good; in the latter, for great evil.

But there is another principle: You would not give a razor to a toddler.

This is not because the razor is intrinsically bad. It is because the toddler could not possibly know how to handle it – and accidentally misusing a razor can cause as much harm as

purposefully misusing one.

Perhaps we should start treating modern electronics with at least the sort of respect we have for sharp objects in our society. Surely, electronic devices – just like razors, scalpels and scissors – can be instruments of great good. But isn't it also true that they can do great harm?

Before the modern electronic revolution really got going, William Butler Yeats wrote a poem called "The Leaders of the Crowd." These were those, he wrote, who "hawk for news/Whatever their loose fantasy invent/And murmur it with bated breath, as though/The abounding gutter had been Helicon/Or calumny a song."

And these leaders of the crowd did not yet have an Internet at their disposal, or video games, or electronic tablets.

Asked Yeats: "How can they know/Truth flourishes where the student's lamp has shone/and there alone, that have no solitude?"

"So the crowd come they care not what may come," wrote Yeats.

Pope Benedict XVI made a powerful observation in his Easter Vigil sermon. "The darkness that poses a real threat to mankind, after all, is the fact that he can see and investigate tangible material things, but cannot see where the world is going or whence it comes, where our own life is going, what is good and what is evil," he said.

"If God and moral values, the difference between good and evil, remain in darkness, then all other 'lights,' that put such incredible technical feats within our reach, are not only progress but also dangers that put us and the world at risk," he said.

"Today we can illuminate our cities so brightly that the stars of the sky are no longer visible," said the pope. "Is this not

an image of the problems caused by our version of enlightenment? With regard to material things, our knowledge and our technical accomplishments are legion, but what reaches beyond, the things of God and the question of good, we can no longer identify."

Out in the Sinai, where the stars shine as brightly as anywhere on earth, a nearly complete copy of the Bible, inscribed in Greek in the 4th century, sat in the monastery library, century after century, unknown to the Western world – until it was rediscovered in the 19th century.

Here in 21st century America, we should consider taking off our electronic leashes once in a while, dusting off our old books and teaching our children how to read them.

Terry Jeffrey is the editor-in-chief of CNSNews.

Opinion: Terrain parks not the safest place to play

By Dick Penniman

Kid's love to fly. Boys especially, but some girls, too, want to take to the air any chance they can, whether on skis or snowboards. When I was young, I jumped from every little bump and ridge I could find. Nothing much has changed with today's kids.



Terrain parks are the special places at mountain resorts where kids are encouraged to test their wings. Snow is piled up

and shaped into a variety of configurations offering airtime to anyone who dares to fulfill the dream of flight. But there's a catch … few (if any) resorts require prior training before participating in these parks, and there are no age or skill limits. Consequently, the big kids are jumping right next to the rank novices.

Before a competitor is allowed to participate in sanctioned aerial events, the U. S. Ski and Snowboard Association requires athletes to complete dozens of successful jumps into a training pool. This can take years of formal training under the supervision of a certified coach. The jump features that are used in training and competitions are built to rigorous engineering standards. Because they are so critical to safe landings, approach speeds are strictly controlled. Nothing of this sort happens in terrain parks at mountain resorts.

As with almost everything else on the trails at California mountain resorts, no laws or regulations exist to guide the creation of features in terrain parks. Most are "free formed" by the park employees, few (if any) of whom have any formal engineering background. They depend on trial and error to determine if features are "safe" for public use.

Before there were terrain parks, ski patrollers like me would tear down big jumps that were considered dangerous. Nowadays, they have nicknames for terrain parks such as "vegetable garden" and "bone yard" because they know it's not a question of "if" but "when" there will be serious, life-threatening injuries.

To help keep your child a little safer:

• Ask if your ski resort has formally engineered terrain park features, and if it does, ask to see the blueprints.

• Tell the resorts to build terrain park features to engineering standards.

• Don’t let your child jump without first getting some training. Ask if the ski school at your resort offers jump lessons. If it doesn’t, find out who does provide this type of training.

• If your child really wants to jump, encourage him/her to take it seriously, and together, learn everything you can about sanctioned USSA jumping.

Dick Penniman is the chief research officer of the SnowSport Safety Foundation.

Opinion: A house call could lower water bills, consumption

By Sarah Jones

Water is a limited resource that is vital to our everyday existence. By participating in a Water–Wise House Call your household could save thousands of gallons of water per year. Not only are you helping the environment by using water more efficiently, these water savings translate into money savings on your water bills.

Upon request, a water efficiency specialist will visit your home, assess your water usage and give you customized water savings tips. By participating in this program you are eligible for free water savings devices and rebates for up to $500 per household.

A Water-Wise House Call consists of inspecting indoor and outdoor living areas. The first item to address is identifying leaks. This can be done by checking the water pressure and meter. Leaks can be responsible for wasting thousands of gallons of water per year. A leaky toilet alone can waste 74,000 gallons of water in a three-month period. Appliances are inspected such as the clothes washer, toilets and faucets. Each customer receives an indoor water conservation kit that includes low flow showerheads, faucet aerators, dye test, toilet flapper and a flow measurement bag.

A trained specialist will:

· Check meter reading and water pressure.

· Check toilets and other plumbing fixtures for leaks.

· Provide toilet flapper valves if needed.

· Measure showerhead flow rates and provide free low flow showerheads upon request.

· Measure faucet flow rates and provide faucet aerators for kitchen and bathrooms.

· Evaluate the efficiency of your irrigation system and provide an appropriate irrigation schedule.

· Assess irrigation sprinkler uniformity and water runoff characteristics.

· Analyze irrigation and drainage systems and provide maintenance, repair or replacement recommendations.

· Provide water conservation program materials, rebate applications and water-wise home and landscaping tips.

By participating in a Water-Wise House Call you will be eligible for rebates for water efficient appliances such as clothes washers, high efficiency toilets and hot water on demand systems. By installing more efficient water fixtures and checking for leaks, households can reduce daily per capita water use by 35 percent. On average, customers who have received a Water-Wise House Call have saved more than 45,000 gallons of water annually

Rebates available to South Tahoe Public Utility District customers:

(Terms and conditions apply)

High efficiency toilets: Receive 50 percent up to $100 rebate for replacing your older (pre-1992) with a new 1.28 gallon per flush model or a dual flush toilet 1.1gpf/1.6gpf. Go online or look for the Watersense label.

Water efficient clothes washers: Receive a $200 rebate for purchasing and installing a high efficiency clothes washer with a water factor of 5.0 or less. Before you buy, view a list of qualifying washers or visit STPUD online to find out more information.

Hot water demand system: Receive a $100 rebate for installing an approved hot water demand system. This is not a tankless water heater rebate. Call for details.

Irrigation efficiency rebate: Based on the recommendations of the Water Efficiency Specialist you may be eligible to receive up to $400 for upgrading your irrigation system with new, high efficiency equipment. The program covers 50 percent of eligible parts and 25 percent of the labor to install them.

For more information contact me at (530) 386.3830 or

sjones@stpud.dst.ca.us.

Sarah Jones is a water conservation specialist with South Tahoe Public Utility District.

Opinion: Arizona is wrong to mess with free speech

By Rachel Alexander

You and I may not use profanity in our Facebook posts, but what about that crazy relative who puts up the funniest posts that sometimes cross the line? Almost no one approves of swearing, but with the exception of broadcasting during daytime TV and radio, it is not illegal. Now new legislation in Arizona would effectively make swearing on the Internet a crime.

Sponsored by Democrats and liberal Republicans, Arizona House Bill 2549 passed both the House and Senate almost unanimously last week, and has gone back to the House for a minor change

before being sent to Gov. Jan Brewer to sign. The relevant part states: “It is unlawful for any person, with intent to terrify, intimidate, threaten, harass, annoy or offend, to use any electronic or digital device and use any obscene, lewd or profane language or suggest any lewd or lascivious act, or threaten to inflict physical harm to the person or property of any person.”

It expands Arizona anti-harassment laws beyond telephones and to the Internet. The problem with this is that one person specifically telephoning another person is not the same thing as an anonymous comment on the Internet. This kind of behavior goes on all the time on the Internet. Every day on political blogs and news sites, some commenters get a little out of hand, and most website editors handle the problem by stepping in and deleting the offensive comments or leaving a comment warning people to tame their comments.

Words like “annoy” and “offend” are vague and could be interpreted broadly to prevent someone from simply engaging in political debate. What one person considers profanity another might not. Is the word “sucks” a swear word? What about “b.s.?” Plenty of families find those acceptable, while others do not. Even anonymous commenters could be liable, if an Internet provider produces records tracing their IP address.

There is no way this legislation will survive a First Amendment challenge in court. The government cannot flat out ban all swear words, which is effectively what this legislation does in the Internet realm. The courts have already carefully decided when and under what circumstances the FCC may prohibit swear words on broadcast TV and radio, and even those restrictions are now being reconsidered. Consider all the swear words on TV and in movies. Then think of what a mammoth task it would be policing the entire Internet for swear words that reportedly annoy or offend someone, and to come up with the additional resources necessary to prosecute them. Anyone could get into a political

debate with someone on a political website, use one swear word in their comments, and be considered violating the law. My own political website, IntellectualConservative.com, is technically full of violators. This is troubling since political debate is the bedrock of our country, Constitution and the First Amendment.

Political analysts are already predicting Republicans are going to lose Arizona legislative seats this election, and will lose at least one of the two Houses. Nanny state bills like this, where Republicans do not appear to be any different than Democrats, will do them in. Voters are not going to be happy when the state ends up spending thousands of dollars defending against a lawsuit everyone has predicted it will lose.

Media Coalition is leading the opposition to the bill, and hopefully the legislature will listen to reason and back down from this atrocious infringement on free speech. Opponents have created a mocking form to report these Internet crimes, and are calling upon Arizona's Governor Jan Brewer to veto it. One of the bill's sponsors, Rep. Vic Williams (Tucson), a liberal Republican, defends it by calling his opponents "crackpots and conspiracy theorists."

Internet trolls have become the scourge of the Internet. But just because we do not like someone else's free speech does not mean it should be made illegal. That is what the core of the First Amendment is about. Internet trolls are to the Internet like TV advertisements are to watching television. If you do not like someone's behavior towards you on the Internet, get a restraining order against them. I did. There are already laws in place against harassment and stalking. It is not necessary to add a duplicate layer of law that will result in the suppression of innocent political debate, and that will inevitably be used for political vendettas. It may be disguised as a nanny, but it is really Big Brother.

Rachel Alexander is the editor of the Intellectual Conservative.