

# OPINION

Opinion Editor: Eric Petermann, 515-4610, eric.petermann@svherald.com

OUR VIEW

## How to get value for your \$1 million investment

Supervisor Pat Call closed discussion on the plan for a new voting process in Cochise County by urging Elections Director Katie Howard to “create reasonable expectations” as part of the effort to educate people on the county’s new voting process.

Perhaps Supervisor Call was part of the majority at Tuesday’s supervisor meeting who were impressed with the plan being implemented to fix Cochise County’s past problems during elections. The new voting process will allow people to vote at any of the 18 voting centers in the county, not at assigned polling places. That change alone will eliminate a significant number of provisional ballots and reduce the time it takes for tabulation. The Elections Office has also been picky about its polling locations, making sure the facilities have adequate Internet access, to improve handling updates and results.

But as smart and sophisticated as the new voting process is, Howard was quick to state on Tuesday that it will take a strong public outreach effort to make the March 22, 2016 presidential primary election go smoothly. There are only 130 work days until that date.

As Supervisor Richard Searle noted, the last time the county reduced the number of its voting centers, in 2008, the outcome was frustrating for constituents, with long lines at fewer polling places.

Considering the investment made in the new voting process, reducing the number voting centers this time would be considered a failure if either fewer people participate in the next election or there are frustrations similar to what county voters have already experienced.

To prevent that happening, Howard has three events planned but is inviting civic groups to get on her calendar for a “road show” presentation of the county’s new \$1 million voting equipment.

If you’re not part of any local civic group, plan on turning out to one of at least three events where the equipment — and your role as a voter — will be on display and explained.

The first of those opportunities is Sept. 8, the Tuesday after Labor Day, at the Sierra Vista City Council meeting. People are encouraged to come to City Hall and see a hand-on demonstration of the equipment.

On Sept. 20 and 21, the Elections office is planning an open house at its Bisbee office, again offering people a chance to get a hand-on demonstration.

Finally, there are plans to “elect a superhero” at the annual Cochise County Fair in Douglas on Sept. 24 through Sept. 27, inviting kids — or as Howard refers to them, “future voters” — to test out the new equipment with their parents.

Ultimately, the investment Cochise County has made to improve its voting process will be of greater value to the people who are paying for it, if they take the time to attend one of these demonstrations and learn how the system works before turning up for the March 22, 2016 primary vote.

For a complete schedule, as it gets updated, follow the election department website at [www.cochise.az.gov/elections-specialdistricts/home](http://www.cochise.az.gov/elections-specialdistricts/home).



## The big decisions



COMMENTARY

DAVID BROOKS

Let’s say you had the chance to become a vampire. With one magical bite you would gain immortality, superhuman strength and a life of glamorous intensity. Your friends who have undergone the transformation say the experience is incredible. They drink animal blood, not human blood, and say everything about their new existence provides them with fun, companionship and meaning.

Would you do it? Would you consent to receive the life-altering bite, even knowing that once changed you could never go back?

The difficulty of the choice is that you’d have to use your human self and preferences to try to guess whether you’d enjoy having a vampire self and preferences. Becoming a vampire is transformational. You would literally become a different self. How can you possibly know what it would feel like to be this different version of you or whether you would like it?

In her book “Transformative Experience,” L.A. Paul, a philosophy professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, says life is filled with decisions that are a bit like this. Life is filled with forks in the road in which you end up changing who you are and what you want.

People who have a child suddenly become different. Joining the military is another transformational experience. So are marrying, changing careers, immigrating, switching religions.

In each of these cases the current you is trying to make an important decision, without having the chance to know what it will feel like to be the future you.

Paul’s point is that we’re fundamentally ignorant about many of the biggest choices of our lives and that it’s not possible to make purely rational decisions.

“You shouldn’t fool yourself,” she writes. “You have no idea what you are getting into.”

The decision to have a child is the purest version of this choice. On average, people who have a child suffer a loss of reported well-being. They’re more exhausted and report lower life satisfaction. And yet few parents can imagine going back and being their old pre-parental selves. Parents are like self-fulfilled vampires. Their rich new lives would have seemed incomprehensible to their old childless selves.

So how do you make transformational decisions? You have to ask the right questions, Paul argues. Don’t ask, Will I like parenting? You can’t know. Instead, acknowledge that you, like all people, are born with an intense desire to know. Ask, Do I have a profound desire to discover what it would be like to be this new me, to experience this new mode of living?

As she puts it, “The best response to this situation is to choose based on whether we want to discover who we’ll become.”

Live life as a series of revelations. Personally, I think Paul’s description of the problem is ingenious but her solution is incomplete. Would you really trust yourself to raise and nurture a child simply on the basis of self-revelation? Curiosity is too thin, relativistic and ephemeral.

I’d say to really make these decisions well you need to step outside the modern conception of ourselves as cognitive creatures who are most sophisticated when we rely on rationality.

The most reliable decision-making guides are more “primitive.” We’re historical creatures. We have inherited certain life scripts from

evolution and culture, and there’s often a lot of wisdom in following those life scripts. We’re social creatures. Often we undertake big transformational challenges not because it fulfills our desires, but because it is good for our kind.

We’re mystical creatures. Often when people make a transformational choice they feel it less as a choice and more as a calling. They feel there was something that destined them to be with this spouse or in that vocation.

Most important, we’re moral creatures. When faced with a transformational choice the weakest question may be, What do I desire? Our desires change all the time. The strongest questions may be: Which path will make me a better person? Will joining the military give me more courage? Will becoming a parent make me more capable of selfless love?

Our moral intuitions are more durable than our desires, based on a universal standard of right and wrong. The person who shoots for virtue will more reliably be happy with her new self, and will at least have a nice quality to help her cope with whatever comes.

Which brings us to the core social point. These days we think of a lot of decisions as if they were shopping choices. When we’re shopping for something, we act as autonomous creatures who are looking for the product that will produce the most pleasure or utility. But choosing to have a child or selecting a spouse, faith or life course is not like that. It’s probably safer to ask “What do I admire?” than “What do I want?”

**DAVID BROOKS** became a *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist in September 2003. He has been a senior editor at *The Weekly Standard*, a contributing editor at *Newsweek* and the *Atlantic Monthly*, and he is currently a commentator on “*The Newshour with Jim Lehrer*.”

## OUR READERS’ VIEWS

### Do a fact check

To the Editor:  
I usually am not inclined to respond to OYM comments but recently there was one so erroneous it needs to be corrected. Interesting that the author of the comment ended with the phrases “Citizens of the Community need to better inform themselves” and “Get your facts straight”. The author stated that the old Sierra Vista hospital had lost its accreditation status and was thus no longer a hospital but a regional health center.

Here are the facts as reported in the *Sierra Vista Herald* on October 13, 2013. Sierra Vista Community Hospital received Blue Cross Certification in 1966. In 1969 it became the first hospital in Cochise County to receive accreditation from the American Hospital Association. In 1972 the hospital was accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals and has never lost its accreditation, under any name.

The name was changed from Sierra Vista Community Hospital to Sierra Vista Regional Health Center in 1999 to reflect the mission and importance of the hospital to the region; it had nothing to do with the accreditation.

In April 2015 the facility was closed and services transferred to the new building under the name Canyon Vista Medical Center without any change to accreditation. In August 2015 the accreditation was again renewed by Joint Commission inspection.

I urge individuals as well as the *Sierra Vista Herald* to do a fact check before publishing or writing factually incorrect information that does nothing but misinform the public and does a disservice to the community and the many exceptional employees at Canyon Vista Medical Center who work hard to provide quality care close to home.

**Bruce Dockter**  
Chairman, Board of Trustees, Canyon Vista Medical Center  
Sierra Vista

### MALLARD FILLMORE



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

- Letters of general interest should be limited to no more than 400 words.
- Letters must include address and telephone numbers for verification.
- To write us, send your letters to: Letter to the Editor, Sierra Vista Herald, 102 Fab Ave., Sierra Vista AZ 85635. Letters can be e-mailed to [eric.petermann@svherald.com](mailto:eric.petermann@svherald.com).



“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” — The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Publisher Emeritus: Robert J. Wick  
Publisher Emeritus: Walter M. Wick  
Publisher: Francis Wick

Assistant General Manager: Patricia Wick  
Editor: Eric Petermann  
Advertising Director: Becky Bjork

Business Manager: Joan Hancock  
Circulation Manager: Jeremy Feldman

SIERRA VISTA  
**HERALD**

Send letters to the editor by mail to 102 Fab Ave., Sierra Vista AZ 85635, or by e-mail to [svnews@svherald.com](mailto:svnews@svherald.com).

BISBEE DAILY  
**REVIEW**