



In 2009, South Korea hosts greeted Jim Cawley with flowers.

Bridget Wingert: Happy to Be Here

Moving on to Harrisburg

The first time I met Jim Cawley, he was accompanying Mike Fitzpatrick into an art gallery, an opening night exhibition in Doylestown in 2004.

He appeared to be an aide to the newly elected Congressman Fitzpatrick, not used to working a room as Mike was.

In a few months, Cawley would be appointed to fill Fitzpatrick's seat on the Bucks County Board of Commissioners, where he would serve a half dozen years.

On Jan. 18, 2005, he was sworn in as a member of the Board of Bucks County Commissioners. On Jan. 18, 2011 — exactly six years to the day — he is slated to take the oath of office as the lieutenant governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Last week he said farewell to his friends and associates in Bucks County and reflected on the past six years.

To mark the occasion, Commissioner Chairman Charles Martin declared Jan. 18 "James F. Cawley, Esq. Day." Cawley's wife, Suzanne, was present with their son, Nicky, as Commissioner Diane Ellis Marseglia presented a plaque to her colleague.

"I was always raised with the notion, and we're raising our son with the same notion that when you've been somewhere and you've had a good time — and it's time to leave — you thank your hosts," Cawley began. "The people that are here assembled in front of me, and the 625,000 others out there doing their work and living their lives, have been my hosts for six years. I have had a marvelous time."

He praised his commissioner colleagues, the current board and former commissioner, Sandra Miller. The commissioners, he said, had gone five years in a row without raising property tax mileage. Bucks has "a good, strong fiscal house."

Cawley thanked employee committees, the BEST (Bucks Employees Saving Taxes) Committee and the BEGIN (Bucks Employees Green Initiative) Committee for their help and cited "all of the fine work that's been done in emergency services." During his time in office.

He listed buildings completed on his watch — the burn building in Doylestown Township and the soon-to-be-built Lower Bucks Public Safety Center, the 9-1-1 Communications Center and Morgue/Crime Lab in Ivyland. He spoke of the expansion of the Bucks County Community College Upper Bucks campus in Perkasie and Lower Bucks Campus of Bucks County Community College in Bristol and the Upper Bucks Government Services Center.

"While we have been busy in capital projects, we have also been good stewards of the environment," he continued. "In 2007, we decided as a board that rather than let our open space preservation efforts pass away, that we would go to the people of Bucks County and ask them if they wanted to continue that process. We did not

put that referendum on some primary ballot in hopes that it would not get the attention it so richly deserved. We put it on a general election ballot while we ourselves were running for reelection. The people of the county overwhelmingly endorsed that project."

Commissioner Cawley closed by expressing his appreciation to members of the county workforce. "As I've said, Bucks County is a marvelous place to live, to work, to raise our families and to grow old in. I will miss my time here. I look forward to visiting with you often."

I got to know Jim Cawley better in 2009, when he was part of a group who traveled to the Republic of Korea as representatives of the Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce. It was a chance to appreciate how much he had grown, how adept he was at meeting the public and dealing with the board issues.

The purpose of the trip was to seal an agreement with Nam Dong, a South Korean province to work with Bucks County to increase trade and cultural exchange.

Much of the trip was spent at dinners and ceremonial occasions with an abundance of speeches and toasts to friendship. Over and over again, Jim was called upon to speak — without warning — and he paused while his words were translated.

His traveling companions marveled at his ability to respond with a new toast for every occasion, a little repetitive but always with a special phrase to fit the moment.

He was warm and poised, quick on his feet. At the final luncheon of the week-long visit, our hosts presented a large screen painted by a treasured Korean artist and Jim was entrusted with its passage home. He carried it himself from Kennedy International Airport to the bus that took us home and made sure that it would have an honored place in the Bucks County Courthouse. It was dedicated last year and is now encased in glass and on public view.

The painting is one legacy Jim did not mention in his farewell, but one that some of us remember well.

He has had a sustained interest in trade and economic development, which was the purpose of the Korea trip. Cawley formed and has co-chaired the Bucks County's Economic Development Advisory Board, which unites influential members to strengthen business initiatives and marketing.

Like Fitzpatrick, who returned to Congress this year, and Mark Schweiker, another county commissioner who became lieutenant governor (and later governor), Cawley hails from Middletown Township, Lower Bucks County. Like Schweiker and Fitzpatrick, he is a graduate of Bishop Egan High School.

Seems like Bucks County is doing its share filling top state and national positions.

And Jim Cawley is the latest native son to move on to a larger arena.

Godspeed Mr. Lieutenant Governor. We wish you well.

What the city can teach the country "Geography is leveled and foreshortened"

Dorothy Potter Snyder

Everyone agrees that shouting fire in a theater is a crime. It's a social agreement that emerges from the culture of congestion.

Yesterday my husband and I sat sorrowful and silent watching the news coverage of the massacre in a Safeway parking lot in Tucson, Ariz., while Democratic Congresswoman Gabrielle Gifford lay in a hospital having a bullet removed from her head.

I called my friends in Tucson to make sure that they were okay, and they were as okay as any two really sad people could be. They have been thinking, as has the avuncular Pima County Sheriff Clarence Dupnik, that Tucson has become the epicenter of bigotry and hate speech in America.

And they are thinking of getting the heck out of there. This is the same state where armed posses of citizenry have been armed by a sheriff (not Dupnik) to go after illegal immigrants in the desert. Who can blame them for being — well, a little down on Arizona?

On Saturday, Sheriff Dupnik remarked "The anger, the hatred, the bigotry that goes on in this country is getting to be outrageous. And unfortunately, Arizona I think has become the capital. We have become the Mecca for prejudice and bigotry." Then, refusing to moderate his speech on the topic on Sunday, he continued: "I think we're the tombstone of the United States of America." And he seemed to be suggesting that our country is on its deathbed and Tucson will mark its grave. Pretty strong words. But unmerited?

Who will be called to account for Sarah Palin's "target practice" propaganda previous to the midterm elections in which a rifle site was placed on Congresswoman Gifford's district? Who will bring Bill O'Reilly to justice for repeatedly spouting hate against Dr. George Tiller, murdered while attending church in 2009 by a crazed anti-abortion activist? And what about Florida radio host Joyce Kaufman's infamous line delivered at a Tea Party rally in July, "If ballots don't work, bullets will"? And then there is the ongoing hum of vitriol, which is the stuff of talk shows and certain TV hosts.

As my husband is quick to point out, Keith Oldermann has the talent to be as odious and over the top as Glen Beck. And the horrific season of political ads previous to the midterm elections is something I still have nightmares about. We have become a nation of bullies, kids who humiliate one another on Facebook and adults who, unable to express ideas in complex sentences and ruled by their fears and prejudices, lower the tone of public discourse to "screw you!" "Yeah, well screw you too!"

Thomas Hobbes, the ultimate federalist, claimed that the life of the average man was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." Now the only difference is we imagine we are not solitary because of Twitter and, oh yes, we live a lot longer than we used to. But the brutish, nasty and poor are qualities in which we have come to revel and make good money on TV deals. The nastier, the more newsworthy.

Legally, speech inciting others to violence goes unpunished unless a direct causal relationship can be established between the speech and an act which results the deprivation of another person's civil rights, among them the right to remain alive. But in a world of rapid individual broadcasting and widespread editorializing, is it fair to hold ourselves to those standards meant for a slower world, or practical to expect the torrent of electronic messages to be traceable to those angry, deranged recipients who decide to actualize their hateful words?

People who live in cities understand something of the difference between free speech and saying whatever you want whenever you want, and if there were no calibrat-

ing forces at work in America's cities, they would have exploded a long time ago.

In New York, we understand this because we are in unusually close contact with millions of other people on a 23-square-mile rock. In New Hope we understand this because so many of us interact regularly with Philadelphia or New York. On each square mile of Manhattan real estate is living an average of 75,000 people: The average American town or city has fewer than 7,000 people in the whole town.

If Mr. New Yorker always said what was on his mind, he'd be in the hospital or dead within a week. Good walls and closed mouths make good neighbors: I would say that by and large the New Yorker is more tolerant and restrained than the average American citizen by a long shot (pardon the expression).

New Yorkers know something about the niceties of free speech, because our daily safety depends upon it. I think that cultural artifacts like rap and hip hop developed in the cities precisely because of a strong need to find an outlet for angry self-expression that won't get you killed.

This sort of contained, organized creative expression is unknown in rural environments where you can say what you want when you want to and populations remain either homogeneous or self-segregating. There's no particular need to practice tongue-holding in the land of the romantic country ballad, Nascar and caribou shooting with the Mama Grizzlies.

Most New Yorkers know from birth that "straight-talk" is not the same as shooting your mouth off, and freedom is not doing whatever the hell you damn well please. If you'd ever been standing in an attitude of studied restraint on the platform at Lexington and 53rd with a hundred other people while an evil-smelling, homeless prophet of doom preached loudly that all women were whores, you'd know what I'm talking about.

But in this Brave New World, country becomes city and city

becomes country, geography is leveled and foreshortened by the electronic sea of media. Suddenly nonurban people who don't have much experience with the need to get along in a crowded subway are in close proximity with fellow beings the world around, thrust into a crowded virtual metropolis for which they are ill-prepared.

Both the new broadcasters of opinion and the recipients of their virulent messages on MySpace, YouTube, and Twitter are swimming in unfamiliar waters, newly puffed up with the ability to throw their voices long distances, and desperately uneducated to the grave responsibilities of doing so.

As Congresswoman Gifford fights for her life in a Tucson hospital and others in that desert town grieve the loss of their loved ones, the difference between free speech and criminally irresponsible speech has to be considered carefully — and soon.

I make an open call to all Bucks County politicians to forswear bullying, negative ads and vitriolic discourse. Here in Bucks County we could, if we decided, officially enact our own form of election reform, and I suggest the following: In all ads and debates, candidates agree to speak only about their own ideas for our community, and agree not to even mention their opponent's name. That simple agreement would cleanse the air incredibly quickly, at least in our own little corner of the world.

As a society, we have failed to recognize that everyone now lives in a culture of congestion thanks to the all-inclusive aspect of modern media, but most are unprepared to deal with it.

The messages that are broadcast now are unfiltered by wiser minds and voices of reason, and the air is full of the egotistic buckshot of hate speech and irresponsibly provocative imagery.

Most of the citizens of this country are utterly unprepared for the new media. And many of them will defend to the death — maybe even your death — their constitutional right to shout "fire" in this very crowded theater.

Start with the voters

Lee H. Hamilton

We've just had three "change" elections in a row, but Americans are no happier with our politicians. I'd like to suggest that our attention needs re-directing. To fix our politics, start with the voters.

Most voters just want the country to work, but to help it along, we need to exercise some judgment. We need to choose representatives who know how to cooperate and find common ground, since our nation is too diverse for any one faction or ideology to dictate the way forward.

We need to remember that the future of civilization is not at stake

when we enter the voting booth, and reject the increasingly common rhetoric that says it is. And we need to be true to our own values and judgment, not rely on politicians and commentators to do our thinking for us.

It is extremely hard to make this country work, but as voters we can help it along by choosing political leaders who are more determined to help the country succeed than to have their personal views enshrined.

Lee Hamilton is director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.



It's cold outside

Dorothea Schaeffer captured a scene that says all there is to say about this cold January.