

A Vanishing Point

Nobody asked but ...

What goes up, must come down. That which pushes in one direction gets an equal and opposite set of pushes in the other direction. By our nature, humans seem to commit resources to the push, but it's let-the-devil-take-the-hindmost regarding the consequences, the push back. In such a manner, we often lay waste to our resources, quickly and certainly.

I worry about the degree to which we let things get out of control, plunging to a vanishing point. In Douglas High School, in Parkland, Florida, we built an optimum security detention center for more than 3000 inmates. What could go wrong? Well, if a number equal to 1% of the day detainees of the school were of a bent similar to that of Nikolas Cruz, that means at least 30 potential perturbers are related to the school at a given moment. Have you ever tried to keep track of 30 people who may be intent on not being tracked, who are needles in a haystack, particularly when that task is not the only task on your agenda, more particularly when your peers and superpeers do not give the task a high priority.

Public schools are bad enough (at least half are below average), but when they are oversized they are overwhelmingly bad.

What are the incentives that lead to a Douglas High? As the purchasing power of the dollar goes down, parents must work longer hours, more jobs to break even. Where will they park their children in the meantime? Politicians first created the mega-school mess, now they curry favor by claiming to reduce the cost of keeping the children. Administrators must seek endless cycles of economies of scale. Sooner or later, someone has to ask, what is the cost of 17 lives? Beyond that, what is the cost of each of the physically injured? What is the damage in terms of trauma?

There has to be a vanishing point at which all economies of scale are equaled by the consequences of those economies of scale. How long will it take for those, who must see, to really see?

— Kilgore Forelle