

# VIEWPOINTS



## Finding A Way Through It

BY PAULA DAMON

"Acceptance doesn't mean resignation; it means understanding that something is what it is and that there's got to be a way through it." – Michael J. Fox, actor, Parkinson's disease survivor and research advocate.

This is my first bike ride since recovering from hip replacement surgery last November. It's been a long haul; yet, I'm ecstatic about my maiden voyage. Sailing past houses and schools, gardens and garages, I arrive at a nearby state recreation area.

Pinching myself in disbelief, I ponder what has transpired in the last eight months. Like a broken record, I keep repeating to myself – first time out on my bike since I fell and broke my hip.

Joy wells inside as I pedal along the crushed limestone path of my retreat. Through the years, this park has been an oasis, where I ardently try to recreate whatever life has taken away.

Stopping to rest a bit, I marvel at the vastness here – the trails ahead are harbin-



PAULA  
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gers of the future; those behind, memories of the past.

After pedaling four miles, I am reminded of my physical therapist's instructions – only do 15 minutes on the bike. Otherwise, you'll feel it the next day.

I've already gone past that and still have the ride back home to contend with.

I want to venture farther, like the old days, when I'd bike 90-minutes for a total of 13 miles round trip. Nothing to it back then.

That was my former self – the pre-surgery Paula who was always on the go.

I want my old life back.

My husband says that's the problem. I have not accepted the new me – my post hip replacement self.

"These changes are permanent," his jolting candor stings me. "There's no going

back."

I listen resentfully.

Yet, as much as I hate to admit it, he's right...I guess.

A part of me is overly proud, falsely so, I would say.

You see, I come from a long line of stubbornness – a galvanized clan who would rather not settle – if at all possible.

Mine is a crazy brood of "can-do" workaholics who, when they decide to do something, usually exceed their own expectations and everyone else's.

A group of high school students in summer training jogs by, their feet barely lift from the path. Scuffing along in unison, they are an incantation of energy and life.

Once again, I consider my husband's reminder.

After a barely audible half-sung sigh, I salute the runners with a casual wave, secretly wanting to be them, to do what they are doing, wishing my legs could carry me in flight.

Reality sets in: I must bid my jogging days goodbye. Doctor's orders – no run-

ning, skipping or hopping.

Hip replacement surgery does not harmonize with anything in life.

You have to relearn how to do practically everything. Walking, sitting, standing, turning, climbing stairs, picking things up and setting them down.

How long you stand changes, too. No more marathon projects on your feet.

I ply the depths of my former self with unanswered questions, all beginning with "why," feeling selfish, wanting it back in the worst way.

I am guilty of incessant whining, which I'm sure everyone's tired of hearing.

My medical team reminds me that less is more. Most days, you'll find me doing my stretches, planning my next 15-minute bike ride and clocking how long I've been standing.

Other days I appear to be failing miserably, struggling to slow down, fighting the urge to nap and resisting this new normal.

There's nothing more to say. That's just the way it is.

## Protecting Against West Nile Virus

BY GOV. DENNIS DAUGAARD:

It used to be mosquitoes weren't much cause for concern. We considered them a nuisance, but otherwise mostly harmless. It wasn't until 13 years ago when West Nile Virus emerged in South Dakota that the nuisance became a formidable health concern.

Just weeks ago, at the end of June, the South Dakota Department of Health reported the state's first West Nile case of the year in Brown County. Though there has only been one human case reported thus far, mosquito pools in two counties have tested positive for the virus. History tells us the peak transmission for West Nile in South Dakota is in August – so we can expect to see more cases.

There is no vaccine or specific anti-viral treatment for people who become infected with West Nile. Mild symptoms include fever, headache, body aches, rash and stomach sickness. Less than one percent of those who contract the illness develop serious neurological infections which can be fatal. Still, of 2,168 human cases reported in South Dakota since 2002, 677 individuals have been hospitalized and 32 people have died.

From the first detections of West Nile in South Dakota the state has worked closely with local mosquito control programs, offering educational opportunities and funding support. Over the years the state has provided cities, counties and tribes with more than \$6 million in either direct funding or control chemicals. Just a week ago the Department awarded \$490,000 in grants to 180 programs across the state to help control mosquitoes and reduce the threat of West Nile.

There are a number of ways to protect yourself from contracting the virus. Use mosquito repellent. Wear long sleeves and pants outside. Limit your time outdoors from dusk to midnight when mosquitoes are most active. Get rid of any standing water in your yard. And support local mosquito control efforts.

## Executive Order May Derail Money Train

BY ROBERT B. REICH  
Tribune Content

President Obama is said to be considering an executive order requiring federal contractors to disclose their political spending. He should sign it immediately.

But he should go further and ban all political spending by federal contractors that receive more than half of their revenue from government.

Ever since the Supreme Court's shameful Citizens United decision in early 2010, big corporations have been funneling large amounts of cash into American politics, often secretly.

That's bad enough. But when big government contractors do the funneling, American taxpayers foot the bill twice over: We pay their lobbying and campaign expenses. And when those efforts nab another contract, we pay for stuff we often don't need.

This is especially true for defense contractors, the biggest federal contractors of all.

A study by St. Louis University political scientist Christopher Witko reveals a direct relationship between what a corporation spends on campaign contributions and the

amount it receives back in government contracts.

A case in point is America's largest contractor, Lockheed Martin. More than 80 percent of Lockheed's revenues come from the U.S. government, mostly from the Defense Department.

Yet it's hard to say Lockheed has given American taxpayers a good deal for our money.

For example, Lockheed is the main contractor for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter — the single most expensive weapons program in history, and also one of the worst. It's been plagued by so many engine failures and software glitches that Lockheed and its subcontractors practically had to start over this year.

Why do we keep throwing good money after bad?

Follow the money behind the money. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, Lockheed's political action committee spent more than \$4 million on the 2014 election cycle and has already donated more than \$400,000 to candidates for 2016.

The top congressional recipient of Lockheed's largesse is Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. Second-highest is Rodney Frelinghuys-

en (R-New Jersey), chair of the defense subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee. Third is Kay Granger (R-Texas), the defense subcommittee's vice chair.

Lockheed also maintains a squadron of Washington lawyers and lobbyists dedicated to keeping and getting even more federal contracts. The firm spent more than \$14 million lobbying Congress last year.

Remarkably, 73 out of Lockheed's 109 lobbyists are former Pentagon officials, congressional staffers, White House aides or members of Congress.

You and I and other taxpayers shouldn't have to pay Lockheed's lobbying expenses, but these costs are built into the overhead Lockheed charges the government in its federal contracts.

And we shouldn't foot the bill for Lockheed's campaign contributions, but these are also covered in the overhead the firm charges — including the salaries of executives expected to donate to Lockheed's political action committee.

The 10 largest federal contractors are all defense contractors, and we're indirectly paying all of them to lobby Congress and buy off politicians.

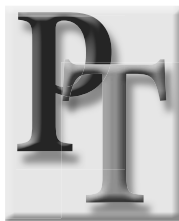
To state it another way, we're paying them to hire former government officials to lobby current government officials, and we're also paying them to bribe current politicians — all in order to keep or get fat government contracts that often turn out to be lousy deals for us.

Fifty-four years ago, President Dwight Eisenhower warned of the dangers of an unbridled "military-industrial complex," as he called it. Now it's a military-industrial-congressional complex. After Citizens United, it's less bridled than ever.

That's why President Obama shouldn't stop with an executive order requiring government contractors to disclose their political contributions. He should ban all political activities by corporations getting more than half their revenues from the federal government. That includes Lockheed and every other big defense contractor.

Robert Reich is Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley and Senior Fellow at the Blum Center for Developing Economies. His new film, "Inequality for All," is now out on Netflix, iTunes and Amazon.

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