

Ideas, opinions

WINSTON CHURCHILL

Raising the 'Iron Curtain' call in 1946



JAMES HUMES
Guest columnist

James Humes, a former White House speechwriter, is visiting historian at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. He is author of the book, "Churchill: The Prophetic Statesman."

The greatest address British Prime Minister Winston Churchill ever delivered was when Churchill was no longer prime minister and not speaking in Britain. It was the March 5, 1946, address that gave to the world the metaphor for the Cold War: "Iron Curtain."

The invitation came to Churchill in September 1945, in Italy, where Churchill was nursing his wounds after his traumatic defeat the previous July. Churchill briefly looked at the envelope address: "Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri," and tossed it aside — another speaking invitation.

He remarked to his daughter, Sarah, who was vacationing with him, "Westminster! I suppose there are even colleges in America called Parliament, too!"

But Sarah read the letter. She came back and said, "Daddy, look. There's a PS by President Truman: 'This is a wonderful school in my home state. Hope you can do it. I'll introduce you. s/o Harry Truman.'"

This gave the speech a dramatic new dimension. To be introduced by the U.S. president gave the defeated prime minister a world stage. He may have been out of office, but he was the world's foremost political figure, a man whose words could still command attention in the world's leading nations.

He had a message to deliver to America. The Soviet political and military encroachments in Europe could only be stopped by a united armed West under the resolute leadership of the United States. Churchill knew his warning would not be popularly received. The Soviet Union was our recent ally.

The widow of the late President Roosevelt still referred to Premier Stalin as "dear Uncle Joe." FDR's former vice president, Henry Wallace, had attacked President Truman for policies jeopardizing post-war peace.

Churchill knew that the mask of democratic pretension had to be ripped from the Kremlin's face and its brutal imperialism revealed. Churchill saw it as his duty to dispel Washington's illusion (shared by London) that it was at peace with its former Soviet ally.

In January 1946, Churchill sailed to America and basked in Miami's warm sun as he prepared his remarks.

His grandson, Winston Churchill II, told me in 2007 that his grandfather spent about two hours for every minute of the address.

On the last day of February, Churchill took a sleeper to Washington where he holed up in the British Embassy editing his address which he titled, "Sinews of Peace."

On March 4, Churchill joined the presidential party aboard the "Ferdinand Magellan," a special train that Roosevelt had built in 1939. When Truman noticed Churchill studying the presidential seal on the train, the president proudly pointed out the change he had made to the seal — the eagle now turned to face the olive branches instead of the arrows. Churchill asked Truman, "Why not put the eagle's neck on a swivel so that it could turn to the right or left as the occasion presented itself?"

On the train, Churchill shared a draft of the speech with Truman, who expressed his approval. During the journey, Churchill continued making changes. In speechwriting, Churchill always suggested a metaphor to give a picture to an abstraction. In his speech, Churchill had mentioned "tyranny," "imperialism" and "totalitarian systems," but these words lacked the imagery that would etch permanence in the audience's mind.

SEE HUMES, 4G

HIGHER EDUCATION

Pushing students to make a choice



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DAVID SVALDI
Guest columnist

David Svaldi is president of Adams State University in Alamosa.

I've written about the need for continuing support for higher education and, in particular, support for first-generation students. But it is also true that college students must take responsibility for their own education.

Every year a majority of entering freshmen across the country indicate they aspire to be medical doctors or lawyers. Yet, one third of all college freshmen never complete a degree. In fact, the success of four-year degree completion is now measured by the percentage of students who complete in six years.

While frosh might say they wish to be a lawyer or a medical doctor, in fact the most popular major is "uncommitted" or "no major declared."

Our institutions must take some of the blame for not pushing students to choose, but the students themselves (and their parents) also have responsibility to make a decision. Back in the day, it was acceptable to take time to "find yourself."

Going to college was the start of a journey in which students might take courses in many different disciplines and then, at some point, make a choice regarding a career focus. "Finding yourself" was not about job preparation, but about developing a critically thinking individual and citizen in a thoughtful and educated manner.

I started at a community college, first thinking that medical school might be in my future, but my experience as an orderly at our local hospital (as well as some tough biology courses) convinced me that a career path following in the steps of Clarence Darrow might be less icky and more interesting.

But my first semester GPA, while above average, was probably indicative that law school was not in my future. Fortunately for me, I found a professor who took the time to dissect my writing. I took all of his political science and

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DENTAL DISEASE

A health program with teeth in it



CHRIS URBINA
Guest columnist



KATE PAUL
Guest columnist

Dr. Chris Urbina, a Pueblo native, is the executive director and chief medical officer of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Kate Paul is president and chief executive officer of Delta Dental of Colorado.

A year ago public health leaders across the state pledged to improve the oral health of Coloradans.

Recognizing dental disease directly impacts the economic health of our state — costing nearly \$1 billion annually — and is nearly 100 percent preventable, Gov. John Hickenlooper named oral health one of the state's top three winnable battles.

At the same time, Delta Dental of Colorado joined the battle with a new fund offering two years of free dental insurance for the state's at-risk populations.

We have seen progress worth celebrating.

According to the 2011-12 Children's Oral Health Basic Screening Survey, about 48 percent fewer kindergartners, and 46 percent fewer third-graders, have untreated decay compared to 2004. That means about 8,600 kindergarten and 7,800 third-grade students no longer have to endure painful

toothaches, missed school days and poorer academic performance that often stems from untreated tooth decay.

During that same time, the state saw a 29 percent increase in the number of third-graders with dental sealants. That's about 6,400 more children with less risk of tooth decay.

Despite these promising signs, significant challenges remain. While the greatest gains in reducing tooth decay came from children in low-income households, these children still are twice as likely as children from higher-income households to suffer from untreated tooth decay.

More than 2 million Coloradans lacked dental insurance in 2011, a 17 percent increase from three years ago, according to a recent Colorado Trust report. This is significant because those with dental insurance are twice as likely to regularly see a dentist.

Response to the Delta Dental of Colorado Fund is a testament to the challenge we face.

The fund reached capacity within months of its launch and already has covered more than \$2 million in dental care. In Pueblo, more than 650 claims were submitted under the fund during its first year.

Not surprisingly, restorative treatments — including fillings and tooth extractions — comprise the largest category of care. These services alleviate debilitating pain and put patients on a path to preventative treatment.

Fund enrollees are gaining access to care that leads to healthier smiles, which can have significant positive impact on their lives.

Colorado's oral health community is committed to fighting dental disease, by building a strong public infrastructure, educating the public, improving access to care and fostering communities that create conditions to make the right choice the easy choice.

Working together, oral health is a battle we can win.