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WIDEN THE TENT
P.T. Barnum and the Importance of Diversity

Last year, I talked about how "The Greatest Show on Earth" shaped the cultural fabric of this country. So, with the Oscars having just taken place, I would be remiss if I didn't take the chance to discuss "The Greatest Showman," the theatrical rendition of P.T. Barnum's rise to fame. It may look like a colorful romp on the surface. But reading between the lines, the film has a deeper message than I was expecting.

I'll be honest, I don't like musicals, so "The Greatest Showman" was not at the top of my viewing list in 2017. We were spending Christmas on the coast at Grandma's house, and freezing temperatures rendered all of us with cabin fever. I was ready to see just about any movie if it meant a chance to escape the house. I went to the theater thinking it would just be something the kids would enjoy. I was wrong.

The movie is far more than a rags-to-riches story with some dance numbers. It's a compelling thesis on the importance of diversity and the thin line that exists between inclusivity and exploitation. While imperfect in execution, "The Greatest Showman" has a message that's still a powerful one.

For those who haven't seen it, the movie follows P.T. Barnum's meteoric rise to fame as he innovated the circus industry. He does this by bringing groups that are traditionally marginalized by society to the stage. Under the circus tents, these performers find solace in one another, creating their own community and sense of belonging. Barnum is far from a savior for these people. As his fame and power grows, he shuns those who helped get him where he is, even calling them "freaks."



these struggles firsthand.

In my practice, we get to help people from all walks of life. The Constitution doesn't mince words. No matter who you are or where you come from, we are all equal under the law. When that isn't the case, something has to change.

Pursuant to a 2009 law enacted by the Tennessee legislature, migrant workers in Tennessee were limited in their ability to receive certain workers' compensation benefits for their injuries. These are people working some of the most dangerous, labor-intensive jobs out there, and according to the Tennessee Supreme Court, the 2009 law made it less expensive to hire such workers. The supreme court panel also noted in their written decision that the unconstitutional law potentially encouraged employers to hire undocumented workers, typically in high-risk jobs that very often resulted in workers' compensation claims. There's nothing worse than looking a man in the eye and telling him that his injury is not considered to be worth just compensation because he is an undocumented worker and there's nothing you can do after he's lost an arm to a piece of dangerous equipment. Thankfully, as Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." That exploitive Tennessee law was declared unconstitutional and was struck down last year.

Our nation can feel a bit like a circus at times. As dark forces try to divide us based on our differences, it's important to remember that we got where we are by widening the tent, not closing it off. Diversity is the lifeblood of democracy, plain and simple.

John Colvin

“ While imperfect in execution, 'The Greatest Showman' has a message that's still a powerful one. ”

Both the character and the man were far from perfect. Barnum was a complex individual, worthy of both praise and criticism. The movie does a good job of capturing this, though some may feel it paints too rosy a picture. Regardless, the film gets you thinking, which is what matters most.

For me, I was struck by the parallels between Barnum and our nation's history. We started out as a scrappy group of colonies, without an ounce of respect on the world's stage. By being inclusive, by pitching a wide tent to welcome the tired and huddled masses, we built a thriving democracy. And just as Barnum's history is complex, so is our own.

Much of our wealth and power came from exploiting people based on their differences. Even today, we continue to struggle with issues of race, gender, ethnicity, and citizenship. I've seen

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPRING CLEANING YOUR UTILITY ROOM
Don't Forget to Clean the Heart of Your Home

The start of spring brings everyone's favorite seasonal chore — spring cleaning! As you dust, vacuum, organize, and declutter, don't forget about the one room that often gets neglected. This year, give special attention to the utility closet.

The utility closet houses your furnace, boiler, water heater, AC junction, and other similar large appliances. Homeowners often forget about these appliances because they are out of sight and out of mind, and this can cost a lot in the long run.

Like all the other rooms in your home, this space needs to be kept clean. Dust, for instance, can be hard on HVAC systems. Over time, it accumulates in the HVAC intake and clogs the air filter, reducing its effectiveness and efficiency. This results in a short lifespan for your system, higher power bills, and a poorly heated or cooled home.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU REPLACE YOUR AIR FILTER?

- Homes with minimal foot traffic (single or double occupancy) and no pets or allergies: six to 12 months.
- Family homes (three or more occupants) with no pets or allergies: three to six months.
- Family homes with at least one pet or minor allergies: two to three months.
- Family homes with multiple pets or allergies: one to two months.



In addition to changing the air filter, it's important to schedule a routine inspection of your home's HVAC system. This includes an inspection of the appliances themselves and any connecting ducts. Dust, dander, and mold can accumulate in the ducts and spread throughout the home, which can lead to health issues, including respiratory problems.

A routine inspection will identify potential problems in your HVAC system. On top of that, you can get these systems professionally cleaned and maintained. These are simple steps that will keep your home's air systems running smoothly for years to come. Plus, you'll be ready for the summer months ahead!

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Wait — Screen Time Is *Good* for Kids? How a Balanced Media Diet Bolsters Child Development

If you Google the effects of screen time on children, you're sure to be bombarded with horror stories. Numerous articles claim that, beginning in infancy, the more time a child spends in front of a TV, phone, or computer, the worse their developmental outcomes will be.

At first glance, the research is utterly conclusive. It seems we should throw out every TV in our house, smash our kids' smartphones, and usher our children into the great outdoors as soon as possible. But what most of these studies fail to take into account is the *content* of the electronic media. If a child spends two hours a day binging episodes of "The Big Bang Theory" or screaming obscenities into a headset while playing "Call of Duty," it's going to negatively impact their experience of the world along with their mental and physical health. But not all content is created equal.

In the past, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended strict limits on electronic engagement for kids, following the old line of thinking that any kind of screen time would be better spent climbing a tree or running in the backyard. But in October of 2016, they offered new recommendations for parents.

For infants and young toddlers, the research still sides pretty heavily against the use of iPads and television. Before 18 months of age, a child lacks the cognitive capabilities allowing them to apply the lessons of technology to real life, and



even after that, the AAP recommends that media consumption should be limited to "high-quality programming, such as the content offered by Sesame Workshop and PBS."

However, for kids ages 5 and up, parents should avoid banning screen time outright, but function as their child's media mentor. Instead of decrying time spent building complex structures in "Minecraft" as hours that could be spent on the soccer field, we should set expectations and boundaries to ensure that children can *deepen* their experience of the world through media, not hamper it. The problem starts not with the screen itself, but when the consumption of media becomes problematic, replacing regular face-to-face interactions and physical activity. But with a balanced media diet, kids can have the best of both worlds.

A Race to the Bottom

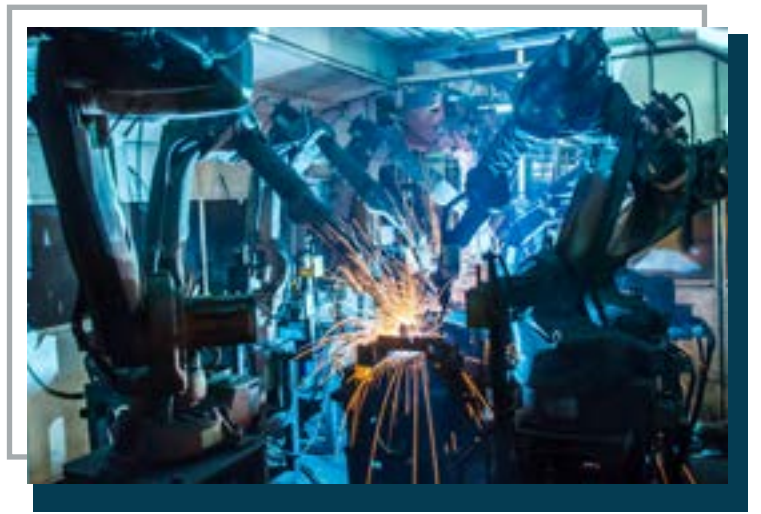
The Price of Our Manufacturing Boom

While they have been instrumental in the growth of the economy throughout much of the South, recent reporting suggests auto plants have been costing workers dearly. Early last year, "Bloomberg Businessweek" shined a light on some of the worst abuses of our region's manufacturing renaissance. What they found is enough to make your stomach churn.

In his expose "The New Detroit," journalist Peter Waldman details how the push for auto plants to compete with developing nations has led to a "race to the bottom." This race amounts to insultingly low wages, inhumanly long shifts, and terrible accidents. As Waldman puts it, "Pay is low, turnover is high, training is scant, and safety is an afterthought."

The story covers several workplace injuries in graphic detail, from lost limbs to a fatal impaling at the hand of a welding robot. How did we get here? The author points the finger at our "right-to-work" laws. While the lack of unions and lower wages were helpful in attracting chain suppliers and growing our economy, it has also led to unbearable and unsafe working conditions.

So, is there no recourse? No way out of this race to the bottom? While these factories attempt to emulate the working conditions and wages of developing countries, it's important to remember this is still the United States, and our laborers still have a voice. Politicians and auto manufacturers need to be reminded that our people deserve more than just a "right to work." They have a right to work under safe, humane conditions.



Of course, the last line of defense is through seeking legal action. Waldman notes that most safety measures are implemented "after someone is badly hurt." It shouldn't be this way. Our firm has plenty of experience representing those who have been injured in manufacturing fields, but we and those who share our values don't want to be in the position of being the sole driving force for change. As a community, we need to take proactive action and prevent these life-altering injuries from happening in the first place.

Spring Festivals *in the Tennessee Valley*

March 17, 2018	-	Daffodil Days Festival	Downtown Bell Buckle, Tennessee
April 2- 8, 2018	-	Mule Day Festival	Columbia, Tennessee
April 20-21, 2018	-	High on the Hog BBQ Festival	City Park: Winchester, Tennessee
April 21, 2018	-	Slaw Burger Festival	Town Square: Fayetteville, Tennessee
April 28, 2018	-	Spring in the Hollow	Town Square: Lynchburg, Tennessee
April 27-29, 2018	-	National Cornbread Festival	South Pittsburg, Tennessee
May 11-12, 2018	-	Tennessee Strawberry Festival	Dayton, Tennessee
May 19-20, 2018	-	Rhododendron Festival	Mentone, Alabama



Colcannon

[Inspired by foodnetwork.com]

When you think of St. Patrick's Day cuisine, corned beef and green beer are probably the first things that come to mind. This year, consider adding colcannon to your March 17 menu. It's basically mashed potatoes on steroids, and it's utterly delicious.

Ingredients

- 3 pounds potatoes
- 2 sticks butter
- 1 1/4 cups hot milk
- 1 head cabbage, cored and shredded
- 1 pound cooked bacon, chopped into small pieces
- 4 scallions, finely chopped
- Parsley, for garnish
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. Steam potatoes for 30 minutes. Peel skins and mash flesh thoroughly.
2. Chop 1 stick of butter into small cubes and add to warm potatoes. Once melted, slowly add milk, stirring constantly.
3. Boil cabbage in water. Add 2 tablespoons of butter to tenderize.
4. Add cabbage, bacon, and scallions to mashed potatoes, gently stirring to combine.
5. Serve garnished with parsley and a pat of butter.

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