

Carbondale Commentary

The views and opinions expressed on the Commentary page do not necessarily reflect those of The Sopris Sun. We invite members of the community to submit letters to the editor or guest columns. For more information, email editor Will Grandbois at news@soprissun.com, or call 510-3003.

Point



By Will Grandbois
Sopris Sun Staff

It seems to be in vogue to be introverted, but I'm not sure it's quite that simple.

My suspicions were first aroused my senior year of high school, when I invited one of the most confident people I know to join me making the morning announcements over the intercom. As head boy (a position he obtained by trouncing me in an election), he was accustomed to speaking to the whole school, but when he couldn't see his audience, he seemed nervous throughout and never joined me again.

The years since have been peppered with people who, while ostensibly extroverted, are extremely uncomfortable in certain social circumstances that appear easy to me. Just like everything else in life, we're good at some things and not at others when it comes to social interaction.

Rather than continue to pick on others, I'll use myself as an example. As a kid, I was talkative to the point of disruption with

Counterpoint



By Megan Tackett
Sopris Sun Staff

As long as we're mashing labels, I tend to think of myself as a sort of Manic Pixie Extrovert. That is, I think I sometimes embody a stereotype

of what introverts think constitutes an extrovert.

And, à la pixie, I definitely dance through social situations — often literally.

You see, I've compiled most of my favorite chapters of my life through agreeing to things. I agree to volunteer at such-and-such event; I agree to go on that trip; I agree to that side gig. All of these agreements lead to meeting wonderful people who then broaden my perspective and surroundings. It becomes a feedback loop of absolutely contagious energy.

After decades of agreeing to do new things with new people, it's easy to become almost addicted to that energy. When I'm visibly enthusiastic talking to you, please know that it's likely because I'm feeding off your own vibe. And it's awesome.

Letters

The Sopris Sun welcomes your letters, limited to no more than 500 words via email at news@soprissun.com or 250 words via snail mail at P.O. Box 399, Carbondale CO 81623. The deadline for submission is noon on Monday.

Keep covering Marble

Dear editor:

Thanks to the Sopris Sun and Peter Mertz for the article on Marble. Please continue to cover Marble as they work their way through controlling traffic, parking and the behavior of tourists.

Bob and Kathy
Zentmyer
Carbondale

Gob-smacked on 82

Dear Editor:

On a recent very welcome sun drenched Saturday, I was gob-smacked by an advertisement on the marquee of the Thunder River Phillips 66 on Highway 82 near Cattle Creek.

The words read: "Start her on wine, then liquor." My mind raced — and then what? Get her pregnant?

We are living in a time when the only sound bites that reach us are those that

are loudest and most extreme. Public discourse has devolved to vitriolic attacks. And the war on women is back (again, always?) — with state level unconstitutional laws to prohibit abortion and a Supreme Court stacked to overturn a woman's right to make choices about her life, her family and her body.

Whatever the setting of your "PC meter," this sign is misogynistic and offensive.

The owners of the Thunder River Market need to know that.

Chelsea Brundige
Snowmass

Farewell from the director

Dear Editor:

(Editor's note: This letter was addressed to all Garfield County residents.)

They say, 'All good things must come to an end!'

It is with some sadness, but

I'm an introvert, and so are you

the teacher and prone to reading at recess rather than facing my peers. Rather than actually participate in middle school dances, I hid behind a camera — a tactic that still serves me well.

In fact, most journalists I know consider themselves introverts even though our job basically boils down to inserting ourselves into other people's business and then sharing what we learned with the whole town. Writing a column like this is an even stranger public display — and you'll notice I don't do it often outside of paper-specific announcements. At least when I'm working I have a role to fill that helps me face angry readers, grieving widows and crafty politicians with a modicum of confidence.

Some of that carries over when I'm off the job. I have no compunctions about cold calling or answering the same — something many folks in my generation and even our otherwise outgoing reporter seem to avoid at all costs. I am used to allocating extra time to socialize at the grocery store, on the street or when I'm out to eat.

I am less sure what to do when someone offers to connect over coffee or a beer. For most people, that signals a more informal interaction in a relaxed setting. For me, it

means undefined roles, beverages I'm not particularly fond of and lots of distraction. For folks who love bars, I'm not sure I can explain how exhausting folks like myself find it to try to hold a conversation over the jukebox, a couple of televisions and a dozen other shouted conversations. There's a great relief to restaurants that keep their music mellow or absent entirely.

Has any of this resonated with you? Have you ever gone to the bathroom just to get some peace and quiet? Felt like a criminal when you left a store without buying anything? Intentionally lollygagged on the trail to avoid having to pass someone? Chosen the seat as far as possible from everyone else? Scheduled something just to get out of another obligation?

If not, more power to you. But for the rest of you, let this serve as a friendly reminder that you're not alone. Many such challenges are darn near universal — and I'm willing to bet that the handful of people who excel at them struggle elsewhere.

Rather than dividing the world into introverts and extroverts, let's play to our strengths, work on our weaknesses and cut ourselves and everyone else a bit of slack.

Putting the "extra" in extrovert

My husband often jokes that people ask him, "Is she always like that?" Yes, he sighs with equal parts endearment and exhaustion.

But of course, that's not true. Like anyone, I enjoy a good night on the couch. Even then, though, I'm not really alone; if there aren't any other bipeds in the room, I always have Sundance for company.

It's not that I don't enjoy my own company, mind you, but I much prefer to share it with someone. If I'm in a class, I'm the student who's almost over participating. If I'm the one teaching the class, I'm pacing back and forth and gesticulating while I lecture, making sure I'm as entertaining as I am helpful in my presentation. Because at the end of the day, for me, almost everything boils down to the people in my orbit and whom I'm orbiting in turn.

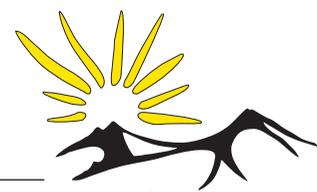
Maybe that's why I've been drawn to journalism — it affords me a societally approved reason to get to know people.

I mean really get to know people. Some of you have opened up to me about tragedies and loss I can't imagine, and you've trusted me to steward your story with compassion and care. I never mind spending extra hours transcribing those

conversations after the fact, because I don't want a notebook (or worse, a laptop!) creating a physical barrier between us, reminding both of us that this is an interview.

But that's my extroversion talking. Literally, I'm laser-focused on you in the moment, and my internal reflections will just have to wait. More introverted reporters may be well served by being able to scribble tactful notes to themselves while on the job — I really, really struggle with that, like it's a betrayal to my immediate environment to go inward for a moment. I'm not saying either is better: it's just interesting how people's social aptitudes manifest in various settings.

My extroversion can seem even more intense because, well, I'm also Midwestern. I didn't even realize that Midwesternism was a "thing" until I left. We're a stereotypically friendly bunch, and I like that about us. As an extroverted Midwesterner, then, I am absolutely going to compliment those earrings I've been silently obsessing over throughout our introduction. You might think I'm awkward or a little over the top, but that's just because I am.



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