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LOOKING IN

## Santa Fe — you're doing it right

By Elsie Maio Dec 3, 2018



The world says thanks for your timely demos of civic leadership.

As a former and would-be-again-in-a-snap resident of the City Different, I love seeing its natural beauty and cultural charm featured regularly in my now local newspaper. But this fall, the New York Times published three articles showcasing a different face of Santa Fe's leadership: as a global citizen. I'm writing specifically to thank you all for publicly modeling two of the most important things our entire society needs to do now: to truly hear and engage collaboratively with the other, and to advocate bravely for our shared destiny.

Even as an outsider, I was deeply moved by the article about La Entrada ("New Mexico grapples with its version of Confederate tributes: A celebration of Spanish conquest," New York Times, Sept. 8). First told in the Santa Fe New Mexican, the Times' version showed the world what can happen as modern humans begin to address generations', even 400 years' worth, of quiet hurt.

Every one of you likely is still touched by the strain of that history. And those whose personal identity and ancestry are at stake call up enormous bravery to move through it and prioritize community well-being. It's a poignantly hopeful mirror for all peoples who are caught in the shadow of legacy conflicts haunting our country and the far corners of the world today.

" 'After we get past this period of darkness, Americans will be thirsty for a period of reconciliation,' said [Mayor Alan] Webber, emphasizing that 'voices were never raised and fingers were never pointed' in the negotiations around the Entrada."

The second story woke me up like the shot that felled Goliath. It's one thing when a big-city Justice Department takes on a national institution — like Philadelphia's district attorney is doing now in challenging the ethos of mass incarceration. But when I read that in your capital city, the state attorney general is taking on the giants of the technology juggernaut, I felt my own backbone straighten ("How game apps that captivate kids have been collecting their data," New York Times, Sept. 12). That's inspiring. That takes guts. And when you think of it, who but the decent people of New Mexico could claim a moral high ground to take on literally the biggest companies in the world to defend all children's safety and online privacy.

The third story, a column by Frank Bruni, spotlighted St. John's College's "contrarian" pedagogy, ("The most contrarian college in America," New York Times, Sept. 11). For me, the college's hallmark curricula, critical thinking and generative conversation around the great books, are the better norm

for our time. I don't know how much Socratic dialogue actually rolls down the hills onto the Plaza, but St. John's College certainly models an antidote to the hyperpartisan tirades or numbing resignation induced by social media.

Unlike old-timey, blustery "smartest guys in the room," these folks cultivate the courage to enter a group discussion "not knowing" and to listen earnestly to "the other." It takes guts, discernment and faith in humanity to work through to a shared truth in that way.

So thanks to you people of Santa Fe for your courage and commitment to a larger good. And thanks to the New York Times for showcasing for the world how you're doing it.

Elsie Maio is founder and chief executive officer of Humanity Inc./SoulBranding Institute. She mentors organizations who are aligning with the well-being of the web of life. Last week, she curated and moderated the panel, "Waging Peace with Commerce: Engineers and the Golden Rule," and presented on "Ethics in an Autonomous World" at the #PeaceEngineering conference of global engineering educators hosted by the University of New Mexico.