

Hoping for the best

By STEVE MCINTYRE | Posted: Thursday, January 26, 2017 10:00 pm

Most of us trust the powers that be and their hired and elected associates to do the right thing. We pray everything will turn out all right. We hope for the best.

Galveston is developing. But what is your future in Galveston?

A book by John Nichols was later turned into a movie about a somewhat similar situation in a mythical northern New Mexico town.

“Leaving the maps, then, Bloom talked about the history of the north, about land grants and how they had been lost, strayed, or stolen, divvied up. He named thieves and quoted statistics, working hard to relate what he knew of the far past and the near past to the present. He spoke of sociological trends in Chamisa County, in the entire United States. He ran down for them a history of other conservancy districts in the state which had effectively destroyed subsistence farmers by forcing them into cash economies where they could not compete. He did everything possible to probe and expose the hypocritical rhetoric surrounding the Indian Creek Dam — the state engineer’s pronouncement, for example, that it was ‘the only way to save a dying culture.’ He tried to demonstrate how the conservancy district and the dam was just one more component of the economic and sociological machinery which for a long time had been driving local small farmers off their land and out of Chamisa County.

“(H)e outlined what the real costs of the dam could balloon into, and broke those costs down to an amount per acre, per year, per person, regardless of that person’s wealth. He explained how the proposed Ladd Devine Miracle Valley project would drive their land values sky high, and what that would do to their taxes. He told them that when middle-class or wealthy people from other states bought expensive vacation homes up in the canyon or around the golf course on the subdivided west side, they would want a school for their children, sewage systems, a cleaner water supply, and for that all the people of Milagro would have to pay. And once the ski valley was completed there would be pressure to raise taxes for a better road up to it. And Bloom did his best to question the myth that this development would bring wealth to every inhabitant, and jobs and security for all. For 40 years, in Chamisa County, there had been a tourist boom: and yet most of the profits went into a few pockets at the top. Skilled construction workers and technicians were always brought in from outside. For the poor and the rural people little had changed, except that in taking service jobs for



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low wages they no longer had the time to work their land, and so had often wound up selling it, only to discover themselves poorer than before”

Check out pages 148-49 of “The Milagro Beanfield War” or the movie at the library and consider whether hoping for the best is all that you should do.