

It seems as if every season of the year is busy, but harvest time, especially for those of us who try to produce as much of our own food as possible, is sometimes hectic. Right now, here on Coe Creek, tomatoes are taking top billing. Nearly every day, the jars of sauce fill the canner. A little more than half an hour after the water begins to boil, I lift out the Mason jars and set them in rows on the kitchen cupboard, the bright red sauce proclaiming, “Look at us!” Beginning as I remove the pints from the boiling water bath, a series of sharp “clicks” tells me that the lids are firmly sealed on the jars. Nine pints in the canner—I count nine affirmations within a few minutes.

We dug our potatoes during the past couple of weeks—ten bushels in the root cellar will more than take us through the winter. The freezer has filled up, too, with green beans, broccoli, peppers, cauliflower, peas, and more. And, the Painted Mountain corn is ripening. This heirloom grinding corn is as beautiful as it is useful. The kernels almost glow—not only yellow like ordinary corn, but red, rust, dark blue, black, magenta, orange, brown. And, the corn meal we grind from this corn is not only interesting to look at. It tastes good, too.

So, with all of this harvesting and preserving taking our days, it is a good time to take out Timothy Snyder’s *On Tyranny*. Five minutes is enough time to read one of his Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century, and it provides the reader with hours of contemplation. So, the fifth lesson this author lists is: REMEMBER PROFESSIONAL ETHICS. “When political leaders set a negative example,” Snyder writes, professional commitments to just practice become more important.”

So, it is our obligation to protest the lack of such professional ethics in those who are in charge now. The actions of the Attorney General of the United States, William Barr, are the easiest example to understand, because his lack of adhering to the ethics of his profession has become so blatant. Michael Flynn was convicted on several counts by a jury. Before he was scheduled for sentencing for the crimes for which he had pled guilty, Barr announced that the Justice Department was dropping the charges. A “jury of his peers” had held Flynn accountable for his actions in the way our legal system provides. The head of the Justice Department negated their actions. Barr acted unethically.

Fortunately, our legal system provided for a review of such actions, and this case is not yet history. But, whatever happens, the Attorney General acted unprofessionally and unethically.

When a President constantly prevaricates, as Donald Trump does, we must not only “fact check” him, we must stand up for truth. And, that means that we, too, must be adherents to a high standard of ethics. It doesn’t matter that we are farmers, or factory workers, or carpenters, or plumbers, or cooks. It does not matter if we have titles or some letters after our names. If we fulfill our obligations on the basis of a high ethical standard, it is easy to see that we must demand the same from our leaders. This, too, is a check on tyranny, one which we can all share.