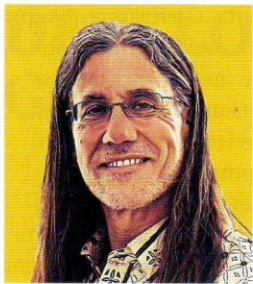


A 30-YEAR VETERAN OF EMERGING MARKETS, JAMES S. KALLMAN IS THE SENIOR PARTNER OF GLOBAL ACCOUNTING AND CONSULTING FIRM, MOORES ROWLAND (A MEMBER FIRM OF PRAXITY). JAMES IS REGULARLY QUOTED IN LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA.

PUTTING A BUY ON AMERICA



THE INITIAL spur to write this piece was the maturity shown by the students of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in the aftermath of the mass shooting that had taken place at their school in Parkland, Florida. Eighty-nine years to the day from

the original Saint Valentine's Massacre that saw seven hoodlums executed gangland style in downtown Chicago, we have progressed to the stage where an ex-student could march "purposefully" onto campus, enter the premises and then open fire indiscriminately, killing 17 students and teachers and wounding a similar number; small wonder that surviving students formed the advocacy group "Never Again MSD" in order to campaign for gun control legislation.

We have certainly failed them when children are taught what to do when a gunman enters the building before they even learn how to read and write. What I learned was how articulate these teenagers were in making their case, addressing those who would listen and offering a dignified riposte to those claiming to be too busy. Here were tomorrow's voters providing clearly reasoned debate based on facts, rather than mumbled excuses for inaction resulting from economic self-interest.

Yet we have seen such movements sprout before, only to swiftly wither on the vine as the public loses interest. While it may happen again, and surely all the students' dreams will not be realized, their initial calls brought swift reaction from unexpected quarters with both Dick's Sporting Goods and Walmart issuing tighter restrictions on their firearm sales. Dick's, in particular, not only raised the minimum age for sales and banned the sale of assault style rifles, but is also destroying such weapons in its warehouses. This reaction stems from the fact the Florida shooter had purchased a weapon from one of its stores and while this was not used in the actual shooting, the firm felt a moral responsibility to destroy its stock of semi-automatic weapons.

People accepting responsibility at a personal level is basically what built America, its great advances coming not via direction from Washington but from the actions of millions believing in their dreams, both individually and collectively. I sense a return to these values today, with individuals, communities and even local governments looking to answer challenges, be they in their personal or community lives.

Over the past year, the #MeToo movement has toppled former titans in many fields, demonstrating that sexual harassment is no longer acceptable. While #MeToo has its share of the headlines, other accomplishments have been generating local pride within many communities and, interestingly, local libraries and newspapers are helping to engender community awareness.

Contrary to the direction of Washington, meanwhile, the majority of U.S. states and major cities are wise enough to be on target to meet the Paris climate goals; after all they'll have to face the long-term consequences of global warming. Yes, it's an imperfect world, but away from the antics of Washington, much of America is doing what it has traditionally done, govern itself to meet local needs. I'll put a buy on that! **F**

