

OUR VIEW

Inquiry into allegations of racism must run its course

It was a disappointing end to a prep playoff football game Nov. 5 between La Grande and Gladstone.

La Grande won the first-round playoff game but a display between the Gladstone coach and officials — that eventually developed into Gladstone fans entering the argument — postponed the contest for at least five minutes and led to the visiting team walking off after the game without shaking hands with the Tigers.

The Oregonian published a story Nov. 11 outlining allegations from Gladstone players that members of the Tigers launched racial slurs throughout the game. The allegations are extremely serious and deserve the full attention of both school districts and the Oregon School Activities Association.

The good news, if there can be good news in such an unseemly situation, is the school districts involved and the OSAA appear to be addressing the issue.

Unfortunately, there is no way to avoid a full investigation into the allegations. Unfortunate because a prep playoff football game should be a place for fair, competitive play where, at the end, both teams can shake hands and walk off the field with the knowledge they played hard.

Yet everyone — the school districts, the OSAA, parents and players — should refrain as much as possible from a rush to judgment.

Allegations have been made and they deserve to be investigated. Yet, allegations are not proof. For proof, an investigation must be conducted in a fair and methodical manner. Essentially, officials need to get to the bottom of the allegations, decide whether they have merit and then act accordingly.

Acting accordingly may mean the dismissal of some of the allegations. Acting accordingly, if the allegations prove to be true, may result in some type of sanction.

The important piece of this incident is a fair, due process probe. Rushing to judgment or vilifying anyone on either side — from coaches to players to fans — isn't going to solve anything and likely would make the situation far worse.

We hope that the allegations prove to be untrue. But the assertions must be followed up on and the truth uncovered.



YOUR VIEWS

Veterans need our help

November includes both Veterans Day and the Marine Corp birthday, a busy month for the veteran community. Typically there are ceremonies, parades and plenty of mattress sales. This year, in addition to all of that, I have a request. Please help us.

I'm tired of watching my brothers and sisters die, broken and alone. I don't care about your politics or your religion. There should be nothing here but agreement on the fact that our veterans deserve more. We have always been there for you. Please consider spending 10 minutes to be there for us. Call our representatives and tell them you care.

Here are just a few of the most influential bills:

- H.R. 147 provides transition services for military to civilian employment; to include apprenticeships.
- H.R. 886 establishes grants and assistance for state/local/tribal governments to implement programs to assist veterans charged with non-violent crimes to receive help.
- H.R. 3504 improves VA housing and education assistance programs.
- S. 1467 directs the VA to begin clinical trials on medical cannabis.
- S. 189 directs the VA to use the same cost of living increase as Social Security; ensuring disabled veterans keep up with inflation.

For an extensive list of proposals and more ways you can help, visit www.vfw.org/advocacy. (I am not affiliated with the VFW, just a fan of their work.)

Kelley Dolson, USN retired
La Grande

Sounds like tyranny

We applaud the Citizens of Union County for Health and Safety for taking a stance on COVID-19. However, one size does not fit all. Since our annual flu shots aren't 100% effective, why should this vaccine be?

Are the vaccines our government mandating obsolete? They were to protect us from the original strain. How effective are they now since this virus has mutated? Why are people with vaccinations still becoming seriously ill or having serious side effects? Is it really doing what we are led to believe? Many unanswered questions.

Are the big pharmaceuticals becoming rich off the backs of Americans and the rest of the world? What about less expensive drugs proven to be effective but doctors

can't or won't prescribe?

Two years we have praised our health care workers, first responders, police and military, calling them heroes. Now they are being prosecuted. Threatening jobs, professions and livelihoods because they won't do something they don't believe in. Shouldn't they know what is best for them?

How effective is wearing a mask? Should we risk getting pneumonia, severe headaches and sinus infections from breathing stale air? We were taught to breathe fresh air into our lungs and expel contaminated air to keep our bodies healthy. Many unanswered questions.

Wear a mask, get vaccinated, if that is what you believe is right for you. Let us make our own decisions. It is called freedom.

Our men and women in uniform are being told to vaccinate or receive a dishonorable discharge. They chose to give their lives for our freedom. Is this how we repay them? Workers are being told no unemployment if their job is terminated for failure to vaccinate. Is one of them your breadwinner?

It sounds like tyranny to us, with harsh and unusual punishment. How much is this a power play by our government? This is unconstitutional and we should be outraged by these edicts. Ultimately down the road we will pay the price for our government's unscrupulous demands.

Contrary to some letters, a great many of us applaud Cody Bowen for his stance on our rights, freedoms and what we believe in.

Nathiel Conrad and Debra Hansen
Cove

Name calling only drives a deeper wedge

I am writing in response to a column by Matt Henry titled "The greatest good for the greater good" (Oct. 21, 2021). I am disappointed that this kind of divisive editorial would be included in the Spiritual Life section rather than the opinion page.

Mr. Henry speaks of the "uber-self-centeredness" and "selfishness of anti-vaxxers" and implies that they have a death wish for others and want to "sacrifice everyone else on earth" due to "child obstinacy." Mr. Henry even goes so far as to suggest that unvaccinated people cannot be "bona fide Christians."

A key fact that Mr. Henry ignores is that vaccinated people can and do get COVID-19 and spread it to others. I also know a number of people who have made a choice to not get the COVID-19 vaccine. None of these people made that choice because they are self-centered or selfish. Quite the opposite. Some chose to not get vaccinated because they do not feel comfortable with the vaccine, others for personal reasons, and many others due to their own deeply held religious beliefs.

Calling people names because they have a different view is not what is needed during these challenging times. Even Grande Ronde Hospital has stated that they respect "our employees' right to make the choice whether to vaccinate or not."

Let's tone down the rhetoric, be kind to each other and remember that divisive name-calling encourages fear and drives a deeper wedge in our community. I encourage Mr. Henry to review the advice from Jesus found in Matthew 7:1: "Do not judge, or you too will be judged."

Mathew Miles
La Grande

What can you do for your fellow man?

President John F. Kennedy so prophetically said, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." I can take it further. Ask what you can do for your friends, neighbors, family and strangers by getting vaccinated for COVID-19.

After a nonthreatening discussion with my Idaho customers building in Oregon who won't get the shot, I explained to them my philosophy. I could never forgive myself if I were unknowingly positive without the vaccine and harmed any other people, and worst of all, if they died because of me.

My husband, Dan, and I are well into the over-65 age group, and his lungs are susceptible to problems, so we not only protect ourselves, but we are also protecting everyone with whom we come into contact. We don't know if those in public places indoors without masks are anti-vaccine people or not, so we always wear our masks. We have stopped going out to restaurants again, except on rare occasions.

What can you do for your fellow man? It's so easy, and you don't risk harming others.

Terrie Biggs
La Grande

EDITORIALS

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of The Observer editorial board. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of The Observer.

LETTERS

• The Observer welcomes letters to the editor. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We will not publish consumer complaints against businesses, personal attacks against private individuals or comments that can incite violence. We also discourage thank-you letters. • Letters should be no longer than 350 words and must be signed and carry the author's name, address and phone number (for verification only). We will not publish

anonymous letters.

• Letter writers are limited to one letter every two weeks. • Longer community comment columns, such as Other Views, must be no more than 700 words. Writers must provide a recent headshot and a one-sentence biography. Like letters to the editor, columns must refrain from complaints against businesses or personal attacks against private individuals. Submissions must carry the author's name, address and phone number. • Submission does not guarantee publication, which is at the discretion of the editor.

SEND LETTERS TO:

letters@lagrandeobserver.com or via mail to Editor, 911 Jefferson Ave., La Grande, OR 97850

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE

NEWSSTAND PRICE: \$1.50

You can save up to 55% off the single-copy price with home delivery. Call 800-781-3214 to subscribe.

Subscription rates:

Monthly Autopay\$10.75
13 weeks.....\$37.00
26 weeks.....\$71.00
52 weeks\$135.00

THE OBSERVER

An independent newspaper founded in 1896

www.lagrandeobserver.com

Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, Oregon 97801
Published Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays (except postal holidays) by EO Media Group, 911 Jefferson Ave., La Grande, OR 97850 (USPS 299-260)

The Observer retains ownership and copyright protection of all staff-prepared news copy, advertising copy, photos and news or ad illustrations. They may not be reproduced without explicit prior approval.

COPYRIGHT © 2021

Phone: 541-963-3161

Toll free (Oregon): 1-800-781-3214

Email: news@lagrandeobserver.com

POSTMASTER Send address changes to: The Observer, 911 Jefferson Ave., La Grande, OR 97850

STAFF

Regional publisher..... Karrine Brogotti Home delivery advisor Amanda Fredrick
Interim editor Andrew Cutler Advertising representative Kelli Craft
News clerk Lisa Lester Kelly Advertising representative Amy Horn
Reporter Dick Mason National accounts coordinator Devi Mathson
Reporter Davis Carbaugh Graphic design Dorothy Kautz
Multimedia journalist Alex Wittwer Page design Martha Allen

