

OUR VIEW

# Stepping up to help out

We often don't think much about blood unless it happens to be our own, but the American Red Cross and, by extension, hospitals are facing a shortage of it. So if area residents can help, they should.

That means rolling up your sleeves at a local blood drive. Such donations will come not a moment too soon.

The Red Cross, which holds frequent blood drives locally, reports it is facing a severe crisis with blood supplies at a low level not seen in decades.

An ample blood supply is critical for a host of reasons. Blood donations are used in surgeries, for those with blood disorders such as sickle cell disease and for cancer patients. Without an ample supply of blood, those who need urgent care the most may face delays and those delays can be life threatening.

The Red Cross needs the entire nation to step up and help and decide to give blood.

Most local blood drives supply area hospitals. That means if residents decide to give blood they are most likely going to be helping someone from their town or region. O-negative blood is especially needed now.

For some, giving blood is a routine matter. For many of us though, the idea of taking time out of the day to give blood probably isn't a priority. It is often easy to forget that such actions as giving blood make a huge positive impact. It doesn't take long and the blood you may give could save someone's life.

Across the region the crisis isn't as acute as in other parts of the nation. In La Grande and Baker City, there has been an increase in blood donations during the past year, but nationwide blood donations are down 10% since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Red Cross is key to ensuring there is enough blood. The agency supplies about 40% of the nation's blood supply. That means when there is a local blood drive by the Red Cross, area residents, if they can, should mark it on their calendar. When you give blood you are performing a civic duty, one that will help the local community in a crucial way.

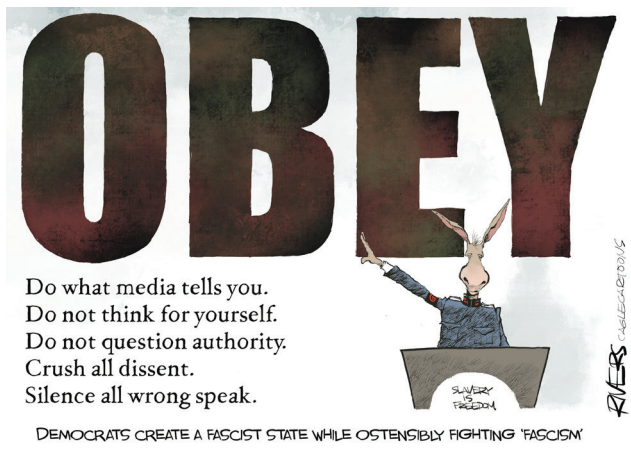
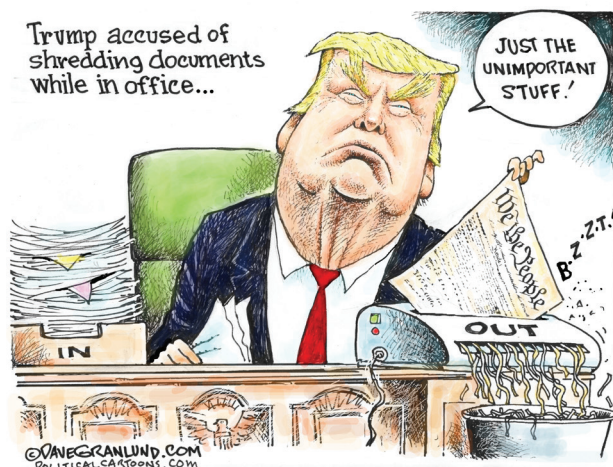
Giving blood may not matter for most of us in our daily lives but if an area resident needs a blood transfusion and there isn't enough of it around, then suddenly a blood donation is a big deal.

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OTHER VIEWS

## CRT, Russia and political correctness



**ANNE MORRISON**  
THINKING OUT LOUD

When critical race theory became a "thing," I had to Google the phrase to learn what it meant. Even though I read about American history and about racial issues, I was unfamiliar with the term.

So that's what it is? Teaching about structural racism, how it has existed in our country, and how it persists?

It's difficult to imagine that anyone in America could deny that institutional racism is a part of our nation's history. Slavery was a legally created, government-enforced institution, and it was racially based. The violent oppression of Black Americans after Reconstruction was tolerated and often sanctioned by state and federal governments, and it was racially based. Segregation was a government-created policy, and it was racially based. It's also not difficult to see how our history still shapes our society, and that many of our attitudes, institutions and policies today flow directly from those that existed before.

What could be controversial about that?

It may be true that much of our history reflects poorly on the white Americans who created our institutions and enforced our laws. But if we are going to prohibit the discussion

of any part of our past that makes us uncomfortable, the list could be very extensive.

We would not be able to learn how Columbus treated the Indigenous peoples of the Caribbean, or read the thousands of stories by former slaves, recorded during the Depression. Maybe we would need to keep children from reading "The Diary of Anne Frank," which records the capacity for uncontrolled hatred and evil by people who called themselves Christian.

Maybe our society would be more "united" if we we pretend that the unpleasant parts of history simply don't exist.

We could take our lead from Russia, where the government is also moving to present a more "acceptable" version of its history. Like the United States, Russia has chapters in its history that are torturous to explore. One is the period of collectivization, when millions of Russians were executed, deported to forced labor camps in the Arctic or died of starvation as Stalin's government seized land for state control.

In December 2021, Vladimir Putin's government shut down several groups in Russia that research and document the Russian government's murder of millions of its own citizens. Putin's action is widely seen as an attempt to silence discussion of one of Russia's most brutal periods, and to present a more "unifying" and uplifting version of Russian history.

Just as some Americans would like to prevent discussion about unpleasant aspects of America's past, Putin would prefer a history that celebrates his country's glorious accomplishments while ignoring the violence done by Russia's government.

Unfortunately, it is not just conservative Americans who believe that it would be beneficial to suppress ideas they dislike, or history that is unpleasant and uncomfortable. For years, many people with more liberal perspectives have actively worked to prevent expression of views they dislike, by preventing lectures by speakers whose views are not "politically correct," by preventing schools and universities from teaching perspectives they dislike, and by keeping people whose views they disagree with from obtaining academic positions.

What difference is there, really, between the people who object to teaching "critical race theory," and Vladimir Putin's attempts to erase the violence of Stalinist times, and those who try to suppress the expression of "unenlightened" views and the people who hold them? All show a profound intolerance of other viewpoints and perspectives. All seem to completely lack confidence that their own perspectives will survive and flourish if they are forced to compete with different, conflicting views.

*Anne Morrison, a La Grande resident and retired attorney, has lived in Union County since 2000.*

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