

OUR VIEW

An obligation to end acts of violence

The racist shooting massacre at a Buffalo, New York, supermarket two weeks ago seems far away and with little relevance to the rural heartland of Eastern Oregon, but its significance and impact is vast and should stand as a signpost for all Americans regarding a cancer that continues to metastasize.

The cancer is a violent, militant ethos that runs hard and deep within certain sections of this nation. It is not a new disease — violent racists aspects of our history are common — but its current form, exemplified by the Buffalo massacre, is by far the most serious in recent memory.

The avowed white supremacist killed 10 Black people and workers at the supermarket and left behind not only a blanket of terror but questions that require deep contemplation by all Americans. Whether one lives in Alabama or Pennsylvania or Eastern Oregon, the slaughter perpetrated on the victims of the massacre should stimulate reflective pause regarding an array of subjects, including how such acts of violence are spawned and what they say about our nation to the rest of the world.

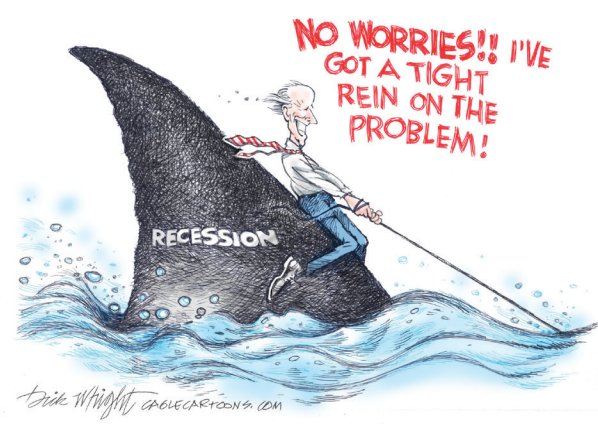
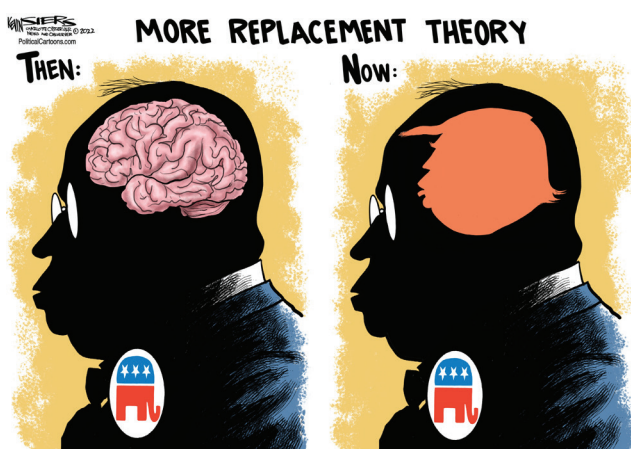
Americans by history and nature are often an unreflective bunch in terms of perceptions of our democracy by other nations. That must change. We stand as the greatest world power and proclaim our form of democracy — where justice for all and equal representation are hallmarks — as a bright beacon for the rest of the world.

Yet, we consistency fail to live up to our own high-minded expectations. So, we must do better.

Too many men and women have laid their lives down on foreign shores for our citizens to tolerate lowering our standards. Every American, regardless of their color or their place of origin, should be able to enjoy the rights of being an American. Being gunned down while shopping for dinner doesn't fit that scenario.

It is not appropriate to place blame on others or to ignore the situation — it is a nationwide problem, and it's up to us to solve it, whether we live in Buffalo, New York, or Northeastern Oregon.

No, it is for all Americans, our obligation really, to work to ensure such acts of violence vanish and the merchants of hate and the brokers of national dissension are vanquished. If we do nothing we are tempting dishonor as well as more acts of violence.



OTHER VIEWS

Guidance of county commissioners invaluable to fair board

I am writing to make the residents of Union County aware of the help our county commissioners have provided the Union County Fair Board. Since my appointment to the board in February, 2020, Matt Scarfo has maintained his role as commissioner liaison by guiding and assisting the fair board. In addition to myself, the county commissioners have appointed Carrie Bushman, Heather Rajkovich, Melinda Becker-Bisenius and Deb Cornford during the last three years, adding to existing members Lori Ritter and Amy Horn.

Matt Scarfo has been instrumental in coordinating and advocating for funding to improve our fairgrounds. He has assisted in my personal testimony for HB3173 in the spring 2021 session. He assisted my family working our cows in order to allow me the opportunity to testify and advocate for the Union County Fair. I sat on the fence listening and waiting my turn while he pushed cows and branded calves.

During the fall 2021 Oregon Legislative Session, \$10 million was allocated for Oregon county fairs. Union County was awarded \$271,000. In November 2021, Commissioner Scarfo encouraged Business Oregon representative Brian McDowell and Oregon Rep. Bobby Levy to walk through the Union County Fairgrounds as he continued to advocate for the need and the challenges we have with our sewer

and water concerns.

Our county commissioners knew the allocation of \$271,000 was not enough to overcome the challenges our facility has. Commissioner Scarfo tirelessly pursued additional funding options from the State Committee of Ways and Means Capital Construction Budget 2022. This resulted in an additional \$1 million secured for the Union County Fairgrounds sewer project.

Commissioner Scarfo has helped coordinate meetings with the Department of Environmental Quality, Gov. Brown's office, Sen. Hansell, Rep. Levy, Oregon Department of Transportation, city of La Grande, and urban development offices in the past several months. He assisted with leading the conversations, building support, and highlighting and connecting the diverse group of people that a project like ours requires to be successful.

The Union County Fair Board is grateful to Matt Scarfo, Paul Anderes and Donna Beverage for their tireless support and guidance.

Jamie Haddock Imbler
Union County Fair Board president

Let us be free to think and do as we choose

I just love it when some political writer insinuates that they can read my mind and tell us how to think. The people that want to share our politics with Idaho are a disgruntled few, so that leaves nearly half the county voters as ...?

Why must we be put in a labeled

bucket just because we do not support your particular values or party? At least some of us are not so interested in having the Oregon leadership telling us to spend our taxes on illegal immigrants and people who simply will not take a job even when many are available.

We want justice that is fair to all and equally enforced. Many of us would be willing to pay more in taxes to have more rights and freedom than we presently have. We do not believe in government that extends a declared emergency to indefinitely extend their control over our lives. Many of their rules are proving they did not follow the science and were of questionable value. I do not believe that the mass of people living and polluting the west side should tell me how to live and think.

Guess I am too independent for others to tell me how to live in my locale. Let us be free to think and do as we choose instead of telling us we are not intelligent enough to take care of ourselves. Let us be free Western Americans wanting to chose our own way instead of being the sheep that just follows. If you don't like the way we think, then give us native Oregonians your approval to join a different government without leaving our homes. Let us decide if we will be the loser.

Evidently, our freedoms are worth more to us than you. Are you willing to sell your freedom for a little less taxes and be chained to the Oregon political machine?

John Isley
Enterprise

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- 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.

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