

Opinion / Local

— EDITORIAL —

Hatred under the guise of tolerance

The week we first launched this newspaper eighteen months ago, one of us received an email written in the wee hours of the night. The message was from someone whose business we'd always supported, whom we'd helped personally whenever we could during their times of need.

Well, she'd seen our first issue come out, and though it contained nothing she could put her finger on as particularly bad—she actually liked parts of it—she was markedly upset.

Why? Because how dare we, being the conservatives that we are, have the gall to start a newspaper. How dare we! The message was clear: she's liberal politically and an opinion page written by a right-leaning editorial board rather than a left-leaning one was unacceptable to her.

She went on to use words like divisive and mean-spirited. She felt simply because our views varied from hers, that our newspaper would "punish" and "divide" the community. She wrote something to the effect that conservatives "didn't even have the ability to recognize people with other points of view as human." She then took her efforts a step forward and went on to do everything she could to financially support at least two other newspapers in the area, while boycotting ours, in the hopes we would fail.

Did she care that we were trying to make a living, trying to raise our kids and create local jobs? Nope! We were conservative. How dare we!

The irony is that in her words and actions, she revealed herself as the embodiment of everything she'd accused us of being.

The vitriol was honestly so out of the blue that it took months to completely wrap our brains around it, and finally to see it as part of a bigger

picture. As the months have rolled by, we've encountered others of the exact same mindset here and there.

You've seen that meme: "I'm tolerant. Agree with me or else, you bigoted, racist, fringe, whacko extremist, Bible-thumping, redneck, sexist, homophobic, capitalistic cretin!"

Ludicrous, right? All this would be laughable if it wasn't such a threat to our country.

The "if I don't like it, it shouldn't be allowed to exist" mentality just took a little stronger foothold this week with the removal of the Confederate Flag in many locations. Some have chosen to attribute hatred and intolerance to that flag. (We call it "projecting," but what do we know?) Others who grew up in the deep south recognize the flag for its historical significance, for familial ties and cultural heritage.

But now, because a group of people dislikes something, it's being taken away from those who value it.

This week, TV Land banned "The Dukes of Hazzard" because of the flag painted on top of the General Lee.

The circle of state flags at the Capitol in Boise, Idaho is missing a state flag now. Mississippi is gone. Its flag featured a Confederate Flag in its top left corner. If someone had seen it, it may have hurt their feelings, you know.

In Salem this week, there's considerable talk among Democrats about removing the Mississippi Flag among our circle of state flags there. The demand at present is to force the nonprofit organization that actually owns these flags to replace it with a version of that flag as it existed prior to the Civil War. That version sports a magnolia tree, and was created before much of that state's rich history, both good and bad, unfolded.

This is the way by which freedoms and rights are gradually worn away, and representative republics are transformed into socialist states.

We think there's a strong argument to be made that this push to be inoffensive and tolerant is the opposite of what it appears. It's hatred hidden only slightly from view. Someday soon, much as it was in that email from 18 months ago, it won't be hidden at all.

—The Baker County Press Editorial Board

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

Carbon dioxide is necessary for life

To the Editor:

Carbon Dioxide is necessary for life. Perhaps there is an overabundance of it, regardless of the cause. I'll let C. Chase, G. Dielman and the Pope argue over that.

I want folks to remember that trees, grass and all vegetation thrive on carbon dioxide. But, all of this flora needs to be growing. That big, old, over-ripe pine tree has already used up its allocation of CO2 and has sequestered some carbon in the soil while doing so.

The young upstarts around it are doing their best to suck up their share of nutrients and light. However, being too crowded with the old ripe trees shading out the sunshine for photosynthesis has slowed their progress.

Grass is even more important for absorbing carbon dioxide. It has a much faster turnaround time if harvested properly. As a grass plant ripens and repeats the process over time, while not being harvested, will eventually shade itself to death. The abundance of old growth prevents any new shoot from receiving enough sunlight. The Federal Conservation Reserve Program that rents millions of acres of private farm land for nonuse is a very sad

example.

A windshield inspection of one of these fields looks like lots of vegetation. Stop the car and walk into the field, looking down, to see all is dead. The supposed intent was set aside for erosion control and benefit of wildlife. The birds and game animals only used it a few years until it matured and became moribund. All land requires management for any kind of sustainable production. Renewable natural resources are the only basic wealth.

Stupid excuses, such as a spotted owl or sage grouse to stop food and fiber production only adds to our countries problems of excessive debt, unemployment and too much carbon dioxide. In addition, this government style of management increases risk of fire to all set-aside lands. Fire leaves bare soil. All soil needs cover with viable, living organisms. Use it or lose it.

Our problems will never be solved by top down Washington D.C. bureaucrats, goaded by misguided tree huggers and animal rights activists. We have to get public land management decision making closer to home. Local control is imperative.

Dan Warnock
Baker City

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Haggen

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"What are our Haggen Values, what the company stands for and what a lot of those values will mean around the community and in community giving and in our relationships with local suppliers," McGiv-erin said.

Haggen fosters a legacy of being a family owned company. It is a community-minded company with a focus that has always been on local community, sustainable values in its business operations, homegrown and home-made quality in its stores and genuine service, he claimed.

"We refer to it as our culture compass, to describe it to you guys it's like a moral compass. As we're going about our day to day business we know that we stand for the local community and that will come to light more and more in this store. Even with this aggressive conversion of all these stores sustainable value, genuine service and homemade quality is kind of what guides us, what we are really about. Those values come to life in our stores and are quite different from Albertsons or Safeway. Haggen really does pride itself on having a great selection of fresh products and that can mean fresh produce, fresh baked bread or deli salads, that's where we try to differentiate ourselves from our competition and be truly better. We partner with small vendors, farmers, ranchers and even fisherman not only because it supports the community but because it's one of the ways we think we can get the freshest food possible into our stores," McGiv-erin explained.

Store Manager Mark Ruberti agreed. "Hopefully we'll get some items in our store that represent our community, which is what this is all about. Everything went pretty smooth with the store (transition) now we are just going to work on building business getting items in the store, make a run of it here in Baker City."

Haggen also believes in giving back to the communities. "Over the last year as a little grocer with 18 stores, we gave over 150,000 to nonprofits some

of those national, some regional like the Multiple Sclerosis Society, Meals on Wheels in Oregon, Red Cross and Children's Hospitals. In every community there are a lot of lesser known nonprofits also, that list would be really long if I tried to list them off but we do make it a point to give back to the communities that we serve.

"One of the things that we did on day one here was donate \$1000 to the Salvation Army. We've also made a commitment within the very near future of opening these stores to have community donation days where 2% of profits for that day are donated to a designated nonprofit organization.

"That nonprofit is determined with the Store Manager's help and based on community input.

Those nonprofits have not yet been selected and Mark should be contacted about consideration for selection of support. You can also submit info online. As far as what we'd like, types of nonprofits we support, we tend to lean toward childhood education causes, hunger relief and sustainability. If you're involved with a nonprofit that falls outside of that wheelhouse it doesn't mean you're excluded at all but it does mean that others that fall into those categories ahead of you they might be the first priorities.

"Mark has paperwork you can fill out or you can go online to start paperwork for 501 3c consideration," said McGiv-erin.

He really stressed the point of talking with Mark at the store level as the best way to get started as best point of contact.

Haggen differs than Albertsons or Safeway in that it empowers its Store Managers to make a lot more decisions at the store and community level. They also allow a larger budget to donate,—it's totally up to each store director how to use that money which has gone from "I think at Albertsons it was a \$50 per month budget to a \$500 per month budget with Haggen. So if you need cake, cookies or water for a fundraiser, event or function talk to Mark. He is always your best resource."

Haggen expects to select the nonprofits in which they will support within the next 2-3 months with approximately four for the

year likely.

McGiv-erin said, "We haven't set a firm date because honestly we are trying to catch our breath here but I would guess by the end of July early August we will select nonprofits and community donation days."

McGiv-erin next talked about vendor possibilities within our community.

"A common question I've had as far as being a small vendor at Haggen is 'is there any minimum quantities to doing business with Haggen?' The answer is no. If you're dealing with Mark and you've got raspberries for three weeks of the year and you've got say 20 cases, he can take them and if that's it that's all you've got that is fine. There is no minimum."

But there are still some required steps that must be taken.

As McGiv-erin explains "It always starts with the store director, but the process is fairly simple. However, if you've never done this before it can seem complicated. We have what we call a new item authorization form that needs to be completed and a new vendor form and then we have a form that basically says you're not selling us anything bad or breaking the laws and its legitimate.

"Those are three forms and then you need to provide us with a copy of liability insurance—" which he believed to be one million dollars but it may have changed to five million. "It's on the form" He smiled. "So occasionally we get asked, 'What if I want to get in more of your stores?' It still all starts with one store. If the product sells well in one store then the corporate buyers will take notice and will expand the store basis."

Brianna Peppers, owner of the Short Peppers farm and Brianna's Breads asked, "When vending you have to have all licenses but if you were offering meats or baked goods or something like that how does the health inspector aspect work? Do you have to have a form, do you have to make sure you have everything, like in doing a farmers market we have to have all of our forms, certifications everything?"

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