

MAKING LEMONADE

In 1998, the white supremacist hate group Aryan Nations applied for a parade permit in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. In response, Northwest human rights groups launched a "Making Lemonade out of Lemons" campaign.

Borrowing an idea from a city in Pennsylvania that faced a similar situation, the groups solicited pledges for donations based on how many minutes the Aryans would march. The goal was to raise \$1,000 per minute for human rights groups.

Non-violent resistance to the current upsurge in neo-Nazi and white supremacist hate group activity is of paramount importance. I encourage other community members to share their knowledge of strategies and tactics of non-violent resistance.

Tom Pugh
Eugene

IS IT JUST ME?

I truly believe that our leaders, or Monsanto (difference?), are crop-dusting Lane County with russet mites/broad

mites. At first, I thought it might just be fire planes circling, but then noticed all these "crop dusters" were east of my property.

There are currently no fires east of where I live. And why would they be swooping in and out and circling about? Even on heavy fire years and light fire years, with heavy marijuana policing, I have never seen these planes before.

Just wondering if anyone else suspects the same? These bugs cannot be killed organically. Extremely toxic, nasty chemicals must be used. So if you have a medical grow or sell to dispensaries, everyone suffers.

Mike Tirsell
Springfield

ANTIFA HARRASSMENT?

As ethnically mixed people with a record of being against bigotry, we have to respond to "Setting the Terms After Charlottesville" (*EW*, Aug 17). Some of us in Eugene have been labeled Nazis by local Antifa without valid reason.

Does this mean that we are "not welcome in Lane County" or that we should not be allowed to "live comfortably within our boundaries?" Should a group of mostly white terrorists be allowed to threaten POC?

As I detailed in a letter to *EW* months ago (June 29), they have harassed and threatened my girlfriend and I in person and online. So be careful about labels like "Nazi." To accuse one of being a Nazi is to put them in danger.

Antifa goes after any who challenge their propaganda. We are not the only people they have falsely accused and gone after.

Also, it was insane to have Redneck Revolt in Eugene. They have been seen by thousands assaulting a peaceful reporter in Phoenix. They are allied with Antifa. These are not anti-racist groups. They are wannabe communist revolutionary LARPers. Look into them.

Justin Antitheist
Eugene

BOMBS AND CARROTS

The U.S. is good at producing military weapons and good at producing food, including the types of food North Korea would like to receive. A carrot stick is loaded with nutritional power, exchangeable by a good businessman.

Helen Woodford
Eugene

LOOK IN THE MIRROR, HILLARY

Hillary Clinton is on a national tour promoting her latest book, *What Happened*. I can save your readers the price of admission and the cost of the book.

Figuring they had the 2016 election in the bag, Clinton and her party wrote off straight, white, working class voters in the heartland. Called them a bunch of "deplorables" and "irredeemable." And lost.

And then blamed everybody but herself. That's "What Happened."

Jerry Ritter
Springfield

VIEWPOINT

BY JOHN HENRY, MIKE KIMBALL, MICHAEL PETERSON, MICHAEL CARRIGAN, GUY MAYNARD AND CAROL VAN HOUTEN

Seeking Truth

ABOUT VIETNAM

Beginning Sunday, Sept. 17, PBS will present a 10-episode, 18-hour documentary, *The Vietnam War*, by noted filmmakers Ken Burns and Lynn Novick.

Coming 50 years after a pivotal year of escalation of both the war and the anti-war movement, the filmmakers say they hope the documentary will serve as a catalyst for long overdue reconciliation and healing of the deep divisions that war created among Americans.

"The seeds of disunion we experience today, the polarization, the lack of civil discourse, all had their seeds in Vietnam," Burns told the *New York Times*.

The U.S. war in Vietnam has indeed left deep wounds, most dramatically among those who answered their country's call — or in many cases, obeyed their country's orders — to serve.

But many at home were also deeply affected, including family and friends of soldiers, as well as millions of Americans whose lives were forever changed by their fervent opposition to a war they believed to be unjust, immoral and contrary to our country's best interests.

And, as Burns suggests, our national sense of self was fractured: How do we go forward as a nation responsible for the devastation of a country (three million dead, environmental destruction) from a war that many of us believed to be wrong, and that we ultimately lost?

Healing and reconciliation are noble and desirable ends. But ask any mental health expert, and they will tell you that no real healing can take place until there is acknowledgment of the underlying causes — that reconciliation cannot happen without some common understanding of the truth of the circumstances that

led to the division.

Burns and Novick, in a *New York Times* op-ed, indicate that the film may avoid some of the most difficult truths about the war in Vietnam: "Many questions remain unanswerable. But if, with open minds and open hearts, we can consider this complex event from many perspectives and recognize more than one truth, perhaps we can stop fighting over how the war should be remembered and focus instead on what it can teach us about courage, patriotism, resilience, forgiveness and, ultimately, reconciliation."

"More than one truth" sounds dangerously close to "alternate facts." Certainly, the war was a complex historical phenomenon, and those who experienced it can bring many distinct perspectives to its discussion.

The film can serve a valuable purpose by exploring that complexity and showing us those perspectives. But the ultimate objective of studying history should be to get at historical facts — the truth — so we can learn from them.

Americans have had trouble learning from the Vietnam experience for at least two significant reasons.

One, much of what has been established as historical facts shows a sinister U.S. role in the creation and manipulation of a repressive south Vietnamese state, which challenges the notion of American exceptionalism — that we are always on the side of the "good."

Second is the largely successful proliferation of the cynically false notion that to acknowledge our fault in Vietnam is to challenge the bravery and sacrifice of the American men and women who served there.

That notion gives cover to all wars. All soldiers sacrifice, but war is a matter of policy that should always be questioned — because expecting that sacrifice for an unjust and unwinnable war is unconscionable.

So we encourage people to watch the Burns-Novick film. Watch with friends, with family, with neighbors or at community gatherings. Folks who lived through that era should watch it with younger people who only know it as history.

Watch it critically. Follow up with other sources. Use it as a basis of discussion. As you watch, think of these questions, based on a list developed by Veterans for Peace:

- What was the U.S. motive?
- What was the motive of the Vietnamese enemy?
- Did the U.S. mistakenly stumble into the war or was it part of a conscious strategy?
- Were U.S. intentions honorable?
- Who was most responsible for the suffering of the civilian population?
- What were the motives of the anti-war movement and was it effective?
- Why did the U.S. lose?
- What are the basic lessons of the war?
- Does the film tackle the hard lessons?
- How do the divisions created by the Vietnam War express themselves today?
- Is there a path to healing and reconciliation?

How do we get there?

Let's take this an opportunity to honestly face this difficult history, so we can stop repeating it.

John Henry, Mike Kimball and Michael Peterson are Vietnam veterans and members of Chapter 159 of Veterans for Peace; Michael Carrigan, Guy Maynard and Carol Van Houten are members of Community Alliance of Lane County.