

Opinion

You can be a Nazi, or you can be an American

It was hard to dispassionately watch and read the news last weekend, as groups of neo-Nazis and counter protesters clashed on the streets of Charlottesville, Virginia. One woman was murdered. Two police officers died in a terrible accident.

EDITORIAL
Voice of the Chieftain

That much anger, hate and violence is hard to stomach, and it surely left Americans across the country seething on their couches as Nazi and Confederate sympathizers marched through angrily through our public space.

There were dozens of major issues at play in Charlottesville, and we could write a tome on each and every one.

But we would like to expand on just one small fact that can hopefully find universal agreement: You can either be an American, or you can be a Nazi — you can't be both. You cannot call for the overthrow of America's core principles and still call yourself a patriot.

Photos of protesters waving American, Confederate and Nazi flags are incongruent. Those governments — their principles and their history — are opposites, enemies. They opposed each other, they warred against each other.

Take just the historical facts: The Confederacy waged war against the United States, the bloodiest and deadliest war this country has ever fought. To wave those flags together, and to support and glorify Confederate generals and members of the Confederate government, is anti-American.

And to all those who think the tearing down of such statues is "erasing history," — don't be so obtuse. Germany would not be stupid enough to allow monuments and statues to Nazis to remain standing — they were long ago unceremoniously destroyed. Yet as we can see, knowledge of Nazis and their history has unfortunately not been erased — its seeing a resurgence.

The Nazi flag is a more egregious example, something good-hearted Americans should not tolerate. This too is a flag of a government that declared war on the United States.

A government that killed millions of our brave soldiers — that killed millions and millions of their own people. A government that turned the world to war, too.

We have freedom of speech in this country — even for Nazis. It's one of the perversions that reminds us of our principles. At the same time, there is no freedom to hate.

The Anti-American ideas and speech that was on display in Charlottesville should be challenged everywhere its ugly head. is raised and proffered.



Wallowa County and issues of race

A retired teacher friend told me recently that when he graduated from a local high school, he was ready for the world. The work and study skills and interactions with fellow students, teachers and townspeople — all white — sent him into a world where political, economic and social power were in the hands of whites. But, he continued, "I worry about students coming out of county schools today. I don't think they're prepared for the world that's out there."

The horrible events in Virginia of the last few days sent me back to his words — and to my own upbringing, racially clearer now in the rear-view mirror.

I started out in rural Minnesota, where six Lutheran churches and a few embattled Catholics and Evangelicals counted for diversity. I went to high school in Southern California where more than 20 percent of the student body was Hispanic and a sprinkling of African-Americans, Japanese-Americans and Samoans joined whites in classrooms and on athletic teams. Social interaction was more rare.

I graduated from the University of California - Riverside in 1964, and our small student population — around 2000 — included a handful of African-Americans



MAIN STREET
Rich Wandschneider

and a few Hispanics and Asian-Americans. We learned that Don Spigner, a captain on our football team, did not get into UCLA Medical School because of the very small quotas for blacks, women and Jews. We — his white teammates — didn't raise a fuss.

UCR now leads the California University System in diversity; more than 40 percent of its 20,000 undergraduates are Hispanic, 34 percent Asian, 12 percent white. If those percentages don't reflect the general population, they probably do reflect the population that meets the difficult basic requirements of the school.

That's a lot of change in 50 years, and I'm sure that part of the turmoil in Virginia, and many other racially charged events of the past few years, leading up to and including the recent presidential election, can be attributed to white Americans reading such statistics, compiling our own

anecdotal stories of "reverse discrimination," then trading and amplifying it all on Facebook.

Our Wallowa County students sit on the cusp of big change, and how they — and students from rural and largely white suburban schools across the country — deal with it will chart the roadmap, or the minefield, of the country's future.

One way will be to join one of the 12 groups represented in Charlottesville's "Unite the Right" rally — the rally that attracted one disaffected 20 year-old from another state and spurred him to drive his car into a crowd of opponents, killing one and injuring many. Avowedly "white supremacist," Neo-Nazis and the KKK, including former Grand Dragon David Duke, were among the 12.

Which in a roundabout way brings me to "white privilege." I think it is something I and most white Americans (especially males) haven't realized we have. It didn't occur to me to ask why the Indian boys and girls who lived just miles from us didn't come to our Minnesota school — we didn't know about Indian boarding schools and kidnapped children.

See RACE, Page A9

Kudos to ODOT for road stripes

Catching our breath this week after the one-two punch of Chief Joseph Days and Wallowa County Fair. I believe we are on the downward side of summer events and getting ready to head into fall activities.

Cooler weather will be welcomed by everyone when it finally arrives, after an inordinately hot summer and, of course, the smoke. No doubt all of us could have done without the added particulates in the air.

We had a great time at the fair. It was another opportunity to meet a number of folks we haven't bumped into previously.

The children who participated are to be commended for their hard work, and there aren't enough words to thank the army of volunteers who make it possible each summer.

There were a couple things that would have added a nice touch, but I'm taking the sign seriously that says if you haven't volunteered, you can't complain. Well, actually I did volunteer to take the auction photos Saturday night, so perhaps I've earned a bit of credibility.

Next year, we'll see if we can't bring some of the resources of the newspaper to bear to help make the fair even better than it already is.

I WANTED TO share something help-



WAHL TO WALL
Paul Wahl

ful for all of the businesses in the county, particularly if you've moved in the past 10 years.

We had been fielding a number of somewhat odd phone calls from people wondering if the Chieftain were open.

Ummm ... yes, regular business hours here.

"Well I'm at your front door, and no one is here," a gentleman told me a while back.

"Not possible," I said. "I'm sitting at my desk and the front door is open."

Turns out, his GPS had taken him to the old Chieftain address up the street. This has happened a number of times in past few months, so I asked our crack online team at EOM to look into it. Sure enough, Google Maps did not have our new address; Apple Maps did.

That has been corrected, but it got me to thinking how many other businesses might be in the same boat.

So check it out. Who knows who might

be looking for you?

THANKS AND A hat tip to Oregon Department of Transportation for painting stripes along Highway 82 leading into La Grande. Lack of stripes on roadways is a major pet peeve of mine.

Have you ever noticed how difficult it is for drivers to judge where they should be on any paved stretch when there are no stripes?

Having had the benefit of a bit of professional driver training for a city transit department, I generally keep as far to the right as possible without leaving the roadway -- as taught. It seems almost everyone else uses the middle of the road, which makes for interesting situations.

Not to mention the safety aspect of having a line to follow at night or in bad weather conditions. Having lived for a number of years in the Tule fog of Central California, I have great respect for those innocuous painted lines.

Some years back, environmental regulations prompted most paint for road stripes to be modified to the point where it doesn't last as long. Annual application was plenty. These days, it seems like the stripes should be redone about every three months.

Eye protection vital for eclipse viewing

If you are lucky enough to live in Wallowa County, well then, you're pretty lucky.

Doubly lucky in fact because on Monday, Aug. 21, we are going to be in the direct pathway of the heralded solar eclipse.

But what is a solar eclipse? When the moon gets directly between us and the sun, it can "hide" the sun for a bit and so "eclipses" the sun out of our sight for a couple of minutes.

So, what do you see? Well, since the sun is covered up, it goes dark (you knew that part was coming, right?) except for a sliver of light halo around the edges of the moon, especially if you're in the path of totality.

That being said, you would think it would be fine to look at the sun directly, but you'd be wrong. In order not to singe those rods and cones in the back of your eye that are constantly helping you to see color and motion, you need to be smart. And as much as optometrists and oph-



GUEST COLUMN
Erica Bailey

thalmologists would love your business, it's best not to have to come in for a completely preventable retinal burn. Nobody likes those.

Especially you, when you can't see this weird round spot right in the middle of your vision for some undefined period of time. Even though the moon is covering up the sun, there are still plenty of light rays from that exploding hydrogen ball in the sky rocketing out around the edges of the moon and into our sky.

So, should you just pretend that this eclipse isn't the coolest thing ever and not go? Nope.

Better to show up to the party with your very own set of "solar eclipse shades" that

you can get at Wallowa Valley Eye Clinic for \$2. If that's not in your budget, feel free to rock a grade 14 welder's glass in front those eyeballs.

However, if you're one of those innovative types like me, you might think that a regular pair of sunglasses (or five) stacked on top of each other would do the trick. Unfortunately not. If you do, you'll be at the eye clinic sooner than either of us would like.

We hope you enjoy the eclipse as much as we will with those crazy awesome eyes of yours.

Maybe we'll bump into you somewhere, gazing intently towards the sun and who knows, maybe we'll have matching shades ta-boot.

If you're interested in more in-depth reading material on this topic check out perkins.owu.edu "Solar Viewing Safety."

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WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN

USPS No. 665-100

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Wallowa County's Newspaper Since 1884
Enterprise, Oregon

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PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY BY:
EO Media Group

Periodical Postage Paid at Enterprise and additional mailing offices

Subscription rates (includes online access)	1 Year
Wallowa County	\$40.00
Out-of-County	\$57.00

Subscriptions must be paid prior to delivery

See the Wallowa County Chieftain on the Internet
Wallowa.com
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POSTMASTER — Send address changes to
Wallowa County Chieftain
P.O. Box 338
Enterprise, OR 97828

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Volume 134