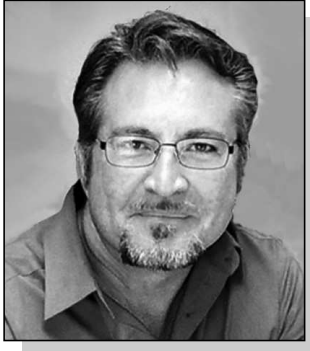


Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion



United in the meaning of those many little flags

I am reminded that a child's pure, unbiased perspective is sometimes our best source of wisdom.

It's been 15 years since we introduced our oldest daughter to the meaning of Memorial Day. She was seven then, but I still remember the short gusts of warm wind on my neck, the earthy smell of the fresh-cut grass, and the hushed snap of small American flags standing like sentries next to dozens of tombstones along the hillside.

"How come some of them have little flags, and some don't?" my daughter asked.

It was near sunset as we strolled through our local cemetery. Though we didn't

have any family members buried there, I thought it would be a good opportunity to explain the meaning of Memorial Day to her.

ing to protect something," I explained. "Like where they live, or the kind of church they go to, or the right to express themselves. These

answered, watching as she stuck the little flag back into the ground. "But not all of them. Some died later, after they were done fighting for us."

"But they still get a flag, right?"

"That's right."

We sat there for a moment, watching as the fabric of stars and stripes waved in the evening breeze. Hugging her knees to her chest, my daughter surveyed the hilly grass, and the long shadows stretching away from the setting sun.

"There sure are a lot of little flags out there," she said finally.

"Yes, there are."

She was silent again, and I

began to wonder if I had laid too much reality on her.

After a moment, she stood and brushed grass from the seat of her pants.

"C'mon, Dad," she said, and reached for my hand.

"You ready to go?"

"Uh-huh," she said. "After we fix those other flags down there. Some of them fell over. We need to make them straight."

This Memorial Day, take time to notice the little flags.

There are many.

And they all deserve our attention...

Write Siuslaw News editor Ned Hickson at nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com or P.O. Box 10, Florence, Ore. 97439.

Though we live in a time where the lines that divide us seem more clearly drawn than ever, this Memorial Day I hope we can unite in solemn appreciation for the men and women throughout our nation's history who sacrificed themselves so that we can live — and even disagree — as Americans.

As adults, we tend to complicate things and ideals. It's days like Memorial Day that

From the Editor's Desk

NED HICKSON

"Do you know what war is?" I asked.

"When people fight," she answered, then clarified herself; "A whole bunch of people."

"That's right, but do you know why they fight?"

She thought a moment, then shook her head.

"Well, they are usually try-

little flags are for people who fought for you and me — so that we could have all those things."

"And they died while they were fighting?" she asked, and crouched in front of a small flag that had fallen over. She looked at me, and I nodded.

"A lot of them did," I

LETTERS

THANKS FOR BIKE HELMETS FROM WLAD

On behalf of the many Siuslaw Elementary students who received a free bike helmet ahead of Bike-to-School day, I'd like to express my appreciation for the helmets we were given this week from the Western Lane Ambulance District (WLAD).

On Wednesday, May 23, we fitted 126 students for new helmets. We asked parents to verify the need and, in the end, distributed more than 60 brand new helmets the next day.

The stylish helmets are greatly appreciated by our students and most pledged to wear them whenever they are using a bike or skateboard.

Events such as the helmet give-away are among the things that make Florence a wonderful community. Danielle Hanson and Kyle Orozco were engaging with kids as they tried on helmets. Our kids got to see real first responders up close and personal.

To see different organizations come together for student safety and wellness is heartening. It reaffirms my position that this is a great place to be kid.

— Mike Harklerode, Principal
Siuslaw Elementary School

BARSAMIAN SHOULD TAKE HIS OWN ADVICE

I have a few thoughts after attending David Barsamian's talk at the library (Friday, May 19.), which was titled "Resistance in the age of Trump."

Not exactly subtle in its direction or tone, but I decided to attend anyway. Needless to say, after 90 minutes it was obvious that not only was there no love in the room, I also found hypocrisy, double-speak and misleading conclusions that came fast and furious.

His presentation was not a service to the community because the majority of his talk simply focused on the demonization, marginalization and dismissal of Trump, his policies and those who voted for him or even support some of his policies.

Rather than offer real solutions outside of what he termed "controlled, channeled rage," Barsamian kept repeating what he called the "progressive liberal movement" mantra, which is essentially that Trump is evil and must be removed from office.

He reverted to childish name-calling ("Misogynist-in-Chief," "Tweeter-in-chief," "The president who must not be named.)

Then, when saying the name "Trump," he apologized to the crowd for saying it. Next came a hypocritical bombshell directing liberals to be tolerant and not name-call or insult — for to do so shows a lack of character.

Apparently, it's okay to suggest our President is the world's greatest evil since Hitler but not permissible to call out a real and true threat like Islamic terrorism (see Manchester) because that would be "Islamophobic."

Barsamian mentioned Standing Rock but ignored the tons of garbage (and its environmental impact) left by the protesters. He also compared President Trump to Kim Jun Il, supports the hateful "humor" of Steven Colbert, believes vetting immigrants is wrong and American foreign policy is the world's greatest threat.

None of this is conducive for the common ground he so vacuously promotes.

Sorry David, but your intolerance was showing.

— Barry Sommer
Westlake

SIGN DESIGNATES POLITICAL AREA?

Recently I noticed what appears to be an official road sign reading "Florence Democratic Area" at the SE intersection of Highway 126 and Highway 101.

It was my understanding that it was illegal to fix political signs on municipal traffic posts. If this is the case, why does this sign remain?

So far as I know, this state does not designate political areas, nor does our county.

— Arthur H. Gray
Florence

CRITERIA FOR SOCIALISM

Since I was the person who introduced guest speaker David Barsamian at the May 19 event at the library, I felt I should add to Mr. Cavarano's critical appraisal in his Letter to the Editor (May 24.)

Station host KXCR has a "noncommercial-educational" license with a mission to bring diverse programming to the community.

Both Dunes City and the Lane County Commissioners provided unanimous resolutions to support its 8-year effort to obtain the license. Its evolving programming seeks to reflect — and respect — that support. It airs, for example, the morning hour national news program, "Democracy Now," a respected award-winning program.

West Lane Translator (WLT), is the KXCR FCC station licensee. WLT is a 58-year-old nonprofit with four television licenses. It brings the Florence area its only on-air television, including Fox, ABC, NBC and CBS. WLT's towers in Glenada also host (at no profit) other noncommercial, commercial and religious radio and television frequencies, including KLCC and KWAX.

All are free to the community.

I don't know if that meets Mr. Cavarano's criteria for "socialism" or not. Rather, I would hope it's an example of what Barsamian refers to as "collective action," or "finding common ground," which he urges to improve communities and counteract environmental threats such as climate change.

A fair review of Barsamian's event audio tape reveals a wide-ranging presentation, not an "appeal to minorities" to "make wedges."

The tape contains no "mopped-the-floor" description of what Sen. Bernie Sanders would have done to Trump.

Instead, it references a projected vote result that would have "wiped out" the Trump victory.

Barsamian's use of the term "wedges" is in the context of expanding media or adding issues to the public discussion or status quo, not dividing people.

As for the American flag standing in the corner, I feel Barsamian showed respect by not wrapping himself in it and, instead, directly speaking to its values — particularly the importance of free speech and assembly.

As for mentioning Karl Marx, during 31 years of producing his weekly radio program Alternative Radio, Barsamian has received numerous awards for his advocacy of independent media. None of them are from the American Communist Party, or Ayn Rand Institute.

To be accurate, he also quoted Orwell and various poets and historians with whom he has co-authored numerous books. His remarks show wide concerns for the complex

status quo and its legacy for our children. He is critical about declining American media, particularly its lack of "context," detail and accuracy, referring to the "press-corpse."

In my old spirit of editing the newspaper of the Second Infantry Division, in Asia, and providing copy to Stars & Stripes, these are my remarks and not those of KXCR or WLT.

— Rand Dawson
Siltcoos lake

(Editor's note: In the interest of providing accurate sourcing regarding what was said at the May 19 event, part 1 of David Barsamian's presentation at the library will air on KXCR FM 90.7 on Monday, May 29, followed by part 2 on Monday, June 5, at 4 p.m. both days.)

The First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Libelous, argumentative and anonymous letters or poetry, or letters from outside our readership area will not be published.

Send letters to:
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