

Opinion

BAKER CITY
Herald
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EDITORIAL

Double standards

Even before he was elected, we tired of Donald Trump's sophomoric verbal jabs at the news media.

Journalists, being human, are no more immune to making mistakes than people in any other profession.

But Trump, rather than complain about errors, indulges in the fantasy that the media is engaged in a grand conspiracy against his administration.

The president's inane claims of "fake news" insult the people whose reporting, no matter the president's distaste for the topics journalists cover, is a model of reality (not to mention civility) compared with some of Trump's Twitter diatribes.

And yet, we recognize that there is a distinct difference between a president's words regarding journalism, and a president's actions.

Which is why we were a bit surprised to read that a literary and human rights organization whose members include journalists has filed a lawsuit against Trump alleging that he has "violated the First Amendment and his oath to uphold the Constitution."

The plaintiff is the PEN American Center.

Its complaint states that "President Trump has First Amendment rights and is free to criticize the press vehemently, but he is not free to use the power and authority of the United States government to punish and stifle it."

PEN's chief executive officer, Suzanne Nossel, said "there is widespread concern that the president is actually extracting reprisals on the media for coverage he considers unfavorable."

The lawsuit cites Trump's threatening antitrust action against Amazon, whose founder, Jeff Bezos, also owns The Washington Post.

Our surprise about the lawsuit stems from one simple issue — President Barack Obama's actions against journalists, and against their potential sources for information potentially embarrassing to his administration, were greater threats to the media's ability to report accurately than Trump's words have been.

Yet PEN America never sued Obama.

Not after his Justice Department subpoenaed phone records for almost 100 reporters and editors from The Associated Press, a move the venerable newsgathering business branded as a "massive and unprecedented intrusion" into journalism.

Not after his administration prosecuted three times as many whistleblowers and leakers than all previous presidents combined.

Not after administration officials contended there was probable cause to believe a Fox News reporter was a "criminal co-conspirator" against the U.S. because he was gathering information about North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

We point this out not because we condone Trump's offensive and unfair statements and tweets.

As we noted above, we find many of his comments reprehensible. Some of them, such as calling for CNN President Jeff Zucker to be fired, might even be legally actionable.

But PEN America's righteous indignation rings hollow in our ears when it follows the silence that reigned during the Obama administration.

From the Baker City Herald editorial board. The board consists of editor Jayson Jacoby and reporter Chris Collins.



Your views

Harvey has earned another term as commissioner

Here are the facts:

- Bill Harvey is the only candidate endorsed by Oregon Right to Life. Mr. Nichols declined to answer "Yes" or "No," to half of the questions, on the ORL Questionnaire. Of particular concern was his silence on whether or not he supported state-funded abortions. Abortion flies in the face of a basic Christian tenant of the sanctity of life; that we are "Wonderfully and Fearfully made by God." That sanctity is also a strong belief of the Nazarene Church which Mr. Nichols attends. Why the silence?

- Bill has done a wonderful job leading, encouraging and supporting his employees. I have talked with a manager of a vital county function who has never been visited by Mr. Nichols. Mr. Harvey visits that department, as he does the others regularly.

- Commissioner Harvey is involved with, has attended council meetings and supports the work of the cities within Baker County.

- Mr. Harvey is invested in, and advocates for the vital timber, ranching and mining industries of Baker County. At the debate between the candidates at the Eastern Oregon Mining Association, I, as do other members, believe some of Mr. Nichols' answers to questions directed to him were clearly disingenuous. To the contrary, Mr. Harvey has been transparent, has always stated his support for these industries, and backed his words up by representing their long-established rights to continue to use and access claims and allotment contracts on public land. Historically, Bruce Nichols has been a non-player.

- Audit? The tardiness of the audit is consequent to an 11th hour resignation by the vendor who has traditionally performed the County audit. Mr. Nichols, a CPA, has been a commissioner for the last two years and suggested using the new auditor. If those who oppose Mr. Harvey's leadership wish to erroneously place the blame on County leadership, Mr. Nichols, as a Commissioner must also share that responsibility.

Under Bill Harvey's leadership we are

seeing the County flourish under long needed proactive and competent leadership. Let's keep it competent. Retain Bill Harvey as County Commissioner, Position No. 3.

Dean Spence
Baker City

Harvey has worked for his family, company, the county

Bill Harvey has a strong history! I have seen him fight for his family. I have seen him put his employees first. I have seen him work tirelessly for his company.

Now I am seeing him fight for our county.

Lorrie Harvey
Haines

The author is Bill Harvey's wife.

McLeod-Skinner supporters say parade walkers locals

The letter, (Wed. Oct 17), referring to Jamie McLeod-Skinner supporters at the Miners Jubilee parade as a "rent-a-mob" is incorrect. Disagreeing about ideology and policy is fine and to be expected. Insults and untruths are not OK.

We support Jamie McLeod Skinner for Congress.

We walked with Jamie in the parade.

We live in Baker City/County.

We are unpaid volunteers

We waved flags and signs.

We did not pick any fights.

We gave out candy and information.

We do not troll on Facebook.

We are committed to honesty and ethics in our government, our town and our relationships with our neighbors.

We are not the only people in Baker County who believe that it is time for better representation of our congressional district in Washington.

Jeanie Zebrak
Parade organizer, Baker City

The letter was co-signed by the following Baker City residents:

Jenny Willis, Marshall McComb, Marilyn Dudek, Diane Wofford, Randy Stadler, Brianna Stadler, Whit Deschner, Mo Quinn, Kellie

Letters to the editor

- We welcome letters on any issue of public interest. Customer complaints about specific businesses will not be printed.
- The Baker City Herald will not knowingly print false or misleading claims. However, we cannot verify the accuracy of all statements in letters to the editor.

- Letters are limited to 350 words; longer letters will be edited for length. Writers are limited to one letter every 15 days.

- The writer must sign the letter and include an address and phone number (for verification only). Letters that do not include this information cannot be published.

- Letters will be edited for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons.

Mail: To the Editor, Baker City Herald, P.O. Box 807, Baker City, OR 97814
Email: news@bakercityherald.com
Fax: 541-523-6426

Trone, Marion Trone, Kathleen Kiefer, Cynthia Roberts, Mike Blank, Suzanne Fouty, Barbara Meyer, Mike Meyer, Mary Sue Rightmire, Nancy Coffelt, Barbara O'Neal, Gretchen Stadler, Ann Mehaffy, Bruce Rafferty, Leigh Heart

The letter was co-signed by the following Union County residents:

Tim Brown, Ann Brown

Harvey has earned my vote with his actions

Bill Harvey has earned my vote. I have worked over the years with Bill on the Baker County Planning Commission and the Agency-Miners Round Table quarterly meetings.

It was a pleasure working with Bill on the planning commission. He was always prepared for the meeting and there to represent fair and factual decision making. I have watched him come to the meeting with a set of observations based on facts (research) only to be changed during the meeting because additional facts had been presented he was not aware of I respect his digging for facts, but being flexible enough to change his mind if someone presents other pertinent facts.

The Agency (Forest Service, BLM), Baker County and Eastern Oregon Mining Association meet quarterly to discuss what is transpiring on public lands regarding mining. It is a forum to bring up potential problems before they get to an unmanageable magnitude. Being a part of the miner segment of the meeting, I have observed Bill going toe-to-toe with the agencies. He is always well-informed before he speaks, he does his research. Additionally, I have observed him asking the agency representatives how can the County help you (agency). Yes, he stands strong for Baker County constituents, but is fair to all. He strives for what is just and fair.

Bill Harvey has earned my vote through my experience working with him.

Terry Drever Gee
Baker City

CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

President Donald Trump: The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500; 202-456-1414; fax 202-456-2461; to send comments, go to www.whitehouse.gov/contact.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley: D.C. office: 313 Hart Senate Office Building, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-3753; fax 202-228-3997. Portland office: One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St. Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; 503-326-3386; fax 503-326-2900. Pendleton office: 310 S.E. Second St. Suite 105, Pendleton 97801; 541-278-1129; merkley.senate.gov.

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden: D.C. office: 221 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-5244; fax 202-228-2717. La Grande office: 105 Fir St., No. 210, La Grande, OR 97850; 541-962-7691; fax, 541-963-0885; wyden.senate.gov.

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (2nd District): D.C. office: 2182 Rayburn Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515, 202-225-6730; fax 202-225-5774. La Grande office: 1211 Washington Ave., La Grande, OR 97850; 541-624-2400, fax, 541-624-2402; walden.house.gov.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown: 254 State Capitol, Salem, OR 97310; 503-378-3111; www.governor.oregon.gov.

Oregon State Treasurer Tobias Read: oregon.treasurer@ost.state.or.us; 350 Winter St. NE, Suite 100, Salem OR 97301-3896; 503-378-4000.

Oregon Attorney General Ellen F. Rosenblum: Justice Building, Salem, OR 97301-4096; 503-378-4400.

Oregon Legislature: Legislative documents and information are available online at www.leg.state.or.us.

State Sen. Cliff Bentz (R-Ontario): Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., S-301, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1730. District office: P.O. Box 1027, Ontario, OR 97914; 541-889-8866.

State Rep. Lynn Findley (R-Vale): Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., H-475, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1460. Email: Rep.LynnFindley@oregonlegislature.gov

Baker City Hall: 1655 First Street, P.O. Box 650, Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-6541; fax 541-524-2049. City Council meets the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers. Mike Downing, Loran Joseph, Randy Schiewe, Rosemary

Abell, Arvid Andersen and Adam Nilsson.

Baker City administration: 541-523-6541. Fred Warner Jr., city manager; Dustin Newman, police chief; Michelle Owen, public works director.

Baker County Commission: Baker County Courthouse 1995 3rd St., Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-8200. Meets the first and third Wednesdays at 9 a.m.: Bill Harvey (chair), Mark Bennett, Bruce Nichols.

Baker County departments: 541-523-8200. Travis Ash, sheriff; Jeff Smith, roadmaster; Matt Shirtcliff, district attorney; Alice Durflinger, county treasurer; Cindy Carpenter, county clerk; Kerry Savage, county assessor.

Baker School District: 2090 4th Street, Baker City, OR 97814; 541-524-2260; fax 541-524-2564. Superintendent: Mark Witty. Board meets the third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m., Baker School District 5J office boardroom; Andrew Bryan, Kevin Cassidy, Chris Hawkins, Katie Lamb and Julie Huntington.

