

Opinion

BAKER CITY
Herald
Serving Baker County since 1870

Write a letter
news@bakercityherald.com

OUR VIEW

Buying local has benefits

With the official start of the holiday shopping season upon us, we would like to urge residents to shop local.

When you spend money at a local store you are doing more than simply purchasing a gift. When someone shops at a locally owned small business, those dollars stay in the community. That's because local merchants often purchase items from other locally owned stores. Spending money at a small business in our downtowns helps the overall business health of the community.

Another element that makes shopping local appealing is that small businesses offer unique gifts. But more than that, small business is a distinctive piece of our small-town character. Small businesses exude a sense of place, of the communities they set up shop in, and of Eastern Oregon. Another key to the benefits of shopping locally is that small businesses generally are the biggest employers at home.

Small merchants also typically invest in the community. That means your dollars don't fly out of the valley and end up at a corporate office far away. No, your dollars kick back over in the community and are reinvested in many ways. That reinvestment is often unnoticed, but it is important for a host of reasons, not the least of which is it helps the community in the long run.

And shopping at a locally owned business can be an intimate, positive experience. A patron often participates in a one-on-one interaction with the person who owns the business. The customer service is specialized and specific, and that counts for something in our fast-paced world.

We are neither immune to nor dismissive of the attractions of big-box stores such as Walmart or Home Depot. The Walmarts of the world provide a large array of choices. The convenience of one-stop shopping offered by big-box stores has its benefits, and most of us this year will journey through the doors of Walmart or travel down the interstates to larger metro centers like Boise or the Tri-Cities to do some Christmas shopping.

We're not advocating abandoning shopping at a big-box store but only suggesting that when you are out looking for those gifts, don't forget about the unique offerings of your local merchants.

For small businesses to survive — and if they prosper, we all prosper — they need patrons.

Saturday is "Small Business Saturday" across the country. We encourage you to shop local this year. You won't regret it.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the Baker City Herald. Columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the Baker City Herald.



Respect for all... well, for most

Recently I took part in ThinkFest, a program sponsored by Philadelphia Magazine. This year's theme was "The Year is 2039. Philadelphia is America's Greatest City. How Did We Get Here?"

I was on a panel with Mayor Michael Nutter, City Councilwoman Helen Gym, and entrepreneur Tayyib Smith. It was a fascinating 45 minutes where ideas were exchanged.

I was grateful to have been invited as the only conservative on the panel, and congratulated our moderator, Phillymag editor Tom McGrath, on his courage to extend the invitation. The comment was only partially tongue-in-cheek, because providing a venue for conservative views in the City of Brotherly Love is a tricky thing.

That became clear when Tom asked us the following question: "Assume it's 2039. Philly is the greatest city in America. Name one significant thing we did between 2019 and 2039 to make that happen."

The other panelists talked about addressing inequality in education and the workforce through grassroots activism and harnessing the power of government and private enterprise. Then I spoke: "We need to stop being tribal. We need to stop voting only for one particular party. We need to stop being hostile to philosophical diversity."

I could hear the giggles in the audience. It was obvious to me that my words were dismissed as the unique idiocies of a clueless conservative. My fellow panelists were wonderful, and fair. But a week later, my most vivid memory

CHRISTINE M. FLOWERS

of that conference is the laughter.

Some might say that makes me a "snowflake." Perhaps they are right. But I think there is something in this that bears deeper examination, something that has nothing to do with personal embarrassment or touchiness, but which signals a sea change in Philadelphia.

The type of progressivism that has seized this city is best defined by the man who currently occupies the DA's Office. Larry Krasner calls himself a reformer, and wants to revolutionize the criminal justice system by creating more equity for the accused. This is a fine idea. But what he has also managed to do is set victims against defendants, creating an environment where anyone who complains about his agenda is the defender of a racist system.

That us vs. them mentality is pervasive in a city that now defines itself as progressive. Take for example Eagles player Malcolm Jenkins, who recently wrote an op-ed which placed the blame for much of the institutional problems at the feet of "racist" cops. Or Meek Mill, a man convicted of drugs and weapons offenses, is used as a symbol of a corrupted and broken parole system.

They're entitled to their opinions, but I've found that in this city, if you don't agree with Jenkins and Mill, you are dismissed as irrelevant at best, toxic at

worst. The push for safe injection sites. If you disagree with that, if you mention that it's illegal or unethical or that it will further destroy the neighborhood, you are attacked as judgmental. I myself, the sister of a man who fatally overdosed, have been told that I don't care if people die simply because I hold a different viewpoint on a move so controversial that it went to federal court.

And let's not forget Mayor Kenney, who years ago threatened to bar Chick-Fil-A from doing business in the city because its owner opposed same-sex marriage, and now makes comments like "If Donald Trump ever has to go back where he came from, he's going to have to go to hell." He clearly knows that the vast majority of his citizens did not vote for the president. And then he goes and wins a second term without even campaigning, more of a coronation than an election. But what about the 15.45% of Philadelphians who voted for Trump? How can they feel supported by a mayor who so callously calls out the president they support?

The hostility toward conservatives in this city is palpable, and growing. And unless we start treating philosophical minorities with the same respect we demand for sexual, racial and ethnic minorities, Philadelphia won't be a city worth living in next week, let alone 2039.

Christine M. Flowers is a lawyer and columnist for the Philadelphia Daily News. Readers may send her email at cflowers1961@gmail.com.

The timeless appeal of 'Peanuts' TV specials

My son Max rested his head on my shoulder and told me he was "really glad" I had asked him to lie there on our couch and watch "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown."

I was happy to be there too.

We were cozy beneath a fleece blanket on a Sunday evening when the breath of the coming winter was heavy on the air.

Max is 8, which means for him the cadre of cartoon characters created by Charles M. Schulz, who died in 2000, are historical artifacts.

But the world of "Peanuts" is also timeless, the greatest testament, I think, to Schulz's genius.

And so Max giggled at Snoopy's antics, and at Charlie Brown's clumsy attempt to cut two eyeholes in his bedsheet ghost costume, with the same carefree glee that I'm sure I displayed when I was his age.

I can't think of a legacy to which I aspire more than Schulz's — to conceive characters that delight each generation in its turn, that allow a father to see his own childhood reflected, briefly and poignantly, in his son's smile.

To belabor the weather analogy, when I see the Peanuts gang on my TV, and I hear the jaunty jazzy melodies of Vince Guaraldi's soundtrack, I feel as comforted and as reassured as when I step inside



JAYSON JACOBY

my house on a frigid night and am instantly enveloped by its warmth and its light.

I recognize this, of course, as nostalgia.

This is not always a reliable emotion — which is to say, we sometimes recall distant events with much greater fondness than we felt while they were happening.

But in the case of the "Peanuts" television specials I have no such reservations. My affinity for these programs is the genuine article, neither embellished nor, more importantly, diminished by the passage of years.

There are more than half a dozen of these but to me the collection is defined by a classic trio, two of which predate my birth — "A Charlie Brown Christmas," which originally aired on Dec. 9, 1965, and "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown," which premiered on Oct. 27, 1966.

The third, "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving," debuted on Nov. 20, 1973, a couple months after my third birthday.

These are the shows we watched every fall as I was growing up, their

sequence as reliable as the shifting colors of the leaves, each as integral to its holiday as the soft, mouth-watering thud of a miniature candy bar tossed into a plastic pumpkin, or the glinting of colored twinkle lights on glass Christmas tree ornaments.

As an adult I haven't watched all three specials every year.

But most autumns, it seems to me, on at least one evening I ended up with a remote control in hand, sifting through the digital menu and seeing "Charlie Brown" and feeling the same little thrill as I do when I come across a friend whose face I see only occasionally but always with relish.

Such was the case on the Sunday before Halloween when I shared a sofa cushion with Max.

As we watched, it struck me how prescient Schulz was to recognize that cartoons, a genre that traditionally appealed largely if not solely to children, needn't have so limited an audience.

When I was Max's age I cherished these shows for their simple humor — a beagle as court jester (and World War I flying ace), a boy who clutches a blue blanket wherever he goes, a bossy older sister, a perpetually dirty kid accompanied always by his personal sandstorm.

But as an adult I recognize the sophistication of the script written by Schulz.

He understood, it seems to me, that adults would appreciate more sophisticated dialogue in the shows their kids insist on watching repeatedly. This approach has been ubiquitous in animated feature films over the past couple decades, crammed with jokes of the "kids won't get it but adults will chuckle" variety.

But Schulz also instinctively realized that writers need not talk down to younger readers, or viewers.

His scripts for the Charlie Brown TV specials remind me, at least in this respect, of the similarly beloved novels of E.B. White — "Stuart Little," "Charlotte's Web" and "The Trumpet of the Swan."

These are often described as "children's novels" as though this renders them less serious works than novels which stand on their own, absent the adjective.

I think this is unfortunate, and not a little misleading.

White, who died in 1985, is far better known for that trio of novels than for his hundreds of essays published in the New Yorker and other magazines.

I've read most of White's essays, and it's a compilation of prose that to my ear is unmatched in quality. I've also read the three aforementioned novels, and I see (and hear) in them the same inimitable quality that marks White's nonfiction work.

Schulz demonstrates the same respect for his audience, no matter its average age.

I could cite examples from each of the three classic programs, but a couple from "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown" illustrate my point.

In an early scene, when Lucy is trying as always to cajole Charlie Brown into kicking a football she's holding, Charlie, certain she's going to yank the ball away at the last second, muses, in a very adult way but also one that younger viewers can intuit, that "I don't mind your dishonesty half as much as I mind your opinion of me. You must think I'm stupid."

Later, as she dons a witch mask, Lucy, who is known for her rather domineering personality, says, with the obvious sincerity of someone who doesn't recognize her own foibles (which is to say, most of us): "A person should always choose a costume which is in direct contrast to her own personality."

I don't know that Max quite grasped the joke; he didn't remark on the scene, anyway.

But I appreciated the humor, and the quality of the writing that permeates the program and ensures its enduring relevance more than half a century on.

Jayson Jacoby is editor of the Baker City Herald.