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Letters to the Editor

Remember those who served

To the Editor:
Twenty-some years ago my fine young friend was just beginning the prime of his life. He volunteered; he was a Marine. His life was lost on a numbered hill. Last Saturday a Memorial was dedicated honoring his and the others from Umatilla County's supreme sacrifice. I would ask your readers to honor their gift by a thought for all who

served, that died and especially for those injured or handicapped veterans. Possibly, we could spend an hour or an afternoon at a Veterans' Hospital (Walla Walla), with a local handicapped veteran or in some small service to those that we owe so much.

(s)Ted. L. Sampson
Rt. 2, Box 621
Irrigon, Oregon 97844

Measure No. 3 changes unenforced law

To the Editor:
A state lottery, which is similar to a raffle, is now legal in Oregon, but church, school, club, organization, lodge, and grange raffles remain illegal.
Ballot Measure 3, if passed, will amend Oregon's Constitution to permit the Legislative Assembly to authorize raffles operated by certain charitable, fraternal, or religious organizations and foundations. The voters of this state have given their support to the concept of a state lottery to support economic development. It seems unfair that people can legally buy tickets for a state lottery but it is against the law to purchase a local church or school raffle ticket.
Article 15, Section 4 of the Oregon Constitution absolutely pro-

hibits raffles for any reason. Presently raffle, or "donation" tickets are still being sold, most for benevolent purposes, and most people do not realize they are in violation of state law. We need to either enforce existing law or change it. This Measure offers reasonable and fair change.

Measure No. 3 is designed to protect the public against possible abuses from organized crime. The Legislature is to regulate which groups are eligible, how often raffles can be held, and the size of prizes.

If you believe in this traditional method of raising funds for needy causes and special purposes, vote "yes" on Measure No. 3.

Sincerely,
(s)Liz Van Leeuwen

English should be U.S. official language

To the Editor:
Making English the official language of the U.S. is an idea whose time has come.
It is something that generations of immigrants have taken for granted—when coming to the United States, one learns English. In fact, those immigrants were proud to have learned English. If an American were to move to France, Germany or Spain he or she would expect to learn French, German or Spanish. The American taking up residence in a foreign country would expect to learn that language, but would not expect to have street signs and public services made available to him in English.

It seems unfair for foreign speaking groups to come to the U.S. and demand a right from their country to not only have their language put on street signs and used in the delivery of government services, but also to have their children taught in their own languages, rather than in English.

The sons and daughters of the previous decades of immigrants have objected to the demands of the current crop of newcomers who have the audacity to insist that their own languages be used as public languages in their new land. Those objections have been met by a surly gathering of 24 Hispanic and Asian groups who recently denounced their hosts for wanting to have English as the official language of the land.

Those who want to have a common language so that communication can be facilitated, national harmony promoted and economic prosperity maximized are denounced by the Hispanic-Asian coalition as anti-immigrant and xenophobic. They claim that these xenophobes object to people who are bilingual.

Well, let's take a look at the charges. I am bilingual, having learned Spanish during the 23 years I have been married to my wife who was born in Panama and whose first language was Spanish. My wife is a naturalized American who passed her citizenship examination using the English which she has mastered quite well. In this respect, my wife is no different from the millions of immigrants who came to America and learned English as a matter of course.

Let's fact it. The drive to make English the official language of the country cannot be characterized fairly as an effort to stamp out other languages and cultures. It is an effort to have a common language, even to have bilingual people, but to have one plane of communication on which all can meet. Countries such as France, Germany and Spain which have an official language certainly have no lack of bilingual people.

Secretary of Education William Bennett has put this matter well: "There ought to be no confusion or embarrassment over our goal. The rise in ethnic consciousness, the resurgence of cultural pride in recent decades is a healthy thing; the tradition we bring with us, that our forefathers brought with them to this land, are too worthwhile to be discarded. But a sense of cultural pride cannot come at the price of proficiency in English, our common language."
The word bilingual has come to mean contradictory things. In Canada, the bilingual laws resulted in a French-only policy in the province of Quebec. The divisiveness that resulted became so oppressive that businesses fled in droves to Ontario. Finally, the economic downturn was so severe that the French-speaking voters of Quebec decided that they were tired of starving in French, and wanted to get back to work in English. They threw the Anglophobe government out.

The kind of rhetoric that we hear about bilingualism from some of the Hispanic groups especially, sounds much to much like the rhetoric that was heard in Canada that resulted in the divisiveness that so damaged that nation.

To top it off, the bilingual education programs advocated by the non-English speaking extremists are quite different from what they sound like. The "transitional" approach to teaching English to non-English speaking kids turns out to be a way of not learning English. The instruction is not unlike the way I was taught Spanish in high school—an hour at most a day, and then I spoke English the rest of the day, not only at home but at school as well. It was not until I happened upon another method of studying Spanish that I was able to master the language.

From all of the teachers who have contacted English First, it is clear that an intensive period of instruction, perhaps as much as a semester, should be provided so that a student can study English full time during that period. Then the student is ready to study the other courses in the curriculum—in English.

The goal of bilingual education should be to make the student bilingual. Bilingual should not become a code word for refusal to speak English.

To continue with the current failed policies characterizing much of bilingual education will produce a growing number of high school graduates who cannot speak English. They will not be employable.

For the sake of our nation's unity and economic prosperity, let's make English First. The voters of California have a great opportunity to take the lead in this effort because this November they get to vote on making English the official language of their state. The eyes of the country will be upon them.

(s)Lawrence D. Pratt
President English First
5881 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, Virginia 22041

Supports Ballot Measure 13

To the Editor:
In my position as County Clerk/Elections Director of Lincoln County, I strongly support Ballot Measure 13, which proposes a constitutional cutoff of voter registration 20 days before an election.

Some reasons and comments for supporting this proposed measure are:

Passage of this measure will close an "avenue of opportunity" for election fraud that exists under current law which allows voters to register up to 5 p.m. on the day before an election. The Legislature, not the County Clerks, established the 20 day residency requirement in this state. "There is no way Election Directors can conclusively prove that a voter registering that late has lived in Oregon for 20 days as the law requires. My point is that the current law prevents me from enforcing that law by not providing me with a means of determining a fraudulent vote until after the election...which is too late."

-Better control of the 20 day deadline for changing party affiliation before Primary Elections - Better control of timely notification to other counties of voter registration transfers thus eliminating the chance of voting in two places - Better control of confusion in the polling places with fewer Voter Certificates issued and more names in the Poll Books - The longer time frame for processing registrations will eliminate the need for extra part-time personnel thus cutting Election Costs...these reasons just stated will support cost cutting and improve compliance with laws, both of which are extremely important and are why I vigorously reject claims by opponents of Measure 13 that county elections officials support the measure primarily to make election administration more convenient."

-Also rejected is the notion that large numbers of voters would be denied the right to vote because of the cutoff requirement. "Our recent change from registration on election

day to a one-day cutoff shows that Oregonians will respond to a registration deadline. At the Primary election, very few voters attempted to register on election day, even though they had been allowed to for over a decade. I am of the opinion that our citizens are much smarter and more aware than the opponents of this measure give them credit for."

"Oregonians in Action" the sponsors of Ballot Measure 13 are to be commended for their supportive efforts in upholding integrity within the Oregon elections process by ending voter registration 20 days before elections.

(s)Gloria McEwen
Lincoln County Clerk/Elections Director

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