

Opinion & Politics

Letters

Change the dominant cultural narrative

Editor's note: Braver Angels, a national grassroots organization whose goal is to Build a House United, released a statement after the Charlie Kirk assassination, and wished to publish it as a Letter to the Editor.

Dear Editor:

September 10th was a devastating day for our nation. There are no words for the loss of Charlie Kirk. Our hearts are with his family and loved ones.

It's on each of us to stop this dangerous cycle of mutual destruction. No matter where we stand on the political spectrum, here's what we must do in the wake of this tragedy.

The immediate priority is to not escalate an already precarious situation. Do not throw fuel on the fire through attacks and counterattacks over responsibility for this act of violence. We've gotten ourselves into a deep hole. The first thing we must do is stop digging.

Second, we must tone down the apocalyptic rhetoric that our democracy will not survive the leadership or ideology of any one side. When the survival of the American experiment is at stake, violence can seem justified and even heroic. We must believe in ourselves that we can hold onto our democratic republic even amidst profound disagreement.

Third, we must use this moment to soul-search what we've allowed to happen in our political culture, from the national to the local

level, and in our families and friendships. Polarization is a "We the People" problem, not just a "those politicians" or "those talking heads" problem. We have a role to play.

For years, we've unleashed bitter contempt on our fellow Americans who think, speak, and vote differently, creating a toxic cycle to which both sides contribute. Change begins with each of us examining how we see and think about those who hold views we believe are wrong. We must challenge the dominant cultural narrative that pits us in a war of good versus evil, tribe versus tribe. Then, we must demand the same of our leaders.

Together, we can define for this country what courageous citizenship means – modeling a constructive civic response that rebuilds trust and puts us on a path toward solving problems together. Now is the time. Our country depends on it.

You are invited to join the Braver Angels South Central Iowa (BASCI) Alliance for a continuing conversation this coming Saturday, Sept. 20, 10:30 A.M. to noon, either in-person in the Winterset Public Library meeting room, or remotely via Zoom. To request a Zoom link, please email Anne Murr. Thank you, and we hope to see many of you on Saturday.

—Anne Murr, BASCI Alliance Blue Co-Chair, Clarke County (amurr@braverangels.org)

Richard Tucker, BASCI Alliance Red Co-Chair, Madison County (rtucker@braverangels.org)

Legislation introduced to give students clear estimate of college costs

A bipartisan bill has been reintroduced by Sens. Charles Grassley and Joni Ernst, as well as other legislators, to provide more transparency to students and families before taking out a federal loan. The Student Transparency for Understanding Decisions in Education Net Terms (STUDENT) Act increases transparency by giving prospective students and families a clear estimate of the total amount of interest they would owe based on the outstanding principal of all the students' loans.

"As college students return to school, many are overwhelmed watching interest pile up on loans they never understood in the first place. Our STUDENT Act, along with other legislation I've introduced, shines a light on the true costs that students and families face. By increasing transparency, our legislation helps students make more informed decisions and empowers them to

succeed," Grassley said.

Additional cosponsors include Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Tim Kaine (D-Va.) and Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.).

"The only time students should be given a cheat sheet is to reveal the true cost of college tuition. My bipartisan bill will pull back the curtain and give our students and their families the tools they need to make the best decisions for their financial future," Ernst said.

Current law does not require the disclosure of the total interest amount that a student loan applicant would pay based on the applicable repayment plan. As a result, many students are not aware of the actual amount they will end up paying over the life of a loan. The STUDENT Act makes the disclosure of the total interest amount required during or before an applicant takes out a loan.

Relatively Minor

Vicki Minor, Editor
editor@wintersetmadisonian.com

Laughter does not have to come from a major source. It could indeed be ... relatively minor.

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Crunch Time: Chasing the Core Dream

I've been doing my best to get back into shape and have been going to the local gym regularly to work out. Stepping onto the treadmill to walk a few miles, running on air via the elliptical machine, and lifting weights have helped me feel stronger.

But now, I've set my sights on something more defined: those elusive six-pack abs. So I started researching ways to strengthen my core – you know, that part of the body where your belly tends to stick out. I'm hoping to find a routine that really works.

I discovered that the fastest way to build core strength was by focusing on exercises such as planks, leg raises, and bar leg raises. At first, I was skeptical – how could holding a plank, essentially pretending to be a long, flat piece of wood, actually help? But I gave it a try and held the position so well that two people mistook me for part of the flooring and stepped over me to reach the free weights. I skipped the traditional leg raises and went straight to the bar version, which felt easier – until I had one too many drinks and fell off the stool. Guess it wasn't that kind of bar.

Further investigation revealed that I could enhance my core workout by incorporating other exercises, such as hollow body rocks, bird dogs, dead bugs, and mountain climbers. That's when I began to understand why not everyone ends up with a tight core.

First of all, gym owners would never allow actual rocks inside, too risky for the flooring, so hollow body rocks were out. Then there's the bird dog. Why would I bring a dog to the gym? That's definitely against the rules, and if I did, it would probably spend the whole time barking at the mountain climbers I brought along for moral support, so much for a peaceful workout.

Still, I can see how grabbing all those dead bugs could help tone my core – I'd be bending over constantly, which has to be worth something!

Send your letter to the editor to
editor@wintersetmadisonian.com

Letters must be signed by the author. Please see our editorial page guidelines below.

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Representative Zach Nunn (R) DC office: 202-225-5476
U.S. Senator Charles Grassley (R) DM office: 515 288-1145
U.S. Senator Joni Ernst (R) DM office: 515 284-4574

Catch the Winterset City Government Update with Mayor Tom Leners on the second week of each month!



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