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COMMENTARY

5 CHATTANOOGANS WHO SHOULD RUN FOR OFFICE

Chattanooga suffers no shortage of impressive young professional talent. For a city this size, we are blessed with an inordinate number of sharp, civically engaged folks who work hard to help this town to realize its full potential.

And in recent years we've seen many fresh faces with fresh ideas take, what I feel is, the gutsiest step in civic life: running for office. What's more, many have actually won races to serve their community in elected positions.

I'd like to see more follow suit.

In thinking this over the other day, I thought I'd throw together a list of locals whose names I'd love to see on a ballot one day. I doubt I'd agree with each of them on every policy matter, but they each command qualities — namely a selfless spirit, intelligence, passionate idealism, relevant experience and objectivity — that would make them ideal candidates for local office.



David Martin

So here's my first five.

I've got more suggestions, and maybe I'll do another list one day. But for now:

» Patrick Bobo — Bobo currently works as an attorney for one of Chattanooga's numerous logistics companies. In addition to that, he's played an integral role in a few nonpartisan civic initiatives, including Your Vote Matters (an offshoot of the Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Chattanooga program), which aims at boosting early voting numbers. He's also a board member at Family Promise of Greater Chattanooga.

» Patricia Russell — All of the recent Hamilton County Department of Education turbulence makes it easy to forget the fact that there are some incredible all-stars working in our public school system. Russell is definitely one of those standouts. She's a classroom teacher turned school counselor, and co-founder of the Student Leadership Academy. You'd be hard-pressed to find a better, more experienced voice to represent the best interests of our students.

» Joda Thongnopnua — Joda and I are ideological opposites on, well, probably everything. That said, his love of problem-solving and civic engagement would be welcome attributes at the local level. Even as the youngest person on this list, he's got a solid resume, which includes serving as co-founder of the UNFoundation and director of communications at Lamp Post Group before launching the Metro Ideas Project.

» Peterson Hostetler — He's a financial adviser by trade, but much of his nonprofessional time has been dedicated to community endeavors. Hostetler is currently a board member at the Boys & Girls Club of Chattanooga, and his past nonprofit service includes stints with the Southside Council, the Leadership Chattanooga Alumni Association and the Bethlehem Center. This guy can function well on Wall Street, Main Street and in your local community center. That's easier said than done.

» Elizabeth Crenshaw Hammitt — The word "impressive" doesn't do Hammitt justice. She's EPB's director of environmental stewardship and community, is on the Tennessee Aquarium's board of directors and has been included in just about every list highlighting the area's most accomplished young professionals. To serve in local government, one must be able to work on projects with numerous stakeholders, and Hammitt already has a long track record of successfully doing that.

Admittedly, this list is comprised of people I regularly encounter in my own bubble. So it is by no means meant to be the definitive "who should run" list. No doubt, you know a few names you'd like to see on local ballots, too. And I'd like to hear about them.

But don't just email me their names and attributes. Tell your Top 5 (or 10, or whatever) that you think they'd be great public servants. Sometimes, all a good person needs is a nudge to run.

Be the nudge.

Contact David Allen Martin at david-allenmartin423@gmail.com and follow him on Twitter @DMart423.



EDITORIAL

THE IRONY OF MOVING A PEACEMAKER

The nascent effort toward removing a bust of Confederate Lt. Gen. Alexander P. Stewart from the grounds of the Hamilton County Courthouse for racial motives is an irony, indeed, because of the Tennessean's role in the peacemaking creation of the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park.

The Chattanooga chapter of the NAACP has begun an endeavor to engineer that removal, building off similar undertakings that have occurred in other Southern cities because of what have been called painful memories for blacks of the United States Civil War more than 150 years ago.

Stewart, who was not a notable battlefield figure but did lead a Confederate division against the Union at the Battle of Chickamauga on Sept. 19-20, 1863, later returned to Chattanooga after legislation was passed creating the national military park in Chickamauga. By that time, he had been an insurance company employee in St. Louis, mathematics professor at Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tenn., and chancellor at the University of Mississippi.

The former soldier, his Chattanooga biographer Sam Davis Elliott told the Times Free Press in 2011, "supervised in a lot of ways the startup of the battlefield [park]."

For those who don't bother to study history before attempting to remove it, the creation of the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park was set in motion with an 1889 barbecue on the Chickamauga battlefield to which veterans of the North and South were invited.

"Chattanooga welcomes the Blue and Gray to a barbecue to be given on Veterans Day, on Chickamauga Battlefield, where they will smoke the pipe of peace and bid each thought of conflict cease," the invitation read.

A year earlier, Union veterans Henry Boynton and Ferdinand Van Derveer had conceived the concept of a national military park while riding through the battlefield. This concept, they hoped, would involve the federal government, where previous battlefield preservation efforts had been private — as in Gettysburg, Pa. — and did not allow for Southern participation.

At the 1889 barbecue, 12,000 veterans from both sides — including Stewart — heard the park plans and enthusiastically supported them. Side by side, at the end of the meal the next day, they actually smoked commemorative peace pipes. One attendee, according to a 2014 Times Free Press history article by local Civil War expert Dr. Anthony Hodges, said, "Men embraced. Old veterans cried like infants as they clasped the hands" of former comrades and enemies.

Congress officially established the military park the next year, the oldest and largest in the country.

In accordance with the congressional act, according to Elliott, two of the commissioners of the park were to be appointed from civilian life, both veterans of the local battles. Although the measure didn't specify it, one was a Union veteran and the other a Confederate veteran, who was Stewart.

Stewart, as resident commissioner, "spent a great deal of time in the park, supervising ... road construction, the erection of towers and bridges, and the general engineering work of the park ..."

Though past 70, he, according to Elliott, "learned to ride a bicycle, and by that means or on horseback traveled all about the park." His biographer said he continued to have spirited conversations about the war with friends on both sides and, to a New York writer, noted in his conclusion on what transpired "that Providence had a great deal to do with the affairs of men, and that human efforts, even those of men who were considered great, had very little to do with great achievements."

Stewart, who never owned slaves, didn't believe in slavery, opposed Tennessee secession and garnered the nickname "Old Straight," probably for his moral uprightness, wistfully concluded at the death of a friend, "It will not be long until the Confederate soldier will be a dream of the past, but his name will ... live in history, in story, in song and in tradition while the world stands."

Nevertheless, the Chattanooga chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy renamed its chapter for Stewart in 1904. The former park commissioner died in 1908, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy unveiled the now tarnished bronze bust on a marble base of him in 1919. The bust stands beside the walkway to the front doors of the courthouse, which are locked. So few people even pass the bust, whose subject was probably known to less than 1 percent of Hamilton County residents until the NAACP sought to remove it.

However, the bust stands not as a relic of the Jim Crow era or as glorification of the Confederacy, as the NAACP maintains. If it did, it would likely depict Gen. Braxton Bragg, Confederate victor at Chickamauga, Gen. Robert E. Lee, the best known Confederate hero of the war, or Lt. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, the Tennessee native who was an early member of the Ku Klux Klan.

Stewart, on the other hand, was memorialized, at least in part, for his devoted role to the unification effort that resulted in the nation's first national military park. His was a uniting effort rather than the divisive one that attempts to remove him.

COMMENTARY

ILLI-NOISE: ANOTHER BLUE STATE CAN'T PAY ITS BILLS

It was a nice summer day in Illinois. Kids were enjoying their summer break, diving for murder weapons in the Chicago River, when news broke



Ron Hart

that the state of Illinois had nearly been downgraded to junk bond status.

Unchecked growth in government and the inability to tax fleeing citizens and corporations were the cause. "I am shocked," said — no one.

Illinois' woes follow the bankruptcy of Detroit, another victim of progressive rule. Even Stevie Wonder in his native Motown saw it coming. Chicago, like Detroit, has just two seasons: winter and killing.

As we do an autopsy on Illinois, once the symbol of American industrial might, we learn several undeniable facts. The state's financial woes are the direct result of decades of insidious liberal rule, heavy-handed union thuggery, cronyism, fleecing politicians and a dependency culture.

You know things are bad when a state dominated

by Democrat machine rule hands the reins to a Republican governor. The Brokeback Mountain of debt he inherited makes his task impossible.

I know a lot about Illinois politics. I had an uncle, Jack Hart, who lived in Chicago and voted a straight Republican ticket until his death. Since then, he has voted for only Democrats.

Uncle Jack went to the church of Obama's famous preacher, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright. My uncle could hardly walk from a Vietnam War injury. He said Wright put his healing hands on his head and said, "Now you will walk." The preacher was right; when my uncle went outside, he found that his car had been stolen.

An endless succession of corrupt governors like "Blago," many of whom are making license plates in the state pen, propagated the untenable notion of equal outcomes through a flawed notion of economic and social "justice."

It is so bad in Chicago that Trump sent ATF agents to help with all the shootings. All the while, Obama acolyte Mayor Rahm Emanuel spent his time talking about how he was going to defy Trump's travel ban and offered ref-

ugees sanctuary in the city. The war-ravaged Muslim refugees from Mosul, who have seen the worst of humanity, are thinking it over. Chicago is more interested in keeping Chick-fil-A out than criminal illegal aliens.

Chicago does not worry about ISIS; if they attack Chicago, ISIS savages know they will be outgunned. You think it is dangerous in Aleppo? Try being a driver of a Nike delivery truck in Chicago.

Liberal policies always leave behind disillusioned, uneducated citizens reared in generational dependency. Entitlement dependency robs people of their ambition, pride and the ability to see beyond what politicians tell them they are "owed." The liberal solution is always to throw more of someone else's money at the problem, money that filters through corrupt, graft-grubbing hands.

The highlight for Chicago this year was holding the NFL draft, where rich old white team owners bid for the services of the biggest, strongest and fastest young men. They really should hold this annual event at Colonial Williamsburg.

No country, state or city can expect to survive when

its people take more than they give. The blue states that are seeing mass migration southward, Illinois, New Jersey and Connecticut, lost more than 200,000 people in 2016 alone, while zero income tax Florida gained 200,000 people in the same year.

Until people reject the lies that liberals codify into law and reject the ideology of "progressivism," they will continue to face financial and moral bankruptcy. This again pits idealistic, socialistic progressivism against two of its lifelong foes: math and reality. Illinois is yet another warning to us all. Detroit, Baltimore, Puerto Rico, Illinois, etc. are not some sort of beautiful, progressive, ideological meccas; they are a continuing education seminar.

Contact Ron Hart, a syndicated op-ed humorist, author and TV/radio commentator, at Ron@RonaldHart.com or Twitter @RonaldHart.

BIBLE WISDOM

Proverbs 3:5-6: Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

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COMMENTARY

GOODELL AND NFL'S STATE-SANCTIONED MONOPOLY NEED TO GO

With all the cowardly decisions, especially the recent national anthem enforcement and the concussions (CTE) deceptions, the real question is: Why does Commissioner Roger Goodell make \$44 million a year for running the NFL, a monopoly sanctioned by Congress?

Maybe the NFL is in cahoots with Washington to distract the citizenry from lawmakers' own doings, much like the "bread and circuses" of ancient Rome. Football diverts attention and placates the masses.

Trump, to his credit, clearly loves football; why else would he wear that helmet hair? But getting rid of the taxpayer-subsidized, tax-exempt status, antitrust exemptions, etc., of the NFL would be a good move for Trump right now.

With all its revenues, why can't the NFL stand on its own? Anheuser-Busch alone paid \$1.4 billion for NFL rights. If you want to sell beer to 18-34-year-old males, the NFL's the place. If you want to sell power tools, also advertise on the NFL, although maybe also the WNBA.

The American justice system, like the NFL, has tons of laws and rules, often laws layered upon laws by the ruling classes so they can prosecute whom they want, when they want, for whatever they want. Thus, it is within the power of the NFL and its beleaguered commissioner to pursue one thing and not another. Just ask "Deflate-gate" victim Tom Brady.

Goodell has had a long string of odd decisions. He toyed with penalties for uttering the N-word or sexist slurs. Yet he weighed free speech issues and reached a compromise: Players can listen to rap music but are not allowed to sing along.

Goodell has dictatorially tinkered with some rules; he once decreed that players can no longer celebrate touchdowns by dunking the football over the goalpost crossbars. That didn't go over well. If Americans wanted to watch a sport with no dunking, we'd watch Ivy League college basketball.

Goodell threatened North Carolina and threatened to pull the Super Bowl from Arizona over legislation he viewed as anti-gay. He didn't follow through with his threat, but the publicity dashed any hopes Arizona or North Carolina had of hosting the Tony Awards.

The league is in constant litigation settlements. The NFL Oakland Raiders cheerleaders sued and settled with the team for \$1,250,000 — or, as their lawyers told the ladies, a quarter-million dollars.

To reach out to women, Goodell even added a female referee to the NFL. The gender clash proved problematic. When the female ref threw a flag and the player would ask what he did wrong, she would just cross her arms and snip, "Oh, oh, I think you know what you did wrong."

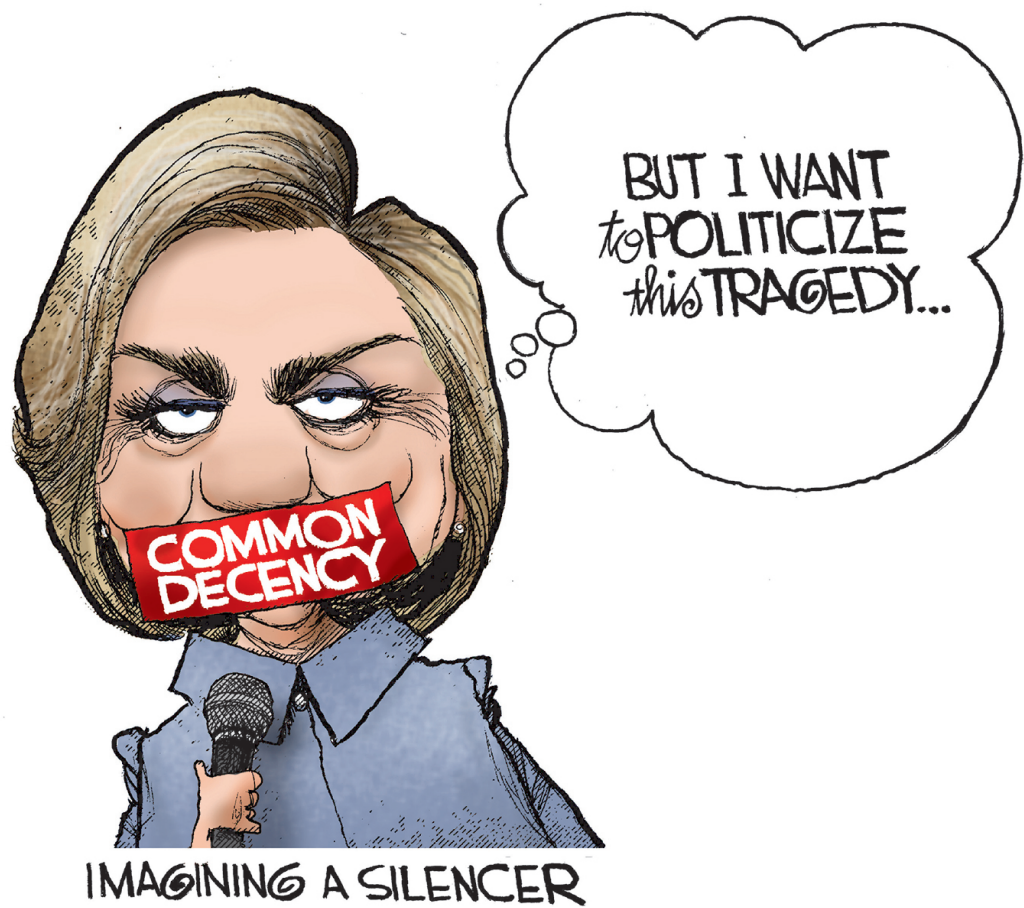
And then she would administer the penalty: usually 10 minutes of tense silence. Per Snopes: Here's what the game Operations Manual says regarding the national anthem, according to an NFL spokesperson:

During the national anthem, players on the field and bench area should stand at attention, face the flag, hold helmets in their left hand and refrain from talking. The home team should ensure that the American flag is in good condition. It should be pointed out to players and coaches that we continue to be judged by the public in this area of respect for the flag and our country. Failure to be on the field by the start of the national anthem may result in discipline, such as fines, suspensions, and/or the forfeiture of draft choice(s) for violations of the above, including first offenses.

So Goodell does not enforce the NFL rule that teams must stand for the national anthem, yet he prosecutes Tom Brady for "Deflate-gate." Who then, may I ask, really has deflated balls?

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EDITORIAL

GOODBYE, COLUMBUS

Poor Christopher Columbus. Even 511 years after his death, the Italian explorer who was only looking for a quicker route to the Far East can't get a break.

In an increasing number of cities around the country, suggestions are being put forth to do away with Columbus Day, the second Monday in October on your calendar, that honors the "discovery" of the New World by the man for whom the governmental holiday is named.

For most of us, Columbus Day is just another day to work or go to school. Since 1937, though, it's been a federal holiday.

If we give Chris a thought at all on his day, we might remember the little ditty we learned in school: "In fourteen hundred ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue ..."

Those of us of a certain age may even recall putting the flag out, a ritual that occurred every nonreligious holiday before flying the flag too often labeled one "overzealous" or "a patriotic freak."

Americans, who might not be who we are or even here today without Columbus, want to keep the holiday, even if we don't get to celebrate it by staying home from work.

By slightly less than a 2-to-1 margin in a Marist College survey, we believe it's a good idea to have a holiday named after the Italian, and in a 2-to-1 margin we have a favorable view of the guy.

So what did the guy do to get on the bad list of the minority of respondents? He "discovered" the New World, a feat that must have surprised the indigenous people already here.

That, of course, led to European colonization of what became known as the Americas, the importation of slavery and the slaughter of many who were here first. And, of course, to the existence of those of us who are here now.

Columbus, sailing under the Spanish crown, hoped to find a quicker route to the East Indies (South and Southeast Asia) by sailing westward. The goal was for Spain to enter the spice trade with Asia. A funny thing happened on the way to Japan, though. Columbus found the Bahamas, and the New World was thus "discovered."

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio is one of those who wouldn't be unhappy to get rid of the guy. Even though the city has a long tradition of a Columbus Day parade, the far left-leaning mayor has created a commission to determine whether monuments to historical figures on public grounds — like ol' Chris — are "oppressive and inconsistent with the values of New York City" and might be removed.

The Los Angeles City Council beat the mayor's commission to the punch. In August, it erased the explorer's name and renamed the governmental holiday to honor "indigenous, aboriginal and native people."

Denver and Seattle have made similar moves.

Earlier this week, Washington, D.C., sought to get on the bandwagon. D.C. Council member Anita Bonds suggested booting Columbus in favor of "Indigenous People's Day."

Columbus Day, she said, "fails to acknowledge the brutality to which the indigenous people were subjected by European explorers."

In truth, though, which people in history, ours or anyone else's, have been flawless? Which of our actions as a country, or those of any country, are not without some controversy, some measure of pain for somebody?

Deeply regarded United States presidents were slave owners. How do we determine whether a slave holder is worse than a soldier who fought for a cause that supported the practice?

Many presidents authorized soldiers to fight wars. Others sanctioned land deals that robbed Native Americans of their lands or sent troops to kill them. One had Japanese Americans sent to concentration camps. Some stole elections. A few covered up crimes.

Because war is abhorrent, should we tear down monuments to those who fought in them? The Vietnam Wall? The World War II monument? The haunting, creeping soldiers that compose the Korean War memorial?

One recent president made decisions that helped some people but hurt many others and tremendously raised the country's debt. Another makes it habit to say hateful things about some people. One of those was serving as president less than a year ago. The other one is currently in office. Should those people be banned, shunned, erased from our consciousness?

Slavery, 45 flawed presidents, wars, crimes, the Trail of Tears, civil rights — they're all part of our history. As are the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, inventions, securing freedom for Europeans and helping bring about an end to the Cold War.

We take the bad with the good. We look for better ways, create scenarios where more people can be successful, pick ourselves up when we fail, dust ourselves off and try again. That's who Americans are.

We like the way fledgling soldier John Winger (Bill Murray) put it in the 1981 comedy "Stripes": "We're all very different people," he said. "We're not Watusi. We're not Spartans. We're Americans, with a capital A, huh? You know what that means? Do ya? That means that our forefathers were kicked out of every decent country in the world. We are the wretched refuse. We're the underdog. We're mutts! ... But there's no animal that's more faithful, that's more loyal, more lovable than the mutt."

And it all started with a guy who made a wrong turn when he was looking for spices.

COMMENTARY

THE LEFT SWOOPS IN ON LAS VEGAS MASSACRE

The dead weren't even finished dying in Las Vegas before the left swooped down to feed on gun control politics.



Jophn Kass

So rather than allow even one day to reflect and mourn, rather than allow us to consider the heroism of the survivors and first responders in that Las Vegas nightmare, politics saw an opportunity and took it immediately.

As of this writing — days after 64-year-old Stephen Paddock's killing spree — authorities could not offer a motive. This is especially odd, because in such cases motives are usually released within hours; the shooter was a madman, or he had political associations and resentments forming the lattice-work of motive.

But not with this one. When the preliminary count of the dead was still in the 20s, as loved ones desperately tried to find the missing, the politicians made their moves.

Hillary Clinton, Sen. Elizabeth Warren, pundits by the deplorable basketful and others seized the moment to press for advantage.

The universal and hateful hot take came from Hayley Geft-

man-Gold, CBS vice president and legal counsel, on Facebook.

At least she was honest in her tribalism, using "Repugs" for Republicans and blaming them for not supporting blanket gun-control legislation.

What's not legitimate was her lack of sympathy for the dead.

"I'm actually not even sympathetic bc (because) country music fans often are Republican gun toters," Geftman-Gold wrote. Later, she was fired.

And in the morning following the massacre, even as victims lay dying in hospitals, Clinton was busy virtue-signaling on Twitter.

"The crowd fled at the sound of gunshots," tweeted Hillary Clinton, still seeking relevancy. "Imagine the deaths if the shooter had a silencer, which the NRA wants to make it easier to get."

She must have been thinking of a Jason Bourne movie, of silencers whispering death, a sound just a bit louder than the munching of popcorn.

But Hollywood isn't reality. A suppressor doesn't make a gun silent like the weapon of a Hollywood assassin. The Washington Post reported a suppressor would reduce the sound of an AR-15 round to that of "a gunshot or jackhammer." There's nothing silent about a jackhammer.

Should we have more debate? Certainly. Let's have it. There are

more guns and more gun crimes in America than any other place in the world.

But let's not forget that most killings aren't committed by some lone sniper without apparent motive. The killings happen on the streets of big cities like Chicago, a city of strict gun control, where street gangs continue their slaughter and City Hall is powerless to stop them.

And America is numb to what happens in Chicago.

There are guns in the suburbs and in rural areas, and yet the suburbs aren't killing fields. So if we're going to have another gun debate, can't we at least discuss culture, too? And can't we wonder about what pathology drives so many mass shootings in the past few years?

Blaming the NRA is good politics for the left. It helps with fundraising, stokes outrage and helps herd voters into tribal camps. But is it possible that it's incomplete, like blaming airplanes for the 9/11 terrorist attacks?

There may be something in our culture that is wrong and sick and festering. And recent mass shootings may be a symptom of larger cultural illness.

We know that we've become increasingly nihilistic, and isolated from one another on our electronic devices. We know we're divided into politically warring tribes, as the political

center crumbles, as the Washington establishment holds desperately to power.

We know that attendance continues to drop at traditional centers of worship. And even so, the political/cultural elites who frame our gun and other debates often mock the remaining faithful as "religious fanatics."

As America abandons religion for entertainment, we consume unprecedented amounts of pharmaceuticals, from opioids to mood-altering drugs, to mask our emotional and mental pain.

Aren't you curious as to how this impacts culture?

Even so, when the shooting began in the Mandalay Bay massacre, as the country music crowd stampeded in fear, as people died, Americans selflessly helped each other, comforted each other, risking and giving their own lives to save each other.

If only we'd been allowed a day or two to mourn, to reflect on the goodness even in the midst of the horror, before the politics swooped in.

The Chicago Tribune

BIBLE WISDOM

Proverbs 29:11 ESV: A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.

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COMMENTARY

BLACKS VS. POLICE

Let's throw out a few numbers so we can put in perspective the NFL players taking a knee during the playing of the national anthem. Many say they are protesting against police treatment of blacks and racial discrimination. We might ask just how much sense their protest makes.

According to The Washington Post, 737 people have been shot and killed by police this year in the United States. Of that number, there were 329 whites, 165 blacks, 112 Hispanics, 24 members of other races and 107 people whose race was unknown. In Illinois, home to one of our most dangerous cities — Chicago — 18 people have been shot and killed by police this year. In the city itself, police have shot and killed 10 people and shot and wounded 10 others. Somebody should ask the kneeling black NFL players why they are protesting this kind of killing in the Windy City and ignoring other sources of black death.

Here are the Chicago numbers for the ignored deaths: So far in 2017, there have been 533 murders and 2,880 shootings. On average, a person is shot every two hours and 17 minutes and murdered every 12 1/2 hours. In 2016, when Colin Kaepernick started taking a knee, Chicago witnessed 806 murders and 4,379 shootings. It turns out that most of the murder victims are black. Adding to the tragedy is the fact that Chicago has a 12.7 percent murder clearance rate. That means that when a black person is murdered, his perpetrator is found and charged with his murder less than 13 percent of the time.

Similar statistics about police killing blacks versus blacks killing blacks apply to many of our predominantly black urban centers, such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Orleans, St. Louis and Oakland. Many Americans, including me, see the black NFL player protest of police brutality as useless showboating. NFL players are not by themselves. How much condemnation do black politicians, civil rights leaders and liberal whites give to the wanton black homicides in our cities? When have you heard them condemning the very low clearance rate, whereby most black murderers get away with murder? Do you believe they would be just as silent if it were the Ku Klux Klan committing the murders?

What's to blame for this mayhem? If you ask intellectuals, a leftist or an academic in a sociology or psychology department, they will tell you that it is caused by poverty, discrimination and a lack of opportunities. But the black murder rate and other crime statistics in the 1940s and '50s were not nearly so high as they are now. I wonder whether your intellectual, leftist or academic would explain that we had less black poverty, less racial discrimination and far greater opportunities for blacks during earlier periods than we do today. He'd have to be an unrepentant idiot to make such an utterance.

So what can be done? Black people need to find new heroes. Right now, at least in terms of the support given, their heroes are criminals such as Baltimore's Freddie Gray, Ferguson's Michael Brown and Florida's Trayvon Martin. Black support tends to go toward the criminals in the community rather than to the overwhelming number of people in the community who are law-abiding. That needs to end. What also needs to end is the lack of respect for and cooperation with police officers. Some police are crooked, but black people are likelier to be victims of violent confrontations with police officers than whites simply because blacks commit more violent crimes than whites per capita.

For a race of people, these crime statistics are by no means flattering, but if something good is to be done about it, we cannot fall prey to the blame games that black politicians, black NFL players, civil rights leaders and white liberals want to play. If their vision is accepted, we can expect little improvement of the status quo.



EDITORIAL

WOULD BUST BE WELCOME AT BATTLEFIELD?

The 6-2 vote last week by the Hamilton County Commission not to move the Hamilton County Courthouse lawn bust of Confederate Lt. Gen. A.P. Stewart may quiet the trumped-up controversy for the moment, but the issue is unlikely to go away.

Though the resolution did not suggest where the bust should go, “the Confederate cemetery” (Chattanooga has two), “the battlefield” (presumably Chickamauga Battlefield, where Stewart served and was a park commissioner) and a “museum” (the Hunter Museum of American Art? the Children’s Discovery Museum? the Towing and Recovery Museum?) all were mentioned.

We wonder what would have happened if Commissioner Greg Beck, instead of reacting with his resolution on the bust to protesters in Southern cities insisting anything Confederate-related should be erased, had acted instead to contact the U.S. Department of the Interior to ask if the battlefield could receive, if offered, and appropriately erect such a bust in a manner that would be befitting of Stewart’s status as a peacemaker and park commissioner.

A positive resolution that detailed a new resting place for the bust, with perhaps further explanation of why the bust was created in the first place (no, not out of racism, Jim Crow laws or any of the other lies told in recent weeks) might not have passed the commission, but it might have received further support.

We believe, in the meantime, the commission was correct in its decision to oppose such a vague, reactive resolution.

Should Stewart ever be offered to the park and accepted, he would be among about 1,400 commemorative features, which include monuments, markers, tablets and plaques, across the units of the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park.

If such a placement were to occur, it would be the first such commemorative feature put there since 1977.

Many of the features across the park units are simple markers. Other monuments are carved in granite or marble. The bulk of the markers and monuments are located where a specific military unit did its most memorable fighting. As a visitor reads the inscriptions on many of them, the visitor is facing the direction in which the soldiers were facing during the fighting. In other words the monuments are facing away from the fighting.

Monuments marking the positions of regular army units were paid for by a federal government appropriation, according to a National Park Service history publication. Monuments

dedicated to specific military units were placed by surviving members of the units and the individual state governments, according to the online National Park Planner, which is not associated with the National Park Service. A few are dedicated to individual soldiers and were placed by the soldier’s family.

Many of the monuments feature soldiers — carrying flags, standing with a pointed gun, urging on their fellow soldiers, standing with a torch, lying prone with a pointed gun, charging on their horse, standing with gun at the ready, crouching with fellow soldiers or attending to their wounded comrades.

Others feature riderless horses, acorns, draped cannon, and cannon balls.

But don’t look for Union Maj. Gen. William Rosecrans (Union), Gen. Braxton Bragg (Confederate), the two leaders of the Battle of Chickamauga, or Gen. Ulysses S. Grant (he didn’t arrive until the Battles of Chattanooga), Gen. Robert E. Lee (he wasn’t there) or Lt. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest (though he was at Chickamauga). They’re not there.

That, says Jim Ogden, chief historian at the park, is for multiple reasons.

“Even as this battle unfolded, in a mostly wooded or forested environment,” he said, “it was recognized as a soldier’s battle. The leadership at the top did not have a great deal of influence.”

So would Lt. Gen. Stewart be welcome at Chickamauga Battlefield?

Ogden wouldn’t say, but he said the park, in its origins, did not “allow monuments to generals.”

Stewart’s bust certainly would be an outlier to the other monuments, which depict the general soldier. But his history as a park commissioner, as a significant factor in the completion of the nation’s first ever national military park, might allow him a prominent space overseeing the park headquarters in Fort Oglethorpe.

His late-in-life role as a peacemaker, after all, is in keeping with the symbolism depicted in one of the military park’s most prominent monuments, the New York Peace Monument in Point Park.

That monument, erected by veterans from New York in 1907, features at the top of its 85 feet two bronze soldiers, one Union and one Confederate, shaking hands underneath the United States flag. The monument, in further symbolism, was constructed of Tennessee marble and Massachusetts granite mixed together to signify the rebirth of the country.

That construction was 117 years ago. If we put the past aside then, why can’t we now?

COMMENTARY

WHY ‘THE SWAMP’ SURVIVES

WASHINGTON — President Trump isn’t draining the swamp. He recently unveiled his long-awaited “tax reform” package, and although many crucial details were missing (for example, the income brackets), he was full of accolades. “This is a revolutionary change,” he said. Well, not yet.

The federal income-tax system — almost everyone seems to agree — is a mess. It features relatively high nominal rates (up to 39.6 percent on individual income and 35 percent on corporate income) whose impact is offset by a baffling array of tax breaks, loopholes, preferences or “tax expenditures,” depending on which buzzword is in fashion.

A truly revolutionary tax overhaul would eliminate most existing tax breaks and use the resulting surge in revenues to lower rates sharply. But Trump may only partially rely on this process. He may also borrow to cut taxes. The crux of the debate is whether the tax cuts will pay for themselves, through higher economic growth, or whether they will simply add to the debt. Economist Diana Furcht-

gott-Roth of the Manhattan Institute, a Trump supporter, argues that reducing the top corporate tax rate to 20 percent will cause more internationally based companies to locate in the United States and fewer American firms to flee abroad to lower-taxed countries.

Reduce tax burdens, and companies will respond. Economic growth will increase; the tax cut will pay for itself.

Wishful thinking, say many economists. Deficits will grow, neutralizing some or all of the gain from lower tax rates. The logic is simple: Larger federal deficits will drive up interest rates, crowding out private-business investment.

Just how much more debt the Trump plan might involve is unknown, because so many details (including the distribution of the tax cuts across income class) remain undecided. But an estimate by the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget puts the figure at \$2.2 trillion over a decade. That’s on top of projected added debt of about \$10 trillion in the same 10 years from current policies.

This returns us to “the swamp,” Trump’s colorful metaphor for all the Washington lobbying for federal money, tax breaks and favorable regulation. He suggests that the pro-

cess is corrupt, and often it is. But mainly it is democracy in action: groups arguing that they deserve special help. Regardless of whether it’s corrupt or not, Trump has inveighed against the swamp more than he has actually tried to drain it.

To do that, he’d have to challenge many more tax breaks. There is no shortage of targets. The 2018 federal budget lists 167 tax breaks; the costliest 15 alone lose roughly \$1 trillion in tax revenue a year. Public benefits are often dubious. Consider two big tax breaks: the mortgage interest deduction for homeowners and the tax-free treatment of employer-paid health insurance. Arguably, both have had ill effects: The mortgage deduction has caused Americans to overinvest in housing, and the insurance break feeds medical inflation.

Still, it’s hard to oppose tax breaks that have such large constituencies. Similarly, tax breaks allow politicians of both parties to announce their support for various economic and ideological causes. Thus, we have tax breaks for college costs, wind and solar power, and corporate research and development. Also, some tax breaks surely do good. Would people save as much for retirement without tax-favored 401(k) and IRA accounts?

As a nation, we’d probably

be better off with a simpler income-tax system with much lower rates and a much broader base. People and companies would decide what to do with their money rather than have government push and pull them through various legal bribes, rewards and punishments. That would relieve pressure on government to do more and more — often raising unrealistic expectations.

In Trump’s vocabulary, the Swamp would begin to contract. There might be fewer tax lawyers, lobbyists, accountants, economists and publicists. This would be good but is also unlikely.

Trump’s tax plan is being squeezed from two sides. If he doesn’t eliminate enough tax breaks, the debt will grow more rapidly. But if he — or his congressional allies — target too many tax breaks, he risks losing essential support. This suggests that, as the proposal winds its way through Congress, all the pressures will be to scale it back. The swamp will survive.

Washington Post Writers Group

BIBLE WISDOM

Isaiah 48:22 ESV: “There is no peace,” says the Lord, “for the wicked.”

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YOUR COMMUNITY YOUR VOICE

Attacks on president won't stop until he's gone

The incessant drumbeat against President Donald Trump by the liberal media, self-serving politicians, prima donna millionaire professional athletes, Hollywood, unhappy people whose candidate lost the election, and others with their own negative agendas will not stop their attacks until the president is drummed out of office and they get their pound of flesh.

Dale E. Yoder

City can create its own symbols for reconciliation

I'm glad our city is taking the events of Charlottesville seriously and our own history in marginalizing those made in God's image. As a fifth-generation son of the South, I pray about my part in that.

Symbols make a difference. I'd like to offer a few suggestions:

- » A good, old-fashioned monument to emancipation (look up "Bussa statue").
- » A monument to Walden Hospital, the first black-owned hospital in Chattanooga. Black folks didn't have to be treated in hospital basements anymore. The great Juliette Derricotte died there.
- » A monument to local black mill workers. Blacks were not allowed to work in mills in surrounding areas, but Chattanooga was different.
- » Recognition of our refugee community: epic, heroic lives of otherwise common people living and working in our town.
- I'd love to contribute to any of those.

Sam Gowin

Don't destroy all monuments, move them

I am a 71-year-old white Southerner. My ancestors fought for the South during the Civil War, and I grew up thinking of Robert E. Lee as a Southern gentleman and war hero. My father used the N-word to put down anyone or anything. I understand why many Southerners have sympathy for the Confederacy, but as I matured, I was able think outside the box I grew up in.

I believe that Confederacy sympathizers should not continue to stick it to African-Americans, white Americans, nor the USA, by waving Confederate flags and displaying their Confederate heroes in public places where they must be observed every day.

While I propose that such commemorations be removed I do not want them destroyed, but saved for history in proper places such as museums and military parks, or an idea I saw in Budapest, Hungary, a city that had been occupied by the Soviet Union may be plausible. After Hungary broke from the USSR, it removed Soviet monuments and replaced them in a country setting without any fanfare, just a place to be seen by those interested.

John Winesett
Lakesite, Tenn.

Demand change, protect democracy

More than 50 percent of our country does not endorse this immoral agenda. We have now been cheated out of two intelligent, qualified people (Al Gore and Hillary Clinton) who won the popular vote for the position of president of the U.S.

It's time for those of us who value decency and justice to demand change. We must challenge those who support the Republican agenda that favors big business, corporate malfeasance and the 1 percent at the expense of the rest of us (95 percent).

How long will our fledgling democratic republic be able to withstand these assaults on our basic constitutional rights? How long will you and I be able to stand in an environment focused on keeping everyone (but the 1 percent) down?

Judith Petersen-Benn



EDITORIAL

BERKE'S EMPTY PLOY

"You never want a serious crisis to go to waste."

— CHICAGO MAYOR (AND FORMER WHITE HOUSE CHIEF OF STAFF) RAHM EMANUEL, 2009

Chattanooga Mayor Andy Berke apparently thought his fellow city chief executive had the right idea Friday when he issued a news release that said he was asking his city attorney to file paperwork to ensure the city was no longer associated with the Confederate Cemetery on Third Street.

The gesture followed a week of politicians across the South expressing new-found opinions that any or all statuary in their states or cities that in any way memorialized the Confederate side of the Civil War more than 150 years ago be moved, destroyed or covered.

Since Chattanooga has no public Confederate statuary to besmirch — save a bust on the Hamilton County Courthouse grounds that was erected in memory of a former soldier who helped in the peacemaking effort to preserve Chickamauga Battlefield — Berke must have felt duty-bound to join his fellow politicians and make a stand against the violence that broke out in Charlottesville, Va., on Aug. 12, when protesters clashed over the potential removal of a statue there of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee.

In this case, it was an unnecessary stand and a particularly empty gesture. And just for good measure, his statement was released on a Friday, the day all smart politicians make statements or release unpleasant news in the hopes it will become buried in the weekend milieu.

Since the Charlottesville violence, no cry had been raised about the Chattanooga Confederate Cemetery. No noise had been made that the graves were offensive. No one had suggested the dead be unearthed and moved out of the city.

The number of University of Tennessee at Chattanooga students who park along the cemetery on East Fifth Street who even know who is buried there can probably be counted on two hands.

Berke's release said the city is not even on the deed for the land. But the mayor's statement said he requested City Attorney Wade Hinton confirm the city is no longer listed as a trustee for the property.

The city, according to Civil War expert Anthony Hodges in a 2013 Times Free Press article, "took over the cemetery in the mid-1940s" (in 1942, in a Chancery Court order, as one of multiple trustees) with the passing of the last area veterans of the war. It's unclear for how long the city cared for the cemetery or what it did to help maintain the final resting place of, at the cemetery's completion, 749 known persons and 156 unknown.

In 1990, according to Hodges, the cemetery — where at least two Union soldiers, one black soldier and one female nurse are among those interred — was cleaned with the assistance of descendants of Confederate soldiers, and a refurbished memorial gate was rededicated in 1995.

Today, according to Hinton, the city allows the Sons

of Confederate Veterans to make repairs and tend to the cemetery.

Why the fuss, then? If a veterans group maintains the cemetery, who cares whether the city owns the property, is on the deed for it, or is a trustee?

If this were a burning issue, why didn't Berke make taking the city's name off any cemetery paperwork one of his campaign promises when he first ran for mayor in 2013? Or when he ran for re-election earlier this spring?

We all get it, though. It wasn't an issue until other Southern politicians seeking to rid themselves of the stain of guilt over the slavery that was one of the causes of the Civil War made similar gestures last week.

"Confederates fought against America to preserve slavery," the mayor's statement said. "That is the truth, and we should no longer subsidize any myths to the contrary."

The statement also said the city condemned "white supremacy in every way, shape and form" as if Chattanooga had been a recently divided hotbed between a majority who wanted to foment a race war — perhaps starting with a march from the Confederate Cemetery and a ceremonial cross-burning — and those few, valiant souls who wanted peace.

We, in fact, were a divided region before the Civil War, not a bastion of Southern sympathy like many other cities in the South. The late Chattanooga Dr. David McCallie, who edited a 2011 book on his grandfather's local remembrances of that era, said his family's split, with sympathizers on both sides, was typical.

"These divided family sympathies were not unusual in East Tennessee," he wrote. "The town of Chattanooga voted to join the Confederacy, but rural Hamilton County voted to stay in the Union."

When the war was over, and survivors found their Confederate relatives buried in a "low unsightly spot" on the banks of the Tennessee River, they did what any decent Chattanooga would do then or now — find a better solution. That's how the Confederate Cemetery, adjacent to Citizens Cemetery and Mizpah Cemetery, came to be.

When the bones of a Civil War soldier were buried in the Confederate Cemetery in 2001, having been unearthed during the excavation of a home on Missionary Ridge, no determination could be made whether the soldier served on the side of the Union or the Confederacy. Nevertheless, he was given a funeral with full military honors.

"This was somebody's son," said Frank Harned of the local chapter of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. "At one time, somebody prayed for this man's return home. He never made it, though. Now we're trying to answer some of those prayers from 135 years ago."

That's what Chattanooga does.

To go through a legal process to make sure the city's name is no longer listed as a trustee for the cemetery to score political points seems to us the most grandiloquent gestures of any we've heard since Charlottesville.

COMMENTARY

THE PRICE OF CONFORMITY

The collapse of the Soviet Union has been attributed to a range of factors, including a failure to resolve what Kremlinologists called the "red versus expert" dilemma.

By "red versus expert" was meant the tension between ideological reliability (in this case fealty to Marxism-Leninism) on the one hand and the kind of expertise necessary for economic development on the other. In short, do you promote people on the basis of their conformity to the official ideology or on the basis of their talent, given that the two are unlikely to co-exist in many cases?

As communist states attempted to move from industrial to post-industrial status, the need for technocratic expertise became more pressing, creating greater conflict between the goals of ideological stability and scientific/technological innovation. Either the regime relaxed its ideological orthodoxy, and thus risked subversion, or maintained it at the cost of increasingly dismal economic performance.

All of this flows to mind because of what occurred at Google involving James Damore, the software engineer who chal-

lenged the reigning ideology of "diversity" at Google with a memo that made three generally unobjectionable points — that promoting people on the basis of merit ("expertise") might ensure the company's success to a greater extent than promotion on the basis of race or gender; that diversity of ideas might be more important than other, more superficial kinds; and that not all discrepancies between men and women are necessarily caused by sexism (gender differences can also influence career decisions).

None of this is or should be at all controversial; but it was too much for Google, which concisely proved Damore's points about its intolerance and ideological echo chamber by firing him.

About all of which, a number of additional observations.

First, that great irony is found in the claim that Silicon Valley has become an ideological bubble with an official ideology. It was, after all, Silicon Valley which inspired and became the symbol for post-industrialism.

Second, that corporate America might soon, like communist regimes did, begin to pay the

price for too often elevating ideology over merit. Conformity and competence rarely go together, and the creative people who propel technological innovation to the benefit of the rest of us require the free flow of information and the ability to question things without fear of reprisals.

Third, that the concept of diversity based purely on race and gender embraced by Google is incompatible with the diversity of ideas because supporters of racial/gender diversity won't allow any ideas that contain any criticism of it. As with Marxism-Leninism, Google's official ideology can be maintained only by punishing dissent.

Finally, that the most appalling thing about coerced ideological conformity (whether called the "party line" in communist states or "political correctness" on our college campuses and at Google) is the manner in which it forces ordinary people to pretend to believe in lies; to, in essence, become complicit over time in deceit.

Few people believed in Marxism-Leninism by the end of the Soviet experiment. But everyone had to at least pretend to believe, as Damore's more craven critics apparently believe he should have done. They went along to get along.

Communist states were built on lies that everyone knew were lies.

One suspects that, so too, are the ideological echo chambers at our universities and Google.

Andrew Sullivan nicely captured this suffocating conformity by noting that, "A man [Damore] has been demonized and fired solely for expressing his views in civil language backed up by facts. He used no slurs. He discriminated against no one in the workplace. He was great at his job. Worse, anyone who might share these views now knows they have to keep silent at Google or be terminated. This atmosphere in the American workplace — now backed by some of the most powerful companies on Earth — is thereby increasingly totalitarian."

So who, other than creepy little apparatchiks, would want to work at such a place?

Bradley R. Gitz lives and teaches in Batesville, Ark.

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

BIBLE WISDOM

Psalm 42:8 NKJV: The Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me — A prayer to the God of my life.