

READERS WRITE

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Party.

This letter is from an 83-year-old former military wife (20 years) and a 30-year retired business owner, also a first-time registered Democrat voter, who really can't believe what is happening to my country. Maybe it's a bad dream and I'll wake up soon. Please respond. We aren't giving up. We are resolved.

Libby Crawford
New Point, Va.

An in-person town hall is needed

Editor, Gazette-Journal:

The most important obligation of members of Congress is to represent all of their constituents, and those constituents have a duty to direct their concerns and questions to those elected to be their voice. My representative, Rob Wittman, has decided against an open, public meeting during the upcoming recess. Instead, he has chosen to communicate via newsletters, e-mails, and a tele-town meeting, none of which allows the people he serves to verify that they are truly being heard. He makes time for meetings with health care providers and shipyard officials, and while I recognize the importance of these meetings, the concerns of the people of his district are his first priority.

Many constituents requesting an in-person town hall are receiving a variety of responses, all of which translate to, "No, I will not make time for you." It is not acceptable to disregard our requests or to ask us to wait while votes are cast and legislation is passed.

If you are listening, Rep. Wittman, please be aware many of your constituents are worried about impacts of the "repeal and replace" frenzy. They are worried about proposed bills to eliminate the EPA and the Education Department. They fear new immigration policies. They are concerned about the disregard of years of scientific data. They are frustrated by the lack of input they have and are asking you to listen; you are refusing. How can you speak for us, when you will not listen to what we have to say?

Beth Bond
Mathews, Va.

We must put aside our differences

Editor, Gazette-Journal:

I grew up in Gloucester, graduated from GHS, subscribed to Gazette-Journal for the last six years. These last few years I've noticed a letter to the editor just about every week from Dawn Dale. She has preached from her soap box quite often. I don't believe any politician other than a Republican could ever earn her respect or kind words.

It's safe to say she has an agenda she wants to publicize and that's fine, it's freedom of speech. She no doubt is a religious, right wing conservative. That is her right to support the political party/candidates who agree with her philosophy. I'm an independent progressive who usually votes Democratic, however I didn't vote for Trump or Clinton in November.

I expect to receive a scathing rebuttal from Ms. Dale. I will not respond or debate her. I am only pointing out my view and response to the letters and responses she has published in this paper.

Our government should not

promote one religion over another. The Constitution has over 4,000 words. Not once is God, Jesus, Christianity or the Bible mentioned. Separation of church and state is decreed in the Constitution. Religion ruled mankind for thousands of years. I don't want our laws based on the Bible, which was written and re-written by man. I find the Bible to be part fantasy, science fiction and fairy tale. The teachings have merit, but I cannot understand why people believe the Bible without question and refuse to accept scientific fact.

You can say "Merry Christmas" and pray when and where you please. When you expect government organizations to allow this, you violate the separation of church and state. Freedom of religion also means freedom from religion. There are hundreds of different forms of religion in this world and when you only allow one sect to have this freedom you do an injustice to all the others. Just because Christians were the first immigrants to come ashore doesn't mean Christianity should be the only acceptable religion. Many left their native land and came here because their religion was not accepted. The Native Americans should have their say, we practically eliminated their race and entire way of life.

Protests should be peaceful and not harm people or property. We wouldn't be the United States of America if we hadn't fought. Both the Women's March and the protests at the presidential inauguration were allowing individuals to express their freedom of speech. It's unfortunate that anarchists caused destruction of property prior to the inauguration.

We must not allow hate, based on religious preference, sexual preference, race or fear of the unknown, to take away the freedoms fought for since this country first began.

Income inequality is growing at an alarming rate. We are divided and distracted by religion, media and politics. If we expect to continue to have a country based on opportunity and equality for all we must put aside our differences, fight injustice and correct the wrongs which have led to our current situation.

Kevin Damian
Mechanicsville, Va.

Washington's wise words

Editor, Gazette-Journal:

On Feb. 19, Congressman Wittman sent an e-mail to his constituents in honor of Presidents Day. The Congressman mentioned George Washington and quoted James Monroe as he wrote: "... we must never lose sight that in our representative democracy We, the governed, are the key to good government. If our government of, by, and for the People is to work effectively, we must each embrace the role we are to play in securing it by making our voices heard."

My reply to the Congressman below is an effort to make my voice heard.

To the Honorable Rob Wittman:

When your recent e-mail to constituents mentioned our first president, I couldn't help but wonder what George Washington might have said or written that would be applicable today. I give you a few of Washington's wise words in the hope you and your colleagues will take his advice:

"If the freedom of speech is taken away then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep

to the slaughter."

"Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence ... the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake," Farewell Address, Sept. 19, 1796.

"Guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism."

"Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of conscience."

"Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the Spirit of Party generally ... A fire not to be quenched, it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest, instead of warming, it should consume," Farewell Address, Sept. 19, 1796.

I ask that you and your Congressional colleagues do your jobs and put our country over party! Speak out against blatant lies and "alternative facts." Hold the Administration accountable—matters of national security should not be handled on Twitter, or on unsecured phones and in unsecured dining venues in the president's club. Call for an investigation of the Administration's ties to Russia. Insist that the President make his tax returns public and his business dealings transparent. Above all, defend all of the Constitution and its amendments (not just the Second Amendment), and step up and encourage your fellow members of Congress to audibly and actively defend the First Amendment's guarantee of a free press against our President's inexcusable, and dangerous, labeling of it as the "enemy of the American people."

Joyce Richter
Gloucester, Va.

Keep on praying, Melania

Editor, Gazette-Journal:

Good work, Melania! As for those who foolishly complain that she opened Saturday's rally in Florida with the Lord's Prayer, she is using her right to freedom of speech and the left can go suck a lemon. I am thankful that we have friends in the White House who actually respect God and understand His importance to America and many of our people.

Nobody is forcing anyone to pray, and nobody has the right to tell Melania or anyone else they can't pray. Check the wording in the Constitution and stop whining.

Thank you, Melania, and keep on praying, because our nation needs it.

Dawn Dale
Hayes, Va.

Kudos to the library

Editor, Gazette-Journal:

This letter is written to commend and thank the Mathews Memorial Library Director Bette Dillehay and her staff for the presentation of the documentary, "Eyes On The Prize." I look forward to seeing the next two segments and encourage our community to support our library by attending.

Mary E. Sampson
Foster, Va.

An amazing movie

Editor, Gazette-Journal:

I would like to thank York River Crossing Cinema and manager Mr. Smith for accommodating our entire school to see the movie, "Hidden Figures." Mr. Smith was kind enough to come in during off hours so that our students and staff could view this amazing movie!

A staff member commented, "This wasn't a movie, it was an experience." The students have reflected on the obstacles, tenacity, losses and victories that have brought them the opportunities that they now enjoy. So a hearty thanks to Mr. Smith and to those who have persevered so that our children have the chance at a more promising future!

Laurel Byrd
Principal, Thomas Hunter Middle School
Mathews, Va.

READERS' SPECIAL

Edna E. Lockwood preparing for a brand new bottom

BY BOB RUEGSEGGER

For 78 years the Edna E. Lockwood, a nine-log bugeye, worked dredging oysters on the Chesapeake Bay. She was the last of her type, a two-masted sailboat, to engage in oyster dredging.

After a short stint as a pleasure craft, the Edna E. Lockwood was donated to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, Maryland, by Jack Kimberly in 1973 with the understanding that the bugeye would be preserved.

John B. Harrison was commissioned to build the log bugeye and the original boat was launched on Oct. 5, 1889 on Tilghman Island, Maryland. The bugeye was built for Daniel W. Haddaway of Tilghman Island. She joined hundreds of other oyster dredgers in the Chesapeake, dredged for oysters through the winter, and hauled freight -lumber, produce, and grain -after the dredging season.

The origin of the term "bug-eye" is uncertain. One theory is that the moniker comes from the visual impression made by the pair of hawse holes in the bow. They resemble large eyes. Another theory maintains that the name "bugeye" is derived from "buckie," the word for oyster used by Scotsmen who settled in the Chesapeake Bay area.

The Edna E. Lockwood is the "centerpiece" of the CBMM's "historic floating fleet." She is the last log-bottomed bugeye under sail.

"Edna's been on the forefront of this museum since the beginning. She's really been the flagship," said Joe Connor, the lead shipwright on the project. "This day has been coming for a long time. It took a lot of work, a lot of fundraising to get here. It's pretty exciting to be in the midst of it right now," he said. "There are not a lot of guys who get to say that they got to build a log-built bugeye, at least guys who are still living."

The museum's effort to preserve her for future generations began in 1975. The upper vessel was separated from her nine-log bottom and rebuilt from the waterline up.

During the current restoration work, the bugeye's log bottom will be completely replaced. The search for logs to replace the vessel's nine-log hull began in April 2014. The trees were harvested from a stand of loblolly pines in Machipongo in Northampton County, Virginia.

In February 2015, CBMM hauled out the 1889 bugeye to permit the National Park Service to laser scan and photograph the vessel's log hull. The data was compiled by NPS's Heritage Documentation Programs to provide details of the various segments of the hull and how they were assembled as a whole.

"We paid for the Park Service to come in and do laser scans inside and out," said Michael Gorman, CBMM's boatyard and project manager. "We were able to get the shape of the logs and what we find to be the original intent of the builder," he explained. "We're lucky that we had the money to spend on the front-end research of this project."

The information compiled from the NPS documentation program has generated a 3-D model to assist CBMM's shipwrights and apprentices in the restoration of the historic bugeye.

The nine logs that form the hull bottom will be fastened together with three-quarter-inch bronze alloy pins, without zinc in the alloy.

"Originally, the pins were wrought iron. Some of the wrought iron in the original hull is still good," said Gorman. "Wrought iron is hard to get, and we want to go back with something that is non-ferrous," he said. "When we pin it, if it is going into the center log there, we'll drill. In this section where it is flat, we'll probably pin two or three logs together."

Shipwrights will stack up the logs, upright or on their sides, and align the compo-



PHOTO BY DON EDWARDS / COURTESY CHESAPEAKE BAY MARITIME MUSEUM

This historic photo shows the Edna E. Lockwood under sail.



BOB RUEGSEGGER PHOTO

The nine-log bottom that will be affixed to the bugeye's topsides is being prepared in the boatyard at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, Maryland. It has been covered with a generous coating of pine tar while it awaits final assembly.

nents correctly. They'll drill out the holes for the pins, about 1/64-inch undersize, and hit the alloy pins with a hatchet to form burrs on the surface of the bronze pins.

"We pound the pins in against the burrs so they can't come back out," said Gorman. "We'll dip the rods in a lead paint or something. We'll ease it in and then it will lock in," he explained. "If you put all of the pins in perpendicular to the center of the boat, they would have that option of it coming apart. We drill at alternate angles so it works against itself."

CBMM's shipwrights and apprentices are going to be using a lot of lead paint on all the surfaces that touch each other. They have access to some Cuprinol, some other wood preservatives, and a lot of pine tar. Once the nine-log bottom is completed, the hull will be coated with red lead, lead oxide.

"In restoration outfits all over the country, Mystic Seaport and other places, institutions like us are able to buy, purchase, and use lead and lead paint products," said Gorman.

During the winter and spring of this year, the hull will be completely assembled. Fairing the hull will begin. The Edna E. Lockwood's topsides will be made ready for removal. The original hull

will be preserved for a visual exhibit on site at CBMM.

By September 2017, the bugeye will be framed to prepare the topsides for removal by a crane. The vessel's topsides will be aligned with the newly fabricated nine-log hull. All operations will be done in full view of the public.

Following work on the centerboard along with installation of new masts and rigging, the historic bugeye is scheduled for a "ceremonial relaunch" at the Oysterfest on Oct. 27, 2018.

The Edna E. Lockwood project at CBMM has two primary goals - to preserve the historic bugeye for future generations and to teach the skills fundamental to building a log-hulled craft.

"It's not going to be Coast Guard certified to carry passengers because that would entail doing way too much structural damage to the artifact," said Gorman. "We'll do an historic tour and go to all the towns on the Chesapeake Bay that we can possibly afford to go to. We now have about 28 towns on the list," he said. "We'd really like to share it with everybody, let people walk on it and see it, and maybe run some educational programs."

For more information visit ednalockwood.org.

Letters To The Editor

Letters to the Gazette-Journal on any subject of public interest are always welcome. The newspaper, however, cannot consider for publication a letter which does not carry the writer's signature and address. Letters should also not exceed 200 words. Writers will please include a telephone number where they can be reached during the day. The right is reserved to edit letters.

The Gazette-Journal will not accept letters to Readers Write which comment on articles published in other periodicals. Also, space limitations often prevent publication of thank-you letters.