

MY TURN

REAGAN COUNTRY?

Where is the "Greater Good"?

I was at a breakfast meeting this morning. When we arrived at that place on our agenda for announcements, one of the attendees reminded all of us that if we did not want a minority group to rule the majority, we should attend the City Council Meeting on February 22nd and speak in support of the Ronald Reagan Statue.

The person with the reminder is someone who I have great respect for and when he speaks, I generally listen carefully. He explained that he had attended the Arts Commission meeting this past Thursday and was very disturbed at the conduct of many of those in attendance who do not support the Ronald Reagan Statue. By his description of the events,

and what I read later in the Daily Pilot, it was a "raucous" meeting. Any time crowd behavior becomes unruly at a public hearing it is unfortunate and should remind us all, that no matter the extent of our passion for or against an issue, restraint and mutual respect for other's views should be paramount.

However, that is not the focus of this piece. Nor, am I going to voice my support for the Ronald Reagan Statue. Although I am not sure it should be located in the new Civic Center, I would not be troubled if it were located somewhere in the city of Newport Beach or in one of our parks. There was a quote in the column I read that does trouble me. It was an unusual quote attributed to the person who said it and yet it was overheard by the columnist. The quote was this, "They may be the only 100 people in Newport Beach who don't want it." The person who said it was referring to the attendees at the Arts Commission meeting.

Most of you know that I sit on the Park, Beaches and Recreation Commission. You also know, if you follow civic affairs in Newport Beach, residents are generally quite content with local government and the way the city is run. I am in my eighth year as a Commissioner and I can count the number of times a 100 people or more have attended one of our hearings and I can recall all of the issues involved. It is naive to think that 100 people in Newport Beach would show up at an Arts Commission meeting to voice their disapproval of the statue if this were not a divisive issue.

As all of us know, every once in awhile a divisive issue arises and our City Council must reach consensus on, often negotiate compromise for, and sometimes reject one side or the other's position for the "greater good." After all, that is why we elect leaders. At the end of the day, hopefully all involved, when passions are set aside, can be confident that "greater good" was the driving force behind the decision whichever way it went.

A couple of years ago, there were over 100 people at a PB&R meeting who live

Forum
COMMENTS, RANTS AND RAVES

near the site for Sunset Ridge Park. They were passionate about their desire not to have that site become an active sports park. In the end, our Commission voted overwhelmingly to recommend to the Council that the site include a baseball diamond and overlaying soccer field. We did so because we know that the youth in our city is better served if we have adequate sports facilities for them to compete on. Although disappointed in the outcome, most, if not all of those residents, knew in their hearts that there was a "greater good" to be served by the recommendation.

Can we say that there is truly a "greater good" being served here by approving the Ronald Reagan Statue over the objections of so many when we compare it to the Sunset Ridge Park issue? And, that is only one of several that I could have used to make the point. My message here to the Council is to simply move on to more important issues we are facing and we know those are many. It is not about a minority ruling the majority, but rather the importance of the scale of the "greater good" when faced with an issue that can divide residents in our great city.

The Loud Minority

Out of the 62,471 voters in Newport Beach, 56% are registered Republicans, while 22% are registered Democrats.

In Anaheim, out of 145,188 voters, 39% are Republican, 38% Democrat.



BY JACK WU

Our City Council is 85% Republican and Anaheim's is 80% Republican.

Why am I comparing Newport Beach to Anaheim?

Because on Feb. 8, the Anaheim City Council voted UNANIMOUSLY to rename Toyon Park in Anaheim Hills to Ronald Reagan Park.

And not one Anaheim resident stood up to speak against it. No one asked for committee discussion, no one asked for private donations.

Not only did not one Anaheim resident speak up against it, but the Anaheim City Council actually nixed the original park to be renamed in favor of a LARGER park.

In speaking with Anaheim Mayor Tom Tait about it, he was actually surprised at how easily it went through.

And in a City where there is a 1% spread between Republicans and Democrats, a "Divisive and Extremely Partisan" former President was given the fitting tribute that he deserves.

But here in Newport Beach, where the Republicans overwhelmingly outnumber

the Democrats, where we have a newly elected Councilman Rush Hill touted his personal friendship with President Reagan, we get Councilman Keith Curry booed and shouted down for having the audacity to have Reagan honored with a privately funded statue.

Shame on you who did that.

But before I further incense you, let me ask you something.

Why are you Republican? Why does Newport Beach have 34% more, 21498 more Republicans than Democrats here in this City?

Are you all, like our former Governor Arnold, Nixon Republicans?

No, most, if not all, are Republicans BECAUSE of Ronald Reagan.

I am a Republican because of Ronald Reagan.

Now, in doing my research for this little column, I found the comments to be the most interesting.

Revisionist, destructive, lacking of morals, embarrassing are some of the responses to honoring President Reagan.

And I'm sure that I'll get my share of angry responses.

But I don't care.

I know Ronald Reagan was a Democrat until his mid-50s.

I know Ronald Reagan raised taxes in his first term of Governor.

I know Ronald Reagan was the head of a major Labor Union.

These "offenses" would have ironically precluded him from receiving the Republican Party of Orange County endorsement in any election.

However, as President, Reagan faced up against Unions and squashed them.

Reagan faced up against terrorists and squashed them.

But most importantly, Reagan faced up against the Communist Soviet Union and squashed them, and made them tear down a wall.

Heck, they even made a "Star Trek" movie using that Cold War victory as a theme.

And according to Gallup, President Reagan left office with a 63% approval rating, with only Clinton and his 66% approval rating being higher in the 20th century.

President Obama's approval ratings during this past midterm election? 44%

So what is wrong with having a Park named after President Reagan? I'm sure there are plenty of parks in Newport Beach, which could have used that honor, with the "Weed Park" being the first one that comes to mind.

But our republicans (note the small "r") were too ... um ... apprehensive (read: SCARED) to do that.

So a privately funded statue was suggested, and that has received tons of heat. Why?

Because Reagan was, as one anonymous

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