Letters To The Editor

The Friday before going on vacation, June 29, I read a column in our local “Potomac News” that irked me more than normal. I read the Potomac News every day on my morning bus commute, and I can only state how shocked I am at the tone of local editorials and Letters to The Editor (LTE). “Hateful” and “bigoted” are two words that come to mind in my daily readings. “Willful ignorance” is a term I frequently think of. But columnist Ken Concannon, who pretends he is a “fair and balanced writer”, really annoys me.

Even against the background of ignorance, hatefulfulness, and bigotry, Mr. Concannon’s column of June 29 “Some commentary on Nazis and socialism” got me angry.

The thrust of Mr. Concannon’s article was a rebuttal to an undisclosed writer taking him to task for calling Nazis socialists. Mr. Concannon ridiculed the writer’s statements, wrote a long rambling essay on the evils of “isms” but conveniently leaving out (capital)ism. He rambled a bit more about the evils of the Holocaust, then closed by making the incredibly hateful statement that “nothing is stupider than bureaucracy, except maybe a liberal who doesn’t know he’s a socialist.”

I was pissed. So pissed I wrote to him directly, calling him out over his statements. I won’t reprint my letter here because Mr. Concannon actually replied with a pretty
reasonable response, even though his response was pretty much the same tone of his weekly column. I also wrote a LTE rebutting Mr. Concannon’s column, never expecting it to see print. But I was wrong. July 9, the day after I returned from vacation, I spotted my LTE titled “Who’s the dumber one? Conservative or liberal?”, printed exactly as I wrote it. I was flying high all day. Here is my published masterpiece of editorial slam against a person, Mr. Concannon, who could actually be a great columnist if he wasn’t so hateful towards people who disagree with him.

In his June 29 column, Mr. Concannon offers an interesting commentary on Nazis, socialism, and liberal Democrats. There is much to dispute in his column, but I will focus on just one thing. Mr. Concannon ridicules a writer who had explained that just because the Nazis called themselves socialists did not mean they were socialists.

Mr. Concannon rebutted by wondering if the people who ran the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were mistaken about who they were too? Or if calling himself a conservative actually made him a liberal. He concluded his column by writing that “nothing is stupider than bureaucracy, except maybe a liberal who doesn’t know he’s a socialist.”

Actually, an organization can name anything, anything, and it doesn’t matter much what the thing really is. The term that describes this phenomena is called “Marketing,” falls under the general heading of “Public Relations” and is what many organizations do as their basis of, well, naming things.

So we have a German Fascist government calling themselves the “National Socialist German Workers’ party.” We have a Russian Communist government calling themselves the “Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.” We have the Republican’s “Clean Skies Act” allowing more pollution in our skies then before. We have the Republican’s “Healthy Forest Act” allowing more clear-cutting and road building than before. We have the
Republican’s “No Child Left behind” education bill lowering the level of children’s education.

And we have a president, who as governor granted fewer pardons and allowed more executions than any other governor in the history of our country, calling himself a “Compassionate Conservative.”

I have to wonder: who is more stupid, a conservative or a liberal?

RON CHAREST
Dale City

I haven’t seen any rebuttals, and Mr. Concannon has not written to me again. Regrettably, Potomac News limits LTEs to one per person per month. So I need to wait before trying again. But, I will be sending in more letters. The level of viciousness expressed in this local paper, combined with the problems Winnie is experiencing with the DMV, demands someone step up and respond. That’ll be me. Look for more letters, both here and in the local news.