

OPINION

AN ECHO PRESS EDITORIAL

Drivers in the dark over tinting laws

It keeps popping up in the police and sheriff blotter: Drivers who have illegally tinted windows.

In the space of just two days recently, the Osakis Police Department issued warnings to seven drivers for having their windows tinted too dark.

There's a reason that law enforcement takes a dim view of tinted windows. It's not to give drivers a hard time or an excuse to pull someone over. Sergeant Neil Dickenson of the State Patrol wrote about it in an "Ask a Trooper" column last week. He noted that window tint obstructs a driver's vision at night and during poor weather conditions. It is also a safety concern for law enforcement at night. Illegally tinted windows make it nearly impossible to see in the vehicle while conducting a traffic stop, Dickenson said.

Window tinting is also a concern for pedestrians and other drivers. If the tint is too dark, they won't be able to make definite eye contact with the driver and know if it's safe to use the crosswalk or proceed through a four-way stop.

That's why Minnesota has laws against it. Even drivers from other states that allow tinted windows have to comply with these rules:

- ▶ No vehicle can have ANY tint to the front windshield.
 - ▶ Passenger cars are limited to 50 percent tint on all side and rear windows.
 - ▶ Pickups, vans, and SUVs are limited to 50 percent on the front side windows.
 - ▶ Pickups, vans, and SUVs are NOT limited on the rear side and rear windows.
- (Tint can be less than 50 percent behind the front seat).
- ▶ Squad cars, limousines, and vehicles used to transport human remains by a funeral establishment are not limited on the side and rear windows.



Contributed
The State Patrol uses a two-piece meter for measuring the tint percentage on rear windows or windows that will not roll down.

▶ No person shall sell, offer for sale, or use any motor vehicle with windows or windshields that have window tint on them.

Why do drivers want to tint their windows in the first place? Some say they're protecting the interior of their car and themselves from harmful UV rays. Some want to conceal the items in their vehicle so they're not stolen. Some think it will keep their vehicle cooler temperature-wise and "looks cooler" too.

But the fact remains that it can be hazardous, not only to the driver but others on the road. If glare is a problem, drivers should try sunglasses, not illegal tints.

Dickenson provided some interesting background about tinting enforcement efforts. The State Patrol has two types of tint meters. The first type slides over the window to give the tint percentage. The second is a two piece meter, and is used for rear window or windows that will not roll down.

Dickenson's advice: If you need to have window tint removed, you can check with a body or detailing shop or you can do it yourself. Look on the internet for advice and suggestions. But be sure you are obeying the law.

LETTERS

VA health care second to none

To the editor:
I read Mr. Forsberg's letter to the editor ("The problems with socialism," May 31) and feel that I must respond.

I do not disagree with most of what he said but I feel he has been misinformed if he feels that all VA healthcare is bad. As a veteran and having worked for 40 years in healthcare, I want to state unequivocally that many VA facilities give excellent care. The care that the St. Cloud facility and its satellite clinics deliver to our area veterans is second to none.

Gary Brink
Alexandria, MN

One person's vulgarity can be another's Dostoevsky

To the editor:
"Science is magic that works." "People generally see what they look for, and hear what they listen for." "You're bound to get ideas if you go thinkin' about stuff." "When you spend your whole life living in a hole, the only way you can go is up." "I do not wish any reward but to know I have done the right thing."

The above sentences respectively are quotes from Cat's Cradle; To Kill a Mockingbird; The Grapes of Wrath; Holes; and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. What these books have in common is they have been banned or challenged. According to the American Library Association, 46 of the top 100 novels of the 20th century have been subject to ban attempts. If the purpose of education is to prepare students for life, declaring half of today's great novels off limits does not accomplish that.

Books are banned or challenged for various reasons in accordance with community standards. The issue then becomes who represents, or claims to represent, the community. The ultimate outcome of a book ban or challenge is that some people determine what other people should or shouldn't read. And one person's

vulgarity is often another person's Dostoevsky.

In response to a recent letter to the Echo, we did see the high school play, She Kills Monsters. We thought it the best of many years of excellent performances by the students. In fact, had we been in charge of such things, this play addressing teen bullying and angst would be performed for all the high school and middle school students.

To paraphrase Lev Grossman, kids need ideas you and I disagree with or they will never figure out what ideas they believe in.

Tom Obert
Alexandria, MN

Here's the whole quote about inferior people

To the editor:
Joel Levie (June 14 letter to the editor) accused me of calling fellow Americans inferior. That was a lie. He accused our President of creating an anything goes era, when in fact he was the one engaging in an anything goes attitude. He took a small piece of what the article said and made it out to be something it was not.

The whole quote was: [Novak] believes in equal rights and equal responsibilities for every American. "Unlike our opponents, we do not believe that inferior people need to be lifted. Every human being is a child of God. If they are given equal rights and equal responsibilities, they can succeed."

Equality, that is what we believe in. That is what the article said. It is our opponents that judge people as superior and inferior. That is what we said and that is what the article said. It is precisely Levie's type of twisting of words that has created the boorish era that he complains of. It is time for honesty. It is time for dignity. It is time to respect the truth; then we can all again respect each other.

Joel A. Novak
Alexandria, MN

IN THE KNOW

Will Russia's meddling continue?

Forget (if you can) all the politics surrounding the Special Counsel's Report prepared by Special Counsel Robert Mueller.

Volume I of the report details the efforts of Russian organizations to influence the election of 2016. Whether a person supported Donald J. Trump or Hilary Clinton in 2016, one

should be concerned about Russian efforts to influence that, or any other election.

When it appeared that Donald J. Trump was going to get the Republican nomination for president, the Russians decided they would rather deal with him than Mrs. Clinton. So they took actions they thought would benefit Mr. Trump and other actions they thought would hurt the campaign of Mrs. Clinton.

The report mentions two organizations that worked to influence the election. One was called the Internet Research Agency (IRA) that was owned and directed by a Russian oligarch. The other was the (GRU), Russia's main intelligence organization.

You've probably heard about the use of "fake news"

postings on social media outlets. These were fake postings that purported to be truthful. Some seemed pretty outrageous, like the one claiming Mrs. Clinton owned a pizza shop in Washington D.C. that was a front for a child kidnapping operation.

Many of these posts were picked up and passed on to others, giving them a greater credibility. It was estimated these posts reached millions. The IRA also bought 3,500 ads on Facebook for \$100,000.

Another tactic was organizing political rallies. IRA people would contact the Trump campaign claiming to be political activists in support of Mr. Trump. They would ask for posters, banners and other materials and even for help in logistics for rallies. The IRA-established rallies included three in New York, a series of rallies in Florida and a series in Pennsylvania. Mr. Trump did not appear at any of these rallies and there was no evidence that anyone on the Trump campaign knew of the connection between rally organizers and Russia.

Still, I would think a person who attended such a rally would be horrified to know the rally was sponsored by Russians seeking to influence his or her vote.

The GRU was busy hacking the computers of the Democratic National

Committee, the Clinton campaign, Clinton campaign chair John Podesta and others and it was successful in many of those hacks. It took emails and distributed them through outlets like the Guccifer2.0 blog and Twitter accounts, DCLeaks and WikiLeaks.

The GRU was also busy trying to hack state election systems, major county election systems, companies that wrote software for state and county election systems and others. It got into the Illinois state system and began downloading information on millions of voters before it was caught.

Congress has passed legislation to give money to states to upgrade their security to protect voter information. Facebook, Twitter and other online social media are trying to ferret out malicious fake news senders more quickly but people seem to be one step ahead of them most of the time.

The question remains, will this be enough to insure a fair election in 2020?

John Stone is the former mayor of Glenwood and former publisher of the Pope County Tribune and Starbuck Times. In the Know is a rotating column written by community leaders from the Douglas County area.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE ARCHIVES

1994: New roller rink to open

1919, 100 years ago: Hon. H. Birkhofer of Alexandria announces that he is to build a new brick building this summer on the site of the Wegener brewery and that he will be ready to do milling early in the fall. The brewery was started in 1876 by Rudolph Wegener. In 1901, the Rd. Wegener Brewing Co. was organized and took charge of the business. The property will now be converted into a milling establishment. An Anglo-American Marvel mill with a capacity of 65,000 bushels yearly will be installed together with up-to-date improvements and wheat cleaning machinery. An expert miller will be engaged.

1969, 50 years ago: The board of directors of the Park Region Publishing Company announced to company stockholders that the Park Region Echo will become a daily newspaper early this fall. "The new publication will be named the 'Alexandria Daily News,' and be published five days a week, Monday through Friday. All subscribers to the Echo will have their subscriptions prorated at the time the News goes into publication," according to Ray Wallentine, company president.

Over 700 horsemen participated in the 11th annual Horsemen's Holiday at Carlos State Park. The event, sponsored by the Lake Region Saddle Club, brought riders from all over the Midwest for a three-day outing.

Alexandria's Studio



RACHEL BARDUSON
Contributing Columnist

L'Homme Dieu, located on Tolena Point, started its fourth year as an extension of the summer program of St. Cloud State College's department of art. Visitors are welcome at any time, according to Robert Riseling, SCSC instructor of art, and enrollment is available to local people interested in art.

1994, 25 years ago: Alexandria's new roller rink will open, and according to Patty Wicken, the manager of the new rink, RollerMax is completely state-of-the-art. "It has a floating wooden floor which is like skating on a giant piece of glass - beautiful," she noted. Wicken is well known to the Alexandria area. She has worked as an on-air radio announcer for many years and is looking forward to her new duties as RollerMax manager. "It has three things I love: kids, music and skating."

2009, 10 years ago: Volunteers worked with city and state workers to plant approximately 700 trees, shrubs and other plants near the new "Welcome to Alexandria" sign along Highway 29 South. The project, which is a partnership between the City of Alexandria, the Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and the Minnesota Department of

Transportation, has been in the works since last winter when the sign, paid for by Tastefully Simple, was installed.

The \$7.975 million voter-approved Osakis Public School expansion project has gotten underway.

Just for fun 2009 - 10 years ago: Alexandria was named the 107th "Best Town for Sportsmen" in the United States in the June/July issue of Outdoor Life magazine. The magazine ranked 200 cities across the nation using extensive research and data to determine the top cities and towns for hunters and anglers to live in. Eight cities in Minnesota made the list.

Sports Trivia 1994 - 25 years ago: Jenny Nodland, former standout Alexandria athlete and graduate, was named the most valuable player on the Iowa Hawkeye Women's golf team. Nodland was one of the leading players on the Hawkeye team this past spring. She will be a senior this fall.

Jenny Jackson, former Alexandria athlete and graduate, now a junior member of the Ohio State University volleyball team has been named to play for the west team in the Olympic Festival scheduled to be played in St. Louis. She will be playing in this event for the second year in a row and is one of the 10 Big Ten athletes taking part and one of four Buckeye spikers in the event.

Rachel Barduson of Alexandria is a regular contributing columnist to the Echo Press Opinion page.

Submitting letters to the editor:

The Echo Press encourages readers to voice their opinions through letters to the editor. Please, however, keep your letters brief and to the point. Letters of more than 300 words or excessively long letters may be edited to a shorter form by the newspaper staff. Personal attacks against private individuals will not be printed. All letters must be signed and include the writer's address and telephone number. Letters published will include the writer's name and the city of residence only. Writers are limited to publishing one letter every 30 days. Submissions can be emailed to aedenloff@echopress.com or submitted to the Echo Press office at 225 7th Ave. E., Alexandria, MN 56308. For information, call (320) 763-3133.

Note to our readers, writers:

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