

# Ted Here.....

Make America Civil Again.  
I must apologize to the community of Maple Plain, which I wrongly associated with the monumental erection to poor taste alongside U.S. Highway 12 a few weeks ago (it was instead Montrose). This monstrosity consists of a few round bales, two vulgar flags, some plastic sheeting and an illegitimate artist's spray painting. The gist of the message is that the president of the United States should be boinked.

To which I recall criticism of a certain weekly newspaper editor who dared call out a different president for some of the deeds he had actually committed. For that, one person suggested treason. Never mind that the definition of treason is "levying war against" the United States or giving "aid and comfort" to the enemy, or that the punishment for such crimes ranges up to death. I forgive that person for over-reaching in the determination of my perceived breach, chalking it up to not really understanding what he or she was accusing.

Then of course there's that whole 'First Amendment' thing, which really muddies the water.

And I will fully acknowledge that the architect of the shrine against President Joe Biden has the right to express his opinion. Remember, it was here where you may have been shocked to read, lo those months ago, that Twitter was making a mistake by turning off the spigot of then-President Donald Trump's invective against his perceived enemies... basically anyone refusing to kneel at the foot of his throne. It was a mistake because people in this country are supposed to have ownership of their own franchise on expression. Again, it's that pesky First Amendment. Opinions don't have to pass an agreeability test before they are allowed in America.

However.  
We are still the United States, a conglomeration of people of every stripe and persuasion. We are still enjoined in the passion we share in finding 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,' as a somewhat famous declaration so states. The big question is, why can't we all 'pursue' in our own ways without feeling the need to rip apart our fellow American neighbor?

Make America Civil Again.  
There are other ways to protest the policies of a political group or an administration than sinking to the level

of angry profanities that don't even make sense. 'Boink' Joe Biden? What does that even mean? What good would 'boinking' the president of the United States -- yours, mine and every citizens' president, like it or not -- do to improve management of this nation? None is the correct answer here.

And here's the real rub. Joe Biden will never see the goofy hay bale altar to crudeness. But who will see it? Everyone else who drives by, including many, many people who voted just like the tasteless chap who perpetrated the display but who would rather not blast this type of unkind message to their fellow members of the human race... their fellow Americans.

Who else sees it, besides the many, many folks who voted for the target of this shotgun animus? Think of the young, the innocent, the future of our country who's experiences will guide their future paths. Is malevolence a great building stone for our democracy -- or republic -- whichever you prefer?  
Abraham Lincoln, perhaps the greatest of all presidents, stated in an address to the Illinois convention of Republicans who had just nominated him for the U.S. Senate these prophetic words: "A house divided against itself, cannot stand." While Lincoln was speaking of slave versus non-slave at a time in our history when the nation was indeed divided over the subject, that sentiment echoes throughout the land yet to this day. We cannot hate each other and still be united. That has been proven time and again in far-off lands where good ideas have fallen to enmity and lack of respect, to despotism and thirst for power over fellow man.

This country will never heal and grow stronger with the likes of people who would tear it all down just for their own personal vendetta. Casting aspersions on a well-protected and universally regarded institution such as our system of voting, with no damning proof of malfeasance, all for the sake of objecting to a result which was different than what was hoped for is a dangerous game. Accepting and moving forward with a plan to change that outcome by appropriate means the next time around is the real American way. In the meantime, nastiness and spite only hold us back.

Make America Civil Again. It's either that or we're all boinked.



## OTHER VOICES

### Declaring a climate emergency means holding Big Oil accountable

by Jessie Roelofs  
MinnPost

In a coordinated campaign, St. Paul, Northfield, Grand Rapids and 13 other Minnesota cities stepped up last month to declare climate emergencies. They're asking for state and federal funding to slow the effects of climate change. This effort, which is both symbolic and concrete, marks an important step toward more action on climate change. But the question remains, who will foot the bill?

To explain why this is important to me, I need to go back to 2018.

My then-fiance and I are sitting on an overstuffed couch in a small room, facing a premarital counselor. We're in our third of five sessions and feeling like we are ready for anything. We've talked about our family histories, our approaches to money, our thoughts on religion, politics and end of life.

But then the question comes that we knew, of course, was going to come. "Do you want to have children?"

We look helplessly at one another. It's something we'd talked about at length, but how do you plan for a future when the world is on fire?

We had done our research. Articles I read stated that there's nothing more harmful to the planet than more humans. I attended an online meeting with 80 other women about whether it's ethical to have children when we're in the middle of a climate catastrophe. The general consensus seemed to be, "No, it's not ethical."

I felt completely lost. How is it that one of the most important decisions a person can make — the choice to bring new life into the world —

seemed to have already been decided for me? It was decided not by me, but by people and industries who saw this coming, who knew the irreversible impact of fossil fuels on our planet, and did nothing. They chose this.

In 1982, five years before I was even born, Exxon distributed an internal document detailing that its own research showed global warming was real and caused by fossil fuel combustion. Further, if reductions weren't made, "There are some potentially catastrophic events that must be considered." Chillingly, Exxon also predicted that once the effects were measurable, they might not be reversible.

Despite all of this, Exxon and other fossil fuel companies chose to quietly prepare their equipment for climate change impacts while publicly denying the validity of this research... their own research.

They knew what was happening and how to fix it and they chose to lie and put us all at risk. They took away our choices.

Instead of taking responsibility for their actions, Exxon and Shell seemed to point the finger back at me, telling me I would be a bad person if I chose to bring a child into this mess. Into their mess.

We know that responding to climate emergencies is going to be a costly and, unfortunately, regular and ongoing occurrence. In declaring a climate emergency, these 16 cities from across the state join hundreds of communities across the country in calling on state and federal governments to commit resources to protecting our communities from further damage.

Is it fair to ask taxpayers to pay for what these companies chose to do? Are we going

to let them get away with it? Again?

In Minnesota, we expect businesses to tell the truth and to be held accountable when they do wrong. I recently started working with the climate justice organization MN350. Our Big Deception campaign raises awareness about the urgent need to hold fossil fuel companies accountable and highlights a Minnesota lawsuit that is making its way through the courts. In that case, Attorney General Keith Ellison is suing ExxonMobil, Koch Industries and the American Petroleum Institute for taking away our choices, limiting our options and blurring our vision for the future.

We all know the importance of choice. We make choices every day to stay informed by reading the news, to engage with topics we may not agree with, to show up in our community to make an impact.

My husband and I also made a choice. We decided to make a bet on the future; a radical act of hope. Late last year, I found out that I am pregnant.

I hope those of you reading this will join me in making a bet on our future while holding accountable those who seek to limit our options and take away our choice. Please, for the sake of the next generation, contact your elected officials and let them know your support holding these greedy companies accountable. Don't let them take away our choice to live safe and healthy lives.

Let's put the pressure on. Let's make them pay for taking away our choices before we even knew we had them.

Jessie Roelofs grew up in central Minnesota and now lives and works in Minneapolis. She is the communications manager at MN350.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### The left is all about government controlling people

To the Editor;  
What's Joe Biden's favorite ice cream flavor? I figured you'd know. Do you really believe Biden got 81 million legitimate votes? Or do you believe the end justifies the means, and you are okay with his policies and leadership? The left is all about government controlling people, not people controlling government.  
David Lien  
Murdock

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