

CONFIDENCE AND FAITH – WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

Ah, the power of words; once said they cannot be retrieved and in fact can become the enemy of ones' neck. So let's take a cue from Readers Digests' "It pays To Increase Your Word Power" and look at the word "confidence" and how two great thinkers used it in a sentence.

Third-century biographer, Diogenes Laertius, preserved the thoughts of many Greek thinkers. Among them, Pyrrho, said, "If appearances are deceitful, then they do not deserve any confidence..." Abraham Lincoln added, "Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people?"

In plain English, they are saying: 1. If someone looks underserving of confidence, they probably are and 2. America rises or falls on our confidence in our own sense of justice.

Confidence and faith. When you lose either in a political leader you lose all, unless the patient citizenry Lincoln spoke of acts with confidence.

Fairfield, as a big player in the country, has a sty in its eye. It is time we bright it to a head.

I have confidence in the Daily Republic expose' on County Chief Administrative Officer Michael Johnson and the findings of the 2005-2006 Grand Jury report (www.solanocourts.com/grandjury/2006/MIP.pdf). The findings clearly show that our supervisors had confidence in our ignorance as well as their own arrogance.

Johnson's and the board of Supervisor's general counsel are still receiving substantial bonuses based on only 60 percent of the votes required. Johnson gets a bonus simply for doing his job.

In dollars, this means Johnson's C grade got \$1,232 per month – triple the bonus he apparently may have received had all votes been counted. The cookie monsters have not only been caught with their hand in the cookie jar, they have laid siege to the "dough" factory.

Furthermore, the only comments from the board are those of retiring supervisor Kromm who rationalized this outrage by suggesting that "maybe somebody did a study."

Say what? How many teachers need a study to fill out a report card? Then he speaks of some mythical and inappropriate metaphor of a "rule of three" in local government. People rule local government, and there are more than three of us. Recent high school grads are appropriately bemoaning the sky high GPA needed to have a shot at University of California whatever. Maybe they should just follow their leaders cue and declare "funsies" or "do-over's" and rescore their GPA with only the best 60 percent of their grades.

The sparse public comments uttered by these folks remind me of the proverbial Foole running frantically about with his butt on fire while trying to extinguish a flame that is being fueled by his own gaseousness. I have heard and seen enough.

I am confident there is an answer and it takes all the citizenry, the media and yes, the City Council, which governs the county seat. But put away the pitchforks and screaming mobs, douse the burning torches and stop warming the tar and plucking chickens for the feathers. I speak of a time tested, inexpensive and powerful tool – a vote of “no confidence.” Yes, I am dead serious.

Since the 1782 British vote of no-confidence that ousted Lord North of American revolutionary war fame, there have been over 25 parliamentary votes of no confidence in first world nations leading ultimately to the removal of the senior executive. The National Executive Institute Associates (NEIA) cites such a mechanism as highly effective and inexpensive.

Publicly pose the most important bottom line questions to all the supervisors. Then have a heavily publicized televised public meeting where they can respond in person or in writing. Next, use a simple, public, dedicated Web site for individuals to express their confidence or no confidence and have the City Council mediate. Make the republic shine and put Fairfield on the map with the right kind of “shot heard round the county and state.”

Who knows, if somehow these supervisors restore our faith and confidence, we could vote that way. We could even serve cookies – but count them first.

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