

Chris Taggart

From: Jane Shigley <harpjane52@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2020 12:21 PM
To: Ravalli County Commissioners Office
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter to Commissioners and BOH--thanks!

July 24, 2020

Greetings.

Opening up the valley's activities involves a much more thoughtful approach than simply "If you want to buy your sandpaper and pantyhose without a mask, we won't stop you." It involves educating the public as to the importance of following guidelines FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR NEIGHBORS. Imagine if we had a forest fire where no one helped their neighbors.

Remember the brouhaha that preceded Y2K? Was Y2K uneventful because we were prepared, or because nothing would have happened anyway? I hope that in a year, we look back on this summer, and say, "We might have done more than necessary, but at least we did enough."

I am not a constitutional lawyer, but I trust the ones who say that the Governor's mask mandate is legal and would likely be upheld in court, as it has in other states.

I am not a virologist, or a public health specialist, but I trust the ones who say that the world (including the United States) should take COVID19 seriously.

I am not a doctor, but I trust the ones who say that recovery from COVID19 does not end when a person is released from the hospital. Many people have lost muscle mass, appetite, energy. This virus is debilitating. Even the "recovered" cases have long term effects.

I am not a minister, but I trust the ones who tell me that trust in God does not mean "unlock your doors."

I am not a historian, but I remember when people refused to buy anything that had a UPC code on it. I remember when people would not wear their seatbelts, or when they had militant "smoke-ins" at the only smoke-free restaurant in town. I remember professors who said they would resign if they weren't allowed to smoke their pipe in class.

I AM a retired disability advocate and I know that there is a huge amount of misinformation surrounding ADA and HIPAA as it relates to COVID19. I look to your leadership to actively educate the public on this topic. Perhaps you could have the County Attorney issue an opinion on whether it is legal for businesses to post this sort of signage.

I AM a free-lance musician who begs to get back to business as usual. My last paying gig was just after Valentine's Day. I usually play at senior homes, special education classrooms, and (my favorite) parties for 90 year olds! I usually play for church choirs (not just my own), school music festivals, and the (now postponed) Bitterroot Valley Chorus. I have played for the Hamilton Players and any number of other community projects. Those large musical events are simply not happening this year. We need to work together to bring them back, safely.

I AM a sidelined Special Olympics coach who is wondering when it will be possible to have an event or practice, again.

I AM a mini-philanthropist. Donating over the Internet is okay and it gets the job done, but the fundraising parties are conspicuously missing from my calendar.

I AM disappointed at the lack of civility which permeates our valley under the guise of “rights.” I am not advocating for a mass crackdown or ticketing of people who don't wear masks. I respectfully request that our elected and appointed leaders err on the side of common sense and decency. Take the governor's focus on education to heart:

- Ask elected officials to set a good example in both actions and civility.
- Work with business organizations to educate owners about the appropriateness of signs that say, “Per RSCO, masks are discretionary,” or reference HIPAA and ADA.
- Work with businesses who do not wish to enforce the mandate, to ensure that they make accommodations for people who cannot enter their business because of the risk. I'm not talking about retail as much as the service industry or veterinary clinics.
- For crying out loud, stop saying “If wearing a mask makes you feel safe, go ahead and wear one.” Replace it with, “Wearing a mask keeps your friends, neighbors, fellow churchgoers, and customers safe. It works best if we all do it.”

Respectfully,

Jane Shigley

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