



Barry Romich, P.E.

13875 Cleveland Rd. Creston, OH 44217 Tel: 330-464-7877 (m) Email: bromich@aol.com

March 2, 2016

To Whom it May Concern:

I write with concern for the future success and viability of the Wayne County Fair. I am seventy years old, was raised on a farm in Wayne County, and expect to live here for the remainder of my life, a few more decades. I am a member of the Wayne County Fair. My family has supported the Wayne County Fair for generations. The Wayne County Fair has been a long standing local institution and touches the lives of a good part of the population of the county. I would like to see the fair continue as an honored and respected tradition, but am concerned that it is at risk of jumping the track and heading into the weeds.

Generally, it would be considered in poor taste to celebrate past or present enemies of the United States of America, especially those with whom we are or were at one time at war, and with whom our country does not have a current good relationship. The display and sale of items that represent enemies of the USA constitute such a celebration. Such enemies of the USA would include, but not be limited to, the Confederacy, Nazis, North Korea, North Viet Nam, al-Qaeda, and ISIS. Without exception, they fit into the same category.

I am in possession of a copy of the resolution of the Ohio Fair Managers Board of Fair Delegates of the OFMA, passed January 10, 2016, in which is stated "the OFMA does permit and will support a Fair's decision to allow private vendors to sell Civil War merchandise ...". I have no reason to believe that a similar resolution would not be generated in response to an inquiry about any comparable material referenced above.

I am searching for some clarity on what is right action in this matter and the following perspectives all point in the same direction.

Family Members and Friends of Casualties of Armed Conflict

Nearly every citizen of Wayne County has family members, ancestors and/or friends who were killed or wounded in armed conflict with enemies of the United States of America. Many are veterans themselves. It is hurtful to them to see a celebration of those who caused such harm to our families, friends and country.

Long Time Fair Supporters

The citizens of Wayne County are largely kind people. They therefore are not highly tolerant of hurtful acts, which include the display and sale of the subject material. Some of these people, including myself and my family, have supported the Wayne County Fair to the tune of many tens of thousands of dollars over the

years. Now I am hearing from some that their support is coming to an end unless this issue is properly addressed.

Youth

Participation in the fair is part of growing up for many kids. Many of our youth are members of 4H and other organizations that help them learn how to live their lives with good character. It is unclear to me how a 4H leader explains to his/her members why materials that are hurtful to their family members are being displayed and sold at the fair, except that some people value money above other things. Perhaps this can be the basis for an educational experience about how not to live. One would hope that the lesson would not need to involve uncomplimentary labels of the members of the Wayne County Fair Board and the OFMA Board, but that might be the natural result.

Exhibitors

I am aware of Wayne County Fair exhibit participants that are now considering terminating their historic involvement at the fair. They simply do not want the association with such a negative situation and anticipate that fair attendance may be significantly reduced. They have other methods of marketing to the community.

Vendors of Subject Merchandise

I have not spoken with vendors of the subject merchandise, but have tried to put myself in their situation. They now risk having pickets discouraging all fairgoers from either entering the fairgrounds or coming near their exhibits. Not only do they not sell the subject merchandise, they may not sell much of anything. Their sales will most certainly be dramatically lower than historic levels if they are picketed. Note: The OFMA resolution refers to "Freedom of Speech and First Amendment to the United States Constitution", which protects the actions of picketers. The Wayne County Fair Board should feel a moral obligation to warn vendors of this risk in advance. They may not be experiencing business as usual.

So how is the Wayne County community to respond? One approach is to issue public warnings to the community in general.

**"DO NOT ATTEND THE WAYNE COUNTY FAIR!
if you wish to not be offended by the display and sale of merchandise
celebrating the actions of those who killed and wounded
your loved ones and ancestors."**

and/or

**"If your participation in the Wayne County Fair has commercial value to you,
be forewarned that attendance may be significantly lower this year."**

It is clear that there are many reasons to not allow the display and sale of the subject merchandise. There must be some reasons to do so, but none come to mind other than the possible fear that something unknown or unforeseen bad will happen. This might be claims of violation of the First Amendment, yet the First Amendment may also cover other items that are on the not permitted list of the fair rules and regulations. Fear is not a good way to live.

The Wayne County Fair Board, whether acknowledged by themselves or not, is in an uncomfortable position on this matter and has not been forthcoming with any viable plan for dealing with this situation in a manner that is positive for all fairgoers. One possible plan would be to communicate clearly to all vendors, in the rules and regulations and/or otherwise, that:

Any display or sale of items that may be offensive to others is permitted, but vendors do so at their own risk. The Wayne County Fair Board will not be responsible for community response to such behavior. Any decision to display and sell could simply be bad for business.

This approach does not require the reversal of any Fair Board action, if any has been taken that would allow display and sale. Further, those fairgoers wishing to purchase offensive items have many other ways to do so that do not involve public display at the Wayne County Fair.

Finally, I want to make it clear that my desires are for harmony in our community and ongoing success of the Wayne County Fair. Without the former, we cannot have the latter.

Good people remaining silent leads to a bad life for everyone.

Anyone wishing to discuss this is invited to make contact. Thank you for your serious consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barry Romich". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'B'.