

Many papers routinely carry in their editorial sections, columns by a writer named Bonnie Erbe. Within the last few months, she has written a couple columns where she has expressed her views on hunting. Not surprisingly, with her sitting firmly on the left side of the political spectrum, her views are not favorable to hunters.

If any hunters out there read either of her two columns, they probably were shaking their heads in the end. Not only because of the anti-hunting remarks she was making, but also in how many mistakes she made in those columns.

Originally, I was going to take her columns and dissect them piece by piece pointing out her errors and flawed arguments, but I had found that I would need a column the size of a small novel. In the end it would be a waste of time and frankly space on my computer.

Let me just say that some of her basic facts are so wrong, that it is apparent she did little or no research to make sure she had a semblance of an idea of what she was writing about.

She made statements claiming a 6mm rifle used by a young hunter to shoot a bear was the same caliber used by NATO for their assault rifle (not even close), and that a wounded goose she came across was shot by hunter with a bullet (unlikely since waterfowl are hunted with birdshot and not bullets).

Of course none of this probably would matter to Erbe who makes it apparent that in her view hunting is nothing more than “rural passions of a less educated America.” Never mind the fact that hunting is enjoyed by people from all walks of life and education levels.

In the end trying to have intelligent discussions with people like Erbe in regards to hunting is futile. Anyone who is obviously unwilling to do a little fact checking to educate themselves about a subject they apparently have no knowledge about is probably not interested in true discourse.

I think most hunters at some point or another will come across people who will feel they just have to let them know that they can not fathom how a hunter can kill that soft, furry (place your favorite species here). I know I have and I know my kids have too.

The easiest thing to do with people like this would be just to say “that they are entitled to their opinion” and walk away. However, the one thing I inherited from my mother was the unwillingness to leave a good argument. So I like to ask these people “Do you eat meat” and “You do know that steak doesn’t come from trees”?

I sent an email to Ms. Erbe enquiring if she was a vegetarian. I have not yet received a response.

Now I have no quarrel with people who will say that “hunting is not for me”. There are a lot of people including friends and family of mine who are just not interested in hunting

or do not have the mental temperament to kill an animal. That doesn't mean they are against it.

However, in my mind the anti-hunter who eats meat is like someone who hires an assassin, but then tells the assassin that they think murder is wrong.

The essence of the problem is that these people are either ignorant or in denial of where their food comes from. I believe in our urbanized society that people have become too far removed from their food sources and therefore come up with these silly notions that somehow they are more sophisticated and civilized than the people who do hunt.

Also, they are probably unaware of how beneficial hunting is when it comes to managing wildlife populations or how much money from hunting equipment and license sales goes toward protecting and improving wildlife habitat.

They likely assume that all that money comes either from general taxes or from the generous pockets of some environmental group. That is not the case.

To be sure there have been problems in the past with hunters not managing themselves and causing destruction to the point of even possibly destroying a species. However, today's modern hunter is more than ever acutely aware of the need for proper wildlife management and conservation of habitat. They are far from the blood thirsty Neanderthals that Erbe and other anti-hunters think them to be.

In one of her articles Erbe makes a statement concerning men finding manliness. She said "it's not about extermination, it's about empire building".

Yes, Ms. Erbe you are right that hunting is not about manliness. However, neither is hunting about extermination; it's about the laws of nature and life. It's about being connected to the environment in away that someone like your self could never understand.

We do not want to build empires. We will leave that dictators and tyrants. Instead, we want to build lasting legacies of family bonds and friendships that span generations. We want to pass on traditions and teach our youth that the real world is not lived in a video game, a movie, or on a golf course.

We want our kids to partake in the boredom, tension, excitement, exhilaration, sadness and even quiet contemplation that occurs in a hunt and when one takes the life of one of God's creation. Many of us have learned that it is in those moments that many a hunter learns truly who they are and where they belong.

Terry Bitz

