

Inclusiveness running wild

by **BRIAN LOCKHART**

I attended a rather large outdoor concert this past weekend featuring some top Bluegrass performers.

It was a fun weekend if you like that style of toe-tapping, head-bobbing, down home fiddle, banjo, and mandolin that makes Bluegrass what it is.

The opening ceremonies featured the usual remarks by organizers followed by the singing of both the American and Canadian national anthems.

The Star Spangled Banner was sung to acknowledge the presence of several American bands who were taking part in the festival.

When it was time to sing O Canada, a local vocalist took the stage and sang a Bluegrass style of the anthem accompanied by a man on guitar. It was really well done.

Then she came to that dreaded line.

It has been a while since I've heard the anthem performed live since the hockey season is over but I deliberately focused on the wording of the anthem ? and yes, she sang ?in all thy sons command.?

This is the single line that caused such grief to so many. Forget the veterans living in poverty, forget world tensions, forget the deficit, forget about the fact that are drowning under a heavy tax burden, they saw fit to gain national attention because of one word.

I turned to watch the crowd as this was happening and saw a lot of smile and nods of approval. I wasn't the only one to pick up on the fact that the vocalist chose not to sing the words ?officially' changed in the anthem to reflect the desire for inclusiveness ? the politically correct word meaning ?I don't like it so you have to change for me.?

Actually this line in the national anthem did NOT cause grief to many. In fact it was very few that were even concerned, but in this day and age, once you are offended and make the news, the media jumps on the band wagon. No need for research, someone has been offended so we must change something.

If you search media outlets, message boards, any place where people voice their opinion, it was clear the majority of people, both men and women, did not want that line changed. They want to sing the anthem as it was written and the way they learned the words and melody. It is our tradition and part of our culture.

Most people realize that ?sons' does not refer exclusively to males ? it is a word meaning everyone, the population, men, women, children, all of us. ?Sons' refers to the collective people and those that will come after us. Used in that correct context, the word is indeed inclusive.

Over the past couple of years, certain groups have latched onto the trend that everything must be inclusive ? that no one should be left out, of anything, at any time. Of course that only applies to other groups or organizations of which they don't belong. The ones screaming for ?inclusiveness' are usually part of a group that automatically excludes others for various reasons, usually based on some misguided political or similar reason or agenda.

These groups always want things to be ?inclusive' unless, of course, you don't agree them, in which case you are excluded.

Yeah, well sorry, but you won't and can't be included in every group, club, organization, and clique in the world just because you want to be a part of it all.

There's all sorts of groups that don't want you around for a lot of reasons.

There are plenty of cultural groups out there that have clubs for members of their ethnic background.

Sorry, if you have an Irish surname, you probably won't be very welcome at the local Dutchy of Grand Fenwick Cultural Centre who pride themselves on speaking Fenwick behind closed doors and revel in weekly Fenwick culture and debauchery.

There are country clubs that don't want you around because you aren't wealthy enough to pay for club and green fees, and frankly, they don't particularly like 'common' people messing up their fairways.

There are religious groups that don't want you around because you don't follow their beliefs. Are you going to demand to be included?

We are all going to be excluded from things in life, and you will also exclude people from things.

Changing the words of a national anthem doesn't change the way things are.

It's just another reason for some people to be offended.