

Letter of Opinion by Traci Hoenstine

(Sent to GRIT's Webmaster via email 10:36 PM Feb. 7, 2008, about the same time our computer crashed, hence, the delay in publishing. Below is the complete text.)

Thu, 7 Feb 2008 20:36:18 EST
Subject: for website consideration
To: lorettastorm@seanet.com

Dear Grit

I wanted to take a moment to write and express thoughts regarding the recently destroyed signs in Sultan on Dyer Road. You [*i.e.*, *G.R.I.T.'s webmaster*] suggest that people be more constructive, and perhaps attend a meeting to voice themselves verses destroying signs. I would like to address why more people may not get involved.

When people get involved in Sultan, they are harassed. Not just by citizens who may not agree with their involvement but also by the city itself. Last summer a couple people and myself placed a "Thank You Walser" Sign along U. S. 2 on BNSF property. I asked for and received permission to place this sign and sent pictures of it to BNSF. The City's Public Works Department in turn, took my sign, while leaving the fruit stand signs intact. They told no one of their deed until a city police officer on his own located the signs. They had been laying near a dumpster for weeks on city property. Though I was grateful for getting the signs back, and the officer reassured me he felt it was a misunderstanding, I can say from my own inquiries that something didn't quite add. Some stories seemed to change with regard to how this could happen. Since I respected this officer, I trusted his assessment and let the matter drop.

The point is, when the city condones thievery or "misunderstandings" that amount to thievery, well, anything goes. What is worse, however, is that the city then sets a tone of this conduct being acceptable.

When my husband ran for city council someone came to our yard a few different times and destroyed signs in our own yard. This was done when I was home. It's an intimidation tactic much like how I was harassed in a parking lot in August for my political views. My point being, all anyone has to do is look at those who did get involved and what grief that caused, to perhaps determine to not get involved. Which, by the way, is the whole point of such harassment. There isn't a lot of incentive to be a part of the government process in Sultan largely because the past would show us those that do get involved are treated horribly. In spite of this, most of us that have been the recipient of such actions will likely continue expressing our views. At what cost remains to be seen.

Traci Hoenstine