**For Release Wednesday, July 6, 2022**

**Capitol View**

**Commentary by J.L. Schmidt**

**Statehouse Correspondent**

**Nebraska Press Association**

**How About a Little Tolerance for a Change?**

News Item: A Subway sandwich customer allegedly shot two employees after he reportedly became angry over too much mayonnaise on his sandwich, police said. One employee died and the other is in critical condition.

As my son and daughter-in-law often say to their 6-year-old, “use your words.”

Could I get a different sandwich? Could you scrape some mayo off this, please? Could I get a refund?

That’s *communication*, defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “the transmission of information, ideas, or knowledge, whether verbally or mechanically, through a medium such as music, writing, or e-mail.” Have we lost that ability to communicate? That’s both speaking and hearing in my book.

Sure, the sandwich shooting was in Atlanta, Georgia. That’s a big city nearly 1,000 miles from here. But that doesn’t mean senseless violence can’t happen here. In the last month, there have been three young people (ages 17-24) shot at a high school parking lot just 10 blocks from my house. Nobody’s dead, but lives have been changed by the two separate incidents.

We’re not talking anymore. We’re yelling and chanting and shaking fists and waving protest signs. We’re still dredging up the past, like the January 6 events in Washington, DC, more than 18 months ago. The only break we got from that rehash by the national media has been three controversial U.S. Supreme Court opinions on guns, abortion, and prayer.

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More yelling and not the least shred of *tolerance* visible. The Oxford English Dictionary defines tolerance “(of/for somebody/something) as the quality of being willing to accept or tolerate somebody/something, especially opinions or behavior that you may not agree with, or people who are not like you.”

Many states are scrambling to enact laws to address the abortion issue which the high court says now is clearly a matter of state’s rights. It’s yet unclear whether the Nebraska Legislature will call a special session to do so since a so-called trigger bill (to ban abortion once the high court has ruled) failed during the regular session.

It appears unlikely that the group of senators who filibustered that bill off the agenda a few months ago have changed their mind or are willing to negotiate. Proponents of the measure say they are uncertain just what kind of compromises would have to be made to ensure passage.

There was a time when *repentance,* “the fact of showing that you are sorry for something wrong that you have done,” would have been an important part of the solution to addressing grievances. But it appears that *reparations,* “the making of amends for a wrong one has done, by paying money to or otherwise helping those who have been wronged,” have become the popular redress.

In a country that has been deeply divided for several years, *unity, “*the state of being in agreement and working together,” seems like a distant dream. I believe it is attainable, but it’s going to take communication, tolerance, and repentance to make it happen.

I recently read a national commentator who said she thinks we are on the brink of a civil war.

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It was five years ago this month that I quoted Charles Kuralt from a 1976 Dateline America piece about the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project in which he said, “It’s not likely that tolerance will soon break out in Nebraska.”

Let’s prove him wrong!

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*J.L. Schmidt has been covering Nebraska government and politics since 1979. He has been a registered Independent for more than 20 years.*