

Morganton News Herald – Sunday, February 5, 2017

Generations



Men share their feelings on 2017 Women's DC march

By Peg DeMarco - Special to The News Herald

We all witnessed the January 21st Women's March on Washington, DC either directly participating in a locally organized march, state capital or large U.S. city march, or the main march in DC. For those women who didn't get to march, there was plenty of coverage on TV, the Internet and social media. The foundation and beliefs of what the march stood for was globally channeled to women from all over the world and the symbols of women in pink hats holding signs dominated the news, if for just one day with honorable mention for days afterwards. However, when all was said and done, over five million people marched globally to make their voices heard and they were comprised of both men and women.

According to www.womensmarch.com, the march's thrust was to stand together in solidarity with partners and children for the protection of rights, safety, health and families, and in recognition that America's vibrant and diverse communities are the strength of our country.

The organization's website further cites that, "In the spirit of democracy and honoring the champions of human rights, dignity, and justice who have come before us, we join in diversity to show our presence in numbers too great to ignore," and, "We stand together, recognizing that defending the most marginalized among us is defending all of us."

So, it really didn't surprise many that anyone who believes that women's rights are human rights prompted men to join women whether it be husbands, significant others, partners, friends or family. The march was open to all who believed in its purpose and vision and there were plenty of men marching right alongside of women.

Before the march, and in a January 12th article written by Arwa Mahdawi on www.nymag.com, nine men were interviewed in an effort to find out why they were marching. Much of their responses were what organizers of the march were hoping for.

I took a few to mention in this article, grateful that Ms. Mahdawi shared with the world their responses. The complete article can be found by keying in the author's name, which should then pop it up on Google.

One man interviewed, Tim Geoghegan, was quoted as saying, "I'm not marching as 'a man.' I plan to be marching as gender-irrelevant. I'm marching as a human being. That's how we should all be seen — with equal rights, opportunities. I might even march in heels. Not because I want to 'understand what it's like to walk a mile in a woman's shoes.' No, if I march in heels it'll be because I think heels will elongate my stride and maybe make my calves look sexy. Okay, and maybe for any bigots watching from afar. But that would only be an added bonus."

Another man, David Singer, had planned to go to Hillary Clinton's inauguration and decided to turn a negative into a positive. He added, "I'm going for moral reasons, fairness reasons, and pragmatic reasons. I'm a political activist and women are 58 percent of the electorate. If you plan on being involved in politics you've got to acknowledge that women have got to be listened to."

A teacher from Rhode Island, Seth Kolker, decided to take his students. "After the election, my students asked me everything from, 'Will I be deported?' to 'Are Latinos going to be allowed to go to high school in America anymore?' When I mentioned the Women's March to my students, their enthusiasm was overwhelming. I've organized a trip [from my town in Rhode Island] to the march for 50 people, young and old."

I particularly liked the response from Alexander McCoy. "In my six years in the Marine Corps, some of the best, smartest, most determined Marines I worked alongside were women. So, it bothers me to see the contributions these women made are so often ignored when we talk about veterans. I'm attending the march with a group of women veterans. I'll march behind them, because I've been led by women before — and my big Marine Corps ego survived just fine. It's time the country sees that following a woman's leadership doesn't make a man weak."

And, probably the most poignant of the group, was the reason Glenn Wallace was marching. "I'm marching in honor of all the work my wife, Pam, did to advance women's rights and progressive causes. She passed away two years ago. If she were alive today, I know she would be on the front lines with me — or rather I'd be following her — supporting the idea that women's rights are human rights."

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