

Surprise a wife, reap her anger

Bill Hall/Lewiston Tribune

I want it on the record that I would not paint the house orange behind my wife's back.

No matter how much I want to paint the house orange, I would never act unilaterally painting the house any new color at all when she is out of town.

Mind you, even if my wife might ordinarily adore the idea of an orange house, she would be seriously irked with me if I went ahead and did something like that without giving her the courtesy and the respect of letting her have a say in the matter.

Similarly, neither of us would replace our present car with a new one without telling our marriage partner about it. She would never secretly trade in our current car on a new and different one without my input.

It takes two to tango in this and in all but the most insane marriages.

Oh, we might act on our own and surprise each other with a quart of ice cream or a bouquet of posies. But significant changes in our lives require two votes. Anything else would be rude and hurtful.

Similarly, the state legislature can put a sales tax on ice cream only with the cooperation of a majority in both the House and Senate plus the governor's signature. Neither the governor nor any member of the legislature can unilaterally, all by himself, decide an ice cream tax will be imposed on the rest of us.

For good measure, nobody in the legislature or in the governor's chair can hold those offices without the agreement of a majority of the voters. In fairness, and in reverence for others, any of those unilateral, one-person decisions are bad and bogus whether it involves a house color, a new car or a change in the ice cream tax.

In short, no thoughtful, fair-minded or courteous person would have the monumental conceit to decide any community matter all by himself, no matter how correct he believes he may be - and especially if he is unelected to anything. Without letting the rest of us in on his remedy for a real or imaginary problem, he creates a lone-wolf, one-man dictatorship.

So what's with this righteous little twit Edward J. Snowden? Who has disclosed classified National Security Agency documents, thereby appointing himself the sole judge of which secrets to spread before the world.

When did I get a vote on that?

Mind you, his diagnosis of what ails our government may be correct. Or maybe not. I, too, have a strong hunch government and countless corporations have gone way overboard in using electronic surveillance and the Internet to slyly stick their noses deep into our personal lives and wallets.

But Snowden asked neither thee nor me our opinion. Nobody elected him to do anything - least of all to act for us without seeking our judgment. He had a better choice. For instance, there are obvious members of Congress (chosen by the voters) who are anxious to listen to any information which could help make a formal case against government snoops invading citizen privacy. Snowden has painted the house orange without giving the rest of us some say in the matter.

He reminds me of a time some years ago when a few dozen hare-brained hyper environmentalists often agreed with me in my opinion that some natural wonderlands should be spared from the axe. But I didn't agree with the radicals on one thing: They drove spikes into trees, risking lethal accidents among loggers who cut down trees. And they burned the houses they thought shouldn't have been built in certain forests.

They saw themselves as super saviors of the wooded wild. I saw them as chronic adolescents who posed physical risks to other human beings. They could have shared their knowledge and passion face to face with the many members of Congress who opposed clear cutting and other excessive logging practices.

And now Snowden, this new self-worshipping god, has decided for us. He is so surely a level above his stupid fellow citizens he must decide serious matters for us. There is no fairness filter on his righteousness.

He would not think like that if he were married. I should paint his house orange behind his back. It's a lovely color. And he should thank me for my generosity in sharing my genius.

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