

PAGE COUNTY DEMOCRATS REJECT STATEMENTS BY MAYOR PRESGRAVES

Luray Mayor Barry Presgraves posted on his personal Facebook page what many local residents and town officials considered a highly offensive racial slur about who Joe Biden may select as his VP, according to the August 4 edition of the Page Valley News, the Washington Post, other news outlets and many Page County Facebook users who saw it first-hand.

After innumerable local officials and residents swiftly and emphatically condemned the Mayor's posting, Mr. Presgraves responded that he "thought it was humorous," that he "had no idea people would react the way they did," that he had "no [bad] intent behind it" and doesn't "have a racist bone in my body."

Page County Democrats find Mayor Presgraves' posting and responses repulsive and alarming on many levels. The fact that he posted this in the first place. The fact that he considered it funny. The fact that as mayor of this town, he may be seen as representing all local citizens. His claim that he's not a racist and had no bad intent.

Treating individuals as caricatures or stereotypes is one of many forms of racism. It certainly is not funny. It also reveals a disregard for the Valley's history and disrespect for its citizens.

During slavery and reconstruction, among the few jobs available to black women were cook, cleaner and caretaker to young and old. Apparently finding that "humorous," Mayor Presgraves seems blind to how his remarks disparage a significant portion of the citizens he is supposed to represent. That he considers his words and actions innocuous is hardly an excuse; in fact, it only reveals the depth of the problem.

The Page County Democratic Committee rejects Mr. Presgraves' posting and his failure to grasp why it is unacceptable.