

On What The New York Times Didn't Consider Fit to Print

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I submit comments now and again to articles in *The New York Times*. Some are accepted, some not. I know which ones aren't going to make it: those that note the Times' left-wing preachiness in everything in the paper, not just the editorials.

Here's a comment that was met with silence—they don't even let me know why a comment is unacceptable. I suspect it's because the reason they could come up with wouldn't play well even with them. It seems to me that somebody who went into journalism as a profession would have trouble justifying to himself why you would invite comments but censor those that don't fawn over what you're doing. I'm not a journalist, but I think I'd feel better if I were up front about it: "You're welcome to comment as long as your comment is friendly to me; I'm not doing an all-sides-deserve-to-be-heard thing here, don't get the wrong idea."

The comment that didn't get through the thought-controllers was on an article in the on June 16th, 2021 by Scott Cacciola entitled "A Vermont Runner Takes Her Show on the Road." It was a feature story about a 26-year-old, small-town Vermont woman who to run in the upcoming Olympic Games. This quote from it will give you a feel for it:

Elle Purrier St. Pierre was collecting state championships as a high school runner in the upper reaches of rural Vermont, she would join her teammates on jogs with an international flair. They would approach the Quebec border and stick their hands under the fence so they could say they had touched Canada, a modest taste of adventure for a group of small-town athletes.

Purrier St. Pierre, 26, has since emerged onto the global stage, smashing the national record for the indoor mile while setting her sights on competing in the 1,500 meters at this summer's Tokyo Olympics. Her chance to qualify will come at the U.S. Olympic track and field trials in Eugene, Ore., where

preliminary heats for the 1,500-meter are Friday, with the final scheduled for Monday. Three spots are up for grabs.

Yet even as she goes about establishing herself as one of American running's rising stars, Purrier St. Pierre remains a self-described homebody. She lives with her husband, Jamie St. Pierre, who was her high school sweetheart, at the end of a long gravel road a few miles from her childhood home. She grew up on a dairy farm where she would head to the barn before school each morning to milk about 40 cows. She and her now-husband rode a tractor to the prom.

The story was competently written, and it was accompanied by some nice pictures. But it just didn't seem like a Times piece to me; it kind of threw me. I noted that 22 people had commented on it ("Scott's running writing is top-notch. Kudos, too, for referencing St. Pierre's body appropriately in the context of the sport without adding unnecessary gendered or weight detail" "Fantastic, moving, personal, human journalism--this is why I subscribe to the *New York Times*"). I thought I had a take on the story that would add substantively to the commentary, so I contributed this:

I got three paragraphs into this article and checked to see that I was in fact reading *The New York Times*. How did an article about sports that wasn't a lecture on racial or social injustice or about sports entertainment (the Nets and LeBron and the Yankees) get in the paper? An article about a young woman runner who doesn't have a gripe or a big money contract and isn't a regular on TV, really? I'm not being flip. Somebody has to have messed up. That said, I found this article a breath of fresh air.

Nope. Such is the state of affairs at what used to be known as the newspaper of record. *Times* readers will never know what the *Times* didn't let them read, and, I'll bet, never think about how what they *don't* read affects their lives as much, if not more, than what they do read.