

BULLY PULPIT

Stinking air

I took a trip this weekend to Minnesota to take my dad back to where he was born and raised. We did the cemetery trip to dress my grandma and grandpa's graves, and even great-grandparents; it was nice. If someone in the younger generation doesn't do that, the past is forgotten.

The next day, we hit the Minnesota River and tried our hand at walleye fishing.

On a side note, I've never been checked by a Wildlife officer to make sure I have a tag, license or other necessity to be legal to hunt or fish. Saturday was different; I saw a vehicle that looked like a DNR vehicle and, low and behold, a wildlife officer came sauntering up and wanted to see my license.

He probably thought I was crazy, but I told him, "I'm glad to see you; it makes the thousands of dollars in tags and licenses I've bought over my lifetime worth it."

After checking my license, he left to check other people.

Meanwhile, the Minnesota River, that is probably 100 yards wide and flows at a pretty good clip, had several people fishing from her shores.

One such group was probably 300 yards across the river and upstream, and upwind, of my dad and I. I smelled it — someone was smoking weed (marijuana) from one of the groups upstream.

Don't get me wrong — I could care less if someone smokes marijuana. What I care about is that it stinks and it is very pervasive in the air. It has a distinct smell of rotten cabbage and is not stealthy in the least.

I passed a car on the highway, one of several, each of us going 60 mph in our oncoming lanes, and I can smell if the driver is smoking pot.

It's kind of like a person saying they drink vodka because no one knows they're drinking it — excuse me, but vodka is not exempt from smelling. I can smell if someone is drinking it, I'm sure others can too.

Pot is fully legal in Minnesota, as it is in 18 other states. In seven states it's been decriminalized and many others have laws allowing medicinal pot, etc. Kansas and three other states still have pot as fully illegal.

My point in this is how our air quality has suffered since the legalization of marijuana. Years ago, bars began making smoking rooms for cigarettes until they finally eliminated cigarettes from their confines totally.

Now, the big deal is marijuana. Most establishments don't allow indoor smoking, but someone that smokes outside shares their fumes with the rest of humanity that is nearby.

I heard a news program the other day where a man from a European country was speaking about the United States as the land of 'stinky air.' It really never dawned on me that the entire country stinks because people partake of an herbal plant — unfortunate.

The river bank we were on was no way a destination for nature lovers. It was nice, it meanders just outside a city with a population of 12,500 and a college — not like the Colorado mountains or Michigan forests, etc. But it would have been nice to smell air not mixed with pot.

Now, when I go to a concert, I expect to smell pot — I buy a ticket, I get the full experience of a band, etc. I go fishing, I don't necessarily appreciate the pot experience in second-hand smoke.

It was enlightening to hear what other countries think about the United States' air quality; maybe something to think about for our elected officials in helping make our country a good experience for both our citizens and visitors.

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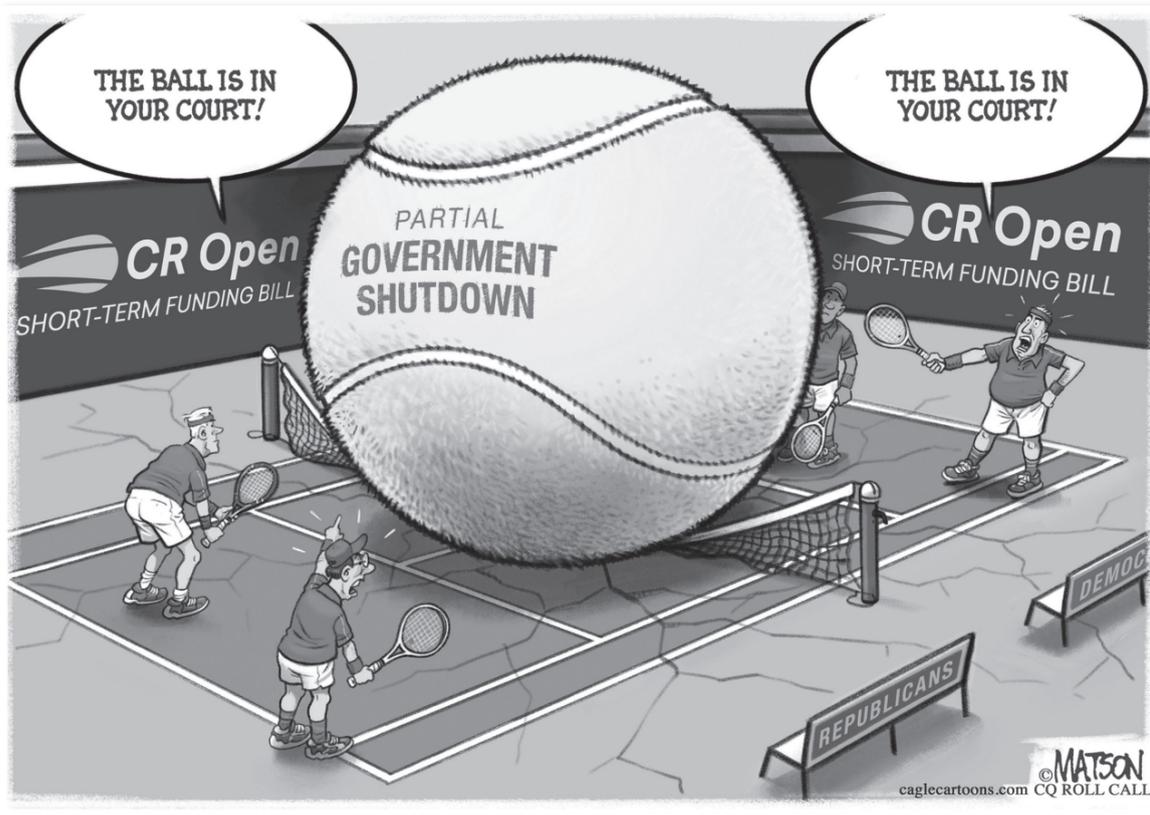
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- Be hand signed.
- Include writer's name, city and phone number as letters will be verified for authenticity.
- Be 500 words or less.
- Be received by 5 p.m. Monday to appear in that week's edition.
- We reserve the right to print or not print reader's contributions.
- No malicious, slanderous or threatening letters will be allowed.
- Letters with political content will not be accepted the week preceding an election as it does not allow time for a response.

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- Any corrections or clarifications that need to be published in the Linn County News are published on the Opinion page after such corrections or clarifications are deemed necessary by the publisher.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mayor bullying fire department applicants

Dear Editor:

I was shown the mayor's post on Facebook after my letter to the editor came out and he mentions being a mayor and a pastor. Well, the way he typed in "all caps" is the text equivalent of yelling; and to do so at any citizen, let alone a 70-year-old woman who spoke calmly is unbecoming of either position.

You are a public elected official and the SCOTUS has ruled in many cases we have a constitutional right to criticize you. For you to have an outburst like that is rather upsetting to see as though you feel you are above criticism.

No one defamed you as you suggested. Rather, I pointed out the obvi-

ous. I can't say what you are thinking and won't, but on camera you were told the fire department doesn't have the personnel it needs. If that is the case, they can't properly respond to emergencies as much as the men and women they have would try to do. The risk of a fire department that can't respond in full-capacity to operate is that lives and property can be lost. I actually assume you to be an intelligent man so I would assume you knew that.

Therefore, I would assume you accepted that risk as acceptable. If you didn't understand that then why are you making the decisions for the fire department and ignoring all the citizens, council members and firefighters? You are unwilling to realize, maybe just maybe,

you are wrong and let people that know more and better make the decisions. Because you "don't know or barely know" the people you are judging and that seems to be okay with you.

You also twist arms like how you said on camera people discussing a firefighter with you won't change your mind, it will only solidify it. You are bullying them into silence because you don't like being questioned. I know one is scared to defend himself because you say things like "a persons and response in the moment makes a massive difference" that means to him and others I've checked with them and they see that as (deal with it or you'll never get a chance.) again; you don't seem to like being questioned.

Also worth mentioning, I am privy to more information than you on at least one of the applicants, so I know for a 100% fact there is nothing in his work history, or criminal history, so I can say for sure on one it is a personal issue. With that being said, you have said he won't always be bad, what is the mark? What are you looking for? When will be the right time? You say proper functioning is your priority, but the council is having to try to change city code to make it where the fire department can function because you won't allow it. Though, I fully expect you to veto to maintain your control. We'll see.

Clara Gillette
Fort Scott
(Submitted by Chris Mitchell)

Fire applicant wants reconsidered

Dear Editor:

This is to again clear my reputation as there was apparently a Facebook post that has had people questioning me. This IS NOT an attack on the mayor or anyone else. This is to clear up my information.

The mayor IS NOT privy to information about me that the rest of you are not. He is likely talking about other applicants. I have made all my information about my uninterrupted 25-year work history - every employer gives me a good review except one. I was unable to give 2-weeks' notice and my criminal history misdemeanors from 25

years ago, one bad check, one criminal damage, one simple battery charges dropped. Available to the council members that asked me and will give it to any citizens. I will sign a release with the city to release the information but the mayor is not legally obligated to do so. I have a CCL clearing the toughest criminal background check, I have nothing to hide.

With me, there is a rumor that I spread a rumor about a city employee or someone in their family. I don't know for sure what it is. It's not true, I've told him that and even publicly addressed it in a council meeting on camera. I have said many times it is not true; I never said it and the content whatever it may be is not true because

I know nothing about the people in question. The mayor told me that in a face-to-face meeting that was the issue and that hiring me would be disastrous to the city; he said that to other people, as well.

With me, it is a personal issue, one I have asked that we move past. I just want to serve my community; but I am not allowed to do so. No matter how many people speak on my behalf, he will not budge. I have even gone as far as to go to the council meeting to beg of him personally. If there is something else, he must feel strongly, as he will listen to no one and has zero forgiveness in his heart. He says maybe later but we all know there is no goal I can meet since I

have done nothing. He says I'm bad now, but may not be later and refuses to listen to everyone saying I am not bad. He has said that many times and it is damaging my reputation. I have to keep defending myself. Obviously, I disagree with him on this but I believe he is a good man and still respect him but on this, about me, he is wrong. He doesn't know me better than me and others.

I would like to take this opportunity again to say to him, and anyone else involved, I am sorry for whatever it is you think I have done; and would ask once again, you reconsider and allow me to serve my community and to train our firefighters.

Dennis Mitchell
Pleasanton

Response to Mayor's Facebook post

Dear Editor:

I am writing this in response to Matthew A. Young's Facebook post

from Sept 24, 2025.

I am both amused and appalled at his post. He states that "If you have an issue with me..."

Be a decent human, come speak to me, instead of trying to defame with

lies and assumptions of you knowing my thoughts..." He wrote this on Facebook rather than saying it to the face of the people he aimed this at. He also quoted the Bible, good, he knows the Good

Book, why did he not use the verse and chapter? I did try to search for this quote, but I failed to find it.

Why then is he judg-

SEE JUDSON LETTER, A3

Linn County News

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Linn County Residents: \$49.28 • Kansas Residents: \$62.56 • Outside Kansas: \$67.33 • Subscriptions are nonrefundable
PO Box 478 • 808 Main St. • Pleasanton, KS 66075
(913) 352-6235 • Fax (913) 352-6607 • E-mail lcn@ckt.net • USPS No.: 435-920

Published by Walker Publishing, Inc. • PO Box 478, Pleasanton, KS 66075

Published each Wednesday, Periodical Class Postage • Paid at Pleasanton, KS
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