

OPINION

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? Contact Jason Jump at (620) 886-5654 or email ghp@gyphillpremiere.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I am a local landowner whose agricultural property is 5.5 miles from the proposed Google data center. My concern is based upon the day-to-day massive drain of natural resources required for data center operation.

Per a report by *Forbes Magazine*, "America's AI Boom is Running Into An Unplanned Water Problem" states, "The think tank 'Resources for the Future' has warned that data centers are often approved as standard industrial projects, even though their energy and water need increasingly resemble those of a much

heavier infrastructure. Even regions long considered water-rich are discovering that availability is seasonal, localized and increasingly unpredictable as climate change alters precipitation patterns and raises temperatures according to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory."

"Water isn't just another environmental input; it is the constraint that exposes the governance failure at the heart of the data center boom. Unlike electricity, which can be expanded with new generation and transmission, water availability

is bounded by geography, hydrology and climate. In many standard systems water evaporates, not returned to the watershed and removing it from the local cycle."

Another aspect of the development is the problem of noise pollution. Data centers have massive chillers running 24/7 and these are certainly not quiet. Placing such a center in close contact with the quiet town of Sharon would have a large impact on the quality of life for all citizens living in a several-mile radius.

I urge those in the approval process to please step

back and not be taken in by expected "revenue wind-falls."

Demand environmental impact statements that will declare anticipated resource usage along with expected noise pollution levels. Due diligence is a must, contact municipalities who have existing data centers, discuss pros and cons and what they wish they would have known before the center was in place. Please do not accept the developers "sales pitch" as gospel.

Thank you,
Merle Bell
Stillwater, Okla.

Free Speech Matters

Max McCoy, Award-Winning Kansas Author, Journalist

In February 1969, more than 400 students at two high schools in Kansas City, Kansas, walked out of their classes to protest the lack of Black history courses.

The students were from all-Black Sumner High School – the only high school in Kansas to be legally segregated – and from Wyandotte High, a school with a significant minority population, about two miles away.

Looking back now, it's easy to see how these students contributed to the warp and weft that is the fabric of America. Like hundreds of thousands of others during the Civil Rights Movement and at other inflection points in our nation's history, these students were driven by a thirst for justice and equality.

But they may not have felt the weight of history on their shoulders at the time. They were probably anxious and a bit afraid of bucking school discipline and asking that their voices be heard by those in power. It was an uncomfortable time in America. The Vietnam War was at its height, political assassinations had roiled the nation, and at 18 you could be drafted even though you weren't old enough to vote. The Summer of Love had become the Season of Fear.

If you've been following the news lately, it's easy to recognize some aspects of those 1960s student protests in the anti-ICE protests of today. When power seems indifferent to justice, one recourse is to take to the streets with signs and bullhorns in the hope of creating enough visual and aural noise to make a difference in the things that matter. You know, the things that are supposed to matter in a democracy – justice, equality, fairness and an end to foolish wars. It's a lesson each generation must learn for itself, or else risk losing the freedom to speak and act.

That kind of freedom makes the would-be despots among us nervous.

Now let us to turn to the Kansas Senate, which may be free of would-be despots but has plenty of confirmed quislings among the GOP supermajority. On March 3, the Senate voted 21-18 in favor of an amendment to punish school districts for student walkouts. The amendment, tacked onto a 364-page appropriations bill, would require parental permission for students to participate in protests and would impose harsh financial penalties for school districts found to have improperly encouraged or facilitated a walkout. The fine would be equivalent of the district superintendent's salary for each day of a walkout, which for larger districts could be more than \$200,000.

The amendment was offered by Sen. Michael Murphy, a Reno County Republican who is prone to wearing an American flag lapel pin and a gaudy Stars and Stripes necktie.

By targeting school districts with potentially catastrophic fines, Murphy's

amendment would have a chilling effect on student speech by making administrators overly cautious. It also could encourage students to incorrectly believe that free speech is something that must be done on their own time, and never on school grounds.

"The bottom line is we understand we have a right to protest, a right to voice our opinion," Murphy said. "But when we're in high school, we're there to learn."

Some Senate Democrats, including Minority Leader Dinah Sykes, Lenexa, criticized the amendment because of its free speech implications. Others expressed concern that it would run afoul of the constitutional protections afforded students by Tinker, a 1969 Supreme Court decision. In 1965, Mary Beth Tinker was a 13-year-old junior high student at Des Moines when she wore a black armband to protest the Vietnam War. She and other students wearing similar armbands were suspended. Three of the students, including Mary Beth and her older brother, John, sued the school district for violating their First Amendment rights.

The Supreme Court ruled, 7-2, that such First Amendment expression was permitted as long as it wasn't disruptive of school activities. Also, officials had to remain neutral when considering discipline.

"It can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate," wrote Justice Abe Fortas for the majority.

We'll return to Tinker presently.

Back to the Black student walkout in Kansas City in 1969.

Sumner High had been established in 1905 as an all-Black school by the state Legislature in an attempt to reduce racial tensions. It was later named for Charles Sumner, an abolitionist and U.S. senator from Massachusetts who had nearly been beaten to death in the Senate in 1856 over his fiery anti-slavery speech.

About 125 students walked from Sumner to Wyandotte High, where teachers peered from behind locked doors while a couple of uniformed police officers stood watch outside, according to a contemporary report in the *Kansas City Star*. The Sumner students had hoped to recruit Wyandotte pupils to accompany them to city hall, where they planned to present their grievances about the lack of recognition of Black history.

"I can sympathize with your gripes," Tom Rhone, the Wyandotte vice principal told the student leaders, according to the *Star*. "You say you want an assembly in observance of Negro History Week. You say you want more Negro history taught in the schools. But how can you have Negro history taught when you are here disrupting classes now?"

Meanwhile, the Sumner

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On July 8, 1981, I was a graduate student at the University of Kansas when I made a simple decision to go for a run, something I had done hundreds of times before. I had come to the University of Kansas from Medicine Lodge High School, where I had been part of our great team's effort to win the first ever Kansas High School basketball tournament for girls (3A) and became a state championship hurdler.

Taking "that run," on Memorial Drive, changed the course of my life forever when brutally attacked (rape and aggravated sodomy) by Sherman L. Galloway at random, something I came to find out, he had done to

yet another victim, only two months prior to my attack. This attack deeply effected not only my life, but that of my family (now 7th generation Kansans) and many lives and families in the community in which this happened.

My family and I are now about to attend the ninth parole review for Inmate Sherman Galloway, KDOC #2000006144 since 1996. And, let me be clear! Sherman L. Galloway has never accepted responsibility for his violent crimes, nor has he ever expressed regret or remorse for his violent crimes which means Sherman L. Galloway continues to be a threat to you, your family and the communities

of Kansas.

Trust me when I say we are tired, but although it continues 40 years later, we are proud to do so. It takes courage, time and effort, as many of you know, to stand up and do what's right, not necessarily what's convenient or easy. Yet in this case, it's not just about me, or us, it's about all of us.

I would also like to express my heart-felt appreciation to Medicine Lodge and Barber County for not only your past support and letters but your continued courage to walk with us now. We will forever be grateful.

We are asking your support to a letter by March 30, that simply asks the

following:

"I request the Kansas Prisoner Review Board to deny the parole of Inmate KDOC #2000006144, Sherman Galloway. We request he serve his complete 60 Year to Life Sentence for the violent nature of his crimes, the lack of his accountability for these violent crimes, and his continued inability to express regret or remorse for his violent crimes."

Please Send by March 30 to: Office of Victim Services, 714 SW Jackson Street, Suite 300, Topeka, KS 66603 or email KDOC_Victim_Notifications@ks.gov.

Thank you,
Jean Rhea and Family

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LEGAL NOTICE

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IN THE THIRTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT DISTRICT COURT, BARBER COUNTY, KANSAS

In the Matter of the Estate of
BOB SOWARDS a/k/a BOBBY D. SOWARDS
a/k/a BOBBY DEAN SOWARDS, d/o/d 10/16/2023
and
LARRY SOWARDS a/k/a LARRY JOSEPH SOWARDS
d/o/d 06/21/2020

Case No. BA-2026-PR-4 NOTICE OF HEARING

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are hereby notified that a petition has been filed in this court by Evan Sowards, heir at law of Bob Sowards a/k/a Bobby D. Sowards, a/k/a Bobby Dean Sowards, deceased and Larry Sowards a/k/a Larry Joseph Sowards, deceased, praying for the Determination of the Descent of Bob Sowards a/k/a Bobby D. Sowards, a/k/a Bobby Dean Sowards, deceased and Larry Sowards a/k/a Larry Joseph Sowards, and pertaining to the devolution of title to the following interest in property:

An undivided one-half interest in and to all the minerals in and under said land, and/or oil and gas royalty interest, including working interest:

A tract of land beginning 320 Feet East of the Southwest corner of the NW/4 of Section 18, at a fence corner and going Easterly along the half-section line a distance of 4910.7 feet, thence turning left and going Northerly along the East side of said section a distance of 2550.0 feet, thence turning left and going Westerly along the North side of Section

18, a distance of 1316.0 feet, thence turning right and going Northerly into Section 7, a distance of 1321.7 feet, thence turning left and going Westerly a distance of 1316.0 feet, thence turning right and going Westerly a distance of 2600.0 feet, thence turning left and going Southerly along the West line of Sections 7 and 18, except for a short deviation at the South end, a distance of 3905.0 feet, containing 422.3 acres, more or less, All in Township Thirty-three (33) South, Range Thirteen (13) West.

AND

The Southwest Quarter (SW/4) of Section One (1); the East Half of the Southeast Quarter (E/2 SE/4) of Section Two (2) ; the Northeast Quarter (NE/4) and the East Half of the Southwest Quarter (E/2 NW/4), the Northeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter (NE/4 SW/4); and the North Half of the Southeast Quarter (N/2 SE/4) of Section Eleven (11); All in Township Thirty-three (33) South, Range Thirteen (13) West of the 6th P.M.

and all other property, real and personal, or interests therein, owned by the decedent at the time of death; and you are hereby required to file your written defenses thereto on or before April 9th, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. of said day, in said court, in the City of Medicine Lodge, Barber County, Kansas, at which time and place said cause will be heard. Should you fail therein, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon said petition.

EVAN SOWARDS, Petitioner
ALAN C. GOERING GOERING AND SLINKARD
P. O. Box 366
201 South Main
Medicine Lodge, KS 67104 (620) 886-3751
Attorneys for Petitioner

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