



Carmage Walls
Commentary Prize

2018 Entry Form

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Date(s) of publication? Dec. 23, Jan. 13, March 10, April 8, April 11, April 28

Is your newspaper under 50,000 circulation or above 50,000 circulation? Under 50,000

Please give a brief explanation of issues discussed and the results achieved. (This space will expand as you type in your comments.)

Over the course of several months, The Port Arthur News has been at odds with the Port Arthur City Council for spending transgressions, for ignoring some constituents, for deception and for inept responses to damages from Hurricane and Tropical Storm Harvey. In turn, the City Council has threatened to pull legal advertising from the paper because of its stiff editorial stance against City Council actions. Here is a sample of The News' stances in support of better, more honest local government that will serve its citizens.

In Our 120th Year

The News

Rich Macke
publisher

Ken Stickney
editor

EDITORIAL

Hurt feelings aside, did council serve citizens?

Port Arthur's elected leaders struggle to pave streets, remove urban blight and curb crime.

Unemployment? Don't even go there. But these are difficult times. Just look around.

In a scant hour or so this week, though, City Council members rewrote the history of free expression in America, insisting that this newspaper has no right to express opinions. Never mind John Peter Zenger and Thomas Jefferson and Near v. Minnesota or their own city laws.

Their insights centered largely around two Port Arthur News articles, the first, a Dec. 2 story detailing their expenses on a three-day convention of municipalities in Houston; the second, a Dec. 10 commentary urging more transparency about how they spend the taxpayer's money.

Both seemed to wound the feelings of District 4 Councilman Harold Doucet Sr., who promised not to belabor his points of objection, then did. Others piled on when they could.

All of which is their perfect right — we wouldn't begrudge anyone their right to express themselves — although it took up a good deal of council meeting time which might have been better spent on citizens' business. Here's a few topics that might have mattered more to people whose taxes pay for city council members' salaries and for keeping the lights on at City Hall:

1. He's hardly been here long enough to learn street names, but the city's police chief is job searching. As of late this week, he's a genuine contender in St. Louis, and who knows where else he's applied?

2. Large piles of debris still line some main thoroughfares, portions of Memorial among them. When's that going to be fully handled?

3. Will an apparent exodus of citizens, post-Harvey, reverse itself? If the city's population decline is permanent it could present a steep cut in tax support and federal dollars.

4. Where did downtown go? With Capital One Bank closing its doors near City Hall, there are no banks left. Isn't that alarming? How will the council bring back a vibrant and vital downtown?

The list could go on — council members might consult that Dec. 10 commentary by News publisher Rich Macke they disparaged if they need additional, relevant topics for City Council discussions.

Councilman Osman Swati made a valiant effort to explain why Americans — newspaper publishing Americans, among them — hold rights to express themselves, but his colleagues were having none of it. Too bad.

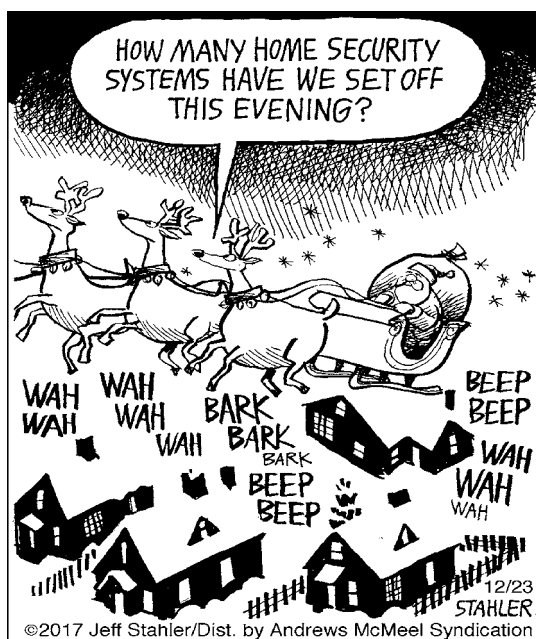
These elected leaders hold office at a perilous time in Port Arthur's history. Their concerns and focus should be on reversing the city's decline, on creating conditions for a livable, prosperous place and happy, busy people.

They didn't do that this week. There's always next week.

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COLUMN

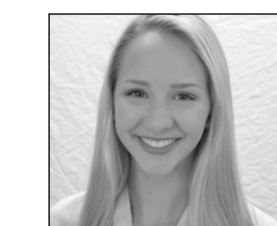
Net neutrality: Time to speak up

America is known far and wide for its courage in the pursuit of maintaining its reputation as the land of the free.

In this pursuit, big-name companies and service providers oftentimes find themselves at a standstill with the needs of the American people. These companies who desire to make profits off hard-working Americans can be seen throughout history in the form of legislation. Most recently, the Federal Communications Commission voted to repeal Net Neutrality, a rule put in place during the Obama Administration that set to protect websites from being censored or overpriced by internet providers, such as AT&T or Comcast.

Net Neutrality is a simple concept in all aspects: It establishes free internet at the same internet speed regardless of what website or search engine a user is on. The rule allows for consumers to have choices as to what they will view on line.

This hurts multimillion-dollar internet providers, who could be swimming in cash with all the profits they would make if they limited viewership to only websites that they have partnerships with or if they made



LAUREN DEVENZIO
Opinion

their consumers purchase internet packages. This possible money-making solution for internet providers has recently become a question of legislation with the repeal of Net Neutrality, though an overwhelming large number of politicians, government officials and civilians strongly opposed the repeal.

The fight to keep Net Neutrality was and still is highly talked about nationwide. For the first time since the 2016 presidential election, high school students sparked a collective interest in politics and policy with Net Neutrality on the line.

Many people misconstrued the hoopla surrounding the trending hashtag "#NetNeutrality" as a simple whine from teenagers who are obsessed with social media and their phones. However, teenagers woke up to the issue due to the fact

that they understand the internet and its capabilities better than anyone.

They have a better understanding because they have grown up with it and are active members of the online community. Net Neutrality protects not only social media and video streaming sites, but also bloggers, YouTubers, businesses, artists, students attending college (particularly online), news organizations and many more.

In protecting all these aspects of the internet, Net Neutrality provides a shelter for free speech and democracy to reside. When the public overwhelmingly opposed the repeal, yet the government did not listen, it became a time to question if our supposedly well-oiled democracy is really looking out for the good of its people.

It seems to many Americans, myself included, that the government is simply trying to extract money from the public's pocketbooks while censoring or slowing down what they can see online. Censorship is one of the most prominent steps a government can take toward becoming a dictatorship, and while America is far from a dictatorship, we certainly should not be taking or

doning steps to become one. Internet providers currently claim they will not censor websites, but without Net Neutrality there is nothing stopping them from going back on that statement.

The fight for Net Neutrality is not over, the repeal is not set in stone. Americans still have a chance to voice their opinions even though the initial vote has been cast.

Every American, even those below voting age, is more than capable of calling their government officials or spreading awareness for the issue. This is a prime opportunity to help preserve the internet and freedom of information rights that Americans and our prosperity deserve.

Lauren Devenzio is a senior at Nederland High School, where she is the head design editor for the Bulldog Beat Newspaper. She is also a 2017 National Youth Correspondent and member of the Youth Advisory Board for the Washington Journalism and Media Conference. Email her at laurendevenzio@hotmail.com.

COLUMN

Nunes: Crimebusting conspiracy theorist

Republican Congressman Devin Nunes, of California, seems to believe he's this generation's J. Edgar Hoover, the near-mythic crimebuster and first and longest-serving director of the FBI. Nunes has set his sights on this highly-regarded law enforcement organization, as well as its second-longest serving director, well-respected Special Counsel Robert Mueller, also a Republican.

Nunes insists Hoover's beloved Bureau has been infiltrated by corrupt, possibly criminal elements.

In reality, it would appear that Nunes is less J. Edgar Hoover and more the reincarnation of Sen. Joseph McCarthy, whose never-ending battle for truth, justice, and the American way, during the 1950's, proved to be so un-American that it ultimately brought about his downfall. Unfortunately, not before he destroyed the lives and reputations of hundreds, if not thousands, of innocent Americans.

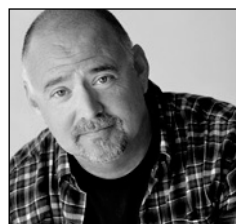
There is, however, a difference between the two.

Joseph McCarthy was smart and conniving. He sought to unmask alleged Communists, Soviet spies, and Communist "sympathizers."

Devin Nunes, on the other hand, is not so bright and appears to be nothing more than a self-righteous sniveler.

McCarthy was, and Nunes is, dangerous.

Multiple news outlets report that Nunes and a



BLAIR BESS
Opinion

group of House Republicans have been gathering in secret to build a case that senior members of the FBI and the Justice Department may have mishandled contents of a dossier describing alleged ties between President Trump and Russia. In doing so, Nunes and his comrades, while hunting down the criminal elements and corrupt officials they allege to be populating the FBI and DOJ, may simultaneously be protecting the successors of former Soviet officials, KGB Officers, and those sympathetic to them - unwittingly or not.

Nunes's public displays of asininity are familiar to television viewers throughout the world. His contradictory statements before reporters, where he asserted that he'd reviewed documents revealing "incidental" surveillance of individuals connected to President Trump, raised questions of unethical behavior.

"Incidental" might characterize former Trump transition team member and National Security Advisor Mike Flynn's conversations

with Russian diplomats and operatives, intercepted by intelligence agencies who routinely monitor them. Conversations Flynn denied having when questioned by the FBI. Denials that proved to be lies. Lies that led to Flynn's guilty plea and becoming a cooperating witness in the Mueller probe.

But why did self-appointed crimebuster Nunes, on his own, without informing any other members of the House Intelligence Committee, travel to the White House under cover of darkness to get a sneak preview of these documents earlier this year?

Allegations of Nunes's continual and secretive mishandling of classified documents that he and other Republicans hope to use in discrediting Mueller, his investigation, the FBI, and the DOJ, are now out in the open. And they're frightening.

It's not clear how this self-proclaimed "farm boy" from California's Central Valley could have come so far. Being a sycophant to former House Speaker John Boehner, who appointed Nunes Chair of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, may have helped. Given that he doesn't appear to be particularly intelligent, nor adept at private investigation, why in the world would anyone consider making Nunes head of the House Intelligence Committee?

With Boehner's retirement, Nunes traded up, be-

coming a willing pilot fish for presidential apprentice Donald J. Trump. Nunes's sycophancy even earned him a place on the Trump transition team, where Mike Flynn also found a home. The same Trump transition team that recently had its e-mail correspondence and records obtained by the Mueller investigation. Could it be that Nunes already knows what damning evidence those missives might contain?

A pungent whiff of self-service and personal protection is beginning to fill the air.

Not to worry, though. The only two people House Majority Whip - and Nunes friend - Kevin McCarthy thinks are on Vladimir Putin's payroll are fellow Republican Rep. Dana Rohrabacher and the president himself. Or so McCarthy told another one of those "secret" gatherings of Republican colleagues last year. But that was prior to the presidential election. Things change. Especially in Washington.

Nunes, who appears to subscribe to former presidential puppet master Stephen K. Bannon's allegations of a "Deep State" within the federal government, is treading on treacherous ground, one that could potentially lead to a Constitutional crisis.

For now, the "Deep State" is a conspiracy theory, just as Nunes's allegations are. But if a "Deep State" may eventually be formed, Devin Nunes and his band of renegade Republicans may emerge as its founding fathers.

In Our 120th Year

The News

Rich Macke
publisher

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EDITORIAL

Standing in a hole? First, stop digging...

Port Arthur City Council members stepped into a smoldering pile of unpleasantness this week, courtesy of a video that spread like wildfire on social media.

Then they made things worse. The problem's source was a Jan. 6 wreck scene at the intersection of Memorial Boulevard near 19th Street. There, Councilman Thomas Kinlaw III's daughter was involved in a night-time wreck.

Kinlaw, understandably shaken by the circumstances, became an instant video topic around Port Arthur and beyond by his unfortunate words and actions from the moment he stepped out of his truck. He parked in the middle of the investigation scene, refused to move, seemed to berate and threaten nearby first-responders and behaved in a way that did him no credit.

No one can blame a dad for his understandable worry when his child is hurt. Wreck scenes can present a sense of frenzy and can exacerbate concerns, too.

But first-responders seemed to perform like professionals on the video that eventually made its way to the wider public. Conversely, Kinlaw seemed to toss his political weight around at the scene. His words seemed to demean the well-intentioned professionals who were trying to restore order on a dark, busy street, investigating the cause of the collision, and tending to the needs of Kinlaw's child.

Worse, Councilman Willie "Bae" Lewis, asked later about Kinlaw's words and actions that night, seemed to suggest that police officers should have treated Kinlaw differently than more ordinary citizens — we mere mortals — because of his political position. Such a position is exactly wrong.

"There's no reason for officers to not know who are the elected officials," Lewis said. "They see us at City Hall. We're highly visible."

If Lewis was worried that the City Council's profile was too low, he needn't worry any longer. Everyone, it seems, has seen the video. Or read his comments. Nobody seems too happy.

- Just a few perspectives:
- The councilman's child is doing well. For this, we are grateful.
- Kinlaw has apologized to the police chief and fire chief. (But not the individuals.)
- Kinlaw said that given the chance, he would do things differently. That shows wisdom.

Osman Swati, District 6 councilman, has made the useful suggestion that the council seek counsel, that the members discuss education and ethics, individually and as a body. That would suggest some sense of humility among council members — humility is good for everyone — and send a clear signal to first-responders and the public that they know what happened was wrong.

- Three more suggestions, offered for free:
- Leadership requires grace under stress. Exercise it.
- When you needlessly offend others, start your next sentence with these five words: "I'm sorry. I was wrong."
- When you're standing in a deep hole, stop digging.

Millions saw the apple fall, but Newton was the one who asked why.

— Bernard Baruch



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COLUMN

Pay-as-you-go amnesty for DACA

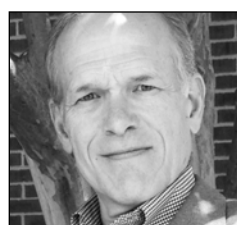
The current controversy involving granting amnesty to approximately 800,000 Delayed Accountability for Contemptuous Aliens (DACA) is nowhere near the end of demands to appease mass lawbreakers.

The people who naively think that after the DACA surge is legalized the country can get back to normal are the real dreamers., Unchaining those demonstrators from the furniture in Congressional offices and TV studios only makes room for the next shift of disgruntled illegals to take their place.

The DACA surrender is just the beginning.

The cultural Marxists in charge of the media, academia, commerce and government are, for the most part, convinced blanket amnesty for illegals is the way to go and the sooner the better. It's those pesky and unenlightened citizens who're the problem. Telling the truth, that amnesty for illegals rewards lawbreaking and creates incentives for following waves of illegals expecting the same giveaway, produces a negative response.

(The term 'immigration reform' is also misleading. There is nothing wrong - excepting the anchor baby interpretation and Ted 'The Liar of the Senate' Kennedy's chain migration law - with our current immigration statutes. What's missing is enforcement. Real 'immigration reform' would be vigorous enforcement of the laws we have now.)



MICHAEL SHANNON
Opinion

That's why descriptions of the problem use touchy-feely, focus-group language to hide the facts.

Which brings us to another 'reform' proposal. The Immigrant Tax Inquiry Group has a Five + Five plan that is supposed to "Enable Unauthorized Immigrants to Generate More Tax Revenue."

Any 'reform' that relies on misleading adjectives makes me suspicious. What's an "unauthorized immigrant"? Is it someone who innocently wandered into an area that's off limits, like the employee breakroom at Costco? Or is it someone who intentionally crossed the border into a nation where he had no right to be?

And why would immigrants need a tax inquiry group in the first place? Legal immigrants are covered by the same tax laws as the rest of us.

The questions answer themselves. So, misleading adjectives aside, how does the program work? Does Five + Five = immigration pacification?

The program is a pay-as-

you-go amnesty described as a tax that's split equally between employee and employer. The attraction for Juan is he doesn't have to flee routine traffic stops anymore. The attraction for his employer is Juan is paying half the tax.

And there, I suspect, is the real motive for Five + Five and the reason ITIG doesn't list its donors. It's a 'guest worker' program that outsources the cost to taxpayers and while the benefits go to the employers.

ITIG was unintentionally candid, "The small tax is reasonable, as employers have traditionally paid unauthorized workers 25 percent less than others, and these workers do jobs others are unwilling to do. The employer still receives a 20 percent wage advantage over other legal workers, including those whose country of origin is the U.S."

For the first time in history serfs pay for the privilege of bringing their wage scale north! Employers do even better. They can now legally discriminate against citizens in favor of cheap foreign workers. It's a win-win, unless you're a citizen who would be willing to do US jobs for US wages.

After agreeing to pay the tax the illegal is granted a REALcard. This lets Juan be a member of Uncle Sam's Club. He can work in the US legally, qualify for Medicaid, take English language classes, enjoy "continuing education," apply for a visa, apply for a driver's license and "other benefits." And

just like a Sam's Club card, the whole family can share his membership for one low price!

The REALcard is good for ten years or until Democrats take control of Congress and grant mass amnesty to these "second-class citizens."

ITIG claims the program will generate \$210 billion in new tax revenue over ten years, but I have my doubts. Let's say Juan is making \$40,000 a year and has two anchor babies. Five percent of the gross is \$2,000, but that is much less than the \$5,616 he qualifies for when he can legally claim the Child Tax Credit.

And that's just one of many questions the plan generates that unfortunately will remain unanswered. After initially insisting I interview ITIG Founder Mark Jason, the interview was canceled after it became evident I wasn't an open borders cheerleader.

Possibly Jason thinks Five + Five is an equitable solution that is fair to everyone. I don't. Rewarding lawbreakers only encourages other lawbreakers. The fact illegals haven't been caught doesn't give them a claim on our compassion. As far as I'm concerned, a sincerely held belief that in the end is bad for the country is no improvement over an outright malign belief that actively seeks do to harm to the country.

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COLUMN

A Russia story that's been overlooked

As conflict and confusion on Capitol Hill continues to swirl around Fusion GPS, Christopher Steele, and the salacious dossier, a new Russia story broke much more quietly this week.

Based on firsthand accounts of an early National Security Council meeting, the Trump Administration purportedly proposed drawing down U.S. troop levels in Europe (specifically, in the Baltics) to "please" Russian President Vladimir Putin.

At face value, there's some appeal to President Trump's oft-repeated wish that we get along with Putin's Russia. To be sure, peaceful relations between nuclear-armed powers are always preferable. And the United States should always strive to cooperate with partners on global security threats from violent extremism to climate change.

Unfortunately, Putin has shown us time and again that he has no interest in cooperation. The strategic interests and fundamental values of the United States are very different those of Russia.

Throughout the Bush, Obama, and now Trump presidencies, Putin has flouted international norms regarding sovereignty in European nations. He has supported the murderous regime of Bashar Al-Assad in Syria, covering for the dictator's use of chemical weapons against his own people. And he has engaged in a campaign of election influence in multiple nations



GRAHAM WEST
Opinion

with the clear goal of undermining public faith in democracy - these efforts most recently detailed in a comprehensive report issued by Maryland Sen. Ben Cardin.

All of this aggressive foreign policy is pursued in the hopes of not just returning post-USSR Russia to world power status, but also to distract from a lagging economy. Putin is dependent on his image as a muscular strongman who is making Russia great again abroad because he isn't exactly doing it at home.

This economic weakness is the reason that coordinated international sanctions are such effective means of pushing back against Putin's bad behavior. Those levied against his regime for his incursions into Ukraine did real damage - and they were painful for our European partners to implement. For nations like Germany, no business with Russian state-owned companies meant losing one of the biggest natural gas suppliers in Eurasia, which translates to a hike in prices for consum-

ers.

The fact that European nations took economic punishment to stand for our shared values is what makes the idea of a troop drawdown there so absurd. Leave it to "President Deals" to hire a hedge fund director with no national security experience - here's to draining that swamp - who then proposed a good faith gesture towards a historic adversary at the expense of stalwart allies, all in exchange for...nothing.

One could argue that this story isn't all that significant, given that the purported proposal never even saw the light of day. Unfortunately, this is just one instance in a much wider pattern of unusual deference to Russia from the Trump Administration.

Consider Russian buzzing of U.S. planes in Syria, submarines off the coast of Delaware, and missile treaty violations going unaddressed; fox in henhouse-esque suggestions of a joint election cybersecurity venture with Moscow; Jared Kushner's attempts at establishing a secret channel for communication with the Kremlin during the presidential transition; former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn's conversations about sanctions relief during the same; and the administration's lagging implementation of bipartisan sanctions against Russia last year.

Then, of course, there are the president's own words and actions. He has repeatedly heaped praise upon Pu-

tin's intelligence and leadership, questioned whether or not he has killed journalists (he has), and sought him out for private conversations sans-U.S. translators at international events, all while also having repeatedly attacked our NATO allies, claimed Russia was not in Ukraine (they are), and even divulged classified information to the visiting Russian foreign minister in the White House.

And all of that doesn't even touch on the communications - and very real possibility of collusion - between the Trump orbit and Moscow during the 2016 election.

News that any administration considered a unilateral drawdown in Europe to the benefit of Putin's Russia would be troubling; with the Trump Administration's wider pattern of behavior, it's worse. It should be a given that the United States stands by its allies, doesn't make free concessions to its adversaries, and understands the fundamentally different values and strategic interests of democracies and authoritarian states.

Here's hoping that no further giveaways to Russia are in the works - and that sooner rather than later, the Trump Administration wraps their heads around why this sort of behavior is a bad idea for American security in the first place.

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In Our 120th Year

The News

Rich Macke
publisher

Ken Stickney
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EDITORIAL

Without Sobczynski No. 503 was doomed

Six weeks after the city of Port Arthur contracted to demolish Locomotive 503; three weeks after the historic locomotive might have been cut into pieces and removed from its current location, if not for outside intervention; members of the City Council decided what to do about the engine that's been rotting away for years in a District 4 city park: Let the citizens handle it.

That's a fact.

Despite the smoke city leaders were puffing at citizens last week about a public hearing and council members not yet making any final decision on the engine's fate until a March 6 meeting, city leaders sought bids in autumn 2017 for companies to:

- Remove and dispose of asbestos from 503.
- *Demolish the locomotive* (our italics) and the rails under it.

Three companies submitted bids to do just that; the low bidder was Inland Environments based in Kingwood. Interim City Manager Harvey Robinson signed the contract in January.

Under terms of the contract was item No. 2: "The Contractor will perform work in proper removal and disposal of asbestos containing material, demolition of train and rails and provide soil remediation and testing."

Confused? Why was the City Council pondering something March 6 that the city itself had decided six weeks before? That's politics for you. Citizens, upon learning the locomotive's fate, were angry. Politicians started backtracking.

Inland Environments wasn't confused.

Here's part of what the company promised to do for the city of Port Arthur in its Nov. 7 2017 bid and what the city agreed to: "Inland will provide demolition of train and rails and removal from the property."

AAR of Houston and Sitek of Humble, which also bid on the project, promised similar demolition services.

Because Inland Environment's bid was under \$25,000, the locomotive's fate was sealed behind closed doors.

When we visited the locomotive site on a rainy Feb. 12 afternoon, the locomotive was being prepared for asbestos removal. A wrecking ball was on the site. A contractor said it would be gone within a week.

When we visited Feb. 16, we met Jason Sobczynski of Next Generation Rail Services, who'd driven here from his company's train rehab job in Grapevine, Texas to see if the rare steam locomotive could be spared from the fate Port Arthur planned for it. He initiated a GoFundMe account that day, pleading for rail enthusiasts around the country to donate funds to save the 503. Donors responded. The scrapper, then the city, relented. Without Sobczynski's intervention, No. 503 was a goner.

Councilman Harold Doucet seemed to mock Sobczynski when the Kentuckian suggested at the Tuesday hearing that his intervention saved the 503. But Sobczynski is right. His plausible plan to move the locomotive out of Port Arthur may not prevail, but his efforts here stayed the 503's execution.



COLUMN

Ignorant promises better left unkept

Every candidate for office makes promises. Only the truly ignorant attempt to keep each and every one once elected.

There is a learning curve in politics. Many Republican leaders acknowledged that in the aftermath of each presidential faux pas made in the early days of the Trump administration.

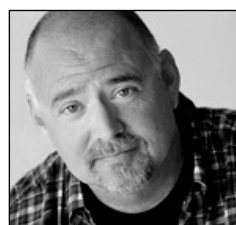
After the president put our relationship with fellow NATO members in jeopardy last year, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said he was "willing to kind of chalk that up to a rookie mistake."

Speaker Paul Ryan was quick to excuse the president for his interactions with, and subsequent firing of, former FBI Director James Comey. Ryan said, President Trump was "new at this."

The president is no longer a rookie and no longer new to the job. He's simply not up to the task. No amount of on-the-job training will ever improve his ability to govern.

The latest example of the president's ignorance is his decision to slap tariffs on imported steel and aluminum, which was part of his campaign promise to put America first. The president thinks tariffs are a good thing. He evidently cut class the day his professors were teaching the fundamentals of foreign trade. It appears that the only course the president did attend in business school was the golf course.

President Trump said,



BLAIR BESS
Opinion

"trade wars are good, and easy to win." Unfortunately, what the American people need, more than a trade warrior, is a cold warrior. The president, however, would rather punish friends than foes.

Instead of listening to Gary Cohn, his chief economic adviser, who implored him not to impose tariffs, he deferred to Peter Navarro, a fringe former economics professor. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross also weighed in. He believes tariffs on imported steel and aluminum are a wise move. Perhaps because of the large financial stake he's held (and may still hold) in domestic steel companies.

Cohn resigned, prompting a 300-point nosedive on Wall Street.

Imposition of tariffs will further alienate heretofore reliable allies and partners, who may end up retaliating with tariffs of their own. Tariffs will negate whatever perceived positive outcomes Republicans thought they would achieve through tax reform. Mostly, they will

hurt the American people. Especially those among the president's most stalwart supporters.

The trade measures President Trump proposes will not save the aluminum and steel industries in this country. They've long been on life support and it's highly unlikely they'll survive, even with tariffs in place. The president told a roomful of steel and aluminum executives, "you'll have protection for a long time."

A long time doesn't matter to those running these companies. They know their industries are among the walking dead. This is solely about short-term shareholder value. Those at the top have the most to gain from protectionist measures. But they're not alone. Labor leaders have their own agenda.

United Steelworkers President Leo Gerard thinks he has a solution: exempt Canadian steel producers from tariffs so they can join the U.S. and apply their own tariffs to "unfairly" traded steel and aluminum from countries like China, Brazil, and South Korea.

That suggestion is as self-serving as the policies steel and aluminum industry lobbyists have pushed for. Gerard's union represents workers in both the U.S. and Canada. It's a win-win for him and his membership. Yet, the president has notoriously stabbed union leaders and members in the

back before.

Remember all those good union jobs President Trump "saved" at Carrier, in Indianapolis, last year? Neither does the president. Many of those jobs were eventually off-shored to Mexico. Maybe Jared Kushner's down there right now trying to bring them back.

Tariffs will bring no long-term trickle-down gain for the American people. Manufacturers who currently rely on affordable steel and aluminum will soon find themselves paying more. Not because of tariffs, but because of trade policies that will put more money into the pockets of their domestic suppliers once they monopolize the market and collectively start gouging prices. Those increases will be passed along to consumers.

The net effect of tariffs reducing our trade deficit will be minimal. The impact of the president's dog-and-pony show, however, will be long-lasting. And we will bear the burden. Promises borne of ignorance may be better left unkept.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Hamilton points out Port Arthur wrongdoing

Per the letter, "City can't afford another election," the writer didn't address the fact that what was presented was the fact that an illegal act was perpetrated, not once but at least twice. Tiffany Hamilton is attacked as the villain when she is the person who calls our attention to the wrongdoing. The assertion that Port Arthur is beyond salvaging is unfortunate but causes me to question why Cathy Bourg bothered to address the issue at all if the issue is hopeless.

It is true that Port Arthursans are reluctant to vote and are quick to criticize. It is true that streets need repair and many other issues need to be corrected in our city. It is true that the current leadership makeup is pathetic. Because all of these things are true we should salute Hamilton for stepping up and attempting to right some of the wrongs instead of joining the ranks of the apathetic majority.

I don't know Cathy Bourg, but may I suggest to her that the best possible way to salvage our situation is to support Hamilton and anyone else who seeks to repair the damage and not to give up on our city.

Scripture says, "you have not because you ask not, or you ask amiss, not discerning the will of God!" (paraphrase).

Let's unite and rebuild a city which is far better than beyond salvaging. God bless us all.

John Syers Jr.
Port Arthur

Letters welcome

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COLUMN

Springing forward to no good purpose

Daylight saving time is a scam.

First proposed by Ben Franklin (with tongue firmly in cheek) in 1784 as a way of conserving candle power, DST does not save any energy or produce any other measurable benefits, but does, in fact, impose real costs on many people around the world, forcing them for no good reason to move their clocks and watches back and forth by one hour twice every year.

DST was adopted as an emergency measure during the 20th century's two world wars as a way to give defense-plant workers an extra hour of sunshine at the end of their dayshift. Since most of those facilities operated around the clock, workers on "swing" and graveyard shifts might have wondered what was in it for them. World War II Britain outdid its allies by adopting "double summer time," setting clocks two hours forward, putting London temporarily in the odd position of being one hour later than Paris, creating what must have been a monumental headache for D-Day planners.

"Springing forward" became a way of life in the United States during the energy crises of the 1970s. DST supposedly would save energy and reduce reliance on oil imported from unfriendly



WILLIAM SHUGHART
Opinion

nations in the Middle East because people returning home from work would not have to turn on their lights until sunset one hour later than standard time.

Standard time and the four U.S. time zones, it should be emphasized, were not decreed by government, but were established by the railroads early on to coordinate train departure and arrival times. Today, however, time-zone boundaries and DST's scheduling are regulated by the Department of Transportation.

Air conditioning was not as widespread back then as it is now. Whatever light-bill savings DST might have been produced in the 1970s have been swamped by computers turning down their thermostats an hour earlier at the end of hot summer days. In fact, careful studies of energy consumption conducted in Sydney, Australia, which extended DST to ac-

commodate the 2000 Summer Olympic Games, and in Indiana before 2006, when clocks there showed three different times (some areas were on Eastern time, some on Central, and DST was not in effect statewide) found that setting clocks ahead by one hour was associated either with no change in energy usage or small but statistically significant increases.

Because changing clocks in either direction disrupts our circadian rhythms, evidence of adverse effects on human health has been accumulating for the past decade or so. Heart attacks spike in the week after the start and end of DST. Traffic accidents increase after the twice-yearly ritual of time changes, especially in the fall when standard time resumes and drivers must adjust to commuting home in the dark. People are less productive on the job in the days after DST begins.

It is ludicrous to think that DST makes an extra hour of natural light available to anyone. Depending on the season and distance from the equator, the sun shines the same number of hours per day no matter where your clock's hands point or what its digits display. That simple observation undermines the old saw crediting DST to farmers. Livestock do not wear watches and do

not awake to alarms.

Smartphones are programmed to adjust automatically to DST's beginning and end, but many watches and clocks must be reset manually. Having to do so twice a year is a complete waste of one's time.

DST's current schedule in the United States was established by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, which extended summer time from the second Sunday in March to the first Sunday in November, shrinking "standard time" to just four months of the year.

People living in Arizona, Hawaii and the U.S. territories get along just fine without submitting to the bullying of "springing forward" and "falling back."

Some people seem to like DST; others prefer standard time. I'm indifferent, but the best option would be to pick one and stick to it.

Let's hope that 2018 is the last year we lose an hour of sleep to "save" an hour of sunlight at the end of the day.

William F. Shughart II is research director of the Independent Institute and is J. Fish Smith professor in public choice at Utah State University's Huntsman School of Business. He wrote this for InsideSources.com.

In Our 120th Year

The News

Rich Macke
publisher

Ken Stickney
editor

EDITORIAL

For some citizens, time to look elsewhere

There's plenty at stake in Dominion Ranch, so we understand collisions in viewpoints and displays of raw emotions.

Residents fled their homes last August as Hurricane and Tropical Storm Harvey unleashed floods unheard of since Noah in Genesis.

Think of how unnatural that is: Fleeing your home, which is supposed to be your refuge in the storm. Think of the fear and urgency involved in collecting precious keepsakes, clutching valuables, while shepherding your family to safety.

Think of the distress involved in watching everything in which you've invested disappear beneath the rising waters. There was no ark for flight, no Mount Ararat for refuge.

Consider that, for those who lived there, Dominion Ranch was a neighborhood of fashionable, single-family, brick residences, close to shopping and far from Port Arthur's and Jefferson County's trouble spots. Homeowners paid dearly for their properties and believed them to be secure castles.

Until, beneath dark skies and pounding rain, Dominion Ranch became its own trouble spot.

Small wonder, then, that developer Cormier Homes and Port Arthur District 4 Councilman Harold Doucet Sr. have been catching an earful from critics in Dominion Ranch. Neighbors say the contractor has been remiss in adhering to city ordinances, that sloppy cleanup has hindered drainage in the area and exacerbated flooding. Cormier Homes says that's not so.

Consider the company's investment risks, though: Who will buy homes in Dominion Ranch if the area continues to flood? So there's plenty at stake for them, too.

Doucet has come under fire for the city of Port Arthur's uneven response to Dominion Ranch's flooding issues, which have remained long after Harvey left. Dominion Ranch people believe they've been largely ignored since their troubles began. They say city officials don't return their calls and emails, that they are met with indifference when they seek help. If that is not true, it surely seems to feel true to them.

What's true, too — and what's apparent to anyone who has watched Doucet's public dealings with Dominion Ranch residents — is that he appears cold to their concerns, needs and troubles. If he cares about the people in Dominion Ranch, it does not show.

When he finally made his way to Dominion Ranch last week, meeting with some neighbors there, he offered observations and insights that may be valid. He's a smart man. What he did not offer was warmth or sympathy or kindness. He is their councilman, but do they feel like they are his people?

The August storm laid waste to Greater Port Arthur. Homes are gutted, streets corrugated, damages run deep. But the storm laid waste to some relationships, too, exposing a wide gulf between this council and some hard-pressed constituents.

For citizens, the time has come to seek help elsewhere.

**Let us put our minds together
and see what life we can make
for our children.**

— **Sitting Bull**



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SPRING 2018..

MARCH:
'IN LIKE A LION.'



JOHN COLE
CARTOONS TRIBUNE
SPRINGFIELD, PA

APRIL:

'IN LIKE A RABID
WEASEL ARMED WITH TASERS
RIDING A HUNGRY CROCODILE.'



COLUMN

Profile 2018 – Beyond the storm

Remember that ol' saying, "The past is better left in the past?"

That's the way residents across our communities feel when remembering last Aug. 29 when Tropical Storm Harvey inundated us with 5 feet of rain and mass flooding.

There's also an ol' saying "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger!" Looking back at what we endured and saying "We are still here and stronger for it" does make one think a lot.

Many that lived through Hurricanes Rita and Ike state that Harvey was different. Harvey was worse. And eight months later, many citizens across Mid and South Jefferson County are still recovering.



RICH MACKE
Opinion

Although Harvey is in our past to some extent, our communities must continue focusing on where we will go from here. This is why The Port Arthur News is focusing its yearly Profile edition each Sunday in April on just that.

"Beyond The Storm", a four section edition pub-

lished over the last four Sundays in April showing citizens where we were, where we are and where we will be.

The first section of "Beyond the Storm" Vol. 1 is in today's Sunday edition. It focuses on our community and the storm by the numbers. It shows ways we have changed and where we are focused.

Vol. 2 will publish Sunday April 15th and focus on, among other topics, schools and hospitals affected by Harvey, and their plans moving forward.

Vol. 3 will publish on Sunday April 22nd and focus on local business, those affected, and comebacks for many. How will business be better, stronger?

We will end with Vol. 4

publishing on Sunday April 29th, focusing on industry and those that support our communities. How were they affected and what are their plans to correct any issues moving forward.

Among all of these sections will be picture after picture reminding us of just how far we have come. Yes, we still have work to do. Yes, the slow process of trash removal still frustrates us. But in the end, we are still here, still smiling, and still a strong community.

We hope you enjoy "Beyond The Storm" as much as we enjoy producing it for you. Because it really is the story of "You!"

Rich Macke is publisher of the Port Arthur News.

COLUMN

Nuclear fusion is federal bloat's silver lining

"The lousy Republicans are supposed to decrease federal spending and get our deficit under control, not blow the budget even more!"

"Ah, yes, you speak of the massive \$1.3 trillion omnibus spending bill President Trump just signed into law. Members of Congress were only given 24 hours to read the 2,232-page monstrosity, which nobody did before voting for it."

"What the heck is an omnibus bill, anyhow?"

"It combines 13 separate appropriation bills, which Congress otherwise must pass and the president must sign, into a single bill that funds all government departments and activities."

"I thought it is Congress' job to fund each appropriation bill separately in a sane, transparent and timely manner - so that we taxpayers can see what our tax dollars are paying for."

"So naive! Too many politicians prefer an omnibus approach because it allows them to sneak in lots of goodies in the dark of night. Such bills are then rammed through the approval process before any meaningful review or debate can take place."

"The dirty rotten sons of a gun! We already have \$21 trillion in debt - that's more than 100 percent of GDP - and \$1 trillion deficits as far



TOM PURCELL
Opinion

as the eye can see. Republicans failed us!"

"There's no doubt about that. However, there's one silver lining: The Trump administration doubled funding for research into nuclear fusion."

"What the heck is nuclear fusion?"

"According to Fast Company, it 'uses hydrogen atoms, an incredibly abundant fuel, to provide clean, almost limitless power, while avoiding the hazardous waste problem and catastrophic risk of current nuclear power.'"

"Can you explain that in English?"

"Nuclear fusion can cleanly produce virtually unlimited amounts of incredibly low-cost electric power. It would end the world's dependence on carbon-emitting fossil fuels, greatly impacting climate-change debates. It would slash manufacturing costs and unleash economic miracles."

"Cool beans."

"Despite all the negative news in the world - despite our country's reckless spending - science and technology are in the midst of a powerful new industrial revolution."

"What is its name?"

"It is called Industry 4.0 or the fourth industrial revolution, whereby interconnections among machines, systems, assets and people are enabling massive insights and improvements in efficiency and performance across all human processes."

"How does this relate to nuclear fusion?"

"Because it is allowing technology innovation to happen at a much faster pace. The New York Post explains that until very recently, with the creation of powerful new superconductors, nuclear fusion has been 'an extremely expensive laboratory experiment that requires more energy inputs than it outputs.'" "English, please."

"The nuclear fusion-reaction process is hotter than the center of the sun - so hot it will melt any power plant that would attempt to contain it. The solution is to use powerful magnets to 'create a field to hold the fusion reaction in place without it touching anything solid.' But until recently, it took more energy to power the magnets

than was produced by the fusion-reaction process."

"The new superconductors solve that?"

"Yes, the new superconductors can produce powerful magnets that are smaller and require less energy. That means, reports the Post, that 'for the first time, their system produces more energy than it consumes.' The MIT/Commonwealth Fusion Systems team leading the research says it could be commercially viable in only 15 years. And, boy, will that change the world!"

"OK, so there's one silver lining in the massive spending bill. I just hope that nuclear fusion produces massive wealth, because we're going to need every penny to pay off our rapidly growing debt!"

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444 Fourth St.
• City hall — 983-8100
• Public works — 983-8511
• Municipal court — 983-8686
• Health department — 983-8864

City of Nederland
207 N. 12th St.
• City hall — 723-1503
• Public works — 723-1541
• Municipal court — 723-1526
• Animal control — 723-1541
• Water department — 723-1512

• Solid waste department — 723-1541
• Building permits & inspections — 723-1502

City of Groves
3947 Lincoln Ave.
• City hall — 962-4471
• Public works — 960-5700
• Municipal court — 960-5748

City of Port Neches
1005 Merriman St.
• City hall — 727-2182
• Public works — 727-2181
• Municipal court — 722-1438

• Animal control — 722-1438 or 960-5719

Port Arthur ISD
4801 Ninth Ave.
989-6100

Port Neches-Groves ISD
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722-4244

Nederland ISD
220 17th St.
724-2391

In Our 120th Year

The News

Rich Macke
publisher

Ken Stickney
editor

EDITORIAL

Willie 'Bae' Lewis: A last, shameless ploy

Nothing says as much about Willie "Bae" Lewis' imminent departure from the Port Arthur City Council as his desperation to hold on to his political position.

Lewis, who has served on City Council for two decades, holds one of two seats due for the scrap heap come May. It ends with completion of his term.

As the days draw down, he's sought to overturn the inevitable by pitching his cause — in this case, his own political survival — to his City Council colleagues and to the Justice Department. Ain't happening.

This issue was placed first before Port Arthur voters in 2016, when first citizens and then the City Council sought to streamline the board's size. Right now, City Council members come from four individual districts, from cross representation of Districts 1 and 4 and 2 and 3 and from two at-large members. Add the mayor, and that makes nine voting members, unwieldy for a city of this size. Voters decided this issue.

Specifically, impetus to trim the size of the governing body came first from an unsuccessful voter petition drive, then from council members like Osman Swati, who holds seat No. 6. Like Lewis, he's also due to leave the City Council in May. Unlike Lewis, he will leave while serving voters' interests and with his dignity intact.

Not so for Lewis. He wasted more council time Tuesday, pitching the notion that the Hispanic and Latino communities will suffer for the loss of the District 6 seat, which he suggests would dissipate Hispanic and Latino voting power.

"Doing away with 6 breaks up the Latino and Spanish concentration," Lewis said earlier this week. "It limits their power. If 6 is left alone, the Hispanics and Latinos could take 6" — someday.

Lewis called on citizens to contact the Justice Department to ask to keep District 6 intact, to get an injunction to preserve the status quo and, ostensibly, his own District 5 seat.

But Bruce Reyes, chairman of the Hispanic Business Council of the Greater Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce, says he senses no groundswell of support among Hispanics or Latinos for preserving the seat. Although Lewis has suggested many Hispanic and Latino people have approached the Justice Department, Reyes says he knows of nobody who has done so.

Worse, Lewis suggested that Swati and former City Council members Tiffany Hamilton and Morris Albright III all "sold out" the Hispanic and Latino communities by supporting the demise of District 6. "They have a problem with the Hispanic and Latino growth," he said, without a shred of evidence that race-baiting charge was anything but baseless.

Lewis deserves sanction for his antics. In this case, his colleagues treated him like the crazy uncle in the attic: You hear a noise? What noise?

Progress lies not in enhancing what is, but in advancing toward what will be.

— Khalil Gibran



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"IT'S A TOTAL WITCH HUNT!!!"

COLUMN

Beyond the storm, or still living it

A small newsroom producing a special newspaper section is something like a state legislature passing laws, or like my cousin Vincent grinding out Italian sausages in Mama's kitchen.

In short: It's better to enjoy the finished product than to witness the entire process, which can be messy at times.

That said, Vol. 1 of "Beyond the Storm," the first of the Port Arthur News' four planned weeks of special Sunday sections on Hurricane and Tropical Storm Harvey and our community's path forward, drew some nice comments and a few complaints about the print job. Specifically, the reverse type on the lead story and on the timeline that ran throughout the section proved tough to read for some folks, particularly depending upon where your copy fell in the press run. I am sorry for that; we won't do it again.

But "Beyond the Storm" has enabled me to get firsthand insights with some clarity on what happened here last August over the



KEN STICKNEY
Opinion

course of four days of rain, flood and mayhem — some stories we'd love to share. As someone who has done some academic historical research, it's fascinating to hear the measured recollections of people who lived through the storm and came out on the other side.

I encountered that years back while doing research on a deceased World War II correspondent. I contacted a colleague of his in a remote corner of Delaware and, over the phone, he recollected in breathtaking detail his arrival on the beach in a landing craft at Tarawa for what was arguably the bloodiest battle of that war. He offered passion but in minute detail,

40 years later. He'd thought about it some.

That's the value in giving history a few moments to catch its breath. What comes at you in a blur slows down for second and third reflections. What seemed to be of imminent importance at one stage of the story subsides in the weight of importance when under review. And inconsequential moments later prove to be turning points.

Last week, we visited with Greater Port Arthur and Mid County people who dealt — and are dealing — with local infrastructure, clean up and more. This week, we've talked with people in health-care and public schools and elsewhere about how they met the storm head on, and what's happened since.

A single story during an interview about the late August deluge and its wake left me not agog at numbers or theories or plans forward but reviewing this image in my own mind: That after the rain stopped, a pregnant woman, experiencing worrisome contractions, arrived at a local hospital on a Jet Ski. Envision that. It illus-

trates a lot about what people here experienced.

Me, I showed up here long afterward. I'd covered the 2016 floods in Louisiana, which overran Denham Springs and portions of Baton Rouge and into Lafayette. I got to watch people "rescued" from trailers and brought to the side of the highway — where they were safely deposited with neither friends nor resources at hand. It had rained some 20 inches in Lafayette and I knew I'd never see effects that bad again — until I visited this community in September.

That's why everything people tell me here about the storm means something. So much happened that it is taking time to process it all. For some folks, still separated from their homes, still lamenting their misfortunes, the storm is happening still. For them, Faulkner's words never rang more true: "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

Ken Stickney is editor of the Port Arthur News.

COLUMN

Cost is what really ails health care

"I'm lucky to have health insurance, but I still can't afford to go to the doctor."

Ah, yes, you speak of a growing problem in health care. According to NextAvenue.org, between a third and a half of people age 45 to 59 and a quarter of those 60+ went without needed health care in the past year due to its cost. That was the finding of a recent survey by West Health Institute and NORC at the University of Chicago.

"My health insurance used to cover most of my costs. Now I have extremely high deductibles that require me to pay hundreds and hundreds of dollars out of pocket before the insurance coverage kicks in. That's making me avoid going to the doctor."

You are not alone. According to the findings, nearly half of the 45 to 59 year olds surveyed did not go to the doctor last year when they were sick or injured. Nearly half skipped recommended medical tests or treatment.

"It's even worse than that. Due to the expensive deductibles and co-payments, I stopped getting my annual physical. I know an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, but I simply can't afford preventive care."



TOM PURCELL
Opinion

That certainly isn't good. One doctor told NextAvenue.org that chronic diseases, such as hypertension and diabetes, are huge problems for millions. He said that early detection and intervention can address them, but left untreated they can lead to heart disease, kidney failure and a risk for getting a stroke.

"I tell you what may give me a stroke: opening the stacks of bills I get for any medical treatment I do receive! It's always way more costly than I expected it to be."

That's also a growing problem. The survey found that 54% of Americans say they received a medical bill in the past year that they thought was covered by insurance [but wasn't] and 53% got one where the amount they owed was higher than expected.

"It's a total mess. I call the

doctor and the hospital to try to figure out why I owe so much, but nobody has a clue."

NextAvenue.org says transparency into medical bills and a lack of competition among health care providers are two considerable challenges. According to Dr. Zia Agha, chief medical officer at the West Health Institute, the lack of transparency and competition limit consumer choices. Since consumers lack the information they need to make smart, informed health care choices, they are unable to choose the most affordable care, which ultimately drives costs up.

"Yeah, well I'll tell you what has really driven up my health care costs up: Obamacare. My premiums and deductibles have increased dramatically since Obamacare was passed into law!"

What you say is a fact. According to Forbes it turns out that 'across the board, for all ages and family sizes, for HMO, PPO, and POS plans, premium increases averaged about 60 percent from 2013, the last year before ACA reforms took effect, to 2017.

"I know it is true. People say the crazy stories about some families seeing massive increases in premiums

and deductibles are hyperbole, but it is not! Millions can't afford their health insurance now!"

That is true, too. According to Kaiser Health Foundation polls, 37% reported having trouble affording health insurance premiums, up from 27% in 2015, and 43% had trouble affording deductibles, up from 34%.

I'm no health care policy expert, but cost is the primary problem with health care in America. Until we implement true reform that unleashes competition and takes other steps to drive down costs — until we restore premiums and deductibles to prices that average Joes like me can afford — I'll be sick to my stomach, but I still won't visit a doctor!

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In Our 120th Year

The News

Rich Macke
publisher

Ken Stickney
editor

EDITORIAL

Osman Swati knew how to leave a room

Osman Swati knew how to leave a room. Port Arthur's District 6 representative served but a single City Council term — his seat was eliminated by voter choice — but he lent grace, reason and humility that this governing body sorely needed and — shouldn't we concede this? — some dash.

Ironically, Swati left public service the same night as Willie "Bae" Lewis, a 23-year councilman whose seat was also eliminated by voter decision.

While Swati left public life reading from an elegant farewell letter, Lewis left with his fingernails scraping his own chair bottom. Like the last toddler in the toy store at lights out, he simply refused to go.

Swati thanked God and the voters for the privilege of serving, humbly extended apologies for anyone he might have offended, offered a heartfelt paean to democracy and praised devoted city workers, staff and his own colleagues for all they do for this beleaguered city. He provided the class in the room.

Lewis, who has threatened court action in clinging to the last vestiges of his political weight, spent his final council meeting dividing the room.

He blamed the former city manager for the destruction of heavy equipment during the 2017 flood. He fumed aloud that there was no storm plan now. He lamented the state of the city, suggesting it might never recover. He offered a cryptic comment about Port Arthur going "to Section 8" and accused the mayor of not doing his own job or knowing how to do it.

The last of these caused the affable mayor, Derrick Freeman, to not only bristle — that was uncharacteristic — but also fire back. That was a bad moment for Lewis.

Freeman recounted in detail that as the city was drowning in 60 inches of rain last August, council members were to meet in an emergency session at City Hall. There, Lewis pitched this single idea as the city sank underwater: Diverting \$30,000 of Port Arthur's public treasure to The Breeze, run by Lewis' friend, for radio programming.

"The only thing you were worried about was that \$30,000," Freeman recalled, staring straight at Lewis.

We might have hoped for a better farewell for Lewis, at least on his last night as a council member. He never provided leadership but he usually brought the entertainment.

Swati's farewell letter contained these words, and Port Arthur citizens might take them in more than one way: "This council is a direct product of your vote." In some cases, it's a direct product of not voting in Port Arthur, where casting a ballot is rare.

Choosing not to vote is a choice in itself: You still bear consequences. On this night, those consequences were stark:

One guy knew how to leave a room. The other guy was Willie Lewis.

Ten people who speak make more noise than ten thousand who are silent.
— Napoleon Bonaparte



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COLUMN

The constitutional workaround for term limits

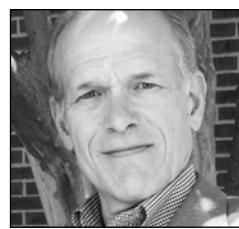
I've always wondered why the National Education Association (NEA) and the country club conservatives in the Republican House and Senate leadership aren't allies, instead of enemies. Both organizations use the same tired talking points to defend inert members from the forces of accountability.

When education reformers urge legislative bodies to adopt merit pay for teachers and thereby reward the best teachers with the most money, the NEA counters that experience is crucial and paying teachers according to seniority rewards that excellent system.

In the same fashion, when congressional reformers urge House and Senate leadership to adopt an amendment adding term limits to the Constitution, leadership rejects the proposal out of hand, claiming seniority is crucial to keeping Congress the paragon of competence it is today.

It's no accident that education, Congress and penal institutions all grant more privileges based solely on how much time you've served.

Congressman Francis Rooney (R-Doomed) wants to remove Congress from that list. Rooney has formulated a brilliant method of implementing term limits that does not require an amendment to the Constitution. Rooney's Thomas Jefferson Public Service Act would place no limits on how long a member could warm a seat in Congress - that requires an amendment - instead Rooney would reduce a member's paycheck to \$1 per year after they served six



MICHAEL SHANNON
Opinion

terms in the House or two terms in the Senate.

My wife is skeptical. She believes after 12 years our 'public servants' have already made themselves millionaires, so the \$173,999.00 pay cut won't bother them. She is not alone.

FedSmith.com downplays Rooney's bill, too, "most Congressmen make a career out of remaining in Congress (often moving on to the Senate). Many become millionaires within a few years after their election and, of course, they also receive a pension under the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS)."

What both overlook is the loss of status if Rooney's bill passes.

When Newt Gingrich was running the show, Republicans imposed term limits on committee chairmen. In the House and Senate, Republicans are limited to six years as the jefe of any committee.

At the end of their term as chairman these members must surrender the gavel, without any reduction in salary or benefits. Many retiring chairmen look upon that gavel as the closest thing to Thor's Hammer they will ever wield. Giving it up is such a personal Ragnarok that they retire from Con-

gress rather than revert to being hammerless rank-and-file member regardless of their salary.

I'm thinking not getting an envelope on payday would have the same effect. It's one thing to talk about being a 'public servant.' Becoming one and working for free is something entirely different.

I'm willing to grasp at Rooney's straw if there's even a slim chance of success.

Rooney is so serious he's prepared to become very unpopular with his colleagues. In an interview with Fox News' Bret Baier, Rooney correctly termed arguments against term limits legislation as 'elitist paternalism.' He already has seven co-sponsors for his bill and he intends to put the heat on nominal term limits supporters.

There are 90 co-sponsors on term limit by [constitutional] amendment bills and there's something called the 'Term Limit Caucus.' Let's see what they want to do,' Rooney explained. This is where Rooney drops off Christmas card lists.

Co-sponsoring a term limits constitutional amendment is exactly like promising to repeal Obamacare. It's showy and consequence-free.

The chance of the amendment coming up for a vote is exactly the same as the chance of Donald Trump being named Man of the Year by La Raza. If the unthinkable happens - see Obamacare vote - and term limits comes to the floor, co-sponsors will cheerfully betray their voters just as

Lisa Murkowski and Susan Collins did.

Rooney's bill will put these poseurs on the spot. There are 26 members of the Term Limits Caucus, yet only two are co-sponsoring his bill. Rooney should have 31 co-sponsors and that's before he goes after the amendment popinjays.

Baier went to Curator of the Senate Mitch McConnell for a comment on Rooney's bill. In a voice dripping with disdain, McConnell gargled, 'I would say we have term limits now, they're called elections, and it will not be on the agenda in the Senate.'

True and the current system has given us McConnell as an example of what term limits would prevent.

Rooney's only misstep so far came in his announcement. He quoted former Oklahoma Senator Tom Coburn (R-Great American) who said Americans 'are frustrated with the federal government.' True again. But Coburn is no longer in the Senate, because he imposed term limits on himself.

I fear the time-servers Rooney is trying to persuade will hear that name and ask themselves, 'yeah, and when was the last time Coburn was on TV?'

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COLUMN

Finally, a presidential speech in Washington

It was beyond reassuring to hear a robust, principled speech in favor of liberal internationalism on the floor of the U.S. Congress. Less ideal, of course, was that the speech came not from the President of the United States, but instead the President of France: Emmanuel Macron.

Predictable media narratives are already emerging about the speech. First, the American left is inevitably being criticized for preferring another president's ideology to our own; there is often similar right wing media whining when Democrats take a shine to a foreign leader (e.g. Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau). It's an ironic claim now, given that same right wing media spent years allowing the GOP - including the sitting President and Vice President - to sing Russian dictator Vladimir Putin's praises in comparison to U.S. President Barack Obama.

But beyond that, the speech is being portrayed as an attack by President Macron not just on President Trump's policies, but in some sense on the man himself. After days of palling around together and posing for all the photos a state visit affords, how could President Macron offer before the U.S.



GRAHAM WEST
Opinion

Congress such a scathing rebuke of so many principles that his American counterpart held dear? But whether or not it was what President Trump wanted to hear, President Macron's speech was the right one for this moment.

France knows something about the dangers of heightened nationalism, which - coupled with fake news, foreign influence, and vicious xenophobia - almost saw its presidency fall to an outrageously far right leader in May 2017. President Macron referenced the danger in his speech and deliberately warned it would only be inflamed by isolationist foreign policy, urging the United States not to close our doors to the world. It was an obvious caution against everything baked into President Trump's America First platform, from its protectionist trade policies to its

flirtations with (and origins in) far right extremism.

Rather than just bemoan the dangers of the status quo, however, President Macron also praised the virtues of robust liberal internationalism in the 21st century. In laying out the collective action challenges that that will define our generation in the history books - including refugee admissions, climate change, and nuclear proliferation - he made a persuasive case for nations with common values to work together. Built into that plea, of course, is the need for President Trump to stop withdrawing from the very international agreements and institutions meant to address those problems.

There may be a cost to President Macron's stand, of course. He has clearly worked hard over the past few days to curry his American counterpart's favor through congenial interactions, personal flattery, and enthusiastic participation in the pomp and circumstance that President Trump is known to love. Those efforts to build a personal relationship are obviously far more useful in working with President Trump than, say, painstakingly building policy consensus. But they may be for naught if America's

foremost cable TV viewer hears a talking head say that the Frenchman's speech was an all-out assault on his ideology.

But perhaps that is one of the things that made President Macron's speech so refreshing. Standing for liberal values and showing political courage are both, fundamentally, about accepting whatever cost may come. It's an approach that stands in stark contrast to President Trump, who constantly drifts from position to position based on which conniving advisor he talks to last or what he thinks the rally crowd wants to hear.

In any case, with an utter lack of acceptance of - let alone praise for - multilateralism, multiculturalism, and multifaceted American leadership in the world coming from the White House, it was reassuring once again to hear a chief executive speak before Congress with a forward-looking vision for nations working together. President Macron's words may incense President Trump, or they may simply fall on deaf ears. Either way, they were the right thing to say.

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