



Carmage Walls
Commentary Prize

2018 Entry Form

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

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

This series of editorials follow Missouri's new and unconventional governor from criticism of operating in the dark to scandals and criminal charges that have led us to call for his resignation.

OUR OPINION

Greitens political maneuvers an insult to Missourians

Gov. Eric Greitens has gone to great lengths to undermine the Missouri Constitution in order to fire a well-respected state education commissioner.

The Constitution doesn't allow the governor to fire the education commissioner, who works at the pleasure of the state Board of Education. So Greitens appointed people to the board who would do his bidding. And for those who wouldn't, he "withdrew" their appointments and appointed others who would. (One of the two people who had their appointments withdrawn has since filed lawsuits, claiming their appointments cannot be withdrawn.)

So, after the board voted 4-4, when failing to fire Commissioner Margie Vandeven, Greitens accepted a resignation on the board and appointed someone who would vote to fire Vandeven.

On Friday, that's exactly what happened. Five of Greitens appointees teamed up for a 5-3 vote to fire Vandeven.

Not surprisingly, not a single commissioner who voted to fire Vandeven would defend his or her vote after the meeting. All five refused comment to the media, and only one, Marvin "Sonny" Jungmeyer, of Russellville, issued a non-specific statement essentially saying Vandeven hasn't produced good results and has "embraced this failed status quo."

How can you possibly defend voting to fire the state's top education official when you haven't been on the board long enough to give her a performance review? The board members who voted to do the governor's bidding should be ashamed.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported one of the votes to fire her came from Eric Teeman, who was sworn in just minutes before the meeting to replace board member Claudia Greim. She who quit Thursday over the pressure Greitens was using to sack Vandeven, the paper reported.

Why all this political maneuvering to fire Vandeven?

Neither the governor nor the board has given a clear answer. The News Tribune reported that after the vote, Greitens said: "Today, kids, teachers and families won." Greitens also said he wanted to raise teacher pay and school administrators make too much.

The problem with that nebulous statement is that Vandeven and the Board of Education don't control those salaries — local school districts do.

Some say the real reason is Greitens wants to put a pro-charter school commissioner in Vandeven's place.

We take issue with the way Greitens and his appointees have subverted the process, which was crafted to avoid such politicking. But most of all, we take issue with Greitens' continued practice of operating in the dark, without explaining to Missourians what he is doing or why.

News Tribune

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Western District Commissioner
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But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

2 Peter 3:10



Is there a way out of North Korea dilemma?

WASHINGTON — With the current administration, there seems to be a new burning question nearly every week. Some linger and others are beyond answering except when they do so themselves. One of these obviously is how to deal with North Korea's pursuit of atomic weapons parity with other nuclear powers with a White House itself seemingly in personnel chaos with increasing reports of top level staff changes that deal with such questions.

If they are correct, the crucial foreign policy team would shift to those more to Donald Trump's way of thinking and that itself is scary given his threats to Kim Jong Un.

Certainly, more sanctions and other restrictions meted out by the United States and its western allies is not going to bring about any curtailment of Kim's determination to push his nation into the atomic elite with the threat of dire consequences ... a possible attack on any major target in the United States including this town. That was made clear with his firing of yet another intercontinental missile — this one something new with a range that makes any site in the United States a target. That is if, as North Korea claims, it has solved reentry and warhead weight problems.

International experts don't believe that is the case, but concede it won't be too long now before it is. At any rate the incident a few days ago when the test missile reached much higher than the International Space Station was enough to increase concerns. America's UN ambassador Nikki Haley issued, echoing her boss, once again warned that the North Korean's would not survive such action.

Strategists, both military and civilian, seem convinced that while this country would sustain

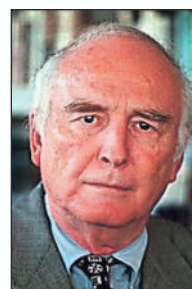
a hit or two, the entire infrastructure of North Korea — military, industrial, economically, and population would be all but eliminated by a U.S. retaliation. Such foolishness would end them entirely, an ex-general friend detailed. But then, he added somberly, we may be dealing with a madman on their side and an irresponsible one on this.

There seems little doubt that Donald Trump's sword rattling, while it might have stimulated Kim's anxiousness over U.S. intentions, wasn't the catalyst for all this. The North's paranoia about defenses South Korea's bolstered by as they are by U.S. forces, including nuclear weapons if necessary, has been constant.

Also, Kim's apparent obsession with exceeding his grandfather and father in power and importance is a factor. He obviously sees equality with the world's nuclear powers as bringing his impoverished nation an undeniable status. He also has seen Iran's nuclear development stunted by U.S. and Israeli pressure and is having none of it — no relegation to that lower status for him.

The overall question of seriousness is one about how far he will take this. Will he continue to test weapons, including the possibility of above ground atomic displays aimed at evermore powerful payloads and to bring about their delivery in more and more sophisticated ICBM's until someone says enough with obvious consequences.

One could only hope that somewhere along the line the North Koreans themselves would rebel against the poverty, starvation and abuse that has



Dan Thomasson

been their lot to pay for all this. The other day a North soldier on the DMZ, fled south and was shot several times before he made it and was saved by doctors. His physical shape was deplorable from lack of nutrition and abuse. Although a general rebellion seems the longest of shots considering a populace unable to break the spell under Kim's tight control and constant portrayal of himself as an infallible God backed up by steadfast military and bureaucratic leaders.

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Is there a way out of this dilemma? There may be. Despite the potential for disaster, there are efforts at negotiations by some U.S. officials, who remain optimistic that a non-violent solution, even one without the use of atomic weapons, can be reached. But Trump's name calling and brinkmanship makes one nervous. Meanwhile, the latest ICBM demonstration has once again convinced the U. S. military that it must be more alert than ever. It has taken defensive steps including bringing forces around concentrating more resources on missile defense and showing muscle whenever possible through military exercises in the area. But even a conventional land war would stand to take thousands of lives if not more, it is estimated.

The "little rocket man," as "the Donald" calls him, seems hell bent for his own destruction ... and a whole lot of the rest of us along the way.

Dan Thomasson is an op-ed columnist for *Tribune News Service* and a former vice president of *Scripps Howard Newspapers*. Readers may send him email at: thomassondan@aol.com.

YOUR OPINION

Issue-oriented letters to the editor are welcome. All letters should be limited to 400 words in length; longer letters may be edited to conform to the specified length. The author's name must appear with the letter, and the name, address and phone number provided for verification. Letters that cannot be verified by telephone will not be published.

Responding to Steinman

Susan Cook-Williams
executive director, River City
Habitat for Humanity
Jefferson City

Dear Editor:

Recently, there was a statement made in a letter to the editor that included some wrong information concerning Habitat for Humanity homeowners and property taxes. There are many wonderful things that we would like for you to know about Habitat for Humanity, but here's a big one: Habitat for Humanity is not a give-away program. River City Habitat for Humanity homeowners pay a 20- or 25-year mortgage, pay homeowner's insurance and pay local property taxes. In fact, in 2016 our local Habitat homeowners cumulatively paid over

\$45,341 in local property taxes. Right here in Cole County.

Our families work very hard to earn their homes. They help build their own home as well as homes for other families. They save money for their house closing costs. They attend monthly educational classes to learn how to become successful homeowners. They are hard-working families, who at the end of the program, purchase their Habitat home and pay property taxes, just like you and me. That is why Habitat for Humanity is a hand-up, not a hand-out. Come stop by our office sometime. We'd love to tell you more.

Enforcement, not new gun laws, needed

Bert Dirschell
Centertown

Dear Editor:

Last week the News Tribune reported that another Jefferson City felon was arrested while in possession of a firearm. Don't hold your breath waiting for the federal government to prosecute him under current federal gun laws.

Federal weapons convictions declined significantly from 2005 through 2015 (2015 is the last year for which data was available). They dropped over 20 percent from 2009-15, under Obama.

<http://trac.syr.edu/tracreports/crim/409/>
We don't need more federal gun laws until the government enforces current laws.

A time to think

Tom Ault
Jefferson City

Dear Editor:

It was disgusting! Supposedly a meeting to bring people together, yet all that could be heard was name-calling and accusations. It was a complete fiasco!

"I won't shop there anymore, black folks own that store!"

"What? Jewish people own that deli. I'll certainly not be seen in there again."

"I understand that some white people own that place. Stay away from there and only shop in places our people own."

"He actually touched you? Call your attorney!"
"She didn't really say that ... did she? Tell her employer; even better, call the media!"

We have adults, acting more like children, making the news these days. This will continue if we let it. The Democrats won't cooperate with the Republicans. The Republicans can't stand the Democrats. Name-calling is the rule! Accusations replace action. Unimportant issues take up the time when

meaningful process should be taking place. Many just feathering their nest at our expense.

Soon we will regress 60 years in time when Catholics and Protestants took sides, when we were certain that only Mexicans and Italians worked at the railroad yards, and the black folks didn't work at all! Those were not times to take pride in.

The only thing we really knew was that the country had been at war and we had been through a depression. We have overcome 50 years of progress and marched backward. Why have we morphed back to a worse time, a time of barriers without reason?

It is time to stand up and be counted! Not for the hatred that is so prevalent, but for the unification we had started to achieve ... and now see dissolving. We need to hang onto the love for each other that had started to grow; we need to care for those that cannot care for themselves, but not be confused by those that stand on our corners waiting for the government to give them something.

Our politicians, news people, actors and actresses, and others, with any kind of standing, are being ostracized whether they are guilty or not. The theme seems to be "get on board, let's get them," whoever "them" might be.

Do you believe that this is a good time? I think this age of rumor and accusation has to stop. When false accusations take over, the country will disintegrate.

OUR OPINION

Greitens
embarrasses state,
but resignation
calls premature

Gov. Eric Greitens has embarrassed our state. His admission of an extramarital affair made national news, fueled by allegations that he bound and photographed his partially undressed mistress in an attempt to blackmail her into silence.

The ordeal has disrupted the 2018 legislative session right at the start.

However, so far, we believe calls for his resignation are premature.

To be clear, we've been deeply troubled with some things we've seen from Greitens over the past year, before the story of the affair broke. While we generally agree with his conservative agenda, we've disagreed with his lack of transparency and some of the tactics he's used, including his acceptance of "dark money." To Greitens, it seems, the means justifies the end.

His affair alone is disappointing, and we should expect more of our leaders. While it shows a lack of character and moral standards from someone who billed himself as a family man, it isn't illegal.

The only thing we know for sure is the governor cheated on his wife. He and his wife have acknowledged that, and said they have worked through the three-year-old issue. He has denied the blackmail allegations.

At this point, they are just that: allegations. They are based on a confession from Greitens' mistress to her husband, who secretly recorded their conversation.

A St. Louis prosecutor is investigating the claims. The prosecutor and the FBI have been given the recording of that conversation, as well as other recorded conversations between the husband and wife, who since have divorced. The FBI isn't saying whether they're investigating.

We welcome the investigations, and ask all parties involved, including the governor, to be forthright and transparent in answering questions.

One of the growing number of lawmakers in Greitens' own party who is calling for the governor's resignation is Sen. Rob Schaaf, of St. Joseph.

"When you ran for office, you promised that you would be a governor known for ethics and transparency," Schaaf said, directing his comments as if Greitens was there listening. "Instead, you have defined yourself through scandal and covering things up."

While we agree with his assessment, we don't agree with his conclusion that he should necessarily resign.

At this point, Greitens has denied criminal wrongdoing, and at least one investigation has been initiated. The governor should be allowed to keep his job while that takes place.

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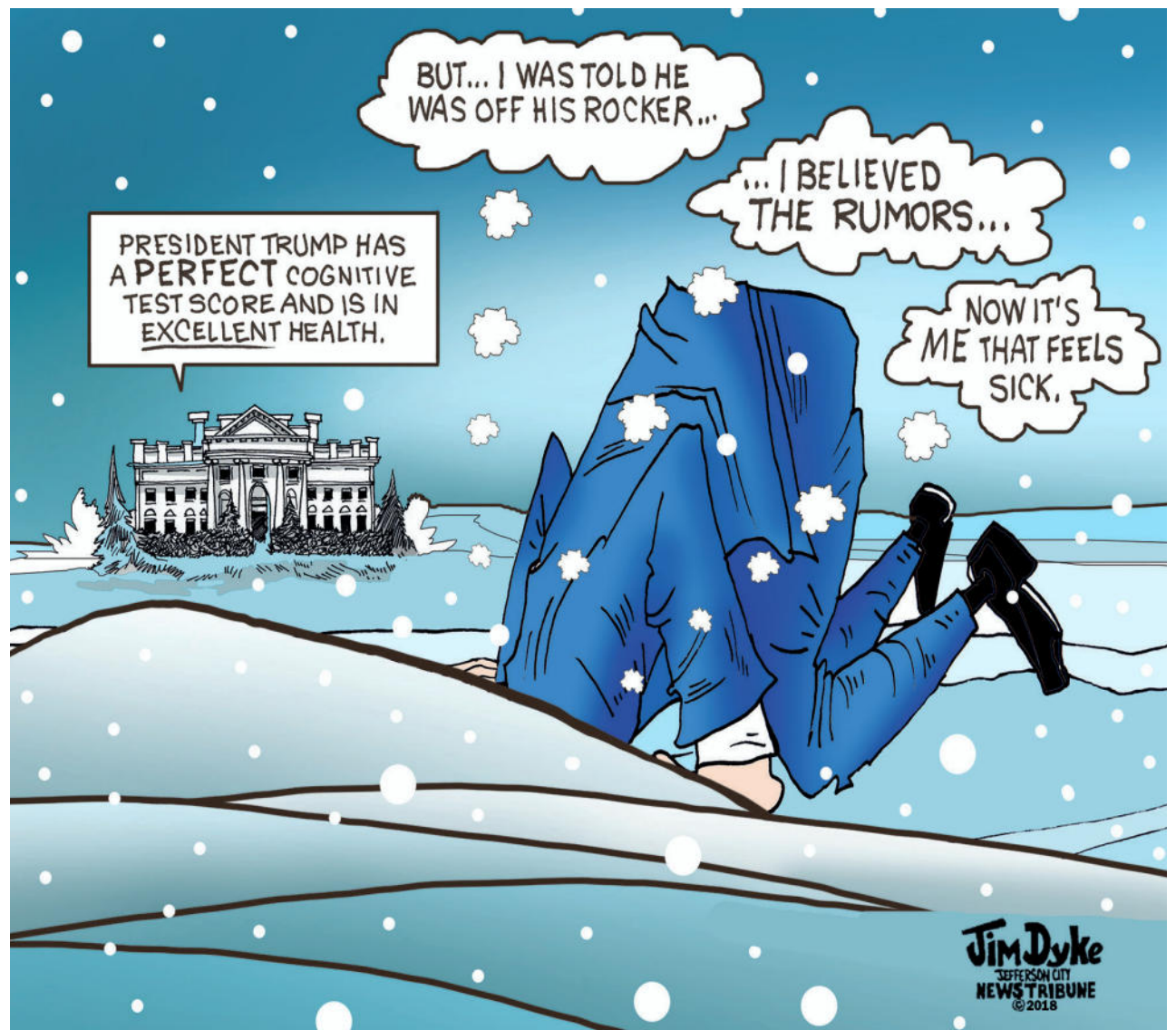
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You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.

Isaiah 26:3

A new paean to progressivism overlooks
why Americans lost trust in government

WASHINGTON — Is there anything more depressing than a cheerful liberal? The question is prompted by one such, historian David Goldfield, who has written a large-hearted book explaining that America's problems would yield to government's deft ameliorating touch if Americans would just rekindle their enthusiasm for it.

Goldfield's new book, "The Gifted Generation: When Government Was Good," notes that in 1964 nearly 80 percent of Americans said they trusted Washington all or most of the time; today, about 20 percent do. Goldfield does not explain why trust in government waned as government's confidence waxed. The question contains its answer.

He rightly celebrates the 1944 G.I. Bill of Rights, but misses what distinguished it from many subsequent social programs. It was intended as a prophylactic measure against unemployment and political extremism among millions demobilized from the military. It worked. Veterans overwhelmed campuses; Goldfield says that some in California resided in fuselages of half-built airplanes. Eligibility for the bill's benefits was contingent upon having performed military service. The bill used liberal means — subsidies for veterans' education and homebuying — to achieve conservative results: Rather than merely maintaining people as permanent wards of government, it created an educated, property-owning middle class equipped for self-reliant striving.

In contrast, much of the Great Society's liberalism sought to de-moralize policies, deeming repressive those policies that promoted worthy behavior. This liberalism's political base was in government's caring professions that served "clients" in populations disorganized by behaviors involving sex and substance abuse. Surely this goes far toward explaining what Goldfield's narrative leaves inexplicable:

Postwar America's political process chose Harry Truman and then Dwight Eisenhower to preserve the post-New Deal status quo. And then it chose Lyndon Johnson over Barry Goldwater, who was (rightly) viewed as hostile to the New Deal's legacy. But just 16 years later, the electorate, whose prior preferences Goldfield approves, made an emphatic choice that he considers a sudden eruption of dark impulses that hitherto were dormant. Goldfield does not distinguish, as Ronald Reagan did, between New Deal liberalism — of which the G.I. Bill was a culmination — and liberalism's subsequent swerve in another direction. And he has no answer as to why the electorate, so receptive for so long to hyperactive government, by 1980 was not.

Goldfield flecks his narrative with fascinating facts: Not until 1943 did the government remove the racial classification "Hebrew" from immigration forms. Cornell University's president promised to prevent Jewish enrollment from making the school "unpleasant for first-class Gentile students." When Jonas Salk, who would invent the polio vaccine, applied for a fellowship, one of his recommenders wrote, "Dr. Salk is a member of the Jewish race but has, I believe, a very great capacity to get on with people." That we cringe is a better metric of social progress than is government spending on social programs.

Goldfield's grasp of contemporary America can be gauged by his regret that the income tax, under which the top 10 percent of earners pay more than 70 percent of the tax and the bottom 50 percent pay 3 percent, is not "genuinely progressive." He idealizes government as an "umpire," a disinterest-



George Will

ed arbiter ensuring fair play. Has no liberal stumbled upon public choice theory, which demystifies politics, puncturing sentimentality about politicians and government officials being more nobly and unselfishly motivated than lesser mortals? Has no liberal noticed that no government is ever neutral in society's allocation of wealth and opportunity? And that the bigger government becomes, the more it is manipulated by those who are sufficiently confident, articulate and sophisticated

COMMENTARY

to understand government's complexities, and wealthy enough to hire skillful agents to navigate those complexities on their behalf? This is why big government is invariably regressive, transferring wealth upward.

During his long look backward through rose-tinted glasses, Goldfield, a Brooklyn native, pines for the days he remembers, or thinks he does, when his borough was defined by its devotion to the Dodgers (who decamped to Los Angeles in 1958). Such nostalgia is refuted by information: There still are seemingly millions of moist-eyed, aging members of the Brooklyn diaspora who claim to have spent every day of every summer of their halcyon youths in Ebbets Field (capacity 31,902). Actually, in the team's greatest season, 1955, when it won its only World Series, attendance averaged 13,423, worse than the worst 2017 team average (Tampa Bay's 15,670). The past — including government's salad days, when it said it could create "model cities" and other wonders, and people believed it — was often less romantic in fact than it is in memory.

George Will's email address is georgewill@washpost.com.

YOUR OPINION

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Congress should do something
about disgraceful presidency

Peter DeSimone
Jefferson City

Dear Editor:

I served the United States government for five years in Africa: two years with the Peace Corps in Tanzania as a civil engineer, one year in Uganda and two years in Sierra Leone as a foreign service officer with the United States Information Agency. My first-born son was born in Kampala Uganda. My daughter was born in Sierra Leone. I speak Swahili, a beautiful lyrical language spoken by millions in East and Central Africa. Tanzania's Olduvai Gorge has been found to be the home and origins of the human race.

Far from being "s---holes" as characterized by our embarrassing excuse for a president of the United States, we found Africa to be a beautiful land and Africans to be wonderful, hospitable people who live decent hard-working lives, raising their families, making a living, living more peacefully than we Americans with our multiple international military commitments and doomsday instruments of war.

And although I hold the United States close to my heart and soul as the crucible, shelter, shield and motherland of my fortunate life, where my loved ones and memories rest and beckon us home, to this day I would proudly live in Africa and count as an honor to have known and lived with such delightful and talented people. We are fortunate in Central Missouri to have gained the presence and talents of many immigrant Africans who have become American citizens and serve the community with energy and patriotic spirit.

As my age and health lead me to my inevitable home in the bosom of America, I have been served by African-American citizens employing considerable skills as health care professionals at the University of Missouri Hospitals and Clinics keeping me healthy and alive a little longer. Outside the hospital I feel lucky to also count African immigrants and now American citizens to Central Missouri as dear friends.

No, Mr. President, Africa is not a "s---hole."

That vulgar, ignorant description belongs to you.

I charge our congressional delegation with complicity in the president's racism and vulgar insults if they do not do something about his disgraceful presidency.

Fire Dept. funding
adds to federal debt

Bert Dirschell
Centertown

Dear Editor:

How long are we voters going to continue to elect those who pile more debt on our child and grandchildren so that they can "buy" votes when they hand out ever increasing amounts of "free stuff"? Claire McCaskill backed, and Trump signed, a bill to extend funding for grant programs to local firefighters and emergency responders. Jefferson City Fire Department was awarded a \$274,461 Fire Act Grant in 2016.

JCFD needs to convince the taxpayers that they need this equipment, and then have local voters approve higher taxes to pay for it. It is insane to fund such projects by federal borrowing.

Have we really devolved to the point where the majority of voters approve of piling debt on our children so that we can have more free stuff? We Baby Boomers, Gen X'ers and Millennial's should

all hang our heads in shame.

The following figures are inflation adjusted to 2017 dollars. From 1940-46 funding our WWII efforts caused our debt to grow by 340 percent, to \$3.6 trillion. After fighting in WWII (407,300 Americans killed, 671,801 wounded) the Greatest Generation started paying down that debt. By the end of 1954, at the end of the Korean War (36,600 Americans killed, 136,600 wounded) the debt was down to \$2.8 trillion. By the mid '60s, when we Baby Boomers started voting the debt had been paid down to \$2.3 trillion. It was still \$2.3 trillion in 1975, after the end of the Vietnam War (58,318 Americans killed, another 153,303 wounded).

Then the debt-funded, free stuff bandwagon really got rolling. By 1988 the debt had more than doubled to \$5 trillion. By 2007 it had doubled again to \$10.5 trillion. In the last 10 years it has doubled again and is now over \$20 trillion.

This is not because of a lack of income. In 1940 federal receipts (taxes collected) were \$0.094 trillion, 1954 receipts were \$0.627 trillion, 1975 — \$1.04 trillion, 2007 — \$2.66 trillion and in 2017 they were over \$3.0 trillion. A 380 percent increase in taxes since the end of the Korean War while at the same time the annual deficit has increased by over \$600 billion.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates the cost of that interest on the federal debt will triple by 2027, to over \$800 billion per year.

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

John 13:34

OUR OPINION

Disappointing transparency rulings show need for Sunshine law updates

Last week, Attorney General Josh Hawley said Gov. Eric Greitens' personal Twitter and Facebook accounts are not public records and he does not need to provide private messages or names of blocked users to anyone.

And, as the News Tribune reported last week, Cole County Circuit Judge Jon Beetem denied a request for a temporary court order blocking Greitens and his staff from using a mobile device application that destroys messages after they are sent or read, although he said the case would continue.

The two decisions were hurtful to transparency in government, which we have long supported. That said, they weren't necessarily inconsistent with the law.

We're not legal experts and have no intentions of arguing the legality of the rulings.

But we do believe that for a free society to thrive, its government needs to be more than accountable: it needs to be open and transparent.

Last Thursday, the Associated Press said the governor was in his Capitol office, taking questions from Missourians about his recently announced tax cut plan via Facebook Live. His office insists it was not government business because the online meeting was not conducted on the official government account he created in September, nine months into

office.

We would argue discussing his tax cut plan with Missourians is state business, regardless of whether it is on an "official government account" or in some other venue.

Part of the problem is the state's open meetings and records law, known as the Sunshine Law, hasn't kept up with the times.

The internet and social media have caused legal gray areas that will need to be sorted out by the courts, as well as by laws that clarify what is public and what is private regarding the latest technologies.

Democratic state Rep. Mark Ellebracht, of Liberty, is sponsoring a bill to update the Sunshine Law to deem an agency or official's personal social media pages as public records.

"What I want to avoid now is having a government that's shifted from a government of openness and transparency to a government that does 90 percent of its policy discussion on third party-hosted websites where people can be blocked and messages can be hidden and information can be controlled," Ellebracht said.

While courts determine how to apply the old laws to new technology, we hope lawmakers embrace Sunshine Law updates that promote transparency in government.

News Tribune

PERSPECTIVE

Congress should follow Olympic athletes' lead and work as a team

On Friday, millions of us watched Team USA walk into Olympic Stadium waving the stars and stripes and eager to get the competition started. For some of the athletes, these Olympics will cap off an impressive career filled with championships and medals. For most, this is the beginning of a dream come true that they've dedicated their entire lives to. Countless hours of training, extreme discipline, and often sacrificing family time and opportunities many of their peers enjoy has led to that first step onto the world stage. Regardless of the level of experience, they are all enjoying the honor of representing the United States of America.

The Olympics is competition at its best — athletes pouring a lifetime of work into a couple minutes down the track, on the ice, or around the slalom gates going head to head with competitors from all corners of the world and at times their own countrymen to lay claim to being the world's best. But as we've seen in the past, once the competition is over, they'll hug one another, congratulate their teammates, and stand shoulder to shoulder on the podium under the same flag, represent the same team: Team USA. They understand even though they are opponents in the snow, they are not enemies. They know they are a part of something bigger than themselves, and while they gave every single thing they could to beat their competition, at the end of the day, they're all in it together.

America, and more notably Congress, can learn a couple lessons from our Olympic athletes. One of the greatest aspects of America is our freedom to voice our opinions and the ability to go against the status quo. We can openly disagree with our government and express our feelings to whomever we choose, as we should. However, more and more, we are seeing arguments take the place of conversation, and the differing of

opinion replaced with vitriol. I fear we are forgetting it's OK to disagree and have begun viewing each other as adversaries instead of fellow Americans with a different point of view.

This is no more apparent than in politics. Of course we are going to be on opposite sides of issues, have separate ideas of what is best for our nation, and give everything we've got to succeed in our mission. That is what we're sent to Congress to do — work for the people who chose us to represent them. However, we must keep in mind that while we may be opponents, we're not enemies. Our first responsibility is to the people and success of this country. Just like those Olympians we are a part of something bigger than ourselves and serving under that same flag.

As the representative of Missouri's 3rd District, it is my job to fight for our region, and as a native of Mid-Missouri I have an unwavering passion to serve the people I'm lucky enough to call friends and fellow Missourians. My team and I work every day to do what is best for our state, and we do it with a conviction that matches our most intense competitors in the Olympics. At times, I get frustrated with my Congressional colleagues who have an opposing view. That comes with any job in which you are so personally invested, and quite frankly, there is plenty to get frustrated about. I will never give up on the priorities of our area or stop fighting for your interest. However, like the young men and women in Pyeongchang, as we relentlessly pursue our goals, we'd be very well served to remember that despite our differences we are all Americans and one nation under God.

U.S. Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer, R-Mo., shares his perspective each week on national issues, including ones that affect Missouri. He represents the state's 3rd District, which includes Jefferson City. His local office can be reached at 635-7232.



Blaine Luetkemeyer



COMMENTARY

Koresh, Bible prophecies and the tragedy of Waco

The recording tape was rolling on Feb. 28, 1993, when Branch Davidian leader David Koresh called Larry Lynch at the McLennan County sheriff's office.

In the background, gunfire continued as Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents raided the 77-acre Mount Carmel complex near Waco, Texas. Koresh was wounded early in a two-hour firefight in which four agents and six civilians died.

Koresh kept talking about Bible prophecies. Lynch kept interrupting, trying to get him to pay attention and help stop the fighting.

"All right, we can talk theology," Lynch said, frustrated. "But right now —"

Koresh fired back: "No, this is life. This is life and death! ... Theology ... is life and death!"

For Koresh, everything hinged on Book of Revelation texts about the Seven Seals and "the Lamb," a mysterious figure who would open those seals in the Last Days.

That was the infamous Branch Davidian drama summed up in one tense exchange, according to the creators of the six-part Paramount Network miniseries "Waco," which runs through Feb. 28. The complex community inside the compound — including some believers who debated with Koresh — kept trying to tell FBI leaders and their hand-picked experts why they were doing what they were doing and why they believed what they believed.

In the end, federal officials saw everything through a "cult" lens.

"Something dehumanizing happens when you start using the word

"cult," said John Erick Dowdle, who, with his brother Drew, spent four years creating the miniseries. "No matter what happened, no matter what anybody said, the FBI people thought it was just a matter of time before they would kill themselves."

Of course, no one living inside one of these faith communities "believes that they belong to a cult," he added.

Thus, one of the main goals of "Waco" was to "try to show what all of this looked like on the inside, for some of the Branch Davidians."

The 51-day siege, which unfolded on television news, ended in a still-mysterious firestorm ignited when nearly 900 soldiers and other law officials, with armed tanks, crashed into the shabby tinderbox that was the Mount Carmel complex. In all, 76 men, women and children died in the flames. Negotiators had arranged for 35 to exit, including 21 children.

The tragedy led to congressional hearings, creating massive amounts of reference materials — including recordings of Koresh and others. The "Waco" miniseries also drew inspiration from books by David Thibodeau, a Branch Davidian convert who survived, and Gary Noesner, a key FBI negotiator.

The Dowdle brothers also visited Baylor University in Waco, digging into archives from years of dialogues with Branch Davidian leaders. These contacts began long before the mid-1980s arrival of a young rock musician, biblical-prophecy savant and eventual polygamist who would change his name to David Koresh.

For example, in the late 1970s, a Davidian leader — Perry Jones,

father of Koresh's wife Rachel — spoke in a class linked to my church-state graduate studies at Baylor. The topic? Debates about the term "cult." Jones stressed that the Davidians split from Seventh-day Adventism, but retained an emphasis on pacifism and apocalyptic prophecies. Jones was fatally wounded in the first moments of the 1993 fighting.

The Dowdle brothers said it was highly likely that the Mount Carmel firestorm could have been avoided if federal officials had listened to scholars who truly understood the beliefs of the Branch Davidians. This included their convictions that Koresh might be "the Lamb" and that one of the Seven Seal prophecies predicted they would be tested by an invasion of hostile forces.

Had the Feb. 28, 1993, raid validated that prophecy? Many Branch Davidians thought God wanted them to stay where they were, awaiting another sign. They also believed that the FBI would take their children, no matter what, because of child-abuse rumors.

However, local officials, hospital personnel, Baylor professors and others knew the Branch Davidians as people — not violent cultists.

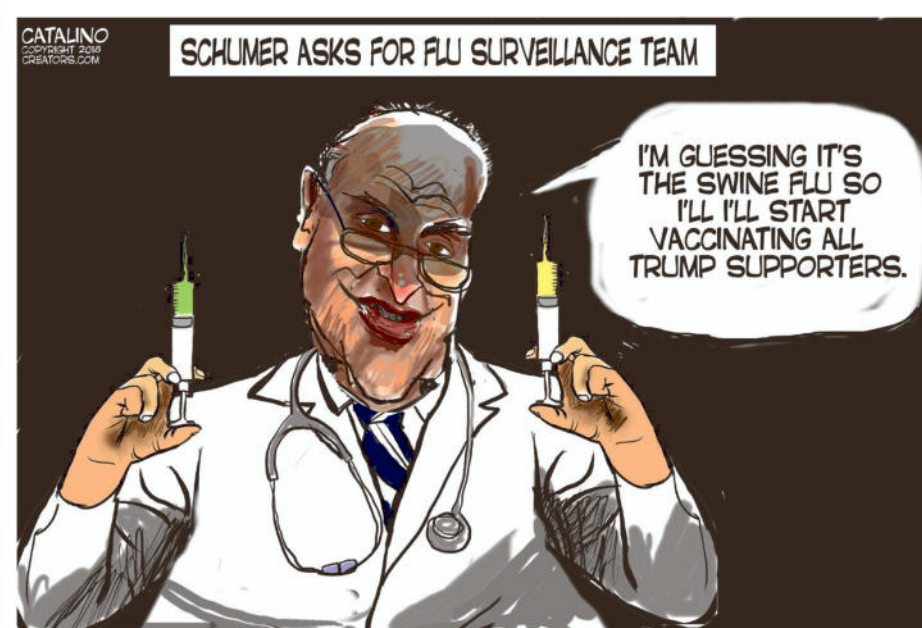
"The FBI was totally dismissive of what they called the 'Bible babble' of Koresh and his followers," Drew Dowdle said. "They felt that if you let them talk about that stuff they would just go on and on all night. ..."

"In the end, they just didn't think that talking about the Bible had anything to do with what was happening at Mount Carmel. And that was that."

Terry Mattingly is the editor of GetReligion.org and Senior Fellow for Media and Religion at The King's College in New York City. He lives in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.



Terry Mattingly



YOUR OPINION

Issue-oriented letters to the editor are welcome. All letters should be limited to 400 words in length; longer letters may be edited to conform to the specified length. The author's name must appear with the letter, and the name, address and phone number provided for verification. Letters that cannot be verified by telephone will not be published.



OUR OPINION

In interest of state, Greitens should resign

In our legal system, Gov. Eric Greitens is innocent until proven guilty. But his ability to effectively lead the state has been compromised.

We commend the Missouri House of Representatives for quickly setting up an investigation of the charge against Greitens. We also believe it's past time for the governor to consider whether staying in office is in the best interest of the state.

Greitens faces a felony invasion of privacy indictment stemming from his 2015 extramarital affair with his former hairdresser. The allegation is that he took a photo of her when she was at least partially nude, in a manner that made the photo available to be seen on a computer.

Greitens has admitted to the affair, but denied doing anything illegal.

House Speaker Todd Richardson, R-Poplar Bluff, and Speaker Pro Tem Elijah Haahr, R-Springfield, issued a joint statement shortly after the indictment was announced Thursday. "We will carefully examine the facts contained in the indictment and answer the question as to whether or not the governor can lead our state while a felony case moves forward," the statement said in part. "The people of Missouri deserve no less."

They're right.

The probe is serious — it's the first step in the process of impeachment, if needed. But lawmakers in both chambers and in both parties seem to understand the gravity of the investigation and the need to be fair. They also understand that, in fairness to Missourians, they need to act quickly.

Richardson made a good choice in Rep. Jay Barnes, R-Jefferson City, to head up the investigating committee. At a Monday news conference, Barnes pledged a "fair, thorough and timely" investigation "without any pre-ordained results."

But right now our state is governed by a politically hobbled leader and a Legislature that is diverting its attention from its three main duties: making laws, passing a state budget and representing its constituency.

Missourians deserve a full-time governor and, during session, a full-time Legislature. Right now, we're not getting either.

While the House starts its investigation, we ask Greitens to consider this question: Does your ability to keep your job outweigh the need for 6 million Missourians to have an effective, full-time governor? We don't believe it does.

News Tribune

YOUR OPINION

Issue-oriented letters to the editor are welcome. All letters should be limited to 400 words in length; longer letters may be edited to conform to the specified length. The author's name must appear with the letter, and the name, address and phone number provided for verification. Letters that cannot be verified by telephone will not be published.

Lessons of the Olympics

Tom Ault

Jefferson City

Dear Editor:

During the last couple of weeks we have, or at least could have, enjoyed watching the Olympics. Some are not great sports fans but ... the beautiful Olympics setting in South Korea, the fantastic displays in both the opening and the closing, could not be ignored. South Korea should be applauded for its beautiful artistic works.

That being said, there is even a much more important message from the Olympics. It is called unity.

Just imagine a world that reacted to each other as the Olympians do. Working for years in advance to prove their ability to the world through friendly competition, while still admiring their opponents' diligence. We were privileged to view 92 countries in competition without race, color, religion, or any of the other unfortunate disparities that are so apparent that our world encompasses each day due to ignorance and greed. We saw no hatred or vulgarity.

What would happen if the billions of dollars spent each year, by all of those countries, on war was instead spent on peace. How wonderful it would be to enjoy other cultures without fear of being murdered, kidnapped or tortured just for being there. How great if all of the world communities could come together as a "human" world and enjoy rather than exploit each other. There would be no famine or hatred. Ignorance of other cultures would be eliminated because we could actually travel and visit those cultures as they could mutually visit and understand ours.

The Olympics could teach all of us how living together, competing in ways that were culturally intelligent and acceptable, would enlighten our lives, restore faith in our beliefs, and stop the prejudices that preclude good judgment.

Just think of the accomplishments the inhabitants of this world could enjoy if all of the scientific communities worked together for the betterment of our unified peoples.

Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done."

Matthew 21:21



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Facts over frenzy

The massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, is so atrocious and painful that it invokes a hysterical urge to "do something."

"Anything!" our tormented empathy cries out.

But frantic feelings and unbridled emotions do not good policy make. The cold light of analysis must supersede the hot tears of desperation if whatever is to be done actually produces some good effect.

There are hard realities and stubborn facts about school massacres. Mass school shootings as we know them today are almost entirely local events, as unpredictable as lightning strikes, and utter anomalies when viewed against the vast K-12 education universe in America.

Concerns over "safe schools" are misguided. In Florida, Miami Southridge High School has far more violence and expulsions than Stoneman Douglas, and is located in a neighborhood with a violent crime rate 15 times higher than Parkland's.

Top-down, traditional indicators are totally ineffective in assigning risk of mass school shootings. Here's why.

In this century, worldwide there have been at least 56 school massacres (defined as a mass shooting with students as the targets resulting in at least two fatalities); 18 of those occurred in the U.S.

Of those 18, eight involved massacres committed on K-12 campuses, which resulted in the deaths of 69 American children and adults. Those eight incidents and 69 murders are spread out over 17 years, across 130,000 different school facilities, attended by roughly 50 million students every single year.

You don't have to be a statistical analyst to begin to understand the degree of difficulty in trying to accurately anticipate or prepare for when and where the next incident might occur.

Add in the 45 people injured in the eight 21st century school massacres, and the resulting 114 casualties represent 0.0000021 (barely 2 ten-thousandths of 1 percent) of all U.S. K-12 students and teachers.

In the same time period, there have been

more than 285,000 murders in the U.S., of which nearly 30,000 victims were age 18 or younger. For those seeking to stop the slaughter of children, the cause is a worthy one: 100 times as many kids as died at Parkland will be massacred this year in the U.S.

The chilling actuality is that the day before the Parkland attack, about 47 people were murdered across the country. And 47 more the day after. And every day since.

School massacres are still singularly heinous crimes, however, and we must do everything we can to prevent them. That begins with analyzing and better understanding their singularity.

In all but one of the U.S. K-12 school massacres since 2000, the shooter was a student or former student at the targeted school. This is critical because it drastically localizes prevention efforts.

Trying to guard against transient adult strangers attacking randomly selected schools would forever be an impossible impracticality. Protecting against attackers that are already known to many in the school — staff, teachers, other students — is much more achievable.

In hindsight, most mass school shooters left red flags galore, and had someone somehow been able to connect the dots, their massacres might have been averted.

Knowing who that person might be, and keeping him away from both guns and schools, is the best approach to stopping school massacres. To acquire that knowledge, we must overcome a couple of traditional obstacles.

One involves rethinking juvenile law's foundational assumptions. We must start distinguishing between merely delinquent and truly violent juveniles, and share that information in real time with school staff. Likewise, anytime a student is expelled for physical violence or anything involving a weapon or other disturbed behaviors, that should trigger placement on a school vio-



Dana D. Kelley

lence watch list.

Had such lists previously been implemented, all of this century's school massacre shooters except one would've been on them. If watch lists were put in place now, the likelihood of spotting warning signals and connecting dots for potentially dangerous students would increase exponentially.

Prohibit students or former students on the watch list from bringing backpacks or bags to school. Search them and their lockers

and cars more often. Regularly inspect and surveil their Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook activity.

The safety of students should constitute a clear and compelling state interest in keeping a closer eye on observed behavioral dangers from a school's own records — which is where the mass school shooters are coming from.

Lawmakers can blivate and legislate for the 50 million American students who will never become mass shooters, because it's "something" national politicians can do.

Meantime, one of those 50 million kids is contemplating shooting up one of the nation's 130,000 schools. Lookouts in Washington, D.C., will never see him coming.

But at his school, he's already been noticed as acting disturbed. He may have been expelled. He's had some juvenile scrapes with the law, possibly involving animal cruelty. Classmates have noticed weird, alarming posts from him online.

The Florida sheriff pleaded, "if you see something, say something," and he's right.

Our juvenile courts and school disciplinary systems already see plenty of potential red flags. We must change policies and processes so administrators and teachers and safety officers can see and connect them.

Dana D. Kelley is a freelance writer from Jonesboro, Arkansas.

COMMENTARY

Remembering the Rev. Billy Graham

Oklahoma was shrouded in grief after the deaths of 168 people — including 19 children — in a home-grown terrorism attack at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City in 1995.

President Bill Clinton spoke at the memorial service. So did Gov. Frank Keating. But everyone knew who would deliver the sermon and face the hard questions.

That was a job for the Rev. Billy Graham.

"The Bible says ... there is a devil, that Satan is very real and he has great power," Graham said, focusing on the 9,000 mourners in the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds Arena. "It also tells us that evil is real and that the human heart is capable of almost limitless evil when it is cut off from God and from the moral law."

"The prophet Jeremiah said, 'The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?' That is your heart and my heart without God. ... I pray that you will not let bitterness and poison creep into your soul, but that you will turn in faith and trust in God even if we cannot understand. It is better to face something

like this with God than without Him."

Graham didn't end those remarks with an "altar call," urging sinners to come forward and make a profession of faith. But he could have — even with the president of the United States in the front row.

Then again, Clinton was from the South and attended Graham's 1959 crusade in Little Rock, Arkansas. The young Clinton was so impressed by the preacher's message, and his refusal to bow to segregationists, that he began sending part of his weekly allowance to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

In the wake of his death this week, at age 99, diplomats, scholars and journalists will struggle to describe Graham's impact via preaching, television, radio, books and other writings. It's hard enough to do the math when discussing his 417 crusades in 185 countries, along with countless other gatherings ranging from presidential inaugurations to tiny youth rallies after his 1938 ordination as a Southern Baptist preacher.

To be blunt, it can be argued that Graham spoke — in person — to more people than any other leader in world history. Rice University sociologist

William Martin put it this way: Graham was the "most powerful evangelist since Jesus." In his final decades, Graham focused on supporting new evangelists around the world, while others obsessed over the question, "Who will be the next Billy Graham?"

It's impossible to point to one Graham sermon as a summation of his life and work, said Martin in a recent interview. However, the Oklahoma City message was certainly a late-career illustration of his convictions, his willingness to discuss sin and salvation, heaven and hell — even when facing the president and a global audience.

"This was Graham acting, once again, as pastor to the nation," said Martin, author of "A Prophet With Honor: The Billy Graham Story," which he recently updated. In Bible Belt Oklahoma, "everybody knew Billy Graham's theology. Everyone knew what he believes. He could say what he needed to say, without offending anyone."

But part of his legacy was the ability to preach "with a sense of appropriateness," even when facing the queen of England, he said. Graham didn't think it took courage to do his work — anywhere. "Billy didn't leave people with doubts about what he

believed as a Christian evangelist. ... But he also knew how to be a healing figure," Martin said.

That's exactly what Graham was trying to do in Oklahoma City.

"Today it's my prayer that all Americans will rededicate ourselves to ... working together to solve the problems and barriers that would tear us apart," he said. "But there is also hope for the future because of God's promises. As a Christian, I have hope not just for this life, but for the life to come. ..."

"This event also reminds us of the brevity and uncertainty of life. It reminds us that we never know when we are going to be taken. I doubt if even one of those who went to that building to work or to go to the children's place ever dreamed that that was their last day on Earth. That is why we each need to face our own spiritual need and commit ourselves to God."

Terry Mattingly is the editor of *GetReligion.org* and Senior Fellow for Media and Religion at The King's College in New York City. He lives in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.



Terry Mattingly



OPINION

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Zach Ahrens, *General Manager*
Gerry Tritz, *Opinion Page Editor*
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A family owned and operated independent newspaper

OUR OPINION

More legal problems, more secrecy

As more of Gov. Eric Greitens potential legal problems come to light, so does his penchant for secrecy.

Last week, the Associated Press reported Greitens used an email address for a veterans charity he founded to arrange political meetings. He was preparing to run for governor at the time.

Federal law bans nonprofits from participating in political campaigns.

Greitens hasn't responded to the allegations, but The Mission Continues has responded by saying it did not authorize Greitens' campaign to use its email/donor list, and that it will support an attorney general's inquiry into "the misuse of our resources by the Greitens campaign," the AP reported.

In addition to this, Greitens faces a grand jury indictment on a felony invasion-of-privacy charge for photographing his partly nude lover in 2015 and transmitting it so that it could be accessed by a computer.

The woman told her then-husband — who recorded the conversation without her knowledge — that Greitens photographed her as blackmail so she would keep their affair secret.

A special Missouri House committee this week has started its own investigation into the allegations against the governor.

The Missouri attorney general's office has an open inquiry into The Mission Continues under the state's consumer protection and charitable reporting laws.

News of the AG's investigation comes just after the office cleared Greitens' administration of another investigation: using Confide apps to, possibly, do state business secretly.

The AG found, while the administration broke no laws, the office discouraged using the app for public business. We agree. Public servants should have nothing to hide and shouldn't need to use secrecy apps.

Meanwhile, amid these legal troubles, Greitens' current and former employees mostly are silent. They feel like they have no choice — they've been sworn to secrecy.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported on Tuesday its reporters and reporters from the Columbia Missourian attempted to contact about 60 people who worked on Greitens' 2016 campaign. Of the handful who agreed to speak with reporters, five people said they had signed nondisclosure agreements. Two others would not say whether they signed one.

The story pointed out Parker Briden, the governor's taxpayer-paid spokesman, routinely does not return requests for comment from reporters. Our reporters have had the same experience.

It's not surprising. Greitens himself moderated a panel at the Republican Governors Association meeting titled "Disrupting the Mainstream Media," according to a January story in the Columbia Daily Tribune.

Greitens rarely holds news conferences.

All these examples — and these are just some — point to a governor who prefers to operate in the shadows of secrecy.

In a dictatorship, that's par for the course. But this is the United States, specifically the Show-Me State.

Missouri needs a governor who operates honestly, legally and in the open.

News Tribune

CONTACT DATA

Cole County Commission

Presiding Commissioner
Sam Bushman, 634-9113

Eastern District Commissioner
Jeff Hoelscher, 634-9112

Western District Commissioner
Kris Schepeler, 634-9111

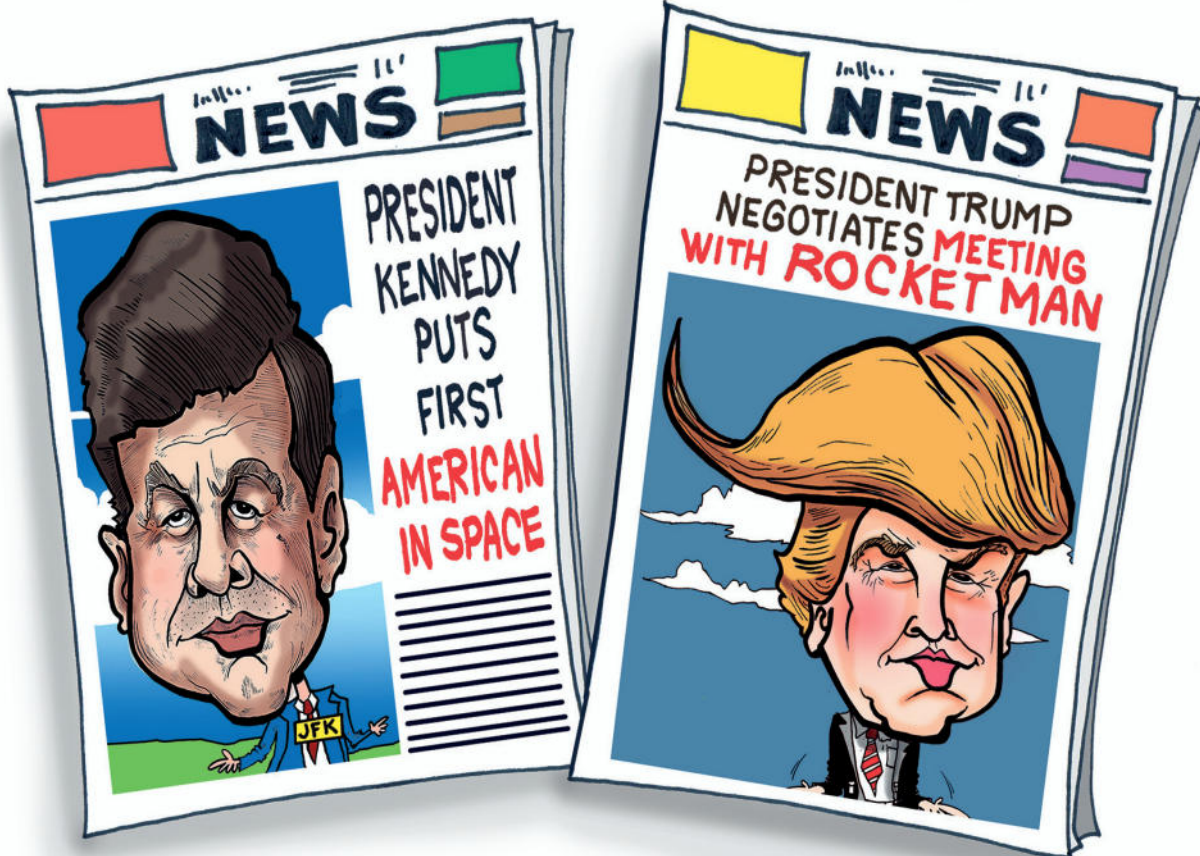
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Comment at
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BREAKING NEWS:

1961

2018



JCPS works toward, relishes in high moments

This summer, my oldest daughter will set out with several other youth on a supervised week-long hiking excursion into Colorado. The goals are pretty straightforward — fellowship and growth; to hike a mountain to its peak without Mom or Dad around to offer any assistance (or criticism, from the perspective of my teenager). The hope is through the struggles of hiking a mountain and low-impact camping, the youth will grow closer together as they share the experience. The labels and assumptions they impose upon themselves as well as their peers stripped away, eventually leaving a greater appreciation for the power of what true connections, empathy and faith provide throughout life.

I'm envious of the journey ahead of her, but I myself have lived and served long enough to know you receive only a few tremendous high points scattered amongst the far more prevalent monotonous, laborious and sometimes viciously painful moments.

On Tuesday, the all-remembering Facebook shared with me what I and many others were doing this time last year just before one of those greater moments occurred. After exercising that most Pavlovian impulse of looking at one's smartphone after it makes

a sound, I was treated to a photo I and so many others had shared that stated "I'm a JCPS Alum/teacher/parent and I believe it's time."

I imagine most of you remember that one, too. The picture instantly brought back feelings of not only being in the middle of a re-election campaign but more importantly being in the midst of a campaign to pass Propositions J and C.

The days were long, but at the end of most of them, you felt proud of who and what you were working in service of. Our direction and mission were clear, and we were united.

I suspect those feelings were shared by most everyone involved in the campaign through one form or another, but what I still remain in awe of is that while some only talked about what needed done, an extraordinary number of people rose to the occasion and gave so generously of their resources and their time in support of something much greater than themselves. That energy was contagious, and it acted like fuel for what has become a bit of a mantra for our school district — StrongerTogether.

Fast forward 12 months, and the exuberance felt by so many last year has partially given way to the discussing of boundary line changes, issues



Steve Bruce

PERSPECTIVE

pertaining to diversity, and most tragically — how to do all we can to ensure the safety of our students and staff while at school.

All are issues that deserve and are receiving our close attention, but like most anything today, they can create division if you let them. However, I prefer to think that if our recent history is any indication, our community and school district have more than enough capacity to thoughtfully address each of these areas, even though they are complex and require an amount of sustained effort and faith from all of us.

Just like what was behind that picture from a year ago, and just like my daughter will learn on the side of a mountain this summer, we are all connected in some deeper way, and frankly, this life is too short to spend it exploiting the differences that separate us.

The late Billy Graham said "Mountaintops are for views and inspiration, but fruit is grown in the valleys." Rev. Graham was right, and while we only spend precious few moments on a mountaintop, once you've been there, you know the way back.

Steve Bruce is the president of the Jefferson City Board of Education. His perspective is published monthly on the editorial page of the News Tribune.

A war without an objective, 6,000 days in

"The war is over." — Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in Afghanistan (April 2002)

"I believe victory is closer than ever before." — Vice President Mike Pence in Afghanistan (December 2017)

WASHINGTON — With metronomic regularity, every thousand days or so, Americans should give some thought to the longest war in their nation's history. The war in Afghanistan, which is becoming one of the longest in world history, reaches its 6,000th day on Monday, when it will have ground on for substantially more than four times longer than U.S. involvement in World War II from Pearl Harbor to V-J Day (1,346 days).

America went to war in Afghanistan because that not-really-governed nation was the safe haven from which al-Qaeda planned the 9/11 attacks. It was not mission creep but mission gallop that turned the intervention into a war against the Taliban who had provided, or at least not prevented, the safe haven. So, the United States was on a mission opposed by a supposed ally next door — Pakistan, which through Directorate S of its intelligence service has supported the Taliban.

This fascinating, if dispiriting, story is told in Steve Coll's new book "Directorate S: The CIA and America's Secret Wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan." There cannot be many secrets about this subject that are not in Coll's almost 700 pages.

He reports when Gen. Stanley McChrystal went to Afghanistan in May 2002, "A senior Army officer in Washington told him, 'Don't build Bondstells,' referring to the NATO base in Bosnia that Rumsfeld saw as a symbol of peacekeeping mission creep. The officer warned McChrystal against 'anything here that looks permanent.

... We are not staying long.' As McChrystal took the lay of the land, 'I felt like we were high-school students who had wandered into a Mafia-owned bar.'" It has been a learning experience. After blowing up tunnels, some almost as long as a football field, that were thought to be created by and for terrorists, U.S. officials learned that they were an ancient irrigation system.

A decade ago, seven years after the war began on Oct. 7, 2001, then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said the U.S. objective was the creation of a strong central government. When he was asked if Afghanistan had ever had one, he answered without hesitation: "No." Which is still true.

Years have passed since the time when, years into the war, U.S. military and civilian officials heatedly debated "counterinsurgency" as contrasted with "counterterrorism," distinctions that now seem less than crucial. Coll says of military commanders rotating in and out of Afghanistan annually, "The commanders starting a rotation would say, 'This is going to be difficult.' Six months later, they'd say, 'We might be turning a corner.' At the end of their rotation, they would say, 'We have achieved irreversible momentum.' Then the next command group coming in would pronounce, 'This is going to be difficult. ...'"

The earnestness and valor that Americans have brought to Afghanistan are as heartbreaking as they are admirable. For 73 years, U.S. troops have been on the Rhine, where their presence helped win the Cold War and now serves vital U.S. interests as Vladimir Putin ignites Cold War 2.0. Significant numbers of U.S. troops have been in South Korea for 68 years, and few people are foolish enough to doubt the usefulness of this deployment, or

Please see Will, p. 11



George Will

COMMENTARY

they'd say, 'We might be turning a corner.' At the end of their rotation, they would say, 'We have achieved irreversible momentum.' Then the next command group coming in would pronounce, 'This is going to be difficult. ...'"

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Genesis 1:26

YOUR OPINION

Issue-oriented letters to the editor are welcome. All letters should be limited to 400 words in length; longer letters may be edited to conform to the specified length. The author's name must appear with the letter, and the name, address and phone number provided for verification. Letters that cannot be verified by telephone will not be published.

Appreciation for diversity coverage

Beverly Price
Jefferson City

Dear Editor:

As a long-time News Tribune subscriber and retired JCPS teacher, I appreciate your recent coverage of the diversity issue in our local public schools. The article in the Feb. 25 edition summarized the history of the issue in our school district and indicated that our leadership is working to improve the situation and thereby improve our community. I am glad to see that students and community members as well as teachers have been asked to work on these issues. Dr. Larry Linthacum has shown that he is willing to participate, and diversity training has been scheduled. This is a step in the right direction. As he said, "There is energy and working together. We're willing to have difficult conversations." I participated in the faculty diversity training in 1996 that Suzanne Richter described in the article, and it was very worthwhile.

Having the diversity in our staff that reflects the diversity of our students will help our community achieve our public schools' goals. This will mean working to keep young people in town, as teachers, mentors, youth coaches, etc. After I retired from JCPS, I taught in the education department at Lincoln University. I was disheartened by the number of good potential teachers that "got away." A number of talented near-graduates either did not apply for jobs in the local schools, or, in a few cases, applied and were overlooked. I am glad that our current school leaders are aware of the problem and are willing to work on it. The motto, "Stronger Together," is true for Jefferson City and its schools.

Our Russian sympathizer president

Lawrence Wansing
Meta

Dear Editor:

It should be easy for most intelligent American citizens to realize that President Trump is a real Russian sympathizer. At every turn he has denied any type of contact with any Russian agents even though it is a common fact that he met with Russian individuals in his Trump Tower estate (behind closed doors) numerous times.

One only has to wonder what classified information was passed along to them. Especially after he made such a big deal about Hillary and her private emails. This overwhelmingly Republican Congress voted almost unanimously for this president to sanction Russia for meddling in our Democracy. It is also strange how he blames Hillary and the Democrats that it is all their fault. First he denies it and then blames others. And Vice President Pence is no better.

And now we have the school massacre in Florida. We all know that nothing will be done about it because Trump and the Republican Party is bought and paid for by the NRA.

Here are some of the NRA payouts made to Republicans: Trump, \$30 million; Sen. John McCain, \$7.7 million; Sen. Marco Rubio, \$6.99 million; Sen. Roy Blunt, \$4.55 million; Sen. Thom Tillis, \$4.42 million; Sen. Cory Gardner, \$3.88 million.

Please see Your Opinion, p. 11



OPINION

Walter E. Hussman Jr., Publisher
Zach Ahrens, General Manager
Gerry Tritz, Opinion Page Editor
Gary Castor, Managing Editor

A family owned and operated independent newspaper

OUR OPINION

For Missouri, Greitens should resign immediately

We've seen enough bloodletting. Gov. Eric Greitens must resign.

Regardless of his guilt or innocence in court, he no longer can lead our state effectively.

Greitens came into office as a bold ex-Navy SEAL — an outsider — with a “drain-the-swamp” attitude.

He belittled our state's elected officials as “corrupt career politicians” and called our state workforce “bloated.” He vowed to “clean up Jefferson City.”

But within a year, Greitens' first term in office turned into a fiasco.

He pledged transparency and quickly became secretive.

He pledged ethical reform then shielded his campaign donors' identities through the use of “dark money.”

But it was his admitted affair with his former hairdresser and alleged campaign fundraising violations that have created most of his problems.

A felony invasion-of-privacy charge accuses Greitens of taking a partially nude photo of the woman, then transferring it to a computer where it could be shared. On Friday, St. Louis prosecutors charged him with a felony for his use of a charity donor list for his 2016 political campaign.

Convinced that he will be found innocent next month, Greitens has dug in for the fight of his life. He refuses to resign and is acting like everything is “business as usual” in the governor's office. Just this past week, he tweeted photos of him meeting with department heads and state employees.

Most of the comments on the tweets were brutal, even vulgar, in calling for his resignation or impeachment.

He may be found innocent in court. But a beyond-disturbing probe done by a House committee showed that, among other things, the woman told the House committee that Greitens called her a “whore,” struck her in the face and

touched her crotch without consent.

Greitens attacked the report as inaccurate and incomplete. But Greitens himself refused to testify, to tell his side of the story. He has the right not to testify to avoid self-incrimination.

But the committee said the woman's testimony is credible. Much of what she said is corroborated by what she told her husband and friends at the time.

Greitens dismissed the investigation as a “political witch hunt,” saying: “The people of Missouri see through this.”

We hope Missourians see through Greitens' statement. This is no witch hunt. This is a growing bipartisan group of lawmakers pleading with him to resign for the sake of our state.

The committee was led by state Rep. Jay Barnes, a Jefferson City attorney who is respected as an intelligent, fair and independent-minded lawmaker. Barnes, like Greitens, is a Republican.

The fiasco is becoming increasingly difficult to watch, with new cringe-worthy turns and twists each day. Greitens, meanwhile, seems like a soldier bleeding on the battlefield, using a rush of adrenaline in a desperate-but-futile attempt to stem the blood loss.

But it's not Greitens' self-inflicted wounds that we're concerned with here.

It's the bloodletting of our state: our state's Legislature and government's ability to properly do their jobs, as well as our state's reputation.

This isn't about Greitens' political survival any more, or his once-plausible aspirations for president. It's about his family. It's about his party. And it's about his constituents — all 6 million of them.

It's becoming clearer each day that the longer Greitens holds out, the more he drags down our state — and the more it appears his vanity is causing him to put his interests above those of Missourians.

News Tribune

I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Isaiah 61:10



YOUR OPINION

Issue-oriented letters to the editor are welcome. All letters should be limited to 400 words in length; longer letters may be edited to conform to the specified length. The author's name must appear with the letter, and the name, address and phone number provided for verification. Letters that cannot be verified by telephone will not be published.

Christians should not partner with local event

Paul Deutsch
Jefferson City

Dear Editor:

I was quite alarmed, visiting a local church on Easter Sunday, to find an insert in the bulletin promoting the Mid Missouri Festival of Faiths! On Easter Sunday! Isn't Christ's death and resurrection enough?

As a Christian, I voice my opposition first concerning the Mid Missouri Festival of Faiths event itself, and also of the CAIA — the Capital Area Interfaith Alliance (sponsoring this event). Let me concede that people have a right to participate as they wish. The real issue at hand is this: Christianity cannot be in partner with either the event or the alliance and stay true to itself.

The Mid Missouri Festival of Faiths is purposely named after a larger movement elsewhere, the Festival of Faiths, that promotes unity among religions and “non-duality wholeness.” Here in Jefferson City, this event is advertised as a way to learn about other faiths and will be hosted by two local churches. However, naming the event after the Festival of Faiths in essence promotes that same purpose. “Non-duality wholeness” is hard to define, but essentially transmutes truth to relativism. To

participate, Christianity would have to set aside its very core — the absolute-ness that Jesus is the only way. I am not opposed to learning about other faiths and how they are valued by others, but not in a mode that invalidates the essentials of Christianity! Doesn't Christianity (and churches) have a responsibility to always and clearly be pointing to Jesus, if Christianity really believes in the Bible and the reality of heaven and hell?

Secondly, CAIA apparently has a three-fold purpose in its formation and practice — to learn/educate about other faiths, to work alongside other faiths to address community needs, and a third purpose to which I must take exception, to worship together. As Christians, let's stand together with others for religious freedom. Let's stand together with others against oppression and injustice in our community. Christianity cannot, however, stand together with other religions to worship God defined any other way than how God defines Himself in the Bible, (for that would be false). Jesus really is the only way, or Christianity cannot be true to itself.

Let Christianity stand for something, or it stands for nothing, when it comes to its doctrine and theology that proclaims that Jesus is the only way.

And if salt has lost its saltiness, what good is it? (Matthew 5:13)

Poor planning for Adrian's Island

Dennis Morrissey
Jefferson City

Dear Editor:

I read in the NT the city plans to clear brush on Adrian's Island, even though they have not obtained required federal and state agency studies, permits or approvals. These studies, permits, and approvals are required before doing any work on Adrian's Island.

Authorization from the U.S. Army

Corps of Engineers has to be obtained under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and possibly Section 408. If the area disturbs wetlands (highly likely) more approval will be needed. It is likely the EPA will have to do an Environmental Impact Assessment. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will have to issue a biological opinion of the impact on wildlife and fish. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources would have to give a Land Disturbance Permit. This may only be a partial list, but none of this has been done.

Restrooms on the island will likely not be permitted. Even minimal disturbance of the soil may not be permitted. Then there are the legal liabilities of exposing people to contaminated soil or water. In addition, people will likely get injured or lost on the property.

To date we have convinced the railroad to give approval for a bridge, the state to give .19 acre of land, and supporters to give funding. We spent funds for design work on a bridge and surveyed to figure out 13 of the 30 acres of land only flood part of the time. The cost was estimated at \$3.2 million and \$2.3 million in taxes and donations identified to pay the cost. Then we redesigned the bridge with a railroad car museum and raised the projected cost to \$4 million without proper approvals for the bridge.

While there has been grandiose thinking to get the project to its current status, the basics have not been addressed to determine if the project can be permitted or is even legal. My personal opinion is that building a bridge to Adrian's Island and giving people access to the property is a mistake. We already have access to the river with the bike bridge and the Noren Access. However, if we must build this bridge to nowhere, why not make it an above-ground viewing platform. This would keep people and property out of harms way on Adrian's Island and avoid a plethora of problems.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Should Gov. Eric Greitens remain in office?



The News Tribune asked Mid-Missourians on Facebook this week to express their opinions as to whether Gov. Eric Greitens should stay in office in light of the criminal charges that have been filed against him in a St. Louis court, as well as the calls for his resignation from state legislators from both political parties.

The responses included:

• “YES, he most certainly should.” — Sharon Doan, Jefferson City

• “Absolutely! ... I am a senior citizen and a staunch supporter of the governor. It seems to me that the accuser has pretty much confirmed that she can't even tell us what happened, for sure. What we do know is that she had and continued the affair. I find it difficult to believe her statement that the first time was violent and scary, but she continued calling and going back and continuing this affair with a married man. ... The investigation was supposed to be about ‘blackmail.’ At this point, I feel it's only an attempt to destroy him and ruin his marriage that he and his wife obviously fought hard to save.” — Ersa Franklin, Eldon

• “No. Too much distraction.” — Francis Smith, Jefferson City

• “I am waiting to decide until his (trial) is over for the felony charge and the investigation into him using his non-profit donor list to raise money. Right now most of this is just accusations, and we only know one side of the story — hers.” — Tim Wilding, Jefferson City

• “I hope he can stay. Anyone that has an issue about what he did, and does NOT have an issue with who and why this is being done, is not someone I care to even meet.” — Linda Clanahan, Jefferson City

• “I think this is a witch hunt pure and simple, paid for by Soros and the Dems! Greitens has been great at his

job as governor.” — Ellen Burris, Jefferson City

• “At what point did we all settle for leaders of ‘all’ parties and groups that lack noble character and integrity? It baffles me that so many are arguing over someone who really is simply the least common denominator or the ‘lesser of evils.’ By embracing these people, we actually are demonstrating how little we think of ourselves because we should be demanding more — we deserve better.” — Jason Bright, Jefferson City

• “The affair thing should be between him and his wife, not the whole world. The other thing is in the past; leave it, forgive and forget is my saying.” — Michelle Kelsey, Jefferson City

• “With everything going on with BOTH parties trying to sabotage one another, I don't believe everything I read, nor do I trust politicians have OUR best interests at heart right now. They are doing more school-yard bullying than legislating. If he's guilty, remove him. If he's not, EVERYONE who called for him to step down should publicly apologize. I'm for cleaning up the system. Right now, they are more in favor of cluttering it up with the grandstanding.” — Steve Moore, Jefferson City

• “Stand strong, sir. Innocent until proven guilty.” — Aaron Krechel, Jefferson City

• “The governor should resign. He

Please see Feedback, p. 11

Gorsuch strikes blow against administrative state

WASHINGTON — Last week, one week after the first anniversary of Neil Gorsuch's ascension to the Supreme Court, he delivered an opinion that was excellent as it pertained to the case at issue and momentous in its implications pertaining to the institutional tangle known as the administrative state. If he can persuade his fellow court conservatives to see why they were mistaken in disagreeing with him, and if he can persuade his liberal colleagues to follow the logic of their decision with which he concurred, the judiciary will begin restoring constitutional equilibrium. It will limit Congress' imprecise legislating that requires excessive unguided improvising by all those involved in seeing that the laws are “faithfully” executed.

In 1992, when James Dimaya, a Philippine citizen, was 13, he became a lawful permanent resident of the United States, where, unfortunately, his behavior has been less than lawful: In 2007 and 2009, he was convicted of residential burglary. The Department of Homeland Security says he should be deported because he committed a “crime of violence,”

hence covered by a portion of immigration law that, after listing specific crimes (rape, murder, etc.), adds a catch-all category of crimes involving “a substantial risk that physical force against the person or property of another may be used in the course of committing the offense.” How are judges supposed to apply this?

Writing for the majority in a 5-4 decision — and joined by Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer and Sonia Sotomayor (with Gorsuch concurring in the judgment and much of the opinion) — Elena Kagan wrote: The law's category, a “crime of violence,” is so indeterminate (“fuzzy,” she said) that deporting Dimaya under it would violate the Constitution's “due process of law” guarantee. Vague laws beget two evils that are related: They do not give citizens reasonably clear notice of what

behavior is proscribed or prescribed. And they give — actually, require of — judges and law enforcement officials excessive discretion in improvising a fuzzy law's meaning. In agreeing with this (and disagreeing with John Roberts,



George Will

COMMENTARY

Please see Will, p. 11