



**Carmage Walls**  
**Commentary Prize**

**2019 Entry Form**

**Name of Author(s):** Joseph Spear

**Author's Title (editor, columnist, etc.):** Managing Editor

**Newspaper:** The Free Press

**Address:** 418 S. Second St.

**City:** Mankato

**State:** Mn

**ZIP:** 56001

**Phone:** 507-317-8073

**Fax:**

**E-Mail:**

[jspear@mankatofreepress.com](mailto:jspear@mankatofreepress.com)

**Submitted by:** Joe Spear

**Title of Person Submitting:** Managing Editor

**Phone Number:** 507-344-6382

**E-mail Address:** jspear@mankatofreepress.com

**What is the subject/title of the entry?** Highway 14 long overdue funding

**Date(s) of publication?** May 1, 2018, May 13, 2018, June 1, 2018, April 17, 2019, April 19, 2019.

**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.)**

We have long advocated for the completion of a four-lane expansion of Highway 14, one of the most dangerous roads in the state.

In fact, starting with a three part series in 2010 that detailed the number of accidents on the road over a 10 year period, we have advocated for completion to increase safety. The state completed a \$40 million expansion of the part we detailed a few years ago.

Last year's editorials advocated for completion of another piece and opposed an attempted bureaucratic end run that would push funding only to metro area roads. We won again, as the Legislature voted to move money back to Highway 14.

**This year's editorials advocate for the last piece of the road to be funded. And our editorial was used in testimony on the measure at the Legislature.**

**Rep. Jeff Brand's floor speech on Highway 14 citing Free Press. April 29**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fswu-GoSKk&feature=youtu.be>

**All of our Highway 14 editorials were shared broadly to other newspapers around the state by us and the Associated Press.**



Editorials are the institutional voice of The Free Press and independent of the newsroom reporting staff

OUR VIEW:  
ROAD FUNDING

Override MnDOT's Highway 14 delay

The Minnesota Department of Transportation's plan to spend the entire \$417 million Corridors of Commerce road funding on metro-only projects illustrates the reason the program was established in the first place and indicates how far awry it now wanders.

But that's not the worst of it. MnDOT claims half of the money will go to Greater Minnesota projects even though those projects fall squarely in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Statistical Area and are just a few miles from Hennepin County, the most populous county in the state.

Why it matters:

A program designed to support outstate Minnesota road funding has been diverted to expensive Twin Cities projects.

MnDOT's new scoring system, as directed by the Legislature, for the Corridors of Commerce program is clearly flawed. A project to make Highway 169 a freeway in Elk River, eliminating traffic signals and building four interchanges at a cost of \$157 million, is considered "rural" Greater Minnesota. This is the approximate cost of completing about half of the remaining 25-mile stretch of Highway 14, which was not included in the funding.

Another "Greater Minnesota" project will add a convenience or auxiliary lane on Interstate Highway 94 from St. Michael to Albertville, going from four lanes to six. Again, that MnDOT considers this "rural" Minnesota is just a sham.

The two metro projects receiving the rest of the corridor funding, at about \$204 million, include an interchange at Interstates 35W and 494 (\$70 million) and adding MnPASS convenience lanes on the road from France Avenue to State Highway 77 at a cost of \$134 million.

The expansion of Highway 14 to a four-lane from Owatonna to Dodge Center at a cost of \$185 million just missed the cut, coming in third in outstate projects.

The Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities President and Granite Falls Mayor President Dave Smiglewski called the MnDOT decision a "massive failure" for outstate and called on the Legislature to immediately overrule Transportation Commissioner Charlie Zelle.

Highway 14 Partnership President and Mankato City Councilmember Karen Foreman said the group, which has fought for decades for Highway 14's expansion, is "befuddled" by MnDOT's new scoring system. She said the "deck was stacked" against outstate with the new system that favors roads that connect to the metro area.

House Transportation Committee Chairman Paul Torkelson, R-Hanska, said important projects in outstate Minnesota, including Highway 14, are "being completely ignored by this metro-centric project list," and he called for changes to the Corridors of Commerce program.

And it's clear MnDOT needs to change its definition of "greater Minnesota."

The Republican caucus did a great deal of bellringing in the last election, declaring it would defend outstate Minnesota interests against the evil metro legislative cartel. Well, when it comes to this road funding, the score is \$417 million for the metro and 0 for outstate.

We call on Democrats and Republicans in the Legislature to overrule the MnDOT decision, cut the projects in Elk River and Albertville and instead include the next two highest scoring projects in funding that are truly in outstate Minnesota. Those projects would be Highway 14 from Owatonna to Dodge Center (\$185 million) and Highway 23 from Willmar to St. Cloud (\$105 million).

The changes made last year to the MnDOT scoring system clearly favor metro-area projects and hurt outstate road funding. Those changes must be reversed.

THEY SAID IT

**"It is important to note that we followed direction set by the Minnesota Legislature regarding the solicitation, scoring criteria and geographic distribution of funding. We brought the scoring criteria to the public to get input prior to the solicitation. And, MnDOT did not put any projects in that solicitation."**

CHARLES ZELLE, MNDOT COMMISSIONER

FOUNDED IN 1887

The Free Press

1st Amendment: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

STEVE JAMESON, Publisher

EDITORIAL MANAGEMENT

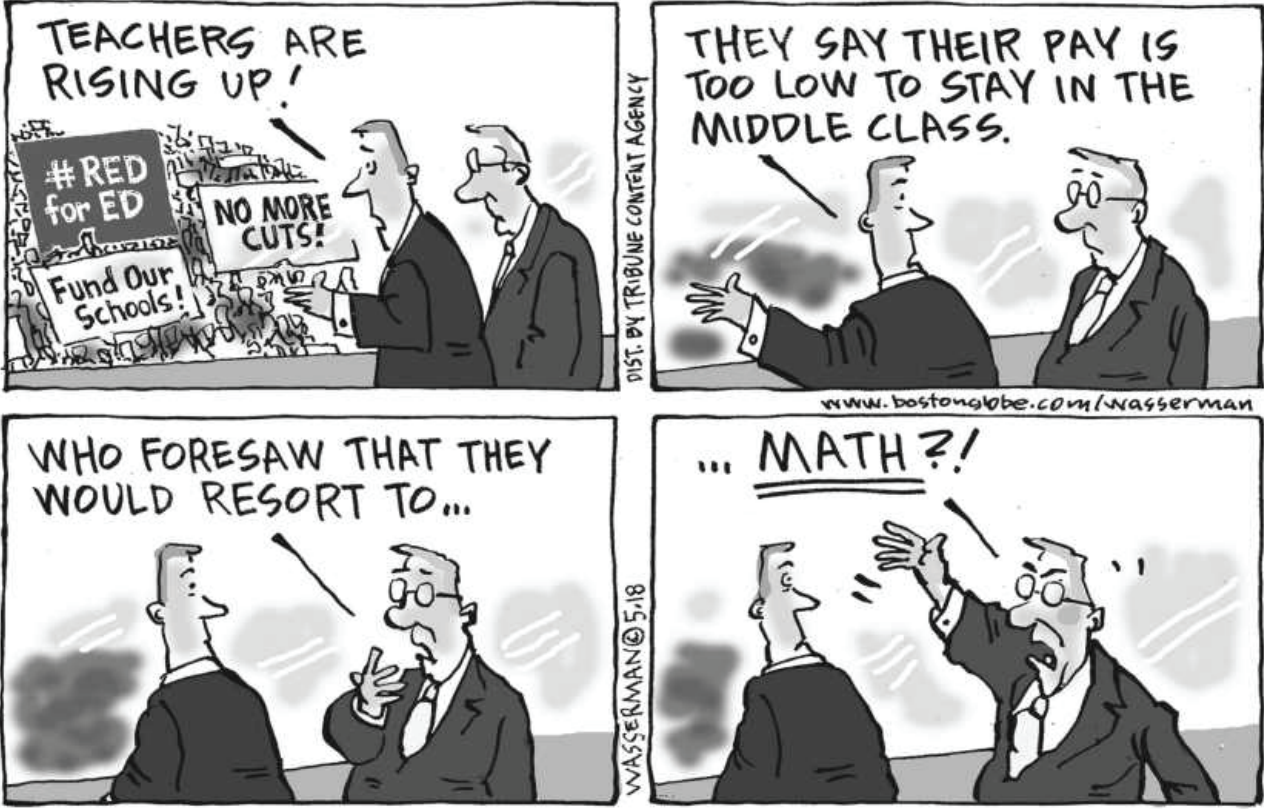
JOSEPH SPEAR, Managing Editor  
KATHY VOS, News Editor  
TIM KROHN, Business Editor  
ROBB MURRAY, Features Editor  
PAT CHRISTMAN, Photo Editor  
JIM RUEDA, Sports Editor

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

JUSTIN NILES, Audience Development Director  
GLEN ASLESON, Facilities & Technology Manager  
TODD BROUWER, Press/Post Press Manager  
DEB PETTERSON, General Manager - The Land

LETTERS POLICY

The Free Press welcomes letters on any issue of general community interest. Please limit your letters to no more than 275 words, typewritten or clearly printed. Letters or emails citing facts that are not commonly known should include the source. Letters must contain the author's name, address and phone number for verification. All letters will be edited for clarity, grammar, spelling and space. You may email letters to the editor to editor@mankatofreepress.com.



YOUR VIEWS

Pitts spoke truth about sin of slavery

Columnist Leonard Pitts Jr. of the Miami Herald humbly spoke to a standing-room only gathering Tuesday at Minnesota State University. He was warmly received with standing ovations before and after his speech.

The title of his lecture was "The United States of Amnesia: Forgetting African-American History." He spoke truth to our American sin of slavery. We have failed nationally to ask forgiveness of our native and enslaved brothers and sisters.

I am thinking of author Jim Wallis and his book "America's Original Sin: Racism and White Privilege."

He said the most controversial sentence he ever wrote was this, "The United States was established as a white society, founded upon the near genocide of another race and then the enslavement of yet another."

The amnesia continues today with building walls and prisons and taking away voting rights and gerrymandering.

The news blasts us with investigations of Russian collusion in elections but fails to inform us of U.S. military coups and election meddling in foreign countries.

Americans are justly upset with Syria's use of nerve gas on its own people but overlook the U.S. military staged nuclear wars using depleted uranium weaponry. Radiation has contaminated vast regions of the Middle East and Central Asia.

Visually, white privilege looks like this: fancy sports stadiums and homeless people sleeping in tents, cars and under bridges.

Lastly, racism is the Trump administration's plans of mass deportation of 800,000 DACA young people and ending Temporary Residency Permits for 200,000 Salvadorans, 57,000 Hon-

durans, 50,000 Haitians and 9,000 Nepalese, Sudanese, Nicaraguans, Yemenis, etc.

Jean Schmidt  
Garden City

Bigger Mankato may not mean better

In city planning there is a saying, "Grow or die." In many cities the elected officials and city administration seem to promote growth. I have to wonder.

As Mankato gets more franchise restaurants and stores, some businesses expand, housing costs rise, schools, streets and infrastructure become overwhelmed. Some people make money and strip malls, apartment buildings and subdivisions will surround the city.

Will crime worsen, will taxes go up, will "quality of life" rise?

Is Mankato a better place to live today than it was 10, 20, 30 years ago? Will it be a better community in 10, 20, 30 years with the present growth rates?

Is 100,000 residents better than 50,000, or 25,000? Rochester, St. Cloud and Duluth have grown fairly rapidly.

Is bigger better for Mankato?

Jim Muyses  
Mankato

Jails are not treatment centers

Currently, in Minnesota alone, there are more individuals with severe mental illness being incarcerated than hospitalized. Over 83 percent of individuals have screened positive for mental health or substance abuse disorders before being booked into

the Blue Earth County jail.

Not only does incarcerating individuals with mental illness fill our jails, it prolongs mental illness and time spent away from treatment.

Jail diversion programs divert individuals with mental health disorders from the criminal justice system and into appropriate treatment when applicable. Currently, Blue Earth County utilizes The Yellow Line Project to divert individuals with mental illness and substance use concerns out of the county jail. However, for those individuals ineligible for diversion from the criminal justice system, care coordination is a must.

A care coordinator within the county jail would assist in finding appropriate treatment upon discharge for these individuals, as well as assist in accessing preventative health care services, housing, and other resources. Care coordination would be most beneficial if paired with law enforcement and human services at a county or regional level.

Since the implementation of a coordination of care worker within the Hennepin County jail, recidivism rates have dropped 62 percent. While some larger counties host these coordination of care workers, many county jails do not. In return, individuals are being released from jail with no discharge plan, no scheduled medication appointments, and most importantly, no treatment for their mental illness.

Without jail diversion programs and coordination of care workers, jails have become default treatment facilities for these suffering individuals. However, jails are not treatment centers.

Rachel Mattick  
North Mankato

#Metoo claims its first scalp in Cosby

#Metoo got its first legal scalp. It's racked up some significant social and moral victories over the past six or seven months, but the person who will be looked to as being the first documented victim of the new perspective on due process will be Bill Cosby.

Thursday afternoon, a jury in Montgomery County found the 80-year-old comedian to be guilty of sexually assaulting Andrea Constand, marking a significant victory for District Attorney Kevin Steele. Actually, the scalp I referred to in the first sentence is one he can attach to his belt, and it's one that he desperately coveted during his campaign for DA back in 2015. You have to give him credit, it's a big and bloody one.

But he didn't do it alone and, frankly, he wasn't able to do it by himself the first time around. Last year, the first jury to consider the matter wasn't able to reach a verdict, and Judge Steven O'Neill announced a mistrial. Steele wanted that scalp, or I suppose he would say he wanted justice for the victims of an alleged serial rapist (tomato, toMAHto) and so he announced only minutes later that there would be a retrial.

And so there was. But during the relative lull between hearings, a tectonic shift took place on the social landscape, and Harvey Weinstein became the most hated man in Hollywood. Then, others started being accused of sexual misconduct, both in the entertainment industry and politics, which gave the media an opportunity to consider that priests weren't the only ones capable of abuse.

Clearly, the times had changed. Clearly, the pendulum had swung.

Clearly, this wasn't going to be your grandmother's Cosby trial, anymore.

And as our ideas about victims and sexual assault changed radically and with a speed that not even Chuck Yeagar, the man who broke the sound barrier, could have anticipated, so did our requirements for due process. As we felt increased compassion and empathy — and a desire for retribution — for the alleged victims, the demands we made on prosecutors and their witnesses evolved.

Whereas before the word of the accuser was not enough to convict the accused, the sounds of her narrative became more convincing. Whereas before the fact that she might have waited decades before speaking out was problematic, that lapse of silent years became less damning. Whereas before our judges and juries required mountains of corroboration to build a circumstantial case, now the similar, echoed stories of a few other women sealed the deal.

Cosby was accused by more than just a few women, and their stories were identical: He invited me to his room, he drugged me, he raped me. Women who were teenagers in the 1960s pointed their fingers at him. Women who are grandmothers now joined their voices to some who are only middle aged, and some women are even younger than that. There were no claims of abuse within the last 10 years.

But #Metoo, a movement more powerful than an atomic bomb, shattered the due process paradigms that existed since well before I earned my law degree in 1987. Now, scalps are easier to win, and this time you can

do it legally and have a judge and jury affirm the trophy. And that has troubled me from the beginning of the #Metoo movement.

I have famously questioned the veracity of the Cosby accusers, well before #Metoo. I have written articles, and have become a bit of a legend in social media circles as that "rhymes with witch who defended a rapist." I regret nothing, because I haven't changed my mind about the holes that make Swiss cheese of the legal foundations for the prosecution. For instance, unsealing a closed civil deposition where Cosby likely incriminated himself in violation of the Fifth Amendment should never have been allowed by a federal judge. Allowing witnesses whose claims arose decades ago as proof of "prior bad acts" was more prejudicial than probative, and should never have been let in. Allowing Gloria Allred anywhere near a camera was also a constitutional violation of the highest legal (and aesthetic) order.

But more troubling to me than the guilty verdict is what I suspect triggered it: a lazy acceptance of minimal proof, a willingness to right the wrongs of the past on the back of the present, an upheaval in a system that has simply switched one sort of victim for another.

Bill Cosby has been found guilty. I respect the jury's verdict, because I must respect the system. It is the only thing that separates us from anarchy.

But I will go to bed tonight feeling a chill for what is certainly coming, in courtrooms around the country.

Christine M. Flowers is a lawyer and columnist for the Philadelphia Daily News. Readers may send her email at cflowers1961@gmail.com.



CHRISTINE FLOWERS  
Philadelphia Daily News



Editorials are the institutional voice of The Free Press and independent of the newsroom reporting staff

OUR VIEW:  
LEGISLATURE

Pass critical  
Highway 14 bill

Years of community and institutional lobbying for making Highway 14 a four-lane across Minnesota may soon come to fruition.

However, now is not the time to rest on our laurels, but rather the time to raise even more voices in support of the proposal.

Why it matters:

Late Senate and House proposals would allocate long-awaited funding to a critical piece of Highway 14.

After Highway 14 was shut out of the Corridors of Commerce funding that put \$417 million toward four Twin Cities projects, Highway 14 funding for a 12-mile stretch from Owatonna to Dodge Center was resurrected in bonding proposals.

The House has amended its plan to add \$145 million in trunk highway bonds to the Corri-

dors of Commerce funding, and the Senate bypassed that mechanism and allocated \$174 million in its bonding bill.

The good news is that once both houses have made proposals to fund the project, it has a better chance of being included in a compromise bonding bill worked out in conference committee.

The funding would be welcome to all those who have lobbied for this project over multiple decades. But the funding is also very fair compared to millions of dollars put toward Twin Cities projects over the years. It's good to see the GOP-controlled Legislature allocate full funding for a big piece of the project.

While Highway 14 has always been done in bits and pieces, huge projects in the Twin Cities seem to be funded in one fell swoop.

The comparisons in funding are important. For example, the interchange project for the Highway 169 and Interstate 494 was nearly \$125 million in 2011.

Should the funding come to fruition for Highway 14, the GOP can certainly put a feather in its cap for keeping its promises to address the needs of outstate Minnesota.

Completing Highway 14 as a four-lane from Owatonna to Dodge Center will make the road four-lane consistently from Nicollet to Rochester. Many businesses, including an ethanol plant at Claremont, will be well served. Workers will be able to safely commute to Rochester's burgeoning Destination Medical Center.

It's good for southern Minnesota's workers and businesses and the state of Minnesota's economy as a whole.

OTHER VIEW

Sessions' cruel plan for  
immigration enforcement

Bloomberg View

Defending the border by pulling children from the arms of their parents is brutal, immoral and un-American. That will be the upshot of U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions's plan to immediately detain and prosecute everyone — including asylum-seekers and parents with children — caught trying to cross illegally into the U.S.

Illegal immigration is wrong, and the government is right to seek to curb it. But this proposal, both cruel and unnecessary, is not the way.

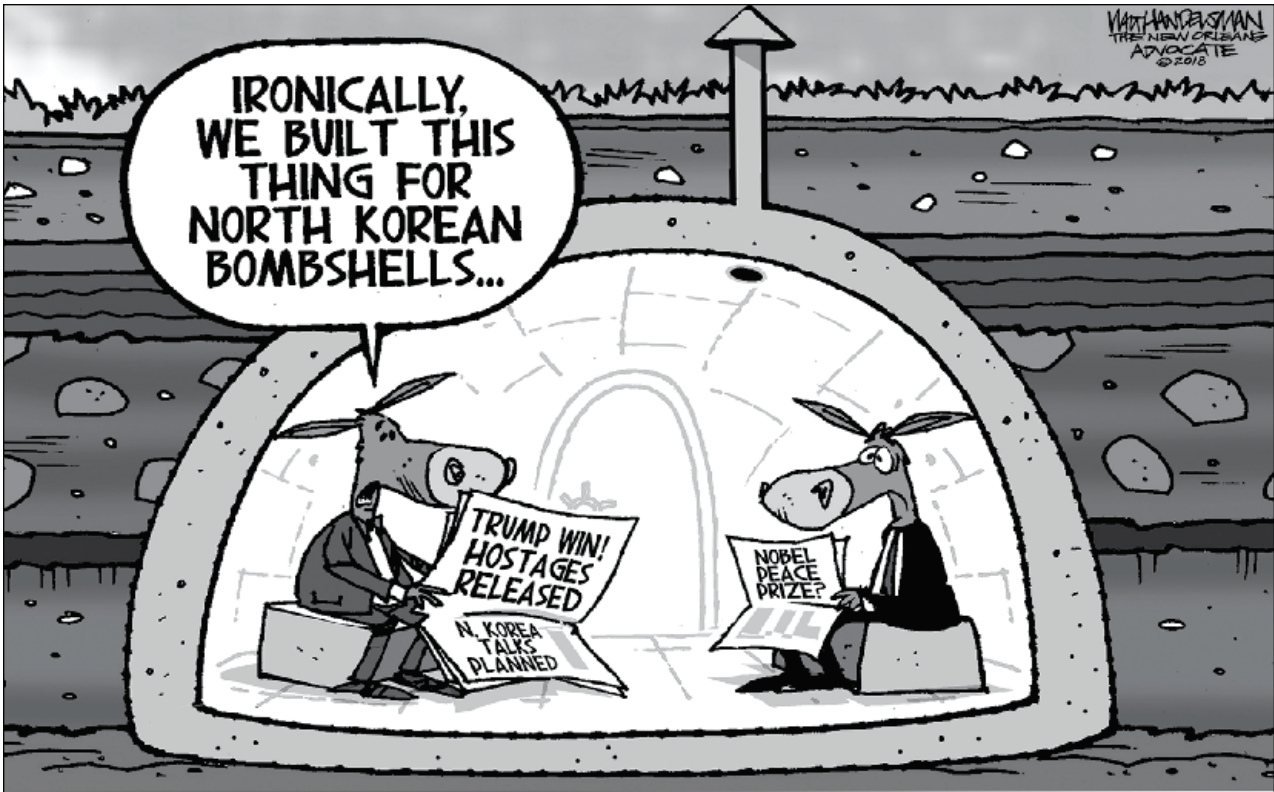
Its rationale strike many as reasonable. After all, if illegal immigration is wrong, why not detain and prosecute the violators? Leave nobody in any doubt about the policy, including the regrettable fact that families will be broken up, and you'll deter people from trying in the first place. And by the way, enforcing the law often breaks up families: Rob a

bank, and you should expect to be separated from your children.

Yet Sessions's policy is both disproportionate and self-defeating. There's no sudden illegal-immigration crisis: Apprehensions at the southwestern border are near historic lows. And there are much more effective ways of addressing the issue.

A blanket prosecution strategy will swamp courts and detention centers with criminal cases, making it harder to remove people quickly. Far better to rely on civil proceedings, bolstered with resources to make them work more efficiently.

But there is no substitute for comprehensive immigration reform. The U.S. economy needs a visa system that addresses its demand for skilled labor. The 11 million living here illegally cannot all be deported and need some path to permanent status. That goes double for those brought here as minors who know no other home.



Korea talks will be a long haul

In 1986, I crossed into North Korea for a couple of bizarre hours. That visit came to mind when President Trump announced last week that he will meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on June 12 in Singapore.

My memories offer a blunt reminder of the Kim dynasty's long history of erratic behavior which should temper any overwrought expectations for the upcoming summit.

So hold the Nobel! A glance at past North Korean behavior patterns should temper Trump's expectations. Forewarned should be (but may not be) forearmed.

In the 1980s, South Korean and Western journalists were allowed once a year to cross the demarcation line from the South Korean side of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) to the North, through the building where the 1953 truce was signed. (There still is no official peace treaty.) Penned into a plaza rimmed by North Korean guards, we were confronted by a phalanx of North Korean men wearing Kim Il-Sung buttons who screamed at us the entire time.

By 1992, the standoff at the DMZ was less hostile: that year the two Koreas signed a declaration pledging to denuclearize the Korean peninsula. In 1994, North Korea pledged, in a framework accord with the United States, to eliminate its nuclear weapons. Both promises were abandoned.

By my next visit to the DMZ in 2005, the area was flooded with buses full of South Korean tourists. Later that year, in six-party talks, including China, Russia, the United States, Japan, and South Korean, Pyongyang committed to abandoning all nuclear weapons and nuclear programs. Didn't happen.

In other words, there's nothing new about North Korean talk of denuclear-

ization — or the release of the three U.S. prisoners held in Pyongyang (spare a thought for U.S. student/prisoner Otto Warmbier, who was returned in a coma and died). Suffice it to say, North Korean is now believed to have at least 60 nuclear weapons, with intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) that can reach the U.S. mainland.

Kim believes his bomb and missile tests have propelled North Korea into the ranks of nuclear states. None of the Korea experts I've interviewed think Kim will give up all his nuclear weapons. They say the word "denuclearization" means something very different to Kim and to Trump.

Trump's national security adviser John Bolton recently said, when it comes to denuclearization of North Korea, "We have very much in mind the Libya model." Libyan leader Muammar Ghadafi agreed to surrender his nascent program, which was closed down over three months in 2004.

But talk of a "Libyan model" is sophistry. Libya's program was small, and it had no nukes. More to the point, having surrendered his nuclear program, Ghadafi was overthrown, with US and NATO involvement, in 2011.

The Kims built their program to ensure that the United States would never overthrow them. Moreover, Trump's willingness to junk previously agreed accords — including the Iran nuclear deal — make denuclearization even less likely.

"The deal they talk about the most is not Libya," says Michael Green, national security adviser on Asia to George W. Bush and now a vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "It's Nixon and Mao — that's the deal they talk about.



TRUDY RUBIN

Philadelphia Inquirer



GEORGE WILL

Washington Post

**WASHINGTON** — Donald Trump, with his feral cunning, knew. The oleaginous Mike Pence, with his talent for toadysim and appetite for obsequiousness, could, Trump knew, become America's most repulsive public figure. And Pence, who has reached this pinnacle by dethroning his benefactor, is augmenting the public stock of useful knowledge. Because his is the authentic voice of today's lick-spittle Republican Party, he clarifies this year's elections: Vote Republican to ratify groveling as governing.

Last June, a Trump Cabinet meeting featured testimonials offered to Dear Leader by his forelock-tugging colleagues. His chief of staff, Reince Priebus, caught the spirit of the worship service by thanking Trump for the "blessing" of being allowed to serve him. The hosannas poured forth from around the table, unredeemed by even a scintilla of insincerity. Priebus was soon deprived of his blessing, as was Tom Price. Before Price's ecstasy of public service was truncated because of his incontinent enthusiasm for charter flights, he was the secretary of health and human services who at the Cabinet meeting said, "I can't thank you enough for the privileges you've given me." Pence chimed in but saved his best riff for a December Cabinet meeting when, as The Washington Post's Aaron Blake calculated, Pence praised Trump once every 12 seconds for three minutes: "I'm deeply humbled. ... " Judging by the number of times Pence announces himself "humbled," he might seem proud of his humility, but that is impossible because he is conspicuously devout and pride is a sin.

Between those two Cabinet meetings, Pence and his retinue flew to Indiana for the purpose of walking out of an Indianapolis Colts football game, thereby demonstrating that football players kneeling during the national anthem are intolerable to someone of Pence's refined sense of right and wrong. Which brings us to his Arizona salute last week to Joe Arpaio, who was sheriff of Maricopa County until in 2016 voters wearied of his act.

Noting that Arpaio was in his Temple audience, Pence, oozing unctuousness from every pore, called Arpaio "another favorite," professed himself "honored" by Arpaio's presence, and praised him as "a tireless champion of ... the rule of law." Arpaio, a grandstanding, camera-chasing bully and darling of the tuggish right, is also a criminal, convicted of contempt of court for ignoring a federal judge's order to desist from certain illegal law enforcement practices. Pence's performance occurred eight miles from the home of John McCain, who could teach Pence — or perhaps not — something about honor.

Henry Adams said that "practical politics consists in ignoring facts," but what was the practicality in Pence's disregard of the facts about Arpaio? His pandering had no purpose beyond serving Pence's vocation, which is to ingratiate himself with his audience of the moment. The audience for his praise of Arpaio was given to chanting "Build the wall!" and applauded Arpaio, who wears Trump's pardon like a boutonniere.

Hoosiers, of whom Pence is one, sometimes say that although Abra-

Nixon let China keep its nuclear weapons and didn't pressure them on human rights. What Kim really wants is for the United States to treat him as a nuclear weapons state."

As for the White House demand that North Korea agree to "complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization (referred to as CVID)" — Green says, "that is not something Kim has any intention of doing."

It's more likely, many North Korea experts believe, that Kim will push for a joint statement on peace and denuclearization that will require years of negotiations. Given North Korea's extensive and hidden nuclear program, complete verification may be impossible to achieve.

Meantime, Kim has already milked benefits from Trump's agreement to meet him which gives him recognition as a major global player. Kim's father sought meetings with U.S. presidents Clinton and Bush but never got them.

The North Korean leader will no doubt try to profit from South Korea's eagerness to banish the war talk that flared between Kim and Trump. He will also try to benefit from Trump's talk of bringing peace to the Koreans. He may propose some kind of peace plan (less than a treaty) between North and South Korea that doesn't require denuclearization. Such a plan would shield Pyongyang from future U.S. military threats.

Kim will be playing the optics of the summit with a skill that matches or outdoes Trump's theatrics and with a clarity about what he wants and what he will pay for it.

The good news is that superficial talks are better than another war in Asia. The bad news: If Trump falls for his own hype he may be outwitted by a showman who can best him at this game.

Email Trudy Rubin at [trubin@phillynews.com](mailto:trubin@phillynews.com).

The repulsive Mike Pence

ham Lincoln was born in Kentucky and flourished in Illinois, he spent his formative years — December 1816 to March 1830 — in Indiana, which he left at age 21. Be that as it may, on Jan. 27, 1838, Lincoln, then 28, delivered his first great speech, to the Young Men's Lyceum in Springfield. Less than three months earlier, Elijah Lovejoy, an abolitionist newspaper editor in Alton, Illinois, 67 miles from Springfield, was murdered by a pro-slavery mob. Without mentioning Lovejoy — it would have been unnecessary — Lincoln lamented that throughout America, "so lately famed for love of law and order," there was a "mobocratic spirit" among "the vicious portion of (the) population." So, "let reverence for the laws ... become the *political religion* of the nation." Pence, one of the evangelicals' favorite pin-ups, genuflects at various altars, as the mobocratic spirit and the vicious mob require.

It is said that one cannot blame people who applaud Arpaio and support his rehabilitators (Trump, Pence, etc.) because, well, globalization or health care costs or something. Actually, one must either blame them or condescend to them as lacking moral agency. Republicans silent about Pence have no such excuse.

There will be negligible legislating by the next Congress, so ballots cast this November will be most important as validations or repudiations of the harmonizing voices of Trump, Pence, Arpaio and the like. Trump is what he is, a floundering, inarticulate jumble of gnawing insecurities and not-at-all compensating vanities, which is pathetic. Pence is what he has chosen to be, which is horrifying.

George Will's email address is [georgewill@washpost.com](mailto:georgewill@washpost.com).

FOUNDED IN 1887

The Free Press

1st Amendment: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

STEVE JAMESON, Publisher

EDITORIAL MANAGEMENT

JOSEPH SPEAR, Managing Editor  
KATHY VOS, News Editor  
TIM KROHN, Business Editor  
ROBB MURRAY, Features Editor  
PAT CHRISTMAN, Photo Editor  
JIM RUEDA, Sports Editor

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

JUSTIN NILES, Audience Development Director  
GLEN ASLESON, Facilities & Technology Manager  
TODD BROWER, Press/Post Press Manager  
DEB PETTERSON, General Manager - The Land

LETTERS POLICY

The Free Press welcomes letters on any issue of general community interest. Please limit your letters to no more than 275 words, typewritten or clearly printed. Letters or emails citing facts that are not commonly known should include the source. Letters must contain the author's name, address and phone number for verification. All letters will be edited for clarity, grammar, spelling and space. You may email letters to the editor to [editor@mankatofreepress.com](mailto:editor@mankatofreepress.com).



Editorials are the institutional voice of The Free Press and independent of the newsroom reporting staff

OUR VIEW:  
HIGHWAY 14

Bipartisan effort delivered needed road funding

The long and winding road to funding Highway 14 is coming closer to an end with Gov. Mark Dayton's approval of a bonding bill crafted by the Republican majorities at the Legislature.

But it's not quite time to say it's done. There remains to be funded a 12-mile stretch between Nicollet and New Ulm that would complete the road as a major corridor from medical facilities in Rochester to manufacturing facilities in New Ulm.

New Ulm has important commerce that would benefit from a fully-expanded

Why it matters:

Funding for expanding Highway 14 to four lanes from Owatonna to Dodge Center will make the roadway four lanes all the way from Nicollet to Rochester.

Highway 14. Such major manufacturers as Kraft, AMPI and 3M employ hundreds of people and do business all over the world. Two years ago, Kraft began a \$100 million expansion project. There are also several over-the-road trucking companies in New Ulm, including J&R Schugel, which has 600 power units and 1,000 trailers serving 48 states.

The Highway 14 Partnership has been instrumental in pushing for completion of the four-lane expansion. Its members include cities, nonprofits, businesses and chambers of commerce all along the highway.

Over the years, both Democrats and Republicans have pushed for the funding, and both parties have been successful in getting different parts of the expansion approved. This year was no different.

The Free Press and other media around the state have also long supported the funding. An in-depth Free Press report in 2010 showed the two-lane part of the highway from North Mankato to Nicollet had one of the worst safety ratings in the state. A follow-up study by MnDOT showed it was even worse than early estimates.

That and other studies also showed the need for new highway funding and helped create the Corridors of Commerce funding program that uses trunk highway bonds to fund important "regional corridors."

The Owatonna to Dodge Center section received \$174 million from the Corridors of Commerce program this year.

Tweaks in the rules of that program this year created a situation that favored more metro area roads. Republicans and Democrats alike were justifiably opposed to the new MnDOT scoring system, which the agency said was established by the Legislature.

One can argue the merits of the new program and where they originated, but there are still some necessary adjustments required to create a level playing field between what is considered greater Minnesota and the metro area.

But both Democrats and Republicans can go to the voters this fall and claim some credit for unearthing another big piece of funding for Highway 14. We only hope they also vow to complete the job.

OTHER VIEW

‘Probably’ isn’t good enough

Dallas Morning News

“Probably” isn’t a word you want to use when talking about whether children are safe. But that is precisely the word that comes to mind as we review the recent controversy that erupted over whether the federal government “lost” 1,475 migrant children who had been placed in the homes of caregivers.

Here’s what we know: In April testimony to Congress, a Health and Human Services official revealed that the government didn’t have a good handle on nearly 1,500 kids it had placed with caregivers. That testimony resurfaced over the weekend when immigration activists fanned the public

debate with a series of tweets linking these children to the Trump administration policy to separate families who attempt to enter the country illegally.

The reality is that the kids in question here are not a product of the administration’s new policy. In fact, they are kids who are enmeshed in a federal system that has long had to deal with the children of immigrants.

But these kids are connected to this debate. If the current system doesn’t do a good job of keeping track of children, why would a new approach that separates children from their illegal-immigrant parents as a matter of policy adequately handle the children in its care?

By Timothy L. O’Brien  
Bloomberg View

Last October, President Donald Trump visited Puerto Rico for a photo op, 13 days after Hurricane Maria had ripped across the island, leaving its residents, communities, roadways and power grid in tatters.

“I’ve been to Puerto Rico many times as, I think, most of you have known. And I’ve always loved it. And your weather is second to none, but every once in a while you get hit. And you really got hit,” Trump told the crowds greeting him. “Every death is a horror. But if you look at a real catastrophe like Katrina, and you look at the tremendous hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people that died, and you look at what happened here with, really, a storm that was just totally overpowering — nobody has ever seen anything like this. What is your death count, as of this moment — 17?”

Someone at the gathering told the president the figure was slightly lower: 16.

“16 people certified. 16 people versus in the thousands,” Trump said. “You can be very proud of all of our people, all of our people working together. 16 versus literally thousands of people. You can be very proud. Everybody around this table and everybody watching can really be very proud.”

Trump emphasized all that the federal government had done to assist Puerto Rico when he wrapped up his speech.

“I appreciate your support and I know you appreciate our support, because our country has really gone all out to help. And it’s not only dangerous, it’s expensive, it’s everything,” he said. “But I consider it a great honor, maybe because I know so many people from Puerto Rico that are such great people. I come from New York.”

On Tuesday the New England Journal of Medicine published a new estimate of the lives lost on Puerto Rico due to Hurricane Maria: about 4,600. That stands in stark contrast to the 16 deaths the president cited in October, and the official death toll of 64 that the Puerto Rican government has stood by for months.

To put the tragedy in context, consider the death tolls from other recent hurricanes.

Hurricane Camille, one of the most brutal hurricanes to hit the U.S. in the late 20th century, made

**Hurricane Irma left about 130 dead last year; Hurricane Harvey, a companion of sorts to Irma, killed about 110. Hurricane Katrina, which Trump cited as a benchmark of catastrophe, left about 1,800 dead after it made landfall in Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi in 2013. Some 3,000 people died in the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in September 2001.**

landfall in Mississippi in 1969 and left about 260 dead. Hurricane Andrew killed about 65 people when it swept across the Bahamas and Florida in 1992. Hurricane Irma left about 130 dead last year; Hurricane Harvey, a companion of sorts to Irma, killed about 110. Hurricane Katrina, which Trump cited as a benchmark of catastrophe, left about 1,800 dead after it made landfall in Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi in 2013. Some 3,000 people died in the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in September 2001.

Compared to all of these events, Hurricane Maria represents an epic loss of life. And the New England Journal noted that its estimate of about 4,600 dead on Puerto Rico “is likely to be an underestimate.” It said that the “mortality rate remained high through the end of December 2017, and one third of the deaths were attributed to delayed or interrupted health care.”

Reporters on the ground in Puerto Rico last fall saw this coming. As they toured the island after Maria hit, it was obvious that Puerto Rico’s heavily damaged hospital system and unreliable power grid would conspire to produce deaths well in excess of the government’s (and Trump’s) lowball figure of 16.

“It’s unclear what is happening with the deceased who are at the morgues of the 51 hospitals that have had to close their doors,” the Miami Herald wondered last fall. BuzzFeed News provided an answer about what was happening to some of the corpses that were piling up at the time: They were being burned.

When I visited Puerto Rico in November, I noted that it was “swamped in a humanitarian crisis, with running water still unavailable in some areas, roadways in disrepair, thousands of people living in shelters and about 100,000 people estimated to have fled since the hurricane hit on Sept. 20.” Puerto Rico’s challenges were perfectly suited to a veteran builder and a self-described man of action like Trump, yet he seemed uninspired

by — and unengaged with — the task at hand.

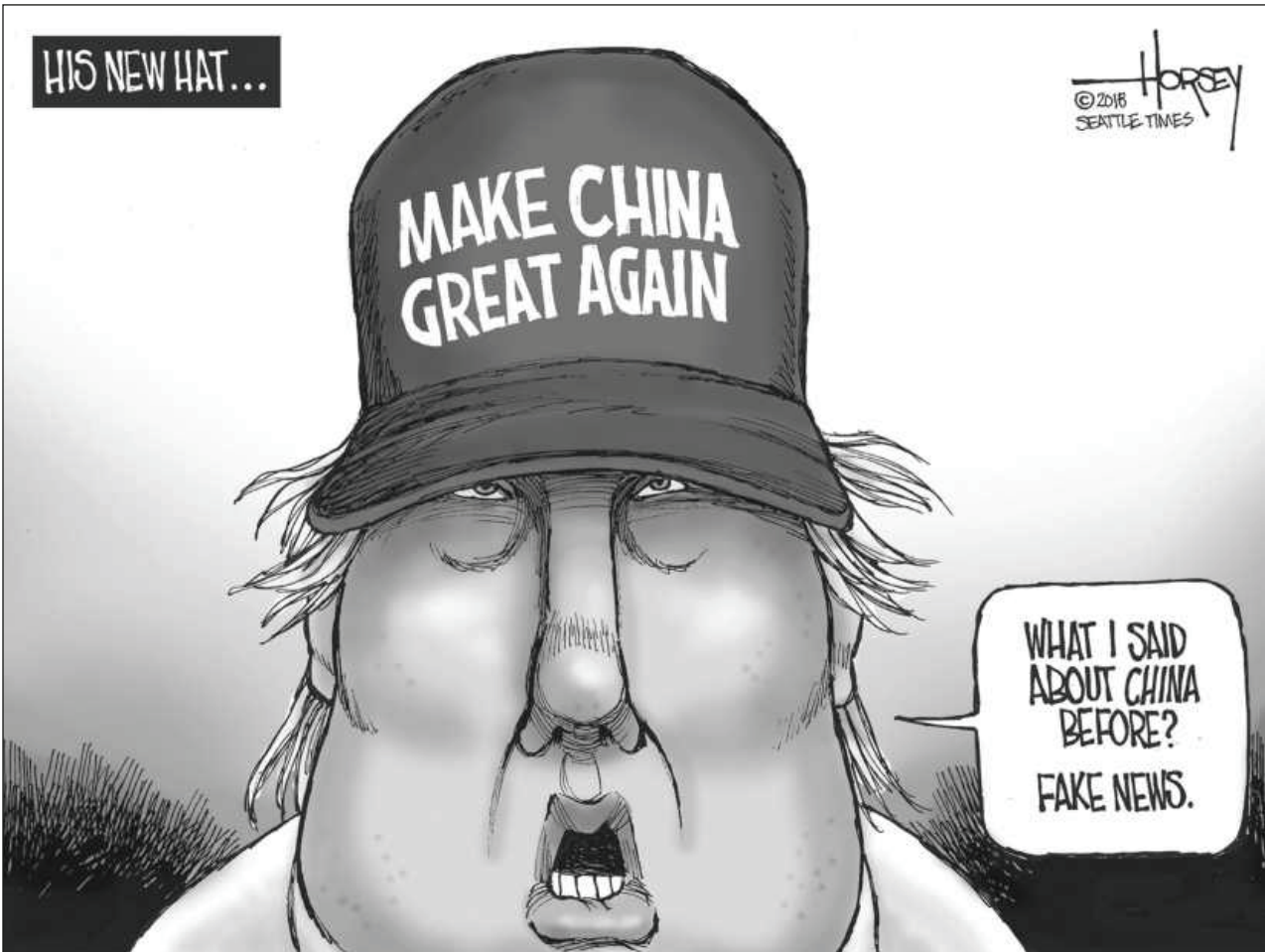
A reminder of the timeline surrounding Trump’s response to Hurricane Maria is instructive. Two days after the storm made landfall on Puerto Rico, Trump was campaigning in Alabama and said nothing about it. His first tweets about Maria weren’t posted until September 25. His first Situation Room meeting in the White House to discuss how to respond to the catastrophe occurred a day later.

To be sure, Puerto Rico presented unique challenges. It is mountainous, surrounded by water, and plagued by corruption and political mismanagement. Yet some of these problems faced the Obama administration when it responded in 2010 to an earthquake in Haiti. There, the U.S. deployed 8,000 troops in a couple of days. Two weeks later, 22,000 troops had been dispatched. The Trump administration only had 7,200 members of the military in Puerto Rico two weeks after Hurricane Maria touched down.

Trump, undaunted, gave himself a “10” when asked by White House reporters to grade the federal response to Hurricane Maria about a month after it first ravaged Puerto Rico. That perfect self-assessment came at a time when electricity and potable water were still in short supply on the island. Puerto Rico’s residents remain saddled today with an unreliable power grid, despite billions of spending and public-private partnerships overseen by the U.S. government and the Trump administration that were meant to address the problem.

More than infrastructure is also at stake in Puerto Rico, of course. Lives have been lost; about 4,600 of them, and counting. With the next hurricane season just around the corner, Trump has a brief window to try to secure Puerto Rico’s future — and actually earn his 10.

O’Brien is the executive editor of Bloomberg Opinion. He has been an editor and writer for the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, HuffPost and Talk magazine.



IN RESPONSE

Taxpayers would bear burden

By Diana Karau

How will the proposed osteopathic medical school TIF District No. 5-1 impact taxpayers in the city of Gaylord, Sibley County, the Sibley East School District and other taxing jurisdictions?

As the city of Gaylord prepares to consider and likely approve a \$5.7 million tax increment financing (TIF) plan that will be in place for the next 25 years, all Sibley County taxpayers will be impacted, because TIFs touch every taxing jurisdiction within the proposed TIF district.

Medical school developer Phil Keithahn, local representative for the Danza Group of Minnesota, would have you believe that the impact of the proposed development will be good for our communities. I, for one, do not believe that for one minute.

To add insult to injury, no one at the city of Gaylord has ever been able or willing to answer these very simple questions: What has been the positive economic impact of the many TIF plans approved over the last few decades by the city of Gaylord? What have been the measurable outcomes of these corporate subsidies? How many good paying jobs have been created? How many of these jobs have been filled by local residents? Have these corporate subsidies decreased the tax levy of any of the taxing districts as a result of increased property values that result from these TIFs?

The city of Gaylord will not answer these questions because it can't.

But know this: This project will impact the level of services provided to residents in each of these taxing districts and they will either be required to cut costs or raise taxes.

The taxpayer profile of Sibley County being asked to bear the burden of this private development is comprised of approximately 75 percent who are farmers in a struggling ag economy; 16 percent of seniors who live on fixed incomes; 10 percent who live in poverty; and those whose average median income is \$55,000 per household.

I must ask the question, will the public good be served by taxpayer dollars being used for this private development? I believe the answer to that question is no; but I have no doubt that the private gain of a handful of people will be achieved at the expense of poor, working taxpayers who are struggling to make ends meet. This in effect is crony capitalism, aka the poor stay poor and rich get richer.

Diana Karau lives in Gaylord

FOUNDED IN 1887

The Free Press

1st Amendment: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

STEVE JAMESON, Publisher

EDITORIAL MANAGEMENT

JOSEPH SPEAR, Managing Editor  
KATHY VOS, News Editor  
TIM KROHN, Business Editor  
ROBB MURRAY, Features Editor  
PAT CHRISTMAN, Photo Editor  
JIM RUEDA, Sports Editor

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

JUSTIN NILES, Audience Development Director  
GLEN ASLESON, Facilities & Technology Manager  
TODD BROWER, Press/Post Press Manager  
DEB PETTERSON, General Manager - The Land

LETTERS POLICY

The Free Press welcomes letters on any issue of general community interest. Please limit your letters to no more than 275 words, typewritten or clearly printed. Letters or emails citing facts that are not commonly known should include the source. Letters must contain the author's name, address and phone number for verification. All letters will be edited for clarity, grammar, spelling and space. You may email letters to the editor to editor@mankatofreepress.com.



Editorials are the institutional voice of The Free Press and independent of the newsroom reporting staff

OUR VIEW:  
ROAD FUNDING

More highways  
are getting worse

According to the latest state pavement condition report from MnDOT, Minnesota roads are getting worse. And it appears that is just fine by the GOP-led Senate.

Majority Leader Paul Gazelka and Sen. Jim Abeler, among others, have been on record saying Minnesota doesn't need more tax money to fix roads. It's just not true. Not unless Gazelka and Abeler want to lower the longtime, bipartisan standards agreed to for the condition of state highways.

Why it matters:

Current road funding will not prevent the number of poor roads from increasing by another 100 miles in the next four years to 600 miles total.

The number of Minnesota state highways falling to the poor category increased by approximately 17.5 percent from 2017 to 2018.

MnDOT reports in 2018 there were 502 miles of state highways in "poor" road condition, 88 more miles than in 2017. This is the primary result of underfunding of Minnesota roads since the days of Gov. Tim Pawlenty's overridden veto on road funding. The DFL has never, in our memory, opposed increases in road funding, particularly the funding that is used to maintain or improve crumbling roads, many of which are in outstate Minnesota.

The parties can argue about expansion and new nice interchanges for the metro area, but basic road conditions remain in a downward spiral across the state.

MnDOT says based on the current funding projection for the next four years, all types of roads, state highways, interstates and national highways (like Highways 169 and 14, which run through Mankato) will all deteriorate further with more listed in "poor" condition. Some 98 more miles will move to "poor" condition during the next four years.

MnDOT experts note: "Once a pavement falls into the 'poor' category it normally will require major rehabilitation or reconstruction to restore any meaningful amount of service life. These types of repairs are expensive, thus making it much harder with a limited budget to recover once the amount of miles in this condition becomes very high."

With 600 miles of roads in "poor" condition, Minnesota will have the distinction of having enough miles of poor roads that one could drive the length of the state on crumbling highways.

We need more road funding. We urge the Republican caucus to face facts and join with Democrats and Gov. Tim Walz and approve an appropriate increase in the gas tax. The longer we wait, the more it will cost and fewer roads will be fixed.

OTHER VIEW

Kowtowing to the  
anti-vaccine crowd

The Kansas City Star

Some long-gone diseases are back, and the resurgence of measles in particular now poses a serious public health threat across the country. Yet the wacky, downright dangerous response of some Missouri lawmakers is to worry more about discrimination against unvaccinated children than about the legitimate risk that those kids pose to the whole community.

Yes, in Missouri, where you can still be fired for being gay, a lawmaker/pharmacist who's been on probation for writing and filling false prescriptions for himself, his relatives, employees and even his dog, is leading the "anti-discrimination" charge on behalf of the unvaccinated.

As a pharmacist, "I'm not against vaccines," said Rep. Lynn Morris, a Republican from Ozark. "I am for people having the right to choose what they want done to their

children. Parents are getting bullied. They are being intimidated. I just don't think that's right."

Now it's bullying to point out the truth that what's not right is risking a serious outbreak.

Anti-vaxxers exploit fear and pseudoscience. But vaccines do not cause autism: In March, a 10-year Danish study of 10,000 children confirmed the findings of a 2002 study that found no link.

Not getting vaccinated, though, is demonstrably dangerous: The measles can in rare instances kill especially very young children. And about 5 percent of children who get the measles will develop pneumonia, which can also be fatal.

Through April 4, 465 cases of the measles had been reported this year in 19 states including Missouri, where lawmakers should be trying to head off a health crisis instead of stoking it.



Our parties need to learn the opposite lessons

WASHINGTON — It would save pixels, ink and talking time if we all agreed on the obvious: Democrats are more divided than Republicans and will remain so for the foreseeable future. What matters is everything else you say once this reality is acknowledged.

First, the facts: Democrats are more diverse than Republicans in almost every imaginable way: racially, ethnically, religiously and ideologically.

And the Democrats' diversity is increasing because of the flood of new supporters fleeing Donald Trump's GOP. Many of these newcomers are not registered as Democrats, meaning that they won't vote in most of the 2020 primaries and caucuses. But their ballots helped Democrats win control of the House.

As for the Republicans, they are, overwhelmingly, a party of whites and Christians. They tilt male, especially in their leadership: Among women in the House, 89 are Democrats; only 13 are Republicans.

The GOP is the party of older people, the Democrats are the party of the young, partly because of the racial and ethnic heterogeneity of the rising generations. In the 2018 House races, according to the exit polling, Republicans won 50% among those 45 and older, but only 36% of those under 45 — and just 32% from the under-30s.

These data points explain a very large share of the standard political commentary.

The question raised again and again about Republican politicians is: Why oh why don't they have the courage to speak up against a president who, many times a day, violates the most basic norms of decency, val-

ues many of these same politicians lauded before Nov. 8, 2016?

The question regularly asked about Democrats is: Why do they fight each other about so much stuff, including single-payer health care, the Green New Deal, immigration, foreign policy and, rather embarrassingly last week, the shape of this year's federal budget?

The Republican question is easier to dispose of. The GOP has been working hard for half a century to become monocultural and mono-ideological. Trump has only accelerated the process. Most are happy to be bought off with judges and tax cuts. And please, no elitist alibis that this is all about those Trumpist blue-collar folks. As The Atlantic's Ron Brownstein pointed out, using Quinnipiac polling from last year, 76% of white Republicans without a college degree supported Trump's wall — but so did 71% of white Republicans who did graduate from college. And remember that over 80% of Republicans are white.

There's a better chance of a Massachusetts politician coming out as a Yankees fan than of a Republican elected official turning on Trump.

Democrats love to say that diversity is a strength. Well, sure. If their coalition is clicking, it can amass a lot of votes — 9.7 million more than the Republicans in last year's House races. And while they may disagree on tactics — impeachment now, later or never? — they're united in wanting to contain and ultimately defeat Trump. They agree on other objectives, too, such as getting everyone health insurance, acting decisively on climate change



EJ DIONNE  
Washington Post

Judges should give America a chance

If you can't trust the courts, who can you trust? Nobody. So don't trust anybody ever again, because if a court gets a case concerning President Donald Trump that provides an illicit means of getting him, it very well may do it.

Well, not every court, but as one example, a federal judge in Alaska said Trump could not free up land for oil drilling, citing reasons pretty much the opposite of what the law says.

President Barack Obama did not have the authority to permanently stop drilling in millions of acres of Alaska and the eastern seaboard but the court said he did. Environmental groups that sued to overturn the Trump order did not have proper standing to sue. The groups said Trump wasn't permitted to act without Congress saying OK, but that's false. Even though the law says the D.C. Court of Appeals should hear any such cases, that is not what happened.

A Wall Street Journal editorial, after outlining all of these facts and more, tells us that "liberals are using the courts to lock in Barack Obama's legacy even as they howl about a supposedly imperial Trump presidency," and yes, I will go along with that. But the words do not go far enough. What's been happening is an assault on justice, converting

courts into political machines, a dive into shame.

Another illustration of that was how some courts did not want Trump exercising a clear right: deciding whether there might be circumstances requiring the denial of entry into the United States by people from countries brimming with violent hatred. True enough, some initial plans for a crackdown were not particularly well-formulated, but things got better and a main purpose was to encourage improved vetting. It didn't matter to judges who told us that things Trump had said during his campaign made him a villain you could not trust.

A phony assertion was that Trump was working to ban entry of all and any Muslims. But, while the evidence of that was not really evidence at all, the idea so easily penetrated some minds that some courts ruled against him. The Supreme Court set things right, but every direction you look there remain judges who think they are gods, free to do anything their high and mighty visions urge even if they are actually vengeful human beings. And thus we also had, as still another example, the ruling that Trump was not permitted to reverse Obama's executive order on not deporting Dreamers even though he was permitted to do so by law.

The use of courts to get Trump is not all that different from tactics used in other branches of government to get him, not the least being the Russian collusion investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller based on absolutely nothing. In the end, Mueller was honest, but the Trump administration must keep up its fight to make America reliable again. One means toward that end has been to put two outstanding constitutionalists on the Supreme Court.

Thanks to an excellent performance by Republicans in the Senate, we're also seeing numerous federal judges get appointed in numbers large enough to make a hefty difference over time. The thing about Republicans, at least some of them, is that too many tend to see the Constitution as lastingly respectable, still in tune with justice and reality, and not something that you reduce to vague principles that can be twisted and turned to mean whatever you want them to.

Along with others, I do happen to think we should find ways to give Dreamers a chance, for instance, and congressional Democrats had a chance to do just that. But when you start destroying our system of government to achieve the ends you seek, you are no longer giving America a chance.

Email Jay Ambrose at [speakto-jay@aol.com](mailto:speakto-jay@aol.com).



JAY AMBROSE  
Tribune News Service

FOUNDED IN 1887

The Free Press

1st Amendment: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

STEVE JAMESON, Publisher

EDITORIAL MANAGEMENT

JOSEPH SPEAR, Managing Editor  
KATHY VOS, News Editor  
TIM KROHN, Business Editor  
ROBB MURRAY, Features Editor  
PAT CHRISTMAN, Photo Editor  
JIM RUEDA, Sports Editor

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

JUSTIN NILES, Audience Development Director  
GLEN ASLESON, Facilities & Technology Manager  
TODD BROUWER, Press/Post Press Manager  
DEB PETTERSON, General Manager - The Land

LETTERS POLICY

The Free Press welcomes letters on any issue of general community interest. Please limit your letters to no more than 275 words, typewritten or clearly printed. Letters or emails citing facts that are not commonly known should include the source. Letters must contain the author's name, address and phone number for verification. All letters will be edited for clarity, grammar, spelling and space. You may email letters to the editor to [editor@mankatofreepress.com](mailto:editor@mankatofreepress.com).



Editorials are the institutional voice of The Free Press and independent of the newsroom reporting staff

OUR VIEW:  
HIGHWAY 14

Legislature, governor  
need political will

There have always been good political reasons to fund the expansion of Highway 14 from two lanes to four from Rochester to New Ulm. But there are also good business and safety reasons.

Funding the final 12-mile stretch figures to be a genuine test of the audacity, honesty and political will of outstate legislators and the DFL governor.

Why it matters:

The last piece of roadway from Nicollet to New Ulm has been blocked by bureaucracy and unwilling legislative leadership.

The stretch of road remains one of the most dangerous in the state. It serves 1,000 trucks leaving New Ulm every day, including large businesses like

Kraft and AMPI, which processes milk trucked in from California.

There's no question it will be an uphill battle, as it has been for decades. It's a battle against bureaucracy, and a political majority in the metro area that now has more reason to challenge the outstate project.

For years, a MnDOT road priority system left one of the most dangerous highways in the state off even a 20-year priority list. In 2010, a Free Press investigative report detailed the high rate of accidents on the stretch from Nicollet to New Ulm. As a result, MnDOT did its own study and found the roadway was even more dangerous than previously understood.

Then-Gov. Mark Dayton and legislators reacted and put together a plan to fund the \$40 million expansion.

Eventually, legislators came together with a bipartisan plan to fund other dangerous outstate roadways that fell outside MnDOT's criteria. They developed another funding mechanism called Corridors of Commerce that allowed outstate roads to be scored differently. It worked for a few years and funded at least two sections of Highway 14 east of Mankato.

But a state auditor's report criticized the program and directed MnDOT to put in more criteria for funding projects. Unfortunately, that new criteria favored metro area roads by a wide margin. Only special influence and legislation last year provided funding to the Owatonna to Dodge Center piece.

Under the new criteria, the Nicollet to New Ulm part of the project would not likely be on the list for decades.

It makes sense to us that that portion be funded. MnDOT has already invested in the North Mankato to Nicollet part and an interchange and bridge at New Ulm, where the work is in progress.

But one of three things must happen. Legislators could change the Corridors of Commerce criteria to make it more equitable to outstate. Or legislators could add the project as an earmark, as they did for Highway 212 near the metro area.

Or they could agree on a huge increase in transportation funding statewide via the gas tax and direct some of that funding back into the Corridors program or regular funding program to fund the projects further down the MnDOT list.

We urge lawmakers and leadership from both parties and the governor to come together to make this happen. Local governments and business have waited more than 50 years for this road to be completed. A completed four-lane from New Ulm to Rochester will boost economic development and commerce across southern Minnesota.

Roll call votes online

The Free Press provides a record of all significant votes in Congress and the voting record of Minnesota members of Congress online at [www.mankatofreepress.com](http://www.mankatofreepress.com).

Votes are listed under "roll call votes" under the "news" accessed through the drop down menu at the top left of The Free Press home page.

Readers can find votes going back to 2011 on topics ranging from gun control to homeland security and from

veterans' issues to Medicare spending.

"Left and Right Scores" are also tallied for each member depending on ratings of various interest groups in categories that include liberal, conservative, green, business, social and labor categories.

Votes for this year can be found by searching "How they voted" on [www.mankatofreepress.com](http://www.mankatofreepress.com) in the search bar on the home page.

FOUNDED IN 1887

The Free Press

1st Amendment: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

STEVE JAMESON, Publisher

EDITORIAL MANAGEMENT

JOSEPH SPEAR, Managing Editor  
KATHY VOS, News Editor  
TIM KROHN, Business Editor  
ROBB MURRAY, Features Editor  
PAT CHRISTMAN, Photo Editor  
JIM RUEDA, Sports Editor

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

JUSTIN NILES, Audience Development Director  
GLEN ASLESON, Facilities & Technology Manager  
TODD BROWER, Press/Post Press Manager  
DEB PETTERSON, General Manager - The Land

LETTERS POLICY

The Free Press welcomes letters on any issue of general community interest. Please limit your letters to no more than 275 words, typewritten or clearly printed. Letters or emails citing facts that are not commonly known should include the source. Letters must contain the author's name, address and phone number for verification. All letters will be edited for clarity, grammar, spelling and space. You may email letters to the editor to [editor@mankatofreepress.com](mailto:editor@mankatofreepress.com).

Old George Washington Didn't Put His Name On Enough Things So Nobody Remembers Him



YOUR VIEWS

Farmers need Hagedorn to act

Farmers need action, not lip service, from Rep. Jim Hagedorn.

During his campaigns, Hagedorn spoke of his support of agriculture and small businesses. Now that he's a member of Congress, farmers in the congressman's First District need his leadership to renew the biodiesel tax incentive.

Hagedorn's congressional colleague, Rep. Angie Craig (D, 2nd District) recently sponsored the Biodiesel Tax Credit Extension Act of 2019 (HR 2089) — bipartisan legislation to renew the biodiesel and renewable diesel tax incentive for 2018 and 2019.

Hagedorn's district in southern Minnesota has two biodiesel plants producing over 80 million gallons of biodiesel per year. Make no mistake, jobs are on the line in the congressman's backyard if the tax credit extension fails to pass.

The situation is urgent. The biodiesel tax incentive has already been expired for 15 months. Meanwhile, Congress signaled several times that they support renewing the tax credit, but we are still waiting.

Everyone shares the value of this tax incentive, including farmers, bio-fuel producers and blenders.

The tax credit has helped the biodiesel industry grow rapidly. Uncertainty around the timing of renewal is threatening that progress. Nearly 5,400 jobs biodiesel supports in Minnesota across several economic sectors are at stake, including nearly \$1.7 billion biodiesel contributes to Minnesota's economy.

It also threatens the nation's environmental goals, as biodiesel is the most widely used advanced biofuel and only advanced fuel recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Southern Minnesota farmers like myself need the biodiesel tax credit, and we implore Hagedorn to play his part in helping to pass this vital piece of legislation before it's too late.

Michael Petefish  
Claremont  
President, Minnesota Soybean  
Growers Association

Cheap clothing prices  
hurt environment

The Rana Plaza collapse was a structural failure that occurred on April 24, 2013, in Bangladesh, where an eight-story garment factory collapsed with a death toll of 1,134 and 2,500 injured. Workers were ordered to continue working, or lose a month's pay, even after they voiced safety concerns and cracks appeared in the walls.

Most of those workers were female, creating garments for retailers and consumers in the western world. They were making cheap clothes for our throw-away culture.

While we're paying cheap prices, the cost to the environment and garment workers is huge.

Each year, we throw away 11 million tons in the U.S. alone.

Garments, full of lead, pesticides and countless other chemicals, almost never break down and release toxic chemicals. Cheap textiles like polyester are derived from fossil fuels, contributing to global warming.

Rana Plaza is one of the many factories where garment workers are found in dangerous, toxic environments, working for low wages and without basic human rights.

Lucy Siegle, author and journalist, summed it up in the documentary

"The True Cost" — "Fast fashion isn't free. Someone, somewhere, is paying."

To combat fast fashion, buy less, wear it more and make it last. Ask yourself "Who made my clothes?" Use the Good on You app, which rates brands on how ethical they are.

April 22 - 27 is Fashion Revolution Week — an effort by conscious consumers who want to change the way clothes are sourced, produced and purchased, and who want to ensure that they are made in a safe, clean and fair way.

Join the Revolution.  
Paulette Bertrand  
Mankato

Carbon-free is a  
worthy goal for state

Minnesota is a leader in renewable energy, and I'm excited to advocate for legislation (HF 1833/SF2067) that will set our state on track to achieve 100% carbon-free energy by 2050.

As a pastor and person of faith, I understand the importance of moral vision. We need big goals to inspire us and move us with unity and purpose. A carbon-free economy is a worthy goal: it will protect the lakes, rivers and forests that we love and will allow our children and grandchildren to enjoy the beauty of this creation.

We would see solar panels of school buildings, more community solar gardens, electric car charging stations and other measures to help us grow into a green and prosperous economy.

I am assured in my faith that the Minnesota I hope for will come to be if we take these next steps to make this dream come true.

Andrew Davis  
St. Peter

Trump's sole goal: Own the libs

President Trump is looking into giving a free trip to San Francisco, New Orleans or other great American cities to tens of thousands of refugees from Central America. All so he can own the libs.

"Owning the libs" is one of those phrases to have emerged over the last few years that vacillates between earnestness and irony. For people who use it earnestly, it means to do something, usually symbolic and petty, that infuriates liberals out of proportion to the deed to make fools of them. For instance, wearing a MAGA hat to a feminist poetry reading at a co-op bookstore in Berkeley. It's a form of taking the culture war to the enemy.

The ironic form of the phrase is to engage in unwitting self-sabotage while making a political point. When pro-Trump internet troll and conspiracy theorist Jack Posobiec (now a "correspondent" at One America News) had his wedding rehearsal dinner catered by Papa John's Pizza — then unpopular with the libs — that was some righteous lib-ownage. Hence one Twitter user's response to Posobiec catering choices: "Eating horrible pizza at my wedding to own the libs."

(There's even a Twitter account called "Own The Libs Bot" (@OwnTheLibsBot) that churns out made-up but often all-too-plausible examples of ironic lib-owning: "Defending pederasty to own the libs." "Getting a Confederate flag face tattoo to own the libs.")

Much of Trump's populist appeal stems from his willingness to go out of his way to own the libs.

Give the president credit: He is

a kind of savant at the genre, particularly in his preferred métier of Twitter. Tweeting footage of the 9/11 attacks while criticizing Rep. Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., last

week is a good example, but his Colin Kaepernick tweets and calls to revoke media broadcast licenses are part of the canon. His defenders think this stuff is brilliant because it keeps the base riled up and, allegedly, produces gallons of delicious liberal tears. When

you point out that such tweets offend more voters than they attract, "Shut up," they explain.

But no lib-owning tweet can hold a candle to Trump's announcement over the weekend that he is considering busing thousands of refugees to "sanctuary cities."

Many conservative commentators have celebrated this triumph of lib-owning, even as they concede in mumbled parentheticals that it won't actually happen — not least because it's almost certainly illegal without congressional authorization, which will never materialize. But some conservatives continue to defend Trump's theatrics on the grounds that people should take him seriously but not literally. But taken either way, the idea is nuttier than a squirrel's preferred last meal.

Stemming illegal (and sometimes legal) immigration is the president's signature issue. Moving the thousands of refugees currently in detention to sanctuary cities is literally achieving the opposite of his goal.

Moreover, the reason there's a refugee crisis at the border is that desperate Central Americans believe this is their now-or-never moment to

get asylum in the United States. What will happen when video of buses depositing refugees in Colorado, Vermont or Oregon is broadcast across South America?

Trump keeps asserting that these refugees are an army of invading murderers, rapists and drug dealers — and apparently he thinks most Americans believe him. So of course, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other San Francisco liberals must be terrified that the president has called their bluff.

The thing is, most immigrants who are in the United States illegally end up going to these very localities. Sixty percent of them reside in just 20 metro areas, most of which have adopted sanctuary policies and limited their cooperation with immigration enforcement. In other words, Trump is proposing fulfilling the final leg of the travel plans of every caravan working its way through Mexico.

During the 2016 campaign, Trump made Kate Steinle, the San Francisco woman who was tragically shot and killed by a man who'd been previously deported five times, into a martyr for his cause. Trump's logic suggests we need more Kate Steinles to own the libs.

Trump's trolling could pay off if some Democrats — say, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York — call on Pelosi and Congress to take the president up on his offer. Then, Trump could say, "See! The Democrats really do want open borders!"

That such a scenario is not unimaginable is further proof that our politics can always get dumber.

Email Jonah Goldberg at [Jonahs-Column@aol.com](mailto:Jonahs-Column@aol.com).



JONAH  
GOLDBERG  
National Review