

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MTSD lawsuit over emails could have chilling effect for parents

To the editor:

I was alarmed to learn that a Mequon alderman is suing the Mequon-Thiensville School District to obtain private parent email addresses. Although Alderman Mark Gierl states that his intention is to provide a counternarrative to district parents, I believe he intends to share the email addresses with the group of parents who seek to recall School Board members, as well as for his own political gain.

Recently, Alderman Mark Gierl circulated petitions and certified signatures for this small group fighting to recall the majority of our School Board. During their dishonest campaign, I was bombarded with unsolicited emails and text messages from this group.

Why would a Mequon alderman get involved with the governance of our school district? Our city government and our school district are run by two distinctly different elected bodies and do not overlap. It is unethical and dishonorable for a Mequon alderman to file an iniquitous lawsuit at taxpayers' expense.

When I register my children to attend school in the district, I am asked if I want my contact information released to the Booster Club, the PTO, and MTEF. I must specifically consent to those releases individually or else the district does not share my information even with these organizations whose sole purpose is to support the district. Therefore, I assume that the district does not release my information to ANYONE unless I specifically consent to it.

Our taxpayer dollars are being spent to protect parents' privacy from an unscrupulous alderman. If the district is forced to capitulate to this request, parents may withhold their email addresses from the district so that outsiders cannot access them for nefarious purposes. How will the district inform parents of vital information in real time? Mr. Gierl's actions will have devastating consequences for the well-being of our school community.

Amy Williamson
Mequon

Internet shouldn't be considered a luxury

To the editor:

A few months ago, I learned something surprising. Internet is still considered a luxury item in the eyes of the government. In the day of COVID, this came as a surprise because so much of our lives have turned to be held online.

Soon, I will be moving out on my own. I've been living with my parents for the last five years after leaving grad school due to my mental health. After two years on the wait list, my name finally came up for Section 8 housing. I'm excited to move out on my own, but I'm concerned about the high cost of inter-

net.

Generally, there are no internet subsidies for those with very low incomes. In the day of COVID, I hardly see internet as a luxury item anymore. Last year, many schools went online and the lack of internet accessibility put some students behind their peers or were forced to learn in person and risk getting themselves or their families sick.

Fortunately, I was able to find a temporary source of internet relief in Wisconsin via the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program. This resource runs until six months after the public health emergency ends or when funds run out.

For me, access to the internet at my parents' house has allowed me to keep up with my mental health treatment virtually. I spend at least nine hours on the internet participating in various therapies via Zoom and other telehealth platforms throughout the week. Without access to these treatments, I know I will end up in higher levels of care.

That said, when I move out, I need a reliable source of internet, an affordable source of internet. I'm concerned that since my income is limited to SSI (around \$880 a month), I won't be able to afford a reliable source of internet long-term, and I know I'm not the only one in this situation. I am moving into low-income housing and I plan to apply for food-share and energy assistance.

As a community, we need to work to create change so I, and many others in similar situations, will continue to have reliable access to virtual treatment and minimize the risk that we will end up in higher levels of care (an expense paid for by Medicaid), or worse.

Rebecca Reinholz
Mequon

Pit bull a 'menace' to Cedarburg

To the editor:

I am a subscriber to the News Graphic and enjoy keeping up with current events around Ozaukee County. My first reaction to seeing your article regarding the menace known as Jinx the pit bull was one of gratitude that this issue was being

brought to light for a larger audience.

But after reading, I couldn't help but feel that this article was slanted toward these clueless pet owners who continue to blame others for all of the problems they ultimately bring upon themselves. This issue has nothing to do with "new neighbors," law enforcement, bad luck, misunderstandings, etc. This is a dangerous dog with negligent owners — possibly the worst combination an innocent neighbor could encounter.

I am appalled that they are applying for "emotional support animal" status for this dog while all of us innocent bystanders are forced to suppress our emotions of fear and uncertainty while going anywhere near their residence.

And that picture? Obviously submitted by the owners to sway public sentiment. Look how dignified he looks on that leather chair. Have you seen Ted Bundy in a suit? What a handsome fella!

This dog isn't your fault, obviously. The incidents aren't, either. But innocent people are being attacked and fear letting their children out of their homes. These dog owners don't care. Remember, "the world is against them" and they have nothing left to lose. I simply ask that anything you write further on this matter gives a little more of a realistic point of view and less "alleged" incidents (that are all very real) and biased viewpoints by the only people in this city that don't need to actively worry about this public menace.

Eddie Sauer
Cedarburg

LETTERS POLICY: Letters should be signed and include phone number and address so that we may verify authenticity. Neither phone number nor address will be printed when letters appear. We reserve the right to edit letters. Please keep letters to no more than 300 words. Generally, letter writers are limited to one letter every 30 days. Letters might appear in multiple Conley Media publications.

• Email: letters@conley.net

