

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Support Malek for Cedarburg School Board

To the editor: I am writing to share my support for Hani Malek in his bid for a seat on the Cedarburg School Board.

Hani is family-oriented and a great neighbor. We are fortunate in Cedarburg. People like that are common here. So, those traits, although admirable, do not make him a distinctive candidate.

There are two things about Hani and his platform that do positively set him apart. The first is his priority for ensuring a safe and accepting environment for all students.

I hope that voters in Cedarburg join me in supporting Hani Malek and vote for him on April 5.

Alfred Weil Cedarburg

Hammett is right choice for Cedarburg School Board

To the editor: We are writing to endorse Ryan Hammett for the Cedarburg School Board. We have known Ryan for over 20 years. He grew up in Cedarburg, moved away for a few years for his career but like many Wisconsinites he and his wife, Robin, made the choice to move back to raise their family here.

His two children attend Westlawn Elementary School. Ryan regularly volunteers his time at Westlawn and is an active member in our community (Little League coach and board member of Cedarburg Public Works & Sewerage, Ozaukee Nonprofit Center, and Illuminate Ozaukee Committee).

We know Ryan is committed to Cedarburg's educational excellence and to a transparent, honest, and inclusive communication process among School Board members, teachers, administrators, and our community.

Eric and Sylvia Arvold Cedarburg

Buzzell, Levash best candidates for MTSD School Board

To the editor: Year after year, the Mequon-Thiensville School District is recognized as a top Wisconsin school district, and recent data supports our district's continued strong standing. Last fall, the MTSD once again achieved "Significantly Exceeds Expectations" on the annual Department of Public Instruction-issued District Report Cards.

Additionally, the district's academic recovery plan, developed in response to disruptions in learning for 2020-2021 due to the pandemic, is yielding positive results.

While these numbers are moving in the right direction, our district acknowledges there's more work to be done. Despite promising outcomes, at least one School Board candidate continues to allege that Mequon-Thiensville schools are failing our kids, using false data to support her agenda.

With demonstrated respect for our community and our schools, Paul Buzzell and Jason Levash are the best candidates to ensure ongoing student achievement. Help preserve the MTSD's commitment to academic excellence — vote Buzzell and Levash on April 5.

Ken Siegel Mequon

Thank you, MTSD!

To the editor: Recently, I heard a teacher talking about fairness. As all children do, her students sometimes complain that things are not fair. She told them a version of this story: Imagine that you hurt your elbow. Jonny, because you tripped on your shoelace. And you, Suzie, hurt your knee playing soccer, and it's a bigger cut than what Jonny has. And you, Julia, fell off your skateboard and cut your forehead open. And you, Brian, have a bump on your head. You all need help.

If you think fairness means everyone gets the same thing, here is what happens: I give one Band-Aid to all of you and you all have to put it on your elbow. That helps Jonny's hurt elbow. Great! But Suzie's got a Band-Aid on her elbow and nothing to stop the bleeding on her knee. Julie's forehead is still bleeding. Brian's head still has a bump. You all needed help. I gave you all the same help: it is fair? All the children said "No" other than Jonny. He has been helped. But when I gave you all the same thing, you were not all helped.

Under another model of fairness, Jonny's elbow gets a Band-Aid, Suzie's knee gets two Band-Aids, Julie's forehead gets stitches at the doctor and Brian's head has an ice pack on it. Doesn't that seem more in line with fairness? The children all yelled yes.

If children can understand this with the analogy I just told you, I am hoping we as adults with different views can agree that fairness is more in line with the second model.

The Mequon-Thiensville School Board is doing a beautiful job of serving each of our students' unique educational, emotional, cultural and developmental needs. Thank you so much for all you do, MTSD!

Amanda Sherman Mequon

McCraw deserves your vote for County Board

To the editor: I am writing to voice my support for Sarah McCraw, who is running for Ozaukee County District 14 Supervisor on April 5. We have known Sarah both personally and professionally for over 25 years, and can vouch for her integrity and dedication. She has devoted much of the past decade to public service within her community, spearheading many dynamic improvements in jail literacy programs and finding solutions to support veterans' mental and physical health issues.

I am particularly impressed with her dedication to the success of small businesses in our community. As small-business owners ourselves, we need all the help we can get from our local elected officials. She supports the growth of infrastructure as a means to boost tourism and help bring new revenue to Ozaukee County. Sarah is a real people person, and will always solicit input from residents to help provide a fair and equal representation.

On a personal note, I want to share something that makes me know how much Sarah cares about people. Several years ago, my husband and I were involved in a car accident and were literally housebound for over a month. One Sunday afternoon she showed up at our house with a delicious spaghetti dinner that fed us for three days. Her kindness is legend, and extends to everything she does both personally and professionally. She has my vote for sure, and I hope will have yours.

Ann Schmidt Port Washington

Pastors urge citizens to vote

To the editor: We are pastors serving ELCA Lutheran congregations in Cedarburg who want to encourage good communication, community-building and trust in our city and in the upcoming School Board election. As Lutherans we are moved by Martin Luther's persistent call for Christians to be involved in civic life and a long tradition of highly valuing public education for the betterment of society.

The efforts of local groups like Bridge the Divide, Peace in the Park, the CHS Bridge Builders Club, Webster Student Acceptance Team and others are encouraging examples of how we are stronger when we listen to and learn from one another. While the work of dialogue can be difficult and uncomfortable, we believe that it strengthens our community by building understanding and trust where misunderstanding and fear had prevailed.

The School Board could be an important partner in this work, especially as students, families and teachers have felt shut out. The upcoming election is a chance for citizens to add their voice to an important community conversation. We invite all citizens of Cedarburg to be informed and vote in the upcoming election.

Pastor John Norquist Pastor Heidi Borkenhagen Cedarburg

Vote McCraw to County Board

To the editor: Every two years, we get to share our collective voice by electing representatives from our community to represent us on the County Board.

Spring elections for County Board supervisors will be held in a few weeks. In many districts, there are numerous options on the ballot. Sarah McCraw is one of the new faces running for Supervisor in District 14. Sarah is passionate about promoting locally owned businesses to enhance the economy in Ozaukee County, and she has a lot of experience doing it. She also believes that the county's infrastructure should be improved to boost tourism and revenue.

Over the past decade, Sarah has served as a board member for a variety of nonprofit

organizations, including the Ozaukee County Jail Literacy Program, the Ozaukee Chorus, and Grafton's Holiday Committee.

Please join us in supporting a fresh voice on the Ozaukee County Board of Supervisors by voting for Sarah McCraw in District 14 on April 5.

David and Mary Lou Mueller Port Washington

Filter out noise, get to know candidates

To the editor: I'm disappointed that Senator Stroebel unethically inserted himself into the Cedarburg School Board election through an email to followers from his campaign account and in social media posts. He falsely alleged that an open records request to local law enforcement asking for service calls to Stroebel properties is related to the school board election, snaring four candidates that he unfairly refers to as "liberal challengers" in the process.

It's a shame to see this personal attack from someone like Senator Stroebel, because every candidate has something positive to offer and none deserves to be unfairly maligned.

While the race has incorrectly been painted as a group of "liberal challengers" vs. current conservative board members, I look at this nonpartisan election in a more balanced way. I have been disappointed with several decisions that the School Board has made in the past nine months, so I sought to learn about the five new candidates. Elizabeth Charland's response to my questions on a position she took showed a lack of critical thinking. However, Hani Malek, Jamie Maier, Kate Erickson and Ryan Hammett have come out on a few issues that are important to me as a parent of two Cedarburg school district students: transparent decision making and communication; treating our teachers and support staff with dignity to attract and retain the best talent; supporting all students, especially the most vulnerable; and modernizing the curriculum to prepare our kids for the world they will encounter after high school.

I encourage you to do what I did: Stop listening to the noise from both political parties and try to get to know each candidate. You might be surprised.

Matt McManus Cedarburg

Kuerschner backs Stroebel for re-election to Cedarburg School Board

To the editor: Dear CSD voters, Please exercise your citizenship privilege and right to vote in the Cedarburg School District election April 5.

Wife, Shirley, and I will vote for several candidates including incumbent board member Laura Stroebel, for she has faithfully and thoughtfully served. As a public official, Laura is open and responsive. Her stated campaign values mirror what I desire for CSD students. Her priorities for every student include: 1) an exemplary academic education, 2) maximization of student potential, 3) strong skills in reading, writing, math, creativity, and problem solving.

Laura respects the values of every family. As a parent, Laura has been a school volunteer for nearly three decades, with four of her children having been valedictorian of each one's graduating CHS class. Laura, with her values, experience, skills and knowledge, if re-elected to the CSD Board, will continue to serve well while exercising common sense on behalf of constituents and students. Having served as an educator and as Cedarburg mayor, I have come to recognize important values and talents within individuals as leaders and decision makers. Laura Stroebel possesses those positive qualities and values.

Be sure to vote for Stroebel, my wife and I will also vote for ballot candidates R. Leach, J. Calzada, and E. Charland. Please vote!

John P. Kuerschner Cedarburg

Maier is someone we need on Cedarburg School Board

To the editor: There is a reason a bell curve peaks in the middle and tapers off on either side — the probability is that the majority of values cluster toward the middle. That's why if members of a nonpartisan board are clustered too far to the left or too far to the right, and make decisions based solely on their political beliefs, they're going to make the majority of people unhappy.

The Cedarburg School Board is a perfect example of how this type of imbalance can cause disruption, inaction and dissent. Politics shouldn't play a role in a nonpartisan race, but it's clear politics are driving this election, and it's splitting our community apart.

On April 5 we need to elect candidates who aren't weighed down by their own political aspirations or obligations. We need board members who are reasonable, thoughtful and willing to listen — to other board members, and also to parents, students, and the administration — and who will make decisions that are in the best interests of our district as a whole.

I've known Jamie Maier for more than a decade, and I know she has the experience and strength to make sure all voices in the district are being heard. She'll be supportive while maintaining fiscal responsibility and she'll be fair and equal in her representation of Cedarburg families.

Jamie Maier is exactly the type of person we need on the CSD board.

Cori Kaminsky Cedarburg

Stroebel misleads on revenue limits

To the editor: In response to Sen. Ducey Stroebel's Feb. 10 letter to the editor, it is Stroebel who misled readers in his original opinion that private school vouchers are a good deal for taxpayers. We thank him for pointing his misleading statements out. A previous letter to the editor gave data to support the argument that vouchers are not a good use of state taxpayer dollars. My data also supports that vouchers are not a good use of taxpayer dollars.

Example: Family A applies for a voucher to send their child to a private school where the child has been attending. The voucher paid to the private school, religious or non-religious, will cost \$8,236 or \$8,992 because Family A's student was not part of the public school district, there is NO effect on the revenue limit of the public school district because the enrollment for the district is unchanged. However, in the year the Family A receives an approved voucher, the district must pay either \$8,336 or \$8,992 to the private school. And, because the revenue limit of the district is now increased due to the voucher, this cost can and is passed on to the local taxpayers. This point is irrefutable.

Senator Stroebel points out that there are private non-religious schools receiving vouchers, too, and that is true. However of the 362 private and religious schools, only 13 could be identified as non-religious. The lion's share of the \$413 million dollars spent on the private schools goes to religious schools.

A previous letter to the editor also made the statement, "The taxpayer cannot afford to support two educational systems." Senator Stroebel countered, stating, "That was not correct. Revenue Limit controls make sure the taxpayers do not pay more because of school choice."

As a strategic school business management consultant, I judge the information in the previous letter to the editor as accurate. I judge Mr. Stroebel's statements regarding how the revenue limit works and that vouchers are not funded by taxpayers blatantly false.

Tim Stelmacher West Bend

Grothman should be ashamed of himself

To the editor: Congressman Glenn Grothman, I understand you were one of the eight who voted against the House bill cutting off trade to Russia. Your reasons why you think it is a good idea to keep trading with Russia are what? Do you approve of their industry in another country? Do you approve of the death and destruction going on in the Ukraine? Do you support Putin? Do you think this is representative of the will of your constituents?

Why would you do such a thing, Congressman? You should be ashamed of representing our district with such an act.

Dale K. Waldo Cedarburg

Stroebel owes constituents transparency on Cedar Gorge Bluffs project

To the editor: The issue concerning the Cedar Gorge Clay Bluff grant is quite disturbing since it was an "anonymous" Wisconsin state lawmaker whose objection to the previously approved grant has put the project in jeopardy.

This objection that ostensibly will benefit an unknown private entity seeking to purchase the land lacks any semblance of transparency. Even worse, it appears to be an example of a close relationship between government officials and a private individual that could be profitable to both of these parties.

Almost daily we read about how Russian oligarchs have benefited from a close relationship with Vladimir Putin, with substantial financial benefits accruing to both parties. Wisconsin residents deserve to know all the facts, especially who are the interested parties, that pertain to this case so that we can be assured our state government is not involved with the type of business deals so common in Russia and other countries with dictatorial regimes.

As the Wisconsin state senator for District 20, Ducey Stroebel has the responsibility to those he represents to provide us with all relevant facts pertaining to the Cedar Gorge Clay Bluff case, especially who is the "anonymous" state representative who raised the objection to the grant and who is the private entity that potentially will benefit from the grant being denied.

As someone with expertise in real estate, and someone who has provided extensive detailed information publicly about issues such as the tax implications of decisions to use TIF districts, Senator Stroebel's silence on this issue is disturbing. Those of us he represents deserve to know the facts and be reassured that our state government operates in a far more democratic and ethical manner than do countries that have created many wealthy oligarchs.

James Angresano Mequon

Election letters deadline

The deadline for receiving letters and Sound CDS related to the April 5 election is MIDNIGHT TONIGHT.

Please keep letters to 300 words.

Email: letters@conley.net.com