

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Recall divides, embarrasses community

To the editor:
Recall organizers, pipe down! That's something I would say to my grandkids when they get overexuberant.

According to the News Graphic, the organizers are upset with the district's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. And they are concerned with test scores declining while district spending is increasing.

Aren't we dealing with a life-threatening and expensive-to-control pandemic? Will the organizers be out picketing MTSD if one of their children is hospitalized with COVID?

Recently I received an unwanted and unwanted email from "Recall MTSD School Board." The subject was "What does CRT look like at MTSD?" This crossed the line into disinformation and politics. Critical race theory as an academic theory has been around since the 1970s following civil rights legislation. Quite recently it seems that CRT has been made into a hot-button label (with misunderstood content) and that label is being used as a political football. Any time CRT is mentioned, take a deep breath and cast a very critical eye on what is being said. Delve into the origins of this stuff.

As a long-term resident, I care about the community and have supported the school district as children and grandchildren attend. Recall organizers, what are you accomplishing? At what cost? This is dividing and embarrassing the community.

Children should learn to value life and to care for and respect others along with the ABCs. We may not survive as a community or society without that. Sometimes we have to sacrifice for the greater good.

I stopped at the recall desk by the pool on a recent day to ask some questions. As I left, I heard snickering behind me. Don't underestimate an old lady that cares.

Judy Kay
Mequon

Equity in our schools

To the editor:
The group that is trying to recall MTSD Board members is campaigning against equity in our schools. They state that they prefer equality. At first blush equality sounds great. Everyone gets the same thing. However, what does that look like for our students? The term "equity" refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality. Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances. Take for example a student with special needs who has an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) in place. This is an example of how the school system addresses equity. If we only focused on equality, every student would have an IEP but not every student needs one. Some students take AVID (a college-readiness program), but not every student needs it. Equality means every student gets the same things — an IEP and AVID. Equity means each student gets what they need to succeed. As a parent of a student in our district who had an IEP, it concerns me that there is a group campaigning against equity. Thankfully, MTSD knew what my student needed and was able to provide it. I am grateful for the MTSD Vision — "Each student, every time, empowered to succeed". The recall group recently sent an email opposing equity. I would ask of the people fighting against equity are you against equity for students who are in the IEP or AVID program? Which children would you choose to hold back from their potential?

Kathryn M. Rusch
Mequon

Resist the school board recall

To the editor:
The Mequon-Thiensville School District is a catalyst for much of what is good about the quality of life in our community. It's a culture of excellence. An outstanding faculty and staff drive a high level of student performance. Its enduring foundation is strong leadership from building principals, keen vision from the superintendent and consistent governance from the board. The district has a long game strategy, with decisions that pay increasing dividends. Its track record is highly distinguished.

A group has emerged which is asking fair questions about academic performance, as measured by standardized testing. Those questions deserve thoughtful answers. In their zeal, this group has galvanized around an effort to recall four members of the board. This is unfortunate on several levels. First, the established election cycle ensures that each seat can be regularly challenged, while preserving the board's stability. Second, the stated rationale for a mid-cycle recall is high-

ly emotional, thinly conceived and contrary to the long game strategy which has served the district so well. Third, the focus of the recall effort has devolved into a catch-all of grievances which have little to do with academic performance. Breathless condemnation of everything from Marxism to voter fraud to the amorphous concept of critical race theory has supplanted the rational debate about how best to lift test scores. Finally, the nature of a recall effort is such that the named board members are unable to defend themselves while signatures are gathered.

I urge those who are undecided to resist the recall. Let's air the issues which are directly relevant to our district, embrace incumbents and challengers in a thoughtful campaign and then have an election next spring which will serve our community in the same manner that it has for over 60 years.

Jack Rooney
Mequon

Recall fraction drastically misrepresents MTSD mission

To the editor:
I was very dismayed by a recent email I saw from the group seeking to recall MTSD Board members. In the email they state "MTSD Mission Statement: Our Commitment to Equity... embrace a culture of Equity and inclusion in which each student is 'rooted in the ideals of Equity... (Not excellence...)' This is not the MTSD Mission and it misrepresents MTSD's commitment. The mission of MTSD, which can easily be found on their website, is "Together, we ignite each student's passion for learning, preparing for a life of infinite possibilities." The MTSD Vision can also be found there "Each student, every time, empowered to succeed." If you look a little further, you can also find the district's commitments including one which states "Our commitment to success for every student is rooted in the ideals of both equity and excellence." I invite you to compare that with what the recall group stated in their email. They claim the school is not committed to excellence by conveniently leaving those words out of what is taken from the district website. How can we take this recall group seriously if they cannot truthfully represent information? How can they possibly think that they are qualified to be on our school board if they cannot be trusted to be honest with our community?

Julie E Smallwood, MBA, CFA
Mequon resident and MTSD parent

Cedarburg School Board plan does not protect students

To the editor:
This year I am going into sixth grade at Webster Middle School. I am unvaccinated like many in the school district because I am only 11 years old. The Cedarburg School District's plan for the fall does not protect me or other students because they are throwing away all of the precautions that they so carefully had us follow last year. It does not make sense to me that we were so careful last year and did so well in preventing the spread of covid and now we're just completely ignoring the facts about how to stay safe at school. It worries me because even though I am going to wear a mask and try and be as safe as possible, I have a higher risk this year of getting the virus because others around me do not have to wear a mask. We could easily prevent the spread of covid in the schools by enforcing the same precautions that were in place last year. This would keep all students, vaccinated or unvaccinated, safe. I am sad I have to write this letter but kids like me who feel unsafe going back to school have to say how they feel because the adults in the school district aren't protecting us this year.

Morgan McLanus
Cedarburg

Republicans want to win elections by any means

To the editor:
The GOP-controlled state Legislature is drawing district lines, instead of an independent body doing this, meaning they can determine who votes for them.

Several state legislatures, again GOP-controlled, have passed election laws which are nothing more than voter suppression. Are they doing this to massage the ego of a twice-impeached president who can't accept the fact that he lost the election?

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy refused to play ball with an independent commission investigating the terrorist attack on the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6. Some Republican "leaders", including our own Ron Johnson, think that it was peaceful protesters, as harmless as a tour group.

If you caught any of the testimony of the four heroes who defended the Capitol, doesn't it make you proud to be an American? I wonder if any of the Jan. 6 deniers have "Back the Badge" yard signs or bumper stickers. If so, they might want to remove them.

The only conclusion I can draw is that the Republican Party hates democracy and winning elections by any means is more important than the U.S. Constitution.

Thomas R. Kandziora
Cedarburg

Biennial state budget supports local governments

To the editor:
Most of you who know me recognize me as the chairman of the Town of Grafton. Pas-

sage of the biennial state budget is rarely front page news. The budget put together by joint finance and signed by Governor Evers insured additional state investment in local roads, broadband, and emergency services, along with targeted support for communities with tax bases so low that they struggle to keep up with the rising cost of local services. We have those areas right here in Ozaukee County where broadband internet and providing emergency services is becoming a terminal issue.

I want to take a moment to thank Senator Ducey Stroebel for his strong leadership as well as our other state elected officials from both parties for the support shown to Wisconsin's local governments through passage of the biennial state budget. Our own Senator Stroebel is a senior member of the Joint Finance Committee that assembled the bulk of the budget. Without his strong leadership, passage of a budget that reached across party lines would not have been possible. I would be remiss if not to also recognize Governor Evers for giving this budget his blessing.

Budgeting is a difficult process in our town. With too little to go around, we must prioritize between roads, services, and the many issues our constituents find important. We can't fund everything. The same is true with the state budget, albeit on a much larger scale. Our state legislators have the difficult job of wading through countless important issues to decide which are most in need of immediate funding. Fortunately, Senator Stroebel, the governor, as well as other legislators who passed the recent state budget, heard the calls of local officials and made great strides in support of local government. Whether you are a Democrat, Republican or Independent, this is a positive piece of news that is much needed.

Lester Bartel Jr.
Town of Grafton chairman

Junior Woman's Club thanks supporters

To the editor:
The Cedarburg Junior Woman's Club is grateful to so many members of our community for assisting with the Cedarburg Junior Woman's Club Safety Town/Safe and Camp programs held at Westlawn Elementary in June.

Our community members who helped bring this event together include: Cedarburg Police Department, Cedarburg Fire Department, Cedarburg Light & Water, Piggy Wiggy, Out & Out, Swim America, Riteway Bus, Cedarburg Vet, and the Cedarburg School District. We could not have done it without the wonderful middle and high school volunteers — thank you for helping the 5th children learn about safety, and the older children learn about bike safety. Our teachers — Denise Kegley and Alison Anderson — you are amazing with the kids; thank you! Theresa Brittingham at Westlawn — you are extraordinary! Casey Ward, Nate Butzler and Ryan Fitting — our community is lucky to have you as members of our Police Department. And finally thank you to our CJWC committee members: Kristin Schlingman, Debbie Schachenman, Toni Krick, and Jean Bieszk, as well as other members who volunteered their time during the event.

Even though we had an unplanned hiatus in 2020, we were able to seamlessly step right up this year, remember it all, and host a solid event. We look forward to Safety Town/Safety Camp next year. Registration will open in early April 2022.

The Cedarburg Junior Woman's Club is a 100% volunteer organization. We love new members — contact us if you are interested in making a difference in the community and meeting new friends. CJWC members LOVE Cedarburg; volunteering is easy and rewarding in a community like this.

Mary-Kay Bourbonlais
Diana Klingler

Cedarburg Junior Woman's Club Safety Town/Safety Camp co-chairs

Thanks to Garden Goodies customers

To the editor:
As we close our doors, I'd like to take a moment to thank all our loyal Garden Goodies customers. We loved seeing your faces and helping you everyday. We are happy so many of our pieces found beautiful places in your homes and yards. We wish you all the health and happiness in the world.

I'd also like to thank all the wonderful employees who have worked at all the Marline's stores over the past 50 years. Your hard work and creativity have brought the shops to life. Whether you worked with us a year ago, or 50 years ago, I appreciate and remember your time in Marline's stores. (If any former employees would like to be notified of our reunion plans next year, please contact marlinejm@hotmail.com)

And finally, I thank the Cedarburg community — not only our fellow merchants, but also the community at large. The stores were nothing without the love and support of our city and its citizens. I was born and raised in Cedarburg, had my family here and started my businesses here. Cedarburg is not only my home — it is my heart. I thank the entire city for their kind words these past few months, and look forward to chatting with you when we cross paths at Cedarburg events.

This is not the end. It's a new beginning. For me, for the building itself. W63 N664 Washington Ave. has been many things in its 150-plus years. From a home to a store. The only constant has been the innovative Cedarburg residents who inhabited it. So we look forward to its next chapter.

Thank you again...

Marlene McGrew
and staff at Garden Goodies
Cedarburg

