

Standard online reader survey



Q: Is there something about your life you would like to change, but can't muster the willpower to do it?

YES 72 percent
NO 28 percent

GUEST EDITORIAL

Removing statues was right move for Memphis

The city's two Confederate statues, racist propaganda from the past, symbols of a shameful era of slavery, lynching and other crimes against God and country, have been taken down.

Good riddance, Nathan Bedford Forrest and Jefferson Davis. May your bronzed and marbled likenesses find more suitable resting places — perhaps a Civil War museum or cemetery — where our unrighteous past can be noted and grieved, not ennobled and glorified.

And good work, Memphis. After years of political resolutions and public protests, legal disputation and moral consternation, state interference and indifference, the two statues were removed suddenly, quickly and cleverly even without incident.

"The statues no longer represent who we are as a modern, diverse city with momentum," Mayor Jim Strickland said after the statues were removed from their pedestals just hours after City Council ratified the sale of Health Sciences Park and Fourth Bluff Park to a privately funded non-profit called Memphis Greenspace Inc.

By selling the two parks, the city outflanked a 2016 law that basically allowed the state to occupy the parks and prevent the city from "renaming, removing or relocating any statues,

Commercial Appeal Memphis

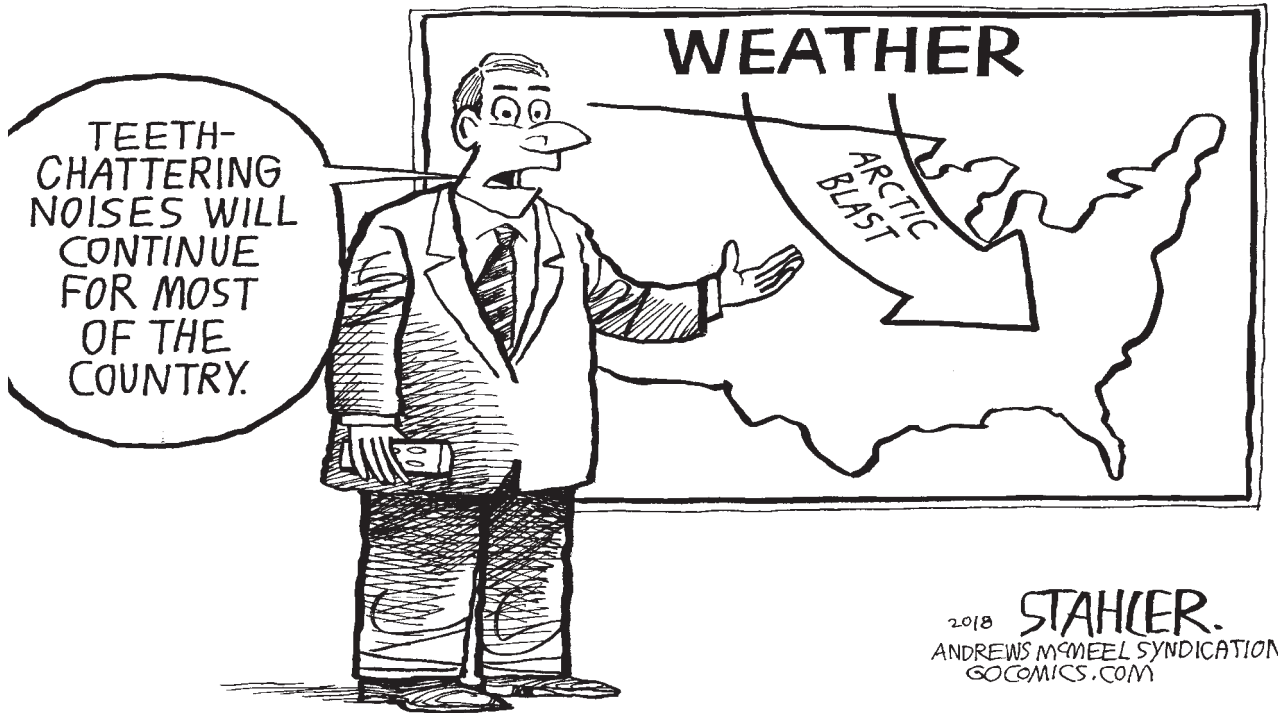
monuments and other memorials on publicly owned land" without the approval of two-thirds of the members of the Tennessee Historical Commission.

The city tried to play by the state's rules, but the 29-member commission is heavily stacked with Confederate history buffs and apologists who twice rejected the city's request to remove the Forrest statue. So the city changed its tactics and tried another legal maneuver.

"The law allows a city to sell land to a private entity," Strickland noted. "The law allows a private entity to remove items such as statues from its own land."

Forrest, the Confederate general known for his deceptive battlefield tactics, his ability to maneuver to "Get there first with the most," would have been proud. So would Forrest the baptized Christian, if accounts of his late-in-life repentance are as true as his supporters claim.

The city's take-them-down legal tactics certainly can be debated, and likely will be challenged in court, but the well-planned, late-night removal of two Confederate statues from public parks was the right and righteous thing to do.



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Dossier is not going away

House Intelligence Committee chair Devin Nunes has issued a subpoena to David Kramer, a former State Department official who, in late November 2016, traveled to London to receive a briefing and a copy of the Trump dossier from its author, former British spy Christopher Steele. Kramer then returned to the U.S. to give the document to Sen. John McCain.

For his part, Kramer was interviewed by the House Intelligence Committee on Dec. 19. The new subpoena stems from statements Kramer made in that interview.

In the session, Kramer told House investigators he knew the identities of the Russian sources for the allegations in Steele's dossier. But when investigators pressed Kramer to reveal those names, he declined to do so. Now, he is under subpoena. The subpoena directs Kramer to appear again before House investigators on Jan. 11.

Knowing Steele's sources is a critical part of the congressional dossier investigation, for both sides. If one argues the document is not verified and never will be, it is critical to learn the identity of the sources to support that conclusion.

Beyond that, there is another reason to know Steele's sources, and that is to learn not just the origin of the dossier but its place in the larger Trump-Russia affair. There is a growing belief among some congressional investigators that the Russians who provided information to Steele were using Steele to disrupt the American election as much as the Russians

who distributed hacked Democratic Party emails. In some investigators' views, they are the two sides of the Trump-Russia project, both aimed at sowing chaos and discord in the American political system.

In a Fox interview Dec. 29, Sen. Lindsey Graham strongly suggested there is something untoward in the dossier material. Noting that special counsel Robert Mueller is not investigating the dossier, Graham said he, Graham, has finally gotten a look at the origins and use of the document:

"I've spent some time in the last couple of days, after a lot of fighting with the Department of Justice, to get the background on the dossier, and here's what I can tell your viewers: I'm very disturbed about what the Department of Justice did with this dossier, and we need a special counsel to look into that, because that's not in Mueller's charter."

FBI and Justice Department officials have told Congress they have not been able to verify the dossier's substantive allegations of collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign. Further, Graham found the dossier affair serious enough to warrant an entirely new investigation, as he does not appear to trust the Justice Department to investigate itself on this particular issue.

All this seems to indicate rather than going away, the dossier investigation will only intensify in the new year.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.

COLUMNIST

BYRON YORK



FAMILY MAN

DUANE SHERRILL



One resolution I've been able to keep

The gyms will be flooded this week with New Year's resolutions, all geared up to remake themselves in 2018. Many a diet began Monday and many a cigarette pack was cast into the garbage with an oath to do better in the future.

And, I'm sure there were many promises to "never drink again" uttered by folks as they turned up a fifth of Jack to toast the New Year on Monday morning.

It's a noble goal to aspire to, changing one's self for the better. Resolutions are truly a good thing as long as resolutions don't get confused with procrastinations.

That's when a resolution becomes hollow, no matter the good intentions felt by the person making them. If you're simply putting off something until the New Year so you don't have to do it now, then you're going to be sorely disappointed. There's no magic in the New Year that will help you find your new self. Actually, you can remake yourself on any day of the week that ends with "Y" if you're so inclined. There's no reason to wait until the ball drops on New Year's Rockin' Eve to go for it.

Frankly, the best things I've done to reinvent myself have come on regular days. I've found most resolutions I've made have faded away within hours of New Year's. For instance, it used to be a regular thing that I would throw away a can of Skoal at midnight every year, swearing I would stop dipping. This would work fine for about two hours until I got the urge again and would have to go buy another can. All my resolution did was cost me \$4 for another can.

However, I was able to finally kick the habit one day when I looked in the mirror and noticed my teeth were no longer even a shade of white.

"That's it," I said, angry at allowing myself to be owned by something.

And that was it, nearly 15 years ago. I gave it up and haven't fallen off the wagon even once. Does this mean I'm stronger than others? Nope. It means I got mad. Sometimes if you can get good and mad at something, you can make yourself fall into line. In that case, I hated my golden teeth and the fact I was being robbed of money every time I bought a can.

Actually, the only New Year's resolution I've ever made stick was on New Year's Eve 1999. That was when me and a couple of friends went to the weight room just before the Party of the Century downtown and worked out. We took an oath to work out at least three days a week. And, I'm happy to say that 18 years later I've pretty well held to that agreement, with a few lazy weeks mixed in.

I was at the gym this New Year's Eve celebrating with some intense pumping of the iron. And why did it work? I got mad. I was tired of having spindly arms and people calling me skinny. I decided I'd do something about it.

So, instead of making resolutions, try getting mad. That worked for me.

Standard reporter Duane Sherrill can be reached at 473-2191.

Is there stress-free living?

Finally we're moving into the new house. After all the stuff we sold at garage sales, gave away or just threw out, life in the new house should be stress-free: fewer square feet to vacuum, no big lawn to take care of, no hedges to trim and no guest bedrooms to worry about. Just enough space for the two of us to be comfortable.

Welcome to easy living.
"Honey, where's the coffeemaker?"
"It's in a box."
"Yes, but which box?"
"I don't know, we'll find it as we unpack."

"I can't unpack without coffee. What did the box say?"
"Seriously? I got boxes from the grocery store. It could say 'cat food' or 'star fruit.' How do I know?"

That was the wrong answer, it turns out. The correct answer was, "Oh, let's leave this mess and go out and get some coffee." But that's OK; things will work out as we go along.

"What did you do with the bedroom curtains?"
"Didn't we give them to the Salvation Army?"

"No, those were the guest bedroom curtains. Our curtains were blue; those were green."

"That's right. Now I remember. I wrapped the coffeemaker up in the curtains so it wouldn't break. But now that you mention it, why don't we go out and get a cup of coffee? I think I could use one."

"You wrapped a dirty coffeemaker in my good curtains?"

Stress-free living is so simple. All you have to do is — "What's that? I'm not bumping into you on purpose. This kitchen is just smaller than our old one. Besides, you're bumping into

ME!"
"Oh, everything's my fault!"
"I don't think I said that."

"You were the one who said we should downsize. You were the one who said it would make life easier. You were the one who said we'd have more time to be with each other if we lived in a smaller house."

It occurs to me this conversation isn't really about coffeemakers and curtains. Moving is stressful. Everything is out of order; we have to find new places for old things; we have to find new ways of not bumping into each other in the kitchen; we have to learn how to spend more time together.

Mowing a big lawn was always a nice way to get out of the house for a few hours. And Sue could spend a day in her greenhouse.

"Tell you what," I say to Sue. "I'll go work on the bathroom, while you unpack the kitchen."

The bathroom, thank goodness, has "His" and "Hers" sections. In the fourth box, I find the coffeemaker, wrapped safely in the green curtains I was supposed to give to the Salvation Army. It was like getting a Christmas present by accident. No reason Sue shouldn't get a present, too. I taped it shut again and put it back in the pile to be unpacked.

"Surprise!" she said about an hour later. "I just found the coffeemaker." She had a cup of coffee in her hand.

"Well, that's great! Problem solved."
"Yes and no. It was wrapped in the curtains you were supposed to give to the Salvation Army. Where are my good curtains?"

"I think I'll start working on the garage. It needs a lot of attention."

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VILLAGE IDIOT

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Established 1879
Southern Standard
Publication No. 506-840

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James Clark, Editor

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