

Standard online reader survey



Q: Do you think peace talks between North and South Korea will come to fruition?

YES 49 percent
NO 51 percent

GUEST EDITORIAL

Dead president shouldn't be exploited for tourism

Shame on the Tennessee Legislature for approving a bill to exhume the bodies of President and Mrs. James K. Polk for the purpose of generating tourism revenue.

Per the bill, the bodies would be relocated from the state capital grounds to the yard of a home in Columbia called the James K. Polk House, though Polk never owned it and lived there but several months.

The 11th U.S. president and former Tennessee governor loved Nashville so much, he specified in his will he was to be buried there.

And so he was. But 169 years later, under the guise that Polk's burial place is hidden away in a corner of the state Capitol grounds and a disservice to the president, lawmakers caved to an effort to move the grave to gin up revenue for the Polk house and museum.

Thing is, Polk's burial place is not hidden away but would be if it's moved. Visitors to the state Capitol can hardly miss the monuments to Tennessee's former governor as well as to Presidents Andrew Johnson and Andrew Jackson. All are within sight of the Capitol building.

President Polk was born in 1795 in North Carolina and came to Tennessee to study law. He set up a successful practice in Nashville, was elected to the state legislature and then to the U.S. House. A close ally of Andrew Jackson, he left Congress to become

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Tennessee's governor from 1839 to 1841, and though a dark horse candidate for president in 1844, won on a compromise.

Polk said he would serve only one term and was true to his word in that respect and others. He is one of the few presidents who during his four years in office met every single major domestic and foreign policy goal set during his campaign. He won the Mexican-American War, giving the nation nearly all of what is now the American Southwest; wrested the Oregon territory from Great Britain; reorganized the U.S. Treasury; oversaw the opening of the U.S. Naval Academy and Smithsonian Institution; and was there for the groundbreaking of the Washington Monument.

Nashville is where President Polk wanted to be buried and is where he should remain. It is unconscionable to even consider moving his tomb. The desecration requires the approval of the Tennessee Historical Commission and its executive director, Patrick McIntyre, strongly opposes it.

The museum now needs to appeal to the State Capitol Commission which, let us hope, will side with the family, history experts, and President Polk himself and leave him in peace.

McMinnville 2018 THE STATE



THE SCOOP

JAMES CLARK



Primaries filled with confusion

There's one topic in which local candidates running for office will all agree after Tuesday's primaries. Voters do not understand the election process.

That's a comment I received from 100 percent of the people who were on the ballot asking for votes. Even some of the candidates themselves are confused, with one asking if the votes they receive in the primary get to carry over to the General Election in August.

This widespread confusion is the reason we should stop having Democratic and Republican primaries for county offices. It adds a layer of disorder that's unnecessary.

Candidates running in McMinnville's city election do not declare themselves Democrat or Republican. They just run. There is no primary. People vote one time. That's it. This process makes it very easy to understand.

Candidates running for seats on our School Board follow this same format and do not affiliate themselves with a political party. They just run for School Board. No one cares if they are Democrat or Republican.

Yet, for reasons I will never understand, a person running for Register of Deeds can do so as a Republican. Does political alliance really matter for this basic office job?

A candidate running for County Court Clerk can do so as a Democrat, as if this makes a difference when I walk in and pay \$59 to renew my car tags.

By the same logic, why do candidates for Warren County Commission declare a political party? Are the Republicans going to band together to shut down Animal Control? Are we going to vote to build a wall around Warren County?

Our County Commission has nothing to do with state and national politics. It provides funding for our schools. It must operate a county jail for our blossoming inmate population. Maintaining a Sheriff's Department and Ambulance Service are huge responsibilities too.

But none of this intersects with state or national politics. And the last thing we need, should the Republican Party continue to gain strength and pick up more seats on the Warren County Commission this election cycle, is for people to toss aside common sense and start voting along party lines, a practice which paralyzes Congress.

It could be argued our County Commission struggles enough as it is. There's no need to complicate matters more with partisan gridlock. From my perspective, the city elections work great. Roll out the candidates, have one election, and let the voters have their say. There are no questions or lengthy explanations. It's an election minus the confusion.

Conversely, Tuesday's primaries were void of clarity. After all we've done here at the paper to publicize who would be on the ballot and who wouldn't, I still had someone ask me why they couldn't vote for their candidate for sheriff.

If we're trying to make it easy for voters to make a clear decision, this is not the way to continue.

Standard editor James Clark can be reached at 473-2191.

Praise Trump for Korea

At the height of the excitement over the real possibility of transformation on the Korean peninsula, a colleague of mine -- a man well-informed but inflamed with dislike for Donald Trump -- murmured to me, almost in anguish:

"It's a great thing! But if it had only been some other president!"

Usually, in these unpleasant days, I refuse to get into these arguments unless there is something positive to learn from them, but for some reason this time I chose to admonish him: "That's ridiculous. Haven't you grown up enough to know that good things can come from bad people and bad things from good ones?"

I have been to South Korea. I've stood twice at the DMZ, looked at the hatred in the North Korean soldiers' faces and grown cold inside. I've learned how the North's first Communist ruler, Kim Il Sung, had been a guerrilla fighting Japanese invaders, but (seemingly little known) was also originally a Protestant.

I learned how the U.S. first garbled the "Korean peninsula problem" after the successes of World War II. First, Secretary of State Dean Acheson forgot to include the Koreans in the strategic Asian defensive perimeter in 1950, leading the Russians to believe we would not defend the peninsula. So Kim Il Sung, backed by the Russians, invaded the South and, in the end, 20 percent of the Korean population died in the war.

And I learned that, despite early American mistakes, like simply drawing a line across the middle of the peninsula on the 38th parallel

(which made no geopolitical sense) after the war "ended" in a draw, the U.S. backed South Korean development to such an extent it has not only become one of the greatest economic success stories of the modern age, but it has passed from military authoritarianism backed by the "chaebol" industrial giants to workable democratic development. It should also be noted that modern South Korea is heavily Christian and heavily Protestant.

But in all these many years since 1953, there has been no peace treaty between North and South, although they are the very same Korean people. Leaders of the two Koreas met in 2000 and 2007, and agreements addressing nuclear weapons and the economy were made -- but never carried out by the North.

The Koreans are important to us, even outside the nuclear question. It was the Korean War that led to the Vietnam War, that set the pattern for that conflagration, and that could have, had our leaders been wiser, warned us against involvement in Indochina. They are important to President Trump, for the world will better remember how he handles this complicated and important situation than it will remember what he has said about it.

The Korean story is a good place for all of us to start being more fair, more honest and less emotional -- and, like our mothers, more right.

Georgie Anne Geyer has been a foreign correspondent for more than 40 years. She can be reached at gigi_geyer@juno.com.

COLUMNIST

GEORGIE ANNE GEYER



Neighbors over government

Another spring, another catastrophic wildfire season in the high plains. This year it was Oklahoma, where wind-driven flames consumed more than 350,000 acres of pasture, killing thousands of cows and destroying barns, homes and fences.

Last year it was Kansas -- 400,000 acres ruined, an area larger than metropolitan New York and Chicago combined, and the largest prairie wildfire in Kansas history. Eastern Montana and the Texas panhandle also experienced disastrous blazes in 2017 -- a million acres consumed in all.

Ranchers spent days shooting their stricken livestock and burying them in mass graves with a backhoe, heartbroken and facing financial ruin.

You can get to love cows when you know them, each with a personality as singular as any domestic animal's. Having once had to shoot a horse to spare him needless suffering, I can't even imagine euthanizing an entire herd. It's a bitter, hard thing.

Not to mention that every cow that goes into the ground represents a \$1,500 to \$2,000 loss, and a whole lot of labor. Rebuilding a herd takes years.

"This is our Hurricane Katrina," one Kansas rancher said. Yes, there's insurance money and assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but it's often too little and too late.

Livestock producers are going to extraordinary lengths to help each other. Reporters described great convoys of trucks arriving at the Oklahoma scene last week from all over middle America, laden with tons of free, life-saving hay.

It's a classic American story of inge-

nuity and self-reliance, powered by social media, word-of-mouth and a region-wide honor system. Reporter Mitch Smith interviewed two brothers named Levi and Blake Smith, who loaded a couple of semi-trailers with 64 round bales of hay -- each weighing about 1,200 pounds and worth at least \$2,000 altogether. The brothers drove 100 miles west and donated the whole load to rancher Rhett Smith, enough to feed his and his neighbors' cows for several weeks until the pastures green up.

The Smiths are no kin and hadn't previously met. The brothers explained that donated hay saved their ranch after the 2017 fire, and they felt compelled to pay it forward.

Will the hay-donating system always work? It's working now.

In my experience, cattle and horse people are an admirable lot. Take my Perry County hay guy, C.J. Gunther. Once, a few years back, a terrible drought had Texans driving over to buy Arkansas hay, bidding it up to a rumored \$100 a bale. So when I went to settle up for the winter, I braced myself. How much did I owe him?

Same as last year, he said: \$35 a bale. For this, I should add, he loaded my truck and trailer weekly, saving me the expense of a tractor. I said I knew he could easily have sold his high-quality, Bermuda grass hay for a lot more.

C.J. looked a little shocked. "I reckon so," he said. "But you're my neighbor."

Arkansas Times columnist Gene Lyons can be reached at eugenelyons2@yahoo.com.



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Patricia Zechman, Publisher
James Clark, Editor

Phyllis Vanatta, Business Manager
Dale Stubblefield, Circulation Director

Phone: 473-2191
105 College St., McMinnville, TN 37110
FAX: 473-6823
Email: standard@blomand.net
Website: www.southernstandard.com

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