

Standard online reader survey



Q: Do you think the city of McMinnville should pay to underwrite concerts at Cumberland Caverns?

YES or NO

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Guns for toddlers an interesting campaign

Sacha Baron Cohen has fooled a lot of public officials during roughly two decades of TV and movie work playing a variety of characters who coax outrageous and embarrassing statements out of people like Newt Gingrich, Ralph Nader, Ron Paul and then-host of "The Apprentice," Donald Trump.

In other words, it would be silly to fault U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C., who appeared in the premiere episode of Mr. Cohen's new show "Who is America?" for falling for a noted prankster's tricks. But it is decidedly less silly to be somewhat concerned by what Mr. Wilson appeared to heartily endorse on the show.

The centerpiece of the episode was a bit in which Mr. Cohen played an Israeli anti-terror expert named Erran Morad. Several public officials and gun rights advocates endorsed Mr. Morad's outlandish "Kinderguardians" program as a solution to school shootings.

Why arm teachers, the pitch went, when students as young as 3 years old could be trained to defend themselves against armed intruders? But no younger than 3, of course, because "they call them the terrible twos for a reason," joked Mr. Cohen in the episode.

Obviously, such a plan would be ridiculous — not to mention dangerous. That's the whole point of the joke. But Rep. Wilson,

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who said on Tuesday he was just reading a script the show's producers gave him, went along with it.

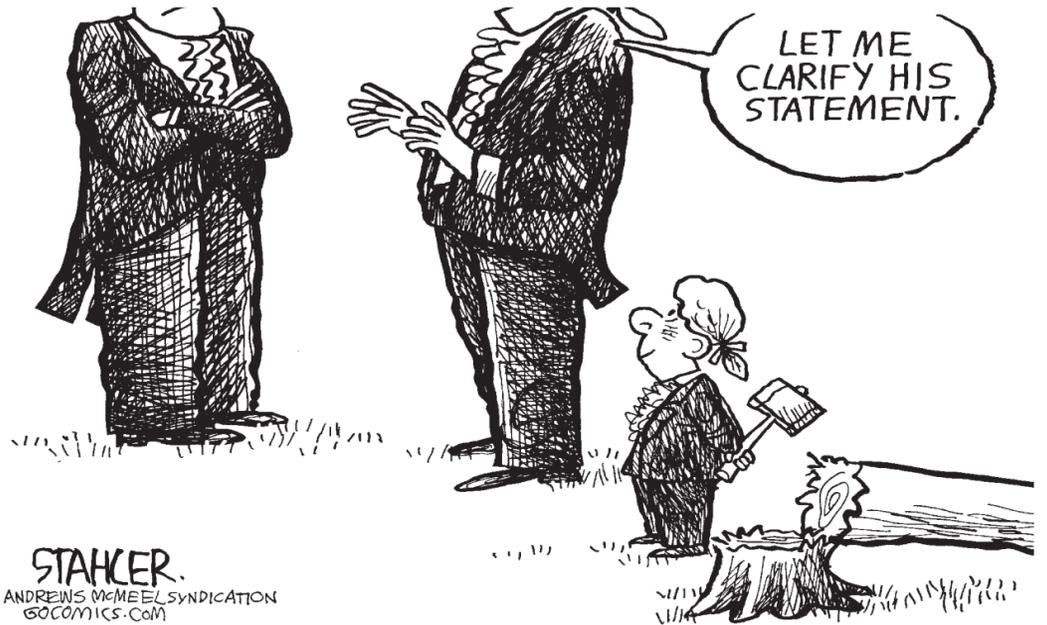
"A 3-year-old cannot defend itself from an assault rifle by throwing a Hello Kitty pencil case at it," said Mr. Wilson. "Our founding fathers did not put an age limit on the Second Amendment."

U.S. Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, R-California, former Sen. Trent Lott and former Rep. Joe Walsh also gave the Kinderguardians a ringing endorsement.

Mr. Wilson's apparent willingness to go along with a clearly ludicrous proposal is less troubling than the extent to which such an absurd policy idea seems mundane in this era of heightened polarization and diminished appreciation for what has otherwise long been considered obvious common sense.

To be sure, people have put their feet in their mouths so to speak for as long as there have been people, feet and mouths. And Mr. Cohen has proven himself uniquely adept at eliciting some cringe-worthy reactions from otherwise very serious people.

Still, we apparently live in a time in which "guns for toddlers" is an acceptable policy proposal for sitting lawmakers to endorse. It's hard to know whether to laugh or to cry.



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Battle brewing for Kavanaugh

When will the Senate begin hearings on President Trump's new SCOTUS nominee?

That's the question swirling about our nation's capital and way beyond. And rightly so.

The sooner the hearings for Judge Brett Kavanaugh begin, the sooner they are likely to end.

The first clue comes from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. He wants Kavanaugh confirmed by Oct. 1, in time to take the Supreme Court seat being vacated by Justice Anthony M. Kennedy's retirement from the bench. Whether that's prudent planning or wishful thinking depends on where you stand on Trump's nominee. And that depends on where you sit in the Senate.

For nearly all Republican Senators, Judge Brett Kavanaugh is the right man at the right time to ascend to the Supreme Court. He's been characterized as "the embodiment of the Republican legal establishment: an Ivy Leaguer who worked for the justice he has been nominated to replace, investigated a Democratic president, served in a Republican White House and now is an influential member of what is often called the second most powerful court in the country."

For nearly all Democratic Senators, Kavanaugh's credentials as cited above are grounds for questioning his fitness for the Supreme Court.

Their comments in opposition to his confirmation range from the apocalyptic, by Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren and others, to the absurd, by Tammy Baldwin, Richard Blumenthal, Bernie Sanders and others.

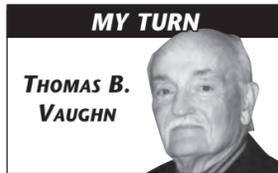
Meanwhile, former Senator and erstwhile two-time losing presidential candidate Hillary Clinton has hit the heights of hyperbole by asserting the confirmation of Judge Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court could set America back to "the 1950s ... or the 1850s."

By any objective measure, Judge Brett Kavanaugh appears to be "Supremely" qualified for confirmation to the highest court in the land. Unfortunately,

objectivity is all too often trumped by party identification and political ideology in these matters. That's why the Senate confirmation hearings on his nomination are bound to be contentious and controversial.

Meanwhile, the clock is ticking on getting the hearings going by the GOP and getting Kavanaugh confirmed by Senate Majority Leader McConnell's Oct. 1 deadline. In the words of that great philosopher and country crooner, Aaron Tippin, "But you've gotta get it started if you wanna get it done."

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MY TURN
THOMAS B. VAUGHN

GOP is Trump's party now

The remarkable transformation of the Republican Party, begun with Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, reached a historical milestone in Helsinki with the president's warm embrace of Vladimir Putin.

For three-quarters of a century, the Republican Party has been the bulwark of skepticism about Russia. Three Republican presidents in a row refused to extend diplomatic recognition to the young Soviet Union in the 1920s, and when the United States, under Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a Democrat, became the last major power to recognize the Soviet Union, he did so against the opposition of many Republicans.

Now, with Trump's effusive description of his meeting with the Russian leader, the GOP has completed the transformation the Manhattan billionaire began during his 2016 presidential campaign.

Trump has approval ratings among Republicans that are surpassed only by George W. Bush's in the wake of the 2001 terrorist attacks. Some Republicans, including House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, were astonished by Trump's comments, but Ryan is retiring and is regarded as a symbol of the Republican past. The other GOP lawmakers who questioned the president's conduct are longtime critics of Trump, though some, such as Sens. Patrick J. Toomey of Pennsylvania and John Cornyn of Texas, continue to blame Russia for intrusion into the 2016 election. Most other Republicans express at least grudging support of Trump.

"If Barack Obama had given Monday's press conference, he would be up for impeachment. The current president has changed the landscape in a dramatic way," said Harley Balzer, an emeritus professor of Russian history at Georgetown University and former director of Georgetown's

Center for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies.

Richard Nixon won his prominence in American politics with his opposition to Soviet Communism, his campaign against prominent Americans accused of having Soviet sympathies or being Soviet agents, and his vilification of Democrats. That was why his trip to the Soviet Union in 1972 was so remarkable.

Despite his outreach to Mikhail Gorbachev, Ronald Reagan was a classic Cold Warrior of the old school. He regarded the Soviet Union as "the evil empire," was caught on a live microphone joking that he was about to bomb Russia, and ascribed many of the problems around the globe to

Soviet intervention and involvement.

But with support of working-class voters who traditionally have sided with the Democrats, Trump has transformed the character of the GOP, which historically has been regarded as the foe of blue-collar Americans.

Reagan now is regarded as a figure of a distant past; he left office three decades ago and has little relevance to the new generation of Republicans. Nixon, whose Watergate involvement spawned an impeachment attempt that some of Trump's opponents would like to reprise, is remembered by even fewer voters. The median-age American was born seven years after Nixon resigned the presidency in disgrace.

Of all his actions, the changes Trump has set in motion may be the most enduring. A future president may mend fences with Canada, the European Union and NATO, but by altering the character of the Republican Party, Trump may have altered American politics permanently.

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Learning the five languages of love

What love language are you? My co-worker Lacy Garrison said she and her husband went through some couple's session to determine what love language they were in order to better understand each other. Apparently, she's "acts of service" and he's "gift giving" — hopefully, I'm not betraying a confidence. I think it's great they know about themselves and each other.

While I don't have a "significant other" to explore this issue with, I'm not above learning a little more about myself by understanding my strengths and weaknesses, passions and fears, desires and dreams. So, I went online and read about Dr. Gary Chapman and his book "The Five Love Languages."

According to Chapman, there are five universal ways people express and interpret love. Through his more than 30 years of couples counseling, he has noticed specific patterns in the way partners communicate — and it turns out most of the population expresses and interprets love in the same five ways, according to his observations.

- The five languages:
- Words of affirmation: compliments or words of encouragement such as "I love you" and other compliments are valued most.
 - Quality time: their partner's undivided attention. Unlike the words of affirmation, talk is cheap and being a loved one's main focus leaves quality timers feeling satisfied and comforted.
 - Receiving gifts: symbols of love, like flowers or chocolates. Some people feel most loved by receiving a tangible gift. This doesn't mean the person is materialistic, but a meaningful or thoughtful present makes them feel appreciated.
 - Acts of service: setting the table, walking the dog, or doing other small jobs. For these people, actions speak louder than words.
 - Physical touch: holding hands, kissing, etc. Everyday physical connections, like hand-holding, kissing, or any type of re-affirming physical contact is greatly appreciated.

An addendum: Just because you or your partner favor a particular love language, doesn't mean you should stop expressing the other love languages. According to Chapman, even though we tend to favor one language more than the others we still enjoy traits of the others as well.

It said the idea is simple, "Break down and decode the different ways in which people communicate with their partners, so we can finally take the mystery out of what our significant other really wants and expects from us."

Which love language am I? I think any committed relationship should contain daily, or at least regularly, words of affirmation, quality time, acts of service, and a physical touch. Receiving gifts can be less frequent, but thrown in there occasionally.

If I absolutely had to select one, it would be acts of service. Recognize my life is difficult and help me out. That would be very meaningful to me. If I had a little less to do, I would probably select a different love language.

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