

Standard online reader survey



Q: Do you think McMinnville Mayor should be placed on the ballot for the November election?

YES or NO

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

It's easy to see why development unwanted

TO THE EDITOR:

I was reading in the July 20 edition of the *Standard* about the latest housing project development and found several interesting points brought up.

First, the director of our numerous housing projects asks the questions: Why are the area residents protesting? What are they afraid of?

The simple answer is that they are afraid of the increased traffic any high-density housing will bring and most of all the negative effect on area property values.

The residents on Spring Valley Road own nice, single-family homes that they have paid for with their own, hard-earned money. I'm sure they never had

any idea when they bought their homes that someday they would be living near a government housing project.

Apparently it doesn't matter where you live. It's just a matter of time before you will have a housing project for a neighbor.

There are already projects on every side of this town. I question why another public housing development is needed.

There are already about 550 units here administered by the local housing authority! And that doesn't even include all the people getting Section Eight vouchers and other government assistance.

*Bill Smallman
South High Street
McMinnville*

Ask before placing signs in my yard

TO THE EDITOR:

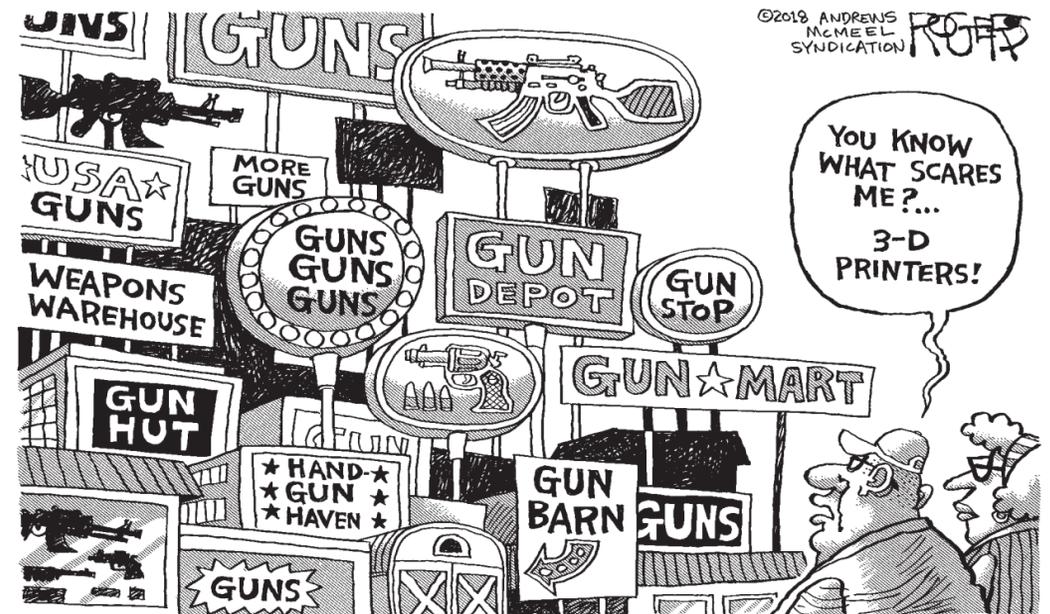
I returned from a trip to the nursing home to find my yard cluttered with political signs, mostly unwanted.

Four years before, the same thing happened. I just put up with it because I figured I couldn't do anything about it.

But this year I found out I could do something about it and collected the signs.

In the future, due to what happened in the past, if you are running for sheriff, state representative, county executive, county commissioner, governor, or whatever, ask me if you can put a sign in my yard. If you don't ask, the answer will be no, but if you do ask it could be yes.

*LaDonn "Slim" Ingalls
Locust Street
McMinnville*



Challenges for Facebook

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg told tech writer Kara Swisher how the social media platform would handle contentious political information in coming elections.

"There are really two core principles at play here," Zuckerberg told Swisher, executive editor of the website Recode. "There's giving people a voice, so that people can express their opinions. Then there's keeping the community safe, which I think is really important. We're not gonna let people plan violence or attack each other or do bad things. Within this, those principles have real trade-offs and real tug on each other."

How Facebook resolves the tension Zuckerberg describes could have a major impact on future elections. After all, the platform has 2 billion followers around the world, and, along with Google and Twitter, has emerged as a primary source of information for many voters.

Facebook's growing importance as a political player was highlighted by the recent indictment of 12 Russian intelligence officers for hacking into the computers of Democratic campaign organizations and using stolen information to help elect President Trump. Often the Russian agents used Facebook to spread their propaganda, buying at least \$100,000 worth of paid ads through 470 phony accounts.

And the Russians are still conducting their campaign of subversion, no matter how often Trump denounces the story as "a big hoax." The president's own director of National Intelligence, Dan Coats, made that completely clear when he called out Moscow's "ongoing, pervasive efforts to undermine our democracy."

The "trade-offs" Zuckerberg describes are as old as the republic. Leaders have always had to reconcile

two profoundly American values -- the right to know and the right to be safe -- and most of the time, they have tilted the balance in favor of free speech.

Zuckerberg long argued that Facebook was only a "utility," like a phone company, that simply transmitted information and had no editorial responsibility. As late as November 2016, he said it was a "pretty crazy idea" that fake news on Facebook had influenced the election -- a statement for which he now apologizes.

Twenty months later, Zuckerberg is coming to understand the enormous

power Facebook has acquired. The question is how that power is employed. Fortunately, he is rejecting calls for censorship, even against odious or

hate-filled speech.

"The approach we've taken to false news is not to say, 'you can't say something wrong on the internet,'" Zuckerberg told Swisher. "I think that would be too extreme."

Facebook needs to make fact-checking a much higher priority, and a larger budget item, so consumers have more data about what they're reading and seeing.

Legislation has been introduced in Congress requiring Facebook to provide more information about who buys political ads -- the sort of transparency that is already required of TV stations -- but the platform should adopt those innovations on its own, even if it hurts its ad business.

The answer to "hateful information" is usually more, and better, information. Then people can hear many voices -- and still feel safe at the same time.

Steve and Cokie Roberts can be contacted by email at stevecokie@gmail.com.



COLUMNISTS
STEVE & COKIE ROBERTS

Let's be students of the Word

Believe it or not, accept it or not, it's time to go back to school again for another year. Some are happy, some are sad, but learning is about to begin in many public schools throughout Tennessee. Clothing and school supplies have been purchased, classrooms are prepared for learning, and buses are ready to run.

For the next nine months, public schools will be in session to educate students with the skills they will need when they enter adulthood. But ever since 1993, a great emphasis has been placed on what is now called "life-long learning." Learning is now recognized as taking place throughout life in a whole range of situations and occurs on an ongoing basis through our daily interactions with others and with the world around us.

In II Timothy 3:7, the apostle Paul in a letter to a young pastor named Timothy talks about people whom he describes as "ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth." It is very unfortunate, indeed, that many people go through their entire lives learning many different things but never learn the truths of the Word of God. Earlier Paul also urged him to "study to show himself approved to God by learning how to rightly interpret and explain the Word of God."

Centuries earlier, God told Joshua, "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth until you

have meditated in it day and night, and until you have committed to do all that is written in it."

God promised him this would help him to be prosperous and successful in life. Joshua had succeeded Moses as the leader of the people of Israel at the time they were about to enter into the Promised Land, so the success of the people was greatly dependent upon the success of Joshua.

We can be like the man who had so many degrees from different colleges and universities that they nicknamed him "Fahrenheit," but unless we know the author of the Word of God and what He says in His Word, we

have lived our lives in vain. Proverbs 1:7 says it well: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: but fools despise the wisdom and instruction of the Lord." Proverbs 9:9 also says, "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will become wiser still: teach a just man, and he will increase in knowledge."

Finally, the apostle Paul says in II Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness."

So let's truly be students of the Word of God. Larry R. Steffee is pastor of the Center Hill Brethren In Christ Church on Miller Road in Smithville. Everyone is welcome. For information, you may email lrsteffee@yahoo.com.



WORDS FROM ABOVE
LARRY STEFFEE



Put mayor on November ballot

It wasn't a highlight for the city of Nashville when Mayor Megan Barry entered guilty pleas to criminal charges and resigned from her office earlier this year.

That was March 6. Despite the cloud of controversy surrounding Mayor Barry, her resignation was a bit of a surprise. But Nashville was able to act fast and just 79 days later, on May 24, the city held an election for mayor. Nashville voters had the chance to go to the polls and determine their top official.

Now the city of McMinnville is in a similar spot. We don't have the controversy that surrounded Mayor Barry's departure, but we're left without a mayor after Jimmy Haley won the election last night to become our next county executive.

Haley still has more than two years left on his term as mayor, leaving a giant void atop the city leadership tree. What's McMinnville to do?

Fortunately, Nashville has shown us a mayor's race can get on the ballot and be voted on in 79 days. So it should be no trouble at all for the city of McMinnville to get the mayor's race on the ballot for the upcoming Nov. 6 election, which is a full 96 days away.

Without getting the mayor's race on the November ballot, we could be left with an appointed mayor for more than two years. It's easy to understand appointing a mayor for six months, or even a year in a pinch. But two years is extreme.

It's important to note city races are already on the ballot for November when three of the city's six alderman seats are up for election. Qualifying for those races is still ongoing with the qualifying deadline two weeks away on Thursday, Aug. 16.

It would seem almost a matter of ease to include the mayor's race in that election. Most candidates can pick up their qualifying papers and obtain the necessary 25 signatures the same day.

There are sure to be mountains of excuses as to why this can't happen: 1) The turnaround is too fast. 2) Last night's election won't be certified for over a week so any action until that point would be premature. 3) Potential candidates won't have enough time to campaign. 4) It would require a special vote to modify procedure.

Of course these are just lame excuses, not legitimate reasons. If Nashville can do it in 79 days, we here in McMinnville can certainly do it in 96. We like to claim we're just as smart and talented as the big-city folks, but that's just empty talk if we can't find a way to fulfill a basic tenet of democracy and let the people decide who will serve them.

The short of it is McMinnville needs a mayor. The best way to determine our new mayor is to let the voters decide who that person will be.

It may require a little extra work, but city officials should not take the lazy or self-serving way out. Let McMinnville residents elect the next McMinnville mayor in November.

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