

The Marietta Times

Physical address: 700 Channel Lane Marietta, Ohio Mailing address: P.O. Box 761, Parkersburg, W.Va. 26102-0761 Phone: (740) 373-2121 Fax: (740) 376-5475

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James T. Spanner Publisher

Christina Myer Executive Editor

Lisa Northcraft Advertising Director

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OUR OPINION

Schools are needing substitutes

We knew it was coming, but some Ohio school districts still find themselves scrambling as another surge in the COVID-19 pandemic leaves them short of staff ... and substitutes.

Last week in the Lakota Schools District near Cincinnati, 60 of 1,400 staff members were out on one day.

"We are hiring substitute teachers, cafeteria, intervention aides. We have kids that are in college now that we can bring in as subs that are helping us out while they're on winter break," Matt Miller, superintendent of Lakota Schools, told another media outlet.

There and in other districts the requirements for those willing to serve as substitute teachers are changing.

"A lot of people don't know the rules have changed in Ohio, and you don't need a teaching license. You have a temporary license right now to do that," said Tracey Carson, spokesperson for Mason City Schools in Warren County, according to WLWT. "In Mason, we'd love to encourage, if someone has just graduated from college, doesn't have a job yet, come sub for us, make \$125 a day and get to be with students."

Getting creative — and finding those willing to do the job rather than those who are simply qualified on paper — is important for school districts. And, who knows? It may show districts that thinking outside the box can sometimes be better for students.

Meanwhile, those who believe they can help schools should look into the requirements for becoming a substitute teacher, driver or other staff member for their local districts. Many of them need all the help they can get.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS' ADDRESSES

City of Marietta Website: http://www.mariettaoh.net/ Twitter: https://twitter.com/MariettaOH Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/citymariettaoh

Marietta Mayor Address: City Hall, 301 Putnam St., Marietta, Ohio, 45750. Phone: 740-373-1387.

Mayor: Josh Schlicher (R), 909 Lancaster St., Marietta, 740-350-1337, Josh.Schlicher@mariettaoh.net.

Administrative Assistant to the mayor: Theresa Taylor, ttaylor@mariettaoh.net.

Marietta City Council Marietta City Council: 740-374-5501. Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. the first and third Thursday of each month at Marietta Area Community Center at the Armory, Room 10, 241 Front St.

Bruce and Barack: Cool dudes on state of nation

Who would you rather hang with, Bruce Springsteen or Barack Obama? Luckily, you don't have to choose, because Bruce and Barack have a bestselling book, "Renegades," out, based on podcast conversations. Maybe it was under your Christmas tree.

Could that be any cooler-than-thou? Bruce and Barack, as I'll call them, have a bro ease with each other. One sweet moment is when Springsteen asks how he should address Obama.

"Barack, man. Come on, dude."

And so, they delved into the soul of this country. The promised land is the motif of Bruce's bittersweet song, Barack's recent memoir. They are believers, seekers, fellow travelers in this land.

Springsteen tells Obama, "You gave me something that I've never been able to give myself." Playing campaign rallies, he enjoyed more diversity in audiences than at his concerts over the years.



Viewpoint

Jamie Stiehm

The bard of New Jersey is more direct than the 44th president. "These are treacherous times with much at stake," Springsteen says. "With everything at stake."

First up, they're concerned with a polarized America. Obama witnessed this splitting at the seams over his presidency's arc. It began with euphoria in Chicago's Grant Park. It ended in tears for most voters, who wanted Hillary Clinton and got Donald Trump instead.

Trump's culmination of a violent mob storming the Capitol on Jan. 6: Let's not go there today. Except it would have been nice if Obama had fired his FBI director, Republican James Comey, for tripping up Clinton twice in the crucial run-up to the 2016 election —

for no good reason. Obama never played tough with Comey, Trump, Sen. Mitch McConnell or anybody. Too cool.

Obama is a solo artist of elegant words. He says lightly, "I've been known to sing." Remember, he broke into "Amazing Grace" at the funeral for nine murdered Black churchgoers in South Carolina. A moment with meaning, yet racial violence was rising like a river.

Bruce and Barack identify as outsiders to the system, folks, as the wealthiest rock star in the world — his songbook sold for \$550 million — and the rock star of the political world.

I know their words well, the working-class anger Springsteen summons so hauntingly and, in the next number, the sheer exuberance of being alive. In recent songs, "Ghosts" and "I'll See You in My Dreams," he's more elegiac than ever before.

Oh, and we danced to Bruce in concert in

Cleveland (he and the E Street Band played "Youngstown"), Philadelphia and Washington.

Even before Obama had the audacity to start his run for president from the Illinois State House, where Abraham Lincoln still walks the halls, I kept an eye on his easy elan and way with words. That great gift never failed him as he raised politics to another level of cool performance art.

One difference is crystal clear from reading their memoirs. In "Born to Run," Springsteen writes from the heart on every page, as if he's pouring himself into a song or a love letter.

Obama's tome, "A Promised Land," is cerebral, one step removed from the reader. Barack left a lot out; I know from living here. And he's cool in the other sense of the word, writing from his head. His beam lights up a full room, but he'd rather be at home writing on his yellow legal pad.

Have I got news for you.

Another poet from New Jersey was paired with a president he loved. This is not the first time.

Musically, Springsteen is compared to complex Bob Dylan, but he rhymes more with Walt Whitman, who celebrated democracy, the body electric and the deepest feelings in American verse. The poet witnessed the Civil War in Washington, where he visited wounded Union soldiers and worked as a government copyist.

Whitman had hat in hand every time President Lincoln's carriage passed by. "I love the president personally," he told friends.

Then came the cruel April night the Civil War president was murdered in a theater, while laughing at a comedy. Washington wept, especially Black freed people. Grieving Whitman wrote his beautiful elegy about a sprig of lilac as symbol of loss.

Springsteen and Obama, blessed as they are, won't repeat that history.

READERS' LETTERS

Stop issuing fracking permits

I am a life-long resident of Appalachia. I grew up in West Virginia and for twenty years I have lived in beautiful Marietta, enjoying the local parks and walking them. That love of nature has been threatened by the fracking industry. For the past few years, every time I travel Third Street, I have encountered more and more tanker trucks. That got me to start asking questions and doing research, which became very troubling.

As I am sure most of you know, all those trucks are carrying waste from the fracking industry, called brine. Fracking is "a process that injects liquid at high pressure into subterranean rocks, boreholes, etc. so as to force open existing fissures and extract oil or gas," according to the Oxford Dictionary. What is most disturbing about this waste is that most is not only radioactive but also contains lead, arsenic, formaldehyde and mercury. Even though that's only one percent of this in fracking waste, that's one percent of, for example, the 1.9 million barrels of brine waste injected into waste wells in Washington County in 2011. Even more troubling, in 2019, Washington County had the second highest level of injection well activity in the state.

One dangerous effect is the threat brine poses to our drinking water. According to Consumer Reports (December 3, 2020), brine "can contaminate [water] supplies when waste spills from trucks or pipelines moving it or when waste leaks from unlined disposal pits." In fact, there was a spill of brine waste just outside of Marietta in January of 2021 at a pipeline owned by Deep Rock Disposal.

Making matters even worse, the Ohio Legislature passed two bills which now allow for 333 times the radioactive brine waste recommended by health experts. Given this threat not only to our environment but to our health, it is imperative that we as residents of this county strongly urge the Ohio Department of Natural Resources at least to



One down, three more to go



stop issuing permits in Washington County until injection wells are better monitored and until our drinking water can be guaranteed to be safe

Margaret Meyer Marietta

Getting published

The Marietta Times welcomes letters to the editor of general public interest.

To be considered for publication, letters must be no longer than 400 words, and must contain the writer's complete address and phone number. This information will not be published, but is required for verification before publication.

All letters should be written to the editor, and not a third party. The newspaper reserves the right to edit letters for length and content.

The real truth of Jan. 6

The truth is Jan. 6 was a dark day in the history of our republic. Fueled by repeated lies from President Donald Trump, a group of men and women stormed the United States Capitol to stop Congress from certifying the Electoral College vote. Along with those men and women were many more who wandered in, curious, thinking they were allowed to be there. We should not lump them all in together, but we should not give the veneer of patriotism to the criminal trespassers.

Ashli Babbitt was one of those with malicious intent. The Air Force veteran thought she was a hero saving the republic when really, she was a trespasser seeking to stop the lawful operations of Congress. She is no martyr. The security cameras that captured her death at the hands of a Capitol Hill police officer show she was trying to break through glass to open a door for the mob. Behind the door, House members were



Viewpoint

Eric Erickson

fleeing for their lives. Outside, the crowd had erected a gallows and some roamed the halls of Congress to find Vice President Mike Pence to hang him.

The truth is a lot of Republicans who condemned the activities of the day have now tried to claim it was something worth celebrating or was not bad. Cowards like Kevin McCarthy, the would-be Speaker of the House, condemned the day, then reversed himself like a supine sycophant to Trump. Now, some Republicans even think Jan. 6 is a cause for celebration like the storming of the Bastille that set off the French Revolution. These would-be Robespierres will lose their heads in the process of try-

ing to take others'. No conservative should ever celebrate the French Revolution.

But there are other truths, too. These truths the press and Democrats would prefer not to talk about. They'd prefer to scream "whataboutism" or claim bringing them up is to excuse or mitigate Jan. 6. Unfortunately for them, to truly understand Jan. 6, we must understand other events and how those were handled.

In 2009, progressive activists stormed the State Capitol in Madison, Wisconsin. The Wisconsin State Journal reported it in eerily similar language to Jan. 6. "Thousands of protesters rushed to the state Capitol Wednesday night, forcing their way through doors, crawling through windows and jamming corridors," reported the paper. Progressives were trying to stop a vote making Wisconsin a right-to-work state, which would undermine labor union powers. Speak-

er Nancy Pelosi called it an "impressive show of democracy" and said she stood with the protesters. The media was mostly matter-of-fact about it and by no means condemnatory.

In Texas, protesters stormed the State Capitol in Austin to stop Republicans from passing a pro-life measure. News anchors and reporters who covered it for the national press almost all explicitly excused the protesters and made Texas state Sen. Wendy Davis a national figure and heroine for feminism. She rode the fame to several electoral defeats in Texas and talking head gigs on CNN and MSNBC.

In Washington, D.C., progressive activists stormed the United States Capitol to stop the vote on Brett Kavanaugh and to intimidate United States senators. Major news outlets were almost all uniformly on the side of the protesters. Some reporters explicitly cheered on the protesters on their

social media accounts.

This does not even include the coordinated and concerted Democratic efforts starting in 2000 to treat any election they lose as illegitimate. Bush was "selected not elected," and Trump was fraudulently accused of being bought and paid for by the Russians. Stacey Abrams still denies her loss with press complicity, but Republicans are bullied and denounced for denying the legitimacy of 2020.

The bottom line is all of these should be condemned, but we should not be surprised some Republicans got tired of playing by the rules after two decades of Democrats breaking them without consequence. Few in the press or among the Democrats will own up to that. Instead, they will scream at me for telling the whole truth, not just the part they want to hear. Undoubtedly, in November, the press and Democrats will scream voter suppression if Republicans win, ratcheting things further.