

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Voters should make fully informed decisions

Regina Hendrix's Oct. 17 Letter to the Editor headlined, "Voters should heed candidates' stance on Rockwool," suggests voters focus on only one issue as the deciding factor for their voting decisions, and in particular for the House of Delegates District 67 race.

I disagree that any one issue should be the deciding factor in how we choose our leaders, particularly for the Legislature.

As a registered Independent, farmer and environmentalist, from a family whose members have been affected by cancer, and as a cancer survivor myself, I choose to weigh the realpolitik of my vote. Here is a different calculi.

Rockwool is a local issue, an issue for our county leaders.

No member of the House of Delegates can "rid ourselves of" Rockwool and any promise or suggestion made in that direction is illusory.

I do agree with Ms. Hendrix that Jefferson County is far away from Charleston and is often forgotten. However, Jefferson County was

not forgotten during Sen. Herb Snyder's leadership and tenure as chairman of the state Senate's Government Organization, Rule Making and Revenue Committees; he made certain Jefferson County's voices were heard.

We now have a candidate that has been chosen for House of Delegates Majority Leader, that is, Delegate Riley Moore, who will be in the position to set House of Delegates' legislative agenda. Our voices will be the loudest they have ever been with Delegate Moore as the House of Delegates Majority Leader.

While I appreciate all candidates who make the effort to run for office, and the efforts of both candidates for District 67, when it comes to "bringing justice and fair treatment" to our county on the issues that can and should be addressed at the state level, I feel voters should consider which choice of candidate can best affect the outcomes for Jefferson County.

MARY T. SELL *Charles Town*

Rockwool sewer vote concerns 'how' – not 'if'

At last week's Charles Town City Council meeting and otherwise throughout Jefferson County, there has been considerable discussion about financing the sewer line to the Jefferson Orchard area where Rockwool's Ranson facility is being built – particularly with reference to the City of Charles Town issuing a bond to finance the construction of the sewer line.

We think it's essential to clarify one critically relevant point – that being that the issue here is only about how to finance the sewer line, not whether to build it. The Charles Town Utility Board has made it clear that it cannot legally deny service to Rockwool.

We have also said that if the City of Charles Town chooses not to accept the zero-interest financing from the state, we would find alternative means to finance the sewer line. That would not be our first choice by any means, as it would raise the rates that all users would have to pay – Rockwool and everyone else. So let's be clear. The West Virginia Infra-

structure and Jobs Development Council is offering Charles Town zero-interest financing to construct the sewer line. Under this model, Charles Town can offset the anticipated operation and maintenance expenses of around \$1.66 million against sewer revenues. If the city rejects that model and Rockwool finances the sewer line by other means, the city will not have the option of offsetting O&M costs in this way and would have to recoup those costs by charging everyone higher rates.

That's not a good deal for anyone. Again, the City of Charles Town cannot legally deny service. But it does have a choice: a financing model that does not require it to raise rates; or one that does. We think the best option for everyone is for Charles Town to choose the option that will not raise anyone's sewer rates.

MICHAEL ZARIN

– *Michael Zarin is a vice president with Rockwool Group*

November vote will mark a turning point for U.S.

One of the basic laws of human nature with roots in the most primitive portion of our brains is that we attack what we fear the most. This law has been manifest in the last two weeks with the panicked eruption of disingenuous slander issued by the flailing GOP as it struggles to simultaneously cling to power and keep itself from disintegrating.

Jefferson County Commissioner Peter Onoszko, who holds the local gold medal in the Public Servant Most Contemptuous of the Public category and who has often been seen dozing during JCC meetings, has launched a robocall campaign through his surrogate, the West Virginia Liberty PAC, against his opponent Ralph Lorenzetti, one of the most gracious and cordial men in local politics, accusing Lorenzetti of "radicalism."

Incumbent Delegate Riley Moore, who has been repeatedly humbled in debates with John Doyle, has mailed flyers featuring Doyle's face photoshopped onto the body of a man in a lab coat holding two pairs of glasses, accusing Doyle of masterminding a scheme to double taxes. While the visual reference is unclear, anyone

who has attended one of the Moore-Doyle debates and listened to Doyle's thoughtful and well-reasoned ideas for funding such things as teacher salaries and community services, recognizes this gambit as nonsense.

A PAC chaired by Jill Upson has been linked to a racist radio ad supporting Arkansas Republican Rep. French Hill. The ad was so poorly conceived and offensive that Hill immediately disavowed it. Upson, for her part, quickly went into damage control mode when it became apparent that the ad had backfired badly, and her supporters on social media concocted a head-scratcher of a conspiracy theory blaming Upson's challenger, Sammi Brown, for "infiltrating" the PAC.

The only exemption so far from this blizzard of fearful assault has been Rep. Alex Mooney, who himself is too cowardly to hold an honest, face-to-face town hall with his constituents, too petrified to debate his challenger, Talley Sergeant, too tremulous to stray from the safety of Donald Trump's coattails and take a chance of exposing his lack of ability, vision and empathy for his electorate.

While all this is going on, the Trump propaganda machine is working overtime to prop the addled old huckster up in front of crowds of red-hatted disciples to bray about angry mobs, celebrate the assault of one journalist and blithely dismiss the murder of another. In the background, the Trump governmental machine continues its work to quietly mar the face of the republic, deeply and indelibly.

One would think that logically, the Democratic faction wouldn't need to resort to a counterattack of insanity and lies. All they would need to do is to calmly point out the incalculable damage the GOP has done in two short years as an oligarchy. But logic has been anything but the rule of the road since these people conspired their way to the throne of autocracy and cheated their way toward the advancement of their agenda.

Nov. 6 will mark a turning point in the fate of the country, one way or another. It will be a chance – maybe the last chance – for voters to prove that we, as a nation, a state and a community, are not those people.

DANIELA A. HARRIS *Charles Town*

Radio lynching ad has done its damage

I was born in 1958 and lived through the worst riots this country has ever produced. While traveling through the Deep South, I learned that other black Americans were forced to live in even worse fear.

There were and still are church bombings and burnings. Black America still lives under the specter of being dragged through the streets or thrown into a lake to drown. Black America still has to wonder why in this day and age we still have to deal with the thought of lynch mobs.

Which brings me to our current situation. Our representative to the West Virginia Legislature, Jill Upson, is also the national chairperson for Black Americans for the President's Agenda. Personally, I could care less what they claim to stand for; I do care about what they have done.

This group claims to speak for Black America – a lie. This group of supposedly black Americans has written, produced and distributed radio ads in Arkansas in support of a Republican candidate stating that "white Democrats" will literally hang black Americans, lynch black Americans unless they support Trump's candidates and agenda. Wow!

Once busted and exposed by the national media, Jill Upson claimed the ads had been removed at the behest of Upson herself. More lies! According to a statement by the group, it is refusing to remove them.

But even if the ads get removed, the damage has been done. Thanks to the Internet, these statements will live in infamy. At this point, how could Upson be the national chairperson and claim to know nothing? Jill Upson should resign. This group is Jim Crow at its worst.

LEWIS H. BROWN JR. *Charles Town*

Disappointed in Delegate Upson

I am disappointed to learn that Delegate Jill Upson chairs the Black Americans for the President's Agenda, the national organization that sponsored the vile and toxic radio ad airing in Arkansas and Missouri which accuses Democrats of wanting to lynch black Americans. Her organization's ad is over the top, and it's an insult to our community and the spirit of Americans coming together.

It seems that there are two options here, either:
A) Delegate Upson is unaware of the culture of the organization which she chairs. This is a problem for someone who wants to earn my vote to represent me in state government. I want someone with more intuition and awareness.
B) Delegate Upson was aware of the toxic political culture that produced this ad and simply agreed

with it. Either way, I'm disappointed with her statement. I am disappointed that she passes the buck and minimizes her role, that's not the leadership I expect from someone who wants to represent me. She is the Chair of this organization, not simply affiliated with it as she claimed in her online statement.

The Charles Town I know and love is made up of people who want a good quality of life with friendly neighbors. The ad that her organization put out there means that she is either unaware of the culture of her own organization or that she agrees with what must be the most toxic ad of an already toxic election season.

DANNY CHIOTOS *Charles Town*

Should I vote for Manchin?

Joe Manchin let me down, again. Most recently, he voted "yes" for Brett Kavanaugh. I wrote Manchin letters. I called his office imploring him not to vote to confirm Kavanaugh for the Supreme Court. But Manchin voted for him anyway.

I have a good mind not to vote for any of the West Virginia senatorial candidates. If I go to a restaurant and don't like the choices, I walk away. But what if my stomach is empty, I am far from home and the only restaurant around for miles and miles has only two choices: Something

unpalatable or something sure to be disappointing. Neither choice is satisfactory.

But under the circumstances, the real choice, the one that matters, is to eat or not to eat. So, I choose to eat. Since I cannot stomach what is unpalatable, I eat what does not meet my standards, but will allow me to continue on my journey to better times.

To me, an election is a new beginning. I may not like the choices, but they are the only ones I've got. In this election, Morrisey's politics are not pal-

atable to me. Though many of Manchin's votes in the Senate have caused me a good deal of anguish, I will make the best of a bad choice. Therefore, I will vote against Morrisey and check the box next to Manchin's name. I want a better future and I will not throw my vote away.

For anyone who is discouraged and inclined not vote, I urge you to look at the bigger picture and go to the polls.

PAM MILLER *Shepherdstown*

Praising Delegate Riley Moore's work

Riley Moore is a man of integrity who deeply cares about Jefferson County. He listens to his constituents and takes action to address their problems. His campaign slogan is "Fighting for Jefferson County's fair share" and last year worked hard to preserve the MARC train and the horse industry.

Riley has earned the respect of his legislative colleagues, and has been selected to be the House Majority Leader, a position that will allow him to set the agenda and prioritize bills that will be voted upon.

For the first time in recent history, Jefferson County will have a leader in this position that can assure your voices are heard and address your problems.

A vote for Riley is practical, not partisan, for all Jefferson County.

RANDY FUNKHOUSER *Charles Town*

Vote Judge Chris Wilkes for Supreme Court

I'm writing to inform your readers about the non-partisan election of two new West Virginia Supreme Court judges on Nov. 6, particularly Division I on the ballot. It has 10 candidates, including our Eastern Panhandle Chief Justice of the 23rd District, Chris Wilkes.

All of his opponents live in the Charleston or Southern West Virginia area. If we Panhandle voters turn out and stick together and vote for Judge Wilkes, we could possibly elect the first state justice from our area since the late 1800s, I've been told!

Chris Wilkes has served our Panhandle counties for 25 years, the last 10 as chief judge. This circuit is the largest in the state. None of his opponents are even nearly as experienced. Chris has also developed a statewide business dispute court for which he is known nationally. Check out his website for more information.

It's way past time for us in the Eastern Panhandle to straighten out the Charleston mess that has become a national embarrassment! Chris can serve the whole state!

PHIL COX *Shepherdstown*

Let's hear it for the brave souls

In Christine Snyder's Oct. 17 opinion column on Rockwool, she compares Josh Compton, an ex-Marylander with no prior political experience, with Dale Manuel, who has decades of public service experience. This would not have struck a chord with me if I hadn't recently applied to fill Jay Watson's seat on the Ranson City Council.

Seven brave souls went through the appointment process. The candidates ran the gamut from lifelong residents to relatively recent arrivals. I don't be-

lieve anyone had held public office before and only about half of us had any kind of public service experience.

Before deciding to throw our hats in the ring our main focus had been on jobs, family, school, and/or church. But we all thought that by serving on the Ranson City Council we could make a positive impact on our community. The wider variety of voices, both old and new, heard in the decision making process the better. So if you're a 30-something who's bound and determined to be

the first LGBTQ U.S. senator from the great state of West Virginia and have the public service packed resume to back you up or you're a 62-year-old homemaker and Sunday school teacher who decides spur of the moment to run for mayor of Harpers Ferry, I say go for it!

As for Josh Compton's presence on the Jefferson County Commission, if I can get over my stage fright, I'll be giving him a run for his money in 2022.

AMANDA STROUD *Ranson*

WORTH NOTING

"There is only one redeeming thing about this whole election. It will be over at sundown, and let everybody pray that it's not a tie, for we couldn't go through with this thing again. ... And, when the votes are counted, let everybody, including the candidates, get into a good humor as quick as they got into a bad one."

WILL ROGERS *humorist (1879 to 1935)*