

OPINION



Founded 1855 | A Lee Enterprises Newspaper
500 E. Third St., Davenport, IA 52801
opinions@qctimes.com | qctimes.com/opinion

Editorial Board

DEB ANSELM Publisher
TOM MARTIN Executive Editor
JOHN WETZEL community member

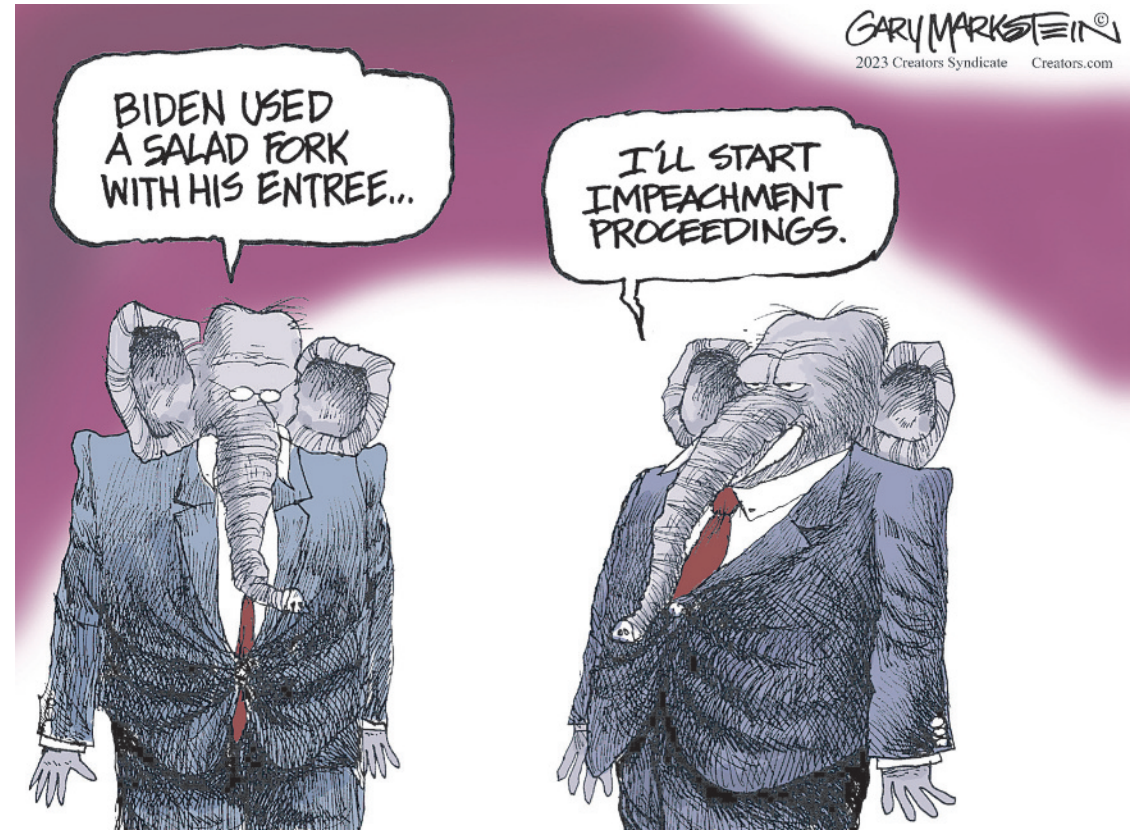
Cartoon crossed the line on our opinion page

Racist and hateful ideas, words or images have no place in our publications, much less our society. It's why we apologize today for letting such an image slip through our editorial process and into our opinion page Wednesday in the form of a political cartoon. The cartoon, while intended to criticize racist ideas and epithets, uses a phrase that is racist and insensitive to members of our Indian American community. The cartoon has been removed from our websites and e-editions, and we will not be



TOM MARTIN

accepting any further work from the cartoonist. We apologize to Republican primary presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy, the Indian American community and our readers for publishing the offensive material in the Quad-City Times and Dispatch-Argus. We seek to share diverse ideas on our opinion pages — editorials, cartoons and commentary that provoke thought and constructive ideas. Dividing and disparaging with any racist images or rhetoric does not fit that mission or our ideals as a local news company. The oversight that allowed it to run is inexcusable, and we can and will do better.



With right candidates, No Labels could win GOP support

Democrats are panicking over No Labels, the bipartisan group laying the groundwork for an independent ticket as an insurance policy if Donald Trump wins the GOP nomination. Democrats complain No Labels would bleed support from President Joe Biden without winning Republican votes, thus handing the presidency to Trump.



MARC A. THIESEN

In fact, No Labels can win Republican support—but only if it nominates the right candidates. To be sure, a successful third-party ticket has been a quadrennial fantasy. And it's true that in normal times, third-party candidates are nothing more than spoilers. But these are not normal times. Overwhelming majorities of Americans say they do not want a Trump-Biden rematch. A HarrisX poll for No Labels—which surveyed more than 26,000 registered voters in all 50 states—found that 69% don't want Biden to run again and 62% don't want Trump to run again. That level of dissatisfaction with the major parties' top contenders is virtually without precedent.

If the system produces a Trump-Biden rematch anyway—as seems increasingly likely—then Republicans and Democrats who don't like their choices have no safe harbor on the other side. Most Republicans won't pull the lever for Biden, whom they consider the most catastrophic president since Jimmy Carter. And most Democrats certainly won't vote for Trump, who they say belongs in prison rather than the Oval Office. If you think Biden is incompetent and Trump is unfit—as millions do—you have nowhere to go.

Enter No Labels, which says it could offer these voters the safe harbor they are longing for. A whopping 59% of respondents told HarrisX that, if faced with

a Trump-Biden rematch, they would consider a moderate independent ticket—including 59% of Democrats, 53% of Republicans and 70% of independents. In other words, No Labels starts out with a ceiling of potential bipartisan support more than 20 points higher than the ceiling for Ross Perot in 1992, who never polled higher than 38%.

But without names at the head of the tickets, these numbers demonstrate only a yearning for an alternative. To translate that desire into votes, No Labels needs candidates who can win actual support from voters of both parties.

If it nominates Sen. Joe Manchin III (D-W.Va.) for president, a possibility Manchin does not discount—and then selects a Republican of similar stature as his running mate—No Labels could put forward the first serious, credible third-party ticket in modern times. Unlike Evan McMullin, Jill Stein or even Perot, Manchin is a sitting senator and former governor with a national profile and record of accomplishment. In different times, he could credibly be the Democratic Party's presidential nominee.

If the worry is that No Labels can't draw Republican votes, then the solution is simple: Put a real Republican on the ticket for vice president—a full-spectrum conservative who in normal times could serve on a GOP ticket. Which means it can't be someone from the Never Trump wing, or a pro-choice Republican who would have no shot at ever winning the party's nomination.

For most Republicans, the main obstacle to voting for a third party is abortion. According to Gallup, nearly 8 in 10 Republicans today consider themselves pro-life, an all-time high. In 2016, abortion would have doomed a No Labels bid, because the Supreme Court was on the ballot. Many Republicans held their noses and voted for Trump, hoping he would appoint conservative justices who would overturn *Roe v. Wade*. He did

just that, delivering a 6-3 conservative majority on the high court.

Ironically, Trump's perfect record on Supreme Court appointments has opened the way for No Labels to defeat him. With its decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, the court took the abortion issue out of federal hands and sent it to the states. And because no justices appear near retirement, the court's conservative majority seems secure, for the moment at least. This means a brief window exists in which pro-life Republicans can feel free to take a risk and vote for a third-party ticket—as long as it stays neutral on abortion and promises not to pursue federal legislation either to codify *Roe* or to restrict abortion.

If No Labels paired Manchin with a pro-choice Republican, that window would close: The ticket would rightly be seen by Republicans as a Democratic stalking horse. And without Republican support, it would be nothing more than the spoiler Democrats fear. But if No Labels neutralizes the abortion question, it can appeal to voters from both sides who are sick of being forced to choose between the extremes.

Let's be clear: a No Labels ticket should not be necessary. Right now, the Republican field offers an embarrassment of riches. Almost any serious GOP contender except Trump could crush Biden, who is one of the least popular presidents in the history of presidential polling. If the GOP squanders that opportunity and nominates Trump, many Republicans will face an agonizing choice in 2024. No Labels could offer them a centrist alternative—and give Americans a second chance for the unity and bipartisanship they thought they were voting for in 2020.

Just as 2016 gave us a populist uprising, 2024 could give us the revenge of the great American middle—and a bridge back to normalcy, sanity and moderation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Apology accepted regarding editorial cartoon

I accept the apology, and let's cordially move on. I'd be happy to talk to the cartoonist offline, too—I'm empathetic to people

who make mistakes once in awhile. Let's not go further or see people get fired over it; the cartoonist should in no way be 'canceled.' We are all human.

The apology is sufficient and well-received.

Vivek Ramaswamy
Republican candidate for

Exploring is worthwhile, close to home or far away

My lack of interest in competitive sports might lead you to believe that I am not a competitive person. That only means you haven't played a game with me.

Whether my opponent is two or 92, if we are playing a board game, cards, or party games I will compete fiercely without mercy. I have a game that is a board filled with varying shades of

ANNE VANDEMOORTEL

multicolored squares. The object is to use words, one- and two-word clues, to describe the color of a particular square you have chosen for the other players to guess. It isn't as easy as it seems.

One difficulty is everyone has different opinions of what a color looks like. What color do you picture if I simply say, "sky"? It matters what time of day it is and what kind of weather is happening. The game involves words, so I like it a lot better than some people do.

My son and daughter-in-law invited us to spend vacation with their family in a cabin in Door County, Wisconsin. My mother-in-law, who has been to Europe, commented frequently along the way about how similar the vistas were to some of the places she had seen overseas and how beautiful the scenery is so close to home; that for certain beauty one need not travel far.

We stopped to explore the Horicon Marsh, which is both a state and a national park, depending on if you are in the northern or southern part of the marsh. We followed the three-

mile auto tour and marveled at the variety of birdsongs we could hear with our windows down. It reminded me of a peaceful track one would play on a sleep machine.

We didn't spend the amount of time that some photographers and bird-watchers were devoting to the marsh, so I am sure we missed out on many wildlife sightings. Due to such perfect camouflage, we almost missed a sand crane family in the grasses. What caught our attention was a ferocious red-winged blackbird repeatedly dive bombing the father crane. The mother and young crane stayed a safe distance away, but the blackbird was relentless in its attack. If not for the cranes the scene very much resembled what we see in our own backyard that is Prospect Park. Walkers there need to be mindful of the territorial blackbirds.

Once water came into view, I couldn't look elsewhere. The majesty of Lake Michigan transfixed me. My grandchildren have the same fixation with the lake, running barefoot over rocks to get into the icy water. The variety of colors we experienced in nature; sky, flowers, water, trees, fields, reinforced why it is so difficult to get an opponent to choose the correct square on the game board. What was blatantly evident was that travel is not a competition. We make comparisons, but all exploring is worthwhile, in our own backyard or worlds away.

Anne VandeMoortel, a regular columnist, is a Moline school nurse, blogger, grandmother of five, Prader-Willi mother, serial hobbyist, and collector of people and their stories.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

It's up to us to pray for miracles

America will prosper if we: Return to Christian principles and believe in miracles. Return to secure borders. Build walls where needed. Return to the melting pot concept.

Unassimilated diversity destroys. Return to understanding illegal drugs and human trafficking contribute to extreme homelessness that should not be allowed to smother America's functional society. Return to incarcerating violent criminals. Return to the family structure of mother, father and children. Return to acknowledging

there are only two sexes. "Feelings" can't create or change actual biological categories. Return to loving all people. Return to protecting children's innocence from pornographic drag shows for children, and the multi-billion-dollar demonic "transgenderism" "gender-affirming-care" industry. Return to pre-woke common-sense vocabulary. Return to teaching true American history and the U.S. Constitution. Return to when the fatally flawed FBI, CIA, NSA, DOJ actually operated as intended. Return to one-day voting. Return to when moms thought off-the-rack prom dresses were too low-cut and required

mom-made inserts to make the dresses "appropriate." Return to reading books (including "banned-books" classics) to replace addiction to social media (now largely "transgenderism-grooming"). Return to eye contact during conversations. Return to when America was respected (feared) internationally.

It's sad when so many people my age hope to die before seeing America's total destruction.

It's up to us to pray for miracles that will allow America to regain prosperity. Our responsibility will then be to aggressively work with God's response.

John R. Horn
Davenport

Letters to the Editor policy

Quad-City Times welcomes letters to the editor. Each submission should be no more than 250 words and include the author's name, city of residence and phone number for verification. Each writer is limited to one published letter every 30 days. Letters can be emailed to opinions@qctimes.com or mailed to: Letters to the Editor, Quad-City Times, 500 E. 3rd St., Davenport, Iowa 52801