

# Thinking outside the box

## Learn More

Here's the link to Dr. Abdul-Aziz's interview: <https://tinyurl.com/6v2wnzr3>

Having retired from corn and bean farming and having put money in the bank, thanks in part to my then-ability to sell corn to the ethanol industry, I have little standing to denigrate that industry, much as I dislike it. So - assuming the ethanol industry is here to stay-- what if, instead of "saving it" by



**Guest Column**  
Marian Kuper

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their nearby homes, cars, pastures, or barns at risk, should ruptures occur,

- 1) ripping up farm fields and drainage tiles,
- 2) doing long-term damage to crop productivity via massive subsoil compaction and topsoil disruption,
- 3) risking the spewing of huge quantities of asphyxiant anywhere along hazardous liquefied CO2 pipelines that happen to undergo a rupture, thereby putting oxygen-dependent organisms like people and animals unfortunate enough to be in

4) leaving affected landowners liable for all damages in the case of such ruptures,

5) handing a subset of those landowners' land rights over forever to a private entity, even via eminent domain in the case of landowners (like me) who balk at the very idea of being dragged to the negotiating table with the private companies that want to construct these pipelines, and

6) doing all this at tremendous taxpayer ex-

pense, while  
7) allowing these pipeline companies to waltz away from all this aftermath with bulging pockets of profits thanks to the private nature of this entire enterprise...

... What if we simply captured the CO2 at the ethanol plants and made rock out of it?

"[W]e have a material that can capture carbon dioxide and turn it into a carbonate, which is basically solidified carbon. And so you can store it as a form of rock. That's something that's being studied right now."

That's according to Dr. Kandis Leslie Abdul-Aziz, assistant professor of chemical and environmental engineering at the University of California-Riverside, broadcast on Jan. 6, 2023, on National Public Radio's Science Friday radio show.

Professor Abdul-Aziz's work is about using agricultural waste products, including corn stover, to make activated carbon filtration materials for removing contaminants from both air and water - an important effort in a world where toxins abound in our air and water. Her work is worth following.

Look. Neither a) the pressurizing of ethanol-plant-generated CO2 into a liquid nor b) the construction of hazardous liquefied CO2 pipelines would be needed at all if we could turn the CO2 into rock at a major source we can't see ridding ourselves of -- ethanol plants. Maybe this rock could also be a building material that could help us improve Iowa's aging housing stock. Maybe we could build a whole new rural Iowa in-

dustry out of it.

Maybe we could just, for once, think outside the 'box' that dollar-hungry titans of industry (and the politicians whose own pockets are kept stuffed by those titans with campaign contributions) hope we'll keep thinking inside of.

If we didn't HAVE to do all those things I enumerated, but could nevertheless still remove carbon emissions from ethanol plants with far less toil and trouble, wouldn't we want to?

Let's be clear: the reason the whole CO2 pipeline idea came about is because the fossil fuel industry wants a ready supply of CO2 to pump into aging oil fields because that's how the hardest-to-get-at oil is pushed around, underground, so that it's easier to retrieve. And once retrieved, it's

sold, and burned, putting yet more CO2 back into the atmosphere.

Monte Shaw of Iowa's Renewable Fuels Association has been quoted as saying that it's "immaterial" whether climate change mitigation even happens once the CO2 pipeline companies get their way, because - and I'm paraphrasing him here - "What's important is that we need this to save the ethanol industry."

To my mind, that sentiment is frightfully close to the "We had to destroy the village in order to save it" statement, made famous after the 1968 My Lai massacre of at least 340 Vietnamese peasants at the hands of American troops, that supposedly rationalized the horrific war crimes that took place there.

It's enough to make your skin crawl. ■

## Music on Friday afternoon

I was probably around 19 or 20 and sitting in a bar in Colorado that celebrated Friday Afternoon Club or FAC, as the locals called it. This was every Friday and pitchers of beer were a buck. I used to like beer, but I have no idea what brand it was... maybe Coors? All I know is we had to get there around 4 if we wanted a seat. By 5 p.m., people were standing in the aisles, resting their pitchers on any nearby table with an open spot. Drove of people standing all over made it pretty hard to get past to go to the restroom... especially if you knew someone and stopped to chat. Apparently, there was no crowd control back then.



**Little Pieces**  
Elaine Loring

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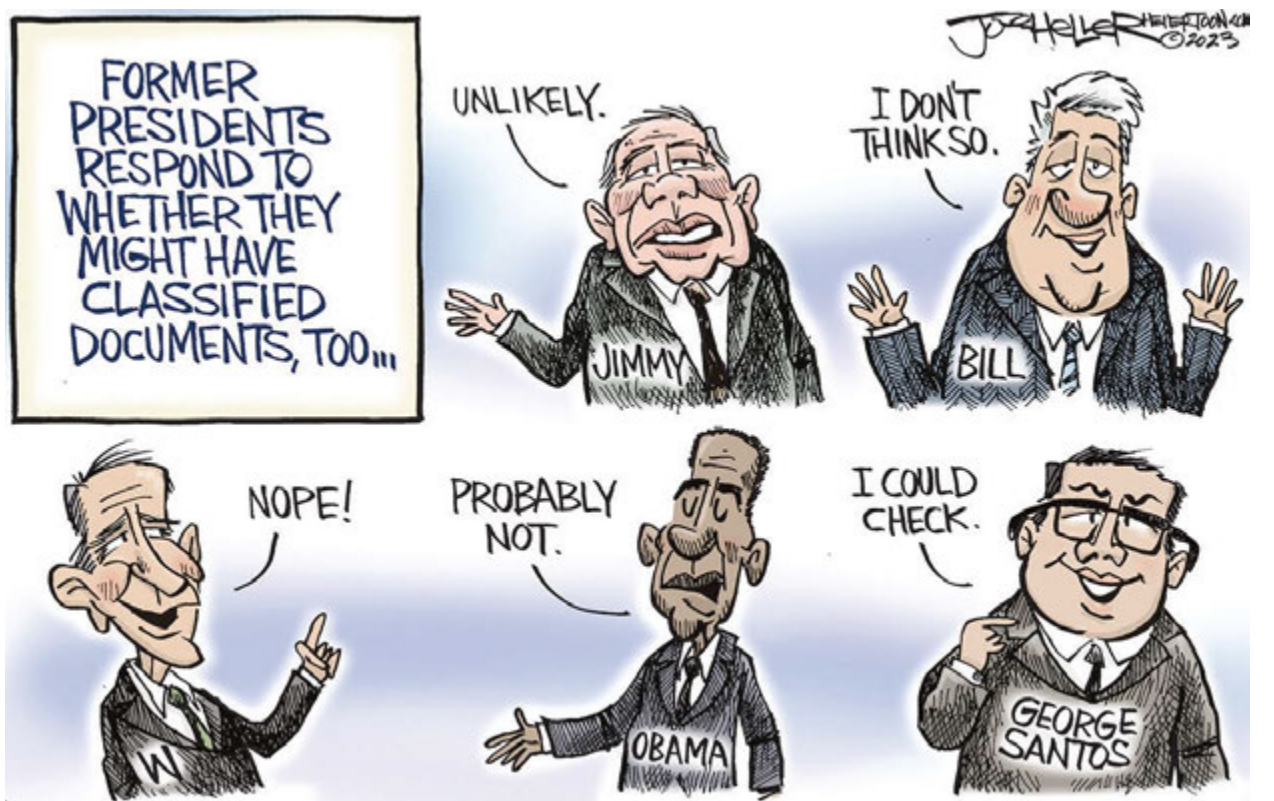
asked if he liked the kind of music they played. "Nah, I like classical."

Soon his bandmates returned, and I went back to my friends and told them the one and only thing that stood out from my encounter with him... he likes classical music. Ewww, we all said in unison.

Interestingly enough, my senior year in college I needed one music credit, so what did I take? Classical music. It really wasn't that bad. We learned the history behind each composer, and what their music represented. I think I even bought a Vivaldi album (yes, album) after that.

So last week David Crosby died. This has nothing to do with classical music - just awesome musical harmony - and I was saddened to hear this. I've always enjoyed Crosby, Stills and Nash or even Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young. In the newsroom someone commented they couldn't get into musicians who just stood around in a half circle singing. For as many times as I watched clips of them performing, I never noticed they stood in a half circle... but they did. Not all the time, but enough.

That's the thing about becoming a noteworthy musician. After they are gone, like Vivaldi or David Crosby, their music lives on forever... and it's covered live in local bars, or hundreds of years later, becomes the subject of a college course. Then it's randomly played on a Friday afternoon by someone who would rather listen to something else, like maybe country, but sticks to it because it pays the bills. ■



## The true purpose of social media

I think I have finally found what social media is really for.

Two years ago I was sick of scrolling mindlessly and seeing things that either upset me or were just not useful in any way. I decided that I would instead use it to share the books that I have read.

From the time I was in utero, my mom was reading to me. She would read whatever she was reading at the time out loud. Then as I got older, every night before bed she would read to my brother and I - until I was to the age that I was reading to myself. I still remember the first book I ever read to her, "Ten Apples Up on Top." While there were plenty of greats, one of my all-time favorites that we read is still "Matilda."

Even though I always had a "bedtime" (I'm one of those people that absolutely need eight hours of sleep), we were allowed to have our flashlights and read as late as we wanted. It became the only way that I could fall asleep. Still to this day, it doesn't matter what time I get home before I turn out the light I have to read at least a couple of pages.

I'm old school and still love a good hard copy. Nothing beats the smell or the feel - the sound of cracking open a book. I do read e-books as well, but the only time

I really use my Kindle is on vacation. Mostly because you never know how many books you might want/need and it's much easier to travel with hundreds of titles in one, than to pick and choose which hardcopy to bring.

My love for audiobooks started when I was little as well. On vacations with my grandparents, we would get books on cassette from the library and listen to them on our drives. Some of our favorites were "Hank the Cowdog" and "The Trumpet of the Swan."

While I still prefer to read the words on the page myself, I turn to audiobooks when I'm driving. As I travel to games several times a week, it gives me a chance to listen to a book. It also makes me feel like I have accomplished something while in the car. The best are really long drives, like when I go to Michigan to visit my family, it helps make that nine-hour drive fly by and makes traffic jams a little more bearable.

I'm definitely more of a fiction fan, but I do enjoy listening to non-fiction audiobooks. Especially if the author reads it themselves. It just seems more personal that way, hearing their words in their voice.

Since I started posting mostly just book reviews on multiple platforms, I've noticed I've had more

interactions with people than I ever did before. Several people have come up to me in the public and talked to me about a recent book they read or one they saw me post about that they also read. I've had people recommend books to me. Or tell me they just added one of the books I reviewed.

Multiple people I haven't talked to in ages have reached out and asked for recommendations for different reasons. Someone I haven't talked to since high school asked me if I knew of any books for her sister-in-law that was having a rough year and needed something uplifting. I had someone else say they were looking for gift ideas for a friend and because they aren't much a reader, they weren't sure what to get. While I know everyone has different likes and dislikes, I mentioned some of my favorite authors.

So, please, keep the recommendations and ideas coming. Keep reaching out if you need recommendations or just read something you loved. Even though my to-read pile and list is miles long, that doesn't mean I don't love adding to it. One of my favorite things is hearing from people that they also loved a book that I did or something I recommended made just as much of an impact on them as it did me.

That's what social media should be about - interacting with people and connecting with someone that you might not otherwise get to. ■



**Wingin' It**  
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## Letters Society on a slippery slope

**TO THE EDITOR:**  
I'm sure when the Capitol police take their oath, it doesn't say

that they are there to protect just Democrats. They lay their lives on the line to protect everyone who enters against foreign or domestic foes. And that's just what they did on Jan. 6, 2021.

Everyone keeps talking about heal-

ing this horrible divide between our two parties. The people we elect to send to Washington, D.C., are given the task to govern this country, and what is best for our country and the constituents. But yet, on the morning of the past Jan. 6 celebration to honor

those who gave their lives or were wounded doing their job, only ONE Republican was in attendance. How sad is that? What is happening to our society? We are on a very dangerous slippery slope.

**JANEICE MURRA**  
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