

OPINION

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THE BLOOMFIELD DEMOCRAT 5A

GUEST COLUMN

It's property rights vs. ethanol in Iowa. Bet on King Corn

By Todd Dorman, The Gazette

Iowa is a state that can't say no to the ethanol industry. And that leaves some Republican lawmakers in a terrible fix.

That's because many of their rural constituents are vehemently opposed to taking land through eminent domain for three carbon capture pipelines proposed by Summit Carbon Solutions, Navigator CO2 Ventures and Wolf Carbon Solutions. The companies want to build nearly 2,000 miles of pipelines that would capture carbon generated by ethanol plants to be stored underground.

(Note: On Thursday in a filing with the Iowa Utilities Board, Wolf said it will not use eminent domain to acquire pipeline easements.)

Advertisement

On Tuesday, a House panel signed off on a bill, House File 368, which would require the companies obtain voluntary easements along 90 percent of a pipeline's path before they could use eminent domain power to obtain the rest. The bill also would slap a moratorium on projects until the federal government completes a rewrite of safety rules that govern carbon pipelines.

Also, pipeline projects must conform to local ordinances and laws in other states before they would get an all clear from Iowa regulators.

The lead sponsor, Rep. Steven Holt, R-Denison, said he's long supported ethanol. "But there are bigger principles here," Holt said, namely property rights.

Holt's bill is entirely reasonable. It should be far more difficult to use what he called the "blunt force of government" to take land for a private project. And it's irresponsible to shove these projects forward before safety rules have been finalized.

Yep, totally reasonable. So it probably won't pass.

That's because the ethanol industry has upped the ante. The Iowa Renewable Fuels Association released a study it commissioned showing that, without the pipelines, Iowa would lose 75 percent of its ethanol industry and \$10.3 billion in revenues annually. Corn prices would drop. The cost of getting ethanol byproducts used as livestock feed would rise.

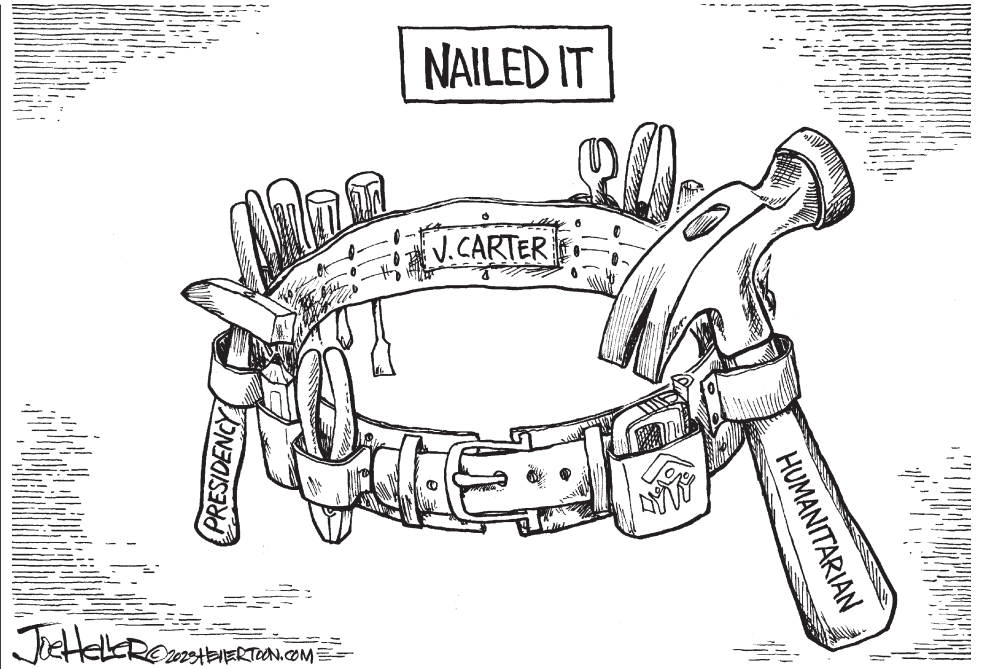
The skies would darken. The earth would quake. The Capitol's Golden Dome would rust. OK, maybe not.

So, basically, if lawmakers act to protect landowners, they'll be ending ethanol as we know it. Instead, the industry wants the Legislature to let companies take land, grab billions of dollars in federal tax credits and make ethanol into a lower carbon fuel that can be marketed in a world seeking to restrict emissions to halt climate change.

Ethanol is saved. Well, until the next time the industry needs to be propped up by government action. We've been doing this dance since the 1970s. It all would be easier to swallow if farmers and landowners also were willing to accept regulations directing them to keep our waterways clean. But they want it all, blank checks and no rules. Oh, and a dead zone. King Corn is a dictator.

And that's probably what they'll get again. Holt's approach has not been embraced by the Senate. And can you envision Gov. Kim Reynolds picking people over the profitability of corporate agriculture? I doubt even AI could generate such a scenario. Although I agree with Steve Holt, so anything's possible.

Wouldn't it be remarkable to see the Legislature do something big that doesn't make many of us cringe or seethe? The skies would darken ... OK, you get the picture.



STRAY THOUGHTS

Libraries shouldn't look for excuses to exclude

By Randy Evans

This has not been an easy time to be a librarian.

Sixty-plus years ago, back when the library card was a coveted sign of my status as a young reader, Miss Botts and Mrs. Sager were never

viewed as conspirators of controversy in the corner of the free world where I grew up.

I never remember a time when their domain, Bloomfield's library shelves, was a controversial place to be.

That was then. Now, too many people in Iowa have drawn targets on the backs of the librarians in Iowa's schools and town libraries.

Much of the controversy has come from people who want to block their own children and grandchildren from having access to certain books and who also want to block other people's children from reading those books, too.

But recent news out of Marshalltown shows library officials are creating some of the discord themselves — by neglecting to bring a dose of common sense to their work. And I am not talking about stripping controversy from the library shelves.

Allow me to update you about the controversy in Marshalltown. I think that will help you understand why that city's library dispute is so unfortunate and so unnecessary.

The Marshalltown Times Republican has reported on the strong feelings that have formed since John Worden of Green Mountain, a patron of the Marshalltown Public Library, first asked the library to purchase subscriptions to a couple of conservative publications, American Rifleman magazine and the Epoch Times newspaper, for library visitors to read.

Library director Sarah Rosenblum and the library's board of trustees have steadfastly said "no" — even after

Worden and another library patron offered to pay the cost.

Rosenblum explained at a meeting of the board of trustees that she made a "deep dive" into the content in American Rifleman and the Epoch Times. The gun magazine is published by the National Rifle Association. Epoch Times is affiliated with the Falun Gong religious movement.

She had what she called serious concerns about the science coverage in Epoch Times and about the American Rifleman being a benefit of NRA membership.

Every library in Iowa cannot accommodate every book, every magazine, and every newspaper. But that is really the same point some parents and some grandparents are making about certain books written for teenage and pre-teen readers.

These parents and grandparents are saying there are plenty of other books available for young readers, so why must these LGBTQ books be available. The response from librarians, teachers and other parents correctly comes down to, yes, you can block your child from reading those books, but libraries should not be blocking other parents who may want their child to have access to those books.

This is where a dose of common sense is needed by officials at the Marshalltown library.

If we trust parents to make the correct choice for what books their children read, shouldn't we trust adults to make the correct choice for what newspapers and magazines these adults choose to read?

Worden told the Marshalltown library trustees that he had done an even deeper dive into the content of American Rifleman and Epoch Times than the head librarian has, the Times Republican reported.

"I think that the staff and this board is inserting themselves between the patrons and the material," Worden said. "The patrons own this building and everything that's in it. They pay the

wages. They come first."

Another library patron echoed Worden's comments. Ray Mitchem told trustees, "I think we have to be careful not to put blinders on. I think the public should decide if it is something for them" — he said of the publications Worden has suggested.

Gary Thompson, a member of the Marshalltown City Council, attended the library's January meeting and weighed in on Worden's request.

"You guys allow your patrons to use the internet," he said. "They're going to find misinformation, pros and cons, on everything. I think you guys made a big mistake."

The councilman's comments about access to the internet is the same one that defenders of LGBTQ books in school libraries make in support of having those available. Kids have access via the internet to content that is even more extreme than what is found in the library.

Libraries traditionally have been advocates for intellectual freedom — making many views and perspectives available for their patrons. Through the years, libraries have taken the position there is no place for censorship in a free society.

The Marshalltown library's policies even state, "The library will not reject materials which are requested by patrons or suggested by standard review sources because of the point of view or ideas they reflect."

Call me naïve, but I think John Worden is correct. A well-rounded public library should have the American Rifleman and the Epoch Times on its shelves, especially if a generous donor is taking care of the expense.

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Randy Evans can be reached at DM-Revsans2810@gmail.com. Readers can offer their opinions on this issue through letters to the editor in the Bloomfield Democrat.

THE EMPTY NEST

The WiseGuys, Building Genuine Relationships

By Curt Swarm

My wife's brother-in-law, Ron, in his mid-seventies, is a good Christian. He and his

wife Becky live in Liberty, Mo., which is a suburb of Kansas City (go Chiefs!). Ron's a

friendly sort of fellow who will walk up to a stranger and begin chit-chatting.

One day while Ron was walking, he noticed a teenager shooting baskets. Ron began talking with the teen, Cal, and found out Cal needed a ride to football practice. Cal's parents were at work. Ron offered to give Cal a ride, and then picked him up when practice was over.

Well, it turned out there was a group of teens in Liberty in the same situation. Their parents were at work or off somewhere, and the teens had no transportation. Ron has two large cars, a Lincoln Town Car and a Mercury Marquis. Soon Ron was transporting a group of boys to their practices and picking them up afterwards. He would even treat them to fast food. Of course, Ron cleared all this with the boys' parents so that the parents knew what was going on. Ron and his wife Becky even attended the boys' sporting events, and Ron jotted down the good things the boys did, and then went over those good points with the boys—something they appreciated.

Being a Christian, Ron

would love the boys with Jesus's love, and tell them of his own experience with Christ. Two of them eventually asked about Jesus. Ron was elated.

Cal and Ron began talking about the possibility of the group getting together once a week on Saturday nights. Cal was insistent that, "This can't be like church!" Ron agreed.

At the meetings Ron talked to the boys about building relationships. He asked them, "Who is your best friend?" The boys hemmed and hawed. Ron tapped himself on the chest. They themselves are their best friend. They needed to look inward. Then they needed

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Swarm

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Sign up to access your God account

By Kimra Hines, Reporter

I spent years believing that God was akin to an old man sitting on a puffy cloud, making a list of everything I did wrong. I attended church off and on and grew to be very turned off by God. What I didn't know at the time was that I

had incorrectly assigned human characteristics to God. I thought the attitudes and behaviors of my fellow man were representative of God.

Later in life, I told someone that I didn't really believe in God anymore. He said, "Yes you do. I see how you are with animals and in na-

ture. You believe in God; you just don't know it."

Fortunately, God believed in me regardless of my own beliefs. God led me to a 12-step program and that 12-step program led me to God. I learned that I could come to believe in a power

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