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Our mission:
The Press-Gazette strives, as it has since 1915, to be the primary provider of information in Northeastern Wisconsin, keeping the welfare and development of the Greater Green Bay area at heart. It is our responsibility to provide a forum for free and open expression of diverse opinions while maintaining the public trust necessary to serve our readers, advertisers, employees and stockholders."

OPINION

IN OUR VIEW

Don't scale back Fox River project

Time and again, executives from Fox River paper mills have sat across the table from us, explaining the importance of a pilot project that would dredge PCBs from the river bottom near Fort James Corp.'s West Mill.

The project, they said, would prove to doubters — environmentalists and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency among them — how committed they were to attacking the environmental and health hazards posed by river contaminants.

Now, the mills appear to be saying that a scaled-back river project is OK, despite serious reservations about that approach expressed by the state Department of Natural Resources.

We think downsizing the project because of rising costs would be a serious mistake. It could compromise the research data needed to evaluate the effectiveness of dredging PCB-contaminated sediments from the bottom of the river and further undermine the mills' credibility in the community.

Many residents favor a Superfund designation for a 39-mile stretch of the Fox River because they think the mills have done little on their own to clean up the river.

We have opposed a Superfund designation and defended the mills, preferring a local solution.

But a pilot project the mills have supported so strongly must proceed as originally planned, even if it means the mills have to kick in more than the $7 million they budgeted.

In December, the DNR ended a small government-funded dredging project near Kimberly. The paper mills themselves have championed a larger project to get more information on how a major cleanup would proceed. That was scheduled for spring near the Fort James mill.

In a *Press-Gazette* guest column last June, Dennis Hultgren, director of environmental and public affairs for Appleton Papers Inc., outlined the importance of the two pilot projects.

"The work on these two projects will generate the kind of data EPA should have been collecting on its other dredging projects all along," he wrote. "We think this is a worthwhile investment and the results will help everyone take a fresh look at what's best for the river."

Bob Paulson of the state Department of Natural Resources said scaling back the project, which translates to removing fewer polychlorinated biphenyls from the river, could render it meaningless — and unsafe for the environment.

Earlier this month, Winnebago County said it would no longer accept river sediments containing PCBs. Brown County's new landfill in the town of Holland eventually could be a site, but it won't be opened for several years. The only current alternative is a landfill in the Detroit area. But the $140 a ton it costs to haul and dump the sediment there is three times the expense of disposing of it locally.

Because of the cost and lack of a local disposal site, plans for removing 60,000 to 70,000 cubic yards of sediments could be cut roughly in half. Hultgren said the smaller project still would be large enough to provide important information about large-scale river cleanup.

Paulson said removing such a small amount could expose high levels of PCBs and other chemicals around it.

Brown County Executive Nancy Nusbaum plans on meeting with the DNR to discuss possible solutions. County officials, she said, "...are very willing to offer whatever resources we have available to start solving it."

The paper mills, the DNR and Brown County all must be part of the solution. The Fort James pilot project is far too important to the future health of the Fox River to unravel at this late stage.

■ Issue:
Downsizing dredging plan

■ Our view:
Paper mills must pay more so a thorough study is done of dredging PCB-contaminated sediments

PEOPLE'S FORUM

KKK can't use public land for promotion of hatred

GREEN BAY — While the Ku Klux Klan may have a constitutional right to free speech, as stated by Judge Barbara Crabb, it does not have the right to use public property for its promotion of hatred and discrimination, as is clearly its goal. We have federal and state laws that clearly ban hate crimes, and the promotion of such.

We tend to forget that the KKK discriminates not only against blacks, but against many other racial and ethnic groups. By allowing the Klan to hold its protest against a federal holiday on public property, Crabb clearly stated that the promotion of hate and discrimination is perfectly legal, even condoned, by the same individuals (Crabb and the ACLU) who are sworn to protect citizens from such hate.

Michael McQueeney of the Klan was quoted as stating his goal is to promote "white Christian rights." Again, this is an illegal use of public land for the promotion of both discrimination and religious beliefs in direct violation of the Constitution's laws of freedom of, and from, religion. Crabb clearly is in support of the Christian lifestyle; would she make the same decision in favor of a group of pagans or atheists seeking to revile or desecrate Christian beliefs in a public forum?

The real questions we should be asking are: why do these people feel they are so superior? How can they justify their hatred with their Christian beliefs, when their Bible clearly condemns hatred and discrimination?

There is absolutely no scriptural basis for this — they are simply madmen, deluded by equally insane individuals. What causes such deep and unreasonable hatred? Is it the fear that they might actually be inferior to those they hate? They obviously feel inferior, threatened and insecure if they must hide behind a mask or hood.

It's time they realized that any hate and discrimination, against any group, will not be tolerated.

James Kaufman, Green Bay Correctional Institution

Natural family planning alternative to pill, IUD

BRUSSELS — In the last 30 years, the abortionists of our world have murdered 1.8 billion preborn babies. In addition, because "the pill" and the IUD are really "abortifacients," not just contraceptives, we cannot fathom this carnage of the innocent.

The "abortifacient" properties of "the pill" are preventing the newly conceived life in its embryonic stage from being transported to the uterus and also preventing implantation in the wall of the uterus. "The pill" is designed to interfere with several normal functions of fertility in order to make a woman unable to conceive due to temporary sterility or sperm immobility and/or unable to carry a pregnancy to term (an early abortion).

This process can be accomplished in the following various ways: Suppressing ovulation, inhibiting implantation, impeding sperm migration, making changes in the fallopian tubes and by stopping a pregnancy.

The results of 18 studies of patients with IUDs found that when pregnancies occurred with the IUD in place, 28.6 percent were spontaneously aborted and another 8.4 percent were tubal pregnancies, necessitating surgery. Therefore, in the polite language of medicine, the IUD contributed to a "fetal wastage" rate of 37 percent in these pregnancies.

Is there a natural, safe and effective alternative to "the pill" and the IUD? Yes. The symptothermal method of Natural Family Planning is in the same effectiveness range as "the pill" and the IUD.

Barbara LeGrave

Raising Phoenix parking fee was a bad move

GREEN BAY — My wife and I have been season ticket holders for the UW-Green Bay Phoenix men's basketball team for the past three years. We find it to be enjoyable entertainment at a reasonable price and have agreed with recent articles concerning the sparse crowds at the games.

When attending the Jan. 23 game, I was surprised to find that the price of parking had been raised from $5 to $6. It struck me that the feeling was — if we can't increase the number of people who attend the games, let's further gouge the people who do.

It's bad enough that the food prices at the arena are so exorbitant, but to raise the parking price in the middle of the year seems to be ill-timed. This increase is a different concept of running a business: When business is slow, raise the price of what we are trying to sell.

I don't know if the Phoenix team shares in parking revenue, but whether it does or not, it seems ways should be found to bring more people to the games, rather than further frustrate the people who do attend.

Keith Jahnke

In America, absurd has become reality

LAKE MILLS — He campaigned on a slogan, "it's the economy, stupid," and has proved a sex pervert can lead a country if he gives people prosperity. A skilled manipulator can be considered brilliant by the manipulated. Thus it explains why a man can be popular with the masses and yet they are embarrassed and disgusted by his actions. So much for the wisdom of the crowd.

Moral outrage? How can you have outrage in a country where morals are on the decrease and pornographers are defending the president?

Democracy works, the Constitution is defended and freedom allows the abnormal to become normal and right become wrong. How can someone not be glad to live in such a country? The absurd has become reality.

Kenneth Quade

W-2 has helped families, but we must acknowledge those it missed

Gov. Tommy Thompson used last week's State of the State address to once again highlight the successes of his welfare-to-work initiatives, known as W-2.

Whatever your political leanings, any fair-minded assessment of Thompson's tenure as governor would give him some credit for tackling welfare reform head-on.

The state's old welfare program was well-intentioned and well-functioning for many families. When divorce, job loss or illness caused families to lose their financial footing, it helped tide them over life's rough spots.

But over the years, it also bred a cycle of dependency that snared generations of families in poverty and despair.

Clearly, welfare was broken, and it needed fixing.

Enter W-2. To receive aid, beneficiaries must work or participate in training to prepare them for work. In its best light, W-2 is a noble attempt to provide Wisconsin residents with an entrance ticket to the working world and its many rewards, including self-esteem and the ability to support themselves and their families.

To his credit, Thompson realizes W-2 is a work in progress. In his address, he proposed several changes, including more dollars to help parents pay for child care.

He also introduced a W-2 success story, Michelle Crawford of Milwaukee, a mother of five who was on welfare for 10 years. Crawford credited W-2 for helping her get a job as a machine operator.

CAROL HUNTER

"My kids see a difference in me," Crawford said. "They see their mother making it."

You'd have to be heartless not to pull for someone like Crawford, and her story no doubt left viewers with the impression that W-2 is doing great things.

However, that conclusion clashes sharply with comments made at a recent panel discussion on W-2 by Pat DeLessio, who works for Legal Action of Wisconsin.

Speaking in Madison at a Wisconsin Newspaper Association meeting, DeLessio described the fallout of W-2 in Milwaukee as overwhelming for families and social service agencies.

Mothers and children show up at her legal-aid office having no food, no place to sleep for the night and nowhere else to turn. So in addition to providing legal assistance, her staff shuttles families in crisis to food pantries and overflowing shelters.

Granted, when discussing poverty in Wisconsin, there's the crushing problems of Milwaukee and there's the rest of the state.

Another panelist, who supervises W-2 programs in Waukesha County, spoke of dramatically decreased caseloads and dozens of clients who'd found jobs. He accused journalists of always focusing on flaws instead of successes.

Without remorse, I plead guilty.

If a government program helps 99 families but through red tape and bureaucratic bungling abandons one family to the streets, I find no fault with doing stories on the one hungry, homeless family.

Yes, we should put in context that many families were helped, and yes, even the best systems can't absolutely eliminate human error.

But we should expect our government to do right by people, and one job of a newspaper is to be a watchdog ensuring government does its job well.

Coincidentally, last week Capt. David Harvey of the Salvation Army visited our Editorial Board to discuss his organization's work in Green Bay (Excerpts from that interview will appear on a future Perspective page.)

He mentioned that 35 to 50 families show up at his agency each day in need of food, shelter or assistance in paying rent or utilities to keep them in their homes.

Getting at the root problems of poverty in Wisconsin is more complex than writing about one family in trouble — or singling out a success story like Crawford's.

The state has done a poor job to date of tracking how people have fared who have left government assistance. And the harshest effects of W-2 may be yet to come, when families reach the program's limits on assistance.

The press has some built-in obstacles in reporting on this issue. It's hard to go beyond raw numbers and anecdotes because privacy laws shield clients' identities.

But we'll keep chipping away in search of the truth. Government can't be the only weapon in the war on poverty; private charities must be part of the effort. Together, they must forge a responsible approach to giving families their best shot at self-sufficiency.

If you have questions or comments about the newspaper, please call Executive Editor Carol Hunter at (920) 431-8377. Or write to her at: Executive Editor's Column, Green Bay Press-Gazette, P.O. Box 19430, Green Bay, WI 54307-9430.

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The Editorial Board meets every Monday at 12:15 p.m. at the Press-Gazette, 435 E. Walnut St., Green Bay.

For more information, call Mike Blecha at (920) 431-8248.

Contacting the Opinion Page staff

Letters should be no more than 300 words. All are subject to editing and must have your signature, address and daytime phone number where we can confirm your letter. Writers are limited to one letter every 30 days.

Mail to People's Forum, Press-Gazette, P.O. Box 19430, Green Bay, WI 54307-9430.

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