

OPINION

Letters for July 28: Bears football, CAFOs and more

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Struggling Bears football faces tough test at Northern Arizona

Four months and one sport season away, Dana Ford has brought forth a proposition that it's never too early to ignite interest about an upcoming basketball season. Waking up fans in this hotbed of basketball country to the possibilities for success that his program has builds high expectations. At the opposite end of the spectrum is Missouri State football that arrives first on the calendar but is far behind in fanfare. Easy to overlook, fans have grown accustomed to a lack of success. There is one certainty though. Before the round ball bounces into action, a pigskin will be flying through the air.

Another foregone conclusion is that playing at Northern Arizona will be a true test of the Bears' mental toughness. There won't be any white flag going up for the Bears in Flagstaff, but rest assured there will be an opponent lying in waiting with a very vivid memory. Last season Missouri State made plays while Northern Arizona self-destructed in a one-sided victory for the Bears. Be it the humidity, a long flight or taking a program in the midst of rebuilding too

1 Northern Arizona football program. All that is needed for bulletin board material is

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Coach Stec will be taking his football troops into hostile territory to face a team that will be literally sky-high at very high altitude. There won't be any humidity this time around, but the Bears will have reason to be sweating it!

This is a litmus test to see if the Bears are actually gradually turning a corner. A requirement will be improved quarterback play that could very well be or a willingness to call someone else's number.

Mike George, Springfield

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"Go back where they came from" attitude only causes problems

I am 76 years old and I have been hearing things like "They should go back where they came from" and "America, love it or leave it" for as long as I can remember.

What I don't remember is those ideas ever solving any problems; they have only caused more problems.

Rick Matz, Springfield

Central High more than IB program that boosts its reputation

My name is Bria Hardin-Boyer and I am from Springfield, Missouri. I am a proud Missourian and I am just as equally a proud alumnus of Central High School Class of 2014. From 2009-2014 I was a student in MYP Program at Pipkin Middle School and the International Baccalaureate Program at Central. I recently read your feature this week which described Central High School as one of the best schools in Missouri and the best high school in Springfield, Missouri. I take issue with a few of your stances or nuances in your recent article.

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First of all, I will start off by informing you all that I am a third-generation Central High School graduate. My mother and her mother attended Central High School, as did all the members of my family who live in Springfield. The only reason why my great-grandmother didn't attend was because she was not allowed due to segregation. I mention this to emphasize that Central High School has always been a cornerstone in my family and in the black community of Springfield. I remember listening to my grandmother tell me stories of when Central High School was underpopulated, underfunded and overlooked by the city. I find it ironic that now, with the introduction of the International Baccalaureate Program and also an influx of transfer students who are attending Central High School (often displacing the students who live in the school zone), Central is a hot spot for educational opportunity, retention, graduation rates and college acceptances.

I understand both sides of this problem. I graduated from Central High School and went on to receive my BA from Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, as well as my MPA from Columbia University in New York, NY. I understand the value of education and the opportunities it can provide. I am so thankful for my college experience. On the other hand, I had two younger brothers who also attended Central High School and who were not candidates of the IB Program. I have observed firsthand the way that funding, teacher attention, and supplemental education programs such as ACT Prep and college readiness is disproportionately saturating the IB populations of Central, all the while students who could have received sports scholarships or taken on a mechanical or technical trade have been undersupported. There is a staunch juxtaposition between IB students and non-IB students at Central High School. The difference is obvious. I find that the cohorts of IB students and their economic status, family income, family contribution and ethnoracial backgrounds directly correlate to the notoriety and acclamation that Central High School has now. But IB is not all that Central is about.

I am proud to be a Bulldog and I am proud to be able to eventually come back to Missouri and do more to contribute to educational disparities and differences in the Springfield and greater Ozark community. What I am not so proud of, however, is the supposed "reinvention" of Central and the new attention that it is receiving now that a new program has come in. Indeed, great changes and new opportunities have been provided to students at Central High School; nevertheless, it is still a school that has and will always have character, history, talent, brilliance, diversity and promise outside of the coveted IB Program.

Bria Hardin Boyer, M.A., Global Affairs; B.A. Spanish Language and Literature

CAFOs are being safely regulated; concerns are misleading

I'm a seventh-generation Moniteau County farmer and Missouri Farm Bureau state board member. I respectfully disagree with the views expressed by Darwin Bentlage in his recent commentary. But I'm particularly concerned with misleading statements, such as citing "scientific consensus" that farms subject to regulation as concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) "represent a significant risk to the environment and public health."

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At the request of our local health officials, Missouri Department of Natural Resources staff responsible for reviewing CAFO permit applications, conducting inspections and enforcing state regulations discussed this very topic recently with our local health board's study group on which I serve. They reported the number of CAFOs in Missouri has been near 500 for several years. Like any other type of permitted entity, some have had violations, but CAFOs are no greater cause for concern than other regulated facilities. Regardless of proximity to CAFOs, water quality in Missouri is generally good.

I won't defend bad actors, but I have every reason to believe CAFOs are being properly managed and regulated at the state level by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and do not represent a "significant" risk to the environment and public health.

Andy Clay, Jamestown

Letter a needed criticism of Pokin's liberal columns

In this past Sunday's paper, Gary Gardner chides Steve Pokin about his (Pokin's) remarks about President Trump, and rightly so. Mr. Pokin is not very popular among those of us who do not agree with his usually liberal comments.

Here's the bottom line: Steve Pokin himself admits to voting for Hillary Clinton, not once but twice. Need I say more?

Gene Smith, Springfield

Trump's success with economy falls short of Obama's

I have read with interest during the past year about how great our economy has been progressing since the election of President Trump. I would agree with those who support this belief and give President Trump the credit. During his first two complete years in office the Dow is up 29.19%; the unemployment rate has fallen from 5%-3.6%; and inflation has averaged 1.85% per year. Unfortunately, President Trump is on pace to preside over a government that will increase our budget deficit by \$6.2 trillion during his first term. This would equate to \$12.4 trillion if elected to a second term.

Let's compare that with his predecessor, Barrack Obama. During his first two years in office, the Dow increased 50.6% and increased by 148.3% during his 8-year tenure; during his eight-year term the unemployment rate decreased from 10%-5%; and the average yearly inflation rate during his tenure was 1.34%. Finally, under President Obama, our government increased the budget deficit by \$9 trillion over eight years.

Another important fact to consider. Under President Trump's leadership, some citizens did see their taxes reduced by a very low amount. But I'm afraid
 ma come tax. Tariffs actually accounted for 95% of the Federal Reserve before the
 fed 99¢ per month. Save 90%. tariffs are in fact just a replacement for the federal income tax.

After gathering these facts from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, I have realized that our president is doing about half as good as what our previous president did in helping our economy. I realize that President Trump's supporters can be proud of the appointment of Supreme Court judges, the attempt to overturn Roe v. Wade and the attempt to end the Affordable Care Act. But basing any such support on economic accomplishments does not appear to carry weight when compared with that of Trump's predecessor.

In conclusion, I would suggest that those who support our president refrain from using the argument that he is responsible for the greatest economic growth in history. Our country's economic growth with President Trump is actually far less than that of the previous Commander in Chief.

Tony Armstrong, Springfield

Medicaid expansion needed for those who can't afford health insurance

If my son had not had health insurance three years ago, he wouldn't be alive today. We went from having a normal day at Cub Scouts to preparing ourselves for a bone marrow transplant in under 24 hours. We experienced a medical emergency that almost took his life; and if about 200,000 Missourians experienced similar situations today, they likely wouldn't survive. All of this due to lack of insurance and, therefore, access to quality health care. This is unacceptable.

Medicaid is a lifeline that low-income Missourians depend on. Expanding Medicaid would mean extending the eligibility to this program to over 200,000 people, including 50,000 parents of young children. Currently, a household of two cannot make more than \$391 a month and qualify for Medicaid.

This leaves many uninsured people in the coverage gap, which happens when they cannot afford private health insurance but don't qualify for Medicaid. Expansion will especially benefit people of color and people in rural communities, where uninsured rates are higher than average.

Medicaid expansion is a win for the health of our citizens, as well as our economy. It would bring over \$1.5 billion a year back to Missourians. This money has been left on the table for far too long; and investing in health care jobs and infrastructure is crucial, especially in rural Missouri.

I never want another family to have to decide between feeding their family and going to the doctor when needed. That is why I will do everything in my power to give the people a voice and finally expand Medicaid in Missouri. And I urge you to do the same!

Cheyenne Mauzy-Wicken, Springfield

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