

THE FOLLOWING EDITORIAL represents the view of The Joplin Globe's editorial board. Members of the editorial board are: **Andy Ostmeyer**, editor, aostmeyer@joplinglobe.com; **Emily Younker**, managing editor, eyounker@joplinglobe.com; and **Jerry Willis**, design editor, jwillis@joplinglobe.com.

OUR VIEW

Shades of Javert in Oklahoma

Ryan Walters' obsessive pursuit of Summer Boismier can only be described as harassment. Shades of Javert. And Ahab.

The latest ruling left no doubt the state did not prove its case against Boismier. Yet Walters vows to push on.

Boismier was the Norman, Oklahoma, teacher who covered her classroom bookshelves in red paper with messages written in black marker in response to new state laws. The state alleges she wrote "Books the state doesn't want you to read" and "Definitely don't scan me" with an arrow pointing to a QR code to obtain a free Brooklyn Public Library card, where many of the controversial books are available.

Provocative, yes, and unprofessional... the kind of thing the local superintendent should address. But worthy of this relentlessness by the Oklahoma's top education official? Hardly. State Superintendent Walters overreacted. And overreached.

The State Department of Education complaint also alleges Boismier had three books on her classroom bookshelves that she "intended to make available to students" that Norman Public Schools "regarded as inappropriate" — "Gender Queer," "The Bluest Eye" and "All Boys Aren't Blue." However, according to coverage of the hearing, Boismier, for her part, said she not have "Gender Queer" among the books in her classroom, did not use excerpts of it in class and did not even own a copy of it.

The state, however, said she violated Oklahoma teaching standards by "promoting explicit sexual materials to minors," and by providing "unlawful racist instruction" in such a way that it violates the rules enacted under a new state law that proponents say prohibits the teaching of "critical race theory."

But as we said before: The critical point here is that Boismier didn't give her students any objectionable books. She gave them access to... wait for it... a public library and its online "unbanned books" initiative. Students weren't required to read any of these controversial books, nor did she point out any controversial passages or art in them.

Walters began hunting for Boismier's teaching license, a move the former teacher, who voluntarily resigned her teaching position, has been fighting.

Attorneys for Boismier and the state Board of Education argued their cases Wednesday during a mediation hearing before Assistant Attorney General Liz Stevens, who served as the administrative law judge.

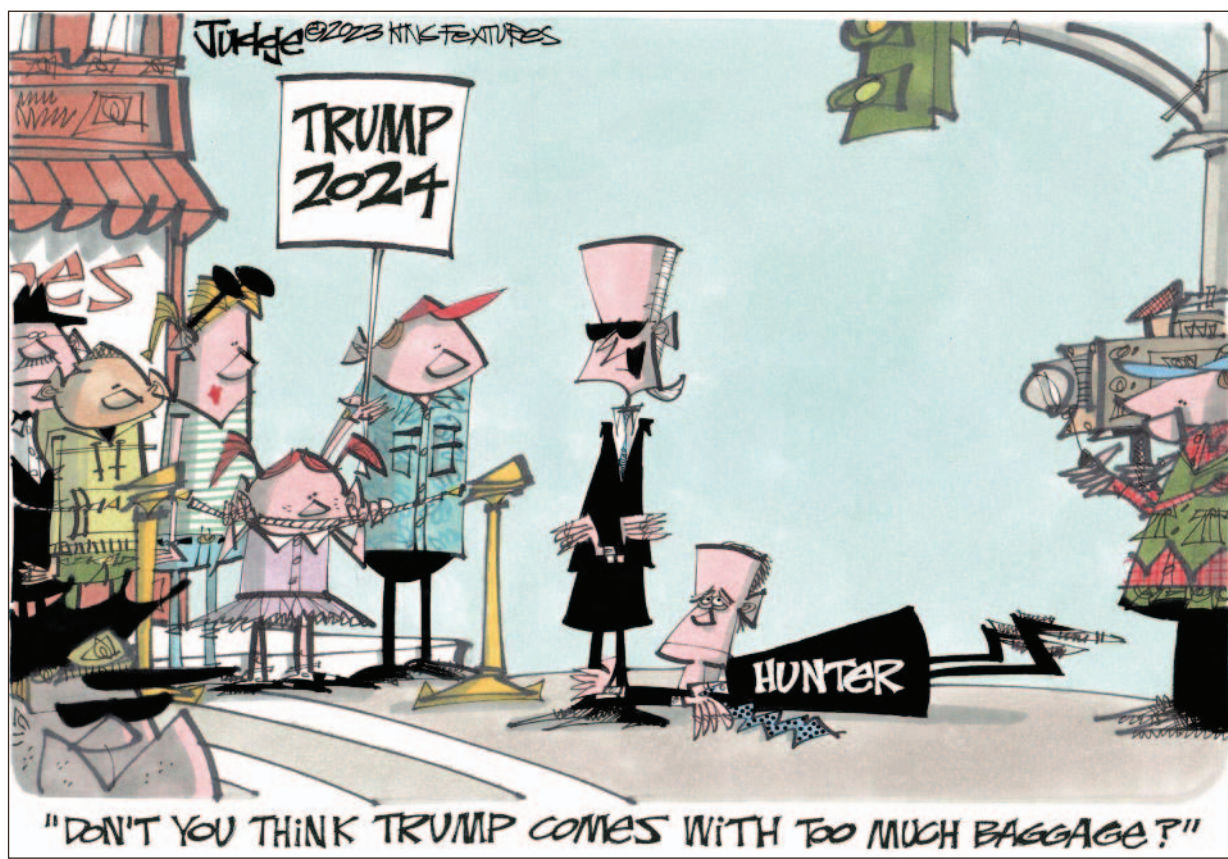
"My ruling today is a recommendation to the State Board of Education. After hearing all the evidence, as to Count 1, I find that State Department of Education has failed to prove, by clear and convincing evidence, that Respondent willfully committed an act of moral turpitude and has violated the standard of performance and conduct for teachers, according to a statement provided."

"As to Count 2, I find the State Department of Education has failed to prove, by clear and convincing evidence, that Respondent has willfully violated OAC 210:10-1-23(a), (c)(4), or (c)(8)."

Yet, Walters' spokesperson had this to say afterward: "At the next board meeting, it may not be until August, Superintendent Walters will be making a recommendation to the board. He can't speak for each board member, obviously, but he will be recommending that the license is revoked."

Norman Board of Education member, Annette Price criticized Walters for ignoring Wednesday's ruling, according to the Norman Transcript: "To ignore this crucial fact and go after her teaching certification anyway is a flawed attempt to intimidate all Oklahoma educators who work tirelessly to meet the needs of our students."

We recommend Walters get a copy of Victor Hugo's "Les Miserables" or Herman Melville's "Moby Dick." Bet the local public library has them.



YOUR VIEW

One question President Biden should be asked

Given the unlikely occurrence of another press conference by our diminished president, this will likely never happen, but if it does... there is one question I would very much like to see asked. That is: "Do you favor mandatory minimum sentencing for one who purposefully lies when filling out a federal firearms application?" Sometimes I have a problem controlling my curiosity.

Perry Davis
Carthage

Let parents be the judges of what is appropriate

Our Missouri secretary of state claims that our new library rules help parents protect children. He claims that librarians should inform parents as to what materials are appropriate or inappropriate for their children to read.

While no one should dispute that young children should not be exposed to pornography or materials depicting violence, the best judges as to what material is appropriate for a particular child are that child's parents.

Children mature at different rates and what is appropriate for one child may not be appropriate for a different child of the same age. Librarians are not going to be aware of each child's maturity level.

If you teach the Ten Command-

ments to young children, how are you going to explain what adultery is?

At what age should a child be told that Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny are fictional or that human babies are not delivered by storks?

While librarians may be able to assist parents in selecting appropriate materials for their children it is that parent's obligation to review the material and determine whether or not it is appropriate for his or her child.

Jim Fleischaker
Joplin

When in a hole, stop digging

An old saw goes something like this: "After all is said and done, more is said than done."

I read (Globe, June 20) more talk about an old depot and bringing downtown Joplin back to life.

Lots of talk about the homeless while spending real money on trails. None for the mentally ill ones on the streets, but money for the walkers and bikers who can't walk and/or ride in their own neighborhoods.

It reads like Joplin has to go out of state to find a use for the building and try to do something about the buildings downtown that have the shortest life.

I heard a statement awhile back that said, "If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging." And then, there is the money. The money to "restore" something when no one seems to know what to do with the something.

I wonder: If you have a building

that has no visible use and will cost a silo full of money to restore, why not raze the old structure, clean up the mess and quit digging.

Start talking about doing something for the mentally ill people on the streets — the homeless.

David Turner
Lamar

Joplin needs grocery store to compete with Walmart

So now we are going to get a Menard's — just what we needed, another version of what we already have.

I can't help but wonder why it is that we get more of the same kind of stores but cannot get a real full-service grocery store, one that could actually compete with Walmart.

Have you been to the 7th Street Walmart lately? Now they have it set up at checkout with chutes to herd you like cattle where they want you to go. That is, after you dodge pushcarts clogging the aisles filling called-in orders.

The people of this city could and would support an option so I have to wonder why the city has not made it a priority to offer its residents a reasonable and competitive choice as to where to spend their food dollars, as they have with so many other vendors and, heaven knows, eateries.

Who or what is standing in the way of a reasonable and much-needed choice?

Dianne Slater
Joplin

Titan shows allure, terror of the oceans

The submersible Titan is now confirmed lost.

There's a tragic poetry to the debris of the vessel being found 1,700 feet from the bow of the Titanic, the watchword for disaster at sea that has been the object of fascination since it went down in the North Atlantic in 1912.

There have been lots of questions raised about all that led to the loss of the Titan, and the five souls aboard, perhaps most importantly: What were they thinking? How could they have taken such a monumental risk?

They were bolted inside a cramped, 22-foot-long vessel equipped with only enough oxygen for several days that could go farther down in the depths than almost anything that could conceivably rescue them if something went wrong. Why do that?

For the same reason that men have been driven to voyage on the sea, and venture under it when possible, from time immemorial. The quest for adventure, profit, survival and freedom have long motivated these nautical undertakings, and insane risk-taking has often been part of the bargain.

We rightly honor Ferdinand Magellan, but it takes only a cursory review of his famous 1519 voyage circumnavigating the globe — the mutinies, the appalling loss of life, the risky expeditions ashore — to realize he was not operating based on a normal risk-benefit calculus. Sure enough, he was killed in a battle on a Pacific island. The surviving men and ships returned from the epic journey nearly three years



RICH
LOWRY

Columnist

after it began. It wasn't only Europeans, of course, who conquered huge distances. European sailors in the 16th century, as Lincoln Paine relays in his masterpiece "The Sea and Civilization," were shocked by the size of the Pacific, as well as the

fact that the majority of the small islands dotted across the vastness were inhabited. One officer wondered of the people on the remote Tuamotu Islands, "Who the devil went and placed them on a small sandbank like this one and as far from the continent as they are?"

As it happens, no one placed them there — they got there under their own power. Almost three-quarters of the Earth's surface is water, and it is enormously important economically and geo-strategically. According to the National Ocean Service, "In 2017, the U.S. maritime transportation system carried \$1.6 trillion of cargo through U.S. seaports to and from our international trading partners."

As Lincoln Paine notes, without its commitment to what he calls "maritime enterprise," we may never have seen the rise of Western Europe. Today, who ends up controlling the Taiwan Strait may eventually help determine the future of the world.

Yet, it's easy to forget the centrality of the seas to the modern

world, as Gregg Easterbrook points out in his book, "The Blue Age." Gigantic container vessels, the lifeline of the world economy, are mostly unseen, unless you live near a port. No one thinks of the undersea cables that support the internet. The pipelines under the ocean are similarly invisible.

For all its usefulness, the sea is a hostile and unforgiving environment. The great artist of the sea, the British painter J.M.W. Turner, brings home in his work the overwhelming force of the oceans and the terror when something goes wrong.

The margin for error at great depths especially is nonexistent. The U.S. submarine Thresher suffered a cascade of failures and imploded at a depth of roughly 2,300 feet during diving tests in 1963. The implosion took as little as one-twentieth of a second, "too fast to be cognitively recognized by the men within the submarine," as an article in Naval History Magazine puts it. The debris field spread over 33 acres of the ocean floor.

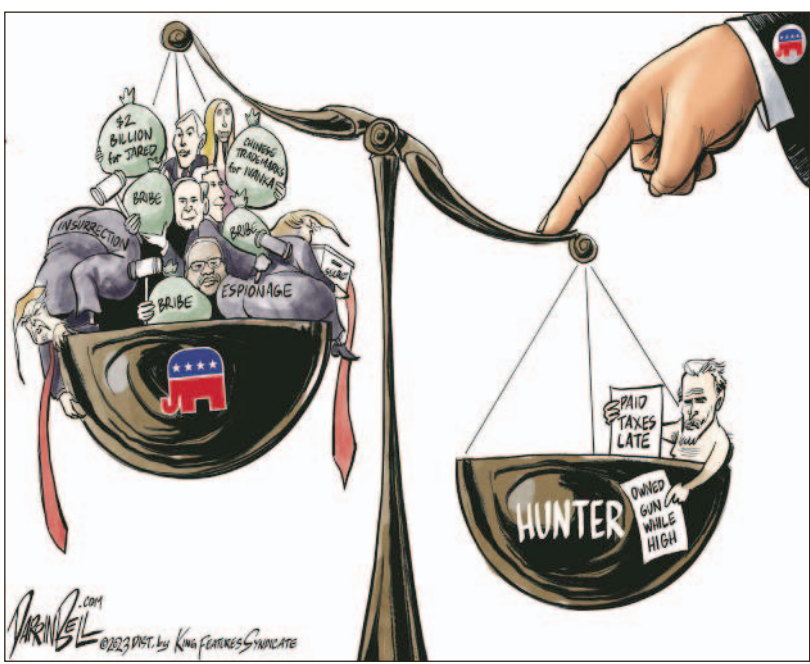
Lincoln Paine quotes an ancient Greek epigram that is unsparing:

"All sea is sea... Pray if you like for a good voyage home,

But Aristagoras, buried here, has found

The ocean has the manners of an ocean."

RICH LOWRY is editor-in-chief of National Review, an American conservative news and opinion magazine. He can be reached on Twitter at @RichLowry.



Verse

'Let all that you do be done in love.'

1 Corinthians 16:14

