

OPINION

EDITORIAL

Thunder, lightning, illegal lightening of the pocket

Flash, crash, bang, boom. Several severe thunderstorms already have swept across the RiverTown region, leaving debris in yards and on roofs and on cars. This on top of flooding. Sigh.

Summer 2019 no doubt has more in store, and unfortunately some people may get hit especially hard — first, courtesy of Mother Nature and second, courtesy of the unscrupulous.

You can't do much about the first, although you can do your best to be prepared.

You can do something about those who prey on those hit by catastrophe, however, and ensure you aren't one of them. Being systematic, sensible and strong isn't easy in a stressful time, but you can do it. When damage

hits, beware the scammers and fly-by-night contractors.

The Better Business Bureau and local insurance agents recommend that consumers who need storm repair services take a measured approach.

Step 1: Contact with your insurance company. Your damage may be covered, and your insurance company may have contractors to recommend — or at least may help you vet those contractors. Your agent also may be willing to accompany a contractor on an inspection.

Step 2: Do your research. Check with state and local government agencies to ensure a contractor is licensed. Ask friends and neighbors about their experiences with

contractors.

Don't believe everything you read online. Is the site independent? At BBB.org, for example, business profiles often include verified experiences posted by consumers.

Step 3: Get several quotes. You have money on the line. Be extra wary of quotes regarding places in your home you cannot see.

Step 4: Beware of "storm chasers" — those out-of-town contractors who descend on regions hit by natural disasters. They won't be here next year if work proves faulty or is left incomplete. The local contractors have reputations on the line — and know they'll likely bump into them at the grocery store, a place of worship or the library.

Step 5: Stay composed and resist high-pressure sales tactics. Be proactive in seeking a contractor and not reactive to sales calls or door-to-door pitches.

Sept 6: Once you select a contractor, get an invoice and pay the contractor directly. The BBB suggests doing so with a credit card, if possible, which offers additional fraud protection over other forms of payment. Don't sign any documents that give the contractor rights to your insurance.

Finally, remember that you are responsible for any insurance deductible. It's the law. You don't need to compound the misery of storm damage by being both a victim and a deadbeat.

LETTERS

Red Wing Bridge name disappoints

I am disappointed but unsurprised to see that the new Red Wing Mississippi crossing will likely be named the Eisenhower Bridge of Valor.

Having worked on the design of bridge as part of the Visual Quality Assessment Committee, our team worked to make sure the bridge design would fit well in its surroundings. Having never gone to war with Wisconsin, I fail to see how naming the bridge to honor our town's thirst for war is not simply duplicating the many other public places in Red Wing already named in honor of the military.

I propose the bridge be more accurately named the He Mni Can Bridge after the original Dakota name for Barn Bluff and the area surrounding it, as the bridge was designed to highlight the beauty of the bluff and river. But, seeing as Red Wing is still in denial of its Native American heritage, I also propose to name the bridge after the LGBTQ members of our military who have served in our country well while also facing discrimination, and call it the Eisenhower Bridge of Gay Valor.

Max Christensen
Red Wing
Max Christensen is a former member of the Visual Quality Assessment Committee of the Red Wing Bridge Project.

Red Wing School Board games?

Jim Pumarlo raises valid points in his exceptionally well-structured explanation of recent School Board diffusion, perhaps obfuscation (RE, June 12).

Is this approach to a most significant neighborhood plan symptomatic of undue authoritarian tendencies, or more simply, techniques of obfuscation that indicate embedded personality issues not conducive to public trust? This issue's most recent events and evaluations require a greatly enhanced explanation of process and rationale and preferences, public and otherwise.

Citizens of Red Wing, demand another round of public explanation of rationale ... with questions accepted. Please also note: In public property sales, the highest bid is not always the best acceptable bid.

That sentiment is, in fact, a key rationale in existing Minnesota statute regarding such sales agreements. The highest bid is not to simply be considered the most worthy bid, and can be ignored in favor of a more suitable bids with respect to objectives, priorities and other valid local issues, regardless of nominal dollar value of bids.

Jim Million
Fridley, Minn.

Let the people decide who represents them

I have read several letters to the editor regarding vacant Commissioner District 1 here in Goodhue County. The letter from our mayor and City Council went way over the top. This very situation happens all too often as judges retire and the governor appoints their replacement. This regularly grants favor come the next election cycle. We the people ought to vote in our judges and representatives.

If anything needs to be replaced, it's those goofy state laws that dictate when, where and why we can hold special elections.

May I add, for anyone from the Red Wing City Council to point their finger at the county commissioners to label them as dysfunctional, is laughable. How clean is their slate?

Have we also forgotten not too long ago when this very question was put on the ballot for Red Wing residents regarding the open mayor's seat? Eighty percent voted to elect rather than appoint. This was for the weak mayoral office with less authority than a county commissioner.

Why didn't the same council of a year ago insist on appointments of their vacant seats? Then too we were left with those goofy state rules leaving us with a confusing path to vote in the new council.

Seems the established government think they know better than the citizens that put them in office.

Ernie Stone
Red Wing



VIEWPOINT: ASK THE CHIEF

Boulevard trees are Public Works' responsibility

Q I have branches hanging from the trees that are in my boulevard that I would like to trim. Am I able to trim these branches or do I need to work with Public Works? Is there a penalty for trimming boulevard trees on your own?

A: Thank you for your question, City of Red Wing City Code, Chapter 7, Streets and Sidewalks, Subdivision 3 states that it is a misdemeanor for anyone to plant, spray, trim or remove trees located on city rights of way without a "work in the right-of-way" permit. Permits can be obtained at the Community Development Office or online at www.red-wing.org.

Chapter 14, Right of Way Management covers work in the right of way/boulevards. Homeowners/property owners wishing to work in the right of way/boulevards shall obtain a "work in the right of way" permit for planting trees, shrubs, gardens

and other landscape amenities in boulevard areas. Removal of boulevard trees will also require a permit.

If you believe that a tree or shrub needs trimming, please contact Public Works at 651-385-3674.

When the city receives a complaint about a tree it will send out a tree inspector from the Public Works Department to inspect the tree and make an assessment. If necessary, the city forester, a certified arborist, will be called out to make a more detailed report.

Regarding trees on private property, Public Works reminds citizens that "the majority of complaints and disputes about trees in a neighboring yard or privately owned property are left for the homeowners to resolve amongst themselves. In the rare instance where the city does condemn a tree, it follows a process spelled out in the ordinance for notice and appeal of the removal decision before any action is taken to prune or remove the tree. Since the city contract for public tree removal does not apply to trees on private property homeowners may prefer to make

their own arrangements for tree work."

References

1. Red Wing City Code, Chapter 14, Right of Way Management, located online at <http://lf.ci.red-wing.mn.us/weblink/o/doc/52259/Page1.aspx>
2. Red Wing City Code, Chapter 7, Streets and Sidewalks, located online at <http://lf.ci.red-wing.mn.us/weblink/o/doc/52268/Page1.aspx>
3. City of Red Wing, Public Works Department, Buildings and Grounds website, located online at www.red-wing.org

"Ask The Chief" allows readers access to useful information about law enforcement issues in Red Wing. This communication tool has been developed to enhance community policing efforts by providing residents and visitors with the opportunity to ask questions about local laws, programs and the department in general.

Submit your question to askthe.policechief@ci.red-wing.mn.us. Generally one answer a week is posted RWPD social media sites and printed in the Red Wing Republican Eagle.

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Reader letters and viewpoints - The Red Wing Republican Eagle welcomes readers' letter and viewpoint submissions. If you wish to submit a letter, please limit it to 350 words or less. At the editor's discretion, the Eagle may consider publishing longer submissions as viewpoints, which generally are limited to 650 words.

Letter and viewpoint submissions must be signed and contain your name, address, email and phone number for verification purposes. Email your submission to: editor@republican-eagle.com. You can send a letter or viewpoint submission to: Red Wing Republican Eagle, PO Box 15, Red Wing, MN 55066.

Reader submissions must be received no later than Noon Monday to be considered for publication in the following Wednesday's edition and 5 p.m. Wednesday for publication in the weekend paper. For details, call 651-388-8235.

Comment - Want to sound off on an important issue, ask a question, or praise someone for a deed that has benefited you or your neighbors? Feel free to email editor@republican-eagle.com. Go to www.republican-eagle.com, click "Opinion," and follow the link to send a letter to the editor.



Ernie Pyle series: The horrible waste of war

Editor’s note: The following is the second installment of a three-part series written by World War II correspondent Ernie Pyle. The Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist describes the action throughout this series immediately following the D-Day invasion June 6, 1944.

By Ernie Pyle
NORMANDY BEACHHEAD, June 16, 1944 — I took a walk along the historic coast of Normandy in the country of France.
It was a lovely day for strolling along the seashore. Men were sleeping on the sand, some of them sleeping forever. Men were floating in the water, but they didn’t know they were in the water, for they were dead.
The water was full of squishy little jellyfish about the size of your hand. Millions of them. In the center each of them had a green design exactly like a four-leaf clover. The good-luck emblem. Sure. Hell yes.
I walked for a mile and a half along the water’s edge of our many-miled invasion beach. You wanted to walk slowly, for the detail on that beach was infinite.
The wreckage was vast and startling. The awful waste and destruction of war, even aside from the loss of human life, has always been one of its outstanding features to those who are in it. Anything and everything is expendable. And we did expend on our beachhead in Normandy during those first few hours.
*
For a mile out from the beach there were scores of tanks and trucks and boats that you could no longer see, for they were at the bottom of the water — swamped by overloading, or hit by shells, or sunk by mines. Most of their crews were lost.
You could see trucks tipped half over and swamped. You

could see partly sunken barges, and the angled-up corners of jeeps, and small landing craft half submerged. And at low tide you could still see those vicious six-pronged iron snares that helped snag and wreck them.
On the beach itself, high and dry, were all kinds of wrecked vehicles. There were tanks that had only just made the beach before being knocked out. There were jeeps that had been burned to a dull gray. There were big derricks on caterpillar treads that didn’t quite make it. There were half-tracks carrying office equipment that had been made into a shambles by a single shell hit, their interiors still holding their useless equipage of smashed typewriters, telephones, office files.
There were LCT’s turned completely upside down, and lying on their backs, and how they got that way I don’t know. There were boats stacked on top of each other, their sides caved in, their suspension doors knocked off.
In this shoreline museum of carnage there were abandoned rolls of barbed wire and smashed bulldozers and big stacks of thrown-away lifebelts and piles of shells still waiting to be moved.
In the water floated empty life rafts and soldiers’ packs and ration boxes, and mysterious oranges.
On the beach lay snarled rolls of telephone wire and big rolls of steel matting and stacks of broken, rusting rifles.
On the beach lay, expended, sufficient men and mechanism for a small war. They were gone forever now. And yet we could afford it.
We could afford it because we were on, we had our toehold, and behind us there were such enormous replacements for this wreckage on the beach that you could hardly conceive of their sum



Ernie Pyle with soldiers in 1944.

total. Men and equipment were flowing from England in such a gigantic stream that it made the waste on the beachhead seem like nothing at all, really nothing at all.
*
A few hundred yards back on the beach is a high bluff. Up there we had a tent hospital, and a barbed-wire enclosure for prisoners of war. From up there you could see far up and down the beach, in a spectacular crow’s-nest view, and far out to sea.
And standing out there on the water beyond all this wreckage was the greatest armada man has ever seen. You simply could not believe the gigantic collection of ships that lay out there waiting to unload.

Looking from the bluff, it lay thick and clear to the far horizon of the sea and beyond, and it spread out to the sides and was miles wide. Its utter enormity would move the hardest man.
As I stood up there I noticed a group of freshly taken German prisoners standing nearby. They had not yet been put in the prison cage. They were just standing there, a couple of doughboys leisurely guarding them with tommy guns.
The prisoners too were looking out to sea — the same bit of sea that for months and years had been so safely empty before their gaze. Now they stood staring almost as if in a trance.

They didn’t say a word to each other. They didn’t need to. The expression on their faces was something forever unforgettable. In it was the final horrified acceptance of their doom.
If only all Germans could have had the rich experience of standing on the bluff and looking out across the water and seeing what their compatriots saw.
Permission to distribute and republish Ernie Pyle’s columns was given by the Scripps Howard Foundation.
This is the second of a three-part series on the columns of Ernie Pyle. Additional columns beyond this series can be found at on the website of Indiana University School of Journalism.

VIEWPOINT

Binding arbitration is dangerous for patients

By Peter Pitts
Center for Medicine in the Public Interest
Washington lawmakers believe they’ve found a bipartisan solution to lowering the cost of prescription drugs. A proposal called “binding arbitration” is being promoted by Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s top advisers, who reportedly believe the Trump administration will be on board.
Binding arbitration — essentially government price controls — would be catastrophic for patients. It would undercut medical innovation and bar American patients from accessing innovative treatments.
Binding arbitration was first floated by leftist health policy experts in 2008. Recently, a handful of Congressional Democrats, and even the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, have voiced support for the scheme.
Binding arbitration

would impact drug pricing negotiations between manufacturers and government-sponsored insurance plans, like Medicare. Currently, these parties work directly to settle price points for prescription medications.
But sometimes the government and drug makers don’t agree on a price tag. And should these two parties reach an impasse, government officials could trigger the arbitration process.
It works like this: The government appoints a neutral, third-party arbitrator to settle the dispute. Drug makers and the government would each make the case for their preferred prices to the arbitrator. And after considering arguments from both sides, the arbitrator would set the drug’s price, which would be legally binding.
But arbitrators are far from the neutral mediators they’re made out to be.
For starters, arbitrators aren’t accountable to

the public. They are unelected officials given exorbitant authority to set drug prices.
Just as problematic, arbitration is really just a front for government price controls. The government has the power to appoint arbitrators without any input from drug companies.
Put differently, instead of capping drug prices directly, the government merely appoints someone else to do their bidding.
Price controls in any form pose a grave risk to patients. Consider that it takes an average \$2.6 billion and 10 to 15 years to create a single new medicine. Investors undertake risky projects knowing they can recoup their upfront costs on the rare chance they successfully bring a new cure to market.
Price controls all but ensure that investors never profit. The government would undercut innovators by lowballing new medicines. So investors

would hemorrhage large sums of cash in every research project. And as the model becomes unsustainable, investors will wisely funnel their money elsewhere.
Less money flowing into pharmaceutical R&D means fewer new medicines for American patients.
That’s terrible news for Americans suffering from chronic diseases. Today, 60% of the United States’ adult population has one chronic condition. Forty percent have two or more. That makes chronic disease the leading cause of death and disability in America.
America can’t afford for the government to stomp out medical innovation. But that’s exactly what would happen with binding arbitration policies. For the sake of patients, let’s hope lawmakers on both sides of the aisle abandon the proposal immediately.
Peter J. Pitts, a former Food and Drug Administration associate commissioner, is president of the Center for Medicine in the Public Interest.

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