

## editor's notes

Chris Rogers, editor, Winona Post

## Winona, in smells

I'm jealous of your lilacs. Every spring, the flowering shrubs set up their little perfume shops in every other yard across town — even more plentiful than garage sales — and I follow my nose across the neighborhood. It's one of the many smells of Winona I love.

Down by the silos on West Third Street, the scent of malt fills the air. Like molasses, it's syrupy and out on the roasted edge of being burnt, mixed with the ferment of corn silage. It's not so different from the fragrance of Malt-O-Meal that would drift across Northfield, Minn., when my sister lived there.

When I lived on the West End, the gummy bear factory on West Fifth Street flooded the neighborhood with the candy-fruit aroma of gummy bears. For me, it's evocative of last-minute impulse purchases in the checkout aisle. The plant now makes pet supplements in gummy form, and I like to imagine it's setting all the neighborhood canines to salivating.

I live on the East End now and sometimes swing past the Watkins building on evening walks. From the front, the chiseled Bedford stone, domed roof, and marble interior of the Watkins headquarters is stately as can be, but I love equally well the factory behind it, with its rabbit's warren of narrow entrances disappearing into brick ramparts. On the sidewalk below, wafts of vanilla pour out, full of warm spice that reminds me of baking cookies with my mom as a child. On another day, cinnamon drifts out onto the street, making my stomach grumble and my feet turn for home.

In June, under the creak of carnival rides and the delighted shrieks of children, Steamboat Days exudes an unctuous aroma —

cheese curds, funnel cakes, and sweaty, blissful festival goers — later mixed with the sulphur of fireworks.

There are, of course, unpleasant smells in Winona. Some factories are less sweet-scented neighbors, and the sputtering black exhaust of old diesel trucks can make me hold my breath while crossing Second Street on foot. The sewer lift station by Bud King Ice Arena smells like — well, you know.

The smell of the river — that backwaters funk that rises from the Mississippi — is not a bad smell, but not an entirely pleasant one either. It's pungent, like mud and muck and algae and the burps of a million frogs. The scent has an undeniable methane edge to it, but it's also strangely comforting and familiar. It's the smell of hot days on the water, fishing, and swimming at my favorite beach. It peaks with summer, when there is a profusion of plants, fish, ducks, and every organism growing, dying, and digesting each other. It's the smell of life, and it's a little unsettling, beyond our control and a little stronger than we might like.

My favorite smell of all is fast approaching. It can't be bottled or infused in candle wax. It's the smell of fall, that change in air that signals the end of summer's wild growth and the coming cold. "Parting is such sweet sorrow," and summer's end is exquisite.



## letters

## Assigning blame for Afghanistan

From: PJ Shaughnessy, former Navy corpsman

If you want to blame someone at least blame the right people — the Afghan government, the army, the police force — for not standing up for their own country. Blame the Taliban for opening the prisons and freeing the criminals and ISIS K prisoners. Blame the bomber who killed himself and all the Afghans and the Marines and Navy corpsman. At least this president finally decided enough is enough and that he will not waste more lives and money on a useless conflict. We didn't learn our lesson in Vietnam. What was the saying? Those that don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it! I served in Vietnam as a Navy corpsman. As in all conflicts there are good and bad, dedicated and those that don't care. It was time to end it. The president did the right thing!

## Please don't use singular 'they'

From: Wes Woodward  
Minnesota City

Dear Winona Post, I need to ask this in the nicest way I can. Please don't play the gender game and so butcher the English language for the sake of political correctness. It only promotes confusion and bad grammar, lowers the bar on academic standards, and in the end does not enhance the reader's experience nor advance a discerning public.

Reading a recent report on an alleged crime, your article made it clear there were two individuals involved, yet you kept referring to the alleged victim as "they" instead of a proper personal pronoun (thus giving English teachers fits, I'm sure). You did not identify the victim by name, since he or she was a minor, which is understandable and reasonable given the nature of the case, but attempting to hide the gender only brings confusion to the facts as stated. I had to read it a couple of times to clarify that there were not multiple victims involved and whether the alleged perpetrator and victim both fell down in the report. If your readers have to reread the report to figure out the details, it is not well written. That's a basic writing rule. (If it is confusing for a native English speaker such as myself, think how much more confusing it can get for someone reading English as a second language!)

In light of the recent political correctness swirling around the issues of gender dysphoria, I assume this is an effort to mask the gender in your reporting. If so, it is an example of trying to accommodate and promote the latest social fad at the expense of truth and accuracy. That is not good journalism (something that is increasingly in short supply these days). Rather than try to filter what we are given, stick to the rules of grammar and stop aiding and abetting PC social engineers' efforts at manipulating the public.

## Why we sometimes use the singular 'they'

From: Chris Rogers, Winona Post editor

First of all, I want to thank Wes for writing (see above letter). Reader feedback helps us improve. In this situation, our choice to use the singular "they" has nothing to do with nonbinary gender identities. Though, for the record, transgender people matter, and if someone prefers the pronoun "they," of course we'll use it.

We used the singular "they" in this instance because we did not know the gender of the victim and because I believe that "he or she" is two words too long. The singular "they" is accepted by the industry-standard-setting Associated Press Stylebook, it reflects spoken English, and it's shorter and less clunky than "he or she." Many will disagree. I respect their opinions, and acknowledge that "they," singular, has a downside.

The singular "they" needs to be used with caution and not in scenarios where there are multiple possible subjects, where it can be confused for a plural pronoun. In the situation Wes describes, it obviously was confusing, and we should have reread the article.

## Putting Winona on the (COVID hot spot) map

From: Chuck Ripley  
Winona

I'm a pretty open guy, and I try to accept that people have different interests that I don't understand.

But I have a hard time wrapping my brain around those members of the Winona City Council who really like COVID-19.

I just find that weird. Maybe they just want to see how high the COVID numbers can go. I mean, we already have more cases than we did last year at this time, and we haven't even seen the full impact from the local colleges, Cotter, and WAPS yet.

I know it was cool when Winona reached the top 10 hot spots in the nation last year, but there's got to be a better way to put Wi-

nona on the map. Or maybe the City Council members see how bad things are in the South, and they want to see if we can do that here? We've already done a good job in Minnesota of beating out Mississippi and Alabama in terms of race disparities, so maybe they're a little jealous of Florida, Texas, and Louisiana on the COVID front, too. Maybe they find people who yell and are rude very persuasive? Some people like loud arguments. Maybe they're sick of doing their jobs, since every argument they offered against the mask mandate could be put forward about every other area that they have jurisdiction over?

Or it's probably that they experience great pleasure when people, like my mother-in-law in Tennessee, have to go to the emergency room for kidney trouble and have to wait 10 hours to see a doctor because of COVID patients. Or when my sister or niece who are nurses come home exhausted, not knowing what to do. I mean, I don't like that kind of stuff myself, but I care for

people like them more than the City Council evidently does. Of course, they probably just want the virus to keep on mutating until vaccines no longer work. After all, council member Steve Young says the virus will be with us forever so we might as well all get used to it. Doesn't anyone else find that a strange thing to make peace with in a little over a year and a half? I mean, we've eradicated a ton of diseases that were around a heck of a lot longer than 17 months. But we're just let COVID win? Huh. Definitely not the decision I'd make. We have safe vaccines for COVID that work. We know if enough people got vaccinated, we could create herd immunity. We know that masks and social distancing slow down the spread among the unvaccinated and the vaccinated people who have breakthrough cases. So we can kill COVID and get back to normal, if we want. But I guess some people don't want to.

## CBAMs will slam us

From: Robert Tereba  
Winona

Ok, I know what you're thinking. What are CBAMs?

CBAM is the acronym for carbon border adjustment mechanism. CBAMs are like tariffs that focus on the carbon intensity of imported goods. Nations that price carbon, in order to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, assess a CBAM on goods from nations that don't. They do this to protect their businesses and workers from unfair competition. CBAMs hurt foreign produc-

ers and aid domestic ones.

Canada and the nations of the European Union (EU) price carbon and they will soon impose CBAMs on imports from nations that don't, a group that includes the United States. Our businesses and workers will be subjected to this "CBAM slam."

This will hurt our Minnesota economy. According to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, in 2020 24 percent of Minnesota exports to foreign markets were to Canada. Another 20 percent were to the EU.

If we do nothing, our businesses and workers will experience the CBAM slam. We can avoid it by simply pricing carbon.

You can help us avoid the CBAM slam. Please contact Senators Klobuchar and Smith and urge them to include a price on carbon in the \$3.5-trillion reconciliation bill, the budget framework for which was recently passed in the Senate via party line vote.

In the House, please contact Representative Jim Hagedorn and urge him to support a price on carbon in the reconciliation bill or support other House bills that include a price on carbon like HR 2307 The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act.

Pricing carbon assures U.S. competitiveness in global markets, otherwise the CBAMs will slam us.

## Leader

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"She really brings a steady and positive leadership to the college," Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students Josiah Litant said. He added, "I appreciate her openness to people. She's inquisitive, she's thoughtful, she's engaging and she's engaged with the work we're doing."

To eventually reach the leading role at MSC Southeast, Danielson transferred to a state university from her community college, then completed seven years of night school to earn her bachelor's and master's degrees.

Then, Danielson applied those degrees while working in fields outside of education, and later, in education. Danielson served for 25 years at Mankato State University and South Central College before arriving at MSC Southeast.

Though Danielson had decades of experience, her interest in serving as a community college president arose a few years ago when she learned about an online accelerated doctorate program in community college leadership. She completed the program in 2019.

A job opportunity that was a good fit for Danielson professionally and personally came along when MSC Southeast's top position became open. Her predecessor, Larry Lundblad, has been her professional mentor as part of a training program,

so she knew about MSC Southeast. She has long loved the area, as well, since she worked with many communities along the river during her time with the state tourism office.

Now two months into the presidency, Danielson is enjoying the people she works with at MSC Southeast. "These individuals are just so dedicated," she said. "They're so entrepreneurial." She continued, "And then I really respect how they say, 'We know our students by name.' And really, we do know our students by name." Staff members are a strength of the college, she said. "They're agile, able, they want to keep on track with the pace of change, and that's a wonderful mindset."

Partnerships with K-12 schools and local industries are also a strength of MSC Southeast's, Danielson said.

Finances are a challenge MSC Southeast faces, Danielson said. Though enrollment is flat, for which Danielson is grateful in light of the pandemic, she would like to analyze the college's funding streams and determine where to improve.

Danielson would like to continue the college's efforts to support student success, such as the establishment of an emergency fund. That fund could help a student pay to fix a flat tire, for example, that otherwise would have resulted in them having to leave the college. MSC Southeast recently announced it would dedicate \$400,000 in federal COVID relief funds to paying off student debt. "We just really thought that that debt was a huge barrier to students

being able to reach their goals," Danielson said.

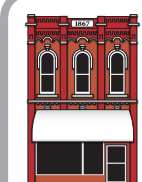
Danielson would like to further MSC Southeast's partnerships with K-12 schools and local industries, as well. One initiative is guided learning pathways that assist students, such as high school students taking classes for college credit, with reaching their academic goals as quickly as possible.

Continuing diversity, equity and inclusion work is also important, Danielson said. The college recently hired a diversity, equity and inclusion director. "That's a personal passion of mine ... I just want to continue that work for the benefit of everyone who might be a new American or might be underrepresented here in our community so they know education is a place for them to be able to meet their dreams," she said.

Retaining students, serving working learners and making the college's data more accessible to help with decision making are some of Danielson's other goals.

"I'm just feeling like the faculty and staff ... they've adopted that growth mindset, and hopefully we can have a greater impact on the community and greater impact on all our students' lives," she said.

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