

Letters to the Editor

McArthur claims erroneous

I regret very much having to write this letter, but the July 24 article in the Geauga Times Courier titled, "'No winner' in legal case, McArthur says," and July 23 in the Chagrin Valley Times, titled, "Grendell's legal battle with McArthur to cost taxpayers," compels me to write. To say that I am profoundly disappointed vastly understates my feelings.

I, therefore, am sending this letter to set forth certain matters appearing in the article that are factually untrue. I do so with the hope and belief that you will correct the erroneous public record caused to be made by Nancy McArthur.

As you are aware, I had the honor and privilege of serving as a justice of the Supreme Court of Ohio from 1985 to 2002. As a retired justice of the court, I still consider myself to be bound by the Code of Judicial Conduct where applicable. Thus the code provides: "Although it is not a duty of judicial office ... judges are encouraged to participate in activities that promote public understanding of and confidence in the judicial system."

In accordance with this admonition, when I was contacted by several persons and made aware of the very public dispute involving Judge Timothy J. Grendell and Nancy McArthur, and I was requested to see if I could assist the parties in resolving the dispute, I reluctantly agreed.

Both parties sought and agreed to mediation. Pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code, the parties agreed that the "matter shall be confidential and all things said and not said or done or not done at the mediation shall be absolutely confidential to the extent permitted by the law."

Up until the time of the publishing of the newspaper article, there had been, to my knowledge, no discussion in the public that mediation had taken place and, certainly, no mention of me as a mediator. I was delighted that all persons involved were keeping their commit-

ments, given the contentiousness of the matter.

Notwithstanding that the agreement has been breached, at the least, by Ms. McArthur, I am still bound by the agreement not to disclose the proceedings conducted during mediation. I do, however, have an obligation to the parties, and now to the public, to be sure that any part of the mediation that is disclosed by one or more parties presents an accurate picture.

Operating within the confines of the revised code and the confidentiality agreement, I am constrained as to what I can say. However, I believe I am permitted to assure "county taxpayers" that Ms. McArthur's statement that the taxpayers "may also be responsible for the costs of a special mediator, retired Ohio Supreme Court Justice Andrew Douglas, who was brought in last week to conduct a 7.5-hour session on the matter in Geauga County Common Pleas Court," is not accurate or truthful.

Ms. McArthur knows, or should know, given the office she now seeks, that such costs should not be paid by the county but rather are generally shared equally by the parties. However, even more striking is that she knows I have not submitted, nor do I intend to submit, a fee bill and, given the statement of her attorney Nancy C. Schuster that I was a volunteer -- a statement I agree with -- she knows that I did not intend to charge a fee for the services that were rendered. In fact, I had overnight lodging expenses, mileage and other expenses, all of which, without complaint then or now, my firm, as a public service, has absorbed.

The newspaper should clear up this error forthwith. In addition, without revealing any of the mediation proceedings, the public should know that there were other emails written by Ms. McArthur, and, in the interest of good journalism, the paper maybe should take a look at those.

Finally, there was no challenge to Judge

Grendell's attorney, and, because I cannot elaborate further, suffice to say that the account presented to the newspaper was done so in false light.

This has been a difficult matter for the community, the parties and me. I believe it now to be at rest where it should reside in peace.

*Andy Douglas
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Farm program benefits many

I read the July 30 article that included an interview with Auburn Trustee Patrick J. Cavanagh. I, like Mr. Cavanagh, participate in Ohio's current agricultural use value program.

I would like to point out an error in the report. To participate, a farm of less than 10 acres must show \$2,500 of gross income from the farm. Farms over 10 acres have no such reporting requirement. The majority of farms in CAUV are less than 10 acres.

CAUV is Ohio's most effective tool for preserving farmland. CAUV was created by the Ohio Legislature to stop the loss of farmland to development. For property-tax purposes, farmland devoted exclusively to commercial agriculture may be valued according to its current use rather than at its "highest and best" potential use. Green-space preservation in the townships has been a valuable side effect of the program. Without CAUV, many small farms would not be financially viable.

Each year the Ohio Department of Taxation sets current agricultural use values for each of Ohio's soil types.

In general, I only hear the large farms complaining about the changes in tax rates. I get very tired watching my fellow farmers with their hands out, always asking for more. All taxes increase over time. Farms enrolled in CAUV are no exception. Suck it up! Pay your fair share of taxes like everyone else.

*Thomas Jones
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'Big Lie' is his Trump card

Italian political theorist Niccolo Machiavelli's (1469-1527) "The Prince," which relates to the political doctrine that craft-venal skulduggery and deceit are justified in pursuing and maintaining political power, represents the narcissistic megalomaniacal behavior of Donald Trump, "You're Fired."

Examples include: Mr. Trump to his architect: "Give them the old Trump (BS). Tell them it's going to be a million square feet, 68 stories." "The point is that you can't be too greedy" ("The Art of the Deal"). "He lost the popular vote by a lot and won the election. We should have a revolution in this country" (Twitter rampage after Barack Obama's re-election. Mr. Obama won the popular vote by over 4 million).

In the world of BSers, Mr. Trump stands above all like a colossus. He is a big believer in the "Big Lie" theory. One of his lawyers told Vanity Fair in 1990: "If you say something again and again, people will believe you." Hitler said basically the same. Sling it out there. See if it will float.

What is BS? Audacity, 40 percent; lies, 30 percent; hyperbole, 20 percent; and gastric swamp gas wind, 10 percent.

Harry Frankfurt's book, "On (BS)," describes Mr. Trump and others in detail. Aaron James' book, "On (A-holes), a Theory," is very insightful in demagoguery.

What would Machiavelli do? He wouldn't be afraid to sling the BS. Past behavior is a good prediction of present and future behavior.

The current quagmire-imbroglio with State Super (Stupor) Intendent of Schools Richard Ross, a sycophant-milquetoast-servile minion of Gov. John Kasich, should be receiving a call from Donald Trump (quack-quack) saying, "You're fired!" However, Mr. Ross should not be that concerned, because he can call or read Regina Brett's book, "God is Always Hiring." Better yet, read, "Lying," by Sam Harris.

*David A. Hancock
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