

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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## History correction for movie review

### To the Editor:

Jake Schexnaydre's movie review of "Oppenheimer" has this physicist creating the "hydrogen bomb." The "hydrogen bomb" (other terms are thermonuclear device, or H-bomb) was not invented and tested until 1953. J. Robert Oppenheimer led the effort during World War II to create the "atomic bomb," (another term is atom bomb) tested for the first time in 1945. The two devices are different as most high school physics class students learn. In simple terms the atomic bomb results from the splitting of atoms of either uranium or plutonium. The hydrogen bomb results from the fusing of two atoms of hydrogen to form helium, and in practical use can be more powerful than atomic, or fission, bombs. During warfare the uranium bomb nicknamed "Little Boy" was dropped over Hiroshima, Japan on Aug. 6, 1945, and the plutonium bomb nicknamed "Fat Man" was dropped on Nagasaki, Japan on Aug. 9, 1945.

Henry Schwartz  
Minocqua

## Reader has concern about outside legal counsel

### To the Editor:

I am concerned about the engagement of Larry Konopacki by the Oneida County board. My concerns stem from Mr. Konopacki's work in the past that supported advancement of mining in Northern Wisconsin, including the Lynne Deposit in western Oneida County. Mr. Konopacki's firm, Stafford Rosenbaum, LLP of Madison, was widely known to work for entities that wanted to promote metallic mining, including the Wisconsin Towns Association. In fact, I attended the August 10, 2018 Wisconsin Towns Law Conference in Madison, where Mr. Konopacki spoke about regulatory options and support available to Wisconsin Towns from the Wisconsin Towns Association as they sought to engage future mining opportunities. It was also clear that Stafford Rosenbaum was a resource available to Wisconsin Towns seeking guidance.

In and of itself, this doesn't amount to measurable concern, until we look at some history within our county.

1. There has been interest in metallic mining in the Oneida County township of Lynne since sampling of minerals was done there in the 1990s. Although this site is considered a sulfide deposit, with significant percentages of sulfuric acid ingredients among the desired minerals, and its location is adjacent to the Willow Flowage, environmental

protection of this outstanding resource water area is an absolute necessity.

2. Various Oneida County boards have reconsidered mining multiple times over the past 30 plus years, when yet another company dangles the promise of financial jackpots in front of them.

3. Mining exploration in southeastern Oneida County has kept promising interests hopeful of future success.

4. The November 6, 2018 Oneida County referendum showed support of 62 percent of the voters to *not pursue metallic mining* in the entire county.

5. From the 2017 efforts initiated by then State Senator Tom Tiffany to do away with previous Wisconsin mining protections, Larry Konopacki has been involved with pro-mining positions, the earliest of which I am familiar with was the series of kick-off meetings titled "Mining 101," with one of those meetings held in Minocqua in January, 2018.

So now the Oneida County board wants to hire outside legal counsel, Larry Konopacki, to help fight the Wisconsin DNR regarding concerns perceived to be inequitable enforcement of zoning rules among various counties. Why in the world would the Oneida County board engage an attorney who has a record of promoting positions totally opposed by the majority of the county's voters/constituents? At the very least, this is a conflict of interest, a comical example maybe of "artificial intelligence!" I am guessing there might still be some very pro-mining board members that remain on the current Oneida County board that personally appreciate Mr. Konopacki's legacy of mining support. Are there additional possibilities lurking for even more work for Mr. Konopacki when the next mining company knocks on the county board's door, or is this just my "conspiracy theory" running wild? If this is the case, I believe there's plenty of opportunity for concern about this expanding relationship.

I hope this provides some valuable transparency.

Jeff Brown  
Tripoli

## Spurious praise

### To the Editor:

Mr. Walker and Mr. Moore, thank you for your editorial "Finally, the gig is up on vaccines" in the July 28 edition of *The Lakeland Times*. You address an important issue that is too often ignored by mainstream media outlets. Biased publications like *The New York Times* rely too heavily on data from the American Medical Association, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *The Lancet*, and Harvard University's School of Public Health.



It is my sincere hope that you continue your investigative reporting to address other dangers from big business and big government. What about the thousands of Americans who suffer from seatbelt-related injuries each year? How about the US Surgeon General's dubious claim that cigarettes may cause adverse health effects? I know a lot of people who never use seatbelts and have smoked their entire lives and they're just fine.

I hope all of your readers appreciate your hard work and keen insight. And if people finally begin to realize the dangers of connecting their homes to the electric power grid, they can use your paper to start their wood-burning stoves.

Keep up the good work!

Tim Curren  
Lac du Flambeau

## Thanks to health and rehab center

### To the Editor:

There is a fabulous treasure right here in Minocqua. I'm not referring to a gas station with incredible low and affordable prices, or a bank that is giving fantastic higher interest rates on your savings, or a grocery store that is rewarding you by dropping the high prices of their groceries. No, I'm referring to Minocqua Health and Rehab Center.

My wife fell getting off our boat onto the pier, breaking her left leg and her left shoulder, which had to be replaced. After surgery and her hospital stay, we moved her to the rehab center, where she was treated like a queen. The caregivers were very friendly, attentive, and accommodating to my wife's needs. The kitchen staff was so kind to provide the meals which she requested, and the physical and occupational therapists, Al and Amy were outstanding.

We would like to thank the Minoc-

qua Health and Rehab administration, the nurses, the caregivers, the therapists, the kitchen staff, and Brian, who fixed the light over my wife's bed more than once! We appreciate you all!

Vicki and Dick Jensen  
Minocqua

## Lakeland gardeners thank sponsors and community for success of GardenFest

### To the Editor:

The Lakeland Gardeners thank all who helped with our Inaugural "Seasons of Life GardenFest" held on July 22, at the Aspirus Seasons of Life Hospice Gardens and GardenFest Garden Tours at the homes of Jean and Dale Davidson & Candy and Jim Nicholson.

We thank the Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Church for the use of their church, and our partners Aspirus Health and Howard Young Foundation.

The generous support of the event business sponsors was outstanding. We also appreciate those 50 businesses and individuals who contributed to our raffles from the Northwoods community — what a difference it makes for the overall profit of the event. People were overwhelmed at the selection of donations and had a hard time choosing between them. Words cannot convey our appreciation for their donations.

We tip our hats to our 45 volunteers, including naturalist Beckie Gaskill, Lakeland Community Gardens, Lakeland Gardeners, Trishaw pilots, Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Church, and friends from the community.

Lastly, we would like to thank everyone who attended and made our Inaugural GardenFest a success.

Kathy Rosa Kavemeier  
Lakeland Gardeners, president

# OPINIONS

## Boss man: America has a problem, and the problem is us

The only thing worse than a conspiracy to obstruct justice is a conspiracy to obstruct justice committed by criminals who aren't very good at it. If the allegations in the superseding indictment handed down by a federal jury against former President Donald Trump last week are accurate, he



Jeff Robbins  
COLUMNIST

was at the center of a conspiracy to obstruct justice comprised of The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight.

After the FBI observed surveillance cameras located at Mar-a-Lago near where Trump was illegally retaining the classified documents he had illegally pilfered, the Justice De-

partment notified Team Trump that it was subpoenaing the surveillance footage from those cameras. Trump's lawyers informed Trump in New Jersey, who promptly summoned loyal aide and co-defendant Walt Nauta for a meeting. Nauta immediately made arrangements to fly to Mar-a-Lago, texting a colleague that he was returning there on a "family emergency," using a "shushing" emoji.

No joke.

Trump's property manager at Mar-a-Lago, one newly indicted Carlos De Oliveira, told another Trump employee that Nauta was changing his plans and coming to Mar-a-Lago, but that he should not tell anyone because Nauta wanted it kept secret.

When Nauta arrived, he and De Oliveira made a cloak-and-dagger trip to the surveillance booth. De Oliveira asked how long the server retained

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## THE LAKELAND TIMES • OUR VIEW

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**GREGG WALKER, Publisher | RICHARD MOORE, Columnist**

# The constitution and the republic on life support

The United States of America was at one time the greatest nation on earth, and not just that, it was the greatest nation the world had ever seen.

It was a nation, by and large, of a people free enough to allow their imaginations and talents to soar to the greatest heights — heights that took us literally to the moon — and that produced not just the greatest wealth but the greatest prosperity for the masses that the world has ever seen.

No nation is without its flaws, and ours was no different. To cite just one example, slavery was a feature of its earliest decades and not just in the South but in the North, too: Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation conveniently freed only slaves in the "rebellious states" but did not free some 500,000 slaves outside the confederacy.

So not flawless but still by comparison a nation that inspired millions and millions of immigrants from around the world to seek to come to America to live the American dream. America became a great melting pot, and it was a land where the poor could become rich — or at least middle class comfortable — and the meek could become powerful. Children could be born in log cabins and become president of the United States.

The bedrock of this greatness was, of course, freedom, both political freedom and economic freedom. The American revolution was essentially a capitalist revolution that cast off the oppression of monarchy and heralded a new age of self-government and critical, independent thinking.

At the heart of this vision of society was an undying belief that collective power was the enemy of freedom, and thus the enemy of prosperity. Centralization has always been a feature of totalitarian societies and so our Founders gave us a guard against the concentration of power in the hands of the few: the U.S. Constitution.

It is such a brilliant document that it's hard to imagine humans wrote it. It constricted the powers of the federal government and enshrined a Bill of Rights to protect individual liberty and to guard against a tyranny of the majority. To do so, the Founders carefully crafted within the constitution a separation of powers, with many features limiting what any branch of government may do.

Today, for example, we hear criticism about the Supreme Court having too much power to declare what is constitutional or not — that is their function — but critics forget conveniently that Congress also has the power to deny the Supreme

Court jurisdiction over any particular issue. Here's how former congressman Ron Paul put it:

"The congressional power to strip federal courts of jurisdiction is plainly granted in Article III, and can restore the people's ability to decide social questions themselves without having to go through the laborious process of amending the constitution," he wrote.

As Paul often noted, Congress never uses this power, part of its disgraceful ceding of authority to the other branches of government over time. Had it wanted to, Congress could have stripped the high court of its jurisdiction over abortion long before *Dobbs* and sent the matter back to the states, as *Dobbs* did.

In other words, there was a democratic and constitutional remedy to *Roe v Wade* long before the court acted, and there is a constitutional safeguard against the courts having too much power, if Congress would only use it.

So the constitution is a brilliant formulation, and a landmark in defining one fundamental principle that can never be abridged: A government cannot be allowed to enslave its people. The principles of individual liberty, due process, freedom of speech, and shared power are timeless.

Over the past century or so, radicals who do not believe in democracy have tried — with many successes — to undermine these principles. The last century gave us the notion of a living constitution, one that evolves and changes over time without being formally amended.

Part of that evolution involved new interpretations, the insertion into the constitution of language that does not actually exist. The court, for example, manufactured the right to abortion out of thin air, as well as that of affirmative action.

Buying into the idea of a living constitution took the nation down the slippery slope of constitutional destruction. For once the country bought into the progressive notion that the constitution can evolve, nothing is fundamental, bedrock, or timeless.

Nonetheless, until about a decade or so ago, the attack on freedom stayed quartered inside the boundaries of the constitution. It's not that these fundamental liberties don't matter, the radicals argued. They do, the progressives asserted, but they mean this and that and the other, and almost all of the 'this, that, and the other' was not actually in the constitution.

And then the pandemic happened, and a sea change occurred. Suddenly, the government employed an arsenal of power and dictat against

its own people, heretofore unheard of in the U.S. Citizens were commanded to stay at home; commanded not to worship. The population was divided into essential workers and non-essential workers, the haves and have-nots. The government decreed that people must inject experimental drugs into their bodies, or else, robbing them of choice and control over their own bodies, not to mention a way to earn a living; the servant class was compelled to wear face masks while they served the unmasked elites at lavish parties; and no one — no one — was allowed to question the wisdom of any of the government's policies.

And thus the government undertook an unprecedented censorship campaign, threatening and cajoling social media companies to silence its critics.

It worked, too, as Google and Apple and Twitter and Facebook all fell into line, sometimes enthusiastically and sometimes not. Still, for a long time, the progressives pretended to color within the constitutional lines.

Never mind Democratic lawmakers publicly threatening social media companies if they did not censor more. Never mind the Biden administration's pathetic attempt to create a ministry of truth. Never mind the anguished cry of credentialed but nonconforming scientists who suddenly were without public platforms. Never mind that many if not most of their exhortations would prove to be true, after all.

Never mind all that, the progressives yelled, because none of the censorship is real. It's a right-wing conspiracy theory that the government is censoring people.

A conspiracy theory until it wasn't, that is. Whistleblowers came forward. States and civil liberties groups sued the administration, and finally the truth came out: The Biden administration's censorship scheme was deeper and wider than anyone had imagined.

And then suddenly the progressives changed their tune: Yeah, it was censorship, but it was for everyone's own good. The First Amendment isn't absolute after all, they said. Free speech can be squashed when it's in the public's best interests to do so. Here's how the New York Times put it after Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s recent testimony before Congress:

"Despite the theater, the hearing raised thorny questions about free speech in a democratic society: Is misinformation protected by the First Amendment? When is it appropriate for the federal government to seek to tamp down the spread of falsehoods?"

In decades past, the New York Times would never have asked such questions. The answers are obvious. Of course misinformation is protected speech, and it is never appropriate for the federal government to seek to tamp down the spread of falsehoods.

Because, as they teach in grade school, allowing the government to police misinformation and to "tamp down" that misinformation requires having someone in charge of declaring what constitutes misinformation and falsehoods in the first place.

It requires a ministry of truth, in so many words. It requires totalitarianism. And, as it turns out, those ministers of truth are often liars.

And so now we have moved from creative and often delusional interpretations of the constitution to outright declarations that fundamental principles such as free speech and due process are not absolute after all but in fact dangerous.

Free speech is dangerous, the progressives tell us, and some lawmakers have openly called for the constitution to be scrapped or, as Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said last week, Biden should just ignore Supreme Court rulings he does not like.

This is new terrain and it may be impossible for the nation to move forward as one political entity for much longer. In decades past, everyone pledged allegiance to the national constitution. Though political battles raged and arguments happened about what rights were and were not covered in that document, no one challenged the fundamental underlying principles.

Now they do.

These days, it appears that one major political party no longer believes in the U.S. Constitution, no longer believes in its guarantees of liberty, or in its mechanisms to prevent a tyranny of the majority, or in its deliberately difficult amendment process.

Well, when half of the nation dispenses with such fundamental principles and its founding document, and the other half embraces them, a point of no return has been reached. We are perilously close; our constitution and our republic are on life support.

To unshackle themselves from freedom and democracy is the progressives' right, of course, but it is also the right of the other half to move on, to say goodbye, and to found a freer and stronger democracy that resurrects, sustains, and protects the majesty of imagination, freedom, and liberty that was once embraced by a nation called the United States of America.

We pray such a course is not needed, but time is growing short.

## Robbins

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wanted it done.

It is of course possible that when De Oliveira insisted that "the boss" wanted the server deleted, he was referring to Bruce Springsteen, but since Springsteen has not played a major role in Trump's various Espionage Act violations, it is likelier

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from the White House mess kept as a memento, there wouldn't be any need to delete surveillance footage of the documents. Jurors will not need to be Sherlock Holmes to get this.

Put another way, "shushing" emojis and "The boss wants the server deleted" are

not where you want to be as a criminal defendant charged with conspiracy to obstruct justice.

Still, Trump's base remains enthralled by, and Republican leaders remain terrified of, "the boss," and therein lies

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