

# TALK AROUND TOWN

## Vote with knowledge, not fear

I don't think I've walked back from the mailbox in more than two months without coming back with a handful of ads telling me what a calamity it would be if one or the other candidate ends up on our Supreme Court.



PETER J. WASSON

I wonder how many millions of dollars have been spent on spreading lies and misinformation — much of it with not-so-subtle racist undertones. And it hasn't ended at my mailbox. My phone every day has bing-ed constantly with incoming text messages. As I was writing this, in fact, the NRA texted me with a pretty predictable and dire warning about the future if the liberal-leaning candidate wins a seat on the court.

Depending upon who is elected, we all will have to immediately surrender our guns and criminals will wander the streets at will, or women will be forced to give up their jobs and return to house-wifing and baby-birthing.

The same goes for the proposed constitutional amendment on bail. Again, criminals roaming the streets eager to kill us all (especially middle-class white people) or a return to the idyllic 1950s, when no one had a care in the world.

I won't tell anyone how to vote on

anything. That's your very personal, very fundamental right.

What I will say is this: Don't give in to fear.

All of the political ads appeal to fear. Fear of you losing something, in particular — something you already have or something you want.

And it's all BS.

Your vote is too valuable to squander. If it weren't, no one would be spending millions trying to buy it.

And this election is extraordinarily consequential. The balance of the court is at stake, and with it, a lot of issues of deep importance to Wisconsin.

As always, my advice is to ignore the ads and seek out balanced, factual information. We've tried to explain the proposed amendment here, in our pages, and to tell you about the candidates for Supreme Court, their histories and positions. But we should not be your only source of information. Seek more.

And most of all, ask yourself what it is that interest groups are trying to make you fear. Fear is one of our most basic and emotional reactions — to threats, real or imagined, to change, to the unexpected and different. That's why ads try to appeal to your fears.

Don't let them play you like that.

Peter J. Wasson is managing editor of the Ashland Daily Press.



### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### Consider students when voting

EDITOR: Thank you to the League of Women Voters for organizing the March 7 forum and thank you to the four school board candidates for participating.

I continue to care about the education of our children. Public education is extremely important for providing equal opportunities. One of the candidates, Scott Burchill, mentioned having a firm belief in the importance of public education. This candidate also mentioned understanding that teachers know their students best, understanding their students' needs the most. As a teacher myself, I definitely appreciate this knowledge.

I've seen first-hand trauma's effect on our students. Through her work for the county, candidate Kelly Maday knows the needs of families and children in our district. Also, she has volunteered as her children are in our schools — next year, in three of the district's four schools. Kelly has shown much understanding and support for teachers over the years and participated in community listening sessions to gain a better understanding of the needs in our district and to share concerns. Kelly has served on the district's strategic planning committee. Also, she stated that she'd be an active advocate at the state legislative level.

Please take time to think about our schools and whom you feel will serve our students best.

While all the candidates are caring of the well-being of students, being a board member involves working as a team, open to discussion of issues that concern our communities. In attempting to address community members' concerns as a board member, I sometimes discovered that independent decisions had been made and carried out by one or two board members. This prevented board discussion from occurring, which then prevented the board as whole from governing. Hopefully the new board as elected in April will have good governance.

Please remember to vote on April 4!

Sally Mika, Marengo

### What do you think?

Email Letters to the Editor to [pwasson@ashlanddailypress.net](mailto:pwasson@ashlanddailypress.net)

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### NEWS STAFF

**Peter J. Wasson, Managing Editor**  
[pwasson@ashlanddailypress.net](mailto:pwasson@ashlanddailypress.net)  
715-718-6241  
**Tom Stankard, reporter**  
[tstankard@ashlanddailypress.net](mailto:tstankard@ashlanddailypress.net)  
Office: 715-718-6480  
Cell: 248-930-8687

### ADVERTISING STAFF

**Bets North, display**  
[bnorth@ashlanddailypress.net](mailto:bnorth@ashlanddailypress.net)  
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# TALK AROUND TOWN

## GOP could learn from ancient Greece

EDITOR: Recently I read a history book about ancient Greece. One story has stayed in my mind. In 300 B.C., the Spartans from the city-state of Sparta made a rule that only two groups of people could have their names written on what today we would call a wall of heroes. The first group was those who had died in battle. This is not surprising because the Spartans were a warring people who celebrated their heroes. It was the second group who caught my eye. They were the women who died in childbirth. In this time before modern doctors or medicines, deaths during childbirth were very common. It was courageous for a woman to become pregnant and if she died, she was worthy of a place on the wall of heroes.

In may be precocious on my part, but now as Republicans in our state Legislature are limiting a woman's ability to see a doctor who might end a pregnancy because of a threat to her life, they might prefer to be like the Spartans and build a wall of heroes for women who have died in childbirth. If course, this is a silly thought. But is it any more so than what they are doing now?

**Carl Doersch,**  
Ashland

## Protasewicz will protect rights

EDITOR: Well, we're voting again for a justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Election day is April 4. For Ashland, all voters go to the Bretting Center.

Like all of the elections for the Supreme Court, this one is crucial. On the one hand we have a candidate, Janet Protasewicz, who will support freedom of choice for women as opposed to government control of women's bodies which would no doubt threaten the lives of many Wisconsin women. Also, she will support the idea of fair districting instead of the gerrymandering that we have now which results in an overwhelming Republican majority in the Legislature despite the fact that, overall, there are more statewide votes for Democrats in the Legislature.

In addition, Protasewicz supports an open process for voting instead of restricting the vote with a barrage of laws intended to limit the vote as much as possible. We need a voting system that is considerably more democratic (small d) than what we have had since about 2010. Please vote, and vote for Janet

Protasewicz.

**Dave Allen,**  
Ashland

## Send 'glampers' elsewhere

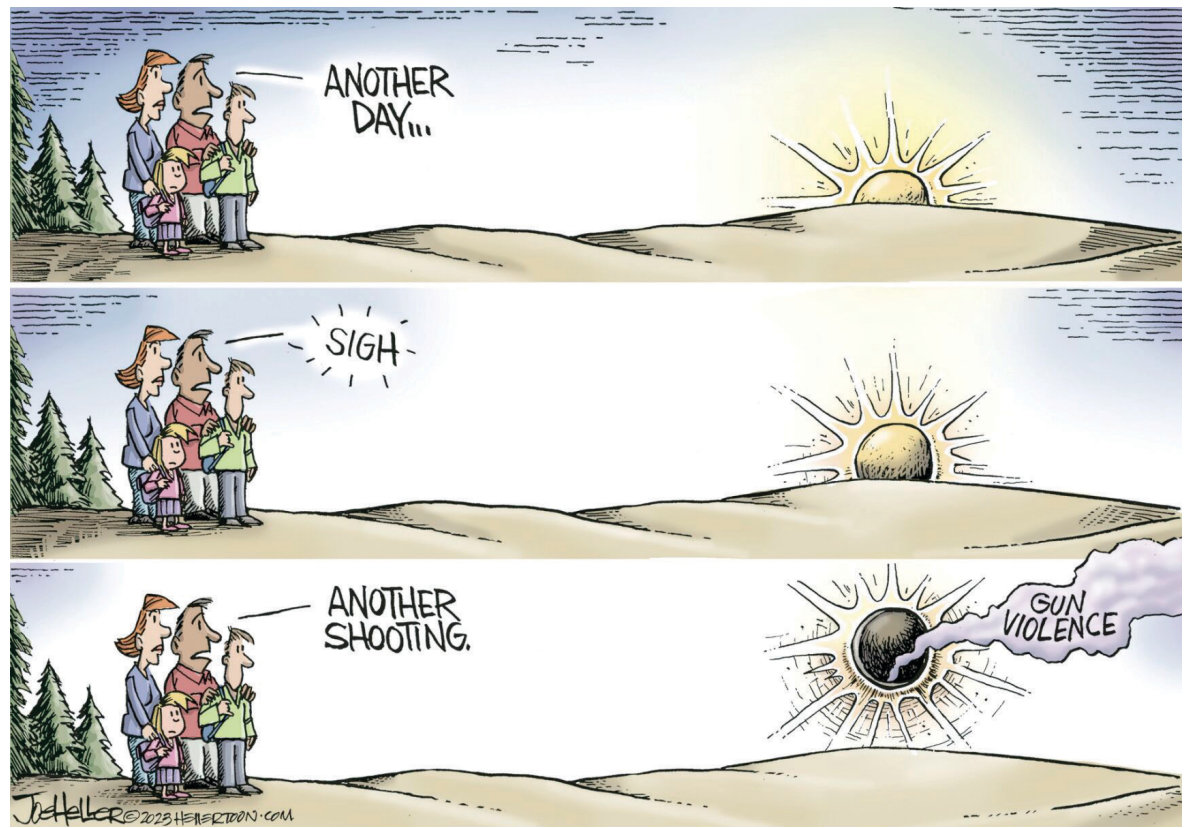
EDITOR: Because the project potentially could be better located elsewhere (including on nearby land within West End Park's historic boundaries), the Washburn City Council's recent 5-1 vote to approve a glamor camping ("glamping") development concept (proposed are four wood-and-canvas lodges called yurts) for land just above the entrance to Washburn's Historic Lakefront Trail is a divisive one. The city administration's next step will be to procure project funding.

Though glamor camping development generally might be good for Washburn (properly located and developed "glamping" campsites could become an important additional source of revenue), the city could do better by following the majority will of the citizenry and finding an alternative location for the proposed project.

Regarding waterfront planning, Washburn could learn much from the waterfront development of American cities such as Chicago, New York, Milwaukee and Austin. These cities focused on the preservation of lakefront green space for the public's enjoyment. Also, Sheboygan, Prairie du Chien and Stoughton are small Wisconsin cities attracting investment by preserving green space and historic sites as fulcrums to attract higher quality development elsewhere in town. Also, we could learn lessons from Bayfield's development story.

Like Bayfield's, Washburn's economy is largely propelled by the attraction of local natural resources. Therefore, projects that are destructive of the town's rural, green leafy beauties of nature undermine Washburn's long-term economic development potential. For example, implementation of \$1.2 million of concrete curbs and gutters in 2004-2006, including totally unneeded ones on lateral streets, diminished our city's street-tree landscape and so its overall charm and attraction. Selling our city's historic lakefront Pumphouse property was another notable mistake. Without more and continued public comment and accordant revision — and relocation — of the proposed "glamping" development concept, yet another of Washburn's irreplaceable lakefront treasures could soon be forever diminished.

**Roth Edwards,**  
Washburn



## Liberal outraises conservative in Wisconsin court race

**SCOTT BAUER**  
Associated Press

MADISON — The Democrat-funded candidate in Wisconsin's pivotal state Supreme Court contest has raised more than five times as much money as her Republican-backed opponent ahead of the April 4 election.

Liberal Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Janet Protasewicz raised nearly \$12.4 million in the final campaign finance reporting period between Feb. 7 and March 20, reports filed late Monday show. Her conservative opponent, former Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Dan Kelly, raised \$2.2 million during the same period.

The winner of the country's most expensive state Supreme Court race to date will determine majority control of Wisconsin's high court with issues such as abortion access, legislative redistricting, union rights and election laws at stake. The race has garnered national attention, given Wisconsin's importance as a presidential swing state.

The state Supreme Court came within a vote of overturning President Joe Biden's victory in 2020. Conservatives have controlled the court for 15 years, but the winner will determine majority control for at least the next two years, including before and immediately after the 2024 presidential race.

Since launching their campaigns, Protasewicz has raised \$14.5 million, more than \$8.8 million of it coming from the state Democratic



MORRY GASH

Wisconsin Supreme Court candidates Republican-backed Dan Kelly and Democratic-supported Janet Protasewicz participate in a debate Tuesday, in Madison, Wis.

Party. Kelly has raised more than \$2.7 million. He received nearly half-a-million dollars' worth of in-kind contributions from the state Republican Party and nearly \$50,000 in donations from county Republican parties and the Republican Assembly Campaign Committee.

Protasewicz's fundraising advantage allowed her to get TV ads on the air weeks before Kelly and his conservative backers could counter. As of March 22, her campaign had bought or reserved more than \$10.1 million in ads, while Kelly had spent about \$460,000, according to a tally by the Brennan Center for Justice.

Over the most recent six-week reporting period, Protasewicz spent more than \$8.3 million

on ads compared with roughly \$364,000 by Kelly. Third-party groups have helped Kelly narrow the gap, but Protasewicz's side still had spent more on TV and radio ads, based on tallies by the Brennan Center and others.

All of the spending, estimated at more than \$30 million and climbing, has made the race the most expensive for a court seat in U.S. history. The prior record high was \$15.4 million spent on an Illinois Supreme Court race in 2004.

Protasewicz has made her support for abortion rights a central focus of her ads and campaign. She has also attacked Kelly for his past work for Republicans and Wisconsin Right to Life, an anti-abortion