

## Stroebel touring Cedar Gorge Clay Bluffs is laughable

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor: I was flabbergasted to see Sen. Stroebel on the front page of the Sept. 19 issue of the News Graphic touring the Cedar Gorge Clay Bluffs. It appears Sen. Stroebel realizes his election in a new Senate District is in trouble over his lack of support for the Cedar Gorge Clay Bluffs project.

Sen. Stroebel's recent claims about his environmental record, particularly regarding the Cedar Gorge-Clay Bluffs project, are misleading and disingenuous at best. While he denies being the source of the "anonymous objection" that nearly derailed the Cedar Gorge Clay Bluffs project, his record on conservation and past writings paints a clear picture. Duey has consistently criticized the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, arguing that conserving Wisconsin's natural lands isn't worth the investment. This stance is evident in his 2019 oped and 2021 letter to the Ozaukee Press, where he dismissed the value of conservation to Wisconsinites.

Even if Stroebel wasn't behind the "anonymous objection," what's evident is that he did nothing to help secure the Cedar Gorge Clay Bluffs project. Did Sen. Stroebel, as vice chair of JFC, do anything to urge the co-chairs of JFC to hold a meeting and take a vote on the Clay Bluffs-Cedar Gorge project? NO! HE DID NOT! No such hearing was ever scheduled.

It was Gov. Evers who stepped in to save the project by funding the final \$2.3 million for the Cedar Gorge Clay Bluffs preserve using Federal dollars. Not Senator Stroebel.

Stroebel's actions are, at best, lacking transparency and accountability, and at worst, consistently prioritizing undisclosed special interests over the health and well-being of Wisconsin families and communities. Voters would be wise to reject Duey Stroebel in November and elect Jodi Habush Sinykin, an environmental lawyer, for the 8th Senate District.

**James Blank** Cedarburg

### **Hypocrite!**

To the editor: Last week's News Graphic featured a picture of Duey Stroebel, front and center, taken on the Clay Bluffs Cedar Gorge Preserve.

What a hypocrite! Are we to believe he supported the purchase of this beautiful lakefront property — to forget how close it came to NOT happening? In case anyone has forgotten, a reminder. The State Finance Committee, of which Sen. Stroebel is the vice chairman, reviewed the request by the Knowles-Nelson Trust for funds and, as a result of an "anonymous objection," on the last day of the review period, denied the funds — funds that matched a decade of fundraising by the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust, funds that were approved by the DNR and funds for a conservation project supported by the local communities. The lastminute acquisition was only made possible when Gov. Evers provided the necessary funds. And Democratic Party members, together with Jody Habush Sinykin made the first move towards the reality of the Preserve by planting trees earlier this year.

Sen. Stroebel's committee and fellow Republicans are more interested, it seems, in privatizing state education, protecting sources of chemicals that pollute our water, proposing huge tax cuts that would jeopardize essential community services, reworking and reducing revenue sharing payments that help pay for local police and first responders, and so on, rather than preserving our State's natural beauty for everyone to enjoy now and in the future. Today we have alternatives to these incumbents. Please check out our local

Democratic Party candidates: Tammy Baldwin, U.S. Senate; John Zarbano, U.S. Representative; Jody Habush Sinykin, State Senate; Mike Rapp, 20th District State Assembly; Dana Glasstien, 22nd District ; Deb Andraca, 23rd District; Deb Anderson, 58th District and Jack Holzman, 59th District. You can be sure they will work for all of us.

**Catherine Brown** Port Washington

### **Supporting MTSD referendum supports 4K**

To the editor: I am writing today to urge Mequon and Thiensville residents to vote yes on the Nov. 5 referendum. This is an operating referendum to support the Mequon-Thiensville School District.

The Wisconsin State legislature stopped indexing public school funding to inflation in 2009. Now, there is a \$3,000 gap between what we're receiving and what we need per student to continue running the school district in a way that upholds the mission and vision.

I value public education. I am a former teacher and have three students in the public schools. I value band, orchestra and fine arts education along with traditional subjects. Our students are required to be there — by state law — for a certain number of minutes throughout the year. I believe we should be teaching a wide variety of subjects in that time, including foreign language and social emotional skills.

Our 4K program is an amazing option that is not required by state law — and should the referendum not pass, would be up for debate if we can continue that program. Our area is lucky to have a variety of childcare and private 4K options, but they are very expensive and can be challenging for busy parents to add into a driving schedule. Having a 4K program in the public schools allows our youngest children to be taught according to the same mission, vision and values that they will be learning starting in kindergarten, at the same schools their

older siblings already attend.

The MTSD website has vast amounts of information available, and a resident has started a website, [voteyesformtsd.com](http://voteyesformtsd.com). Please vote yes for MTSD this fall, and let your friends and neighbors know as well.

**Cathrine Wagner** Mequon

### **Is our military prepared?**

To the editor: Trouble is brewing all over the world. Putin has said he will use nuclear weapons if Ukraine is allowed by the United States to use long-range missiles in its war against Ukraine. A 'Houthi' missile was shot into central Jerusalem last week. The Wall Street Journal reported that Germany, our strongest ally in Europe, will require 100 years to rebuild its military to 1991 strength. The Navy has mothballed seven cruisers because it doesn't have the resources to maintain them or the sailors to operate them. Is our military prepared? The short answer is 'no.'

A recent bipartisan congressional report 'Commission on the National Defense Strategy,' said: 'The United States could in short order be drawn into a war across multiple theaters with peer and near-peer adversaries, and it could lose.'

The Heritage Foundation published a comprehensive, nongovernmental assessment of our military readiness — for the first time it provided an overall rating for 2024 of 'weak,' down from 'marginal' in 2023.

Many problems exist: The largest recruiting crisis in over half a century occurred last year when our military

recruitment was short by 41,000 personnel; 44% of women failed the Army Combat Fitness Test, the Army has reduced the standards for the test to accommodate more women and older soldiers; Department of Defense data show that 70% of active-duty service members are overweight and that obesity rates have doubled in the last 10 years; In 2018, 70% of Americans said they would recommend joining the military to family or friends. By 2023, that number had plummeted to 51%.

The National Independent Panel on Military Service and Readiness concluded that 'the human elements of training, discipline, cohesion, confidence, and morale critical to fighting and winning wars are under severe duress due to a prioritization of a political agenda that distracts from the warfighting mission and diminishes trust in military leadership.'

Citizens of Ozaukee County can take action to help rectify these shortcomings by going to STARRS.US, a bipartisan organization formed in 2007 by retired military and concerned citizens. It's focus is to maximize military readiness and teambuilding by focusing on warfighting while enforcing high standards.

**Phil Bail**, LtCol, USAF, retired Cedarburg

### **We won't go back**

To the editor: My mother was born two years before women were granted voting rights in America. Let me share what I know about women's reproductiverights journey. An older relative told me that after her two children were born 18 months apart during WWII, with her husband's support, she had an illegal abortion. She experienced life-threatening complications from this back-alley procedure. Good women have felt a need for this choice throughout history for innumerable personal reasons.

In 1966, a doctor came to our dormitory to educate anyone interested in 'the pill,' which had become an option six years earlier. Three years into my marriage, in 1973, the Supreme Court ruled abortion legal nationwide in Roe v. Wade. We were at a point in history when women and couples in every state could control their reproductive lives. That held for 50 years.

Donald Trump claims success for his three Supreme Court nominees who have denied this right. We've seen what 'state's rights' looks like. Some states have criminalized doctors if they perform medically necessary abortions. It's an unfair mess, and women are cruelly suffering and even dying due to lack of care.

Trump and Vance have close ties to Project 2025. This conservative Republican plan has language supporting rights for fetuses and embryos, which legal experts say would threaten family planning methods, including IVF and some forms of contraception like the pill. Democrat candidates on our ballot in Ozaukee County support women's rights. Wisconsin Republicans are keeping a low profile on this question despite their checking every box on the Right-to-Life website. They know the majority want freedom from government interference in their personal choices. When Kamala Harris declared, "We won't go back," it resonated with women and men. Let's codify this right nationwide by voting Nov. 5 for Democrats.

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