

1321 Jana Drive
Lawrence, KS 66049
February 13, 2019

Mayor Lisa Larsen
6th East 6th Street
Lawrence, KS 66044

Dear Mayor Larsen,

Next Tuesday, February 19th, the Lawrence City Commission will again address the Lawrence Humane Society's request to change the Lawrence city code so the LHS can release its feral cats to roam free in the city. I was surprised and proud of the Commission when it resisted the LHS's attempt, at your December meeting on this issue, to overwhelm your senses and obtain a quick acceptance of their "trap-neuter-release" (TNR) proposal. Since then, the LHS, with the help of the *Lawrence Journal-World*, has redoubled its efforts to get its way.

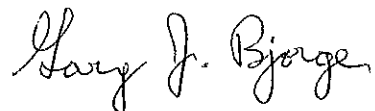
I am enclosing a copy of a letter I wrote to the *Journal-World* on January 27 expressing my disappointment about the way our local newspaper has addressed the LHS's TNR proposal. For some reason, the *Journal-World* has supported the LHS TNR program in a biased way that could not help but give its readers a distorted, incomplete understanding of the threats posed to human health by feral cats, the damage they do, as nonnative invasive species, to the Kansas ecosystem, and the ways in which they diminish the quality of life for many residents of Lawrence. Since I wrote that letter, the paper's bias was again on display on February 4 when it published a letter from Ms. Christi J. Jarrett under the heading "Feral cat facts." How strange, I thought, that the reasons Ms. Jarrett gives for supporting TNR are given the authoritative label of "facts" while concrete information about the damage done by feral cats and reasons why TNR should not be implemented contained in an earlier letter written by Ms. Denise Pettengill are only Ms. Pettengill's "concerns." I am enclosing copies of the Jarrett and Pettengill letters as they were published in the *Journal-World* for your information. My letter of January 27 has not been published.

When I wrote my letter to the *Journal-World* on January 27, I was anticipating that the combination of the LHS's ability to line up people to support its TNR proposal and the *Journal-World's* editorial support and biased reporting on this issue would produce the "lawrence listens" result that they desired. I hope that you will recognize that powerful forces were contributing to "stuffing the ballot box" and will simply ignore the "lawrence listens" data when deciding whether or not the LHS's feral cats will be turned loose to do the boundless harm they will, without a doubt, do.

Before closing, I would like to ask if the Commission has given any consideration to the applicability of the legal clean hands doctrine to the LHS's petition to change the Lawrence city code for its benefit. I wonder about this because it appears to me that LHS leaders are not being fully forthright in stating their reasons for asking the City Commission to grant them relief from a city code provision they don't like. They talk about implementing TNR for the sake of the feral cats, but if Ms. Jarrett is correct, the LHS staff is emotionally unfit for their job and is seeking a change in the city code to relieve them of workplace stress. I also suspect, that while not stated, the LHS leadership also wants permission to send their feral cats out the door so they can end the embarrassing situation in which the LHS is spending \$500,000 per year giving feral cats room, board, and free medical care while our Community Shelter that takes care of homeless families is on financial life support and in danger of having to shut its doors. I hope you will seek a full and complete disclosure from LHS leaders about all of the reasons why they are pushing their TNR plan.

\$500,000 per year is a sizeable sum and should be addressed in your decision regarding the TNR proposal. If, sadly, you do decide to give feral cats the official status of Lawrence community assets and allow them to run free and kill all sorts of creatures everywhere in the city, please, at least, do not allow the LHS to reap a \$500,000 annual windfall as a result of your action. If you want to give the burden of handling feral cats now borne by the LHS to all the residents of Lawrence, the \$500,000 the LHS claims to be spending annually to do this job should go to the Community Shelter. That would be a truly humane path to follow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary J. Bjorge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and "B".

Gary J. Bjorge

Enclosure 1: My letter of Jan. 27, 2019

Enclosure 2: Ms. Pettengill's letter

Enclosure 3: Ms. Jarrett's letter

Enclosure 1


1321 Jana Drive
Lawrence, KS 66049
January 27, 2019

Letters to the Editor
Lawrence Journal World
645 New Hampshire Street
Lawrence, KS 66044

Dear Editor,

How disappointing it was this morning (Jan 27) to read the *Journal-World* and find that its editorial position supporting the Lawrence Humane Society's (LHS) scheme to turn its horde of feral cat bird-killers loose in Lawrence (expressed on Dec 13) was there on the front page, a place where I thought objective reporting is supposed to rule. I say this because the article about the LHS's proposed "trap-neuter-release" (TNR) "community cat" program for Lawrence was extremely biased in favor of this proposal. I think you owe the Lawrence community another article on this topic, one that does a thorough job of laying out the threats feral cats pose to the ecosystem, the diseases carried by feral cats, the negative aspects of TNR, the viable alternatives to TNR, the reasons for questioning TNR's supposed success in Topeka, the reasons for questioning the judgment shown by the LHS in handling their excess cat problem, and the thoughts of the Jayhawk Audubon Society Chapter regarding a program that will contribute to the deaths of thousands of song birds. The failure to present any comments from the Audubon Society in this article is especially disappointing. Please remember, *Journal-World*, the "lawrence listens" site that the article mentions is much less an aid to good decision making if our local newspaper is publishing one-sided information as the whole story.

Sincerely,


Gary J. Bjorge

In 1903, Winston Churchill, then 28, warned (this is from Andrew Roberts' magnificent new biography) that by embracing protectionism the Conservative Party would "cause the lobbies to be crowded with the touts of protected industries." The Trump administration's protectionism has turned the Commerce Department — it is now an impediment to the activity that its name denotes — into

no president did so until 1927), and that congressional-executive agreements decisively resemble treaties because presidential initiative is paramount. However, the president's power in foreign relations is plenary except regarding commerce, where the president has no independent power and where the Constitution's Commerce Clause establishes Congress' primacy. Presidents can make trade

Dictator model is displayed in South Bend's Studebaker Museum. Although today's swollen presidency will not soon be a museum piece, it is encouraging that a few legislators want to claw back some of their branch's powers, thereby reducing the executive to a dimension more compatible with our constitutional architecture.
— George Will is a columnist for Washington Post Writers Group.

Enclosure Z

Journal-World 12/16/2018

PUBLIC FORUM

Shoe on other foot

aps in reac- climate, we ler, gentler" lies many of Dec. 11 letter ck's of Dec. s record on nly claimed every piece), which he Bush fam- \$50 million, million dol- at President as a white nally by the s. civil rights trous. Even trongly op- state statute x relations s. As presi- ts act that protections ng based on edicare was s, President "fear and campaign- campaign is ians as one erican his- are paying n who mel- ertainly not

To the editor:
Part of Trump's recently announced trade-war truce is an agreement by China to limit the flow of Fentanyl from Chinese manufacturers into the U.S. Does anyone catch the whiff of irony? It takes a little remembering, but between 1800 and 1880 exports of opium into China, mostly by European and American traders who controlled decadent Chinese Mandarins, increased more than 3,200 percent. Many Chinese became addicted, leading to efforts by responsible elements of Chinese society to end the opium trade. In the First Opium War (1842) the British used military force to extract reparations for opium destroyed by a virtuous Chinese official attempting to protect his people. At the point of a bayonet Britain, France and the United States entered into what became known as the Unequal Treaties protecting "free trade." The problem persisted into the 1950s. By the way, there's an interesting connection between the 19th century China trade, the Abolition movement and Free State Lawrence. Boston Brahmins who helped fund the New England Immigrant Aid Society were heavily involved in the China trade and made enormous profits from the sale of opium in China that were used, in turn, to capitalize industry in New England.
Now, the shoe is on the other foot, and lacking a sufficient political will of our own to protect Americans from drug addiction we're asking China to help save us from ourselves. A good moment for looking back to find ourselves.

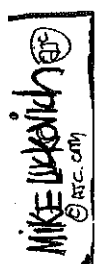
William Skepnek,
Lawrence

Cat concerns

To the editor:
While trap-neuter-release (TNR) ends reproduction by those cats who are caught, the following negative impacts are not addressed by TNR.
Free-roaming cats live shorter, harder lives. Predation by larger animals, poisons, antifreeze, rat bait and being killed by cars are serious threats. Exposure to extremes of temperature and unreliable food and water sources all conspire to dispel the myth that a free-roaming cat is living its best life. Dog owners would be considered negligent by subjecting their dogs to the same risk-filled life faced by "community cats." TNR is not a very humane solution.
Estimates of numbers of birds killed by cats in the U.S. annually range from 1 billion to 2.4 billion, according to various studies. Cats are not a co-evolving part of an ecosystem, and the damage they inflict causes great environmental harm. TNR does not ameliorate the damage to ecosystems by cats.
Community cats use yards, gardens and landscaping as their litter box. Contact with cat feces exposes humans to toxoplasmosis and parasitic roundworms and hookworms. What recourse would property owners have to permanently remove cats that are causing damage to property if the current ordinance is changed? TNR does not protect property rights.
Free-roaming cats are a problem that humans have created. Looking at the wider negative impact, TNR is not a good solution for the cats, the ecosystem or our neighborhoods.

Denise Pettengill,
Lawrence

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Journal-World 2/4/2019

PUBLIC FORUM

Dishonesty

To the editor:
We live in dishonest times. Society has devolved to the point where our politics are more important than our laws, mutual respect, personal integrity, relationships, human dignity and life itself.
Make no mistake, today's dishonesty is based on political power. This power corrupts people and institutions. Those defending their politics are saying anything to protect their interests, thus violating their personal integrity and dignity, while trying to demean their opposition.
This dishonesty creates a lack of trust, listening and compromise. It manifests itself through prejudiced intolerance, animus toward others, politics of personal destruction and discourse that tears down and divides the country based on superficial differences of identity politics and through disrespect for our elections and the Constitution.

What is America's future? Does dishonesty continue? Is our future where we continue to devolve, wherein politics is more important than our laws; where intolerance, animus, identity politics, lack of personal integrity and lack of compromise reign? Or is our future where we evolve into a society with mutual respect, personal integrity, respect for our laws and the Constitution, and

rodents (especially mice) and insects; when they do hunt birds, they generally catch common and plentiful species.
Cat colonies exist in Lawrence and anywhere else humans and their companions reside. There are many reasons why cats and humans share habitat; the reality is, they share our homes and our lives. They are members of our families. The feral cats that we are so concerned about are the exact same species, and many of us have dear pets who were once a part of these colonies. Let's teach our children compassion and rationality by adopting humane, effective and financially responsible animal control policies.

Feral cat facts

To the editor:
Recent articles regarding changes to animal control laws have been somewhat misleading, or at least unclear, I believe. I keep seeing references to 'allowing feral cat colonies' in Lawrence. The reality is, feral cat colonies already exist here and will continue to exist, regardless of how we respond to them. The new ordinances do not 'allow' these colonies; what is being discussed is how best to handle them.
Trap/Neuter/Vaccinate/Release (TNVR) has been shown to be an effective way to control and minimize these colonies. Many communities have successfully adopted these policies with gradual but significant results.
These changes will allow good people to feed a hungry cat without the risk of stiffing. It will also relieve the compassionate people who work for the Lawrence Humane Society and Animal Control of the emotional burden of mass euthanasia of healthy cats.
Cats do kill birds but are not responsible for driving some species to extinction, as some have suggested. We humans corner the market on that one, I'm afraid. Cats kill far more

Christi J. Jarrett, D.V.M.,
Lawrence

Letters to the editor

- Letters should be 250 words or fewer
- Letters should avoid name-calling
- All letters must be signed with the name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Journal-World will publish only the name and city of the writer
- Letters can be submitted via mail to P.O. Box 888, Lawrence, KS 66044 or via email at letters@jworld.com

— Reprint
local writ

L
JOURN

Scott S
Chad
Kim Calla
Kath
Adve

Rep. Barbara Ballard
(D-44th District) Room 451-S,
State Capitol, Topeka 66612
Lawrence: 841-0063;
Topeka: 785-296-7697
barbara.ballard@house.ks.gov

Rep. Mike Amyx
(R-45th District) Room 43-S,
State Capitol, Topeka 66612
Lawrence: 843-3089;
Topeka: 785-296-7632
Mike.Amyx@house.ks.gov

Rep. Dennis "Boog" Highberger
(D-46th District) Room 174-W,
State Capitol, Topeka 66612
Topeka: 785-296-7122
dennis.boog.highberger@house.ks.gov

Rep. Eileen Horn
(D-10th District) Room 54-S,
State Capitol, Topeka 66612
Topeka: 785-296-7652
eileen.horn@house.ks.gov

Rep. Jim Karleskint
(R-42nd District) Room 512-N,
State Capitol, Topeka 66612
Tonganoxie: 550-4298
Topeka: 785-296-7683;
Jim.Karleskint@house.ks.gov

Sen. Marci Francisco
(D-2nd District) Room 134-E,
State Capitol, Topeka 66612
Lawrence: 842-6402;
Topeka: 785-296-7364
Marci.Francisco@senate.ks.gov

Sen. Tom Holland
(D-3rd District) Room 134-E,
State Capitol, Topeka 66612
Lawrence: 865-2786;
Topeka: 785-296-7372
Tom.Holland@senate.ks.gov

Sen. Anthony Hensley
(D-10th District) Room 318-E,
State Capitol, Topeka 66612
Topeka: 785-296-3245
Anthony.Hensley@senate.ks.gov

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