

OUR VIEW | RECALL PETITION

Admission of lying is a novel spin-control method

La Marque political activist Joseph Lowry picked an odd means of spin control when he took to social media claiming he'd faked an invoice from Texas Hometown Strategies, a company hired to run campaigns to roll back the city's tax rate and recall Mayor Keith Bell.

Lowry sent the invoice to *The Daily News* last week in response to numerous questions about the money behind his campaigns to roll back the city's tax rate and recall its mayor.

The reporter was using Lowry as a source because the political action committee involved in the campaigns had failed to file a financial disclosure report due July 15, according to the Texas Ethics Commission.

Lowry bragged on a Facebook video that he'd "trolled the state's oldest newspaper."

"I won," he said on the video.

It's not clear what Lowry thinks he won.

The invoice at issue was part of an editorial appearing in this space Sept. 17 arguing much about the political warfare under way in La Marque was a matter of trust, and that Lowry didn't appear to be very trustworthy.

What had been mere assertion now is a proven objective fact, based on Lowry's own admissions.

For that clarity, we are grateful.

We say Lowry "claimed" to have faked the invoice because we have no way of knowing whether he was lying about the invoice, or lying about lying about the invoice.

If the goal of your spin control is to create enough whirl to make observers woozy, then it was effective.

Lowry said he faked the invoice to prove *The Daily News* doesn't check facts. The way a reporter does that is to ask questions of primary sources. In this case there were two. One is Lowry and the Galveston County Connects PAC, which, for practical purposes, strikes us as the same thing, and Texas Hometown Strategies.

Lowry disputes he and the PAC are the same. But his partner, Sarah Dougherty, is the treasurer, he has

received correspondence for the PAC, according to social media posts, and as recently as Thursday, he spoke on behalf of the PAC.

Lowry lied and Texas Hometown Strategies declined comment.

Jessie Knapp, a spokeswoman for Texas Hometown Strategies, responded to questions about how much the PAC had spent with a text message on Sept. 14.

"Sorry, but I'm not able to discuss the financial aspects of the contracts," Knapp texted. "We have a nondisclosure with each of our client contracts we acquire, and it would breach those contracts to talk about any specific numbers."

If Lowry set out to embarrass the newspaper, he failed. All reporters take people at their word about things. That's one reason reporters attribute statements to a source with one form or another of the ubiquitous, "... he said." We're always hedging against somebody lying or just being wrong, because people do and are both at times.

Perhaps Lowry set out to somehow burnish his own credibility or undermine the newspaper's. Readers will have to decide for themselves whether he achieved any of that. We're confident ours is still intact, however, considering we reported in good faith everything we knew, neither withholding nor fabricating.

Lowry can claim to have done neither.

There are other reasons Lowry might claim he'd faked the invoice.

One obvious reason is he might have violated terms of the nondisclosure agreement Texas Hometown Strategies says it has with all clients. Those tend to work both ways.

Most likely, this sadly inept sleight of hand was meant to distract people from the core truth that the PAC associated with a person who claims he is and should be trusted because of who he is has failed to abide by the state's campaign finance disclosure laws.

That's not assertion, speculation or fake news; that's an objective fact.

• **Michael A. Smith**

IN PLAIN VIEW | LEONARD WOOLSEY

Challenges come in all sizes

Sometimes getting angry is the right thing to do.

Thinking back to a speaker talking about his life-long challenges with cystic fibrosis, a handful of words seemed

to stay with me beyond the length of his talk.

"My life changed when I became angry with myself," he said.

His words hooked me.

"For most of my life, I was angry at God, the doctors, my parents — you name it; I was angry at them. But then one

day it occurred to me there was only one person to be angry at — me."

No one would criticize someone who, as a 9-year-old, ran across an encyclopedia entry telling him he was approaching middle age. According to the set of hard-back books in his living room, the average cystic fibrosis survival age is projected to be 25 years.

I'll be somewhat of a spoiler here and let you know this remarkable man is now approaching his 40th birthday, married and blessed with a family. This point helps drive home the speaker's discovery, one he made while in college, and underscores his journey.

One day the speaker found himself knocked to the ground during a pickup basketball game and needed help to get up. As guys do, some trash talk came to the surface, but with an unusual result. The words triggered anger inside him that manifested not at the other player but himself. This basketball game would become a tipping point for a young man who'd spent most of his life focusing his anger outward.

Shortly afterward, he found himself focusing on self-improvement — signing up for weightlifting classes and committing to exercise and fitness. As his body changed, so did his mind and self-confidence. By focusing on what he could do, and what he could control, he found his world and surroundings improving.

Suddenly, because of focusing his energy inward, his life changed forever.

I found his lesson powerful, not just because of his medical challenge, but because of his realization that he alone would be in charge of his life's direction. This decisive moment is one of those we all can relate to — only most of us do not face the extreme challenges of the speaker.

Today he's a successful athlete, running and competing in road races and triathlons. He also donates a significant amount of time to helping people understand what cystic fibrosis means and how others can help. He even holds an annual softball tournament, named after his sister, who died near his birth because of cystic fibrosis, raising over a million dollars in a few short years.

The lesson for me is there is a guy like you and me — only most of us do not carry the challenge of cystic fibrosis in our daily lives. And to him, he's cutting a giant pathway through life and changing the world around him for the better. If anything, this should inspire all of us to live our lives with a bit more purpose.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR | LETTERS@GALVNEWS.COM

Thank you so much, kind driver

I would like to send out a thank you to the driver who stopped where the curve to enter Broadway from 61st Street is so I could get to a safe place.

The bus lets passengers out on the side of Broadway in front of the Verizon.

I had to walk on the side of the feeder road and cross in front of the traffic merging onto Broadway as there is no sidewalk or grass to walk on until Enterprise Rent a Car.

Thank you so much.

**Gwynne Arnold
Galveston**

Education, action can prevent RR crossing collisions

Last year, Texas led the country for the number of injuries and fatalities involving railroad tracks. Across America, a person or vehicle is struck by a train every three hours.

These are powerful statistics to reflect on this week as we mark Rail Safety Week, a national event to raise awareness about safety near railroad tracks.

Education makes a difference here, led by groups like Operation Lifesaver, efforts

have led to an 83 percent reduction in crossing collisions over the last several decades.

The best way to stay safe is by strictly obeying crossing warnings and gates. But the safest crossing is one that does not exist, and new federal grants provided by the recently passed Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provide record funding not only to upgrade crossings with improved gates and other technology, but also to fully separate crossings.

Railroads are vital to Galveston, with trains facilitating ports and industrial operations, supporting jobs, all while cutting down on congestion and wear and tear on local roads. Together, through both education and action, we can prevent avoidable tragedies on our railroads.

**Brett Sebastian
Houston (Clear Lake)**

PAWS Gala Committee already has done more than shrug

In response to Laura Elder's excellent editorial ("Galveston needs to change its boozy tourism branding," *The Daily News*, Sept. 19, 2022,) encouraging our community to do more than just "shrug our shoulders when it comes to blatant

over-drinking and driving during festivals," the Galveston Island Humane Society's PAWS Gala committee has done that.

It started this vital initiative in 2018 during the annual PAWS Gala fundraiser at the Galveston Island Convention Center. Securing sponsors for the program and partnering with Uber, we publicized and promoted that any guest too inebriated to drive — and who resided on Galveston Island — could have a complimentary ride home, including gratuity for the driver, and their car would be kept securely in the convention center garage overnight. This initiative has been very popular.

The committee remains confident that we've created and maintain an environment where our guests could enjoy themselves knowing they have a viable option for not only getting themselves home safely, but knowing that they can't harm someone else if they were on the road driving.

We welcome the opportunity to share with other organizations that host events and serve alcohol how we established and continue to offer this life-saving service.

**Cynthia McEldowney-Parsons
For the Galveston Humane
Society PAWS Gala Committee**

AP | SATURDAY'S TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Saturday, Sept. 24, the 267th day of 2022. There are 98 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY

» On **Sept. 24, 1960**, the USS Enterprise, the first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, was launched at Newport News, Virginia.

ON THIS DATE

» In **1789**, President George Washington

signed a Judiciary Act establishing America's federal court system and creating the post of attorney general.

» In **1957**, the Los Angeles-bound Brooklyn Dodgers played their last game at Ebbets Field, defeating the Pittsburgh Pirates 2-0.

» In **1963**, the U.S. Senate ratified a treaty with Britain and the Soviet Union limiting nuclear testing.

» In **1968**, the TV news magazine "60 Minutes" premiered on CBS; the undercover police drama "The Mod Squad" premiered on ABC.

» In **1969**, the trial of the Chicago Eight (later seven) began. (Five were later convicted of crossing state lines to incite riots at the 1968 Democratic convention, but the convictions were ultimately overturned.)

AP | SUNDAY'S TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Sunday, Sept. 25, the 268th day of 2022. There are 97 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY

» On **Sept. 25, 1957**, nine Black students who'd been forced to withdraw from Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, because of unruly white crowds were escorted to class by members of the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division.

ON THIS DATE

» In **1513**, Spanish explorer Vasco Nunez de Balboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama and sighted the Pacific Ocean.

» In **1789**, the first U.S. Congress adopted 12 amendments to the Constitution and sent them to the states for ratification. (Ten of the amendments became the Bill of Rights.)

» In **1964**, the situation comedy "Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.," starring Jim Nabors,

premiered on CBS-TV.

» In **1978**, 144 people were killed when a Pacific Southwest Airlines Boeing 727 and a private plane collided over San Diego.

» In **1981**, Sandra Day O'Connor was sworn in as the first female justice on the Supreme Court.

» In **1992**, NASA's Mars Observer blasted off on a \$980 million mission to the red planet (the probe disappeared just before entering Martian orbit in August 1993).

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