

OUR VIEW | POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

Toxic campaigning won't end unless voters demand it

Galveston County voters should take some pride, and comfort, in the fact political campaigns supported by money from distant or unknown sources didn't fare well in the election that culminated Saturday.

The best example probably is the mayoral race in Dickinson where incumbent Sean Skipworth had been the target of a relentless, apparently well-funded and mostly covert campaign for months.

Wayne Dolcefino, a former Houston TV reporter now working as a "media consultant," directed at Skipworth a series of social-media attack videos built, as far as we can see, entirely of innuendo and middle-school rhetoric.

Dolcefino wouldn't disclose who was funding his work, which should have been enough to turn rational voters off, and perhaps did.

Political operative Joseph Lowry, who has run toxic campaigns against elected officials in La Marque, paid for a billboard urging voters to reject Skipworth.

Lowry, of course, has been supported by the Galveston County Connects political action committee, which has a habit of suggesting elected officials are criminals, but won't follow the state's campaign finance laws itself.

Perhaps that irony didn't escape Dickinson voters who elected Skipworth to a second term.

The Defend Texas Liberty PAC invested \$5,000 into Peter Lauzon's campaign for a spot on the Clear Creek ISD school board; a substantial sum for such a race.

Defend Texas Liberty devoted more than \$10 million to conservative Republican organizations, home-school coalitions and Republican Party state representatives and senators.

There's nothing illegal about any of those transac-

tions.

But Defend Texas Liberty is an outside group with a clear ideological bent and no direct stake in the district. Some voters are reasonably skeptical about injecting partisan politics and money into local elections.

For that reason or others, incumbent Arturo Sanchez won decisively against Lauzon.

Our hope is voters are rejecting the incursion of hate-mongering, covert money, outside money, partisan ideology and partisan agendas of all sorts in their decisions about electing local people to volunteer posts.

Voters should do more than that.

The tone and tenor of some of the campaigns have been toxic. The campaigns were not of a type to achieve anything good, and frequently have wobbled off into the bizarre — people with records of felony convictions calling elected officials with no such records "thugs" and "criminals," for example.

And they are not going to stop just because they are wrong.

Texas City Mayor Dedrick Johnson is being targeted by such a campaign being conducted by some of the usual suspects.

These clearly are political operations, yet some aspects of the campaigns — social media attacks, for example — seem to fall outside the state ethics laws governing political campaigns and spending.

That shouldn't be the case and voters should demand state lawmakers close that hole.

They also should demand the Texas Ethics Commission, which exists and sucks up public money to enforce ethics laws, begin acting less like a lapdog and more like a watchdog.

• **Michael A. Smith**

COMMENTARY | MOTHER'S DAY

In May, my thoughts tend to turn toward my mother

My mother was a writer and an artist. That's really all you need to know to know all about her.

I remember once as a child, planting bulbs beside her on a fall day. I looked at her, kneeling beside me. Her lips were moving, talking without sound. She was somewhere else.

"Mama, what are you doing?" I asked. She smiled, caught.

"Making up dialogue," she said. "It only works if you hear it spoken."

My mother published a novel in 1957, and she wrote all her life, but she never achieved her dreams of fame or success as a writer.

Instead, she supported three children, working every day for decades in low-paying jobs. Those jobs kept our family fed. She worked so hard. She was first in the office each morning, the last to leave at night.

The lawyer she worked for recognized her value. In a profession where words count, he appreciated her gifts. His partners tell me she brought her lunch each day, and her solitary lunch hour was inviolate. Her quiet, steady presence was an unobtrusive hum in the background.

She was unlucky, my mother. During World War II, she married my father, who was handsome, alcoholic, violent and mostly absent.

I saw him once hit my mother so hard that she bounced off the upright piano in our living room. The booming sound of it more than 65 years ago lives with me today.

I remember she looked up from the floor at my father. "I wasn't raised to live like this," she said, but she did not cry.

Still, she didn't leave him or us. When my sisters and I left home, though, my father did, too, and my mother was alone, burned out on love, I suppose.

Mama died in 1982 after battling ovarian cancer. I saw her near the end of that fight on a very beautiful day in May. She was in hospice, and I remember the azaleas in raging bloom.

My mother was drugged and sleeping, pale, thin and small. I took her hand, and her eyes flickered open briefly.

"Help me," she said distinctly. Of course, I could not. In the end, there's no help for any of us, except to know we are loved.

Yet she triumphed. Her sparks and her individuality live on, timeless and brave. She lives in me and my sisters. Her passion for words and her struggle to see the meaning in ordinary things lives on. It lives in my children and my grandchildren.

I can see and hear her most clearly in my daughter. Mama's there beneath her surface. I see my mother in my daughter's eyes and in her absolute, unwavering commitment to the boys she is raising.

My mother knew no grand victories, no fame or glory. Her story, instead, was one of courage, commitment and perseverance through difficult, wearying times.

What more could a mother give to her children? No more, that's what I think.

Dolph Tillotson is chairman of Southern Newspapers and a member of The Daily News editorial board.

PRESS RUN | SAFETY CONCERNS

Texas City Press Run rescheduled over safety concerns

The Daily News' mainland Press Run, which the editors invited and encouraged people to attend, has been postponed over concerns about the weather.

The run, which had been sched-

uled for Saturday, is rescheduled for June 24 at Bay Street Park in Texas City.

This will be the first time The Daily News has staged a mainland Press Run and we hope readers will forgive the change,

which was promoted by safety concerns, and support the run in June.

As we noted before, proceeds of the run go to support Newspaper in Education, literacy in general and other worthy causes.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR | LETTERS@GALVNEWS.COM

Hope we learn motive for Corvette Concepts killings

I'll never forget the 1983 murders in League City.

Members of the McGraw family were close friends, and I was a hairdresser to Jackie McGraw, the mother of Thomas McGraw.

These senseless murders had a profound effect on a close-knit family that I cared for very much.

I was at a loss of words because there are no words to alleviate the kind of pain this family experienced.

I hope justice is served, but I've always wondered what was the motive for such a terrible act.

M. Elaine Black
League City

Transgenderers have misused Title IX for profit

In 1972, the 1964 Civil Rights Act was amended with Title IX.

It was hailed as one of the greatest advances ever for women's athletics.

It provided equal support for female sports. Girls enjoying sports could get financial support, quality instruction and

rewards for hard work.

Members of a small cult called transgender have invaded Title IX for personal profit. Failed male athletes are competing under Title IX by calling themselves women.

Congress and state legislatures are working on plans to rescue the promise of Title IX by eliminating transgenderers from Title IX events, with laws requiring transgender people to compete in transgender events only.

Fake women competing in Title IX may decide to be men again.

Gary Miller
Texas City

AP | TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Thursday, May 11, the 131st day of 2023. There are 234 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY

» On **May 11, 2010**, Conservative leader David Cameron, at age 43, became Britain's youngest prime minister in almost 200 years after Gordon Brown stepped down and ended 13 years of Labour government.

ON THIS DATE

» In **1647**, Peter Stuyvesant arrived in New Amsterdam to become governor of New Netherland.

» In **1858**, Minnesota became the 32nd state of the Union.

» In **1927**, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was founded during a banquet at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles.

» In **1935**, the Rural Electrification Administration was created as one of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs.

» In **1946**, the first CARE packages, sent by a consortium of American charities to provide relief to the hungry of postwar Europe, arrived at Le Havre, France.

» In **1953**, a tornado devastated Waco, claiming 114 lives.

» In **1960**, Israeli agents captured Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

» In **1973**, the espionage trial of Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony Russo in the "Pentagon Papers" case came to an end as Judge William M. Byrne dismissed all charges, citing government misconduct.

» In **1981**, legendary reggae artist Bob Marley died in a Miami hospital at age 36.

» In **1996**, an Atlanta-bound ValuJet DC-9 caught fire shortly after takeoff from Miami and crashed into the Florida Everglades, killing all 110 people on board.

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