

One-Stop Opinion Shopping

Every now and then I like to test the notion that one need not be very smart to hold an opinion or get published in the local newspaper (or both). Here we go.

>It's already possible to vote early in the June 5 primary for Johnson County Auditor (if you're a registered Democrat, anyway). Tom Slockett has accomplished much and deserves our thanks for his years of dedicated service. But he also has a more-than-capable opponent in Travis Weipert and arguably more baggage than United Airlines. The winner will likely become (or remain) Auditor because Johnson County Republicans are evidently resigned to their lot in life and aren't contesting this race, not to mention the Board of Supervisors or Sheriff (again).

>Urban Chickens may not be on a ballot anytime soon, although they should be. I recently attended a block party in a neighbor's back yard and was on my second beer before I realized that they had an illegal chicken coop (and run) within 20 feet of where I was standing. The chickens seemed clean, happy, quiet and practically odor-free. There is also good enough privacy fencing that it's entirely possible the next-door neighbors are blissfully unaware of their existence.

>On the ballot this fall will likely be the proposed new \$48 million justice center. Never having set foot in a Johnson County courtroom or jail, I'm not directly impacted by the fact that our current facilities are universally acknowledged as being woefully inadequate and dangerously unsecure. What does bug me is that we taxpayers are currently spending over a million dollars per year schlepping our excess prisoners back and forth to neighboring counties.

>President Obama may not be the second coming of Abraham Lincoln, but I don't think anyone else could have done much better with the pitiful hand of economic cards he was dealt. No matter who is president the U.S. economy will eventually rebound, and when it does I want someone running the place who shares my bleeding heart liberal values.

>I like living in a college town, and I like it even more when most of the students leave for the summer. With UI graduation occurring this weekend, we can all look forward to – among other things - driving through campus and downtown unimpeded by suicidal jaywalkers. Occasionally I'll encounter one crossing against a light who is so completely zoned out I'm compelled to brake smartly at the last second to provide him or her with a brief but intense lesson about the importance of being aware of one's surroundings. I consider this my small contribution to their education while they are in our fair city.

>Now that gold leaf has been removed from the building plans for the proposed Iowa City Animal Shelter, the price tag is closer to a manageable \$3 million. I'm glad that after much discussion the University Heights City Council members eventually agreed to support the shelter. Up until that point I assumed their plan was to encourage UH residents to transport all unattended critters to the border they share with Iowa City and yell "SHOO!"

>Finally, I'll throw in for free one of my mother's opinions that she passed along to me when I was little – that I need to be careful to not catch some dread disease while using public restrooms. I had my doubts about the likelihood of this occurring, but you can never be too careful. After doing a significant amount of Internet research on this topic recently it is now my opinion that it is indeed possible to catch a Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) in a public restroom. But you'd have to agree that it's not a very romantic place to take a date.

Writers Group member Dave Parsons lives in Iowa City, co-owns a business on the Coralville Strip and never uses a strange bathroom if he can avoid it.