

room as Jones' ex-wife, Kelly, seeks custody of their three children on the not-unreasonable grounds that a man who spews spittle for a living is not someone you want raising your kids. She says Jones is "not a stable person."

But lawyer Randall Wilhite argued that judging Jones by his on-air persona would be like judging Jack Nicholson by his performance as The Joker in "Batman." In other words, like

The so-called president has professed admiration for Jones and has built his worldview, such as it is, around a Jones-like belief that a tangled skein of conspiracies explains virtually everything in life that refutes, frustrates or embarrasses him. We face four years of him steering the ship of state.

As regards the lawyer's claim, there are two possible conclusions. One: he's telling the truth and Jones never believed the garbage he vomited. Or two: Jones is

among the easiest. And never mind the damage that is done, the ignorance that is fostered, the pain that is caused.

Meantime the rest of us — dare we still say, "most" of us? — muddle through actual reality using actual facts to confront the big, bad world. It is not easy.

But it sure beats the alternatives.

Pitts is a columnist with Miami Herald.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Q-C arts are worth supporting

The White House has proposed eliminating the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in this year's budget. These agencies, which support state arts and humanities councils and nonprofit organizations large and small, in every state in the union, including many here in the Quad-Cities, make up a tiny part of the federal budget, yet their impact is huge. Grants from the NEA, NEH and IMLS provide the resources to begin projects that then attract private funding. Through the state arts and humanities councils, the NEA and NEH support local organizations that bring art and history into schools, often replacing programs lost due to budget cuts.

It is an accepted fact that the arts and humanities are an economic driver and a unique and important educational and social resource. They foster inquiry, discussion and creative thinking. The Quad-Cities region is blessed with a vital and diverse community of arts and culture organizations providing history, science, theater, music and art

experiences to thousands of local citizens of all backgrounds each year.

Eliminating these agencies will have a chilling effect on local programs and on private support. If your life in the Quad-Cities has been made brighter through attendance at a museum, a concert, a dance, or a play, if your children have received the gift of a free performance by a standout musician, or have visited a museum with their class, we need you to stand with us. Please contact your elected representatives now and let them know that the arts and humanities are worthwhile to all Americans.

**Tim Schiffer
Davenport**

Editor's note: Schiffer is director of Figge Art Museum. This letter was co-signed by Joedy Cook, Ballet Quad-Cities; Carmen Darland, Quad-City Arts; Kim Findlay, Putnam Museum and Science Center; Kelly Lao, German American Heritage Center; Ben Loeb, Quad-City Symphony Orchestra; and Deb Sandry-Powers, River Music Experience.

Suspend factory farms

Each year, 22 billion gallons of toxic, untreated waste are dis-

charged onto our land from the thousands of corporate-sponsored hog confinements across the state. Through spills, leaks and run-off, this sewage contaminates our waterways and contributes to Iowa's water crisis.

For decades, our politicians have given special tax breaks and protections to an industry which damages not just our water quality, but our air, health, quality of life, rural communities and property values.

Law-makers know this is a huge problem, but have done nothing to stop it. Their indifference and political cowardice has enabled these factory farms to skirt the rules, avoid environmental regulation, and proliferate. Last year, 448 new factory farms were approved in Iowa. This year, 126 have already been approved. The legislature has failed us on this issue. We need a moratorium.

If a factory farm is building near you, contact Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement. We've stopped over 100 factory farms in the past two decades, and we can help your community organize to fight back.

**Stacy Hartmann
Minburn, Iowa**

Editor's note: Hartmann is a member of ICCI.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR POLICY

Quad-City Times welcomes letters to the editor. Each submission should be no more than 250 words and include the author's name, city of residence and phone number for verifica-

tion. Each writer is limited to one published letter every 30 days. All questions should be directed to Editorial Page Editor Jon Alexander, jalexander@qctimes.com or 563-383-2320.

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