

Bread and circuses

The importance of critical thinking

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unfortunately, over the past several years, the City of Festivals has adopted a “bread and circuses” mentality with regard to spending. (For those unfamiliar with this concept, please see the definition below).

[“Bread and circuses” is a phrase critiquing superficial appeasement. It is attributed to Juvenal, a Roman poet, active in the late first and early second century AD—and is used commonly in cultural, particularly political, contexts. In a context, the phrase means to generate public approval, not by excellence in public service or public policy, but by diversion, distraction, or by satisfying the most immediate or base requirements of a populace— by offering a palliative: for example food (bread) or entertainment (circuses).] Art feels good. Libraries are good. Bike paths feel good. Sports complexes and senior centers are good. Parades and festivals feel good.

However, the City has squandered its good-will and

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our precious tax dollars on those non-essential “feel good” projects, while ignoring the real costs associated with basic, essential services and infrastructure.

The reality of the situation is that the city is broke!

The scramble to find alternative funding sources, including additional taxation without first delaying or deferring nonessential projects is tantamount to rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

Existing revenue sources should be fully utilized before considering any cuts in basic services or new taxes.

It may sound painful to some, but nonetheless necessary to redirect the revenue generated by the 1/2 cent Norman Forward sales tax and 100% of the Hotel-Motel Room tax into the general fund. If this can't be accomplished by a vote of the City Council, then perhaps the City should study the feasibility of conducting a citywide popular vote to accomplish this. Those who want to keep raising our taxes should perhaps first consider establishing a private foundation

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even be willing to donate a few million dollars of their TIF money back to the City to help cover the debts incurred by their fair home city since, in part, they contributed to those debts.

The choice now is between essential services versus bread and circuses.

Bruce Remy NORMAN

I swore to myself I wouldn't hold forth on Mr. Trump anymore, but here goes.

Mr. Franken is very gifted at stating the obvious, but I thoroughly enjoy reading his words. It's as if he gathers all of the current media trends and summarizes them.

But I have noticed one trend that seems to be just starting and hasn't yet gained much traction: Mr. Trump's cognitive state. As I've said before in this column, it is unethical to diagnose psychological states in the absence of a therapeutic relationship. But at several points in my career I've been either a member or leader of a team of professionals charged with evaluating someone's cognitive state with regard to some sort of dysfunction and/ or fitness for a particular job, from skilled jobs to executive positions. It's time to begin the proper procedures. This partisan bickering has to stop, and I can think of a few other elected leaders who have been around way too long. We need leaders at federal, state and local government levels who can apply critical thinking to verifiable facts, regardless of political affiliation - and personal ambition. Jim Cacy, PhD (retired) NORMAN

to collect donations to fund their projects. Perhaps the OU Foundation with \$1.5 billion in assets (that's billion with a "B") can provide instruction on how to run a successful foundation. They might