

OPINION

OUR VIEW

Good time to GiveMN

The Minnesota State Fair has come to be known as “the great Minnesota get-together.” Now, Thursday’s Give to the Max Day is taking on the moniker “the great Minnesota give together.” Give to the Max Day is a day when thousands of Minnesotans raise millions of dollars for local nonprofits and schools by visiting the website www.givemn.org. GiveMN launched in 2009 as a collaborative venture led by Minnesota Community Foundation and many other organizations committed to helping make Minnesota a better place. To generate excitement, GiveMN established Give to the Max Day resulting in online giving of \$14 million in 24 hours. Since that trial run in 2009, Give to the Max Day has become an annual tradition. Every year thousands of organizations raise money to improve the quality of life in Minnesota. Now, GiveMN is a website available year-round to link people who can donate with nonprofits and schools that help Minnesota be a better place to live,

The website makes donating easy on Thursday and any day in a variety of ways. Organizations are listed by category and keywords and the website provides information about each nonprofit organization involved. Donations can be made by checking and debit cards on the site. For each donation made with GiveMN, a tax receipt via email is sent instantly. Donors can create an account to store and access their tax receipts year-round and get a visual breakdown of their giving. But Thursday offers a chance to raise more money with matching funds provided by generous foundations and other supporters. Organizations that raise the most funds via GiveMN.org on Thursday will receive prize grants, and some nonprofits and schools are eligible for randomly awarded grants. GiveMN has helped increase giving in Minnesota by simplifying the process. If you are able to give, it makes the most sense to GiveMN on Give to the Max Day when your donation could grow even bigger.



GUEST COLUMN

Put that in your pipe and smoke it

I admit it: I feel sorry for cigarette and cigar smokers these days. But changing fashions and the results of the recent election may offer them hope. Cigarette smoking used to be fashionable. Actors like Steve McQueen and Sean Connery made it look manly and cool in their many movies. Women who smoked used to be considered sexy, too. No sooner did they pull a Virginia Slim out of their cigarette case than men everywhere would rush toward them with lighters. But somewhere along the way, smoking became vile and ugly. Americans began hating it the way they once hated communism and polio. The government sued cigarette makers for misleading the public about the addictive nature of nicotine and billions in punitive tax revenues are now pouring into public treasuries. Smoking has been banned in public places in many states. And so it is that cigarette smokers are shunned at family gatherings and sent to the garage or the street, so as not to stink up the house. Even executives at the highest level of corporate America are sent down the elevator to the basement

or courtyard, where they mingle with other smokers like some kind of pigeons while passersby snarl at them in disgust. It’s not much better for cigar smokers. I smoke 15 or 20 stogies in a good year. Why? I don’t know. Maybe it’s the manly feeling I get when I see my breath billow out of me like a chimney. Or maybe I want to be in the company of legendary cigar smokers like Mark Twain and Winston Churchill. And there’s something calming about taking a slow, deep drag on a stogie. It’s like male yoga — for males who would never do yoga. Sure, there are health risks to those who smoke cigars on a daily basis. Such smokers are more prone to cancer of the mouth and other maladies — and fully aware of the risk. All I know is that it

is dang relaxing and it promotes some very enjoyable conversations with friends and strangers at my favorite cigar bar, the Leaf & Bean in Pittsburgh’s Strip District. But the federal government is going after cigars now, too. President Obama’s Food and Drug Administration proposed sweeping regulations last spring that would affect the availability, accessibility and cost of my favorite cigars. As stated in the Federal Register, the FDA believes that “asserting our authority over these tobacco products will enable us to take further regulatory action in the future as appropriate.” Like they did with cigarettes and cigarette smokers? Well, if the recent elections are any indication, I think the future suddenly is looking good for smokers — marijuana smokers. You see, many of the same totalitarian do-gooders who loathe cigarettes and cigars, and who have been doing all they can to limit their use, have been doing everything they can to allow people to smoke weed freely. Referendum initiatives legalizing recreational marijuana just passed

in Alaska, Oregon and the District of Columbia — even though inhaling weed is much harder on one’s lungs than inhaling cigarettes and far riskier than puffing on a cigar without inhaling at all. In any event, the trends are looking good for marijuana legalization. Whether you agree or disagree with the trends, legal weed smoking is the hot fashion of the day. So if you like to sit back and enjoy smoking dried leaves without the government butting in and telling you what you can and cannot do, maybe it’s time to give up unfashionable vices — cigarettes and cigars — and prepare to make the switch to a vice that is highly fashionable, marijuana. And if you don’t like such government hypocrisy, too bad. You’re just going to have to put it in your pipe and smoke it. **Purcell, author of “Misadventures of a 1970’s Childhood” and “Comical Sense: A Lone Humorist Takes on a World Gone Nutty!” is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review humor columnist and is nationally syndicated exclusively by Cagle Cartoons Inc.**



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WHAT OTHERS SAY

Obstruction cleared in the Senate
Tuesday’s midterm election results were a rejection of the Democratic-controlled Senate’s pattern of obstruction. Voters tired of gridlock and lack of Senate action on House legislation removed the obstruction and sent Republicans back to Washington with control of the Senate and a stronger majority in

the House. With Sen. Mitch McConnell set to replace Sen. Harry Reid as Senate Majority Leader, Republicans will be in a position to move on the legislation Reid has stonewalled, things like the Keystone XL pipeline, international trade agreements and meaningful tax reform. President Obama said he is enthusiastic about

working with Congress in the next two years to attend to the needs of the people of the United States. He will have to be. The president can govern by veto, or by working with the GOP leaders in Congress to develop legislation that serves the people. If he is sincere about working with Congress, the next two years could be beneficial for all,

and especially Obama’s own legacy. If he continues on the path he has followed for most of his administration, trying to rule by decree and unilateral administrative action, he will go down as one of the least effective presidents we have ever had. **The Journal of New Ulm, Nov. 6**

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