

When we screw up, people need to let us know. It's a healthy part of any city government.

Here's the deal about the water tower - We were in the process of approving routine maintenance on the water tower, and we just didn't pay attention to the emotional attachment that local residents have for the Matador on the tank, and boy did we hear about it. We needed to hear about it. We got the message, and the Matador will remain on the tower.

I learned a couple of things about our community from that experience. One was very encouraging, while the other was dark, depressing, and ugly.

I'll talk about the encouraging thing first. It's the kids.

At least the ones I had contact with. I had email exchanges with 2 or 3 of them, and I was very impressed with their passion and with their courtesy. They all let me have it, but did it with decorum and respect. One of them even came to City Council and gave a very articulate and well documented testimony. I was highly impressed with her ability to let us know how she felt without insulting us. Well done, Keaghan Holt.

Now to the dark, depressing, and ugly part. It's the adults.

Not all of them, but many of them. There were vile, despicable things said about council and our city on social media. Truly sick things. Truly hateful things. It seems that evil overcomes some people when they start tapping on their phones and keyboards. We had some council members who actually feared for their own safety.

All this vile hate and rage (by adults) over what? A mascot on a water tower.

The adults could learn a thing or two from the kids.

Last week's city council meeting was scheduled as a tax rate hearing. We added the tower issue to the agenda to solve it as quickly as possible. The budget consists of tens of millions of dollars of levies and expenditures that affect the health, security, and prosperity of the 30,000 citizens that inhabit the City of Seguin.

Not a single citizen testified about the budget or tax rate. Not a soul. People packed the council chambers to express their anger about the removal of a mascot from a water tower. I guess all the other things we do in the city must be working pretty well!

I totally get the passion about the Matador on the tower. Believe me, I was totally wrong, was not paying attention, and I apologize for my insensitivity.

For those of you who don't know me or my history, here are my Matador bona fides: I'm a life-long Matador (Class of '67), and a season ticket holder. I have a great nephew on the team. I attend many Seguin ISD functions throughout the year, and speak at many of those functions. I've even spoken to the team before games in the past. I buy a half page ad every year in the program. I make the goofy bet with the mayor of New Braunfels every year. I named the Matador Band as Marshals in last year's July 4<sup>th</sup> parade. I read at the elementary schools throughout the year. I do "Hour of Coding" every year. I've applied to be a mentor with "Communities in Schools". My wife is a retired SISD teacher, and our daughter went K through 12 in Seguin ISD, and was a varsity cheerleader. I strongly tout the Seguin ISD as a valuable community asset when recruiting economic development prospects for the city. I gave a pretty decent contribution to the fund for putting up the new Matador on the tank. I am a Matador through and through.

Yes, school mascots and community spirit go hand-in-hand and play an important part in small town life. But there has to be some perspective.

When vitriol erupts like last week from adults about a mascot on a water tower, there is something else that is deep and dark in peoples' souls causing it. It must be something about the non-face-to-face aspect of social media that allows the darkness in people's minds and hearts to come flowing out. They certainly wouldn't say those things to my face.

Regardless of what some people may say or think, I love the Matadors.

And gosh, I love this town!