

From: jcannon2011@verizon.net
To: <ksmorris92@gmail.com>
Cc: (Removed)

Subject: Apology to Mr. Cannon
Date: Sun, Nov 6, 2011 9:27 pm

Miss Morris,

Thank you for writing. And thank you for expressing the error in judgment. Too often these days, people don't take responsibility for their actions. You have, and I appreciate it.

You indicated your passion regarding the election. Miss Morris, my running mates and I are just as passionate. We see a school board that is no longer answering to the community they purport to serve; we see an arrogance and elitism on the part of board members that generate no benefit for the township; we see an ill-fated, poorly conceived high school "renovation" that will plunge our community further into debt and end up reducing both teaching positions and programs within all our schools; and as a result, we see an opportunity to correct the destructive course on which we find ourselves.

There are certain forces, people really, at work within our community who are set on attacking those with different views. It is disappointing to see such petty behavior within Mt. Lebanon. Our residents deserve better. It has been my hope, naive as it may be, the candidates could engage in a civil, friendly, intelligent debate of ideas and solutions. Instead, during the primary, I was faced with malicious and immature behavior on the part of several sitting board members including an email similar to the one that prompted your apology. The community spoke and I prevailed. Now, with the general election just about a day away, I am once again presented with ridiculous antics. Miss Morris, did you actually read the entire email before forwarding it? Did you ever stop to wonder if perhaps the person(s) who wrote it might just have an agenda? My four running mates are long-time residents who collectively, have probably done more for the betterment of our community than any other 50 people combined. Yet with one fell swoop, those efforts and goodwill can be erased with one poorly written, vile and non-factual email from an *anonymous* source? While I think the author or authors and the dozen or so people who actually believe the tripe contained therein are not decent citizens, I believe you are. And I believe the rest of the folks involved with the PTA are decent, honest, well-meaning residents. The last thing I would have believed is people like you and those on the distribution list would lower yourselves to the level of libelous rhetoric. As you said, and as I believe, the passion and energy surrounding the election got the better of you.

Something else to keep in mind is perspective. This is a school board election, not the U.S. Senate or a presidential race. So I'm not sure why some people see a local election rising to such a level or why it would be worth attacking someone personally and trying to damage their character. That's not the lesson I, as a parent, want to deliver to kids. In the end, it's very telling that the ardent supporters of the high school project have to employ negative means in order to build support. After all, if it's such a wonderful plan and enjoys the massive community support we've been told exists, wouldn't it do fine on its own merits? Also keep in mind that neither I nor my four running mates have children in the schools...but we did at one time. We know the value of the end product, what kind of person is shaped when public education follows the right path. Our motivation is not self-serving but rather selfless. The five of us really want what's best for everyone in Mt. Lebanon.

Miss Morris, I am running because I believe we all deserve better representation from the school board, one of two taxing authorities in our township. I know the PTA currently enjoys a good relationship with the board. That may ultimately be rendered moot when we have to close schools and lay off teachers since the resources to support and sustain your organization simply won't

exist (don't forget, there is existing debt from the elementary school renovations and legally mandated pension costs to factor in, not to mention a projected decrease in enrollment by 2020). My goal is to pull back the reins of school district spending, ensuring we have a healthy, vibrant and dynamic community and school district. I think you want the same thing. Having grown up here and gone through our school system, I can recall a time when Mt. Lebanon enjoyed a position of top billing in Western Pennsylvania. Quite simply, we had the best school system around. Well, these days, our area has become competitive, and if pushed to the brink financially, our district risks losing any chance of staying in contention with our neighbors in terms of attracting residents. A bankrupt community, high taxes and zero available building expansion will result in Mt. Lebanon slipping into mediocrity. I am not ready to let that happen. Nor do I believe are any residents or parents. Let's do this right.. Let's ensure our schools don't just survive but thrive. Let's make sure we can retain our wonderful teachers instead of face layoffs due to budgetary constraints. Let's all work together to make sure the children in our schools enjoy the best possible all-around experience they can have.

All residents have a choice on Tuesday. Stick with the status quo and face substantial problems down the road. Or try wiping clean the school board slate, if you will, and install five people who have the desire to do things right. I also encourage you and anyone else to reach out to us. I've made no secret of how to contact me. And my running mates are available should anyone have questions. You obviously have my email address. Here are the email addresses for the other four candidates:

Rudy Bies: rcbies@aol.com

Charlotte Stephenson: stephensoncs@verizon.net

Joseph Wertheim: jhwertheim@aol.com

Paula Bongiorno: genpau@aol.com

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

James Cannon

On 11/05/11, Karen Morris wrote:
Dear Mr. Cannon and Hoover PTA,

Recently I sent out several emails expressing my opinions on the upcoming School Board election.. I apologize for using a PTA email list and for discussing this as if from a PTA viewpoint.

Mt. Lebanon City Council has given us stern instructions that while we are permitted to voice our opinions as citizens, we were not to "wear our PTA hats" in any communications or discussions about politics. I became passionate about the election and overstepped those boundaries. I sincerely regret what I did.

Sincerely,

Karen Morris