

# grassroots editor



*A journal  
for newspeople*

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of Weekly Newspaper Editors**

## 2006 Golden Quill & Golden Dozen Awards



Editorial skills and courage exemplified by winners  
of the ISWNE contest

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# 2006 Golden Quill contest

In the 45-year history of the Golden Quill competition, only four people have won the award twice: Robert Estabrook in 1973 and 1980; Jeff McMahon in 1999 and 2000, William F. Schanen III in 1985 and 2001, and Bill Lueders in 1990 and 2005.

Make that five. Gary Sosniecki, co-publisher of *The Vandalia (Mo.) Leader*, is the 2006 Golden Quill winner. Sosniecki also won the award in 1998. Additionally, Gary and his wife, Helen, have claimed ISWNE's other top prize, the Eugene Cervi Award, in 2003.

Clarence Burley, editor and publisher of the *Menlo Park (Calif.) Recorder*, established the Golden Quill award in 1961 as ISWNE president. His goal was to recognize "good editorial writing in the weeklies...not necessarily to select the best editorial of the year, but simply to recognize a good piece of writing...something turned out under pressure of a deadline...in the heat of indignation or inspiration...or simply an idea the writer had to get off his chest."

ISWNE is not presenting the Eugene Cervi Award this year, as the Society's past presidents felt that none of the nominees met all of the ideals embodied by the late Gene Cervi, editor of the *Rocky Mountain Journal* in Denver.

ISWNE is dedicated to encouraging and promoting high standards of editorial writing and to facilitating the exchange of ideas. The Golden Quill awards, we believe, serve those purposes.

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# Golden Quill Winners

1961-2006

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>1961 Hal De Cell</b><br><i>Deer Creek Pilot</i> , Rolling Fork, Miss.                    | <b>1984 John McCall</b><br><i>The SandPaper</i> , Ocean City, N.J.                  |
| <b>1962 Don Pease</b><br><i>Oberlin</i> (Ohio) <i>News Tribune</i>                          | <b>1985 William F. Schanen III</b><br><i>Ozaukee Press</i> , Port Washington, Wis.  |
| <b>1963 Hazel Brannon Smith</b><br><i>Lexington</i> (Miss.) <i>Advertiser</i>               | <b>1986 Henry G. Gay</b><br><i>Shelton-Mason County Journal</i> ,<br>Shelton, Wash. |
| <b>1964 Mrs. R.M.B. Hicks</b><br><i>Dallas</i> (Pa.) <i>Post</i>                            | <b>1987 Ellen L. Albanese</b><br><i>The Country Gazette</i> , Franklin, Mass.       |
| <b>1965 Robert E. Fisher</b><br><i>Crossett</i> (Ark.) <i>News Observer</i>                 | <b>1988 Michael G. Lacey</b><br><i>The New Times</i> , Phoenix, Ariz.               |
| <b>1966 Owen J. McNamara</b><br><i>Brookline</i> (Mass.) <i>Chronicle-Citizen</i>           | <b>1989 Tim Redmond</b><br><i>Bay Guardian</i> , San Francisco, Calif.              |
| <b>1967 Alvin J. Remmenga</b><br><i>Cloverdale</i> (Calif.) <i>Reveille</i>                 | <b>1990 Bill Lueders</b><br><i>Isthmus</i> , Madison, Wis.                          |
| <b>1968 Henry H. Null IV</b><br><i>The Abington Journal</i> , Clarks Summit, Pa.            | <b>1991 Stuart Taylor Jr.</b><br><i>Legal Times</i> , Washington, D.C.              |
| <b>1969 Dan Hicks Jr.</b><br><i>Monroe County Democrat</i> , Madisonville, Tenn.            | <b>1992 Hope Aldrich</b><br><i>The Santa Fe</i> (N.M.) <i>Reporter</i>              |
| <b>1970 Richard Taylor</b><br><i>Kennett News &amp; Advertiser</i> ,<br>Kennett Square, Pa. | <b>1993 Michael D. Myers</b><br><i>Granite City</i> (Ill.) <i>Press-Record</i>      |
| <b>1971 Edward DeCourcy</b><br><i>Newport</i> (N.H.) <i>Argus Champion</i>                  | <b>1994 Jim MacNeill</b><br><i>The Eastern Graphic</i> , Montague, PEI, Canada      |
| <b>1972 C. Peter Jorgenson</b><br><i>The Advocate</i> , Arlington, Mass.                    | <b>1995 Brian J. Hunhoff</b><br><i>The Missouri Valley Observer</i> , Yankton, S.D. |
| <b>1973 Robert Estabrook</b><br><i>Lakeville</i> (Conn.) <i>Journal</i>                     | <b>1996 Patricia Calhoun</b><br><i>Denver Westword</i> , Denver, Colo.              |
| <b>1974 Phil McLaughlin</b><br><i>The Miami Republican</i> , Paola, Kan.                    | <b>1997 Tim Giago</b><br><i>Indian Country Today</i> , Rapid City, S.D.             |
| <b>1975 Betsy Cox</b><br><i>The Madison County Newsweek</i> ,<br>Richmond, Ky.              | <b>1998 Gary Sosniecki</b><br><i>Webster County Citizen</i> , Seymour, Mo.          |
| <b>1976 Peter Bodley</b><br><i>Coon Rapids Herald</i> , Anoka, Minn.                        | <b>1999 Jeff McMahan</b><br><i>New Times</i> , San Luis Obispo, Calif.              |
| <b>1977 Rodney A. Smith</b><br><i>Gretna</i> (Va.) <i>Gazette</i>                           | <b>2000 Jeff McMahan</b><br><i>New Times</i> , San Luis Obispo, Calif.              |
| <b>1978 Robert Estabrook</b><br><i>Lakeville</i> (Conn.) <i>Journal</i>                     | <b>2001 William F. Schanen III</b><br><i>Ozaukee Press</i> , Port Washington, Wis.  |
| <b>1979 R. W. van de Velde</b><br><i>The Valley Voice</i> , Middlebury, Vt.                 | <b>2002 Paul MacNeill</b><br><i>The Eastern Graphic</i> , Montague, PEI, Canada     |
| <b>1980 Garrett Ray</b><br><i>Independent Newspapers</i> , Littleton, Colo.                 | <b>2003 Jeremy Waltner</b><br><i>Freeman Courier</i> , Freeman, S.D.                |
| <b>1981 Janelou Buck</b><br><i>Sebring</i> (Fla.) <i>News</i>                               | <b>2004 Charles Gay</b><br><i>Shelton-Mason County Journal</i> , Shelton, Wash.     |
| <b>1982 Albert Scardino</b><br><i>The Georgia Gazette</i> , Savannah, Ga.                   | <b>2005 Bill Lueders</b><br><i>Isthmus</i> , Madison, Wis.                          |
| <b>1983 Francis C. Zanger</b><br><i>Bellows Falls</i> (Vt.) <i>News-Review</i>              | <b>2006 Gary Sosniecki</b><br><i>The Vandalia Leader</i> , Vandalia, Mo.            |

# The judge's comments

**J**udging this year's editorial entries from unnamed weekly newspapers was an enjoyable task and convinced me the expression of opinion is alive and well among ISWNE members. With the ISWNE criteria statement in hand, each editorial was given a quick read to get a feel for the lot.

During this process, mental notes were made concerning those editorials that stood out. The entries were put aside for nearly two weeks.

An afternoon was then set aside to read and digest each editorial. The task took about three hours. During the process, the editorials were

divided into two piles. In one were the editorials that were not very strong (i.e. lack of substance, weak content, opinion expressed, writing, focus, logic, etc.). The editorials found to be worthwhile for one or more reasons were placed in another pile.

The next morning the editorials in the not so strong pile were reread to see if my original elevation had changed. Two editorials were found to be better than originally thought and were shifted to the pile of worthwhile editorials.

That afternoon, the editorials in the worthwhile pile, about 45, were reread. Paying attention to those that demonstrated courage and

other elements in the ISWNE statement, the better editorials were placed on top until all were read.

The next day the top 20 editorials in the pile containing those ranked worthy were removed. Each was reread and the better ones were placed on top. Through this process of elimination, the "Golden Dozen" were chosen.

After sleeping on the selections, the dozen were carefully reviewed the next day within the context of the ISWNE criteria statement. During this process the 2006 Golden Quill editorial was selected.

## About the judge

**J**ournalism may have been in David Dary's blood when he was born in Manhattan, Kan., in 1934. His grandfather had owned a weekly newspaper there early in the 20th century. Dary's journalistic career, however, did not begin until half a century later in high school. His journalism class produced the news and advertising copy, and his printing class set many stories in type by hand and then printed the *Mentor*, the high school weekly.

After graduating from what is now Kansas State University, Dary found work in broadcast journalism in Kansas, Texas, and then at CBS News in Washington, D.C. covering the White House during the last months of the Eisenhower and then the Kennedy administrations. He then moved into management at NBC News in Washington during the Johnson administration.

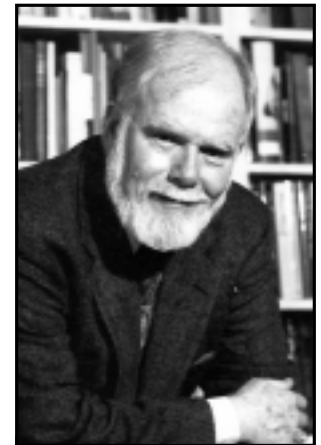
Rubbing shoulders and becoming friends with many named journalists gave Dary a greater appreciation for the written word and was a wonderful learning experience.

In the late 1960s he returned to Kansas and joined the faculty of the William Allen White School of Journalism at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. He also completed an advanced degree and eventually earned tenure and a full professorship. In his spare time Dary began researching and writing about the American West and writing articles for nearly a decade for *Star*, the Sunday magazine of the *Kansas City Star*.

After serving 20 years on the faculty at KU, Dary became head of the journalism program at the University of Oklahoma in 1989. During 11 years in that position the curriculum and faculty were strengthened, and his last two administrative goals were realized. One was to raise a substantial private gift and the other to elevate the program to a free standing college of journalism. Both goals were realized in 2000 when Edward L. Gaylord, publisher of *The Oklahoman* in Oklahoma City, gave \$22 million to the journalism program and OU President David Boren agreed to elevate the school to a college which is now housed in a new building, Gaylord Hall.

Dary then retired at age 66 to devote full-time to research and write more books on the American West. Among more than a dozen published books are *The Buffalo Book* (1974 and 1989), *Cowboy Culture* (1981), *Entrepreneurs of the Old West* (1997), *Seeking Pleasure in the Old West* (1995), *The Santa Fe Trail* (2000), *The Oregon Trail* (2004), and *Red Blood and Black Ink: Journalism in the Old West* (1998). Currently he is completing a book on frontier medicine for his publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York.

From time to time, Dary still has the urge to locate a small pedal printing press, type, ink, and everything else needed and return to setting type by hand. This dream, however, will probably not be fulfilled because writing books takes most of his time.



David Dary

# Golden Quill Winner



**Gary Sosniecki**

Co-publisher,  
*The Vandalia Leader*

P.O. Box 239  
Vandalia, MO 63382

March 9, 2005

## Stop the rumor-mongering

I received a critical e-mail a couple of weeks ago that reminded us of one of our duties as a newspaper.

“You have a strong tool in using your paper to better your community,” the writer lectured me. “Let’s see it in action.”

OK, here goes: Let’s stop the rumor-mongering. Rumors have been an everyday part of life in every small town we’ve lived in. Usually they’re nothing more than overblown gossip, stuff like who’s having an affair with whom, or who owes money to what business. Sometimes they’re true; sometimes not. Sometimes they’re cruel; sometimes they’re good-natured. Normally they have a lifespan of a week or two and fade away as the coffee drinkers find something else to laugh about.

In Vandalia, rumors are a blood sport. They can be vicious and hateful, and they feed on themselves to the point that they are accepted as fact, even when logic would tell you that they couldn’t possibly be true.

I don’t know if Vandalia always has been this way, but I know that the town went through a wave of nasty rumors before and after the resignation of the school superintendent and the replacement of the high-school principal last year.

Nobody even remotely connected to the situation was spared from the rumors.

In *The Leader* that was published the morning after last year’s school-board election, I editorialized that it was time for the community to put its disagreements behind it and move forward.

That prompted a visit from an unhappy reader who informed Helen that nobody who had lived in the community for only six months — she meant Helen and me — was going to tell her to move forward. She then canceled her subscription.

It’s obvious now that our critic knew the community better than we did. Despite the best efforts of many, the community has not moved forward. Rumors about what has or hasn’t happened at the school this year with regard to administrative performance have festered below the surface all year. The new high-school principal, who made a commitment to Vandalia by buying a house here, has been treated shabbily.

Why any school administrator would want to work in Vandalia the way Larry Beshears, Connie Hesse, Lyndel Whittle and even elementary principal (and state-champion basketball coach) Brian Meny have been ground up and spit out by the rumor-mongers is beyond me.

Frankly, I haven’t had a problem working with any of

them. All have been courteous, respectful and professional to us at *The Leader*.

As a reporter, I’m at our schools frequently, often more than once a day. I didn’t see mayhem and chaos in the schools last year, and I don’t see mayhem and chaos in the schools this year. About the only difference I see at the high school this year is that high-school secretary Marilyn Basinger’s desk faces a different direction; I’m sure somebody has a conspiracy theory about that, too.

Yet the rumors continue, fueled anew by the gossip about 10 students entering the high school late the night of Jan. 21 without permission, how they managed to get into the school and what they did while they were there.

Because so many of the rumors I hear in Vandalia are false, I didn’t believe this one either when we first heard it. I figured it was just another attempt to discredit the high-school principal three weeks before his contract came up for renewal.

But Helen began making some calls, and, sure enough, something did happen that night, though exactly what happened remains grist for the rumor-mongers. The school investigated and disciplined the students based on the information it uncovered. The Audrain County Sheriff’s Office is wrapping up its own investigation, and it will be up to Prosecuting Attorney Jason Lamb to decide whether any of the students face criminal charges. The school will have the option of reassessing its original punishment if the sheriff’s investigation determines any students lied to administrators.

What the students did that night was stupid, not only because of how their actions have tarnished their reputations, but because they naively and unintentionally became pawns in the bigger chess game of who should serve on the school board and who those school-board members should hire as administrators.

“Sounds like the new Van-Far principal and the school board are doing an absolutely superb job at corrupting the values of the youth in your community,” one critic e-mailed us. “You should take a stand in your paper calling for better examples by the adults involved and stricter discipline in the school or total mayhem will erupt!”

The only mayhem I’ve seen erupting at the school was when Van-Far’s lead became insurmountable in the district-championship game Saturday night.

After more than 30 years in the newspaper business, it’s no surprise to Helen and me that we have been drawn into the controversy. The “side” that didn’t appreciate our attempts at objective coverage a year ago sends us “I-told-you-so” e-mails. The “side” that liked our attempts a

*continued on page 5*

**FROM THE JUDGE**

It takes courage for a newspaper to tell its readers to quit spreading rumors. This editorial did just that in a frank and candid manner that should have gotten the community's attention.

Newspapers can make a community better. In this case, the writer had earlier observed how a school administrator was run out of town and a high-school principal replaced because of unfounded rumors.

When critical rumors of the new principal's efforts began, the paper realized it was time to comment on the obvious.

Explaining the past and relating it to the present, the writer condemned rumor-mongering in a simple yet direct approach. The editorial called for the rumors to stop. In the process, he shamed the little minded rumor-mongers and made it clear to his thinking readers that it was time for common sense and objectivity to prevail in the community.

## *An explanation from the winner*

**I** heard a rumor last night that a prominent businessman had been seen the night before at a local nightspot, one of those small-town bars where, in our part of the country, prominent businessmen shouldn't be seen.

The rumor was a guilty pleasure, a nugget of information with no redeeming social value, passed with a whisper and a smile from one business owner to another at the expense of a third, who may or may not have dropped by the bar the night before.

Rumors are a form of entertainment in towns as small as Vandalia, which has a two-screen movie theater that, rumor has it, won't show the film unless at least four people are in the audience.

As long as no one gets hurt, and as long as they somewhat resemble the truth, the rumors generally are harmless.

But Vandalia went through a period early last year when the rumor mill became especially vicious.

Two sets of rumors were the worst, and both involved the school, the focal point of towns as small as ours.

One set involved a controversial change in principals at the high school in 2004 that split the community. Even a year later, nobody on either side of the controversy — administrators, teachers, school-board members, parents, even children — seemed to be spared from rumors that impugned their characters. Regardless whether the school board was justified in replacing the prior principal, the new principal never had a chance to survive the rumors that questioned his effectiveness. He is leaving the school district this year, after only two years, by his own choice. The principal he replaced, demoted to a junior-high teacher the past two school years, is leaving the district, too. Both, hopefully, can flee the rumors of the past two years and prosper in new environments.

The second set of rumors involved a group of about 10 students who entered the high school late one night without permission. According to the worst of the rumors, some of the students had sex on the gym floor while others videotaped it. A parent told us as recently as last week that she saw the videotape on the Internet.

We heard about the alleged break-in from a neighboring businessman, who heard a rumor about it from a customer. My wife called the sheriff's department to get a report for our newspaper. The sheriff's department didn't know anything about it.

Hence began separate and at times conflicting investigations by the school and the sheriff's office that resulted — five months later — with five teens being charged with trespassing.

Five months is a long time for a community to gossip about the behavior of children from some of the town's most prominent families. Whatever happened in the gym that night was not good; the rumors made it worse than it ever could have been.

Both sets of rumors contributed to divisiveness in the community that broke up longtime friendships. They also could be blamed for the failure of a bond issue to build new science rooms at the high school, a step backward for the community that, fortunately, was corrected recently in a second election.

Sometimes the news in a small town is bad enough without it being embellished by rumor. When rumors reach a point that they harm rather than humor, they need to be reeled in. In Vandalia's case, I didn't want our town to self-destruct because rumors were taking on a life of their own.

My column was an effort to encourage Vandalia residents to take a step back, take a deep breath, and put more thought and more facts into what they say to each other.

## *Stop the rumor-mongering* from page 4

objective coverage last year but doesn't like us being so objective this year simply snubs us and complains about us behind our backs. Every other small town we've lived in has taken up "sides" over one thing or another, often involving the school, and the newspaper gets the blame whenever one of those sides doesn't get its way. Unfortunately, Vandalia is proving no different. Helen has attended between 300 and 350 school-board meetings in four communities since 1974 — more than most superintendents — and it's a safe bet that she knows what she's doing when reporting on schools.

But Vandalia's rumor-mongers don't stop at the school. One business owner heard a rumor last month that he had sold his store. It wasn't true.

Another business owner keeps hearing rumors that her business has closed. She even heard that it was closing for good on a certain day last week. She watched as cars drove

in front of her business to see if the rumors were true. They weren't. The business remains open and has no plans to close.

Helen and I continue to hear the rumor that we've moved to a house we've bought. No, we haven't bought a house yet, though we looked at another one Saturday.

As a community, let's find something to talk about instead of hurtful rumors. Let's talk about the basketball team or the minor-league football team. Let's talk about whether the Cardinals can repeat. Let's talk about the serious issues on the ballot April 5: a bond issue for the school and a county sales tax for 911.

If we must spread rumors, let's not be so gullible as to believe those that couldn't possibly be true.

Vandalia is a good community with good people.

Stopping the rumor-mongering would make it even better.



**Jim Painter**

**Managing Editor,  
West Valley View**

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Litchfield Park, AZ 85340

**November 8, 2005**

**FROM THE JUDGE**

**The theme of this editorial is simple – government exists for the people, not the other way around. This editorial brought to the reader's attention a problem common in many communities and sometimes ignored by the local press.**

**Through carefully chosen words, the writer gave a bureaucrat – in this case one of the sheriff's public information officers – a slap on the wrist. The officer's sheriff politician boss should also have felt the slap.**

**In so doing, the editorial warned others in government not to break the spirit of the state's Public Records Law.**

**The paper stood up for the people's right to know. It also reminded readers of the obvious, that "those who don't fight for their rights, are bound to lose them, one by one, until there are no rights left to lose."**

# A bureaucrat is stomping on your rights

**T**he business of the government is the business of the people. The government exists for our benefit, not the other way around. That's why public records laws are so important.

Because the government is our (the public's) business, it's imperative that we (you, us and everyone else) be able to have access to the documents that can tell us just how well or how poorly our elected officials and paid public employees are doing on our behalf.

Arizona's Public Records Law is pretty simple. It provides that "[p]ublic records and other matters in the custody of any officer shall be open to inspection by any person at all times during office hours." Although it sounds simple and straightforward, there are always public employees looking for loopholes that will enable them to make it more difficult for you to see the records that belong to all of us.

An example of such "stonewalling" techniques came to light recently when the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office informed the *West Valley View* that police reports no longer can be viewed by the public at the District 2 substation in Avondale; people now must go to the Sheriff's Office's headquarters in downtown Phoenix to view such records — and only after they have submitted a public records request form (which, by the way, is not mandated by the state's Public Records Law).

For the past 19 years, the *View* has been able to access the arrest reports at the District 2 substation, which we publish weekly in the Police Log. The reasons we publish all of the arrest reports from the five Southwest Valley law-enforcement agencies were outlined in a column written by Managing Editor Jim Painter in the Oct. 28 edition (if you missed it, visit the *View* Web site, westvalleyview.com, and click on "commentary").

The change in the Sheriff's Office's policy came without warning and without explanation. However, we have been able to ascertain it was the decision of one man, Lt. Paul Chagolla, one of Sheriff Arpaio's many public information officers.

We find it incredible that such an important pub-

lic-policy decision concerning the handling of public records could be made by one non-elected official, without the benefit of any public hearings or consultation with any body of elected representatives. What recourse does the public have in such a case?

We repeatedly have asked Chagolla to put his new policy in writing, along with an explanation for the necessity of it, but he flat-out refuses to do so. He believes he owes the public no explanation as to why you no longer have access to public records without first jumping through his special hoops.

Chagolla, we repeat, is a public information officer, whose primary mission in life is to make his boss, Sheriff Joe Arpaio, look as good as possible so he can continue to win re-election. The cities of Avondale, Goodyear and Buckeye also have PIOs. Chagolla's action could be compared to one of them unilaterally deciding that their city's speed limits should be 15 mph — without the benefit of any public hearings or the input of the people the voters elected to represent them at the city level.

We don't dispute that Chagolla's new policy conforms to the letter of the Public Records Law (you still have access to the records as long as you're willing to go downtown and jump through Chagolla's hoops), but we contend it quashes the spirit of the law, which is that those records are yours, you have a right to see them, you have the right to determine the conditions under which you will see them and that the role of a public servant is to serve you and make your life easier, not force you to serve him and make his job easier.

We can't think of any good reason why a person seeking a police report — for insurance purposes, or to find out the status on an investigation after your house has been burglarized, your car stolen or your property vandalized — should be forced to drive to downtown Phoenix rather than view the records in Avondale. It's one man's arbitrary usurpation of one of your rights.

Only you have the power to reclaim what is yours by right — and by law. Those who don't fight for their rights are bound to lose them, one by one, until there are no rights left to lose.

# This Math Lesson Is Criminal, But It's Called Justice



**Gisele McKnight**

**Editor,  
*The Kings County Record***

593 Main Street  
Sussex, New Brunswick  
E4E 7H5

**January 11, 2005**

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**FROM THE JUDGE**

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The interpretative editorial form is used effectively in telling readers about a jailor who molested a teenage prisoner nine times, was convicted, but only sentenced to 18 months in prison.

The editorial points out that that the jailor could be out of prison in six months under the Canadian criminal justice system. It adds that this would only be a slap on the jailor's wrist with a punishment of about 20 days behind bars per molestation.

The writer makes the reader wonder why the jailor was not given the maximum sentence. The editorial describes the sentence as "despicable" considering the position of trust held by the convicted offender.

The editorial ends by noting the jailor's sentence does not reflect the revulsion the community feels about the crimes, nor its expectation that child molesters will be adequately punished.

**W**hat's a life worth these days? In Hampton Provincial Court Friday, the public learned the damaged life of one special needs teenaged boy is worth exactly 18 months.

That's the sentence convicted sex offender and Korean War veteran Ralph Kilpatrick received after pleading guilty, as the boy's jailer, to molesting him not once — but nine times.

If you do the math, that 18-month sentence works out to two months per molestation — not a bad deal if that's your vice.

But the deal is significantly sweetened by the Canadian criminal justice system. According to their rules, Kilpatrick, if he behaves himself in jail, will probably spend a maximum of six months there. Convicted criminals normally serve one-third of their actual sentences incarcerated, followed by a period of probation.

If we continue to do the division, that six months in jail equals about 20 days per molestation — an even better deal.

Eight of the attacks took place in the Sussex RCMP lockup over a ten-month period. Each time, the system — where the jailer has all the power and the incarcerated person has none — let this boy down. The betrayal of this position of trust is despicable. The maximum sentence for the charges is five years, but Judge McCarron said he had to reserve the five year maximum for repeat offenders. So then, what was wrong with four years, or even three years in prison? There were, after all, nine incidents.

When the fact that the Crown talked about how Kilpatrick seemed to have difficulty in accepting responsibility for his crimes and how he told his victim not to tell or his "friend" could go to prison for 10 years, one has to wonder how a sentence of 18 months was thought to be appropriate.

That slap on the wrist does not reflect the revulsion this community feels for the crime nor its expectation that those who prey on our children will be adequately punished.



## Richard McCord

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December 7, 2005

### FROM THE JUDGE

This well-written editorial takes the interpretative form using brevity to explain the facts about a part-time resident's plan to build a 17,000-square-foot, part-time getaway home near downtown Santa Fe, N.M.

While word of the plan was already making the word-of-mouth rounds, the editorial recaps the facts and then discusses the structures likely impact on Santa Fe's esthetics.

The writer goes beyond Santa Fe and tells of mounting opposition in many areas of the nation to extravagant homes constructed by the mega rich. The writer describes the owners of such homes as doing nothing more than flaunting their wealth, adding that such monster homes are nothing more than "monuments to the excesses of American consumerism."

The writer takes a pot shot at the city fathers of Santa Fe, who he says "have timidly avoided" setting limits on house sizes such as the 2,400-square-foot maximum recently approved in Los Angeles.

This hard-hitting editorial no doubt reflects the views of many long-time residents of Santa Fe. The writer concludes that if the part-time resident goes through with his plan, "all he will erect is a monument to himself."

# The Mansions That Ate Santa Fe

## Can Anything Stop The Attack Of Monster Homes?

**A** recent news item noted that four related people in Oregon had bought the winning ticket for the second-highest lottery jackpot in U.S. history — some \$340 million, which they chose to take instead as a lump-sum payment of \$110 million after taxes. Asked how they planned to spend the money, a smiling 68-year-old woman (who seemed like a nice person) said that she and her husband had not yet decided long-term, but had already bought a brand-new yellow Humvee, which was now parked in their driveway.

The story struck me as lamentably all too American: If you've got big bucks, spend them lavishly and conspicuously, with no regard for larger considerations beyond flaunting just how wealthy you are. These nouveau-riche good folks in Salem, Oregon, apparently were not concerned that one of the most urgent crises facing America and the world today is the dwindling and politically precarious supply of fossil fuels.

Nor did they care that their new toy is notorious as just about the worst of all gas-guzzlers, getting some 3.8 miles per gallon at high speed on the road and about 6.8 mpg at slow speeds in town, according to one Hummer website. Nor did they care that the highest gasoline prices ever are breaking the budgets of millions of American homes. Hey, \$3 a gallon? Chump change. \$8, \$12, \$25 a gallon? Bring it on. We've got the bucks for it, and that's all that matters.

This tale of the good fortune of the Oregonites and their reaction to it made me reflect upon a situation currently unfolding in Santa Fe: the announced intention of mega rich fashion designer Tom Ford to build a cozy little 17,000-square-foot part-time getaway on Talaya Hill on the city's historic east side, about a mile or so from the Plaza, where stands another 17,000-square-foot structure: the historic 400-year-old Palace of the Governors.

How big is 17,000 square feet? Most of us will spend our lives never setting foot inside a house of this scale and cannot picture one, but here are some comparisons: In Beverly Hills, where buses take tourists around to gawk at the mansions of movie stars, there is a 15,000-square-foot cap — "restrictive only for those who dream of adding the ever-popular indoor football field," in the words of a Los Angeles Independent Media Center article. In India, the world-famous Taj Mahal, at 34,596 square feet, is almost exactly twice as large as Ford's planned cottage. In our nation's capital, the White House is three times the size.

But though he already owns two Santa Fe-area residences — the east-side home in which he grew up, on the other side of Talaya Hill, and a ranch near

Galisteo with an orchard and vineyard, plus homes in London and Los Angeles — Ford says he needs this new in-town retreat, in all its size. First and foremost he needs it for himself and his longtime partner and their dog, a fox terrier. But even more, he needs it for his parents, who live in Santa Fe but sometimes visit him, and his sister and her children, who also visit.

Assuming that Ford and his partner and their dog can squeeze themselves into just half the home, 8,500 square feet, there should be lots of room left over when his sister comes. If she inhabits a 2,000-foot bedroom for herself and brings four children, then each of them will have 1,625 square feet for romping. If she has eight children, then each must settle for 800 square feet. If Ford's sister has 20 children, in this age of population concern, then each will have to get by with just 325 feet for personal use when they drop by during Ford's three to four months in town.

According to the National Association of Home Builders, the average American home in 1950 had 983 square feet. It had 1,500 in 1970; 2,080 in 1990; and 2,330 in 2003.

Mounting all around the nation is a resistance to houses such as Ford proposes. These gigantic structures have acquired many nicknames: "McMansions," "Starter Castles," "Edifices Rex" — and, most often, "Monster Homes." Communities that have enacted or are weighing laws against oversized residences that change the nature of a neighborhood include the town of Chevy Chase in Maryland; California's Bay Area and Silicon Valley; suburbs of Chicago; Minnesota's Twin Cities; the borough of Queens in New York City; Denver; Boston; New Canaan, Greenwich and Westport in Connecticut; even rural, mountainous Pitkin County in neighboring Colorado. Earlier this year, the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously to limit house size to 2,400 square feet in one area of the city.

But Santa Fe has timidly avoided such specific limits. Some years back the city enacted an escarpment ordinance, long after countless ridgetops had already been claimed by huge "statement mansions" proclaiming the ego of their occupants. And ever since, that ordinance has been under siege by rich people and their lawyers, seeking to exploit every loophole. The latest in this line is Toni Ford — who like the lottery winners in Oregon seems like a nice guy, visiting prospective neighbors to assure them he will do everything humanly possible to minimize the impact of his absolutely essential 17,000-square-foot part-time home.

"Monster Homes R Us," a fine article at SFGate.com, quotes architectural historian Mitchell

*continued on page 9*

# A royal pain?

**T**he Royal Family is kind of like the eccentric extended family you have back in the Olde Country. Every five years or so you extend an invitation for them to come to visit in The Colonies.

You move the furniture around in your home to accommodate them, you cook special meals, and take them around town to see the sights but nothing is ever good enough. You become easily bored with them, there are long pauses in the conversation — when they deign to speak to you, and after a week, you just wish they'd go home where they belong.

Such was the nine-day visit to Saskatchewan and Alberta by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness Prince Philip — Canada's official Grandma and Grandpa.

Our link to the United Kingdom is growing frail. The generations who have grown up with and fought for King and Country are dying off and a more critical, cynical, media-savvy generation has little respect for the Royal Family. The multi-cultural makeup of 21st century Canada has no connection to the monarchy and if immigrants do have a connection, it's likely they are refugees from a former British colony.

Generations ago, Canadians loved the monarchy unconditionally and knew little of the Royal Family's peccadilloes. Today, we are bombarded with everything royal and we know more about their personal lives than we ought to know about anyone's.

The opportunity to have the Royal Family reach out and form a new, meaningful bond with a new generation of Canadians died with Princess Diana, who was more of a sex symbol and celebrity than potential Queen Mum.

The Queen is Canada's living symbol that ties our past and our present, and represents the continuing endurance of the values we hold and share — if we weren't spending so much time trying to bring down the government or kowtowing to Quebec. Because she is above the political fray, she is the Canadian conscience.

You couldn't necessarily tell from the media coverage afforded the Royal Visit — the Big Media

seemed to concentrate on what Her Majesty was wearing, and who touched the Queen where — but the theme of the visit was supposed to be a celebration of The Spirit of Nation-Builders. As we observe the 100th anniversary of Saskatchewan and Alberta joining Confederation, the Queen came to recognize our accomplishments, honour our contributions to Canada's development, and celebrate our spirit of determination.

The Royal Family is well known for its support and encouragement of our communities and our volunteer agencies. They have created and award many non-political honours for outstanding Canadians.

Devon could take a page out of the royal handbook and ascribe certain honorific duties to a distinguished citizen. They would speak for the community to town council on matters of culture, volunteerism and community conscience; and speak to townsfolk as the embodiment of our community spirit. Dan Claypool, or former mayor Bob McDonald come to mind. They're well respected in government and community circles, and as retired citizens they might have the time to dedicate to the task.

Every time Grandma and Grandpa come to visit, Canadians begin anew the debate about whether to divorce ourselves from the Royal Family. It's a discussion that has no real urgency but a debate we must have nonetheless. It's not treasonous, it's just the next logical step in Canada's determining Canada's independence. First we have to deal with Quebec and the unity issue.

We will need to decide whether to make a clean break and consider a republican form of government, or to continue to be governed differently from our American neighbour, the world's largest superpower and culture killer. Would there be support for a home-grown head of state who was appointed on merit and not given the throne from divine right? Would that person better represent Canadian values and our vision for our nation than a distant monarch?

Is it time for the Royal Family to cut the apron strings?



**George A. Brown**

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May 27, 2005

## FROM THE JUDGE

**This well-written editorial combines the interpretative and entertaining forms. The writer tackles the Royal Family and asks if it is time for Canada to make a clean break with Great Britain and consider a "republican form" of government like that of the United States.**

**The writer sketches the history of Canada's relationship with Great Britain and especially the monarchy, which is described as "Canada's official Grandma and Grandpa." The writer makes the case that times have changed but also points out some negatives should Canada go it alone.**

**The editorial is frank, candid and entertaining. It does not favor one avenue over another but simply asks the reader to decide — "Is it time for the Royal Family to cut the apron strings?"**

## The Mansions That Ate Santa Fe *from page 8*

Schwartz: "It just illustrates a kind of crass desire for living large. Monster homes are clearly far beyond use or need. It's architectural gluttony. People buy things that have no use whatsoever, to prove that they can afford to buy things that have no use whatsoever."

The SFGate.com article goes on to say: If the Taj Mahal is a monument to love and the White House a

monument to democracy, then what are monster homes — monuments to the excesses of American consumerism?

And here? If Tom Ford — and he's rich enough to do it — proceeds with his plans, one mile from the Plaza in the City Different, all he will erect is a monument to himself.



**Charles Gay**

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**September 8, 2005**

**FROM THE JUDGE**

**This editorial uses the informative form of trying to explain to readers the complex nature of an ordinance being considered by city commissioners to regulate sexually oriented businesses.**

**On the one hand was an element in the community using morality as the reason they want regulation. On the other hand, there are those who want to protect citizens' Constitutional rights, namely the First Amendment.**

**The editorial seeks to explain it is a clash between opinion and the law. There is, as the writer points out, "no middle ground for opponents of such businesses as well as nutty logic."**

**The writer implies that most people in the community believe such businesses can be harmful, but at the same time he observes, "A ban on expression is a dangerous thing, because there's no end to the unpopular minority views that would be candidates for banning."**

**It was a complex subject to tackle. The newspaper is commended for seeking to clarify what it labels as a "miserable issue."**

# Miserable issue

**E**verything about the issue of a City of Shelton ordinance regulating sexually oriented businesses makes us sad. There should be no need for such an ordinance, because there should be no market for the goods and services here. However, city commissioners know such businesses could be proposed here because an X-rated movie store opened a few years ago and Shelton isn't immune to what's happening everywhere else.

Several people worried about their community, who see the world spinning out of control morally, asked the commissioners to take a stand by banning the businesses altogether instead of only confining them to a certain area. But, in an age when government decisions are determined by legal advice, the commissioners initially opted for an ordinance that would pass constitutional muster, allowing filth as free expression but keeping it in a zone on Mountain View. Lucky Mountain View.

Then last week, just before passing the proposal, the commissioners called a timeout to allow a citizens' committee to develop a law more palatable to those who don't want the businesses here. We wish the panel good luck wrestling with a miserable issue that seems to have no middle ground for opponents of such businesses as well as nutty logic. That is, the standard practice of government is to recognize sexually oriented business as potentially harmful and therefore move to contain it but shrug that government is powerless to stop it. Leaders explain that they are upholding the Constitution.

One of the blessings of living in this country is that the government is not making a religious decision, for if it were that would mean religious people were at the mercy of the government as are citizens of a nation where the Bible is forbidden. The same First Amendment that protects religious expression protects the free expression of filth. A ban on expression is a dangerous thing, because there's no end to the unpopular minority views that would be candidates for banning.

It's a rotten choice for city commissioners who can seem to be accepting businesses that a majority of the populace finds repugnant. Some people, including some Christians who understand the concept of choice in a garden or in modern times, have asked the city to forbid choice based on their morality. That's where the clash of rights and opinions becomes dicey, and city commissioners were leaning toward acknowledging constitutional rights rather than making moral judgments. What adds to the diceyness is that opponents of sexually oriented businesses could argue that governments often make moral judgments in the laws they pass to protect society.

Everyone has his own concept of morality. We believe that in today's popular culture the sexually oriented television, sexually oriented music, sexually oriented movies and sexually oriented Internet are just one step down from the sexually oriented businesses in question. Things are getting more sexually oriented all the time.

The developments trouble those who believe more flagrant sexual expression has hurt men, women, children, marriages, families and therefore society. Unless society wants to confront the trend, it won't reverse and will probably worsen. Though some frustrated people want to confront it, this society having too much fun with sex doesn't want to confront it. The frustrated people need to change hearts and minds rather than the Constitution, a tall order in the moral morass called America.

It would help if more people appreciated the basis for a moral judgment against this garbage: It mistreats women and damages relationships, and that's not good for society. Americans need to stop the sexually oriented things that demean women. It is not good for society to degrade women, treat them as sex objects, make them second-class citizens and raise them to believe that their self-worth and acceptance by others depend on a sexual standard. At its worst, the sexism manifests itself in violence against women too prevalent.

At a time when our society should be moving toward equality for women, it is instead reinforcing or increasing sexism. Many girls grow up brainwashed to play a game, expecting sexist treatment as the norm. Many boys grow up trained to be sexist, ready to treat women in an insulting manner. The sexism is so ingrained that it is accepted, unrecognizable as harmful.

Just two quotations in a recent newspaper feature story speak volumes. The story was about women having boudoir photos taken. Said one, "I'm a housewife. I need something to boost my self-esteem." And, of course, it helped that she would have the photos for her husband. "Keep him off the Internet," she said.

It comes down to respect. The community of Shelton should foster respect for women. Sexually oriented businesses do not foster such respect. Neither does our popular culture. Neither do homes where husbands do not honor their wives.

The market for the worthless goods and services of sexually oriented businesses will be nonexistent here when Shelton men have respect for women. Only a societal change, not a law, can bring about that respect.

# Would you do whatever it took?

**I**f your daughter needed an operation to save her life, but you didn't have the money, would you just let her die?

Or would you do anything in your power to come up with the money. Would you work overtime, borrow on anything you could, get another job?

Of course you would.

In the movie *John Q.*, Denzel Washington holds the operating room staff of a hospital hostage to try to get heart surgery for his dying son. They won't perform the surgery because Washington doesn't have insurance.

What if that wasn't enough? What if all the resources available to you weren't enough to pay for an operation to save her life? Would you sell a lung or a kidney to save her?

If none of that worked, would you just let your daughter die? Or would you do whatever it took, even if that was illegal? Would you lie, steal or cheat to keep her alive? Or would you let her die.

I know what I would do. I would do whatever it took. I would steal or lie if I had to. If the medicine needed to save her were available only in Mexico, I'd go there to get it. If the surgery was available only in a foreign country, I'd find a way to get her

to that country even if it was off limits to people living here.

Washington even threatens to kill himself when he thinks he may be the only compatible donor of a heart for her.

I would do whatever it took.

In fact, if my daughter weren't dying, but just starving, I would do whatever it took to find food for her.

And if I thought that living in this country was going to keep her from being able to live a healthy, normal life. I would do whatever it took to resolve that problem.

Would you?

Would you smuggle drugs to save your daughter's life if it was the only way?

Would you cut down a fence and break in somewhere to get the money to save her?

Would you run a marathon in the dead of summer to raise the money to save her?

I would do whatever it took, even if that meant entering this country illegally from Mexico and picking vegetables, or washing dishes or cleaning hotel rooms.

Would you expect a parent to do anything less? What would you do?



**Elliott Freireich**

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**January 28, 2005**

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#### **FROM THE JUDGE**

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This editorial seems to be a response to an earlier news story about an illegal alien who may have broken the law to survive or to save a family member. Although the particular event is not recapped, the writer's passionate plea to the reader is to stop and think and to put on the shoes of the accused. The writing is personal and very human.

The editorial asks questions. The writer provides personal answers. The questions and answers are simple yet direct as the editorial seeks to convince the reader to think about how they would answer the questions if they were ones involved.

The writer used thoughtful psychology in this persuasive editorial form.



**Betta Ferrendelli**

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July 28, 2005

**FROM THE JUDGE**

This editorial follows the call-for-action form, one of the easier forms to research and to write and therefore a form often abused by papers.

In this case the paper makes a good case for change. The writer calls the reader's attention to the fact that the city administrator has followed the practice of hiring white males, many of them apparently friends from the past for key positions.

The writer then tells the reader, "We need less testosterone and more diversity."

The editorial is well-written and calls on the city administrator in future hirings not to ignore the obvious — consider women and minorities including Hispanics to achieve diversity.

The editorial, however, does not demand diversity for the sake of diversity. The city administrator is urged to hire the best candidate even if white and male.

# What about diversity?

**P**resident Bush's Supreme Court nominee is judge John Roberts, a conservative Republican, and the obvious white male. That disappointed and surprised many on Capitol Hill who had expected the president to keep diversity in mind when selecting the life-long appointment to the nation's highest court. It remains to be seen how the nomination will play out before Congress.

Closer to home, Ed Chismar is resigning as cultural enrichment director after nearly nine years with the city of Rio Rancho. That leaves another vacancy under city administrator Jim Palenick. One has to wonder what the city administrator will do when replacing Chismar — if the new hire will be like the others Palenick has brought into the fold. Thus far Palenick has hired Department of Public Safety police chief Robert Boone, public infrastructure director John Kolessar and development services director Jim Neblett, who resigned his post after one year on the job. His successor is Rob Anderson. Not only is he from Palenick's stomping grounds of Bay City, Mich., from where Palenick plucked Kolessar, but like Palenick, Kolessar, Boone and Neblett, Anderson is a white male.

We need less testosterone and more diversity. Why have diversity in the work place? Simple: It brings people together under one roof who are different, unlike in their character and qualities.

Palenick would do well to keep that in mind as he begins the hiring process anew.

He should consider a woman to be sure. There are a few women of influence in Sandoval County. A snapshot: Noreen Scott, director of economic development; Sue Cleveland, Rio Rancho Public Schools superintendent; county manager Debbie Hays and Angie Marchi, CEO for West Mesa Medical Center (WMMC). As a matter of fact, each has held her own. In 2003, for example, Marchi was responsible for a \$15 million renovation and expansion project at WMMC and Cleveland heads up the second largest school district in the state.

Though Palenick does have a few women in position on his staff, he seemingly puts little credibility in their abilities. When Palenick leaves town, he appoints city attorney James Babin (another white male) as acting city manager. Never mind that Peggy McCarthy is his assistant.

Of course, the best candidate should be hired to replace Chismar. That goes without saying. It could be yet another white male, but for the sake of a bit more office diversity at city hall, let's hope not. Will Palenick think a bit more broadly this time? Will he consider a woman candidate, a minority or someone from the large and important Hispanic community this city, state and nation have to offer?

Time will tell, but let's hope Palenick does not ignore the obvious when making his final decision.

# Driving darkly in Pendergrass

**T**he little town of Pendergrass is an embarrassment. Week after week, it puts men with guns on a public road to stop motorists and fleece money from them. They call it “policemen” doing “traffic enforcement.”

Legalized extortion would be a better description.

Look at last month’s Pendergrass city court results. The tiny town raked in over \$31,000 from traffic fines, the vast majority of which came from stopping motorists along a two-mile stretch of highway.

It’s the Pendergrass traffic trap at work and it’s part of an on-going pattern:

- In August, Pendergrass raised \$26,944 in traffic fines from 127 people who had the misfortune to drive through the town.
- In July, it gathered \$19,780 from 112 auto drivers.
- In June, it snared \$18,584 from 90 unfortunate victims.
- In May, Pendergrass slapped 129 drivers with traffic fines for a whopping \$41,544 payday.

Add it up. That’s \$138,000 in traffic fines from 679 people since May, all in the tiny town of Pendergrass (pop. 479, not counting chickens and dogs).

Anyone want to argue that the town isn’t running an organized traffic trap?

Of course it is. The town’s action speaks for itself.

Recently, the town discovered a new weapon of choice for stopping and fining passing auto drivers — “visibility violation.”

That one will net you a \$94 fine.

In May, a new state window tint law went into effect after the state Supreme Court had ruled an earlier law unconstitutional.

In August, Pendergrass fined 47 people for having too dark of a window tint under the new law.

In September, it slapped a whopping 61 people \$94 each for having car windows which were too dark.

For a while, Pendergrass was fond of stopping and fining drivers for having an “improperly equipped vehicle.” That law is just vague enough that it can mean whatever a rogue police department wants it to mean.

All too often, that has meant you were “driving while Hispanic.” Pendergrass cops apparently don’t

like Hispanic drivers. They stop and fine a lot of folks who have Hispanic surnames. They deny such profiling, but it’s difficult to argue with the evidence.

Now, however, the fine of the moment is “visibility violation.”

It’s a flimsy excuse for a cop to have “probable cause” to stop a car and put a light meter against your window.

“Sorry sir, you owe Pendergrass \$94 for having a dark window.”

Outrageous.

But let’s not just blame the cops. They’re doing what they’re told to do by the Pendergrass City Council, which is the real genesis of this problem. In its quest for easy money, the town created a police department when the new bypass opened in 2002 as a way to raise funds for the city government.

The town really doesn’t need a police department. Pendergrass police seldom handle any real crime problems — those get booted over to the county sheriff’s department because the city cops are busy chasing cars with dark windows.

No, Pendergrass didn’t create its police department for public safety. It was created to put money into the city’s bank account.

And it has been wildly successful at that. As a story in this week’s newspaper states, the town is again number one in the state in per capita traffic fine income.

That’s really something to be proud of. The leaders of Pendergrass can erect a sign and claim to be “Number 1” at something.

That is, after all, what underlies this entire issue: Pendergrass’ leaders who have a huge inferiority complex. They want to be a big dog on the block rather than a little mutt.

And like many little mutts, they run and bite everyone who passes by in an attempt to get attention and project an aura of being a big deal.

That’s why Pendergrass leaders don’t care if the town’s police department stops dozens of people and issues silly fines. They want the money because they believe having money will make them a big dog and earn them respect.

It won’t.

And the irony is, by abusing citizens with its outrageous traffic trap, Pendergrass leaders are losing respect and look more mutt-like than ever.



**Mike Buffington**

Editor,  
*The Jackson Herald*

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October 12, 2005

## FROM THE JUDGE

**The writer of this editorial uses the argumentative form very effectively in laying out the problem of a traffic trap in the tiny town of Pendergrass.**

**This carefully researched and well-written editorial explains how Pendergrass has filed the town’s coffers with traffic fine money. The evidence is presented clearly including the fact that the tiny town is number one in the state in per capita traffic fine money. The town’s population is 479.**

**The writer blames the problem on the town council noting that it created a police department to put money in its bank account and not for public safety. It did so, according to the writer, because the town’s leaders have an “inferiority complex.”**

**The writer ends by pointing out that the town has lost the respect of others. The editorial effectively shames the town and its leaders.**



**Lisa Joy**

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**November 16, 2005**

**FROM THE JUDGE**

**This editorial uses the persuasive form after citing an earlier news story explaining that many former patients of a local mental institution make their home in the community after they are discharged.**

**The editorial seeks to convince readers that attitudes towards the mentally ill have changed. The writer uses logic, suggestion, inference, and a little psychology to do this effectively.**

**The writer in this well-organized editorial relates to the local mental institution and praises readers for their understanding of the mentally ill and what can be done to help them.**

**At the end the writer makes a gentle reminder to readers that their character is measured by how they treat the most vulnerable members of society.**

**The approach used is most effective.**

# Changing attitudes towards the mentally ill

**P**onoka Town Councillor Jack Surbey in the story "Promoting Ponoka as easy as 1-2-3" in this week's *Ponoka News* raised an important point. He said when many of the patients at Alberta Hospital Ponoka (AHP) leave the institution, they make Ponoka their home. In turn, he said the community embraces them.

Former AHP patients often find employment in Ponoka and become productive members of society. There are local organizations and community support programs that provide housing, counseling as well as employment, life and social skills training.

As a community, Ponoka is leading the way in helping change attitudes towards the mentally ill. Maybe what makes local residents more understanding and compassionate towards the mentally ill is their longstanding exposure to them. Generations of local family members have worked at AHP since it opened in the early 1900s. Through the decades, descendants of employees have followed in their parents' steps, pursuing careers in the psychiatric field. As well, many Ponokans have long had experience with the mentally ill on a day-to-day basis in the community. They see firsthand that many of the stereotypes perpetuated in the media — that portray patients as violent, dangerous or unintelligent — are untrue. Certainly all of this may have provided many Ponokans with a unique perspective, sensitivity, and compassion for the mentally ill.

According to the International Labour Organization (2000), a study conducted in 1996 by B. Wciorka claimed that people who have had experience with mentally ill persons tend to be more sympathetic than those with no personal experience. But progress in changing attitudes towards the mentally ill has been slow. In fact, society has made more inroads on changing the stigma and attitudes towards AIDS than on changing the misperceptions of the mentally ill.

Mental illness is more common than we may realize. Over six million Canadians, or one in five, are affected by mental illness ranging from the more serious forms such as schizophrenia and manic depression to the less serious anxiety and phobias. Worldwide, there are over 400 million people suffering with mental illness.

Society should not be afraid of mental illness. It is treatable with medication, counseling, stress management and in more serious cases, hospitalization.

Mental illness must be considered an illness just as is diabetes or cancer.

But the stigma of mental illness is still prevalent today. This only adds an unnecessary burden to those suffering a mental illness and to their families because, often, the stigma attached to mental illness is the hardest part of the illness to cope with.

To end this stigma we must first work on changing our attitude towards the mentally ill. The World Health Organisation (WHO) characterizes stigma as a disgrace or disapproval, a mark of shame that results in individuals being shunned or rejected by others. This may lead to discrimination and harassment against the mentally ill, for example in their workplace, which could make them lose their job and cause them to live in substandard housing or become homeless.

Many mentally ill individuals may experience isolation as they are rejected by society and often subjected to being stared at, laughed at or called names. This only lowers their self-esteem and confidence, which further deteriorates their mental health.

Families of the mentally ill also suffer. They may not accept the illness of their loved one due to feelings of guilt and shame. Because of this they may not seek critical support and the family unit ends up being put under increased strain. So an important first step in changing society's attitudes towards the mentally ill is for families to accept the mental illness of their loved one.

We must never stop challenging public attitudes towards the mentally ill and there are things, as individuals, that we can all do to help. Realize that if a person acts strangely, it is a symptom of his/her illness just as a sneeze could be a symptom of a flu or allergy. If you know someone who is mentally ill, learn what you can about the illness so you can understand his/her strange behaviour. Be kind and considerate. Provide support to those you know are struck with a mental illness. Encourage the mentally ill or their families to get help.

Think about how you react when you encounter someone you know is mentally ill. Do you avoid him/her? Are you uncomfortable? Are you rude? Or are you compassionate, kind and gentle?

A true measure of someone's character is how he/she treats the most vulnerable members of our society.

# A more profound reason to celebrate Father's Day



**Carl Conley**

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June 17, 2005

## **FROM THE JUDGE**

**Using Father's Day as a peg, this editorial uses the interpretative form to focus attention on the environment, namely the earth.**

**The writer takes readers by their hands and leads them into the editorial, gradually building a strong case for man to think about how he changes the earth with his "pell-mell methods."**

**The message is clear and simple. Readers should use Father's Day to pause and reflect and to develop a better understanding of earth's natural contributions.**

**The writer emphasizes the importance of gaining a better understanding of how the earth functions so that we can continue to harvest its abundance before we destroy it.**

**The editorial ends reminding readers that they are "the guardians of this sacred place" and that their choices will determine the future of generations yet to come.**

**W**hile Sunday is Father's Day and dad certainly deserves recognition for his contributions to the family life of America, a startling new discovery has kept me focused on Mother Earth this past week.

The venom of an obscure marine cone snail found in tropical waters off the coast of Australia holds the promise to relieve the most difficult forms of pain to treat. The venom has shown potential for treating pain generated inside the body, associated with damage to nerves in conditions including surgery, cancer, AIDS, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, shingles and sciatica.

Why is this so important you may well ask? If for no other reason than to remind us all that the mysteries of our planet are far from exhausted. The answers to many of humanities most pressing problems lie outside of man in the wonders of our nature. That is why the preservation of habitat for creatures other than man must start taking on an even greater role in man's plans for Earth.

We focus so well on short-term goals like building housing projects or constructing new oil fields that we forget the only real wealth is our health. Without that nothing else matters. And if we really take a hard inventory it's readily apparent that everything that generates health comes from the natural life of our planet. From the combined movement of the skies and oceans comes purified air fit to breathe. And from the percolation of ground water through clean soil comes the life sustaining waters. From the actions of sunlight upon the seeds in fertile ground springs forth the food that nurtures our bodies.

Building another shopping mall only covers up this fertility. Another chemical plant destroys the filters of good earth and global warming coupled with ozone depletion threaten the very lungs of the planet.

Right now, in Washington and Oregon, a battle is being fought that illustrates without reservation how our twisted concept of caregiver reads. The wild salmon of the Pacific Northwest are dying at an unprecedented rate. Many believe they will be gone in a decade. Know why? Because we are depriving the fish of water! By constructing dams and rerouting the water flow of the rivers, we have practically

ended a cycle that has fed people for thousands of years. And what's our answer? We build an ever-increasing number of "fish farms" to replace the wild sources. But already there's trouble with this approach. Salmon raised in contained areas develop diseases and sometimes mutate into inedible versions of their free running cousins. Once again, a classic example of our inability to duplicate the working of nature on a grand scale.

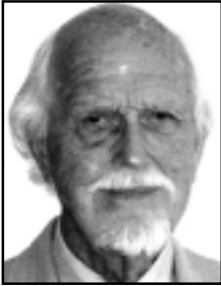
We are brilliant at engineering immediate solutions to problems but fail miserably when asked to do nothing but protect what has already been given to us. As innovators we appear invincible; as stewards pitiful.

Why do we do it? Is it because we think we can rebuild the earth better than the way she already is? If asked, nobody would agree with this statement yet by our actions it is being proved truer as the years pass by.

If we continue our pell-mell methods, one day we may wake up to a world that is as bleak as what our science fiction writers would have us accept. Where the only thing we see is an endless row of machines working in nightmarish fashion to extract air, water and nutrients for our survival. Where the very elements that flowed so bountifully in our natural world are reduced to so many pieces in an erector set. A world where the pain easing cone snail long ago passed into extinction.

If you believe Our Father created the heaven and the earth, then here is a more profound reason to celebrate Father's Day. A tip of the hat, a pause for reflection and a moment of reverence for the Creator who thought so much of us that he placed on this frail and fragile globe the solutions to every problem we'll ever have. There's only one caveat, we have to develop our spiritual side natures commensurate with our all consuming material natures to survive long enough to harvest the abundance before we destroy it with our presumptive arrogance. Perhaps our Native Americans expressed it best:

Will you ever begin to understand the meaning of the soil beneath your very feet? From a grain of sand to a great mountain, all is sacred. Yesterday and tomorrow exist eternally upon this continent. We are the guardians of this sacred place and in our choices lie the future of all coming generations.



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December 14, 2005

**FROM THE JUDGE**

This editorial uses the argumentative form in tackling local politics and especially the upcoming county board elections.

The editorial argues logically that good candidates should file. It first lists four qualifications that successful candidates usually have, but the writer with more than three decades of covering elections adds five essential qualifications.

The writer urges persons with all or most of the “essential qualifications” to become candidates. As a kicker, however, the writer adds that if they are elected they will be educated beyond their intelligence.

The underlining theme is that better qualified candidates should apply. They should understand county government and how it functions, have some knowledge of county finances, have an open mind and a willingness to put politics aside, have the time and energy to do the job, and realize that state and federal grants are not a free lunch.

The editorial is clearly written with good substance and logic.

# The reality of Pike County politics

**S**o both political parties are having a problem finding candidates for county offices in 2006. It's not surprising.

With only a few exceptions, history proves that the essential qualifications for election to Pike county offices are four in number:

1. Lifelong residence in the county.
2. A familiar and recognizable name.
3. A big family and an abundance of relatives, both of your own and your spouse's.
4. Membership in lots of organizations.

Anything else is secondary. This may be a harsh appraisal, but it is a proven reality. If you try to challenge it as a candidate you have an uphill tussle.

As for the candidates for the county board, certain qualifications should ideally prevail. I write from 34 years' experience covering county boards as a news reporter in two Illinois counties, including Pike, and eight years as a Pike county board member, including four as chairman. Based on that record, I can say the essential qualifications of a

county board member are five in number:

1. A prior knowledge of county government and how it functions.
2. Some prior basic knowledge of income and outgo or revenue and expense — call it what you will, preferably gained from personal experience.
3. An open mind and a willingness to put politics aside in reaching a decision.
4. The time and energy to attend board and committee meetings, often boring and non-productive.
5. Recognition of the fact that grants and money from state and federal sources, however seductive and awe inspiring, are not a free lunch and sooner or later come from a taxpayer's pocket.

If you meet all of these qualifications, or at least most of them, by all means throw your hat in the ring and enter the arena. If elected, you'll be educated beyond your intelligence.

## Editorial forms

By David Dary

**A**n editorial is an expression of opinion, which usually comments on current events. Editorials may criticize, praise, or simply discuss the actions of some public official or group. In style, it is much like an essay since it reflects the personality of the author. Whether an editorial includes an opinion depends upon the purpose for which it is written and the form it takes. Since the 19th century, six basic forms have existed.

**Informative Editorial** — which usually restates the facts of a news story or event and tells or explains a particular occurrence or series of related happenings. Such editorials are sometimes used to lay the groundwork for future editorials when a newspaper is still researching a subject and is not positive what position it will take.

**Interpretative Editorial** — This form usually presents with brevity the facts of a particular event, as in the case of an Informative Editorial, but then tells the reader what is the real, vital, and perhaps hidden significance of the event, and what the event will mean to the readers. Such an editorial often offers a conclusion for the reader and may advocate a line of action that the paper believes should be taken.

**Argumentative Editorial** — This form is often the most difficult to research and write. It usually

takes an upcoming event such as an election, an appointment to public office, and so forth and argues logically what will happen from cause to effect. Such editorials require substantial logic. They must contain substance and clarity of reason. Often, facts are not too readily available for the subjects covered. Such editorials sometimes take the form of a prediction by the newspaper.

**Call-for-Action Editorial** — This editorial usually states a problem or situation and then calls for action, detailing the solution. It is the easiest to research and write, but it also is often abused. Too many papers, when first editorializing, bombard their readers with pleas and after pleas, call for decisive action. Readers can become deaf to the calls and the editorializing efforts of the paper are shattered.

**Persuasive Editorial** — This form is something called “sozft-sell.” If a problem does not need immediate action, the paper may seek to convince by suggestion, inference, and thoughtful psychology. In such cases, the writer must be subtle and somewhat sophisticated in his or her writing approach.

**Entertaining Editorial** — This form offers a paper the opportunity to have fun. Satire, humor, and comedy in the news can be the subject for such editorials whose sole purpose is to entertain. This form requires a good writer with imagination.

Some editorials combine parts of the different forms to achieve their goal.

# grassroots editor



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