

grassroots editor



*A journal
for newspeople*

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of Weekly Newspaper Editors**

2008 Golden Quill & Golden Dozen Awards



Editorial skills and courage exemplified by winners
of the ISWNE contest

and the

The 33rd Annual Gene Cervi Award

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2008 Golden Quill contest and Eugene Cervi Award

This year's Golden Quill winner got her first reporting job at her parents' Adirondack weekly newspaper, *The Lake Placid News*, in 1975.

Melissa Hale-Spencer's father, Ed Hale, a newspaperman from the old school, taught her how to write by editing her work with a thick, black copy pencil. She grew up believing words could change the world.

For the last 20 years, Hale-Spencer has worked at *The Altamont Enterprise*, where she has won many awards for her work from the New York Press Association, ranging from columns and editorials to in-depth news and features. She won ISWNE's Golden Dozen award in 1999, 2002, and 2005.

ISWNE received 100 Golden Quill entries this year. The 12 best are gathered together as the Golden Dozen. The summer issue of *Grassroots Editor* traditionally contains these editorials along with comments from the judge. It is an opportunity to see the quality of commentary in the weekly press.

Burt and Ursula Freireich, who owned and operated the *Youngtown News* and *Sun City Sun* in Arizona from 1960 to 1984, are the recipients of the 2008 Eugene Cervi Award. Burt had been a sports writer with *The Phoenix Gazette* but dreamed of owning his own paper. The *News-Sun* became the *Daily News-Sun* in 1977, publishing six days a week.

The Golden Dozen

The judge's comments & About the judge

By Ben Burns..... Page 3

Golden Quill Winner

We, the people, are responsible for what our government does
By Melissa Hale-Spencer, Editor, *The Altamont Enterprise*, June 14, 2007.....Page 4

An explanation from the winner

By Melissa Hale-Spencer, Editor, *The Altamont Enterprise* Page 5

Time to stop fighting the Civil War

By Mike Buffington, Editor, *The Jackson Herald*, March 21, 2007..... Page 6

Parole is not for everyone

By Gisele McKnight, Editor, *Kings County Record*, December 11, 2007 Page 7

The miner's fish

By Bill Schanen, Publisher, *Ozaukee Press*, July 12, 2007..... Page 8

Would a Wasatch Front gas leak attract so little response?

By John Hales, Managing editor, *The Sanpete Messenger*, November 21, 2007 Page 9

Just what we need

By Fred Hatfield, Editor, *Yarmouth Vanguard*, March 27, 2007..... Page 10

Top 10 reasons to vote

By George Brown, Publisher and editor, *The Beaumont News*, October 12, 2007..... Page 11

Falling Star

By R. Scott Moxley, Staff writer, *OC Weekly*, November 2, 2007 Page 12

Coronation, a seniors haven

By Joyce Webster, Publisher, *Coronation Review*, October 22, 2007 Page 13

Wilenchik's a Liar, and There's More

By Michael Lacey, Executive editor, *Phoenix New Times*, November 15, 2007..... Page 14

What's a person worth?

By Richard Mostyn, *Yukon News*, July 18, 2007 Page 15

City of Medford plan to narrow Cedar Street is a dumb idea

By Brian Wilson, News editor, *The Star News*, May 17, 2007 Page 16

The Gene Cervi Award

Burt and Ursula FreireichPage 17

A few words from the couple's supportersPage 19

Gene Cervi past winnersPage 19

Golden Quill Winners

1961-2008

- 1961 Hal DeCell**
Deer Creek Pilot, Rolling Fork, Miss.
- 1962 Don Pease**
Oberlin (Ohio) News Tribune
- 1963 Hazel Brannon Smith**
Lexington (Miss.) Advertiser
- 1964 Mrs. R.M.B. Hicks**
Dallas (Pa.) Post
- 1965 Robert E. Fisher**
Crossett (Ark.) News Observer
- 1966 Owen J. McNamara**
Brookline (Mass.) Chronicle-Citizen
- 1967 Alvin J. Remmenga**
Cloverdale (Calif.) Reveille
- 1968 Henry H. Null IV**
The Abington Journal, Clarks Summit, Pa.
- 1969 Dan Hicks Jr.**
Monroe County Democrat, Madisonville, Tenn.
- 1970 Richard Taylor**
Kennett News & Advertiser,
Kennett Square, Pa.
- 1971 Edward DeCourcy**
Newport (N.H.) Argus Champion
- 1972 C. Peter Jorgenson**
The Advocate, Arlington, Mass.
- 1973 Robert Estabrook**
Lakeville (Conn.) Journal
- 1974 Phil McLaughlin**
The Miami Republican, Paola, Kan.
- 1975 Betsy Cox**
The Madison County Newsweek,
Richmond, Ky.
- 1976 Peter Bodley**
Coon Rapids Herald, Anoka, Minn.
- 1977 Rodney A. Smith**
Gretna (Va.) Gazette
- 1978 Robert Estabrook**
Lakeville (Conn.) Journal
- 1979 R. W. van de Velde**
The Valley Voice, Middlebury, Vt.
- 1980 Garrett Ray**
Independent Newspapers, Littleton, Colo.
- 1981 Janelou Buck**
Sebring (Fla.) News
- 1982 Albert Scardino**
The Georgia Gazette, Savannah, Ga.
- 1983 Francis C. Zanger**
Bellows Falls (Vt.) News-Review
- 1984 John McCall**
The SandPaper, Ocean City, N.J.
- 1985 William F. Schanen III**
Ozaukee Press, Port Washington, Wis.
- 1986 Henry G. Gay**
Shelton-Mason County Journal,
Shelton, Wash.
- 1987 Ellen L. Albanese**
The Country Gazette, Franklin, Mass.
- 1988 Michael G. Lacey**
The New Times, Phoenix, Ariz.
- 1989 Tim Redmond**
Bay Guardian, San Francisco, Calif.
- 1990 Bill Lueders**
Isthmus, Madison, Wis.
- 1991 Stuart Taylor Jr.**
Legal Times, Washington, D.C.
- 1992 Hope Aldrich**
The Santa Fe (N.M.) Reporter
- 1993 Michael D. Myers**
Granite City (Ill.) Press-Record
- 1994 Jim MacNeill**
The Eastern Graphic, Montague, PEI, Canada
- 1995 Brian J. Hunhoff**
The Missouri Valley Observer, Yankton, S.D.
- 1996 Patricia Calhoun**
Denver Westword, Denver, Colo.
- 1997 Tim Giago**
Indian Country Today, Rapid City, S.D.
- 1998 Gary Sosniecki**
Webster County Citizen, Seymour, Mo.
- 1999 Jeff McMahan**
New Times, San Luis Obispo, Calif.
- 2000 Jeff McMahan**
New Times, San Luis Obispo, Calif.
- 2001 William F. Schanen III**
Ozaukee Press, Port Washington, Wis.
- 2002 Paul MacNeill**
The Eastern Graphic, Montague, PEI, Canada
- 2003 Jeremy Waltner**
Freeman Courier, Freeman, S.D.
- 2004 Charles Gay**
Shelton-Mason County Journal, Shelton, Wash.
- 2005 Bill Lueders**
Isthmus, Madison, Wis.
- 2006 Gary Sosniecki**
The Vandalia Leader, Vandalia, Mo.
- 2007 Lori Evans**
Homer News, Homer, Alaska
- 2008 Melissa Hale-Spencer**
The Altamont Enterprise, Altamont, New York

The judge's comments

By Ben Burns

Getting the opportunity to judge the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors' Golden Quill contest confirms my belief that good journalism is alive, well and thriving in small towns and suburban communities across North America. The daunting part of the task was to find only a dozen that deserved special recognition out of 100 entries. On a first read through I discovered that I still had more than 80 entries in contention. I was greatly impressed by the consistent quality of the writing. While some had grammatical or syntax

flaws that allowed me to winnow the competition, there were no bad or poorly written editorials or columns. The writers were all going about the business of making government work by civilly calling on its representatives to perform their duties.

The writers are not namby-pamby editorialists who conclude that a problem bears watching. They tell it like it is and like it should be in the communities they serve and they take no prisoners. The risk is much greater at this level than it would be at a large metro. The subjects of editorials are not held at arm's length, but are the folks that the editorialists may see every day. It is considerably easier to toss thunder

bolts from Mt. Olympus than it is to constructively criticize a person you might run into at the local grocery store the next day.

Whether it is the local sheriff, city or county officials, public administrators, school leaders or the public at large, the writers deal directly and forthrightly with issues ranging from human compassion to calling to task official misconduct.

A century ago Finley Peter Dunne wrote "A newspaper's job is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable."

Ben Burns can be contacted at aa5200@wayne.edu.

About the judge

Ben Burns is director of the journalism program and a professor in the Department of Communication at Wayne State University. He teaches Media Management & Ethics, Investigative Reporting and Feature Writing.

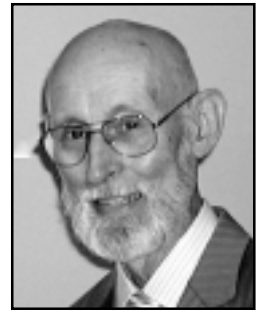
He spent 30 years in the newspaper business in posts ranging from political writer and investigative reporter to play reviewer and auto writer. He was executive editor of *The Detroit News*, which was the nation's sixth largest daily when he left in 1988.

Burns has been a reporter, editor, general manager or publisher of more than 30 daily and weekly newspapers in five states.

He has a B.A. in journalism from Michigan State

University and an M.A. in history from the same school. He is a graduate of the executive business program at the University of Michigan. He has edited books for Democratic congressmen and ghostwritten for presidential candidates and Republican U.S. senators.

He has won awards for his work in promoting newsroom diversity. He has lectured at a half-dozen colleges and universities on media ethics and media management. He is co-author of *Michigan Media Law: A Newsroom Guide*, which is being prepared for a third edition. He has been a Pulitzer juror twice and is named in three halls of fame — two for journalism and one for high school sports. He writes a weekly human interest column for the *Grosse Pointe News*.



Ben Burns

Golden Quill Winner



Melissa Hale Spencer

Editor,

The Altamont Enterprise

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June 14, 2007

We, the people, are responsible for what our government does

Last week, Alice Fisher, a widow with six children, was homeless because the village had turned off the water to her house. This week, the water is back on.

In between, we ran a front-page story — “Kicked out at Christmas” — that made public something Fisher and her kids had been living with since last December.

Exposing a problem can lead to a solution.

Fisher, whose home is on Gun Club Road just outside the Altamont village line, had fallen behind, way behind, on her water bill. She owed the village \$6,732 for water.

Fisher works at a day-care center and had been willing to have her wages garnished or her house mortgaged to pay the bill. The village lawyer determined the house was over mortgaged, he said, and so that would have no value.

On Thursday, the day our story ran, Richard Umholtz, president of Safe Haven, Inc., went to see Altamont’s mayor, James Gaughan, and negotiated an arrangement: Safe Haven would pay the bill, and the water would go back on. On Friday, the water was turned on.

When readers called, wanting to make donations, we referred them to Umholtz. We admire the man and his organization. Umholtz has a soft heart but the tenacity of a bulldog.

Fisher had told our reporter, Saranac Hale Spencer, “I promised my kids I wouldn’t split them up, but I ended up having to.”

Umholtz told us, “It makes perfectly logical sense to bring a family together.”

Helderberg Interfaith Community Safe Haven, based in the Hilltowns, provides temporary housing for children, adults, and families in turmoil and need. It keeps two apartments and uses local services to help those in need.

“It’s not just gimme, gimme, gimme,” said Umholtz. “People have to give back, pay what they can, and work at straightening out their problems.”

A lot of Safe Haven’s clients suffer from low self-esteem, he said, so getting them back on their feet involves helping them succeed. He tells one success story of a woman who was living in a car with her children because they had no place else to go. Now, she is happily married and she and her husband are raising the children in their own house.

Safe Haven was started nearly a decade ago when

a Westerlo minister was concerned that members of families in turmoil often felt forced to leave their rural community to go to shelters in the city.

Umholtz is hoping for more than just donations of money. He’s looking for a few good volunteers, like himself, to give their time and talents. He’s hoping to find three active board members to join the current nine — which include a lawyer, a school counselor, a local business leader, a former mayor, a retired police chief, a college president, and a retired doctor.

“We need people with brain power and sensitivity to be board members, people who can reach out and problem-solve,” said Umholtz.

As a newspaper, we can’t personally help someone like Fisher or donate to her cause. We need to remain objective to try to fairly tell all sides of a story.

Our job is to inform. We wish we could have informed the community about Fisher’s plight earlier. It wasn’t for lack of trying. Our reporter spent months chasing records, trying to piece together a story.

The mayor did not return our repeated calls this week as we attempted to detail what led up to shutting off Fisher’s water. But the deputy mayor, William Aylward, made a substantial effort to answer our questions. First, he thought there had been a November or December resolution by the village board to shut off Fisher’s water.

Treasurer Catherine Hasbrouck was helpful when we went to Village Hall to look for the resolution. She searched through the files and could find no such resolution. Aylward then went to look for himself, and determined that the decision was made by the village attorney and mayor.

We also tried this week to find out when Fisher’s bill first went unpaid. Her recollection was six years ago. Our reporter talked to trustees, since the mayor wasn’t returning calls, and to the lawyer handling the case for the village; no answers were given.

Robert Freeman, executive director of the state’s Committee on Open Government, assured us this was a matter of public record. When our reporter called Village Hall for the information, Kelly Best, the office assistant, managing the office in the absence of the clerk this week, said she does not handle Freedom of Information Law requests.

“It’s not in my job description,” Best said. “This is very rude of you...It would be like my asking you about the finances of The Enterprise.”

Public records are just that; they belong to the peo-

continued on page 5

FROM THE JUDGE

"We, the people, are responsible for what our government does," exactly fulfills that charge. The newspaper pointed out the problems of an individual and called government officials to account for their handling of that problem. It is in the best tradition of journalistic opinion. It wins the Golden Quill award.

An explanation from the winner

Last Christmas, the Fisher family awoke to polyester bedspreads and unfamiliar pictures on the wall. My daughter, Saranac Hale Spencer, wrote those words last June. She's a reporter at *The Altamont Enterprise*, a weekly I've worked at for 20 years. She grew up accompanying me as I covered news stories, or waiting for me, her always-late mother, as I swept in to pick her up from school or some event.

An editorial is only as good as the reporting on which it is based. My daughter is a perceptive and persistent reporter, so I could write a convincing editorial.

I had some doubts about Saranac becoming a reporter, not about her abilities, but about her future. With a freshly-minted degree in philosophy from Cornell, couldn't she do better than the long hours and low pay that had defined her mother's career? And didn't she deserve better than the ire of public officials that often comes with the territory?

Her lede continued, "After the village shut off their water in December, the Fishers moved into a hotel on Washington Avenue where they opened presents around a \$29 Christmas tree from K-Mart."

Saranac had grown up on the old newsroom adage: Comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.

She had overheard a stray comment at a village board meeting that caused her to look further. Stonewalled by village officials, she worked doggedly to piece the story together. She discovered Alice Fisher, a widow with six children, had fallen behind on her water bill so the village cut off her water, causing her to leave her home. Her husband had died in a tractor accident while working at a local orchard.

Saranac wrote about the Fishers' Christmas dinner. Alice Fisher, a day-care worker, had cooked a small ham. "We ate very quiet, very solemn," she said of Christmas dinner with her children. "I heard a lot of complaints from them, but the quietness is almost

worse."

The public had not been aware of the Fishers' dilemma until we published Saranac's front-page story.

After the story ran, we received many phone calls from people wanting to help. We also received a visit from the mayor who was unhappy with the coverage. The editorial gave us a way to let citizens know about their government's shortcomings and to highlight the work of a worthwhile low-profile organization in their midst—Safe Haven, which provides temporary housing for families in turmoil.

I wish the story had a happier ending. Although Alice Fisher's water was turned back on the week after our first article ran, she was too deeply in debt to keep her house.

There are rarely complete and satisfying solutions to complex problems like poverty and unresponsive government, but I'm gratified my daughter has chosen a profession that chips away at those problems and others.

Thorough and fair reporting can make activists of citizens. Weekly papers often provide news that can't be found elsewhere. Who else covers the inner workings of local government and the ways it affects our citizens?

Thomas Jefferson, a chief author of the grand experiment of modern democracy, wrote in a letter in 1787: "The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

So, really, I couldn't think of a better, more essential job for my daughter than that of a newswoman. We'll keep the presses rolling.

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We, the people from page 4

ple. It's our job to ask questions, and find answers, about matters of public concern.

Before the office assistant hung up on our reporter, Best said, "I'm going to get the mayor to talk to you."

That would delight us.

Certainly, citizens need to pay their bills. Government would go bankrupt if everyone was in arrears. But just as certainly, there has to be a way other than throwing a widow and her children out in the cold just before Christmas.

Time and time again, on these pages, we run notices of events to raise funds for those in need and over the years we have been gratified by the response.

Mayor Gaughan himself wrote in a village brochure, "We are very fortunate in Altamont. Our community is small enough that we really *can* look out for one another and help each other."

Alice Fisher told us last week, "I've never been homeless in my life. It's embarrassing."

We should all be embarrassed. As members of a democracy, we, the people, are responsible for what our government does.

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Mike Buffington

**Editor,
The Jackson Herald**

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March 21, 2007

FROM THE JUDGE

This entry reflects the best writing among the 100 entries in the contest. It is an eloquent exposition of the ongoing tragedy of the U.S. Civil War and the need to step away from memorializing it. The writer takes you to the scene of Civil War battlefields and prison camps and correctly asks why some southerners insist on preserving the myth that the war was “a noble cause.”

Time to stop fighting the Civil War

I've walked the fields at Gettysburg under the moonlight when the ghosts of dead soldiers rose in the mist. I've trod the hills at Manassas and heard its canons roar faintly in the distance. I've stood inside the stockade at Andersonville Prison where the thirsty-dead still haunt the grassy fields.

In these places is found the anvil on which the South was forged during the Civil War. The fiery kiln of that conflict seared not just men and flesh, but also bent and burnt the very culture of the Old South.

From its ashes rose not just the industrial New South, but also a mythology of the “Lost Cause” and with it, a lingering psychological scar that has yet to heal.

We, the natives of the South whose ancestors took up arms in that most un-civil of conflicts, have yet to stop fighting that war. The last living Civil War soldier died in the 1940s. Yet to many Southerners, the soldiers never died and the South never laid down arms at Appomattox.

That much is evident in two recent legislative proposals in the Georgia General Assembly that reflect both ends of this spectrum. One proposal is for the State of Georgia, as a government, to apologize for its official role in perpetuating slavery and the slave trade. The other is a bill that would name April as “Confederate History and Heritage Month.”

It seems to me that there should be some kind of statute of limitations on these issues, a time at which we stop picking at the Civil War scab and let the past be the past and the dead remain buried.

It was President Lincoln's desire that the nation be reunited at the end of the Civil War. It was, but for some, in name only.

Beneath the legal unification, the South and its core institutions continued to resist real cultural, social and political reconciliation for another 100 years. Not until the 1960s and the upheaval of the Civil Rights movement did many Southern institutions begin to loosen their grip on the mythology of the Lost Cause.

In the 1960s, it began to dawn on many Traditional White Southerners that there were really two histories of the Confederacy —there was the White Southern

history that held to the nobility of the Cause as it had been glorified in “Gone With The Wind” — and there was the Black Southern history that carried the stigma of ancestors having been forced into slavery and the lingering Jim Crow laws that separated them and their families from the rest of society.

Much has changed since that 1960s movement. The rise of a growing Black middle class has profoundly reshaped the African-American culture from its past of poverty and cultural isolation. And many white Southerners have left their rural, agrarian roots for the industrialization of urban and suburban culture, in the process also leaving behind many old attitudes about race.

Yet from both groups are those who continue to argue about the past and who view any kind of real political or cultural reconciliation as historical treason.

I'm as curious a history buff as anyone. Several years ago, I logged hundreds of hours researching my own family's Civil War roots and those of my Confederate kin who took up arms in the war. I've visited many Civil War sites and attended battle reenactments with my kids. And some of my ancestors did own slaves, although most were just dirt-poor farmers who lived little above the subsistence of slaves.

All these things are historically interesting, but whatever it may have been, that era was not glorious. While the forge of battle did lead to some noble acts, as a whole the Civil War and Southern secession was this nation's most tragic time. It bathed the South in the blood of dying boys and gave rise to the cries of hungry women and children.

It's time, indeed past time, for us to reconcile on these issues; to reconcile psychologically the present with the reality of the past, and to reconcile politically as Black and White citizens who share a common, if different cultural heritage.

Will the two proposals now before the Georgia Legislature do that? Or will they serve only as two opposing political poles around which to gather our lingering resentments and cultural myths?

Mike Buffington can be contacted at mike@mainstreetnews.com.

Parole is not for everyone

The Canadian justice system is showing a few cracks and dents lately, particularly in the area of parole.

Robert Latimer was denied day parole last week after a parole board said he did not display the proper “insight” into his crime. His crime, by the way, was the compassionate killing of his 12-year-old daughter, Tracy, who suffered from cerebral palsy, weighed 40 pounds, was in constant pain, had the mental age of a three-month-old, and was facing yet another surgery, this time to remove a thigh bone from her permanently-dislocated hip.

His first bid for day parole, which would have allowed him to live in a halfway house, was denied because he refuses to say he’s sorry for what he did. If that’s what gets you out of a Canadian prison, Latimer will never get out because he’s not sorry for what he did. He’s still glad he did it.

The parole board, in effect, asked him to say that he’d much rather have seen Tracy continue to suffer excruciating pain over the 14 years since his crime. He was unwilling to say that, so he must sit in prison for another two years until he is next allowed to apply for parole, and even then there are no guarantees, especially if he has not gained any “insight” into his crime.

However, having someone express the proper insight into their crime is not a condition of parole, and not the foundation upon which the parole board should have based its decision. The criterion for awarding parole is the answer to this question: does Robert Latimer pose a risk to society? Anyone with a brain will say Latimer, a 54-year-old Saskatchewan farmer, is not your usual criminal, is not at risk to re-offend, and no one should be wary of years in prison. By contrast, look down the road to Apohaqui. In a meat shop on George Street in the village lives a convicted drug dealer who was sentenced to six years in prison back in 2002. Because neither his life nor his crime was considered violent and he met the criteria,

George Moore was granted accelerated parole, something our criminal justice system dreamed up to get convicts out of prison after serving only one-sixth of their sentence.

This gift of the criminal justice system was afforded Moore despite the fact that the estimated \$1 million in drugs found on his property included cocaine that was 96.6 per cent pure, indicating there were few stops between out-of-country suppliers and Moore’s meat shop. And this despite the fact that dozens of people quite probably perpetrated innumerable crimes in order to afford Moore’s product. And this also in spite of the untold suffering, health effects, poverty, and addiction that come from buying and using the sort of product Moore was selling.

Moore stayed in prison one year, spent another year in a halfway house, and was subsequently released on parole for the remainder of his six year sentence.

Eleven days ago, it was déjà vu as his meat shop was once again raided. His parole suspended, Moore is back in prison awaiting new drug trafficking charges.

Now both men are in prison — Robert Latimer for at least another two years while he gains “insight” into his crime, and George Moore while police build a new drug case against him. One man sought to lessen his daughter’s pain, the other sought to make a living by illegal and immoral means. One man has been denied parole; the other received it at an accelerated rate.

Should Moore be found guilty of new drug charges, that whole concept of parole being granted to those deemed least likely to re-offend will be a bit of a joke, wouldn’t you say?

The problem is, Robert Latimer has nothing to laugh about.

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Gisele McKnight

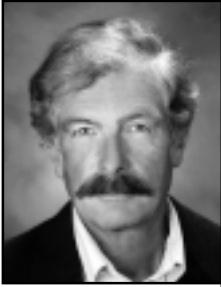
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Kings County Record**

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December 11, 2007

FROM THE JUDGE

The editorial compares and contrasts the handling of two cases for parole and suggests the justice system needs to take a hard look at how it handles such applications. One case involves a loving father and a mercy killing and the other the case of a convicted drug dealer who returned to his trade shortly after being paroled. It is well written and makes a strong case for a compassionate and understanding parole board.



Bill Schanen

**Publisher,
Ozaukee Press**

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July 12, 2007

FROM THE JUDGE

The preservation of the Great Lakes and the protection of them from harm is both a local and an international story. This editorial focuses on a local problem — the disappearance of the chub population from Lake Michigan, but it properly puts it in the larger context of the federal government's need to act to preserve the incredible water resource from invasive foreign species.

The miner's fish

The sudden decline of the once robust chub is a warning that the flow of invasive organisms into the lakes must be stopped now

The humble chub is an unlikely candidate to be the miner's canary of Lake Michigan. This small, deep-water fish has been a sturdy survivor, sustaining commercial fishing for generations while other fish species faltered. But now — suddenly — the chub appears to be expiring. Like the yellow bird whose death was once a warning that the air of a mine shaft was unfit to support life, the decline of the chub is a sign that Lake Michigan is no longer fit to sustain the native fish that have been symbols of its vitality for eons.

There have been other indications that the lake is in trouble, but the suddenness of the failure of the chub to maintain a healthy population drives the message home with alarming urgency.

It was only a few months ago that the Ewig Bros. smokehouse in Port Washington was processing 3,000 pounds of chubs a week. It was only a few years ago that a commercial fishing tug left Port Washington daily for the 25-mile run to fishing grounds where gill nets yielded generous catches of chubs.

Fishermen have seen the lake trout decline to the point where it is no longer commercially fished and have witnessed the decimation of the perch population. But at least they had the dependable chub. Now even that once hardy and resilient fish is endangered. The chub, of course, is famous as Port Washington smoked fish, and connoisseurs have flocked here throughout much of the city's history to buy the rich, golden-skinned treat. Not now. Ewig's, the city's last fish processor, has no chubs to smoke because there are so few in the lake that fishermen can't afford to set nets for them.

Don't look for a mystery here. There is no inexplicable natural cycle at work. Humans did this — in plain sight, in front of the world. And no one did anything to stop it. Invasive, predatory creatures were allowed to be brought in the bilges of ocean-going ships to the Great Lakes where they laid waste to native life.

The likely explanation for the sudden decline of the chub is the recent arrival of quagga mussel, a larger cousin of the zebra mussel that feeds on the microscopic crustaceans that are essential nourish-

ment for chubs. Without adequate food, the chubs are susceptible to a yet another invader, a fish killing virus from foreign waters.

This crime is made worse by the fact that it could have been stopped. The influx of invasive species via the St. Lawrence Seaway was identified years ago. Nothing was done about it. What regulations existed were not enforced. Even now, though pressed by an outcry finally loud enough to be heard in Washington, Congress dithers when it should be enacting iron-clad restrictions requiring vessels entering the Great Lakes to sterilize bilge and ballast water.

Failing that, the alternative should be to close the St. Lawrence Seaway. After all, what's more important — the survival of the ecosystem of the Great Lakes or the economic impact of international shipping, which is already in decline?

There is no way to cleanse the lake of invasive species that are already here. But at least the door can be closed to the new invaders that are waiting in the Black Sea and elsewhere for their free ride to the Great Lakes.

The sad story of the chub matters not just because it is another nail in the coffin of the commercial fishing industry or because it deprives people of the opportunity to eat commercially caught lake fish. It is important most of all because it represents the shameful degradation of a wondrous natural resource.

Lake Michigan is a still a thing of beauty sometimes, ironically, even more so than in the past, thanks to water clarity resulting from filtering by billions of mussels (which will of course, as summer wears on, result in hideous algae blooms). And the enjoyment it provides to boaters and to anglers pursuing the lake's abundant stocked game fish continues to make it a grand recreational resource.

The shame is that the beauty and enjoyment mask the fact Lake Michigan is in imminent danger of becoming a barren shell able to sustain little more than put-and-take fish and exotic creatures that don't belong here.

A greater shame would be the continued failure of the federal government to act, even at this late hour, to try to save the lakes.

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Would a Wasatch Front gas leak attract so little response?



John Hales

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November 21, 2007

FROM THE JUDGE

Standing up for the unrepresented is in the best tradition of editorial journalism. The writer raises questions about how a rural gas leak can get ignored or under-investigated by state officials and urges the Department of Environmental Quality to force those officials to take a serious look at the problem.

We hate to play the small, rural community card, but the handling of the Gunnison gas leak almost demands it.

The length of time it has taken for officials, at the state level most notably, to appear to take the situation seriously is unconscionable, and some agencies have yet to give it the attention it deserves.

It begs the question: If something like this had happened on the Wasatch Front, how would it have been handled differently?

In July, approximately 20,000 gallons of fuel leaked out of an underground storage tank at the Gunnison Top Store.

Calls to the state's Department of Environmental Quality from business owners and residents who smelled fumes were made as early as July, yet not much was done to investigate the matter until Top Stop reported the leak on Aug. 2.

Even then, it took eight days for officials to do much of anything.

Information about the incident was not forthcoming.

Until last week, very little was said about the magnitude of the leak, but now we know it was enormous — one of the largest ever in the state.

Again, what if a leak of this magnitude had happened in Salt Lake City? Would the state have settled for being on site just a handful of days in the three-month period following the leak?

The so-called investigation by the Attorney General's office into questions surrounding the leak is hardly worth the term. The investigation in no way broached what was known by whom, and when.

When DEQ officials were in Gunnison in early

August, they heard rumors that the tank had been leaking for some time prior to July, perhaps up to two years prior. They heard rumors that Top Stop knew of the leak and did nothing about it, and worse, perhaps actively covered it up by falsifying documents.

They heard other rumors, too, but wouldn't go into the ones the press hadn't heard yet.

We have heard now from three independent sources that gas fumes were causing problems at least two years ago. Top Stop has said that the testing method it used to detect leaks can be unreliable up to 200 gallons per month. Take that over 24 months and there could have been a substantial leak even before July's 20,000-gallon leak.

But how did the AG's office investigate? By only examining the records that Top Stop itself had provided to the state. By the AG's office's own admission, there were no interviews with any local people who might have had firsthand knowledge of the rumors heard by the DEQ.

Sounds like it went something like this:

"Hey, Top Stop, we've heard 20 different people say that you spilled some gas. Did you?"

"No."

"Good enough for us."

Again, we ask, how would this have been different if the leak had happened on the Wasatch Front?

We appreciate that the DEQ has finally taken the initiative to get needed information to the city and its residents, and to provide more active oversight.

We hope the DEQ and others will join us in demanding that the AG's office take more than just a token look at the questions that have arisen.

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Fred Hatfield

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March 27, 2007

FROM THE JUDGE

Writing with humor is an art and this is perhaps the best example in the contest to make its point with a sense of the silly. It correctly suggests there are more important items that should be on the provincial agenda than declaring a pony Nova Scotia's official horse. And it leads up to a kicker that causes an involuntary chuckle in the reader and a sense of the absurdity of government.

Just what we need

When it comes to silly ideas all one has to do is follow the antics of the people elected to the House of Assembly.

Lost last week amidst the provincial budget announcement was an item from an MLA who is proposing that the province declare the Sable Island pony Nova Scotia's official horse.

Getting by for centuries now without an official horse apparently concerns this MLA. And he aims to correct such an oversight. Now get a grip here, folks. If you were compiling a list of the things this province really needs, how far down the list you have to go before you'd pencil in: "declare the Sable Island pony Nova Scotia's official horse?"

We would hope it would be well below the need for a minimum wage that gets people out of poverty. And below the need for more hospital beds.

Lower than the need for long-term care facilities.

And surely further back from fixing highways that are, well, fit for a horse.

Our Legislature, like those in other provinces, is rarely without its comedic moments but dragging this issue to the House has got to be right up there among the things we have gotten along quite nicely without

and could probably go a few more centuries without.

Is there an outcry from horse lovers out there for an official mount? If there is we've yet to hear it.

Is this the stuff of which a referendum should be held?

Are you in favour of Sunday shopping? What about declaring an official horse?

What's next? The official insect?

How about the official car?

Or would that be slighting the horses since cars have replaced them?

Will declaring an official horse really make a difference in our quality of life?

An animal that few people in the province ever see, since the vast majority of them are milling about in the sand dunes miles off our coast on an island nobody's allowed to visit.

You might as well declare an official dinosaur since you're not apt to see one of those either.

But if you're wanting to declare an official jack-ass, start looking in the House of Assembly, you're sure to find one there.

*Fred Hatfield can be contacted at editor@
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Top 10 reasons to vote

Candidates are in the home stretch in the month-long municipal election campaign that ends Oct. 15 when you go into the booth to elect a mayor and councillors.

Those candidates with the time, the political resolve and a good pair of shoes, will have knocked on thousands of doors seeking input from residents — and of course, support on Election Day.

In the short term it doesn't matter who, you elect to town council — water will still flow from your taps, garbage will continue to be collected and streets will still be plowed of snow — but still not frequently enough. The candidates we elect are pieces of an ever-changing puzzle. It takes all of the councillors and the mayor working together to accomplish their goals for the community; no single candidate can claim to be able to implement a vision for Beaumont if they don't have the support of at least half of council.

Take a close look at the candidates running for town council and make an informed decision. Don't feel that you have to vote for a full slate of six candidates. This isn't bingo; you don't need a full card for the community to win. Pick only those candidates whose vision for Beaumont aligns with yours.

Vote, because your voting power will influence the election and help to determine the community's direction.

Top 10 reasons to vote on Oct. 15

1. Your vote will make a difference in who gets elected to council. There are examples at every level of government of candidates who have won and lost by just a few votes. Yes, you can still complain even if you don't vote but you have clout on Election Day.

2. The level of local taxation depends on it. Affordable taxation may seem like an oxymoron but town councils need taxes to fuel their budgets. Loading the cost of all municipal services onto the property tax is unfair; the flip side is increased user fees. Whether services are cut or taxes increased will depend on your vote.

3. The value of your home could depend on your vote. Land designation decisions, such as the location of commercial and industrial properties and power lines, are made by town council. If you don't vote, you might not have a say in who your neighbours will be and what affect that might have on your property value.

4. The safety of your community depends on it. The level of police and fire protection is directly decided by town council. Are you satisfied with the response time of the RCMP and the volunteer fire department when an emergency strikes?

5. The environment depends on it. Recycling, municipal composting programs, diverting refuse from the landfill, and the use of pesticides in parks, how town council deals with these issues affects your family's quality of life.

6. The variety of recreation opportunities in the community depends on your vote. Beaumont residents have said time and time again that they want an indoor swimming pool. Will this be the council that comes up with a creative and affordable means of paying for it? Whether it's new parks, a community centre or an off-leash dog park, what you do with your leisure time could be affected by who gets elected Oct. 15.

7. Your health could depend on your vote. Beaumont contracts with the City of Edmonton for ambulance service and has its own community paramedic on call. Are you satisfied with the level of service? Would a locally-based ambulance be better for you and your family?

8. How traffic moves through town could depend on it. Whether Main Street through the heart of downtown becomes a four-lane thoroughfare or whether there is a bypass built to divert commuter and heavy truck traffic around Beaumont could be decided by the councillor you vote for.

9. What your neighbourhood looks like could depend on you. Population density, the mix of housing styles, the location of new businesses, speed bumps, "no left turn" signs and the planning of neighbourhood parks all hinges on your vote.

10. The future of Beaumont depends on your vote. Do want your kids to be educated in Beaumont, to move out, get a job and buy a house in Beaumont? Whether you vote will have a direct bearing on the availability of jobs and housing in town.

The decisions made by town councilors affect every aspect of life in Beaumont. If you want to make life better in Beaumont, vote on Election Day.

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George Brown

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*The Beaumont News***

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October 12, 2007

FROM THE JUDGE

Every editorial writer who has spent any significant time at the craft has written a get-out-the-vote editorial. They tend to be formulaic and are largely ignored by the reading populace. This piece takes a new look at why you should vote and what the impact on each reader personally could be if he or she doesn't vote. A very nice job.



R. Scott Moxley

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OC Weekly

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November 2, 2007

FROM THE JUDGE

The crash and burn of a high-flying public official is not news, but the writer summarizes a sheriff's career in office and where it went terribly wrong. The writer recalls early warning signs when the publication tried to get straight answers from the fallen sheriff, but was unable to do so.

Falling Star

Besides the \$700 million-per-year budget and the right to boss around 4,000 underlings, the sheriff of Orange County enjoys an undeniable perk: Everybody wants to be his friend. A weak individual with deep, unresolved emotional issues would have a hard time resisting the temptations of this weighty job. Members of the opposite sex go wide-eyed over the gold stars on his shirt collar, the badge over his chest and the pistol in his holster. Businessmen with massive yachts and private planes seek an association to enhance their reputations, or to gain secret use of departmental spy equipment. In the hope of obstructing justice; crooks are willing to pay for dinners, drinks, luxury vehicles and vacations, or simply offer old-fashioned cash bribes.

Sadly, Michael S. Carona is a deeply flawed individual. This week, the U.S. Attorney's office, in conjunction with the FBI and a federal grand jury, threw a 10-count corruption indictment at Carona, two of his former assistant sheriffs, his wife and one of his numerous mistresses. Except for a few of us who never bought Carona's glad-handing, cheap smiles and constant lies, the indictment is a tsunami for Orange County government, politics and law enforcement.

In a world of constant scandal, this still qualifies as major national news. Carona is chummy with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, who once openly considered the sheriff as a possible lieutenant-governor running mate. President George W. Bush appointed him to an elite national-security advisory board — though he has no anti-terrorist training, associates with organized-crime figures and has never made an arrest in his life.

Way before anyone was willing to listen to OC Weekly's lone drumbeat, CNN's Larry King anointed Carona "America's sheriff," and the local media abandoned watchdog roles to treat his word as gospel.

Carona is nothing if not an opportunist. Before the wind could change direction after the national TV exposure, Carona ignited rumors of a planned challenge to U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer.

National publications wondered if he was the future of the California Republican Party. The sheriff even sought Hollywood studios willing to feature him in a weekly crime-fighting reality show. He began traveling — at taxpayer expense — with an army of bodyguards that would rival the head of state of a small European nation. Department helicopters became aerial limousines for dates with women. He reneged on more than a dozen campaign promises. During his first election in 1998, Carona guaranteed he would serve no more than two four-year terms because it wasn't healthy for one person to hold such a powerful job any longer.

Our sheriff is, of course, an extraordinary skillful liar. If one-tenth of the allegations contained in the 29-page indictment are true, a devious chameleon has been running our county's criminal-justice system. We already knew, for example, the self-styled Christian-conservative sheriff prowled for extramarital sex with government secretaries, ladies in cities a plane ride away, or — how's this for class? — the wives of criminal defendants arrested by his deputies. Who can forget the photo of the young, scantily clad Russian woman in the sheriff's Moscow hotel-suite bedroom wearing little more than the official

uniform jacket the public loaned him?

It wasn't just sex on the sheriff's mind. The FBI now tells us that Carona positioned himself for bribes like a bouncer at an exclusive Hollywood nightclub. His game? Pay to play.

According to federal prosecutors, the sheriff used his public office to accept cash and other forms of bribes for years; lied to the IRS about the money; and recently attempted to get a co-conspirator, ex-Assistant, Sheriff Donald Haidl, to lie to a federal grand jury.

"The defendants schemed to get Carona elected and to corruptly use the office of sheriff to enrich themselves," according to federal prosecutors Brett A. Sagel and Kenneth B. Julian, who allege that the crime plot began in 1998. Other allegations are that Haidl, a wealthy used-car salesman, gave Carona "regular monthly payments of \$1,000," fraudulent campaign contributions, a yacht, loans, gifts, private jet trips and a luxury vacation to Lake Tahoe. FBI agents say bribes totaled more than \$350,000. In exchange, they say Haidl got appointed assistant sheriff and obtained special treatment in the Orange County Jail for his gang-rapist son, Gregory Scott Maid!

"The indictment of Mike Carona on conspiracy, witness-tampering and public-corruption charges serves to assure the public that their officials are, and will be, held accountable for their actions," said Debra D. Icing, special agent in charge of the IRS criminal-investigation division based in Los Angeles.

If convicted — and we're possibly a long way from that day — Carona faces a maximum prison term of more than 20 years.

Federal agents also revealed that both Haidl and George Jaramillo, another of Carona's assistant sheriffs, have pleaded guilty to committing federal crimes. Jaramillo, the man Carona once called his "brother for life," was convicted earlier this year in a separate state bribery investigation. He's currently serving a jail sentence in LA.

Flash back to 1999: Carona had been in office just five months. He and Jaramillo came to visit me and colleague Nick Schein at *Weekly* headquarters, then in Costa Mesa by John Wayne Airport. I'd been digging into payments businessmen were making to a secret Carona account in exchange for actual sheriff's badges and who knows whatever else. The arrangement stunk, and I told him so. The sheriff assured me that neither he nor his department would ever be for sale to the highest bidder. He talked about the importance of open, honest government. He asked us if we wanted helicopter rides. "He asked us to work closely with him if we pursued corruption stories involving himself or his department.

I didn't care about helicopter rides or his sweet-sounding words and very real charm. I wanted him to prove to me he was clean by revealing the identities of the people who'd contributed to his secret account. No, he repeatedly stated.

Why not? I asked.

Don't worry, he said. "No one is ever going to get close enough to me to compromise me," Carona said. "It just won't happen."

R. Scott Moxley can be contacted at smoxley@ocweekly.com.

Coronation, a seniors haven

The Town of Coronation has temporarily set aside land behind the Coronation Community Centre for a Senior's Housing Project.

One train of thought, and maybe the only one at the time, was the fact that the kitchen in the Health Care Complex could be utilized for food services at the Senior's Complex.

It was done so that Government could see that the Town of Coronation was committed to the project when applying for grants but not a great deal of thought has been put into it. Council is still waiting for a Town Planner although Connauton reported at the October 16 meeting that he had talked with Tracey Connauty who is to be the Planner and a committee has now been formed.

Councillor John Rush noted at the Town meeting that the block on Railway Avenue between Mary and Queen Street is ideal in his opinion.

Now is the time for more input from the public as to the location of the seniors housing project. Both of the above are viable considerations, maybe?

Who wants to eat hospital food? No insult to the kitchen staff at our hospital but most of these seniors complexes have fully operational kitchens and run it like a restaurant with cooks, waitresses and menu choices.

They also provide recreational staff and nursing care. Nursing care required may be nil, it may be just the distribution of medication, or it may be maximum care — but all paid for by the resident according to the care needed.

That's how these seniors' complexes are run when it's a business and that's what it should be, a business. It should provide an economic boost to our community which means not only more population but also more jobs.

Removing the need for a nearby kitchen, it would only be sensible to place our seniors near grocery stores, the post office, the drug store and the Senior's Drop In Centre, and even restaurants and convenience

stores.

They go to these places every day. Most seniors living in these types of complexes are still very active. Surely trips to the Health Care Complex are few and far between.

The thought of moving up next to the Health Care Centre would give a feeling of "I'm old now," "I'm not wanted," of being "pushed off into a corner," when instead we can embrace our seniors by making them the 'centre' of our attention, by placing them in the centre of town, close to all the places that will keep them young and active.

That's what Camrose has done...they've made their community a seniors' haven.

The location on Railway Avenue is okay, but just okay! Placing a complex of that sort on a truck route three or four blocks from the Post Office, drug store, etc. is okay but not perfect.

Perfect would be half a block from the post office, restaurants and just down the street from the drugstore. There is land that possibly could be made available on Main Street and much more aesthetically pleasing to the eye than chain-linked fenced compounds full of construction materials and other various things.

That's what has been appearing more and more in downtown Coronation and that certainly is not what downtown Coronation should be zoned for. Those properties are what belong on the closeby truck route.

'Aging in Place' is more than just keeping seniors in their own communities.

Coronation Town Council, the Town Planner and the Committee need to plan on keeping our seniors in the downtown core to keep them as active as possible. To do that we need to put them in the 'place' of the action in downtown Coronation and let them 'age in place' actively and with dignity and with a feeling of importance.

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Joyce Webster

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October 22, 2007

FROM THE JUDGE

A strongly local editorial raises questions about the wisdom of locating a senior's complex next to a health care complex rather than in the center of town. The editorial urges the town officials to involve the seniors in the center of the community.



Michael Lacey

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November 15, 2007

FROM THE JUDGE

This is a newspaper's strongly-worded response to the attempt by a public official to muzzle the press by attacking a publication financially. It lays out the facts in a clear, understandable style and leaves the reader marveling at the bizarre happenings in local governments across North America. It pulls no punches and makes its case.

Wilenchik's a Liar, and There's More

Special Prosecutor Dennis Wilenchik sought to put this newspaper out of business by going after our financial assets.

According to confidential grand jury records released by the court, Wilenchik adopted a scorched-earth policy when confronted with our misdemeanor.

These same documents also make it clear that Wilenchik lied when he said he had no idea who ordered my arrest and that of *New Times* CEO Jim Larkin.

In fact, Wilenchik personally demanded the arrests and confinement of Larkin and myself.

Incredibly, he also asked for the arrests of the paper's attorneys, Tom Henze, Janey Henze, and Steve Suskin.

Furthermore, he sought tens of millions of dollars in sanctions, fines that would have bankrupted *New Times*. He asked the presiding judge to penalize us by more than \$3 million for the issue published October 18 — with escalating assessments that would've reached a staggering \$90 million in the course of a year.

Not satisfied, Wilenchik and his law firm then took the law into their own hands.

It took County Attorney Andrew Thomas 36 months to unleash his pit bull prosecutor for the publication — purportedly a felony — of Sheriff Joe Arpaio's home address on our Web site in July 2004.

Yet when Larkin and I revealed in a cover story the existence of grand jury subpoenas — a misdemeanor — we were led from our homes in handcuffs within hours of publication.

Our article revealed that Wilenchik used grand jury subpoenas in an effort to obtain reporters' files on any story about the sheriff published in the last several years. The special prosecutor also demanded the identity of each and every reader who'd viewed our publication online since '04, as well as the Web-viewing habits of these readers.

The swift, bold roundup of this newspaper's CEO and executive editor, however, was a redheaded stepchild.

No one admitted paternity.

Not the county attorney.

Not the sheriff.

Not the special prosecutor.

Well, we did not arrest ourselves.

One of those three men was a liar, and not a very good one at that, given the unambiguous evidence I've since uncovered.

Arpaio's jailers turned me out into the street at approximately 4 am. That very afternoon, County Attorney Andrew Thomas called a press conference, dropped the grand jury investigation, "fired" Wilenchik and alibied that "mistakes were made."

He made sure that voters knew that *he* had not

ordered the arrests of two journalists.

The Sheriff's Office claimed no responsibility "Sheriff Arpaio had no participation in the decision to make these arrests," Captain Paul Chagas, Arpaio's spokesman, told *New Times*.

In response to an e-mail asking who'd ordered our arrests, the disingenuous Wilenchik wrote to us, "Don't know. If I find out will be back..."

Wilenchik never got back to us.

But there is no need to clarify his instinct for deception; his signature is clear enough on the released grand jury paperwork.

Wilenchik demanded our arrests on the very day the article Larkin and I wrote hit the streets.

Over his signature, Wilenchik requested "that the court issue a warrant for the arrest and confinement of..." me and my partner.

That was the least-sinister move by Wilenchik.

In a lethal strike, Wilenchik sought to cripple *New Times* financially.

Had public indignation over our jailing not erupted, Wilenchik was prepared to bankrupt the newspaper.

On October 18, as copies of *New Times* hit the streets, Wilenchik sought an emergency hearing in front of Judge Anna Baca, who presided over the grand jury.

He sought an immediate fine of \$3.5 million for the first week that *New Times* was on the streets and on the Web with our grand jury disclosure.

Wilenchik sought an additional \$1.68 million per week for each week the grand jury article remained on our Web site.

In our ongoing dispute with law enforcement over Arpaio's attempt to mask his commercial real estate investments, the sheriff's address has run on our Web site for nearly four years.

The math on Wilenchik's schedule of fines for just one year of grand jury disclosure is astounding.

Wilenchik sought almost \$90 million per year in fines.

For a misdemeanor.

For those of you not familiar with the economics of weekly newspapers, it is important to note that this paper bills approximately \$14 million annually

That isn't the paper's profit; that's our revenue before printing, rent, supplies, salaries, benefits, and taxes.

The spotlight and the ensuing furor over the arrests of Larkin and me were more than misplaced. They missed entirely the larger point.

Wilenchik wanted us to choose between solvency and the First Amendment over a misdemeanor.

And because the media ignored the blunt offensive aimed at our checkbook, Wilenchik never bothered to cover his tracks.

He had the sheriff's deputies arrest us before the

continued on page 20

What's a person worth?

People hate to consider the arbitrary values they place on human life. But society's grim accounting is easy to chronicle. First consider the case of Angel Carlick.

The 19-year-old aboriginal woman has been missing for more than six weeks.

People console themselves with the fact she was once living on the street. That her home life was sketchy.

Perhaps it assuages their guilt.

But at the time of her disappearance, she had an apartment and a job. She was looking after her mother and considering adopting her younger brother.

She was days away from a significant graduation ceremony. And was, by all accounts, very excited about that.

But she missed that grad.

And she missed shifts at work, which is highly unusual because she was good about phoning her boss.

Her ID and clothes are still at the Blue Feather Youth Centre.

Two paycheques have not been collected.

Friends and family last saw her at a barbecue on May 27th.

Police confirmed talking to her on May 31st.

She has not been seen by anyone since.

She has, by all accounts, vanished from the face of the Earth.

It took police two weeks to declare her missing.

Since then, it's difficult to assess what police have done to find her.

Last week, as volunteers took responsibility for searching the long-cold trail, we asked RCMP what efforts it had made to find her.

We were told there had been an extensive search. In fact, the RCMP had searched all the areas the volunteers were going to cover, we were told.

But Const. Marc Janus couldn't say when. Or, precisely, where the RCMP had searched.

He didn't have the file before him. Then a more important phone call came in and he hung up.

Compare that to the search for Regina Thyrone.

Thyrone, a 35-year-old temp working for the federal Justice department, was last seen on April 15th, 2000, in downtown Whitehorse.

She was in Whitehorse from Vancouver for two weeks. She failed to show up to work in Justice's offices on April 17th.

She was reported missing immediately.

By April 20th, local RCMP had called on the

Whitehorse district search-and-rescue teams for assistance.

Over the next 48 hours, more than 450 person hours were invested in the search.

Thyrone was found on April 21st near the clay cliffs at the south end of town.

By April 22, the search had started looking for evidence into her murder.

She'd been missing a total of six days.

So what's the difference? Garlick is local. Thyrone was visiting from Vancouver. Was there some sense of obligation to a visitor? Or do we simply value our local women less?

Thyrone was 35. Carlick was 19.

Are we more ambivalent about our youth, and less so about middle-aged folks?

Both women had jobs. Carlick once lived on the street and worked for a youth centre. Thyrone worked in an office surrounded by lawyers and other professionals. So is class a factor?

Do we value youth-centre workers less than temps?

Both had concerned friends, employers and family who quickly reported them missing.

Thyrone was white and blonde. Carlick is dark-haired and aboriginal.

Is race a factor? Does society value aboriginal women less than whites?

What is it?

Why does one woman warrant mobilization of a 450-hour search within three days of being reported missing and the second get a shrug and a six-week lapse before an ad-hoc volunteer search was organized by friends and family and overseen by a single RCMP officer?

Sadly, these aren't isolated cases.

Consider the lack of action towards the aboriginal women who have vanished along northern BC's Highway of Tears.

Or the decades-long ambivalence toward more than 100 missing prostitutes, many of them poor or aboriginal — often both — who vanished in Vancouver before city police established its Missing Women's Task Force.

Society assigns arbitrary values to human life.

And far too often it is women like Carlick that society deems spare change.

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Richard Mostyn

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July 18, 2007

FROM THE JUDGE

The editorial raises basic questions about the difference in handling of criminal cases based on status within the community. It compares two specific cases and finds the governmental answers wanting. It is well crafted and strongly makes its point.



Brian Wilson

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May 17, 2007

FROM THE JUDGE

You can't get any more local than a street narrowing proposal. The writer calls the suggested shaving of three feet off the street in order to save money a bad idea that would make a dangerous situation worse. The editorial explains why. The writer proposes a specific course of action. City government should examine the traffic flow on the street and conclude that narrowing the busy artery is a bad idea.

City of Medford plan to narrow Cedar Street is a dumb idea

In a misguided attempt to save a few dollars on asphalt, the City of Medford is considering making an already dangerous situation worse.

The City of Medford plans to rebuild Cedar Street in 2008. Engineering for the much needed project to upgrade utilities and resurface the street is currently underway.

While rebuilding the road, which serves as a major traffic artery for the southwest corner of the city, makes sense, what does not make sense is the city's current plan to reduce the width of the street by about three feet.

What makes Cedar Street unique is the location of Holy Rosary Church at the intersection of Cedar Street and Washington Avenue and Hemer Funeral Service located at the intersection with Gibson Street. Three feet may not seem like a great deal, but with vehicles parked on both sides of the road and pedestrians in the area the road is already a tight squeeze. Also consider the people who park along the street to access the church are often elderly or have physical limitations and the need for wider streets in that area becomes more apparent.

Holy Rosary is already taking steps to relieve some of the parking issues with plans to tear down the Michael Cypher Center and build a parking lot in its

place. However, this is simply to address the church's current parking woes and won't do anything to stop the congestion and increased danger to vehicles and pedestrians caused by city employees deciding a narrow road would be better.

The city narrowed Park Avenue during that street's reconstruction a few years ago. In that case, narrowing made sense because of the relatively low amount of traffic on the residential street. However, the arterial nature of Cedar Street — running parallel to Hwy 64 and connecting Gibson Street to the downtown — makes it a poor candidate to be narrowed.

While the city may save a few dollars in the construction budget by narrowing the street, city decision makers are being penny wise and pound foolish and will ultimately cost taxpayers more in the long run.

About the only people to benefit from a narrower Cedar Street will be the body shops as they make repairs on sideswiped cars.

Since the elected council has yet to weigh in on the plans to narrow the road, let's hope the city government comes to its senses and makes the decision to keep the road the width it is.

Brian Wilson can be contacted at starnews@centralwinews.com.



The 33rd annual Eugene Cervi Award

The Eugene Cervi Award was established by ISWNE in 1976 to honor the memory of Eugene Cervi of the *Rocky Mountain Journal* in Denver by recognizing a newspaper editor who has consistently acted in the conviction that “good journalism begets good government.”

The award is presented not for a single

brave accomplishment, however deserving, but for a career of outstanding public service through community journalism and for adhering to the highest standards of the craft with the deep reverence for the English language that was the hallmark of Gene Cervi’s writing. The award also recognizes consistently aggressive reporting of government at the grassroots level and interpretation of local affairs.

Following his death at 64 in 1970, the *New York Times* described Cervi as “one of the most outspoken voices in American journalism.” Today, several ISWNE members still regard him as their “journalism conscience.”

This Year’s Winner Is...

Burt and Ursula Freireich



In 1960, Burt and Ursula Freireich bought the *Youngtown News* and *Sun City Sun* for \$7,500 in the unincorporated Northwest Valley area of Phoenix. The fledgling, twice-monthly tabloid had been created just four years earlier. Burt had been a sports writer with *The Phoenix Gazette* but dreamed of owning his own paper.

With a \$1,500 down payment and lots of confidence — but with little experience in photography or crafting display advertising — the Freireichs took control of the paper, which was redubbed the *News-Sun* for the July 22, 1960, issue. They thought “*Youngtown News* and *Sun City Sun*” was way too much of a mouthful to say, especially when answering the phone.

The *News-Sun* became the *Daily News-Sun* in 1977, publishing six days a week. The Freireichs sold the *Daily News-Sun* to Ottaway Newspapers Inc., a subsidiary of Dow Jones & Co. Inc., in 1984. Today, it is the sixth-largest paid-circulation newspaper in Arizona.

Burt attended his first ISWNE conference in 1963. At the editorial page critique, he was told in no uncertain terms to get rid of his editorial page ads. He would later recall how he drove the 2,000 miles back to Sun City “mad as hell” over the advice. By the time he got home, Burt later related, he had decided to throw out his old editorial page with its ads and replace the content with editorials, letters, his own column, and a column by a local old mining character. Across the top of the eight-column page, the *News-Sun* started featuring a long letter-to-the-editor or reprinting an editorial by a conference member such as Gene Cervi.

Elected ISWNE vice president in 1967, Burt told his readers in a column dated from Pere Marquette State Park in Illinois: “This annual week-long meeting is something special to me. First, of course, it is provocative, informative and inspirational to the editors who convene here to discuss only matters which affect our doing a better news job. It is the only seminar in which commercial aspects of the newspaper business are out of place.

“Secondly, a unique comradeship has built up among the conference’s fellows, and I find a great deal of pleasure in renewing my personal relationships with the keen-witted individuals who have become my associates here.

“As for the basic function of the conference, I hope it will be reflected throughout the year in the *News-Sun*’s editorial pages and in *Sun City-Youngtown* attitudes. This conference since 1963, my first year of attendance, has had a significant effect upon our community, more than any of our readers could imagine and even more than I realize. The results have been for the good...”

By the time of the 1969 ISWNE conference, Burt was doing the editorial page critiques in partnership with Rick Friedman, the former *Editor & Publisher* columnist who had publicly scolded him just six years earlier for including ads on his editorial page.

A few words from the couple's supporters

Couple epitomize tradition of this award

By Frank Garred

With this letter I'd like to propose and support the nomination of Burt and Ursula Freireich for the 2008 Eugene Cervi Award.

Burt was a sports writer with the former *Phoenix Gazette* in 1960 when he and Ursula discovered they had a spare \$1,500 sitting in their pockets and went out and purchased the *Youngtown News* near the developing retirement community of Sun City, Arizona. That pocket change was the down payment for a 24-year ownership career.

When the Freireichs entered the community newspaper universe Burt had just banked two successive sports writing awards — 1958 and 1959, I believe — with the *Gazette*. The Freireichs' dream was to own their own, so they connected with the *Youngtown* tabloid. The masthead of their newspaper proclaimed: "Youngtown's First Newspaper and Now Sun City's First."

These community newspaper entrepreneurs had little experience, but lots of confidence as they took control of the *Youngtown News* and *Sun City Sun*. Neither had experience with photography, crafting and selling display advertising, the intricacies of production and the realities of circulation... let alone an understanding of running such a business.

They obviously learned, and learned well. The couple, who met while students at the University of Illinois working in the journalism program, had set their course for a very successful newspaper ownership and management career, one that evolved into community leadership and service, continuing today as they support their son Elliott and his *West Valley View* near Phoenix.

So Burt was ignorant of circulation methods and challenges? Later as he and Ursula grew from a less-than-weekly, to a weekly, to a semi-weekly and on to a daily (in 1977), Burt used the natural resources of the Sun City retirement community to craft an original and absolutely unique circulation system: Those "old retired folk" became his delivery staff, riding around the community in golf carts to deliver the newspaper to subscribers/readers. Imagine a 90-year-old newspaper boy pitching your daily read on the front porch each day... or at least, putting it into the streetside newspaper tube.

Ursula took on the more esteemed purpose of the family business. She became the outreach journalist, hooking up with the National Editorial Association (later the National Newspaper Association) to keep in touch with the broader issues of the day beyond Sun City. She served as co-chair of NNA's Government Affairs Workshop in 1977 (now Government Affairs Conference) among so many other contributions to her home community and state. Her column as co-publisher, "The Other Half," was sometimes counterpoint to what Burt had to offer the *News-Sun* readers, and it was the voice of the valley for many of those same readers.

The Freireichs have been persistent supporters of their faith and its commitment to serve the broader community around them. They have been recognized for that extra service. Ursula was named by the governor to serve on the Maricopa County Commission on Trial Court Appointments in 2003. Burt and Ursula are the founding investors in ISWNE's Foundation, not only banking a considerable contribution, but also underwriting the expenses of its formation. Both have been and continue to be active in growing and helping to develop communications enterprises in their home area.

And writing of service, long before the big investment at Sun City, Burt made an even larger investment in our country's future: he is a decorated infantryman serving in the European Theater during World War II, earning the army's third highest honor for combat service, the Bronze Star. He also

received the Purple Heart.

While Burt developed a diversionary interest in ponies running around in elliptical circles, which occasionally earned him a modest reward for their exercise, he didn't forgo his and Ursula's commitment to community journalism.

Burt was elected president of the Arizona Newspaper Association, serving in that capacity in 1973. His memorable column for the May 1973 issue of the ANA newsletter puts him in perspective: a cynical, satirical curmudgeon who bludgeons democracy in the newsroom. How dare the journalists consider electing editors, he wrote. To Burt that was anarchy. He was an owner, after all, and appointments to managerial positions, even in the newsroom, were his sole prerogative as "The Boss."

Burt continues to serve on the Sun Health Foundation, though as a "Trustee Emeritus." He is a member of the Arizona Softball Foundation Hall of Fame. He has been a persistent presence at the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors annual conferences and besides his service to the organization's leadership hierarchy, he led some of the most vibrant and vital editorial critique sessions the ISWNE membership has enjoyed. He served as the organization's president in 1968, just eight years after gaining his non-daily credentials and editorial voice as co-owner of the *News-Sun* (with Ursula). The Freireichs' first ISWNE conference was 1963, according to one unconfirmed original source. They can correct the record in their acceptance duet.

There are many other supportive and superlative details we'll leave to the family to insert here, but this introduction to Burton and Ursula (Sue) Freireich as nominees for the 2008 Eugene Cervi Award should justify our purpose. They epitomize the tradition of this award, and reflect Cervi's lifetime commitment to leadership and good journalism in the communities they serve.

Frank Garred can be contacted at fpg@olympus.net.

Freireichs have been ISWNE consciences

By Robert Estabrook

I should like to nominate Burt and Ursula Freireich for the 33rd annual Eugene Cervi Award.

Although I did not meet them until 1973, I soon learned that they were people of high journalistic standards who had done a remarkable job of operating the *Sun City News-Sun* in Arizona, nurturing it from a weekly to a highly successful community daily. That took a lot of courage in itself. They capitalized on an opportunity to convert what once was a mom-pop venture of shaky foundations into a money-maker that retained respect and attracted an outside buyer.

Over the years I have seen their myriad contributions to ISWNE, not only in participate in each of the conferences I have attended, but also in leading editorial critiques and supporting initiatives of the organization as well as in hosting an ISWNE annual conference at Flagstaff. Their generosity has been fabulous. Not the least of their contributions has been the rearing of a family that takes principled journalism very seriously. I rejoice in their encouragement to Elliott in his expanding venture with the *West Valley View*.

Burt and Ursula have a keen sense of history and have served as consciences of the organization. They also are a lot of fun. Long may they waive (but not waiver!).

I recommend them for the Cervi Award with much enthusiasm.

Robert Estabrook can be contacted at restabrook01@comcast.net.

'Call Burt' best solution to ethical issues

By Elliott Freireich

Burt and Ursula Freireich lived the American dream. They became journalists and desired to serve the community by owning their own weekly newspaper. They bought one of the only properties they could afford, a fortuitous decision. The *Youngtown News* and *Sun City Sun* had just converted to an every other week tabloid from mimeo. The couple learned newspaper ownership and management from the seat of their pants, doing nearly every job themselves.

They grew the paper with the communities, moving to weekly, twice weekly, added presses and finally to a six-day daily. Burt ran the newsroom. Ursula ran the business: advertising, reception, accounting, circulation.

Burt should also be the poster boy for ISWNE. At his first conference Rick Friedman was quite critical of the *News-Sun* editorial page. Rick was not known for being subtle. He was quite blunt, sometimes bringing new members to tears. Burt had driven to Pere Marquette from Arizona and the long ride back gave him plenty of time to reflect on Rick's comments. He took those to heart, making the editorial page free of ads, having an editorial in each edition and making sure it was issue-based and clear and strong in its message.

This resulted in editorial awards and recognition from the local newspaper community as well as political community. Years after his retirement, when politicians would meet with me they would ask about my father.

ISWNE has always been a part of Burt's life. The late-night bull sessions created friendships and allowed editors to discuss the topics important in their lives with other like-minded souls. Burt and Gene Cervi became close friends. Burt admired Gene's crusty personality which manifested itself in his aggressive editorial positions.

Burt took on the local fire board when he found out that it had held secret meetings in the home of the board chairman. The fire board was a relatively new organization which had formed to fund a community need of having a full time fire dept. After editorializing against the secret meetings, Burt sued the fire board and won under a new state open meeting law. It was the first successful case under that law. Despite that contentious episode, Burt made

that fire chief the paper's first man of the year for his work in creating the district.

Del E. Webb Co. built Sun City and owned all the residential and commercial property. It sold all the new and resale homes originally. Any news racks or counter sales took place on its property. When the *News-Sun* started taking ads from realtors located just outside Sun City, the Webb Co. was unhappy. It stopped running ads with the paper and refused to all it to be sold in any of its properties. Burt called the Webb property manager and explained that he could not allow other racks on the property and not ours. That resulted in the racks going back in. He also called Del Webb personally and convinced him to resume the advertising (which had worked well enough that the local sales staff had complained when the company canceled it). At that time, the Webb Co. was one of the paper's largest advertisers so the advertising boycott was a significant financial blow.

Burt also took a strong stand against incorporation which was a big and ongoing issue. He said the community wasn't ready for it yet. (It remains unincorporated today.) Proponents of incorporation complained that he ran more letters to the editor against incorporation than for it. His answer was that he ran every letter he got on the subject.

Burt also became a mentor and consultant to ISWNE member editors. Once in an ethics session, someone wanted to know what to do when ethical issues came up. One of the members, I believe Vickie Canfield Peters, had a solution, which she wrote on the easel. "Call Burt." Heads shook in the affirmative. I think this is one of the highest compliments one could receive.

Burt became one of the leaders of the ISWNE editorial critiques. Not only did he critique the editorial page but also writing for clarity and conciseness. He would spend hours with an editing pencil or felt tipped pen, marking up submitted newspapers.

Burt also became a mentor and consultant to ISWNE member editors. Once in an ethics session, someone wanted to know what to do when ethical issues came up. One of the members, I believe Vickie Canfield Peters, had a solution, which she wrote on the easel. "Call Burt." Heads shook in the affirmative. I think this is one of the highest compliments one could receive.

Burt is a believer in the power of the press, the need for strong editorials and clear, concise and precise writing.

Elliott Freireich can be contacted at publisher@westvalleyview.com.

GENE CERVI AWARD WINNERS

- 2008 **Burt and Ursula Freireich**, Litchfield Park, Ariz.
- 2007 **Guy & Marcia Wood**, Angel Fire, N.M.
- 2006 No award given
- 2005 **Frank Wood**, De Pere, Wis.
- 2004 **Frank Garred**, *The Port Townsend Leader*, Port Townsend, Wash.
- 2003 **Gary & Helen Sosniecki**, *The Lebanon Daily Record*, Lebanon, Mo.
- 2002 **Bill Meyer**, *Marion County Record*, Marion County, Kan.
- 2001 **Marg Hennigar**, *Lighthouse Publishing*, Lunenburg, Nova Scotia
- 2000 **Allan A. Seiler**, *The Pike Press*, Pittsfield, Ill.
- 1999 No award given
- 1998 **Jack Authelet**, *Foxboro* (Mass.) *Reporter*
- 1997 **Carol Wilcox & Cary Stiff**, *Clear Creek Courant*, Idaho Springs, Colo.
- 1996 **Charlotte & Marvin Schexnayder**, *Dumas* (Ark.) *Clarion*
- 1995 No award given
- 1994 **Jim MacNeill**, *The Eastern Graphic*, Montague, Prince Edward Island
- 1993 **Bob Bliss**, *The Montgomery County News*, Hillsboro, Ill.
- 1992 **Robert Trapp**, *Rio Grande Sun*, Espanola, N.M.
- 1991 **Henry Gay**, *Shelton-Mason County Journal*, Shelton, Wash.



G. Wood



M. Wood



G. Sosniecki



H. Sosniecki

- 1990 **Karl Monroe**, *Collinsville* (Ill.) *Herald*
- 1989 **William Rotch**, *Milford* (N.H.) *Cabinet*
- 1988 **Bruce Brugmann**, *San Francisco Bay Guardian*
- 1987 **James Russell Wiggins**, *Ellsworth* (Maine) *American*
- 1986 **Rollin McCommons**, *Athens* (Ga.) *Observer*
- 1985 **McDill (Huck) Boyd**, *Phillips County Review*, Phillipsburg, Kan.
- 1984 **Richard McCord**, *Santa Fe* (N.M.) *Reporter*
- 1983 **Homer Marcum**, *The Martin Countian*, Inez, Ky.
- 1982 **Kieth Howard**, *Yellow Springs* (Ohio) *News*
- 1981 **Edward DeCourcy**, *Newport* (N.H.) *Argus Champion*
- 1980 **Robert Estabrook**, *Lakeville* (Conn.) *Journal*
- 1979 **Houstoun Waring**, *Littleton* (Colo.) *Independent*
- 1978 **Tom Leathers**, *The Squire*, Kansas City, Mo.
- 1977 **Charles & Virginia Russell**, *Dewitt County Observer*, Clinton, Ill.
- 1976 **Blair Macy**, *Keene Valley Sun*, Kennesburg, Colo.



Meyer



Hennigar



Seiler



Waring

Professor's editorial on editorials flunks the test

By **Burt Freireich**
The Arizona Publisher
 September 1969

Editor's note: The editorial printed below was written in response to a feature in the August 1969 issue of The Arizona Publisher.

Arizona Publisher's spread on editorial — one page in defense and another page in opposition — provided a provocative forum. The pro-editorial-page views expressed by Harold Hudson of the *Perryton* (Tex.) *Herald* so closely paralleled my own thoughts on the subject that I thought he had read my mind.

I would like to take issue, however, with the University of Tennessee's journalism professor James Kalshoven, who led off with the pronouncement that "an editorial page is not essential to a successful newspaper, according to an analysis of 151 of Tennessee's 157 newspapers... The survey showed that only 107 of these papers have editorial pages, or that approximately one editor in three does not see any need for this page in his publication."

The professor is a master of the syllogism.

From the finding that one-third of Tennessee's newspapers do not have editorials, he reaches the conclusion that these publishers do not see a need for editorials. Additionally, he finds that an editorial page is not essential to a successful newspaper.

I would go a step further. I believe that 100 percent of Tennessee's newspapers would not have editorial pages if they had to rely upon Professor Kalshoven to write their editorials.

Editorials should reach logical conclusions. The professor's piece doesn't. He assumes

causal relationship where there is none.

I would expect the professor to take a survey, find that 50 percent of those interviewed do not wear brassieres, and assume that 50 percent of the population is opposed to brassiere wearing — notwithstanding that 50 percent of those interviewed were men.

"Not essential to a successful newspaper" is a key phrase which calls for a little examination.

Just how successful is the one-third which has no editorial page? Are these the smallest, least successful newspapers in Tennessee? Does this one-third actually include newspapers that aren't successful at all? Is this one-third made up of plants which are successful strictly because of job shop revenues and would be in the red on their newspaper operations if an economic analysis were made? And do these printer-run publications have no one who would or could write editorials?

The professor didn't provide this information — and for one of two possible reasons. Either he didn't have the facts or he deliberately stacked the cards. In either case, the professor's editorial on editorials flunked the test of responsibility.

I'll give him a better yardstick to apply in determining the "essential" quality of the editorial page. Let him take the newspaper without an editorial page in a face-to-face competitive situation with a newspaper providing a responsible, vibrant editorial page.

You place your \$2 on the newspapers without an editorial page, Professor. I'm booking all bets.



Burt Freireich

Wilenchik's a Liar, and There's More from page 14

judge could rule on his emergency plea to have us jailed. He had us arrested before the judge could consider slamming us with multimillion-dollar penalties.

Dennis Wilenchik took the law into his own hands.

I want you to stop reading and think about 'this for just one moment: Wilenchik asked a judge to bankrupt the paper and jail its leaders, as well as our lawyers, and that wasn't enough for him.

But ignoring the court and acting on his own to jail us backfired. Public outrage forced County Attorney Thomas to "fire" Wilenchik. And while Thomas' response was mostly cosmetic, it freed us from the grand jury probe and put Wilenchik on the hot seat.

On October 25, one week after our arrests, Wilenchik issued an eight-page press release that foreshadowed the defense he will raise in the State Bar's investigation into allegations that he committed ethical abuses.

The attorney offered not a single sentence of justification for his attempt to bankrupt the newspaper. He did not mention the financial sanctions he sought from the court.

But while Wilenchik went into detail regarding our arrests, he avoided the truth.

"The arrests of Mike Lacey and Jim Larkin were the result of miscommunication," wrote Wilenchik. "My knowledge and intent was to have them cited for violating A.R.S. 13-2812, understanding that if they refused to accept the citations, they could be taken to jail and booked, then cited."

Apparently believing that no one would pore over the dense paperwork of the grand jury proceeding, Wilenchik's public statement ignored his own pleading with the judge on the day of our arrests.

In his request to the judge for an emergency hearing, Wilenchik asked "that the court issue a warrant FOR THE ARREST AND CONFINEMENT OF RESPONDENTS. . ."

The respondents are clearly identified: Michael Lacey, Jim Larkin, Tom Henze, Janey Henze, and Steve Suskin.

The newspaper's office is down the street from the sheriff's. Arpaio's handpicked Selective Enforcement Unit could easily have served us there with the misdemeanor ticket. Instead, two teams drove halfway across town and arrested us in the middle of the night, took me downtown and drove Larkin all the way out to Mesa in an SUV with Mexican license plates.

What does he mean by "if they refused to accept the citation, they could be taken to jail...?" Did he think two journalists were going to get into a 'shootout over a ticket'?

After demanding in writing that the judge "arrest' and confine" us, Wilenchik then attempted to lay the blame for our arrests and confinement on a "misunderstanding" by a junior associate in his firm.

"The direction from me was apparently misunderstood," wrote Wilenchik in his press release referring to the other lawyers in his firm.

Nonsense.

Wilenchik had requested an "emergency hearing" before Judge Baca to have us arrested and confined.

He was so filled with vengeance that he could not wait for Judge Baca to even schedule the hearing; he took the law into his own hands.

Now we are supposed to believe that he asked the judge to arrest and confine us, but when he took the law into his own hands later that same day and contacted the Sheriff's Office, he merely wanted to serve us with a ticket? What does a reasonable person conclude after this grotesque circus?

Dennis Wilenchik had us arrested, then lied about it.

Lost in the drama of mug shots and a 4 a.m. release from jail, Wilenchik sought from the court a series of five escalating financial sanctions, beginning with a \$100,000 fine and moving onto \$10,000 for every hour our story was on the Web, and \$10,000 for every hour the issue was on the street.

He meant for us to choose between bankruptcy and the First Amendment.

And this is what makes Thomas' press conference such a farce.

grassroots editor



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