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The International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors



Published by the Department of Communications, Missouri Southern State College, Joplin, MO



Check out the ISWNE Website!

www.mssc.edu/iswne/iswne.htm

The **International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors** is finally online. The new site is located on Missouri Southern State College's Website at www.mssc.edu/iswne/iswne.htm.

Although the site is still under construction, it does include brief information taken from the ISWNE's brochure. The site has six main links:

- **Membership Information**

This link provides information about becoming an ISWNE member. It also includes an additional link to a list of the Society's officers and board members along with their respective e-mail addresses.

- **Publications**

This link gives descriptions of the ISWNE newsletter and the *Grassroots Editor*. After construction is complete, it will include PDF files of each publication that the user will view using Adobe Acrobat Reader. It will also include an interactive index of articles published in the ISWNE newsletter since August 1999. PDF files and an index of the *Grassroots Editor* will be added as the magazine is published.

- **Annual Conferences**

This link will include updates about each upcoming annual conference and highlights from past conferences.

- **Awards**

Currently, this link includes general information taken from the ISWNE brochure about the **Gene Cervi Award** and the **Golden Quill**. When construction is complete, the main **Awards** link will include a separate link for each award that will include nomination information and a list of past winners.

- **Member E-Mail Addresses**

This link contains an alphabetized list of member e-mail addresses. Please check that your e-mail address is included and listed correctly.

- **Member Newspapers**

This link is still under construction. It contains a list of member newspapers and contact information. Newspapers that are online or that have e-mail addresses will have active links. The list is organized by state (U.S.) and country (international).

We hope you like our initial efforts in producing this Website. If you have any comments or suggestions about the site's organization, content, and overall look, please contact Chad Stebbins at stebbins-c@mail.mssc.edu. We appreciate your patience as we complete the site.

Here's my latest conspiracy theory. All the Y2K problems have already been fixed in earlier versions of nearly all of the software on the market, including the accounting software I use.

But the fixes were "undocumented features" — no one knows they're in there. This allows the vendors to put out a new and improved, Y2K compliant version that everyone has to buy. There was no way we were going to risk using the old package and possibly lose our ability to bill for our advertising.

That leads me to my next gripe: all these customers who send me letters asking me to certify that my company has completed Y2K compliance. The last one wanted me to verify we have done testing and explain to them what testing was done. That particular client buys \$7 classified ads from us once a month.

•••

On the positive side of the Y2K ledger, expect lots of additional classified revenue in January as everyone tries to sell all the portable generators, Coleman stoves and gas, 50 lb. bags of dried beans, solar distillers, guns and ammo as well as useless stuff they bought just in case.

•••

I read trade journals to learn more about our business. I

The President's Report

By Elliott Freireich

Publisher, *West Valley View*,
Litchfield Park, AZ



have given up on quite a few because they don't really provide much valuable material. A couple I tend to read each time they come out are NNA's *Pub Aux.*, which has a lot of nuts and bolts

kind of stuff, and *AJR* (American Journalism Review).

AJR doesn't give the how-to articles of better writing, sales promotions and how to stay out of trouble on personnel matters that I get from *Pub. Aux.*, but it does have interesting reading about incidents that make you think about how newspapers are run and how they should be run.

AJR has had a long-running series on the state of the American newspaper, chronicling the Thomson chain, telling of general practices of the nation's small dailies and of the chain's acquisitions and how it affects journalism.

The most recent issue discusses how far is too far for an editorial writer to go in advocating for a change. The story is about the

editorial writer for a Florida paper who wants to bring in an aircraft carrier to his city as a museum. He has joined the board of the nonprofit agency which is raising funds for the museum. It could be a problem any of us could have to face if we want to editorialize repeatedly on a subject we feel very strongly about and want to additionally want to actually work for out in the community. Each of us will find their own comfort zone on these issues, but getting a chance to see similar situations that others face can help us come up with solutions we can universalize.

•••

Some of them did it for revenge, some of them for fame and notoriety. Some of them don't know why they did it. But there has been a rash of brutal massacres which the national media has given what I consider way too much play.

I wonder if any other small-market journalists would have handled these stories differently if they had been in charge. And while I'm asking, am I the only one who wouldn't have had non-stop coverage of the search for JFK Jr.'s plane and multipage biographical sections after his death?

**Some of them
don't know why
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But there has been
a rash of brutal
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which the
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way too much play.**

I got to thinking about civic journalism. You read about it everywhere. They call it civic or public or community journalism. Being a well-seasoned newsman, I did what most newsmen do — I shrugged it off.

Ivory tower people talking about grass roots journalism, yeah, sure. How much more community can you get than small town, grassroots American journalism? They can't tell me. . .

Then a funny thing happened. I got a vacation (not the funny thing) and read some things on it. Then I got travel money (also not the funny thing) and I heard a few more things, and it dawned on me.

The title is the thing that is killing it. Once you put a label on it, people fire darts at the labels.

But down underneath all the labels and the ivory tower and the big city ideas is a grain of truth:

- People are not taking part in society's big decisions because Brett Favre on Monday night is a lot more interesting.
- They don't attend meetings because they are cynical about how government works.
- And the fact is, participating in anything social or governmental is dropping off like a boulder going over Pike's Peak.

Why is this? Didn't our fabled forefathers participate? Didn't town meetings bring people together? Is it ALL the fault of television? Whose job is it to get

Now, Just a Minute



The so-called thinking man's
column on journalism



BY RAY LAAKANIEMI

people to meetings and to voice complaints and to help out when needed?

Certainly not the newspaper's job.

But if not, who? Is anyone else going to do it?

That's what civic journalism is all about. Newspapering being more than reporting what happened last week.

How can people get involved if the first time they hear about a decision at a meeting is two days after the meeting? Is it your job to find out what is going to be discussed BEFORE the meeting happens? Do you know anyone else doing it?

What about including phone numbers for the people involved in decision-making so the public can tell them what they think? Won't make you popular, but it is one small step for a paper, one giant leap for participation.

And about politics. When the candidates come smiling into your office, do you have questions for them or do you take what they offer and print it —

editing slightly? What do readers want to know, and who speaks for the reader anyway?

Think about it. Who represents the reader? The companies and the big guys all have PR reps, the reader has none.

ANTICIPATE. Know (or find out) what the subjects at a meeting will be ahead of time. And you may have to ask around (report) to other people to see what is going on. Some people like to keep information to themselves. It gives them power.

So I have come to the conclusion that civic journalism is not a flash in the pan, is not some ivory tower idea from the big cities. It is about leadership, about making it possible for people who have to vote on civic issues to get a word in before the decisions are made.

It's about doing something that no other institution in society is geared up to do or wants to do — letting the citizens get in on decisions about their future.

**OK, bring it on.
Let me hear from you.**

(More good stuff like this in *The Weekly Writer's Handbook*, Second Edition, due on or about Oct. 1. Email rllaakan@bgsnet.bgsu.edu or write Box 71, East Tawas, MI. 48730-0071) Phone (419) 372-2078.

ISWNEWS



Send your ISWNEWS to Chad Stebbins at stebbins-c@mail.mssc.edu or to Missouri Southern State College, 3950 E. Newman Road, Joplin, MO 64801 - 1595 by Friday, Oct. 15 for next month's newsletter.

'Freeman Courier' upgrades Website

The newspaper's Website is designed to supplement the information provided by newspaper which has been around since 1901. The site includes condensed stories as well as a the opinion page, calendar of events, business guide, community page and links to other sites. The site is very easy to update and sports scores and breaking news are added routinely. The page is designed as the portal to the community as reflected by the address: freemansd.com. The *Courier* is working closely with community leaders in an effort to develop, host and maintain linked sites for the city, chamber of commerce and development corporation as well as individual businesses and organizations.

The *Courier* is working with International Newspaper Network, a Montana company which publisher **Tim L. Waltner** became familiar with when he spoke on the responsibility newspapers have to their community at a boot camp sponsored by the Montana Newspaper Association in April. (Incidentally, he has been asked to make the same presentation at the NNA convention in Boston this fall.) Waltner and his news editor (and son) **Jeremy Waltner** are working with developing and maintaining the site. Once a routine is established, they expect maintaining the site will require less than an hour a week.

Freeman Courier, PO Box 950, Freeman, SD 57029, (605) 925-7033, freecour@dtgnet.com

Hix will coordinate requests for student internships

ISWNE members desiring to hire college journalism students for summer internships are asked to contact **Harry Hix**, Engleman/Livermore Professor of Community Journalism at the University of Oklahoma. Harry said he would be pleased to coordinate requests and try to arrange for students to fill internships, whether in news or advertising. **Harry's e-mail address is hix@ou.edu. His phone number is (405) 325-4137.**

'The Cabinet' ready for another century

We have been busy here this summer. We have just started a fourth paper, the *Bedford Journal*, in the nearby town of Bedford, New Hampshire. It is another exciting attempt to grow and still maintain the special small town uniqueness that we have always encouraged and valued.

We have also changed the name of our flagship paper to *The Cabinet*, in recognition that it really does serve five towns. It was *The Farmer's Cabinet* for the first hundred years, and *The Milford Cabinet* for the next hundred. We are now ready for a new century.

Frank and Martha Manley, *The Cabinet Press, Inc.*, PO Box 180, Milford NH 03055

9/27/99

To All ISWNE Members:

This is Jennifer Pease replying on behalf of my Mom to Mr. Freireich's message. Since Mom doesn't use the computer, I checked Dad's e-mail for her when I came home for Dad's birthday on Sunday.

She wanted to let you know that Dad (**Don Pease**) had a heart attack on August 27 while taking a stress test at the Cleveland Clinic. He was in the Cleveland Clinic for three weeks and is now in Oberlin at Allen Hospital's subacute unit for therapy.

He is making steady progress but we don't know when he will be able to come home. Once he regains this strength, he faces a catheterization to determine the underlying cause of the heart attack.

Since I am returning to Minnesota tomorrow, Mom will try to keep Mr. Freireich informed by traditional mail or phone when she can. My folks had a great time at the conference in Nova Scotia and they send their greetings.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Pease Eastvold

ISWNE members share 'Views From the Field'

Three ISWNE members were guests on Jim Lehrer's *NewsHour* on July 29.

Nancy Slepicka of the *Montgomery County* (Ill.) *News*, **Larry Atkinson** of the *Mobridge* (S.D.) *Tribune*, and **Robert Trapp** of the *Rio Grande Sun* in Espanola, N.M., were interviewed by media correspondent Terence Smith for *NewsHour*'s "Views from the Field" program.

Three other weekly newspaper editors were also on the program: **Nicholas Benton** of the *Falls Church* (Va.) *News Press*, **Charles Tisdale** of the *Jackson* (Miss.) *Advocate*, and **Joel Hack** of the *Bodega Bay* (Calif.) *Navigator*. The six editors discussed the issues they thought should be discussed in the 2000 campaign. Slepicka said education and health care would be on her list.

"I think if we had a healthy populace and a well-educated populace, a lot of other problems would be solved," she said.

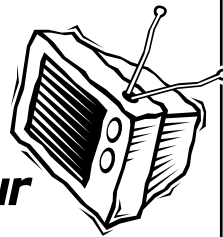
Atkinson said in the heartland of the United States, the farmers and ranchers are not enjoying the same economic boom as the rest of the country.

"They're facing grain prices, cattle prices that are 10- and 20-year lows," he said. "There are problems on the farm. The American farm policy has not worked to this point. There's something wrong. It needs to be revisited."

Atkinson said although agriculture represents only 1 percent of the nation's \$7 trillion economy, the presidential candidates need to discuss what can be done to keep the farmers and ranchers on their land.

"When we lose them, we also lose communities in rural America," he said. "The towns of South Dakota, of North Dakota, Nebraska, all the way on down to Texas, the rural communities are facing an outflow of people because the business isn't there anymore."

Jim Lehrer's *NewsHour* Starring:



Larry Atkinson
Mobridge Tribune
Mobridge, S.D.



Nancy Slepicka
Montgomery County News
Montgomery County, Ill.



Robert Trapp
Rio Grande Sun
Espanola, N.M.

"If that farmer and rancher who has been spending \$130,000 a year in that community is not making any money, that money dries up and the communities dry up. So it's more than just the farmers and ranchers hurting; it's rural America hurting."

Trapp said he would focus on using the budget surplus, to pay down the national debt.

"A \$6 trillion national debt may not mean much in Washington, D.C., but in Espanola, it'll buy an awful lot of enchiladas," he said. "And the income tax cut that

they're talking about I think should be ignored. We pay more in Social Security taxes than we do in income taxes. I also think that they should be talking about health care. There's millions of people out there in New Mexico, children, there are hundreds of thousands of them who don't have health insurance, are uninsured."

Trapp also said he's like the candidates to discuss bringing U.S. troops home from Kosovo and Bosnia.

"We've heard that they'd be home by Christmas a couple of years ago," he said. "They're still over there, they're still costing us millions of dollars. I'd like to hear some of these presidential candidates discuss that. I haven't heard a word about that yet."

Slepicka said she was disappointed that the 2000 presidential campaign has focused on only two candidates and that a national debate may not evolve. Low voter turnout next November was a good possibility, she said.

Atkinson said parts of South Dakota were not sharing in the country's wealth, particularly the Sioux Indian reservations and Shannon County.

"We now have the wherewithal, the money, the surpluses to look at what we need to do to fix things," he said. "Now we should be looking at what can we do to get everyone on the same level."

Trapp said he agreed with Atkinson and would not return the budget surplus to the taxpayers. He would also keep the politicians' hands out of Social Security.

"If we had some money left from income taxes, I still maintain that it should go to pay off the national debt, which would reduce the interest on the national debt, and in the long run I think that'll be beneficial," he said.

International Briefs

The American Press Institute has scheduled five seminars for community newspaper personnel during the coming year:

One of the API's most popular programs for community newspaper publishers, editors, and other department heads is the **Executive Development Program**, to be conducted March 26-31 and again Aug. 6-11. The **City and Metro Editors class** for community market newspapers is also Aug. 6-11. The **Editing the Weekly and Community Newspaper** seminar is scheduled for April 11-15 and the program aimed at advertising executives in community markets is Oct. 1-6. All seminars will be at the API facility in Reston, Va. For more information, persons may contact API, 11690 Sunrise Valley Dr., Reston, VA 20191-11498, (703) 630-3611.

Jim Sterling receives Missouri Journalism Award

Jim Sterling, former owner and publisher of weekly newspapers in three Missouri towns, received a Missouri Journalism Medal of Honor on Oct. 8 on the University campus in Columbia. Sterling is marketing and media director of the TD Waterhouse Championship, an event on the Senior PGA tour. He is former owner and publisher of the weekly papers in Bolivar, Buffalo and Stockton, Mo. Sterling also is a former curator of the University of Missouri.

New Postal form must be in use no later than Sept. 10

Newspapers must have started using a new Form 3541 on Sept. 10. Papers that send copies to foreign addresses have used the new form since the end of May. The new form has the May 1999 date on the bottom. Form 3541 can be downloaded from the USPS website at www.usps.com. Persons can save a copy in Pagemaker or Quark and can fill in the numbers on the computer and print out a copy for the Post Office.

NNA Convention Theme was "The Future Begins in Boston"

The National Newspaper Association's 114th Annual Convention & Trade Show opened in Boston on Sept. 29 and continued until Oct. 2. With the theme "The Future Begins in Boston," the program focused on building circulation, developing newspaper growth, new advertising ideas, recruiting and hiring quality employees, and new technologies.

Canadian Community Newspaper Association has new president

Gerald Dorge became CCNA's 80th president on July 24, 1999. Dorge is publisher and general manager of Transcontinental Distribution & Weeklies in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He began his career in community newspapers more than 27 years ago when he first got into publishing a French paper before going into partnership at a printing and publishing company in the early 1970s.

Teaching evolution in the classroom (from the Navajo-Hopi Observer, Arizona)

Evolution has been in the news lately, with the Kansas State School Board no longer requiring the teaching of the theory. The board also prohibited questions about evolution on statewide tests. Arizona recently did just the opposite, requiring for the first time that evolution be taught, by including it in the state proficiency standards. It will not be on the AIMS (Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards) test according to the state Department of Education because the test doesn't include science. But it is specifically required in the proficiency standards.

Society of Editors, United Kingdom: BT regional awards

The Journal Newcastle is the **BT Daily Newspaper of the Year**. The judges admired *The Journal's* confident grasp of a vital region, augmented by a strong feeling for the national interest. Runner-up was the *Manchester Evening News*. *The Tyrone Constitution* is **BT Weekly Newspaper of the Year** with the *Basingstoke Gazette* and *Keighley News* named as runners-up.

When Houstoun Waring died in 1997, many young Colorado journalists may have asked, "Who's he?" After all, Waring was 95 at his death, and he retired as editor of the *Littleton (Colo.) Independent* more than 30 years ago.

Yet throughout the middle of this century, Waring was among the most influential weekly newspaper editors in America.

He died in Littleton on Feb. 18. He had been in declining health for several years. More than 400 friends attended his memorial service.

"Hous" (pronounced "House") Waring spent his entire career at Littleton's weekly newspaper, including 40 years as editor and 30 as editor emeritus and columnist.

Waring believed that local newspapers should nurture a sense

of community and link Main Street with the world, principles reflected in many of his 6,000 editorials. His thoughtful editorials made the small-town weekly paper famous, and his insistence on accuracy, precision, and clarity influenced the generations of young journalists who worked for him or studied under him.

Waring was born in Savannah, Ga. After tuberculosis ended his studies at the U.S. Naval Academy, he moved to Colorado to recover.

He studied journalism at the University of Colorado at Boulder, but never completed his bachelor's degree. He left school to work at the

Houstoun Waring LITTLETON'S EDITOR

BY GARRETT RAY

Associate Professor, Colorado State University

Independent, beginning in 1926. The following year, publisher Edwin A. Bemis (also the first manager of the Colorado Press Association) made him editor; a year later, Waring bought a minority interest in the *Independent*.

Really Bad Headlines

Courtesy of Joyce Klug

March Planned For Next August

Blind Bishop Appointed To See

Lingerie Shipment Hijacked – Thief Gives Police The Slip

L.A. Voters Approve Urban Renewal By Landslide

Patient At Death's Door – Doctors Pull Him Through

Latin Course To Be Canceled – No Interest Among Students, Et Al.

Diaper Market Bottoms Out

Croupiers On Strike – Management: "No Big Deal"

Stadium Air Conditioning Fails – Fans Protest

Queen Mary Having Bottom Scraped

Henshaw Offers Rare Opportunity to Goose Hunters

Women's Movement Called More Broad – Based

Antique Stripper to Display Wares at Store

Prostitutes Appeal to Pope

Teacher Strikes Idle Kids

Lawyers Give Poor Free Legal Advice

Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant

Fund Set Up for Beating Victim's Kin

Killer Sentenced to Die for Second Time in 10 Years

Cancer Society Honors Marlboro Man

Nicaragua Sets Goal to Wipe Out Literacy

Autos Killing 110 a Day – Let's Resolve to Do Better

20-Year Friendship Ends at Altar

War Dims Hope For Peace

If Strike Isn't Settled Quickly, It May Last A While

Cold Wave Linked to Temperatures

Half of U.S. High Schools Require Some Study for Graduation

Blind Woman Gets New Kidney from Dad She Hasn't Seen in Years

Man is Fatally Slain

Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Experts Say

Death Causes Loneliness, Feelings of Isolation

Flaming Toilet Seat Causes Evacuation at High School

Defendants Speech Ends in Long Sentence

Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers

House Passes Gas Tax Onto Senate

Police Discover Crack in Australia

Stiff Opposition Expected to Casketless Funeral Plan

Many Antiques Seen at D.A.R. Meeting

William Kelly, 87, was Fed Secretary

Collegians are Turning to Vegetables

Scientists to Have Ford's Ear

Quarter of a Million Chinese Live on Water

Hershey Bars Protest

County Officials to Talk Rubbish

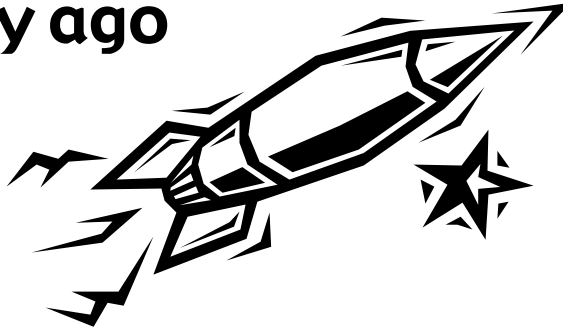
Carter Plans Swell Deficit

Caribbean Islands Drift to Left

'Y2K' cars don't compare to ones half-century ago



BY JIM SAWYER



Lanny Payne, Willie Clark, and I slithered up a dark alley at 2 a.m. one Saturday morning. It was the fall of 1949 in our Iowa town of 6,000, which was an island of conservative civilization in a sea of cornfields.

We headed for the Oldsmobile "garage." They didn't call them car dealerships then.

Ten-year-olds shouldn't have been up that late, but some powerful stuff was going on.

Yancy Peck, the tubby, likable, cigar-smoking owner of the place, caused all this because he had put butcher paper all over the showroom windows. And we knew why.

Lanny's the one who got us started on this nocturnal truancy in a town that had a curfew for anyone under the age of 35.

"Listen, a big truck's coming!" he said earlier as we were telling fibs and reading scary comic books. This was all being done

by flashlight inside a tent, and the tent was in my bedroom, made from bed sheets propped up with whatever was handy that would work against the force of gravity.

After the lights were switched off, we imagined ourselves to be explorers in one of those faraway places where corn didn't grow. And like most explorers, we took along comic books. But that truck Lanny heard brought us back to reality real quick, and I went for the electricity.

We peeked out the window just as the truck passed.

It was one of those "low boy" car carriers, and the six or so cars on it had very

secretive-looking covers on them. When it turned down the street where the garage was located, we knew we were in business.

The dangerous six-block trek to Yancy's place began. Dangerous because, for one thing, "Thomas," the town cop, was lurking somewhere out there. Thomas was his last name, and all the kids around town thought he worked for J. Edgar Hoover. Therefore, the slightest offense could result in prison life for other gangsters.

We managed to avoid Thomas, and when we got there we huddled inside a dark recess — the back entrance to tailor Levantahl's shop. That was scary because we'd heard rumors that he was "a communist." But we figured it was worth the risk because it put us real close to the now-parked truck.

As the cars made it to the lighted interior of the garage, we could see them in all their glory, and they had "rockets" for hood ornaments!

Plus, on their fronts they had round emblems with rings around them, like a planet. Revolutionary!

One by one the covers came off the cars, and ol' Yancy was out there hooting, hollering, and giving directions.

As the cars made it to the lighted interior of the garage, we could see them in all their glory, and

they had "rockets" for hood ornaments! Plus, on their fronts they had round emblems with rings around them, like a planet. Revolutionary!

We truly believed we had beat

the rest of mankind in getting the first look at the new Oldsmobile "Rocket 88," and it was worth every risk we had taken. Willie even peed his britches in the process, but he'd done the same thing earlier that night.



When we got back to the house, we stayed up the rest of the night and drew pictures of what we'd seen. Lanny's car was standing on its hind end and shooting flames.

When daylight broke and the town started coming to life, we headed back to the Oldsmobile garage. All the butcher paper was off the windows, and people were milling around the new "rocket cars" — Oldsmobile's introduction of its first V-8 engine, which was what the rocket hoopla was all about.



Ol' Yancy even had a "demonstrator" all for himself, parked out front with a plastic see-through hood and an illuminated rocket hood ornament. He was out there patting people on their shoulders, puffing on that cigar and grinning like a possum.

Now, half a century later, it's nothing special when the next year's cars come out, and some of the turn-of-the-century Year 2000 models are already rolling.

But it was a big deal half a century ago.

Jim Sawyer is a Webster County Citizen columnist; this column was printed September 1, 1999.

'Death-row coffee' has gotta go!



BY JIM SAWYER

It's getting tougher every day to get a good cup of joe. Too many eateries, including fast food joints and others, plus gas-n-go outfits, are messing it up.

This is about java, coffee, that delicious-to-many and apparently habit-forming stuff some believe we get in great quantities only from a guy on a burro with a big grin on his face who hails from somewhere in the southernmost reaches of this continent.

Coffee, second only to oil in international trade, with one-third of the consumption in the United States, apparently was started as a drink by the Arabs in the 14th century. America's introduction to the stuff was in direct response to the Boston Tea Party. King George tried to tax tea, and the contrary Yanks swiftly turned to coffee. And they've never given it up.

Problem is, nowadays far too many places in the United States don't have a clue about making good coffee — and it's terribly unforgivable and unpatriotic. It either tastes like the transmission out of a Yellow Cab, or it's too weak. And I'm getting increasingly upset. Many restaurants and other serve it in forms ranging from colored water to burnt mud that has to be chiseled out of the mug. Coffee in all scales of

eateries, the high fallutin' as well...as the ones for those of us us who are serf-class Yanks, is getting bad, bad, bad.

In this country's pioneer days when prairie schooners stopped for the night after hot days trudging through virgin wheat fields or through blazing deserts, hundreds of camp fires lit the skies, and as the night cooled down, the scent of coffee permeated the air. Coffee was often the last thing in the evening for though Westward Ho folds and the first thing on early-morning fires.

Ah, a good cup of coffee! The unmistakable aroma of the coffee bean!

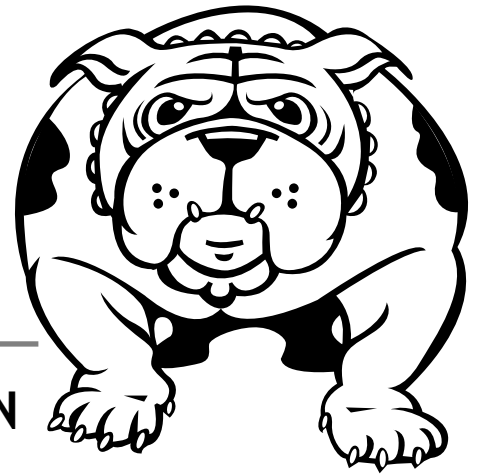
Too often the coffee I'm served is the burned bottom-of-the-pot stuff that would be considered inhumane to give to someone on death row. Or maybe it's what should be given on death row instead of lesser punitive measures currently used. In fact, I think the threat of a dose of it could do much to deter crime.

Every day, lots of places routinely push "death-row coffee" off on the public, and they have the guts to charge for it. They try to squeeze the last drop out of a pot, letting it burn to caffeine-laced mud before serving it. Or they make it so weak in the first place that it tastes like hot water on a crusade to make you guess whether it's coffee or tea.

continued on page 18

Remembering Heroes

of weekly
journalism



By RICK FREEMAN

Who was Gene Cervi?

The young wife of an editor put the question to me last week during a hospitality hour at the annual **International Society of Weekly Newspapers Editors** conference, this year in Halifax, Nova Scotia. My first response was, "How much time do you have?"

I was a speaker at the four-day conference, my topic the *Woburn Advocate's* ongoing coverage of *A Civil Action*, the book and movie, the local people who made it happen and the ramification 20 years later at hazardous waste sites created by W.R. Grace Company. ISWNE gives out a **Gene Cervi Award** to an editor for outstanding contributions to community journalism over a long period of time. There was no recipient deemed worthy this year.

Upon further responding to my young questioner I realized how much community weekly journalism has changed since I first met **Gene Cervi** 37 years ago. It was a different place and time in the United States for weekly newspaper editors and everybody else.

Cervi was an early member of ISWNE. The group first came together in 1954 when 13 weekly editors from 10 states met at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. The thrust was to engage ideas they could carry back to their communities in the form of editorials and columns. It formalized

as a non-profit organization in 1959.

During the long, feverish decade of the 1960s and into the still-smoldering 1970s, ISWNE attracted an extraordinary group of weekly journalists to the annual meetings at the southern end of Illinois.

They reflected a time when the towns they served desperately needed to understand lynchings, ghetto riots, campus demonstrations, assassinations, the 1968 Democratic convention, the war in Vietnam, the fractured psyches of

Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon and Kent State.

These weekly editors were created by their tumultuous time and rose to its challenges in extraordinary ways, sometimes through circumstances rather than choice. They were beaten up, shot at, their newspaper plants were bombed, they were boycotted by advertisers.

There have always been courageous community editors in America but I know of no other time when they had a place such as ISWNE to convene each year as a group to give each other the courage to go back and fight the battle still another day. ISWNE member Bill Rotch wrote in his *Milford (N.H.) Cabinet-Press* back then, they came to ISWNE, lifted their heads up over the trenches and saw there were others just like themselves in trenches on both sides.

All through the 1960s and early 1970s, the award was not the Cervi, but the **Elijah Lovejoy Courage in Journalism**, given out by Southern Illinois University. Year after year, these amazing winners showed up, almost always for the first time, to receive their award, became ISWNE members

**Gene Cervi
often was
the bulldog
barking
the loudest.**

and came back year after year to give strength to other **Courage** editors who had thought they were fighting lonely battles in places most of the world had never heard of. Like Lexington, Miss.

Chief among them was **Hazel Brannon Smith**, of the *Lexington* (Miss.) *Advertiser* who won the **Lovejoy** in 1960, and was the first woman and first weekly editor to win the Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing. Because of her views on Civil Rights, the White Citizens Council in Lexington forced an advertising boycott on her small weekly that lasted more than 20 years, with the only ad in her newspaper a free public service announcement from Smokey the Bear to stop forest fires.

Her newspaper was bombed, her husband lost his job as country hospital administrator, her closest friends, out of fear, abandoned her. The place she found love and respect each of those painful years was at ISWNE in July. Finally, deep in debt to a number of editors and publishers who helped keep her newspaper printing, this proud southern woman, who had once been among Mississippi's most honored journalists, finally gave up in the 1970s, \$300,000 in debt. Her last words to ISWNE in 1975 was, "I'm tired of fighting."

Another **Courage** winner was **W. Penn Jones**, who edited the *Midlothian Mirror*, a tiny weekly near Dallas, Texas. He won the award in 1963 for his battle with the ultraright John Birch Society. Its local leader was a speaker at his son's high school graduation. Penn Jones tried to get a liberal judge invited to also speak at the graduation.

When he asked the principal in his high school office, the principal punched him out. The local head of the John Birch Society later started a fist fight with him and they both went through the front plate glass window of Penn's newspaper office on the Thursday the *Mirror* came out. On Sunday, the newspaper plant was fire-bombed.

Penn Jones was stunned that anybody had paid attention to what he was doing in *Midlothian*. He said at the 1963 ISWNE conference, "For 17 years I couldn't even get the local school board to hold open meetings." On November 1963, Penn was in Dallas when John F. Kennedy was assassinated. He later wrote four books on the Warren Commission Report and was on the cover of *Ramparts* magazine as the focus of a 21-page story on his JFK assassination findings.

From 1962 to 69 I wrote about weekly newspapers for *Editor & Publisher* magazine, out of New York City. Each July, I journeyed to Pere Marquette State Park, near Grafton, Ill., where the conferences were held. I covered not only these **Courage in Journalism** winners, but some of the great community newspaper editorial minds the

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GENE CERVI AWARD WINNERS

- 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.
- 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.



Trapp



McCord



Estabrook

Who is Gene Cervi?

continued from page 11

conference attracted, first among them the late **Houstoun Waring**, the *Littleton (Col.) Independent*, then considered the premier weekly newspaper editor in the country. He frequently wrote for the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*.

There was **Don Pease**, editor of the *Oberlin (Ohio) News-Tribune* from 1957 to 1976 and for 16 years after that an outstanding United States congressman from Ohio.

Presidential primary candidates going back to Eisenhower and Stevenson trekked through the snows of New Hampshire to interviews at **Bill Rotch's** *Cabinet-Press* in Milford and to **Ed DeCourcy's** *Argus-Champion* editorial offices to Newport at the opposite end of the state. Both, now retired, were brilliant editorial writers and columnists. Bill still writes his column as another New Hampshire primary season under way.

The late **Landon Wills**, editor of the *McLean Country* in tiny Calhoun, Ky., was the subject of an ABC TV documentary, "A Country Editor: Portrait of a Dying Breed."

Bob Estabrook spent 25 years at the *Washington Post* as London, U.N. and Canadian correspondent and editorial page editor before he and his wife, Mary Lou, bought the *Lakeville (Conn.) Journal* in 1971. They sold it in 1986 but he still writes his "Perambulating" column for the weekly. Bob and Mary Lou, along with Don Pease and his wife, Jeanne, were at the Halifax conference.

Keep your **James Restons**. These weekly newspaper editors were my journalism heroes. Foremost was **Gene Cervi**, editor and publisher of Cervi's *Rocky Mountain Business Journal* in Denver, a highly successful weekly devoted to business,

By 1975, the United States had cooled down and far few weekly editors were being harassed. The "Lovejoy Courage in Journalism" award stayed at SIU when the conference headquarters moved to Northern Illinois University. A new award,

the **Cervi** was created, be given to "someone with a career of outstanding public service through community journalism and who adhered to the highest standards of the craft with a deep reverence for the English language that that was a hallmark of Cervi's writing." For awhile, along with a

plaque the recipient received a gold-plated replica of the bulldog hood ornament on the Mac truck. The bulldog resembled Cervi.

The current roster of ISWNE has many outstanding editors in its ranks today, among them sons and daughters of the early members. Their meetings are a lot more quiet than the raucous 60s sessions in Southern Illinois as editors and speakers of all political stripes went at each other. Gene Cervi often was the bulldog barking the loudest.

Ask me who Gene Cervi was and I come at you from a far different place and time when weekly newspaper journalism mirrored a Mac Truck hood ornament and a 1960s confrontational sensibility.

The Mac truck bulldog hood ornament said it all.

Rick Freeman is a Woburn resident and contributing columnist to the *Woburn Advocate*.

**Ask me who Gene Cervi was and I come at you
from a far different place and time
when weekly newspaper journalism
mirrored a Mac Truck hood ornament
and a 1960s confrontational sensibility.**

social and cultural coverage, or as he described it once to me, "a combination of the *Wall Street Journal* and *The New Yorker*."

Cervi, an imposing figure of average height, some 250 pounds, and a booming voice, was the loud conscience of ISWNE at a time when many at the annual meeting were noisy and sometimes contentious. Following his death at 64 on Dec. 15, 1970, the *New York Times* described his journal as the "muckraking weekly business newspaper" and Cervi as "one of the most outspoken voices in American journalism."

Cervi, with his successful "in your face" journalism, was the conscience of the ISWNE. **Burt Freireich**, retired editor and publisher of the *Sun City (Arizona) News-Sun*, told me at the Halifax conference that for years until he sold his paper he had Cervi's photo on his office door with the caption "This is what a great editor looks like."

ISWNE 1999 award competition

The 24th Annual Eugene Cervi Award

The **Eugene Cervi Award** was established by ISWNE to honor the memory of Eugene Cervi of the *Rocky Mountain Journal*, 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 Eugene Cervi's writing.

The award also recognizes consistently aggressive reporting of government at the grassroots level and interpretation of local affairs.

Cervi Award Nominations should begin with a letter of nomination, which should include the writer's reasons for making the nomination. The nomination also should have other letters about the nominee, clippings demonstrating the criteria for the award and a biographical data sheet giving basic facts about the nominee's career.

Nominations are open only to editors of newspapers of less than daily frequency. Daily is defined as at least five days per week in frequency. (Note: Since the Cervi Award covers a journalistic career, supporting materials are not limited by chronology. Clips can be made from any point in the nominee's career.)

Nominations should be sent by Feb. 1, 2000, (materials may follow by end of month) to:

Chad Stebbins, Department of Communications, Missouri Southern State College, 3950 E. Newman Road, Joplin, MO 64801-1595. Please mark the envelope: CERVI AWARD ENTRY.

The 39th Annual Golden Quill Award

The first **Golden Quill Award** in 1961 went to Hall DeCell of the *Deer Creek Pilot*, Rolling Fork, Miss. Then as now, the award recognized good opinion writing.

Eligibility:

All newspapers of less than daily frequency (published less than five days per week) are qualified to enter. Entries must have been published between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 1998.

Entries must be postmarked by Feb. 1, 2000.
Please mark the envelope: GOLDEN QUILL ENTRY.

**Send to: Chad Stebbins,
Missouri Southern State College,
3950 E. Newman Road, Joplin, MO, 64801-1595.**

You may also nominate an editorial or signed opinion piece by sending the information above with a copy of the article in the format indicated. Please enclose a letter telling ISWNE that it is a nomination.

How to Submit:

Select up to four best editorials or signed opinion pieces from your newspaper. Two is the maximum number of entries permitted from each individual. Mount each entry on 8 1/2-by-11-inch white paper. Please use glue or mounting material that does not bleed through newsprint. Golden Dozen articles (ISWNE selects 12 finalists from which the winner is chosen) will be photocopied in their original form for publication in the **Grassroots Editor**, ISWNE's quarterly journal.

On each page on which the entries are mounted, the following should appear in the upper right-hand corner: Name of newspaper, full mailing address of newspaper, date on which the entry was published, and full name and title of the person who wrote the article. Please mail the entries flat in appropriate envelopes.

GOLDEN QUILL and EUGENE CERVI AWARD winners will be invited guests of ISWNE for a presentation during the Society's annual conference at Victoria, British Columbia. Each award includes a plaque, conference expenses, and travel expenses up to \$500.

A CURSE on our NATION

Opinion: Bluntly Speaking
From *The Ghanaian Chronicle*,
Accra, Ghana

BY I. K. GYASI

"THE CURSE never fell UPON our nation till now; I never felt it till now."

— **Shylock, in Shakespeare's THE MERCHANT OF VENICE**

We are either going through a baptism of fire to toughen us up or we are under a curse that will consign us to eternal perdition.

Whatever it is, many of us feel unsafe, deprived, and uncertain of the future — our own future and that of our country. The cause of our fear?

The Ghana Armed Forces and the Ghana Police Service are the two regular institutions charged with the primary responsibility of securing our lives.

The Police Service ensures that law and order prevails so that we, living within the country's borders, can go about our lawful business without fear that our lives, limbs and livelihood will be at grave risk.

The Armed Forces perform a similar function, with the difference that they ward off external aggression. Of course, occasionally, they may help the police or even take over from them when a very dangerous local situation requires their services. A case in point is the celebrated but nightmarish Northern conflict.

For the most part, however, our soldiers are expected to be hardly seen, and even more hardly heard.

Unfortunately, some members of the two

security institutions have turned criminal, and consequently turned their fists, batons and guns on innocent persons.

**About 1:00 a.m.
on July 24, 1999 Lance
Corporal Kennedy
Dufour, Lance Corporal
Oduro and another one
yet to be identified, and
all from the 6th Battalion
of Infantry in Tamale,
invade the home of a
couple Mr. Kwasi Dubeng
and Miss Julie Oppong,
and brutally
assault them.**

The criminal behaviour of these bad nuts and other happenings in the country make some of us feel unsafe, deprived and uncertain about the next step to take. Take the latest case of military indiscipline and criminal behaviour reported by *The Pioneer* of Thursday, August 5, 1999.

About 1:00 a.m. on July 24, 1999 Lance Corporal Kennedy Dufour, Lance Corporal Oduro and another one yet to be identified, and all from the 6th Battalion of Infantry in Tamale, invade the home of a couple Mr. Kwasi Dubeng and Miss Julie Oppong, and brutally assault them.

These three soldiers, fully armed with rifles, also steal Mr. Dubeng's purse containing DM400, c80,000.00 and a gold chain.

A clue to this otherwise bizarre and unprovoked attack is the bit about Miss Oppong being a former girlfriend of Lance Corporal Dufour.

A few questions arise. Granted that Miss Oppong was a former girlfriend of Dufour, did that give him and his accomplices any right to assault man and wife?

Did they come all the way from Tamale or were they among a unit of the 6th Battalion

temporarily stationed in Kumasi for official duty? Were they on leave or were they guilty of AWOL (absent without leave)?

Did they take the rifles with or without authority? Carrying arms on a private mission at 1.00 am?

This incident and others in the past make some of us wonder if Lt.-Gen. Ben Akafia, Armed Forces chief, is really in charge of his men and women or whether he has lost his grip owing to the unfortunate intrusion of partisan politics into the Armed Forces.

When soldiers walk our streets assaulting innocent civilians and taking them away into guardrooms, I wonder who is in charge.

When such a politically partisan organization as the Association of Committees for the Defense of the Revolution. (ACDR) is allowed to exist in our armed forces, I wonder who is in charge.

When the Armed Forces ACDR issues statements that should have come from the Ministry of Defense, or from the Chief of Defense Staff, or at least from the Armed Forces Directorate of Public Relations, I wonder who is in charge.

And when the Minister of Defense and a Presidential Staffer defend the continued existence of this potentially divisive virus in the Armed Forces, I wonder where we are heading to.

The Armed Forces have, in recent times, diplomatically warned the media against reporting events involving the institution.

So when our neighbour Togo blatantly violates our air space with apparent impunity, it is not to be reported.

So when serving and retired soldiers kill innocent civilians the media should be "circumspect" in reporting it. No. The Chief of Defense Staff should have the political handcuffs taken off his wrists so that he can bring order and discipline into the Armed Forces.

The Armed Forces should have only one ideology — loyalty to the State no matter which political party may be in power.

On a sign board in Accra, our Armed Forces have proclaimed loud and clear that they are ever ready to defend Ghana even to the peril of their lives.

If that is a sincere promise or even an oath, then let them turn their fists, guns, ships and aircraft on external aggressors instead of turning them on the very citizens they have sworn to defend.

That goes to Police boss Peter Nanfuri's men some of whom, like some of the bad nuts in the Armed Forces, allegedly give out their guns and uniforms to criminals.

Mr. Nanfuri should also be left free to tackle policemen implicated in armed robbery and other offenses.

We get the impression that some are sacred cows that should not be touched no matter their direct involvement in serious crimes.

**As long as
criminals roam free
or enjoy the comfort of
their homes, the wrong
signals are sent to the
rest: to other criminals
who become bold,
and to citizens to come
to prefer lynching
suspects to sending them
to the police station.**

As long as these criminals roam free or enjoy the comfort of their homes, the wrong signals are sent to the rest: to other criminals who become bold, and to citizens to come to prefer lynching suspects to sending them to the police station.

Lt. Gen. Ben Akafia and Inspector-General Peter Nanfuri, the ball is in your court. Let us walk easy, work easy, and sleep easy in the sound and reassuring knowledge that nothing can touch us unless we willfully break the law of the land.

Has it truly come to the point where Great Britain has threatened not to recognize degrees awarded by the country's universities?

If true, this news might be music to the ears of someone like our President who has more than once suggested that our medical students should

be initially half trained so that they will not immediately leave the country but will stay to treat malaria.

It is no laughing matter, of course, but a serious one which should engage our attention. And talking of university degrees and university education in general, I ask, what is happening?

Perhaps the President and some of his men and women do not care because they have their children and other relatives studying abroad in private and expensive schools and universities abroad. But they should care and not adopt a myopic policy that sees university education as benefiting only those who get them.

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Beatlemania

strikes again in Co. Wexford



From the
Wexford Echo,
Ireland:

The Fab Four may be no more, but it will never be a case of Hello Goodbye to the Liverpoolians as far as members of The Beatles Fan Club of Ireland are concerned, writes Seán Whelan (who once almost saw the group).

LISTEN reader, **Do you Want to Know a Secret?** **Take it From Me to You**, it's **Something** which can be said without any Help (even a little from my friends) that there'll never be another group with the same profound impact on popular music as **The Beatles**.

I suppose **Tomorrow Never Knows**, but for me, today's superstars may go through a **Hard Day's Night** in attempting to emulate the lovable mop-tops of **Yesterday**, turn **Here, There, and Everywhere** searching for the same magic, and **Twist and Shout** all they like. Now, **I Don't Want to Spoil the Party**, but they have a **Long and Winding Road** before they emulate the Liverpoolian lullaby lads.

Yea, Yea, Yea — people can tell the new kids on the block that **Baby You're a Rich Man**, but, of course, we know that **Money Can't Buy Me Love** (of their music, that is).

Which, apart from being a somewhat showy (and, so far, pointless) introduction to this particular story, is also one of the corniest ways of catching the casual reader's eye (or should that be eyes?).

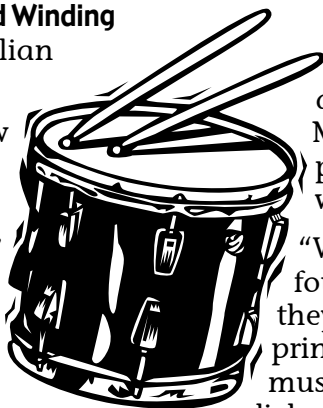
Yes, The Beatles are back, though for true devotees, to paraphrase those immortal words, the Merseyside legends never really went away.

They certainly haven't for the fanatical members of Beatles Ireland, the one and only official Beatles fan club in this country, and whose hundreds of members include fans as distant as the Far East.

Formed in November 1993 and with the motto 'The Beatles live on,' it is twinned with 'Beatles Scene,' the fan club in the group's home city in Liverpool. Unlike fan clubs in the heyday of the Beatles, today's technology means that, via the Internet, the Irish Beatles' section can now be instantly contacted by people all over the world.

Beatles Ireland's honorary patrons include ex-Beatle Ringo Starr, former Beatles drummer Pete Best, legendary record producer George Martin, John and Cynthia Lennon's son Julian, and former Pacemaker leader Gerry (**You'll Never Walk Alone**) Marsden.

Co. Wexford was this year's destination for the annual outing of Dublin-based members of the fanclub, when their **Magical Mystery Tour** weekend brought them to the Carne/Our Lady's Island area, the native heath of Maurice McCarthy, one of several Wexford members of the club.



Club President Pete Brennan, a dynamic enthusiast of the Fab Four, says that not alone will the music of Lennon and McCartney and Co. never die, but it is as popular today as it ever was, and not just with '60s freaks.

"We have members as young as three and four in our club," he says, stressing that they are a non-profit-making organization principally aiming at keeping the Beatles' music alive and catering for the group's diehard fans.

Any money raised at their regular functions, or via the sale of the club's six-times-a-year newsletter, goes to Our Lady of Lourdes hospital in Crumlin, a cause well known to Wexford.

Pete himself was aged four when The Beatles visited Dublin on Nov. 7, 1963, playing at the old Adelphi Cinema. Among Pete's treasured collection of Beatles memorabilia is one of the original tickets for that gig, costing seven shillings and six pence (around 33p in today's currency).

For the **Magical Mystery Tour** stay in Carne, Pete and his merry band used the local Lighthouse' premises as their base. Among their VIP guests was Englishman Jeff Rhind, a classmate of

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The POLITICS of Soccer

BY MICHAEL COLEMAN

From *Honduras This Week*, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

It's never just a game in Honduras.

After finishing the Pan American Games with the country's first silver medal in history, the Honduran soccer team was something to celebrate — if only for a while.

The hastily assembled team surpassed all expectations sailing through pool play and the semi-finals beating the United States, Uruguay, Cuba, Jamaica and Canada. Mexico halted the blue and white's five-game winning streak in the finals 3-1 in a emotion-packed game.

"This is something to feel proud of," said student, Beatriz Chirinos. "Because it's the first time we've won something like that. People will know about Honduras."

And hopefully not just as a good soccer playing nation. It is international recognition that is important for some Hondurans who think their country has been associated with its problems, not its accomplishments for too long.

"People feel the name of Honduras is associated with negative things," said Jorge

Navarro, a bank employee who studied in the United States.

"In the eighties it was the Contras, the nineties it was Mitch. There are some occasions when Honduras is looked at as a success so our people feel really proud."

Doubtless the game gave Hondurans a sense of pride but for some the celebration is already over and it is time to look at real issues.

**For a moment,
the people of Honduras
were very happy.

But when we
do well in soccer
the government
takes advantage
of that.**

four lempira hike in gas prices on game day was a coincidence.

"Hondurans tend to forget



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<http://www.marrder.com/htw>

everything when the soccer team wins," he said. "If a lot of people got over it maybe this country would think about more important things."

"People swallowed that (the gas hike)," added Navarro. "It's another trancazo."

Presidential hopefuls also took advantage of this nationalistic fever pumping up their campaigns.

The Ricardo Maduro contingent made the connection obvious passing out bumper stickers in front of the Estadio Nacional on Saturday. Jaime Rosenthal held a rally nearby on Sunday.

The Pan American Games in Winnipeg was a historical event, something to be proud of but many Hondurans are asking, now what?

Beatlemania

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Lennon and McCartney at Quarrybank grammar school in the 1950s.

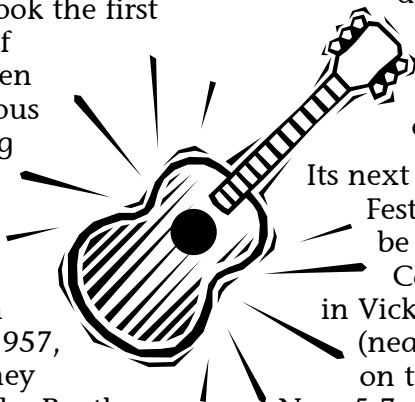
Rhind has another, even more unique distinction: it was he who took the first photograph of The Quarrymen group, a famous snap featuring the check-shirted musicians playing at a garden fête in Liverpool in 1957, long before they evolved into the Beatles.

Jeff, Pete and Co. had a ball on their visit, with their very own musical group belting out all the old Beatles numbers. There was also another important aspect of the trip, in line with their aim of promoting any Irish angle to the Beatles Story.

As is well known, former Beatle George Harrison's grandfather hailed from Co. Wexford, with Corah, Ballycarney, near Enniscorthy, his ancestral home. Harrison's great-grandfather was a member of the Ffrench family, whose son (George's grandfather) emigrated to Liverpool, where he worked as a policeman and taxi-driver.

On their return home to Dublin from Carne, The Beatles Ireland party stopped off at the house which was the original Ffrench home, and presented an inscribed plaque to the present owners of the property.

Pete Brennan says that the 'Wexford connection' in The Beatles history is something the Irish section of the club is very proud of, and would be delighted to see many more from the Model County join the club.



Its next gig is a Beatles Festival Weekend, to be held in 'The Castle Inn' upstairs in Vicker Street, Dublin (near Christ Church), on the weekend of Nov. 5-7 next. Guests will include Louise Harrison (sister of George), former Beatles' publicist and Mr. Fix-it Alastair Taylor, and ex-Wings guitarist Henry McCullough.

A video of the **Magical Mystery Tour** to Co. Wexford of a few weeks back will also be screened.

Thirty-three years ago, it was a case of so near-yet-so-far from a historic moment for this writer, when living in Aston in Birmingham. The Beatles were at their height in early 1966, and I literally bumped into thousands of screaming fans surrounding the old ABC television studios in Aston, where The Beatles were due to appear. I didn't hang around, and missed the chance to catch a glimpse of popular history.

But now I think **I'll Follow the Sun** and dust off my old Beatles record collection: as they might say around Enniscorthy, "**Strawberry Fields Forever!**"

Death-row coffee

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Anybody out there agreeing with me?

Well, by George, let it be known. Send the goop back. This stuff's gotta go.

You can be subtle about it if you don't have the guts to be confrontational. Say kind things to the server like (take your pick):

- Pardon me, but didn't you know the war's over, I think you've mistaken me for the enemy.
- I know some outfit got sued for spilling hot coffee on someone, but still I'd like some of it. I'll be extra careful. Meantime, here's the hot water back while I'm waiting.
- Has this place ever had its well tested? I presume it's a water well.
- Whatever this is, it's got an oil slick on top of it. I can see myself in it, but it makes me look overweight.
- I know this must be a new drink you're proud of. But let me try a cup of coffee along with it.
- How much would you charge not to give me a refill?
- Does the Environmental Protection Agency know about this?
- I just wanted to stay up all night, not die.

A word to offending businesses: being that coffee's a high-profit item in the first place, isn't it a bit sadistic to punish people with it?

And to coffee-loving customers: I done all I can, bless your pea-pickin' hearts. You're on your own here on out.

Jim Sawyer lives in Willard, Mo. This column was printed in the *Bolivar Herald-Free Press*, Bolivar, Mo., Aug. 18, 1999

A Curse on our Nation

continued from page 15

We cannot sincerely say that university education benefited only the Kofi Annans, the Lade Wosornus, the Konotey-Ahulus, the F. K. A, Alloteys and no one else. If nothing at all, Ghana basks in the glory of their achievements even if some of them currently work abroad. Are we not proud of our heart surgeon, Dr. Frimpong Boateng?

University education is no luxury either, though the devilish International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other 'donor' countries are doing their dangerous best to convince us that it is.

To reduce funding to the universities to the point where a considerable number of qualified students cannot get in due to

poverty will be disastrous in the short run and criminal in the long run.

Why does this Government enjoy swallowing indigestible and bitter lumps from the IMF, the World Bank and so-called donors?

One condition imposed by these Western institutions is the severe reduction in real wages. Government has achieved that, with the introduction of the current slave wages that, in real terms, are worse than what we received previously.

The Governor of the Bank of Ghana, the Government Statistician and others claim that inflation is steadily going down.

Not being an economist, a banker or statistician, I cannot

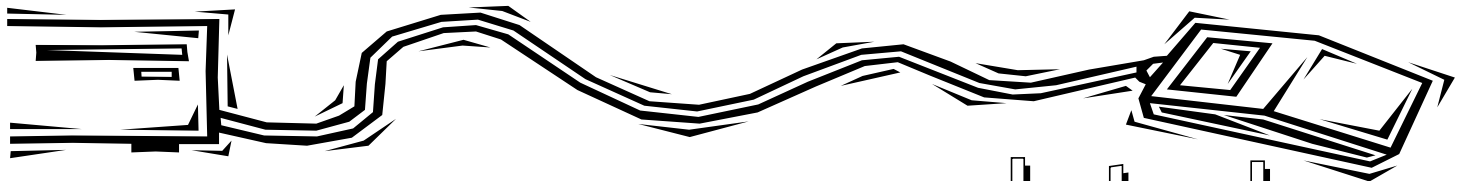
tell. All I know is that I am paying more for utilities, food, soap and other items.

Perhaps those who have financial cushions and shock absorbers do not feel the jolting effects of the economic bumps but the rest of us do.

With the kind of ruinous, IMF-World Bank dictated policies, are we surprised about the spate of strikes, unemployment even for people with skills, and the epidemic of armed robberies and murders?

Let me turn one of Ayikwei Armah's book titles on its head by asking: Why are we so cursed?

Perhaps we need to consult an oracle to get an answer to that one.



electronic
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Roberta Atkinson atkinsonroberta@hotmail.com
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Photo by Tommy McGraw

Titanic Remembered in Halifax

Jim Sawyer of Missouri, in photo, along with Goodloe Sutton and Tommy McGraw of Alabama, didn't leave ISWNE's 1999 Halifax conference without visiting Fair Lawn, one of the city's three cemeteries containing 150 Titanic victims — Fair Lawn the largest with 121. Sawyer wrote a story last year about the connection to the tragedy of a Roman Catholic parish in County Mayo which lost more young people than any other area of Ireland. He traveled to the village of Lahardane to interview relatives. Parts of the story were carried in his weekly column, which appears in the *Webster County Citizen* in Seymour and in several other Missouri papers. The full story was carried by the Missouri-based Senior Living publication.

ABOUT THE ISWNE

The International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors (ISWNE) was founded in 1954 at Southern Illinois University (SIU) by Howard R. Long, then chair of SIU's Department of Journalism at Carbondale, and Houston Waring, then editor of the *Littleton (Colo.) Independent*. ISWNE headquarters were at Northern Illinois University at Dekalb from 1976 to 1992, at South Dakota State University in Brookings from 1992 to 1999. Missouri Southern State College in Joplin became the headquarters in 1999.

ISWNE's purpose is to help those involved in the weekly press to improve standards of editorial writing and news reporting and to encourage strong, independent editorial voices. The society seeks to fulfill its purpose by holding annual conferences, presenting awards, issuing publications, and encouraging international exchanges. There are ISWNE members in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, and India. There are subscribers to *Grassroots Editor*, the society's quarterly journal, in still more countries.

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