

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“What we want, and what we shall have, is the royal American privilege of living and dying in a country town, running a country newspaper, saying what we please when we please, how we please and to whom we please.”

— William Allen White,  
*Emporia (Kan.) Gazette*, Dec. 6, 1911

# The International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors

Visit the ISWNE's Web site:  
[www.iswne.org](http://www.iswne.org)

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## Rediscovering the Scardinos

By **Don Brod**  
ISWNE Vice President

The Sept. 17 issue of *Forbes* magazine includes its “The World’s 100 Most Powerful Women.” It contains the usual suspects — Angela Merkel of Germany is No.1 and Condoleezza Rice is No. 4. There are a lot of people I never heard of, all CEOs or politicians. The next name on the list that I recognized was No. 17, **Marjorie Scardino!** She is listed higher than Oprah, Queen Elizabeth, Hillary Clinton, or Nancy Pelosi.

Marjorie and **Albert Scardino** used to be important members of ISWNE when they published the *Georgia Gazette* in Savannah. Albert won the Golden Quill before he won the Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing. (The only other person to win them both, to my knowledge, is **Hazel Brannon Smith**.) The Scardinos hosted an

ISWNE winter board meeting one year while Albert was on the board. It was a welcome departure from the usual January meetings in cold, snowy DeKalb, Ill.

My memory gets a little hazy after the Scardinos left the weekly newspaper business. They went to New York, where Albert got a job with the *New York Times* and Marjorie went from publisher of the *Georgia Gazette* to North American publisher of the *Economist* magazine. There was a time when their son Hal was a child actor in several movies. I remember *The Indian in the Cupboard* and *Searching for Bobby Fischer*.

When Marjorie was named publisher of the *Economist* (for the whole world, not just North America), her name appeared in the old “Milestones” column of *Time* magazine. I sent her a note saying that I was not accustomed to seeing my friends’ names in “Milestones.” She sent a note back saying that she wasn’t accustomed to being there either.

Now fast-forward to 1995 when ISWNE was engaged in its Capital Experience conference in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, and Dublin. Marjorie and Albert hosted us two evenings in London — one at their townhouse and one at the *Economist* offices. On the night at the townhouse, some of us went up to their roof garden — I guess it’s called a terrace. There in a prominent place was the big old wooden sign of the *Georgia Gazette*.

Albert and I have been corresponding lately by email, and I asked him if the newspaper sign is still in the same place. He said they moved to a flat just across the Thames from the London Eye, that huge Ferris wheel. So they put the sign on the wall of their house in



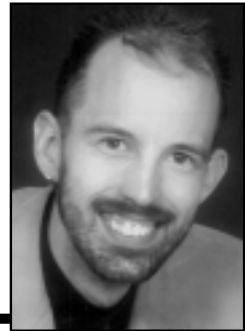
**Don Brod**



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# President's Report

By **Jeremy Waltner**  
*Freeman Courier*  
Freeman, S.D.



## Who we are

The reporter from one of 11 daily newspapers in South Dakota sat across from me scribbling notes in his blue and white reporter's notebook — a notebook exactly like the one so many of us carry when we go to interview the head football coach or the entrepreneur or the quilter who just celebrated a century of living.

For more than 90 minutes he fired off question after question in an attempt to find out what makes newspapers tick; the answers as he saw them would be published in a cover story the following week emphasizing my involvement with the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors.

I had been interviewed before, so the role-reversal that took place (usually I'm the one scribbling words only I can read in a reporter's notebook) wasn't much of an anomaly.

The self examination that followed was.

And the residual effects from that interview keep washing over me now, more than a month later.

As I sat there answering question after question, it occurred to me again that the role of the newspaper in our communities is as valuable as practically any other. Hospitals heal. Schools educate. Banks lend. Those institutions are widely considered staples in any town or city and play a large part in the vitality of their communities.

Newspapers can and should be added to the list.

We are sounding boards for citizens who think the sewer rate increase imposed by the

city council could have been avoided had funds been better managed, or for the elderly couple living on Mulberry Street who is sick and tired of the Harleys screaming past their home at 10 p.m.

We are obituary writers who somehow sub up a person's life in 600 words so readers understand just how special Mom really was.

We are photographers who take pictures of daughters and grandsons crossing finish lines, celebrating touchdowns and drilling 3-pointers when the game is on the line, or hanging their heads when the cruel sword of defeat slashes through them.

We are advertising managers who make the hardware store on the corner feel like their products are the most important products in town, giving them space to tell the world that all lawn care products are 20 percent off through Sunday.

We are reporters who want to know from the chief of police just why the break-in at the country club hasn't been solved, or from the superintendent at Valley High why a dozen staff members have resigned in the past two weeks.

We are editorial writers who present a case for the Independent candidate for congress who really does deserve a shot at office, or who make a call for the school board to open their eyes and recognize that consolidation is happening now, and nobody is immune to what that means.

Our pages are filled with meeting agendas, minutes from county proceedings, court records and police blotters.

A cherry red 1998 Mustang is for sale at a steal — see it in the classifieds — and there's an upcoming auction featuring a plethora of tools next Tuesday afternoon. Who's got their eye on that band saw?

There's the feature story on an amateur sprint car driver who has dreams of someday taking a tour on the NASCAR circuit and the feature photo of the 80-year-old gardener who has just produced a 60 lb. pumpkin in his backyard, a feat that hardly matters — except to the grower and his family.

Bet your bottom dollar the photo of the pumpkin and the story of that race car driver will be on a refrigerator or in a scrapbook or in the folds of a wallet somewhere, and will be cherished till kingdom come by someone.

This is our call because we have made the decision to be newspaper people, most of us choosing the path because we believe it is a noble one.

And if we don't tell their stories and take their pictures and give them a place to write letters and place advertisements and birthday announcements and classified ads, who will?

All of this surged through me as the reporter sat across from me and asked questions about newspapers, newspaper people and our role in our communities and our world.

I knew it before.

But once in a while we need reminders.

Sometimes they come when we least expect it.

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# Rediscovering the Scardinos *from page 1*

the country. "That part of England, East Anglia, gave America most of the early settlers of Massachusetts," he said, "the rabble rousers who thought freedom of expression should be at the top of the agenda. We feel right at home there, and so does the *Georgia Gazette* sign."

I asked Albert to fill us in on what has hap-

pened to him and Marjorie (whom we both referred to as No. 17) from the *Georgia Gazette* days to the present, and he sent this marvelously detailed account:

"No 17 is in India at the moment but would be very flattered to know how many details about our lives you had recalled already. Don't pay attention to lists. *Harper's & Queen* magazine in London a few years ago ranked Powerful Women in History. Marjorie came third to Cleopatra and Elizabeth I. And that was before she became a Dame. As she says often, everything we ever needed in life we learned in the weekly newspaper business.

"We learned courage from Hazel Brannon Smith, dignity from **Ed DeCourcy**, humor from **Bob Bliss**, determination from **Dick McCord**, humility and a big world view from **Bob Estabrook**. We are still learning about the pleasure of poking Goliath in the eye from **Jim MacNeill**. Having a seat in that house was just about the most rewarding, exciting and lasting pleasure we've known.

"A potted history: We restarted the *Georgia Gazette* in 1978 after a hiatus of 175 years. We helped put 38 elected and appointed officials in jail for everything from insurance fraud to running a prostitution service on the state payroll. Like every other ISWNE member, we had a few victories in gender equality, race relations, environmental standard raising and cultural history, and lots of defeats on gun control, zoning, litter and public toilets.

"We were paraded out of Savannah in 1985 shortly after the Pulitzer award, having lost the legal ads to the chain daily that dominated the local market. Marjorie landed a job running what was then the very small office of the *Economist* in Rockefeller Center. I became a junior copy editor at the *New York Times*. The job fit her like a Chanel gown, and she fit the job. She knew from her previous weekly about circulation drives, ad sales, protecting the editorial team and reorganizing the papers on the newsstand to put her banner out front. The U.S. business grew like kudzu, from 80,000 circulation to 240,000 in fairly short order.

"For me, the job fit like my grandfather's army boots, stiff, small and unfit for purpose. I didn't much like the place, which was convenient, because the management didn't much care for me. I quickly understood that no matter how long I stayed it would never be like the *Georgia Gazette*. I'd

never get to spend the night with the publisher.

"When the chance came in 1989 to serve as the press secretary to the first African-American mayor of New York, David Dinkins, I jumped. It was a joyful experience, though being on the front page of the *New York Post* every few weeks as the quadruple-chinned mouthpiece of the mayor made school life a bit awkward for our three children.

"Out of the blue in 1993, the *Economist's* chief executive left and the board offered Marjorie the job in London. I had an itinerant career as a speechwriter, campaign manager, book reviewer, media investor and stage mother for Hal's accidental movie career. In 1997, after four more years of dramatic growth, Pearson, which owns half the *Economist* shares, offered her the job she has now, CEO. That made her the first woman to run one of Britain's 100 largest public companies. The Queen made her a Dame Knight of the British Empire for that distinction. By tradition, our children gave me the title Lady Albert.

"At the time, Pearson owned a third of Lazards bank, Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum, Penguin books, the *Financial Times* and the business newspapers in Spain and France, plus a couple of theme parks in Spain. They had recently sold off Royal Dalton china, Latour wines and a group of daily and weekly newspapers in southern England. ('You gave me the job after you sold off the only thing I knew anything about,' said Marjorie.) They also owned Longman and Addison Wesley, their textbook businesses.

"Marjorie decided to turn the Pearson conglomerate into an education and information company. She sold off the bank, the wax museum, the theme parks and most of the non-English language newspapers. She bought the education book business of Simon & Schuster and a very large testing business. She then set about integrating technology into the classroom, using the power of computers to analyze every child's understanding of each and every concept, then redoing the material overnight for those who didn't catch it. She thought some children learn better aurally, some by reading, some by watching animation, so she found ways to put all of those concepts together for math, sciences, languages and social studies. Using embedded testing for diagnostic purposes rather than ranking

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## The International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors

### Officers of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors:

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# 1996 Eugene Cervi winner dies

**Melvin Schexnayder**, a longtime owner of *The Dumas (Ark.) Clarion* weekly newspaper, died Sept. 11. He was 87.

Terry G. Hawkins, current publisher and managing editor of the southeast Arkansas newspaper, said Schexnayder suffered from diabetes and other health ailments in recent years.

Schexnayder and his wife, **Charlotte**, won the Eugene Cervi Award from the ISWNE in 1996. Charlotte is still a member of the Society.

Born in Abbeville, La., Schexnayder served four years in the U.S. Army during World War II, earning the rank of lieutenant. He and Charlotte met as students at Louisiana State University and married in 1946. He

worked as a chemical engineer for Texas Pacific Railroad before becoming an advertising manager at the *McGehee Semi-Weekly Times*.

Schexnayder and his wife purchased *The Dumas Clarion* in 1954, said Tom Larimer, executive director of the Arkansas Press Association. Melvin Schexnayder served as the association's president in 1962.

In 1998, Emmerich Newspapers of Jackson, Miss., bought the 4,000 circulation weekly from the Schexnayders. The previous winter, the press association honored the Schexnayders for five decades of service to journalism.

Charlotte Schexnayder was a longtime Democratic state representative for Dumas

who served as assistant speaker pro tem from 1995-1997. She also was the first woman to serve as president of the National Newspaper Association. Larimer remembered Melvin Schexnayder as "a very knowledgeable newspaperman and businessman."

Schexnayder is survived by his wife, two sons and one daughter.



**Melvin Schexnayder**

## Rediscovering the Scardinos *from page 3*

purposes, these new systems made pass rates soar in every school system where they were adopted.

"In the process, Pearson became the world's largest education company. Their technology has proved so successful that in the last year four of their six largest competitors have decided to get out of the education business (Reed Elsevier and Thomson, for example). Pearson is now rolling out these services in many other countries.

"At the same time, the company handles a lot of other testing services too, from the national nursing qualifying exam in the U.S. to the GMAT business school entrance exam to the national drivers' license exams in the U.K. They are also the world's largest teachers of English, one of their projects being to teach enough English to 7 million people in China to allow them to handle the crowds for the Beijing Olympics.

"They also publish Penguin books and all of the related imprints.

"And of course, the *Financial Times*, the world's standard financial publication (outside the U.S.). And half the *Economist*.

"In all, it is a company of 30,000 people

with annual sales of \$7 billion, 'just like the *Georgia Gazette*,' she says, 'except they use much bigger bags to move the money around.'

"Marjorie also sits on the boards of Nokia, where she is vice chairman, the MacArthur Foundation, the Carter Center, and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

"I had one brief return to newspapering. In 2003 I became an executive editor of the *Guardian*, responsible for training and staff development. It all went well for two years until the bombs went off in the underground. One of the trainees in a new program I had organized was the only devout Muslim on the staff of 400 journalists, and the only Urdu speaker. Under pressure from a number of outside groups, the editor asked him to sign a statement that he was not anti-Semitic and that he did not condone the use of violence as a political weapon. He refused, saying that no one else was being asked to sign such a statement and pointing out that no one had ever accused him of being anti-Semitic or of condoning the use of violence. He was brought up before a management tribunal on a charge of bringing the paper into disrepute, convicted and

dismissed. I resigned the next day.

"The whole thing made me very nostalgic for the *Georgia Gazette* and ISWNE, days of being able to love newspapering without the need to serve institutional priorities.

"Daughter Adelaide has grown up to be a movie executive in Los Angeles, sons Will and Hal in their final year of university (Will at Kingston in London in computer studies, Hal at Columbia in New York in literature). And I'm labouring away in the fields of journalism at [www.mediastandard-trust.org](http://www.mediastandard-trust.org) and as a weekly reviewer of the Monday morning British newspapers on Sky television.

"Marjorie and I think about you and those summer meetings often and fondly."

And we continue to think of them fondly. I remember Albert in his seersucker suit helping coordinator Dick McCord keep the 1989 conference in Atlanta going.

And, by the way, Albert is still an ISWNE member.

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# ISWNEWS



## Governor names Frank Garred to task force

**Frank Garred** has been named by Washington State Gov. Christine Gregoire to serve a three-year term on the newly formed "Sunshine Committee" (Public Records Exemption Accountability Committee) charged with evaluating the more than 300 exemptions to the state's Public Records Act and recommending changes to the governor, attorney general and state legislature.

Essentially the 13-member panel is expected to determine the need for such exemptions, which have grown to the current number from the 10 included in the original act initiated by voters in 1972.

Garred also is named the first recipient of the Washington Coalition for Open Government James Andersen Award, presented for his work as volunteer managing director of the coalition from its inception in 2002 until June 2005, when he moved onto the coalition board. He served as a coalition board member and vice president until January 2007.

The former ISWNE president, Cervi Award recipient, newspaper editor and publisher, and still journalist-activist and college journalism instructor, additionally has been named to this fall's University of Washington Department of Communications alumni honor class for 2007. Garred earned his journalism degree at the university in 1958, and except for two years active military service, has spent the remaining 47 years as a practicing journalist.

## Macleod Gazette earns provincial, national awards

The *Macleod Gazette* in Fort Macleod, Alberta, recently received three national and four provincial newspaper awards.

In May the *Gazette* was named best all-around newspaper in its circulation category by the Canadian Community Newspapers Association.

"The *Gazette* placed first with its clean presentation, strong editorial page, contemporary ad design and obvious commitment to its community," said judge **George Brown**, an ISWNE member. "The *Gazette's* news coverage is comprehensive, well written and nicely packaged."

The *Gazette* also placed first for best editorial page and second for best front page among papers that circulate 1,250 to 1,999 copies.

Then in June *The Macleod Gazette* was named the best newspaper of its size in Alberta.

"Wonderful paper," judge Lin Orosz enthused. "Everything is well balanced between stories, advertising, photos, etc."

The *Gazette* was awarded 945 points out of a possible 1,000 in the 2007 Better Newspapers Competition sponsored by the Alberta Weekly Newspapers Association. The *Gazette* also earned first-place awards for best editorial page and best sports pages, and placed sec-

ond in judging for best front page.

The *Gazette* is owned and operated by ISWNE member **Frank McTighe** and his wife, **Emily**.

## Garrett Ray gets plug in local newspaper

An article in the Aug. 10 issue of the twice-weekly *Fort Collins* (Colo.) *Now* featured ISWNE member **Garrett Ray**. A Page 1 teaser read, "When it comes to charity, there's no slowing down 70-year-old Garrett Ray."

The feature described Ray's work in April as a volunteer in the New Orleans area with Habitat for Humanity. The news peg was Ray's promotion of a drive to collect school supplies for an elementary school in St. Bernard Parish.

## Colum Burke to study hotel management

**Colum Burke** of *The Tuam Herald*, Ireland, has passed his school Leaving Certificate exam with enough points to get his first choice college course, hotel and catering management, at the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology.

Delegates at the 2003 ISWNE conference in Ireland may remember the very striking copper facade of the GMIT building on the Dublin Road, looking out over Galway Bay. Colum's program is a four-year course, with several work placements in Ireland and abroad, so he is hoping he may be lucky enough to get a posting to the U.S.

## Brennan Stebbins stringing for Sosnieckis

**Brennan Stebbins**, who recently completed his freshman year at the University of Missouri, is covering Van-Far High School football for *The Vandalia* (Mo.) *Leader* this season.

Stebbins covered three Van-Far games for *The Leader* last year. He is a native of Carl Junction, near Joplin, where he played high school football. His father, **Chad Stebbins**, is ISWNE executive director.

*The Vandalia Leader* is owned by ISWNE members **Gary** and **Helen Sosniecki**.

## 'Soz Sez' columns named state's best

**Gary Sosniecki** has been named best serious columnist on a Missouri weekly newspaper in the 2007 Missouri Press Foundation Better Newspaper Contest.

The award for Sosniecki's "Soz Sez" column was one of five received by the *Vandalia Leader*, more than any other rural weekly newspaper in northeast Missouri. The *Leader* also received second place for best news story, second for best online newspaper, third for the Tilghman Cloud Memorial Editorial Award, and honorable mention for best business story.

# Sheriff's ego costs us all

## People 2, Arpaio 0

*West Valley View*  
Litchfield Park, Ariz.  
Aug. 17, 2007

An Arizona Appeals Court judge has ruled in favor of the *West Valley View* in its legal battle with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office over the sheriff's refusal to send press releases to the *View*.

The Sheriff's Office appealed an earlier court decision in which a trial judge ruled that the Sheriff's Office must provide the releases to the *View* at the same time it sends them to other news media organizations.

The Appeals Court judge upheld a lower court's decision.

The appellate court judge also reversed the trial judge's decision not to award the *View* attorney's fees and costs from the original trial, and has ordered the Sheriff's Office to pay attorneys fees and costs at both the trial and appellate levels.

By **Jim Painter**  
Managing editor  
*West Valley View*  
Litchfield Park, Ariz.  
Aug. 21, 2007

Twice now, the courts have ruled that the Maricopa County sheriff should make press releases available to this newspaper — the same press releases he sends to other Valley media outlets as well as to some nationally known conservative pundits. Twice now, the sheriff has told the judges he will not do so, and has now stated his intention to appeal last Thursday's Court of Appeals' decision to the Arizona Supreme Court.

For many people reading this, the issue might seem to be one of a battle of a stubborn newspaper vs. an equally stubborn public official, but actually several impor-

tant issues are at stake:

- **Fiscal responsibility.** By continuing to fight this impossible-to-win battle in the courts, the sheriff is squandering public funds that could be used for more worthwhile endeavors.

What would it take for him to avoid spending even more public money in his appeal to the Arizona Supreme Court? The answer: Simply having one of his many public information officers make 24 keystrokes on a computer keyboard. All he has to do is type news1@westvalleyview.com into the Sheriff's Office's e-mail address book. That's all there is to it. We've timed it. It takes all of five seconds for someone with only average typing skills.

Court fights like this cost both sides tens of thousands of dollars in attorneys' fees, which ultimately county taxpayers will have to pay as the sheriff loses one appeal after another.

- **Public safety.** It benefits us all to know when child predators are stalking children in our neighborhoods and near our schools. It benefits us all to know the status of homicide cases in our communities. If your neighbor were murdered, you'd probably want to know if he were the random victim of a serial killer, because if he were, you could be next. It benefits us all to know if the people we elect to serve and protect us are doing their job.

But the Maricopa County sheriff refuses to provide you such information because he doesn't like the *West Valley View*.

By refusing to release such information to this newspaper, our sheriff is placing all of our lives at risk. His disdain for the *West Valley View* translates to a disdain for you, the people who depend on him for protection from criminals, the people who voted him into office and the people whose tax dollars make it possible for him to do whatever it is he does on our behalf.

- **Freedom of speech and a free press.** If any court were to rule in the sheriff's favor in this case, it would send the message to all public officials that it's OK for them to play

favorites when it comes to disseminating public information to news media. If that were to happen, journalists would be afraid to publicly criticize public officials for fear that they would be cut off from the supply of information.

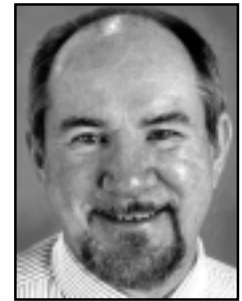
The *West Valley View* isn't the only news outlet Sheriff Joe Arpaio has shunned because he's not happy with their reporting or their editorials; he's also cut off the *Sonoran News*, the *Phoenix New Times* and KPNX Channel 12. He provides press releases and access to crime reports only to news media that cater to his thirst for pro-Arpaio publicity.

If the courts were to rule in his favor, they would open the door to such behavior for all elected officials. If that were to happen, newspapers would be fearful to write editorials or publish news stories critical of any public official from local school boards to the White House.

Furthermore, if government officials can get away with denying the press access to public records, they can also deny the average citizen access to public records. If your home has ever been burglarized or if you've ever been involved in a serious automobile accident, you know how important it is to have access to police reports.

Government by the people would cease to exist under conditions in which government officials could pick and choose which members of the public they were going to give information to. People cannot govern themselves or make educated decisions at the polls when the only information they get from their news sources is pro-government propaganda.

*Jim Painter can be contacted at editor@westvalleyview.com.*



**Jim Painter**

# Court tells Sheriff Arpaio to comply with law

By **Le Templar**  
*East Valley Tribune Blogs*  
 Aug. 16, 2007

The Arizona Court of Appeals told Sheriff Joe Arpaio Wednesday that if he insists on being petty and vindictive with public records, his office is going to have to pay for it. Of course, that means we taxpayers will have to pick up another bill for Arpaio's defiance.

Arpaio has been locked into a rather stupid fight for almost two years with a newspaper called the *West Valley View* that covers several smaller communities including Litchfield Park and Avondale. In the fall of 2005, the sheriff's office removed the *West Valley View* from its list of media outlets who receive news releases by email. The newspaper discovered this when the sheriff announced his investigators had solved a double-homicide in the newspaper's coverage area, but the *West Valley View* only learned about it from reports by its competitors. Capt. Paul Chagolla, the main spokesman for the sheriff's office, told a *West Valley View* editor that the newspaper never seemed to write any stories from the news releases, so apparently it didn't need to receive them anymore.

Translation: The *West Valley View* doesn't write about many of the publicity stunts by Arpaio, so the sheriff's office will punish the newspaper by denying it information that could be useful to its readers.

This has turned out to be a common tactic of the sheriff and his staff. Other newspapers such as the *Sonoran News* and the *Phoenix New Times* routinely have been cut off from written information in response to negative stories and criticism of Arpaio. In July, the news director at KPNX-TV, the Valley NBC affiliate, told the Arizona First Amendment Coalition that Arpaio was trying to black out that station as well.

As a county sheriff, Arpaio routinely sends his news releases to a rather odd collection of places include Bill O'Reilly and Rush Limbaugh. But he refuses to put any of them on his office Web site for the average taxpayer to read. This allows him to use information about his office as leverage against media outlets: push Arpaio too far and he could shut you out while aiding your competitors.

The *West Valley View* refused to be intimidated. The newspaper filed a request under state's open records law to receive all future news releases at the same time as other media outlets. When the sheriff's office ignored the request, the newspaper sued. A trial judge said the law doesn't require Arpaio to return the *West Valley View* to the email list. But the judge did require the sheriff's office to make all news releases available on the same day they are sent to other media, even if someone from the newspaper has to drive more than 20 miles roundtrip to downtown Phoenix to retrieve them.

That didn't satisfied Arpaio, who argues the

*West Valley View* should have to request to see each news release after they are issued and sent to others. So he appealed, confident the ruling would be overturned.

Not only did the appeals court reaffirm the trial judge's order, the court said Wednesday that Arpaio has no legitimate reason for his actions and directed his office to pay the *West Valley View's* costs to pursue the lawsuit.

Arpaio frequently promises to pursue lawsuits to the state Supreme Court, if necessary, and he's stubborn enough to waste more tax money on this vendetta. But if he wants to do the right thing, he will put the *West Valley View* back on the email list. Or even better, start posting the news releases on the sheriff's office Web site for everyone to see at the same time, like virtually every other government agency in the Valley. The "World's Toughest Sheriff" should be able to handle the scrutiny.

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## Leslie O'Donnell editorial gets second place

**Leslie O'Donnell** received a second-place award for an editorial in the Independent Free Papers of America (IFPA) editorial contest on Sept. 13.

The editorial was published in *Nutfield News*, which covers Derry, N.H. The award was presented at the joint conference of IFPA and the Free Community Papers of New England, held in Boston.

O'Donnell is the editor of Nutfield Publishing's three free community newspapers: *Nutfield News* (Derry, N.H.), *Londonderry Times* (Londonderry, N.H.), and *Tri-Town Times* (Sandown, Hampstead and Chester, N.H.). Nutfield Publishing is based in Londonderry, and O'Donnell has been with the family-owned company since November 2006.



## Chadron Record gets attention of New York Times

By **Douglas Perret Starr**  
Professor of Agricultural Journalism  
Texas A&M University

Making the police report of law violations interesting and enticing is not easy, but the weekly *Chadron Record* in northwestern Nebraska's pine ridge region is a past-master at the task.

So much so, in fact, that editor George Ledbetter ranks the police blotter alongside the obituaries as the most appreciated item in the newspaper.

The *Chadron Record* has been publishing news about Dawes County, including the police blotter, for 120 years. Long before Ledbetter took the reins of the newspaper, the Chadron Police Department had been sending the blotter to the newspaper every day, and the newspaper had been publishing it every Wednesday.

Then, things changed; now the blotter is faxed, and Ledbetter assigned reporter Heather Crofutt the task of preparing it for publication. She had a better idea, and her published report needed a name. That was easy, Ledbetter said: "Police Beat."

The blotter contains many calls of serious

nature: child abuse, domestic violence and the like. That's not surprising in a town of 6,600, including those of the 2,200 students of Chadron State College who live off campus. But, Ledbetter said that serious crimes are handled as separate stories, as they should be.

What Crofutt does is select the most interesting items, those of less-than-serious nature. She picks up almost verbatim the blotter wording, which is pretty much the way the callers describe their problems. What makes the Police Beat enticing is that she deletes home and business addresses and changes people's names to "suspect" or "someone" or "caller" and the like.

Crofutt's handling of the Police Beat is so enticing that the *New York Times* recently sent a reporter to do a story.

The *Times* included in the story some of the items from the Police Beat, like these, all common in small-town America, what Ledbetter called a reflection of human life:

*Caller from the 200 block of Morehead Street advised a man was in front of their shop yelling and yodeling. Subject was told to stop yodeling until Oktoberfest.*

*Caller from the 400 block of Third Street advised that a subject has been calling her and*

*her employees, singing Elvis songs to them.*

*Caller from the 100 block of North Morehead Street requested to speak to animal control because caller felt that someone was coming into his yard and cutting the hair on his dogs. Dispatch advised caller to set up video surveillance on his house. Caller said he planned on it.*

And this one:

*Caller from the 800 block of Pine Street advised that she had just left someone's home and she forgot her jacket, and requested an officer to get her coat.*

The Police Beat did not say whether an officer retrieved the jacket.

Douglas Perret Starr can be contacted at [d-starr@tamu.edu](mailto:d-starr@tamu.edu).



**Douglas Perret Starr**

## Brahms away

By **Charles Gay**  
Editor and publisher  
*Shelton-Mason County Journal*  
Aug. 30, 2007

*Editor's note: Charles Gay, who encouraged editors to experiment with humor in their editorials in the August ISWNE newsletter, follows his own advice in this piece.*

That's a Verdi interesting proposal by Pierce Transit officials and Tacoma police to play classical music at bus stops to discourage gang-bangers from hanging out in those arias.

Whether it was just using Carmen sense or thinking outside the Bachs, officials seem to be going for baroque to get a Handel on the situation. They're banking on the fact that hoods Offenbach at this kind of music. True solutions to gang loitering are fugue and far between and, as transit spokeswoman Dee Walker says, if the crime rate Rossini higher, it could affect ridership.

To romantics like me, the idea has a certain Ring to it. With any luck this overture to the hoods will be only a prelude to burying them in culture, which should Scarlatti them away. I can't wait to see the Liszt of tactics the police will Ravel next in their Culture War orchestrated to show the gangs no symphony. Some of the changes would B minor but have A major effect. I'd bet Monet the Impressionists hung at bus shelters as autumn set in would make gangsters treble in their boots. Or post some of Maurice's drawings — scare them with Mozart. Then later this Falstaff could add poetry, with parking enforcers doubling as meter readers. Those cummings and goings would really Frost the delinquents in the Wolfgang.

There's no reason some Mahler should be able to waltz right in to a bus stop and start such bass, eGriegious behavior. When Ives been to the mall and finished my Chopin, I sit at the bus stop. Maybe Aida Salome sandwich and an orange Schubert cone. The last thing I want is some punk coming up to the people sitting there and saying, "Etudes, wassup?" and then shaking his Faust at us or pulling out a 9mm

Gluck he's been Haydn in his baggy pants as if assault is some Rite of Spring.

As police spokesman Phil Harmonic says, bus stops can be very Bizet places when lots of riders congregate, but there's no reason they need to be high-Strauss places, too.

I like this no-Holst-barred assault on the bad guys. The Bartok in the taverns is that Pierce Transit plans to put Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto on an endless loop to play Auber and Auber so The Emperor has no close.

I Figaro, two, maybe three weeks, and thugs like vile Lynn will be so rap-deprived they'll go jump off a clef.

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**Charles Gay**

# Freeman Editor Makes News

By **Randy Dockendorf**  
Regional editor  
*Yankton Press & Dakotan*  
Aug. 31, 2007

Each week, hundreds of people pay to read what **Jeremy Waltner** has to say.

Waltner, the news editor of the *Freeman Courier*, also writes editorials with his father, **Tim**, who publishes the weekly newspaper.

Sometimes, readers agree with him. Other times, they are outraged at what he has to say.

"I'll get a phone call from someone who disagrees," Waltner said. "They'll say something like, 'I can't believe you wrote that about the school board!' I'll say, 'If you want to complain, that would be a great letter to the editor.' That's where the courage (to speak out in public) comes in."

Jeremy Waltner has been provoking thought since he was a teenager, winning his first journalism award at age 17. He has amassed experience usually found in an entire career.

Now, at age 31, he has become the youngest president in the half-century history of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors (ISWNE). The Waltners also become the third father-son set to serve as ISWNE presidents.

"Jeremy brings the perspective that is different than someone who grew up in the 1960s or World War II," Tim said. "That doesn't mean it's necessarily better, but it enriches the process."

Jeremy Waltner stands poised to take over the ISWNE reins, said executive director **Chad Stebbins**.

"Despite his relatively young age, Jeremy has everyone's respect within the ISWNE organization. He has been attending our annual conventions since he was a teenager," Stebbins said. "Just four years ago, he won our prestigious Golden Quill award for writing the best editorial within the weekly press. Jeremy is passionate about small-town newspapering as well as the necessity for maintaining local ownership and strong, independent editorial voices."

The ISWNE believes that a strong newspaper creates a strong community, Jeremy

said.

"The purpose of the organization is to promote and encourage a strong editorial voice with an emphasis on local issues," he said. "We don't talk ad revenue, the latest technology or postal rates. We talk about how to edit pages, build our communities and make our newspapers better."

A newspaper's voice doesn't run just one way, as readers can respond, Jeremy said.

"A newspaper should be a sounding board and source of information. You need to report the news, but you also need columns, editorials and views," he said. "The nature of the news and editorials is completely different. The editorial is the soul of the newspaper, and the news is the heartbeat."

Many good things are happening in small towns, and newspapers can help spread that message, Jeremy said.

"You are a champion of your city, and you shout it from the rooftops. We are able to do that because there are so many things going on here in Freeman," he said. "For a town of 1,300 residents, it's mind-boggling. I could list 10 things right away."

But editorials can also require taking controversial stands, Jeremy said.

"A lot of people say editorials are hard to write. I say that's hogwash," he said. "You take the time each week to plan and take a front page photo. You can do the same with an editorial."

Tim attended his first ISWNE summer conference at Brookings, S.D., in 1993 and became hooked on the organization. Jeremy continued the family tradition, and both Waltners have won the Golden Dozen Award as one of the 12 best editorials in the annual competition.

"I have six Golden Dozen Awards, but Jeremy won the Golden Quill Award, so he's one up on me," Tim said with a laugh.

Jeremy recalled that year as special in two ways — he not only received the Golden Quill in Ireland but was also elected to the ISWNE board at the age of 27.

Jeremy's ascent to the ISWNE presidency became even more special this year as the summer conference was held in the Black Hills. The South Dakota Newspaper

Association (SDNA) provided about a half-dozen scholarships for interested members to attend the summer conference, helping boost attendance to a record 107 participants.

Jeremy believes the central location and family-oriented activities found in the Black Hills helped boost participation. The conference also allowed members to discuss issues important to South Dakota. He hopes the good experience helps push ISWNE membership well above 200.

"I have made a lot of friends all over the world. Each summer, I become recharged," he said. "It's humbling, because these people have written things of Pulitzer Prize caliber."

As Jeremy begins his presidency, Tim said he has already seen great accomplishments by his son.

"Jeremy has pushed me significantly professionally in terms of what we do with newspapers. He brings a different approach, and I think we balance each other fairly well," Tim said. "It's not just a generational thing. Jeremy has life experiences that are different than mine. Putting those two into play strengthens both of us and hopefully strengthens the newspaper."

The Waltners write as an editorial board. While Tim writes most editorials, he gets input from Jeremy. If they disagree strongly, they may produce a point-counterpoint format.

"I disagree with the idea that we write editorials to tell people what to think. I prefer to think of editorials as prompting people to think," Tim said. "Editorials, for the most part, should be local, but not exclusively local. We need to promote our small rural communities to think both nationally and internationally about issues."

While tackling the leadership of an international organization, Jeremy does not intend to neglect his *Courier* duties. He still



**Jeremy Waltner**

continued on page 10

# Great challenges await new leaders of Nicholasville Now

By **Mike Moore**

Editor

*The Jessamine Journal*

Nicholasville, Ky.

Aug. 16, 2007

The face of Nicholasville Now has changed. In June, its first executive director Carola Hartley left to take a job in Newton, N.J., and last week its president, Brian Goettl, announced his decision to step down, citing burnout.

There's no doubt that both Hartley and Goettl gave it their all, and the community owes them a debt of gratitude for their efforts.

Presently a five-person search committee is looking for candidates to take on the role of executive director.

This shouldn't be a rush job. The right person is needed to take Nicholasville Now to the next level.

The same goes for the organization's new president, whoever he or she may be. Goettl said it best: "You want somebody who is fresh and can bring in new ideas."

It's fine to be recognized by the Renaissance on Main, Kentucky Main Street Program, Kentucky Heritage Council and National Trust for Historic Preservation. Those organizations are wonderful and helpful in securing grant money.

But more tangible improvements are needed in Nicholasville's downtown. The Jessamine Jamboree and the Kentucky Wine

and Vine Festival, and other events like those are well and good, but even they cannot hide the fact downtown seems as drab a place as it did when Nicholasville Now was organized the late 1990s.

According to Nicholasville Now's Web site, its mission "is to stimulate and encourage the civic, social and commercial welfare of downtown Nicholasville by using a comprehensive approach that integrates design, promotions, organization and economic restructuring into a downtown management strategy that will have useful and lasting effects."

In December 2006, Hartley told the *Journal* that Nicholasville Now completed a marketing study to determine what would work best for Main Street and the surrounding area. The study found that the best bets for downtown Nicholasville are tourism-related businesses, like restaurants, coffee shops, bookstores and specialty shops.

Almost a year later, still nothing is on the horizon.

In April 2006, Nicholasville Now announced that a \$146,000 grant from the Governor's Office for Local Development had been awarded to transform the old Hemphill building on Main Street to a cyber café which was slated to open in fall 2006. In March 2007, Nicholasville Now announced the work on the Hemphill building would soon begin. It's now August, and people are still wondering when the work on the Hemphill building will begin.

We've heard talk about the new master

plan being worked on. We're still wondering why it took Nicholasville Now nearly eight years to realize it needed to come up with such a plan. You'd think that would have been at the top of the "To do" list.

In the spirit of a new school year starting, we at the *Journal* have looked over Nicholasville Now's mission statement and we are ready to hand out some grades:

Dedication of its many volunteers: A+ (We realize without volunteers, nothing would be accomplished and applaud anyone who is willing to volunteer their time.)

Organizing special events, i.e. festivals: B+ (The events have been popular.)

Focus and direction of Nicholasville Now: D+ (The focus seems to be on events, rather than a total downtown beautification.)

Stimulating and encouraging civic, social and commercial welfare of downtown: D- (Other than special events, nothing seems to be stimulated.)

As you can see, many great challenges await new Nicholasville Now leaders.

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## Freeman Editor Makes News *from page 9*

intends to take the photo of the gardener with the large squash and to make his Wednesday visits up and down the street for off-the-record visits with residents to learn news and their concerns.

"You have to earn people's trust," he said. "I'm young, but I have lived in this town

nearly my entire life. I know the town's people and their history."

Unfortunately, many young journalists are not joining weekly newspapers, Jeremy said. They need to learn the value of the weekly paper, he said.

"We are more in sync with our readers. We

are more invested and write for the heart of people. They know us, and they know our news and editorials every week," he said.

"I love what I do. I want to write for a newspaper the rest of my life."

*Randy Dockendorf can be contacted at [randy.dockendorf@yankton.net](mailto:randy.dockendorf@yankton.net)*

# Editorials can serve variety of purposes

By **Jim Pumarlo**

A newspaper has a responsibility, say, to identify all stores fined for selling cigarettes to underage youths, especially if the fines are assessed at a city council meeting. Nevertheless, the story will likely draw wrath from the businesses and from their employees.

In contrast, a newspaper can be selective in topics it addresses on its editorial page. The positions are not welcomed by all, such as the decision to endorse or oppose a housing development or a school closure.

Courageous publishers and editors — those who view the editorial page as the heart of a newspaper — take those stances, regardless of potential repercussions. That does not mean advancing positions with reckless abandon. Editorials should be thoroughly researched, reasoned and crafted. It's a greater challenge in the community press as you are writing about issues that involve individuals you associate with on a regular basis.

Editors often feel the burden that editorials must attempt to solve the problems of their worlds — their communities — every day. In truth, editorials serve a variety of roles.

**They educate.** What are the current rental codes and how would they be strengthened under a proposed ordinance? What's the process, and the pros/cons, for annexing land to a city?

**They enlighten.** Newspapers feel obligated to promote participation in the annual city festival. Take the opportunity to speak to the impact of tourism on the local economy.

**They entertain.** An editorial might spin an April Fool's yarn or a Valentine's Day poem — or even offer comment on a light-hearted moment at a school board meeting.

Editorials challenge personal beliefs. Or they might reinforce readers' positions, prompting an exclamation, "Now that editorial makes sense." They can elicit a range of emotions — frustration, anger, laughter or tears.

Common to all effective editorials, however, is that they leave an impression. In contrast, nondescript editorials are easily forgotten.

Following are some principles of strong editorials:

**No ivory tower.** Editorials should not be positioned as the "correct" opinion or the last word. Editorials, at their best, should present a reasoned, researched and well-thought out position.

**Welcome rebuttals.** Newspapers should readily publish contrary opinions. Point/counterpoint is at the heart of vibrant editorial pages. Every editor can point to letters stronger than the original editorial. And, by all means, newspapers should not have the final say via an "editor's note" unless a letter contains some egregious error.

**Consistent stances.** Editorials should be unwavering in promoting common themes. Newspapers often are labeled — even criticized — for promoting a conservative or liberal agenda. But newspapers that regularly flip-flop on issues will lose their credibility. That requires carefully thinking through positions, especially when an issue surfaces for the first time. At the same time, newspapers should be open to revisiting an issue and changing an editorial perspective if circumstances change.

**Offer kudos, too.** Don't hesitate to write complimentary editorials. Newspapers should not shy away from their role as a government watchdog. However, you'll lose credibility — and quite possibly hinder your communication and relationships with key individuals — if governing boards are always on the receiving end of an editorial rant and rave.

**Keep it local.** Editorials can be localized the same as news stories. For example, do rural districts fare better than urban and suburban districts under proposed state legislation? Are local legislators representing the best interests of their constituencies?

**Call to action.** Editorials are best when they can offer direction. For example, a city

council is considering tax incentives for a proposed business expansion. Write an editorial on what you believe is best for the overall community good. A sidebar editorial might educate readers on how tax incentives have been beneficial or detrimental to other communities.

**Be aware of balancing act.** Editors and publishers often fill a vacuum in community leadership and find themselves at the forefront of civic initiatives. Coverage of editors "in the news" should be held to the same standards as any other newsmaker. Clear-cut conflicts of interests also should be stated in editorials. At same time, the strongest editorials are due to an involved newspaper staff. It's impossible and impractical to carry a footnote for every conflict of interest, real or perceived.

Editorials are the best example of leadership by community press, and that includes tackling the tough and sensitive issues. It's easy to be a community booster and join the bandwagon in applauding a high school sports championship. It's more challenging and fulfilling to propose stiffer academic standards for student athletes. In the end, you're fulfilling your responsibility of a newspaper and you're doing your community a service.

It's also the best way to really feel good about being an editor.

*Jim Pumarlo regularly writes and speaks on Community Newsroom Success Strategies. He is author of Bad News and Good Judgment: A Guide to Reporting on Sensitive Issues in a Small-Town Newspaper and Votes and Quotes: A Guide to Outstanding Election Coverage. He can be contacted at [www.pumarlo.com](http://www.pumarlo.com).*



**Jim Pumarlo**

# Family Remembers '57 Tragedy

By **Robert Trapp**  
Editor and publisher  
*Rio Grande SUN*  
Española, N.M.  
Aug. 16, 2007

We'll never be convinced newspapers are destined to disappear from the American scene as some predict. They are too much a part of our daily lives and will continue thus. What prompted this observation was a letter from Robert Fresquez, former Valley resident, now living in Albuquerque. The Fresquez family was involved in a tragedy 50 years ago this week when Robert's brother, David, and cousin, Albert, died when a cave they were digging in Cuarteles, as young boys do, caved on them and killed them.

Robert, and his family, remembers and submitted this letter, asking its publication as a remembrance of that sad day 50 years ago:

"It has been 50 years since our beloved brother David, and cousin Albert, passed from this life. They were 11 and 6 years old when they were innocently and happily playing 'mining games' behind their parents' home in Cuarteles, when the underground chamber they had been digging collapsed.

"The two boys had tunneled approximately 10 feet into the side of an embankment with the help of David's two younger brothers. Once the dirt of the make-believe mine was removed, creating a hollowed-out cavity, the heavy earth above caused the mine to cave-in.

"One of the younger brothers notified Albert's older sister of the cave-in and she got neighbors and friends to help dig them out.

"David's father, Conce, had cautioned them not to play at those dangerous games. He ordered and chased them to go play in the apple orchard, but as soon as Conce went to work the four boys returned and continued their make-believe mining activity.

"The tragic accident occurred on Tuesday, Aug. 13, 1957, at about 8:20 a.m. Approximately 20 minutes elapsed before help arrived. David and Albert were trapped for an undetermined period of time and much

longer than one can live without oxygen.

"David's brothers were partially buried but were able to get out. Both sets of parents were at work or out of town as were David's older siblings when this tragedy occurred."

Robert writes that "The parents, brothers and sisters of the loved ones have never forgotten their sons and brothers, or the calamity."

In a note accompanying his brief article, Robert Fresquez reported he still had a copy of the *Rio Grande SUN's* "well written article" about his brother and cousin. The family has kept this clipping for 50 years.

If we didn't have newspapers, and clippings of family tragedies, triumphs and mundane daily happenings, we'd have little else to cling to for memories. Hopefully 50 years from now the Fresquez family will still have a clipping of the 1957 tragedy along with a copy of Robert's letter of Aug. 16, 2007. Will someone in the Fresquez family submit a let-

ter to the *Rio Grande SUN* in 2057 and ask that a similar memorial be published? Hopefully.

You can't do that with TV, the internet, bloggers, websites or other electronic gear. They all get their news from newspapers, so yes, newspapers will be around to feed information to the bloggers and TV. Who other than your hometown newspaper is going to record the story, good and bad, of your community?

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**Robert Trapp**

## Belliveau settles lawsuit out of court

Former ISWNE member **Sue Belliveau** reports that her lawsuit against Advocate Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd. in Nova Scotia has been resolved out of court, although she is under a gag order regarding the details.

Belliveau resigned as editor of *The Record* in Springhill in July 2005 and later filed a lawsuit claiming constructive dismissal after the paper printed a public apology for a June 29, 2005, story she wrote.

"Although I am not at liberty to discuss the particulars of the resolution of this matter, I feel vindicated by the way it was resolved, and I consider it a victory for journalists everywhere," she said. "This lawsuit was about putting editorial control back in the hands of the editors where it belongs. When an editor's afraid to print an accurate news story for fear of offending a manager or advertiser, it's detrimental to the delivery of news and, as a result, negatively impacts readers.

"I hope, if nothing else, this lawsuit has sent a clear message and made the line between editorial departments and management a little harder to cross. At the end of the day, I'd like the issue to be remembered as one of journalism integrity and the significance it holds in the open delivery of news and, ultimately, freedom of the press."

Belliveau is writing a weekly column and doing a bit of freelance reporting for the *Amherst Daily News*, in addition to setting up a custom graphics business.



# 18 years of memories left behind

By **Peggy Dostie**  
Editorial Page Editor  
*Duxbury (Mass.) Clipper*  
Aug. 22, 2007

Nobody warned you it would be like this. The quiet house. The dark kitchen, unlit bedroom. Some of his belongings are still there, books, high school binders, dress shirt in the closet — the same dress shirt you always ironed for him, until about a week before college when in a flurry of teaching life-lessons you showed him how to iron, sleeves first, then collar, take care between the buttons that you don't pull the fabric. He left it hanging; you were too late with that lesson. He left junk on his bureau, too, AA batteries, erasers, dimes. Another lesson you tried too late to impart: how to save money; he left silver dollars among the dimes.

The last time you saw him you were hugging him and he was pulling away, slightly, toward the dorm and new roommates, from D.C. and Florida; one owns an electric guitar, another a Wii. You wanted to shake him, pull him close, say, "What did they ever do for you, these roommates you've known for

30 minutes, that you are so enamored? Because I was the one who helped with your spelling words and science projects, who went on field trips and late-night runs for poster board, who listened as you memorized *The Road Less Traveled*, or multiplication tables and presidents of the United States, saw you to the bus and waited when you stepped off, made sure you had lunch money, who attended open house after open house and met teacher after teacher. I was the one who went riding with you when you got your driving permit, hitting the imaginary brake as you threatened to steer into the lilac bushes. I was the one who helped with those 13 college applications, remember, and who read more than 13 entrance essays. So why are you pulling away, even slightly?"

Well, he's beyond you now; he's got his eye on the dorm and you turn away. You can't watch him cross that road and you wonder why in the world you helped with the college applications in the first place. When some sent rejection letters you should have chimed, "I guess you'll just have to stay home now," but instead you blew it, you said, "Don't worry. There are lots of schools that will say yes."

What made you think it was a good idea for him to go to college, and so far away? He could be nearby now, working at Stop and Shop — they liked him there. He could be only 20 feet away, in his room lit up by the ceiling lamp he found at the dump and made work and by the computer monitor you complained he left on too much and by laughter as he made plans with his friends for a LAN party. You could talk to him now, well, not now, too early for him to be out of bed, but by noon. He'd get up and come into the kitchen, ruffled, disheveled, shining, lighting up the room, and he'd say, "Hi," and you'd say, "Hi."

And that would make all the difference.

*Peggy Dostie can be contacted at copy@duxburyclipper.com.*



**Peggy Dostie**

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# Let's reject the idea of dictators in our midst

By **Carl Conley**  
Editor and publisher  
*The Island Sand Paper*  
Fort Myers Beach, Fla.  
Aug. 10, 2007

I've written a fair number of philosophical editorials, some on fairly eclectic subjects. But never have I had a chance to be so sure about something so clear. If this town allows the current Council to substantially extend their terms by whatever logic, be it fancy lawyer's tricks, or otherwise, then we are accepting dictators in our midst.

The problem of term limits and election dates has been with us for quite awhile. And while it may be acceptable to extend or cut a term by a few months to accommodate the logistics of the Supervisor of Elections to physically open the polls, it defies all fundamental notions of fair play to take a three-year term allowed by the voters and turn it into four years. When we entrust a representative with public power the last thing we need is for them to use their power to give themselves more than they were given. It's a clear-cut case of abusing their position.

Lawyers Charles Meador and Bill Shenko along with Mayor Dennis Boback were elected in 2005 to serve until 2008. Now, Charles Meador wants to have a referendum to extend their terms to November 2009. Here is a copy of what he is proposing as Ordinance 07-07, to be submitted in referendum form to Beach voters.

"Section 3, Amendment — Elections. Section 5.03 of Article V of the Town of Fort Myers Beach Charter, adopted as Chapter 95-494, Laws of Florida is amended as follows: The terms of all council seats shall be for 4 years, except during the transition period, during which councilpersons elected in March 2007 shall be for a term from March 2007 to November 2011 and councilpersons elected in November 2005 shall be for a term from November 2005 to November 2009."

Read the letter to the editor in this issue written by Patrick Gould. We get lots of letters from politicians, former politicians and their well-known supporters, but ones by everyday Islanders who are fed up are much more reliable as an indicator of public opinion due to a lack of obvious self interest. Mr. Gould asks a great question. How can our

## FMB Shakespeare quote flap silly

By David Plazas  
Community Conversation Editor  
*The News-Press*  
Fort Myers, Fla.  
Aug. 20, 2007

The hysteria suffered by a Fort Myers Beach city councilman and caused by a newspaper publisher quoting Shakespeare proves once again that the pen is mightier than the sword.

A Lee County sheriff's deputy will provide security at tonight's council meeting — and, goodness, metal detectors have even been mentioned — after weekly publication publisher Carl Conley quoted in an editorial that famous line "Beware the Ides of March" from Shakespeare's play "Julius Caesar."

The reference was made regarding a proposal to increase council members' term limits.

Councilman Charles Meador saw it as a death threat, citing among other things Conley's long ago drug offense conviction, but sheriff's Capt. Matt Powell said he doesn't consider the publisher a threat.

It's true that Julius Caesar was assassinated shortly after hearing the "Ides of March" line from a soothsayer, but that was Ancient Rome and this is modern-day Fort Myers Beach.

elected officials be paying so much attention to ensuring their jobs, over getting the everyday business of government handled? Easy — their first priority is taking care of themselves!

And don't let glib clever smokescreens fool you; they are not motivated by taking care of difficult issues left behind by prior officials. Nor are they self-sacrificing idealists bent on saving us. Let's see them for what they are. Narrow-minded, special interest attorneys dedicated to ensuring their own bully pulpits.

It's incredibly hypocritical that these same lawyer Councilmen complained so bitterly

about the last Council when they discussed changing election dates or extending terms. We all know the current election schedules are not corresponding exactly to the terms of office or the best times for the Elections Office to open the polls. Voters would like to see the problem fixed permanently.

But nobody wants to see a change in our Town Charter or a new ordinance adopted that will apply to those elected in the past. If their vote is to mean anything, people must know with certainty the extent they are empowering those elected. Free people must know in advance how a rule will be applied for that law to be respected. The Constitution of the United States contains a clause prohibiting ex-post facto laws for this very reason. If this council wants to fix this problem by changing the term limits and election dates, then let them, but the law must only apply to those elected in the future. This is the only fair, palatable way.

The advocates of changing the term limits try and convince us that by moving the proposal to a referendum they are actually letting the voters decide. But we all know how easy it is to use the power of office to select language and present confusing choices. This is even more true when the ones putting the proposals forth are trained attorneys. Their tactics is an unconscionable misuse of training and puts most of us at a decided disadvantage. This is what I told Meador when he asked me if I would support this referendum. "Make the choice plain so voters can clearly see what they are deciding — Do you want to extend our terms a year or do you want elections in March when everyone originally thought they'd be?" If this is the question in front of voters, OK. But, let me assure you, it won't be put this way. It's too straightforward and ensures defeat for this very slippery attempt to retain power against the wishes of the people.



**Carl Conley**

*continued on page 15*

# A new approach to covering local legislators

By **David Giffey**  
*Home News*  
 Spring Green, Wis.  
 Aug. 1, 2007

In an effort to provide more thorough coverage of our River Valley legislators, we're trying a new approach this week. In this *Home News* you'll find a compilation of recent press releases, columns, and statements issued from the offices of State Sen. Dale W. Schultz, Richland Center, and State Rep. Steve Hilgenberg, Dodgeville.

As constituents of Schultz and Hilgenberg, it's critically important that we follow their activities in Madison as closely as possible.

But doing so poses problems for the *Home News* and, I suspect, for rural weekly newspapers in the Driftless Area in general. If we were to rake in and run all the words received from our legislators, the local news space — our highest priority — would be painfully limited.

However, ignoring Schultz and Hilgenberg until they come knocking on our door seems irresponsible at least, because they almost never come knocking on our door. In fact, their home bases are located outside our circulation area, yet they govern districts, which blanket our area of coverage.

Both men, and their staff workers, are more than willing to share their opinions via press releases, usually sent electronically. For months I've been saving the printouts in a special drawer, and growing more and more frustrated with the process, or lack thereof.

This week, I decided to edit Schultz and

Hilgenberg, and to wrap them into a single story with sources clearly marked. Inspirational thanks is due Kay Taylor and the River Valley School Board for delivering a legislative update at the beginning of each board meeting with a focus on issues affecting public schools. That seems like a good idea, and provides a relatively pragmatic assessment of state lawmaking.

For *Home News'* purposes, Schultz and Hilgenberg offer a great opportunity to view state government from very partisan points of view. Schultz is a Republican and Hilgenberg is a Democrat. While I intend to edit their press releases for length, I have no interest in editing them for content. I'll try to preserve the gems and trash the fluff, while respectfully acknowledging, if asked by Schultz or Hilgenberg, that we consider everything they submit for publication to be wholly gem-like and completely devoid of fluff.

The political alignment of our lawmakers is somewhat microcosmic of Madison where, for the first time in years, Democrats in the Senate and Republicans in the assembly hold narrow majorities. For too long, one party ruled.

This new party parity resulted in proclamations from both that they embraced bipartisanship above all else, sort of. Those good intentions to compromise and respond to the will of the people might, if sincere, pave a path to a universal health care plan for Wisconsin, for example. Such a plan is available and overdue in a state known for its progressive legislation.

Hopefully the news we print about what's on the minds of Schultz and Hilgenberg will prompt our readers to take up cherished issues directly with the legislators since we will also provide their contact information. Nothing is as effective, we are told, as direct contact between voters and votees. We encourage that direct approach rather than writing a letter to the *Home News* about a statewide issue, since such letters will be edited or remain unpublished according to our regular letter policies calling for very local subject matter.

For reasons similar to the restraint we feel obliged to practice when receiving lengthy press releases from legislators, so will we continue to require subjects of local interest in letters to the editor. Letters about statewide issues should be directed to publications with statewide circulations. Here at the *Home News* we'll stick to publishing letters about local issues.

As you may imagine, sometimes people write about things that are a little too close to home. You should see a letter I received the other day. It was really another story.

*David Giffey can be contacted at [giffeyhomenews@yahoo.com](mailto:giffeyhomenews@yahoo.com).*



**David Giffey**

## Let's reject the idea of dictators from page 14

Vice-Mayor Kiker put a question to me this week that puts an even more interesting spin on this gambit by Meador, Shenko and Boback to extend their terms. "What if," he asked, "I don't want to serve a four-year term? When I ran for office I ran to serve three years and that's all I want right now." Whether that's true or not, he certainly underscores yet another problem created

when someone tries to change the rules in the middle of the game. In the old days, players would walk off the field if this happened. In more ancient times the consequences for seizing power while in office sometimes proved to be dire.

Don't be fooled by this manipulative attempt to stay in office. Raise your voices now and demand that elections be held

when they were expected and that the current councilman don't serve time in office beyond what we, the people, gave them.

Send the message: Elections in March/April 2008 or beware the Ides of March, dictators!

*Carl Conley can be contacted at [islandsandpaper@earthlink.net](mailto:islandsandpaper@earthlink.net).*

# Pumarlo encourages consistency, endorsements

By **Tim Waltner**  
Publisher  
Freeman (S.D.) Courier

Whether you believe you're doing it right or whether you fear you might be doing it wrong, **Jim Pumarlo's** latest book *Votes and Quotes* is worth reading if you want to give your readers solid campaign and election news and opinion.

Covering political campaigns and elections is an important part of our commitment to community journalism. But like much of what happens in the weekly, monthly and annual cycles of news events, campaigns and elections can easily become routine. Too often we simply follow the patterns and processes of what we did the last time.

Reading "Votes and Quotes" serves as a reality check and offers opportunity to review, rethink and revitalize the way we offer both the candidates and our readers the best service.

Pumarlo covers a wide range of topics in his 164-page book. Each of the 15 chapters is devoted to a specific topic, addressed in considerable detail and in a style that's

readable and thought-through. Pumarlo, who spent 21 years as editor of the *Red Wing* (Minn.) *Republican Eagle*, writes from experience and he's not afraid to share his stance on how newspapers should approach campaigns and elections.

"It's amazing and troubling how many newspapers handle initial campaign

about the people who ultimately make those decisions? If newspapers tout their roles as government watchdogs, endorsing candidates for elected bodies should be at the top of editor's responsibilities," he writes.

"Endorsements in local races might be the most sensitive, but they are also the most meaningful," he continues. "Newspapers are in the best position to research local candidates and concerns...isn't that the true calling of newspapers — to share their knowledge, concern and expertise for betterment of their community?"

Whether you share his opinions or disagree with him, Pumarlo gives readers reason to think.

The chapters are broken down into bullet-point subsections that give detailed thoughts and observations. There are tips on interviewing candidates, suggestions for candidate profiles, graphics and voter guides. He also has a chapter titled "Utilizing the Web."

In "Votes and Quotes," Pumarlo provides start-to-finish observations including a chapter titled "Coverage doesn't end with election edition."

Throughout the book are examples of columns, policies and situations that help bring home his point — that newspapers have opportunities and responsibilities to do a better job of providing leadership on elections in their communities. It begins with planning and it ends with execution.

Reading "Votes and Quotes" will help every community journalist think about how we cover candidates and election with new insights...and very likely better results.

*Tim Waltner can be contacted at [courier@gwtc.net](mailto:courier@gwtc.net).*



**Tim Waltner**

## Book review: *Votes and Quotes*

by Jim Pumarlo

announcements in a haphazard fashion," he writes in chapter two, titled "Campaigns: From beginning to end."

"There is no right or wrong way, but consistency is imperative."

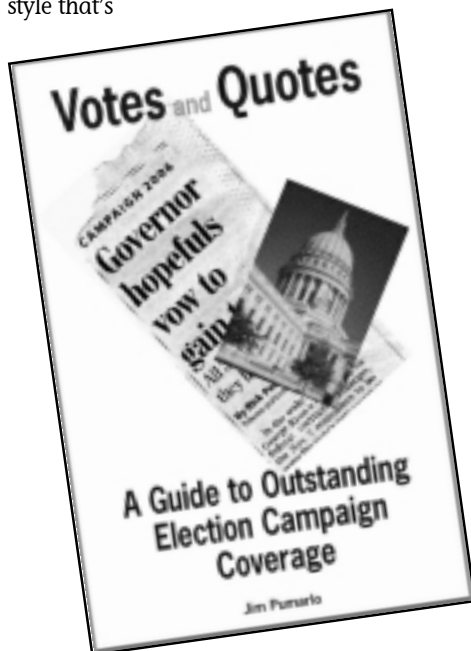
In a chapter devoted to letters to the editor, Pumarlo lobbies for policies and consistency. And he makes no bones about his feelings on the practice by some to charge for "paid" letters that endorse candidates.

"It's a dangerous path when editors start restricting access to editorial pages simply on the basis of supporting a candidate for elective office — the very heart of the democratic process."

Pumarlo notes two reasons frequently given for implementing paid letters are that they lack substance or they replace paid ads. "If those are truly the reasons," Pumarlo says, "many newspapers better rethink what kind of letters they accept year-round."

He also weighs in on endorsements; the title of chapter five is clear — "Don't shirk responsibility of endorsements."

"If newspapers believe so strongly in calling government bodies to action, or criticizing them for lack of action, shouldn't they have equally strong convictions



# Gambling with death

By **John M. Wylie II**  
Editor and publisher  
*Oologah (Okla.) Lake Leader*  
Aug. 23, 2007

If you need an ambulance in the 250 square miles of Rogers County served by OTEMS, you will get a unit staffed by a paramedic — someone licensed at the highest level of emergency medical training. That's the kind of ambulance service you see on TV or in movies. It is what most people expect.

What happens if you need an ambulance in the rest of Rogers County?

The *Leader* confirmed Monday what we have long suspected — even though the Pafford ambulances which serve Claremore and the rest of the county generally say "Paramedic" on the side, they don't always have paramedics on board.

The Oklahoma State Department of Health reports that every day in July, Pafford had "at least one ambulance" which actually used a less-qualified "intermediate [emergency medical technician] as the lead medic."

Yet regulators labeled the complaint that led to this finding "unsubstantiated." The state simply let Pafford drop its license status from paramedic-level to intermediate-level with no public notice.

Pafford will still operate at paramedic level when paramedics — who cost more money — are available. But this hodge-podge arrangement means that patients never know what level of training the lead medic will have when they call a Pafford ambulance.

It gets worse.

The Health Department reports that on June 25, a 14-year-old boy was aboard a Pafford unit wearing a Pafford EMS shirt. The paramedic on the ambulance was treating a patient and also "explaining the

readings of the cardiac monitor to the boy."

Medics don't put a patient on a heart monitor for fun. What was a 14-year-old boy doing on that ambulance? What kinds of patient privacy rights were violated?

So what was the Health Department's final word on this matter? It suggested that the student was too young to be aboard the ambulance as a "third rider," and that third riders should "clearly identify themselves as such."

It then ended the report by stating, "This complaint is unsubstantiated."

What is going on here?

Welcome to a rare inside look at the world of emergency medicine as practiced in Oklahoma. It is under-funded, under-regulated and misunderstood.

Most people don't know that there are three grades of emergency medical technician, with vast differences in the levels of training and the ability to perform life-saving procedures. They see paramedics at work on TV and assume that when they call 911, that's what they are getting.

Services such as 10-33 in Nowata make no pretense of offering paramedic service. It is a different story when a service lets the public think it offers the highest level of service when that is not always true. The public should have a right to know what level of emergency service they are getting, but the state does nothing to help the public understand the difference.

It makes a little more sense when you find out that the former state regulator for this part of Oklahoma negotiated a deal to buy an ambulance company with two partners before he resigned his state post. He knew his partners, who he called "old friends," from regulating their ambulance services and those of their competitors.

He announced his decision in an email to regulated ambulance services which he sent from the State Health Department but

signed with his new private sector title.

He remained on the state payroll (although thankfully with no further regulatory authority in this region) for six weeks after announcing the deal on Jan 11.

So much for impartial regulation!

You probably don't know about the Health Department's definition of investigating a complaint.

Issues arose involving the level of care given the Claremore Police dispatcher killed in a fiery wreck July 6. A complaint was filed. The department's "investigation" apparently consisted of interviewing the medic involved. The "investigation" determined that the crew treating her did not include a paramedic, but said that was OK.

It may be that everything possible was done, but right now we don't know because we have no confidence in the Health Department's handling of ambulance regulation in general and this matter in particular.

You probably didn't know that if you drive in Rogers County outside OTEMS's boundaries and have a wreck, you could be treated by an intermediate ambulance crew instead of one headed by a paramedic.

Now you do. But it should not have been left to us to tell you.

Oklahoma should provide essential services such as roads, public safety and education. Emergency medical services should top the list. That is not happening now.

*John M. Wylie II can be contacted at lakeleader@sbcglobal.net.*



**John M. Wylie II**

# In memory of that last shot on the film roll

By **Byron Brewer**  
Frankfort, Ky.

When I first came to Georgetown in 1980, I had logged zero hours in *The Kentucky Kernel's* photo lab. Zip, zilch, nada, bup-kiss. I had interned two summers for the state's Public Relations Department in its photo lab, though, so I knew the insides of film and considered myself a good judge of what made a good photo a great photo. I could even develop film, if given the right tools.

But a photographer I was not. That was why I opted for an active job as a reporter rather than a copy desk job at the *Lexington Herald*, one of the big "should I or shouldn't I's" in my life. But I wanted to write and I wanted to learn how to take photos, and by George...or make that by *George-town*...it seemeth as if I was going to do it here in Scott County.

Well, Mr. Frye, our esteemed publisher, fitted me up with gear right away that was probably modern when my granddaddy Barney first stepped foot out of the boat when it hit Canada's shores from Scotland back in the 1900s. The good stuff, it seemed, was reserved for when Ron Baston went to the high school football and basketball games...and I wasn't betting how new that camera was.

But as time went by, this large camera and me, with its bigger-than-usual film, we got along pretty well. I adapted to its hand crank like Lucas McCain, *The Rifleman*, did the one he modified on his Winchester rifle. We were not quite as imposing as the square-jawed rancher, but I did learn the art of taking good newspaper photos, trying to make even the most boring photos have a little life.

For instance, some weeks my running and very popular series, "Scott County Personality," featured ordinary citizens in our community who loved to sew, throw horse shoes, collect all kinds of Georgetown Tigers memorabilia, play croquet, run track, grow unusual gourds, quilt or have a knack for woodwork. What a challenge for unique and unusual angles, especially when I had a guy who worked with a jigsaw. I had a shot through the very puzzle piece as he was sawing another!

But sometimes, these people had interesting lives that had no photo ops to go with them: they were adopted by a family and had been reunited with their birth parents only to be disappointed by what they found; they were the retiring or the dedicated; the volunteering or the faithful; the businessman or the charity director. For these people, I came up with a simple gimmick advertising salesperson Margie Jones kidded me about endlessly, but it worked, and I always used it sparingly: the telephone. I always had them talking on the phone, looking off at an angle. This gave them animation, and brought life to the story as they looked into the copy. In many instances, there was little else to do.

I am so sorry that, little by little, film has gone out of vogue in favor of digital photography. I have used both; film the majority of my career and digital for a time at the state Department of Agriculture. I will applaud its immediacy for getting something on a website and allowing a public relations agency, which we essentially were in KDA, to get our message and images to the media quickly. But there is lacking that great hidden surprise at the end of a roll that has saved me so many times, the last shot that was unknown and unheard of, a secret savior that came from nowhere to become a crowning glory when least expected.

Such was the case when Johnna Scogin

was putting together one of our *Georgetown* magazines. She used to put her heart and soul into laying out these beauties, and could not find the right horse photo to put on the cover. She looked at this horse and that horse. Finally, she saw the last photo on a roll I took at a Pumpkinfest one time: a tired little girl, wiping the sweat from her brow after I made her lift a huge pumpkin for a number of minutes. "That's it!" Johnna shouted. A cover was born!

Of course, my favorite place to get great, stylized photos is no more. It was the spiral staircase at the county courthouse. But when they remodeled the structure in the 1990s, they did away with it in favor of a more open lobby.

So the irony — or Byrony — is this: I now know how to develop film, and no one uses it. I now know how to take photos, but my illness prevents it. Sheesh! Listen, if anyone comes up with a way to make grip-and-grin photos interesting, wake me up.

*Byron Brewer can be contacted at [b-rbrewer@hotmail.com](mailto:b-rbrewer@hotmail.com).*



**Byron Brewer**

## 2007 Sustaining Members

In addition to paying their \$50 ISWNE membership dues, these individuals have donated \$50 more to the Society. We appreciate their generosity!

**Donald Smith**  
**Frank Garred**  
**Bob and MaryLou Estabrook**  
**Larry Atkinson**  
**Paul MacNeill**  
**Sandy and Bob Horowitz**  
**R. Braiden Trapp**  
**Elizabeth Laden**  
**Goodloe Sutton**

**Albert Scardino**  
**Tamura Norio**  
**David Burke**  
**Chris Wood**  
**Jeremy Condliffe**  
**Bob Trapp Sr.**  
**Phoebe Baker**  
**Timothy M. Williams**  
**David Bordewyk**

# Illinois journalists looking forward to new era

By **P. Carter Newton**  
President  
Illinois Press Association

We've now been to Paxton, Onarga, Pontiac, Watseka, Kankakee, Bourbonnais, Joliet, Orland Park, Waukegan, Chicago's north side, Downers Grove and DeKalb. The number of visits now totals 33.

We call it the Dave and Carter IPA Road Show. Thus far, we've visited newspapers in southwest, southeast and northeast Illinois. The northwest Illinois leg of the tour will begin in late October.

These visits have impressed upon me how busy newspaper folks are. The flow of information through a newspaper on a daily basis, regardless of size and frequency is mind boggling.

And, when you factor in the change which is taking place at newspapers, this busy pace can become ever so frantic.

Once again, IPA members carved out big chunks of their precious time to accommodate us. In Joliet, we met with Larry Randa and nine staff members for a roundtable discussion over lunch. The same happened in Downers Grove with group publisher Carol Stacklin. And in Paxton, on Monday, June 25, our very first visit of the week, Editor Bobby Kerns shared an entire morning with us despite being awash in change.

There on the corner of a table rested the Friday, June 22, issue of the *Paxton Evening Record*. This was the final issue of the state's smallest circulation (about 1,000) daily newspaper in the state. How exciting it was to visit a newspaper on the dawn of a new era. The King press in the back shop will soon be sold. The weekly newspaper will be printed in nearby Rantoul.

(Editor's note: *The Paxton Record* and *Lodi Times* have since been sold to News-Gazette, Inc.)

Our desire to talk about public notices, training and the Illinois First Amendment Center seemed almost insignificant compared to the changes taking place.

We were impressed with the resilience and dedication of these staffers, just as we have been at every other newspaper we visited. We didn't see staff members pouting with that "oh woe is me" atti-

tude. These folks were looking forward to the new era.

According to Bobby, so much of staff time went into putting out the daily newspaper, they had little time for enterprise reporting or feature stories. That 9 a.m. daily deadline loomed over them day after day after day. Bobby's excited to have the opportunity to work on new projects.

\* \* \* \*

*One of the things we've learned on these trips is that newspaper managers would like affordable training opportunities for staff members. And, staff members would like to know how to do their jobs better.*

\* \* \* \*

Art Jones and Patty Goff started their newspaper in October 2002. Art was at a stage in life that he wanted to do something different. "I've always been interested in newspapers. I've read two to three a day," he said.

People thought they'd never make it a year.

Patty says, "We're here. We're profitable. We're doing all right. We're giving to the community and schools. We're giving to the most important people in the community: the children."

Art makes the photos and handles the outside reporting. Patty's the computer/internet expert and handles the inside duties. "It's intense here," she says. "I don't tolerate anything that takes me from my paper."

You never know how you're connected to people. That lesson evolved the next morning while visiting *The Daily Leader* in Pontiac. Publisher Linda Stiles' husband, John, is a copy editor at *The Telegraph Herald* in Dubuque, Iowa, my neighbor to the west. She's been to Galena and loves it. (Hint, hint — you all should come visit!)

Linda believes community service is at the heart of a successful newspaper's mission and works hard to ensure her newspaper remains connected to the community.

Don Hurd, publisher of *The Times Republic* in Watseka, is proud of his newspaper. "I've never been at a newspa-

per where there are so many faces in the paper...so many photos. There is a commitment to local news," he says.

Staying in Kankakee the first two nights, we called *Daily Journal* General Manager Ken Munjoy on the spur of the moment to see if he had time for an unscheduled visit. We showed up and were welcomed by Ken and *Daily Journal* publisher Rob Small. The spur-of-the-moment meeting at 5 p.m. turned into a delightful and thoughtful two-hour discussion on the state of the IPA and newspapers.

Rob was keenly interested in knowing about the community weeklies we visited that were growing their circulation while doing little to grow their circulation.

The next morning we met Laura McElroy, managing editor of *The Herald* in Bourbonnais. It's one of the nicest community weekly offices we've visited during our visits.

From Bourbonnais, we ventured to Joliet in time for a roundtable discussion and lunch with Publisher Larry Randa's management team at *The Herald News*. Before talking about the Internet, we had a wide ranging discussion on how badly broken the state's FOIA law is. It's a topic that concerns many throughout the state.

Larry talked about his paper's move toward being a 24/7 information provider and the culture change that occurs when it happens. The big issue, he said, is "getting young people. We walk a delicate line between the newspaper and attracting folks to the website."

To that end, Larry added, "As long as we stay local, we'll realize our niche. People will still want to see names in their local newspaper."

A discussion of local news continued for our third visit of the day with Jack Ryan, publisher of *22nd Century Media* in Orland Park. His staff of 22 stresses



**P. Carter Newton**

*continued on page 24*

# Letter to the editor galvanizes fire danger project

By **Chuck Anderson**  
Editor  
*Press-Banner*  
Scotts Valley, Calif.  
Aug. 1, 2007

Three weeks after he wrote a letter to the editor about fireworks “morons,” John “Tex” Anderson of Ben Lomond suddenly finds himself leading a major community-wide campaign to remind San Lorenzo Valley residents of the high summer fire danger.

He’s now head of the Valley Fire Awareness Project, encompassing individual citizens, the valley’s volunteer fire departments, Cal Fire, Mountain Community Resources, Valley Women’s Club, Caltrans, the California Highway Patrol and the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office.

Already \$300 in donations has been received, and there are plans for banners across Highway 9 declaring, “Extreme Fire Conditions — Please Think.” An organizational meeting filled the meeting room at the Ben Lomond Fire Station.

“We’re going to have stuff going on for the next two to three months, until the rains come,” Anderson said. “It will have to be neighborhood oriented for it to work.”

He envisions neighbors helping each other to clear brush and downed trees, clean roofs and gutters and repair chimney spark arresters throughout the heavily wooded valley.

Nobody was more surprised than Anderson after his July 11 letter to the *Press-Banner* berating people for setting off illegal fireworks in the tinder-dry valley for the Fourth of July. “What are you morons thinking?” he asked in the letter.

It struck a chord. Within days, he had received 35 phone calls from citizens who offered to join with him in an awareness campaign, and people now stop him at the supermarket to ask about the project.

“It snowballed so fast,” Anderson said. “It’s pretty phenomenal.”

In addition to the Highway 9 banners, Anderson said there will be signs at all major intersections in the valley and

posters in as many stores as possible.

Scarborough Lumber and Building Supply is donating materials for signs and will stock extra parts for repair of backyard barbecues when the project sets up days to perform the repairs.

“People have the fire danger in the back of their minds already,” said Anderson, who cleans and repairs fireplaces and chimneys for a living. “We want to bring it to the front of their minds.”

Next spring, he said the project will gear up for a safe Fourth of July campaign.

*Chuck Anderson can be contacted at [chuck.anderson@pressbanner.com](mailto:chuck.anderson@pressbanner.com). The letter to the editor follows:*



**Chuck Anderson**

# Fireworks in forest are irresponsible

By **Tex Anderson**  
*Press-Banner*  
July 11, 2007

This is addressed to anyone who either set off fireworks or who let their children do it on the Fourth of July: What are you morons thinking?

As Albert Einstein said, “The difference between genius and stupidity is that there’s an end to genius.”

How could anyone be so unconscious as to put their neighbors and the rest of the valley in jeopardy of their lives and property just for the temporary thrill of lighting off a few rockets?

Did you folks somehow miss the recent pictures on the news and in the papers of folks standing by their burned-out homes in the Tahoe area just because some idiot let a campfire get away? Or, how could

anyone forget the firestorm devastation in the Oakland hills a while back?

In the 40 years I’ve been in the valley, I can’t remember it being this dry this early in the season. A spark from safe-and-sane fireworks is just as deadly in these conditions as regular fireworks.

I’m a big proponent of individuals’ rights and think folks should be able to do what they want, as long as it doesn’t cost anyone else any money, time or grief and, when it comes to neighbors, you don’t have to hear it, see it or smell it. But no one’s individual rights are greater than the safety of our community.

I know you can’t legislate intelligence, because I still see people throwing lit cigarette butts out of their car windows.

I know the authorities are stopped when it comes to responding to these calls, but if we don’t get a grip on this problem, we’ll

be seeing ourselves on CNN.

I propose that we start a valleywide effort next year to eliminate this problem. We need to develop a zero-tolerance attitude toward this with heaving fines and jail time; we need to get neighborhoods involved and volunteers to help monitor, document, report and prosecute anyone who is unclear on the concept of using fireworks in a forested valley in extreme conditions when it’s 100 degrees outside.

We need to work with our absolutely incredible volunteer fire departments and Sheriff’s Office to educate and inform. We need signs on Highway 9. We need leaflets passed out, and we need to make sure everyone is aware of this so there will be no excuses.

I’m willing to put some time into this — if anyone else is, give me a call at 336-2198.

# Caen inspiration for 'Quotes Worth Saving'

By **David V. Mitchell**  
Point Reyes Station, Calif.  
Aug. 14, 2007  
SparselySageAndTimely.com

Many years ago, *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen (1916-97) wrote that he kept a file of items to use whenever he had space, so I began keeping a similar file, which I labeled: "Quotes Worth Saving."

One item from Caen's file that ended up in mine has to do with Winston Churchill's famous saying, "The British Navy has survived 300 years of rum, buggery, and the lash." To this Caen added, "That sounds like another quiet Saturday night South of Market."

Churchill, of course, had a legendary way with words. Take his comment in a 1939 radio broadcast two months after Stalin and Hitler signed their non-aggression pact: "I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma."

Has anything changed in the Kremlin? Part of the confusion, of course, results from the fact that folks in Moscow speak Russian.

In October 2000, *The Chronicle* reported that "Boris Yeltsin scolded Mike Wallace during a 60 Minutes interview: 'An experienced journalist like yourself should express himself in a more civilized fashion.' Wallace's question, 'Is Yeltsin thin-skinned about the press?' had been mistranslated as asking whether the former Russian leader was a 'thick-skinned hippopotamus.'"

One item from my Quotes Worth Saving file concerns James Gordon Bennett Jr., who took over the now-defunct *New York Herald Tribune* from his late father. "Father had no enemies," the son commented, "but his friends intensely disliked him."

Here are a few more newspaper stories from Quotes Worth Saving:

**DECATUR, GEORGIA** — "A man accused of holding up a Domino's Pizza outlet because he believed he was the target of the company's 'Avoid the Noid' ad campaign has been found not guilty by reason of insanity...[Kenneth] Noid, who was described as 'acutely psychotic,' held two employees in the restaurant in Chamblee hostage for nearly six hours in January before he surrendered. Police said Noid thought the pizza maker's TV commercials (which showed a giggling, red-hatted gremlin called 'the Noid,' who tried to chill pizzas before they could be delivered) were aimed at him." — Associated Press, 1989

**PHILADELPHIA** — "Two Amish men have been accused of buying cocaine from a motorcycle gang called the Pagans and then distributing it to young members of the conservative religious sect. 'Bikes and buggies, it's a rather strange combination,' Pennsylvania State Police Maj. Robert Werts said of yesterday's indictment." — *Marin Independent Journal*, 1998

**IRAN** — "A 16-month-old baby in Iran was found safe and slumbering in the den of a mother bear after being missing for three days... The baby was the child of nomadic parents in western Lorestan province who found their child missing after returning to their tent from the fields. A search party later discovered the toddler in the bear's den about six miles from the encampment. The team said the child had been breast-fed by the bear; doctors reported the baby was in good health." — Earth Environment Service, 2001

**SACRAMENTO** — "A 26-year-old man was arrested early yesterday for hitting his wife with a frozen squirrel, police said. Police spokeswoman Betsy Braziel said Kao Khae Saepphan had been argu-

ing with his wife about 2:30 a.m. when he walked into the kitchen and took several frozen squirrels from the freezer. The woman told police that when she walked into the room, her husband swung the squirrels at her and struck her in the head...

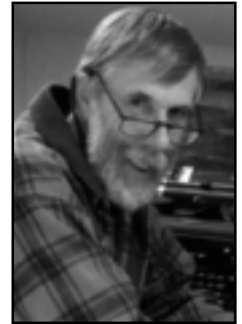
Saepphan was booked in Sacramento County Jail on suspicion of spousal abuse." — Associated Press, 1991

**HARRISON, ARKANSAS** — *Sun* editor Jon Vader testified yesterday that he used a photo of an elderly Arkansas woman to accompany a fabricated article about an aged pregnant woman because he assumed the woman in the photograph was dead. Nellie Mitchell, 96, of Mountain Home is alive and suing *The Sun*, a tabloid newspaper published in Boca Raton, Florida, for \$1 million." — Associated Press, 1991

**FRANCE** — "A three-pound meteorite tore through the roof of a parked car in the French Alpine town of Chambéry, setting the vehicle on fire. Police said the small, molten-basalt rock fell from the sky at around 3 a.m. on April 11... The car's owner, awakened by the crash and fire, refused to believe it was a meteor and insisted on filing an arson complaint with police." — *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1997

**AND FINALLY** — "For many in the West, diseases are a bit like birds: everyone gets them, but poor countries have more exotic species." — *The Economist*, Aug. 11-17, 2007

David Mitchell's blog can be found at <http://www.sparselysageandtimely.com/>.



**David V. Mitchell**

# Black and White and Red All Over

Once again, it was all Phoebe's fault. As far as Dick was concerned, it was over. The story of the recent pun war between **Phoebe Baker** of Avondale, Pa., and **Dick McCord** of Santa Fe, N.M., was reported in the August ISWNE newsletter. The only rule was that each pun had to be based on a color. After lulling Phoebe into a false sense of security by pretending to surrender, Dick slyly got in the last word by mentioning the upcoming conference in the Black Hills. That should have been the end of it — and good riddance. But after the story was published, Phoebe resumed hostilities. And this time, it would be a fight to the finish, with no prisoners and no mercy. Phoebe's opening e-salvo started it:

My opinion of you was colored by the newsletter. I didn't think you were the kind to pun and tell. Whatever possessed you? Did you think there would be a hue and cry from the readers? I never should have let the Black Hills go without a response.

**I am deeply wounded by your reaction, but I guess olive.**

I can understand you being offended, but imagine my surprise.

**Sure you want to get rolling again? I can keep this up until the cows come home.**

That is a brassy assertion.

**I've barely begun to flax my muscles. You better quit now.**

I quit. Your silver-tongued oratory will

cream me.

**Sorry. You broke a cardinal rule. The only acceptable cyan of surrender must be colorless.**

OK, I blue it. But I azure don't want to continue forever.

**Carnation, Phoebe, I'm warning you: I've never cinnamon I couldn't beat in a game like this.**

I take umberage at your remark. Cerisely now, this must stop.

**I'm only starting. For the battle to come, I'm putting on my khakis. And I've mustard my forces.**

Ivory much would like to im-peach your abilities in this "battle," just to give you a whipping.

**Wheat is the matter with you? I'm reporting you to the coppers.**

Me! The matter with me? You're the one who started me walking on eggshells down this primrose path.

**Your efforts are getting so windy that I'm going to malachite to you, just so I can tell you to go fly it.**

You're just baying at the moon, as if you're jaded by this exercise. I pine for simpler times.

**You know, sometimes you can be a real bistre.**

You got me. I had to look "bistre" up. You must have buffed up on your colors. With

this win, I bet you hear a coral singing hallelujah.

**You pretend to surrender, but you lilac a politician. To really give up, you must strike ALL your colors.**

Do I detect a note of wisteria in your e-mail?

**I beige you: Please, please upgrade the quality of your puns.**

You know, o-vermilion people can't pun at all. It is just not natural for them.

**I am ber-dened by your increasingly clumsy rejoinders.**

I do not get it: "ber-dened"? You win. But I will dye happy because your sage remarks have challenged me.

**Try "(am ber)-dened." I think the battle has worn you out. You have sent me worse ones than this. But I repeat: If you hope to halt the assault, you must lower ALL your colors.**

Fiddlesticks! You win. I quit. I missed this one, so am defeated. Now out to the garden before it gets too hot today. This was fun.

*And so it ended, in Phoebe's unconditional surrender and ignominious defeat. As strange as it seems, this is the true story of an epic struggle — and remember, you read it here first.*

## Future Conferences

Save the dates...upcoming ISWNE conferences

2008: June 25-29

Santa Fe, New Mexico

2009: June 24-28

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

# Public benefits when arrests are reported

By **Jim Painter**  
 Managing editor  
*West Valley View*  
 Litchfield Park, Ariz.

*This is the seventh in a series of articles explaining the workings and philosophies of the West Valley View.*

One of the most well-read (and most controversial) regular features in the *West Valley View* is the Police Logs.

Not surprisingly, the complaints we get about the appropriateness of publishing arrest reports usually come from the people whose names are published.

Crime reporting is probably one of the most sensitive types of journalism there is. Editors constantly must weigh the rights of the general public to know the nature of crime and police activity in their community against the rights of privacy of the people who are accused of crimes.

One of the foundations of the American criminal justice system is that the accused is presumed innocent until proven guilty — a principal that is upheld by our nation's courts. I stress that it's the courts that presume a person's innocence until guilt is proven, because it doesn't make sense for police to arrest people they presume to be innocent. If the "presumed innocent" doctrine applied to law enforcement, the police wouldn't be able to arrest a suspect until after the suspect had been tried and convicted.

The moral and ethical question facing the press is that, since news institutions are not part of the U.S. judicial system, are we required to presume a person's innocence until the person is convicted? If we applied that standard to reporting, you would never hear about criminal cases such as the 1991 temple murders here in the West Valley or the O.J. Simpson trial or the Valley's Baseline Killer case until after those people had gone through the court system and been convicted. In Simpson's case, you never would have heard anything at all because neither he nor anyone else has ever been convicted of that particular crime.

That, of course, doesn't mean that we think

everyone who is arrested is automatically guilty of the crime of which he's accused; it simply means that we believe if there's a reasonable suspicion the person has committed a crime, it's in the public's best interest to be aware of it.

So, why should the public be told who has been arrested in their community and the charges that have been filed? Following are a few reasons:

- You're paying for those arrests and criminal citations and you have a right to know how your tax dollars are being spent and who they're being spent on.

Every West Valley community has growing public-safety needs because of the burgeoning population. Cities are struggling to hire the necessary law-enforcement personnel to keep us safe. They raise taxes in order to do so. Every time someone is arrested, it costs you, the taxpayer, more money.

- We concede that a certain percentage of people who are arrested are not guilty. However, as a free society, we must assume that the law-enforcement professionals we are paying to protect us are honest and competent, which means that the vast majority of the people who are arrested are actually guilty of the crimes they're accused of.

If we were deluged with phone calls from people who wanted us to withhold their names from publication because they had been falsely accused and arrested, we would know we have a major news story — not about crime, but about incompetent or corrupt law-enforcement officials.

In the more than 20 years that the *View* has been publishing the Police Logs, that has never happened. Only once or twice has anyone asked us to withhold their names because they were innocent. In most cases, when people ask us to withhold their names, it's because they don't want their spouse or their boss to find out they had been arrested. Regardless, we do not withhold names for any reason.

- It informs the public about the nature of the crimes being committed in their communities, and which neighborhoods harbor the most scofflaws.

A regular reading of the *View* Police Logs

should actually be reassuring in a way. The vast majority of West Valley crimes are non-violent, and usually involve charges such as driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, driving on a suspended or revoked license (usually as a result of a DUI conviction), failure to pay a fine or failure to appear in court. Most of the violent crimes involve domestic violence. These frequent charges should alert the public to the most serious social problems the West Valley faces.

A frequent reading of the Police Logs also reveals that certain streets, blocks and neighborhoods are home to more regularly arrested suspects than others (yes, the police reports do have regulars). An astute homebuyer would avoid purchasing in those areas.

- A list of the types of crimes being committed frequently also alerts the general public to the true danger they face when out on the street. The *View* Police Logs reveal that our streets are plagued by drunken drivers, especially when you consider that only a fraction of intoxicated drivers are actually stopped and arrested by the police.

You, I and everyone else have the right to know the name, age and address of anyone who places our lives in danger.

- Seeing the published names of people who have driven past a stopped school bus or allowed a potentially dangerous dog to run loose might encourage more people to obey the laws, ultimately increasing the safety of our children and ourselves.

- Publishing the names of people who have been arrested helps keep law-enforcement agencies accountable, thus making it less likely that our nation will ever become like one of those totalitarian regimes where people are swept off the streets by secret police and never heard from again.

*Jim Painter can be contacted at editor@westvalleyview.com.*



**Jim Painter**

# Illinois journalists looking forward to new era from page 19

"hyper local content" for their free-distribution weeklies.

Their goal is "to do good in the community, make money and have fun."

Once we navigated our way along Chicago's freeways, we finally made it (late) to the *Lake Area News-Sun* in Waukegan for our first visit on Thursday. There, Publisher Dave Rutter, Editor Dave Sele and Photo Editor Tom Delaney were ready with a topic hot on their minds: FOIA. "It's a law of virtually no use," Dave Rutter noted. Four times this year, the newspaper has had difficulty getting information from public sources.

This gave Dave Bennett an opportunity to talk at length about FOIA and how the IPA has been trying to get Attorney General Lisa Madigan on to take a leadership role in an effort to rewrite the law.

Dave Rutter argued that doing the public's business in public is the best possible way to govern. He added, "Our citizens are consumers of government. I've been doing this for 40 years. Our government is getting more secretive..."

Publisher Rutter suggested that IPA should consider sending Lisa Madigan a

letter, signed by all Illinois publishers, seeking a rewrite of FOIA.

Glenn and Brian Nadig are the father-son publishing team of Chicago's *Northwest Press*, a pair of neighborhood publications serving Chicago's near-northwest side. Brian says his father lives and sleeps the business 24 hours a day.

They have questions and concerns about the Internet and how it might impact their business. Many of the community weekly newspaper publishers we visited had similar concerns.

There's something else unique about this newspaper operation. A fleet of youth carriers distribute their two controlled circulation publications.

Caroll Stacklin, president of GateHouse Media Suburban Chicago Newspapers, said something at the beginning of our meeting which was music to our ears. "It's important for our publications to have a relationship with IPA," she said.

Caroll packed the house with staff members including Loryn Hawkins, classified manager; Jacki McGrath, executive assistant; Joe Greco, managing editor/visuals and corporate design consultant; Michael

James, national accounts manager; Linda Siebolds, public notice advertising manager; Carrie Banas, niche publication manager; Bill Casey, vice president advertising; and Mark Cark Colasimo, managing editor/content.

David Arkin, GateHouse News Service director of content, spent a few minutes with us to share a new service, which the company is rolling out. This service provides news content to newspapers, including an "Illinois-only" service.

In DeKalb, we elicited a promise from Publisher John Pfeifer, to become involved with one of the association's many committees, the internet advertising sales committee.

John's been on the job for less than a year, coming from LaCrosse, Wis. He's a J-school graduate from Marquette University. Out of college, he started selling ads in Kenosha, Wis., and never left the ad side. Through the years he's worked with daily newspapers, weeklies and shoppers.

*Carter Newton can be contacted at [cnewton@galgazette.com](mailto:cnewton@galgazette.com)*

## ABOUT THE ISWNE

The International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors (ISWNE) was founded in 1955 at Southern Illinois University (SIU) by Howard R. Long, then chair of SIU's Department of Journalism at Carbondale, and Houstoun 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 University 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, and Japan. There are subscribers to *Grassroots Editor*, the society's quarterly journal, in still more countries.

This publication will be made available in alternative formats upon request to Chad Stebbins 417-625-9736.

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