

# OPINION

DAILY JOURNAL

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"The Daily Journal is dedicated to community service, to defense of individual rights and to providing those checks upon government which no constitution can ensure."

SCOTT ALEXANDER  
founding editor, 1963



FILE PHOTO

The Indiana Department of Transportation soon will begin working to synchronize traffic signals on State Road 135.

## AT ISSUE

Commuter traffic in the northern parts of the county is at best a headache, at times a nightmare.

## OUR POINT

Coordinating traffic signals on State Road 135 and U.S. 31 hold a promise of keeping traffic flow even, as long as drivers stay with the program.

# Coordinating stoplights should speed commuters

The Daily Journal

Commuter traffic on State Road 135 at times makes it seem that each motorist is just learning to use a manual transmission.

Lunge forward. Jerk to a stop. Lunge forward. Jerk to a stop.

Sometimes this halting advance northbound in the morning and southbound in the late afternoon is caused by impatient drivers, but part of it is due to a lack of coordination among traffic signals.

The same is true to a large degree on U.S. 31 in Greenwood and the far south side of Indianapolis.

The Indiana Department of Transportation is aware of the problem. Engineers will begin working late this month or in early March to remedy it on State Road 135.

The plan is this: Better synchronization of traffic lights so traffic moves in groups through intersections.

Here's how it works: When the change is made, stoplights will communicate with each other when they switch from red to green. That communication will set off a sequence of green and red lights to move as many vehicles through as possible.

Right now, the lights are controlled by sensors that tell the signals when cars are waiting at the light.

There's a kicker to this plan, though.

To make the plan work effectively, drivers will need to drive at the speed limit. If they drive faster than the posted limit, the chances are good they will hit a red light at a signal or two. This will put a driver out of sequence with the lights.

The same will be true if they drive significantly slower than the limit.

Steady is the operative word.

If a group of vehicles, moving as a small herd, navigates the road at about the speed limit, chances are good the entire group will breeze through a succession of lights.

That doesn't mean drivers won't hit any red lights, but it's fairly certain they will be stopped at fewer than they are now.

In late summer or early fall, engineers will turn their attention to U.S. 31.

Will Wingfield, a spokesman for the transportation department, said that throughout the state, the goal is for the longest time a motorist to wait at a red light to be 2½ minutes. The time just seems longer when you're waiting there, he said.

So once the plan is in effect, drivers need to slow down a little because they'll save time in the long run.

## Focus: Space

### Unmanned projects good scientific investment

The Providence (R.I.) Journal

Unmanned space missions may lack a certain glamour, but dollar for dollar they have recently proved a better research investment than their manned counterparts.

The latest such effort is the New Horizons spacecraft, which set out last month on a nine-year voyage to Pluto.

Though some astronomers argue that Pluto is not technically a planet, tradition ranks it as the solar system's most distant member. Small, icy Pluto was the only planet to be discovered by an American, Clyde W. Tombaugh, who located it in 1930. He died in 1997, at age 90. It is fitting that some of Mr. Tombaugh's ashes are on the spacecraft.

If all goes well, New Horizons will approach Pluto in July 2015. For five months, without ever landing, the craft will study Pluto's composition and atmosphere, along with its large moon, Charon. A variety of cameras and spectrometers will be used to collect data. Beyond Pluto, the mission will take aim at the Kuiper Belt, a collection of icy, rocky objects that apparently includes stunted planets. Studying these may offer clues to how planets are formed.

Scientists believe that material in the Kuiper Belt may be left over from the creation of the solar system and could therefore contain a wealth of information. Two small moons discovered last year by the relentlessly productive Hubble Space Telescope are also on New Horizons' agenda.

Waiting for this mission to bring results will take patience. Scientists who could end up attached to the project may now be working their way through school. But if taking the long view is not quite in Americans' nature, the findings from Pluto could help change that. New Horizons is the fastest spacecraft ever launched; it is able to travel at 36,000 miles an hour. Yet even so, it will be slow in arriving — a reminder of the vastness of space, and of human history's relative brevity.



## YOUR VIEWS

### Outreach by Greenwood police helps community

To the editor:

As the manager of Village Crossing Apartments, I want to express my thanks to the Greenwood Police Department for their support and efforts in keeping all of Greenwood safe and secure and particularly the cooperation and education they have provided me since I took over as manager of Village Crossing.

Through outreach efforts and community meetings with representatives of the police department, we have already reduced the number of police calls to our property by more than 75 percent.

Our residents and neighbors appreciate the time and attention that the Greenwood Police Department has taken to meet and educate us, and we remain committed to keeping Village Crossing a safe and inviting place to live.

Michelle Sumner  
Greenwood

### Planned Parenthood in business of abortions

To the editor:

Near the anniversary of the most controversial Supreme Court decision in history (Roe v. Wade), I can always count on a letter to the editor from Planned Parenthood claiming the virtues of their industry, mainly protecting women's rights and privacy.

What totally amazed me this year is how an industry that performs more abortions than any other in this country can put into print that they would like to agree that "reducing the occurrence of abortion is a shared goal." (Daily Journal, Jan. 25). That is like General Motors announcing they are looking to reduce sales of Chevrolets so they would like you to buy a Ford or a Dodge.

Michael McKillip, director of legislative affairs, writes, "The occurrence of abortion is not the result of the Supreme Court decision, but directly tied to unintended pregnancy." While it is true that without unwanted pregnancies there would be no abortions, it is certainly not true that each of those pregnancies would absolutely end in abortion. It is also not true that abortions would be reaching enormous numbers without this legal decision. It is not true that

### WRITE A LETTER

The Daily Journal invites readers to submit letters, opinion columns and e-mail comments for the opinion page.

#### GUIDELINES

- Letters published in the Daily Journal must contain the writer's name and city or town.
- Letters sent to the Daily Journal must be signed and must include a daytime telephone number for verification to be considered for publication.
- Letters should be kept as brief as possible.
- Make sure the e-mail letter includes the writer's name, mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address for verification.
- Because of space and legal considerations, the Daily Journal reserves the right to edit any letters or articles and to limit comments.

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abortion would be legal in all states without the Roe v. Wade result.

Abortion has increased since this decision, and the industry that has benefited most has been Planned Parenthood. Am I to really believe that this same industry is interested in working with anyone to "reduce the occurrence of abortion?"

The writer claims that "emergency contraception could prevent 1.7 million unintended pregnancies." Could we agree to call emergency contraception what it really is: RU486, the latest form of abortion and the morning-after pill? Two particular disturbing forms since women are totally on their own when administering these drugs. The death of Holly Patterson, a California teen, is a perfect example of the risks of RU486. The 2003-04 Annual Report for Planned Parenthood states their facilities

sold more than 95,000 abortion pills. Does that make you wonder why these are advocated by Planned Parenthood? Using any type of abortion is not preventing a pregnancy, it is ending it.

My personal favorite is the claim that Roe v. Wade is about "medical privacy, the right to time pregnancies and plan families." Roe v. Wade was and is about money, greed and self-interest. This multibillion-dollar industry has thrived in the country because of deceit and half-truths.

The fact is that until recently women were unable or unwilling to publicly speak about all the effects of abortion. Not only did the abortion industry count on this, they capitalized on it.

According to Steven Ertelt of LifeNews.com (Dec. 16, 2004), "Surgical abortions accounted for \$104 million of the \$302.6 million (Planned Parenthood) offices brought in." Could we agree that those are hefty profits and ones that Planned Parenthood would not likely want to decrease?

The introduction of ultrasound technology has been one of the greatest impacts in reducing abortion. When Senate Bill 134 was introduced, which would have required all abortion clinics to offer women a chance to see the fetus via an ultrasound, Planned Parenthood was the frontrunner of opposition.

If they really wanted to reduce abortions, they would instruct their clinics nationwide to show every client the fetus growing inside them. According to The Washington Times Cybercast News Service, National Institute of Family Health and Life Advocacy, "Research indicates that up to 90 percent of women who see their unborn child using new 3-D ultrasound technology choose to carry the baby to term."

Could we agree that Planned Parenthood locating their facilities close to the nearest college campus because of the number of young, trusting women there is no coincidence? Could we also agree that women suffering from the effects of abortion, whether emotional or physical, do not receive aid from Planned Parenthood? Again, could we agree that by withholding important facts about the long-term effects of abortion and the link to breast

cancer that young, unsuspecting women's health and welfare is not the sole purpose here?

I don't really think Planned Parenthood wants to agree with me on a shared goal of "reducing abortions." You can look at this issue from any vantage point, but there is no business that would want to reduce its primary cash cow, and that is what abortion is for Planned Parenthood. I think that by claiming medical privacy and women's health, they want me to believe that they are in my corner. I might believe them if the evidence was not so overwhelmingly contradictory.

Vernon Howard summed this all up when he said, "The terrible immoralities are the cunning ones hiding behind masks of morality, such as exploiting people while pretending to help them."

There are many organizations in this country that are diligently working to try to reduce abortions; however Planned Parenthood is certainly not one of them.

Dottie Watkins  
Bargersville

### Weighting enrollments for athletics discriminatory

To the editor:

The 1.5 multiplier proposed by members of Indiana High School Athletic Association is not only anti-Catholic, it is also anti-academic.

(The proposal would multiply private school enrollment by 1.5 for athletic-class-assignment purposes. Thus, private schools would be in the same class as larger public schools.) Academic superiority of private schools compared to public schools is well known. Smarter students equal smarter athletes and is an equation that translates into success in all sports.

Discrimination is illegal in the real world; so, why is the IHSAA considering the 1.5 multiplier?

At one point in United States history, blacks were considered to be three-fifths of a person. If enacted, the 1.5 multiplier turns public school athletes into two-thirds of a person.

Do we have to revisit the Supreme Court ruling that ended the former to argue the ignominy of the latter?

Carl F. Ernestes II  
Morgantown

# Freedom, religious tolerance valued by the West



Jerry Wilson

America is basically a tolerant nation. There are individual Americans and some groups who are less tolerant than the norm. But, overall, Americans tolerate a wide range of individual choices, as long as those choices do not bring harm.

Even the most religious people in America are tolerant of other religions. Sure, there are those Pat Robertson disciples who reek of intolerance for anyone who is not a Christian fundamentalist. But even they aren't calling for the destruction of an entire nation.

No, unlike the Muslims in many Middle Eastern countries who are up in arms because of some newspaper cartoons, Americans of all religious persuasions, even Muslims, are rather tolerant.

And that's why it is so difficult to understand what's going on in the minds of those Middle Eastern Muslims. Muslims in America claim their religion is one of peace, and most do not condone violence, let alone terrorism.

But violence is often encouraged as a matter of course for many everyday people in Islamic nations. That became readily apparent last week as tens of thousands of Muslims swarmed in protest of a Danish newspaper

cartoon that depicted a caricature of the prophet Muhammad.

Islamic law prohibits any depictions of Muhammad, even positive representations. So the caricatures, one of which showed Muhammad wearing a turban shaped like a bomb, really provoked reaction.

The cartoons appeared late last summer in a Danish newspaper but were reprinted recently in other newspapers in Europe and in New Zealand. They were, admittedly, in poor taste. And it is understandable how those of Islamic belief would view them as blasphemous.

Perhaps that's why one Muslim worker in the West Bank called for execution. "Whoever defames our prophet should be executed," the worker said.

And you see, that's what separates Middle Eastern Muslims from the religious people in America and most other civilized

nations. The Muslims over there don't care that other people in other countries may not share their faith. Other faiths are irrelevant to them.

If Muhammad is blasphemed, the perpetrator must be dealt with harshly, even if he or she doesn't believe Muhammad was anybody special.

Several years ago, there was an epidemic of church fires in this country and in Northern Europe. The fad of burning churches actually began in Norway as a protest against Christian encroachment on the ancient native belief system of that country.

And, although the church burnings were illegal acts of arson and quite deplorable, American Christians responded with prayer and pleas for justice through legal means. There were no widespread calls for the overthrow of Norway or for vengeance against pagan groups.

But, in the Middle East, the streets are crowded with thousands of everyday Muslim citizens calling for vengeance and executions. They're boycotting Danish goods, and that's fine. But their pleas for vengeance go well beyond boycotts.

The Danish prime minister said

he had no power to stop his country's news outlets from publishing the cartoons. He said he does not, himself, approve of them. But his country has freedom of the press and of speech.

The Muslims in the Middle East have no sense of how important freedom of speech is to us in the West. Nor do they care. Their world is small and isolated, but their voices are loud, far-reaching and sometimes scary. They are calling for limits on freedoms of the press and speech. They say if such freedom results in what they consider blasphemy, it should not be tolerated.

And that's another reason why one of the other guarantees of our First Amendment is so precious. Freedom of religion is guaranteed in America. That includes the freedom to worship whatever god you want, or not to worship any at all.

In America, some of us don't like it when our religion is attacked or made fun of; but unlike those in the Middle East, we generally tolerate it as an act of civility. It's unfortunate that so many millions of people in the Middle East have not learned to be civil yet.

Jerry Wilson writes this weekly opinion column for the Daily Journal. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.