

OPINION

DAILY JOURNAL

JEFFREY W. OWEN
PUBLISHER
E-mail address:
jowen@thejournalnet.com

SCARLETT SYSE
EDITOR
E-mail address:
syse@thejournalnet.com

"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

AT ISSUE

Scores of college students will survey Franklin neighborhoods looking for junk cars and unkempt yards.

OUR POINT

Cleaning up the city is important for economic development efforts. After all, first impressions do count.

Cleanup efforts to help make Franklin attractive

The Daily Journal

On March 25, about 150 Franklin College students will fan out in select areas of the city looking for problems.

They won't be on a mission to cause trouble. Rather, they will be on the lookout for eyesores like broken windows in vacant buildings, junk cars and unkempt yards.

The students will walk through older parts of Franklin during the survey. Groups will first canvass areas from U.S. 31 to Forsythe Street, then they'll check the area near the Masonic Temple on South Main Street.

They won't talk to the property owners. They won't even step onto the properties.

Drawing on training from city personnel, they will do visual surveys and write down problems they spot.

City planner Krista Linke said a report will be compiled. Then property owners will be notified so they can clean up the property or correct the problem.

Even though older parts of Franklin are being targeted in this survey, city officials emphasize that the entire city will be checked eventually.

City officials have been trying to attract new businesses and customers into the downtown for years. Franklin Mayor Brenda Jones-Matthews said cleaning up the area near downtown is an important part of revitalizing the area.

We couldn't agree with her more.

The expression might be considered a cliché, but it's true: First impressions count.

As Franklin and Johnson County seek to attract new businesses, what executives see as they drive around town will weigh significantly on location decisions.

After all, as important as things like transportation access and tax abatements are in luring firms, final decisions often are based on what life will be like for the people who move to the community to work and live.

If the city looks inviting, executives are more inclined to locate a business here. If the first glance is of a rundown area, then a thumbs-down might well result.

Jones-Matthews doesn't want to stop with the eyesore survey.

When the county conducts its annual tox-away and heavy trash drop-off day at the Johnson County Fairgrounds on April 22, the mayor wants to schedule a cleaning day in Franklin's downtown.

Trash will be picked up from alleys and sidewalks, and city workers may even plant some additional shrubs.

Sprucing up the city, by itself, won't attract businesses to Franklin.

But efforts like the eyesore survey and the downtown cleanup will make Franklin a more pleasant place for existing residents and more inviting to prospective ones.

Focus: Milosevic

Even in death, Serbian leader is divisive

Scripps Howard News Service

The Butcher of the Balkans is dead. Slobodan Milosevic, 64, died of a heart attack Saturday in his jail cell at The Hague, Netherlands, the U.N. war crimes tribunal said after receiving preliminary findings from Dutch pathologists who conducted the autopsy.

There were ambiguities about his death, perhaps linked to a medicine he was taking surreptitiously, that Dutch and international doctors should quickly resolve, as the former Serbian dictator's part of the world is too prone to conspiracies already.

Milosevic had been on trial for war crimes and genocide, crimes for which there really was not much question of his guilt. He launched four wars in the Balkans and lost all of them, but not before about 200,000 to 300,000 people had died and his regime had given the world the phrase "ethnic cleansing."

The Balkan unrest of the '90s is fading into history. But Europe should not forget that it has seen Milosevic's ilk before, a police-state dictator playing on his aggrieved people's sense of victimhood with the shrill themes of extreme nationalism and ethnic superiority.

Nor should Europe forget that until his 13 years of deprivations were brought to an end, by the spectacle of NATO bombing a European capital, he had come close to launching a broader conflict, drawing in Greece, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Muslim jihadists and even Russia. He was truly a danger.

His trial showed both the positives and negatives of an international court. The proceedings were agonizingly slow, more than four years and \$200 million; and in the end, moot, although a verdict was expected this summer.

But the record of his crimes as laid out by 295 witnesses is irrefutable and an antidote to the Balkans' unfortunate willingness to rewrite history to accommodate perceived injustices and expiate guilt.

Even so, Serbia should put all that behind it by turning over the remaining indicted war criminals, cooperating in a solution to the problem of Kosovo and joining the European Union and, with it, modern Europe.

Milosevic is still capable of controversy. His wife and son, exiled in Russia, need waivers from international arrest warrants to retrieve his body and attend the funeral. And details of his burial — Serbia, Montenegro or Russia — remain in dispute. Even in death, he remains divisive.



JONES-MATTHEWS

YOUR VIEWS & COMMENTARY

In a truly free society, no need for ban on smoking

To the editor:

There is no need for the proposed government-imposed smoking ban. The reason there is no need for the proposed smoking ban is that we live in a free nation where each individual has the full authority to make his or her own informed decisions.

I don't happen to believe 95 percent of what is reported on the "dangers" of secondhand smoke, but that data is irrelevant to my position. My position is a strong defense of liberty and free will.

Each individual can make his or her own decision of the safety or danger of being around a smoker. Partnership for a Healthier Johnson County claims that, by a margin of 79 percent to 9 percent, "(r)esidents believe that the right of customers and employees to breathe clean air in restaurants and other public places supercedes (sic) the right of smokers to smoke inside these places."

If these respondents truly believed this, they would not patronize smoking establishments. Even if true, shouldn't a business be allowed to cater to the 9 percent?

Don and Dona's is not the only restaurant in Johnson County, and there are restaurants in Johnson County that are nonsmoking.

The survey respondents that truly believe it is unhealthy to eat in a smoke-permissive environment will not eat at Don and Dona's. Those who eat at Don and Dona's who don't smoke have determined for themselves that it is more important to them to eat at Don and Dona's than it is to eat in a smoke-free environment.

I celebrate the free will of both groups. I am in no way affiliated with Don and Dona's other than as a patron.

There are restaurants that serve steak, and some that serve fish; some for the budget-minded, and some for those that don't mind spending \$100 on a meal. The fact that these businesses exist indicates that there is a market for what they provide.

Just because there are people that don't like fish or can't afford a \$100 meal does not mean that the government ought to ban the choice for others!

I am a former smoker, pilot,

WRITE A

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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

GUIDELINES

- Letters published 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.

- Opinion columns for the community forum section of the editorial page also will be considered for publication. The article should be kept to a reasonable length and should include the writer's name, address and telephone number for verification.
- Because of space and legal considerations, the Daily Journal reserves the right to edit any letters or articles and to limit comments.

WHERE TO SEND THE LETTER

Mail
Letters to the editor
The Daily Journal
P. O. Box 699
Franklin, IN 46131

E-mail
letters@thejournalnet.com
Drop-off
2575 N. Morton St. (U.S. 31)
Franklin

Fax
736-2766

hunter and target shooter, and motorcyclist and could probably be talked into sky diving. To make each and every one of these decisions about my life, I have analyzed the risk, my desire, and any number of other criteria to determine if it is an activity I want to participate in.

I don't need Partnership for a Healthier Johnson County or the government to make these decisions for me.

The same government power that has been used to mandate seat-belt laws and smoking bans can in the future be used to make it illegal to sell a Krispy Kreme doughnut to an overweight patron or for your kid to play football because he might get hurt or hurt someone else.

Do you really want your government exercising this level of control over your life? Or do you think you are an intelligent adult able to make this decision for yourself? Don't scoff at the examples. Did anyone believe the federal government could regulate your toilet until they did it?

"Government is not reason; it is not eloquence; it is force! Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master." George Washington.

"That government is best which governs the least, because its people discipline themselves." Thomas Jefferson.

Richard D. Hoffmann
Franklin

Rule will protect people from secondhand smoke

To the editor:

Governmental officials or agencies have taken away my right to eat improperly cooked chicken in a restaurant. They insist that chicken must be cooked to an internal temperature of 165 degrees. So if I choose to eat raw chicken, I still can do so at home.

Governmental officials or agencies have taken away my right to eat with dirty flatware and glasses in restaurants. They insist that water temperature must be at least 180 degrees when sanitizing utensils. So if I choose to eat with germ-infested utensils, I still can do so at home.

Because of governmental intervention, I have not lately heard of anyone dying from improperly cooked chicken or unclean utensils. But today and every day, 145 Americans will die from second-hand smoke. It's now time for

government to also protect the air that workers and patrons breathe. Franklin City Council members can give the workers, citizens and patrons of Franklin a strong, smoke-free public ordinance.

Dr. Dick Huber
Greenwood

Don't pay consultants to restudy old issues

To the editor:

Well, once again the county wants to conduct a study for an east-west highway corridor. Studies on this east-west corridor have been conducted countless times since 1965. Why do we need more studies? This is a terrible waste of taxpayer money.

I believe an ethics investigation should be conducted by the county prosecutor to find out who is getting the money from these studies and how it may be influencing the decisions of county officials.

It was first determined in 1965 that Johnson County needed additional east-west roads to accommodate population growth. Several times more studies were conducted up to and through the 2003.

As John Price, former highway director stated, three of these routes are old news. So why is there so much indecision on the part of the county commissioners?

According to Don Sanders, interim county highway director, a company has yet to be hired to do the study. Good! Gentlemen, put on your thinking caps, look at the numerous studies previously conducted and make a decision.

The comment that county officials want to stretch a federal grant as far as they could is particularly galling. Let me translate for you. "Stretching" means the same thing as "wasting." A federal grant is tax money. Tax money that is used to study the same thing, over and over again, is wasteful.

The people of Johnson County deserve and need the long overdue east-west corridor. I ask the people of Johnson County to contact their county commissioners and tell them to quit wasting time and taxpayer money and build the road. Unless of course you don't mind paying consulting firms over and over again for work already done.

Bill Chernisky
Greenwood

President must sell foreign policy at home, abroad

Iran threatens to withhold oil and gas to cause us "harm and pain" because of our efforts to keep it from developing nuclear weapons.

North Korea pays no heed to our admonitions to stop trying to build a nuclear bomb.

Iraq is descending into chaos. Peace in the Middle East seems as elusive as ever.

Nuclear Pakistan is angry that President Bush gave nuclear India a sweeter deal than it got, permitting India to import nuclear fuel and technology despite thumbing its nose at the nonproliferation treaty.

Sudan is a tragedy in fast forward. China's government plans to jack up military spending. And so on.

Is all this a blip on the radar screen of history, or is it a bad harbinger?

A chill has descended on many in the White House, a worry that events are spiraling out of control. Perhaps it was the unraveling of the contract with a Dubai company to operate a number of major U.S. ports that finally woke up the administration.

When two top Republicans, Senate majority leader Bill Frist of Tennessee and House Speaker Dennis Hastert of Illinois, went to the White House to inform Bush that what the president thought was a routine deal to cede control over large U.S. ports to an Arab-controlled company,



Ann
McFeatters

Bush's reaction was that he was not changing his mind: The deal was a good one; the uproar was unmerited.

The outcome was then ordained: Dubai Ports World would get out of the business of managing U.S. ports and sell the U.S. component to someone else.

The debate is not over, but in the White House, uneasiness is palpable. Yes, the boss is stubborn. But national security has been Bush's trademark.

If two-thirds of Americans continue to think he is not doing a good job defending the country, the midterm elections in November could result in a GOP loss of the House and the Senate. Bush would be a lame-duck president blamed for vastly weakening his party.

But what we're going through is about far more than politics. It's about how the United States is seen in the world, the staying power of its prestige and its future role in keeping the peace.

Many Americans paid scant attention to Bush's recent trip to

India and Pakistan. Yes, Pakistanis were upset that the United States ignored the nonproliferation treaty to benefit India but not Pakistan, but so what? Pakistan hasn't managed to capture Osama bin Laden, thought to be hiding in its mountains.

But the rest of the world saw Bush playing footsie with friendly India because it's a trading opportunity for U.S. companies. It saw Bush giving India a wink and a nod to become a potential major nuclear power while ignoring past U.S. policy and at the same time futilely admonishing North Korea and Iran to keep their hands off nukes.

This used to be called *realpolitik*, and basically it means that principles are all well and good unless they collide with the dollar, the backbone of American diplomacy. But what Bush has done is boldly announce that the United States will abide by international rules only when they serve its purpose.

Nonproliferation, which such eminent Republicans as Sen. Richard Lugar of Indiana say is vital to America's security, means that the United States, a signatory to the treaty, must not provide civilian nuclear technology to any country refusing inspection of its nuclear facilities.

India won't permit such inspection. Nor will it even promise to stop nuclear testing or developing plutonium for use in weapons.

What Bush has done is to say that because India is a friend, it

has virtual carte blanche to develop unlimited numbers of nuclear weapons in secret without signing the treaty.

It's OK to break the rules for India, our friend. We assume India will always be our friend, just as we once assumed that an Iraq controlled by Saddam Hussein was best for us.

We also are assuming that breaking with our principles on this won't matter when we try to explain how good our word is on other issues.

Bush still has to sell his agreement with India to Congress, just as he had to sell the Dubai port-control deal. He badly failed to do that, even though there were some good arguments for going through with it.

The deal with India has far fewer arguments in its favor, and Bush is not on a winning streak.

What is troubling some in the White House is that when a president's foreign policy goes south in one area, it often takes a hit elsewhere. We need help with Iraq, with North Korea, with Sudan, with China, with the Middle East and with next week's crisis.

Such help is less and less likely to be forthcoming. That means the "harm and pain" promised by our enemies may be inevitable.

Ann McFeatters is Washington bureau chief of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and The Toledo Blade. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

