

OPINION

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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

AT ISSUE

Students from Indian Creek High School are asking the school board to offer a Latin class.

OUR POINT

The two teenagers showed initiative in developing and presenting their proposal.

Energetic students push 'dead language' revival

The Daily Journal

Latin has been called a dead language. A *lingua mortuus*, as it were. After all, no one speaks it, not even most parish priests during Mass. But the language has its place in the academic community. The terminology of science, particularly biology and medicine, is filled with Latin terms. So knowing the language can give students a bit of an edge.

This is part of the argument of two Indian Creek students, who are urging the school board to offer Latin as a foreign language class at the high school.

Ben Woodworth, 15, and Carly Swanberg, 16, are planning careers in medicine. They feel Latin will help them prepare for the working world.

But they readily recognized that two students are hardly enough to warrant creating a class, let alone hiring a faculty member.

When talking to their history teacher about options for foreign language classes at the high school, they found out the teacher used to teach Latin at Indian Creek. They also found out the course had been dropped because of declining interest.

Swanberg said, "We were interested in how we could get them to offer it again, so we found out if students were interested in taking it and then went to see our counselor and principal."

So they checked with their classmates. They found about 20 students who are interested. In addition, the teacher was willing to teach the class again.

Woodworth presented the petition and some of his research to the school board last week.

Superintendent John Reed said, "(The students) weren't prompted. These kids did this on their own, and the (school) board was impressed."

The board asked Reed to look into shuffling the schedule and calculating any costs associated with offering the class.

Indian Creek offers Spanish and Japanese classes. Franklin is the only high school in the county that offers Latin.

The school board hasn't made a final decision. But the students are deserving of praise just for their effort.

They showed initiative, creativity and perseverance in developing their proposal. They tried to address the board's questions in a constructive way. A lot of adults could learn from their example.

No matter what the board decides, to the students we say, "Exquisitus!"

Focus: Sports icons

Gowdy let action on the field be the TV star

The Providence (R.I.) Journal

He wasn't flashy. He wasn't self-obsessed. He wasn't a motormouth. And he never shook the unassuming ways of his native Wyoming.

Curt Gowdy, who died Feb. 20 at 86, was one of the great sports broadcasters because he let the game tell the story. His most famous call may have been Ted Williams's last at-bat in the major leagues, when Teddy Ballgame dramatically delivered a home run.

Gowdy's smooth, laid-back style and consummate professionalism propelled him to the highest ranks of sports announcing. He called seven Super Bowls from 1967 to 1979, including the legendary Jets-Colts upset in 1969, and 10 consecutive World Series, capped by arguably the best ever played: the 1975 seven-game classic between the Boston Red Sox and the Cincinnati Reds. He was beloved in New England as the announcer for the Red Sox for 15 years.

His gentle and unobtrusive, but keenly observant, nature made him the ideal host of ABC's "The American Sportsman," on which he teamed up with such celebrities as Ted Williams and Bing Crosby in hunting and fishing on camera. You could tell he loved every minute of it. "The outdoors was a way of life for me. I should have paid them to host 'American Sportsman,'" he mused.

Those who dealt with Gowdy almost universally seemed to regard him as a gentleman. The contrast with today's brand of bombastic, self-promoting blowhards could not be sharper. Curt Gowdy's great virtue was understanding that the sports he covered, and not the announcer, provided the drama. As long as televised professional sports are slathered with loud music and hype, we probably won't see his like again.



GOWDY



IN THE ROLLING STONES' HOTEL ROOM

Bill to limit snacking choices in schools merely a first step

Many years ago, when I was in school, our cafeteria served food on a single line. A student could either eat what was on the line or bring his own food from home.

And our drink choices were even smaller. We had white milk.

We didn't have vending machines until my second year of high school. And then our only choice of food product was yellow apples or red apples. We couldn't purchase soft drinks, candy, cookies, cakes, chips or flavored milk.

Today, students have a wide variety of food choices, both in and out of the cafeteria. Many schools have soft drink vending machines scattered throughout the building. Other vending machines sell potato chips or candy and other sugar-laden snacks.

Cafeterias offer a la carte items, including french fries, fruit-flavored drinks, which are not much more than flavored sugar water, and ice cream.

There is a growing problem with childhood obesity in this country. Not everyone believes that kids are getting fat because of what they eat at school, but it does contribute.

For that reason, the Indiana General Assembly is prepared this year to finally pass legislation that will help address the issue of what kind of junk food schoolchildren are allowed to purchase.

The Indiana Senate last week passed Senate Bill 111 that would place restrictions on what kind of snacks qualify as healthy and what percentage of unhealthy



Jerry Wilson

snacks vending machines are allowed to contain.

The bill is a good first step, but it is far from perfect.

For example, the bill requires that only 35 percent of snacks sold at school be of the more healthful variety beginning this year, going up to 50 percent in 2007. When given such a choice, which side of the vending machine will students be more likely to spend their money on?

A better bill would outright prohibit the sale of unhealthy junk food during school hours from vending machines and from the cafeteria. But such a bill is unlikely to pass since it would be opposed by the snack food companies.

The Indiana Vending Council and Hoosier Beverage Association both support the bill in its current form. That should send up a red flag that maybe the bill doesn't go nearly far enough.

Still, it's better than nothing. And it does present kids with better options than they might otherwise have.

But even the so-called healthier snack foods may not be all that healthy.

The guidelines state that the

healthier options must not provide more than 30 percent of their calories from fat, or 10 percent from saturated or trans fat. There is a 210-calorie limit as well as a 20-ounce limit for beverages, which do include the sugar-laden sports beverages.

In addition, to qualify, a snack cannot contain more sugar than 35 percent of its total weight. That still could add up to more sugar than what should be considered "healthy." Caffeinated beverages and sugar-sweetened soft drinks also are not on the healthier snacks list.

Realizing that snack foods by themselves have not made our children obese, but that lack of exercise has also played a role, state legislators also added a physical activity clause to the bill. It doesn't actually mandate any kind of activity, but it does require schools to provide time for it.

The bill still needs to be passed by the full House and then signed into law by the governor.

But since every group that might have opposed it seems to support it, most lawmakers see no problem for the bill in the House. And a governor's office spokesperson said the governor agrees with the bill in its current form.

So, unless something unexpected happens, school kids will have some healthier snack choices in September. We can only hope they choose to take advantage of them.

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

Verdict in assault case sends message: Domestic violence won't be tolerated

Another day, another dangerous criminal behind bars.

Last week, a Johnson County jury convicted 24-year-old John Friend III of charges that could result in a sentence of more than 50 years in prison. The police reports from the case read like a script from a horror movie.

The story began Dec. 2, 2004. At about 11:30 p.m., Friend became angry with his fiancée because he believed she was planning to leave him.

Friend viciously assaulted the woman in the couple's Greenwood apartment and then ordered her into a bedroom, where he returned repeatedly to threaten and strangle her until she lost consciousness. At one point he sneered, "This is the night you are going to die."

The torture and torment continued for several hours. Then, about 3:30 a.m., Friend decided to go for cigarettes. Taking the victim's keys, car and money and warning her not to leave, he left for the store.

Clothed only in ill-fitting jeans and a T-shirt, the victim realized that this might be her only chance to escape. Snatching up her 4-year-old son, she fled barefoot into the freezing night air.

The victim tried summoning neighbors but got no response. When she saw headlights approaching, she tried to flag down a car. Running into the street and waving her arms, the victim was relieved to discover the approaching car was a police cruiser. The driver was Greenwood police Lt. Brian Blackwell.

Blackwell immediately placed the victim in his police vehicle and rushed her to safety. He also ordered the investigation that ultimately led to Friend's arrest.

Friend's trial for victimizing his



Lance Hamner

fiancée began on Valentine's Day. It ended three days later. The jury convicted Friend of confinement, intimidation and domestic battery.

Confinement is a crime that falls under the kidnapping section. It carries a sentence of up to 20 years in prison. Intimidation and domestic battery are lesser offenses.

Because of Friend's extensive criminal history, we were also able to charge him with being a habitual felony offender. The habitual charge potentially adds another 30 years to Friend's prison term.

Friend will be sentenced on March 13 by Johnson Circuit Judge Mark Loyd.

As prosecutor, I'm pleased with the Friend verdict.

Nine years ago we created the domestic violence division in our office to specifically address dangerous criminals like Friend.

As we saw with O.J. Simpson, domestic cases often turn deadly. Nationally, nearly 1,700 domestic violence murders were committed in a recent year, and more than 32 percent of all murders of women involve domestic violence.

Our office filed 343 domestic violence cases in 2005.

In order to give these violent and potentially deadly crimes the attention they deserve, we obtained a grant from the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute. The grant permitted us to hire and train staff to make that division of

our office highly effective.

The story of this unit is a virtual litany of successes like the Friend case. In addition to successful prosecutions, we have been able to conduct extensive training for law enforcement officers so that our investigations will yield convictions.

In the Friend trial, two specially trained domestic violence prosecutors, Elizabeth Joiner and Paul Felix, presented the evidence to the jury.

Joiner has been with the division for a year. Felix had been a domestic violence prosecutor for nearly three years and has tried dozens of domestic cases. Fifteen of those cases were tried before Johnson County juries. Felix obtained a conviction in every one.

If you or someone you love is involved in an abusive relationship, you may call 738-4231 and talk to a domestic violence advocate of the Johnson County Prosecutor's Office. You may also contact Turning Point, a family violence shelter, 24 hours a day at (800) 221-6311.

The Friend case demonstrates why we must give domestic violence cases serious attention. I hope this verdict sends a message to vicious individuals like Friend who think they can get away with brutalizing someone whom they claim to love.

Friend will be spending the next few decades in a steel cage where he can't hurt anyone for a long, long time.

That's what we mean when we say we won't tolerate this kind of behavior.

Lance Hamner is Johnson County's prosecutor. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

YOUR VIEWS

Moving mailboxes will create, not solve, hazard

To the editor:

Some of you may not be aware of a problem now occurring in our town with the Nineveh postal service. It involves the moving of your postal mailboxes from curbside delivery, in front of your private property, to locations entirely away from your curbsides.

Scores of mailboxes have been moved by residents because of the demands from our new, of one-year, postmaster. She is claiming the moves are a safety issue with her postal drivers backing up their vehicles to service these routes. The postal operation is found in the rural carrier's handbook.

Actually, minimal to no backing up is done, in this case. They cannot claim an immediate safety issue exists. There has never been an accident involving a postal driver, or any other driver for that matter, in our town.

I have asked for proof of their claims about our town, and they have not and cannot produce what is not there.

So far about 250 Prince's Lakes residents have been affected. I am wondering how long it will take our postmaster to obtain her obvious goal for the entire town of Prince's Lakes.

There had been at least 50 to 80 mailboxes moved before eight more of our roads were put in the issue for moving; before our town council was even made aware of these actions.

Do you, as a citizen of this town, think the council president, Charlie Bourne, should have been approached with the postal plans before these residents were contacted to move their box by a specified date or mail delivery would be discontinued by that date?

The postmaster is ignoring the fact that this is a very small town that consists mainly of retired and elderly residents who will be unable to walk distances, in possibly extreme weather conditions, to obtain their mail, on narrow, curvy, hilly roads and drives that also have no sidewalks.

All of our residents are being put at serious multiple risks by the actions and intended actions of March 15 by the local postmaster. We, the town, feel the real issue coming from our postmaster is "convenience and the almighty dollar."

These routes are being cut short for those very reasons, and the postmaster is putting the residents and her drivers in the path of more dangers than they have ever experienced with the past postal service.

The postal service has asked for recommendations from residents on how to solve the problem.

It has been recommended to leave us alone and leave us with the postal service we have had for 50 years or convert our service to city delivery. This would not only solve the postmaster's safety issue in backing, but their operating costs as well.

Please write or fax your congressman, Mike Pence, if you are opposed to further actions from our postal service. If you have already complied with the move of your post box and feel you were forced into it, write your congressman now.

Donna Stillabower
Nineveh

WRITE
A LETTER

SEND IT

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