

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

The L.S. Ayres store in Greenwood will close for good soon, ending a chapter in local retail history.

OUR POINT

Changes in the marketplace are inevitable, but it's sad to lose such a clear link to the region's past.

Ayres' closing leaves hole in county history

The Daily Journal

The going-out-of-business sale at the L.S. Ayres store in Greenwood Park Mall appears to be in its home stretch.

When the doors are locked for the last time, it will close a chapter in local retail history.

A few decades ago, there were four anchor department stores at the mall, two national chains (Sears and J.C. Penney) and two Indianapolis-based operations (L.S. Ayres & Co. and Wm. H. Block Co.).

The Greenwood Ayres and Block's stores were suburban extensions of their downtown Indianapolis flagship stores.

Slowly the local retail landscape was altered as national chains began buying up regional groups and reshaping the stores in their own images. Eventually, Block's disappeared.

Now it appears it is Ayres' turn.

We must admit the writing was on the wall once Macy's bought the parent company of Ayres. It was no surprise when Macy's announced it would close one of its two stores at Greenwood Park Mall.

Originally, the company was going to close the Macy's store and renovate the Ayres store. Now, Macy's will stay, and Ayres will be closed.

Recently, mall owner Simon Group revealed plans to tear down the Ayres building and replace it with a variety of smaller stores.

While it will be sad to see the building razed, shoppers are likely to admit it had become a little frayed at the edges over the past several years.

But it's sad to lose such a strong part of the region's shopping history. Lifelong central Indiana residents older than 50 will remember going downtown to shop at Ayres and Block's. They'll remember eating at one of the store's tea rooms.

They might even remember visiting Ayres' Toyland during the Christmas shopping season, maybe even riding the large electric train on the way to talking with Santa.

Most younger shoppers will remember only the store at the mall.

The store offered a unique array of merchandise. The variety of goods differed from any other store in the mall, not like the almost cookie-cutter lineup of items shoppers find at so-called competing stores today.

There's no way to turn back the clock, of course, and certainly some memories are richer than the reality. But L.S. Ayres will still be missed.

We'll miss the uniqueness. We'll miss the presence of an anchor store at the mall.

Goodbye, Ayres. It's been wonderful knowing you.

Focus: Moussaoui

Make Sept. 11 conspirator spend life in jail

Scripps Howard News Service

The trial of Zacarias Moussaoui for conspiracy in the al-Qaida hijacking plot was intended to prove that the American judicial system could try terrorism cases fairly and in open court, rather than go the suspect route of special tribunals.

And by and large the trial did, even though the eccentric and erratic Moussaoui, who bombarded the judge with filings and occasionally acted as his own attorney, was hardly a model defendant. The court refused his request to summon witnesses from al-Qaida suspects in U.S. custody, but it is not at all clear they could have brought anything to his defense.

Moussaoui has denied he was part of the specific Sept. 11 plot, but he did admit that he was here attending flight school as part of a planned later hijacking. He pleaded guilty last April and is now standing trial on whether he be imprisoned for life or executed.

The death penalty was never a sure thing because Moussaoui was in prison at the time of Sept. 11, and the prosecution's case hinges on whether those hijackings could have been prevented if Moussaoui had spoken up.

But then a courtroom disaster intervened.

Carla Martin, a Transportation Security Administration lawyer, defied the judge's order and coached, with e-mails and trial transcripts, seven government aviation security witnesses on their testimony to head off what she called "a credibility gap that the defense could drive a truck through."

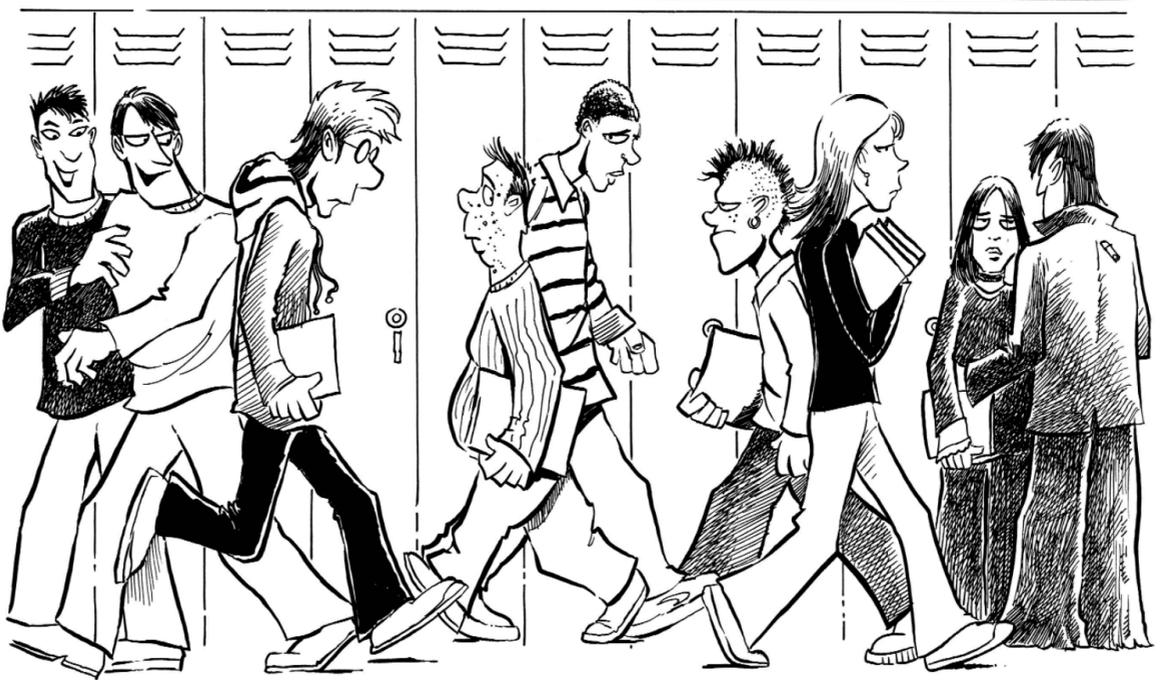
Further, she told the prosecutors that four of the witnesses had refused to talk with Moussaoui's lawyers, which the officials denied and which the judge termed "a bald-faced lie."

Judge Leonie Brinkema barred the seven witnesses from testifying and ordered that aviation security evidence already introduced be stricken on the grounds that it was now tainted. The government is appealing the ruling, and Martin faces contempt charges.

But the government's case for the death penalty has been seriously, perhaps fatally, damaged. Brinkema could have — and perhaps should have — canceled the death penalty trial altogether, but it will resume Monday.

It is arguable whether Moussaoui should have faced the death penalty in the first place. The government got its guilty plea. It would be unfortunate now, after a visibly fair trial, if Moussaoui's fate looked as if it was rigged. Spending the rest of his life alone in a maximum security cell is sufficient.

Stopping School Violence: How do we find the next ticking time bomb?



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THE DAILY JOURNAL

YOUR

VIEWS & COMMENTARY

Punishment too harsh for pair of Franklin students

To the editor:

I am now moved to voice my outrage at the treatment of the two students from Franklin Community High School who were accused belatedly by an unnamed source (from the girls' perspective) of an illegal act while on an intensive week.

First let me state that I have had three children enjoy the privileges of going on intensive trips through Franklin Community High School. Each time they went away with chaperones, I expected them to obey their chaperoning adults. I also expected the adults to care for my children.

We all signed an agreement that if our children were to behave in any way that was deemed inappropriate or did something against school policy, we would be contacted immediately, the children would be sent home at our expense, and they would be dealt with when school was back in session.

I am sure this was also true in the case of the two girls who went to the dude ranch.

What happened was this, as I understand it from what has been reported: An employee of the dude ranch said alcohol was missing and that he thought a student might have taken it. No adult immediately followed up on this by inspecting the rooms, the kids' luggage or trash. The young adults were not questioned immediately, nor were parents contacted about this so they could assist with their children.

I would have been ballistic if I had not been contacted about a problem at the dude ranch. After coming back home, one of the chaperones informed Principal Leighton Turner of the allegation. Mr. Turner then questioned all of the students about this. One student that went on the trip claimed to know who took the alcohol.

Then a wicked nightmare began for two girls who may or may not have taken alcohol. I think I have properly summed up the events.

My first question is: Did the chaperones get reprimanded for improperly caring for their charges?

Supposedly they were "dealt with," but how? The girls' trials have been a public circus, so why

have the adults responsible for all of this debacle not been exposed publicly?

Telling the girls to sign something when they claimed innocence, just because the school could threaten to use a bigger hammer (expulsion) if they did not, was poor and undemocratic judgment. It is intimidation.

I have been a fan of Mr. Turner's for 10 years. I have really respected and supported his approach when dealing with students. I believe, however, he dropped the ball in this case.

There is no possible way to know anything for a fact, when the facts were not immediately gathered at the time of the accusation.

What has happened since the girls were shanghaied? The parents have desperately tried to get the school to use Common Sense 101 and seem to be failing miserably.

Two girls who may or may not have made a stupid mistake (as I did my senior year in high school. I was caught smoking in the bathroom. The dean knew I had never had a detention and decided to give me another chance) are now fighting for their right to be in school.

So what did the Solomon-like school do following the girls' suspension? Expelled them. (The school board is reviewing that order. A decision is expected Tuesday.)

The adults were the first in line for the breakdown of "school policy." If the adults had been openly punished, we would have shown the girls how real adults act.

They admit when they make mistakes, take full responsibility for their actions, and lastly we would have shown students how much they mean to us because we are so careful about whom we allow to supervise them.

Mr. Turner and the school system have killed a fly with a sledgehammer, thus nullifying their credibility to lead.

I hope these girls are restored to their classes.

I hope the girls and their parents have dealt with any possible drinking problem, and I hope that the next group that goes with adults that are faculty from Franklin on future intensive trips are much safer than this past group was that went to the dude ranch.

My last and final rant is for the misguided staff member at Martinsville High School that took

a cell phone from a student who was desperately trying to call 911 to help his fellow classmate. The death of a 15-year-old due to choking was horrific.

I personally know an adult that was there during this horrific event. I applaud any student who thought to whip out a cell phone to call 911.

I encourage all students to disobey any adult that would tell them to do otherwise in an emergency situation. Many a child has saved lives with that exact quick thinking.

I do not believe anything could have been done to save the child. All help was given within the rescuers' abilities. However it did take emergency medical personnel 26 minutes to respond. I would hope that the Martinsville School Board would make sure that a qualified paramedic was within five minutes of the school from now on.

Emergency medical technicians do not have the same life-saving training, and if a paramedic is not able to respond within six minutes of cessation of breathing, more lives could possibly be lost. Hopefully this poor child will not die in vain and changes can be made to better safeguard other students.

And to the staffer that was worried about controlling a student and holding them to a school policy that is appropriate during a math exam but not during a life threatening emergency, you need immediate first aid classes. You are a danger to yourself and others in an emergency situation.

I hope what the "powers that be" see from both the above examples is that just because one can enforce a school policy, does not mean that one should.

Ellen M. Fuqua
Franklin

Poorest residents suffer most in smoky workplaces

To the editor:

As Johnson County and the city of Franklin begin to explore a smoking ordinance for these communities, I would like to add my voice to the many hundreds and thousands of our citizens who want smoking ordinances to be enacted.

Every day the local papers are full of the plight of people who are struggling to find jobs or working dead-end jobs to support their families. Particularly during the holidays, the stories of these families

tug at our heartstrings.

Unfortunately, after the rush of support during the holidays, most of us go back to our homes and lives with little thought to these stories.

What does all of this have to do with a nonsmoking ordinance?

Several years ago I had the opportunity to work with a program called Project Self-Sufficiency, which matched local residents with welfare recipients to assist them in getting their lives on track and removing some of the barriers to work that they faced every day.

Most if not all of these folks were single mothers, with little education, struggling daily to keep food on the table with little or no support from fathers or husbands. Many had jobs in restaurants or small businesses, where they were exposed on a daily basis to secondhand smoke.

In addition, most had to rely on the emergency room or Medicaid for help with any illness.

The simplest thing, like a flat tire or sick child, could cause them to miss work; and if they were ill, they were unable to take a day off for fear of losing their jobs.

If the secondhand smoke made their working miserable, they had few options for recourse. These are people that our proposed nonsmoking ordinances are all about.

Yes, as nonsmoking customers we have the option of leaving an establishment where smoke makes us uncomfortable.

However, I challenge anyone who has children to think what they would do if their children's next meal depended on the tips or minimum wage that they received while working in a smoking environment. I think most of the world would agree that we would suck it up (quite literally, unfortunately) and keep going to work until and if someone offered us another position.

Let's be realistic, most of the jobs that would be affected by the proposed nonsmoking ordinances are those held by the people I have discussed above.

In a time when all government agencies are trying to cut costs and get people to be self-sufficient, doesn't it make good sense both economically and humanly to give people in workplaces suffering from secondhand smoke a chance to have a better life?

K. Jane Adcock
Greenwood

If a columnist, writing x words per hour, meets ...

The wonderful people who bring you the SATs announced the other day that they made a mathematical mistake when they corrected some of the exams this past academic year and that some students received scores 100 points lower than they should have. Maybe 120. But who's counting?

Apparently no one who really knows how to do math. The College Board people who administer the exam said that it was nothing to be alarmed about. At first, they just said they made some technical errors. Hey, that's exactly what I told my parents when I got a 280 on the math exam in 1963.

Then came the official reason from the board: moisture caused the answer sheets to expand before they were scanned.

Man, that is a great excuse. Why didn't I think of that one when I was a kid? I'll tell you why. Because no one would have believed me.

The board went on to say that it only affected .08 percent of the 495,000 students who took the test. When asked how many



Dick Wolfsie

people that was in actual numbers, they said they weren't really sure.

These are the same people who would ask an innocent child something like:

If $x(-3)$ equals 64, what is the value of $x/1.8$ divided by the square of 5.678?

They can't wait to start deducting points to keep the masses out of Yale or Harvard; then they turn around and can't add up a poor kid's score to within a hundred points. Shame!

To make matters worse, we get questions like this:

The cells of a bacteria colony grow by each splitting into two cells every two hours. If after 18 hours from the start of an

experiment, the colony grows to the square root of 5.7, how many cells were in the colony when the experiment began?

I have no idea what the answer is to this question. I think what's important is that someone needs to get into that lab and stop all that multiplying. If those were people doing all that multiplying, we'd send in a commission or some religious leaders.

Not only that, but turning the whole thing into a math problem kind of takes all the romance out of reproducing.

I sometimes wonder if they messed up my score 45 years ago when I took my SATs. It would kill me to know that I've been walking around for the past four decades under the misconception that glove is to hand as hat is to head. Maybe B was correct: hand is to glove as banana is to pocket. Being a big fruit lover, it would have garnered me a lot of Mae West jokes.

And the more I think about, the more frustrated I get. I remember one question from my test that went something like this:

A train leaves the station going

150 mph. You leave your home on your bike going 12 mph. If you started 200 miles apart, when would you and the train meet?

That question really gave me nightmares, and I walked to school for the next two months. I originally thought I got that one right, but now as an adult I seem to always be late for trains, so maybe the College Board fouled up that question, too.

The board said they plan to return all the registration fees to the .08 percent of the 495,000 students who were affected by this.

Let's see, that's a \$41.50 registration fee times .08 percent of 495,000 plus .08 percent of 495,000 for stamps at 39 cents each which comes to somewhere in the neighborhood of:

- A) \$172,284.87
- B) \$16,588.44
- C) \$23.46
- D) A lot, give or take \$100 or so
- E) All of the above

Television personality Dick Wolfsie writes this weekly column for the Daily Journal. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.