

# 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

## Hearts and Darts

The Daily Journal

**EDITOR'S NOTE** — *Hearts and Darts* is published as space is available and each Monday in the Daily Journal. To submit an item, please call Editorial Assistant Kelly Boggs at 736-2712. Items can also be submitted by e-mail to [kboggs@thejournalnet.com](mailto:kboggs@thejournalnet.com), by fax to 736-2766, or by mail to *Hearts and Darts*, P.O. Box 699, Franklin, IN 46131. Items should include the writer's full name, street address and telephone number and the full names of all people mentioned in the item. Readers are asked to name no more than 10 individuals and/or five businesses per item.

### Hearts

•Hearts to our unknown benefactor in Knollwood Farms who cleared our driveway with a snowplow after the Dec. 8 snowstorm.

Also hearts to our good neighbor, Harry Armstrong, who mowed our grass during the summer and shoveled our snow last winter.

These kind acts are truly appreciated.

Ruth and Pete Blankenship  
Franklin

•Hearts to Johnson County Sheriff Terry McLaughlin and the department for checking on the sales of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, ingredients needed for making methamphetamine. Law enforcement, the judicial system, citizens, legislators, schools and community organizations working together will make Johnson County a better place.

Dr. Dick Huber  
Greenwood

•Hearts to all Union basketball and cheerleading parents who helped at the concession stand for the championship game. We appreciate your support as always.

Hearts to the Union girls and coach for showing excellent sportsmanship considering what happened that Saturday. I'm proud to be a Union parent.

Jennetta Gambrel  
Morgantown

•Hearts to Casey Johnson, freshman at Indian Creek High School, for all your hard work and dedication in everything you do. Congratulations on placing third in the Johnson County boys diving meet Dec. 17 at Indian Creek High School. Considering you're still a freshman, this is an outstanding accomplishment.

Also, many hearts for all the singing we love to hear in drama, church and at home. Your family is very proud of you.

Aunt Cathy Foley and family  
Morgantown

•The Greenwood Fire Department would like to thank the local churches, businesses, residents and guests of the city of Greenwood for donating to our Hurricane Katrina relief trip. We raised more than \$5,000 from your generous contributions, which helped us purchase tools, building supplies and dry wall. We were able to change three families' lives.

Greenwood Fire Department

•I would like to send a thank-you to the drivers of two trucks who stopped to help me Christmas evening when my Gold Saturn went off the road into a muddy field near Bargersville. One stopped and stayed with me until police arrived, and the other helped pull my car back onto the road.

Laura Cunningham  
Nineveh

•Hearts to Dr. Jennifer Clarke and her staff at Hillview Veterinary Clinic for their understanding and compassion with helping to get two abandoned mama cats and their kittens healthy, spayed and adoptable. Thanks also to the caring families who gave these precious animals loving homes.

Victoria Vennetti  
Franklin

•On Dec. 20, members of the Todd Aikens Health Center presented a memorial service for the families of loved ones who had passed away during the year. I want to especially thank Paula Ramey, Terry Rodriguez, Kellie Kolb and the Rev. David Mark Owens for the inspirational and comforting program.

I would also like to thank the dedicated staff of Todd Aikens for their care of my loved one.

Ruth Stevenson  
Franklin

•I wanted to say thank you to the firefighters in the White River Township Fire Department for their efforts in collecting donations and distributing gifts to many children in White River Township.

Also, a big thank you to Peterman Heating and Cooling for sponsoring a family in need just a few days before Christmas.

Mandy Hurrle  
Bargersville

**thejournalnet.com**  
Johnson County, Indiana

### THE QUESTION

Do you think the Pacers should trade Ron Artest?

### PICK AN ANSWER

- No
- Yes

### HOW TO VOTE

Vote and offer comments on the Daily Journal's Internet edition — [www.thejournalnet.com](http://www.thejournalnet.com). This is an unscientific poll. Readers who don't have access to the Internet are welcome to mail or fax comments.

Write: Daily Journal, P.O. Box 699, Franklin, IN 46131.

Fax: 736-2766.



## New Year's resolution that's easy to keep: no more goals

We all wearily wiggled into our work clothes this morning, stuffed our swollen toes into our too-tight shoes and tromped right out here to a new year.

It's too early to tell. But we all hope for 12 months of good things, don't we? Magic, love, excitement, laughter and peace of mind are at the top of most lists.

We've been introspective about last year. We have counted the times we screwed up. We've counted lots of our blessings. We've learned quite a few lessons about life, even when we didn't really want to. And we're hoping to plow through this year with new skills, achievable dreams and a few great memories.

If you're like me, you've probably got at least one resolution-loving friend. And if you're like me, you loathe that particular buddy right about now.

We'll just refer to that person in my life simply as "Pain." Bright and early on New Year's Eve, Pain called with her usual cheerleader excitement.

"Are you making goals?" she asked.

"Nope."

"Why? Because you always fail?"

"Thanks," I mumbled. "You really know how to suck my very fragile



Sherri Coner

self esteem right down the drain."

"Remember that one year? When we wrote down predictions?" Pain asked. "And the following year, you were the only one on the list of predictions who actually got divorced, lost everything but your heat rollers and gained 20 pounds?"

I rolled my eyes and sighed.

"Yes, I think I recall that year," I said.

"So you aren't making any resolutions this year?" Pain asked.

"No," I said. "I can't take the shame."

"I'm making plenty of them," Pain chirped. "Want to hear them?"

"No."

"Too bad," she said. "I'll rattle off a few, just for fun."

"Oh boy," I sighed again.

"This year, I want a boob job," Pain said.

"That's a dumb goal," I mumbled.

"Boobs are important to me," she said. "I'm not making New

Year's resolutions for you."

"Good," I said.

"I'm also signing up for a Spanish class," she continued. "I want to enjoy six weeks of Pilates, decrease my Prozac dosage, and I'm going to start walking five miles every day. What about you?"

"I don't know," I said, wanting to somehow fall into unconsciousness.

"What are you going to do?" Pain persisted.

"I'm going to be perimenopausal," I said finally. "Every day, all year."

"Be serious, Sherri," she said.

"Oh, I'm serious," I said through clenched teeth. "I'm extremely serious."

"Let's talk about..."

"So sorry, I have to go," I said and quickly ended the torture.

On New Year's Day, however, Pain called again bright and early. And so chipper, I was instantly nauseated.

"Happy new year," she squealed.

"Umm huh," I grumbled.

"What are you doing on your first full day of the New Year?" she asked.

"Gearing up for a mood swing," I said.

Feature writer Sherri Coner writes this weekly humor column for the Daily Journal. Send comments to [letters@thejournalnet.com](mailto:letters@thejournalnet.com).

## Baby boomers leave dubious legacy, massive debt for future generations

By SEAN MUSSENDEN  
Media General News Service

As if we haven't spent quite enough time obsessing over all things baby boomer, now comes Jan. 1, 2006. On this day, the oldest sliver of the "me" generation turned 60, a milestone that will spark endless reflection on the boomers' legacy.

Revolutionized corporate America. Transformed Hollywood. Changing Washington.

Enough already.

When I think of boomers, pretty much the only thing I reflect on is my wallet. As in: how quickly the boomers will drain it dry.

The boomers are getting dangerously close to retirement age. They will begin drawing on Social Security in a few years. In a little more than a decade, there won't be enough members of my generation — I'm smack between X and Y — paying into the system to support all the retired boomers taking money out. Future generations are looking at higher taxes or smaller benefits than promised.

By now, this problem should be obvious to everyone. President Bush visited 29 states last year to sound the alarm about Social Security's problems. And still his campaign to introduce private accounts to the system failed miserably.

His critics accused him of overdramatizing the impact of the baby-boomer retirement wave, calling it a scare tactic to sell private accounts.

His critics were wrong. Bush actually undersold the burden retired boomers will place on younger generations.

That's because he didn't make

Medicare's problems a serious part of the conversation.

Haven't heard much about Medicare's rapidly approaching financial woes? That's because few in Washington are talking about it.

The reality is that the boomer retirement wave will cause just as many problems for the massive senior health program as it will for Social Security, and for basically the same reasons. In both cases, seniors will milk out money faster than younger workers can replenish it.

Medicare, though, has special challenges. Rising health-care costs and an expensive new prescription drug benefit will make Medicare even harder to pay for in the future. Despite Bush's focus on Social Security, bureaucrats familiar with both programs say Medicare's problems deserve the most attention.

"We're going to have to restructure Social Security and Medicare. And, frankly, Social Security will be a lot easier than Medicare," David Walker, head of the Government Accountability Office, Congress' investigative arm, said at a presidential forum on aging issues last month. "If there's one thing that could bankrupt America, it's health care. And it's out of control."

In their most recent annual report on the health of Social Security and Medicare, the trustees that oversee both programs had this to say: "Medicare's financial outlook has deteriorated dramatically over the past five years and is now much worse than Social Security's."

In 2017, Social Security will start paying out every year more than it takes in, and by 2041,

boomers will drain all the money from the "trust fund" surplus the program has built up.

Sounds bad, right? Medicare is worse. The cornerstone of the program, Medicare Part A, which covers hospital stays, already pays out more than it takes in. And its trust fund surplus likely will be exhausted by 2020 — two decades before Social Security's trust fund runs dry.

Unless these problems are addressed — and the sooner the better — the greatest boomer legacy will be the mountain of debt they leave to their kids and grandkids. (Thanks, Mom!)

Unfortunately, the prospect of a fix for either program seems unlikely anytime soon.

Seniors love Social Security and Medicare and get very nervous when politicians talk about change. Bush's poll numbers went into the toilet shortly after he tried to tinker with Social Security.

He hasn't talked seriously about Social Security in months, and key Republican lawmakers now suggest that any Social Security fix will have to wait until at least 2009, after Bush is gone.

There's no urgency for a Medicare fix either.

Fantastic. I didn't really want to retire anyway. Working until I'm 94 sounds just peachy. And, really, what are the odds that I'll get sick in my later years? Pretty slim, I'm sure.

I hope that isn't a cold coming on. Maybe some nice boomer could bring me a glass of orange juice. It's the least they could do.

Sean Mussen is a national correspondent in Media General's Washington Bureau. Send comments to [letters@thejournalnet.com](mailto:letters@thejournalnet.com).

## YOUR VIEWS

### Politically correct term still has religious base

To the editor:  
So now we're supposed to say happy holidays?

Maybe the joke's on the American Civil Liberties Union, which is apparently unaware that the word holiday derives from the words holy day.

In any case, I hope everyone had a merry.

Earl Ragsdale  
Greenwood

### Fees for not removing snow unfair to elderly

To the editor:

In these times of budgetary shortfalls, you'd think Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson would be singing, "Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow," and not just to fill the city's chuckholes.

Granted, he's charged with removing snow on most Indianapolis streets, which is no easy task, but he could be singing in the flurries rather than ever fretting them.

Snows are potential cash cows for his financially strapped administration. According to an Indianapolis ordinance, businesses and residents must clear their sidewalks of snows or face a \$50 fine.

If my eastside Indy neighborhood is any indication, its broken, neglected sidewalks are worth their weight in rock salt. After our most recent big snow, Indianapolis police officers legally could have trudded house to house, passing out \$50 tickets to most of my neighbors, which they didn't, thank goodness.

I can't think of a better extortion racket than taking advantage of people, especially elderly, out-of-shape and absent people, when the weather is really miserable ... but that's what the ordinance is set up to do. Its intention to clear sidewalks is noble, but its potential for abuse is enormous.

For example, the police can net twice the return per ticket than they do on seatbelt violations and with much less effort. How hard can it be to walk up and down streets through snow and to leave a demand notice at every sitting duck's gate?

I'm glad that Mayor Peterson hasn't stooped to use such measures to raise revenue, although he can. There are better uses for police officers than policing snow on our sidewalks. Plus, this ordinance affects older and unhealthy people disproportional to healthy ones.

Indianapolis' City-County Council would be smart to comb its code books of both under- and unenforced ordinances, such as this one. I've lived in Indianapolis most of my 50 years, but until recently I had never heard of the city's sidewalk rules. Laws and ordinances that aren't worth enforcing and can't be enforced uniformly should be struck.

It goes without saying, also, that police officers should not have discretion over which laws and ordinances to enforce. Most of the residents on my block were clearly in violation of the sidewalk ordinance, but the law went unenforced. If the city can't or won't enforce its own written laws, then there are too many laws.

Indianapolis' sidewalk ordinance is a perfect example of the futility of using statutes and ordinances to impose duties on our neighbors. This is a case where the city's legislative body has enacted a rule that few people even know about and which its own administrators don't enforce. The City-County Council should clean house of all such ill-advised and unenforceable attempts to impose duties on people.

Ironically, I spent an invigorating hour clearing my sidewalks before I read about the city's sidewalk ordinance. I was motivated by the safety of my postman, of the blind guy down the street and of the Hispanic kids at the bus stop in front of my house, not to mention my pride. I was not motivated by some obligation that my local legislature said I owed them.

As well, I imagine most companies clear snow in front of their businesses for commercial reasons and not because government tells them to, which suggests that government would do us all more good if it stopped imposing often unknown and unenforceable duties and merely used the media to encourage us to be better neighbors.

Kurt St. Angelo  
Libertarian activist and former chairman of the Libertarian Party of Marion County

WRITE  
A LETTER

SEND IT

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