

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

AT ISSUE

Hurricane Katrina is history, not a current event, these days.

OUR POINT

Relief efforts are needed now as much as in the days immediately following the devastating disaster.

Aftermath of Katrina not forgotten in county

The Daily Journal

Nearly six months ago, Hurricane Katrina roared ashore for the second time in its disaster-filled life, lashing the Gulf Coast with a Level 4 wrath never witnessed by most Americans.

Entire towns disappeared. The impact was felt hundreds of miles inland. Then the levee in New Orleans failed, flooding sections of that city.

The immediate outpouring of assistance was gratifying. It demonstrated the greatness of Americans.

Locally, volunteers were tireless and creative in the ways they helped. Some raised money. Others opened their homes to evacuees. Still others rolled up their sleeves and helped directly with disaster assistance.

That was months ago. Katrina has now moved from a current event to history.

And our compassion has been refocused on other disasters and causes closer to home.

But the need continues. Tens of thousands remain displaced because of the storm. The rebuilding effort is not roaring forward as quickly as many people had hoped.

Several local organizations, though, continue to keep their humanitarian attention focused on the human toll from Katrina.

For instance, St. Thomas Episcopal Church near Whiteland collected rakes, brooms, mops, yard-waste bags, work gloves, rubber gloves, buckets, bleach, sponges and other clean-up supplies. The items were then shipped south to families still cleaning up home sites.

At Bluff Creek Christian Church, 270 members are donating \$1 a day to raise \$5,000 for building materials to construct panels for a home.

Several churches have scheduled work teams to go south. For some it will be a one-time effort. For others, teams will be sent multiple times over the next year to help with the various stages of rebuilding.

Bluff Creek Christian Church, Rocklane Christian Church, Franklin Memorial Christian Church and New Whiteland Christian Church are coming together to build replacement homes in pieces. The panels then will be shipped south.

Volunteers from the churches and other interested community volunteers will begin building the panels at 1 and 6 p.m. Friday in Scott Hall at the Johnson County Fairgrounds in Franklin. Hammers will swing again at 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. Saturday.

Building experience isn't even necessary. There will be jobs for people who can't pound a nail.

Until everyone displaced by Katrina is helped, the need will continue. Johnson County residents refuse to let this sad chapter close without trying their best to write a happier ending.

Focus: Hockey

NHL at risk of its own Black Sox scandal

The Providence (R.I.) Journal

As if the National Hockey League hadn't enough problems, a gambling scandal is now rocking the game. Hockey's all-time greatest player, Wayne Gretzky, now coach of the Phoenix Coyotes, is coming under a spotlight because of the involvement of his wife, actress Janet Jones, and his friend and assistant coach, Rick Tocchet, with a New Jersey gambling ring.



GRETZKY

Although no evidence has come out that Gretzky bet through the ring, The Star-Ledger of Newark reported that Jones gambled about \$500,000, including \$75,000 on the Super Bowl.

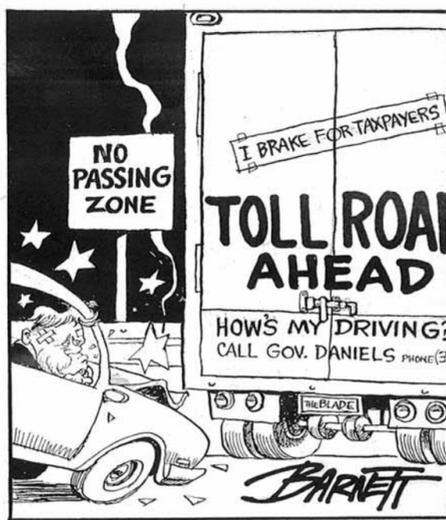
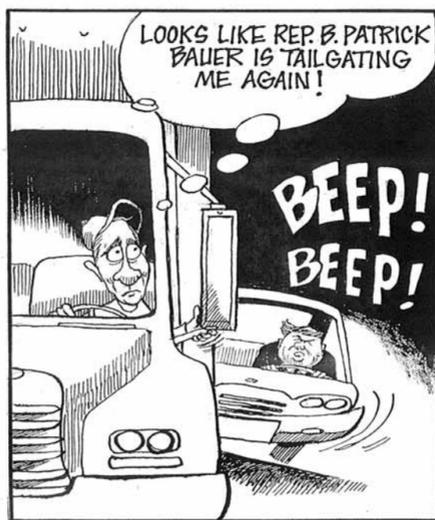
Tocchet, a New Jersey state trooper and a southern-New Jersey man were allegedly running the ring; all face charges of promoting gambling, money laundering and conspiracy. The authorities say that the five-year-old ring has had a connection with organized crime in southern New Jersey and Philadelphia.

The coming weeks may reveal whether hockey has been compromised by these associations, but it's not hard to imagine that it has. When big money illegally rides on sporting events, the underworld gets interested in manipulating the betting — through fixing games or obtaining inside information that gives its friends an edge over the "suckers," the average bettors.

This is one reason that baseball was so concerned about the gambling of Pete Rose in the 1980s; even if he did not bet directly on his own sport, he was in a position to share information and make managerial decisions to benefit the gambling world. Baseball gambling has twice almost destroyed the professional game: in 1877, when the Louisville Grays threw the National League pennant, and in 1919, with the throwing of the World Series by the Chicago "Black Sox."

In the hockey scandal, according to one report, Gretzky was recorded on a wiretap talking to Tocchet about how Jones could avoid implication, suggesting that he knew of the gambling ring before the public did, which raises all sorts of thorny questions.

The National Hockey League is competing for sports-fan dollars, and it desperately seeks to re-establish hockey's popularity after last year's season-long layoff caused by a labor dispute. It must now act quickly to assure fans of the game's integrity.



READERS

RESPOND

Here are comments from people who responded to the question: Should the Greenwood City Council approve a ban on smoking in restaurants and other public places?

The council could take a final vote on the smoking ban Monday.

Former smoker bothered by smoke while dining

I agree with the smoking ban in restaurants in Greenwood. I am an ex-smoker of eight years, and smoke really bothers me now. I do not like going to restaurants that allow smoking now. I work in the Greenwood area.

Tracy Nash
Franklin

One vote for a ban

Yes. Yes. Yes. It is about time.

Charleen Kennedy
Franklin

Ban good for everyone

I am a voter in Greenwood, and I passionately support the no-smoking ordinance for a better Greenwood. Part of the city council's responsibilities, as I see it, is to help make Greenwood a better place to live by approving improvements and protecting us from harm.

Secondhand smoke is a serious issue, and I am sure everyone is aware of the volumes of studies, Web sites, literature, etc., on the harm and cost to our society. I am particularly concerned for the children of Greenwood since they are sometimes imprisoned by secondhand smoke. I recently spent a week in the hospital because of a pulmonary embolism to which I attribute secondhand smoke as a major catalyst.

As for a business or financial perspective, people will do what they want, including going to their favorite restaurant, bar or bowling alley if they can smoke or not. And what an impetus for the smokers who want to quit and be healthier.

Stephen Bard
Greenwood

Smoke unappetizing

As a nonsmoker, it is sometimes difficult to enjoy a meal even if you are seated in a nonsmoking section. There have been times when I've requested a seat farther away from the smoking and have even left restaurants if I

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Should the Greenwood City Council approve a ban on smoking in restaurants and other public places?

can tell the smoke is drifting across the room.

It was strange moving from California, where I did not have to worry about smoking in restaurants, back home to Indiana to find the huge numbers of people smoking, not only in restaurants but everywhere. I think a smoking ban in restaurants and public places would be a move in the right direction.

Shelia Rosario
Academic Affairs
Franklin College

Limiting area doesn't help

There really is no such thing as a "nonsmoking" section if smoking is allowed anywhere inside the facility.

The nonsmoking section will still have smoke in it, but perhaps not as concentrated as the smoking section. I've never seen a restaurant that completely separated the smoking section, say in a separate, enclosed area with special ventilation to filter the air. Most restaurants are open and share the same ventilation system, which simply distributes the smoke throughout the building. I would definitely be in favor of banning smoking in public buildings.

Laura Pryor, BSN, RN
Clinical care coordinator of
Edinburgh and Trafalgar Family
Health Centers

Laws meant to protect

Of course, smoking should be banned in public places. This shouldn't even be controversial. We do not have, and never have had, the right to do whatever we want in this country.

The guiding principle is this: If one's behavior adversely affects others in a serious way, in this case the very health of others, his or her rights should be limited. This is why we make laws. If someone has the right to smoke around others in a public place, then I have the right to not stop at stop lights.

Robert E. Beasley
Franklin

Shooting incident adds ammunition to arsenal of vice president's critics

By TOM RAUM
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

At the start of the Bush presidency, Dick Cheney was viewed as the grown-up, the seasoned hand to guide an inexperienced president. Now, he's the center of controversy.

His accidental shooting of a hunting companion and the administration's fumbles in getting out the word underscore the secrecy and near independence under which the vice president operates — and it all sent the White House scrambling on Tuesday to find the right tone when the victim's condition took a turn for the worse.

After first defensively fielding questions on why disclosure of the Saturday shooting was delayed until the next day, press secretary Scott McClellan joked about the situation with reporters at his morning briefing. Later, he turned somber after doctors in Corpus Christi, Texas, said the Austin lawyer shot by Cheney, Henry Whittington, 78, had suffered a minor heart attack after birdshot from Cheney's blast migrated to his heart.

"If you want to continue to spend time on that, that's fine," McClellan told reporters pressing him on the shooting incident. "We're moving on to the priorities of the American people. That's where our focus is."

The shooting presents a new problem for the White House as it seeks to repair damaged credibility in a midterm election year in which continued GOP control of Congress hangs in the balance.

Cheney, 65, whose "favorable" rating was just 24 percent in a recent CBS-New York Times poll, has found himself in other storms

swirling around the Bush presidency.

His strong insistence that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction helped build the case for the U.S. invasion of Iraq. He also has played the role of point man in the National Security Agency's warrantless wiretapping program in the war on terror.

And, more recently, his indicted former chief of staff, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, testified to a grand jury about being authorized to disclose classified information to the news media in the CIA leak case "by his superiors," according to court documents. Democrats have demanded to know whether Cheney was one of those superiors.

"These things become symptoms of a broader disquiet with Cheney," said Paul C. Light, professor of public service at New York University.

Among moderate and liberal Americans, "there is such an anger toward Cheney," Light said. "There are people who believed he pulled the trigger figuratively on a lot of things. Vice presidents can get away with hitting people with golf balls, but they can't get away with shooting people with shotguns."

Questions linger over why so much time passed before Saturday's shooting was made public and before Cheney and members of his party were interviewed by local law enforcement.

Cheney himself has said little publicly about the mishap, avoiding reporters during a visit to Capitol Hill on Tuesday for meetings with lawmakers. His office issued a terse, unsigned statement describing Whittington's condition and saying that Cheney had phoned him from the White House.

Workers shouldn't be at risk from others' habits

Yes, we absolutely should ban smoking in all public places. Shoppers and diners have a choice. But workers have to work. They shouldn't be exposed to someone else's destructive habit simply because it's the way things have always been.

And the business of going outside to smoke simply puts the smoke in the path of those trying to enter the establishment. Nix that one, too.

Natalie Douglass
Director, Respect Education Inc.
Smokers have rights, too

I am so sick of hearing all of these nonsmokers complain about smokers. I smoked for many years but gave it up for my own reasons.

The last time I looked we were in the United States. People are allowing others to take away freedoms that most people believed were their own personal choice.

Now, we are taking away personal freedoms because of selfish actions on the part of these whining people. If you don't like to smell smoke, then don't sit in smoking areas.

Otherwise I wish people would shut up and aim their opinions on something more important. Sorry to say I have seen more maturity in my 6-year-old than most of these complainers who have nothing else to do.

I would like to ask them, what's next? Are we going to put bans on certain religious opinions, because this is the country of freedom, which my husband and brother and many other members of my family have fought in wars to protect. Find someone else to complain to or something worthy of your complaints. Or better yet, don't sit in smoking areas if you don't like it. If others were telling you what you could and could not do it would be a crime against humanity.

Please remember what this country did stand for, at one time: Freedom. Sorry to say today that's not the case, but people like this are the ones promoting this "communist" garbage.

When it's the complainer's rights that are taken away next, then maybe they'll see the light.

Kris Givan
Franklin

YOUR VIEWS

Apartment complex has good record, tenants

To the editor:

In light of the article, which appeared on the front page of the Jan. 31 paper, I would like to correct information with regard to Park Greenwood Apartments. I know this created a false impression of our property within the community.

As the property manager of Park Greenwood Apartments, I want the readers to know that we take pride in our community.

The article "Who you gonna call?" gives the reader an image of our community, that the police make numerous runs on our property which keep them from handling other more important calls within our city. The article also does not distinguish the reasons for the police calls, therefore implying the crime in our community is high.

The numbers published by the Daily Journal and indicated as Park Greenwood Apartments included all of Woodale Terrace, Park Greenwood Apartments residents reside from 660 to 780 Woodale Terrace, which is private property.

After reviewing the erroneously reported 216 calls attributed to Park Greenwood in 2005, I know that 76 of the 216 reported police runs actually involved other apartment communities south of Park Greenwood Apartments, yet still on the street named Woodale Terrace. Another 10 of the 216 runs attributed to Park Greenwood were actually traffic accidents that occurred at Woodale Terrace and Fry Road. Consequently, Park Greenwood can accept responsibility for 130 police runs.

As the property manager, I can assure you that all of our staff works diligently at Park Greenwood to enable our property to be a positive force in our community. We have strong qualifications standards we utilize when we qualify prospective residents.

We refuse to compromise the standards of our community with residents who could create potential issues not only for the property or other residents but for our city as well. With the lack of a city ordinance governing the number of occupants allowed per unit, we take control of the issue within the confines of our property rules and regulations so that not only do we attempt to provide a comfortable, but as safe (as possible) environment for our residents.

Our ownership wants us to run a business, but not at the cost of an unsafe community. While the bottom line is that we are a business first, our goal is to occupy our community with residents who are willing to see their apartment as a home and take pride in it. Our residents are our business, therefore we put them and their community needs and safety first.

The article also refers to our property as low-income housing. Low-income housing means the government pays a portion of the rent based on the income of the prospective resident. Our apartments are not government assisted living.

Consequently, we rent large apartments, at an affordable price, in a comfortable environment to those who maintain a more frugal budget than others and recognize value. It would be a stretch to even consider many of our residents as low-income tenants.

Our community offers many of the amenities that other communities offer, in an established area with mature landscaping, beautiful grounds and a location near several new shopping areas.

As a lifelong resident of the city of Greenwood, I take pride and accept personally the responsibility of managing Park Greenwood Apartments. In the past two years, our property has filed a total of 17 evictions.

The majority was for non-payment of rent, and only after we had worked with each individual in an attempt to eliminate the process of legal eviction. We know that legal evictions place an additional burden on our already overburdened court system.

Our employees have worked diligently during the past 10 years to keep our property a great place to live. It was very heart wrenching to have worked so long and hard and to be a positive contributor to our city only to be misrepresented and judged based on one article that improperly assessed the true nature of our community. If the city of Greenwood is the city of pride and progress, then we follow that slogan as the apartment community of pride and progress.

Thank you to the city of Greenwood and those employees who have always worked diligently to assist us in our quest. The police officers of our city have always been more than willing to assist us along way, and as a result, we know that we offer everyone a great place to call home.

Karen R. Bair
Property manager
Park Greenwood Apartments

Tom Raum has covered Washington for The Associated Press since 1973. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.