

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

New county commissioner Tom Kite will face a variety of issues.

OUR POINT

He promised to be a good listener. If he keeps that pledge, he will have a better chance of success.

Eagerness to listen will help new commissioner

The Daily Journal

Greenwood firefighter Tom Kite expressed an interest in running for a seat on the Johnson County Board of Commissioners months ago.

On Thursday, the Union Township man was appointed by county Republican precinct committee members to fill out the term of Jim Rhoades, who died Dec. 5.

He was sworn in at that meeting. He attended his first meeting as a commissioner Monday.

The business the board transacted wasn't earth-shaking: a few appointments, a couple of procedural matters and some administrative tasks. But they were typical of the unglamorous nuts and bolts of government that go with the job.

More important issues, though, await the board. The most obvious are the county animal shelter and economic development.

The county needs to move forward on the shelter issue. If the county is going to replace the current shelter, it must make a firm decision and act on it. Endless debate and postponed votes sap public interest and support. If the shelter is not to be replaced, then that decision also should be made and explained so, again, people can move on.

Improving the local economy is a key to the county's fiscal future. Without industry, the tax burden falls on homeowners and farmers in the county.

In remarks after his selection, Kite said he wants to bring more jobs to Johnson County. He also acknowledged the impact job growth will have on taxes.

Kite said he views public officials as servants to their constituents and said he will listen to what people have to say.

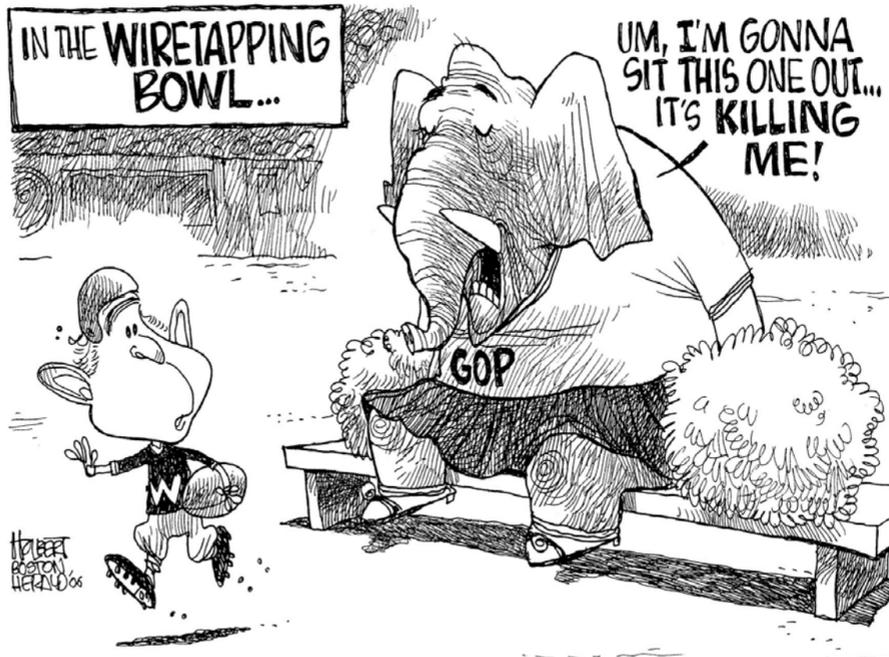
He also said his down-to-earth attitude helped him win the position and will help him in dealing with public issues, though he knows he can't change the world. "I don't pretend to have all the answers, but I have a good ear," he said.

This is exactly the attitude that nearly any public official should have, but it's especially valuable in a position like commissioner, where the issues and the future are fluid and will require the ability to adapt with changing times.

We wish Kite the best of luck. For now, he'll have a hand in charting the county's course.



KITE



STUDY: CHEERLEADING INJURIES WAY UP!

Salute the beauty of coffee with a cup of Bold Justice

It's a beautiful day, and I'm off work, which means I've got all the time I need to read the newspaper that I am carrying into the restaurant.

As I'm ordering, I realize the promotional card in my wallet from this establishment has been stamped and initialed the required number of times, which means I am entitled to a free cup of coffee. Free coffee!

The day just keeps getting better. I am enjoying my free mug of bliss when my eyes are drawn to yet another news article about coffee. As a lover of this wondrous brew and as a writer, I find myself clipping articles about coffee whenever I come across them. I have quite a collection.

It turns out Supreme Court nominee Samuel Alito is also a coffee connoisseur. Seems the T.M. Ward Coffee Co. in Newark, N.J., began concocting a potent blend of coffee about five years ago as a birthday gift for His Honor. Now, ever since his November nomination, they can't keep Judge Alito's Bold Justice on the shelf.

The blend is a mix of several robust coffees, according to the Newsday article. I don't know about his politics, but I definitely support his choice of a strong roast as opposed to a mild one. It might even help his decision-making if and when he joins that august body. After all, one study determined that caffeine is good for the brain.

Actually, the Austrian study says caffeine enhances that part of the



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brain involved in short-term memory. The research team used functional magnetic resonance imaging to measure brain functions in volunteers before and after they drank two cups of coffee.

The findings showed increased activity in those parts of the brain that control attention as well as short-term memory. Now I know why I need that Venti-size cup on the way to work: so I can remember why I am driving my car so early in the morning.

Apparently I'm not alone out there on the road doing my best to focus. We coffee-guzzling Americans consume more than three times the world average. That might explain why there is a Starbucks on nearly every corner. At one time, there was some concern about the effects of coffee on health. While nothing has been established for certain, most research seems to show we can relax as we get buzzed on our daily cup of Joe.

According to my collection of coffee-related information, researchers have found no link between coffee consumption and high blood pressure, heart disease

or an irregular heartbeat. In fact, coffee contains potassium and magnesium, both of which protect the heart.

Other studies indicate that coffee may help prevent chronic liver disease in people at high risk for the disease as well as help control the effects of Parkinson's disease. And researchers from the American Cancer Society have concluded that drinking coffee does not put one at risk for cancer. It may even prevent certain cancers.

The International Journal of Cancer's most recent issue reports the results of a study of 1,690 women who carry the BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations, which are indicators of a high risk for the disease. The women in the study who drank six or more cups a day lowered their risk by nearly 70 percent compared to those women who drank no coffee at all.

So, although coffee can't quite be called a "wonder drug," it seems clear it's OK to enjoy a few cups without worry.

As I relax on my day off with my newspaper and free coffee, I am elated only partly because of the caffeine. I smile as I realize there is more free coffee in my future. After all, I still have all those Starbucks gift cards I received for Christmas.

Norman Knight, a teacher at Clark Pleasant Middle School, writes this weekly column for the Daily Journal. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

Corrupt people, not corrupt system, led to influence-peddling scandal

There is so much about the breaking Jack Abramoff scandal that should sicken every American it's hard to know where to start.

Many in the Washington establishment are shaking in their Gucci shoes wondering who will be nailed now that the once high-powered lobbyist has pleaded guilty to federal charges of conspiracy, tax evasion and mail fraud. Abramoff will wind up with a lighter sentence in exchange for fingering those who were part of his influence-peddling circle.

Perhaps we should hope first that the right conclusions are drawn about the nature of the problem and the nature of the solution. It's difficult to be optimistic given what I read and hear so far.

Already there is talk in Washington about "lobbying reform legislation." Washington has seen many scandals over the years, followed by a lot of reform legislation that was supposed to close the gaps allowing improper influence and corruption. Yet, despite a lot of laws about what lobbyists can and can't do, along came Abramoff to show what a truly talented, creative, and energetic liar and charlatan can accomplish.

There are two themes here to remember:

First, excessive government is a big part of the problem. The more of our lives that we turn over to politicians and bureaucrats, the more we expand the scope of the culture of power and influence that emerges from this. When we address corruption with new laws, we just make government bigger and therefore expose ourselves to more, not less, of the same problem.

Second, the more we choose to believe that our problem is not enough laws, the more we distort the truth that the problem is corrupt people, not a corrupt system. There is a great incentive to



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write new laws. After all, politicians always want to be perceived as doing something. As the saying goes, for a man with a hammer everything looks like a nail. Politicians' hammer is legislation, and they're always ready to use it. Scandals provide great opportunities for those who appear to not be involved to be self-righteous and heroic. The white horse that politicians will always jump on is a new law designed to "fix" the problem.

We should also recall that one of the principal platforms upon which Abramoff was generating the millions with which he was enriching himself and peddling influence was his representation of American Indian gambling casinos.

The American Indian gambling industry is another grotesque product of ill-conceived social engineering. The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act passed by Congress in 1988 was supposedly going to generate new economic opportunities for the American Indian community by staking out a piece of regulatory and tax protected turf for casinos operated by tribes.

The concept of using gambling as a vehicle to cure poverty and attendant social problems like alcoholism is sufficiently bizarre. However, like all social engineering, the results wind up doing little for those whom the programs are supposed to help and do a lot to enrich those with skills to milk the programs. Estimates have been made that

something on the order of 75 percent of the jobs that the casinos have created go to non-Indians. And, of course, once government programs start, new interest groups are created to keep them going, and lobbyists like Abramoff get into the picture to skim the fat.

Particularly instructive is the insulting and condescending sense that Abramoff had of his American Indian clients. His e-mails showed him referring to them as "monkeys," "morons" and "idiots."

I might be accused of overstating my case, but in fact attitudes such as these characterize the attitudes that create and drive government programs aimed at communities that are thought too pathetic to get on their feet and take care of themselves like everyone else. Abramoff simply stated this implicit attitude in a particularly bold, straightforward and obnoxious way.

There's a lot of talk in our country today about the role of religion. It's frightening to think that the banishment of the Ten Commandments from the public square is really a symptom, not a cause. The fundamental problem is that these commandments have disappeared from so many of our hearts, and particularly those of the nation's elites.

Jack Abramoff came from a background of privilege and is a product of America's best schools. We should recall, before we start trying again to fix corruption with new laws, the famous words of George Washington:

"Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

Star Parker is president of Coalition on Urban Renewal and Education. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

YOUR VIEWS

Columnist misses mark on 'American,' doctrine

To the editor:

Good thing that David Carlson teaches something other than history because he comes up a bit short in that area (Daily Journal, Jan. 7).

That fellow Brian from Canada that you say you met overseas seemingly was upset that the term "American" was given to people of the United States of America. We didn't create the name; it was others who chose to refer to us as Americans, primarily Canada's birth parents England and France. Additionally, America is part of our name. Last time I looked, it wasn't part of Canada's.

You might have asked if he would also like to share the other name given to us by many in France and Canada, "Ugly American," or would that have offended him? The only lesson you could have learned from Brian was how clueless you both were, and you got blamed and accepted responsibility for his being jealous. Score: Brian 1, David 0.

David, I suspect that the name "Ugly American" in your thinking should be reserved for only United States of America citizens. Have I got that part right?

You wrote about the "Monroe Doctrine" of 1823. There was not a Monroe Doctrine "document" of 1823, only a message delivered by President James Monroe to Congress, written by John Quincy Adams, then the secretary of state. The message was used over the next several decades to develop into something referred to as the Monroe Doctrine, or should it be the "Adams Doctrine?" The Monroe message helped calm countries from warring in the 1820s but did little beyond that until it began to be defined decades later.

It is still a work in progress. It has helped create many independent democracies and saved lives all over the Americas. One of those democracies is Panama, which you must certainly hate since they gave us the rights to invest huge amounts of United States of America money and United States of America lives to build the canal.

The so-called Monroe Doctrine helps keep the misery caused by communism, excepting Cuba, out of the Americas. That is the main reason the principles surrounding the doctrine are hated by liberals.

For this proof, you need look no farther than the Contra Freedom Fighters ordeal. My how the liberals squealed when communism was being beaten back. Based on what you wrote, you must have been one of those squealers.

Only one president in history has managed to cause the worst of the worst economically, that being an unemployment rate, inflation rate and interest rates all in double digits. It was so bad we gave it a name, "the misery index."

What president would believe that you could kiss and put your arm around your enemy and instantly make them trustworthy and your friend? What president would sit on his hands while scores of citizens of the United States of America were held hostage? What president would think that holding our athletes out of the Olympics would accomplish anything except harm our own athletes? What president would form the Church Commission in order to hogtie the CIA, FBI and other intelligence agencies that probably allowed Sept. 11?

Who, but an idiot, would plan to invade a large country with less than 100 military people in an attempt to recover prisoners hundreds of miles from the nearest base, and I'm not talking about the huge screw-up by Bill Clinton in Somalia. The attempt gained nothing but several deaths to the United States of America military.

What ex-president would go to foreign countries and attempt to do something no other president would ever consider, undermine a sitting president? This same president terminated the Panama Canal lease, even though we had paid dearly with money and lives to build it and were leasing the rights and most everybody was happy. Now it appears that China may want a presence there, and things may get dicey. The missteps and wrongdoings by the president in question will fill books.

Thank goodness the voters threw the joker out as soon as they could. I'm referring to the president that factual history will record as perhaps the worst president in the history of this country, and David's hero and peanut farmer, Jimmy Carter.

And wasn't that a special sight, Jimmy and Michael Moore with their arms around each other, and perhaps a little slobbering, in the reserved seating at the most recent Democrat National Convention?

David, I suspect that another secret hero of yours is Fidel Castro. In your mind hasn't Castro created a little bit of the Utopia you seem to believe exists? I'm sorry David, but I know the real meaning of utopia as used by the ancient Greeks meant, "no place." And that's where spouting socialist thinking will lead you.

By the way, isn't it cumbersome calling ourselves citizens of the United States of America? What's wrong with calling ourselves Americans, since that's what we're called by the rest of the world?

Floyd L. Shirrell
Indianapolis