

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

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 e-mail Editorial Assistant Kelly Boggs at kboggs@thejournalnet.com. Items can also be submitted by fax to 736-2766, by phone to 736-2712 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 in hearts and to not name specific individuals in darts.

Hearts

• I would like to thank the young men who carry out groceries and all their assistance at Wal-Mart in Franklin. They are very kind, and I appreciate it very much.

Kathy Rooks
Whiteland

• A big heartfelt thank-you to all of the underclass Cubs and parents who joined in to give the graduating seniors Abby Shuck, Kristin Chaney and Nancy Miller a great Senior Dinner. The lasagna dinner would never have been such a hit with out all of your help.

Thanks to Abby Shuck for offering the prayer that all of the team, coaches and parents participated in. It's really fun to see such team support for the seniors.

Good luck completing your season.

Patty Albertson, dinner organizer
Franklin Community High School

• Christian Help Inc. would like to give hearts to two very special people. We would like to thank Carl's Heating and Cooling for all the donated time and work that he has given to the poor and the needy in our mobile home program and elsewhere. He has never hesitated to help, is prompt and freely gives of his time. He also does an excellent job.

We would also like to thank Charles Lizius who has also donated his time and money to our mobile home program. He has given us his expertise, workmanship and talent continually. He has freely given of his time and has remodeled rooms at his own expense.

The world is a better place because of these two men. They are a wonderful example of Christianity in action. We ask God to bless them every day.

Christian Help Inc.

• Thanks to Grace United Methodist Church, Piper's Cafe and Catering, PDQ Printing and Kroger for their part in making the first Humane Society of Johnson County Volunteer Recognition Party a great success.

Thanks also to Michelle Loftin for planning and coordinating the event. Most of all, thanks to all the volunteers whose dedication and hard work have helped the Humane Society have its most successful year.

Sherri Ellett, volunteer coordinator
Humane Society of Johnson County

• Hearts to Ann and Ray Kegley for remembering me on their 50th wedding anniversary by sending me a beautiful bouquet of spring flowers.

My husband, the Rev. John L. Hancock, was the minister who officiated at their marriage at Community Congregational Church on a cold day.

It warmed my heart that they honored his memory by noting on the floral card a piece of advice he had given them. He would be pleased that theirs has been a Christian marriage enduring 50 years.

Marjorie Hancock
Franklin

• Hearts to the Daily Journal for putting the article about the man stabbing the puppy on the front page (Feb. 1). He deserves a just punishment for cruelty to helpless animals.

Betty Dillard,
Greenwood,
Robert Locke,
Indianapolis

Darts

• Darts to the people who do not know what the word "stop" means coming out of Hilltop Farms subdivision. That word means to stop before coming out onto County Road 25W.

I was pulling out of my drive, and no one was around; and then a vehicle comes out of that subdivision, hardly stops and then tailgates all the way down County Road 25W.

I do not understand why people think they have to tailgate down that road. It is not going to get them to their destination any faster.

The Johnson County Sheriff's Office put up a speed limit signal machine, but that did no good at all. They still speed down that road all the time.

I would love to know what it is going to take before someone gets seriously injured on that stretch of road.

Also, darts to the transportation department that cannot fix Pushville Road.

The road is so damaged, and all they do is patch it maybe every two years. The road needs to be repaved, not patched. Fix the roads that are in bad shape and not the neighborhoods that are in better shape than Pushville Road.

Debbie Davis
Whiteland

• Darts to the driver of the brown convertible who was involved in a hit-and-run on Boonesboro Road in Greenwood on Jan. 28.

Be a responsible citizen and own up to the accident. Our insurance will not cover the repair unless you come forward.

Alex Smith
Whiteland

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Actors have no greater grasp of politics than the rest of us

If you wondered what happened to "Hanoi Jane," she's alive and well and making a comeback.

The darling of the anti-Vietnam movement who lent her looks, voice and whatever prestige she had as a member of Hollywood's elite Fonda family of actors to the turbulent protests of the '60s and '70s is once again at the head of the march, demonstrating against another president's plan of action, this time in Iraq.

Age, which has been quite kind to her physically, hasn't seemed to dampen her enthusiasm for confrontation, although she has been away from the scene for nearly 40 years and even had earned a measure of respectability in the world of God, motherhood and apple pie. If the early Jane is back, can Tom Hayden, her onetime husband and leader of the protest band, be far behind?

The caption under an old picture of Fonda in a recent edition of a national newspaper seemed to reflect this somewhat compassionate view of the new Jane. Everyone has seen the photograph that so angered U.S. men fighting in Vietnam and earned her the unflattering nickname. It shows her in a helmet standing on a North Vietnamese anti-aircraft battery in a pose that oozes sympathy for the enemy. The caption of the reprint noted that "many" had found her actions at the time deplorable.

Many? You have to be kidding. Check anyone who served in Vietnam or knew someone who did. Even she conceded years later that it was a mistake. In fact, there were those who equated her with Axis Sally, who broadcast for the Nazis, or the original Tokyo Rose who it turns



Dan K. Thomasson

out was forced to do the same by the Japanese. It is a miracle her career survived. Only overwhelming national anger over that war saved her.

How far we have come since 1941 when the actor Lew Ayres declared himself a conscientious objector, explaining that his starring role in the 1930 film of Eric Remarque's stunning anti-war novel "All Quiet on the Western Front" had left him thoroughly traumatized and opposed to service that required shooting at anyone.

He was the first of his kind in a Hollywood where studios demanded strict adherence by their contract stars to a code of patriotism. Anything less was considered bad for business and would bring instant reprisals.

And it did for Ayres, who was shunned by the studio bosses and all but booted out of films. But the quiet, handsome intellectual who had studied to be a doctor more than redeemed himself by serving as an unarmed combat medic, braving enemy fire to save lives on more than several occasions.

Young "Dr. Kildare" managed to build a decent career after that. How unlike today's Hollywood where film and other personalities are taking a major role in opposing U.S. efforts in Iraq and particularly the president's latest plan to add more troops to quell

the fighting there. This again raises the same question as when Fonda and other movie stars took to the streets for the first time all those years ago.

Simply put, why would anyone find Fonda and Susan Sarandon or any other of the actors who took part in the march on Washington any more persuasive than anyone else? They are merely actors with no real expertise in much of anything that hasn't been scripted for them.

It was one thing for Ayers to stand up for his principles and put his life on the line without compromising them and quite another to try to convince people as Fonda did the other day that her voice will make a difference, so it is time for her to speak out again.

There are any number of Americans who view your first incarnation with loathing and believe your only credential is that of a traitor. That may be harsh, but others did what you did without lending themselves to the kind of propaganda that provided aid and comfort to the enemy.

Being high profile carries responsibilities.

This is not an anti-protest diatribe. Actors are people we love to watch, and they have the same rights as anyone else to express their sentiments. But we should understand that playing a part does not qualify them to fill the same role in real life nor does it imbue them with a special understanding beyond that of the average American.

Only a handful of them have managed to accomplish that.

Dan K. Thomasson, a Hoosier native and Franklin College trustee, is former editor of the Scripps Howard News Service. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

When presidents rein in agencies, Americans suffer

There is a point in second U.S. presidential terms when a frustrated chief executive pondering his legacy decides that he doesn't have the power he should have. And out comes an executive order.

Presidents Bill Clinton and Ronald Reagan both signed orders giving the White House broader authority to regulate the home front, and now President Bush has done it, too.

It's hard to blame the men in the Oval Office.

They're successfully the most powerful people in the world, and time after time they're told that a cherished goal — a nuclear plant near every city, a uniform on every school child, a lecture on sexual abstinence in every classroom, a campaign contribution from every business, a strip mine on every mountain — is not possible because a bureaucrat has decided it's against an obscure section of the Federal Register.

On Jan. 18, Bush signed an order rewriting Executive Order 12866 dealing with regulatory authority.

Bush's new interpretation now means that White House political appointees have a greater say over regulators, policy wonks and scientists who toil in the government's health, safety and civil-rights agencies.

Bush's new order, which has the force of law, says that agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Food and Drug Administration and many others have to abide by a new standard.



Ann McFeatters

They can't act unless they can demonstrate that their action would correct a specific market failure.

For example, an agency trying to protect workers from a new hazardous substance would have to prove that employers completely failed to address the issue on their own.

A tougher clean air standard could not be ordered unless the agency proved that polluting businesses failed to do anything about the air they dirtied.

From now on, according to Bush's order, White House political appointees must approve new regulations.

The language reads: "Unless specifically authorized by the head of the agency, no rule-making shall commence ... without the approval of the agency's Regulatory Policy Office."

Such new offices will be run by a person appointed by the White House.

Bush's order also says that "guidance documents" issued to interpret regulations with an economic impact of at least \$100 million must be subject to public comment, must be limited in scope and may be subject to lengthy delays.

There are two ways to look at this new order.

Either it aids open government by making bureaucrats more responsive to the businesses they regulate, or it further politicizes the regulatory process and makes the government an even bigger tool of special interests.

Oddly, no mention was made in the mainstream press about Bush's new power grab until The New York Times wrote about it 12 days after the fact.

The Times reported that business is thrilled, and environmentalists, health and safety advocates and other liberal elements are appalled.

Americans have been so worried about the war in Iraq, which has now lasted longer than World War II, that they have stopped paying heed to many of the administration's domestic policies.

Bush, aka "the decider," has determined that global warming is not something he needs to worry about, that developing pristine wilderness areas for oil and gas potential is vital, and that there are too many onerous regulations required of business in the name of the environment and human health and safety.

He is right about some of these problems and probably dangerously wrong on others. The issue, however, is not what he thinks (his thoughts about a quick, easy strike at Iraq were certainly off-base), but that decades of trial-and-error tactics have forged processes of regulatory authority so that politics and biased judgments are not supposed to affect the outcome.

YOUR VIEWS

Will drug cost negotiation harm Medicare patients?

To the editor:

I understand that the U.S. House of Representatives just passed House Resolution 4, directing the federal government to negotiate directly with the drug companies in order to control the costs of the Medicare Part D program.

I applaud Congress' efforts to reduce costs and expand coverage for senior citizens and disabled people who rely on Medicare. But I also worry about the unintended consequences of such actions.

My experience with kidney cancer has shown me how few treatment options are available to patients. Some treatments work for some patients and not for others.

My father has had a 50 percent decrease in the size of his metastatic tumors in his first two months of completed treatment. These treatments that are effective for particular patients may lose effectiveness over time, thus necessitating the need to move on to another available treatment.

Until 2006, there were no treatments for kidney cancer that has spread to other areas of the body. Most people have no symptoms of this cancer until it has spread. Some time this year, the Food and Drug Administration expects to approve a new, third kidney-cancer fighting drug.

If the government chooses to negotiate directly with drug companies, I worry that kidney cancer patients, and other people facing cancer, may not have access to the best treatment options.

These drugs may make a cancer that was considered "terminal" into "curable." As the Senate now considers different bills, I ask that the medical needs of patients are not lost in the debate. Ensuring the best possible care and treatment for all cancer patients is critical in the personal battles we face and in our nation's war against cancer.

As your constituent, I ask you to take a careful and thoughtful approach to this issue. Protect kidney cancer patients' access to effective therapies in the Medicare Part D program.

Dr. Linda S. Wick
Franklin

Toll road would negatively alter Indiana landscape

To the editor:

Gov. Mitch Daniels announced a toll road around Franklin on Nov. 9, and Franklin Mayor Brenda Jones-Matthews gave it a limited endorsement the next day.

If this session of the state legislature passes this toll road bill, Daniels will have the authority to proceed as he sees fit with no further legislation required.

This road, eight lanes wide and 75 miles long, will change the quality of life forever in Franklin and the surrounding rural areas more than anything that has happened here since World War II.

Face reality and oppose this toll road now.

Richard Sheek
Franklin

Clearly, it doesn't always work.

But the goal has been that businesses, experts on a specific public interest, the government's own impartial technocrats, scientists and, yes, policymakers work together to forge a consensus. It often takes years, but that's the way it's supposed to work.

Bush's new order probably wasn't even necessary. He's already studded regulatory agencies with likeminded men and women who deplore regulation and want businesses to have a freer hand.

The powerful White House Office of Management and Budget has final authority over anything the executive agencies do, how much they spend and how they spend it. Scientists have been testifying in Congress about how they were pressured by the Bush administration to play down their findings.

But the new executive order will not only help this administration in its final two years but will help future presidents tamp down regulatory thinking they don't politically approve of, further delay decision-making and quash untold efforts to protect the public from dangers now not even known.

Without good government regulation, buildings fall down, chemicals cause cancer, toys kill children, food makes people sick, workers die on the job and the cost of cleaning up dirty air and water is seen as prohibitive.

Scripps Howard columnist Ann McFeatters has covered the White House and national politics since 1986. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.