

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

• A lot of thanks and appreciation to Homeview Rehabilitation Center for the wonderful Christmas dinner they joyfully gave to residents and their families. A lot of love and caring went into the planning.
The family of Pauline Knight
Franklin

• Friendship Baptist Church would like to say thank you to the management and staff of the Comfort Inn in Franklin.

On Dec. 3, William Stafford, an elderly man who uses a walker, wanted to be baptized and was unable to climb the stairs of our baptistry, so Comfort Inn allowed our church to use their pool to baptize William.

This was a great comfort to William, and he was able to follow scripture in being baptized by full immersion. Isn't it great to live in a caring and God-loving town?

Bill Bright
Friendship Baptist Church member

• Hearts to Jordan Mederis, Mariah Picklesheimer and Alicia Denrey for helping wrap Christmas presents for the residents of Morning Pointe Assisted Living.

Sally Hood, LPN, and Tammi Lawson, activity director
Morning Pointe Assisted Living

• Big hearts to the first-grade teachers at Isom Elementary School, Principal Bobby Prewitt, Superintendent David Edds and the board of education for Greenwood schools. These people have proved that they truly care about the education of our children.

Isom was faced with three large classes of first-graders, the largest being 28 students. The school began looking for solutions, and each class was given a full time assistant. But upon further evaluation, they learned that this was not enough. They decided to hire a new teacher and form a fourth class. Welcome Amber Ploutz. You are joining a wonderful team of teachers.

Jeff and Kelly Pine
Greenwood

• Thank you to everyone who gave gifts and donations for our residents at Hickory Creek. They were appreciatively received.

Alice Weddle, activities director
Hickory Creek

• The Genneken family would like to thank Gary Burden from GT Home Improvement and Jeff Montfort with Floor-Tech for remodeling Tyler's bedroom into a Center Grove theme room. We sincerely appreciate making Tyler feel special.

Joyce, Drew, A.J. and Tyler Genneken
Greenwood

• Hearts to Donna Ford for your generosity and time to the Lancer family (Max and Logan). Wow! What great gifts you brought for our extended care room. And to all our parents who gave generously, we thank you.

The staff at St. Rose of Lima Extended Care
Franklin

• Hearts to the Greenwood Park Board for adopting our recommendation from May to allocate money from park impact fees to trails at their November meeting.

Trails Advocacy Board
Greenwood

• Christian Help Inc. and the residents of our Affordable Housing Program would like to thank the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity for providing Christmas for three of our families in the program. It was an awesome experience for the families to be greeted by 45 young men with presents for the children and an abundance of pizza.

We would also like to thank the men of this fraternity for their help in raking leaves at Friendly Village Mobile Home Park. We were able to receive another donated home to refurbish because of their efforts. Thank you and God bless you.

Pam Leffler, director, Christian Help Inc.; and the families of the Affordable Housing Program

• Thank you so much to all of our wonderful Daily Journal subscribers. Your generosity at Christmastime was just a wonderful unforeseen blessing to our family. A huge thanks from our whole family.

Amanda and Matthew Gibson
New Whiteland

Dart

• A dart to the person or people who stole the radio from my vehicle recently. I hope that you enjoy listening to it; I did.

By the way, I have a 4-year-old son who is now afraid to be in a room by himself because he thinks that you are going to steal him too.

If you needed a radio that badly, you should have just knocked on the door. I would have given you one, and you would not have had to tear up my dash and cost me money I don't have to fix the damage you caused. And I would not have a son who is afraid.

By the way, why did you take my \$1.98 clock from the dash? Did you need it for your next theft or what?

Darrell Hall
Greenwood



STAHLGER
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH, 2007.

2006 Good Cheer program was success

I have the privilege to again report on another successful Good Cheer Fund campaign during the 2006 Christmas season.

Through the efforts and generosity of the citizens and organizations of Johnson County, we distributed 750 baskets of food to those less fortunate individuals and families, an increase of 50 baskets over last year.

This Christmas season, total donations will be an estimated \$31,000. The cost of the food purchased, not including the canned goods that were donated, was \$33,646. Any shortfall will be made up from the Good Cheer Fund endowment distribution, which we expect to receive in June.

Any excess of the endowment distribution, after making up the shortfall, is normally donated to the InterChurch Food Pantry of Johnson County.

Without question, the most significant occurrence in this year's food drive was the overwhelming donation of canned goods, which were collected from the elementary and middle schools of Johnson County.

In 2005, the total estimated canned goods donated was 38,000 items. This year an estimated 52,877 items were donated. Incredible. We have never come close to that number. Each year the InterChurch Food Pantry receives the excess, which we cannot put into the baskets.

These schools that participate annually in this effort are to be commended.

In addition to the schools, there are many individuals,



Bob Heuchan
GUEST COLUMNIST

businesses and organizations who make all of this possible each year. Here are many to be thanked:

Thank you to Kenny Swint and the volunteers of the Johnson County Fraternal Order of Police. They were responsible for the assembly and distribution of 175 baskets in the Greenwood area.

Thank you to Allen Smith and the volunteers of the Edinburgh Fire and Rescue, who were again responsible for assembling and delivering 200 baskets in the Edinburgh area.

Thanks again to the Edinburgh Jay C Food Store managers Carol McCullough and Kevin Condra and the store employees for supplying the dry and perishable food items that are purchased to go into each basket. We appreciate your efficient service each year.

Thanks to Franklin Printing, Indoff and Dave Kahre and Associates P.C. for donating printed items, supplies and tax preparation services.

Thank you to the employees of Davis Electric for picking up the food baskets from the Center Grove schools; to the employees of Embarq who picked up the food baskets from the Franklin schools; and to the many

volunteers who assisted in picking up the food baskets from the Clark-Pleasant, Nineveh-Hensley-Jackson and Greenwood schools.

Thanks to the Johnson County Office of Family and Children, Human Services and to the elementary and middle schools who assist each year in getting the applications into the hands of those who need them.

Each year volunteers from Leadership Johnson County assist the effort by taking food basket applications over the phone and by processing the many names into the computer. We thank you for your valuable help. Thanks to Carol Cooney for recruiting the Leadership Johnson County volunteers again this year.

Thanks to these organizations who assisted in the assembly of 375 baskets at the REMC: Franklin Lions Club, Franklin Community High School cheerleaders, Franklin Community High School Interact Club, Pam Millikan and Custer Baker Middle School students, Grace United Methodist Church Youth, Garden Christian Church Youth Group, Girl Scouts Troop No. 138, The Good Flower Farm volunteers and the REMC employees.

Thanks also to those individuals and families who assisted.

There were several organizations who assisted in the delivery of baskets: thanks to Franklin Lions Club, Franklin Masonic Lodge No 107, Indian Creek High School FFA, and Johnson County Young Farmers. Thanks also to brother Joe, Mark Friend, Juel Carman (and his

usual entourage) and those individuals and families who give of their time to assist each year.

A special thank-you once again goes to Chet Aubin and the board of directors of Johnson County REMC for providing the use of their facility. The REMC has supported this community effort since 1994. Thanks also to REMC employees Steve Smith, Phil Carpenter, Ken Dickey, Linda Gray, Scott Mitchell and Doug Stahl for your help.

Thanks again to the Daily Journal, whose support gets the word out each year about the Good Cheer Fund and for depositing and reporting the donations as they come in.

Finally, thank you to all of the individuals, businesses and organizations who donate time and money to the effort. It is not possible to list all of you, but congratulations on another successful effort in 2006. The Good Cheer Fund consists entirely of volunteers who for the most part live in Johnson County.

It was in 1982 that I began helping Eddy Teets with the Good Cheer Fund by picking up baskets at the schools. This makes my 25th year being a volunteer.

I was glad to again work along side Eddy, who led this effort for 37 years (and who probably considered resigning 36 times). Thanks again to all of you who donated and participated in this year's Good Cheer Fund drive. Best wishes for a successful 2007.

Bob Heuchan is the Good Cheer Fund coordinator. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

Will Pelosi champion cooperation or be vindictive?

With almost nothing in Washington seeming to work right, many eyes are on Nancy Pelosi to make a difference. Is she up to the challenge?

It probably matters less that she's the first woman speaker of the House, elected by all 233 Democrats, and more that she's been around the scene for two decades. But it may matter less that she's been around for a while and more that she's been a politician's politician, lionized from coast to coast for her fund-raising skills.

If the California Democrat does not chuck her old eye-for-an-eye, tooth-for-a-tooth partisan mentality, little is likely to change on Capitol Hill. If she does not "get" that Americans are seriously tired of ineptitude and bickering in the nation's capital, her tenure as speaker is doomed.

Her speech accepting the gavel acknowledged the difficulties ahead, especially deciding what to do about Iraq. Her gesture of asking children in the House chamber to come touch her new gavel was charming — and a smart photo op. Americans know that their children get short shrift at the federal level. Her words were encouraging: This should be a civil country where health care is affordable, college is accessible and retirement is reliable.

After the November elections,



Ann McFeatters

Pelosi did not get off to a good start in her efforts to provide a "new direction for America." Her futile effort to get John Murtha elected as her deputy without having the votes for him, her blocking of rival Jane Harman as chairwoman of the intelligence committee and her decision to bypass the committee process (and keep Republicans out of the picture) to try to ram her initial legislative ideas through the House quickly made her appear a trifle vindictive and ineffectual.

On the other hand, she is savvy, hardworking and well-organized. And the stakes are enormous. Her pledge to help oversee "the most honest and open Congress ever" should and will not be forgotten by reporters or voters. She knows that. She ran on a platform to end the "culture of corruption" in Congress. She will now be held accountable for that promise.

While President Bush is rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic of his bumbled Iraq policy, pulling people almost at

random out of one job to stick them in another, Democrats are rearranging the chairs in Congress in a process that seems almost as futile.

In both houses, Democrats armed with the power of the subpoena are planning hearings to try to figure out what went wrong in the past six years. In particular, the new head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., one of the legions running for president in 2008, wants to put all the president's men (and one woman) on the hot seat to prod them on Iraq. But it's too late for that.

Pelosi, of course, ostensibly has nothing to do with the Senate. But she has become symbolic of the new regime on the Hill. And as leader of the House, she will have enormous influence in whether and how Congress gets its act together. Along with the Senate's new majority leader, Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada, she will be either credited with helping to change the tone in Washington or preserving the nasty status quo.

With the next presidential race under way, making a difference in Washington is daunting. Bush would seem to have no political interest in helping Democrats. Democrats would seem to have no political interest in helping Bush.

But if Pelosi and Reid work well with Bush and Republicans

on the Hill, and some actual work gets done in Congress, the nation profits. If Bush starts listening to senior Republicans and well-informed Democrats, if by a miracle Iraq becomes less of a mess, the nation profits.

To many Americans, Pelosi is a new face. But despite her efforts to greet them as a grandma from Baltimore (she is from Baltimore and she is a grandmother), Pelosi will be judged quickly as a veteran politician.

Her strategy of a 100-hour blitz of legislative action and new rules — specifically, ethics reform to "break the link between lobbyists and legislation," a minimum-wage increase, cutting student-loan interest rates, implementing the 9/11 Commission's recommendations, broadening stem-cell research — seems a little too cute. Her party's majority in Congress is thin, and the president is already hinting that he suddenly found his veto pen.

We must hope Pelosi becomes the most effective and most inclusive speaker of the House in U.S. history, and that she and Bush form, in her words, a bond of genuine partnership. For all our sakes.

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