

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 more hearts

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

• Thank you to the off-duty firefighter who came to our daughter's rescue about 7:30 p.m. Feb. 18 on Whiteland Road. You are truly an angel.

Larry and M.J. Hannan
Greenwood

• Thanks to Brett Barnhart, the best neighbor anyone can have. He cleared our driveway and other neighbors' during the recent snows.

Bill and Ann Cook
Franklin

• Hearts to the Franklin Street Department for the exemplary management and service provided to our city during the most recent ice-and-snow storm. The extremely harsh weather conditions didn't deter them from working hard and putting in long hours to clear the city streets. They are to be commended for a job well done. Thank you.

Hearts also to the employees of the Franklin Planning Department, parks department, Greenlawn Cemetery, Department of Public Works and the private contractors for assisting the street department with snow removal during the most recent storm. They are to be commended for a job well done. Thank you.

Mayor Brenda Jones-Matthews
City of Franklin

• Hearts to the Daily Journal and all the sponsors for the terrific posters of our Colts team before the Super Bowl. It was great to see all the different businesses supporting our Indianapolis Colts. Thank you.

Judy Dayan
Greenwood

• I would like to thank the unknown person who plowed my driveway on Valentine's Day. What a nice surprise to come home from work dreading chiseling and shoveling all that beautiful white stuff only to find it's been done by a kind and thoughtful person. (It's been driving me nuts trying to figure out who it was.) One broken back and heart attack spared, thanks again. I will "pass your kindness forward."

Jim Beeson
New Whiteland

• A big heart to all of those who have helped and supported me during the past week. I lost my fiance suddenly Feb. 17, and so many friends, family and strangers have been by my side.

I am not only left without Josh, but I am also left with our 17-month-old twins. Thankfully, my support system is huge, and they are making this difficult time a little easier.

Also, I would like to send a heart to Johnson County Coroner David Lutz for being so kind and prompt in answering my questions. He helped tremendously. Also, I send another heart to Franklin Police Department Detective Chris Tennell for being so kind during such a hard time. Again, thank you to everyone.

Becky Bennett
Franklin

• Hearts to the nice woman who stopped and helped clean the entryway at St. Andrew's Anglican Catholic Church on Feb. 18. And hearts to all the other good Samaritans who helped others in such an unselfish manner during these past two weeks of snow.

The Rev. Paul Nugent
Franklin

• Hearts to the lady wearing a shiny black jacket who helped me cross Jefferson Street at the corner of Jackson Street on Feb. 8.

I was walking to pick up my car at a garage on Jefferson Street. The sidewalk on Jackson Street had been cleared of snow, but there was a build-up of snow at the corner. I walk with a cane. At the corner, I hesitated, decided it was too hazardous to cross there and turned around, retracing my steps to look for a better option.

A lady called to me from Jefferson Street, asking if she could assist me across the street. I accepted and told her she was truly a good Samaritan. She smiled.

After we were safely across, I thanked her. She walked to a red pickup, parked at the curb with the motor running, headed west.

It was then that I realized she had been driving west on Jefferson Street, saw my plight, parked her truck at the curb and came to my assistance. A wonderful act of compassion.

The back of her jacket was embroidered with a colorful emblem and the red letters "ARMY."

I will long remember her act of kindness on a cold, snowy winter day in downtown Franklin.

Alice Sutton
Morgantown

• Hearts to Ed Tichenor for clearing our driveways during the recent snowstorms. It's so good to have such thoughtful neighbors.

Eula Brockman and neighbors
Whiteland

STAHLER.
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH • 2007.



Reading project highlights creator of mischievous feline

We looked! Then we saw him
Step in on the mat!
We looked! And we saw him!
The Cat in the Hat!

It's called Project 236, and it happens at 2:36 p.m. Friday. That's when we are encouraged to find a youngster (or someone young-at-heart) and read aloud from "The Cat in the Hat."

Why? Because it's the 103rd birthday of the book's author, Theodor Geisel (better known as Dr. Seuss) and the 50th anniversary of the book that became a landmark in children's literature. The event, part of Read Across America Day sponsored by the National Education Association, is so named because Geisel wrote the text using only 236 different words.

The quirky story about a mischievous, hat-wearing feline came about when Geisel read an article describing the trouble children were having learning to read. Convinced that current books were boring, he created "The Cat in the Hat," employing the publisher's limited word bank of "new reader" vocabulary words. With those few words he created a whole new planet for novice readers to explore.

Dr. Seuss was not really a doctor. Geisel donned the title to please his father, who had wanted his son to become a professor at Oxford. Seuss was Geisel's middle name and his mother's maiden name.

After the success of "Cat in the Hat," the good Dr. Seuss created 43 more books that kids and adults alike found delightfully intriguing, appealingly odd and pleasantly zany.



James Johnson

"I like nonsense," he once said. "It wakes up brain cells. Fantasy is a necessary ingredient in living. It's a way of looking at life through the wrong end of a telescope."

In addition to the quirky rhythm and rhyme of the text, Geisel drew all of the colorful illustrations for his books. The characters he created can only be described as peculiar, but millions of children have learned to read, and more importantly learned to like to read, by way of such creatures as Horton the Elephant, Yertle the Turtle, the Grinch and Foo-Foo the Snoo.

Geisel called his drawing "exaggerated mistakes." He said he drew the way he did because he couldn't draw. As a child he had been told by his art teacher that he had little talent for the subject. As he grew up, he didn't receive much more encouragement. At Dartmouth College, his classmates voted him "least likely to succeed."

He first tried his hand at children's books in 1937. "And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street" was considered too outlandish for children. It was rejected by 27 publishers before Vanguard Press took a chance with it. It found an audience in

early readers who were drawn to a world outside Dick and Jane.

With titles like "Horton Hears a Who!" "If I Ran the Zoo," "The Sneetches," "The Lorax" and "Oh, The Places You'll Go," Dr. Seuss became famous. When publisher Bennett Cerf bet Geisel that he could not write a children's book using only 30 words, the result was "Green Eggs and Ham," which won the bet and became an instant classic.

By the time he died in 1991, Dr. Seuss had sold more than 200 million books.

His words had been translated into 15 languages. His ideas had provided the source for 11 children's television specials, a Broadway musical and a feature-length film. His honors included two Academy Awards, two Emmy awards, a Peabody award and the Pulitzer Prize for his lifetime contribution to literature. And the "pretend doctor" had received seven honorary doctorates, including one from Dartmouth.

Dr. Seuss must have loved the irony in that, just as he would love the idea of everyone in America reading "The Cat in the Hat" at the same time on his birthday. Reading, specifically helping kids learn to read, was what he was all about.

The more you read, the more things you will know,

The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.

Board of contributors columnist James H. Johnson is retired educator who lives in Greenwood. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

Blogging trends starting to promote inaccuracy, wrecklessness in writing

In this world of electronic wizardry and instant opinion, the blogger just may be king. So every presidential candidate wants one or two to tap into the enormous potential of the Internet with its ability to stimulate huge amounts of campaign cash from obsessive tube watchers who seem to believe nearly anything they read on this creation as long as it's bad stuff about those who don't agree with them.

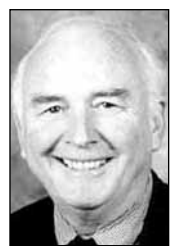
Whether or not the staid world of national politics is ready for these undisciplined rants and diatribes remains to be seen. But if there were doubts about the perils of relying too much on these newest of media darlings during the coming campaign, there is already ample evidence to change one's thinking.

When it comes to bloggers, what the candidate buys he may not be able to live with, given a general insensitivity to political correctness, accuracy and decent language.

Take the recent case of the potty-mouthed bloggers hired by the former senator and vice-presidential nominee, John Edwards, for his seemingly perpetual campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination.

One of those, Amanda Marcotte, whose writing has been viewed, among other things, as anti-Catholic, recently resigned, although Edwards had decided against firing her despite obvious qualms.

Edwards had ended several weeks of indecision by saying he was keeping Marcotte and another female blogger on his staff, despite the fact he, too, had been personally offended by some of their writing, which was so profane and tasteless that few presidential hopefuls could be caught endorsing it.



Dan K. Thomasson

Marcotte has been quoted as wondering how things would have changed if the Virgin Mary had been able to take Plan B, the emergency contraception. And she charged that Catholic policies about birth control and abortion were rooted in the church's need to ensure a steady stream of children who would become tithing members of the Church. Her biting sarcasm, as reported, also extended to the controversial Duke University rape case, which still is pending but has been severely damaged by evidence contradicting the accuser's claims.

"Can't a few white boys sexually assault a black woman anymore without people getting all wound up about it? So unfair," she is quoted as having written.

Confirming how unwise the former senator's decision to keep her was, Marcotte ended her brief foray into national politics in typical fashion, lashing out at "right-wing skills," chiefly from prominent Catholic organizations, for forcing her resignation. Predictably, liberal bloggers dashed to her defense. So far her cohort, Melissa McEwan, has not resigned.

By its very nature, the art of blogging offers a measure of freedom and reach beyond anything in the past. And because it does, it should carry with it a degree of responsibility that matches that scope and privilege. It, of course, does not. In fact,

just the opposite is true, giving broad access to every nut case with a cause and permitting nearly anyone to say nearly anything about anybody, often anonymously, without a shred of proof and without fear of liability.

Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., already has felt that sting from an online magazine that used the fact he attended a Muslim-sponsored grade school as a 6-year-old to intimate that he had fundamentalist Islamic connections.

The editor of the magazine has refused to disclose the source of the story or its author. The piece actually has been disavowed by nearly every reputable journalistic enterprise, including a respected sister print publication of the Internet magazine.

Even newspapers now seem to be experimenting with online stories that are written on a laptop by a "reporter" and immediately put online without benefit of editing. For one who has spent his entire life in the discipline of the checking and rechecking that occurs in any legitimate newspaper, I can't think of anything more dangerous and irresponsible.

If that is the wave of the future in news, a free press and all it stands for may choke to death on misinformation. But, tragically, that is exactly what blogging is all about.

It is easy to predict that before this campaign is completed more than one presidential hopeful may regret the rush to the unruly world of the Internet, where the knack of making things up puts the most inventive politician to shame.

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.

YOUR VIEWS

Hoosiers deserve fair property tax system

To the editor:

The halfway point of the 2007 session is quickly approaching, and House members are getting more accustomed to longer days. The pace at the Statehouse has reached a fevered pitch, and legislators are working hard to resolve the issue of property tax relief in the state.

Recently, House members, including me, voted against a measure that fails to adequately provide a major plan for property tax reform for Hoosiers in the state. House Bill 1007 would not provide citizens with any relief on their 2007 property tax bills and would have the potential to increase taxes for Hoosiers over a half-billion dollars per year.

Provisions included in the bill would have imposed a 1 percent-age point increase in Indiana's corporate income tax, ranking us fourth-highest in the nation and No. 1 in the Midwest at 8.5 percent. In addition, Indiana is sixth in the nation in property taxes imposed on corporations.

One of the most important factors that helped attract businesses to the state helping to create some of the new 34,000 jobs brought to Indiana over the past two years depended on the state's corporate tax structure. This would have a negative impact in attracting future businesses to the state and halt any attempts of helping to employ more Hoosiers. Essentially, elements included in the legislation made this bill a job killer, and we must do everything we can to bring employers to the state.

My main goal working at the Statehouse representing citizens across Bartholomew and Johnson counties is to reduce the state's reliance on Hoosier taxpayers. I cannot and will not vote in favor for a potential increase on property taxes across the state.

In fact, under HB 1007 property taxes within the year 2007 are projected to increase 14.5 percent. Additionally, the bill would raise tax rates for families of four with a median income of \$65,000 across the state.

Another tremendous concern to me that has not been addressed in HB 1007 is the issue of school spending and construction. I wholeheartedly support education dollars being spent in the classroom, but I cannot support the lack of control the bill places on capital building projects at schools, which drive property taxes even higher.

I will continue to support the reduction and elimination of property taxes in the state and pledge to continue to vote in the best interests of those I represent across Bartholomew and Johnson counties. We must come together to iron out all the details so we have a fair and just property tax system that does not burden citizens and continues to attract good paying jobs to Indiana.

For more information, citizens can contact my office at (800) 382-9841 or e-mail me at h59@in.gov.

State Rep. Milo Smith
R-Columbus

WRITE A LETTER

The Daily Journal invites readers to submit letters, opinion columns and e-mail comments for the opinion page.

GUIDELINES

- Letters published in the Daily Journal must contain the writer's name and city or town.
- Letters sent to the Daily Journal must be signed and must include a daytime telephone number for verification to be considered for publication.
- Letters should be kept as brief as possible.
- Make sure the e-mail letter includes the writer's name, mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address for verification.
- Opinion columns for the community forum section of the editorial page also will be considered for publication. The article should be kept to a reasonable length and should include the writer's name, address and telephone number for verification.
- Because of space and legal considerations, the Daily Journal reserves the right to edit any letters or articles and to limit comments.

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