

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

The Super Bowl will test some local professional football loyalties.

OUR POINT

Colts fans must be accommodating to longtime Chicago Bears supporters.

Grin and bear presence of Chicago faithful

The Daily Journal

Long before Robert Irsay sneaked the Colts out of Baltimore, Johnson County's football loyalties were largely divided between the Chicago Bears and the Cincinnati Bengals.

But it was easy for these two factions to coexist because the teams have played each other only six times. Cincinnati won the first two meetings, in 1972 and 1980.

None of the six games had the gravitas of the playoffs.

Many fans transferred their allegiance from the Bears after the arrival of the Colts in Indianapolis in 1984.

But several kept the Monsters of the Midway nearest their hearts.

The Bears have met the Indianapolis version of the Colts several times since the move, but none as important as the Super Bowl on Feb. 4.

So it's understandable that emotions will run high, and some quiet Bears fans will come out of hibernation to cheer their team on.

Colts supporters must rein in their enthusiasm and treat the opponent's backers with civility.

This week, though, a group of unconscionable Colts fans have elevated the tensions by kidnapping a Bears flag.

Ransom has been demanded.

Retaliation is a possibility.

Be true blue for the Colts, but don't punish a harmless banner.

Where will the escalation end?

Muting a megaphone?

Breaking someone's foam finger?

As the run-up to the game continues, fevers will only become more acute on both sides.

The best solution may be dueling Super Bowl parties. And may the best batch of nibblings win.

So be kind to Chicago fans.

After all, the Bears were the top of the local gridiron food chain before the Bengals started prowling around and long before the Colts galloped into town.

And besides, we all know who the better team is.

Focus: Corruption

Ethics reform at last thanks to 110th Congress

Scrrips Howard News Service

It turns out that Congress was serious about ethics reform, with the Senate following the House in passing a strong corrective to business as usual, and by a reassuringly large margin of 96 to 2.

And they did it before the State of the Union address, the traditional kickoff to the legislative year.

Both houses either banned or curbed some of the gaudier excesses: lobbyist- and corporate-paid or subsidized travel; free tickets to sporting events, the theater and concerts; hosting lavish bashes at the national political conventions.

As the Senate was acting, Congress received a dark reminder of why these measures were really necessary. A federal judge sentenced former Ohio Republican Rep. Bob Ney to two and a half years in prison for swapping official favors for gifts and luxury travel in connection with a spreading lobbying scandal.

The most effective measures in the bill, however, are probably not the bans and prohibitions but the public disclosure requirements.

Those especially should go a long way toward cleaning up the growing black market in slipping favors for special interest to legislation.

Lawmakers will now be required to identify pet spending projects and specially targeted tax breaks they add to bills.

And in the case of tariff suspensions, a burgeoning field of special interest favors, the lawmakers would have to name the company that would benefit from the suspension and justify the tax break in writing.

One of the potentially most far-reaching — and one that the House must still adopt — is public disclosure of "bundling" wherein a lobbyist raises campaign funds from his friends and clients, each contribution within the legal limit, and hands them over to a favored legislator in a single bundle.

Being able to accept bundled contribution is a huge, and legal, advantage for incumbents, but it's always nice to know where the money is coming from.

The best defense against corruption in Congress is the rectitude of its individual members and the vigilance of their leaders.

Still, all new Congresses come to town talking a good game on ethics.

It looks as if the 110th is actually doing something about it.



YOUR

VIEWS & COMMENTARY

Not all grandparents want toll road for family's future

To the editor:

To state Sen. Tom Wyss: You should meet my grandson, the cutest, sharpest, most adorable 3-year-old any grandparent could have.

Obviously, you have not met him or you would know that what he likes is to ride horses, watch baby pigs being born, work with those pigs as they grow up to be shown at the county fair, ride the tractor with his Papaw in the hay field and roast hot dogs over the campfire with family and friends.

It troubles me that you appear to think that what you want for your grandchildren is what everyone else should want for theirs.

My grandson's roots do not include a toll road on or near the family home place. I want him to know his roots and be able to come back to them no matter where his path in life takes him.

My childhood memories include helping my great-grandfather put up hay in the old barn loft, having him teach me how to keep the potato bugs off the plants, eating as many strawberries as we picked, raising the largest, sweetest onions around, gathering eggs in the hen house, and having family reunions with fresh watermelon and homemade ice cream.

This next year, my parents are starting another phase in their lives, and my husband and I hope to move to the home place. It is a small 20-acre farm in south-eastern Johnson County that has been in my family for many years. I have been excited about the opportunity to preserve my childhood memories and pass them on to my grandson.

None of us knows what our grandchildren will do in the future. They may go to college, meet someone from a different state and decide to settle there.

They may join the armed forces and make a career of traveling. They may choose a career that leads them to a job far away. Maybe, like I did, they will decide on a career that allows them to stay in Indiana.

My sense of family was so strong that while I loved the state of Tennessee, I wanted to be close to my parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. I chose to be

WRITE A

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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

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P. O. Box 699
Franklin, IN 46131

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letters@thejournalnet.com
Drop-off
2575 N. Morton St. (U.S. 31)
Franklin

Fax
736-2766

a teacher, now literacy coach, at the same school I attended.

My husband was from a nearby community. He has been in the Indiana National Guard for 31 years and recently served in Afghanistan. He works full time at Camp Atterbury. Wherever our grandchildren go, and whatever they do, it is always good for them to know that they can come home.

I want home to be filled with their past, my past and the stories they have heard about their great-grandparents' past.

I want them to be able to stand on the land where those great-grandparents were born and died.

That would be difficult to do if a toll road were running across the land, and the peace of the past will not be there if the toll road is running within earshot.

I am reminded of Bill Peat's story titled "Wump World" that I often have read to my students. The alien Pollutients come in and build lots of buildings and roads until everything is concrete. The Wumps struggle to survive underground until the Pollutients have moved on to another planet.

The Wumps find one little park left, and after many, many years the concrete begins to crumble and a sprig of grass pokes up through the cracks.

I do not consider myself an environmental extremist, but I have to wonder: Where does it end?

How much farmland must we take in the name of progress? How many fast-food places that can't get workers do you think we need? How many warehouses do we want sitting around empty? On and on the questions could go.

You are correct, Sen. Wyss, in that the bottom line for me is my grandchild. However, you are wrong about what I want for his future.

I want him in a country community, with a smaller school system and good times based around church activities, where he will be raised with good, wholesome values.

That picture just does not fit with loud noises, pollution and buildings that go with a toll road. Perhaps they need one on the north side of Indianapolis; better yet, perhaps Fort Wayne needs another road.

As for me, I prefer the quiet country roads and the lane that leads to my home place.

Rebecca Morrison
Franklin

Farms, not highways, make up Hoosier legacies

To the editor:

I live southeast of downtown Franklin. The proposed toll road will probably go somewhere south of Franklin College and north of Camp Atterbury.

This is my property, my farmland and my legacy.

My home was built by my great-great-grandfather, James C. Dunlap, more than 100 years ago. His daughter, Jesse Dunlap-Weaver, grew up here.

She lived only until the birth of my grandfather, James Allen Weaver. A braid of her long hair lies as a treasure in an old trunk upstairs. The home and property were willed to my grandfather when he was just 11 years old. While growing up here with his father, he married and had two daughters, one of whom is my mother, Marjorie R. Hood.

Each daughter bought a piece of the property for one dollar to build their homes and raise their families. When my grandfather passed, the farm land and his home were divided between the families. I am the fifth generation to live in this

home and my children are the sixth generation in the family to live in this home.

We are on high ground, and I can barely see Interstate 65 through the beautiful woodland behind my home, but I can hear the noise on a daily basis. To our west is U.S. 31, and to the north is State Road 44. A toll road to the south will box us in.

I have always thought of Indiana as a farm state. The proposed toll road will dead-end all the country roads that I travel to get away from the noise. Why is everyone in such a hurry? Haven't you ever taken the long way home just because it was scenic?

The generations of farmers living near me are phenomenal. There is not one day that goes by that I do not pass one of them on the road. Farming is their life. They are working at it from sunup till sundown every single day of their life. How will they get across your toll road when you slice their livelihood in half?

I realize that Mother Nature can take all of this away from me in a blink of her eye. I have no control over that.

However, I would like to think that I have control over this, with the help of my legislators.

Please kill the bill that proposes to kill the legacies of our Hoosiers.

Tom and Sheila Hood
Franklin

EDITOR'S NOTE — The following is a corrected reprint of a letter that was originally published Wednesday.

Club director was given no chance to improve

To the editor:

The Boys Club director was treated shabbily.

Is this how you repay a long service employee, by demoting him?

Accepted practice suggests if your employer is unhappy with your performance, you are interviewed and given the chance to correct. If the employer is unable to do so, discipline to the extent of termination is warranted.

It seems to me that the board of directors is derelict in its duty and is blaming the director. This wrong should be corrected.

Robert D. Stultz
Franklin

Benefits of full-day kindergarten aren't proved

EDITOR'S NOTE — Franklin Community School Corp. Superintendent William Patterson sent this letter to Gov. Mitch Daniels.

I believe that broad and effective early-childhood education is a critical component of the future educational success of children.

During the past two years in Franklin, the school corporation has made a commitment to provide support to preschool children through a number of means, including a pre-kindergarten camp for children who demonstrate a need for additional support before they enter kindergarten.

However, I do not support full-day kindergarten for all children for a number of reasons.

Thinking that I had somehow been out of the research loop and had missed data that indicated that full-day kindergarten for all children was worth the cost, I reviewed the literature. Just as I experienced 15 years ago when studying full-day programs, the data is very equivocal about the benefits of full-day kindergarten.

Little evidence exists that supports the long-term effects of full-day kindergarten.

The results of a 2006 Colorado study, which mirror previous research, indicates that, at best, children in full-day kindergarten demonstrate higher achievement at the end of kindergarten, but those gains disappear by the end of first grade.

Another analysis comes from California and indicates that



William Patterson
GUEST COLUMNIST

kindergarten research "includes unsubstantiated assumptions and overgeneralizations," drawn from questionable research techniques. These reports parallel numerous others that are discouraging to those of us looking for effective strategies.

Even if we limit our focus to studies that emphasize the positive attributes of full-day kindergarten, few reports provide detailed descriptions of those programs that seem to be more successful; so moving ahead with full-day kindergarten at this juncture means assuming that more time is the critical component for success — not what happens in the time that is provided.

And with insufficient knowledge of what we need to do to maintain those gains over time, a high possibility exists that we will spend millions of dollars on a fleeting and hollow solution.

Full-day kindergarten for all children may indeed be a key to long-term student success. We simply do not have the evidence that supports such a program at this time.

Your previous comments in the newspaper suggest that you are aware of the research to which I have referred; yet you believe that doing nothing is unacceptable.

I agree.

Because kindergarten attendance is not mandated in Indiana, considering a requirement for all students to attend half-day kindergarten might be a more reasonable starting point. Also, offering full-day kindergarten programs only to at-risk children may be an acceptable approach that at this time maximizes research and dollars.

However, a definition of at risk, I believe, needs to go beyond students in poverty situations and focus on individual child attributes rather than a pre-identified group of children.

For example, in pre-kindergarten assessments that we do in Franklin, using the proposed free and reduced-price lunch data to qualify students would include some students in a full-day program who already display very adequate skills, while some students not meeting free and reduced criteria need the additional support.

In the community of Franklin, full implementation of kindergarten will cost about \$1.5 million to \$2 million for teachers, assistants, furniture and supplies.

And because we have no classrooms available to house additional classes, the instructional costs of full-day kindergarten for all students will pale when compared to the cost of

creating 10 or more additional classrooms that are appropriate in size and quality.

Although recent building projects in Franklin have cost taxpayers dearly, I will go to our community and promote a program that I can assure them will greatly benefit students.

However, a proposed full-day program whose results nationwide are far from conclusive, a program whose gains are transitory and a program which appears to be a get-on-the-bandwagon approach rather than a thoughtful one in which the necessary prework is undertaken is not a program that I can in good conscience promote in my community.

To move ahead with full-day kindergarten for all children at this time would be fiscally irresponsible.

At a time when there is great concern over the level of property taxes, moving ahead with an expensive program that lacks sufficient evidence of long-term impact is indefensible.

In Franklin, we are investigating and implementing a number of programs to support student success from pre-kindergarten through Grade 12. Unfortunately, the necessary homework has not been completed on full-day kindergarten for all children.

William Patterson is superintendent of Franklin Community School Corp. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.