

CARROLL COUNTY COMET

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Editor: Susan Scholl, editor@carrollcountycomet.com
Ad Director: Joe Moss, comet@carrollcountycomet.com
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It's time for a county manager

Last week's conviction of the former county health department worker, who was employed for nearly five years as a "nurse" and who did not have a valid Indiana nursing license, was as much an indictment of the county's personnel policy and management system as it was of the defendant's behavior.

Mistakes can happen in the best of circumstances, but a situation that lasts for almost five years rises to being more than just a mistake.

It became evident at the trial that although several county employees suspected and questioned this person's credentials for the position, there was no clear place for any of those employees to turn in order to air their concerns.

There is no one assigned in county government to receive those types of complaints, investigate them for validity, and then act on them. It took nearly five years for the predicament in the health department to come to a head. When it finally reached the commissioners the situation began to change for the better.

The time to hire a county manager is now. There should be one person in county government who is responsible to ensure all county positions have written job descriptions and that all county employees understand what their job duties entail. There should be one person who is responsible to verify licenses and certificates required for professional positions...and that should happen **BEFORE** a new hire begins work.

A county manager would also be responsible to consolidate supply ordering for all county offices and departments and to manage all maintenance contracts.

The position will cost money, of course. But if streamlining purchases saves money, it would be worth it. Saving the cost of a lengthy prosecution and jury trial would be an added benefit.

A county manager would direct county personnel matters efficiently, working closely with the department heads, and report directly to the commissioners.

Now that the county could be faced with a potential financial crisis, it is necessary for commissioners to make decisions that will have lasting positive effects for all community members.

Circuit Court Judge Donald Currie

New filings are from public records available in the Carroll County Clerk's office on the second floor of the courthouse, Delphi. Other information regarding judgments and marriage dissolutions is gathered from public records found in the clerk's office.

The following were found to be in arrears in the payment of child support: Laura Sue Acebedo, \$1,981.55; Stephen Clark, \$10,099.09; Macon Cory, \$3,729.60; Brian Majors, \$898.03; Jason Williamson, \$4,144; Stacy Roe, \$7,457.26; Raymond Clark, \$2,985; Janice Daniels, \$3,852; Wayne Shirar, \$171; Peter L. O'Brien, \$10,613.86; and Rhonda D. Blount, \$23,194.72.

Christopher W. Savoldi was found guilty of burglary and theft. He was sentenced to 12 year in prison, two years suspended, and two years probation.

Virgil Spencer Sr., 55, pled guilty to theft and possession of marijuana. He was sentenced to three years in jail, one year suspended, and one year supervised probation.

David J. Montine, 32, was ordered to serve twenty months of a previously suspended sentence for violation of terms of probation.

Brian Shanks, 46, was ordered to serve six years of a previously suspended sentence in prison.

The court extended the probation of Gabriel E. Fetters, 23, for a period of three years for violation of probation.

Default judgements were entered for the plaintiff in the following cases:

Hudson & Keyes LLC vs. Brian W. Wallace, \$4,030.56; GMAC vs. Timothy T. Spratt, \$5,940.70; Capital One Bank vs. Steven A. Fultz, \$914.33; American Acceptance Co. LLC vs. Timothy L. Stafford, \$2,296.35; Midland Credit Management Inc. vs. Mary Long, \$2,269.83; and Pipestone Financial LLC vs. Troy M. Helderman, \$1,450.17.

Donald E. Fritts, 57, pled guilty to dealing in cocaine. He was sentenced to eight years in prison, five years suspended, and supervised probation.

Keith O. Munson, 31, pled guilty to child molesting and child exploitation. He was sentenced to 28 years in prison, six years suspended, and supervised probation.

Christopher L. Robertson was charged with criminal confinement and domestic battery.

The following were charged with operating a vehicle while intoxicated - endangering: Juan V. Martinez; Edward R. Priest; and Greg A. Clawson.

Kenneth A. Nehrig was charged with two counts of resisting law enforcement.

Cindy A. Hartman was charged with domestic battery.

Harry A. Hartman Jr. was charged with check deception.

Robert Guenther was charged with check deception.

Antonio Lopez was charged with operating a vehicle while intoxicated - endangering, operating a vehicle with an ACE of .15 percent or more and failure to signal turn.

Default judgements were entered for the plaintiff in the following cases: Atlantic Credit & Finance Inc. vs. Amber M. Spitznagle, \$1,198.13; Med-1 Solutions LLC vs. Shelly Bennington, \$7,715.08; Capital One Bank vs. Joy A. Burge, \$1,516.59; Robert and Kimberly Scroggs vs. Creative Concepts Painting/Feather Dusters Cleaning, \$6,000.00; and Atlantic Credit & Finance Inc. vs. Thomas E. Mullins, \$899.36.

For convictions related to alcohol, the following were meted a combination of jail time, with some suspensions, probation with fees, community service, house arrest, participation in a court-approved drug and alcohol program, and suspended and/or probationary driving privileges: Timothy A. Robinette, 20, of Delphi, illegal consumption of an alcoholic beverage; Louis M. Fassnacht, 49, of Delphi, public intoxication; Ava D. Willis, 40, of Delphi, public intoxication; and Michelle D. Rogers, 38, of Monticello, operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated - endangering a person.

The following cases were dismissed: State of Indiana vs. Joshua T. Johnson and State of Indiana vs. Zachary D. Platt.

Alfonso Torres Jr., 28, of Marion, pled guilty to driving while suspended. He was sentenced to one year in jail, all but 60 days suspended, and one year supervised probation.

Laura Moore Burkhart, 28, of Lafayette, pled guilty to check deception. She was sentenced to 60 days in jail, all suspended, and 180 days unsupervised probation.

James R. Sacha, 50, of Delphi, pled guilty to operating while intoxicated - endangering and habitual substance offender. He was sentenced to one year in-home detention, three and a half years in jail, two years suspended, and two years supervised probation.

Jennifer Holman, 31, of Lafayette, pled guilty to two counts of check deception. She was sentenced to 180 days in jail, all suspended, and one year supervised probation.

Marvin W. Douglas, 45, of Delphi, pled guilty to neglect of a dependent. He was sentenced to one year in jail, all suspended, and one year supervised probation.

Deysi Martinez, 25, of Logansport, pled guilty to driving while suspended. She was sentenced to 180 days in jail, all suspended, and one year supervised probation.

Raul Salazar, 30, of Medaryville, pled guilty to driving while suspended and speeding. He was sentenced to 120 days in jail, all suspended, and one year unsupervised probation.

No one has ever complimented me on my use of grammar. And proper punctuation can leave me staring at a word processor straight on until the screen saver goes dark.

I am not one who should throw stones.

Having said that, I greeted one *Comet* website headline last week with both dismay and disheartenment.

"Guilty as charged!" the headline blared, as I searched the column inches for any cause for exclamation in the article reporting the jury verdict in the Rebecca Lohmiller criminal trial.

I've been a devoted fan of the exclamation point ever since I heard one fellow's take on the excitable punctuation mark. The speaker was Larry Winget, a business speaker and author. Winget told us that if he had to go through life as a punctuation mark he wanted to be an exclamation point.

"I want that energy, that wow quality it has," he said describing the lanky line that hovers over the perfectly round period.

According to Wikipedia, the free, on-line encyclopedia, the exclamation point is used to indicate "strong feeling" or "high volume" or "identify something astonishing in some way."

I object, I reject the exclamation mark tossed at me last week on our website.

Midwest Memo

by Alan Shultz



Exclamation point?

The news report of a guilty verdict clearly doesn't allow for "feeling," based on the rules of journalism. I guess an argument could be made for selling papers by cranking up the "volume" on something perceived as sensational. That's hardly the tradition of this newspaper. And jury verdicts are rendered all the time, some right, some wrong, some tossed on appeal. There was no astonishment factor apparent in this verdict.

I guess the exclamation point seemed judgmental to me. It had a "see there!" quality to me.

Judgmental, that's something I know a little something about myself. Back when I had life all figured out I carried quite a bit more than my share of "judgmental" in my hip pocket.

I employed it liberally.

I tossed it out based on opinion and reaction and the imposition of my values.

But life happens, lessons are learned, observations sink in.

I'm trying to empty my pockets of judgmental. It's hard to do. Old patterns are comfort-

able. It doesn't help, however, that I was wrong more often than right. Didn't know half the story, didn't have the background to understand.

The older I get, the fewer absolutes I know. And the rules keep changing.

I was once one of three named defendants in a civil case. It was a contract dispute for money damages.

My lawyer warned me that the verdict likely would hinge on whether or not the jury thought it was the insurance company that would pay the award.

Guilty as charged!?

In later years, it was me on the other end of filing a lawsuit in Federal court for food poisoning by a major fast food chain. That entire process made me feel like a victim of the poisoning and of the court system. In the shadows I felt "judged" by some friends for having filed the suit at all.

Guilty as charged!?

What does it mean?

The State of Illinois has a moratorium on executions because 3% of those on death row were later proved to be innocent.

Guilty as charged!?

I don't see any cause for exclamation point.

Then again, I should really start with my own exclamation points that need retracting.

Letters to the Editor

The Comet welcomes letters to the editor responding to articles and events in the news. They must include the author's name, address and telephone number. The letter writer's name and city/town will appear in the paper - no exceptions. Letters must be 400 words or less in length. Please send your letters to editor@carrollcountycomet.com; Letters to the Editor, Comet, P.O. Box 26, Flora, IN 46929 or P.O. Box 179, Delphi, IN 46923; or fax 574-967-3384 or 765-564-2010. By submitting a letter or opinion article, the author grants the Comet the right to publish, distribute, archive or use the work in print, electronic, on-line or other format.

Group effort

The flower pots have returned to the corners of downtown Flora. Carolyn Blocher of The Flower Bed grew the plants specifically for our pots and delivered them into town. She did all of this at a greatly reduced price to the Town of Flora, who purchased the plants. The Carroll County Garden Club planted all of the containers as a service project for the club. Flora town employees transported each pot back to its space around town.

And finally, Ron Rice will be watering and caring for the plants again this year. He is paid a small wage by the downtown businesses for his flora and fauna expertise. If you see Ron around town, please let him know how nice the pots are looking.

Theresa Brown
Flora Kiwanis Club

Justice wasn't done

I recently attended a jury trial in Carroll County with a visiting judge. I was under the mistaken impression that everyone accused of a crime received a fair trial. The jury was not privy to very important information that could very well have changed the outcome of that trial.

My second disappointment was with the witnesses. Once you take an oath to tell the truth, aren't you supposed to do just that? I will say the witnesses were very well rehearsed. When the defense asked a question of them the answer was a blatant lie or they had selective memory. In any event, several of them perjured themselves and I for one hope they are prosecuted.

The defendant did not harm anyone. There was no intent and there was no fraud. The Indiana law only changed two years ago. The defendant was not even working at that time.

I hope all of you who said, "I can't remember" or "I don't recall" or told a lie to that jury will have a hard time sleeping at night for a very long time.

Ro Lantz
Monticello

Museum seeks community support

After reading notes in the *Comet* and other local media about the historical museum, I felt they should be addressed. There is no more space to display and very little volunteer help to dust and arrange things for proper viewing. Help! There are many items in the museum that you cannot see due to overcrowding and poor lighting. Help!

The county wants a cut of what little money is donated to the museum. This is wrong. The people who donate money do so with the expectation that it is helping the museum and Historical Society, not the county.

Preserving your heritage is a very important thing and the museum staff tries to do that the best way they can. Help! There are people from all over the states and other countries who contact the museum for family information and historical data. They know what a valuable resource it is. Do you?

When an organization, business or county resident needs to verify historical information or family roots, they turn to the museum with its many documents and records.

The curator has one assistant and she is kept busy all the time. The curator is constantly helping answer questions about families or county history. The volunteers they have are kept busy recording records and scanning documents that you will be able to view in the future. Already there are many photographs of early pioneers and photos of the town in its early stages. Thanks to hard-earned grants, these photographs are available to you. Soon other early statistics will be online for you to view.

The museum is in its 40th year and still using the cases that were available then. They make the best use of what they can find and are given. Are they cluttered? Yes, and dusty, maybe a little, but not dirty. Go to the museum and see for yourself. This is your heritage in question. Please help. Let the county know what it means to you and that you care.

Carol Lou Randle Oliver
Delphi

WHAT DOES MEMORIAL DAY MEAN TO YOU?

BARB WYRE
RANCHWIFE



"IT MEANS COMMUNITY PICNICS ARE BACK!"

HOWIE ITCHLESS
BITE VICTIM



"IT MEANS BLOODSUCKIN' SKEETERS ARE BACK!"

JOE GASSOG
RV SALESMAN



"IT MEANS OUTRAGEOUS GAS PRICES ARE BACK!"

J.P. DOODLES
VETERAN



"IT MEANS LOTS OF BRAVE FOLKS'LL NEVER BE BACK..."

Superior Court Judge Jeffrey Smith

Superior Court judgments are gathered from public records on file in the Carroll County Clerk's office on the second floor of the courthouse, Delphi.

New Filings

Eric A. Christensen was charged with operating while intoxicated - endangering, possession of a controlled substance, possession of marijuana, driving left of center and disregarding a stop sign.

Kayla B. K. Britton was charged with check deception.

Kyle E. Andrews was charged with criminal recklessness and illegal consumption of an alcoholic beverage.

Moises Carrera Mendoza was charged with public intoxication and illegal consumption of an alcoholic beverage.

Jesus A. Arymendi was charged with operating a motor vehicle without ever receiving a license.

Amanda R. James Shepherd was charged with driving while suspended and speeding.

Shawn A. O'Brien was charged with possession of marijuana.

Murilo Dias Bernal was charged with operating a motor vehicle without ever receiving a license.

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Web poll

Tell us starting Wednesday at our web site, carrollcountycomet.com

Each week the *Comet* polls its readers on a different topic. Vote online at carrollcountycomet.com starting each Thursday, and then click the *Comments* link to send us an email voicing your opinion. The best responses will be printed the following week.

What do you think is the most important pearl of wisdom to offer graduates?

Remain true to your faith, all else will fall in place

How you treat others, no matter their station in life, speaks of your character

Do something good for your community or someone in it every week

If you don't enjoy your job, find something that you do enjoy and make that your life's work

Last Weeks results

When there is no county primary election, do you think county government employees should be given the day off as a paid holiday?

13% Yes

87% No

0% Undecided

Total responses: 119

Reader's comments:

If there is no primary, the county usually doesn't get the day as a holiday. FYI Why this year? Don't know.

Restaurant Inspections

The Summer Kitchen

Routine inspection: 5/1/07
Summary of violations: No Violations Noted

Flora Mara Mart

Routine inspection: 5/3/07
Summary of violations: 3 non-critical

There was a food employee not wearing a hair restraint in the food prep area. Directed to correct by 5/3/07.

There were some utensils not being stored properly. Directed to correct by 5/3/07.

The wall beside the Pepsi machine had a sticky residue. Directed to correct by 5/3/07.

Flora Citgo

Routine inspection: 5/7/07
Summary of violations: No Violations Noted

Delphi Mid-Land Meats

Routine inspection: 5/9/07
Summary of violations: No Violations Noted

Country Candies and Confections

Routine inspection: 5/7/07
Summary of violations: No Violations Noted

Marriage Licenses

Jared Phillip Maxwell, 22, and Breanna Valentine Walden, 22, both of Delphi.