

# CARROLL COUNTY COMET

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## Taxpayers: expect more, demand more

A devastating bookkeeping error was made in 2004 at the county level. It is easy to connect the dots between then and now to understand how this mistake contributed to the massive financial crisis the county is currently (and excruciatingly) experiencing. The act of misreporting the amount in the general fund to the Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) that year, and subsequent years of like errors, significantly changed the course of Carroll County history.

But it didn't have to be this way. There is an Indiana law that directs the county auditor and treasurer to balance the accounts between the two offices monthly. Current auditor Beth Myers and treasurer Jane Brewington have not followed that law. The money problems now are the result of that decision.

It was, and continues to be, a conscious choice on the part of these two elected officials. It might have been a mistake the first month they were in office (January 2003). But after 63 months of not balancing the books, it can no longer be considered a "mistake." It is a choice. Where would the county be now had that choice been different?

But there's more. During the exit conference for the State Board of Accounts (SBOA) audit of the 2003 county finances, then commissioners' president Bill Brown and then council president Rob Baker, along with the auditor and the treasurer, were told the books did not balance. (SBOA reports indicated the results of the audit were shared with the county leaders and when.) They were told it was against the law for the auditor's and treasurer's books to not balance. They said nothing, they did nothing.

The same message was given each year thereafter. Loren Hylton (the commissioners' president since 2007) and Baker heard a repeat of the information just last summer in the latest exit interview...yet the situation has been allowed to continue. Hylton confronted the auditor at one commissioners meeting but nothing was done and nothing changed.

An outspoken county council member recently said privately, "We've put up with wrong so long, we think it's right."

This simple and clear statement strikes a chord as the purest and most honest truth in the county.

Taxpayers, you do not have to put up with "wrong." You can demand officeholders do their jobs. You can readily understand what happens when they do not.

The DLGF is not the county police. They approved budgets for the past four years based on inflated numbers. The consequence - the county has been spending more than it has been taking in.

The council is trying to make budget appropriations work for 2008, but they are still working with questionable numbers.

How long are you going to ask the council to butt its collective head against a brick wall?

How much longer are you going to sit still and not demand that public officials do the right thing?

After all, you pay the bills.

### 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.

Clarence E. Jervis was named executor of the estate of the late Evelyn M. Jervis.

A decree of dissolution of marriage was granted to Ginger Short and Gary Short.

Martin E. Wade was charged with operating a vehicle as an habitual traffic violator for life, operating while intoxicated - endangering a person (two counts), false and fictitious registration, and habitual substance offender.

American Acceptance Co. LLC filed a complaint against Michael Fuller.

American Acceptance Co. LLC filed a complaint against Jesse R. Heffley.

LVNV Funding LLC filed a complaint against Kathryn Hariri.

Bank of New York filed a complaint on note and to foreclose mortgage on real estate against Russell Young.

HSBC Bank USA NA filed a complaint on note and to foreclose mortgage against Luke W. Windler and Mortgage Electronic Registration System.

Capital One Bank filed a complaint against Jennifer L. Lind.

### Marriage Licenses

Scott Anthony Baker, 22, and Erica Lynn Phillips, 22, both of Camden.

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The other day I went to the dry cleaners to pick up the load of shirts I left the previous week. I usually wait until I'm down to my odd colored dress shirts before I make the trip. This occasion was no exception. The clothes cupboard was bare and I didn't want the same fate for myself.

I'm a light starch and hangers guy. Frankly, I don't like starch at all. Whoever invented the starched shirt collar had no sense of humor. But I've tried my shirts without starch and I'm a wrinkled mess by 9:05 a.m. without it.

The dry cleaner I frequent is owned by an Asian couple. Even though I've been going to these folks for years, I only know the wife's name. She's Helen. They are both very nice. I know that they are nearing retirement and that they both work hard.

It's funny how you can do business with the same folks for years and not know their names. At some point it feels like you are past the point of asking. That's where I am with Mr. Dry Cleaner.

Helen and her husband know my name because of the little faded red claim check they issue each time I visit. I'm Mr. S(c)hultz to them. For the first couple years I tried to get them to spell my name without the "c." Finally I gave up. There are other things more important

It's more important, for instance, that they not loose your clothes than spell your name right. Helen and her husband

## Midwest Memo

by Alan Shultz



### Claim check

have never lost anything I've ever lost with them.

When I went to get my shirts this last time Helen greeted me as follows:

"Seven shirts."  
No "Good morning," or "How are you." just "Seven shirts."

Each time I arrive at the dry cleaner I follow a little ritual. I walk up to the counter and place the hangers I am returning to my left. I make a little racket with the hangers and this announces my arrival. Mr. Dry Cleaner seems pleased to receive the hangers. "Thank you for hangers," he says. Helen seems annoyed and never mentions the hangers. I do not know if they can use the hangers - but I sure don't want them.

Anyway, I put the hangers to my left, the pile of dirty shirts in front of me, and the claim check for the old batch to my right. Then I count the shirts and announce the total to Helen or her husband. He or she writes down the number of shirts on a new claim check, hands the check to me and then steps away to get my shirts. I then step to the right of the cash register and get out my wallet. Whoever is waiting on me then hangs the new shirts on a rack

to my far right and then proceeds to take my money. Our routine never varies and it is designed to move me towards the exit. Sometimes I pay and then forget to take the shirts. No system is perfect.

On this occasion I learn that last week's shirt count was incorrect. I tallied 6 shirts that I was leaving but it turned out that I had actually left 7.

Clearly my mistake had been on Helen's mind. It was a week since I had left the shirts and she greeted me immediately with the correct shirt count.

Helen and I don't talk much, but this occasion was an exception. She explained to me that she has a system where she double checks the laundry with the claim check she issues. Helen said it's not such a problem when the claim check understates the items left. But "big deal" was her description when the receipt shows the item count to be more than was left.

Helen said that when a shirt is missing or damaged most people shrug it off. Most say "it was old," or "it's not a problem." But a few people add drama to a miscount, Helen explained.

"\$400, they say," she recounts to me in one story of a missing shirt.

Starch your collar, count your shirts, keep your claim check and take your laundry home after paying. Little lessons, little routines. But first, exchange names, it makes things all the nicer.

## 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.

### Sticks up for commissioners

This letter is in response to a letter written by Judy Berkshire. As there are two sides to every story, as most people realize, I felt it necessary to explain the situation.

Berkshire's letter made it seem as though Commissioner Bill Brown kicked the can out from under an old man walking slowly across the street. The facts are very different. This "elderly man" attends most meetings of the commissioners. He yells things out at the commissioners throughout the entire meeting. He uses very inappropriate language. On several occasions he uses the Lord's name in vain. It is very disruptive for someone sitting next to him. He makes it impossible to hear the meeting for the constant talking and argumentative attitude that he displays.

On several occasions, Bill and the other commissioners have been asked to do something about his behavior. So, if the commissioners do nothing about his outbursts - they are wrong. If they yell back and say enough is enough - again, they are in the wrong.

Commissioners are blamed for poor roads, people losing their jobs, and the county not having any money. The commissioners can only work with the budget that is set by the county council. The council's only job is FINANCE.

The commissioners have been scolded in the past for wanting to spend money on economic development. Now we are in desperate need of money for our county. Why? The answer is clearly the lack of economic development. Hmmm. Maybe they aren't so stupid!

Angie Brown  
(Commissioner Brown's wife)  
Cutler

### Curfew and vandalism

In light of the recent outbreak of property damage vandalism, is there anything that can be done? There used to be a curfew of 11 p.m. for anyone under 18 years of age that quite obviously is not being enforced.

I have in the past witnessed youngsters on the courthouse square at 2-3 a.m. I cannot see any reason for these kids to be out that late. There is nothing open and certainly nothing but mischief to be gotten into.

I believe if the city and county want to curtail some of these problems then let's enforce our ordinances and keep children under the age of 18 off the streets after 11 p.m.

Parents, you need to do your part as well. Do you know where and what your kids are up to?

Rick Brown  
Delphi

### Because the public has a right to know...

In an effort to help our readers understand what government meetings are happening when and where, the Comet will now print upcoming meetings on a weekly basis.

- Wednesday, April 2**  
√ Carroll County special meeting: 5:30 p.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 28**  
√ Carroll County special meeting: 8:30 a.m.
- Monday, April 7**  
√ Carroll County Drainage Board: 8:30 a.m.  
√ Carroll County Commissioners: 9 a.m.  
√ Flora Town Council: 6 p.m.  
√ Delphi Board of Works: 6:30 p.m.  
√ Delphi City Council: 7 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 8**  
√ Burlington Town Council: 7 p.m.  
√ Carroll School Board: 7:30 p.m.

### Public Notices appearing in this issue of the Comet:

- Sheriff Sale-Cox .....5B
- Summone-Holsinger.....4B
- Summons-Sutter .....4B
- Hwy Dept. Bidders .....4B
- Sheriff Sale-Teel.....4B
- CCSC-Bidders .....4B
- Jervis Estate.....4B
- Camden-Jackson Twp Lib...4B
- Brewster Estate.....4B
- Berninger Estate.....4B
- Flora-Monroe Lib.....4B
- Highway Claims.....4B
- Election Voting .....4B
- County Claims.....4B

Questions concerning Open Door and Public Access Laws may be directed to the state's public access office, at 1-800-228-6013.



## 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.

Phillip M. Ratcliff, 28, of Bringhurst, pled guilty to battery resulting in bodily injury. He was sentenced to one year in jail, all suspended, and one year supervised probation.

Robert D. Bammerlin, 26, of Kokomo, pled guilty to receiving stolen property. He was sentenced to three years in prison, two and a half years suspended, and two and a half years supervised probation.

Andrew C. Yancey pled guilty to check deception. He was fined.

Shannon M. Torres, 29, of Logansport, pled guilty to driving while suspended. She was sentenced to one year in jail, all but 180 days suspended, and 180 days supervised probation.

Nancy E. Gunter, 24, of Peru, pled guilty to driving while suspended. She was sentenced to one year in jail, all suspended, and one year supervised probation.

Raquel Dela Garza, 30, of Brookston, pled guilty to operating a motor vehicle without ever receiving a license. She was sentenced to 60 days in jail, all suspended, and 180 days unsupervised probation.

Christopher L. Robertson, 22, pled guilty to domestic battery. He was sentenced to 32 days in jail. A charge of criminal confinement against him was dismissed.

The following cases were dismissed: State of Indiana vs. Jason L. Bush; State of Indiana vs. Angela M. Knott; State of Indiana vs. Jason R. Asselin, criminal confinement; State of Indiana vs. April L. Forrest; State of Indiana vs. Derade D. Remaly; State of Indiana vs. Patricia L. Babcock; State of Indiana vs. Darrell D. Kincaid; Zachary L. Cook and by next friend Tracy Houchin vs. Richard Mundy and Brittnay Mundy; Rothberg, Logan & Warsco LLP vs. Traci L. Hahn; Mann Chevrolet-Buick Inc. vs. Johnson's Towing & Recovery; Nancy A. Clapper vs. David K.

Collins/Sign City; Velocity Investments LLC vs. Jack Gerard; Velocity Investments LLC vs. Jason Byers; Martin Financial Mgmt. Inc. vs. Jamie Hutchinson; Credit Acceptance Corporation vs. Penny Houser; Cavalry Portfolio Services LLC vs. Brady A. McBay and Dustina S. McBay; Horizon Veterinary Service Inc. vs. Erin Baughman; National City Bank vs. Steven Haines and Yvonne Haines; and State of Indiana vs. Tina J. May (two causes).

In an agreed judgment, Amy L. Fisher was ordered to pay \$6,786.67 to CACH LLC.

In a default judgment, Justin L. Swinney and Samantha A. Swinney were ordered to pay \$3,892.71 to American General Financial Services Inc.

In an agreed judgement, Katrina Hunt was ordered to pay \$165.03 to Delphi Auto Diagnostics.

In a default judgment, Goldie C. Ford was ordered to pay \$5,337.96 to Portfolio Recovery Associates LLC.

In an agreed judgment, Jeremy W. Ellis was ordered to pay \$987.19 to Helvey and Associates Inc.

Tina J. May, 29, of West Lafayette, pled guilty to theft. She was sentenced to two years in prison, all suspended, two

years supervised probation and restitution.

Kenneth Ash, 38, of Monticello, pled guilty to battery resulting in bodily injury. He was sentenced to 180 days in jail, all suspended, and 360 days supervised probation.

William J. Emmitt, 46, of Delphi, pled guilty to battery resulting in bodily injury. He was sentenced to one year in jail, all suspended, and one year supervised probation.

In an agreed judgment, Shannon M. Livesay was ordered to pay \$1,470 to Miguel Serna.

The following were meted a combination of jail time, suspensions, probation and other penalties for convictions related to alcohol or illegal substances: Roger D. Napier, 61, of Flora, operating while intoxicated - endangering a person; Ashley D. Wallace, 22, of Lafayette, operating while intoxicated - endangering a person; Mark A. Brown, 27, of Frankfort, operating a vehicle with an ACE of .08 percent or more; Nancy A. Stonebraker, 36, of Monon, aiding, causing or inducing dealing in marijuana; Joshua W. Stout, 24, of Monticello, possession of marijuana; and Bradley A. Gipson, 52, of Delphi, public intoxication.

## 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.

### Did you go out and buy something just to beat the April 1 increase in sales tax?

- Yes
- No
- Seriously considered buying something, but resisted

### Last Weeks results

April Fool's Day is Tuesday. Will you be pulling any pranks?

33% Yes  
49% No  
19% Maybe  
Total responses:113