

CARROLL COUNTY COMET

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Let's really be transparent

The state of Indiana makes understanding conflict of interest fairly easy.

"A public servant who knowingly or intentionally has a pecuniary interest in or derives a profit from a contract or purchase connected with an action by the governmental entity served by the public servant commits conflict of interest, a Class D Felony. A public servant has a pecuniary interest in a contract or purchase if the contract or purchase will result or is intended to result in an ascertainable increase in the income or net worth of the public servant..." per Indiana Code 35-44-1-3.

IC 35-41-1-24 states a public servant is a person who: 1) is authorized to perform an official function on behalf of, and is paid by, a governmental entity; 2) is elected or appointed to office to discharge a public duty for a governmental entity; or 3) with or without compensation, is appointed in writing by a public official to act in an advisory capacity to a governmental entity concerning a contract or purchase to be made by the entity.

In short - whoever benefits from a contract or potential industry establishing in the county should not in any way be influencing public money (i.e. taxpayer funds). It is against the law.

Anyone associated with a group which receives public money must not then benefit financially from the use of those public funds. An engineering firm who is hired by a governmental entity must not benefit financially from any contracts associated with the job they are paid to do for that governmental entity.

How does the public know when there could be a conflict of interest with a governmental entity representative?

All with potential issues are required to file a form with the county clerk's office declaring their conflict of interest. Records available in that office reflect forms dating back to January 1993. Seventeen elected and appointed individuals submitted forms in 2008, all associated with township government positions.

Could those be the only ones with potential conflicts of interest in this county? The public is becoming very aware of those entrusted with taxpayer money and the need for transparency as they perform their duties. Those who handle that money must be transparent in their actions and behaviors.

Money colors decisions. We have all seen the result of making poor decisions based on greed.

The feds did not discuss the failure of the banking and lending institutions until the crisis was upon us.

County leaders did not discuss openly in public meetings what we now know to be years of dwindling financial county resources until those resources were simply gone.

In the name of "economic development," deals for land purchases using public funds are sometimes made by those who stand to profit from them.

Full disclosure is a must for all handlers of public funds. The Indiana Code provides the guidelines.

We urge all who handle public funds and who might in some way gain financially from any transactions while representing the governmental entity they transact business for to report that information for all to see. It's the only way to achieve true transparency.

Last weekend I was among a group of family members attending a memorial service held for my wife's late cousin. As the service was about to start, the officiator asked those of us in the audience to turn off our pagers and cell phones and assume a decorum suitable to the solemnity of the occasion.

As folks in the audience reached into purses and pockets to silence ring tones, he looked around the room and noted aloud that he didn't see any small children.

"But just in case I've missed them," the man said, "if a youngster starts to fuss, do the right thing and take them outside the room."

"Do the right thing," the man said. He made it sound so absolute and so simple and that appealed to me. So I made a mental note to myself to write today about how simple it is sometimes to just do the right thing.

It turns out that theme has eluded me.

When our children were young, my wife and I were quick to remove them from circumstances where they were disruptive, crying or annoying. As a result of that policy, my son Jeff and I spent a lot of quality time in the parking lots of churches, restaurants and the like. My wife Deb used to complain that we had too much fun off on those "time outs." She was probably right.



The right thing

So when I sat down with a blank sheet of paper and this basic idea, I reasoned to myself that my wife and I always "did the right thing," at least when it came to silencing our children. I further reasoned that it's just not that hard of a task to accomplish.

On my way to self-righteous street I stumbled on several road bumps.

The first bump in the road to self-righteousness came when I considered my own Grandmother's plight. My Grandmother navigated life as a single parent from the time her two daughters were under the age of three. I don't know what her habit was when my Mom or Aunt fussed. All I know is that my Grandmother was the sole breadwinner, and that life was pretty grim and lonely.

I had to ask myself whether I would have wanted my own Grandmother sent shamed out the door if her children were fussing. Was that the right thing I was so enthusiastically applauding?

The late columnist Erma Bombeck once wrote about a

situation she experienced in church. A child in the pew in front started to fuss and eventually turned around to look at Bombeck. Bombeck and the child exchanged smiles and a chance momentary connection until the glaring mother swatted the child, hissing him into submission.

Bombeck wrote of her rage in that moment when she witnessed innocence punished so unjustly and joy snuffed out quite capriciously. "All this," Bombeck wrote, in a place where inspiration and joy are sought.

The final bump in the path to the "right thing" came in a weekend report I heard on National Public Radio. That report examined a childrearing program in Harlem aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty experienced by generations of families in that community.

According to the commentator, children of poverty are disciplined by parents who often lack the tools to best accomplish the job. The submissive compliance that yelling and hitting produces in a child stifles the brain-building exercise that exploring and testing accomplishes. The quiet passive child is not necessarily the aim of child rearing.

"Do the right thing," the official charged us. How simple. How straightforward. I thought I knew right away what that meant.

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.

Foreclosures were entered for: Beneficial Indiana Inc. d/b/a Beneficial Mortgage Co. vs. Michael Carlson a/k/a Michael P. Carlson Jr. and Lisa Carlson a/k/a Lisa M. Carlson a/k/a Lisa M. Downham.

Kristina M. Cremeans, 29, was convicted of two counts of burglary and one count of aiding, inducing or causing burglary and was sentenced to four years in the Department of Correction, three years suspended to be served on supervised probation, and to make restitution.

Francisco Camacho was ordered to pay Domingo Bernardo \$4,500 for damages;

Marriage Licenses

John B. Williams, 35, and Carrie Ann Campbell, 32, both of Burnettsville.

Mark A. Tichacek, 27, and Jacqueline A. Marie Blackburn, 20, both of Monticello.

Michael D. Kubacki, 40, and Pamela S. French, 36, both of Flora.

Jesus Alejandro Villagrana, 19, and Jerica A. Martin, 19, both of Delphi.

Nicholas L. Pattengale, 28, and Laura L. Sydow, 23, both of Brookston.

Thomas W. Stigers, 49, and Peggy D. Gangwer, 52, both of Delphi.

Sterling L. Price, Jr., 22, and BrandyLei D. Wernz, 20, both of Cutler.

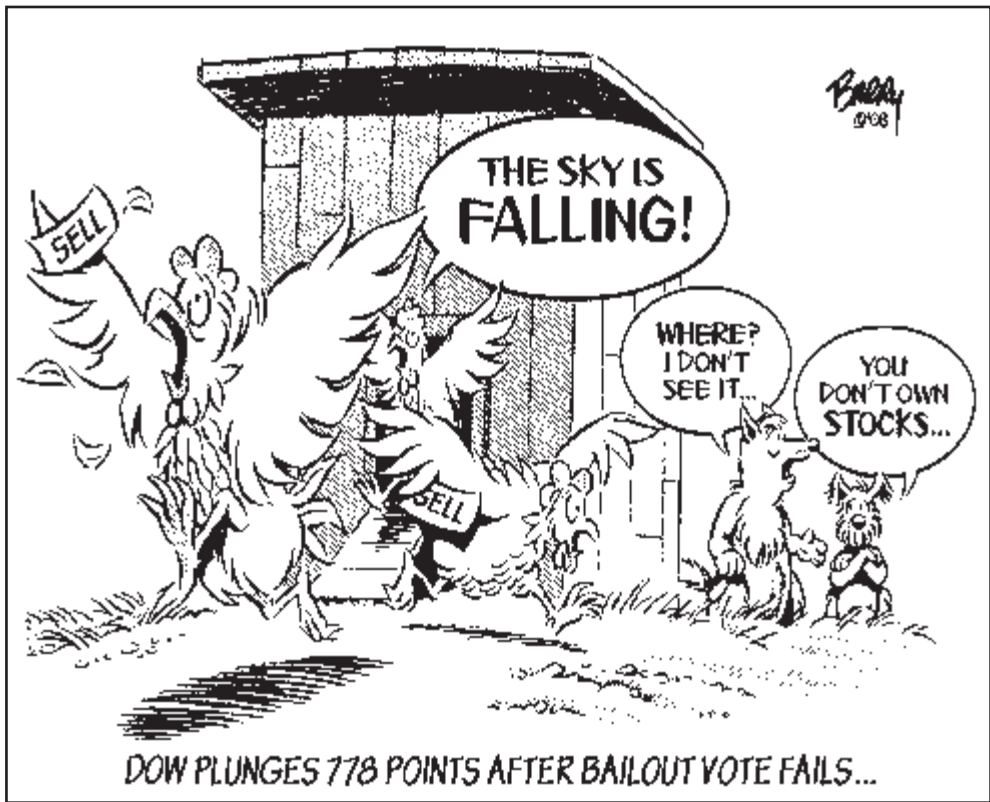
Lloyd L. Gangwer, 23, and Amanda K. Stone, 31, both of Cutler.

Robert J. Hudson Jr., 30, and Crystal M. Gunter, 28, both of Camden.

Jeffrey D. Shoff, 40, and Melissa D. Hicks, 32, both of Flora.

Jason M. Spann, 27, Bringham, and Jami M. Coffman, 30, Flora.

Ted M. Hufford, 22, and Kandis M. Greeno, 22, both of Rossville.



DOW PLUNGES 778 POINTS AFTER BAILOUT VOTE FAILS...

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.

Misty G. Conklin, 26, Star City, was convicted of OWI/endangering and was sentenced to 1 1/2 years in jail with one year sus-

pending, one year supervised probation and \$364.50 court costs.

Juan M. Martinez, 25, Delphi, was convicted of cruelty to an animal and was sentenced to 60 days in jail suspended, one year supervised probation and \$164 court costs.

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.

Why bother?

Although my husband and I have chosen to recycle plastic, newspaper, aluminum, and metal cans, we wash, sort and accumulate. Recently, my husband took seven garbage bags of plastics and cans to the recycling center in Delphi. A trash truck was there emptying the "recycle" containers. My husband was told to just throw the bags in the back of his truck where they were all compacted together. Is the public being misled into believing we are doing something 'good' for the environment when everything is actually being deposited in the landfill?

This has also happened to us at a Wisconsin campground. Residents were required to buy clear trash bags. When we missed the recycling truck, we were told, "Just put it in the dumpster; it all goes to the same place." Who is telling the truth? Is it worth our time and effort to clean and separate?

Kay and Bill Miller
Delphi

Clarifies statement

The people who serve on the Board of Trustees of the Delphi Community School Corporation try to do the best job as possible. As with any elected position in government, it is impossible to please everyone or even to agree on every decision.

It appears that most patrons in the school corporation feel cause all that we are doing little need to contact board

members regarding matters involving the school corporation. Whether this means that they feel the board is making good decision or they have little interest in what is going on, I do not know.

Since very few people attend the school board meeting, they rely on the local media to keep them up to date on what is occurring at the meetings. If local media wants to attend meetings, then detailed information needs to be reported. The media pushes the Open Door Law and the board attempts to comply with the Open Door Law. Therefore, information provided in meetings should be reported as it is presented, especially when critical decisions are made and explanations are given.

Too many times detailed explanations are shortened to only quips. The public then perceives some of the moves by the board as uninformed or questionable. It sometimes appears that articles are written to reflect only certain opinions of a vote.

A prime example was the vote on Sept. 22, regarding whether to proceed with a 1028 hearing to move forward with a renovation project at the school. The vote came down to a 3-3 tie, which meant the board president had to break the tie.

The article reported statements made by those in favor and those against. In a couple of cases every detail they stated was printed. But it was reported that the president made the following statement in breaking the tie. "If we don't do something now, we might as well forget it"

The transcript from the meeting reports that the following was stated in breaking the tie. "I am in agreement that we need to move on be-

cause all that we are doing tonight is establishing a dollar

amount for the 1028 hearing, we are not deciding on what we are going to do. Therefore, I break the tie and vote aye. Motion carries"

The transcript goes on to state "This is not a personal grudge match against anyone in the community, each one of us are elected to represent a district, but also this seven-member board is representing the entire school district. This is the way I look at it; if we do not do something now then we might as well forget it and let someone else try later on."

What was reported and what was said, has a much different meaning. If the media is going to report on the happenings of a school board meeting, commissioner meeting, council meeting or any other governmental meeting the facts should be reported completely even if it requires a little more ink and paper. The community, patrons and taxpayers deserve the opportunity to read a complete and factual report.

Robert R. Resler
Delphi

Great community effort

A hearty bon appetit and thanks to the county officials, servers, entertainers, Manor tour guides, cooks, auxiliary personnel, and specially the Indiana Packers Corporation for the tasty luncheon provided on Sunday.

This was certainly one of Carroll County's finest hours - helping each other in a time of need.

Mark A. Smith,
Brookston,

Proud Carroll County native

Manor benefit surpassed expectations

On Sunday Indiana Packers Corp. sponsored a pork chop dinner for Carroll Manor. The turnout was

AWESOME - three times what was hoped for! Everyone who volunteered their time or came to the dinner was blessed.

In this time of uncertainty and hard times, it was good to see a community come together. Human kindness was the theme of the dinner. We, the staff, were overwhelmed by the masses of caring people who came to join us for some great food, entertainment and fellowship. This is a time to stop the name calling, blaming others and politics. Do not be a part of the problem... help fix the problem!

Terry Liebert,
Manor staff,
Delphi

Our government has failed us

"I believe in the sacredness of private property, which means that I do not believe that it should be sub-

jected to the ruthless manipulation of professional gamblers in the stock markets and the corporate system...I believe that the government, without becoming a prying bureaucracy, can act as a check or counterbalance to this OLIGARCHY* so as to secure the chance to work and the safety of savings to men and women."

Franklin Delano Roosevelt
Aug. 20, 1932

*Oligarchy - a government in which a small group exercises control, especially for corrupt and selfish purposes.

Where's the help for Americans who are watching their jobs go overseas?

Where's the help for those without health insurance who are brought down to their knees?

Where's the help for Americans who are struggling to pay their basic bills?

Where's the help for those who lost their homes due to

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.

Last Weeks results

Do you agree with the federal government's bailout of mortgage and insurance companies with our tax dollars?

18% Yes, it was necessary to stave off an economic depression.

70% No, we are going to have to suffer an economic depression to fix what is wrong in this country.

11% I don't know

Total responses: 105

Reader's comments:

Banks could allow their lenders to extend their mortgages 10-15 years so there wouldn't be so many forecloses.

the corporate mortgage ills?

Don't bother to give me any answers to these questions, our government has had their say. We don't invest in the people anymore, big business and corporate greed is now the American way.

Belinda Griffin
Flora

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.

Monday, Oct. 6

√Carroll County Drainage Board: 8:30 a.m.

√Carroll County Commissioners: 9 a.m.

√County Council: 3:30 p.m.

√Flora Town Council: 6 p.m.

√Delphi Board of Works: 6:30 p.m.

√Delphi City Council: 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 7

√Carroll School Board: 7:30 p.m.

Public Notices appearing in this issue of the Comet:

Scott Name Change6B
Sheriff Sale-R. Martinez . .6B
Sheriff Sale-J. Martinez . .5B
Not of Suit-Shockley . . .6B
Sheriff Sale-Snyder5B
Comm.-Adv. for Bids5B
Sheriff Sale-James6B
Sheriff Sale-Carlson5B
Small Estate5B
Draper Estate5B
CCSC-Tax Levies6B
CCSC-Bus Replace6B
DCSC-Capital Projects . .5B
Sheriff Sale-Youngs5B
Sheriff Sale-Criswell . . .5B
Not. of Suit-Eason5B
DCSC-Public Hearing . . .5B
Alcohol Permits5B
Sheriff Sale-Humphrey . .5B
Sheriff Sale-Kimberly . .5B
HWY Claims5B
County Claims5B

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