

CARROLL COUNTY COMET

Consolidation of the Delphi Journal-Citizen (Est. 1839) and the Flora Hoosier Democrat (Est. 1897).

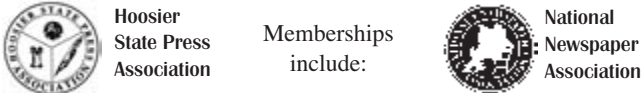
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Editor: Susan Scholl, editor@carrollcountycomet.com
Ad Director: Joe Moss, comet@carrollcountycomet.com
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Congress Needs to Embrace Transparency

By Lee W. Hamilton

The word "transparency" has been much in vogue on Capitol Hill lately. The stimulus package contained unprecedented requirements for tracking where and how federal dollars are spent. Some members of Congress have openly been pushing the National Security Agency to account for its surveillance of U.S. citizens' emails. President Obama's plans for revamping financial regulation have brought renewed calls for greater openness on the part of the Federal Reserve, one of the most habitually opaque institutions in Washington.

These are refreshing developments. A big part of Congress' role in our democracy is to ensure that the executive branch carries out its responsibilities to the American people in plain sight - or, at least, as openly as the demands of national security permit.

The presumption in a free society is that government will operate in the light of day, allowing its actions to be gauged and assessed, and its decision-makers to be held accountable to the American people. There are limits, of course, especially when it comes to national security, but secrecy is too often used as an excuse to cloak positions that politicians don't want to reveal, or mistakes that bureaucrats would rather cover up, or simply to avoid accountability for actions that wouldn't stand up to public scrutiny.

I don't mean to suggest that transparency is always called for, but the institutions of our government function better when they do so visibly, rather than in the shadows.

This goes especially for Congress. On the whole, it has a better record of openness than the executive branch, but it's "the people's branch" - it ought to do better. Over the last few decades it has made some significant strides on this score: putting television cameras in the House and Senate chambers and in committee hearings; requiring recorded votes both on the floor and in committee; opening up conference committees; moving - at least in the House of Representatives - to make campaign filings more easily available, and requiring more information from lobbyists.

All of this makes legislators more accountable to the people who elect them and more accessible to the various stakeholders who will be affected by legislation.

Yet openness in Congress is a work in progress, not a done deal. Increasingly, important legislation is being put together by just a few leading members, sometimes without amendments or full-on debate being allowed. The drive to open conference committees has had the unforeseen side effect of making them less important - the leadership of both houses often cooperates, now, to sidestep them so that deals can be struck in private.

While the 110th Congress took the important step of making individual members' responsibility for particular earmarks more transparent, it is still too hard to find out whether officers of companies benefiting from those earmarks made campaign contributions to the members who sponsored them.

And although Congress has tried to strengthen the disclosures required of lobbyists, it has been less assertive about enforcing them - according to a recent report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, a sample group of lobbyists failed to document fully their activities in more than half the disclosure reports they filed, as required by law.

While secrecy breeds problems for government as a whole, I believe it is especially problematic for Congress. It makes ordinary Americans more cynical, limits the access of stakeholders, and permits members to avoid accountability for their actions and cut corners they shouldn't cut. In other words, it creates both political problems for Congress - as measured by lack of trust in the institution - and makes legislation less responsive than it would be if it were openly created and debated.

As a member of Congress, I often encountered a troubling lack of confidence in the American people on the part of both executive-branch officials and my congressional colleagues. They believed that it was fine for them to know things that most Americans didn't. If I've heard it once, I've heard it a thousand times: "Trust me; I know." This is fine for troop movements, but in most cases I believe they underestimated the sophistication and good judgment of the American people.

"Let the people know the facts, and the country will be safe," Abraham Lincoln once said.

And while I thoroughly agree with him, I would add one point: If it is the responsibility of Congress and the White House to hold themselves to high standards of transparency, it is equally the responsibility of voters and media to demand openness and accountability of their government.

Lee Hamilton is director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

Restaurant Inspections

Burlington Meats & Catering

Routine inspection: 6/22-6/26/09
Summary of violations: No violations noted.

Treece's II Restaurant

Routine inspection: 6/22-6/26/09
Summary of violations: 2 Critical

1. Ready-to-eat food not date marked in storage cooler.
2. No consumer advisory for undercooked food.

Summary of violations: 3 non-critical

1. Ceiling and floor in food prep area not constructed of easily cleanable material.
2. Inadequate lighting in food prep area.
3. Buckets used for ice being stored on floor.

McDonald's

Routine inspection: 6/22-6/26/09
Summary of violations: No violations noted.

The Dinner Bell

Routine inspection: 6/22-6/26/09
Summary of violations: No violations noted.

White Oaks Clubhouse

Routine inspection: 6/22-6/26/09
Summary of violations: No violations noted.

White Oaks Beach House

Routine inspection: 6/22-6/26/09
Summary of violations: No violations noted.

Willoughby's Food & Spirits

Routine inspection: 6/22-6/26/09
Summary of violations: No violations noted.

Burlington Mara Mart

Follow-up inspection: 6/22-6/26/09
Summary of violations: No violations noted.

Burlington Pizza LLC

Routine inspection: 6/22-6/26/09
Summary of violations: 1 Critical

1. Ice tea dispenser being stored in hand sink in prep area.

Summary of violations: 3 non-critical

1. No paper towels available in restroom.
2. Mop stored in bucket of standing water.
3. No test strips available for sanitizer solution in 3 bay sink.

Burlington Pizza King

Routine inspection: 6/22-6/26/09
Summary of violations: 1 Critical

1. No backsiphonage device on hose in utility sink.

For decades, and with no guilt whatsoever, I was able to walk past the bar bells and weights at the gym. My detour around the weight room was my own personal program of resistance training. I resisted it.

Frankly, I never got the whole grunting and preening business that I associated with strength training. What's with all the mirrors? I surely didn't want to personally watch the spectacle I knew would be me lifting weights. Also persistent was the fear that some ripped young lady at the next station might be bench pressing 3-times my weight while I sweated bullets on the equivalent of a broom handle.

But, back then, my time at the gym was pretty unproductive. I had no clue how to use the seemingly random collection of equipment. There was everything from high tech cardio stuff to stationary bikes that rattled and wheezed. None of it came with instructions.

Regular users of the gym I go to have a well practiced, eyes averting routine of self-reliance. They all enter the exercise area wearing earphones in place. The earphones give them immunity from questions which their dumber neighbors, ie: me, might pose.

Had anyone been available for questions, my first one might have concerned the treadmill. I'm used to treadmills that are basically a fast moving belt upon which you huff it. But the newer treadmills do not come with off/on capacity. They must be pro-

Midwest Memo

by Alan Shultz



Resistance training

grammed. For some reason my solo attempts at the treadmill always wound up involving mountain climbing. I'd start off without problem. Then suddenly, the equivalent of Mount Everest would appear on the screen before me. Up the treadmill surface would tilt and I'd be on the ascent of an experience way more involved than I intended.

All this confusion was pre-Jerry.

Jerry is the personal trainer that works with people at this particular gym. He gives classes and individual instruction. He also gives a session on how to use the equipment. That's how I met Jerry.

When someone asks me how I can pay to have someone exercise with me - I respect the question. I respect it because I ask it of myself on a regular basis. The simple answer is that a session with Jerry is much cheaper than a day missed at work over a bad back. And frankly, now I get "it."

I understand the machines, I see the value of weight training. Jerry has been my educator on really simple stuff like stretching, posture and breathing - stuff I managed to avoid

in Life 101.

Recently the gym where Jerry and I met was shut down for renovation. This has left the two of us kind of rambling around looking for areas to use for work out sessions. We've done Pilates in the park - dew and dogs can be a challenge. We've done push ups on the patio - keep that chin up or you'll regret it.

To stay with the resistance training, Jerry has purchased a new contraption invented by parachute troops stationed out in the desert. It seems that these folks had a lot of time on their hands. They used that time to invent exercise routines out of pieces of their parachutes.

So Friday morning, there Jerry and I are in the kids' park with the equivalent of the world's largest rubber band. Jerry has looped this rubber band around bars of the juggle gym - somehow, he has also looped the rubber band around me.

Small inquisitive children appear from nowhere to witness what may be a space launch of...me.

Suffice it to say that folks stuck in the desert with only parachute for amusement-well they need to carry a paperback book along for some diversion. I was wound and sprung and unwound, as well as launched.

At the end of the session Jerry said I might "feel it" the next day. And he was correct.

It made climbing a mountain via a treadmill seem appealing.

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.

Appreciates 'no' vote

I would just like to say thank you publicly to Congressman Joe Donnelly for his vote against the National Energy Tax Bill. He was one of 44 Democrats who did not vote for the Bill.

Although the Bill passed the House, Congressman Donnelly did the right thing by not supporting it or caving in to Nancy Pelosi. He deserves to be recognized for his courageous vote.

Senators Bayh and Lugar need to keep it from passing in the Senate.

Richard Cromer

Cemetery vandalism

For the second time this year, I am forced to write this to the persons who have vandalized the gravesites of our family. This time it is a different place and different family members.

For whatever reason, these vandals felt the need to desecrate, steal from and set fire to our family's resting place. These destructive acts are heinous and vile, not to mention a crime.

My family wishes the persons responsible to know how outraged we are that they lack the morals and respect that a decent person would have. They have reasoned that this behavior is acceptable.

It does not matter the age of the persons responsible. There is no excuse, no matter what the age. We are appalled at the disrespectfulness shown in our community.

When you are caught we will pursue the highest form of punishment deserving of a person of your character.

Anyone who has lost a loved one should check out their resting place for vandalism.

Wanda Wilcox
Delphi

Time for change, time for Thompson

I am a law enforcement officer in Carroll County. As a local citizen with a personal opinion, I feel compelled to inform the public of what an outstanding job I believe the Carroll County Prosecutor's Office, and more importantly the Carroll County prosecutor, Tricia Thompson, is doing.

It has been nearly four years since I chose to try to "Change Carroll County." I am not one to give gratitude to anyone who has not earned it. However, Carroll County Prosecutor Tricia Thompson has overwhelmingly earned my respect. Tricia has been one of the most dedicated public servants I have ever seen.

I am sure most of the public drives through Delphi, and at some point passes by the courthouse late at night. And what do you see? I bet you see the light on in the second floor of the courthouse, most importantly you will see the prosecutor's light on.

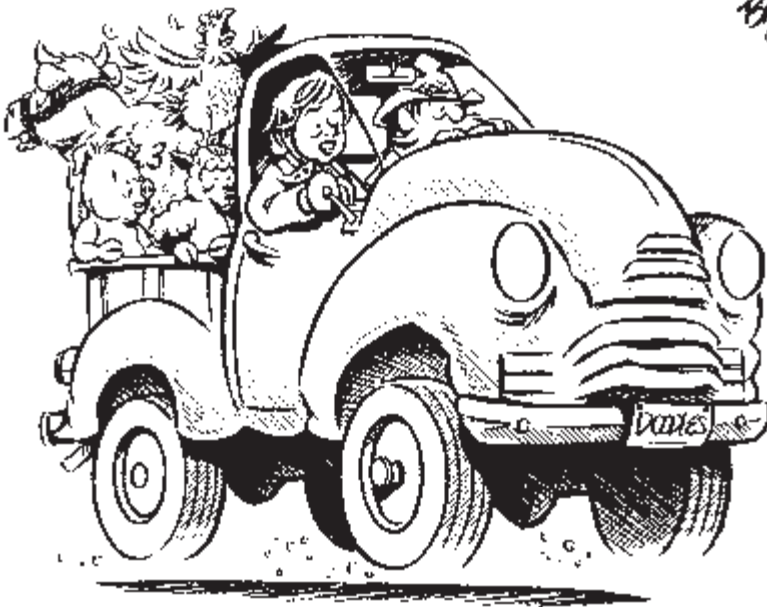
In these times everyone is struggling and times are extremely tough; budgets are being reduced and jobs are being lost. The same is for the public offices. I have seen Tricia on a regular basis up in her office trying to do the work of two and three employees at one time.

Everyone always says hard work should not go unnoticed, so please take notice. Just as most of the community has sacrificed, so has she. On more days than could be counted, I have had to call up to the Prosecutor's Office at 2 a.m. to tell her to go home - that is dedication! That is what should be recognized!

Tricia is extremely passionate about her job and it shows. It is impossible for her passion not to rub off on to us as law enforcement. I have had high expectations of Tricia and she has exceeded them every time. She deserves our gratitude.

Justin Wilson
Delphi

IF LIFE'S COMIN' AT YA FROM EVERY SIDE,
AN' IT'S MORE THAN YOU CAN BEAR—DON'T
BE FLUSTER'D, DON'T YA FRET, GET THEE
TO TH' FAIR!



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.

Marriage dissolutions were granted to the following: Myka D. Harness and Clinton J. Harness; Carlie Fultz and Jennifer Fultz; Stacy L. Brooks and Shane A. Brooks; Phillip A. Knott and Lisa D. Knott; Flossie Boyles and Patrick Boyles, Jr.; and Ragene A. VanPelt and Randy L. VanPelt.

Default judgment was found for the plaintiff in the following: Discover Bank vs. David J. Wisinski, \$13,198.91; First National Bank of Omaha vs. Charles G. Barnard, \$5,801.59.

Judgment was found for the plaintiff in the following causes: Capital One Bank vs. Kathy J. DeWitt, \$3,494.30;

Midland Credit Management vs. Catherine Fritz, \$1,799.46; Robert and Doris Lathrop vs. Matt Sutter, \$104,352.71 and Marc and Aimee Macaluso vs. David R. Riggs, \$133,687.27.

Judgment of foreclosure was granted to the plaintiff in the following: Countrywide Home Loans Servicing LP vs. William E. Belt, \$128,082.19; and Wells Fargo Bank vs. Martha A. Tristan and Dean R. Achor, \$68,666.37.

Marriage Licenses

Coty Patrick Canady, 20, and Jamie Lynn Davis, 19, both of Delphi.

Phillip Andrew Knott, 31, and Nicole Dawn Griffin, 24, both of Flora.

Joshua George Hollis, 22, and Crystal Ann Alley, 20, both of Monticello.

Sergio Mendez, 23, was convicted of resisting law enforcement and identity deception. He was sentenced to the Department of Correction/Carroll County Jail for 364 days for both counts, to run concurrently.

Because the public has a right to know...

The Comet publishes government meetings weekly to provide understanding of which government meetings are happening, when and where.

Monday, July 20

- ✓ Carroll County Commissioners: 9 a.m.
- ✓ Delphi Board of Works: 4:30 p.m.
- ✓ Delphi City Council Budget Work Session: 5 p.m.
- ✓ Delphi Library Board: 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, July 21

- ✓ County Council: 8:30 a.m.
- ✓ Delphi City Council Budget Work Session: 5 p.m.
- ✓ Carroll School Board: 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, July 22

- ✓ Jefferson Township Advisory Board Meeting: 7 p.m., 9868N. 1175W., Monticello

Thursday, July 23

- ✓ Twin Lakes Regional Sewer District: 7 p.m., Administration Building
- ✓ Delphi Airport Board: 7 p.m.

Public Notices appearing in this issue of the Comet:

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- Summons-Bakos68
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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.

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 is your favorite food at the Carroll County 4-H Fair?

- Grilled Loins/Porkburgers
- Ice Cream
- Lemon Shake-Ups
- Bread Sticks
- Fair Cookies

Last Week's results

Do you think it's a good idea to allow golf carts and gators on town and city streets?

- 35-Yes, they are economical
- 73-Yes, as long as they are not on the highways
- 39-No, they are unsafe
- 62-No, they hinder traffic
- Total responses: 209

Reader's comments:

They are just as safe as the horse-drawn carriages we see in many rural communities, including Carroll County. The "Slow Moving Vehicle" sign should be visible on them. Perhaps there should be some street/road signage advising motorists and pedestrians that these vehicles are sharing the roadway.