

Carmage Walls
Commentary Prize

2018 Entry Form

Name of Author(s): Mark Gregory

Author's Title (editor, columnist, etc.): Editor

Newspaper: The Sentinel

Address: 300 Spring St.

City: Hot Springs

State: Arkansas

ZIP: 71901

Phone: 501-623-7711

Fax:

E-Mail: mark@hotsr.com

Submitted by: Mark Gregory

Title of Person Submitting: Editor

Phone Number: 501-623-7711

E-mail Address: mark@hotsr.com

What is the subject/title of the entry? Time for transparency, apology from CMS board

Date(s) of publication? Nov. 26, 2017

Is your newspaper under 50,000 circulation or above 50,000 circulation? Under 50,000

Please give a brief explanation of issues discussed and the results achieved. (This space will expand as you type in your comments.)

Members of the Cutter Morning Star School Board voted at around 1:10 a.m. Dec. 16, 2017, following an eight-plus hour hearing, to accept the recommendation of Superintendent Nancy Anderson to terminate the contract of employment of Jann Gibson, the elementary school principal. The public never did receive its apology, or most of the documents it requested.

In Our View

Time for transparency, apology from CMS board

The patrons of the Cutter Morning Star School District are due an apology from the president of the school board for his insulting remark that critics of the current administration should “take a hike.”

Board President Mark Rash made the remark on Tuesday at the end of a two-hour regular session while defending Superintendent Nancy Anderson against criticisms by members of the community of poor leadership and financial improprieties, as is their due as taxpayer citizens of the district.

Rash said he is “really frustrated,” “really upset,” and “really disturbed” with the amount of time and effort and “thorough disruption” of “our administration.”

He pointed out, appropriately, that no financial improprieties have been discovered by legislative audits, which are conducted every year. Then he said he is disappointed by those who have made accusations against Anderson and the district.

“I’m tired of it, I’m frustrated with it and for a lack of a better way to putting it, I would professionally request that they take a hike,” Rash said, and also denounced criticisms of the district’s transparency.

“Transparency is a relationship between this board and that superintendent,” Rash said.

We respectfully disagree. Transparency should be a relationship between the public and the public officials it elects.

The board president and each of its members are responsible to every single parent and guardian in the school district, not just the ones that support their individual positions, or the positions of their administration.

To dismiss any parent’s concerns by telling them to “take a hike” is not only disrespectful, but also goes against the very foundation of an elected official’s responsibility.

Elected officials have one job, and that is to serve the public. Every parent with a child in that school district has the right to address their concerns to the board. Anything else is completely unacceptable.

We would also remind the board that the only people with the power to tell someone to “take a hike” in this situation are the voters of the Cutter Morning Star School District. The ballot box gives them this power. For any elected official to take this tone with any of their constituents speaks to a detached and unsympathetic attitude that can make resolving the situation more difficult.

This board and the school district’s administration should welcome the questions and concerns of the public. Transparency is the quickest route to fewer questions and concerns.

A new position was requested by Anderson to fulfill public requests made under Arkansas’ Freedom of Information Act. Six FOI requests totaling thousands of pages of documents were submitted in recent weeks.

The new position was approved Tuesday after Rash said he felt the position was needed to deal with the “exorbitant costs” of the “unnecessary situation that we have been dealt.”

It is our position that fulfilling the public’s request for additional information to bring to light, or disprove, improprieties, is never unnecessary, no matter the cost. It is a duty, and a law, that every public official must fulfill.

We close with this quote from Pope Francis, which seems especially appropriate in this case: “Every man, every woman who has to take up the service of government, must ask themselves two questions: ‘Do I love my people in order to serve them better? Am I humble and do I listen to everybody, to diverse opinions in order to choose the best path?’ If you don’t ask those questions, your governance will not be good.”

10 mistakes journalists make that hurt our credibility

SAN DIEGO — There is a debate raging within the media over our favorite subject: the media.

Someone told me recently that Americans are information rich and knowledge poor. One reason for this is that journalism is broken. We just can’t agree on how to fix it.

Consider the contrasting views of former New York Times reporter Linda Greenhouse and Emmy Award-winning former CBS reporter Sharyl Attkisson. Each has written a book detailing her experience as a journalist and offering thoughts on where the profession is headed.

In Greenhouse’s book, “Just A Journalist: On the Press, Life and the Spaces Between,” she writes: “The opposite of objectivity isn’t partisanship, or needn’t be. Rather, it is judgment, the hard work of NAVARETTE, PAGE 7B



Ruben Navarrette

Copyright 2017, Washington Post Writers group



JUSTICE LEAGUE

Shop local or stop complaining

At the most basic level, when you buy local, more money stays in the community. A story in Entrepreneur magazine states that The New Economics Foundation, an independent economic think tank, compared what happens when people buy from businesses that are located in the area that they live in versus businesses outside of their community or online. The foundation found for every \$100 spent at a local business, \$78 remained in the community.

That is an amazing statistic and really illustrates the need to buy from local merchants. Keeping as much commerce local as possible is vital to a community’s overall strength and success. Employment and tax dollars are the bedrock of a strong community and the more we focus on that, the better our community will be.

It is not only the obligation of the institutions and business in a community to insure that economics are kept local, it is up to the individual citizens also. Every dollar that is spent outside of our local area hurts us all.

Our roads, sidewalks, utilities, police and fire protection are all funded in part by sales tax revenue and that revenue comes from local dollars spent at local businesses. Our local government’s ability to repair and improve these important aspects of our lives is tied directly to our spending habits.

When we want to complain about road conditions, garbage collection or police protection, let’s take a second and think about all the shopping trips that our family has taken out of town. Every one of those trips has an adverse effect on our local economy. When we make that trip to a larger city to shop, it hurts local businesses and also our local

infrastructure because that infrastructure is dependent on tax dollars.

Traveling to our neighboring large city is cool and fun, and I’m not saying to not do it. What I am saying is it should be the exception, not the rule. Even if we have to pay a little bit more to shop at home, it is worth it in the long run.

The same should be said for shopping online. Yes, Amazon began collecting sales taxes in March of 2017. This is great and helps our economy, but Amazon doesn’t employ a single person in Garland County. Local businesses employ more people directly per dollar of revenue earned, they also are the customers of local auto dealers, accountants, wholesalers, farms, attorneys, etc., expanding opportunities for local entrepreneurs. This domino effect is what makes a local economy thrive and improve.

I have heard some people complain that there isn’t enough of this or that type of business in Garland County. Part of the reason we do not have more businesses is because of the dollars spent in other counties. Keep the majority of your dollars at home and watch how it changes our community.

Think of it like this, by shopping locally, you are not only saving gas, but you are making an investment in your children’s future. Your dollars spent locally will come back to you in the form of better roads and services, but also in more stores and shopping opening up. Don’t drive to spend. Instead, let local be the focal point and watch your community improve.



Harry Porter

General manager

Letters to the editor

The ‘religious right’

Dear editor:

R.L. Hudson of Cabot wrote a letter appearing in the sister newspaper, the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* on Nov. 22 that points out puzzling contradictions in the “religious right,” as he terms them.

Exactly which groups would fall under this label is itself debatable; yet, I have pondered the subject since childhood.

My religious training as a child was in a country church, which met in the public school building where both Baptist and Methodist ministers alternated Sundays, and adults of both persuasions attended the same Sunday school class (with some children tagging along). I remember no arguments about mode of baptism and other matters.

As I grew older, I was an attendee of both religious bodies. Some of those churches were much more conservative than others. But I became suspicious of another group I was attending with a couple who came by for me. I had been visiting happily until one Sunday the ones at the altar were so filled with the “spirit” that they physically threw hymn books. I was frightened and never returned.

Later in life, making extra money playing for revivals, one ultra conservative group became involved the third evening in a screaming argument with the pastor over one lady wearing short, rather than long, sleeves on her dress. I did not return.

So, I do find Mr. Huston’s argument persuasive that strong contradictions often appear in many religious groups that carry the “ultra right” label. The majority of those appear to be strong pro-life proponents, yet are very supportive of the death penalty.

The majority of those do seem to call for peace in all things, but appear to desire unrestricted access to guns of all kinds. They strongly call for following Jesus’ teaching of love for everyone, but support efforts designed to limit some groups. And so many condemned the infidelity of President Clinton, but overwhelming supported the election of President Trump, who during the campaign was shown to have in his past openly acclaimed the “privilege” of harassing females, and during the campaign itself insulted a female reporter

with strong negative rhetoric. Their defense even today has been, “better that man than that woman.”

I still remain puzzled by these seemingly apparent contradictions, but I believe that a strong faith will keep me in mind of the teaching that is found in most religions, which we call “The Golden Rule.”

John W. “Doc” Crawford
Hot Springs

The Greenbriar angel

Dear editor:

In the past year, I have witnessed something amazing happening at Greenbriar Apartments. Here the loyalty of the tenants does not lie with a group defined by race or religion as the world around us seems so intent on making it. Here, the loyalty lies with a single woman, who despite her past pain, despite her trials, has made these humble apartments, homes.

She has children a place to play that is safe from the dangers of the street. Given housing to those without, even given food from her own cabinets. She has opened her heart to these people and in return they have opened theirs. I have seen her fight and struggle so that the people here may sleep under their roofs with no worries, I have seen her struggle against odds that seemed impossible with a team that is ready and willing at any moment to take on any problem. Then late at night, when all is dark and families sleep, I have seen her go against men and women alike so that they may stay that way.

Turning a crumbling castle into a proud palace is a stressful job. It is hard and calls for an iron fist at time, but it is her talent to turn that same fist into an open palm that willingly offers a warmth that is severely lacking in this world today.

The people here have called her by many names, but never has it been unfair. She has listened to the problems of both young and old, solved the issues, both petty and dangerous. It is because of her that the 60-plus households that make up our little community know that all is well. They know they never have to go cold in the winter or worry of the danger of the summer heat.

When the idea of a playground for the children as a way to try to keep little ones from the constant coming and

goings of the drive came up, she sought the help of Walmart for safe equipment so that mothers and fathers wouldn’t have to fear their sons and daughters meeting there end by a too-fast car. Then when even that was not enough, she did not give an inch. She asked her tenants and they responded. They scraped the money together and soon their goal was met. The park stands. It is proof that we are ever moving forward.

I write this as someone who has seen a new hope for people in this world threw a single woman. There are still people out there that fight for others and one such person is here, her name is Angela Courteaux.

Thank you for listening, an old soul with new hope.

Heather Najera
Greenbriar Apartments

Trickle-down on steroids

Dear editor:

The current corporate/mega-rich tax cut bills being rushed through Congress are perhaps the largest transfer of wealth in American history. The purpose of these bills is to pay off the mega donor class. For rich donors sending a contribution to a politician is a transactional enterprise. They are making an investment in that politician and they expect a return on that investment. As GOP Rep. Chris Collins of New York put it, “My donors are basically saying get it (the tax bill) done or don’t call me again.”

Two-thirds of the multi-trillions in tax cut in these bills go to multinational corporations and billionaires. In order to conform to Senate rules, the bill cannot add more than \$1.5 trillion to the national debt. For months, the corporate/mega-rich tax cut bills have been in search for a way to cap the debt increase to \$1.5 trillion. The bills begin with a tax cut for all, but all of the offsets (that which will add to your taxes) are designed to be taken by the working class and college students. As a result, millions of middle-class Americans and college students will actually pay higher taxes.

This is a trickle-down economics bill on steroids. History has shown that these types of tax cuts have not trickled down to the middle class and have never raised wages.

Corporate CEOs recently gathered at *The Wall Street Journal* for a conference.

LETTERS, PAGE 7B

The Sentinel-Record

P.O. Box 580
Hot Springs, AR 71902

Clyde E. Palmer (1876-1957)
Walter E. Hussman (1906-1988)
Walter E. Hussman Jr. Publisher

Terri Leifeste
President, Palmer Newspapers

Harry Porter
General Manager
Mark Gregory
Editor
Jimmy Robertson
Production Manager

Debe Johnson
Advertising Director
Larry Graham
Circulation Director
Cindy Hester
Accounting Manager

Policies

Write our columnists: Susan Estrich, Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045; Eugene Robinson, George Will, Charles Krauthammer, Michael Gerson and Kathleen Parker, *Washington Post* Writers Group, 1150 15th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20071; Rich Lowry, King Features Syndicate, 200 W. 57th Street, New York, NY, 10019; Jim Davidson, 2 Bentley Drive, Conway, AR 72032; or Byron York, 1130 Walnut St. Kansas City, MO 64106.

Write our cartoonists: Steve Benson and Steve Breen, Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045; Glenn McCoy and Garry Trudeau, Universal Press Syndicate, Ninth Floor, 4520 Main St., Kansas City, MO 64111; Bruce Tinsley, King Features Syndicate, 888 7th Ave., New York, NY, 10019.

Write us: Letters to the editor run daily as space allows and are subject to the editing requirements of the newspaper.

All letters must include the writ-

er’s name, address and telephone number and no unsigned or “Names Withheld” letters will be published. Letters to the editor become the property of the newspaper. By submitting a letter, writers grant the newspaper the non-exclusive, royalty-free, right to make unrestricted use of the contents of the letter, including publication and republication, in both print and all electronic or digital media.

A local guest column called “In My Opinion” will appear at random on this page and submissions are subject to the newspaper’s editing requirements. Letters and local guest columns should be sent in care of the editor, *The Sentinel-Record*, P.O. Box 580, Hot Springs, AR 71902, e-mailed to editor@hotsr.com, or faxed to (501) 623-8465.

Expressing their views: The viewpoints expressed on this page do not reflect the opinions of *The Sentinel-Record*. Views expressed by columnists, cartoonists and letter writers are their own.