



Viewpoint & Opinion

"If you expect to be ignorant and free, you expect something that never was and never will be." — Thomas Jefferson

Letters to the Editor

Deadline for letters to the editor is 5 p.m. on Thursday. Letters and faxes to the News are welcome. All letters and faxes must be signed and must include your residential address and a daytime phone number. Addresses and phone numbers will not be printed, but are needed for verification of authenticity.

Letters to the editor should be 300 words or less, so please keep your comments brief and to the point.

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Support for Sheriff Vasquez

As a registered independent, I feel it is important to objectively compare qualifications of candidates to their respective offices. One such office is the office of the Pinal County Sheriff. I visited the official websites for each of the candidates and found the incumbent a highly qualified nominee for this office.

I like the fact that Sheriff Vasquez is a 4th generation native of Arizona and that he lives and works in Pinal County. I'm not sure which one came first; his US Navy service in Vietnam or his Masters in Public Administration but it is clear that both experiences have bettered him as a leader of men and women in law enforcement.

Then there is the law enforcement experience itself, which completely dominates the side-by-side comparison available when viewing both websites. Sheriff Vasquez has risen up through the ranks of leadership, spanning 31 years of law enforcement experience in Pinal County. In short, there is no comparison. It's the difference of comfort I feel in letting a 16-year-old teenager or a 42-year-old man drive my brand new car to the store for milk. 26 years of experience makes all the difference in the world when it comes to steering a division of public safety into the future, which is already here. He has set in motion numerous programs, of which the realtor lockbox program for elderly and handicapped citizens is most impressive.

There is no doubt in my mind that Sheriff Vasquez needs to, and will remain in office as the Pinal County Sheriff. It's important to have his qualities and credentials available to Pinal County in the coming years.

Thomas Preiss, Pinal County

Also supports Sheriff Vasquez

I am getting tired of reading these letters concerning Sheriff Chris Vasquez and trying to equate plagiarism with everything evil in this world. This issue is nothing more than an attempt to distract people from the real issues in this upcoming election. The real issues are the inequality of experience between Sheriff Vasquez and his Republican opponent and the many accomplishments Sheriff Vasquez has made in his four years of service to Pinal County.

Sheriff Vasquez is a life long resident of Pinal County with 31 years of experience in law enforcement, and 17 of those years in law enforcement management. The Republican in the race has lived in the area only five years and is a patrolman in a small town. While I respect any police officer who works in the community on a daily basis that experience alone is not enough to manage the complex issues facing our growing Pinal County population.

Sheriff Chris Vasquez has accomplished a great deal in his four years. Since March of 2005 his office has helped to reduce response times by more than 60%. For the first time in the last 13 years he has completed each fiscal year within budget during the last four years. In partnership with the US Border Patrol participated in a proactive effort to remove undocumented aliens from Pinal County. He successfully established a Criminal Justice Information Sharing program enabling all fifteen counties and twelve municipal agencies to share vital intelligence information on criminals arrested in each jurisdiction. This is the first program to accomplish this in the United States.

Let us look at the real problems facing Pinal County and to the person best able to guide us through the law enforcement issues facing us at this time. That person is Sheriff Chris Vasquez.

David Coward, Gold Canyon

Governor and guns

Well, Guv, you did it. Again.

With one bold stroke of your magic marker you, in a brief moment, cancelled the reasoned conclusions of the majority of our state's leadership who made the determination that a portion of our present gun legislation as regards the use of concealed weapon permits (CWP) needed a little "tweaking." To this end they concurred that it would be in keeping with the intent of the program, in a situation of threatened harm, to reveal that the bearer of the permit had in his or her possession a weapon that might well be brought into play should the situation at hand so demand. This in an effort to defuse a potential scenario of violence. Previously it had been illegal to do so, either by so speaking of one's intent, or by simply moving one's coat or jacket sufficiently to reveal the presence of a weapon.

Madam Governor, I do so hope you never find yourself in a situation, when your life is being threatened, that some CWP holder present at the time is precluded from revealing the presence of a weapon to the perpetrator in an attempt to prevent further escalation of a volatile situation. I think that then you might have second thoughts about having vetoed the measure.

I cannot help but wonder if your action might be an indication as to the stand you will adopt over against such issues should you be chosen as a Vice-Presidential candidate.

Richard Paustian, Gold Canyon

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¿Que Pasa?

Facts and figures

Here's a startling fact I happened to run across the other day. According to a May 23, 2008 report for the Pinal County Comprehensive Plan, the largest employer in Arizona in 1988 was Motorola with their average worker earning \$50,000 per year. In 2008, the largest employer in Arizona is WalMart with their average employee earning \$22,000 per year.

What a difference 20 years makes.

Some other statistics you may find interesting:

Median family (household) income for Arizona in 2006 (latest year available) was \$55,709. The U.S. average was \$58,526.

The percentage of Arizona's population below the poverty level is 14.2%. The national average is 13.3%.

Arizonans pay an average of 10.3% in state and local taxes. The U.S. average is 11%.

Arizona property owners pay an average of \$863 per year in state and local property taxes. The national average is \$1,132.

While Arizona ranks 16th in population among the states, only Nevada has fewer state and



Ed Barker News Editor

local employees per capita on the government payroll.

Arizona ranks dead last in public school expenditures per pupil at \$5,696 per year. The U.S. average is \$9,557. We're also dead last in student/teacher ratio at 22 students per teacher. The national average is 15 students per teacher. Even Mississippi has a teacher for every 14.8 students.

It should come as no surprise, then, that Arizona ranks 50th in the "Smartest State" rankings. The "Smartest State" rankings are published by Morgan Quitno Press and are based on 21 educa-

A Bittersweet Farewell

By Jill Jones
The News

Well readers, after 6 years with *The News* I have decided it is time to move on. I will certainly miss being a part of your lives on a weekly basis.

It was a very tough decision to make, but being a reporter is stressful and demanding and it definitely takes a toll on the mind and body. I'm plum' worn out.

Working as a reporter with *The News* has given me many wonderful memories and experiences that I would not have had



if I had worked anywhere else. There was "Bobby" the Beagle dog that I recovered after he had been stolen from his Apache

The News Opinion Poll



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Last Week's Results: Question: Now that Sen. Barack Obama has secured the Democratic Party's nomination for president, would you like to see Sen. Hillary Clinton as his vice presidential running mate?

Yes 33.7%

No 66.3%

This Week's Question: Do you favor a "Windfall Profits" tax on oil companies as a way to help lower the cost of gasoline at the pump?

Yes

No

tional factors including academic performance and graduation rates. Vermont is number 1.

I don't have any facts to back me up, but it appears that most young people spend more on tattoos and body piercings than they spend on higher education.

Only 9% of Arizonans have a hunting and fishing license. The national average is 15%. Minnesota is tops in that category with 32%.

Arizona ranks 2nd in the number of property crimes reported per capita. New Hampshire is the

lowest in that category.

With 20.2% of the state's population without health insurance, Arizona ranks number 4 in the nation in uninsured residents. Texas is the worst at 24.1% and Hawaii is best at 8.7%.

Forty-three percent of all babies born in Arizona are born to unwed mothers. The national average is 48%.

All figures quoted in this column, except as otherwise noted, are from *The "50 States Comparisons" 2008 Edition*.

Junction owner and whisked off to Indiana. Bobby and his owner Lillian are doing well.

Uncovering the scandal revolving around former Pinal County Manager Stan Griffis was also a great experience. Though not a particularly happy story, the Griffis story had to be told. Mr. Griffis is now cooling his heels in a Florence prison cell.

As a reporter I have had the privilege of meeting many notable people, such as Governor Janet Napolitano, senators, congressmen, sheriffs, mayors and others.

I have made many friends and, unfortunately, probably a few enemies. But through it all I have tried to bring fair, honest, reliable reporting to the citizens of Apache Junction, Gold Canyon and Queen Valley.

Thank you for welcoming me into your homes. I hope you enjoyed what you read and that I provided you with the information you were seeking. I hope to drop in with a few local stories now and then. In the mean time, continue to count on *The News* as your source for up to date, accurate local news stories.

Kollenborn's Chronicles

Land Of Dreams

By Tom Kollenborn
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"Crazy Jake" Jacob was a man who could sell any idea if given the proper opportunity, setting and enough time. Jacob was known as the man with the golden tongue when it came to the Superstition Mountain region, and he accumulated millions of dollars before his death in 1993.

Robert Simpson Jacob was born in Kearney, New Jersey on December 17, 1928. As a youth he moved to Hooker, Pennsylvania, and later worked at a variety of jobs in the automotive industry in the Pennsylvania area.

Jacob served eleven years in the United States Army from December 20, 1945 to November 19, 1956, and was a veteran of the Korean Police Action. Jacob was in and out of trouble after the Army but his life changed completely in 1964.

One day while perusing a copy of Life magazine in the Hooker Library, a photograph caught his eye. It was a photograph of the alleged Peralta Stone Maps. When Jacob arrived in Arizona he was convinced he had a new lucrative means of income. Upon his arrival he began his search for the Lost Dutchman Mine.

I first chatted with Jacob along First Water Road in November of 1964. He was full of questions that day, but I believed that he, like others, would soon become discouraged with their search. I was certainly wrong about that.



Robert (Crazy Jake) Jacobs (at left) at a press conference held at the Superstition Inn in 1980, announcing he had discovered the Lost Dutchman Gold Mine.

Jacob Waltz died in 1891, there have been many attempts to defraud people out of their life savings with stories of lost gold mines in the Superstition Mountains. You can prevent yourself from becoming a victim. Here are some hints: Don't give anyone cash for any kind of an investment unless you have a witness or a signed contract with a witness you know. Check all investment groups out with the Better Business Bureau or the Arizona State Attorney General's fraud division. A brief phone call can save you an enormous amount of grief later. Don't make any kind of deals without a witness who will back you up in a courtroom if need be.

Many years ago a handicapped man approached me in a class I was teaching asking me to help him get an investment back. He explained that the federal, state, county and city authorities would not assist him. I soon found out why.

He had given a local prospector (con artist) five thousand dollars in a paper sack expecting a return of twenty-five thousand dollars within thirty days. What he thought he was purchasing was gold bullion for half the price of spot. Of course the local



Tom Kollenborn

pro prospector didn't deliver and the man demanded his money back. The prospector claimed he never received any money. If there is no paperwork or witnesses, it boils down to a case of one man's word against another's. Sadly, the gentlemen lost his five thousand dollars.

My friends, this can happen every day when it comes to lost gold and treasure stories. The stories are always shrouded in total secrecy. The perpetrator reminds the investor not to tell his best friends, his children or anyone because it could endanger the lives of the men removing the treasure or lost gold.

Several years ago the Attorney Generals of Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and Colorado met to discuss the problems of treasure and lost gold fraud. The four states' legal representatives estimated approximately two hundred million dollars annually was lost to this kind of scam.

Most people laugh and say this can't happen to them. I agree it can't, however when somebody produces a considerable amount of gold and claims they have a rich mine in the Superstitions and the government won't let

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