



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. 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.

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Members of the flock?

It is very plain to see that there is an organized almost militant effort to unseat the city council and anyone in a leadership role in the city of Apache Junction. I have reviewed many of the tapes made at the city council meetings, and have come to the conclusion that it all goes back to the allegations brought against former Chief of Police Glenn Walp by a former female employee of the police department. Apparently the young lady felt that the gifts offered (I understood were clothes! Car! Trip! Not really sure) were of a personal nature and had nothing to do with their business relationship!

The former police chief apparently felt it was his Christian duty to offer these items to someone in need. I was one of the individuals in town that wished these alleged complaints had the opportunity to be viewed through due process, within our court system. I felt that complaints were of such a great significance that Police Chief Walp needed total vindication, as these allegations could impede or actually cause injury to his personal reputation. It should be understood that while performing his contracted duties to the city of Apache Junction former Police Chief Walp made many significant changes for the better to our police department!

The sad part is that a trial and the subsequent court vindication of those alleged charges never happened, I personally have never been sure why this case did not go through the court system. Rumor has it that the individual who made the allegations no longer lives in town, and apparently no longer needs the gifts allegedly offered by former Police Chief Walp.

To see friends of the former chief get up month after month and try to upset the city government, I really do not understand! It seems strange to me that their anger, (and I suspect planned attacks on our city government) increased after city contracts were not renewed. I am sure the former police chief as an announced Christian would not condone such actions. One thing I am sure of, I will never vote for anyone who can speak against our total city government as if it were one entity with allegations, innuendoes, and unsupported personal attacks on individuals. To me this does not show leadership qualities, more like members of a flock.

Charles Bunten, Apache Junction

Alleged foul names

At the July 1, 2008 meeting of the Apache Junction City Council, several citizens, whom I have never met and who do not know me, took it upon themselves to malign me at the Call to the Public.

I was accused of screaming at the top of my voice at Mrs. Flynn and allegedly called her foul names. This alleged incident did not happen. Anyone who knows me knows that "scream" has never been used to describe my voice. Shout, thunder and bellow are more appropriate descriptions. My normal speaking voice is bass and it carries across a room. My own mother is always telling me, "not so loud Michael!" At the top of my voice I can be heard for well over a city block, as anyone who has heard me calling for a lost child or lost dog can attest. If the incident had occurred as described, it would not have needed anyone to go to the mayor or council to tattle because they would have heard it for themselves from inside the building.

The facts of the matter are: Both meetings of the council were disrupted by the noise from some small children in the audience. The first meeting was a special budget meeting and many in the audience were more concerned with hearing about our tax dollars than listening to children's prattle. The second (regular) council meeting was more of the same. Despite pointed looks from myself, my wife and other members of the audience, nothing was done to hush the children. Several persons told me later that they also could not hear the council members conducting business over the children's din.

When Mayor Insalaco adjourned the meeting, I commented to my wife in my normal tone of voice, "Now maybe the kindergarten can go home." Mr. and Mrs. Flynn took exception to the remarks which were not addressed to them and stated they had a right to bring their children to the meetings. I opined that City Council meetings are not the place for small children and they should get a baby sitter. The Flynns became more confrontational and rather than continue, I walked outside and sat down next to John Kantowski and started a conversation with him and a lady from Main Street. I apologize, I've forgotten her name.

My wife Deb was inside, speaking to Council member Barker, Mayor Insalaco, Charles Bunten and City Clerk Kathy Connelly. When Deb came out to meet me, she passed Tess Nesser, who was on the way in. As she got close to the door leaving the council chambers, while still inside the room, Deb passed Shannon Flynn with a group of her friends. Mrs. Flynn made a remark to Deb as she passed. The point is, at the time Ms. Nesser went to the Mayor and others to report my alleged bad behavior, Shannon Flynn was still inside the building and could not have been outside being screamed at as Ms. Nesser claimed.

John Kantowski, the lady from Main Street, Deb and I sat outside and chatted for quite a while. At one point, the Main Street lady commented about my voice being loud and some people might interpret it as shouting. Shortly after, Mr. and Mrs. Flynn came out and stood with a group of people on the sidewalk between where we were sitting and the parking lot. At no time were any words of any kind, in any tone of voice, exchanged between myself and the Flynns. When my wife and I passed the group to get to our car, neither side spoke to the other.

Imagine my shock the next morning when I heard about this alleged altercation and my even greater shock to be attacked at the Call to the Public by people that I do not know for an event that did not happen!

I spoke to John Kantowski after the council meeting on July 1 and he said that he didn't know where this alleged altercation came from, as he and I had a nice conversation with no comments to or from the Flynns or their friends at the time.

If anyone has a problem with something I've said or done, my door is always open. I've often had disagreements with the mayor and council members, past and present, when their decisions didn't match my opinions. Yet, I still support them because they are looking out for the long term well-being of our town. Some of the council members with whom I've had the worst disagreements, I consider my friends.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to set the record straight. I apologize for the length of this letter, but the people who attended the meeting or watched the proceedings on TV or on the internet should know the truth.

Michael Weller, Apache Junction

Thumbs Up!

Two thumbs up for the Apache Junction 4th of July Celebration last Friday. The City Parks and Recreation Department did another great job with the day-long events at the football field and with the fireworks. Thanks to the Apache Junction Fire District for supervising the spectacular fireworks display. And thanks to the Apache Junction Police Department for the job they did with the large crowd and the heavy traffic.

Robin Barker, Apache Junction City Council

Apache Junction Youth!

I am a mother of an Apache Junction teenager. The news

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Last Week's Results: *Question:* What do you think of the concept of building a "downtown" in Apache Junction?

It's a good idea 52.2%
It's a bad idea 47.8%

This Week's Question: Do you think the attempted recall of 5 city council members will be successful? (see story, page A-1)

Yes **No**

about the stabbing of Randall Mercier and the others teens involved in this murder, has brought out a lot of negative things about our youth and parents in Apache Junction.

I would like to COMMEND our young people of APACHE JUNCTION for stepping in and helping a family in their time of grief! I think, as a parent of an Apache Junction teen, that I can be PROUD to be just that! Crime is everywhere in this world not just Apache Junction, Ariz.. What these kids (good, troubled, whatever people want to call them) have done thus far is far better, than bashing another human being! I think some of the adults that have made negative comments about Apache Junction, should take lessons from these kids! My son considered Randall a friend, even though he wasn't as close to him as some of the kids. He has worked very hard to bring dignity to Randall, and his family in this time of sadness. Lets face it, a loss of any child is most horrific to any parent, so I say to you that criticize the Apache Junction parents, look what these kids have done for this family and praise these teens as they should be praised! This could have been any one of your sons or daughters, weather you want to believe it or not.

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Kollenborn's Chronicles

The Baron of Arizona

By Tom Kollenborn
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One of Arizona's most infamous characters was a man named James Addison Reavis. This man of dubious character and background was one of the great land fraud schemers of the 19th Century. His claim on 18,500 square miles of Arizona and New Mexico territory as part of an ancient Spanish land grant led to him being dubbed the "Baron of Arizona."

Reavis was born on May 10, 1843 in Henry County not far from Clinton, Ark. He served as a soldier in the Confederate Army, enlisting in Hunter's Eighth Division of the Missouri State Guard. While in the army he perfected his genius as a forger.

Reavis became disillusioned with the Confederate Army and soon recognized the fact they were losing the war. Near the end of the Civil War he switched sides and enlisted in a United States Army regiment. He tried using his forging skills and was caught. He fled to Brazil and South America in late 1865.

Reavis' mother Maria was part Spanish and probably taught him the Spanish language. It was his speaking and writing knowledge of Spanish that allowed him the opportunity to effectively forge Spanish documents in both Spain and Mexico that would later lead to the bogus Peralta Land Grant.

James Addison Reavis was related to two other well-known Arizona pioneers. One was Federal District Judge for Arizona, Isham Reavis, of Fall City, Nebraska, and Elisha Marcus Reavis better known as the "Hermit of Superstition Mountain."

Reavis arrived in Arizona Territory about 1880, making



James A. Reavis, the "Baron of Arizona" in federal prison, circa 1896.

claim that he owned a large part of Arizona and New Mexico territory that included Phoenix, Tucson and Mesilla. Reavis amassed a fortune from collecting rent and tribute from railroads, ranches, farms, and mines for about eleven years. Many of the Arizona pioneers preferred to pay his extortion rather than fight him in court.

Finally, the U.S. District Court challenged Reavis' claims to Arizona and New Mexico. The case had been on the docket since Feb. 1, 1893, in the United States Land Claims Court, but still had not gone to court even by Feb. 1, 1895. Reavis had collected money from the Southern Pacific Railroad for right-of-way and from various mines in Arizona Territory through out this period of time. After losing his case in the U.S. District Land Claims Court, Reavis was soon indicted in a criminal court.

The criminal court proceed-

ing began on June 27, 1896. Reavis was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison for trying to defraud the U.S. Government. He served his time in the Santa Fe, New Mexico Penitentiary and was released early, on April 19, 1898, for exemplary conduct during his imprisonment.

What did James A. Reavis have to do with the Lost Dutchman Mine located in the Superstition Mountains? First and most important, he claimed to have won the land the mine was located on. Also, many storytellers believed the Lost Dutchman Mine and Peralta Mines were one in the same. What we call the Superstition Wilderness Area today was totally encompassed by the boundary of Reavis' so called Peralta Land Grant (1880-1895). James Addison Reavis claimed all mineral wealth within his land grant territory, and this included the Superstition Mountain area. Did Jacob Waltz pay tribute to Reavis for mining rights? Sure he did, my friend.

Reavis was known for creating stone markers to verify his claim on lands within the Peralta-Reavis Land Grant. There are some historians who believe the so-called Peralta Stone Maps were one of the methods used by Reavis to help verify his claim. Reavis' original marking stones were never place properly by his henchmen. The reason behind this belief is Reavis needed proof his land was surveyed by the Spanish Crown. Could the stone maps placed at Black Point have belonged to the Baron of Arizona? If so, why didn't the Baron of Arizona use them to prove the authenticity of his claim?

The Peralta Stone Maps are the work of a true artist working in stone. The carved inscriptions are clear and crisp



Tom Kollenborn

for the most part. Everything about the stone maps point to careful planning and preparation. The Baron of Arizona, James Addison Reavis and the Peralta Stone Maps are all unusually noted in Arizona history.

Reavis was a very clever and intelligent man. He must have taken meticulous notes and keep accurate chronological information as he traveled the world planning this enormous land fraud scheme.

Reavis must have been very fluent in Spanish and had great penmanship skills to master the task of forging documents in Spain and Mexico.

Reavis may have succeeded with his scheme if it had not been for a newspaperman who thought there was something fishy about the ink he was using on documents.

Tom Weeden, owner of the *Florence Blade-Tribune*, caused a small crack in Reavis' grandiose scheme of riches and eventually lead to his downfall according to some historians.

Reavis was back in Arizona Territory one time after his prison term, laying claim to the Hudson Reservoir site at Box Canyon on the Salt River near its confluence with Tonto Creek in 1903. Reavis' credibility was quickly challenged and he rapidly faded into obscurity.

Reavis died in Denver, Colo. on Nov. 20, 1914, from bronchitis at the age of 72, but not before he became part of the history and lore of the Superstition Wilderness.

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