



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.

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

Letters:
The News
115 N. Apache Trail
Apache Junction, AZ
85220

Faxes:(480) 982-3707
E-Mail —
ajnews@ajnews.com

Likes House

Having read your 8/25-31 edition and focusing on the five candidates for Pinal County Supervisor; it appears to me that only Mr. House has not spent his adult life feeding at the public trough or in a "services only" enterprise.

I would like to have as a county supervisor someone who knows what it's like to operate a business where providing a quality product in a timely manner without sustaining a loss is mandatory.

Without knowing any of the candidates, I will vote for Mr. House on that basis alone.

Bob Greggs, Gold Canyon

Shut out of election

Upon deciding to run for election to the AJ School Board I contacted the Pinal County School Office to obtain their help in pursuing having my name placed on the ballot, and they provided a packet of forms along with instructions on the process involved. I spoke with them to ensure I was following their procedures, filed an initial financial form, and proceeded to collect signatures on nominating petitions. When I delivered these signed petitions to the county office, I asked the individual who receipted them if there was anything additional required and was assured that all was in order, all I had to do now was wait for the election.

Imagine my surprise when I subsequently received a letter from them advising that I would not be allowed on the ballot because I had failed to file an additional nominating paper, a document which had not been enclosed in the original packet.

I met with Ms. Orlenda Roberts, the Pinal County School superintendent, to discuss the situation, pointing out the fact that her office had not provided the necessary form; and had not only failed to apprise me of its existence when I asked specifically if anything further was required, but had assured me that I had met all the requirements. Her response was classic bureaucratic arrogance; from her perspective it mattered not that her office was culpable, it was my responsibility to file this document and I had failed to do so, thus I would not be allowed on the ballot.

It seems to me that this is an example of a government entity deliberately limiting public participation, and causes me great concern for the future of our children's education in Pinal County.

Jon Miller, Apache Junction

Liked election articles

You are to be praised for the fine articles in this week's edition of the NEWS regarding the Pinal County candidates for office in the upcoming elections. The articles were so thorough that they included Web site addresses for contacting the candidates. It was easy to see that most of the candidates who supplied Web addresses were astute enough to avail themselves of their own private sites. Not so, the three incumbent candidates for treasurer, recorder and assessor; they provided Pinal County web addresses. Dodie Doolittle, Laura Dean-Lytle and Paul Larkin are apparently so accustomed to being face down and feeding in the government trough that they are willing to violate state law and Pinal County Policy and procedure rules about use of Internet regarding political activity on county equipment.

Voters should take note of this flagrant misuse of taxpayer funds when voting in both September and November.

Felix Wilson, Apache Junction

Needs some help from public

My brother Christopher Martin, at the time age 18, was brutally murdered July 29, 2006. His body was discovered in the desert area of Meridian and Elliott roads. Since then we've had no arrests, and nothing to really work on. I've been trying to keep and active roll in the investigation, and helping as much as I can. I try to keep up with the detectives working the case, and find myself never getting anywhere. They don't return calls in timely manners, and it's like pulling teeth to get e-mail responses. We've tried contacting several news stations, with no luck. We've had some communication with the East Valley Tribune, and you guessed it, no luck again. AJ News was the ONLY paper to run anything about the body being found in that area.

A year after the article ran, my Dad and I talked to a lady at the AJ News about running a follow up, or just another story on it again, she was given the OK and

Guest Commentary

A Call For Public Action Of An Important Issue

By Thomas Krukow
Apache Junction
tkrukowcom@mchsi.com

It is shocking to find out that one does not count when it comes to important issues. AJ's Planning & Zoning (P&Z) and our City Council do not have to consider rezoning objections voiced by citizens who own Manufactured Homes (MH) in Apache Junction Resort Parks. This was made clear by Tess Nesser, vice chairwoman of P&Z Commission, in a hearing July 22, 2008, and later was seemingly reaffirmed by our City Council in its work session on August 5, 2008. THE PRIMARY REASONS WERE: MH owners do not own their land, they only own the home, AND because of that P&Z and some on our City Council said we were not property owners.

A current rezoning issue before the City Council place a QuikTrip Service Station in mid-block on South Ironwood Drive, right next to an existing Chevron Service Station (formerly Shell), and in front of the Desert Harbor Manufactured Home Park. This location is just South of U.S. Highway 60. It will occupy the only available parcel for commercial use and is close to four (4) communities in that area. A majority of home owners in those affected communities: Desert Harbor, Pal-

mas Del Sol East, La Casa Blanca, and Ironwood Estates HOA, have opposed Quik-Trip project in writing and in person at public hearings and Meetings of the Planning & Zoning, and City Council.

The land was rezoned C3-PD, commercial-planned development, in 1997. It was to be developed as a motel with a future restaurant. There was no opposition then nor would there be today to those business types. In fact there would not be opposition to a shopping plaza, or any business that would be compatible and complementary to this location. A service station would not complement the area. This non-corner parcel is not a terrific location for a service station. The land owners only want this parcel rezoned so they can sell to QuikTrip. The current land owners are based in Florida and simply want to sell, and will not have to live near the resulting effect of this City's decision.

In the P&Z meeting on July 22, Nesser told an overflow crowd, AND instructed her Co-Commissioners that WE (MH home owners) did not have to be notified when a rezoning change was being sought. Only the land owner of the MH park was required to be notified. This is in spite of the Planning & Zoning Department's own written rules

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Last Week's Results: Question: Do you think the selection of Sen. Joe Biden as Obama's running mate helped or hurt the Democratic Party's 2008 ticket?

Hurt 28.5%

Helped 40.1%

No Change 31.3%

This Week's Question: Do you think the selection of Gov. Sarah Palin of Alaska as John McCain's running mate helped or hurt the Republican ticket?

Hurt Helped No Change

governing the ways about requesting a zoning change. The rules say that the person requesting a zoning change provide "Completed Addressing Labels of the List of Property Owners with the County Tax Assessor's parcel numbers"..."for all property owners within 300 foot radius of the subject property." Quik-Trip Corp did not request tax assessor records and therefore notices were conveniently never mailed. That is, sixty-one (61) property home owners in Desert Harbor MH community were intentionally kept in the dark.

WE ARE PROPERTY OWNERS. WE DO PAY TAXES. We have an individual County Tax Assessor's Parcel Numbers to prove it! We are NOT exempt from notification as Nesser asserts. The procedures do not specify any such exemptions. She

misled the Commission. By her telling her fellow commissioners that this was a FACT, and by they not challenging that fact, this no doubt had a bearing on the vote not to allow this project to move forward. In effect, all objections voiced in the public meetings and received by mail could be ignored. We were disenfranchised, no rights with this issue.

Ms. Nesser's ruling also made it impossible for the commission to follow another rule which states "...If more than twenty percent (20%) of the affected property owners oppose the project, the project should go to the City Council with a recommendation for denial of the zone change". Eighty-five percent (85%) of the property owners within the 300-foot radius of

see Commentary, A-5

Kollenborn's Chronicles

Death On The Mountain

By Tom Kollenborn
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Many people have fallen victim to the rugged terrain and extreme climatic conditions that often prevail on Superstition Mountain. Siphon Draw, on the west face of Superstition Mountain, is a classic example of a climatic basin affected by weather extremes during the cooler months of the year. The elevation changes from 2,400 feet to 5,024 feet in a very short distance. This rapid change in elevation can alter the temperature dramatically, especially during the winter months.

On Sunday, November 15, 1964, two brothers decided to go deer hunting in the canyons along the west face of Superstition Mountain. A winter storm was moving in, but they believed they could hunt until dark and then hike back to their pickup truck without difficulty.

They hiked a trail just north of Mining Camp Restaurant that followed the slope of the mountain into Siphon Draw. Richard Kermis, the older of the two brothers lived in Mesa with his expectant wife Barbara. Robert Kermis, his brother, was visiting from Fredonia, Pa. Hunting in this rugged terrain can be real challenging even to a veteran outdoorsman.

The brothers had hunted together before. However, they were young and inexperienced to desert conditions. On this particular day they hunted most of the time and climbed around the rocks in the area.

At sundown the brothers had



Siphon Draw after a snowstorm on Superstition Mountain.

not returned to their pickup. Later that evening, Barbara, Richard's wife, reported her husband and his brother missing to the Pinal County and Maricopa County Sheriff's offices. The next day a search was implemented by both counties that continued for four and a half days.

On Wednesday, November 18, 1964 the temperature in Siphon Draw had dropped to 15 degrees F. and above four thousand feet there was a foot of snow. After the third day hope was given up that the brothers would be found alive.

Roy Leubben, Tom Daley, and Deputy Sheriff Toby Drummond had worked the search area for three days by nightfall on Wednesday, November 18. Roy Leubben claimed all the trails had been checked in a 15-mile radius of the search area. Still there was no sign of the two missing brothers. The search continued, and the number of searchers had grown to several hundred horseman and hikers by Thursday. The weather began to clear Thursday morning. Still there was

no sign of the missing brothers on Superstition Mountain.

On Friday, November 20, 1964, Mike Laughlin of Coolidge, making his last pass through Siphon Draw discovered the two bodies. The position of the bodies indicated the older brother was trying to shield his younger injured brother from the extreme cold. Investigators believed Robert Kermis fell from the top of a ledge some 60 feet. He was severely injured and couldn't move. The weather changed rapidly and darkness was upon them.

A closer examination of the bodies assured the investigators that Richard tried to protect his younger brother from the extreme freezing conditions in Siphon Draw.

Judge Norman Teason called for an inquest to be held at his office in the Palo Verde Lodge on Apache Trail. An autopsy was performed by Dr. Alford D. Musgrave, Pinal County pathologist. He determined Robert died from a broken back and the complication of freezing temperatures. Richard died from hypothermia.



Tom Kollenborn

Temperatures at night probably dropped down to 22 degrees below freezing on the Fahrenheit scale.

Richard and Robert Kermis died on the mountain from the results of a severe winter storm. They were challenged by weather, severe injuries and isolation even though they could see the lights of houses below and the lights of Apache Junction in the distance. The brothers didn't attempt to build a fire because they didn't have any matches or dry tinder.

Death on the Superstition Mountain under these circumstances is nothing but tragic and overwhelming to the family and loved ones. The story goes to show, you don't have to be in the rugged interior of the mountain to meet up with tragedy. The Kermis family suffered the ultimate during that tragic week in November of 1964.

Since the turn of the century many individuals have lost their lives on Superstition Mountain. One should always approach this mountain with caution and common sense. Always let somebody know where you are going and when you expect to return.

It is recommended to always go prepared for extreme weather conditions during the winter months or summer months.

Foothills Publishing, Inc.

of Apache Junction



115 North Apache Trail Apache Junction, Az. 85220

• (480) 982-6397 • FAX 982-3707

• Web Site: ajnews.com • E-Mail: ajnews@ajnews.com

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