



Viewpoint & Opinion

"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what never was and never will be." — Thomas Jefferson

Letters to the editor

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Unprofessional sheriff-elect

I'm sorry but after much consideration I felt compelled to respond to last week's article about Paul Babeu (Sheriff-elect).

After serving in the military, working in the corporate world, then retiring from law-enforcement, I must say that I have never known any leader that hired or fired personal through a 3rd party (local paper) such as our Sheriff elect Paul Babeu. This has all the markings of a coward, a man afraid of confrontation.

Without any experience in his new to be position or knowledge of the present staff and their credentials or back ground, he's requesting their resignation.

Officers "at will" are those that have risen through the ranks with years of experience and proven leadership skills, they are the backbone of the department. Several of the officers named on this hit list were hired from nationwide searches because of their much needed backgrounds and skills. I hope the rumors aren't true that Babeu is filling these positions with previous disgruntled officers who were fired for their poor performance and criminal acts. The folks of Pinal deserve better than this.

I have spoken to a few PCSO deputies who stated that the department is nervous and unsure of their future due to Babeu's threats and unprofessional tactics. He needs to do this county a favor and shut up, move into his new office, learn his responsibilities, get to know his personal, then make educated restructuring and departmental changes.

Don Wideman, Apache Junction

Big rigs

I hope, that with the City Council back at full strength, we will please address the ongoing and on-growing problem with "big rigs" in this City. It seems that we can complain and complain, as I have for the last 5 years, and still nothing is done or brought up in council programs. Is there a reason only parts of our city are off limits to these big noisy and stink diesel trucks?

It is never ending in the "City" these days and nights, that all we hear are these big rigs starting up, running sometimes for thirty minutes at a time, then going off to work in other parts of the State and then coming home to roost where we used to have peace and quite.

In the last four to five years, we have more and more trucks moving into residential areas, more quads without proper license, or exhaust, running up and down the streets, and if some of us complain, we are the ones with the problem.

There is a very easy fix. I have talked with people from Mesa and Gilbert who say just put a weight limit on your streets. We had one once, but because one guy threatened to sue the city they were removed? His constitutional rights abused?

What about the right to be able to enjoy your own property. Do we not also have rights? If you have weight limits, then it is just obeying the law, plain and simple. Believe me, if you are afraid of recalls, there are more of us who do conduct commercial trucking in this town who would back you up.

Michael MacLean, Apache Junction since 1990

Art and politics

Merchants, tourists and the local community have always been supportive of Apache Junction artists and are continually supportive of artists in many ways. Artist and Authors benefit by the promotions from the Independent News as they gather in the many designated meeting places around Apache Junction and by other local publications and are well received with acknowledgements.

Within the city limits I see much work to be completed as I watch the Salvation Army volunteer ringing the bell donating valuable time to create a better world. I see artist and photographers throughout the community working continually creating images as they are inspired by the southwest sunsets upon the majestic Superstition Mountain landscape and by the many interesting faces within our community.

Those wishing to establish an Apache Junction Arts Commission can only hope to be among the select few to benefit by such a commission. DeGrazia, Lorenzo Hendricks and Dorothy Strait are among our great area artists of the past that managed colorfully to operate not asking government for guidelines or commission to define who and what is art.

I trust the people will draw the line as to what is art and what is politics.

Cherokee Mangus, Apache Junction

Silly Mountain

Phase II of the Silly Mountain restoration project was completed just in time for our wonderful Thanksgiving rains (Phase I, installation of trails and signage, was completed last winter). It was a labor intensive month in November to get the work done before our rains. I want to give a huge THANKS to the City of Apache Junction

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Guest Commentary

By Sandie Smith
Pinal County Supervisor

It has been an exciting time living in Pinal County from 1970 to 2008. During that time Tom worked for Motorola and drove to Phoenix everyday (no freeways) on Main Street through Apache Junction, Mesa, and Tempe. I worked on our RV Park which we bought with 10 existing spaces. We added about 10 spaces a year until we had 35. Our children were five, three and a newborn. These children attended all of their primary and Jr. High/High School years in the Apache Junction School system. In 1975 we purchased the Gift Shop at the Buckhorn Baths and by 1979 we had added a gift shop in the Superstition Inn and Copperstate Trading Post located at the Lost Dutchman Plaza.

When we first moved here, Pinal County had a population of 67,916. By 1990 (20 years later) our population had grown to 166,379.

In 1993 when I first took office as the Pinal County Supervisor, Pinal County had a net assessed valuation of \$529,488,325, a primary tax rate of \$4.32, and no bond rating. In this same year, we had 51,143 registered voters and 53 voting precincts in which 13,777 voters came to the polls to cast their votes. In addition, we had four Superior Court Divisions, no



Sandie Smith

Web site; no e-mails and cell phones were "brick phones".

Sixteen years later, Pinal County has a population of approximately 350,000 people, a net assessed valuation of 3,449,599,026, a primary tax rate of \$3.43, and a bond rating of "A". In the 2008 election we had 145,704 registered voters and 88 voting precincts in which 106,095 voters came to the polls to cast their votes. We now have 10 Superior Court Divisions, an excellent web site, and e-mail communication.

These years have been an amazing time for me. Raising our children here, being involved in the community through the school system, the business community, and elected offices of the School Board and the County Supervisors has been an unbelievable experience.

When I first came here, I was scared and very unsure of myself. My family and the

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Yes 72%
No 28%

This Week's Question: Should the U.S. government provide financial assistance to the "big 3" U.S. auto makers?

Yes **No**

community gave me the confidence to move forward step by step in business and, finally as a public servant. I would like to express my eternal gratitude for the incredible journey that has been mine for the last 38 years.

As I leave the office of County Supervisor and look forward to new adventures and opportunities, I do so with mixed emotions. It has been an honor to serve with the dedicated elected officials and employees within Pinal County government who are part of the team that delivers the services mandated and needed by the citizens. I would also like to thank the other governing entities that I have been fortunate to work with on local, state and federal issues.

The events that I have experienced and the citizens that

I have met and worked with have enriched my life beyond my wildest dreams.

A very special thanks to my husband Tom who is my greatest cheerleader, and to our children Sheryl, David and Kenneth - grandchildren, Ashley, Kirsten, Davis, Abbott, Cassandra and Nicole. When times get tough, I look at their pictures and know that no matter what happens they are there for me with unconditional love and support.

There is never a good time to leave as there are so many more exciting years and challenges to come for Pinal County. But, I leave with my heart grateful for the past years given me, for the friendships that I have gained and with the knowledge that I will still be living and working in the community that I love.

Kollenborn's Chronicles

Read the Chronicles archive at www.SuperstitionMountain.info

A Lost Mine?

By Tom Kollenborn
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Arizona's Superstition Wilderness Area has fascinated and mesmerized those who have walked and rode the trails within the towering spires and deep canyons of this region. The terrain can overwhelm you with beauty, isolation, tranquility and pure ruggedness. These 159,780 acres of wilderness continue to attract gold and treasure hunters. Prospectors continue to wander the trails of the Superstition Wilderness Area in search of gold. Most of the gold they searched for was in their minds, according to "Doc" Rosecrans, an old time prospector of the area now deceased. He spent forty years living along the Apache Trail and occasionally hiked into the Superstition Wilderness to explore a hunch. He published a small book on the Dutchman's Lost Mine in 1949. His book wasn't much of a success; however it did get him a threat of a lawsuit from Barry Storm, another author on the topic.

Today prospectors and treasure hunters still wander the region in search of gold or treasure, however for the most part their way of life is slowly disappearing. Strict forest service regulations and the withdrawal of the wilderness from mineral entry has all but ended prospecting and mining in the region.

Contemporary writers, weekend explorers, and the curious continue looking for facts and information associated with events that occurred decades ago. Such research and discussions has been opened to the public through various forums about the Supersti-

tion Mountains and the Lost Dutchman Mine on the internet or worldwide web. You might say a new Argonaut has arrived on the landscape for the wilderness area.

The three most controversial topics are the location of the Dutchman's Lost Mine, the Peralta Stone Maps and the tragic death of Adolph Ruth. These topics continue to attract a wide range of interest among readers on the internet or the worldwide web. The internet has changed the way we view and research material today. The forum about the Dutchman's Lost Mine can be factual and it can fictional at the same time. It is very difficult to separate the fact from the fiction. After all, history is a very thin gray line between the truth and a lie.

When somebody claims they have found a lost gold mine how do you know they are telling the truth? A simple question might be; where is the gold?

If that person were to produce gold then there would be some interesting repercussions from those interested in where the gold was found. The next question would be did you stake a claim? Would any person in their right mind stake a claim on rich vein of gold? Probably not! A claim notice would be an invitation for everyone to come and look at your rich gold mine. I believe this explains the dilemma you would be in. I believe some old timers might not have told anyone about their discoveries in the hills. This type of behavior could easily explain all the confusion involving the Dutchman's lost mine.

Jacob Waltz, the legendary "Dutchman", may or may not have had a gold mine. Nobody knows for sure. When he died on October 25, 1891, a candle box of high-grade gold ore was found under his bed. This gold proved to be of bonanza quality. The discovery of this candle box of rich ore created a controversy that continues to linger to this day. Where did this gold ore come from? Men and women have searched the high peaks and deep canyons of the Superstition Wilderness Area for the source of this gold ore to no avail.

The Dutchman's lost mine continues to be a tale about a lost gold mine in the Superstition Mountains. To many folks, the mine is a figment of somebody's imagination that continually draws in more dreamers each year. Since the early 1920's more than 170 individual have claimed they found the fabulously rich Dutchman's lost mine. The roll of discoverers lists the names of men like Glen Magill, Barry Storm, Robert Simpson Jacob, Charles M. Crawford, and many, many more that allegedly found the mine and reaped its profits. Most of those profits were monies they conned out of innocent and naive investors. I have watched this vicious cycle for more than fifty years and witnessed the destruction and heartache it has caused to innocent people. Robert K. Corbin successfully tried and jailed a couple of these crooks. Most notable was Robert Simpson Jacob, who was sentenced to ten years in prison for his part in a criminal conspiracy.



Tom Kollenborn

Now you ask me is there a Dutchman lost mine somewhere out in the rugged Superstition Mountain region? Yes, I have dreamed of finding this mine, but I have never found any evidence that really suggested the mine existed. Everything is based of subjective hear-say. Actually facts about the lost mine just don't exist. Even the alleged rich gold ore found under Waltz's bed is based on hear-say information. Yes, there are alleged pieces of this gold that supposedly exist today. The documentation that supports this alleged gold ore is nothing more than hear-say. Even I am guilty of signing an affidavit that verifies I saw the gold ore and jewelry "Brownie" Holmes claims belonged to Jacob Waltz. Again witnessing such a thing is still subjective information at best.

A very distinguished gentleman once said Waltz's gold ore is what dreams are made of; meaning who knows where that gold came from that was found under his bed. Dreams help to build subjective ideology. Let's face it, if you have spent a life time searching for the gold of Superstition Mountain there has to be something meaningful to the story. Maybe my father had it all figured out when he basically said, "Yesterday's adventures are today's memories."

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