



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

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:

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Recall ridiculous

The recall election slated for March 10th in Apache Junction is ridiculous. It is crazy to think we are trying to oust our City Council two months before the General Election. The political process comes with a natural set of checks and balances, one of which is re-election. If you do not like the elected officials, simply chose to vote for someone else. There is no need for us, as Apache Junction residents, to give credence to those who conspire in the shadows to overthrow the government.

The last thing our city needs, especially this close to a major election, is a council shake-down. I am certainly in a position to agree that the City Council has not always acted appropriately with the best interest of Apache Junction in mind. However, it will benefit no one to expel some elected officials unnaturally when the proper vehicle of election of right around the corner.

Our city has managed to function properly for the past several years, and will continue to do so unless the political process is prematurely disturbed by this recall. I urge you to vote in the Primary Election, but please do not support the Recall candidates and their hidden agenda.

Mike Lynn, Apache Junction

Take away his bullet?

Who is this sheriff from Queen Creek who wants to stick his nose in Apache Junction politics? From the looks of things (his unpaid speeding ticket, his misspelled name, his drunken deputy on duty) it appears he would be better off paying attention to his own business and forget about telling other towns how to vote. Somebody should take away his bullet before he hurts himself.

Kenneth Brady, Apache Junction

More on the sheriff

A sheriff endorsing recall candidates? A sheriff who has been in office only two months? A sheriff who doesn't even live here? A sheriff who can't keep his deputies sober?

He might want to worry more about how AJ is going to vote when he runs for re-election.

Robert Gelhart, Apache Junction

And more on the sheriff

I must admit that I am quite confused regarding the editorial and reporting policies of your newspaper. On the front page of today's edition, February 23, 2009, above the fold and including a color photo, is a story about a Pinal County sheriff's deputy who reported to the shooting range under the influence of alcohol. The article brings up questions about the sheriff's handling of the incident and obliquely criticizes the fact an arrest was not made on the spot: despite the fact the deputy was NOT seen driving. This then becomes an internal investigation best left to the sheriff, not the editor of the Apache Junction News.

The really puzzling issue here is the fact your periodical has never, to my knowledge, said one word, whether above the fold or below, regarding the DUI arrests of the Pinal County assessor, another county employee, during the past year and one-half. It would be easy to surmise that the assessor spends a good deal of his waking hours under the influence, judging by the way he has over-assessed county properties.

Kenny Baker, Apache Junction

Editor's note: Mr. Baker was the campaign manager for the losing opponent in the county assessor's race in 2008. The News has never reported a DUI for County Assessor L. Paul Larkin because, according to public records, a DUI involving Mr. Larkin has never occurred. In fact, Mr. Larkin has never had a traffic ticket. If Mr. Baker can present valid evidence to the contrary, the News will print it.

Likes the News

I just wanted to say I appreciate the AJ News and your efforts to keep the public informed. A rare quality in today's newspapers. Please keep up the good work!

Dennis Lease, Apache Junction

Saddened by election discontent

My name is Christa Rizzi and I am running in the primary election NOT the recall. I've been a property owner and resident of AJ for 13 years. I want to be a team player and work together with whomever is elected. I'm very proactive in this community. I have educated myself on how our city government operates by completing the Citizen Leadership Institute, serving on 3 city boards, regularly attending council and board meetings and volunteering for our city and county. I frequently speak at CTTIP on issues within our community and with various city staff. I have a deep love for Apache Junction and the people who make this community an awesome place. If elected I can help

unify city leaders with the citizens. I'm motivated, and can bring diversity, common sense and new ideas to the table. I'm committed to being open, honest, fair, accountable and will do the best job I can for the citizens of Apache Junction.

I've been saddened at how much discontent this election has brought to our community. I truly hope when this election is over we can all work together on issues our community faces. This negativity is harming our image as others look upon Apache Junction. Our children have to live with the stigma we create for our community. Please let's let the dust settle and move on to making Apache Junction the BEST place to be.

The recall has caused much confusion on the ballot. It is imperative that citizens get to the polls and vote in both the recall and primary elections. If you or someone you know needs assistance getting to the polls please feel free to contact me at (480) 330-7744.

Join me on Saturday March 7, for a public "Meet & Greet" at the Veterans Gazebo from 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. (N.E. corner of Idaho & Superstition Blvd.) Refreshments will be provided.

I also invite you to visit my Web site at www.ChristaRizzi.net that clearly expresses my platform. I hope you will support me on Tuesday March 10, 2009. Please VOTE YES ON PROP 100.

Christa Rizzi, candidate for Apache Junction City Council

Citizenship

I don't normally respond to the views of others in Letters to the Editor. However, after reading the letter by Charles Bunten in the AJ News on 23 Feb 2009 I feel compelled to do so. Unfortunately Mr. Bunten's views seem to mirror those of a number of others in the community that have expressed similar views that seem to say that those who do not "own dirt" in Apache Junction are not just as committed to their community as those who own land. This is a false and bigoted view of those of us who have chosen to live in homes in neighborhoods where we lease the land from the property owner for what certainly are varied and legitimate reasons.

Commitment to a community does not simply flow from owning land in a community. Commitment involves having pride in the community whether you are a land owner, leaser, or even a renter. It also is taking part in community affairs and functions in which an individual may have an interest and which are within one's physical and intellectual capabilities

Kollenborn's Chronicles

Read the Chronicles archive at www.SuperstitionMountain.info

Whistler's Gold

By Tom Kollenborn
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The trails of the Superstition Wilderness Area have yielded many interesting characters during the past century. They came here to search for lost treasure or gold mines. These individuals followed in the footsteps of Coronado's Children, according to Frank J. Dobie, noted western author. If anyone could be classified as one of Coronado's Children the 'Whistler' was certainly such a man.

This obscure recluse wandered the deep canyons and towering peaks of the Superstition Wilderness for more than two decades. His search for the Lost Dutchman Mine began in 1939, and was immediately interrupted by World War II. The Whistler's first knowledge about the Lost Dutchman Mine came from Barry Storm's book, *On the Trail of the Lost Dutchman*.

The Tortilla Flat area served as the Whistler's base camp from 1949-1951. In the years following 1951, he prospected an area around Willow Springs. The Whistler walked from First Water to Apache Junction monthly to up pick his VA disability check and his monthly supplies. He was always whistling a tune.

Keen eyes of hikers and prospectors rarely spotted the whistler. They often heard him, but didn't see him. Even the Barkley cowboys rarely saw him.

He always wore dark clothing, even during the hot summer months. His dark clothing was his trademark. It was his whistling at night while he walked that gave him his nickname. His nocturnal habit of hiking through the Superstitions at night during the summer months caused other prospectors to be suspicious of him. Some men claimed he



On the trail to West Boulder Canyon.

was a camp robber.

It was quite strange for cowboys to be sitting around a campfire and hear somebody whistling a tune while walking in the distance. Many of us believed the Whistler was afraid of the dark, whistling to vent his anxiety.

The Whistler spent much of his time in the West Boulder Canyon area. His camp was located in the high rocks above the canyon floor. He chose this location because he wanted a camp safe from detection and from the flash flood waters of West Boulder Canyon.

While rounding up cattle in West Boulder Canyon in the spring of 1959, we came across the Whistler's Camp by accident. We heard somebody with a serious cough. When we rode up the hillside to investigate we found the Whistler flat on his back with either the flu or pneumonia. Barkley sent me back to First Water and Apache Junction to contact the Sheriff's Office. The next day the Whistler was taken out of the mountains and admitted to the Pinal County General Hospital then transferred to the VA hospital at Fort Whipple near Prescott. The Whistler asked us to look after his meager belongings while he was in the hospital. I rode back to his

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Last Week's Results: Question: Do you think it was wise for Queen Creek resident and Sheriff Paul Babeu to get involved in an Apache Junction city election, a place where he doesn't live and can't vote?

Yes 11.1%

No 88.9%

This Week's Question: Do you approve of President Obama's "stimulus package?"

Yes No Undecided

to try to better the community in which you live. It is working in ways you may be capable of to make your community a better place for every resident to live and work.

Mr. Bunten states "If you make a capital investment in a community it is a sign of commitment." That is true as far as it goes but it is not the only sign of commitment to your community. I can drive around Apache Junction and find a fairly large number of properties that are, how can I put it, less than attractive. They don't have signs out front saying "owner occupied", "leased property", whatever; but the condition and appearance of such property certainly speaks to the person's commitment to the community, or lack thereof, regardless of their status. He also speaks of investment in the community, and I must assume he means a monetary investment. I am not an expert on all of the ins and outs of the Arizona and Pinal County tax codes. I do know I pay all of the taxes levied on me for my personal property as required by law and such taxes are used for the same purposes as those of other city residents. I also pay all of the other same sales taxes, fees, etc. as someone who "owns dirt." I am also sure that the park in which I live pays various taxes, fees etc. to the state and county so they

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Tom Kollenborn

picked up his camp from our tack shed where I had place it. He returned to the mountains to search for his dream.

The only treasure the Whistler found in the Superstition Mountains was probably peace and solitude. He never found gold, but then again he may not have been searching for it. I had only met the man once, and to this day I don't recall exactly what he looked like. What I do recall were his penetrating blue eyes, gray hair, and his rugged calloused hands. Was the Whistler a war hero? Or was he searching for peace and solitude to ease his tired and worn out soul?

He is now a forgotten man swallowed up by time. He's a ghostly face from the past that once defended our nation, walked the trails of the Superstition Wilderness and followed in the footsteps of Coronado's Children. Ironically I have never forgotten General Hap Arnold's words, "never to be forgotten by this grateful nation."

Many lost souls have roamed the Superstition Wilderness over the decades searching for gold. The Whistler was just one of many searching for peace and solitude. Many years later Tim O'Grady told me the man I knew as "The Whistler" was a highly decorated hero of World War II who had an extremely difficult time readjusting to civilian life after the war.

If you have time today, tell a veteran thanks for his sacrifice that has insured us a free nation. You don't have to wait for a national holiday to do this my friends.

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of Apache Junction



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