

Independent Opinion

Gallup's 'Music Man'

In the 1960s musical "The Music Man" the kind people of River City, Iowa, were sold a bill of goods by a traveling flim-flam man, "Professor" Harold Hill, played by Robert Preston.

In that musical, Hill convinced the town fathers they needed a first-class boy's band for the town and commenced to drain the town treasury for his own benefit.

Hill complained to the city fathers of the lack of respectable activities in which the youth of River City could participate. He noted that pool halls were springing up around town and these establishments were corrupting the city's youth. One of the most famous lines in one of the most famous songs goes "Trouble, oh we got trouble, right here in River City! With a capital 'T' that rhymes with 'P' and that stands for pool, that stands for pool. We've surely got trouble! Right here in River City, right here!" the people lament at the urging of Hill.

In the end Hill turns out to be a shyster who is only interested in getting the town's money.

Recently, the Gallup City Council was given another bill of goods by just as cunning a flim-flam man as "Professor" Hill.

Instead, it was "Professor" Robert Weekes, Fox Run golf superintendent, and his flim-flam was a request for more than \$75,000 to hire an golf course assistant superintendent — someone to do his job while he studies agronomy.

Newly elected Councilor Bryan Wall must have seen the movie because he asked about the request for a new golf course assistant superintendent at a cost of \$75,460.

It's a good thing.

Weekes is watching too much "NBC Nightly News" and thinks he's going to get in on the federal stimulus money where incompetent business executives who are responsible for bringing our country to the brink of financial ruin are rewarded with huge bonuses.

Weekes must have thought: Now there's an idea.

So what does our bumbling golf course superintendent do? He asks for an assistant so he can spend his time marketing the facility and overseeing future construction and maintenance. Sounds more like he wants to hire his buddy, the incapable and unskilled Bill Nechero, who just saw his income take a dive after losing his city council post. Sweet deal, huh?

It seems to us that some of those responsibilities would fall upon the golf pro, which we already have — or in his giddy grab for power, did Weekes forget this? This con man will not give up. We are drowning in his river of snake oil.

Well folks, after Weeke's inane request, we believe we have "Trouble, oh we got trouble, right here in Indian City! With a capital 'T' that rhymes with 'G' and that stands for golf! That stands for golf course superintendent. We've surely got trouble! Right here in the Indian Capital City, right here!"

In the movie the fine folks of River City, Iowa, saw through the flim-flam.

We believe it will not be long before the fine folks of Gallup see through the flim-flam being perpetuated on us by "Professor" Weekes.

It is only a matter of time before Weekes is run out of town, and we believe that time can't come soon enough.



Quotations of the day

By The Associated Press

"We have sent word to the U.S. government in private and in public that we are willing to discuss everything — human rights, freedom of the press, political prisoners, everything. We could be talking about many other things. We could be wrong, we admit it. We're human beings."

— Cuban President Raul Castro after President Barack Obama indicated a willingness to revive a diplomatic relationship frozen by 50 years of cold war.

"He's our hero. He's the best thing to happen to the U.S. in a while."
— Underhill, Vt., resident David Villeneuve, who put up signs in his yard to welcome Capt. Richard Phillips home after his hostage ordeal off the Somali coast.

"You never heard a peep from that house. It's unreal. I can't imagine what state of mind he would have been in to do something like that."
— Neighbor Gina Marquez said of Long Beach, Calif., hospital shooter Mario Ramirez, who killed two co-workers before taking his own life.

Letters to the Editor policy

GALLUP — The Independent encourages letters to the editor, which are published twice weekly — Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Letters must include writer's name, address and phone number although only the name and community of residence will be published.

Letters may not exceed 500 words. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. The Independent may choose not to print any letter for any reason.

Anyone may submit a letter, and there is no charge for publication.

Letters may be mailed, delivered in person, faxed or e-mailed to: Editor, The Independent, P.O. Box 1210, Gallup, New Mexico 87305, (505) 722-5750 (fax); editorialgallup@yahoo.com (e-mail).

Letters
to the editor

Globe not warming

To Editor:

The difficulties facing the Desert Rock power plant illustrate the very dangerous path our country is taking as it attempts to deal with global warming.

There is growing skepticism within the scientific community of global warming alarmism. Indeed, only a small number of environmental fundamentalists still believe the catastrophic predictions of Al Gore and other alarmists. Global temperatures have been flat for the last 10 years with 2008 being the coldest year in the last decade. How many years of lack of global warming will it take before we realize that the models and predictions aren't very good? Carbon dioxide is now being treated as a pollutant and soon there will be bills introduced in Congress to tax carbon emissions. Not only will cap and trade schemes do nothing to reduce purported global warming but they will do indescribable harm to economies around the world, and affect the poor disproportionately.

Statements like "scientists overwhelmingly agree ... that we must reduce carbon emissions below 1990 levels" to avoid climate catastrophe are demonstrably false and represent the type of journalistic hyperbole that have brought us to this precipice.

William Krzymowski
Gallup

Ganado schools

To Editor:

Like most Navajo schools, the Ganado School District is not without accomplishment. But there is a huge question if it is on track with a vast, long-term effort to provide the quality of education our students need at this time.

As with some schools, the district is heading into troubled times — largely leadership — that threaten its classrooms and students. Today, Ganado Unified School District confronts a budget shortfall of at least 1.6 million dollars to finish our this fiscal year and even more in the 2009-2010. It is faced with the possibility of cutting programs and laying off staff. There is talk of curtailing programs for students and other course offerings. Students stand to suffer, as do teachers. Superintendent Dr. Deborah Dennison was overconfident about her ability to navigate the political shoals that lay ahead. Shortly after starting her job, she was confronted with an enormous student achievement problem.

Though initially she seemed to have tackled the problem, unfortunately she also compounded it, first by trying to blame district staff for the mess and then by hiring expensive and ineffectual education consultants to spin a new image for the district and by hiring close friends who she can expect to be loyal to her.

Dr. Dennison started off with good intentions and big plans. Since those early months, however, she had done little to inspire positive credibility and much to stoke misgiving. She stumbled in putting the district in order and responded to crises with mostly management-speak.

She has managed to give away any opportunity for key staff and faculty to demonstrate leadership to further develop their talents by contracting with an outside vendor, the Learning Keys, who technically run the district from their Houston offices at an annual cost of \$ 115, 000.00 to \$150,000. Total cost for the three years she has been at Ganado is estimated at \$400,000. These same consultants were with her at Window Rock and cost that school district \$450,000.

More recently, in a letter to the Dine' Education Committee and to the Dine' Division of Education, she has taken the position that the Dine' Nation has absolutely no authority whatsoever regarding matters over the District. Unfortunately, the Governing Board has gone along with her and has done so without asking tough probing questions.

Any good superintendent will know that the Diné Nation has an intergovernmental Agreement through a 99 year lease agreement which authorizes the State of Arizona to operate public schools on the Navajo Reservation. Included in these agreements, the State of Arizona agreed to provide for Navajo language and cultural teachings, and more importantly, provision for involving parents and other stakeholders in the operation of the schools.

Parental involvement is usually

undersized in our communities. There are many reasons: language barriers, babies at home, feeling unwelcome in schools and most often---being unaware of parental "rights". These reasons cannot continue to be excuses. The parents who are involved such as ours need to get other parents angry enough to get involved. They need to convince parents to learn their rights and start demanding changes in schools.

Gordon Gorman,
Ganado

A glaring error

To Editor:

During Bill Nechero's first campaign for councilman, we nailed his signs in the front yards, joined hands and ringed around with jolly tunes.

I become his self-appointed fan club president. Such a hollywood handsome boy. The house has since been plastered with his attractive photos.

When my daughter Kayse trekked down to vote for Bill on election day, she had been teaching a horrendous day at Wingate HS — crisis after crisis. Those little buggers slam back at you with such shocking language would shock my dear ole mama.

And, to top it off she commutes twenty miles there and back, which requires much stamina and dedication. Only a teach or ex-teacher, like myself, knows how exhausting and thankless the job can be.

She went to the court house and was redirected to the library nearby. When She got to the library, no one could find a record of her voting registration.

What would you do in desperation, wait for the incompetence to find her record?

"No way," she thought. "I cannot waste another minute."

Is it her fault some at the voting place misplaced her registration? There ought to be some restitution for such a glaring blunder!

Who would know one vote would make that much difference.

What can be done?
Bill is much too young and handsome to retire from public life.

I am so sad. And, how must he feel to have lost to such an inexcusable error?

Why not allow both candidates to serve on the council since with Kaysee's vote it was a tie.

Geraldine K. Cloud,
Gallup

Hopi Council

To Editor:

At the end of the session on April 8, the illegal Tribal Council so called, of 10 village representatives decided that Action Item 012-2009 "to conduct a Special Election due to the resignation of the Chairman and Vice Chairman" shall remain tabled since March 10, 2009. Representatives Nada Talayumptewa from the village of Kykotsmovi insisted that until we have an election board of five regular board members and three alternates, no special election shall be allowed.

Following this bureaucratic thinking, these village representatives need to be appointed and thus far only one individual have applied. Therefore, the announcement for candidates will continue for another 30 days. The stated opinions of these village representatives is to have at least five candidates before they will interview them. Logically, if they do not get five candidates within 30 days, they will extend the announcement for another 30 days, and so on until November comes around.

It is now self evident that these village representatives, specifically Representative Nada Talayumptewa of Kykotsmovi and the tribal secretary and the current presiding officer, do not want a special election to take place. In my honest opinion, Representative Nada Talayumptewa from my village is holding up the whole process.

Normally in accordance with past practice and precedent, three regular board members are made a legal quorum and hold elections. Nevertheless, this time these village representatives specifically representative Nada Talayumptewa, is nit picking Ordinance 34 to delay this critical special election. Therefore, they are in violation of our Tribal Constitution Article V, Section 3, and the interest of the tribe.

The bottom line is that these village representatives do not want to allow a special election because now they feel they can do anything they want even though it will be illegal. What they do not realize unfortunately, is that there will be a price to

pay for their illegal actions. One consequence may be the rejection of this type of tribal government by the people. The longer this continues, the greater the rejection of this illegal government will be. Another consequence may be that the Federal Government will gradually begin to assume control of those tribal programs funded by federal appropriations which amount up to 40 million dollars. Another consequence may be that this type of illegal activity will enable the Hopi Tribal government to loose its credibility.

Caleb H. Johnson
Kykotsmovi

Thanks to Muñoz

To Editor:

On behalf of the Tsayatoh Chapter community, I would like to thank Honorable George K. Muñoz for supporting our New Mexico Capital Outlay Projects funding for our community. Also, the chapter staff and I were honored meeting with you and your staff at Santa Fe State Capital office. I also appreciated your recognition of our chapter from the Senate floor during legislative session while we were there.

Ellen Y. Thomas
Chapter Vice-President, Tsayatoh Chapter

Upset over Estrada

To Editor:

I am very upset about the admitted drug dealer Estrada getting work release from jail. What's going on here in Gallup with our city officials anyway? Estrada admitted to violating his probation and the prosecutors still agreed in sentencing him to 47 weeks in jail? Why do we as tax payers have to pay for him on his furloughs and special holidays, just because he's a business owner? He is an habitual offender and he should not be given any special privileges just because of his "business status." He should pay for his crime just like anyone of us here in this community.

I read all those stories of the same people being arrested for the same offenses over and over again. They pay their bail "money" which by the way is probably their drug money they use to get out of jail. Here they are these so called "men" in their 30, 40 and 50-year-old ages, affecting our younger kids to sell and even commit crimes that they probably don't even realize their getting into , until its to late.

Don't give him another slap in the hand, make him pay the price for what he does and lets get another drug dealer off our streets.

Bernadette Hill
Gallup

Second-hand smoke

To Editor:

I recently read the Navajo Nation is experiencing financial gains with the Fire Rock Casino. While this is great news for the Navajo Nation, we need to ask ourselves the question: "How can we justify that money is more important than protecting the lives of individuals who are exposed to cancer-causing toxins?"

We know that secondhand smoke is deadly and our Navajo people who go to this establishment continue to be exposed to cancer-causing toxins on a daily basis. While our tribes make millions of dollars, casino employees and patrons are risking their lives. Ultimately, if we do not do anything, many of our people will come down with illnesses caused by secondhand smoke including cancer and respiratory diseases.

For many years, my aunt has been dealing with cancer. She worked in the uranium mines in New Mexico. The decision to allow uranium mining on our reservation was costly: it took the lives of many of our loved ones and like my aunt many of our loved ones are struggling to live just one more day. Today, President Shirley will not allow any uranium to be dug on the Navajo Nation because he knows uranium has caused harm our Nation. When will we understand that the secondhand smoke causes cancer and is doing harm to our Nation? As a health advocate, I am truly concerned for the health of our Nation. Let us create change now for a healthier Nation.

Patricia Nez Henderson, MD,
MPH
Seba Dalkai, Ariz.

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The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

-Isaiah 35:1