

## Letters to the editor

### Many thanks

To Editor:

I wish to thank World Changers and their team of kids for their labor they exerted cleaning and trimming up my yards (front and back). Also major kudos to Jay McCollum, Robert Tavoires and The First Baptist Church for the dedication and energy which brought World Changers to Gallup in the first place.

The spirit of the "kids" and their supervisors was amazing. They actually thanked me for the "privilege" of working themselves into a lather for two whole days. Finally, additional thanks must go to the city of Gallup for the use of their Dumpster.

Karen Kearns  
Gallup

### A bad idea

To Editor:

I think that the plan of Mayor Mendoza and his city council to eliminate the position of golf professional at Fox Run Golf Course is unjust and a terrible idea. Alex Alvarez has always done a very competent and often, an outstanding job, in his many duties as the head pro.

It has been my experience that Alex does extremely well working with young people and junior golf, running a great deal of tournaments, working with, and instructing, golfers of all ages, and doing all that he can in "growing the game."

In the 3 years that Bob Weekes has been the course superintendent, I have personally seen him once out on the course. As a frequent player at Fox Run, this mystifies me — maybe he is busy concocting grandiose plans for his course. During his three years on the job, I have seen little improvement in the condition of the course; in fact, the greens have gotten worse.

I think the main idea of Mayor Mendoza, the council, and Mr. Weekes is to run the golf course into the ground so that it becomes unplayable for everyone. Without a head pro, there will be less youth involved in golf, no instruction for new golfers, fewer tournaments, and no super vision of day-to-day operations. These items will lead to fewer rounds played and, as a result, greatly reduced income. The mayor and the city council will like this result: sell the course and get out of the golf course business.

I implore the mayor and the city council to reconsider their decision about eliminating the position of golf professional. Alex should be given a new contract and for a time of, at least 5 years.

Finally, during my 24 years in Gallup, I have read about and seen many former city employees sue the city for wrongful termination. The firing of Alex Alvarez seems to be heading down this same road.

Charles J. Strickler  
Gallup

### Course reform

To Editor:

For almost 3 years now I have been seriously concerned with the fact that Mr. Bob Weekes is the "Director of Golf Operations" here in Gallup at Fox Run Golf Course. He has always impressed me as someone who could not be trusted. Never more than today. I suppose I should be cautious in how I speak out in view of the recent discovery that Mr. Weekes is now carrying a concealed weapon. One can only assume that he carries it all the time. Certainly he did not strap it on just for his recent district court appearance.

Why is this guy allowed to work for the City of Gallup and particularly in a position of responsibility? Is there someone at City Hall who can professionally certify this man's mental stability? Employees under his supervision now must be completely on edge and uncomfortable. Gerald Herrera said there is no policy covering a city employee carrying a concealed weapon and has not investigated the incident. Both Herrera and Weekes should be fired immediately. Weekes for his stupidity and irresponsibility and Herrera for not seeing the obvious seriousness of the problem. I strongly urge the City Council and the mayor to become involved in this one before something serious happens. It is obvious that Herrera cannot handle his job.

Please, Gentlemen, act now to get rid of these two irresponsible individuals and put people in their respective positions that have more than the common sense God gave a turnip. Left to itself this issue will not go away. Deal with it!

As you may guess, I, and many others are extremely skeptical of the Mendoza administration's ability to manage this city and to look out for the well being of its citizens. Bob Weekes is dangerous and anyone who supports him is not paying attention and is equally dangerous.

I have been critical of Mr. Weekes' ability to improve and maintain our golf course. The conditions grow steadily worse. There seems to be no real effort to make golfers comfortable on the course. At the risk of sounding repetitive I have noted that the tee boxes, fairways and greens are still in disrepair and getting worse.

If Bob Weekes worked in private industry with his obvious lack of job performance, especially in a supervisory position, he would have been gone after his first year. Now after nearly three years of failure to do his job, why is he still happily employed by Gallup, and more importantly, why is he in charge? Who is running this circus? It seems that the people at City Hall like listening to Mr. Weekes's professed accomplishments and fictional plans for the future and are not in touch with reality. The man is spending hundreds of thousands of our taxpayer's dollars every year with literally no improvement on the golf course. Parking lots, maintenance building, two new pick-up trucks, fences, security cameras and expensive equipment he doesn't even use. It's all there and it's either leased or paid for with our money. But, still the golf course is all but unplayable.

The only way to fix this mess is to change the personnel. In business, when you change the "head guy" you change the entire company. We can only hope for a meaningful change.

Gary B. Leloff,  
Gallup

## Fame: I'm (not) gonna live forever

"How fevered is the man who cannot look

Upon his mortal days with temperate blood,

Who vexes all the leaves of his life's book,

And robs his fair name of its maidenhood...";

So wrote English poet John Keats in "On Fame."

It's worth re-reading as we overindulge in the recent deaths of Michael Jackson and Farrah Fawcett. Ed McMahon's death the same week received somewhat less coverage because he was neither beautiful, nor weird, though he qualified as a celebrity. At least McMahon served in two wars as a Marine, which was a real accomplishment.

What is it about celebrity that so fascinates us? And it is celebrity, not fame. As the now defunct New Times magazine editorialized 30 years ago, "There are almost no famous people anymore; only celebrities." That's because, the editorial writer said, fame is too suggestive of steady achievement. Almost anyone can be a celebrity.

Listening to the Michael Jackson tributes would make one think he had created something of lasting value. Some said his music will "live forever." No it won't. No one today hums Stephen Foster songs or ditties from World War I, or the Great Depression, which were better songs and understandable. Can anyone quote the lyrics from Gus Kahn's greatest hits? Somehow "Butterflies all flutter up and kiss each little but-

tercup at dawnin") doesn't seem to have the ring it had in 1922.

Tony Bennett is a singer. His songs have a better chance of longevity than Jackson's because they are about love and relationships, which are common to every generation. Bennett and his contemporaries, including Frank Sinatra, Mel Torme and Ella Fitzgerald, are in a league far above the "pop" culture headed at one time by Jackson, whose biggest hit "Thriller" came before the younger generation was born.

Our culture celebrates and promotes beauty, which fades. Farrah Fawcett attempted to remind people she was still around after her initial splash in the '70s by having plastic surgery, among other things, and appearing nude in Playboy. Michael Jackson, who had numerous plastic surgeries and other "treatments" to his skin and body, was rehearsing for a "comeback" when he died of an apparent prescription drug overdose. Jackson, the self-proclaimed "king of pop," got more coverage in newspapers and on the networks, especially cable TV, than Elvis Presley, the "king of rock and roll," received when he died of a drug overdose in 1977.

Diana, Princess of Wales trumped Mother Teresa in TV coverage of their deaths, but who made the



Cal  
Thomas

greater contribution?

A culture that fixates on the likes of the Osbournes, and those dreadful reality TV celebrities Kate and Jon, is a culture that is cannibalizing itself. Embracing the base while rejecting the noble will produce more of one and less of the other.

"Why then should man, teasing the world for grace,

Spoil his salvation for a fierce miscreed?"

Keats asked a good question. So did the writers Jule Styne, Betty Comden and Adolph Green when they wrote "Make Someone Happy" (reprised by the late Jimmy Durante in the film "Sleepless in Seattle"): "Fame, if you win it, comes and goes in a minute. Where's the real stuff in life to cling to?"

The list of celebrities whose lives turned into a train wreck is long and lengthening. Why would so many want to follow these people and their broken and lousy relationships, drug use, and plastic surgeries, especially when we see where it leads for so many of them?

Last Thursday night, more people watched a Farrah Fawcett special on ABC than a Michael Jackson special on CBS, suggesting that beauty beats weirdness. Far fewer watched ABC's health care special with President Obama. By almost anyone's standards, health care is far more important than dead celebrities. That ratings disparity is a commentary on our shallowness and the refusal of so many to cling to the "real stuff" in life.



## Vince Lombardi politics

By David Brooks  
New York Times News Service

Freud said we're forever changed by the traumas of our youth, and so it is with the Democrats and Clintoncare. Even as you watch the leading Democrats today in their moment of glory, you can still see wounds caused by the defeat of the Clinton health care initiative. You see the psychic reactions and the scars and the lessons they have taken away so that sort of debacle never happens again.

The first lesson they have learned is that domestic policymaking should never be dictated from the White House. The Clinton health initiative was hatched in the executive branch and unleashed on Congress. So the Obama administration is doing the opposite, handing Congress working control of every major piece of legislation.

Congress wrote the stimulus package. Congress wrote the cap-and-trade bill. Congress is writing the health care bill. The House and Senate chairmen make more decisions on these issues than anybody on the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

Second, Democrats learned never to go to war against the combined forces of corporate America. Today, whether it is on the stimulus, on health care or any other issue, the Obama administration and the congressional leadership go out of their way to court corporate interests, to win corporate

support and to at least divide corporate opposition.

Third, the Clintoncare collapse and the ensuing decade in the wilderness drove home the costs of failure. This has produced a Vince Lombardi attitude toward winning. There are limits, of course, but leaders in Congress and in the administration seem open to nearly any idea so long as it will lead to passing legislation. On health care, the administration would like a strong public plan, but it is evidently open to a weak one. It is on record against taxing health benefits, but it is clearly willing to tax them. It will do what it takes to pass a bill.

All of this has produced a ruthlessly pragmatic victory machine. Last week Democrats were able to pass a politically treacherous cap-and-trade bill out of the House. The Democratic leaders were able to let 44 members vote no and still bribe/bully/cajole enough of their colleagues to get a win. This was an impressive achievement, and a harbinger for health care and other battles to come.

But the new approach comes with its own shortcomings. To understand them, we have to distinguish between two types of pragmatism. There is legislative pragmatism — writing bills that can pass. Then there is policy pragmatism — creating programs that work. These two pragmatisms are in tension, and in their current frame of mind, Democrats often put the former before the latter.

On the stimulus bill, the Democratic committee chairmen wrote a sprawl-

ing bill that incorporated the diverse wishes of hundreds of members and interest groups. But as they did so, the bill had less and less to do with stimulus. Only about 40 percent of the money in the bill was truly stimulative, and that money was not designed to be spent quickly. For example, according to the Congressional Budget Office, only 11 percent of the discretionary spending in the stimulus will be disbursed by the end of the fiscal year. The bill passed, but it is not doing much to create jobs this year and it will not do nearly as much as it could to create jobs in 2010.

On cap and trade, the House chairmen took a relatively clean though politically difficult idea — auctioning off pollution permits — and they transformed it into a morass of corporate giveaways that make the stimulus bill look parsimonious. Permits would now be given to well-connected companies. Utilities and agribusiness would be rolling in government-generated profits. Thousands of goodies were thrown into the 1,201-page bill to win votes.

The bill passed the House, but would it actually reduce emissions? It's impossible to know. It contains so many complex market interventions that only a fantasist could confidently predict its effects. A few years ago the European Union passed a cap-and-trade system, but because it was so shot through with special-interest caveats, emissions actually rose.

## 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).

### Independent

LPS 015-605 ISSN 1099-8052

John K. Zollinger  
Chairman  
1964-2007

Robert C. Zollinger  
Publisher

Barry Helfner  
Managing Editor

THE GALLUP INDEPENDENT CO. Gallup, NM 87305 (505) 863-6811 FAX (505) 722-5750  
Grants-Milan: Toll-Free (505) 287-9226

Additional News Offices

DINE BUREAU Window Rock, AZ 86515

Karen Francis (505) 876-7238 • Katy Hahn (505) 876-6666 Fax (505) 876-3437

GRANTS/MILAN/CIBOLA BUREAU Grants, NM 87020

Jim Tiffin (505) 283-4569 Fax (505) 287-8660 • Helen Davis (505) 287-5627 Fax (505) 285-4678

Published daily except Sundays and New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas by the Gallup Independent Co., at 500 N. 9th St., Gallup, NM 87301. World Wide Web: <http://www.gallupindependent.com/> -gallupind/ E-mail: [gallupind@cia-p.com](mailto:gallupind@cia-p.com). Subscription rate: Home delivery by carrier or motor route \$11.50 per month. Single copy 50c weekdays and \$1.00 weekends. By mail \$204.00 a year; \$102.00 for six months; \$17.00 a month 2-month minimum. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE INDEPENDENT, P.O. Box 1210, Gallup, NM 87305-1210.

This newspaper printed in part on recycled paper and is recyclable

The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

-Isaiah 35:1