

## COMMENTARY

# Sunday Herald

Established 1829  
Newton, N.J. 07860 • (973) 383-1500  
www.njherald.com

Published Sunday by the New Jersey Herald, Inc.  
continuing  
The Sussex Register, established 1813  
Sussex County Independent, established 1870

Bruce R. Tomlinson  
General Manager

Chris Frear  
Editor

Andrew Porter  
Prepress Manager

Patricia L. Hruby  
Advertising Director

Mike Lawson  
Circulation Director

The New Jersey Herald assumes no financial responsibility for typographical errors or advertisements but when an error occurs, the advertiser shall be entitled to credit for actual space of error, except that when proof of advertisement is furnished advertiser resumes full responsibility. The New Jersey Herald and New Jersey Sunday Herald are members of the Audit Bureau of Circulation.

## Five better than three

Frankford Township found out just how awkward a committee of three can be.

When it came time last Sunday afternoon to appoint a mayor for the 2006 term, one member had to second the nomination of himself, because the third member — being passed over for the nomination — sure wasn't going to.

From a pragmatic standpoint, it made a lot of sense for Carol Ann Kristensen to nominate Mayor Bill Hahn to a second consecutive term. The township is facing significant votes in 2006 about its town center plan and a proposed outlet mall. No matter how those issues play out, Hahn can more easily serve as the committee leader.

Bob McDowell, who didn't get the expected appointment as mayor, came into the year facing accusations of bias against the project. As that plays out in the legal arena, it would complicate all the dealings of the committee if McDowell were mayor.

There's no getting around the tension in a room when the expected candidate is passed over for the nomination. It doesn't matter whether the committee has three, five or 35, the sense of the person being left out is strong.

Which highlights the need for additional voices on the board. A committee of five would avoid such situations by allowing for the rotation of the office without the limitations faced by Frankford last week. It would allow for a wider range of voices when the important issues facing a growing population are put forward. And it would allow members to divide the issues facing the township for closer consideration and meeting preparation.

Deborah Kole, staff attorney for the New Jersey League of Municipalities, said a larger committee isn't necessarily better but the "most common reason (for increasing the size) is probably population growth."

The change requires a public referendum, but first a petition with signatures of at least 15 percent of the registered voters who voted in the last general election must be gathered. It would be difficult but worth the effort to turn the three-member committee into the Frankford five.

The Sussex County freeholders expanded from three to five in 1990, and the main reason cited was to give better, more diversified representation for a growing county.

And for townships such as Wantage and Sandyston, which also have three-member boards, it's worth considering now, before either one faces the difficult choices that Frankford has.

## Republicans will take hits

By TOM RAUM  
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The plea deal worked out by Jack Abramoff could send seismic waves across the political landscape in this congressional election year. The Republicans, who control Congress and the White House, are likely to take the biggest hits.

The GOP has more seats to lose and has closer ties with the former lobbyist. But some Democrats with links to Abramoff and his associates are also expected to be snagged in the influence-peddling net.

While the full dimensions of the corruption probe are not yet clear, some political consultants and analysts are already comparing its damage potential to the 1992 House banking scandal that led to the retirement or ouster of 77 lawmakers.

"You don't have to be a political genius to sniff the smell of blood in the water," said GOP consultant Rich Galen.

Galen said even lawmakers in seemingly safe districts, and those "who don't have a reputation for being fast and loose with the rules," could be vulnerable if voters rise up in reproach "and everybody drops five or six points" in this year's midterm contests.

Abramoff, a former \$100,000-plus fund-raiser for President Bush with close ties to former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, pleaded guilty on Tuesday to conspiracy, tax evasion and mail fraud. That cleared the way for his cooperation with federal prosecutors in bringing charges against former business and political associates.

The investigation is believed to involve up to 20 members of Congress and aides and possibly several administration officials.

The timing couldn't be worse, politically, especially for Republicans. Lawmakers who may be indicted could find themselves coming to trial this summer, just ahead of the midterm elections. Around the same time, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, former chief of staff to Vice President Dick Cheney, is expected to stand trial in the CIA leak case.

### ANALYSIS

DeLay, who had to step down as majority leader in September after a grand jury in Texas indicted him in a campaign finance investigation, is awaiting a trial date.

And former Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham, R-Calif., gave up his seat Dec. 1 after admitting he had accepted \$2.4 million in bribes from defense contractors.

With so many trials and prosecutions in the works, speculation is swirling over whom Abramoff might bring down and on the possible fallout for others.

"Most seats in Congress are relatively safe this year. But they are not safe from a tsunami," said University of Virginia political scientist Larry Sabato, author of a book on political scandals. "Iraq, plus economic problems, plus these scandals, could produce a tsunami. That's what every incumbent on Capitol Hill has to fear."

Most Americans are convinced that corruption reaching into all levels of government is a deeply rooted problem. According to an AP-Ipsos poll last month, 88 percent say the problem is a serious one, with 51 percent calling it "very serious."

People need to know "that government is not for sale," Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher said in pledging to pursue the investigation "wherever it goes."

For months, federal prosecutors have focused on whether Abramoff defrauded his Indian tribal clients of millions of dollars and used improper influence on members of Congress. Tribes represented by the lobbyist contributed millions of dollars in casino income to congressional campaigns.

Abramoff also took members of Congress on lavish overseas trips and provided sports tickets, golf fees, frequent meals, entertainment and jobs for lawmakers' relatives and aides.

Some lawmakers have already returned contributions. Others no doubt are nervously scouring their memories and appointment books.

# Greatest story of forgiveness

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

— Jim Elliot

Today marks 50 years since five American missionaries were brutally murdered in the Amazon rain forest by a tribe of savage Indians then known as the Aucas. At the time, it was difficult to discern what good could possibly come from these violent and apparently senseless deaths. Yet, what happened as a result was nothing short of miraculous.

Jim Elliot, Pete Fleming, Nate Saint, Ed McCully and Roger Youdarian were American missionaries working in Ecuador. They had learned of a savage tribe of Indians that had killed several Shell Oil employees. Violence was a way of life for the Aucas. Six of every 10 adult deaths were homicides by spearing.

Fearless, the missionaries initiated contact through an ingenious method of lowering a bucket of gifts from a small airplane. As Nate Saint flew the bright yellow single-engine Piper PA-14 overhead, banking it in a tight circle, a bucket was lowered on a long rope. It remained nearly motionless, just long enough for several curious Aucas to help themselves to what was inside.

This continued for several months.

Thinking they had gained their trust, the missionaries landed their plane on a sand bar in the Curaray River. Over the ensuing days, they made several friendly face-to-face encounters and even gave one of the Aucas, Naenkiwi, a ride in the plane. But on Jan. 8, 1956, all five of the missionaries were attacked and brutally murdered.

The world recoiled in horror. The images of the mutilated bodies, recovered from the Curaray River, appeared in newspapers across the county. LIFE Magazine ran a 10-page story on the incident. It seemed to be nothing more than a tragic loss.

But God would soon roll back the dark clouds of despair, allowing the world a providential glimpse into his often mysterious ways. God was about to make the wrath of man praise him.

Two years later, in what could be considered one of the greatest acts of forgiveness in the 20th



RUMMO

century, Elisabeth Elliot, Jim Elliot's wife and Rachel Saint, Nate Saint's sister, went to live with the tribe, now known as the Waodani.

The women studied the tribe's language and learned their culture. Their demonstration of forgiveness to the men who murdered their loved ones so moved the Waodani, they were given the opportunity to share the greatest story of forgiveness — Christ's death on the cross.

Many members of the tribe were converted to Christianity. The murder rate among the Waodani dropped 90 percent.

Years later, Nate Saint's son, Steve, moved his family from Florida to live with the Waodani. His children now call Mincaye, a tribal elder and the man who speared Steve Saint's father to death, "grandfather."

Last year, a 2-hour documentary, "Beyond the Gates of Splendor," was released on DVD. It recounts this story of forgiveness that sprang from martyrdom. It is both riveting and poignant and includes interviews of Elisabeth Elliot, Rachel Saint and the other wives and colleagues of the five missionaries. Many of the Waodani also appear in the documentary, which contains original footage shot in the jungles of Ecuador.

On Jan. 20, "End of the Spear"

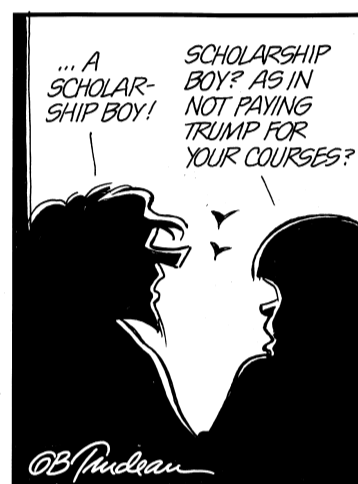
will open in 1,200 theaters across the country. The movie stars Louie Leonardo ("Law & Order," "ER" and "Charlie's Angels") as Mincaye and Chad Allen ("St. Elsewhere," "My Two Dads," "Our House" and "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman") who plays both Nate Saint and his son, Steve. "End of the Spear" tells the story from the Waodanis' point of view, showing how this extraordinary act of forgiveness led to an end of tribal violence and deep, caring friendships for the children of the men that were murdered.

On Oct. 28, 1949, Jim Elliot wrote in his diary, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

In a little more than six years and two months, he was called on by God to make good on those words. In so doing, he demonstrated by his death the words of Jesus recorded in John's Gospel: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

(Gregory J. Rummo is a businessman and a writer. Contact him through his Web site, GregRummo.com)

## Doonesbury Flashbacks



## Wildlife management necessary

### Editor's Mailbag

Editor:

I would like to respond to the (Dec. 29) letter written by Valerie Joy Johnson of Hackettstown, who stated, "How many citizens in New Jersey have been killed by a bear?" I would like to use the mantra of the anti-gun and anti-hunting groups: "If only one life can be spared, then all efforts are worthwhile."

Perhaps Ms. Johnson has conveniently forgotten the infant who was killed by a black bear in New York state a short while ago. Barely a word of sympathy or empathy issued from this lunatic fringe group. Instead, the deeply bereaved parents were chastised for the neglect perceived by this group, stating the parents had unwittingly placed the baby in a "bait" position on the back deck of their home.

Let us remember that black bear, like deer and Canada geese, continue to devastate crops and private property. Deer have created gallery forests in much of northern New Jersey. It may be centuries before these forests can ever be restored. Canada geese pollute our ponds and lakes with their copious droppings.

We can all live in harmony — the beasts of the field and man. The state Division of Fish and Wildlife must be allowed to exercise thoughtful and scientific management in a variety of ways — including the hunt.

To Ms. Debbie Milkovich, whose ravings continue unabated (in a Dec. 27 letter), the bear hunt has no relationship to our dedicated soldiers fighting for freedom overseas. Then again, organizations such as B.E.A.R. have never been noted for logic. Unfocused rage appears to be their genre.

Patricia Hefferan  
Wantage

### Frankford forgot about democracy

Editor:

Is democracy dying in Frankford? Your Dec. 30 article "Developers want McDowell tossed," attempting to bar Committeeman Robert McDowell, a member of the Land Use Board, from taking part in any hearings about the proposed mall at Ross's Corner by the developers was incredible. Please continue your unbiased reporting about this issue.

Interestingly, this article appeared right before McDowell should have been sworn in as mayor, following a long-standing township tradition. He was blocked from becoming mayor by the other two council members, who voted against him. Many members of the community attended this meeting and

showed their displeasure over this behavior.

Robert McDowell was elected by the community of voters because he is honest and environmentally knowledgeable. He should be allowed to freely express his opinion for, or against, any issue which impacts the township and voters he serves. Citizens who express opinions about issues should not be threatened by oppression or lawsuits. The reason America is a democracy is because we have freedom of speech in this country.

We have lived and worked in Sussex County as a business owner and a teacher for over 30 years, and we are very disappointed in what is going on in Frankford Township. Does this bother anyone else out there?

Mr. and Mrs. Jan Culp  
Branchville

### Ross's Corner mall would provide jobs

Editor:

There is something that the people opposing the mall at Ross's Corner are overlooking. That is the positive economic impact this project will have on the county. There will be a large number of jobs that will be created during the construction phase of the project and there will also be many retail and maintenance jobs that will follow.

Think about your neighbors, friends and family who are in the construction industry and are currently out of work due to the poor economy. With high unemployment in the construction industry, every project that reaches the approval stages has potential to help the employment situation.

The members of the Morris/Sussex County Building Trades need the jobs that will be created by the proposed mall. The members of the building trades want nothing more than to have the ability to earn a day's pay for a day's work. Currently they are forced to travel over an hour away to Bergen, Passaic and Union counties so they can earn a decent living wage. It is very rare that we are afforded the opportunity to work here in Sussex County.

We want to be able to provide for our families exactly what you want to provide for your families: health care, a decent standard of living and some form of a retirement package. Why deny your neighbors the opportunity to work here in the county? Don't forget that the people you are

affecting are your baseball coaches, football coaches, Girl Scout and Boy Scout leaders ... members of this community.

David Fiore  
I.B.E.W. Local Union 102  
Parsippany

### Judge wrong on Intelligent Design

Editor:

U. S. District Judge John E. Jones III ruled that the Dover, Pa., area school board members had "violated the Constitution" by including the teaching of an Intelligent Design theory in conjunction with Darwinian evolutionary ideology in their science program. He called this inclusion "breath-taking inanity."

Here is a judge who has a "flat world" mentality. Imagine a young sailor, believing that the earth was round and ready to set sail, receiving an edict from someone in authority that said, "You will not sail to prove that the world is round. We all know that the earth is flat, and that is that."

Darwin was an astute individual and a careful observer; however, his theories on evolution have too many gaps to be accepted as the final conclusion as to the origin of the species. I certainly can believe in evolution, but I believe that it must contain a pre-programmed design to become what it was designed to be in order to complete its maturation.

The judge in his wisdom felt that the teaching of Intelligent Design would lead to religion and, therefore, was unconstitutional. Let's take a look at the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech..." Since an agnostic, atheist or believer in a creator could equally make the statement that evolution and intelligent design go hand-in-hand without ascribing to any particular religious denomination, what exactly was unconstitutional? Would the judge feel differently if "haphazard design" were being taught?

I believe that there is a place for both Darwin's theories and Intelligent Design.

Allowing only Darwinian ideology to be studied and deemed acceptable as the only credible scientific approach to how we got to where we are should be considered highly restrictive and very exclusionary. The judge's decision precludes the study of additional ideas on which to ponder.

BY GARRY TRUDEAU

### Not convinced ID is science

Editor:

Columnist Gregory Rummo is amazed how people misunderstand the Intelligent Design debate ("Intelligent Design is non-religious," Dec. 18).

No one should be fooled that what ID tries to pass off as science is — at the very least — a philosophical claim: An intelligent being created the world. It may be true that God made everything; but it is not within the scope of science to prove that.

Rummo explains ID as "a systematic evaluation of observed biological phenomenon [sic] resulting in the logical conclusion that design is inherent in living systems." The "inescapable implication" is that a designer made everything.

Note Rummo's change of ID from a theory to a "logical conclusion," showing just how open-minded he really is on the subject. What need have we for theories and testing when ID's reasoning is logical and inescapable? All science need do is mutely offer proofs of its foregone conclusion. Rummo — a businessman and no philosopher — fails to notice that the premise of his definition "begs the question," and is therefore logically false.

Note Rummo's other qualification: "Biological phenomenon." It is easier to argue for ID from little "machines" scooting around the cell or the compact efficiency of the human eye than to show design in a rock formation or intelligence from a collapsing star. Further, ID theory concludes that "biological phenomenon" works intelligently and according to design. Rummo adds that this clearly implies a designer. But neither ID nor Rummo seems to acknowledge the frequent ruptures in the designer's design, like disease, genetic abnormalities, and physical and mental illness. If ID is a scientifically valid theory, then Rummo should be able to explain these realities without appealing to religious concepts (sin, evil, divine will).

Rummo assures us that ID is pure science; that supporters like him are not "stealth creationists." I am not convinced.

Matthew W.I. Dunn  
Sparta