

FREE AT LAST! FREE AT LAST!

OUR THANKS TO THE DEMOCRATIC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR SETTING THE CITIZENS OF ABERDEEN FREE FROM LIES AND DECEPTION!

On the subject of...

Another open letter to Billy Crews

From Contributing Editor Don Rowe



Dear Billy:
Two different and distinct terms come immediately to mind in describing the situation with our newspapers here in Aberdeen and Amory – *absentee ownership and benign neglect*.

Absentee ownership, according to a recent article in the Encyclopedia Britannica, was first used to describe "...ownership of land by proprietors who did not reside on the land or cultivate it themselves, but enjoyed income from it." As such, the term absentee ownership "has assumed a derogatory social

connotation...based on the assumption that absentee owners lack personal interest in and knowledge of their lands and tenants."

Now we all know The Journal Publishing Company isn't in the farming business and it doesn't have any tenants. But even so, I think it's safe to say The Journal Publishing Company has, for far too many years, lacked a personal interest in and knowledge of its operation here in Aberdeen. Too, there is no doubt in anyone's mind your organization,

as proprietor, has in fact enjoyed the income which was generated over the years primarily by the Aberdeen Examiner.

The second term which most certainly applies to our local paper is benign neglect, defined by The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language as, "A policy or attitude of ignoring a situation instead of assuming responsibility for managing or improving it."

Not to beat a dead horse, but you'll remember that I wrote

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THE TRUTH IN BLACK AND WHITE

The Aberdeen Advocate

A special Black History Month contribution

By George N. Morrow

He was born in 1856 in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. He was the fifth of eight children. His father, a barber, (*A most noble profession! Ed.*) died when he was only nine. His mother moved the family to Baltimore, Maryland, where she had other relatives. Until he was 12, he worked as a shoemaker.

After learning to cut hair in his teens, he was sent off to Janesville, Wisconsin, where he worked for a family member as a barber until he completed high school at Hare's Classical Academy where he graduated in 1877.

While working as a barber, he met Dr. Henry Palmer, a leading surgeon who later became the Surgeon General of Wisconsin. Doctor Palmer took the young man under his wing and allowed him to work as a medical apprentice. Doctor Palmer also helped this

man apply for admission to the Chicago Medical School, an affiliate of Northwestern University. The young man began his studies in 1880 and graduated with his medical degree in 1883. For the next six years, he held a position as an anatomy instructor at Northwestern University and as medical doctor for the City Railway Company and the Protestant Orphan Society.

In 1889, he was appointed to the Illinois board of health. Because there were racial barriers in the medical field (our doctor was one of only four black doctors practicing in the Chicago area) he founded Provident Hospital. It gave black doctors a place to practice. At Provident, he also opened the first African-American nursing school.



His focus was to stress the importance of providing the best medical care to people of all colors and ethnicities. In 1893, a young man was rushed into Provident Hospital with a serious stab wound to the chest. The other doctors were concerned about operating on the patient, but our doctor gathered a team and performed the necessary surgery to save the young man's life. The wounded man made a full recovery.

This was the first successful open-heart surgery ever performed!

His medical career continued to prosper. He had many more accomplishments until his retirement in 1926 following a stroke. In 1931, he passed away, ending a life dedicated to the service of mankind.

The name of our black doctor was Daniel Hale Williams.

Issues and Answers

This week's question: *The symptoms of the disease which is killing Aberdeen include employee theft, low morale, ineffective city services, a shrinking tax base, plummeting property values and escalating taxes. What is our ailment and, more importantly, what is your prescription?*

Ed Rayfield Candidate for Alderman, Ward 2:

First, let's start with Employee Theft: NO ONE IS ABOVE THE LAW. Like any other business, if you steal from your employer, you are fired immediately and, depending on the dollar

amount, prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Low Morale/Ineffective City Services: One of the most difficult tasks a leader has to do is to motivate employees to do a good job. Low morale goes hand-in-hand with bad services. We have to be able to motivate our employees to take ownership and pride in their jobs. We, as leaders, must show our employees that we care for and respect them. As aldermen, we must set the example.

Shrinking Tax Base, Plummeting Property Values, and Escalating Taxes: First of all, we need a quick fix to our economy. I would start by promoting tourism. We have a lot to offer such as our his-

torical district, waterfront and our parks and sports complex. While we are getting tourism up and running, we need to get very aggressive to promote our city for more business. But most of all, we must stop the businesses that we have from leaving.

How do we do this? By communicating with one another to see what needs there are and then, as aldermen, we must try to meet those needs. We also must use the talent which we already have. As I am getting out and meeting people, I am pleasantly surprised by the talent we have in our city. As aldermen, we must listen to what these talented people have to say.



Issues and Answers

In our continuing effort to assist the voters of Aberdeen in their quest for a new and more effective city government, we offer to all candidates (who are not incumbents) space in this publication to address questions and offer solutions to Aberdeen's problems. Candidates, if you wish to play along, please provide a typewritten answer of 150 words or fewer to the following questions:

Several years ago, our very knowledgeable Planning and Zoning Committee was effectively dismantled and replaced when one alderman pushed to put a single-wide mobile home within the city limits and met with opposition from the P&Z Committee. What part does Planning and Zoning play in our future and how will you take steps to ensure compliance with the good plan we have in place?

Deliver your answers to 112 East Washington Street, Aberdeen,

or email them to - advocate@vikimason.com -

Deadline 12 Noon, Wednesday, February 20, 2008

We get letters!

Imagine that !

The Democratic Executive Committee refused to certify the incumbent alderman for Aberdeen's Ward 3 because he allegedly does not live in the ward he has been representing on the Aberdeen Board of Aldermen. Not residing in the ward one supposedly represents is a violation of the law.

Thus, any vote cast by someone who does not have the legal right to vote on behalf of his ward must also be illegal. Then it follows that any action taken by the Board of Aldermen, which was passed by a 3 to 2 vote where his vote was cast with the majority, was an illegal action.

If he was illegally on the Board, he

was not eligible for any compensation associated with the office, including salary, cost of insurance, travel reimbursements or any other public payment accruing to an alderman. One would suppose that any illegal payment should be subject to return to the City treasury.

Why did the City receive no competent legal counsel which might have intervened to prevent this corruption of the body politic? Where were those who are paid to administer the City's business? Their inaction makes them culpable too.

Weston Fisher, Ph. D. - Aberdeen

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Bingo, Doctor Fisher!

The remaining aldermen and the Mayor

knew or should have known that Willie A. Cook was seated illegally. (Particularly since one of them lived almost exactly across the street from Cook's primary residence.) Furthermore, since they have been repeatedly put on notice that this was the case, they should have taken action.

Usually government officials have a "safety net" for such mistakes which keeps them from being sued when they are acting in their official capacity. The question becomes, if these men were specifically ignoring their responsibilities and were deliberately acting (or not acting) in accordance with the law, are they then stripped of their sovereign immunity? I should like to think so. It would be fun to find out. VEM

Another open letter to Billy Crews

Continued from page 1

to you last summer and provided hundreds of examples highlighting the typos, misspelled words, etc., which had been published in both the Aberdeen Examiner and the Amory Advertiser. You, in turn, wrote back and assured me that “numerous improvement opportunities” were noted and that Charlotte Wolfe “was working with others to address specific errors and weaknesses.”

At last, after years of an obvious lack of management on your part, you finally assumed responsibility for the sad state of affairs at the papers. Sadly, however, based on the tear sheets I presented to interim general manager Charlie Langford several weeks ago, you (or anyone else on your staff) had absolutely no impact on any improvement at either publication.

Back when the Examiner actually had a staff of full- and part-time writers, one person was always assigned the task of proofreading the newspaper before it was published each week. That person spent the entire morning pouring over every story, outline and ad to make sure what was sent for publication later that afternoon was relatively free of typos and other errors. She also made sure that the stylebook was adhered to.

As a result, at one time the Examiner was one of the most well-respected and largest (circulation-wise) weekly newspapers in the state, and it regularly turned out three or four sections each week which ranged anywhere from a low of 24 pages to as many as 36 or more. Compare what used to be with this week’s Examiner and you will find a paltry 14-page publication which includes a six-page B Section containing a page and a half of sports, one-half page of general news, one religious page and three pages of classified ads.

Adding insult to injury, the Aberdeen sports section contains no less than 36 mistakes of one kind or another – ranging from simple typos (beaqten, couldn;t) to sentences which don’t make any sense (Quarterback was the mane of the game; Itawamba Community College is now reached unchartered water; ...our program is receiving some major respect now only in the south, but around the country, as well; ...but the even-keeled Nettleton senior give oppos-

ing pitchers...) to an inability to differentiate between Louisville and South Pontotoc in the AHS girls’ basketball story to downright stupidity (Ladys lead; ...its a place I can finish my education).

Too, Amory and Nettleton players were featured prominently in a signing day story in the Aberdeen Examiner, while the signing of two Aberdeen players (one of whom was the only high school player to receive a scholarship to a four-year school) and a former Hamilton grad were buried at the tail-end of the story. Ditto for a column on the upcoming baseball and softball seasons.

Throw in the same mistakes in identical stories published in the Advertiser, plus goofs like, “Houston’s 25-11 run lead to its 57-38 lead after three periods,” and a botched account of a sequence of plays in the Amory-Nettleton girls’ game, and it’s no wonder you can’t sell any advertising.

Incredibly enough, instead of making an effort to clean this mess up, you recently announced plans were in the works to look at the possibility of combining both papers into a so-called Monroe County Journal. (I guess that could be a good thing, for then all your mistakes will be rolled into one publication and it would cut my proofreading time in half.)

But before you go forward with this half-cocked idea to do away with the Examiner and the Advertiser, allow me pass on to you some suggestions to improve the situation here in Aberdeen. (I know you are loath to listen to suggestions from a so-called disgruntled former employee, but what follows has been relayed to me by scores of people who feel the same way I do about our pitiful excuse for a newspaper.)

For openers, put a face in charge of the paper who actually lives here and who can be found at work in the Examiner office on a fairly regular basis. In addition to actually living here, this person should also take an active role in community affairs much like Gary Andrews (who ran the paper before The Journal Publishing Company acquired it back in the early ‘90s) and Barry Burleson did during their tenures as publisher/general manager – both of whom served on the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, were active in various civic clubs, were leaders in their local churches and also helped coach softball and baseball teams in the local summer programs.

Next, hire competent people who can ac-

tually construct a sentence, know how to spell (or at least use spell-check) and have the ability to keep facts straight so the reader can actually understand what is trying to be conveyed in the story.

Next, cover the news. Don’t make us read the Columbus Commercial Dispatch or the Columbus Packet to find out what’s going on. Tell us about the principal in the Aberdeen School system who recently appeared in Aberdeen Municipal Court charged with disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. Put pictures of those caught in drug busts in both newspapers, not just the Advertiser. Mention the recent pileup on the river bridge. Keep the names straight in the birth and marriage announcements. Eliminate the typos and mistakes in the obits. Highlight the local high school football players who were named All-State and brag on their stats which ranked them among the best in the state.

Next, remember Aberdeen and Amory are separate communities with their own rivalries, jealousies and differences. Aberdeen readers don’t want to read about a former Amory football has-been who had absolutely no impact in his abbreviated NFL career; they want to read about players like Reggie Kelly, one of the highest paid tight ends in the NFL who has been a starter for most of his nearly 10-year NFL career.

Next, create a real editorial page which will take a stand on issues vital to the community, and finally, make sure your ads and information boxes are free from typos and other stupid mistakes like misspelling the words *comments* (commernts) and *information* (infromation) for over one year in your information box on page 2A or the name of your own newspaper (Advertier) in a house ad several weeks in a row.

To be sure, if and when you address these problems, then maybe you will have a publication of which the people of Aberdeen and The Journal Publishing Company can finally be proud and one which won’t be the laughing-stock of the publishing industry.

Becka’s Burger Shack

North Hwy. 45

369-4275

Monday through Friday

10:00 a.m. — 8:00 p.m.





The Aberdeen Advocate

THE TRUTH IN BLACK AND WHITE

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The Aberdeen Advocate is committed to the goal of improving the quality of life in Aberdeen and Monroe County by identifying and exposing waste and mismanagement in Government. To these ends we humbly offer our observations and opinions.

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“A nation of sheep will beget a government of wolves.”

...Edward R. Murrow