

On the subject of...

An humble apology to woofenbarkers

By Viki Eggers Mason



The Aberdeen Advocate

Sometimes in my eagerness to communicate clearly with you, my dear reader friends, I stumble over words which can occasionally be caustic and hurtful. I choose to use harsh terms, particularly when I'm speaking of the character flaws of our elected officials, because I'm at war. (I know...lots of you didn't understand the fact that Aberdeen is a battleground.)

I'm fighting for my economic future here, and I agreed with myself long ago that all's fair in this adventure. And so it happened that just a week or so ago, I referred to aldermen Alonzo Sykes and Cloyd Garth as "dogs."

The other afternoon, I encountered Garth at the Monroe County Courthouse where he was milling about in an apparently successful effort to intimidate voters in the municipal election. He hailed me in the parking lot and snarled, "You'd better be careful who you're calling a dog, Mrs. Mason," he growled.

"Whatever are you talking about kind sir," I inquired sweetly. (Ok.

It's my story. I'll tell it like I want.)

"It isn't nice to call people dogs," he snarled.

At that point, I wondered what misguided brain cells he was using for logic that particular day. I've told the man in no uncertain terms more than once that my singular goal is to unseat him and his cronies from their places around the municipal boardroom table. Maybe he's just a slow learner.

"Mr. Garth," I told him with as much patience as I could muster, "I have been trying for four years to find something nice to say about you, but I just can't find a thing."

He was about to bark at me again when I dismissed him entirely. "You know what," I said, "I just don't want to talk to you today." I turned on my heels and went about my business.

Later, as I reflected upon the metaphor I'd initially used to cause him such consternation, I

realized I had resorted to what my mentor, Mrs. Dunbar, would have called lazy language. I had, indeed, painted Cloyd Garth and his partner in crime, Alonzo Sykes, as "dogs." Instead of coming up with a colorful, new and clever descriptive phrase, I'd used the cliché, "If you lie down with dogs, you'll get up with fleas." Worse, in doing so, I'd done a terrible disservice to dogs around the world. Man's best friend deserves far better than to be compared to the likes of these two charlatans! Please forgive me, noble canines!

It's odd the way we choose words to describe the loathsome among us. Too often, we resort to referring to our unsavory traveling companions on life's highway as body parts. For example; "He's a total earlobe!" or "She is a real bicuspid!"

I must confess I was prone to refer to my former husband in an array of different anatomical

Continued on Page 2

Hell hath no fury....

By Contributing Editor Don Rowe

"Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned," is a modern-day adaptation of the closing line of Act III of the William Congreve play, *The Mourning Bride*, first produced in 1697.

The popular quote, which is oftentimes mistakenly attributed to William Shakespeare, is commonly used to refer to a woman who takes her revenge out on a cheating husband and/or her husband's lover.

In contemporary times, however, it has also been used as a warning for a person not to insult a woman lest he/she will invariably regret it. In other words, a woman will make someone suffer when and if she is treated badly (see story

above)

For my purposes here today, I claim an unalienable right to utilize my "literary license," so I will add a slight twist to the aforementioned adage, to wit: "Hell hath no fury like a mother whose child has been mistreated." Too, drawing my inspiration from a recent college assignment given to my granddaughter, I do, as the so-called writer of this allegedly non-fiction tale, have the responsibility to declare whether this production is truth or fiction. Thus, being this is purported to be a truthful piece, I have an obligation to you, the reader, to tell the truth as I understand it.

That said, I now present for

your edification one version of a truly unfortunate scenario currently getting top billing right here in Aberdeen, Mississippi.

My production has five main characters: Ulaine Williams, the mother scorned; Curtice Williams, Ulaine's daughter; coach Matt Smith, former Aberdeen High School slow-pitch and fast-pitch softball coach; Terry Morgan, president of the Aberdeen High School Booster Club; and a Ms. Hodges, the AHS Booster Club secretary. In addition, several "bit players" have been called upon to perform, some of whom wish to remain anonymous.

Continued on page 3

Woofenbarkers

Continued from page 1

Terms. But then one day, I realized that, except for those times when I called him an appendix, each of the expressions I used to describe him referred to a very useful and completely necessary body part. He was neither that useful nor that necessary. It was then when I started calling him other things. (I'm just teasing, Poopsie!)

And so, doggie friends, I hope you will accept this tribute to your kind and giving nature and will forgive me for my careless characterization of you.

Some distinct differences between a dog and your average politician:

When a dog drags his butt across the carpet, he almost never blames the cat for the brown streak he leaves behind.

When a dog makes a mess in the house, he owns up to it.

When a dog steals the cookies, he at least has the courtesy of hiding under the bed for a day or so.

Dog's don't bark just to hear themselves barking.

Except in the PetCo commercials, dogs are not vain and they almost never wear pimp hats on televisions or inside buildings like City Hall.

Dogs are protective of the people who feed them and almost never cut deals with thieves and con-men.

Dogs don't have pockets. Politicians do.

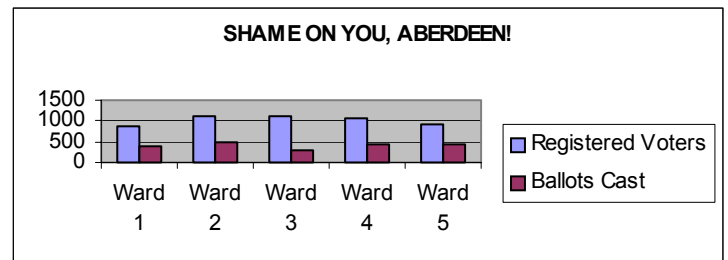
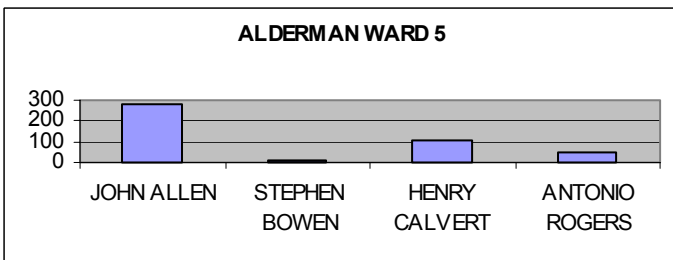
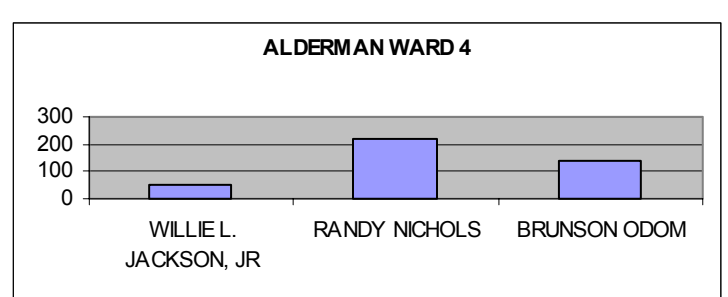
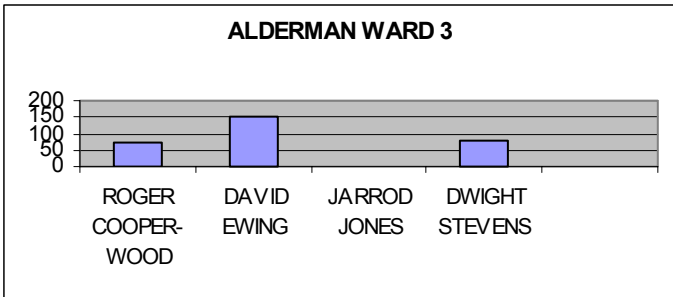
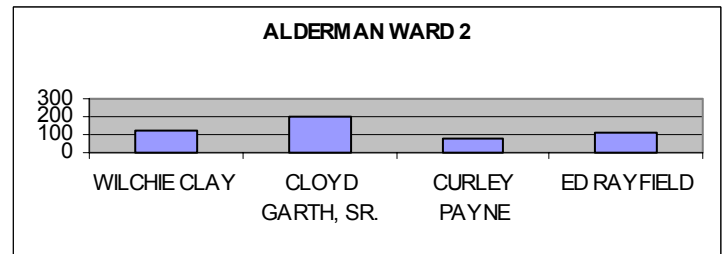
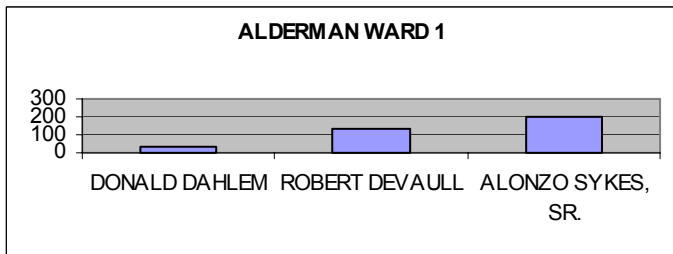
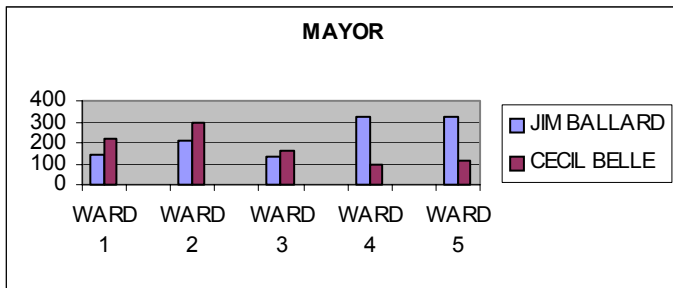
Dogs respond positively to kindness and behave loyally. Politicians respond to our help and support by stealing our supper and selling our stuff to fill the aforementioned pockets.

Dogs get parasites. Politicians are parasites. (And I can say that with humility having been one.)

No matter how hard you try, you can't muzzle a politician.

When a dog makes an obnoxious smelly noise, it's called breaking wind; but when a politician does the same thing, it's called a campaign promise.

So, you see, I clearly understand my faux pas (fo paw, if you will permit me a small pun) and I shall endeavor never to heap such an insult upon man's best friend in the future. But, come to think of it, have you ever noticed how many politicians are also lawyers?



Hell hath no fury like a mother scorned

Continued from page 1

In a nutshell, today's story line goes something like this: Curtice Williams, a female Aberdeen High School athlete, is denied a letter jacket by the Aberdeen Booster Club. Ulaine Williams, who claims her daughter is being unfairly denied something she has worked hard for, calls the booster club to task. In response, the booster club summons Mrs. Williams to a meeting to discuss the problem. But Mrs. Williams, wary of being "outnumbered," brings along three "uninvited" guests for support. After a chilly reception, the "uninvited" guests are told to leave the meeting, shortly after which Mrs. Williams also exits the premises after being assured Curtice will indeed not receive a letter jacket.

Unfortunately for our production purposes though, booster club president Terry Morgan, along with club vice president Willie Stewart, chose to go on strike. (Actually, they were given the opportunity to defend the club's decision, but chose to remain silent.) However, unlike the recent writers' strike which shut down the movie and TV industries for several months, our show must go on, so what follows is an admittedly one-sided story concerning a dispute between the Aberdeen High School Booster Club and the Williamses.

ACT I:

Our story begins earlier this year when, according to Mrs. Williams, AHS athletic director Tony Horton asked all of the school's coaches to bring him a list of all of their athletes who were to be awarded a letter jacket.

All junior athletes, Curtice included, were then called to the school library to be fitted for their letter jackets – girls first, followed by the boys. The letter jacket company rep recorded the names of those who were fitted and the coaches' list of deserving letter jacket winners was passed on to the booster club.

Shortly thereafter, the booster club officers called a meeting to discuss ordering the letter jackets. It was at this meeting, according to a source who wished to remain anonymous, that Ms. Hodges, the club secretary, arbitrarily made the determination as to who deserved a letter jacket and who did not. Curtice, who

claims she saw her name on the original document, later found out at a February home basketball game that her name had been scratched from the list.

Upset with hearing her daughter was going to be denied a jacket, Mrs. Williams checked with an unnamed AHS coach who told her to call former coach John Zorn for his opinion. (Reportedly, he also told Morgan to check with Zorn, but that can not be confirmed because Morgan refuses to comment). According to Mrs. Williams, Zorn told her Curtice did indeed deserve a letter jacket. He said he would share that sentiment with his former coaching colleagues and also promised to call Morgan to inform him of that fact. Unfortunately, Zorn wasn't able to speak to Morgan, but he did leave a message reaffirming Curtice's claim to a jacket.

Several weeks later, at 7:30 p.m. on March 23, Mrs. Williams, at home at the time, was handed a letter by a booster club member's daughter informing her that she was to meet with them the following evening in the Middle School cafeteria to discuss the issue. But Mrs. Williams, knowing full well she would be outnumbered, called coach Smith, the school resource officer and myself to support her.

Upon our arrival, all of the booster club officers were cordial, but here was obvious tension in the air once they realized Mrs. Williams had brought along a former coach and a so-called writer to bolster her cause. Prior to being called to order, two of our main "characters" stepped outside to discuss this unexpected turn of events and when they returned, the meeting started with a prayer.

Morgan then looked at me and asked if I "had any issues with the booster club." I shook my head and replied I did not. Morgan then asked the same question of coach Smith and the school resource officer and then said we would have to leave the premises because the booster club meeting was a private affair and not open to the public.

Before being unceremoniously booted from the meeting, coach Smith made an impassioned plea on Curtice's behalf.

"I'm going to leave like you asked, but first let me say a couple of things," said

Smith. "First of all, I know everybody around this table and I love each and every one of you. As far as the letter jacket is concerned, Curtice lettered in both slow-pitch and fast-pitch softball for several years. In my opinion, she deserves a letter jacket."

(According to Mrs. Williams, Curtice played both fast-pitch and slow-pitch softball from her seventh-grade year through her sophomore year. "Curtice played on both the J. V. and the varsity teams all four years," said Mrs. Williams. "She didn't start a lot on the varsity, but she did occasionally. At the end of her sophomore year, she was hurt but kept score and helped out as a manager." Curtice did not play softball this past year, but she did serve as a manager for both the boys' and girls' state play-off basketball teams. Currently, she throws the shot on the track team.)

Smith also told the Booster Club officers that ever since he had taken over both programs seven or eight years ago, he had asked for criteria to be enacted by the athletic department to set specific targets which had to be met in order to determine who lettered and who didn't. These targets (games and/or innings) would help the coaching staff determine whether an athlete had played enough in order to letter.

"The whole time I was the coach, there was no feedback from the athletic department, so I lettered every girl on the team – both players and managers," said Smith. He then reiterated that Curtice deserved a letter jacket and, as he was leaving the room, said if the Booster Club wouldn't buy one for her that he would.

It was at this point, the three of us, along with Curtice, all stepped outside the open doorway and left Mrs. Williams to fend for herself. Seconds later, Ms. Hodges closed the door so we couldn't hear what was said. "I asked them one question," said Mrs. Williams: "Are you going to buy my child a letter jacket?" Upon being told "No" by Morgan, Mrs. Williams got up from the table to leave. One of the other booster club officers then asked her if she wanted to know why her child was being denied a letter jacket and Mrs. Williams replied, "No!" In short order, Mrs. Williams joined us in the parking lot.

Next week: ACT II.





The Aberdeen Advocate

112 EAST WASHINGTON STREET
ABERDEEN, MS 39730
662.369.0449

Email: AberdeenAdvocate@bellsouth.net
viki@vikimason.com

<p>Aberdeen Advocate Subscription Rates: \$1.00 per week up to 12 weeks Make checks payable to The Aberdeen Advocate</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Our Thanks to Our Supporters!</p> <p>Aberdeen Muffler & Brake Becka's Burger Shack Hair Visions By Lisa Michelle's Barber Shop Mr. Charlie's Piggly Wiggly Reflections</p> <p>http://vikimason.com</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Subscribe me!</p> <p>NAME: _____</p> <p>ADDRESS: _____</p> <p>PHONE: _____</p>	<p>“It may well be that our means are fairly limited and our possibilities are restricted when it comes to applying pressure to our government. But is this a reason to do nothing? Despair is not an answer. Neither is resignation. Resignation only leads to indifference which is not merely a sin but also a punishment.”</p> <p>...Elie Wiesel</p>	