

On the subject of...

Feeling defenseless

By Viki Eggers Mason



The Aberdeen Advocate

This week, I've been up to my ears in law books.

Now that the Governor has set our special runoff election between incumbent alderthug Cloyd Garth and challenger Wilchie Clay for July 1st, I've been preparing for the worst.

While I plan to work very hard to help get Wilchie Clay elected, I no longer naively expect that we will have a clean and honest election. If it gets muddy, it will be the work of Cloyd Garth and his supporters and, if it isn't an honest election, Garth will most likely win. Ugh.

Now, there is a ray of sunshine in this mess. It is my firm belief that very soon, Cloyd Garth and several others, including Alonzo Sykes, will be indicted for their mismanagement of the Electric Department. But what happens when these charges are finally brought? How will it all play out? In a perfect world, those public officials under indictment would be suspended without pay until the trial established their guilt or innocence.

Ours is not a perfect world, however. Democracy is a messy business. The framers of the constitution decided long ago that folks are to be considered innocent until proven guilty. It's the American way. Therefore, until the trial(s), these men will probably be allowed to live and work among us as usual.

I'm perfectly happy with that concept all the way up to the part about, "work among us as usual." Since the "usual work" of these two involves duping the taxpayers out of hard-earned cash, I'm more than a little frustrated.

Mississippi law offers no help. As a matter of fact, the more I delve into it, the worse it all appears.

In Mississippi, if you live in a municipality and depend upon elected municipal officials for protection, you have only one chance to save yourself and your family from crooks, thieves and bullies, and that chance comes only at the polling place. You see, there are statutes in place which allow just about any public

official from the governor right on down to the county supervisors to be recalled or ousted—anybody can be kicked to the curb *except municipal officials*, that is.

For reasons incomprehensible to me, the public's safety net does not extend under the municipal institution. In my research this week, I've learned that if we are dissatisfied with any other elected official, we have the right to pass around a petition and eventually un-elect the culprits. Not so with city officials! Nor is there any supervisory board to help us in our plight.

The Ethics Commission is relatively toothless. They have guidelines, but those parameters are so specific and so very narrow that they render the committee nearly completely impotent. Judges police their own troops by way of the Judicial Review Commission. Lawyers look after their collective reputation subject to the judgment of the Mississippi Bar Association. Aldermen, on the other hand, are accountable only to themselves. Oh, they

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Monkish me

by Contributing Editor R. T. Mason

Viki sometimes accuses me of being somewhat, well, "Monkish." She gets that term from the television show *Monk*, which features a lovable but obsessive-compulsive murder detective. She seems to feel that I sometimes exhibit traits of those peculiarities.

Nonsense!

Over the period of my lifetime, I've simply learned the best and most expedient ways of performing some tasks, so I simply utilize that education

and training. I mean, putting your pants on while standing up makes absolutely no sense because the process is much easier done while sitting. As a matter of fact, the entire process of getting dressed is faster and easier when done in the sitting position.

The entire dressing process can be done faster and with less motion, hence with less use of energy, when one thinks of it as one project with several distinct processes which can be

studied and analyzed to ascertain the best sequence of the processes and the best method to complete each process of that sequence.

No matter how I explain it, though, Viki is still going to think that my dressing procedures and some of my other quirks are "Monkish." So, I did something this morning which will (since we're talking about clothing) "knock her socks off."

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Feeling defenseless

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manage to elect the wrong man, our only hope for relief is to pray that his four-year term passes quickly, or, as in our case, that the judicial system will work swiftly.

Having done my time in a law office, I can assure you that even though you are promised a speedy end to your suffering, the legal world runs on the concept of continuation. The name of the game is stall, stall, then stall some more. Sadly, if Garth and Sykes were indicted tomorrow, my guess is they wouldn't go to trial for at least two years. And, to make matters worse, we will continue to endure their bad leadership and corruption and have the privilege of paying them \$800 a month plus benefits for it. Double ough!

In previous Legislative sessions, bills have been introduced which would call for immediate suspension upon indictment. Those bills bore no fruit. Reminiscent of the Voter Identification bills which are frequently considered but never enacted, it appears to me that our legislature likes to leave plenty of room for corrupt officials to work their special brand of mischief on the taxpayers unless and until they are convicted of a felony. Do you feel comfortable with that, Aberdeen? I don't. (Note to self: Put this matter on our "what to lobby for in the next legislative session" list.)

So, here we sit. We have re-elected one thief and are about to re-elect another in order that we may enjoy another four years of time in the septic tank. Whatever shall we do?

The answer is, of course, not to re-elect Cloyd Garth.

It's a heavy burden, and not one they expected to bear, but the entire future of our city lies in the hands of Ward 2's voters. There has never been a more important decision to be made than the one they will make on July 1st. No matter where you live in Aberdeen, this vote will have an incredible impact upon your future, your family and the investments you have made in this pretty little town. No matter who you are—if you work here, live here, educate your children here or even shop here—your future is really what's on the line in this special

election.

As a result, we all have work to do.

Now, since I don't live in Ward 2, I cannot vote for or against either of the candidates. I can only speak out in favor of Wilchie Clay and beg the nice folks in Ward 2 to heroically save the rest of our city by doing the same.

I suppose it's possible that this election will be a legal one, unlike the last. After the Attorney General's investigation and the tedious two-day hearing over the balloting irregularities, I guess it might happen that Cloyd Garth's election machinery won't run as efficiently as it has in the past. Now that his lieutenants have had occasion to be grilled by a number of lawyers and representatives from the office of our state's top cop, and now that they know there are serious consequences associated with voter fraud, maybe they will have been properly "scared straight." We can certainly hope for that, but we would be fools to rely upon such a small hope. It's just too dicey. What we must do is work diligently in the weeks to come.

I urge each of you to reach out to friends and acquaintances who live in Ward 2—tell them what this election means to our future. Offer to take them to the polls, then do just that. If they will be on vacation or out of town that week, make sure they vote absentee. I mean MAKE SURE they vote absentee....take them to city hall yourself! Do not trust that the best, most qualified man will win—if that were true, Ed Rayfield would already have been elected. You may not recognize it as such, but I assure you, we are at war.

I remember a story of a man whose system for tithing was simple: He would step outside and throw his paycheck up into the air. His theory went something like this: "Whatever God wants, he can keep."

We cannot allow ourselves to employ that sort of logic in this very important matter. God established our system of government as He established our spiritual system. It all depends upon free will. You will make decisions in your spiritual life as you will in your civic life and then, as surely night follows day, you will experience the consequences of those decisions. It works every time, just like gravity.

What will your decision be? I hope it

Your City Officials

Mayor
Honorable Jim Ballard
125 W. Commerce Street
Aberdeen, MS 39730
369-4165

Chief of Police
Henry Randle
125 West Commerce Street
Aberdeen, MS 39730
369-6454

Alderman, Ward 1
Alonzo Sykes
1113 Elk Circle
Aberdeen, MS 39730
369-7705

Alderman Ward 2 (Temporary)
Cloyd Garth
310 South James Street
Aberdeen, MS 39730
369-5734

Alderman, Ward 3
David Ewing
Post Office Box 1095
Aberdeen, MS 39730
369-9150

Alderman, Ward 4
Randy Nichols
Post Office Box 1161
Aberdeen, MS 39730
369-3352

Alderman, Ward 5
John Allen
1006 West Commerce Street
Aberdeen, MS 39730
369-4683

will be to roll up your sleeves and do what you can to salvage our community. I hope you will help me to educate our friends and neighbors in Ward 2 to vote as if our lives depended upon the outcome of this election because, in many ways, they do!



Monkish me

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Although there were no witnesses to my act, I did something this morning that is so out of character for me that I am totally shamed, yet, in a sense, I'm also proud. Face it, sometimes it feels good to be naughty, and I was definitely naughty.

My Navy background tells me that I should be keelhauled, given a "taste of the nine" (that's sea talk for being beaten with a "cat-o-nine tails," which is a whip for you landlubbers) assigned to the brig, or even given a one-way trip to Davy Jones Locker for my radical behavior.

Admittedly, I know little of the Navy today. But years ago, each sailor was assigned a locker (most of which had no door, and hence no way of locking) in which to keep all his earthly possessions. The dimensions of this "locker" were about 18 inches square, so there wasn't a lot of room for frivolities. The Navy, though, was nice enough to spend a great deal of time teaching each of us the proper way to stow our gear in order that no space would be wasted.



We learned the proper way to fold all of our various types of uniforms; we learned how to roll our socks (that's a whole story in itself, and not one to be told in prime time); and we learned how to fold sheets and towels in a way that would minimize their storage space.

One of the small nuances of towel and sheet folding involves making certain that the "catch-edge" is always on the inside of the folded towel or sheet. (For you folks who may have never folded either of these items, the edges of most towels and sheets are hemmed to prevent unraveling. These, then, are the catch edges.) Since I learned how to fold towels in the Navy, folding them with the catch-edges inside has become second nature to me.

Now, barbers use lots of towels, so over the years I've folded more than my share of towels and I've always done it the Navy way. This morning, however, I broke with tradition, and folded one towel *with the catch-edges on the outside*. It was embarrassing, and I had to look around to make sure that nobody was watching me.

All this morning, I've been waiting for

insutor = tourism
reilgpmgai = pilgrimage
rhitoy = history
rvatslfe = festival
tuulrec = culture
cnstafihpmas = craftsmanship
mdrkansla = landmarks
narbbq = barbeque
wnonodt = downtown
traweawy = waterway
enemerittr = retirement
tsar = arts
bgrteuslt = litterbugs
lunopas = Paulson
oagtinmmiri = immigration
cmccerem = commerce
yniercmah = machinery

Word Scramble Answers

the towel police to come around, search through my three drawers full of folded towels to find that single mutinous towel. The anxiety is suffocating, but I believe it is something I must endure – for myself and for generations of future sailors-turned-barbers to come. It's a matter of compromising and adapting, and is not to be taken lightly.

I can do this!

I MUST do this!

(Every time I remove a towel from those drawers, I know that I won't be able to avoid inspecting it to see if it is *THE ONE*. As soon as I've placed that particular towel on someone's shoulders to shave his neck, my trial will be done.)

We all have our traditions. We all have our quirks. We all have our ways of doing various things. Once in a while, though, we need to break with our personal traditions and our ways of doing things and see what life is like when we graze on the other side of the fence, no matter how momentarily. We may not always be able to walk a mile in someone else's shoes and, indeed, we may not wish to do such, but sometimes it might be a good idea to take a step or two in them.

Wisdom, as I often say, is where you find it.

Puzzlers...just for fun!

Retrieve last week's *Aberdeen Advocate* from the bottom of the bird cage, puzzle pals! Clues for these scrambled words can be found therein!

imsutor _____	uarebbqe _____
rielpmgai _____	wnonodt _____
rhitoy _____	tsar _____
rvatslfe _____	rcnstafihpmas _____
tuulrec _____	traweawy _____
lbuse _____	enemerittr _____
mdrkansla _____	bgrteuslt _____
lunopas _____	omccerem _____
oagtinmmiri _____	yniercmah _____

Please Help Elect
 Wilchie Clay
 Alderman, Ward 2



The Aberdeen Advocate

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ABERDEEN, MS 39730
662.369.0449

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viki@vikimason.com



NOTICE!

On Thursday, June 19th, 2008, at precisely 12 noon, future citizens of Heaven who are current, temporary residents of Aberdeen, Mississippi, are urgently invited to gather on the steps of City Hall.

The purpose of this gathering is to come together in prayer...to bring before the Lord, Our God the desperate need for unity within this small southern town.

A number of local clergymen will be present that day to lead us in prayer in order that we might find, at last, a common ground and a common purpose for Aberdeen and her citizens.

Please attend! We need all the faith we can possibly muster.

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.

“I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community, and as long as I live it is my *privilege* to do for it whatever I can.”

...George Bernard Shaw

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Reflections

