

## On the subject of...

# Kanga Goes to Court

by Viki Eggers Mason



THE TRUTH IN BLACK AND WHITE

# The Aberdeen Advocate

I consider myself to be a fairly sturdy woman. Not only am I possessed of a stocky stature, my spirit is far from fragile. I'm rather like the bulldog which seems to have become a feature of my website. Once I'm affixed to something, once my attention has been captured, it is no mean feat to shake me off. I am a patriot and I am a champion of our system of justice. I believe the United States of America is the best place in the world and I'm grateful to live in a place where, most of the time, our constitutional system works.

There are times, though, when I'm sorely disappointed. The system does not always work precisely the way I think it ought to. In the murder trial of Orenthal James Simpson, a man obviously guilty of two grizzly murders was allowed to go free.

In the child molestation trial of singer Michael Jackson, a high-profile pedophile was allowed to continue to roam among unsuspecting innocents. No, the system doesn't always work.

Recently, here in our lovely little village, a similarly heinous miscarriage of justice occurred.

Oh, it wasn't murder and, as yet, I'm not aware that any children have been seriously harmed, but the shameful "trial" of Cloyd and Lady B. Garth held here on Friday, July 27<sup>th</sup> was a mockery of our justice system which demonstrated just how far some powerful people will go to escape the consequences of their anti-social behavior.

In case you just dropped in from another planet, in June of 2006 the Aberdeen Police Department was summoned to the Park and Rec gymnasium to quell a disturbance which had erupted after a

charity basketball tournament. When officers arrived on the scene, they were met by an agitated alderman Garth who ordered the police off the premises. The uniformed officers attempted to explain to Garth that they were bound to investigate and could not leave until they were satisfied the problem had been resolved.

It was then when Garth and his wife became threatening and verbally abusive toward the officers on the scene. The police officers were told in no uncertain terms that if they did not leave immediately, they would lose their jobs on Monday. (That didn't quite work out according to Garth's



Aberdeen's Municipal Court

Continued Page 2

## Sorry politicians a political reality

By Contributing Editor Don Rowe

Years ago, too many to be exact, professional sports were the center of my life. I was a fan of the NFL and the NBA when they were in season, but I lived for Major League baseball. From spring training in February to the World Series in early October, my heroes were the "Boys of Summer," and I can't begin to tell you how much money I spent collecting baseball cards and buying *Sport* magazine, or how much time I spent pouring over my weekly issue of *The Sporting News* (to the ultimate detriment of my studies).

Growing up in Ohio and raised by a father who commanded an African-American

Army-Air Corps squad during World War II, I didn't care whether my heroes were white or black. All that mattered to me as a die-hard baseball fan was whether they could play the game. I didn't give a hoot whether it was Willie Mays or Mickey Mantle, Stan Musial or Roberto Clemente – they were all my heroes and unfortunately, I put more effort into following their careers than I did my school work.

Our family moved to Florida following my eighth-grade year and I had a couple of real life experiences (although I didn't realize it at the time) with two people

who would go on to play in the majors. My freshman year, my parents enrolled me in Jesuit High School in Tampa, Florida, and it was here that I first met Lou Piniella. If memory serves me correctly, Piniella was a year or two ahead of me and already a three-sport star.

Following a brilliant career at Jesuit in which he was a basketball All-American, he went on to become an All-American baseball player at the University of Tampa. Signed by the Cleveland Indians in 1962, Piniella became the first player to come to bat in the Kansas City Royals' history in 1969. Nicknamed

Continued on Page 4

# Kanga Goes to Court

## Continued from Page 1

plan—as I recall it took several days and a number of “special, closed-door meetings” in which Garth shamelessly took part in spite of his own personal involvement (which rendered him anything but objective). Garth even went so far as to completely disregard the city attorney’s advice to recuse himself. After Garth himself cast the deciding vote, the two officers were summarily canned.

Eventually, on that June evening at the gymnasium, the officers left the scene and went back to Police Department headquarters upon instructions from the Chief of Police. There, they each filed charges against the Garths for things like impeding an officer in his/her line of duty, disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. The Garths reluctantly turned themselves in to the authorities some time later and were to have a hearing in Aberdeen’s Municipal Court.

There are some who will tell you, perhaps even the judge who heard the case on Aberdeen’s saddest morning, that had the Chief of Police taken immediate charge of the situation, the outcome of the trial would have been different. Sorry, your honor, the die was cast long before the Chief arrived on the scene. My research tells me the officers were “Gone Johnson” in the very minute they dared to attempt to do their duty. I’ve interviewed the witnesses, read the police reports and have more than a passing acquaintance with Cloyd and Lady Garth’s explosive tempers. No matter how the Chief tried to smooth things over, it was a lost cause.

Now, because the municipal judge and the prosecuting attorney in Aberdeen both owe their positions directly to the aldermen who appointed them, it would not have been proper for either of those folks to participate in the Garths’ trial. They were recused and the search began to locate a special judge and prosecutor to handle this matter. When last I checked, which was in January, 2007, the Garths were docketed to appear on January 9,

2008, about 19 months after the original offenses took place.

Mind you, there are currently two lawsuits pending on this matter brought by the fired police officers. Naturally, the city’s lawyers wanted the lawsuits settled before they allowed the Garths to have a hearing—we wouldn’t want them even accidentally convicted before the civil suits were settled. Such an outcome would have ugly monetary ramifications.

Imagine my surprise when I learned the court date had been changed! As if by magic, a judge who could hear the matter and a prosecuting attorney whose schedules permitted them to visit Aberdeen to participate in the trial were found, imported and seated on the bench before the rest of us had any inkling of what was going on.

Reader friends, if you or I had been ticketed for jay-walking, you can bet we would be forced to appear on the regular Wednesday morning Municipal Court docket right alongside shoplifters, wife-beaters and traffic violators. But not the Garth gang. No. They were accommodated in a deserted courtroom on a Friday morning when no citizen (meaning me) or member of the media (also meaning me) would have even guessed such an important trial was taking place!

If that weren’t smelly enough for you, let me tell you that after the witnesses were heard and the testimony taken, the charges against the Garths were dismissed. What’s even more malodorous is the timing of the trial. As I told you earlier, the risk of having the Garths convicted before the civil suits were settled was a mighty one and you might say with some certainty that such a gamble would not have been advocated by the insurance company’s highly paid lawyers. Why, then, did the trial date change?

Mind you, I’m just guessing here, but I suspect somebody in the Garth camp has consulted with Madame Lamar and/or recently obtained a crystal ball of their very own. Those defendants sashayed into that quiet courtroom fairly certain they would come out unscathed. Perhaps this chance meeting with the gypsy took place at the Mississippi Municipal League Convention earlier this summer on the Gulf Coast. Certainly there were a host of city attorneys and municipal judges in attendance that week.

Perhaps our esteemed aldermen located an oracle there who could accurately predict the trial’s outcome. Or perhaps the Garths found a genie’s bottle on the beach and were granted the usual three wishes. (I rather doubt this scenario since my heart continues to beat regularly and I have not yet assumed room temperature.)



However it happened, the people of Aberdeen were denied due process. We were deprived of our rightful protection under the law. The system failed us miserably and it would appear to me that blind justice is now sporting corrective lenses. There will be no more of this impartiality nonsense! Toss out those silly old rules about not allowing preferential treatment for some and not for others! Now that justice has eyes and can see where her buns are buttered, she’ll be operating under a new set of rules here in Aberdeen.

Don’t lose faith, my friends. Try very hard to remember that most of the time justice is served. Nevertheless, we must be aware that wicked people don’t always *immediately* get what’s coming to them. Evidence: OJ Simpson, Michael Jackson and Cloyd Garth. (List updated 8/8/07 to include Adrian Haynes.)

In God’s perfect plan, some things never fail. One of those irrevocable rules is this: what goes around comes around—every single time.

### Your Municipal Officials

**Cecil Belle, Mayor**

**369-4165**

**Ward 1 Alderman Alonzo Sykes**

**369-7705**

**Ward 2 Alderman Cloyd Garth**

**369-5734**

**Ward 5’s OTHER Alderman Willie Cook**

**369-9156**

**Ward 4 Alderman Brunson Odom**

**369-2246**

**Ward 5 Alderman Jim Buffington**

**369-4985**

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*Reflections*

119 South Meridian Street  
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Vickie Pace  
Owner / Stylist

# Sorry politicians a political reality

## Continued from Page 1

“Sweet Lou,” Piniella retired as an active player after 18 seasons, 11 of which he spent with the Yankees. Currently the Cubs’ manager, Piniella won a World Series title with the Reds in 1990 and his Seattle Mariners’ team won a record tying 116 games in 2001.



Several months after I started at Jesuit, my dad was transferred to Orlando, so we moved to Winter Park where I had the privilege of playing baseball against another future Major Leaguer – Jackie Billingham. I went to Bishop Moore High School and Billingham, who is reportedly a distant relative of Christy Mathewson (one of baseball’s greatest pitchers), was Winter Park High’s star baseball player. Major League scouts took notice of his talent and signed him to a professional contract. After bouncing around the minor leagues for six or seven years, Billingham was finally brought up by the Dodgers in 1968.

A 6-4 right-hander, Billingham pitched over 2200 innings and compiled a 145-113 record in a 13-year career with the Dodgers, Astros, Reds, Tigers and Red Sox. An All-Star in 1973 when he led the National League with 40 starts, Billingham posted seven shutouts and won 19 games in both ’73 and ’74.



Aside from being a successful Major League baseball player (who, by the way, gave up Hank Aaron’s record-tying 714th home run), the thing I remember most about Billingham, always just “one of the guys,” was the fact that in the off-season he came back to Winter Park and pumped gas at his dad’s Standard station which was located across the street from Rollins College, my alma mater. In those days, players weren’t showered with million-dollar contracts, so Billingham had to work year-round just like the rest of us in order to make ends meet.

Sadly, those days are long gone, as is my love for professional sports, and the reason I’ve fallen off the wagon so to speak is that too many of today’s play-for-pay players (unlike Billingham, along with Aberdeen’s very own Reggie Kelly and Andre Townsend) are no longer just “one of the guys.” Instead, far too many of them are unapproachable, spoiled, pampered, egotistical

thugs who will do anything to get ahead, drugs included. (Yes, I’m talking about Barry Bonds, Mark McGwire, Rafael Palmeiro, Sammy Sosa and all the other drugged up cheats who populate the professional sports scene today.)

My disdain for the modern professional athlete doesn’t begin to compare, however, to the contempt and scorn I hold for today’s politicians. Because of the decision-making power they hold, politicians have a tremendous influence over the way a society is governed. There are literally dozens of different definitions for the word “politician” in the various dictionaries, but being “old-school,” I’m partial to one found in Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary which defines a politician as, “a person experienced in the art or science of government, especially one actively engaged in conducting the business of government.” (The key phrase here is “actively engaged in conducting the business of government.”)

Not too long ago, within my lifetime anyway, our government was populated by people who actually did “conduct the business of government.” They were “one of us” and, for the most part, really did accomplish good things for our nation and state.

Sadly, those days are also long gone and, for many of us, the aforementioned definition hardly applies to what passes for a politician today. In fact, contemporary politicians can be compared with a great many of our current professional athletes as they have become the pariahs of society who will say or do anything (lie, cheat and/or steal) not only to gain a political office, but to stay in office in order to enrich themselves, their families and friends. (If you don’t believe me, check Congress’ recent poll numbers which are far worse than Bush’s all-time low numbers.)

So that brings us to the modern-day definition of a politician, a person who can be more accurately described as, “one devoted primarily to his own advancement in public office,” or “a schemer or an intriguer.” My favorite definition, however, was the one used by Canada’s Rhinoceros Party which stated politicians “are, by nature, thick-skinned, myopic, slow-moving and dim-witted” creatures who “wallow in mud,” but “can move fast as hell when cornered and have large, hairy horns growing out of the middle of their faces.” The Rhino Party, successor to the Rhinoceros Party, was fond of boasting its membership was made up of “artists, anarchists, absurdists, activists, alcoholics, practical jokers, loudmouths, perverts, door-crashers, weirdos, maniacs, show-offs, oddballs and morons,” but many of those same characteristics could also be applied to the modern-day politician, along with terms such as “liars, frauds, opportunists, influence-peddlers and hypocrites.”

Before I continue with my rant, let me say that not all politicians – just like not all professional athletes – are sorry, scum-sucking liars dedicated to, first and foremost, their own

**“...not all politicians—just like not all professional athletes—are sorry, scum-sucking liars dedicated to, first and foremost, their own betterment (although we do seem to have more than our fair share of incompetent boobs here in Aberdeen).”**

betterment (although we do seem to have more than our fair share of incompetent boobs here in Aberdeen). To be sure, there are honest, hard-working politicians who truly do set the standard and lead by example

and who actually have their constituents’ best interests in mind when they pass laws and set policy. Usually, most of those turn out to be the “local” politicians who actually live and work in their communities year round, not the career politicians who go off to Jackson or to Washington D.C. to govern.

But far too often, once many of our elected representatives leave the friendly confines of their individual communities, they become career politicians who acquire the nasty habit of putting politics and their own reelection plans ahead of their promise to serve the people with principle. Power, money and influence, not to mention a cushy lobbying job upon retirement, oftentimes take precedence over campaign promises made to those

Continued on Page 5

# Wong

By Viki Eggers Mason

A few weeks ago something happened that shook me to my very core.

I was chatting with a long-time supporter of this publication, when my friend told me my most important job was to keep Aberdeenians abreast of the goings on at City Hall. He told me you readers were *counting on me* to accomplish that critical duty. I suspect that my friend even considered my recent forays into the world of other governmental issues – immigration for example – kin to dropping the ball. EEK! How did THAT happen? Somebody please, show me where I signed on to be the guardian of your fortunes! We need to talk.

First, though, allow me this small digression. The Pacific Northwest is rich with the history of the Oriental peoples who came to this land to build railroads, wash sheets, toil in mines and, quite incidentally, to popularize egg foo yung. The town of Ontario, Oregon, where I was born was the site of one of the World War II internment camps where many Americans of Japanese descent were rounded up and imprisoned after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Eastern Oregon is now replete with huge farming operations run by eminently successful Americans with names like Murakami and Iseri.

Baker City, Oregon, where my children were born and where I spent several years as a young wife and mother, has sad ties to the gold rush coolies. Nearby is the site of Lillywhite Mine where hundreds of Chinese laborers dug for gold in the bowels of the Blue Mountains – at least until the gold began to play out. Then, when the primary mine shaft collapsed with the coolies still working deep within the mine, the cheap labor was left to die in the dusty darkness. The mine owners thought it would have simply been too costly to dig them out!

Industrious descendents of Baker County's first Chinese residents continue to live and do business there. All of which brings me to the point of this stroll down

Oregon History Lane - the old man who owned the best Chinese restaurant in town back in the 1970's.

He was a singularly dedicated man. I promise you, no matter what hour of the day or night, if the restaurant was open for business the ancient Chinaman would be there seated right beside the cash register where he hovered over every transaction. Come to think of it, it seems to me that every Oriental restaurant in which I've dined, including our local Jin Jin, seems to have just such an inscrutable character lurking somewhere near the money!

Perhaps it is their long tribal memory of torment and abuse telling them they must protect every penny which comes their way. In their early days in this country, Oriental Exclusion Laws specifically denied them the prospect of citizenship and the protections such status guaranteed. They must have learned somewhere back in time that hard-earned money has a way of slipping away when it goes unguarded. Whatever the cause for their caution, these people quietly and instinctively keep their eyes on the prize. They seem to flourish because of that vigilance.

After generations of governmental coddling and bounteous plenty, we in America, and particularly here in Aberdeen, seem to have grown fat and lazy where safeguarding our treasure is concerned. That any of you would think for the briefest second, that somebody else (me, for example) could possibly protect your investments is pure and simple silliness. Of course I do subscribe to Calvin Coolidge's advice when it comes to things governmental—I look out for myself by looking out for America – and, to whatever degree that philosophy manifests itself in matters municipal, I suppose I might accidentally help to protect your stuff. Nevertheless, it's not my job! I don't want it and I won't take it. Alone, I cannot possibly make even the smallest change. Remember, our leaders don't exactly leap to do my bidding! No. This a job for all of us. (After all, it's your fortune, cookie!)

I can't make many guarantees, my friends. Of this, though, I am certain—our current leaders like it best when you don't insert yourself into the business of running Aberdeen. They feel much more secure when you stay at home and blindly hope

for the best. They don't want you observing as they make the incredibly stupid hiring and firing decisions for which they gained no small notoriety. They don't want you meddling in planning, or zoning, or economic development. They become irritated when they are questioned or criticized and will roll their eyes when a citizen actually demonstrates the unmitigated gall to attend a meeting and ask pertinent questions!

So, if making them comfortable is your goal, and allowing them to continue to use your wealth in their crap shoot makes you sleep better at night, you must certainly stay the course. Don't bother them with suggestions and/or confuse them with facts. Leave them to their ignorance and arrogance and they will, I promise, pour your future down the proverbial drain.

I don't know how many more wrongful firing lawsuits this community can fund. I cannot determine how and why our money is being frittered away because this administration has deliberately neglected to complete even one of the annual audits required by State statute. As I type this, the boys in the boardroom have just hired a "financial planner" whose reputation and corporate affiliations seem to lead down a dark path toward failure and fraud. If you're ok with this sort of decision making, by all means don't involve yourself.

If, on the other hand, you honestly want to help yourself by helping your city, you're most welcome to join me on any first and third Tuesday in the quest for corporate sanity! Bring your own reason and intellect with you—finding such in Aberdeen's boardroom is sometimes impossible. Oh—and don't forget hope. We have precious little of that!



**Baker City, Oregon's Chinese Cemetery Pavillion. Dedicated August 24, 2002, the pavillion was built in Suzhou, China and shipped to Baker City in honor of the Baker County's Chinese pioneers.**



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## Sorry politicians Continued from page 3

who actually put them in office.

A classic example of this centers around our former Senator Trent Lott (after the recent immigration fiasco, I no longer consider him to be my Senator, just as I refuse to recognize Barry Bonds' new home run record). According to Dr. Tom Colburn, a Republican Senator from Oklahoma and the author of the book "Breach of Trust: How Washington Turns Outsiders into Insiders," a meeting with Colburn, House Speaker Dennis Hastert and then-Senate Majority Leader Lott aimed at limiting federal spending failed to convince Lott of the need to act. Said Colburn, "Lott looked at me, rested his chin on his hand, and said in his Mississippi baritone drawl, 'Well, I've got an election coming up in 2000. After that we can have good government.'"

Character flaws such as these and a lack of integrity often lead to a "culture of corruption," a term used by the Democrats in the last election when referring to a series of Republican political scandals which took place during George Bush's second term in office. More times than not, corrupt and/or morally bankrupt politicians ignore the average voter (until election time, of course) and instead, pander to corrupt lobbyists who represent special interest groups such as big business, trial lawyers, the environmentalists, etc. Fraud, bribery, cover-ups, racketeering and money-laundering then, in turn, become the norm, and the ethical standards which we have a right to expect from our elected leaders are tossed aside as the lawmakers rush to sell their souls to the highest bidder.

*Next week: The hypocrites and ethically-challenged leaders who populate the Democrook and Republicrook parties.*



## A tongue-in-cheek lesson in social history....

### *Found among the gems in our email in-box:*

Centuries ago, humans existed as members of small bands of nomadic hunter/gatherers. They lived on deer in the mountains during the summer and would go to the coast and live on fish and lobster in winter.

The two most important events in all of history were the invention of beer and the invention of the wheel. The wheel was invented to get man to the beer. These two events became the foundation of modern civilization and together were the catalyst for the splitting of humanity into two distinct subgroups: Liberals and Conservatives.

Once beer was discovered, it required grain and that was the beginning of man's dependence upon agriculture. Neither the glass bottle nor aluminum can were invented yet, so while our early human ancestors were sitting around waiting for them to be invented, they just stayed close to the brewery. That's how villages were formed.

In order to survive, some of the men of the village spent their days tracking and killing animals to BBQ at night while they were drinking beer. This was the beginning of what is known as the "Conservative Movement."

Other men of the village who were weaker and less skilled at hunting learned to live off the conservatives by showing up for the nightly BBQs and doing the sewing, fetching and hair-dressing. This was the beginning of the "Liberal Movement." Some of these liberal men eventually evolved into women. The rest became known as "girlie-men."

Over the years, conservatives came to be symbolized by the largest, most powerful land animal on earth, the elephant. Liberals chose as their symbol, the jackass.

Modern liberals like imported beer (with lime added), but most prefer white wine or imported bottled water. They eat raw fish, but like their beef well done. Sushi, tofu and French food are standard liberal fare.

Another interesting liberal evolutionary side note: a majority of their women have higher testosterone levels than their men. Most social workers, personal injury attorneys, journalists, dreamers in Hollywood and group therapists are liberals. Liberals also invented the designated hitter rule because it wasn't "fair" to make the pitcher also bat.

Conservatives drink domestic beer. They eat red meat and still provide for their women. Conservatives are big-game hunters, rodeo cowboys, lumberjacks, construction workers, firemen, medical doctors, police officers, corporate executives, Marines, coaches and athletes – generally anyone who works productively. Conservatives who own companies hire other conservatives who want to work for a living.

Liberals produce little or nothing. They like to "govern" the producers and decide what to do with their production. Liberals believe Europeans are more enlightened than Americans. That is why most of the liberals remained in Europe when conservatives were coming to America. They crept in after the Wild West was tamed and created a cottage industry whereby they have continuously tried to get *more* for nothing.

Some noteworthy liberal achievements include the domestication of cats, the invention of group therapy and group hugs, and the concept of Democratic voting to decide how to divide the meat and beer which the conservatives provide.

Here ends today's lesson in world history. It should be noted that a Liberal may have a momentary urge to respond to the above, before simply giggling and dismissing it as the rantings of a far-right neocon. A Conservative, on the other hand, will be so convinced of the absolute truth of this history that he will immediately share it with other "true believers."

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