

DAVID FERRO,
PUBLISHER

HEATHER JEFFREY
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Opinion

MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2007

THE
DAILY
REPORTER

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Whom to call

ELECTED OFFICIALS
Circuit Court Judge
Michael H. Cherry
279-4304

District Court Judge
David T. Coyle
279-4308

Probate Court Judge
Frederick L. Wood
279-4318

Prosecuting Attorney
Kirk Kashian
279-4319

Sheriff
Warren Canon
279-2325

Clerk
Terry Kubasiak
279-4306

Treasurer
Sandra S. Thatcher
279-4321

Register of Deeds
Nancy Hutchins
279-4320

Drain Commissioner
Michael Hard
279-4310

Surveyor
Edward W. Reed
639-4029

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Jerry R. Hubbard
741-3141

Sherwood Township
Union Township
Date Swift
369-1522

Matteson Township
Bronson Township
Bronson City
Noble Township
Norm Heinemann
238-4225

Batavia Township
Bethel Township
Gilead Township
Kinderhook Township
Imorean Rubley
238-2365

Alganssee Township
California Township
Ovid Township
Rod Olney
639-4694

Butler Township
Quincy Township
William Chinery
279-7680

Girard Township
Coldwater Township,
Ted Gordon
278-8788

Coldwater City, Ward 3,4
Don Shemel
(517) 279-9042 or (517)
278-4286

Coldwater City, Ward 1, 2

COLDWATER CITY NUMBERS
Eugene Wallace
Mayor
279-9501

1st Ward
Cisco Ortiz
781-4925

Tim Miller
1st Ward
278-6945

Chris Pierce
2nd Ward
279-7669

Mitch Rice
2nd Ward
279-1111

Randall Hazelbaker
4th Ward
279-7875

Heather Peet
4th Ward
278-5324

Maureen Petzko
3rd Ward
278-6234

Thomas Kramer
3rd Ward
278-6832

City Hall
279-9501

CBPU
279-9531



Editorial Round-Up

Excerpts from recent editorials in newspapers in the United States

THE BALTIMORE SUN, ON COCAINE SENTENCING GUIDELINES:

With a welcome dose of common sense, the U.S. Supreme Court has made it clear that federal sentencing guidelines are advisory, not mandatory, and that a judge is still free to exercise discretion, depending on the circumstances of the case. The court's reiteration of the principle that judges should use their judgment is particularly appropriate in drug cases, where mandatory minimum sentences are often unnecessarily harsh and disparate punishments involving crack and powder cocaine are especially glaring.

The U.S. Sentencing Commission's unanimous vote yesterday in favor of a retroactive review of many of these sentences should help restore some fairness, but it comes after too many people have already served too much time. Congress needs to enact more comprehensive relief.

The guidelines that went into effect in 1987 were meant to address widely uneven sentences, particularly among racial and ethnic groups, but they helped exacerbate the problem.

Viewing different forms of cocaine as more or less potent and dangerous sent many urban, minority crack users and sellers to prison for longer terms than their mostly white counterparts who were using and dealing powder cocaine. ...

But even as the commission has taken important steps to amend the guidelines, Congress needs to adjust the drug laws to which the guidelines apply. The House and Senate have been slow to move on bipartisan bills to change the 100-to-1 ratio for amounts of cocaine powder compared with crack that qualify for mandatory minimum sentences.

THE COLUMBUS (OHIO) DISPATCH, ON PRESIDENT BUSH'S MORTGAGE CRISIS FIX:

Large-scale government intervention to remedy the bad investment decisions made by individuals never is the ideal course, but the prospect of a million-mortgage meltdown with far-reach-

ing effects on the U.S. and world economies makes some action justifiable.

The deal worked out between the Bush administration and leading mortgage lenders appears to be appropriately limited in scope and duration. ...

The plan doesn't put taxpayers on the hook with a bailout that the nation can't afford. By limiting the freeze to those mortgages that are not delinquent, it avoids rewarding borrowers and lenders who struck deals that were unsustainable from the start.

ST. PETERSBURG (FLA.) TIMES, ON DESTROYED VIDEOTAPES OF CIA INTERROGATIONS:

The Bush administration serves up one outrage after another in its handling of terror suspects, from its use of secret overseas detention facilities to its use of harsh interrogation techniques. Now it appears the CIA destroyed hundreds of hours of videotapes showing the brutal interrogations of two top al-Qaida suspects, despite warnings that such destruction could be illegal.

As it has in the past, the CIA is beginning to look like a rogue agency that doesn't feel constrained by the law. ...

Investigations are under way by the House and Senate intelligence committees. ... A joint preliminary investigation also has been launched by the Justice Department and the CIA internal inspectors.

All this attention is more than warranted. This act of destruction that took place in 2005 not only suggests that the agency ignored the advice of Justice Department lawyers and the warnings of lawmakers. It also may have set itself up for obstruction of justice charges. ...

How aggressively the Justice Department digs into this will be the first test of political independence for Attorney General Michael Mukasey. At his confirmation hearings, Mukasey refused to classify waterboarding as torture. But the issue here is not torture. It is whether the CIA destroyed evidence and obstructed justice.

Another View

Thanks to many for a special weekend

"Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
"Let earth receive her King;
"Let every heart prepare Him room,
"And heaven and nature sing,
"And heaven and nature sing,
"And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.
"Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!
"Let men their songs employ;
"While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
"Repeat the sounding joy,
"Repeat the sounding joy,
"Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.
"No more let sins and sorrows grow,
"Nor thorns infest the ground;
"He comes to make His blessings flow
"Far as the curse is found,
"Far as the curse is found,
"Far as, far as, the curse is found.
"He rules the world with truth and grace,
"And makes the nations prove
"The glories of His righteousness,
"And wonders of His love,
"And wonders of His love,
"And wonders, wonders, of His love."



Roland Stoy

That's the print version of the timeless Christmas standard with words by Isaac Watts in 1719 and music by Lowell Mason for it in 1848. Friday evening in 2007, a flawless and exquisite rendition of it was performed at my front porch steps.

It started out as a typical Friday evening, do I want to get on the computer and work on my column and stuff for the Monday paper, or watch the Pistons? Or maybe I could at least get a start on work during halftime?

Then came a pronounced knocking on my front door, and I opened it to Kelly Ford and the Coldwater High School Balladiers, singing "Joy to the World."

Out caroling for a couple of hours under the auspices of Ford were Jessie Lillis, Chelsea Hart, Morgan O'Neill, Kayla Dove, Katie Hicks, Nikki Wilson, John Counterman, Nathan Ford, Bryan Shirk, Matt Cole, Jason Delaney and Nick Baughman.

Was I in good fortune this night?

I think they appreciated my appreciation and performed a second tune, "Carol of the Bells."

"We have been doing this since I started at Coldwater," said Ford. "It's a lot of fun for us to go out and share a bit of Christmas cheer - the kids love to sing, and in the middle of so many formal performances for the Balladiers, they enjoy something a little more casual."

Made my night. Made my weekend, which was blessed Saturday by the "Wreaths Across America" ceremony at Fort Custer National Cemetery in which military personnel from all over the region presented Christmas wreaths in memory of those who gave all in service to their country.

And then Sunday morning, how beautiful was that? It was intensely beautiful with the white blanket of snow over everything and the flurries coming down, before being slightly diminished in beauty later when I had to go out and shovel.

At least, I didn't have to go to work Sunday morning, as did Jim Whelan of the radio station, who along with wife Pat, rolled out of bed at 4 a.m. and braved the storm to get down to their offices on Angola Road and report church and other closings.

At 7 a.m. there were a handful and by 8 a.m. a couple of dozen, saving many hundreds, probably over a thousand churchgoers, including myself, hazardous travel in vain.

Pat said they had a relatively clear road down to the station at 5:30 a.m., thanks to the work of county and city road crews, but the parking lot there was another matter. Hopefully, they made it out and home okay.

To Ford and his wonderful singers, to Major Ed Shumway and Lt. Debbie (D.J.) Sandstrom for the Civil Air Patrol's wreath project and to the Whelans, thanks for a great weekend.

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Roland Stoy is a staff writer for The Daily Reporter. He may be reached at (517) 278-2318, ext. 25 or by e-mail at rstoy@thedailyreporter.com.

Where to call

County Clerk
279-4306

Third District Court
279-4308

District Court /Probation
279-4309

Drain Commission /Dept. Public Works
279-4310

Equalization Department
279-4312

MSU Extension Office
279-4311

4-H Fair Board
278-5367

Family Independence Agency
279-4200

Friend of the Court
279-4314

Health Department
279-9561

Housing Rehabilitation Commission
279-4315

Intermediate School District
279-5730

Jury Board
279-4306

Branch District Library
279-2341

Maintenance
279-4307

Medical Examiner
279-7840

Mental Health Department
279-8404

Microfilm Department
279-4317

Parks and Recreation
279-9850

Letters To The Editor

The Daily Reporter welcomes letters from readers commenting on public policy issues. The letters should be no longer than 600 words, they must be signed by the author and an address and telephone number must be included for verification. Letters that do not meet these criteria will not be published.

The newspaper reserves the right to edit letters for accuracy, brevity and clarity.

Please address letters to: Letters To The Editor, Attn: Heather Jeffrey, Executive Editor, The Daily Reporter, 15 W. Pearl St., Coldwater, Mich. 49036.

You may also fax us letters at 278-6041 or e-mail them to us at editor@thedailyreporter.com.

Our Web site is www.thedailyreporter.com.

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What kind of columnists would you like to see on these pages? Local? Syndicated? Liberal? Conservative? Let us know. You may call us at 278-2318 or e-mail us at editor@thedailyreporter.com. Our address is 15 W. Pearl St., Coldwater, Mich. 49036. Our office hours are Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Doonesbury



Garry Trudeau