

OPINION

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The Day AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1881

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"The newspaper should be more than a business enterprise. It should also be the champion and protector of the public interest and defender of the people's rights."

As written by Theodore Bodenwein in his will establishing The Day Trust.

OUR MISSION

To publish the highest quality newspaper and to be the dominant source of news and advertising in the region.
To be a strong, profitable company that serves the needs of the customer.
To be a good employer.
To lead in the growth and well-being of the region.
To return the company's profits to the community to serve the public interest.

For the good of the state

Now is the time for the state's vast array of honest political men and women to do the right thing for Connecticut. The priority begins with Gov. John G. Rowland, who should resign immediately.

The governor has been caught lying about freebies he took from aides and from a major state contractor working on his summer cottage. This event was no different in substance from the details that prompted the governor to fire Public Works Commissioner Theodore Anson. Mr. Anson took free drawings for his home project from an architect doing business with the state.

Yet the governor tries to make his act of betrayal of state residents somehow more innocent. This is nonsense.

That is why we now appeal to Gov. Rowland's best instincts, the kind of character he showed in forcing the legislature to avoid a budget mess, in trying to rebuild the state's long-forgotten cities and in strengthening the state Freedom of Information laws.

At his best, Gov. Rowland is a courageous political leader who cares deeply for Connecticut and often remarks of his pride in the state. It is in that spirit that he should surrender the leadership of state government to Lt. Gov. Jodi Rell.

The Republican Party leaders should now come together to persuade the governor that he would serve Connecticut best by leaving office. The congressional Republicans and the state party leadership and top leaders in the legislature all should be united in one voice urging Gov. Rowland to step down.

Failing to do so will create in Connecticut the cynicism and nastiness that enveloped our national government during the impeachment trial of President Bill Clinton. No leader should permit in Connecticut the gut-wrenching, visceral animosities that ripped the country apart during the Clinton finale.

Yet the long knives have come out in both the Republican and Democratic parties. In their crass and small vision, the two parties seem

Gov. John Rowland can stop poisonous politics by resigning.

prepared to create a poisonous atmosphere. They are treating this scandal as if it is only a matter of politics and public relations. It is not. Rather, it is a matter of ethics, decency and integrity.

It is not about lining up for the next gubernatorial election in 2006. Nor is the issue about how the governor's troubles will hinder Republican or help Democratic fund-raising. It is, in short, not about selfishness. It is about the common decency to do the right thing. It is about state politicians who rise above tawdriness and deception to help the people of Connecticut.

This year has been a nightmare for state politics. Mayor Philip Giordano of Waterbury and Mayor Joseph Ganim of Bridgeport have been convicted of criminal charges. Lawrence Alibozek, the governor's former deputy chief of staff, has pleaded guilty to taking bribes for state contracts. Former State Treasurer Paul Silvester has been sentenced for taking bribes and political contributions in return for handling out state pension fund management. A federal grand jury is in the late stages of a corruption investigation into the Rowland administration. State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal is investigating, too.

Connecticut has a history of decent, caring government. It is critical to restore that tone and sense of purpose.

The governor should respond to that higher calling. He can leave now with a measure of respect if he stands forthrightly to acknowledge that he has lost the public's trust and cannot govern effectively.

John Rowland should do what's best for Connecticut. He should resign.

Chinks in the Dean armor

President George W. Bush isn't the only politician energized by the capture of Saddam Hussein. U.S. Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman, trailing in New Hampshire, has unleashed an attack on Howard Dean that exposes chinks in the armor of the former Vermont governor.

Sen. Lieberman seized upon Gov. Dean's remark that the capture of Mr. Hussein has not made America safer. Earlier, Sen. Lieberman had attacked Gov. Dean for being ambivalent about whether Iraq would be better off, or not, without Saddam Hussein.

And Sen. Lieberman emphasized the point when he said Gov. Dean was against removing Saddam Hussein. As with Sen. John Kerry, Gen. Wesley Clark and Sen. John Edwards, the effort is to paint Gov. Dean as an ultra-liberal who would weaken the military and fail to meet America's foreign policy challenges.

"In this campaign, I'm putting forward a positive vision for America. And that stands in sharp contrast to what Howard Dean offers today," Sen. Lieberman said. "He seems to believe if you are just against everything,

Lieberman uses statements on Saddam, Iraq war to try to disparage Gov. Dean.

that's enough. Against removing Saddam Hussein. Against tax cuts. Against knocking down walls of protection around the world so we can sell more products that are made in America, by Americans. Dr. Dean has become Dr. No."

The popularity of Gov. Dean stems from the fact that he generally gives direct, unequivocal answers. And sometimes such directness gets him into trouble as his answers are interpreted by his rivals.

The growing problem for all the Democratic candidates is that only Gov. Dean has awakened a grass-roots excitement among the party faithful and with independent voters. No one else has yet made so strong a connection with voters.



LETTERS TO THE DAY

Program casts ray of hope on woodlands

To the Editor of The Day:

Monday through Saturday for the past few months, more than 100 big dump trucks (14-wheelers) go past my home, some starting prior to 7 a.m. These behemoths go in both directions on the main road and you really have to be alert when attempting to enter the traffic flow so as to avoid bodily harm.

We all know that malls are being built, a Stop-and-Shop is planned in Flanders, an up-scale development is under way off Route 161 and, of course, the specter of Route 11 is hovering over us; so these trucks indeed are necessary.

In addition, subdivisions are being proposed "that would use innovative techniques to maximize open space." When is it all going to stop?

The trucks, incidentally, while spewing all kinds of good stuff into the air, are probably damaging the roads as well, but who cares except those hoping to profit.

The above activity is certainly not helping our fragile environmental balance, but when I read The Day I was heartened to see that all is not lost. ("State buys rights to 270 acres in Bozrah," Dec. 14.)

The state Department of Agriculture has quietly bought development rights to more than 200 farms (since its inception in 1978) "to permanently bar housing and commercial development." It further stated that: "the owners retain the rights but the parcels can't be subdivided or put to any use other than limited agricultural or open space."

It looks like someone is really trying to halt all of this ecological lunacy.

Stephen W. Boska
Oakdale

When will the troops return from Bosnia?

To the Editor of The Day:

You should tell whoever is asking when our troops are coming home from Iraq that the better question might be, when are our troops coming back from the "six-month temporary assignment" in Bosnia?

Wasn't that deployment almost eight years ago? And aren't the troops still there "temporarily"?

David L. Deibel
Groton

Montville safety panel should study ethics

To the Editor of The Day:

Ethics. The Day should have the same high standards of ethics on state and local issues. When Montville's Public Safety Commission Chairman Anthony Pescatello "jokingly threatened" to throw a person (ex-Mayor Howard Beetham) out the window, I never heard any mention of ethics from The Day.

Fellow commission member Joe Kennedy, who is an ex-police officer — as many of the members are — saw nothing wrong with his fellow member's threatening and thought it was humorous. Public safety is what this commission represents and here they're going to throw people out the window. Where's the ethics in this picture?

Mr. Pescatello said he would resign, which was a good thing, and I thought his fellow member, Mr. Kennedy, should also for his comments. Neither resigned.

The Day had an article about our high school students learning about right from wrong and bullying. I wish this commission would have

attended. It might have learned something. As far as ethics with politicians, well, "birds of a feather fly together" and that's because of the good old American buck.

Les Taylor
Oakdale

Handicapped deserve more consideration

To the Editor of The Day:

Lazy, inconsiderate and being in a rush is not a handicap. By becoming handicapped myself recently, I've noticed some people don't seem to care about anyone but themselves. This really infuriates me to no end.

People, please stop and think about what you are doing. Those parking spots are not there for your convenience, but for disabled people.

Please be a little more considerate next time you think, "I'll only be a minute," because God forbid that you someday may become disabled like me.

John R. Millett Jr.
Pawcatuck

Death in Iraq must be a newspaper priority

To the Editor of The Day:

Today, instead of complaining about it, I'm going to do something about it. I have to ask "Where are The Day's priorities?" when I find another loss of life in Iraq buried on page C5 and a dog story on the front page.

This is not the first time. Just the other day you ran an Indian story on page one and a more important story about another loss of life in the war on page two.

I wish you would develop a policy of keeping the Iraq war losses on the front page. Keep it in everyone's faces so we don't trivialize that our service people are facing death and danger everyday in defending all our freedoms.

Daniel Desmond
Waterford

Tour showcased city's fine-arts community

To the Editor of The Day:

The third annual New London Open Studio Tour was a success because of the efforts of Greg Bowerman, with some last-minute help from the New London arts community. Though attendance was light, there was some foot traffic and it was most welcome. Conversation and solidarity was spread between artist and visitors in a rewarding weekend for those who participated.

I was at 60 State St., one of the buildings renovated into the city's newest and more expensive apartments. All I can say is what a space, what a location and what a view. Accolades to Alva Greenberg and the other building owners who provided space for the New London artists who happen to live outside of downtown proper.

New London is quick to call itself the region's arts capitol and the artists are indeed adding luster to the city's peculiarities. They are small-scale entrepreneurs who like what they have found here and are sticking to their convictions. They are actually showing up, producing and forging ahead with their vision of New London, largely by their own initiative.

From my vantage point, I saw two members of the City Council, Rod Gaynor and Bill Morse. I did not see any other politician or civic leader, except Ms. Greenberg, despite how often the city's arts renaissance is invoked to describe new and vibrant New London. Nor did I see many New Londoners who are reading

this letter.

Kudos to everyone who came down and made this a memorable, even if we are the only ones who know it. It is the people who come and spend their time reinvigorating downtown life through actions, not words, that make New London great. It is not a black-tie affair and it is infinitely more interesting.

Everyone is welcome to come aboard.

Matthew King
New London

State would be better off without Rowland

To the Editor of The Day:

Gov. John G. Rowland should be impeached immediately if he will not resign. At best, he is a liar and expense-account cheat; at worst, an influence peddler. Were he a federal official, he would have been fired or indicted long ago.

Twenty years ago, then-state Rep. Pat Hendel asked me to testify to the committee responsible for spending, recommending the adoption of the Model Procurement Code (MPC) just promulgated by the American Bar Association. I was then Electric Boat's contracts attorney after serving in the Office of the General Counsel (OCG) and had many years' experience with the Defense (now Federal) Acquisition Regulation.

Unfortunately for the taxpayers, our legislature never adopted the MPC, which could have prevented the corrupt, non-competitive awards to Tomasso and other "hooked-up" large donors. The Democrat-controlled legislature showed no interest either in doing away with back room deals.

Hopefully, once Gov. Rowland is gone, Department of Administrative Services and Department of Public Works will see the wisdom of adopting the MPC. Several Capitol region cities did adopt the companion Model Procurement Ordinance and streamlined procurement at the micro level.

Walt Jay
Groton

Rowland's arrogance conveys his character

To the Editor of The Day:

Bottom line, Gov. John G. Rowland's actions, cover-up lies, amazing memory recalls and mea culpas, only when found out are, unacceptable. Not only do they indicate that he knowingly oversaw a pervasive level of cronyism and corruption throughout the state, his current arrogant behavior implies that he believes a simple admission of guilt is all that's now required.

As citizens of Connecticut, each of us deserves much better from our governor. His swift departure from the leadership of our state is the very least he can do. And then, just like all others who have gone to trial for similar infractions, so too should he. As responsible adults, we work hard to teach children the core values of honesty and hard work. Lately, it's become more difficult to reinforce this message as those who ask for our trust, disappoint.

Increasingly, it seems as if those who break the rules expect selective justice in a society laden with secret sweetheart deals for those in the "in crowd." Gov. Rowland, during his tenure, only when pressured did he confess to improprieties in so many areas. Now it's time for him to stand up and take what's coming. With Jodi Rell as governor, let us move on to the more important task of ridding the state of Connecticut from a continuance of our dismal legacy.

Claudia Gauches
Stonington

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