

EXPRESS YOURSELF

Write a letter to the editor. All letters must be signed, 400 words or less and include the writer's phone number and address. Only one letter per writer per month will be accepted. Letters may be mailed to The Sidney Daily News, Jeff Billiel, publisher/executive editor, P.O. Box 4099, 1451 N. Vandemark Road, Sidney, OH 45365; emailed to jbilliel@sdnccg.com; or faxed to (937) 498-5991.



IN OUR VIEW

Sidney Daily News

Your hometown newspaper since 1891

Frank Beeson/Regional Group Publisher
Jeffrey J. Billiel/Editor and Publisher

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Look around and be thankful

Sometimes it's good to just walk around slowly and quietly and look and think. This morning was one of those times. I didn't get mildly out of breath the way Doc wanted me to, but just strolled comfortably.

There was what we still call the old drugstore, there in faded brick solidity in the corner. The new drugstore's made mostly of glass and is three blocks down these days, and the old drugstore has become a meeting place and rehearsal hall for our local actors, and is also a place where members of the PTA take turns tutoring children after school. Not a bad job for a grand old building.

And here comes Mrs. Sandiford. She's bent over pretty badly these days, but she looks up at me with effort and smiles a good morning. Two years ago we knew she wasn't going to survive that stroke, but here she is, still smiling and still taking care of her two cats: Boots and Desdemona.

There's old Billy, asleep in the street again. He was Stewart Simpson's dog until Stew passed on, and now Billy belongs to all of us. We haven't had a town dog since Sally died in her sleep on Doc's front porch, you know, so now Billy has picked up the slack. We



Home Country
Slim Randles

all feed him and pet him, and he has quite smoothly made the transition from one-man dog to one-town dog. He greets each of the children in the mornings down at the school, just to make them feel good about themselves. A worthwhile job.

Old Martin, the crossing guard, stops the traffic for Billy now, as well as for the kids. How Martin can make it out there, year after year, in all that weather, just to get those kids safely across the street, is a mystery. He's a special guy. That new young couple just parked the car over by the dress shop and got out. They have that new baby of theirs in one of those tummy sling things. You can zip a parka right around those babies, you know. Keeps everyone warm and feeling loved.

As for me, I just like to think of Thanksgiving and the treasures life has given us.

The writer is a veteran newspaperman and outdoorsman who is a registered outfitter and guide. He has written novels and nonfiction books based on rural living and he has also been an award-winning columnist for the largest daily newspapers in Alaska and New Mexico. He lives in Albuquerque.

Senate fighting to end human trafficking

Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., and I launched the Senate Caucus to End Human Trafficking. We were joined by individuals and groups from around the country who are devoted to ending this modern-day form of slavery, whether it is bonded labor, forced labor or sex trafficking. Advocate Jada Pinkett Smith, founder of Don't Sell Bodies, spoke, as did two university students, brave young survivors of human trafficking who talked about their experiences.

Human dignity
Our idea is to bring Republicans and Democrats together in this fight to respect and protect human dignity. I have heard from thousands of Ohioans who care deeply about preventing human trafficking, partly because it is occurring in our own backyard. When it comes to human trafficking at home or abroad, our government's policy must be one of zero tolerance.

It is an issue with special meaning for me. I grew up with my mom's stories about her great-grandparents, Quaker abolitionists who lived on a farm north of Dayton and helped slaves seek their freedom by way of the



Portman reports
Rob Portman
U.S. Senator

Underground Railroad. In fact, the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, located on the banks of the Ohio River in Cincinnati, is home to a permanent exhibit on human trafficking.

In my time in the Senate, it has been heartbreaking to learn that human trafficking is a major problem in Ohio. A few years ago, the Ohio Trafficking in Persons Study Commission estimated that more than 1,000 Ohio youth are victims of sex trafficking every year, and that many more are at risk. Toledo, in particular, has been an epicenter of this trafficking.

Unsettling
It is especially unsettling because no city better symbolizes America's great cities than Toledo, just as no state better reflects the nation than Ohio. This is why companies choose Toledo as their test market when they are trying out new products.

Yet the Glass City is currently No. 4 in the nation in arrests, investigations and rescues of domestic minor sex-trafficking victims. Toledo and Lucas County lead the nation per capita for traffickers

produced and victims recruited.

Many Ohio and Toledo-area organizations, including faith-based institutions and nonprofits, are working hard on a grassroots level to help fight this problem. State leaders such as Rep. Teresa Fedor, Gov. John Kasich and Attorney General Mike DeWine have elevated this issue in public consciousness.

But there is also a role for the federal government to play. That is why I have co-sponsored the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, bipartisan legislation that gives Washington better tools to combat the international side of this plague.

Penalties
It makes tougher penalties for human trafficking as a federal crime, and gives trafficking victims access to the social services they need to rebuild their lives.

Another area I have been focused on is ensuring that the billions of taxpayer dollars our government spends on overseas development, reconstruction and other projects are not used to support human trafficking.

Though the majority of U.S. contractors and subcontractors are not exploiting their workers, sometimes workers recruited for low-wage jobs — often thousands of miles from their

home countries — can find themselves vulnerable to illegal or fraudulent employment practices. These include forced or coercive labor, passport confiscation, "recruitment fees" that consume more than a month's salary, and failure to help the employee return home when the job is finished. Earlier this year, as the top Republican on the Senate's Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight, I joined with Sen. Blumenthal to introduce the End Trafficking in Government Contracting Act. In June it passed out of my committee, and we are working to get it passed by the full Senate.

Values
The goal is to ensure that overseas government contracts, paid for by taxpayer dollars, operate in a manner consistent with our deeply-held values as a nation. Our bill requires the best practices adopted by some contractors become standard practice on all significant U.S. government contracts abroad.

Addressing the scourge of human trafficking cuts across all party and philosophical lines because it is fundamentally about respecting and protecting human dignity. It is a principle all of us as Americans must hold dear, and it is a fight we must continue.

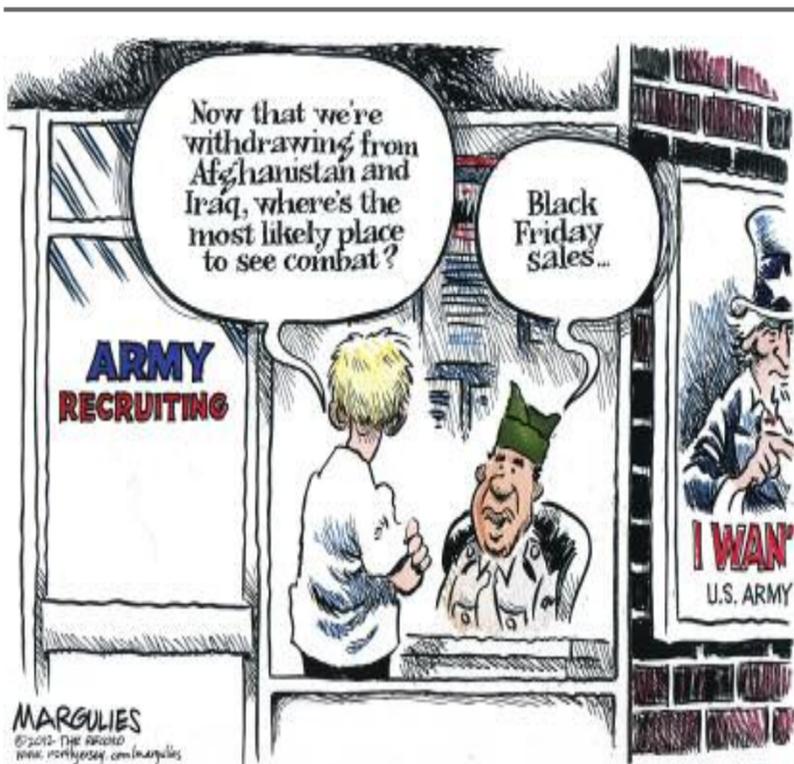
POET'S CORNER

On a Saturday afternoon

BY IRENE K. PALKO

On a Saturday afternoon
the air is cool, crisp
even a flurry
of white
exists
Brutus jumps
and frisks
here and there
the band swings
and beats
to make an afternoon
complete
a vast sea of red
sways from side to side
player's are bent low
and wide
perfect for another
"game of the year"
on a Saturday afternoon.

The writer lives at 3003 Cisco Road.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Many helped to save animals

To the editor:

As Shelby County sheriff, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to a number of people and organizations for their devotion to the success of the investigation into Pedigree Pets. Without their involvement and hard work we would not have been able to accomplish the task of saving the 240 animals that were seized from 8350 Tawawa-Maplewood Road in Maplewood on Nov. 17.

They include Deputy Cami Frey, Dr. Lisa Nadasi and staff, Ohio SPCA, SCARF, the village of Jackson Center and administrator Bruce Metz and Police Chief Joe Cotterman, Jackson Center FFA, Shelby County Commissioner Julie Ehemann, Chris Roettiger of the Shelby County Fairgrounds, all of the rescue groups and foster families who have taken dogs to care for, and the

various volunteers who have spent many hours helping with the care of these animals. We have had so many people that have volunteered that we can't begin to name them all.

We have had a lot of people wanting to donate items or time and those that have already donated. We appreciate the donations. At this time we have everything we think we need to continue to care for the dogs; anyone wanting to donate can do so by making a monetary donation to SCARF at P.O. Box 671, Sidney, OH 45365.

The investigation is continuing and as a result I expect there will be multiple charges filed against the Atons for cruelty to animals, failure to license and possibly other criminal charges.

John Lenhart
Shelby County Sheriff

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

FISH plans special shopping day

To the editor:

Christmas is rapidly approaching. The FISH Thrift Shop is planning to have a special Christmas shopping day in December. This is to help the less fortunate in our area purchase gifts for members of their family. There will be a special time set aside for parents to shop for their children and then the children to shop for their parents.

If anyone out there has nice, clean, used toys, dolls with clothes, complete games, children's clothing in good condition or other useful items that you don't need anymore, please consider donating them to our organization. It would certainly help us with this project.

Times are tough for many people — but we can make things easier for a little while if we all pitch in and help. Wouldn't it be wonderful to know due to your generosity, these families would all have a gift to open on Christmas!

If you have any questions, or can help us, please contact the shop. Blessings to you and yours.

Becky Gillman
FISH Chairman
1128 W. Michigan St.

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