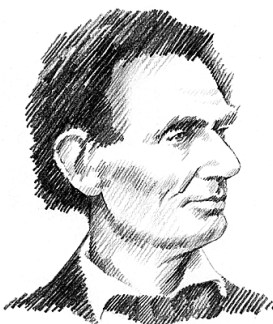


THE STATE
Journal Register

"The Journal paper was always my friend..."
— A. Lincoln, June 18, 1864



"We want the Register to be the people's paper."
— Publisher's statement June 19, 1881

OUR OPINION
**State must curb
abuse of fund**

STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER reporter Sarah Antonacci didn't have much luck when she attempted to speak to Minnesota lawyer John Paul Carroll about his bill to the Illinois Capital Litigation Trust Fund for defending child killer Cecil Sutherland in his recent retrial.

First, Carroll hung up on Antonacci. Then he didn't return her calls.

We can hardly blame him. If we had just finished billing the state for \$900,000 for a murder case we had initially offered to defend for free, we would not want to discuss it with a reporter from that state either.

Antonacci fared even worse when she attempted to speak with Michael Fleming, Carroll's investigator on the Sutherland case.

"I'm not going to talk about this nonsense," Fleming told Antonacci, who contacted him in Chicago. "I just don't want to talk about it. I don't want to talk to you. Have a good day."

Fleming, who worked with Carroll when both were Chicago police officers, collected a tidy \$600,000 from Carroll for his work on the Sutherland defense.

THAT MONEY, and the entire \$2.03 million bill submitted by Carroll in the Sutherland defense, came from the Capital Litigation Trust Fund. The fund was established by the Illinois General Assembly in 2000 with the noblest of intentions: As evidence mounted that Illinois' death penalty system was prone to errors leading to unlawful convictions, lawmakers created a resource to provide proper legal defense to all death penalty defendants.

Unfortunately, the General Assembly did not establish any system for questioning the legitimacy or possible excessiveness of bills submitted to the fund. A defense attorney submits his bills to the fund to the judge in the case, who forwards the bills to the Illinois Treasurer's Office. The trial judge, understandably, is reluctant to deny expenses for fear of hindering the defense.

That is why Carroll could turn in expenses such as 24 hours at \$135.68 an hour for packing a van with items for the trial, driving from Minnesota to Belleville and unpacking the van. That was just a small part of what eventually became nearly \$900,000 in charges for Carroll in the Sutherland case.

IF ILLINOIS is to keep the death penalty, we believe the Capital Litigation Trust Fund is an essential part of the system by which capital punishment is administered. At the time it was established, 13 people wrongly sent to death row had been exonerated. Many of those false convictions were rooted in poor legal defense for defendants who could not afford better. The fund ensures that lack of money will not deny a death penalty defendant a thorough and proper defense.

Unfortunately, lack of a supervising authority to scrutinize and question expenses billed to the fund has left it alarmingly vulnerable to unscrupulous behavior. Carroll maintains a Web site on which he says he charges \$50,000 for a death penalty case. Yet when the state of Illinois is paying the bills without question, that figure is multiplied almost 18 times.

A REASONABLE solution to this would be to assign oversight of CLTF billings to an outside authority, perhaps the chief judge in the circuit in which the trial is being held. An attorney who knows his or her bills will be scrutinized and, if deemed excessive, denied, will be less likely to view the state as a source of easy money.

We also believe, however, that any attempt by the state to limit spending for a death penalty defense will lead to such protracted appeals of convictions as to make capital punishment a legal impossibility in Illinois. That may be years down the road, but we see it as inevitable.

Until then, the state must act both to protect the Capital Litigation Trust Fund and to severely punish those who abuse it.

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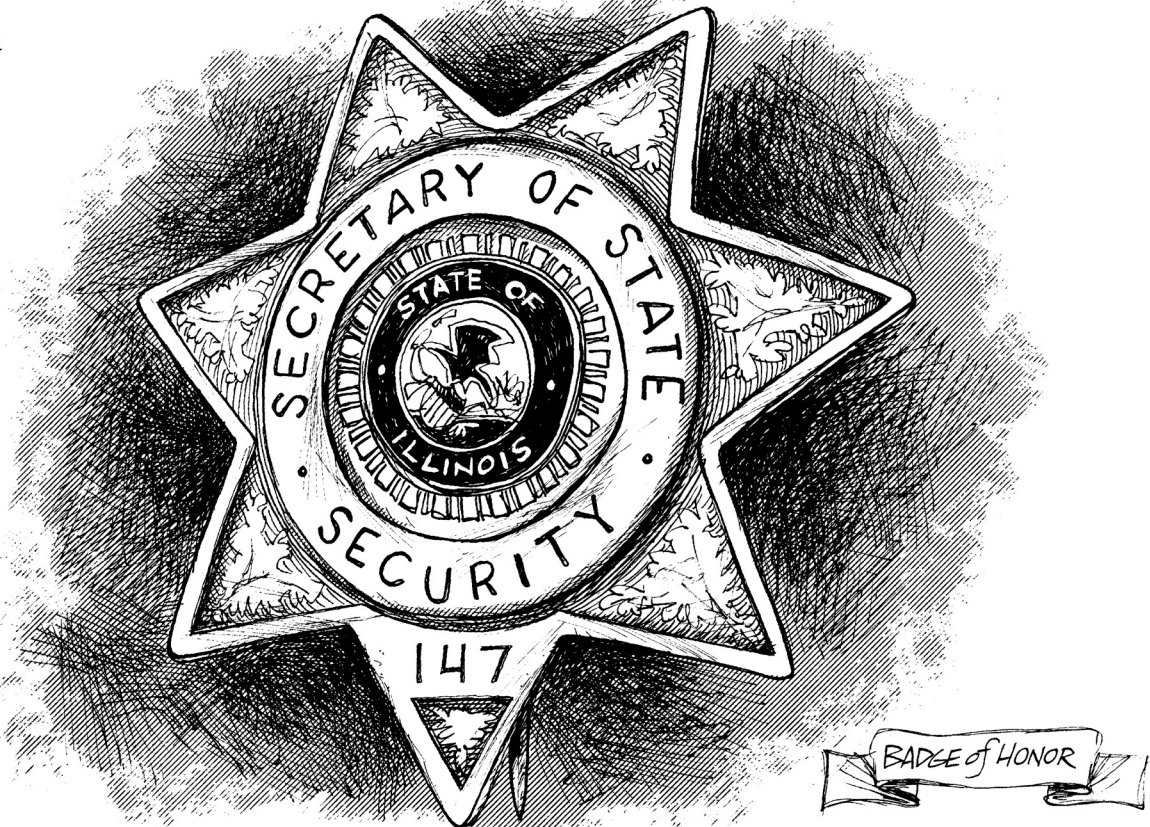
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THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER

CHRIS BRITT

DEDICATED - LOYAL - KIND



BILL WOZNAK - 1953-2004

Cartoonist Chris Britt can be reached at 788-1558 or chris.britt@sj-r.com.

LETTERS, FAXES & E-MAIL

City landmark ordinance
can be effective in future

The story about the two potential landmarks on Eighth Street demolished recently despite their listing in the city's demolition delay ordinance (State Journal-Register, Sept. 15) mentions, "The idea (for the ordinance) came from the city's Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team study."

While the R/UDAT study endorsed the concept, the Historic Preservation Association of Springfield had helped draft a demolition delay ordinance in 1995, 12 years after it had begun lobbying for the legislation. In 2002 Save Old Springfield suggested that the R/UDAT include the measure in its recommendations, which it did. With that impetus, the Historic Sites Commission then recommended adoption of the ordinance, and the city council passed it last year.

Although the ordinance failed to save the two houses on Eighth Street, it's encouraging that the city has now established procedures that will guarantee that the ordinance, designed to provide some time for discussion of the fate of buildings with landmark potential, will be effective in the future.

Jerry Jacobson
Save Old Springfield

Good luck in bid to hike
pay for Catholic teachers

We read with interest the "In My View" opinion of Susan Stegeman on Saturday and couldn't agree with her more.

Having had three children go through the parochial system here in Springfield, and finding the majority of their teachers to be inspiring and dedicated, we would think the Springfield Diocese would be embarrassed regarding these salaries. We knew they did not make what the public schoolteachers did, but were surprised to learn how much of a disparity there really is.

Communication by the Springfield Diocese is extraordinary when it concerns fund-raisers, appeals, etc. However, good luck to the Center for Improving Parochial Education in having the diocese respond to their concerns. Our experience with them has been that their official response is no response!

David and Elaine Boardman
Springfield

Let registered voters
decide fate of Chief

Numerous letters regarding Chiel Illinikew have appeared. The Chief is certainly a divisive topic with passions running high, whichever side is taken. That is why I believe it's time for our legislature to handle the Chief's fate. The question of the Chief's existence should be taken out of the hands of the board of trustees and protesters alike.

The question should be posed to the registered voters of Illinois; the legislature can ensure it happens. The U of I is a state-supported institution and not a private school. By letting the voters decide we will have a clear indication of what the taxpaying population wants, not what we're told we want.

Personally, I believe the Chief is an integral part the U of I and should remain. One last thought: If the Chief has to go, we should also think about renaming our state.

Lynn Arthur
Springfield

'Footloose' production
sets a great precedent

I would like to publicly thank the Springfield Public School Foundation and Springfield School District 186 for their ongoing support of this coming weekend's first ever all-city, public school musical — "Footloose."

Last spring, several District 186 administrators and teachers applied to the Springfield Public School Foundation for a grant to bring all three public high schools together to produce a musical — and to start building bridges among the city's youth.

Wow! Did they succeed! Lanphier, Southeast and Springfield are represented throughout this cast and stage crew, and these kids have worked all summer to bring this production to the stage.

Many of the kids in the "Footloose" cast have no prior stage experience and I would like to acknowledge the directing team of Jen Wallner, Bob Mitchell and Maryna Mitchell who have worked diligently to pull this production together with cast experience levels that run the spectrum.

Long-lasting, cross-city friendships have been forged. Hat's off as well to the many Springfield community members who have come forth to build and paint sets, pull cos-

tumes together, provide technical assistance and perform as part of the orchestra.

"Footloose" is about teenagers coming of age, learning hard lessons as they work together to get the town's leadership to see things in a different way. I applaud the Springfield Public School Foundation for having the foresight to provide this grant so that perhaps these kids can mirror the characters they are playing and work to effect change.

"Footloose" is playing in the Springfield High School Auditorium on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and on Sunday at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$5 for students and are only available at the door.

I encourage you to come out and support this talented cast, the crew, the directors and the musicians, and all who have worked hard to bring this production to life.

As we applaud at the show's conclusion, it will not just be for what has been accomplished on stage this weekend, but for the precedent that has been set for our community.

Kim Carter Parker
Springfield

Stranger went out of her
way to return checkbook

With everything going on in our city this week, I wanted to share a nice story about a stranger going out of her way for me.

Sunday afternoon I went to Sam's to do some shopping. While walking up to the door I was going through my purse looking for my Sam's card. Later that night, my phone rang and it was a nice young lady telling me she thought she had my checkbook.

I didn't even realize it, but it had fallen out of my purse when I was searching for my card. She picked it up and called the number listed. Thank goodness for the kindness of this young lady; this could have really led to some heartache for me. She even offered to bring it to me that night, but I went to her to retrieve it.

It is so nice to know that there is still goodness in this world, especially right here in our own hometown, where so much sadness has happened this week. Thank you, Jessica, you will never know how much I appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Lori Myers
Springfield

Security guards are
often unsung heroes

I often wonder why it is that after a major incident many people feel that somehow if "they" were involved that "they" could have made the difference. There are whole careers built on armchair quarterbacking.

It is one of the most common problems in this country because it is just that — people sitting on their collective butts and doing nothing but complaining, not lifting a finger to do much more than dial the nearest talk show or tell you all about it around the water cooler.

Then there are people like William "Bill" Wozniak. Bill was a security guard. Bill did something; he protected people. Yes, it was his job, but how many of us want to get in harm's way for others? Without Bill being at the door, who knows what would have happened at the Capitol Monday.

Security guards often are given a bad rap, but they give their time and lives protecting you, where you work, where you bank, etc. They take a job you obviously can't or won't do and you benefit from it.



Rich Saal/The State Journal-Register

Bill Wozniak is shown at the Capitol during 1987, his first year on the job.

I am sure that the salary and benefits are not so great that there is a long line at the personnel office for these jobs. There is something inside a guard that makes them want to serve.

Everything that the Capitol needed to be safe was there; Bill was there. He probably saved the lives of many people.

Bill did what he had to do to save the lives of others. Every other person who puts themselves in the line of fire for the security of this city, state and country does it to make it safe for others.

There was something that the armchair quarterbacks could have done. They could have helped instead of sitting on the sidelines complaining, and they could have supported and prayed for this man before this happened instead of after.

If you had all these ideas why didn't they write them down, send them to the secretary of state's office and tell them? Why don't you offer to patrol your neighborhood? Why don't you volunteer to be a crossing guard and protect our kids and grandkids? Why? I wish I knew why it is that some seek to somehow glorify themselves instead of honoring the one who did something.

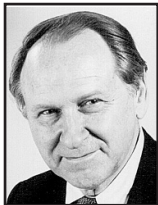
My prayers and thanks go out for all those people who's choice is to get into harm's way. No man can give more than to lay down his life for another.

Craig Williams
Springfield

10 ways
to turn it
around

I am John Kerry, falling further behind in the polls with only six weeks to go.

I've already shaken up my staff again; Cahill, Shrum and the whole Kennedy crowd were fine for the late primaries, but their war-hero strategy was all wrong for the general election. Now I've got Sasso and the Clinton heavy-hitters calling the shots. What can we do to stop the erosion in the polls and turn this campaign around?



WILLIAM
SAFIRE

1. Change the strategic target. It's not the swing voter who counts, but it's the Democratic base that has to be whipped up and turned out.

2. Ignore my peripheral messages that show no traction. Unemployment keeps drifting down and the stock market is going up, so the economy doesn't help me. Deficits don't scare people, taxing the rich shows no traction, and Bush has muddled up the health and education issues. Scaring the old folks about privatization of Social Security only drives younger voters to the GOP.

3. Stop wasting time magnifying the fury of the Bush-haters. Halliburton is not the Manchurian Candidate. And our supporters are no good at dirty tricks — that fiasco with CBS, which I pray that the DNC had nothing to do with, will keep backfiring on us for weeks. The "fortunate son" business hasn't hurt Bush — and I wasn't exactly born in a log cabin.

4. Recognize that the war is the switcher issue and take a stand that I can stick with for at least six weeks. Blazing away at his past mistakes falls flat. When I hit Bush on misleading us, he hits me back for voting both ways, and it's at best a wash. So I have to focus now on the bloody present under him versus the bright future under me.

5. Don't let Bush get away with being "misunderestimated" again as a debater. He's a master at the "better than expected" game. He has Bill Weld telling all and sundry what a great debater I am. We have to remind everybody that Bush, with his phony aw-shucks personality, has won every debate he's been in.

6. Get a slogan that fits on a bumper sticker. My "W stand for Wrong" isn't working because too many hear "wrong" as beginning with an R. Instead, be ready when Bush's people trot out Lincoln's wartime "Don't Change Horses in Midstream." Come back with FDR's blast at Herbert Hoover after the crash: "Change Horses or Drown!"

7. Duck all the gotcha! news conferences. I'll get away with Imus and Oprah and Larry King and let the hard-news media holler about softballs.

8. Lower the opposition's beltline. It makes me sick at heart to have to claim that \$200 billion for the war could be better spent at home. That isolationist knee to the groin sounds as if it came from Dean or even McGovern, but as Bush likes to say — "Whatever it takes."

9. Hit hard the monopoly-of-power horror. A GOP White House and Congress means a Supreme Court that would overturn Roe vs. Wade. We must convince women that a vote for Bush means a return to back-alley abortions. Edwards should be going for the jugular on this, but he's showing only an instinct for the capillaries. And that takes me to the 10th commandment of the new Kerry campaign:

10. Above all, win back the women who used to be with the Democrats. Bush has them believing that the fighting in Iraq is for the security of their families. Too many women can't get it through their heads that Iraq is just a distraction from the global terror war. And Bush's pitch about "better fighting over there than here" — tying Iraq to al-Qaida — closes what used to be a gender gap. So I have to move on to "while he's spinning, we're losing" — and never mind that it makes me dependent on escalation by Zarqawi and pessimism from CIA flip-flopers who were wrong before but who now want jobs in my administration.

Yes, scared women are the key, so enough with my sensitive nuances. They want Mr. Tough Guy — from now to November, that's what they'll get.

William Safire is a columnist for The New York Times.