

Opinion

Gulf Breeze NEWS



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2005
Florida Press Association
Place Winner
■ Editorial Page
■ Sports Section



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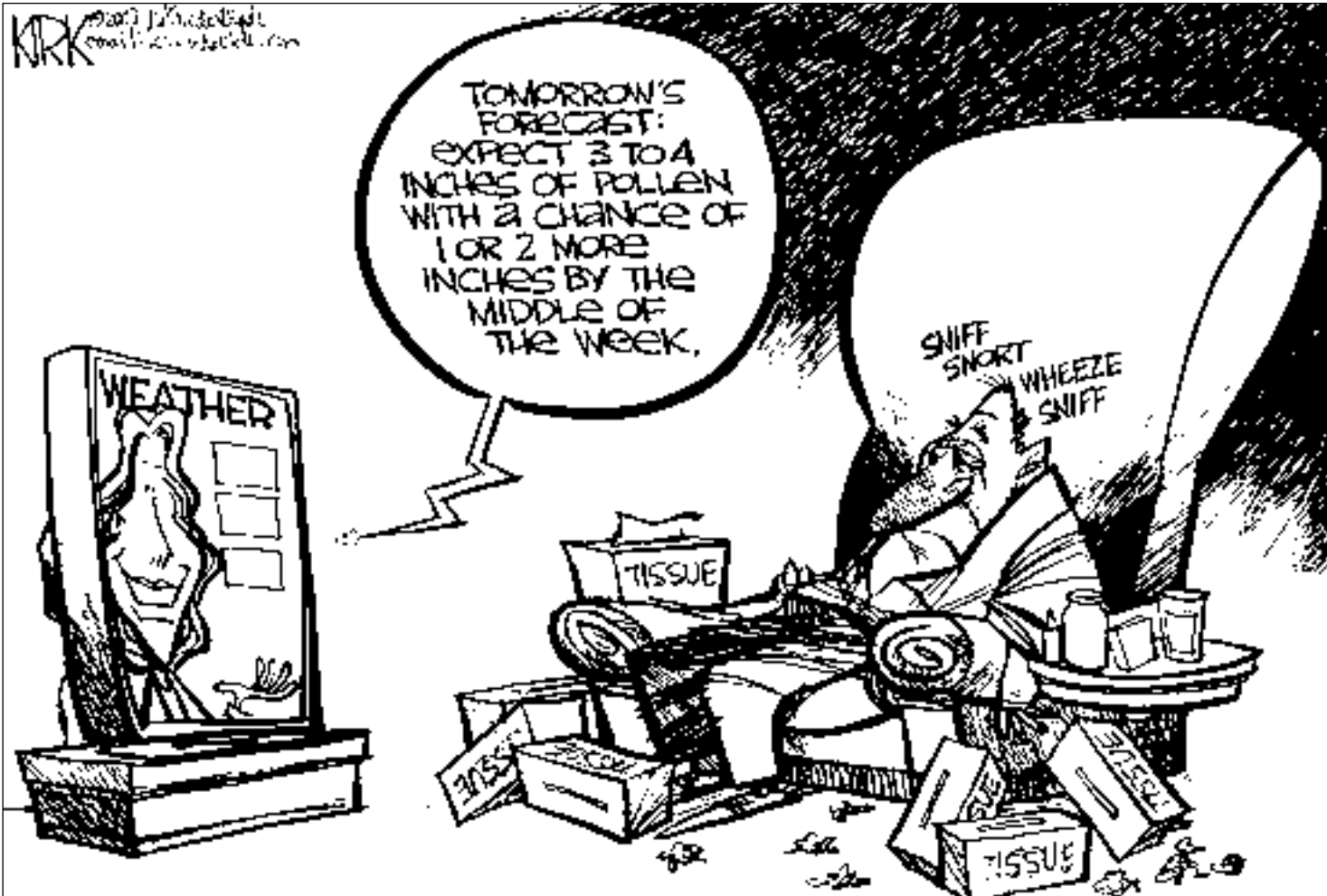
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Community mourns loss of Blue Angel

I had a hard time concentrating on Saturday. I tried to wash dishes, I attempted to edit some stories and then I started doing loads of laundry. I wanted to remain calm, be positive.

As the terrifying news continued to trickle in, I gave in to my grief. I remembered our pain as a community in 1999 when we lost two Blue Angel pilots. This time it was more difficult for me, this time it was more personal.

I had the incredible privilege of flying with LCDR Kevin Davis last summer on a media ride, and I followed his success as he was chosen solo pilot for Blue Angel #6.

Kevin was one of those people that makes a huge impression in only a matter of minutes, yet he came across as a truly

humble guy. Though I only spent about one and one half hours with him, I immediately sensed that he was truly one in a million.

I was expecting a "hot stick," but I was amazed to find that this young man was also patient and kind. He coached me through my flight and encouraged me before each stunt. To be in a Blue Angels jet was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream, and I knew I only had one chance to experience it all. Kevin took me on loops and dives through clear blue skies, we broke the sound barrier and pulled max Gs as we screamed above turquoise Gulf waters.

I grew up a Navy brat, and I spent eight years as a Navy wife. I met many wonderful people all



those years, but I found Kevin to be one notch above even the excellence I expected. Blue Angel pilots are truly one in a million and I expected an excellent pilot; I met an excellent man.

The mommy in me couldn't help but think how proud his family must be. As we headed back to shore, I peppered him with questions about his education, his training. His Blue Angel

#7 crew chief, Marine Sgt. Deo Harrypersaud, had told me all about Kevin's excellence at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University and throughout his Naval Aviation training, but Kevin just talked about how much he had always loved to fly.

At our flight's end, as we taxied toward the Blue Angel squadron hangar, I told Kevin that I had always loved the Blues. His quiet New England demeanor did not betray how uncomfortable he must have been with my Southern gushing and post-flight adoration. "I will pray for you all every time I hear you scream over my house," I said. "I will never forget you."

I am praying for the Blues - our Blues - my Blues. And I will never forget Kevin.

Term limits would improve City Council

Letters to the Editor

There are many issues that need to be addressed if the City of Gulf Breeze will prosper. Term limitation is just one of the many. This is simply another method of limiting the power of elected officials and of 'assuring genuine representation'.

Periodic elections themselves are the most fundamental expression of these limitations, but limits on service in public office have been integral to democracy since its origins. In America, limits on executive officials in particular have existed since the founding, and are now so ingrained as to pass almost without comment. Our governor, for instance, can serve only two four-year terms, a situation which most voters and politicians seem satisfied with. There are at least two general objectives in limiting the terms of elective officials: the first, to prevent an acquired familiarity with government and its functions from creating among officials a different set of interests and views than among the public generally.

A second and related objective of term limits is to prevent the ability of elected officials to bend their legally acquired powers in order to expand their influence or perpetuate their incumbency. As for the short period of time I've lived in Gulf Breeze, I've seen only the private enterprise rather than city government making major improvements in our city, i.e., Andrews Medical facility.

The City of Gulf Breeze residents deserve better. There has been a significant lack of ability to demonstrate leadership with our current council as a result of allowing the city manager to guide the ship. They have no incentive to lead, only try to run the city by committees, led by our city manager. The decision making process

therefore has no consequences for the city council.

Our city council members are far more willing to delegate broad powers to our city manager, on the assumption that committees will implement and execute their ordinances. Such practices leave voters who are frustrated with our city government performance in general or with particular policy outcomes with no one to hold accountable.

The council points fingers at the city manager, the city manager points back at the council and nothing is done ... yet both sides have incentives to postpone and temporize rather than to resolve issues. The result, again, is a lack of accountability to voters as to who is responsible for the results.

The most important changes under term limits would be in the political process and system itself, term limits would change the role, outlook, and attitude of our elected officials. New council members would be more willing to question current established programs and policies and would be more inclined to fix problems than to manage them. The current system we're using in Gulf Breeze has no incentive, intended or not, the system manages problems rather than solves them.

This system serves the public poorly. A term-limited City Council would likely demonstrate a different attitude. A term limited City Council would be less willing to delegate broad powers to the city manager. A better defined separation of powers would emerge as a result. Now the question is should we have a strong mayor

form of government or continue with the current city manager form of government? The strong mayor will promote leadership, responsibility and accountability which will in turn require a platform and vision for our city.

There are surveys comparing municipalities with and without term limits which indicates that term-limited cities have more competitive elections, even in the terms in which the seat is not open. This is contrary to the claim that term limits would result in a free ride after the first election since competitors would wait for an open seat.

Finally, term limits would almost certainly result in greater diversity in our City. It may be time for elected officials to ask themselves honestly whether they are thinking about term limits as their constituents in other adjoining cities are, or whether they are reacting on the basis of their own career situations. The extent that judgments are formed on that basis proves that public officials have lost sight of the public interest, when the public supports term limits broadly and overwhelmingly.

Change is inevitable, our goal in the city of Gulf Breeze should be a system that promotes structured change in a positive direction rather than the same old-same old.

Van Hibberts
Gulf Breeze

Thanks to USMC helpers at sale

The Gulf Breeze Hospital Auxiliary would like to publicly thank the nine Marine's

who worked with our organization on Thursday April 12. We were preparing for our annual TnT (Trash and Treasures) Sale which was held on the 14th. These young men spent the entire day transporting and setting up 57 tables as well as emptying a 10x20 ft storage bin and 4 garages and helping to set up and organize all of the thousands of items. Their manners, smiles, work ethic, personalities and cooperation were greatly appreciated. Our 160 active volunteers whose average age is 65-70 were certainly happy to have their physical help.

I would like to publicly identify them: Privates Lawrence Kelly and Harris Ryerson; Private First Class Molina Jose, Cory Sturdevant, Kevin Ranck and Tyler Ankney; Lance Corporal Lewis Meridith and Cory Sowell; Second Lt. Joseph Kennedy.

Thanks guys, you were great.
Wendy Brandon
President GBHA

Small businesses bear insurance burden

Excellent article on small business healthcare. Small business, our largest employer, continues to sink under the double digit annual increases of healthcare costs and taxes. Meanwhile small business is forced to help pay for the employees of Wal-Mart, Home Depot and others whose employees are on State funded subsidies. I read one article that shows in the State of Florida we pay over \$13 MILLION PER YEAR for medical costs for Wal-Mart employees! Despicable. It is about time that this drain on our taxes and small business is stopped. TODAY would not be too soon.

Nick Pasquine
Ormond Beach, Fla.

On the Spot:

WHERE WE PUT PEOPLE "ON THE SPOT" TO ANSWER A QUESTION "ON THE SPOT."

By Franklin Hayes

Should the media employ more self-censorship in regard to violent crime?



"Yes, because the more you show that type of thing, the more desensitized you get to it. It's not shocking anymore with violent crimes like that."

-Cheryl Camire
Navarre



"I don't think so. I haven't seen anything to graphic. It's real."

-Kimberly Givens
Pensacola



"They kind of are too graphic if you have children. Adults can probably handle it."

-Leona Keller
Navarre



"I think that regular TV should be for the general public and if people want to see graphic things they can go to some other channel."

-Will Cordell
Gulf Breeze