

# ELLEN GOODMAN



## For Rep. Frank, excuses wear thin

**B**OSTON — This is what it must have been like to be in Jim Wright's district, or in Tony Coelho's. The scandal this time is starring Barney Frank, the guy from your own district, the 4th district of Massachusetts.

The story breaks like an accident report, a political sea disaster. Steve Goble, a hooker at the helm, opens up a leak the size of the hole in the Valdez and pours oil, 100 percent crude, over Barney Frank's reputation.

Frank had hired the prostitute. The prostitute had used Frank's apartment to ply his trade. The story is a sleazy one as it goes out over the wires. But in the district, you really know the guy. So here you put this episode into context, the context of the whole person, his whole life.

The fact is that you liked Barney back when he was a self-described slob. You liked him when his mother starred in his ads. You've always liked his politics, his grit, his one-liners. You like having a smart-mouth congressman. Seven out of 10 of you re-elected him. And that was after he'd come out of the closet.

So, at first there is remarkably little said about it. It's as if something embarrassing had happened to a member of the family. In Fall River, you shake your head and say, "Jeez." In Newton, you meet and quote your grandmother, "Smart, smart, but stupid." For the most part you hope the oil slick will evaporate, or get mopped up with sponges.

**BUT THE DAMN** thing doesn't go away.

There was the matter of the parking tickets. Big deal, you say. There was a question of taxes for Goble's time as a driver. Spare me, you say. So he was snookered by the guy? Is it a crime to be naive? None of it sounds like the Barney, the one you know, but the guy made mistakes, and you make allowances. Because in the district you like him.

Barney starts talking about how these things happen. What it's like to be gay and lonely, to try and lead an entirely public life, to fail that. He talks about what it was like to admit his homosexuality, to deal with it. There was, he says, more than one prostitute.

In the district, where you don't really want to know this, you hear it with some sympathy. Maybe you run through the Rolodex of friends who've gone through a different transition, from married to divorced. How many of them would want to see

their dumbest or most desperate acts in the news. How much worse is it to come out into a world that calls homosexuals "queers"?

Because you are part of a liberal district, you tell yourself, hey, it was a bad time. He was hurting and stumbling and it's past history. Today he's in what you call a stable relationship and while you might not be comfortable welcoming Barney's companion on the campaign trail, hey, you have to be happy that he's happier. After all, you like the guy. Better we should go after the HUD scandal.

But somehow or other, the same oil slick has started to cover the rocks and accumulate on the beaches and it just doesn't scrub off. In the district, you talk about the scandal more, not less. The arguments you use to defend the guy you like become more complicated, more layered. Harder.

You try to imagine Barney in front of that ethics committee and you want to cringe. Somebody's going to ask him how many hookers he hired, how such a smart guy could have been conned. You imagine him, without trying, as the new poster boy for the right-wing hate mail.

**YOU THINK ABOUT** that crude oil sticking to the causes that he cares about, that you care about. You think about how "local issues" in the 4th Congressional District have included Central America and homelessness and civil liberties. Can a guy represent you without representing those?

That leads you to think about the smart mouth. This is — was? — Barney's political tool. The verbal attack at just the right place. A finely tuned ideological wit. You calculate the odds that he can get back to attacking corruption, or get behind a microphone with the Democratic leadership. They're long.

The jokes were once by Barney. Now they are about him. You have no idea how long the cleanup of his reputation will take. Or if it can ever be the same.

Because you like the guy, like his politics, because he's the home team, you'd vote for him again. Probably. But more of you discover that you've gone from being proud to being defensive and not a little embarrassed.

And so now you want to tell him, Barney, it won't wash. Give it up.

Ellen Goodman's syndicated column appears Tuesdays and Fridays in *The Gazette*.

## More slot machines OK'd for boats

### Gaming panel urged to amend other rules for casino gambling

By Rod Boshart  
Gazette Des Moines Bureau

ALTOONA — Iowa riverboats equipped with gaming devices will be allowed to stock more slot machines than originally proposed, according to application rules adopted Thursday by the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission.

However, industry officials said Iowa's law still is too restrictive and lawmakers must relax some regulations to be competitive with other Mississippi River states that also might legalize riverboat gambling.

Richard Thornton, a Des Moines attorney who lobbied for the Delta Queen, said Iowa's 20 percent tax on gambling proceeds exceeding \$3 million annually is too high and the three-year length for a license needs to be expanded to at least five years.

He also encouraged the commission to recommend that lawmakers lift the require-

ment that only 30 percent of the riverboat area can be devoted to gambling and that the legal gambling age aboard riverboats be lowered from 21 to 18 years.

"If Illinois passes a bill (this fall), this whole thing will become moot very rapidly as far as Iowa," Thornton said. "Any good businessperson who chooses to get into this area would have a very easy decision where they would locate."

**THE FOUR** commission members unanimously approved application rules that pave the way for non-profit organizations working in conjunction with boat operators to apply for licenses between Nov. 15 and Jan. 1.

The panel, which is one member short with the resignation of Lavonne Mydland, plans to begin approving licenses in March for boats that can operate April 1991.

The application rules say boats must offer a minimum of one table game for every 20 machine games offered, as opposed to the originally proposed 1-to-10 ratio. Boat operators wanted the ratio expanded because table games are more labor-intensive and take up more space than slot machines.

"We came up with what we feel is a very liberal interpretation," said Mick Lura, com-

mission administrator. "We don't just want to make money off of gambling. We want to create an entertainment package that is attractive and, quite frankly, classy."

**THE COMMISSION** also decided not to mandate a minimum admission fee for entering casino areas aboard the riverboats, and allowed wagering to exceed the limit of \$5 per bet for blackjack and dice games.

"Wagering will be allowed to exceed \$5 per hand on 21 when traditional insurance, doubling or splitting of hands occur," the rules state. "Each wager at dice shall be considered a separate play when enforcing the wagering limit of \$5. A wagering limit of \$6 shall apply to individual place bets on the numbers six and eight at the dice table."

Also, the board said the initial \$25,000 application fee for qualified non-profit groups will be reduced to \$5,000 for a second application involving the same operator. Lura said preliminary drafts of the application rules were mailed to about 100 interested parties.

Next month the commission plans to tour Eastern Iowa communities that have passed referendums permitting gambling boats to dock along their Mississippi River shores.

## Teacher is in step with kids

By Kurt Rogahn  
Gazette education writer

Joyce Klimes is a Coolidge Elementary fourth-grade teacher who really takes the task of getting to know her students to heart.

Or to foot.

She straps on her walking shoes and walks home with one or two of her students each afternoon at the beginning of the school year. She wrapped up this year's series of walks home with her students this week.

She gets to know the paths and the sidewalks her students take to school and the neighborhoods they live in.

Sometimes she gets to meet her students' parents. But that isn't the purpose.

"It's just a chance for some individual time," Klimes explains. "Sometimes kids who are real quiet in class open up on these walks."

"I'll ask them, 'What do you think about school? What are you going to do when you get home?' It's just a get-acquainted time for both of us. It's just some time to be one-on-one," Klimes says.

**SHE GOT** the idea three or four years ago from a magazine or a book. Klimes is not sure which.

If the student lives too far from school — four of her 28 students come by bus — she drives the student home.

"I've gotten to know the boundaries of our school's attendance area," Klimes says.



Gazette photo by Kurt Rogahn

Accompanied by students Josh Rathje, 10, left, and Bryan Hamilton, 10, fourth-grade teacher Joyce Klimes sets off on the last of her nightly walks home with her Coolidge Elementary School students. Klimes does this at the beginning of the school year to get to know her students better.

Coolidge is on the city's west edge, and its attendance area extends west to the Benton County line.

**HER STUDENTS** say they appreciate the attention.

"I think she's kind of cool," says Bryan Hamilton, 10. "She's a good worker with us, and she's a real strict teacher."

Says Josh Rathje, 10, "A lot of people have talked about this. They like it a lot. They get to know the teacher better, and the teacher gets to know the kids better."

## Keystone store robbed for 3rd time

**KEYSTONE** — For the third time in five months the PEMCO Fastbreak Mini-mart on Highway 30 south of Keystone has been the scene of an armed robbery.

About 2:36 a.m. Thursday a man armed with a dark snub-nosed handgun entered the store and demanded money at gunpoint, according to the Benton County Sheriff's Department.

No one was reported injured. Officials would not say how many employees were in the store at the time.

Officials are looking for a white male, in his late 20s to early 30s, 5 feet 9 or 10 inches and 170 pounds. The man has blond, collar-length hair parted in the middle, a receding hairline, moustache and short beard. He has blue eyes and was wearing silver wire-rimmed glasses. He was wearing a dark blue jacket with zipper in the front, faded blue jeans and brown work gloves.

Deputies are also looking for an older-make car. It is described as beat-up, full-size, dark-colored, with low back end and wide lights.

At the same store in April, clerk Gloria Stout was shot to death in a robbery. Another robbery occurred May 31 and is yet unsolved.

**IN THE** Cedar Rapids and Marion area, 16 armed robberies have been reported since January, including eight at convenience stores.

In the past two weeks, there have been four armed robberies. On Sept. 8 the Longbranch Motel in Marion was held up. On Sept. 9 Brian Schappert, a clerk, was killed in a robbery at a Mount Vernon Road SE convenience store. Sept. 10 a Domino's Pizza worker at the Center Point Road NE business was robbed at gunpoint. And on Sept. 16 the Econo Lodge on 16th Avenue SW was held up.

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### CORRECTIONS / Clarifications

Rolling Hills Orchard of rural Lowden is no longer in operation. A list supplied by the Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association and published in the "Call of the Colors" section of Sunday's Gazette incorrectly reported it was an active orchard.

The phone number listed, 944-7643, rings at Sybil's General Store, Massillion, whose owners had run the orchard for four years until 1988. The general store is still open.

\*\*\*  
Honey Creek Orchards at

Swisher, 857-4322, was omitted from the list provided to the Gazette. In addition to its 37 varieties of apples, the orchard has tours, cider and apple pie available.

The Gazette will respond to complaints about the accuracy, fairness and completeness of reports and headlines in the newspaper. When a report is found to be wrong or misleading, a correction or clarification will be published in this space. Phone 398-8313.

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