

OPINION



An independent newspaper established in 1883

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GAZETTE EDITORIALS

Nature's force

**M**OST PEOPLE ARE too concerned about their safety and that of their loved ones to deliberately dare nature to do its worst. As any Iowan who has witnessed the devastation wrought by a tornado is aware, nature's worst is awesome.

Throughout this land — throughout the world — the lesson is hammered home with grim frequency. Earthquakes in Mexico, torrential rain and mudslides in California, volcanoes, forest fires, floods, searing heat. And most recently, Hurricane Hugo. Man's role typically is that of a helpless onlooker. Each phenomenon ignores every obstruction, bowling them over, washing them away, tearing them apart. Each makes its own path. Each leaves a trail of destruction.

Unfortunately, there is little any of us can do to insulate ourselves from nature's caprices. None of us is immune to natural calamity. A funnel may dip from the clouds into a densely-populated neighborhood as readily as it might descend on a deserted pasture. In certain instances, however, experts insist the risk can be reduced.

The death and devastation along the East Coast from Hurricane Hugo was appalling, but not unexpected, according to Dr. Orrin H. Pilkey, a marine geologist at Duke University and a leading authority on coastal erosion. "This is a manmade disaster as well as a natural disaster," he observed while exploring a battered stretch of beach near Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Artificial barriers were no match for the wind-driven Atlantic. A scenic ocean view turned ugly as the sea crushed homes, apartment buildings and other commercial structures in its path. As he has before, Pilkey renewed his call for more restrictive state laws against beachfront development. With its 135-mile-per-hour winds, he noted, Hugo may ultimately have been a blessing in disguise if it forces state governments along the coasts to wise up to the hazards.

That such advice has been ignored in the past and property destroyed is unfortunate. That it has been ignored and lives lost is tragic. Perhaps now somebody will listen.

Parks fun again

**I**OWANS SAID THEY didn't like the park user fee imposed by the General Assembly a couple of years ago. Clearly they meant it, because when the fee was scrapped earlier this year, park usage shot up — a hefty 15 percent over last year, according to records just released by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

While their intentions were good, proponents of the user fee seriously miscalculated public opinion. Iowa is blessed with an excellent park system. It could be larger, of course; but that's a typical argument; few regions are satisfied with the space they're able to devote to recreation. Use fell off sharply, however, once the state imposed admission fees — either on a daily or annual basis.

What made the user fee concept attractive to its proponents was a desire to maintain the excellent quality of the state park system, if not expand it. Each is an expensive proposition and parks must compete with every other state program for a limited supply of taxpayers' dollars. Intolerable though it became, asking park users to ante up was not a totally unreasonable idea. The proceeds would have been put to good use.

But park users understandably were angry over being required to pay for a service already consuming part of their taxes. Legislators were wise to relent.

That, however, does not free lawmakers of the responsibility to protect the quality of existing parks and perhaps consider an occasional expansion project.

Iowans like their parks. We suspect they would be as displeased to see them deteriorate as they were when they had to pay extra to use them.

Holy cow!

**H**ATS OFF to the Chicago Cubs, winners of major league baseball's National League East. "Cubs Country," which includes Eastern Iowa, is buzzing over the team's amazing climb. Two years ago, when Cubs outfielder Andre Dawson won the league's Most Valuable Player Award and pitcher Rick Sutcliffe came within an ace of winning the Cy Young Award, the last-place Cubs were a laughing-stock. There was no team to back up the stars.

What a contrast between then and now. This year's Cubs, a well-balanced team, has used the "one hero a day" formula. Some days the heroes were rookies from the Iowa (Des Moines) farm club. And manager Don Zimmer, once a journeyman ballplayer, has done a terrific job.

Bring on the San Francisco Giants. It is time for the Cubs to win their first pennant since — gasp! — 1945.



Don Zimmer Showered with beer

Helms amendment gone, not forgotten

By JAMES J. KILPATRICK

WASHINGTON — The famous, or infamous, Helms amendment vanished a couple of weeks ago in a puff of parliamentary smoke. It is gone, but when reauthorization of the National Endowment for the Arts comes up next year, it will not be forgotten. Supporters of the NEA have won a battle; they have not necessarily won the war.

In these politically bellicose times, when we have a war on drugs, a war on crime and a war on deficit spending, the war launched by Sen. Jesse Helms of North Carolina may not rank large. The senator's war is against federal funding of obscene or "indecent" works of art. The gentleman's target is misplaced. He ought to be aiming instead at the whole business of funding grants to individual poets, novelists, artists, photographers, musicians, museum interns and all the rest.

Important principles are at stake in this affair. One principle is that federal funds should be appropriated only in accordance with the Constitution. You may search the Constitution from Article I through Article VII, and you will not find the slightest vestige of authority for these grants — not unless you give a tortured meaning to the power vested in Congress "to provide for the general welfare of the United States."

Two years ago the NEA gave \$30,000 of the taxpayers' money to photographer Robert Mapplethorpe and \$15,000 to photographer Andres Serrano. Mapplethorpe's contribution to the general welfare of the United States was an exhibition that included, by way of example, a photograph of his own buttocks with a bull whip thrust up his rectum. Serrano's con-



103 makers of craft objects found seats on the gravy train.

tribution was a photograph depicting a crucifix in a container of urine. To be sure, these were exceptions, aberrations. Over the years the NEA has made more than 80,000 grants of one kind or another, and no more than 20 or 25 have set off an uproar. That statistic may be relevant, but it is also immaterial. My thought is that the federal government has no business in the arts business. The government ought not to be sponsoring ANY artist to produce ANY work at public expense.

During the House debate on Sept. 13, opponents of the Helms amendment condemned it as an exercise in "censorship." This was hokum. The question is not of censorship but of sponsorship. Serrano had every right to put a depiction of Christ (or a depiction of Sen. Helms, for that matter) in a bottle of urine and call it art. He had no right whatever to do this

at public expense. And Congress had no power to provide the funds to support Mapplethorpe's scatological photo.

Rep. Les AuCoin of Oregon spoke up for the NEA. It is "no rogue elephant," he said, it is "an agency that gives grants to artists who are producing art which improves the caliber of lives in communities across the country." Well, bosh!

Would the gentleman like to defend the individual grants of 1988? Here is a grant of \$8,550 to Judi Freeman of Los Angeles to support travel in France to study museum collections. Here is a grant to \$10,000 to Roger C. Greenwald of Toronto, Canada, to support the translation of a Swedish novel. Here are 50 grants of \$20,000 each to poets. Eighty-nine sculptors, 60 photographers and 103 makers of craft objects found seats on the gravy train.

Does anyone seriously believe that these grants provide for the general welfare of the United States? The proposition is absurd. The art that is being funded is a peculiarly American art: It is the art of grantsmanship.

The Helms amendment was poorly drafted. It would have affected not only the NEA but also every agency or institution receiving funds under the Department of the Interior. It swept with too wide a broom. I would have been among the 264 members who voted, in effect, to kill it on a procedural motion. But if Helms wants to try again in 1990 on a move to abolish at least the individual grants, he will merit the support of long-suffering taxpayers everywhere.

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LETTERS TO THE GAZETTE

Make drug education a priority; stop discrimination

Your editorials of Sept. 14 ("Inexcusable" and "Include Congress") made some very good points. Our schools really are the frontline in the war on drugs and I hope Cedar Rapids area school officials will support the president, not just by tuning in when he speaks but by making drug education a priority.

By the same token, we all need to do our part to stop discrimination against people with disabilities — and that includes Congress.

When Sen. Lowell Weicker, R-



Tom Harkin

Conn., and I first introduced the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1988, we made a public commitment that civil rights protections for the disabled, as well as for women and minorities, would be applied to Congress. There was never any question whether this would be done, only when and how. We were concerned that such a provision might hold up the bill indefinitely in the Rules Committee.

This year, during committee markup hearings, Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and I discussed

amending the bill to cover Congress. We agreed the best way would be to add it to the bill on the floor. It was my understanding that Sen. Hatch, as ranking Republican on the committee, would offer this amendment. I was surprised that my colleague Sen. Grassley did so, but pleased to lend my support as floor manager to assure the amendment's passage.

The ADA broke new ground in protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, and in the process made an equally historic change in requiring Congress to abide by the same rules as the rest of society. It was a bipartisan victory of which we can all be proud.

Tom Harkin, U.S. senator Washington, D.C.

A beautiful life

On Sept. 8, our son, Brian Schappert, was brutally murdered. Three weeks have gone by and it still seems unreal and like a nightmare.

It has, however, been overwhelming: the outpouring of love, prayers, phone calls, visits, cards, letters, food and flowers. We could not believe we could possibly know so many wonderful people. We didn't know all of the people who were so kind to us. They sent some of the most thoughtful and touching letters.

We just wish to thank you, everyone. We praise God for each one of them. They have helped us through many difficult moments. There are so many good and beautiful people. They far outnumber the ones that resort to such violence and brutality.

We were blessed with two fine sons and know our sons are only lent to us and really belong to the Lord. We are so thankful for the 22 beautiful years we were able to share in Brian's life. We feel as if he set a very fine example for others during his lifetime: with his sensitivity, caring, loving tenderness for people, animals, plants and property, love for history and political science.

We feel as if even his most horrible death was a part of God's plan to bring recognition to the person he was and what he stood for: A true child of God.

Arnie and Laurie Schappert 1715 Memorial Dr. SE

Minorities do exist in C.R.

I am writing regarding your articles published in the Lifestyle section entitled "Iowa's Changing Families" (Sept. 10).

Contrary to your continued depiction, Iowa does have a minority population. Why were we not included in this article? What type of effect does this have on your minority subscribers?

We do exist in Cedar Rapids. We do have families that fit into these roles. Are we to go unnoticed? Why can't time be taken to find minority families in order to give the total picture? Why do you continue to publish articles that are so one-sided?

Nancy J. Humbles, 1923 Western Dr. SW

Openness

Chris Contard believes in the people of Cedar Rapids. He is convinced that they are the city's greatest resource. His announcement speech gave new hopes to an open and aboveboard city government if he is mayor.

The concerns of only a few are welcomed by our current mayor. Cedar Rapids cannot progress under the closed-door syndrome that exists today. Times change and so do our citizens' needs. Our current administration has not kept up with this change in our community.

It is time the voters of Cedar Rapids make this change and vote Chris Contard for mayor.

Karen Bruening 350 28th Ave. SW

Dry atmosphere

I am forced to write about the bad environment inside the Abbe Center due to the terrible, dry atmosphere. It causes so many residents to have dry, itching noses and eyes. It affects their ears, too. It has been that way ever since this place was built, due to the heating and air conditioning being all electric. I am sure some of the nurses and aides here will agree with me — under their breath, of course.

If they want to do something constructive here, they should try to solve this problem regardless of cost.

Come on, Abbe Center and Linn County (owner), get on the ball. This has been going on here for a long time.

C.H. "Butch" Hutter 1860 County Home Rd., Marion

WRITE RIGHT / CARL KANE

From whence do you come come?

An out-of-town editorial writer commented that urban areas are filled with "people who, when they arrived in the big city, promptly built suburbs in an attempt to recreate the small towns from whence they came."

A national news service reported, "The highly accurate rifle is most popular with Central American drug cartels for the protection of marijuana and cocoa fields and processing plants."

Each of those sentences has an error that might escape most of us, but the questionable word choice did not escape the attention of two word-conscious readers.

Jim George of Grinnell points out the editorial writer, in effect, wrote the repetitive "from from what place. Whence means — 'from what place.'" Webster's correct example: "Whence do you come?"

Whence is like hence. The preposition

from is built into the meaning of both words. However, seldom does anyone write, "Get thee from hence" or "The meeting is a year from hence." Whence also should not be burdened with the extra from. Nonetheless, many good writers produce such sentences as "From whence do you come?" That doesn't make it right. It's still repetitive.

In regard to the second sentence cited above, Mary Alice Ericson comments, "Coco, coca, cocoa — just too confusing! Cocoa, the word used in the news story, is the name for the popular drink made by adding sugar and milk to the powder made from cacao beans. (Cacao also is right, just to add to the confusion.)"

Coco refers to the coconut palm or to its fruit. Coca is the word the writer wanted for his "marijuana and coca fields." The leaves of the coca plant are the source of cocaine.



"Aha! I see the problem — a homosexual on the gun deck. Case closed!"