1991

Iannone, Carol: News Articles (1991): Letter to the Editor 02

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Neighor a hero

To the editor:
In my humble opinion, my neighbor Donnie, of the Southcrest Mobile Home Park, is every bit as big a hero as General Norman S. Schwartzkopf.

As a former member of the Women's Army Corps, Army Air Force, I have seen my share of heroes and maladjusted Army personnel. In fact I worked under one in the JAG office who happened to be a disgruntled attorney who could not get into Officer's Candidate School, probably because he was such a good clerk. He made my life miserable. He was guilty, in my opinion, of female harassment, even back then. We did not have that criteria to complain about, but believe me, we had all the other unfortunate circumstances of living in close quarters with 60 females from the New York-New Jersey area.

I was overwhelmed with amazement when I heard of the circumstances dealing with my neighbor's courage in going into a blazing trailer to rescue a fellow neighbor. Greater courage hath no man — the general is surrounded with combat troops and war machinery, but this gallant person went in alone and saved a life.

He, in my opinion, warrants not only the gratitude of the population of Bloomington, but a cash award from whatever source is ready to give it.

He is a true human being, and I give him four stars.

Jessica Siebert Krueh

Why Tyrrell?

To the editor:
If you've got to add yet another conservative political columnist, why R. Emmett Tyrrell? Unlike George Will, who at least is intelligent and writes well, for persuasion Tyrrell substitutes innuendo, exaggeration, and extremism.

Tyrrell's attack on the Modern Language Association of North America is especially regrettable. He calls it the academic equivalent of a left-wing Ku Klux Klan. With more than 30,000 members, the MLA is the main professional organization for scholars who teach language and literature. Most professors of English and foreign languages at IU, and other universities across the nation, belong to the MLA, and many present academic papers at the annual MLA meeting. This is not simply "an association of university scholars that patrols standards of scholarship in Academe, particularly in comparative literature," as he defines it. It's hard to believe that a newspaper in a college town would publish such distortions.

When Carol Iannone is appointed to the council of the National Endowment for the Humanities for her political views, Tyrrell perceives no double standard in accusing the MLA of political motives in opposing her appointment. If reasonable people ever had any sympathy with the ill that will that's been generated over the issue of "political correctness," it's been vitiated by words like Tyrrell, who uses the issue to flog any opposition to the Buckleye agenda in the academy. As proof of the frivolousness of the MLA he offers the example of a linguistic paper on North Italian dialects read at the last MLA meeting, whose only fault, apparently, is in being too remote a subject for his palate. And yet Tyrrell, who has the audacity to pontificate, has no sympathy with the MLA of political motives in opposing her appointment.

Never mind the impression he gives of conservative thought in general; but you might at least care about the effect of his methods on the political process. For him there is no middle ground: those who disagree with his political agenda he characterizes not as people who might have understandable reasons for their beliefs, but as "nitwits," "Knights" of a left-wing Klan, and promoters of "slander" and "infantile revolution." He is a provocateur of the sort who have robbed American political life of its vitality by making moderation and cooperation rare and difficult to achieve. As long as you publish columns like Tyrrell's, your readers don't need to hear complaints from you about the sort of unreasonable partisanship that has brought the state legislature to a standstill. It's what you've asked for.

R.D. Fulk

Ruth C. Engs