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July 24, 2007

Voice of the People

Juries a cornerstone of U.S. democracy

The right to trial by jury is central to our democracy; indeed, it was the colonists' loss of that right that helped spark the Revolutionary War. The right to trial by jury is enshrined in both the United States and Michigan constitutions.

Even so, jury service is often viewed not as a high duty or privilege of citizenship but merely as an inconvenience. True, jury service involves a sacrifice of time, convenience and sometimes money. Nonetheless, it is also essential to our system of justice that citizens answer the call to jury service.

Serving on a jury does make a difference to your community. The decisions those jurors make affect thousands of lives every day and those decisions have a direct impact upon the quality of life for each and every one of us.

The jury system is also uniquely democratic. The founders of our country knew, based on their experience and the lessons of history, that the right to trial by jury was a safeguard against tyranny and oppression.

To celebrate the jury's place in our community, and honor all those who answer the call

WRITE TO US

Mail your letters to Voice of the People, The South Bend Tribune, 225 W. Colfax Ave., South Bend, IN 46626; e-mail them to vop@sbtinfo.com; or fax to (574) 236-1765.

Letters may be no more than 200 words.

Longer submissions will be considered for Michiana Point of View.

All submissions are subject to editing.

Please include your full name, which will be printed, and your street address and telephone number, which will be kept confidential but are necessary for verification purposes.

to jury service, the Michigan Supreme Court has proclaimed July to be Juror Appreciation Month in Michigan.

The judges of the Berrien County Trial Court join the Michigan Supreme Court in celebrating the duty and privilege of jury service. On behalf of the Berrien County judges, we urge you to join us in holding -- and when called, participating in -- one of the cornerstones of American democracy.

Thomas E. Nelson
Chief Judge Pro Tem
Family Division Presiding Judge
Angela M. Pasula
Criminal Division Presiding Judge
Lynda A. Tolen
Civil Division Presiding Judge

3 Rs

Dennis McFadden (Voice, June 30) asked Larry Cox (Voice, June 17) to do his research? Well, here are some interesting facts for the writer to consider in my research from a book titled "Oil: Anatomy of an Industry," written by Matthew Yeomans.

The United States uses 25 percent of the world's oil. We import 60 percent (12 million barrels) of our daily needs. The price breakdown for a gallon of gasoline lists crude oil at 43 percent, federal and state taxes at 31 percent, refining costs and profits at 13 percent, with distribution and marketing making up the remaining 13 percent.

A barrel of crude (42 gallons) when refined has the following breakdown, in gallons: 19.4, gasoline; 9.7, distillate fuel; 4.3, kerosene-type jet fuel; 2.0, coke; 1.9, residual oil; 1.9, liquefied refinery gases; 1.8, still gas; 1.4, asphalt and road oil; 1.1, petrochemical feedstocks; 0.5, lubricants; 0.2, kerosene; and 0.4 listed as "other." If you add up the numbers they total 44.6 gallons which is a net gain of 2.6 gallons of refined petroleum products. So, if you and your family don't subscribe to the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle), you are part of the problem and not part of the solution.

Steve Eshelman
Granger

No faith

I think that it is pretty bad when someone feels the need to steal from a yard sale. I had a yard sale recently in South Bend and a woman, who acted as though she could not speak or understand much English, stole many items from me.

It was obvious what she did when another woman, I'm guessing was her mother, paid for her items while she put her child into their vehicle--along with many of my things. And when I went to collect from her she showed me two items that totaled 75 cents. I do not believe that it was a matter of need but a matter of being able to get away with it.

I am not petty; my items were priced very low--and if someone had in fact needed

something I would probably have given that person the item. To me it is all about honesty. Where is it anymore? To top it off, when I went back to look over the tables to see what was missing I found that she had stolen a cross necklace.

How's that for having faith in others?

Brooke Jenkins
South Bend

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