

# Opinion

Columnists, Our Views,  
Letters to the Editor

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## Centralia College Gets an A+ with Four-Year Program

### Our Views

In today's Chronicle, we break the most welcome news that Centralia College, starting next September, will for the first time offer a four-year degree.

The college has been a central part of Lewis County since it opened in 1925. This milestone announcement continues a march toward excellence this past decade, from a new gymnasium and athletic center, to the elegant Corbet Theatre to the ambitious Science Center.

For almost a century, the college has offered an affordable quality education, specifically getting associate's degrees

in the hands of area higher education students. Now area students will be able to stay home, and take a combination of online and lecture classes on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and earn a Bachelor's degree in Applied Science — Applied Management. That degree would, if desired, allow the student to then pursue a master's degree.

"It's a great option for those who don't have means to leave the community," said Centralia

College President James Walton, of the two-year program (a three-year-program option is also available for those choosing to only attend classes one night a week).

At \$7,500 in tuition costs per year, and with financial aid anticipated, this new program spearheaded by Walton, will both offer an educational way up for locals, and also a trained workforce for area industry.

An assessment showing the need for this four-year management degree makes a strong case for the new program.

Lewis County in the past

few years has had among the highest unemployment rates in the state. Our proximity to Interstate 5, rail, natural gas and affordable land makes this area desirable for new businesses, but they need an educated workforce, specifically in management positions. As the economy heats up in the coming years, the need will increase.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the area that Centralia College covers, as stated in the needs assessment, has an upcoming shortfall in projected annual openings

exceeding the number of anticipated graduates from the new four-year program. Our workforce needs this program.

The mission statement of Centralia College includes "improving peoples' lives through lifelong learning," and providing "a quality education while keeping the costs of their college experience as affordable as possible." The vision of the college includes being "an economic driver in our local economy."

With this upgrade to a four-year college degree, Centralia College gets an A+.

### COMMENTARY: I Was Just Thinking ...

## Another Local Person Whose Appreciation Lies Elsewhere

There isn't one of us who hasn't felt a small (or, maybe large) twinge of sadness when something we've grown accustomed to is no longer there. Maybe it's similar to the way we felt when the old Yard Birds closed its doors for good, or when the grandstand was torn down at Noble Field in Centralia or when Chehalis' Millett Field was demolished.

That's something like the feeling I recently had after I called Richart Tracy and asked for an updated tour of his forest of Styrofoam and wire art at the corner of Harrison and M Streets. He immediately and graciously agreed, and I (just as immediately) hurried to his home.



By Bill Moeller

The first thing that filled my eye when I walked into his yard was the extent of bare grass that greeted me instead of the aisles and pathways between crowded rows of art works that had been there the last time I walked through them. The tours have stopped. He has taken 20 or more truckloads of his creations to the transfer station. I know there are critics of his (but no art critics among them) who will say, "It's a start."

I'll say right here that no local person who called the display an eyesore and a blemish to Centralia ever took a moment or two out of their lives to stop and walk through that labyrinth of fantasy and form. If I may bring up an old peeve of mine, it's similar to the people who complained about the way Centralia's downtown benches initially faced, but never once sat in them.

All through the years of criticism of his work, Richart has remained true to his vision. How many of his critics can say the same?

The time of viewing that complete collection up close is over, because he'll be giving no more tours, but not everything

is going away. The pieces that remain are some of his favorites, and he explained to me the reasons why each of them is still appealing to him. So the appearance from the street won't change all that much, but the heart of the display is gone. It was the sheer overpowering aura of the entire collection that had impressed me so strongly in the past. That's what is gone.

Local residents have either ignored or complained about the display in the past. If I may make another comparison, it's something akin to our ignoring the worldwide achievements of Merce Cunningham until Gordon Aadland mounted a campaign to correct that oversight. Another example might be John McClelland's insightful and unbiased reporting of the Armistice Day Episode in the book "Wobbly War," which sold almost no copies in Centralia. (It's out of print now, but I found a signed, personally inscribed mint condition copy of it going for a dollar in a local yard sale.)

The list of organizations and individuals from out of the area which have viewed Richart's work in a different light from our local reaction to it is impressive.

There was the front page of a Sunday edition of Seattle's P.I. where the entire page was devoted to Richart and his works.

There was a six-minute feature filmed by Channel 9, KCTS, which may have opened a few eyes to the phenomenon which we once had right here in our midst.

There was a 26-minute documentary filmed by noted filmmaker Vanessa Renwick. You can tell by the expression on Richart's face when he talks about it that this was the recognition of which he is most proud.

I'll have more about that film next week.

...

Bill Moeller is a former entertainer, mayor, bookstore owner, city council member, paratrooper and pilot living in Centralia. He can be reached at bookmaven123@comcast.net.

### First Amendment Center Quote of the Day

**"So, then, to every man his chance — to every man. Regardless of his birth. His shining, golden opportunity — to every man the right to live, to work, to be himself, and to become whatever thing his manhood and his vision can combine to make him — this, seeker, is the promise of America."**

Thomas Wolfe  
novelist, 1940

## FLOOD INSTRUCTIONS: THE FOUR 'P's'



### Letters to the Editor

#### Probe of Fast and Furious Needed

To the editor:

Fast and Furious is a criminal action that has resulted in the death of one American Border Patrol agent, as well as perhaps 1,100 Mexican nationals. The typically anti-Second Amendment Obama regime facilitated the sale of thousands of illegal firearms to criminal gangs south of the border.

We know that Obama's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, using so-called stimulus funds, actively facilitated the illegal sale of at least 2,500 firearms to criminals and traffickers. And even after federal officials became aware of these deaths, there were three egregious criminal actions taken.

First, federal officials tried to cover up evidence at a murder scene. Second, the federal agent who blew the whistle on Operation Fast and Furious was fired for doing so. The details of this activity, also called Project Gunrunner, may have never come to light without Agent Vince Cefalu's exposure of it.

On what charges was Cefalu fired? Since they couldn't charge him with a crime they settled for firing him after 30 years of service for what they called a "lack of candor."

Finally, Attorney General Eric Holder lied to Congress under oath about his knowledge of Fast and Furious. It is obvious to any thinking person that this is systemic criminal behavior on the part of the (non-justice) Justice Department and ATF agents.

It's not uncommon for law enforcement officials to engage in what would otherwise be criminal activity as part of a sting operation, but to chalk the failure of this "sting operation" to mere incompetence stretches credibility.

To add insult to injury, it is clear that the Obama regime is lying and actively attempting to cover up what actually happened. It even went so far as to drag out the trumped-up Iranian issue on the very day Holder was to testify. Old strategy: distract, obfuscate and deny.

Possibly the bigger story is the fact that this activity was known by the State Department. It has been reported that they were deeply involved in this scandal.

Investigative journalist Mike Vanerboegh declares that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and her trusted associate, Andrew J. Shipiro, devised at least part of the framework of what would later become Operation Fast and Furious.

Taking it even a step further, Vanerboegh claims that it was Shipiro who first described the

details of the proposed scheme early in 2009 just after the Obama Administration took office. Clinton, it is reported, was obsessed with gun statistics that would prove that 90 percent of the firearms used by Mexican criminals come from the U.S. These claims by Clinton, as well as Obama, Janet Napolitano and certain members of the ATF are patently and blatantly false.

The only way to get to the bottom of this out-of-control, Chicago-style administration is to appoint a special prosecutor to thoroughly investigate, excluding no one involved. When the law is flagrantly violated by the so-called guardians of law, total lawlessness will eventually follow.

DICK KNOLLS  
Centralia

#### Take Responsibility for Your Actions

To the editor:

Are you listening to what your mirror is telling you? Seriously. I'll bet you check yourself out every day: how cool you are or how good you look.

When did you start making excuses for the extra weight you carry? When did you start evading important issues at home, at work or in church? When did you start blaming everyone and everything for what is wrong in your life? When did you stop taking responsibility for your actions? When your mirror asks you, "What have you done?" do you respond as Adam did from the Bible, "the woman made me do it" or do you blame Wall Street, big business and commercialized Santa?

We all remember the spilled hot coffee lawsuit episode. What was it she ordered again? Hot coffee. Do you have a wood stove and children at home? Could you imagine if one of your children sued you because they touched the hot stove after you warned them it was hot?

Why are you laughing? What is the difference between this and hot coffee? With snow covered roads approaching, will you blast through the intersection because the other person is supposed to stop or do you take responsibility for your actions and slow down until you know for sure they can stop?

This country was not built by people who said, "I'm not responsible for myself, so give me my share that I didn't work for or earn." Rather, they took their dignity, morals, heart and what little they could scrounge up and forged a future. My mirror tells me where I fail. What does yours tell you?

STEVE AHLSTEN  
Onalaska

#### Editorial Mission Statement

■ We will strive to be the voice of reason for the peaceful settlement of conflict and contention on key local issues. We will work to be fair at all times and to provide a balance of opinions. We will make our opinion pages available for public discussion of vital issues and events affecting the quality of life in Lewis County and adjoining regions. When necessary, we will be willing to take a tough, definitive stance on a controversial issue.

#### Letters Policy

■ Please type opinions, if possible, and limit letters to 500 words. Shorter letters get preference. Contributors are limited to publication of one item every two weeks, with exceptions as warranted. Items submitted are subject to editing and will become the property of this newspaper. Poetry is not accepted.

#### To Send Your Letter

■ Address letters and commentaries to "Our Readers' Opinions." Please sign them and include your full address and daytime telephone number for verification and any questions. Send them to 321 N. Pearl, Centralia, WA 98531. E-mail letters can be sent to letters@chronline.com.

#### Questions

■ For questions on a letter call Doug Blosser at 807-8238 or toll-free, 1-800-562-6084, ext. 1238.

#### Editorials

■ Executive Editor Michael Wagar can be reached by e-mail at mwagar@chronline.com or at (360) 807-8224.

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