

LETTERS

Beloved pet dog mourned

To the Editor: The driver who was speeding down 18th Street in Lorain on the morning of Monday, Dec. 10, should know that Comett was the name of the dog you killed, a golden lab. How could you just keep driving and not stop to see if you could have helped him? He was only 18 months old. I bought him from a rescue shelter.

Cornett would go up to anybody and let them pet him, or play with any other dog or cat. I loved Cornett so much I bought a kennel and put him in my bedroom so he could be an inside dog.

On that Monday morning, when we woke up, Cornett was put in our fenced-in back yard. I don't know how he got out of the yard, but two cars of people went looking for him, plus another person on foot. I wish we would have found him first, before you did.

Cornett's dead now; he was a good dog. But what if he had been a child and not a dog? I hope you will slow down and be more careful while driving. Next time it might be a child you hit.

D. Hamilton, Lorain

'Surge' troops back home

To the Editor: The proposed "surge" of 20,000 or 30,000 combat troops in Iraq, for a limited time is foolhardy.

The military has a penchant for holding on to troops under their commands. They only need to say such people are needed for security and victory, and the soldiers stay, as they did in Vietnam.

We will leave Iraq, later than sooner, and the body counts of our soldiers and Iraqi civilians will steadily rise.

That the "surge" will kill many Shia, many Shiite, a few Christians, and the collateral damage of dead children and their moms, is guaranteed. And for what? Killing a few bad guys? Demolishing the few buildings we haven't leveled?

The term "bad guys" bandied about by talking heads on television is insulting and juvenile, making the opposition into the ranks of cattle rustlers and stage-coach robbers. The "enemy" defies one simplistic labeling. Surely, it is a civil war, a religious war, a criminal war, a war of vengeance and payback.

It is not, anymore (if it ever was) a preventive war of liberation and democratization and whatever other silly labels the administration dreams up.

If we can surge one way, we can (and will) surge another. Toward the borders, and eventually leaving the Iraqis to their own destiny.

This country must renounce all designs on military bases, the administration of oil revenues and backing of any religious fac-

Legal Aid shorts area

To the Editor: Six years ago, Lorain County had its own legal aid program, governed by Lorain County residents, staffed with four full-time attorneys, and operating on a balanced budget. The federal government then forced a merger with the Cleveland Legal Aid Society "with the goal of integrating delivery and improving efficiencies."

By 2005 the number of attorneys in the Lorain County office had been halved. That number is now down to one. Cleveland Legal Aid Society explains that the Lorain County office is "in transition" and that the needs of the county's poor are being addressed by interim solutions. It is looking for someone to manage the office, promises to add a staff attorney sometime next year, and hopes "eventually... to add more."

The entire situation is cast as part of national problem. While it is clear that the challenge of providing the poor with basic access to our justice system has been and remains large, there is more to the Lorain County issues than that.

According to its annual report, Cleveland Legal Aid Society's revenue in 2005 increased by 13.6 percent to \$6.9 million. The additional funds were used as follows: \$378,660 to more than double its administrative budget, \$372,642 banked, and \$110,572 for direct services to the poor (a 2 percent increase). Cash reserves have grown to \$2.5 million and, while final figures for 2006 are not yet available, it is likely that revenue growth will continue.

In 2005, Cleveland employed 38 lawyers to handle 6,700 cases. Lorain County's two lawyers (representing 5 percent of that staff), handled 10 percent of the total workload. The revenue received on account of the number of poor in Lorain County is more than \$500,000 annually. Clearly that amount is not being used locally.

The issue has to do more with priorities in spending than with a dearth of resources. A "transition" in Lorain County is indeed needed — one that reverses the decline of the past six years, and rebuilds staffing to levels commensurate with our indigent population.

David A. Myers, Elyria

Happy new letter-writing

To the Editor: I wish all of my fellow letter writers a blessed, healthy new year, and keep on opining!

La India Caribe, Lorain

Freedom of religion

To the Editor: In response to the Dec. 15 letter titled "Muslim congressman," politicians swear on the Holy Bible yearly then lie, cheat and steal daily. This country of ours was founded on the freedom of religion that allows Muslim congressman-elect Keith Ellison his religion. The word Allah means God; the word Muslim means believer in God. What happened on 9-11 was not an act of Allah but the act of a lunatic who distorts a religion to meet his needs. A lunatic that this country was in bed with, a lunatic that we conducted business with for years. A lunatic caused 9-11. Not a God-fearing Muslim.

Charles Parker, Lorain

Nag auditor for dog tags

To the Editor: Please, please bother Mark Stewart, the Lorain County auditor, until he gives in and sends out mailers for dog tags. It is an important tool for tracking lost dogs and helping dogs that are lost find their way home and receive care while they are being kept at the Lorain County Dog Kennel. Licensing your dog is one of the most important things you can do to help protect them.

Jill Connone, Oberlin

A New Year with heart

To the Editor: The Friendship Animal Protective League in Elyria has been in a financial crisis in the past few months. We have received generous donations and contributions from warm-hearted people in Lorain County that have helped to keep the doors open thus far. A few weeks ago our furnace went out, which left our shelter very cold for employees and animals alike. E.H. Roberts and Co. not only installed a new furnace at no cost to us but cleaned all of the duct work in the shelter. Words will never be enough thanks for this act of kindness and generosity. The unwanted dogs and cats that we care for will be warm this winter, and the employees will be able to work in a comfortable workplace. Again, as a member of the executive board, I would like to applaud this kindness and compassion.

Diane Grunick, Avon Lake

Holiday spirit shines

To the Editor: The Avon Women's Club and The Avon Lion's Club would like to