

By JOE Assoc

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VIEWPOINT

Time for North Elba to retire

North Elba deciding to call itself "Lake Placid" is every bit as sensible as Marion Morrison changing his name to "John Wayne." Placid is a legend, like "The Duke," North Elba is for family only, like Marion.

The Town of North Elba has wallowed in anonymity since Lake Placid made itself a big deal by hosting the 1932 Olympic Winter Games. Now it's ready to throw its hands in the air and submit to the pressure to go by Town of Lake Placid.

Many people don't realize the relationship between a village and a town. That's because of historic nomenclature.

A town is merely a big geographic entity, the next step down from a county. It may include a population center, but it doesn't have to. The Town of Saranac in Clinton County, for example, has a few loosely defined communities, but it doesn't have a village or even what could truly be called a population center.

The Town of Plattsburgh has Morristownville, which is a population center, all right, but not a full-fledged village.

Dannemora is an example of a town that includes a village within it. (Names may have been scarce, back then, and they decided to call the village the same thing they called the

town. Other localities had the same problem: Champlain, Westport and Mooers, to name three.)

So the Town of North Elba surrounding the Village of Lake Placid was not unusual. What was unusual was how the village has so far exceeded the town in terms of fame and prestige. South of Ticonderoga, who ever heard of North Elba? Who never heard of Lake Placid?

So the name change is overdue. To heighten the reasonableness of the decision, the village and town may consolidate. If you lived there, would you rather see "North Elba" or "Lake Placid" perpetuated? Had they stuck with North Elba, people all over the world would be asking what ever had happened to Lake Placid.

One fly in the ointment might be that Saranac Lake, perhaps the most-confounding site of all, being in three towns and two counties, would have to own up to being at least partially in the Town of Lake Placid. Many Saranac Lakers would rather be in the Soviet Union than the Town of Lake Placid.

So this civics lesson might not end with the birth of the Town of Lake Placid. The next step may be a separatist movement by the Village of Saranac Lake.



The Packers are the real America's team

Here is some advice for those brooding fans in Cleveland and Los Angeles, whose football teams have been carried off by unscrupulous franchise owners. And for those of us in Chicago who waste time worrying about what Michael "The Weenie" McCaskey might do with the Bears. Forget it. Do as I have done and become an out-of-town fan of America's Team.



Mike Royko

No, I'm not talking about the Dallas Cowboys, who falsely claim to be America's Team.

The truth is, Dallas became nationally popular only because they hired higher-class hussies to jiggle and bounce for the networks.

If there is one team that truly deserves to be called America's Team, it is in the most unlikely community to have a major league sports franchise of any kind.

Yes, I'm talking about little Green Bay, Wis., and its Packers.

Consider this: Los Angeles, the nation's second-biggest city, has recently lost two NFL teams.

Yet there has never been even a hint that the Packers would leave Green Bay, a city with fewer residents than L.A. has rioters.

You don't hear the owners of the Green Bay team whining that they are not rich enough or trying to shake down the local taxpayers for new goodies that will make them even richer.

That's because the Packer franchise is owned by the kind of people who should own every football franchise.

Basically, it is owned by the people of Green Bay. And it would be almost impossible for the team to go anywhere else because no one individual owns a big enough piece to do it.

As Phil Pione, executive assistant to the team president, explains the setup:

"There are 1,898 stockholders representing 4,634 shares. A good majority are Wisconsin residents. Most shareholders own one share. The bylaws indicate that no one shareholder can hold 200 shares.

"There are no dividends, no interest, no special season-ticket privileges. Stockholders meet once a year at the annual meeting, and they elect the board of directors. It's a 45-person board, 15 elected each year.

"The board elects the executive committee and they operate the daily functions. It is seven people: the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and three members at large.

"The president-CEO is the only person who is compensated. Everyone else sits gratis."

Isn't that sensible? It means that the Packers are truly Green Bay's team, the way the Rams and Raiders weren't L.A.'s team; and the Cardinals weren't Chicago's team or St. Louis's team; and the Browns weren't really Cleveland's team; and the Colts weren't really a Texas team or Baltimore's team; and the Raiders weren't Oakland's team when they moved to L.A., and stopped being L.A.'s team when they crept back to Oakland.

Who can keep track of all these comings and goings?

But you can keep track of the Packers because they have been in the same location since 1919, although most of the country doesn't know where Green Bay is. Even people in Green Bay aren't all sure where it is, but they don't have to know, since they are already there.

Those of us in Chicago sometimes poke affectionate fun at our rustic neighbors to the north.

We tease them for wearing red long underwear to weddings and other formal events — as an outer garment.

We call them cheeseheads and chuckle at the way they chomp their bratwurst, drink their brandy-beer boilemmakers, and happily thump their distended tummies. The men, too.

But while Chicagoans worry about the Bears moving to Gary, where the players might be mugged on their way to the locker room, the Green Bay fans are free of such concerns.

This is the way it should be in every football-crazed city. They should own the teams, not some prissy bookkeeper like McCaskey, a double-talking hustler like the guy who dumped Cleveland, the blowhard who took the Colts to Indianapolis, or the other megabuck strap-sniffers whose loyalty is comparable to that of a leech.

If the 1,898 Packers stockholders can renounce greed, envy, gluttony, the works of Satan, and other vulgar cravings, why can't it be done in other cities? The Packers have managed to win championships with their homespun system. At the very least, they always field teams that are just as capable of twanging an opponent's tendons and crunching his cartilage as anyone else's.

So until they get another team in Cleveland (maybe the Cleveland Bears) and L.A. (maybe the L.A. Cardinals), the fans of these cities should join me in eating a big burp, burping a big burp and cheering on America's Team.

You will become not only an honorary cheesehead but an even greater honor — an honorary Packerhead.

Anyone for a bumper sticker? Tribune Media Services

Public Journal

Despising crime not a racist attitude

After several months of bathing in conservative adulation, State Sen. Dale Volker, the Erie County Republican and prime sponsor of the state's new death-penalty law, will soon be joined by other capital-punishment advocates — GOP Gov. George Pataki jumps to mind — in defending the fact that New York became the 38th death-penalty state last March.



Ray Herman

Although it's autumn, the season of wedgewood blue skies and "the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness," to quote John Keats, the capital-punishment debate, entombed in relative serenity in recent months, is about to assume a new sizzle because the new law, which took effect Sept. 1, may soon be tested as the result of a Manhattan murder case.

Two men accused of killing a woman and her two teenage children are the first suspects charged with a capital crime under the new statute.

Charged in the Manhattan case are Lamar Sanchez, 18, and Jose "Benny" Rodriguez, 24. Liberals have long contended that a disproportionate number of blacks and other minorities are convicted of first-degree murder and, thus, become eligible for capital punishment, which under the new law is by lethal injection. However, unless one is into executions by quotas or racial balance, these liberal beefs are just air pockets and sky castles. If a disproportionate number of any segment of the population kills others, then that segment becomes eligible for executions.

In point of fact, since the death penalty was reinstated nationally as a sentencing option 19 years ago, about 260 felons have been executed. Of those, about 40 percent were black, more than three times the black percentage of the U.S. population. But since 1976, the annual percentages of blacks among those convicted of murder have ranged from 44 to 52 percent. If these stats prove discrimination, does it favor or injure blacks? In any event, what do stats have to do with the guilt or innocence of a particular prisoner? Have we reached the stage where minorities and non-minorities have to be executed in proportionate, affirmative-action-like numbers? Moreover, liberals tend to patronize and even degrade blacks by refusing to hold them to the same standards as others. It's a libel on the many black families who

raise disciplined kids who succeed.

If, as New York liberals suggest, the criminal-justice system is racist, why have New Yorkers at large and in a more general sense exercised their voluntary choices in the marketplace by helping to make the National Basketball Association, about 80 percent black, one of the most popular leagues, and why have they helped make Whitney Houston the most popular and richest singer; Bill Cosby, the most popular and richest comedian and Oprah Winfrey, the richest entertainer? New Yorkers at large applaud achievement but condemn crime.

New York's death-penalty statute comes at a time when there is an entirely new criminal culture where terrorization and destruction by young punks have become ends in themselves. For adult nihilists, why not the death penalty? But for all the popularity and passion buttressing the New York statute, it has left a debris distracting loose ends. The libs will contend that the law will be unevenly administered, noting that the state's 62 district attorneys have the option of seeking capital punishment or not. Moreover, every member of the state's Court of Appeals, the ultimate arbiter of the new statute, are appointees of former Gov. Mario Cuomo, the patron saint of the anti-death-penalty forces. For Volker, Pataki & Co., fasten the seatbelts. A bumpy ride lies ahead.

Herman is an award-winning political writer and columnist.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Blood drive successful

To the Editor: A blood drive to benefit the CVPH Medical Center Blood Bank was held on Oct. 5, at the AuSable Forks Community Center gym. There were 53 donors, three of whom were first-time donors. Forty-eight units (six gallons) were collected and donated to the Blood Bank in memory of Kathleen "Kathy" Devlin Torrance.

Members of her family who were on hand and presented with a card signed by the donors were Barbara and Gary Nelson, Fanny and Mark Devlin, and John Devlin.

The AuSable Forks Volunteer Ambulance Service and Volunteer Fire Department wish to thank all those who donated blood and also, to Santa's Workshop for their support of our efforts to supply an adequate blood supply for our area. For you! The Christmas Marathon

Blood Drive is set for Dec. 7 from 3 to 8 p.m. at the Community Center. You may give the gift that makes someone else's Christmas possible, on Dec. 7, from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Community Center Gym in AuSable Forks. Linda Dubay AuSable Forks

Granddaughter a blessing

To the Editor: I want to publicly share our granddaughter's heart-felt poem that we received as a "thank you." Amanda came for a visit this summer to our home. She lives in Charlestown, S.C. She misses her North Country relatives very much.

Grandparents: "My grandparents think of me all the time. They make me feel so good inside. They listen to me all the time. Thinking about what's on my mind. They teach me everything I need to know — from hanging clothes to how to

sew. My grandparents take me up and down, all around town. They don't let me frown. They take me to see my cousins around the clock. On the way back we sit in the car and talk. As you can see my grandparents are so nice to me!" — Amanda

We are blessed to have such a loving and caring granddaughter. Walter Lashway Plattsburgh

Pranksters or vandals?

To the Editor: Re page 13, Press-Republican, Nov. 7, Halloween pranksters? No! Rather further evidence of the sick minds that are infiltrating our society today.

It would be interesting if one might follow the progress of these vandals and one day read of what Halloween mischief they might dream up while they are permanently incarcerated in any New York state prison.

Helen C. Merritt Plattsburgh

Letter to the Editor Press-Republican P.O. Box 459 Plattsburgh, N.Y. 12001

The Press-Republican welcomes letters to the editor. All letters must be signed (except e-mail) and include the address and telephone number of the author. Letters must not contain more than 300 words. They should be typewritten. Those letters not meeting the criteria will not be published and will be returned. The Press-Republican reserves the right not to publish letters it judges to be inappropriate.

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