



Coming Tomorrow:
Guest columnist Lou O'Halley says he's excited by the push to put the Ten Commandments in the county courthouse.

Opinion

Our mission: To provide the Green Bay community with the most comprehensive and accurate information in the Green Bay area at hand. It is our responsibility to provide the public with open expression of diverse opinions while maintaining the public trust necessary to serve our readers, advertisers, employees and stockholders.

A-14

Green Bay Press-Gazette

Comments and suggestions? Call Opinion Page Editor Mike Biecha, (920) 431-6248

Sunday, September 14, 1997

In our view

Rafn takes charge at NWTC

Jeff Rafn seems solidly in charge after only two months as the first new president of Northeast Wisconsin Technical College in nearly two decades.

In a lively conversation with Rafn in his Green Bay office, we found a leader with specific ideas for improving the way it serves its students — he repeatedly called them customers — and the community.

To his credit, he hasn't rushed into quick, cosmetic changes. He is taking time to talk to students, faculty, staff, business and civic leaders, and the heads of other educational institutions.

"Mostly I've been listening," Rafn told us. "That is a critical skill for any effective leader. Rafn inherited a school with a solid reputation for producing skilled workers. More than 94 percent of its 1996 graduates were employed within six months — most in their career

field, most at Northeast Wisconsin job sites. NWTC serves 4,000 students in its six- and one-half county district — including 13,000 students in associate degree and technical diploma programs at campuses in Green Bay, Sturgeon Bay and Marinette.

■ Our view: We like what we heard from Rafn about breaking down barriers between educational institutions about the need for lifelong learning.

One dramatic change on the horizon is allowing high school juniors and seniors to finish their education at a technical college. "It doesn't matter to me where they get their education," Rafn said. "What matters to me is that the student gets the education."

Rafn said people have the wrong impression if they think technical college simply train

students to perform a specific task.

"If think if you go out and talk to employers, employers don't want the person who is narrowly trained. They want somebody who can think. They want somebody who can delegate responsibility and take on responsibility. Who can identify problems and solve problems, make decisions. Who can continue to learn because they know their technology is going to change rapidly."

Rafn says his vision for NWTC is to provide all students — and he underscored the all — with high-quality learning opportunities when they want it. Where they want it, how they want it and what they want in order to provide for them a career and continuing education so that they may have a high quality of life. That's a tall order. We urge the campus and community to work with Rafn to fulfill his vision.

Pay close attention to series documenting Fox River pollution

The Fox River is the Saint-Joseph physical feature of a Green Bay Appleton area rapidly becoming urbanized. The river is the region's heritage. It will play a major role in the region's future.

Because the Fox is so important, we ask you to pay close attention to River Renewal, a series of stories by environmental reporter Susan Campbell that begins today and will run through Thursday.

Her stories will look at the river through the eyes of those who live on its banks, catch its fish, monitor its composition and design its future.

Before white came, the Fox was a vital transportation and trade route for Indian tribes. It served the same purpose as white settlers came to the area.

But almost — the turning of waste from sawmills, farms, factories and municipalities — dumped the river into a sewer and residents away from its dirt waters.

Thanks to an array of local, state and national environmental initiatives, the river is dramatically cleaner and healthier today than a generation ago.

Fewer contaminants are dumped into it. More people have a higher regard for its condition.

But, as Campbell's stories will show, an improved Fox River is a work in progress. Much progress has been done. But the Fox remains a river in need of renewal.

In particular, Plans must be done to contain dangerous contaminants such as PCBs flushed into the river years ago. Stronger efforts are required to reduce the runoff from farm fields and suburban backyards that is now the Fox's biggest problem.

Please pay attention to Campbell's stories. The Fox will be of increasing importance to the Green Bay-Appleton area in years to come.

An attractive river will draw new commercial and residential development to the old communities along its banks. A clean Fox will draw boaters and anglers. A healthy river will be a quality-of-life asset.

But a neglected Fox, a river whose banks are eroded by those along its shores, will be such a liability that the region it defines will find property elusive.

COMING SOON - NEW FEDERAL STANDARDS FOR MATH + READING.

Q: If the Vice President makes \$25,000 raising calls and \$5.75 donate \$40,000 each in soft money of a Bushist is illegal, and returned to a Bushist Temple, after a series of investigations by Congress, what are the chances campaign finance reform will occur before the election in the year 2000?

People's Forum

Committee action backed

GREEN BAY — I am writing to support the action of the Brown County Board Executive Committee in voting to call the request of the group wanting to post the Ten Commandments at the Courthouse. I sincerely hope the board will take this action.

It is hard to agree with such a request, especially when it is so clearly unconstitutional. Excuse me, Judge John Curran, but I do not agree with you on this one.

In fact, Judge Roy Moore displayed the Ten Commandments in an Alabama County Courthouse. Moore was removed from office by the Alabama State Supreme Court. He is now in prison for contempt of court.

I am sure that if the Ten Commandments were posted at the Courthouse, it would be a disgrace to our community. I am sure that if the Ten Commandments were posted at the Courthouse, it would be a disgrace to our community. I am sure that if the Ten Commandments were posted at the Courthouse, it would be a disgrace to our community.

Our good neighbors will be missed

I am a fanatic when it comes to the history and culture of Wisconsin. In celebration of Olympic medalists, I own a video titled Olympic Winter Games: Moments of Glory.

This video is special because it tells the story of the athletes who won the medals. It is a great example of the dedication and hard work that went into winning those medals.

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Concerned about GOP budget

GREEN BAY — I have given considerable thought to the Republican state budget, which threatens the health and safety of families and communities. Republicans support an Environmental Action Program that allows industrial companies to pollute our water and air.

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