

We must become the change we want to see -- Mahatma Gandhi

# Corpus Christi Examiner

Premier Issue  
October 1, 2004

The grassroots advocate supported, and run, by people like you

\$1.50

## Earning \$1.50

*A regular column about the making of this paper*

This paper's cover price of \$1.50 makes it, on a cost-per-issue basis, the most expensive media outlet in town. That means the paper had better be darn good. This column is where I will justify the price, explaining in each issue why I believe it's vital that you make the investment.

Here's my first go at it:

This first edition of the Examiner is all about the old saying, "People get the government -- and the journalism -- they deserve."

Complaints about the quality of our local journalism were rampant during a recent town hall meeting hosted by the Corpus Christi Caller-Times and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. And at that meeting, I heard nothing I haven't heard for years from people all over town: true community leaders go unacknowledged in the local press, big scandals go uncovered, people and places get unfairly stereotyped, important local issues go unaddressed, and harried reporters routinely get facts wrong.

My gut feeling is that Corpus Christi certainly deserves better. That's why I've started this paper.

But, as you'll see throughout this edition, I can't do this without your support. Good journalism is incredibly labor intensive (that's why it's so rare), and I'm just one guy.

So, if my gut feeling is correct, plenty of help will be forthcoming right away. (Throughout the paper you'll find a number of ways to get involved.) And, together, we'll turn this into the high quality media outlet that Corpus Christi really deserves.

I hope all that is worth \$1.50.

--Don Cudd, Editor

## Cover Story #1

# Filling the gaps

## Examiner aims to bring media change

The quotation in our nameplate from the too-often forgotten spiritual leader Mahatma Gandhi will grace each edition of this newspaper, which is debuting on the weekend of Gandhi's birthday. The paper's success will depend upon its readers taking the quotation to heart.

People from all walks of life in Corpus Christi have long complained about the quality of their local journalism, calling it biased, amateurish,

unethical, immature, incomplete, inaccurate and any number of other harsh adjectives. Those who have worked to start the Examiner are certainly among these critics and, accordingly, this new paper offers us all an opportunity to "become the change we want to see."

With the Examiner, residents of Corpus Christi are now empowered to produce, for themselves,

See "INTRO" Page 7

**New brand of journalism depends on you**  
Details throughout this issue

## The founding ideals

The Examiner was born after a June 29 gathering of 10 Corpus Christi residents who shared some concerns about the local media. The following is a summary of what that group decided about a news organization's role in a society.

### A local news organization should

1. Be an accurate archive of all segments of the community.
2. Help empower those who are disenfranchised and/or disenfranchised with our local democracy.
3. Take seriously its role as the "Fourth Estate," providing continuous, dependable checks on government, businesses and all who hold power in the community.
4. Put fairness and a quest for journalistic integrity ahead of all other concerns.
5. Create education initiatives that work for a more media literate community.
6. Concentrate its journalistic resources on local issues, covering them as thoroughly as the national media cover national issues.
7. Adequately compensate its employees and contributors.
8. Be open to criticism and calls for improvement.
9. Express an undying love for its community.
10. Strive to be consistently thought provoking and entertaining.

## New paper promises several key differences

In media circles, it's usually considered bad taste and poor journalism for a newspaper to devote a huge chunk of any issue (particularly its first) to itself.

As you can see, the Examiner is willing to risk the media gods' wrath.

Journalism is in terrible shape in America these days precisely

because the media are so reluctant to talk about themselves. Media people love to pretend that they don't matter, that they have no influence on the stories they cover (or ignore), and that they are simply invisible observers of the world.

The Examiner is not a part of that fantasy land, and that's just

one difference between this news organization and others.

Here are some others.

### Advertising's limited role

Most news organizations depend upon advertising sales for the lion's share of their income.

And, while that leads to "free" (or

low cost) media for consumers, it also leads to problems in news coverage.

See, hiring reporters and editors costs money, and selling advertising makes money. So, it just makes good business sense for news organizations to put most of

See "DIFFERENCES" Page 6

### More on this ...

**Not for spectators:** See how you can get off Corpus Christi's journalistic sidelines. P. 6

**What's in store:** Read about some stories that are currently in the works. P. 7

**How it began:** See the full story of how this paper came to be. P. 7

### Other stuff inside ...

**Examining Ideas:** This issue's discussion -- are our local media adequate? P. 2

**Examining Our City:** Find out about some groups that local candidates won't ignore. P. 4

**Examining Life:** Read about a Citizen Reporter's wacky experience with Cher tickets. P. 9

### Plans for next issue ...

#### Thorough Election Coverage

The general election is coming up November 2, and the Examiner's next two editions (October 15 and October 29) will offer a comprehensive look at the issues and candidates. See page 6 for information on how you can (and should) be involved in our coverage.

The Examiner depends on reader support!

To subscribe, call 853-0388, see page 8, or visit [www.corpuschristiexaminer.com](http://www.corpuschristiexaminer.com)

# The Opinion, Editorial and Discussion Section

# Examining Ideas

Articulate thoughts from a variety of backgrounds

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Corpus Christi Examiner  
October 1, 2004

## Ground Rules

**A regular column about the making of this section**

Because behind-the-scenes misunderstandings typically abound when it comes to any paper's editorial section, I plan to try something different from most editors. I will use this space to publicly explain certain decisions I will have to make in each edition.

If, for example, the Examiner gets 15 letters on a certain topic, and we only have room to print 3, I'll tell you here that the three I'm running are the ones I think make their points the best. I might even explain why the other letters didn't quite make the cut.

I hope this column will keep hard feelings to a minimum. At the very least, it will give you some important insight about this section.

Most editions of this column will include at least a brief mention of how I decided upon the Featured Issue. Since this is a new paper founded on the idea that our local media are not as thorough as they could be, this week's issue is probably self explanatory.

Please don't be shy about suggesting next issue's topic and/or guests. As I write this, I'm thinking of asking whether voting is really worthwhile. Know anyone who would be a good guest columnist on that? Have any other topic ideas? Please let me know.

I'll end with a quick writing tip for prospective contributors to this section. (I'll do this in most issues, space permitting.) Avoid "double headers." Example: instead of "part and parcel," just say "part", dang it!

--Don Cudd, Editor

Each edition of the Examiner will explore one important local issue from a variety of perspectives.


## Featured Issue

**Do the Corpus Christi news media adequately cover the city?**

Answering

# NO

**Mark Di Carlo**  
Defense Attorney  
TV Show Host



No, and the reinstatement of the Fairness Doctrine should be discussed.


To begin, I can speak to coverage of two of my trials. A news reporter at Channel Three, KIII, was covering one of my trials years ago. The reporter came into the trial during the prosecution's examination of one of a witnesses and stayed for about five minutes. The reporter walked out before I cross examined the witness. During the cross examination the witness was caught in several major contradictions of his testimony. The reporter stated on his newscast, that evening, that there was an eyewitness to the accident and that the scene "made the witness sick."

See "NO" Page 3

Answering

# YES

**Manuel Flores & Donna Strong**  
Del Mar College  
Journalism Department



Covering local issues and events is the mission of city and area newspapers and journals, TV and radio stations, a number of which are locally-owned and operated. The area media do a very good job of covering local events that impact us. Though our stations and publications vary in the amount of coverage they give local issues and events, the overall mix seems to be about 70-80 percent local news vs. national or international on the TV stations. On the print side, the ratio is about 50-60 percent local coverage in area publications, but some publications are comprised of almost 100 percent local coverage.

Fact is, local television stations do an excellent job of covering

See "YES" Page 3

## What's your answer?

Your picture (and comments) can be here next issue

After you've read what our guests have to say, feel free to join the discussion.

Beginning with our next issue, October 15, this space will have comments from people like you. If you have a thought about our featured issue, you are welcome to be a part of our street poll.

## Our first street poll

Friday, October 8

12 -12:30 p.m.

Six Points Bus Station

(Can't make it? Well, catch up with us next time. We'll be in a different location every other Friday.)

[www.corpuschristiexaminer.com](http://www.corpuschristiexaminer.com)

Corpus Christi Examiner

(361) 853-0388

a sole proprietorship established in Nueces County, Texas on August 19, 2004 by founder Don Cudd, 3537 Monterey, Corpus Christi, Texas 78411

### Mission

The Corpus Christi Examiner aims to solve social problems caused by undue corporate influence upon American news media. The organization holds journalistic values above all other concerns and, specifically, concentrates its resources on giving public due to noteworthy individuals and issues largely ignored by other media.

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### Policy Encouraging Participation

The Corpus Christi Examiner encourages strong public participation in the making of the paper. Plans for each edition and other important behind-the-scenes information about the paper is available at the paper's website listed above. Readers are strongly encouraged to join the paper's online "club" via that website and/or to attend the paper's gatherings on Monday nights at 7 p.m. at B&J's Pizza, 6335, SPID. The paper is open to criticism and calls for change.

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### Advertising Policy

A limited amount of advertising space will be available in each issue to individuals who have an announcement to make and to businesses or groups who want to show public support for high quality journalism in South Texas. The Examiner will reject advertising from anyone who may be attempting to influence the paper's editorial content with his or her order.

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### Subscription Information

The Examiner costs \$1.50 per copy. To order delivery visit the paper's website or mail payment for the number of issues desired to the address above.



*Editor's Note: The following letters were submitted by people who heard about the Examiner before this first publication date and had something to say in the first issue. If you've got something to say, we welcome your letter for our next issue, October 15. See the end of the column on page 12 for our policies concerning letters in all future issues.*

## Faith is key to family success

Look what the Lord has done! I started working at Fruit King Produce in 1973 when my late father, David Martinez Sr. decided to go into business. My father is my mentor, a man of integrity, who taught us to always put The Lord Jesus first in everything

and that all things are possible. Fruit King Produce was named by Georgiana Martinez, a devoted wife and Christian mother. She also loved us and was always there for all of us, teaching us to trust in the Lord.

My heart's desire was to have my own business. So, I learned the retail as well as the wholesale aspects of my parent's business and, in February 2003, I took a step of faith. With the support of my husband Javier Sifuentes Sr, I opened a fruit stand of our own.

I am now the owner of Fruit King No. 5, at 4510 Weber Rd, and my son Javier Sifuentes Jr. (Hobby) is part owner, carrying the same desire of his grandfa-

ther, David Sr. He knows, as I have

## LETTERS

Corpus Christi Examiner  
3537 Monterey  
Corpus Christi, TX 78411  
e-mail: letters@corpuschristsexaminer.com

found, that the key secret of success is "With God, all things are possible."

People who come to our store often express their gratitude and comment upon the fresh and friendly atmosphere the store has.

I thank God for the wonderful blessings he has given to my family and myself.

And I faithfully say, "Everything is possible if you put Jesus first in your life."

**Celia Martinez Sifuentes**

## Renter upset about complex

*Editor's note: Printing the following letter is a considerable journalistic risk because, well, we don't have the complex's side of this story. The Examiner is running the letter, however, because countless other Corpus Christi apartment dwellers likely identify with its overall sentiment. The author does not identify his complex, and, to further protect the complex's identity, The Examiner has omitted the author's last name. The Examiner will not make a regular practice of printing anonymous letters.*

I need to call to your attention. It is about the deplorable living conditions at my apartment complex. The mess in my apartment is so bad that I want to move. It could very easily even be making me sick. I pay more than half of my monthly income to rent and think I deserve better.

First, I don't even have decent air conditioning. I only have a window unit which isn't any good. I had it replaced, but the new one didn't work either. And now, let me tell you about the refrigerator: I had the old one replaced because the gasket on the door was gone and this second box isn't much better. It doesn't keep food at the temperature with which it needs to be. If you turn it down too low, it spoils food because it's too hot,

I have a very pressing issue that

See "LETTERS" Page 12

## No... from p. 2

The witness's contradictions which made his testimony unbelievable were not part of that newscast.

Recently, the same reporter appeared at the murder trial of a defendant I was representing in Alice. The reporter was a possible witness, so he did not hear nor see any testimony at the trial. My client was found innocent, and the reporter appeared on television stating that there were boxes of evidence. He videotaped the boxes and said the jurors "still" found my client innocent. The boxes of evidence which the reporter referred to, such as the murdered girl's clothing, established that my client did not commit the murder. Despite my establishing the more likely suspects at the trial, the local mass media did not report who they were nor why they were more likely suspects. The public was left with the impression that a guilty man, my client, "got off."

To add insult to injury, after the trial I heard a local morning talk show host interview a retired medical examiner to attempt to explain why evidence may not

have existed against my guilty client. Neither the talk show host nor the medical examiner heard testimony at the trial and their opinion was based upon the slanted stories of the trial that appeared in the newspaper. I felt this talk show host's discussion that inferred that my client was guilty after the jury found him innocent -- even though he did not see one day of the trial -- was morally unconscionable. My client was a teenage boy. The local media's attempt to influence or override the jurors' decision and make them seem ridiculous is harmful to our form of government and the criminal justice system.

Similarly, the local media is involved in an attack on the civil justice system, that is, the right to sue people or corporations who harmed you physically or financially. These views are also purveyed by the typical party line Republican, one dimensional, talk show hosts like the one who hosted the medical

See "NO" Page 9

## Yes... from p. 2

events. Were it not for local TV, many area residents would not be aware of the issues facing our communities. From the local elections, to inoculations for school children and hurricane preparedness, TV stations in Corpus Christi do their job.

The media successfully address issues affecting the majority of people in the area, as well as some specialized topics. Almost everyone is interested in the recent appraisal value and tax increases, especially homeowners since the increases take money directly from their pockets. The media covered this issue well. The recent CCISD bond referendum, its defeat and the resulting decision to close Coles Elementary and incorporate it with Evans Elementary received solid coverage.

Thankfully our local media seem to have gotten away from the proverbial "if it bleeds, it leads" mentality, but locally we have our share of "bad" news to report. And the media do their job in that area too. Some stories are uncomfortable to report such as the

police shooting of Paul Silvas in front of the Times Market on Baldwin and Horne on Oct. 28, 2003. The TV stations and Caller-Times thoroughly covered this incident. They also covered the hunt for the murderers of Pablo Guerra "Amigo" Castro at a Times Market on Baldwin July 19 and reported thoroughly on the hanging death of Miller High School student Paula Gonzalez this past summer.

As sad as these stories are, they were covered professionally and with sensitivity instead of the sensationalism often associated with small markets such as ours.

One of the biggest cases the media ever handled was the shooting of Selena Quintanilla-Perez in 1995 and the parking lot standoff with her killer and former fan-club president, Yolanda Saldivar. The media continue to cover events related to Selena. The press thoroughly covered -- live -- Kenneth Kraus' holding

See "YES" Page 9

## And the editor says...

Both sides are right here, but Mark Di Carlo's argument is more urgent. So, I vote "no."

There certainly are a number of bright spots in our local media. Donna Strong and Manuel Flores are good to point out, for example, that the Corpus Christi media have been slow to adopt the unfortunate national trend of emphasizing crime and fire stories over real news. Our local newsrooms are at least well-intentioned, and, on any given week, a consumer can find out a good deal about quite a few important local events and issues.

The trouble is, Di Carlo is not, by any means, alone in his criticisms. Our local media also miss a lot of important stories. Or they often just get facts wrong.

Being consistently accurate and thorough is expensive and difficult. And, while the people in our local newsrooms make valiant efforts to do their jobs well, they are often undermined by profit motives.

Hiring a reporter and camera crew to sit around a courthouse during an entire trial costs a lot of money. And for what? One 250 word story? From the perspective of a business's bottom line, well, it just doesn't make sense.

That's why I've started this paper. By beginning a dialogue about the local press, I hope to build a demand for better journalism. Then the local media will have to pay the price to do it right -- all the time.

Or they'll end up without an audience.

## About the contributors

**Mark Di Carlo** is a Corpus Christi defense attorney and regular supporter of alternative media outlets in South Texas including the Examiner. (His ad appears on page 8 of this edition.) He hosts a television talk show that can be seen Tuesdays at 9 p.m. on cable channel 10.

**Manuel Flores** is the leader of the Del Mar College journalism department and faculty advisor to the school's student newspaper, the Foghorn. He is also a former sports editor of the Corpus Christi Caller-Times and currently serves on the Corpus Christi Independent School District Board of Trustees.

**Donna Strong**, is the business manager for the Foghorn and serves as Flores' assistant. She also teaches English classes at Del Mar and is a former Caller-Times reporter.

# Examining Our City

The Section Devoted to Corpus Christi's Social Institutions: Political, Economic, Educational, Fraternal, Religious and Others

## Keeping It Fair

*A regular column about the making of this section*

This is the "news" section of the Examiner, where we'll explore the institutions that make our city tick.

And we'll do so fairly as opposed to objectively. Hence, this column's name.

Journalists playing the objective game cannot publicly ask some of their best questions for fear of revealing their biases. So, we just won't play the game.

We'll raise the issues that need to be raised and ask the questions that need to be asked. In other words, writers on this page will be free to tell it like it is. And I won't care if you can tell what side of the fence they're on.

But I will care a great deal about being fair. That's where this column comes in.

This is where I will explain why I've chosen to run the pieces that appear in this section and why they take their particular angles.

I will be open about my biases (or those of the writers) and explain my attempts to be fair to competing ideas. I do this because, well, this is your paper. If you don't feel I'm fair, I want you to know I'm at least trying. And I'm always open to calls for improvement.

Here's my first set of explanations:

The pieces to the right are about groups that, by and large, represent my own ideals. Several are already enthusiastically supporting the Examiner, in fact.

There are other grassroots groups in Corpus Christi, of course, and the Examiner will be open to them all. I've chosen to focus on these groups this time because, they are all involved in, more or less, non-partisan voter education.

If you know of a group not listed here and not regularly mentioned in other local media, please let me know. Chances are that group, whether I agree with its membership or not, will be a wonderful future topic for this section.

-- Don Cudd, editor

The November election is fast approaching and local candidates are certainly

# Making the rounds

*In it's next two editions, the Examiner will have thorough coverage of the issues and the campaigns. But this week, here's a little about some of the local groups, people and shows that our local media sometimes forget to mention, but candidates are sure to not ignore.*

### Morning Coffee Club

This group has long been a required stop for residents pushing political issues and candidates stumping for votes. That's mostly because group leader Connie Guitierrez and her assistant Danny Noyola Jr. video tape each of the club's meetings and air them on Corpus Christi Cable Public Access Channel 10 several times each month. (And footage has also been known to pop up during other public access shows as well.)

While both group leaders are active Democrats (both serve as their precinct chairs), they are very clear that their forum is open to everyone. Republican Raul Torres running for County Clerk was a recent speaker.

Anyone with an issue to discuss is welcome to show up a little early and ask to speak at club meetings which happen at 9:30 a.m. each Thursday morning at Rositas Restaurant, 5253 S. Staples. The group gets plenty of visits from local politicians, especially during campaign season.

Audience members always have a chance to ask questions, and often the answers would be newsworthy -- if only the media were there.

### Corpus Christi Barrios Association

This group's name comes up regularly in political circles, and many of the city's most prominent activists are members. The group doesn't always get the media attention it might deserve, but it, nevertheless, is usually right in the middle of some of the most talked about issues in Corpus Christi. It

Some recent examples:

Many group members were surprised, saddened and angered by a September announcement that the Corpus Christi Memorial Coliseum will no longer be home to live concerts and shows. The group's heartfelt press release on the matter was ignored by local media.

The group recently, to little media fanfare, recognized the Leopard Street Corridor Association for its efforts in curbing crime in its part of town. And it also honored activists Roland Garza and Priscilla Leal for their recent unsung work in helping more than 200 South Park Middle School neighborhood residents fight for improvements in their part of town.

This group meets in various places at 9 a.m. on the first and third Saturdays of each month. For more information, contact President

### Moody Civic Minded Students

This group of high school government students (including many first-time voters) is into any number of civic projects in which they interact directly with politicians and candidates.

Some of its members appear regularly on local radio and television announcing news about their school, several members were very active in a recent forum on why high school students drop out of school, and some are regular participants in other civic clubs, such as the Corpus Christi Barrios Association which is lead by their teacher.

The group is currently organizing its annual Moody Community Convention in which many local politicians and candidates will be participating. That event is set for Oct. 24, and you will find more information about it in the next Examiner.

Oh yeah, these guys are selling the Examiner these days as a fundraiser for a spring trip to Austin.

### The Noyola's

Careful readers will have already noted that the groups and shows mentioned on this page have one thing in common: The Noyola family is involved in them all.

Jessie (who is currently on the Corpus Christi City Council), Danny Sr. and David Noyola are among the most influential leaders in Corpus Christi. They have been called, many times, the "Kennedy's of Corpus Christi."

And everyone in politics in Corpus Christi is aware that they certainly have a Kennedy-like following in these parts. (It should be noted that Danny Noyola Sr. is a supporter -- financial and otherwise -- of the Examiner.)

### KTMV-TV (Cable 8) & KMIQ (104.9 FM)

These two stations are among the last locally owned broadcast companies in Corpus Christi and four of their shows are hot spots for local politicians, candidates and issues.

Corpus Christi voters should make sure they tune in regularly to the following programs.

La Hora Civica, hosted by Danny and David Noyola at 6 p.m. on Mondays on KTMV; South Texas Politics, hosted by John Marez and Rene Saenz at 6 p.m. on Fridays on KTMV; Commentarios, hosted by David Noyola at 6 p.m. on Wednesdays on KMIQ; and David Noyola's daily show at noon weekdays.



# The Examiner Interview

Sylvia Samaniego -- Graffiti Wipe Out Specialist

Interviewed by Don Cudd, editor, on September 23

*In each edition, the Examiner visits with an unsung-but-noteworthy local activists. Keep your eyes peeled for people we need to interview.*

Sylvia Samaniego was, until recently, an outgoing newcomer to the Corpus Christi political scene. As the basically self-appointed leader of the local effort to nominate dark horse Democrat Dennis Kucinich for president, Samaniego ruffled a few feathers throughout the summer. She consistently pushed for Kucinich's often-ignored platform, proudly wore Kucinich t-shirts at events where most people were supporting John Kerry, and, in general, begged local Democrats to do a better job of working together and with the rest of the community.

When arranging this interview in mid September, the Examiner intended to ask Samaniego about her political activism, the local reaction to her efforts, and her plans for the fast approaching November election. But she surprised us: a few days before, she took a new job that requires her to stay out of partisan politics. She now works at the Volunteer Center in Corpus Christi at a job funded by Americorps, the non-profit organization President Bush promoted after the September 11 attacks as a way to build a better America.

So, while this interview suddenly took a new life Samaniego's new job, it turns out, makes as interesting and as useful a tale as her politics

**Examiner:** Tell us about what you're doing now.

**Samaniego:** I am now the the Graffiti Wipe Out Coordinator for the Volunteer Center.

**Examiner:** And what's that?

**Samaniego:** I try to get volunteers to help out with the graffiti wipe out's and get donations for the supplies that we need, you know, paint and rollers, and even things for the volunteers, stuff to show they're appreciated. Organizing and trying to get the word out is what I'm focused on right now. I'm trying to let the community know that this Graffiti Wipe Out Program is here.

I got involved myself about 15 years ago when I was trying to do Graffiti Wipe Out through the school district. This is strange, but I have always just hated graffiti. I have always thought it is just so awful for someone to take over property like that and just ruin it. So I (began approaching school district officials about graffiti wipe out initiatives) and after going to so many meetings, nothing happened. And after that, I realized that I can do this on my own. I thought, you know what, as long as I have permission from the owners (of property that's been vandalized), that's all that I need.

**Examiner:** So, you went around town cleaning up graffiti at random and on a volunteer basis.

**Samaniego:** Right, on my own

**Examiner:** You did this for how long?

**Samaniego:** I just did it, you know, every now and then. I did some over across from Wynne Seal (middle school) and I did some here in my area (near Collier Pool) and a few others. Maybe about five or six sites. It wasn't a lot. Just whenever I had the time and was motivated enough.

**Examiner:** So you're doing the same thing now, only getting paid for it.

**Samaniego:** Exactly. It's not a lot of money, but it's enough to sustain you. You get close to \$800 a month, plus mileage. Plus you get (some money for education) at the end of the year.

**Examiner:** Do you know what else Americorps is doing in this area?

**Samaniego:** Well, I don't have too much contact with the others, but from my training (with Americorps), I know there were some people working with Habitat for Humanity, and then there's the Red Cross.

**Examiner:** So that's what Americorps does. It fits in with these other organizations.

**Samaniego:** Yes.

**Examiner:** But there's no special graffiti wipe-out organization, though, right? Americorps is just taking this project on it's own, right?

**Samaniego:** Right. The Volunteer Center applied for grant money and was awarded the grant, and they were awarded two (Americorps) volunteers to work on this project. And I'm one of them.

**Examiner:** So, graffiti is your only concern right now?

**Samaniego:** Well, I do work at the Volunteer Center, and wiping out graffiti is my goal, but, I am also an advocate for tree planting. I'm trying to incorporate that as well. You know, I think I'm just one of those people who goes from one passion to another, but it all seems to be connected. I am very people oriented and I like to do community work.

As you know, I was the Kucinich coordinator for the Corpus Christi area, and when I was at the (Americorps) orientation, I found out that I could not do political work (and keep the Americorps-funded job). That was a very hard decision for me to make. I didn't sleep that night.

**Examiner:** Is that a Volunteer Center rule or an Americorps rule?

**Samaniego:** It's an Americorps rule. I believe it's done to protect the volunteer because Americorps is funded through Congress. It has to be non-partisan. They don't want you involved in making, and swaying, one group of people. All we do is plant seeds.

You know, I had a passion for politics and I'm thinking that

someone can apply to -- I can't do it myself through Americorps, but maybe some other people would be motivated to do so -- try go out and try to get people motivated to vote-- on a long term basis.

**Examiner:** Now that goes back to something that happened this summer. You and I were both involved in Voting Matters, the local voting drive sponsored by the Nueces County Democratic Party. There was a debate when that group first started as to whether it should be a partisan group at all. And you strongly said, "non-partisan."

**Samaniego:** Exactly. Yes! I think if you give the issues to the people, they are smart enough to know what is best for them. But when you try to spoon feed them slogans and advertising, I think you belittle them. Once a person really investigates the issue, I feel they will probably be more Democratic, but I've always felt that it is up to the person to decide. We all have to work together. It doesn't matter if Democrats believe that education is the number one issue, if Republicans don't feel the same way. So, it comes back to everyone working together.

**Examiner:** Tell us about some graffiti that you have wiped out recently.

**Samaniego:** Well, we try to stay within certain areas. We did some of the Weber area, and have also been in the area around Kostoryz, but we can go all throughout the area. Right now, we're working with the Neighborhood Pride Program. And on (September 25) we (worked) in the (area around) Osage and highway 44. There's a lot of graffiti out there.

**Examiner:** So when you say "we," I guess you're not working alone this time?

**Samaniego:** I get volunteers (who have been sentenced to do community service work by) Judge Joe Gonzales. And then we also get volunteers from the community. I've contacted several schools and pretty much have commitments from Carroll, King and Miller. And I'm hoping that in October, we'll be able to focus on the schools because it does start there. You want to get the kids involved because they are the ones who know, maybe, whose doing the graffiti.

I really want the community to do this. And that's why I'm contacting organizations or even volunteers. If they want to come and help us out, we have scheduled Saturday (as clean-up days) about three times per month. As long as you provide your own transportation, we provide you with the paint and the roller and the brush. We say, 'here is the location to do this, and you just need to go take care of it.'

The sooner you take care of it, the better. Graffiti is an on-going battle. You can paint over it one day and it will come back the next. Statistically, you paint over it three times and then usually they move on to another territory. It's a real battle with them, and I hope we can make a difference.

The old saying says, "if you want to do something right, ya' gotta do it yourself." So, dear Corpus Christi resident, if you want the kind of high quality local journalism that you deserve, get ready to become a

# Citizen Reporter



As the Examiner's editor, even armed with 20 years of media experience and 33 graduate school hours in mass communication, I cannot, working alone, make a dent in covering the hundreds of underreported local stories. The Examiner's success depends on you! This page has plenty of ideas for how you can get involved.

*It takes a city to cover a city*

## Good reporting isn't a spectator sport

For the last month or so, I've been all over town talking about the plans for this newspaper, and the typical response has been something like, "Wow, this town really needs that" followed by a list of great story ideas.

Below you can see just some of the suggestions I've heard so far. There is no shortage of great ideas.

But, as they say, good journalism is 10 percent inspiration and 90 percent perspiration, and I'm starting to recall my early experiences as a reporter.

When I was a student newspaper editor at Ray High School and Del Mar College in the late '80's, my friends and I came up with hundreds of story ideas that we never told to anyone. We weren't dumb. We knew that if our teachers heard us talking about our

great ideas, well, we'd end up doing those stories.

And that meant a lot of work.

So, we kept quiet about the great stories could have done, and we actually *did* the easy, more or less meaningless, stuff.

When I got into professional journalism, I saw that the same trick still worked: If you want to work just 40 hours a week, don't tell your editor about your best ideas.

So, now I've got a problem. I'm starting this paper because I want to finally follow up on all the great story possibilities that other local

reporters don't have time to tell.

But, ironically, I don't have time to cover them either. On page 7 I've listed a few examples of

appearances, media people don't really do anything that John Q Citizen can't do by himself.

In fact, in these days in which reporters don't have time to be investigators too, it's concerned citizens, not the media, who break most of the biggest stories.

So, through the Examiner, I want to turn Corpus Christi into a city full of Citizen Reporters. I guess I'm offering you the same deal that the other media do. I'm just being honest about it. And I'm willing to offer you a lot of help.

If you know about an issue that

needs to be addressed, I want you to get off your butt and do some research about it. (I'm sounding like my journalism teachers now.) Then come see me and let's talk about how to turn it into a story for the Examiner.

I've taught journalism in both high school and college. I enjoy working with inexperienced reporters. I would love to work with you.

My long-time family friend Travis Bird has already taken me up on this. As Citizen Reporter #1 he is all over the Cher ticket issue that has so many people in an uproar these days. See page 10 for the stories he and I worked up.

And let it inspire you to get off the sidelines and help out your paper -- and your city.

-- Don Cudd, Editor

### How you can help

1. Start thinking in terms of, "Wow, everyone needs to know about this. It should be in the Examiner."
2. Contact Don Cudd to get on his list of people he can call to attend, and take notes during, important public meetings.
3. Be willing to talk to enough people and do enough research to make your story thorough, accurate and fair.

stories that just weren't quite ready for this issue. I'll be honest. I just ran out of time.

But I think this is going to work out just fine.

See, I've discovered in my years as a reporter that, despite

## Look at all these ideas...

Moody High School students want someone to look into construction issues in their school \* Their principal wants more recognition of his school's impressive alumni \* some local musicians think the vibrant South Texas jazz scene deserves better local coverage \* many people want to know how local uninsured people can get healthcare \* several have suggested a regular column about local families whose

loved ones are off fighting wars \* at least one man wonders why a lot of recyclable materials end up in the city's landfill \* some literature buffs want to know more about the city's writers \* And everybody wants to know why our streets are torn up all at once!

Together, we can do all this!  
(And a lot more)

## Start today!

The Examiner's election coverage begins next issue (October 15), and we can use your help in several ways. Contact Don Cudd if you want to

- \*Interview candidates
- \* Suggest questions
- \*Research the issues

Believe it or not, just reminding candidates to return our calls can help a lot.

## DIFFERENCES... from p. 1

their focus on ad sales and to cut costs as much as possible in news coverage.

That's why in Corpus Christi we see almost no high-quality investigative reporting these days. And that's why most news stories are covered only superficially by inexperienced, overworked reporters. Doing journalism right costs much more money than a company is willing to spend if its real goal is to sell advertising.

The Examiner will keep advertising sales in their proper per-

spective. There is value to advertising, and the paper will accept a limited amount (see page 8), but we will not aggressively pursue advertising accounts.

Our main goal is to serve you and the community. So you can bet that we're going to be hitting you up for subscriptions. Yes, we're different because we are asking readers to foot the bill of \$1.50 per issue. But we think that's a fair price for a paper run by an entire community instead of a few large companies like

Whataburger, American Bank, Citgo, HEB, Champion Auto Dealerships or any other large local advertiser.

### Your involvement encouraged

The Corpus Christi Caller-Times took an extraordinary step recently when it invited local Hispanics to publicly explain their frustrations with the paper.

In response, the paper heard plenty of the same complaints that have been running around town

for years. And several at the town-hall style meeting wondered why the paper took so long to call the gathering.

People also raised eye brows when it became clear that Caller-Times managers themselves will decide which local Hispanics will comprise a special new advisory panel for the paper.

The Examiner will be decidedly more open to your participation.

We will continue to hold informal gatherings at least once a week (see page 8), and everyone

is always welcome to come talk about the paper, find out about behind-the-scenes issues, and be involved in decisions. We also post more information than would make most business managers comfortable on our website, and we welcome you to comment upon it all.

The Examiner already has an e-mail list accessible via the website. Everyone is welcome to sign up and post about any topic to **See "DIFFERENCES" Page 12**



# Who is behind this paper? What kind of paper will it be?

The Examiner Crew has heard these questions countless times already. Thanks for asking. The editor answers them below.

What's in the works ...

## Editor gives honest look at four potential stories

Murphy's law is a journalism given. So, original plans for this edition are much different from reality. Here's a look at some of the stories that, well, will likely appear in future issues. I hope it, along with all that we've said in this edition, gives you an idea of what we're all about.

I planned to write for this edition a story about the public access television in Corpus Christi.

In a nutshell, a local group of public access producers is in disarray. That means a studio full of city-owned equipment intended for free or low cost use by anyone is, for the most part, just gathering dust in a building that, for at least a few days last month, had no electricity.

Well, the troubles of the public access producers group are many and deep, and to get the entire picture straight, I would have to spend many hours talking to about a dozen key people. When several of those people did not immediately return my phone calls beginning two weeks ago, I knew the story would probably not be ready for this issue. Then, I discovered last Friday that the city commission that oversees the public access channel would be meeting on Monday night, the same night I'd arranged to meet with the Examiner crew to plan this weekend's distribution.

So, look for the public access story in a future issue. Just as soon as I can round up a few more people and get the full story.

Same for an article I'd planned about the apparent decline of Sunrise Mall.

I wanted the mall manager to explain in these pages why so many stores are vacant lately and whether people in town should be worried about the mall's

future.

I've read a ton of background information about the mall's history and the local retail scene, and I have some great questions to ask the manager. I also have some questions for a few other local leaders who have been involved with the mall over the years.

But getting phone calls returned is tough -- especially when few people know about your paper still. So, the mall story is on hold for a little longer.

And, well... The same goes for a story I'd planned to do about recycling in Corpus Christi.

A friend of mine bombards me almost daily with claims that most people in Corpus Christi are doing a lousy job of recycling. He says that spells big trouble for the city's landfill and even our environmental future.

Well, my informal observations tell me that my friend is right. (He won't let me name him because he is one of those city workers who is forbidden to speak publicly about politics -- and that's yet another story the Examiner needs to look into) But I need more than that before I'm comfortable printing a story. And the guy at City Hall who can probably lead me to some good recycling-related statistics in Corpus Christi -- you guessed it -- has yet to call me back.

So, frustrating as it is, I'll just continue to plug away at these stories and others. When I have the full scoop, you'll see them here. And in the meantime, your active and vocal support of this paper will go a long way towards assuring that folks give my phone calls (or those from anyone representing the Examiner) a high priority.

--Don Cudd, editor

*It all began  
in a living room*

## Paper blossoms after June gathering of 10

This time last year, I was beginning my short-lived stint as a Washington D.C. area school teacher and, of course, I spent several weekends excitedly touring our nation's landmarks. You know what I'll always remember best

He said he'd never seen the problem addressed in our local media.

That's when I decided this town needs the Examiner.

I called a few of my friends who I knew had some ideas for issues that haven't received their due.

about the National Mall? I never found a public restroom there.

**For more on the paper ...**  
[www.corpuschristiexaminer.com](http://www.corpuschristiexaminer.com)

**For more on the editor...**  
[www.doncudd.com](http://www.doncudd.com)

They called a few of their friends. And, on June 29, 10 of us got

When I visited with residents and business owners in the area, I discovered that a lack of restrooms is certainly a major concern of theirs. But nobody could remember ever seeing a media report about the problem.

Interesting.

I arrived back home in Corpus Christi this summer and deja vu set in quickly: I heard my father complaining about our city's lack of restrooms at its major bus transfer stations.

together in Sylvia Samaniego's living room (Sylvia, by the way, is our first Examiner Interview subject. See page 5.) to talk about the local press and my idea to start a newspaper.

We came to some conclusions at that meeting (see page 1), I started rolling the ball, and this issue came to life.

The no-restrooms- at-bus-stops is just one of hundreds we've now got to tackle. We can use your help.

-- Don Cudd, Editor

## INTRO... from p. 1

the brand of journalism they have long wanted and deserved. This is a dramatic break from the top-down philosophy most news operations traditionally employ, and it is based on a trust that this city's residents are up to the task.

A few critics have already expressed concern that the Examiner -- whose current assets are less than a few borrowed shoestrings -- won't catch on. They worry that the paper's lack of fancy photography, its small number of pages and tiny editorial staff (comprised of one tired editor and three or four volunteers), just won't translate into a product

worth \$1.50.

And, the critics are probably right -- if Corpus Christi residents are content with their traditional media.

But, fortunately for the Examiner, calls for media change in our city have been rampant for "decades and decades" as activist Roland Garza said during a recent town hall meeting with Corpus Christi Caller-Times officials.

So, this rag-tag start up has a shot, despite the critics. (All of whom, by the way, have agreed to buy at least one issue themselves. They say they like the idea behind the paper. They just don't have

confidence that enough of you will also.)

This is truly your paper. In other words, its success depends upon you.

If you want to change the way local news is done in Corpus Christi, then don't worry about the Examiner's \$1.50 price tag (which amounts to about 3 minutes worth of work each week for the average Nueces County household), and get ready to be involved.

As we get started, the Examiner might sometimes seem a little hypocritical. Despite one of our "founding ideals," our editor and

writers will make little money (maybe nothing) at first. We will not, of course, be able to get to all the great stories that need to be told. And surely we'll make our share of silly mistakes.

So, as we're growing, we might have a lot in common with the rest of the local media.

But, there will be two big differences:

1. The Examiner will always be honest about its shortcomings.

2. The Examiner isn't just playing a marketing game when it says this is your paper. If we're ticking you off, we offer plenty of ways for you to get involved and really

make a difference in our operation. (If the rest of the media make you mad, about the best you can do is to stop reading or watching. That doesn't change much, does it?)

If you want to see a great newspaper in Corpus Christi, you can wait for a big company to dramatically change its ways. Or, you can get involved with the Examiner today to help build the change you want to see.

Special thanks to Moody High School's Civic Minded Students They're selling the Examiner as a fund raiser

# The Examiner is Your Paper

Extra!Extra! Get your copy of The Examiner from a Moody High School Civic Minded Student

Join our on-line club at [www.corpuschristiexaminer.com](http://www.corpuschristiexaminer.com)

The Examiner is a community project! Below are a number of ways you can support (and have already supported) the paper.

## Examiner Classifieds

In future editions of the Examiner, this space will be devoted to your classified announcements. Just fill out the form below, clip it out and send it in. Or order your ad on-line at [www.corpuschristiexaminer.com](http://www.corpuschristiexaminer.com). You can also call 853-0388. Please remember that Examiner advertising space is limited.

### Sell your stuff, support your paper ... up to 15 words, just 3 bucks!

Your name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Other Contact Information \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a short title for your ad (24 characters max)

-----

List your 15 words

\_\_\_\_\_

Number of issues ordered: \_\_\_\_\_

Send form, along with \$3 for each issue in which you wish the ad to appear to Corpus Christi Examiner, 3537 Monterey, Corpus Christi, Texas 78411. Thanks for your order!

An opportunity for businesses ...

## The Examiner's South Texas Quality Journalism Fund

For just \$25 groups and businesses can publicly show their support, here in this space, for the Examiner's brand of journalism. To get started, complete the form below and mail it in. You can also order at [www.corpuschristiexaminer.com](http://www.corpuschristiexaminer.com) or (361) 853-0388. Advertisers will receive a certificate acknowledging their support of the South Texas Quality Journalism Fund, which pays for writing and other editorial talent in the Examiner.

Business Name (as you wish it to appear in your ad) \_\_\_\_\_  
Your name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Other Contact Information \_\_\_\_\_

Please your business contact information as you wish it to appear in the ad

-----

Enter your slogan as you wish it to appear in the ad (15 words max)

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Number of issues ordered: \_\_\_\_\_

Send form, along with \$25 for each issue in which you wish the ad to appear to Corpus Christi Examiner, 3537 Monterey, Corpus Christi, Texas 78411. Thanks for your support!

This issue's supporter  
(Our first! We can use more!)

Mark A Di Carlo  
Attorney at Law  
[markdicarlo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:markdicarlo@sbcglobal.net)  
(361) 888-6968

If you have a group or business, please show your support for the Examiner's next issue

### The Examiner Club's Corner

The Examiner Club meets on-line at the paper's website and in person each Monday at 7 p.m. at B&J's Pizza (on SPID between Airline and Nile). Everyone is welcome!

#### All Star Members

The following have made otherwise unacknowledged contributions behind the scenes to this first issue. Danny Noyola., Jaime Lopez, Les Cassidy, Mary Rodriguez, Vicci Mora, Sheila Cudd, J.B. Cudd, Cheryl Cudd, Guy Morrow Jr., Hector Torres, Kip Putnam, Mary Cazaurang

### Where to find the Examiner

#### Fruit King

4510 Weber, 1607 Morgan, 3401 Morgan, and 4702 Ayers

#### Tim's Market

Corner of Elizabeth and Brownlee

#### Trinity Fruit-Ful

4510 Weber Ste. B

To suggest a distribution location, please call 853-0388. Or send an e-mail to [distribution@corpuschristiexaminer.com](mailto:distribution@corpuschristiexaminer.com)



**NO... from p. 1**

examiner to discuss how one of my clients might have been guilty. These talk show hosts unfairly monopolize the local radio air waves and spread misinformation based on an agenda in a further attack on the rights of citizens. For example, the local media, in conjunction with these unashamedly biased talk show hosts, and the national media falsely trumpet key phrases such "frivolous lawsuit" and "malpractice crises" and "Doctors are leaving town" when none of these statements are substantiated. The local media in conjunction with the state media continues this drumbeat until laws are changed to make it more difficult to file lawsuits against anyone in the medical field. They then wait a brief period of time until they resume the same or similar fraudulent assertions to change the laws further in their favor. In fact, the opposite contentions are arguably true. Medical malpractice is rampant because citizens have lost the right to sue doctors unless the case is virtually proven before it starts, and doctors are virtually immune

from lawsuits. Practically, in order to sue, liability must be definite, such as the wrong leg amputated, and the harm must be immense, such as a lost limb or life. Arguably, the entire medical profession suffers because the poor doctors are protected from suits entirely.

Similarly, a related medical issue covered by the local media, the high cost of medical care, is never addressed by the right wing, free enterprise proponent, talk show hosts in a manner outside of their apparently approved scripts. The high costs of medical care are never caused by lack of free enterprise or the restrictions on the number of doctors being trained which keeps the number of doctors too low and their wages high. Doctors' pay, as well as that of the support staff, is curiously absent from the dialogue of the problem

of high costs of medical care. The wealthiest doctors are portrayed by the media as victims of greedy lawyers, not greedy themselves despite their unions formed to make them immune from traditional laws against negligence

City and County on the local media's complicity in, for example, not questioning the local government budgets, "accounting procedures", or even covering those who are concerned Obviously, whenever there is some new frivolous

The Examiner's editor says no, too.

See page 3

What's your answer?

You can join this discussion in the October 14 Issue.

See page 2

project or tax raise the local media builds a sort of pseudo patriotic crescendo

expressing the need for some new building project or sales tax raise upon which the City would benefit. There is little to no questioning of the worth of these projects nor is any sort of equal time given to voices against them. Some of the media stories to support these procedures are comical. Recently I saw a news story with video of a broken water fountain on a local television station to help establish the angle of the story that a new school was needed. The reporter

did not ask: "Why don't you replace the water fountain?" Or, "Do these sort of repairs make a new school necessary?"

The media, in particular the broadcast media, has a social responsibility to present contrasting views fairly and in a balanced manner. The local media problems may originate from the repeal of the fairness doctrine during the Reagan administration, which required, in part, the balance of controversial issues in broadcasting. Maybe it is time to revisit the fairness doctrine. The broadcast media has irresponsibly violated the public trust to protect all viewpoints. In the same manner that corporate fraud recently resulted in increased regulation of corporations to protect investors, the fairness doctrine may have to be reinstated to protect the public airwaves from media biases and financial influence by organized economic groups.

**YES... from p. 1**

four George West Burger king employees hostage in May 2001 and other subsequent hostage takings, one that ended with the hostage taker shooting himself. TV and print do not stray from divisive stories, as evidenced by the coverage of the King Ranch land holding disputes that included a number of historical series.

When disaster strikes, the local media are there. When Claudette hit Port O'Connor and other areas just north of the city, KRIS-TV Channel 6 provided "exclusive coverage" during the event and the other stations and publications covered the aftermath. Tornadoes struck Corpus Christi in Fall 2002. The library on the West Campus of Del Mar College took a direct hit and adjunct instructor James F. (Buster) Gillis was killed. The press was there in force within minutes. We know that because our student journalists were the first ones there on campus (and we are proud of them for doing precisely what local journalists should do).

The local media also do a good job with the "soft" news, and always seem to have a place for these stories. One that comes read-

ily to mind is the recent story about the dachshund puppy rescued from a dumpster. The story followed the rescue, recuperation and adoption of the puppy by a couple whose former pet was a dachshund who spent most of its life on a cart, having been paralyzed at two years of age. You will often see animal welfare/cruelty stories on the news - the story of the decapitated dog found Sept. 2 near Martin Middle School has hit the national news. And there are any number of features on people doing good deeds, the Caller-Times' Jefferson Volunteer awards and Christmas Appeal primary among them.

If there is a fault in local coverage, it can be traced to the Corpus Christi Caller-Times and to local radio stations. The Caller-Times, at times, is comfortable with being "scooped," especially by its partner, KRIS-TV Channel 6. It often does not report the story on the

same day, choosing instead to highlight what editors feel is of more interest to the community than covering the entire story. An example, of this was coverage of the recent dress code issue with

*"(Local)TV and print do not stray from divisive stories, as evidenced by the coverage of the King Ranch land holding disputes that included a number of historical series."*

CCISD. The reporter covered only that phase of the meeting, avoiding other issues such as the tax rate, the initial proposal to close Coles Elementary and the prospect of building a new south-side elementary school. The next day's headline featured only the dress code discussion. For a paper that at one time was considered to be the record keeper for local events, this was not one of their brighter days.

In radio, local coverage has also

suffered. When radio -- once considered the premier source of "local" news -- was taken over by conglomerates like Clear Channel (that owns 6 radio stations in the local market), local coverage went out the window. Very few stations are covering local news as it was covered prior the 1990s. For Spanish radio, the loss of long-time respected newsmen Victor Lara Ortegon at KUNO-KSAB is certainly being felt city-wide. No one has replaced Lara Ortegon. What saddens local radio observers is that many of the programs are piped in from satellite and the disc jockeys -- is that what they still call them-- are from another market, but we hear them here in Corpus Christi. Is this the beginning of a new trend? Unfortunately, for radio, yes.

Finally, from a website point of view, both the Corpus Christi Caller-Times and KRIS-TV news do an excellent job, often referring to each other's coverage and taking full advantage of the trend

toward convergence of media. The websites cover the gamut of hard news to self-help sites that interest women and young people. That's not a bad idea. What is local for one person (coverage of what's going on in the clubs downtown for young people, for example) is not local for another. While some prefer extensive coverage of the bond election, others want complete coverage of the local rock concert.

Local media do well in covering many events. They are our media and should remain loyal to their viewers. In a world of 24-hour all-news channels such as "Headline News" and "CNN", there is no lack of information about national or world issues. Non-local news addicts can get their fill at any time. You will find few stories about Corpus Christi politics, economy, education, social issues and other important topics in USA Today or other major papers, or on national/international news programs. This leaves the local electronic media and publications to focus on the local issues, as they should. Without local coverage, the local media cannot flourish.

Next Issue's Probable Featured Topic: Is voting really worthwhile?

# The Section About What Makes Living Worthwhile Examining Life

Music, art, drama, food, film, sports,  
religion, literature, nature, technology

Page 10  
Corpus Christi Examiner  
October 1, 2004

## A labor of love

**A regular column about the making of this section**

In this space each edition, I expect to tell you how much fun I've had the previous two weeks putting this section together.

This column is about all the things that make live worth living. And there's a ton of stuff like that that never makes the other media.

While the "this paper depends on you" theme is rampant throughout this edition, it is especially relevant here. How this section develops depends a huge amount on how you respond.

I need your help in finding local cool stuff that more people need to know about.

If you hear a local band, read a local book, see a local sculpture, come across a new local technology, hear a local sermon, eat at a local restaurant, see a local endangered species, play a local sport, or go to a local movie or play and say, "wow, I didn't know we had this kind of thing here" please let me know about it.

I want to run lots of reader-written reviews in this section, and I want to have lots of announcements about events the rest of the media ignore.

That being said, you'll see that the lead story in this section this week is about the same ole' Cher concert that local residents have been hearing about adnauseum for several weeks now.

But our take on the ticket sales is something you won't find anywhere else. I'm looking for more of that kind of thing in this section, too.

And it's done by our very first Citizen Reporter Travis Bird. See page 6 to find out about what that's all about.

-- Don Cudd, editor

# The Ticket Master

*A mother-in-law's simple request for Cher concert tickets led to some interesting, and possibly profitable, experiences for Examiner Citizen Reporter Travis Bird. Here's his story ...*

By now most everyone should know that Cher is coming to Corpus Christi's newly built American Bank Center on Sunday, November 7. With this city recently lacking any high profile music acts, the excitement of Cher upcoming show spread quickly.

Although, I must say that I myself was not that excited.

But, I am still a polite and kind son-in-law. So, when my mother-in-law asked me to help her get some tickets to the show, silly me. I said, what the heck.

In the harrowing process of buying tickets, my eyes were opened and my curiosity sparked.

Welcome to my wacky journey for the truth about Ticketmaster (the company that concert goers love to hate) and how tickets are distributed.

I've got to warn you: This trip is so wild, it still hasn't ended. Right now I have more questions than answers, and it's going to take me until the next Examiner edition to find out just exactly what happened to me.

But that's okay. I might actually end up making some money on this deal.

Off we go...

## Saturday, Sept. 18 -- 9:59 a.m.

Sitting at home on Saturday morning, I decided that the easiest way to attempt to get tickets was to go to ticketmaster.com.

As 10:00 approached, the time tickets went on sale, I was sitting at my computer getting ready to jump on some good floor seats. When I finally got on the site at 10:00, I asked the computer for the best available tickets.

I was astounded. Instead of floor seats, I was offered seats in the back of the auditorium.

It was hard to believe that within 1 minute of tickets going on sale, these were the best available.

Well, I bought the tickets I was offered, because had I not, I would not be hear writing this article today, due to the fact that my Mother-In-Law would have seriously maimed me.

But I was confused.

## Friday, Sept. 17

I received a call this afternoon from my mother-in-law. She says her friends are telling her that they have already bought their tickets.

Hmmm. This is a day before the tickets are on sale.

My first thought was of those kind of people we all knew in school, the ones who tried to be "cool" by flat out lying.

But then my mother-in-law directed me to a website which was selling floor seats to the Cher concert a day before tickets were going on sale.

This thing was getting really, really weird.

Turns out, this site, www.chertickets.com, has tickets to all kind of concerts, all over the nation, too.

After explaining to my mother-in-law that the tickets being offered are not tickets she should get, mostly due to the outrageous high prices, I was free to then spend my time on Saturday getting her tickets "at cost."

But things were starting to get very confusing.

## Saturday, Sept. 18 -- 10:30 a.m.

Fast forward to the news that within 30 minutes of going on sale, the concert was sold out.

Hmmmm.

Many people were surprised that the sell-out happened that fast. It might even be safe to say that a few people, including me, got real curious about the way ticket sales are handled.

That curiosity, within two days, would turn to complete astonishment and leave me wondering about a lot.

## Thursday, Sept. 22

A story broke regarding a local woman who sold her Cher tickets on ebay .com for a whopping \$2,000 for a pair of front row seats.

I'm still very, very confused. But a light bulb went off in my head.

This could be a good way to make some bucks!

I went really nuts. I got back on www.ticketmaster.com and buy 6 tickets to a Cher concert (one that's not sold out) in Columbia, Missouri.

Did I get my mother-in-law the best deal?

Should I have bought the Missouri tickets?

Who knows?

I guess we'll all find out in the next Examiner.

We've said it  
1000 times  
this issue ...

This is  
YOUR PAPER

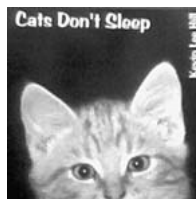
If you're favorite band is missing from  
Corpus Christi's local media coverage,  
the Examiner can help.

Don't be shy with your ideas!

## An Examiner Review

when we find local stuff  
that's great, we'll be sure to  
let you know

### Kevin Lee Hill's jazz is impressive



Cats Don't Sleep  
Kevin Lee Hill

w/ Sonny Hill, Eddie Olivares Jr. and Paul  
Bowman

Hacienda Records  
Corpus Christi

I appeared on KEDT radio's  
noon newscast recently talking  
about the Examiner, and Jeanne  
Schiller-Brenz was listening.

I'm glad she was.

The second the program ended,  
Schiller-Brenz called the station  
and convinced someone to give  
her my cell phone number.

A minute later, my ear was  
buzzing with the voice of Schiller-  
Brenz, a local jazz singer, excitedly  
telling me about a new album  
some of her friends just finished.

And two days later, the album  
was in my mailbox, the first-ever  
"review copy" sent to the  
Examiner.

Well, I'm not qualified to speak  
on the finer points of jazz, but, as  
a layman, I can say that, the second  
I put Cats Don't Sleep on my  
CDplayer, I was proud to be from  
Corpus Christi.

These guys are great!

They had me dancing like  
crazy, and my wife and mother got  
a kick out of that.

One day, with your support, the  
Examiner will be able to have a  
music expert nitpick albums like

this.

But, for now, you'll just have to  
take my word as a novice: this is a  
wonderful album that will fill you  
with lots of pride in your city.

Kevin Lee Hill and his gang  
are, according to Schiller-Brenz,  
among Corpus Christi's music  
legends. (I'm pretty sure I went to  
Ray High School with Eddie  
Olivares Jr., by the way. He was  
an incredible sax player back then.  
Even better today.) And, after  
hearing the album, I won't dispute  
that.

I will however take issue, once  
again in this paper, with our local  
media for not giving these guys  
they are due. I sure wish I'd heard  
of them years ago.

Oh well, such is life.

--Don Cudd, editor

Okay, now  
we've said it  
1001 times ...

This is  
YOUR PAPER

If you want more church news  
in Corpus Christi's local media,  
the Examiner can help

Don't be shy with your ideas!



## A Pastor's Thoughts

*A regular, rotating column by  
Corpus Christi's spiritual leaders.*

Pete Hinson  
Life of Christ Ministries

### Sticking to convictions is vital

The question today in this world is do you hold  
to your convictions? When a problem comes, do  
you stand true to what you say and what you  
believe? Or do you stray from the situations to  
keep from dealing with it? Time after time when  
we are faced with a problem, we try to get out of  
town as quickly as possible. There are areas in our  
life that are very touching that we don't want any-  
one to know about.

Jesus deals with us by his Spirit and by His peo-  
ple that He assigns to us. When God is trying to  
deal with us, to show us not to go in a sinful direc-  
tion, then we abandon the "FAITH". We justify our  
sin and belittle others so that we can feel good  
about ourselves.

The word apostasy means an abandonment of a  
previous loyalty. People say that we love God but  
when we are being dealt with, then we say that it  
is not of "GOD". So we abandon what is truth plus  
we miss the righteousness of Jesus in our lives.

Now we wonder where's GOD, where has He  
gone, and why has He abandon us. We know that  
the LORD had not abandoned us! We just rebel  
against His WORD. Look at God's Word. It said in  
Jude 1:5, I will therefore put you in remembrance,  
though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, hav-

ing saved the people out of the land of Egypt, after-  
ward destroyed them that believed not.

God does not wink at sin, but He judge's sin.  
Willfully sinning is to say I will do my own will.  
Satan also said I will exult myself. To exult one-  
self is to do one's own will and not the will of the  
Father. Isaiah 1:28 said, and the destruction of the  
transgressors and of the sinners [shall be] together,  
and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed.

We say we don't forsake the Lord with our "lips"  
but our hearts and actions do not line up with what  
we had said. Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites  
because they also said one thing and done another.  
Actions like this will promote the falling away.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 states like this, Let no man  
deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not  
come], except there come a falling away first, and  
that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Remember, to fall away from something you  
must be part of a sect (a group adhering to a dis-  
tinctive doctrine or to a leader (Jesus)).

I will leave you with this to Selah, to pause and  
think about it...

To suggest a future guest for this column,  
contact Don Cudd, editor

If you like the idea behind this new paper, please remember that one of its beauties is that it isn't free

Please subscribe, and move us up another step on the

# Ladder to 6,000

For long-term success, our business plan says the Examiner needs at least 6,000 subscribers. Here's just some of what we can start bringing you regularly when we reach that milestone.

**Weather Exams:** We can keep track of the local television weather forecasters to find out who is, really, the most accurate.

**Consumer Advocate Column:** We can be on the lookout for scams perpetrated by local businesses (small and large) and let you know about them .

**Labor Column:** We can keep you up-to-date on how management and labor are getting along in town at companies like HEB, Citgo, Whataburger, CCISD, and others.

**Local Literature:** Plenty of talented writers from around these parts have short stories and poems they'd love to share in the Examiner.

And, well, just more of everything ...

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## LETTERS... from p. 3

then, if you turn it up too much, it freezes the food, and that's not good.

Lastly, let me tell you about my filthy carpet. It needs to be cleaned real bad.

So, I think all that combined is making me sick. I've heard, though, that they won't put anything new into an apartment

until you move. That sounds like an excuse to me.

What do you think? Any ideas? I can't afford to move at the present time, though.

**Kenneth (last name withheld)**

### Letters policies

*The Examiner welcomes read-*

*ers to submit opinion pieces of all types for publication in this section. If we have more submissions than space will allow, we will give priority to letters about topics the Examiner has covered, local topics, timely topics, and topics that are of pressing interest to many other readers. If numerous letters are submitted on one topic, the Examiner will give priority to the*

*letters that make their points most clearly.*

*The Examiner will edit letters in an attempt to eliminate grammar errors, redundancy, and journalistic problems such as inaccuracies, potential misinterpretations and libelous statements. Before running a letter that has been substantially revised, the Examiner will attempt to contact*

*the author and seek approval for the changes.*

*The Examiner does not guarantee that all letters submitted will appear in the paper, but , when a letter is rejected, the paper will make an attempt to contact the author to explain and to propose revisions.*

## DIFFERENCES... from p. 3

their heart's content. We hope to get some great story ideas, as well as generate a lot of discussion about the paper, on that list. We won't censor you unless you become unnecessarily vulgar or start offering unbelievable deals on mortgages.

### Honesty

The Examiner will be commit-

ted to covering Corpus Christi honestly. That means, we will admit our mistakes, ask for help, and tell you about important things that we are experiencing behind-the-scenes.

You're unlikely to find that in any other local media because, well, they're too busy pretending they're invisible.

**Examiner:** So you are going to be the Graffiti Woman in Corpus for a while?

**Samaniego:** For a while, yes.

**Examiner:** Actually, you've been at this for a good while already, huh?

**Samaniego:** Yes I have. But now

I'm actually getting paid a little.

**Examiner:** So, it's official now, I guess.

**Samaniego:** It's official.

**Examiner:** If someone is interesting in wiping out graffiti, how can they contact you?

## INTERVIEW... from p. 9

**Samaniego:** Call the Volunteer Center. 887-8282, ext. 15. And I also have a partner named Laura Rodda, and her extension is 19.

**Examiner:** I appreciate you being the first Examiner interview.

**Samaniego:** I thank you so much.