

Dear Representatives et al.

It was not always the case that the local paper shied away from controversial material.

But you do have to go a long way back as far back as 1847, perhaps when the predecessor paper to the Star Gazette, published a satire by American's first female humorist, Frances Miriam Whitcher (anonymously I might add, but the public figured out that she was the author" As a result she and her preacher husband were driven out of town.

"Mrs. Whitcher was at the height of her fame as a humorous author, and while her writings were everywhere in demand, she was assailed with vituperation and personal insult by those who fancied that they had unwittingly served as models for her sketches. So high ran the tide of angry feeling in Elmira that it soon became apparent that Mr. Whitcher's usefulness as a clergyman would find fewer obstacles in some other parish. In the autumn of 1850 Mrs. Whitcher returned to Whites-town, and soon afterward she began to suffer severely from the disease that caused her death." Appletons Encyclopedia

But at least the paper published her work, even if Elmira's infamous breach of the code of "gentility" which she rejected was breached.

In any event it pleased me and perhaps it will please you to know that of the three hundred Elmira's that I sent the unpublished letter to none criticized it or its English.

I did get one humorous note "watch your tenses"

More importantly, I received many accolades, for speaking my mind on Why Elmira's City Government is a failure by prominent Elmira's, some of which I share with you below:

"WHAT????- Oy Vay! Like they never make mistakes ( I haven't gotten my paper delivered in 2 weeks without a phone call) they have clowns writing that can't spell, don't know to form too... and points they try to make are sometimes pointless....really are they in such a position pass such judgments on others?"

--Prominent Elmira Community Leader

"Wow that is amazing"

--Prominent Long Time Elmiran

"I appreciate your concern, Elmira , needs better management. You seem like a breath of fresh air, Have you ever considered running for the TOP job?"

Local TV station have a morning program addressing local issues, It is like a mini face the nation. Call Jeff Stone Channel 18 .

PS You did not say a word about Mark Twain,"

--Prominent Local Physician

"Welcome to small town America~we (at least some of us) are glad you came!"

Surprised that towns are run as poorly as they are? Group think, lack of accountability, old boys network (of various types) and a sense of self righteousness pervades its history.

Keep laughing and pointing out stuff."

--Elmira Healthcare Professional

Regards

Richard A. Gerard, Attorney-at-Law,  
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Dear Representatives et al.:

A few more comments agreeing with my evaluation of the Elmira local government as a failure.

Not a single negative comment from 300 hundred Elmirans yet!

The Star Gazette continues to refuse publishing the Letter despite renewed requests and knowledge that the public supports my criticisms of Elmira's administration. So much for Investigative Journalism in the Gannett Chain. I feel sorry for their reporters who would like to have a career in what once was journalism and now is sensationalism, pabulum or worse.

The Comments of local folk on the Letter

"Richard,

....you're a good and honorable man. Your efforts to help Elmira might be a bit Quixotish.....but I am thankful for your vision."

==Prominent Elmira Artist

"Elmira officials are scared for "their jobs" they are scared for "their public image in our small town" This leads to "do what is good for us" (on controversial issues) and not the people who elected them. I believe the controversial issues are left up to not elected officials. Or come highly recommended from non-elected officials"

--Elmira Historian.

"It's refreshing to know you - amongst others, are 'battling' the powers that seem to exist like shadows in this small town called Elmira that hold it hostage in one sense or another."

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"WOW!! Thank you, I see what you mean. I too have issues, with the Board of Health, pretty much everywhere. They do their inspections of nursing homes and hospitals, but somehow, someone seems to know when they'll be arriving and everything looks picture perfect.....for the most part, so they pass and then everything just goes back to be being ridiculously wrong!!! ... I know the board has to know that things are just not running that well. What needs to be done, is for them to return out of the blue three or four days later and see how bad things really are. The saddest part for me, is that the residents are paying thousands of dollars to reside in these places and the care they receive is inexcusable. Thanks again and I'll let know how well my letter gets received."

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Hence I have established a website

[HTTP://WWW;WHYELMIRAFAILS.COM](http://WWW;WHYELMIRAFAILS.COM)

The hope is that other Gannett cities across the US will form their own contra Gannet websites where a shadow paper can operate and conduct citizen investigative journalism.

It is appropriate that the first contra Gannet site be established in Elmira since Elmira is the site of the first Gannett newspaper.

The site will allow entries by local folks that focus on investigative journalism type matters in this community that the Gannett paper is refusing to report on.

All entries must be attributable.

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