

# On the *Lighter* Side

'Twas a few nights before Christmas and one of our staff who was working late at the Justice Coalition office heard noises in the ceiling. Not the prancing and pawing of little hooves, but what sounded like someone crawling over the ceiling tiles.

Suddenly startled by a loud crash in the back office, she grabbed for her keys and purse and ran from the building. She called 911 and when the responding JSO officer checked the office, he discovered a huge mess in one of the restrooms – fallen tile, dangling wires, debris everywhere.

The officer called for backup and the two of them sought unsuccessfully for the cause of all the chaos, so they decided the K-9 Unit should check things out. When the dog failed to sniff out an intruder, they called for the JSO Air Unit to survey the roof. Officers in the helicopter didn't see anyone but said there were places a person might be hiding and suggested using a ladder to access the roof from the ground.

JFRD responded to the scene with a ladder truck, and all the officers, except the K-9 duo

(who monitored the perimeter to prevent a possible escape), ascended to the top of the building. Nothing there.

The officers conjectured that someone may have thought Ted Hires' office was still at this location and that there might be money inside (the Justice Coalition certainly does not have money lying around!), or that someone wanted access to the Dept. of Corrections office next door – but the consensus was that the culprit was an animal. Our staff member, not one to be easily panicked, was convinced she heard sounds from something much larger than a critter of some kind.

The next day we cleaned up the mess and talked about all the excitement of the previous evening, then left food out – just in case there was a four-legged varmint in residence. Sure enough, the next morning all the food was gone and several – ahem – deposits permeated the air with pungent aromas.

We asked Pa (Clyde Mills) to locate the offender, which turned out to be a fairly small black and white cat that he finally found in a box in the kitchen. After chasing him

around the office for a while, Pa cornered him in Sabrina's office, then shooed him from the building.

Thinking the odor was all that remained of our "cat burglary" episode, we were unprepared for Sabrina's cry of outrage. "THAT DAD-BURN CAT used my keyboard for a litter box" was only one of many dark mutterings we've heard from her since then. "THAT DAD-BURN CAT better be glad I didn't find him." "If THAT DAD-BURN CAT comes back, I'll bring Heidi [her German Shepherd] and take care of him."

We just hope our intruder learned his lesson and doesn't mess with the Justice Coalition again!

*Editor's note: Our staff apologized profusely to the JSO officers for all the fuss and the expense involved in their search, but they assured us this is standard procedure. They take every precaution to ensure the safety of any citizen who seeks their help.*

*Another note: K-9 dogs are trained to alert only to humans they are seeking; the dog ignored the scent of the cat.*

## LETTER to the Editor

This letter is long overdue, but I would like to give credit to one of your wonderful volunteers, Mr. Dick Braendle [courtwatcher]. Some time ago, I was called to serve on a jury trying a case of child molestation on a little girl only eight years old at the time of the crime.

The details of this case are so horrific that I will not go into them here, but the defendant had several friends and family members present. These people spent the entire trial glaring at the jury. They were making me very uncomfortable, until I looked up and saw Mr. Braendle sitting in the courtroom. He gave me such a feeling of safety, and confidence. He never offered a word, but his presence in the courtroom made a real difference for me. I was able to concentrate on the evidence, and not the defendant's gallery.

On one occasion, because of the parking situation for jurors at that time, my husband had dropped me off, and I called him to pick me up when our day was over. Mr. Braendle saw me go outside the courthouse and sit on one of the benches. He came and sat with me, never mentioning the case, just that it was not a good idea for a lady to be sitting there alone late in the afternoon. He stayed with me until my husband arrived. After that I followed his advice and fought the parking problems so I did not have to sit and wait. He was a real blessing to me during this period, one that I have never forgotten, and one that I really want to say "Thank you" for.

So, Mr. Braendle, thank you for helping although you did not know what you were doing for me.

Sincerely,  
Polly Mohr

**A SAFER COMMUNITY IS  
A BETTER COMMUNITY.**

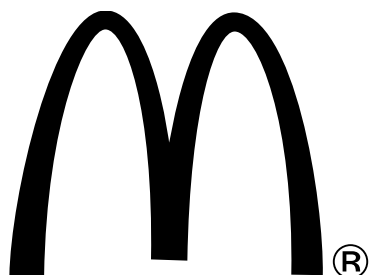
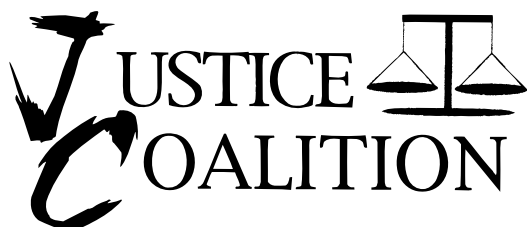
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