

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



The Headline... Arpaio's Raid Shows an Ugly Reality by Linda Valdez Arizona Republic, August 14th 2009

The Truth... August 14, 2009

While the tone of the editorial is particularly insulting, what makes it so much worse is how misguided and incorrect in her assumptions writer Linda Valdez is.

Valdez, and by extension the entire editorial board at the paper, accuses Sheriff Arpaio and this Office of "disrespecting the law" when earlier this week, deputies changed the password on a computer to prevent unauthorized access by county employees to highly sensitive criminal justice information.

Valdez says the Sheriff "raided" the computer center and seized the computers "by force" allowing the Sheriff to "gain access to privileged Superior Court emails" which the Sheriff's Office wanted but was previously denied access to by an appellate court ruling.

What Valdez either does not know, or understand or simply ignores in order to paint Arpaio and his Office as a band of jack-booted thugs, is that the computer system we took administrative control over this week is a criminal justice information management system only.

This computer system processes highly sensitive information like criminal history, court dates, probation information and other criminal justice related information. By an inter-agency policy agreement, this computer system must be managed by a criminal justice agency. When County Manager David Smith moved to have the system managed by civilians in his technology department, Smith essentially violated terms of the contract.

The computer system we regained control of this week does not allow us to access ANY email transmissions from other county departments like Superior Court or Public Defender or County Attorney or Adult Probation.

It does NOT allow law enforcement to "snoop" as the editorial writer accuses. E-mail communications, both inner agency and intra-agency are done through an entirely different computer system which the COUNTY (David Smith), not the Sheriff, has administrative control over.

Getting the facts correct before shouting out such untruths is job one for all Arizona Republic reporters and editorial writers. Sometime they do a fine job of it.

This time they did not.

The Truth

100 West Washington, Suite 1900, Phoenix, Arizona 85003

Phone: (602) 876-1801 Fax: (602) 258-2081

Media Contact: SheriffsMediaRequests@MCSO.Maricopa.Gov