



A CAPITAL-GAZETTE NEWSPAPER  
AMERICA'S OLDEST NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS

FOUNDED 1727  
IN OUR 281ST YEAR

PHILIP MERRILL, Publisher, 1968-2008

ELEANOR MERRILL, Publisher Emeritus

JAMES BROWN, President and Publisher

TOM MARQUARDT,  
Executive Editor

ROB PRYOR,  
Circulation Director

LORETTA HARING,  
Managing Editor

CHARLES FEENEY,  
Chief Financial Officer

WILLIAM F. HOPE,  
Production Manager

RICHARD P. MURCHAKE,  
Operations Director

## *Editor's notebook*

**WARRANTS AND FLOWERS** — We give county Sheriff Ron Bateman credit for not only tackling a huge problem — thousands of unserved warrants — but using imagination, and even having some fun, while doing so.

Last fall he sent out bogus state Treasury letters to some 500 people, telling them they could get a \$572 refund on overpaid taxes if they would kindly come to the Treasury Building to collect it. Forty showed up, and were promptly arrested.

Last week, in honor of Valentine's Day, deputies went door-to-door as employees of "Flowers by Ron, with an arresting bouquet." Some of those visited were called in advance and promised, if they were there to receive them, a Valentine's gift — wine and goodies for the men, long-stemmed roses and heart-shaped balloons for the women. Others got unannounced visits.

All in all, 14 people were snared. That doesn't sound like many next to the 10,000 warrants the Sheriff's Department has received just since November 2006, but it is equivalent to a good week's work for the department, and all in one day.

So far the sheriff has tried greed — everyone suspects the government owes him money — and love — everyone thinks he deserves a secret admirer. We'll be interested to see what element of human vanity figures in Sheriff Bateman's next sting.