

## A Fish-Eye and a Shark's Bite

Written by Mark Sell, BT Contributor  
April 2015

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### What's in store for political blogger Stephanie Kienzle?

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e're breaking two journalistic rules this month. The lead is buried, and though I've met the subject of the column, blogger Stephanie Kienzle just once, months ago, it's tough to call her Kienzle. Steph it is.

Check out Steph's site, [votersopinion.com](http://votersopinion.com), along with [politicalcortadito.com](http://politicalcortadito.com), [eyeonmiami.blogspot.com](http://eyeonmiami.blogspot.com), and now [www.pooroleta.com](http://www.pooroleta.com). Why Steph this month? Well, two big municipal elections are coming up: May 5 in North Miami Beach and May 12 in North Miami. The *Miami Herald* and television do terrific work, but everybody, it seems, comes to Steph's blog.

Ignore Steph at your peril. She's in nobody's pocket, doesn't need the money, and doesn't get a dime for it.

"I put my name and personality out there and stand by my opinion," she says. "I hate corrupt politicians. When I go after people, I use my own name. I try to base what I do on fact. If I make mistake, I apologize. That's why I'm believable and credible. If people don't like what I have to say, I'm a big girl, and I can still pay my mortgage."

If you don't like what she writes, she'll post your comment -- as long as it isn't personal, racist, or ridiculously stupid or repetitive. If you're a public official and take her stuff personally, she expects you to be at least as transparent as she is. She is quick to forgive, she notes, and

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doesn't hold grudges, with a few notable exceptions.

She's got sources going back 20 years, from North Miami Beach Little League days. She's also a sharp writer and diligent researcher with a shark's nose for public records and human frailty. She has honed those skills over 37 years as a trained legal and real estate law secretary and administrator for real estate holdings and investments.

If you were a public official in her gunsights, what would you do? You could start by recalling three old public-relations rules, founded on human nature and the laws of the tides:

*When you mess up: (a) admit it; (b) make amends; (c) overcompensate.* We said this last month, but we add something more: If you're a business or government enterprise, check with your lawyers before publicly admitting your screw-up. Liability costs. Whatever the case, listen to the aggrieved party and proceed as much as possible with (b) and (c).

This prescription often helps in PR, and almost always in 12-step programs, and therefore in life, where you generally do not need lawyers.

*Never believe your own press. It's only PR.* When complimented, accept it with grace and keep your head level. When things sour, figure out what to do next. Google the poem "If" by Rudyard Kipling, and read it aloud twice. If you got called out on a screw-up, make the self-flagellation deep and fast, forgive yourself, and get on with it.

*When angered by something you've read, count to ten before responding in any way.* Then go outside, take a walk, and meditate. What if you did nothing? Would responding hurt more than help? Ronald Reagan was a master at shrugging things off with a chuckle. It worked. If the accusation is a damn lie, however, go for the jug.

So how do you irk Steph?

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Suppose you're on the North Miami City Council and trying to get a certain city employee fired, and even suggest on Creole radio that you are All That. Stop! Now! Abuse and bullying are bad, and worse when you're violating the spirit of the city charter that prohibits such interference, no matter how weasely the charter's wording. You deserve a sharp and public rap on the knuckles.

Suppose you're North Miami Police Chief Leonard Burgess and growing obsessed with Steph's repeated calls for your head as she keeps beating her drums on an old sex harassment claim and other things. Check yourself. If you suspect a detective is an anonymous source and bust that person back to patrol, Steph's anonymous sources will chirp like crickets before dawn, and Steph the Bloodhound will turn into Steph the Shark.

Steph's shark teeth bit former North Miami Beach Mayor Myron Rosner, who is awaiting trial on public corruption charges, traceable to her Florida Ethics Commission complaint. No hurry there. It's dragging along in state court, where ace criminal defense lawyer Ben Kuehne's famous delay tactics work better than they do in federal court, where his magic didn't work as well with another client, former North Miami Mayor Lucie Tondreau, who was sentenced March 24 to five and a half years in prison for mortgage fraud.

Steph grew up in Miami Beach, went to Beach High, and while at Miami-Dade College worked for real estate lawyers who sensed talent and potential, and trained her to the max. She now handles the books and business affairs for a lawyer-turned-big-time real estate investor, and works from home. He's been her boss since 1978, the year Steph turned 21. She's divorced with three grown children.

She plunged into blog world in August 2010, as years of community activism segued nicely into applying her obsession with fraud and corruption. She smelled mendacity in Rosner and casts a fish-eye on folks such as North Miami Beach Councilman Frantz Pierre; former North Miami Mayors Andre Pierre and Kevin Burns (she likes current Mayor Smith Joseph); and departing District 4 council member Marie Steril. As for Steril's successor, Steph gives a big raspberry to District 4 candidate and ballot-broker "Teacher Carline" Paul and a big thumbs-up to candidate Alix Desulme, who's a real teacher in Miami-Dade public schools and head of a marketing firm.

So whither Steph's blog? Here's where we're placing the lead to the story.

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This election may be her last hurrah...or not.

Steph no longer lives in North Miami Beach. She sold her 1958 house in the Sunray West neighborhood last year, moved to Davie, and loves it. It's clean, with low crime and reliable services.

People want her to blog about Broward, but in North Miami and North Miami Beach, the fruit hangs low on the tree. She thinks of blogging about national issues, but figures she might lose 90 percent of her audience. In the deep-blue Biscayne Corridor, Steph is a passionate Libertarian Republican who wants the government to stay out of your wallet and your bedroom.

If you've got a problem with that, enjoy your problem, and we'll give Steph the last word: "Just do the right thing and be ethical. And don't spin. I hate spinning and can smell it from a mile away."

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