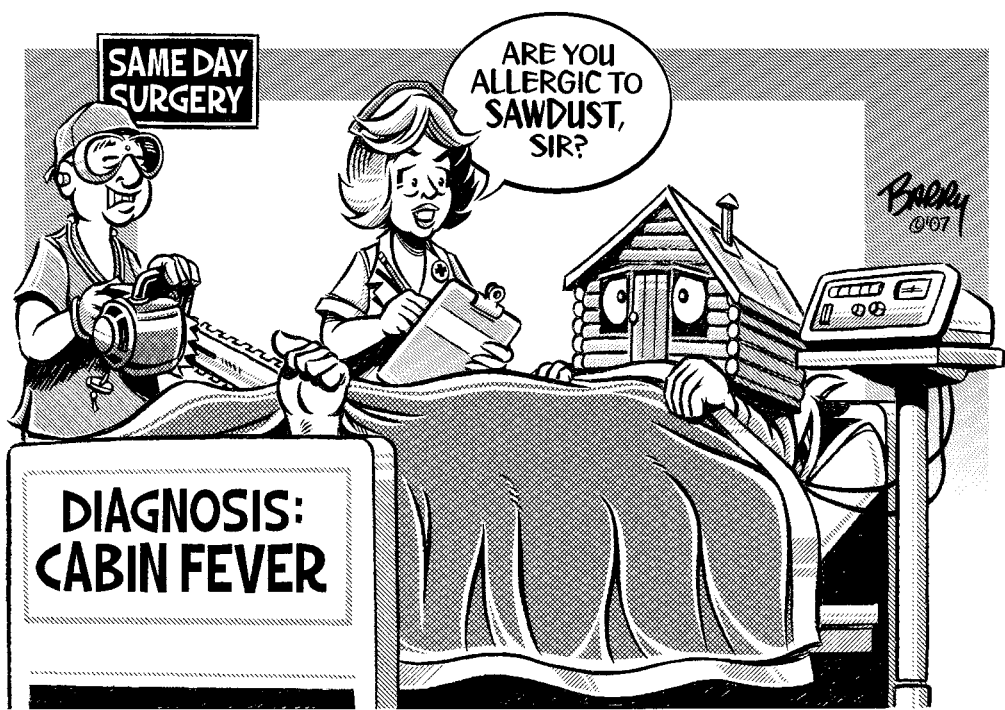




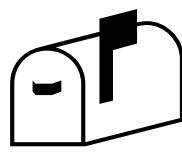
Opinions

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Letters



The David H. (Billy) Dykes family would like to thank everyone for all the phone calls, visits, flowers, monetary gifts, food and especially for all the prayers and every expression of kindness shown to our family during the extended illness and death of our loved one, Billy Dykes.

We also appreciate the kindness and concern shown by Rocky Bumpers and his staff in our time of loss.

Rosa, Tim, David, Jr., Jeff, Cindy, Sara, Danny and Eric Dykes

Thank you for printing my letter to the editor regarding school uniforms. I also appreciate your editorial note as well. I look forward to the responses.

There are many issues that can be debated regarding our local mandatory school uniform policies, however, one of the most compelling arguments against mandatory school uniforms is the cost. Proponents of mandatory school uniforms claim that they save parents money. Many parents that I have talked to say exactly the opposite. Because of school uniforms, they now

See LETTERS, page 5A

SoundOff

It is refreshing to see county government being run in a professional manner that is allowing the people of the county to see how it is being run. I think the county will now make great strides in the next few years. The old system of cronyism may soon fall to the wayside. I think that is truly great!

The SoundOff is interesting to many readers. May I suggest that we use it as a "positive" for our county? We have NEW LEADERSHIP on board. They need our support and our daily prayers. We have men and women who are willing to give our towns a fresh new street appeal look. What a difference paint and cleaning up will say to all of us. We have new schools for our children, and new leaders. Let's be proud of where we live. Let's always shop at home first and leave the tax dollars here. Our new hospital is coming soon. Please, let's be supportive and THANKFUL. We only have one chance to make a good impression. Choctaw County is a great place to be. We have lots to offer to all. Be proud and let's be a TEAM TOGETHER, PULLING TOGETHER! And most of all, let's pray for our county!

When you work nights like I do and most meetings happen at that time, there is no way you can attend any meeting. Teachers take school uniforms to the extreme. We don't really have a choice when it comes to jackets and when it is cold outside the kids need to wear a thicker jacket, but yet they are getting wrote up or suspended for it! Well, look at how some of our teachers dress! They dress like they want to, so how can you tell if you have a visitor from outside the school? Some of our teachers need to put some clothes on and set a better example for our students. For me, life would be so much easier if I didn't have to buy school uniforms, casual clothes and dress clothes. Kids grow so fast and it sometimes is hard to find uniforms after school starts. Blue jeans would be so much easier, then we wouldn't have to buy so many sets of clothes.

School uniforms are the pits. I hate 'em. It makes for a whole lot more washing and drying that I have to do after I get off work at 7 p.m. every night.

To the Sun - thank you for correctly reporting that our schools celebrated CAREER TECH WEEK, and not "Career Day" as some erroneously did. As a teacher at CCHS, I appreciate

See SOUNDOFF, page 5A

Opinions expressed here are those of our readers and do not necessarily represent those of the owners or staff of The Choctaw Sun. Because of the enormous volume received each week, we are unable to publish every comment in the "print" version. Comments that contain vulgarity, obscenities, or personal attacks on the character of any individual will not be published. SoundOff can be found in both the Tuesday and Friday print editions of The Sun.

A Black History message for all of us

"Are you looking for another leader?" he asked the crowd. "You already have one - Jesus."

His words were meant for an audience of African-Americans, but they could have been for America as a whole.

As I sat in the Black History program at Shiloh Baptist Church on Sunday afternoon, I heard inspirational music, dynamic speeches, and awesome vocals from youth and adults. I heard lists of the achievements of African-Americans, both locally and nationally.

As with most programs of its kind, the messages were historical in nature and meant to inspire a remembrance of heritage. The music was faith-filled and meant to inspire an adherence to the faith of their forefathers.

But when Tyrone Bolden got up to speak, I heard much, much more than the traditional historical remembrances. I heard much more than a message of faith through the ages. Although both of those things were, no doubt, important parts of the celebration, the mes-



Looking Up

By Dee Ann Campbell
Editor

sage from the Meridian minister was a challenge that could have been meant for every American, both young and old, black and white.

His message was one that compared the African-American people to the nation of Israel, with their years of faithful service to God and the times when they were not so faithful. Drawing parallels between the periods in history and the people groups that were, in his opinion, alike in so many ways, Bolden drew a word picture of the journey of African-Americans toward faith, and away from the premises of that faith - and the problems that occur within a people when they draw away from God.

His message con-

cluded with bold statements that drew upon the quest for a new president, a new black leader like Martin Luther King, Jr., and a new hope for the future for the black race. Instead of pinning their hopes on a person to lead them, he challenged, the African-American people should simply look to the 'leader' they already have.

It was a message that all of America needed to hear.

Over the next two years, our lives will be filled with the voices and faces of those who will be vying for the ultimate human leadership position. There will be those who run for president who will promise a new day, a new hope, and a new brighter future for America.

While all of those things are worthy to look toward - and no doubt there will be those candidates who will be more able to promote them than others - the truth is that we, as Americans, have already known the ultimate 'leader' who offers all of those things and more.

We've known Him. We've drawn toward Him, and we've drawn away.

We all - not just the African-American population - have been like the people of Israel in the Biblical era. We have drawn toward Him and enjoyed all the blessings that come with His favor. And we've drawn away and suffered all the problems that come with our denial of Him.

Today, we as Americans - whether black or white - should remember what Bolden had to say on Sunday.

If we are truly looking for a leader, we should remember that we already have one who has all the answers we will ever need for now, and for the future - if we will only realize it.

It's time to clean Choctaw County's house

A public meeting will be held Tuesday evening, Feb. 20th at Town Hall in Gilbertown to bring together members of the community, elected officials, business owners, church leaders, youth groups and anyone else who is fed up with the trashy appearance of our county and who are willing to help do something about it.

Topics to be discussed include a countywide cleanup day for later this spring, and the possibility of establishing a recycling program.

The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. and **The Choctaw Sun** is inviting, and encouraging anyone who has an interest in this place we call HOME to please come.

A lot of people say they are concerned, and that's good, but if we really are concerned, its time to do something



The way I see it ...

By Tommy Campbell
Publisher

about it.

In addition to picking up the garbage that's already there, there must also be an ongoing educational program in the schools, as well as a recycling program.

Properly promoted and maintained, a good recycling program could put much needed funds into the treasuries of local schools, fire departments, churches, Boy and Girl Scouts, or other non-profit groups.

A small group of us met for lunch last week

and had a really productive discussion about the possibilities for our poor 'ol littered-up county.

We hear from people through our SoundOff forum all the time who want to know what they can do. Well, here's your chance.

I am personally excited about the possibilities, and while we would like to share our own ideas, we want to hear what you think, too.

After all, if this is to work, it can't be a limited, small-scale, one-shot

effort by a handful of people. Our goals have to be long-term, and long-range, as well as including some short-range plans to deal with the immediate issue of the tons of ugly, unhealthy trash that covers the sides of our roads.

We are asking you to be at this meeting, if at all possible, to listen to the ideas that will be presented, voice your own ideas, and then let's all agree to pitch in and do our part.

The problem has been allowed to go unchecked for far too long. New businesses, industries, tourists and new residents do not want to come to a place that looks like a herd of pigs just moved out. Let's put our thoughts and resources together and see if we can't come up with a plan that works.

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