

# SoundOff

This is to the folks who are taking jabs at the **Sun** because of an issue that allegedly involves a teacher in Washington County. This has been a concern among us parents for a long time, and this newspaper didn't start it, OK? It has been the #1 topic of conversation here for months. We just don't understand why school officials won't address it.

Facebook is just a website. Just because some kids are writing vulgar stuff does not mean that everyone else is. If you don't want your kids on Facebook then delete their account.

I just wanted to say God bless the **Sun** for that editorial in Tuesday's paper about the sickening mess here in Pennington. Tommy, you are to be commended. The **Sun** is one of the few newspapers that doesn't mind telling it like it is. Your editorial said it all. These business license increases have certainly opened a lot of people's eyes to how our mayor and town council feel about the few businesses that are left here. I am seriously thinking about relocating both my business and my residence to Butler or Gilbertown. God help us, this is like living in a dictatorship!

Gol'lee, now I hear the school board is broke. What in the world has been going on down there in the last few years? It is apparent that the last two superintendents have dropped the fiscal ball. The board has waaay too many high-paid folks in that Central Office than it needs, starting with the last two hired getting a raise of about \$15,000 each without having an accounting degree or master's degree in administration, and one that doesn't even have a degree in anything that I know of. This is for the BIRDS, folks!!! We just cleaned out the Courthouse, now it is time to clean out the school board members for allowing this to happen. Time to SWEEP, SWEEP and SWEEP some more! I just hope Ms. Moore can help get this fiscal junk solved, because she walked into a mess, and unfortunately she will have to solve the problems from the last two administrations.

I guess now if I want to burn my yard off, I must be extremely careful not to let it get away because the fire department in my area cannot respond to woods fires.

With all of the mess that's going on in Washington County schools, there will most likely be some new faces on the Board of Education and in the Superintendent's office come next election. We parents have been ignored and had doors slammed in our faces for too long. If you who are in those positions won't get up off your backsides and act on some things, then by gosh, we the voters will sho'nuff give somebody else a chance!

Why should the military have to teach kids discipline? If you are a parent then its your job as a parent to teach your kids discipline? I can understand if you have tried and it didn't work, but some parents would rather send them off so that they don't have to deal with it.

I walk daily at the walking trail in Gilbertown behind the college. I know this can not be prevented but the other day I almost stepped on a snake. In my opinion if the parked was cleaned up and all the mess cleaned up from the hurricanes it my help prevent the population of the snakes.

**(ED. NOTE:** We spoke with Mayor Bobby Graham and you will be interested to know that a major upgrade is in store for the park in the weeks ahead. Watch the **Sun** for more details. In regard to snakes, everybody needs to be watchful .. one of our Silas readers said she was working in her yard this week and almost grabbed a hold of a copperhead! – Tommy.)

To the person from Millry that asked where to find the school uniform petitions ... call 251-846-3170 or stop by one of the convenience stores in Millry. Someone will even bring one to you if necessary.

It is funny that some members of the Choctaw Co. Board of Education want so badly to give our new Superintendent a pay raise when the system is in jeopardy of being taken over by the State Dept. of Education because of lack of funds. Way to go elected board, way to go!

I am writing because a resident in my community was evicted and he has relocated. However, there is a major problem that he left. THE YARD IS FILTHY! There are junk cars and piles after piles of trash everywhere. The raw sewage is even visible. It is unbearable to sit on my porch because of the awful smell. It is also an attraction for stray dogs and rats. I've contacted some local officials in my town and the health department but have not had any results. What do I have to do in order to get someone to do something about this situation?

**(ED. NOTE:** Call us and tell us where this place is located and we will gladly look into it for you. – Tommy.)

Next time you as a customer walk into a convenience store and see an employee sitting down, please think about the fact that he/she deserves a break just like you expect to have at your workplace. Most of the time these people rarely get a break because just about the time they sit down a customer comes in. At our workplace, getting a "break" consists of grabbing a bite to eat on the run.

OK, so maybe some parents had the chance to vote on school uniforms and some did not. A lot of us don't remember having that opportunity, but we will take your word for it! Maybe some of us believed the hype that our kids were going to be safer, peer pressure related to clothing would be reduced, etc. Well, now we have personal experience and facts to base our opinions on. The kids with more money still buy their clothes at the mall and kids with less money buy theirs at the dollar store. No one is really safer. Hundreds of kids graduate from local schools every year taking with them their khaki pants and school shirts. Employees from dollar stores and Subway wear khaki pants and black shirts to work. Wal-Mart employees wear khaki pants and navy shirts and the list goes on! It is not petty or ignorant to question or challenge oppressive policies that do not really benefit our schools. I agree completely that we should be good examples to our children. Let's teach them that they should think for themselves. Just because someone tells you that something is in your best interest doesn't make it true!

More SoundOffs on page 4A!

## Mason resigns from Landfill boards

By Tommy Campbell  
The Choctaw Sun

**BUTLER** — The County Commission on Monday voted unanimously to accept the resignation of O.D. Mason, Jr., as a member of the Choctaw Co. Solid Waste Disposal Authority and the Choctaw Co. Landfill Cooperative District.

### ■ Airport

From page 1-A

D'Wayne May said to Jeremy Aldridge at the March 12 meeting.

Aldridge said the Authority voted on members a couple of months ago, and has been working with the Mobile-based Volkert and Associates on a grant to help with some of the work that needs to be done.

Commissioner Henry Lovette asked Aldridge for a list of all of those who are currently serving on the board, and Aldridge said he would get that to him by the end of the week.

"Since I've been here (mid-January), nobody's been appointed to this authority, and we need to take formal action," May said. The judge said the commission can reappoint current members or pick new members to serve.

Attorney Lee McPhearson had earlier advised the Commission that, even if a board member's term expires, he or she continues to serve until such time as they are reappointed or removed.

Lovette said he wanted to do whatever he could, and asked Aldridge to come up with a list of things that the Commission can do to help.

Commissioner C.D. "Budd" Ruffin said his concern is, with federal and state agencies wanting to go to "regional airports" over smaller, more local facilities such as the one in Choctaw County, if the airport is not licensed it may put it in jeopardy.

Ruffin said he is also concerned because the state inspection revealed that the shoulders of the runway were below the pavement of the runway, which could be a major safety issue.

"If we don't have proper lighting at night, the county would also be responsible," he said.

The FAA has issued an advisory that the facility is closed to night-time flights because a number of lights are either blown out or broken.

Ruffin said the county "doesn't have time to play around with this" and risk not only losing a large federal grant, but maybe even the entire airport.

"If an accident were to take place in a non-licensed airport, it would be a big threat," he said.

Ruffin said that, had they been asked to help, members of the Commission could have assisted with bringing the shoulders up to the proper level.

Aldridge said he had not seen the inspection report from the DOT.

"I'm baffled by that," Ruffin said.

Commissioners said they received copies of the letter, which was addressed to Aldridge and former Probate Judge Michael Armistead.

"I have not seen a letter, I'm completely in the dark," said Airport Authority member Claude Owen. "All I know is what I read in the paper."

(NOTE: The Choctaw Sun covered the deficiencies noted by the state, as well as the temporary suspension of the airport's license, in an article published on Jan. 9, 2007.)

The letter, which was addressed to Aldridge, as Chairman of the Butler/Choctaw Co. Airport Authority, gave the board 30 days to correct noted violations and deficiencies. A copy was reportedly also sent to former Probate Judge Michael Armistead.

"As noted in the report, the airport does not meet the requirements for the issuance of an operating license," the letter stated. "The operating license for the airport is being withheld pending the required actions necessary to correct the safety deficiencies."

According to the state, the Code of Alabama (section 23-1-375) prohibits the operation of an airport for which a license has not

been issued.

The annual inspection of the airport was conducted on Nov. 1, 2006.

"If he didn't get one (a copy of the letter), somebody dropped the ball," Lovette commented.

Authority member Jack McEmore likewise said he had not seen the letter.

"We met with Volkert in September and we have basically been in a 'holding' pattern ever since," he said.

Ruffin commented that the letter stated that a copy was sent to Volkert. "Did Volkert not notify you that the license was being held up until those deficiencies were being corrected?" Ruffin asked?

EMA Director Bill Gibson said he made copies of the letter and placed them in every commissioner's 'mailbox' as well as in Aldridge's box in the Treasurer's office.

May said the Commission needs a list of names from the Authority "immediately" for appointment to the board, and that if commissioners have persons they want to nominate they can do so as well. The appointments will be made at the Commission's April 2 meeting.

Ruffin said someone needs to be finding out where the Airport stands with the state.

"The letter to the Airport Authority had a 30-day time limit to contact the state, and the date on the letter was December 14, 2006," he said.

May said he will go over the Authority's articles of incorporation before the meeting to make sure that the board is in compliance with state codes.

The judge also asked attorney McPhearson if he had researched the question of who actually owns the airport — the Authority or the County Commission. McPhearson said he didn't remember being asked to do so, but would look into it. Lovette asked that copies of the December letter be made and given to all Authority members present at the meeting.

It was stated that the letter intended for Aldridge may have not been delivered because it was mistakenly sent to the address of a former airport manager.

Commissioner C.D. "Budd" Ruffin said he was puzzled.

"I questioned the former judge (Michael Armistead) in a prior meeting and he said those boards were not active," Ruffin said.

"If they are not active then those boards should have a meeting and vote to dissolve the corporations," May said, adding that with Mason's resignation, he would guess that there should be two members left on each of the boards.

Ruffin said that both he and Floyd Wimberly had questioned the need to establish two boards to oversee the landfill.

"Should we have them come in so that we will know what's going on?" Ruffin said of the remaining board members. "We were told that it was filed but nothing had taken place since then."

Attorney Lee McPhearson said that, to the best of his knowledge, neither of the two landfill boards are active.

"I think it would be a good idea to follow up with other boards as well," he said.

May said that it is of the utmost importance to the county to thoroughly investigate the need for setting up any type of board or authority before any action is taken.

"There has to be a thorough discussion of every action we take here," he said. "Whoever brings in a request and asks for any board or authority to be set up needs to take time to explain it, to give us all the answers before we vote to set one up."

May asked Treasurer Alice Carol Smith to send letters to the remaining board members requesting them to be present for the board's April 2nd meeting.

"We might have to subpoena people, if necessary," he added.



**Choctaw Timber Co. Inc.**  
P.O. Box 231  
Gilbertown, AL 36908

**Bert Campbell**  
*Buyer Of All Types Of Timber*

Office: 251-542-9272  
Home: 251-843-2166  
Cell: 1-888-250-8243

3312005SUN

## NOTICE

Invitation to bid on split air conditon system for Ag Shop at Southern Choctaw High School. Bid packages must be picked up from:

**Randy Boggs**  
Choctaw County Board of Education  
Maintenance Dept. Building  
107 Tom Orr Drive  
Butler, AL 36904  
Phone: (205) 459-3015

Bids will be accepted until 4:30 P.M.,  
Tuesday March 27, 2007.  
Sealed bids will be opened 10:00 A.M.,  
March 28, 2007.

Send Bids to:

**Choctaw County Board of Education**  
Attn: Beverly Skinner  
107 Tom Orr Drive  
Butler, AL 36904

©SUN07

### Alabama Southern Community College Positions Available

Instructor of Music - Monroeville Campus  
Instructor of Nursing - Monroeville and Thomasville Campuses  
Instructor of Mathematics - Demopolis and Thomasville Campuses  
Director of the Alabama Center for Literary Arts/Instructor of English  
Monroeville Campus

Closing date: April 5, 2007

For a complete description of the job vacancies, please see our website at  
<http://www.ascc.edu> . A complete application package must be in the Dean of  
Academic Affairs by the date referenced above.

Alabama Southern Community College is an Equal Opportunity Employer. 7357©SUN07

## Experience The Miracle Of LASIK

# CLEAR, CRISP VISION

## NOW AFFORDABLE AT \$949 PER EYE

Mississippi's most trusted name in eye care, the Eye Clinic of Meridian, offers a truly customized approach to LASIK Vision Correction. We are proud to offer our patients:

- Highly experienced surgeons
- Over 7,000 procedures performed
- Named LaserVision® Top 10 Surgeons
- LaserVision Gold Surgeons Award
- VISX Star S4IR State-of-the-art Laser Technology
- Mississippi's only in-house WaveScan Wavefront Analyzer



**Call Us Today For A FREE LASIK Exam**

## 800.247.6654

**Eye Clinic of Meridian**

Don E. Marascalco, M.D. • J. Lawrence Mason, Jr., M.D.  
1301 20th Avenue, Meridian, MS 39302  
[www.eyeclinicofmeridian.com](http://www.eyeclinicofmeridian.com)