

■ Letters

From page 5-A

ment under construction on CR 32. The costs incurred were due to the relocation of that water line. The statement, regarding the fact that we didn't have money to pay a big water bill, is true. We humbly approached the Commission to request help with the bill that was incurred due to the county bridge project. It is standard protocol that any and all utility conflicts be addressed prior to construction of a bridge replacement project of this magnitude. The cost for relocation should have been included in and paid for by the grant received by the county. Realize, there would not have been any relocation or cost associated with it to the NCWSA and it's 1,291 customers were not for the County Bridge Project. Now these 1,291 customers on the NCWSA system will be responsible for paying the bill on a monthly basis for several years. Also note, the county has not paid any money to date and the financial burden is on our customers for their bridge replacement project.

As for The Choctaw Sun and SoundOffs, I think it is great idea, but I do believe letters should be signed. The unsigned letter of March 13 is not the first letter to SoundOff that has been less than factual. When statements are made that are not true about county, city, school employees, elected officials and others, they can have far reaching effects. If a letter is signed, people tend to be more accurate and honest. This letter and opinions are mine alone, but I do thank Carrie Mae Johnson and Chairperson Rita Woods who also serve on the NCWSA Board with me. Serving on a board is very often a thankless job with many hours of work and no salary. Myself and others who serve on boards throughout this county do it simply because we care about our communities and want to give back.

Bo Boykin

America has achieved a greatness never attained by any other nation in the history of the world. She has also attained a distinction no other nation has held or will ever hold.

That distinction is that more of her citizens are actively participating in treason than has ever happened in any other nation. I would like to believe that the participants are ignorant of the fact that they are traitors but even if they are there is no excuse for their treason. Every person who writes, talks on TV or Radio, or participates in antiwar protests is filling the terrorists with exceeding joy and in effect saying to them, "Keep killing our troops".

If the traitors in congress are successful in pulling our troops out of Iraq, within six months or less the terrorists will hit America with such a destructive blow it will make 9/11 look like a July 4th celebration. Anyone who says that there were no WMDs in Iraq is a liar. I have talked to many of our military that have been in Iraq one or more times. One of them told me that he personally saw 17 bunkers filled with WMDs.

Edwin J. Slaten

■ Tommy

From page 5-A

Sweep is a county-wide effort to give our county a new "face" in time for Easter, and if every single one of us were to get out and pick up just one bag of trash, imagine what a difference it would make.

The Choctaw Co. Commission has agreed to provide plastic bags for the pickup, and will be placing dump trucks at various places throughout the county as "drop off" locations for people to bring their bags of collected trash. Terry Kelley, with the Choctaw Regional Landfill and Arrow Waste Disposal, will also be placing large, commercial-size dumpsters at several locations for this purpose as well. (By the way, when you see Probate Judge D'Wayne May, Commissioners Dandy Brown, C.D. "Budd" Ruffin, Clyde Dixon and Henry Lovette, and Terry, be sure to thank them for all of their help and cooperation.)

I would like to ask all of you who are planning to have a pick-up day in your community to call the **Sun** and tell us what area you will be working in so that our news team can come by and snap some pictures.

If you need bags, contact the County Commissioner in your district. Mid Star Timber has generously donated five dozen brightly colored T-shirts for volunteers to wear, and those will be available as long as they last. MidStar is also donating 2,500 small litter bags for people to use in their vehicles. Billy and Pam May have donated a box containing almost 100 bright "hunter orange" safety vests, and those have been distributed to several groups that have already registered their intent to participate in the day. Others have said they intend to purchase – at their own expense – more vests, t-shirts, water and snacks for volunteers, and to use their vehicles to travel around and pick up bags of trash and transport them to the drop-off points. Several students have also volunteered to give up that morning of their spring break week to help, too. *It means a lot and I just wanted to thank all of you for whatever you are doing to help with this clean-up effort.*

On a final note, if you are out driving Saturday, please **SLOW DOWN** because there will be several groups out there and we don't want any of the volunteers to become a victim of someone's speed or careless driving.

We'll see ya'll out there on the roadsides this Saturday morning!

■ Dee Ann

From page 5-A

jobs become jeopardized.

I also do not apologize for proposing the idea for a voluntary, non-compensated board – an idea that has, no doubt, worked for such entities as the E-911 Board, the Parks and Recreations Board, the Ambulance Board, and many Boards of Education within this state and across the country.

But I do apologize if my opinion offended those whom I have much respect for. Nowhere in my editorial did I so much as hint that the BOE does not work hard, that it does not put effort into its actions, that it is not a viable entity that deserves respect for difficult, often under-appreciated work.

On the contrary, the sheer difficulty of the proposed Recovery Plan is enough to show that the BOE is under pressure from all sides. I understand that, and I respect it. In fact, I have seen the Board of Education take hits in many situations – and many of those hits were definitely undeserved and unwarranted. I've seen some of them stand up to pressure from decisions made that were unpopular but necessary, and I have seen one of those board members in particular bear the brunt of standing for what he felt was right, even though others did not agree. And for that, I have the utmost respect for them and for what they do for our school system.

But I also stand behind my right to have my opinion, to stand up and say something that may not be popular, something that I myself feel is a viable option, even though others may not agree.

And I stand beside the premise that there are enough sacrifices to go around, sacrifices that may have to be shared by everyone – from top to bottom.

(NOTE: When quoting the salaries of school board members last week, I used figures that were given to me by three separate sources who were all in agreement about the \$900 salary. The corrected figure, however, is \$800 per month per board member, for a total of \$4,000 per month and \$48,000 per year.)

■ SoundOff

From page 5-A

these rules no matter who you are. One person doesn't own the whole neighborhood and shouldn't be able to get away with not abiding by the rules. City and county workers should be the only people able to use these type vehicles on the road.

From the School Board's recovery plan, if a person in the Central Office retires then that person is not being replaced with a new hire but their job will just be done by the others there. I heard someone was retiring and this is what I thought the plan meant. Is this right?

Who do I need to contact about two stores who's gas pumps ring up small amounts of cash before you even mash the nozzle? I have complained to the management several times in the last two months asking them to correct the problem but have seen no results. I had a situation with one of the stores where a 28-cents amount appeared on the pump BEFORE I started pumping. When I asked the manager to reset the pump they told me they would not. I said I wasn't going to pay for gas I didn't get and I got in my car and drove off. So, Sheriff, if you are looking for the person that drove off "owing" 28 cents, I'm the culprit. I'd bet if those pumps were showing 28 cents LESS for each purchase something would be done immediately! Do the math ... 28 cents per gas sale times how many sales a day? That's a lot of money in a year's time! I am warning people to CHECK THE AMOUNT ON THE PUMP BEFORE YOU MASH THE NOZZLE!

(ED. NOTE: The Weights and Measures Section of the Alabama Department Of Agriculture and Industries is responsible for enforcing weights and measures laws by inspecting weights, gasoline pumps, grocery store scales, large vehicle scales, and other measuring devices for accuracy to ensure that consumers are getting their money's worth. You can contact the department at 334-240-7133, or 334-240-7130 to report your problem. You can also log onto their website at www.agi.alabama.gov. – Tommy.)

I am originally from Choctaw County and have served on my local school board here in west Texas for 15 years. I attend two meetings a month and am paid only mileage expenses. As a result, my "pay" is about \$37-\$40 a month. Maybe Alabama needs to make service on Boards of Education totally voluntary and without financial remuneration except for actual, receipt-documented expenses, as ours is here. Just one man's humble opinion. My people are all from the Needham area and I do enjoy keeping up with the hometown news in the **Sun** and appreciated what Miss Dee Ann had to say in her column this week.

The education of the children in Choctaw County is in the hands of some of the most qualified professionals anywhere. The teachers, administrators and staff are willing to give of their free time generously. They work diligently to develop lessons that most other students would love to experience. However these lessons often fall on deaf ears. Without effort by most students and full support from the parents the hard work of the staff is useless. To improve the schools, we parents must become fully active in the education and discipline of the children of our county. To do this, try attending all P.T.O. meetings, making your child show you all of his/her homework every night, make him/her teach you something new he/she learned that day. We must remember the often used philosophy of business people, "If you always do what you always did you will always get what you always got." The children need not only the dedication of educators but also the dedication of parents as well.

I have tried several times in the last week to contact my senator and house member about those raises they gave themselves. So far neither has called me back and I don't really expect them to. That's alright. The next election is only three years down the road. I can hardly wait!

I serve on a local board that deals with millions of dollars in funds and personnel issues. I attend one to two meetings a month and put a lot of miles on my car going to different functions both inside and outside of the county. I have never asked for nor received one penny in pay for what I do. I pay for my own gas, too. Food for thought.

I love your newspaper. I have retired from the school system but there some issues I would like to address. My neighbor's kids keep telling me that at a certain school in this county there is a student that's in Special Ed who is mistreated every day. People make fun of him. That's not right. The kids should not be allowed to pick on him. When he address this to the teachers they tell him to "sit down". Parents, get concerned about your children.

I've been watching the news and I don't know which one is the biggest embarrassment to America, Al "Movie Star" Gore or that pathetic bunch in Congress, including Harry "I Don't Have A Clue" Reid, and Nancy "Look How Important I Am Now" Pelosi. They are all so out of touch with reality and the average American it's scary. And some of the Republicans are just as bad! Looks to me like we need to start electing more independents like Sen. Joe Lieberman. He sure showed them Democrats with his own re-election that they ain't as hot as they like to think they are. Hey, Joe, are you running for PREZ next year? I would vote for you!

I just wanted to applaud you, Mrs. Campbell, for having the guts to propose that School Board members consider giving up their salaries as a goodwill gesture to help save the jobs of those custodians whose jobs are in jeopardy. Those custodians really need their jobs, and their services are desperately needed by the schools. If the board members do fire those custodians and fail to relinquish their salaries, I would expect to see those five people with brooms and mops in hand every day at the schools in their districts to help with clean-up chores.

I am one of the skateboarders and I want to know what they did with all of our stuff at the tennis courts in Gilbertown? I don't know why they wouldn't just call one of us and tell us to come and get it. We were the ones who cleaned up the tennis court in the first place we put those garbage cans up there to throw away the trash. And why would we trash something we cleaned up? We put in a lot of money in the stuff you took from the tennis courts, and I think we should get it back. We weren't hurting anyone until some other people came up there and tipped over the trash cans and you blamed it on us. So will the person who has all of our stuff please call me so I can get it back if you haven't thrown it away?

I am amazed at the opinions about school uniforms. I am a mother of three and I know how expensive life can be. However, I fail to see why there is such a conflict about school uniforms. Khakis are khakis and shirts are shirts regardless where they are bought. Of all the SoundOff comments I have read, my heart was truly blessed this week as I read the article from "the young Christian guy". As a parent I believe we need to remember that our children already have to face enough temptation in this world, wouldn't we rather not have to worry about our children being looked at in a negative way? I believe that if we spent as much time and energy on things that will protect our children and help raise them with Godly morals and beliefs, that the world we are raising them in wouldn't be such a scary place. So I wanted to say thank you to the young man who's heart is in the right place and to all the parents, lets show our children that there are more important things to focus our hearts on rather than the clothes they wear or where those clothes came from.

I want to thank you for the stand you took on those ridiculous raises that our legislators voted to give themselves. It makes me so mad that they can run around here telling us how they are SOOOO concerned and anxious to go to Montgomery and do something good for our county, and then turn around and kick us in the teeth with such a selfish act like this. We in the African-American community must unite against this injustice! Let us show these legislators that we need officials in Montgomery who serve the PEOPLE who elected them and not THEMSELVES. In my opinion, they have let me and every voter in this district down.

Please, please, please DO NOT take the Instructional Aides away from the special needs children who so desperately need them in order to acquire an appropriate education! Teachers in this county have 20+ students in the classroom. There is no way that a teacher can give the children with special needs the individual, one-on-one attention that they need. They deserve an appropriate edu-

cation as much as any other child, yet sometimes it takes extra help to achieve this and meet their goals. Aides help to provide this extra help and backup what the teacher is trying to do with that child. It seems that if the Board of Education would get rid of a few certain, non-essential padded jobs in the Central Office they might be able to keep some of these very much needed aides in the system. I agree with the SoundOff in last weeks paper, maybe the State Dept. of Education DOES need to take over our school system for a while. Oh, what a hoot that will be! It would certainly straighten out things around here!

President Bush fired eight, President Clinton fired 93. What is all the hoopla about? People need to pray for Attorney General Gonzales or he is going to be yet another victim of the liberal Democrats and their cohorts, the national media. It is time to pray!

God bless you for that heartfelt editorial about the big, fat unnecessary pay raise our legislators gave themselves. Who do they think they are? GOD????? It just don't make no sense to me.

I wonder how the business community of Pennington could have been blindsided by this ruling if they were the responsible citizens they need to be? This is just the tip of the iceberg across our county, state and nation, of rulings that are going to blindside citizens who do not take their civic responsibilities seriously. I think the outcry should be just as loud at the state level for even passing such ridiculous laws, but who even knew that the Legislature had passed this ruling? Who was involved in fighting this law? Who even knows what our Legislators are doing in Montgomery? Who even cares? In the article the phrase "infrastructure" was mentioned repeatedly. "Infrastructure" is equivalent to, "higher taxes", or "higher fees". The people need to keep their eyes and ears open to such jargon. Not every small town's success is judged by its infrastructure or its growth in businesses or population. Small town America is a great place to live. Every town's goal should not be who can get the biggest grants from Montgomery or Washington, but feeling the heartbeat of the people and using that as their guide to planning for the future. Pennington businesses need to stop the bellyaching, stay informed and stay involved! Citizens of Choctaw County don't need to complain about decisions that municipalities or boards pass if they are not going to attend meetings and get involved. At the same time, municipalities and commissions deserve every repercussion they get if they are not going to be responsible in the way they go about making significant changes when it becomes obvious that they are trying to slip one by the people instead of being forthright, honest and make every effort to let their citizenry know what is going on, thus the idea of publishing the minutes, or having a report published in the newspaper is so ethical! Find out what is going on in your community, state and nation, and don't be pointing the finger if you choose to not be a RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN!

I plan to see that some of our legislative crew don't get to go back for another four years of taking advantage of me and the rest of us taxpayers. This is a personal PROMISE to Mr. Lindsey, Mr. Keahey, Mr. Singleton and Mr. Jackson ... enjoy the next three years, boys, because in the next election I will see to it that every one of you has somebody running against you. I may even run myself.

Them legislators ought to be ashamed of themselves! My daughter is a young widow who is struggling to raise three children on a waitress' pay. If it wasn't for me and her mama she couldn't even buy food for those kids. She won't make the kind of money TOTAL that they gave themselves in a raise in TWO YEARS time. They make me SICK, do you hear me? SICK, SICK, SICK!!!! Tommy Campbell, I want to thank you for that FINE piece you wrote in the **Sun**. I can tell you this, it has sure opened my eyes as a voter.

To Dee Ann, thank you so much for laying it on the line about the board members' salaries. I think they do a pretty good job overall, but the truth is, they all have full-time jobs. They get full-time pay from those other jobs. Those janitors would have no other job if they are fired. They NEED their jobs. Bless the **Sun** and bless you for caring for those of us who feel like we do not have a voice. The **Sun** is a wonderful paper.

Note to readers

We appreciate readers opinions and while we print as many SoundOffs as we can each week, we receive so many that it is just not possible to print all of them. Please know that we do read each one and we thank you for your enthusiastic participation in this feature. The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees you the right to express your opinions, as well as the newspaper's right to print those opinions. Thank you again and please keep on SOUNDING OFF!