

Opinions



The Choctaw Sun
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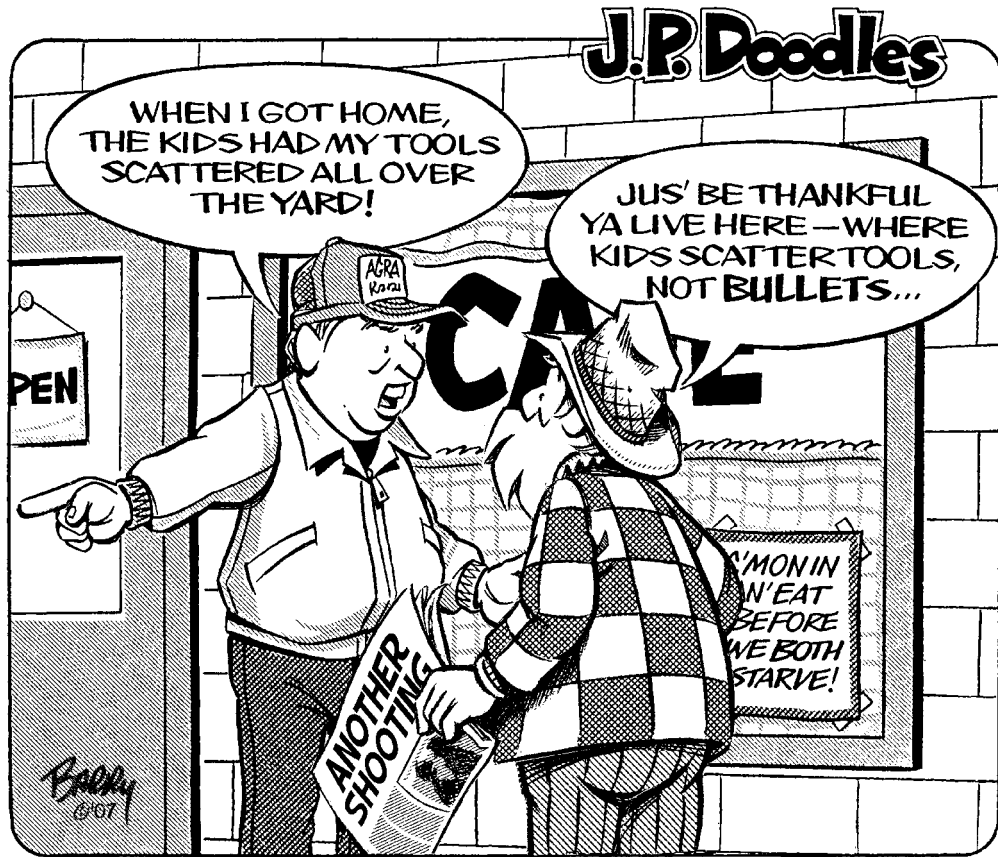
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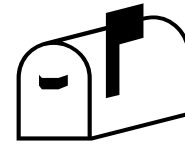
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Letters



Dee Ann, we just wanted to thank you so much for that beautiful write-up about Lauren and Kyle as well us!! If you have an extra copy of it, I would really like to have another one. Thank you again!!

Mike and Cecelia
Tropical Beach Weddings
Gulf Breeze, Florida

The family of Howard Norton wishes to express their appreciation, gratitude, and love for the prayers, visits, cards, calls, flowers, food and words of comfort shown to us during the loss of our father, grandfather and great-grandfather Thank you, Bro. Buddy Braddock and Bro. Jim Halliday for the message and words of comfort. A special thanks to Morgan Chapel Baptist Church, the Hospitality Committee, and all who prepared and served a delicious meal providing a time of fellowship following the service.

We also want to thank Beth Wright and Bumpers Funeral Home for the all the love and support at this time. God bless each of you and keep us in your thoughts and prayers.

Peggy, Mike and Ashley Givens
Becky and Willie Sykes
Champ, Preston and Taylor Norton
Andrea and Parker Adams, Drew Faile
Amy, Dori and Dyer Lumpkin
Michael and Elliott Greene

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SoundOffs

To *The Choctaw Sun*, I just wanted to say a big THANK YOU for that full page of pictures from Gilbertown's opening day of youth softball last week. I saw two of your staff members there shooting pictures. It really meant a lot to us parents, and those pictures were so cute! Your sports coverage is great.

This is for the business owner who lied to the state of Alabama for an employee so that he did not have to withhold the proper amount of child support from that employee's check. Not only are you cheating the children, but you are also cheating the family members who take up the slack for this dead-beat dad! I'm sure you thought of this as a favor, but for those of us helping to support the children it is a slap in the face. As long as these people are enabled they will continue to get off scott-free while the rest of us pay for them.

To Marcus Gates — buddy, I appreciate your great coverage of events at the Whynot race-track. We go every week during race season and we enjoy seeing this in the *Sun*. Keep it up.

It is wonderful to have a Superintendent of Education who lets people know what's going on. Ms. Moore is trying to iron out wrinkles that have been building in this system for years. These problems did not develop overnight and I think she's doing a great job. She has always told it "like it is" and I hope she continues to do so. I don't attend board meetings but I read about them in the paper. I just don't get why the board members aren't more involved in the schools and why they always seem to pit against each other instead of resolving issues and getting to the heart of the problems. It's not about who is to blame anymore. The damage is done. Shouldn't everyone work together to FIX the problem? I'm active in the school my kids attend, but I don't believe I'd recognize the first board member if I was to run into them.

Tommy Campbell: defender of freedom of speech with other peoples blood.

A few years ago there was an effort to annex property south on Ala. 17 to the new schools into the city limits of Gilbertown. It seems to me that, with Congressman Davis saying that the Gilbertown Utilities Board is on the verge of getting a federal grant to help with the construction of a sewer system, the more people in

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Our fear is not a joke

Fear. It seems that there is nowhere to go to escape from it.

So often we try to hide from it, to think that it can't happen to us — not here, not in OUR schools, not to OUR kids.

The students at Virginia Tech no doubt thought the same thing last week. But that was before Monday.

At a university that is in one of the more beautiful, more serene, more seemingly safe areas of the United States, 32 people, including professors and students, were massacred at the hands of a gunman who showed no mercy. It was a tragedy that shouldn't have happened. But one that has happened all too often in recent years.

For the students at the university — and the parents who waited at home for them — Monday was a day for real, raw,



Looking Up

By Dee Ann Campbell
Editor

unmitigated fear. It was a fear that can be only fully known by those who have experienced it.

Last week, the safety of some of our children was threatened by someone who wanted to instill that same kind of fear in our hearts. Someone with a twisted sense of humor issued a threat of violence against students and faculty, with no regard for the consequences.

It is undoubtedly a fear that no parent should

ever have to face — the fear that their children are in grave danger.

In this era of violence on our campuses, there is simply no excuse for anyone to make such a threat. From the children who were massacred in Columbine, in Jonesborough, in Paducah, and even in a small, very protected Amish school in Pennsylvania — in so many other places around the country over the past few years — the fear is real. It's not a joke.

For those who would play games and try to put that kind of fear into the hearts of local students and parents, there should be consequences so severe that others would think again before making that threat. No matter whether the student is 12 years old or 20, anyone who would dare to issue threats — bogus or real — of violence against our children and our educational facilities should be used as an example to others who might be tempted to do the same.

So often, we feel isolated here, safe from the problems and struggles that are so prevalent in other areas. We feel that our kids are safe when they go to the store, or to school, or to bed at night.

But like those young people at Virginia Tech, the truth is, we can never

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It's the least we can do in return

The next time someone tells you that "nothing goes on in Choctaw County," don't you believe it.

There's plenty of all-family events that go on year-round here in our little neck of the woods, and we here at the *Sun* get to be a part of as many of them as the hours in a day will allow.

But I often see groups work for days, weeks and months planning a special event and then end up with only a handful of people there. It's disheartening and discouraging, to say the least, because so many of these groups — especially our fire departments, schools, youth groups, church groups and others — depend on these fundraisers, "fun days", barbecues and singings to help keep them going throughout the year.

Now, don't get me wrong. I know that we live in a "busy" world where a person's leisure time and family time is precious, and is often measured in hours rather than days. Dee Ann and I have



The way I see it ...

By Tommy Campbell
Publisher

school-age children, which in itself is enough to occupy 99.9% of a family's spare time, and the newspaper business itself is one of the most hectic and stressful lines of work that you could be in, so we know what it means to stay "in the road" and be stretched from here to there and can to can't.

I see the disappointment and frustration on the faces of the volunteers who give so freely of their time, talents and often from their own pocket-books to make these special events happen when so few turn out to support their event.

My point is this, Choctaw County ... we would be in a bad way if all of our non-profit, com-

munity-service groups suddenly got the same apathetic, "I-don't-have-time-to-be-bothered" attitude that so many folks have when it comes to supporting those fundraisers and special events.

Think about it. Think back to three hurricanes named Frederic, Ivan and Katrina. Think back to how long it would have been before you could get from your home to ANYWHERE had it not been for fire departments, the Rescue Squad and others working around the clock to cut trees out of the road and deliver water, medicine, and food to those cut off by the storm.

Think back to the

fires that threaten our homes, businesses and very lives ... fires that no one would respond to if it weren't for volunteers.

Think about the last time you said goodbye to a loved one and how many churches and neighbors rallied around your family with food and other support.

Think back to how many wrecks we have locally ... wrecks that often require volunteers to help free the victims from their demolished vehicles.

Think about the folks who, over the years, became disoriented and lost their way and wouldn't have been found had it not been for faithful volunteers who spent day and night hacking their way through briar patches and snake-infested swamps looking for them.

Think about the boaters and fishermen who have drowned over the years, persons whose bodies would not have been recovered had it not been for volunteers.

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