

# Opinions

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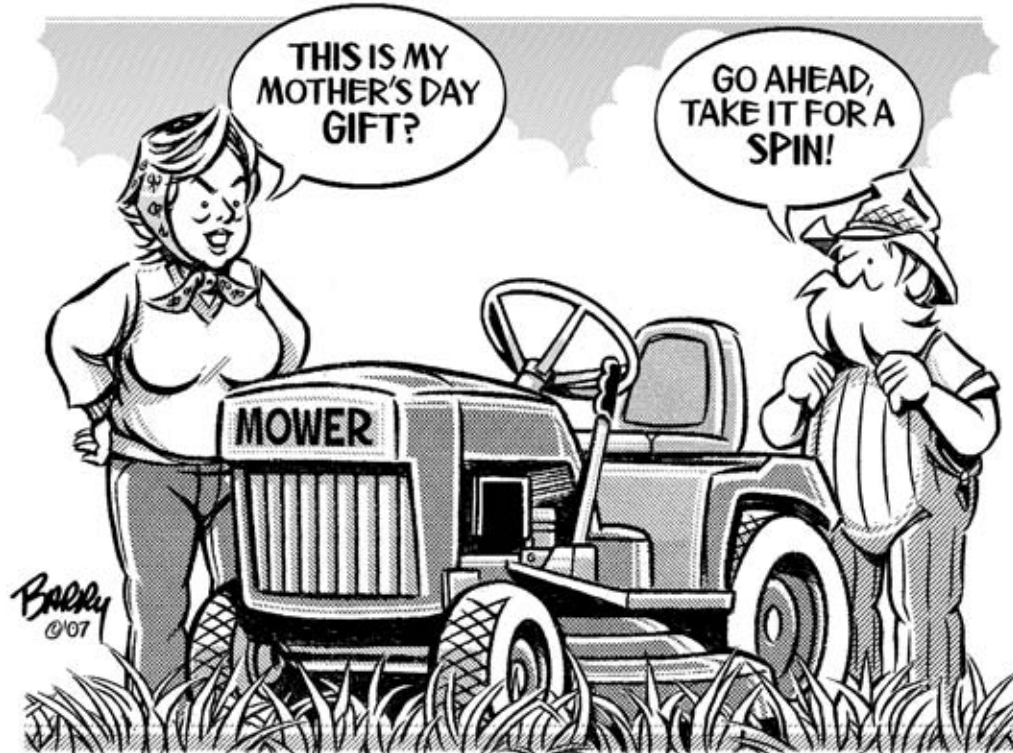
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FROM THE "BETTER TO GIVE THAN RECEIVE" DEPT. ...

## SoundOffs

To the cast and crew of Rehearsal for Murder at SCHS — you were fantastic! What talent you have. I truly enjoyed the performance. Way to go!!

I want to say THANK YOU to *The Choctaw Sun* newspaper. I am a student at CCHS and I love the way you folks listen to us. So many people dismiss us as just "children" but you listen to us and you give our opinions just as much attention as you give adults. We are very, very lucky to have your newspaper. Thank you again from me, a proud JUNIOR at CCHS! Oh yes!! I almost forgot, thank you Miss Dee Ann and Mr. Tommy for coming to our prom! We really, really, really appreciate that you give our special events coverage in the *Sun*!

I have a neighbor who owns at least a dozen mangy old hound dogs. He NEVER has them vaccinated for rabies and they run loose. They are always in my yard, getting into trash, eating our own dogs' food, and growling at me and my wife. Who do I report this to?

**(ED. NOTE:** As far as the rabies vaccinations go, call the Choctaw Co. Health Department at 205-459-4026. If you wish to sign a complaint regarding the animals being on your property, you would need to contact the Sheriff's Department.)

Is there anybody at the state level that we can call to come and check into the food that is served at local schools? Students do not get enough to eat and my children come home every day complaining about how it tastes. I don't mean to offend anyone, but this is not just isolated teenage whining or complaining. I have heard it from several parents who have themselves eaten meals in school cafeterias as well. All I am saying is that, maybe the State Dept. of Education does need to send some "unannounced" inspectors to the schools to "taste test" the food on a random basis and to check the portions that are being served. The students deserve the best and I encourage Supt. Moore and board members to take steps to see that this happens. If you don't, the parents will.

I would like to say congratulations to Mr. Dyana Thomas for being picked as the principal of Greene County High School. In my opinion, he was railroaded from CCHS and the school has been going down since. I am sad because I was hoping we could get him back. He knew how to talk to the parents and to the children. In my opinion, the school board members cheated those children out of the best thing they had. There is no excuse for those children having to go without a MATH teacher.

On behalf of all of us seniors of Southern Choctaw High School, I would like to SoundOff and thank *The Choctaw Sun* for coming to make pictures of us at prom last Saturday night. You are always here to put us in the paper and it makes us feel good to know that you care.

I have to agree about the way the Parks and Recreation Board matter was handled. It obviously was a "done deal" when the Commissioners walked into that meeting room because why else would all of the paperwork have been typed and ready for their signatures? I feel like the other SoundOff callers in that it appears certain factions are still very much in control of what happens in that courthouse. I would like to know who it was who made the decision as to who stayed on the board and who was kicked off?

Thanks to the County Commission for finally taking steps to settle that landfill thing. It will be costly, yes, but its costing us tens of thousands of dollars a month now. We have to do something about it. Thanks. Judge May and Commissioners.

I see where one of our state senators says he is SOOOOOO concerned about Choctaw County's roads. Whoop-ti-do! Sure he is. Wonder if he would sign over that big, fat pay raise he got to help pave this half-a-mile of tore-up road in front of my house? I can tell you the answer to that one!

I liked the pictures you put in the *Sun* of us at our prom. It was a big night for us seniors and we were glad to see ourselves in the *Sun*. My mama don't read any other paper but yours. She says your paper treats all people fair and I agree.

I hate SoundOffs. Any chance you are going to stop printing this idiotic crap?

**(ED. NOTE:** No. Any other questions? -- Tommy)

*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. Comments that contain vulgarity, obscenities, or personal attacks on the character of any individual will not be published.*

## Sharing a cup at midnight

Wake up and smell the coffee?

*Smell it??* I don't just want to smell it — I want to pour it, to sip it, to savor every dark, caffeine-laden delicious drop!

There are some things in this life that make us want to stop, to slow down, to take a few moments out of the rat race. That's the way it is with coffee.

Coffee demands our attention, commands our allegiance, and begs us to take a few minutes out of our day to take a deep breath, and, of course, a long sip.

Any good coffee drinker knows what I mean.

When the advertising executives came up with the slogan that has become so familiar over the years, they knew just what I'm talking about. When my mother and



## Looking Up

By Dee Ann Campbell  
Editor

father got up at 5 a.m. before work to have that cup together, they knew just what I mean. When the waitress offers you a cup as an over-dinner relaxation, she's talking my language.

When it comes to coffee, I want the real thing. No cappuccino, or frappuccino, or espresso, or Irish mocha mint cinnamon latte. Just coffee — with a little cream and sugar, of course.

But coffee drinking is

about more than just a hot drink. It is about stopping the race. It's about savoring a moment, and, in my life, it's about spending a few precious moments sharing.

To say that Tommy and I drink too much of the Joe would probably be an understatement. It's what we do when we get up, what we do at work throughout the morning, and it's what we do as a treat right after lunch. In fact, as time allows, it's

what we do throughout the day.

But for us, the real beauty of coffee is found not in the morning, or at lunchtime, or throughout the day. Rather, it is found in the quietness of the moment as our household prepares to get still for the night, to turn the light off on another day.

In those few moments of peacefulness at the end of our day, when work is put aside and chores are left for the morning, we invariably put on a fresh brew, grab our favorite cups, and sip.

It's a ritual of relaxation, a routine of calmness. It is our treasured chance to share a cup and a moment.

Healthcare professions would undoubtedly argue all the detriments to drinking caffeine-rich

See DEE ANN, page 11A

## Professional fellowship means a lot

It's nice to have newspaper staff members and friends at other papers that we can count on.

Case in point. Last Wednesday, an M&B train carrying booster rocket components for a NASA space shuttle derailed just across the river in Myrtlewood.

I was putting papers in vending boxes in Butler at the time, heard the call on my scanner and headed that-a-way. At the same time, *Sun* staff members Mickey Bryant and Dan Melvin also heard the call on their scanners, and headed in that same direction, too.

We have some dedicated employees here at the *Sun*, people who don't wait to be asked to head out to cover a breaking news event. They know that "news" doesn't wait, and that in this business, he who hesitates often doesn't get the story or the picture for you readers.

It means a lot to us because everyone who works here is more like "family" than they are "employees".

As it turned out, The *Sun* was one of the few



## The way I see it ...

By Tommy Campbell  
Publisher

news media outlets that had an opportunity to get down to the actual site of the trestle collapse in the Tombigbee River swamp before they shooed reporters and photographers out of the area.

It also means a lot to us to know that the *Sun* has friends at newspapers all across this country who are willing to work together with us to share stories and photos on occasion.

For example, I knew that the M&B Railroad is based in Meridian, but since I did not see our friends from *The Meridian Star* there, I felt sure they might not know about the event, or were otherwise tied up and just couldn't get a photographer to the scene, and would want a picture

of the derailment. I called up Editor Steve Gillespie on my cell phone and he definitely wanted a photo. After I got back to the office, I emailed him several of my picture files. The *Star* ran two of the *Sun's* pictures on their front page Thursday morning.

Another newspaper in an adjoining county also called and asked if they could use our photos of the train derailment because they got there after authorities began stopping news reporters access to the scene, and, of course, we were glad to help them out, too.

As it turned out, the capital murder trial of a Choctaw County native was wrapping up in Quitman, Miss. on Wednesday afternoon. We

were so tied up with getting the paper out, the train wreck, and other matters ourselves that there was no way we could send anyone to cover the trial. However, the *Star* did have a reporter/photographer on site, and Steve graciously shared with the *Sun* a picture taken by one of their staff members of the defendant being led from the Clarke County Courthouse. Our friends at the Clarke Co. Tribune, in Quitman, also offered to share information from their coverage of the trial with us.

Tuesday morning, the editors of *Railfan and Railroad Magazine*, in New York, called and had seen several of my train derailment photos in the *Meridian Star's* online edition and wanted to use them in the next issue of their magazine. Of course, we said yes.

Late Wednesday afternoon, Tommy Wilson, my good friend, mentor, and former boss in the "High Country" of North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains called and we had a long visit on the

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