

Eugene Lorton
1869-1949

Opinion

"Publish and set up a standard; publish and conceal not." Jeremiah 50:2

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EDITORIALS

Trauma care

State leaders tackle the problem

State leaders apparently have found a way to keep the University of Oklahoma Medical Center's trauma unit open for another six months. The trauma center, the only level one facility left in the state, was scheduled to close at the end of the year because of continuing high losses.

A plan to help this particular trauma center and trauma issues statewide first reportedly in the works. Citizens who rely on such care can only hope our leadership succeeds.

Two level-one trauma centers in Tulsa recently opted to have their status changed to a level-three emergency department, which left the OU trauma center as the only one in the state staffed and prepared to handle major, multiple-injury cases resulting from serious accidents and the like.

About 83,000 people are treated at the OU center each year, but many of them do not have serious emergencies. Many also lack insurance or are underinsured. Reimbursements for emergency care also are lower than for other types of care. The result is that emergency facilities end up writing off substantial losses year in and year

out.

Officials here have said if the OU center were to close, Oklahomans in need of major trauma care might have to be transported to another state.

State officials looked for a cash infusion to help keep the center open. Ultimately, though, some other way was found.

Gov. Brad Henry and legislative and health-care leaders say they are working on a plan to address all the state's trauma issues. Details of the plan are evolving.

"We're committed to implementing a comprehensive solution that ensures Oklahomans will always have access to the highly specialized trauma care that emergency situations demand," Henry said.

It sounds as if state leaders are serious about addressing this and the other growing health-care problems in the state, notably the uninsured. We wish them well. These health-care dilemmas are problems that affect us all in one way or another.



A new door

TU plans south entrance

The University of Tulsa has always had a beautiful campus. Problem is, unless you're driving through it, you can't really see it. Most of the campus is hidden somewhere between Delaware Avenue and Harvard Avenue.

Now, TU is planning a grand entrance to the campus. During the next seven years, \$18 million will be spent to "improve the university's aesthetics."

The project includes a 15,000-square-foot visitors center incorporated into the Shaw Alumni Center and seven new apartment buildings.

But the most exciting project is a four-block landscaped oval. It will give TU a new entrance, this one off of 11th Street. It will be TU's new front door.

The university has been expanding its campus over the last few years. The improvement to

the school and the surrounding neighborhoods has been dramatic. The new Reynolds Center is a breathtaking venue in which to watch basketball.

TU also retains its roots in buildings such as Kendall Hall, McFarlin Library and Sharp Chapel. Other projects remain in TU's future, including more student housing, the expansion of the college of engineering and new performing arts facilities.

The oval south entrance is first on the drawing board. And a welcome addition it will be.

Soon everyone will be able to see what those who have ventured onto TU campus have seen for years: Tulsa has a beautiful campus in the heart of the city. It's a campus and school that makes the city proud and soon will have a grand south entrance.

Gadhafi's gesture

Libya offers to abandon weapons

Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi's decision to abandon nuclear weapons is a triumph of diplomacy and patience.

It is another attempt by Gadhafi to gain respectability on the international stage and rejoin to the world community.

President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair announced last week that Libya had made the decision to give up trying to make unconventional weapons and to permit international inspections.

It has been suspected that Libya runs biological and chemical weapons programs and might have been trying to develop nuclear weapons.

The condition set by Libya is that if it follows through, then the United States should be willing to resume economic and political relations with Tripoli.

This will be difficult for some to accept, especially the families of those who lost their lives in the Libyan-sponsored terrorist bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 that claimed 270 lives, many of them Americans on their way home for Christmas.

Gadhafi did finally cooperate with that investigation, admitting his country's role in the bombing, paying compensation to victims' families and turning over two

bombing suspects for trial.

Like it or not and believe it or not, Gadhafi has been trying to shed the terrorist persona that he worked so long to cultivate.

After Gadhafi turned over the bombing suspects, the United Nations lifted its sanctions, but the United States left its in place.

That act of arm-twisting seems to have worked. To become a viable member of the world community, Libya desperately needed the cooperation of the United States. To get that, the last piece of the puzzle was the abandonment of its weapons programs and agreement to inspections.

In this case diplomacy worked. It took about 15 years, but the patience paid off.

Although many would like to see sanctions remain on Libya, the fact is that a Libya with a nuclear or biological weapons program would be dangerous. Although it might not be capable of building a weapon to directly threaten the United States, such weapons would be valuable on the black market.

Lifting sanctions is cheaper and less dangerous than war. Gadhafi still has a long way to go to prove his intentions are honorable. But he's made a start.

Reinstate cancer care

To U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe and U.S. Representative John Sullivan: My wife has been undergoing cancer treatment for a year and is alive today because of her oncologist, surgeons and chemotherapy.

By passing the Medicare drug bill you have compromised her future treatment as well as treatment for millions of other cancer victims. I urge you to fight to reinstate full funding for cancer care.

Phillip D. Wade, Tulsa

Dollar isn't worth much

Recently I sent \$100 via Western Union to my sister-in-law who lives in France. Imagine my surprise to find out that she only received about \$70 of it. The reason, I learned, is that the American dollar is only worth about 70 percent of the euro, which is stronger because we are currently importing more goods than we are exporting.

The reason for that is that too many American companies have packed up and left for Mexico, Southeast Asia, China, etc. (They do this so they can increase their profits by avoiding taxes and paying slave wages, and by avoiding pollution controls, insurance and using safety equipment.) In effect, they have started to destroy the very dollar they so feverishly covet and we have started to import products from foreign countries made by so-called American companies.

The ramifications of this irony are that our citizens have fewer jobs, less income and less confidence in American corporations. It makes one pause to ponder the theories on right to work, unions and workers' rights. Now that the wealthy corporate types pay

fewer taxes, doesn't it seem to follow there will be harder times for the rest of us since the dollar is rapidly losing its value? Perhaps the current administration should reconsider its economic theories before we have to resort to immigrating to Mexico just to have a job?

Robert Edmiston, Kellyville

Look for the payola!

As the flap continues and grows over the increasing cost of prescription drugs, Canadian drugs, the new Medicare prescription drug "benefit," and the closing of RxDepot, maybe it's time for a reality check.

Visit any medical office building on any given day, you'll see drug representatives carting in trays and bags of food for the offices. Frequently you'll see vans from caterers pulled up unloading all their delicacies. This is not an occasional or seasonal event — it's done daily.

Next, take note of the number of full page, full color ads in national magazines and the bombardment of TV commercials with touting this or that drug. This advertising doesn't come cheap.

Now multiply all these promotional gimmicks by all the medical offices in the United States. Add to this the lobbying costs pharmaceutical companies incur for eager congressmen who always have their hand out for "considerations." All these costs are recovered through higher drug prices.

None of this payola has anything to do with RxDepot. In fact, it wouldn't be surprising to learn that probably more is spent on food, ads and perks than is spent for RxDepot.

So the next time you have a prescription

filled and are shocked at the price, remember that slick ad you saw in the magazine, or the TV commercial featuring some celebrity who is getting big bucks to tout the drug. You might even be fortunate enough to have a doctor's appointment when the food comes, but don't wait to be asked to lunch.

Norm Rourke, Beggs

Policy won't change behavior

It is time to take a firm stand to address hostile school environment harassment and bullying.

Current initiatives follow in the footsteps of a more than a 20-year struggle in the work place to end not only the instrumental and procedural forms of employee aggression, but to also eradicate the more subtle interpersonal hostilities that create an atmosphere of disrespect. What can we take away from this history to guide us in the effort to improve the climate in schools?

We are psychologists with a specialization in harassment and discrimination — in the work place and in the schools. For more than 25 years' experience, we know that teaching employees the do's and don'ts is not a very effective way to change culture. Students are still more complicated: Children and adolescents are not just "little adults." It takes more than policy to change behavior.

We know, because we have been doing it.

Steven Dranoff and Wanda Dobrich,
Livingston, N.J.

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, Tulsa World, Box 1770, Tulsa, Okla., 74102, or send e-mail to letters@tulsaworld.com.

A diminishing reverence

WASHINGTON — His goal, 220 years ago, was to sleep Christmas Eve in his 6-foot 6-inch bed at his Virginia home on the bank of the Potomac. It would be nicer than some other recent Christmas Eves.

Such as in 1776, when he led soldiers across Delaware River ice floes to one of his greatest — and, truth be told, relatively few — victories, at Trent Town, as Trenton was then known. Only four Americans died that night, two — probably shoeless — from frostbite.

George Washington spent Christmas Eve 1777 with an army leaving bloody footprints in the Valley Forge snow. Six years later, he was heading to a home he had left in 1775 to lead farmers and shopkeepers against the British Empire.

Since Yorktown, Washington, like his embryonic nation, had lived in a peculiar limbo as negotiators, two months' travel away in Paris, codified peace with Britain. In late November, from headquarters along the Hudson River north of Manhattan island, he began his trek from strenuous public service into a placid future of private enjoyments, or so he thought.

His journey was through a nation deep in the throes — it would be in them for many years — of regime change. To the extent that there was a national regime, he was it, and he was retiring.

In January 1783 Congress had fled Philadelphia, going to ground in Princeton, N.J., to escape a platoon of unpaid soldiers. Congress was a place of empty palaver by representatives of states that retained virtually untrammelled sovereignty. By July 1783, with Congress sitting in Annapolis, only South Carolina — seven decades later, it would be the least cooperative state — had



GEORGE WILL

paid its full assessment to the national treasury. Of the other 12, only Washington's Virginia had contributed half its quota. The two weightiest states, Pennsylvania and New York, had contributed one-fifth and one-twentieth, respectively.

What united the barely united states was 6 feet 3 inches of American in a blue coat and buff trousers, carrying a sword and buckle engraved "1757" that testified to his frontier service for the British against the French, whose fleet, 24 years later, sealed the victory at Yorktown. If on his trip home this 51-year-old man had caught a chill and died, as he would do 16 Decembers later, national unity might have been unattainable.

The story of his triumphal trip home, itself an act of nation-building, is well-told by historian Stanley Weintraub in his new book "General Washington's Christmas Farewell: A Mount Vernon Homecoming, 1783." It evokes the frail seedling from which the mighty American nation grew. In a seven-year (1775-81) war in which fewer than 4,500 American soldiers died in combat, Washington lost more battles than he won. But he won the battle that mattered most — the last one — and adulation unlike any ever bestowed on an American.

His homeward journey paused at Harlem, a Manhattan village nine miles north of New York City, a community of 21,000 on

the island's southern tip that Washington had never captured. As Washington's party entered the city, Loyalist emigrants were being ferried to departing British ships in the harbor. A British officer marveled:

"Here, in this city, we have had an army for more than seven years, and yet could not keep the peace of it. Scarcely a day or night passed without tumults. Now we are gone, everything is in quietness and safety. These Americans are a curious, original people; they know how to govern themselves, but nobody else can govern them."

Then it was four days to Philadelphia, passing along what is now U.S. Route 1 through difficult New Jersey. In 1776 Washington had urged Jerseymen in the village of Newark to join his cause. Thirty did — but 300 joined the British. In Annapolis he surrendered his commission after a ball at which, Weintraub reports, fashionable ladies wore their hair in the *Dress a l'Independence* — 13 curls at the neck.

Washington's journey to Mount Vernon, which he reached after dark, Dec. 24, was a moveable feast of florid rhetoric and baked oysters. It also was a foretaste of what was to be, for more than a century, his central place in America's civic liturgy. Abraham Lincoln wore a ring containing a sliver from the casket Washington was buried in until his body was moved to its current tomb in 1831. At his Inauguration in 1897 William McKinley wore a ring containing strands of Washington's hair.

Presidents no longer inspire such reverence, perhaps because America is different, perhaps because presidents are.

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