

Eugene Lorton
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Opinion

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

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EDITORIALS

A dangerous place

Can problems at Rader be fixed?

Protecting the the people who work with troubled juveniles and even those offenders from each other does not come easily.

In the past two years Sand Springs police have gone to the Lloyd E. Rader Center 113 times.

Now state juvenile delinquency authorities are considering a new behavioral adjustment unit at Rader, the state's only maximum security detention facility for juveniles. The unit would house violent inmates. A decision by the Office of Juvenile Affairs board could come Friday.

If approved, the new 12-bed unit, could open in the next few weeks. The idea is to isolate combative teens.

Something needs to be done. Not many people choose to work with juvenile offenders with major problems. If those dedicated folks cannot be reasonably protected they would be justified in moving on. Many workers say they no longer feel safe at Rader, and Sand Springs police say staff often can't control the state's worst juvenile offenders.

An isolation unit won't solve all the problems, but it's a start. Does anyone have a better idea?

Juveniles housed in the new unit would receive their treatment, education and recreation inside the separate facility without mixing with

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other juveniles. They would be held separate from the general population. Safety would be improved for staff and other residents.

Rader's Intensive Treatment Program houses juveniles held for offenses including murder, rape and armed robbery. Some are 18 or 19 years old because of state laws allowing the office to keep them in custody. As if their crimes aren't serious enough, imagine adding immaturity, difficult childhoods, hair-trigger tempers and erratic and assaultive behavior to the mix.

Let's start with the unit. If problems persist, the whole system at Rader might need to be examined to ensure the safety of staff and residents.

For Art Justis

Councilor seeks sixth term in District 6

On March 9 Tulsans have the chance to send some cohesive, progressive councilors back to City Hall. An important player in that group is Art Justis.

Justis seeks his sixth term as the councilor from District 6. There is no good reason not to return him to office and plenty of good reasons to re-elect him.

Justis, a Democrat and owner of Metro Data Processing, has lived in Tulsa more than 40 years and knows his district and his fellow Tulsans well. In his tenure on the City Council he has been the voice of reason, putting aside partisan politics for the good of his district and the community in general.

The list of progress made under Justis' stewardship is impressive. He was instrumental in

getting 129th East Avenue widened to five lanes from 11th to 21st streets and obtained funding to widen it from 21st to 51st streets. It was during his watch that major storm water management projects were completed.

Justis is not finished. He has a list of projects that he would like to finish in the next two years.

Most important, Justis has proven that he can work with other councilors — Republicans Randy Sullivan, Bill Christiansen and Susan Neal and Democrats David Patrick and Tom Baker — and Mayor Bill LaFortune to move Tulsa toward a brighter future.

Art Justis deserves re-election. Voters of District 6 will do themselves and all of Tulsa a favor by voting for Art Justis March 9.

Chill out

Too much fuss over a little flash

Alright already.

We're all properly outraged by the fleeting glimpse of Janet Jackson's right breast. Or at least those of us who actually saw it during halftime of the Super Bowl are outraged by the sight. The great majority who didn't see it are outraged by the very thought of it.

But isn't it time we all take a deep breath, take a step back and get on with our lives? Was the offense so great that congressional hearings are required?

Was it really "a new low for prime-time television," as FCC Chairman Michael Powell opined to the Senate Commerce Committee on Tuesday? Powell's sweeping denouncement, af-

ter all, takes in a lot of territory. Was Janet's mammorial moment worse, more damaging to the national morality, than the late, unlamented sitcom "Couples"? Was it worse than a quick peek at a fat guy's butt on "NYPD Blue"?

The Jacksonian flash lasted no more than two seconds. She exposed about a half-inch more skin than actresses routinely display in the plunging-neckline gowns they don for the Oscars and Golden Globes. Did we lose our collective virginity as a result of this?

The continuing brouhaha over the Janet Jackson-Justin Timberlake incident is providing way too much notoriety to two modestly talented celebrities. Let's chill out.



LETTERS

Make pot legal!

It's high time we legalized medical marijuana.

Every day millions of Americans suffer needlessly because they can't get marijuana. Those afflicted with cancer, multiple sclerosis and other diseases, can be helped by either smoking or eating this herb. Marijuana has been shown to reduce nausea, increase appetite and to relieve the excruciatingly painful muscle spasms, common symptoms of MS.

Consider that more than 60 percent of Americans are overweight and 300,000 die every year from obesity-related ailments. That's 100 times the death toll of 9/11! (If the government were truly concerned about the nation's health, it would declare gluttony illegal and appoint a diet czar.)

Furthermore, 400,000 die annually from cigarettes, and another 100,000 deaths are caused by alcohol. Yet gluttony, cigarettes and alcohol are legal, while marijuana is not. This despite the fact that no one has ever died from marijuana poisoning.

Medical marijuana is legal in the Netherlands and Great Britain, and neither of these societies has fallen into chaos, nor have fire and brimstone fallen from heaven. A lot of suffering souls have been helped, however. And what's wrong with that?

Larry Forrest, Norman

More bus lines needed

I find myself troubled after reading "Life without wheels," (Feb. 2). A trip to the local health department is a major undertaking that can take an entire day out of someone's schedule. A man who is perfectly capable of doing a job and who is willing to work is unable to do so because he has no way to get there. An old lady is forced to skip church because her bus route has been taken away.

People who don't own cars have every right to be productive members of society. I see numerous listings in the classified ads every day for jobs to be filled. More bus lines and more frequent stops would allow people to look for more jobs and actually keep them. That old lady would have a happier, more fulfilled life.

In my opinion, the poor city transportation contributes to these people's educational, social and health condition. It also affects the demographic picture of the city. The ability to be mobile impacts every aspect of generations of Tulsans' lives.

Those who are responsible and who can do something about this issue should take a long look at Tulsa's bus service. Perhaps some of the funds that were intended for unrealistic city projects could be directed toward the bus service.

I would not mind seeing a fraction of my penny go toward improvement of Tulsa transit.

Jelena Susic, Tulsa

Put a woman in office!

Most media are corporations and a part of huge corporations and will not publish facts — as I see them — and most corporations are not for America's poor people. The Republican leadership and Democrats are hand picked by "huge corporations," not by the people.

Should you vote a Democrat for president in November, to be effective you must vote him a Democrat-controlled House and Senate. Likely no one will be helped by any one person on the Democratic Party's candidate list. I wish that a woman was running. I know that we have crooked women in both parties but it is my opinion that certain women would be more sensitive to the needs of the poor people.

Congress has brainwashed everyone to the point that the tax payer is paying the candidates millions of dollars to campaign.

Robert Wright, Oleta

What if demands were made?

The Super Bowl has become something of a global American icon screened in 166 countries in 26 languages to more than 990 million people around the world, including this year, first-time viewers in China.

We all know the extraordinary power of a first impression. The trouble is, for many millions it is the only impression of America that they will ever have. No wonder "the American dream" is fast becoming the world's nightmare. What does a Vietnamese mother, glimpsing America for the first time through the lens of the Super Bowl, say to her children following the halftime show?

Freedoms demands conscience; it requires responsibility or else it devolves into the deadly muck of sheer license. It's true for matters of social justice as well as cultural decency.

As a parent I have turned off the Super Bowl, giving up hope that the NFL and CBS might demand something other than "R" rated halftime shows.

As an American, I hear T.S. Eliot's words written 70 years ago: "If humility and purity be not in the heart, they are not in the home; and if they are not in the home, they are not in the city."

As a Christian, I wonder what might happen if people of faith became active and joined together in demanding standards of decency in the public square?

God forgive us, and God help our children, if we do nothing but shout about "freedom of expression."

James D. Miller, Tulsa

James D. Miller is pastor at Tulsa's First Presbyterian Church.

Humphreys is best qualified

As much as we shall miss Sen. Don Nickles and his fight for Oklahomans, it appears the candidate most qualified to replace him is Kirk Humphreys, the former mayor of Oklahoma City. Humphreys' strong Christian belief structure is proven by his association with the Rev. Billy Graham. As we battle to keep the words "under God" in our Pledge of Allegiance, Humphreys will be a voice for all of Oklahoma and what we hold dear.

This is certainly not the time to elect anyone who must vote with the dreaded Kennedys and the other liberals representing the northeast corridor. We need a senator who is against gay marriages, strong on national defense, knows the meaning of family and will fight to protect those values. Above all, Humphreys understands that without national security, there is no security at all.

CeCe Phillips, Broken Arrow

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

It's time to take the offensive on Iraq

For months, President Bush has been a sitting duck, taking incoming rhetorical fire from Democratic opponents and a willing media eager to bring down his poll numbers so they can have themselves a contest. The poll numbers are down, and it appears there will be a real contest. It is time for the president to return fire.

On NBC's "Meet the Press" interview with Tim Russert on Sunday, the president again defended his decision to invade Iraq and topple the murderous dictator, Saddam Hussein. The interview was OK, but he didn't say much that he hasn't said already many times. He needs to say something new, beginning with more about the unique responsibility of being president. He should note that a president does not enjoy the luxury of his critics, who have opinions about everything but take responsibility for nothing. Bush acted on the best intelligence available at the time, stopping a madman who has been responsible for the deaths of per-



CAL THOMAS

haps millions, his own people and many others. Was that not worth doing?

The leading contender for the Democratic presidential nomination, Sen. John F. Kerry of Massachusetts, presents an inviting target of inconsistency, hypocrisy and opportunism when his statements about Iraq and weapons of mass destruction are examined. Just last June 15 on "ABC's This Week" program, Kerry said he thought "it would be irresponsible for me at this point to draw conclusions (about whether intelligence was hyped) prior to all the evidence being on the table."

On NPR's "All Things Considered" last March 19, Kerry said, "I think Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction are a threat, and that's why I voted to hold him accountable and to make certain that we disarm him. I think we need to..." Since Kerry had access to some of the same intelligence passed on to the White House, why shouldn't he admit his wrong decision if he now wants to criticize the president for what Kerry regards as Bush's mistakes?

Kerry told USA Today (Feb. 12, 2003) that leaving Saddam "unfettered with nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction is unacceptable." As far back as 1990, Kerry warned in a Senate speech, "Iraq has developed a chemical weapons capability" (Oct. 2, 1990, Congressional Record, p.S14330). In January, 1991, Kerry said Saddam had been working on WMD "for years" (Congressional Record 1/12/91, p.S369).

In addition to noting Kerry's flip-flops,

the president should roll out an even more powerful political weapon. He should invite to visit America some Iraqi men, women and children who could publicly thank this country for its commitment and sacrifice on their behalf. They would tell their stories of life under Saddam and how things have improved since his ouster. These personal stories of murdered relatives, rape, torture and imprisonment would touch many hearts. Then the president could ask, "Do any of those who want my job wish to tell these people they would have been better off if America and our allies had chosen to stay home?"

Let Kerry and the other candidates say that more fatherless children would have been acceptable to them. Let the Democrats persuade the public that the continued rapes of women and girls should be of no concern to a decent nation that has sacrificed its own in the past so others might share the joy of freedom. How

many Democrats want to be known for this kind of isolationism, insensitivity and indifference to suffering? Are we our brother's and sister's keeper, or not? Does freedom require a certain responsibility and accountability from those who enjoy it in behalf of those who don't?

When he announced the beginning of military operations against Iraq last March, the president said it "could be more difficult than some predict. And helping Iraqis achieve a united, stable and free country will require our sustained commitment."

Part of that commitment ought to be introducing liberated Iraqis to the American public. Call it, "Meet the Iraqis."

Americans are used to taking criticism from an unappreciative world. Hearing the stories of grateful Iraqis would not only give us a needed morale boost, it could improve the president's approval ratings.

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