



# OPINION

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

Eugene Lorton • 1869-1949

## EDITORIALS

# Reform needed

Prison parole process should be revamped

It comes as no surprise that the Oklahoma prison population continues to grow. The state's incarceration rates are high, but one reason corrections officials expect an 18 percent increase in the number of inmates by 2016 is that fewer inmates are being released on parole.

In addition, although sentences on average are lower by one year, inmates are having to serve longer. A 2000 law requires inmates to serve 85 percent of their sentences before being considered for parole.

"I would say the largest cause of prison growth now does not have to do with the intake in prisons, it has to do with fewer releases from prisons," said K.C. Moon, director of the Criminal Justice Resource Center.

His group's report was given to the Oklahoma Sentencing Commission, which recommends removing the governor from the parole process.

Under Gov. Brad Henry, fewer paroles are being granted. In 2006, 19 percent of eligible inmates were granted parole compared to 31 percent in 2003.

That's a good recommendation. The parole process should be removed from politics.

Henry or any governor is understandably reluctant to parole inmates because if one commits a crime while on parole, the governor's political enemies will pounce on it. Does anybody remember when Massachusetts Gov.

**Given the growing population of prisons and the fact that early releases under supervision are not only the cheapest but the best method of control, lawmakers ought to consider revamping the entire system.**

Mike Dukakis was pilloried during the 1988 presidential campaign when Willie Horton, an inmate he paroled, committed murder?

Governors certainly remember the incident. It might have cost Dukakis the presidency.

The governor acts on the recommendation of five citizens on a part-time Pardon and Parole board that probably should be replaced with a full-time board of corrections specialists.

Given the growing population of prisons and the fact that early releases under supervision are not only the cheapest but the best method of control, lawmakers ought to consider revamping the entire system.

They ought to start by removing the governor from the parole process.



## LETTERS

### Existing question

Ken Neal's column, "Explanations, theories lacking in Virginia Tech shootings" (April 21), that there is no explanation for the senseless Virginia Tech event and other disasters caused by nature is correct.

When people ask where was God when these events occur, religionists respond by saying such events should increase our faith. However, the plague that killed half the population of Europe at one time and the untold misery experienced during World War II has resulted in a decline of faith in Europe.

Rejecting the notion that time extends backward forever and forward forever, now science offers hope, confirmed by religion, that this universe of time, space and matter had a beginning and likely will have an ending. With this ending, perhaps then we will know why seemingly senseless events happen and our restless souls will find peace from the despair we feel of not knowing why we exist.

If not, we may join with the biblical writer in Ecclesiastes 4 who observed the chaos of his time concluded that "to have been" is better than "to be" and perhaps even better is to "never have been."

Don Bradfield, Sand Springs

### Socialized medicine

The decision to ask Tulsans to pay for EMSA insurance via a fee attached to their water bills constitutes another step toward socialized medicine. Of course, the first steps were the government's unfunded mandates to provide services to any and all who needed them.

Knowing this service had to be paid for, legislators permit doctors and hospitals to charge insurance companies and paying patients double or triple fees to cover the costs. The EMSA fee or tax will probably soon be followed by another to pay in advance for emergency room services. Taxing everyone to pay for doctor and hospital bills will follow.

I am not saying that is a bad thing. It may even result

in some controls on the runaway costs of medicine and medical treatment. There may even be some relaxing of unnecessary and unrealistic scholastic, physical and financial hurdles that throttle the flow of new recruits into the field of medicine. It's something to hope for and I think everyone can agree that the present setup is a mess.

It is inefficient and unfair in that the result is to allow our doctors and hospital administrators to get richer by the day by stealing from the paying patients and insurance companies while at the same time overworking and underpaying the nurses resulting in lower quality care. I believe this is what is happening now and that it is unfair to most citizens.

Gary Cheatham, Tulsa

### Recycle!

I hope this will assist anyone in their endeavor and be informative to those who consider recycling to be not only a common sense issue but an important one for those who are contemplating or in the process of removing an old chain link fence and installing new wood fencing.

I phoned three local fence companies and was given the same answer as to what they do when discarding chain link fences: they throw them away. One even said they "just put them in the Dumpster." This is not the answer.

You can load the old fence, 230 feet of it in my situation, and haul it to CMC Recycling at 2001 N. 170th East Ave. Make sure you bust off the concrete from the metal poles.

Kirk Benson, Tulsa

Letters to the editor are encouraged. Each letter must be signed and include an address and a telephone number where the writer can be reached during business hours. Addresses and phone numbers will not be published. Short letters are preferred. Letters may be edited for length, style and grammar.

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

# Googleade

Pryor gets a double dip boost

Good for Pryor and the folks at the Mid-America Industrial Park there. In what seems like only a short time — although behind-the-scenes negotiations took quite a while — two major companies announced plans to locate at the park.

First came the news that Gatorade would build and operate a \$180 million, 1.4 million-square-foot plant there and then Google, the international computer fact-finding giant, got on board with its plan to open a \$600 million server farm on 800 acres at the park.

Is this a windfall or what?

Of course, these two major companies didn't simply throw a dart at a map and find it sticking in Pryor. Mid-America has a good reputation and Pryor, and Oklahoma in general, is known as a state with a good work force. And the industrial park also has some people working very hard to make sure everyone in the country knows of the benefits of Mid-America.

Oddly enough, Google Googled for industrial parks and up popped Mid-America. It also helped that Google was looking for a spot in the middle of the U.S. that had one ownership and plenty of water and electricity. Pryor and Mid-America easily fit that bill.

As Gatorade is building its new facility,

**What's good for Pryor is good for Tulsa and all the nearby communities. More jobs, more salaries, more people buying things.**

Google plans to use one existing building and build another and maybe more if needed. The two companies together will put 480 people to work.

Mid-America is becoming more of a success with each passing year. It sits on 8,800 acres and even with the announcements by Google and Gatorade there still is plenty of room. Only 50 percent of the land is developed.

With the addition of these two companies word will spread easier and more quickly about Mid-America.

What's good for Pryor is good for Tulsa and all the nearby communities. More jobs, more salaries, more people buying things.

Way to go Pryor and Mid-America. Now, what's next?

# Broder's words not worthy of outrage

Veteran political columnist David Broder set off a firestorm recently when he called Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid an "embarrassment" for declaring the Iraq war "lost."

From the assault subsequently directed at Broder — from other journalists, political operatives, left-wing bloggers and even the entire 50-member Senate Democratic Caucus — you'd have thought Broder had had an intimate encounter with an intern.

Or, in the spirit of bipartisanship, had broken into Democratic National Committee headquarters.

Broder committed no such dastardly deed, but merely did what he has done for the past 35 years. He called it as he saw it — just as Reid claims to have done, and that his defenders seem to find so refreshing.

Nevertheless, the 50 Democratic senators felt compelled to respond. Doesn't the U.S. Senate have more important matters to attend to than David Broder?

In a letter to The Washington Post that had the unmistakable whiff of a powder



KATHLEEN PARKER

room manifesto, otherwise known as a hissy fit — as opposed to a "bed-wetting tantrum," as Paul Begala described Broder's column — the senators asserted that their leader is a "good listener," who has an "amazing ability to synthesize views and bring people together," and who also demonstrates a "mastery of procedure."

It is perhaps admirable, and certainly reassuring to Reid, that his fellow senators came to his defense. But this kind of overreaction to a columnist is rare, if not unprecedented, and betrays a disturbing hostility to legitimate criticism.

Though Broder is a great political writer, he is not the president of the United States. He doesn't command an army or meet routinely with heads of state. He's a

commentator.

And what, exactly, is a commentator supposed to do if not comment? When he or she makes a point — from the perspective of an observer with more than 50 years' experience in Broder's case — does disagreement necessitate a movement?

Outrage has become such a predictable response to any difference of opinion that it's lost its heat. When everything is outrageous, nothing is.

In fact, what Broder said was not remotely outrageous. It's hardly crazy to think it inappropriate when the leader of the most powerful governing body in the world declares in the midst of a war that the war is lost.

Broder's point, provocative but hardly incendiary, was that American lives are on the line and that Reid's remark didn't help matters. Rather than provide encouragement to our enemies, Broder suggested that the Senate leader might do better to heed the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group report and seek common ground toward both military and political

solutions.

Broder needs no one to defend him. His record, which includes at least equal numbers of columns criticizing Republicans as Democrats, speaks for itself. But the Reid-Broder dust-up reveals the degraded state of public debate today. People don't disagree; they brawl. Punditry has become a free-for-all — and mutual respect is locked in the attic with Aunt Sadie.

Part of this devolution in discourse has been brought about, no doubt, by the volcanic explosion of the blogosphere, which has democratized free speech in a way that is not always positive or pretty. Everybody can type, but not everyone can write. Everyone has an opinion, but not everyone comes equipped with the same skills and experience.

The disinhibiting effect of anonymity, meanwhile, has unleashed something dark in the human spirit that seems to have infected the broader culture. It isn't enough to say that Broder is all wet; instead he's "foaming at the mouth," a "gasbag" and a "venomous bloviator," borrow-

ing again from Begala.

Begala, who came to punditry via the Clinton White House, isn't anonymous, of course. But many other lesser-knowns have taken Broder to task in what has become the typical blog-inspired pile-on.

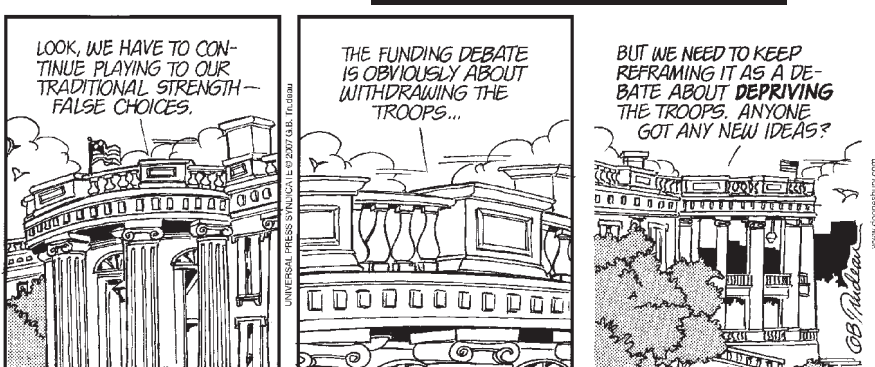
One wonders where these same thin-skinned were when Broder was leveling his sights at the Bush administration. Was Broder a gasbag when previously he lambasted the Bush budget deficit, the tax cuts for the rich and the mess in Iraq?

A fair treatment of Broder's recent column would consider the broader context of his body of work, but fairness is missing from this debate. Also is respect for those, like the Pulitzer Prize-winning Broder, who have toiled long in the fields to earn the kind of forum others merely feel entitled to.

The absence of fairness and respectful dissension — and the decline of civility wrought by our nation's unbridled narcissism — now there's something worthy of outrage.

Washington Post Writers Group

### DOONESBURY



### MALLARD FILLMORE

