



Carmage Walls Commentary Prize

2018 Entry Form

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Is your newspaper under 50,000 circulation or above 50,000 circulation? Under 50,000

Please give a brief explanation of issues discussed and the results achieved. (This space will expand as you type in your comments.) Our series of editorials on economic development trace many of the challenges Lufkin faces as it attempts to make the transition from a mostly blue-collar industry town to a forward-thinking community with a diversified economic footprint. We refer to it as the business world equivalent of the circle of life —creating jobs and expanding the tax base, which not only supports the necessities (fire and police, water, sewer and schools), but bolsters the quality of life (the zoo, museums, movie theaters, restaurants, parks and youth programs).

Along the way, city leaders have taken steps that should help ensure Lufkin's continued and future growth. So far this year, American eChem Inc., LufTex Gears, Atkinson Candy Co., Overseas Hardwood Company and Lockheed Martin are all expanding their operations in Lufkin. A new gas gathering and treatment facility is moving into the county and the Deep East Texas Council of Governments is building its new 15,000-square-foot headquarters in Lufkin. In addition, the city is pursuing a foreign-trade zone designation that will level the playing field for existing companies while attracting even more new businesses.

OPINION

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

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OUR OPINION

Shop Local

Do the community a favor and look for all your gifts in our small businesses

Today is Black Friday — typically the official kickoff of the holiday shopping season (although some stores are opening on Thanksgiving evening now). While more than 80 percent of the respondents in our Black Friday poll question say they're going to hide at home, we anticipate many of our readers will be taking part in the hustle and bustle, chaos, sales and excitement of the day as they vie for the best deals on all the hottest Christmas gifts.

But sandwiched between Black Friday and Giving Tuesday is Small Business Saturday — a day in which consumers are encouraged to patronize the brick and mortar businesses that help our community thrive.

Small businesses help ensure local economies stay strong and vibrant; and "shopping small" is a great way to show your support. According to statistics from the U.S. Small Business Association, 99.8 percent of all businesses in Texas are considered small businesses. They employ about 2.6 million people and deliver essential goods and services to communities across the state all the time. But more importantly, "shopping small" boosts our local economy and helps support our local businesses who contribute so much to the fabric of our community.

We are amply blessed in Angelina County with a proliferation of specialty boutiques and mom-and-pop shops that offer unique gift options that can't be matched at the big-box retailers. Some are in downtown Lufkin; others are

scattered around the loop and throughout the county.

As suggested by the SBA, shoppers can do their part in the following ways:

- Commit to making at least one purchase from a locally owned small business retailer. Get to know the owner, and make your gift more meaningful by sharing their story as part of what you give your loved ones.

- After a day of shopping, continue to support small businesses by dining small at your favorite small business restaurant.

- Enjoy the experience. Travel outside your comfort zone, and away from your computer screen, to discover an out-of-the-ordinary shopping district with some trendy local stores.

- Take part in Small Business Saturday on social media, using the hashtag #LoveLufkin, #SmallBizSat, #ShopSmall and #DineSmall to amplify your support. If you find a great small business retailer with unique products, tweet your find or post it on Facebook so others can enjoy it too.

- When you open your gifts, start a conversation about which one came from the most distinctive and creative sellers. This can make for great debate over eggnog or your holiday drink of choice.

Remember that "shopping small" refers to where — not how much — you buy. Show your love and share your love for this community by looking for all your gifts in our local small businesses before you head to the big-box stores or online to find a less personable present.

Best to avoid the blackest of days

Just read where the term "Black Friday" refers to the fact retailers can count on turning a big profit on that particular day. If you're behind on something, you're "in the red." If you're ahead, you're "in the black." With all the shopping scheduled to take place today — the day after Thanksgiving — businesses are expecting tons of business. It's the biggest shopping day of the year, where people search for deals in time for Christmas. Stores are gonna make bank on that day.



GARY STALLARD

Thus, "Black" Friday. Whatever. They're not fooling me. Black is the color of death and doom. Mystery and evil.

Sounds more like "Black Friday" than any other description I can muster.

I'm a Black Friday veteran, if one counts a single excursion as enough for "veteran" status. One time was all it took to leave me cowering in fear for the rest of my life. I'm scarred. And scurred.

My daughter suckered me into it. I was perfectly happy sitting at home and watching news reports of all the destruction wrought at those early-morning sales.

But noooo, Jordan had to try it. She wanted the full experience: Waking up at 2 a.m. to be at a store by 3 a.m. Standing in line. Getting excited about the deals she'd seen in the papers. Feeling the rush, both the one of excitement and the one guaranteed to come once the doors opened.

No way I was going to let her go alone, so I offered to take her.

I'll chalk that one up to one of the biggest mistakes of my life, right along with testing an electrical outlet with a butter knife.

The crowd outside was OK. Packed

in like sardines, but well-behaved. We even had a guy with a thermos offering us a cup of coffee. This ain't so bad, I thought.

All of it was subterfuge. They were trying to hide what they were about to do to me.

When the doors opened? I'm stealing this description from my baby brother Jack, who described it as "the opening scenes from the movie 'Saving Private Ryan.'"

Pretty accurate description, all the way to the bodies getting trampled in a massive stampede worthy of the "Running of the Bulls."

I tried keeping Jordan close, figuring if someone was going to plow over her, they'd have to hit me first.

They did. Repeatedly. I felt like I was in a mosh pit.

Whatever we went in to buy became secondary to survival. I think she wanted to look at a laptop, but we were swept out to a sea of bodies miles away from the electronics section. We ended up near the cheap DVDs, just in time to see a couple of ladies fighting over the last copy of "It's a Wonderful Life" — as "Joy to the World" played over the intercom.

People ripped through aisles and piles of stuff as if searching for the Holy Grail. Some toted blenders and other appliances under their arms; others somehow managed to strap TVs to their backs. Every person wore an expression daring passersby to touch their stuff. I haven't had that many elbows thrown my way since my last game on a basketball court.

When we finally reached the electronics — after wading through the various blood baths — we found another riot in place. The store had advertised in the newspaper a sale on a high-definition television.

Did you catch the "a" part?

They had one. One TV for the low, low price of one's soul. The crowd was playing "King of the Mountain" while climbing all over each other to lay hands on it first.

Somehow, I found myself trapped near the women's loungewear. Ever seen two grown women fighting over a pair of pajama bottoms? It ain't a pretty sight.

I hoped and prayed Jordan would surrender and ask to leave, but nope. She was loving it. She wanted to hit every section, just to see what bargains she could discover.

I just wanted to live to see another day.

Finally, she was ready. We managed to make it intact to a checkout line. I could see the door from where I stood, but I may as well have been 100 miles away for all the good it did me. I kept her close, making sure no one grabbed whatever she'd found. I gave off the same glare I saw everyone else offering. I wondered how fast 10 years in prison would go by if I had to defend her.

After what seemed like a full year, we made it back to my truck. I asked if she'd found anything cool.

She opened her bag and showed me. A pair of socks. With kittens on 'em. I nearly died for kitty socks?

With Black Friday landing yet again today, I'll offer three little words of hard-earned advice for anyone thinking of giving it a shot:

Nope, nope and nope. Yes, all kinds of stuff is on sale, but what good does it do to save money on an item when you're probably gonna need that cash for bail money? Unless you're a thrill-seeker looking for an impromptu session of crowd surfing, I suggest you stay home. That's where I'm gonna be.

I'm not against free enterprise. I fully support trying to make or save a buck when possible.

Nor do I consider myself a coward — except when dared to face another Black Friday.

I'm not a chicken. I just have no desire to put my life on the line.

Not for a pair of kitty socks.

Gary Stallard is a regular contributor to the Opinion page of The Lufkin News. His email address is garystallard@yahoo.com.

HEADLINES IN Local HISTORY

NOVEMBER 24

One year ago

- Matthew Battise of Lufkin has been charged with the alleged murder of James Sadler on the Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation.
- Lufkin High School Lady Panthers softball team hosts its yearly "Lady Pack Can," generating Thanksgiving meals with food drive. Coach Shelby Holcomb states more than 400 canned food items were collected this year.

Ten years ago

- Models young and old strut their stuff to help

raise money for scholarships at the 26th annual Sepia Fashion Show.

Twenty years ago

- More than 200 people attend a Sunday dedication of the Marjorie Edwards Byrd Memorial Fountain at Angelina College's Technology and Workforce Development Center.
- One of two juveniles placing wooden barricades in the 2000 block of Timberland Drive was arrested by police for obstruction of a roadway. From the pages of The Lufkin Daily News, compiled by The History Center, TheHistoryCenterOnline.com.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Nov. 24, the 328th day of 2017. There are 37 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 24, 1917, nine members of the Milwaukee police department and two civilians were killed when a bomb exploded inside a police station. (The suspicious-looking package was brought to the station by a local resident after it was discovered outside a church; anarchists were suspected, but the culprits were never caught.)

On this date:

In 1784, Zachary Taylor, the 12th president of the United States, was born in Orange County, Virginia.

In 1859, British naturalist Charles Darwin published "On the Origin of Species," which explained his theory of evolution by means of natural selection.

In 1939, British Overseas Airways Corp. (BOAC) was formally established.

In 1944, during World War II, U.S. bombers based on Saipan attacked Tokyo in the first raid against the Japanese capital by land-based planes.

In 1947, a group of writers, producers and directors that became known as the "Hollywood Ten" was cited for contempt of Congress for refusing to answer questions about alleged Communist influence in the movie industry. John Steinbeck's novel "The Pearl" was first published.

In 1957, Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, 70, died in Mexico City.

In 1963, Jack Ruby shot and mortally wounded Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy, in a scene captured on live television.

In 1971, a hijacker calling himself "Dan Cooper" (but who became popularly known as "D.B. Cooper") parachuted from a Northwest Orient Airlines 727 over the Pacific Northwest after receiving \$200,000 dollars in ransom; his fate remains unknown.

GOP readies itself to welcome Roy Moore

Fun fact: Under U.S. law, sexual assault allegations are now adjudicated by political election.

Don't believe me?

Just ask White House officials, Republican lawmakers and right-wing pundits, who lately argue that an electoral win provides absolution for any past sexual misconduct.

This troubling claim is being applied to (who else?) our president. But it also sets a terrible precedent for what happens if alleged child molester and sexual predator Roy Moore wins an Alabama Senate race.

Last week, after President Trump mocked Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn., for sexual misconduct, a reporter asked the White House if it was fair to investigate similar accusations against the president by more than a dozen women.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said no. Those allegations had all been nullified by the election last November.

"Look, I think that this was covered pretty extensively during the campaign," Sanders said. "We addressed that then. The American people I think spoke very loud and clear when they elected this president."



CATHERINE RAMPPELL

That's right, my fellow Americans. When you voted last November, it turns out you were actually volunteering for national jury duty. And you didn't even get your \$40 daily stipend!

Sanders is not the only one making this argument.

On CBS's "Face the Nation" on Sunday, Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., was asked by host John Dickerson whether the country's increasing willingness to believe victims of sexual harassment and assault should cause a "re-evaluation of those who came forward" against the president.

"Well, it happened in the middle of the campaign last year, John," he replied. "And the American people had their say on that as well."

Meanwhile, on Fox News, MediaBuzz host Howard Kurtz questioned why the media would "resurrect" allegations against Trump in the first place.

"He's called these women horrible liars. There's certainly a debate about whether they should be believed," Kurtz said. "There's about a dozen of them. But we had an election after that. And he won."

To hear Trump apologists tell it, the 2016 election exonerated its victor not only of any past sexual misdeeds, but also of every possible transgression or broken norm.

Such as not releasing his tax returns. On Sunday, on NBC's "Meet the Press," White House budget director Mick Mulvaney was asked why anyone should believe Trump when he claims the Republican tax agenda will raise his tax bills, since the public still has no idea what Trump's current taxes look like.

Mulvaney ducked the question. "I can't speak to the president's taxes. I think that was sort of litigated by the American public during the election," he said, echoing language that White House aide Kellyanne Conway has used on this subject.

These excuses are both dumb and dangerous.

Dumb because, well, if the American

electorate was indeed serving as jury last year, its verdict was not exactly unanimous. Or even in the right direction, for Republicans' purposes.

A majority of American voters voted against Trump, as you may recall. If you buy Republicans' logic, that would mean the public found Trump guilty of sexual misconduct and wanted him to disclose his tax returns.

Moreover, casting a ballot for a politician does not necessarily mean you endorse a candidate's every policy stance, character trait and action.

When choosing between candidates, voters have to select one bundle of beliefs and behaviors or another. It's a combo plate. No substitutions allowed.

Maybe Trump's supporters backed him because they don't believe the allegations made against him. Or maybe they supported him in spite of finding those claims credible. (They heard him admit to grabbing women "by the p—y" on tape, after all.)

In any case, by arguing that victory refutes all allegations against Trump, Republicans are laying the groundwork to welcome Moore to Washington if he wins next month.

Already, White House officials are ducking questions about whether Moore should be allowed to serve as senator. A mere week ago, Conway said there was "no Senate seat worth more than a child." On Monday, when asked whether Alabama voters should cast their ballots for Moore, she denounced his Democratic opponent and said, "I'm telling you that we want the votes in the Senate to get this tax bill through."

Sure, some Republican senators have said they believe Moore's accusers. Some, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (Ky.), have even suggested that they might try to expel him if he gets elected.

But with tax cuts hanging in the balance, don't be surprised if they lose their nerve once "the voters have spoken."

Catherine Rampell writes for The Washington Post. Her email address is crampell@washpost.com.

MALLARD FILLMORE



By Bruce Tinsley

OPINION

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

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Give a trio of gifts that will last a lifetime

It's the holiday season, and through the hustle and bustle of buying presents and all of the festivities, I take the time to reflect on the gifts that really matter, the gifts that are lifelong, the gifts that years from now students will talk about and retell to their children and grandchildren. At Lufkin ISD, I believe some of those gifts that will keep on giving are the gift of preparation, the gift of support and the ultimate gift of love.



LaTONYA GOFFNEY

Preparation is a simple concept. It's just making sure you're ready. Ready for whatever comes your way. I think back on this amazing football season and how our students were well-prepared. No matter what the weather, what team they were playing, what obstacles were in their way, the Lufkin Panthers were ready.

My favorite example of this was when Max Quick ran back to get the football when it was snapped over his head in the Westfield game. He immediately retrieved the ball and kicked it for more than 50 yards down the field with a Westfield player (or two) about to tackle him. Some may say it was a split-second decision, but it was prepara-

tion. Even though that play cannot be completely replicated in practice, he's been preparing for a moment like that from all of the hard work and dedication he has put into his skill.

Whether it's students preparing for the SAT or a band member honing their skills for the NAAMB competition, our students are working hard, and our teachers and staff are preparing them for what lies ahead. When I think about our band winning the NAAMB state competition three years in a row, that doesn't happen by accident. It's the gift of preparation that is making sure our students are ready for the opportunities in store for them.

The gift of support is something that cannot be bought. Our community supports our students like nowhere else I've seen. When I looked up into the stands during our playoff games and saw a sea of purple from young to young-at-heart all cheering in one accord for our students to do their best, it made me proud.

We live in a special town. When I think about how our Education Foundation was able to give \$54,000 to teachers for innovative ideas in the classroom, it makes me proud that dreams are fulfilled in this city. When I see the enormous support for our Little League team that won the national championship, it makes me think, how can our kids not succeed when they have all of the support

and more that they could ever need. Thank you, Lufkin, for showing up. Kids need that, and it means the world to me to be a part of a community that values children and the hope within them.

Love. It all comes down to love. The gift of love is lifelong. When students know you want them to do their very best because of love, they rise to the occasion. Our teachers love to teach. It's evident in our retention rate that not only do they love to teach, they love to teach in Lufkin. Our staff loves to serve. I am amazed when I see our cafeteria team making lunchtime fun and connecting with our students. From the first face our students see on a school bus, they are given the best. Our board loves Lufkin ISD. Every time they meet, they are intentional about making a difference for all kids. They want to make sure our school district is fiscally sound for the future and that teachers and staff have what they need to be successful.

Reflecting on this past year and the accomplishments of the district, I am proud to serve as the superintendent of Lufkin ISD. The secret to our success is simple, but it takes everyone playing their part making sure that our students are prepared, supported and loved. ... Gifts that will last a lifetime.

LaTonya Goffney is the superintendent of Lufkin ISD. Her email address is lgoffney@lufkinisd.org.

OUR OPINION

Economic Development

Strong economy crucial to continued growth, advancement across our region

Members and investors of the Lufkin/Angelina County Economic Development Partnership met this past week to discuss goals and legislative priorities for the coming year and leading into the 2019 legislative session.

Those goals and priorities are based on the premise that "a strong economy is crucial to the continued advancement of our region."

The Lufkin/Angelina County Economic Development Partnership is made up of public and private entities/individuals who pool resources to promote, support, attract and create jobs in Angelina County. The organization is funded through membership dues and the generosity of others through financial gifts.

Or, as we stated in this space earlier this year, "it's a matter of creating jobs and expanding the tax base, which not only supports the necessities (fire and police, water, sewer and schools), but bolsters the quality of life (the zoo, the museums, movie theaters, restaurants, parks and youth programs)."

It's the business world equivalent of the circle of life.

In theory, the more people we bring here, the better our quality of life because those new people infuse new money into the economy. More people means stepping up the quantity and quality of municipal services. In turn, a strong local economy bolsters schools and provides opportunities for a higher-quality education, leading to a thriving community college. That type of environment ensures a skilled workforce to meet the needs of those growing businesses. A skilled workforce also attracts more, better and higher-paying jobs.

It's all interconnected, much like the circle of life. But our local businesses are the foundation. They always have been and always will be.

Let's apply that philosophy to an average mom and pop shop that just opens its doors without advertising or in some way engaging its customers. The business exists, but isn't growing. While this theoretical business may stay open for a short while, it most likely will die a slow death before closing its doors for good. The old adage is that you have to spend money to make money. That means it's hard to make money in a business without investing some money in supplies, products, advertisement or other business expenses.

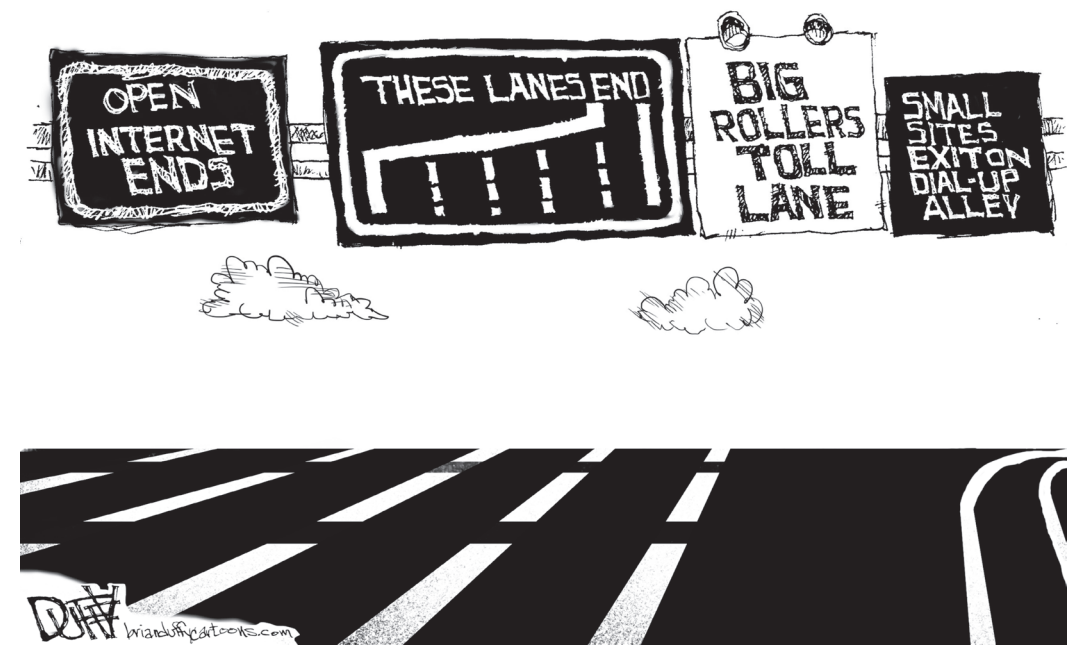
Participation in the Lufkin/Angelina County Economic Development Partnership is a prime example of fulfilling that old adage.

"Individuals and businesses should invest because they believe in the opportunity for an organization like the economic development partnership to play a role in economic development programs in the county," according to Jim Johnson, who serves as the partnership president in addition to his role as president and CEO of the Lufkin/Angelina County Chamber of Commerce. Individual investments start at as little as \$250.

Ultimately, that gives small businesses the flexibility to seek additional resources or alternate funding for expansion.

The membership roster from last week's meeting indicates there are 70 current investors in the partnership working on a number of projects. There were only four new investors during 2017. In our opinion, that's not enough. Every business in the city and county should be participating. Our economic future depends on it.

For more information about joining the partnership, contact Johnson at The Chamber. His phone number is 631-3830. The Chamber is at 1615 S. Chestnut St.



Our national identity crisis burns on

WASHINGTON — The phrase "self-radicalization" seems to be emerging as a regular part of the national discourse. Every vicious nobody who wants to blaze his name into eternity by planting a bomb somewhere to kill Americans is now described as "self-radicalized" — and that is supposed to make immediate sense of it.



GEORGIE ANNE GEYER

The miscreant doesn't do it, we are told, because he's a classic killer who just likes to see people blown up. And he certainly doesn't do it because when he came here, he carried with him in that hidden satchel of his soul a cultural basis different from the American.

No, 27-year-old Akayed Ullah, who was almost blown up by his own bomb in Manhattan Monday morning, had been self-radicalized! The New York police again immediately announced this. But in fact, the entire concept would be just silly, were it not so deadly serious.

To self-radicalize would actually mean to realize the truth of your inner self and find you are at one with the heinous teachings of a group called ISIS half a world away. If you are taught hatred or bomb-making by TV or social media, that simply amounts to radical teachings by outside forces.

But then, what actually WAS the problem? Akayed Ullah was from Bangladesh, one of the poorest and most miserable countries on Earth. Formed in 1971, it was originally part of Pakistan. The destitute land, criminally overpopulated and constantly flooded by rising seas, has no hope for genuine development or much of anything else, except for hatred of the non-Muslim world.

As of this writing, we know that this unlikely young immigrant received the most wondrous gifts that any highly developed, rich society could offer. The boy from Bangladesh was the winner of not one, but two of the greatest blessings of our unhinged immigration policies.

First, a member of his family had won the infamous American immigration "lottery," which puts citizenship up for win or lose as though we were one big bingo game. Second, Ullah was able to come to America six years ago because of the policy of "chain migration" or "family reunification," in which immigrants already here legally can bring numerous relatives to America.

Most of these policies came out of the immigration reform of 1965 based essentially on the idea that human beings are interchangeable. Don't bother about culture; just change the scenery. Centuries of family or religious tradition? Un-

important! Men and women from anywhere will come here and automatically be "American."

If we kept the numbers of immigrants to a reasonable percentage of the population, IF we had civic education programs in the schools for immigrants and citizens alike, and IF we were truly serious about assimilating newcomers — well, then there might be a chance that none of them would radicalize.

But we don't have any of those things. In fact, chain migration today accounts for a massive 70 percent of legal immigrants to America, so there is simply no space or time in our immigration policies for admitting others on merit.

Meanwhile, the immigration debate takes two extreme left-right positions: the Trumpian position, which tends toward "Keep them all out!" and the sentimental liberal position that says, in effect, that a boy cultivated by the perfervid Islam of Bangladesh is exactly the same as a boy from Copenhagen or Prague and will respond to America in the same manner.

There is one predominant problem in the world today, and it is the massive movement of either deeply dissatisfied or downright desperate peoples.

From Berlin to Ohio and from Hungary to West Virginia, the Western world is struggling to define and defend its identity against outsiders. That is Brexit, and that is Angela Merkel's problem in Germany, and that is Donald J. Trump's election.

Now, you may not like President Trump. But the immigration/identity question is so crucial to stability in today's world that Democrats and liberals would be smart to co-opt this issue instead of criticizing Trump over it, because it will not go away. Any intelligent policy would start by abolishing chain migration and our self-imposed humiliation of visa lotteries.

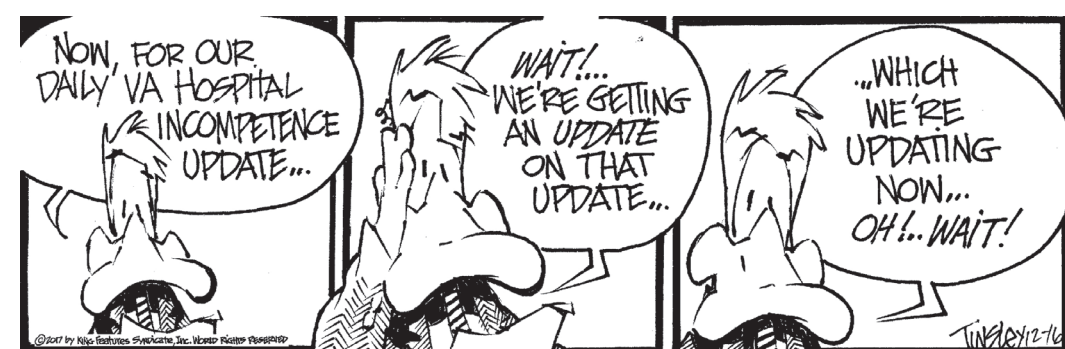
An unemotional, intelligent analysis of the world would acknowledge that this country was formed based on the Judeo-Christian heritage, mostly Protestantism. And while we have utmost respect for those great periods of Islam like Al-Andalus and the Ottoman and Seljuq empires, we can afford to absorb, and we should only take, an appropriate number of Muslim immigrants, given the extreme differences in modern-day beliefs between them and us.

Maybe I've become self-radicalized myself on this issue; or maybe I'm just pushing for a reasonable, moderate and workable immigration policy in America so we don't have any more bombs going off in our streets. And maybe I'm just wondering: Hey, why don't we all get to work?

Georgie Ann Geyer writes for Newspaper Enterprise Association.

MALLARD FILLMORE

By Bruce Tinsley



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks for lunch

Lufkin has a very good lunch program for people like me who are not able to cook meals each day. I want to thank everyone for this service you give to us. The food is good and there's a variety of vegetables.

Louise Greene, Lufkin

HEADLINES IN Local HISTORY

DECEMBER 17

One year ago

- Brookshire Brothers' John Alston, 35-year-old chief operating officer, is named new chief executive officer.
- Lufkin outlasts John Tyler in triple overtime. Panthers beat the Lions, 93-91, in district basketball action.

Ten years ago

- Lufkin Mall 9 has confirms the theater will be showing "Charlie Wilson's War" on two screens.
- Aggravated robbery reported after two men attempt to rob a downtown boutique in the 100 block of Shepherd.

Twenty years ago

- Lufkin ISD trustees consider giving letter jackets to its honor students.
- Construction at Lufkin schools progressing and will continue through the holiday break, according to district officials.

From the pages of The Lufkin Daily News, compiled by The History Center, TheHistoryCenterOnline.com.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Sunday, Dec. 17, the 351st day of 2017. There are 14 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 17, 1967, Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt, 59, disappeared while swimming in the ocean off Cheviot Beach in Victoria state; despite an extensive search, his body was never found (Holt was succeeded as premier by John McEwen).

On this date:

In 1777, France recognized American independence.

In 1865, Franz Schubert's Symphony No. 8, known as the "Unfinished" because only two movements had been completed, was first performed publicly in Vienna 37 years after the composer's death.

In 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright of Dayton, Ohio, conducted the first successful manned powered-airplane flights near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, using their experimental craft, the Wright Flyer.

In 1925, Col. William "Billy" Mitchell was convicted at his court-martial in Washington of insubordination for accusing senior military officials of incompetence and criminal negligence; he was suspended from active duty.

Your elected officials

Let your elected officials know what you think. Here is contact information for each.

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OPINION

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

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OUR OPINION

Looking to the Future

Mayor strikes optimistic tone while discussing city's economic development opportunities

Mayor Bob Brown struck an optimistic tone while delivering his annual "State of the City" address on Friday during the Lufkin/Angelina County Chamber of Commerce First Friday luncheon at Crown Colony Country Club.

Using a fishing analogy, Brown said Lufkin's economic development team has "three corks in the water."

He also described them as three "awfully good prospects" on the line that could bring about 400 jobs to the area.

"All three corks are under the water," Brown told the luncheon crowd. "We haven't gotten one on the bank. Our goal is to get them on the bank. Our goal is by this time in February, we will be able to announce one and hopefully two of them. There is some local presence. There is commitment to the community, but I'm not telling you a thing until we get them on the bank."

That's understandable. Nobody can blame city officials for playing it close to the vest when it comes to discussing economic development propositions. That's because economic development is big business. A multitude of cities and counties in Texas, the United States, and yes, even the world, are all vying for those same jobs. And those entities all fear the same thing — losing their competitive negotiating position.

Again, that's understandable; after all, the well-known idiom isn't "good news travels fast."

Brown also talked about a luncheon with employees of General Electric/Baker Hughes/

Lufkin Industries. "They're are a lot of things going on at GE/Baker Hughes/Lufkin that makes us aware that there is still a great hope for the 300 employees that are there," he said. "It will get big, I promise you. They are making an international presence known that it can get done in Lufkin, Texas, and it can get done right."

Those veiled references by Brown are both exciting and frustrating. The excitement in that statement should be evident to all. The frustrating part is that in today's world of instant gratification, it's not happening as fast as we want.

But the mayor did outline some of the city's other economic developments that have or are happening: American eChem Inc., LufTex Gears and Atkinson Candy Co. are all expanding their operations in Lufkin. The Deep East Texas Council of Governments is building its new 15,000-square-foot headquarters in Lufkin. The agency, which oversees the annual distribution of federal grants and funding for numerous public service initiatives, has called Jasper home since 1972.

Brown said eChem, a chemical manufacturer with facilities around the world, studied its options for expansion, before ultimately deciding to stay here. "That big company had the opportunity to either expand in the United States, expand anywhere in the world where they had facilities, or make Lufkin their headquarters," Brown said. "It says that we have something to sell in this community."

We agree.

Anti-vaccination movement is dangerous

Most vaccine-preventable diseases of childhood are at or near record lows. Vaccines prevent the deaths of about 2.5 million children worldwide every year. Yet some highly contagious diseases like measles and whooping cough still pop up where enough people are unvaccinated.



DR. SID ROBERTS

In the United States, compliance with childhood vaccinations remains quite high overall. At least 90 percent of children are getting the recommended vaccinations on time for many diseases — but not all, and not in all locales. Maintaining a high percentage of children vaccinated is important. Herd immunity occurs when a certain threshold percent of a community (such as a school) is vaccinated, reducing the probability that those who are not immune will come into contact with an infectious individual. For highly infectious diseases like measles, 90 to 95 percent of a community needs to be vaccinated to reach herd immunity. That is why vaccinations are required for our schoolchildren.

According to the Texas Department of State Health Services, students are required to have seven vaccinations in order to attend a public or private elementary or secondary school in Texas: Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis (DTaP/DTP/DT/Td/Tdap), Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR), Hepatitis B, Varicella (chicken pox), Meningococcal (MCV4) and Hepatitis A. Texas law allows physicians to write medical exemptions if they feel the vaccine(s) would be "medically harmful or injurious to the health and well-being of the child or household member." All well and good.

Texas law also allows — ill-advisedly — "parents/guardians to choose an exemption from immunization requirements for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief." The "belief" of the anti-vaccination movement is

based on lies and is only "religious" in its cult-like following of a dangerous (and discredited) Pied Piper, Andrew Wakefield.

A 2017 Washington Post article states, "A leading conspiracy theorist is Andrew Wakefield, author of the 1998 study that needlessly triggered the first fears. (The medical journal BMJ, in a 2011 review of the debacle, described the paper as "fatally flawed both scientifically and ethically.") Wakefield's Twitter handle identifies him as a doctor, but his medical license has been revoked. The British native now lives in Austin, where he is active in the state and national anti-vaccine movement."

The political noise made by these charlatan zealots has been difficult for legislators to ignore. This disturbing movement has been gaining traction, especially in certain private schools in Texas. In one such school, the Austin Waldorf School, reportedly more than 40 percent of the school's 158 students are unvaccinated. This is mindboggling ignorance in a "school" where tuition ranges from \$11,450 to \$17,147 a year.

Baylor College of Medicine professor Peter J. Hotez, MD, Ph.D., founding dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine and director of the Texas Children's Hospital Center for Vaccine Development, is truly on the front lines of the battle being waged by the anti-vaccination movement. The fact that Hotez is both a world authority on infectious disease and a parent of an autistic child hasn't stopped the anti-vaccination movement from attacking him. It does, however, make their attacks even more sad; they have no facts to back up their case, so they just get mean (for example, saying he is in denial that vaccination caused his daughter's autism).

This insidious — and disproven — idea that vaccines are linked to autism continues to rear its ugly, dangerous head, despite what Hotez calls "rock-solid proof" to the contrary published in peer-review journals like the New England Journal of Medicine, JAMA (the Journal of the American Medical Association), the British Medical Journal, and by organizations like the

Institute of Medicine and the American Academy of Pediatrics. The data that originally was claimed to show a link between vaccines and autism was later found to be falsified.

In other words, the anti-vaccine crowd is fueled by conspiracy theories and truly fake news. (Though not known with certainty, it is believed genetics and environmental exposure during early pregnancy may play a role in development of autism.)

The problem with conspiracy theories is that facts don't matter. Those who try to argue based on facts are automatically considered part of the conspiracy. Unfortunately, President Donald Trump was rumored early in his presidency to favor a proponent of this "vaccines cause autism" theory to chair a new commission on vaccines, lending credence to the lies. Thankfully, those commission efforts appear to have stalled.

Some argue against vaccinations on the basis of parental rights. I'm so sorry, but you do not have the "right" to endanger others' children. It is a time-honored role of government to provide a safe, healthy environment for its citizens. Just look at the public health disaster in Flint, Michigan, where the government abdicated its responsibility.

Texas needs to stop allowing non-medical "conscientious" exemptions in our schools. Your "right" to ignorantly and dangerously keep your child from receiving vaccinations stops at the schoolhouse door. California made it tougher for parents to opt out of vaccination compliance and vaccination rates increased. Texas should do the same.

In this New Year and upcoming legislative session, may the Texas Legislature resolve to pass legislation limiting nonmedical exemptions. Here's hoping they can ignore the cacophony of lies and claims of "rights" of those who try to stop them. Those liars endanger all our children, and that is not a right they should have.

Dr. Sid Roberts is a radiation oncologist at the Arthur Temple Sr. Regional Cancer Center in Lufkin. He can be reached at sroberts@memorialhealth.org. Previous columns may be found at srob61.blogspot.com.



HEADLINES IN Local HISTORY

JANUARY 14

One year ago

- Lufkin Mayor Bob Brown touts partnerships, alliances as means of attracting economic development and creations of new jobs during a "state of the city" address.
- Lufkin edges College Park in District 12-5A basketball opener, 62-59. Kordell Rodgers leads the Panthers with 11 points and 10 rebounds.

Ten years ago

- New state law for background checks on

teacher applicants goes into effect this month, but Lufkin ISD has been doing it for years.

Twenty years ago

- Officials raise questions about flooding on an 18-acre piece of property that was given to the county as the site of a new jail.
- Lufkin's soccer team suffers first loss of the year, falling 1-0 to Kilgore.

From the pages of The Lufkin Daily News, compiled by The History Center, TheHistoryCenterOnline.com.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Sunday, Jan. 14, the 14th day of 2018. There are 351 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 14, 1968, the Green Bay Packers of the NFL defeated the AFL's Oakland Raiders, 33-14, in the second AFL-NFL World Championship game (now referred to as Super Bowl II).

On this date:

In 1784, the United States ratified the Treaty of Paris ending the Revolutionary War; Britain followed suit in April 1784.

In 1898, author Charles Lutwidge Dodgson — better known as "Alice in Wonderland" creator Lewis Carroll — died in Guildford, Surrey, England, less than two weeks before his 66th birthday.

In 1927, the Paramount silent romantic comedy "It," starring Clara Bow (who became known as "The It

Girl"), had its world premiere in Los Angeles.

In 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and French General Charles de Gaulle opened a wartime conference in Casablanca.

In 1963, George C. Wallace was sworn in as governor of Alabama with the pledge, "Segregation forever!" — a view Wallace later repudiated. Sylvia Plath's novel "The Bell Jar" was published in London under a pseudonym less than a month before Plath committed suicide.

In 1967, the Sixties' "Summer of Love" unofficially began with a "Human Be-In" involving tens of thousands of young people at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.

In 1969, 27 people aboard the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise, off Hawaii, were killed when a rocket warhead exploded, setting off a fire and additional explosions.

How merit-based college admissions failed

WASHINGTON — During World War I, chemist James Conant

was deeply involved in research on what was considered the worst imaginable weapon: poison gas. During World War II, as a science adviser to President Franklin Roosevelt,



GEORGE WILL

Conant was so central to the development of the atomic bomb that he was at Alamogordo on July 16, 1945. His most disruptive act, however, may have come in the interim when, as Harvard's president, he helped put the university, and the nation, on the path toward a meritocracy by advocating adoption of the Scholastic Aptitude Test.

As his granddaughter Jennet Conant explains in her new biography, "Man of the Hour: James B. Conant, Warrior Scientist," the Harvard at which he, from a middle-class Dorchester family, matriculated in 1910 was a place of insufferable snobbery and mediocrity, devoted to passing on the inherited privileges of the families whose boys were funneled there from prestigious prep schools. To the consternation of Boston's Brahmins, Conant became Harvard's president in 1933 at age 40, hoping that standardized tests for

admissions would mitigate the large degree to which enrollments at elite institutions reflected the transmission of family advantages. Ninety-two years after the SAT was first offered in 1926, it seems to have only slightly modified the advantages transmitted.

The Brookings Institution's Richard V. Reeves, writing in The Chronicle of Higher Education's Review, says that colleges and universities, partly because of the complexity of the admission process, are "perpetuating class divisions across generations" as America develops what The Economist calls a "hereditary meritocracy." It is, however, difficult to see how something like this can be avoided. Or why it should be.

Also in the Review, Wilfred M. McClay of the University of Oklahoma decries higher education's "dysfunctional devotion to meritocracy," which he says is subverting the ideal that one's life prospects should not be substantially predictable from facts about one's family. Meritocracy, "while highly democratic in its intentions, has turned out to be colossally undemocratic in its results" because of "the steep decline of opportunity for those Americans who must live outside the magic circle of meritocratic validation." Entrance into that circle often is determined by higher education. At two premier public universities, the University of Michigan and the University of Virginia, the percentages of students from the bottom 60 percent of households ranked by earnings (17 and 15 percent, respectively) are comparable to the percentages at Yale and Princeton (16 and 14, respectively).

In "A Theory of Justice," the 20th century's most influential American treatise on political philosophy, John Rawls argued that "inequalities of birth and natural endowment are undeserved." So, social benefits accruing to individuals because of such endowments are justified only if the prospering of the fortunate also improves the lot of the less fortunate. And Rawls' capacious conception of what counts as a "natural" endowment included

advantages resulting from nurturing families. But as sociologist Daniel Bell warned in 1972, "There can never be a pure meritocracy because high-status parents will invariably seek to pass on their positions, either through the use of influence or simply by the cultural advantages their children inevitably possess."

Actually, the cultural advantages are so salient that the importance of crass influence is diminishing. Furthermore, to the extent that a meritocratic society measures and rewards intelligence, which is to some extent a genetic inheritance, equal opportunity becomes difficult even to define.

A meritocratic assignment of opportunity by impersonal processes and measurements might seem democratic but it can feel ruthless, and can be embittering. By using ostensibly objective standards to give individuals momentum toward places high in society's inevitable hierarchies, those who do not flourish are scientifically stigmatized. And as the acquisition and manipulation of information become increasingly important to social flourishing, life becomes more regressive: The benefits of information accrue disproportionately to those who are already favored by aptitudes, both natural and acquired through family nurturing and education. Add "assortative mating" — well-educated and upwardly mobile strivers marrying each other — and society's cognitive stratification reinforces itself.

Something, however, has to sort people out, and we actually want the gifted and accomplished to ascend to positions that give scope to their talents. Furthermore, we do not want to discourage families from trying to transmit advantages to their children. The challenge is to ameliorate meritocracy's severity by, among other things, nuanced admissions policies at colleges and universities that seek students whose meager family advantages can be supplemented by the schools.

George Will writes for The Washington Post. His email address is georgewill@washpost.com.

MALLARD FILLMORE

By Bruce Tinsley



OPINION

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

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OUR OPINION

Foreign Trade Zone

Local companies will reap rewards that accompany designation

City leaders this past week took a step that should help ensure Lufkin's continued and future economic development. City council members on Tuesday voted to authorize spending \$45,000 to submit an application to the U.S. Foreign-Trade Zone Board to pursue a foreign-trade zone granteeship. The money covers the application preparation, filing and monitoring; the cost for a dedicated individual to assist with application preparation and filing; as well as the application fee.

We believe a foreign-trade zone designation will elevate the city's position as a regional magnet for international trade development.

"The foreign-trade zone program is a key complement to the local community's emphasis on providing a positive business environment for new and expanding business," City Manager Keith Wright told council members.

A foreign-trade zone is an area physically located within the United States but considered outside U.S. customs territory. According to a feasibility report from Ernst & Young, which has been serving as a consultant for the city, a foreign-trade designation helps lower a variety of customs duties, fees and taxes and other related operational costs for certain companies engaging in international trade activity.

In the global marketplace, companies consider moving to foreign facilities to reduce costs. The Ernst & Young report says a foreign-trade zone program "may be the competitive advantage that companies need to keep their manufacturing or distribution operations in the United States."

Texas has 32 foreign-trade zone grantees. Those located closed to Lufkin are Athens, Longview and Conroe. Other Texas grantees include Amarillo, Austin, Beaumont, Bowie County, Brownsville, Calhoun/Victoria Counties, Corpus Christi, Dallas/Fort Worth, Eagle Pass, Ellis County, El Paso, Freeport, Galveston, Gregg County, Harris County, Houston, Laredo, Liberty County, Lubbock, McAllen, Midland, Orange, Port Arthur, San Antonio, Starr County, Texas City and Waco.

The most recent statistics show those 32 grantees served 419 businesses that employed roughly 55,000 people. The value of the merchandise received was estimated at more than \$100 billion. The value of exported merchandise was estimated at between \$10 billion and \$25 billion.

Nationally, there are 174 trade zones and more than 500 subzones. They are located in all 50 states and Puerto Rico, employing about 370,000 people and serving 3,200 businesses. The estimated value of imported merchandise is \$732 billion, while export values are estimated at \$70 billion.

The Ernst & Young report says the foreign-trade zone designation could help the city with its economic development and recovery efforts on several fronts. With an established framework, the city could attract offshore activity and encourage retention of domestic activity. We can think of a dozen or so companies operating in Lufkin and Angelina County that should reap the rewards of such a designation.

In addition, special customs benefits could enable the city to facilitate, encourage and expedite international trade operations in competition with foreign plants. Cost reduction for current Lufkin companies could help those companies remain in the area and potentially expand production capacities. In addition, the designation could help attract future investment in the area, leveling the playing field between Lufkin and the other established Texas/Louisiana grantees from a customs benefits perspective.

"I think this is a great thing for us to enter into," council member Mark Hicks said. "I know we've had some prospects looking for a place to warehouse goods close to a port. I think this is real positive thing we're doing. This is another tool in our toolbox."

We agree. The only downside we see is that the application process from start to finish will take the better part of a year (10 months).

Take your time, drive carefully when mercury falls

Recently, record-low temperatures were set in cities and counties all across the state as Winter Storm Inga blew ice and snow into Texas.

I know, unfortunately, that in most counties in our region there were automobile accidents reported that were a direct result of someone's failure not to drop their speed and drive to the conditions of the roadways. Life is precious, so please slow down and drive carefully, especially when the mercury drops below freezing. Here's the latest update from your State Capitol in Austin.

Testing and civics for Texas students. Every year, legislators, teachers, parents and students question the burdensome, high-stakes testing in Texas public schools. It's one of the issues I hear most about across our district.

During my time in office, I have been an advo-



TRENT ASHBY

cate for reducing the emphasis placed on end-of-course exams so that our educators can focus on content mastery and not teach toward passing a single over-weighted test.

In fact, in the most recent session, I worked with my House colleagues on a testing reform bill that not only would have drastically decreased the number of end-of-course exams required for students, but also added more relevant subject matter, such as basic civics education, to items that would be tested.

Unfortunately, the bill did not make it out of the Senate.

Specifically, this comprehensive testing bill contained a provision that would have ensured that students received a solid, thorough education on the most critical events, dates and components of U.S. history. As a growing number of states have done, it would have replaced the existing U.S. history end-of-course exam with the civics test administered to people applying for citizenship in our great country.

After the bill's nearly unanimous passage in

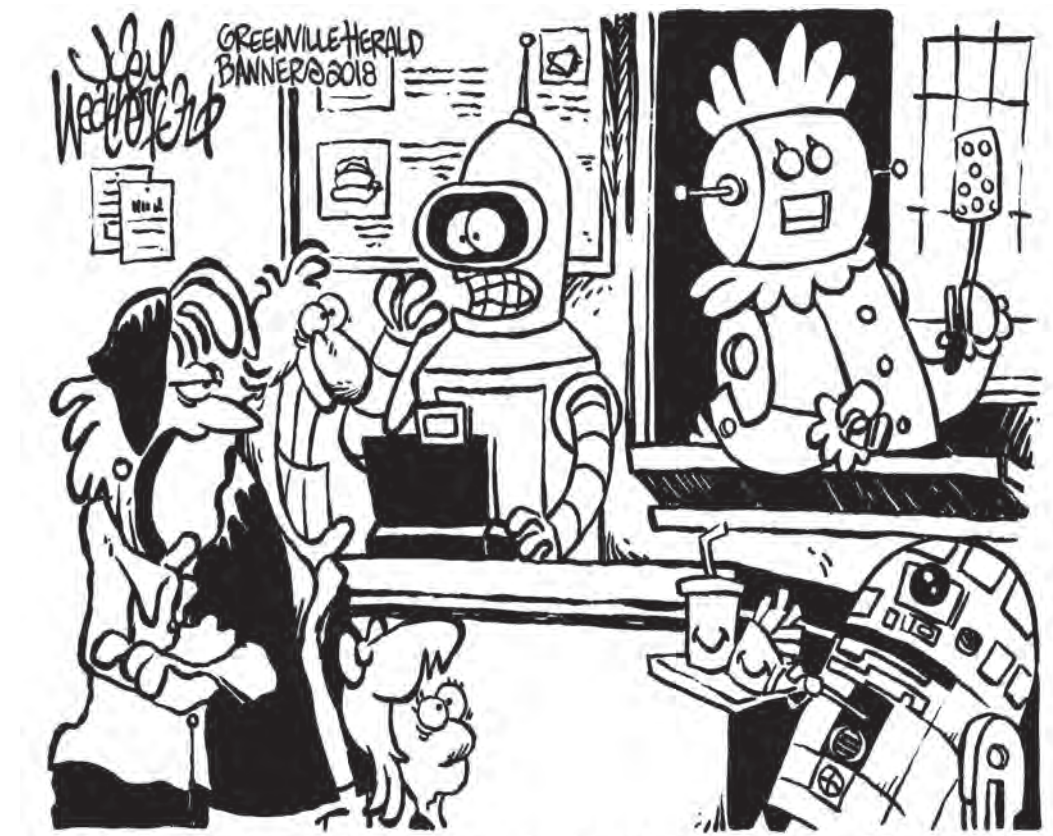
the House, it was clear that reining in some of the existing high-stakes tests and ensuring our young people have a firm grasp on our country's rich history is an area all members of the Legislature agree on.

Having listened to countless numbers of constituents on this topic, I firmly believe the Texas Legislature must continue to build on the ground that has been broken with respect to this issue. As a starting point, we should recognize that testing is necessary, but not to the extent that one end-of-year, be-all, end-all test is designed to tell the whole story about student achievement.

Reminders: The mobile office is on the road for the month of January and looks forward to seeing you from 9-11 a.m. Wednesday at the San Augustine County Courthouse in San Augustine.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact our office if we can help you in any way.

Trent Ashby is the state representative for District 57 that includes Angelina, Houston, Leon, Madison, San Augustine and Trinity counties. His email address is trent.ashby@house.state.tx.us. He and his staff are available during the week at (512) 463-0508 or 634-2762.



I KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN ONCE THE COST OF MINIMUM WAGE WENT UP TO \$15 AN HOUR

Trustees' vision sets tone for LISD

January is School Board Appreciation Month, the perfect time to thank our school board members for their outstanding job leading the district.

Our school board members are community volunteers who are committed to the success of our school district. They serve countless hours working to ensure that Lufkin ISD is the best choice for education in Lufkin. They develop policies and make tough decisions on complex educational and social issues that affect the entire community and the lives of individual students. They bear the responsibility and oversight for an annual budget of \$71.2 million; more than 8,100 students, in grades PreK through 12th grade; more than 1,200 employees; and 15 campuses.

That's a big job! Thank you to Scott Skelton, board president; Andro Branch, board vice president; Allyson Langston, board secretary; and board members Hall Henderson, Kristi Gay, Don Muhlbach and Andra Self. You all truly make a difference for kids.

Scott Skelton has served on the board for the past five years and is our current board president. Like several of our board members, Scott is also a parent. He has one daughter in medical school and the other is a very involved senior at Lufkin High School.

You can see Scott on the sidelines at football games taking photos to capture precious high school memories to share with other parents. He also volunteers for the Help One Student to Succeed mentoring program at Brandon Elementary where he reads with third-graders to improve their literacy skills. Scott has a heart for all kids.

Andro Branch has served on the school board for 14 years and is currently serving as vice president. With those years of service comes years of experience and dedication. He is involved in mentor programs and can always be seen at the red carpet welcome back at the beginning of school. He even spoke to 4-year-olds on their graduation day at Garrett Primary. Andro works hard to ensure that we add value to all kids.

Allyson Langston is in her fourth year serving on the board and currently holds the position

of secretary. Allyson has three children in the district and does a great job supporting multiple schools on PTO/PTK committees. She also is a huge supporter of our teachers as evident by her personal Facebook page. She is encouraging and does a great job promoting the good things in the district. Allyson cares for kids.

Hall Henderson is our newest board member and has jumped in making a difference for the district. Being a Lufkin ISD graduate and a grandson of a former board member, he has come full circle giving back to the school that gave to him. He can be seen mentoring Lufkin High School students, and even refereeing LISD staff basketball games during halftime at Angelina College basketball games. Hall supports our kids.

Kristi Gay is in her second year on the board. She brings her banking experience not only to the board but to the classroom as well, mentoring third-graders on financial literacy. Kristi has an eye for detail and loves to volunteer on campus. She can be seen reading to students and supporting the band and majorettes. Kristi is devoted to our kids.

Don Muhlbach is serving the board in his fourth year. Don is a constant presence on campus mentoring LMS students, telling stories at the campfire read-along at Herty Primary, and helping young men become gentlemen at Brookholow Elementary. Don appreciates all kids.

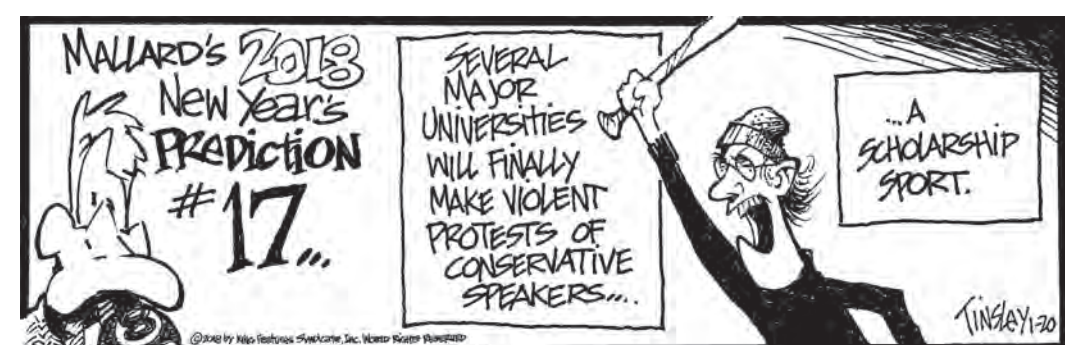
Andra Self is our longest-serving board member with 21 years of service to the school board. She has taken on a new mentoring program this year that focuses on middle school girls. She is such a great example to these girls and our community as she demonstrates true service. She not only serves on our local board, but on the Texas Association of School Board Risk Management board, as well. Andra is an advocate for kids.

We proudly salute our board, and I feel especially blessed to work along with each and every one of them. They bring their talents and passion for kids to each decision they make. They set the tone for the district and have a vision for success. Please join us as we applaud these local leaders, and we encourage you as you see them about in the community to thank a school board member. They deserve it.

LaTonya Goffney is the superintendent of Lufkin ISD. Her email address is lgoffney@lufkinisd.org.

MALLARD FILLMORE

By Bruce Tinsley



HEADLINES IN Local HISTORY

JANUARY 21

One year ago

- Kade Murry and Jada Robins are named Pinewoods Community Academy's 2017 Homecoming king and queen.
- Surgical tech graduates at Angelina College earn 100 percent passing and placement rates.

Ten years ago

- The 16th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Observance Day and Commemorative March begins at the Homer Garrison Federal Building in downtown Lufkin, followed by the Dunbar Hall of Honor Induction ceremony.
- A convenience store reports the attempted theft of bottles of wine. The suspect was later located.

Twenty years ago

- Texas Foundries lays off about 80 employees citing "soft market" for slowdown.

From the pages of The Lufkin Daily News, compiled by The History Center, TheHistoryCenterOnline.com.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Sunday, Jan. 21, the 21st day of 2018. There are 344 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

- On Jan. 21, 1968, the North Vietnamese Army launched a full-scale assault against the U.S. combat base in Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, in a siege lasting 11 weeks; although the Americans were able to hold back the communists, they ended up dismantling and abandoning the base. An American B-52 bomber carrying four hydrogen bombs crashed in Greenland, killing one crew member and scattering radioactive material. North Korean commandos tried but failed to assassinate South Korean President Park Chung-hee at his official residence, the Blue House, in Seoul.

On this date:

- In 1793, during the French Revolution, King Louis XVI, condemned for treason, was executed on the guillotine.
- In 1908, New York City's Board of Aldermen passed an ordinance prohibiting women from smoking in public establishments (the measure was vetoed by Mayor George B. McClellan Jr., but not before one woman, Katie Mulcahey, was jailed overnight for refusing to pay a fine).
- In 1915, the first Kiwanis Club, dedicated to community service, was founded in Detroit.

Have your say

To submit a letter to the editor, bring it to us at 300 Ellis Ave. in downtown Lufkin, mail it to P.O. Box 1089, Lufkin, TX 75902-1089, or visit an easy-to-use form at lufkindailynews.com/letters. Or you can email your letter to news@lufkindailynews.com.

Please limit your letters to 350 words.

Be sure to include a daytime telephone number on your letter.

All letters are subject to editing for length and clarity, and unsigned letters will not be used. We will only publish one letter per writer during a 30-day period.

Your elected officials

Let your elected officials know what you think. Here is contact information for each.

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OPINION

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

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OUR OPINION

Job Growth 'Flat' unemployment rate doesn't necessarily portend good news

On the surface, this sounds like good news. But dig a little deeper and that "good" news gets a little murkier.

Jobless rates in Lufkin and Angelina County closed out 2017 nearly flat compared to prior months, according to figures released by the Texas Workforce Commission.

Lufkin's unemployment rate was 4.1 percent in December, up a tick compared to 4 percent in November. That is well below last year's December jobless rate of 5.6 percent. Angelina County's unemployment rate dropped from 4.3 percent in November to 4.2 percent in December. The county's jobless rate a year ago was 6 percent.

Those numbers look even better from a statewide perspective: jobless rate at 3.9 percent and employment growth at 2.5 percent, marking 92 consecutive months of annual growth. Statewide, 10 of the 11 industry categories added 306,900 jobs in 2017.

But where, you ask, are those jobs in Lufkin and Angelina County? The answer, generally, is in the retail and service industries. And that answer is the same for the other 11 counties that make up the Deep East Texas Council of Governments.

Those falling jobless numbers also could represent a couple

of troubling trends: East Texans have quit actively seeking employment, or worse, they're leaving to go find jobs elsewhere. We know of many, for example, who are heading to the Gulf Coast to help with the rebuilding efforts in the wake of Hurricane Harvey.

Those lower jobless numbers will almost certainly reflect on our area's sales tax revenues, which account for a large percentage of our local governments' operating budgets.

That amounted to \$14.3 million, a 0.2 percent increase for Lufkin in 2017. However, city officials were not as optimistic in planning for fiscal 2018, which started in October, projecting a 1 percent decrease.

Job creation is the lifeblood of our state. Cities, counties and economic development organizations across our region are working to strengthen job growth.

Those efforts must continue. We must work to attract and develop businesses in our area. We need to create jobs so that all our residents have the opportunity and means to invest in the future of their families.

For more information about employment programs in Angelina County, call WorkForce Solutions at 639-1351 or visit the center at 210 N. John Redditt Drive in Lufkin.

Dinosaurs will return quicker than compromise

Each of my three oldest grandchildren has his or her specific interests when it comes to playing.

Atticus is all about superheroes. One day he might be Spider-Man, and on another he could be Batman. He's always ready to save the world.

Amelie, 5 years old, is the lone girl in that crew. She loves anything to do with babies. She even has a particular game she loves to play — named, simply enough, "The Baby Game" — and she'll recruit every nearby human as a playmate. The rules change from day to day, depending on the little mom's whims. You know. Just like real parenthood.

Three-year-old Beaux currently is into dinosaurs. We're talking really, really into dinosaurs. He can tell you the difference between a stegosaurus and a brontosaurus. He'll warn you to stay away from velociraptors and the big, bad T. Rex. He'll show you where to hide when the pterodactyls come flying through the living room looking for lunch.

When the weather's nice, the three of them find their places and play their games. There's no conflict.

But when they're cooped inside with nowhere to go? I pity my daughter, their mama. The arguments start over which game they're going to play.

At first their mom suggested taking turns. That didn't work. Each child waged a veritable filibuster to prolong his or her game as long as possible. Each child tried to steer the game away toward his or her preference.

During one phone call, I could hear my daughter twitching as she tried to maintain her sanity.

The next day, she called me, laughing. Inside her home, peace reigned despite the winter storm howling outside.

The kids had reached a great compromise.

Amelie was the proud new mom of a bouncing baby dinosaur (Beaux donated it to her from his collection). Beaux would use his new dinosaur truck — the one with the big cage on

the back — to haul her and her infant T. Rex. back and forth to the grocery store. Atticus the Superhero would be in charge of keeping the bad guys at bay. For hours, they played happily and quietly. My daughter wouldn't need a dose of nervous medicine after all.

Those three little ones came to the Great Compromise all on their own.

Maybe if children were in charge of stuff, there wouldn't have been a government shutdown.

A shutdown. No, it didn't last long, but it shouldn't have happened at all. We could burn our brains reading and hearing all the reasons for it, but whatever comes our way is going to look like nothing more than a big, blame-pointing finger. This party slamming that party. He said/she said at its finest. So-called "leaders" who couldn't wait to find a TV camera somewhere to rip opponents.

Meanwhile, the poor folks caught in the middle were worrying about their livelihoods. They were worried about health benefits and other crucial parts of their day-to-day existence. Our own troops weren't sure if they were going to get a paycheck for protecting the same people who were playing with the budget like it's Monopoly money. Our armed forces were on the verge of pausing much-needed training until someone told them the check wouldn't bounce.

But hey, as long as the decision makers were still getting their checks and benefits, what's the problem? So what if a few pawns can't pay their bills.

Pathetic, and for what reason? Because the ones in charge can't seem to wrap their feeble, selfish brains around the concept of "compromise." There were four major resolutions on the board for the nation's spending habits over the next several months. Those clowns couldn't find common ground on any of them.

I'd call them "childish," but that would be an insult to little people everywhere.

What we've got going on in Washington is embarrassing. The two parties are the couple who can't agree on where to eat for dinner, so they both decide to starve themselves — and the kids in their home while they're at it. They're the man and woman I read about years



GARY STALLARD

ago who couldn't decide how to decorate their new home, so one of them set the whole place on fire.

If I can't have my way, I'll just burn everything down so nobody else gets theirs, either.

What an adult way of looking at things.

If it's true that elected officials have an obligation to serve constituents, and not the other way around, then how are they still in office when their only apparent agenda appears to be so clearly self-serving? Argue all you want, but it's hard for me to see it any other way. When everything taking place is focused on making a select few look good at the expense of others, what else are we to believe? Promises? Those are just air.

This whole shutdown thing isn't going away. Experts predict we're going to get the same bad news in the very near future. Expecting the same groups who couldn't compromise before to suddenly discover the talent is a far, far reach.

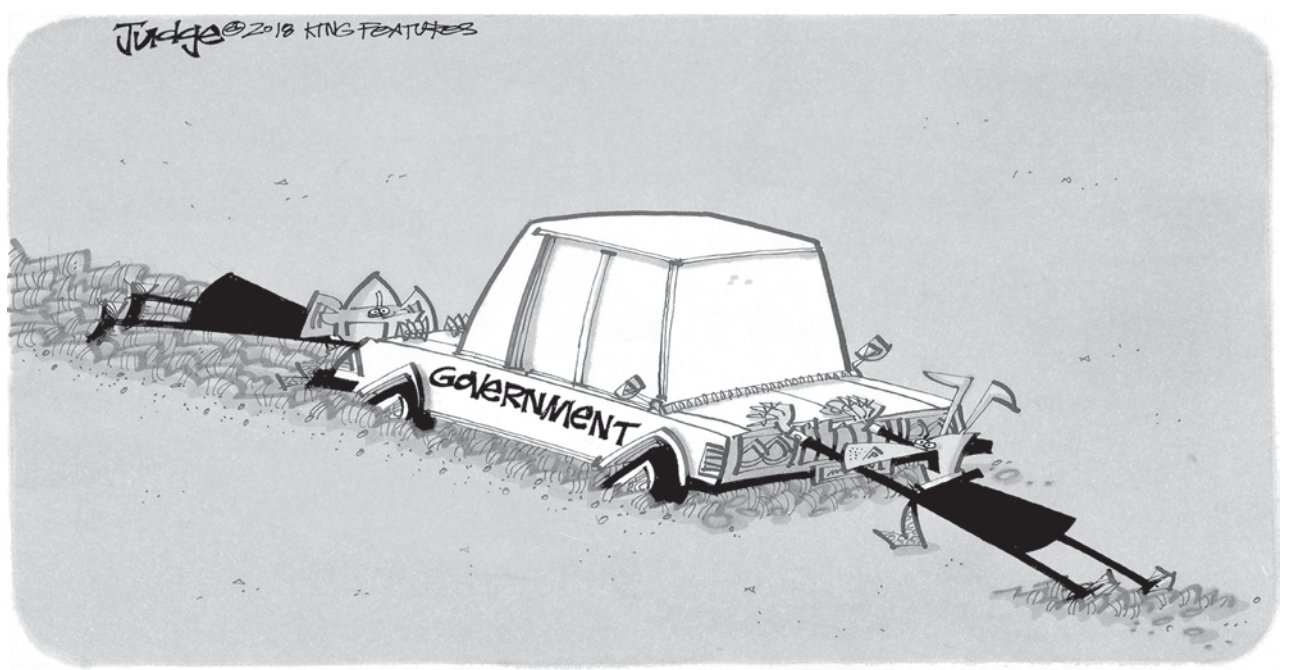
Our only recourse is to suck it up for now — and take a lot of notes. Take note of who does and doesn't, and keep those notes in our pockets the next time we enter a voting booth. No matter how high an elected official rises in the ranks, we're still the bosses. We can fire them by voting them out if they're not doing what we elected them to do. We don't care to hear whose fault it is. We want solutions, and they get paid well to find those. Can't find any? Find another job.

Honestly? I don't have high hopes at the moment that we'll witness any hatchet-burying any time soon. I know I'll get backlash from anyone who reads this thinking their chosen party is the good guys. I'll get more fingers pointed my way, and not all of them the blame-pointing kind.

That I can handle. What I can't stomach is knowing how many average citizens have to stress over this mess.

Until the Great Compromise rises from the ashes, I'll harbor my little fantasy of a big pterodactyl flying over Washington and leaving a different kind of mess for them to clean up.

Gary Stallard is a regular contributor to the Opinion page of The Lufkin News. His email address is garylstallard@yahoo.com.



"I WONDER WHY WE HAVEN'T MADE MORE PROGRESS."

HEADLINES IN Local HISTORY

JANUARY 26

One year ago

Lufkin's Target at 4200 Medford Drive will soon receive face-lift, including the addition of a Starbucks coffee shop.

Lady Runners knock off Coastal Bend, 72-50 in college hoops. Tyanna Barlow leads Angelina College with 15 points and 11 rebounds.

Ten years ago

Lufkin Panthers move into first place tie with a 71-70 win over the Conroe Tigers in district basketball action. Wendell Smith is top scorer

for the Panthers with 15 points.

Twenty years ago

Miss Texas Regan Hughes visits Lufkin First Baptist Church, sharing her faith with the congregation.

Two males spinning out on the grass at Lufkin Country Club get their Chevrolet Caprice stuck in mud. Friend with log truck pulls them out, leaves log truck at scene of activity.

From the pages of The Lufkin Daily News, compiled by The History Center, TheHistoryCenterOnline.com.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Jan. 26, the 26th day of 2018. There are 339 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 26, 1788, the first European settlers in Australia, led by Capt. Arthur Phillip, landed in present-day Sydney.

On this date:

In 1531, a major earthquake struck Lisbon in the Kingdom of Portugal, followed by a tsunami and several strong aftershocks; an estimated 30,000 people died.

In 1784, in a letter to his daughter Sarah, Benjamin Franklin expressed unhappiness over the choice of the bald eagle as the symbol of America, and stated his own preference: the turkey.

In 1837, Michigan became the 26th state.

In 1870, Virginia rejoined the Union. In 1915, President Woodrow Wilson signed the Rocky Mountain National Park Act, which created America's 10th national park.

In 1942, the first American Expe-

ditionary Force to head to Europe during World War II arrived in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

In 1950, India officially proclaimed itself a republic as Rajendra Prasad took the oath of office as president.

In 1962, the United States launched Ranger 3 to land scientific instruments on the moon — but the probe ended up missing its target by more than 22,000 miles.

In 1979, former Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller died in New York at age 70.

In 1988, Australians celebrated the 200th anniversary of their country as a grand parade of tall ships re-enacted the voyage of the first European settlers. The Andrew Lloyd Webber musical "Phantom of the Opera" opened at Broadway's Majestic Theater.

In 1993, Vaclav Havel was elected president of the newly formed Czech Republic.

In 1998, President Bill Clinton forcefully denied having an affair with a former White House intern, telling reporters, "I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky."

\$20 can make all the difference in the world

He found twenty bucks at a gas station. The bill was sitting on the pump, weighted with a rock. A Post-It note was stuck to the bill.

"God bless," the note read. "Pass it on."

About him:

He was broke. He was talking flat busted. He had forty-three bucks to his name. Single dad. Two kids. Life was a mess.

He'd been looking for work for months. He'd taken small jobs, whatever he could find.

His family ate dried beans and rice. They'd been living in a friend's camper. He worked every task he could drum up. Power-washing driveways, delivering papers, scrubbing toilets.

His friend's sympathy ran out. They were evicted. He searched classifieds, filled out applications, begged employers.



SEAN DIETRICH

They left for the city to find work. His car was on "E" before he even hit Clanton. He stopped to use the only forty-three dollars to his name. He prepaid for gas and almost vomited.

Then, it happened.

He was filling his tank. He saw twenty bucks. He tucked it into his shirt pocket. He coasted into Birmingham on fumes.

The first day in town, he walked into a restaurant with his children. He talked to the owner. He offered to wash dishes in exchange for feeding his kids. The owner agreed.

The things a parent will do.

They slept in their car, eating from Styrofoam boxes.

The next day, he visited construction sites, hat in hand. He was met with "I'm sorry, sir."

That night, he washed dishes until midnight. His hands were pruned, his energy was spent.

He met a young Hispanic waitress. She was worse off than he was. Tips were bad, she had no husband, and four kids.

Before she left, he handed her the twenty dollars with the sticky note.

She read the note aloud. "God bless. Pass it on." And she cried.

His two children huddled beside him in the backseat that night. He cried himself to sleep.

Homelessness is a downward staircase. You stumble a few times, then break every bone on the way down.

Morningtime. Tapping on his car window. A young Mexican man, and several workers dressed in white.

"Was it YOU who give my sister money?" the young man said in a thick

accent.

"It was me."

They were a painting crew. None of the workers spoke much English.

"We could use someone who speak Inglés," said the young man. "Joo want a job?"

It was almost too good to be true. They painted houses the size of golf courses. Several years he worked with them.

He was an asset. He confronted crooked contractors. He spoke English to customers. He wrote receipts and filled out bank deposits.

Some days, he spent ten hours with a roller in his hand. Some days longer. They worked like animals. They made decent money.

And that's the story.

Though you ought to know that last year, he closed on the purchase of a new house. And you should know that his children are in high school. His new wife is a jewel. And he just bought a new truck.

He's older. The lines on his face are from a lifetime of trouble.

He keeps a roll of twenties in his pocket. It's not for spending. It's because it only takes one small thing to alter the events of someone's life.

And if you should ever find a twenty on a gas pump near Birmingham, Alabama...

Now you'll know why.

God bless. Pass it on.

Sean Dietrich is a columnist, novelist, biscuit connoisseur, known for his commentary on life in the American South. His work has appeared in Southern Living, the Mobile Press Register, the Tallahassee Democrat, and various publications throughout the Southeast, and he has authored nine books.

MALLARD FILLMORE



By Bruce Tinsley

OPINION

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

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Angelina College: 50 years and going strong

Angelina College opened its doors to students in fall 1968, a momentous year in modern history. The Smithsonian called 1968 the Year that Shattered America...



DR. SID ROBERTS

time, obtaining the education and skills necessary to join or advance in the workforce in Angelina County and beyond.

Simon notes on the AC website that AC offers associate degrees and certificates in Business, Fine Arts, Science and Mathematics, Liberal Arts, Technology and Workforce and Health Careers academic divisions.

Angelina College has an impressively broad catalog of course offerings. Both visual and performing arts classes and opportunities are available at AC, and the availability of the Temple Theater (and AC's close collaboration with Angelina Arts Alliance) is a huge benefit to both AC and the Deep East Texas region.

Sports programs are an important component of the AC experience, with basketball, baseball, softball and, now, soccer available. In 2014, the Lady Roadrunner softball team captured the NJCAA Division I national championship...

The Division of Health Careers is an especially strong part of Angelina College, offering programs in Nursing, Pharmacy Tech, Radiography and Ultrasoundography, EMS and Surgical Tech, among others.

The Division of Technology and Workforce offers more than 30 certificate and licensure

programs in areas from Automotive Technology and Fluid Power Technology to Criminal Justice, HVAC and Welding.

Want to start a new business? The Angelina College Small Business Development Center assists new business owners and existing businesses raise capital to start and expand businesses with expertise in financial analysis of business ideas, bank presentations, business plans, accounting and marketing.

Distance learning opportunities are available throughout our 12-county Deep East Texas region, and online options are an increasingly important offering for many students, both traditional college students and those seeking adult workforce education.

Angelina County has always been a very generous county, supporting many nonprofit and educational initiatives. That is seen in how we help our AC students, as well.

But nearly 600 students receive academic scholarships, and with the Angelina Challenge Award, all public high school graduates in Angelina County who do not qualify for more than \$1,000 in any other financial aid may receive up to \$1,000 for tuition for one year.

For a half century now, Angelina College has provided a solid educational foundation for the citizens of Deep East Texas. Keep an eye out this year for special events related to Angelina College's 50th anniversary.

Dr. Sid Roberts is a radiation oncologist at the Arthur Temple Sr. Regional Cancer Center in Lufkin. He can be reached at sroberts@memorialhealth.org.

OUR OPINION

Opportunity Knocks

Efforts put forth by Lufkin's 4B group beginning to bear fruit

If you build it, he (not they) will come. That oft-misquoted line from the 1989 movie "Field of Dreams" has sparked a veritable cottage industry among pundits discussing economics, academics, infrastructure and, yes, even sports.

The basic premise dates to the early 1800s, when French economist and businessman Jean-Baptiste Say published "A Treatise on Political Economy." It contained much of what became known as Say's law about economics.

To that end, we're pleased to see the efforts put forth by Lufkin's 4B Economic Development Corporation beginning to bear fruit.

Within the last couple of weeks, Lufkin's City Council has approved economic development agreements with Overseas Hardwood Company and Lockheed Martin. OHC is an Alabama-based company that recently completed the acquisition of Angelina Hardwood.

Lockheed Martin's agreement with the city calls for the company to invest a minimum of \$3.5 million over the next six years and while adding at least 125 jobs, bringing the facility's workforce to a minimum of 363 full-time employees.

In both instances, the 4B group was able to convince the company that it was to their advantage to stay and grow in Lufkin, rather than going elsewhere.

In addition, Align Midstream Partners II has announced that it is partnering with BP America Production Company to commission a new gas gathering and treatment facility in Angelina County.

According to a press release, the the Dallas-based company's gas gathering and treatment facility is the first phase of the system, which will consist of 50 miles of large diameter gathering pipelines, a large treatment facility and multiple interconnections with downstream interstate pipelines in the area.

"We think this is a great place to be," said Fritz Brinkman, CEO of Align Midstream Partners II. There's going to be a lot of opportunity. You'll see a lot of employment in this area, and we're not done yet."

Matthew Osborn, Align president and COO, said Align intends to invest \$30 million over the next 18 months in the Angelina facility. "As we expand our presence in Angelina County, I want you guys to know the benefits we will bring. We plan to invest \$30 million in 18 months. That number can rapidly grow. We are excited to be here. We want to be members of this community. We look forward to growing."

There are some of those buzz words again: "great," "opportunity" and "excited." These companies will be making a significant economic impact on this community by creating jobs and putting money into the projects we all hold dear. And that's a win-win situation for all of us.

Jack Hudgins was the first president of Angelina College. He served until 1991 and was followed by Larry Phillips, who served until 2015. Current president Michael Simon is only the third president in the college's 50-year existence.

Angelina College, accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, has grown over the last 50 years to have an operating budget of nearly \$23 million and more than 250 faculty on a campus of 230 acres with more than 20 buildings.

Angelina College is not only one of the major employers in the county, its influence is widespread and long-lasting. More than 5,300 students, including many high school dual credit students, attend classes either on site or online at any given

Toward less larcenous government

After two years of stonewalling about its theft of Gerardo Serrano's 2014 Ford F-250 pickup, our mistake-prone government suddenly returned it — detailed bumper to bumper, with four new tires and a new battery. It probably hoped that Serrano, mollified by the truck's sprucing-up, would let bygones be bygones and go back to Kentucky.



GEORGE WILL

On Sept. 21, 2015, Serrano drove to the Eagle Pass, Texas, border crossing, intending to interest a Mexican cousin in expanding his business in the United States. As mementos of his trip, he took some pictures of the border with his cell-phone camera, annoying two U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents, who demanded his phone's password. Serrano, who is what an American ought to be regarding his rights — prickly — refused to submit to such an unwarranted invasion of his privacy.

Having found five .380-caliber bullets in the truck's center console — Serrano has a concealed-carry permit but had no weapon with him — they handcuffed him and seized his truck under civil forfeiture, saying it had been used to transport "munitions of war." Civil forfeiture is the power to seize property suspected of being produced by, or involved in, crime. In this "Through the Looking-Glass," guilty-until-proven-innocent inversion, the property's owners bear the costly, protracted burden of proving they were not involved in such activity. Law-

enforcement agencies get to keep the profits from forfeited property, which gives them an incentive to abuse the process. But then, punishment before a crime is proven is inherently abusive.

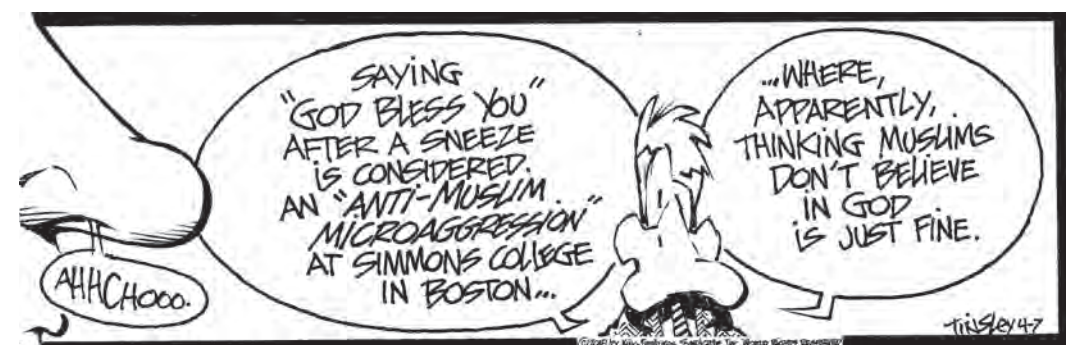
The government seems mystified that Serrano will not leave bad enough alone. It says he got his truck back after a mere 25 months, so "there is no longer any case or controversy." But before it would deign to promise due process — to allow him to request a judicial hearing — it extorted from Serrano a bond of 10 percent of the truck's value. The hearing never happened.

Serrano is suing for restitution, but also seeking a class-action judgment on behalf of others similarly mistreated. Just at Eagle Pass, one of 73 U.S.-Mexico border crossings, the CBP seizes, on average, 100-plus Americans' vehicles a year. Serrano seeks to establish a right to prompt post-seizure judicial hearings — improvements of a process that requires radical revision, if not abolition. What happened to Serrano happened at the hands of a government — the one north of the border — that felt free to say, "You have no rights here."

George F. Will writes for The Washington Post.

MALLARD FILLMORE

By Bruce Tinsley



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Will miss Walmart greeters

As a frequent Walmart shopper, I was super disappointed to find out that the physically challenged greeters are all being let go — just because. Friday is their last day. When asked why, I was told by the greeters that Walmart wants younger, able-bodied greeters. Why would this be? Is there any failure to perform documented by using challenged greeters?

Roberta Smith, Lufkin

HEADLINES IN Local HISTORY

APRIL 8

One year ago

Eric Atkinson of Atkinson Candy Company, guest speaker of the Chamber of Commerce meeting, tells the story of the Atkinson Candy Company.

Main Street Market Days begins today in downtown Lufkin, with many vendors on both sides of the street.

Ten years ago

Main Event facility's manager disputes Lufkin Police Department's report, saying it is not a club, but a facility that hosts gatherings for the community, such as birthday parties and other family events.

Lufkin Panther pitcher David Teaff tames the John Tyler Lions with a 13-3 victory at Morris Frank Park. Lufkin's overall record currently is 12-9-1 and district record stands at 2-1.

From the pages of The Lufkin Daily News, compiled by The History Center, TheHistoryCenterOnline.com.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Sunday, April 8, the 98th day of 2018. There are 267 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On April 8, 1974, Hank Aaron of the Atlanta Braves hit his 715th career home run in a game against the Los Angeles Dodgers, breaking Babe Ruth's record.

On this date: In 1820, the Venus de Milo statue was discovered by a farmer on the Greek island of Milos.

In 1864, the United States Senate passed, 38-6, the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolishing slavery. (The House of Representatives passed it in January 1865; the amendment was ratified and adopted in December 1865.)

In 1913, the 17th Amendment to the Constitution, providing for popular election of U.S. senators (as opposed to appointment by state legislatures), was ratified. President Woodrow Wilson became the first chief executive since John Adams to address Congress in person as he asked lawmakers to enact tariff reform.

In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Emergency Relief Appropriations Act, which provided money for programs such as the Works Progress Administration.

In 1952, President Harry S. Truman seized the American steel industry to avert a nationwide strike. (The Supreme Court later ruled that Truman had overstepped his authority, opening the way for a seven-week strike by steelworkers.)