

Texas Informer

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YOUR GATEWAY TO EAST TEXAS SINCE MAY 1995



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Rusk Industrial Foundation takes lead against the privatization of state hospitals

Special to The Texas Informer
~By Terrie Gonzales, Editor
Cherokeean Herald

Rusk, TX. - The Rusk Industrial Foundation is taking the lead in a campaign to stop the privatization of state hospitals. "We are asking for contributions to help fund our efforts," said Charles Hassell, Rusk Industrial Foundation president. "We want to make everyone aware of what privatization means if it is done the wrong way."

He indicated that the foundation is seeking a broad base of support to send a message to the Health and Human Services Commissioner Dr. Kyle Janek about local opposition to privatization. Dr. Janek has entered into contract negotiations with a private company, Geo Care/Correct Care to privatize Terrell State Hospital.

Mr. Hassell expressed concerns that the quality of care under private ownership would suffer and that tenured employees would be replaced with lower-salaried employees. "We do not believe that HHSC has the authority to privatize state hospitals, and we hope to raise money and awareness before the legislative session ramps up," said Mr. Hassell.

For additional information, contact Charles Hassell or Amanda Gray at (903) 683-2277.

Oliver Sturns carrying the torch of brotherly love



Oliver Sturns, community volunteer, President Cherokee Brotherhood Organization and mentor shares his thoughts.



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday celebrated January 19th.

EDITORIAL

Comment

Why a decline in church attendance?



Walter Session

In the 1960's black churches maintained the tradition of active involvement in the social lives of congregations. Ministers and members were major participants in voting and other civil rights issues participating in voter registration drives and protests. Women were powerful figures in church affairs remaining mostly outside the ministry. Their organizations were referred to mostly as "auxillaries".

The churches visibly encouraged youth to remain in school, organized activities that kept them busy

in productive pursuits and rewarded them for positive achievements.

In Texas many black congregations are affiliated with and feel welcome in prodominately white churches. In 1994, for instance approximately 400 black churches belonged to the white Baptist State Convention., yet church intergration has not worked in reverse. No prodominately white congregation belongs to the black Missionary Baptist General Convention. It is noticeable that eleven o' clock sunday morning services remain the most segregated time of the week.

Today there is a large decline in black church attendance. Bishop Cecil Bishop of an African Methodist Episcopal Church noted that the church now is in the midst of a storm and the storm is worse than we thought it was. what we have is a growing number of people to whom the church means nothing. He goes on to state that younger generations, in particularly males are declining. It is an issue that requires much thought and stratigizing in 2015 to find a solution.

Letters to the Editor

Slocum Massacre of 1910 won't go away!

Dear Editor,
 In October, Slocum Massacre victim descendant Constance Hollie-Jawaid submitted an official request for a historical marker to the Anderson County Historical Commission. On November 6th, she received word regarding her effort. The Anderson County Historical Commission has decided to close up shop until 2015 rather than openly address or reject Hollie-Jawaid's historical marker request. Early on, the commission chair, Jimmy Odom, hemmed and hawed and claimed there wasn't enough evidence to support the fact the Slocum Massacre even happened. Odom also informed Hollie-Jawaid (whom he referred to as "Girl") that the "colored people" in Anderson County were happy and she didn't need to be stirring things up. Once the Hollie family provided indisputable evidence, Odom conceded the fact that the massacre had occurred but then wanted evidence of the motives as to why the massacre occurred (implying that African Americans may have started it). Once Hollie-Jawaid provided evidence of motive (which the historical documentation suggests was white instigation, not black), Odom told Hollie-Jawaid that the commission had only received one request for a historical marker of late, and, since they were accustomed to handling a few at a time, they might postpone its consideration till they had more marker requests. Then, an associate of Odom's contacted Hollie-Jawaid and asked her to rescind her marker request. Hollie-Jawaid re-

fused and the Tyler Morning Telegraph subsequently ran a story on the Slocum Massacre and the marker request effort. Then, just over a week later, Odom et al decided to shut down the process completely. On November 6th, Hollie-Jawaid was forwarded the copy of a letter from the new Anderson County Historical Commission Chairman-elect, Norris White, Jr., indicating that all "official commission business will be temporarily suspended until the 2015 calendar year.

Ms. Hollie-Jawaid had hoped to get a marker up by the 105th anniversary of the Slocum Massacre next summer, but the marker application deadline is November 15. Now Hollie-Jawaid and others will have to appeal directly to the state.

In the meanwhile, Hollie-Jawaid has also received a leaked email indicating that a Dallas police officer--whose chief qualification seems to be that he is against a Slocum Massacre historical marker--has been appointed to the 2015 Anderson County Historical Commission.

This has been a long, arduous and emotionally and physically taxing process for Hollie-Jawaid, and the Anderson County Historical Commission has been hostile and obstructive at every turn. She will now submit directly to the state.

As a friend to this effort and proponent of justice in regards to the Slocum Massacre, could you please take time out of your day to compose a letter to the Texas Coordinator of the Historical Markers program to express your support for her marker request? Your concern and support would be invaluable.

Slocum Massacre Letter continued page 11



**Your Newspaper
 A class Act**

Cherokee County Informer /dba Texas Informer
 Walter Session: Managing Publisher
 Melvin Session: Sales & Advertising

Oliver Sturns carrying the torch of brotherly love

~Maxine Session

Local organizations have a difficult time recruiting young members, especially those who are willing to be active and take responsibility to make a difference in the lives of others.

Having just completed his twenty-fifth year as an employee of Rusk State Hospital, Oliver Sturns has a community service record and a work record equal to that of a much older man. Born the ninth child of fifteen in his family, he learned early on how to share and to care about the lives of others. Born in the Fairview community, he attended Laneville ISD schools through grade six. At that time his parents moved the family to the Shady Grove Community. He attended Rusk Schools graduating Rusk High in 1987.

His grandfather, Henry T. Sturns had a farm. He and his brothers learned valuable lessons both from their grandfather and from working on the farm. "My grandfather taught us that "A man should know hoe to work and make his own was. Farm work is not easy, but we raised cattle, chickens, hay, watermelons, peas and did household chores daily," Oliver said, and that contributed strongly to my work ethics."

After graduating Rusk High School he moved to Houston and enrolled in AMI School of Masonry. He graduated at the end of the year with a Certification in Masonry.

After completing the certification, he returned to Rusk.

In December of 1989 he began working at Rusk State Hospital and has been there since. Oliver's first job was in housekeeping, spending two years there, then ICU and ECU three years each, the Float Pool one and one-half years. July 1995 he started a position in Transcort. He is currently the Assistant Coordinator of the Transcort Department and is the only original hire that is still there.

Oliver is a young man with large numbers in experience. Twenty-three years ago (1992) he began officiating basketball.

He loves officiating the games and uses it as a tool to mentor young people. Oliver talks to them about their lives and the choices they make now and what's coming for them after high school and athletics. The game has also allowed him to make many new friends.

Oliver officiates high school and junior high games for 1A through 5A schools. These include playoff games and original tournaments. His main goal is to one day officiate state tournaments, which have been moved from Austin to San Antonio.

He currently belongs to two Basketball Chapters for officials, East Texas Dogwood of Palestine and Basketball Official's of Tyler. Somewhere about 1995 Oliver and his brother Darryl were recruited to join the Cherokee Brotherhood Club by the late Eddie Dwayne Harris. "I was very interested because they worked with a group of young boys. At that time the organization adopted a section of Loop 343 which they were responsible for keeping clean. They were visibly active picking up trash on the loop and around the community. They played summer league basketball.



Sonya and Oliver Sturns

I wanted to be a part of that, so I joined, and have been active since.

In 2006 I was elected President. This is my third term. I am very proud to be a part of an organization that reaches a hand out to help when and where we can.

"I officially accepted my calling into the ministry on Thanksgiving day of 2014, Oliver said. During prayer at the family gathering at Mom's house the Lord spoke to me and said, "Now is the time." Not really knowing what He was saying to me, I just couldn't stop praying. Finally, I understood and said Lord I surrender and the Lord said again, Now is the time for you to accept your calling into the ministry."

Oliver has been actively involved in the church more than fifteen years serving as an assistant choir director, youth leader, head deacon, and head of the finance committee taking care of all the church business.

Oliver is a member of Shady Grove Church of God In Christ where Superintendent Donnie Timmons is the Pastor. He is also the assistant choir director for the Shelbyville District which includes Grace Temple, Troup, Greater Teneha, Elizabeth

COGIC and Brian Temple of Garrison.

As a very young man just entering the work force Oliver says his mentors were the late Earnest Mitchell, Jerry Hart and Walter Session. One of his very favorite supervisors was Bert Gabbert, and he added the best is Charlsie Session. She has taught me so much about life. Through her tragedies and ups and downs she has never wavered from being the great person she is. She is an excellent example employee who reminds the department to always take care of your family and be there when they need you.

Oliver and his wife Sonya together have six children of their own, four boys and two girls. He says spending time with his family both the immediate family and his brothers and sisters and their families gives him joy.

He said There were many who made a difference in my life by caring and I want to pass it on.

Minority-owned businesses still underrepresented in state procurement

By NICOLE JAMES SCOTT

Texas Publishers Association News Wire

After conducting a disparity study in 2009, the Texas Comptroller's office concluded special programs to secure procurement for Historically Underutilized Businesses are still necessary. It went on to affirm its commitment to ensure state agencies make a concerted effort to utilize HUBs for contracts in construction, professional and consulting services and commodities purchases. All state agencies, medical and health facilities, and institutions of higher learning were included in the study. The following primary points highlighted in the study to confirm disparity were as such:

- Statistical disparities by race, ethnicity and gender classification in current HUB utilization, particularly in prime contracting;
- Statistical disparities by race, ethnicity and gender classification in the private marketplace, particularly in the area of utilization of women and minority-owned firms in commercial construction;
- Statistical disparities in firm earnings by race, ethnicity and gender classification, even after controlling for capacity-related factors; and
- Anecdotal testimony of disparate treatment as presented by business owners in interviews, surveys, public hearings and focus groups.

The more than 200 state agencies and institutions of higher education have a cumulative multi-billion dollar annual budget. A great source of that revenue is generated from 60 different taxes and fees. Taxes and fees such as property tax, sales tax, cigarette tax, alcohol tax, hotel tax, various motor vehicle taxes that all citizens of the state pay. For the fiscal year of 2013, the comptroller's office collected close to \$48 bil

lion in taxes alone. So what is the connection and what does this have to do with state agencies? If you drive a car, buy alcohol, smoke cigarettes, own property or patronize hotels, then you are contributing to that whopping \$48 billion the state collects to fund various state agencies such as the Department of Transportation, and Public Utility Commission and institutions like Sam Houston State, Texas A&M and University of Texas just to name a few. In essence, these agencies and institutions belong to the communities and should in kind serve those communities. So when the Department of Health and Human Services advertises in the medical journals and fails to do so in African American newspapers, it is a great disservice. It is the Black Press that is the pipeline of communication into the African American community where the prevalence of diseases such as diabetes and strokes are twice that of Whites. African Americans have the highest age-adjusted heart disease death rate and African Americans have the highest hospitalization rate of all ethnicities. In the interest of serving the African American community the Department of Health and Human Services is remiss in bypassing Black newspapers. But it's not just the Black Press that is underrepresented when it comes to state procurement and contracting. According to the 2014 annual HUB report, \$15,113,071,094 was awarded to non-HUBs

, compared to \$2,060,862,969 awarded to HUBs. Asian Pacific, Black, Hispanic, Native American, woman-owned and service-disabled veterans constitute HUBs. All state agencies and institutions are required to keep annual reporting of their expenditures. There is a special report generated specifically to detail how much funding and bids are awarded to HUBs. Just to provide a few examples of the inequality that exists, the University of Texas Health and Science Center's 2013 report listed 42 out of 559 bids/proposals that were awarded to HUBs, 25 of which went to women. In fiscal year 2013, the Department of Transportation contracted a paltry 4.82 percent of its construction contracts with HUBs. The same year, the Public Utility Commission awarded 250 contracts of which 90 went to HUBs. Of those 90, 26 went to Asian males, two African American males, seven Hispanic males, one Hispanic female and one Native American male. The remaining 53 were awarded to women. The Alcoholic Beverage Commission awarded 1,600 contracts. The break

down of those contracts were as follows: one Asian male, one Asian female, six African American males, 49 Hispanic males, one Hispanic female, two Native American males and 246 women. These are just four examples but the pattern is consistent among the majority of agencies and institutions. Moreover, most often many of the contracts that are awarded primarily go to women who are neither Asian, African American, Hispanic or members of any ethnic group. The issue at hand is not about set asides, diversity or even affirmative action; albeit groups that have been historically excluded should receive special consideration. However, HUBs contribute and put into the collective pot, so to speak, just as much as other businesses. Any procurement HUBs receive from state agencies are not only deserved but also earned. We are not talking about handouts or charitable contributions. In viewing the above chart, suffice it to say HUBs are clearly not receiving their fair slice of the pie. Not by a long shot.

See Total Dollars Chart page 12

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Contract to Privatize Terrell State Hospital could come anyday

Special to the Texas Informer
By Terrie Gonzalez, Editor
Cherokee Herald

The announcement of a finalized contract to privatize Terrell State Hospital could come before the opening gavel of the 84th Legislature in Austin on Jan. 13, 2015. An East Texas senator is serving notice that he believes the governing agency lacks the authority to take such action. State Sen. Robert Nichols (R-Jacksonville) is concerned that the move to privatize Terrell State Hospital happened too quickly and without legislative intent. In an interview Dec. 23, Sen. Nichols told the Cherokee Herald that he will co-sponsor legislation during the upcoming session to prohibit any state agency from privatizing a facility without clear legislative intent. Within the last two weeks, HHSC appears to be an agency without direction as its executive commissioner terminated two highly placed executives and placed three others on administrative leave amid allegations of awarding \$110 million in contracts without a competitive bidding process. Critics of state hospital privatization see parallels between the no-contract bids and the fast-tracking to privatize Terrell State Hospital. They hope that the privatization announcement for TSH stalls until the Texas Legislature convenes and investigates whether the agency is operating outside its scope. Privatization discussions began in 2011. The most recent impetus to privatize state hospitals began in 2011 near the end of the session when a legislator attached a bill rider that called for one of the state's mental hospitals to be privatized. The rider passed without drawing attention or discussion. The state hospital in Kerrville was selected for privatization, but the only bid received was from GEO Care. The superintendent who helped steer the hospital through the "request for proposals" (RFP) process soon left state employment and went to work for GEO Care. Following months of criticism by mental health advocacy organizations and protests by employee unions, the RFP was withdrawn without a contract awarded in Kerrville. "During the 2013 budget, the rider (to

privatize a mental hospital) was taken out of the budget," said Sen. Nichols. Legislators thought the concept of privatizing a mental hospital was moot – until June. That's when the Health and Human Services Commission announced the Terrell RFP (request for proposals) to privatize the facility. Sen. Nichols said he immediately called the head of HHSC, Executive Commissioner Dr. Kyle Janek, to express his dissatisfaction and to seek clarification on the reasoning for the action. "I told him that the request to privatize a state hospital was removed (in the last session). I asked him several times: 'What are you doing and why are you doing this?' I never got a good answer to my satisfaction. I followed up with a letter in writing, but he moved forward anyway." The lone bidder for the Terrell State Hospital (TSH) contract is Correct Care, formerly known as GEO Care, which operates six residential treatment hospitals in Florida, South Carolina and Texas with approximately 2,000 patients. HHSC and Correct Care have been in contract negotiations regarding TSH since October. A source familiar with the contract negotiations said that HHSC did not stipulate in the RFP that the bid show a net cost savings. The bill rider in 2011 required that the bidding company show a 10 percent reduction in expenses. Historically, privatization efforts are required to show two things: an overall cost savings and improved service. The source said that accepting a bid from only one vendor is considered somewhat irregular, and that the bidding process should have been cancelled with a new RFP set for a future date. Sen. Nichols said the entire process should have begun with analysis and that an RFP process should not begin without specifics on what goals are to be accomplished.

An agency under investigation

With the 84th legislative session just two weeks away, Commissioner Janek's agency is under investigation

for contract scandals. Inspector General Doug Wilson resigned Dec. 19, and chief counsel and former state representative Jack Stick resigned Dec. 18. Both men's wives are employed by HHSC, and the women have been placed on administrative leave, along with Mr. Stick's chief of staff. In late November and December, Austin American Statesman reporters uncovered \$110 million in questionable, no-bid contracts which were awarded to a software company, 21CT, which claimed to have data analytics which would help HHSC ferret out Medicare and Medicaid fraud. 21CT promoted the technology as a "revolutionary tool with graph pattern analysis." 21CT claimed to be able to predict fraud before it happened. Two days before Christmas, Dr. Janek called a two-hour press conference attended by three reporters in Austin. During the interview, he said he was misled by his chief counsel and the office of the inspector general. The Statesman quoted Dr. Janek when he accepted responsibility for the contract irregularities. "I never forget that ultimately, I'm responsible." He admitted the 21CT's original \$20 million contract was procured through "inappropriate back channels." He said that a \$90 million contract extension this year was based on a recommendation by HHSC attorney Stick. Dr. Janek cancelled the \$90 million contract extension after the Statesman stories outlined a procurement process that didn't require competitive bidding and sidestepped oversight boards. HHSC has gotten crosswise with the Texas Legislature, and particularly with the Texas Senate. In a Dec. 18 letter to the Travis County District Attorney's office, state Sen. John Whitmire (D-Houston), called on the special prosecution division to begin a formal investigation into the 21CT deals. "The amount of money that was awarded in a non-competitive bid to a company with a questionable business product should cause us all concern," said Sen. Whitmire.

Irregularities have similarities

The 21CT scandal and the Terrell State Hospital have similarities because they both involve the awarding of large contracts. The source familiar with agency proceedings expressed concerns about Dr. Janek's broader agenda for state hospitals across the state. "This is an initiative from a state agency to create new policy," the source said. "A fair public policy question to ask is this: 'Should we entertain agency initiatives in sweeping public policy, or should the Legislature do it? Where is the accountability to taxpayers?'" The source claims Dr. Janek would like to outsource all state hospitals to the state's medical schools or a private entity. "In my view, that is not something an agency should decide." Sen. Nichols spoke harshly about the GEO Care/Correct Care track record of skirting the rules. "They got a private hospital funded in Conroe a few years ago. That deal never went through a committee or a hearing. A senate member put it in the budget at the tail-end of session as a rider to fund the last six months of a two-year contract." Sen. Nichols said he does not have confidence, nor is he comfortable with GEO Care/Correct Care. "An agency should provide (the legislature with) analysis that certain thresholds will be met," he said. Using Rusk State Hospital as an example, he said the track record of the facility is excellent, with consistent near-perfect scores by the accrediting agency – the Joint Commission. He said a typical business model in privatization is to terminate highest paid employees and replace them with lower-salaried workers. Sen. Nichols drew another parallel to an HHSC fiasco several years ago with punitive consequences. "Do you recall the juvenile facilities operated by the Texas Youth Commission in 2011? There was a lot of horrible abuse going on. A committee of the whole Senate met on the floor to take emergency action. We finally broke it up and closed it down." The TYC debacle occurred before Dr. Janek's appointment by Gov. Rick Perry in September 2012. Prior to the appointment, Dr. Janek, an anesthesiologist, was a Re

Tyler Texas March Against Police Shooting of unarmed black men

Tyler, TX.- Tyler, Texas area citizens have joined Houston, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York, Ferguson Missouri and major cities around the state and country in expressing their concern about and support for changes in the shooting of unarmed black men by police officers. As it stands now, the laws that allow District Attorneys, Mayors and City Councils to look the other way, upholding their taking of life is not acceptable by these citizens. December 18, 2014 the Tyler PD

cleared a portion of Broadway from Front Street to the downtown square. Citizens from Tyler, Athens, Longview, Henderson, Jacksonville, Kilgore and Rusk linked arms and walked silently to the downtown square where Rabi Cost, Mr. Sedrick Grandberry, Rev. Milton, Ambra Phillips, and others addressed them.

The organizer of the event was Ambra Phillips. The marchers are concerned about the recent shootings of Eric Garner, Michael Brown,



Louis Hale - Kilgore - When you see unarmed people shot down, that's wrong. The families, the suffering they go through. We lost our daughter, so I know what they go through.





Crowd of about three hundred stand and listen to speakers following peaceful march down Broadway to the Tyler downtown park.

Andrea Crouch longtime gospel music legend passes



Andrae Crouch, a seven-time Grammy winner and gospel music legend, died Thursday at a Los Angeles-area hospital, his publicist said on his website.

Crouch was 72 and had been hospitalized at Northridge Hospital Medical Center since Saturday. While Crouch was well-known for his gospel work with his choir, the Disciples, he also produced and arranged songs for pop artists such as Michael Jackson.

No cause of death was given. Crouch revolutionized gospel music in the 1970s, giving it a power and verve that propelled him out of the church and into the mainstream, although he really never left the church either.

"Crouch was an innovator, a pathfinder, a precursor in an industry noted for its conservative, often derivative approach to popular music," Robert Darden wrote for Christianity Today. "He combined gospel and rock, flavored it with jazz and calypso as the mood struck him and the song called for it."

Some of Crouch's best-known songs are "My Tribute," "The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power" and "Soon and Very Soon." Often called "the father of modern gospel music," Crouch was inducted into the Gospel Music Association Hall of Fame in 1998 and his songs have been covered by artists as varied as Bob Dylan, Elton John, Barbara Mandrell, Paul Simon, Elvis Presley and Little Richard.

And if you needed to give your song a gospel feel, he was the go-to guy. Crouch directed the choirs that sang on Madonna's "Like a Prayer" and Michael Jackson's "Man in the Mirror." Crouch began to sing in his dad's California church, performing his music on the Gospel Music Hall of Fame website. He would later co-pastor the congregation with his twin sister.

Andrae Crouch was born on July 1, 1942 in Los Angeles, California, USA as Andrae Edward Crouch. He is known for his work on *The Lion King* (1994), *The Color Purple* (1985) and *A Time to Kill* (1996). He died on January 8, 2015 in Northridge, California. See full bio »

Fraternal twin brother of Sandra Crouch, who sometimes referred to Andrae as her "womb mate". In 2004, he became only the third gospel artist in history (until that time) to be awarded a Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, for music recording, at 6520 Hollywood Boulevard in Hollywood, California.

He was the Soul Gospel Artist of the Year for *Billboard Magazine* in 1975 and 1977.

After both of his parents, and his brother all died within a period of just a few months in late 1993 and early 1994, Andrae, already an ordained minister, became the senior pastor at his father's Christ Memorial Church of God in Christ of Pacoima, California, USA. Attendance at the church soon soared. He was inducted into the Gospel

Music Association's Hall of Fame, located in Nashville, Tennessee, USA, in 1978. He won four Gospel Music Association GMA Dove Awards.

His first music group, in 1960, at his father's church, was the Church of God in Christ Singers, and which included Billy Preston. 2007 Christian Music Hall of Fame and Museum inductee. Andrae Crouch won nine Grammy Awards.

In defiance of parent Church of God in Christ's ban on the ordination of women as ministers, he named his twin-sister, Sandra Crouch, as co-minister of the church he led after the death of their father and brother. When the parent Church of God in Christ threatened sanctions, they renamed their church New Christ Memorial Church.

He earned a Gold Record for "Jesus Is the Answer".

He also won an ASCAP Award, a Billboard Music Award, and a NAACP Image Award.

CHRISTIANITY

Paul and Silas Praise Service in Prison
 What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Acts 16:25-28

Paul and Silas had come to Philippi in order to preach the Gospel of salvation by the grace of God through faith alone. Along the way, however, they had encountered a slave girl who was possessed by a demon. As horrifying as that was, however, the girl's owners did not wish to see her made whole since her fortune-telling was a source of income for them. So when Paul cast the demon out of the poor girl, her masters were enraged. They "grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities at the marketplace" (Acts 19). They were beaten, put in jail, and restrained with feet in stocks - a rather unlikely setting for a praise and prayer service. Although in a miserable

place and position, by midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing loud and strong with the other prisoners listening in. Luke writes in 16:28, "Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors flew open, and the chains fell off every prisoner. The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself. But Paul shouted to him, "Stop! Don't kill yourself! We are all here!"

The jailer, understandably overwhelmed by the experience, asked Paul and Silas the all important question: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 30) Paul and Silas told him, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household. (Acts 31).

That very night the jailer and his entire family believed the Gospel and were baptized - undoubtedly the most beneficial aftershock in history.

OBITUARIES

Mrs. Jerline Tilley Christopher

Services were held for Mrs. Jerline Tilley Christopher, December 20, 2014 11:00A. M. At Benson Memorial C. M. E. Church with the Rev. Orenthia Mason, Eulogist. She was born to the late Lexton Tilley and Eutha Coleman Moore on January 3, 1929 in Jacksonville, Texas. She was raised by her Aunt and Uncle, the late Annie Tilley Ragsdale and Plummer Ragsdale from age two(2). Jerline joined Benson Memorial CME Church at a young age where she sang in the choir and served in any capacity she could to help her church.

She graduated from Fred Douglass High School in 1945 and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Prairie View A & M University. She did further studies at Stephen F. Austin State University. Mrs. Christopher married the love of her life, Rev. Robert Christopher on May 28, 1948. They celebrated sixty-two years of marriage. Their home was a haven of peace and joy.

Jerline retired from Jacksonville Independent School District. Mrs. Christopher was very ac-

tive in the community helping others. She loved people and everybody was somebody and was treated with compassion and respect.

While living in Chicago, She helped raise her nephews Kevin, Ray and Larry Christopher. Upon her return to Jacksonville she helped raise Benita, Ruth and Lemitris Boyd. She was past President of the Central Texas Ministers Spouses of the Eighth Episcopal District of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. She held this office with grace and dignity.

Her greatest joy was sharing in the ministry of her husband, Rev. Robert Christopher. The melodious voice and the giving spirit of Mrs. Christopher will be missed by all who knew her.

She leaves to cherish her memory a brother Welling (Carry) Tilley of Forest Hill, TX; half brother Anthony Akridge of Colorado; brother-in-laws Leon Christopher of Jacksonville, Claude Christopher of Glenwood, Ill., Clyde Sonya) Christopher of Madison, MS.; sister-in-laws Elizabeth Fields and Alice Christopher of Jacksonville, TX.; devoted God-son A. J. Rhodes of Jacksonville, TX.; and a host of relatives and friends. Burial was at Alexander Cemetery under the directions of Community Funeral Home, Jacksonville, TX.

Mrs. Jerline Thompson McCuin

Services were held for Mrs. Jerline Thompson McCuin December 27, 2014 2:00P.M., Benson Memorial C.M. E. Church with the Rev. Leon Thompson Eulogist. Jerline was born October 23, 1944, the first child of three to parents the late Loyd Thompson and Hartense Hampton.

Jerline grew up in the Pine Hill community and graduated from G. W. Bradford High School in Rusk, 1964.

She confessed her faith in Christ at an early age with Rock Hill Presbyterian Church. In 1968 she met the love of her life, Mr. Ersell McCuin, Sr.. They were married and to this union three children were born.

Mrs. McCuin was well known in the Rock Hill Community where she was raised. She moved to Jacksonville in 1992. Her profession brought her in contact with various people in the Home Health Profes-

sion which became one of the most important things she enjoyed outside of family. Her love and dedication to people made a wide spread impact on the hearts of those she met.

She was called home to be with the Lord on Monday, December 22, 2014. Jerline was preceded in death by her parents and her husband.

She leaves to cherish her memories two sons Ersell (Eli) McCuin, Jr., Jacksonville, TX., Bernard McCuin, Dallas, TX., a daughter LaTysha McCuin, Tyler, TX.; a brother Rev. Leon (Louise) Thompson, Desoto, TX., two step-brothers Emerson (Lisa) Thompson, Los Angeles, CA., and Elmer Thompson, Hobbs, NM., Seven grandchildren and a host of neices, nephews and other friends and relatives.

Burial was at Union Hill Cemetery, New Summerfield under the directions of Community Funeral Home of Jacksonville, TX.

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Jacksonville Police Department hires Clayborne and Hamilton

Ronnie Clayborne, Jr. and Quincy Hamilton will begin classes at East Texas Police Academy at Kilgore College January 19, 2015. Each were hired by the Jacksonville Police Department. They are working within the department for the next two weeks. Following the scheduled police academy graduation they will fill the two department officer vacancies. The results of the of the application testing and interview process Hamilton and and Clayborne scored number one and number two.

Quincy Hamilton is a graduate of Alto High School and he attended Kilgore College, Stephen F. Austin State University and received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Phoenix University in Criminal Justice. He has worked as a parole officer for the Texas Department of criminal Justice, Adult and Juvenile Probation for Cherokee and Smith Counties, Crockett State School, and ACCESS.

During the application, testing and interview process Ronnie scored number two. The thirty-four year old is married and has four children. Ronnie Clayborne Jr. is a Jacksonville High School graduate. He attended Tyler Junior College and graduated from the University of Texas at Tyler with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Criminal Justice. After graduation he went to work for the Cherokee County Adult Probation Department.

He is twenty-severn years old, married and he has three children. Clayborne is the second generation to work for Jacksonville Police Department. His father Ronnie Clayborne Sr. worked for the JPD in the eighties.

Both men have exemplary qualifications and backgrounds, professionally and personally.

The light has come into the world, and every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or the darkness of destructive selfishness. ~Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Elmer Beckworth Former Cherokee County District Attorney Announces party change

Rusk, TX. - Former Cherokee County District Attorney Elmer Beckworth announced recently that he is leaving the Democratic Party to become Republican. The announcement came following the swearing in ceremony of officials elected in the November election. Mr. Beckworth had this to say, "I look forward to working with my new party and the elected officials, particularly regarding the legal issues that affect everyone in Cherokee County." As district attorney, Mr Beckworth successfully prosecuted many cases including Beunka Adams and Richard Cobb, resulting in the execution of both men; the 16-year-old murder case of Martha Ezell and many others. He also drafted "Faye's Law allowing certain defendants to be held without bond and helped negotiate "Jessica's Law" which toughens sentences for sex offenders. The Swearing in ceremony was held in the district courtroom of the Cherokee County Courthouse.

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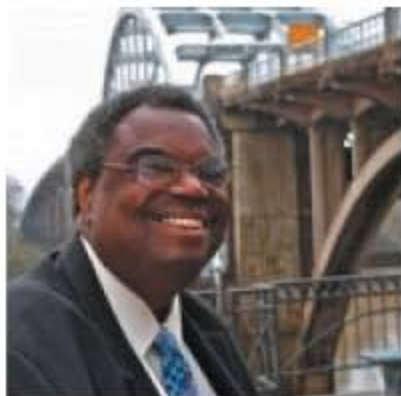
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Contract could come any Day

Continued from page

publican state representative and senator who served 1995-2008. HHSC was created in 2003 by a merger of 12 state agencies and became the largest agency in the state with an annual budget of \$30 billion and 55,000 employees. Terrell State Hospital is similar in size to Rusk State Hospital. It has 980 employees and is funded for 316 patients with an annual budget of \$34.8 million. Terrell State Hospital came under scrutiny in 2012 with the death of a 63-year-old woman who had been restrained for 55 hours. The incident prompted a federal investigation and threatened the \$4.6 million in federal money the facility received from Medicare. Since the 2013 turn-around, Terrell State Hospital has joined Rusk State Hospital and Austin State Hospital as "top performers" on key quality indicators reserved for the top 10 percent of all hospitals across the country. HHSC spokeswoman Carrie Williams told the Cherokeean Herald in October that the TSH made many improvements in the months following the 2013 investigation. The original timeline to privatize TSH called for a new operator to be in place by Sept. 1. However, Terrell community leaders were caught off guard, and the timeline was changed to allow for a public hearing and citizen input. Dr. Janek met with the group in July. The difference between the attempt to privatize Kerrville and Terrell is that TSH has been an expedited, fast-track process without a mandate from the Legislature, said the privatization critic. "Right now, I am going to concentrate my efforts on why they are doing this in Terrell," said Sen. Nichols. In Rusk, business leaders are watching the Terrell privatization efforts – and wondering what role the 84th Legislature will have on the pending contract – and how that policy decision could impact the future of Rusk State Hospital.

An Open Letter to Charles Barkley From Alabama State Senator Hank Sanders



Dear Mr. Barkley:

I write you out of love. I write you out of profound pain. I write you out of deep concern. I hope you accept this letter in the spirit that I write.

Mr. Barkley, I understand that you said, in so many words, that slavery was not so bad and that you were tired of people bringing up slavery. I was shocked by both statements. Then I was mad. Then, I was terribly disappointed. Finally, I was just in deep hurt and great pain. Now, I am trying to help you and all those who may think like you.

Mr. Barkley, allow me to tell you why slavery was "not so bad," but very, very bad. First, African people were snatched from their families, their villages, their communities, their tribes, their continent, their freedom. African people were made to walk hundreds of miles in chains. They were often beaten, poorly fed and abused in many ways. Women and girls were routinely raped. The whole continent was ravaged and still suffers to this day. Mr. Barkley, this is very, very bad.

Second, African people were placed in "slave dungeons" for weeks and sometimes months until the slave ships came. They were often underfed, terribly beaten, raped and stuffed together so tightly they could hardly move. African people were packed in the holds of ships with little space to even move. They performed bodily functions where they lay and then lived in it. They were oftentimes beaten, raped and abused mentally, physically and emotionally. Many died from disease and broken spirits. Some

stripped of every element of their identity. Their names were taken. Their languages were taken. Their religions were taken. Their histories were taken. They were forbidden to have family. They had no rights to own anything. They were considered property. Their personalities were permanently altered. Their freedom was taken. They became chattel sold from "slave blocks." This crushing of identity impacts us to this day. I call it the psychology of the oppressed. Mr. Barkley, this is very, very bad.

Fourth, African Americans were worked from "kin to can't," that is from "can see" in the morning to "can't see" at night. There was no pay for their long, hard labor. Many were poorly fed. Most felt the lash of the whip. All felt the lash of the tongue. Many were repeatedly raped. Their children and other loved ones were sold at will. Some mothers killed their baby girls so they would not have to endure the ravages of slavery. Mr. Barkley, this is very, very bad. Fifth, African Americans had no right to defend themselves no matter what was done and how wrong it was. By law, they could not even testify against their abusers. As U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Toney said in the 1857 Dred Scott case, "A Black man has no rights a White man is bound to respect." This became the law of the land and its legacy bedevils us to this day. Mr. Barkley, this is very, very bad.

Sixth, African Americans were perceived and treated as sub human. The only way enslavers could square this terrible treatment with their Christian beliefs was see us as less than human. Therefore, they could proudly place such beautiful words in the Declaration of Independence and the U. S. Constitution with impunity: i.e. - "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit

of happiness." To them, African Americans were not human so these beautiful words did not apply. Even the U.S. Constitution designated us as three-fifths of a person. That's why White terrorists, in and out of uniforms, can kill us without punishment. The legacy of being less human lingers with us today. Black lives are worth much less than White lives. Mr. Barkley, this is very, very bad.

Seventh, it required great violence to implement and maintain the worse form of human slavery known to humankind. It required unbridled violence by enslavers, slave catchers, local, state, federal governments and the entire society. Maintaining the institution of slavery created a very violent society that infests us to this day. That's why the United States has far more violence than any country in the world. Mr. Barkley, this is very, very bad. Mr. Barkley, if you knew your history, you would not say slavery is not so bad and you are tired of people bringing up slavery. The legacy of slavery is everywhere. However, you are not totally to blame because you were deliberately denied the opportunity to learn you history. That is one more legacy of slavery. I hope you will seek the full history for yourself so

that you will not ever say such things again. Eighth, even after slavery formally ended, we still had Jim Crow. These same imbedded attitudes generated state-sanctioned terrorism for nearly another 100 years. The Ku Klux Klan and other terrorist groups hanged, mutilated, maimed and murdered without any punishment. It was state sanctioned terrorism because the "state" did not do anything to prevent it. That's why even during the Civil Rights Movement murders took many years before even a modicum of justice was forged. Just look at the deaths of Medgar Evers, James Chaney, the four little girls murdered by the bombing of a Black Birmingham Church and so many others. That is why today Trayvon Martin could not walk the streets of his neighborhood and Jordan Davis could not play loud music in his car and Eric Garner was choked to death and Michael Brown was gunned down. Mr. Barkley this is very, very bad.

With deep concern,
Hank Sanders

Hank Sanders is a 9-term Alabama State Senator. A practicing attorney in Selma, Ala., he is a graduate of Talladega College and Harvard Law School

Every intersection
in the road of life
is an opportunity
to make a decision,
and at some time to
only listen.

~Dr. Martin Luther
King, Jr.

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Game #	Game Name / Odds	\$	Official Close of Game	End Validations Date
1547	\$250,000 Bingo Overall Odds are 1 in 2.82	\$10	1/23/15	7/22/15
1512	Line 'Em Up Overall Odds are 1 in 4.42	\$1	2/18/15	8/17/15
1594	Match 3 Doubler Overall Odds are 1 in 4.54	\$1	2/18/15	8/17/15
1584	VIP Cash Club Overall Odds are 1 in 4.14	\$2	2/18/15	8/17/15
1605	Cherry Tripler Overall Odds are 1 in 4.21	\$2	2/18/15	8/17/15
1588	7 Overall Odds are 1 in 3.84	\$5	2/18/15	8/17/15

For detailed odds and game information, visit tlottery.org or call 1-800-37LOTTO. Must be 18 or older to purchase a ticket. The Texas Lottery supports Texas education. © 2015 Texas Lottery Commission. All rights reserved.

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New Year Resolutions



Samuel O'Neal

I plan to be a better person in 2015, to get closer to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and to help others more than I did last year.

Slocum Massacre Letter from Page 2



Chiquita sparks

I plan to have a more prosperous year in 2015 and to be a greater blessing to others.



Janice Smith

I plan to take one day at a time and I plan to take better care of my own business. This is a new year with a chance to make a new start.



Brent Overstreet

I plan to be a better person and do the right things for the Lord. I plan to attend church more often.

able and, as Constance Hollie-Jawaid's request still seems to be an almost impossible, uphill battle, your few words could help turn the tide. The address for the Texas Coordinator of the Historical Markers is below. The coordinator is our friend

in this process, so please be courteous, professional and respectful. Bob Brinkman Coordinator, History Programs Division Texas Historical Commission Coordinator, Historical Markers Program, P. O. Box 12276

Austin, Texas 78711-2276 Constance Hollie-Jawaid and the descendants of the victims of the Slocum Massacre need our help in this marker request effort. Please see what you can do. PLEASE WRITE THE COORDINATOR A LETTER.

Thanks for your time and support! Respectfully, E. R. Bills Author of *The 1910 Slocum Massacre: An Act of Genocide in East Texas*



Margarett Perkins, Laura Perkins, James I. Perkins and Dr. L. Michael Metke President of Tyler Junior College enter into agreement making possible the Rusk TJC Citizens Promise. The James I Perkins Family Foundation and Tyler Junior College established this scholarship program for Rusk High School graduates. The top fifty-percent/qualifying students will have \$8000. scholarships to TJC beginning with the class of 2014.

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Selma to Montgomery March Sunday March 7, 1965 Celebrating Fifty years



Edmund Pettus Bridge Selma, site of 1965



Dr. King leading Selma March three days later than original march


The Selma-to-Montgomery March for voting rights ended three weeks--and three events--that represented the political and emotional peak of the modern civil rights movement. On "Bloody Sunday," March 7, 1965, some 600 civil rights marchers headed east out of Selma on U.S. Route 80. They got only as far as the Edmund Pettus Bridge six blocks away, where state and local lawmen attacked them with billy clubs

and tear gas and drove them back into Selma. Two days later on March 9, Martin Luther King, Jr., led a "symbolic" march to the bridge. Then civil rights leaders sought court protection for a third, full-scale march from Selma to the state capitol in Montgomery. Federal District Court Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr., weighed the right of mobility against the right to march and ruled in favor of the demonstrators. "The


law is clear that the right to petition one's government for the redress of grievances may be exercised in large groups...." National Historic Trail was created by Congress under the National Trails System Act of 1968. Like other "historic" trails covered in the legislation, the Alabama trail is an original route of national significance in American history. An inter-agency panel of experts recommended, and the

Secretary of Transportation designated the trail an "All-American Road"--a road that has national significance, cannot be replicated, and is a destination unto itself. This designation is the highest tribute a road can receive under the Federal Highway Administration's National Scenic Byways Program, created by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991.


Continued from Page 4

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