

# Wednesday's

# Editorials, Columns & Letters

P.O. Drawer 1272 409 W. Hill Email: ads@brownfieldonline.com Phone: (806) 637-4535



## Paper 'n Ink... down to the river...

**By Lynn Brisendine**  
Thirty people were crushed to death in a human stampede which took place last weekend in India. It was a tragedy, one which occurred far, far away. I glanced at the headline and decided to read a little of the lengthy story following.  
And that's when I read an incredible statistic about what was going on where people panicking were in such numbers that so many were actually killed in the moving crowd.  
The numbers were estimated to be an astonishing 30 million. The article in Monday's *New York Times* contained an amazing paragraph... "The pilgrims came, millions upon millions of them, in the greatest tide of humanity ever seen. Again and again, the vast crowds threatened to press too close, to trample the smallest. Then it happened."  
All of this got this West Texas kid thinking about large crowds, at least for me they seemed large and I came up with a couple of football games, one at Tech which probably saw 65,000 in attendance, and one at UT where the crowd pushed 70,000.

Arba'een in 2009.  
Other events which have drawn some hefty attendance include...  
"The Tour de France cycle race - the number of spectators at recent events is estimated to be 12 to 15 million. Many other cycle races and similar events will have huge number of spectators. This number is the aggregate number of spectators over the whole three week event, but still phenomenal numbers.  
"The Indianapolis 500 has an estimated crowd of 400,000 attend. They also report big crowds at the Daytona 500 and Le Mans events.  
"Maracana stadium had a record attendance of 199,854 for the Brazil vs. Uruguay match in the World Cup Final of 1950, on the 16th of June. This is the biggest attendance at a sporting event held in an enclosed stadium. The crowd number is an unofficial number - the official crowd (people who paid tickets) that day was 173,850. Due to its large capacity, Maracana stadium has many more reported sporting events with large attendance figures.

## State Capital Highlights

Compiled by Ed Sterling, Texas Press Association



### Judge rules against school finance system...

AUSTIN — Texas' current school finance system fails to provide substantially equal access to revenues needed to provide "a general diffusion of knowledge" in accordance with the state constitution, a Travis County state district court declared on Feb. 4.

Judge John K. Dietz ruled in the lawsuit brought by nearly 700 school districts (as Texans for Real Efficiency and Equity in Education), three individual school districts, a group of intervenors and a charter school coalition. Named as defendants in the lawsuit are the commissioner of education, the state comptroller of public accounts and the state board of education.

Major among complaints against the officials was inadequate state funding to augment local property tax levies. School districts forced to tax at the cap of \$1.17 on the \$100 valuation, in essence, have been asked to do too much with too little, therefore losing "meaningful discretion" in setting their tax rates, Dietz wrote.

Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst reacted, saying he expects an immediate appeal of the ruling to the Texas Supreme Court.

Last session of the Texas Legislature, in 2011, lawmakers voted to cut education funding by about \$5.5 billion, part of an across-the-board effort to reduce state agency spending to compensate for a budget shortfall then calculated to be between \$10 billion and \$24 billion. Today, however, the current estimate by the comptroller indicates a multi-billion-dollar budget surplus. Educators hope to recoup billions in funding lost to those cuts made two years ago.

Complaints about school funding formulas repeatedly have been addressed in high-profile cases by state courts since the mid-1980s. Texans for Real Efficiency and Equity in Education's published goal "is not asking the court to legislate a solution to this problem, but rather to force the Legislature to do their job in creating a constitutional public school system."

**Cancer agency questioned**  
Texas in November 2007 responded to a call by the governor to create an entity that would focus on finding cures and preventive measures for cancer. It was then that voters approved a constitutional amendment to establish a state agency, the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, and allowed the issuance of \$3 billion in general obligation bonds over 10 years to fund it.

Last year, questions arose over the cancer agency's management and where the money was going. Gov. Rick Perry, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst and Speaker Joe Straus on Dec. 19 sent a letter to the agency, calling for it to address "concerns that have been raised about its processes and operations before any future grants are awarded."

Cancer agency officials testified in a daylong hearing before the House Appropriations Committee on Feb. 6, answering questions about grant management, property leases, executive salaries, and more.

**Perry takes California trip**  
Gov. Perry traveled to San Francisco, Silicon Valley, Los Angeles and Orange County on a three-day mission to meet with high tech, biotechnology, financial, insurance and film industry leaders.

In a pre-trip "California regulates... Texas innovates" marketing blitz, Perry invited California businesses to relocate in the Lone Star State.

Perry's office said TexasOne, an economic development corporation based in Austin, is paying for the trip and no tax dollars would be used for the governor's travel or accommodations.

**Accreditation must wait**  
Education Commissioner Michael L. Williams announced Feb. 7 the Texas Education Agency will not assign its normal annual accreditation statuses to the more than 1,200 independent school districts and charter schools for the 2012-2013 school year.

"Because student performance is a key indicator in the state accreditation system, and because that data is not available due to the transition (to the new State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) accountability system), the Agency will suspend the assignment of accreditation statuses until the 2013-2014 school year," Williams said.

**Senate seat vote is set**  
Gov. Perry by proclamation on Feb. 8 set Saturday, March 2 — Texas Independence Day — as the special runoff election date for the Texas Senate Dist. 6 seat held by the Hon. Mario Gallegos Jr., who died Oct. 16.

Gallegos, though deceased, still won 71 percent of the vote to Republican challenger R.W. Bray's 29 percent in the Nov. 6 general election.

Included among eight candidates in the race to serve out the term ending in 2016 are Bray and standing state Rep. Carol Alvarado, D-Houston.



AXIS of EVIL UPDATE

## Thinking in Type...

**By Brian Brisendine**

It's here again.  
That day each year when men across America will spend hundreds of dollars in extortion money to appease women who have already proclaimed their love for them.

I'm on the lookout for heavily-armed, winged babies in the nude firing their arrows of love all willy-nilly.  
This week will mark the 15th Valentine's Day I've concentrated my courting efforts on 'Ol What's Her Name.

What a relief.  
In times past, Valentine's Day was fraught with peril. It started in elementary school, when I would agonize over just the right Muppet card to send to some lucky young lady in my class.

Miss Piggy was too forward; Kermit, too serious; Fozzie was out of the question with his lascivious and suggestive "Wokka wokka!"

I think at that time in my life, when I most strongly felt the need to reveal my affection in code, I would have chosen the Swedish Chef.

His impressive mustache would have garbled my message of unbridled love enough ("Beduh Merduh Verintemuh bork bork bork!") that I could deny it at recess if, heaven forbid the other boys found out.

I've blocked out my Valentine's memories from Brownfield Middle School, as riddled as they are with bad fashion, thick eyeglasses and buck teeth.

Come to think of it, I may have blocked out most of Middle School, in

general, but I do remember opening my locker in the 8th Grade hallway to find a Valentine's card atop my school supplies.

On the front was a picture of a coiled snake with comically puckered lips.

On the inside was the line: "How 'bout a hug and a hiss?"

At the bottom of the card was a heart and a smiley face drawn lovingly in the fashion only middle school girls ever master.

Alas, in her haste to sketch her feelings, my star crossed Valentine failed to sign her name.

The mystery has haunted me for years.

By the time I'd reached high school, I was far less reticent about my feelings, despite the annual February 14th drama — a pink rose to this girl, a red to that one, both conveniently supplied by the student council at a buck a bloom.

The agony of sending someone a red flower only to have to wait and hope for one in return was bottomless.

**The Brownfield News welcomes and will publish engagement and wedding stories under a long time policy.**

**The News will accept and publish for free weddings which are newsworthy. We will provide our readers this service with the understanding that we reserve the right to edit the content for space. We will not accept (for free) a wedding story which details an event more than one month old. Should you wish to have a story published concerning an event more than a month old, we have an affordable and workable wedding package available.**

Oh, for the days of the Muppet valentines!

Then came college.

Finally heading into the holiday of love confident I had my hormones under control and a firm understanding of the opposite sex.

Both assumptions proved drastically wrong.

Fortunately, my February troubles came to an end when my permanent Valentine came on the scene.

In the beginning, on student budgets, there were flowers and hand-made cards.

After graduation, when the checkbook was a little more flush, there was jewelry and dinners out.

Then came toddlers, when the checkbook and time and energy all but disappeared and we lapsed back to more simple expressions of love and devotion.

These days, we usually celebrate at home, with simple cards, and special smiles over breakfast on the 15th.

Wokka wokka.