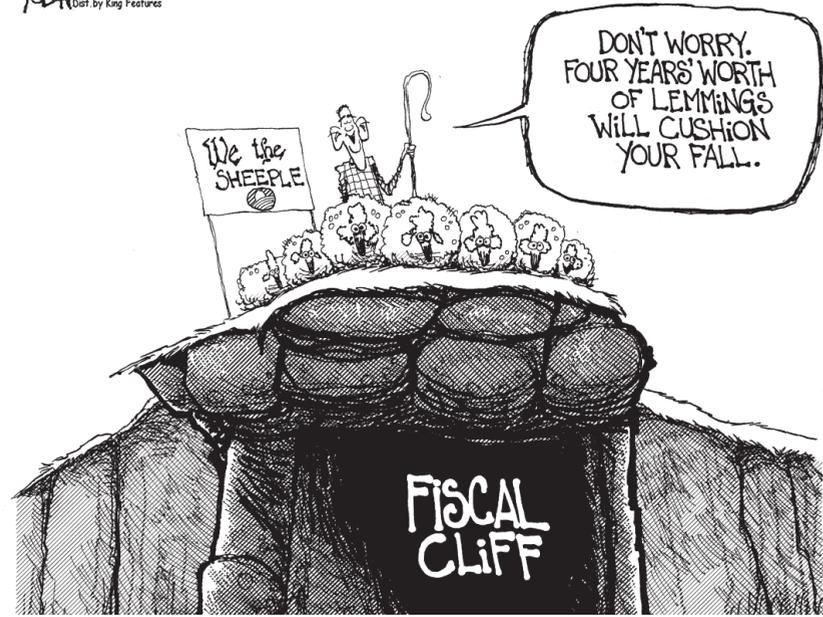


Mailing Address: P.O. Drawer 1200, Seminole, TX 79360 • Email: news@seminolesentinel.com • Web Site: www.seminolesentinel.com • Phone: (432) 758-3667 • Fax: (432) 758-2136

©2012 MRC.org/BMI Dist by King Features



## Paper 'n Ink... prowess in a bottle...

**By Lynn Brisendine**  
How the mighty can fall. Too many times we see sports heroes fall from grace. It is an unpleasant occurrence at the best. Over the last couple of years, Lance Armstrong has denied charges that he used enhancing substances allowing him some almost superhuman efforts to win in his sport. He won an unprecedented seven Tour de France bicycle races. He also biked and won in many other racing formats across the globe. In between victories in these challenging races, he suffered from a serious bout of cancer. Yet, he prevailed, fought through the disease and its treatments. In a few words, it made him out to be Superman wearing a leotard speed suit rather than a cape.

He was so talented, so strong and so competitive that doubts began to circulate in the touring world. Many of the sports participants and its followers began to question his ability to do all of the fantastic things he was accomplishing. Winning seven titles in anything is practically unheard of on a team level and especially as an individual. Rumors began to circulate that his accomplishments may have come from a bottle. He denied them at every chance he got. He was backed with the fact that he had been tested many times for years and the results were always negative. Still, others in the sport were adamant that he was using substances, plus utilizing other techniques to enhance his body.

One procedure is called "blood packing," where pints of blood are taken and stored while the body rebuilds the supply. Then just before competition, the blood was put back, giving the donor more blood to carry more oxygen. This added capacity allowed the body being packed to sustain more energy.

Armstrong was stripped of all of his hard won Tour de France titles this past week. His name has been stricken from the record books and it's as if he never was in the race at all.

Of course, Armstrong is also known as a cancer survivor. He beat the disease in the middle of his remarkable run of titles. Now according to many, it was not such a great deal as he cheated to cross the tape. Some are heard to say that it was the stuff he used to win which aided in his getting so sick.

Steroids and other illegal techniques aren't exclusive to bike racing. We have seen many one-time sports heroes fall from the public's good graces.

Football players who had built their bodies into muscled specimens and ran faster, got bigger, hit harder and won began to confess to using the "roids" to such an extent that they ended many careers and then, sadly, ended lives prematurely. Many of these men didn't beat cancer, they

contracted it from using too much of the noxious miracle drugs.

Lyle Alzado confessed to using the steroids and in a battle for his life, he blamed his illness on the use of banned enhancers. He pleaded with youngsters near the end of his life to stay away from the needle.

Many of these men who play games for a living have denied using anything to gain that little extra, only to be proven liars. It amazes me that some of them continue to make millions even after the cheating was uncovered. Roger Clemens was hounded and even tried for lying about using banned substances. He beat the rap and even tried a comeback this season. Alex Rodriguez, a multi-million dollar Yankee infielder and prolific home-run hitter (until just recently) also was slapped on the wrist and then allowed to go on playing.

But the thrill of being able to run faster, hit harder and win is too much for too many.

Football isn't the only sport to be plagued with these problems. Baseball has seen abuse to such an extent that many sports records now have an asterisk by them, indicating the record setter was using substances to again make them faster, able to throw harder and swing a bat knocking balls out of the parks.

Big time home-run hitters like Barry Bonds and Mark McGuire went from skinny rookies who had talent to massive muscled bodies. Batters weren't the only users as several big league pitchers also had help from a bottle and a needle. In today's more sophisticated world of sports, tests are made sporadically, but often to make sure unnatural aid is not taking place.

Perhaps even more troubling is the fact that it hasn't just been the pro athletes who are accused of misusing these artificial enhancers. College athletes and high schoolers, too, have used a little help from the chemicals to be just a step faster and a few pounds of muscle heavier.

Bad things have happened to a lot of men. Like Alzado, they purchased a few seasons of glory for a lot of years of life.

Back to Lance Armstrong and his ongoing woes. He has vehemently denied any kind of help from a bottle for a lot of years. Some informants had testified of his abuse, still the test proved negative. Again just recently, new evidence has come about. And the proof must have been unassailable because Armstrong simply dropped out of the fight.

So many heroes, people who fans looked up to with adoration and high praise, have been taken down. Not by a more adept opponent, but by a bunch of dirty needles.

Say it ain't so... but it is...

## State Capital Highlights

Compiled by Ed Sterling, Texas Press Association



### Record number of Texans register to vote...

AUSTIN — Secretary of State Hope Andrade, the state's chief elections officer, on Oct. 19 announced Texas reached a historical peak in the number of registered voters on her election division's "official list of registered voters."

As of Oct. 19, Andrade said, Texas had 13,646,226 registered voters, the highest number in state history. Oct. 9 was the last day to register to vote in the Nov. 6 general election. Early voting began Oct. 22 and runs through Nov. 2, and voters may cast a ballot at any polling place in their county during the period.

### Judge puts policy on hold

Hardin County State District Judge Steven Thomas on Oct. 18 granted a temporary injunction preventing Kounze Independent School District and its superintendent from stopping cheerleaders from displaying banners or run-through signs that have religious references on them at school sports events.

Plaintiffs, the parents of cheerleaders, argued that the school district's policy prohibiting religious expression at school events violated their minor children's constitutional right to freedom of expression.

A trial is scheduled for June 24, 2013, in Thomas' 356th state District Court.

### Unemployment rate drops

Texas Workforce Commission on Oct. 19 reported Texas' seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell to 6.8 percent in September, down from 7.1 percent in August.

Texas added 21,000 seasonally adjusted nonfarm jobs in September for a total of 262,700 jobs added since last year, the Commission reported, and the state's unemployment rate is down more than a point, from

7.9 percent a year ago.

"We saw encouraging signs in our state's labor market in September and a decrease in the unemployment rate last month," said Texas Workforce Commission Chairman Andres Alcantar. "Texas continues to add jobs and we now have a record number of people employed in our state."

The U.S. Department of Labor Statistics calculated the national unemployment rate at 7.8 percent for the month of September.

### Call made for higher pay

At its Oct. 19 meeting, the Texas Public Safety Commission — the body that oversees the Texas Department of Public Safety — signaled unanimous support for increasing the base salary for state highway patrol troopers.

According to figures in a recent report by the Office of the State Auditor, trooper pay would have to increase at least 20 percent to be competitive with compensation at the seven largest local law enforcement departments in the state.

The commission and Texas Department of Public Safety Director Steven McCraw plan to work during the 2013 legislative session with lawmakers to bring about a pay increase for troopers.

### Kids kick off anti-drug week

More than 1,200 Texas fifth grade students from Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Houston and San Antonio gathered at the state Capitol to declare that "drugs don't make sense," the theme of this year's Texas Red Ribbon Rally.

The rally kicked off Red Ribbon Week, a national campaign observed Oct. 23-31 that uses school and community events to teach millions of students about

the dangers of drug abuse.

Part of the program was a mock legislative session in the House and Senate chambers, where students debated and voted on drug and alcohol related resolutions they drafted in advance.

A recent survey by the Texas Department of State Health Services and Texas A&M University's Public Policy Research Institute shows that the use of tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs is declining among Texas youth.

### Sadler-Cruz debate again

Republican Ted Cruz and Democrat Paul Sadler engaged in their second and final televised debate on Oct. 19, each seeking to succeed U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison of Dallas, who is retiring from office at the end of her term on Dec. 31.

Among topics on the table were tax reform, immigration reform, taxation, health care and foreign policy. The tenor of the second debate was less heated than the first, yet sharp differences between the two over the range of issues, and the federal Affordable Health Care Act and how to spread the tax burden in particular, were notable.

### Galena Park senator dies

State Sen. Mario V. Gallegos Jr., D-Galena Park, died Oct. 16.

Gallegos, 62, was a retired Houston firefighter. He served two terms as a state representative before he was elected to the Senate in 1994. He was reelected to the Senate Dist. 6 seat in 2002 and 2008.

Gallegos is credited as the first Hispanic to serve as a senator for part of Harris County. He was regarded for his advocacy of firefighters, police, teachers and elder citizens.



## Wright Words...

**By Dustin Wright**  
Sentinel Managing Editor

At the time it was purchased by my parents, I'm sure their pea green Oldsmobile Delta 88 was one of the more classier vehicles on the market.

By the time it came around for me to drive it at the ripe age of 15 — thanks in part to a hardship license — it was the talk of my high school friends, and I'm sure the entire Seminole High School campus.

Today, the old Oldsmobile sits like a forgotten relic on the 1 1/2 lot property my parents own here in town.

A reminder of the past. Oldsmobile's glory days with, what I'm sure at the time, included sleek lines, the modern conveniences of in-car radio (I'm not even quite sure I remember if it was a cassette tape or 8-track tape deck), air conditioning, heating and spacious seating for six.

By the time I got to drive it to school and work, it was a fading battleship among sleeker cars, a shoddy radio, a lack of shocks that made the car bounce like a square of Jell-o for 45-seconds after coming to a complete stop, and the capability of holding 10 high school bodies inside of it, if we had folded ourselves tightly inside.

Even though it was a car and a ticket for freedom at the age of 15, it was also a unique experience to drive around the car some of my closest friends dubbed "The Green Latrine."

The other day, while visiting my parents, I pulled into the drive way and looked over at the aging battleship.

I couldn't help but smile and think of the times in that car.

The infante miles and hours spent traveling in her from Seminole to Levelland to visit my kinfolks up there on Sundays as a young child.

The trips to Texas Tech football, basketball and baseball games with my dad.

The first time I had a chance to get behind the wheel of the "Latrine," and how it seemed to take forever to turn the wheel to make a simple turn.

All great memories.

By the time the "Latrine" fell into my semi-position during my high school days, her numerous excursions were cut significantly

down due to my parents' upgrade in vehicles.

There was a well worn hole in the driver seat, which was covered by an outdoor patio chair pad.

The rubber accent molding along the front bumper was held tightly together by numerous strips of electrical tape, which always drew a laugh or two from my friends.

The fabric ceiling of the car was beginning to come apart from its foam, which was held together by push pins.

The radio, which had long been dead since the time I got behind the wheel, was replaced by me with a portable compact disk player and a pair of external plug-in

speakers — the latest in mobile music technology at the time.

Although I truly hated driving that car at the time, and was completely jealous of my friends who were driving the newer vehicles of the time, I sure was proud of that car.

And, more importantly, proud of the life's lesson I learned from having to drive that car. It made me want to work, to strive to put myself in a position where I could work for, and pay for, a vehicle that I wanted.

However, there are those days I sure wish I could get behind the wheel of the old battleship and take a cruise down the road, just for old time sakes.

## Letter to the Editor

P.O. Box 1200 Seminole, Texas 79360  
Sign and include address and phone number...  
You may also send your letter via the Internet.

Send it to  
seminolesentinelonline.com

The Sentinel requests that letters be concise and reserves the right to edit for libelous content or inappropriate language and space. We will edit a letter to conform with the standards we use in publishing a responsible community newspaper.

## SUBSCRIBE TO THE Seminole Sentinel

Fill out this form and mail it to:

In Seminole  
Only \$32.35  
per year!

Seminole Sentinel  
Circulation  
PO Drawer 1200  
Seminole, TX 79360

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

How you want it delivered: Carrier  Mail

Your News Leader the Seminole Sentinel