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# Paper 'n Ink...

a disaster movie...for real

By Lynn Brisendine

As you read this, it has been a full week since the hurricane named Sandy tore up the Atlantic seaboard.

Now several days after the "one hundred year" storm raked across much of the Northeast, some people continue to live without power. Emergency electric crews from all across the nation, several men and trucks made the 1,800 mile one way trip from Amarillo, are working back east.

Reporters and weathermen are comparing this event with the terrible Katrina that devastated New Orleans, much of Louisiana and the Mississippi coast.

While the storms were different in many ways, Katrina varied from a rating of five to three as it headed north across the warm Gulf of Mexico. Sandy, the Atlantic maelstrom, ramped up to a two on the five scale, and was estimated to be a strong one when it actually hit New Jersey and lower New York.

New Orleans, a city which is below sea level in many places, was overwhelmed when huge rains took out levees around the city and allowed waters from Lake Ponchartrain to engulf the city.

We all know it was a mess. Thousands of poor people struggled for months, some are still affected by this weather terror of 2005.

New Orleans has not completely recovered. Many residents who fled the storm and its aftermath never returned. Still, the Corps of Engineers rebuilt the levees and installed new facilities costing billions of dollars to try and keep the city dry if another huge storm should hit.

And hit another huge storm surely will. Just as, sooner or later, another one of these super storms will hit where Sandy demolished billions of dollars more of public and private properties.

While the storm took its toll, it really was no surprise. Weather experts had been tracking the tropical depression for weeks. And they predicted almost to a pinpoint where this mass of wind, rain and destruction would make a turn and come ashore.

Predictions were also proved true for some who had been labeled crack pots and alarmists by others who doubted global warming. These non-scientists who make a living being pundits who preach radicalism with every breath have to be rethinking their inaccurate commentary.

New York City, at least a lot of it, was flooded in some areas by feet of rain and wind driven sea water. The "crackpots" who have warned for years about the rising ocean levels have been vindicated to some extent.

Like New Orleans, New York City will see some unique, innovative and certainly expensive measures taken to try and protect the city from another tropical mass.

Bigger sea walls are to be constructed. Tunnel entrances and exits will be refitted as new technology using huge inflatable bladders to seal them are being considered.

Larger and faster pumps will be installed and electric equipment will be built higher from the ground and refigured to forestall shorting out during these storms.

Even new methods of rodent control will be needed. Nests of rats hidden among the subway tunnels networking below the city have been disturbed and they are moving to the surface. The theory is that these animals have been contained to some degree in isolated conditions. Now they will breed with other colonies and spread disease. These vermin carry disease, foul living quarters and contaminate food supplies. Some say these unwanted guests will experience a population explosion as they exploit new territories.

Oceanographers have been telling anyone who would listen that water levels are rising. They said that these levels had come up from one to one and half inches over the last century. No worries, it would seem. But, apparently, that amount of additional water makes all the difference in a city built at the water's edge. These same experts are telling us that the seas will rise even faster over the next decades, making the conditions for flooding worse.

All of this for the huge city, while other areas will also see changes. Not much will be the same for people who have grown up going to the amusement parks built on peers in several areas. Those facilities have been decimated. Much of the infrastructure lays rusting in sea water as the peers were destroyed and the sand in huge swaths moved in covering miles of streets and highways inland.

Just dealing with the sand will be monumental. Front end loaders can't just scoop it up and move it back. At least not until it has been sifted and broken glass, nails and other storm hurled shrapnel is removed.

All of this is problematic, but the residents of New Jersey and much of NYC are suffering their own losses as they have lost housing, wages and normal is no more.

The people who live in that area certainly weren't surprised. News bulletins had been ongoing, many every hour, for more than a week. And the first question is, why didn't they move out of the way and take other precautions to prepare? The truth is, too many had no other place to go and no money to fund such a move. These people are now stranded in neighborhoods with no power, no heat, no running water and homes with major damage.

Our leaders have to figure out better ways of handling these natural disasters.

# State Capital Highlights

Compiled by Ed Sterling, Texas Press Association



## Officials say women's health program is ready...

AUSTIN — Dr. Kyle Janek, chief of the state Health and Human Services agency, and Gov. Rick Perry on Oct. 31 announced a new state-funded Texas Women's Health Program is ready to step in and deliver services to low-income women "if Washington cuts off funding to the Medicaid program."

"We've got the state program ready to stand up at any time, and that transition would be seamless for patients and their doctors," Janek said.

Since 2007, the program has been funded primarily with federal Medicaid dollars. The state plans to reject billions in Medicaid dollars in order to cut off funding to organizations affiliated with abortion providers in accordance with a state law passed in 2011.

Perry said that any lawsuit filed to challenge the state's version of the women's health program would "kill the program, and would be responsible for denying these important health services to the low-income women of Texas."

Meanwhile, a temporary injunction put in effect by an Austin state district court on Oct. 26 prevents the state from following through on its "affiliate ban rule" until Nov. 8, when oral arguments in a case brought by Planned Parenthood will be heard.

Planned Parenthood called the injunction "a small victory for the approximately 50,000 Texas women who rely on Planned Parenthood for care through the Women's Health Program, which includes lifesaving breast and cervical cancer screenings, birth control, and testing for sexually transmitted infections."

**Windstorm concerns aired**  
Hurricane Sandy's recent ravage of the eastern seaboard reminds Texans of Hurricanes Rita, Katrina, Dolly, Ike, Alicia

and others. Before and after mayhem hits, questions over who pays and who is responsible for what inevitably arise.

On Nov. 1, the Joint Committee on Oversight Board of Windstorm Insurance met at the Capitol, hearing testimony from the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association ("TWIA"), the Texas Public Finance Authority, the Texas Department of Insurance and the State Auditor's Office.

A few of many topics addressed were TWIA's reserve fund, high administration costs, bookkeeping issues, the danger storms pose to coastal counties, slowness and other problems with recovery efforts, and how some coastal property owners struggle to pay high premiums.

TWIA was established by legislative mandate to provide wind and hail insurance for Texas Gulf Coast property owners in the event of catastrophic loss.

"We provide 'basic' coverage unavailable in traditional markets for consumers who might otherwise be left uninsured," TWIA's literature states.

**Drought proclamation**  
Gov. Perry on Nov. 2 renewed his July 5, 2011, proclamation certifying that exceptional drought conditions pose a threat of imminent disaster in specified counties in Texas.

The renewed proclamation, good for 30 days, applies to 121 of the state's 254 counties.

Disaster relief to counties population under 200,000 and cities under 50,000 that have suffered from severe drought and wildfire may come in the form of federal aid through the Community Development Block Grant Program.

For example, on Oct. 31, Texas Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples announced the award of \$1.4 million in federal disaster relief grants to governmental bodies that applied and

met the criteria: Bastrop County and the cities of Florence, Llano and Seymour.

## Manufacturing panel forms

House Speaker Joe Straus on Oct. 22 created the Interim Committee on Manufacturing, a panel of 15 state House members tasked with recommending ways the Legislature can strengthen the manufacturing sector in Texas.

Straus said manufacturing is a \$192 billion industry in Texas, accounting for 15 percent of the gross state product, adding that more than 800,000 Texans work in manufacturing.

Straus appointed Rep. Jim Murphy, R-Houston, as chair of the committee and Rep. Eddie Rodriguez, D-Austin, as vice chair.

## TEA calls for applicants

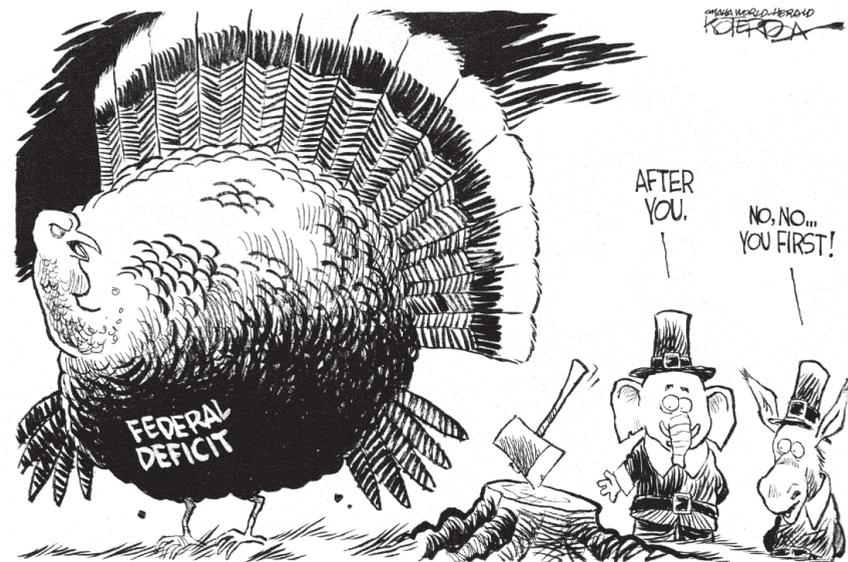
Texas Education Agency last week posted notice that it is seeking qualified attorneys to act as independent hearing examiners in local school district employment hearings.

Examiners preside over hearings involving nonrenewal or termination of educator employment contracts and issue recommendations for a school district's board of trustees to consider. Deadline for filing application is 5 p.m. Dec. 3.

## F1 racing

On Nov. 1, the governor participated in a public relations event to promote Formula 1 Grand Prix automobile racing at the Circuit of the Americas track near Austin, where racing events will take place Nov. 16-18.

"The U.S. Grand Prix will bring 1.2 million visitors to Central Texas," Perry said, "and is an opportunity to demonstrate to people from around the world everything we have to offer in the Lone Star State as a tourism destination, and as a place to live and work."



Seminole Sentinel ...In Print and Online News You Can Use.

# Wright Words...

By Dustin Wright  
Sentinel Managing Editor

My journalism career began in the latter part of my sophomore year in high school.

Looking over the listing of junior class electives to fill my schedule, I was looking for something to pass the time in the school day. Something that would prove to be an easy grade without having to put out the maximum amount of effort.

Hello journalism. Thinking this was going to be a walk in the park, I was wrongfully mistaken in my first journalism class my junior year.

It fueled something inside of me that I am still passionate about today, being the messenger of news -- good or bad -- to the masses.

One of my beat assignments while working on the staff of the *War Whoop* my junior year as News Editor was to produce a general column.

General columns aren't my forte, and I continue to struggle with coming up with topics to ramble about. I do much better with covering the news.

Having trouble with general column ideas, I began to scour the area daily newspapers as a high school junior, to see how the "professionals" did it.

Enter Dave Barry -- a Pulitzer Prize-winning American author and columnist, who wrote a nationally syndicated humor column for *The Miami Herald* from 1983 to 2005. He has also written numerous books of humor and parody, as well as comedic novels.

I am a person who thrives on humor. Ask any one in the family or the closest of friends, and they will be quick to tell you I am always looking for the sly one-liner or the opportunity to make anyone around to crack a smile.

Barry could do this through his writing. He immediately became my idol.

His weekly ramblings were a highlight of my Sunday mornings thumbing through the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*.

Barry, in 2005, stepped away from his weekly column, and has since, penned the occasional humorous piece, leaving me to result to humorous column sites, such as *The Onion*, to sometimes get my "funny bone" jolt of the day.

The following is one of my favorite Dave Barry column topics -- Mr. Language Person -- which was penned in 2003. Enjoy!

It is time once again for Ask Mister Language Person, the column that provides you with the grammar, punctuation and vocabulary skills you need to verbally crush your opponents like seedless grapes under a hammer.

Today's first language question comes from author Joyce Carol Oates, who writes to ask:

Q. At restaurants, I often order the soup du jour. My question is, what is "jour"?

A. It is a French word meaning "bat spleens."

Q. Speaking of restaurants, can you give an example of pretentious menu language?

A. Yes. We were dining recently with Mrs. Language Person at the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, Fla., and the menu listed the following item, which we are not making up: "Chef's Daily Inspiration of Soup." When the waiter came around, we asked him: "What is the Chef's Daily Inspiration of Soup?" And he answered, quote: "It's the soup of the day."

Q. I have a question about the correct pronunciation of the word "aunt." I say it's pronounced "aunt," but my husband insists that it's "aunt." Who is right? We argue about this all the time! Also I'm pretty sure he's sleeping with his secretary.

A. According to the American Association of English Professors of English, the correct pronunciation is "nuclear."

Q. Like many people, I am troubled by the part of "Humpty Dumpty" that goes: "All the king's horses and all the king's men, couldn't put Humpty together again." Why does it mention horses? Does anybody seriously believe that if a bunch of horses saw a giant egg broken into pieces, their response would be: "Hey! Let's try to reassemble this!" Also, in "Cinderella," are we really supposed to believe that the prince -- this guy who danced with Cinderella all night and wants to MARRY her -- believes that the only way he can recognize her is to make her TRY ON A SHOE? As if a shoe is some kind of medieval DNA sample? So if Cinderella's foot swells up, the prince is going to say: "Well, you LOOK exactly like the woman I love, but the shoe never lies!"

A. You have given this a lot of thought.

Q. At least once a day, my phone rings, and I answer it, and the person on the other end -- the person who called ME -- starts the conversation by asking: "Who is this?" Is that rude?

A. It most certainly is, because this

person is committing the grammatical "faux pas" (literally, "bat spleen") of using a pre-emptive connubial pronoun in an infirmitive phrase. The proper wording is: "Whom is this?" Or, more formally: "Just exactly whom the heck is this to whom I am speaking to?"

Q. I would like to use the word "synergy" more often. What does it mean?

A. "Synergy" is one of the key words used by business professionals to indicate that they have no clue as to what business they are actually in. ("The Harbingle Organization: A Paradigm of Synergy")

Q. Is it time now for examples of actual language usage sent in by alert readers?

A. Yes. --Veronica Peterson sent a newspaper ad for a Watertown, N.Y., dental clinic offering "Personalized Dentures."

--Bob Emerick sent an ad for a fundraising dinner in Tampa, Fla., with this headline: "Shaquille O'Neal Attacks Literacy."

--Ed Lacy reports that he saw a sign in the men's room of an Office Depot that said: "EMPLOYEES MUST WASH YOUR HANDS." (Ed writes: "I waited 15 minutes for someone to wash my hands.")

--Susan Tudor sent an article from the Anderson, Ind., Herald Bulletin, headlined: "MINORITIES IN SHORT SUPPLY."

--John Noren sent an informational document from the Internal Revenue Service containing this statement: "The definition of a child living at home is a child who lives at home."

--Bill Belt sent a letter that his elderly mother received from BlueCross BlueShield that begins with this cheerful and personal salutation: "Dear Catastrophic Member."

--K. Houser sent an article on shark attacks from USA Today, quoting a shark expert as follows: "To have shark attacks, you have to have people together with sharks in the water."

Q. You need BOTH?  
A. Yes. To create synergy.

# Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,  
Seminole Indian Fans: here it is the end of the football season and we have a chance to make the playoffs for the ninth time in a row.

If we beat Andrews Friday night and Shallowater wins, then we will be third place and go to the playoffs.

Our players and coaches need our support, so please get out this Friday night and support them.

They have all worked hard this year through sweat, tears, injuries, and yet here we are with a chance.

And when you come to the game, don't just sit there like a bump on a log, let's yell and cheer for these boys and coaches.

They need our support!!

So I ask, as a former coach, to get out to Wigwam Stadium and let's yell and cheer our boys on to victory.

David Turner  
Seminole