

LETTERS

Houston Chronicle Feb. 8, 2007

Tomball dropped the ball

Debacle's psychological harm

WHERE is the public outcry over the treatment meted out to 10-year-old Casey Harmeier by the Tomball Independent School District and the Tomball police? [Please see Rick Casey's Feb. 7 column, "What Casey's jury will hear."] We may not be living in a police state yet, but if children can be arrested and interrogated without their parents' even being notified, much less being allowed to sit in, then we're not far from it. The questions put to this child by the police department interrogators were totally outrageous, and everyone responsible for this debacle should be suspended or dismissed immediately.

The psychological harm done to Harmeier seems to be every bit as severe as from a physical assault on his person. All involved should be ashamed.

— MARILYN MOUNGER
Conroe

A callous disregard for boy

RICK Casey's column on 10-year-old Casey Harmeier, accused of setting off a school fire alarm, reveals the delirium of certain school

officials, investigators and prosecutors in their passion to prosecute the innocent.

I'm convinced that many prosecutors, because of their desire to obtain "justice," border the line of sensibility for what everyone else can see as truth. Truth seems to be simply an obstacle to work around so that prosecutors can obtain convictions. And that's my point.

Their focus is to add another notch in their expanding belt of convictions. What is the motive? Promotions, power, political aspirations?

The events surrounding this child's "crime" seem to indicate that the ball was dropped at every turn. No one seemed to know that an alarm would sound when the cover was removed. Note that the covering came loose when it was bumped and then was easily removed. The principal was so callous concerning the welfare of the child that she failed to show common courtesy by notifying the parents. And what happened to the teacher who actually tripped the alarm?

Added to all this mess is how the child was treated: arrested, removed from his classroom, taken into court, assigned to an alternative school. I was sickened to see the unconscionable disregard for the well-being of this child.

— LARRY WARD
Pearland

Bad decision — worse reaction

HAS the whole world gone mad? Maybe not the world, but Tomball Independent School District certainly has. And how does the Tomball prosecutor sleep at night knowing that she is ruining the life of a 10-year-old boy who made a bad decision to take a dare, but who harmed no one?

The worst that should have been done to him as punishment would be to put him in an alternative classroom for a few days and perhaps make him write an essay on good citizenship.

But to have him arrested for a felony? Give me a break!

— NORMA THORNTON
Pearland

Will Casey go to bat for her?

I LOVE it when Rick Casey takes up for the little guy. I hope that if I ever do something that gets me in hot water, I can have Casey on my side.

— JAYNE BROWN
Sugar Land

