

Opinion

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Owens Park

Change is slow, painful

The racial slur painted on a Lawrence County bridge was a likely occurrence because some people are racists. They are frightened, poorly-educated people who are threatened by change, by giving other people equal treatment and equal opportunity. They are even threatened by giving proper recognition to someone who is no longer alive, because they are afraid of change.

The racial slur painted on the bridge was a reaction to the attention being paid to the late Jesse Owens, the black track star who won at the Berlin Olympics when Adolf Hitler was touting his Aryan race's superiority.

The Olympic Torch will visit Oakville later this month as part of the pageantry leading to the Atlanta Olympics next month. Many people have worked hard to get the Jesse

Owens Memorial Park ready for the attention that will be focused on the area on June 29.

Those people, like county farm agent James Pinion, are proud of what they have accomplished but their efforts can be diminished by one act of hatred. Let's not allow that to happen. Let's accept that some people won't change, and let's not allow this act to further divide people along racial lines.

Let's accept that the attention being given to Mr. Owens' memory is long overdue, and that the park being developed will be there for all Lawrence County residents to use.

This park is an opportunity for Lawrence County residents to unite, to celebrate a sports victory that had heavy political implications and was carried out by the son of a sharecropper who happened to have been born in Lawrence County.