

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor,
I would love to take this opportunity to inform the community and fellow parents that I feel a huge injustice has been done. I feel so strongly about this, that I am writing my very first letter to the editor, ever.

As a former newspaper editor, I try to understand that there is always more than one side to a story. Often times, the things you hear are just glorified versions of the truth. Due to this, when something bothers me, I dig. Lately, I have dug. The reason I have dug is because I feel as a parent of two children that one man has taught and/or coached, I should try to understand the reason his contract was not renewed. I have dug, and still, there is no reason. No reason other than intimidation by a parent that wants to make things personal with a true asset to our school. I know I am not alone in feeling this way due to the 40 or so parents and players that have taken time out of their busy days to appear at not only one - but two board meetings to try and have this matter re-evaluated. This course of action has gotten us nowhere.

As parents, grandparents or even fellow teachers and coaches, please take the time to investigate the circumstances surrounding the decision to let Coach Rickey Ellis go. To lose a man that left a life he had made in South Georgia to come to our community and better our football program. Please take the time to evaluate his record and get to know him as an educator and coach. Ask your children about him. Then, ask your school board about him. Ask to see the "incident report". Ask to see the minutes of the meeting where the decision was made to not renew his contract. Educate yourself about the accuser. Ask to see the minutes where multiple parents and students have voiced their concerns at two different school board meetings. I will warn you, those you probably will not find since we were only allowed a combined fifteen minutes to speak before the meetings were even officially called to order. No board member has publicly addressed the matter.

I for one would like to know that my tax dollars at least would buy a response to a group of parents. Aren't we the boss? Aren't we deserving of the "voices" we elect to represent us?

Please, think about it. Imagine if it were a matter that was important to you. Silence only goes so far. The voices of many can move mountains.

Thank you,
Becky Landress

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE
By Don Jacobsen

Everybody knows that kids who are brought up in single-parent homes are more likely to struggle with some basic issues than those who grow up where both parents are present. That's no secret and it's no mystery.

Kids living with only a mom, for instance, are more likely to earn lower grades in school, to have more sick days, to be sent to the principal's office more often, more apt to be arrested, more apt to have asthma and more apt to be overweight. And that's just the beginning. I could fill this entire column with the bad things that are more apt to happen in father-absent homes. (Note that I said they're more apt to...it's not inevitable. We all know lots of productive people who grew up in single-parent families.)

Some might argue that if a man's presence is so important in a family but for whatever reason the dad's not there, maybe mom ought to find a dependable man friend to move in and take his place, right? Let me assure you that isn't a good idea.

Here's one good reason: Some very interesting research

has recently determined that children living in a home with an unmarried man and woman are at just about the same risk of these childhood difficulties listed above as kids in a single-parent home. Which leads to a very interesting conclusion: It's not the absence of a man in the family, but rather it's the absence of a dad. Or more precisely, it's the absence of a marriage. You see, the security every child deserves is best provided in an atmosphere where mom and dad are unshakably committed to each other. Kids find stability in their world from knowing that mom and dad are in for the long haul. You've heard it said that the most important thing a dad can do for his children is to love their mother. The new research validates that ancient wisdom.

In fact, maybe we could reinforce it. The only thing better than a youngster growing up in a home with a mom and dad is a youngster growing up in a home with a mom and dad who are obviously very much in love with each other.

Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@RareKids.net.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Last Sunday Governor Nathan Deal spoke at the ribbon cutting ceremony officially opening the new convention center built by Georgia taxpayers on Jekyll Island. Many Towns County residents have joined people from all over Georgia, indeed from all over the country, in their concern for the future of an island that holds so many dear memories. I recently returned from a visit to Jekyll. I cannot speak to the cost effectiveness of spending \$30 million on a convention center and park in an economic downturn. Only time will tell if the return on our investment will justify the expense. I can, however, share some observations with those of us who were worried that new development on Jekyll would spoil the beauty, the peacefulness and the accessibility of our Golden Isle.

When we first heard about plans to revitalize Jekyll Island, many of us pictured high-rise hotels along the waterfront and upscale accommodations out of the price range of the average Georgian. Experience has taught us that when the good old boys get busy spending taxpayer money, the taxpayer is often the last one to benefit. We can all think of examples of bridges to nowhere.

Jekyll, however, had a problem. Since 2008 it had cost Georgia taxpayers \$2-4 million per year to replace revenue lost from declining tourism and lack of interest in a 45 year old convention center. Preservation and restoration of Jekyll's historic features was curtailed to help pay the bills. Something had to be done to make the island self-supporting again.

The concern many of us shared about the original plans for Jekyll's revitalization was that development would turn Jekyll into just another beachfront town, at best,

and at worst it would put Jekyll out of reach of the very people it was chartered to accommodate: the average Georgia citizens. The response to those plans was immediate, passionate and organized. The result may be one of the best compromises ever achieved between government, business and the consumer.

The new convention center is attractive and its footprint is not much larger than the building it replaced. Great pains were taken to preserve native trees and a lot of effort went into protecting the dunes around the development with native vegetation. The Great Dunes Park is a family friendly facility blending parking areas with picnic facilities outlined by native plants and trees that soften the lines of the pavement. There is plenty of parking, but it feels more like a park than a parking lot. Sometime within the next year or so a revitalized shopping area will be built to house the businesses now occupying temporary facilities in one of the old parking lots. All of this development has and will take place on more or less the same areas that were developed in the past.

Jekyll is still Jekyll. Development, or re-development, has not spoiled its peace or beauty. The undeveloped areas remain untouched. The beaches are still uncrowded. Jekyll is still an ideal place to take the family, and for those of us who have gathered memories there like seashells on the shore, the magic is still strong.



"IT'S ON MY MIND.."
Danny H. Parris

Why did the chicken cross the road?

As a minister I have been asked all kinds of "important" questions, like which came first the chicken or the egg. Some folks want to know why preachers like chicken so much or why did the chicken cross the road. You know, all of those important life changing questions. So I thought I would share with our readers this week the most modern, updated version of "why did the chicken cross the road?"

BARACK OBAMA: The chicken crossed the road because it was time for a change! The chicken wanted change!

JOHN MCCAIN: My friends, that chicken crossed the road because he recognized the need to engage in cooperation and dialogue with all the chickens on the other side of the road.

HILLARY CLINTON: When I was First Lady, I personally helped that little chicken to cross the road. The experience makes me uniquely qualified to ensure right from Day One! - That every chicken in this country gets the chance it deserves to cross the road. But then, this really isn't about me.

DICK CHENEY: Where's my gun?

BILL CLINTON: I did not cross the road with that chicken. What is your definition of chicken?

AL GORE: I invented the chicken.

DR. PHIL: The problem we have here is that this chicken won't realize that he must first deal with the problem on this side of the road before it goes after the

problem on the other side of the road...what we need to do is help him realize how stupid he's acting by not taking on his current problems before adding new problems.

OPRAH: Well, I understand that the chicken is having problems, which is why he wants to cross this road so bad. So instead of having the chicken learn from his mistakes and take falls, which is a part of life, I'm going to give this chicken a car so that he can just drive across the road and not live his life like the rest of the chickens.

NANCY GRACE: That chicken crossed the road because he's guilty. You can see it in his eyes and the way he walks.

MARTHA STEWART: No one called me to warn me which way that chicken was going. I had a standing order at the Farmer's Market to sell my eggs when the price dropped to a certain level. No little bird gave me any insider information.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY: To die in the rain, alone.

BARBARA WALTERS: Isn't that interesting? In a few moments, we will be listening to the chicken tell, for the first time, the heart warming story of how it experienced a serious case of molting, and went on to accomplish the lifelong dream of crossing the road.

ALBERT EINSTEIN: Did the chicken really cross the road, or did the road move beneath the chicken?

GILLIGAN: The traffic started getting rough; the chicken had to cross. If not for the plumage of its peerless tail, the chicken would be lost. The chicken would be lost!

GRANDPA: In my day we didn't ask why the chicken crossed the road. Somebody told us the chicken crossed the road, and that was good enough for us.

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GUEST COLUMNS

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE EMAILED OR MAILED

TO: Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net. Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc. Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.*
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