

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor: I had a friend in Peru, IL, whose family had owned and operated a restaurant for generations. His motto was, "You think this is easy?" Now to my point. I have known Bill Kendall for 6+ years and have worked with him on two projects. If you should happen by his office, you will see his door open and his desk completely covered with what can only be called "organized chaos." Here is a man who does the best that he can for the good of Towns County without overtaxing myself and every other resident. His record speaks for itself. Truly, I do not understand why he does it, but for the citizens of Towns County. But don't take my word for it; just stop by and observe how our little corner of the world continues to balance its budget in a troubled economy. Thank you! Ben Sutton

Letter to the Editor: The voters have spoken and the Tsplost tax was defeated by a vote count of 63% against on a Statewide level. I have written many Letters to the Editors of newspapers before the Tsplost tax vote was held. A lot of newspapers published those letters and I thank you for doing so as a public service to your communities. I am now asking all voters to consider and ask the Governor to implement, a moratorium on the 3 Regions in the State, which passed this tax, from collecting any Tsplost tax monies until the legislature meets next year. I am also asking all voters to contact the Governor, their elected State Reps and State Senators and ask them to make it a priority next year to revisit the Tsplost law, to nullify it and come up with another way to get transportation funds if needed. The Law should be changed and nullified. If the Legislature and Governor are intent on having this vote again, it should be a Statewide vote, (should have been Statewide to begin with) with a plurality of the State vote deciding the outcome. If the Governor and the State insist on implementing the tax within those 3 regions and also implementing the 30% penalty on the other 9 regions for matching transportation funds, which voted no; then the only thing left for the voters to consider is whether our elected officials are serving the voters or serving special interest. The people are tired of taxes, as I have expressed in my Letters to the Editors. If those who we elect insist on penalizing the Regions who voted no, and now have to pay the 30% penalty of matching funds, the result will be the voters will decide to get newly elected officials into office who will listen to the people. I encourage everyone to write their elected officials from County level to State level. Mike Sims

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Last week we began a discussion of the polarizing effects of election year politics amplified by the unscrupulous use of media. No matter where we position ourselves along the great divide, whether we are conservative democrats or liberal republicans, we all know someone who disagrees with us, someone who is obviously mistaken in their beliefs, or worse. We work with these wrong-headed people. We go to church with them or we live in the same community as they do. Since we cannot completely avoid them, we have tried convincing them of the error of their ways. We have reasoned with them, argued with them, pleaded with them. Nothing avails.

When we are forced to interact with these poor deluded souls, many of us have resigned ourselves to a kind of détente wherein we simply do not discuss certain hot button topics, though many of us still cling to the hope that one day our misguided friends and neighbors, if we can still claim them as such, will see the error of their ways. In the meantime we "agree to disagree."

Most of us are reasonable people. As Americans, we have a long tradition of agreeing to disagree. Many of us do not dwell upon the self-attached labels our neighbors may like to wear. We keep our political beliefs more or less to ourselves. Sometimes we vote for a democrat, sometimes for a republican. We are the so called "silent majority" and we have decided elections in this country for generations.

Political campaigns, however, do not rely upon reason to influence our votes, but upon persuasion. Political campaigns hope that by influencing how we feel, they can influence how we think. Political campaigns rely upon the addictive behavior wired into our brains.

Did you ever know someone who would get "fighting mad" in defense of a belief? Ever see a fist

fight between two fans of different sports teams? I would venture a guess that we have all encountered people who can become passionate, enraged, defensive or judgmental when one of their paradigms is challenged. Belief makes us feel good. It gives us comfort. Part of the reason for this is an electro-chemical reaction in the brain. Life experiences create neural pathways. When these pathways are reinforced by repetition or remembrance, they release neuropeptides associated with the good (or bad) experience. When we challenge someone's beliefs we can also be doing something very similar to denying an addict a fix.

Even the most intelligent people are susceptible to addiction, which is why reason is often unsuccessful in changing a belief. At the risk of sounding as if I am attempting to reduce the wide and varied landscape of human emotions, love, friendship, honor, anger, jealousy, greed, into chemical reactions, I think it is safe to say that we are all addicted to something. We all have something that, were it taken from us, would cause us pain. We all have something that we would fight to defend.

Perhaps the best we can hope for is to remain "open minded," to keep our minds as free from positions that must be defended as possible - to embrace a wide variety of life experience; to build as many neural pathways as possible and to remain unattached to the maintenance of these pathways as we can. When we do become positional, defending labels and slogans, choosing belief over fact in an attempt to maintain the good buzz that belief can bring, we are vulnerable to the manipulations of those who are not burdened by our illusions, those who struggle to maintain a much more dangerous addiction, the addiction to power.



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

The hitting season

Schools, baseball, football and politics, all four of these have one great common denominator. It is the season of hitting. Almost all schools are back in session and teachers and parents alike are attempting to motivate students to hit the books. Students are constantly reminded if they hit the jackpot later in life (as a success) they must hit the books in the present. Two dads who had sons in college were sharing with each other how their sons were doing. One dad said every time his son wrote home he had to hit the dictionary. The other dad said every time his son wrote home he had to hit the checkbook. Parents and teachers are in agreement that if students hit the target in life, they must hit on the right formula which they will find by hitting the books. Baseball season is winding down and the play-offs are upon us. Coaches are frantically urging the players to "hit the ball." Years ago a player of Casey Stengel's was sent down to the minor league. A reporter asked, "Casey, can he field?" Casey said, "Fairly well." "Can he hit?" asked the reporter. Casey said, "Mister, he couldn't hit the ground if he fell on it out of an airplane!" Coaches and managers do not need players to hit a slump right now, but are praying that they hit their stride. And then there is football. Some colleges and universities, as well as some professional teams will begin the season with heavy hits. They have been hit with heavy penalties, fines, sanctions and suspensions. New Orleans for instance will begin the season with the coach suspended because they had a hit list of players from

other teams that were targeted for personal harm. Penn State is another story. Although, football is a hard-hitting sport some retired players are suing the league because they have taken so many hits to the head and as a result they are suffering devastating health issues. Schools, baseball and football are recognized as "big hitters", but when it comes to "hitting", everything else pales in comparison to politics. There is more hitting going on in politics than in all boxing matches worldwide for the last ten years. I would say "hitting" has a new low. As our two presidential nominees have hit the road campaigning they have given new meaning to hitting below the belt. They know nothing about hitting the high spots. They couldn't hit the broadside of a barn when it comes to the enormous problems facing our nation but they know how to mix a little truth with a whole lot of error to hit their opponents. Groucho Marx described politics as "the art of looking for trouble, finding it every where, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies." Personally, I am looking forward to football season beginning. I had rather watch two football teams banging their heads together to entertain spectators, than two presidential nominees smearing each other to obtain the highest position of the land. Sickening. Let me close by saying that when humanity hit the snag of sin and placed themselves on the devil's hit list, God provided a pinch hitter for us. When the human race hit rock bottom God sent His Son to take the hit in our place. On Calvary Jesus became the heavy hitter and smashed a home run for us in obtaining our salvation. I don't have an aspiration to become any kind of hit in the world, but I would like to hit the nail on the head for Jesus.

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE By Don Jacobsen

Q: Sir, at what age should we begin talking to our children about the dangers of drug use? We have one in fifth grade, one in third grade, and one pre-schooler. A: If you haven't spoken to the two older ones you're behind the curve already. I don't want to frighten you and I don't want you to frighten them, but the time is now. The reason is because drug use is working its way down the age grid and they need the information before they need it. My mother used to say, "To be forewarned is to be fore-armed," or something like that.

part of your anti-drug environment, too. Like helping them catch a vision of who they can become, how they can fulfill their God-given destiny. Like how having a clear, sharp mind will help them achieve the big goals they will be setting for themselves. Like how it will help raise their self-respect when they know they have said no to a non-profit habit.

Do stuff together as a family. Just eating dinner together around the table in the evening (without cell phones or television) lowers the rate of drug use, lowers the rate of unmarried sexual activity, and even reduces the incidence of teen suicide... providing of course that the mood around the table is upbeat. "Tell us about the best thing that happened to you today," or "What's one thing you learned today that surprised you?" or "What do you look forward to most tomorrow?" are good conversation starters. Not so you can correct their answers, but so they know Mom and Dad have a genuine, non-critical interest in what's going on in their world. You might even want to start tonight.

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

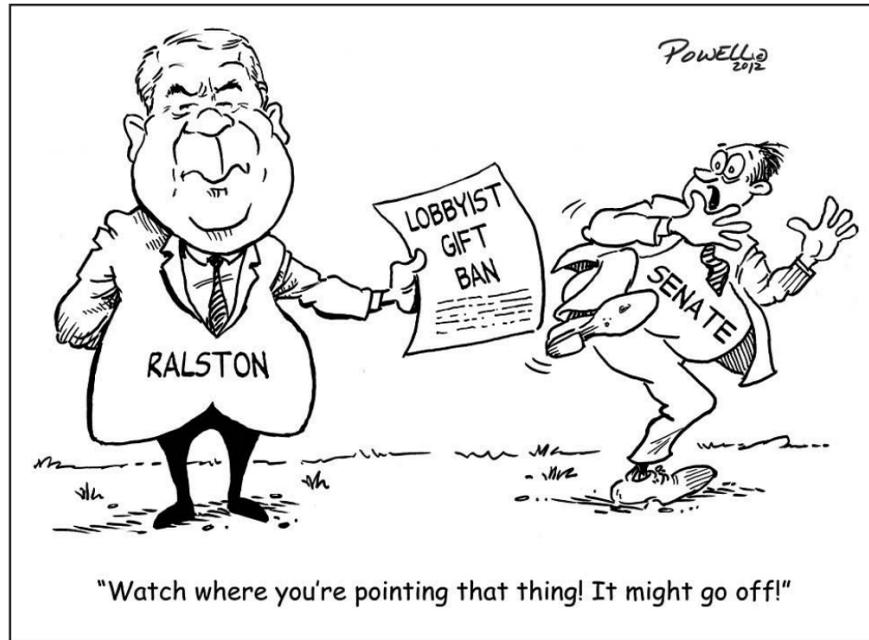
GUEST COLUMNS

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.

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OFFICE LOCATED AT 446 NORTH MAIN STREET "THE MALL" HIAWASSEE (706) 896-4454 Publication Number 635540. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points. EMAIL Address: tcherald@windstream.net

POSTMASTER: Send change of address to: TOWNS COUNTY HERALD P.O. BOX 365 HIAWASSEE, GEORGIA 30546

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