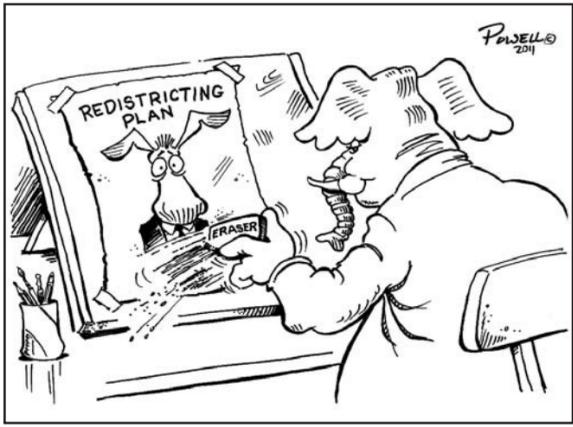


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



## The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Events in Egypt continue to dominate the headlines as the developed world eyes the unrest with both hope and suspicion. We have been conditioned to view anything that happens in the Arab world through the lens of religious extremism, but religion is not the inspiration behind these protests. The conditions that have driven thousands of young Egyptians into the streets have changed societies and toppled governments for centuries.

Government has tendency to move towards either despotism or oligarchy. As a lens which magnifies the worst as well as the best in human nature, government over time facilitates the concentration of wealth and power into fewer and fewer hands. Most people have, for most of recorded history, lived in varying degrees under some form of tyranny. The imperial bloodlines of east and west, the theocracy of the Roman Empire clothed in Christianity, the military dictatorships of South America—all have fallen because of similar influences.

There are many contributing factors to the rise and fall of governments, but the tipping points grow out of a small set

of demographics very similar to those found in Egypt and much of the Arab world today where, like in the Protestant Reformation, the French and Russian revolutions and the European tinderbox which ignited World War I, a large number of young people became unemployed, impoverished or disenfranchised.

The developed world as well as the developing both currently suffers from the concentration of wealth and power into a very small segment of the population. The developed world, however, is more stable, largely because of the age of its population. A twenty-something who has time to rebuild his life is more likely to take risks towards change than a fifty-something. America, for example, has moved rapidly in the last two decades towards the disparity of wealth seen in the developing world, but our grievances for now are largely dissipated by the political process.

A younger nation might very well be taking to the streets as in Egypt. This story is not over. Much of the Arab world is similar to Egypt in both demographics and income disparity.



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

### Too many wrong mistakes

Yogi Berra has always been one of my favorite people. I like the way he communicates. You have to ponder what he said to figure out what he said. He once said, "I really didn't say everything I said." After the 1960 World Series between the Yankees and Pirates, explaining why they lost the series, he said, "We made too many wrong mistakes." Hence the title for this week's column. Do you ever look back and say, "I have made too many wrong mistakes?" It is good to acknowledge our mistakes, but we will make more wrong mistakes if we just dwell on our past mistakes. Don't miss out on the present by moping over the past. Don't be one of those individuals who misses the boat of life because you have become anchored to your past mistakes. You may ask, "What can I do about my mistakes?" I suppose the answer lies in what kinds of mistakes you have made. It has been said that "A doctor's mistake is buried, a lawyer's mistake is imprisoned, an accountant's mistake is jailed, a dentist's mistake is pulled, a pharmacist's mistake is dead, a plumber's mistake is stopped, an electrician's mistake is shocking, a carpenter's mistake is sawdust, a teacher's mistake is failed and a printer's mistake is redone." It is interesting to me that the word mistake is nowhere recorded in the King James translation of the Bible. It does, however, confront us with the reality that all of us have done wrong. The Bible points out the fact that because our frame

is dust all have sinned. That means that we have missed the mark, we have fallen short of the target. We are not perfect. Although, I have encountered a few who felt they were flawless. James Riddle Hoffa once said, "I have my faults, but being wrong ain't one of them." Most of us are not that foolish. Abraham Lincoln said, "The man who is incapable of making a mistake is incapable of anything." Close relation to that statement is the statement of Edward John Phelps who said, "The man who makes no mistakes does not usually make anything." Adam and Eve attempted to cover their mistake (sin) by clothing themselves with fig leaves. One little boy picked up the big family Bible (you know the one that no one ever reads) and a dried leaf fell out. He was really excited and informed his mother that he had found Adam's underwear. Cain followed his parent's pattern by burying his brother Abel, whom he had killed. The sorry scenario continues to this very day. Man wants to use fig leaves, white out, correction tape, or some kind of deletion key to obliterate his wrongs, mistakes and sins. Granted, there are mistakes that we can and should correct in our lives, however, the real problem has to do with our fallen nature.

We need a new nature if we ever do any better in this life. If you want peace from your past you must experience pardon from the Person of Christ. We are incapable of reliving our past, but we can be free from all those wrong mistakes if we confess and commit our wrongs, mistakes and sins to Jesus Christ who completely covers, forgets, fully, finally and forever all of our sins with His forgiveness. It can happen.

## Letters to The Editor

### Letter to the Editor

The Towns County Homeowners Association Board of Directors has called for a General Meeting and Public Forum to be held on Thursday, February 24 at 6:45 p.m. with a potluck supper beforehand at 6 p.m.

This General Meeting is to discuss the upcoming Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) referendum to be placed on the ballot for the March 15 special election. Early voting on this issue will have just begun at the time of this meeting. Commissioner Bill Kendall has confirmed that he will attend, and officials from both cities will be attending.

The TCHA Board of Directors supports passage of this referendum as an alternative to an increase in property taxes, and since the 1% school SPLOST will expire the day before this new 1% tax would take effect, there would be no net increase in total sales tax charged in the county.

TCHA members and the general public voters of Towns County expecting to attend the potluck supper, please contact Ina Kozesky to RSVP and coordinate dishes to bring. Ina's email is risk2007@windstream.net, phone is 706-896-2995.

This is a very important meeting, so the Board has resolved to open the meeting to the public, as space allows. Flyers will be available at the meeting, explaining the purposes to which this sales tax will be put and the advantages of a sales tax vs. an increase in property taxes. I strongly urge all interested voters to attend.

Chris Swett, TCHA President

### Questions and Answers

from the desk of

Commissioner Bill Kendall



These are misconceptions about the SPLOST referendum to be voted on March 15, 2011

**Q:** Cobb County Commissioners stated on T.V. that if voters in Cobb County didn't vote to approve the SPLOST on Cobb County's ballot, they would raise property tax 20%. I have heard that if voters in Towns County do not vote for and approve the SPLOST for Towns County; you will also raise their property tax. Is this true?

**A:** NO - THIS IS NOT TRUE. I will not raise property tax on Towns County property owners should the voters not approve SPLOST. I do not believe public officials should use as leverage the threat of raising property tax to coerce voters. Voters should feel free to weigh the pros and cons and make their decision on the merits of the SPLOST question on the ballot.

At the beginning of 2011, I made a commitment to Towns County property owners not to raise their taxes. I shall keep this commitment whether or not SPLOST is approved by voters. Your property tax WILL NOT BE RAISED. It is anticipated that there will be little or no growth or a decrease in the 2011 tax digest. However, I will closely watch the revenue and reduce spending if necessary to live within the revenue available. WE WILL KEEP THE STATE OF THE COUNTY FINANCIALLY STRONG. As many citizens struggle with balancing their

own budget during this recession, you can be assured you will not need to worry about finding money in your budget for additional property tax.

**Q:** I have heard that if SPLOST is approved it will increase the sales tax and I have also heard it will not increase the present sales tax rate. Which is correct?

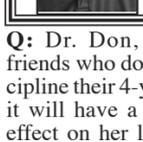
**A:** IT WILL NOT INCREASE THE PRESENT SALES TAX. A "yes" vote for SPLOST is to keep our sales tax rate the same rate as it is NOW. The Board of Education has levied a 1% ELOST sales tax for the last 10 years to construct school facilities which expires on June 30, 2011, and the board voted to not renew. If approved, the SPLOST would begin on July 1, 2011, thus keeping the same sales tax rate.

I feel SPLOST is the best way to fund the needy projects for Towns County. For example, Towns County has 453 miles of county roads to be maintained by the county. If SPLOST passes, these roads can be better maintained by patching, re-capping pavement surface treatment, gravel roads, etc. If SPLOST fails the roads will still be maintained but not at the same level of repair. When Towns County citizens shop or visit in other counties, including neighboring Union, Fannin, White, Habersham and Rabun, we help pay through their SPLOST, to repair and maintain their roads.

Next week's article will answer other questions.

## RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen



**Q:** Dr. Don, I have some friends who don't want to discipline their 4-year old for fear it will have a bad emotional effect on her later in life. So they just let her do what she pleases. What is your opinion on that?

**A:** Parents have two options in the situation you describe - one is to make the child uncomfortable for a little while and raise the possibility of a happy life as she grows up, and the other option is to give in to her demands and make her and everybody around her miserable for the rest of their lives.

A lot of the stuff being cranked out today in the parenting field is trying to get parents to believe they should never make their children unhappy.

The argument is often given that if the parents are forceful with the child they may scar him/her for life. No, one of the situations most apt to scar children for life is always getting their own way when they're young, because they are not likely to grow out of it.

I'm not speaking of parents brutalizing their kids, of course, but rather of providing robust parental leadership. That's what leadership parents do. A leader makes decisions on the basis of the long-term well-being of those being led, then charts a course in that direction and does not waver. The best description of leadership I think I ever heard was by Tom Landry, long-time coaching legend of the Dallas Cowboys. He said, "A coach's job is to get people to do what they don't want to do in order to achieve what they want to achieve." That's profound. And it's a good description of leadership parenting.

I've just finished a chapter in my forth-coming book where I deal with that issue at length. I am very concerned that many of America's parents have become afraid of their kids. That is not leadership. And it does not bode well for the future of America's families.

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

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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 E-MAILED 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.\*  
*Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.*



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