

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



"Looks like we don't need to spoon-feed them after all!"

From the desk of

State Sen. Jim Butterworth



Working together is success

Not one of Georgia's 56 state senators or 180 representatives was elected for his or her ability to make deals or play politics. We were blessed with this opportunity because of our values and determination to do what is right. You elected me because I am committed to working with my colleagues in the Senate and the House of Representatives to create critical solutions to the critical issues facing our state.

We have less than ten legislative days left in this year's legislative session, which means it's crunch time. These last few weeks are packed with hurried changes to finalize legislation. It's often during this crunch time under the Gold Dome that public servants start to play politics. They get caught up in the deal making and promises that are often an unfortunate part of the last few days of session. Sadly, these public servants lose sight of their true objective - to make Georgia a better place for the people they represent.

This is the perfect opportunity to remember that we must work together in a collaborative spirit to accomplish our top priorities. We must ensure that personal agendas don't hamper the business of Georgia.

Our friends in the House are a vital resource that we can tap during these times. A good

working relationship is the only way to accomplish what needs to get done. We must be able to compromise and make sure legislation we pass will improve on the status quo and is an efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

Henry Ford once said, "coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success." We are in pursuit of success and nothing short of it. Henry Ford was one of the most remarkable American industrialists in our country's history. His words still hold a message for all to adhere to and take to heart. As your Senator, I promise to work in concert with the House while maintaining the same moral fiber I ran for office with.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding current legislation moving through the process or any other issues. As always, I'm honored to serve you, the 50th Senate District, this session and all year round.

Sen. Jim Butterworth serves as chairman of the Higher Education Committee. He represents the 50th Senate District which includes Towns, Rabun, Habersham, Stephens, Banks, Franklin, and Hart counties along with a portion of White County. He can be reached by phone at 404-651-7738 or by email at jim.butterworth@senate.ga.gov.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

A large portion of the effort which humanity has expended during our brief sojourn on this planet has been devoted to three basic questions: "Why are we here? Where are we going and what should we do?" Religion and philosophy attempt to answer those questions and the explanations have grown so intricate and complex that, in many cases the original questions have been all but lost.

We perceive truth "through a glass, darkly." For some of us, faith illuminates that darkness, but if we are attempting to navigate a labyrinth, the possession of a candle may light our way, but it does not guarantee that we will solve the puzzle.

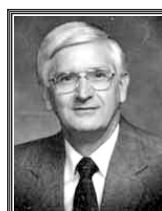
If we are determined to move consciously through life, we look for navigational clues. If we are spiritually inclined, coincidence and synchronicity can become indicators of "God's will." If we are scientifically or mathematically inclined, we may intuit an underlying structure or geometry in the relationship between cause and effect. For many of us consumed in the struggle to survive assuaged by the myriad material gratifications offered by our civilization, we are like the toy trains we had as children. These little trains would travel in one direction until they encountered an obstacle, at which point they would then turn and go in the first available direction until encountering the next barrier.

Humanity is at this point in time being offered some very strong clues as to the consequences of our collective choosing and we can see the guideposts of our chosen route in the international headlines as well as the local. We have chosen a way of life that is enabled by the expenditure of vast amounts of energy, and along that path we have emphasized convenience and profit over efficiency and sustainability. We have chosen immediate gratification over the long term effects on future generations. We have ravaged the land, poisoned the air and the water and disrupted the food chain so that we can watch television in our underwear. We complain about "global warming," but we can't be bothered to turn down the thermostat. We flood the night skies with wasted light while we sleep. We drive ten miles for a jug of milk. We pave farmland so that everyone can buy Chinese plastic at Walmart. We destroy mountains

and watersheds so that a privileged few can enjoy a pretty view for a few weeks out of the year and call it "economic development." We blame the Japanese, the Americans, the government or the local power company for nuclear waste left to our descendants, for mercury in milk, for ugly steel pylons marching across the landscape - but we rarely if ever trace accountability back to the face in the mirror.

The Exxon Valdez was a clue. The Deepwater Horizon was a clue, as were Three Mile Island and Chernobyl. The ongoing struggle at Fukushima is a clue. Together these clues are a gigantic billboard advertising the cost of our energy intensive way of life. The west is engaged in Libya, not in some noble sacrifice to protect civilians, but as an effort to protect the energy interests of the UK, France, Italy and the United States which, when mapped out, cover more than half of Libyan territory. Look no further than the main street of Hiwassee for towering steel indicators of the cost of unplanned, unregulated development at the local level.

An individual unaware of his connection to his fellow man, oblivious of obligations to his community, blind to his dependence on the earth which sustains us all, can make a bad neighbor. The autonomous, independent egos of the Me Generation, taken individually, can be annoying. They can, among other things, cut you off in traffic and litter the sides of the road with fast food garbage tossed out of car windows. They can rob you at gunpoint, on a spreadsheet or in the halls of government. They can conceive more children than a family can afford to feed or add to the growing burden of individuals for whom the planet must provide food, clothing, shelter and manufactured widgets for entertainment. Added together and magnified by our institutions, ego becomes catastrophic. The signposts we are being shown today are clear indicators of the destination to which our current path leads. Our choice is more fundamental than choosing fossil fuel, nuclear or renewable energy to empower our journey into the future. Our choice is about whether our energy intensive, materialistic, self absorbed trip is indeed the journey we wish to make.

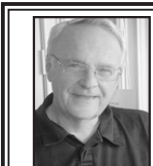


"IT'S ON MY MIND.."
Danny H. Parris

Where's the Light?

The famous preacher and author of "O Little Town of Bethlehem" often told the story of the missionary to Africa who had been home on furlough. When he returned to Africa he wanted to take something back that would please the natives. He decided to take a sun dial. When the missionary set it up and explained it to the natives, they were so happy with it that they built a roof over it to protect it from the sun. "That," said Brooks, "is what so many people do with their religion - they try to fold it up and put it away to protect it from life." We have never had so much light and yet live in such a dark world. Man made light has brightened the deepest physical darkness. We have permeated man's dark world with flood lights, spot lights, car lights, exit lights, traffic lights, warning lights, motion lights, lasers, medical lights, etc. In fact, light is essential for all existence either directly or indirectly. Do you know God's first recorded words? They are found in Genesis 1:3: "Let there be light." The Bible goes on to say "and there was light" and "God saw that the light was good" (Genesis 1:3-4). In the New Testament, Jesus said, "And men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). But He also said to His followers "you are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). Our world of 2011 is indeed a dark world. The most heinous crimes are committed daily. The value of human life has

been reduced to trinkets. Millions live in the darkness of addictions: drugs, alcohol, sex, etc. Here in America Christians are constantly being pressured to conceal their light under a bushel. One preacher has said, "that he could not remember a time when so much that is so wrong was being called so right by so many people, and when so much that is so right being called so wrong by so many of the same people." The prophet Isaiah prophesied that a time would come when men would call right wrong, and call wrong right. He said, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; and put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20). It surely seems that every dark and evil thing that God calls sin is raising its ugly head and demanding to be called respectable and politically correct. In this world made bright by man-made light there exists a depth of spiritual darkness that I don't believe I have encountered before. It seems to have invaded the walls of the Church House to the White House. It makes one want to say, where is the light? Jesus said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:5). If we are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14) have we hidden that light under a bushel? With all of our troubles at home and abroad and new wars erupting almost daily do you think that we may be rapidly approaching the apocalypse of the book of Revelation? The doomsday clock may be ticking but let us work while it is still day to take the light to that spiritual darkness. We must be God's Light Company in this dark world!



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Last week I told you I was inaugurating my first annual THIRST Award - THIRST standing for This Is Really Stupid. I said that I thought the proud winner of that award was a family "authority" who told a mother she should get down on the floor when her child was pitching a tantrum, rub her back, and talk to her until she calmed down.

Yeah, right, do that and your 3-year old has just learned a huge lesson: How to get her way anytime she wants to. That's definitely not the lesson smart parents want to teach.

I suggested some time alone in a quiet place for the child if it happens at home. But what if, as the mother asked, it happens in public? That complicates the situation just a little, but just a little. I'm not recommending this you understand, but one mother told me that the first time her three-year old pulled the tantrum thing in a restaurant, mom threw a glass of water on her. Hasn't been a tantrum since. Hmm.

When a youngster is involved in any kind of deliberate disobedience in public there are a couple of principles that help us decide how to deal with it. First, do not impose punishment in public or when you are angry. Second, do not give in to the hostage situation the youngster is trying to create. You are the parent; you are in charge. End of sentence.

Three, the wisest course is probably to remove the child - outside or to the car, etc. It may cut short your shopping trip or party but it may still be the wisest move. In the car, a brief, low-key description of the kind of behavior you will not tolerate is appropriate.

At home the child must go to his/her room and stay there until they are willing to (1) apologize for what happened in the store, and (2) tell mom how they will act next time. It may not go away with one such session, so, as the doctor says, Repeat as needed.

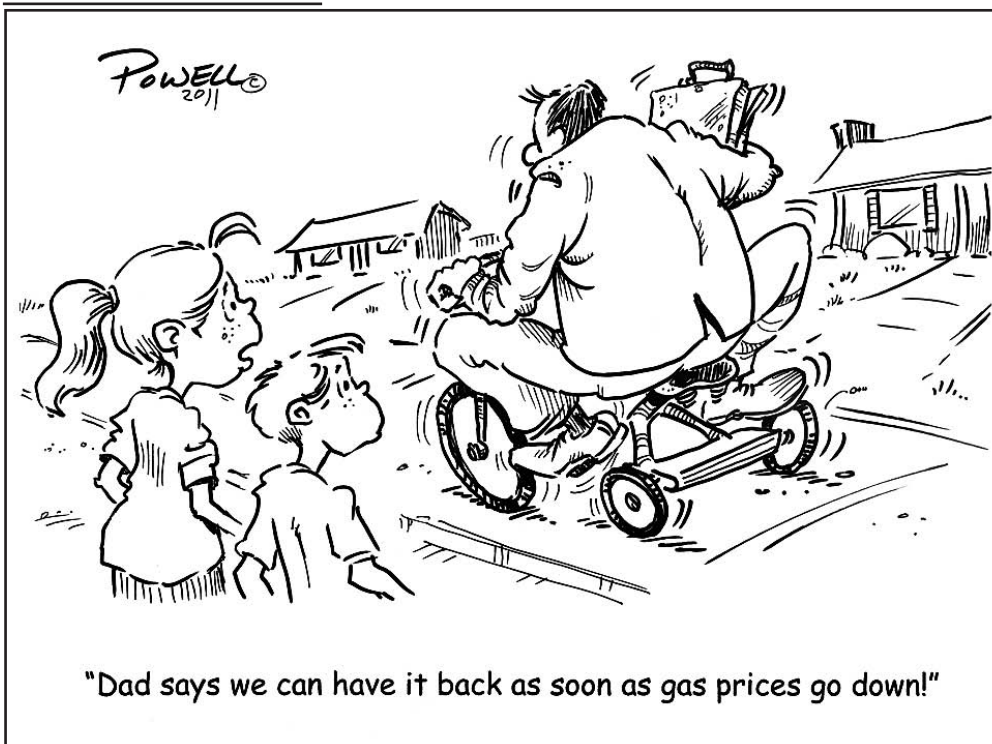
Send your parenting questions to DrDon@rarekids.net.

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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"Dad says we can have it back as soon as gas prices go down!"

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