

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

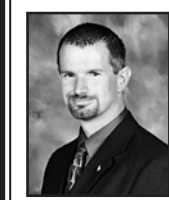
Letters to The Editor

Letter to the Editor:

We would like to thank, with all our hearts, everybody who was involved in the rescue of our daughter (operator) and my husband who was air lifted to Grady Hospital. Everybody showed great professionalism.

Karin and Robert Gregory

From the Desk of:



Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

I'm not sure what all the fuss was about in last week's paper. On Thursday August 26, we had a meeting at the courthouse in reference to long range planning. The meeting was about being prepared for the next 20 years and the challenges that we expect to face. The meeting had nothing to do with raising our taxes. The only thing I said about that issue was "I am fundamentally opposed to raising taxes."

In America, we enjoy a system of government based upon the will of the people. It is my duty as the elected sheriff to seek the will of the people and act accordingly. The only thing I have asked for thus far is your opinion as a citizen of Towns County. I work for you.

I offered an honest assessment of where we are today and where we need to be in the coming years, and then asked for your feedback. The assessment was based on the research of the command staff at the sheriff's office, the sheriff's review board, sheriff's auxiliary board, and professional opinions of the staff at the Georgia Sheriffs' Association. The assessment was made using the best accepted professional standards.

I presented to a standing-room-only crowd a rough draft of the strategic plan and asked for your input. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. I asked each person to take copies of the draft and share

them with family and friends and get back to us, answering the question, "What do you want from your Sheriff's office?"

It is my duty to keep you and your family safe and to properly represent you. Part of the duty of any public servant is to give honest figures and allow you the opportunity to make an honest decision. I will continue to seek to inform you of what I believe we need to do as a community in order to provide the level of safety that I believe we deserve in Towns County. I will also continue to seek your input and advice. I will ask for what you tell me to ask for, nothing more, and nothing less. I will also continue to be a good steward of our tax dollars and continue to operate within the budget, as I have for the last two years. I will continue to seek grants. I also plan to continue to grow the sheriff's auxiliary to help meet these needs through volunteer efforts. Many of you have expressed your enthusiasm about these initiatives and as long as you agree with them I will continue to provide the effort on my part.

In the end it isn't my place to decide what you want. It is up to the will of "we, the people" of Towns County, Georgia. In seeking that will, I intend to continue giving you an honest assessment of where we are and where I believe we need to be. I will also continue to seek your advice on how to best serve you.

I intend to have additional meetings as we finalize our strategic plan. We will base it on what you tell me you need and want, so please continue to keep us informed about what is important to you as we move forward. In closing, let me say thank you. Thank you for the tremendous support that you all have shown thus far.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

It's Sunday, September 5th and today Zachry's Seafood restaurant will open its doors for the last time on Jekyll Island, Georgia after 23 years. A restaurant has occupied that location since I was a small child making his very first trip to the ocean and the taste of wild Georgia shrimp has brought me back to that spot ever since. Soon all the little stores in the quaint little shopping center will be bulldozed to make way for what will most likely be a huge parking lot in the \$130 million "revitalization" project brokered by the Jekyll Island Authority and largely paid for by your tax dollars.

When the State of Georgia purchased Jekyll Island in 1947, the justification for spending tax dollars to create a state park was the mandate which stipulated that the facilities on Jekyll always be affordable to the "average" Georgia resident. The new mission of the Jekyll Island Authority is to make Jekyll, and I quote, "serve the world as a premier vacation and convention destination," and one of the first efforts to serve the world seems to be the gift of a multi-million dollar contract to, among other American based companies, the Chhatrala Group, a privately held company based out of India.

At a time when Georgia is not yet sure how it will pay for the growing unfunded portion of its pension commitments, when the Georgia Lottery is threatened with bankruptcy and when unemployment in the state approaches 10%, Georgia has chosen to commit \$50 million to build upscale hotels to better serve the world. I am reminded of the "state park" which was supposed to bring jobs to Towns County and which later became the Brasstown Valley Resort where the few low paid local workers were required to leave the premises within half an hour of clocking out. I am reminded of the 2.6 million tax dollars spent on the Equani Spa across from the resort, where average Georgia citizens or world travelers can rent the private accommodations suite for \$350 per night. The average cost for a night's stay in the new full service hotel on Jekyll is predicted to be around \$170 per night.

The odd thing about government contracts for building projects is the amount of money that evaporates in committees and consultations, meetings and managers' salaries long before the first brick is laid. Cost overruns are often born somewhere between the Governor's golden spade and the bulldozer blade. In the case of the Equani Spa, for example, state auditors could

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

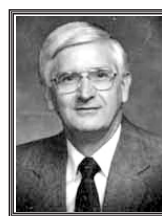
only document about \$50,000 worth of contracts for the almost \$1 million paid to DaVinci Design Associates Inc. We can hope that state oversight on the revitalization of Jekyll Island will be more proactive.

There is no doubt that some of the facilities on Jekyll have seen better days. Leaking roofs and a crumbling parking lot at the shopping center have long been in disrepair. Proposed plans for the new facilities appear to be attractive and well designed. But of the \$50 million in state funds and \$80 million earmarked from private sources, \$34 million will be spent on a single "full service" hotel alone. Jekyll was once the exclusive playground for the world's wealthiest people. Depression and war ended that gilded age. The new plans for Jekyll unfortunately seem to be a step back in that direction at a time when the average Georgian is finding it harder to have a vacation at all - and the economic viability of upscale accommodations is also questionable. Consider the recent bankruptcy of Sea Island, another upscale development just a few miles from Jekyll.

Change is the one constant in our world. Towns replace villages; cities replace towns. Ruins replace cities. Forests precede us and deserts succeed us. History tends to move in cycles driven by changes in the environment and programmed by human nature, which seems not to have changed at all in our sojourn on this planet. Brief were the moments in human history when the so called "common" person thrived. Briefer still were the fleeting moments when the decisions of a nation were made democratically.

The majority of recorded history is the story of the struggle between the few and the many, the elites who control and the masses that produce. The uniqueness of American civilization has been the elevation of the average person to a relative state of affluence where the "commoner" could enjoy luxuries and freedoms formerly reserved for royalty alone. A drive to the ocean in the summertime and a flight to a ski area in the winter; bananas in February and a selection of foods from all over the world year round; instant communication, free access to knowledge, private property: these things which we take for granted are little known in much of the world today - unknown to all but royalty 200 years ago.

This morning I talked to a family on the beach; a postal worker, his wife and two young children from Macon, Georgia. Their clothes and beach gear were recently purchased at Wal Mart. They unloaded from a ten year old Chrysler minivan which looked like it would need new tires by winter. The kids were well behaved, bright, and totally fascinated by the ocean and everything around them. Their bright eyes held the reflection of two generations of Georgia families and families from all over America who have fallen in love with Jekyll Island. It is sad to think that the grand visions for Jekyll "revitalized" may make it harder for good people of modest means to enjoy one of Georgia's treasures. Unfortunately, as our economy continues to decline we will begin to see a darker side of history repeated. When times are hard, treasure is hoarded by those with the means to take it.



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

Say that again

Church bulletins, church newsletters and church publications in general are sometimes the most humorous reading material found anywhere. For example... One pastor was having a busy day and was about to rush out of his office when the church secretary asked him for his sermon titles for the Sunday bulletin. He said, "Oh, for Sunday morning just print "The Pastor Speaks." For Sunday night I am preaching from Psalm 14, you just pick out a title." When folks read the bulletin, Sunday morning's title appeared, "The Pastor Speaks" and Sunday night's title was "What The Fool Said." Another bulletin printed the Sunday morning messages: "Jesus Walks On Water." Sunday night's message, "Searching For Jesus."

The following are excerpts from church bulletins nationwide:

At the evening service tonight the sermon topic will be "What Is Hell?" Come early and listen to the choir practice.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.

Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa, will be speaking tonight. Come hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.

Miss Charlene Mason sang, "I Will Not Pass This Way Again" giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

The Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet

Thursday at 7 p.m. Please use the back door.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 p.m. this evening. Please use the large double doors on the west entrance.

Barbara remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of the pastor's sermons.

Don't let worry kill you, let the church help.

Irving Benson and Jesse Carter were married October 24, so ends a friendship that began in their school days.

The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind and they may be seen in the church basement Friday.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands.

His farewell sermon tonight, after which the choir will sing, "Break Forth Into Joy."

We have a large, beautifully renovated nursery, let's get busy and fill it up.

Next Sunday is family hayride and bonfire. Bring your own hotdogs and guns. Everyone welcome.

This evening at 7 p.m. there will be a hymn sing in the park across from the church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

Next Sunday is homecoming. We will have all day sinning and dinner on the ground.

Thursday night, potluck supper with prayer and medication to follow.

My favorite blooper, "Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered."

Thank God that we are able to laugh at our poor spelling and improper phrases.

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Between the day our kids enter first grade and the time they graduate from high school and head off to college (or wherever), we have them for a total of 624 weeks. Subtracting summer camps, field trips, visits to grandma's house, sleepovers, and other unpredictable events leaves us with about 600 weeks. That's all.

That suggests to me that as parents we need to be pretty intentional about character building. Let me ask you a couple of questions: What are you reading with your kids? What worthwhile videos are you watching together and then discussing? What moral issues in the news are you helping your kids discover and explore? What exposure to church or synagogue are you building into their schedule? (And into your schedule, for heaven's sake. Don't just send them; take them!)

The common (and easier) route with kids is to help

them with short-term stuff...a good grade on Friday's spelling test, make sure they get to soccer practice on time, brush their teeth after dinner. Those can be really useful, but the big picture is this: We're not really raising children, we're raising adults. Whenever I am speaking to a roomful of parents I like to ask them what they want their kids to be like in 25 years; not once have I ever had anyone answer. "I want him to be a good speller, be able to hit a softball out of the park, and have shiny teeth."

No, they talk about having integrity, compassion, a spirit of service, unselfish. So we've got 600 weeks to get to them with the big stuff... to take the long look; to help polish, not just their skills and their teeth, but more importantly, their characters. Let's work together and get this right.

Submit your questions to: DrDon@rarekids.net.

Have something to sell?

Let the Herald work for you!
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Deadline for the T.C. Herald is Monday by noon

WE STILL REMEMBER
-SEPT. 11, 2001-

Towns County Herald

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