

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

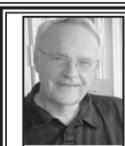
To the Editor:

While I do not wish to belabor the point, I feel compelled to respond to the February 12 letter from A. J. Moore critical of my February 5 letter. Here, at Moore's request, are some "facts" for your readers to consider: (1) 60 Plus is a political action committee (PAC). (2) Its ad claimed a conservative agenda, stated trial lawyers were "trying to buy Republican politicians" and showed side-by-side photographs of President Obama (a lawyer, but certainly not a Republican politician or a conservative) and Rep. Allison (a Republican, a conservative and one who has been good to and for Towns County). (3) Republicans, generally speaking, do not align themselves with trial lawyers. (4) Rep. Allison, to my knowledge, is a lawyer, but not a trial lawyer (not all lawyers are trial lawyers, just not all doctors are surgeons). (5) That ad, by implication, tried, for obviously political purposes, to connect Obama and Allison. (6) We've all heard the saying (from Shakespeare's *Henry IV*) "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers". Well, folks, that was said in an effort to establish an autocracy. (See Obama, *Ibid.*).

In conclusion I raise the following question of 60 Plus: Is it not a lie (or at least a half-truth) to try to link Obama and Allison in their respective political and philosophical views?

I commend the Herald's promotion of diverse viewpoints.

Claudos G. Spears



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Q: Dr. Don, lately we have been reading arguments on both sides of the "self-esteem" issue. Some authorities claim that it is the cornerstone of good parenting that we raise kids with high self-esteem. Others say just the opposite, that self-esteem is really only a fancy name for arrogance. What say you?

A: You're right; you don't have to read very far in today's parenting books before you feel like people are shouting at you from both sides of the street. Two of my favorite parenting gurus - John Rosemond and James Dobson - even disagree.

California launched a program in their public school system to raise everyone's self-esteem with the belief that it would dramatically reduce juvenile delinquency. Obviously didn't work. Dr. Roy Baumeister of the University of Florida has done research on the results of self-esteem for more than twenty years and discovered that the population with the highest self-esteem consists of inmates in America's prisons. So who do you trust?

I've tried to de-fuse the debate by insisting that self-esteem is not the trait we're after, but rather that self-worth or self-confidence or self-respect

might come closer. While I like those terms better I have to admit that it's not always easy to make the distinction between them.

So recently I've been trying to clarify the goal by changing the language. The word I like better than any of the above is "courage." Courage is a character word. When my youngster faces a tough decision, I want him to have the courage to do the right thing. When she sees someone being picked on or bullied, I want her to have the courage to intervene. When some of his friends are telling off-color stories I want him to have the courage to walk away. When her friends invite her to watch an edgy movie I want her to have the courage to say No.

Courage is a term kids can get their arms around. They know it can be painful to walk out of step with their peers. And they know it takes courage to do it. They know it's embarrassing to admit doing something wrong. And that it takes courage to do it. Courage is the willingness to overcome fear and do the right because it is right. Now there's a trait that will keep our kids out of trouble. I vote for courage.

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

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Despite what the historical time lines we memorized in school might suggest, history does not proceed in a linear fashion. One thing does not lead to another. Instead, many things lead to many other things, and the law of unintended consequences is always at play.

Take for example the ever increasing impact that technology has on our culture and lifestyle. Information technology has already changed us in ways that would have been almost unimaginable to previous generations; ways that will only be fully discernible to future ones.

In less than one generation our social, intellectual and financial lives have been joined in a matrix of always on, always connected information sharing that is global and instantaneous, and we are only beginning to understand the implications.

The more hopeful among us see tremendous opportunity in the widespread dissemination of knowledge. During the collapse of the Soviet Union it was the Internet that allowed those trapped behind the crumbling iron curtain to communicate with the outside world. The guilty secrets of government (the merger of government and business) have become much more difficult to hide. Increased communication and information sharing within the communities of science and technology have accelerated the pace of discovery and innovation.

There have also been consequences to this information revolution that we did not intend or expect. The same innovation which empowers individuals and communities also enables government and business to extend the reach of coercive and manipulative power. There is no corner of our digital lives that is ultimately private, and the tools to monitor our physical lives in real time are being actively used.

In 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, a framework was established for meeting the coming challenges of an increasing population on a planet of finite resources. Commonly known as "UN Agenda 21," this plan has had the support of every administration since George H. W. Bush. The report is some 300 pages long, and at a glance it appears to address a number of problems we would all seek to overcome, such as overpopulation, poverty and pollution. Taken as a whole, the plan describes the mission of government to basically

monitor and control life on planet earth.

The assumption behind this plan is that individuals lack the ability, the knowledge and resources, to make the best decisions for ourselves without government oversight and intervention. If you watch reality television or the nightly shooting report or if you skim the surface of headlines on the Internet, you might agree with those who would seek control. If you are concerned by the actions of individuals who make stupid decisions too numerous to list here or by the actions of individual (as defined by law) corporations to corrupt, pollute and destroy in the name of profit, you might take comfort in Agenda 21.

The problem, of course, is that when individual and corporate interest is woven into the fabric of government itself, the power to make stupid decisions, to corrupt, pollute and destroy, rather than being prevented, is amplified. The power to catalog, monitor and control life was a vision in 1992. In the 21st century technology is making that vision a reality.

Americans once had a tradition of independence and rebelliousness and we resisted anything that even hinted at coercion and control, whether it was proffered for our own "protection" or postured to hide an agenda for profit. But after a decade of being conditioned to fear enemies we did not make from places we have never been, that spirit of independence has eroded. The spirit of independence and patriotism, instead of being considered a quintessential American characteristic, is now often reserved for the pabulum of political speeches or viewed with suspicion as a dangerous aberration to be found among conspiracy theorists and domestic terrorists.

A large section of the population, affluent, aging and over time less willing to take any kind of risk clings to values that they are told are no longer mainstream. Younger generations, undereducated, uninterested in civil responsibilities and unconcerned with privacy, do not vote, and they, along with millions of others in the swelling ranks of the working poor, (and non working) look only to government for solutions. One wonders whether, when the time comes for the next generation to inherit the ship of state, they will do so as pilots or as passengers.

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.



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

Preachers and humor

I have always loved to laugh. Before I ever thought about preaching and the ministry I loved humor. Believe you me that after a half-century of preaching among Baptists I have been exposed to enough humor for a lifetime. After God called me to preach, my thoughts were that I should alter my personality to a more serious side. Some preachers that I had known possessed a pallbearer pale personality. But the gospel is "Good News" and preaching shouldn't be a "Hee Haw" theology of "gloom, despair and agony on me, deep dark depression, excessive misery." Charles Spurgeon was instructing some young ministers on facial expressions when they preached. He said, "When you preach on Heaven you should have a smile on your face!" One young spurt interrupted, "Dr. Spurgeon, when you preach on hell what kind of expression should you have?" Spurgeon said, "Just look normal young man, just look normal!" I believe in Heaven and in hell, but I also believe if we have been saved from hell and we are on our way to Heaven, we ought to be happy about it. If we are joyful and happy we just might influence others to want to go with us. Over the years I have learned that humor is beneficial in communicating God's truth. Mind you not every message lends itself to humor, but assembled on Sundays

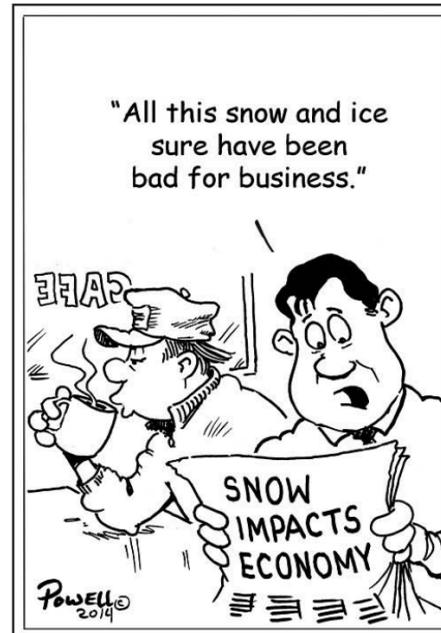
are throngs of people who have been beaten up by the world and all of its negativity during the week and they need a little love and laughter that carries them beyond Sunday. I believe laughter can be sacred. Charles Swindoll said, "It is often just as sacred to laugh as it is to pray." Numerous studies have been done that indicate that laughter boosts the blood flow to the brain (some folks must have only a trickle-you had better start laughing), it reduces stress, helps your respiration and has various physiological and psychological benefits. In other words laughter helps you to become a healthier and happier person. Why do some people never laugh? Could it be that their mind and heart have "blockers" to laughter? If you harbor bad feelings and resentment to others; if you have wrath, anger and bitterness in your soul, laughter is blocked from your being. I realize that laughter can be carried to excess. For example: "What goes ha, ha, ha, ha, plop? Someone who laughs his head off!" God has not called ministers to be comedians, but he has called us to be communicators of His glorious Word. The greatest joy and happiness is proclaiming to a dark world the Light of the Lord Jesus.

If anyone needs a sense of humor it is a minister. Moshe Waldoks said it well, "A sense of humor can help you overlook the unattractive, tolerate the unpleasant, cope with the unexpected, and smile through the unbearable." "...the cheerful heart has a continual feast" (Proverbs 15:15 NIV).

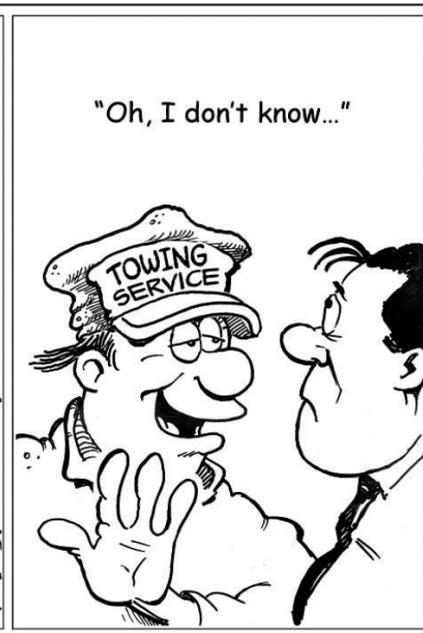
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"All this snow and ice sure have been bad for business."



"Oh, I don't know..."

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