

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

To the Editor:

Climate change is real

In response to the letter to the editor last week that attempted to deny that climate change is real, I would like to reply. Though I admire a person who stands up for what they believe, we still have to look at the scientific facts. They are: 1. Carbon dioxide produced by the burning of fossil is a strong greenhouse gas, which acts like a blanket and keeps more heat in the atmosphere. 2. As carbon dioxide has increased over the last 100 years, there has been a corresponding increase in global temperature, now having increased almost 1.5 degrees F. over the last 100 years. This is escalating now. 2014 was the hottest year in recorded history, and the 10 warmest years have all occurred since 1997. We are on pace to increase the average global temperature by up to 8-10 degrees by the end of the century if we do not act to decrease greenhouse gas production. 3. There is an increasing global meltdown of ice caps and glaciers. Though there was some rebound increase in polar ice cap volume from 2010 to 2013, it decreased again in 2014. Overall it is 19% lower than the 1981-2010 average. Though there has been some very minor increase in the East Antarctica ice volume, this has been more than offset by a decrease in the West Antarctica Ice Fields, with an overall recent yearly decrease in ice in the Antarctic by 125 cubic km/year. Greenland is losing 375 cubic km/year in volume. These volume losses have double or tripled since 2000. 4. The sea level is now increasing by 1/8 inch per year, almost double what it was 8-10 years ago, and it is predicted to continue to rise much more rapidly by the end of the century. 5. Just over 97% of published research that has been peer reviewed the gold standard in science-agree that the climate is warming and it is caused by humans. 6. Each second, we are increasing the heat on earth by the equivalent of 1-2 Hiroshima bombs.

With this, and far more evidence, I feel compelled by the God that I love and that rules my life -to act on climate change for the love of my children and countless children to come for many generations. We can act, we have the technology, and we can do this in a way that actually increases our GDP and employment.

Vernon Dixon



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Q: Dr. Don, What should I do when my teenage daughter is being rude toward me and I try to get her to stop, but my wife tells me in front of her to leave her alone? I don't want to feel like a wimp in my own family, but I really don't know what to do. Is there an easy solution?

A: If I had to answer that question directly I would say that the answer is simple but not easy. Perhaps it depends on your definition of easy. Let me give you my take on it and then you tell me if it's easy.

The situation you describe is not really a parenting question. It's actually a marriage question. And it goes like this: What is the key relationship in this family? Is it between mom and daughter, or is it between wife and husband. Once both of you agree on that simple issue, the answer to your question is easy.

So let me speak to the simple issue. The foundation of a family is not the relationship between parents and kids, it's the relationship between the husband and wife. That came first. That must always come first. The strong, sacred union of husband and wife creates the secure space where the kids can grow up knowing they are sheltered by both love and walls.

Anything or anyone – even the kids – who comes between the members of that union weakens it. The marriage vow you took had it right, the two have become one. And remember, it's "till death do us part," not "till kids do us part."

From the little information I have about your family let me observe that my hunch is you have allowed yourself to be marginalized in the family structure, which always erodes respect. And when kids lose respect they often replace it with rude. So the next step is for you and your wife to re-think the dynamics going on in your home. Is the marriage the lynch pin? Do all other relationships radiate out from there? Do you show a united front? Unless you're comfortable with Yes answers there, I suggest you and your wife do some reading/discussing together. Some reading suggestions: "Sacred Marriage," by Thomas; and "Two Become One," by Donald Joy.

Then be sure the two of you explain to your daughter that there are some changes afoot...as the two of you head out the door for a date night. Simple? Yes. Easy? You tell me.

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

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that considers questions of right and wrong and rules of conduct for various groups of people. Natural Law and common sense might suggest that what is unethical should also be illegal, but politics and business frequently demonstrate that this is not the case. Much of what is unethical is also "perfectly legal."

The difference between ethics and morals is mainly one of scale. Ethics applies to groups of people: families, companies, governments; morals is more personal. For many people ethics and morals are guided by religious belief. Few would disagree that society is significantly less religious than it was in the past, but is it also less ethical?

If we're talking about work ethic, I think that, at least in the United States, we are less ethical now than in the past. We have the lowest level of workforce participation in 36 years. Many of us who are unemployed are unwilling to take the menial or uncomfortable jobs eagerly sought by immigrants who are grateful for the opportunity. For others, work is not necessary in order to acquire food, housing... and cell phones, all of which are provided by a government quick to increase the amount of wealth redistributed from those who are working to those who are not. Many believe that this is a legitimate function of government to help the disadvantaged. It is also something governments do to reduce social unrest, and something political parties do to help win elections. It is all of these things in varying proportions, depending on one's political perspective. Sometimes government support is necessary, but sometimes it just does not encourage a healthy work ethic.

We have discussed here also the issue of quality, something which has declined with the growing willingness of unethical companies to sacrifice high standards for profit. Quality suffers also in the declining work ethic of those who decide that "they don't pay me enough to work that hard." Sadly, just one short generation ago physical labor and menial jobs were considered desirable. Factory jobs provided a living wage. American made products were the best in the world. Now one must search far and wide to find anything made here, and the garbage dumps overflow with cheap disposable goods.

What about morals? Surely they have declined as well, as evinced by the images promoted by media and the tabloid headlines seen all the way from the checkout line at the grocery store to the nightly news. However, the moral decline that we

are so often warned about from the pulpit may not be quite as dramatic as some in the religious community claim. Human nature just doesn't change that rapidly, if it changes at all. I suspect that the percentage of people breaking the Ten Commandments 2000 years ago was about the same as it is today, only today everything we do is reported with sound and fury in the 24 hour news cycle and constantly regurgitated on social media. Much of what was hidden or never discussed in polite (or repressed) society in previous generations is talked about openly today, but that doesn't necessarily mean that the behaviors are more prevalent.

On the other hand, for the many who have abandoned religion as a moral and ethical guide, there is no replacement. For the independent and trendy, everything is relative. We cannot make change or find North America on a map, but we are masters of rationalization. The husband who cheats on his wife because he decides his needs are not being fulfilled at home, the employee who dips into the till or carries merchandise out the back door because they don't pay her enough at work, the business owner who evades taxes or the thoughtless driver who throws trash on the road – what they all have in common is the ability to rationalize their behavior when it is unethical and self-serving. Right and wrong depends, to paraphrase former president Clinton, on what the definition of "is" is.

Media is often our worst enemy in the struggle to maintain moral and ethical standards. It is a short distance from the "leaked" sex tape to mainstream celebrity status. Our favorite make believe characters are the rebellious, "make your own rules" mavericks who disregard the ethics, morals, and often the laws of lesser creatures because these trivialities do not apply to bearers of the grand vision. When we elect these same visionaries to office, they often see themselves as immune to ethical questions, as in the case, for example, of a Secretary of State with a private email mail server and a lifelong mandate to become the first female president.

Alas, if we follow that train of thought into a discussion of the ethics and morals of politicians and presidents who have lied repeatedly, disregarded laws and by "executive power," made up their own rules, we would be here all day in a discussion that would include most of American history.

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.



The Veterans' Corner

By Scott Drummond, USCG Veteran

Greater love hath no man/ Max Flaig

Max Flaig was born March 28, 1936 in America's Heartland, Iowa. His father ran a band instrument shop and as a youngster, Max loved to help. Thus Max developed his love of music. Max explained he has always loved music and was also "intrigued" by our US Navy. Right out of high school as a youth, in 1956 Max enlisted in the US Navy and with his prior youthful musical experience was awarded the Navy School of Music. He became accomplished at Electric Bass, "his favorite toy", and led an unusual but very successful 18 year, 9 month and 10 day career at shore stations and shipboard alike, one of which was the original USS Enterprise! For his dedication, passion, abilities, skill, and commitment to being a strong leader and desire to inspire our servicemen and women, Max earned the rank of E-9 Master CPO. A rare breed indeed! We who have served understand the solid facts that absolutely nothing positive happens without our NCOs, in particular chiefs and senior sergeants, those who truly comprehend, understand and lead. Max seriously injured his left arm and shoulder when he fell off a cliff.

Max wanted it told that on a scale of 1-10 rating, his family rates a twelve! Max and his quick witted, brilliant, outgoing and Iowa born wife, Marilyn, moved to Hiawassee, GA and Max became the Chaplin of Hiawassee VFW Post 7807, for seven years, earning the love and respect

of all who recognized his ultimate respect for all veterans, and all people. He also played in various Christian bands in and around our mountain communities. He offers great respect for a prior mentor Beverly Chambers, and advises that all of us seek and look up to elder experienced veterans for wisdom, and to respect and honor their leadership, in our efforts to stand up for all that is good. He has a reputation as a quiet, laid back but very strong, sharing and loving Christian. Marilyn advised me that military life was very challenging and tough sometimes, but was nevertheless an extremely great education for her and their three "incredible" children, Bruce, Jeff and Cheri who are now "scattered" across America. We both agreed that in our youth, we really didn't know what we were doing, she as a young Navy wife, Max, and in fact me, but that we were determined to be a part of something greater than ourselves. She also was very strong in commenting that, "I'd never trade my life as a military wife, mother and partner, for any other on earth!" Inspiring doesn't begin to describe these two!

Max stated unequivocally that minus his volunteering to serve our America, you and me, in our US Navy, his life would have "probably" been terrible, as he would have wandered astray. Our lives are indeed enriched and have been protected and preserved by folks like Max and Marilyn Flaig. God bless Max and Marilyn.

Semper Paratus!

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- U.S. Congressman Doug Collins, 9th District, Washington, DC 20515, 202-225-9893
- Rep. Stephen Allison, Georgia House of Representatives, 404-656-0177 or 0185
- Sen. John Wilkinson, Georgia State Senate, 404-463-5257
- Towns County Commissioner Bill Kendall, 706-896-2276
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