

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Letters to The Editor

### A Realistic Lawyer's View:

A previous writer's May 21 letter opposing the use of the TCRC by a Christian group was very well-written and is seemingly logical. But, as one who was admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court just 3 years after graduating from law school, I disagree with (but acknowledge) his viewpoint. I begin by saying that a logical conclusion must start with one or more valid premises. The First Amendment specifically states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; ... or the right of the people peaceably to assemble..." [Emphasis mine; see also the subsequent asterisk pertaining to Congress.] Next (and I believe historically pertinent), the preamble to the Declaration of Independence specifically recognizes God and the conclusion of that Declaration specifically appeals to the "Supreme Judge." I interpret the foregoing to mean that the federal government (and, via the 14th Amendment, states and municipalities) cannot "establish" (i.e., "mandate"; there is no mention of the writer's word "promote," a synonym for "encourage" or "suggest") any one, only and exclusive religion (for example, and in a historical relevant context, the Anglican Church in England, from which the U.S. declared its independence). However, I readily concede that the U.S. Supreme Court (which I, as a strict-see the 10th Amendment-and common sense constructionist of the Constitution, am not one bit, as is my right, to criticize) currently interprets the crux of this matter the same way as does the writer. But I believe the writer must concede that the U.S. Supreme Court decisions are sometimes wacky. For example, would he tell today's woman that she could not vote or own property? Tell African Americans that they are but a piece of property? Deny that the Court sometimes reverses itself? That such a reversal could occur following a change in the composition of the Court?

Another historical tidbit: The words "In God We Trust" were first put on U.S. coinage in the midst of the Civil War (1864), the government (including, per Article 1, Section 8(5) of the U.S. Constitution, Congress!\*) in then so doing quoting from Psalms 118:8 - "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man." Will any of us, regardless of our religion or lack thereof, refuse, on principle, U.S. money as legal tender?

While I (sadly) agree (considering the current state of the law - various opinions and the contents of a May 28 letter notwithstanding - and considering the current Supreme Court panel) with the writer that it'd be better for prayer breakfasts to be conducted in multi-denominational worship centers, I'd also suggest that if he chooses (and it's all Constitutionally about freedom of choice: yours, his and mine) not to attend or participate, nobody's stopping him.

Regarding the commissioner's response to the writer's letter, in my opinion it was partially ill-considered. In my view, the commissioner, in his role as sole commissioner and therefore Towns' official spokesperson, should simply and solely have said "all Towns facilities are open to all persons equally." But by his additional statements (though socially and politically popular), he has arguably stigmatized the writer into a pariah, whereupon, from a practical standpoint, the writer would not be inclined to seek the use of the TCRC. A federal court could deem these additional statements as having "a chilling effect" (a common legal term in civil rights cases) whereupon the writer could possibly have a cause of action for a civil rights violation, which, win or lose, would cause Towns to incur time, expenses and other annoyances. Folks, federal courts don't much care about your (or my) personal beliefs; all they care about is whether the law has been correctly applied.

Claude Spears

### Dear Editor:

Federal, state and local officials are sworn to uphold the U.S. Constitution. America is a secular government founded on the principal of equal protection under the law. As a grass-roots lover of liberty, I support the rule of law and I believe that no person or group is above the law.

By definition, secular government is the opposite of a theocracy based on rule by religious fundamentalism or faith-based dictates as determined by religious leaders. Nowhere in the U.S. Constitution is mention made of Christianity, the Bible, or God, nor is there any mention of Jesus Christ. Moreover, one of the keystone laws as written by our founding fathers is the First Amendment to the Constitution that says no religion shall be established by government. Conversely, government shall not interfere with religious groups right to practice their faith outside of government.

In subsequent judicial rulings, courts have injected Jeffersonian language to describe this separation of church and state. In *Everson v. Board of Education*, 330 U.S. 1 (1947), citing Jefferson, the court concluded: "The First Amendment has erected a wall between church and state. That wall must be kept high and impregnable. We could not approve of the slightest breach." Day of Prayer observations led by municipal leaders in government facilities violates the separation of the church state clause to the Constitution and is a violation of the law.

Lance G. Jobson

### Dear Editor,

On April 21, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) published a proposal in the Federal Register that would greatly expand the authority of the federal government to regulate water and wet areas on private property.

Towns County Farm Bureau believes this proposed rule goes too far. This rule affects everyone who owns property, not just farmers. We urge all property owners to submit comments to EPA telling them to back off and withdraw the proposed rule. Georgia Farm Bureau has a web page [www.gfb.org/ditchtherule](http://www.gfb.org/ditchtherule) dedicated to opposing this federal overreach. Additional information can be found at this site along with a sample set of comments interested persons can use to express opposition to the rule. Comments can be added to address specific concerns of the sender. If the rule is finalized, EPA and the Corps will regulate virtually every area of ground that gets wet in the country, including those areas that only have water flow during heavy rains. The change would expand regulatory authority to many land features, including ditches and ponds, giving the agencies the power to regulate land use. This rule is an effort to go around the will of Congress and to thwart U.S. Supreme Court case decisions on the issue.

These federal agencies have no accountability to the citizens they seek to regulate. Please take a few minutes to tell EPA to "Ditch the Rule." Visit the aforementioned web page and submit comments urging EPA to withdraw the rule. The comment deadline is Oct. 20. Your comments do matter. The original comment deadline of July 21 was extended after the agencies received numerous requests for an extension.

Sincerely,  
Dennis Miles, President  
Towns County Farm Bureau

### To the Editor:

Recently I was asked to purchase a ticket for an event to support a mission to go to another state to help repair homes of poor people. A project that I thought very worthwhile. The next day I happened to go with a friend while he volunteered to deliver food to "homebound" folks in our county. He told me that he was one of eight volunteers doing this every week and that he had over a dozen homes to visit which would take well over a couple of hours. While we rode he told me about the Towns County Food Pantry. I came away with two specific impressions. The first was learning just how many families the Food Pantry helps each week, and the amount of work and logistics that goes into this project. The second was the shock of seeing the abysmal conditions in which some of our neighbors live. We delivered food to homes that I did not believe anyone could possibly live in. Most were elderly widows living way out in the back of beyond in the old family homestead, which looked like it had been built well over a hundred years ago. Others in old trailer homes patched up any way they could with plywood that had certainly seen many years of weather exposure.

At this time I remembered the ticket I was asked to buy to help this mission to another state. WHY? Why are we spending money to help these good hearted folks fly across the country to help others when we need so much here at home?

My friend introduced me to one of the folks who helps run the Food Pantry and we spoke about the issues they confront on a weekly basis. The first is financial. I was not aware of the fact that the Pantry does not receive any funding from any governmental agency, but is totally funded by private contributions by the good folks of the community, either directly or through churches or other organizations. The second was the issue of food. They are able to get food fairly inexpensively through the Food Bank, but the problem is that their supply is drying up and the variety of products is getting more limited week after week. This forces them to seek food from other sources at a greater expense. It doesn't take a mathematician to realize that this is a mission that we need to increase our support to in any and every way possible.

He told me that he spent his life, like many of us, with blinders on busy running his business and raising a family, never realizing his good fortune in being able to put plenty and varied food on the table for his family and a solid roof over their heads, not knowing that this was not the way for everyone. It made me realize how, like him, I neither had given it much thought. Having listened to him about the problems of feeding the hungry, and witnessing the atrocious conditions some of our neighbors are living under, just how important it is that we should be reconsidering just how and where we send our charity money.

I also learned that the Food Pantry is a mission organized under the Towns County Cooperative Ministries, a 501©3 organization formed by many churches in the county coming together to help the community. Under this TCCM umbrella other missions can be formed, such as one to help repair the homes of those in Towns County that are in desperate need of repair. This could be funded by the moneys we are already spending to go out of the county. And those strong backs that are going to wield hammers in other parts of the country could do it right here at home. It brings to mind that old saying, "charity begins at home". I don't know how many other good intentioned folk are sending money or supporting missions out of the county, but Towns County is our home and that of many people in desperate need right here.

He gave me his card with the Pantry's address and phone number, which is 1294 Jack Dayton Circle, Young Harris, GA 30582, 706-896-4783, and although his hands are full, he would be happy to help guide and set up such a mission if some folks were to step forward. And anyone was welcome to go out and experience and witness what I did with one of their volunteers.

Humbly submitted  
John Fitzgerald.

### To the Editor:

On June 11th, our redbone hound got out of his pen. After looking everywhere for him, and a sleepless night, I thought to call the Sheriff's office and ask if anyone around the jail had seen him, as we live in the Crooked Creek area. As it turned out, our dog had been overseeing, and making friends with, some workmen at the jail all day long. One of the Sheriff's deputies, Sgt. Jimmy Nations, was kind enough to bring him home to us and put him back in his pen. He even fed him for me after returning him to his pen. We can't thank him enough for his kindness.

Mrs. Harold King

### 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](mailto: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

### What are you making?

Life is full of makers. In fact, all of us are makers. God made us to be makers. He gave us life and what we make of life is a personal choice.

Years ago, before cable, digital and dish TV, folks erected antennas into the clouds for reception. A family had bought a TV and an antenna and were trying to get the antenna hoisted up, but were having a hard time because they didn't have the necessary tools. Along came a fellow with lots of tools and with his tools and assistance the antenna was up in no time. One member of the family was looking at all of his tools and asked, "What do you make with these special tools?" The stranger's reply was, "mostly friends."

All of us have the tools to make life and living a daily experience of joy, happiness and goodness for ourselves and for others but sometimes we use the tools for the wrong purpose. Over my life span I have met those who were convinced that their purpose in life was to make a bundle. All of their time, energy, effort, ability; all of their pursuits were aimed in the direction of making money. Their total conversation expressed their obsession for making a fortune or making a killing. Making money will never make the grade.

Sadly, the world is overpopulated with seemingly bright and intelligent people who are daily consumed with making a living and making ends meet.

Some just make it from paycheck to paycheck. It is a constant battle for them to make a go of it financially. While all of us must make a living and make ends meet, that is not the whole purpose of life. Just to feed, shelter and clothe the physical body will never achieve God's plan for us. There is also a multitude of the earth's inhabitants that seem to believe the main goal for life and living is to make a name for themselves. They engage in activities, causes and events with reckless abandon to make their mark or make a hit. For them, if they have recognition and are noticed by others, they will be a success. But many die empty and lonely deaths even though they reach celebrity status. You will fall short in life if you have only made a name for yourself.

The prodigal son (Luke 15) in mountain vernacular had made a gom of his life. But he got it right. When he left; all he could say was "give me." When he returned, his prayer was "make me."

A couple I once knew that had been married for many years always made jokes with each other (especially the husband). Once I asked the husband where the wife was. His reply, "Oh, she's at the beauty shop." "She's trying to make a comeback." That's what the prodigal did. He made a comeback. You may have made a gom (a major, mega mess) of your life but you can make a comeback with God's help. The devil wants to make a laughing stock of you but God wants to make you a new creature through His love and grace. Make up your mind today, let God make you a blessing in order that you may make a difference in this world.

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"I'd have more faith in outsider candidates if they didn't run so hard to get inside!"

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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	Clerk of Superior Court Cecil Dye, 706-896-2130	Tax Commissioner Bruce Rogers, 706-896-2267
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