

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

To the Editor:

In response to the letter protesting the use of our Towns County Recreation Center for the use of religious services, the writer states that he is a taxpayer and a non-believer and this is against his rights. How about the believers that also pay taxes, do they have no rights? There are more believers in Towns County than non-believers and probably pay lots more taxes. There is no law that says that anyone, including the writer, has to attend these meetings. We applaud Mr. Kendall for his stand on this matter. We will be praying that the writer will become a believer before he stands before his Maker, the Almighty God.

Bethel Baptist Church members

Dear Editor,

Please, please, please no more printed letters from the emotional writer regarding the location and our observance of the National Day of Prayer Breakfast 2014. I admire your openness for accepting his first letter, no matter it's unanimous unpopularity, but to have given a second forum to one who is so anti-Towns County was way over and above any possible duty you might feel.

The vast majority of us will ensure that the 2015 Prayer Breakfast is "better than the last one" and we will insist it be held in the same location as the 2014 assembly.

The U.S. Post Office has a good supply of "Change of Address" forms should any of your "Letter To The Editor" authors feel the desire to move from Towns County and Georgia.

James J. Harber

Dear Editor:

During the May 20 election, many Towns County Citizens went to the precinct where they have always voted. Upon attempting to vote, they were told that Towns County precinct boundaries were changed and they would have to go to another precinct to vote. This was news to them. According to Georgia law, "When the boundary lines of a precinct are altered, all affected electors shall be notified of the change at least thirty (30) days before the next primary or election". This didn't happen and the result was mass confusion at the polls.

We have no idea how many voters were disenfranchised that day. As an example, one voter was sent from Macedonia to Hiawassee. At Hiawassee they couldn't find his information. Finally, he got disgusted and stormed out saying "I just won't vote".

Since the law wasn't followed, a number of people have questioned the validity of the election. This prompted me to visit the Towns County Registrars office on Friday, June 20 to inquire about this situation. I was met with a very uncooperative attitude and was told a few times "I don't know what you're talking about". I persisted in my questioning and then was told "I don't want you in here. If you don't leave immediately I'm going to call the Sheriff's Deputy at the Court House". Within a minute the Deputy arrived and escorted me from the premises.

Gary W. Meier

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Understanding the turmoil consuming the Middle East is difficult in the bedlam of cognitive dissonance which is the 24 hour news cycle. The talking head is the constant companion of world events as violence spills out of Syria and into Iraq. The middle east is a wildfire fueled by religion and demographics and fanned by the efforts of today's "great powers" to contain it, or direct it to their own advantage in the ongoing geopolitical struggle for oil and natural gas.

One can also frame the conflict in terms of a proxy war between the Shia of Iran and the Sunni of Saudi Arabia. This family feud dates back to the mid Seventh Century and the power struggle that ensued after the death of the Prophet Mohammed. At the risk of oversimplifying the case, there are elements among these two branches of Islam who hate each other as much or more than they hate Jews and Christians. There is no purely political, or peaceful, solution to a conflict which has survived the rise and fall of great civilizations, two world wars and millions of tons of high explosives.

The cannon fodder of this ancient struggle is still, as always seems to be the case in war, young and male. Radical Islam is manned by millions of idealistic and testosterone pressurized by unemployment and very few outlets for that pent up energy.

The conflict is guided, as always, by cooler, grayer heads coldly calculating the means to direct this conflagration towards their own goals without burning their own interests. Sunni Saudi Arabia, our dubious "ally," friend of presidents and one of the world's biggest suppliers of oil, does not relish the thought of Shia Iran, already rich in oil reserves, armed with nuclear weapons and further enriched by Iraqi oil fields.

Iran, nurturing its own imperial designs, cannot accept a Sunni hegemony led by their arch enemies in Saudi Arabia. Witness the recent improvement in American and Iranian relations as the US reluctantly accepts the reality that Iran is currently the only regional power capable of countering the rapid advance of ISIS through Iraq.

What a minefield for any American President to attempt to cross! How do we cooperate with Iran to stabilize the situation without offending too much the Saudis? What about the wild card of Israel, bristling with nuclear weapons and quite capable of taking matters into its own hands when threatened? When and where will the Chinese, who

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.*

have recently been purchasing over 40% of Iraqi-produced oil choose to act?

What about the Russians? They have been fighting radical Islam longer than anyone. They have already acted to secure a greater share of fossil fuel outside the volatile middle east by annexing the Crimea and gaining for themselves the massive natural gas and oil reserves surrounding that peninsula. They have been Iran's closest ally, and last week when Obama signaled that the government installed in Iraq by United States must go, Putin announced his support of that government against the ISIS fighters. Russia is heavily invested in the oilfields of western Iraq.

As is often the case with world events, it is hard to determine whether the situation in the middle east is out of control or proceeding according to plan. Reports are surfacing which indicate US involvement in training ISIS fighters at secret bases in Jordan. In about one week, ISIS fighters conquered what has been predominantly Sunni territory while almost simultaneously, Kurdish Peshmerga moved to conquer territory inhabited by ethnic Kurds. The current state of affairs in Iraq quite closely resembles a US map of the "greater middle east" published in 2006 which partitioned Iraq into three ethnically homogeneous regions: A Shiite state, a Sunni state and a Kurdish one. At the very least, a volatile region consuming itself by war and acts of terror might, for a while, take some of the wind out of the vision of a worldwide Islamic state. It might keep Russia and China preoccupied while the US, moving ever closer to energy independence, can better afford to let the middle east become someone else's problem.

Meanwhile back home, we will pay more for gasoline; at least 10 to 15% more in the coming months. We will shake our heads at the "religious nuts" fighting each other in the middle east. Some of us may catch a glimpse of the invisible hands moving events there, but as our nation gears up for another presidential campaign, too few of us will see those same hands moving in America as we debate prayer in public buildings, abortion and gun control - all those perennial "religious" issues that divide us year after year, election after election.

At the end of the next long and excruciating campaign, if history repeats, we will once again be offered an opportunity to vote for coke or pepsi, the kettle or the pot. Will we remember the imperial presidents of the past who opened Pandora's Box in the middle east? Will we soon forget the current imperial president who compounded those errors and simultaneously with pen and microphone, created chaos on our southern border? Will it ever occur to us that, despite what remains of democracy in this country, the worst of the problems we now face and will pass on to our children were created, each in his turn, by one man in one oval office?

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

Full circle

It has been a little over ten years since I retired (changed gears). What all retirees told me has come to pass: "You will be busier than you have ever been!" How true! In these ten years I have served as interim to five other churches. Now life has brought me full circle. Fifty years ago, at age 25, Morganton Baptist Church extended a call for me to become their full-time pastor. (I was serving as a bi-vocational pastor and working a secular job as manager of a grocery store). Believing their call was a call from God, I resigned my part-time church and left my secular job, moved my wife, Regina and our two children, Mike and Michele to Morganton, Georgia.

While serving as their pastor, I commuted to college for four years earning a BA degree in sociology. After serving as their pastor for six years they sent me off to seminary at New Orleans, LA. In my wildest dreams I never thought I would be back in North Georgia and certainly not at Morganton Baptist Church. Now, at the age of seventy-five, I have accepted a call to return as their interim pastor. As someone has said, "Life is queer with its twists and turns as every one of us sometimes learn." The rapid pace of these fifty years is absolutely astonishing. The older I get the faster life becomes.

I pulled into a food mart the other day to fill up with gas and people were coming and going like ants. These food marts

are symbolic of our fast moving world. There was a sign outside that read, "Eat and get gas." That sign had more than one meaning. I don't mean to be ugly, but I got gas-pumping gas. I didn't have to eat anything. I just listened to the zinging of the ting, ting, ting of that gas pump. When my tank was filled and I looked at the total price I was more bloated than my tank. My stomach was tighter, but my wallet was thinner. It certainly takes less time to fill up your tank but costs you more.

One of the quick things that I thank God for is that I can get my receipt at the pump and I don't have to go inside and line up behind all of those people buying lottery tickets. The names of these food marts reveal their competitive nature to get you in and get you out as fast as possible. For example, there is "Grab and Go", "Toot and Take", "Buy and By", etc. As a kid I would walk into "Luther White's Country Store", buy a "dope" (soft drink), Luther would put into a "poke" (bag) and I would "tote" (carry) it home. Luther's store could have been named "Tote-A-Poke". Yes, we have our "drive-thrus", our "walk-in-clinics", "quick stops", "pit stops", "one-stop-shopping", "quickie marriages", and even quicker divorces. With our minute-market-mentality, many Christians have turned to Christianettes that grab a TV preacherette that preaches a sermonette while they smoke cigarettes. Life is not to be gulped down it is to be sipped. It is not to zip by but to be lived in Christ Jesus.

If you desire a life of rest for the rest of life read and obey Jeremiah 6:16 and Isaiah 40:31.



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

We have a winner. You may know that we confer the Dr. Don Annual THIRST award each year on someone involved in a glaring example of inept parenting. This time the honor goes to Amy Redwine, whose 17-year-old daughter, Violet, is a high school senior in Lexington, NC. Oh, the THIRST Award is an acronym that stands for This Is Really STupid. Here's the story.

On the last day of school Violet shows up wearing a dress that, according to school standards, is inappropriate. The school has a dress code and the dress didn't make the cut. Too short. So, they sent her home. No other penalty, they just sent her home and told her to change her dress. Understandably, Violet was embarrassed.

Mom was not happy and so far I'm kind of sympathetic. Dress codes tend to be pretty subjective and a dress deemed appropriate by the judges can be instantly changed by a simple tug on the waist. Kids delight in pushing boundaries, so the skirt police don't have an easy assignment. But I submit that this story is not about modesty, or even about dress codes. It's about a youngster's response to authority.

Mom might have helped

her daughter understand that life isn't always fair, and that schools establish norms and rules they believe are in the best interest of the students and the families they serve, and that if you disagree there are ways to express displeasure with those rules. Rebellion is not one of those ways.

Here's what mom did: She said in effect, "I'll show those prudes what I think of their dumb rule. I am going to wear the dress in question to Violet's graduation. I am going to stick my finger in the eye of the judges and show them who's boss." She told the TV reporter who interviewed her, "I'm going to wear it in front of everybody and be proud..." And she did.

Something else mom did: She missed a great opportunity to help Violet learn how to deal with unpleasant situations, challenges, even perhaps being mistreated. That should be part of her education, too. Was the school unfair? You and I don't have enough information to answer that. Could mom have helped Violet grow up a little, develop some new skills, learn how to deal with authority? She could have; she blew it. Her THIRST Award is in the mail.

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

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