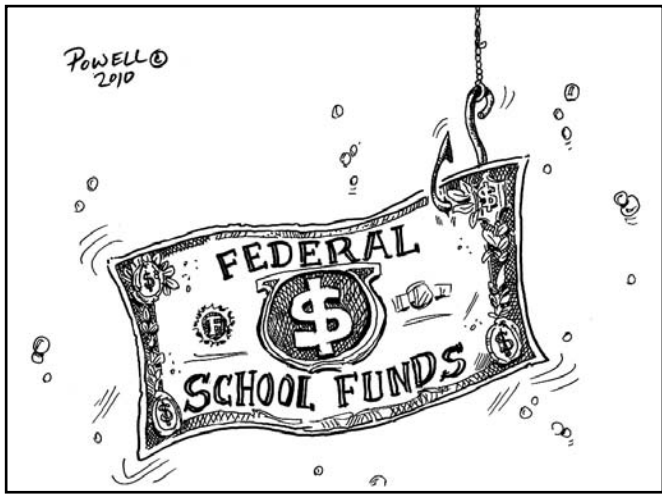


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



A note from the Tax Commissioner

Today I would like to take a moment of your time to discuss property tax collections in our county. My office is currently at a 92% rate of collections for 2009; a very good percentage considering our local economy and its effect on each and every one of us.

Now, we must continue the collections process with the remaining 8% who are delinquent on property taxes. I realize and understand that many customers have had tough times this year, but regardless, you have a bill and all bills must

be paid.

During the remainder of June, my office will be preparing and mailing delinquent notices. Please do not take the notices lightly, as we will be actively pursuing collections.

As always, my office is open to you, customers, taxpayers, and friends. If you have any questions, please call me or my staff; we are available to you Monday-Friday 8:30-4:30.

*Bruce Rogers
Towns County
Tax Commissioner*

From the Desk of:



Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

This week I want to be sure and remind everyone of the Second Annual Fundraiser for the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes is this Friday, June 11. The event will last from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. and there will be a lot of exciting things to do. Aside from the trap shoot competition, we are going to have music, air rifle competitions, barbecue, silent auctions, raffles, Sheriff's Office K-9 demonstrations, and much more.

This will be a great opportunity to come out and enjoy a great day of fun filled activities for the whole family as well as help raise money for Georgia's less fortunate children. There are some special guests who will be attending the event including Senator Jim Butterworth, Representative Stephen Allison, and several of our district and local officials such as our District Attorney Stan Gunter and his Chief Assistant District Attorney Jeff Langley, members of the Georgia Sheriffs' Association and Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes staff, including Sheriff Sid Roberts (ret.) and "Bud" Cody Director of the Georgia Sheriffs' Association. Bud was instrumental in helping the Sheriffs get the Sheriffs' Youth Homes started all those years ago and he is still very active in this mission. These men are very personable and are looking forward to visiting with you. Each of them has pledged their support of the children of the Youth Homes.

Last year we gave out

some great prizes and there are more to give away this year. Prizes this year include, but are not limited to, several shotguns and rifles, pontoon boat free rentals, guided hunts, 1/2 day guided fishing at Noontootla Creek Farms, hunting and fishing gear and much more. We also have available raffle tickets for those who would like to participate in the drawings while helping support the children. You can purchase raffle tickets by contacting the Sheriff's Office at 706-896-4444. You do not have to be present to win.

All proceeds of the day's event will go directly to the support of the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes. The children in the care of the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes are good children who have never been in any trouble with the law. These are boys and girls who simply need a chance and the sheriffs of Georgia are offering them the support that they need to succeed in life. This is a great charity that I believe in. As a public charity, all donations qualify for the highest tax deduction allowed by law.

I want to take a moment to personally thank Dick Fillie, Ed and Verlee Jones, Russ Schoetker, Sheriff Sid Roberts, Jeff Edge, Tully Griggs, Gene Margelli, and the entire Chatuge Gun Club staff and membership for their dedication and support to helping make last year's event a success and for helping to plan this year's event. I could not have done this without you all and I thank you!

All are invited to come out to the event which will be held at the Chatuge Gun Club range on Owl Creek. For directions to the range contact the Towns County Sheriff's Office at 706-896-4444. You do not have to participate in the competitions to come out and enjoy the day. I look forward to seeing you all there!

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Our memory for history is short and our attention span is even shorter for historical perspective on current events. Headlines again decry the "crisis in leadership" that we face today but if there is any truth in headlines, the crisis extends back in time to the beginnings of our history as a nation. Even someone allergic to dusty old history books can remember that some of the catchy phrases being used to confront Barack Obama have been recycled from the Bush years. "Obama's Katrina" is just one of the cheesy captions being used to describe the president's response, or lack of it, to the Gulf oil spill.

Some have compared today's wide range of problems to the challenges faced by the declining Roman Empire. The Romans struggled to pay for maintaining a military presence at the far flung corners of their empire and this economic challenge was exacerbated by corruption in their government.

One can easily find parallels to modern times, but if you searched the annals of history from yesterday's newspaper to the beginning chapters of the Bible, you would be hard pressed to find a time when corruption was not a problem and leadership was not in crisis.

Yet empires do decline and nations fall and being creatures of some reason, we seek explanations when things change. Historians do not agree on cause and effect for the rise and fall of nations. Modern thinkers do not agree on the evolution or devolution of American society, but where we do find general agreement is among the general population where we live the lives behind the statistics. The majority of us are in agreement that the times are troubled indeed and for the first time in modern history our children are unlikely to be as well off as their parents.

There are no easy answers to be found in the historical record, but as one born at the end of the Baby Boomer generation, I have lived long enough to see a new generation waiting in the wings and to perceive some changes that have happened in my own lifetime. The one change that I believe bears most directly on the problems we face today is the systemic decline in integrity that can be found all the way from Main Street to Pennsylvania Avenue.

I'm not talking about religion or even morality here. The German people before WWII were among the most religious and moral (and best educated) people of their time, but that did not save them from disaster. By "integrity" I mean truthfulness and consistency in principles. Integrity is what

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.

holds a society together and while there have always been liars and thieves in every walk of life and though governments have always lied in varying degrees, arguably when the national integrity drops below a certain threshold, decline is imminent.

I can think of very few political campaigns in living memory where the truth was not bent or broken. I can think of no administration which did not at some point attempt to deceive the American people. What seems different, however, is the lack of offense we now take to the lies that accompany politics and governing like thunder accompanies lightning. What seems different is the level of corruption that engenders the lie, corruption that is found not only in government but in business all the way from the small corporation which can be manipulated to enrich a few individuals to the large multinational that can pick the pockets of an entire generation, also for the benefit of the few. We have all heard the story of the CEO's given millions in bonus pay, some even after bankrupting their company. Most of us have seen an incompetent supervisor promoted despite his performance because of nepotism or political connections. What seems different now is the frequency with which these stories arise.

Perhaps part of the problem is the hierarchical structure of the corporation.

In a democracy or a republic, theoretically, power is derived from the people and when malfeasance is found in leadership circles it can be weeded out by election if not by due process of law. In a corporation, however, power is wielded by a CEO and a Board of Directors and the influence of stockholders is distant or diluted. There are few checks and balances on the power concentrated into a few hands inside a corporation and the integrity of the company depends on the integrity of a relatively few individuals.

When corporate power gets into bed with government power and integrity is an issue, one of the results can be seen washing up on the shores of Louisiana.

As for the decline in integrity, volumes could be written on the subject, and while we might argue over the root cause, some of the mechanism, at least, seems clear.

We are a generation brought up to "create our own reality" and we are saturated by media which reinforces that idea. We worship celebrity and we are reminded at all times of the excesses, the affairs and the crimes of these awful role models, our precious actors, sports figures and politicians. We observe that, at least for these special people, there seems to be no consequence for their actions. We know it isn't fair. We all want to be special. We all want to be the "Golden Child," and when we are presented with examples on a daily, even hourly basis of people who act with no consequence, for some of us it becomes easier to cheat on our taxes, to cut corners, to fish off the company dock or to try and change the reality of our actions by talking it away. We can do this as individuals or we can do it as a nation, but there is a reality no amount of talk or spin will change. That reality is standing in line at the unemployment office. That reality is rotting in the marshes of Louisiana. Lack of integrity helped to create it. We ignore it at our own peril.



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

Prerequisite for a happy marriage

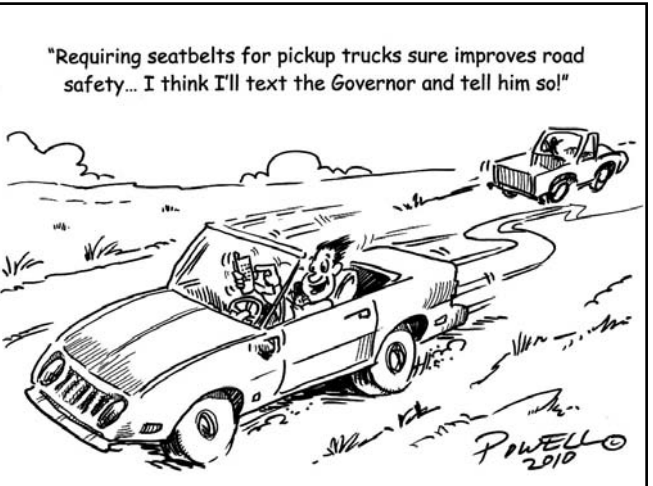
June is the traditional month for marriages. I am not sure why, but it is the month that most couples plan their weddings. While serving as a pastor before I agreed to marry a couple, I required them to attend counseling sessions. One of the first questions that I asked a couple was, "Why have you decided to get married?" Almost without exception the answer was, "We are in love." That was the answer I had hoped to receive. Then, I asked that mystifying question of the ages, "Tell me what love is?" The couple would look at each other and then, almost in unison, would say to each other, "You go first." They were already nervous and when you're nervous is not a really good time to define love. After the couple had done their best to define love (most of the time they described rather than defined) I had the privilege to share the Bible's instruction about love. I know the Bible is old, but it is more up to date than this newspaper you are reading. A lot of things are old, but we still need them in this rip-roaring, revved up world. The sun is pretty old, but I don't believe we want to discard it. Well, what is love anyway? Is it just a four letter word made up of two consonants, L and V, and two vowels O and E, and two fools, you and me? Or, is it a feeling you feel when you feel a feeling that you have never felt before? Or is it like someone has said, "Life is one fool thing after another, and love is two fools after each other?"

Is love just a romantic idea perpetrated upon us by Hollywood? No, love is a gift from God revealed in His Holy Word. Forget Hollywood, read the Holy Word. Hollywood talks about reel love which is based on lust. The Holy Word reveals real love based on a commitment between two people who pledge themselves to each other - no matter what happens in the future. This is the kind of marriage which is sacred and Holy Ground. This marriage is not a human contract, but a Divine Covenant. God is love, and any marriage that does not have God has only a horizontal type of love. A Christian marriage is a triangle - God, man and woman. Man did not originate the idea of marriage. God ordained marriage and performed that first wedding in the Garden of Eden. Any man that does not have a relationship with God can never love his wife to the fullest. The same is true for the woman. The highest kind of love is God's love, agape love. Christian marriage is one man, one woman for life. It is a life-long commitment. Some people stand at the marriage altar and say, "I do," until I can do better. Sad to say it only takes some of them a few months or in some cases just a few weeks to do better. Our world is littered with the debris of broken homes, shattered dreams, crushed children, and bitter wives and husbands. When marriages fail, the toll on human life is beyond calculations. My prayer for all you newly weds is that you will build your marriage on God's love revealed to us through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Leave all other relationships, cleave to each other and weave a life together. Remember you can't walk together through life going in opposite directions!

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