

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



The Middle Path

by Don Perry

I woke up abruptly from a sound sleep during the Republican debates Saturday night when the network dramatically increased the volume for a commercial break. This statement is almost a koan, a paradox given to Zen students to be meditated upon. It is very revealing of the current state of the nation. Think about it.

We didn't really hear anything new Saturday night. The candidates said what they have said in the past, but the issue at stake for the lumpen electorate is not really the ideas that the candidates have, but how well the candidates "perform" on stage. Think about that for a moment. The candidates present basically the same material from debate to debate, but the polls indicate that our opinion of their electability changes based on how they look and sound on television. We track the candidates from performance to performance and rarely hear anyone address the core issues which actually affect our lives.

One among the many, Ron Paul, in the few moments granted him by the celebrity moderators, did address core issues. He spoke of how, when a government destroys its currency, it accelerates the transfer of wealth from the people to the financial sector. He pointed out the fact that if our elected officials actually kept their oath of office - to protect and defend the Constitution - then many of our other problems would not exist at all. Rep. Paul has been consistent in delivering his message, but these are not truths that Americans, for the large part, are ready to embrace.

History provides us with several examples of what happens when a currency is destroyed. Debtors benefit by being able to pay off their debts with worthless paper. Exchange agents benefit by picking up real assets for worthless paper and holding those assets until the day that they can be exchanged for real money. Tremendous wealth is transferred from average citizens to elite individuals and institutions positioned to receive it. Unfortunately our fiscal policies and our relationship to the Federal Reserve and the central bank is beyond our understanding; not that we can't understand it, but we simply do not have access to information that has been held in secret for decades. All we know is that everything costs more; we have less money at the end of the week than we did before and it is harder to make ends meet. Millions know that there are few jobs available now that our unemployment benefits have run out and we have been removed from official statistics. Millions know that we are one

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.

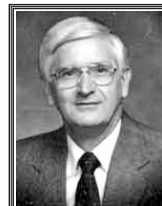
illness or accident away from bankruptcy. We know that these problems exist, but too many of us still trust that they can be solved by the institutions we trust, the institutions which have been in place all of our lives. For a growing number of people, however, the awareness is slowly dawning that many of our problems are actually caused by those institutions.

There exists in Republican and conservative circles an idea that usually goes unchallenged by so-called Democrats, and that is the idea that wealth creates jobs. A corollary to this theory is the idea that we need to keep our banks healthy so that they can loan money to wealthy people in order to continue that process of job creation. This idea continued unchallenged from the Bush to the Obama Administration, but that is a topic for another time and one which we will revisit when Obama and the Democrats attempt to hop on the wave of protest now growing across the nation and ride it into a second term as champions of the people.

For now, however, it is important to realize that when we are discussing the tax code and changes to that code which are sorely needed, the idea that the wealthy create jobs and therefore should be treated gently by the tax code, is incomplete. Rich CEO's do not create jobs. Consumers create jobs. All of the great innovations which built successful corporations did so only because of the consumers who bought the products. We do not need to give tax breaks to the extremely wealthy so that they can spend more to stimulate the economy. An extra ten million dollars in the hands of an individual will probably, for the most part, end up sitting in a bank or converted to shares of stock. If, however, you give ten thousand people an extra thousand dollars, the majority of that money will end up going back into the economy via the purchase of goods and services.

We need to learn to separate the baby from the bath water when we are discussing tax code, fiscal policy and government intervention in the markets. We have one of the highest corporate tax rates in the world. We have a hodgepodge of rules and regulations governing business which are imposed by a bureaucracy which does not administer or enforce those rules consistently. As a result of high taxes and government meddling, companies have moved millions of jobs offshore in order to remain viable. Nevertheless, while government impedes business in general, it allows certain favored sectors advantages and it allows, through loopholes and deductions, some wealthy individuals to pay a lower tax rate than the average worker.

So the candidates drone on and argue issues that will have little or no effect on the problems we face. For all the effect that their ideas are likely to have on those problems, we might as well award elected office based on the same criteria we use when we award Oscars. Every year our government grows more bloated, more wasteful, more meddlesome and more intrusive into our personal lives - and we argue about who is going to pick up the tab. The real question is how much discomfort we will endure before we decide to cut up the government's credit cards and take back what we have given away for so long.



"IT'S ON MY MIND.."

Danny H. Parris

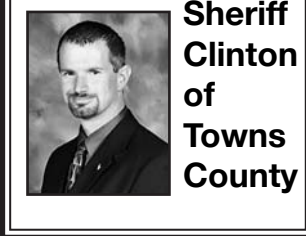
The real you

When we come into this world our names are chosen for us. As we live and grow we develop a reputation and a lot of folks are given nicknames because of dominant characteristics of their lives. For example, the fellow who was nicknamed Drip - you couldn't turn him off; or the fellow nicknamed Banana - he was always getting skinned; or the lady called Echo - she always had the last word. Our names are chosen for us, our reputations are what our friends or our enemies think of us, but our character is what God knows us to be. Our reputation can be stolen from us but our character no one can touch. As some unknown has said, "Character is like the foundation of a house - it is below the surface." Each of us is in control of his character. It has always been true, as a voice of the past has said, "Character is always lost when a high ideal is sacrificed on the altar of conformity and popularity." I am sure that all of us are disappointed when political leaders, religious leaders, athletes and well-known public figures have their backgrounds so openly exposed that their character is revealed which contradicts their reputation. Sad indeed, to see anyone lose their char-

acter. Anonymous said it perfectly, "When wealth is lost, nothing is lost, when health is lost, something is lost, when character is lost, all is lost." In the last few weeks we have witnessed highly influential personalities lose it all. I ran across this poem written by Dale Wimbrow in 1934. It is entitled:

The Guy in The Glass When you get what you want In your struggle for self And the world makes you King for a day, Then go to the mirror and Look at yourself, And see what that guy Has to say. For it isn't your Father, Mother, or Wife, Who judgement Upon you must pass, The feller whose verdict Counts most in your life Is the guy looking back From the glass. He's the feller to please, Never mind all the rest, For he's with you Clear up to the end, And you've passed your most Dangerous, difficult test If the guy in the glass Is your friend. You may be like Jack Horner And "chisel" a plum, And think you're A wonderful guy, But the man in the glass says You're only a bum If you can't look him Straight in the eye. You can fool the whole world Down the pathway of years, And get pats on the back As you pass, But your final reward will be Heartaches and tears If you've cheated The man in the glass.

From the Desk of:



Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

Each year the Sheriff's Office attempts to provide the joy of Christmas gifts for children. This effort is only made possible by the help of generous people in the community who donate to this cause. Names of children in need are collected and toys are gathered. We try whenever possible to provide at least one item that the child has specifically asked for. The toys are then given to the parents of the child to handle Christmas in their family's tradition. It is all done in such a way as to protect the dignity of the family and allow them to share in the joy that many of us take for granted.

For those who wish to participate, the Sheriff's Office does not require any unnecessary information. The following information is all that is required: 1) The name

and contact information of the parents, so that we can contact them when the toys are ready, 2) The ages of the children, and (3), whether they are boys or girls. We attempt to provide at least one gift from their "wish list". It is wonderful to witness the spirit of this showing of love and compassion by so many in our community. This effort is simply an attempt to provide for the needs of local children at Christmas. This Christmas drive is not something that I began. The Sheriff's Empty Stocking drive was in place before my administration. I have given it my full support because I believe that we can make a difference in the lives of these children.

This year has been a tough one for many local families. We are hoping to provide for each child, but we need your help. If you would like to help us with this effort, or if you know of a family with children that needs help, please contact Vicki Ellis or Heather Whitaker at the Sheriff's Office at 706-896-8343, or 706-896-4444. I hope that each of you has a blessed and joyous Christmas this year!

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE By Don Jacobsen

Dear Dr. Don: we have a question. My husband and I have a 9-year old boy who has recently begun a behavior that is very troubling to us. It is not criminal behavior you understand, but it is unacceptable in our family. We scold him and send him to his room but it hasn't helped. We tell him to go there for an hour and to think about what he has done and then he can come out. It doesn't seem to be helping. Do you have any suggestions for us?

A: Absolutely. Thank the Lord your son has only one "unacceptable behavior"! You could compare notes with most of the parents on your street and you'll have a hard time finding a kid who is doing as well as your 9-year old. Congratulations! You are obviously doing a lot of things right.

Not knowing what his violation of family policy is exactly, let me offer some general suggestions. First, sending him to his room to think isn't a bad idea. However, ask him to think, not about what he did, but about what he might do next time he faces that temptation. You don't want him fixing

his attention on what he did wrong, but rather on what the right behavior might look like. Fact is, of course, we become like what we think about.

Then at the end of the hour (or whatever time you choose), call a family counselor (the three of you) and talk over with him what he decided his course of action might be next time. Add your own suggestions to his if you need to. Assure him that you know they describe the kind of young man he is becoming. Give him lots of affirmation about his resolutions and how they are important to your family, and to his future. Ten minutes is probably long enough for this chat, and let it end on an upbeat, happy note.

If in the future he forgets - and he likely will - you may wish to ratchet up the impact of the consequence. From what I know of the situation I might suggest longer in his room or take away some privileges, for instance. It sounds to me like you're doing well as parents, and he's doing great as a 9-year old.

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

Extension Tips



by Robert Brewer

Christmas tree safety tips

When decorating Christmas trees, always use safe tree lights. (Some lights are designed only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.) Larger tree lights should also have some type of reflector rather than a bare bulb and all light should be listed by a testing laboratory.

Never use electric lights on a metal tree.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use tree lights. Any string of lights with worn, frayed or broken cords or loose bulb connections should not be used.

Always unplug Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to sleep.

Never use lit candles to decorate a tree, and place them well away from tree branches.

Try to keep live trees as

moist as possible by giving them plenty of water daily, do not purchase a tree that is dry or dropping needles.

Choose a sturdy tree stand designed not to tip over. When purchasing an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled as fire-retardant.

Children are fascinated with Christmas trees. Keep a watchful eye on them when around the tree and do not let them play with the wiring or lights.

Store matches and lighters up high, out of the reach of children, preferably in a locked cabinet.

Make sure the tree is at least three feet (one meter) away from any heat source and try to position it near an outlet so that cords are not running long distances, do not place the tree where it may block exits.

Safely dispose of the tree when it begins dropping needles. Dried-out trees are highly flammable and should not be left in a house or garage, or placed against a house.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Towns County Extension Office Robert Brewer and Marlene Pendergrass



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