

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Sustainable out of Necessity

Dear Editor,
I have a few thoughts regarding the Feb. 24 letter to the editor advancing a “drill, baby, drill” oil-centric energy solution. I wholeheartedly agree regarding the need to safeguard American jobs, however, any plan to rely primarily on fossil fuels in today’s world is a plan to destroy our planet and economy.

It is hard to persuade people who dismiss the overwhelming consensus by the scientific community regarding climate change as a hoax, so I will not try to do that here. The remainder of us, however, understand we have to balance a sustainable future and a strong economy. Carbon fee and dividend is a market-based approach favored by economists (www.econstatement.org) and can be an important part. Instead of providing government subsidies for fossil fuels, pricing would more appropriately reflect true costs. EPA restrictions would be suspended and market forces would drive innovative energy solutions.

The world is moving toward a sustainable future out of sheer necessity. It is regrettable that any jobs will be lost along the way, but many more will be gained in sustainable energy. Being a leading nation in this effort is critical to our own success.

David Miller

Time to Tackle Corruption in our Politics

Dear Editor,
The 2020 presidential election revealed the many cruel and unnecessary barriers that far too many Americans still face in order to vote. From confusing voter registration instructions to long lines outside of too few polling places, there are still so many hurdles to participating in our democracy.

It doesn’t have to be this way -- not if Congress can pass the For the People Act.

The For the People Act is an expansive bill that would greatly strengthen our democracy and level the playing field for all Americans in the political process. The act is so comprehensive that it would take on the numerous barriers to voting and representation, like stopping partisan gerrymandering, overturning racist voter ID laws, and ending felony disenfranchisement. It would also register millions of new voters. Many of these barriers are Jim Crow relics that continue to disproportionately impact Black and Brown Americans across the country.

Prioritizing this bold democracy reform would send the strong signal that our new Congress and administration are serious about ending America’s racist voter suppression laws, which is why I’m urging Congress to pass the For the People Act.

Jeanne Winter

World of Insanity

Dear Editor,
What do Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head, the Muppets, Dr. Seuss and Curious George have in common according to the extreme left? They have all been banned as a whole as racist or sexist. We are living in a world of insanity as the hard core left gets to dictate to us how we can live. There is nothing wrong with Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head, etc. If that offends somebody, they need to get their head examined.

All of these that I mentioned are wholesome — books, toys and shows that teach our children and grandchildren about good behavior. These are all part of Americana and are not racist or sexist. Just remember that if the corporatists and government have the power to regulate the little things, then they have the power to regulate everything. They seem to be offended by these little things but don’t seem to be offended by what is going on in China, where Christians and Muslims are being imprisoned and slaughtered, or the increased crime rates in our inner cities. Instead, they want to ban books, toys and shows while at the same time undermining and underfunding the police.

This is the hellish existence that the left is creating for us. The left should have no say over our children ever again. During the pandemic, it’s the left that has kept kids out of classrooms; it’s the left that has caused mothers and fathers to give up their jobs in order to take care of their children; and it will get worse, because Joe Biden is signing more executive orders, and after his recent visit to Texas, admitted that he doesn’t know what he is doing here. God help us.

Tim Groza

A Matter of Fairness and Justice

Dear Editor,
As an American, I am a firm believer in fairness and justice. They are basic American values, no matter what our political affiliation. Those values are some of the main reasons I favor a carbon fee and dividend plan to combat climate change. Right now, fossil fuel companies are allowed to put their carbon pollution into the air, and there are no consequences. That doesn’t seem fair or just to me. From deaths from inhaling particulate matter to increasing storms and wildfires, the damages are catastrophic and rising.

If we simply put a price on the burning of fossil fuels to account for the damage they produce and return all that money to all U.S. citizens, it makes the whole situation much more fair and just. Those who produce the damage pay for it. This would stimulate innovation and produce millions of new American jobs and put more money back into the average person’s pocketbook, with the poor benefiting the most — again, fair. It would also decrease greenhouse gases by 90% by 2050 and avoid costly government regulations. It would be a conservative solution to climate change using a free market plan, and it would bring back fairness. A WIN/WIN situation.

Vernon Dixon, MD

HOW THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DOES ELECTION REFORMS



"My remote batteries are dead. Guess I need a new TV!"

To be Right, or to be Effective

Cuthbert Rumbold is an 11 pound Barred Rock rooster who rules the roost in our chicken restaurant and day spa. As is often the case with roosters raised by hand that lose their fear of humans, he can be a bit hazardous.

"I would put that rooster right into the stew pot," a neighbor opined. My wife loathes Cuthbert, who seems to take a special interest in challenging her.

Mr. Rumbold has tried to flog me several times as well, but we have an understanding which took some effort to work out. It involved a bamboo quarterstaff and its role in convincing Cuthbert that it was impossible to get close enough to lay a spur on me, and that the end of the staff could get to wherever he was going faster than he could.

Now if there are any of you PETA disciples who might take issue with my relationship with our magnificent and uninjured rooster, like the ones who meddled in the Possum Drop over in a neighboring community, rest assured that there is no cruelty involved in this training. The only contact with the staff is when old Cuth flies into it.

The whole purpose of the exercise is to convince him that the staff is quicker and just as relentless, and simply placing the end of it in front of wherever he goes results in his eventual submission.

What it all means is that Cuthbert gets to live, and most of the time now he immediately retreats to the opposite side of the yard when I enter the pen.

That doesn’t mean that I’ll ever turn my back on him. He is a rooster, after all, and a creature long on instinct and short on cognition.

"I wouldn’t have a rooster like that," another neighbor said. "Why do you keep him?"

Because Cuthbert would fight to the death to protect his flock. Last week an owl settled into our cove and started hooting. Cuthbert raised the alarm and stood between the hens and the owl.

A few days later I burned a pile of brush in the garden below the hen house. The chickens had never seen fire or smoke before, but their natural instincts took over.

When the fire started crackling, Cuthbert herded all the hens back inside their house and stood watch on the ramp outside.

Whenever there is any kind of danger, Cuthbert is the first one on the scene and the last one to leave.

I would be well within my "rights" to serve up old Cuthbert (he’s barely a year out of the egg but he got "old" very quickly) on a platter with some carrots and potatoes. But a question a mentor asked me once still informs me to this day: Would you rather be right, or would you rather be effective?"

I’d rather have a rooster who will protect our little flock from the variety of predators we have living here at the edge of the wood.

We can modify that same question for our age of addiction to outrage and offense. Would you rather be right, or would you rather be happy?"

If you’re in a happy marriage, chances are that you’ve already answered that question. I’m convinced that, at the core of the general animosity and rudeness that permeates online communities and poisons politics, there is an insistence on being right.

Being right is its own reward.

Convincing others that we are right often means that we’re not all that sure that we are right, and we need validation or compliance to prop up our self image. When enough people are doing this at the same time, feathers will fly.

Which brings us to the bigger picture of the two main groups that have been flogging each other incessantly for the last 5 or 6 years.

On one side of the pit we have conservatives, republicans — people who usually say they hold to Christian values. The problem is that they have handpicked some elements of the Faith that are useful mainly for accusing and condemning, and let slide the elements of charity, love and hope which made Christianity the original "inclusive" group.

On the other side of the pit are the "progressives," liberals, democrats, and whoever else wants to fit under that umbrella. Some of them seem to have adopted an attitude of "I just want peace and I’ll kill to get it." There is a lot of talk about inclusion and equality, but many seem bent on achieving that by pulling everyone down to the same level, and they aggressively seek out "wrong" thinking and "wrong" speech with the intent to punish it.

Both sides are "right," and neither is very effective.

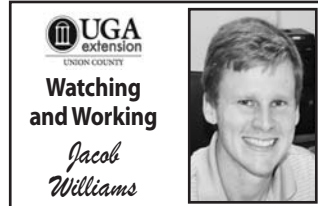
There is no room for compromise, and little recognition that at the core of their beliefs, both sides want the same thing.

Unseen by both sides is the invisible hand with the bamboo stick that keeps the flocks in a state of constant alarm.

Outside The Box
By: Don Perry
worldoutsidethebox.com

Raised Bed Soils

Last week I talked about the different materials that can be used to construct a raised bed. This week I want to talk about what we put in the raised beds. There are many different options out there, some are better than others are, and some are cheaper than others are. So let’s talk through some options for soil in your raised garden bed.



Before filling up your raised garden bed figure out how many cubic feet of soil you will need. This is a simple calculation of multiplying length by width by height. Let’s use the dimensions 8 feet X 4 feet X 10 inches. In this case, we would multiply 8x4x0.833 because 10 inches is 0.833 feet. The answer is 26.66 cubic feet. If we wanted to convert cubic feet to a cubic yard, we would divide our cubic feet by 27.

This means that we have close to one cubic yard of volume.

Now that we have the math out of the way and know how much material we need let’s talk about what materials can be used. Obviously, you can use top soil to fill the raised bed. If you have extra top soil nearby this might make sense for you. Otherwise, I don’t think that it’s a great option. Top soil is not regulated in terms of what is in it. So you might have many chunks of bark that haven’t started decomposing. If you don’t know the source of top soil, it could also contain weed seeds that will grow and compete with your plants.

Another option would be to go to the store and buy bags of soil that are made for raised beds. This would give you quality soil in the beds. The flip side is that you’re going to spend a lot of money doing it. You could easily spend \$250 or more for soil using the dimensions I talked about earlier. If the money is not a problem, this is a quick and easy solution.

Compost is a great way to fill your raised beds. Compost that has completely composted will provide many nutrients to the soil. If you have your own compost you can use that, or you can buy compost in bulk. Some companies will deliver or if you have a pickup truck, you can use that. You can also buy compost in bags. A product like Black Kow is an example. Buying bags will be more expensive. One drawback to using compost is that the pH will most likely be high. This can lead to some nutrient shortages. Another thing to keep in mind with compost is that it will continue to decompose. This means that the amount you have will decrease and more will need to be added periodically.

The lasagna method is a popular way to fill raised beds. You alternate layers of brown and green material. Brown material is dry leaves, shredded newspaper, peat, and pine needles. Green materials are vegetable scraps, garden trimmings, and grass clippings. The green materials contain nitrogen and the brown materials contain carbon. Make the brown layers twice as thick as the green layers and it will compost down into a good material into which you can plant.

If you have beds that are very deep another option is the put branches in the bottom to fill up space. The branches will break down over time, giving you good material in which to grow.

If you have questions about filling your raised bed contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Freedom Rocks!

Actually there are ninety-nine "Freedom Rocks" in Iowa! A very patriotic professional artist, Ray "Bubba" Sorenson II began his boulder painting tour of Iowa in May, 1999 near Menlo, IA when he asked permission to paint a large boulder.



This was a 60 ton rock one mile south of Interstate Hwy. 80 near exit 86. Prior to Bubba, kids had been painting this boulder with graffiti. Bubba made his message very simple. "Thank you Veterans for our freedom" accompanied by the flag raising at Iwo Jima.

Eventually this rock was totally graffitied over, a group of Veterans asked Sorenson if he could do the same thing on Memorial Day. He decided to change the entire mural!

From that point on his idea for honoring Veterans snowballed all over Iowa. Every May 1, he goes out to paint a different mural as a "Thank You for our Veterans". Bubba began his effort out of his own pocket and received no compensation for his time or paint. Then he and his wife started a mural painting and photography business in 2008, thus creating the Freedom Rock Tour which touches all counties in Iowa!

This has become his full time business and he now receives pay. Bubba says, "I haven’t served, so I feel like I and my family, we owe a debt of gratitude to the men and women that have served and who are serving and standing at the ready to defend this country. All it’s done is to deepen my appreciation and understanding of what our Veterans have done and are doing."

He allowed that he paints between 10 and 16 rocks a year and even painted a rock in Wisconsin in January! Every rock requires one to two weeks to complete. There are Freedom Rock committees that form up at each site. There are many Veterans from each locale with plenty of input for the subject matter to be painted.

Bubba goes on, "I’m not so much concentrated on branch and each era and every single thing cramped onto each rock, but rather just tell interesting and inspiring stories at each spot."

He says his original Freedom Rock is his favorite as he had sole control of the theme. He stated that he will conclude the Freedom Rock Tour with his 100th rock.

He is now using permanent weatherproof paint and only repaints his original Freedom Rock every year.

Towns in Iowa will get to bid for the final spot. Fifty percent of the proceeds from the auction will benefit a Veterans charity.

He has now begun the 50 state Freedom Rock tour, already painting murals in Missouri, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Washington State.

His goal is to try and have at least one in all fifty states. It’s going to take a while but will be a wonderful tribute to all those who have honorably sacrificed and served our great nation in uniform.

Semper Paratus

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