

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Senate Filibuster response

Dear Editor,
I must respectfully disagree with the letter writer (June 9) that advocates for the elimination of the 60 vote rule (aka Filibuster) in the Senate. That rule is in place to prevent the party with a slight majority from running roughshod over the sizable minority. In short, in a somewhat evenly divided Senate, it requires the parties to work together to find mutually agreeable solutions instead of the bickering, name calling and demonization of the opposition that is so prevalent today. The letter writer conveniently left out the fact that the Democrats in the Senate made liberal use of the filibuster when the Republicans were in the majority (no pun intended). Additionally the piece of legislation referred to (For the People act) is considered by many to be seriously flawed. It would destroy the integrity of our election process and would not pass Constitutional muster when applied to Presidential elections.

The real solution to gridlock in Washington is for "We the People" to demand our politicians work together in good faith to pass meaningful and just legislation. This requires "The People" to put their thinking caps on, abandon the hatred that has permeated the public discourse, demand truthful explanations from our politicians and evaluate both sides of the argument. Unfortunately we're a long way from that.
Jim Soltys

Re: "Young woman struck, killed crossing US 76 at night"

Dear Editor,
I find it very difficult to write words that properly express the tragedy of Alexandria Richbourg's death on Saturday night June 12th. Although I did not directly know her, her death at such a young age is something that will long be sadly remembered. That sentiment is shared by many of us at the Sand Bar. Unfortunately, after reading the front page article about her in the June 16 edition of the Towns County Herald, I realized a response to the article was necessary even at the risk of sounding self serving. This response should present the actual events that occurred at the Sand Bar immediately prior to the accident. Alexandria walked up to the entrance of the Sand Bar just prior to the end of our show at 11 p.m. Her ID was reviewed and accepted. After a discussion between myself and staff at the front door, we agreed she should not be served and the bar staff was informed. She was not served a drink at the Sand Bar. The article, of course, stated she was drinking at the Sand Bar "according to authorities." The Sheriff's Office assured me that their policy is to never release such information during an active investigation. Furthermore, our bar staff made arrangements for her to be driven home. When that person arrived, Alexandria did leave the building, but then ultimately decided to cross the highway instead. Once again, our condolences.

Regarding the highway and people constantly crossing from the lakeside, this is something we cannot control. The safety of these people is a constant concern. We are, however, presently pursuing possible answers to this longterm problem with the Commissioner and the Georgia Department of Transportation.

Paul Stroup
Owner, The Sand Bar and Grille

Senate Filibuster response

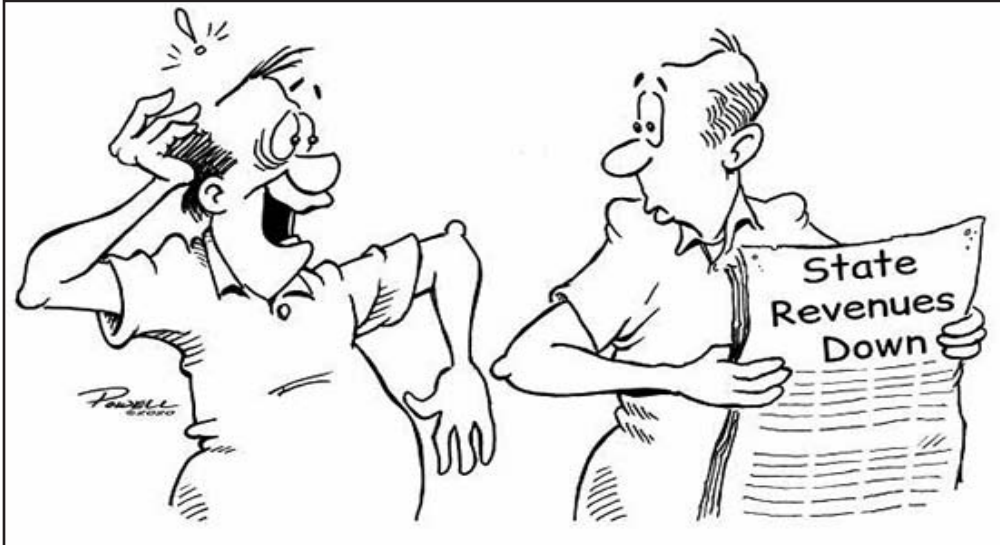
Dear Editor,
I read a recent Letter To The Editor regarding the recommendation of eliminating the Senate Filibuster. The writer suggested that "eliminating year" politicians promise things to their constituents if they will just vote for them. Well, that part of the writers comments are very true. However, what I, and probably 150 million other Americans disagree with, is his assertion that the For the People Act would improve the lives of communities and root out corruption. What was left unsaid is the fact that in 2017, 33 democrat senators penned a letter to then Senate Majority Leader McConnell telling him how dangerous it would be to our country to "nuke the filibuster." Further, the current President in his own words stated (back when he was a senator a 100 years ago) that removing the filibuster "is a bone head idea." One last point on the hypocrisy of liberal democrats suggesting that eliminating the filibuster is good for America: a little research will tell you who thought the filibuster was the greatest thing since sliced bread during the last administration. Yep, you guessed it, liberal democratic senators. They used the filibuster numerous times to derail legislation that I'm quite sure many of us felt would have been "good for our communities." And, just to note, it is two democrat senators who will also refuse to eliminate the filibuster (Senators Manchin and Sinema). There are other Democrats who would also resist the radical idea of nuking the filibuster. They just have not stepped out in the public eye to state it. Why run the risk of being attacked by the radical left like Manchin is being attacked. Here is a pro tip for those on the left that want to shove their radical agenda down the throats of millions of Americans; win a majority in the senate. You DO NOT have the majority! The senate is referred to as the greatest deliberative body. It is a simple concept. It should be where 100 reasonable senators work together to massage bills that come out of the HoR so that it is indeed the best for the entire country, not just one political party.

If you think that defunding the police, packing the Supreme Court with additional liberal minded justices to off set the current mix of justices, or giving stinkhood to Washington, DC just so democrats can add two new senators, or forcing local schools to teach CRT to our children that the color of ones skin makes them an oppressor then you must be a democratic.

I'll pass on the idea that a small number of liberal senators have my community's best interest at heart. Perhaps they should try negotiating in good faith and stop with the we must change America because we are racist oppressors.

Regards,
Michael L. McNabb

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"If the state needs money, why don't they just tax every bad thing politicians say about their opponents?"

Across the Great Empty - Part II

We swam in the ocean and pulled crab from the brackish waters of a tidal creek; walked along the marshes and watched the flight of big, graceful birds. The draw of the sea is powerful, but perhaps because I was formed of dust and not of sand, no amount of salt and sun, nor even fried shrimp, can replace the need to return to the quiet cove in the mountains.

On the day of our return we woke up early and shared one last cup of coffee in the cool stillness of the salt air. Then we put the sun on our right side and headed up the old Golden Isles Parkway.

We found Gardi, Odum, Surrency and Pine Grove almost exactly as we left them two years ago. I wanted to linger in Hazellhurst and Lumber City, remembering their hospitality and generosity, and I almost pulled the left turn blinker at the junction of 117 and the road toward Jacksonville and the Horse Creek WMA, remembering the nights camping at Scuffle Bluff on the Okmulgee River, and the canoe trips down to the mighty Altamaha and beyond.

So much of your joy is mis-spent, but that part of mine was invested.

All the way up to McRae, it's easy to picture our coastal plain as it once rested on the bottom of an ocean. The terrain is flat and sandy, and the occasional undulations are more suggestive of dunes than hills.

From McRae to Dublin you can feel the gentle climb of softly rolling hills that always puts my traveling companion to sleep. She usually denies it when we stop at that one McDonald's with a grassy area for the dogs and its reminder that the coffee from your own thermos is always better than coffee purchased through a window.

I like the expression, "mountain time," which contains enough rough edges for you to get a grip on being offended if you wish, but that is not my intent. I truly like it. It suggests an independence from the tyranny of the timepiece. It holds that the integrity of a commitment is in the deed and not on the schedule. It flies in the face of modern life, and like the governor on a school bus engine, it resists the runaway wreckage of "progress."

I think coastal time, island time and country time are all similar to mountain time, but as we left the Coastal Plain and traveled further into the Piedmont, time began to accelerate, along with the traffic.

The race was on coming into Milledgeville, and a facsimile of urban travel commenced between the drivers determined to get through and the ones wishing only to get to. Highway 441 on a Friday was little different than anywhere else in America where people compete to get ahead and hurry to separate a little personal time from all the obligations between the bills and the paycheck.

If you manage to slip out of work a little early on a Friday and if you hurry, you might be able to get home and hook up the boat before the traffic gets bad.

Hurry up and wait pivots every Friday to an all too brief period of hurry up and relax.

North from the lake country the land was empty of hurry for a while, until we reached the great terraforming project to blow open 441 below Athens. The extra lanes will make the highway somewhat less of an extended parking lot attached to Georgia home games, but I'll miss the pecan trees that surrendered to eminent domain.

We got home just as the sun was dropping below the mountain, so very grateful to be back in our peaceful place that time forgot; grateful for the safe journey and the memories; grateful to be home in an area which has managed to preserve so much of what is important against the raging tides of change.

We've made this trip many times, across the Great Empty and through the scattered hives of bustle, and though you can't travel the same road twice or step in the same river, there was something about this journey that was fundamentally different from all the others: People are anxious. Some are angry. Many are impatient, even in the small towns and remote places where the hive mind is able to reach with its breaking news.

It's almost like a pandemic. Some of it is undoubtedly caused by the virus, but I think most of it is in our response to that ailment. We are exactly where a crisis of faith meets a devolving culture in an ailing economy, and the symptoms can even be found here at home.

But here, we can do something about it. So the contractor was late. Be patient. He can't find enough people to work to fulfill his obligations, and he's been working 7 days a week to try to get caught up.

The clerk was cranky and didn't genuflect when you asked for help. This is your opportunity to be kind. The store has been short staffed since March, and everyone who did show up has been working long hours. They're tired, and the extra money doesn't begin to catch up with the higher price of just about everything.

Add to the mix, throngs of cooped up Americans with their pent up frustrations unleashed on the vacation scene thinking they are owed something because they've been inconvenienced, and no one has ever suffered like they have. This is a time for understanding, so understand this: your anger doesn't make you special; it just makes you part of the problem.

Finally, be grateful. We have it so much better here than what can be found "out there."

If you came here from "out there," you should remember well. If you've been here so long you've forgotten, just travel two hours in any direction.

Outside The Box

By: Don Perry
worldoutsidethebox.com

Watering Plants

As you may have noticed, the weather lately has been rather dry. All plants, but especially annuals (such as veggies) and freshly planted perennials, are affected by this drier trend, because their root systems are not yet large enough to support the plant and do not yet efficiently collect water from surrounding soils. There is a fine balance to be observed when irrigating plants, though: Too much water will wash nutrients away from young roots and may cause rot, while too little or shallow watering will either allow the plant to dehydrate or bring the roots too close to the hot surface of the soil.

In general, vegetable plants would rather have more thorough and less frequent watering. When the entire topsoil layer is saturated at least twice a week, the roots of a vegetable plant will tend to grow downward, towards the damper and cooler soil beneath them. Not only will the root system collect water more efficiently, it will also draw the roots away from the drier and hotter surface of the soil. This promotes a healthier plant growth pattern, reducing the need for external watering when there is a rain and lowering the chances of the root system being attacked by unwanted fungi.

In the case of other young transplants, such as fruit trees, bushes and shrubs, flowering perennials and other ornamental plants, the amount of watering will usually vary due to the soil it was planted in, the size of the original root ball and plant, and the type of plant being watered. For example, a young apple tree from a 3-gallon pot transplanted in clay-based soil will require less frequent watering than a group of raspberry starts in the same soil, due to the higher amount of water loss through the leaves (transpiration) in the raspberry starts. It is always best to check the sticker or plant tag that came with the plant for advice first, but as a general rule of thumb, water trees and ornamental shrubs enough to keep the soil 4 to 6" around the root ball (including below it) moist, but not soggy, every other day that it does not rain. Continue this until they are established. For starts such as blueberries, raspberry and blackberries, hydrangeas, and vining flowers and fruits (like clematis), water 4-6" around the root ball every day it does not rain until they are established in the soil.

Common sense applies in this process as well: if the soil around the plant is still about as moist as it should be at day 2, then hold off on watering until it begins to dry again. A good "quick-n-dirty" test for soil moisture is to grab a handful, squeeze it in your hand, and let go. Optimal moisture content is when most of the soil is still in a ball in your hand, but when you touch it, it begins to break apart again.

In vegetables, it usually takes until the first fruit is set and ripening on the plant for the roots to be fully developed. This typically (of course, depending on the kind of plant) takes anywhere between 3 and 6 weeks from the date of transplant. For trees and shrubs (and blue, black and raspberries, etc.) usually takes most of a growing season to accomplish. For example, if a blueberry bush were set out in early May, it would need this kind of watering until the end of August, and maybe longer depending on the timing of rain or heat.

If you have any questions about watering, how long or when to water, or any other concerns, please feel free to contact your County Extension Office.

Not a Household Name

This column was requested by someone loved by all who know her. She is also a lady who is stronger and tougher than me, just as Hazel Jane Raines from Waynesboro, GA was, as she pursued her life's love of aviation and served the cause of freedom and liberty against the NAZI terror in WWII.

She claims she was a misfit, physically and socially even as a graduate from Wesleyan College in Macon at age 20. She fully developed as a pilot rather than an aircraft passenger. In another first for a Georgia woman, she earned her private pilot's license and commercial license in 1936. Lo and behold she could not get a job flying as a female pilot!

Therefore Hazel turned to stunt flying with the Georgia Air Races and Shows. A significantly tougher and more dangerous challenge than commercial flying. Then in 1939 with Hitler's NAZI conquest to civilization, Hazel began training future pilots in America's Civilian Pilot Training Program, another First. She was humble about her position, describing herself as just "a two bit flight instructor".

Later in our Allied war effort, she and Jacqueline Cochran began ferrying American aircraft across the Atlantic to Britain, as part of the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA).

Then after the fascist Japanese attack upon Pearl Harbor, Hazel came back home with plans to become more active in our war efforts. With the aid of U.S. Army's Lt. Gen. Henry "Hap" Arnold she helped create our American version of the ATA. Very difficult to sell a team of lady pilots to our military, Gen. Arnold, Hazel and Cochran succeeded in creating our military's "Attagirls". They flew 147 military aircraft MINUS guns and ammunition, with little training and no radio contact, flying low and by visual means only, day and night. While flying a damaged Spitfire, and developing engine failure, Hazel's career as an "Attagirl" ended with a crash into a British rooftop which severely injured her.

She didn't quit. Coming home in 1943, Hazel became squadron commander of the newly formed Women Air force Service Pilots, called WASPS, as well as Flygirls. Based in Texas the Flygirls ferried planes, served as test pilots and dodged live fire as they towed targets for our Army Air Force. As the war was ending soon, and more traditional job assignments settled in, the Flygirls program came to an end.

However Hazel still refused to quit and in 1948 with the creation of our WAF (Women's Air Force), Hazel was there. However they were only offered Reserve positions at Maxwell AFB in Alabama.

Hazel had many speaking engagements as a staff advisor to women in the AF and sadly died of a heart attack while serving as a recruiter and advisor while in London, at only age 40, in 1956.

As all knowledgeable military men and civilians know, our nation would be severely weakened without the services of exemplary women. As Hazel Raines stated, ".....when women are left out of history, history itself is incomplete."

Semper Paratus



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Scott Drummond

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