

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

To the Editor:

Questions that need to be answered

For the non-believers: Must you raise a divisive ruckus in an area widely deemed to be the buckle of the Bible Belt?

For the Commissioner: Why did you use your official position as a pulpit to castigate a citizen of both Towns County and the USA who merely has constitutionally-protected views different from your personal views by using words such as, and I quote, "provocative" (what's wrong with provoking discussion in a free country and then accepting or rejecting the thoughts that are the subject of that discussion? Didn't our founding fathers have thoughts different from the crown?) "distasteful" (Who decides that? See the immediately preceding parenthetical.), and finally "[our] citizens [need to be] aware that this kind of thinking is out there that we must guard against" (Are you, in your private opinions and/or your elected position as Sole Commissioner of Towns County, against freedom of thought? Do you deem "thinking" "provocative" or "distasteful"?)

For the Supreme Court: Considering all the misconceptions and confusion you have caused by the conflicting decisions you have over time rendered about the First Amendment, why can't you provide clarity as to what is (and is not) legally permissible? After all, if we're expected to comply with the law, why can't you tell us what the law is?

For all of us: Why can't we, as Americans, despite our occasionally different views, seek peace and courteous tolerance (if not understanding or acceptance) of someone else's views?

Claude Spears

Letter to the Editor:

Tax dollars paid for the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center. Because of the separation of church and state, the government is not allowed to tax you for the purpose of supporting someone else's religion. If you are Jewish, you can't be taxed to pay for Christian churches, Christian schools, Christian hospitals or Christian Prayer Meetings. If you are Muslim, you can't be taxed to pay for Jewish synagogues, Jewish schools or Jewish prayer meetings. If you are a non-believer, you can't be taxed to pay for anyone's religious organizations. Upholding the 1st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution demands as much, especially when it comes to government leaders' illegal use of government facilities for religious purposes.

Churches were given tax exemption, further removing religious institutions from state interference. Now, religious leaders want to make use of tax payer supported public facilities for prayer meetings. Where does this illegal encroachment end?

Lance G. Jobson



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Q: Dr. Don, my husband and I have been married just over six years. He brought two boys to the marriage who are now 13 and 16. We all get along pretty well – they both call me mom, for instance. The only real problem is our three bathrooms. They are pretty big bathrooms and it is a big job for me to keep them clean. My husband says I should have the boys clean them, but I've tried it and they don't do a good enough job to suit me. The atmosphere gets pretty intense at times. Can you help us work out a compromise?

A: OK, let me see if I've got this right: You have two stepsons, teenagers, and the only problem in the family is who should clean the bathrooms? You need to write a book. I think I could put you in touch with close to half a million moms who would gladly trade places with you. Please put a thank offering in the plate when it comes by at church this week.

Another cause for rejoicing is that your stepsons are high IQ kids. I mean, they've figured out that if they do a sloppy job of cleaning the bathroom they get totally delivered from bathroom detail. If I understand them correctly I hunch that

they will quickly discover that the same strategy works equally well in other areas of domestic responsibilities. Such as bed making, vacuuming, cleaning up after meals, mowing the lawn, doing their laundry, to name a few. If these boys continue as they're going they could be blissfully living as total freeloaders before they are forced out into the real world.

So here's my formula for compromise: Quit the nonsense. This is not about you, mom. It's about developing responsible kids. You're behind schedule on the learning curve – you've had them for six years – but you can change course. Here's how. Let's assume they each have their own bathroom. On a given day each week they clean each other's bathroom. Then each inspects his own. If there is even one item that doesn't pass inspection the sloppy one forfeits his cell phone for 48 hours and has to clean the third bathroom – which I assume is mom and dad's. You owe them this, mom. This is about teaching your kids to be responsible members of the family. Their wives will thank you one day.

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

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

This week we remember and we celebrate that Declaration of Independence which, nearly two and a half centuries ago, announced the beginning of our journey as a nation.

The Founders of this nation, against all odds, led the United States of America to victory over the best trained armies of the mightiest empire on the planet. They went on to establish a democracy tempered by the balancing restraints of a republic, guided by a system of checks and balances designed to prevent the kind of tyranny which the young nation had just escaped.

The Founders understood human nature very well. They feared the tyranny of too much power concentrated into too few hands, but also the tyranny of the masses driven by the changing winds of popular opinion. After the War of Independence, the Founders went on to give us a republic framed by a Constitution and a Bill of Rights, empowered by the consent of the governed, with that power shared between a legislative, a judicial and an executive branch. It was a model for free peoples everywhere.

Remnants of that system of government survive to this day.

Part of the genius of the Founders of this nation was their understanding that time is fluid and history does not stand still. The Founders gave us a system of government based on a dynamic equilibrium, able to adapt to changing times and changing needs. The needs of a nation of two and a half million, mostly farmers with an agricultural economy were very different than the needs of today's 310 million with an economy as diverse as the people who live here. Isolated colonists surrounded by unexplored frontier have different priorities than millions of urban cliff dwellers crowded into cities or the affluent and aging spread out in sprawling suburbs. Our ancestors were linked by ideas and communicated slowly and carefully in handwritten letters that arrived on foot or on horseback. We are linked by entertainment, consumption and instant, constant, unrelenting communication.

Times change. Human nature does not. The greed and lust for power so evident in the monarchies and dictatorships of the past, survives all forms of government and all human efforts to suppress these elements hardwired into our natures. All democracies erode over time, beginning with the moment when people discover that they can vote themselves benefits out of the public treasury. As the extraction of wealth from the governed becomes more and more institutionalized, the coercive power of government must grow to accommodate the theft.

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.*

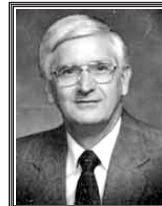
Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.

Democracy, in time, becomes two cats and a mouse arguing over what to have for supper.

Every Fourth of July we have an opportunity to reflect on the history of our country; to think about where we started, where we are today and how we have changed, for good or for ill. It would behoove us all to read that Declaration of Independence again, or for the first time, and compare the grievances and the aspirations of our Founders to whatever principles guide those who govern us today. We have a legislative branch of government known for corruption, divisiveness and a revolving door relationship with business. We have a judicial branch which has declared that corporations are people. We have an executive branch which, independent of political party, moves ever closer to the powers once reserved for the monarchs. We have a permanent, burgeoning federal bureaucracy intent on monitoring every aspect of our lives.

Read, if you will, the second paragraph of the Declaration, which states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

When these historic words are used to illuminate the dark corners of Washington, to gauge the headlines of the 24 hour news cycle, we can easily see how far we have moved from the founding principles of our nation, but not quite full circle to the tyranny which inspired our genesis. We still have mechanisms in place, inherited from our Founders, that would allow us to loosen the grip that corruption and coercion has on our nation. We can still vote, though fewer of us show any interest in exercising that right with each passing election. We must vote, though we feel helpless in our limited and hopeless choices. We must vote and vote wisely, hoping for change. Our ancestors fought for change. We must keep voting so that our grandchildren do not have to fight for it also.



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

Watch your step

Life seems to be made up of steps. A baby is born and one of the great moments of celebration is when that baby takes its very first step, or says its first word. Parents spend the first few months of a child's life trying to get them to walk and talk and then spend the rest of their lives trying to get them to sit down and shut up (not really). The first steps of a child are tottery and unsteady. Parents usually hold a child's hand to steady its steps.

One of the early lessons that a child is taught is "watch your step." Of course, that advice is given in order for the child to keep its eyes open, to walk in safe places, and steer them away from any danger. Good advice. If followed, it will prevent a lot of bumps, bruises, breaks, burns, bites, black eyes, bloody noses, bandages and all the other bad B's.

"Watch your step" is not only healthy physically for a child, but it is good advice for the rest of our lives. Adults have a tendency to get careless, as they grow older. As parents caution us to "watch our steps" to protect our physical health, God cautions us to "watch our steps" to protect and preserve us spiritually. In fact, the Bible makes it clear that we are always just one step away from death and

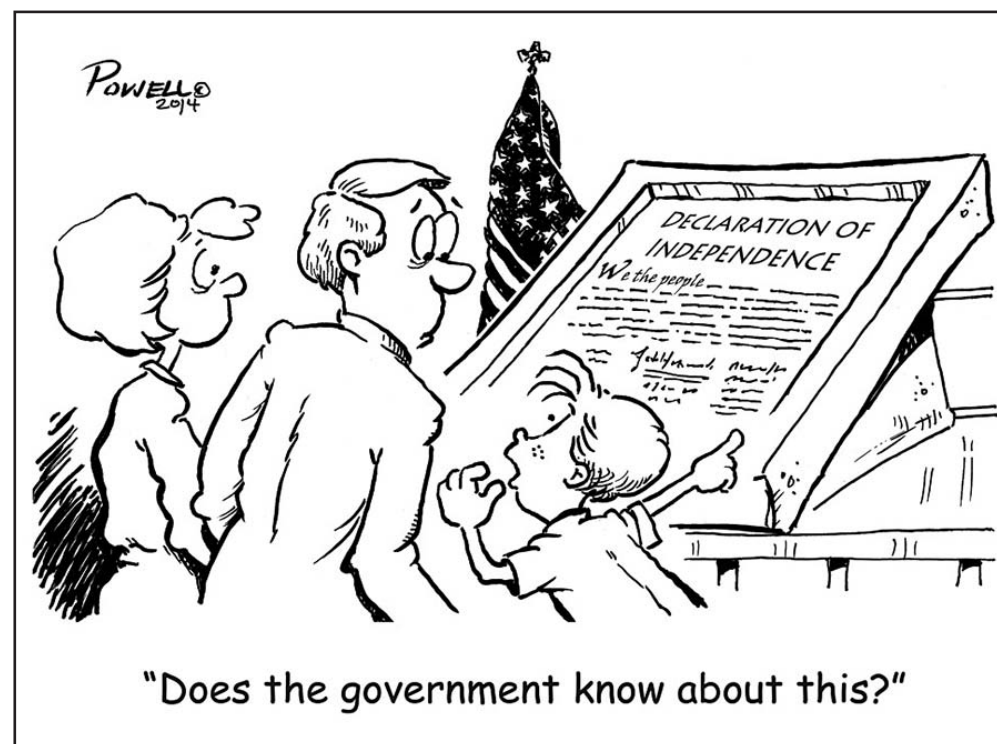
judgment (I Samuel 20:3). It seems to this preacher that much of our nation has become "High Steppers" that are out of step with the God who created them. To be in step with God means that we are in harmony and agreement with His Word, Will and seek to walk in His Way. The devil is like a carnivorous barker who is saying, "step right up folks and try your luck at the latest fads and fashions of sin."

Anytime we step up to the devil's booth, we step away from God, which is a step downward. Legalized abortions, laws for same-sex marriages, affirming and approving homosexual activity and other sexual perversions are steps downward, definitely, not steps upward. Preachers, politicians or public officials who advocate perverted behavior of any kind are attempting to change the steps of our nation to walk in a path that will only lead to destruction. If I step on anyone's toes I do it on purpose.

Personally, I think that we need to be taking steps to correct some of the crooked steps that we have made in the past thirty or so years. Have not many of our spiritual leaders and public officials become stumbling blocks rather than stepping-stones? The Psalmist said, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord" (Psalm 37:23). Do not be deceived by false leaders who want to direct our steps. Only let your steps be ordered by God's Word (Psalm 119:133). Again I say, "Watch your step".

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