

Opinion

A community forum for viewpoints from around the world to your backyard

The Clinch County News

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A.I. "Len" Robbins, IIIEditor & Publisher
lrobbins@theclinchcountynews.com

Blake Pittman..... Production Manager
atcocitizen@mchsi.com

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Our letters to the editor are intended to be a free and open forum for local and area citizens to comment on items of general public interest. If you wish to write a letter to us, please type it or write legibly, double-spacing preferred. Letters are subject to editing for length, good taste and newspaper style. Subjects of a personal nature are generally not acceptable. Endorsements of political candidates are also not acceptable during a campaign. All letters must be signed but names may be withheld under certain dire circumstances. Please include a daytime phone number and address. You can also e-mail us a letter at clinnews@windstream.net, or visit our website at www.theclinchcountynews.com.

Your newspaper needs your support

Many in our area were shocked when the owners of the *Waycross Journal-Herald* announced in September of last year that they planned to close our neighboring daily newspaper.

I wasn't. Thankfully, Rick Head, owner of the nearby *Brantley Beacon*, purchased the *Journal-Herald* and converted it to a weekly paper.

That's the good news. The bad news is that this wasn't an isolated incident that can be easily explained or dismissed. It smells more like a trend that's just starting – and the COVID-19 pandemic is only escalating it.

I'm going to be blunt – Newspapers were struggling before the current crisis. I know we were. That's why I wasn't surprised to hear about the *Journal-Herald's* predicament. In a story about their plans to close, the *Journal-Herald* cited competition from "Facebook, websites, data streaming, 'marriage mail,' TV, radio, and several other mediums," as more "Americans and Waycrossans turned to cell phones to get their news."

For different newspapers, the challenges are different. For us, it's been an aging audience; a slow, brutal weakening of our local retail base; and national, and even some local, advertisers turning online; among other reasons.

We have tried, and are trying, to adapt to an online product, in addition to a print product. *The News*, for instance, was the first weekly newspaper in Georgia to offer online

Len Robbins EDITOR & PUBLISHER



lrobbins@theclinchcountynews.com

subscriptions. We've basically become a daily newspaper by reporting news online when it happens, and not waiting on the print edition. We've recently expanded into producing podcasts. We have put video of public meetings and community events on our website, and plan on expanding that. These are potential revenue streams that we're exploring, and will continue to explore. We have the largest online following of any site in our community – we just need to find a way for all that attention to work for our customers, and, in turn, us.

Frankly, our community isn't supporting its community newspaper like it did in the past. Our subscriptions have declined substantially annually, as has advertising from local businesses.

In addition, we've found that in recent years, the traditional billing methods we've utilized aren't as effective as they used to be. In the past year, we've been fortunate if we collect 50 percent of what we bill in a month. In turn, that makes it incredibly difficult to pay our debts on time.

The reason I'm writing this isn't to elicit sympathy. It pains me to admit that this newspaper that I care so much about, and committed my working life to, is struggling.

There are a couple of reasons I'm sharing our predicament publicly. They are: 1. When I became editor of this newspaper in 1994, 26 years ago, I wrote in this space that I was this newspaper's latest "caretaker," but the newspaper really belonged to the community. I still believe that, and as shareholders, you deserve to know how your newspaper is doing economically. And 2. When people heard the *Journal-Herald* was having issues, they were shocked, and "If I had known..." was a common refrain.

Well, now you know. If you believe having a newspaper that delivers trustworthy, verified information about your community is important, here's some things you can do to help:

1. Purchase a subscription. Right now, we are offering a special deal for online subscriptions - \$20 a year. That's \$13 off the regular rate. And if you already have a subscription, you can always purchase a gift subscription for someone who lives outside of Clinch County but would enjoy keeping up with their hometown news. You can order print or online subscriptions at our website (www.theclinchcountynews.com) or by calling our office.
2. Purchase an ad.

Despite decreased numbers of subscribers, our newspaper still reaches more Clinch Countians than any other form of communication – and second place isn't close. Fact is – newspaper advertising works. If you have a business, newspaper advertising isn't an expense. It's an investment. An investment in your business. Give us a call and let us help you tell your story and improve your bottom line.

3. Share with us what we can do better. Give us your opinion about how we can better serve you, and our community, as its primary source of news and information. We welcome your input and creative ideas - remember, it's YOUR NEWSPAPER. We want to hear any suggestions about how we can improve, or change our business model, to serve the future needs of the community and our readers.

If it already wasn't apparent, the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly illustrated that small communities (and large ones too) need a local, independent news source they can trust and rely on to bring them credible, accurate information. *The News* is the only one providing this service for Clinch County, and have done so for the last 125 years. We've love to do it for another 125 years, but in order to survive, we need the community's support.

Again, this newspaper belongs to the community – tell us how you'd like us to proceed.

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Heal me, O Lord,
and I shall be healed;
save me, and I shall
be saved: for thou
art my praise.

Jeremiah 17:14



Things I love, and don't

I Love these things....

1. An engrossing, well written, very long, good book
2. Hot tea with honey
3. Little square ice cubes
4. A warm brown puppy
5. A day all to myself
6. A long talk with a good friend.
7. Comedians: Martin Short, Steve Martin, Jerry Seinfeld and Christopher Guest movies
8. Pink skies at night
9. South Georgia sunsets
10. Beautiful music that matches my mood.
11. A well played piano
12. Singing and performing and not singing and performing anymore.
13. Never waking to an alarm clock
14. Freshly ironed sheets and soft cotton blankets
15. The ambient light of early morning and late afternoon
16. Fresh donuts, warm yeast rolls and birthday cake...and did I mention cookies?
17. Surprising my friends or family with a gift that is just what they wanted.
18. Squishy bunny babies, especially my grans.
19. Conversations with children.
20. Binge watching a good tv series

21. Cool, crisp weather
 22. Creating something beautiful
 23. Fresh flowers
 24. Quiet time with the Lord and reading His word, hearing His voice, finding His way
 25. Belly laughs that take my breath away
 26. Secretly blessing others
 27. The sound of my loved ones voices
 28. The sight of my loved ones faces
 29. A good haircut
 30. My iphone's camera
 31. Proper writing implements, ie, fountain pens with fine nibs, sepia ink, Palomino Blackwood pencils with superb erasers
 32. Monogrammed anything, especially writing paper
 33. Naps on Sunday afternoon followed by something sweet to eat or cold corn pudding
 34. Obedient pets and respectful children
 35. Loving and being loved by the one I have always loved
- These things?not so much*
1. Making chat with strangers
 2. liver & boiled okra
 3. being misunderstood
 4. bitter tonic
 5. nausea

Linda Davis

NOTES FROM CANEY BRANCH



6. hot, sticky weather
7. bugs, snakes and gators
8. amusement parks
9. jam packed schedules allowing no down time
10. Being stuck in the middle seat of a 7 person center aisle airplane section for a 9 hour overseas flight
11. daily cooking & thinking up meals
12. clueless people
13. meetings, especially on Sunday afternoons
14. Getting stuck in the back of an elevator
15. Being pushed too fast in a wheelchair
16. Losing things in my purse
17. Forgetting to put a pencil, a pen and a small notebook in my purse along with a crossword puzzle
18. Uncalled for rudeness
19. Painful pedicures
20. Sitting across the table from someone who chews with their mouth open.
21. Brain freeze
22. Dry socket
23. Slamming my hand in my car door
24. Camping out

25. Long car rides with humorless bores
 26. sullen children
 27. Spectator sports
 28. People who talk during movies
 29. Walking into a room and forgetting why I'm there
 30. Heavy perfume that smells like kudzu vines.
 31. dull scissors and knives
 32. Uncomfortable shoes no matter how cute they are
 33. A bedroom with no overhead fan
 34. The endless cycle of dusting, vacuuming, cleaning bathrooms and changing linens which turns freshly ironed blouses in your closet into a form of wealth you are loathe to spend.
 35. Biting your tongue and being asked immediately, "What happened?" Isn't the blood dripping off your lip clue enough?
- After you read this column you may well think less of me but that's ok. Just tune in for more next week. Refer all complaints to my editor.

Your Governmental Representatives

U.S. Senate

David Perdue (R) – 202-224-3521
Johnny Isakson (R) – e-mail: johnny_isakson@isakson.senate.gov
U.S. Representative

1st Congressional District - Buddy Carter (R) – 202-225-5831
State Senate

8th District
Ellis Black (R) – 229-251-0303(Cell); e-mail - blackellis@bellsouth.net
State Representative

174th District
John Corbett (R) – john.corbett@house.ga.gov; 404.656.0287 - Office

Clinch County Commission – 912-487-2667

Regular meeting – first Monday of every month, 9 a.m.
Chairman-Roger Metts (Post 3); Vice Chairman-Debra Thomas (Post 4); Chad Brown - Post 2; Kenton McLaine-Post 1; Henry Moylan-Post 5.

Clinch County Board of Education – 912-487-5321
Regular meeting – Fourth Thursday of every month, 6 p.m.
Chairman-John Davis (Post 2); Vice Chairman-Charlie Mae Cross (Post 4); Stanley Thrift-Post 1; Laura Landrum-Post 3; Charles Handley-Post 5.

Homerville City Council – 912-487-2375
Regular meeting – Second Thursday of every month, 6 p.m.
Mayor Tom Kennedy; Mayor Pro Tem Willie Hardee; Len Robbins, Elexis Williams, James McBride.

Fargo City Council – 912-637-5597 or 637-5520
Regular meeting – Fourth Monday every month, 7 p.m.
Mayor Roy Abbott; Council members John L. "Bappy" Griffis, Landa Hart, Clifford Wells, Roy Wilson.

Dupont City Council – 912-487-2500
Regular meeting – Second Tuesday of every month, 7:30 p.m.
Mayor Jimmy Rawls; Council members Catherine Register; Jane Lee, Tommy Davis, Brent Westmoreland.

Argyle City Council – 487-2279
Regular meeting – Third Thursday of every month, 6:30 p.m.
Mayor Kaye Riley; Council members Delois King, Ann Grady, Lee Lane, Otis Fleming.