Editorial



Congratulations, **Graduates!**

We're counting on you!

An up-side-down ending to the journey local graduates began more than twelve years ago has been a bittersweet pill to swallow. Social distancing, and additional precautions put in place to slow the spread of the COVID-19 crisis, cancelled plans and events and effectively flattened and deflated end-of-year graduation excitement. It was certainly sad, and heartbreaking, to see the disappointment on the students' faces; however, don't think for one minute that the onemonth delay of in person celebrations lessens in any way the accomplishment of earning and receiving your high school diploma. No way. Each graduate earned this one, with hard work and dedication, and I am so very proud of each and every member of the Class of 2020 for a job well done.

So, with that said, let's start talking about your future . . . It's graduation time, but graduates, I am sorry to tell you the tests don't end, they just change. Sorry to tell you the grades don't stop coming, they just come in a different way. Sorry to tell you the homework assignments don't end, they just become projects for work or college.

It might be a cliché, and one you'll hear plenty of from upcoming Valedictorian, Salutatorian and guest speaker addresses, but you are the future of Donalsonville, the future of Seminole County and beyond.



Impressions David Maxwell david@donalsonvillenews.com

For years, we (your parents, relatives and friends) have pressured you to complete your assignments, study for your tests and get to class on time. This isn't because we like being a pest; it's more selfish than that. We're counting on

For years, we've told you to tuck in your shirt, stand up straight and use your manners. This isn't because we like telling you what to do; it's more selfish than that. We're counting on you.

For years, we've challenged you to take tougher classes, participate in extra-curricular activities and be careful with those you call your friends.

This isn't because we are trying to control your life; it's more selfish than that. We're counting on you.

Whether you've attended a public school or a private school, the investment made in your future has been well into the thousands of dollars — the tens of thousands of dollars. In short, you are an investment we are counting on

Whether you plan to attend college, a technical college or no college, is irrelevant to the expectations we have of you.

What we expect is that you return the favor, that you make an investment back into Donalsonville, into Seminole County, into the community that has done so much for you and your future.

What we expect is for you to be the type of men and women we know you can be and be a good example to those who follow you.

You have been given a gift of education; don't squander it. Instead, turn it into something great, turn it into something you — and those who have given you this gift — will be tremendously proud of one day.

Graduation is simply the period of one sentence; it is not the end of the story. What you do with this story is completely up to you, but you have the tools, the skills and the ability to make it whatever you want and to make it a classic.

While we offer our congratulations to the graduating classes of 2020, just know we still have plenty of expectations of you. Know too, that we are counting on you.

We could not be more proud of each and every one of you. You embody to the fullest the drive to discover, to create and to inspire. This is your moment, and no one deserves it more. So pause to bask in your achievements. Celebrate, if you can, with your friends and loved ones. You have earned it. It has been a privilege to put your faces and tell your stories on the pages of your community newspaper throughout this past year.

Go forth and keep discovering, keep creating, keep inspiring. You have the tools, you have the will, you have the vision. And you have our gratitude, because through you, the world is about to get better.

Getting to know the faces of the 2020 Seminole County Indians, and SGA Warriors, and the personalities of the fine young people behind them, has been a pleasure. As you begin, in earnest, the journey to your dreams, remember that after God, the most important person you need to impress is yourself, so go forward and conquer your world. As far as I am concerned, you have been doing that all year long. Don't stop now.

Learn, live and leave your mark on the world. As you embark on the next journey in the quest of your dreams we look forward to bigger and brighter reasons for you to make us proud. And remember, we are counting on you and we will be watching and rooting for you all the way.

> Comments and impressions are requested and welcomed at donalsonvillenews.com

Go jump in the lake

My mother broke her threemonth quarantine this week. She lives in an independent living facility in Atlanta. Her meals have been delivered to her apartment each day since the pandemic closed their dining room. For the past month, she has finally been allowed to walk on certain days for 30 minutes on a path on the property, provided a mask was worn.

Do not get me wrong. Huntcliff Summit has done a wonderful job in protecting the health of their residents, including my mother. It comes at a personal cost, however. No visits. No leaving the facility. No community meals.

Thankfully, the balcony of Mom's apartment overlooks the entrance. She has spent the afternoons there watching whatever activity was happening, diminished as it was.

When Governor Kemp extended the quarantine for these types of facilities this past Friday, my Mother decided she had had enough. Supportive of her facility's decisions and thankful for their support, she nevertheless decided it was time to break out of prison, as she jokingly described it.

She and my sister arrived at Compass Lake this past Saturday. Despite numerous Zoom and Facetime calls, it was the first hug I had given my mother in three months. The first thing out of her mouth is that she wanted



Ponderings Dan Ponder dan@donalsonvillenews.com

to go swimming. It was just a few minutes before Mom had on her bathing suit and was literally jumping in the lake.

Jobie Ponder was a child of Compass Lake as I was. Both sets of her grandparents had places at the lake. She says this is her favorite place in the world, and she has been to a lot of places.

There was something special in watching my mother floating along in the water on a noodle. The smile on her face said it all. She washed her hair in the lake, a generational tradition that results in the softest hair ever.

It was transformational for her. She was back at her "Happy Place" after being held hostage to the Coronavirus. Add in fresh corn, peas, butterbeans, tomatoes, and homemade ice cream and it is easy to forget all the turmoil in the world.

We have had long talks on the porch, long naps in the hammocks on the dock, and several sunset cruises on the boat. I do not know if she will ever leave now that we have finally gotten her down here.

As a young boy, we would arrive at the lake for the weekend. My brother, sister and I would jump out of the car, put on our bathing suits, and then run full speed into the water. It was the best feeling in the world. Cold water on a hot day.

80 years later, my mother still has those same feelings and thoughts. Not many 88-year-old women jump in the lake and swim, not once but several times

These are trying times we live in. Sometimes we must reach back to our own childhood to find places of comfort. Compass Lake has always been such a place for my mother, just as it has always been for me.

It is not the solution for the world, but for my precious mother, the answer for the pandemic, quarantine and social distancing was simple. Just go jump in the

Dan Ponder can be reached at dan@ponderenterprises.net

A bat-tle of wits

I'm going to jump ahead in the story: it was a bat!

Now that I have your attention, allow me to tell you how we got to that point. My wife and I were putting our kids to bed the other night. Miles and Maeve were in their pajamas, their teeth were brushed and they were ready for a story before hitting the sack.

Miles got distracted by a sound over by his window. I heard it, too. It sounded like a cricket or some other kind of bug. At first, I assumed this growing noise was coming from outside the window. In fact, the sound was coming from inside the house. The noise grew louder to the point where I told Miles to get out of his bed. I pulled the curtain back from the window to find the source of the clamor: it was a bat!

I yelled a four-letter word that my kids usually don't hear in my house, then urgently instructed everyone to get out. Carrie and Maeve shut themselves in the upstairs bathroom; Miles ran downstairs and closed himself in the downstairs bathroom. Now it was just the flying rat-mammal and me. I scanned the room to find a recently-used bath towel. I grabbed the towel, climbed



The Grammar Guy **Curtis Honeycutt**

up onto Miles' bed and quickly enveloped the bat inside the curtain and the towel. The beast squealed like a trapped bat.

Next, I made the quick decision to remove the entire curtain from the rod, still squeezing the bat-infested area. Successful in the curtain maneuver, I hopped off the bed and walked cautiously-yet-purposefully down the stairs. Passing the downstairs bathroom, I invited Miles to come out to watch only after I got outside onto our front porch. I

opened the glass door outside and secured it, letting my son know it was safe to watch. Men are curious creatures, after all. I decided the only logical thing to do was to heave my handful of towel/curtain/bat as far as I could and then watch the result.

I heaved as only a man holding an armful of linens and a bat could heave such a thing. The pile landed with a plop on the steps leading down to the sidewalk, where the bat clambered out of its hiding spot. It paused a moment, wiggled its rubbery wings and then flew awkwardly over to my neighbor's house, where it landed on the outside wall above the air conditioner unit. That's how I saved the day.

There is a grammar lesson in this age-old tale of man vs. beast combat: a "clamor" is a loud noise or uproar, while "clamber" is to climb with great difficulty. Now we can consider this confusing word bat-tle settled.

Curtis Honeycutt is a syndicated humor columnist. He is the author of Good Grammar is the Life of the Party: Tips for a Wildly Successful Life. Find more at curtishoneycutt.

Join the planning committee for Seminole County's 2020 Centennial celebration. Call the chamber at 229-524-2588 and volunteer.

We want your historical Seminole County photos to be a part of the 2020 Seminole County Centennial pictorial publication.

Drop your images off for scanning at the Donalsonville News' office or send them to history@donalsonvillenews.com

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