

Lanier County**News**

is owned by
Good Shepherd
Media, LLC

CONTACT US:

By Phone:
229-854-0186

By Location or Mail:
60 Cypress Trail
Lakeland, Georgia 31635



Carol A. Moore
Publisher
carol.moore@
laniercountynewsline.com



Alicia Davis
Marketing
marketing@
laniercountynewsline.com



Theba Sirmans
Marketing
marketing@
laniercountynewsline.com



Marsha Tallent
Digital Editor
marsha.tallent@
laniercountynewsline.com



Cliff Ulmer
Cartoonist
cliff.ulmer@
laniercountynewsline.com



Jon Moore
Cartoonist
Jon.Moore@
laniercountynewsline.com



JnC Photography
Staff Photographer
jncphotography@
laniercountynewsline.com

OUR GOAL: Lanier County News is created proudly for the citizens of Lanier and the surrounding area by Good Shepherd Media in Lakeland, GA. Our goal is to produce a quality, community oriented newspaper that you, our readers, are proud of. We will reach this goal through hard work, teamwork, loyalty and a strong dedication toward printing the truth.

OUR POLICIES: Letters to the Editor are welcome. Please sign and include address, telephone number and e-mail.

•Liability for an error in advertising will not exceed the cost of space occupied by the error.

•All pictures are filed after publication, but may be picked up by the owner at Lanier County News office in Lakeland.

DEADLINE: the deadline each week for all news and advertising copy is Monday at 5:00 p.m. Submittals can be placed in the drop box located by the door of the Lanier County News office.

Elected Officials**Mayor of Lakeland**

Bill Darsey • 229-482-3100

Lanier County**Commission Chairman**

Alex Lee • 229-482-2088

Lanier County Board**of Education Center**

Mitchell Chason

229-482-3966

GA State Representative

James D. Burchett

912-816-7745

GA State Senator

Ellis Black

Lanier County Sheriff

Nick Norton • 229-482-3545

OPINIONS & VIEWPOINTS



HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

current events through a historical lens

Dr. James Finck, USAO History Professor

When Boxing was King

By James Finck, Ph. D.

For most of us this week winter has finally come. It seemed the perfect weekend for our first Arctic plunge as it was Wild Card Weekend in the National Football League, and I could hunker down with three days of football. As a Kansas City Chiefs fan, I was excited to watch them take on the Miami Dolphins and hoped the Chiefs' receivers could catch the ball in the cold. Yet, to my surprise and frustration while watching the Cleveland Browns-Houston Texans game, I saw an advertisement for the next game, only streaming on Peacock. I don't have Peacock. I thought about subscribing for just this game, but I already have more streaming services than I need, and I refuse to be forced to subscribe to yet another. The advertisements for Peacock all said the same thing: It's the first time a playoff game will be streamed and so sign up and be part of history. Streaming a playoff game is historic, but the NFL should note it's probably not the history they are hoping for.

Today in sports there are the big four that dominate: baseball, basketball, hockey and the biggest of all, football. Yet, if we traveled back 100 years, the sports scene was much different with the big three being horse racing, boxing and the one constant baseball. In the 1920s and '30s everyone had their favorite horse, and the most significant sports star was the heavyweight boxing champ. Every kid dreamed of being the heavyweight champion and the sporting events were the biggest thing on the radio. This changed over time and for many reasons.

While baseball still has a considerable following it has fallen behind basketball and football in popularity. Most consider this due to TV. Baseball is perfect for radio but is thought of as too slow to keep modern audiences glued to a TV the way the fast-paced sports like football do.

For horse racing, most historians see four major causes. First, horse racing used to be the only legal form of gambling, but then the rise of casinos captured the attention of gamblers.

Secondly, the move to the suburbs in the 1950s took people away from the tracks mostly built in urban areas. Thirdly, horses did not race as much. If a horse won a leg of the Triple Crown, they were sent to stud. Its hard to develop relationships with favorite horses if they only raced a couple times. Finally, animal rights groups protested the sport as cruel to animals turning off some fans.

Let's focus on boxing. Heavyweight champions were worshiped 100 years ago. Yet, today even as a big sports fan, I have no idea who the champ is. That is a big change. In the 1920s and '30s names like Jack Dempsey, Tommy Loughran, Joe Louis and of course Jim Braddock were spoken in reverence. Boxing, unlike horseracing, survived the post-war years and it thrived with TV. Boxing fit TV perfectly. Boxers like Sugar Ray Robinson and Rocky Marciano kept the sport thriving.

In the 1960s the sport actually grew when a young Cassius Clay captured America's attention. Changing his name to Muhammad Ali, he became to many the greatest boxer of all time. It was not just Ali, the next two decades also had fighters like Sonny Liston, Joe Frazier, and George Foreman to keep fans interested.

While it would take time for boxing popularity to fall, something happened in the 1970s that is at least partly responsible, a cable network HBO. In 1973 Home Box Office premiered its World Boxing Championship series with an amazing match between Foreman and Frazier. While the fight pitted two superstars, it also limited its audience as less than 10% of Americans had cable. HBO topped itself in 1975 when it broadcasted 'The Thrilla in Manila' between Ali and Frazier on a pay-per-view format. The fight was huge and the format did not seem to hurt the sport's popularity. Yet as boxing began to be dominated by HBO, it started to lose the casual fan as many households did not have the service.

Things looked up for subscription services in the 1980s. About 60% of homes had cable by the end of the decade and at least half of them had HBO, but that is still only 30% of the television audience. Luckily boxing still thrived, especially with new superstars like Mike Tyson. Too young to have watched Ali live, for me Tyson was the greatest boxer I had ever seen. I loved his fights, but it required a bunch of us kids to pool our money to afford to watch them.

The problem for Tyson fights on pay-per-view was that after shelling out all the cash he knocked out his opponent in the first round. Tyson beat Bruce Seldon in a championship fight in one minute forty-nine seconds. I don't recall how much we paid to see the fight, but it was a lot of money to shell out for less than two minutes.

Mixed Martial Arts has stolen many fans who prefer what is often seen as a much more violent sport. I'd contend that boxing has lost popularity partly because of the added expense of subscribing to premium channels. While boxing remains big and the major fights still draw big crowds, its place in the American landscape is only a shadow of its past. There is no longer the casual fan and today young boys dream of being the next LeBron James or Patrick Mahomes.

I have no idea what the rating were for the Chiefs game. They were probably spiked with the thousands of Swifties who tuned in to see how many cutaways there were of Taylor Swift. No matter the ratings, they could not have been as large as other games that were broadcast on regular networks.

I am not saying football might go the way of boxing. Most of the games were on the networks and most Americans now stream their content. Also, unlike boxing, the NFL does not need to worry about the Chiefs knocking out the Dolphins in two minutes, even though it did look that way with the Green Bay Packers v. Dallas Cowboys. It's just difficult to understand when you are the king, why tinker with the product? Maybe viewer accessibility is what keeps then on top. Yet if you want to call a streaming game "historic", historically speaking there was a time when boxing was king.

James Finck, Ph.D. is a professor of history at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma and writes for the Southwest Ledger. You can follow Historically Speaking on Facebook or at Historicallyspeaking.blog.

Valdosta Monkey's Thoughts & Opinions

Send your questions for

Valdosta Monkey to

Publisher@

laniercountynewsline.com



What's your opinion on the upcoming Presidential Election?

What's your opinion on the upcoming Presidential Election?

Hmmm...in my opinion it's a no brainer. VOTE TRUMP in 2024!

On one hand you have Trump who delivered on more campaign promises that I can remember ANY politician delivering on in the past.

The best economy in history, the lowest unemployment rates in history, the best stockmarket in history, Trump promised to secure our Southern Border and he is making good on that promise despite the tactics of the shameless Democrats.

On the other hand, we have Joe Biden who has been involved in politics for over 40 years yet he wants to blame Trump for what all that's wrong in America. He can't form a coherent sentence, keep his train of thought and he certainly can't keep his hands to himself, Biden is a joke.

The democrats have ridden a few dead horses over the last few years such as the Russian Collusion Delusion for example.

Let me break this attempted coup down for you humans.

The Hillary Campaign paid a foreign actor to either find or make up "dirt" on Trump. Once the foreign actor delivered rumors and lies to the Clinton Campaign, the same BS was presented to the FISA Court as "evidence" to get a warrant to spy on the Trump Campaign.

These people that played the FISA Court and weaponized Federal Law Enforcement Agencies, specifically the F.B.I.

This isn't the first time that DC has weaponized Federal Agencies against Conservatives in order to keep or gain political power. Do you remember the Obama Administration using the I.R.S. to target Conservatives?

We were told back in 2015-16 that if Trump was elected "the stock market would crash and the economy would crash and burn. That didn't happen quite the contrary...the market surged due to consumer confidence and the economy performed better than the most optimistic economist predicted.

Do the Demoncraps have your best interests in mind? No.

Do the Demoncraps want to do away with the Trump tax breaks? Yes.

Do the Demoncraps want to raise your taxes? Yes.

Do the Demoncraps want to take away your right to own a weapon? Yes.

The Demoncraps and Liberal-Leaning Lame-Stream Media have fought against Trump with all their might for the last 3.5 years with Demoncrappy politicians spending MILLIONS of your tax dollars doing so.

You might not like Trump but he's done more for Aamericans in the last four years than Joe Biden has done in the last 40 years.

I'll bet money that as soon as the election is over in November, this COVID-19 plannedemic will soon be over.

I believe Trump truly cares about doing what's best for America and Americans. He didn't seek office for money, power or prestige. Hell, he already have all that before running for President.

He is also the first President EVER that has donated his quarterly paychecks as he promised.

You are invited to "Like" and "Follow" Valdosta Monkey on Facebook and visit his webpage at www.valdostamonkey.com