

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

current events through a historical lens

SPEAKING

Dr. James Finck, USAO History Professor

Reviewing “Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East”

By James Finck, Ph. D.

In her book, “Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East,” Valentine M. Moghadam thoroughly examines the conditions of women in the Middle East—especially around the time of the Arab Spring of 2010—and reviews the plight of Middle Eastern women in history.

Moghadam wrote that she wants to show, “how women’s lives are shaped not primarily by Islam and culture but by economic development, the state, class location and the world system... that middle class, educated women are consciously and unconsciously major agents of social change in the region, at the vanguard of movements for modernity, democratization, and citizenship.” In an incredibly detailed analysis she does exactly that, however I came away with two ideas on which I want to focus: how women’s lives have declined in the Middle East and the role of Hamas towards women.

While the history of Middle Eastern women is too long and complicated to cover here, and every country is different, in short and as a generalization, as Middle Eastern nations fought to break away from colonial powers in the early part of the 20th century, women were vital. As new liberal governments formed with attempts at democracy and constitutional governments, the rights of women were included. As part of the movement to modernize women, they were pressured to remove their veils just as men were, sometime by law, told to wear Western style hats instead of turbans or fezzes. Moghadam wrote, “when revolutionary government set about reforming the position of women in the first period of social and economic transformation, they tend to focus on three goals: extending the base of the government’s political support, increasing the size or quality of the active labor force, and harnessing the family to the process of social reproduction. For socialist and communists movements, women’s participation was essential to the realization of those goals; women widened the movement’s or new government’s social base of support; women became part of the labor force and thus contributed to the productive process; women were central actors in the transformation of family life and its connection to wider societal processes. As we shall see, these elements have been present, albeit with variations, in state building and national identity construction across the Middle East and North Africa, as well as in the different courses and frames of Islamist movements.”

As time progressed, so did women’s roles in many Middle Eastern countries. They were able to vote, hold office, run companies and choose how they should dress. Yet, while for most women around the world these rights continued to grow, in the Middle East many of these rights began to reverse themselves starting in the 1980s.

Moghadam wrote, “Tension between the states’ modernizing and traditional impulses became more pronounced in the latter part of the century. The Islamic revival of the 1980s, partly inspired by the 1979 Iranian Revolution and partly the result of a complex set of endogenous and exogenous factors and forces, transformed the nationalist frame from modernist to religious. Conflicts and wars—the Iran-Iraq War, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Lebanese civil war, the Algerian civil conflict of the 1990s—intensified hypermasculinity and controls over women. Both Islamist movements and

regional conflicts transformed the cultural environment for women.”

At the same time as these conflicts there was a push that the Middle East had lost their way and had gone too far trying to copy Western culture and lifestyles. In realizing their situation – and to regain their identity – there was a call to return to Islam. Whereas once Middle Eastern universities, like American universities, were the center of liberal change, they began to be the center of Islamic fundamentalists. Once students encouraged women to attend college and pressured them to unveil, were now in the forefront of shaming women who attended class with their hair not covered.

While Moghadam covered the vast area of the Middle East and North Africa, and spoke sparingly on Palestine, I thought I would include her thoughts on the region as it has become such a volatile issue today. Especially as so many on the left seem to have sided with Hamas in this struggle, I felt it pertinent to look at their treatment of women. Palestine follows a similar course as described above. Moghadam wrote, “Palestinian women have been active participants in the movement for statehood, and they have founded many organizations that have contributed to a vibrant civil society. Nonetheless, social problems plague many women.

The problems that Palestinian women face—early marriage and high fertility, the poverty of female-headed households [because so many men have died fighting], difficulties in daily life, domestic violence, sexual abuse, low political participation and representation, and absence of a legal framework for rights—originate in patriarchal gender relations, the Israeli military occupation and lack of resolution of the national problem, and the conservative nature of the main political forces. Patriarchal relations are particularly strict in the refugee camps, small towns, and the Gaza Strip. There, Palestinian women tend to marry young, at about age nineteen, often to close cousins. The hijab campaign of the late 1980s led to increasing observance of veiling by Palestinian women, including students at Birzeit University. The first intifada resulted in unprecedented opportunities for women’s social participation.” However, the second intifada which come in response to a peace talks with Israel helped usher in Hamas control and subsequently undid most of the gains women had made. Not only is the regimen oppressive, but the amount of domestic violence against women had grown exponentially.

Moghadam’s work can shed a great deal of light of the history of women in the region and the many struggles they face. It is immensely researched and contains dozens of charts and graphs. I also appreciate her neutrality on the subject—something my students struggled with as it is a sensitive subject. She very much gives the facts without blame. However, this is not a book for a casual reader. It is written academically with very little narrative or storyline to follow like the other books I have reviewed.

Published in 2013 by Lynn Rienner Publishers Inc., Boulder, Colorado, Valentine M. Moghadam’s “Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East” is available on Amazon.

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



Thoughts on legal and illegal Public Meetings

Opine Monkey is still out of country and has asked me to pen this week’s column. Allow me to introduce myself, I am Political Monkey.

Recently I’ve seen some hate on social media aimed at this publication. I’ve also noticed a common denominator in the origin of said hate, which I will keep to myself for the time being.

In reference to “Public Meetings” and “Illegal Public Meetings” let me paste the following...

The public must be given full access to all open meetings and may make video and audio recordings of all open meetings.

In addition to mandating open meetings, the Law requires that agencies provide notice to the public in advance of all meetings, even emergency meetings. That means agencies must make information available to the general public by, in the case of regular meetings, posting at least one week in advance a notice containing the information in a conspicuous location at the agency’s regular meeting place and on its website if the agency has one. The notice must do more than simply meet the technical requirements of the Law. It must be sufficient to reasonably apprise a concerned party of an upcoming meeting and must not be misleading.

Special or emergency meetings that are not held at the regularly posted time and place require more rigorous notice procedures. Such notice includes the posting at least 24 hours in advance at the regular meeting place and oral notification to the newspaper which serves as the legal organ for the county. In counties where the legal organ is published less than four times a week, notice also must be given to any local media outlets that make a written request to be so notified. Such outlets must be notified at least 24 hours in advance of the called meeting. In those rare circumstances where a meeting must be held upon less than 24 hours’ notice, either the county’s legal organ or a newspaper having a circulation at least as high as that of the legal organ must be notified, as well as other media that have requested to be notified by the agency.

Prior to all meetings, including emergency meetings, the agency holding such meetings must make an agenda of all matters expected to be considered available upon request and must post the agenda at the meeting site as far in advance as possible within two weeks prior to the meeting. Items not on the agenda may be considered at a meeting where it becomes “necessary” to do so and such items were not anticipated in advance and deliberately omitted from the agenda.

Minutes of all public meetings must be kept in writing and made available to the public for inspection no later than immediately following the next regular agency meeting. Such minutes must contain, at a minimum, the names of the members present at the meeting, a description of each motion or other proposal made, the identity of the individuals making and seconding the motion or other proposal and a record of all votes. These minutes are subject to the Open Records Law after approval, unless voluntarily released before approval. A summary of the meeting also must be provided by the agency within two business days.

Penalties for Non-Compliance

All actions taken during a meeting closed in violation of the Law are void and can be set aside by a court if challenged within ninety days of discovery. Anyone who “knowingly and willfully” conducts or participates in a meeting without complying with every part of the Law is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not in excess of \$1,000.00. Alternatively, a court may impose a civil penalty not to exceed \$1,000.00 against anyone who negligently conducts or participates in a meeting without complying with the Law. The court also may impose a criminal fine or civil penalty not in excess of \$2,500.00 for each additional violation committed within a year of the first violation.

Additionally, public officials who participate in closed meetings in violation of the Law can be subject to recall. Moreover, failure to give adequate notice can result in the invalidation of the proceedings, the issuance of legal injunctions and the requirement to pay the objecting party’s legal costs. In addition, the Attorney General may bring a civil or criminal action to enforce compliance with the Law. As with the Open Records Law, a government agency may be liable for the attorney’s fees of a party who brings a lawsuit to require compliance with the Law if that agency has acted without substantial justification.

Let me be clear, I’m not saying that illegal meetings have or are taking place. I’m just stating the Georgia Sunshine Laws concerning public meetings.

What would be outstanding is if more of the public would take the time to attend such meetings. Especially when those that you have elected are having the meetings and are spending your tax dollars.

I think more people should request to see the operational budgets of all governmental agencies. It might be interesting to see exactly how, where and with whom your tax dollars are being spent.

Is it a bad thing to demand good stewardship and accountability when the politicians are spending our money?

If everything is on the up-and-up then there should be no issue with being as transparent as is required by law.

Some of you may be asking yourself, “Why did Political Monkey paste the Georgia Sunshine Law?” Because “ignorance of the law” is no excuse.

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