

Opinion

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

The Clinch County News

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Letters to the Editor

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Reader urges for common sense over partisanship

Editor, *The News*:

I'm an independent, and I've never been one to blindly raise the flag of any political party. After listening to what's being said today, it honestly makes me sad to see what our politics have become.

There used to be incredible Democrats and incredible Republicans—people who could disagree, but still respect one another and work toward something bigger than themselves.

Now, too often, both sides have drifted into anger and division. And worse, we as their constituents have picked up those same banners and carried that hostility into our own lives.

How did we get to a place where families stop speaking to each other? Where brothers, sisters, parents, and friends turn their backs on one another—not over something personal—but over politicians who, in many cases, don't even know we exist?

If you think this is about any one candidate, it's not. I vote for who I believe can do the best job at the time our country needs it most.

Leaders will always come and go. Every one of them will be seen differently than the last.

But this country—this nation—is bigger than any one person who sits behind that desk.

Maybe it's time we reach out again. Maybe it's time we stop hating so much. Because at the end of the day, this nation has always been stronger and more resilient than any individual who leads it.

I've always found it troubling when people say, "My family has always voted Democrat," or "We've always voted Republican, and that's the way I'm going to vote."

To me, that kind of thinking misses the point.

I've always believed that God has a special place in His heart for people with more common sense than education—because He sure made a whole lot of us. And common sense tells me this:

I'm not voting for a party. I'm choosing a person. I look at it like this—

We're all riding on a bus and the person behind the wheel - that's who I'm trusting to look out for my interests, my family, and my future.

I expect that driver to do their level best. But if they don't—if they take us in the wrong direction—then it's pretty simple...

...next time around, I'm putting in for a different bus driver because my vote isn't about loyalty to a party. It's about accountability.

It's about results. And it certainly isn't about who I hate the most.

And it's about common sense and as one who barely made it out of high school, thank the Lord that I've been able to get from point A to almost point Z in life because of a little bit of common sense.

Stop hating and start rebuilding Bridges.
 Say a prayer for peace.

John Allison
 Homerville



What 'they' won't tell you about adulthood

I now have a son who is a junior in college, and another who recently graduated.

If that isn't scary enough, financially and otherwise, the recent graduate is teaching his younger brother a valuable lesson.

"I can't wait to graduate," the oldest son announced before he graduated.

I quickly tried to talk some sense into him.

"Being an adult stinks," I said. "Stay in school as long as you can. Or as long as your parents will pay for most of it."

He didn't listen and jumped into the "real world" as scheduled a couple of years ago. And now he's telling his brother the same thing I told him.

When you're still in the myopic arms of education and not fully on your own, all you see is the glory of independence, and not the distasteful responsibilities that accompany adulthood. There are so many things "they" don't tell us when we dive blindly out of adolescence on our own.

Here's a condensed version.

- Insurance. Many times during

my education, it was mentioned that I would have to pay for insurance, but no one ever really stressed how much I would have to pay for insurance. They also failed to sufficiently convey how many types of insurance I would have to pay, or that the percentage that insurance devours of my income would increase every minute of every day for the rest of my life.

- You understand politics.

Let me rephrase that: You may understand politics.

When you're young, politics is naively seen as a synonym for public service.

You see someone running for national political office, and say, "Gee, he or she seems like a nice person. I'm glad they want to serve the people. I hope they win."

But as you wise up with age, you realize that it's not about

public service in the higher levels – it's about politics. And politics is about money, special interests, and separating people by party alliances. These people who think they are in different political parties really aren't that much different, but politics wants them to believe that. And has been incredibly successful in doing so.

We just need to rid our country of these political parties that separate us. But that's unlikely to happen any time soon – which is great for the business of politics, and horrible for public service.

- Health.

Before the metabolism halt of adulthood, I could eat four pounds of Rolos at breakfast, lunch and dinner, and not gain an ounce. If I did that now, I would myself become a Rolo (which is, by the way, a round candy that doesn't breathe).

For most adults, your

health becomes a major concern as you get older. And you also have to be concerned with your kids' health, your pet's health, and then, your parents' health and well-being. And perhaps others.

- Money.

When you're young, you think having lots of money will solve any problem and make you happy. Unfortunately, most of us never get to find out if that is true.

It seems like everything costs a lot more than you can afford, no matter how much money you accumulate. Don't get me wrong – I'm very, very thankful for everything we have. I have all the money I'll ever need – if I died 12 years ago.

Even when you have money, your financial welfare is a concern that doesn't seem to go away.

"What doesn't stink about being an adult?"

"Well, lots of things," I replied. "First, you're not a dog. For every year you age as an adult, a dog ages seven years. So, you have that going for you."

He gets it now (somewhat). I hope his brother does too.

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EDITOR & PUBLISHER



Scams, Shams, and Flimflams

October was my lucky month. Five phone messages informed me I was the grand prize winner of two major sweepstakes. Not only did I place first with Readers' Digest, I was also atop the leaderboard at Clearer's Publishing House. Twin wins in one month with prizes worth millions had never happened to me before. I was ecstatic.

Congratulatory voicemails stressed the importance of keeping my good fortune confidential until finalized. They provided a callback number and the name of their agent who would ensure the funds were safely deposited in my bank.

Jane and I don't answer unknown numbers unless there's a compelling reason. If a voicemail is left, we listen then decide. Quite often it's a scam, sham, or flimflam. The difference in those three terms is unclear to me. I just like the sound of that column title.

At this stage in life, it's unlikely I'll get taken in by such blatant trickery, but no one is immune. The bad guys excel at deception and persistence. They play the numbers game, knowing if they place enough calls someone will fall.

Sunday's edition of The Macon Telegraph on

October 29th carried a front page story about a retired Houston County couple who were almost conned out of \$186,000. Through an elaborate scheme, they thought their bank accounts were in jeopardy.

The couple invested in gold, from a legitimate seller, as instructed. Thankfully, they became suspicious before the valuable bars arrived. They contacted authorities and were able to return the gold for a full return. By cooperating with law enforcement on a sting operation, one man was jailed after showing up at their house. A zillion more, however, are still on the loose.

Their story reminded me of a lady coming to Bank of Dooly years ago, convinced she had won a large sum of money. She had agreed for a courier to deliver the certified check to her home. The only thing required of her was to give him \$2500 cash for federal taxes. There was no doubt it was a scam, but she believed otherwise.

Officer Robert Jones with the Vienna Police Department came to the bank and also explained it wasn't legitimate. She didn't believe him either, but reluctantly left without the money. Vienna P.D. monitored

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her neighborhood around the appointed time. The courier didn't come, or perhaps saw law enforcement was nearby and kept driving.

Two other bank customers were victims of scams of a different nature. Sadly, the crooks were operating within the law at the time. The scams weren't illegal, just immoral, unethical, misleading, and reprehensible. Both ladies fell for the same ploy, believing that by purchasing magazines and other assorted items, they were certain to win a small fortune.

By the time their families intervened, each had spent tens of thousands of dollars on goods they had no use for. The purchase that best demonstrated the culprits' heartless strategy was a motorized boat. It was inflatable with a tiny trolling motor. Battery not included.

Merchandise had been stored in each of the women's homes. That which was still in the original packaging could be returned for a partial refund. I guess that helped keep the perpetrators out of jail.

With the assistance of authorities, part of their expended funds were recovered. The grossly overpriced items which had been discarded, however, or lacked the original packaging, resulted in substantial losses.

Both of those elderly ladies were susceptible to scams, and we all are to some extent. New schemes, increasingly more sophisticated, are introduced with regularity. I'm no expert on such matters, but here are some suggestions.

First, don't answer unknown numbers. Second, don't trust your caller ID to reflect who is on the other end. Third, always remember that if something sounds too good to be true it probably is. And fourth, if a situation seems the least bit odd, discuss it with someone you have confidence in.

The fifth point, and perhaps most important, is never rely on Joiner's Corner for advice on scams, shams, and flimflams. I don't even know if that's one thing or three. I just like the sound of that column title.