

Opinions, yours and ours

The Chatter Box

By Deborah Bennett

I heard John Denver's famous song, "Country Roads Take Me Home," on the radio recently and was immediately transported back in time to an era when sitting in the back of a pickup truck rambling down a dirt road on Sunday afternoon was an adventure.

I can still see a truckload of youth holding on so tightly to the side of the vehicle that their knuckles turned white. I can still hear the shouts of laughter released with each jolt and rise and fall of the truck as it hit potholes, sunk into mud up to the tire rims and rattled across washboard ripples that made our teeth chatter and our voices vibrate. I can still smell the sweet aroma of the honeysuckle bushes lining the sides of the road and hear the calls of the Bob White from the thick undergrowth as we passed by.

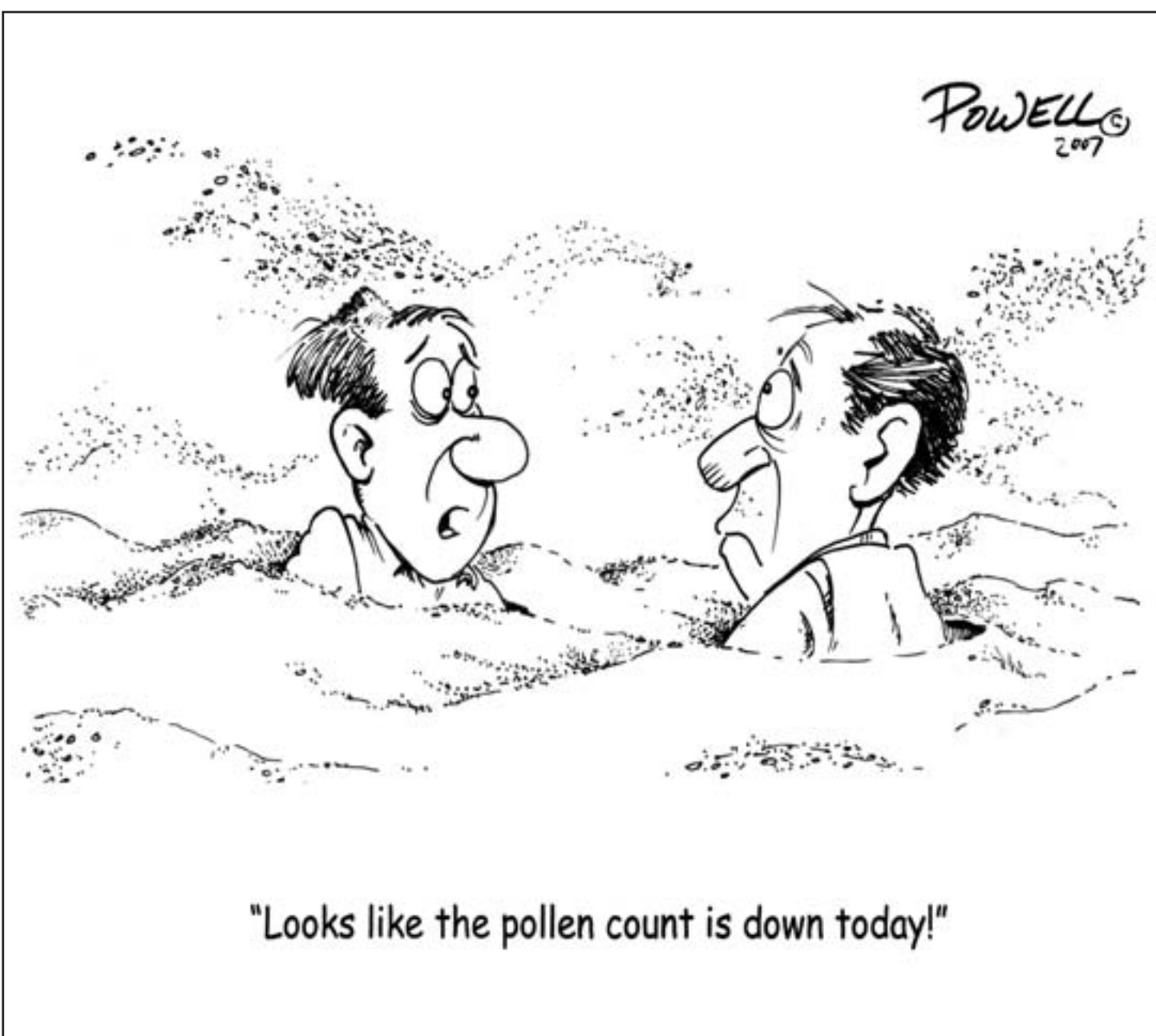
I can still feel the warmth of the sun on my face, the sting of the hot sand thrown up by the tires on my arms and the wind tangling my hair. I recall with gratitude the vehicle stopping in the middle of the road to allow us to jump out and grab some blackberries from the bushes growing along the ditches or plums from nearby trees. And if the driver sped off to leave us running after the vehicle for a short distance, that was even better.

Do youth today find riding down dirt roads in the back of a pickup truck exciting? I doubt it, and that is too bad. I believe it is the simple things in life that mean the most. The memories you make, not the things you accumulate, are the things that are really priceless — like riding down a dirt road with a truckload of friends.

Happy birthday this week to: John Herrington III, Jonathan Hall, Nicolette Schwonke, Rosalie Dwell, Trey Black, Barbara Burke and Ana Joiner.

Celebrating wedding anniversaries this week are: Mr. and Mrs. Jim Waters.

Military Active Duty List: **SPC 4 Travis D. Motes**, 1st Cavalry Division, Camp Taji, Iraq; **Capt. Donald Slade Burke**, Travis Air Force Base, Fairfield, Calif.; **SPC Grade E4 Arthur Lamont Milton Jr.**, HHC 1-36 Infantry Support, Friedberg, Germany; **Staff Sgt. Gilbert C. Sheppard III**, 48th Brigade, 118th Field Artillery, Ft. Stewart; **Petty Officer 2nd Class Jamie A. Yager**, U.S. Navy, Maryland; **Petty Chief Officer Andy D. Crosby**, U.S. Navy, Elroy Destroyer, Norfolk, Va.; **Stephanie Crosby, R.N.**, U.S. Navy, Lafayette Destroyer; **LCPL Dwain "Cade" Lee**, 1st Marine Division Combat Service Support Group II Security Element, ArRamadi, Iraq; **Jimmy Cooper**, U.S. Army National Guard, 87th Engineering Battalion-Augusta, Persian Gulf; **1st Lt. J.R. Taylor**, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Iraq; **SPC. Daniel Stuart**, 18th MEDCOM, 121 General Hospital, Seoul, Korea; **Capt. Andrew P. Thomas**, U.S. Marines, 2nd Marine Division, F.A.S.T. Company, Yorktown, VA; **Sgt. 1st Class Steven Yager**, 362nd Sig. Company, Korea; **MM3 Jeffrey Sweat**, U.S. Navy, USS Kauffman, MM3 59/E-Division, A-Gang, Norfolk, Va.; **Cpl. Larry Lamont Clark**, U.S. Marine Corp, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C. Bagdad, Iraq; **Khan Young**, U.S. Navy, U.S.S. Kitty Hawk, Persian Gulf; **Robert Milton Jr.**, E-3, U.S. Army, Ft. Stewart, Hinesville, Ga., Mission Kuwait; **SFC Ronnie Perryman**, E-7, Georgia Army National Guard, Battery A, 118th Field Artillery Regiment, 48th Brigade Combat Team; **Arnold R. Mosley**, 2nd Lt., U.S. Air Force, Randolph AFB, Texas; and **Debra A. Mosley**, Tech. Sgt., U.S. Air Force, Randolph AFB, Texas.



Jim Hite

Most often, after putting my thoughts and ideas on paper and then sending them to the *Millen News* for publication, I wonder if anyone takes the time to read what is written. Although every once in a while someone will make mention of a particular column, often adding his or her thoughts to mine, such is not a frequent occurrence.

However, the column of four weeks ago about littering and trash along the roads of our county brought a good number of comments, all agreeing that there is a problem and expressing frustration that there seems to be no way to bring such trashing of our land under control.

One in particular expanded on the idea, noting that we have other eyesores which, while not exclusive to our community, can also fall under the trash-along-the-roadsides designation, such as deteriorating housing, unkempt areas, and abandoned buildings.

Comments like these reminded me of a concept which I studied many, many years ago in college philosophy and theology classes and which is as relevant in this day and time as it was throughout the centuries dating back to the time of the ancient Greek philosophers. It is a concept found also in the Bible.

It's called the "common good."
The term is rather self-explanatory. Laws, society, human activity, religion are to promote the common good. The Preamble of our own country's Constitution speaks of a "more perfect union...domestic tranquility, ...common defense, ...general welfare..." all having to do with what can be termed the common good.

Unfortunately, when one starts speaking of philosophic ideas,

readers and listeners can quickly shut down and skip on to something that is not so "boring."

But hear me out.

It's the common good that calls for each of us to respect the land around us: Thus, no trash, no pollution, no destruction.

It's the common good that calls for each of us to care for the other: Thus, decent housing, decent wages, care and active concern for those with less.

It's the common good that calls for each of us to build up our community: Thus, each of us working to make our county, our country, a better place in which to live.

It's the common good that must be at the basis of every law in the land: Thus, no laws geared to favor the rich over the poor, to harm one segment of society while promoting another, to favor the powerful over those who have little or none.

It's the common good that calls for respect of those around us, whatever their nationality, religion, social standing: Thus, speech and actions that reflect this respect without the self-righteous superiority so rightly condemned by Our Savior whose ultimate sacrifice and conquering of evil (the opposite of good) we celebrated this past weekend.

It's the common good that applies the teachings of this Savior to our daily activities, that gives more than lip service to the entire Sermon on the Mount, a summary of His teachings that may be difficult to put into practice but which, if we are to believe the 25th chapter of the same Gospel, provide the blueprint for our life's actions by which God will judge us.

The current flap over the display, or rather the frequent forbidding of the display of the Ten Commandments in public buildings provided the opportunity for one commentator to note that the Commandments are very much concerned with how we treat one other, *i.e.*, the common good. After getting our relationship with God on the right track, we are commanded not to disrespect our parents, not to lie, not to kill, not to destroy the marriage bond, not to steal what belongs to our neighbor.

Sounds like a pretty fair description of the common good.

I know the application of this concept in the world around us can reach a virtually limitless spectrum of activity. It's the application that often goes through my mind during runs and rides, as well as when I sit in the peace and quiet of an early morning on our back porch, watching the sky brighten with the hope and promise of another day.

My attempt to make real in my life this "common good" helps provide meaning to each day. There is no resting on my laurels, no cynicism, no negativity, and no end in sight for personal growth and understanding.

And it's a great way to stay young at heart!

Letters policy

Letters to the editor of *The Millen News* are welcomed and encouraged. These are pages of opinions, yours and ours.

The unsigned editorials generally appearing on the left side of the editorial page represent the opinion of the newspaper and not that of any one person on our staff. Personal columns represent the opinions of the writers whose names appear on them and are not to be considered the opinion of this newspaper, its management or owners. Letters to the editor voice the opinions of the newspaper's readers.

The Millen News reserves the right to edit any and all portions of a letter. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters must include the signature, address and phone number of the writer to allow our staff to authenticate its origin. Letters should be limited to 400 words.

The deadline for letters is Monday at 9 a.m. You can email letters to deborah@eastga.net.

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

I would personally like to express my appreciation to Tim Frawley for his service on the Jenkins County Recreation Board.

Tim has served on the board for the past six years. He has tirelessly given his time and energy to make the recreation complex a better place for *all* children. He has worked evenings, weekends and has even taken vacation time to put in endless hours of work at the recreation complex. Tim has been a great asset to the recreation department.

Thank you for your years of service.

Sandra Sherrod
JCRD Board

Dear Editor:

In 1870 Confederate General Robert E. Lee told Fletcher Stockdale, the former governor of Texas: "Governor, if I had foreseen the use those people designed to make of their victory, there would have been no surrender at Appomattox; no, sir, not by me. Had I foreseen these results of subjugation, I would have preferred to die at Appomattox with my brave men, my sword in my right hand."

Our Christian heritage and our Confederate heritage are under attack. The anti-Christian liberals and the ACLU want to remove all Christian symbols from public view. Hate groups want to remove all Confederate symbols from public view. Both are in direct contradiction to our Constitution.

Our Confederate symbols will be the first to go, and then our Christian symbols will be next. Just open your eyes and look around, and you will see its already happening. When you take away freedom from people you might not agree with, you are signing a death warrant to your own freedom.

Remember that our Confederate ancestors fought for everybody's freedom against an oppressive and an invading central government. Because we lost our brave and historic battle, we now have to deal with a state and local government that wants total control over our lives also.

Confederate Memorial Day in Georgia is April 26. Our Confederate ancestors knew that if they didn't stand up to a central government that was getting out of control, they would just take away more and more of our freedoms our founding fathers wanted us to have. Never be ashamed of what our Confederate ancestors fought and died for.

Don Bazemore
Sylvania

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The Millen News Deadlines

FRIDAY AT NOON:
Wedding Announcements
Engagement Announcements
Anniversary Announcements
Birth Announcements
Memoriams and Thank You's

FRIDAY-5PM:
School News, Chatter Box Items,
General News Items.

MONDAY-9 AM:
Letters to the Editor

MONDAY-10 AM:
Datebook Items, Church News & Obituaries

MONDAY-11 AM:
Classified & Legal Ads

MONDAY-NOON:
Retail Display Ads