

# The Claxton Enterprise

# OPINIONS

Some of ours . . . some of yours ... and some others

## Love letters lead to a reunion

It was several months in the making - a reunion with someone I'd never actually met. It all began with a box of letters, a Purple Heart medal, and a mission to find their rightful home.

As I wrote about in a previous column, I read those letters and got caught up in a love story from World War II. The letters were primarily written from Charles Campbell, a gunner in the U.S. Navy to his new young bride, Elizabeth. It was a window into a different time and a different place - a glimpse at a young family struggling through the trials of separation brought on by war.

When Charles discovered that he was going to be a father, he was excited and never failed to express his love for his wife and the son named Michael whom he would never get to meet.

A father's love is one of the most important gifts a child can receive. For Michael Campbell, that gift came, in part, through this collection of letters.

I had the wonderful opportunity to meet Michael a few weeks ago in South Carolina. I drove up with Britnee and Hamilton Kinard who, through their work on behalf of veterans via the SD Gunner Fund, had played a key role in ensuring that Michael would receive this gift from his dad.

I was looking forward to meeting Michael and learning more of this story that had so fully captured my attention, but I was a little anxious too. How much had he known of his father? Would the letters mean as much to him as I had hoped? Had

I spilled the beans about a family drama that might cause him discomfort to know?

When we did meet, it truly was like a reunion! Michael and his family were gracious and so appreciative of having this bit of family history returned to them. It could not have gone better had it been scripted by some Hollywood screenwriter. In fact, I believe it was scripted by One much more creative and thoughtful than that. So much of this experience had Divine appointment written all over it.

Though now 70 years old, Michael still lacked closure from losing his father as an infant. He expressed his gratitude at having this chance to get to know him a little better and bring some healing to that lifelong wound.

Elizabeth has since passed on, but she lived a long and full life. She had told Michael that she had always known at least once in her life, she had been truly loved! She



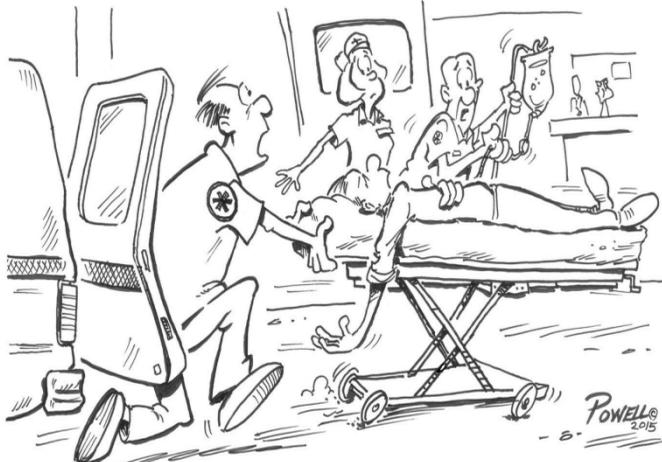
**LeeAnna Tatum**  
Guest Columnist

See **LEEANNA TATUM** Page 5

### Something to think about ...

"Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into friend."

*Martin Luther King Jr.*



"Quick! Another State employee heard they might get a break on health premiums!"

## Trump's telling the truth about one big issue

Donald Trump's campaign for the Republican presidential nomination seems to defy gravity and all the other laws of nature.

He insults Mexicans, military veterans and women, and makes taunting remarks about the bodily processes of popular TV host Megyn Kelly. His poll numbers remain steady or even increase.

The Republican Party establishment, the pundits, the Fox News management, and conservative hot-heads like Erick Erickson deride Trump and try to knock him out of the race. He still runs way ahead of everybody else.

Is there anything Trump could say that is so outrageous it would

cause supporters to desert him? I'm not sure there is, although I may yet be proven wrong.

While Trump has said many questionable things, he has called attention to a topic that has long needed discussing: the influence of money on politics.

Trump, who claims to be a multi-

billionaire, knows a lot about how money affects politics, and he summed it up in this memorable phrase: "When you give, they do whatever the hell you want them to do."

At the TV debate hosted by Fox in Cleveland, Trump explained how a wealthy person uses their money to affect the political process: "If I ask them, if I need them, you know, most of the people on this stage I've given to, just so you understand, a lot of money."

"I hope you will give to me," said Gov. John Kasich of Ohio. Trump responded: "Sounds good. Sounds good to me, governor."

Trump was asked why he had

contributed to Democrats like Hillary Clinton and Nancy Pelosi, and what he had received from them in return.

"I will tell you that our system is broken," Trump answered. "I gave to many people. Before this, before two months ago, I was a businessman. I give to everybody. When they call, I give. And do you know what? When I need something from them, two years later, three years later, I call them. They are there for me. And that's a broken system."

Trump added: "With Hillary Clinton, I said, be at my wedding, and she came to my wedding. You know why? She didn't have a choice, because I gave. I gave to a

foundation that, frankly, that foundation is supposed to do good."

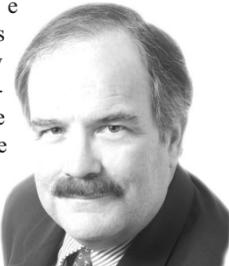
A few days before the Cleveland debate, GOP candidates Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, Scott Walker, Jeb Bush, and Carly Fiorina attended a meeting hosted by Koch Industries billionaire Charles Koch.

Trump tweeted about that confab: "I wish good luck to all of the Republican candidates that traveled to California to beg for money etc. from the Koch Brothers. Puppets?"

What he is saying is accurate about politics at both the national level and the state level.

There are many examples that

See **TOM CRAWFORD** Page 5



**Tom Crawford**  
The Georgia Report

## Dixie Divas Talking to everyone to collect stories

Southerners tend to collect stories. And, we tend to talk to anyone who will talk to us. The latter tends to lead to the first.

"In New England, we don't strike up conversations with strangers," Tink pointed out. "We mind our own business."

"That's boring," I replied to this observation that was made after a 15-minute conversation with two sales clerks while my husband paced nervously, his hands thrust deep into his pockets. He doesn't like to be impolite and my questions, he thought, were bordering close to being - get this - nosy.

But we were in Nashville, a Southern proud city, so the young ladies thought nothing of it. In fact, they participated enthusiastically. It started this way: It was spring, ambling toward Easter. I, as usual, was trying to find a hat. Now, this is a chore every year but I had recently come up with a rather smart idea. If

you live long enough and learn enough, you can figure out how to solve a repeated problem.

"That's beautiful," said the sales assistant as I tilted my head from side to side, closely examining the broad-brimmed natural-colored, sheer straw trimmed in deep fuchsia pink with a matching flower. It looked remarkably like a Derby hat.

I smiled and turned to her. "I think this will match one of my potential Easter dresses." That was the leading line into a tale of all the years that I have picked one dress in one color then tried to find a matching hat. "But this year, I have three dresses in three colors so when I find a hat in one of those colors, that will be the dress I choose!"

She agreed that I was rather smart so that led to deeper conversation. Soon, another sales assistant joined us and, before long, we were talking about their colleges, what they majored in, what they hoped to accomplish in their careers and how one grew up in Nashville but one had moved there from Mississippi.

I paid for the hat, finished the conversation then trailed behind my hus-

See **RONDA RICH** Page 5



**Ronda Rich**  
Columnist

## The Whole Truth or Thereabouts

# One way to catch a game thief

I first heard about him when I answered the poaching hotline during my first year with Idaho Fish and Game. Most informants were anonymous, and this one was no exception. He gave me a voluminous amount of detailed information on a highly resourceful poacher whose killing of out-of-season big game without licenses or permits knew no bounds. His regular stomping ground was the huge River of No Return Wilderness Area.

This culprit was also an unlicensed guide who catered to wealthy, nonresident hunters on post-season big game hunts. He had been paid more than \$30,000 by highly satisfied clients. The informant knew the poacher well and doubted that he could ever be caught conventionally.

It turned out that I had been working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a cooperative enforcement plan. It agreed to provide undercover agents for specific and serious poaching problems in Idaho, especially those involving federal violations. Illegal guiding of nonresidents on illegal hunts satisfied that condition, so this became our first cooperative case.

The case began when the federal agent arrived in the poacher's hometown. He portrayed himself as a wealthy racehorse breeder from Texas and wore high-end clothing, drove a fancy truck, and flashed large bills. To support his clandestine alias he also voiced his

desire to add an Idaho bighorn sheep to his trophy head collection.

All of that evidently worked because the poacher quickly contacted him in the town's only saloon. Over drinks he introduced himself as an experienced and highly successful big game guide. The agent assured him that's what he was looking for, because he wanted a trophy bighorn no matter how. The poacher seemed to be taken in, but he checked the agent's background by calling the references the agent gave him.

Of course, all of those contacts were fellow agents or employees who provided the right answers to support the undercover agent's story. For example, one pretended to be an illicit guide in Montana who bragged about having guided the rich Texan on successful hunts for trophy sheep and elk. He particularly emphasized how well he had been paid.

After that, the agent had the poacher's full confidence which resulted in solid plans for a guided bighorn sheep hunt. During that first hunt they stalked a trophy ram but the agent purposely missed it. He blamed the horseback trip into the area for knocking his rifle sights off.

But the poacher shot a nice-enough ram, skinned the head cape out and secured the head and horns high in a dense fir tree. After it had aged sufficiently, he would retrieve it as a natural mortality pickup which was legal. He ex-

plained that he often did that and always made good money from horns and capes like those.

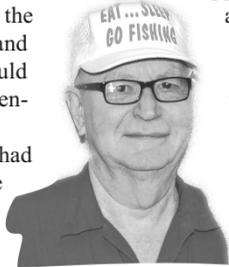
We continued that operation for another year. During the summer another agent was introduced to the poacher by the Texan. He was vouched for and portrayed as a well-heeled hunting friend and longtime racehorse client. Both agents separately hunted with the outlaw guide that second year and sufficient evidence was collected to prosecute him.

The operational segment culminated when the lead agent called the poacher from Las Vegas. He bragged that he had just made a bundle selling some expensive race horses. In addition, the agent told the poacher that he had a new, four-horse trailer and, to show his gratitude, he would give it to him if he came down for it.

The unsuspecting offender soon arrived in Las Vegas whereupon the waiting federal agents charged him with several felony violations of federal law which prohibit, in any manner, the transporting of illegally taken wildlife across state lines. The agents also confiscated the poacher's pickup truck which he had often used in his illegal activities. They last saw the unfortunate culprit standing on a Las Vegas street corner.

Two nights later he was caught spotlighting and killing a mule deer buck in a restricted area of Idaho. He told officers that he needed a trophy head to sell in order to pay his federal fine. The deer's antlers measured out to be Idaho's all-time fourth largest.

See **FRANK NESMITH** Page 5



**Frank NeSmith**  
Columnist

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