

Notes from the Senate

Weekly report from Senator Jack Hill

Legislation and Funding Pointed Towards Protecting Georgia's Natural Resources

As a state with boundless natural resources, Georgia leaders work to protect those resources with legislation, to promote hunting and fishing and to fund various water initiatives, preserve natural resource areas and wildlife area preservation. This week, we look at legislation passed in the 2015 Session and the FY2016 Budget for Natural Resource areas.

•**SB 62** - Allows Probate Courts to hear all game and fish violations rather than being limited to misdemeanors under present law. Solves a problem particularly in counties with no state court.

•**SB 101** - Coastal Marshland Buffer bill establishes a 25 ft. buffer along coastal marshlands in line with the Coastal marshlands Protection Act and provides procedures for variances and variances by rule. Effective

Dec. 31, 2015.

•**SB112** - Authorizes and requires the Board of Natural Resources to establish recording and reporting requirements for all game animals and game birds harvested during hunting in addition to the present requirement for deer.

•**SR 26** - Creates the Joint House and Senate Coastal Greenway Study Committee which will examine the proposed Coastal Georgia Greenway Trail, which would connect various historical areas and green spaces along the Coast and provide a link to the East Coast Greenway Trail running from Maine to Florida. Committee would consist of 13 members appointed by the Senate and House and other officials. Would be abolished on Dec. 1, 2015.

•**HB 160** - Controversial raccoon trapping bill. Trapping of raccoons is presently permitted in much of middle and south Georgia but was prohibited in areas like Atlanta and North Georgia.

This bill allows trapping to be expanded to the northern part of the state. Stirred up much opposition not just in Georgia, but around the world.

•**HB 199** - Sets uniform statewide notification requirements for timber harvesting operations. Requires harvesters to notify local governments before and upon completion of timber harvesting. Limits county to one bond requirement regardless of the number of tracts being harvested.

•**HB 475** - Establishes a permit requirement for the transport of live feral hogs to market. Also expands hunting of the nuisance hogs to allow night hunting, hunting from vehicles or airplanes and cross-bow hunting as well as with sound suppressors.

FY 2016 Budget Items Affecting Natural Resource Areas

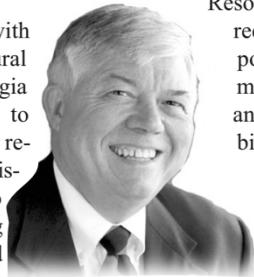
•Georgia Environmental Finance Authority -- \$10 million for the state match to the Federal State Revolving Fund Match, Clean and Drinking Water Programs.

•Firefighting Equipment for State Forestry Commission - \$4 million. Facility major improvements and renovations statewide - \$160,000 and \$300,000 for construction and equipment for North Bryan Forestry Unit, Pembroke.

•Department of Natural Resources
- \$950,000 - Replacement vehicles
- \$19.93 million - Facility major improvements and renovations statewide for parks and other facilities.
- \$5.72 million - New construction matching federal funds.
- \$4.5 million - Acquisition for Wildlife Management Areas and Parks, to match federal and private funds
- \$5 million - Purchase one new helicopter

Legislation and final action may be accessed online at: www.legis.ga.gov and the State Budget can be accessed online at the Senate Budget and Evaluation website: www.senate.ga.gov/sbeo/en-US/Home.aspx

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Jack Hill
Guest Columnist

• LeeAnna Tatum

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his wife and the happiness they would know when they could finally be together again.

The letters continued in much the same way through the completion of Charles' pre-deployment training. With one notable exception, Charles received news that a baby could be on the way. Then, a gap in the timeline, almost two months later, and Charles was writing from sea - the South Pacific.

He had originally hoped to be assigned to the amphibious forces, but ended up as a gunner on a destroyer escort ship instead. "I'm glad I'm not going into the amphibious," he wrote, "because it is about the (most) dangerous branch there is. The regular fleet is lots safer than any part of the Navy. I used to didn't give a damn, but now I've got a darling little wife to live for, and the safest place is the best place."

The marriage license intruded into my thoughts again. Somehow, I didn't think that Charles was as safe as he had hoped.

Charles' letters reflected a sense of humor and a bright optimism for the future. He joked in his letters about never wanting to eat rice again when he was out of the Navy and expressed his longing for a fresh egg. Powdered eggs were plentiful aboard the ship, but not to the gunner's liking.

While at sea, Charles learned of the safe arrival of his son, Michael, and expressed his love for mother and child. He also learned of an argument between his wife and his mother (who suspected the paternity of the baby).

Charles defended his wife and son, and wrote a letter declaring the child to be his and professing his unwavering trust in his wife. He proudly wrote that she could show the letter to anyone who doubted her. Later letters seem to indicate that the rumor died down and the relationship between his wife and his mother was on the mend.

Then I came to the last letter in the box from Charles. Again, the marriage

license came to mind. I began to dread what I would discover.

The letter was postmarked October 19, 1944, and mailed from aboard the USS Eversole. Charles told Elizabeth to make note of the date so she would know that he was safe. The following sentence was removed - most likely the work of the censors who read each letter before allowing it to be sealed and sent.

Thanks to modern technology, it wasn't difficult to discover what happened to Charles. Not time consuming or complicated, that is. But, I cried when I read his fate.

The USS Eversole was part of the Battle of Leyte Gulf. Surviving the initial battle, the Eversole was in the process of picking up survivors from the sea when it was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine. Though 139 survived the sinking of the ship, Charles was not one of them.

Like so many young men of his time, and so many men and women still, he left the

comfort and safety of his home to serve his country, but he didn't come back. In Charles' case - not even in death. Lost at sea, he was declared dead on October 29, 1944, ten short days after his last letter was sent to his beloved wife.

"Take good care of yourself and our son," he wrote in closing, "Write to me often as possible and remember I love you very much. All my love always, Charles."

Author's note: Those to whom this box truly belongs have been located. Charles' and Elizabeth's granddaughter is very excited to surprise her father, Michael, with these letters from the father he never knew. I am looking forward to being a part of that surprise and getting to meet this family with whom I now feel so connected.

Thank you Laura Mauer and Stephanie Smith for recognizing the value of this box and saving it from being lost forever. And thank you, Britnee Kinard, for allowing me to be a part of this journey.

• Tom Crawford

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Thompson, the lieutenant governor, claimed that he should be governor, as the constitution specified. Outgoing governor Ellis Arnall declared he wouldn't hand over the office to Talmadge and would continue to serve as the chief executive.

It was two months before the Georgia Supreme Court sorted out the mess, ruling that Thompson was the governor and would serve until a special election could be held in 1948, where Herman Talmadge won with the support of voters who were still living and breathing.

Bullock, Buchanan and Gaddie have produced an entertaining book that lays out all the particulars of this sor-did affair. They especially deserve praise for their account of how the Talmadge campaign worked hard to keep blacks from voting in the Democratic primary.

In many counties, local registrars deleted the names of blacks who had registered on the grounds that they didn't

provide good enough answers to questions about the U.S. Constitution - or on no grounds at all.

In one county, the registrar kept the voter registration book at her home: "She 'occasionally' would allow whites to come to her home and register, but she 'could not turn over my living room to Negroes' and refused to allow them to register."

In another county, the local legislator stood in front of the polling place on election day with a shotgun and said he

would shoot any black person who tried to vote there. None did.

Seventy years later, the same issues of voter suppression and access to the ballot box are playing out in the 2016 presidential race, showing once again how history keeps repeating itself.

(Tom Crawford is editor of The Georgia Report, an internet news service at gareport.com that reports on state government and politics. He can be reached at tcrawford@gareport.com.)

• Frank NeSmith

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1973 at my father's visitation. I asked him if he ever had any students in tree identification as good as Morris and I had been. He said that a few did fine, but Bill Callaway had even outshined us.

Later, when I was a game warden in northeastern Kansas the knowledge gained from that experience came in especially handy in one par-

ticular case. Another officer and I had arrested a man for the felonious theft of black walnut trees from one of our public hunting areas. While I was testifying during the trial the defense attorney ruthlessly cross-examined me about the commercial worth of trees. It was a defense tactic designed to draw the jury's attention away from the defendant by focusing on

the officer. After I satisfactorily answered all of his questions he didn't even grill the other officer.

As we were going down the courthouse steps after winning the trial, George grumbled that that defense attorney probably couldn't even tell a pine cone from a hickory nut. To be fair, I told him I knew of one lawyer who was truly an expert at

identifying trees, but he lived in Georgia instead of Kansas.

Returning to Morris and me, we graduated that spring of 1960 but wound up leading very different lives. We've only met twice since, but our work and cooperative accomplishments in those tree identification contests have always remained uppermost in my mind.

The Way It Was

From the Enterprise Files



50 YEARS AGO

"Circus Day," a miniature replica of the Big Top, was presented Thursday, May 20, as a feature of the closing days of the Kiddie Kollege Kindergarten.

The kindergarten yard was transformed into the circus grounds, complete with a lemonade stand, circus ring, wild animals, gaudy costumes, and clowns. A record number of friends and parents attended the colorful event.

Brad Tippins has the swagger and call of a veteran ringmaster. Chris Strickland, the lion tamer, put his growling lions, Lewey Adams and Michael Ellis, through their act with calm courage.

Karen Beasley was the lady horse trainer who put her two white chargers, Keith Branch and Berry Strickland through their paces. Beth Tippins was transformed into a sultry snake charmer.

Brenda Waters shuffled to the music as the dancing bear. Lexie Strickland was the organ grinder, with his frisky monkey, Keith Mitchell.

Chris Lawson quickly "sold" all his wares to the younger guests, with cries of "Popcorn, Popcorn."

"The Famous Stricklands," Berry and Chris, billed as "The Limberjacks" were daring acrobats, aided by "the Limberjills," Ann Thompson, Dale Oglesby and Karen Beasley in acrobatics and gymnastics acts.

Four ballerina girls "straight from France," Donna Ne-Smith, Renee Branch, Debra Collins and Melanie Collins, twirled and whirled to the music of the dance.

Strongman Steve McLeod displayed his talents in a sidshow outside the ring.

Throughout the performance, three clowns, Dave Tippins, Jimmy Williamson and Todd Harris, delighted the audience with their stunts and tricks.

40 YEARS AGO

Lady Luck was apparently with Mrs. Judy Tippins of Claxton when she hooked a large catfish while fishing in John Varnedoe's pond Sunday afternoon. According to Mrs. Tippins, she fought the fish for more than 30 minutes before landing it with the assistance of her husband, Robert R. (Bobby) Tippins III. The catfish weighed in at 34 pounds. Mrs. Tippins was fishing with a Penn Reel and black worm at the time of her catch.

Approximately 400 Georgia Southern College students were recognized at the 1975 Honor's Day Convocation held at GSC recently.

Those students from the Evans County area who received honors at the ceremonies include Robert R. Miller, Thomas Lee Lynn and Debra Lynn Holmes. All received excellent scholarship, 3.5 - 4.0.

Mr. and Mrs. David DeLoach of Bellville, proudly announce the birth of their son, Robert Grant, in Candler County Hospital. Grant was born May 18, 1975, and weighed 8 lbs. 5 oz.

30 YEARS AGO

The annual Honors Day festivities at Middle Georgia College were concluded on May 9 with the crowning of the May Day Queen. Paige Banks of Bellville, Debbie Flanigan of Claxton and Terri Ambrose of Bellville were selected as members of the May Day Court.

Four students from Claxton Elementary School each received a \$50 U.S. Savings Bond for submitting the winning drawings in a "Farm Scene" coloring and drawing contest sponsored by Harvey Foods of Claxton. Winners are Jeremy Strickland, first grade; Star Griffon, second grade; Latisa Kennedy, third grade; Christina Selestok, overall winner.

Randall and JoEllen Tippins are proud to announce the birth of their son, Justin Roy.

Justin was born on Friday, May 10, 1985 at 7:05 a.m. He weighed 5 pounds and 15 ounces and measured 19.5 inches long.

• Ronda Rich

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Mama opened her pocket-book and pulled out two crumpled dollar bills. "Here," she pushed them toward me. "Get me a jar. That'll be enough to do me 'til I die."

Three months later when I was cleaning out her refrigerator after her departure from this earthly abode, I pulled out a half-full jar of Duke's. I had to smile. She was right. She had enough to do her until she died and still had half of it left.

About six months before she died - now, mind you, she was in good, almost robust health - I went in the house one day and found her sitting, as usual, in her favorite recliner, the footrest kicked up on it. In her hands, she was holding an 8x11 photo. She was in her thoughtful pose which was noted when she rested her thumb against her chin and let her forefinger settle on her upper lip while the rest of her fingers sorta' dangled.

"Whatta you doin'?" I asked.

"I'm admirin' this photo that I had made at church for the directory." She turned it toward me. "Ain't that good of me?" She was full of admiration and, truthfully, rightly so. She had on a beautiful, deep pink suit, lipstick a shade darker, and her hair, teased to a bountiful fullness by Louise, was perfect.

"Yeah, real pretty." She held it at arm's length, studying it in all its glory and said, "I had this made so that when I die, y'all can put this in a frame near the casket."

I rolled my eyes and walked to the kitchen.

That's exactly what we did. And it just goes to prove that if you threaten long enough to die, one day, you will.

Life goes by so quickly. *Ronda Rich is the best-selling author of There's A Better Day A-Comin'. Visit www.rondarich.com to sign up for her free weekly newsletter.*