



2014 winner: Sports Writing excellence
2014 winner: Investigative Reporting excellence
2014 winner: Local News Coverage excellence
2014 winner: Humorous Column excellence
2014 winner: News Photo excellence
2014 winner: Serious Column excellence

Opinion

Declare among the nations,
and publish, and set up a standard;
publish, and conceal not;
Jeremiah 50:2

On the Porch Damage control

BY WILL DAVIS
publisher@mymcr.net

Last week we talked about the importance of a newspaper reporting plainly both the good and bad in its community. Like a mirror, a good newspaper reflects accurately what's happening. Getting the facts out allows conscientious members of a community to respond not with outrage at the mirror, but with steps to correct the inevitable shortcomings we all find in our mirrors.

Monroe County Emergency Management director Matt Perry demonstrated such a response last week. It was a minor, humorous thing, but it shows a good way public officials can respond to imperfections. The outdoor warning sirens in Forsyth waited one day last week and at least one reader turned to the Reporter's Facebook page to ask the community, "What gives?" Was there a tornado we needed to know about?



Will Davis

Before long, Perry took to the county's Emergency Management FB page to respond: "So, who here has ever butt dialed someone on their cell phone? Now, show of hands, who here has ever butt siren activated outdoor warning sirens city wide? Anyone? Anyone? Well, it's happened. Turns out the encoder box that is used to activate the city of Forsyth sirens was accidentally hit and set those suckers off. Sorry for the scare folks. It was an accident."

Give credit to Perry for his honesty and good humor. Another example arose last week reported on the front page of this edition. It seems the county -- or its contractor -- low-balled the county property tax rates on all 17,000+ tax bills sent out last week. The county doesn't want taxpayers to pay the mailed bills, as they were significantly lower than they are supposed to be.

We placed a call to tax commissioner Lori Andrews last week. We were sent to voice mail. On Friday she sent out a vague press release about what had happened. We tried again Monday. She was busy. Finally, she had her staff ask us to email any questions. So at 10:01 a.m. on Monday, we did. Here they were:

- 1) What happened? Was it a mistake on our end or the company's?
- 2) How many bills went out?
- 3) What is the cost of re-sending the bills and who will absorb the cost?
- 4) When will new bills go out?
- 5) What if their mortgage company pays their taxes? Do they need to contact them to prevent them from paying the first bill?
- 6) Didn't this happen one time before? When and what?

Six hours later we had no response and emailed her again since we were going to press that night. She finally sent these answers at 4:37 p.m.:

- 1) "An error was made in the calculation and printing of the 2015 tax bills that show the County M&O at 10.831 with a sale tax rollback at 2.261 which was incorrect, the corrected tax bills will show County M&O at 13.816 and a sale tax rollback at 2.985". We apologize for any inconvenience this error may have caused the citizens of our county. My office is dedicated to sending an accurate bill as soon as possible.
- 2) The whole county
- 3) Don't know at this time.
- 4) End of the month
- 5) Yes, they will need to send their new tax bill to their mortgage holder.
- 6) No

Note the first answer is merely copied and pasted from the press release sent out on Friday. Again there's no assigning of responsibility for the problem, which was discovered five days earlier. The last answer is up for debate. County officials confirmed that there was an issue a few years ago with mailings where something was figured wrongly.

Moreover, except for the press release sent to us late Friday, the tax office did little to alert the county's property owners that their just-received tax bills were wrong. The tax commissioner taped a sheet of paper about the problem on the door of the office, which is seen only if you go to the office. There have been no robo-calls to county residents, no postings on the county website or the tax commissioners website. (And to think some lawmakers want to let counties handle their own public notices on their websites instead of making them report to newspapers!) There have been no reports in Macon TV, radio or newspapers. You would think this would be urgent. If the tax office doesn't fix its under-billing it would lose \$3 million in revenue. That means deputies not getting paid, roads not being paved and water service being interrupted.

The lesson of the day is this: You will blow it. You will make mistakes. It's human. But when you do, be up front and open about it and tell everything you know. This will help re-build public trust, which will probably help you if you want to be re-elected.

MYMCR.NET POLL

Who would you vote for in the race for Forsyth City Council Post 2?



Chris Hewett
11 votes
55 percent



Tye Howard
6 votes
30 percent



Annette Mays
3 votes
15 percent

Carolyn's Corner

Where do we come from?

BY CAROLYN MARTEL
ads@mymcr.net

Kids can ask some profound questions can't they? A little girl asked her father, "Where did the human race come from?" The father answered, "We were made by God." The girl asked her mother the same question. The mother answered, "Many years ago we evolved from monkeys." The confused little girl returned to her father and said, "Dad how is it possible, that you told me the human race was created by God, and Mom said we came from monkeys?" The father answered, "Well, dear, it is very simple. I told you about my side of the family and your mother told you about hers."



Carolyn Martel

HERE'S A question that we've all asked, "Where did God come from?" How would you answer that question? Our finite minds find it difficult to imagine a Being with "no beginning." Yet Isaiah 57:15 says, "He is the Holy One who inhabits eternity." A.W. Tozer wrote, "Time dwells in God. Time marks the beginning of the created existence and because God never began to exist; time can have no application in Him. God created time for our physical existence here, but He has no beginning and no end."

I ADMIT that it may be difficult to wrap your mind around a God that has no beginning and no end. But I believe we exist because He exists. If you want to believe we evolved from primordial soup

or from monkeys, have at it. However, Romans 1:20 offers a convincing argument, "For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities --his eternal power and divine nature --have been understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."

JESUS IS our Creator, Designer and Life-Giver! Everything that was made has his fingerprints all over it. He's awesome, magnificent, splendid, majestic, glorious, eternal, immortal and all-powerful! And the best part? He loves you and me. That ought to wow you! That's my opinion. What's yours?

Carolyn Martel writes encouraging columns each week in the Reporter's Carolyn's Corner. She's also the advertising manager for the Reporter. E-mail her at ads@mymcr.net.

As I See It...

War hero can't win with Dems

BY CLAUDE CURLEE
cbcurl47gmail.com

Within the last few days there were two announcements that may cause some to ponder what they mean. Jim Webb announced he is dropping out of the Democratic race for president. Jim Webb at one time would have been the ideal candidate. His resume is better than John F. Kennedy's by far. JFK was the last Democrat to use his war record to win office. Jim Webb's military awards are: The Navy Cross, our nation's second highest award for valor; The Silver Star for valor; two Bronze Stars with combat Vs for valor; and two Purple Hearts for injuries caused by enemy action; He served as Secretary of The Navy. He served as Assistant Secretary of Defense. He was elected to the Senate from Virginia as a Democrat. Why couldn't Jim Webb get support from the Democrats? Simple answer: He is everything the Democrats have come to oppose. Jim Webb has a lot of positives going for him but his platform didn't agree with the Socialist movement.



move away from taxing income regardless of the level of income and tax consumption instead. Jim has a position on jobs which includes an education component for those who lost their way when they were 16 years old. Jim also believes in responsibility. He believes in giving a hand up and not a life-long hand out. If you look at Jim's positions there is a lot of common sense in them. Democrats who are dissatisfied with the direction the present Democratic candidates want to take should visit his web site for in depth look at his platform. He believes that present socialist Democratic policies are destroying this country. Because he doesn't support the socialist Democratic movement, he is an outcast by the Democratic Party and the liberal media. The liberal national media doesn't want him to be heard and was evident by how moderator Anderson Cooper treated Jim in the debate. He was cut off and interrupted numerous times while Hillary and Bernie were given free rein. There is now a movement to get Jim to run as an independent. He may be a candidate who could draw from both sides.

The second announcement was by Joe Biden which didn't come as a surprise, but some of the things he said did. When he addressed the enemy question, he made clear that the Republicans were not enemies, and

that Hillary's position was the wrong way to view things. He also made it very clear he didn't believe we could endure 4 more years of what has happened in the last 6½. Obama's use of executive order has driven a wedge between the branches of government. Hillary said Obama hasn't gone far enough and she would use executive orders more. I believe he was saying Hillary is the wrong person for this country. If she is elected, she will be a more divisive and a more destructive force than this country can endure.

Don't misunderstand me. I am not endorsing Jim Webb. I do recognize his achievements. I admire him for his military record and service. Jim Webb was a U.S. Marine Corp Officer who served in combat as a platoon leader. I am attempting to point out that Jim is a man who has all the qualities which helped make this country great. Qualities which he has lived by. Many Marines carry a little red card on which are words they live by. The word HONOR on a line alone. On the next line words INTEGRITY, RESPONSIBILITY, and ACCOUNTABILITY on the next line COURAGE is the only word which is centered. Next line DO THE RIGHT THING, IN THE RIGHT WAY FOR THE RIGHT REASONS. Next line the word COMMITMENT. The other side of the card tells what Marines are to do. I believe the words on the card describe the character traits which helped make this country great. Jim probably still carries his card.

I tell about the card because I believe the Democratic candidates and media display none of those attributes. I also believe our youth and younger voters have not been exposed to these principles enough. They are exposed to too many television programs which teach bad character traits such as lie, steal, cheat, use and abuse people to win, winning is all that matters. So when they see the same character traits in politicians, it is accepted as OK.

On a different subject, if anyone believes Obama is going to let Hillary get derailed, you must remember none of the people associated with his administration have suffered any harm because of their wrong doings. Usually they have gotten a promotion. He also controls the DOJ.

While on the Obama administration, I need to acknowledge what I believe to be two of his accomplishments

Until Obama's administration, Grant's administration was viewed as the most corrupt; I now believe Obama holds that record.

I also believe James Earl Carter is no longer our most incompetent president. I believe Obama has also claimed this honor.

Congratulations Barack Obama you now hold two records recognizing your accomplishments. (trophies and plaques to follow in the mail)

Claude Curlee of Forsyth is a Vietnam veteran and a member of the Monroe County GOP.



the Monroe County

Reporter

www.mymcr.net

is published every week by
The Monroe County Reporter Inc.
Will Davis, president
Robert M. Williams Jr., vice president
Cheryl S. Williams, secretary-treasurer

OUR STAFF



Will Davis
Publisher/Editor
publisher@mymcr.net



Trellis Grant
Business Manager
business@mymcr.net



Richard Dumas
News Editor
forsyth@mymcr.net



Diane Glidewell
Community Editor
news@mymcr.net



Carolyn Martel
Advertising Manager
ads@mymcr.net



Ken Baker
Graphic Artist
webmaster
graphics@mymcr.net

50 N. Jackson St., Forsyth, GA 31029
Periodicals Postage Paid at
Forsyth, Ga 31029
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
THE MONROE COUNTY REPORTER
P.O. Box 795, Forsyth, GA 31029

Official Organ of Monroe County and the City of Forsyth
Phone: 478-994-2358 • FAX 478-994-2359
SUBSCRIPTION RATE: In County - \$35 Out of County - \$48
Single copy - \$1

Deadlines noon on Friday prior to issue. Comments featured on opinion pages are the creations of the writers, they do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Reporter management.

Publication No. USPS 997-840)