

perspective

CONGRESS shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

(First Amendment to The U.S. Constitution)



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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

In County: 3 months \$15; 6 months \$28; 1 year \$50.
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Law Enforcement: 1 year \$28.
Students: 9 months \$36; Schools: 9 months \$41.

LETTERS POLICY

1. Each letter submitted must be an original — no photocopies. E-mails are also accepted if a name and phone number is included: editor@gaffneyledger.com
2. Letters should include the writer's name, address and day and evening telephone numbers.
3. Letters should be submitted exclusively to this newspaper.
4. Letters are subject to editing for length and clarity.
5. Letters submitted in all-italic or all-capital letters will not be accepted.

We will not print letters:
— That are unsigned;
— That contain questionable or undocumented facts;
— That contain inappropriate attacks on a person or persons;
— Regarding disputes between the writer and other parties;
— Endorsing a business.

Our mailing address is: P.O. Box 670, Gaffney, S.C. 29342.

IF YOU MISS YOUR PAPER

Here at The Gaffney Ledger, since 1894, our newspaper delivery goal has always been the complete satisfaction of our readers.

Despite our taking exhaustive measures to prevent it, a newspaper delivery will occasionally be missed. Papers are sometimes picked up by the wrong person or by a dog, or they are missed due to some other unavoidable occurrence.

With this in mind, we have developed the following standard policy for late delivery of your Gaffney Ledger.

— We guarantee same-day delivery of your Gaffney Ledger if the problem is reported to us by 5 p.m.

— You can call at any time after 5 p.m. to report a missing paper via our answering machine and your paper will be delivered the next day by noon.

— We will deliver your Gaffney Ledger on the following business day by 11 a.m. if the missing paper is reported by 9 a.m. on that day.

After that, you have the choice of:
— Having the paper delivered with the next day's paper, or
— Crediting your account for the cost of the missing paper.

If you have any questions about this policy or if you have any problems with the delivery of your newspaper, please let us know. We are here to serve our readers.

CORRECTIONS

The Gaffney Ledger makes every effort to ensure all information in this publication is accurate and thorough.

However, in the event an error is made, it is this newspaper's policy to correct the error as soon as possible.

If you find a mistake, please notify the editor by calling 864 489-1131. Please be ready to tell us the page number and story in which the error appears.

ATTENTION POSTMASTER

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LETTERS

These videos show how much students have to teach us

Dear Editor:

South Carolina's students have been creating videos for the Healthy SC Video Contest that are creative, informative, entertaining and alarming and they show just how much our students here in South Carolina have to teach all of us.

All are about the importance of healthy living and chronic disease prevention, and there's still time for you to vote for your favorite one! Visit www.healthysc.gov to learn about the contest and to submit a video or log directly onto www.ourstage.com/go/healthyscjudge to pick the winners and learn from our teens.

Halfway through the 12-week contest, nearly 60 videos have been submitted, 48,000 votes have been cast, \$5,000 in cash has been awarded to students, and \$15,000 cash remains to be awarded, plus a host of other prizes for schools and students.

If you haven't had a chance yet to check out the videos that our SC students have made then you don't know what you're missing.

Jenny Sanford
Columbia, S.C.

He's noticed the same thing about traffic lights

Dear Klonie:

I just read your column on traffic lights. I have noticed the same thing. I know there are sensors under the road that detect when traffic is there but sometimes it seems that they are not used.

Also, I have noticed that myself and six to eight other cars are sometimes stopped just to let one vehicle at the intersection get a quick green light after activating the sensors at a particular intersection. This is very fuelish to stop six to eight cars just to let one car get a green. If we can put sensors at the intersection, maybe we should put a few more sensors in the road and try to make our traffic control lights work "smarter."

One other thing I notice about excessive fuel use: I see the big SUVs and pickups (I have one as well) that will take off wide open after getting a green light, while it is apparent there is a red light at the next intersection. They drive wide open and at the last minute have to stand on the brakes to get stopped. It seems to make

more sense to let off your gas pedal well before you get to a red light intersection and coast to a stop. When you are coasting, it is literally free mileage. Also, if you coast to the next intersection, and then the light turns green before you get there, you now have a "rolling start" and that uses a lot less gas than starting from standstill.

I tried this on my Ford SUV and went from 16 miles per gallon to 20 miles per gallon a couple of years ago.

Earl Scruggs
Gaffney, S.C.

Motorcycle Riders Foundation supports Right to Repair Act

Dear Editor:

The Motorcycle Riders Foundation has declared its support of the Motor Vehicle Owners' Right to Repair Act (HR 2694) and strongly urges Congress to pass the legislation in order to safeguard individual vehicle ownership rights.

The legislative intent of the Right to Repair Act is to offer protections for motor vehicle owners by making it illegal for vehicle manufacturers to withhold information necessary to diagnose, service or repair motor vehicles.

The fact is that consumers are entitled to the right to choose how their motor vehicle is maintained or upgraded. The point of Right to Repair is not to discourage vehicle owners from using the dealership for service, but to protect the freedom of American consumers to choose how they take care of their motor vehicle, be it in their driveway or at a trusted repair facility.

We have formally committed to support the Right to Repair Act because we believe that safeguarding individual ownership rights is an absolute must. Access to accurate information when it comes to the repair or upkeep of a vehicle is essential to the safety and well being of the entire American motoring public.

We encourage all motorists to visit <http://www.righttorepair.org> and to send a letter to each of their congressional representatives, urging them to support the Right to Repair Act by adding their names to the growing list of co-sponsors.

Sincerely,
Jeff Hennie
Vice President of Government Relations
Motorcycle Riders Foundation
Washington D.C.

CODY SOSSAMON

This year was certainly no exception

It never fails. Each year during our "Christmas is for Kids" shopping spree, something or someone stirs my emotions.

And this year was no exception. On second thought, maybe it was. Several things and someones moved me.

I struck up conversations with a couple of the younger children — as much as one can converse with kids not yet in first grade.

I was impressed with their bright demeanors and obvious affection for their siblings. Not only were they polite and grateful, they were thrilled with their purchases, proudly showing off what they picked out.

I didn't see one child throwing a fit because they didn't get something they wanted. Not one. I don't know about you, but it's a rarity when out shopping I don't see a kid whining about not getting this toy or that piece of candy.

Then there were the parents of these children. Over and over, staff members of the various agencies who helped us — DSS, DSN, DMH and Parents of Preschoolers — pointed to a parent and said, "Now there's a real success story," and went on to describe how he or she was overcoming obstacles to become a good parent and provide for their children.

The staff members themselves were something special. Their "clients" seemed more like family and friends and the genuine concern for their welfare was evident in the greetings and hugs that ensued Saturday morning. I cannot say enough about these folks, but if the other employees at these agencies are half as caring, our local social services agencies are in good hands.

The Wal-Mart associates who assisted with shopping this year were outstanding. I know, I know, they were getting paid to run the cash registers and assist in other ways, but paid employees aren't always pleasant and helpful, especially when things get a bit hectic — like when you have 140 children and their families trying to go through two checkout lines and have a limit on how much they can spend.

The associates this year went above and beyond the call of duty in understanding the situation and handling it all very gracefully and cheerfully.

And what can I say about the girls of Sub Deb and their adult advisors? These high school girls not only got up very early Saturday morning (at least by 6:30), which is miraculous in and of itself, but they were waiting at the front door of Wal-Mart when our first shoppers arrived at 7. With calculators in hand, they "adopted" families and helped them pick out toys and clothes while staying within budget. They also helped add totals and bag items at the cash register.

I'm pretty sure I saw a few tears or damp eyes from some of these girls and their advisors.

Last but certainly not least, like every year, I am amazed at the generosity of the people of Cherokee County. Just before Thanksgiving each year when we begin the "Christmas is for Kids" fundraising effort, I begin to wonder if folks will continue to give as they have in the past.

Each year, my "wonder" proves unfounded. We'll never raise enough money to help all the kids who need it, but you always give enough so we can help a bunch of them. It looks like close to 160 children will have presents this year that otherwise would have had little or nothing under the tree.

For the past 18 years, I've been blessed to be a part of this special event, thanks to those of you who donate time and money to make it possible.

Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Cody Sossamon (cody@gaffneyledger.com) is publisher of The Gaffney Ledger.



Sub Deb Megan Tyler poses with Andre while waiting to check out.

INSIDE REPORT

A Republican retreat

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Nearly the entire federal government would be funded by an omnibus appropriations bill to be unveiled Monday after covert negotiations. In subsequent parliamentary maneuvering likely to extend all through this week, Democrats will pare the spending level to the maximum demanded by President George W. Bush in order to avoid a veto. Republicans will declare victory. In fact, they are in retreat.

As the minority party in Congress, the GOP will have less than 24 hours to read the massive bill before it comes up for a House vote on Tuesday. While at least coming close to the Bush limit, the bill will be passed over Republican opposition because it contains no Iraq war funding. It then will go to the Senate on Wednesday, where Republicans will use their filibuster threat to insert money for Iraq. Overall spending will be reduced to the Bush standard in the Senate by means of an across-the-board cut.

The bill then will be passed into law by the House, though Speaker Nancy Pelosi says she personally will vote against this solution that, in effect, finances the war at the expense of domestic programs.

This solution is designed to win bipartisan support because it will contain the earmarks for pork barrel spending back home dearly desired on both sides of the aisle. It became clear a week ago that Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell was in negotiate with Majority Leader Harry Reid for a bill to finance multiple new earmarks by means of across-the-board reduction in government programs. What's more, a little rules chicanery will

hide an estimated 12,000 new earmarks, including pork that previously had not been passed by any chamber and is "air-dropped" into the bill. The wily legislators have found a way to get around new ethics rules that require disclosure of all such spending.

Nobody can predict even at this late date exactly the outcome of this intricate legislative process. It is not totally out of the question that an omnibus money bill still will fail and that Bush will achieve his real desire.

On Friday, the president advocated a continuing resolution (CR), keeping spending at last year's level without new earmarks. That is also the goal of the GOP's House leadership. But because that is a very unlikely outcome, Republican reformers believe they have a lost a golden opportunity to regain their old "brand" of fiscal responsibility by fighting to the end in the budget battle.

As early as Tuesday last week, the astute House Democratic Caucus Chairman Rahm Emanuel observed what McConnell was up to and issued a statement accusing him of trading established domestic spending programs for individual earmarks: "He's fighting for earmarks over funding



ROBERT NOVAK

for cancer cures, the veterans' health care crisis and 5,000 new American teachers." Those words chilled conservative Republican senators who were saying exactly the same thing privately. They did not go public because rank-and-file members of Congress are not inclined to challenge their leaders in today's climate of partisan polarization.

Indeed, while anti-pork Republican Sens. Tom Coburn and Jim DeMint have fought earmarks valiantly for three years, they are reluctant to combat McConnell and thus play into Democratic hands. Remembering how Republicans suffered from the 1995 government shutdown, other GOP senators are chary about a CR repeating unpleasant history (though it is hard to see why this time the minority party and the president would be blamed, in contrast to what happened 12 years ago).

But the overriding reason for backing away from a showdown on government spending was the feeling in both parties that elected representatives cannot return home without booty, financed by the bank accounts of American taxpayers. However, House Minority Whip Roy Blunt, not known previously as a foe of earmarks, has come to the conclusion that his colleagues vastly overrate the political necessity of pork.

Rep. Blunt and Sen. DeMint met privately Friday to probe ways of enacting a clean, pork-less bill. They have not given up, but the odds against them are heavy, as their colleagues yearn to return home for Christmas. Each is a Santa Claus distributing earmarks to special interests with no thought of reform.