

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.

NC & SC: 3 months \$25; 6 months \$41; 1 year \$75.

Outside The Carolinas: 3 months \$31; 6 months \$47; 1 year \$83.

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

The Gaffney Ledger, established Feb. 16, 1894 (USPS 212-760) is published three times weekly by The Gaffney Ledger, Inc., 1604 Baker Blvd., Gaffney, S.C. Periodicals postage paid at Gaffney, S.C.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Gaffney Ledger, P.O. Box 670, Gaffney, S.C. 29342.

THE MOSS REPORT

Potential 2008 issues

The second regular session of the 117th South Carolina General Assembly will convene Jan. 8. Things are already happening in Columbia as Dec. 5 was the first wave of prefile legislation; the second prefile date will be Dec. 12. There are many significant issues that may be considered by the General Assembly when it reconvenes.



Rep. Dennis Moss

Education is always an important issue at the Statehouse. Legislation establishing the South Carolina Public School Choice Program was approved by the General Assembly during 2007, but the governor's veto of the legislation was sustained. The legislation outlines a process whereby a parent may enroll a student in a public school in any district without paying tuition, and all districts must participate. The stated objective of the legislation is to increase student participation in and student access to public school educational opportunities both within and outside of their resident school district, regardless of where they may live or their socioeconomic status. A recent press conference indicated that Superintendent Jim Rex and others are supporting increasing choices within school districts with options such as single-gender and Montessori programs.

As a former member of the S.C. Highway Patrol, student safety is a priority of mine. With that in mind, I introduced legislation Dec. 12 to increase speeding penalties in a school zone. Currently, there are no special penalties for speeding in a school zone. My legislation will mirror the increased penalties for speeding in a work zone. Increased penalties will emphasize the importance of safe driving in school zones.

In the General Assembly there are numerous bills still pending from the 2007 session addressing different components of the illegal immigration issue. Among other things, the pending bills address: registration of immigration assistance; illegal aliens and public benefits; and the creation of a House study committee to examine the appropriate enforcement of federal and state laws relating to the presence of illegal aliens in South Carolina. During the interim, the Senate Illegal Immigration Reform study committee held public meetings across the state to hear people's concerns. Also, the S.C. Chamber of Commerce recently reversed its opposition to state-level immigration reform. Additional legislation has been prefiled in the Senate and the House addressing the illegal immigration situation. Some form of reform on this issue is likely in 2008.

While legislation was enacted in 2007 requiring ignition interlock devices for certain repeat driving under the influence offenders, comprehensive legislation is still pending that would reform South Carolina's driving under the influence laws. The House of Representatives approved and sent to the Senate legislation that implements a tiered system of punishment with four levels of impairment: "driving while impaired," "driving with an unlawful alcohol concentration," "operating a motor vehicle with an unlawful and high concentration," and "operating a motor vehicle with an unlawful and

gross alcohol concentration." This legislation also strengthens penalties and requires treatment for those convicted of a first offense.

The House of Representatives approved and sent to the Senate legislation proposing a cigarette tax increase. Under the proposal, revenue from the additional 1.5-cent surtax on each cigarette was to be credited to a Groceries' Sales Tax Relief Fund.

The House of Representatives approved and sent to the Senate the "South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Act" to assist municipalities, counties, special purpose and public service districts, and public works commissions in constructing and improving rural infrastructure by providing loans and other financial assistance.

Legislation approved by the House of Representatives provides for new limits on state appropriations that are linked to population growth and increases in the consumer price index. The legislation places restrictions on the expenditure of revenues exceeding the limits.

The House of Representatives passed and sent to the Senate legislation proposing periodic sunset review of State government agencies and departments to determine if they should be continued in existence, modified, or terminated.

During the 2007 session, the House of Representatives approved and sent to the Senate legislation revising the process for nominating judicial candidates for election by the General Assembly. This summer the Senate Judiciary Committee appointed a study committee on the issue.

South Carolina's various court dockets are often backlogged. Legislation approved by the House of Representatives and sent to the Senate provides for additional circuit court and family court judges.

The General Assembly may address the issue of changes made to the state's non-emergency Medicaid transportation system. The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services implemented a broker system in May 2007 in order to enhance efficiency. In the past, the agency contracted directly with transportation companies to provide services for non-emergency cases. There are concerns that these changes have endangered patient safety through late and missed appointments. Members of the General Assembly, including myself, have requested that the Legislative Audit Council conduct an audit of how the agency awards contracts for non-emergency medical transportation for Medicaid beneficiaries.

With the tragedy of the bridge collapse in Minnesota and the 2007 legislative reforms to the Department of Transportation, funding and maintenance needs for South Carolina's bridges and roads may be addressed by the General Assembly in 2008.

INSIDE REPORT

MITT'S DIVIDED STRATEGY

MANCHESTER, N.H. — Desperate to save Mitt Romney's Republican presidential campaign in Tuesday's New Hampshire primary, his advisers all wanted to attack Sen. John McCain but were divided about how to do it.

Coming out of his disappointing performance in the Iowa Caucuses, the Romney camp was united in the need to hit McCain hard for voting against President Bush's tax cuts. But the decision also to attack McCain's support for the liberal Bush immigration reform was opposed by a minority of Romney's advisers. These dissenters argued that Romney's hard line on immigration taken in Iowa did him no good there.

A footnote: The estimated 60 percent of New Hampshire "independents" who are Democratic-aligned voted for McCain in the 2000 Republican primary but are expected to be solid for Sen. Barack Obama in the Democratic primary this year. Nevertheless, McCain's strength with the remainder of the independents makes him the favorite against Romney on Tuesday.

SECOND PLACE HILLARY?

No sooner had Sen. Hillary Clinton slipped to a third-place finish in Iowa than her agents in Iowa were saying that their campaign would be content if she finished second in New Hampshire ahead of John Edwards and effectively drove him out of the race.

Those comments, in sharp contrast to Clinton's previous professions that her election as president was inevitable, constitute

an attempt to lower expectations in New Hampshire. At the same time, Clinton has not abandoned hopes of defeating Obama in Tuesday's primary.

What Clinton cannot afford in New Hampshire, however, is another third-place finish behind Obama and Edwards.

HELP FOR HILLARY

Even before the bad news for Sen. Hillary Clinton was in from Iowa, two veteran Democratic political practitioners — Chuck Campion and Joe Grandmaison — were dispatched to New Hampshire to try to save her failing campaign.

Campion, a Massachusetts Democratic stalwart, long has been considered one of the Democratic Party's ace organizers. Not active until now in the 2008 campaign, Campion was a senior campaign aide for Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry in 2004.

Grandmaison long has been one of New Hampshire's top Democratic insiders. He now lives in Washington, D.C., where he is on the Export-Import Bank's board of directors.



ROBERT NOVAK

I hate it when the customary vroom is not there

One of my favorite gifts last Christmas (or was it the year before?) was a remote starter for my car.

Now, being as I don't know much about installing things on automobiles, I took said remote starter to Traffic Jamz down on Stacy Drive and they installed it



Klonie JORDAN

in a quick and efficient manner. They do good work down there.

So for the next several months, I could start my car from pretty much anywhere within a 100-foot or so radius.

This comes in extremely handy, especially on cold mornings. When you get out of the car the night before, you simply leave the heat on and the fan turned to high. Then, when you're getting dressed the next morning, you can start your car from the comfort of your toasty warm house and by the time you're ready to leave, your car is warmed up nicely.

So, on Thursday morning, I pointed the remote control starter toward the car just like I have many, many times before and pushed the button twice per the instructions.

Bzzzt.

Bzzzt.

Bzzzt.

I hate that sound. It meant that either my car battery was dead or large unfriendly bumblebees were swarming somewhere within earshot.

You should know here that I am easily annoyed. I also have no patience. I want what I want when I want it and I want it RIGHT NOW.

So when I pointed my remote car starter and didn't get the customary "vroom," well, that just chapped my hide.

I hate it when things don't do what they're supposed to do. I hate it when things break, or fizzle, or wear out, or need to be replaced. This is doubly true when it comes to transportation. When your battery is dead, let's face it, you are at the mercy of someone who has a live battery, someone who can give you a boost. You are at the mercy of whomever you can get to assist you in reviving your conked out power source.

I HATE THAT!

I want my car to run when I need to go somewhere. I want my car to operate in an expedient and efficient manner. I want to cruise the friendly highways and byways of our great country and point and giggle at OTHER PEOPLE whose car batteries are dead. To put it succinctly, I need to be independently mobile.

The person on whose mercy I was suddenly thrown happened to be my wife. I called her up at work.

"Honey, my car won't start. The battery's dead."

"Your battery's dead? Do you need me to come home and give you a boost?"

STUPID QUESTION ALERT NO. 1 (HEAVY SARCASM HERE) "No, I need for you to go pour yourself a nice hot cup of coffee, kick back and watch the soaps, maybe do your nails." (HERE'S YOUR SIGN.)

OK, I didn't really say that or I would have been battery-less AND HOSPITALIZED.

So she came home, I dragged out the booster cables and hooked them up and a few minutes later, the customary "vroom" returned, albeit it having been induced artificially.

I drove to the auto parts store and went inside.

"Can I help you?" the clerk asked.

STUPID QUESTION ALERT NO. 2 (MORE HEAVY SARCASM HERE) "No, I just came in because...duh...the colors on your building are really purty." (HERE'S YOUR SIGN.)

OK, I didn't really say that. I was just still very annoyed from the whole dead battery-and-having-to-depend-on-somebody-else thing and there was no need to take it out on the nice auto parts man.

"I need a battery."

"What kind would you like?"

"I want one that will jump-start the danged space shuttle."

He flipped through his parts-o-meter computer.

"Best one I've got is right here. It's \$85."

"I'll take it. You're going to put it in for me, right?"

"Yes sir."

So I drove away a few minutes later with a brand new, powerful car battery that could probably light up the whole city of Gaffney, including the Christmas lights, for the next, oh, say, 20 years.

My car was fixed. I was once again independently mobile. Everything on my vehicle was working as it should.

That night just before I was ready to go home, I used the remote starter to start my car. When I went outside I noticed one of the headlights was out.

OH MAN!

The next day I went and bought a head lamp and installed it myself. (OK, somebody SHOWED ME HOW and THEN I installed it myself.)

So what have we learned from all this?

Oh, you were expecting a moral.

Hey, I ain't no Hans Christian Andersen.

There's no moral. But if NASA calls, I've got the battery power to boost that space shuttle if they need it.

T minus 10...9...8...7...6...5.....

Klonie Jordan (editor@gaffneyledger.com) is executive editor of The Gaffney Ledger.