

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

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LEDGER READERS ON THE ROAD



Danny Smith keeps up with local news by reading The Gaffney Ledger in Djiboti, Africa. He is the wastewater treatment supervisor at Camp Lemonier. He was previously employed by KBR in Iraq. Danny is the son of Boyd and Donna Short and the husband of Bobbi Smith. On your next trip out of town, take a copy of The Ledger along and send a picture of yourself or your group reading the newspaper to: cody@gaffneyledger.com.

SUSAN ESTRICH

The 'G' word



It's easy to assume that the worst place to be in a campaign that's going through tough times is right in the middle of it. At least you're not Hillary, people say to me all the time. But in my experience, the hardest place to be in a hard campaign is not right in the middle. I've been there, and it can be eerie and strange, but you rarely get as depressed as you do when you're one step removed. Maybe that's a good thing.

In the middle of the campaign, no matter how many votes you've lost or are about to, you're surrounded by people, thousands of them, who are on your side. In the final days of the Mondale campaign, we went from one amazing rally to the next, with tens of thousands of people chanting their support, the product of generations of men and women literally coming out of retirement to give the former vice president the send-off he deserved, no matter what the closing weeks held in store for him.

In the final weeks of the Dukakis campaign, Dick Gephardt asked me, after a meeting with the candidate, whether he actually knew he was likely to lose, so upbeat (or oblivious) did Dukakis seem in light of the doom making both Gephardt and me distraught.

The point is, he said it to me, not the candidate. Sherman Adams, Eisenhower's chief of staff, used to tell a story that I heard David Gergen, a top aide to both Republican and Democratic presidents, repeat, about the problem of getting people to say the negative things they tell aides to the "man" himself. Both Adams and Gergen would regularly get an earful from people about how someone should tell the boss he was doing this, that and the other thing wrong, so they, in turn, would make time for the person to talk to the "man" himself. Once ushered in, of course, the former critic would become the current fan: You're doing great, your critics are all

wrong, you're right on track, everything you think is right.

I cannot begin to tell you how many times I saw that happen in my experience with presidential candidates. No one likes to be the messenger of bad news, the carrier of criticism, the pessimist predicting doom to a person who then has to go out and rally the tired troops. The result is that the eye of the storm is sometimes the calmest place in a struggling campaign.

One step removed is another matter. This is not a calm time for friends and supporters of Hillary Clinton. There is much talk, but more heat than light. The problem is that most of the people I talk to don't know what they'd tell her if someone ushered them into a room with her. I understand. I can't tell you, or her, why, after a strong showing on Super Tuesday, after consistently strong debate performances, after weathering tough times in Iowa and South Carolina, she has lost 10 straight. I take nothing away from Obama, but it isn't as if she has fallen on her face, done something wrong or embarrassed herself. And while he is an inspirational and impressive guy, he has yet to make the five policy speeches that would give substance to his agenda.

For many Hillary supporters, especially the many strong women who admire the guts and determination she has shown in this campaign, the troubling question is not whether race is defining this campaign, but whether sex — or to put it bluntly, sexism — is. If the problem is that so many people really don't like Hillary, and reading the blogs is certainly enough to suggest that, the question is why. The economy is an issue on which the Clintons, both of them, have enormous credibility. She has been articulate, enthusiastic and, yes, human. The people who don't like her generally don't know her. Could it, in the end, be an issue of gender? And what can anyone do about that? Except maybe say it out loud.

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LEDGER COLUMNIST

The bass would just surrender

I'm pretty good at this bass fishing stuff. Now I haven't been fishing in years, but back when I used to do it, I was ... well ... the king.

Whenever the fish heard that I was planning on coming out to the river, they would get their affairs in order, say good-bye to their loved ones and go ahead and coat themselves with tartar sauce.

Many times, when they knew I was coming down to the banks of the mighty St. Johns, they would just crawl up on the bank, wave little white flags and then put themselves on the stringer.

Sometimes, on days when I hadn't even planned on going fishing, a bunch of them would come over to the house and ring the doorbell. I'd open the door and they would come in and jump into the freezer.

I reckon they figured it was just a matter of time so they might as well get it over with.

A lot of times they would bring their own freezer bags.

"Master bass fisherman," they would say. "We know you are a busy man and might not have had time to get down to the Albertson's and buy freezer bags so we stopped by there on the way over here and picked some up for you."

Many's the time it broke my heart seeing all the fight taken out of 'em like that, so I would let them go.

"Y'all are kinda taking a lot of the sport out of this," I'd tell them on the banks of the mighty St. Johns. Then I'd point to the water and they would dive back in, turn and appreciatively wave a fin at me and then swim off.

Sometimes when they'd come over to the house, I'd load them into the car and take them back to the river. They'd be so giddy about being given a reprieve. We'd giggle and laugh and sing that song that goes,

*"I lobster and never flounder,
He wrapped his line around her,
And they drove off in his carp.
I lobster and never flounder,
I octopus his face in.
Eel only break her heart."*

And they would roll down the windows and fin-wave at people on the street as we would drive by.

Sometimes I watch those bass fishing shows on TV and just shake my head. Those boys have \$75,000 boats and \$200,000 worth of gear and then they go out and catch these poor little pitiful looking bass. They hold them up in front of the camera and grin like a mule eating briars.

Amateurs. The other day one of those guys was talking about how maybe catching an eight-pound bass would put them back into the bass fishing competition.

Eight-pounders. Hah. We used eight-pounders for bait down on the banks of the mighty St. Johns.

It ain't about the gear and the money. You're either a fisherman or you're not.

One day we were fishing the mighty St. Johns when this fancy, shmancy boat with two guys on it drifted near. We started talking and they began describing all the expensive equipment they had — fish-finder this, sonar that.

"And what happens on the days when you can't catch anything even with all that fancy stuff?" I asked them.

"Then we go back to the basics," they answered.

"Yeah? And what's that?" I queried.

"Dynamite," they said.

They were just kidding. I think.

Oh, I gotta go, there's the doorbell.

I hear the rattle of freezer bags.

Wonder who that could be?

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

INSIDE REPORT

CRUMBLING OHIO FIREWALL

WASHINGTON, D.C. — After Sen. Barack Obama's decisive victory over Sen. Hillary Clinton in Wisconsin, Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland was reported expressing doubt to political colleagues about whether he could hold his state for Clinton during the two weeks remaining before Ohio's Democratic presidential primary March 4.

Polls taken before Wisconsin voted gave Clinton a double-digit lead in Ohio, a state necessary to sustain her presidential hopes. A Clinton win there also may be needed for Strickland's chances to be the vice presidential running mate for either Clinton or Obama.

Prospects for Strickland, a former member of Congress elected as governor in a 2006 landslide, are based on presuming he would help carry pivotal state Ohio for the Democrats. But that argument would be undermined if he cannot deliver for Clinton in the primary.

HOFFA FOR OBAMA

The unexpected endorsement of Barack Obama by Teamsters President James Hoffa followed private indications by Bill Clinton that the 19-year federal monitoring of the big union under a court decree would not be ended under a Hillary Clinton presidency.

Hoffa previously had told friends he probably would stay neutral in the presidential race. He changed his mind, according to union sources, partly because of pro-Obama sentiment among rank-and-file Teamsters and partly because of former President Clinton's attitude about the consent decree.

Obama has indicated willingness to end federal oversight of the Teamsters. Refusal by President George W. Bush to do so helped sour his administration's relations with the union.

NOT SEN. HUCKABEE

An increasingly favorable attitude toward Mike Huckabee inside the conservative movement, nurtured by his presidential campaign against Sen. John McCain, is threatened by the former Arkansas governor's refusal to run against Democratic Sen. Mark Pryor this year.

Polls show Huckabee is the only Republican with a chance to unseat first-term Pryor. He has until March 10 to file against Pryor, six days after what could be his final presidential campaign effort in the Texas primary. During a recent Washington breakfast with reporters, Huckabee wrote off a Senate run by saying, "It's more likely I'll dye my hair green, get a bunch of tattoos and go on tour with Amy Winehouse."

A footnote: Huckabee raised eyebrows the Sunday before the Wisconsin primary by going off to Grand Cayman Island to deliver a paid motivational speech.

MCCAIN'S NEW ROLE

Sen. John McCain, changing from party gadfly to party leader, was in Illinois Wednesday trying to elect a Republican successor to resigned Rep. Dennis Hastert seven years after an exchange of insults with the former speaker of the House.

McCain presided over a \$1,000-a-ticket fundraiser in Sugar Grove, Ill., for conservative dairy



ROBERT NOVAK

magnate Jim Oberweis. Although Hastert carried the district easily, Republican nominee Oberweis faces a serious battle against liberal Democratic physicist-businessman Bill Foster. Oberweis lost previous primary bids for governor and the U.S. Senate.

In April 2001, then-Speaker Hastert attacked McCain for a letter he sent Republican House members for whom he had campaigned. McCain urged them to vote for the McCain-Feingold campaign finance bill in what Hastert called "a threat." McCain was reluctant to help foes of his bill in future elections.

EARMARK DEFENDER

Sen. Ted Stevens, the senior Senate Republican who is under federal investigation and press inquiry for his earmark practices, used his monthly newsletter this week to attack fellow Republican and anti-earmark nemesis Sen. Tom Coburn.

Stevens contended Coburn's attack on the famous Stevens earmark funding the "bridge to nowhere" in his home state of Alaska was "strictly for publicity." Stevens charged Coburn "wanted to make a name for himself."

A footnote: The Stevens newsletter also defends his Alaska earmarks, including a Defense Department appropriation for research into hibernation genomics of Alaskan ground squirrels.

Martha Stewart, the University of Alaska's federal lobbyist, is quoted as saying: "We have a number of ground squirrels that are in various stages of hibernation in Fairbanks."

To find out more about Robert D. Novak and read his past columns, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creators.com.

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