

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)



Publisher: Cody Sossamon
(cody@gaffneyledger.com)

Executive Editor: Klonie Jordan

Advertising Director: Robert Martin

Col. Ed H. DeCamp 1865-1952
F.W. Sossamon, Sr. 1887-1979
Louis C. Sossamon 1921-

NEWS STAFF

Joe L. Hughes II: Features
Scott Powell: Education
Tim Gulla: Police/Courts
Larry Hilliard: Sports/Government
Laura Parker: Lifestyles

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.

LEDGER READERS ON THE ROAD



LCPL Holton Guyton keeps up with the news back home while stationed in Al Quaim in Iraq. Holton is the son of Carl and Loretta Guyton Mullinax of Gaffney. He has a younger sister Carla. On your next trip out of town, or tour of duty, take a copy of The Ledger along and send a picture of yourself or your group reading the newspaper to: cody@gaffneyledger.com.

THEIR VIEWS

Tougher penalties needed

A state Senate committee has taken an important step toward toughening penalties on cockfighting by approving a bill that would make the crime a felony on first offense. The bill also increases penalties for those who attend the matches.

Senate passage of the bill would be particularly important because that's where a previous effort to strengthen first-offense cockfighting penalties was weakened. In Thursday's committee vote, senators disregarded the arguments of cockfighting advocates who had insisted, for example, that the blood sport is no less offensive than hunting with a bow and arrow. But law enforcement officials have clearly demonstrated that cockfighting is closely tied to gambling and illegal drug use.

The bill would make cockfighting a felony with a minimum fine of \$500 for the first offense. It's currently a misdemeanor.

Increasing South Carolina's penalties for cockfighting will bring them in line with those for most states and will help discourage its cruel tradition.

The Legislature should put cockfighting penalties on a par with those for dogfighting.

The (Charleston) Post and Courier

Ban payday lenders

Only a ban can guarantee payday lenders will no longer exploit consumers in our state.

But the S.C. Senate has decided to try regulating them — finally. Shamefully, when lawmakers sanctioned this predatory business in the late '90s, they provided no protections for consumers, many of whom now find themselves trapped in long-term cycles of debt. They can't afford to repay the initial loan, at an annualized rate of 391 percent, and find themselves getting additional payday loans to pay off older ones.

While a ban is preferable, senators have approved rules that would provide some good protections for consumers. If these legalized loan sharks are going to be around,

the least the Legislature can do is minimize the damage. Token regulation isn't an option. Even with these regulations, we expect the day will come when lawmakers decide, as we have, that only a ban can really protect the public.

Fortunately, the Senate — pressured by Sens. John Hawkins, Joel Lourie, Luke Rankin, Ralph Anderson, Gerald Malloy and others — approved legislation that is much stronger than an amendment favored by the industry. ...

When payday lenders ask for a break, lawmakers should remember they've had it their way for a decade.

It's time to look out for consumers for a change.

The (Columbia) State

It's not only heartless ...

Gov. Mark Sanford's proposal to cut state funding for the Meals on Wheels program for elderly South Carolinians is not only heartless, it also is false economy. ...

We agree with the governor that the failure to assure steady sources of funding for multiyear programs has been a bad habit on the part of the Legislature. Nonetheless, we can't see the sense of trying to teach state lawmakers a lesson by cutting off meals to thousands of senior citizens. Besides, proponents of continuing the program are trying to get lawmakers to do the responsible thing and provide permanent funding for Meals on Wheels.

But continuing to give these elderly South Carolinians one hot meal a day — and some attention from the people who deliver them — also makes good economic sense. For many of these seniors — including 147 in York County — that one meal can be the only thing allowing them to live independently in their homes. Without it, they would have to move to nursing homes.

Nursing home placements cost an average of \$45,000 a year. ...

Providing meals for the needy elderly is both compassionate and practical. We hope lawmakers find the money to make the state contribution permanent.

The (Rock Hill) Herald

LEDGER COLUMNIST

'Stop it .. you are annoying me'

Relationships are often a challenge, requiring both parties to at some point practice patience and knowledge of when to speak and shut up.

It is quite apparent I have yet to learn how to do either one.

I have been with one woman during the past four years, simply being me — a young man who likes to get the last word. This formula has helped me become a "hot-headed" person at times, ready to argue my beliefs to the bitter end.

For a while, my fiancée helped me with the problem, becoming less high-strung and more of a listener.

Sometimes when you are around someone long enough, you tend to rub off on them. It seems some of my bad habits have made their way to her end and I am wondering how this happened.

For example, what is supposed to be a simple conversation can sometimes spin into a flurry of sarcastic jabs, becoming a competition of who can make the other stop talking.

One of these situations involved my fiancée's trouble getting out of bed to go to work. She has tried several different alarm clocks, each one meeting their demise due to being ineffective or a mishap occurring that caused the appliance to break.

In an attempt to make sure my lady gets to work at the time she desires, I usually make an early morning call to her house to wake her up. It is something we agreed on, and honestly was working out quite well.

But earlier this week, I was reminded how I should be on my toes when dealing with a woman ... especially mine.

I made the usual call expecting to hear the words "Good morning, honey ... did you get a good night of sleep?" But on this particular morning all I heard was ranting and raving of how I stole her last five minutes.

Being someone who believes five extra minutes of sleep would make waking up easier, I told her I would let her get that time and would actually wait another 10 to 15 minutes before waking her up. That amount of time would also allow me to get a few extra winks.

The time passed and I made another call. However, what I heard on the other end was not what I expected.

"Stop it ... I don't want to wake up right now ... you are annoying me," she said.

My "virtuous woman" had somehow morphed into a teenage girl. In essence, her rants were what I equate to a child telling his or her parents that they ruined a good dream just to wake him or her up for school.

As I previously said, I am currently working on my temper. Unfortunately, this morning it did not show.

I suddenly turned into a fire starter, saying things merely to get a response.

"Why did you ask me to call when all you are going to do is complain?" I said. "That is totally asinine."

Of course, that resulted in me hearing my good friend "tone."

After calling back a few times and getting the same result, I decided to fall back asleep believing things would calm down. When I did catch up with her 30 minutes later, things had been smoothed over. But I did make sure to get my message across.

"Honey, if you are going to complain at me when I call — something we agreed on — I just will not do it anymore," I said. "This is the type conversation that is not important enough for us to get angry at each other about."

My fiancée agreed, telling me that she was sorry and things should continue as they are.

So what did I learn? I learned once again that women are the hardest thing on Earth to figure out, and us men should never try to do so.

Joe Hughes (joe@gaffneyledger.com) writes feature and enterprise stories for The Gaffney Ledger.



Joe HUGHES

LEDGER STAFF WRITER

INSIDE REPORT

How not to run for vice president

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Minnesota's Republican Gov. Tim Pawlenty carefully prepared his plan for controlling greenhouse gas emissions to present it at the annual Washington winter meeting of governors. That effort coincided with Pawlenty's fast-rising prospects to become Sen. John McCain's choice for vice president. But behind closed doors, his fellow governors from energy-producing states complained so vigorously that the scheme was buried.

Pawlenty's position as chairman of the National Governors Association (NGA) may prove his undoing. While party insiders sing his praises as ideal to be McCain's running mate, leading conservative Republican governors have been less than pleased with him. Pawlenty has collaborated with the NGA vice chairman, Pennsylvania Gov. Edward G. Rendell, in a fat economic stimulus package, as well as the energy proposal.

Hours after Pawlenty's energy plan was derailed, McCain himself was urged in private by GOP governors not to appear to be anti-coal or anti-oil. The upshot of a busy Saturday at the J.W. Marriott Hotel in downtown Washington was that Pawlenty came over as somebody considerably different from what McCain needs to calm conservatives. He left the nation's capital as a less attractive vice presidential possibility than he was when he arrived.

The 47-year-old Pawlenty long has been talked about as a good fit for the 71-year-old McCain. He is the most conservative Minnesota governor since Theodore (Tightwad Ted) Christianson in 1925. Elected for two terms (albeit narrowly) in a slightly blue state, Pawlenty is seen by supporters as a plus for McCain in the Democratic upper Midwest if added to the ticket.

He gets high grades from conservative fanatics of Republican horse flesh, such as Karl Rove, Ken Mehlman and fellow Minnesotan Vin Weber. Anti-tax activist Grover Norquist approves of Pawlenty's record, save for one cigarette tax hike. The censorious Cato Institute graded him "C" for fiscal responsibility in his first term (compared with "F" for Mike Huckabee of Arkansas).

Pawlenty has largely avoided the fate of Republicans who are elected governor on a conservative platform and then in office fall prey to spending projects and concomitant tax increases. But he has become entwined in the NGA's buddy system by serving as its chairman. That allied him with Rendell and put him at odds with conservative Republican colleagues. Govs. Haley Barbour of Mississippi, Mitch Daniels of Indiana and Mark Sanford of South Carolina were not happy when Pawlenty and Rendell presented an NGA-sponsored sweetening of the Bush administration's stimulus package by \$6 billion in federal Medicaid funding and \$6 billion in a flexible block grant.

As co-chairman of the NGA's energy committee (with Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, Democratic responder to President Bush's State



ROBERT NOVAK

of the Union Address), Pawlenty proposed statewide goals of reduced CO2 emissions. But at a "governors only" session opening the NGA meeting last Saturday, Pawlenty encountered adamant opposition. Barbour led the way for governors from energy-producing states, including Republican Rick Perry of Texas and Democrat Steve Beshear of Kentucky. The issue of greenhouse gases was "set aside," Pawlenty told me, "because we realized there was no consensus."

McCain, who has co-sponsored a global warming bill with his friend and supporter Independent Democratic Sen. Joseph Lieberman, got more of the same over dinner with Republican governors that night. They made clear that energy was a major issue and that they hoped McCain would be sensitive to energy producers. By all accounts, the prospective presidential nominee was receptive.

On that same Saturday, The Wall Street Journal ran an essay by Minneapolis-St. Paul talk show host Jason Lewis critiquing Pawlenty's record — including renewable energy mandates — as too liberal for him to be McCain's vice president. "If you look at my record as a whole," Pawlenty told me the next day, "I would be astonished if I was not considered conservative." As for Lewis, "He doesn't think I'm conservative because I'm a proponent of clean energy, and, from my standpoint, we've got a national security issue."

"We loved Ronald Reagan, but he made some compromises along the way," Pawlenty said, adding, "We don't have a big enough party to be throwing people overboard." Presumably, that also means coal and oil interests.