

Statesboro Herald

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Letters to the editor

GSU's 'Platinum' shooting range opens in 'Primetime'

Editor:
By shutting the Platinum and Primetime clubs, Statesboro has put an old Band-Aid on the symptom and not the cause of the gun problem in our city and the country in general. Closing clubs while simultaneously financing a new shooting range is hypocrisy. If you believe its people not guns that are the problem, then why did German police only fire 85 bullets in the entire year of 2011 while this total is exceeded in many single chase/arrests in the U.S.? Do you really believe Germany just has an extraordinarily better mental health system? Maybe gun availability just might be a factor, too?

The American Pediatrics Association last year has reiterated that the safest home for a child is

one without guns — no amount of gun training or practice at a shooting range make a home safer for children than just not having any guns at all. Statesboro would be a safer place if conservatives would follow Australian conservatives by giving up their guns, voluntarily recognizing that public safety is not a right/left issue.

Christians can follow Jesus during the week as well as Sunday morning by refusing to own any weapons and not participating in any weapons training whatsoever. What if you miss the squirrel and hit the sparrow? How are those deaths in any way not equivalent and why do folks bristle so much if asked? Let Big Heart not Big Brother take your guns away.

Greg Brock



ONE PROBLEM WITH ALLOWING CELLPHONE USE DURING FLIGHTS

Obama remains resilient

For a guy whose presidency was supposed to be on life support, Barack Obama has certainly had a productive couple of weeks. With his poll numbers sinking toward George W. Bush territory — 53 percent in a recent CNN survey said he's not a strong or decisive leader — Obama took bold action on two issues that dramatized the power of the presidency.

One was about getting Congress to act, the other about preventing World War III.

But first, a few words about Obama's political fortunes: With reports surfacing about great improvements in the healthcare.gov website's performance, what many have described as the nadir of Obama's presidency may prove a short-term phenomenon.

Stone partisans aside, Americans want their presidents to succeed. With strong majorities saying they continue to like Obama personally, and to believe that he cares about people like them, he retains a reservoir of good will to sustain him until the positive effects of the Affordable Care Act become clearer.

However, if people doubt that Obama has the wherewithal to manage the gigantic enterprise that is the federal government, well no wonder. Like many intellectuals and nearly all writers — his "Dreams from My Father" is a real book, not a ghost-written campaign bio — Obama confuses saying something with doing something. He also has a terrible time admitting error — another occupational trait, I assure you.

His failure to make sure that somebody with real-world management skills supervised the healthcare.gov rollout is the most incomprehensible blunder of his presidency. Had the site run properly, Obama's ballyhooed "lie" about people keeping their insurance coverage — more of an opportunistic campaign exaggeration, actually — wouldn't have caused a great ruckus, because most people whose insurance companies dumped them would have been mollified to learn that they're getting a better deal.

People took Obama's falsehood



Gene Lyons

personally, unlike, say, George W. Bush's deceptive assurances that he'd received "no warning" about 9/11, or his phony certitude about Saddam Hussein's imaginary WMDs. That's because nothing touches them more directly than health insurance. (Although talking about botched White House initiatives, how about the bleeping Iraq War?)

Also, because it's personal, they're apt to forgive Obama when the law starts working for them. But slowly, one at a time, like the way they forgave Bill Clinton.

Most also see that if Obama has weaknesses, he also has formidable strengths. Agreeing with Sen. Harry Reid to do away with Senate rules allowing Republicans to filibuster White House appointees took real political courage. Will Republicans retaliate when they get the chance? Probably. And that would be worse than total congressional paralysis how?

Most people don't especially give a hoot about the hallowed traditions of the U.S. Senate, so if modifying the filibuster rule helps Congress get something done, they're OK with it. The Senate's an intrinsically conservative institution anyway — what with thinly populated "red" states like Wyoming and Alaska having as much power as New York and California — so it's not as if majority rule there threatens the foundations of the republic.

Meanwhile, Washington Monthly's Martin Longman noticed that even if it did nothing else, enhancing the president's power to make executive appointments also gives him a freer hand to remove underperforming cabinet members like Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. Not that it's Obama's practice to seek scapegoats, but his seeming passivity during the healthcare.gov fiasco hasn't

helped him, either.

You can bet President Trump would have fired somebody!

Longman also suspects that the GOP's muted response to the Senate rule change — Minority Leader Mitch McConnell charged only that Democrats wanted to distract people from Obamacare — could indicate "that the Republicans are truly on another one of their Moby Dick adventures, like Whitewater, like the White House Travel Office, like Vince Foster, like l'affaire Lewinsky, like Saddam's WMD, like Fast and Furious, like Solyndra, like the New Black Panther Party, like Benghazi, and like the most recent government shutdown."

It's a dumb strategy: If Obamacare fails, it fails. If not, what have they got?

This brings us to the remarkable diplomatic breakthrough with Iran: potentially the Middle Eastern equivalent of the fall of the Berlin Wall. If you've heeded Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and his chorus of American neoconservatives, Iran has been three months away from acquiring nuclear weapons for the past 20 years.

And yet, despite the odiousness of its theocratic regime, this still hasn't happened. Under its new president, Iran has agreed to shut down the centrifuges and submit to inspections in exchange for reduced sanctions. The Netanyahu chorus invokes Chamberlain at Munich, basically the only song they know how to sing.

But President Obama grasps one big thing: The U.S. and its allies are exponentially more powerful than Iran. Worst case, he gets embarrassed and Iran goes back to furtively building nukes — except more isolated now than ever.

If Obama's willing to risk it, then we should be, too.

Arkansas Times columnist Gene Lyons is a National Magazine Award winner and co-author of "The Hunting of the President" (St. Martin's Press, 2000). You can email Lyons at eugenelyons2@yahoo.com.

Column on GSU football win right on the money

Editor:
Matt Yogus' piece in Tuesday's Herald was a masterly written touchdown.

He's right. The reason I salute him, this indeed is what Dale Lick meant when, as we drove home from a speaking engagement, he turned to me and said quietly but firmly, "Ric, I've decided to bring football back and I am expecting you and Bucky to get the action going." Of course, I well remember, as does Bucky, many of my dearest friends and supporters looking at us and saying, "Are you guys nuts?"

The theme of this message, if it had not been the guts of Dale Lick, there would have been no Erk; there would have been no victory over Florida; no Paulson; no six national flags. Let us praise (Georgia Southern University) President (Brooks) Keel for his adamant spirit regarding all Southern sports. But he will be the first to tip his hat to the tall cadence walk of Dale Lick

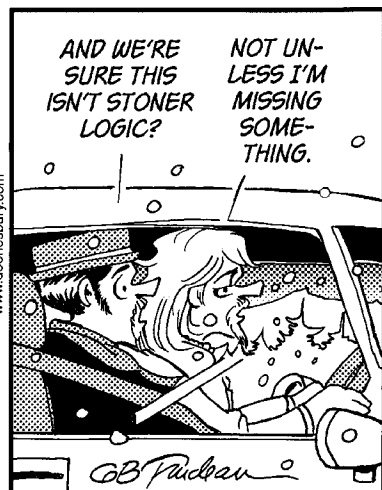
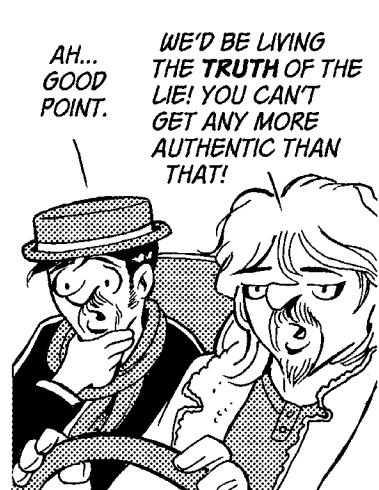
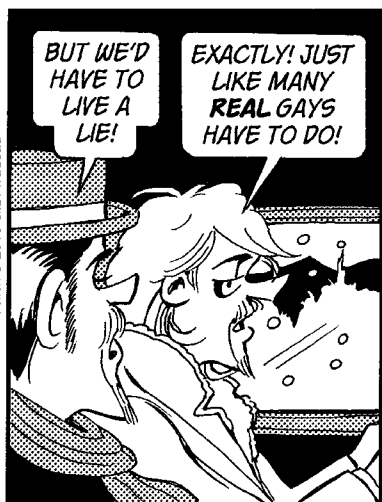
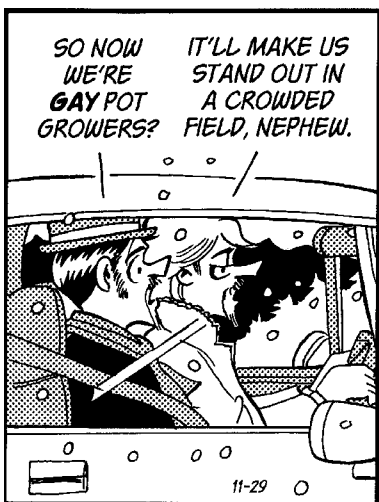
when it comes to football!

I was 50 when we teed it up for sure. Now 30 years later, I feel the roar of the fans, the pulse of Eagle Nation. And with that, as I walk through the crowds at the game, wonderfully unnoticed, my heart skips a beat when I hear the Marching Eagle Band. I take a long look at our gridiron, once a corsage of South Georgia pines. And I think of my "dirty dozen" individuals of this community who put their shoulders and honor to Lick's plan. Dale just simply could never understand that dark statement, "It cannot be done!" Add to that his devotion to university status and an added degree to our graduate program, the doctorate.

Look southward folks, and let forth a roar of thanks to Lick, who is currently directing doctoral studies at Florida State! You know, the Indians whom Florida must meet this weekend?

Ric Mandes

Doonesbury



Prayer of the Day

"Eternal and ever-blessed God, grant this day light to the minds that hunger for the truth and peace to the hearts that yearn for rest. Grant strength to those who have hard tasks to do and power to those who have sore temptations to face. Grant us thy strength, we pray. AMEN."

— The Rev. Dr. Charles E. Cravey, retired. Please submit your Prayer of the Day to him at drrev@msn.com.

Making a difference, then and now

I really fell in love with Thanksgiving in the first grade. The teacher told us to put away our books and listen. She began telling us a story, using cutouts and maps, about some people called Pilgrims who wore black clothing trimmed in white, lived in log cabins and ate lots of food on a day we would soon celebrate as "Thanksgiving." I thought that Thanksgiving was a day when the family ate turkey, dressing, pumpkin pie and I would fall asleep in the living room while the old people talked a lot. Later on, when I was a teenager, it was more of the same with the addition of watching a football game on a black and white television set.

I know that most of us have read about or have been taught the story of the 102 Pilgrims who, in 1620, left England for the New World. Out of the original travelers, only 50 survived. A piece of a diary reads, "We were ragged in apparel and some little better than half-naked." I also believe that most of us have questioned more than once, "How could anyone call a time of loss, tragedy and unbelievable hardship Thanksgiving?"

I do not think that any of those remarkable men and women thanked God because they had lived through the disaster, but I believe that they thanked God because He had saved them for something greater than they could have imagined. Of course, we must remember their sacrifice, courage and commitment to life! We must also have this day of celebration to understand that we, too, have to live through a history



Rev. John Bressler

filled with hostility, moral decay and not many guarantees for a better tomorrow.

As you read this, Thanksgiving will have come and gone for another year, but if we have been thinking ahead, the fridge is filled with some wonderful and glorious leftovers that should last until Monday. Granted, the pie is getting a bit on the crusty side and the turkey and dressing taste a bit gamey, but who's going to fuss?

We will have celebrated with family who traveled back home and, as always, forgotten a box of valuables that we'll put in the mail next week. Yes, we watched every football game available on the big screen knock-your-socks-off color television. Our dog Downgirlsit has had enough exercise with the kids to help her sleep for a month, I hope. Julie and I will now focus on the Christmas: getting the stuff out of the attic, decorating to the nines and polishing up our credit cards for the gift-getting spree. The year is not over just yet, folks.

The conversation is not over. In our time, we can talk about supermarkets overflowing with food from every corner of the world, refrigerators for the extras, eventual medical help for everyone and a lifestyle most of our planet will never experience. We also have a historical memory we must not only cherish but

embrace or it could be lost in time.

I absolutely believe that every time a baby was born to that little colony of survivors, there was a celebration! Every time one more cabin was built, they fell to their knees and gave thanks! When baskets of a good harvest were set aside for storage just in case there might be another harsh winter, they sang songs of praise! I am positive that the colony never took anything for granted, believed they deserved only the best or could always count on one more good day after another because they were entitled to the best!

That historical memory is this: those early Pilgrims made a difference and we will make a difference too! As the Lord God Almighty had a plan for those faithful men and women, so does the Lord God Almighty have a plan for the faithful in this generation so we can have a generation yet to come! In the plans of God, there are no lost moments, no wasted efforts and no forgotten people! That is a fact!

In the words of the Psalmist who penned Psalm 8, my favorite, "What are we that You take notice of? And who am I that You would care even for the likes of me?" The Lord God answers, "You have been made in my image, and I have crowned you with glory and honor. I have given you this world!" Then, we shout with joy, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your Name in all the earth!"

Many Happy Thanksgivings yet to be celebrated!

Thanks, God!