

## Statesboro Herald

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## Letter to the Editor

## Oxymoron: Christian gun owner

Editor:

Would Jesus go to Bulloch County-sponsored gun training? Wouldn't He not only refuse but also strongly urge all His followers not to go?

How would Jesus react to you putting a second shot into a squirrel to "put it out of its misery" as the animal writhed in pain on the ground after your first shot only winged it? And training your kid to do the same?

This isn't 10 A.D. or even 1790 A.D., so the "put meat in the pot" argument is a stretch. Why not just go to Harvey's meat counter? It's not the meat; it's the enjoyment of the kill. And what would Jesus say about that feeling? Why is shooting a defenseless horse-

sized buck "good" (call Alvie — you might make the Herald!) while shooting a buck-sized horse "bad" (don't call Holly — you might make the Herald!)? Isn't doing either one kind of going against that fish symbol on the back of your pickup?

Given Jesus' voting district was way, way more dangerous than yours, what would be the Christ-like position to take on owning or getting training with weapons? Need an excuse as an outdoor lover to crash through the woods wearing a bright orange vest with your friends? Put down all your weapons and pick up trash. That's Christ-like!

Greg Brock  
Statesboro

## Other views

## Pay attention to nature

Two unrelated items popped up on the laptop screen recently. No, that's wrong. They're not unrelated at all.

The first was a report in the Brunswick News that a young humpback whale had been spotted off the Georgia coast. Humpbacks, an endangered species, are not indigenous to this region, but a Department of Natural Resources biologist was quoted in the paper as saying one or two show up every year.

The other item came from one of those "Quotations" websites where you can find interesting observations attributed (sometimes accurately) to famous people. This one was from Walter Gilbert, an American biologist and biochemist who won the 1980 Nobel in chemistry. "We are embedded in a biological world," Gilbert said, "and related to the organisms around us."

It's not a profound or original observation, even from a Nobel laureate. It wouldn't have been profound to Native American, Asian or African peoples of millennia ago for whom the interconnectedness of the natural world was a practical and spiritual given.

But profound or not, Gilbert's observation was a reminder of our curious, selective relationship to science, especially natural and environmental science.

Star Trek "science" is in some ways an oxymoron, but the movie's fundamental premise is sound: The natural

world isn't somehow separate from the human world, our stubborn Flat Earth denials to the contrary.

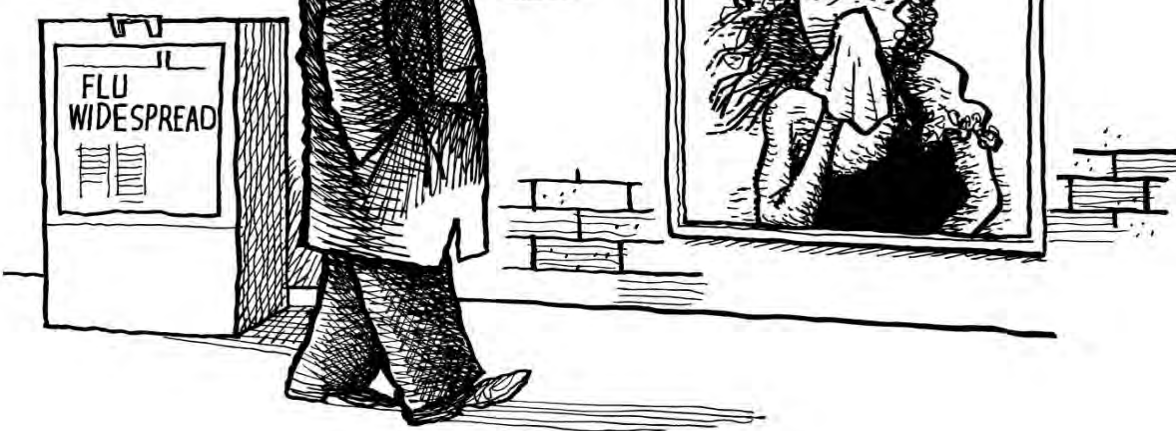
You've heard a lot of the latter, for instance, in debates over the quality and quantity of water in the Chattahoochee River. When biologists pointed out that a certain downstream mollusk is a key indicator of the river's health, the phrase "people versus mussels" became the simpleminded sound bite of choice for politicians whose principal interest was . well, let's say something other than the long-term health of the Chattahoochee River.

Every living thing is in some ways the proverbial canary in the coal mine — an indicator, and sometimes a dire warning, that human beings and human consumption and human comfort and human profit don't exist in a bubble impervious to the natural world around us. Phony either-or choices like economy "versus" ecology or people "versus" environmental health are worse than just cynical lies — they're lies that deliberately nurture the most dangerous kind of willful ignorance.

But there's a scary, dismissive contempt for natural science in this culture, and it seems to be getting worse. Perhaps it doesn't matter, but if that baby whale off the Georgia coast is having problems it shouldn't have, in a place where it shouldn't be, we should want to know why.

Columbus Ledger-Enquirer

## Moderately Confused

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## GOP looks at debt ceiling

During the "fiscal cliff" battle, I asked several Republican lawmakers why they didn't push harder for spending cuts in exchange for their historic concession to vote for higher taxes. They invariably answered that they were waiting for the fight over raising the debt ceiling. Then, they promised, Republicans would demand serious cuts, especially in entitlement spending, from President Obama.

Their thinking was this: The GOP was on the wrong side of the polls in the battle over raising taxes on the highest earners. Surveys showed substantial public support for the president and Democrats on that issue. But Republicans are on the right side of the polls in the battle over fiscal responsibility. The GOP, the party trying to put sensible limits on Obama's runaway spending, is better positioned to make the case for cuts.

"We're making a hard pivot to spending," says a senior GOP Senate aide. "Our view is that the revenue question has now been settled. It's behind us. Now we fight on spending, and we've got two good opportunities to do so coming up — the debt limit and the continuing resolution."

The Republican strategy is more than just positioning. It's the right thing to do. Everybody knows Obama's tax increases will do little to reduce deficits in coming years. They'll add about \$60 billion in revenue a year, turning a \$1.2 trillion deficit into a \$1.14 trillion deficit. And everybody knows entitlement spending is on its way to eating the entire federal budget. It has to be reduced or disaster awaits.

Nevertheless, the mood on the political left since the election has



Byron York

become one of solid opposition to any and all cuts in entitlements. The president won the election, activists on the left say, so he should get the tax increases he wants and Republicans should not get the spending cuts they want. Obama, who has never shown any serious interest in cutting spending anyway, will be under pressure not to concede anything.

And the president is not through trying to raise taxes. In coming days, he will cite the Republican offer, made just after the election, to raise revenue by eliminating tax deductions and broadening the base. Now that he has won the fight to raise tax rates instead, Obama will demand that Republicans give in on deductions, too, as they had once offered.

The GOP hopes to stop that cold. "The president got his revenue," Minority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell said Jan. 3 in his opening remarks to the new Senate. "Now it's time to turn squarely to the real problem, which is spending."

But Republicans know they will soon be cast as the villain again. During the fiscal cliff fight, they were accused of being the party ready to plunge the nation into financial disaster on behalf of their millionaire and billionaire friends. During the debt ceiling fight, they will be tagged as the party willing to take the nation to the very brink

of default to balance the budget on the backs of the poor and the elderly.

That will make for a tough debate. In addition, given the federal government's horrendous spending excesses, Republicans know the debt ceiling will have to go up eventually, probably with some GOP support.

Nevertheless, Republicans seem ready for the fight. And unlike the fiscal cliff battle, when it was obvious that taxes were going to go up, there's no clear sense of how this one will end.

Nobody knows, even the main players. To cite an example from the fiscal cliff fight, shortly before the deadline I talked to two senior senators, one from each party, and was struck by how little they knew about what was going on. Of course, they knew the issues and the moving parts, but when it came to the actual provisions of the bill that was being fashioned as we spoke, they were flying blind. What would the tax rate cutoffs be? What about the sequestration cuts? And the other issues, like estate taxes?

The Senate leadership was making the decisions, and even senior lawmakers didn't know what was happening. Expect a lot of that in the next few months.

So Republicans enter the debt ceiling fight, knowing there will be plenty of confusion, name calling and desperate maneuvering. But they know one other thing, too. They know they're doing the right thing.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.

## Brent Musberger and Kim Jung Un

HOLLYWOOD — God bless America, and how's everybody?

The Baseball Hall of Fame got no new inductees Wednesday after Barry Bonds, Mark McGwire, and Roger Clemens didn't get enough votes to get in. It wasn't a total loss. They didn't make it into the Hall of Fame but they did finish in a four-way tie for Mr. Olympus.

Brent Musberger drooled all over Miss Alabama Karen Webb when cameras showed her in the stands during the title game Monday. He's seventy years old and she's twenty. In Alabama she'd be his granddaughter and in Los Angeles she would be his murder victim.

Lance Armstrong agreed to go on Oprah and confess to steroid use Friday. His world has collapsed. Last fall, Nike terminated Lance Armstrong's contract, saying it doesn't condone performance enhancing drugs unless it helps Asian children increase production.

The Hollywood Reporter said Hillary Rodham Clinton's life as a young congressional staffer in the Seventies will be made into a feature movie. It covers the time she and Bill first met and fell in love. The working title of this movie is *An Affair to Refrigerate*.

Charlie Sheen thanked L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa on Twitter Friday for the great time they had partying in Mexico's border country last weekend. The mayor is just lucky he's still alive. Last year Charlie Sheen did enough cocaine to kill Two and a



Argus Hamilton

Half Men.

Barack Obama named Jack Lew as Treasury Secretary. He picked John Kerry, Chuck Hagel, John Brennan, and Jack Lew to head State, Defense, CIA and Treasury. He's got so many white guys working for him it's starting to look like a photo-negative of an NBA team.

WalMart turned down Joe Biden's request to meet with him to discuss gun violence and gun sales. The store wouldn't even talk to him. They felt they did their part for gun safety last year when they stopped people from making crystal meth in the bathrooms.

Savannah gun stores were bought out of stock Tuesday as residents of Southern states continued buying up guns and ammo. They're ready for anything. Georgia is a right-to-work state, so armed school guards get to shoot without having to join the teachers' union.

The National Hockey League owners and players reached a labor deal Saturday after a lockout nearly cancelled the season. What a relief. For the last six months, to enjoy hard-partying and hard-fighting white guys with bad teeth we've had to follow Prince Harry. Monopoly gamemakers

announced a vote Monday allowing people to decide the fate of the eight tokens. There's only five left. The White House just decommissioned the battleship, outsourced the wheelbarrow to Mexico and sent the Top Hat fleeing to the Grand Caymans.

Senator Lindsey Graham vowed to block John Brennan's nomination for CIA Director if the State Department doesn't come clean on the Benghazi fiasco. The questions in the hearings will be brutal. Hillary Clinton has two weeks to find something to hit her head on.

North Korea's leader Kim Jung Un celebrated his birthday by delivering two pounds of chocolate to every kid in North Korea. What a nice gesture. Syria's Bashar al-Assad is kicking himself for celebrating his birthday two years ago by sending everyone anthrax.

Audi introduced its new self-driving car at the Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show Wednesday. The new car is accelerated, steered, stopped and parked by sensors equipped with autonomous technology that guides you smoothly to your destination. It's an absolute embarrassment to the Confederate flag you have painted on the roof of your car.

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