

## Statesboro Herald

statesboroherald.com

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## Letter to the Editor

## Rifles, like Stonewall, unhorsed by their own fusillade

## Editor:

In response to letters by Messrs. Mull and Jones, it's good to see Mr. Jones acknowledging that historians besides "camp historians" use the term "civil war." George Will does, too, in his column next to Mr. Mull's letter. Distorting the Demon of Andersonville's history and omitting that Wirz personally shot 10 Union soldiers while running a camp that saw more die than bloody Antietam is fraudulent. Mr. Jefferson became president in 1800 only because Southern states successfully put into the U.S. Constitution the clause that many folks in their states only counted as 3/5 of a person, something Southern colonies could never have done in London, making his comparison of the two periods incorrect. What would those 3/5 folks like Dred Scott have said at the Buchanan negotiations to keep the status quo?

All the good men Mr. Jones mentions must wonder. (Good women might wonder also as well as why they, too, were not at those negotiations). Why many of Dred Scott's descendants still can't vote after six generations thanks to Jim Crow, KKK and current felony law is a profound 150-year-old theft I don't hear the Rifles even mention, let alone condemn. Do these gross distortions somehow help with Rifle fundraising?

Messrs. Mull and Jones still haven't said when they will put down the guns and uniforms to address the greater theft. They could further show their theft outrage by selling all their guns and uniforms with proceeds going to the Red Cross, whose founder, Clara Barton, was the "Angel of the 'American Civil War' Battlefield."

Greg Brock  
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## Moderately Confused



## The importance of ditches

Now that I am four months into my tenure as District 1 Statesboro city councilman, people are stopping me and asking how it's going.

Seemingly, folks perceive the job is full of power lunches and glamorous events. (It's not by a stretch, but I'm still enjoying it. Thanks for asking).

Actually, much of the job is monitoring the routine activities our competent staff needs to get done to keep Statesboro running smoothly — reviewing documents, setting up accounts, attending budget meetings, or today's topic: cleaning the ditches.

Yes, ditches.

Certainly not glamorous, but it's important to keep the various drainage ditches cleaned out so our yards don't flood and mosquitoes don't breed.

Routine maintenance items don't interest the public typically but, despite the not-so-thrilling nature of ditch maintenance, citizens mentioned it quite often during last fall's campaign.

Why? Well nearly everyone with a home in the city has a drainage ditch running along their property. In most cases, it runs entirely across the front, street-facing part of their yard. An attractive or ugly ditch affects curb appeal.

After years of inattention due to budgetary constraints, the city's Public Works Division is making an effort to re-establish neglected ditches. Many upgrades resulted from citizens altering staff to clogged pipes and standing water after recent rains. As employees make repairs, the city is also thinking long-



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term.

Soon, the state will begin mandating municipalities monitor the storm water runoff entering the state's rivers and streams. The key words to keep in mind are "water quality." The state wants the city to make sure the pollutants from our streets and parking lots are not making their way into our waterways.

On Tuesday's agenda, the council will consider hiring a consultant to evaluate our storm water needs. Perhaps we'll need a series of retention ponds lined with certain foliage to purify the water naturally or even a central retention pond. Maybe some other solution. (We're not sure yet, hence the consultant.) In any case, the city will need to insure our storm water is free of certain contaminants before it enters Little Lotts Creek and is sent out into the world.

The city is trying to get ahead of the curve. One relatively simple and cost-effective way to mitigate water flow and quality is to keep the runoff on the originating property (where the rain falls) as much as possible. To that end, it's in the city's best interest to make sure the ditches have a gentle slope and are lined with grass. This, for the most part, also aligns with the individual homeowner's desire for their front yard to be attractive and easily maintained. A grass-filled

ditch with a gradual slope that can be maintained with a lawnmower instead of a weed eater certainly fits the bill.

To get a ditch back to proper function, the city needs to remove the grass from the bottom of the ditches, blow out the culverts, and clean things up in general. The more grass that is removed, the more gentle a slope can be created, which both slows down the flow of water and simplifies maintenance.

This presents an aesthetic problem because once the grass is removed, what remains is a bare, grass-free trench across the front yard. Though the grass will return, it doesn't look all that great until it does — as many have told us.

To solve that problem, the city is in the process of acquiring a hydro-seeder that will help the grass return more quickly and will help prevent sand and silt from re-entering the culverts and blocking the ditches. It will also be used out at the landfill and in other development projects throughout the city. But, it is an expensive piece of equipment and it's not in the fiscal budget until 2014, which starts in July.

So, bear with us as we clean things up and get ahead of state mandates. Please be kind to the city workers who come out to pull up your grass. And, keep in mind the temporary scar across your front lawn will soon grow back and will help the city send clean water to our neighbors downstream.

And for that, we thank you.

Phil Boyum is city councilman for Statesboro's District 1.

## Reminiscing about our roots

This time of year, I reminisce a great deal. When I see winter-dormant fields being harrowed, when fresh produce begins appearing in markets, when tractors start slowing traffic as farmers travel from field to field — I am reminded of my childhood.

My significant other farmed most of his life and we often share memories of growing up in the farm life. The childhoods we experienced were priceless, fun and taught us many lessons.

While Dean and I both grew up on farms, life was quite different for each of us. My dad allowed us to hoe rows, pull weeds, plant gardens by hand and harvest what we grew, but Dean was driving a tractor at a very early age.

I know how to cut okra, pull corn, tell a weed from a good plant, shell peas, dig potatoes, flick a tobacco worm from a tomato plant and pick green peanuts from vines gathered by the handful and yanked from the earth.

Dean knows how to fix a downed tractor in the field, spray chemicals, plow straight lines, harvest all kinds of crops with all kinds of harvesting equipment, pull bogged tractors out of the muck, plant, till and care for row crops and bale hay.

I learned about life through raising chickens, rabbits, and helping Dad feed hogs and a few cattle. Dean learned through helping his father raise quail and working at the family



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dairy.

We were both blessed. We worked hard, learned discipline from stern but loving fathers, tempered by loving mothers, and grew up with an appreciation for value and a respect for the land. We developed strong work ethics and nurtured a love and understanding of nature.

We both know how it feels to tip back a jar of ice water underneath the shade of a pecan tree, enjoying the cool refreshment as sweat and dust cover our faces.

We both recall the unique experience of shoving bare feet through the sun-warmed crust of a freshly plowed field to find the cool, damp earth below.

He has seen the miracle of calves born and quail hatched. He has even helped cows bear calves on more than one occasion, often saving the lives of both.

I always took on the runt pigs Dad knew wouldn't make it. On rare occasion, one did live. I enjoyed helping him pull baby pig's teeth (not sure why we did that, though) and loved watching baby chicks enter the world.

Both Dean and I are blessed beyond measure for having

been raised on the farm. I developed a strong spiritual connection with living things. He developed a physical and spiritual strength and stamina that have served him well. Both of us attribute our strong personalities to growing up on the farm, and neither of us would trade that for a childhood in the city.

When the rains fall and we watch the wheat grow tall in fields, we both remember the worry on our father's faces when droughts withered past crops.

When we see a farmer in a field, we recall times when our own fathers — and Dean himself — worked sunup to sun-down, often beyond the edge of night, to get a crop in or a field tilled.

Both of us left farm life as adults. Dean, whose mother says he started taking apart Tonka toys with butter knives at age 3, became a mechanic. I, who often hid in the woods with a good book, became a writer. But both of us will always be products of the farm and — no matter what — won't ever forget the lives we had and the parents who gave us the challenges, lessons, love and memories that have made us who we are today.

You may be able to take the kid off the farm, but you can never take the farm out of the kid. Thank God.

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## Prayer of the Day

"Father of our spirits, we turn now to you for strength and peace. Keep us, please, from offering the same disappointments, the same sins, the small tokens of praise. All too often we ply you with a quantity of prayers, with little intent or effort. Forgive us, we pray. Amen."

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