

Commentary

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1941-1983

C.H. LEAVY III
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THE BRUNSWICK
NEWS

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EDITORIAL

Manufacturing needed for diverse local economy

We have been told often by people who study such things that having a diversified local economy is the best way to weather the inevitable troughs in national economic waves.

Diversity is also important for the local job market and in building a thriving economy during the peaks.

As important as tourism so clearly is to our local economy, we saw last week how big the impact of local manufacturers are as well. The Brunswick-Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce and the Brunswick-Glynn County Development Authority highlighted their contributions at a luncheon and focused the presentation on the economic impact of Georgia Pacific's Brunswick Cellulose plant.

Georgia Pacific and other manufacturers offer roughly 25 percent of the jobs available in Glynn County. The average wages of those jobs have risen by about 50 percent in recent years.

By comparison to some major local tourist-based employers, Georgia Pacific's impact is roughly equal to that of Jekyll Island and Sea Island. Georgia Pacific employs 2,069 people and provides more than \$125 million in local income.

Jekyll and Sea islands combined employ roughly 6,000 people and

provide more than \$220 million and \$200 million in local income respectively.

It can be easy to think about our local economy in terms of tourism's impact. Tourism is the most visible sector of our economy and is clearly a cornerstone. But manufacturing provides a different sort of support. It is not reliant on weather, or the season or how much money people have to spend.

Manufacturing, as the impact study of Georgia Pacific shows, is a steadier, more reliable source of jobs and is a sector we should be focusing on for future economic growth.

The Great Recession took its toll, however. The number of local manufacturing businesses dropped from 99 to 76 during the downturn, diminishing the percentage of employment in the sector to around 20 percent.

That ratio is trending in the right direction now and we hope to see it continue.

We encourage the development authority to use its resources wisely to attract more well-paying, steady jobs in the manufacturing field. Doing so will not only add to the diversity of jobs and businesses in our local economy, it will also provide the opportunity to keep our young people who are training for modern skilled jobs at home.

COLUMN / RICHARD YARBROUGH



Where would we be without our mothers

All the technological advances in the world will never replace our mothers.

Don't look now, but Sunday is Mother's Day. Actually, I'm just kidding. You are free to look all you want as soon as you and I are finished here.

Whether we are liberal or conservative; black or white; rich or poor; speak English or habla Espanol; live in God's Country (aka Georgia) or are from up north where all the buildings are rusted and it snows 10 months a year, we share one thing in common: We all have or have had a mother.

There is a lot of weird stuff happening these days, but I don't think we have found a way yet to birth babies without one. At least I hope not. I don't want to think of a world without mommas.

I am an authority on mothers. I am married to one and the father of one, the grandfather of one and hope to be — sooner rather than later — the grandfather of two.

I have told you on several occasions about my own mother. She was a stem-winder. I'm not sure how this DNA stuff works, but it is fairly obvious to our family that my brother, Bob, got most of our dad's genes. He is quiet, thoughtful, kind and chock-full of integrity — the solid rock in our clan. Me? I swim in my mother's gene pool — funny, acerbic and as blunt as a sledgehammer.

My momma didn't stand on the sidelines and complain. She got involved. I can't think of an organization she belonged to that she didn't end up running. She is probably chairing the monthly meeting of God's Angel Corps in heaven as we speak.

After our dad died, Momma moved into a retirement home with a vow to not get involved in anything. She just wanted to read all the books she could and enjoy a life of leisure. I bet her \$10 that it wouldn't be long before she was in charge of something there. She took my bet and a few months later sent me a \$10 bill along with an announcement that she had been named chaplain of the retirement home.

I have heard beautiful stories of loved ones who say they saw Jesus



Provided photo

Columnist Dick Yarbrough says Mother's Day, a traditional day for giving flowers, reminds him that he hopes he is a chip off his mother's block.

just before they died. Not my mother. On her last day, she was in Intensive Care with a bunch of tubes in her and machines blinking and whirring. The nurse told us that we might want to tell her goodbye for the final time. She was a bit groggy, but I hoped she had heard us.

As we were leaving, she made a motion for the nurse to come closer. The nurse complied and look startled as my mother mumbled something to her. "What was that about?" I asked. "Your mother wants to know what time the Braves game is on tonight," she replied. Momma wasn't going to see Jesus until the game was over.

If you had met her, you would have assumed she was a college graduate. In fact, some people did. She could intelligently converse on any subject you could name. Yet, she only made it through the seventh grade, growing up in the rural South when education was not a priority. She had an insatiable appetite to learn. She created in me a love of words, whether it was the daily crossword puzzle or the summer reading program at our little library in East Point.

I'm not sure what her politics would be today. In her day, she was a yellow dog Democrat, although

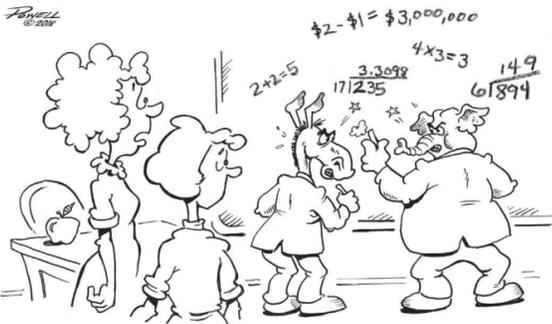
she never forgave Zell Miller for promoting the lottery, which she considered gambling. I do know she would not be happy to see the way our nation is trending these days. She loved her God, her family and particularly her two boys, who may have exceeded their own expectations, but not hers.

Her homegoing service was perfect. The church was filled to overflowing. Her two grandsons (my brother's sons-in-law, both ordained ministers) told "Granny stories" and had the crowd in stitches. That is just what she wanted. No tears. Just laughter and celebration. She knew where she was headed. Nothing to be sad about.

My mother was a great lady and I hope I am a chip off her block. At a time when we seem to emphasize our differences, this would be a good time to think about what we all have in common — our mothers. Where would we be without them? I don't even want to think about it. Happy Mother's Day to one and all.

Dick Yarbrough is a syndicated humor columnist from Georgia. Contact him at yarb2400@bellsouth.net.

ANOTHER VIEW / JIM POWELL



"They may be terrible at math, but the one thing they are good at is division!"

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Glynn could make room for small boat sailors

If the Surf Sailors are pushed off East Beach there will be no other home port for any small boat sailors in this area. The proposed plan for East Beach seems to be designed for income producing enterprises. Small sailboats don't produce income.

The marinas don't want them. The marinas can't afford to have them. Itty bitty sailboats don't buy fuel 100 gallons at a time, and the minimum marina slip fee seems to be about \$405 per month (\$13.50/ft, 30 ft minimum), which cannot be justified or afforded by many small boat sailors.

Once there was a racing fleet of Snipes here, a 15 ft one design sailboat. The Fendigs were active in this fleet. They lost the place where they could keep their boats near the water. They are gone now and the Hobie Cats will be gone soon. Instead we see marinas filled with large yachts which never seem to go anywhere.

Other communities have made accommodation for small boat sailors at a modest fee. Glynn County could, if we put our mind to it.

Art Pierson
St. Simons Island

ELECTION POLICY

Letters to the editor sent to The News from candidates for public office will not be published prior to the May 22 primary election. Letters regarding candidates will be accepted, but must be received by no later than Monday, May 13 so that letters may be published by Saturday, May 19.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send letters on topics of general interest to readers in Southeast Georgia by: Mail Letters to the Editor, The Brunswick News, 3011 Altama Ave., Brunswick GA 31520 Email: editor@thebrunswicknews.com Fax: 912-280-0926 Letters should be no more than 250 words in length and may be edited for clarity. Letter writers will be limited to one letter every two weeks You must include your name, address and phone number.

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FROM THE MURPHY CENTER / MELISSA TRUSSELL



Children quickly change household economics

The last month with children in the house has been the most important economics lesson of my life.

I have taken and taught a lot of economics courses, and I have had opportunities to be part of a lot of really cool economics research in the last decade. But, the last month has provided me with one of the greatest economics lessons of my life. Two kids moved into my house.

This is not a permanent situation. They are just hanging out with me for a little while. But, oh my goodness! Kids change everything, not least of which is a household budget!

Groceries! So many groceries! I am very single. I am used to cooking one or two meals per week and just eating the leftovers until they are gone. But kids demand variety. And snacks. And drinks besides water. Groceries are not cheap, y'all. My household grocery budget more than doubled overnight with the addition of two kids.

And laundry. Can we talk about laundry?! My usual was one or two loads of laundry every two or three weeks. (I know — seasoned moms burst into laughter at this thought.) We are now washing one or two loads a day. My electricity usage increased from an average of 14 kWh in the week prior to

the kids' arrival to an average of 26 kWh in their first week with me.

I know this is not news to many of you. Those who have been parents for a while will probably find my experiences of the last few weeks familiar and perhaps will think it cute that I am just learning what you have known so well for so long. Bless my heart, right?

In fact, the story of my last few weeks is all too familiar and not at all cute to more than a third of Brunswick's families, which are headed by single moms with children below age 18 according to the 2016 American Community Survey. Of those moms, 23 percent have children under age 5. Over half of single-mom families in Brunswick have incomes below the poverty level, and that statistic grows to two-thirds for single moms with children under 5.

For these moms, perhaps the most significant cost of raising children is one I have felt strongest this month — opportunity cost. Opportunity cost is the value of what we give up to do or experience something else. For me and for many single moms, the opportunity cost of parenting is a thriving career.

The kids came along two weeks before the deadline on a project I began working on four years ago. Crunch time. I had to call on family and friends to help with the kids so I could work on weekends to even have a shot at getting the thing submitted.

I had only been parenting a few days before I began to understand why mothers — particularly single mothers — often struggle to get ahead in their careers. Thank goodness I have such an amazing and supportive network of family, friends and coworkers. I was able to meet that deadline, and I have been able to adjust pretty well to the daily role switches from parent to professor and back to parent.

I cannot imagine how difficult this must be for moms without that sort of support system. Hug a single mom for me this week. Given the statistics cited above for Brunswick, it won't be hard to find one.

Dr. Melissa Trussell is a professor in the School of Business and Public Management at College of Coastal Georgia who works with the college's Reg Murphy Center for Economic and Policy Studies. Contact her at mtrussell@ccga.edu.