

Commissioners not notified about tornadoes in their districts

The tornado struck in District 1 and District 2, Bivins and Prince Districts. These commissioners were never notified. This commissioner heard about it on TV about 8 AM.

This intentional lack of communication to the commissioners in whose district the emergency occurred, on the part of chairman Norton, demonstrates more than anything I can think of, the inadequate, inexperienced leadership on the Grady County Commission. When Mr. Prince and I arrived at one of the badly damaged sites on Joe Ferrell Highway 93N, I used my personal cell phone to call county commission office to speak to Norton. He was out somewhere without a cell phone. I told county manager that we needed helicopters to search for survivors. He said they had been trying to reach the forestry pilot. I said that fixed wing aircraft were useless.

Mr. Billy Dinkins (EMS Director) overheard this conversation. He said we could get helicopters out of Dothan Army Base. I called county manager back, Mr. Dinkins gave him

the information. The helicopters arrived at 11:30 AM.

If Mr. Prince and I had been notified by 1 or 2 AM like we should have been, I would have had the helicopters by daylight.

As it turned out, all the missing people were accounted for, but it could have been critical. We could have had people lying all over the landscape suffering.

I am sure Mr. Norton can learn to be a leader, but you learn to be a leader by watching other leaders, as I did.

Mr. Norton probably did not call Prince and Bivins because Bivins might take over.

Mr. Norton and county administrator left that evening to go to Hotlanta for the Legislative Conference. The event where you hob nob the legislators for things like pay raise for commissioners, etc. This event is held at the old railroad station. It features pig pickin, wine, women and song.

Commissioners Prince, Bivins, and wives cooked and served our people in District 1&2 all day Tuesday. We

served about 250 meals.

Wednesday, we went to funerals and showed respect for the citizens. It was a humbling experience.

As for the legislators at the pig pickin, I'll bet they scattered like a covey of quail when they heard that Vice President Gore was coming to Mitchell and Grady County.

The sky was full of helicopters in Mitchell and Grady. I passed by the event on the way to the church. I saw Cairo County Commissioner Copeland standing there with Mike Stephenson. I think I saw the Cairo County Commissioner Burns there too.

Citizens, please call me and advise me of anything I should know about. 762 3200 or gbivins@rose.net

See Messenger 2/23/00 Pg 8A - **Bivins criticized Emergency Management Director and Administrator.** Not so, I critisized Norton only for failure to notify Prince and Bivins after he had been notified at 1:00 AM. of tornado in our districts.

Grady County "Serving Grady County"

Inquirer

Intentionally Prophetic & Opinionated

March, 2000 • TIME TO TAKE OUR COUNTY BACK • Issue 2, Volume 1

STANDARD MAIL U.S. POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO.12 WHIGHAM, GA. 31797

1/6/2000

Dear Messenger Editor,

When I read your Banter column, I had a good belly laugh. You stated, "What you can expect from me is a fair shake. There is always two sides to every story. We will be fair, objective, and truthful."

I want to take issue with the objectiveness of "Bivins displays his pique." Page 3A, January 5, 2000 issue. It is hardly a pique when a commissioner brings up a charge that the Grady County (Bylaws) Procedures of Operation, the state laws, and the Georgia Constitution have been repeatedly violated.

You, sirs have belittled lawful government. You and the three wolves must be Clintonian Democrats. You seem to be saying, "Well, it depends on what the definition of is, is." Where there are no absolutes anymore? Where we cannot depend on our laws to keep the wolves at bay?

Your controlling influence is turning our Republic into a Democracy. The difference is that a Republic requires government within the law. A Democracy simply says that the majority rules, whether legal or not. Shame on you, and shame on the three wolves on the Grady County Commission.

George Bivins

1000 percent payraise for commissioners, \$70 to \$100 per hour, Pg. 3

THE STATE OF THE COUNTY

Well, another discovery of theft in the tax office. How many does that make by now? I can't say much about the latest. It is apparently under investigation, By whom no one knows, not even the County Attorney knows. It happened a little over a year ago. About \$9,000 went missing before discovery by a tax office employee. The suspect is no longer a county employee.

If a person with proven integrity and accounting experience, who knows right from wrong, who would devote full time as tax commissioner, would run for Tax Commissioner and win, then the board of commissioners are authorized to provide supplemental pay. I would support up to \$10,000 annual supplement to the right person. Even with the supplement, we would save about \$20,000 peryear. •

As Thomas County goes, or so it seems. The Thomasville Times writer Laura Cassels and our dear

departed county administrator are old buddies. At least they were when she worked in Cairo. Now they seem to be coordinating their social engineering agenda on consolidation in Thomas, and Grady County as well. The departed Grady County Administrator and our own county clerk have been in almost daily contact by phone and fax ever since he left.

Our own county clerk and her husband have become very active in the Chamber of Commerce. They both are on the county payroll. It comes as no surprise that they represent business interest. Of course business interests want total regulation of county land, so that consolidation of city and county government can be accomplished.

Consolidation will require COUNTY property owners to pay for the continued growth in Cairo, (as I explained in February issue).

I am trying desperately to shield farmers and C O U N T Y property own-

ers from this robbery. It looks like the three wolves, however will thwart my efforts.

Now, I don't mean these guys are full time wolves. Sometimes they are downright lovable. But, when it comes to important issues like: Prison in Grady County, Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), Referendum issues, Subdivision and Zoning Regulations, Fire tax districts, and Consolidation of City and County Government, they will vote the way special interest want. They have already demonstrated this on the prison referendum. •

Recently it was discovered that a Sheriff's Deputy had been given an unauthorized raise by someone in the county commission office. I brought a motion to recover the overpayment in 12 installments. The motion passed. Later the motion was overturned, only partial recovery was



Charley Reese
Columnist

Unfortunately, the modern politician is missing two key ingredients of statesmanship: knowledge of his or her country's own history and a backbone.

Charley Reese is with the Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel.



Bill Shipp
Columnist

• Republicans will gain a majority of seats in the state Senate in the 2000 election, setting the stage for a big fight over reappointment in 2001. • Lt. Gov. Mark Taylor will not only win reappointment but will also be reappointed to control of the state Senate - and his position as Lieutenant Governor.

New Bumper Sticker

In the African American Vernacular

No Mo Bil, No Mo HIL, and No Mo Gore

..... no pun intended

SPLOST - You are going to hear SPLOST a lot in the future, You might as well learn what it means. It means that the Grady County School System, all the school systems in Georgia, of Podunk Arkansas and all over America, cannot live within any budget. We want no financial restraints, because, it's for the little kiddies. Remember, about four years ago, suddenly, there was no longer talk of poor people. It became: CHILDREN IN POVERTY. That sells better. Read the book HELL TO PAY, it is the life

story of miz Clinton. You will see that " it's for the little children," was her idea.

Comes Grady County School System, that already gets 60 % of the Ad Valorem taxes paid in Grady County, plus all it can get from the State of Georgia, wants you to approve a SPLOST referendum for about \$12 million. Well, it's for the little kiddies. Who can say no?

Well, I can see that every mother's son will have to pay, even the poor Blacks, Mexicans, and unfortunate Whites. But, don't for

get, these poor Blacks, Mexicans, and Whites are voters too. The Democrat party saw to that with motor voter. Blame them if SPLOST don,t pass. Thank God I am not among their number yet, but a lot of us are headed there, including our farmers. I vote no on SPLOST, tighten your belts, for now. Lets wait to see what land regulation and consolidation will do to taxpayers.

INSIDE

View From Airline Cockpit
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Commissioner Pay RaisePg. 3
County Tax SavingsPg.5

CYAN MAGENTA



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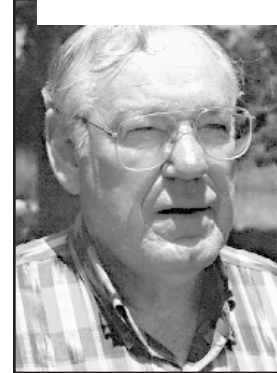
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CYAN MAGENTA

Continued on page 3

from the desk of **THE EDITOR**



When I became an active commissioner, I was appalled by the lack of accountability in the commission office itself. The administrative staff had been allowed

total authority for several years. Drew, Copeland, and Burns fought and voted to allow this to continue. The two commissioners in the minority were expected to get along and go along. I felt (and I have demonstrated over 3 years) that I have a brain and had a great deal to contribute.

The Cairo messenger supported these three wolfish commissioners, because their control was threatened also, along with the Chamber. I will not extend to any special interest, any more influence in government than any ordinary citizen has.

Drew and Administrator Stephenson are gone, setting the stage to return to "government of the people, by the people, and for the people." But, that won't happen now, because Norton, in order to remain Chairman, joined the wolves by not honoring his Jan. 19, 1999 promise, by unanimous consent motion, to rotate chairmanship annually. He nominated Copeland also, for his 9th continuous year as Vice - Chairman.

request by Chronicle, Messenger refused.
•Hiring Office Mgr. for Tax Office. Tax office now staffed with competent clerks.
•Designed Forms for tax office, to require accountability and provide audit trail.
•Wrote corrective action plan for Tax Office, line item.
•Validator printers, to provide computer generated tax receipts.
•Required Auditor payments accountability of billing, and board approval of each payment.
•Required Tax Assessor to mail out a list of previous years taxable personal property.
•Post Office, "address service requested", assures the correct mailing address. In 1999, up to 10% of all tax bills were sent (three times) to incorrect addresses, causing penalties & interest to be added.
•Designed Form for Tax Assessor, taxpayer can use form to apply for relief of interest and penalties.
•Requested that state initiate address service requested status on all tax bills, statewide. Sen. Ragan.
Attempted to correct many shortcomings of county administration:
•Required county commission staff (including Attorney) to obey state open records laws.
•Reestablished Commissioners right to: Have a private office, unfettered access to all county records,
•keys to courthouse. Under Drew and Copeland, only they had these rights.

- Inadequate communication of board action to other constitutional offices.
- Inadequate, accurate, and complete recording of the (minutes) public record.
- Inadequate and sloppy storage and control of county records
- Illegality of not re-electing Clerk and Attorney, both are intended by law, to be "at will" employees.
- Require Clerk to use word processor instead of a typewriter - done in 1999.
- Computerize county and other offices with windows technology, including Internet use - done.
- Improve adherence to Robert's Rules of order, required by law - not done, but still trying.
- Required Sheriff seized property inventory, required by law - done.
- Required "Records Retention Schedule" required by law, has been in progress two years, ongoing.
- Requested county records inventory - ongoing.
- Disorderly Conduct Ordinance - done. Road Petition and new ordinance - done.
- Private Property Ordinance - done, cannot now bury cows for ex - commissioners. Cronyism dead.
- Road inventory & database - done, development of database is ongoing.
- Annual Road priority list, done, if published annually, it will help take politics out of road paving.
- Attempted county personnel database, in the process, hanky panky was discovered in payroll.
- Finish 3rd floor 1999/2000, I requested it in 1997, this paved the way to sell the old bank building.
- State Prison Referendum, my motion for Referendum failed, but I am proud of my failures as well.
- Repeal of Subdivision Regulations - my motion failed. but I am proud I made it.
- Attempted to get some control of 911 - not successful, still trying.

Good News

With this newspaper, and all the letter writing that I've done over the years, I have endeavored to give you some insight into the workings of county government, from the inside. Unfortunately, most of the insight has been negative. There is however, a positive view that I would like to share with you.

Since I have been a commissioner, and all the boards that have served before me, have managed to hold down taxes. Yes, C O U N T Y taxes are now, and have been low for years.

If that is true how then has your tax bills continued to rise? Schools my dear citizens, schools. The Grady County School System budget, about \$25 million. County budget about \$7,033.172.

Of the \$7,033.172 county budget, C O U N T Y taxes collected was only \$2,622.552. The C O U N T Y only gets 37% of the total Ad Valorem taxes it collects. Please try to remember: the C O U N T Y taxes are only 37% of taxes collected.

Grady C O U N T Y Government may, in my opinion, be deficient in many ways, but over taxation is not one of them.

Bad News:

The Cairo Good Ole Boys, and other special interests know that county taxes are low. They can't stand it. They are coming after C O U N T Y land taxes, by way of regulation, and consolidation of city and county governments. •

Book Review

The best book I've read on Thomas Jefferson is : American Sphinx by Joseph Ellis • Read all about Hillery in Hell to pay. • Non Dare Call It Education by John Stormer • Reclaiming Morality In America by William Murchison •

A View From the Airliner Cockpit

With all the recent news coverage of airline crashes, I want to calm your fears of flying, by giving you some insight from the pilot's vantage point. As I've said before, I spent 30 years flying airplanes. Twenty five for Airlines. My total flight time approximately 20,000 hours. About seventeen thousand hours turbo jet. Airline pilots must take a FAA physical, which includes psychological and emotional exam every six months. The specially designated and licensed physicians know the unique stresses of airline pilots.

The FAA requires the airline companies to give flight training and competence checks every six months to every pilot.

The training and check standards are closely monitored by the FAA, and are constantly being improved upon by the airplane makers, the airlines, and the pilots themselves.

Statistically, risk is far less on an U. S. Airline than a trip in a car. Very few of these recent accidents are pilot error, but some are, such as the MD 83

accident in Arkansas. I my opinion.

Multiple airplane system failures are the cause of most airplane accidents. Scheduled inspections, maintenance, and certification are done as a matter of law. The airplane builder, the FAA, and the airline, design the maintenance and certification schedule for every model of airplane used by U. S. Airlines.

There is virtually no failure of any individual airplane system, in flight, that cannot be overcome to bring you home.

For example, if you have a jammed stabilizer, the pilots can use split flaps, and split flight spoilers to regain vertical control of the airplane.

I believe the recent Alaska Air crash off the California coast was caused by structural failure of the tail section. It is not yet known for sure. If it had been simply a jammed stabilizer, the pilots would have brought it home. They were well trained, with much experience on the MD 83. The only criticism I have of the FAA is they are too slow correcting a problem that they know exists. •

Dumpster Sites Through out County = Solid Waste

1/27/2000

Dear Messenger,

This commissioner wants to talk some more trash. For the most part, I agree with the Grand Jury Special Committee. I believe however, that reducing the number of refuse receptacles, (dumpster) sites, is premature. I do not want to do that until we have explored every other alternative.

My District 1 is the largest district in Grady County. Reducing the sites would inconvenience my people most. I have offered a plan to the board, where it is either being considered, or is marinating. The plan is as follows:

County should hire one man qualified to be invested with total authority over solid waste. This man must be certifiable as a Sheriff Deputy. County should con-

tract with the Sheriff to certify him as a deputy, keep him certified, so that he can write citations and has arrest powers. He should report only to County Administrator and Sheriff himself, bypassing the Sheriff Administrative Staff, except for certification. He would work exclusively as a department head, under at will contract, answerable to County Administrator.

Present Georgia Law allows a certified Sheriff's Deputy to use county inmates for work detail. The work of keeping these dumpster sites picked up and sanitized could be done with inmate personnel at no cost.

With intense supervision by one man, I believe our present system can be made to look and smell presentable. It goes against my grain to change any service

that the citizens have come to expect.

The Superintendent of Roads and Bridges presently supervises solid waste. Since his and the County Commissioners primary job is Roads and Bridges, I would like Roads and Bridges to have Superintendent's undivided attention. I believe he would agree. George Bivins Added note:

I have heard suggestions to reduce dumpster site locations from about 80 to four for the whole county. People will not drive 5 or six miles to a dumpster, they will go back to the old way, dump anywhere they can. Citizens, come to these meetings with your views.

Note: Messenger did not publish.

Candidates for Political Office 2000

Hopefully, the commissioner pay raise page 3 will bring out many commissioner candidates for that office. Citizens deserve a choice in all the offices.

I would like to see as many candidates for all the offices as possible. As with jury duty, I believe it is our Christian duty to run for office if you have something to contribute. America was not built by the faint hearted. America's freedoms will not be maintained by the faint hearted.

There are no educational requirements for these offices, making it possible for almost anyone to qualify. I thoroughly recommend holding political office. It will give you an opportunity for an experience unequalled in any other way. You will discover in yourself capacities you never knew you had. It will inspire you to either hold fast to your ideals, or to adjust them. Political office, like no other, will force you to ask the question, do I really believe in government of the people, by the people, and for the people? We need to know this about ourselves.

When we pledge allegiance to the flag, do we really listen to its meaning?

Crisis in Grady County Government

We have a crisis in Grady County Government. It is not representative and it is not democratic.

When special interests buy a politician, they expect him to stay bought. They will do anything to protect their interests. In Grady County they protect that investment by controlling the majority, keeping the Chairman and Vice Chairman in place year after year. They enlist help from a variety of sources, Cairo Messenger, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Volunteer Fire Chief and Director Wayne Hadden. Mr. Hadden is attempting to use the Volunteer Fire organization to further his political agenda.

Previous Chairman and present Vice Chairman Uncle Howard Copeland were key to maintaining control by breaking the tradition of rotating Chairman and Vice Chairman. These leaders stayed bought.

Now, I am not saying that these people did or did not take bribes. Money is not the only coin. I don't know why they did it. I don't know why Norton joined them. But, there is one thing for sure, the intent of special interest is to dig deeper into citizen's pockets.

Many counties in Georgia have resolved this problem of special interest control of the majority by electing the Chairman by a county wide vote.

Candidates

I pledge allegiance to the flag, and to the Republic for which it stands What, I thought America was a Democracy? No, my dear citizens, it is a Republic.

One prerequisite a candidate should have is thick skin. Be able to vote his/her convictions, then let the criticisms slide like water off a duck's back. If you have a burning desire to be popular, if you are a fence sitter, then stay out of politics. See Candidates Pg. 3

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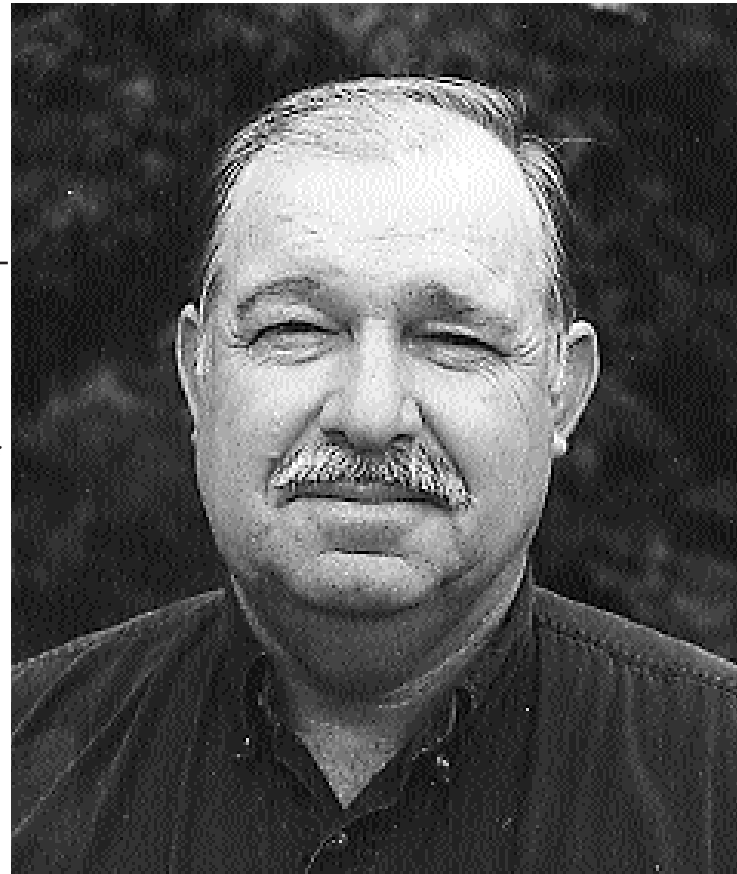
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PHILOSOPHER



Dear Cairo Messenger Editor, I can read between the lines.

This letter Mr. Editor is in response to your editorial of Feb. 11, 1998. I find it strange why you devoted such space in your paper taking sides, when what people say themselves, ought to be enough to explain what they want to. Like the lawyer told the judge, if you are going to plead my case for me, don't try so hard to lose it. I've found George Bivins to be quite capable of saying what he thinks. But apparently you feel your readers are not capable of reading George, without prior explanation of what you think of Commissioner Bivins, or his state of intentions. No thank you, Mr. Editor, some of us would prefer our news straight from the horse's mouth. We got a "Maw" government already, we can forego the "Paw" newspaper which seeks to tell us ignorant masses what the message is.

Liberals use the word "fairness" a lot Mr. Editor and I know for a fact, ya'll have printed a few examples of letters from me, that you did not want to print. What is greater fact than my rare allowed letter to get through is the numerous letters that didn't.

The good old boys that George Bivins talks about are not the crowd who

chew tobacco, tell fish stories, drive pickup trucks, and have red necks. The crowd George Bivins speaks of is people able to use government for their own benefit, and in whose interest may or may not be in the best interest of the common citizen.

In your editorial you said, "we feel a responsibility for what we publish, regardless of the author." It seems you have given yourself permission not only to voice your own opinion, but also to interpret, as you choose, the explanation of other people's opinion on issues. If Mr. Bivins is crazy, you should say so. If Mr. George Bivins is not fit for his opinion to be expressed, then take that up with the people in District 1.

In closing Mr. Editor, whom ever you are that I am replying to, your last paragraph tells volumes. You said that in the future all letters from candidates and their supporters had to have, "content standards we try to live up to as a newspaper." What standards are those and where are they found?

I think a newspaper's standards can be like a government who creates a regulation book for the people to go by, and then states that what ever the book says is subject to change, if the people in charge desire

it. Tyranny is not the domain of government alone, but can reside in the pages of a newspaper. If that newspaper acts in ways that conceal and misinform, rather than allowing a free people the currency of Liberty, which is choices, that reflects honest information.

Walter H. Lewis

As Thomas County Goes - So Goes Grady County

Volunteer fire chiefs Support sales - tax Plan

By Laura Cassels Times-Enterprise

THOMASVILLE - Thomas County's volunteer fire chiefs said this week they would support a new 1-cent sales tax to raise \$4 million over two years to buy equipment for firefighters, ambulance crews and 911 dispatchers.

The volunteer firefighters met Thursday with members of the Emergency Services Board to explain what the volunteer departments need in terms of equipment and training and to hear the boards views of how to meet those needs.

Thomasville Mayor Roy Campbell, chairman of the board, urged the volunteers to lobby Thomas County commissioners in favor of a proposed sales tax for emergency services and road improvements. Only county government can sponsor the county wide referendum, which would ask voters to adopt a 1-cent, special - purpose, local option sales tax, or SPLOST.

I promised honesty in county government

The delivery of honesty and openness in county government has been much more difficult than I imagined.

I began tape recording Grady County Commission meetings early in 1998. With these recordings, copies of meeting minutes, I can prove everything I say.

Tape recording of the meetings was necessary because the minutes of the previous meeting that was submitted for approval to the board contained errors, omissions, and sometimes outright lies.

There is evidence on the record of numerous corrections, attempted cor-

rections, and several resolutions, signed by the chairman, saluting the competence of the incompetent clerk and previous administrator.

I say incompetent not because they could not do the job, they simply had been allowed to believe that they could do it any way they wanted. I believe, I got their attention.

Another area of incompetence was failure to comply with the open records laws of Georgia. When a commissioner would ask for a copy of something, she was too busy, or the lawyer has the file, or I'll have to ask Mr. Stephenson. Now,

Commissioners briefly entertained the idea last fall but decided the timing was not right, coming on the heels of property revaluations that increased the value of taxable properties and, hence, the tax bills due on them.

Campbell said he was encouraged by the firefighters' endorsement and their confidence that such a sales tax could win the support of voters.

"They all said they endorsed it and they would work for it," Campbell said. "They appreciated the fact that we're trying to do something for them ... and the fact we're having to start from scratch."

Countywide volunteer fire fighting coordinator James Hart could not be reached for comment Friday.

A critical need among volunteer firefighters is fire trucks. Several stations have trucks down for repairs that have become chronic.

The Emergency Service Board is scheduled to decide before the end of the month whether to lease-purchase six new fire trucks, with three going to volunteer stations, three to

full-time firefighting stations and three of the best trucks in the existing fleet going to volunteer stations.

The board's decision hinges on discord about long term financing of such expensive equipment.

Campbell said he is determined to find a way to buy the new fire trucks.

Also Thursday, the fire chiefs asked the board to ease new training requirements for volunteer firefighters, who are not paid for this service and hold down regular jobs. And they asked for better maintenance of their fire vehicles. ... See full article in TIMES 2/12/00.

Editor's notes:

The purpose of this article is to get you to thinking ahead about what your position will be when the above concerns are brought up in Grady County. Make no mistake it will be an issue in Grady County.

The minutes of commissioner meetings are full of evidence that Norton, Burns, and Copeland vote for anything Mr. Wayne Hadden wants. Even to approval of a \$25,000 expenditure, without first amending

State of County

done, leaving taxpayers to lose \$1,900. No effort was expended to discover who doctored the books. Principle was compromised again.

Today 2/23/00 at 2:30 PM, I received a call from Commissioner Norton, wherein he said he had read the Inquirer, my, (first issue), that he was unhappy with the things I said about him. I don't blame him, I would be ashamed too.

Herewith, I extend an invitation to Norton - to write his rebutals in this paper. What could be more fair?

The only concern I have is whether what is published by Commissioner Norton is really written by him. Maybe he will be honest and forthright

the budget, as required by county code.

Mr. Hadden, Cairo VFD chief has just been elevated to Volunteer Fire Coordinator with a raise in the position from about \$4000 to about \$10,000. The vote 12/21/99 passed 3-2, Norton, Burns, and Copeland yes.

Later pay was changed to \$7,500 plus .26C mile plus \$1000 telephone allowance, with no hours specified. I voted against it as well. Too rich.

I also ask you to reread the underlined text, then ask yourself whether your commissioner will vote for your interests, or the special interests. Any doubt, don't reelect him.

State of County

in this.

In our telephone conversation today, Norton made a couple accusations, one that I had taken the county car and visited my son in Atlanta. That is false. I have never driven the county car, ever. That I had cut classes in Atlanta or Athens to go to a continued on page 5

Whoo - Weeee, Talk about a pay raise for County Commission-

HB 1044 Minimum Salaries for County Commissioners/ Training Certification Supplement (Rep. Jonette Jureaux)
This bill was introduced late last session to gather comment and support for consideration this session. The bill would establish a minimum salary for commissioners with part time commissioners receiving 10% of the sheriff's salary; part time chairman receiving 10% more than the other commissioner; and full time chairman/CEOs and solo commissioners receiving 10% more than the sheriff. In addition, commissioners that complete certification training would be entitled to a 20% supplement. In the same manner as sheriffs and other county officers, cost of living adjustments equal to what state employees get in a given year would be automatically applied as would 5% longevity increases for commissioners reelected to a new 4-year term.
Status: Pending in House State Planning & Community Affairs Committee

The above House Bill 1044 is sure to pass the Legislature. I calculate Norton's new salary will be: \$25,190 on Jan. 2001. A pay raise of \$21,590.00
Breakdown:
Sheriff 2001 - \$51,413.00
Norton: \$25,190
Copeland \$22,671
Burns \$22,671
Bivins \$17,673
Prince \$17,673
Why am I sure the bill will pass? Because the state

Candidates From Pg. 7
I promised open honest government, that I would only play on the citizen's team, that I would not take even a peanut bribe. I promised that I would fight to protect all your rights. I have worked steadily, full time, and hard, to comply with all these promises.

I did not fight just to be fighting. I picked my fights carefully, did my research (homework), and presented my motions peacefully. If they did not pass, and if the issue was important enough, I kept researching and presenting the issue until it did pass.

Listed on page 2 are some of my accomplishments as a commissioner. If I did not have convincing and persuasive ability, how could I have been successful?

I have been told repeatedly that I would not get reelected. My answer was that I did not run for commissioner to get reelected. I ran to represent the interest of the people of District 1.

See Candidates Pg. 4

Whoo - Weeee, Talk about a pay raise for County Commission-

bureaucrats want to encourage commissioners all over the state to go ahead and roll over and support their plans for total regulation of our land, and to support consolidation of city and county governments. Can you imagine commissioners getting \$70 to \$100 hour? Believe it. Tell'em you read it here first. Of course, Messenger would have reported it, after it's a done deal.

Lewis
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CYAN MAGENTA

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CYAN MAGENTA

County manager seeks consolidation

Stephenson wants county, city police to join together

By LARBA CASSERIA
 THOMASVILLE

THOMASVILLE — Thomas County Manager Billie Stephenson has invited county

leaders, the sheriff and local municipalities to discuss consolidation of law enforcement.

In a recent released meeting Stephenson urged county council members, local, municipal and

meet with representatives from Thomasville and Thomas County regular citizens to discuss the idea.

"As other services are available, I believe it is time for us to shift our attention to consolidation of all law enforcement services in Thomas County," Stephenson said. "Our success with

through their law enforcement as no employee and there is a result to address it.

"It's been talked about for a couple of years, actually," County Commission Chairman Tim Sherrod said. "It's a real issue that's been in the air for a while."

positions better for the whole county. "We definitely need to talk about it," Stephenson said. "We need to get all the pieces in the puzzle together. We need to make sure that we are addressing the needs of the citizens that are being served."

Continued from page 1A

Consolidation

Champion and other city council members have been promising. "We're working together on the agenda, we're working together on the agenda, we're working together on the agenda," Stephenson said. "We need to make sure that we are addressing the needs of the citizens that are being served."

Tim's Surprize Feb 2, 2000

is in timely. Presently, Thomas County has three offices with police departments wholly within Thomas County — Thomasville, Ocilla and Hoken — and three partially within the county — Barwick, Meigs and Peru. Sheriff Carlton Powell and Thomasville Police Chief John Perry would not be involved in the consolidation, he said.

Page No. CONSOLIDATION page 1A

If you will turn the page and read the article, you will see what we can expect to occur in Grady County regarding land regulations, and consolidation. It will probably begin by zoning regulation in the county, or consolidation of departments.

I believe it is up to COUNTY voters to prevent this robbery. City voters have already been conditioned by the notion that city property owners are being double taxed.

Norton is key to heading off zoning regulations and consolidation of the governments. If I were a voter in District 3, I think I would have a word of prayer with him.

Remember: The purpose of consolidation is not to save money, it is to tax COUNTY landowners.

CITY of WHIGHAM

To the Mayor and Council Members of our dear old City of Whigham. Congratulations on your election and reelection success. I feel sure that you are serving during a unique time. Indeed, you may be serving on the last City Council of Whigham, Georgia.

The Georgia Future Communities Commission took on the job of reshaping the state's local governments. This board was formed following a study by the Governor's Growth Strategies Commission of 1987.

Several non binding laws were passed to put the plans into action. House Bill 215 of 1989 was the first, HB 489 is the latest.

HB 215 of 1989 was a Bill for land use planning. It sought to pass subdivision and zoning regulations. HB 489, a recent non binding law has worked to get local city and county governments to thinking about consolidation of services.

The administration of these grandiose plans are done by the Department of Community Affairs, I believe, chaired by Representative Royal of Camilla, Georgia. The working arm of DCA is the Regional Development Center, RDC.

My disagreement with this whole plan is that it is dishonest on it's face. First by legislating non binding laws, then by coerc-

Candidates
 If I didn't get reelected, that's fine, if I got reelected, that's fine also. Politics was never envisioned by the founders to be a profession.

I have heard, until I'm sick of it, that "I represent all the people of Grady County." If you were supposed to represent all the people of Grady County why are commissioners elected by districts? You had better believe that Burns and Copeland represent the City of Cairo, it appears that Norton does as well.

George Bivins

The Rights of
LAND OWNERS

10/31/98
 No Joy in Mudville

Dear Cairo Chamber of Commerce facilitators, quality management personnel, business people, civic leaders, and "Progress 2000" task force.

I read the "Progress 2000" article in Cairo Messenger Oct. 29, 1998. It was chock full of good sounding things like "good growth," "progress 2000," "consolidation of services," "right arm to local governments."

I applaud the cooperative spirit, but let's be honest, you are not talking about community spirit, you are talking about business interests. I believe what you are saying is: "what's good for General Motors, is good for America," or, what's good for Cairo Business is good for Grady County. I do not entirely agree with that.

Let us talk about growth. Quality growth to me is industry that pays something close to the national average of \$14.00 hour. Quality growth to me is growth that pays for itself instead of sticking the City of Cairo property owners with the bill for infrastructure, made necessary by growth.

Citizens of Cairo are being whipped into a frenzy and told they are being double taxed by the county. When the real problem is they are being overtaxed by the city to pay for growth in the city.

What I did cut is visits to the Legislators and bureaucrats. I don't need to listen to these people tell me how I should think.

The afternoon after the tornado, Norton went to Atlanta to visit with the Legislators. I stayed home in case I was needed. Besides, it saved the Grady County taxpayers about \$500.00 in expenses.

I'll be willing to bet that my total expenses for travel and lodging to taxpayers, since I became a commissioner, is about half of Norton's. I do not take my boat with me on these county trips, either.

are looking around for another source of revenue. I think they think they have found it.

The CC "Progress 2000" article said "our leaders need our encouragement to aggressively consider options that might include consolidation of services." Later, these options will include consideration of consolidation of city and county governments.

The 1998 crop year was very bad for the Grady County Farmer. Some farm properties have been reassessed by state mandate upward over 200%. Instead of worrying about whether the next county administrator will be pro-business, pro-consolidation, or will do as he is told, you should be lobbying the Georgia Legislature to pass a green belt law limiting taxation of Grady County farms.

Let us be clear about the mission of Chamber of Commerce. It is primarily business interest. Let us also be clear about the mission of the Grady County Commission. It is to represent the long and short-range interests of all citizens in Grady County, not just business.

Property owners small and large who farm in any commercial way, can save 25% on their property tax bill by applying with Tax Assessor for PREFERENTIAL AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENT. You must apply by April 1. Be prepared to commit to a ten year contract. You must learn the penalties for breaking the contract. Also, penalties and interest can be saved on property and other tax bills, by simply learning a few cutoff dates.

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County Tax Savings

0Auto Tag - by 5 PM on your birthday
 Late payment penalty is 10% of car taxes, plus 25% of the tag, plus \$1.

MH on rented lot, pay by May 1
 Late payment penalty is 10% of the bill
 You will get a new sticker

MH on your lot, payment is due Dec 20, the MH tax is included in with the property tax bill. The sticker is included. See Real Property penalty.

Real Property (land & home)
Pay by Dec. 20
 Late payment penalty is 1% per month until paid
 Plus after 90 days extra 10% plus \$20 levy.

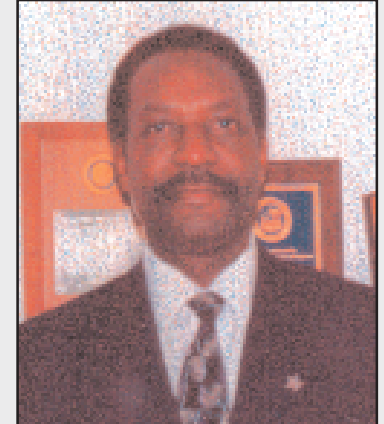
I have passed into law that Tax Assessor will send a list of personal property that you were taxed on in previous year.

If there is an item that you sold before Jan. 1, you must list it as sold on the State Form that is also mailed to you by Tax Assessor. This State Form must be mailed back before April 1, otherwise you must pay taxes on property you no longer own. Please, never ignore any tax mail that you receive. Take care of it immediately.

At my request, the board of commissioners has approved changes that will stop so much penalty & interest charges to taxpayers.

Please, do yourself a favor, clip the above cutoff dates, and tape to your fridge.

**VOTE FOR
 ODELL JOLLY
 SHERIFF
 Grady County - 2000**



Experience Counts
 Metropolitan Police Institute of Dade Co., Fla., the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Jackson State University, Essex County College, Alabama A&M and the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

**VOTE NOV. 7 2000 FOR
 ODELL JOLLY!**
 Paid for by Odell Jolly Campaign

YELLOW
 BLACK



CYAN
 MAGENTA

YELLOW
 BLACK



CYAN
 MAGENTA