

MARIETTA DAILY JOURNAL

METRO ATLANTA'S ONLY CONSERVATIVE EDITORIAL VOICE.

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COMMENTARY

RECENT EVENTS

Serving as a reminder of what's really important

Wow. Is it just me or has the world suddenly gone crazy? First, we have a terrorist attack on one of America's greatest sporting traditions, the Boston Marathon. (More on this subject next week.) Next, an Elvis Presley impersonator is arrested and charged with sending ricin-laced letters to Pres. Obama and Mississippi Sen. Roger Wicker, supposedly because faux-Elvis thinks there is a government conspiracy to sell body parts.



Dick Yarbrough
COLUMNIST

Then comes an explosion and fire in a fertilizer plant near Waco, Texas. As of this writing, there are reports of as many as 15 people killed and more than 160 others injured.

I have just returned from St. Simons Island, where all the talk there is about a 17-year-old and a 15-year-old accused of shooting and killing an 13-month-old baby in his stroller and wounding his mother on the streets of downtown Brunswick, in what officials call a robbery attempt gone horribly wrong.

I think about all of this as my family and I confront next Wednesday, which would have been the 25th birthday of our grandson, Zack Wansley, who passed away unexpectedly in September 2008. The last time I saw Zack, we hugged. That is the way I do business in my family. Hugs only. Shaking hands is for friends. Hugs are for family.

Maybe the bad people responsible for the bombings in Boston never got a hug. Maybe nobody ever told them they loved them or if they did, they didn't show it. It is one thing to say it; it is another to mean it. And poor old ersatz Elvis. Did anyone ever think there might be a sequin or two missing upstairs? How did he get from harmlessly gyrating his pelvis to being suspected of sending letters to government officials with a substance potentially more deadly than cyanide? Obviously, somebody wasn't there when they needed to be.

I wonder how many, if any, people went to work at the fertilizer plant in West, Texas, after some harsh words and if the survivors wish they had a chance to take their words back and start the conversation all over again? That, in retrospect, maybe what started the argument wasn't worth it.

One of the two boys accused of shooting the toddler in Brunswick has a mother that has been locked up 54 times. His great-grandfather urged the court to let the boy out on bail, that he would look out for him. The prosecu-

tor asked the old man if he even knew where his great-grandson lived. He admitted he didn't. Brunswick isn't that big of a town not to know that.

No parental support. No family support. No role models. No one pushing these kids to get their education and to become productive citizens. No love. Instead, it looks as though two young people are destined to become crime statistics and soon forgotten. And don't plead poverty. You can be poor and love those around you, just as you can be rich and unloving.

I look at my 4-year-old great-grandson, Cameron Charles Yarbrough, who has done a lot to heal the hole in our hearts. I am as assured as I can be of anything in this world that he is loved and that he knows it. Not a rotten spoiled love but tough and tender love that applauds him when he does something good and corrects him when he doesn't. And a young man who gets hugged every time he walks in the door.

Maybe some of the confused souls that have caused us so much pain became disaffected with society because we didn't care enough to take an interest in them.

Maybe their peers made fun of them and bullied them when they were growing up and violence is their way of getting even.

Maybe their parents were too busy with their own problems and tucked their child away in a room with a computer, having no idea what was going on in the kid's head because they never asked.

Maybe their child found a high in drugs.

Maybe all the violence coming out of a hypocritical Hollywood gives unstable minds their mental highs as well as their bad ideas.

I just don't know. I do know that my grandchildren are all adult age now and Cameron is getting prepared for pre-kindergarten with all the requisite tools for success. But I can't say that there won't be more heartbreak in my family. Or yours. Or in the world. Life is tenuous. Many things are out of our control. After all the bad things that have happened recently, we need to remember that fact and do a better job of caring for each other while we can.

And don't forget the hugs. Hugs are good.

You can reach Dick Yarbrough at yarb2400@bellsouth.net or P.O. Box 725373, Atlanta, Georgia 31139.

Latest sex scandal has sheriff singing another verse of ...

THE JAILHOUSE BLUES

A COBB SHERIFF'S SERGEANT has been demoted and a recruit fired in the latest sex-related incident involving those who run the county jail.

Sgt. **Orlando Clarke**, 38, a 10-year veteran of the Sheriff's Department, was demoted to jailer as of March 4 and has been out on family-related sick leave since then, according to Sheriff **Neil Warren**.

"I hope he doesn't come back," he told *Around Town* on Friday. "He's not the type of supervisor I want here. I think he's a predator."

■ ■ ■
CLARKE

and Deputy **Nadja Bauer**, 24, admitted under questioning by Internal Affairs to having a had a romantic relationship, according to the sheriff. Additional allegations have been swirling that the two had trysted in a control tower overlooking one of the "pods" at the jail and in a parked car while they were working as security for the North Georgia State Fair last fall. But Internal Affairs investigators were unable to corroborate those rumors, the sheriff said.

When confronted, Bauer claimed she had initiated oral sex with Clarke in an office at the jail, a claim Clarke denied, the sheriff said. Both volunteered to take a polygraph test, which though inadmissible as evidence in court, remains a good investigative tool, the sheriff said.

"He passed his polygraph with flying colors — that he had never had sex with her or anyone else on county property while on duty. ... But she failed the hell out of hers," the sheriff said.

The test results were then sent to the GBI, which drew the same conclusions as the Sheriff's investigators, he said.

"The only improper thing we could find they did on duty was spend extra time together at lunch, and hold hands on occasion and maybe kiss on the cheek," he said.

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"THERE WAS NO DOUBT" that she and Clarke were having an ongoing relation-

ship on the outside," he said. "But at the end of the investigation, we determined the allegations that they had sex while on duty was not provable."

"However, because he was a supervisor, and based on several incidents where he spent too much of his time on duty with her, and bought her gifts and showed her too much attention, which was a violation of our policies, we determined that he failed to supervise her in a proper way and used poor judgment."

"So we had an internal affairs hearing and I busted him.

Took his stripes away," he said.

Clarke had the right to appeal the decision to the Civil Service Board, but chose not to, the sheriff said.

Bauer was terminated. She was still on probationary status and no right of CSB appeal, he said.

"I felt she was too immature for the job and used poor judgment," the sheriff said. "I didn't feel she was someone we needed to keep. And if I could have proved anything, I would have terminated him, too."

THE CLARKE-BAUER EPISODE

is the latest sex scandal to rock the Sheriff's Department this year. A Cobb grand jury indicted former Sgt. **Alvin Blake Sutherland** of Douglasville last month on 21 counts including rape, sexual assault against someone in custody and violating his oath of office. And in February Sgt. **Kristopher David Travitz** of Douglasville was arrested and charged with sexually assaulting a female inmate.

"I had two sergeants who committed terrible, terrible acts," Warren told *Around Town*. "And I'm going to do everything I can to put them in the state penitentiary. And I guarantee that if I find any other conduct in this department that is not morally right that interferes with the operation of this department, that they will be terminated."



Neil Warren

ARE YOU TIRED of seeing veteran educators kicked to the curb by the Cobb School District's Central Office? Tired of the CCSD's rabid enforcement of a state law that requires all school employees (and volunteers) to report any suspected child abuse within 24 hours of hearing about it? A law that carries fines of up to \$1,000 and a year in jail — regardless of whether the alleged assault even happened?

We're tired of reporting about such miscarriages of justice, and many subscribers have told us they're tired of reading about them.

And now, and to his credit, Cobb School Board Chairman **Randy Scamihorn** has joined those ranks.

Scamihorn raised eyeballs — and hopes — during unexpected remarks during Wednesday's school board work session.

"I need to thank the Marietta Daily Journal," he said. "A week ago Saturday, we had a news article about the way we do business and we've had two news articles in the MDJ the last week and a half and two editorials."

Those stories, editorial and **Dick Yarbrough** column focused on the retirement under a cloud of respected Kell High Principal **Trudie Donovan** for failing to report a pair of slapping incidents involving a Kell teacher; the firings of Tapp Middle School principal Dr. **Jerry Dority** and counselor **Yatta Collins** for failing to report hearsay information; and the attempt-

ed suspension without pay of Awtrey Middle School principal **Jeff Crawford** for failing to report hearing of an alleged off-campus sexual assault involving two students.

As it turns out, the Cobb Solicitor's Office has now dropped the charges against Donovan for lack of evidence and hope remains that the same thing will happen with Dority and Collins. Crawford's hearing is next month.



Randy Scamihorn

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CONTINUED SCAMIHORN: "The reason why I'm thanking them is we need everybody's participation to try and improve our system. We were already looking at changes and how we do business here at the senior level. It's not lip service. We want to try and improve and continue to improve the morale of our staff. Hopefully the MDJ articles have helped us move that ball forward and I look forward to in the near future for the MDJ to be able to publish our procedural changes and for us to continue to demonstrate that we do have our teachers and students as number one."

Scamihorn elaborated further to *Around Town* on Thursday: "If policies and procedures need to be changed, then that needs to be what happens. I was uncomfortable after reading (the stories) as a retired educator and as a board member. I feel like that whatever the issues are, they need to be looked at in the immediate future."

CITY BEAT: Businessman **Marshall Dye** told *Around Town* this week that he plans to run against incumbent Ward 4 Councilman **Andy Morris** in this fall's city elections. Dye, 60, has lived in Marietta since the 1970s and is owner/president of Court Makers Inc. on Marble Mill Road, Georgia's largest tennis court-manufacturing company.

Dye serves on the Zoning and Appeals Board, to which he was appointed by then-Councilman **Van Pearlberg**. He's also on the boards of Net Work Ministries and the Marietta Country Club's Long Range Planning Committee. He previously served on the Cobb Landmarks Historical Society Board and Marietta Pilgrimage Tour of Homes Committee.

He and wife **Cindy** live on Church Street in the former Medford home and he is the father of two daughters, **Bridget Davis** and **Eileen Johnson**.

"Over the years I have watched WellStar Kennestone Hospital grow into the thriving facility that it is today, as well as taken part in the revitalization of the historical district right next to the hospital," Dye said. "My goal is to help both of the areas continue to

grow in harmony with each other."

Morris won the Ward 4 seat in a special election last July to replace Pearlberg, and is running for reelection.

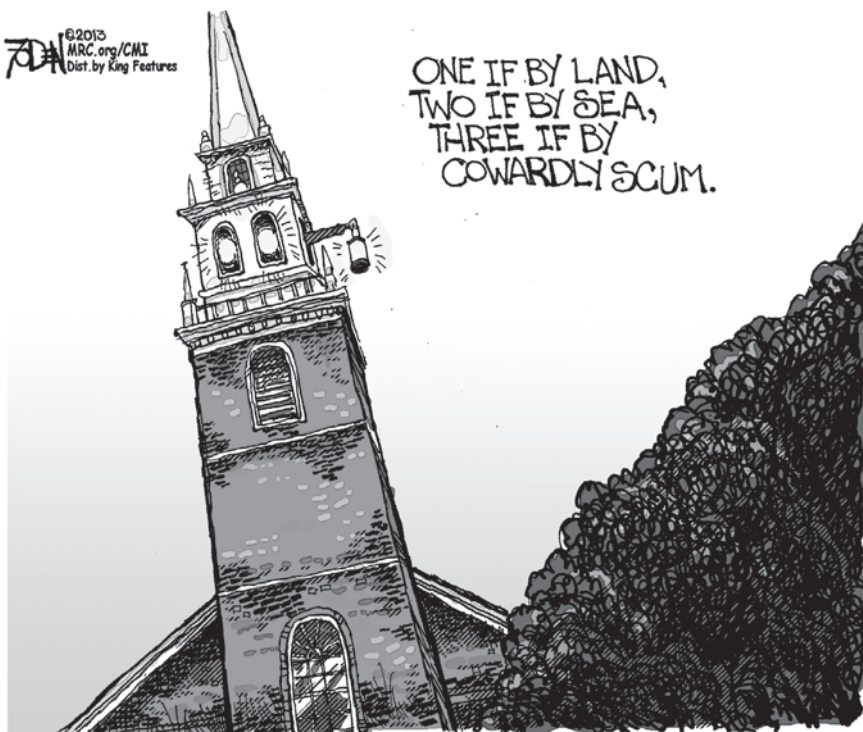
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POLITICS: Look for Gov. **Nathan Deal** to sign HB 349, this year's major criminal justice legislation, following his remarks to the Marietta Kiwanis Club on Thursday at the Marietta Hilton/Conference Center on Powder Springs Street. ...

Lt. Gov. **Casey Cagle** will host a fundraiser for state Sen. **Judson Hill** from 5-7 p.m. Tuesday at The Georgia Club.

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THIS YEAR'S 40th annual Swordsman's Ball benefiting the American Cancer Society Aug. 24 will take place in a different venue — the Waverly Hotel, reports **Babe Atkins-Byrne**. Co-chairs are **Bill** and **Valerie Hilley** and **Dan** and **Janet O'Brien**.

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THIRSTY? Informed sources tell *Around Town* the new Starbucks in the former Krystal's location on Whitlock Avenue just off the Square will open on Friday.

THE DRAWING BOARD



Old North Church - Boston, Ma.

ONE IF BY LAND,
TWO IF BY SEA,
THREE IF BY
COWARDLY SCUM.

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