

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Letter Drive Question

Recently, I have received a couple of questions asking why the volunteer stations ask for donations and why could they not be fully funded with the Fire Department budget. I believe that it would be better answered if I explained some history of the Fire Department and how we operate today. The department began as an all-volunteer department until the late 1980s when the county hired one firefighter per shift (three shifts of 24 hours each) to help the all-volunteer department.

Each volunteer station or district was almost independent at that time. They chose their own officers and the members of that station voted on all decisions, especially about what equipment they needed and how they wanted to use their donations. They had fundraisers, including letter drives, to raise money for their station. There was very little tax money put into the department and/or stations at that time. The annual letter drive was the main source of those donations and has been conducted in Union County by the volunteer fire stations for over 40 years.

Today, we are one department, and each station is less independent or separate from the career stations than they were in the past. Union County Fire Department is a combination department, meaning that it is made up of career and volunteer firefighters. The volunteers make up the majority of the department's firefighters, and they operate 11 volunteer stations throughout the county. Volunteer firefighters respond to calls in their station's area; however, they may also respond to other areas in the county as needed. The career firefighters respond to all calls in the county, no matter what district.

The volunteers continue their tradition of having an annual letter drive and fundraisers in order to have funds that they are responsible for, as a volunteer station, in order to better serve their community. The donated funds give the volunteers some autonomy and a voice for their needs in their specific station. They use these funds to purchase radios, turnout gear, and various other firefighting and rescue equipment that they determine are needed at their station.

We work together with the budget and donations to provide our needs. The Fire Department's budget has increased over the

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Life's Calling

Bob Buford had it made. He was an entrepreneur in the startup days of cable TV. But financial success did not shield him from tragedy. His tragedy made him rethink his life's calling.

Buford's father died when he was a child. In his teens he wanted to become a TV executive. He achieved that goal by the time he was 40. A few years later, tragedy struck. His son, recently graduated from college, drowned trying to swim across the Rio Grande.

As a Christian, Buford eventually realized the tragedy was an opportunity to reflect on what matters, what gives meaning to life. "God, you have given my life into my hands," he prayed. "I give it back to you. My time, my property, my life itself...I release the cares and concerns of this world, knowing you loved me enough to give your only Son in my behalf." Buford entered the second half of his life with a new calling.

Ten years after the tragedy, Buford explained what he had learned. His book, "Halftime," focuses on finding significance rather than success. He urges readers "to find the one thing that is uniquely yours - the thing that once found, will enable you to make a difference." That sentiment reflects the calling, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

Buford poses some questions to help clarify your calling, whether you are a student, in mid-career, or contemplating life as a retiree. His first question strikes at the heart of the matter: "What is your primary loyalty in life?" Money? Career? Leisure? Jesus Christ? You can only put one thing in that box. "If you do not choose the one thing that belongs in the box," he writes, "life's inertia will choose it for you."

Here are some follow-up questions. What would you die for? Do you live like that is true, with courage and sacrifice? What do you do so well, you would do it without pay? Do meaningful experiences from your past suggest a new focus for your life? What must you learn or change to re-align your life to what you value? These are urgent questions because what you do with

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

During the spring season as residents begin to recreate outside, we receive more questions about roads, roadsides, and vegetation. This week's questions address the basics of public roads, county-maintain roads, and private roads.

Q. I am confused by the different types of roads in the county. Can you explain the difference?

A. There are basically three different types of roads within the county. There are county-maintained roads which the county has and will continue to maintain. There are public roads which the county does not maintain, but they have been open to the public for many years. This type of road may have been used by several property owners to access their property or it may be a connecting roadway that has been used by the public for many years. Finally, there are private roads which are owned by the property owners and are not county-maintained.

Q. What is the difference between a "public road" and a "private road" neither of which is county maintained?

A. A "private road" (not county maintained) can be controlled by those who live on that road or who actually own the road. The road has not been opened up for public access throughout the years; therefore, if the property owners want to gate or close the road, they have that right. The owners are also responsible for all maintenance of the road.

A "public road" (not county maintained) must be maintained by those that live on it or those that use it, or as in some cases, no one maintains it. Sometimes it is a homeowner's association, or just a group of property owners that get together to pay for maintenance. Usually, on a public road, access cannot be denied to the public since the road has been utilized by the general public for many years, and the road cannot be legally blocked off. This often causes problems when those paying to maintain the road cannot keep those that don't from using the road. This is often the case when an old US Forest Service road that is open to the public and utilized for hunting, goes across or through a subdivision or is accessed from a county road.

Both of these type roads "public and private" are identified

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

The Right Medicine

Dear Editor,

Turn on or read the news today and they're reporting another (school, church, or mall to name a few) shootings. How could this be happening in the country I love so much? The country I offered my life for in the Navy during the Vietnam War! What's causing such violence? Is there a cure? Have solutions been suggested? If so, what are they? Are they the right medicine to cure the problem? The state of Utah just banned the Holy Bible in their public schools. Is censoring God's word a clue to the problem?

After every attack the vacuous media, government bureaucrats and elected officials have the solution. Defund the police they scream. Over 200 years ago Thomas Paine knew better. He said: "You cannot undermine police authority and then complain about rising crime." More gun control laws they opine! For years this has been their solution. Since gun laws are obviously not working, why not try something else? This one is guaranteed to work as well as more gun laws.

Every morning gun owners should go to their gun locker and gruffly tell their "shooten irons" "Do not leave the rack today. Do not fire a shell until told to do so." What have you got to lose? This would work as well as gun control laws, wouldn't it? Better yet, why not look for the real reason we are in the shape we're in?

Thinking back to my school years, the worst crime being committed was chewing gum in class. There were no locked doors in the building. No metal detectors and no School Resource Officers. So what's changed? If you believe the vacuous media, government bureaucrats and elected officials, it's the Second Amendment. Do away with it and the problem goes away, says California Governor Newsom. Ben Franklin said: "Make yourself sheep and the wolves will eat you." My school parking lot was filled with pick-ups with loaded gun racks in the back window. Some trucks were left unlocked, and I can't remember a gun ever being stolen. Handguns were brought into shop class for repair and cleaning. Imagine trying that today! So what changed? We had no gun laws to speak of back then, just the Second Amendment. Our school day began with our class standing before the American flag, hand over our heart, and saying the Pledge of Allegiance. The teacher would then lead with the invocation and a reading of a verse of scripture from the Holy Bible. If this worked, why was it stopped?

In 1930 and in 1952, justices had declined to rule on the constitutionality of requiring Bible readings in public schools. Simply addressing the practice had great significance, they proclaimed. On June 25, 1962, the vacuous U.S. Supreme Court declared prayer in public schools unconstitutional. Their holding in Engel v. Vitale, as officially summarized, was that "state officials may not compose an official state prayer and require that it be recited in the public schools of the state at the beginning of each school day - even if the prayer is denominationally neutral and pupils who wish to do so may remain silent or be excused from the room." Very liberal Democrat Senator John C. Stennis (D-Mississippi) said: "Unless something is done to counter this unfortunate decision, we will have blown out a light by which we have found our way." Their decision was based on the First Amendment. So what does the First Amendment say? What is the correct interpretation?

In 1962, 13 states required daily prayer or Bible reading in public schools. Three days after lawyers argued Engle at the Supreme Court, Maryland's highest court upheld a Baltimore rule that each school day in that city begin with a Bible verse and The Lord's Prayer. A brief in Engel supporting a New York City school policy was signed by 22 states. Engel started in 1951 with a New York Board of Regents decision to develop "moral and spiritual training." The Regents wanted to acknowledge a source of morality, but knew that the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion meant no student could be forced to recite dog-

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No Nonsense Irritability

We have heard repeatedly throughout our lives that life is what we make of it. For the most part it can be wholesome, fun and adventuresome. On the other hand, it can also be dreary, stressful and downright depressing. However, it is true that even the happiest, stress-free person can at times become irritable. Over what? Absolutely anything. There are times when we get just plain grumpy.

A junk collector was pushing his cart along the sidewalk and collecting items he could sell or cash in for deposits. He came to a woman sweeping the walk and called out, "Any old beer bottles, madam?" The woman frowned. "How dare you! Do I look like the type of woman who would drink beer?" The collector made a mock bow, "Pardon me, Madam. I was mistaken. Any old vinegar bottles and pickle jars?"

There are basically four ways in which to deal with one's irritability. Our irritable moods can be traced to one or more causes. Identifying the four is not, however, enough. We also need to know how to do something about our irritability before our friends run for the hills. HALT is the magic word.

When we know that we are entering the canyon of irritability, we need to determine which letter(s) in HALT is creating the problem. Once that has been determined, we can do something positive to return ourselves into our comfy arena. It isn't that difficult to place our finger on the cause. Our irritability is identical to that of having a baby or child in our home.

H - Hunger: H in the word HALT stands for Hunger. Identical to that of a baby. When our hunger signals go off, we need food. Whether it is a snack or meal, the basic need for food must be satisfied...or else...our irritability will manifest itself intensely and be known to those around us. Irritability can rear its ugly face quickly when our need for some type of nourishment is required. However, we can put a halt to our irritability by means of nourishment.

A mother was pleading with her young son to eat his spinach. "Come on, Johnny," she begged. "Think of the thousands of children in the under-developed countries who would love some nice spinach like this." Johnny looked up and demanded, "Name two."

Several months ago, the H hit me full force. I was getting into my car from the grocery store, late at night, and out of nowhere, I became very irritable. I was still several miles from home. Immediately I went through HALT and knew what was going on: I was starving. So out of my grocery bag came a muchly needed candy bar. While

See Ashurst, page 5A

Successful Mental Health

Dr. James Ray Ashurst PH. D.



A Chicken Frizz

The Chicken Frizz was a custom in the hills of North Alabama. The event was a chicken stew and social gathering for teenagers. It was a time for young men and women to come together while under the supervision of young adults. And yes, some of the same things happened in those days that happen nowadays. Usually, romance was in the air during a chicken frizz.

My father remembers a Chicken Frizz being held at his home when he was very young. Dad was around 11 and my Uncle Bud was around 9 when Papa and Granny invited 15-20 of the youth from the Trapptown area to come to the Cummings' home for a Chicken Frizz. Dad remembers many kids being present. But the primary characters were Vera Wynn and Mitch Wynn.

My grandfather and grandmother, Columbus and Glenna Mae Cummings, worked all day to get ready for the Chicken Frizz. The family killed and dressed 8-10 chickens. Glenna asked her sons to get out the big black cookpot and build a fire under it.

Teenage kids came from all across the community to the Chicken Frizz at the Cummings home. Vera and Mitch did not have to travel very far to get to the event. Herman Wynn lived just across the cotton field from the home of Columbus and Glenna Mae Cummings. Herman was a short, jovial and slightly rotund individual. He was quite possibly the finest man in the community. His daughter Vera and son Mitch were the first teenagers to arrive at the Cummings home. The Wynn children were 16 and 15 years of age, while Dad and Uncle Bud were 5 or 6 years younger. Dad and Uncle Bud knew everyone at the Chicken Frizz, and this presented a slight problem.

Dad said, "Everyone was sitting around the campfire enjoying the meal and all the talk. Then for no reason at all a boy and girl got up and walked away from the fire." As the two lovers walked away from the fire, Dad asked his father, "Where are they a going?" Everyone around the fire began to laugh. Columbus scolded his son and said, "Don't worry, I will take care of it." With that statement Papa left the fire and gently herded the two young lovers back to the fire. A short time later Uncle Bud noticed a young man whispering something in the ear of his giggling girlfriend. Uncle Bud was curious so he asked the young fellow to tell everyone else the joke he was telling his girlfriend. Once again everyone around the campfire was laughing at the young man.

All at once Granny grabbed her two young sons and strongly suggested the boys should go to bed. Despite their objections Paul and Bud soon

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Chamber of Commerce

It's festival season and we are off to a good start. The Spring Arts, Crafts & Music Festival included a record number of vendors and attracted over 9,000 attendees to enjoy a weekend of great weather, food, music and crafts. The DDA, Historical Society, and our local merchants really came through.

The Blairsville - Union County Chamber President Steve Rowe said the festival got off to a fast start but was set back by some rain on Sunday morning. Even despite the rain, many of the vendors stayed around for what turned out to be a beautiful afternoon. Thank you to all the sponsors and vendors for helping make this past weekend fun for all.

The Red, White, & Blairsville - 4th of July Fireworks are just around the corner, and we are looking to make it bigger and better with a bang each year. Our local churches and other groups will have fun activities for the kids at Meeks Park, and there will be plenty of food trucks and fun across the road at North Georgia Technical College.

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Japanese Beetles

The Japanese beetles will soon be out in full force. I spotted the first few last week. They are a huge pest as they munch their way through your yard. Controlling them can be challenging because they are such voracious eaters. Let's talk about some strategies for lessening their impact.

Japanese beetles arrived in the U.S. 1916. They have spread to much of the East coast and across the Mississippi River. They will feed on a wide range of ornamentals, fruit trees, vegetables, and shade trees. Feeding on such a wide range of plants means that your yard may look like an all you can eat buffet to them. They have a metallic green color on their abdomen. They look similar to June beetles. June beetles are typically about 1.5 to twice as large as Japanese beetles. Japanese beetles also have a row of five white dots along the side of the abdomen that can be used to differentiate them from other beetles. The damage that you see from them looks like skeletonizing of the leaves. They'll eat everything between the leaf vein, but leave the veins.

Thankfully, Japanese beetles only have a single generation each year. Usually the adults, which are the beetles that we see flying around eating leaves, will begin to appear in May - June. They live four to six weeks. The females will lay eggs for most of their adult life. The eggs are laid in the soil. They hatch in about two weeks. After hatching, the beetles live in the soil until they come back out as adults in May.

There are three times a year that are most ideal for controlling Japanese beetles. The most obvious is when they are adults and are out feeding on leaves. You can use carbaryl, which is the active ingredient in Sevin to control adults. Sevin comes as a liquid or in dust form. If you don't have a heavy infestation you can also use a cup with soapy water in it. Knock Japanese beetles off plants into the cup and they will drown.

The second time to control Japanese beetles is in September. By that time of year all the Japanese beetles are grubs living in the soil. Even as grubs they can do damage to turf by feeding on the roots. Milky spore is an organic product that can be used to kill grubs in the ground. It's a bacteria that feeds on Japanese beetle grubs after they ingest it. September is the optimal time to make a milky spore application. The third time to control Japanese beetles would be in the spring with another milky spore application. Soil temperatures need to be over 65 for milky spore to be effective. The grubs must ingest the milky spore for it to be work. It only works on grubs.

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UGA extension WATCHING and WORKING

Jacob Williams



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by a BLUE street sign - which means they are "NOT" maintained by the county.

Q. So how is a county-maintained road different from a public road?

A. This is confusing to people, always has been and always will be. A "county-maintained road" is a designation that is given to roads that have been accepted by the county for maintenance and are obviously for public use and maintained with public funds. It may have become a county-maintained road for many different reasons through the years. These roads are identified by a GREEN street sign. As stated in the previous question, a "public road" legally is accessible by the general public but is not maintained by the county because the road is no longer needed by the traveling public or it does not comply with county road requirements.

Q. Are all county roads the same?

A. No. On some county roads, primarily the main roads, such as Old Blue Ridge Highway, Pat Colwell Road, Gumlog Road, Town Creek School Road, the County actually owns the R/W which usually varies from 60 feet to 80 feet wide. These main roads were built with state funding and right-of-way purchase was usually required to receive the state funds.

However, on many of the smaller county roads we do not have right of way that is owned by the County. Often, we may have easements or sometimes we only have prescriptive rights, or we may simply maintain the road based on classification by previous commissioners. In the past county-maintained roads for which we have no right of way usually began to be maintained by the County for many different reasons, but almost always at the request of property owners along the road.

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the result is far from a Biblical miracle, I was amazed at how fast my irritability disappeared once I had devoured the chocolate bar. In my case, chocolate was my miracle! My raunchy mood became past tense. When you and I are hungry, our sour mood will dissipate once we have something to digest. If your irritability is due to hunger, grab something to eat as quickly as you can. Your world will become brighter for you and for those around you.

A - Anger: The second letter in HALT can become a more challenging category to handle than hunger. We can put a halt to our anger by several ways. First of all, we have to own our feeling of anger without feeling guilty about it. It is not an emotion to be ashamed of, but it is a powerful emotion which means that we need to be careful on how we express it.

Secondly, we need to decide where our anger is coming from. Did someone cross your path at work the wrong way? Did some event take place that rattled you on your trip to the grocery store? Before you left your home in the morning, did anything or anyone cause you to become angry?

Thirdly, once we own the anger and realize where it originated, we will have to decide what to do with it. Perhaps we need to face the person who created the problem? Maybe a situation in our life needs to

be changed? Until we are able to determine the cause of the anger, our irritability is fast at work. It continues to become more and more volatile while we are waiting to put a halt to our nasty mood. Quickly putting a closure on the anger and stopping the irritability requires facing the anger head-on and deciding what to do with it.

One family in the neighborhood kept their household from overheating from fits of anger by using this solution: Whenever one of the three boys was mad enough to boil over, he went to the refrigerator, got an egg, and started walking toward a big oak tree on the far side of their lot. As he walked, he tried to squeeze the egg in the palm of his hand, trying as hard as he could to break it. Usually by the time he reached the oak tree, he felt foolish enough to be calmed down. But if he was still angry, he was allowed to throw the egg against the oak tree. If the anger was gone and the egg was still in the boy's hand, he brought the egg back to the refrigerator. "We raised three wonderful boys," the mother says, "and lost very few eggs."

Suggestions: Talk to someone you trust to vent your anger. Write on paper what is causing the anger. Do some type of physical exertion to reduce the anger. Confront the person if absolutely necessary. Own your anger.

***Next week: L and T of HALT

Huber...continued from Page 4A

mas he or she did not accept. The Regents tried to skirt individual doctrines by composing this prayer: "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our Country."

Each class would begin with the reciting of this prayer. The Regents ruled that any student wanting to remain silent or leave the room was free to do so. The board forbade teachers to comment on those opting not to participate.

Nonetheless, the observance stirred controversy. New York City and other jurisdictions spurned it, but New Hyde Park on Long Island embraced the Regents' prayer, prompting five parents to go to court in 1959 on behalf of their children. The suit reasoned that, in addition to guaranteeing freedom of religion, the First Amendment also bans "an establishment of religion." Having the state dictate the words of a prayer to be used in a public school violates that ban, the plaintiffs said. Two New York State courts rejected that argument and, given the broad opt-out provisions, found nothing wrong with the Regents' prayer or policy, and the battle was then sent to the vacuous Supreme Court and Chief Justice Hugo Black, who wrote the court's opinion: "By using its public school system to encourage recitation of the Regents' prayer, the State of New York has adopted a practice wholly inconsistent with the Establishment Clause. The constitutional prohibition against laws respecting an establishment of religion must at least mean that, in this country, it is no part of the business of government to compose official prayers for any group of the American people to recite as part of a religious program carried on by the government." In 1963 the Supreme Court struck down the Baltimore requirement and one in Pennsylvania calling for school-day recitation of The Lord's Prayer and Bible reading.

So did the nine Black Robed dilettantes get it right? The amendment says: "CONGRESS shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech." Since

when did a school teacher or anyone else represent Congress? Where does it say that anyone can prohibit the free exercise to pray anywhere we chose?

Ed Huber

Dyer...

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years as we have grown and increased the number of career firefighters. The budget is used to pay for salaries, benefits, equipment, building maintenance, utilities, etc., for both career and volunteer stations. However, as with any budget, it is limited. The donations received and used by the volunteers allow the Fire Department budget to remain low, thus keeping our taxes low.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Chamber...

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College. There will be a few spots reserved for the nursing home, health care workers, and first responders, but all remaining spaces are free to all on a first-come basis. So be sure to come early and enjoy the food and fun and of course the fireworks!

Be sure to check out the Chamber calendar for other events and programs. Thanks to all our members, volunteers, and local businesses for helping make Life Better in Blairsville!

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

your time is what you do with your life.

What is your life's calling? For the believer, the answer starts with who's doing the calling. God "has called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace," Paul writes. He "was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher" (1 Tim. 1:9,11), but God may call you to be a banker, educator, manager, carpenter, or volunteer. Regardless, your holy calling means, "It is the Lord Christ whom you serve" (Col. 3:24).

Cummings...continued from Page 4A

found themselves in the bed. But, the two lads could still see the campfire and all that was going on around it. The two little boys were so excited that they couldn't have slept if they had wanted. Later in the evening as they lay in the bed watching the boys and girls at the Chicken Frizz, they noticed Vera and one of the young men sneak away from the fire. The lovebirds walked over to the well house where they felt hidden from the rest of the group.

Unknown to Vera and the boy was the fact that they were standing directly in front of the bedroom window of the two boys. Paul and his younger brother, Bud, were fascinated by what was happening. But when the young couple kissed the boys could stand no more. The youngest boy squealed in a high shriek, "Did you see where he put his mouth?" Meanwhile, the elder brother let out a howl that would wake the dead. The howl scared the two lovebirds, and it scared my grandmother even more. She went running to the house with Papa close behind. They ran into the house, then to the bedroom of their sons.

Papa then heard his sons say, "She put her mouth right onto his lips." The two boys had never seen anything like this and they didn't understand it. Dad asked his father, "Why did Vera put her mouth on that boy's lips?" Columbus was trying to calm down his sons. But the campfire was close enough to the house which allowed everyone to hear the conversation. Once again everyone broke out into hysterical laughter. When the boys were finally calmed down, Granny left her sons at the house and walked back to the fire. Mitch Wynn snuck away from the fire to the bedroom window where Dad and Bud were watching. He told the young boy that he should make sure to tell his and Vera's father, Herman, about the goings on at the Chicken Frizz.

A couple of days later the

little boy which would become my Father was at Ebb Trapp's country store. As he walked in the front door, he noticed Herman Wynn sitting on an empty drink crate. Dad walked up to Herman and began to tell him the story. The old man sat on the crate listening to the boy's story. When he heard about the boys' response to Vera's kissing the boy, Mr. Wynn laughed so hard he fell off the crate, all because of a Chicken Frizz.

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so applying it while the beetles are out eating leaves won't kill any Japanese beetles.

Using milky spore to kill the grubs doesn't mean that you won't have any Japanese beetles the following year, but you can significantly reduce the population that is present in your area. Some people will use traps to kill Japanese beetles. I try to discourage people from this practice because traps with pheromone lures will bring beetles in from five miles away, meaning that you have more beetles.

If you have questions about Japanese beetles contact your county Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Your Patriot Reflection



States Rights

States rights have always been guarded with great vigor, so that the federal government could not encroach and impose laws rightly relegated to the states. But with most states receiving federal funds they are being forced to loosen their hold and the Federal government maneuvers and controls more of what rightly belongs to the states.

The Founders argued that strong local self-government is the keystone to preserving human freedom. In fact they often referred to it as the golden key to preserving freedom. Thomas Jefferson said, "The way to have good and safe government is not to trust it all to one, but divide it among the many, distributing to everyone exactly the functions he is competent to perform best!"

In closing, we echo the words of Historian John Fiske, who said, "If the day should ever arrive when the people of the different parts of our country shall allow their local affairs to be administered by prefects sent from Washington, on that day the political career of the American people will have been robbed of its most interesting and valuable features, and the usefulness of this nation will be lamentably impaired."

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