

# EDITORIAL

## Time has flown

Tyler was just five-years-old the first time I met him. It doesn't seem possible that it's been 13 years. Time does have a way of marching on by, doesn't it?

Technically, I suppose, Tyler is my step-nephew. He came into my life because my brother, Marvin, was dating — and he later married — Tyler's mother, Sharon.

But my family has never much gotten into the "step" or "half" designations. Once you become a part of our family, for good or for bad — I've got some strange relatives — you're a full-fledged member. So as far as we're all concerned, he's Marvin's son and my nephew.

He was just a skinny kid back then, and there was no way we could be sure what kind of person he'd become. You can dream, of course. But for Marvin and Sharon, all they could do was do what they thought was right and hope for the best.

To their credit — and to Tyler's — he's grown into a fine young man.

One of the most appealing things about moving to Gainesville and taking this job was the chance to be near my brother and his family. It's been great being around for Tyler's high school years. He's quite a good athlete and I've tried to get to as many of his basketball and baseball games as I could make.

It's been a great ride, too, celebrating with him on the days he played well and consoling him on the days when he didn't. He still has a few high school baseball games to play, and hopefully, a state championship to celebrate with his teammates.

Tyler probably doesn't realize it yet, because he hasn't had time to reflect on it, but he's been fortunate to have some great role models in his life, men that will help shape the kind of man he becomes. His high school coaches, Seth Vining and Deuce Roark, are both fine coaches and fine men.

One day — hopefully before he gets as old as his uncle — he'll look back with appreciation at what those men have meant to him.

And then, there's Marvin. It's one thing to sign up for marriage. It's another to get a

### Other Voices

Mitch Clarke



ready-made family all at once. But he took on the responsibility and never wavered. He's been there for everything Tyler has ever needed, and he's been a great father.

Tyler's youth hasn't been without conflict, of course. He is a typical teenager, which means he's butted heads more than a few times with Marvin and Sharon.

I'm convinced that teenagers become rebellious and more difficult to deal with for a reason. It's part of God's plan to ease the pain when the teenager leaves the nest and flies off to college.

And now, 13 years after he first entered our lives, Tyler has reached that milestone moment in life, one we celebrate with him, but one that brings great change for all of us.

Tyler graduates from Lakeview Academy on Saturday, and he moves on to the next phase of his life, one that is both exhilarating and scary. I'm not sure who's going to have a tougher time this fall, Tyler or his mother.

In August, he heads off to Valdosta State University — his uncle's alma mater, incidentally — and a career as an athletic trainer.

He hasn't really asked me for my advice about college, but no one in my family is shy about offering it, anyway, so here goes.

I hope Tyler studies hard and does well in school. That's important. But there's so much more to college than just classes and grades. I want Tyler to soak in the whole college experience.

I want him to get involved. To take advantage of every opportunity he can. To have fun. To fully enjoy these next four years, because the Real World — and all the responsibilities it entails — awaits soon enough.

And I hope he heads to college knowing how proud his uncle is of him.

*Mitch Clarke is executive editor of The Times in Gainesville, Ga. He can be reached at mclarke@gainesvilletimes.com.*

### IN GEORGIA...



## Dogs, cats and razor blades

In the news this week, Nebraska authorities arrested a 21-year-old man after he entered the wrong home and went to sleep in the basement. The fellow had a few drinks too many the night before and thought he was at his own home.

We had this happen once while on the dog show circuit. Someone banged on our motel door in the middle of the night demanding to come in. When the assortment of dogs sleeping in our room, including a rottweiler and a Great Pyrenees, started barking, the guy at the door uttered an expletive and "she's done gone and bought a dog." About the same time, the door to the room next door opened and a lady dragged in her intoxicated husband. She fussed. We went back to sleep. So did the dogs.

In Bradenton, Fla., a woman was arrested for stealing over \$1,000 worth of razor blades from a Wal-Mart store. I am dying to know what the woman wanted with all those razor blades, but so far, no one seems to have asked that question.

Is there a black market for razor blades?

### All That's Fit to Print



Brenda Wall

Was she selling cocaine and giving every customer a free razor blade with their purchase? From her mug shot, she wasn't particularly hairy, so I don't think it was a grooming need.

I looked up razor blades on Wal-Mart's web site and they sell a jillion kinds.

The news release didn't say what kind of razor blades the lady stole, so I'm going with the standard double edged razor blade. I can't see much use for the cartridge kind on the re-sale market or for use other than shaving stuff.

Anywho, the cost of a package of 10 razor blades is around \$4.98 which means she had to steal about 200 packages and that's 2,000 razor blades.

I'll be watching the Bradenton news to keep up with this story. I really want to know about those razor blades.

A Sebastian, Fla., woman has been in the

news for keeping her dead mother in a bedroom for six years. The story actually started with neighbors reporting the woman to code enforcement because her property smelled bad and she had a bunch of cats. I'm guessing the neighbors were surprised to find it wasn't always the cats that smelled bad.

Authorities discovered the dead body and didn't get all excited until they found out the daughter had been cashing the corpse's social security and military retirement checks for the past six years. She (the daughter, not the corpse) is in trouble for "stealing" the money which averaged about \$40,000 a year.

If I was her, my defense would be "the cats made me do it." The authorities found eight in the house but I have a feeling there were more roaming the premises. Even with only eight in the house, the woman had to be bonkers with all the meowing and leg rubbing and someone always wanting to come in the door or go out the door. And the looks, if you have a cat you know what I mean.

It was probably the cats.  
Have a good week.

## It's all about the ice cream

### Mumbles



Billy Fleming

Someone in my office just yesterday said, "I can't watch the news anymore." Almost every-day Obama can be found championing another spending program, leaving us to worry and wonder again, "How did we get to this point?"

Along comes this email which explains it in terms anyone can understand... We are worried about "the cow" when it is all about the "ice cream."

The story is about a third grade teacher who decided to hold an election for class president.

Candidates were nominated by class members. From the many nominees, Jamie and Olivia were picked to run for the top spot.

Both candidates were good kids. The teacher thought Jamie might be a slight favorite because of his parental guidance.

After the campaigning, the day arrived when they were to make their speeches. Jamie went first with specific ideas about how to make the class better and promising to do his very best. Every one applauded.

He sat down and Olivia came to the podium. Her speech was concise. She said, "If you will vote for me, I will give you ice cream." She sat down. The class went wild. "Yes! Yes! We want ice cream." She did not have to say more.

A discussion followed the speeches... Olivia had no idea how she would pay for the ice cream. The class didn't care. All they wanted was ice cream. Jamie was forgotten. Olivia won by a landslide.

It's about the ice cream! Every time Barack Obama opens his mouth we're left to feed the cow and clean up the mess.

## Don't mess with the marching band girls

It's said that desperate times call for desperate measures. That may explain why, as the global economy dips, the global crime rate soars. And why merchants are taking more innovative steps to protect their property.

One of the most creative crimestopping efforts has just been pulled off in Split, Croatia.

Owners of a local bakery were beside themselves after watching their profits disappear night after night as thieves broke into their posh bun store and dashed off toting hot baked goods and cold cash.

Every conventional anti-crime technique know to man was tried, but the burglars kept coming back. Store owners finally sought help from Hollywood.

They hired former world karate champion, movie star and exercise equipment salesman Chuck Norris to tackle security duties.

Sort of. Norris was way too expensive to show up in person and kick some bakery robber bootie, so the shop-

### Alex McRae



Alex McRae

keepers settled for a life-sized cardboard cutout of Norris posing in a fearsome karate stance.

They put the poster in the store window along with a sign that said, "This shop is under the protection of Chuck Norris."

Guess what? Within a month after the Norris poster went up, burglaries went down to zero.

"To be honest we just started it as a joke but it really has worked," store employee Mirna Kovac said. "Thieves haven't been anywhere near us for ages. Everyone around here has seen his films and he's quite a popular character, perhaps even among criminals, so they've decided to leave us alone."

The local residents are also happy Norris is in town.

"We have had a few customers come in and

ask us whether they can get Chuck's autograph," Kovac said. "They really believe he is sitting in our storeroom ready to pounce on any burglars."

The Chuck Norris caper proves that perception goes a long way towards solving some problems. Since that's the case, shopkeepers in Quartz Hill, Ca., may want to hire a local 17-year old girl to do their summer security work.

The girl made headlines recently when she not only escaped from two would-be robbers, but beat them half to death with the baton she totes while on duty as a majorette with the local high school marching band.

Police say the girl was on her way to school when two jerks jumped her. Instead of boo-hoing, she fought back and beat both boys like a drum.

She punched one dude in the nose, kicked the other in the groin and bashed both with her baton before the robbers raced away.

"The girl happened to be carrying a large baton, which she uses in

proceeded to beat both of the suspects with the baton," said Deputy Michael Rust of the Lancaster Sheriff's Station.

"One of them is probably holding his nose and the other one is limping after being kicked in the groin area. The moral to this story is don't mess with the marching band girls, or you just might get what you deserve. Final score: marching band 2, thugs 0."

As a former band kid I'd like to send my congratulations to the young lady. I'm not surprised. Marching musicians don't get sports-page headlines, but a few seasons of marching band will make anybody tough enough to tackle just about anything.

And as someone with majorette memories both painful and sweet, all I can say is "You go, girl."

Now the California criminal element knows what band kids have know for years: majorettes can rock you in more ways than one. Always could. Always will.

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