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**From the Selected Works of James M. Donovan**

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# Broun is Mere Opportunist

James M Donovan



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## EDITORIAL

# Shooting victims take their place in memories

Time bestows a tender mercy on all who move through it. It is the mercy of a fading recollection, a loosening of the bonds of memory from around things that need not unduly weigh us down forevermore.

Now, almost three weeks after this community — and most especially the Town & Gown Players — was rocked by a triple murder near downtown on what had been a perfect spring Saturday in Athens, time is beginning its merciful work.

Slowly, to be sure, but steadily, too.

Earlier this week, just days after police found the body of University of Georgia marketing professor George Zinkhan in deep woods in a far corner of the community, the

Town & Gown Players announced that their current season will continue. The troupe no doubt will carry through the rest of its season with heavy hearts, for it was three of the group's most treasured members — Marie Bruce, Ben Teague and Tom Tanner — who were felled by Zinkhan, who would flee the Athens Community Theater grounds only to later take his own life.

Here's how the Town & Gown board framed the troupe's state of mind in its announcement: "Recent developments have ended one chapter in the tragedy at the Athens Community Theater. Friends and family of Marie Bruce, Ben Teague and Tom Tanner, the Town & Gown Players and the Athens community

as a whole have a long road of healing yet ahead. Hopefully the resolution of the search will allow for some closure so that we may all focus on our loved ones and mourning the tremendous loss we have suffered. ...

"Community leaders have been tirelessly working to ensure our safety and mental health. The Board of Directors of Town & Gown would like to thank the Athens Police Department, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Marshals, the Athens Critical Response Team, Alpha Team K9 Search and Rescue, National EMS, the University of Georgia, neighbors, friends, family and the community around us for unprecedented support and concern.

Thank you."

The Players' next show, Neil Simon's "Fools," will run July 10-12 and July 16-19, and the final show of the season, Stephen Sondheim's musical "Company," will run Sept. 18-20 and Sept. 24-27.

And so it goes. In small steps, timed to the tick of the clock, the Town & Gown Players and the rest of the community will begin moving away from the immediate memory of four tragic deaths and the battered families and friends left in their wake. There is, as the Town & Gown board reminded the community, "a long road of healing yet ahead."

Healing, yes, but not forgetting. Which is as it should be. Some memory of that April day and the people

who had been such an integral part of this community will be here always. Years hence, bittersweet pinpricks of recollection will occasionally startle — sometimes as a reminder of the sadness of a still-felt loss, other times as a reminder that one April afternoon need not be a bar from savoring the happier memories of days before.

In the end, perhaps what this community should take away from this tragedy is the certain knowledge that for all the things that make Athens what it is, it is people — like Marie Bruce, Ben Teague and Tom Tanner, like each of us — who are its truest and most enduring treasures, even when the place they endure is the universe of memories.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Broun is mere opportunist

Only Congressman Paul Broun could compress so many misleading statements and factual errors into such a brief space, beginning with his appeal to the Founding Fathers (Letters, "Broun defends amendment," Thursday).

In justifying his plan to resurrect an anti-same-sex marriage amendment to the Constitution, Broun shows an apparent ignorance of the 10th Amendment. State judges, construing state constitutions, on matters traditionally left to the states to decide (such as marriage), is exactly what the Founding Fathers intended. That they are not making what he regards as the correct decisions, Broun views as an invitation for federal intervention, contrary to the framers' design. Broun represents their worst fear — someone who hopes to expand federal powers at the expense of states' current rights to make their own decisions.

Although Broun claims his fear is that same-sex marriage will be imposed by "activist liberal judges," several states have now recognized that fundamental right legislatively, not judicially. Broun himself mentions one similar action in his silly attempt at self-defense, the "Washington, D.C., Council measure" to recognize such marriages from states where they are legitimately formed. Were Broun sincere in his espoused beliefs, and not merely an apologetic anti-gay Fred Phelps of the Congress, his proposed amendment would recognize that distinction.

As for his insistence that U.S. law be an unfaithful reflection of biblical law, a position that distinguishes him not at all from extremist Muslims trying to impose their own reading of the Koran as binding secular authority, I doubt his sincerity. The biblical model of marriage permitted polygamy, expected the complete subordination of the female, and forbade divorce. If that's truly the marriage ideal he is insisting upon, by all means let him introduce an amendment to that end. His avowed principles demand no less. Otherwise, he reveals himself (again) as a foolishly ignorant homophobic political opportunist.

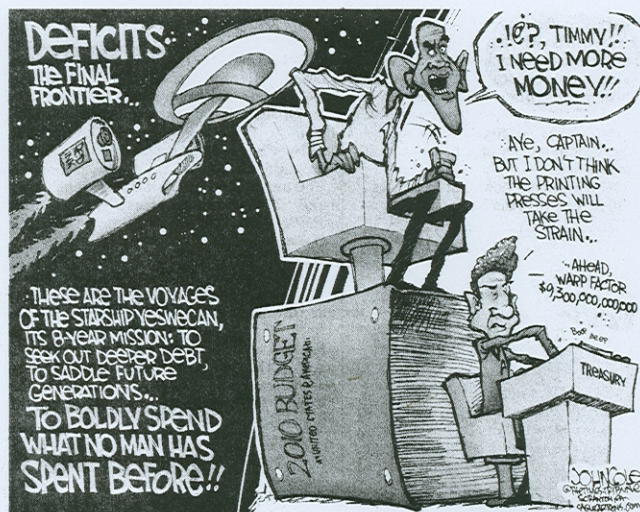
James M. Donovan

### Improve leaf-and-limb pickup

A Tuesday Banner-Herald story headlined "Slow snowstorm cleanup frustrates" detailed the Athens-Clarke County government's problems with leaf-and-limb pickup following a major early-March snowstorm.

Based on my personal observation, even in normal times leaf-and-limb collection appears to be unnecessarily inefficient and costly to the taxpayer. As I understand it, the trucks, once loaded, go to the landfill where material is shredded into mulch that the public can cart away.

The Tuesday story notes five extra trucks were leased, at a cost of \$66,000, to speed up post-storm leaf-and-limb collection. Has any-



one done the math on the round-trip costs of hauling each truckload to the landfill? The amount each truck can haul is obviously limited, thus even under nonstorm conditions leaf-and-limb collection would involve a lot of trips.

Wouldn't it make sense, instead of leasing additional trucks, to lease shredders to make the rounds? Shredding on the spot offers advantages. For one, shredders dramatically increase the volume of material that can be loaded on a truck, drastically reducing trips to the landfill.

Also, might it be possible to dump the resultant mulch at designated spots around the county so people could avail themselves of it at will? Based on what I've heard, many of us would be happy to be able to do that.

Given the economic pressures these days, it's incumbent on government to maximize the utility of every tax dollar collected. This can be achieved in many cases by doing things more efficiently. I'd urge our local officials to do the math on the real costs of the present

system of leaf-and-limb collection. No system is so perfect it can't be improved.

Howard E. Leeb

### Obama is man of faith, prayer

A Wednesday letter to the editor, "President should have prayed," described President Obama as a "stay-at-home" while prayer groups were meeting all over the United States during the recent National Day of Prayer.

No doubt there were many public prayers offered that day, many of them associated with nationalistic symbols such as flags and flagpoles and local seats of "power" — empire. I stayed at home. And I prayed that day. But I can imagine the grandstanding that may have accompanied the rallies, the signs, the causes.

From my impressions of our humble and faithful Christian president, I'm more inclined to conclude that on the "day of prayer" and probably most — if not all — other days as

well, President Obama was "in his closet." Some may recall from the Gospel of Matthew this verse: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou has shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

I, for one, am grateful for the influence of a president who is both faithful to his own traditions and caring for the traditions of others as he prayerfully leads one nation under God.

Robert L. Harris

### Beechwood thanked for operas

With the close of the opera season, let me express gratitude to Beechwood Cinemas for offering the magnificent "Live HD" operas transmitted direct from the New York stage on Saturday afternoons. This expansion of great opera, great music and great artistry for greater Athens music lovers is a signal benefit to our community.

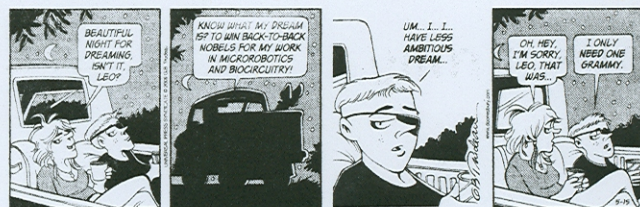
The performances, shown in high definition in real time from the Manhattan stage, are in many respects more beautiful, dramatic and thrilling for the audience in Athens than for the Metropolitan Opera fans in Lincoln Center. They are closer, more intimate, more realistic than the "originals." I know, for we attended the Met in New York for many years, loved it and still do but are thrilled by the cinema technique and quality, boosted by the entr'acte comments and views of the stars, stage directors and conductors, whom one gets to know as individuals, even friends.

The Learning in Retirement Opera Group convenes for early lunches for the Beechwood performances, to explore the opera-of-the-day with the graduate students-in Professor Frederick Burchinal's opera department at the University of Georgia School of Music — an extra bonus for us fans. The combination of Beechwood, the School of Music and LIR is phenomenal.

To have all this for prices one-third the cost of tickets to Lincoln Center is a gift for our community, from the Metropolitan Opera and from our own Beechwood Cinemas. Bravo! And thanks!

John Rudy  
Watkinsville

## DOONESBURY



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Street address and daytime telephone number are required. Letters should be typed double-spaced and not more than 250 words. All letters must be signed by the author. The opinions expressed by columnists and cartoonists do not necessarily reflect the editorial position of this newspaper.



## EDITORIAL

# Commission should be flexible on grant outlays

How about "none of the above" as an option for Athens-Clarke County's mayor and commission as they move toward a vote on how to spend almost \$396,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds in the federal economic stimulus package?

The commission is considering two options for the funding — one developed within its ranks and a second proposed by the county's Department of Human and Economic Development.

The commission's proposal, which commissioners currently appear to prefer, would allocate \$50,000 to installing low-flow toilets in low-income residents' homes; \$156,017 to revitalize blighted properties; \$50,000 for loans to small businesses; and \$100,000 to train workers for "green jobs."

The HED proposal calls for allocating \$25,000 to low-flow toilet

installation; \$100,000 to blighted property revitalization; \$131,017 to renovate East Athens' Dudley Park; and \$100,000 to sidewalk construction.

Both plans allocated \$39,558 to cover administrative expenses.

Of the two plans, the commission's plan appears to be the most sensible, particularly with regard to the proposed \$50,000 low-interest revolving loan fund and the significant allocation to address blighted properties, of which there are dozens across Athens-Clarke County.

As far as the HED plan is concerned, using more than a third of the federal dollars to renovate a park that, quite frankly, didn't get all that much attention until the neighborhood in which it sits began gentrifying, seems a bit shortsighted.

But there is an aspect of the commission's preferred option that appears problematic as well. Allocat-

ing \$100,000 to train workers for weatherizing homes and installing solar panels seems particularly shortsighted at a time when most homeowners — and business owners, for that matter — are facing economic challenges that preclude them from investing in weatherization and alternative energy strategies for their properties.

Outside of these technical concerns about both the HED and the commission proposal, there's another reason the mayor and commission shouldn't get too attached to any current proposal for using the CDBG funds.

Initially, the county was working under the impression the deadline for having a plan for the CDBG funds was May 18. The actual deadline, though, is June 6. Just as the longer deadline has given the mayor and commission a chance to take a deeper look at the possibilities for

the stimulus dollars, it also could afford the local minority community, which could derive significant benefit from the CDBG outlays, a chance to make some recommendations on how the money might best be spent.

That's an opportunity the minority community wasn't afforded in connection with the May 18 deadline, and it clearly rankled black community leaders, who noted at a town hall meeting late last month that they don't necessarily trust the mayor and commission to allocate the dollars wisely.

This isn't to suggest it's incumbent on commissioners to actively solicit input from the minority community in the days before their May 21 agenda-setting session and their June 2 voting meeting. It is, however, meant to suggest that commissioners ought to be willing to listen to members of that community who

might come forward before the June 2 vote.

It's also meant to suggest the minority community should make an effort to be heard before and during the June 2 meeting, rather than grousing about not being heard. Contact information for the mayor and commission is as close as a phone call to City Hall, or a look at the county government's Web site, [www.athensclarkecounty.com](http://www.athensclarkecounty.com). Similarly, information on how CDBG funds can be used is available with a phone call to the county's Department of Human and Economic Development, or a visit to the department's Web site.

As noted above, there is reason to question whether the best plan for CDBG funds is yet in place. What's certain, though, is that absent any constructive or timely input to the mayor and commission, the proposals won't get any better.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Thanks from Town & Gown

The members, friends and families of The Town & Gown Players wish to express our gratitude and appreciation to all who have given comfort and assistance to us in these past few weeks.

Most especially, we wish to thank members of the Athens Crisis Response Team, a group of volunteer mental health professionals who have unselfishly and with great compassion volunteered their time to provide counseling and to help us through the trauma of our losses. These wonderful people have met with T&G members, friends and family, both collectively and individually, and have guided us through some very difficult times. We are profoundly and deeply grateful for their time, expertise and compassion.

Town & Gown Players Inc.

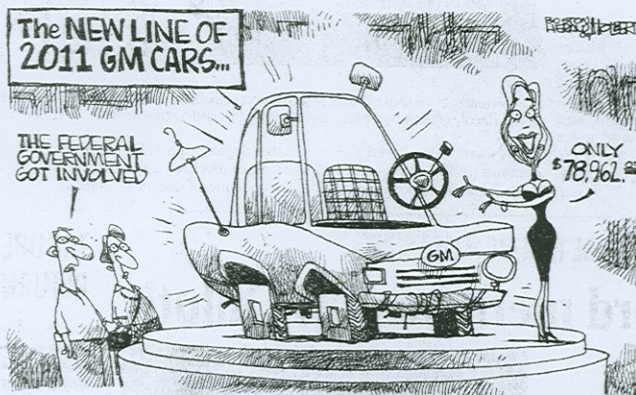
### Advice offered to students

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

These lofty words from this country's Declaration of Independence express man's desire to live free from government oppression. Sad to say, there are many people living in America today who believe "the pursuit of happiness" is a constitutional right that should be afforded every citizen regardless of cost to the government. Many seemingly intelligent people somehow have come to believe their pursuit of happiness should not be hampered by mundane tasks which divert their attention from their pursuit.

There are many intellectuals, artists, professionals and the like who believe providing oneself with the proper food, clothing and shelter — all necessary for human survival — should be delegated to, and paid for by, lesser minions. It is surprising the number of college students who believe they can devote all of their efforts to studying some obscure, inconsequential subject to the point of acquiring a Ph.D., only to find out after many years the world places little value on just how much knowledge they have acquired on the mating habits of the snail darter.

If a person has the intelligence for advanced education, but doesn't have either



the skills or the ability to exert the effort to feed, clothe and shelter himself first, he shouldn't expect his neighbor to keep him up.

Providing the essentials for life — on your own, by your own effort — should be the first accomplishment of every adult; then you may pursue anything else you wish. Stop living off your neighbor taxpayer. You can live like a pauper and still be happy if money means nothing to you, but rest assured there are few in America willing to live like a pauper and be happy about it.

If you do acquire some advanced degree in a subject that provides no financial security, either because there is no need for your expertise or because too many other people have the same expertise, consider going back to school for some practical education — something

that will afford you the lifestyle you desire. You might even consider "earning money" as one of your pursuits of happiness.

J. Paul Clark

### Broun defends amendment

The Banner-Herald's Sunday editorial, "Broun's test on gay marriage ban falls apart," claimed my efforts to protect marriage were a "political ploy" for which I have "compromised my principles." The reality is that nothing could be further from the truth.

I reintroduced the Marriage Protection Amendment, which had 92 co-sponsors last year, because I believe the American people and their elected officials, not activist liberal judges, should determine the law of the land.

My amendment will send a clear message that marriage is, and shall remain, a union between one man and one woman, unless and until the people decide otherwise. Despite the editorial's claims, it stands right in line with my principles and meets the criteria of my four-way test:

■ It is necessary. With the recent ruling by the Iowa Supreme Court, and now the Washington, D.C., Council measure, traditional marriage between a man and a woman is under assault as never before.

■ It is constitutional. This does not infringe on states' rights in the least, because the Founding Fathers specifically put a measure in place to amend the Constitution in this way when an issue of national importance came to light that wasn't originally addressed. The Founding Fathers did not intend for judges to write and rewrite state laws.

■ It is moral. Our great nation was founded upon biblical principles, and the Bible is clear in its references to marriage and homosexuality.

■ It is affordable. This amendment is affordable, because it holds no monetary cost to the taxpayers.

While we must focus on fiscal policies that provide relief to families during these tough economic times, an endeavor I have been working tirelessly toward in this Congress, we also must not forget to protect fundamental social institutions. Traditional marriage, a principle tenet in our Judeo-Christian values, is certainly worth fighting for.

Rep. Paul Broun, M.D.

• Broun, a Republican, represents a portion of Northeast Georgia including Athens-Clarke County in the U.S. Congress.

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