

The Hartwell Sun

The Sun.
1876

If it ain't broke, don't fix it!

Mike Griffin, Guest Columnist

It seems that lately all I hear from many politicians and community leaders is that Hartwell is changing, has already changed and will need to change more in the future!

On the one hand they are talking about preserving our small town values and way of life, while on the other hand talking about bringing in liquor stores and tourism as a way to preserve the culture that we have all grown to love and appreciate. Is it me or does the prospect of having liquor stores while maintaining small town values seem ludicrous? Maybe it is just me, but I'm concerned about "pro-growth and change" if it's going to compromise our community's moral standards and family values.

This month makes my family's thirteenth year living in Hart County and I can say without a doubt that Hartwell and Hart County is the best place in the world to live, work, raise a family and even to retire in for that matter.

I want to see our economic status improve. I, also, don't want to pay higher property taxes. I want to see more industry and jobs for our young people. But, more than all of this, is the fact that I don't want to see our morals and community standards lowered to achieve these or anyone else's perceived economic goals.

Let's face it, the greatest selling point for Hartwell is "Hartwell". The bottom line is that Hartwell is made up of people like you and me. Hard-working, decent, honest people who want to live and do right in a small town setting whose family values are more like Mayberry than some metropolitan area. Most of us who are "outsiders" came to Hartwell for what it is right now, not what someone thinks it ought to be in the future. Many came to escape the problems that are associated with some forms of economic growth. The way I hear some talk they want Hartwell to become a place that they themselves would not have even moved to! I wonder if we have forgotten what drew us to Hartwell. And, if we do remember, why would we want to go back to something we once left behind?

Let's face it, Hartwell is not like Athens, Atlanta, Augusta or Anderson and thank God it's not!

Do we have improvements to make? Do we have fences to mend? Do we have relationships to work on? Do we need to work on plans for the future? Yes we do. But let's resist the types of tourism and industry that would bring about the increased availability and consumption of alcohol. We need to have tourism and industry that are family friendly.

I'm concerned when I hear politicians say things like "I think we need to bring revenue in. If that means liquor-by-the-drink then we need to consider it." No my friend, we do not need to consider it "just" for revenue. Economic ends to justify the means will destroy this town and it will soon be far removed from the town we wanted to raise our families in.

My belief about Hartwell is the same as my belief about the USA. If it's so bad and needs changing then why are so many people still moving here? We need to be very careful about tampering with what we have in this community. No, Hartwell is not perfect. I've had my share of disagreements with others. But by far, God has taught me how to forgive, get along with and love people more because of living in a small town like Hartwell.

Let's remember there are a lot more things that are right and don't need to be fixed than there are things that are broken.

I love Hartwell even with its imperfections and it is still a great place to live and call your home! So, if it ain't broke, don't fix it!

pastormike@hartcom.net