



## Editorials

## The Great Labelmakers of Elbert County

by Mike Phillips, Publisher

This has been on my mind awhile. With GOP Chair, Scott Wills' petty move to bump Robert and Gaye Thomasson from the rolls of election judges for Tuesday's primary, Brooks Imperial ramping up his ridiculous vilification of New-Plains and anyone not Brooks Imperial, and the usual snarky GOP bag of dirty tricks against non-insider candidates Ross and Rowland; I decided that now is a good time to address some of the free-floating BS.

There is an old saying, "The truth shall set you free." It does not unfortunately; allude to how messy and convoluted things get first. The biggest consolation I've always found is that you don't have to expend a lot of time and energy keeping your lies straight if you don't tell them. That being the case, some of our local political blowhards must be in a continual state of exhaustion. And frankly, I've had it with the lot of them.

I'm Mike Phillips, the Publisher of New-Plains. I've been a registered but unaffiliated voter for about 18-years in Elbert County. I have worked for the Federal Government, worked in corporations, owned several small businesses, published an International Journal, starved a couple of years as an artist, and won some photography awards. I wrote a book once. I've known people who'd kill you for a ham sandwich and some who would make the Dalai Lama look like a meanie. I do not suffer fools lightly.

So, let's talk about those fools. The first one who comes to mind is Brooks Imperial, keeper of the *Elbert County Forum*. This little black hole on the Internet is where ultra-right-wing pap is cherry-picked out of all the available information on the web to prop up Imperial's skewed political view. Commissioner Kurt Schlegel and Brooks Imperial seem to link to each other a lot in a presumed admiration for this mutual twisted ideology. Brooks has touted, "a thousand hits a day" on the forum. Seems a bit far-fetched, but this is America and we do have more than our share of extremists and proactively uninformed, so who knows. Everyone should have a dream.

Both Schlegel and Imperial love to label anyone who disagrees with them with such gems as "leftist," "leftist mythologies," "power seekers," "leftist agenda," "loony left", "fascist inclination," "liberal publishers," "fish-wrap" etc. (Direct quotes) Relying upon such banalities to make a point is sheer laziness and denigrates both the intended targets of their mindless bile, and the label slingers themselves who otherwise claim to be intelligent. This particular brand of bully-themed bloviating is grossly inaccurate. It would be similar if I wrote, "Brooks Imperial does a lot of business in China so, he must be a commie sympathizer; or a maybe one of those underground moles." Or, "What's with those shockingly bright ties the Commissioner wears; is he gay or what?" How would these master thespians like these or worse references popping up in Google searches upon them?

For the record, to my knowledge, neither of the above statements is true; but see how slimy innuendo can be used? I find the whole "leftist labeling" thing annoying, so frankly boys, I suggest you knock it off for your own good because you're not very skilled at it and my 13-years as a Computer Systems Analyst gives me a whole lot more options. Pass it on to the rest of the Oligarchy; they might want to watch their backs as well. The bullshit stops now.

For edification, I am not a leftist, particularly politically correct, or a new-age-sensitive-guy. You cross me and I might give you the benefit of the doubt... once. I consider twice a pattern, and at that point I'll drop a house on you. If I had a motto, it might be, "Two eyes for an eye."

I am a rather practical conservative without a political party. I personally disdain meaningless slogans, party talking points, and ridiculous short-sighted epistemology that politicos hide behind. That is all claptrap to influence and control the clueless masses who are unable or too lazy to be informed and think for themselves. I care less what you say, I judge you by what you do.



The basics of my operational model are kindergarten simple:

- Don't lie, Don't steal, Don't cheat.
- Share with others and offer help when you can.
- Take responsibility for your actions.
- No one is more entitled than anyone else.
- No one is above the rules.
- If there is a problem, fix it.
- If there is a more effective, economical way to accomplish a task, do it that way.
- Think long term and don't settle for temporary fixes.
- Don't be wasteful.
- Put people first.
- You are just a renting this life so don't ruin it for those who follow.

Blah, blah, blah, and so what? It isn't about labels. It isn't about lazy minded shortcuts, amassing more toys than your neighbor, or taking advantage of others to get more power. I dare say most people in Elbert County are decent folks and actually maintain some similar ethical standard about them. Some call themselves Christians, or Jews, or Hindus. It doesn't matter to me; It's just about being ethical and doing the right thing.

Folks around here, especially the rank and file Republicans, have been hijacked by an Oligarchy; "the Old Guard," "Good Ol Boys," whatever you want to call them: a small group whose only ethical standard is to stay in control and in power at all costs. Primarily, that is why Elbert County is so broke, broken, and just about bankrupt. Kurt Schlegel's arrogant actions against Donald Pippin with the restraining order fiasco and the resultant lawsuit may just be the last screw up to put Elbert County out of business. The Oligarchy doesn't care about you or me; it only cares about itself and staying in power.

Everything we put up on New-Plains.com pretty much adheres to these standards. Bill (William C.) and I argue over: are we being "fair?" Foremost we work to keep New-Plains balanced. We've listed and linked all the candidates' websites for free. The two incumbents declined; actually Schwab never responded to multiple offers to list him and when I phoned Shipper he curtly said he didn't have a website. We received the same incumbent behavior from our multiple requests to respond to written questions we put out to all the candidates, and for brief introductory interviews we did after each candidate announced.

If candidates send us event announcements and there is space, I put them up; at a minimum they are listed in Patty Sward's huge coming events listings and in the emails broadcast to 550+ subscribers. We advertise ALL political party's events if they have been adult enough to send them to us in time. We also have featured events such as the Lincoln Day Dinner, Bill Harris' eat meat and shoot guns fundraisers, etc. We won't beg people to send in their events, and if Shipper, Schwab and Scott Wills give us the frosty shoulder, frankly, screw'em; we've tried, their loss. We rely on people being adults. So Brooks baby, if you infer we are supporting the challengers over incumbents, you might just be uninformed, delusional, or stupid. Probably all three.

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### Labelmakers - Continued

It doesn't mean we have anointed Larry Ross and Robert Rowland as our candidates of choice. It means they were smart enough to grab free advertising and Shipper and Schwab were not. Personally I don't care who is elected as long as he or she doesn't lie to the public, gets the true condition of the county's finances out in the open, warts and all (illegal and mis-management, under-the-table deals, etc.) and stops playing the insider power games and personal gain politics with my government and my tax dollars. The winners could be the incumbents or a trained monkey; I don't care which party they come from or whether it's a boy or a girl Commissioner. I want someone who is honest, not corrupted by money and politics, who can actually do the job. I'm tired of being lied to and watching the County use short term Band-Aid solutions that blow up and have to be fixed again. Oh yeah, I also want them stop the 20-year cycle of breaking the law just because leaders find it more convenient.

Here's a quick and dirty standard: If someone can, in open Court and under oath, answer some pretty fundamental questions without going to jail for perjury, they have my vote. It has nothing whatsoever to do with being a leftist, a tree hugger, or a peacenik. And the spinmongers who try to paint it as anything else are full of shit. I vote for the individual, not for some trumped up packaged PR set out by political parties to keep themselves in power and to keep getting contributions. If you vote based solely on an R, D, or any other party designation, you have given over your freedom to think for yourself and that is how really bad governments and leaders are able to exist.

I hold no personal malice against either John Shipper or Del Schwab. Guy to guy, I like Del Schwab when he doesn't let his political dark side take over. Of the three Commissioners, he is the most actively engaged and participates in community events and learning first-hand what people are doing - not just for the political glory. I understand the reasons for John Shippers' apparent grumpiness. He has legitimate demons, and you have to admire that he is still willing to get up and put on a suit. Despite the fact I know a lot of nasty things about both, I and New-Plains have never gone after them personally.

Granted, we do tend to make relentless fun of stupid things they do. It's usually in cartoon form to make a point. We report factual things that I'm sure they'd prefer nobody finds out about, because it makes them look bad. That's the territory; it would be and will be the same for whoever holds public office. Some folks vilify Shipper and Schwab as evil instruments of the devil; that is just stupid. They've done some good things, and they've pulled some real bone-headed stunts, you know, like human beings are prone to do. Measure them by the totality of their deeds.

Finally about the Kurt Schlegel recall effort. That is on me, not the Democrats, not some fictional leftist conspiracy leaking out of Brooks Imperial's brain. Like me, the people involved (members of all parties, and the unaffiliated), have had a bellyful of bad and corrupt local government. The recall is not to bring on some utopian enterprise, or a grab for power, or whatever moronic scare tactic that insiders want to invent. A whole lot of folks are just fed up with the dishonesty, the bullying, the arrogance and the really bad decisions that have and will ultimately cost the taxpayers who will be stuck with paying for the mistakes. Believe me, none of us lacks for other things to do to occupy our time. The recall is not being undertaken lightly. If Schlegel gets replaced by another of the same ilk, Scott Wills and the mysterious Republican Central Committee might need to find an undisclosed location for their own safety.

Elbert County is full of good and talented people doing honorable and creative things. There are groups preserving historical sites, there are groups that make and give quilts away to cancer victims; there are animal rescue groups, food banks, fraternal organizations that support charities, there are educational groups, Relay for Life Volunteers, we have active 4-H groups instilling a lifetime of good values to kids. We have rodeos, and live music, we have artists, and unique local businesses. New-Plains.com supports these things and strives to be a nexus to let people know all the terrific things that are available, and we do it unpaid to contribute to the community. The politics; that is just part of the news.

My name is Mike Phillips. I can be one of meanest son-of-bitches you're ever likely to meet. I'm not running for anything, I'm not beholden to any advertisers. I am a different kind of conservative-one who really hates liars and self-serving jerks who take advantage of others. And, I don't tolerate fools.

