

“Don’t walk behind me; I may not lead. Don’t walk in front of me; I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend.”

Albert Camus

The Hartwell Sun Editorial Board  
Peggy Vickery, Publisher  
Vivian Morgan, Editor

## EDITORIAL

### Educate yourself on proposed tax bills

While most of us know that GOP Senators as well as GOP members of the House of Representatives have different tax bills on the table, it is questionable as to how many people really know what is in these bills and it is still uncertain as to which bill or version of the bill will come to fruition.

All income groups under the Senate bill would see their after-tax incomes rise on average in the first few years.

In both bills, the standard deduction would increase. For example, in the Senate bill, the deduction for singles increases to \$12,000 from \$6,350 and increases for married couples filing jointly to \$24,000 from \$12,700. This will greatly reduce the number of people who itemize deductions.

Also, in one version of the bill, graduate students will have to pay tax on the tuition waivers they receive in exchange for working as graduate assistants. National Public Radio reports that this will increase the tax burden on graduate students by as much as 400 percent. While this doesn’t impact many retirees, this may impact your children and grandchildren.

The Hartwell Sun is not speaking out for or against the proposed tax bills but is encouraging individuals to educate themselves on the bills so they are not blind-sided down the road.

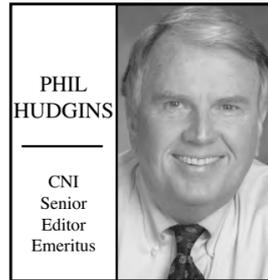


### Steam Locomotive 611 brings back memories of Daddy and me

My wife was cleaning out a chest of drawers in a storage area of our home, and naturally, she came across some things that I had rattled, just in case VCRs and tape recorders made a comeback. One of the old videocassettes was titled “Heislars, Shays and Other Teakettles.” I had to keep that one. It’s a video of steam locomotives—tea kettles on wheels.

There’s something special about steam engines. For most railroad buffs, I guess it’s just a romantic yearning and appreciation for the past. But it’s more than that for me. My father spent most of his life working on the railroad, and his career began with steam locomotives.

When I was a boy, Daddy—he was Po Boy to his crew—occasionally would take me to work with



him. Then the Southern Railway decided that wasn’t a good idea. Po Boy’s boy could get hurt on a freight train.

But then, in the 1980s, several years after Daddy retired, I got a chance to take him to work with me. I was doing a story on the Norfolk and Western 611, which was coming through our hometown on an excursion northward. My dad and I were among the nostalgic passengers who climbed aboard that day. We rode to Greenville, South Carolina, where my mother and sister picked us up and brought us home.

The 611, built in Roanoke, Virginia, in 1950, is the only remaining Class J engine, said to be the most advanced line of coal-fired steam locomotives ever built. It’s huge and has a futuristic look about it. It features simple lines, a bullet nose, and a Tuscan red stripe down the sides. It’s beautiful.

My dad and I had a great time riding that train. He didn’t talk much about his railroading days—he didn’t talk much about anything—but I could tell he enjoyed sitting back and watching steam from the massive engine float by our passenger-car window.

He never said so, but I think he loved the railroad. Still, he told me when I was young that I could choose any job I wanted, but stay away from the railroad. It had been a hard life, sometimes a dangerous life.

Emphysema made railroad work almost impossible at the end, and he retired early.

He died 30 years ago this Nov. 30. He was only 76 years old.

Steam Locomotive 611, in the meantime, had been resting for years inside the Virginia Museum of Transportation in Roanoke. But thanks to a group called the Fire Up 611 Committee, money was raised, the engine was restored, and coals are burning again inside the belly of the magnificent 611. Excursions have returned.

It would be nice to ride that train one more time. But if I don’t get that chance, I’ll just remember that one excursion my daddy and I took in the 1980s. He bought me a 611 commemorative cap that day.

As I write this piece, I am wearing that cap.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### We must speak now for choice in cancer care

Dear Editor,  
Patient choice is everything when you’re fighting cancer. Trust me. I’ll never forget the three words that my doctor said to me when I was diagnosed. “You have cancer.”

So many things rushed through my mind. How bad is it? Do I need chemo? Will I survive?

And decisions had to be made. The biggest one - where do I go for treatment?

After talking with family and friends and meeting with doctors at a few area hospitals, I chose care at Cancer Treatment Centers of America in Newnan.

And that’s when I learned not everyone has that choice because a state law says CTCA can treat only a limited number of Georgia patients. Just 35 percent. The rest have to come from other states.

I was shocked, sad, and furious.

I can’t imagine being turned away from a cancer hospital because of a

law. Luckily, I didn’t have to, but others have, and others will.

Every Georgian should have a choice in their cancer treatment. I chose CTCA because after meeting with my doctor, we talked not only about my treatment plan, but my life after beating cancer. It was a deeply personal choice, and no one should be robbed of that choice because of a law.

I joined Speak Now Georgia, along with other patients, caregivers and concerned citizens because we believe that Georgia patients deserve better. And I urge you to act now. Visit [www.SpeakNowGeorgia.org](http://www.SpeakNowGeorgia.org), contact your state legislators and sign the petition to change this ridiculous law.

Cancer doesn’t wait, and neither should Geor-

## LETTERS POLICY

We welcome letters to the editor. Letters to the Editor must be no more than 500 words, must be signed and contain an address and phone number. Only one letter per person/organization will be accepted each month (30 days). We reserve the right to edit letters for accuracy or length, and, depending on space available, will be responsible for writing headlines. Letters of Thanks will be accepted, but no specific persons or businesses will be listed. Bring or mail letters to The Hartwell Sun office at 8 Benson Street. You can also e-mail to [editor@thehartwellsun.com](mailto:editor@thehartwellsun.com) Deadline is Tuesdays at 2 p.m. Note: All opinions on the editorial and op-ed pages, except for the unsigned editorial in the left-hand column, are the opinions of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Hartwell Sun.

## Thanks

Dear Editor,  
I’d like to extend a big thank you to all who helped us with the Christmas Tree Lighting this year. It was a fun evening with a great crowd of people and beautiful weather. This event would not have been possible without the help of many people and volunteers.

First, I’d like to thank the Hart County Board of Commissioners for sponsoring the event and making sure we have a tree to light. I truly appreciate each of the commissioners for being present to represent their district and welcome the community to the tree lighting.

A whole host of other people and entities had to come together to make this event possible: City of Hartwell, the Hartwell Police department, the Hartwell Fire Department, Tony Lark, Hartwell DDA, Kathy Bryant and Diane Geiger, Karen and Barry Vahaly, Myron Ramsdell, the Mann Family Singers, HCHS Chamber Chorus, HCMS Football team, Connie Carter, First Baptist Church of Hartwell, Jim Owens and his team (Parks and Rec), Jay and Mandy Floyd, and the Chamber and DDA volunteers.

If it wasn’t for the generosity of others, this event would not have been possible.

Christine Blomberg,  
Hart County Chamber  
of Commerce

## The Hartwell Sun

P.O. Box 700 - Hartwell, GA 30643  
706-376-8025 FAX 706-376-3016

The Hartwell Sun, (UPS 236-460) official organ of Hartwell and Hart County, Georgia is published every Thursday by Community Newspapers, Inc. P.O. Box 700, Hartwell, GA 30643 Periodicals postage is paid at Hartwell, GA 30643

Peggy Vickery.....Publisher  
Wassie Vickery.....Editor Emeritus  
Vivian Morgan.....Editor  
Michael Isom.....Staff Writer  
David Butler.....Staff Writer

Visit us on the web: [www.thehartwellsun.com](http://www.thehartwellsun.com)

### OUR MISSION

The Hartwell Sun is published with pride for the people of Hart and adjoining counties by Community Newspapers, Inc. Athens, GA. We believe that strong newspapers build strong communities - “Newspapers get things done!” Our primary goal is to publish distinguished and profitable community-oriented newspapers. This mission will be accomplished through the teamwork of professionals dedicated to truth, integrity, loyalty, quality, and hard work.

Tom Wood, Chairman     Dink NeSmith, President  
Alan NeSmith, Regional Publisher

Subscription rates: Hart County twenty-eight (\$28.00) per year; Georgia out of Hart County thirty (\$30.00) per year; outside of Georgia forty-three (\$43.00) per year, tax included. Senior Citizens, 60 or over, four (\$4.00) discount.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to -  
THE HARTWELL SUN, P.O. Box 700, Hartwell, GA 30643

Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press and that cannot be limited without being lost.  
- Thomas Jefferson

## WORKING FOR YOU

### HARTWELL CITY COUNCIL

Brandon Johnson, Mayor ..... 706-376-4811  
Arthur Craft..... 706-376-9793  
Billy Ethridge ..... 706-371-5292  
Bill Griggs ..... 706-436-3247  
Tony Haynie ..... 706-376-8397  
Tray Hicks ..... 706-436-9695  
Mike MacNabb..... 706-376-2976

### HART COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

R.C. Oglesby, Dist. 1 ..... 706-371-0037  
Frankie Teasley, Dist. 2 ..... 706-376-6214  
Marshall Sayer, Dist. 3 ..... 706-436-6285  
Ricky Carter, Dist. 4 ..... 706-363-1665  
Joey Dorsey, Dist. 5..... 706-376-4224

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

Stephanie Burton, Dist. 1 ..... 706-436-2006  
Matt Honiotes, Dist. 2 ..... 706-376-8960  
Kim Pierce, Dist. 3 ..... 706-614-9006  
Richard Sutherland, Dist. 4 ..... 706-436-3235  
Dennis Dowell, Dist. 5 ..... 706-961-1036

### GEORGIA LEGISLATORS

Rep. Alan Powell (R), House District 32  
District phone..... 706-206-6500  
E-mail address ..... [alanpowell23@hotmail.com](mailto:alanpowell23@hotmail.com)

Sen. Lee Anderson (R), Senate District 24  
Capitol phone ..... 404-656-5114  
E-mail address ..... [lee.anderson@senate.ga.gov](mailto:lee.anderson@senate.ga.gov)

### UNITED STATES CONGRESS

Sen. David Perdue ..... 202-224-3521  
Sen. Johnny Isakson ..... 202-224-3643  
Rep. Doug Collins ..... 202-225-9893

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

Hartwell City Council..... 7 p.m., Dec. 4