

### THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH TALKING SOUTHERN.

I promised the Woman Who Shares My Name I was going to be a good boy-person this holiday season. No picking on liberal weenies and getting them all upset. Besides, liberal weenies can't help it if they were born without a sense of humor. It is a genetic defect and picking on them is like bear-baiting. There's not a lot of sport in it.

Also, no gloating over the fact that the University of Georgia — the oldest state-chartered university in the nation, located in Athens, the Classic City of the South — still reigns as football champion of all the world from Tybee Light to Rabun Gap. Since our beloved grandson, Zack, is a freshman at Georgia Tech, Grandma Jane strongly suggested I say a kind word about Tech, following their fifth straight loss to UGA. Okay, here goes: Tee. Hee. (Oops! That's two words.)

In this season of Peace on Earth and Goodwill to All Men and Women and Those Somewhere In Between, I swore that I would turn over a new leaf. I would not be cranky. Not sit in judgment of others. Live and let live. Let a smile be my umbrella.

Alas, my warm and fuzzy feeling didn't last long enough for me to get to the present-buying stage. While drawing up my list of who has been naughty and nice, I happened to read that a professor at the University of South Carolina is teaching impressible young minds how not to talk Southern. Well, kiss my grits.

According to the Associated Press, Erica Tobolski is instructing students on how to replace their Southern accents with Standard American Dialect, whatever in the name of Beauregard Lee that is. One young woman complained that she had gone to New Hampshire — that was her first mistake — and the locals had teased her about her accent. Had she been properly schooled, she would have told them that it is everybody else who talks funny, not us, and at least it doesn't snow in South Carolina 10 months out of the year and we don't have anything approximating Vermont below the Mason-Dixon Line, for which we can all be grateful.

Write this down. There is nothing wrong with the way we talk, and we have nothing to be ashamed of. Our problem is that a bunch of Yankees have come down here and tried to make us feel inferior because we say things like "fixin'," as in "I'm fixin' to go to the ballgame." Yankees think that is funny, and they laugh at us. Since we in the South were raised to be polite, we don't laugh back at them when they say things like "goil," as in "Hey, Marty. Check out the goil! She a real looker, that goil."

My daddy, who was smarter than the entire state of New Hampshire, used to say Georgia wasted a lot of money painting lines down the middle of the road, because nobody ever went north. They all came south. When is the last time you heard of somebody retiring from here and moving to Cleveland?

For the life of me, I can't think of anything wrong with saying "Y'all" and "Hi U," and eating dinner at noon, instead of lunch, and supper at night, when the rest of the world is eating dinner, and saying "bless your heart" when we find fault in someone, as in, "Bless her heart, she's so ugly her face could curdle cow's milk."

We are a unique people, and we don't need to change a thing. In fact, I would submit that we must be doing something right, because the South is growing like a weed and we are going to be picking U.S. presidents for a long time to come while the rest of the country watches and sulks.

In the meantime, if some pointy-head professor and a bunch of impressionable kids don't like the way we talk in the South, I would suggest they move themselves and their classroom to New Hampshire and freeze their little buns off, because, bless their hearts, we don't need folks who aren't proud to be Southern.