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OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

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Deadline for the T.C. Herald is Friday by 5 PM

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

We left you last week on the banks of the Okmulgee River during an expedition with a group of teenage boys trying to put their lives back together.

The eleven adjudicated teenage boys under our care had all suffered the consequences of anger. Some were in fact adjudicated because they had acted out in anger: getting into fights, destroying property or being convicted of the catch-all charge of "terroristic threats."

The capsizing of a canoe and the rescue of two boys from the frigid water had sent a shock wave throughout the group. Jon and Mike, my two fellow instructors, both veterans of wilderness expeditions, had been able to pull the two shivering lads out of the water and into their own boat and they came around the bend in the river with the boys and their now empty canoe in tow to join the rest of the crew gunwaled-up in an eddy.

The sun was sinking westward as we pushed our raft of canoes back out into the river. We stayed gunwaled-up for a while as we talked to the boys, making sure that they were confident enough to continue the expedition, at least as far as a campsite for the night. Time was not our ally as we searched for a spot to camp in the lengthening shadows.

Strong emotions, especially fear, can resolve into anger when we lack the tools or the understanding to process them. One of the longest nights of my life began as my two fellow guides and I made plans to keep watch, not only on the boys, but on the river should it continue to rise.

GUEST COLUMNS

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE EMAILED OR MAILED TO: Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net.

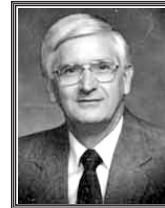
we were preparing the evening meal. By morning we were forced to intervene more than a dozen times to prevent continued violence. During a few quiet moments just before dawn as the exhausted group finally succumbed to sleep, we decided that at daybreak I would paddle downstream alone to Hawkinsville, Georgia to recon a campsite, call in our support team and arrange for resupply of our lost provisions.

The sun broke through the clouds for a moment just as I pushed off and headed downriver, and then it disappeared again as the rain returned. The normally lazy black water of the Okmulgee was moving rapidly and just a few miles from our campsite, there was no land in site and it was getting harder to discern the main channel.

At one sharp bend in the river I went wide to river-left to avoid a strainer - and headed directly into a downed tree. Unable to make the turn I tried to hit the tree with the bow, but the rushing water soon turned my boat alongside the almost horizontal trunk of the tree and threatened to flip me over and under.

We are amazingly strong when we are afraid. Alone, with no land in sight and a rushing river trying to push me under a tree, I was able to keep the boat from capsizing, but fatigue began to set in. They say that faced with death, our life flashes before our eyes, but I think we rarely have time for that. I knew that eventually my legs would give out and I would lose the boat and be left clinging to a tree with nothing but a lifejacket and the contents of my pockets.

We will pick up the journey next week. Join the discussion at www.mulebristle.blogspot.com!



"IT'S ON MY MIND.." Danny H. Parris

There is no God The Psalmist records in Psalms 14:1 and in Psalm 53:1 "that the fool has said in his heart there is no God." In his head he has better sense than that. These are tumultuous days in which we live. If there is no God, no power greater than man, the whole creation may as well throw up their hands and give up the ghost.

itself to keep the oceans from falling off toward the sun. Infants teach themselves to cry when they are hungry or hurt. A small flower invented itself so that we could extract digitalis for sick hearts. The earth gave itself day and night, tilted itself so that we get seasons. Without the magnetic poles man would be unable to navigate the trackless oceans of water and air, but they just grew there. How about the sugar thermostat in the pancreas? It maintains a level of sugar in the blood sufficient for energy. Without it, all of us would fall into a coma and die.

Letters to The Editor

Last week, President Obama signed into law a bill (HR347) that was approved in the House of Representatives, and passed by a significant majority of BOTH parties.

It will be at the discretion of the Secret Service to decide to make areas around politicians, especially the President, Vice-President, etc., "Free Speech Free Zones."

What is the government afraid of? While I understand the need to protect the President and others from the crazies, stopping Free Speech is NOT the correct way to do so.

It is very interesting that President Obama, a liberal who wants to outlaw legal ownership of firearms, has also decided to limit Free Speech.

Sincerely, Christopher D. Mazur

Editor's Note: U.S. Congressman Paul Broun, R-GA, was one of only three members of the U.S. House of Representatives to oppose the legislation.

Dear Editor: While I'm in agreement transportation needs improvement, I am against the Tsplost tax for 2 reasons mainly. It is a regressive tax against the low income, fixed income, and other poor.

The other problem I have with the Tsplost tax is it leads to Regional government thereby crushing local county home rule. A regional government which is not chartered by the State of Georgia constitution to abide by certain rules and laws.

Thanks, Mike Sims

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE By Don Jacobsen

Q: My 30-month old daughter will sometimes hit me, especially when I pick her up. Does that mean she is mad at me for something I've done or do you think there is some other reason? Reasoning with her doesn't seem to help.

A: Reasoning with a 30-month old is not likely to provide much satisfaction - to either of you. The cause-and-effect switch has not usually been turned full-on by this age and they have trouble making the connection.

As to whether she is "mad at something" you've done, if you pursue that line of reasoning far enough you come to the place where, whenever the child does something unacceptable, you go searching for someone other than the child to blame.

Let me try to put your mind at ease. First, her actions are not likely related to how much violence she sees at home - in real life or on TV. And it is not a commentary on how well you're doing as a mom.

Meanwhile... meanwhile don't make a federal case of it. Don't show anger, don't raise your voice, or hit the child in return. Rather, take her hands firmly in yours, look her in the eye and matter-of-factly say, "You are not allowed to hit Mommy."

Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@RareKids.net.

OWN A BUSINESS? NEED TO ADVERTISE? Contact the Towns County Herald 706-896-4454



"What do you think, Hon? Is the federal government really over-reaching its power?"

Community Calendar

Towns County Water Board Meeting 3rd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the TC Water Office Building.

Mountain Community Seniors meet the second Thursday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawassee at 2 p.m.

Towns County Democratic Party meets the 2nd Thursday of every month at 5 PM at the Senior Center. Please call Kim Bailey at 706-994-2727 or 706-896-6747 for details.

Towns County Republican Party meets at 6: 30 PM the 2nd Thursday of each month at Daniels Steak House. For more info call 706-379-1371.

Towns County Planning Commission is held the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Courthouse.

Towns County Commissioners meeting is the 3rd Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in the courthouse.

School Board Meeting, 2nd Monday each month at 7 p.m. in the auditorium.

Hiawassee City Council 1st Tuesday of month 4 p.m., at City Hall.

Young Harris City Council, 1st Tuesday of month at 7 p.m., Young Harris City Hall.

The Hiawassee River Valley Kennel Club meetings are held at 7 p.m. the 1st Monday of each month at Brother's Restaurant on Hwy 64 in Murphy, NC. Call President Kit Miracle: 706-492-5253 or Peggy Moorman: 828-835-1082.

The Unicoy Masonic Lodge #259 meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

Stephens Lodge #414 F & AM meets the 1st Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM in Young Harris.

Board of Voter Registrars meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 4:30 p.m., Courthouse.

Towns County Board of Elections holds its monthly meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. at the Elections

Office (Old Rock Jail).

Towns County Historical Society meets the 2nd Monday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawassee at 5:30 p.m. Annual dues \$15, PO Box 1182, Hiawassee, GA 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org

Bridge Players intermediate level meets at 12:45 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Recreational Dept.

Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG) meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at ArtWorks Artisan Centre, located at 308 Big Sky Drive (behind the Holiday Inn), Hiawassee. Refreshments at 6 p.m. & the meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Contact us by calling 706-896-0932, mtnregartsandcraftsguild.org. mtnregartsandcraftsguild@hotmail.com.

Mountain Computer User Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month at the Goolsby Center at YHC. Q & A at 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m.

FPL Retirees Breakfast will meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Hole in the Wall Restaurant on the square in Blairsville at 9 a.m.

Chattahoochee-Nantahala Chapter, Trout Unlimited meets 2nd Thursday of each month at Cadence Bank in Blairsville. 5 p.m. Fly Tying - 7 p.m. General Meeting. Everyone welcome. www.ngatu692.com.

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) meets the 3rd Monday of each month at various area restaurants. For information call John Quinlan at 706-896-2430 or visit www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridgemountains.

Alcoholics Anonymous: 24 hour phone line 828-837-4440.

Mothers of Preschoolers meets on the third Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church of Blairsville from 6 - 8 p.m. Call

the church office at 706-745-2469 for more information. Chatuge Regional Hospital Auxiliary on the 3rd Monday of each month, except the months of July, October and December, in the hospital cafeteria at 1:30 p.m.

Mountain Magic Table Tennis Club meets 6 p.m. Thursdays at Pine Log Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Brasstown. Ping Pong players welcome. Call Lee (828) 389-0924.

We do Family Oral History of all of our residents. If you have not had your family history recorded and would like to do so, please call the Towns County Historical Society at 706-896-1060.

Prostate Cancer Support Group meets the 3rd Monday of every month from 5-6 PM in the Cancer Treatment Center Auditorium in Blairsville. For more info call Steve 706-896-1064. GMREC Native Plant Garden Tours: Mondays 9 AM-1 PM. May-Sept. (except holidays). 706-745-2655.

The Humane Society Mountain Shelter Board of Directors meets the last Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at Cadence Bank in Blairsville.

The Towns County Alzheimer's Support Group meets the first Tuesday of each month at 1:30 PM in the Family Life Center of McConnell Memorial Baptist Church. Caregivers or family members of those with dementia are encouraged to attend. For further information, call Carol at 706-896-6407.

The Appalachian Shrine Club meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Allegheny Lodge in Blairsville. For more info call William 706-994-6177.

Georgia Mountain Writers Club meets at St. Francis of Assisi Church the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 AM.

Towns County Herald Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County KENNETH WEST.....PUBLISHER CHARLES DUNCAN.....EDITOR, ADVERTISING SHAWN HENRIKSON.....COPY EDITOR JAMES REESE.....SPORTS WRITER, PHOTOGRAPHER LOWELL NICHOLSON,NEWS,SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHER OFFICE LOCATED AT 446 NORTH MAIN STREET "THE MALL" HIAWASSEE (706) 896-4454 Publication Number 635540. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points. EMAIL Address: tcherald@windstream.net POSTMASTER: Send change of address to: TOWNS COUNTY HERALD P.O. BOX 365 HIAWASSEE, GEORGIA 30546 DEADLINE FOR ALL NEWS COPY & ADVERTISING Fridays at 5 PM SUBSCRIPTION RATES TOWNS COUNTY (1 YEAR) \$15 OUT OF COUNTY (1 YEAR) \$25 The Towns County Herald is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All subscriptions must be paid in advance.