

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



Letters to The Editor

Letter to the Editor

I write to commend the thoughtful columns provided by Don Perry.

Week after week, Mr. Perry boldly addresses issues and concerns pertinent to citizens of Towns County and the United States. He obviously does his homework, for his articles provide perspectives that are well-informed and insightful.

"The Middle Path" is an appropriate title for his column. With sensitivity and skill, Mr. Perry avoids the rancor and irrationality that inevitably is found at the extremes. In non-judgmental fashion he prods his readers to examine objectively the views he sets forth. Gaining agreement is not his aim.

Rather he is intent on provoking the exercise of reason and responsible action. We do well to read and heed.

Towns County and our mountain area are fortunate to have access to the wisdom, knowledge, and passion of Don Perry.

**John Kay
Young Harris**

From the Desk of:

Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

Last week I met with the planning committee for the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes fund raiser that the Chatuge Gun Club and the Towns County Sheriff's Office are sponsoring. Many of you may not be aware of how the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes came to be and what it does. According to the Georgia Sheriff's Association, the purpose of the Youth Homes is "to give our state's most at-risk children the love, safety, and structure needed to become mature, successful adults."

The Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes grew out of a concern that the Sheriffs of Georgia had for abused and neglected children. During the 1950's the sheriffs noticed that this was a growing problem across the state and begin to consider ways to make a difference in the lives of these children who through no fault of their own had become victims of abuse and neglect. The sheriffs considered this project vital for these children and for our state.

In 1960 Georgia's Sheriffs were able to open the first Georgia Sheriffs' Boys Ranch near Hahira, Georgia. The Boys Ranch provided children an opportunity to learn "strong moral values, religious awareness, personal responsibility, teamwork and acceptance of authority, as well as how to overcome adversity" (Georgia Sheriffs'). This first campus was only the start of a vision that would continue to grow. Today there are four additional campuses that provide a nurturing atmosphere for boys and girls placed strategically across the state.

I believe that the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes provides opportunities for children to succeed. I believe that children deserve to be given a chance to become productive, successful, law abiding citizens. To me the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes is providing these children the opportunities that our nation's founders dreamed would be available to all children. Children in the Youth Homes learn that they are able to overcome their difficulties and that if they work for it, they can obtain a better life for themselves. I think that our children deserve to be given a chance to succeed.

This is why I continue to support the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes. On Friday, June 11, 2010 the Chatuge Gun Club and the Towns County Sheriff's Association will be hosting our 2nd annual fund raiser. There will be raffles and silent auctions as well as door prizes. We still have a few openings for teams of shooters if you or your group would like to sponsor a team. Or a shooter the donation is \$250 for a team of five shooters. The cost for an individual shooter is \$50. All the proceeds go directly to benefit the children of the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes and because the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Home is a public charity, any donation to the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes qualifies for the highest tax deduction allowed by law.

If you would like to purchase raffle tickets sponsor a team or sign up to shoot in the contest please contact Verlee Jones at 706/896-1783. If you would like to shoot or sponsor a team you should contact Verlee as soon as possible as slots are filling up quickly and we can only accommodate a certain number of shooters. You do not have to participate in the trap shoot to participate in the other events of the day. Please come out and join us as we have a great time and raise money for a great cause.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

A young friend was home from college recently and we met over the weekend at a gathering of old friends. The inside joke was the well practiced paragraph she had developed in response to the same short list of questions: How is school? What are you studying? What are you doing this summer? Have you found a summer job yet?

My friend is of an academic nature and so she was more indulgent of the type of questions for which many of the young have no patience, such as, "Why does your generation..." I had read an interesting study which indicated that the youth of today are more trusting of the government than my own generation and another which indicated that the issue of privacy is not of particular concern among the young texting, tweeting and social networking masses. I was curious as to why she thought that might be the case. Her answer was illuminating.

"The people I know," she said of her classmates in their early twenties, "are too busy worrying about how they are going to pay for school, how and where and if they are going to be able to find a job, where they are going to live and how they are going to pay for that. They don't have time to worry about what the government is doing or whether it is listening in on their conversations which they assume are in the public domain anyhow."

The thing that struck me about my friend's response was how in some ways the youth of today are facing a harsher and more unforgiving reality than I did when I was in my twenties. Back then I trusted the "government" enough that I eagerly joined the Marine Corps, which I would do again, but now I've seen too much of what people in government do to assume that they always have the best intentions. And of the declining numbers of young people graduating high school and going to college, the families of these students are facing a much tougher time affording the ever increasing costs of education. College graduates are facing a much harder search for gainful employment.

My own twenties were a time of adventure and discovery. I had the opportunity to sample from an extensive menu of what life has to

offer, a menu that today is increasingly available only to the wealthy. I worked. I went to school. I joined the service and then went back to school. I traveled extensively and had a number of different jobs. Rarely did I worry about the future because opportunities were so abundant I knew that if I let one pass by, another was waiting around the corner. During the entire adventure of trying new careers and changing directions, I never had to wait more than a couple of weeks to find a job. I made lots of mistakes, but our society and our economy was very forgiving.

How the times have changed – and it doesn't seem fair. Youth should be a time of adventure and discovery and it should afford the young the opportunity to make mistakes, to learn from them and to be given second chances. College used to be a time when a student could devote herself completely to her studies free from concerns of economic survival.

My generation was arguably the most affluent in the history of the world. Like the current generation, we also did not spend much time worrying about what the government or big business was doing or how it was changing our society or damaging the environment upon which our affluence depended. Perhaps we should have worried, because I can't shake this gnawing feeling that the price tag for our overindulgence in the gifts of freedom is the stress related disease now affecting our children. We hold the reigns now, but as our grip loosens over the years we will pass them on to a generation largely unaware that the mechanisms of power are preparing for their own survival at whatever cost. A surveillance state, a totalitarian state fearful of its own survival is poised to snap into place to confront the devolution of our society brought on by a generation of self indulgence at all levels. If you remember the fable of the grasshopper and the ant, you know that when tough times come it is the ants that survive. We are seeing the beginnings of ant society, and it will not look very much like the American Dream we grew up to assume was our birthright.



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

No Refills

I heard about the fellow who called his doctor to ask him about the blood pressure medication he had prescribed. He said, "Doc, you did tell me that I would have to take this medication for the rest of my life." The doc said, "That's right." "Why do you ask?" The man replied, "Evidently, this blood pressure problem is more serious than I thought because the prescription on this bottle says NO REFILLS!" That's life! When physical life runs out there are no refills, no reruns, no opportunities to live it over because it is over on this earth. A professor always told each new incoming class, "You can take this class one of two ways: You can take it seriously or you can take it over." Well, we don't have that option for this physical life so we had better take it seriously. The preacher in Ecclesiastes gives some first hand experience to us about life. He had lived the life of Riley because he was the king. Evidently, he had been the life of many a party. He had pursued lust, ladies, liquor, leisure, laughter and labor until he was at a total loss. In essence he said, "Life makes no sense. It is empty. It is all vanity." He sums life up by saying "the sun glows, the wind blows and the rivers flow. Everything returns to its own place and the cycle begins all over again" (Ecc. 1:1-7). It doesn't make sense. Solomon was like a lot of people of our generation; he

knew a lot about the arts but had not learned the art of living. I read about a man who was driving on the Tri-State Freeway in Chicago when his hat blew off in the middle of traffic. He stopped his car and started chasing his hat. He ran into traffic and was killed. The article reporting the incident read "It's amazing that you can lose everything chasing nothing." For the life of me I don't understand why some people who seem to have everything start chasing nothing and lose everything. Solomon finally came to wisdom about life when he said, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: For this is the whole duty of man" (Ecc.12:3). Some of you who are reading this need to make some life adjustments before your life expectancy expires. If you have life-ever-lasting with Christ, your Creator, you must get on board the life boat. You can only do this through the Life Saver, Jesus Christ, who provided the life line when He gave himself on Calvary's cross was buried and rose again with the blessed assurance of abundant life to all of those who grasp that life preserver of salvation. An old riddle asks, "What is it, that the more of it you take away, the more it grows?" The answer is a hole in the ground. This is true of life. The more you give yourself away the greater your life grows. The more time, energy and money that you invest in the lives of other people the bigger your life becomes. Don't be a life chaser be a life giver. Don't just struggle with physical existence, enjoy abundant life (John 10:10).

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