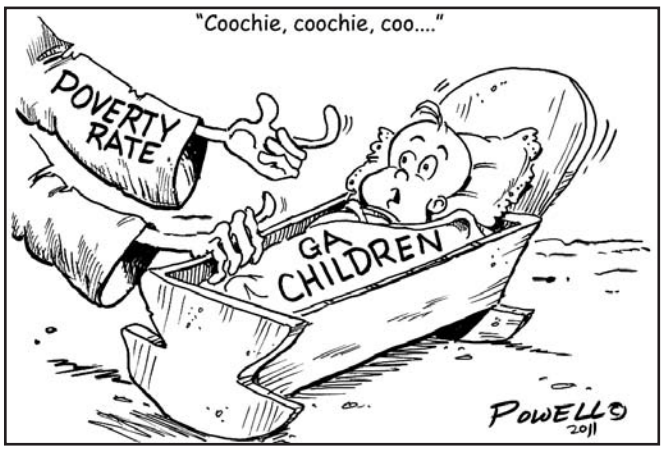


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



From the Desk of:



Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

age appropriate restraints. In 2004, there were 495 passenger vehicle occupant fatalities among children under five years of age. Of those 495 fatalities, an estimated 173, or thirty-five percent, were totally unrestrained.

A cell phone can save a life, but it can also cause a collision. It is best for you to pull off the road when you need to dial a number or converse with someone.

Use the three-second rule - the suggested time interval that keeps you from tailgating another vehicle too closely and causing an accident.

Keep a vehicle safety kit in the trunk. It should include jumper cables, reflective triangles, a blanket, nonperishable food, flashlight, and other important tools. Even if you do not use many of the items, it will provide you peace of mind.

Don't fall asleep at the wheel. According to the NHTSA study, most crashes happen when people are alone. Drowsy drivers cause 56,000 crashes annually.

Be prepared for law enforcement road checks with driver and vehicle information (GSA).

Our goal at the Towns County Sheriff's Office is to help you and your loved ones stay safe. We believe that an informed community is a safer community. For additional information and safety tips, you can follow the Sheriff's Office online at www.townscountysheriffsoffice.com. At the website you can follow links to visit our blog, follow us on Twitter or Facebook, or sign up for our e-newsletter.

Aggressive driving, speeding, alcohol, and sleepiness remain the primary causes behind automobile fatalities, according to research conducted by an array of federal agencies and consumer groups. Statistics gathered by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, for example, show that 43,443 people were killed in automobile accidents during 2005, the most recent complete survey year. Despite a 3% decrease, the number nationally remains unacceptably high and reveals the challenges faced by local and regional law enforcement agencies. With that in mind, the Georgia Sheriffs' Association has some practical advice to help keep you and your family safe on the roads:

Drinking and driving don't mix. According to the NHTSA study, three in every ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some point. Have a designated driver or refrain from drinking.

Always travel with a first-aid kit. It can offer a quick bandage, tweezers, antiseptic wipes and other first aid supplies.

Children 12 years or younger should ride in the back seat of the vehicle in

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Those who have lost a loved one will tell you that the greatest regret is in the things left undone. The Christmas before my mother died, her illness had progressed to the point where she was spending more time in bed than out of it. On that special day, however, she had perked up for the holiday and we enjoyed a good visit. When the evening came she was tired and ready for bed again, and I went to her room to tell her good night. As she had done on so many other occasions, she asked me, "Are you going to spend the night?" Mothers love to have the whole family, or as much of it as possible, under the same roof. I had a busy schedule, or so I thought at the time, so I told her I would be leaving that night. I remember that she closed her eyes for a moment in disappointment before telling me goodbye, but for the life of me I cannot remember now what was so important that I chose that instead of the chance to spend one more Christmas night with my mother. I did not get another opportunity.

We do not know when our "lasts" will occur, but occur they will, and for everyone and everything that we hold dear. You will look into your cherished one's eyes for a last time. There will be a last trip back home, a last reunion of old friends, a last sunrise, a last sunset and a last supper. Some opportunities will end suddenly; an accident or an illness will take away someone we love. Some last chances will fade away, lost in time and circumstance. I may never see another sunset off the coast of Oregon while whales pass slowly by in the distance. We are not guaranteed another single day of existence, or even a single breath, nor do those whom we cherish live with any such promise.

It is too easy, I think, to say, "Live each day as if it were your last." There is wisdom in that statement, but it is not enough. Clinging to the moments with an ever present awareness of death does not seem a good way to use the time we are given. Morbidity is bereft of creativity and passion. Living in future darkness has a tendency to stumble over things in broad daylight, and to miss the journey while so intent on the destination.

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. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

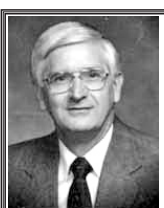
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE EMAILED OR MAILED TO:

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net. Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc. Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication. *Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.

On the other hand, to live like a grasshopper in a June meadow is ecstatic - until November comes.

How then shall we live? It is this middle path that we must each find for ourselves, but there are some guideposts along the way. Ask someone who has been in combat; someone who has survived a catastrophic illness or a natural disaster; someone who has lost a loved one but has gone on to love again. Ask someone who walks in Faith. It is possible to do both - to cherish each step on the journey, and to be mindful that the journey leads inexorably into the Great Unknown.

Time flies when you are having fun, they say. Much has been written about that person who comes to the end of his life and regrets the swiftness with which life has rushed by. The implication is that this is inevitable for all of us, that we will come to the end of our road and despair that the journey has been so short. I disagree. If we rush through life intent on our destination, and then the next, then perhaps the journey will seem brief. If, on the other hand, we find a way to cherish each moment, hold it gently, and then release it to grasp the next one, then the journey will be rich with memories and life, no matter how brief, will be long enough.

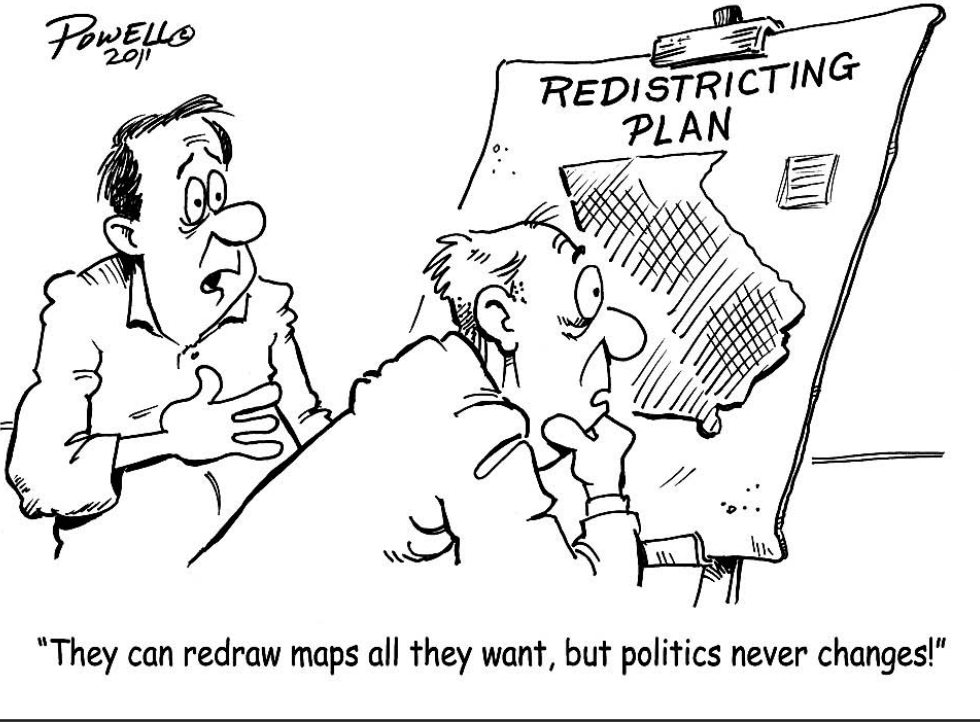


"IT'S ON MY MIND.."
Danny H. Parris

Baloney Days

Recently, one of the fast food restaurants has come out with a new breakfast sandwich that contains baloney. I haven't tried the sandwich but I have enjoyed their commercial "full of baloney." I am sure that a lot of you remember the days when sandwiches were made at home and sandwich shops and drive-thru restaurants were unheard of. The favorite sandwiches of boys and girls were peanut butter and jelly and banana sandwiches. Some folks had a little better variety. Every once in a while there was potted meat, Treet, sardines, Vienna sausage, and sliced baloney (bologna). Personally, I have never felt comfortable eating baloney. How do you know what is mushed up in that roll of baloney. I asked a butcher (meat cutter) one time what baloney was made of. He said, "compressed parts." My question is what kind of "compressed parts." The word baloney has evolved from being just a food source, but slang for nonsense. If someone makes a foolish statement the response may sometimes be "baloney." (Nonsense). A person who makes a lot of non-sensical statements may be said to be "full of baloney." This is my personal opinion, but I believe that for the last few months both political

parties have been dishing out a steady diet of baloney to all of us. There is a limit to just how much baloney the system can take until it gets sick of baloney. I heard about some construction workers who sat down for lunch. One opened his lunch box and unwrapped his sandwich. He started screaming and using some choice words. He said, "I can't believe it! Baloney again! I hate baloney! This is the fourth time this week that I have had baloney. I can't stand baloney!" One of his co-workers said, "Why don't you just tell your wife that you don't like baloney. I am sure she will fix you something else." The fellow replied, "Wife, nothing! I fix my own sandwiches!" The fact of the matter is that most of the baloney in our lives we have put there ourselves. Some people's lives are filled with baloney - they blame other folks because it is there, but the truth is that they have made the choice to fill their lives with a lot of baloney. If you are fed up with all the baloney in your life you need to change your diet. The devil is happy to provide an ample supply of baloney to fill your life. Baloney, all that crazy, foolish, stupid stuff that just bloats and puffs you up is not real life. Jesus came in order to take away all of that baloney. He is the bread of life. He is the source of love, joy and peace. Don't be content in living a life of baloney. Live and feast upon Jesus Christ, the Living Bread. It's your choice. You make your own lunch. Will it be Living Bread or lousy baloney?



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

We had four college kids at our home all weekend. Now that's an education. Sweet kids, but they don't know when to sleep, they are eternally hungry, and they love that 6/36 music (you know the kind I mean - the same 6 words repeated 36 times). We actually had some very stimulating discussions out on the back deck. I had the idea that all young adults were Liberals. These four were staunch Conservatives all. They are deeply concerned about the moral direction of our country, how we can ever pay our national credit card debt, and what's likely to be available for their career-wise when they're ready to go to work. It's a discussion I might have expected to have with a group of my peers, not upper teens and twenty-somethings.

As the weekend wore on my respect deepened for their perspective on important matters. But their concern for the future took a back seat to their attitude toward their present. They confessed that they live absolutely frazzled. They used the term frenzied. They can't keep up. Between classes, work, study time, deadlines,

term papers, band practice, staying fit, and a minimal social life, they hardly have time to breathe, let alone think. I said, "Hey, you kids are still in college and you're stressed already. What's with that?" One of them gave an interesting response. "We've been stressed since we were 5."

I thought about that a lot. He's probably right. T-ball, music camp, dance class, art courses, swimming lessons, piano practice, memory verse drills, soccer games, exercise. And a lot of it by the time they're 5. When do they have time to be kids? When do they have a chance to play make-believe in the back yard? When do they have time to lie on their backs and watch the clouds? Are we pressing our kids out of their childhood? Are we growing a generation of youngsters who haven't had time to think, and make-believe, and dream so they can be ready for life?

Four high-octane collegiate-types for a weekend... like I said, it's an education. Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@rarekids.net.

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 3rd Thursday of every month. Please call Kim Bailey at 706-994-2727 or 706-896-6747 for details.
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 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@hotmail.com.
VFW Post #7807 Fish Fry will be 2nd and 4th Friday of the month, 4:30-7 p.m., \$9 a plate, all you can eat.
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/blueridge-mountains.
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.

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
 Monday at 12 Noon

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.