

# DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Letters to The Editor

### Letter to the Editor

For the third season "Summer's Last Kiss - An Affair With the Arts" lived up to its mission as a community celebration of arts on the Town Square in Hiawassee. Productions of this magnitude take a year to produce and a great many people to pitch in. So the "Kiss Committee" wishes to introduce its members and thank the many who helped make the event fun, festive, safe, and exciting. "Summer's Last Kiss" is an affiliate of the Towns County Tourism Association, and its members are: Deb and Russ Collins, Deb Collins Signature Gallery; Liz Getz, Hallam Construction; Jane Holland, Towns County Tourism Assoc.; Faron King, Coldwell Banker; Rebecca King, Bank of Hiawassee; Katie Polstra, Ramada, Lake Chatuge Lodge; and Susan Wyman, Fain Investments. And yes, all these members work full time and donate time and effort to produce "Summer's Last Kiss".

First, we want to thank Mayor Barbara Mathis and Attorney Rick Stancil for the staunch support they give to this Hiawassee experience. We need to thank the many talented artists who participated in the show, many of whom have already expressed an interest in returning next year. And the food vendors were outstanding for our 2010 event. We also want to thank the U.S. Army Ground Forces rock band, "Loose Cannons" for leaving Fort McPherson at 5AM in order to set up and perform at 11AM. Our own Ryan Acree kicked off the event with his rendition of "I'm Proud to be an American". Susan Vardeman's "Fuzion Dance Company did an outstanding performance, as did Jeremiah and Kyle from Helen, Ga., and Keith and Pat of "Martin Breedlove". Last but not least, Steven Phillips and "Midnight Express" rocked the night for the evening street dance. Ronnie Moffitt did a great job on sound once again.

It basically takes a village to make "Summer's Last Kiss" a success. Police Chief Jimmy Wright, Sheriff's Department personnel, and EMS services all participated. Security detail included Mike Davis and John McCoy. Larry and Coot Owens used their Ranger to pick up supplies and dispose of trash. Dave Phillips sent the covered stage from Fun Factory in Franklin for us to use. Bank of Hiawassee provided lunch for the Army personnel, trash services, and parking while also providing a kid pavilion for activities. United Community Bank also provided a kid activity tent. BRMEMC made sure we had lights and power and put up their big tent for the convenience of visitors. The Ramada Inn Chatuge let us borrow lots of folding chairs and also brought donuts for the artists. The Ridges provided tables and chairs. Scotty Fain opened his office so the Army personnel and the dancers could have a place to change their clothes and Susan Wyman kept the coffee and cold water flowing all the time. Holly Tiger of Anderson's store was supportive of the event, even though it closes the street beside her business. Volunteers, Rosie Hallam, Gail Bertrand, and Carol Lumpkin staffed the gazebo, selling T-shirts and greeting the public. And Judges Ed Ludwig, Brian Grahl, and Susie Hall took on the difficult task of judging the juried art in the show. Jane Holland created an original "Summer's Last Kiss" quilt which was raffled off during the event. The winners of the quilt raffle were Rick and Carol Cook of Mt Dora, FL. They intend to share it with the Art Community in Mt. Dora. Congratulations to them.

And then there were the little helpful things that happened - like Rich Sterba who had the Kettle Corn booth giving cold bottled water to the Army band when our supply was delayed in arriving. And the artist, who didn't even identify himself, who provided lights on stands to help light up the street dance. The camaraderie among all the participants and the enthusiasm of the crowds was the most gratifying thing of all. And so, we thank everyone so much, and look forward to next year.

Sincerely, the "Kiss Committee"

## The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Mark Twain wrote that "travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts." Twain went on to say that "broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime."

I understand the frustrated idealism in the statement, but I think perhaps that the operative word here may be "vegetating." My grandfather, born in 1886, never traveled outside the Southeast, never owned an automobile or even a television, but never was there a more charitable or tolerant individual. He never "vegetated." He observed human behavior; he read voraciously; he prayed constantly and he died peacefully at the age of 98. He was, perhaps, exceptional in his egalitarian views.

Americans have for generations taken pride in being a great "melting pot" of cultures, and nowhere on earth has travel been more ubiquitous than in the United States. Travel is central to our national identity, our perception of freedom and independence and in some cases our very sense of self. Yet a generation after the great civil rights struggles of the 1960's, prejudice persists and we are a nation divided by race, ethnicity, politics and religion; this, despite the efforts of mass media to frame every situation and every comedy as a happy mixture of every race, color, creed and national origin that can fit on a screen.

As for the "melting pot," a recent study based on census data and posted on the Radical Cartography website illustrates the extreme racial and ethnic segregation that persists in our largest cities. With the ability to live anywhere we choose, we choose to live among our "own kind," and humankind is not enough of a distinction for many of us.

Mark Twain hoped that if Americans exposed themselves to different cultures that they would recognize the humanity which joins us all. Yet travel in and of itself does not seem to fulfill his wish. The British Empire at one point in history circled the globe and yet many of the people who lived within the "empire" were considered by the British to be subhuman - not a particularly charitable view. Africans who traveled halfway around the world to America did not consider life on the plantation to be wholesome and their owners, when they were exposed to a foreign culture, attempted to eradicate it.

Prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness display the ability to survive travel and exposure to other cultures. De-

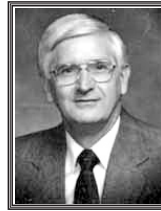
cedes after the desegregation of our schools they appear capable of withstanding even education. These debilitations of the human spirit seem to be hardwired into the animal side of human nature. Genetically identical animals form groups, develop identities separate from their neighbors and compete with each other for territory and resources. This is true of a hive of bees, a pack of wolves, a pride of lions or a herd of elephants.

Is this not also true of humans? Several studies have shown that the human mind is incapable of comprehending more than about 150 meaningful relationships. People outside this group have a tendency to be perceived as "the other," no matter how similar they may be to us. Perhaps this is the determining factor in our astounding ability to create divisions among ourselves. Combine our hardwired perceptual limitations with fear of "the other," and you have the history of the human race in a nutshell.

I'm still inspired by Mark Twain's hope for "broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things." As well as being capable of division, humanity has used religion, education and compassion to overcome the limitations of the human animal. For many it is not the perception of the other but the fear of the other that is the root of the problem and for many, travel provides the opportunity to overcome that fear. For others it is the spiritual journey or the travels of the educated and inquiring mind.

Perhaps there is a cautionary tale to be found in the structure of the human brain. A hundred and fifty individuals is about the size of a small tribe or a clan. Perhaps we achieved the optimum organizational unit for human beings generations ago - and while nations and empires have erased the natural boundaries of the community, we have invented divisions to replace them. While there seems to be little chance of an orderly retreat from the homogenization of cultures, it would behoove us to remember the plagues and infestations endured by the natural world that was brought on by our industrial practice of monoculture. In the final analysis, perhaps our best hope for survival is to be found in a twofold approach: by encouraging diversity and, above all, by teaching tolerance.

Jews and Muslims, although genetically almost identical, have fought each other for ages because of the fear of the same God.



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

A billboard, bumper sticker society

Ours is a very mobile society.

We are a people going to and fro. Millions of people drive millions of miles daily on our expressways, state highways, county roads, country roads and city streets, commuting to work, school, hospitals, sports events, entertainment activities, etc. While driving all of these miles we are exposed to monstrous billboards, marquees, posters, signs, graffiti, and bumper stickers.

We are not only a mobile society, but we are a verbal society. Everyone wants to make a statement to promote, proclaim or protest some person, product, philosophy or some political or religious issue. Some of these messages tempt us to drink, gamble or engage in questionable behavior. Some of these signs are clever, cute, crude and some even cruel in their statements.

Election time multiplies the signs, posters and billboards. Wherever we travel or congregate there is no shortage of signs to influence us to vote, to buy a certain product, to support a cause, or to embrace a philosophy.

Even the atheists have gotten into the act. A couple of weeks ago anti-God and anti-church signs went up around Atlanta encouraging people to sleep in and skip church. The irony of these signs is why would you spend good money fighting something that you don't believe exists in the first place?

The church has always been out front in proclaiming its message in a bold way to

convince people to choose the straight and narrow path.

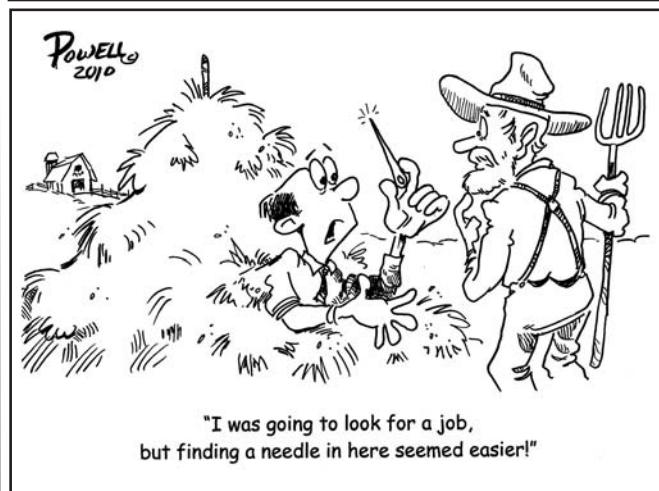
The following messages on church marquees are some of my favorites. For those who dislike their preacher: "To get a better preacher pray for the one you have." For those who are anxious: "Don't worry about tomorrow - you did that yesterday."

For those who complain about the weather: "The weather never changes in hell." For those who are critical: "A sharp tongue and a dull mind are usually found in the same head." For those who curse: "A dam holds water back, it's not my last name" - God.

For those who are frustrated: "Don't give up Moses was once a basket case." For those who don't tithe: "Give God what is right, not what is left." For those who are fearful: "It's risky to go out on a limb - but that's where the fruit is." For those who are tempted: "Forbidden fruit creates many jams."

For those who love Sundays: "Our Sundays are better than Dairy Queen." For computer lovers: "God always answers knee-mail." Long ago the prophet, Habakkuk penned these words: "The Lord said, 'Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.'" (Hab. 2:2) Did you know that we are a living billboard? Everyone is reading us. What kind of message do you convey on the billboard of your life?

For this world that is on the run, can they catch a glimpse of Jesus as they glance at your life? Few people stop and talk theology with us. Therefore, we must proclaim in big bold print the clear message of Jesus on the billboard of our life. While reading the messages of others, don't forget to make your statement about Jesus!



## RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Joe Namath once said, "Until I was 13, I thought my name was shut up!" A lot of kids grow up today feeling that way. No youngster should ever be yelled at. Why? Well, first it's difficult to learn to respect someone who yells at you, and one of your goals as a parent is to build respect between you and your kids.

As hard as it is to admit, we cannot control our kids' behavior. Parents will sometimes come up to me after a talk and say something like, "We have tried to get Cristy to practice her piano, but she just refuses to do it." Try as you will - threaten, withhold privileges, badger, scold, nag, and shout - you cannot force Cristy to do what she has decided she isn't going to do.

Parents are leaders and good leaders don't shout. Good leaders don't call names. Good leaders give clear instructions without a lot of explanation and they expect obedience. Kids are most apt to be obedient to parents they respect and admire, not to those who lose their cool and go into a rant.

Another reason parents don't yell at their kids is because part of a parent's role is to teach their youngster to respond positively to authority. One of the reasons school achievement tests have dropped significantly over the last thirty years - in spite of smaller class sizes - is because today's children are not coming to school ready to learn and follow orders.

There was a time in this country when a teacher might have forty or fifty first-graders in her room, by herself. Today she is more apt to have twenty or thirty and an aid or two. Why? Today's children are more apt to come to school without respect for authority, and huge amounts of the teacher's time is absorbed with disciplinary issues rather than teaching. Don't blame the teacher.

So, give your orders once and walk away. But what if they disobey? That's our topic for next time.

Submit your parenting questions to: DrDon@RareKids.net

### 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 E-MAILED 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.**

## Community Calendar

**Towns County Water Board Meeting** 3rd Monday of each month at 6 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. Please call Kim Bailey at 706-994-2727 or 706-896-6747 for details.  
**Towns County Republican Party** meets the 4th Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Daniels Steak House. Dinner at 6 p.m., 706-896-7281.  
**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 Hiwassee 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 Health Dept. Call Eden at 706-896-6921.  
**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, mtnregartscraftsguild.org, mtnregartscraftsguild@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.  
**Old Fashioned Square Dance Lessons** each Mon. in Hiawassee, GA, 6 p.m. at the Senior Center (2 blocks south of the town square, beside the Court-house) Hiawassee, GA 706-896-1060  
**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.  
**Mended Hearts Support Group** meets the 2nd Monday of each month at Chatuge Regional Hospital Cafeteria from 5:30-7 PM. For information contact 706-994-6988.  
**We do Family Oral History** of all of our residents. If you have not had your family history recorded ad would like to do so, Please call the Towns County Historical Society at 706-896-1060.  
**Fall Storytime** at Towns County Public Library Thursdays at 1 PM.

## Towns County Herald

Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

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