

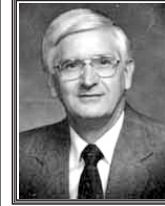
DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

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The Middle Path

by Don Perry



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

a number of people are trying to figure out how to leave their mark in life there is another group of people that looks at life as being a big question mark. They just can't seem to solve the mystery of what life is about. To them life is made up of columns of red marks and black marks that measure progress or failure. Lots of young people have been pressured and led to believe that if they get high marks in school then life will be successful. Although, I encourage every person to achieve the best marks possible in their studies, that by no means guarantees a successful life. Some of the most productive people in history did not finish anywhere near the top in their class. And then I meet those people who live in fear of the dreaded mark of the beast in Revelation. They are consumed with fear that they may be here to face the beast and the mark. Well, life is not about marks but about a Master. Who your master is will determine your success or failure as well as your eternal destiny. The high water mark for all of God's creation came when Jesus died on a cross outside the city walls of Jerusalem. The + marks the spot where life defeated death. God marked up (raised the worth) on all mankind when Jesus arose from His tomb to declare eternal life to all who receive Christ Jesus as their Master. You don't have to worry about all of life's marks if you carry God's trade mark on your life.

We are watching with great interest the protests which began at Wall Street, spread across the country and are now resonating in capital cities across the western world. Protestors carrying signs reading "We are the 99%" are attempting to bring attention to the worsening economic conditions of the vast majority of people while a small minority enjoys record profit.

These numbers are not new to longtime readers of this column. We dusted off the word "oligarchy" almost seven years ago and predicted that economic pressures would lead to protest and unrest. That was a "no brainer," as they say, but we have been puzzled that it has taken so long for an awareness of economic inequity to reach the mainstream consciousness.

It is interesting to observe politicians attempting to probe this popular uprising for anything they can turn to their own advantage. Obama and the democrats, or at least the democrats still supporting him, would like to claim the "99%" as their own. It would be an ironic twist if Obama, a Goldman Sachs asset whose first order of business upon taking office was to bail out the financial sector, should be able to successfully posture this unlikely position. Professional politicians are chameleons, but I don't think our memories are that short, or that the republicans will allow us to forget Obama's ill-concealed Wall Street agenda which surfaced on the heels of his populist campaign rhetoric.

On the other side of the aisle the republican front runner, Herman Cain, has so far attempted to identify with voters who may be uncomfortable with the protests. With characteristic candor he said, "Don't blame Wall Street; don't blame the big banks. If you don't have a job and you're not rich, blame yourself."

A good counterpoint to Cain's statement was given by Elizabeth Warren, who pointed out that "There is nobody in this country who got rich on his own... You built a factory out there - good for you. But I want to be clear. You moved your goods to market on the roads the rest of us paid for. You hired workers the rest of us paid to educate."

As is so often the case in any conflict, we believe that the truth is to be found somewhere between the extremes, and if the truth were more widely known the protestors would be occupying Pennsylvania Avenue instead of Wall Street. Let's begin with the budget proposed by Obama, which is in the neighborhood of \$3.6 trillion dollars. In 2011 the government will receive about \$2.2 trillion in tax revenue. If 100% of all corporate profits were absorbed by the government, the budget would still not be balanced, although the economy would be devastated by the impact to the businesses which create jobs. In 2011 the government will receive approximately \$1.2 trillion in income taxes. If this amount were doubled, there would still be a deficit of about \$400 billion and once again the economy,

which depends on consumption, would be destroyed by millions of consumers with less money to spend.

Neither of the above scenarios is realistic. They are given only to illustrate the fact that the solution to the economic problems we now face is beyond the reach of taxation. Government's solution to the deficit problem for several Congresses, democratic and republican, has been to create more money out of thin air. Every time this happens, the money we use to buy food and fuel and all the necessities of life, is devalued. Prices go up.

But what about the fact that, while the vast majority of us have seen our economic power decline, a small minority is enjoying record profit? The numbers are clear on this point, and the reasons can be found in the advantages gained by corporations through years of lobbying and the revolving doors between government and corporate offices. A problem? Certainly. An injustice in need of addressing? Absolutely. But is this the solution to our economic malaise? Not at all.

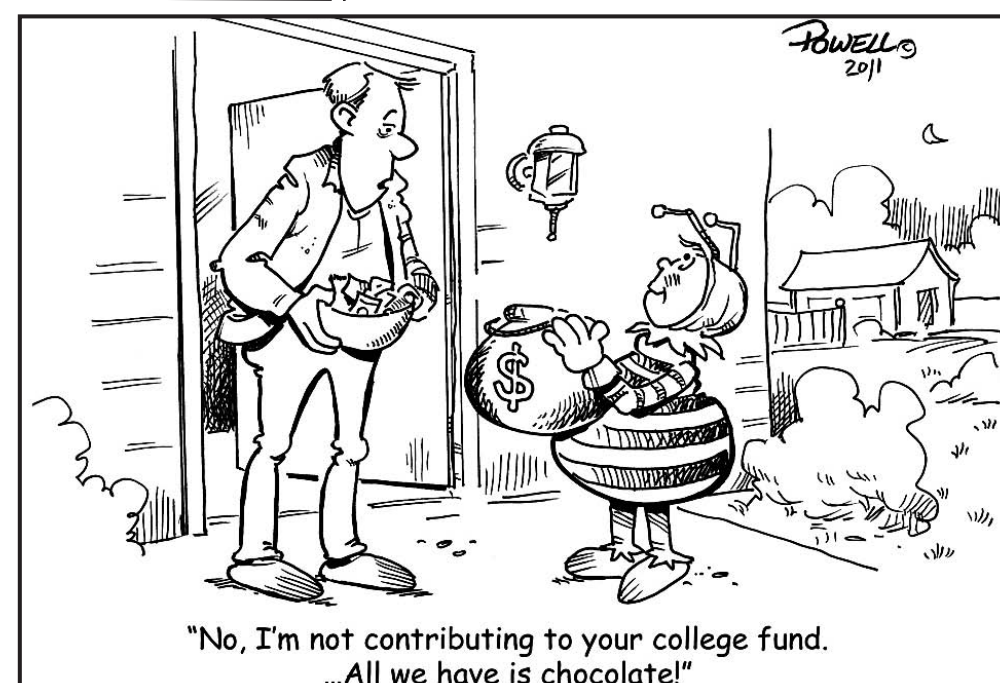
The problem, as we see it, is systemic. It did not develop overnight and the solution will not be forthcoming within a single political cycle. The problem is not entirely business and it is not entirely government. It is business embedded within government and it is government corrupted by the influence of greed and lust for power. Human organizations, over time, are changed by those who learn to modify them for personal advantage. Personal advantage need not be some kind of misappropriation of funds or resources. It might simply be the addiction to wielding power and spending money, even if that money belongs to someone else. How many small companies have been bankrupted by managers who, though they did not steal company funds, spent money beyond the company's means? Spending money is fun. Wielding power is fun, especially when it is done from a position insulated from the consequences of one's actions. Our elected representatives spend money and wield power and few if any of them feel the consequences of those actions beyond voter opinion. These activities can be addictive, and addicts will go to extraordinary means to support their habit. Witness the wide range of behaviors exhibited by our leaders in their efforts to stay in office.

A simple long term solution to the problem may be in removing the opportunity for participants in our system to become addicted to that participation. Term limits would go a long way towards accomplishing that. Requiring elected officials to live under the same rules as citizens would remove the insulating layers between government and the governed. Our permanent class of professional politicians is incapable of healing our unhealthy system in much the same way that a sick patient has little success self-medicating to heal a sickness.

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.

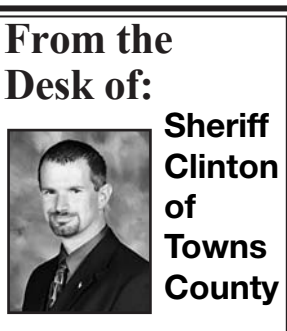
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE EMAILED OR MAILED TO: Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net. Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper 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.



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Sen. Jim Butterworth, Georgia State Senate, 404-651-7738
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From the Desk of: Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

the best air will be closest to the floor.

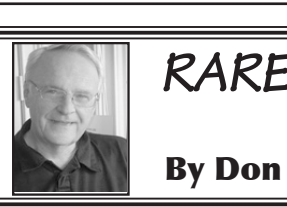
3) Be careful to give heaters and fireplaces plenty of space. Placing combustible material close to a heat source can cause it to ignite and start a fire.

4) Your family should have an escape plan in place, in case of a fire. You should practice this plan with your family so that everyone is familiar with it. A good plan should include two escape routes from any room in the home. You should designate a place to meet outside. Once out of the fire, stay out.

5) "Stop, Drop, and Roll!" By now most of you have heard of this. If your clothing catches fire stop, and drop to the ground, and roll. This is the best way to smother the flames. It is a good idea to cover your face with your hands to protect your face and lungs from smoke and flames.

6) Candles and cooking often cause house fires. Be careful with any heat source. Never allow combustible materials to get too close to heat or flame. Always monitor any open flame and do not allow candles or other flames to go unattended.

These are just basic tips. They are not meant to take the place of diligent planning on your part. They are offered as possible safety tips to help protect your family, and encourage you to have a proper fire safety plan. If you need help forming a plan, the Sheriff's Office will be glad to assist you.



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE By Don Jacobsen

Q: Dr. Don, are you really against any pills for any kids at any time? In a recent column you made it sound like it. Don't you think we can trust our doctor?

A: Thanks for your question. It gives me the opportunity to make sure you didn't hear me say something I didn't say.

Two of the most dangerous words in medicine are "always" and "never." Pills are not always, or never, the right answer. Pills can be over-used or abused, but pills can also be a responsible and necessary choice, especially when it comes to children. Pills can save lives by fighting infection or supporting nutrition. Pills relieve pain and inflammation. Pills help manage blood sugar levels.

But here's a major caveat. Pills can lend themselves to taking short cuts. Sometimes it's easier to take a pill than to exercise the discipline needed to lose weight, for instance, or address behavior problems, or cut cholesterol. I have a close friend who is diabetic but who chooses to eat all the sugar he craves and then take insulin to help stabilize his blood sugar. Sometimes a pill knowingly covers an excuse.

Now the other question, whether you can trust your

doctor. "I don't say you can "always" or "never" trust your doctor; frank conversations with your doctor are essential. What he or she recommends for your youngster (diet and exercise for instance) is often very different from what the patient wants (a pill). You may feel - or your doctor may suggest - the value of a second opinion.

On top of that, much of the research on new medications is done by the universities of our land, and much of that research is funded by pharmaceutical companies, the very companies which produce and sell the medications. Your doctor receives a blizzard of reports on new drugs and must decide which are the most likely to help and at the same time are least apt to have unwanted side effects. Your physician must make a multitude of decisions every time he/she sees a patient. Remember, as a parent you are the final decision-maker and your doctor is your trained coach. As you consider healthcare for your children, do not hesitate to initiate those kinds of open discussions with your physician that can build trust.

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

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