

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Letters to The Editor

### Why I choose to live in North Georgia...

**Dear Editor,**  
I am proud to be a part of the nonprofit charity that, with the help of our wonderful community, provides Christmas for children who are in or have been in foster care. For fourteen years this charity has grown with people agreeing to sponsor foster children who might not have a Christmas without their generosity. Despite the depressed economy, each year the number of people willing to help these children has grown.

But this year, my amazement has grown. You see, things get pretty hectic when we arrange to have children's gifts picked up or delivered in time for "Santa's" visit on Christmas Eve. This year we helped Santa with special wishes for 98 children in Towns and Union Counties. Somehow, in all the rush, a very important present fell by the side of the road without anyone knowing. Now, this present was quite big and wrapped in pretty Christmas wrapping. Some good Samaritan found the gift and decided that it was for a foster child. They took their time to bring the large present to the DFCS office. The package was still in the pretty wrapping, unopened! I was notified about the gift and quickly knew what child had not received their important present. I contacted the foster mom and learned that she had commented to her husband that morning that the baby was outgrowing his car seat and they would need to purchase one soon.

Because of the honesty of our good Samaritan, this little fellow will ride safely in his new seat.

This gift was delivered unopened and in perfect condition. The gift had accompanying paperwork indicating that it was quite expensive and purchased at Walmart. It would have been easy to return the gift for money, but our Samaritan did what was right and good. I wish I knew who this person was, as I would love to meet the person that gave me yet another reason to be grateful that I live in this wonderful, caring community.

Pat Elliott

### Towns & Union Foster Children's Christmas Program

#### Lucky come home!!!

**Dear Editor,**  
About noon on Thursday, January 9th our little dog, Lucky, disappeared while helping me work in the woods near the Gumlog Church. Circumstantial evidence leads us to conclude that someone lured him into a vehicle near 6054 Gumlog Road and drove away.

Lucky is a Jack Russell Terrier, 18-20 pounds. He is pure white with a brown head and a dark spot in front of each ear. His tail had been docked and he is unneutered. He is highly energetic, moves at top speed and is rarely still.

We rescued Lucky three years ago when the driver of a dark gray Dodge Ram pickup pushed him into a busy highway and drove off leaving a terrified little dog to be run over or perish in freezing weather. We gave him a good home off the pavement with several hundred acres on which to run (and boy did he ever run). He is a very affectionate little fellow and a favorite activity was sitting on laps in the same position as a human child. Thus he became our "Dog Baby." He loved us.

We hope that Lucky is still alive and is being kept somewhere in this area. We also believe that some readers know or will learn where he is (likely in someone's house, yard or vehicle). We reluctantly concede that there are cruel, perverse sub humans roaming these mountains who care little or nothing about other people, much less about dogs. However, we know from experience there are also many kind, compassionate persons and we hope you are one of those. Call us at (706) 745-5388 if you have any information about Lucky's whereabouts. When we have safely recovered Little Lucky, we will offer you a generous cash reward in the hundreds of dollars.

Ron & Carol Gibson, (706) 745-5388



**RARE KIDS; WELL DONE**  
By Don Jacobsen

With seven friends in his white Ford pickup, 16-year-old Ethan Couch sped away from the Wal-Mart store in Burleson, TX, where they had just stolen some beer. A short party later they brazenly headed back for more. Ethan's blood level was now at three times the legal limit, and on a dark Texas road he and his friends were only minutes from a horrific tragedy.

Breanna Mitchell, 24, was driving home that night when her car stalled in front of the Boyles' residence. Hollie Boyles and her 21-year-old daughter, Shelby, came out to the street to see if they could help. Brian Jennings, a 43-year-old youth pastor from a nearby church, stopped to lend a hand as well.

Ethan's pickup plowed into the stalled car at 70 mph, killing all four of the people standing near it. Two passengers were thrown from the bed of the careening pickup; one barely escaped with his life, the other is paralyzed and can neither move nor communicate except

by blinking his eyes. Ethan was not seriously injured.

Sounds like the plot of a bad B-grade Halloween movie; unfortunately the story is true. The teen pled guilty to four counts of manslaughter and two counts of assault causing bodily injury. Open and shut case, right? Texas law provides for up to twenty years of prison time in such a case. Ethan Couch was not sentenced to any prison time. None. Rather he was given 10-years probation. Here's how it went down.

The defense argued that Couch himself was a victim; psychologist Gary D. Miller testified that Couch was suffering from "affluenza." Although not an illness recognized by the American Psychiatric Association, "affluenza" is informally described as a condition that could afflict someone from a wealthy background so they did not understand that bad behavior has consequences and that they are therefore not responsible for their actions. Ethan had lived such a privileged life,

### Executive Director of RC&D



### 2014 Firewise and Fire Adapted Communities

The Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council promotes projects that help the citizens of the 13 counties in NE Georgia improve their lives, standard of living and promotes economic development. What better way to accomplish this goal than to make homes, businesses, property, and lives safe from uncontrolled wildfire. Chest/Chatt RC&D is the Southeastern hub and administrator for the Fire Adapted Communities pilot program in our area. Chest/Chatt also was awarded a grant to enhance and improve the existing Firewise programs here in NE Georgia as well as to recruit more communities that want to protect their resident's property by reducing their risk of wildfire.

The Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program has been one of my main themes for the past year and for good reason, it works to save your property, your stuff, your cat, dogs, and maybe even your life. The Firewise program in Towns County is leading Georgia in the number of certified Firewise Communities with 9 certified and 3 more in process. Georgia has 49 total making Towns a major player in the Georgia Firewise program.

Chest/Chatt's success with helping communities is why we were awarded one of the 8 national Fire Adapted Communities Pilot projects last year to be developed in Towns County and when completed will be spread to our neighbors all across NE Georgia. The Towns FAC is the only Fire Adapted Pilot Hub east of the Mississippi River with the next closest one in Minnesota. Firewise is one of the main components of Fire Adapted. The success of this program is due to the close cooperation of our agency partners; Towns Commissioner, Georgia Forestry Commission, US Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, Towns Fire Rescue, Watershed

Miller argued, he was unable to understand or control his behavior and therefore should not be held responsible.

OK, I get it. I am not responsible for my actions because my family has so much money. Or has so little money? Or has so little education? Or so much? Even our court system - at least in one part of Texas - has decided that because my life has been unique I am not responsible. Fortunately, as Leadership Parents you and I know better.

Send 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.**

Training Center, and most of all, you the citizens who recognize the dangers all around where we live and who want to do something to reduce these risks. Wildfire calls in Towns County have dropped 75% since the Firewise program was started in 2009. Think of the money that this reduction has saved, not to mention property and lives!

The Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program is a process that empowers neighbors to work together in reducing their wildfire risk. Join the growing network of more than 1,000 recognized Firewise communities taking action and ownership in preparing and protecting their homes against the threat of wildfire.

Using a five-step process, communities develop an action plan that guides residential risk reduction activities, while engaging and encouraging neighbors to become active participants in building a safer place to live. Neighborhoods throughout the United States are embracing the benefits of becoming a recognized Firewise Community - and you can too!

The following steps will get your community started and on their way to receiving their official Firewise Communities USA recognition status, and the honor of proudly displaying their own signage along with many other benefits. The five steps of Firewise recognition: 1. Obtain a wildfire risk assessment as a written document from Georgia Forestry Commission. 2. Form a board or committee, and create an action plan based on the assessment. We help you do this. 3. Conduct a "Firewise Day" event. We furnish a chipper to chip the debris around your homes. 4. Invest a minimum of \$2 per capita in local Firewise actions for the year. \$0 - All In-Kind labor. 5. Submit an application to your state Firewise liaison. We help you do this also. We do the hard work with the paperwork and all you have to do is organize your community, and drag your brush and limbs to the curb and help us "Feed the Chipper" and enjoy the feeling of reducing the risk of the wildfire that will come.

Take the Firewise Challenge. Wildfires happen. It's not a matter of if, but when. Are you prepared? Join us in our mission to add more of our NE Georgia communities to the 1,000 safer places in the US.

Frank M. Riley, Jr. CE/ Executive Director - Firewise/Chattahoochee RC&D Council. For more information on Firewise/Fire Adapted Communities or any other community improvement programs, contact the Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council, by our web site [www.chestchattcrd.org](http://www.chestchattcrd.org) or [frank.ccrd@gmail.com](mailto:frank.ccrd@gmail.com).


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Governor Nathan Deal, Georgia State Capitol Atlanta, GA 30334, 404-656-1776  
Sen. Johnny Isakson, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, 202-224-3643  
Sen. Saxby Chambliss, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, 202-224-3521  
U.S. Congressman Doug Collins, 9th District, Washington, DC 20515, 202-225-9893  
Rep. Stephen Allison, Georgia House of Representatives, 404-656-0177 or 0185  
Sen. John Wilkinson, Georgia State Senate, 404-463-5257  
Towns County Commissioner Bill Kendall, 706-896-2276  
Clerk of Superior Court Cecil Dye, 706-896-2130  
Tax Commissioner Bruce Rogers, 706-896-2267  
Magistrate/Probate Judge David Rogers, 706-896-3467  
Sheriff Chris Clinton, 706-896-4444  
Coroner Tashina Eller, 706-489-9519  
Enotah Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley, 706-896-6489  
Board of Education: 706-896-2279, Michael Anderson, Donna Hedden, Jerry Taylor, Bob Gibby, Emily Phillips. Superintendent: Melissa Williams  
Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis, 706-896-2202  
Hiawassee City Council: Janet Allen, Jay Chastain, Joan Crothers, Steven Smith, Pat Smith  
Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby, 706-379-3171  
Young Harris City Council: Terry Ingram, John Kelley, Donald Keys, Matthew Miller, Stuart Miller, David Sellers



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

There are three relatively modern products that have made life more practical and productive than anything that has been discovered or developed in the last two hundred years (maybe a little exaggerated). These three products hold things together that need to be held together, loosened things that need to be loosened and substituted for more things than you can count. In general, they help to solve more practical, every day problems than all technology combined. We know them as W-D 40, Duct Tape and Velcro.


I am a firm believer in all three products. I got to thinking about Velcro and thought that I would do a little research on the internet concerning its history. My personal thoughts were that it was developed by some good-ole-country boy who got the idea from "beggar's lice" (Mickey Cummings can give you the technical term). However, I was wrong. It was the idea of a Swiss engineer, Georges de Mestral, who, along with his dog, had gone for a walk in the woods and he wondered if the "burrs" that fastened on to his trousers and his dog's fur could be turned into something useful. Thus, Velcro. While that may be the true, brief history of Velcro, "beggar's lice"

is every bit as tenacious as Velcro. As a young boy who loved to spend time in God's creation I have had numerous confrontations with "beggar's lice." It would latch on to your shoe laces, socks, pants, shirt and even get in your hair. You didn't just "brush off" "beggar's lice." You had to pick it off, piece by piece, by piece. It could be a time-consuming process. It would even stick to your fingers sometimes. In fact, it seemed to be magnetic. If you didn't dispose of it some distance from you, it might be right back on your clothing.

"Beggar's lice" reminds me of sin. As you journey through life, all at once you discover you are covered in sin. Bad habits, evil, wickedness, yea, sin has fastened onto you and you are impotent to remove it. Unlike "beggar's lice" sin cannot be pulled off, brushed off, worked off, it must be washed off through the cleansing of Christ. As we enter and journey through this new year let us be alert as to the path that we are travelling so that we don't end the year covered in sin. The following is good advice for the new year.

"Be careful of your thoughts, for your thoughts become your words; Be careful of your words, for your words become your deeds; Be careful of your deeds, for your deeds become your habits; Be careful of your habits, for your habits become your character; Be careful of your character, for your character becomes your destiny."  
-Anonymous

**From the Desk of:**



**Sheriff Clinton of Towns County**

### Property crimes

Property crimes such as thefts, burglary, stolen vehicles, etc., are increasing in many areas of the country. It can be very frightening to return to your home or business after being away to find that your property has been entered and your personal items stolen or damaged. You can help protect yourself and aid your Sheriff's Office in finding the criminals and recovering your property if you follow these practices for safety and security recommended by the Georgia Sheriffs' Association:

When you return to your home or business, always do a quick visual inspection for signs of forced entry. These signs may include broken windows, removal of screens, doors kicked in, or locks damaged. If you see signs of forced entry, do not enter. It is important that you stay outside of the building. Call 9-1-1 immediately, but try to do so

from a safe location, such as a neighbor's house or your own vehicle. If necessary, leave and drive to a safe location.

Do not enter the building without law enforcement. When they arrive, advise them of any weapons, animals, alarms, or dangerous conditions in the building.

They will let you know when it is safe to re-enter your home or business. When they do, don't touch anything without first asking. Try to do a walk-through with the deputy to advise of any stolen or damaged items.

If you enter your home or business before noting signs of a burglary, leave immediately and call 9-1-1.

If you return to your vehicle and see signs of damage, entry, or theft, call 9-1-1 immediately, and do not touch anything. You can help your Sheriff's Office recover your property by providing as much information as possible on any stolen items, such as complete descriptions, make, model, color, or any serial numbers or identifying marks. It is often helpful to also make a video or photo journal of valuable items and provide it to the deputy in charge of your case. Ask your insurance company if they recommend inscribing identifying marks on electronics or other valuable items, such as lawn equipment. (TJan15.H1)SH



**"At last! It looks like recovery is just around the corner!"**

**Towns County Herald**  
*Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County*

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