

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Executive Director of RC&D

Frank Riley



The Chest/Chatt RC&D's mission is to "Assist local people in planning and carrying out activities that conserve natural resources, support economic development, enhance the environment, and improve the standard of living for all citizens". One service that Chest/Chatt RC&D offers is to provide information and links to Local, State, and Federal Government programs, services, and agencies where help is available for farmers, ranchers and forestland managers. Below is a News Release from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that may be of interest to some readers.

"ATHENS, GA, (Jan. 15, 2013)--James E. Tillman, Sr., State Conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Georgia today announced a sign-up for specific initiatives under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) - applications are due by Feb. 15.

EQIP is a voluntary program that funds conservation practices based on state identified natural resource concerns. The specific initiatives being funded under this sign-up are: on-farm energy, seasonal high tunnels, organic operations and longleaf pine. Some of the benefits of these special initiatives through EQIP offered by the NRCS include:

On-Farm Energy Initiative: helps producers conserve energy on their operations.

Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative: helps producers install high tunnels designed to extend

the growing season into the cold months, increase productivity, keep plants at a steady temperature and conserve water and energy.

Organic Initiative: helps producers to install conservation practices on certified organic operations or those working toward organic certification.

Longleaf Pine Initiative: helps producers in the implementation of conservation practices including planting longleaf pine, installing firebreaks, conducting prescribed burning and controlling invasive plants.

"The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) offers farmers, ranchers and forestland managers a variety of options to conserve natural resources while boosting production on their lands," State Conservationist Tillman said. "This financial assistance for conservation investment helps improve environmental health and the economy of Georgia rural communities."

Interested producers should visit their local NRCS office for information on this sign-up period. Applications are taken on a continuous basis but only those applications received by the cutoff will be considered for this sign-up. To participate in EQIP, an applicant must be an individual, entity or joint operation that meets EQIP eligibility criteria.

For more information about EQIP or other technical or financial assistance programs offered by NRCS, please contact your local service center: offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?agency=nrscs."

Frank Riley is Executive Director of the Chestatee/Chat-tahoochee RC&D Council.

For more information on Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council, visit our web site www.chestchattcrd.org or Phone our office at 706-894-1591 or email susan.cercd@gmail.com. You can also check us out on our facebook page at www.facebook.com/cercd.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Since driving is something I do on a regular basis, I observe a lot of behavior related to the choices people make while driving. I have long believed that driving habits can be a window into a person's character. When we are behind the wheel of an automobile, we often feel insulated from the consequences of our choices. Consider the number of DUI's and speeding tickets handed out each year. We also feel somewhat anonymous behind our tinted windows and locked doors, free to indulge in behaviors that we would never consider with our feet on the ground.

How often have you observed the following: Driving through a neighborhood you encounter a car parked in the opposite lane, blocking or partially blocking that lane? As you slow down to better gauge the potential hazard, a car traveling in the opposite direction, instead of waiting for you to clear the bottleneck, accelerates into your right of way, forcing you to wait to avoid a collision.

We have all witnessed worse on the Interstate, where frustration and aggressive behavior are the norms. But in a residential neighborhood? What about a rural area such as ours, where people have supposedly come to enjoy a more relaxed lifestyle? How often have you, traveling at or above the posted speed limit, been passed on a double yellow line traveling from Helen to Hiawassee? How often has someone pulled out in front of you when you were the only two cars on the road? How often has someone attached their vehicle to your bumper, even when you were traveling in a line of cars with no option to pass? How often have you seen someone blow by a pedestrian in the crosswalk between our post office and the hardware store?

I have heard such behavior excused as our natural tendency to be "competitive." It is not competition. Competition exists when all participants play by the same rules. It is, in fact, aggression, not competition

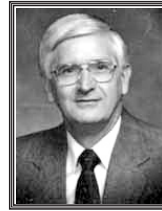
that we often exhibit when we feel safely cocooned in our automobiles.

Competition and aggression are ingrained in our way of life. Impatience is an understandable if not excusable reaction to our stressful schedules. However, when we make aggressive decisions, especially when those decisions endanger or inconvenience our fellow citizens, we are inflating our sense of self-importance beyond all reason. Life has a way of correcting that misconception, and the lessons can be as harsh as our actions are selfish.

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

What day is this?
A man and his wife sat down for their morning breakfast. The wife proceeded to ask her husband a very disturbing question. She said, "You do know what today is don't you?" Being a thoughtful, loving husband, his answer was, "Yes." However, he had no clue as to what day it was. He thought of birthdays, anniversaries and every holiday on the calendar shot through his mind, but to no avail. Fortunately, his wife did not pursue the conversation and the husband was off the hot seat for the time being. He rushed off to work knowing that when he returned home he had better know what today is. About 10 a.m. the wife received a love telegram from her husband. At 1 p.m. she received a dozen red roses from her husband. As the clock struck three a delivery truck arrived with a very expensive outfit, suit, shoes and all. When the husband arrived home he was greeted with the most excited wife you have ever seen. She said, "Honey, I have had the most wonderful Ground Hog Day of my whole life." It pays in more ways than one to know what day today is. Like the husband, there are multitudes who have no clue about today. They live life today with a hit or miss plan. The significance of life and living seems to be a hidden mystery to them. In numerous households, both husbands and wives get up in the morning, hit the highways and fight traffic to their employment. Many of them struggle through their work without any satisfaction; dreading go-

ing home, cooking, helping children with homework, doing laundry and sometimes without any appreciation from children or spouses. They go to bed depressed, fearing the sound of the alarm that signals the cycle to begin all over again. There are massive numbers of men and women who face each new day with the only goal to make a living rather than living a life. Someone has said that each morning puts a man on trial and each evening passes judgment. What day is today? Today may very well be the rest of your life. Albert Schweitzer prayed this morning prayer. "Here, Lord is my life. I place it on the altar today. Use it as you will." What is today? "It is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps.118:24). What is today? "Today is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). We are to recognize this is the day the Lord has made and we resolve to be happy in it. We are to receive today the gift of salvation. What day is today? It could very well be the exit day from time to eternity. Today, you could be with God in heaven or you could be in darkness and blackness separated from God. Henry Clay Trumbull said, "Today is, for all that we know, the opportunity and occasion of our lives. On what we say or do today may depend the success and completeness of our entire life struggle. It is for us, therefore, to use every moment of today as if our very eternity were dependent upon its words and deeds." Since our days are numbered and today could be our day of reckoning, today, is the day to hear His voice and experience abundant life. Yes, there are dog days and ground hog days on the calendar but God has on His calendar heavenly days for all who will receive them. Won't you make this a red-letter day in your life by seeing the light of day?

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen



You may have read the recent report indicting soda pop and sweetened juices as contributing to the mental condition called teenage depression. The design of the research was impressive, though it missed some significant issues. We've talked before in this column about some of the negative effects of the high consumption of soda drinks. If you can replace just one sweet drink each day with water, in a year your youngster will have consumed 50,000 calories less than if that drink had been soda pop. Other things being equal, that's probably at least one pants size, reason enough to help Junior build some good judgment into his diet regarding what he drinks.

But this new investigation opens up a whole different window. Research from Norway, a linear study involving some 50,000 young adults, demonstrated that among the young people who drank four such drinks each day there was a 33% higher chance they would experience bouts of depression. To the surprise of many, it didn't matter whether the drink was sugar sweetened or artificially sweetened, the results were virtually the same. Neither did it matter whether the beverage was soda or sweetened fruit juice. That's a pretty potent incrimination of non-

water drinks.

Now let me be absolutely honest and describe a weakness I see in the research - the study didn't factor in whether it was the drinking of the suspect beverages that created a higher incidence of depression, or whether those who were already prone to depression were more apt to drink the questionable drinks. Kind of a chicken-and-egg thing.

Still, the larger question is, Does it really matter? If there is a correlation of any kind between sweetened beverages and depression then I want to take seriously the threat that linkage creates. If my youngster isn't prone to depression I am motivated to keep him off of them so he doesn't become depressive. If he already inclines to times of severe moodiness or depression I am highly motivated to keep him off soda pop so the depression doesn't worsen. Either way, water wins hands down.

In fact, when I recall the relationship between soda and childhood obesity, bad dental health, asthma, muscular development, now bad mental health, and a host of other undesirable side effects it convinces me that water is the true drink of champions.

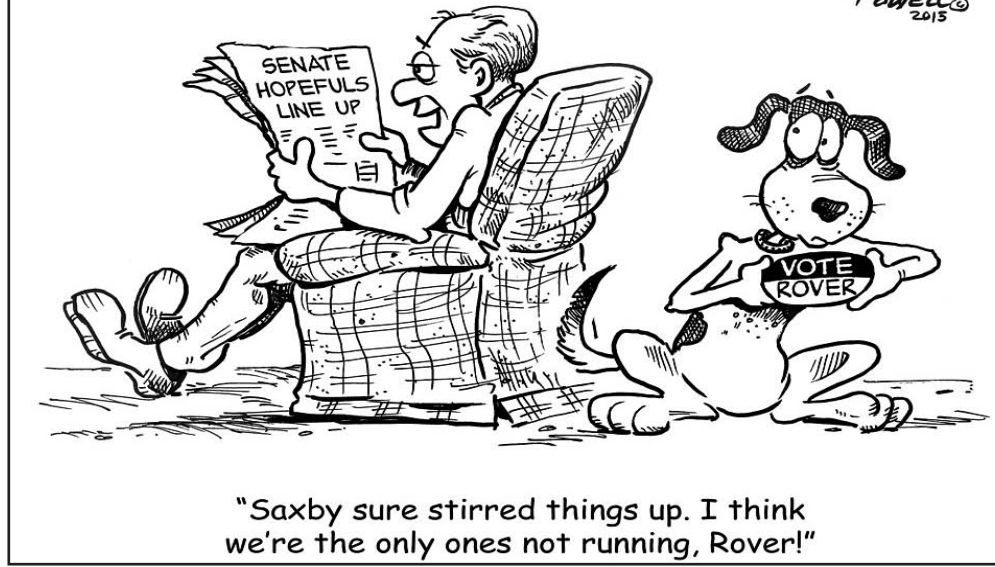
Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@RareKids.net.

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 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.



Community Calendar

American Legion Post 23 meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 4 PM at VFW Post 7807, Sunnyside Rd., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-8387 for details. We need your support!
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 at 5 PM at the Senior Center. Please call Kim Bailey at 706-994-2727 or 706-896-6747 for details.
Towns County Republican Party meets at 6:30 PM the 2nd Thursday of each month at Daniels Steak House. For more info call 706-379-1371.
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 in Murphy. Call Kit: 706-492-5253 or Peggy: 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.
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 Hi-

awassee at 5:30 p.m. Annual dues \$15, PO Box 1182, Hiawassee, GA. We do oral family histories of residents. 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org
Bridge Players intermediate level meets at 12:30 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Rec Center.
Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG) meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at ArtWorks Artisan Centre, Hiawassee. Refreshments at 6 p.m., meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Call us by 706-896-0932 or mtnregartsandcraftsguild.org.
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/blueridgemountains.
Alcoholics Anonymous: 24 hour phone line 828-837-4440.
Mothers of Preschoolers meets the third Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church of Blairsville from 6 - 8 p.m. Call the church at 706-745-2469.
Chattahoochee 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 3 p.m. Thursdays at Pine Log Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Brasstown. Ping Pong players welcome. Call Jerry (828) 837-7658.
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.
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 are encouraged to attend. For more info call Carol at 706-896-6407.
The Appalachian Shrine Club meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Allegheny Lodge in Blairsville. For more info call William 706-994-6177.
Georgia Mountain Writers Club meets at St. Francis of Assisi Church the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 AM.
GMREC Garden Tours every Monday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Shooting Creek Basket Weavers meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at the Shooting Creek Fire Hall Community Center. For more info www.shootingcreekbasketweavers.com.
Friendship Community Club meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6 PM at Clubhouse, 1625 Hwy. 76, 706-896-3637.
Goldwing Road Riders meets the 3rd Saturday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse in Hiawassee. We eat at 11 and meeting begins at 12.
Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meets every Wednesday evenings at 7 PM at the Red Cross building (up the hill from the chamber office on Jack Dayton Circle).
Caregiver support group meets 2nd Tuesday of each month, 3 p.m. at Brasstown Manor, located at 108 Church St., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-4285 for more info.
Enchanted Valley Square Dance Club. Dances 2nd & 4th Fridays at Hiawassee Senior Ctr. from 7-9 PM. \$5/person to dance. Free to watch. Call 706-379-2191.

Towns County Herald

Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

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