

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

The Apathetic American Voter

Recently I had the opportunity to participate in a number of political discussions. I am 45 years old and find that most people my age are glad to vote, if they have the time and don't have something better to do. The older generation likes to shame the younger ones about not voting, telling them it is their patriotic duty to go out and vote. Too many people died giving us the right to vote the die-hard patriots tell us. I often wonder how these pious people, young and old, decide for whom to cast their ballots. Don't get me wrong, I believe they think they are doing their patriotic duty by voting, but if our founders could see us now, I wonder if they'd agree.

Winston Churchill once said, "The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter." I believe he was right. The founding fathers believed that the welfare of our country was best served by an educated, informed, invested electorate. Of course they also got to decide who were educated, and they thought only land owners had an "investment" in the welfare of our country. But they were right on the premise that the voter should be educated, informed, and invested. Being an American citizen makes us "invested". We hire these people, pay them and expect them to run our government using our tax dollars wisely. Yes, I would say we are all "invested". But how have we educated ourselves on these candidates?

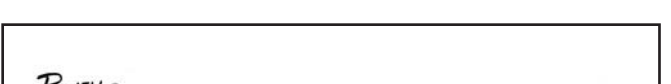
The typical voter goes into the voting booth not having a clue about the candidates they are choosing. This week I spoke to a man who considers himself a well-educated, informed citizen. He even voted on the first day of early voting in the primaries. When asked about a certain race, he said, "I didn't like the incumbent. I didn't like him the last time he ran. But I didn't know the other guy, so I voted for the incumbent anyway." So, that's how we do it Mr. Educated Voter? But is "Mr. Ed" (it seems to fit) any different from the guy who votes against every incumbent. My brother loves the saying, "Politicians are like diapers. They get dirty and need to be changed often". He votes a straight anti-incumbent ticket and will until they start getting it right in Washington. He believes that our country was not supposed to have "Career Politicians", that's why they created "terms" and called them "representatives". They are supposed to know and represent the ones who sent them there.

So here in North Georgia the average salary of the working person is under \$40k. Yet we pay \$174,000 for each US Senator and each US Congressman we sent to Washington last year. Nearly 50% of our US House and Senate are composed of lawyers, compared to less than 1% of the general population (according to the American Bar Association). Thomas Jefferson observed correctly, "If the present Congress errs in too much talking, how can it be otherwise in a body to which the people send one hundred and fifty lawyers, whose trade it is to question everything, yield nothing, and talk by the hour?" Well, I believe old Tom was correct then and today. We still send a bunch of lawyers, they still talk a lot and get nothing done. But isn't that our fault for sending them? Do we assume because they are educated, that we don't have to be educated on the issues?

How do we choose these people? I listened intently at a recent forum to all the candidates speak. The incumbents are an interesting lot. They get up (several lawyers in the mix) and take credit for everything good that has happened in the two or more years since they were elected. Most of which they had nothing to do with, but of course the uninformed voter doesn't know that. As I sat there I wondered, if I had hired any other employee two or more years ago, should they even have to tell me how great they are? Shouldn't I already know, if they had done such a great job? The challengers were not near as "polished". They want to get their message out, but don't have anywhere close to the money or staff that the incumbents have. Most of the incumbents were smooth talking politicians. They seemed like nice guys who can give a great speech. So this is how we choose?

But do I vote against them just because they are an incumbent? I admit 83% of the American public disapprove of how they are doing their job and we would certainly fire any employee who had accomplished so little and been so reckless with our money. But how is that any better than voting for them because you recognize their name or see their signs littering the roads? I refuse to sit back and be that apathetic ignorant voter anymore. I pledge to hire my next representative, exactly as I would hire a manager to run my company. I will see what they've accomplished before their political careers. I will see what kind of person they are and if they have taken any money from groups to help them get hired. I will see if they are a true representative of who I am and what I believe in. Won't you join me in becoming an educated voter?

Suzanne Crews



"All I hear are babies crying on another political ad!"



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

Passing of the porch

Today my mind wandered back about twenty-five years ago when I was visiting Mr. Jay Lance. As we sat on his porch on a beautiful, warm spring day he said, "Preacher", "I have always wanted two things in life: A wide front porch where I could sit in a rocking chair, prop my feet on the banisters, and not be bothered by someone wanting to get by me; they would have plenty of room to walk behind me; the second thing I wanted was a well with good water." He certainly had a good wide porch but his well water didn't turn out very good. Remembering that conversation I found myself drifting back to my childhood days when I enjoyed sitting on the porch with my dad, mom, sisters and brothers. In the summer, sitting on the porch, we would shell peas, shuck corn, string beans, peel peaches and apples, chop cabbage, clean blackberries and prepare food for the winter for our family of eight. Our front porch was a place of activity. The porch had a large swing suspended from the beaded ceiling. It was occupied in the summer months, both day and night. Occasionally, the chains on the swing would get dry where they hung from the hooks and would make a terrible scraping noise. However, a "glob of lard" left over from the winter would silence the noise. The porch had several chairs for visitors and also a wooden barber's chair that customers sat in while my dad cut their hair at 25 cents a head. With four sons, Dad got a lot of practice on our heads. I always dreaded those early haircuts when Dad used those old hand clippers that pulled out almost as much hair as they cut. During my dad's leisure time he occupied himself by carving monkeys out of peach seeds, which he sold to the tourists that visited the Tennessee Copper Company where he was employed. He finally sold enough monkeys at 50 cents apiece to buy a set of electric clippers. Boy, was I ever glad.

The front porch also served as a beauty salon where my mom and two sisters would take turns cutting each other's hair and putting in home permanents. The front porch was the place where we discussed theology

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.

with the neighbors and revival preachers that visited the community. Not only did preachers frequent the front porch, but we also had our share of peddlers to come calling. They would lay out their wares of Fuller brushes, or those good smelling Watkins products. I can still smell those boxes of pie fillings. Other peddlers were more into the medicinal line of products with magical creams that would remove freckles and warts. Their most famous salves, Rose Bud and Cloverine would heal any wound, bite, cut or infection. On occasions we would have local politicians visit the front porch soliciting my parents votes during the next election. At night the front porch served as an educational station where dad and mom would answer questions about the moon, stars, galaxies and God's wondrous creation as the crickets and katydids played background music. Sometimes we just sat quietly observing shooting stars while we ate homemade ice cream squares that had been frozen in ice trays. As my two sisters grew older, the porch became a romantic setting for courting at night. I must admit that it was very difficult for any young man to steal a kiss with four brothers on patrol. It was always a joy to entertain your relatives and neighbors during the day or at night on the front porch. Well, there are not many porches left, but I often wonder if there will not be a porch in heaven where I can sit down with Dad, Mom and Jesus and welcome the saints that stroll down the golden streets to come and sit-a-spell as we glorify God. Won't it be wonderful there!



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE
By Don Jacobsen

Q: Dear Dr. Don, our 11-year-old is lazy. I know that's not politically correct language, but that's what it is. We can't get him to do anything around the house. His room is a pig sty and he won't do his chores even though we beg till we're blue. Is this an 11-year-old thing that he'll get over?

A: Yes, it's an "11-year-old thing." But it can also be a 5-year-old thing and a 16-year-old thing. And a 29-year-old thing. But it's a really important thing and I applaud you for not just looking the other way. A very wise man - the Apostle Paul, actually - had some strong sentiments on the issue, too. He said, "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." Please note that I am NOT suggesting that parents withhold food as a means of punishment.

Paul was talking to adults and dealing with what had become an entitlement mentality in the early Christian church.

But I believe, as my Aussie friends would say, he was spot-on. The principle: If a person doesn't carry his/her share of the load they should be made to feel uncomfortable. And the earlier we get

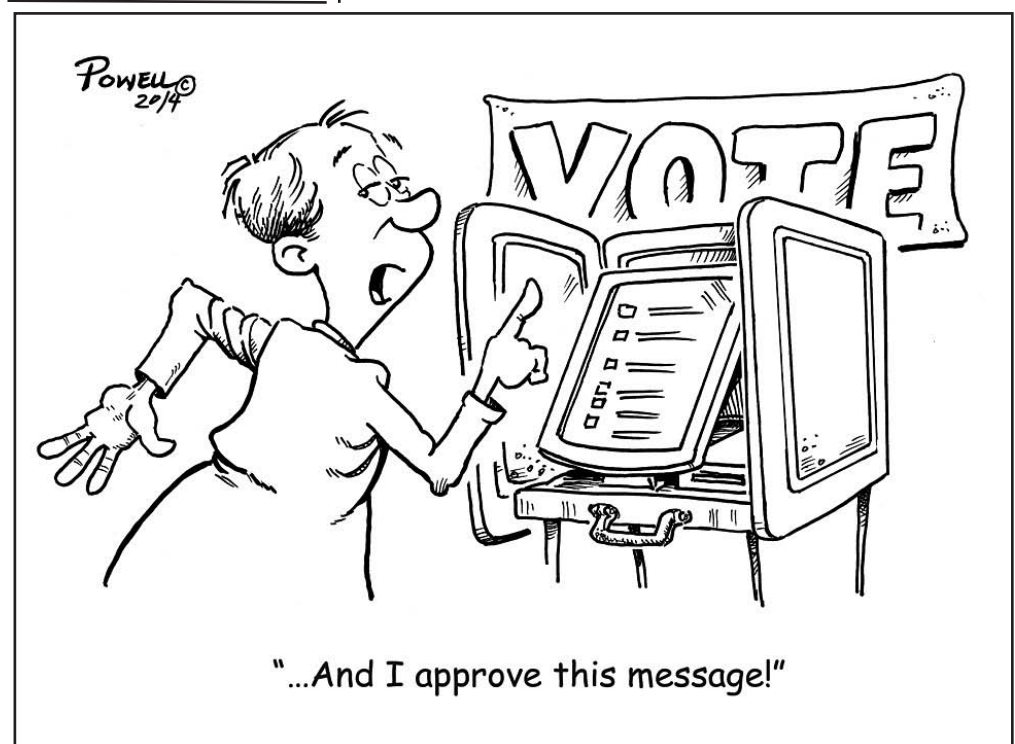
a handle on that rule with our kids the less apt they are to still be freeloading when they're 29. Ignoring instructions from mom and dad is a learned skill so we can speed up the un-learning process too.

So, tell your son, just once, that you want him to take out the trash. Then leave the room. Don't threaten, plead, or bargain. If he ignores you, take out the trash yourself. But the next time he wants to do something he enjoys, for instance, use his iPad, tell him that he has lost the use of it for a week. Or his cell phone. Or his bike. Or his skateboard. Whatever will get his attention. Don't give in if he cries, yells, or otherwise makes his discomfort known. In fact, tell him that anytime he fusses, it adds another day to the penalty.

Explain that there's a new sheriff in town and that from this day forward he is expected to carry his share of the responsibilities or there will be a memorable consequence. In a couple of weeks or so he will begin to remember about the new sheriff thing. Hard core cases may take a bit longer but he'll eventually get it. Providing...that you don't waver.

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"...And I approve this message!"

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 1 p.m.
Towns County Republican Party meets at 6:30 PM the 4th Thursday of each month at the new Senior Center. For more info call 706-994-3919.
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 Hiawassee 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 mtngarts-craftsguild.org.
Mountain Computer User Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month in Young Harris. Meetings start at 6 p.m. and visitors are welcome. A "Q & A" session follows. Details can be found at www.mcug.org.
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 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 the third Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church of Blairsville from 6 - 8 p.m. Call the church at 706-745-2469.
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 3 p.m. Thursdays at Pine Log Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Brasstown. Ping Pong players welcome. Call Jerry (828) 837-7658.
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. 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 Cadence Bank 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.shootingcreek-basketweavers.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 Towns Co. Rec. Ctr. from 7-9 PM. \$5/person to dance. Free to watch.
Brasstown Woodturners Guild meets 1st Saturday of month at 9:30 AM in HHS shop. For more info call J. C. at 706-896-5711.
VFW Post #7807 will be hosting a fish fry their 2nd & 4th Fridays of each month April - October. \$9. all you can eat from 4:30 - 7 PM.
Mountain Amateur Radio Club (MARC) meets 6:30 PM the 1st Monday of month at 1298 Jack Dayton Cir. (next to EMS), Hiawassee. For info call Al 706-896-9614 after 6 PM.

Towns County Herald
Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

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