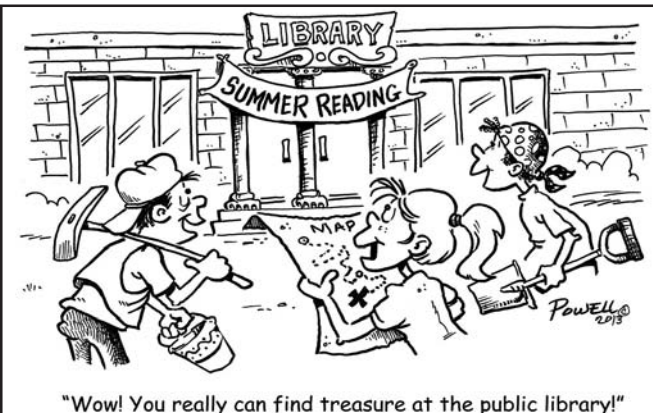


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



The Middle Path

by Don Perry

We all seek balance in our own way. When we are overexposed to politics, scandal and disaster, we seek escape in entertainment. After a hard day at the office and bad news on every screen, our spirits seek relief. An hour or two watching a situation comedy on television or chatting with friends on facebook can go a long way towards putting us back in good humor.

The problem with the previous paragraph is that so many can read it without noticing that anything is amiss. The center of gravity for our culture currently resides somewhere in the pixelated world of flat screen televisions and smart phones. Our national identity and even our sense of self is often now a projection of virtual reality.

My own path towards balance has been headed back outdoors lately. This past weekend it merged with a surprising number of hikers who either ignored or embraced the rain to feel the earth under their feet and escape the ubiquitous hum of technology (although most new outdoor clothing now comes with media pockets.)

Had I not been able to escape the tyranny of the television these past few weeks, here is a sample of what I might have missed. The cool, wet Spring has been reminiscent of weather that was once common in the North Georgia mountains. The high country is filled with the music of running water. An abundance of flowering plants and trees have decorated the hillsides. Morning mists have lifted each day to reveal crystal blue skies. Everything that can green is verdant. Everything that blooms is blossoming.

All of our dramas will one day turn to dust, but long before we came and long after we have gone, water will drip from branches, streams will run into rivers and rivers will flow into the sea. It won't be long before these cool days and brisk nights give way to the rising thermostat, the biting insects and the stifling haze of summer. While there is still time, turn off the television; put the smartphone in the drawer and switch off the radio. Close the book and put the newspaper under the birdcage. Get outside and breathe. Take a walk in the woods and feel the earth moving under your feet. Dangle your toes in the stream.

Don't forget to post it all on facebook.

We don't have enough holidays in America. Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas, sometimes New Year's Day, constitute the bulk of our official time away from work - a half dozen days off for 260 days in the salt mines.

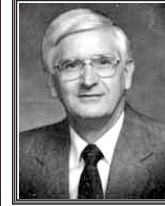
A day off from work is like a pressure relief valve, and Americans describe being under ever increasing pressure at work

and in the intervening hours away from the office. With the energy we have left over after work we compress the rest of our lives into a few hours at home between commutes, kid maintenance, grocery shopping, the doctor, the dentist and the bank. Weekends can become an almost desperate attempt to make our lives look at least a little bit like the happy and prosperous people in the commercials, but the laundry has to be done, the oil changed in the truck and the kids must be home and in bed by 10 o'clock Sunday night, ready for the school day on Monday.

On Monday we start looking forward to Saturday. On Sunday night we look forward to the next holiday and hope for a long weekend. By the time the holiday rolls around our anticipation is high, and driven by the knowledge that we have a limited time to visit the relatives, barbecue with the friends and take the kids to the lake, we pour onto the highways in a flood of pent up expectations.

Anyone who has ever waited at an airport during Christmas, driven on the freeway during Thanksgiving or tried to get in or out of Hiawassee on Memorial Day Weekend can relate to what I'm saying.

So I say again: We need more holidays. One per month would be sufficient. In this way we could more evenly distribute throughout the year the driving, the shopping, the preparation and the cleanup that sometimes makes going back to work after a holiday a relief. Perhaps we might even be able to capture a few hours for ourselves, a few hours of peace, unencumbered by any sense of obligation to be anywhere or do anything - a real holiday.



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

A time to weep

Growing up here in the mountains most of us were told or we heard some of our friends told, "Nobody loves a cry baby." When you stubbed a toe, had to have a tooth pulled or a large briar removed from your hand or foot, the only anesthesia was verbal. Mostly, it came in the form of this phrase: "Grit your teeth, son." Later, I found out why you were told to do this. You see, it is impossible for you to scream with your teeth welded shut. I confess that I always had trouble trying to grit my teeth when my dad was fixing to jerk out a loose tooth with a string. While it is commendable to be strong, "to grin and bear it," sometimes it may be more courageous to cry. Occasionally, I encounter an individual who is an emotional wreck. They have gone through some traumatic tragedy and some well-meaning person has said, "Oh, be brave, don't cry." These people have no understanding of the therapy of timely tears. There is a time to weep and a time to mourn said the preacher of Ecclesiastes 3:4. Jesus, the most manly man that has ever lived was not ashamed to cry. He mourned over the city of Jerusalem. He wept at the grave of Lazarus. Luke records that one day a woman came to Jesus and anointed him not only with expensive ointment, but anointed his feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Not once did Jesus ever instruct her not to cry (Luke 7:37ff). The Psalmist said that God knew his restlessness, his wonderings and tossings. He

said that God had put his tears in a bottle (Psalm 56:8). God knows our hurts, our losses, our loneliness, the heartbreaks and the heartaches of life. He hears our cries and takes note of our tears. Jeremiah is sometimes referred to as the weeping prophet. He wanted to weep day and night for his wayward people (Jer.9:1). Paul in his letter to the Corinthians said, "I wrote unto you with many tears..." (II Cor. 2:4). The great need for many Christians in America is to weep over their own sins in deep repentance, and to weep for lost humanity. We certainly need to weep with those who weep. The Psalmist said, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Psalm 126:5). Someday we will die to cry no more. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes..." (Rev. 21:4). There is a time to shed timely tears. Lately, I have shed tears as I have watched and listened to our neighbors in Moore, Oklahoma. I have cried tears of joy as I witnessed families reunited and cried tears of sorrow as I listened to the sobs and heart-break of those who lost spouses, parents, children, siblings and property. I thank God that I have enough feeling of love that I am able to weep for others. However, we not only need to sympathize and empathize with these thousands of broken lives but we need to minister in a tangible way of assisting with money, food, clothing, housing and a thousand other ways to be the hands and arms for Christ on earth. There is a time to weep but there is a time to work, witness and walk with the wounded and broken lives of humanity. These wounded who have been stripped of all hope need someone with skin on to speak and minister to them. I know we have and will continue to do so.

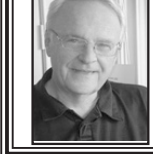
Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor: The Friends of the Libraries of Towns County had an amazing fund raiser on May 18 at Moschetto's Restaurant. The goal of the event was \$10,000 for the purchase of a portable computer lab for both libraries in Towns County.

In addition to the patrons who bid on the 70-plus donated silent auction items, we would like to send a resounding thank you to all of our community and FOLTC sponsors: A Head of Hair, Al Supplee, Ann's Lakefront Cabins, Arne's Auto Service, Art of Gold Gallery, Associated Fire Protection, Barbara Ide, Beaded Bunny Hill, Bill Bates Photo Art, Bi-Lo, Black Tie & Tails Dog Groomers, Blairsville Cinema, Brasstown Valley Resort, Brothers Restaurant, Candace Lee, Candy Schlarb, Castoff Pet Rescue, Classy Groundcovers, Clothes Rack, Copper Door, CR Consulting, Donna Howell, Fieldstone Cinema and Resort, The Herb Crib, Ingles of Hiawassee, Jack Grashof, Jacky Jones Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep; Jim & Trish Reynolds, Joan Crothers, Joe Garner, John & Jan Roberts, Judith & Leon Lee, Kaylor's Auto Detailing, Kim's Korner Nail Salon, Licklog Players, Lovely Nails (Blairsville), Marilyn Brown, Marsha Aunspaugh, Mary's Southern Grill, Maureen & Ted Gustafson, Meg Nisi, Mike's Hair Design, Monte Alban (Hiawassee), Moschetto's, Movers & Shakers, Nifty Needles, Noblet's, Operation Pup, Pat LaBarr, Peacock Playhouse, Radio 95.1, Rebekah Lee Ricardo, Sandy Hazen, Sandy & David Kraft, Sheriff Chris Clinton, Suzie Adelman, Sweet Tooth Bakery, T.A.T.A. and Seas, Tammy Wells, Tastefully Simple, Tiffany's Clutter, Tiffany's Glass, Tina Gray, The Barn, The Cutting Edge Salon, The Gold Academy, The Ridges Resort, The Wine Cottage, Total Salon Concepts, Towns County Chamber of Commerce, A to Z, Trackrock Campground, Trackrock Stables, United Community Bank (Hiawassee), Young Harris Florist, Young Harris Pharmacy, Younger-U Center for Wellness and William Holland School of Lapidary Arts.

Although as of the date of this writing, we do not have any total financial figures, we are quite sure that we have raised at least one-half of the \$10,000 goal. Once again, thanks to all who participated. Without the support of these individuals and businesses, the Libraries of Towns County would have difficulty serving the residents of the county in the manner we strive to achieve.

Friends of the Libraries of Towns County



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE By Don Jacobsen

Did you notice that America recently celebrated National Marriage Week? I'm not surprised if you didn't notice, hardly anyone else did, either. Turned out to be a kind of a non-event. Nobody spent much energy to bring it to our attention, and I don't think the media even realized they missed it. Including Fox. Marriage seems to have been taken over by a huge case of calculated indifference.

For instance: Today three out of every four women in the U.S. have lived with a partner without being married by the age of 30, an astonishing trend that suggests cohabitation is the "new normal" for family life in the U.S.

When I was growing up, two people living together but not married was scandalous. It was called common law marriage. The normal track was that a guy would have a girlfriend - or several - then choose one, maybe in his late teens or early twenties, and "go steady" for a year or two, fall in love, get engaged, then get married. Quaint, huh?

I know, some view cohabitation as a way of test-driving a relationship to see if a wedding will work. But that's world-class dumb. Think about taking a relationship as momentous as "two people becoming one" and continuing

to serialize it till one day you hope to get it right. Whatever happened to wisdom, good judgment, discernment, divine guidance?

I've heard all the arguments, like: "Well, the sex drive is strongest in the mid-to late teens; how can we expect these kids to contain themselves?" But remember, that's the way we're designed. Do you suppose the Creator decided: "OK, here's a strong drive; if we let it flower in this young man it will give his friends opportunity to see whether he has the character to manage it. That'll help his fiancé decide whether she'll be able to trust him later."

One of the reasons why marriage has fallen out of favor is that it has few champions in our culture. Our houses of worship need to be equipping our youth to learn how to make their relationships work, to know what it is to make a promise and keep it, "in the presence of God and these witnesses." Mom, dad, you and I need to begin early to position marriage as the most precious, the most sacred relationship that can exist between two unselfish and self-disciplined people who love each other unconditionally.

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

GUEST COLUMNS

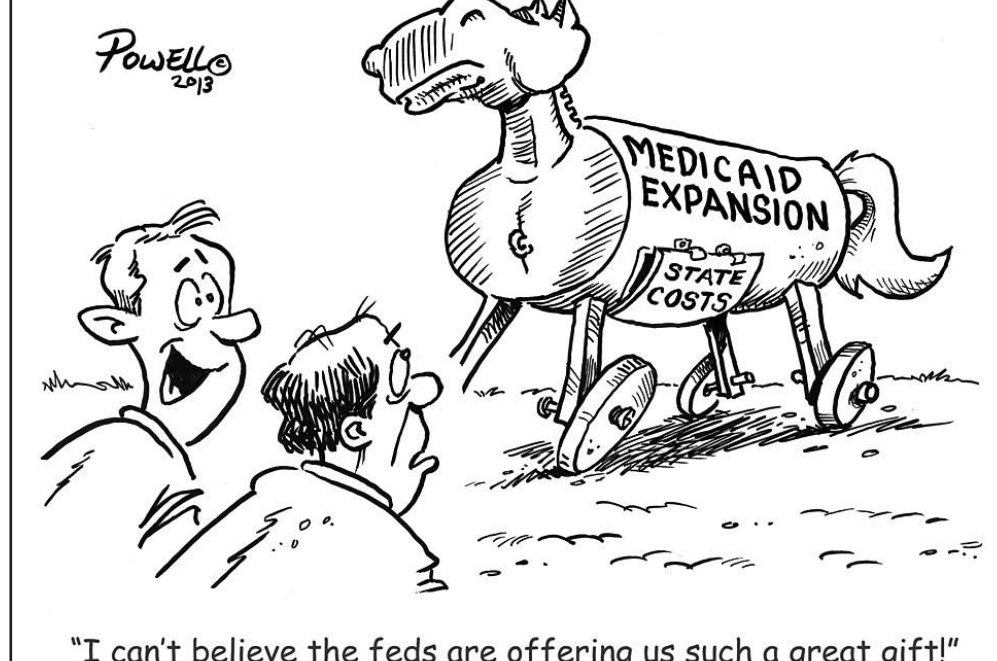
From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear 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.

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 Hiwassee 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).

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 mtntregarts-craftsguild.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 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.

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.

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. 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.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 Hiawassee Senior Ctr. from 7-9 PM. \$5/person to dance. Free to watch. Call 706-379-2191.

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 they 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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