

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



The Middle Path

by Don Perry

You might be surprised by the amount of research that forms the basis of an opinion for these articles. We try to be aware of the often elusive difference between fact and interpretation. We all experience reality through the filters of our own experiences and prejudices - and in the age of information every prejudice imaginable is available to anyone with access to the web. The technology that brings us unprecedented access to information is often less a means of discovering truth and more a tool for reinforcing belief. Whatever it is that you want to believe (or are afraid not to) you can find support for it on the Internet or in the electronic media.

A downside to using the Internet and corporate media for research is the "other ingredients" which accompany the medicine. Scholarly studies are certainly available. You can read scientific journals and research papers to your heart's content, but when there is a need to follow current events you must plunge into a bubbling vat of information reminiscent of the popular energy drinks with names like, "Full Throttle," "Zipfizz," "Monster," and "Red Bull," (though "bull" comes in all colors in the media.) Soap selling media gives us information that is imminent and dangerous: "North Georgia today experienced the hottest temperatures IN 48 HOURS!!" Soap selling media selects information designed to capture that part of our attention that slows down to rubberneck at the scene of an accident: Live reports with police tape in the background have become a nightly indigestive aid for many.

With a constant background noise of daily disaster, we reach a crescendo of negativity and misinformation in an election year. Truth has become the first casualty of the political campaign. The Obama and the Romney campaigns are BOTH lying, though the candidates themselves can sit at a comfortable distance from the fray and disavow any responsibility for their respective political action committees. The remarkable thing is that the campaigns are lying with impunity. Fact check organizations are abundant and the debunked claims of both campaigns are many - but where is the outrage, or even the interest on the part of the voting public?

Perhaps campaign managers have realized a sad truth of the human condition, which is that we are more comfortable with belief than with truth. The search for truth requires personal responsibility. Truth takes work. With belief, someone else has done the work for us. In religion we are often more comfortable with someone else's interpretation of reality. In politics, we are more comfortable with the candidate that presents an image more in tune with our own beliefs and prejudices. In America we

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:

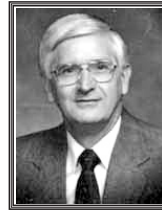
Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net. Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial 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.

have been conditioned to believe that politics and religion are inseparable and in both, we accept the facts which support our preconceived notions and reject the facts that don't.

The two (or two and a half) party system is failing us, and while we angrily defend party lines and parrot talking points, dividing into camps guarded by passions often reserved for sporting events, our pockets continue to be picked by a bloated system that exists primarily to perpetuate itself. If I lament the coercive powers of government I am labeled a tea partier. If I express a belief that what people do with their personal lives in the privacy of their own homes is no government's business, I am called a Libertarian. If I think that society should secure the health and the dignity of the aged, the weak and the infirm, then I must be a Liberal. If I express a belief that capitalism (without the cronies) is vital to the economy then I am pegged as a conservative. If I believe all of these things I will not find a home in any political party.

I have never seen the country so polarized by phantom beliefs, by the loosely fitting labels of conservative, liberal, democrat or republican. I have seen friendships end this year because one person liked the pepsi candidate and the other preferred coke. Shakespeare wrote that life is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. But our lives are not insignificant. Our families and friendships, our dreams and our hopes, our faith and our love - are not insignificant - and yet we allow our tale to be told by idiots; parasites who will say anything to sell soap, tell any lie to get elected and spin any tale to keep us content.

Recently I was asked by a friend familiar with my disaffection for the election process whether I planned to vote this year. Absolutely and emphatically, yes. I would encourage everyone to vote, but to do so without the emotional baggage. It matters very much that we continue to vote. It matters less who we vote for - until our society is able to produce better choices. More on that next week.



"IT'S ON MY MIND.."

Danny H. Parris

A whole lot of pulling going on

Dentists are not the only ones doing a lot of pulling these days. Both democrats and republicans are pulling out all the stops. Instead of using their resources to pull this nation together they seem to be pulling out of thin air every dirty, destructive and damaging thing they can come up with to pull us apart. What has happened to "pulling together?" The question that used to be asked was, "Who are you pulling for in the election?" "What team are you pulling for, etc.?" Nowadays, it is "Who are you pulling against?" What has happened to representation? From rural townships, to large cities and to the nation's capital we have elected officials who evidently think that they have the ultimate power to say whether a chicken restaurant can locate in their city, whether a mother can breast feed or bottle feed her child; whether you can buy popcorn in a movie theater and whether it can be buttered or not; what foods you can eat and how much; and what you can drink and how many ounces. Personally, I think some of these governors, mayors, senators, representatives, etc., have pulled a muscle in their brain. In my opinion, the grass roots of America need to pull the plug on their power and flat pull the rug out from under them along with their outrageous salaries and exorbitant retirements. There doesn't seem to be any "underdogs" in politics anymore. They all want to be "big dogs". Most of us like to pull for the underdog, but it is hard to pull for a big dog. Some of these big dogs need to be put on a leash and pulled in. Decades

ago when I started to school there were a few teachers who would pull your ear to get you to listen, or some kid behind you who wanted to pull your hair; I didn't like my ear pulled, nor my hair pulled and I resent anyone, anywhere who thinks they can pull the wool over my eyes. But to be honest and frank I believe that we have placed in office some leaders that are insultingly arrogant, cocky and feel they are accountable to no one. They have no concept of servant leadership. I realize that we still have a few honest men and women who are servant leaders, but they are in the minority. We are over balanced to the bad side which has put our nation on a dangerous slope. We certainly don't need to be intimidated by elected officials and jump in bed and pull the covers over our heads like frightened children who have heard a ghost story. We need to stand firm in our Christian teachings and voice our concerns without pulling any punches. We have too many politicians that are "Pull hitters". They want to pull everything to their advantage without considering their constituents. I have always believed in pulling my own weight and helping as much as possible those who are not able to pull their weight. But the "weight pullers" seem to be growing less and less which is going to break down the wagon. Friends, it is not time to pull up stakes and forsake our convictions. Politicians are not going to pull some magic out of a hat to solve this world's problems. If we pull through, we must pull together and pull rank on anyone who tries to pull a fast one on America. I am not trying to pull strings, or pull your leg, but if we pull up to a higher level it will be like pulling teeth.

Let me pull on your heart strings and ask you to pull on God's heart strings. Jesus alone ever lives to make intercession for us.

Letters to The Editor

Letter to the Editor re: Water rescue exercise on Lake Chatuge:

I was part of an interesting and very worthwhile water rescue exercise this past Tuesday that demonstrated how many great volunteers we have here in the mountains. Local participants included the Towns County EMS, 911 Center, Fire & Rescue teams, Sheriff's Department, Commissioner Bill Kendall and the Northeast Georgia Coast Guard Auxiliary flotilla. Other agencies playing a critical role were Georgia DNR, Clay County's Water Rescue & Dive Team and North Carolina DNR. All personnel representing the various public safety agencies appeared to be professional, adaptable, and displayed positive attitudes. The teamwork and spirit of cooperation was obvious. These drills are very important because they help the first responders identify strengths and challenges that need to be addressed, and its clear that the Towns County Dive Team needs to upgrade some of their equipment. The public needs to be aware that our Towns County Fire & Rescue Dive Team is made up of many volunteers and operates on limited resources. Please help the Towns County Fire Corps raise funds for needed equipment.

We are all indebted to those who put much time and effort into planning this training. The formal training, education and experience of those who spent their time planning this exercise is invaluable. Towns County Georgia, Clay County North Carolina and all our visitors should be thankful for such professional and dedicated first responders who are ready, willing and able to assist in the case of genuine need, which occurs when we least expect. Once again, the decency, positive attitudes and humility exhibited by each and every professional I observed in the exercise should be recognized.

I sincerely thank each and every person who put forth time and effort to ensure this valuable exercise could happen. This type of training cannot be replicated on a computer or in a classroom.

Thank You,
 Scott Drummond
 Semper Paratus



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

I'm angry, very angry. I'm angry that my country has moved so far from what made it great - and seems determined to continue moving in that direction. You've never read a word in this column dealing with political issues. You will not read one today. This column is about kids and about the kind of national legacy you and I are getting ready to hand off to the next generation.

American justice demands that no business shall discriminate in its hiring practices or its services against a person on the basis of their ethnic origin, religious beliefs or lack of them, or their personal sexual preferences. As an American I am proud of that position, proud that it's in our national DNA. Countless patriots have died to make sure that it stays there. It's part of our "One nation under God" heritage that was bequeathed to us when we as a nation were born.

So please tell me, when did we decide to allow elected government officials to deny the granting of a license to a company to do business in their city because the president of that company personally believes in the historical, biblical definition of marriage as being between a man and a woman? Keep your eye on

the Chik-fil-A flap that's going on; it is a bellwether of much that has gone wrong with America the Beautiful. Has it become dangerous to speak as a Christian?

Here's my reason for raising the issue. Are you as a parent ready to have this conversation with your family? "Kids, we need to apologize to you. Mom and I inherited a pretty amazing country, unique in all of recorded history. It was great because it was built on principles that made it great - honor, integrity, morality, love for God and others, hard work, compassion. But on our watch we let much of it get away from us. The country we will be giving to you is not the country that was given to us. If our Forefathers (and Foremothers) could see what their creation has become they would likely rise up and launch another Revolution..."

A recent Rasmussen poll reports that just 14% of America's parents believe their children's world will be better than their own, so my concerns are shared by many. Let's you and I, then, be more fervent about handing off these key values and the reasons behind them to our kids - while we still have time.

Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@RareKids.net

Community Calendar

American Legion Post 23 meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM at VFW Post 7807, Sunnyside Rd., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-8387 for details. We need your support!
Towns County Water Board Meetings 3rd Monday of each month at 7 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 Hiwassee River Valley Kennel Club meetings are held at 7 p.m. the 1st Monday of each month at Brother's Restaurant on Hwy 64 in Murphy, NC. Call President Kit Miracle: 706-492-5253 or Peggy Moorman: 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.
Board of Voter Registrars meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 4:30 p.m., Courthouse.
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 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org
Bridge Players intermediate level meets at 12:45 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Recreation Dept.
Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG) meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at ArtWorks Artisan Centre, located at 308 Big Sky Drive (behind the Holiday Inn), Hiawassee. Refreshments at 6 p.m. & the meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Contact us by calling 706-896-0932, mtnregartscraftsguild.org. mtnregartscraftsguild@hotmail.com.
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/blueridge-mountains.
Alcoholics Anonymous: 24 hour phone line 828-837-4440.
Mothers of Preschoolers meets on the third Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church of Blairsville from 6 - 8 p.m. Call the church office at 706-745-2469 for more information.
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 6 p.m. Thursdays at Pine Log Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Brasstown. Ping Pong players welcome. Call Lee (828) 389-0924.

We do Family Oral History of all of our residents. If you have not had your family history recorded and would like to do so, please call the Towns County Historical Society at 706-896-1060.
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.
GMREC Native Plant Garden Tours: Mondays 9 AM-1 PM. May-Sept. (except holidays). 706-745-2655.
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 of those with dementia are encouraged to attend. For further information, 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.
VFW Post 7807 will have their all you can eat fish fry on the 2nd & 4th Fridays of each month from 4:30 to 7 PM. \$9 a plate. See you there!
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. All welcome. 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.

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