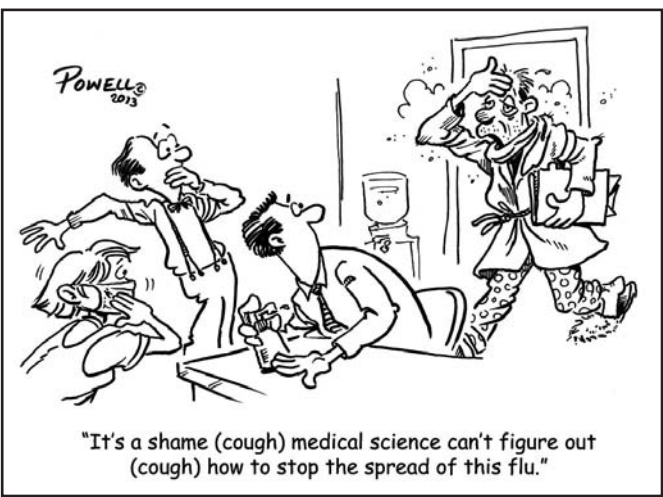


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



The Middle Path

by Don Perry

We left you last week with the question of what kind of nation we will choose to be. Sadly, the answer to that question appears to be in the hands of Congress and the Whitehouse as they argue over how government is going to pay the bills that government has accumulated. Since government creates no new wealth (as opposed to creating new dollars) we all know the answer to that question.

The other big question on Capitol Hill right now is whether Congress, particularly the House Republicans, will choose not to raise the debt ceiling, allowing the government to temporarily shut down. It is all very dramatic.

The problem for anyone seeking truth and a balanced view of current events in the cacophony of flaming opinions is that without drama, large industries that depend on keeping our attention do not profit. The problem for media is that our attention, habituated as it is to drama, now requires a constant supply of sensation.

We are hardcore addicts when it comes to drama. War, after a decade of destruction, no longer moves us as a nation. Scandal is a weak tea quickly set aside for a stronger beverage. Disaster, unless we are personally involved, is soon forgotten in our ongoing expectation of newer and better emergencies.

The world did not end in 2012. The asteroid, Aphophis, quietly passed us by over the weekend and NASA now says that there is no chance for a direct hit for at least another 24 years. The flu epidemic has apparently peaked and there have been no mass murders for a few weeks. The only big bone left for the media to chew on now is the debt ceiling "fight."

My inbox is crammed with warnings of dire consequences should Congress allow the government to default; consequences that can be avoided, of course, by subscribing to certain newsletters and financial blogs. Personally I will not miss government, should it be forced to close down for a few days. Aside from keeping invading armies at bay and providing for the sick and the elderly, I am hard pressed to think of anything, anything at all, that the federal government does better than private enterprise or state and local government.

Congress will fight like cats and media will regurgitate every word and every innuendo, but as one expects of a cat fight heard in the middle of the night, look for "kittens" to be born somewhere down the line; kittens that will all have to be fed.

This morning I turned off the news and shut down the Internet connection and walked

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.

outside for some fresh air. As I stood in the drizzle wearing a t-shirt...at 8 AM on January 14th in the middle of "winter," it occurred to me that while we are distracted by the circus clowns in Washington, another drama, a real drama, is steadily and inexorably building just beyond our collective attention span.

Perhaps the planet is trying to tell us something. During 2012 we saw one of the largest hurricanes ever recorded destroy entire communities. Persistent drought in the farm belt worsened. Warm climate pests and diseases moved farther north. Australia is on fire. China is choking in smog. Russia is freezing to death. Headless of the power and unpredictability of Mother Nature, humans have expanded into the most sensitive and volatile areas of the planet. We live in flood plains, in low lying coastal areas, along fault lines and perched on mountain tops. We have turned farmland into subdivisions, watersheds into second homes with a view. We live in plastic bubbles, commute and work in plastic bubbles powered by burning the most toxic substances we can find. We swim in a soup of lead, mercury, phthalates, perchlorate and dioxin. Even the fish in Lake Chatuge contain too much mercury to be eaten on a regular basis.

We think that the only way that we can survive is to constantly grow. More must be born to support the dying in an endless cycle that only ends when we have digested the entire planet or moved on to a new one. We have adopted the working philosophy of a cancer cell. We have become a cancer on the face of the earth.

We did this, not because we are bad people. We work hard and try to care for our family and friends. We want a better world for our children and grandchildren. Perhaps we have become the scourge of the planet because of the "bubbles" in which we live - not the physical structures or the thin layers of technology that separate us from the natural world, but the bubbles of consciousness that separate us from each other and from the consequences of our actions. Our collective consciousness is now guided, not by shared belief or common purpose, but by entities that exist to sell us soap bubbles and by leaders motivated by the desire to strengthen the walls of their own bubble empires. Our national consciousness is noisy, toxic foam obscuring a clear view of reality.



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

Will this be your year?

The holidays are over, the old year is in the record book and God has blessed us with a new year. For many the year 2013 will be no different. It will be a year of the "same old sins", the "same old habits," the "same old routine." A routine is a rut and the only difference between a rut and a grave is the rut has both ends knocked out. If this is a "new year", we need to experience the "new." The Bible, in the "New Testament" tells us about the "new birth" that brings "new life." This "new life" causes us to be "new creatures" with a "new song" and even a "new name" written down in glory. It tells us that someday we will experience a "new heaven" and a "new earth" where God makes "all things new." As the "new year" begins why don't you make a "new commitment" to attend worship and learn about a "new kind of life" that comes through Christ? My prayer is that you will not be like the fellow who wrote his pastor the following letter.

Dear Pastor,
You often stress attendance at church as being

very important, but I think a fellow has a right to miss now and then. I think every person should be excused for the following reasons and the number of times indicated.

- Christmas (the Sunday before or after) 1, New Year's (because of parties) 1, Easter (get away for holidays) 1, July (celebrate national holiday) 1, Labor Day (last fling before winter) 1, Memorial Day (visit hometown) 1, School Closing (kids need a break) 1, School Opens (relax before study) 1, Family Reunions (mine plus my wife's) 2, Sleep late (Saturday night activities) 5, Deaths in family 4, School activities (prom, sports, etc.) 3, Anniversary (second honeymoon) 1, Sickness (one for each family member) 5, Business trips (a must) 2, Vacation (3 weeks) 3, Bad weather (ice, hurricane, snow, etc.) 6, Ball games (tournaments) 4, Unexpected company (just can't walk out) 2, Time changes (spring forward, fall back) 2, Special on TV (Super Bowl, etc) 3.

Pastor, that leaves only two Sundays per year. So you can count on us to be in church on the fourth Sunday of February and the third Sunday of August unless providentially hindered.

Sincerely,
A Faithful Member
Will this be your year?

Letters to The Editor

To the Editor:

As a new resident in Towns County in 2006 I had few acquaintances and, other than local neighbors and a few fellow Floridians, I knew absolutely no one. However as the months passed I acquired more and more friends, among them one Joan Crothers. Speaking with shop keepers, leaders of community organizations, and other knowledgeable residents, whenever I referred to Joan I invariably received the response, "Oh, you mean Miss Hiawassee". Initially, I wondered whether this was a derogatory remark or complimentary. In time I came to recognize "Miss Hiawassee" was indeed an expression of appreciation for Joan's involvement in the community which has invariably brought benefits to the residents of Towns County.

Joan's attributes and accomplishments are well known and appreciated by members of the Garden Club, Towns County Historical Society, the Home Owners Association and more recently an elected Councilwoman on Hiawassee City Council.

Joan's prior experience as a writer and editor for a local newspaper, combined with her respect by the community seemed a natural for the position of Public Affairs officer for the local U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.

After the administration of the oath of office to the recently re-elected flotilla officers, Bob Garrott and Mike Hall, 2nd Div Commander Nan Ellen Fuller, accompanied by her husband, 7th District Captain Dave Fuller, swore in Joan Crothers as Flotilla Staff Officer - Public Affairs.

Bill Wendel, DSO-PA (Ret.)



RARE KIDS;
WELL DONE
By Don Jacobsen

Q: You talk a lot about never arguing with our kids but my husband and I have a hard time with that. Our oldest son is nearly 13 and is quite argumentative, but are you saying we should never let him "win?" Doesn't there come a time when we should negotiate our disagreements instead of just pulling rank on him. How old should he be before "because I said so" doesn't work anymore?

A: I love your insights and your astute questions. Our role in our kids' lives changes as the kids change. Billy, 4, tries to climb a tree in the back yard. We tell him no, and we don't need to include a lecture on the effects of gravity. At 4, mom and dad's authority is enough.

At 10 Cheryl wants to have a sleepover on a school night. We can still say no to that request and talk about how we might be able to make it work on a non-school night. A firm no for the specific request, but a negotiated reasonable alternative is the goal here. Win/win.

At 13 Andy asks if he can go see a questionable movie with his friends. As an earliteen he is beginning to think hard about how he fits in the family and his relationship with mom and dad.

Because he is still forming his own set of moral values, this can be a good teaching moment. Dad might say something like, "Well, we don't like the sound of that, but you're a teenager now. Let mom and me think it over and we'll discuss it again after dinner." Mom and dad's goal here is not just to issue a yes-or-no about this movie, but rather the bigger goal of helping Andy decide how he's going to make this kind of decision - and there will be many ahead. They earn his respect by their willingness to think through the request carefully before responding.

After dinner the conversation might go something like this: "We've talked it over, Andy, and we feel that your choice to go would not be taking you in the direction you want to go with your life. Here are some of the reasons why..."

Now, if Andy were 17 the response might be, "The final decision is yours, son, but it would be against our better judgment." Even in the stressful teen years kids are strongly influenced by their parents' approval.

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

Towns County Herald

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"How come our constituents do that every time we say we're serious about ethics reform?"

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 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.

Stevens 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).

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 new Hiawassee Senior 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.

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. 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 Basketball 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.