

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Reply to Letter to the Editor:

The Hiwassee Council has met at 4 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month for approximately seven years. Prior to that, the Council tried meeting at 7 p.m. and various other times. Years ago, the Council was asked to change their Meeting time to earlier in the day to allow greater public participation. The 4 o'clock time was set to avoid conflict with Towns County school activities and other public functions.

The Council takes great pride in its efforts to inform the public of meetings and matters under consideration. We go beyond the requirements of state law and take pride in our efforts to inform the public.

It is true however that the windows to City Hall are tinted. We decided to retain the windows that were originally in the Bank of Hiwassee when we purchased the building. It seems an unnecessary expense to replace these tinted windows at taxpayer's expense. Anyone is welcome to take a look at our posted materials in these windows to determine if they are visible. We know them to be. If anyone has difficulty reading through the tinted glass, we encourage them to read the Notices posted in the Bulletin Board next to the front door.

We do not try to hide our meetings or agenda items. Currently our Agendas and meeting Notices are posted on the outside windows of City Hall at three locations; they are posted inside City Hall at another three locations; they are posted in the Bulletin Board next to the front door just outside City Hall; and they are distributed via email to the Hiwassee Community Distribution List. We have over fifty (50) groups and individuals on the distribution list including the *Towns County Herald*, local governments, individual members of the press, the Chamber of Commerce and volunteers and interested parties. Anyone can request to be placed on the Hiwassee Community Distribution List.

We hope this letter address the concerns expressed.

The Hiwassee Mayor & Council

Letter to the Editor:

The Blcock Performing Arts Center held its 1st Annual 'Boots and Bling' fund raiser September 26. It would not have happened without the generosity of the business community in our area. I moved to this area from a larger city and there were hundreds of businesses and thousands of individuals to ask for donations of time, money and goods. Here with our limited resources the same individuals and business are asked again and again to help one cause or another. I wanted to personally take the time to thank these businesses and individuals that came through in spades, giving us an abundance of food and drink, space to hold the event, promotion to let the community know and bodies to help serve the food and prizes to give away to attendees. The restaurants that donated our food were Asiano's in Hiwassee, Brother's in Young Harris, Chevelle's in Hayesville, The Chop House in Hiwassee, The Copper Door in Hayesville, Cottage Deli in Hayesville, Enrico's in Young Harris, Happy Hawg in Young Harris, Hinton Center and Subway in Hayesville. The following provided wine at a reduced cost, Eagle Fork, Crane Creek, Hightower and Raylen. Angles in Haysville provided a keg of beer along with ice and staples for serving the food. I am proud to be a member of such a giving community that shows by deed they support the arts.

*Jim Kumas
Program Director, Peacock Performing Arts Center*

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

In uncertain times we look to our leadership to guide us with the information we need to stay safe and healthy. This is the legitimate function of government. But when the integrity of a leadership which has lied to us about everything from weapons of mass destruction to the safety of substances that are allowed in the food chain has proven to be unreliable, uncertain times can become dangerous times. Dishonesty in government is nothing new, but western civilization has nurtured the idea of a Fourth Estate, a news media intent on keeping government honest. Unfortunately our news media has become little more than an extension of the marketing goals set by the same corporations which infest government. They cry "wolf" every hour of the day in a continuous state of emergency, making it difficult for us to discern whether or not there is a legitimate threat. For many of us, the only public figures we feel we can rely on are those who report on the weather, and here we have to rely on their good intentions more than the accuracy of their forecasts.

The fact that our civilization survived unscathed the passing of two greatly feared apocalyptic milestones, the millennium and December of 2012, has apparently done little to quell our appetite for doom. Perhaps it is a kind of addiction enabled by too many years of anticipation, disaster movies and walking dead. We want to stop using but we don't know how (even though every television, computer and phone has an "off" switch).

A quick scan of the headlines over the last decade will reveal a recurrent theme. HIV, Bird Flu, West Nile, Chikungunya and other harbingers of doom have all been "Drugged" as possible candidates for the thing that finally took down our civilization. Fear of sickness is a primal fear and it is hard wired into the human psyche. However, for the generations who grew up with vaccinations and ready access to medical help, fear of the words "epidemic" and "pandemic" is mitigated in the repetitive use by talking heads and by websites that seek to capture our attention. The closest thing to pandemic that most of us have in our own experience is the annual outbreak of influenza.

Within the living memory of older generations, however, and in the experience of many who grew up outside US borders, pandemic and epidemic are very real concepts. Our own area of the Appalachians has seen outbreaks of cholera and typhoid fever as well as the 1918 Spanish Flu which killed more people than died in battle in World War I. Our parents' and grandparents' generations lived with the fear of tuberculosis and polio. Not far from here in Rome, Georgia, Battey State Hospital housed over 2000 tuberculosis patients at its peak during the '50s and '60s.

Epidemics have always happened to human populations as well as to every other group of biological entities. The outbreak of Ebola is serious and it warrants the immediate marshaling of resources to meet the threat, but this threat is nothing new in the history of humankind and so far, its impact pales in comparison to other outbreaks of communicable disease.

We hope and pray that its impact remains minimal, even as we realize that we have probably not seen the worst yet. The rapid spread of the disease in the poorest nations underlines weaknesses of infrastructure and culture that simply cannot be overcome in time to save the many that will become infected. Ebola will spread where it finds crowded, unsanitary conditions among people who lack the basic necessities of hygiene that the developed world takes for granted. Where the disease meets hygiene and quarantine, it is stopped. Case in point, the outbreak of Ebola in Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, appears to have been contained.

As for the conspiracy theorists and fear mongers who frighten their audiences with fears of Ebola becoming airborne, one simple fact stands against them: If Ebola evolves from a virus that is transmitted by contact with body fluids and contaminated surfaces to one that spreads airborne, it will be the first virus in a long and extensive history of studying viruses that has done so.

Ebola is unlikely to become a widespread problem for the United States, at least as far as the number of people infected is concerned. The economic impact, should the disease reach the crowded cities of developing nations, remains to be seen.

The spread of this communicable disease and others may also usher in some new behaviors for our culture. The enterovirus causing polio-like symptoms in children continues to spread. Influenza continues to kill thousands of Americans every year. The silent epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases now affects up to a third of all Americans. You read that correctly - over 110 million Americans have an STD. A generation from now we may see that shaking hands has been replaced by bowing, a civilized and sanitary alternative. Perhaps the younger generations will learn that those activities which they consider "not sex" can and do spread STD's. Perhaps people will begin staying home more when they are sick instead of insisting on spreading their germs at work, at school, in the grocery store and on public transportation. Perhaps companies will modify sick-day policies that force people to believe that they cannot afford to miss a day of work. Hopefully, our leadership will get beyond political posturing and agree to defend our borders, not only from those seeking to do us harm, but from the communicable diseases that move with unregulated human migrations.



"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 tears, but there is a time to work, witness and walk with the wounded and broken lives of humanity.

All around us are the wounded and hurting who have been stripped of all hope and need someone with skin on to speak a kind word, love and minister to them. Why don't you choose someone to minister to today?

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE
By Don Jacobsen

We mythed it. One of the parenting myths we have been asked to buy into since the 1960s is that when a child disobeys we, the parents, should go searching for some psychological reason to explain it. If we find "it" then all we have to do is change the cause and the bad behavior will go away. It can even sound quite plausible. And attractive.

That twisted view of parenting, though, has done several things to America's families, none of them good. For one thing, it has made parenting seem really, really hard. Not only are we expected to keep little Archie clean, fed, clothed, housed, and educated, but we are also expected to become his resident psychologists. But what if we guess wrong and his unwanted behavior doesn't go away? Then what? Do we just keep guessing till, hopefully, we get it right? Maybe it would help if every parent were required to have a degree in psychology before being allowed to become pregnant. On second thought, it may be hard to get that through the legislature.

Second, it builds into Archie the belief that his behavior is someone else's fault. Now that's not healthy. It means Archie has a hard time discovering that he is responsible for

what he does; he can always blame it on others. While mom and dad are searching for a likely psychological excuse Archie is rejoicing to discover that he isn't really to blame for his irascible behavior.

Third, it blurs the line about who's guilty for mom and dad. If Archie's misdeeds are really "caused by something his mom or dad did," or circumstances beyond his control, how can we punish him for that? He isn't responsible - maybe his parents did something that caused him to act like that...so dad and mom wrestle with trying to decide who's at fault here, Archie, or themselves. That's not a position of strong leadership for parents.

So here's the deal: Bad habits, wrong choices - that's the problem, not "psychological issues." The right question is not, "What caused Archie to disobey?" The right question is, "What shall we do about Archie's disobedience?" That's a whole lot simpler question for mom and dad to answer and a whole lot more helpful to Archie in the long run. It takes the pressure off of mom and dad and puts it back where it belongs - on Archie.

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

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