

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor and Towns County residents:

I attended the County Commissioner's meeting last month, 10-16-14, and received a copy of the proposed 2015 budget for the county. My question is; how can a proposed budget be presented without actual input, requests, and discussions from the various county offices? As of 11-4-14, the Towns County Sheriff's requested 2015 budget proposal has not been finalized and/or presented to the County Commissioner.

I asked the commissioner why the State checks for reimbursing daily/per diem cost to the jail were being placed into the County General Funds account instead of being placed into the Sheriff's account. He & his financial assistant(?) explained they estimated \$11,000 as revenue to the county budget from the state reimbursements and that money shows up on the Sheriff's budget. How can that be, if it hasn't been submitted yet, see above paragraph! As per the Sheriff's office, this is not true. Is there an actual check or transfer receipt that the citizens can obtain to prove or disprove this?

When I questioned him about the Sheriff's cars, he stated they had purchased 3 new vehicles 2 or 3 yrs ago @\$75,000. I mentioned the 200,000 miles on the cars without comments from him, and I told him they must not have been great cars, as cars now-a-days cost much more than \$25,000 especially with the needed equipment for Sheriffs these days...still no comment. They just seem to feel they got a "good deal" for the 3 new cars. I did not know at the time that one of the cars was totaled after accidentally being submerged in the river. Did they have insurance? Did that insurance get another vehicle or go to the County General Funds account? I was told later that the "new" cars were new to the county, however they were in fact "used" cars. That would explain the lower costs. Why hasn't the County Commissioner assisted the Sheriff's office in obtaining a new/used replacement car?

I urge all Towns County Residents to attend the next Commissioners meeting Wednesday 11-20-14 at the Towns County Courthouse at 5:30 p.m. Encourage everyone to come and voice your support for the Towns County Sheriff's Office, their employees, as well as, support for the other county businesses that might also have similar problems with their budgets.

Sincerely,
Carolyn A. Brown



**RARE KIDS;
WELL DONE**
By Don Jacobsen

Q: We have two children, a girl 9 and a boy 6. They are basically good kids except they fight constantly. I mean constantly. They wake up and fight over the bathroom, they fight over the cereal, they fight over who gets to sit in the front seat on the trip to school. It never stops. Will they outgrow this before their dad and I run away from home?

A: Well, you may have read about my two-fold fool-proof solution for sibling conflict: (1) Have only one child. (2) If you elect to have more than one, have them at least 18 years apart. Now it appears that neither of those options is still open to you so let me suggest some other helpful strategies.

I suggest you begin with a family council - the four of you together, maybe in the family room. The monologue (not a dialogue - this is one-sided) begins: Mom and I (or Dad and I) are hereby establishing a new rule in our family. We don't have many, but as you know, we do enforce the ones we have. The new rule concerns your frequent bickering with each other. It has three parts:

Part 1: Any disagreement between you must not escalate to where it intrudes into the rest of the family's space. In

other words, you are free to disagree, but it if gets loud enough for Mom or me to hear it, we will intervene. If we are forced to intervene, you will not enjoy it.

Part 2: When we intervene, both of you will receive the same punishment. It doesn't matter who is alleged to have started the fracas; we will not even ask. You will both be declared guilty and judgment will be administered equally.

Part 3: The consequence will be memorable. That means it will make a difference in your quality of life for a period of time. In bed, lights out, at 6:30 every night for a week...that kind of memorable. (And any time you complain about it, that adds an additional night to the penalty.) Or, no telephone, no friends over, or the forfeiting of some cherished privilege for an entire week, including weekends...that kind of memorable. You will not know what the penalty will be until it is imposed. Any questions? Good. That is the new rule - and it goes into effect right now.

Leadership parenting works. Helps produce Rare Kids; Well Done.

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

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

As we approach the tenth anniversary of being asked to share our thoughts on this page, a little housekeeping is in order: a bit of setting the record straight and clearing the air might be useful. We are encouraged to this end by the occasional criticisms and accusations we receive. We prefer, of course, to get compliments, but if we make someone angry, at least we have stimulated an increased flow of blood to the brain, and some of you quite often manage to improve our own thinking processes as well.

So here we begin, in no particular order, to address some of the more thoughtful as well as a few of the more persistent comments and misconceptions we have collected. One well-read reader asks if we use the "Middle Path" byline because we are Buddhists. Thank you, and no. We do attempt, as Buddhism is generally believed to attempt, to reconcile and transcend opposing viewpoints. We believe that the truth is usually, but not always, somewhere in the middle of the extremes. Beyond that our religion is a personal matter, and our God a personal God.

We have been accused of being democrats. No thank you, and no. When we criticized the Bush Administration for following the neo-conservative playbook and vastly increasing the coercive power of government, we voiced a minority opinion in a country paralyzed by fear and blinded by color-coded terror alerts. We questioned the loss of American blood and treasure in the pursuit of goals that have yet to be clearly identified. We campaigned against the ham-handed destruction of our mountains that was driven by greed on an unsustainable trip to prosperity. We predicted, quite accurately, that the wheels would come off of that bandwagon, and they did. We certainly did not sound very much like republicans back then.

And yet our criticism of the Obama Administration has been so persistent that we have been accused of being republican. Again, no, and no thank you. We certainly do not like big and bigger, always bigger government. We value free enterprise, free from government interference but also free from crony capitalism. While we cherish the environment and loathe the destruction wrought by the extraction of fossil fuels from the earth, we also believe that a difficult but necessary transition period will be unavoidable in the transformation of our fossil fuel economy to a renewable energy economy. That transition period will require pipelines to be built, oil and gas wells to be drilled. We're not sounding very democrat here either.

For us the question, "Are you liberal or conservative?" is a false dilemma similar to "have you stopped kicking your dog, yes or no?" When we are feeling generous we might say that an addition to either point of view might be understood in terms of completely naturally occurring differences in brain wiring. When we are less inclined to be kind, we might say that to try and fit everything in life into a round hole or a square one, is stupid. We're more likely to feel that way during political campaigns.

If one is never wrong, then chances are that one is a

divine, or b. that one has never bothered to learn anything. We have been, in our own estimation, wrong several times. We don't like being wrong, but we're not afraid of it either. This is a, by no means comprehensive, accounting of some of the more memorable mistakes.

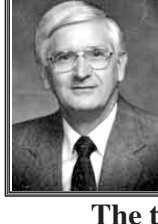
We were wrong about peak oil. Plain and simple. Our research was not comprehensive enough and we missed the new technology which made "Saudi America" possible. We will certainly run out of oil someday, but probably not within the lifetime of anyone reading this. There was probably some cognitive bias in our thought processes. Scarce oil would have accelerated the development of alternative energy and a lot more of the earth's untouched places would have remained untouched.

We were wrong about Barack Obama, and then we were wrong about him again. We very grudgingly gave him our support in 2004, wishfully thinking that he would be a different kind of president than the long string of corporatists who occupied the Whitehouse before him. When the deal to bail out the big banks was sealed before he had even taken the oath of office, we knew that we had been had. Guantanamo is still in business. We still have the Patriot Act and "Homeland Uber Alles." War has never stopped and the coercive power of government has grown beyond all expectations.

Feeling betrayed by Obama and by our own cognitive bias once again, we compounded the mistake by assuming that the President could do nothing right. Obamacare has been a nightmare, granted, and we have yet to feel the full impact of the cost to the taxpayer, but we personally know of a number of sick people who would not be getting treatment right now or who would be financially ruined by their medical bills if the Affordable Care Act did not exist.

Nevertheless, we are not socialists either, though we do prefer, in a "perfect world" sort of way, to have a government which spends more educating children and healing the sick and less on defending us from enemies that government created. But it isn't a perfect world. It is difficult to govern. It is easier, and more comforting for the governed as well as the governing, to make decisions based on an established template, a republican, or a democratic one, a liberal or a conservative one.

But you don't read The Middle Path because you prefer the easy solution, now do you?



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

The tongue

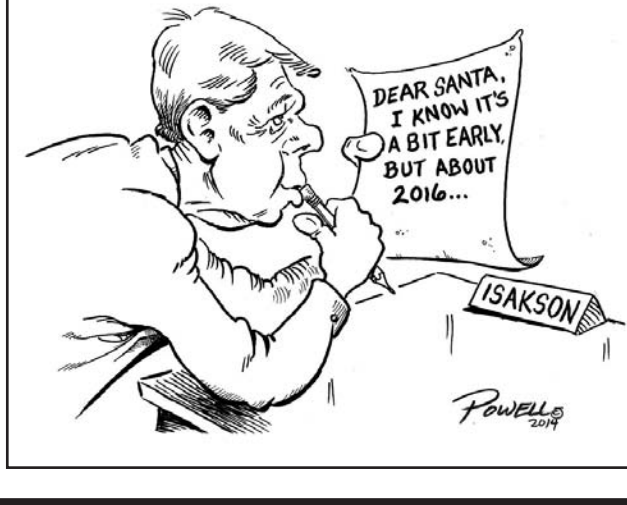
The most ferocious beast dwells right behind the teeth. It is that small organ called the tongue. The tongue is a paradox indeed. It can blast or it can bless. It is not sharp, but it surely can cut. It is small, but it can cause tremendous damage. James says that the tongue has the power to direct, to delight or to destroy (James 3:1-12). The Bible is filled with exhortations about speech, conversation, communication and words that flow from the tongue, that they may be chosen and spoken with wisdom. Whoever said, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never harm me," didn't know what they were talking about. Ill-chosen words can hurt and destroy relationships. People with long, loose tongues can disrupt harmony in the working place, and in the worshipping place, yea, many churches have suffered and even split because its members engaged in tongue attacks against its leaders or fellow members. When the tongue is not controlled (and no man can tame it, only God can) chaos reigns.

The following compilation contains worlds of wealthy wisdom:

- "The boneless tongue, So small and weak, Can crush and kill" Declares the Greek.
- "The tongue destroys, A greater horde" The Turk asserts, "Than does the sword."
- The Persian proverb Wisely saith, "A lengthy tongue - An early death!"
- Or sometimes it takes This form instead: "Don't let your tongue Cut off your head."
- The tongue can speak A word whose speed, Say the Chinese "Out strips the steeds."
- The Arab sages said in part, "The tongue's great Storehouse is the heart."
- From the Hebrews Was the maxim sprung, "Thy feet should slip, Ne'er let the tongue."
- The sacred writer Crowns the whole, "Who keeps his tongue, Doth keep his soul."
- My prayer and your prayer should be: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3).

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Community Calendar

American Legion Post 23 meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 4 PM at VFW Post 7807, Sunnyside Rd., Hiawasse. 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 Hiawasse 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.

Democratic Party of Towns County meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 5 PM at the new Senior Center.

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.

Hiawasse 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 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 Hiawasse at 5:30 p.m. 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org

the 2nd Tuesday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse, Hiawasse. The Board meets at 4 p.m., and the Guild at 6. Call us 706-896-0932.

Mountain Computer User Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month. Meetings start at 6 p.m. and visitors are welcome. Details can be found at www.mcug.org.

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.

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 Hiawasse. We eat at 11 and meeting begins at 12.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meets every Wednesday evening at 7 PM at the Red Cross building on Jack Dayton Circle.

Caregiver support group meets 2nd Tuesday of each month, 3 p.m. at Brasstown Manor, located at 108 Church St., Hiawasse. 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 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), Hiawasse. For info call Al 706-896-9614 after 6 PM.

The Board of the Towns County Chamber of Commerce meet the second Monday of every month at 8 a.m. at the Chamber office, 1411 Jack Dayton Circle, Young Harris.

The Quilting Bee at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church in Family Life Center - Room 216. 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10 AM - 3 PM. Bring a sack lunch. For more information call Kathy Taylor at 706-835-6721 or Marilyn Bostrom at 706-897-4367.

Mountain Coin Club meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the North Georgia Tech campus in Blairsville. Guests are welcome. For more info, call 706-379-1488.

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