

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor,
I am writing to address two concerns that have not been addressed by the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC (BRMEMC). The November bill included a tip sheet on how consumers can save energy. Looking almost nightly at the conspicuously lighted new BRMEMC headquarters, I emailed them and suggested that they could cut back to the lighting that is absolutely necessary for site security. I had two concerns. First and foremost, the unnecessary consumption produces greenhouse gases which exacerbate climate change and, secondly, the cost to customers.

Climate change is for real. The emission of greenhouse gases is melting the polar ice cap and the Greenland glacier. The results are profound droughts, excessive rainfall and flooding, and super storms like Sandy. The long term lighting of this facility night after night over time will contribute to an increase in air temperatures which, in turn, produce the effects already described.

Second, I am concerned that BRMEMC has had a month to respond to me. The receptionist who fielded my email was kind enough to let me know she had forwarded my concerns to management. To date, no response from management.

I hope other readers and customers think that BRMEMC should be (1) environmentally responsible and (2) responsive to customer concerns.

J. Patrick Mahon

Letter to the Editor:

Over and over again, the President has tried to compromise with Republicans to guarantee that middle-class taxes won't increase. All he wants is to find a balanced approach that helps families like mine.

This balanced approach could be reached if Congress would pass the tax cut extension for working and middle-class families.

Both Democrats and Republicans agree that these tax cuts should be preserved, but Republicans won't come to the table because the President believes it is time for the wealthiest 2% to pay their fair share.

Congress, please stop playing partisan games with Georgia families. Pass the middle-class tax cut extension for 98% of us and start working for the American people.

Kim Bailey



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE
By Don Jacobsen

Q: Dr. Don, I have heard that you have strong feelings about children's toys. Is it true, and if so, what are they?

A: I don't know where you heard it, but it's true. Here's the deal: Childhood is a time for learning. Our kids will learn more in the first five years of their lives than in any other five-year period. Period. To sit, to crawl, to walk, to run, to throw, to talk, to reason, to love, to avoid pain. All of these are complex learnings and much of it is learned - or enhanced - during play.

One of the most essential skills our kids need to develop is the skill of creativity, because creativity is such a vital part of a successful life. Problem-solving, resourcefulness, adaptability, innovation, smart choices, these are all traits that build strong self-worth, engender respect from others, and for which the marketplace will one day pay them great premiums. Toys can be a central part of that learning process, and parents (and grandparents) can help stimulate a child's creativity by the toys they select.

So I buy my grandson a \$298 Premium Gazoo-blaster that hums, gurgles, and flashes; he will likely sit and watch, giggle briefly, and soon start playing with the box it came in. As a grandparent I'm feeling

pretty good about it, because I spent a lot of money on it. But what is Alfie learning? Not much. Hence my rule: Nothing with an on/off switch before age ten.

Ah, but what if I buy him (age-appropriate) a box full of blocks for instance? Or a Lego set, or modeling clay, or some other device he can push, pound, assemble, disassemble, shape, or ride. Now he has options. Now he can experiment. Now his imagination kicks in. Now he begins to make discoveries. We call it creativity and it can be aroused by things as simple as toys. Toys are for them, not for me which means I need to be thoughtful in my choices.

One mom's story: "Last year, a sewage pipe burst on the corner by our house. My kids plastered themselves at the window to watch the repair project. They were so interested we decided to create our own "broken pipe," so we collected toilet paper rolls, trucks, Scotch tape, spoons for pretend shovels, and it took us almost as long to fix our "broken pipes" as it did the workers outside." Lots more productive than a \$298 Premium Gazoo-blaster.

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

From the Desk of:



Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

For most of us, the holiday season can be a very busy time. Between shopping, family gatherings, church programs, Christmas parties, concerts, and the like, it is very easy to lose track of our surroundings. Don't forget that even with all that is going on around us, our first concern should be remaining safe.

Your Georgia Sheriffs' Association offers the following suggestions in the form of an easy to remember acronym we call SAFE.

Stay alert

Identify potential dangerous situations and avoid them. Watch for suspicious individuals or situations. If possible, park in a brightly lit space. When leaving a store or a shopping area, stop for a moment just outside the doorway to peruse the parking area. If you see something suspicious, contact a security guard or call for a law enforcement officer.

Always be aware of what is going on around you

Avoid digging in a purse, bag or pocket for keys or a wallet. Retrieve them before leaving the store or building and have them ready as you approach your vehicle. Invest in a small flashlight so you can see what's inside your bag, as well as your vehicle door locks and the area around your car.

Follow your instincts

If you don't feel right about a situation, circumstance or person, don't ignore your feelings. Follow your instincts and avoid situations that could cause you a problem. Keep your bags and packages close and avoid displaying them in your vehicle.

Envision various scenarios

Mentally practice how you might escape scenarios. Note building exits; remember, sometimes the nearest exit might be in front of you. Be aware of obstacles or problems that might impede

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.*

your exit or escape.

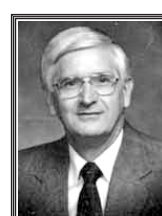
With a few simple steps, you can help make sure you and your family remain SAFE this holiday season (Georgia Sheriffs' Association).

I also want to say a special thank you to all of those who came out for our official presentation of State Certification. We had a full courthouse which included Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby, Hiawassee City Council member Joan Crothers, a representative from Congressman Doug Collins' office, as well as a number of local civic organizations and many citizens who came to show support for our deputies and staff.

Sheriff Stacy Nicholson, while making the presentation, made a very good point in recognizing the fact that this ceremony was about the deputies, staff, and the Office of Sheriff in Towns County. Becoming state certified requires a team effort and signifies that your sheriff's office is serving you in a faithful manner.

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

A birthday celebration
Christmas is a birthday celebration. However, if you just arrived upon the American scene it might be a little difficult figuring out that Christmas is a birthday celebration. It would probably be even more difficult trying to identify just whose birthday we are celebrating. It has not always been this way. There was a time in our nation's history that any visitor or stranger would not have had to ask, "Whose birthday is it anyway?" They would have seen and heard Jesus everywhere. Sadly, each year there are more and more voices that demand less and less of Jesus. We may change names, remove symbols and seek to muzzle every believer but that does not change history one iota. God did love the world (in spite of our rebellion and arrogance) and He did send His Son as a babe through the virgin Mary to live a sinless life and die a vicarious death to save us from our sin (Matt. 1:21). Jesus' birth was natural - He was born of a woman. His birth was unnatural - He had no human father. His birth was supernatural - He was conceived by the Holy Ghost. His birth is the most spectacular event in all history. For fifty plus years I have had the privilege to stand before a congregation and by the Holy Word and the Holy Spirit present the message of Christ's

birth as if folks were hearing it for the first time. However, I must confess that I get a little depressed at Christmas. Mind you, this is a different form of depression. I love the sights, sounds, smells and even the spending of Christmas. But I do have a down time. My depression - downtime is a result of the fact that I can't do Christmas justice. As a minister, no matter how much I pray, prepare and proclaim when I am finished my feeling is that Christmas is so deep, wide and high that I barely pull back the curtain for folks to get just a glimpse. The very best that I can do seems to be too little. But if a human could fully comprehend and explain this blessed birth then it would not be that momentous. But you see this event is so holy and miraculous that only God can reveal the height and depth of becoming flesh and moving into our neighborhood. Every year I struggle with my limitations to put into words how much God loves us and what He did to demonstrate that love. Even though I have never felt that I could do Christmas justice, come this Sunday morning, I look forward to the glorious privilege of standing before the people of First Baptist Church of Blue Ridge, Georgia and with this stammering and stuttering tongue tell them one more time about angels, wise men and creation announcing Christ's birth. It is a special time and the story never grows old. It is a birthday celebration not a memorial service. Glory to God in the highest and on earth goodwill toward men. Merry Christmas to you all!



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 Hiawassee 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 Untcoy 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. We do oral family histories of residents. 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, Hiawassee. Refreshments at 6 p.m., meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Call us by 706-896-0932 or mtntregartsandcraftsguild.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.
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 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.
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! April - October.
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.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.

Towns County Herald
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