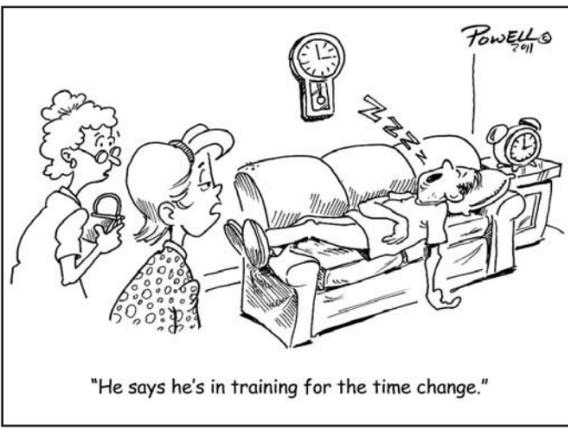


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



The Middle Path

by Don Perry

A few years ago, mathematicians from the University of Exeter developed a model which explained the mystery of traffic jams that occur for no apparent cause. In this mathematical model, a driver near the front of a line of heavy traffic reacts late to a potential problem and applies the brakes. If he brakes hard enough, he can cause the driver behind to apply the brakes even harder. A backward traveling wave is formed which can eventually cause traffic several miles behind to grind to a halt.

The theory is logical and the mathematical proof is elegant, though I'm not sure that the mathematicians at Exeter ever navigated the 285 at rush hour. Those of us who have might insist on adding more variables to the equation, but the gridlock around Atlanta might best be explained by Chaos Theory or, abandoning math altogether, in sociological or psychological terms. Witness the tailgating, the lane changing and the altogether reckless driving which occurs while jockeying for position in an intensely competitive (for what reward I do not know) environment. Consider the inattentiveness due to distractions inside the vehicle. If we include these variables, traffic jams might also be understood as the cumulative effect of thousands of individual acts of selfishness or self absorption. They might also be considered to be the result of a systemic breakdown in the driving ethos.

Leaving the highway for a moment (if that is possible in this culture) let's consider for a moment what happens when we experience a breakdown of ethics in other areas of life, when seemingly insignificant acts of selfishness accumulate to affect the entire system. "No one will notice if I steal this pack of gum." "Everyone cheats on their taxes." "The company will never miss these office supplies; besides, they owe me." "You'll never get ahead in this life if you don't look out for number one." The backwards traveling wave of the traffic jam then moves forward and outward like ripples on a pond. The neighborhood store closes because shoplifting destroys its profits. The government levies new taxes or prints money to pay its bills. The company adopts draconian security measures which destroy morale. The nation's system of jurisprudence becomes an overgrown jungle of laws, rules and regulations impossible for the average person to navigate.

In the past month alone I have witnessed so many examples of the inability to make and keep commitments, examples of what a friend in frustration referred to as "systemic incompetence." I had to run this warning flag up the flagpole to see if anyone else recognized it. In discussions with a small group of only half a dozen people we identified, within just a thirty day period, 5 examples of appliances and electronic equipment from American companies

which failed right out of the box. We counted 4 examples of the fast fish and raw beef served in local restaurants. We heard an example of one company which instituted a policy of closely monitoring its employees in order to "discipline" more production out of them. We heard of a health care professional who forgot about an appointment and blamed staff for the oversight. We heard about a transmission in the shop for over two weeks and counting for a "guaranteed" three day job, and within that small group we compiled a list of a dozen elected officials from the local to the national level who were implicated in some form of malfeasance.

There is a theory, albeit not a mathematical one, that the decline in the quality of goods and services in America, the decline of the nuclear family and the increase in non-violent crime, can all be explained, at least in part, by the rise of moral relativism. Relativism holds that ideas have no absolute truth or validity, only subjective value based on differences in perception. Notwithstanding the struggle of a large number of conservatives to infuse the national ethos with a very particular interpretation of Christian belief, I believe it is accurate to describe a large segment of our population as practicing no strict interpretation of any belief system.

Over the centuries of human history many different forces have inspired or intimidated an adherence to a system of ethics and a moral code. Fear of punishment produces compliance in totalitarian regimes. Theocracies such as the Holy Roman Empire are held together by a combination of devout inspiration and fearful intimidation. The unique experiment of the American Republic has been an ownership society wherein the responsible acts of its citizens guaranteed security and prosperity. We grew, and we continue to grow, out of a diversity of cultures, but our system emphasizes our similarities while it respects our differences. As a people (and not including the "personhood" of our amoral corporations) we have prospered the most when our work ethic was infused with honor and integrity, no matter from what race, religion, creed or national origin it derived.

Examples of honor and integrity are still abundant in America. It is abundant in the professionals of public safety. It is widespread among the sacrifices we make to raise our families and educate our children. It is particularly abundant along the hard edge of the young people serving in our military. Nevertheless there is a soft underbelly of relativism and complacency in our society that could use some conditioning.



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

Would-be water-walkers

Do you ask, or have you ever asked yourself why am I here where I am? A mother and a baby camel were talking one day when the baby camel asks, "Mom, why do I have these huge three-toed feet?" The mom says, "Well, Son, God gave you those toes so that when you travel across the desert your toes will keep you from sinking into the soft sand." Just a little later the baby camel asks, "Mom, why do I have these long eyelashes?" "Well", she says, "When we make trips through the desert they will keep the sand out of our eyes." Then the baby camel asks, "Why do I have these huge humps on my back?" Mom says, "They are there to store water for long trips across the desert so we don't have to drink water so often." Then the baby camel says, "Now, let me see if I have this figured out: We have huge feet to keep us from sinking, long lashes to keep the sand out of our eyes and these huge humps to store water?" Mom says, "You've got it right." The baby camel then asks, "So why are we here in the San Diego Zoo?" I am sure that some of us have asked practically the same question: If God made me with so much potential why am I where I am?" Don't you imagine that Noah must have asked himself, "What in the world am I doing here building a boat?"

Reckon Moses said, "What in tarnation am I doing out here on the back side of the desert tending sheep?" Do you think that Joseph might have entertained the thought, "Why in the world am I here in Pharaoh's prison?" I would be surprised if the Apostle Paul didn't wonder, "Why am I here in this Roman dungeon?" Over our lifetime most of us have asked ourselves questions like, "Why am I working for this company; Why am I in school; Why do I live in this house; or live in this town; Why am I here and why do I do what I do?" Do you ever get tired of being in the same boat with everybody else? Do you ever feel like rocking the boat? Are you scared your boat might be taking on water? Maybe you feel like you have totally missed the boat in your life? Are you ready to bail out of the boat? Well, Peter loved boats. He loved to fish from a boat. He enjoyed fellowship in the boat with James and John and the other disciples. He especially loved being in the boat with Jesus. One night the disciples were in their boat on the Sea of Galilee but Jesus was not in the boat. He had sent them to cross the lake alone (Matthew 14:22-33). They encountered a terrific storm on the way and feared drowning until they saw Jesus walking on the water. It was at this moment of turbulence in the life of Peter that he aspired to become a water-walker. Maybe you are at a point of turbulence in your life that you would like to become a water-walker. In the next few weeks we will explore water-walking. It is possible to do the impossible.

Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor,

We need to convince more people to vote yes for the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST). There are many reasons why the SPLOST will be a good thing for Towns County. First, we need a fire truck with an extension ladder, because our current fire safety vehicles aren't going to be good enough as Towns County grows. The tax will also supply money needed to go to more fire hydrants, so we can be more fire safe and have lower insurance rates. Second, the SPLOST will help our children by adding playgrounds, courts, and ball fields. The libraries will also be more suitable for our growing population. Third, and lastly, this tax will upgrade our sewer plant to keep phosphorus and nitrogen from entering Lake Chatuge. As few may know, phosphorus is a limiting nutrient, and if we add more into Lake Chatuge, it may cause algae blooms to form, thus making the beautiful lake less attractive. Plus, all that is being used is 1% of our 7% sales tax, so we aren't being asked to sacrifice anything at all, which makes the SPLOST a win-win for the community.

Sincerely,
Nathaniel Arnold



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Recently I raised some eyebrows when I said that kids should not be paid for doing chores around the house. I feel pretty keenly about that, but let me refine it a bit.

A common concern was, Well, then how are kids going to have any spending money? Understand I'm all in favor of kids getting an allowance. The amount should be determined by the child's age and what the parents expect him/her to pay for from the allowance. All of their recreation? Half of their clothes? School supplies? Toothpaste only? You get the point.

But the purpose of an allowance is less to meet the child's financial needs than it is to teach them how to manage money. Save 10%; give away 10%; spend the rest wisely; save up for something you want that costs more than you have. Good training; it needs to begin early...maybe when the little consumer begins school.

Then shouldn't kids ever be "paid" for work they do? I can think of times that might happen. Dad wants to

paint the fence around the back yard. He decides that instead of hiring someone to do it or doing it himself he's going to offer the job to his 12-year old son, Billy. This is not a daily "chores," but more of a "project."

Dad takes Billy to the fence and explains what he wants done and just how to do it. He agrees to stay with Billy for the first 30-minutes to make sure he gets the hang of it. Or Dad may choose to paint the outside of the fence if Billy paints the inside. He reminds Billy that this is a good chance for him to learn a new skill, and also to put some money in his sock drawer where Billy is saving up to buy the new baseball cleats he's been wanting.

Include a proposed modest salary proposal, a suggested timeline, add clean-up expectations, and Billy is in business. It's not part of his chores regimen, and it doesn't affect his allowance. Three totally separate issues here: allowance, chores, project. None of them is related to the others.

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

GUEST COLUMNS

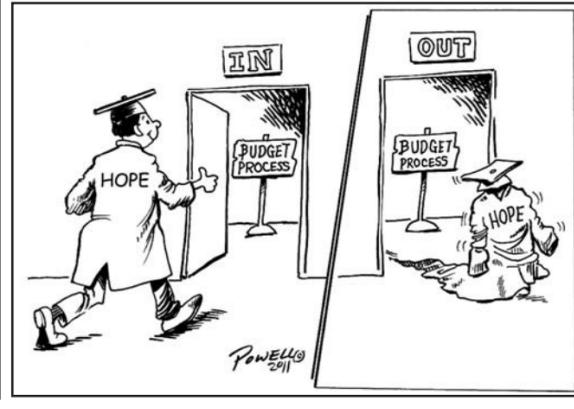
From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear 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.

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. Please call Kim Bailey at 706-994-2727 or 706-896-6747 for details.
Towns County Republican Party meets the 4th Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Daniels Steak House. Dinner at 6 p.m., 706-896-7281.
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

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Community Calendar

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 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 Recreational Dept. Call Eden at 706-896-6921.
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, mtntregartscraftsguild@hotmail.com.
VFV Post #7807 Fish Fry will be 2nd and 4th Friday of the month, 4:30-7 p.m., \$9 a plate, all you can eat.
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 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.
Fall Storytime at Towns County Public Library Thursdays at 1 PM.
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.
Mountain Coin Club meets the second Tuesday of each month at the Blairsville Civic Center. Doors open at 5:30. Program and auction begins at 6:30. For more information, call Ye Old Coin Shop, 706-379-1488.

Have something to sell?
Let the Herald work for you!
Contact us at 706-896-4454
Deadline for the T.C. Herald is Monday by noon

Towns County Herald
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OFFICE LOCATED AT 446 NORTH MAIN STREET
"THE MALL" HIAWASSEE (706) 896-4454
Publication Number 635540. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points.

EMAIL Address: tcherald@windstream.net

POSTMASTER: Send change of address to:
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P.O. BOX 365 HIAWASSEE, GEORGIA 30546

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