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OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

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The Middle Path

by Don Perry

We left you last week on the banks of the Okmulgee River during an expedition with a group of teenage boys trying to put their lives back together.

The eleven adjudicated teenage boys under our care had all suffered the consequences of anger. Some were in fact adjudicated because they had acted out in anger: getting into fights, destroying property or being convicted of the catch-all charge of "terroristic threats."

The capsizing of a canoe and the rescue of two boys from the frigid water had sent a shock wave throughout the group. Jon and Mike, my two fellow instructors, both veterans of wilderness expeditions, had been able to pull the two shivering lads out of the water and into their own boat and they came around the bend in the river with the boys and their now empty canoe in tow to join the rest of the crew gunwaled-up in an eddy.

The sun was sinking westward as we pushed our raft of canoes back out into the river. We stayed gunwaled-up for a while as we talked to the boys, making sure that they were confident enough to continue the expedition, at least as far as a campsite for the night. Time was not our ally as we searched for a spot to camp in the lengthening shadows.

Strong emotions, especially fear, can resolve into anger when we lack the tools or the understanding to process them. One of the longest nights of my life began as my two fellow guides and I made plans to keep watch, not only on the boys, but on the river should it continue to rise.

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.

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.

There is no God The Psalmist records in Psalms 14:1 and in Psalm 53:1 "that the fool has said in his heart there is no God."

The sun broke through the clouds for a moment just as I pushed off and headed downriver, and then it disappeared again as the rain returned. The normally lazy black water of the Okmulgee was moving rapidly and just a few miles from our campsite, there was no land in site and it was getting harder to discern the main channel.

At one sharp bend in the river I went wide to river-left to avoid a strainer - and headed directly into a downed tree. Unable to make the turn I tried to hit the tree with the bow, but the rushing water soon turned my boat alongside the almost horizontal trunk of the tree and threatened to flip me over and under.

We are amazingly strong when we are afraid. Alone, with no land in sight and a rushing river trying to push me under a tree, I was able to keep the boat from capsizing, but fatigue began to set in. They say that faced with death, our life flashes before our eyes, but I think we rarely have time for that.

We will pick up the journey next week. Join the discussion at www.mulebristle.blogspot.com!



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

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itself to keep the oceans from falling off toward the sun. Infants teach themselves to cry when they are hungry or hurt. A small flower invented itself so that we could extract digitalis for sick hearts.

Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor:

Last week, President Obama signed into law a bill (HR347) that was approved in the House of Representatives, and passed by a significant majority of BOTH parties.

It will be at the discretion of the Secret Service to decide to make areas around politicians, especially the President, Vice-President, etc., "Free Speech Free Zones."

What is the government afraid of? While I understand the need to protect the President and others from the crazies, stopping Free Speech is NOT the correct way to do so.

It is very interesting that President Obama, a liberal who wants to outlaw legal ownership of firearms, has also decided to limit Free Speech.

Sincerely, Christopher D. Mazur

Editor's Note: U.S. Congressman Paul Broun, R-GA, was one of only three members of the U.S. House of Representatives to oppose the legislation.

Dear Editor:

While I'm in agreement transportation needs improvement, I am against the Tsplost tax for 2 reasons mainly. It is a regressive tax against the low income, fixed income, and other poor.

The other problem I have with the Tsplost tax is it leads to Regional government thereby crushing local county home rule. A regional government which is not chartered by the State of Georgia constitution to abide by certain rules and laws.

Thanks, Mike Sims

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE By Don Jacobsen

Q: My 30-month old daughter will sometimes hit me, especially when I pick her up. Does that mean she is mad at me for something I've done or do you think there is some other reason? Reasoning with her doesn't seem to help.

A: Reasoning with a 30-month old is not likely to provide much satisfaction - to either of you. The cause-and-effect switch has not usually been turned full-on by this age and they have trouble making the connection.

As to whether she is "mad at something" you've done, if you pursue that line of reasoning far enough you come to the place where, whenever the child does something unacceptable, you go searching for someone other than the child to blame.

Let me try to put your mind at ease. First, her actions are not likely related to how much violence she sees at home - in real life or on TV. And it is not a commentary on how well you're doing as a mom.

Meanwhile... meanwhile don't make a federal case of it. Don't show anger, don't raise your voice, or hit the child in return. Rather, take her hands firmly in yours, look her in the eye and matter-of-factly say, "You are not allowed to hit Mommy."

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

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"What do you think, Hon? Is the federal government really over-reaching its power?"

Community Calendar

Towns County Water Board Meeting 3rd Monday of each month at 7 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.

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 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org

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.