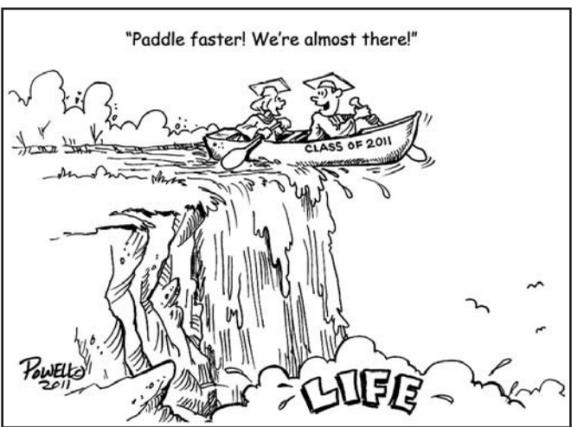


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Back in ancient times, before satellite and cable television became ubiquitous, I moved to a sheltered cove in these mountains where a television signal was difficult to acquire. No matter where I placed the antenna or how much I boosted the signal, two and a half channels was all I got: two Atlanta stations, grainy but acceptable and GPTV without the sound. By rotating the antenna I could get a decent signal from GPTV, but then the other channels disappeared. This small selection of choices notwithstanding, there always seemed to be something on to watch. I sometimes wonder at the contrast between then and now and marvel at the fact that, with hundreds of channels available today, there is so little of interest from which to choose.

For several years before I invested in a device which rotated the antenna electrically, I usually tuned in to Channel 8, the PBS station from Athens, Georgia. The quick trip up the ladder onto the roof to rotate the antenna for a baseball game or the nightly news was less risky to my health than an hour spent in a recliner with a remote today. I loved channel 8. Back in those days I worked hard physically during the day and at night it was a pleasure to enjoy something which stimulated the brain while the body rested. Occasionally I even donated money when the station did its yearly pledge drive.

After enjoying PBS for so many years commercial free, it is odd, strange, and not quite right when I see a commercial message now on public television. It is another triumph for consumerism and one which we can ill afford - and I feel badly about it. I feel bad because, as the issue of public funding for public broadcasting became a political football, I remained silent. I never imagined that the fear and stupidity which sometimes nests in conservative and republican politics like a Cuckoo's egg, would threaten an institution which has made such a significant contribution to the education of children

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 E-MAILED 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.



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

Responding to death

Our nation was mourning the deaths of hundreds of victims killed through the tornados that swept through the south demolishing, tearing down, uprooting, ripping apart and sweeping away everything in their path when the news came that Osama Bin Laden had been killed. Suddenly, the tenor of the nation changes from mourning death to celebrating death. Death, the enemy of humanity, that had created heavy, hurting hearts caused some of those same hearts to celebrate the death of one of history's most violent and vicious human beings. Death is strange that way. Folks don't like to mention death let alone discuss it. But all of the recent events remind us that "It is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment..." (Hebrews 9:27-28). Everyone has that appointment to meet. You can't send a substitute. The righteous meet death as well as the wicked. We may die suddenly through a devastating tornado or at the hands of a demented terrorist, but die we must (unless we are raptured). Whether folks mourn or celebrate depends on how we have lived. I am not trying to be morbid, nor do I want to depress anyone, but death is an important part of life. In fact, until you have settled the question of death you really are not prepared to live. I am not sure who first made the statement, "I am not afraid to die, I just don't want to be there when it happens," expressed the sentiments of a lot of people. Death is not a dominant conversation at parties and get-to-gathers. People just don't pair off in

groups and say, "Hey, let's discuss death." We may talk about the weather, sports, politics, taxes, the economy and a host of other things but if you want to break up a gathering just mention death. The subject of death makes some people nervous because it stirs up the mystery of the unknown and frightens some because they dread having to face God. Generally speaking, most people are not anxious to die. I realize that people do choose to terminate their lives through suicide but in reality they do not want to die - they are seeking an escape from a messed up life or what they feel is a hopeless situation. The only problem is that they apply a permanent solution to a temporary problem. Most of humanity flees from death which is evident by the millions of dollars spent annually on vitamins, health foods, creams, oils, etc to hold back the hands of the clock and the cold hand of death. Fitness centers, gyms and clubs are packed with sweating bodies as they maintain a rigorous exercise program to keep the body healthy and escape the grim reaper. Even when death comes we attempt to camouflage it with beautiful flowers surrounding the deceased, playing videos of the deceased person and friends viewing the body saying things like "Doesn't she (he) look good," or "don't they look natural." You never hear someone say "Don't they look dead" or "He died" or "she died." Certainly, we need to lovingly support and comfort those who grieve, but the reality is the dead have met their appointment and we too must go the way of all the earth. The problem with dying is that you don't know when. When it does come you don't have time to "get ready" you must "be ready." "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12). Do you have life????

Letters to The Editor

Letter to the Editor:

Let PUP help you. The members of Operation PUP have a goal of reducing the stray, unwanted/homeless cat and dog population in Towns County by helping with the cost of spaying and neutering these animals--or also a pet cat or dog. We ask for a donation from the individual or business (if you can afford one) and that after we schedule the vet appointment, you place the animal in a carrier and take it in for surgery.

If you haven't seen the cat pyramid, it shows that two breeding cats plus all their kittens and all their kittens' kittens, if none are ever neutered or spayed, add up to 80,399,290 in 10 years! These animals will just suffer while reproducing over and over without humans putting a stop to over-population by getting them spayed or neutered--the kindest way to end homeless cats and dogs.

Please call PUP at 1-888-496-2387, we are a non-profit 501(c)3 which means you may take this expense off your income tax if you itemize.

We'd also like to ask, that when you hear about all those wonderful citizens and rescue groups that are selflessly and diligently helping these unfortunate strays everyday, recognize and thank them.

Sincerely,
 Marsha Grogan,
 President Operation PUP

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

When I was about 11 my mother (we were a single-parent family from the time I was 6 till about 12) unilaterally decided I was going to learn to play the violin. I didn't even get a vote. Argue as I might for a trumpet or sax, I ended up playing the violin.

Mr. Harris, a very hefty conductor, became my music coach. I came to this class with below-zero violin aptitude and even less enthusiasm. Three years later I was playing in the Spokane (Washington) All-City Youth Ensemble. Mr. Harris pushed our whole string section and stretched us to do things we didn't dream we could do. He didn't demand perfection, only excellence. He had people standing on their feet cheering when they heard us. How great is that for a kid from a broken home?

I think that's why I like the term coach to represent the role of parents, especially during that all-important ten-year window of ages 3 - 12.

A wise coach has respect for every player.

A smart coach helps the individuals on the team develop skills, especially decision-making skills.

A good coach helps the team understand that giving their best is more

important than winning.

An effective coach sits players on the bench when that is the most appropriate decision. A coach is a leader and is not derailed even if a player disagrees or doesn't understand.

A successful coach convinces the team that sportsmanship is more important than the final score.

A savvy coach builds team loyalty, knowing that nobody gets where they want to go by themselves.

A caring coach is an encourager who talks the team through those times when they don't perform well, all the while insisting that all players follow the game plan and give their best.

A visionary coach discusses options for "next time" rather than emphasizing blame.

A winning coach searches out the strengths of those on the team and helps them discover strengths they didn't even see in themselves.

Now reread those nine qualities of a good coach, and in place of "coach" insert the word "parent." Then lay each of them over against your parenting practices and see how you measure up.

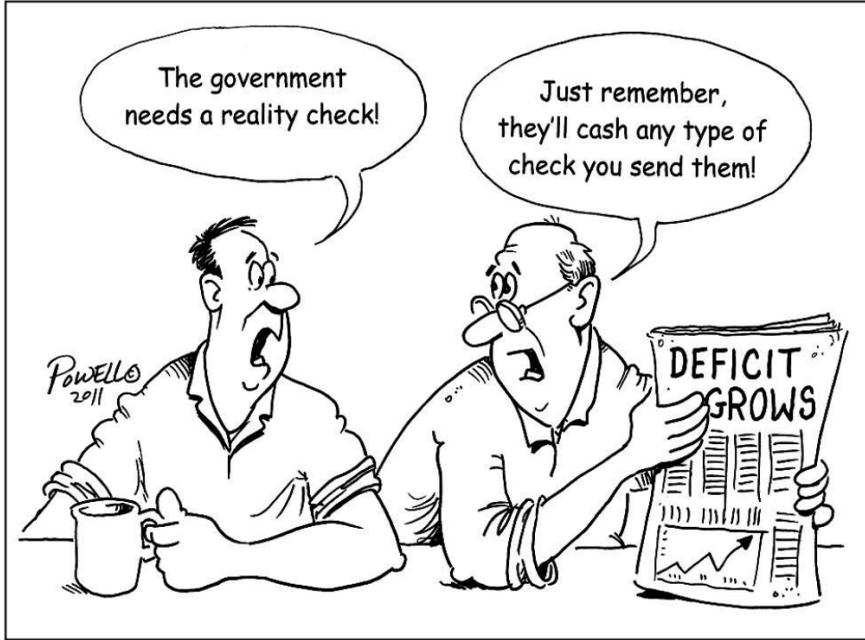
Good job, coach!

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

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Towns County Herald

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