

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Letter to the Editor:
Chris Adams, your last musical "Funky Town" was fantastic as usual. The rendition of four National Anthem was the finest I have ever heard. What you have brought to Towns County is magical with these young gifted students. It was truly 5 star!
Ben Sutton

From the Desk of:



Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

An ounce of prevention, as they say, is worth a pound of cure. This is the idea behind a new project that we have taken on at the Sheriff's Office. The project is geared toward educating young people and adults on the truth about drugs. Recently, Robbie Dernehl, whom many of you may know from her work with the children of Singing Stars for a Better World, approached me with an idea about how we could do more to raise awareness of the dangers of drugs. Robbie offered her assistance and provided some great educational material. On Saturday night, the showcase for the Singing Stars was held to raise awareness of this issue.

When asked to speak I raised a question for the parents and grandparents to consider: How much is your child or grandchild worth? I'm sure that most are like me and would give their very life without a moment's hesitation to keep their child safe. We would do so in an instant, but would we give of our time to learn the truth and teach our children the truth about drugs. Many times people ask me, "What do I tell my kids to keep them safe from drugs?" The short answer is the truth, but if you don't know about drugs you may have to become more aware so that you can tell them the truth.

In Towns County, Georgia there have been about 30 fatal drug overdoses in the last three and a half years. That is a startling figure, isn't it? Most of these overdoses were accidental and caused by misuse of prescription drugs. I have said many times in the past that young people, as well as many adults, consider prescription drugs a safer alternative to street drugs, but the truth is they are just as dangerous if misused as any of their street drug counterparts. In fact, they can be more dangerous. Almost nine out of ten of the fatal overdoses in Georgia are from prescription drug abuse.

I think most of us would agree that we live in an age of information. Unfortunately, a lot of that information is incorrect. Our culture often glamorizes drug use. One does not have to look far to find movies, sitcoms, music, or other forms of media depicting the abuse of drugs as a good thing. Drug abuse is portrayed as cool, fun, the in thing, etc. The truth is that drug abuse can lead to a lifelong addiction, criminal issues, health problems, and premature death.

If we allow our young people to get their information about drug abuse from the media, how are they to make an informed decision to stay drug free. Whether we want to admit it or not, in our society our children and young adults are facing some form of pressure to use drugs. Shouldn't we do all that we can to educate them about the real dangers associated with drugs so that they can stay drug free?

For more information about how to talk to your children about the dangers of drugs please contact the Towns County Sheriff's Office at 706/896-4444.

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE
By Don Jacobsen



My vote for the two most important days in a person's life: (1) The day he is born; (2) The day he discovers why.

As I recall, that isn't an original thought with me, but I believe it's true. And I believe it is essential that we understand it. Otherwise we show up on the screen of life only as some kind of cosmic accident...we have no idea where we've come from or where we're going. We can reason that what we do doesn't matter, and how we treat each other doesn't either.

On the other hand, if there is a plan and we're part of it...if there is a Master Designer and He has written us into His script...if He in fact has put us in His world to help make it better, that changes everything.

It certainly changes my perspective as a parent - or grandparent. It re-shapes my parenting priorities, too. I want Johnny to remember to

brush his teeth, but I also want to make sure he learns to respect others. I want my Janie to learn to play the piano, but I also want to make sure she learns to tell the truth.

I want Everett to learn to play softball but I also want to make sure he learns to give his employer an honest day's work. I want Sherri to get good grades in math, but I also want to make sure she develops a caring heart toward those who are hurting or hungry.

If my kids are to be contributors and not just spectators, builders and not just hitchhikers through life it will be because I have been able to help hitch their dreams to a big goal, a noble goal, an unselfish goal. I've been able to help them see past their own needs to the needs of others, that I've been able to help them understand that they are here not just for a brief, self-absorbed lifetime, but so that they too can leave a legacy.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

The political season is upon us again. Does it ever really leave? The speeches and the posturing, the accusations, innuendo and lies, the polls and predictions and the constant analysis of every word and every nuance will all join the stream of hype that now flows continuously through our national consciousness. The celebrities of politics and punditry will discuss, they will rant and rave and debate. They will call in "experts" and sit in panels and talk and talk and talk, dissecting the disjecta membra of a fragmented democracy.

The talking points of the talking heads are now keen to underline the "philosophical divide" currently plaguing the nation, as if there were two species of Americans who separate every choice into a liberal or a conservative decision. We are ripe for this division. We are conditioned this way from birth; taught to compete, to view life as a series of right and wrong choices between pairs of opposites: East versus west, black versus white, democrat versus republican, good versus evil. Give us two choices on any subject and we are likely to personally identify with one or the other, defending against any aspersions cast on our "team" as if they were personal insults. We are not taught to think logically or dispassionately.

Unfortunately for us, the problems currently batted around by political parties are outside the scope of politics. These problems will only yield to logic and to science, not to political solutions. Conservative and liberal labels will not adhere to these problems. The price of oil and gasoline, for example, along with the price of everything else we need to live our lives in the civilization we have created, is a popular political football and we demand a political solution. "Let's tax the oil companies," we say, although increased corporate taxes are almost always absorbed by higher prices and lower wages. The increasing cost of living is a problem beyond democratic and republican talking points. It is a problem of supply and demand and a parasitic financial sector.

As long as gas prices increase independently of the price of oil, we can catch a glimpse into the arena of speculation and the effect it has on everything that we do and everything that we consume. Western Civilization has encouraged the monetization of the human condition and

in doing so we have allowed a small group of financiers to gamble with the commodities which support life as we know it. They speculate on food, energy and raw materials, making obscene profits and driving up the price of goods and services. Supply and demand can no longer predict what we pay for goods and services because our economy is host to a small but powerful group of parasites, tapeworms which produce nothing, which add nothing to the net wealth of the economy as they feed off of it, enriching themselves while they weaken the host.

Political solutions will not be forthcoming. Divided by partisan politics, we are conquered as we select from the same two column menu the next set of marks for lobbyists. Our elected officials will stage impassioned arguments. They will pass meaningless resolutions. They will add thousands of new elements to the already burgeoning collection of laws and regulations which no average citizen can navigate without a lawyer. They will do everything they can to divert taxpayer money into their own districts to increase their chances for re-election and if history is any guide, they will create more problems than they solve.

Meanwhile, the price we pay for living as we do will continue to rise as climate change and overpopulation tax the physical limits of a closed system. There is only so much oil, so much water, food, and arable land, steel, copper and concrete to go around and the supply lines for these commodities are subject to many potential disruptions. Civilizations rise and fall on these supply lines, a fact to consider if you still believe that we fight wars and maintain 140 military bases around the world in order to bring freedom to the downtrodden.

Afflicted as we are, this great nation of ours is poised for a difficult transition. The pace of change will continue to accelerate and we, weakened as we are by our parasites, may be slow to respond, but there is still time to minimize the damage. We can begin by accepting the fact that change is inevitable; accepting the fact that unlimited consumption based upon unlimited credit is coming to an end. Cheap energy is gone. Demographics are changing. New and innovative solutions will be required, not just for the sake of profit, but for survival itself.

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



Death and the Post Office
"Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the lord my soul to keep, if I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take." As early as I can remember, this was a prayer that my parents taught me to say before going to sleep. Since early childhood I have known that I could die and some day will die. I don't believe that my parents were cruel because they taught me the reality of death. Quite the opposite is true. My knowledge of the reality of death gave me a greater respect for the precious gift of life. Dr. Ed Young, pastor of the Second Baptist Church in Houston, Texas said, "Death is like an elephant in the living room: We can decorate around it, but it is impossible to ignore." However, we should not live life by the fear of death. I read about a fellow who habitually read the obituaries. If his name was not listed, he dressed and went on to work. One morning he read the obituaries and sure enough his name was listed. He was somewhat upset, but he got dressed and went on to work. After he arrived at work he called a friend and asked, "Did you see my name in the obituary column this morning?" The friend said, "Yes, where are you calling from?" The question is: "If you should die before you wake, where will your soul the Lord take?" Jesus told a story about two men which is recorded in Luke 16:19-31. These two men were worlds apart socially, financially, physically and spiritually. The beggar was named Lazarus. He was placed each day outside the gate of a rich man. Evidently, he was crippled or physically handicapped in some way. This had prevented him from making a living and being independent. He had to resort to begging to survive. He was probably

looked upon as a parasite on society, living a useless life. This man Lazarus begged for bread in this life. Bread is the staff of life physically. The rich man apparently fared well everyday of his life. We can imagine he had blessings beyond blessings, food, shelter, parties, banquets, applause of men, friends galore. He could have named his blessings ton by ton. But death comes to both the rich and the poor. Both men died and went into eternity. The rich man had a big funeral and was probably eulogized in glowing superlatives. The beggar died and nothing is mentioned that he was buried. He may have been placed outside the city walls on the garbage heap. The scene suddenly is changed. Death has affected a reversal of conditions. The rich man is now in a place of torment. He is now the beggar. Here was Lazarus, a beggar on earth, a beggar for bread. Now the rich man is a beggar in eternity, a beggar for water. Two men, two lives, two deaths and two destinies. What made the difference in eternity? On earth one was a beggar for bread. In eternity the other became a beggar for water. On earth a "gate" separated the two men. In eternity a great "gulf" which cannot be crossed separated the two men. On earth one lived in torment but now enjoys eternal joy. The other lived it up on earth, but now tormented. What made the difference? Lazarus had trusted God for eternal life; the rich man had not trusted God. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). Someone says, "Why Preacher, you know that going to heaven is like going to the Post Office." "There are many roads that get you to the Post Office!" The only problem with that analogy is that when you die you are not going to the Post Office! The question: "If you should die before you wake, where will your soul the Lord take?" The answer: He that hath the Son hath life; He that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:12).



Community Calendar

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 3rd Thursday of every month. Please call Kim Bailey at 706-994-2727 or 706-896-6747 for details.
Towns County Republican Party meets the 2nd Thursday 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 Hiawassee 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 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, mtnregarts-craftsguild.org, mtnregarts-craftsguild@hotmail.com.
VFW 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.
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.

Towns County Herald
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