

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Letter to the Editor

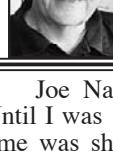
For the third season "Summer's Last Kiss - An Affair With the Arts" lived up to its mission as a community celebration of arts on the Town Square in Hiawassee. Productions of this magnitude take a year to produce and a great many people to pitch in. So the "Kiss Committee" wishes to introduce its members and thank the many who helped make the event fun, festive, safe, and exciting. "Summer's Last Kiss" is an affiliate of the Towns County Tourism Association, and its members are: Deb and Russ Collins, Deb Collins Signature Gallery; Liz Getz, Hallam Construction; Jane Holland, Towns County Tourism Assoc.; Faron King, Coldwell Banker; Rebecca King, Bank of Hiawassee; Katie Polstra, Ramada, Lake Chatuge Lodge; and Susan Wyman, Fain Investments. And yes, all these members work full time and donate time and effort to produce "Summer's Last Kiss".

First, we want to thank Mayor Barbara Mathis and Attorney Rick Stancil for the staunch support they give to this Hiawassee experience. We need to thank the many talented artists who participated in the show, many of whom have already expressed an interest in returning next year. And the food vendors were outstanding for our 2010 event. We also want to thank the U.S. Army Ground Forces rock band, "Loose Cannons" for leaving Fort McPherson at 5AM in order to set up and perform at 11AM. Our own Ryan Acree kicked off the event with his rendition of "I'm Proud to be an American". Susan Vardeman's "Fuzion Dance Company did an outstanding performance, as did Jeremiah and Kyle from Helen, Ga., and Keith and Pat of "Martin Breedlove". Last but not least, Steven Phillips and "Midnight Express" rocked the night for the evening street dance. Ronnie Moffitt did a great job on sound once again.

It basically takes a village to make "Summer's Last Kiss" a success. Police Chief Jimmy Wright, Sheriff's Department personnel, and EMS services all participated. Security detail included Mike Davis and John McCoy. Larry and Coot Owens used their Ranger to pick up supplies and dispose of trash. Dave Phillips sent the covered stage from Fun Factory in Franklin for us to use. Bank of Hiawassee provided lunch for the Army personnel, trash services, and parking while also providing a kid pavilion for activities. United Community Bank also provided a kid activity tent. BRMEMC made sure we had lights and power and put up their big tent for the convenience of visitors. The Ramada Inn Chatuge let us borrow lots of folding chairs and also brought donuts for the artists. The Ridges provided tables and chairs. Scotty Fain opened his office so the Army personnel and the dancers could have a place to change their clothes and Susan Wyman kept the coffee and cold water flowing all the time. Holly Tiger of Anderson's store was supportive of the event, even though it closes the street beside her business. Volunteers, Rosie Hallam, Gail Bertrand, and Carol Lumpkin staffed the gazebo, selling T-shirts and greeting the public. And Judges Ed Ludwig, Brian Grahl, and Susie Hall took on the difficult task of judging the juried art in the show. Jane Holland created an original "Summer's Last Kiss" quilt which was raffled off during the event. The winners of the quilt raffle were Rick and Carol Cook of Mt Dora, FL. They intend to share it with the Art Community in Mt. Dora. Congratulations to them.

And then there were the little helpful things that happened - like Rich Sterba who had the Kettle Corn booth giving cold bottled water to the Army band when our supply was delayed in arriving. And the artist, who didn't even identify himself, who provided lights on stands to help light up the street dance. The camaraderie among all the participants and the enthusiasm of the crowds was the most gratifying thing of all. And so, we thank everyone so much, and look forward to next year.

Sincerely, the "Kiss Committee"



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Joe Namath once said, "Until I was 13, I thought my name was shut up!" A lot of kids grow up today feeling that way. No youngster should ever be yelled at. Why? Well, first it's difficult to learn to respect someone who yells at you, and one of your goals as a parent is to build respect between you and your kids.

As hard as it is to admit, we cannot control our kids' behavior. Parents will sometimes come up to me after a talk and say something like, "We have tried to get Cristy to practice her piano, but she just refuses to do it." Try as you will - threaten, withhold privileges, badger, scold, nag, and shout - you cannot force Cristy to do what she has decided she isn't going to do.

Parents are leaders and good leaders don't shout. Good leaders don't call names. Good leaders give clear instructions without a lot of explanation and they expect obedience. Kids are most apt to be obedient to parents they respect and admire, not to those who lose their cool and go into a rant.

Towns County Herald Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

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The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Mark Twain wrote that "travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts." Twain went on to say that "broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime."

I understand the frustrated idealism in the statement, but I think perhaps that the operative word here may be "vegetating." My grandfather, born in 1886, never traveled outside the Southeast, never owned an automobile or even a television, but never was there a more charitable or tolerant individual. He never "vegetated." He observed human behavior; he read voraciously; he prayed constantly and he died peacefully at the age of 98. He was, perhaps, exceptional in his egalitarian views.

Americans have for generations taken pride in being a great "melting pot" of cultures, and nowhere on earth has travel been more ubiquitous than in the United States. Travel is central to our national identity, our perception of freedom and independence and in some cases our very sense of self. Yet a generation after the great civil rights struggles of the 1960's, prejudice persists and we are a nation divided by race, ethnicity, politics and religion; this, despite the efforts of mass media to frame every situation and every comedy as a happy mixture of every race, color, creed and national origin that can fit on a screen.

As for the "melting pot," a recent study based on census data and posted on the Radical Cartography website illustrates the extreme racial and ethnic segregation that persists in our largest cities. With the ability to live anywhere we choose, we choose to live among our "own kind," and humankind is not enough of a distinction for many of us.

Mark Twain hoped that if Americans exposed themselves to different cultures that they would recognize the humanity which joins us all. Yet travel in and of itself does not seem to fulfill his wish. The British Empire at one point in history circled the globe and yet many of the people who lived within the "empire" were considered by the British to be subhuman - not a particularly charitable view. Africans who traveled halfway around the world to America did not consider life on the plantation to be wholesome and their owners, when they were exposed to a foreign culture, attempted to eradicate it.

Prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness display the ability to survive travel and exposure to other cultures. De-

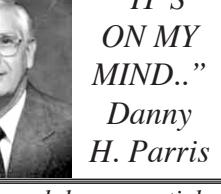
cades after the desegregation of our schools they appear capable of withstanding even education. These debilitations of the human spirit seem to be hardwired into the animal side of human nature. Genetically identical animals form groups, develop identities separate from their neighbors and compete with each other for territory and resources. This is true of a hive of bees, a pack of wolves, a pride of lions or a herd of elephants.

Is this not also true of humans? Several studies have shown that the human mind is incapable of comprehending more than about 150 meaningful relationships. People outside this group have a tendency to be perceived as "the other," no matter how similar they may be to us. Perhaps this is the determining factor in our astounding ability to create divisions among ourselves. Combine our hardwired perceptual limitations with fear of "the other," and you have the history of the human race in a nutshell.

I'm still inspired by Mark Twain's hope for "broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things." As well as being capable of division, humanity has used religion, education and compassion to overcome the limitations of the human animal. For many it is not the perception of the other but the fear of the other that is the root of the problem and for many, travel provides the opportunity to overcome that fear. For others it is the spiritual journey or the travels of the educated and inquiring mind.

Perhaps there is a cautionary tale to be found in the structure of the human brain. A hundred and fifty individuals is about the size of a small tribe or a clan. Perhaps we achieved the optimum organizational unit for human beings generations ago - and while nations and empires have erased the natural boundaries of the community, we have invented divisions to replace them. While there seems to be little chance of an orderly retreat from the homogenization of cultures, it would behoove us to remember the plagues and infestations endured by the natural world that was brought on by our industrial practice of monoculture. In the final analysis, perhaps our best hope for survival is to be found in a twofold approach: by encouraging diversity and, above all, by teaching tolerance.

Jews and Muslims, although genetically almost identical, have fought each other for ages because of the fear of the same God.



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

A billboard, bumper sticker society

Ours is a very mobile society.

We are a people going to and fro. Millions of people drive millions of miles daily on our expressways, state highways, county roads, country roads and city streets, commuting to work, school, hospitals, sports events, entertainment activities, etc.

For those who complain about the weather: "The weather never changes in hell." For those who are critical: "A sharp tongue and a dull mind are usually found in the same head." For those who curse: "A dam holds water back, it's not my last name" - God.

For those who are frustrated: "Don't give up Moses was once a basket case." For those who don't tithe: "Give God what is right, not what is left." For those who are fearful: "It's risky to go out on a limb - but that's where the fruit is." For those who are tempted: "Forbidden fruit creates many jams."

For those who love sundaes: "Our Sundays are better than Dairy Queen." For computer lovers: "God always answers knee-mail." Long ago the prophet, Habakkuk penned these words: "The Lord said, 'Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.' (Hab. 2:2) Did you know that we are a living billboard? Everyone is reading us. What kind of message do you convey on the billboard of your life?

Even the atheists have gotten into the act. A couple of weeks ago anti-God and anti-church signs went up around Atlanta encouraging people to sleep in and skip church. The irony of these signs is why would you spend good money fighting something that you don't believe exists in the first place?

The church has always been out front in proclaiming its message in a bold way to



"I was going to look for a job,
but finding a needle in here seemed easier!"

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 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 at 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 Unicoi 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.townhistory.org

Bridge Players

intermediate level meets at 12:45 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Health 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@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.

Young Harris City Council

1st Tuesday of month at 7 p.m., Young Harris City Hall.

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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/blueridge-mountains.

Alcoholics Anonymous

: 24 hour phone line