

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



"The list of things we have may be smaller this year, but my level of thankfulness is sure a lot bigger!"

## Letters to The Editor

### Letter to the Editor

On behalf of the city of Hiawassee, I would like to thank everyone that helped in any way to make Halloween on the Square such a big success: Russell Stookey, Ramada Inn, Wylene White, Body Sense, Shelia Chapman, The Hens Nest, Randy & Gail Warne, Moore Ins. Company, Regency Hospice, Taking Care of Business, Rick Stancil, Designer Threads, Dollar General, Barbara Mathis, Always Christmas, Turpins Electrical, Mary's Southern Grill, Georgia Vision Center, Lovely Nails, Curves, Bacchus Wine Shoppe, Dairy Queen, Mountain Graphics, Men on the Move, James Melton, Crane Creek Vineyards, Larry & Brenda's, Turpins, The Medicine Shoppe, Justin Moss & John Allen, Marathon, Hiawassee Animal Hospital, Mountain Realty, Blue Ridge Mtn. EMC, Laurel Mtn. Cabins, Shear Perfections, Ministries of Christ, Papa's Pizza, Century 21, Holiday Inn, Towns Co. Fire Dept., Towns Co. EMS, North Georgia Jeepers Club, Music: Kaleb Garrett, Ronnie Moffet & Wayne Barter, OTM for sound equipment, Emcee- Stephen Smith, Costume Contest: Judges- Gail Eaton & Husband, Janet Allen, Prizes- Fun World & Papa's Pizza.

To everyone that had tables on the square a great big thank you.

Mayor Barbara Mathis  
City of Hiawassee

### Letter to the Editor

In addendum to, and in support of the Letter to the Editor by Teresa Stephens, Chair of the Towns County Food Pantry, it would be appropriate to add this information. In addition to the 20 churches in Towns County that are participating in the Towns County Cooperative Ministries, Hayesville, NC is also represented. Parishioners from Immaculate Heart of Mary Church-many of whom live in Towns County-have been supporting the Towns County Food Pantry since its inception more than 3 years ago. In addition to donations to the pantry from monthly parish collections, a team of folks assist with unloading of food items as well as being involved in the distribution of food boxes on Tuesdays. It is heartwarming to be involved in such a fine community resource. The Church of the Good Shepherd also supports The Towns County Food Pantry. The Towns County Food Pantry continues to be blessed by all area churches in our fight against hunger in our county.

Many Thanks,  
Teresa Stephens



**RARE KIDS;  
WELL DONE**  
By Don Jacobsen

**Q:** Dr. Don, my kids are driving me crazy with questions. From early to late every day it's constant Why, or Why is, or Why doesn't? Which is going to give out first, my mind or my kid's questions?

**A:** You didn't tell me what ages your kids are, but it doesn't really matter. I'll bet they're normal. Someone with more spare time than you and I have has studied the phenomenon of children asking questions and calculated that the average healthy child asks 500,000 questions between the ages of three and fifteen. Do the math - that's 114 questions a day. Multiply that by two or three kids and it's no wonder you feel like you live in Question Valley, USA.

So why do kids ask Why? Some reasons are obvious. Sometimes it's simply because they know it'll get a rise out of mom or dad. Sometimes it's because they want someone to talk to. At four they're not really ready to begin a dialogue with, "Dad, there is an issue I wish to discuss with you." So a question is their instinctive way of launching a conversation. And who would be happy if their five-year old never spoke to anyone? We

thought our youngest granddaughter was going to be in school before she learned to talk. Her two-year-old sister did enough talking for both of them. Her parents were relieved when she finally began to speak - even though it started out as mostly questions.

Kids often ask their questions for the same reason you asked me yours, they are looking for information. Remember, kids early-on develop an insatiable curiosity. There is so much they can't figure out. Why do things fall down instead of up? Why does water get hard when it gets cold? Why does a cow eat green grass and give white milk? They've got to ask 114 questions a day just so they can start to figure out how stuff works!

You'll survive this period. Other parents have. Rejoice that their minds are working. The nearer they get to their teens the more their questions will provide teaching opportunities. If you've been respectful of their early questions they are more apt to be respectful of your later answers.

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

## The Middle Path

by Don Perry

There are moments when the curious fact that the human race has survived this long seems an unlikely fluke, an accident, an aberration. Such moments can occur on the Interstate when the speed of the traffic exceeds the IQ of most of the drivers. They can occur when a cross section of popular culture is taken on any given night from a random sampling of what is broadcast on our airwaves. Such a moment occurred for me recently when I decided, after a brief hiatus from mainstream news, to get up to date on the tragedy and the controversy of Penn State. How could a species which continues to produce individuals that abuse children have survived so long? What possible positive spin can be taken on a culture which riots when a football coach is fired?

The issue of child abuse by Penn State officials is beyond the scope of this article. The proper place for this issue to be resolved is in the courtroom, not in the feeding frenzy of speculation and hype which now accompanies every newsworthy event. There is no middle path for child abuse. In this author's opinion, an individual who abuses children is broken and should be thrown away, period. But it is the court which will discover guilt and the law which will determine punishment, not the networks, not the talk shows and not the small talk around the water cooler.

As for the rioting, there is, at least from a scientific perspective, an explanation. We are genetically programmed to identify with groups and we have a predilection towards worship. Humans lived as small groups of hunter-gatherers, clans, tribes and villages for much, much longer than we have lived as nations. Allegiance to a group was a trait necessary for our survival, and when our group was threatened, we defended it. Concurrent with the development of civilization, religion, with its focus on deities and myths, has accompanied us on our long journey and is likely embedded in our genetic code as well. The firing of Penn State's head coach was, in psychological terms, a threat to a group as well as the mythos which surrounded it. The rioters were responding to impulses as old

as humanity itself.

Traits which are advantageous in small groups do not always provide the same benefit for modern civilizations. Our need to attach our social consciousness to something outside our selves can provide support and comradeship, but it can also separate us in ways that lead to conflict. Anyone who has spent an afternoon in Sanford Stadium can understand the powerful emotions and sense of tribal allegiance that such an event can foster. These same traits, however, can also contribute to prejudice, racism and hatred of "the other." Our propensity for worship can enrich our spiritual lives and provide lasting moments of devotion, but worship of human deities, at its best, wastes hours of life in front of the television following celebrity and at worst, allows tyrants to assume power.

One of the most frustrating examples of in-group blindness can be found in the political arena. In America we are divided and conquered by a two party political system. We are divided by a perception that the differences between what pundits call "liberal" and "conservative" are irreconcilable. We overlook those differences when our allegiance to country is invoked. Defense of that group membership can produce great heroism and sacrifice, but we often forget that nationalism is a trait essential to leading a people to war. In the long history of warfare and despotism, this fact has never been forgotten by those whose only allegiance has been power and profit.

Race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, political party, income, team affiliation, and favorite soft drink are a few examples of the myriad ways we have of separating ourselves from each other. There is nothing "wrong" with allegiance to a group. We are born with that behavioral predisposition. The harm occurs when we lack a self-awareness of what motivates us and when those motivations, necessary for the survival of small groups of people struggling in a challenging environment, are forced into the ill-fitting molds of modern life.



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

### The voice of many waters

I have reached that age where I don't believe there is that much water left to go over the dam or under the bridge, however that saying goes. Sometimes my sentiments are like the fellow who, after a very hard day of yard work, came inside and plopped down in his recliner groaning about all of the aches and pains of his advancing years. His wife, who was athletically inclined enjoyed running, biking, mountain climbing, etc., said, "You remember as newlyweds we looked forward to growing old together." He said, "Yes, but you haven't kept your end of the bargain." Well, speaking of water over the dam, my wife and I visited Niagara Falls a couple of years ago. The overwhelming experience of standing by those falls was not the volume of water tumbling over that precipice but the thundering noise of the water. I can still hear the crushing, crashing sound of those waters. While the falls present breathtaking beauty there is the awesome reality of the force and power of those waters. Recently, I have been concerned about the state of our nation in relation to water. In my

lifetime these days seem to be the most troubled waters that we have had to maneuver. Economically, we seem to be dead in the water. We can't keep our heads above water in this economy. There's a lot of sputtering, spitting and gasping but the water's heavier than the air. All efforts just appear to be treading water. Politically, all politicians are in hot water. Their credibility is probably at an all-time low. But in spite of grass root's uprising most politicians don't seem to care what their constituents are saying. It's just like pouring water on a duck's back. This generation has probably muddied the waters morally more than all of those before us. Marriage, family and sexuality have all undergone life altering changes. Traditional convictions have been blown out of the water. There is a segment of society whose philosophy is come hell or high water they are determined to destroy traditional foundations of right and wrong. I am convinced that most of these changes fail to hold water. Any reference to God or any mention of seeking God for spiritual guidance for this age is usually met with the cold water committee to drown any spiritual inspiration. What this age needs is the One with the voice of many waters to pour oil on these troubled waters. He is the Lamb of God!

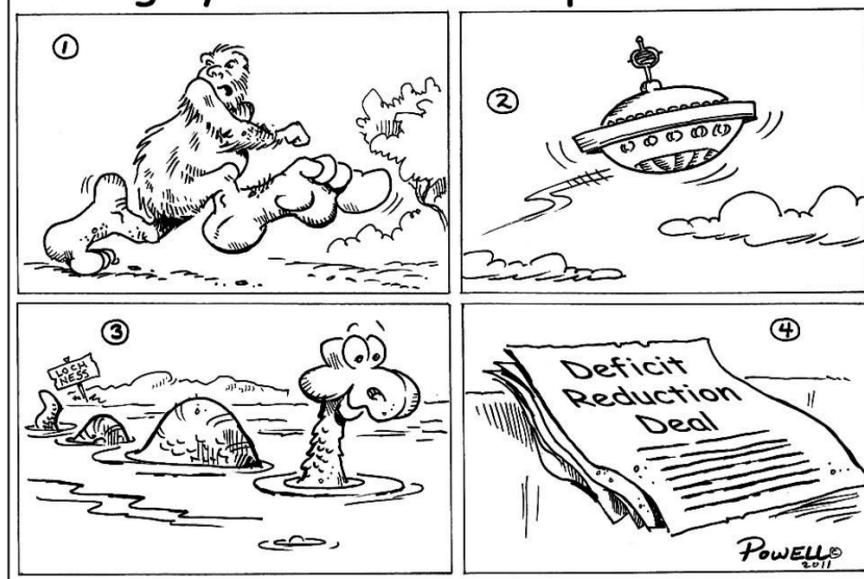
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## Things you shouldn't expect to see...



### 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.**

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