

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Winter

Winter roars in on a cold wind, it strips the leaves and the trees are bare. A look at the mountains show houses that we didn't know were there. The birds have migrated to warmer climates. We brace ourselves for colder times. Sometimes it rains and we track mud. It gets so cold I feel a chill in my blood. Sometimes it snows in the night, and we wake up to the beauty of a blanket of white. We put on a sweater and a warm overcoat, we wear gloves and a muffler so we don't get a sore throat. But children still play outside, and get a runny nose, they look forward to Christmas and holiday fun. We listen to carolers singing holiday tunes but I would enjoy it better if the holidays came in June.

by: Bruce Sims

Christmas Spirit

Christmas is such a special time As we celebrate His birth But He is with us all year Watching and guiding us Answering our needs While we try to do good deeds. We should remember Christmas is His birthday We celebrate every year. But we should keep that spirit All through the year. Feel blessed and happy Be kind and considerate Do good deeds everyday Be generous and pleasant Treat others as you wish to be treated Earn respect and admiration. Your acts will reward you. Christmas spirit can last all year!

Submitted anonymously

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

'Tis the season. Be it tradition or ancestral urging, a sentimental journey to more innocent days or a thing programmed into our genes, some of us are compelled to begin celebrating as soon as the days begin to darken. Jack-o-lanterns become pumpkin pies at the Thanksgiving table and the Christmas tree is decorated before the dishes are dry. We will gladly celebrate Hanukkah with you or ring a bell on the Solstice. We will go to your church play and admire the children dressed as shepherds. We will attend your Midnight Mass, sing along with your Christmas carols, and for those of a more comic nature, we will laugh at your Festivus pole and compete in your feats of strength.

What we will not do is yield this season of celebration to any who might claim it for their own narrow agenda. The birth of Christ, which in all likelihood did not occur in the cold of Winter, is a thing to be celebrated every day if at all and is certainly not diminished by any other traditions that share this season. Furthermore, "Merry Christmas" is not a politically incorrect greeting, any more than "Happy Kwanza" is inappropriate for this time of year.

America is historically and by simple math a Christian nation, so get over it.

We will also gleefully ignore anyone preferring fugues to carols who might wish to criticize our shopping and gift giving, our decorations, our feasting and our frenzied anticipation as being "too commercial." The only commercials we wish to avoid this time of year are the ones that interrupt our favorite Scrooge movie on television. We have the rest of the year to be frugal, and our commercialism, beyond the ephemeral pleasures it provides, is the one thing that allows many businesses to stay open from one year to the next.

We invite you all to celebrate, or not to celebrate, as you wish, but equally as important we implore you to allow others to do the same without judgment. For the fun loving, for the deeply spiritual, and for the young at heart still able to understand the magical nature of life itself - enjoy the season that now rushes past us in glittering moments as unique as snowflakes. All too soon the gray days of winter will be upon us, minus the brightly colored lights, the songs, the fellowship and the wonder.



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

Christmas Is Hope

It has been said that man can live about forty days without food, about three days without water, about eight minutes without air, but only one second without hope. Fred Craddock said, "Hope is the very stuff of life; it keeps the farmer on the tractor, the prisoner alive, the student at the books, and the patient watching for the morning." Hope is confident expectation. When God took on flesh and blood and moved into our world in the person of Jesus, He came to a world of darkness, blackness, and hopelessness. The voice of the prophet had been silent for about four hundred years and men had turned to mystery religions and gods that did not see, hear nor answer prayers. At just the right time - in the fullness of time, God came to replace man's hope with the fulfillment of the Messianic Hope of ancient promise. What seems more hopeless than to live in a world where a tyrant rules and murders babies? What appears to be any more hopeless than a congregation of shepherds? Even worse, what could seem more hopeless than a young man with a pregnant teenager for a wife, away from home, no shelter for giving birth, except for a stable? Into this atmosphere of hopelessness, hope broke forth. You see hope is not just believing that things are finally going to come out in the wash. Christmas (Christian) hope brings the assurance of God's presence NOW. In the midst of our circumstances that bring despair and a sense of hopelessness, God steps in to say that you don't have to "go it alone." When the enemy of death has removed that precious loved one; your spouse has just walked out saying, "I

don't love you anymore" or that son or daughter has made a decision to live an ungodly and rebellious lifestyle; when your boss has just dropped the bombshell that you no longer have a job, or a thousand other scenarios, God gives blessed hope. Man extends false hope. He has clichés and empty slogans that last about as long as the morning dew. However, God gives hope not only in this world that is overwhelmingly negative (listen to the evening news and current events) but Christmas hope that says the future is more glorious and brighter. Christmas hope declares the best is yet to be. If we have hope just for living this life now, without any hope of a future life, Paul says we would be most miserable. Christmas is not just a secular holiday; it is a holy day that offers hope. Christmas is not just being home for the holidays; it is hope for heaven with all of God's family. Yes, Christmas is hope. Each sparkling light declares that Jesus is the light of the world. Every Christmas tree communicates the death of Christ upon the cross. Each gift exchanged carries the message that Christ is the ultimate gift of God to a world of lost sinners. We not only have a hope to live by now, but we have a hope that is good enough to die by. Several years ago one of our nation's submarines became disabled and sank off the coast of Massachusetts. Ships were rushed to the scene to see if anything could be done. The men were trapped and clung desperately to life as their oxygen slowly dissipated. The divers communicated with the men inside in Morse code. As time was running out, a question was tapped from inside the submarine: "Is.....there.....any....hope?" Thank God, in a war-torn world Christmas declares again that there is hope!! Our hope is anchored in the Past. Jesus arose! Our hope remains in the Present. Jesus lives! Our hope is completed in the Future.

Jesus is coming!!



"Bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."
Luke 2:10



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Q: Dr. Don, it's a nightmare when I take my 4-year old to the store with me. He wants me to buy him everything he sees. Do you have any ideas?

A: Sure, leave him home. Well actually, that won't solve the problem, will it? It might make your shopping a little less stressful but it won't deal with his attitude. And by the way, that attitude is not limited to 4-year olds. I don't know much about your family but let me make some suggestions.

First, I'd suggest you look at his toys. Most kids who want everything they see have too much already. Does he have more than a dozen toys? That's probably too many. That's why he gets bored. Aim for just a few and make sure they are the kind that give his imagination a good stretch... blocks or small boxes, play dough, Legos, puppets, are examples. Nothing with a switch before age eight; toys should make kids think, not just press buttons.

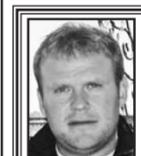
Next, practicing with some really short shopping trips. Explain that you need to get just two items and there won't be

time for him to shop today. On the way to the store explain to him the kind of behavior you expect. If he forgets, he goes to bed early for a week. At the age of four, he'll quickly get it.

But let me describe a bigger issue that may help. No generation in history has had the fixation with "stuff" like ours does. Start early to model for your kids the true joy of giving things away. This is a great time of year to do that. Build a family tradition where your kids are encouraged to think about what kind of gift Mom might like from them, what hints has Dad dropped of something he might like? Make it a game to help them learn to think about how what they do can make others happy.

"Adopt" a needy family and help your kids plan what they can give to their kids. Let them help you distribute food baskets with your church. Help them help fill shoe boxes for Samaritan's Purse. The more your kids learn to give the less they learn to want.

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



OUR FUTURE

By Minister Aaron Stanley

The Greatest

Christmas means so many different things to so many different people. It is a time of year when so many different emotions, memories and ways of life come together and blend for a moment in time. For many people it is a time when we take ourselves back and remember the birth of our Savior, who came to this earth to live only for us. For others it is a time of family meetings and a time for second chances for a year that is far spent. I know that there is a particular feeling in your own heart this Christmas season that no one can fully capture except for you and that, to me, is what makes this season what it is.

In First Corinthians 13:13, we read these very familiar words, "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love." I want to take just a moment, look at this verse and break it down, and use it to capture the fullness of the season of Christmas. I hope you will keep this verse very near to your heart as we draw near to the end of the year of our Lord, 2010, and as we begin anew, in 2011.

Faith, We, as human beings, have established a faith in something. The writer of Hebrews said, "faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." For those who know Christ, know him, first through faith. We have faith that Jesus came to this earth, lived a short life and died for us on Calvary. Without faith in Christ, we have nothing more.

Hope, Romans 8:24; "For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for

why does one still hope for what he sees?" Hope, much like faith, is not something we can hold on to but something we must receive. None HAVE a hope in receiving eternal life but were GIVEN it through Christ Jesus. Verse 25 of Romans 8 goes on to say, "But if we hope for what we do not see, then we eagerly wait for it with perseverance."

Love, Why was love named the greatest of the three? I challenge you to read the entirety of 1 Corinthians 13. We read here that without love we can have nothing in this life or the life to follow. No matter what great things you can do or have done, without love, all of these were in vain. Love was named the greatest of all because Christ Jesus is the purest picture of love one will ever find.

Each of these deserves so much more than the space I am allotted. I challenge you this Christmas season, to enter into it with a LOVE in your heart for all, through which you will find a FAITH and HOPE in Christ Jesus that you never could have imagined. God is Good! Merry Christmas!

In Christ,
Aaron Stanley
bcocaminister@yahoo.com



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Towns County Herald

Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

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OFFICE LOCATED AT 446 NORTH MAIN STREET
"THE MALL" HIAWASSEE (706) 896-4454

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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.

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 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.

Stevens 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 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, mtnregartscraftsguild.org. mtnregartscraftsguild@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 Tuesday 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.

Fall Storytime at Towns County Public Library Thursdays at 1 p.m.

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.

Mountain Coin Club meets the second Tuesday of each month at the Blairsville Civic Center. Doors open at 5:30. Program and auction begins at 6:30. For more information, call Ye Old Coin Shop, 706-379-1488.

Community Calendar