

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Letters to The Editor

Avery Cagle RMA VS TOWNS

Sir,

Great Coverage of the game. TOWNS COUNTY has improved a lot since December. My son commented on they played hard and were killing it from the parking lot. The Arena WAS AWESOME! It is or was an exact replica of the Alexander Memorial Coliseum at GA TECH which is now McCamish Pavilion. Thanks for the kind words about Avery, and the Towns County Coach was also great with his comments to my son after the game. I thought it was a great homecoming, Great Arena, and class team and coach. I wish them the best and the winning will come no doubt.

SFC Brian Cagle

### Letter to the Editor:

If the Herald is "Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County" and considering all that Rep. Allison has done for Towns County, how did the January 22 full page ad full of lies and half-truths from a self-serving Atlanta PAC promote that dedication?

Claudos G. Spears

Editor's Note: The newspaper is required to print paid political advertisements without discrimination.



## RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

America's parents and grandparents spent more than \$22 billion last year on toys. Someone observed, that's more than the GDP of Uganda. Anyway, if you're a typical mom or dad you may think you could probably locate about half of that stuff...under your child's bed. In fact, the typical 7-year-old in America has just a few less than 500 toys. Hard to believe but that's what "the research" says.

We've talked before about how parents think they're doing their kids a favor by plying them with a whole inventory of the latest and greatest. Fact is, though it may make the parents feel better, it isn't doing the kids much good. Here's one reason: Take the typical toy at the toy store, buy it and bring it home, it'll last your child about four days. The very best toys you'll get seven to 14 days out of. How's that for return on investment? "The toy industry is broken," says one researcher, "and they don't care about your kid. It's more about when can they sell you the next toy, not whether your child still loves the current one?" To underscore her observation she notes that Mattel leads the way, followed by Hasbro and LEGO, all with a phalanx

of sophisticated researchers learning how to push adult hot buttons about what kids will like. How serious are they? Together the three companies will spend nearly \$1 billion this year on marketing.

Toys are valuable. Play is a child's work, and toys are the tools of his trade. This is not an invective against the toy industry. It's a plea for some wise and unemotional thinking. When Aunt Martha walks into the children's play room and sees the latest shipment from Toys "R" Us, she may be impressed. Or not. But the toys are not for her. Small children - pre-schoolers - need toys that feed their creativity and imagination. They don't need glitz, flashing lights, or working parts. Whatever the item is, Julie will probably use it for something else, anyway. A plastic bucket can be a drum or a hat. Some small boxes can make a bridge or a house. A glob of clay can make a snowman or a family of cats. They'll have more ideas than you do. Billy's creativity can be stimulated; pre-fab toys can slow down the process. Besides, you can put the money you save in his college fund.

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

## The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Buried in the family archives I recently found an ancient tome written sometime during my grade school years. The title of the essay was, "What America Means to Me." The language of the paper was very similar to what we often hear in political speeches today. It was full of hope and patriotism. When I was a child, I believed the things I wrote about in that essay and much of the country shared that same sense of national identity.

Today I still believe in those things, but I wonder what that paper would say if it were written by a student today. When my generation was growing up our world view and our sense of national identity was guided by parents and peers, informed by lessons in school and the books and magazines we read. To a greater degree than today our worldview was influenced by what we saw and heard in our houses of worship. To a lesser degree than today it was shaped by media, particularly the television shows we grew up watching.

Parents still influence their children, but there are significantly fewer families with two parents today than there were a generation ago. Media is and always has been guided by agendas other than art or craft or even the mandate of informing the public. It remains, as always, controlled by profit and heavily influenced by government and the intrusion into government of corporate interest. But never before in the history of humanity has our connection to media been so pervasive and so persistent. As for religion, while it still influences millions of Americans to a greater or lesser degree, it has moved more into the background of people's lives, if it influences them at all.

So what factors influence our national identity today? There are many. Media provides support for whatever we choose to believe. Every opinion under the sun has a home on the Internet. Churches have been rocked by scandal and corruption and religion is less trusted than in the past. Government is generally viewed to be inherently corrupt and hardly trusted at all. Our segregated neighborhoods defy four decades of government attempts at social engineering. Census maps reveal a patchwork quilt of Americans separated by race, national origin and economic status. Elections reveal a country divided by age and affluence, conservative and liberal values.

How does our nation function at all with so many disparate elements and without the strong unifying influences of the past? Tolerance. Tolerance is the one essentially American value that has contributed to any success we have had as a people. Intolerance is the one factor hard-wired into humans that has contributed to our greatest failures.

Who and what have been our greatest champions of tolerance? The Constitution of the United States and the ideals of our

Founders embedded tolerance into the fabric of our national identity. Government has often been the only guarantor of tolerance. It is the one job that, through the rule of law, it seems capable of performing well, though in practice its track record has been inconsistent.

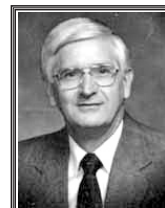
Religion, particularly Christianity, Judaism and Islam which all branch from the same tree, should be champions of tolerance. The command to love our neighbors as ourselves is common to all these beliefs. Yet religion, even Christianity, I'm sorry to say, has a dismal record promoting tolerance.

As for media, there have been some fine examples of television shows and movies which have championed tolerance, alternative lifestyles and beliefs. Yet too often media promotes an "anything goes" attitude toward the morals that have guided the country for generations. Media often attacks those ideals with cynical humor and ridicule. Hollywood and the producers of television shows are "tolerant" of every slant of human behavior except for Christian and traditional values.

I was reminded of how much our national identity and sense of morality have changed over the last several decades when I watched part of the Grammy Awards. Mainstream music drains a different watershed than the one in which my preferences reside, but I was channel surfing and happened to catch one of the single-name celebrity performers demonstrating the ability of her bare buttocks to mimic sexual positions in time to music before being joined on stage by her celebrity husband and performing something they called "drunk in love."

These performers are friends of the president of the United States and if one judges the number of times their faces (and buttocks) appear on websites and magazine covers and the number of times their names are mentioned by mainstream media, one might conclude that they represent the preferences, the taste and to a degree the national identity of Americans. I have a hard time accepting that. I believe that their performance crossed the line between tolerance and permissiveness, innuendo and pornography. I must look elsewhere for my ideals of mainstream America.

I found that source several nights ago during the ice storm and traffic gridlock around Atlanta. Where government and media failed, ordinary people rose to the occasion. Commuters trapped in their cars were given food and drink by people who risked the elements to help someone in need. Businesses stayed open and provided shelter. There are countless stories of heroism and sacrifice from that storm, and the empathy of ordinary Americans crossed all our self imposed lines of social, religious and economic difference. That is the America I grew up in, and I'm glad to know that it still survives.



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

### Perspective

A Norwegian story tells of a fisherman and his two sons who had gone to sea for their daily run. They had a very successful day, and by mid-afternoon headed home. Suddenly, a violent storm blanketed the shoreline with darkness. The winds were turbulent and the waves threatened to capsize the boat. The men struggled with oars against the billows without chart or compass. They could not tell what direction they were headed. For several hours they fought to survive. Completely lost and nearing exhaustion, one of them saw a light piercing through the darkness. They headed toward the light. With diligent focus they made it to their own landing. As they pulled into dock they were met by the wife and mother. In terrified, tearful tidings she cried out, "Karl, Karl, fire has destroyed everything." Karl was unmoved. His wife started over, "Karl, don't you understand? While I was cooking the skillet caught fire and before I could do anything the house was engulfed in flames. Everything we possessed is gone." Still Karl was unshaken. He then explained to his distraught wife how he and his sons were lost at sea and were certain to have a watery grave. Suddenly, they saw this light which was the house being con-

sumed by fire. The very blaze which consumed our home and all our possessions was the light which drew us home.

Everything is relative to something else in life. If we reach proper conclusions we must have the right perspective.

Most of the time we are wise after events, not during or before. Perspective will cast light on sorrow, heartache, failure, success, grief, death and a multitude of other experiences in life.

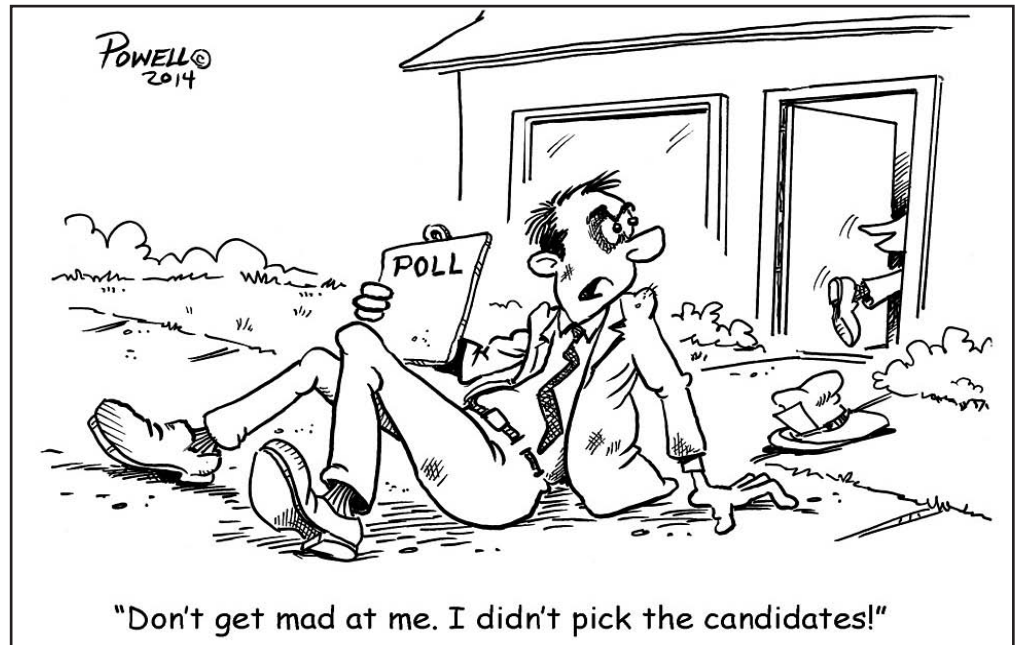
To illustrate further this truth I recount the old Hebrew legend that tells of a Rabbi journeying on a mule through a wild country. His only companion was a rooster whose crowing at sunrise awoke him to his devotions. He came to a small town at night-fall and sought shelter, but the people turned him away. He went to a cave nearby to sleep. He lit his lamp before retiring but the wind blew it out. During the night a wolf killed his rooster and a lion ate his mule. Early in the morning he went into town to see if he could buy some food and to his surprise found that everyone was dead. A band of robbers came during the night, killed all the people and stole their possessions. "Now I understand my troubles", said the Rabbi. "If the townspeople had received me, I would be dead. Had not my rooster and mule been killed they would have revealed my hiding place, and God sent the wind to blow out my lamp. God has been good to me!" Perspective - Romans 8:28.

### OWN A BUSINESS? NEED TO ADVERTISE?

Contact the  
Towns County Herald  
706-896-4454



"Oh, no... I had to tell him Santa isn't real. You tell him about makeup days!"



"Don't get mad at me. I didn't pick the candidates!"

### Elected Officials

Governor Nathan Deal, Georgia State Capitol Atlanta, GA 30334, 404-656-1776  
Sen. Johnny Isakson, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, 202-224-3643  
Sen. Saxby Chambliss, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, 202-224-3521  
U.S. Congressman Doug Collins, 9th District, Washington, DC 20515, 202-225-9893  
Rep. Stephen Allison, Georgia House of Representatives, 404-656-0177 or 0185  
Sen. John Wilkinson, Georgia State Senate, 404-463-5257  
Towns County Commissioner Bill Kendall, 706-896-2276  
Clerk of Superior Court Cecil Dye, 706-896-2130  
Tax Commissioner Bruce Rogers, 706-896-2267  
Magistrate/Probate Judge David Rogers, 706-896-3467  
Sheriff Chris Clinton, 706-896-4444  
Coroner Tashina Eller, 706-489-9519  
Enotah Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley, 706-896-6489  
Board of Education: 706-896-2279, Michael Anderson, Donna Hedden, Jerry Taylor, Bob Gibby, Emily Phillips. Superintendent: Melissa Williams  
Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis, 706-896-2202  
Hiawassee City Council: Janet Allen, Jay Chastain, Joan Crothers, Steven Smith, Pat Smith  
Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby, 706-379-3171  
Young Harris City Council: Terry Ingram, John Kelley, Donald Keys, Matthew Miller, Stuart Miller, David Sellers

## Towns County Herald

Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

KENNETH WEST.....PUBLISHER  
CHARLES DUNCAN.....EDITOR, ADVERTISING  
SHAWN HENRIKSON.....COPY EDITOR  
AZURE WELCH.....STAFF WRITER, PHOTOGRAPHER  
MASON MITCHAM.....SPORTS WRITER  
JOE COLLINS.....ADVERTISING SALES  
LOWELL NICHOLSON.....NEWS, SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHER

OFFICE LOCATED AT 518 N. MAIN ST. SUITE 7  
"THE MALL" HIWASSEE (706) 896-4454

Publication Number 635540. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points.  
EMAIL Address: tcherald@windstream.net

POSTMASTER: Send change of address to:  
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD  
P.O. BOX 365 HIWASSEE, GEORGIA 30546

DEADLINE FOR ALL NEWS COPY & ADVERTISING  
Fridays at 5 PM

SUBSCRIPTION RATES  
TOWNS COUNTY (1 YEAR) \$15  
OUT OF COUNTY (1 YEAR) \$25

The Towns County Herald is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All subscriptions must be paid in advance.

### 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.