

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Letters to The Editor

### My Hope for the Nation

**Dear Editor,**  
Is the pursuit of Life, Liberty and Freedom of Religion a thing of the past? To me it appears to be just that. It seems we've lost our way and with it a mutual respect for everyone has been replaced by an individualistic attitude that if I can't have it my way, you can't either.

The welfare and exercise of freedom of the majority has been sacrificed to satisfy the whims of the minority whether or not their freedoms have been jeopardized. When something is thought to or "might" be offensive to someone, it becomes the law of the land. The freedoms of the many are sacrificed for the few.

This is a major problem which affects all aspects of our society. To become amicable or complacent and "cow-towing" to everyone's feelings has brought us to our knees. Society cannot survive if everyone has the right to do as they wish without regard to the welfare of society as a whole. Each person has to give a little for the benefit of everyone. If not, no one will have anything to give, or receive, because all of the power will have been forfeited to the government or a dictator controlling the government.

At the core of this complacency I believe is the lack of individual responsibility and the loss of the stable family. In stable families, there is a sense of mutual cooperation, respect for each others' interests, dreams, possessions, welfare and health, sharing of household chores and the joy of being part of something bigger than ones-self. All of these require a sharing of responsibilities for the good of the entire family unit. When we isolate ourselves from the family or society, we lose the benefits that can be shared by or with each other.

There used to be a saying that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It appears that in today's world, some of the "parts" seem to think that they are no longer part of the whole. There have always been individuals that didn't fit into the mainstream of society and there probably will be others in the future. The problem, however, is magnified when a 'few' becomes the 'many'. Society as a whole loses its way when no one wants to be accountable.

There was a time when we were a compassionate society. When someone was in need, family and friends provided assistance; now everyone looks to the government. There was a time when the person at fault was given a suspension, a demotion or a different job. When someone makes a mistake on the job today, the response is "fire him/her". Destroying their family welfare or future employability is not a factor. It's the guillotine for you! Off with your head!

If we don't learn responsibility and respect soon, very, very soon, we will sacrifice our freedoms to someone that won't give a damn. They will be exactly like the person of today that wants everything for him/her self. The only difference will be that the 'dictator' will have the power to quench your ability to regain what you once had and lost.

I hope that life, liberty and pursuit of happiness will not be lost. All major societies have self-destructed due to pride, greed or complacency. History repeats itself and we should learn from the mistakes of those who have gone before us and failed. Are we on the same track of self-destruction? Will we right the ship before it sinks?

Ralph Kwiatkowski



### RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

**Q:** Dr. Don, my husband and I read quite a bit about why we shouldn't be "helicopter parents," (actually, I read - he listens) but we can't find a definition so we're not sure exactly what it means. I know it's a negative term, but is there something we're not getting?

**A:** Maybe the new term ought to be "drone," since that seems to be the current spy-in-the-sky of choice, an ever-watching presence that monitors every move of those suspected of being the enemy. Helicopter parent is not a technical term, it just describes parents who constantly "hover" around their kids.

The negative side of the deal is that kids whose parents solve all of their problems have a hard time growing up to be responsible adults. They are constantly anticipating that someone will swoop in and settle their conflicts and difficulties. Helicopter parents are usually wimp-makers.

Congenital hoverers are easy to spot. We've all seen them. There's a quarrel on the playground and mom instantly sprints to serve as referee rather than let Sally learn to work through her own disagreements. Sean gets in trouble at school and dad rushes to the phone to help assure the teacher that whatever happened, it couldn't possibly have been Sean's fault. It's

the homework-helper who not only checks over all the answers on Freddy's paper, but who stays up half the night gluing together the final pieces of the planet display Normajeau started, late, rather than allowing her to take the consequences herself.

When Cheryl goes on a class trip to the museum, mom loads up her backpack with a week's supply of Band-aids, tissues, hand cleaner, extra sox, lip ice, a list of phone numbers for her mother, dad, brother, uncle, grandma, and the police, fire department, and EMTs. Obsessively protective. Unreasonably cautious. Excessively vigilant.

I know, there are always those who speak up from the "what if...department." But we can't discomfort-proof our kids, and shouldn't if we could because that doesn't equip them for life. Hovering - or droning - over our kids, is a major parent no-no. I've written before about my friend, Alexa, who let her 9- and 11-year-old boys pack their own bags for summer camp. It nearly killed her not to look in the bags before they left home. But they survived. And the next summer they did a lot better job. Hmm. Now there's a useful observation.

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

## The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Some time ago we did a piece on free or low-cost alternatives to expensive pay-television and recently one of our readers asked us to revisit that discussion. We say "expensive" because that \$100 per month cable or satellite bill invested at a 7% return would yield over \$100,000 in thirty years. There are costs, and then there are opportunity costs from decades of television watching, both to the bank account and to the waistline.

Satellite, cable and IP television are fairly reliable and there are hundreds of channels and hundreds of thousands of commercials available to watch. In our area, which is out of range for Atlanta or Chattanooga stations broadcasting over the air, it is generally believed that our only choice for staying current with popular television shows is a costly monthly subscription.

Much more could be said about whether or not staying current with popular media is a worthwhile goal, but we will save that discussion for another time. Suffice it to say that there are ways of keeping current with celebrities, sports and shootings without digging too deeply into the bank account.

There are a variety of streaming devices that connect your television to the Internet and provide a vast selection of programming. Roku, Chrome TV, Apple TV and Neo TV are some of the more well known choices and all can be purchased for a one-time fee of around \$100 or less. If you own an Xbox, Playstation or a Blu-Ray media player, you probably already have a device that will stream movies and television.

My personal favorite of all the streaming devices in the \$100 range is Roku. A Roku with a subscription to Netflix will give you access to over 75,000 movies and 20,000 television episodes - all commercial-free. Roku also streams Amazon Prime content and Prime members have access to over 40,000 movies and TV shows as well as Amazon's vast library of pay-per-view movies and episodes. A subscription to Netflix (streaming only) costs about \$8 per month. Amazon Prime membership costs \$99 per year, but most people buy Prime for the discounts and free 2-day shipping - the streaming content is an added bonus. Roku currently has over 1100 channels available for streaming and the majority of them are free.

For those of us intent on keeping up with the latest shows being discussed around the water cooler, the content offered by Netflix and Amazon Prime, which tends to be

### 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.

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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.**

months or years old, can be too stale, but there are alternatives to the monthly cable bill. Hulu Plus for \$8 per month streams most of the major network shows as well as many offerings from cable-only series. Current shows streaming on Hulu are delayed by at least 24 hours and, as in the case of ABC shows, delayed one week. Hulu forces you to watch commercials (you can mute but you can't fast forward) but there are fewer and shorter commercials on Hulu than on the network broadcasts.

For someone who craves the "live" (delayed by only a few minutes) experience of the nightly shooting report, as well as local programming from Atlanta, Aereo is an affordable choice at \$8 per month. Aereo is a unique service creating huge waves in the broadcast industry. Aereo assigns one digital antenna per customer and rebroadcasts whatever programming is available within a designated broadcast area. The service is not as fast as satellite or cable and the quality of the picture depends on the quality of the Internet connection, but the service does include scheduling features and cloud DVR storage for recording programs.

You will be hearing more about Aereo in the news this year. Its very existence appears to frighten the networks which have ruled the airwaves since the 1950s. In every market Aereo has entered, it has been met with lawsuits sponsored by the networks. Aereo has won most of the court battles it has fought, but decided recently that instead of fighting a war of attrition with the much larger networks, it would try to settle matters once and for all in the Supreme Court.

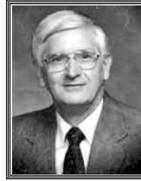
The networks claim that Aereo is "stealing" their content because Aereo does not pay retransmission fees like cable and satellite providers. Aereo claims that it is simply replacing the digital antenna for people who could normally receive network broadcasts and it limits its transmissions to the broadcast areas served by the networks.

Not surprisingly, the Justice Department has backed the networks in a brief filed earlier this month. The networks have threatened to stop broadcasting freely over the air and move their programming to pay services if Aereo wins in the Supreme Court. In other words, the networks claim that they are willing to deprive millions of viewers (and lose their advertising dollars) if they don't get their way.

No matter who wins in court, the broadcast industry is changing, has changed, significantly. Last year multichannel television providers saw their first ever decline in subscriptions. Over 100 million people still subscribe to pay-TV in this country, but that number declined by over a quarter of a million in 2013. Rising prices, poor service and cheaper alternatives from streaming providers have been blamed for this decline.

Now that the government has declared its support for the networks, can we can look forward to another "too big to fail" plan for subsidizing them at taxpayer expense? Government has a talent for protecting the industries that have paid the most for that protection - oil, banking, insurance and now, perhaps, broadcast media.

At least, for now, a library card and every book, tape and DVD in the library, is still free.



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

### Working the puzzle

In my early childhood days one of the most popular pastimes was what we called "working puzzles." My brothers, sisters, mom and dad enjoyed the challenge of "working puzzles." In the early days of our marriage the wife, myself, and the children spent some time "working puzzles." Now that it's just the wife and I, she is a real puzzler. She has graduated to I-pad puzzles. She consumes I-pad jigsaw puzzles. I just remain her biggest puzzle. On occasions I have to remind her that it is time to put down the I-pad and go to bed. Today's generation is more into electronic games than painted paste-board pieces. In fact, I am not sure that this generation has either the time or the patience to fit the pieces of a puzzle together. Life is a lot like "working a puzzle."

To many life is a puzzle. How exactly do you work a puzzle? The way I was taught to work a puzzle was first to clear off a large area, pour out all the pieces (some contain 250 pieces, some 500, some 1000) onto the area and proceed to place each piece face up.

When all the pieces were facing upward we would strategically place the top of the box where all workers could see what the finished puzzle would look like. The pieces of the outside border were connected together first.

When all four sides were connected we "filled in" all remaining pieces. If the picture of life comes together for us, we must early on get a vision of what life should be. When I helped to put a puzzle together I

constantly looked back at the finished picture. For one to live life successfully you must obtain a vision of life from God's Word. As you work at that vision you must constantly refer back to the Book in order to keep the vision fresh before you. Like puzzles, it seems that some lives don't have a lot of pieces to fit together. However, some lives are more complicated with thousands of pieces to fit in, but that depends upon the vision you have for life. I have seen some people build shacks when they could have built mansions but in their vision they only had a shack in mind. When we are born into this world God has a completed picture for us to be found in His Word. We have boundaries that He has set for us and we are to fit each day into this life according to His will for that picture to appear as God has planned for us. A full and satisfying life does not happen by trial and error. All the pieces must face upward for you to know where they fit in the big picture.

You can't force them to connect to other pieces if they are not shaped properly. It takes time and patience to make godly connections to live a fruitful and beneficial life. We need to get God's big picture for our lives and work toward putting the right pieces in the right places so that in God's good time the right picture will appear. God's picture for all of us is that He might conform us to the image of His Son, Christ Jesus.

Are you cooperating with God to make you look like your elder brother, The Lord Jesus? Don't allow the devil to persuade you to put the wrong pieces into the wrong places to produce a grotesque life.

Life is not a puzzle but a privilege to produce a precious picture.

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(No editorial cartoon today due to the lack of political controversies)

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OFFICE LOCATED AT 518 N. MAIN ST. SUITE 7  
"THE MALL" HIAWASSEE (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 HIAWASSEE, GEORGIA 30546

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