

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Over the course of the last several years of writing this column, I have been criticized for being both too conservative and too liberal. My hope is that this is at least some indication of being near the mark in my efforts to find a middle path between extremes of opinion. The world is more complicated than the black and white filters we attempt to apply to it, and if you struggle with this idea, consider for a moment how you might navigate if you should find yourself struck with colorblindness sitting at a traffic light.

It is perhaps more comforting for some people to perceive reality as consisting of a set of absolutes. Religion, for the most part, agrees with this notion and tells us that reality is eternally unchanging. Science, on the other hand, tells us that reality is fluid, changeable, and that at a level where we begin to infer the basic components of matter and energy, those components, the very building blocks of the atom, are themselves influenced by our observations.

Politics is a good example of the interplay between the absolute and the changeable. We describe political reality in absolute terms: democrat, republican, conservative, liberal, yet those unchanging terms mean different things over time under the influence of our ever changing opinions. The patriots of the American Revolution were certainly considered liberal, yet those who adhere to some of the same principles today are labeled as the most reactionary of the conservatives.

It is interesting how people continue to attempt to attach time honored labels to our current president. Those who consider themselves conservative often describe President Obama as a liberal. Many, those with a more active dislike of the president, refer to him as a socialist, that being the most derogatory label they can use in polite company. Liberals, particularly those enamored of the term, like to describe the president as liberal. Here we have an example of the same word being used as both a blessing and a curse.

Unfortunately for the American voter, all such terms have become more useful as marketing tools designed to inspire, to inflame and to polarize than they are in predicting how a president will choose to act while in office. All too often what a president chooses reflects more practical, less noble goals than the standard labels would indicate.

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.**

Take, for example, the recent bill signed by President Obama, HR 933. Section 735 of the massive spending bill is an anonymous rider that many are referring to as the "Monsanto Protection Act." Section 735 shields biotech companies from federal courts should any harm be found in their genetically modified seeds. This signing is on the heels of Obama's appointment of Monsanto Vice President, Michael Taylor, as Senior Advisor to the Commissioner at the FDA.

When George W. Bush appointed oil men to positions that directly influenced energy and environmental policy, he was accused of acting on the worst impulses of evil conservatives who have sold out to large corporations. The election of "liberal" Barack Obama was supposed to reverse this trend. Contrary to his campaign rhetoric, however, Obama has assigned Wall Street bankers to oversee the economy and given a pass to the giant multinational corporations who seek to own our food supply. Perhaps we need some new, more accurate, more predictive labels for the political process. Perhaps if politicians were required to wear the patches and labels of their sponsors, like NASCAR drivers, we could make more informed decisions when voting.

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

The path of life

Being born in rural Fannin County, super highways, interstates, or even paved roads were uncommon to me in my early childhood. I was more accustomed and acquainted with "paths" than I was with roads or highways. To get from one place to another, even though there were graveled roads, usually, there would be a "path" or a "trail" that was a short cut to where you were going. Most of these paths were well worn and well traveled by persons and animals. They were narrow and not accessible for wagons and cars. They were for walking. Now-a-days we have well defined paved, concrete, or dirt-smooth walking trails. These paths are beneficial to the well being of our fast paced whirling world. As a bare footed little ole boy, I was a frequent traveler on the path to "Luther White's Country Store." I was a big spender, purchasing "bubble gum", "dopes", penny candy and ice cream. I kept that path beaten down. The paths to my grandparents, aunts and uncles and to my friend's houses were kept "hot" with my brothers and sisters and cousins. Then there were paths to our favorite fishing and swimming holes: paths to the springhouse and to the one room school house and church house. Anyone who grew up in the country will never forget that most important path to the outhouse. I can still visualize walking, running, and skipping along those paths and trails of my boy hood. These paths were not noisy, nor crowded. They were inviting and interesting. You could stop along the way

and eat a hand full of blackberries, or fox grapes. You could see some of the most beautiful sites observing butterflies, watching squirrels, rabbits, and animals of all kinds. You could observe first hand the blossoms of a cherry tree, pear tree or apple tree. Even climb one and sit-a-spell if you felt so inclined. You could examine the changes of God's creation from blossoms and blooms to full grown flowers and leaves, the turning of those to brilliant autumn colors and falling back to earth. Those trees that were once fully clothed in glorious beauty now looked like naked ghosts until a winter snow clothed them in purity and whiteness. The sights were delightful but the sounds were heavenly. Provided by God's wonderful singers, the blue birds, cat birds, mocking birds, sparrows, brown thrashers and house wrens serenaded me with music that would calm the spirit, and remove moody thoughts from a little boy's mind. All of my boy hood paths were pleasant but the greatest path of all was when God showed me the path of life (Psalm 16:11). I have been walking this path for fifty years and found it to be a plain path (Psalm 27:11) and a path of righteousness (Psalm 23:3). It is protected by the presence of God (Psalm 139:3, 142:3). He has directed my paths (Proverbs 3:6). Some of you who are reading this at one time walked in God's path but you have found a wicked path to walk in. Yet, you long in your soul to be back in that old path. Just ask God to direct you back (Jeremiah 6:16). There are others of you who have only known a dark path. In the words of the writer of Hebrews I encourage you "to make straight paths for your feet" (Hebrews 12:13). Let the Holy Spirit lead you to the Path of Life. It will lead you to the Father's House.

Letters to The Editor

Letter to the Editor:

Hiawassee: An unexpected gift

I'm thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail and had no plan to stop in Hiawassee. The mountain weather quickly changed my plan on Sunday night, March 24th.

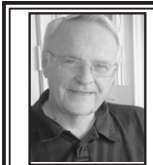
I woke up on Tray Mountain and everything I owned was frozen solid. I got to Dick's Creek Gap and there my introduction to your great town began.

A young man named Jonathan picked me up and took me to the Holiday Inn. The staff there made me feel extra special.

The rest of the day took me to Ingles, the nearby hardware store, Hardee's and to the nearby all you can eat restaurant.

Everyone I encountered made me feel welcome. The pride that the folks of Hiawassee have for their town is tangible and heartfelt.

Thank you for treating a dirty, stinky hiker so well.
Vince Vilcinskis
Marshall, NC



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE
By Don Jacobsen

Just about half of all first-birth children born in the United States are born to women who are not married. Among young women who have not completed high school, 83 percent who give birth are not married.

Those are startling statistics compiled by researchers at the University of Virginia. Not only do they describe a potentially disastrous future for the American family, they paint a picture of a generation of youth with serious trouble ahead. We don't need any more of that. Here is what we know:

Children of unmarried mothers tend to have "poorer outcomes" than children who grow up with married parents. That means they are more apt to grow up in poverty, but more importantly, they are much more likely to have negative experiences at school leading more often to becoming dropouts, to developing significant emotional problems, abusing both drugs and alcohol, and who themselves are more likely to become pregnant before marriage.

To be producing a generation of kids who face that kind of tomorrow does not bode well for the future stability of this nation. Lest you think I am over-reacting, let me share a part of the conclusion reached by the researchers cited above: "... One of the primary reasons

for getting married - starting a family - is increasingly viewed as a relic of the past. The institution of marriage, and even the presence of two parents, are seen as nice but not necessary for raising children."

A "relic of the past..."? "Nice but not necessary..."? This represents a major generational shift in America's value system. A culture is no stronger than its families. If half of our children have not grown up with the stability of a committed mom and dad in their lives what will their own homes be like in the next generation?

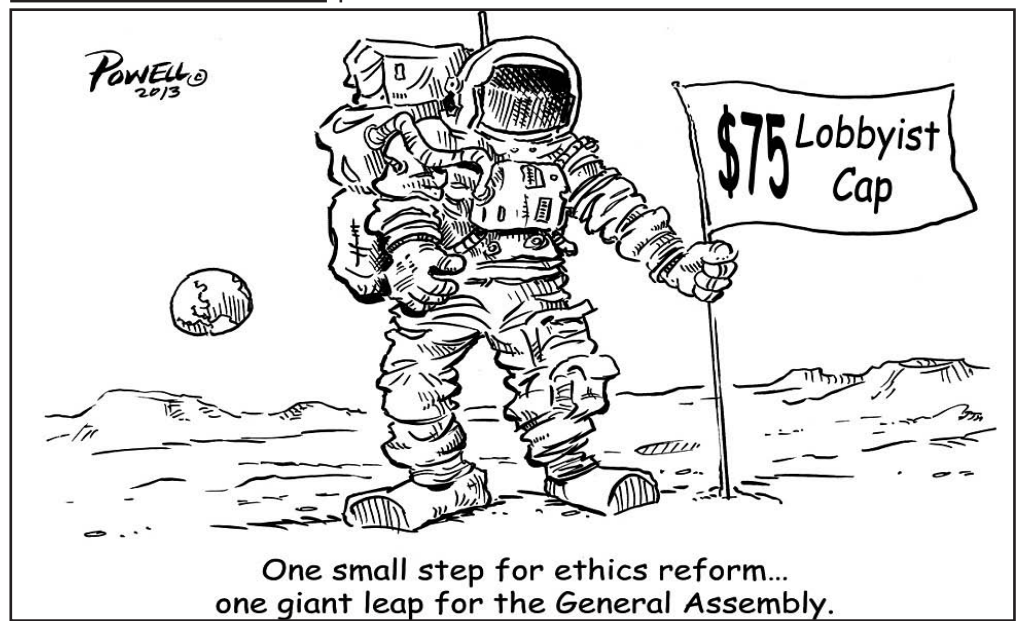
OK, enough gloom and doom. Where do we go from here? Three observations:

(1) Without a moral compass everyone becomes their own lawgiver. Let's be sure our kids have a faith anchor; and don't send 'em to church, take 'em.

(2) Family values are handed off at home. Kids pick up on the value they see us place on marriage. Intimacy is not something we make jokes about; it is a magnificent and exclusive gift from the hand of God.

(3) Let's communicate high expectations to our kids. Purity in a decaying culture is a gift we give them.

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



Community Calendar

American Legion Post 23 meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 4 PM at VFW Post 7807, Sunnyside Rd., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-8387 for details. We need your support!
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 at 5 PM at the Senior Center.
Towns County Republican Party meets at 6:30 PM the 4th Thursday of each month at the new Senior Center. For more info call 706-994-3919.
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 in Murphy. Call Kit: 706-492-5253 or Peggy: 828-835-1082.
The Unicoy 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.
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 5:30 p.m. Annual dues \$15, PO Box 1182, Hiawassee, GA. We do oral family histories

of residents. 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org
Bridge Players intermediate level meets at 12:30 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Rec Center.
Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG) meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at ArtWorks Artisan Centre, Hiawassee. Refreshments at 6 p.m., meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Call us by 706-896-0932 or mtregarts-craftsguild.org.
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 at 706-896-2430 or visit www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridgemountains.
Alcoholics Anonymous: 24 hour phone line 828-837-4440.
Mothers of Preschoolers meets the third Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church of Blairsville from 6 - 8 p.m. Call the church at 706-745-2469.
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 3 p.m. Thursdays at Pine Log Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Brasstown. Ping Pong players welcome. Call Jerry (828) 837-7658.
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.
The Humane Society Mountain

Shelter Board of Directors meets the last Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at Cadence Bank in Blairsville.
The Towns County Alzheimer's Support Group meets the first Tuesday of each month at 1:30 PM in the Family Life Center of McConnell Memorial Baptist Church. For more info call Carol at 706-896-6407.
The Appalachian Shrine Club meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Allegheny Lodge in Blairsville. For more info call William 706-994-6177.
Georgia Mountain Writers Club meets at St. Francis of Assisi Church the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 AM.
GMREC Garden Tours every Monday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Shooting Creek Basket Weavers meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at the Shooting Creek Fire Hall Community Center. For more info www.shootingcreek-basketweavers.com.
Friendship Community Club meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6 PM at Clubhouse, 1625 Hwy. 76, 706-896-3637.
Goldwing Road Riders meets the 3rd Saturday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse in Hiawassee. We eat at 11 and meeting begins at 12.
Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meets every Wednesday evenings at 7 PM at the Red Cross building (up the hill from the chamber office on Jack Dayton Circle).
Caregiver support group meets 2nd Tuesday of each month, 3 p.m. at Brasstown Manor, located at 108 Church St., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-4285 for more info.
Enchanted Valley Square Dance Club. Dances 2nd & 4th Fridays at Hiawassee Senior Ctr. from 7-9 PM. \$5/person to dance. Free to watch. Call 706-379-2191.
Brasstown Woodturners Guild meets 1st Saturday of month at 9:30 AM in HHS shop. For more info call J. C. at 706-896-5711.
VFW Post #7807 will be hosting a fish fry their 2nd & 4th Fridays of each month April - October. \$9. all you can eat from 4:30 - 7 PM.

Towns County Herald
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OFFICE LOCATED AT 446 NORTH MAIN STREET
"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

DEADLINE FOR ALL NEWS COPY & ADVERTISING
Fridays at 5 PM

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
TOWNS COUNTY (1 YEAR) \$15
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