

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

From the Desk of:



Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

Child passenger safety

Child passenger safety is an important topic. No one wants their child to be injured in a motor vehicle accident. Not only will improper precautions place a child in harm, but drivers can receive a citation for failing to follow state laws regarding child passenger safety. The following information is a paraphrase of the requirements of the law in Georgia.

Children under age eight are required to be in a child safety seat or booster seat. The seat, or booster, must be appropriate for the child's height and weight. The seat or booster seat must be used according to the manufacturer's instructions. Generally, children under eight must ride in a back seat, but there are a few exceptions to that requirement.

If a vehicle has no rear seating, or all the rear seats are already occupied by other children, a child under eight may ride in the front seat. Still, any child riding in a front seat must be properly restrained in a child safety seat or booster seat appropriate for their height and weight. Drivers should be aware of the potential of the child receiving serious injury should an airbag deployment occur while a child is riding in the front seat.

When using a booster seat a lap/shoulder belt is required, but again, there is an exception. A child over 40 pounds may use only a lap belt if the vehicle does not have shoulder belts, or if positions that have lap/shoulder belts are being used to restrain other children. If there are only lap belts in the rear seat, a child may ride in the front seat. Again, any child riding in the front seat must be restrained in a safety seat that is appropriate for their height and weight. The seat must be used according to the manufacturer's instructions. There remains the potential for serious injury from an airbag deployment that should be understood and considered.

A child over 4'9" in height may be restrained in a safety belt instead of a booster seat. A child under eight can be exempt for physical or medical reasons only if the parent or guardian has a written statement from a physician that a physical or medical condition prevents using a child safety seat or safety restraint system.

As always, it is our desire to help you and our loved ones remain safe. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call on your Sheriff's Office. We are always honored to assist you in keeping yourself and your family safe.

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The Middle Path

by Don Perry

At the end of its life, a tree simply stops growing. As long as it is alive, a tree will continue to add growth rings, even in drought years. For a tree, life itself is growth and change. We humans are similar to trees in this respect. We live as long as our cells can continue to divide, to replace what is old and worn out or diseased with new, healthy tissue. But as creatures of body, mind and spirit, our health and our longevity depends on the well-being of all three aspects of our nature and not just our ability to add growth rings, though some of us are very adept at that particular activity.

Throughout human history our survival and our success as a species has depended on our ability to adapt to change. As we get older, this becomes more difficult for many of us. I think it begins in the mind as we become less open to new ideas and customs and new surroundings. As our senses become less acute, we find it harder to absorb new information so we have a tendency to focus our attention more on the past, on those memories that were formed when we were more flexible in all aspects of our nature.

Those of us who wish to maintain a vigor of mind, body and spirit into old age, beyond the cards we are dealt in our genetic makeup, would be well advised to find ways to remain flexible and open to change, to continue to seek new knowledge and new experience.

Life on planet earth has always been subject to change. We live on a volatile planet that, even without human interference, is given to sudden and often catastrophic transformation. No less volatile is the history of our civilization, of social and political change, sometimes peaceful, often violent.

We are at somewhat of a disadvantage in how we are taught to perceive time. Usually it is only the scientist who understands the geological perspective; the historian who appreciates historical context. As the rest of us move over the highways from couch to cubicle and back again, we understand that on Monday there are four more days until the weekend. As we navigate our personal pathways, or in some cases our well-worn ruts, we focus on our immediate concerns and gratifications.

One day we look up and notice that everything has changed around us. This is happening right now all over America as the generation of

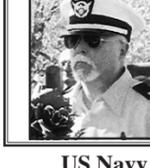
Baby Boomers begins to retire. While they were busy working, paying bills, caring for their aging parents, driving the kids to soccer practice and waiting for the weekend to come, the face of the country changed. The sound of it changed. The morals changed.

Those who can, attempt to flee the changes. They leave the cities, where the changes are more pronounced, and they come to places like Towns County, where some of the essence of Mayberry was rumored to still exist, where ancient mountains stand like islands in the stream of time rushing past.

But there is no escape, not for long. In seeking out the places we think are immune to change, without really meaning to, we change those places forever. The beautiful mountain vistas become pock-marked with the latest attempt to build with a view. The small town shops are replaced by corporate franchises; the local home cooking restaurants give way to fast food drive-thrus.

It is happening all over America. We are in the midst of profound demographic change. Americana is disappearing as rapidly as an ice cube on asphalt in August, and we can resist the tide of change about as effectively as we can save that ice cube by putting it in our pocket.

Perhaps what we can do is what vital and vigorous people have always done in the face of change. If we cannot embrace it, we can at least engage it. If we cannot stop it, perhaps we can guide it. We can become the change. To refuse to do so is to stop growing. That isn't good for trees. It isn't good for people either.



The Veterans' Corner

By Scott Drummond, USCG Veteran

US Navy Waves American Patriots

America couldn't have existed without so many who wanted to serve, including our ladies. Another wonderful WWII vet, a patriotic lady who enlisted in the US Navy because she simply "wanted to serve America;" thanks to Shirley Sonnenfeld for sharing her story with all of us. Born September 12, 1922 in Bethlehem, PA. After High School at Liberty High, Shirley completed a two year secretarial course at Temple University, then spent time working at Bethlehem Steel Company. In Shirley's own words she "didn't want for anything" as a child, as her family furniture business was adequate for family needs. However she was still committed to serve our WWII effort and enlisted in the Navy. She went to boot camp at Hunter College campus and then on to advanced training in Ames, IA. Serving as a Yeoman with Bureau of Naval Personnel near Arlington, VA, and via hard work and study Shirley advanced from E-3 to E-4, E-5, and E-6 PO1 Yeoman. She happily and proudly served America from 1943-1946.

Simultaneously, Shirley's husband to be was also serving in the US Army in Europe, as an engineer. As Shirley fondly put it, "he was building bridges and blowing up bridges". Martin "Marty" Sonnenfeld worked his way up through the ranks from private to lieutenant, enjoying his time with escapades as snow skiing, sans permission from the US Army. He was extremely athletic. Marty was to see the horror of what so many wars are about when he, as a part of

Allied forces went in and freed the remaining victims of the Polish death camps.

After military life Shirley kept meeting Marty at the bus stop, back home in Pennsylvania, and in August of 1946 they married. Soon they were "raising kids" and pursuing Marty's yearning for education, he a teacher and Shirley as the school secretary. Marty also designed and built a school and "special education" program for kids who otherwise may have been considered non-productive, focusing on their natural abilities and aptitudes, refining these skills into such activities as building fine and sturdy furniture. After retiring in the 1980s they moved to Sarasota, FL and for 25 years Shirley once again volunteered, full time, serving the Veterans' Administration, the city hospital for seniors, and the Jewish Synagogue. Due to Marty's health problems and with the assistance of one of their daughters, who was a Registered Nurse already living here, they moved here in 2008. Marty passed in February 2014.

Their family is quite a large, happy, and beautiful example of Americana with Shirley and her three daughters, Nancy, Sandra, and Anita, including four grandchildren, and "seven and one half" great grandchildren. The plethora of framed family photographs and family artwork Shirley maintains is nothing short of beautiful, and tells the story of America's veterans and their love of country and family, without which our nation would flounder and fail. Shirley says she'd gladly enlist again. Thank you, Shirley!

Semper Paratus!

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Recently Ruthie and I were sitting in a restaurant waiting for our food. We couldn't help but notice the family in the booth across from us. Mom and grandma were unsuccessfully attempting to maintain order with the two kids sitting beside them; a boy I judged to be about 4 and a girl about 5.

The chaos the kids were creating began to subside and the thought came to me, "These adults have this situation under control - good on 'em." But out of the corner of my eye I could see without appearing to stare...the two little munchkins had discovered a way to amuse themselves. They had taken the little jelly packets, peanut butter packets, foil-wrapped pats of butter, and sugar and sweetener envelopes from the holders and were deftly building Lego-like structures on the table.

The thought went through my mind, "The restaurant is going to have to throw all of that away, because no one is going to want to use them after these kids have been handling them." Mom looked pleased; grandma did not. Although I'm on grandma's side here, I did not glare; honest. Grandma didn't do as

well as I did. I couldn't hear her question but I could hear mom's defensive response. "I know I shouldn't let them do this, but they've done it before and if I try to stop them they create a terrible scene. It's easier just to let them play."

Well, first, it is not the epitome of parental aptitude to take a 4-year old and a 5-year old to a restaurant. At least not a restaurant where adults eat. Feed the kids at home, drop them off at a friend's house, then you and mom go do your bonding thing wherever you choose.

But my main concern is for the kids. Mom, you've just surrendered your authority to two preschoolers. Whenever I see that happen I have to bite my tongue. I want to intervene. I want to invite her to a class I'm teaching somewhere or mail her a copy of my book. What she needs to understand is that this is the easy part, when the problems and the demands are small and childish. And if you don't get a handle on it early, odds are, it is only going to get bigger and harder. Restaurant or not, mom, you are in charge. Don't ever give that away.

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

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.



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!
VFW Fish Fry April - October on 2nd & 4th Fridays each month from 4:30 - 7. \$10 per plate.
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 1 p.m.
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.
Democratic Party of Towns County meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 5 PM at the new Senior Center. For info contact Bill Jones at 706-851-0318.
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 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. Sat. morning breakfast 2nd Sat. of each month from 8 - 10:30 AM. \$6 adults, \$3 12 & under.
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 old Rec Center in Hiawassee at 5:30 p.m. 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 Daniel's Steakhouse, Hiawassee. The Board meets at 4 p.m., and the Guild at 6. Call us 706-896-0932.
Mountain Computer User Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month. Meetings start at 6 p.m. and visitors are welcome. Details can be found at www.mcug.org.
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.
Chatuge Regional 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.
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.
GMREC Garden Tours every Monday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Shooting Creek Basket Weavers meets 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at Shooting Creek

Fire Hall Community Center. For more info www.shootingcreekbasketweavers.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 evening at 7 PM at the Red Cross building 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 Towns Co. Rec. Ctr. from 7-9 PM. \$5/person to dance. Free to watch.
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.
Mountain Amateur Radio Club (MARC) meets 6:30 PM the 1st Monday of month at 1298 Jack Dayton Cir. (next to EMS), Hiawassee. For info call Al 706-896-9614 after 6 PM.
The Board of the Towns County Chamber of Commerce meets the second Monday of every month at 8 a.m. at the Chamber office, 1411 Jack Dayton Circle, Young Harris.
The Quilting Bee at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church in Family Life Center, Room 216. 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10 AM - 3 PM. Bring a sack lunch. For more information call Kathy at 706-835-6721 or Marilyn at 706-897-4367.
Mountain Coin Club meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the North Georgia Tech campus in Blairsville. Guests are welcome. For more info, call 706-379-1488.
Monday morning BINGO at Brasstown Manor every Monday morning at 9:30 a.m. 108 Church St., Hiawassee. Players meet in the Bradford. Questions 706-896-4285.

Towns County Herald
 Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

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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

DEADLINE FOR ALL NEWS COPY & ADVERTISING
 Fridays at 5 PM

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
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