

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

To the Editor:
The man made edifices and tall skyscrapers can in no way compete with the natural beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the crisp, cold rivers and the native flora we enjoy here in North Georgia. Some people are lucky enough to have been born here. Some are smart enough to have settled here.

The two-lane lifestyle and the friendly people suit this transplant just fine. I do not miss the big box stores and chain restaurants one whit. This area is a treasure.

Loving Towns County and the surrounding communities, I'm angered and saddened at the lack of respect shown by the many litterbugs that mar the charm of our slice of heaven. The disregard for their fellow citizens and the selfishness of these lawbreakers is just plain wrong.

This is not a political or religious issue. This is an issue of pride and honor. Please join me in keeping Towns County and all of the United States of America clean. It helps us all and costs nothing.

Dale Harmon

Dear Editor,
I am a WINDSTREAM customer from Towns County and I am writing regarding the recent outage. It has been especially bad in the area where I live, every time a cloud passes over the DSL or phone service will go off. Every time I call about it, all they want to do is send out a technician. I have told them many times over that I DONT NEED a technician, that I just need the problem solved, that it must be in the main system or network, or the main line because many of the neighbors as well experience the same issues. But yet, they still want to send out a tech. Some of the neighbors eventually got so fed up, they have dropped them and have gone to other systems. I would also like to say that I have asked cell phone services of many kinds to come and put up a tower in our area as well. Now surely some one would want to receive an extra income of a few thousand dollars a month for leasing a few acres of land to them. I know I would if we had sufficient land to lease. That would look great in our bank account. But many folks around here are too vain about their land. I can't say as I don't blame them but still, we don't get cell service where we are. We have to drive two or three miles down the road and sit parked along the side to call. What if we have an emergency situation, the power is out and our land line phones are out, and we have to make a quick call? What if we were getting robbed or being shot at or something is going wrong at the neighbors or something? No cell phone service, and by the time we get in our vehicle to drive down the road, well, half of our stuff would be gone, we would be dead, or the neighbors as well. DONT WAIT for something like this to happen before a tower IS built.

Sincerely,
Delores Barnes

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

On a beautiful spring day such as we often enjoy in our mountain home, in the peaceful valleys leading to the friendly small towns we sometimes take for granted, the images of violence and destruction that have occupied the media for the last several weeks seem out of place. Somewhere out on the edge of awareness we may or may not know that 42 people died in Iraq from a string of bombings on the same day as the explosions in Boston; explosions that remind us that though we live in the eye of the storm, we are closer to the eye wall than we think, and storms are always moving.

Boston, like the 911 attacks, shocks us out of the comfort zone of mental and emotional equilibrium we have enjoyed during decades of living in a land insulated from the effects of war. Insulated, that is, unless someone close to us is in harm's way, or when we, ourselves, are in harm's way. Then we demand an explanation. Why do they hate us?

The talking heads tell us that it is because we are free and brave and "they" envy our lifestyle. We are brave. When the IED's exploded during the Boston Marathon, scores of people ran toward, not away, from the destruction. There were many heroes on that day. We are free; less free, perhaps, than we were a decade ago, but still more free than much of the world. However, as enviable as our good qualities and our affluent lifestyle may be, to attribute the passionate hatred which accompanies such acts of terror to some kind of satanic jealousy of our good nature is as childish as it is self-serving.

At some point in our ongoing experience of terror we must look at the fundamental causes of the problem and act accordingly. Thus far we have reacted by allowing the accelerated growth of a police and surveillance state, though the reduction in our freedom has not produced a reduction in the determination of our enemies. We have reacted with military force, which is sometimes as effective as trying to put out a grass fire with a broom, fanning the flames and spreading the conflagration.

No, our enemies were not created and are not willing to sacrifice life and limb out of petty jealousy. Empire creates enemies. It always has, but our empire has not been as, honest, as the empire of the Romans or other imperialists that provided peace and stability in exchange for tribute. With armies as powerful as the Roman Legions in their time, our empire certainly has a military component, with over 140 military bases worldwide. There have always

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.

been those who, surviving the onslaught of overwhelming military force, crawl out of the rubble and seek revenge, but our military campaigns have been the climactic events in an imperial saga that stretches all the way back to the last days of World War I.

The creation of our enemies began, not on the battlefield, but in boardrooms and in the halls of government. It began in the unholy alliances, out of sight and out of mind, that have existed between government and business, alliances with a worldview that sees the life and liberty of people unfortunate enough to live in areas blessed by natural resources and lucrative markets as being irrelevant, even inconvenient to the pursuit of profit.

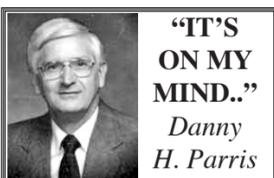
The great wealth of the American nation has, in large part, been enabled by the extraction of cheap energy and natural resources from parts of the world far removed from our native boundaries. This is not a political opinion; it is an historical fact. In order to extract this wealth, the kind of wealth that allows us to drive our SUVs 15 miles for a jug of milk, leave the motor running while we shop and then return to our climate controlled cocoons without thinking twice about it, we have been implicit in the political intrigues, the coups, the assassinations and the regime changes required to funnel the wealth of the world into our driveways and living rooms.

Our affluence, as considerable as it may be, is only incidental to the great financial empires that have been built by forcefully extending American business interests, and these financial empires, not the will of the American people, are the forces that move the world.

We have enemies willing to sacrifice life and limb because many parts of the world have long memories of brutal regimes propped up by the support of American government and American business. They have long memories of American uniforms, American bombs, and the carnage and destruction which accompanied our advertised efforts to spread "democracy."

It's not that hard to understand. Shelby Foote illustrated the concept very well in the Civil War series. To paraphrase a conversation between a union and a confederate soldier across the lines one evening, the blue asked the gray, "Why do you fight so hard for a lost cause?" The rebel replied, "Because you're down here."

We are not going to easily change a system of exploitation which has taken generations to develop and one which has replicated in various forms since civilization began. However, if we are honest with ourselves, we may, at least, be able to take from the tragedy in Boston a new sense of gratitude for the lifestyle so many of us take for granted. We use far, far, more energy and resources per capita than most of the rest of the world. Many of us want to claim this affluence as a birthright, with no awareness and no appreciation of the blood and treasure that has been sacrificed to enable it. Thousands of our young people have died on foreign soil to allow it. Hundreds of thousands of foreigners have died at home in the process: A tragedy in the eyes of thinking and feeling Americans; a business expense to the empire builders.



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

Mark my words

Words spoken or written have power for good or evil. Every day we speak, read, hear and write thousands of words, often times not realizing the dynamic force which words contain. Are you ever embarrassed by what folks write and you read? Do you ever wonder how someone could utter such words or express such thoughts in writing?

Words have power to bless or blight, comfort or condemn, lift or lower, help or hurt, love or lambaste, build up or tear down. Someone has wisely written: "A careless word may kindle strife. A cruel word may wreck a life. A bitter word may hate instill. A brutal word may smite or kill. A gracious word may smooth the way. A joyous word may lighten stress. A loving word may heal and bless."

Sometimes we have a tendency to get our tongues in high gear before we engage our brain. Is it any wonder why Jesus said, "For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36)? In fact, Jesus further stated "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:37).

According to Jesus' words our words live on after they are spoken or written, and one day, in the counsels of eternity, we will be confronted with our spoken and written words that will either justify or condemn us. We, therefore,

need to speak with wisdom as our guide and write with wisdom as our guide. The Psalmist's prayer should be the prayer for all of us: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).

To listen to the words of some people and read their writings, I believe that they have been watching too many Jerry Springer shows, rather than taking counsel from the Word of God. Some people are never at a loss for words, even though their words are fighting words. They are never able to say "Words fail me." As punishment, they often have to eat their famous last words. The Bible teaches us that we need to be persons of few words, either "nay", "nay" or "yea", "yea". James, the Lord's half-brother, said, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19). Again he said, "If any offend not in word, the same is a perfect man and able to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2). The preacher in Proverbs gives a word to the wise: "...grievous words stir up anger. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness" (Proverbs 15:1-2).

Finally, for my last word for this column, I don't want to mince words, but bluntly tell you to mark my words that God will have the last word and His word endureth forever. May we speak words and write words that will build up individuals, our city, county, churches and country. In so many words let us be men and women of good words. Lately, it has been on my mind. Selah

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Recently I was telling a story to a roomful of parents about a man and his son who were having what I called an intense discussion. In the heat of the argument the dad said something to his boy he instantly wished he hadn't said. The dad paused, struggled with his words for a minute, then apologized to his son for his rash statement.

Immediately a man over on the left side of the room put up his hand and asked if I thought the dad should have apologized. He said it was his understanding that when you apologize to your child you give away your authority and your kids learn to distrust your judgment and will be less inclined to accept your leadership.

Interestingly, you can read stuff like that in some parenting books. I'm sorry.

It's interesting to talk to kids about the kinds of parents they appreciate. I've never had a youngster say, "I want my parents to be perfect." Kids are too realistic for that. Being a parent isn't about being perfect. A word kids like is authentic. They want someone to be real, to be honest, to be genuine. Authentic.

You want your kids to know that you set high standards for yourself but that you don't always reach your goal. What they admire isn't that you are always standing on the mountain top but rather that you are putting your heart into the climb. You want to build respect in your kids? Let them hear you say, "Alicia, I'm sorry I spoke to you that way. You know me well enough to know that's not the kind of dad I want to be. I blew it and I want to ask you to forgive me. Will you do that?"

True story: One day a friend of mine said something unkind to his eight-year old daughter. He let it go at the time, but that night as she was getting ready for bed he came into her room and sat down. He recalled the incident, then added, "Honey, that was unkind and I want to ask you to forgive me." She assured him she already had, put her arms around his neck and whispered in his ear, "Thank you, daddy, I knew you were going to have to do this." A genuine apology, rather than diminishing respect, can raise dad's stock to a new level.

Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@RareKids.net

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