

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Letter to the Editor

Great news was forthcoming from the most recent Council Meetings... or was it? The old city hall had been sold. Mountain Realty owner and councilwoman Janet Allen sold it.

It has been pointed out that that is just plain wrong and is a conflict of interest. That has resulted in a flood of claims, from the Council, that there is "no conflict of interest."

Read the following and judge for yourself. Key words are **bolded**.

The following rules are taken directly from the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) Handbook for Mayors and Councilmembers', 2012 Edition:

Sale of Municipal Property
State law regulates the sale of surplus property.
All sales by a municipal corporation of real property or personal property that has an estimated value of more than \$500 must be made either by sealed bids or by auction to the highest bidder.

Conflict of interest;
Georgia law provides that: **It is improper and illegal** for a member of a municipal council to **vote** on any question in which he (she) is personally interested. This ruling is derived from court decisions brought forth since 1888.

City officials must avoid all situations in which their public actions may be affected by or come into conflict with their personal interests. In instances where this is impossible, they should disqualify themselves from acting on such matters.

It is of no consequence that there is only a potential of conflict of interest... end GMA references.

Georgia State Law very clearly defines conflict of interest and those definitions have been upheld in court since 1888. Why does the Hiwassee City Council continue to do things contrary to the law and against recognized rules of ethics?

After the fact and with much fanfare, Ms. Allen has announced she is donating the commission earned to a Special Projects Fund for improvements within the city. It is very coincidental that the donation and the Special Project both appeared after the fact.

It is not only Ms. Allen's conflict of interest, but a conflict of interest by the entire Council for voting to sell the old city hall in a manner against the law.

The special project and the donation may be commendable in themselves but it sure comes off as a cover up.

What do you think? Please attend your Council Meetings.

*John L. Holmes
Taxpayer.
Property owner.
Hiwassee resident.*

Editor's Note: Hiwassee City Hall records indicate that Janet Allen recused herself from any vote on the sale of the old Hiwassee City Hall. The City also maintains that its City Charter allows it to sell municipal property.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Rudeness has and always will be impossible to avoid entirely. We can, however, reduce the amount of rudeness we experience by making a conscious choice not to take things personally. Much of what is experienced as rudeness is simply a result of someone (someone else, of course) being self-centered or self-absorbed. Technology, with its many distractions, makes self-absorption so much easier, and sometimes to the point of being criminally negligent, as in the case of a texting driver.

Much of what is rude is simply a result of proximity. In the country, where we are blessed with greater distances to absorb the free exercise of our rights and privileges, rudeness can be less of a problem than in the suburbs or the city. At home in the country I do not have to worry about the neighbor's floodlights shining through my bedroom window, or his music played too loudly late at night, or the beer can tossed onto the front lawn, (which does not qualify as a right or a privilege, but seems to be broadly taken as such.)

There is a form of rudeness, however, that can be experienced just about anywhere you can find an American in an automobile. With great power comes great responsibility, and modern vehicles with their agility and acceleration give us great power; so much so, in fact, that some of us seem inclined to insinuate some of that power into our own personal attributes.

Perhaps there is a corollary here to the study done by Berkley psychologists Paul Piff and Dacher Keltner which indicated that more affluent people are less compassionate to others and less able to recognize emotions in other people. In one study, a busy intersection with a crosswalk was monitored. Drivers of more expensive cars were much more likely to cut off other motorists at the intersection rather than taking their turn, and they were more likely to speed past pedestrians in the crosswalk.

If you have ever driven in Atlanta you may, like me, be of the opinion that rude driving cuts across all social and economic boundaries. I believe that there is a competitiveness instilled into our culture that, combined with our occasional sense of entitlement and exceptionalism, invites us to believe that we deserve to be first in line and first to make it to the traffic light.

Across the relatively wide open spaces of Towns County, it is an irrational deci-

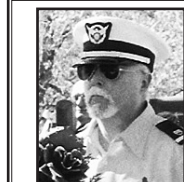
sion when, as I know so many of you have experienced, a driver intent on doing 40 mph pulls out in front of us, doing 55, when there is not another vehicle behind us for half a mile. It happens too often to be a coincidence. There must be a logical explanation, or some rationale behind the decision to reduce the life expectancy of our brake pads. The same irrational thinking can be suspected of the tailgater attached to our bumper when there is a line of cars in front of us as far as the eye can see, or the slow poke on the mountain doing 20 who refuses to use a pull-out to let the faster traffic pass by.

Apparently the god-like power bestowed upon us by our machines has convinced many of us that we deserve to be first. Fortunately, we cannot all be.

Brad Delong on the Equitable Growth blog touches on another aspect of the "competition" inherent in class distinctions. The majority of Americans consider themselves to be "middle class." However, there is a great insecurity amongst this majority which will be a favorite target of opportunity during the next political season. This insecurity grows out of instability in income, a sense that we are falling behind when compared to our parents' generation and a perception (one supported by actual math) of the widening gap between the middle class and the wealthy.

To add insult to injury, technology has leveled the field for many of the trappings of affluence, the trinkets and toys, the brightly colored plumage which serves as an outward sign that we are better than our neighbor and more deserving to be first in line. Everyone now has a smart phone, a flat screen television, a designer handbag and a high-tech automobile. Now that's just rude.

In conclusion, on a planet of over 7 billion souls and climbing and with shrinking resources, logic would suggest a new paradigm of cooperation (and politeness and respect for the rights of others). Animals, soulless and without reason or morals, compete fiercely for limited territory and resources, but they are innocent in their self-centered pursuit of biological imperatives. We are not innocent, and when we compete on a large scale we rationalize that competition and call it "just war." On the scale of individuals and communities, we are just rude to each other, but the root cause is the same.



The Veterans' Corner

By
Scott Drummond,
USCG Veteran

Attention: US Korean War Vets

Korean War Veterans are now entitled to and will receive the Korean Ambassador Peace Medal, awarded by the Korean Government to all who served in Korea from 1950 to 1953. However, those who qualify must submit an application, along with a copy of their DD-214. This is a very special, long overdue award! Applications will be available at VFW Post 7803 in Hiwassee, GA.

Please mail the appropriate applications along with copy of DD-214 to: Consulate General of the Republic of Korea, Suite 2100, International Tower, 229 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA 30303, Attention: Patricia West.

Any questions please call either of these two Korean War Vets, who have helped to spearhead this announcement for our Korean War Vets: Herb Hair 706-379-1229 or Charles Patterson 706-234-8424. They were kind enough to give me all the information contained herein.

Also! All veterans and public: Saturday, June 6, 10 AM till 4 PM at the new Rec Center in Hiwassee, GA, Foster Park Road, off Hwy. 76/515 there will be a special event honoring Korean War Vets! Bring your DD-214! There will be some movies and memorabilia.

There is also a Second Award available to those who served to save South Korea from the oppressive Communist regime. Requirements are to have served in or above (in the air) the Republic of Korea on or after 28 July 1954, and for at least 30 consecutive days or 60 non-consecutive days. Applications are available, as above and same contacts for questions. Mailing addresses are as follows:

Army: National Person-

nel Records Center, Medicals Section (NRPMA-M), 9700 Page Ave, St. Louis, MO 63132-5100

Navy/Coast Guard/Marines: Bureau of Naval Personnel, Liaison Office, Room 5409, 9700 Page Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63132-5100

Air Force: National Personnel Records Center, Air Force Branch (NRPMF), 9700 Page Ave., St. Louis, MO 63132-5100.

Even if you do not get your application in on time or have not heard back from either of the respective agencies, please come to the event listed above on 6 June 2015. The two contact gentlemen listed above have been instrumental in getting this information out to Georgia Korean War Vets, since 2013 when this first became available. They represent the Army-Navy Garrison Post 66, right up on the Georgia/NC state line above Young Harris, GA. As a very important historical marker, 2013 marked the 60th year anniversary of negotiations that ended the Korean War.

For additional, detailed history of these awards please go here: www.asalives.org/ASAONLINE/newmedal.htm you really should read this article and recognize some familiarities to how so many of our veterans have been ignored (at best). Every South Korean I've ever met, has been humble, gracious and very appreciative of what our young men of those days, in a foreign land, under the most adverse and rugged conditions imaginable suffered for them and their sovereignty as a Republic. Thanks and may God Bless all our fine men and women who have served and continue to serve unto this day forward.

Semper Paratus



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Q: Dr. Don, we are struggling with our 11-year old son. He has become a video addict and he is hooked on movies. And it's not "Frozen," or "Monkey Kingdom," either. It's the raw, violent, LV-rated and R-rated ones. We are seeing behavior changes that worry us. We know downloaded movies are going to be part of our lives looking ahead, but is there anything we should be doing that we're not?

A: I don't know what your strategies have been but let me give you my take on it. I've discovered that most anywhere a group of parents gather and candidly compare notes it isn't long before this topic comes up. Welcome to the future. History demonstrates that the farther our nation strays from the values on which it was founded, the more vile our appetites become.

It has been interesting to watch the studies over the past three or so decades that try to measure the effect of R-rated and V-rated movies on young viewers. Some conclude that there is a negative cause-and-effect relationship, others conclude there is not. Those who claim that youngsters are not affected by what they watch miss one key observation: Everything we see changes us. Everything. You mention that you are noticing

undesirable behavior changes in your youngster so I think you agree.

You don't describe how your son accesses the movies but since he knows you don't approve I'm guessing that he has a mobile device and that he probably doesn't just watch them on the TV in the living room. My strong counsel to parents is that they not provide a smart phone or tablet for their youngsters until they are old enough that their decisions on what to watch are guided by strong character traits. A cell-phone for his safety and your convenience is fine, but nothing with Internet access except a computer in a public place.

Making that change may not be pleasant especially since many of his friends may not have the same guidance, but at 11 he's in that era of his life when one of your chief assignments is handing off your family's values and helping him understand them. Kids don't develop indomitable characters by default; rather because mom and dad take the assignment seriously. Help him understand your beliefs and why they are indispensable to your family. I see some valuable family discussions just ahead.

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

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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 E-MAILED OR MAILED

TO: Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiwassee, 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.*
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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
Hiwassee Mayor Barbara Mathis, 706-896-2202
Hiwassee 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, Hilary Martin, Matthew Miller, Stuart Miller, Sam Leslie

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