

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Prepare for wildfire! Wildfire Prevention Strike Force

Part of Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D's mission is to help improve the citizen's lives in the 13 counties of NE Georgia by helping make their homes and businesses safe from disasters such as wildfire. The RC&D provides information and programs by teaming with local emergency agencies, state, federal, and local fire organizations to carry the "how to prepare for wildfire" message to the people who need it most, those who live in high risk areas and if there are specific local or county ordinances you should be following.



Executive Director of RC&D
Frank Riley

If you have a homeowner association, work with them to identify regulations that incorporate proven preparedness landscaping, home design, and building material use, such as Firewise.

We tend to think that wildfires happen somewhere else, but they do happen around here and can happen in your neighborhood. Look up the recent devastating fire in Pigeon Forge, TN and another recent outbreak in South Carolina to see what can happen when people are not prepared. These fires are not as big as the ones that happen in California, but to the people who lost their homes they are just as devastating. Wildfire can happen to you or me so we all need to take time to make plans for what to do when the flames are approaching our homes and businesses.

The Georgia Forestry Commission has created a Wildfire Prevention Strike force which is a team of fire professionals that visit communities and carry the fire prevention message to the people who live there. When they come to your neighborhood listen to what they have to say about what you can do to make your home safe from fire. Be Fire Wise!

Frank M. Riley, Jr., CF is Executive Director - Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council. For more information on the Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council, visit our web site www.chestchatrcd.org. Phone 706-894-1591 email susan.ccrd@gmail.com. NT(May22,Z4) CA

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Just a few short months ago, we waited to see whether the world was going to blow itself up at the end of 2012. When December 21st came and went without incident, we were almost disappointed.

Our culture has a very short attention span. Many of us have already forgotten why that date was supposed to be significant. Our interests have changed. What has not changed is our appetite for tragedy. We like to see things blow up. Hollywood does not film fiery car crashes year after year because no one watches them. Tabloid scandals do not line every checkout lane in every grocery store because we ignore tacky rumors. We respond to the sensational; we have a weakness for it, and advertisers know it.

Many of us have come to terms with the fact that the faces and names that present us with the dramatic information which permeates our day to day lives are less journalists and committed members of the Fourth Estate than they are simply extensions of the advertisers who pay their inflated salaries. (Most of us do not even remember what the Fourth Estate represents. Google it.)

We do remember how to change the channel, how to hit the mute button and how to switch the whole thing off and go for a walk. Advertisers know that we know this. They also know that with so many forms of media available to us, the competition for our attention is intense, and like hungry chicks in a bird's nest, the ones who cry the loudest get fed first.

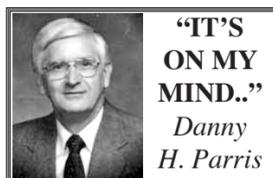
For several years I have used "The Nightly Shooting Report" presented by our local Atlanta television stations as an example of media using the sensational to gain our attention. Unfortunately if you travel or if you have access to IP Television and the scores of local stations across the country, you begin to realize that the Nightly Shooting Report is ubiquitous and the talking heads all look and sound very much alike. The news talkers have their own rhythm and cadence designed to convey the impression that every utterance is serious, imminent and a matter of fact. The raised eyebrow, the dramatic pause, and the didactic tones are the same from Punxsutawney to Pasadena.

Our steady diet of the sensational presents a problem for a free people who take for granted that they will remain a

free people. Every single day we are presented with something imminent, dangerous and dramatic. When something horrible happens sufficient to capture national interest, the story is repeated and recycled on every local and every national stage and dissected on every talk show ad nauseum. We become overwhelmed and we disconnect or we become desensitized. We find that it is harder to discern what is true and what is meaningful.

When we are overwhelmed, dulled and desensitized, it becomes easier for us to accept or to ignore the crimes and excesses of those who are in power. When, for example, we discover that the IRS can be used as a political tool to target specific groups which oppose a current regime, we should be outraged. Some of us are, and the story will undoubtedly occupy the limelight until something replaces it. The media has cried "wolf" so many times, has elicited our shock, our astonishment, our grief so many times, we may not have it in us to be concerned. Our ambivalence may allow yet another advance of the coercive power of the surveillance state to go unchallenged. Being a free people is hard work, and we are tired.

At least we can look forward to a new season of "So You Think You Can Dance..."



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

Memorial Day

Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Memorial Day comes to us with significance beyond the historical incident from whence it is derived. It reaches down deeper, extends out farther, it lifts up higher than merely a parade and a prayer, or even the beautiful custom of placing flowers on the graves of those we delight in honoring. The courage, call and conviction of those who gave themselves for justice and freedom should inspire us to live lives of devotion and sacrifice. This is a time to remember.

Remember the price

One of the most touching scenes in *Gone With the Wind* depicts thousands of wounded and bleeding Confederate soldiers lying in a railroad yard following the Battle of Atlanta. They are there to remind us of the awful price of war. No matter how we look upon war - the great causes served and, at the same time, the evils involved in the execution of war - there is this fact: Those who died have given their lives for others. Those

who have fought and given the supreme sacrifice for the sake of the great causes are to be remembered for the sacrifices and honored for their service. They have given the full measure of devotion. The worst sin of our generation would be to let these men have died in vain. Remember, lest you forget the price that has been paid for the peace and comfort we enjoy this very day.

Respond to the challenge

There is no value just to remember our dead ancestors on a memorial occasion if we do not take increased devotion from our honored dead. We fight against forces today, not so much of flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness in high places. The evils we are confronted with today are more subtle, more deadly, dangerous and better organized and better equipped than any of our father's armies that have ever marched. Our enemies are numerous in our day. Memorial services are incomplete until we, too, dedicate ourselves to the causes for which those we honor gave their lives. Help us, oh God, to do more than decorate graves of heroes. Help us, dear God to dedicate ourselves to the challenge of fighting and conquering the giants of our day. By doing this "They" will not have died in vain.



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Do your kids have a mirror they regularly look in? Yes, they do. It's called mom and dad. Your kids make decisions on the basis of how they see themselves reflected in the eyes of those who are the important people in their lives. Let me tell you a story.

I was waiting for my wife (which seldom happens) in a waiting room, when a mother and her young daughter - probably about four - came in and sat near me. Pleasant lady. Pretty little girl - let's call her Charlotte.

For maybe ten minutes Charlotte sat quietly on her mother's lap. Then the receptionist appeared and needed some information. Before she walked away she spoke to the little girl - who didn't respond. But the mother did. She looked at her daughter and said, "She is the laziest child I know and she's spoiled rotten." That's what she said - I wrote it down.

Everyone in the room was embarrassed for this little girl. And for her mom. Lazy? At four years? Come on mom, give her a break. Spoiled rotten? How do kids get "spoiled?"

The thing that troubled me most was that this little pre-kindergartener was old enough and smart enough to understand what her mother

was saying. And since the words came from her mother, she'll likely believe them. So what is Charlotte learning to think about herself and about how the other important people in her life feel about her. What did she see when she looked in the mirror of her mother's eyes? That's the most important mirror our kids look in.

Mom broke some cardinal rules of parenting there in the waiting room. Among them, she demeaned her daughter in front of others. That is never ok. Also, she painted a negative self-picture in the mind of a four-year old. Kids tend to live up to the reputation we give them. If they hear us say they are stupid, lazy, stubborn, dishonest, those judgments often become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Many years ago I read about a Mrs. Emerson who was hanging her washing on the clothes line in her yard, but it was windy and she was having a difficult time. Billy was watching from his front porch. Almost under his breath he said, "It's too bad Mrs. Emerson doesn't have a nice little boy like me to help her." Billy had obviously been looking in the right mirror.

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



Our freedom is their highest praise.

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 Hiwassee 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 Unicorn 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 mtnregarts-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/blubridgemountains.

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.

Chattahoochee 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 the 2nd & 4th Fridays of each month April - October. \$9. all you can eat from 4:30 - 7 PM.

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.

Towns County Herald

Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

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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, 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.