

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Letters to The Editor

### Letter to the Editor:

Once again, Hiawassee City Hall has exceeded expectations for being unreasonable. The Budget Hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, June 24 at 2 p.m. -- the optimum time to guarantee a limited attendance by citizens (voters) most of whom are too busy being employed to attend. Mr. Stencil said in the Monday work session (committee meeting) that he was scheduling it then because that's when it was last year. He misspoke unless he was referring to the budget adjustment hearing near the end of the year that was held at 2 p.m. Last year in June, the hearing was held at 7 p.m. To reiterate my previous statements on the subject -- it would really be a good thing if hearings, meetings, etc. were held at times that were convenient for the citizens, instead of the folks we elected and are hired to represent our interests.

Speaking of representation -- why is city hall going to be represented at the Georgia Municipality Association meeting this summer by an employee instead of an elected official?

And speaking of employees -- why does the salary of our city manager top the list of salaries paid to that position in category G -- municipalities under 1000 population. For that matter, why does the salary of mayor define the top salary for all mayors in the category. (Reference Community Development Association, Municipal Salaries)

We need to pay attention, attend meetings and insist on our council members actually representing our interests. We particularly need to pay attention to the budget.

Sincerely,  
Anne Mitchell



## RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

**Q:** Dr. Don, my husband and I heard about a teacher who wouldn't let a youngster eat an Oreos cookie that mom had sent in her lunch. What's with that? Since when are teachers telling parents what their kids should eat? Do you see this as a new threat to parenting?

**A:** No, I see it as an over-eager teacher who stepped across the line of acceptable behavior. There are some who believe "It takes a village" to raise a child properly, but the child is still the responsibility of the parent, not the state. As I followed the Colorado story you cite, it seems the school has apologized and the teacher appropriately chastised. I would hope so.

Having said that, there are a lot of people who deal with kids -- such as teachers, pediatricians, pediatric dentists, neighbors -- who share my concern that few parents realize how much long-term damage they are doing to their kids by what they allow them to eat. Nearly one in every three children in America is overweight or obese. That's a current health issue and is setting the stage for a huge health crisis as these kids grow older.

For instance, we know sugar to be a major cause of inflammation in several of the body's major systems, and the average American eats 130 pounds of sugar per year

(that's close to four tons in a lifetime...made into M&M's that would fill a commercial dumpster). Some researchers have gone so far as to define sugar as "poison" and "toxic." Strong words, but the more we learn about its effect on the body the more we think they may be right.

The prime source of sugar for kids is sodas (with 10 teaspoons per can). But notice the nutrition labels on the other foods your kids eat, too. There is sugar in nearly all processed foods. We also know that sugar tends to spike hyper-activity in kids. When parents talk to me about their kids "bouncing off the walls," I nearly always suggest that they check the youngster's sugar intake. Very often there is a correlation.

There is a growing body of research regarding autism (which is experiencing a major increase) and eating issues, including sugar. For more on this I recommend, "Grain Brain," by Dr. David Perlmutter, a Board Certified Neurologist and Nutritionist.

There is no question that the Colorado teacher was off base. But the positive side of the story can be if her actions remind all of us to do better at helping our kids stay well.

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

## Fire is Nature's Housekeeper

"The Great Barbecue" The earliest European settlers to North America recorded indigenous peoples' use of fire for clearing land, hunting and gathering activities, and in warfare. However, post-Columbus settlers did not understand fire as a natural process, and sought to suppress fire wherever it occurred because wildfires destroyed their crops, homes, and trees they needed for homes.

In addition, the huge increase in human traffic brought on by late 19th Century immigration brought new human activity to these areas, meaning more human ignition sources were introduced to previously sparsely populated areas. This created one of the most devastating wildfire periods in American history -- the great fires of the 1880s.

The number and intensity of wildfires in this decade were so vast, scientist Stephen Pyne referred to it as, "The Great Barbecue." The Great Peshtigo fire occurred on October 8, 1871 (same night as the Chicago Fire) and raged through Northeastern Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. This fire destroyed the town of Peshtigo and killed between 1200 and 2500 people and burned more than 1.2 million acres.

Many other huge wildfires occurred, both lightning caused and human caused. Because people wanted their lives and property to be protected, putting out wildfires of any cause became the norm. As early as the 1930s and even before, land managers in the southeastern United States began arguing for the return of more natural fire regimes. Other fire-dependent areas were equally in need of fire, but had few advocates. While few could argue, then or now, that the suppression and prevention of extreme fire was not appropriate, few were arguing that the focus should be on maintenance of natural fire occurrences.

The Yellowstone fires of 1988 and the fire season of 2000 began to shift public perspective and have opened a revised chapter in wildland fire history. Its Legacy - Ecosystems that were dependent on fire to thin the forest canopy and cultivate the forest floor have been transformed, and sunlight-dependent native plant species have been overtaken by those that like shade.

The net effect is that fire suppressed ecosystems become less diverse, denser with overgrowth, and littered with dead plant material. A Solution - By reintroducing fire into fire dependent ecosystems

### Executive Director of RC&D



in a controlled setting, we can recreate the effects of natural fire, give balance back to fire-dependent communities, and prevent the catastrophic losses of uncontrolled, unwanted wildfire. Fire teams can use controlled burns/prescribed fires when and where doing so will safely reduce the amount of fuel for fires. Fire teams can also decide to allow lightning caused fires to continue to burn in areas that will not affect the safety of people while reducing fuels.

In certain fire dependent ecosystems, periodic fire normally burns off ground litter (needles, leaves, dead wood) and maintains native plant species, many of which depend upon fire for their livelihood. View a fire dependent ecosystem with periodic fire. Is Smokey wrong? - No. Remember Smokey's ABCs: Always Be Careful with fire. Smokey wants people to be responsible when they use fire. Fire has many uses. Smokey wants you to be trained in the proper ways to use fire.

It is still wrong and irresponsible to play with matches, leave fires unattended, throw lit cigarettes away, or use equipment without proper spark arrestors.

For more information on fire, contact your local Georgia Forestry Commission office, local US Forest Service office or Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council frank.crcrd@gmail.com

\*Article reprinted with permission from Smokey Bear!



## The Veterans' Corner

By Scott Drummond, USCG Veteran

### Navy Seabee Veterans of America (NSVA)

On April 10, 2015 Blairsville, GA became only the third "Island" in the state for all veterans of our US Navy Seabees. In case you didn't know our proud Seabees are the engineering, construction, building and design team of our US Navy, whether in peacetime or right in the thick of combat, anywhere, anytime on planet earth they are called to work. Our Seabees were extremely important in winning WW2 as a branch of the US Navy in the South Pacific Islands.

Examples are airstrips cut out of dense jungles or in the middle of desert terrain, bridges across swamps or rivers, boat docks, outposts, barracks, communication centers, hospital bases, and camps for Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guardsmen. At certain times some of these engineers may be called upon to use their special skills to "tear down" buildings or other structures deemed "unhealthy for peaceful civilization". They are not just good at what they do; they are unsurpassed, working in any and all conditions which may be deemed impossible elsewhere.

These proud, hard working, good natured and happy guys who have served now have their own post, chartered as Island X-3 GA, to meet, share fellowship, share stories and just like many of our veterans' service organizations are very committed to community service. As Island X-3 GA is now chartered there exists an opportunity for many fine ladies associated with Seabees to form the ladies auxiliary. National Commander David Buchanan attended on June 12,

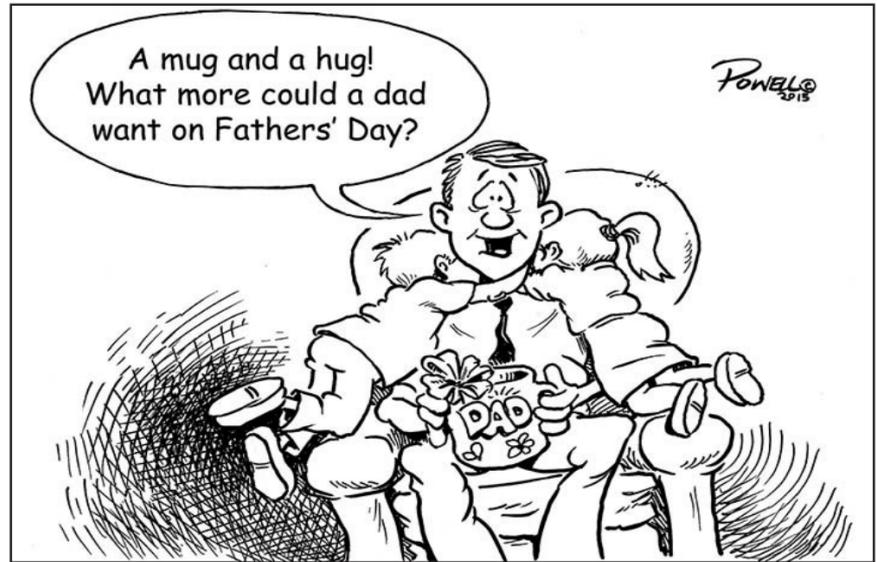
2015 for official presentation of the Charter at a special meeting attended by no less than two dozen Seabees, wives and guests. A great grilled burger and hot dog luncheon was prepared outside and served to all under the pavilion.

Their new organization is meeting in Blairsville at the Major Leon Davenport Veterans' Center at 78 Blue Ridge Street (old Chamber of Commerce building), a very nice facility. Island X-3 GA will serve members from North Georgia, Western North Carolina, and Eastern Tennessee. Information may be obtained by visiting the National Web page at NSVA.org and the local Facebook page at NSVA Island X-3. Commander is Richard Hoibraten (404-683-2834), secretary is Ed Crenshaw CE1 (ret), membership coordinator is Mr. Mike Rubak (954-249-2707). New members are invited!

The Navy SVA Preamble for Articles of Incorporation: "We, the Veterans of the Naval Construction Forces and the Civil Engineer Corps of the United States Navy, who have served our Country during time of war and peace, recognizing that service to God and Country is the Foundation on which our Nation was founded, do hereby rededicate ourselves to that service, and further pledge our lives and actions to preserve the fundamental ideals of American Government, which we believe are Justice, Freedom, and Equality for all."

Important notice for all Veterans of every Veteran organization: On June 20, 2015 there will be a Veterans forum and cookout at the location identified above!

Semper Paratus



A mug and a hug!  
What more could a dad want on Fathers' Day?

## 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 2nd 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.  
**Stephens 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.  
**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.

**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 PM at the Shrine Club, Industrial Blvd., Blairsville.  
**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 706-896-9614 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.

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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.\*  
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