

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

From the Desk of:



Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

Summer travel safety pointers

Americans travel during the warm summer months more than any other time of year. Criminals often take advantage of this busy season, preying upon weary travelers or watching for unattended homes or vehicles. With that in mind, the Georgia Sheriffs' Association offers the following travel tips for a safe and happy summer.

Before you leave: When you leave your residence, try to make your home look as occupied as possible. Ask a trusted neighbor or friend to pick up mail and newspaper or package deliveries daily.

Invest in a few electrical timers to activate lights at the same time you normally do when you are at home. Set your radio on a talk station so anyone listening at a door or window will hear conversation. (Keep the radio on a timer, too.)

Notify your sheriff's office that you will be away and ask them to check your residence.

Let them know of light timers, alarm systems, and vehicles left visible in the driveway.

If you're going to be gone for an extended period of time, consider arranging for a house sitter to stay in

your residence. House sitters water plants, take care of pets, and can also be called upon to keep the lawn mowed so it doesn't advertise your absence.

Cancel regular deliveries, such as food, pharmacy prescriptions or pet supplies.

Before you leave, take a final walk through your home to make sure appliances are turned off and windows and doors are secure.

Since summer storms can come up suddenly, you may want to unplug electronic equipment such as computers, televisions or fax machines.

While you're traveling: Remember to remain alert and watchful, especially in crowds. Many travelers have invested in small, flat bags that hang from neck cords to store money, credit cards, passports, and other important identification. Avoid carrying wallets in a rear pocket that could be easily "picked."

At hotels, avoid hanging the "housekeeping" sign on your doorknob. That alerts the observer to your absence from the room.

Avoid discussing your travel plans where strangers may overhear you.

If you are the victim of a theft or any other crime, contact the local law enforcement agency and file a report immediately. Provide contact information so they may keep you updated on any developments in your case.

Remember to lock doors and windows securely. Always lock the doors in your vehicle.

Have a safe and happy travel season!

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Growing up in the city or being raised up in the country, we learn different life lessons, and sometimes we learn the same lessons but in different ways. My own parents wanted us to be as comfortable crossing a busy street as we were hiking through a thicket, miles from any road.

In the city you learn to look in all directions before you step off the curb, to be wary of strangers and to keep your hand on your wallet. In the country you learn to watch for snakes and yellow jacket nests, to mind where you step and to keep your muzzle out of the dirt. The pertinent lesson here, for surviving in both realms, rural and urban, is awareness.

I began learning one of my most important life lessons when I was about 15. Full of grand visions and hormones, a 15 year old seeks to prove manhood and independence at every opportunity. (Sometimes this process can last for several more decades.)

When I was 15 my grandfather, who lived in a remote part of Towns County, was 89. His youthful exploits were legendary in our family history. As a young man my grandfather would hike into the high country with a mule, cut chestnut logs by hand and then snake them down the steep slopes to his backcountry sawmill. Imagine trying to manage a mule and a 1500 pound log down the side of a mountain without losing life, limb or mule.

Naturally, as a 15 year old male I wanted to impress my grandfather. On summer visits I would get up before sunrise to help him milk the cow. When he worked in his garden, I was ready with a hoe and a rake. When there was wood to be carried for the fire, I would overload myself with dangerous (to my toes and to the cat rubbing against my legs) armloads of firewood.

"Son, you're working like you're fighting fire. Work smart and you won't have to work so hard," he would say with a chuckle.

The wisdom of my grandfather's statement was all but lost on a teenager determined to demonstrate feats of strength and endurance. One day, however, he taught me a lesson I would not forget.

Splitting wood was a feat of manly ability when I was a teenager, but as anyone who has ever bounced an axe off of a piece of oak knows, there is a right way and a wrong way to split wood. One

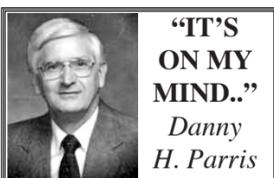
Saturday morning after what I considered to be a herculean effort, my pile of firewood was woefully small.

"I see you chopping but I don't see any chips flying," my grandfather observed, watching me work from the shade of an apple tree. "Let me show you something about chopping wood."

Reluctantly I surrendered the axe and watched in amazement as my 89 year old grandfather raised it with one hand and, letting it fall under its own weight, split clean through the round of wood I had been attacking for several minutes. Driving the lesson home, he split the next piece with ease, and then another. In five minutes he had doubled the size of the pile of firewood I had labored an hour to produce.

Enjoying tremendously my state of confoundment, my grandfather drew my attention to the star shaped cracks at the center of a round of wood. "This is the 'sweet spot,'" he said. "Line up your axe on one of those cracks and then let the axe do most of the work." Then looking me in the eye he said, "Everything has a sweet spot."

Many times over the years this lesson has come back to remind me to use finesse, rather than force, to accomplish my goals. It is a lesson as simple as splitting wood, but one which is so often missed, and so badly needed in a world so given to brute force.



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

Lord, let me be a potato

A young couple serving as missionaries in Pakistan was devastated when their six month old baby died. They were counseled and comforted by an old Punjabi. He said to the couple "a tragedy like this is similar to being plunged into boiling water. If you are an egg, your affliction will make you hard-boiled and unresponsive. If you are a potato, you will emerge soft and pliable, resilient and adaptable." Bitterness is the result of a hurt in one's past that has never been dealt with properly. Bitterness (Pikria, in the Greek) is a "sharp", "piercing" hurt. It is expressed with a bitter spirit and with bitter speech. People who are angry, who refuse to forgive, and nurse long-standing resentments, eventually develop a malignant disposition. Paul said, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:31-32). A bitter person is often involved in "clamor" or loud talking. They frequently engage in evil speaking and lying. The bitter person is often hostile, sarcastic, cynical, and critical and talks about how they have been mistreated and wronged. They try to justify their anger and win allies with their negative comments. However, they eventually alienate themselves from others which results in loneliness and more bitterness. Bitter people seem to have a chip on their shoulder.

They are not happy, and in venting their misery attempt to make others unhappy. Someone has said that some bitter people are well-balanced - "they have a chip on both shoulders." Bitterness is a very serious problem that will rob a person of the joy of life. What can be done to conquer bitterness in one's life? In the book of Ruth, we have the story of a family facing a famine and fleeing out of fear to find food. They left Bethlehem (house of Bread) and went to the land of Moab. Elimelech, his wife, Naomi and their two sons planned to spend only a short time in Moab. However, tragedy struck. Naomi's husband and both her sons died. Naomi is devastated with grief and struggling with bitterness. Naomi, along with her daughter-in-law, returns to Bethlehem. Upon her return the whole town was moved by the physical appearance of Naomi. She said, "I went out full and the Lord brought me home empty" (Ruth 1:21). She requested her people no longer call her Naomi (pleasantness), but "Mara" (bitterness). To conquer bitterness the first step is to admit the problem. Confess to God that you recognize the sin of bitterness in your life. Refrain from placing blame with anyone or anything. The second step is to acknowledge the supernatural power of God. God can sweeten the spirit of any person if they acknowledge and allow God to work in their lives. The third step in conquering bitterness is to apply scriptural principles to your life. Paul tells us to "be kind to one another, tender-hearted, and forgiving." If we practice this instruction no matter how life may tumble in, we will maintain a positive and sweet spirit about life and living. Do not lose your witness for Christ by developing a bitter spirit. Choose to be a potato.

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Sir: one of your regular readers told me you don't believe parents should assign chores as punishment when our children misbehave. May I ask why not? It sure works for me.

Dear non-regular reader: Actually, it could work; it depends on your goals. If one of your goals is to teach your children that unless they do something wrong they don't have to help around the house, it could work. If one of your goals is to teach your children that they don't have to mow the lawn unless they misbehave, it could work.

The issue is that chores need to be seen as a natural part of the rent all of us pay to belong to the family. If mom is late getting ready for church we don't assign her to do the laundry that week. If dad is caught with his feet up on the coffee table we don't make him vacuum the den. If Billy neglects to put his dirty clothes in the basket we don't make him wash dishes all that week. Why? Because those are tasks that need to be done; therefore the family members pitch in and do them...all of the family members (including those maybe three years old and above).

But if we use chores as punishment it takes them out of the category of family responsibilities. My kids aren't assigned chores because they got in trouble, they are assigned chores because I want them to grow up to be responsible. Erma isn't told to do the dusting because she forgot to feed the dog. She may lose some privileges. She might even lose her cell phone for a week. But her chore assignments go right on uninterrupted.

We don't add chores for bad behavior. We don't take away chores for good behavior. The two are not related. My goals include helping Adam learn to be a partner in the family's duties. If there is a behavior issue that needs to be dealt with we'll work on that; meanwhile he still carries his share of the load. If he has a stellar week and functions as a model son I'll affirm him for that, but the dishes still need to be washed and the living room still needs to be vacuumed. Your friend learned this kind of stuff by becoming a regular reader; you ought to try it.

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.



"Summer may just be starting, but I want to make it last as long as I can!"

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 Hiawassee 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 mtngarts-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/blueridgemountains.
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.
Chatuge 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

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