

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

From the Desk of:



Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

Summer safety

Summer in the mountains always a great time of year. It is a time when families tend to move out of doors and take advantage of all the available activities. To assist you and your family in having a safe summer season, your Georgia Sheriffs' Association and the Towns County Sheriff's Office would like to remind everyone of the following summer safety guidelines:

Never allow a child to swim unsupervised. If your child is going with a friend to swim, be sure to speak with the adult in charge. Don't be afraid to ask if they know CPR. Children are drawn quickly and in very small amounts of water. Even a brief span of inattention can be fatal. Take the opportunity to evaluate your child's ability and general comfort in the water. Make sure your child knows the safety rules.

Hydration is important for all ages, particularly in the summer. A dehydrated person can become weak, faint, and vulnerable. Make sure you allow at least eight glasses of water per day for each person, more if you're involved in athletics or strenuous activities. If you're traveling, freeze water in reusable containers to pack in a cooler. The ice will thaw gradually, but the water will stay cooler and more refreshing during the long, hot summer days.

When schools are not in

session, children often spend more time on the computer or in front of the television. Make sure your computer has an internet filter (available from many family-oriented websites), and that you have activated the parental controls on your television. Teach your child never to give out their name, address, or other identifying information to anyone on the internet. Make an effort to become acquainted with the parents of your children's friends. Don't be afraid to ask them what their guidelines are for their child's internet and television use.

Set outdoor boundaries for your child. A good way to establish these limits is to take a tour of the neighborhood with your child and determine what areas are off limits. Perhaps you live near a highway or a busy intersection. These areas might be designated "out of bounds" because of the risks they present to your child. Often places with water, such as creeks, streams, and ponds are also out of bounds. Entering unfamiliar homes without a parent should always be out of bounds. Discuss these boundaries with your child and make sure they understand.

Get to know your child's camp counselors, coaches, troop leaders, ministers, and teachers. When you speak to the adults in your child's life, establish yourself as "Mary's dad" or "Jimmy's mom." If time allows, offer to volunteer or help out in some capacity. Not only will you enjoy the time you spend engaged with your child in summer activities, but you can watch their interaction with others and monitor their activities.

We hope each of you enjoy the warm summer months and as always, please do not hesitate to call upon your sheriff's office if we can be of service to you.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Not far from here there was a little country store by the side of the road. It was established many years ago when the road between Cleveland and Dahlonega was dirt and gravel, but the store was far busier back in the days when life moved at a slower pace than in more recent times. Most people never noticed the little shop as they breezed by at 60 mph, oblivious to the lives of the people who once traded there and the stories shared across the counter.

The old gas pumps outside were long ago retired, but they stood rusting slowly, with dignity, as a testament to the time when farming communities still dotted the countryside; a time when communities grew and thrived like old oak trees, deeply rooted in the soil, before they were replaced by roadside distractions of sheet metal and asphalt parking.

A collection of classic cars and trucks decorated the grassy yard in front of the store. The vehicles had not moved in many years and some were browning a bit around the edges, but you could tell that someone still cared about them, though perhaps with less vigor than in years past.

Behind the store was an expanse of cultivated fields, gardens, barns and out-buildings and a little wood frame house stood a short walk away.

I first stopped by the little store out of curiosity, to look at the old cars and following an instinct that this might be a place where I could get an ice cold coke in a glass bottle. As I opened the door and stepped across the threshold, I think I traveled half a century back in time. A single bare lightbulb illuminated a tall glass counter that ran the length of the room. The counter was filled with treats and curiosities and an old cash register with mechanical keys sat on top. A vintage chest cooler did indeed have that bottle of coke I was craving.

The lady behind the counter was probably close to 80 at the time. She greeted me with a smile and we chatted about weather and traffic as she rang up my purchase. I asked her if she had been busy over the weekend and she said no, but that didn't matter. The store kept her occupied and in touch with friends and neighbors in the area. A bell on the door announced the arrival of the woman's husband, just in from harrowing part of his field behind the store. He sat down in a well-worn rocking chair in the corner and we talked about the old days, when he was much younger and no grass grew under his collection of automobiles.

Over the next several years as my wife and I traveled the countryside, we would stop by the store from time to time. The bare lightbulb was as good as an "open" sign. When we saw it from the road we knew that someone was there and ready with a cold drink and another good story of days gone by. It's too easy in a world that measures and monetizes all human activity to let life push down on the accelerator. Over time we stopped visiting the store as often, but we would look for the lightbulb and say, "next time, when we're not in

such a hurry, we'll stop in." One day we finally stopped, but the store was dark inside. We looked for the lightbulb over the next several trips, but we never saw it again. One Saturday morning we drove by and saw people loading up the old cars to haul them away. On the trip back, all the vehicles were gone and the store was empty.

I don't know what happened to the old couple who ran the little country store and tended the fields behind it. Considering their age, the likelihood is that someone passed away, someone got sick or went to live in a nursing home. In any event, something that was once the center of a small community is gone, and with it go the stories and the fading memories of a slower, gentler time. Gone is the place where two people held on to their vitality and their dignity, where they made their last stand against the ravages of time.

There are many other things I do not know, and the list grows longer as the pages of the calendar turn. I don't know how many people are left who miss the simpler life and slower pace. Those of us who lived those times are getting harder to find, and for many of us those times are just a story from our grandparents, or an episode of "Andy Griffith."

What I do know is this: I am renewing my resolve to respect those instincts that tell me to take my foot off the accelerator and pull into the parking lot of the little country store, to take the time to listen to the old stories whenever I am given the opportunity. Because one thing is certain - just like the bulb over the counter in that little store, now closed forever, one day all of our lights will go out.



The Veterans' Corner

By Scott Drummond, USCG Veteran

Do you have what it takes? (DoD)

I had no clue and as a Veteran and dog lover, this never dawned upon me how we who are blessed in so many ways, can be a great help to soldiers, sailors, airmen and women who are active duty and deployed away from home. Having just lost our dearest friend and family member, Bella, to the ravages of cancer, this article, sent to me by a friend really hit home.

Think of this, a young Marine, soldier, sailor or airman who has volunteered to serve our nation and must leave his homeland and all he or she loves to go abroad for whatever mission must be done in order to try and preserve America for all of us. If he or she has no place to leave their dearly beloved dog, that very stressful burden of heart can be alleviated by anyone who has the time, place, love and ability to foster and provide a temporary home for a four legged, faithful, loyal friend to one of our nation's best young servicemen or women who will be forever grateful to you for protecting a life of something that is extremely precious to them, just as they protect our nation. He or she, while deployed, will most certainly be of a more sound mind and body, knowing full well their four legged angel is being well cared for in a loving home. Do you have what it takes?

Dogs on Deployment (dogsondeployment.org/) was founded by husband and wife,

Shawn and Alisa Johnson, who serve in the US Navy and US Marine Corps respectively. They started Dogs on Deployment in June 2011. As a dual-military family, the founders have been in situations where they needed a program like Dogs on Deployment. Alisa had orders to move to Quantico, VA where she was to attend six months of military training. At the same time, Shawn, was to be deployed. Neither could care for their beloved dog, JD. They were lucky enough to have family to rely on, but recognized the need for a program which would help others who found themselves in a similar situation. Thus, Dogs on Deployment was born.

From Alisa Johnson, President and Co-Founder: "I first started looking into professional boarding facilities. I soon realized this was impractical. Not only was the price for long term boarding up to six months absurd, but let's be real. My dog in a kennel? He is not crate trained; he is not a "dog." He is a human-being dog, a Fluffalump, as I like to call him (Urban Dictionary: Fluffalump is a fluffy creature who is very soft and huggable). He belongs in a home with free rein to sit on any couch he'd like and have table scraps for rolling over and performing "beg." No boarding facility. It was silly I even considered it. In the Marine Corps we have a saying, "Semper Fidelis." It means "Always Faithful." Very appropriate!

Semper Paratus

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

I can often tell when I have struck a nerve by the mail I get. In my last column I wrote about getting a teen off his recliner and involved somewhere in helping change this world. I suggested his parents might send him to Appalachia or maybe Nepal. Or at least down the street to mow somebody's lawn.

Not everybody liked what I said and I must admit that always makes me happy. As long as you're making thoughtful decisions that are in the best interest of you and your kids you don't have to agree with me.

I was interested to note that a common reaction to my last column was the complaint that since this teen had been working so hard during the school year he deserved time off in the summer. Oh, please. I'll bet he doesn't have a lot of chores around home, either. But if he had been born just a generation or so ago this schedule would have read differently. He would have rolled out of bed about 5:30 in the morning, milked the cows, fed the horses and gathered the eggs.

After school he'd have spent the afternoon hauling hay and digging post holes for the new fence. Oh, and he'd have milked the cows again.

After supper he'd likely have spent a few minutes on his homework, then fallen into bed only to start all over the next morning.

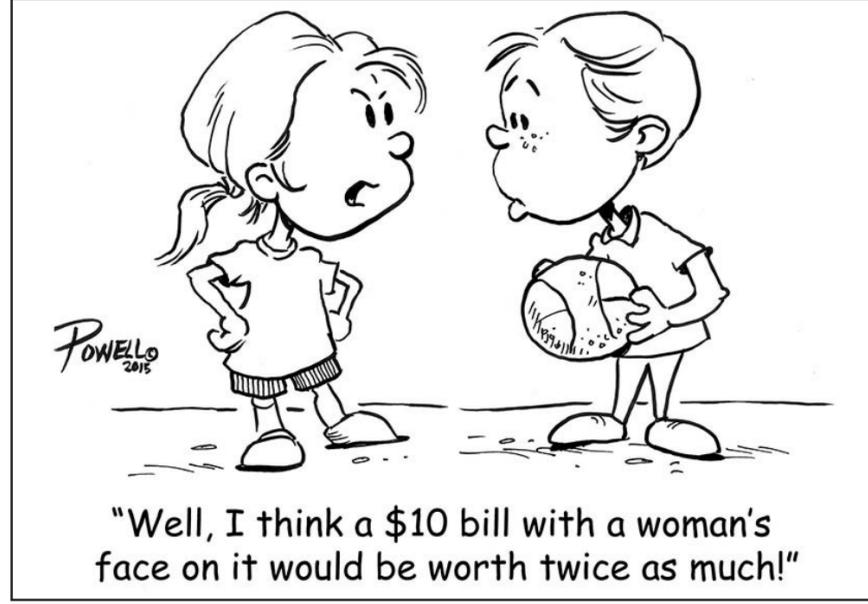
But of course he'd have the summer off, right? Give me a break. That's when the schedule got hairy. That's when the garden had to be hoed, fruit canned for winter, the barn painted. And the cows milked twice a day. I know about that list because I worked on a dairy farm during summers to pay for college. About the only time we had available to be helpful to our neighbors was an occasional weekend. And of course we still had to milk the cows. One thing I learned was that it was a great preparation for life. That's where a work ethic is built.

I was always glad when school started in the fall because the schedule got a little easier. It dropped from 70 hours a week to only about 50. I learned we grow stronger by struggle. When a muscle becomes inactive, atrophy sets in - it begins to lose its usefulness. When a teenager becomes inactive they lose their usefulness, too. Teenage atrophy - sounds like a serious disease.

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

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.



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 second 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.
Stevens 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 & Crafts Guild meets 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Calvary Chapel on Hwy. 76 in Hiawassee. All local artists and crafters are welcome, for information call 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 Gary at 706-896-4308 or visit www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridgemountains.
Alcoholics Anonymous: 24 hour phone line 828-837-4440.
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.
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 706-896-5711.
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.
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.

Towns County Herald

Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

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