

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Is your insurance policy prepared for wildfire?

Firewise is a program that I have written about many times over the past three years and I don't want to sound like a broken record, but the things it offers all of us who live up here in these beautiful mountains can help keep these mountains beautiful forever. Imagine what this place would look like if we had a fire here like they are having right now out west and in Florida and South Georgia.

The news shows people who have lost everything in a few moments. These losses can be minimized with a few simple actions you can take around and in your home. Those people on TV also thought it won't happen here, but it did, so we must be prepared around our homes and businesses for the wildfire that will happen here one day. It doesn't have to be big, but a little one can be tragic just as well. Becoming Firewise is easy and doesn't cost very much, only a little effort and some of your time. Most of us can only imagine what homeowners go through when wildfire strikes and they lose their home and everything in it. Some of them have told their stories about how their lives were changed forever. They lost their home, their belongings and many have said they lost time. The time that it takes to rebuild, the time that it takes to re-landscape, the time it takes to work with their insurance company so that they can re-build their lives and some things can never be replaced no matter how much time we have. NFPA's Firewise program provides principles and education so that homeowners can reduce their risk from wildfire loss.

Homeowners can also take steps to reduce their financial risk by making sure they are adequately insured should catastrophic loss occur. Carol Walker of the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association, (RMIIA), says that many homeowners in high wildfire risk areas are underinsured. "Homeowners need to evaluate their coverage on an annual basis with their insurance company", she said. If homeowners are not proactive to make sure their insurance keeps up with changing replacement costs, they may find themselves under-insured. Replacement cost coverage can provide some inflation protection, but often, with older homes, building codes have changed so replacing the home may be more

Executive Director of RC&D

Frank Riley



expensive than the original home. What about debris removal and re-landscaping after the fire? Do you have coverage for that? What endorsements do you have to cover expensive collections, jewelry or antiques? Have you done a home inventory?

The RMIIA website contains a host of resources to help homeowners reduce their risk and most states have similar organizations that can help residents with resource needs. Some examples are: Wildfire and Insurance and Insurance Basics from RMIIA. So along with reducing your home's risk through Firewise, having an evacuation plan and doing a home inventory, meet with your insurance agent to make sure you are adequately protected will give you peace of mind. We have seen first-hand stories where people who lost everything discovered after the fire that their insurance would not cover enough of their losses to rebuild their homes and lives.

Towns County is leading the state in the Firewise efforts and the results show it. Town's wildfire numbers are a fraction of our surrounding counties because the citizens have been bombarded with Fire Safety Education for several years and they have embraced the idea that it is better to be safe than sorry. Other counties in our area have also expressed interest in becoming Firewise. There is presently a Firewise Citizens Coalition forming in White County with others stepping up to join in.

If you want to get involved with Firewise just let your local fire department know that you are interested and they can sign you up. Beginning on July 1 Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council was named the Firewise Liaison for the state of Georgia. Are you Firewise? For more information on Firewise or wildfire education, contact your local Georgia Forestry Commission office, US Forest Service office or the Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council - frank.ccrd@gmail.com.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

"The freedom to criticize ideas, any ideas – even if they are sincerely held beliefs – is one of the fundamental freedoms of society."

We like to believe that this is a true statement in America. We are confident that it is not true in places like China, where order is valued (by those in control) over freedom and arrests for criticizing the government are commonplace. It's not true in areas controlled by the Islamic "State," where death is the penalty for non-conformity. It is not true anywhere that tyranny reigns.

Hold on. Before we congratulate ourselves for our exceptionalism, I would suggest to you that, in this particular area, we have less to be proud of than you might imagine. In America we live under a different kind of tyranny, and while we cannot effectively point a finger at such a clearly defined target as, say, a Vladimir Putin, we are still under the control of a very small minority as far away from the beliefs and desires of the mainstream as any tyrant could be.

Let's start with a recent example, which began with the monstrous church massacre in Charleston, SC. When I look at the facts of the case, I see an opportunity to discuss the failure of background checks. Roof was the last person that should ever have been allowed to own a firearm. I see an opportunity to discuss the clear connection between the use of psychiatric drugs and a long list of murderers.

Instead, the 6 corporations that control media and their employees in Washington decided that the national narrative would be about the Confederate battle flag.

As someone happy to have been born and raised in the southern United States, well versed in my family history and content in the knowledge of ancestors who fought on both sides of the Civil War, I do not seek to distort that complicated human history into an emotional attachment to a piece of cloth I can run up a flag pole or display from the back of my pickup truck. The Stars and Bars was never an official symbol of the Confederacy. Once a symbol of honor and valor on the battlefield, it became a disputed symbol of southern heritage which was adopted, turned to that purpose, in the same way that it was incorporated into several state flags in the 1950s as a protest against integration.

I am not "proud" of a symbol that, like all symbols, is an artificial construct. But I am also not offended by it. Yet my own ambivalence does not mean that I cannot empathize with those who are offended. It does not mean that I cannot sympathize with those who grew up thinking that the flag was a legitimate symbol of cultural heritage, but who now find that the national narrative would condemn them as being racist for a choice that probably has absolutely nothing to do with race.

The tragedy in Charleston is an opportunity for discussion, but the Confederate battle flag, in the ongoing battle against racism, is low hanging fruit. It is armchair activism and limousine liberalism. From the state governments which have made a great show of sacrificing the flag to the corporations which have banned its sale, it has been the political equivalent of clicking "like" on Facebook.

I have listened to liberal friends arguing that no one, particularly no one who has ancestors who were enslaved, appreciates the knowledge that their tax dollars contribute to the use of a symbol that they despise. One could make the same argument for those whose sincerely held religious beliefs do not support the right of approximately 4 percent of the population who might wish to marry the same sex, but whose beliefs are now legally overruled by 5 Supreme Court Justices who decided the issue for 310 million people.

One of my liberal friends recently asserted that the Charleston massacre, followed by the burning of several black

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.

churches in the south, would "set the south back 50 years."

First of all, one of the churches that burned was in Ohio. Two of the fires were caused by lightning and one by electrical wiring. No evidence has been discovered at the time of this writing that any of the church fires was racially motivated. Between 2007 and 2011, an average of 1780 religious buildings per year were damaged or destroyed by fire. Less than 3 percent of those fires were proven to be motivated by hatred.

Is there racism in the south? Undoubtedly. Is racism against blacks more prevalent here than in other parts of the country? Arguably, but racism against African Americans is more likely to occur where more African Americans live. Hate crimes against the Inuit are unlikely to occur in the Australian Outback.

Racism is not just a southern problem nurtured by southern traditions. The Northwest Front, which seeks to expel all non-white people from the Pacific Northwest, is very active in that part of the country. The State of Oregon was founded as a white homeland and in 1857, over 80 percent voted to prohibit blacks from living or working in the state.

Racism is an unfortunate aspect of the human condition and it occurs all over the globe. To target the southern United States, or any region, and broadly paint it with a set of characteristics is, like racism, a reification fallacy. It is a mental and emotional process similar to that which assumes certain characteristics based on skin color.

Any liberal activist or compassionate conservative who wishes to address the wrongs of racism would be more effective confronting realities than symbols.

The battle flag no longer flies over state buildings in South Carolina. You can no longer buy Confederate battle flags on Amazon (although you can still buy nazi memorabilia), but the economic hardships that afflict black communities, the hip-hop culture which glorifies violence and gives racism a convenient target, the fear and the distrust, these problems still exist. The corporations which gave us the flag narrative and participated in symbolic acts of taking it down, still do business with regimes which violate human rights on a regular basis and where women live virtually as slaves. And we, having posted our posts, clicked our "likes" and congratulated ourselves on our sensitivity and tolerance, have moved on, ready for the next narrative to be dictated.



The Veterans' Corner

By Scott Drummond, USCG Veteran

Local young Firefighter enlists in USCG

Reed Moss, son of Rick and Judy Moss, all local volunteer firefighters and First Responders, has joined our United States Coast Guard. Born in Union County, March 27, 1997 and has lived his entire life in Towns County achieving some astounding accomplishments for such a young guy. He attended his first firefighting school at age 13 with Rick as a father/son team, as probably the youngest first responder trainee while in the ninth grade.

He has loved the water ever since he was six months old and has also earned certificates from our USCG Aux FL 2-3 in Cold Water Survival Training as well as taking a boating course at age 12.

He has trained and earned certificates in training for saving lives in or as "Rescue Diver"; Underwater Navigation diver; Open water Scuba diver; Search and Recovery diver; Equipment specialist; Boat Diver; Advanced Adventure Diver and in 2012-2013 achieved honors in HOSA Public health.

He is an outstanding example of McConnell preschool, kindergarten and Towns County School, attending there in grades 1-12, as well as our unique community as a competitor on our BB gun team under Mitch Floyd's leadership.

Reed has already actually responded and assisted on over 38 hours of emergency incidents as well as over 60 hours of classroom and clinical study within the guidelines of our National Safety Council Emergency Medical Responder program.

Not quite old enough for National Firefighter test,

he did complete Firefighter One program with over 155 hours of classroom work. And a 60 hour program for Firefighter Two. He logged 441 hours of volunteer work with TCFD.

He has completed all training necessary to follow his goals of life saving, firefighting, and First Responder Community Service, only hindered by his young age for full certification, and after graduating from HS this past May, has decided to accept a greater challenge and dedicate his passion to serve by enlisting in our USCG. He has also expressed an interest in perhaps serving in the Law Enforcement arena while serving America.

Reed is a quiet, humble, honorable young man who also participated with our USCG Aux FL 2-3, Towns County Emergency Services, Towns County Fire and Boat Rescue Team, Towns County Sheriffs Dept., GA DNR and all first responder agencies from Clay County, NC when we staged our multi-agency rescue drill in July, 2012 on Lake Chatuge at the age of 14! His already valuable swimming skills were dedicated to community service that day and he impressed a lot of us old fogies.

Reed wishes to express thanks to all our community leaders for their training including Doug Mills, Harold Copeland, Mitch Floyd, Wayne Canterbury, Dick Metzler, and Mark and Leslie Moore of our USCG FL 2-3, as well for their dedication and encouragement.

Our loss of Reed to serve our small community will most certainly be the gain of our United States Coast Guard.

It is an honor to know such young men.

Semper Paratus!

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Q: Dr. Don, sometimes I wish I was a working mom instead of a stay-at-home. Here is a typical situation in our family. My 5-year old will be playing with a toy when the 3 1/2-year old decides he wants it and grabs it. A tussle follows. The 5-year old of course wins, but they both end up crying. Since I wasn't there to watch it begin I don't know who to blame or how to punish the one I think is guilty. I know I'm not the first mom to watch this happen, but what advice do you have?

A: Welcome to the world of the pre-schooler. If it's any encouragement to you, there is a national epidemic going on (it may be global, I'm not sure) of the very behavior you describe, and it's been around for a long, long time. It goes, I want what I want and I'm going to make life miserable for everyone else until I get it. Actually, I've seen it in 40-year olds, too.

Here's a leadership parent strategy that will help. In a very unperturbed manner, take the toy away from both of them and put it where neither can have it for a time, like maybe tomorrow. Don't assess blame or accuse

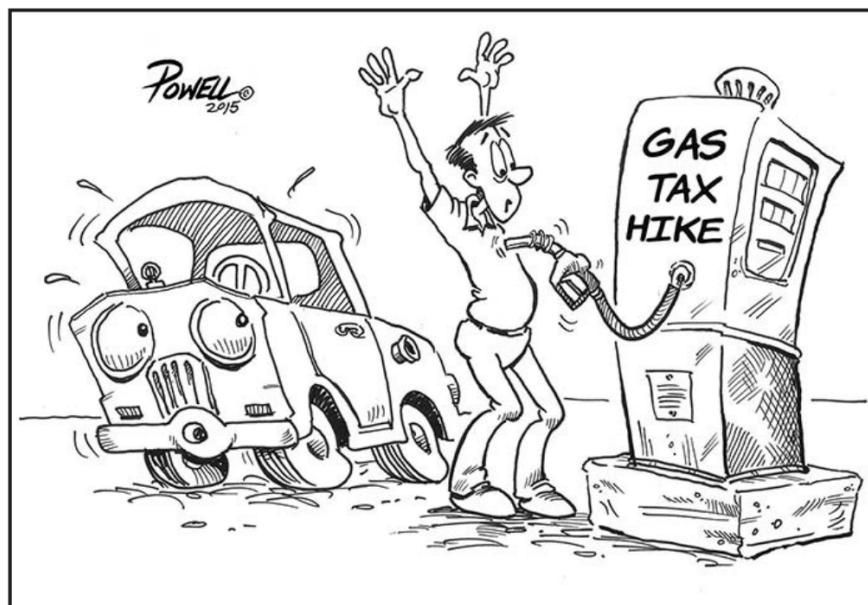
either of them; both receive the same treatment. Where possible put both of them in different parts of the house for 15 minutes, set a kitchen timer (a very useful device at this point in their lives) and tell them they are to remain there until it rings.

You'll end up doing this often for a while till they get it. Eventually they'll understand that this kind of behavior is not acceptable and that there will be a consequence they don't like. You don't need to play the part of Solomon and determine who was right or wrong, you only communicate that they need to solve the problem in a more congenial manner. That's the role of "civilizing the savages" that is assigned to us as parents.

I hope you've developed the habit of reading to your boys at bedtime. Tonight will be a great time to read a story about a couple of brothers who were always scrapping but figured out a way to be nice to each other. You can find whole books filled with character-building stories like that. This is a choice strategy at this time in their lives.

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

Have something to sell?
 Let the Herald work for you!
 Contact 706-896-4454
 Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday by 5 PM



- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| Elected Officials | Elected Officials | 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. David Perdue, 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, Cliff Bradshaw, Donna Hedden, Jerry Taylor, Bob Gibby, Robert Williams. Superintendent: Dr. Darren Berrong | Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis, 706-896-2202 |
| Hiawassee 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 |

Towns County Herald
 Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

KENNETH WEST.....PUBLISHER
 CHARLES DUNCAN.....EDITOR, ADVERTISING
 SHAWN HENRIKSON.....COPY EDITOR
 SHAWN JARRARD.....STAFF WRITER
 MASON MITCHAM.....STAFF WRITER
 JOE COLLINS.....ADVERTISING SALES
 LOWELL NICHOLSON.....NEWS, SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHER

OFFICE LOCATED AT 518 N. MAIN ST. SUITE 7
 "THE MALL" HIAWASSEE (706) 896-4454
 Publication Number 635540. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points.
 EMAIL Address: tcherald@windstream.net

POSTMASTER: Send change of address to:
 TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
 P.O. BOX 365 HIAWASSEE, GEORGIA 30546

DEADLINE FOR ALL NEWS COPY & ADVERTISING
 Fridays at 5 PM

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
 TOWNS COUNTY (1 YEAR) \$20
 OUT OF COUNTY (1 YEAR) \$30
 The Towns County Herald is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All subscriptions must be paid in advance.