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OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

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The Middle Path

by Don Perry

The thing we call friendship can come in many forms. Each one is unique. Each one is a gift. Some take years for their full value to be realized.

Recently I lost one of the friends of my youth. Jack was a Vietnam veteran, a biker (a real one, not a weekend version) and a wanderer who explored every side road between the rain forests of Washington state and the deserts of Arizona and New Mexico. He was just the kind of mentor a young man hopes to meet; someone to teach the "secret knowledge" of the ways of the world, the stuff you don't learn in school, and the things a father can't, or won't, teach.

I met Jack when I was fresh out of the service and working in southwestern New Mexico. One lazy morning on a weekend camping trip with some friends along the San Francisco River, Jack was retelling one of my favorite stories about prospecting for gold on the Verde River in Arizona.

"We should go there some day," I commented. "What's wrong with right now?" Jack said.

So we loaded up my old car with the kind of gear you carry for getting out of places you've gotten yourself stuck in - a shovel, a couple of coils of rope, a chain come-along and a bag of carabineers - along with a few cans of tuna, a bag of pretzels and a big jug of water. What else do you need for roaming around in the desert, besides a map...which we forgot to bring?

I'm not exactly sure whether we actually found the Verde River or not. I know we did find Arizona, eventually. I know that we enjoyed miles of open highway just rolling along and talking about life, more miles of bumping along rutted-out washboard dirt roads, laughing when our heads would hit the ceiling of the car. I know we found a big stretch of water rolling through a canyon with a nice section of class 3 and 4 rapids jumping over the rocks with the urgency of a flash flood and the roar of an avalanche.

I can still picture Jack standing down by the edge of the rapids in the shade of a big old cottonwood tree eating tuna out of a can with the blade of a knife. He's standing there looking at a big limb stretching out over the water and chuckling.

Then he turns around and looks at me, half grinning with a look he had - like a cat

who just figured out how to get the birdcage open.

"It would be a shame to lug all that gear way out here into the desert, and not get to use any of it," he said, pointing at the trunk. Then he pops open the trunk, grabs a coil of rope and says, "I've got an idea."

In about 20 minutes we've got a rope harness and swing rigged up from the branch of that cottonwood tree and there's Jack jumping out into the river, yelling like a banshee, plunging into that stampeding water, disappearing and then popping up at the end of the rope, cutting a swath through that water like a speedboat pulling a bag of rocks. He's slapping that water hard, riding those big waves like a monkey on the back of a water buffalo. Up he comes like a trout trying to throw a hook and then down and out of sight. I swear you could see him grinning all the way from the bottom of the river.

After a long, long ride Jack finally starts to get tired and he yells, "Pull me in," so I put my back into the Z-drag we had rigged and there he comes, gliding in like a tired fish ready for the net. He climbs up on the bank and lies back in the mud, giggling like a kid. I took my turn next and then he went again, back and forth for the rest of the afternoon until every scrap of food in the car and most of our water was gone and the sun was going behind the mountain on one of the best days I ever had.

Among the things Jack gave me by virtue of our friendship there is one in particular that I hold very dear. It is a gift that continues to enrich my life many years later. It is the knowing that, of all the hours of the day, the days of the week, the weeks of the month and the months of the year, the very best time for finding adventure - is right now. Now is all the time we will ever have, and it is the best of times.

Rest in Peace, Brother Jack.



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

Nor things to come

Paul tells us that "God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7). In spite of at least 400 scripture verses that speak about fear, our world is filled with fear. People have a fear of losing. The healthy person is afraid of losing health. The wealthy person is afraid of losing wealth. Employed persons are afraid of losing their jobs. Wives/husbands are afraid of losing their spouses. Children are afraid of losing their parents. People are afraid of losing their friends, losing their youth and ten thousand other fears. Jesus gave a parable in Matthew 25:14-30 of the talents. One man had received one talent. He took the talent and hid it in the earth because he was afraid. Fear will send you into hiding. This man was afraid of failure. He was afraid he would lose and not gain. He was afraid of what his Lord might say or do. He was afraid of what the future might hold.

Everywhere you turn today there are the peddlers

of doom selling uncertainty to our generation. Authors build financial empires by telling people what may happen to them, their families, the economy, the air, the water, the environment, the ozone, social security and health care. No wonder people feel so bad. One lady said it for a lot of folks. She said, "She felt bad when she felt good because she was afraid she was going to feel worse when she felt better." You see, fear hides in the future. Fear lives not in the known but the unknown. For the believer you don't have to fear the future. Paul said, "Nor things to come" (Romans 8:38).

The Psalmist David had overcome his fears when he penned these words in Psalm 27:1, "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" If you have fears confront them. Openly acknowledge your fears. Find out where they originate. Share your fears with some Christian friend. Tell God your fears. Turn them over to Him and let God give to you His peace and courage to face your fears and to face tomorrow. Someone has made an acrostic that throws true light upon fear.

It is False
Evidence
Appearing
Real



Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor:
Lucky us

Honored to be asked to judge entries in the recent Taste of the Southern Highlands, I couldn't say "yes" fast enough. People, people, people. Not only do we have the gorgeous topography of the Blue Ridge Mountains, we get to enjoy some gourmand eats.

My fellow judges and I took our responsibilities seriously. As a former food service professional I can tell you that one is only as good as the last meal served. It's a far cry from a stainless steel Viking or Wolf stove in a well-equipped restaurant kitchen to a hot plate in an enclosed, rain-substituted venue which could have doubled as a sauna. These food providers were outstanding. All of them.

I urge us all to treat ourselves to the top-notch talent we're lucky enough to be near. If you want them to stay here, patronize.

Dale Harmon

**RARE KIDS;
WELL DONE**
By Don Jacobsen

Dear Sir: Several days ago my 8-year old broke a lamp in the living room, and when I asked him about it he lied to me. When I was scolding him for it, I got so angry I began to cry. So I said something like, "It makes me really upset when you don't tell me the truth." To my surprise he answered, "I don't care." What should I do when he does that?

A: Let me respond to what I think your question is. I am assuming it's not the lamp or the lie as much as it is that he wasn't moved by your anguish at his behavior that is bothering you.

I also assume that the lamp was broken because of his carelessness or at least some degree of 8-year old irresponsibility. Is that an issue that should be dealt with? Possibly. Adults break things, too. So, if my assumption is correct perhaps the should be asked to pay for a replacement - or maybe a part of the cost - from his allowance. That decision deserves some careful thought and not just a knee-jerk reaction.

What about the lie? To this part of the narrative there needs to be an appropriate and memorable response. Some significant suspension of privileges

maybe. Sir Lamps-a-lot needs to understand that truthfulness is a highly held family value and that if he violates that code of honor there will be noteworthy consequences. Leave no doubt in his mind what he got in trouble for.

So far you and I are probably pretty much in synch, but here is a perspective I want to add. We want our kids to understand that they are not just learning to obey in order to keep adults happy, but because it also brings themselves the greatest joy. Obedience is the way of happiness; ultimately disobedience always hurts.

Virtually every youngster will say things and do things that are hurtful to mom and dad. Ordinary parents may rankle, get angry, or lash out in retaliation. But leadership parents know that being ordinary is not the route they want to take. Rather than telling Junior how you feel about it, keep the focus on him and what he has done. This isn't about you, though he'd like for you to think it is. Deal with the event - the lamp and the lie - and not with how they made you feel.

Send your parent 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 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.

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"Tying the Farm Bill to food stamps just isn't logical. The Endangered Species Act would be more like it!"

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 Uncioy 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 Tyng - 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.

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