

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Letter to the Editor:

Thank you
On August 3rd, I dialed 911 for my mother. God put a lot of angels in our paths that day. We would like to say a big "Thank You" to our EMT guys, nurses and doctors. Our little hospital took such great care of us and our mother, just like she was their own. We can't begin to find the words to say how much it meant to us. Chatuge Regional Hospital was the best of the best in our eyes.

*Family of Lillie Mae Lockman
Karen Moody, Mary Derochie*



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

This will not be an easy column to write. It may not be an easy column to read, either. But I've gotta write it. As parents, grandparents, and educators we need to know this. I hope you'll read it.

Important new research shows that kids with even moderate amounts of lead in their systems are three times as likely to be suspended from school by the time they're ten as those whose blood-lead levels are considered acceptable. Perhaps of even broader significance is that those same kids also have shorter attention spans, tend to impulsive behaviors, are hyperactive, irritable, and generally don't do as well in school. It's interesting that these are behaviors often linked to symptoms diagnosed as ADD and ADHD.

So how common is the presence of lead in the systems of our kids? Well, it's not considered epidemic, but the best CDCP estimate is that about 310,000 American kids between the ages of 1 and 5 have unsafe levels of lead in their blood. As long ago as 1991 the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services called lead the "number one environmental threat to the health of children in the United States."

But I don't see much lead lying around; where would my kids pick it up?

Where does it come from? There are numerous sources including some paints, batteries, many building materials, some auto exhausts, for instance. Even some drinking water. Houses built before 1978 are a common culprit because prior to the government mandate that year, much house paint contained lead. Products, especially toys, from some overseas countries can be sources since their health regulations may not be as strict as ours. By the way, if you have adopted a child from another country you may wish to have the child's blood tested for lead, a simple and inexpensive procedure your physician or any public health agency can do.

Here's my prediction... you heard it here first. We've all been concerned at the rising incidence of significant childhood ailments. Autism for instance. My prediction is that in time researchers will begin to link these increasing health issues with the huge inventory of chemicals with which our generation is being bombarded. Read the list of ingredients on the labels for the food products you buy, for instance, especially prepared foods. If you can't pronounce it you probably shouldn't feed it to your kids...or yourself.

Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@Rare Kids.net.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Gmail has been a mainstay of my email communications for years. I came to depend on its reliability and ease of use, and at a time when local internet providers were offering meager storage space measured in megabytes for a not-so-meager monthly fee, Google offered gigabytes of storage for free.

About four years ago I began using Facebook. Social media was an intriguing way to reconnect with old acquaintances and it was the only way to communicate with some contacts that were inaccessible by any other means. Facebook offered seemingly endless storage space for pictures, random thoughts and mouse clicks, all for free.

Nothing is free, and in the ongoing high stakes contest between Google and Facebook for our attention, a price for using these services is extracted. That price is in a currency that many of us are more than willing to pay: our privacy.

Those of us raised on television are accustomed to the price we pay for "free" content on television networks. About one fourth of an hour of programming is devoted to commercial messages, (not counting product placement). We are infrequently bothered by the ads that line the pages of most of the websites we visit. We accept that the companies bringing us our information and entertainment must pay their bills.

Google and Facebook, however, are taxing us using methods of which many of us are simply unaware or do not fully understand. Google and Facebook spy on us in an attempt to learn our likes and dislikes so that they can more profitably provide us with opportunities to be parted from our money.

Here's a good example of how Facebook works. Not long ago I had Facebook open in my browser. I have no pictures stored on Facebook, no comments, no "likes," no notes and very little personal information. My Facebook is locked down as tight as the security settings will allow. It is little more than an interactive contact list as far as I am concerned.

While logged into Facebook, I opened another tab in the browser and started searching for information on backup generators. I logged out of Facebook, shut down

the browser and cleaned my browsing history and cookies. I shut down the computer. Later on I booted up the computer and logged into Facebook again. Lo and behold, ads from companies selling generators appeared beside my newsfeed. Facebook had followed me in my journey across cyberspace and it had taken notes.

What about Google, the company that, in its early days, sported the motto, "Don't do evil?" Documents from a recent court case revealed that Google's official position is that Gmail users should have "no reasonable expectation of privacy." Google routinely scans every email that passes through its servers for the same reason that Facebook spies on web users - to look for information that can be used in marketing.

Facebook and Google both publicly declare their devotion to defending the personal information of their users. The complex algorithms that anonymously scan email and web pages looking for keywords are not quite the same as someone taking a letter out of your mailbox, steaming it open, reading it and then sealing it back up before you have a chance to read it yourself. Nevertheless, information is power. Facebook has over one billion users. Google? Recently Google experienced a five minute outage and it killed about 40% of the world's Internet traffic. Two behemoth organizations with close government ties through which pass personal and financial information of at least a fifth of the world's population - what could go wrong?

Alternatives? There are many. Keeping Facebook open in a separate browser, (I now use Chrome for Facebook and Firefox for web browsing) or logging out before opening another tab will hobble some of its more active abilities. Cleaning browsing history and cookies is always a good idea, not only to protect against malware but to deny information to a host of other websites that want to rifle through your cookies. Microsoft has a free and feature-rich email service called "Outlook Mail," and Microsoft swears that it does not read your mail as it passes through its servers.



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

Read all about it
Isn't it amazing how things change? People change more than anything else. I attended my 55th high school class reunion recently, and everyone had changed so much they hardly recognized me. People's appearance changes. Their hair changes color, slides off and to the sides of the head. In fact, you know you are getting old when more hair grows in your nose and ears than on your head. My hair is now gray (snow white) and one of my classmates thought I had gotten my hair wet and it had molded. One fellow said when he was young he would look in the mirror and his head reminded him of the ocean. It was just wave after wave of beautiful black hair. He said his head still reminds him of the ocean - it's all beach now. I look into the mirror now and I am more well rounded than I have ever been. When I was in high school I was as skinny as a rail. I had to walk twice in the same place to make a shadow. In fact, I used to tell folks that I was so skinny that I had to tease the hairs on my legs to get my socks to stay up. Have you noticed that where you need to get fat you don't? My legs are still skinny, but I can't say that for the rest of my body. There are some things about life that you never understand. For instance, brain cells come and go, but fat cells stay forever. I am not only heavier now, I am shorter. That's hard for me to understand. I am not only shorter but I am slower. In my younger days I could run so fast that when I reached where I was going it would take my shadow an hour to ar-

rive where my body was. Now my shadow arrives before my body gets there. We recognize appearance changes quite readily. However, we are not so quick to recognize aptitude changes. When you discover appearance changes you have some options. There are all kinds of surgical procedures, pills, vitamins, exercise programs, diets and other things available to help us keep a youthful appearance. One lady said that she had had so many face lifts that it was necessary to have her lower body raised to keep up with her face. It's a little different when you start slipping mentally. You are more embarrassed about that than you are your appearance. You really don't want to admit that to yourself and you surely don't want anyone else to know it. For over fifty years I have preached about the hereafter and warned folks about the hereafter. But you know I am more occupied with the hereafter, as I grow older. Everywhere I go I ask myself - "What am I hereafter?" My wife, Regina and I have devised a plan as we travel. She remembers where we are going and I remember who we are. Well, I hope you can laugh or at least smile about life, as you grow older. We don't need to look back so much at things as they used to be, but look forward to things as they are going to be. Praise God, someday, we will be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we shall be changed. We will have a new body, and a new life in a new land where we will never grow old. Thank God I have heard of a land on a far away strand where we will never grow old. You can read all about it in the Book called the Bible. It's the only Book in the world that tells us how much better life is going to be for all of those who trust Christ as their savior. Read all about your future in the Bible.



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Towns County Herald

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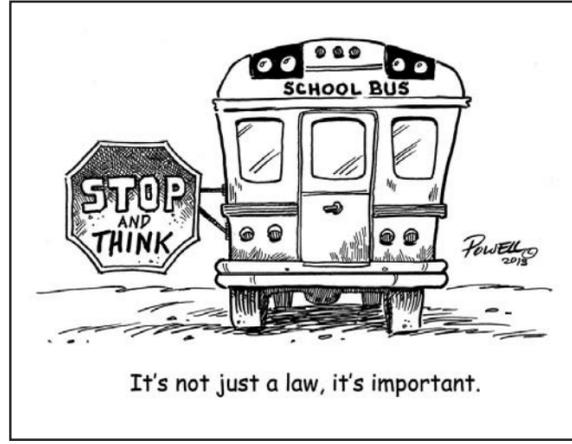
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GUEST COLUMNS

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 EMAILED OR MAILED TO: Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawasse, 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.

American Legion Post 23 meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 4 PM at VFW Post 7807, Sunnyside Rd., Hiawasse. 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 Hiawasse 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.
Hiawasse 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 Hiawasse 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 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.
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 Hiawasse at 5:30 p.m. Annual dues \$15, PO Box 1182, Hiawasse, GA. We do oral family histories of residents. 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org



Community Calendar

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, Hiawasse. 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 Hiawasse. 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., Hiawasse. Call 706-896-4285 for more info.
Enchanted Valley Square Dance Club. Dances 2nd & 4th Fridays at Hiawasse 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.
FVH Post #7807 will be hosting a fish fry they 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), Hiawasse. For info call Al 706-896-9614 after 6 PM.