

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

A \$30,000 opinion

It depends on which newspaper you read nowadays. Anything other than the North Georgia News and Towns County Herald are reporting that the \$30,000 report by EMC Attorney Steven Minor is a fact-filled document.

Initially, we treated Minor's report as a hard-hitting, fact-filled document.

That was before officials with Blue Ridge Mountain EMC started talking about the opinions in the document.

That leads one to believe that the Minor Report is a fact unless it conflicts with the message that BRMEMC is trying to sell.

Upon closer look, Minor's report uses phrases such as "reasonably confident of the following conclusions."

So, what we're learning here is that basically, Steven Minor's \$30,000 internal report was a \$30,000 internal opinion.

Case in point, when the newspapers reported that General Manager Matthew Akins made false reports to the Internal Revenue Service on Nonprofit Form 990 based on revelations in the Minor Report, EMC officials told a crowd at Mary's Southern Grill in Young Harris on Friday that this was Steven Minor's opinion.

So, it certainly looks like it's Minor's opinion that no sitting member of the Board of Directors knew anything about a five-digit debt owed by former BRMEMC Board President Terry Taylor's commercial stone crushing operation.

According to the Cherokee Scout in Murphy, NC, the report on the BRMEMC website shows the board knew nothing about the debt. We've actually reported that as well.

However, for the report prepared by Steven Minor for BRMEMC to indicate that former and now deceased BRMEMC Board Member Jack Lance Sr. knew about the debt as early as 2009, well, where did you get that information? Possibly from a current and sitting board member?

Unless Minor has a Quija Board, that's the only place Minor could have gathered the information.

Actually, Minor says he got the information from current Board Member Bill Prather. Mr. Prather reported to Minor that in 2009 Lance Sr. shared with him information that a director had not paid his EMC bill in several months. Mr. Prather did not believe that Jack Lance Sr. specified the director's name, and Mr. Prather did not inquire further about it.

Well, we can't ask Jack Lance Sr. to verify this can we? And it is amazing that the only board member who knew about Terry Taylor's indebtedness is now deceased and has taken this information with him to the Pearly Gates.

However, it certainly looks like a fact in the Minor Report, although, there's no way Minor could have verified this information - unless he had a Quija Board.

The Minor Report also shows former EMC General Manager Joe Satterfield under the bus. Of course, now we know that Mr. Satterfield's involvement - where he was alleged to have created a defacto policy of allowing Taylor to skate on his bills - was also just an opinion.

As we head into the Sept. 13 Annual Meeting at Anderson Music Hall, we've learned that the BRMEMC Board of Directors approved the use of \$30,000 in membership money to create an educated guess about how Taylor and Taylor Construction was able to generate a debt of more than \$48,000 in unpaid utility bills.

We've also learned that Taylor and Taylor Construction did pay their bills - at least every two or three years. They got away with that because the threat of disconnection was not there, according to the Minor Report.

The Minor Report also says that EMC Legal Counsel Lawrence Sorgen knew about the debt in May or June 2013 and was told by GM Akins. If that's a fact, why didn't the board find out until March 2014?

To his credit, Sorgen demanded that Taylor pay his debt immediately.

Nevertheless, we arrive again at fact or opinion? According to the Minor Report, Sorgen had no contractual duty to disclose the news to BRMEMC's board of directors.

The future path of BRMEMC is now in the hands of its membership - 43,000 strong. Do we fix the sputtering carburetor or just wait until it finally breaks down?

The choice is ours as owners of the cooperative. If you're tired of the current individuals who claim amnesia when it comes to knowing about something they should have known about, then, it's time for a change.

If you're not worried about that, then vote for the status quo.

Bottomline: make your vote count.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Letters to The Editor

To the Editor:

Don't let the \$48,000+ delinquent power bill dim our focus on the real issue with BRMEMC. The real issue is with the Board itself. Remember, despite the recent recession when almost everyone was hurting, the Board continued its lavish perks for itself, spent in excess of \$20 million on the Taj Mahal and even voted a rate increase for all of us to pay. What a deal!

The old way of doing business, including the selection of board members, must change. Friends picking friends has not worked. The method used to select (not elect) board members lends itself to complacency and unresponsiveness to the EMC members. Even if everything is as it should be, this method just appears "shady". For once we have a chance to make changes, but we must all vote. Get a friend, child or grandchild to go on-line and vote. It doesn't take but a minute or you can attend the meeting at Anderson Music Hall 8 - 10 AM on Saturday, September 13. If you don't vote, then don't complain.

We must change the way the current board is thinking and acting. Instead of spending even more that we have, we must get into a savings mode. Who knows, God forbid, we may even be able to cut electric rates and give the people who deep our power on, a raise. S-o-o vote, vote, vote.

Tommy Moore

Dear Editor:

I agree with the views expressed by a previous writer in the August 20th edition of the Herald. I believe it's high time to "clean house" of the management and board at OUR BRMEMC! We have the chance at our upcoming election to eliminate 3 of the present incumbents and vote for new blood, so to speak.

Last week we were exposed to a pretty large size ad of more BRMEMC lies and guess how it got paid for, most likely? Our money, people! I wonder why Terry Taylor got a special 1-1/2% interest rate when we heard of one regular member being charged 5% on their late power bill? One other thing I wonder about - a \$107,000 debt? I thought we had an EMC, not an EMC and charity office? Has anyone else besides Taylor gotten charity from our power company? Also, what happened to the rest of his bill, suddenly?

Mary Jean Boyette

To the Editor,

I'm a property owner in Towns County and am totally confused in regard to the addition of another junk yard being developed at the entrance to our lovely community. I was elated when I saw Benny's Sanitation being cleared, however no sooner did that start when another so called recycling center Junk Yard began developing on the corner of Hwy. 76 and 288, what a black eye this gives the Town. You developed a beautiful new recreation center yet allow these unsightly Junk Yards exposing trash right in our backyard. Don't you have ordinances in place to restrict such development? I go through Blairsville and admire how nice and well kept their community is yet Towns County looks disarrayed with closed businesses and Junk Yards, why? Do you (Commissioner Kendall) not realize this is happening right under your nose, or do the good old boys control these issues?

Concerned Citizen

Dennis LaSota, President of the Windjammer HOA

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE By Don Jacobsen

Q: Driving home after having dinner with some friends of ours recently, we were discussing the fact that it seemed like we had laughed a lot. Our hosts were just a happy bunch, mom, dad, and two youngsters. I envy them. Is that something they have learned to do or does it just happen?

A: I read somewhere (I actually read it in a book I wrote) this powerful line: Leaders are responsible to create the atmosphere in the organization they

manage. You may have worked somewhere once where it was a downer just to show up. It seemed that when you punched the clock a pall of gloom settled over your spirit. Or maybe instead, when you walked into the room you immediately detected a kind of a happy hum.

Well, remember, you read it here, "Leaders create the atmosphere in the organization they manage." It may have been the one in charge at your company who was setting the pace,



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

Voices

Do you like the sound of your voice? The first time I heard a recording of my voice I was embarrassed. Our voices sound peculiar to us. Are any of you old enough to remember the TV show "This Is Your Life"? A guest would be chosen to appear on the show and various persons from his/her past would be hidden behind a curtain. They would say just a sentence or two about the individual and see if the guest could recognize the person from the past. It might have been a first grade teacher, neighbor, relative, preacher, a former boyfriend or girlfriend, etc. Sometimes the guest could recognize the voice but as often they failed to recognize the voice. Paul said, "There are many voices in the world and all have significance" (I Cor. 14:10).

Your voice is just like your finger print it is unique. People can be identified by voice prints if there are recordings available to compare. There is a man's voice, a woman's voice, a teenager's voice, a child's voice, and a baby's voice. A ventriloquist throws his voice; a comedian changes his voice to sound like a variety of personalities. There is the voice of rejoicing and the voice of weeping. Cain killed his brother Abel and buried him, but his voice cried out from the earth (Gen. 4:10). You remember Rebecca connived with Jacob to deceive Isaac into giving Jacob the blessing instead of Esau. Rebecca placed goat's hair on Jacob's hands and smooth of his neck. When he approached Isaac, his father, Isaac felt his hands and

neck and said, "The voice is Jacob's but the hands are the hands of Esau" (Gen. 27:22). Isaac was deceived because he went on feeling and failed to listen to the voice. When John the Baptist came preaching he was asked who he was, one of the prophets or the Messiah. John identified himself by saying, "I am the voice." The sound of some voices are special: your spouse, your children, mom and dad, your siblings and friends. Being a preacher I listen to the sound and tone of speakers and preachers. Who of us would fail to recognize Billy Graham's voice? Dr. R. G. Lee had a unique voice. In his sermon Payday Someday he changed his voice to imitate the characters of Ahab, Jezebel, Elijah, Naboth, etc.

I have heard the recorded voice of Winston Churchill who had a powerful, persuasive voice. He stuttered so when he was a child that you couldn't understand him. He taught himself to be a speaker by putting marbles in his mouth and talking. Dr. W.A. Criswell and Dr. George W. Truett both served First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas. Both had unique and persuasive voices. They had that quivering ministerial voice. Peter Marshall had a voice that captivated his audience.

I believe Jesus had the greatest voice man has ever heard. We have Jesus' written words but there was no such thing as a recorder in His day. However, we have some indications in Scripture that give us some idea about the voice of the Son of God. His voice was the voice of the Bridegroom, the Shepherd and the Savior. His was/is a tender, trustful and truthful voice.

In this day of confusing and chaotic voices we need to listen for that still small voice of Christ. Hear ye Him! (Rev. 3:20).

or it may have been an employee whose radiance became the joy-thermostat for the group. Some folks cause happiness wherever they go; some folks cause happiness whenever they go.

Joy is a decision. It was Abraham Lincoln who said, "Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be." Look for the happy in your family. Poke fun at yourself. Not in a demeaning way, but so everyone knows you don't take yourself too seriously.

We can (1) fuss about the constant rain or (2) we can say, "I hope the rain continues just one more month, then we can have our very own swimming pool in the front yard." Whichever response you choose won't affect the weather outside, but it will af-

fect the weather inside. And just think, some day maybe you can compare stories with Noah.

Being joyful is a learned skill. It radiates from a thankful heart. It's difficult to be grateful and grouchy at the same time. "What was the best thing that happened at school today?" How's that for a conversation starter at the dinner table? Or maybe something like, "Dad, they had a little staff shake-up at your work this week. What is the thing you like best about your new boss?"

So the answer to your question is Yes and Yes. Once you practice it a bit, happy is more apt to happen.

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

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 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 Thursday of each month at 5 PM at the new Senior Center.

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 Unity 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 artguild-store.com.

Mountain Computer User Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month in Young Harris. Meetings start at 6 p.m. and visitors are welcome. A "Q & A" session follows. Details can be found at www.mcug.org.

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/blueridge-mountains.

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.

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 Cadence Bank the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 AM.

AMREC 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 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.

VFW Post #7807 will be hosting a fish fry their 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.

The Board of Directors of the Towns County Chamber of Commerce meet the second Monday of every month at 8 a.m. at the Chamber office, 1411 Jack Dayton Circle, Young Harris.

Cartoon illustration of three children with speech bubbles saying 'TAP=TAP=TAP' and a caption: "Of course us kids know literacy is important. If you can't read, you can't text!"

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