

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

The Membership has Spoken

The crowd at Anderson Music Hall on Saturday was vocal.

Yes, they spoke their minds and didn't hold back. They called for the resignation of Blue Ridge Mountain EMC General Manager Matthew Akins, and the entire 9-member group of EMC Board of Directors.

Of course that was before they learned the results of the 2014 Election of Board of Directors for Union and Towns counties in Georgia, and Clay County, NC.

We're told the petition circulating to remove the EMC Board of Directors does not include its three newest members, Charles Jenkins, Steven Phillips and Chris Logan.

Yes, on Saturday at Anderson Music Hall, there was a clean sweep in the election that removed Brian Trout, Julie Payne and Lenny Parks from the EMC Board of Directors.

We feel for Trout and Payne, who have barely been on the board long enough to get their feet wet. Parks on the other hand was seen as a Board insider and members left him in third place in his race. He finished behind both Jenkins, and Mike Patton.

The message: "we want change." Prior to the announcement of election results, board member Jerry Nichols took to the podium and told the packed crowd at the Music Hall that the board was sorry. Yes, mistakes were made, and the board was doing everything it could to correct those errors.

GM Akins also apologized to the membership, asking for forgiveness and the opportunity to make them proud of their EMC.

Board members sat quietly as Karen Kelley, the wife of former EMC Director of Operations Chris Kelley spoke of the hardships her family has endured as a result of her husband's demotion for bringing to light the long-term debt of former BRMEMC Board President Terry Taylor.

Really, there was nothing that they could say. EMC Member Barbara Heimanson said it all when she demanded Akins' resignation and the subsequent resignations of the EMC Board of Directors.

"Terry Taylor would still be sitting up there on stage if it wasn't for the North Georgia News," she said. "You should be ashamed of yourselves."

Thank you Barbara, we're just doing our job.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



The Middle Path

by Don Perry

When someone tells us, the modern, sophisticated, technologically savvy and politically astute people that we are, to "stop and smell the roses," we might just lift our noses instead, buoyed by the enlightenment of our worldly wisdom. Only a Pollyanna indulges in rose appreciation, unless the roses are on fire, involved in a scandal or impeding our progress with their thorns.

Those of us of a more idealistic nature lament the ascendancy of negativity in our civilization, but science tells us that we are hard wired to emphasize the negative. Generations of hunter-gatherers were apparently better served by brains that could quickly discern a snake from a stick, with little time to admire its shape while pursuing, or trying to avoid becoming, dinner.

Negative stimuli is registered immediately by the amygdala, whereas it takes at least 12 seconds for positive experiences to imprint long term memory. Therefore, is it not "natural" that we rubber-neck at accidents? Is it not understandable that we emphasize the negative, that we believe the worst and that a cynical and suspicious nature is considered worldly? It is not proper that those who think the glass is half full are considered idealists and those who know that it is half empty are "realists?"

"Hold on," says the optimist. "We are no longer hunter-gatherers trying to stay alive on a planet where everything wants to eat us. Those survival instincts no longer serve us in the modern world."

"Perhaps," replies the realist, "but what about the predators of the modern world, from the government who wants to rob us with the law to the thug in the parking lot who wants to do it at gunpoint? Who wants to be hit by a bus, admiring the clouds while we cross the street? We

don't have to hunt for food or gather nuts and berries, but what about the life's savings we gather that can fall prey to a scam artist, a lying politician or a dishonest merchant?"

I must confess, as I attempt to balance this fictional dialogue with a reply from the "optimist," that it is much easier to write the negative viewpoint. Negative experiences linger longer, reinforced by our nervous systems programmed to recognize danger; reinforced by a marketing milieu constantly broadcasting bad news to compete for our attention in the pursuit of advertising dollars.

Yet, though we may be programmed to whatever extent science believes we are to emphasize the negative, the clinical trial and the statistical analysis seem to miss the most salient point in this discussion: We are beings of consciousness. We are creatures of choice. We are people of Faith. We may consciously choose when it is safe to cross the street and when we can afford to stand on the sidewalk and admire the clouds. We can passively allow the 24 hour news cycle to program our subconscious minds with fear and suspicion, or we can choose our reactions on a case by case basis.

It is much easier to be passive than to be alert and aware stewards of our own consciousness, but to surrender to the flow is to live fearful lives bracketed by drama and worry and subject to stress related disease.

There is a middle path between the cynic and the Pollyanna where alertness protects us from danger and where Faith and choosing allows us to embrace the good things in life, which are just as abundant as the bad. Whatever may be said of fate or the inevitable future of all that lives, happiness and contentment are to be found in the present and in the conscious choices we make right now.



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

By the skin of my teeth

Here in these mountains we have numerous words, sayings, phrases and idioms that are only understood by folk who have grown up here. There are sayings and idioms that have originated in one locality but have been so expressive that they have gained widespread usage. Such is the phrase "by the skin of his teeth." Of course, we recognize that the popularity of this phrase stems from the fact that it comes from perhaps the oldest book in the Bible. Job, in answering Bildad, his so-called friend, described his awful physical condition by saying, "My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth" (Job 19:20). Thus, when someone escapes from harm or danger, we say, "they escaped by the skin of their teeth." That means by the smallest amount of margin. I understand when the Geneva Bible was produced in 1560 this literal rendering of the passage was given: "I have escaped with the skinn of my teth." When the King James Version was produced in 1611, the phrase was retained. In just a few short years anyone who barely dodged some form of disaster was likely to say that he escaped "by the skin of the teeth." Now I certainly don't want to get into a debate with some dentist about whether the teeth have skin or no. However, there are some scholars who deny that the teeth have skin, but I believe they must because Job believed they did. There are some modern translations that translate: "I have escaped with only my gums." My firm belief is that the new phrase will never catch on. Job's saying got me to thinking about the skin. Anyone who reads this column pretty well knows that I am not a great lover of beaches. The sea, the salt, the sand and the sun have never beckoned to me like it has to some folks. It seems that the sea, salt, sand and the sun

has a strange affect on some folks; it makes them want to go naked. I grew up being taught that there are some areas of the human anatomy that you don't expose to the sea, salt, sand and the sun. You know, being a Baptist preacher and all, "we don't drink, smoke, cuss and chew, nor run with those that do." Neither do we undress in public, or so I was taught. If you have been to the beach lately you were exposed to more than the sea, salt, sand and the sun. You were exposed to skin. I truly believe that some of the women (and men) on the beach could carry their swimsuits in a band-aid box.

If some folks believe that beauty is only skin deep, they must believe more skin shown, more beauty seen. I suppose that by now I have gotten under some reader's skin. Those of you who have a thick skin will keep on reading but those with a thin skin may take exception. There may not be more sea, more salt, more sand and more sun but there is definitely more skin. What's even more amazing to me is what people are doing to the skin. Why, some have poked, punched, pinched, peeled, pickled, pulled, plugged and painted their skin until you couldn't recognize them if they were your blood kin. Some have inserted rocks, stones, gold, silver and metal in every conceivable area of the skin so that it would be impossible for them to slip up on anyone. You can hear them coming. They sound like wind chimes with all those rocks and metal clanging together. And have you noticed the scenes that some people have painted on their skin? Someone has said that some families don't have to go on vacation. Dad just puts all the family in the car parked in the driveway, pulls off his shirt and runs around and around the car flashing scenes of national monuments, mountains, oceans, parks and lakes. They don't have to leave the driveway to take in historic sites. According to Job 19:26, worms will destroy the skin, but do you suppose that some people's skin won't be appetizing even to worms? Pray that I am not skinned alive over this column. Anyway, it's been on my mind.

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen



Sometimes I get the distinct impression that it's helpful to rant occasionally. Not long ago I ran an aggressive column describing some of the destructive outcomes of pornography. I am under no illusion that my one column changed the world, at least not much of it. But I do see a glimmer of hope. Maybe if enough of us keep making enough of the right kind of noise we can see the changes we hope for.

On June 6, 2014, Google, the most pervasive Internet site in the world, announced that it would cease all advertising for pornography including all ads that link to sexually explicit websites. Google executives in Washington, DC, also agreed to no longer offer sexually explicit apps in their app store. Now that's huge.

A delegation from Morality in Media, with some other groups, met with Google administrators. Chief concerns discussed were porn on YouTube (which Google owns), the Google Play store, and Google ads. No agreements were signed following the discussions, but porn industry news sites immediately lit up with complaints about new policies coming from Google executives.

Interestingly, leaders in Australia also concerned about the decaying sexual morals in their country, took the occasion to launch a series of major

initiatives intended "to turn back the tide of evil (of pornography) in...our societies." Commenting on encouraging changes in their own country and responses from Google and other entities in the United States, Aussie leaders called it "the greatest single victory in the battle against pornography in the last 40 years."

What encourages me most about the Google decision is that these business titans were not bowing to federal mandates. No laws were passed that will be debated in the courts for the next ten years. These decisions were made by business leaders who decided that what they were doing was wrong and they chose to do what is right. Man, that's refreshing. There hasn't been a lot of that going around lately.

What also encourages me is the manner in which the changes came about. No angry riots. No burning down buildings. No posturing or politicking. Thoughtful people sat together for intense and passionate discussions. Both sides had a stake in the outcome but were willing to listen to the other side as well. I submit that everybody won. Everybody. Seems to me like a good model for some other discussions we need to have.

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

"I assure you there's no need to worry about the impact of fracking on your water supply!"



"Say, I'm thirsty. Do you have any bottled water?"



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