

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Letters to The Editor

### Letter to the Editor:

As a US Navy and US Army war time veteran, I realize how lucky we are to live in this great country. I also realize how lucky we are to live in a great county. This has been my family's home for about 25 years and after living all over the world and the USA I can honestly say that there has been nowhere else that welcomes and supports Veterans more than Towns County. As an example Towns County gave us a Veterans ceremony on Veterans Day that honored every major war and every branch of the service including Towns County residents that gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country. All Veterans that attended felt like this was home, no matter where you came from. All of this support and honor has to start somewhere and by someone and I want to recognize and thank one of the many Towns County employees who was instrumental in putting this together and honoring America's Veterans. Commissioner Bill Kendall and his employees have all of the Veterans gratitude for making the ceremony such a memorable day. Thank you Commissioner.

Terry Williams

### To the Editor:

I'd like to revisit an issue that some will not like to be revisited, but nevertheless in today's society - certainly locally - really needs to be revisited.

Most folks will recall the brouhaha engendered by a 'nonbeliever's' objection to Towns County public facilities being utilized for a prayer breakfast and the responses of the Commissioner and the general citizenry to that objections, thus resulting in a chasm of opinion of polar proportions.

I have monitored the applicable issues since that brouhaha and have found that studies and statistics have established that secularism has increased, as has the commitment of the deeply religious, particularly Christians, whereupon each side has defiantly dug in its heels even more.

As a student of the U. S. Constitution and the U. S. Supreme Court's decisions interpreting it, I believe those decisions all too frequently defy simple common sense, perhaps the result of the justices' never actually having lived and worked in "the real world" and furthermore perhaps the result of those would-be pundits who incorrectly cite the meaning and application of those decisions. But those matters are far too broad for this letter. Nevertheless, I would like to suggest (a) all public facilities should be and constitutionally are permitted to be open to all people, (b) "believers" accordingly should not be forced to exercise their beliefs only in places of worship, just as "nonbelievers" should not be governmentally ostracized and/or prohibited from expressing their beliefs in a public forum such as this newspaper, (c) let's all peacefully adopt a policy of tolerance, if not acceptance, of the thoughts and opinions of those with whom we strongly disagree and (d) we give thanks for our freedoms and celebrate Christmas and the holiday seasons as we may choose.

Claude Spears

## The Middle Path

by Don Perry

In April, when the Islamic "State" killed 147 people in Kenya, the western world scarcely took notice. Corporate media barely mentioned the tragedy. No one on Facebook draped a Kenyan flag over their profile picture.

Our response to the Muslim attacks in Paris has been quite different. Every major news source is recycling headlines that are often provocative and emotive. Social media is awash in the kind of empty but well-intentioned gestures that have become common in the electronic wasteland.

The victims of the Paris tragedy are certainly no more important than the victims in Kenya, or in scores of other places around the world that are not as familiar to the west, but we can perhaps understand the difference in the treatment of these very similar tragedies without trying to justify it. Little is known about Kenya in the west, particularly in the United States. We do not share the history and the cultural similarities with Kenya that we do with France. There is no Kenyan Statue of Liberty embedded in our national collective consciousness.

However, for those of us who attempt to follow media from a more detached position, and for anyone who bothers to follow the money trails that converge on about half a dozen corporate entities that produce almost 90 percent of what we see and hear, other questions emerge. If we take a moment to view corporate media as the propaganda division of our oligarchy, then the information selected for us, often force-fed to us, and the information ignored or obscured, takes on new meaning.

It is in the interest of the oligarchy, the matured outgrowth of the military-industrial complex that Eisenhower warned us about, that the "war on terror" does not end. For many years after the destruction of the World Trade Center in 2001, our fear of the faceless enemy was enough to allow a significant erosion of our republic along with the increase in the coercive power of our government. We traded freedom for security, and our democrats and republicans led us there. But we are a simple people, and we need a name and a face to fear and to hate.

What better choice for our common enemy than the religion of Islam. It is foreign to most Americans. Even in its gentlest expressions it seems irrational and often misogynistic to us. It is rapidly growing, especially among the poor and under-educated. It is the best enemy that the elite have been able to create for us since the Axis powers and the Communist menace.

"Created," you say? Indeed. Created by empire building, assassination, orchestrated coups, the extraction of oil and natural resources at the expense of native populations, bombings, economic sanctions, and drone strikes. In less than 20 years the west, led by the United States, has destroyed the infrastructure and economy of Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and parts of Syria in conflagrations that have created over a million civilian casualties. Created? Like Al Qaida, which we financed to thwart the Russians in Afghanistan? Like ISIS, which the evidence suggests was created and/or supported by covert operations financed by the West?

With the horrific attacks in Paris, now they say that the "barbarians are at the gates," or worse, they are inside the gates. The Paris attacks, they say, demonstrate the ability of our enemy to bypass our best security measures and most sophisticated technology. Consequently, I believe that what will come next will be a call for tougher security measures, more surveillance and bigger budgets in this "clash of civilizations." The point will be driven home, perhaps, by more attacks, closer to home.

Surf the channels or click on the bait, listen to the conversation in the breakroom, and you will already detect a crescendo of anger and fear. Threats against mosques have already been made. Hate crimes against Muslims are more likely now. The sacrifice of brave and honorable men and women fighting for our country will continue, and civilian casualties will continue to mount. However it happened, an enemy has been created that must be dealt with.

However, as we move further into our season of the political circus, and we witness the increase of hawkish rhetoric that will surely come in the wake of the Paris attacks, keep in mind that about 150 families have financed the lion's share of most the campaigns still active. The share of the world's wealth controlled by 1 percent of the population now approaches half. Corporate profits continue to soar as our buying power declines and work force participation approaches generational lows. All this, and we are still significantly better off than the vast majority of the world, better off than the minions of angry poor facing Mecca to pray. Among those minions we do have an implacable enemy, but should we not also consider that an enemy of all mankind exists within that small minority that continues to influence world events from behind the scenes?



## The Veterans' Corner

By Scott Drummond, USCG Veteran

### The Remembrance Poppy

Why the red poppies ('papaver rhoeas'), we see handed out and proudly worn at events, such as our wonderful Veterans Day? Mr. Bill Graham, a supreme historian, reminded me of this history, as we all need reminding occasionally for the sake of our beloved America. First, a poem, written by a Canadian soldier Lieutenant-Colonel John Alexander McCrae, published on December 8, 1915 with regards to one of the most devastated areas of the Western front during WWI, Belgian Flanders. He had taken note that these "Flanders Poppies", called red weeds by some had taken growth in this destroyed land, and the fields were red with poppies. For a fact the torn up devastated ground, by nature's design, is perfect for these red poppies. Here is Colonel McCrae's dedication to those who gave their all:

*In Flanders fields  
The poppies blow  
Between the crosses,  
Row on row,  
That mark our place;  
And in the sky  
The larks,  
Still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid  
The guns below.  
We are the Dead.  
Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn,  
Saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved,  
And now we lie  
In Flanders fields.  
Take up our quarrel  
With the foe:  
To you from failing hands  
We throw  
The torch;  
Be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith  
With us who die  
We shall not sleep,  
Though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.  
Born in the small Georgia town of Good Hope, on*

August 15, 1869, Moira Belle Michael, who at the outbreak of WWI, Europe 1914 was a professor at our University of Georgia. By all accounts, she was a compassionate person, one who today we would call "people person." She was very active in our YWCA. Later as she wrote her autobiography, entitled, "The Miracle Flower: The Story of the Flanders Fields Memorial Poppy" (1941), she explained how, while in New York for Armistice Day in 1918, she was so impressed by McCrae's poem originally called "We Shall Not Sleep", she became determined to make this beautiful flower into a symbol, for all Americans and freedom loving souls as a Remembrance Poppy, a reminder to never forget. In fact she went out and bought up every single artificial red poppy she could find, to hand out, and from that moment forward was determined to make that little red poppy a national commemorative symbol. Michael convinced the Georgia Department of the American Legion (our largest US VSO) in August 1920, to adopt the Memorial Poppy as its symbol. At the National American Legion convention in Cleveland, September 29, 1920 the Memorial Poppy was adopted as a country-wide symbol of remembrance, the idea that American Legion members and supportive members of the public would wear the poppy annually on Armistice Day, 11 November, (Veterans Day). Unbeknownst to her this idea was to spread across the globe as a symbol of freedom and remembrance.

For more reading go here: [www.independent.co.uk/life-style/history/the-history-of-the-remembrance-poppy-9852348.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/history/the-history-of-the-remembrance-poppy-9852348.html). Or Bill Graham's book nook at Hiawassee Antique Mall. *Semper Paratus*



## RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Quite often you'll read something in this column about kids and technology. It's not because I'm stuck in another generation, or that I pine for "the good old days," it's because today's media is having a more pervasive influence on our kids than any other single factor. More than school, more than church, more than peers, more than home. No other generation in the history of the world could say that. Because that's true and because I care a lot about this generation of kids, I want to make sure you as a parent or grand are aware of what's going down.

Some new studies reveal that America's teens spend just shy of nine hours per day with what is being called "entertainment media." That would include music, online videos, various social media, and gaming. That's more hours in a day than they sleep. By the way, that does not include any time they may spend doing research for school assignments. And it doesn't include the time spent watching television.

Is this something else (sigh) parents need to be concerned about? You bet. Why? Do you want my short list or my long list? Tell you what, rather than give you either list, let me make some suggestions.

The more sexual or suggestive content kids see on media the earlier they are likely to initiate sexual activity themselves. They are going to see it; it's about as pervasive as the air we breathe. So begin the conversations early. Talk to them about the beauty of the right time, right person, right place and the destructive dangers of any counterfeits.

More than 80 percent of movies depict alcohol use. Help them learn at home that alcohol and people are not good for each other.

Begin early to limit their access to media. Home computer in a public place. No smart phone till they have demonstrated the character to handle web access. That kind of simple stuff. And the earlier you create this reality in your home the more ready they'll be to handle the freedom later.

Be ready for the, "But dad/mom, all my friends have one," pushback. A good answer to that might be, "We don't allow our neighbors to determine how we live; we make that decision ourselves. That's our rule." He may not like it, but you don't have to ask his permission to be his parent.

Send your parenting questions to: [DrDon@RareKids.net](mailto: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 EMAILED OR MAILED TO:

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: [tcherald@windstream.net](mailto: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., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-8387 for details. We need your support!  
**VFW Fish Fry** April - October on 2nd & 4th Fridays each month from 4:30 - 7. \$10 per plate.  
**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 2nd Tuesday of each month at 5 p.m. at new Senior Center. Newcomers welcome. Questions please contact the T.C. Dem's at [Townscountydemocrats@gmail.com](mailto:Townscountydemocrats@gmail.com).  
**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 Unicoy Masonic Lodge #259** meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.  
**Stevens Lodge #414 F & AM** meets the 1st Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM in Young Harris. Sat. morning breakfast 2nd Sat. of each month from 8 - 10:30 AM. \$6 adults, \$3 12 & under.  
**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 old Rec Center in Hiawassee at 5:30 p.m. 706-896-1060. [www.townshistory.org](http://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 & Crafts Guild** meets 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Calvary Chapel on Hwy. 76 in Hiawassee. All local artists and crafters are welcome, for information call 706-896-0932.  
**Mountain Computer User Group** meets the 2nd Monday of each month. Meetings start at 6 p.m. and visitors are welcome. Details can be found at [www.mcug.org](http://www.mcug.org).  
**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](http://www.ngatu692.com).  
**Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)** meets the 3rd Monday of each month at various area restaurants. For information call Gary at 706-896-4308 or visit [www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridgemountains](http://www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridgemountains).  
**Alcoholics Anonymous**: meets every Friday and Sunday evening at 7 at Red Cross Building at 1293 Jack Dayton Circle. 24 hour phone line 828-837-4440.  
**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.  
**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 PM at the Shrine Club, Industrial Blvd., Blairsville.  
**GMREC Garden Tours** every Monday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.  
**Shooting Creek Basket Weavers** meets 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at Shooting Creek Fire Hall Community Center. For more info [www.shootingcreekbas-](http://www.shootingcreekbas-)

**ketweavers.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 evening 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.  
**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 the Towns County Chamber of Commerce** meets the second Monday of every month at 8 a.m. at the Chamber office, 1411 Jack Dayton Circle, Young Harris.  
**The Quilting Bee** at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church in Family Life Center, Room 216. 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10 AM - 3 PM. Bring a sack lunch. For more information call Kathy at 706-835-6721 or Marilyn at 706-897-4367.  
**Mountain Coin Club** meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the North Georgia Tech campus in Blairsville. Guests are welcome. For more info, call 706-379-1488.  
**Monday morning BINGO** at Brasstown Manor every Monday morning at 9:30 a.m. 108 Church St., Hiawassee. Players meet in the Bradford. Questions 706-896-4285.  
**Towns County Lions Club** meets 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Daniel's Restaurant, 273 Big Sky Drive, Hiawassee.



'Tis the season...

## Community Calendar

**Towns County Herald**  
*Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County*

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