

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

To the Editor:

A few weeks ago I read a letter to the editor that I thought made some valid points, and was well written, but apparently was mis-read. The topic was the availability of liquor in Towns County/Hiwassee. The article did not say that people couldn't get a 'drink' if they wanted, it said that they couldn't buy a bottle to take home.

I realize many people object to having distilled beverage sales in Towns County. My question to those people is: Do you seriously believe that any adult in this county (resident or visitor) that wants a bottle of liquor doesn't have one? Of course they do.

I hate to go to any of our surrounding counties and see my tax dollars go to those counties and often a different state. I was recently parked near a liquor store in Hayesville and there were 8 cars in the spaces surrounding the store, and 6 had a Towns County tag. I can't say for sure that they all were people that were in the store, but I don't know where else they could have been, and in the short time I was there I did see a few come out. Not only did Hayesville, Clay County, and NC receive tax dollars that could have been here, but also the 'money' that certainly supports the economy there. I also know that when people go to the surrounding counties they often shop and dine there. More revenue and tax revenue for Murphy, Clayton, Helen, Hayesville, etc., that would be spent here if people could buy their liquor where they work and live.

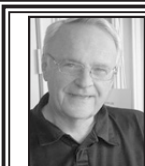
Anyway, I wanted to support the person that wrote the 'other' editorial and say, this County and Town need to change the current law(s) and allow 'bottled' liquor sales, and stop 'our' money from being spent elsewhere!

Dave Hering

Dear Editor and Towns County residents:

I would like to thank the Towns County Commissioner and his Financial Officer, Ms. Andrea for their professional, patience and tolerance of my letter in the paper 11/20/14. They were visibly upset, but handled my questions in a calm professional manner. Ms. Andrea actually sat next to me to help point out the line by line budget amounts being discussed. It was very much appreciated. They also provided everyone a copy of the Sheriff's vehicle titles, which showed the cars were in fact new at the time of purchase in 2013. I am sorry that I had been misinformed. I do sincerely apologize.

Carolyn A. Brown



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Q: Dr. Don, I heard about a school in Massachusetts where the students were not allowed to attend a production of The Nutcracker Suite because there was a Christmas tree on the stage of the theater. What's going on here, who makes those decisions, have we gone bonkers? I read of a bunch of other things like that. A kid who got in trouble for bringing candy canes to school. A lady who was forbidden to give gifts to wounded veterans because some of the packages were wrapped in Christmas paper. This is insane. Where are we headed?

A: It's called the secularizing of America, dad, and you are one of many who are deeply concerned about it. I am another. Moral values are the core of a democracy. Take away the deeply held moral values of a people and there is no longer a right and wrong, everyone is free to do what feels right to them.

I am certainly not defending Christmas, especially its crass commercialism. But the bigger picture causes me great concern. To demonize the great religions that have helped make this nation a unique influence among nations - Christianity and Judaism - is to set the stage for lawlessness and anarchy. If we neuter the influence of America's

churches and synagogues, who will teach the next generation that there is a distinct connection between goodness and greatness?

A very wise man, Clay Christensen, of the Harvard School of Business, says, "If you take away religion, you can't hire enough police."

All of us as parents should be outraged at the flagrant attacks on America's core. Not outraged so we burn down buildings and loot liquor stores. But rather outraged sufficiently that we determine to invest whatever time and decisions are necessary to see that our kids grow up owning both good information and strong character. To educate the head and not the heart only increases the capacity of the student to do evil.

Our personal influence as parents is our first line of defense. What are the inflexible non-negotiable principles that your kids would say your family holds high? We have a voice in the kind of education our children receive, who teaches them and what they teach. We have freedom to see that they are exposed to the great teachings of Scripture. It seems to me we have two options: Lethargy and chaos, or diligence and freedom.

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

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

As I write these words the 24 hour news pushers are recycling the events surrounding the decision of a Ferguson, MO grand jury not to indict police officer, Darren Wilson. Hopefully by the time you read this, corporate media will have moved on to the next topic. Hopefully some meaningful dialogue will result from all of the drama which has surrounded these events. It is doubtful that much will change. The problem is systemic and cannot be solved by treating the symptoms.

This is not an opinion on the merits of the case, but rather an observation about the way in which the infotainment industry, in my opinion, contributes to the tensions around events like Ferguson and helps to make bad situations worse by relentlessly portraying, and helping to create, a crescendo of drama.

Media tantalized and baited us for weeks with the imminent grand jury decision in Ferguson. They speculated, anticipated and regurgitated every possible inflammatory opinion. People responded. Some prepared to protest; some to defend their homes and businesses. The assumption was that if the grand jury returned a decision that the black community in the Ferguson area did not agree with, then that community would respond with violence.

Quite a few commentators criticized this assumption as being racist, insisting that the conversation should be about police brutality instead of black anger. Unfortunately, within one hour of the announcement of the grand jury's decision, we heard the first reports of looting, just as predicted.

Elements of every community of every race and nationality around the world stand ready to take advantage of a volatile situation. Looting occurs during just about every natural disaster, blackout and large scale (or largely reported) protest. Since the Ferguson decision, looting and violence has been the exception in an otherwise peaceful response. But as far as crime is concerned, perhaps the biggest crime of all is in the cold and calculating manipulation by media in their efforts to knowingly play to existing fears and racial prejudices. After weeks of speculation and hype injected into a fragile situation, some cars and buildings were burned and arrests made and those of us who were already influenced by racial bias could say, "See! More black people destroying their own neighborhoods." As demonstrations continue in several large cities around the country, networks are playing the same footage, over and over again, of the same street corners and the same clusters of people. A reporter stands on a street corner reading copy while pre-recorded images flash on the screen. This carefully edited "live" reporting creates a sense of immediacy and urgency and it gives us, indeed, it is designed to give us the impression that what we are seeing on the screen is the most earth shaking and widespread occurrence imaginable.

I do not intend to minimize the very real suffering and understandable anger felt by Ferguson residents on all sides of the issues, nor the frustrations of poor communities across the country, or the fears of the silent majority in the face of a culture which increasingly glorifies violence, or the legitimate concerns of citizens of all races about the militarization of law enforcement - or the risks and sacrifices made by law enforcement professionals who put themselves in harm's way day after day after day. But there is a matter of scale, and one thing that seems to be missing from the 24 hour news cycle is perspective.

Everything which has happened in Ferguson so far was dwarfed by the Los Angeles riots in 1992 and the Watts riots in 1965. Pick any decade in modern history. In Dearborn, Michigan police shot and killed 5 protesters and 60 others were injured in the Ford hunger march in 1932. During the Detroit Race Riot in 1943, 34 were killed and 434 wounded before federal troops were called in. Four students were shot and killed and 9 others were injured during protests at Kent State in 1970. The list of violent protests in the United States is lengthy, but the list of reasons for the violence is short: poor people striking out from hopelessness; racially charged frustration and anger, ordinary people pushing back against coercive government and law enforcement responding to crisis with extreme prejudice.

We are fortunate to live in an area that does not feel the frustrations of Ferguson, Mis-

souri. We are not racially diverse and our citizens are relatively affluent, so we are spared many of the tensions felt by other parts of the country. Our law enforcement professionals have always been integral parts of our community, our neighbors and friends. There are many of us who sometimes feel as if we live in the eye of a storm.

But none of us are unblemished by some form of racial, social or economic prejudice. The stories live on in Cherokee, NC and Oklahoma, but the living memory of the injustice done to the Native Americans in our area during the early 19th century is lost to us. Racial prejudice against Latinos and African Americans most certainly exists among some of our residents. Social and economic prejudice exists in the attitudes of some of our newer residents toward our native born "locals" and their traditions - and some of our local residents view recent arrivals with resentment and distrust. We are in no position to sit in judgment about prejudice.

A student of history might sigh and say, "What's new?" Humankind has a long tradition of inhumanity. But many would say that we have made progress; some by design, some in the inevitability of demographic change. Nevertheless, it is frustrating that what progress we have made through education and sacrifice can be so easily undone in a culture that glorifies violence; can be so casually brushed aside by the corporate enablers that both stimulate and satisfy our baser appetites. Hip hop celebrities promoting a culture that demeans women and celebrates violence does not serve the black community. Night after night of television shows depicting beleaguered cops forced to shoot evil doers, does not serve anyone. Corporate media fanning the flames of every volatile situation serves only their profit motive.



"IT'S ON MY MIND.."

Danny H. Parris

Jesus, God's peace package

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:13-14).

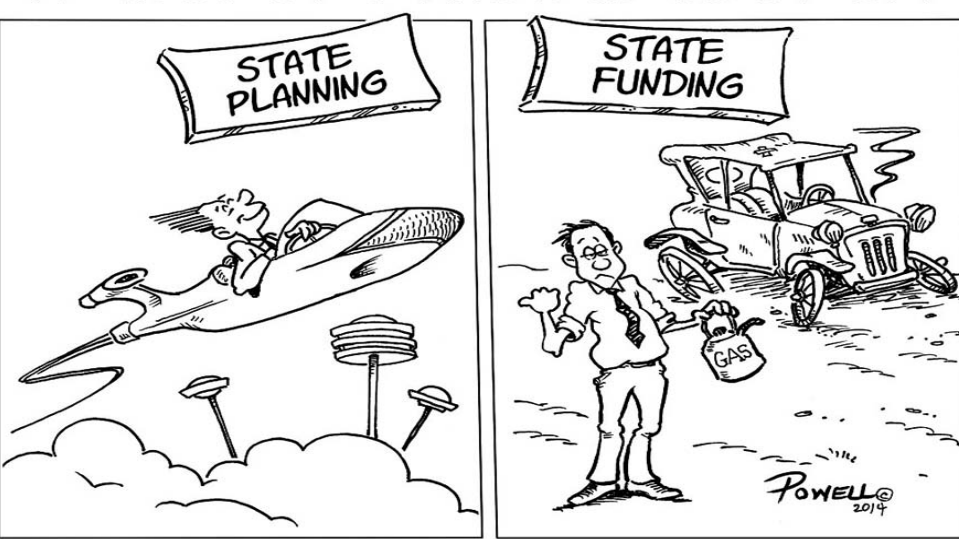
Franklin D. Roosevelt died at Warm Springs, Georgia. On the night before he died, he was planning a trip to San Francisco to attend the organization of the United Nations. He wrote his speech that night, the last words he ever wrote. They were: "We seek Peace ---enduring Peace --- must cultivate the science of human relationships ---the ability of all peoples of all kinds to live together and work together in the same world at Peace---As we go forward toward the greatest contribution that any generation of human beings can make in the world ---the contribution of lasting Peace - I ask you to keep up the faith." Peace, the subject much talked about and desperately needed for man's safety, happiness, security and survival seems to elude men and nations. What is Peace anyway? Is it the absence of strife? Is it the cessation of war? Is it disarmament? Does stepping between two people to keep them from fighting mean they are at Peace? There may not be fighting in your home, but does that necessarily mean there is Peace?

Nations may put down their weapons, but that does not mean they are at Peace. War may weaken a nation and deplete its resources to the degree that it can't fight. That is not a declaration of Peace, but exhaustion. Peace then is not just the absence of negative events, emotions,

experiences and enemies but rather the Presence of a host of friends: Namely, harmony, unity, concord, tranquility, serenity, calmness and security. This whole package is the gift of a Person whose name is Jesus. The package comes with the person through the process of reconciliation. There is no possibility of Peace without reconciliation. We must be reconciled to God, ourselves, our families, our co-workers, our neighbors and nations. Without reconciliation there can never be Peace. Jesus is God's Peace Package (Eph 2: 13-17). Paul said, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 5:1) Isn't it strange that a world that talks about Peace and spends millions to achieve Peace, ignores and deplores the very name that was sent to give Peace as a free gift from God. Folks, Seasons Greetings and Happy Holidays won't get the job done. When we deliberately move away from, and willfully remove from our vocabularies the name of God, Jesus and Christ, we are no longer seeking Peace but very methodically racing toward destruction and that final war the Bible refers to as Armageddon (Rev. 16:16). In the opening statement of this column, Luke was talking about lasting Peace. Likewise, I believe that Franklin D. Roosevelt knew that lasting Peace would come only through God. That first Christmas, which introduced Jesus, Messiah, The King, sent the world into a frenzy. The name of Jesus the King sent Herod, the earthly king, into a rage of hate, resulting in the blood bath of infants.

This Christmas brings out the same reaction of hate in minds that have rejected the true light of God. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! The name that calms my fears.....tis music in the sinner's ears. Don't let the world tell you differently, Jesus is God's Peace package!!

TRANSPORTATION IN GEORGIA



Community Calendar

American Legion Post 23 meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 4 PM at VFW Post 7807, Sunnyside Rd., Hiwassee. 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 Hiwassee 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.
Hiwassee 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 Unicyc 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 Hiwassee at 5:30 p.m. 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 Daniel's Steakhouse, Hiwassee. The Board meets at 4 p.m., and the Guild at 6. Call us 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.
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.
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 Hiwassee. 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., Hiwassee. 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 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), Hiwassee. For info call Al 706-896-9614 after 6 PM.
The Board 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.
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 Taylor at 706-835-6721 or Marilyn Bostrom 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.

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