

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

From the Desk of:



Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

Help a child at Christmas

Most of us have family traditions that we enjoy during the Christmas season. Families with small children may spend Christmas Eve baking cookies for Santa, or listening to Christmas carols while enjoying eggnog by the fire. As a small child I remember the anticipation of Christmas being so intense. I was in awe and wonder dreaming about what might be inside all those presents wrapped so nicely under the tree. I would just stare at the Christmas tree and day dream about Christmas Day.

For me, even at 44, Christmas is still the most magical time of year. I love Christmas lights and the sounds of Christmas carols everywhere. The world just seems to be a nicer place during the Christmas season. I love to watch young children open gifts and see their eyes light up with joy. There is no other feeling like the feeling of Christmas. While Christmas is about much more than material possessions, the spirit of Christmas is certainly captured in the joy of a child receiving a gift on Christmas morning.

So, what about the children who are less fortunate? Imagine the child whose family has fallen on hard times. Do they wake up to just another day of struggling to

make ends meet? Imagine if you were a parent who loved your child, but had lost a job because of the poor economy. I doubt that there would be anything much harder than not being able to provide your child, whom you love, the wonder of Christmas morning. It breaks my heart to think that as the rest of the world enjoys the most blessed day of the year, some families wake to another day of not having enough. While providing toys for these children isn't going to make the rest of their problems go away, I can't help but believe that, at least for a time, their world becomes a little brighter and things seem a little better than before.

Each year the Sheriff's Office attempts to provide the joy of Christmas gifts for these children. This effort is only made possible by the help of generous people in the community who donate to this cause. Names of children in need are collected and toys are gathered. We try whenever possible to provide at least one item that the child has specifically asked for. The toys are then given to the parents of the child to handle Christmas in their family's tradition. It is all done in such a way as to protect the dignity of the family and allow them to share in the joy that many of us take for granted.

This year has been a tough one for many local families. We are hoping to provide for each child, but we need your help. If you would like to help us with this effort, or if you know of a family with children that needs help, please contact your Sheriff's Office at 706-896-4444. I hope that each of you has a blessed and joyous Christmas this year!

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

The land we call home is an ancient land. The bedrock, older than time, formed half a billion years ago when continents collided to form Pangaea. The topsoil, thick in our green valleys winding their way beneath the highlands, accumulated an inch at a time every ten thousand years for countless millennia. There are plants in the highlands with ancestors that were pushed here by the last ice age. This land is old.

With age comes wisdom. There is wisdom in the clean air and pure water flowing from the high country. The pioneers understood that wisdom and they loved this land, even when the land was hard on them. Before the pioneers the Cherokee understood this land, the secret heart of the world, and before the Cherokee there were many others, stretching back into the prehistory of the American Dreamtime.

When the world beyond these peaceful hills seems to spin beyond control, we find sanctuary here, with each other and with the traditions of community and faith and survival so deeply rooted in this soil. We find beauty here in every season and every time of day. We have the stars, clear and bright, too many to count on a chilly December night.

We are fortunate to call this land home; blessed with the friends and neighbors we have found here; grateful, for this, and many other blessings in this season of gratitude.

Not far enough away from our mountain sanctuary, there were recently a number of cities and towns where holiday shoppers set aside gratitude and common decency to fight each other over discounted pogy bait. These crowds of congealed selfishness and expectation resurrected another aspect of our ancient heritage as they hunted and gathered televisions and toasters in the annual marketing spectacle, proving once again that ten thousand years of civilization does not seem to have altered our capacity for competition and violence.

For the most part the spectacle of materialism was peaceful and for many it was, aside from the traffic, enjoyable in the modern

way of gratification. We were groomed for this event for the entire month of November. News talkers predicted crowds and speculated on the chaos long before the Friday of blackness. Between news casts and talk shows the advertisers who pay the talkers who report the spectacle that sells the goods that built the house that Jack built - enticed us with the promise of big savings and door-busting excitement. No one was disappointed. We have our flat screen tv's. They have their profits.

As the sun rises over the mountain this morning to reveal yet another beautiful day unfolding in the valleys below, the crowded streets and shoving mobs seem far away. As best we can and for as long as we can, let's try to keep it that way.

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

Keep on being thankful

Have you heard about the fellow who wanted to live a quiet and simple life? The story goes that he joined a monastery and took the vow of silence. As a monk he was allotted two words each year. After his first twelve months he appeared before his superiors and used up his two words. He said, "Food cold." Another year went by and he appeared again before his superiors. This time he said, "Bed hard." He lived out his third year in silence and stood for review. His final two words were, "I quit." "Well," said the elder, "Your decision comes as no surprise. All you have done since you have been here is to complain!"

Some people do seem to have the gift to gripe, grumble and complain. The weather is always bad. It is too wet, or too dry. Too hot or too cold. The work is too hard and the pay is too small. Youth are going to the dogs and the government is spending too much money. They always have some ache in their body and delight in the opportunity to describe in detail the gory symptoms they are experiencing.

A little old lady entered a department store and was scared half to death when a band began to play, confetti rained down on her head, and a dignified executive pinned an orchid on her dress and handed her a crisp thousand dollar bill. She was the store's millionth customer. Radio and television reporters were on hand and

began their usual barrage of questions. One reporter asked, "What did you come here to buy?" The little old lady embarrassingly dropped her head and said, "I'm on my way to the Complaint Department."

That prolific writer Anonymous warns us about:

The Grumble Family
There's a family nobody likes to meet, They live; it is said, on Complaining Street, In the city of Never-Are-Satisfied, the river of Discontent beside.

They growl at that and they growl at this; whatever comes there is something amiss; and whether their station be high or humble, they are known by the name of Grumble.

The weather is always too hot or too cold, summer and winter alike they scold; nothing goes right with the folks you meet; down on that gloomy Complaining Street.

They growl at the rain, and they growl at the sun. In fact, their growling is never done. And if everything pleased them, there isn't a doubt; they'd growl that they'd nothing to grumble about.

And the worst thing is that if anyone stays, among them too long he will learn their ways, and before he dreams of the terrible jumble he's adopted into the family of Grumble.

So it were wisest to keep our feet, from wandering into Grumbling Street; and never to growl, whatever we do, lest we be mistaken for Grumblers too.

So whenever you are tempted to tell your troubles to other people, remember that half of your listeners aren't interested and the other half is glad you're finally getting what's coming to you.

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen



In a recent seminar I was talking about helping children learn to be obedient, when a mother asked, "I want my children to be obedient, but I also want them to be happy every single day of their lives. If I discipline them or deny them something they want it sure doesn't make them happy. Can I have both?" What would you have said? My answer went something like this:

Obedient children are the happiest children; getting there is not always joyous. If you're looking for an unhappy child, look for the one who has everything they want, does anything they want, and no one challenges them. But the youngster who has been taught to respect the authority figures in his life, is learning to develop self-control, and accepts the boundaries that are expected of him is on his way to a life of true happiness. In study after study, when kids are asked, "What one change would you like to make in your parents?" the kids respond that they would ask their parents not to be afraid to have rules for the family and to enforce the rules. Who would have guessed?

That doesn't mean that helping a child move in that direction is always a pleasant maneuver. The Greyhound Bus

Company advertises, "Getting there is half the fun." With parenting that's not always the case. Attempting to make a child happy all the time is not good for the child, or for the parents.

And another important issue here: In trying to create a situation in which our children are never unhappy we are not helping them learn how to deal with the realities they will face later, the fact that life has disappointments, and that they can survive those disappointments. No mother or dad wants to see their children disappointed or angry over something they wanted but didn't get. However, being a leadership parent means accepting a child's frustration or disappointment or anger in order to develop the character qualities the parents want to see in the child.

Here's the big picture: Sometimes my mom - we were a single-parent family - would deny me permission to do something I really wanted to do, I didn't like her answer and I don't think I liked her right then. But I never doubted that she loved me, even when she said no. That security is what helps shape a happy kid.

Send your parenting questions to: 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. 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.



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 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.
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 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 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 mtrgarts-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.
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 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 (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., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-4285 for more info.
Enchanted Valley Square Dance Club. Dances 2nd & 4th Fridays at Hiawassee 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.
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), Hiawassee. For info call AI 706-896-9614 after 6 PM.

Towns County Herald

Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

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