

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

To the Editor:
Edmund Burke said, "the only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men (or women) to do nothing."

There was a roomful of witnesses to this concept at the December meeting of the Hiawassee City Council. Uniformed policemen were summoned to "remove" a citizen who was insisting on her right to speak - and who WAS on the agenda to do so. And we all just sat there in stunned silence; both audience and council members alike, while the citizen assured the officers she would leave under her own power; and did. At that point a full two thirds of the room left with her.

In retrospect, that's essentially the same as "doing nothing." We did not stay and speak to the travesty that had just occurred. We did not question the city manager's right to call the policeman -- who were already sitting in the back of the room. We did not admonish the rudeness of the city attorney, city manager or mayor as they shouted down a Hiawassee city resident who had the audacity to want to be heard. She was not brandishing a weapon, calling names or speaking in tongues. She was exercising her right to speak in the part of the city council meeting allocated to that purpose.

We, the citizens of Hiawassee, should not remain silent in the face of such behavior, for if we do, we have no one but ourselves to blame when we lose what voice we have. We should not remain silent when our elected city council members do not speak for us. We should find our voices to protest the methods by which decisions are made and by whom they are made. We should, above all, speak against the uncivilized actions and words of those who are not elected, but employees paid with taxpayer dollars, to represent our interests; a task at which they failed miserably when they told a taxpayer to "shut up." We must not SHUT UP. We must SPEAK UP.

Anne Mitchell



**RARE KIDS;
WELL DONE**
By Don Jacobsen

You probably have heard - I talk about it here quite often - that by the time the average American child is in the second grade he or she owns about 500 toys. Grandma probably won't like that revelation but it's true just the same.

Most of us can look back and remember some special toy from childhood - a teddy bear with some of the hair gone that we slept with, a favorite doll, a puzzle map with each piece shaped as one of the states. As a preschooler, I remember a black, felt, scotty dog. I never knew that dog when he had both eyes. But I'd like to make a suggestion. Instead of bringing home things for our kids, let's help them store up experiences. Most toys are quickly forgotten, many in the first week. But memories can live forever. Rather than a room full of glitzy stuff covered with lead-based paint, I'd rather my kids have a heart full of precious experiences.

A friend told us a story of when he was about 5. Late one night his daddy came into his room, woke him up and took him out on the front lawn to watch a vivid meteor shower. One shooting star after another sliced across the night sky. Nearly six decades later this

5-year old would reflect how his dad believed that a new experience was more important for a small boy than an unbroken night of sleep. The boy remembers it as one of the happiest remembrances of his childhood.

Memories don't have to be expensive. When our boys were young we were living in Washington, DC. One warm summer evening we braved the MARTA and went down to the Tidal Basin and heard the U.S. Navy Band play an evening concert under the stars. It was unforgettable.

One summer we were in Europe for some conferences and we took our boys along - one of whom was old enough to have his driver's license. They rented a motor scooter and spent a week on a self-guided tour of the back roads of Europe. When they got a little older we helped them raise the funds so they could each spend a year teaching English in a foreign country. One went to Bolivia, the other to Thailand. They both learned a lot about what it means to serve. Those are the kinds of gifts they remember.

The 500 toys? They're long gone.

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

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D provides the citizens, that it serves, information and links to local, state, and federal government programs, services, and agencies where help is available for farmers, ranchers, landowners, and forestland managers. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural and other producers in order to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation or improved or created wildlife habitat.

Eligible program participants receive financial and technical assistance to implement conservation practices, or activities like conservation planning, that address natural resource concerns on their land. Payments are made to participants after conservation practices and activities identified in an EQIP plan of operations are implemented. Contracts can last up to ten years in duration.

Agricultural producers and owners of non-industrial private forest land and Tribes are eligible to apply for EQIP. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pastureland, non-industrial private forest land and other farm or ranch lands. Socially disadvantaged, beginning and limited resource farmers, Indian tribes and veterans are eligible for an increased payment rate and may receive advance payment of up to 50 percent to purchase materials and services needed to implement conservation practices included in their EQIP contract. Applicants must:

1. Control or own eligible land;
 2. Comply with adjusted gross income limitation provisions;
 3. Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements;
 4. Develop an NRCS EQIP plan of operation.
- NRCS funds EQIP applications that do the most to improve the environment. Funding selections also consider the land use and the location of the applicants' property. A ranking system gives points to each application. NRCS assigns points by looking at how much the land treatments in the application will improve natural resources.

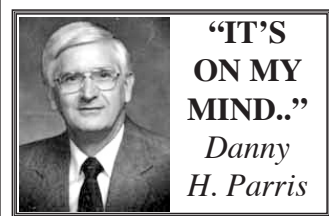
A local work group made up of conservationists, agricultural producers, and



others working with natural resources in the community choose which natural resource problems are most important at the local level. The local points make up 25% of the total points used for ranking. The NRCS State Conservationist must approve local work group ranking points, the conservation practices selected to improve the natural resource problems, and the payment rates for conservation practices.

The national and State NRCS offices choose which natural resource problems are the most important for the other 75 points used for ranking. NRCS accepts EQIP applications year-round. Periodically, usually once a year, NRCS announces an application deadline date to rank and select applications submitted for funding on or before the deadline date. Check with the local NRCS office for this year's 2015 signup deadline. NRCS defers applications received after this date until the next funding cycle.

For more information on Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council, EQIP and other NRCS programs, contact Frank Riley, Executive Director of the Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council at frank.crcrd@gmail.com or visit our web site www.chestchattcrd.org.



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

Christmas nuts to crack
Well folks, you have heard about the nuts and bolts (the basics) of various subjects, but I want to explore the nuts of Christmas. As far back as I can recall I have been nuts about Christmas. In fact, before you are finished with this column, you likely will say that this writer is as nutty as a fruitcake. If my memory serves me right, I don't remember a Christmas without a variety of nuts.

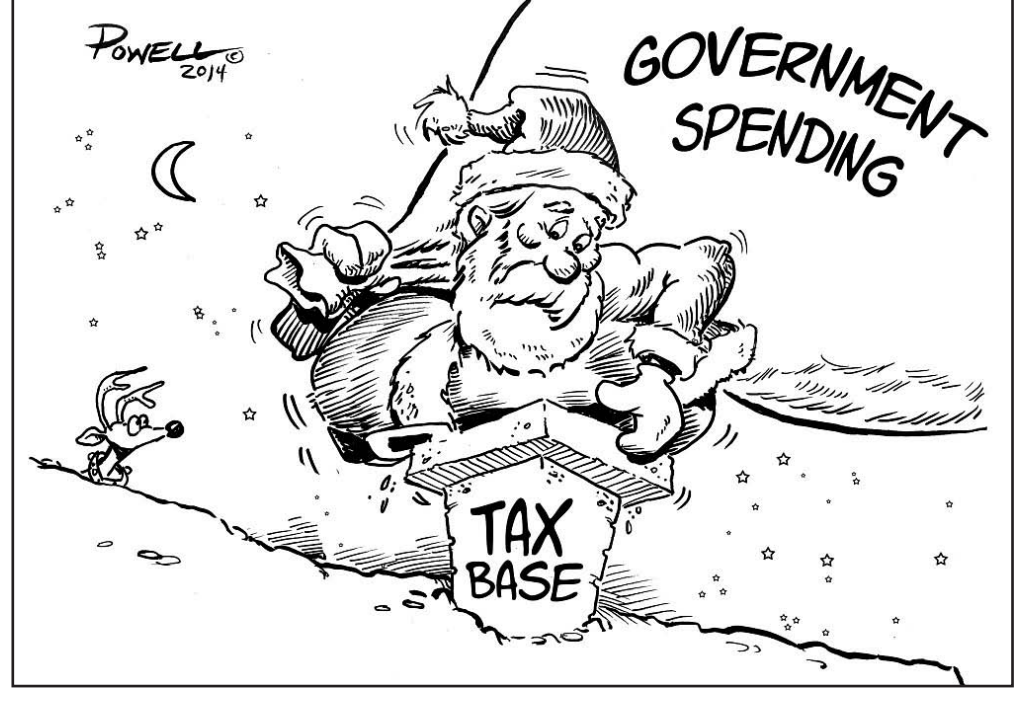
My dad always made sure that we had oranges, apples and different kinds of nuts. In grade school and at church programs, teachers would hand out brown paper bags that always included nuts. Over the years I have attended Christmas parties where someone goes nuts about finding out how dumb I am by requiring tests to be taken. One such test was Christmas nuts to crack. I was glad that Regina was sitting next to me or else I never would have cracked some of those nuts. Here are some of the questions: What nut is in a box? I peeped on Regina's paper and she had Chestnut. All I recall about chestnuts was something about roasting over an open fire. What nut is a hot drink? Coconut. Personally, I prefer it cold. I churned my brain to come up with the answer to "a nut made from cream?" Butternut never dawned on me.

As I looked over other nutty questions such as "What nut is a canned vegetable?" I thought I am going to fail this test. Why, I never would have thought of a Pecan being the answer. By now I am thinking I will have to turn in my ordination papers. My goose

was really cooked when I came to the question "what nut is uncooked bread?" Answer-a Donut. I thought that was silly. But the next question really threw me, "What is a seashore nut?" I have never found a nut on the seashore except maybe a two-legged one. Coconut had already been used. But for some reason these smart preachers' wives knew the answer was "Beechnut." I always thought that was chewing tobacco. Next came the biggie, "what nut is the side of a room?" Man, I have seen some big nuts in my time but never one the side of a room. I tried to picture just how big the tree would be and just how many nuts it could produce. What if you were standing under the tree when the nut fell? Just then another preacher's wife shouted out "Walnut." But, by cracker jacks, I knew the next four: "What nut should be given to bad children?" Hickory nut - thanks to my mom. "A nut imported from South America?" Brazil nut - thanks to my geography teacher. "A nut named after a girl?" Hazelnut - thanks to my male instinct. "A nut popular in Ohio?" Buckeye - thanks to my football knowledge. I am a vegetable nut but I missed that one - "A vegetable nut" - of course, a Peanut, that really made me feel small. I finally got enough answers right to at least retain my license to preach.

In a nutshell, let me tell you what Christmas is all about - This world of sin was a tough nut to crack but God was nuts about us (means He loved us with an everlasting love) and sent Jesus, His only Son to die on a cruel cross that He might save us from an eternal nuthouse - Hell itself.

At this Christmas season don't let the world drive you nuts, but be nuts about Jesus, our Savior!



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 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. 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org

Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG) meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse, Hiawassee. 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/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.

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 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 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 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.

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 E-MAILED 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.

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Towns County Herald

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Publication Number 635540. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points.

EMAIL Address: tcherald@windstream.net

POSTMASTER: Send change of address to: TOWNS COUNTY HERALD P.O. BOX 365 HIAWASSEE, GEORGIA 30546

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