

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Letter to the Editor: In his Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln said "and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth". This was clearly not the case at the Hiawassee city council meeting on Tuesday afternoon when police officers were instructed by the Mayor, the city manager, and the city attorney to remove citizens from the room for speaking out of turn and for using more than their allotted 5 minutes for their presentation!

Background leading up to the December meeting started in August when the city manager granted a permit for the development of an RV park on 6/10ths of an acre on the lake, for 4 pads. This action/permit was approved by the city council. The city received \$12,000 for the water and sewer hook-up for this commercial operation. The citizen who was protesting the issuance of the permit was told in the open meeting by Mr. Stencil, City Manager, the city's "hands were tied; there were no ordinances or zoning to prohibit the permit". The minutes from the August meeting (which, if recorded as this happened) have mysteriously disappeared from the public archives of the city webpage.

However, there is an ordinance from 2000 restricting trailer parks on less than 5 acres within the city limits. Now comes the backpedaling and justification for issuing the permit. City officials are now claiming the 2010 Comprehensive Plan Ordinances eliminated all existing ordinances. The key points and goals of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan adopted by the City Council specifically states in two locations, NO TRAILER PARKS.

The citizens on the agenda who were seeking a reversal of the original permit were not allowed to complete their presentations nor distribute the ordinance information they had prepared for city council members and attendees. They were frequently interrupted by the city manager and the city attorney, and were treated in a very disrespectful and condescending manner, which included the attempted removal from the meeting room. A number of attendees walked out of the meeting in shock and distress over witnessing such a scene. Now, remember, these folks are elected officials, paid staff, or contractors who receive their compensation from the taxpayers in the city of Hiawassee.

To add insult to injury, the police officers came outside city hall where a number of us were discussing what had happened. We had placed the information packets on the windshields of the vehicles parked at city hall and we were told to remove it or be cited for littering, one charge per vehicle; a city ordinance! Some days we have ordinances, some days we don't.

In a democratic society, citizens are able to voice their concerns and have their questions answered by the elected government entity that represents them in local matters, regardless of differing viewpoints. This did not happen at the December Hiawassee City Council meeting.

Grace Howard

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

My mother loved her Christmas ornaments, and like many mothers she kept certain ones for many years. Carefully wrapped and stored away after the holidays, they would reappear just after Thanksgiving. There was a section of the Christmas tree that was always populated by the most unlikely combinations of sparkling shapes; simple childhood gifts and class projects from the ghosts of Christmas Past. Some were cute, some gaudy, and to teenage eyes embarrassing reminders of the "youth" we were so impatient to leave behind.

If we are fortunate, we will have the memories of many years of youth and innocence to comfort us later in life; years when the wonders of life are many and the responsibilities few, years when Christmas vacation lasts the entire winter and Santa Claus is as real as the cookies and milk carefully placed next to the tree on Christmas Eve.

Growing up in the country, there are certain rites of passage that often occur simultaneously with the season of giving, and as a young lad I just knew that the Christmas day after my 12th birthday would bring that long hoped-for present so often desired by many boys lucky enough to grow up in the rural South. I was certain that this would be the year I received my first real firearm and be able to join the adults on a grownup deer hunt.

It must have taken someone a long time to wrap the long, beautifully decorated rectangular box I found under the tree that year, but I cannot for the life of me remember the color of the paper or the bow I so hastily tore away. I do, however, remember every inch of the Harrington and Richardson single shot 20 gauge inside.

I remember the excitement of waking up long before daylight on the morning of that first hunt and having a hunter's breakfast, a cold bacon and egg sandwich, just me and my dad moving quietly in the kitchen trying not to wake up the house. I remember the way the stars sparkled in the crisp winter air; the ride in the old pickup from the farm to the hunting ground and the last minute advice on cover and concealment. I remember the crunch of dried twigs in the dark, and another lesson from my dad about how to balance my weight, placing my feet carefully to move silently.

I was well concealed before dawn, nestled in pine straw and leaves with my back propped against a suitable tree with low hanging branches for cover. Time never passed more slowly or with greater anticipation as I listened, straining my ears for any telltale sounds that might signal the approach of my quarry. When a deer finally did come near my location, well scouted by my dad in anticipation of this momentous event, the only sound I could hear was

my heart pounding in my ears.

The flash was blinding and the blast deafening when I pulled the trigger. The gray shape of the deer disappeared into the mist and the pounding of my heart was replaced by a loud ringing as I struggled in vain to hear in what direction my target might be headed. I had been warned that a spooked deer might run for quite a distance before settling down and I was prepared to wait in the event of a shot that wasn't true, quiet and watchful until I got my bearings again.

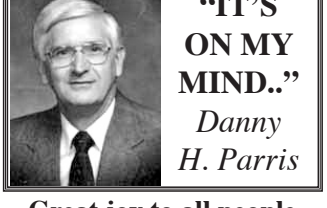
I waited with the patience of a 12 year old until I thought I heard a likely sound some distance from my vantage point and then I headed as quietly as I could in that direction. A thickening mist was descending on the forest and I could barely make out the shape of the trees. After half an hour of carefully picking my way through branch and bramble, I stepped into a small clearing just as I thought I saw the shape of my prey on the other side. I took one more step into the clearing for a better look, but I never got the chance.

Just as I stepped forward, the ground beneath my feet collapsed and I went straight down about four feet into a hole, landing hard on the flat of my feet with a thud. I saw stars for a moment, and as I blinked them away, looking up, I noticed with some trepidation that the end of my nose was about a foot away from an old moss covered tombstone.

I do not know what congregation lived and died on that land forgotten for long enough to grow a mature stand of timber. I doubt that I was ever able to equal the feat of acrobatics necessary to shoot straight up out of that abandoned grave like a fish jumping out of water. I think I may have actually levitated. I'm not sure that I have ever run away from a place so fast in my life. I don't have a clear memory of how I found my way back to the truck.

What I do remember is the sound of my dad's laughter, joyful and not the least bit at my expense, as we drove back home that morning. He told me something then that I have always cherished, that though I may have missed my buck, I bagged a good story that would be worth a lot more to me as the years went by.

Memories are a lot like those favorite Christmas ornaments my mother kept so carefully. The number and variety we keep, the way we display them or keep them wrapped up and stored away, this is how we decorate the story of our lives. If we are fortunate, when we consider them all, the ones that sparkle, the unlikely shapes, the ones we are proud of and even the embarrassments, we will enjoy a bit of the same sense of celebration we feel when we look at a Christmas tree.



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

Great joy to all people

The heart of Christmas is not about shopping and sales, but about a Savior and singing. It is about angels and arrivals. Christmas signals the arrival of hope.....peace.....and joy.

Joy is not the same thing as happiness. Happiness is based upon "happencence" or what happens to you. For one to be happy the circumstances have to be right. Happiness may depend upon the weather, wealth, health and a thousand other things. What makes one happy differs from individual to individual and changes from day to day. What makes one happy today may be boring tomorrow. Joy, on the other hand, is an internal quality that is not altered by external events and is eternal in nature.

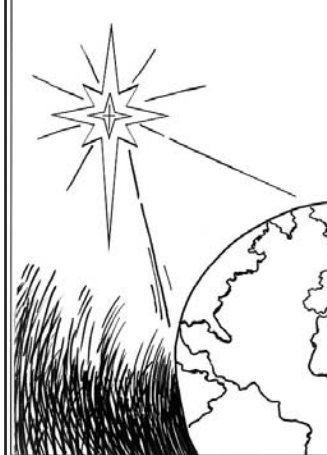
I know that some of you are saying, "Man, you are crazy." To the world there is no such thing. But I want you to know that "great joy" is for all people (Luke 2:10). As you read this you may be sick, even in the hospital, you may live in a dysfunctional family, you may be unemployed; you may have lost a loved one in death; the weather may be miserable to you; you may be like the shepherds, your job may stink; you may be out in the cold, etc.

However, in spite of all of the bad things that you can number, God wants you to possess His joy. When Christ entered this world He came to bring "Great Joy" to ALL people. For many, life is a meaningless mediocrity or a daily drudgery of existence. Masses of people live dull, drab, depressing and dissatisfying lives never knowing

that there is something better. Christ came that your joy may be full and that your joy may last forever (John 15:11). To have joy you must ask Jesus to come into your life (John 16:24). You see, joy is not some kind of prescription that can be condensed into a pill and sold in a bottle. Rather, joy arrives in your heart when you make room for the person of Christ to live through you.

One fellow who was a brand new Christian used the word "hallelujah" a lot which irritated some of his friends. One of them said to him, "I bet you don't even know what 'hallelujah' means?" He said, "Yes, I do. It means, 'hot dog, this is it.'" You see, joy is uninhibited by people, problems, powers or pressures from within or without. Joy is not an outer thing, but an inner thing. It is not originated by you but a quality in you by the indwelling presence of Christ. It is God's gift of His son to you. The Psalmist said "...in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forever more" (Psalm 16:11). Joseph Marmion said, "Joy is the echo of God's life within us" (Nehemiah 8:10; Isaiah 62:56). I salute you with "Season's Greetings" and hope that you have a "Merry Christmas" but my prayer for all the faithful readers of this column is that you will experience "Great Joy." The birth of Jesus brought joy. The life of Jesus brought joy. The death of Jesus brought joy. The resurrection of Jesus brought joy. The return of Jesus will bring that final joy.

I grew up on an old gospel song that said: "If you want joy, real joy, wonderful joy, let Jesus come into your heart." Jesus didn't come to make us happy, but He came to make us holy which results in joy unspeakable and full of glory. God wants you to have joy, joy, joy down in your heart!



Still Bringing JOY to the World Merry Christmas! POWELLO 2014

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE By Don Jacobsen

Columnist Mike Spohr recently wrote a fascinating piece in which he lists 23 things kids learn from their parents. Taking some editorial license, here are the 10 I see as the most important. Take my quiz below and you'll have an idea of how well you're doing. Be honest.

On each item where you think you do a lousy job of setting an example for your kids, give yourself a 1. For each one where you feel like you do an excellent job, give yourself a 10. On the ones where you think you are somewhere in between, assign a number between 2 and 9. Here's the list:

- 1. A strong work ethic. My kids would describe me as a hard worker.
2. A love of reading. I read a lot and my kids know I enjoy it.
3. A positive attitude. I tend to see the cup as half full rather than half empty.
4. Use of money. My kids would tell you I am a careful manager.
5. It's obvious to my kids that God is an important part of my life.
6. Eating well. I make wise choices about the kind and quantity of food I eat.
7. I look at the world

from many perspectives. I listen well, even to those I don't agree with and I know my opinions are valuable only if they are challenged.

8. I am courteous and respectful to others, especially my spouse.

9. I am seen as a helper. If my neighbor - or anyone else - needs my help, I'm there.

10. My language is refined. No profanity or harsh words.

Now, take the numbers you've given yourself and add them together. Lowest possible is 10; highest possible is 100. Translation: If you scored 50 or below, you need to take a class on parenting. If you scored between 51 and 80, you must have read my book. If you scored 81 or above you need to teach a class on parenting.

Incidentally, an interesting part of the exercise is to ask your spouse to write down the numbers he/she sees in your conduct. You might want to both take the quiz and then exchange papers. You may learn some things about yourself you didn't know.

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 having 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 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 Unicorn 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
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, 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.

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