

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Letter to the Editor:

To all members of the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC.
I feel I am living on a leaky old boat with big business poking holes in it daily, with their over inflated, bogus charges. Lining their own greedy pockets with money from people like us who can barely cover the smallest essential needs much less even the small luxury of a ride in the country because we can't afford the gasoline.

I like many others survive (please note I did not say live) on Social Security. We are receiving a whopping 1.7% cost of living raise from Social Security starting January 2015! GET REAL! Cost of living has gone up way more than any 1.7% and it sure doesn't take an economist to figure that out. One of my biggest pet peeves is: Blue Ridge Mountain Electric Co-Op.

I can understand moving to a larger facility when you out grow the one you are in. Was it really necessary to build the Taj Mahal of electric companies? Who are they trying to impress? At great cost to all of us the paying members?

Was it really necessary or cost effective to use ornate carved hardwood throughout the building? If solar panels are so efficient and energy saving why didn't they incorporate them & help defray the cost of their own usage? Why did they not use the latest technology such as heat seeking and motion detection outdoor lighting? Go by there any night it's lit up like Los Vegas!

I live in Hayesville, on a clear night I can see the glow from their lights!

I have asked "what is this customer charge?" Their reply was "Customer charge is for the up keep of our equipment." Why are we being charged for an expense that any company normally has that is deductible as depreciation at the end of the tax year? I have asked just how much did this new complex cost & who was the architect? I was informed, "You will have to get that answer from a manager. Let me transfer your call." When transferred I got a voice message: Leave your name and number and why you have called we will return your call," over a year and I still haven't received a return call.

Being conservative I cut every corner I can, use of fewer kilowatts per month yet, my bill continued to rise. I called and inquired as to why? The response I received was, "We were given permission to raise the cost, perhaps you should turn off your lights more often and you can save more". This coming from a company that probably uses more kilowatts in one night than I use in a week!

If I had the money I would be willing to bet, we the paying members who having no other choice than BRMEMC to obtain electricity would never have consented to this costly, pretentious, extravagant monstrosity.

I am a responsible senior citizen, an honorably discharged veteran, I think: all the owners, board of directors and personnel should be held personally accountable to its paying members.

Sincerely,
Sheila Goodwin



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Q: Dr. Don, my divorced daughter just moved back in with me, bringing her 9-year old boy and 11-year old girl - my grandchildren. But I can't stand the children, especially the boy. He has a terrible temper and he is not able to explain his anger. The children fight all the time. Now they've got my daughter and me fighting all the time, about them. I wish they would all go away but I know I shouldn't feel that way. What can I do?

A: Dear Grandma: Your daughter is probably in her 30's and that's late for a child to be a "boomerang" child and come back home, but it happens. And it's not surprising that you wish they'd all go away, life would be a lot less complicated without them. You didn't mention whether your husband is in your home with you, but if not then it's understandable that you feel like you're facing the disruption alone and that can be tough.

Immediately sit down and have a heart-to-heart talk with your daughter. These are not your children, they are hers. You and she need to talk through some common goals because both of you want the same outcomes for the kids. Their mom needs to establish some ground rules for living in grandma's house. Respect,

obedience, and being helpful come to mind. When they forget, then mom - not grandma - should see that there is an appropriate consequence. At 9 and 11 they should have a well-understood regimen of chores.

You mention the 9-year old's anger and that he can't explain it. At 9 he doesn't have a clue why he's angry. Friction between him and his sister is typical at these ages, but there are some powerful things mom can do to help manage it. It might be helpful if she would speak to a counselor about some of the trauma she's just gone through. A larger church or synagogue in your area will likely have a Family Life department and be able to give her some help.

And grandma, remember that divorce is usually terrifying to young kids, eroding what vestige of security they may have felt. Kids often carry extreme guilt feelings that part of mom and dad's break-up probably was their fault. By exercising all the grace you can, you can help them see what undeserved love looks like and begin to build some memories they can look back on with joy.

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

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

There are many reasons I'm proud to be American. We are a people of ideals. We are inventive, resourceful and generous. Our system of government, or at least the ideals behind it, stands among the most enlightened the world has ever produced.

I'm not so proud of that narrow, elitist, intellectually and philosophically inbred slice of our cultural heritage which has anointed itself as the spokes-model for what it means to be an American. I'm not proud of those little strips of west and east coast alternately known as "Hollywood," or "New York" or the "entertainment industry." I'm not proud of the six multinational corporations, including Sony, which produce the majority of what we see and hear.

Increasingly I find that the values, or the lack of them, which these entities reflect in their programming are not compatible with my own, nor are they compatible with the values shared by most of the people I know or have ever known, and I have known a wide range of people.

When I first heard that Sony pictures was producing a snarky attempt at a comedy about the assassination of the dictator of North Korea, it did not register any more than scores of other tasteless offerings which dim the luster of that shining ideal called freedom of speech, the essence of which many Americans believe that we own the copyright.

When the news broke that Sony had been hacked, when embarrassing internal company documents were released and threats made against theaters and movie goers who dared to see "The Interview," I believed North Korea when they said they were not responsible. After all, when has North Korea ever successfully pulled off any kind of dangerous or nefarious action that they did not trumpet to the world? Even their triumphs are portrayed as disasters.

I was not really surprised when the release of the film became a political event. A former president once encouraged us to fight terrorism with shopping, so when President Obama encouraged Americans to go ahead and see the movie, it seemed consistent with the post 911 theme of "The American way of life is not negotiable."

That way of life has changed considerably. There are still millions of Americans alive who remember meatless Monday and the rationing of gasoline, tires, butter, sugar and shoes during WWII. They re-

member the sacrifices an entire generation made to win an epic struggle for which the outcome was never certain.

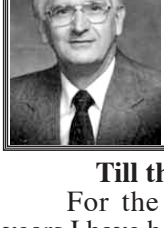
Today we applaud ourselves for going to see a bad movie and believe that we are striking a blow for freedom when we do so. We think that we are contributing to a cause when we echo a celebrity's ramblings in a tweet or click "like" on Facebook. Many of us seem to believe that the corporate entities which create fantasies on a screen, pay celebrities millions of dollars for "play acting," companies that sell entertainment, are the standard bearers for the heart and soul of America.

Inside the real North Korea, freedom of speech simply does not exist. Even a privately held opinion can result in imprisonment, not only for the offender but for his entire family. In other parts of the world women are not allowed to vote, drive or seek an education, much less exercise freedom of speech. Yet we seem much less concerned about real oppression than we do the potential loss of one choice as to how to spend our leisure time.

Cyber attacks are serious, whether they originate from a rogue nation or a group of hackers. With each news cycle bringing a new theory as to the identity of the Sony hackers, we don't really know if the responsible parties are North Korean, Chinese, Russian or insiders at Sony itself. But no matter who the culprit turns out to be, we can take away two lessons from the events around Sony.

First of all, with so much of our economy dependent on secure electronic communications, not to mention the electrical grid, air travel and the safety of nuclear power plants, the Sony attack underlines the vulnerability of our virtual world and the need for continued vigilance in protecting essential systems, which are already under constant attack.

Secondly, while we should not let fear or threats, real or imagined, undermine our freedoms, we can certainly question our priorities when we are so moved by the potential loss of the opportunity to see a bad movie but remain ambivalent about the right to express our opinions by voting, volunteering or becoming active in our communities. When we are indifferent to the scale of human misery which exists on this planet, our couch potato defense of leisure freedom should not be a source of pride, but of shame.



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

Till then...

For the past sixteen years I have had the joy and privilege of writing a weekly column for *The North Georgia News* and *Towns County Herald*.

I certainly do not consider myself a professional writer but the articles that I have written were chosen somewhat like my sermons. Early in my ministry I was taught that every good sermon ought to accomplish three things: warm the heart, stretch the mind and tan the hide. I hope that my articles have had a little success in all three areas.

My prayer is that I have helped some of you to laugh, encouraged some of you to pray, inspired some of you to embrace God's abundant life, convinced some of you to give up addictions, bad habits, etc. But mostly I have endeavored to stir in the readers slumbering chords of laughter to make them vibrate once again.

Nothing that I have written was ever intended to unsettle any person's faith or to corrupt anyone's principles. Hopefully, most of my articles have fed your faith, not your doubts, lightened your load, not added to it, brought a smile, not a frown, and perhaps helped you to appreciate Blairsville, Union County, these ma-

jestic mountains and these mountain people and their friendly ways.

You have inspired and encouraged me with your notes, phone calls and complimentary comments over the years. I have considered it a blessing to share with the readers of *The North Georgia News* and *Towns County Herald* articles that I thought would help struggling individuals and would help to build and in some cases rebuild relationships.

Most of the time the hardest task was not knowing what to write but the difficulty was condensing the articles. As my wife has said, "What I need is not an introduction, but a conclusion!" So, after sixteen years I need a little rest and I am sure you do!

Therefore, since this is the last week of this year this will be my last article for a while. I have asked *The North Georgia News* for a sabbatical and they have graciously consented. God willing, I will resume my column, "It's On My Mind" sometime in the future. I conclude this article with the words of the angel, "Fear not: For behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a savior which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).

May God bless you and your family this Christmas season and grant you a Happy New Year! My love and prayers are with you. Selah.

Have something to sell?

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Contact us at 706-896-4454

Deadline for the T.C. Herald is

Friday by 5 PM



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 pm.
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.

Towns County Herald
Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

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