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OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

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Letters to The Editor

Last week, President Obama signed into law a bill (HR347) that was approved in the House of Representatives, and passed by a significant majority of BOTH parties. This bill, with the quaint sounding title, the "Federal Restricted Buildings and Grounds Improvement Act of 2011," makes Free Speech, guaranteed by the First Amendment, a FELONY.

It will be at the discretion of the Secret Service to decide to make areas around politicians, especially the President, Vice-President, etc., "Free Speech Free Zones." Should a person verbally or by any sign indicate opposition to the politician involved, that person may be arrested, charged with a FELONY, and if convicted, imprisoned, fined, and voided of their civil

What is the government afraid of? While I understand the need to protect the President and others from the crazies, stopping Free Speech is NOT the correct way to do so. Let the Secret Service and other Law Enforcement agencies go their best to protect the politicians but without denying citizens of our nation their rights. It is very interesting that President Obama, a liberal who

wants to outlaw legal ownership of firearms, has also decided to limit Free Speech. Is he attempting to destroy all our civil rights? I fear this is but the beginning of the end for our nation as a nation of free people.

Christopher D. Mazur Editor's Note: U.S. Congressman Paul Broun, R-GA, was one

of only three members of the U.S. House of Representatives to oppose the legislation. There are 435 members of the U.S. House

Dear Editor:

While I'm in agreement transportation needs improvement, I am against the Tsplost tax for 2 reasons mainly. It is a regressive tax against the low income, fixed income, and other poor. The poor have no disposal income, every penny they get is spent on living. A 1% sales tax takes a loaf of bread a week out of the mouth of a poor child.

The other problem I have with the Tsplost tax is it leads to Regional government thereby crushing local county home rule. A regional government which is not chartered by the State of Georgia constitution to abide by certain rules and laws. There are no rules or laws pertaining to the regions in the State. It is not chartered as a government entity and there are no elected Reps. on a region level. The regions also are not balanced by population numbers as the larger counties have sway over the smaller counties in sheer number of voters.

A vote against the 1% tax is also a vote against regional

Thanks,



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE By Don Jacobsen

Q: My 30-month old daughespecially when I pick her up. Does that mean she is mad at me for something I've done or do you think there is some other reason? Reasoning with her doesn't seem to help. A: Reasoning with a 30-month

old is not likely to provide much satisfaction - to either of you. The cause-and-effect switch has not usually been turned full-on by this age and they have trouble making the connection. Also, it's not going to help much to ask questions like, "Why did you hit Mommy?" Fact is, she doesn't have a clue.

As to whether she is "mad at something" you've done, if you pursue that line of reasoning far enough you come to the place where, whenever the child does something unacceptable, you go searching for someone other than the child to blame. Believe me, although that kind of parental response may be nearly epidemic in our culture, it is not going to help your child become what you want her to become. Don't go there.

Let me try to put your tions are not likely related to how much violence she sees at home – in real life or on TV. And it is not a commentary on how well you're doing as a mom. It's pretty common behavior for a 2½ year old who is still trying to determine where the behavior boundaries are in her strange new world. She will no doubt figure them out soon and the hitting will stop.

Meanwhile...meanwhile don't make a federal case of it. Don't show anger, don't raise your voice, or hit the child in return. Rather, take her hands firmly in yours, look her in the eye and matterof-factly say, "You are not allowed to hit Mommy." As a parent you understand that this is a pretty typical phase she is going through and your purpose here is to help her sense your disapproval without everyone ending up in a tearful meltdown. It may take a few repetitions, but don't fret, she'll figure it out by and

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

Towns County Herald Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

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OFFICE LOCATED AT 446 NORTH MAIN STREET "THE MALL" HIAWASSEE (706) 896-4454

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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The Middle Path

by Don Perry

We left you last week on the banks of the Okmulgee River during an expedition down the flooded waterway with a group of teenage boys trying to put their lives back together. We were all learning lessons about anger, and before the trip was over the river would have more to teach us. Let's continue the journey. The eleven adjudicated

teenage boys under our care had all suffered the consequences of anger. Some were in fact adjudicated because they had acted out in anger: getting into fights, destroying property or being convicted of the catch-all charge of "terroristic threats." Anger is a normal part of the growing pains of youth. It can be a challenge for the best of families even with the support of the community and the school. The majority of our boys did not: indeed the majority of adjudicated youth do not have the luxury of a healthy and functioning support system. Most of them were from broken or dysfunctional families, a condition which remains a reliable indicator of future crime.

The capsizing of a canoe and the rescue of two boys from the frigid water had sent a shock wave throughout the group. Jon and Mike, my two fellow instructors, both veterans of wilderness expeditions, had been able to pull the two shivering lads out of the water and into their own boat and they came around the bend in the river with the boys and their now empty canoe in tow to join the rest of the crew gunwaled-up in an eddy. Time was of the essence as we passed the two waterlogged boys across our makeshift raft like cordwood, stripping off their wet clothes and putting on dry polypropylene and wool. Mike boiled some water on his small primus stove to make a hot beverage while I dug into my river bag for peanut butter and cheese for some fast fuel to warm the boys.

The sun was sinking westward as we pushed our raft of canoes back out into the river. We stayed gunwaled-up for a while as ve talked to the boys, making sure that they were confident enough to continue the expedition, at least as far as a campsite for the night. Time was not our ally as we searched for a spot to camp in the lengthening shadows. Our river notes were useless now that all the known campsites and sandbars were under several feet of water. At dusk we finally found a small embankment, now an island just a few feet above the water, barely large enough for a few tents. As we unloaded our gear Jon quietly told me that, though the boys were docile now, when the shock subsided and they settled in for the night, we would have some

Strong emotions, especially fear, can resolve into anger when we lack the tools or the understanding to process them. One of the longest nights of my life began as my two fellow guides and I made plans to keep watch, not only on the boys, but on the river should it continue to rise. The first fight broke out as we

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 ED-ITOR 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

were preparing the evening meal By morning we were forced to intervene more than a dozen times to prevent continued violence. During a few quiet moments just before dawn as the exhausted group finally succumbed to sleep,

we decided that at daybreak I would paddle downstream alone to Hawkinsville, Georgia to recon a campsite, call in our support team and arrange for resupply of our lost provisions. The sun broke through

the clouds for a moment just as I

pushed off and headed downriver, and then it disappeared again as the rain returned. The normally lazy black water of the Okmulgee was moving rapidly and just a few miles from our campsite, there was no land in site and it was getting harder to discern the main channel. A river out of its banks makes its own path and several times the current heading off into the trees was stronger than the main course. Alone in a canoe heavily loaded with provisions the adrenaline of my extreme situation banished all sleepiness from the

long night as I fought to navigate

the sharp turns away from hazards

on both banks.

At one sharp bend in the river I went wide to river-left to avoid a strainer - and headed directly into a downed tree. Unable to make the turn I tried to hit the tree with the bow, but the rushing water soon turned my boat alongside the almost horizontal trunk of the tree and threatened to flip me over and under. Wedging my paddle under the seat I grabbed the trunk of the tree in a bear hug and tried to steady the boat with

We are amazingly strong when we are afraid. Alone, with no land in sight and a rushing river trying to push me under a tree, I was able to keep the boat from capsizing, but fatigue began to set in. They say that faced with death, our life flashes before our eyes, but I think we rarely have time for that. I knew that eventually my legs would give out and I would lose the boat and be left clinging to a tree with nothing but a lifejacket and the contents of my pockets. If anger and desperation are not the same things, they are at least first cousins. As my legs began to fail, I got angry at my untenable situation and the last of my adrenaline was enough to pull myself and the boat along the length of the tree, breaking limbs and tearing cloth and skin, until the upper branches were weak enough to let the canoe

We will pick up the journey next week. Join the discussion at www.mulebristle.blogspot.com!



ON MY MIND.." Danny H. Parris

There is no God

The Psalmist records in

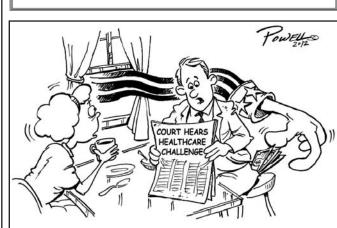
Psalms 14:1 and in Psalm 53:1 "that the fool has said in his heart there is no God." In his head he has better sense than that. These are tumultuous days in which we live. If there is no God, no power greater than man, the whole creation may as well throw up their hands and give up the ghost. Mankind has made a gom (a major, mega mess) of God's creation. If we are left only to the leadership of mere man the whole world is doomed without a shred of hope. But in spite of puny men denying God, He is alive and very well. For those who seek Him, He is a constant companion. Consider the following bit of wisdom written by Jim Bishop, author of 21 books, including "The Day Christ Died" and "The Day Kennedy Was Shot." Jim Bishop died in 1987 and the following article was published in the Miami Herald, July 27, 1987. This article was written by Bishop in the 1960's. "There is no God. All the wonders around us are accidental. No almighty hand made a thousand-billion stars. They made themselves. No power keeps them on their steady course. The earth spins ish people in this world.

falling off toward the sun. Infants teach themselves to cry when they are hungry or hurt. A small flower invented itself so that we could extract digitalis for sick hearts. The earth gave itself day and night, tilted itself so that we get seasons. Without the magnetic poles man would be unable to navigate the trackless oceans of water and air, but they just grew there. How about the sugar thermostat in the pancreas? It maintains a level of sugar in the blood sufficient for energy. Without it, all of us would fall into a coma and die. Why does snow sit on mountaintops waiting for the warm spring sun to melt it at just the right time for the young crops in farms below to drink? A very lovely accident. The human heart will beat for 70 or 80 years without faltering. How does it get sufficient rest between beats? A kidney will filter poison from the blood, and leave good things alone. How does it know one from the other? Who gave the human tongue flexibility to form words, and a brain to understand them, but denied it to all other animals? Who showed a womb how to take the love of two persons and keep splitting a tiny ovum until, in time, a baby would have the proper number of finger, eyes, and ears and hair in the right places, and come into the world when it is strong enough to sustain life? There is no God?" There are some fool-

itself to keep the oceans from

OWN A BUSINESS? **NEED TO ADVERTISE?**

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"What do you think, Hon? Is the federal government really over-reaching its power?'

Community Calendar

Towns County Water Board Meeting 3rd Monday of each month at 7 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 2 p.m.

Towns County Democratic **Party** meets the 2nd Thursday of every month at 5 PM at the Senior Center. Please call Kim Bailey at 706-994-2727 or 706-896-6747 for details.

Towns County Republican Party meets at 6: 30 PM the 2nd Thursday of each month at Daniels Steak House. For more info call 706-379-1371.

Towns County Planning Com*mission* 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 Hiwassee River Valley Kennel Club meetings are held at 7 p.m. the 1st Monday of each month at Brother's Restaurant on Hwy 64 in Murphy, NC. Call President Kit Miracle: 706-492-5253 or Peggy Moorman: 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

Board of Voter Registrars meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 4:30 p.m., Courthouse. Towns County Board of Elec*tions* 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 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org

Bridge Players intermediate level meets at 12:45 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Recreational Dept.

Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG) meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at ArtWorks Artisan Centre, located at 308 Big Sky Drive (behind the Holiday Inn), Hiawassee. Refreshments at 6 p.m. & the meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Contact us by calling 706-896-0932, mtnregartscraftsguild. org. mtnregartscraftsguild@ hotmail.com.

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 Quinlan at 706-896-2430 or visit www.moaa.org/ chapter/blueridgemountains.

Alcoholics Anonymous: 24 hour phone line 828-837-

Mothers of Preschoolers meets on the third Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church of Blairsville from 6 - 8 p.m. Call

the church office at 706-745-2469 for more information. 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 Mountain Magic Table Tennis Club meets 6 p.m. Thursdays at Pine Log Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Brasstown.

Ping Pong players welcome. Call Lee (828) 389-0924. We do Family Oral History of all of our residents. If you have not had your family history recorded and would like to do so, please call the Towns

County Historical Society at 706-896-1060. Prostate Cancer Support Group meets the 3rd Monday of every month from 5-6 PM in the Cancer Treatment Center Auditorium in Blairsville. For more

info call Steve 706-896-1064. GMREC Native Plant Garden Tours: Mondays 9 AM-1 PM. May-Sept. (except holidays). 706-745-2655.

The Humane Society Mountain Shelter Board of Directors meets the last Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at Cadence Bank in

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. Caregivers or family members of those with dementia are encouraged to attend. For further information,

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.