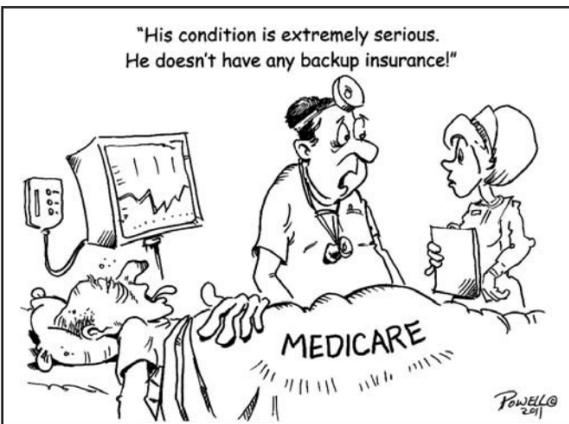


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



Letters to The Editor

To the taxpayers and citizens of Towns County,

It is that time; once again, my office must begin the process of collecting delinquent property taxes. I wanted to take the time to address the public of the procedures my office is required to follow during this time. We are required to send a 30 day letter of intent to FIFA; we must address the letter to the owner of record as of January 1st of 2010. At this time, if you receive a letter on property you have sold, or been foreclosed on, please call in to the office so we can redirect the letter to the proper persons or lending institution. Issuing a FIFA on the parcel could affect the taxpayer's credit, additional fees will be added to the balance due, and signifies that the parcel shall be turned over to our collections agency at the end of the 30 days. I can not stress to you the importance of your response should you receive one of our letters. Please take the time to properly address this matter if you should find we have sent out a letter to you.

I am well aware of the economy and the burden this could place on our families; however, my office is required to collect any and all taxes due so this is a process that must be completed. My office is always open to you. It is my hope that we can work together to make this process as painless as possible.

Thank you for your time,
Bruce Rogers, Tax Commissioner

Letter to the Editor:

I have become increasingly concerned about the damage to our beautiful earth from the use of plastic. I recently watched a public television program regarding the harm plastic is doing to our environment, particularly plastic bags.

As much as possible I am now bringing reusable bags to the grocery store, produce markets and other stores. On a recent trip to California I read that whole cities and counties there are banning the use of plastic bags.

I feel we all need to do our part to reduce the use of plastic bags.

Sincerely,
Melda Davis



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

This is the week I like to talk about teachers. Actually, any week will do, but the end of the school year is a great time to reflect and celebrate.

Teachers are America's unsung heroes/heroines. They should be paid more than our basketball players because they are more valuable to our nation. Instead, they often work summers at odd jobs to catch up what they couldn't quite cover when school was in session. (Or they work on advanced degrees so they can do a better job with our kids.)

They build America's most valuable commodity - its children - frequently with meager tools. Our daughter-in-law who is a teacher writes letters and knocks on doors every year to buy stuff her class needs but which the system won't provide. That's like asking NASA engineers to stand on the corner with red buckets ringing a bell to raise donations.

We dig other holes for our teachers to dig out of... like taking away their ability to administer basic discipline. Benny gets in trouble and Mom scolds the teacher. Suzy brings home a bad grade and the parents complain to the

principal - about the teacher. The biggest cover-up in our nation is not from dishonest politicians, it's from parents doing everything they can so their children don't have to be accountable or suffer any pain whatsoever. What that kind of parent overlooks is this: We grow the most when we are solving problems.

This is not a second-hand pity party, it's a serious appeal. Get next to your kids' teachers. Find out what they need. They work for you, remember. Find out what tools would help them do a better job. How about some form of regular, "Thanks for the good job you're doing..." note under their door.

And how about requiring some accountability of little Egbert when he isn't participating in his own education. My mom and dad used to tell me if I got a spanking at school I'd get a worse one when I got home. I never tested that proposal, but it made it very clear whose side they were on. Thanks, mom and dad, I needed that. So did my teachers.

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

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

When you read this column sometime during the first week of June, Memorial Day of 2011 will be a rapidly fading memory. This is the seventh year I have sat at my desk on this Congressional Monday holiday while our nation was at war. It is the tenth year our young people have risked their lives in Afghanistan; the eighth year in Iraq.

For some of us, the memory will not fade. A constant awareness of a son or daughter, a parent, a friend or relative in harm's way will be with us during every waking hour, often intruding even into our dreams, our nightmares.

Most of us, however, will not be so troubled. Some may pause to remember a parent or grandparent who fought in World War II, go to a parade and wave a little flag or post a word of gratitude and recognition on Facebook. We will quickly return to our normal lives and our routines of working, commuting and collecting the materials of life.

Those who fight would not deny us this luxury. The ability to pick up our normal lives and carry on, to allow our children to grow up unburdened by the fears and responsibilities they will face all too soon as adults - is indeed why soldiers fight.

Nevertheless, with recognition comes responsibility, and we set aside that responsibility too easily. The ascendance of materialism through media and our constant saturation in marketing has created a popular culture that is shallow and vapid; a culture which assumes without question that it is entitled to every largesse and every luxury, a culture which can pay occasional lip service to the sacrifices necessary to maintain our affluence, but which by and large is unconscious of the life and death struggles necessary to maintain what we take for granted.

In World War II it was clear to every citizen what could and should be done to support the war effort. In Korea and Vietnam we fought ideologies with armies and during the Vietnam War we struggled as a nation with the concept of questioning the war but at the same time supporting the warrior. During all these conflicts we were very much aware as a nation of reasons and costs. Things have been different during

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.

our latest decade of war. We have a peripheral awareness of the conflict. The enemy is a concept with a changing face and he does not wear a uniform.

The truth of the conflict is not that hard to understand, but it is very difficult to accept. Strip away the politics and the patriotism, the religion and the ideology and what is revealed is something much more fundamental. Our lifestyle built on an economy of consumption and high energy use is supported by a delicate framework of technology that is dependent on maintaining supply lines from around the world of materials that we do not have or do not produce. Even a chicken nugget contains materials from at least 11 countries: chicken from Brazil; bread crumbs from the UK; wheat from Canada, Pakistan, Paraguay and Australia; emulsifiers from Spain; dextrin from China and vegetable fat from the UAE. This entire supply chain is dependent on oil and the whole world knows under what countries the oil lies buried.

There are many among us who wish that they could do more to support our troops. We cannot all wear a uniform and put ourselves in harm's way. We can lend our support to the many volunteer groups that exist to help our warriors. We can keep an awareness of the conflict alive in our thoughts, our prayers and our conversations. All of these are worthwhile efforts, but they address only the symptoms, not the disease of war. If we are truly weary of the disease, there is but one place to look for a cure, and that is in the consumption and the wastefulness of our entitlement. Are we truly willing to send a son or daughter to fight for our right to sit idling in the drive-thru line in our huge gas burners, waiting for the chicken nuggets? Are we willing that someone should die so that we can keep the thermostat at a balmy 78 during the winter and a cool 70 during the summer? Unless we are able as a nation to make this connection, to acknowledge the true cost of our largesse, the price of our willful ignorance will continue to grow and one Memorial Day will bleed into the next, and the next...



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

The total story

Two symbols of man's sinfulness and frailty are visible in every settlement of people. These two symbols are: jails and cemeteries. The jails tell us that man is a law breaker. He is sinful (Romans 3:23). The cemetery tells us that death is the result of man's sin (Romans 3:12). Death has passed upon all men (Romans 3:12). While all men are under the sentence of death, there is a difference in the way men die. Sin came into the world by one man, Adam, and death followed. By one man, Christ, came life through the resurrection. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:21-22). Those who die in Christ experience only the shadow of death. On the way to his wife's funeral, Dr. Donald Barnhouse tried to console his daughter by explaining the death of a Christian. He used a passing eighteen wheeler truck to illustrate the death of a Christian. He asked his daughter if she had the choice would she rather be run over by the truck or by its shadow. Of course, her answer was the shadow. He went on to explain that Christ has taken the full impact of death for the Christian. He has removed the sting from death. That is the reason that David, the sweet singer of Israel, could pen the words of the Twenty-third Psalm centuries before Christ came. David talked about "walking through the valley of the shadow of death" (Ps. 23:4). Now I grant you that shadows can certainly frighten the wits out of you, but a shadow cannot hurt you. To cast a shadow you need three ingredients: light, an object and a background. In the background of this world we may see some dark and scary shadows but

just remember that we are "just passing through." The light of God is above every shadow of life. David knew that in pastoral life the shepherd did not walk behind and drive. He walked before and led. So it is with our Shepherd. He has walked this way before us. The late Dr. Herschel Hobbs tells the story of visiting one of his members in the hospital. She was facing major surgery the next day. He tried to console her by telling her that she had an able surgeon who had performed this surgery "hundreds of times" and she had nothing to fear. She answered, "Yes, he may have performed this surgery hundreds of times, but for me it is the first time." She had a point. When you pass through the valley it will be your first time to do so. But just remember that the great shepherd has passed this way many times - once for all mankind and countless times as He has led His people to their heavenly home. When Commander Wellington of England met Napoleon at Waterloo a communications system of semaphore flags were used to relay the message when the battle was over. Men were strategically stationed at high places all the way between Waterloo and London. When the fighting stopped they began to wave the flags and the message was relayed across the English Channel. The message read "Wellington Defeated" as a fog rolled in. There was weeping on the shores of England. Then the fog lifted and the message continued - "Wellington Defeated - The Enemy!" When England received the total story the sadness of defeat was transformed into jubilation and celebration of victory.

Yes, the shadow of death will cast its darkness over you temporarily but at the end of the valley will be the light of God's presence. When the shadows flee away we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. "Thanks be unto God who gives us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord." (I Cor. 15:5).

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"What's the big deal? My budget has been zero-based for a long time."

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Elected Officials

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Sen. Saxby Chambliss, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, 202-224-3521
U.S. Congressman Paul Brown, 10th District, Washington, DC 20515, 202-225-4101
Rep. Stephen Allison, Georgia House of Representatives, 404-656-0177 or 0185
Sen. Jim Butterworth, Georgia State Senate, 404-651-7738
Towns County Commissioner Bill Kendall, 706-896-2276
Clerk of Superior Court Cecil Dye, 706-896-2130
Tax Commissioner Bruce Rogers, 706-896-2267
Magistrate/Probate Judge David Rogers, 706-896-3467
Sheriff Chris Clinton, 706-896-4444
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