

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

"This must be the same dictionary the folks at the State Capitol use!"



The Middle Path

by Don Perry

The ability of subliminal messages to affect our thoughts and attitudes has been known for decades. Our mindscape is coveted territory. Thoughts lead to actions, and when the desired action is a vote or the release of money from our bank accounts, we are the subject of much study.

Some attempts at influencing our behavior are fairly easy to detect. For example, we are more likely to purchase items on the middle shelf at the grocery store, so the brands most profitable to the store are often placed at that position.

There are other ways that our thoughts are influenced which are more difficult to trace. Consider the information we receive that is loosely referred to as "news." Many of us grew up watching the nightly news on television when there were only three networks from which to choose. Now that the world is online, competition for our attention is fierce and it takes place between myriad sources of information and entertainment. Perhaps this is why headlines so often seek to grab our attention with sensation. Thank goodness for small town newspapers and local radio stations, right?

Saturday night I decided to take a sampling of headlines from one of our Atlanta television stations. Like every media outlet that wishes to survive, WS-BTV has an online presence which augments its television broadcasts. I chose the "Latest Headlines" section of their site. Like the middle shelf of the grocery store, this section is placed to grab our immediate attention. I picked one word from each headline which represented the main point of the story represented. This is the resulting list of words: Dead, shooting, prostitute, HIV, injured, Feds, stolen, shoots and sponsored. Technically, "sponsored," was not in the headlines section, but it immediately followed the last headline in the section.

Unfortunately my list of words is not atypical for this and many other media outlets, and while the subliminal message may be unintended, just what is that message for a growing number of people worried about the economy, worried

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.

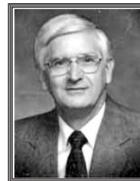
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE EMAILED OR MAILED

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.**

about the condition of the world and worried about our continued march towards anarchy and apocalypse? How does the constant barrage of sensation and negativity affect us when it is presented at the beginning, the middle and the end of the day; a death for breakfast, a shooting for lunch and a theft for dinner, day after day after day? If sex and celebrity can influence us to purchase a particular brand, how are we being influenced by a steady diet of bad news? How will our behavior and our health be affected should media, intentionally or unintentionally, convince us that the world is a bad and wrong?

Bad things happen all time, every day, everywhere. Good things happen also, but they are not afforded equal status. Some would argue that media gives us exactly what we want, that our culture slows down to gape at an accident but never was there a traffic jam caused by motorists slowing down to gawk at a rainbow or a beautiful sunset. I would counter that argument by pointing out that our obsession with dancing celebrities and the popularity of other distracting entertainment results from our desire to escape from all the bad news.

What if we decide that we don't want to believe that the world is rotten, that we are surrounded by violence and vice and disaster at every turn? Many people find it easier to escape, but what if we prefer to be aware and informed? The answer is, we discern. We choose. We filter what we allow to live in our consciousness, and most importantly for the mental health of future generations, we teach our children to do the same.



"IT'S ON MY MIND.."

Danny H. Parris

Life's doors

Life seems to consist of passing through one door to the next. We talk about the "door of opportunity" or the "door of success" or "getting your foot in the door." Very sick people are said to be at the "door of death." Through the process of life I have learned that it is very important how you enter a door and how you close a door. If life is successful we need to let God open the doors for us. We don't need to knock down any doors. Likewise, we need to let God close doors in His own timing. We don't need to manipulate the doors. Practically all of my life I have been interested in doors. It may have started when I was a little fellow listening to the bone chilling episodes of "The Creaking Door." Every Saturday night I found a safe place next to my dad or mom as the radio was tuned in to the next episode of "The Creaking Door." I can still hear that door as it opened. It was scary, frightening and would send chill bumps all over your body. Of course, that show happened in the days before WD-40. I enjoy examining doors. I check out glass doors, wood doors, metal doors or whatever. When I visit the Biltmore Estates in Asheville, NC, I do a survey of all the doors. Most of them are massive and have beautiful grain patterns. I am not too fond of revolving doors. I have a fear of getting stuck inside or losing a finger or two. Automatic doors are convenient but have no personality whatsoever. Many doors are restrictive, labeled for "Employees Only", "Men", "Women", "Office Personnel", and some are just labeled "Private." Some are labeled with signs: "Danger, Do not Enter" or "Enter at Your Own Risk" or "Contagious Illness" or "Contamination", etc. As I drive up and down the streets I look at doors to houses and I wonder as the song says

"What goes on behind closed doors?" Do love, peace and joy abide behind those doors? Do hate, misery and abuse dwell there? Does Jesus reside behind those doors in the hearts of the family? Does a little bit of heaven exist there or does hell break loose behind closed doors? I visit hospitals and I walk through those doors where there are doctors, nurses, medication and personnel available for the healing of sick bodies. Thank God for those doors to ministry. I have visited schools and colleges and walked through doors that offered education and learning that leads to a better way of life. I walk through the doors of funeral homes where family and friends gather to say their final goodbyes to loved ones who have walked through the door of death from time to eternity. I have visited jails and prisons and listened to the lonely sound of a steel door being closed behind me. It is not a door or sound that one wants to hear. To me it is one of the saddest life-draining sounds that I have ever heard. I can't imagine being shut up in prison and cut off from the main stream of life. But I also have the privilege to walk through the doors of churches where prayers, praise and preaching are shared and experienced. Yes, there are many doors in life that we can walk through but the greatest door of all is Jesus Christ. He said, "I am the door." Jesus did not come just to show us a door to God. He is The Door. He did not come to be a doorman. He did not come to be a doorkeeper. He did not come to be a doorstop. Neither did He come to give a door prize. He literally became The Door, the entrance into the Kingdom of God. There is no back door into heaven. If you have never walked through that door of Christ you are shut up behind the door of prison, the door of sin and of death. Because Christ became The Door, I have the privilege to show individuals The Door to everlasting life. The label over the Jesus Door reads: "Whoever will may come in." Will you walk through The Door to life? It is wide open. You don't have to be afraid. Come on in.

Letters to The Editor

GMREC Community Council thanks community

Thanks to our 200 volunteers and financial support from the community we've had a remarkable seventh year of operation. We have served over 24,000 students and adults from Fannin, Towns and Union counties in Georgia, and Clay and Cherokee counties in North Carolina.

The Education Committee provided instruction to 3,292 students:

Johnny Applesseed was provided to 928 kindergarten students.

Our Feathered Friends was taught to 729 first graders.

Water Conservation was provided to 185 second graders.

All About Trees was presented to 509 fourth grade students.

Environmental Field Day was experienced by 342 fifth grade students.

Geology instruction was provided to 599 third, sixth, and eighth graders.

Adults in the region continue to be impressed with the quality of seminar speakers provided by the Outreach Committee:

Free monthly seminars accommodated 700 adults and 72 people took a tour of the GMRE Center.

Popular seminar topics included: Growing Organically, Growing Blackberries, Heirloom Seeds, Growing Blueberries, and Beekeeping.

Garden tours and live demonstrations by Preservation Committee members and friends provided information about native plants to over 100 visitors in June.

The Preservation Committee continues to encourage residents in our region to value and preserve native plants:

Committee members continue to develop the ethnobotanical gardens, herb garden, bog garden, old spring house site garden and woodland medicine trail with over 200 plant species on display.

Over 800 acres on 46 properties in the region have been certified as Appalachian Native Botanical Sanctuaries.

Public education is provided through newspaper articles, hands-on plant workshops and garden tours.

We appreciate your support of our programs and invite you to "Come Grow with Us" at the GMRE Center.

Sincerely,

Sandy Nicolette

on behalf of the GMRE Center Community Council



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Have you been watching the story raging in the news about the possibility of the state taking children away from their parents if the parents allow the kids to become grossly overweight? Now there's a tough one. I could argue either side.

I might argue: Such parenting comes under the category of severe child abuse and for the well-being of the child he or she should be removed from that kind of gross parental irresponsibility.

On the other hand I would observe: To take a child away from his biological parents and give him to someone else to raise is radical surgery. In a civilized country there must be a less disruptive and less extreme strategy.

How do kids get morbidly obese in the first place? Often - not always - often it is because parents are not willing to provide the leadership every youngster needs. The child fusses and whines because he doesn't get his favorite fattening food. So rather than make him unhappy, mom gives in.

Parenting with love and leadership (a regular theme in this column) requires that mom do the right thing, and sometimes that makes the little darling unhappy. So? Who's in charge here?

Let me suggest a possible parallel. With a DUI conviction the driver is often required to attend special driving classes - DUI School it's called - in order to get his license back.

So, what if mom and dad were required to take classes where they learn both the short term and long term results of significant overweight in children. They could learn about alternative foods that don't result in weight gain. They could learn about simple exercise strategies that will help get Junior to a healthier lifestyle. They could even learn about leadership parenting.

What parent wouldn't accept that option as opposed to giving up their children to be raised by a stranger?

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

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Community Calendar

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 2 p.m.

Towns County Democratic Party meets the 3rd Thursday of every month. Please call Kim Bailey at 706-994-2727 or 706-896-6747 for details.

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 Hiawassee 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 Harris.

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 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, mtnregarts-craftsguild.org. mtnregarts-craftsguild@hotmail.com.

VFW Post #7807 Fish Fry will be 2nd and 4th Friday of the month. 4:30-7 p.m., \$9 a plate, all you can eat.

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. Every-

one 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/blueridge-mountains.

Alcoholics Anonymous: 24-hour phone line 828-837-4440.

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.

Chattahoochee 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 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.

Towns County Herald

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