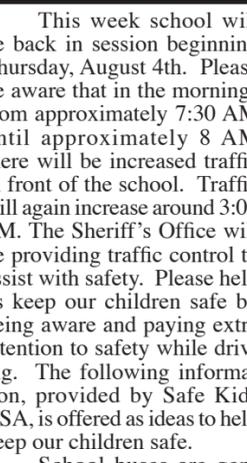


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



From the Desk of:
Sheriff Clinton of Towns County



This week school will be back in session beginning Thursday, August 4th. Please be aware that in the mornings from approximately 7:30 AM until approximately 8 AM there will be increased traffic in front of the school. Traffic will again increase around 3:00 PM. The Sheriff's Office will be providing traffic control to assist with safety. Please help us keep our children safe by being aware and paying extra attention to safety while driving. The following information, provided by Safe Kids USA, is offered as ideas to help keep our children safe.

School buses are generally considered one of the safest ways to travel; however, an estimated 5,000 children are injured each year in school bus related accidents. Many of these injuries occur when children are entering or exiting the bus. This is likely due to the fact that the driver has a blind spot of about 10 feet around the bus. This is sometimes difficult for younger children to understand. Half of all school-age pedestrians killed in bus-related crashes are between 5 and 7 years old (SAFE KIDS USA).

Help keep children safe by teaching them to wait until the bus comes to a complete stop, the door opens, and the bus driver says that it is safe to board the bus.

Make sure children know that they should never walk behind or close to the sides of a bus.

Teach children to never run across the road to catch a school bus.

Pay extra attention and never speed when driving in a school zone and around school buses and pedestrians.

The Towns County Sheriff's Office is always looking for new ways to keep citizens informed. We are pleased to announce that several new features have been added to our website that will help you stay connected with us. The Sheriff's Office website, www.townscountysheriffsoffice.com, now offers links that will allow you to follow the Sheriff's Office on Facebook and Twitter. For those who may not have accounts with Facebook and Twitter, there is also a Sheriff's Office blog on the website.

These areas will offer many useful safety tips, keep you informed of what is happening in our county, and offer you another way to connect with your sheriff's office. These features will offer another means for you to make comments and suggestions, or ask questions. There is also an area that shows the current inmate population of the jail and provides bond information. As always there is a feature that will allow you to sign up for our electronic newsletter. If you visit the site often you may need to occasionally refresh in order to view newly added material. I hope that you will find these new features useful and informative.

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The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Twenty years ago a 401K was a little-known financial instrument, people kept track of stocks by reading the newspaper and defined benefits, or what used to be known as "pensions," were much more common. With a defined benefit, a retiree receives a guaranteed income; with a 401K, he hopes that the value of stocks and bonds in his retirement fund will grow so that the value of the fund divided by the number of years he expects to live will provide enough income to cover his expenses. In 2008 and 2009 a sharp downturn in the market erased up to half of the value of many retirement accounts in just a few months.

The shift away from defined benefits in the United States was part of a shift away from a production economy to what former Assistant Secretary of Housing, Catherine Austin Fitts, described as a "tapeworm economy." A tapeworm is a parasite which extracts vitality from its host without providing any benefit to the host. In our tapeworm economy, billions of dollars are extracted from the movement of money without any value being added to the economy in the process. In a healthy economy, the savings of a nation's citizens is invested in new business. In a tapeworm economy, wealth is extracted by the channels through which it passes in taxes, fees, penalties and debt based "financial instruments." Debt is used to leverage more debt and the government creates inflation by devaluing the currency.

For many people, stuffing their money into a mattress would have been a better investment than putting their hard earned dollars into the casino-style operation known as Wall Street. Not that there is anything fundamentally wrong with the concept of owning a stake in a company that is producing new wealth, but in the high speed world of modern markets, "virtual" money does not sit still long enough to add any new value to the system. As a private investor, for example, let's say that tomorrow I buy 100 shares of a stock for \$1 per share. An hour later, if people are willing to pay \$1.50 per share and I sell my stock, I have extracted \$50 of wealth from the economy, but no new service has been provided, no new widgets have been manufactured and no new wealth has been created. I can spend

that \$50 on gas and groceries, but the value is already absorbed by the increasing cost of food and fuel and the inflationary practices of a government which continues to devalue its currency.

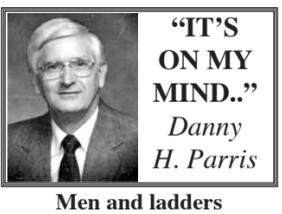
The shift from defined benefits to 401Ks occurred over several decades and was promoted by democratic and republican, conservative and liberal figureheads alike. This transition was sold as a chance for the average citizen to join in the abundance of wealth enjoyed by market elites. It was also a chance for corporations to become more profitable by reducing the amount of money they had to set aside for their employees' retirement accounts. Let's take a closer look at the so called "free market" which now holds the reins of financial security for so many Americans.

The price of stocks often has very little to do with the value of the company they represent. The market goes up and down, based not on the logical interpretation of accurate financial data, but on rumor, innuendo, gossip and sensational headlines. It responds to how people feel as much or more than it responds to how they think. It is, like so much of our economy, infested by parasites.

For example, if I intended to trade stocks and bonds as an individual, I would most likely have to use one of the many brokerage accounts available. Every trade would incur a fee, paid directly to the broker. Whether I won or lost, the "house" would always get paid. Meanwhile, large investment banks would be trading stocks, bonds and futures with high speed computer algorithms, executing thousands of trades in the same time it would take me to complete one.

With the growth of on-line brokerages such as E-Trade, Ameritrade and many others, a new class of tapeworm has spread throughout the system which takes advantage of the "dark" side of the information age. Thousands of "experts" now permeate the online community, offering advice on what to buy and what to sell. Many of these advisory services are free and many will charge a hefty fee for advice. One might well ask what is to be gained by the publishers of "free" information, which leads us to new elements of the tapeworm economy.

to be continued....



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

Men and ladders

Men have many enemies that they must avoid if they live long on this earth. Doctors tell us that the kind of and amount of food we eat can take us out. There are foods that may cause cancer, heart attacks and strokes. If you can keep those foods off the table and out of your mouth you may live longer. The fitness people tell us to avoid some furniture, like that easy chair. We had better be jogging or working out at the gym. Avoid driving small cars. Your chance of living longer is better if you drive a large car. Every day that we get out of bed we must be mighty cautious of a long list of things if our life span has any possibility of ever reaching that three score and ten. Since I have survived to three score and twelve I am convinced that man's greatest, most dangerous, deceitful, life-threatening inanimate object is the ladder. A ladder may look very innocent and non-life threatening, but let me tell you that a ladder is a nasty, mean, vicious, crippling, killing device. It does not matter if it is aluminum, wood, rope or fiberglass they all have dangerous personalities. No wife ever buys her husband a ladder for a Christmas gift or birthday gift unless she has an ulterior motive. (There must be a large insurance policy in a drawer somewhere.) Forget about gun control. Men, if we want to live long we had better pass some legislation that will ban any man from owning a ladder, especially after the age of seventy. I had just turned seventy and decided to use my aluminum six-foot step ladder to aid in gathering apples from high limbs on my apple tree. I had harvested them all for the exception of one plump, juicy looking apple at the top of the tree. That's when the ladder attacked me. I got a long stick and stood on the very top step of the ladder (you know where in bright bold yellow letters

it says, "DO NOT STAND HERE!") Well, that's when it happened. When I came to my senses lying on the ground, wrapped up very neatly with aluminum from head to foot, my first thought was I have been attacked by a robot. My wife, looking down at me with horror on her face, began helping me unravel myself from the grip of this aluminum which was no easy task. I could tell by this twisted metal squeezing me that this ladder was really angry. After a lot of prying, pulling and bending, the ladder finally released me from its angry embrace. I checked my body for blood leaks, or to see if any bones were protruding and there were none. But I couldn't see well and discovered my glasses were gone. After a diligent search I found them but still couldn't see well. The ladder had not only jerked my glasses off, but it had pulled the lenses from the frames. By this time, my wife thinking I would live, began one of those silent, under the breath laughs which almost resulted in a rupture had she not exploded in laughter. I would have laughed too, but I never could laugh and tremble at the same time. Space prevents me from telling you of the time I was on a ladder painting when it decided to take a walk while I was next to the top rung (about 22 feet high) or the time I was putting up Christmas lights on a tree outside when the ladder decided to buck me off. These ladder episodes have taught me that if you don't want to be hugged to death by a ladder: you had better firmly and evenly place the legs on solid ground- you don't level the legs with props like rocks, cans or wood scraps - you never wire, tie or rope two ladders together for an extension - you don't climb ladders with a chain saw (they don't like the noise) - you don't tell your wife to hold the ladder. Finally I am at a loss as to why God didn't give some instruction on ladders. Genesis 28:12-13 is the only time a ladder is mentioned in the Bible. From these verses I garner two important truths: Men, when you climb a ladder make sure there are angels on it and God is standing at the top!



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Recently I wrote about getting an 11-year old painlessly out the door in time to meet the school bus in the morning. I suggested that mom and dad let him wake himself up, do his chores and make it to the appointment without their micromanaging him. If he missed the bus, he missed the bus. Here is a delightful note I got from a mother describing her showdown with her 5-year old daughter.

"I read what you said about getting a youngster to the school bus on time in the morning, but wasn't sure if it would work with a 5-year old. I decided to try it."

"Every morning I was pleading and racing to the bus stop to get her out the door and come to work on time. One day I started laughing uproariously at this picture of my 35-year old self running around like a panicked shrew in pursuit of a 5-year old!"

"Now what she loved was school—every day was an exciting adventure. So I calmly told her that I was no longer chasing or even reminding her

in the morning, that we had to leave by 8:15 in order to catch the bus, and that in the future if she missed it she would just stay home with our daycare mom (who comes in for the baby)."

"Sure enough she improved greatly for a few days, but then she started slowing down again, and then she missed the bus. Well, my daycare mom was wonderful. She charged my daughter for lunch (which she had to get out of her bank), and pointed out that on a school day she only cared for babies so the schedule included only baby activities, baby meals, baby naps, baby toys, etc., and my daughter had to follow that schedule, too."

"I think the nap was the final affront to her dignity. My daughter has not missed the bus since."

Like I said, A parent should never agonize over anything that the child is perfectly capable of agonizing over himself. Or herself.

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 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.

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.

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 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 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
Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

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