

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Letter To The Editor:

I read the "Cooperative" and the "Managers Message" in the March 2013 Georgia EMC Magazine (GEMC). The two articles mention, "much consideration was given to the overall aesthetics of the new headquarters," "designed to accent the beauty of the Brasstown Valley," and "we feel very fortunate to construct such a beautiful facility." Hmm, how about a facility built at a minimum cost so as not drive up the cost of electric power, which is then placed on the backs of hard working people and fixed income seniors, in an area hard hit by high unemployment and a deep recession. So when I drive past the facility, I don't see any beauty at all. I see extravagance and excess, and a manager that has the arrogance to brag about it. By the way, the manager forgot to mention, "the beautiful landscaped, well appointed, and manicured grounds."

In a previous issue of the GEMC magazine, the BRMEMC manager said, "we are confident the membership will be proud of this facility." Now, I've talked to a lot of people in Hiawassee and Blairsville and I've never heard anyone say that they were "proud of" the BRMEMC facility. I did hear many of them say "ridiculous," "over the top," or that it looked like a Swiss Chalet Resort, or an exclusive Country Club, but not like a facility that was concerned about providing low cost electricity.

As stated in the GEMC magazine "Cooperatives are owned by those they serve," and "Co-ops are organized for the benefit of their members," and "members serving members." That sounds very democratic. However, as far as I know, BRMEMC members don't own anything except maybe the long term debt loans for the new extravagant headquarters. The BRMEMC manager says, the new loan interest rates will save more than \$10,000,000 in interest over the term of the loan, but he never tells us the total cost of the new headquarters. Now, that doesn't sound very democratic. We also get to vote on the board of directors, the only problem is they are uncontested, and they were chosen by a nominating committee composed from the same board of directors. Now, that sounds nice and cozy, but doesn't sound very democratic. That is sort of like they do it in Russia and Iran. I guess Russia and Iran must have a "cooperative" political system.

Does the manager tell the co-op members what financial remuneration the BRMEMC manager and the Board of Directors receive? No, and that's not very democratic either. So I don't believe we have a "Cooperative," but just a typical Corporate (as it states in your name, BRMEM Corporation) monopolistic electric utility.

Does the management listen to the input and recommendations of the "members serving members?" Members said we didn't want the Hiawassee substation next to the lake and ruin the "ascetic" view, management put it there anyway. Were members consulted on the purchase or the plan of the new facility? No! Were members consulted on the ugly monster utility poles routed straight through beautiful downtown Hiawassee? No! None of the above sounds like, "members serving members."

So please, Mr. BRMEMC manager, give us members a little more credit, and stop trying to placate us with "beauty," "proud of," "ascetic facility," and "members service members," just give us low cost, reliable energy and leave it at that. We understand you have no competition, you're in charge, and there's not much we can do about it.

Gordon Frank

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Americans spend about 34 hours per week watching television. If you add all those lost hours to the time many of us spend watching smaller screens at work, on the laptop, the tablet and the smartphone, the amount of time we spend in virtual reality is a significant portion of our lives.

There are myriad reasons we spend so much time in our pixelated panopticon. During my bachelor years living in a remote corner of Towns County, when two and a half channels was the best I could expect from Radio Shack's most expensive antenna, the television was on for many hours in the evenings to light up the dark house and provide some semblance of companionship. With the volume turned down, it was background noise and rarely noticed. The impact of the virtual world was minimal.

As the years passed and my career moved from the great outdoors to a not-so-great indoors uncomfortably similar to the cult classic, "Visioneers," the virtual world began making more inroads into my consciousness. Up at 5 AM to begin my day as a wage slave, the morning shooting report oozed into my awareness in a sticky syrup of artificially sweetened banality. After a day at the office staring at more pixels and plodding through the corporate swamp of institutionalized incompetence, there was just enough energy left after supper at home to sit in the recliner and hit the mute button during commercials.

The advent of the Information Age and social networking attached even more tentacles of that ubiquitous, soul sucking, and ever evolving leech of a monster which business and government wrestle to control. It entertains, yes. It educates. But it also exists for profit, for pacification and for domination.

My wife and I are at home now, self-employed and in charge of our own schedules, but soon after making the change we noticed that some of the old routines were still with us. Why are we watching the morning shooting and traffic report? Why not partake of music with breakfast instead of homicide? Why are we sitting down with a remote after dinner instead of going for a walk or working in the garden? Eventually these questions led to the inevitable one: Why are we paying a small fortune for hundreds of channels we never watch, and when we do watch them, can never find anything we want to see?

We knew that a total

media blackout was not going to work. We both like watching movies on a rainy Sunday afternoon and an occasional documentary to stimulate the mind and the imagination. With a little bit of research, we were soon able to find a media middle path, one that gave us a wide variety of choice and a great deal of control over what and when we would watch - for very little money compared to satellite or cable.

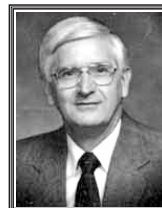
With the expansion of high speed internet to so many areas, a plethora of devices has become available which offer free or low cost programming. Apple TV and Google TV are well known alternatives. We tried NeoTV from Netgear, Omnibox from Omniverse. We even tried plugging the laptop into the television via an HDMI cable. All of these are viable alternatives to high-cost broadcast media. After many experiments we settled on a versatile little box about the size of a deck of cards.

ROKU streaming players are available online or locally at Radio Shack. The players cost between \$60 and \$100, depending on the features and resolution you choose. This is a one-cost and there are no additional fees. ROKU connects wirelessly to your home network or in some models, via an Ethernet cable.

Currently there are about 700 channels available on ROKU and the majority offer free content. When we discontinued our satellite service we were paying about \$70 per month for hundreds of channels we never watched. We now subscribe to Netflix for movies and Hulu Plus for Video On Demand (VOD) network shows for a combined cost of about \$15 per month and we have more content than we ever could - or should - watch.

If you are reluctant to abandon the "local" Atlanta news here in the land beyond the reach of antennas, do not despair. A new service called "Aereo" will soon offer Atlanta channels on ROKU for about \$8 per month.

That's all for now from the virtual world. I risk pixel poisoning if I stare at this laptop for much longer. The real world awaits. The spell has been broken. If you are also looking for an alternative to media madness, or if you just want to reduce your monthly bills by a significant amount, a little bit of research will yield a number of good options.



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

To tell the truth

Someone has said that "there are people who exaggerate so much that they can't tell the truth without lying." The ninth commandment teaches us that we should speak truth and refrain from lying. Deception, falsehood and lying originated with the devil. He is a liar from the beginning and the father of all lies. Not only are there those who love to lie, but there are those who love to believe a lie rather than to believe the truth. Most Americans have come to the point of accepting lies and falsehoods as being just a normal way of life. "Everybody lies" is not true, but the devil will tell you it is true. In the political arena we are plagued with deceit, lies, half-truths and false information of all kinds. Business circles as well, seek to profit by false and underhanded deception. Major corporations are charged with false advertising and are hauled into court by consumer groups. Even in religious circles there are those peddlers of lies rather than prophets of love and truth. People exaggerate or outright lie on resumes. They lie about places of employment and falsify fake degrees. This is done across the spectrum - from theology to cosmetology. How shameful that in just the last few days 35 teachers, principals and administrators of the Atlanta Public School system were indicted by a Fulton County grand jury with charges ranging from making false statements (lying), theft, racketeering, influencing witnesses and conspiracy. They allegedly

lied and influenced thousands of children to cheat on the state's Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). Lying is not confined to just a certain occupation, race or ethnic group. Lying permeates all mankind. Mankind is prone to lie from birth. Kids lie. Adults lie. Young and old alike lie but shouldn't and don't have to. We lie to God, ourselves and to others, but shouldn't and don't have to. Ladies, have you ever seen your neighbor, sister church member or family member with a new outfit on and said, "Oh," "that is so nice and looks so good on you?" But all the time you were thinking, "where in this world did she find such an awful looking outfit!" You lied. I tell you I have been between a rock and a hard place on occasions as some of you other men. Fellows, has your wife ever come home from the beauty salon and as soon as she walked through the door, you thought, "My lands, someone has used a leaf blower on her head?" But when she asked, "How do you like my hair?" There was no hesitation, you responded, "Oh," "it looks good." We lied! Shouldn't have, didn't have to, but we knew that to avoid a great outpouring of tears we just didn't speak the truth. It is true that fallen mankind has departed from truth and lapsed into error and sin. However, God is a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He (Deut. 32:4). He, therefore, "desireth truth in the inward parts" (Ps. 51:6). Thank God, Jesus came as "The Truth" and when He ascended back to heaven He sent the "Spirit of Truth" to guide us into all truth (John 16:13). Every believer has the "Spirit of truth" that enables him to believe truth, think truth, speak truth and practice truth.

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE
By Don Jacobsen

Q: My husband and I are running out of ideas. Our 11-year-old son continues to perplex us. He is turning out to be one rude dude. He is so impolite it's embarrassing. He intrudes into other people's conversations, runs through doors ahead of everyone else, rushes for the biggest piece of pie at the Wednesday night dinners at our church, jumps up from the table before the rest of us are finished eating. I could go on but you get the picture. Some help, please.

A: Well, part of the job description of parents is to help civilize the savages. Looks like you could use some help with a strategy. Kids don't generally just fall into polite behavior by accident. Some of it is caught; some of it is taught. The stronger the example, the better for everyone. The more intentional the training, the better for everyone. So let's talk about how to get there from here.

A key issue is that of respect. At two years kids have a hard time understanding the value of allowing others to have what they want themselves - whether it's pie or being first through the door. By the time they're 11 they are very aware of other people in their world so some down-home training is

important. (Actually, it should start earlier - say, like about six.) For instance, how about Dad and Jimmy do some role-playing and practice approaching a door side by side. The respectful thing to do is for Jimmy to allow the older person to go through the door first. If he's walking beside Mom - or a girl - so much more important the display of respect. You can do the same thing getting on an elevator, or on a bus. Dad sets the pace, both as coach and as role model.

You've heard me talk before about the "manner-of-the-week" club. Pick a thoughtful gesture, like saying, "Please pass the potatoes," work on it for a week and it will stick. Next week add another one. Just think what can happen in a year. No one leaves the dinner table till everyone is through eating. "Yessir." "No, ma'am." Please. Thank you. The basics - you get the idea.

Interesting fact to ponder: Other things being equal, the young person who succeeds in life is more apt to have gracious, thoughtful manners than to have attended a prestigious university. It's true. And it's a whole lot cheaper.

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.

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