

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Letters to The Editor

### To the Editor:

Thank you to a dedicated group of Young Harris College students for helping the City of Young Harris put mulch on paths at Cupid Falls. We appreciate the help of these young, energetic students that are giving back to the community.

*Andrea Gibby, Mayor of Young Harris*

### Letter to the Editor:

Years ago, when the City/County started putting up Christmas decorations the weekend after Thanksgiving, it seemed a little early, and I thought at the time, "Can't we at least wait until December?" Then, some years later, it was the week before Thanksgiving, and that too became the norm. This year, it happened the moment Halloween was over. I know the retail businesses begin holiday advertising the first of November, but do we have to simply follow suit? I know of no one who likes the practice, but it continues anyway. Two months of Christmas decorations has nothing to do with Christmas.

*Gretchen Howell*



## RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Fascinating story in the news from New York this week. It seems that David, the dad, picked up his 4-year old son from day care to take him out for supper. Junior wanted to eat at McDonald's. I mean, he really wanted to eat at McDonald's, but dad said no... you've had too much junk food already.

Junior pitches a fit... a full-blown, kicking-and-screaming, arms-flailing tantrum. Dad, who by his own admission has been quite indulgent with his discipline, decides to dig his heels in this time: Dinner anywhere but McDonald's - or no dinner at all. Junior stubbornly opts for no dinner at all if it can't be at McDonald's.

Hostage to Junior's temper, Dad returns Junior back to the estranged wife's apartment all the time unsuccessfully pleading with this son to reconsider his demands. Next morning Junior's mother trots down to her psychologist's office, gets dad labeled as an inept parent, and persuades a judge to restrict dad's visits until their contentious divorce is settled. Sounds like a badly written soap opera. So, now what?

OK, it's difficult to undo what is, especially when he's a part-time dad, but it appears dad is paying the price for his lax parenting practices. At 4,

Junior should not be in the role of making family decisions like where should we eat. You don't reason about nutritional issues with a 4-year old. You don't plead, you lead with a 4-year old. Dad doesn't have to be ugly about it, just forthright. "Junior, some other time maybe we can stop at McDonald's, but daddy has chosen a really nice place tonight just for you and me, just us guys..." And make sure the sentence doesn't end with dad asking permission, "Okay?" This kind of intentional leadership parenting should have started when Junior was 2, not when he was 4. His tantrum suggests to me that it has worked for him before.

Mom has played the heavy here. She's obviously using the evening's events to further her own agenda. For her this is not about a Big Mac and fries, it's about control. Showing her husband to be inept with Junior further strengthens her position in the divorce proceedings. The psychologist apparently said what mom wanted to hear, but mom and dad need to have a constructive talk about how much they want their own relationship to penalize their son. May not work; worth a try.

Send your parenting questions to: [DrDon@RareKids.net](mailto:DrDon@RareKids.net).

## The Middle Path

by Don Perry

For some time now I have wanted to bring the ongoing discussion about the Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as "Obamacare," to this page. Unfortunately, for the last two weeks most of my time has been spent sitting in doctor's offices and hospital rooms supporting my father. I have been right where the rubber meets the road, where all the debates in Congress and the realms of rules and regulations coalesce into actual experience for the patient and the consumer.

I was inspired to dig deeper into the healthcare issue by a thoughtful letter sent to me by a kind reader who, aware of my concerns about the integrity of the agendas woven into Obama's signature legislation, encouraged me to consider also the benefits that might be available to people previously underserved by the insurance industry; that there were people who could actually benefit from the new laws.

Indeed, if and when the ACA begins to work like it was intended, people who have never had insurance before, who have been excluded because of pre-existing conditions; who have not been able to afford even the most basic plans, should be able to find some relief under the new laws. I would encourage anyone who has a need to use the new laws to whatever advantage they may gain.

In fact, since the new laws have significantly changed the way the health insurance system operates, we have no other choice but to accept the new reality. There is no choice to "opt out." If you have no insurance you will pay anyhow. There is no going back. And as millions of Americans are finding out when they receive cancellation notices from their insurance companies, doing nothing is not an option either.

The changes to the insurance system are significant, but I stop short of saying that they are "fundamental." Despite what many of our conservative friends choose to believe, we have not exchanged a free market solution for one leaning more towards socialism. Insurance was already a huge government program which redistributed wealth, albeit very inefficiently. The health insurance system is and has been for some time a form of shadow fiscal policy wielded by the states and the federal government.

Insurance "works" because wealth is distributed from healthy people who don't need to make claims to sick people who do. Under the old system, if you were healthy your insurance premiums would exceed your expected claims; if you were sick, your premiums would be less than your medical

bills. But where does the hidden fiscal policy come into play?

One study found that in unregulated markets some people paid as much as nine times more than others for the same policy, the difference being determined by age and health status. In other states where the insurance industry was more regulated, the difference in premiums was much less. States have extended fiscal policy by the extent to which they regulated insurance costs, again, distributing wealth from the sick and the old to the young and healthy.

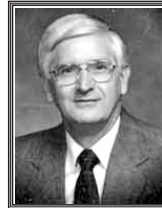
On the federal level, shadow fiscal policy has been extended in the massive subsidy provided in the exclusion of employer health benefits from payroll and income taxes. The federal government has subsidized the insurance market this way at a cost (to the taxpayer) of approximately \$300 billion each year - once again redistributing wealth, the \$300 billion in revenue lost paid for by other taxpayers or by future generations of taxpayers. Obamacare is no different in its efforts to redistribute wealth; it just attempts to cast a wider net.

The other problems with Obamacare are well known by now. The website, which is the main portal for accessing the new insurance marketplace, the keystone of the entire program - does not work. The Obama Administration went out of their way, using legal loopholes in the federal procurement system, to award the no bid contract for the website to a Canadian company with a poor track record of performance. One of the top executives of this company is a friend and former classmate of Michele Obama.

Many of you reading this have already received the cancellation notice from your insurance company. My wife and I received ours several weeks ago. Chances are you will be paying significantly more for your new policy, as are we. Meanwhile the echoes of the president lying repeatedly that if we liked our insurance policy we would get to keep it are bouncing around the media. Of course they have always known that this was not true. It is a simple matter of mathematics. In order to redistribute wealth from the healthy people who do not need insurance to sick people who do, everyone must pay for things they do not need; things not currently included in many policies. Obamacare cannot work without this provision.

Back in the hallways of the hospital where my father recently stayed, the hallmark of our new healthcare system is visible everywhere. Nurses have become permanently attached to computer terminals. They must be data collectors now as well as care givers. Every hour of every day and every night while I visited my dad, they rolled their workstations in and out of patients' rooms and then stood in the hallways feeding more information into the hungry maw of our national healthcare beast. It is the same in the doctor's office where the doctors and nurses spend more time looking at a terminal than looking at the patient. They have no choice. It is the law, and it remains to be seen whether our new laws will benefit the health of the nation.

One thing is clear, however. The profit margins of insurance companies, those entities which actually wrote our new laws, are benefitting. One might reasonably assume that this was the plan all along.



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

### Getting thin skinned

Here in these mountains we have numerous words, sayings, phrases and idioms that are only understood by folk who have grown up here. There are sayings and idioms that have originated in one locality but have been so expressive that they have gained widespread usage. Such is the phrase "by the skin of his teeth." Of course, we recognize that the popularity of this phrase stems from the fact that it comes from perhaps the oldest book in the Bible. Job, in answering Bildad, his so-called friend, described his awful physical condition by saying, "My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth" (Job 19:20). Thus, when someone escapes from harm or danger, we say, "they escaped by the skin of their teeth." That means by the smallest amount of margin. When the Geneva Bible was produced in 1560 this literal rendering of the passage was given: "I have escaped with the skinn of my tethe." When the King James Version was produced in 1611, the phrase was retained. In just a few short years anyone who barely dodged some form of disaster was likely to say that he escaped "by the skin of the teeth." Now I certainly don't want to get into a debate with some dentist about whether the teeth have skin or no. However, there are some scholars who deny that the teeth have skin, but I believe they must because Job believed they did. There are some modern translations that translate: "I have escaped with only my gums." My firm belief is that the new

phrase will never catch on. Speaking of skin, as winter blasted us with the temperature dropping to 16 degrees this past Tuesday morning, my skin felt like it had lost all of its thickness. It is common knowledge among senior adults that as you age your skin does not get tougher, but it gets thinner and more transparent. Your skin becomes so thin that the heat escapes right through it. Even worse, skin tears and bruises easier as you age. Where you don't have age spots, blots and blemishes on your skin you can see your blood veins. You can almost tell how fast your blood is circulating. Age proves the saying that "Beauty is only skin deep!" Some of us who used to be "thick skinned" have suddenly gotten thin skinned emotionally. Some folks, when they were younger didn't get angry no matter what was said to them. They were very thick skinned. Not so any longer. Some senior adults can get angry pretty quickly. This week a female about ninety years old got so upset I thought she was going to ram me with her car. She kept motioning for me to get out of her way so she could park. I had stopped to keep from killing a pedestrian. I wasn't about to get her parking space she might have pulled out an ak-47 and made me jump out of my skin. I know one thing; the skin has been gone off my teeth for a long time because the ones I have left have all been capped. Another thing I know is that cold weather and hot showers will make you start shedding what skin you have left.

By now I have gotten under your skin and some of you would like to skin me alive. However, this is Thanksgiving Season and I'm sure most of us have never thanked God for our thick skin. Thank Him right now.



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### 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, Hiawasse, GA 30546. Our email address: [tcherald@windstream.net](mailto: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.\*  
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"...until you get your tax bill!"

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