

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

To the Editor:

BRMEMC Board Meetings

Minutes from BRMEMC's Board of Directors meeting on September 29, 2014 as published in the TCH on November 26, 2014 were a real eye opener for me.

Thanks to Editor Charles Duncan and new board member Stephen Phillips for this public service. I noted President-elect William Prather's stated intent to make board actions more transparent to members and appreciate much of his address to the board. Like the new board members, I believe that board meetings should be open to members (After all, the co-op belongs to all of us, not just the board) and that minutes should be published in local newspapers.

If the U.S. Senate, the House of Representatives, Federal and State courts can conduct their business with spectators in a designated visitors area, I see no legitimate reason why BRMEMC cannot. Rules could be adopted allowing visitors to attend as observers only and those wishing to comment could be instructed on how to do so, e.g. written comments submitted in advance to the President of the Board. The minutes indicate that some veteran members are unfamiliar with the policy manual and by-laws. I suspect they are likewise unfamiliar with the sorry excuses for audit reports they have routinely accepted.

Also some have probably not read Mr. Minor's \$30,000 report in which he substantiates (among other findings) that members of the Finance Committee have been negligent in certain aspects of their duties for 10 years or more.

In my opinion these directors either do not understand what their duties are or have adopted too limited a view of their responsibilities and have failed to take proper initiative to know and do the jobs for which we elected them. They have certainly underestimated the depth of member concerns about their performance (less than 10 months until the next election).

Wm. Ronald Gibson



Towns County Herald Editor Charles Duncan

Welcome Home Nick

If you're an Atlanta Braves fan, you'll hear a lot of debate in the national and Atlanta news media about the most recent free agent signing by the Braves. Some of it will be negative, some will be spot on positive.

For those in the North Georgia Mountains, you have to have a smile on your face as the news of Nick Markakis becoming a Brave is finally official.

Nick is a Young Harris College Mountain Lion, coached by the legend Rick Robinson. He was probably more noted for his pitching prowess than being a contact-hitting outfielder.

He was the seventh pick in the 2003 Major League Amateur Draft by the Baltimore Orioles. Coach Robinson said that when the Orioles called him about one of his players, he was surprised that they were talking about an outfielder.

Nick was 13-0 with a microscopic earned run average. Coach Robinson asked them if they were sure that they weren't asking about a pitcher. They replied "the Markakis kid, the outfielder."

In addition to being a lights out pitching prospect with a high-90s fastball, Nick also was an excellent hitter. It was the hitter that the Orioles

were most interested in.

Oriole Nation was skeptical about their No. 1 draft choice. After all, where the heck was Young Harris College? Well, it wouldn't be long before Nick Markakis put Young Harris College baseball on the map.

Nick was lights out as a hitter in the minor leagues and it wasn't long before he was named the Orioles' top prospect by Baseball America. In his first start as an Oriole, Nick drew three walks in as many as bats. On his fourth at bat, Nick hit a 400-foot home run for his first Major League hit.

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There's plenty of talk about the departed Jason Heyward, but, give Nick some time and they'll hush up pretty quick. Only Robinson Cano and Ichiro Suzuki have more hits than Nick since 2007.

We wish Nick a happy return to Georgia, and we wish him the best of luck as the new rightfielder in Atlanta. Now if we could only get Charlie Blackmon (also a Mountain Lion) from Colorado.



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

A big Merry Christmas

We live in a big world that keeps getting smaller in many ways, but a lot of things keep getting bigger and bigger. The word "big" is an interesting word. It is used, abused and overused. We talk about Big Brother, big business, big buildings, big cars, big churches, big cities, big government, big games, big houses, the big picture, the big upset, the big storm, big cheese, big shot, big gun, big wheel, big frog, big deal, big league, big mouth, big bucks, big salaries, etc. Man is impressed with bigness. He is a builder of bigness. I am sure that all of us have seen or read about the world's biggest cruise ship. The Royal Caribbean's Oasis of the Seas was unveiled November 20, 2009 in Fort Lauderdale. It cost \$1.4 billion dollars to build and can carry 6,296 passengers with a crew of 2,165. It is almost 4 football fields in length (1187 feet) and taller than the Statue of Liberty. According to an article I read this vessel contains seven themed neighborhoods. In the middle of the ship is Central Park which is longer than a football field. It has thousands of plants, dozens of trees and outdoor cafes. The Boardwalk contains eateries, games and an "Aqua Theater" for live water shows. It also houses an in-door mall with dozens of shops. It includes several clubs, a 1,380 seat theater, a casino with 450 slot machines and 27 gaming tables. If passengers get bored they can go to the basketball court or volleyball court for entertainment. The Kid Zone contains everything from a science lab to a disco dance area. Would you believe it has a Nursery

for babies as young as six months old? I wonder if Noah would be impressed? Well, from Genesis in the building of the Tower of Babel to the building of Dubai, man's bigness pales in the awesome bigness of God. In this month of December we celebrate the biggest event in human history. When I think of the birth of the Son of God in a little town called Bethlehem I feel like the country boy who saw the Grand Canyon for the first time; He yelped out the words, "Something b-i-g happened here!" Bethlehem was the place of the biggest birth in all of history. It was here that the great God of all creation became a little baby. According to Matthew the news of His birth didn't go over big in Jerusalem either. Herod and all Jerusalem were troubled (Matt. 2:3). Each year as Christians begin celebrating Christmas, God-haters start a big stink. They get upset over manger scenes. They want to take legal action against public singing of Jesus, Peace and Good Will. Merry Christmas spoken in their presence gives them the heartburn, raises their blood pressure and accelerates their heart rate. They are anti-God and would be very pleased if they never heard God's name mentioned. In spite of their passionate rejection of God, that does not stop God's love for them. Neither should it prevent Christians from loving them and sharing frequently and vocally of the biggest event in human history - the birth of the Son of God, Christ Jesus our Lord.

The biggest birth led to the biggest death and biggest miracle of all time - the resurrection of Christ from the grave which places on God's calendar the biggest event yet to come - the visible return of Christ - "Even so come quickly, Lord Jesus!"

A great big Merry Christmas to all!



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Q: Dr. Don, my husband and I have been hearing more and more about parents who have lost custody of their kids because the state has imposed new restrictions on how they do parenting. They're told they can't spank, the school system determines what the youngsters learn and the parents have no voice, for instance. Do you see this as a new threat to our society? Is it going to get worse? Is there any way we can stop it? Frankly, it worries us a lot.

A: Downstream of Hillary Clinton's book, "It Takes a Village," it seems the government has been increasingly aggressive in telling us how to raise our kids. I know, many would argue that, "The government has to protect the vulnerable - and that includes kids." And there are abusive situations when someone needs to intervene.

But there are lots of ways to abuse our kids...feeding them stuff they shouldn't eat, for instance, creating childhood obesity, being unreasonably strict - or unreasonably unstrict, demeaning them, yelling, neglecting to introduce them to God; we could both make a long list. And while we need to do our best to protect those who can't protect themselves, we must also remember that no intervention by the state is going to create a generation of perfect parents. So what to do?

Two suggestions: We need to be intentional and persistent in educating parents. Churches, synagogues, service clubs, PTAs, should be constantly providing resources to help parents hone their marriage and parenting skills. That's the purpose of this weekly piece, by the way, which is read all over the world. But to teach those who already have children how to parent is almost like teaching a person to be a pilot at 30,000 feet over the Atlantic with a plane load of passengers sitting behind them. It's better than not teaching them at all, but it's late.

Second: Development of the skills necessary for parenting begins in infancy. Gentleness, patience, love, Essential parent skills all, and they are caught from us really early, like, in toddlerhood. Respect, obedience, responsibility, cleanliness, consequences; these begin next. And they are both caught and taught. Unselfishness, honesty, social skills, forgiveness, perseverance. Imagine the climate in America's families if our young adults arrived at the parent part of their journey with these traits already in place. I know, it will never be perfect, but moving in that direction is a whole lot better than a state-enforced alternative.

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

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

We need more holidays. I believe that we would benefit on a personal level by having more time off from our wage slavery. The economy would benefit by giving us more reasons to shop, spread out over the course of the entire year rather than crammed into a few weeks during fall and winter.

Gone would be the need for the last minute shopping, the black Fridays, the stressful travel on crowded airlines and the frustration of having to dine on a whole year's worth of family issues at one sitting. Gone would be the disappointment over having to miss a particular holiday: "We can't be there for Christmas but we'll see you on Groundhog Day!"

With more holidays spread across the calendar, the benefits as well as the burdens of the holidays would be more evenly distributed throughout the year. It might have a stabilizing effect on our culture.

One would hope that having more time off would raise our spirits and increase morale, but we must also consider the unintended consequences. Everything we do in this culture must be monetized, so as soon as we established new holidays, the engines of marketing would begin to turn. Weeks before National Potato Day on August 19th, for example, commercials depicting a group of happy, successful friends of all races sitting around a bowl of steaming potatoes, wearing their potato t-shirts and toasting their good health with sparkling potato wine, would

begin to run. Amazon would have online specials on potato earrings and potato pendants. Eventually, as our potato celebrations became ingrained into our cultural heritage, we would begin to feel obligated to buy just the right, the most stylish and trendy potato accessories to demonstrate our Potato Spirit.

But as soon as we put away the potato decorations and finished the leftover potatoes au gratin, it would be time to start decorating for Vesuvius Day on August 24th and shopping for Toasted Marshmallow Day on August 30th.

With all the new holidays to decorate, the shop and to cook for, we might find that our wage slavery, already aggravated by working fewer days during the year, would further intensify. Perhaps we had better leave well enough alone and try to enjoy the holiday season as best we can.



Community Calendar

American Legion Post 23 meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 4 PM at VFW Post 7807, Sunnyside Rd., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-8387 for details. We need your support!

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 1 p.m.

Towns County Republican Party meets at 6:30 PM the 4th Thursday of each month at the new Senior Center. For more info call 706-994-3919.

Democratic Party of Towns County meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 5 PM at the new Senior Center.

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 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 5:30 p.m. 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org

Bridge Players intermediate level meets at 12:30 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Rec Center.

Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG) meets

the 2nd Tuesday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse, Hiawassee. The Board meets at 4 p.m., and the Guild at 6. Call us 706-896-0932.

Mountain Computer User Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month. Meetings start at 6 p.m. and visitors are welcome. Details can be found at www.mcutg.org

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. Everyone 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 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 the third Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church of Blairsville from 6 - 8 p.m. Call the church at 706-745-2469.

Chatuge 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 3 p.m. Thursdays at Pine Log Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Brasstown. Ping Pong plays welcome. Call Jerry (828) 837-7658.

The Humane Society Mountain Shelter Board of Directors meets the last Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at Cadence Bank in Blairsville.

The Towns County Alzheimer's Support Group meets the first Tuesday of each month at 1:30 PM in the Family Life Center of McConnell Memorial Baptist Church. For more info call Carol at 706-896-6407.

The Appalachian Shrine Club meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Allegheny Lodge in Blairsville. For more info call William 706-994-6177.

GMREC Garden Tours every Monday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Shooting Creek Basket Weavers

meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at the Shooting Creek Fire Hall Community Center. For more info www.shootingcreek-basketweavers.com.

Friendship Community Club meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6 PM at Clubhouse, 1625 Hwy. 76. 706-896-3637.

Goldwing Road Riders meets the 3rd Saturday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse in Hiawassee. We eat at 11 and meeting begins at 12.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meets every Wednesday evening at 7 PM at the Red Cross building on Jack Dayton Circle.

Caregiver support group meets 2nd Tuesday of each month, 3 p.m. at Brasstown Manor, located at 108 Church St., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-4285 for more info.

Enchanted Valley Square Dance Club. Dances 2nd & 4th Fridays at Towns Co. Rec. Ctr. from 7-9 PM. \$5/person to dance. Free to watch.

Brasstown Woodturners Guild meets 1st Saturday of month at 9:30 AM in HHS shop. For more info call J. C. at 706-896-5711.

VFW Post #7807 will be hosting a fish fry they 2nd & 4th Fridays of each month April - October. \$9. all you can eat from 4:30 - 7 PM.

Mountain Amateur Radio Club (MARC) meets 6:30 PM the 1st Monday of month at 1298 Jack Dayton Cir. (next to EMS), Hiawassee. For info call Al 706-896-9614 after 6 PM.

The Board of the Towns County Chamber of Commerce meet the second Monday of every month at 8 a.m. at the Chamber office, 1411 Jack Dayton Circle, Young Harris.

The Quilting Bee at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church in Family Life Center - Room 216. 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10 AM - 3 PM. Bring a sack lunch. For more information call Kathy Taylor at 706-835-6721 or Marilyn Bostrom at 706-897-4367.

Mountain Coin Club meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the North Georgia Tech campus in Blairsville. Guests are welcome. For more info, call 706-379-1488.

Have something to sell? Let the Herald work for you! Contact us at 706-896-4454. Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday by 5 PM. Image of piggy bank and money.

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