

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

From the Desk of:



Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

Winter driving

It is always best not to drive during snowy or icy conditions. Whenever possible avoid driving during extreme winter weather. Even front-wheel-drive and four-wheel-drive vehicles are susceptible to snow and ice. If you must drive, the following suggestions are meant as helpful tips to avoid increasing the risk.

During winter you should always make certain that your vehicle is prepared. Vehicle preparation should include keeping your vehicle properly tuned up and making sure that your tires are in good shape. Tires should be properly inflated and have a tread depth of at least an eighth inch. Always keep plenty of fuel in your vehicle's tank and make sure that your battery is up to date and properly maintained.

There are several items that are recommended to be kept in your vehicle during cold weather. These are especially important if you are traveling long distances. Good items to have on hand include bottled water, a flashlight with extra batteries, spare warm clothing, a warm blanket or sleeping bag, jumper cables, snow chains, a tow strap, wooden matches in a water proof container, a fully charged cell phone, and road flares, safety triangles, or both to make your vehicle more visible. Cat litter can be

used as a traction aid, much like gravel, but is easier to carry in a vehicle.

Some things to consider when driving include slowing down by at least half the speed normally recommended and allowing at least twice the distance between your vehicle and another. Remember to use more gentle controls during slippery conditions. You should start, steer, and stop your vehicle in a gentle, steady, and smooth fashion. If you are braking and your brakes start to lock, ease up on the pressure. If your rear wheels start to skid, take your foot off the brake and steer the vehicle in the direction you want the front of the vehicle to go. Do not try to accelerate during a skid and never use cruise control during snowy, icy, or wet conditions.

If you become stuck or stranded in the snow it is almost always better to stay with your vehicle and wait for help. If you run the vehicle to use the heater, be sure that the exhaust is not obstructed and always leave at least one window slightly open to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Only leave your vehicle if you know exactly where you are and are certain that you will improve your conditions by doing so.

It is always better to stay off the roadways during winter weather conditions such as snow and ice. The information I have provided is by no means a comprehensive list and is only meant to offer some suggestions for being safer. All the preparation in the world cannot guarantee you will arrive safely to your destination if you choose to drive in poor conditions. My first advice is that you not drive during extreme weather. If you must, please take precautions and drive carefully.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

This week we shall discuss one of the most valuable things in the universe, and also one of the most mysterious: time. The Cambridge online dictionary says that time is the "measure of existence," but the more we attempt to pin down a definition, the more elusive our understanding becomes.

Time behaves very predictably when we are punching a clock, designing a rocket or even describing the movement of objects light years away. When we try to grasp time itself, however, it slips between our fingers.

Even science struggles toward an understanding of what time actually is. As a young physics student taking classical mechanics, I once heard a professor quip that "Time is Nature's way of making sure everything doesn't happen at once." But in quantum physics we learn that at the subatomic level, "objects" can and do occupy the same space at the same time.

Beyond a collection of theoretical equations, a discussion of time moves away from science and into the realm of philosophy. On that boundary line stands the eminent quantum physicist, Amit Goswami, who suggests that perception plays a role in understanding time, indeed, that "consciousness is the ground of all being." We can interpret that to mean that our consciousness, our awareness, interacts with our physical universe; that there is a causal link between what we think, what we perceive, and what happens around us.

Taking the bit in our teeth, we can run with that idea. It is on track with the wisdom shared by our older friends who tell us that life is long and rich and full of experiences. It runs straight by those who tell us that life is short, who reach the home stretch feeling like the race has just started. The implication is that by perceiving more of the moments that make up our time on this earth, we can, in a very real sense, lengthen our stay.

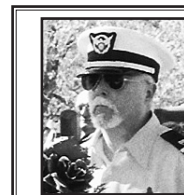
The wisdom of children concurs. Most of us can remember when summers lasted forever, when it took forever for holidays to come around, when we thought it would take forever to grow up. Our perception was very different back then. Everything was new. Each new day was an adventure. A patch of grass was

vast, undiscovered country; a reflection in a puddle was a magic mirror.

How quickly now does our "sophistication" rob us of the childlike wonders that once lengthened our lives! The routines of money-seek numb us to the mysteries all around us. The commute to the cubicle encapsulates large portions of our time in unawareness; muscle memory navigates traffic as our brains idle during time that must be endured. Once, we embraced the moments of the day. Now we seek distraction from the long, intermittent periods of boredom between the week-ends.

I would seek to become an exception to a bored, and ultimately brief, existence. We can see those exceptions all around us: people who, independent of age, employment or finances, still carry that youthful spark; people who find myriad reasons to be pleased with the passage of time. I would venture a guess that these people do not cling to the past; they do not worry about the future, but rather they embrace as many moments as they possibly can. I believe that at the end of their journeys, no matter what the calendar might say, their lives, full of experience and meaning, will have been long.

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The Veterans' Corner

By Scott Drummond, USCG Veteran

Military history
Please forgive me for being a little biased here by choosing one of my first articles on military history pertaining to our USCG as I promise to do articles on all of our military services. But this is January and it just happens to coincide with a significant branch of our services, the smallest and very often overlooked. We Coasties are used to that and take no offense whatsoever. We were and are proud and humbled to serve.

Even though we of the United States Coast Guard claim 4 August 1790 as our official birthdays, then we were called the Revenue Cutter Service, some interesting developmental history follows. The Lighthouse Service was formed even earlier, 7 August 1789 and was absorbed by the USCG in 1939. Aids to Navigation is still, today a primary mission in our coastal & Intercoastal Waterways. On 20 January 1915 President Woodrow Wilson signed our United States Coast Guard into law via the "Act to Create the Coast Guard". So, our unique USCG, over the last 200 plus years was created or combined the missions of five federal agencies: 1- The Revenue Cutter Service, 2-the Lighthouse Service, 3-the Steamboat Inspection Service, 4-the Bureau of Navigation, 5-and the Lifesaving Service.

As a military service, dedicated to protect and serve our USA, our USCG has served in every major conflict around the globe, in addition to primary missions of SAR (Search and Rescue), law enforcement such as drug interdiction, and Aids to Navigation. This, by no means is a comprehensive list of all that our USCG does. Some of us older folks enlisted when

the USCG was managed by the U.S Treasury Department, soon to be reassigned to the Department of Transportation, and currently under the auspices of the Department of Homeland Security. When Coast Guard units are assigned to war zones, as in WWII, South Pacific, or in Viet Nam, we typically are liaisoned with our United States Navy. For anyone interested in an excellent book on USCG involvement in WWII, locate a copy of "Lucky Thirteen" written by former USCG Petty Officer Ken Wiley. Or perhaps speak to one of our Towns County Iwo Jima heroes, Retired USN Chief Petty Officer Bud Johnson, who served on DE's with many USCG sailors in our efforts against the Japanese in those dark days.

Today's modern USCG has come a long way in technology, equipment, and even our "more educated" young men and women who volunteer for a unique and what I consider a somewhat extraordinary military opportunity. Young folks, once graduates of boot camp, exclusively at Cape May, NJ, then perhaps Advanced Training, at one of several locations, are often placed in positions of utmost responsibility, not typical of other services under normal conditions. The rank of "petty officer" in the USCG isn't petty at all. In spite of being lovingly called "Hooligan's Navy" and "Shallow water Sailors," we of the USCG have travelled far and wide across our globe in quest of saving lives, defending our nation, assisting other countries in times of disaster, and when called, serve beside all our nation's brave men and women.

Scott Drummond
Semper Paratus

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen



Pathetic story from the J F Kennedy High School in Paterson, NJ. A freshman student was using his cell phone in class - against school policy - and when the 62-year-old Physics teacher attempted to confiscate it - which school policy permits - the student grabbed the teacher, scuffled with him, and finally "slammed him to the floor." All 23 seconds of the fight can be viewed on YouTube.

Two things I find deeply troubling about the story. One is that none of the other students came to the aid of the teacher or attempted to intervene. I mean, whatever happened to courage? Whatever happened to justice? In watching the video you can see that the teacher does not retaliate or strike the student. Why didn't a couple of brave folks from the class show up at the prof's side and say, "Hey, enough already!" The classroom aside, don't we as citizens have a responsibility to each other? Maybe this should have been a class on Courage 101 rather than Physics. Incidentally it might also be a good discussion topic with your kids around the dinner table this evening.

The other part of the story of course is about the 16-year old freshman. Aside from

the fact that he was removed from the school and received an "appropriate, educational placement" for the balance of the year, the fact is that the charge against him is third-degree aggravated assault, and if he is tried as an adult and convicted, the penalty for that crime in New Jersey is five years in prison. Pretty expensive cell phone.

The cell phone of course is not the issue. It's the 16-year old ninth-grader. We harp a lot in this column about starting early to help our kids develop respect for others, and here is a glaring example of what can happen when it doesn't take. The parents of this ninth-grader are way behind the curve of helping build respect into the fabric of their son's character. He's 16 so it won't be easy, but it's doable.

Actually, doable is not a strong enough word. It's imperative. I don't like the picture that comes to mind when I think of this kid's future if he doesn't get help. His relationship with his boss, his neighbor, his wife, his kids. Come on mom, dad, bring someone along side if you need to, but give this kid a chance.

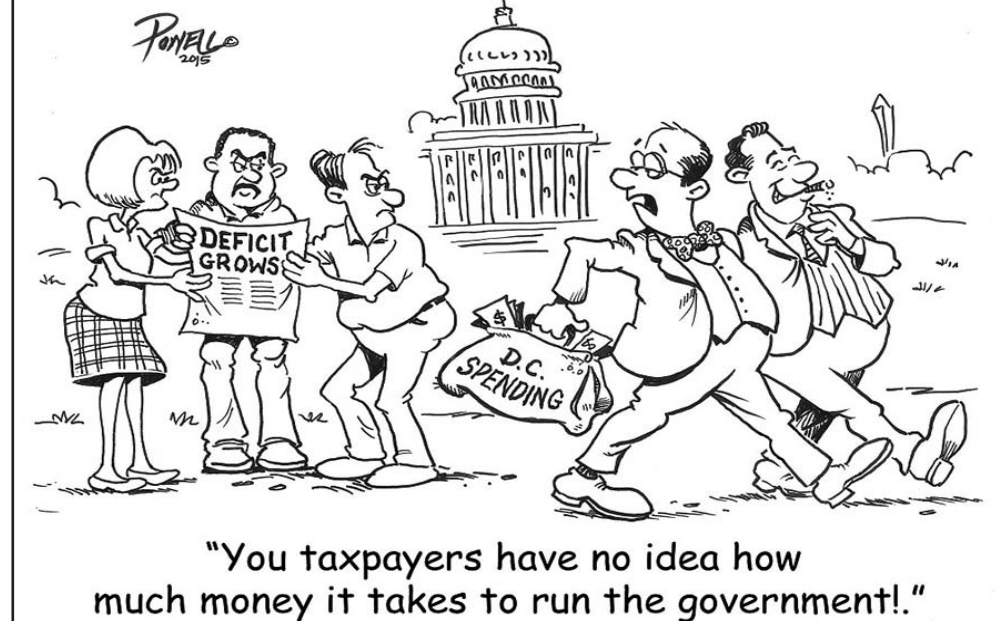
Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@RareKids.net.

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 E-MAILED 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

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 Tuesday 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 old Rec 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.mcug.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/blueridgemountains.
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 players 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.
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 at 706-835-6721 or Marilyn 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.

Towns County Herald

Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

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