

Community

Turners

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compendium with the signal title of High Humor of the Hills. It has both Drs. Turner as joint authors and was published by Nathan House Books, Oakwood, Georgia, 2006.

The book is a valuable addition to our mountain literature and lore on several levels.

The first level is given in the title. It is a book of "High Humor," coming from our mountain folk for many generations, kept alive by repetition, and serving to add a bit of levity to what was often a "hard road in a rough land."

Dr. Joe Turner has done an exceptional job editing the stories and arranging them by eras. If you want a tale from the Revolutionary period, "How Skinflint Won the Race" will pit the frontiersman against a "Virginia Dandy" in a bare-foot race (only the story says they were "bar-foot").

The Civil War era brought forth such tales as old Ben Nix and "The Mule Shoe Dentist" when a blacksmith doubled as the community's tooth-puller. Through various decades, the

true tales of humor represent a people, humble and unpretentious, who found entertainment by listening and telling events, often with themselves as the subjects. Neighbors had time to exchange stories, share laughs, lift each other's burdens.

Altogether, the book contains 200 stories and 139 pages of delightful vignettes. The reader will enjoy the volume as a straight read-through, but will return again and again to reread and learn the variable shades of humor certain favorite tales convey.

So on the level of historical reference book, this volume has merit.

Another level of the book's value is in the language. A five-page "Appalachian Glossary," alphabetized and with meanings of now almost-obsolete mountain words and phrases is a reference not only for the vernacular of the stories but for a language that is rapidly passing away. It has been said that the Appalachian people, especially those of previ-

ous generations before the media rendered a "standard English" language for us all, was one of the truest Scots-Irish and Elizabethan English tongues still practiced. Dr. Joseph Blair Turner writes in his foreword: "I have attempted to capture the more folksy expressions. If it seems different, remember that socio-linguistically there are no right or wrong accents or dialects, only some people who do not appreciate the beauty of folk-tendered expression, preserved by the folk themselves. This culture is vanishing. I am thankful I was there, warmed by its fading rays." (page xv)

High Humor of the Hills will bring laughs. But, further, it will bring understanding. The storytellers who people its pages are real, proud of their heritage, unafraid of hard toil and life's knocks, able to pick up and move forward, always keenly compassionate and ready to lend a helping hand. As both Harry Turner and Joe Turner state: "These are my people. I am one of them." And

those of us born and reared in the Appalachian region—or Union County, Georgia, in particular—can relate to the tales, to the thread of hope that lies beyond the pranks, to the people seeking some respite from grueling work and sometimes drab life. As Dr. Harry Turner states in "The Prologue":

"You wouldn't dare call them 'hillbilly.' They aren't. Just real honest to goodness folk, getting more of life's blessings than you might be, dear reader." They care not for aberration nor embellishment, but life as it comes." (page xii).

Many of the stories show strong faith held by Appalachian people. Even though these stories deal with faith laced with humor, that faith is, nevertheless, an unswerving dependence on God. Harry Turner expressed this faith of the people well: "Neither are they complacent in their fear of God—their Divine Master. They are His stewards of the soil. They toil and grow strong on it. They

laugh deep and long there in the valleys, next to Heaven's crests, heeding the only call that counts to them: God's." (page xiii).

The author who first started recording the stories, Harry, son of a dirt farmer, and long-time agricultural agent in the mountain counties of Georgia, knew first-hand of the strong affinity between the land and the people. High Humor of the Hills will provide amusement while teaching the reader many valuable lessons he will remember.

For purchasing information, see the website at NathanHouseBooks.com. I think you (as am I) will be glad to have your own copy for \$12.95 (price includes shipping). If you do not have inter-

net, you may order from Nathan House Publishers, P. O. Box 1696, Oakwood, GA 30566.

I personally congratulate Dr. Joseph Blair Turner for completing this book. He invites readers to contribute their own stories of true mountain humor. In the future there very likely will be a Volume II of High Humor of the Hills. But first, I highly recommend that you get Volume I of this brand new publication for yourself or for a gift. And if you hear of a book signing at a book store near you, I recommend that you go to meet compiler Dr. Joseph Blair Turner who felt it his mission to complete the work his father had begun.

St. Francis festival features silent auction

This weekend's Festival at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church promises to provide something for everyone. Most notably, the Silent Auction which takes place Friday and Saturday, September 15 and 16 has over one hundred items to satisfy the most discerning tastes.

Cathy Fiser, Chairman for the Silent Auction, commented, "We were astounded at the value and quality of some of the items. I particularly love the antique mahogany secretary and mahogany harvest server inlaid table both of which are in mint condition. We have Collector's items including a

Dale Earnhardt jacket, a vintage Stephens Pottery Master Ink bottle and an antique Silver Mexican Coin Bracelet."

Cathy described some of the fashion items including a Dooney and Bourke purse and wallet, Ann Taylor black leather purse, 18 karat gold earrings, a silver necklace and a handmade felted knit purse. "We also have some great activities like a 7-day stay at a two-bedroom condominium in Branson, Missouri for the week of June 18-25, 2007, a Fun World ten guest gift certificate valued at \$149.55, a \$90 certificate for Horseback Riding at Brasstown Valley Resort and a

variety of restaurant certificates. We have a major selection of art objects from framed prints to originals, wood carvings and stain glass panels."

"The variety and quantity is simply too extensive to list everything, so you'll just have to come on out and see for yourselves. You may go home with a new Rogers Brothers Silver Service or even a small organ." Winners in the bidding will be announced over the loud speaker after 2 pm on Saturday. For additional information about the Silent Auction you can email Cathy at ryfiser@alltel.net.

Visit the international

food booths, listen to the wide variety of live music and bring the children for a fun-filled day. Come on out Friday and Saturday, September 15 & 16 at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Blairsville, located 3 miles east of downtown Blairsville between Blairsville and Young Harris.

Candidate wants health insurance to all children, regardless of income

Representative Charles Jenkins, District 8, today urged passage of PeachKids, which is a plan to guarantee health insurance to all Georgia's children, regardless of the parent's income.

"We can provide access to quality, affordable health insurance for all of Georgia's children with PeachKids," said Rep. Jenkins. "The cost for the program would be minimal and can be easily done considering the state's current revenue surplus. The high price of health insurance is a burden to families in this district and throughout the state."

PeachKids would expand

on the current PeachCare program by providing access to health insurance to all children, regardless of their parent's income. It is estimated to cost \$10 million the first year and \$20 million every following year. The price would be small considering the present state budget is at \$18.6 billion and Georgia currently has a large revenue surplus.

On the subject of new statistics showing the number of Georgians without health insurance has increased, Jenkins continued, "We also recently learned that Georgia saw an increase in the amount of citizens who lack health insurance.

Georgia was one of only 8 states to see this happen and it is simply unacceptable. Our lawmakers must start providing real solutions to solve the healthcare crisis in Georgia, and PeachKids is a great place to start."

According to the latest Census Bureau data, the number of uninsured has increased from 1.5 million in 2004 to 1.7 million in 2005. Georgia was also one of eight states whose two-year rolling average of uninsured rose. The figure leaves Georgia tied for eighth among states with the highest rate of people with no health insurance.

Volunteer opportunity

Are you a person looking for ways to improve your community? Do you know that 1 in 4 students in Union and Towns

County do not complete High School? Do you know that literacy problems in the southeastern states cost employers

\$57.2 Billion each year? Do you know that when employers in service and retail businesses lose that much money, you in the general public pay. Do you want to help wipe out this problem? Do you have one, two or three hours a week to devote to volunteer tutoring? As a responsible member of the community, you owe a little time to help. Call Charlie Sowers, Director of T.U. L. I. P. (Towns Union Literacy Instills Pride) at 781-3944 or 745-5123. Let's talk about it.

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