

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Letter to the Editor

I am writing this letter in support of the election on the one percent sales tax.

The SPLOST one percent school tax stops this summer. The recreation tax would just continue, the one cent sales tax, for a beautiful park at the junction of Hwy. 76 and Hwy. 69.

I have researched this vote proposal and found if this tax fails, all of our county taxes will increase. If it passes, non-county residents will help pay for a park that would be second to none in this area.

In conclusion, if everyone wants to pay less taxes and get the same results, please vote "Yes" on the SPLOST tax.

I am 79 years old and have battled cancer for the past six months. I will never get the chance to fully enjoy this park, but I know that my friends and family will.

Regards,
Harold Shook

Letter to the Editor

Reference is made to article published in the Towns County Herald, Wednesday, January 26, 2011: "Bank of Hiawassee Ingles branch to close April 30, 2011". As a customer of the bank for over 24 years, I was greatly disappointed to read the article of the bank branch closing. I have talked to a number of local customers and they too expressed disappointment. This branch's convenient service, and the always courteous, friendly personnel, are compliments to the Bank of Hiawassee. It would seem that instead of "taking a step forward", in customer service they are "taking a step backward". We sincerely hope the bank officials will reconsider the decision to close this branch, that has provided convenient and outstanding service to your countless customers for many years.

Sincerely,
Leo D. Hesson

Dear Editor,

What is it going to take to get people to notice that YIELD sign at the intersection on Bell Creek, as well and more importantly, the intersection up above Macedonia where you turn and go up the river towards Helen and Cleveland? If people do not know what a YIELD sign is for, then please put up something with flashing lights, or something to get them to notice and PAUSE for on coming traffic. With the fender benders especially at the river junction lately, some day, it is going to come to more than just an injury. And then will something be done, but only after it is done too late?

Thank you,
Mrs. D. Barnes



**RARE KIDS;
WELL DONE**
By Don Jacobsen

Last time we talked about building kids who are respectful. Here's a recipe for mom and dad:

1. Respect is a street with two-way traffic. We all, kids included, tend to show respect to those who respect us. Treat your kids with the same courtesy as you do your best friend.

2. As a parent, you are the leader in your family. Not a despot, but the leader.

Not a wimp, but the leader. Few rules, with obedience anticipated. The kids are free to disagree, but they are not free to disobey. If they choose to disobey, there will be consequences. It's predictable. Life is like that. A family is a kid's preparation for life.

3. Your children will become like you are, so be what you want them to be. No shortcuts here, no games. Kids are God's little spies—they'll know. Personal integrity is huge. No one can spot a phony like a kid, and nobody respects a phony.

4. Engulf your kids in genuine affirmation. Pay them honest compliments. Look for traits in them that they may not notice in themselves. Not flattery, but honest appreciation.

Don't exaggerate, but look for reasons to celebrate them.

5. Listening is a learned skill. Learn it well. Reflect back to them what you think you are hearing them say. "I'd love to hear what your thinking is on the subject of . . ." is a great - and respectful - way to begin a conversation. Then don't argue or judge; just listen. There are few things you can do that will demonstrate respect more powerfully.

6. Lead your family in looking for people you can help. You'll get more respect from your kids if you help others than if you help your kids. This trait grows out of a gratitude mind-set rather than an entitlement mind-set. As a bonus, few activities build self-respect better than this one because it goes beyond today's self-help hype of knowing what you want and how to get it, to knowing what you have and how to give it.

7. And one we talked about recently: Never argue with your kids. Never. Not ever.

Now there's a recipe for a scrumptious dish of family respect.

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

From the desk of State Sen. Jim Butterworth



The HOPE (Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally) Scholarship program has been called the state's brightest jewel, most valuable gem and its most unique treasure. The scholarship is a tool that helps attract Georgia's best and brightest students to in-state colleges. It is a vital economic development tool and it is necessary to keep Georgia's post-secondary education competitive with the rest of the nation. This is why we are diligently working to craft a sustainable solution to the funding problems currently threatening the program.

The HOPE program is funded entirely by the proceeds from the Georgia Lottery Corporation. According to the Georgia Student Finance Commission, HOPE expenditures will exceed lottery funds by \$243 million in 2011 and by \$317 million in 2012. The program's financial distress coupled with the state's economic struggles is a recipe for disaster unless we act now.

There are several reasons for the timing of this crisis. The HOPE program has been underfunded by the Georgia Lottery Corporation for years, college tuition has dramatically increased, and the number of participants in the program has grown. State law suggests that 35 percent of lottery proceeds go to funding the program but the law also allows some flexibility if this threshold is impractical with respect to that year's proceeds. The Lottery Corporation has sole discretion over what it considers to be practical. Last year, only 24 percent of lottery funds were contributed. The corporation argues that the program is so successful because the majority of lottery funds go back to the players as prize money.

I believe it's time to rein in an organization that has, intentionally or unintentionally, taken advantage of its independence. Currently, Georgia lottery players buy more tickets than almost any other state in the Union. We are 2nd in the country in total sales. Inversely, we are 34th in the country in the amount of revenue which is deposited to its intended cause, in our case, HOPE. The Georgia Lottery is held to high expectations set by the people of Georgia and it's time the corporation is made accountable to those expectations. Increasing transparency, accountability and oversight are all options that we'll look at as we move through the legislative process.

Surging tuition prices have also placed a huge burden on the HOPE program. From Fall 1999 to Fall 2010, the tuition rates have increased by about 94 percent. Because HOPE pays for the entire cost of tuition, any increase is a major factor in the program's financial crisis. The largest drain on HOPE resources is the increasing number of participants. In 2000, awards were handed out to over 300,000 but the projected number of awards for 2011 is 580,000. Increased eligibility and awards, together with the country's economic recession, have led to

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, 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.

tremendous jumps in enrollment and participation in the scholarship program.

As Chairman of the Senate Higher Education Committee, I called a meeting to facilitate the understanding of these complex issues for the members of the committee. Testimony was heard from stakeholders regarding their thoughts and suggestions for a sustainable solution. We heard from several of my colleagues in the State Senate, representatives from the University System of Georgia, the Georgia Student Finance Commission, the Technical Schools and also the President of the Independent Colleges of Georgia. While the suggestions differed, the goal was the same: to keep helping high-achieving students and their families afford college.

Many different ideas were discussed and these ideas will facilitate the drafting of forthcoming legislation. The important thing is that we are involving the interested parties and asking their help in forming legislation, and including them in every step of the process. Something must be done to save this scholarship program not just for next year, but for generations to come. We will be successful in this endeavor. Our success will require looking at every angle and considering every option on the table. Also, I'll work diligently to ensure we keep the essence of the program intact. I'll continue to update you as any legislation is introduced and we analyze them in the Higher Education Committee.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding HOPE, the budget or any other issues. As always, I'm honored to serve you, the 50th Senate District, this session and all year round.



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

Double the dose

February is frequently referred to as "Love month." Of course, there is no mystery as to why it is called love month. The word "love" is probably written, spoken, and sung more in February than any other month. Love, what a powerful word when properly experienced and understood in one's life. Some unknown once said, "Love is appealing, but its practice is appallingly difficult." We send e-mails, letters and Valentines oozing with expressions of love. We talk about love; we write songs and poems about love; we sing about love, but love seems to elude us when we attempt to put it into practice. The problem with most of America when it comes to love is that we have adopted the world's definition of love. Hollywood defines love for vast numbers of individuals as nothing more than unbridled lust. True, genuine love is not demonstrated through Hollywood but through God's Holy Word by a Holy God who became the God-Man in the person of Jesus Christ and lived a sinless life, died a sacrificial death for unlovely humanity, and was raised in a victorious resurrection in order to pour out His perfect love in our hearts. God's love will never be obsolete. Everything will someday fail: Health will fail. Wealth will fail. Knowledge will cease.

Fame will fail, faith will end and hope will be fulfilled, but love (God's love) is eternal. Life is not about what you drive, deposit or dwell in; it is about your dedication and devotion to living a life of love. Somewhere in my reading I ran across this formula about life: "Life minus love equals zero." Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Love would put a new face on this weary old world in which we dwell as pagans and enemies too long, and would warm the heart to see how fast the vain diplomacy of statesmen, the impotence of armies, and navies, and lines of defense, would be superseded by this unarmed child. Love will creep where it cannot go, will accomplish that by imperceptible methods — being its own level, fulcrum and power — which force could never achieve." Genuine love is absolutely essential if life is a blessing and not a curse. The late Michael Guido tells the story of a wise physician telling his young protégé that he had been practicing and prescribing medicine for many years but he had found that the greatest medicine was love. "But what if it doesn't work," asked the young doctor? The wise physician said, "Double the dose!" In this month of February would you join me in "doubling the dose of love" to our mates, children, siblings, parents, teachers, leaders, neighbors — what I am saying is give everyone that you know a "double dose of God's love" as you serve and sacrifice. We love because He first loved us. Isaac Watts said it best, "Love (God's love) so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."



Community Calendar

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 2 p.m.
Towns County Democratic Party meets at 5 PM at the Senior Center the 3rd Thursday of every month. Please call Kim Bailey at 706-994-2727 or 706-896-6747 for details.
Towns County Republican Party meets the 4th Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Daniels Steak House. Dinner at 6 p.m., 706-896-7281.
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 Hiwassee River Valley Kennel Club meetings are held at 7 p.m. the 1st Monday of each month at Brother's Restaurant on Hwy 64 in Murphy, NC. Call President Kit Miracle: 706-492-5253 or Peggy Moorman: 828-835-1082.
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.
Board of Voter Registrars meets the 3rd Wednesday of

the month at 4:30 p.m., Courthouse.
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 p.m. Annual dues \$15, PO Box 1182, Hiawassee, GA 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org
Bridge Players intermediate level meets at 12:45 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Recreational Dept. Call Eden at 706-896-6921.
Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG) meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at ArtWorks Artisan Centre, located at 308 Big Sky Drive (behind the Holiday Inn), Hiawassee. Refreshments at 6 p.m. & the meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Contact us by calling 706-896-0932, mtnregarts-craftsguild.org. mtnregarts-craftsguild@hotmail.com.
VFW Post #7807 Fish Fry will be 2nd and 4th Friday of the month, 4:30-7 p.m., \$9 a plate, all you can eat.
Mountain Computer User Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month at the Goolsby Center at YHC. Q & A at 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m.
FPL Retirees Breakfast will meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Hole in the Wall Restaurant on the square in Blairsville at 9 a.m.
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 Quinlan 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 on the third Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church of Blairsville from 6 - 8 p.m. Call the church office at 706-745-2469 for more information.
Chattage 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 6 p.m. Thursdays at Pine Log Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Brasstown. Ping Pong players welcome. Call Lee (828) 389-0924.
We do Family Oral History of all of our residents. If you have not had your family history recorded and would like to do so, please call the Towns County Historical Society at 706-896-1060.
Fall Storytime at Towns County Public Library Thursdays at 1 PM.
Prostate Cancer Support Group meets the 3rd Monday of every month from 5-6 PM in the Cancer Treatment Center Auditorium in Blairsville. For more info call Steve 706-896-1064.
Mountain Coin Club meets the second Tuesday of each month at the Blairsville Civic Center. Doors open at 5:30. Program and auction begins at 6:30. For more information, call Ye Old Coin Shop, 706-379-1488.

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