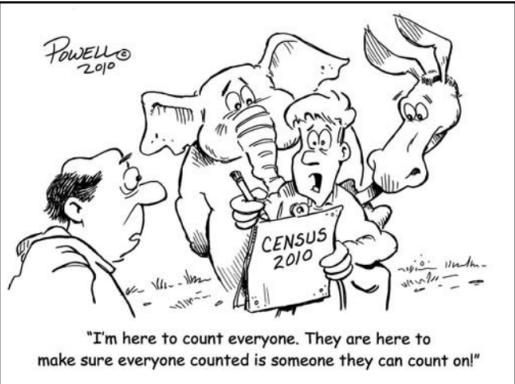
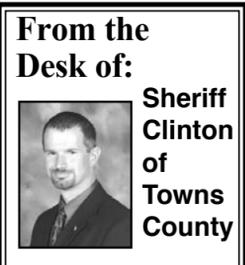


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



Letters to The Editor

Thank you
The Unicoi Detachment, Marine Corps League, thanks the people of Towns County for their generous support of our 2009 Toys For Tots toy collection. We were able to supply toys to 111 families for 248 children in Towns County. We also thank the establishments who provided space for our collection boxes, and the organizations that held toy drives amongst their members. A special thank you to the Center for Disease Control who provided 21 new bicycles, and Brasstown Valley Golf Course for collection of larger toys from their golfers. Even though these are difficult times, the love you have shown made 2009's collection one of our best. All the members of Unicoi Detachment thank you again. Semper Fidelis
Marine Corps League Unicoi Detachment



From the Desk of:
Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

Over the last few weeks, we have been very busy at the Sheriff's Office. We have begun implementing the new grant for the purpose of working drugs in Towns County. Over the weekend, we have already stopped a drug trafficker who was moving drugs into Towns County. We are continuing to work with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and other sheriffs around the state to bring to justice those involved in supplying drugs to drug dealers in our area. Drug trafficking is a charge that applies to large quantities of drugs known as trafficking amounts. Drug traffickers typically supply several smaller drug dealers. It is my goal to enforce the drug laws and stamp out the drug dealers and ultimately the drug traffickers from our area.

Over the last two years, we have made real progress in accomplishing this goal. In 2008, drug arrests went up significantly and, in turn, crime went down. The same was true for 2009. As the rest of the state has seen crime increase over the last two years, crime in Towns County has decreased 12.6% in 2008 and

15.1% by the end of 2009. The reason for the decrease in crime is the aggressive stance we have taken on the drug trade in our area. According to the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Report (ADAM), in 2008 nearly 90% of those arrested in the United States tested positive for illegal drugs at the time of the arrest. That tells me that if the drug trade is attacked, crime must go down.

We also continue to work to improve our response to missing persons. We recently had a report of a missing woman that was resolved successfully with no harm to the victim. We worked with the G.B.I. on the case and the agent in charge of the case commented to me that he was impressed with the professionalism and proficiency with which the deputies had handled the case prior to his arrival. In fact, he stated that, had all the leads been located in Towns County, he would not have been able to bring anything to the case. His feelings were that the deputies had already handled the case inside Towns County in the same manner the Bureau would have.

I'm very proud of the job being performed on a daily basis by the staff at the Sheriff's Office, as I'm sure you are, too. As always, we are striving to find new ways to better serve you and if you have any suggestions please contact me personally or call the office at 706-896-4444, or you can email us through our website at www.townscounty-sheriffsoffice.com. T(Feb17,1)SH

The Middle Path by Don Perry

While scientists and religionists continue to argue the validity of the theory of evolution, it can be amusing to consider that, though humans are rumored to have ascended or descended from the apes, humanity often exhibits instincts uncharacteristic of primates. While we certainly have the ability to act like monkeys, the behavior that adds to our collective woes over time is the herding instinct. Our ability to graze more or less peacefully, content or at least resigned to making our widgets, eating our Big Macs and paying our taxes, often leaves us vulnerable to predators and parasites.

Last week I promised to renew the effort to find hope among all the news that is dire. I haven't forgotten that promise. There are many of us who have awakened to the worsening state of the Republic and who have begun to take steps to lessen the impact of the changes we must face in the coming months and years. Key to that awakening is the understanding of how often and to what extent we are indeed herded like cattle or that we follow like sheep.

Predators and parasites have always existed among the herds of humanity. Robbers and thieves, though dishonorable, are at least easy to identify when they prey on the weak and the unaware, but if we apply education and the ability to rationalize to the same desire for power and profit, government in its many forms provides a ready vehicle for predatory action and a facade of legitimacy to mask the same base instincts that picks pockets and robs liquor stores. Native Americans hunting bison on the Great Plains would often cover themselves with a buffalo skin in order to slip unobserved among the herds. Well neighbors, we have been buffaloes.

If you doubt this then tell me what corner of life in the United States is not influenced by some elected or appointed organization that monitors, controls and taxes an ever increasing array of human action, all under the auspices of democracy?

From the local level where we pay tribute to a city or county (or both) for the privilege of living in our own homes, where our taxes,

licenses and fees are so often spent to employ the unqualified friends and relatives of the elected - to the national level where the corridors of power are traveled day and night by agents of the wealthiest corporations - the average American citizen is the unwilling and often unwitting host to an increasing number of parasites. Still don't get the picture? Then watch as the Obama Administration makes its own run at something attempted unsuccessfully by both Clinton and Bush: Opening up Social Security to the casino style "security" of Wall Street.

The election of Barack Obama should be a wakeup call for anyone considering the state of democracy in America. Millions voted to end war, to step back from the intrusion of government into our private lives and to put the investment banks grown fat by feeding on our future on a diet. None of these hopes has been fulfilled and they are not likely to be, but who can deny that this situation is any different from scores of past elections accompanied by hundreds of broken promises?

This is not an effort to announce an anarchist manifesto. Obviously the legitimate functions of government justify its continued existence. We are not a mature enough species to exist without our institutions. However, the longer a para-

sitic government functioning as an extension of corporate power continues to exist in a tapeworm economy, the less effective that government will be in fulfilling its legitimate functions. Just take a look at the crumbling infrastructure in the United States, for example. Consider the forty thousand new laws created for fifty states last year alone. Consider that half of every dollar coming our way is taxed and diverted in one form or another into the coffers of elected or appointed organizations. Consider the untold billions of tax dollars given directly to the wealthiest people in the world to "save" the economy by rescuing institutions "too big to fail."

When parasites feed excessively, at some point the host sickens and dies. The primary host feeding the tapeworm economy in the United States is the ever shrinking middle class and small business is the economic engine that creates the most jobs, yet both of these groups are under an ever increasing burden to finance the imperial economy and to pay for the increasing number of citizens who are unemployed or otherwise unable to work. The private sector will continue to atrophy as our free market economy is gradually replaced by a government economy where elections are occasionally held to legitimize the decisions already made by the oligarchy.

We know the problem. What can we do about it? Step one on the path to economic survival and the survival of our sanity is to right now and today leave behind the way of

the sheep and resolve to be a goat. Goats are independent, keenly observant and skeptical; more prone to realize that every talking head, no matter how good the intentions, wants to sell us something. The news reader wants ratings to sell advertising. The Congresswoman wants our vote.

The preacher wants to pass the collection plate. And all of the above study our psychology and even our physiology in order to be more effective at tapping into our prime motivations and manipulating our decisions. All information is subjective and even scientific information is colored by the bias of the observer.

Remember the parade of scientists hired by the tobacco companies to testify that smoking was not harmful. Step two is to realize once and for all that the paradigm we grew up with which defines success as the ability to own and display material things - is changing. The time when we thought nothing of driving twenty miles for a fast food meal is ending. It should end. It wasn't healthy for us or for the planet. These are two steps, but they are a good start, and in the coming months we will explore in more detail the beginnings of a new American paradigm, one that is leaner, smarter and more efficient. Be patient. Be practical. Be observant.

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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, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: tcherald@brmemc.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

Towns County Water Board Meeting 3rd Monday of each month at 7 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 6 PM every 2nd Thursday of the month at Crossroads Restaurant. Meeting begins at 6. Please call Kim Bailey @ 706-994-2727 OR 706-896-6747

Towns County Republican Party meets the 1st Tuesday of each month from 5 p.m.-6 p.m. Dinner at Daniels Steak House, 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. meeting, 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 Unicoi Masonic Lodge #259 meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

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 Health 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/blueridgemountains.

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.

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.

Old Fashioned Square Dance Lessons each Mon. in Hiawassee, GA, 6 p.m. at the Senior Center (2 blocks south of the town square, beside the Courthouse) Hiawassee, GA 706-896-1060

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.

Mended Hearts Support Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month at Chatuge Regional Hospital Cafeteria from 5:30-7 PM. For information contact 706-994-6988.