

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Are mountainside homes at risk?

Last summer, wildfires burned out of control for several weeks in parts of southern California.

Then recent torrential rains pounded those areas causing massive mudslides in hilly places where protective vegetation had been destroyed. Many homes were damaged or destroyed by either fires or mud. Locally, huge rockslides closed parts of I-40 in North Carolina and Tennessee, Hwy 64 in Tennessee and Hwy 76 in Towns and several other North Georgia counties. Record rainfall in 2009 (I measured 72 inches at our place) was certainly welcome in ending several years of drought, but now the ground is so saturated that it has become highly unstable, especially on steep slopes. Rock formations that were bone dry two years ago now spout streams of water that are weakening their seams, starting crumbling and erosion. Instability can be expected to worsen as heavy rains continue. This prospect raises serious concerns for those who have built on "difficult terrain," i.e. steep slopes. Will the mud and rockslides that have occurred elsewhere where terrain was disturbed by excavation soon begin to affect these sites? How safe are access roads and buildings in such locations? If mountainside structures start eroding, what liability will developers, builders and sales persons face for failing to disclose the risks and county officials for permitting construction? The worst scenario would be for continued saturating rainfall, compounded by shifts in the underlying fault line, to trigger a sizeable earthquake. While this situation may not occur, just the very real possibility is enough to cause rational people to rethink the wisdom of building on unstable mountain slopes.

Wm. Ronald Gibson

Letter to the Editor:

Why has Georgia had so many bank failures - more than either Florida or California or of the two combined? Yes, the retirement community and vacation home markets have been hit especially hard, but North Carolina and Florida have at least as many of those properties. Could it have something to do with the Georgia Department of Banking and Finance?

Michael Valinoti

Dear Editor:

Each and every one of us on the face of this earth is GUILTY! Guilty of attempting to destroy something that is very precious... LOVE! It is offered to us pure and simple, and we run away from it. We run away from it because we can't bring ourselves to trust it, or the people who are offering that love. We can't believe that if people saw us as we really are, that they would still love us. We all think we have to be some kind of superhero for others to love us. There is a monster living among us.

But it is not a legendary creature that comes lurking out of the woods which stands ten feet tall all covered with hair, nor is it some type of prehistoric creature who swims in our lakes and rivers. No, it is the LIES that are told on those who are different, about BLACK people, or WHITE people, or YELLOW people, or BROWN people, or people who are in wheelchairs or handicapped, or people who are JEWS, or CATHOLICS, or MORMONS, or whatever is different. And, those who are different, sometimes, as stupid as it seems, they buy it. And end up living that lie. "Oh don't fret too much for me because I am handicapped or no one could really love me because I have a birth mark splashed across the side of my face. It is a disease, and it has caused more death and destruction and suffering than any other in the history of the world.

And it is carried only by human beings. And its name, is PREJUDICE! And YOU are the carrier of it! WE ALL ARE!

Sincerely and with blessings,
Mrs. Delores Barnes

Make the effort to be counted!

For weeks we have been watching our mail for the 2010 Census survey. Today, I learned that since we do not receive mail delivery at our street address, but at a post office box instead, we will not be receiving a 2010 Census survey. Why hasn't this information been made public to us through the local media? In a rural county, where many of us do not have the benefit of mail delivery to our homes, how were we to know that we might not get counted in the Census? The census is even more important during these tough economic times. Our congressional representation and percentage of federal and state money to which we are entitled is dependent upon the number of people who live within our county's boundaries. When the 'pot of money' is limited, it is critical that we receive our rightful, proportional share of that money. Every one of us who lives in Towns County must be counted. At the post office what happens if our census survey comes addressed to our street address? The postal service has been instructed that no census correspondence addressed to a street address is to be forwarded to a post office box. It is all to be returned to the census bureau. The Young Harris post office alone has returned over 1000 pieces of census correspondence in recent weeks. 2010 Census survey forms are available to those who have not received one in the mail at both public libraries in Young Harris and Hiawassee. It may be a trip out of the way, but it is so important to all of us who live in Towns County. I urge you to make the effort to make sure we are all counted!

Kathy Dayph

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The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Several years ago during a Republican regime, we made the observation that energy companies and defense industries appear to do well under Republicans and that finance and insurance do well in a Democratic regime. The recent signing into law of "landmark" health care legislation would seem to support that observation.

I'm not particularly impressed with this recent gift to the insurance companies financed by the tax dollars of unborn citizens. Republicans posture that this legislation is a great evil which must be repealed at any cost, although it contains provisions which they themselves once promoted and which could have been passed months ago were it not for the fact that this is an election year.

During a six year term a senator barely gets two years to attempt to accomplish something before it's time to start running for re-election; during the two year term of a Congressman, well, you do the math.

The legislation itself is not so much an "overhaul" as it is an attempt by the Democrats and the Obama Administration to hold on to legitimacy. It is the sad product of political posturing, procedural gymnastics and back room compromise that has become the norm for our virtual democracy. I hope I am wrong, but I think it will have little effect on our health care system other than to raise the cost of health insurance and push our economy ever closer to the brink.

An interesting by-product of the health care reform debate is the hubris revealed in the requirement that all citizens purchase health insurance or be penalized.

Never before has a Congress reached so far as to require that citizens engage in commerce. In effect, Americans must now purchase a particular product from a corporation or be fined for failing to do so. Apologists point out that we are required to buy auto insurance, but this is something different. Automobile insurance is regulated by the states and a person can opt out by simply refusing to drive, which many who live in metropolitan areas do. If Congress were truly concerned about the state of healthcare in America a simpler and much more effective measure would have been to outlaw smoking and fast food, which would save billions of dollars and thousands of lives - but we don't resort to such dictatorial measures in the "Homeland;" at least we didn't until now.

The yellow journalists (for those of you who remember

GUEST COLUMN

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.

the term "yellow journalism") have made much hay out of the health care debate, and once again while we were distracted by all the theater, news that is truly important has slipped by unnoticed. This year Social Security will pay out more than it receives. Medicare's unfunded liability will exceed \$89 trillion. Social Security's unfunded liability will exceed \$17 trillion. Added together that amount is seven times the size of the US economy.

It is what it is because Congress (bold, underlined and italicized) has year after year after year spent the money entrusted to it on entitlement, war, pork and corporate bailouts. Every political regime since Reagan has trumpeted a smaller federal government, and every single one of them has increased the size of it.

A friend of mine who has observed politics much longer than I recently tried to explain the system to me. As to my observation that there is little difference between democrats and republicans, he agreed that they both serve the same masters, but asserted that their methods of staying in power are different. "Republicans," he said, "if they can't inspire your vote with patriotism or religion, will try to scare it out of you. Democrats, on the other hand, just buy votes directly with entitlements.

With apologies to the Mr. and Ms. Smith's who undoubtedly go to Washington to make a positive contribution, the enormous gulf between campaign rhetoric and the political theater which happens after elections would indicate that my friend is not too far off the mark.



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

What think ye of Christ?

This is Holy Week and Christians all over the world turn their thoughts to Jesus and to the events that took place in Jerusalem over two thousand years ago.

In fact, the entire world is faced with the question, "What think ye of Christ?"

This was the question that Jesus directed to the Pharisees in Matthew's gospel (Matt. 22:42). This is a personal question. "What do you think of Christ?"

All of us must answer this probing question. As you consider this question I would like to share with you what others thought of Jesus.

Let's ask God what He thinks of Christ and He says, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). If you ask the angels in heaven their response is, "Unto you is born... a savior which is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:11).

Let's ask John the Baptist and he declares, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Ask impetuous Peter and he cries out, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt 16:16).

Disbelieving Thomas, when asked his opinion would loudly announce, "My Lord, and my God" (John 20:28). The poor sinful Samaritan woman who had lived with six different men, weeping invites us to "Come see a man... Is not this the Christ?" (John 4:29). Nathanael, a man in whom was no guile, testified of Jesus,

"Rabbi, thou art the Son of God" (John 1:49).

Paul, the forgiven persecutor of Christ's followers, gladly proclaims his revelation of Christ when he confesses, "I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3:8). John the Apostle, records in the last book of the Bible that Jesus is "The bright and morning star" (Rev. 22:16).

That Roman Centurion helping to carry out the execution of Christ declared with a broken heart, "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15:39).

The Ethiopian Eunuch when asked what he believed joyfully confesses that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37).

Pilate, the governor, weak and spineless, admits that "I find no fault at all" (John 18:38).

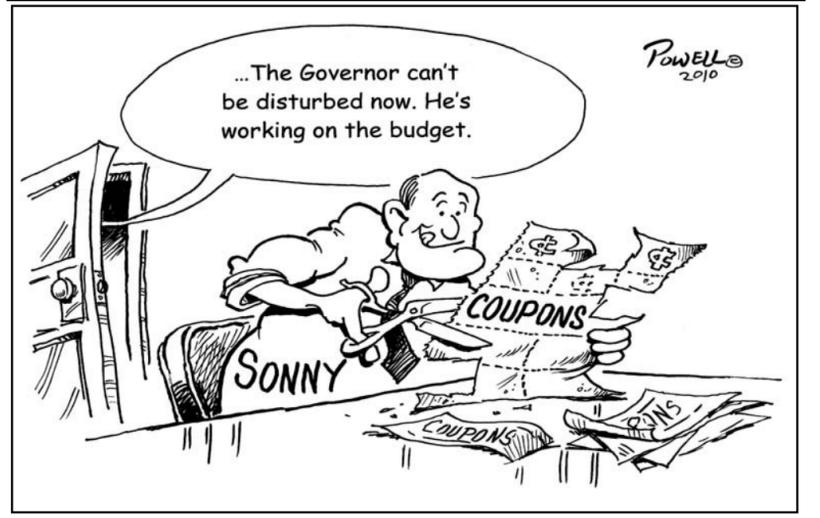
Lastly, the very one who lived and traveled with Jesus for three years, and finally betrayed Him for the price of a slave, Judas, the name that makes you shudder, bitterly wails out, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood" (Matt. 27:4).

The evidence is overwhelming. Jesus is God's Son, human-kind's only Savior. The witnesses in heaven and in earth, both friends and foes, testify that Jesus is the Son of God.

It is important what all of these witnesses believed and confessed.

But what they believed won't help you. In the beginning, I said this was a personal question.

Your eternal destiny depends upon what you think of Christ. In light of the evidence and witnesses what is your decision?



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 the 2nd Thursday of every month. Please call Kim Bailey at 706-994-2727 or 706-896-6747 for details.

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 Hiawassee 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 Moor-man: 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 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, mtntregartscraftsguild.org, mtntregartscraftsguild@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.

We continue to do Family Oral History of all of our residents - We do not want to miss anyone. If you have not had your family history recorded ad would like to do so, Please call the Towns County Historical Society at 706-896-1060.