

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY
OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

From the office of Bruce Rogers, Towns County Tax Commissioner

I would like to begin by thanking the citizens & the taxpayers who own property in Towns County for paying 85.5% of our total Tax Digest in a timely manner; despite the fact our economy, at the present, lacks a lot to be desired.

I am well aware of the hardships created as a result of the economy. We as citizens and property owners of Towns County have an annual obligation to pay our property taxes.

When I took office nine years ago, I swore an oath to collect or pursue collections of any and all delinquent taxes to the best of my ability. I have not taken this lightly and never will. This being said, it's time for the citizens and taxpayers who are delinquent in paying the final 14.5% of the Tax Digest to contact my office in reference to payment of their outstanding tax bills.

As you may or may not know, the process of collections is a lengthy and expensive one; requiring time and money for notification to all who are delinquent. We have now completed one step in this process by sending out our bills on December 10, 2008 bearing a due date of February 10, 2009 and are now notifying the delinquent taxpayers.

I am putting this public notice in the papers to better prepare you of notices yet to come and asking for your full cooperation.

Contact me at the office from 8:30-4:30 Monday thru Friday, please call (706) 896-2267 with any questions you may have. I am sure if we work together we can get through this without further problems.

Sincerely,
Bruce Rogers, Towns County Tax Commissioner

Small businesses score big in General Session

Georgia's General Assembly did an impressive job in the session that ended a couple weeks ago.

Despite the tight budget and weak economy, the House and Senate worked with small business on a few bills that are going to help create jobs and pull Georgia out of the worst recession we've seen in decades.

Probably the greatest victory small business enjoyed this session was a bill called the Jobs, Opportunity and Business Success (JOBS) Act of 2009, sponsored by Rep. Tom Graves of Ranger.

The JOBS Act is going to get people working again, help businesses hurt by the drop in spending and save state government—meaning the state's taxpaying businesses—millions of dollars a year in unemployment benefits.

How? By giving businesses a \$2,400-a-year income tax credit for hiring someone who receives unemployment benefits and stays on the job at least two years. It also gives them a maximum \$500-a-year credit toward their employers' unemployment insurance tax.

The more people a business hires from the unemployment rolls, the greater the credit.

There were other victories, too.

For example, lawmakers approved a bill calling for a special election to let voters decide whether to eliminate the state inventory tax. That's a tax businesses pay on unsold merchandise.

It's an incredibly unfair tax, because it punishes businesses for having merchandise to sell. Georgia is one of only six states that still has an inventory tax, and we're hopeful that voters will agree we need to nix it.

Lawmakers agreed to a two-year freeze on property tax increases, so our commercial and residential property tax bills won't climb during this recession.

They avoided a \$226 million tax increase on businesses by agreeing to accept federal dollars to shore up Georgia's unemployment trust fund.

And they defended the right of workers to cast secret ballots in union representation votes.

The Senate passed a resolution urging Georgia's congressional delegation to vote against the so-called Employee Free Choice Act, a piece of federal legislation designed to make it easier for unions to organize.

Under this federal bill, unions could bypass secret ballots in favor of a very public, very intimidating process called card check. Once a majority of workers sign union authorization cards, their workplace would be unionized.

Of course, Georgia's small businesses still face challenges.

Legislation calling for an increase in the state minimum wage and for employers to give workers an extra 24 hours of leave didn't make it out of committee, but they'll come up again in 2010.

And small businesses still need the General Assembly to allow a vote on a constitutional amendment that would cap residential and commercial property tax increases at 3 percent a year or the rate of inflation, whichever is lower.

But those are challenges that can wait until next year's legislative session.

Georgia's General Assembly truly rose to the occasion this spring, passing a raft of bills that will go a long way to helping small business lead the state out of recession.

David Raynor
 State Director of National Federation
 of Independent Business



The pleasures of sin will deceive you

By Dr. Steven Swisher, Pastor
 Living Word Revival Center

If we deny that there are some pleasures in sin, we would be silly to do so. That is what attracts people into walking in sins, because sin is usually self-serving and a decision made by one's weaknesses of the flesh. The bible says in John 3:19, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." God has not made us ignorant of right or wrong. Adam and Eve ate from the tree of good and evil and had their eyes opened to these things. So it is not the knowledge of the truth that is a hindrance to serving God, but it is the love of ungodly pleasures that causes men to remain in darkness, lest they repent and come to the light. That light is Christ and the only way that men can be saved and inherit eternal life. The bible says in Romans 8:6-8, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

An example of this is found in the life of Moses. The Bible says Hebrews 11:24,25, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Moses saw the wisdom of serving God as a greater reward than to follow after the pleasures of sin for a season. The bible says that the wages of sin lead to death and destruction. Moses was able to see the greatness of what God offers to those who repent of evil and live unto righteousness. Imagine serving God on the earth in godliness for an average lifetime of 75 years and to gain eternal life that lasts beyond billions of years, never to end. Sounds like an easy decision, yet sin has the power to deceive man into choosing darkness over eternal life. The penalty for choosing sin is being cast into outer darkness and the gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 13:38-43) The fact is that in whatever

state you die, whether saved or unsaved will never be able to be reversed. You won't be able to say, Oh Lord, save me from this horrible place, it will be too late!

We can just look around and see that prisons are built for sinners who break laws. The prisons are full of sinners who thought that they would enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. (Maybe prison can be a vivid example of hell except that even the rumors of foreign prisons sounds like a country club compared to hell.) In Hell, there is no escape, nor parole, only the torment that awaits all who end up there. It's for eternity. People commit crimes for money, power, sex and more in order to achieve some fantasy lifestyle, not knowing that it will cost them their souls for eternity. The pleasures of sin are deceiving multitudes that are on the path to eternal punishment.

Yes, alcoholism, drug addiction, having sex outside of marriage, living with a person that you aren't married to, or homosexual behavior seems to be the culture of today's society. This is called the "broad way" in the Bible. Yet every one of these things is an abomination of sin before the Lord that leads the doers unto destruction, death and eventually to the pains that await them in hell. The "Narrow Road" leads us to eternal life and to a life of sobriety, wisdom and fulfillment. All you have to do is look at the lives that these type of people live that are named above or read the newspaper or listen to the news in order to see that they missed life's destiny because of making wrong choices. Homes are broken, businesses are destroyed, lives are wrecked, destinies are changed simply because men loved darkness rather than light. More children are being born out of wedlock, never to have a father or mother to parent them in the things of life simply because men loved darkness rather than light. Satan's plan to destroy families seems to be right on schedule.

How can we evolve out of this sadistic socially perverse society. It can only be done through the power of our faith in Jesus Christ who forgives our sins and delivers us from living a perverse and non-productive life. The perfect life comes from God who created all of us to live after the example of his son, Jesus Christ. This is the life that is blessed and approved of God. My counsel to you is to simply acknowledge where you are in life and dream from there for something greater to take place. In Jesus Christ we can find our destiny and the truth that will keep us walking in his peace. Like the Proverbs says, it's better to have peace in a small dwelling than to live in a palace full of strife.

I would like to invite you to join us for our weekly services at Living Word Revival Center, where you can be delivered and healed by the power of the name of Jesus Christ", in Hayesville, NC, on Sundays at 10 a.m. and on Wed. nights at 7 p.m. "Come taste and see that the Lord is Good!" For information 828-389-3444. Come join us to make a difference at home and on the mission field!

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@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 Middle Path

by Don Perry

Swine flu tops the headlines this morning as the European Union cautions its citizens to avoid travel to the US and Mexico. The CDC has called this advisory "unwarranted," pointing out that there have been only 20 cases of this strain of flu in the US so far, and only one of these required hospitalization. It is often difficult these days to sift fact from folderol when so many of our sources of information urge us not to panic while simultaneously waving a red flag.

Our culture has institutionalized panic, monetized it, like so many other aspects of the human condition. Americans are fertile ground for sowing seeds of discord and then reaping the benefits of our morbid fascination with bad news. Our Judeo-Christian heritage, which influences us deeply whether we are active church goers or not, imprints many of us with an expectation of eventual and inevitable apocalypse. While we can't exactly agree on the afterlife or how to get there, we do seem to agree on the notion of end times and Armageddon. Urged on by the infotainment media, blog writers and book authors that push drama like an addictive drug, many of us become like hypochondriacs, alert to every ache and pain, just waiting for the one that will finally kill us.

We don't know yet whether swine flu will be the next great pandemic. Chances are that if we cover our mouths, wash our hands and stay home when we are sick, this emergency will pass like so many others - or it will evolve into something more serious. Apocalypse aside, pandemics are an inevitable part of a densely populated planet where people travel extensively. But while it's too early to start duct-taping the windows and doors, this designated public health emergency might give us pause to consider an often overlooked root of this and so many other of the problems that occupy our headlines.

There is plentiful fodder to feed our fears of tribulation and doom. The climate is

changing. The environment is becoming toxic to many species, including our own. Rogue states sponsor terrorism. The supply of oil that enables our brand of civilization is diminishing. Dangerous infectious diseases lurk. To make matters worse, here at home we are faced with a collapsing economy, immigration problems and fears of a new socialism and bigger government. The often overlooked root of all these problems is quite simple. It is overpopulation.

Solve the overpopulation problem and the problems just mentioned moderate or disappear entirely. However, except for the Chinese who were forced to take action by their burgeoning numbers, the world has been extremely reluctant to address the issue of too many babies. Even with a declining birthrate, with current immigration rates the population of the United States is projected to reach 392 million by 2050. Yet any mother who gives birth to five or more babies in the same litter is an instant celebrity, as if fertility must always be celebrated without question. Ironically, the American ideals of freedom and independence which assert that no government has the right to dictate how many children a family may have, are contributing rapidly to the erosion of those freedoms. The open door immigration ideals beautifully recorded on the Statue of Liberty are contributing to the guarding of those doors as population pressures elsewhere push people towards our shores.

Freedom is not an unlimited quality. We are limited by the laws of physics and the physical restraints of a finite world. Two cows on a hundred acres are free to eat all the grass they want, but a thousand cattle on the same pasture must be governed by the farmer or the pasture will soon become barren. More Americans living on an overpopulated planet will inevitably mean more government and more intrusive government - not only to protect us from outside threats, but to protect us from ourselves in a rapidly changing world of diminishing resources.



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 Sen. Saxby Chambliss, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, 202-224-3521
 U.S. Congressman Paul Broun, 10th District, Washington, DC 20515, 202-225-4101
 Rep. Stephen Allison, Georgia House of Representatives, 404-656-0177 or 0185
 Sen. Jim Butterworth, Georgia State Senate, 404-463-1367
 Towns County Commissioner Bill Kendall, 706-896-2276
 Clerk of Superior Court Cecil Dye, 706-896-2130
 Tax Commissioner Bruce Rogers, 706-896-2267
 Magistrate/Probate Judge David Rogers, 706-896-3467
 Sheriff Chris Clinton, 706-896-4444
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