

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY
OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



Letters to The Editor

Thanks
 Words can't express our appreciation for the excellent care that my mother, Mary Ellen Taff, received at Chatuge Regional Nursing Home.

During her three month stay in the Blue Hall, all nurses and support workers did a remarkable job in caring for her. Thanks for the fine cooperation of the administrative staff and social workers.

I commend Dr. Tracy Edwards for the fine manner he took in treating my mother. He certainly was responsive when called upon.

I would like to share a comment from an employee of Owen Funeral Home in Cartersville, GA. She said that this was the cleanest and most odorless nursing home she had ever been into.

Jimmy Taff Family

Questions and Answers
from the desk of
Commissioner Bill Kendall



A letter to the editor concerning Lowe's in the 06-18-09 issue of the Towns County Herald and Towns Sentinel asked the following question which deserves an answer.

Q: What have you, as commissioner, given away that the citizens of this county will have to pay in order to get Lowe's located here? I and many others think we have a right to know this cost before we allow this store to be located here.

A: I have not committed one penny of taxpayer money and I have not approved one penny of tax incentive to Lowe's. Lowe's has not requested nor have I given any variance of Towns County's Sign Ordinance. I have not granted any variance of any part of the Building Codes and Building Inspection Ordinance nor has Lowe's asked for any variance.

I have not promised Lowe's one penny for construction - nor has Lowe's asked for any. I have not approved a tax break for Lowe's. A Lowe's representative did present a proposal for reimbursing Lowe's a million dollar tax break over a ten year period, as they stated they have received in some other stores. I immediately informed the representative that I would not consider such a proposal, that it would not even be on the table for discussion, that I firmly oppose granting any retail business a tax incentive that would be unfair to all the other retail businesses and that all retail businesses should be operating on the same level playing field.

Lowe's representative responded that the tax issue was one of the items they must check that they had requested when they take their proposal back to the Real Estate Committee.

Legislation to increase homestead exemption to \$10,000 of assessed value

Q: Does the tax legislation you had introduced that allows citizens to vote on Nov. 3, 2009 increasing homestead exemption from \$2,000 to \$10,000 include all property taxes?

A: NO. The legislation only includes your county taxes; it does not include your school taxes or city taxes. If the voters approve the legislation, everyone living in the unincorporated area of the county and in the cities of Young Harris and Hiawassee will get a homestead exemption from paying any county taxes on the first \$25,000 of Fair Market Valuation of your home; which is assessed at 40% or \$10,000 of assessed value. You will not receive this tax exemption on the school tax or city tax you pay. However; I did discuss this, at the time I had the legislation introduced, with some members of the Board of Education and some City Council members and at the time they were favorable to the proposal. Due to the short time left to get the legislation introduced, they never officially requested Rep. Allison to include them in the bill. However, if the voters approve the legislation in the Nov. 3, '09 election to raise county homestead exemption to \$10,000 the Representative could, upon request by the Board of Education or a City, introduce a bill in Jan. 2010 General Assembly to include them without having another referendum and it would take effect at the same time as the legislation I requested to be voted on Nov. 3, 2009 for the 2010 tax digest.

Q: If the voters pass the legislation on Nov. 3, 2009 will it apply to the 2009 tax digest?

A: NO. We did not have time to get the legislation passed for the 2009 tax digest; therefore, it will become effective for the 2010 tax digest.

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The Middle Path

by Don Perry

There has never been a better time to turn off the television and unplug the computer. The alternative is to be caught up in yet another media frenzy launched by the recent deaths of two celebrities, one a sex symbol manufactured by Hollywood who used her fame to try and make a contribution to the betterment of humanity; the other an un-convicted pedophile. The inspiring story of the actress has been quickly eclipsed by the lurid details of the tortured life of the pop star, but that is what an apparent majority of us want to know about, and that is what the media will continue to regurgitate for us as long as there is an advertising dollar to be made in the process.

Where do we draw the line when and if we separate the "art" from the "artist?" We read and enjoy a great novel without any thought as to the character of the author, and by the same token we enjoy any number of artistic expressions independently of the lives of their creators. In the case of the pop star, however, the music was long ago superseded by the tacky and prurient details of excess, self immolation and unpunished crime.

We treat "art" as a thing to be valued above all other

things, stretching the definition of "artist" to include anything that entertains us or stimulates our attention. Regardless of our egalitarian values, we treat the "artist," whether he or she sings and dances, reads lines and cries fake tears or bounces a ball, as a better class of human to be judged by a different standard than the rest of us. We forgive much for the sake of "art," and we prostrate ourselves before it as if it were a singular gift of the gods, precious and irreplaceable, channeled to us through a variety of unlikely vessels.

History and archaeology demonstrate clearly the arbitrary and fickle nature of our tastes and preferences. Fads come and go; popularity waxes and wanes. One pop star dies and another one takes his place. One famous painting burns in a museum fire and a dozen others rise up to occupy the pedestal. Consider this: perhaps "art" is not so much a gift of the gods as it is a natural expression of what it is to be human, and therefore it is not to be valued above all things - but to be recognized in all people as something that emanates from an inexhaustible wellspring. There is no need to prostrate ourselves before art or artist because as long as there are humans, there will be artistic expression.

sometimes beat the odds.

I believe dreams can come true. I believe in Heaven, as well as a rock n roll Heaven where Jimi Hendrix, John Lennon, Elvis Presley and others play music eternally.

I believe most of the people who come into the newspaper office, and I believe a man and a woman still have a chance in this world.

I believe in tipping waitresses, even when they are having a bad day. I believe in angels, aliens, and the lost city of Atlantis. I believe in the future, in spite of the past. Occasionally I even believe in myself.

I believe a woman has the right to choose, but I also believe life begins before conception. I believe God will one day be there to answer all of our questions. In fact, I've got my question ready.

I believe the truth always overcomes the lies, although it may take a while for that to happen. I believe in karma, Murphy's Law, and the power of forgiveness, even though I don't always practice it. And when I am at my best, I believe peace, love, and understanding will change the world.

And for those of you who don't believe me, well, I believe one day you will.



By David Seckinger

Filling Up Empty Space
These things I believe

Like most people, I am a believer. For those of you who do not believe me, I would like to make a public and categorical list of what I believe in.

I believe in life after death, in intelligent life in other parts of the universe, in eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, in the philosophies of Buddha, in the revelations of Mohammed, and in Bigfoot.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and haunted houses. At the beginning of every season, I believe the Atlanta Braves might make it to the World Series again. I believe in a mother's love and the Ten Commandments. I believe in miracles.

I believe in the Loch Ness Monster, the Abominable Snowman, and flying saucers. I believe in the United States of America, its Declaration of Independence, and our founding fathers. I believe even a loser can

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.

4 helpful steps on the road of life
 By Dr. Steven Swisher, Pastor
 Living Word Revival Center

Some people in life may live by chance or without some moral standard in life that simply drives them like the waves of the sea. Being tossed to and fro without any defined direction or purpose for their lives. Many times just making crazy decisions that affect their destiny more than they think. I honestly believe that every life is unique and filled with the purposes of God in order to fulfill something that God called them unto.

I used to live a life without any real direction or purpose only to find myself sinking more and more into the quicksand of life. This was one of the most important reasons why I began to search for God. I couldn't understand why I was born nor for what purpose. I was simply allowing opportunities, good or bad, to shape the direction of my life. Of course, I came to this place in my life because none of the expectations of my childhood dreams were being realized and that was important to me.

After surrendering to God and discovering that he really has a plan for my life, I realized that I could not just live by chance any more. So today I want to share a few things that can help put and keep us living a life filled with purpose and destiny.

The first thing that we must settle in our hearts is the moral convictions that we want to live by. Moral convictions will set willful boundaries which we can keep and live by. These moral convictions ought to be based upon a renewed desire to serve God with our lives. It is by using the word of God as our standard, we are able to put boundaries in place that are good and acceptable to God and able to keep us on a steady and upright course for life.

The second thing is to have the courage to stand upon the convictions that we have set in our life. The testing of our convictions will come upon us every day of our lives in order to prove our standard for life. But by having convictions in place, at least we have a foundation from which to draw. Without the convictions of our faith in place, we will find ourselves making irrational decisions that will simply put us back on a path to nowhere. But by having the courage to stand upon those convictions, again this will help us to keep ourselves upon that steady and upright course for life.

The third thing that I feel is extremely important is to live by the fear (reverence) of the Lord, knowing that our

every word and that our every act will eventually be judged by God. By living in this way, we will not only fear what people may think, but more highly, we will begin to factor into our decisions that God is watching us at all times. Not that we should be afraid of him, but contrariwise, we ought to be comforted by his presence in that he is present to help us make sound and righteous decisions. The conviction of the Lord is a sign to us that we ought to pause and think about the decisions that we are about to make. This will help keep us on a set course even when no one else is around.

The fourth and final thing is to search out the will and purposes of God for our lives. There are many purposes and sometimes they are only for seasons, yet there are other purposes that can last your entire life. But the biggest thing is to know that God has planned things out for all of us to do in this life. And the way to understanding those things can many times be acknowledged by us through the convictions that God has given to us to live by in his Word, (Bible). No doubt, God wants us to live by the Bible, yet he also has good intentions and purposes for us all. The Bible says in Proverbs 25:2, "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honor of kings is to search out a matter." God calls it an honorable thing to search out his will for our selves. I say it is imperative for our inner peace, knowing that we are doing the right thing in life, even before God.

These are four simple, but sound ways, which if we live by them, will keep us steady, upright and well able to make sound decisions that will satisfy the true reasons why we live. So my advice is for you to make some adjustments that will get you off the bumpy roads of life and begin to set that compass of life upon the real and most powerful reasons for your life. These four things are to be as a "fulcrum" to take you into a new and exciting future.

I would like to invite you to join us for our weekly services at Living Word Revival Center, where you can be saved, 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 call: 828-389-3444. Come join us to make a difference at home and on the mission field!

Community Calendar

Towns County Water Board Meeting 4th Monday of each month at 7 pm in the TC Water Office Building.

Towns County AARP Chapter 1859 meets the second Thursday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawassee at 2 p.m. Luncheons are held at 1 p.m.

Towns County Democratic Party meets at 5:30 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 p.m. - 7 p.m. meeting, 896-9021.

Towns County Planning Commission is held the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 pm in the Courthouse.

Towns County Commissioners meeting is the 3rd Thursday at 5:30 pm 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 pm, at City Hall.

Young Harris City Council, 1st Tuesday of month at 7 pm, 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 Moorman: 828 835 1082.

The Unicoy 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 pm. Annual dues \$15, PO Box 932, Hiawassee, GA 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org

Bridge Players intermediate level meets at 12:45 pm 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, mtnregartscraftsguild.org, mtnregartscraftsguild@hotmail.com.

VFW Post #7807 Fish Fry will be 2nd and 4th Friday of the month, 4:30-7 PM, \$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 pm, meeting at 7 pm.

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. 5pm Fly Tying - 7pm 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.