

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY
OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Lost wallet

I enjoyed reading the story related by Patt Burgin regarding his lost wallet. It brought home memories of many years ago as a youngster in a small town in Florida. I came upon a ladies purse that had apparently fallen out of her parked car while the door was open. I determined the owner, the wife of a local dentist, and called her to report what I had found. She came to the house, I gave her the purse, she opened it, checked its contents in front of me and then thanked me and left. While I didn't call her expecting any reward, as I grew up I realized that she had virtually insulted me by going through the purse as if to see if I had taken anything from it before she thanked me and left. And then leaving without offering me so much as a quarter, which back then would have been a small fortune to a young boy. While I didn't count the money, when I opened the purse to gain her identity, I could see there was quite a little (to me anyway) folding money in it. I always felt she handled the situation very badly especially considering her position in the community. I trust Mr. Burgin handled the recovery of his wallet from Jody more appropriately, which I feel sure he did. Honesty is right - whether it pays or not. Jody's actions give good indication of the type of folks living in this area. That and the natural beauty are two of the factors we considered when deciding to live here, moving from one small town to another.

G.E. Noblit, Young Harris

Thank You

My family and I would like to thank everyone for all the prayers and help given when my mother, Ruth Miller, lost her house in a fire. We would like to extend a special thanks to all the first responders, Johnny and Ricky Rogers, Vaughn Nicholson, Michael Rogers, and Pastor Harold Ledford and the kind people of Macedonia Baptist Church. You are all truly appreciated.

Trannis Miller and Family



From the desk of John Oxendine
 Georgia's Insurance and Fire Commissioner

As the dad of a newborn baby boy and a candidate for Governor who would be sworn into office in January of 2011, I believe there are three ways that the state of Georgia will benefit from having a toddler scooting around the Governor's Mansion.

First, Georgia needs a Governor who wakes up every day thinking about the family. With another little one around, issues like childcare and education and safety will be fresh on my mind. We all want our children to achieve, to build good character and to be loved. These basic concerns are things that the government should enhance and promote by undergirding the family, school, and community. My new little son Jake toddling around the Governor's Mansion will be a constant reminder to me and all of Georgia that building strong families is job-one.

Second, a toddler reminds parents to prepare for the future. What parent doesn't wonder what their child will be like, who they will marry, and where they will work? Thinking about the future and helping to improve the quality of life for one's offspring is a daily part of parenting. So too is governing. Leading an agency as I have for the last 15 years in our Executive branch, I have lain awake at night thinking about how people count on their leaders to work on their behalf. Georgia continues to grow and we need a bold Governor in 2011 to build more reservoirs, to engineer creative transportation alternatives, and decrease the tax burden on our people. Kids have a way of reminding us that our time on this earth is limited and I am sure that my toddler in the Governor's Mansion will be a constant reminder that Georgia's future hangs in the balance.

Finally, a toddler will be reminder to Ivy, me and many others as to why we are conservatives. None of us are born in a vacuum. We are the recipients of well-thought out documents like our state and federal constitutions, long-standing traditions in our communities and churches, and a system of values that have helped make America the great country that it is. Preserving this country and state is part of the duty citizens expect from their leaders. But leading requires responsible stewardship—so that everyone's life can be better. That means protecting people from not only criminal elements, but from bad ideas that rob them of opportunity: bad ideas like our antiquated state income tax and poorly planned transportation system. There are many other things in our state that need to be reviewed, revamped or discarded. That toddler in the Governor's Mansion will be like a ticking clock reminding me that there is not a minute to waste and that all of state government must march in double-time to get our state in good order for generations of Georgians to come.

Electing a chief executive for our state—as well as any other office on the ballot—is serious business. Government, even at the smallest level, impacts us as citizens and our children who come along behind us. Let's use this election to catapult Georgia ahead and make a better future for all of us. In 2011, bring your child or grandchild to the Governor's Mansion for a play-date with Jake.

John Oxendine is a brand new dad, and the State Insurance and Fire Commissioner for the State of Georgia. Reach him at johnox@earthlink.net.



T.C. Herald Editor
 Benefits of higher technology
 By Charles Duncan

I've never claimed to be an expert on giving restaurant reviews, but, I am an expert on food. As a matter of fact, I've got 48 years of experience and counting. The only food that I totally condemn is liver (never eat a body organ that filters waste).

I recently sat down and ate lunch at Hiawassee's newest restaurant, Café Portofino, at the Shoppes at Fieldstone. Let me say this: if you like delicious Italian food, you'll love Café Portofino.

The eatery, open Monday through Saturday, offers the Old World's Tuscan atmosphere, complete with the feel of looking out a villa window in Venice, Italy.

Here, patrons sit back and enjoy the hillside view of the beautiful blue waters of Lake Chatuge as they experience a savory blend of gourmet Italian cuisine.

Café Portofino's tantalizing menu, created by Executive Chef Dennis Barber, offers delicious entrees that include Chicken Piccata, Veal Saltimbocca, Chicken Parmesan and Chianti Steak. Patrons also experience the Pork Ragu with Gnudi, grilled Salmon and Halibut and the unforgettable Porchetta.

The eatery also features select Italian wines and beer. Lunch is served between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Dinner hours are 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. with the exception of Friday and Saturday when the eatery's hours are extended until 10 p.m.

As I sat waiting on an appetizer to arrive (Pork Ragu is delicious), I began to envision a way to evaluate a restaurant. I envisioned complicated formulas surely used by the professional restaurant critics. At that moment I decided that I'd let my taste buds be the judge of the food. Likewise, I'd let my common sense be the judge of the service.

Right off the bat I noticed how prompt and polite the lovely young lady that escorted me to my seat. I hadn't even reached my seat when my waitress was already asking me what I might like to drink. That, ladies and gentlemen, is service.

I might not be an expert restaurant critic, but I'm getting the hang of it.

It took all of about four

minutes to decide what I wanted – grilled salmon is one of my personal favorites. It was covered in fresh tomatoes and rested on a bed of pasta. It came with the vegetable of the day, asparagus (I love grilled asparagus).

The service was excellent as my waitress kept my glass filled with Diet Coke. The bread and the oils that accompany the meal were enough to make my mouth water. It truly was tantalizing and certainly whetted my appetite for the main entrée.

Before the grilled salmon arrived, Sam Collins, the eatery's manager, came over to say hello. Sam made me feel really special as a customer at Café Portofino. As I looked around the room, I could tell he made all of his customers feel special as he went from table to table asking patrons if everything was okay.

Only a week earlier, Sam told me that anyone who comes into Café Portofino can count on great food and great service.

"They can expect to be treated like royalty; that's what we're going to do here," Sam said prior to the soft opening at Café Portofino.

Sam Collins lives by his word and his work: "Café Portofino isn't just another restaurant; it's the ultimate Italian dining experience."

I'll have to agree, they do treat you really well from the moment you step through the door until you head for the car.

In less than an hour, I went from novice restaurant critic to expert in one trip to Café Portofino. My assessment: hard work truly pays off. Restaurant owner Dana Merritt truly has a winner on her hands. It's called Café Portofino.

From the Desk of:



Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

Last week I met with members of the Bald Mountain Park Neighborhood Watch Association. We discussed a number of ways to help further the goals of suppressing crime in the neighborhood. We also discussed gathering the neighborhood watch associations across the county for annual meetings to discuss what each community has learned works for them. I believe that if we work together as partners we can make a tremendous impact on crime. That is why I am an advocate of the neighborhood watch program and encourage every community in Towns County to become actively involved in the program. All too often we sit back and wait for someone else to do it.

I also met with the Citizen Review Board and we discussed several ideas for the future. Dr. Patton agreed to write monthly reports on our meetings, which will be made available to the citizens.

I would like to thank all of you who turned out for the fundraiser for the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes. There is not enough space in this report to include all the names, however, Ed Jones of the Chatuge Gun Club, and I plan to write an article that we will submit to the local papers.

The event was a huge success! Sid Roberts and Bud Cody of the Georgia Sheriff's Association were on hand and

were very excited that the event was so successful. They both felt that for a first time event the turnout was remarkable. They had many positive things to say about the community and were very impressed with the helpfulness of the people of Towns County in supporting the children of the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes.

Once the final count is in we will announce the winners, as well as the amount raised. I would again like to thank all who turned out and helped sponsor the event by sending or sponsoring shooting teams, donating prizes, as well as those who came out to watch and bought raffle tickets and lemonade at the lemonade stand, participated in the silent auctions, etc, and all those who volunteered their time to help plan such an event

We plan on making this an annual event and I will be meeting with the committee this week to discuss this year's success, as well as make plans for next year's event. I hope that next year everyone comes back and brings a friend. We have already mentioned the possibility of making it a two-day event next year due to the numbers who have expressed interest in participating.

The electronic newsletter this month will feature the event. If you would like to receive The Sheriff's Corner, you may sign up from the homepage of the Sheriff's Office's website at www.townscountysheriffsoffice.com. Be sure to type your email address correctly and put newsletter@townscountysheriffsoffice.com in your address book or white list. You may also send anonymous tips through the website by visiting the Contact Us page or you can use our anonymous tip line at 706-896-3697. 7061618175

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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 E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: tcherald@brmcm.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.

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 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.

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.

FV 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.

Towns County Herald
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Community Calendar