

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY
OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Many visitors to our area have come and gone during the last week while the Georgia Mountain Fair was in town. If traffic was any indication, the Fair seems to have produced a good turn out this year, which would be welcome news to local businesses trying to ride out difficult economic times. Since many of the visitors to the Fair only come here once or twice a year, the changes to which we have begun to grow accustomed are new to them, inspiring a new round of discussions about the transmission power lines going through Hiawassee. If you stay long enough in a grocery store you will hear every opinion about everything. I would like to make a final observation about the topic of the power lines and then file the subject away with deceased pop stars and resigning Alaska "mavericks." It is time to move on. Americans have grown up with the idea that bigger is better; "more" is more desirable; growth is the end that justifies any means, and anything that is not expanding is unhealthy. Even now in the midst of worldwide economic devolution the language of the financial sector is still spoken within the context of that paradigm. Our obsession with growth is a subject we have discussed here often. It is a consequence of allowing greed to become institutionalized, of permitting the line between business and government to become blurred, of allowing our guiding influences, which were once family values reinforced by our communities and underscored by our churches, to be replaced or corrupted by a pervasive media influence which changed the definition of the word "entertain" to "a distraction which promotes consumerism."

Locally the consequences of ill considered growth are evident in the number of unsold properties, closed businesses, lack of job opportunities and more recently - the advance of transmission power lines across Hiawassee in the heart of Towns County. Let's reason together for a moment about this controversial topic.

It is an unfortunate irony that, in the midst of an economic downturn, the growth that has already happened in our area now requires an expensive solution that many find unsightly. "Many" is a relative term which does not necessarily include the opinions of the majority of 48,000 electrical customers across five counties who will pay the cost of whatever means are necessary to provide power to the eastern half of Towns County. Nevertheless when change happens that we don't like, we seek someone to blame, and the current scapegoat is our local EMC. Few would now argue the need for providing power to the eastern part of the county and upgrading the infrastructure to avoid blackouts, but now our remaining frustrations are being directed at the choice to go overhead with the transmission lines instead of underground. This opinion is based on a lack of knowledge. The criterion for choosing between underground or overhead certainly includes aesthetics, but cost is a more pertinent factor. Underground installation of transmission lines is four to ten times more expensive than overhead, and while some residents of Towns County

have already expressed their willingness to share any extra costs with the majority of power customers who do not live here, unfortunately for some, the TVA is required to consider the public interest over the private. Costs aside, common sense would be hard pressed to find a twenty foot right of way, cleared of all vegetation and all structures, through any part of Hiawassee, to say nothing of finding a water that did not impact water, sewer and communications infrastructures already in place. If the EMC was currently engaged in condemning property for an underground route, there would be just as many if not more voices raised in protest.

If we need someone to blame for our dissatisfaction, we need look no further than the mirror. When Hiawassee was born, this area, like many rural areas, was so sparsely populated that there was a tendency to concentrate all development close to the main roads in order to take advantage of any traffic which, in those days, came on or behind horses and mules. This trend continued during the era of cheap oil as we became a drive-through nation stretched out along our highways and increasingly distant from our distribution points of food, fuel and energy. Hiawassee is like many other drive-through towns in the rural South, where development favored the automobile rather than the pedestrian and the community. We had a choice to do things differently, but year after year our business and political leaders favored growth over sustainability and quality of life. Over time our town, like so many others, became like a fly strip stretched out along the highway in the hopes of catching some of the tourist dollars as they passed through. While we concentrated on getting as many people as possible to move here as fast as possible, insufficient thought was given to the question of how we would build and maintain the infrastructure necessary to support all those people - or who would pay for it.

Today we have a growing number of people who paid dearly to be here and naturally they are concerned for quality of life issues, including aesthetics. A larger number of people who have always lived here or who have lived here long enough to fall in love with this area have long been concerned about quality of life, particularly the aesthetics of deforested ridge lines, the environmental impact of ravaged mountainsides and streams choked with sediment. Our concerns were often ignored in the headlong rush to develop, back in the days when the word "sustainable" was sneered at. Many of us have felt the monetization of the mountains as a visceral pain, and we can sympathize with those who view the infrastructure necessary to support us all in the same way, but again, if you are still looking for someone to blame, the power lines that you see are only necessary because we are all here now, spread out over long distances like the legs of a spider. We did not plan for this, and now we must live with the consequences. Perhaps we can do better in the future. We have so much that is beautiful and worthwhile and worthy of preservation and planning, for while growth is not, in fact, inevitable, change certainly is.

Letters to The Editor

Gratitude expressed

The family of Elma Eller would like to thank all our family and friends who remembered us in the loss of our oved one.

Special thanks to Chatuge Regional Nursing Home, the hospital auxiliary, Rev. Harold Ledford, Margaret Dendy, the pallbearers and Cochran Funeral Home. To those who remembered us with food, flowers, visits, cards and phone calls, we thank you and may God bless all of you.

**Daughter & son-in Law, Charlene & Max Hogsed
 Granddaughter & husband, Sharon & Jerry Everett**

Mr. Cronkite in Camden

We were in Camden, Maine approximately twenty years ago when Walter Cronkite sailed down to town for a book signing. Only a few people showed up for the event, according to the newspaper. We did not attend.

Cronkite had a summer home near Castine, twenty-five miles up Penobscot Bay and sailed his new forty-nine foot boat down through thick fog. A reporter asked if sailing in zero visibility wasn't a dangerous undertaking. Cronkite replied that with radar, sounding equipment and a thorough knowledge of the waters, he cautiously sailed with confidence. - Sounds like Cronkite, the twentieth-century premier American reporter.

Camden is a beautiful, quiet and peaceful place. It is somewhat elitist and upscale, yet welcomes all comers. The sparse crowd attending the book signing on that pleasant summer day probably resulted from the calling of a wonderful outdoor environment.

We have placed an order for the book we regretfully failed to acquire from Mr. Cronkite that day in Camden.

Clarence & Lorraine Newton, Young Harris



To every thing there is a season

**By Dr. Steven Swisher, Pastor
 Living Word Revival Center**

We may sometimes think that our lives are playing insignificant parts, but we need to understand that life is full of heroic actions that may never be publicly acknowledged. When I went to Washington, DC one time to visit my father's gravesite, I saw many headstones there without names, only the words "Unknown Soldier" were engraved, yet I knew that each one of them had served our country in order for us to live in freedom. When I got to my father's place of burial, it was a small box put in a wall with his name on it. It wasn't next to one of the great president's gravesites, but I know his many missions helped to keep America safe and for that, he is a hero!

Every one of us will have the opportunity to shine in order to do something noble for another person. I truly believe that life is not a series of accidents, but that we are able to experience divine times and seasons that come from God in order to shape us into His will. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 3:1,11, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven and He hath made every thing beautiful in his time." These scriptures teach us that we live in a world where God has given to us times and seasons in which to live in order for us to understand the workings of God during them. All we have to know is that all things are working for the good of those who love God and are called to his purposes.

I know that every one has the ability to become a champion in one way or another. We just need God to open up the right opportunities to bring out the best that is within each of us. Some of you may say, Lord when is it going to be my time to shine? The Bible says in Luke chapter 1:80, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit,

and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel." This scripture speaks of John the Baptist who was called as the forerunner of Christ's ministry by calling men to repentance. The scripture tells us that John the Baptist spent his whole life growing up in a desert. The desert speaks of a hidden lifestyle out of the public eye. The Bible says that he grew and became strong in spirit until he appeared unto Israel. You see, many of you are just being hidden until the time of your public ministry. But, you must believe that you are being trained and prepared for some great purpose in the kingdom of God to shine here on the earth. Don't get anxious for stardom or great things, just grab a hold of the things that will prepare you to shine and in due season, you will shine.

Most of us do not see the locker rooms and work out centers where many athletes are working and being trained behind the scenes. We only see them shine when they play their sports. But most of their life is spent in the training processes behind the scenes as opposed to their time on the playing field. I think this is comparable to us in life. We are all being prepared for great opportunities that will come to us in the right times and seasons of our lives. Until the time to shine comes, just keep on being prepared behind the scenes. Because become "Pluripotent" in life and you will see the time to shine come.

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.

**News from
 the Principal**

**Roy Perren
 Principal
 Towns County High School**



While it is hard to believe, the beginning of school is back upon us. I hope that each of you have had a restful summer. It has been a busy summer here. We think you will be pleased with the remodeling we have done to the high school and middle school. The beginning of school is always an exciting time. We look forward to the new school year and great things happening at Towns County High School. We welcome approximately 90 students who will be new to the high school. Most of these are students entering the 9th grade from Towns County Middle School. These rising 9th graders will be the class of 2013. We will be having orientation for parents of rising 9th grade students on Thursday, July 30, at 7 PM in the auditorium.

Open House will be Tuesday, August 4, from 5 PM to 7 PM. Students will be able to pick up their 2009 - 2010 sched-

ules at Open House. We look forward to seeing you there. We think you will like the updated look of our building.

For those parents who drop off students in the morning and pick them up in the afternoon, our procedures will be the same as last year. We ask that those dropping off or picking up students not leave their cars unattended on the curb in front of the high school. If you have to come into the building, please park in a parking spot.

We truly want to know what you think about our school. We want your input into our school and programs. We are looking for representatives for our local school council for this year. The school council meets four times over the course of the school year. If you are interested, please let me know.

If I may be of assistance to you please do not hesitate to call on me.

Have something to sell?

**Let the Herald
 work for you!
 Contact us at
 706-896-4454**

**Deadline for
 the T.C. Herald
 is Monday
 by noon**



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.



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.

Towns County Herald

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