

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Letters to The Editor

### To the Editor

My name is Amy Ivy. I am a wife and mother of three from Hiawassee, Georgia. I have worked in the public education system of Georgia for the past 11 years, currently with Georgia Cyber Academy. I am a class of 2000 graduate of Piedmont College in Demorest, Ga. I still remember the excitement I felt a little over a month ago as I drove through town and saw campaign signs up with Dr. Austin's name on them. While reaching for a pacifier for my youngest and trying to keep my eyes on the road at the same time, I recalled memories of being in one of Dr. Austin's classes back in 1998 (wow, has it really been that long?). What I remembered the most about him was his character and his reputation on campus for having strong faith and values. I got home and told my husband Craig very enthusiastically, "Dr. Austin is running for State Senate!"

Shortly thereafter, I realized he would be coming to our church to speak. Not quite sure that he would remember me from almost 15 years ago, I contacted Dr. Austin on Facebook and told him that I was excited to see him. Almost instantly he replied that he did remember me and that he was thrilled to come worship with our congregation in Hiawassee. Wait a minute. Did a politician just say worship on the most popular social-networking site in the world with no reservation? Oh yes, that's the Dr. Austin I remember-strong values with no apologies. His visit to our church echoed the same message, "This is who I am, this is what I stand for, and that won't change no matter what". It was so refreshing to see that after all this time, he was still the same man of character that I remembered.

In between seeing his announcement to run and his visit to our church, I started looking into his campaign. I was excited to see his boldness to proclaim strong Christian values and a conservative voting track record. I was especially impressed to see that he backed Georgia's Right to Life. His unwavering conservative platform, political experience, education and strong family values have me convinced that there is simply no better choice to represent the 50th district in the State Senate. I believe Rick Austin is a strong voice for conservative values in a time when conservative values are trying to be silenced. I urge you to join me in voting for Rick Austin on December 6th. By doing so, you will be using your voice to stand up for the Christian values that we hold so dear here in Northeast Georgia.

Amy Ivy

### To the Editor

#### Voting: A right and a responsibility

Most Americans have never heard of Casimir Pulaski. He was born in Poland and at the age of 15 he and his family were exiled to Paris for opposing Russian intervention in Poland. He soon became impressed with the ideals of a new nation struggling to be free and volunteered his services to support the colonies in the American Revolution. After serving valiantly in the Revolutionary Army for a number of years, he met a bloody death during the Battle of Savannah, being torn apart by the blast of a cannon.

One word drove Pulaski and 25,000 others who died in that war - FREEDOM. Every one of those men and women gave of life, limb and heart to insure that we might live freely, speak freely, earn freely, spend freely and VOTE FREELY. Because of these valiant heroes, America is a bastion of freedom, the envy of most other countries.

The right to vote is a fundamental human RIGHT that is not enjoyed by billions of people around the world. Americans have the right to determine the course of their country by voting and participating in the electoral process that chooses people who will represent them in the governing of the country. Unfortunately, even though voting is what defines our nation as a republic, voting is a right we take for granted...witness the miniscule voter turnout for most elections.

This is wrong.

Every right that is enjoyed by citizens, including voting, carries with it an inherently inescapable RESPONSIBILITY. We are individually responsible and have an obligation to decide what's important and in the best interests of ourselves, our community and our nation and expressing those opinions at the voting booth. Voting is the foremost way to exhibit good citizenship and civil responsibility. Voting is a patriotic act in which everyone should participate. Voting is the American thing to do. Voting is the right thing to do.

Here's the problem. People don't vote because they say they are too busy, they don't follow politics, their vote won't matter, it's a waste of time. All feckless excuses implying cerebral deficiencies. Those 25,000 people who gave their lives so that we could vote would say these excuses are so very petty. Of those four excuses, the most egregious is that an individual vote doesn't matter. John A. Durkin is another person of whom most people haven't heard. Many years ago, Durkin contested a New Hampshire U.S. Senate seat against Louis Wyman. In that contest, 223,363 votes were cast and Durkin LOST BY TWO (2) VOTES. Three of Durkin's friends didn't vote because they believed their vote didn't matter.

Those who accept no responsibility with their right cannot be trusted with that right.

There is an election in Towns County on December 6 for the open Georgia 50th District State Senate seat. Rick Austin and John Wilkinson are vying for that position.

Voting in this election is the very least you can do out of respect for the blood that was shed for you and your loved ones to guarantee this right and responsibility.

Gary W. Meier

### From the Desk of:



**Sheriff Clinton of Towns County**

Most of us have family traditions that we enjoy during the Christmas season. Families with small children may spend Christmas Eve baking cookies for Santa, or listening to Christmas carols while enjoying eggnog by the fire. As a small child I remember the anticipation of Christmas being so intense. I was in awe and wonder dreaming about what might be inside all those presents wrapped so nicely under the tree. I would just stare at the Christmas tree and day dream about Christmas Day.

For me, even at 42, Christmas is still the most wonderful time of year. I love Christmas lights and the sounds of Christmas carols everywhere. The world just seems to be a nicer place during the Christmas season. I love to watch young children open gifts and see their eyes light up with joy. There is no other feeling like the feeling of Christmas. While Christmas is about much more than material possessions, the spirit of Christmas is certainly captured in the joy of a child receiving a gift on Christmas morning.

So, what about the children who are less fortunate? Imagine the child whose family has fallen on hard times. Do they wake up to just another day of struggling to make ends meet? Imagine if you were a parent who loved your child, but had lost a job because of the poor economy. I doubt that there would be anything much harder than not being able to provide your child, whom you love, the wonder of Christmas morning. It breaks my heart to think that as the rest of the world enjoys the most blessed day of the year,

### 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@windstream.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.**

some families wake to another day of not having enough. While providing toys for these children isn't going to make the rest of their problems go away, I can't help but believe that, at least for a time, their world becomes a little brighter and things seem a little better than before.

Each year the Sheriff's Office attempts to provide the joy of Christmas gifts for these children. This effort is only made possible by the help of generous people in the community who donate to this cause. Names of children in need are collected and toys are gathered. We try whenever possible to provide at least one item that the child has specifically asked for. The toys are then given to the parents of the child to handle Christmas in their family's tradition. It is all done in such a way as to protect the dignity of the family and allow them to share in the joy that many of us take for granted.

This year has been a tough one for many local families. We are hoping to provide for each child, but we need your help. If you would like to help us with this effort, or if you know of a family with children that needs help, please contact Vicki Ellis or Sheriff Whitaker at the Sheriff's Office at 706-896-4444. I hope that each of you has a blessed and joyous Christmas this year!

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

### I am thankful

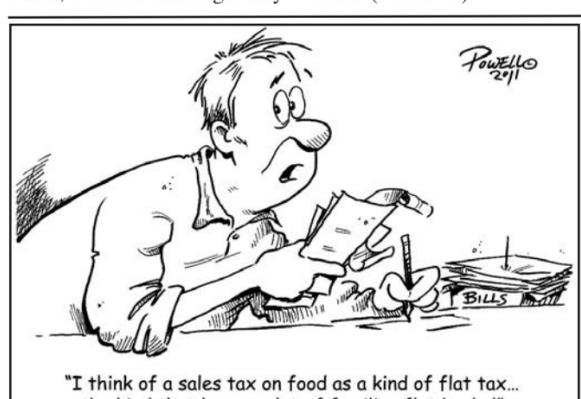
I heard about a little fourth-grader who stood up to give a report concerning the origins of the Thanksgiving holiday. Here's how he began:

*The pilgrims came here seeking Freedom of you know what. When they landed, they gave Thanks to you know who. Because of them, We can worship Each Sunday, you know where.*

Someone has said, "It is not what you have in your pocket that makes you thankful, but what you have in your heart." Everyone has something for which to be thankful.

The famous Scottish preacher, Alexander Whyte, always began his pulpit prayers with an expression of gratitude. One cold and rainy day his people wondered how he could be grateful for the weather. He began by saying; "We thank thee, O Lord, that it is not always like this." I am grateful that when I awoke this morning the birds singing outside my window were not buzzards. I am grateful - I am not like the man who said he got up and put on his pants backwards and they fit better. I am grateful - I am not a turkey (even though my wife uses that term to describe me sometimes). Thanksgiving for the turkey is a pain in the neck. He's the star attraction at dinner, but can take no bows or listen to applause. Matthew Henry, the famous Bible scholar was once accosted by thieves and robbed of his purse. He wrote these words in his diary: "Let me be thankful first, because I was never robbed before; second, because although they took my purse, they didn't take my life. Third, because although they

took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed." I am thankful for what I call the Five C's. At the head of the list is Christ, God's Son, My Savior, who loved me and gave Himself for me, in order that I might be forgiven of sin and have everlasting, abundant life. Every good and perfect gift comes down from Christ Jesus. Next is my Companion of 52 years. My wife, Regina, has been God's special gift to me to complete and fulfill life here on earth. We have experienced joy indescribable in our marriage covenant with God and each other. Then I am thankful for our Children, Mike and Michele, and our son-in-law Tim. Mike and Michele were both beautiful babies. But one day something strange happened. They went to bed and woke up weird. They had become teenagers. I have finally forgiven them for being teenagers. Now we have four beautiful granddaughters and one handsome grandson for which we are thankful. Two of them have graduated from college and three of them are still in college. Next I am thankful for my Church, First Baptist Church, Andrews, NC where I serve as interim pastor. God has blessed me to serve a gracious, generous, Godly people. They are not perfect, but we are struggling, striving and serving together a Perfect Savior. Lastly, I am thankful for my Country, America, the greatest country on earth. My country, the land of the free and the home of the brave. I am thankful: for my parents who have gone to be with the Lord; for my brothers and sisters; for my father-in-law who is still living and is a World War II veteran; for the North Georgia News for publishing my articles; for the Georgia Bulldogs for their 9 and 2 record and being the East Champions in the Southeastern Conference. It is good to give thanks (Psalm 92).



## 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 3rd Thursday of every month. Please call Kim Bailey at 706-994-2727 or 706-896-6747 for details.

**Towns County Republican Party** meets at 6:30 PM the 2nd Thursday of each month at Daniels Steak House. For more info call 706-379-1371.

**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 Moorman: 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 Recreational Dept.

**Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG)** meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at ArtWorks Artisan Center, 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, mtnregartsandcraftsguild.org. mtnregartsandcraftsguild@hotmail.com.

**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/blueridge-mountains.

**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.

**Chattage 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.

**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.

**We do Family Oral History** of all of our residents. If you have not had your family history recorded and would like to do so, please call the Towns County Historical Society at 706-896-1060.

**Prostate Cancer Support Group** meets the 3rd Monday of every month from 5-6 PM in the Cancer Treatment Center Auditorium in Blairsville. For more info call Steve 706-896-1064.

**GMREC Native Plant Garden Tours:** Mondays 9 AM-1 PM, May-Sept. (except holidays). 706-745-2655.

**The Humane Society Mountain Shelter** Board of Directors meets the last Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at Cadence Bank in Blairsville.

**The Towns County Alzheimer's Support Group** meets the first Tuesday of each month at 1:30 PM in the Family Life Center of McConnell Memorial Baptist Church. Caregivers or family members of those with dementia are encouraged to attend. For further information, call Carol at 706-896-6407.

**The Appalachian Shrine Club** meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Allegheny Lodge in Blairsville. For more info call William 706-994-6177.

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