

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Letter to the Editor:

Congratulations to the Hiwassee Registered Voters who turned out in record numbers in this past election. For the record, here are the numbers: Normal turn out in an off year election is approximately 20% of the registered voters. The final figure was approximately 50% turn out with a gain of 91 new registered voters.

In addition, approximately 100 interested and dedicated people turned out for The Candidate Forum on a rainy, nasty evening. What does this large voter turnout mean? It means that the residents of Hiwassee were not happy with the manner in which the city has been run. You have spoken in a loud and clear voice. It needs to be done one more time in November.

Who won the election? We all did. There are three new members on the City Council. Anne Mitchell and Liz Ordales both have college degrees and bring diverse business backgrounds to the Council. Kris Berrong is a young, dedicated, local businessman that brings a new spirit and concern to the Council.

The new Council is already making changes as the meeting times are now in line for more people to attend. Please do so. It is our community and we all must take good care of it for our mutual benefit.

Special thanks are due to two community organizations that are truly acting in the behalf of their members and the community as a whole. Those are The Towns County Homeowners Association and the Movers & Shakers. They co-sponsored the Candidate Forum that allowed the voters to meet and hear what the candidates were all about.

We need another Candidate Forum for the '16 election. I think those who attended would agree.

See you at the Council Meetings,
John L. Holmes
Taxpayer
Property Owner
Hiwassee Resident

Dear Editor,

This is in response to Dr. Vernon Dixon's recent letter advocating carbon taxes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Of course it was inevitable. As soon as we start to enjoy significant relief of pain at the pump, the progressives clamor for higher gas taxes and new carbon taxes. Dr. Dixon does not confront the obvious. Taxes that increase energy costs will on balance lower the incomes of Americans. Savings from lower fuel costs allow us to spend more on everything from restaurant meals and movies to rent to education and new cars. I guess carbon tax proponents want us to believe that we will be better off if we have less money to spend on these items.

Dr. Dixon stated, "We must now take the lead or risk China leaving us behind." With all due respect, China won't be leaving us behind anytime soon. In 2006, China surpassed the United States as the world's largest emitter of carbon dioxide. But the difference in emission growth rates is striking. According to data from the Global Carbon Project, from 2000 through 2007, global total greenhouse gas emissions increased 26 percent. During that same period, China's carbon dioxide emissions increased 98 percent! Carbon dioxide emissions in the United States increased by only three percent. As time goes on, the United States will emit a smaller and smaller share of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions, which makes U.S. efforts - such as a carbon tax - an ineffective way to influence global warming. I'm putting some more wood on the fire; it's cold out there.

Tim Groza

Dear Editor:

My mom, Mary Catherine (MC) Brooks, writes this letter. I am her dog Kona, the missing Bernese Mountain dog. Born in Fort Bend, Indiana, I first met MC when she picked me up at the Atlanta airport. There I met my new brother and sister. Sadie is 13 year-old Weimeraner and Kibo was a big male Bernese like me. Sadly, Kibo died just 4 days after I met him of an unknown bacterium. Vets think he ate part of a dead fish. My Mom and Dad were so sad, but they told me I was a gift and helped them to get over the loss of Kibo.

Now, I am missing and I hate to think of my mom being sad. I've been missing since Christmas Day, from Hayesville, NC, and I just want to go home. I miss playing on the floor and getting belly rubs, walking along the river, wading in the river watching mom fly fish and most especially miss playing with my sister Sadie. I know my mom has had sleepless nights, walked miles calling my name and I can almost taste the many tears she has cried for me.

I am very confused. I thought all people were friendly and would help me find my family. Do people not see how well behaved I am? I wait for an invite to cross a threshold, I will never jump on people, and I never jump on furniture like my sister Sadie does, even when nobody is looking. I always stick with and look after my people while hiking, and I never get in the way of a fishing line, a trick my mom taught me. I can play soccer for a bit, but mom doesn't allow me to fetch a ball from her flowerbeds. I can also talk, make human-like noises when I sleep. And I am especially talkative with my dad. He thinks I'm funny and taught me to talk.

I don't see myself as beautiful, but everyone seems to think I am. I look exactly like all the dogs and puppies at Berner Haven Farms in IN. My parents are both from Hungary. Dogs like me are very popular there. I am mostly black with a white muzzle and strip up my face. I have a white chest, and white tips on my feet and tail. I also have some brown highlights on my face and legs.

I can appreciate that someone would want me, but nobody wants me more than MC. She loves me and knows just what I need. I made a big mistake when I ran farther than ever, but I was scared of the thunderstorms. I belong with my family, and I feel guilty I can't do my job of protecting them. If you know how to reunite me with my family, I'd be the happiest dog in the world.

Just call the number on all the signs my mom put out or take me to a vet or shelter, it is the right thing to do.

Kona Brooks
Microchip Number 9851 12002525360
By Mary Catherine (MC) Brooks

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

If you've read this column you know that I am on the road often and my travels take me far from home and to a variety of places. Some of the trips are repetitive, and a danger of driving repetitive routes is that the road can become hypnotic as the mind wanders away from the task at hand. To counter this effect, I endeavor to engage my attention, to notice things. The smallest effort along these lines can be rewarding, because we miss a lot on our commutes, and fail to see what is every day in plain sight.

One thing in particular has, however, been hard not to notice during recent travels, and I am reluctant to address this topic again. For one thing, we have discussed it before, and for another, I am convinced that the readers of this column are not part of the problem. I'm talking about the often unbroken trail of trash that has collected along the side of the roads, which crosses state and county lines, which emerges from the cities and towns and spreads out across the countryside, and into some of the otherwise most scenic places we are privileged to see.

In discussing this topic, I have perhaps painted the problem with too broad a brush. I have preached to the choir in writing about this problem on this page. After all, I have never seen a copy of the Towns County Herald littering the side of the road. I've never seen a library book or even a magazine decorating a highway. It occurs to me that people who read, for lack of evidence, can be excluded from this personal indictment of our littering public.

What I do see, and quite often, is discarded cups from any and every fast food chain you can name. I see soft drink cans and bottles, beer cans and cartons and the occasional bottled water. I am convinced that I could track a number of Bud Light drinkers right back to their own driveways by following the trail of blue cans on the shoulder of the road, and one cannot venture very far in this nation before encountering some representative of the Styrofoam world. Plastic cups, plates and the many forms of takeout food containers line the roads across the nation, as if they are embarked on a pilgrimage, one gust of wind at a time, to join the great whirling vortices of garbage that have formed in all the great oceans. During the peak of the tourist season last year, I even noticed a growing presence of discarded baby diapers along the route from Hiwassee to Helen.

I believe that, for the purposes of this editorial, we can therefore exclude healthy people from our indictment. Healthy people do not often eat fast food, drink super-sized soft drinks or consume an entire six pack of beer before reaching the top of the Helen Mountain. So now we have two groups, the healthy, and the literate, whom we can hold blameless. Unfortunately, this exclusion leaves us with a majority of our fellow citizens still under suspicion.

In Georgia, a fairly recent law requires anyone hauling garbage to cover the load with a tarp or a net. I think this is a good law. Since I bought a net for my pickup, not once have I had to pull over and turn around to go back and pick up a garbage bag blown from the back of the truck. I wish I had started using a net years ago. However, judging from what we now see lining the highways, unless tarpless loads of empty McDonald's cups are being illegally driven up and down the road, the vast majority of trash we see is being thrown out of windows, one vulgar gesture at a time. I think we can safely eliminate people hauling their trash to the dump from our list of suspects.

While the inductive reasoning of this process would not hold up in any court of law, for the purposes of our editorial we can speculate further. It seems logical to assume that the perpetrators of vulgar acts such as littering are none other than the vulgar themselves. If one is capable

of an action which damages the environment, offends the eye and burdens the taxpayer, then one is likely capable of other thoughtless gestures as well. Unless, of course, the act of littering is intentional, as in a gesture of contempt for one's neighbors or for society in general. Gestures of contempt can be thought of, perhaps, as a kind of economic indicator or a gauge of the "misery index," and if the level of garbage on the roads is any guide, that misery is on the increase.

And the choir said, "Amen." Now what more can we, the non-littering public do? Many of us, through the Adopt-A-Highway program or by simply patrolling our own neighborhoods, are already contributing to a solution. We can encourage our neighbors to do the same. We can attempt to educate, or barring that to shame anyone we witness littering, though we risk additional vulgarity by risk already prone to act in such a way. We can encourage local government to continue doing what it can to address the problem, and we can refrain from complaining when we have to pay for this service.

A long term solution can be found in the political arena. If you have traveled cross country, you may have noticed that the states which have container deposit legislation also have the cleanest roadways. Unfortunately, only 10 states currently have such laws. When they are introduced, such laws are almost always vigorously resisted by lobbyists for bottling companies, grocery and convenience chains. Politics, too, is often prone to vulgar acts.



The Veterans' Corner

By
Scott Drummond,
USCG Veteran

A Veteran's journey, serving God and country

8 February 1947 in Canandaigua, New York a strong soul to be called Richard Hoibraten was born into a normal family which was dissolved when he was ten. This would be a devastating event for any one of us. He then moved to central Florida and began his quest to understand life's challenges, the dynamics of humanity and the importance of family, which had been taken from him. No bitterness exists within Richard's heart, who is in fact a very warm, big hearted, outgoing man who now seeks to serve others as an ordained minister. Education became important to Richard as he achieved an AS degree in Business management from Brevard Community College, then onto the University of Florida and our USN to earn Electrical Engineering, Architectural design and Construction Management. May 1969 - May 1973 found Richard on active duty with our USN, including Vietnam and then USNR from 1973-1975 in Aviation on to USNR 1977-1998 NCMB-14, Seabees, retiring thereafter.

Life's often hard lessons continued with cancer taking his late wife over 18 years ago. However this very painful, life-altering tragedy did not deter Richard from questioning, thus pursuing one of his most valuable excursions into life, as a minister, acquiring theology training at Emory University, Candler School of Theology, and Ministry Methodist Church. He now teaches in church, Blairsville, works with the choir, and is very heavily involved with community functions, trying

to bring peace and unity to those in need, which includes every single one of us. The seeking of answers within himself brought Richard to a place of peace and joy continuing to serve others, as he had already accomplished in our US Navy. Perhaps the ages old analogy of "making lemonade when life serves you lemons" applies.

Being Commander and Chaplain of our North Georgia Honor Guard is one of his most important services to our Towns and Union Counties communities, sometimes requiring travels into other communities. Richard delivers strength, comfort and very heartfelt eulogies and prayers to those bereaved family members whose beloved Veterans have made their final passage into Eternal rest beside our Supreme Creator. He humbly asks for everyone to look inside themselves and see if they are able or would like to serve on the North Georgia Honor Guard for their fellow Veterans and their families.

Sharing his life's lessons, Richard sincerely requests that we, as humans, blessed by our Creator's offering of Free Will, all learn to listen to each other and share our varying perspectives. And to learn to ultimately respect the creation of life, one of God's most precious gifts. A primary concern is that our precious nation divided cannot survive. Minister Hoibraten continues to serve us all with honesty, truth, respect and integrity. As such he would like it passed along, that we, as Military men, women and Veterans need our families and as fellow humans we ALL need each other.

Semper Paratus



Community Calendar

American Legion Post 23 meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 4 PM at VFW Post 7807, Sunnyside Rd., Hiwassee. Call 706-896-8387 for details. We need your support!
VFW Fish Fry April - October on 2nd & 4th Fridays each month from 4:30 - 7. \$10 per plate.
Towns County Water Board Meeting 3rd Monday of each month at 6 p.m. in the TC Water Office Building.
Mountain Community Seniors meet the second Thursday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiwassee at 1 p.m.
Towns County Republican Party meets at 6:30 PM the 4th Thursday of each month at the new Senior Center. For more info call 706-994-3919.
Democratic Party of Towns County meets 2nd Tuesday of each month at 5 p.m. at new Senior Center. Newcomers welcome. Questions please contact the T.C. Dem's at Townscountymocrats@gmail.com.
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.
Hiwassee City Council 1st Tuesday of month, 5:30 p.m., at City Hall.
Young Harris City Council, 1st Tuesday of month at 7 p.m., Young Harris City Hall.
The Unicoy Masonic Lodge #259 meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.
Stevens Lodge #414 F & AM meets the 1st Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM in Young Harris. Sat. morning breakfast 2nd Sat. of each month from 8 - 10:30 AM. \$6 adults, \$3 12 & under.
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 old Rec Center in Hiwassee at 5:30 p.m. 706-896-1060, www.townshistory.org

Bridge Players intermediate level meets at 12:30 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Rec Center.
Mountain Regional Arts & Crafts Guild meets 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Calvary Chapel on Hwy. 76 in Hiwassee. All local artists and crafters are welcome, for information call 706-896-0932.
Mountain Computer User Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month. Meetings start at 6 p.m. and visitors are welcome. Details can be found at www.mcug.org.
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 Gary at 706-896-4308 or visit www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridgemountains.
Alcoholics Anonymous: meets every Friday and Sunday evening at 7 p.m. at Red Cross Building at 1293 Jack Dayton Circle. 24 hour phone line 828-837-4440.
Chatuge 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.
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. For more info call Carol at 706-896-6407.
The Appalachian Shrine Club meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6 PM at the Shrine Club, Industrial Blvd., Blairsville.
GMREC Garden Tours every Monday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Shooting Creek Basket Weavers meets 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at Shooting Creek Fire Hall Community Center. For more info www.shootingcreekbas-

ketweavers.com.
Friendship Community Club meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6 PM at Clubhouse, 1625 Hwy. 76, 706-896-3637.
Goldwing Road Riders meets the 3rd Saturday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse in Hiwassee. We eat at 11 and meeting begins at 12.
Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meets every Wednesday evening at 7 PM at the Red Cross building on Jack Dayton Circle.
Caregiver support group meets 2nd Tuesday of each month, 3 p.m. at Brasstown Manor, located at 108 Church St., Hiwassee. Call 706-896-4285 for more info.
Enchanted Valley Square Dance Club. Dances 2nd & 4th Fridays at Towns Co. Rec. Ctr. from 7-9 PM. \$5/person to dance. Free to watch.
Brasstown Woodturners Guild meets 1st Saturday of month at 9:30 AM in HHS shop. For more info call J. C. at 706-896-5711.
Mountain Amateur Radio Club (MARC) meets 6:30 PM the 1st Monday of month at 1298 Jack Dayton Cir. (next to EMS), Hiwassee. For info call Al 706-896-9614 after 6 PM.
The Board of the Towns County Chamber of Commerce meets the second Monday of every month at 8 a.m. at the Chamber office, 1411 Jack Dayton Circle, Young Harris.
The Quilting Bee at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church in Family Life Center, Room 216. 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10 AM - 3 PM. Bring a sack lunch. For more information call Kathy at 706-835-6721 or Marilyn at 706-897-4367.
Mountain Coin Club meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the North Georgia Tech campus in Blairsville. Guests are welcome. For more info, call 706-379-1488.
Monday morning BINGO at Brasstown Manor every Monday morning at 9:30 a.m. 108 Church St., Hiwassee. Players meet in the Bradford. Questions 706-896-4285.
Towns County Lions Club meets 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Daniel's Restaurant, 273 Big Sky Drive, Hiwassee.

Towns County Herald
Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

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