

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor: Church groups, civic organizations, individuals, are needed to help clean-up Towns County. A few years ago I was very pleased when Towns County created a "Litter Law". At the time I felt that it would be very difficult to enforce because, first, most people won't throw trash from their car when a law enforcement is watching, and second since at least 90% of the trash along our roads and streams is beer cans, and drinking and driving is already against the law, I doubted that the individuals that do this were suddenly going to stop. Third apparently many people think that the trash they throw in the bed of their pickup doesn't blow out while they're cruising down the road, but is mysteriously taken away by the trash fairies. Last week I decided to go fishing where Kelly Road crosses Hightower Creek. The amount of trash under the bridge and on the path along the creek was unbelievable. Yesterday my wife and I went and picked it up. Five (5) large garbage bags, 90% beer cans. My wife picks up trash along the Tallulah River every week. She averages 3 plastic grocery bags per week, even in the winter, and at times 5 or more bags. Trash is available to collect everywhere and organized programs are available for State highways by contacting the GDOT (www.dot.ga.gov) and Lake Chatuge by contacting the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition (www.HRWC.net), or, JUST DO IT !.

Please help, Dave Hering

To the Editor: Why you should think twice before voting on the TSPLOST 1% sales tax on July 31, 2012. It will raise your taxes an extra \$300 yearly for the average family. This is on top of an already \$2100 in sales taxes you are paying. It will hit the fixed income and the poor the hardest as they are the least able to endure another sales tax. Your county will not get all of the 1% tax it collects, as some of it will go to region projects out of your county that you probably will never use. Your county most likely has not published what it would do with the 25% larp monies it will receive back from the 100% it contributes to the region. Most voters do not know where the 25% monies will be spent within their county. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) will receive a 95% increase to their budget if the tax passes. That 95% is a HUGE increase of money and not all projects will be done in the 10 year cycle as there are not enough Engineers or Construction companies to do all the projects promised. The costs of projects are estimated out to 8-10 years in advance and no one can predict what construction cost will be in 8-10 years. We do know costs will rise as the cost of everything rises over time. This means some of those projects will not be done during the 10 years of the tax, and an extension of the tax will be asked for, similar to Splost tax extensions. The taxes very seldom die and become permanent.

Mike Sims

Letter to the Editor: I would like to publicly thank the volunteers who cleaned up the roadside at the abandoned campground on Highway 288 (Sunnyside Rd). This park was totally overgrown with weeds and debris growing over the old roadway. There were downed trees just piling up and broken limbs dangling overhead. These volunteers came and spent a morning bush-hogging the roadsides with their tractors and weed-eaters. It is people like them who make this area a great community. I also would like to thank the hikers who maintain the lower wooded trail at this same park. My friends and I walk our dogs in this area everyday and really enjoy its secluded nature. I know the friends in my walking group really appreciated your efforts.

Sincerely, Gig Wilkowsky

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE By Don Jacobsen

Parents ask me a lot of questions. Some profound; some not. One day a mother near the back of the room where I was speaking raised her hand and asked, "Some neighbors near us have the best behaved little girl I've ever seen. Is it ever possible to work out a trade?" I don't remember my answer but it probably wasn't any more helpful than her question. But I like to ask questions to parents, too. Like, What is one thing you would like to change about the way you parent? Or this, "What was the most embarrassing thing your toddler ever did - that you know of? Most parents don't have to think very long to answer that one. One of the serious questions I like to ask is, What is the most difficult thing about parenting? I get lots of different answers, but the most frequent is this: Letting go. Hmm, I find that interesting, though not surprising. My mom cried the first year I went away to summer camp. I cried the first time we dropped our oldest son off at the front steps of the school where he would start first grade. I remember a huge lump in my throat when we moved him into his college

dorm, and then drove away. But they are born to leave us. From the day they are weaned we are preparing them to be gone. We begin early to help them discover a vision of who God wants them to be. We build into their characters those traits that will help them get there. When they forget the goal, we remind them. When they take a detour, we deliberately help them back onto the right path, and in the process help them develop a distaste for the wrong path. I think it was the great oracle, Dr. Seuss, who said, "Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened." Their being potty trained is not the goal. Graduation is not the goal. Their wedding is not the goal. Today is the goal. Today we love them for who they are even as we nudge them toward something grander. Today we celebrate that they have been loaned to us, though just for a while. Today we enjoy them because they are not intended to walk in our shadow forever. That would deny them the purpose for which they were born. Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@RareKids.net.

The Middle Path by Don Perry

The hypesphere of information has chewed on the Affordable Care Act, disaffectionately known as "Obamacare," for months. After Thursday's ruling by the Supreme Court, the hype hawkers are choking on it. Among the small group of corporate behemoths that control the lion's share of what we see and hear, "the most trusted name in news" and "fair and balanced" are both doing damage control after erroneously reporting that the keystone of Obamacare, the individual mandate, had been struck down. CNN and Fox News both might have avoided embarrassment had someone bothered to actually read the court's decision rather than apparently just glancing at the first couple of paragraphs. Perhaps it was the rush to be the first to report the breaking news that contributed to their oversight. Perhaps it was the inability of a new generation of producers and reporters weaned on the abbreviated communication of the 21st century - sound bites, streaming headlines, texts, blogs and status updates - to digest compound sentences. The Age of Information is delivered to us in endless streams of 0s and 1s. Computers "think" in binary code. Imagine two switches. Both can be off. Both can be on. The first one can be on and the second off, or first off second on. Everything digital from a simple text to a sophisticated animation is, at the root of its existence, nothing but ones and zeros. People are not computers. Our brains are vastly more complex than even the most sophisticated thinking machines. Unfortunately, many of us do not even begin to tap into the potential abilities nestled between our ears. Perhaps it is just easier to see everything in terms of black or white, good or evil, conservative or liberal, yes or no... zero or one. Whether we agree or disagree with the provisions of the Affordable Care Act, many of us would be more comfortable with a zero or one decision by the court. Fox and CNN certainly tried to provide us with that comfort. Unfortunately for the reputations of those popular providers and unfortunately for those of us weary of the endless talk about Obamacare, that is not what happened Thursday. The Affordable Care Act had its genesis in the idea that Congress could require Americans to make a purchase under the commerce clause. The Supreme Court ruling struck

down that idea and said that Congress does not have the power to require Americans to purchase anything. Zero -and that is what CNN and Fox reported. However, the court also said that the ACA can be funded through the power of Congress to tax. One? No; not exactly. The Supreme Court's decision gave us a new tax, which is no surprise to readers of this column. "Tax" is not a word to be tossed around lightly in an election year. "Mandate" or "penalty" sounds better, but candy coating a suppository does not improve its basic qualities. If we want everyone in America to have healthcare and if we want them to have quality healthcare (two very different propositions) then someone has to pay for it, and this legislation crafted by the insurance industry will not be cheap. Now back to our binary discussion. Did Obamacare stand or fall - one or zero? Well, Congress can't force us to buy insurance, but they can tax us to pay for someone else's insurance, just as current workers are taxed to pay for someone else's retirement - zero and one. The court went a step further. The original ACA relied on the states to implement the program and threatened to pull Medicare funding if a state did not comply. The Supreme Court said that this was unconstitutional - zero. So what we are left with in the Affordable Care Act is a completely different piece of legislation than was originally intended - a string of zeros and ones entirely appropriate to the digital age. We will pay for it. That part was never in question. However, the states can choose to comply or not. The democrats will head into the elections defending a tax increase. Last but not least Congress, should they decide that everyone in America should purchase a subscription to CNN or the Fox News Channel, will be forced to call the measure what it truly is - a tax.

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 EMAILED 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.

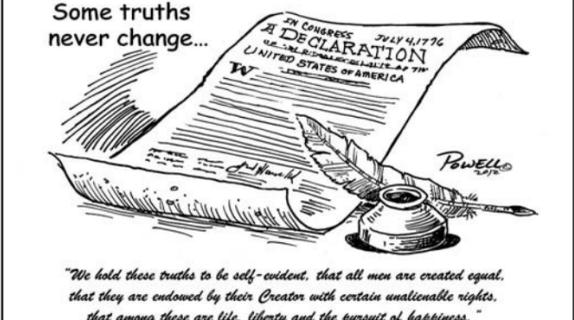
"IT'S ON MY MIND.." Danny H. Parris

God Bless America Are we a nation on a suicide binge? Has our nation forsaken the solid rock of the Lord Jesus Christ for the quick sand of atheism, humanism and materialism? Before I wrote this column I was reading the prophet Hosea. Some of the same symptoms which hastened Israel's demise are frightfully present in our nation today (Hosea 8:7; 12:1). The danger that poses the greatest threat to our nation does not come from the outside but from the inside. It is not insane terrorists that will take down our nation. Of course, they may take part in doing so, but we will pave the way for them due to our moral and spiritual decay (Hosea 6:4; 13:3). America was founded upon Judeo-Christian principles in spite of what liberal historians may say. True, humanly speaking, imperfect men founded this great nation and some of them were not even Christians but they based this new nation on Christian principles which has been its guiding light for 236 years. It seems that the predominate attitude of this nation is an idolatrous dependence on government rather than upon God who provides all things. The late President, John F. Kennedy, is known for his one statement more than anything else when he said, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." We seem to have developed a mindset in this country that demands the government to give me what I need. As someone has said we need to be reminded that the nation that is strong enough to give you all you want is strong enough to take all you have. As we cel-

brate our freedom this July 4th we need to stand faithful to our spiritual heritage. Our history is a rich history as a nation. Someone has said, "A man's country is not a certain area of land, mountains, rivers and woods, but it is a principle; patriotism is loyalty to that principle." We have a glorious heritage that began with individuals who had a dream for freedom and they paid the price for it with their blood. We must stand faithful to our spiritual heritage but we must stand firm in our spiritual health. The writer of Proverbs records that righteousness exalts a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people (Proverbs 14:34). The Psalmist said, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance" (Psalm 33:12). What makes a nation strong? Its wealth? Weapons of war? Military might? No. A nation is strong whose dependence is in God who rules in the affairs of men!

Lastly, we need to stand fast in our spiritual hope (Hosea 13:4, 9). Christ is our only hope. Individuals or nations who sow to the wind will reap the whirlwind. In the latter part of the 30s the depression had sucked out nearly all hope from America and the dark clouds of war were already hovering over Europe and America. All hope for the future seemed bleak for this nation. But then from the pen of America's premiere songwriter came the song that lifted a broken and bruised nation. The beloved songwriter and radio singer, Kate Smith, stood before a microphone and in her beautiful, full soprano voice sang:

"God bless America, Land that I love, stand beside her and guide her, Thru the night with the light from above. From the mountains, to the prairies, to the ocean white with foam. God bless America, my home sweet home. God bless America, my home sweet home."



"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Community Calendar

American Legion Post 23 meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM at VFW Post 7807, Sunnyside Rd., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-8387 for details. We need your support! 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 2nd Thursday of every month at 5 PM at the Senior Center. 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 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. 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 So-

ciety meets the 2nd Monday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawassee at 5:30 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 Recreation Dept. 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, 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. 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. 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. Georgia Mountain Writers Club meets at St. Francis of Assisi Church the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 AM. VFW Post 7807 will have their all you can eat fish fry on the 2nd & 4th Fridays of each month from 4:30 to 7 PM. \$9 a plate. See you there! GMREC Garden Tours every Monday 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Shooting Creek Basket Weavers meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at the Shooting Creek Fire Hall Community Center. All welcome. For more info www.shootingcreekbasketweavers.com. Friendship Community Club meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6 PM at Clubhouse, 1625 Hwy. 76, 706-896-3637.

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