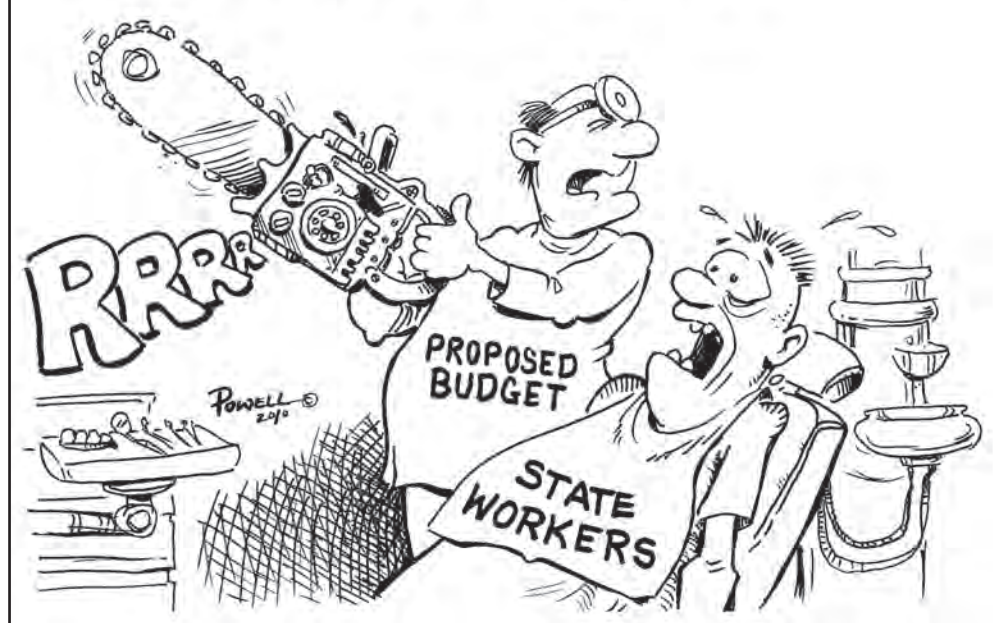


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

"Relax. It'll all be over before you know it!"



Letters to The Editor

Thank you

Thanks to everyone who supported our 3rd Caring, Sharing Christmas Celebration. With your volunteer efforts, donations of food and financial contributions, we were able to serve approximately 660 meals throughout Towns and Clay Counties on Christmas Day. This would not have been possible without your help. Your expressions of kindness and care for our community truly demonstrated the spirit of Christmas in an extraordinary way, touching the hearts of many.

Scotty Fain & Coot Owens

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Towns County

Family Connection celebrates 10 years

Since its inception in 1999, The Towns County Family Connection has been committed to continuing its mission of improving the lives of children and families in Towns County.

Over the last ten years we have established and sustained many programs through developing, implementing, and evaluating a strategic plan, making decisions about what results are desired, setting priorities to improve results, and allocating resources effectively. We strive to continually hold ourselves accountable for the well-being of children and families in the community.

The Towns County Family Connection measures results in five areas:

- Healthy children
- School Readiness for Children
- School Success
- Families who are stable and strong
- Families who are economically self-sufficient

Over the last ten

years, our success stories have included: Mentor Program, Family Advocate, Outdoor Adventure Therapy Program, Prevention Program, Communities in Schools, Enotah Youth Council, Regional Youth Summits, Life Skills Parenting Classes, Strengthening Families Parenting Classes, School Supply Drive, Prom Expo, Christmas Giving, Interagency Council, 21st Century After School Program, Career Expo, and the Health Fair. We have secured funding from local, regional, state, and federal sources and have successfully implemented fundraisers such as Music of the Mountains and Taste of the Southern Highlands, as well as work with multiple businesses and agencies to host fundraisers together.

Our collaborative partners are families, faith-based organizations, business leaders, school based organizations, civic organizations, local elected officials, public/private service providers, and other concerned citizens. Our county collaborative is a public/private partnership that serves as the decision making body for improving family supports and services with a family focus and fostering collaboration among public and private organizations. Each year brings a renewed effort to enhance public awareness, understanding, communication, and commitment to families in Towns County.

Family Connection Partnership of Georgia started in the early 1990s with 15 pilot counties and is now a statewide network of 159 county collaboratives. It is the largest network of community collaboratives in the nation that are working together to improve results for children and families.

For more information about Towns County Family Connection, please contact us at (706) 896-4131 x 1233 or argibby@towns.k12.ga.us or visit our website at www.gafcp.org/fcnetwork/towns.

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@brmenc.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.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said, "None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free." If we are content, then naturally we have little reason to want to change the status quo. This is why history as we understand it is rarely if ever made by "happy" people, and by the same token this is also why that in many areas of the antebellum south, teaching a slave to read was punishable by law. Here in the United States we believe that we are the leaders of the "free" world and that we enjoy freedoms which are the envy of the vast majority of humans less fortunate than we.

Our concept of freedom has mutated in the years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The Founders considered freedom to be the absence of coercion by government, which should exist only by virtue of its ability to protect us from our enemies and to dispense justice within the framework of the few laws needed to guarantee a civil society. Last year state legislatures in the United States created over 40,000 new laws. Clearly, we have a different understanding of the word, maintained perhaps by the same fuzzy logic we use to guide our expenditures and the same magical thinking we apply to our political views.

We are introduced to our version of freedom by 12 years of mandatory participation in a government program run by government employees. Here we are given the knowledge necessary to compete in the marketplace, and by the time we graduate high school we have a clear understanding that the freedom we enjoy in the United States is in large part a function of the choices we have to spend what money we are able to make. For a young person in America, even with economic hardships and the rising price of oil, freedom is still represented by an automobile and the open road. A teenager is free (with the

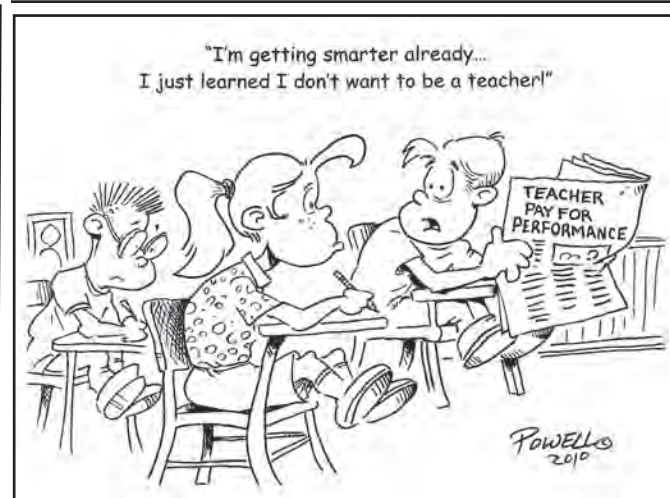
permission of his parents, a social security number and a state mandated license) to use his free time working for minimum wage in order to pay for the gas and insurance necessary to drive his car to work.

As young adults we are free to choose from a variety of paths towards the more advanced rewards offered by freedom. We are free to choose the company with which we want to seek employment and if we are fortunate enough to land that job we can spend the balance our years from youth to seniority, the majority of our waking moments, our health and our vitality for all the free mud and straw we can tread into bricks. By working only 40, 50 or 60 hours a week with an hour free for lunch and two fifteen minute breaks every day, day after day for twenty or thirty years we can provide shelter for our families and fill our homes with technology and luxuries that would have been the envy of the pharaohs. Many of us contributing to this pyramid of freedoms can even claim two weeks out of every fifty-two as our own time, during which we are free to travel anywhere and do anything within the limits of our money and credit that is not prohibited by the forty thousand (and then some) laws of the land.

Of course we are free to do none of the above, to strike out in any unique and unusual direction our imaginations can conceive, and if we do not violate any of the hundreds of thousands of local, state and federal

laws established to protect our freedoms, if we pay the taxes and the fees and purchase the licenses and follow the rules - and if we are lucky - we may succeed in acquiring the money which has become, at least in the United States, a closer approximation of the word "freedom" than the ideals of the past that are still echoed by politicians, pundits and the manufacturers of cell phones and soft drinks.

For the rest of us still free to either fight traffic on the way to work or sleep in a homeless shelter, as the years recede in the rear view mirror we may begin to look forward to the time of life when we will be "truly" free, the time when we can retire from the pursuit of freedom and spend our remaining years doing anything we want, limited only by our remaining health and vitality and the amount of money we have been able to save. For many of us, however, that consolation prize in the great "competition" we learned about in school has been taken away from us. While we worked and slept to work another day, grimly determined to bear out the hardships imposed upon us by those enemies who hate us because they hate our freedom, our portfolios and pensions disappeared through the pockets of rogues and thieves perched near the top of the pyramid. The enablers of this theft, of this greatest transfer of wealth in the history of humankind, are in many instances the very same people we trusted to guarantee our freedoms. Our grandchildren, if they are lucky enough to have a job, will still be treading mud and straw into brick long before the legacy of that debt is paid.



Community Calendar

Towns County Water Board Meeting 3rd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. 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 Julie Miller, (706) 896-6076.
Towns County Republican Party meets the 1st Tuesday of each month from 5 p.m.-6 p.m. Dinner at Daniels Steak House, 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. meeting, 896-7281.
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.
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 932, 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 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, mtnregarts-craftsguild.org, mtnregarts-craftsguild@hotmail.com.
VFW Post #7807 Fish Fry will be 2nd and 4th Friday of the month, 4:30-7 p.m., \$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 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.
Old Fashioned Dance Lessons each Mon. in Hiawassee, GA, 6 p.m. at the Senior Center (2 blocks south of the town square, beside the Courthouse) Hiawassee, GA 706-896-1060
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.

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Towns County Herald

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