

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY
OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Questions and Answers
from the desk of
Commissioner Bill Kendall



Salaries of Elected Officials

This is to clarify any issues regarding salaries of Towns County's elected officials. The Auditors pointed out, and my office staff and I found that the former Probate Judge, former Sheriff and Clerk of Court were all receiving salaries well above the minimum base salaries set by Georgia Code. My staff searched the minutes for any supplements for these officials and none could be found. There was found a provision in the minutes in 1993 to pay the Tax Commissioner \$200.00 per month for serving in the capacity of Chief Deputy Registrar and \$200.00 per month for serving in the capacity of Ex-Officio Sheriff as provided in Georgia Code. However, during the process of adopting an ordinance placing all elected officials on the State minimum salary schedule as provided by Official Code of Georgia Annotated, this pay is now eliminated.

An Atlanta TV station has called me several times wanting to do a story on the salaries. I tried to discourage them and told them that I would be no part of a story that would disparage the integrity of Towns County, its officials and its citizens. I informed the TV that according to auditors and legal sources there was no evidence of any kind of intentional wrongdoing or criminal activity concerning the salaries, and that I was in the process of correcting the situation by adopting an Ordinance setting salary standards for elected county officials.

Letters to The Editor

Stolen street sign a possible hazard

We recently moved from Young Harris to Hiawassee. About a week after we moved, someone stole our street sign. It was a major annoyance since we were expecting deliveries and preoccupied with all the confusion and disorder of moving.

However something more serious is at stake. If we have an emergency and dial 911, a missing street sign could slow down rescue workers or police, and we could die without timely help.

This reminded me of a national news story a few years ago about four teenagers who stole a stop sign. Their clueless actions resulted in a terrible car crash and death, all because of a missing sign.

I spoke with a lady who works in the Mapping Office, and she said her street sign is stolen on a regular basis also! She provided great advice about emergencies. If you call 911, call from your landline phone because your name and address come up so they can locate you. If you must use a cell phone, at least stay on the phone and try not to change your location. If you hang up they can't call you back. Also Internet phones don't aid in locating you either.

Of course if clueless people keep stealing street signs, all the precautions in the world might not be enough.

Lori Najaar

Pets on the square, a disaster, 2008

Last year in or about June, there was held, PETS ON THE SQUARE and I'm sorry to say, it could of been a disaster... Years ago there were more than 10 times the amount of pets and people for this dog show, what's wrong???? Well, several, including me, was glad to see our newly elected commissioner judging the show. Talking with long time residence in Towns County, they states, the judges should be from Veterinarian Hospitals, local business owners, various heads of other committees within our county, not the same 1 or 2 all the time. The feelings is to much favoritism and discrimination against other people that are in the show, having the same judges all the time, it was noticed. It was brought my attention the last couple of years the same people won different classes, this is why people do not come out.

It was very dangerous taking the dogs off their leash near the main street, to run to their owners, they ran all right, not to their owners. Barbara De Young, our past president of the shelter who was very good, in past years putting on this show, many, many, attended.

I myself had made a remark to Towns County Mayor, that there should be containers where a dog owner could get a bag to pick up after there dog, she had a big load behind her chair. That day along with others. WHO CLEANED UP AFTER ALL THE DOGS THAT DAY????

Nancy Veronica (Everett) Fortunato
 Past member of our Animal shelter on board of directors when shelter was built.

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Towns County Herald

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The Middle Path by Don Perry

Political speeches and press releases usually include some kind of reference to the American People. In recent times the phrase "Main Street" has come into common usage when making the obligatory reference to the masses. During hard economic times, we the people must be courted with even greater fervor - social unrest is bad for business and has a tendency to change the status quo in ways that threaten entrenched interests. Even Madison Avenue has discovered Main Street now as advertising firms have begun to replace images of models leading prosperous lives in exotic locations with models posing as "regular folks" struggling to make ends meet.

Politics and marketing aside, the headlines we see these days are beginning to illustrate some of the power struggle which has taken place behind the scenes and out of sight while our attentions were focused elsewhere. A window has opened up into the smoky backroom where a small group of financial elites has enriched itself at the expense of future generations of taxpayers and indeed at the expense of the financial stability of the entire world economy. Without a doubt there are people of integrity in government who are legitimately outraged and sincerely committed to making things better. There are also many whose outrage rings hollow, even some charged with fixing the problem who share in the responsibility for creating it.

In our opinion, it should be increasingly obvious to those of us who foot the bill, who shoulder the burden, the

majority of people working hard for a salary or an hourly wage, that we are and always have been on our own. The government will take care of those who cannot or will not work. It has to do so to maintain stability. But for those of us who saw half of our retirement accounts disappear in less than a year or for the increasing numbers of people who, if they are lucky enough to find a job, will find one with little or no benefits - we do not have the luxury of time to wait for Washington to solve our problems. There are too many factors preventing a timely resolution to a problem which took generations to create. Vested interests permeate the halls of government like termites in a foundation, and they will not give up power without a fight. Even those who sincerely wish to make things better are laboring under the illusion that with just the right fix, with some combination of new laws and new regulations, that things will return to "normal."

The truth is, there is no going back, but it will take years, not months, for this information to permeate the consciousness of our civilization. Some of us do not have the luxury of time to wait for the remote chance that our retirement accounts will regain the value they once had. We are beginning to realize that our future will not reflect the Madison Avenue images of unlimited consumption we grew up with, and we have an inkling that the longer we wait, the harder will be our adjustment. As dire as this may all sound, please do not read "doom" in our description of changing

times. With every problem comes an opportunity for growth. The old model is broken, but it does not need fixing - it needs replacing. Unlimited growth and unbridled consumption were unsustainable at best, and at worst they were helping to create new generations of Americans who were destined to be unhealthy and soulless automatons addicted to instant gratification. We were becoming an overweight and ignorant people who needed a pill to wake up, a pill to go to sleep, a pill to digest our fast food, a pill for sex and a pill to relieve the depression caused by all of our other pills.

There is no better cure for laziness than the threat of privation, and no better cure for ignorance than the realization that lack of information can be dangerous. We have an opportunity now to create a new, healthier and more sustainable paradigm if we realize that we will not be rescued by anything farther away than our own bootstraps. Already people have begun saving money again as levels of consumption have dropped. Attendance in churches is up as people be-

gin to look for something real to fill the void once occupied by material pursuits they can no longer afford. Participation in grass roots community organizations is up as people begin to realize that lasting security will not be found from the top down, but from the local level up, and in that vein of thought we offer some useful resources to enhance your own research into a personal, sustainable future. An excellent resource for finding or creating local financial networks is www.solari.com, which offers tips on everything from finding locally grown food to smart ways to invest in the local economy. Another good resource is forumorganizing.org which offers information on forming common security clubs for "finding real security through education and mutual aid."

We leave you today with this thought: America has emerged stronger from every crisis we have ever faced. We do so, in part, because we have one of the best systems of government ever devised, when it is allowed to operate from the ground up as it was designed. We have some of the brightest and hardest working people in the world. We will face changing times with creativity and innovation.



"You know times are tough when the only place doing a booming business is the unemployment office."

Can fasting make a difference?
 By Dr. Steven Swisher, Pastor
 Living Word Revival Center

We know that fasting is different than going on a diet. Yet our bodies will probably yield the same results. So why call it a fast or why not just say we are dieting? Fasting is much different from just refraining yourself from some of your favorite foods. It is a spiritual principle that can yield some great benefits to believers. Fasting should be something that we choose to do for the biblical reasons in order to see biblical results. Of course others fast for other than biblical reasons, yet these are not the reasons that Christ has given to his followers.

In Isaiah 58:6-11, the bible says, "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the

LORD shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day: And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." In this passage of scriptures, God is giving us the reasons and the results of what biblical fasting is all about. It is more than just trimming off a few extra pounds off of our bodies, as you can see.

God ties fasting to a way of handling our every day burdens that may arise in our lives. God has given us a way to live free of the pressures of demonic influence, the brunt of heavy burdens, spiritual oppression in order to destroy every yoke. Every Christian should understand the spiritual warfare that we endure on a daily basis. Yet the Lord wants us to give us ways and means to be able to battle against the powers of

darkness that work against every person. The cartoons that have displayed an angel speaking to us in one ear and the devil speaking to us in our other ear is not far off of how the spiritual realm operates.

So, why fast then? Well, if you fast in order to live free and to meet the needs of others, you will see the promises for God's intervention in your lives. It is God that promises that our health shall spring forth speedily, that fasting will show our righteousness before him. It is God that says if we fast for the biblical reasons that when we call upon him that he will hear us and answer us. Fasting is a biblical principle that will yield supernatural rewards when it is done according to God's purposes.

All of us come to the end of the line with things because of the tensions and stress that things can sometimes bring into our lives. Yet God gave us keys to a successful outcome for us. Fasting is just one of the many keys to our personal victories as believers. And of course it takes faith to believe that your fasting will move the heart of God in your situations. But as believers, we are justified by living with our faith in God's word knowing that his are

above our ways. Meaning that they simply work for those who believe and practice them. Like James says, faith without works (practice) is dead.

Fasting is another way that God wants to minister unto us through his mercy. It is to undo the heavy loads that come to overwhelm us. Fasting gives us the key to break every yoke of bondage in our lives. You should fast for any types of oppression, sickness, bad habits, any type of relational problems, financial problems, spiritual breakthroughs and more in order to plead for God's power to intervene for you. Fasting may be the last thing that we might try because it is difficult to our flesh, yet it is a God ordained way for us to live a healthy, liberated and blessed of God. So let's not live our lives "precariously" when we can live our lives upon a solid rock!

I would like to invite you to join us for our weekly services at Living Word Revival Center, "a Spirit filled church for Jesus Christ", in Hayesville, NC, on Sundays at 10:00am and on Wed. nites at 7:00pm. "Come taste and see that the Lord is Good!" For information 828-389-3444. Come join us to make a difference at home and on the mission field!

Community Calendar

Towns County Water Board Meeting 4th Monday of each month at 7 pm in the TC Water Office Building.

AARP meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at the Senior Center

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 5pm-6pm Dinner at Daniels Steak House, 6pm - 7pm 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 Democratic Party of Towns County meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. For more info, call Kim Bailey at 706-896-6747.

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 Mooman: 828 835 1082.

The Unicorn 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 6p.m. & the meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Contact us by calling 706-896-0932, mtncraftsguild@hotmail.com

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