

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Letter to the Editor:

My response to this week's headlines concerning Mr. Taylor's Taylor and Taylor Construction company, and the matter of non-payment of that power bill from BRMEMC after March 22, 2012. Does anyone besides myself notice something very strange about 2 years of non-payment going by, and our so-called efficient power company never disconnected their service? Every statement that I have received in all the years I've had an account with BRMEMC have carried the statement "Service may be discontinued without notice if customer bill is unpaid--10 days after due date". There is normally, probably, an automatic disconnect after the allotted time has gone by, but was this person selected for preferential treatment for two years because he was the Board Of Directors Chairman of our Blue Ridge Mountain EMC?

Perhaps we should investigate the president of our BRMEMC--and the person in charge of seeing that each member's bills are currently being paid--who else is allowed to keep service indefinitely while not paying their bill?

We might find all kinds of shady practices. I think our city, county, and/or State Attorney General needs to make a thorough investigation of this power company!

I have a question about the announced total amount to be paid by Mr. Taylor. Late payment charges are due starting the day after the payment has not been paid. Has their bill been charged with interest added on month after month or has Mr. Taylor been given a lower amount due than his lesser important members? I for one, insist that he pay every last penny of every month's cumulative penalties. It seems to me the total published amount should be higher. Looking at my current statement of the penalty amount should I not pay when due, it shows a fairly high rate of interest charged (I don't even have to pay a late fee because I am an honest consumer that always pays her bills on time). I also believe the person or persons who allowed this debacle, should be fired immediately without any benefits allowed (such as possible retirement). This is a despicable scandal.

A very disappointed BRMEMC member,
Mary Jean Boyette

To the Editor:

Our 80 year old house, our home for the past 40 years, caught fire Friday night, April 11. Five minutes after calling 911 two neighbors, Jim Thomas and David Sellers, were on the site spraying a hose through the kitchen window slowing the fire's progress. Very soon after, with flames above the roof, two volunteer fire crews arrived and went into action inside and outside the structure. Within two hours they had the fire under control. To see those well-trained men and women working as a team to save our cherished home is a sight we will never forget. Standing among them three hours later as they re-packed their equipment we knew we were in the presence of heroes. These magnificent people who hold down normal jobs each day left their homes that night to save ours. We will forever be grateful to each and every one.

Bob & Gayle Nichols

Letter to the Editor:

Last week you chose to run a front page article on this year's Rhododendron Festival that was not only poorly written but also totally misquoted our gardens hardest working and most dedicated volunteer - shame on you! Your staff reporter not only took what Catherine said out of context but added a very negative spin to it as well.

I have not known the Herald to run negative, nonsensical articles as a habit. Let's hope this was just an oversight on the editor's part. Next time, perhaps you will publish an article aimed at asking our community to help support their local botanical garden by coming out to visit the Hamilton Gardens during our fundraiser. Oh, and maybe a little something about how wonderfully colorful the gardens are when over 400 rhododendrons and 200 native azaleas are in bloom at the same time!

*Paul Hansen
Curator, Hamilton Gardens*

Letter to the Editor:

Letter re BRMEMC

My monthly electric bill contains the following statement: "Service may be discontinued without notice if current bill is unpaid—10 days after due date." Ten days.

Yet we learned in the April 30 edition of the Towns County Herald that the chairman of the board of the electric company didn't pay his bill in over two years—a bill of nearly \$50,000—and nothing was done. Two years. Fifty thousand dollars. Let that sink in.

Now that he's been caught, the chairman has stepped down from his position. The attorney for the BRMEMC was quoted in the article as saying "BRMEMC acted promptly when it learned of the unpaid bill owed by the now former board president." This is a pile of baloney. If the BRMEMC has the ability to know when a widow on social security has a bill 10 days overdue, it surely knew more than two years ago that its chairman of the board hadn't paid his fifty thousand dollar bill.

I believe it is time for the BRMEMC manager and other board members who covered for this egregious act of fraud to also step down, as well as the attorney who dishonestly claimed that the board acted promptly. The whole lot of them should be fitted for orange jump suits.

Carol Gibson

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Walking through the forest today, the results of over forty years of periodic infestation by the Southern Pine Beetle can still be seen. I know of several patches of woods where you cannot walk ten yards without stepping over the slowly decomposing trunk of a pine tree.

The Southern Pine Beetle is a naturally occurring species found in Georgia. The large stands of monoculture pine which enabled the beetle to multiply far beyond its natural restraints, costing landowners hundreds of millions of dollars, were not naturally occurring.

Over a thousand species of bananas can be found around the world. However, 99% of bananas grown commercially are the Cavendish strain, which is now suffering from a soil-borne fungus that threatens a staple that we take for granted as being inexpensive and universally available.

Monoculture in the natural world is an unstable condition.

In the world of economics, it can be argued that "monoculture" is also undesirable. Consider the hundreds of thousands of small to medium sized locally owned businesses that have been replaced by Wal-marts full of goods manufactured in China. Witness the hollowing out of communities that results when big box stores like Home Depot and Lowe's move to the outskirts of town and draw business away from the core.

Let's look at the economic issue in another way. The lesson of economic "monoculture" should still be fresh in our memories, having witnessed the devastation caused when people stopped building houses in our local economy that was so dependent on home building.

In the forest, monoculture invites disease and infestation, invasive and non-native species. In town, economic monoculture can lead to entrepreneurs and business owners becoming low paid employees of invasive corporate chains, or worse, unemployed.

"Diversity" is a word which has become a politi-

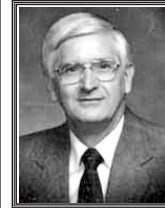
cal football, but it is a useful word when applied to the natural world and the world of business. Ecological diversity is undone by clear cutting and monoculture. Economic diversity is undone when we choose not to support our local businesses in favor of big box chains.

Local stores may have to charge a bit more in order to survive. They may not be able to support the inventory that fills the shelves of the big chains. But if we do not shop locally whenever possible, we are hollowing out the soul of our small towns and destroying much of what attracted us to them in the first place.

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

Say that again

Church bulletins, church newsletters and church publications in general are sometimes the most humorous reading material found anywhere. For example... One pastor was having a busy day and was about to rush out of his office when the church secretary asked him for his sermon titles for the Sunday bulletin. He said, "Oh, for Sunday morning just print "The Pastor Speaks." For Sunday night I am preaching from Psalm 14, you just pick out a title." When folks read the bulletin, Sunday morning's title appeared, "The Pastor Speaks" and Sunday night's title was "What The Fool Said." Another bulletin printed the Sunday morning messages: "Jesus Walks On Water." Sunday night's message, "Searching For Jesus."

The following are excerpts from church bulletins nationwide:

At the evening service tonight the sermon topic will be "What Is Hell?" Come early and listen to the choir practice.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.

Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa, will be speaking tonight. Come hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.

Miss Charlene Mason sang "I Will Not Pass This Way Again" giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

The Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet

Thursday at 7 p.m. Please use the back door.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 p.m. this evening. Please use the large double doors on the west entrance.

Barbara remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of the pastor's sermons.

Don't let worry kill you, let the church help.

Irving Benson and Jesse Carter were married October 24, so ends a friendship that began in their school days.

The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind and they may be seen in the church basement Friday.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands.

The pastor will preach his farewell sermon tonight, after which the choir will sing, "Break Forth Into Joy."

We have a large, beautifully renovated nursery, let's get busy and fill it up.

Next Sunday is family hayride and bonfire. Bring your own hotdogs and guns. Everyone welcome.

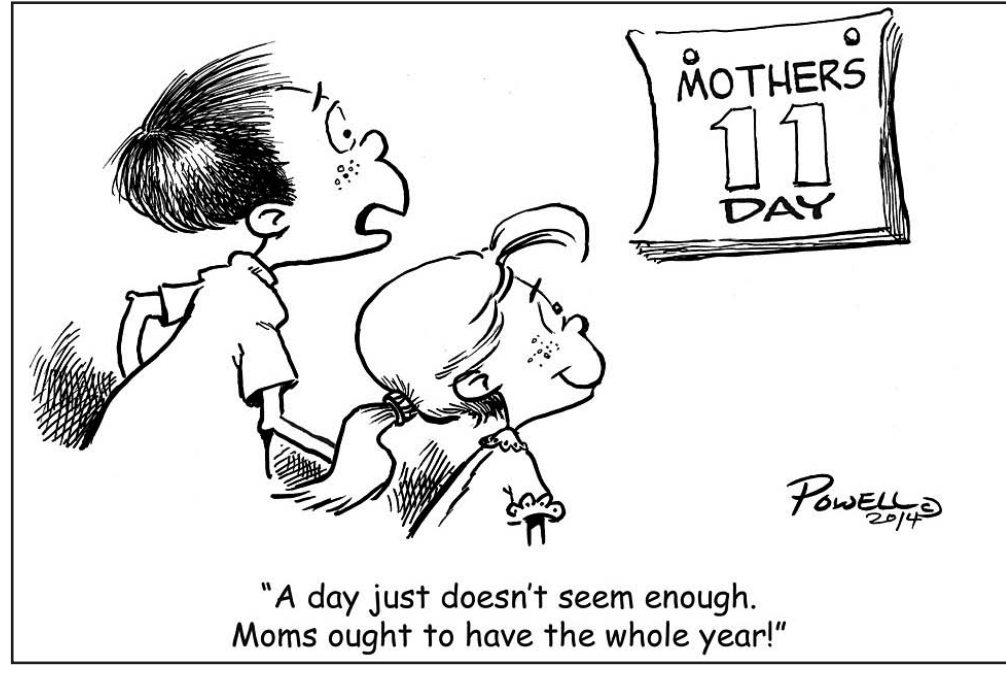
This evening at 7 p.m. there will be a hymn sing in the park across from the church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

Next Sunday is homecoming. We will have all day singing and dinner on the ground.

Thursday night, potluck supper with prayer and meditation to follow.

My favorite blooper, "Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered."

Thank God that we are able to laugh at our poor spelling and improper phrases.



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.

American Legion Post 23 meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 4 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 6 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 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.

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 in Murphy.

Call Kit: 706-492-5253 or Peggy: 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.

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 5:30 p.m. Annual dues \$15, PO Box 1182, Hiawassee, GA. We do oral family histories of residents. 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 and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG) meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at ArtWorks Artisan Centre, Hiawassee. Refreshments at 6 p.m., meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Call us by 706-896-0932 or mtnregarts-craftsguild.org.

Mountain Computer User Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month in Young Harris. Meetings start at 6 p.m. and visitors are welcome. A "Q & A" session follows. Details can be found at www.mcug.org.

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 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 the third Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church of Blairsville from 6 - 8 p.m. Call the church at 706-745-2469.

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 3 p.m. Thursdays at Pine Log Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Brasstown. Ping Pong players welcome. Call Jerry (828) 837-7658.

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 6:30 PM at the Allegheny Lodge in Blairsville. For more info call William 706-994-6177.

Georgia Mountain Writers Club meets at Cadence Bank the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 AM.

AMREC 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. For more info www.shootingcreek-basketweavers.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 Hiawassee. We eat at 11 and meeting begins at 12.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meets every Wednesday evenings at 7 PM at the Red Cross building (up the hill from the chamber office on Jack Dayton Circle).

Caregiver support group meets 2nd Tuesday of each month, 3 p.m. at Brasstown Manor, located at 108 Church St., Hiawassee. 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.

VFW Post #7807 will be hosting a fish fry they 2nd & 4th Fridays of each month April - October. \$9. all you can eat from 4:30 - 7 PM.

Mountain Amateur Radio Club (MARC) meets 6:30 PM the 1st Monday of month at 1298 Jack Dayton Cir. (next to EMS), Hiawassee. For info call Al 706-896-9614 after 6 PM.

Towns County Herald
Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

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