

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY
OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

The swine flu persists in making headlines this week, so we will take another look at the overpopulation problem, as it relates directly to the issue at hand. The politically correct name for swine flu now is "H1N1." The pork industry has lobbied for the rebranding of the virus, fearing a drop in sales, but it is the crowded conditions of industrial pig farms which may have been the genesis of this potential pandemic.

Many scientists believe that the flu pandemics of 1957 and 1968 resulted from the mixing of genetic material from bird and human viruses inside pigs. Virologists have long credited the extreme conditions of pig farms in southern China as one of the primary sources of genetic mutation in influenza. Today, however, industrial pig farming in the west has joined China as a major contributor to the genetic evolution of the flu virus. In 1968 there were approximately 53 million pigs on one million farms in the United States. Today there are 65 million pigs crowded onto 65,000 farms.

Last year a study by the Pew Research Center warned of the dangers inherent in industrial animal farming. According to Pew, "the continual cycling of viruses ... in large herds or flocks [will] increase opportunities for the generation of novel virus through mutation or recombinant events that could result in more efficient human to human transmission." Pigs living in overcrowded conditions swelter in extreme heat as they live the entirety of their short lives constantly exposed to fecal material. The stress of crowded and unsanitary conditions weakens their

immune systems and makes them susceptible to a range of infections which can run rapidly through their populations. Accordingly, pigs are saturated with a wide range of antibiotics and insecticides. The effect of so many drugs and chemicals on consumers of pork is generating an ongoing debate between consumers and the pork industry, but the practice does have some verifiable consequences. The extensive use of antibiotics contributes to the evolution of drug resistant bacteria. The drugs and chemicals combine with untreated sewage for a toxic brew which pollutes ground water and poisons rivers. The pork industry responds with the claim that antibiotics are necessary to maintain current levels of production - and that if pig waste was treated to the same standards as modern sewerage the practice would be so expensive that the industrial farms would lose money.

It is unlikely that Smithfield Farms executives wake up in the morning thinking of new ways to poison the environment and encourage genetic mutation in viruses, although the Pew Research project did report several attempts to obstruct their investigation. Modern industrial pig farming and similar practices used in producing chicken and beef is a logical consequence of a burgeoning population of humans with an appetite for meat. Consumers demand meat that is cheap and abundant. In a collapsing economy, even though we might know the history of our meat and the consequences of its production, at the market with a shrinking budget, many of us have little choice but to choose what is affordable.

Letters to The Editor

GMRE Center thanks community for support:

Thanks to the efforts of over 200 volunteers and financial support from businesses and individuals in the community, the Community Council at the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center completed another successful year. In less than five years, we have served over 13,000 students and adults through our programs and activities.

In September, the Education Committee hosted 698 kindergarten students from Cherokee, Clay, Towns, Union and Fannin County for the Johnny Appleseed Program. Five hundred-twelve first grade students from Cherokee, Clay, Fannin, Towns, and Union County received Our Feathered Friends Program. Committee members field-tested a Water Program at Hayesville Elementary School for second graders. This program will be evaluated and made available to other schools next year.

Education Committee members have begun planning for the All About Trees Program which will be provided to fourth graders in our region on May 4, 6 and 8th. Committee members will assist with Environmental Day for Clay, Towns and Union County's fifth graders at the GMRE Center.

Homeowners in the region continue to be impressed with the quality of seminar speakers provided by the Outreach Committee. Recent program topics included: Nature Photography and Fruit Production for the Backyard Gardener. These seminars had approximately 100 participants in each session, with a number of participants in attendance for the first time.

Future topics include: Organic Gardening and Crape-myrtle Evaluation. Workshops will feature Sustainable Gardening, The Garden Through a Hand Lens and Sensational Herbal Fare. An evening seminar, Preserving the Bounty, will be offered on August 20, starting at 7 p.m. at the GMRE Center Auditorium. Several of the workshops require registration, so please check the schedule on our website for complete details: www.gmrec.uga.edu.

The Preservation Committee is proud to announce that 30 properties encompassing 524 acres have received the "Appalachian Native Botanical Sanctuary Certification." This program was established to encourage landowners to create and maintain native landscapes. A six-member team continues to write a bimonthly news column concerning native plants which is carried in six local newspapers covering our five-county region.

The Preservation Committee is striving to complete the Interpretive Center which will be housed in the converted cannery. The hardscape in the gardens has been completed and a compost demonstration area is nearing completion. Plants are being added to the Ethnobotanic Garden and Woodland Medicine Trail.

The Council welcomed new members Jo Anne Allen, Louise McTaggart, Bill Moshier, and John Roberts from Union County, Gail DuFresne from Fannin County, and Leslie George, Executive Director of the North Georgia Recycling Management Association, Extension Agents Silas Brown and Doug Clements, from Clay and Cherokee County, will be serving as additional ex officio members. Committee members continue to maintain outstanding programs and set goals to include more students in our educational activities, provide more knowledge for homeowners in the region and create an environment at the Center which will continue to demonstrate best practices.

Again, thanks for your generous support as we teach the students and adults of the region how to be good "Stewards of the Mountains."

Sincerely,
 Sandy Nicolette, on behalf of the GMRE Center
 Community Council

Why no sports schedules?

I still find it distressing that there is no mention of upcoming games included in the game stories. Young Harris College is hosting the opening round of their district baseball tournament this weekend but no mention of this anywhere.

Yes, there are sometimes schedule changes that occur for one reason or another; such is the problem with a small town and a weekly paper. BUT - that's still no reason not to mention the upcoming schedule. Even tho there may be a change that you can't foresee and due to your publication date can't notify the public, I think we all recognize this problem but would still benefit from publication of a schedule each week in the sports pages.

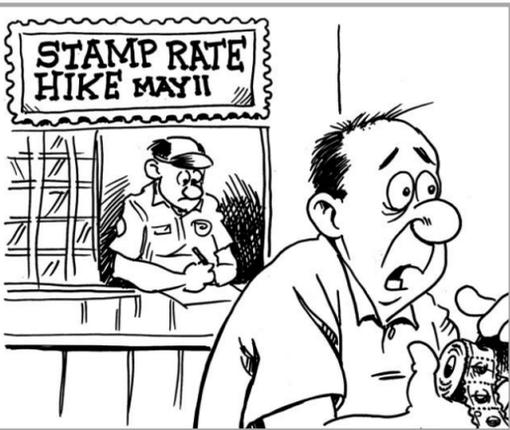
I'm sure the college and high school would appreciate this as well.
 Thank you.

John Sellers

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 E-MAILED 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.



Towns County Herald

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Thank you from Trey Rogers

I would like to say a big "Thank You" to everyone for their help in getting me to Washington D.C. Many friends, family, and even a few strangers sent and gave support. Thank You for taking a chance on a \$100 bill, which was won by Mr. Ryan Hampton of Hayesville, NC. Thank you for buying Krispy Kreme donuts and finally buying BBQ plates. To all those helping us get it together and those that helped to serve.....we couldn't have done it with out you! My family has done so much and got far beyond the normal to help, Thank You all so much!!

I've tried to keep up with all the donations and names of those people that have given and/or sent money to me. So I hope I have not for gotten any one if I have it's not on purpose. They are.....Mr and Mrs Leon Dav-entport, Bud and Earlene Holcomb, Susie Miles, Patsy Owens at Georgia Mountain Restaurant, Sister Jo, Marlene, Jerry, Betty and Jerry Anderson and Angelica, Boyd Ledford, Zell Miller, Carolyn Fortenberry, Sherry and Wes Parramore, Nicole Mason, Pam, Jessica and Jaime Dean, Kim and Marcus McGill, David and Alicia Rogers, John and Phyllis Clemons, Ricky and Andrea Smith, Royce and Beth Dillard, Danny Rowland, Carolyn Smith, Marty, Amy and C.J. Jones, Robbin and Chad Cook, Jim and Helen Rogers, Enotah baptist Church, Jacky Jones Ford, Jacky Jones Dodge, Kathy Smith at Smith Power Sports, Clara Reffit, Roger and Carole Mascali, Carl Patterson, Norman McConnell at Technique Crown and Bridge, Inc., Ava Tibilis, Ron West, Hayesville Trailer Sales, Doug at Firestone Tires, Farm Bureau, Rib Country, Lewis Surplus, Bill Jones, Betty Dockery, Ralph Burrell, Jeannie Miles, Lacei Rogers, Charles and Nan Corbin, Shirley Swanson, Marlene Nicholson, Aileen Dailey, Charlene Mathis, Lisa Barrett and Jennifer Barrett. and R.E. Linenkohl.

Thank you to Mrs. Judy Bourne, 6th grade Teacher at HMS, for seeing the potential in me and to nominate me for this wonderful experience. This was the best thing that's ever happened in my life. I loved it!

May God bless you all for your help and kind words of encouragement. Thanks again!

Trey Rogers,
 13 years old,
 7th grader at HMS

Thank you from Kevin Green

Hello, I would like to thank everyone for coming out recently. My name is Kevin Green, owner of K Green Construction Inc., and developer of Aquinnah Place.

It is very much appreciated for all your help and giving at the food pantry this past year. With our economy at a downfall for the past year it is great to know that there are people still trying to help all that are in need whether with food, work or just friendship. With the food pantry giving out food weekly to the needy that helps keep families healthy. I have been by the pantry several times and seen all the work that everyone contributes in order to make it effective.

What we are trying to do with Aquinnah Place is to make jobs for the people of Towns, Union and Clay counties by keeping 90% of the work force and supplies local. This project will also show great activity in the township of Hiawassee for all visitors and people just passing through. With the help of all of you at the food pantry making sure no one goes hungry and people like us trying to generate jobs and employment, I think we can make our communities strong and healthy. We are going to donate \$1000 for every one contract we receive on Aquinnah Place through June 10. With these donations I hope that it will help all of you be able to help all the people that we can't reach. With the help of all of you and the community we may be able to receive some good words throughout the community in order to get our project off the ground to be able to create jobs very well needed. In order to have the work force to complete this project it will take in the neighborhood of about 200 different people on site at different points of time. If we all work together in ways to help one another our economy has no choice but to get better. So thanks again for all your hard work and thankfulness throughout the community. Keep up the good work.

Kevin Green

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 Towns County Herald
 706-896-4454

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 5 p.m.-6 p.m. Dinner at Daniels Steak House, 6 p.m. - 7 p.m. 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 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 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 6 p.m. & the meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Contact us by calling 706-896-0932, mtnregartsandcraftsguild.org. mtnregartsandcraftsguild@hotmail.com.
VFW Post #7807 Fish Fry will be 2nd and 4th Friday of the month, 4:30-7 PM, \$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 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.
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.