

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



Letters to The Editor

TCHS Wrestling team

I write today to congratulate the members and coaches of the TCHS wrestling team, not only for their recent successes at the KOM matches, but for their recognition of their shortcomings and determination to improve and ultimately win.

Folks, this is what a commitment to excellence is all about and these young athletes' actions tower immensely over the words within my December 9 letter to the editor of this newspaper about the uselessness of making excuses.

Too often, after all is said and done, more is said and done, and these young men provide a worthwhile exception to the saying.

Keep up the good work

Claudos D. Spears

Thank you

The Family of Kathleen Mosteller Blankenship would like to express their sincere appreciation for the prayers, calls, cards, food, flowers, financial help and every expression of kindness during our mother's illness and passing.

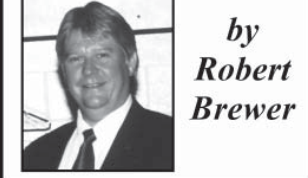
A special Thank you to sister Alene Mosteller, Pastor Clark Moss and the singers for the beautiful service celebrating the life of our mother. Thank you Chaturge Hils Assembly of God for preparing the wonderful meal for our family. And, Thank you North Mt. Zion and Shiloh Church for sending food also.

A special Thank you to Harriett Cox Lygh for being our friend and all you done to make our mother comfortable. Dr. Shell Cochran, she loved you. Thanks for taking care of her all these years. Ivie Funeral home was exceptional and we appreciate them.

The children of
Kathleen Mosteller Blankenship



Extension Tips



Poinsettia tips

Keep poinsettias well watered and away from direct sun and heat sources, such as fireplaces or radiators. They'll droop at the drop of a hat and won't recover well.

Miscellaneous tips

In moderation, add the wood ash from your fireplace to your compost heap. In the warmest regions, continue to plant cool-season flowers and vegetables. Mulch to conserve moisture and reduce weeding.

In the warmest regions, now is also an okay time to transplant shrubs and small trees. Keep them well-watered. In those areas where frosts are just an occasional thing, keep planting well-watered so whenever a freeze threatens, plants are more

likely to survive. A "turgid" well-hydrated plant is better equipped to recover than a dehydrated plant.

Set out a nice big basket to hold all those garden catalogs that have started arriving already so you can read them after the holidays, at your leisure. If you've over seeded your lawn and there are bare spots, feel free to scatter a bit more seed to fill in. also, if the weather is warm and dry, you may need to water the over seeded lawn. If haven't over seeded, sit back and relax!

In warmer regions, from now through February, after a killing freeze or frost, is a good time to move a rose. Transplant it with as much of the roots as possible and keep well-watered. After the last mowing of the season, if there is one, take in your mower to be serviced and have the blades sharpened so it's ready to go for spring. Winterize all power equipment by allowing it to run until the gasoline runs out.

Check out online gifts for gardeners. Give a garden magazine subscription or a garden book



Rolling up our Sleeves: A Legislative Preview

By Senator Jim Butterworth

The 2010 legislative session is upon us and I'm once again honored to represent you. As you are finishing up your Christmas shopping, at the State Capitol we are rolling up our sleeves in preparation to do the people's business and move Georgia in a positive direction.

Last session, while facing historic drops in revenue, we passed a balanced budget without raising taxes. This year, we are facing additional declines in revenue and shrinking reserve funds. Although tough decisions must be made, raising taxes is still not an option. Your money belongs in your pocket. You are the best budgeter of your money, not the government. Attracting business and getting Georgians back to work is the only solution that will lead to economic recovery.

It is statistical fact that Georgia is currently ranked as one of the top states to do business in the nation. We have one of the lowest corporate income tax rates, total per person tax burdens, and cost of living in the nation. We have eagerly opened our doors to new and emerging businesses that will only lead to positive economic growth and increased job opportunities.

Northeast Georgia, along with the entire state, is feeling the strains of the tri-state "Water Wars." Judge Magnuson's ruling that Atlanta does not have the right to take its drinking water from Lake Lanier shocked millions. As much as I disagree with the decision, we must find a solution. The upcoming session will be an opportunity to work with the Governor's Water Contingency Task Force and the states of Alabama and Florida, and even South Carolina, to find a solution that will work for everyone. One part of Georgia is not more important than another. We can all agree on one thing, the water faucet cannot be simply turned off to four million people and a solution that comes at others expense is no solution at all.

Trauma care must be

addressed. A great extent of Northeast Georgia, as well as much of the rest of rural Georgia, has little access to trauma care. Trauma is the number one killer of Americans between the ages of one and 44, and the third cause of death across all age groups. We made steps in the right direction last year with the "super speeder" bill which imposes an additional fee on drivers convicted of driving at excessive speeds. Money collected from the fee will go into the State's general fund with the intent of funding a trauma care system in Georgia. Despite this, we must find a consistent funding source for trauma care.

We will work diligently to find a long term, sustainable answer to transportation in Georgia. We passed a transportation governance bill last year that streamlines the way transportation projects are developed, implemented and funded. With this headway, it allows our time this session to be focused on more pertinent issues, like budget and trauma care. We must find a funding solution but we must also prioritize.

The General Assembly continues to work throughout the year to prepare for the next session. Many bills have been pre-filed and meetings have already started. I am co-sponsoring a bill with Sen. Seabaugh (R-Sharpsburg) that will increase legislative oversight of the Georgia Lottery Corporation. This bill will ensure that money intended to be generated for the Hope scholarship is being used properly and efficiently instead of going to Lottery executive bonuses.

I am employed by you. You elected me to do a job. I am honored and ready to tend to our business at the state capitol. If you have any comments, concerns or would like your voice heard, please feel free to contact me anytime. If you need contact information you can go to the Georgia General Assembly website or simply send an e-mail to jim@jimbutterworth.net.



The Middle Path

by Don Perry

There are among us gentle souls whose generous and loving nature carries with it a spirit of celebration throughout the year. For the rest of us there is Christmas. This is a time when, perhaps more than any other time during the year, the best of our ideals become action. This is the season when we take the extra time and go the extra mile for someone else.

It has been my good fortune in life to have been able to spend time and many holidays with old folks as I, in spite of my best efforts, slowly and inexorably become one of them. I have seen those from whom time has taken career, friends, family and good health, but among that number are some who can still find a great deal of joy in life. It seems that the people who are best able to do so are those who have been able to preserve their best memories like pearls on a string. When they relive those memories the twinkle in their eyes, the laughter and the vigor that returns to them suggests that time travel is indeed possible, if but for a moment.

I was visiting my father recently in my childhood home and while down in the basement going through some boxes I came across Christmas decorations which had been painstakingly labeled and packed away for the next year. Like many families we have certain ornaments and keepsakes that we treasure over the years and each special one is rich with layer upon layer of memories of times past. Every box I opened was a time capsule as the memories came flooding back. These

ornaments were last used two Christmases ago in the year that my mother was stricken with the illness that would eventually take her life. I remember that season very well, though at the time we had no idea that it would be the last Christmas our little family would all be together on this earth.

We never really know when those "lasts" will come; the last family vacation, the last Thanksgiving turkey at home, and the last wave goodbye as we pull out of the driveway to return to our busy lives. On this morning 68 years ago, 2345 sailors, marines and soldiers breathed their last breath at Pearl Harbor, and as we once again send our children, our fathers and our mothers off to war, many last goodbyes have again been spoken.

Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, whatever our favorite event is during this season, the holidays mark the passage of time in broad strokes. They reveal another year of change in the faces around the table more personally than any calendar. The empty chairs whisper a sweet and poignant reminder that time is precious, that we should seize the day but hold it gently, for no matter how we try to cling to it, when night comes all too soon it will slip from our grasp as we, in our own turn, become someone else's Christmas memory.

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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 6:30 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 3rd 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 Square 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 every Monday at 6 p.m. at Pine Log Baptist Church in Brasstown, NC on Pine Log Rd. (in reception hall.) For more info call Lee at 828-389-0924