

# Editorial

## Cutting expenses is only half the story

The Board of Commissioners made good on its promise this week. After all commissioners went on record vowing to decrease the county's tax millage rate, that is exactly what they did. Right?

The millage rate is down, but the county will still draw more revenue from property taxes than in 2007, due to the, in some cases astronomical, increases in property values. This technically counts as a tax increase, and though the millage rate will be lower, some citizens will no doubt experience it as such.

And, though the BOC has spoken, taxpayers are left to nervously chew their pencils while the Board of Education deliberates on its millage rate. The school board is where the money lies, both in terms of spending and collecting. And yet the vast majority of the 72 percent they collect from property taxes goes to pay teacher salaries. Though the schools can be accused of buying land for development at the peak of the real estate boom when prices were highest, though

there's the small issue of paying for two superintendents, most of the school board's expenses are difficult to begrudge.

## County must generate revenues, future growth

County services, such as sheriff and emergency services, the court systems, environmental management, and the creation and maintenance of parks and pretty spaces, may therefore have to suffer cuts to balance the budget.

The question, and indeed the bitter irony, will be: Will cutting services perpetuate the county's problems by inhibiting future growth? The county needs more businesses, more people buying homes, more tourists, and more sales

tax money to solve any long-term budget woes. Good services, nice spaces, and a beautiful town help to draw these things in.

In addition, cutting jobs will only add to the county's unemployment crisis. Similarly, taxing citizens so they don't have the means to put money back into the local economy is a treacherous path to tread. So what are we left with?

We are left with the need for basic money management – cutting waste while generating revenue. The investment in Dalton State College is a perfect example. It will bring revenue into the county; it has already created 14 upper-level jobs.

The county needs to invest in other revenue-generating enterprises. Without revenue, expenses can be cut until the county is crippled and the budget still will not be balanced.

Limiting waste is good; inhibiting growth is not. Our new leaders will need to pursue some new ideas in the near future.



## Out on a Limb

### It don't get no better than Leon and the Melting Point



Al Summers, News Editor  
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This is a short story about faith challenged and faith restored.

A couple of weeks ago, one of my music idols, the great Leon Russell, was making an appearance at what has to be one of the finest, if not the finest, music halls in the Southeast – the Melting Point in Athens, Ga.

I have written about the Melting Point in this space before, and I have also written about the great Cousin Itt of rock and roll, the unparalleled Russell.

Friday night, Aug. 22, turned out to be as magical a night as one could hope, but the beginning of the evening was rocky at best.

Our entourage, headed by my good friend, the great David Westmoreland, arrived just as the rain began to fall and to a sign announcing the Russell show was "sold out."

There were five of us and we had four tickets. Efforts to obtain an extra ticket at the first locked gate proved to be futile.

I have been around hundreds of venues and shows, and there is always an extra ticket somewhere.

In the meantime, a young man who suffered from some kind of disease that rendered him a mute, tried to get in to see a friend of his, a love-

ly and talented Betsy Franck, sing a song. But, due to his condition, he could not explain to the doorman he should have been on her guest list. He was turned away.

By now, David had located another ticket for our group and had gotten on the phone to the club about the mute gentleman, Steven.

In steps Ian Schwarber, the club's show coordinator, to save the evening. He arranged for all of us to throw in and buy Steven a ghost ticket and get in the door to hear Betsy.

The smile on Steven's face when he heard Betsy sing was worth the trip.

But, when Leon took his chair behind the contraption he plays and hit the first notes of "Jumpin' Jack Flash" and "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone," the place went berserk. It was like that for one hour and 45 minutes.

After playing most of his hit songs from a long and storied career, he ended up the show, returning to the roots of rock, with "Great Balls of Fire" and "Roll Over Beethoven," while people were up dancing and clapping and stomping their feet. I was standing in my chair. Even Steven was making noise.

I have always considered the Melting Point a premiere venue for seeing and hearing an act, but now I know that it is THE PLACE where the guests come first.

Thanks, Ian, you are a class act. And, it don't get no better than Leon Russell at the Melting Point.

Although, I would like to see them invite The Killer to the Melting Point stage.

## A Call to Readers



Becky Antworth  
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I was going to write about McCain's surprise VP pick – the gun-toting, moose-eating, ex-beauty queen, first-term governor, hockey-mom of five – but the volume of negative responses to my last column cannot be ignored.

Last week, I wrote about Obama's response to an interview question from Pastor Rick Warren. When Warren asked Obama about the point at which life begins, and is therefore entitled to human rights, Obama replied:

"Whether you are looking at it from a theological perspective or a scientific perspective, answering that question with specificity is, you know, above my pay grade."

What does this answer mean?

My analysis was, and is, as follows. Either: His "pay grade" answer was honest, and he really has no take on whether a one- or five- or eight-month-old fetus is "alive," despite the fact he aims to pass policy that hinges upon it.

Or: He does have a view, but won't say what it is. Obama skirted the basic question for the purpose of avoiding more complicated questions; he has essentially refused to take a stand.

Beyond subject matter, Obama's answer says something about him as a leader.

Obama wishes to define himself, lest he be defined by McCain or others. He agreed to the interview with Warren to accomplish as much, and to reach out to a different audience. He must have known this particular question would come up. And, it's an issue on which Obama has been quite active, and on which he's taken some strong positions, even relative to other pro-choicers. In the Illinois Senate, for example, he opposed the Born Alive Infants Protection Act (BAIPA), which would afford infants born alive after an abortion the same medical care as other premature babies. For some context, even Hillary Clinton and Ted Kennedy supported BAIPA; even NARAL was neutral on it. It passed without a single vote in opposition in the Senate in 2001 (before Obama arrived). Further, Obama feels the issue is so important he said "the first thing" he would do as president is sign the Freedom of Choice Act, thereby erasing all federal and state restrictions on abortion (July 17, 2007, at a Planned Parenthood event).

Obama promises unity; there is hardly an issue that divides the country more. So why not seize the opportunity to explain his stance – to define himself, in his own words, independ-

ent of the voting record he feels has been so sorely exploited? Why not help the Independents, the undecideds, and the Conservatives understand his rationale?

The fact that he didn't do so is dissatisfying at best, and distressing at worst. Those who aim for the highest possible "pay grade" must be held to a higher standard. They must be required to explain, defend, and justify their positions, especially during the "interview phase." To be either unable or unwilling to do so is to be unprepared for the presidency.

That's my take. My inbox has been filled with responses ranging from the respectfully contentious, to the outraged, to the insulting. Not surprisingly, a wire has been tripped.

I'm open to the fact that I may be missing something – that my either/or analysis falls prey to the black-and-white fallacy.

I therefore open the floor to the readers and ask: *What is the third option?* What nuance of Obama's character is above the pay grade of this *Times-Courier* employee? Why did Obama say the start of life, and when it should have human rights, was above his own pay grade?

Alternately, if there is no third option – if Obama either has no stance or otherwise refuses to state it – does this not point to a hazardous character flaw?

Offer an answer, and the *Times-Courier* will publish the alternative viewpoint.

Pieces must be between 650 and 850 words (to be strictly enforced) and address the above questions. (This is not a pro-choice/pro-life debate.)

Send submissions to [News@TimesCourier.com](mailto:News@TimesCourier.com) (Subject: The Other Side), or via standard mail (Attn: Al Summers), with the author's contact information, by September 12, at 12 p.m. Pieces will be read by the editorial staff for clarity of thought and language; the *Times-Courier* reserves the right to edit articles for inappropriate content. The piece judged to be the best will appear in the September 18 issue. Believe me or not – I won't even read them until the winner is printed.

And then, taking a cue from Obama himself, I will defer any future discussion of the issue.

WITHOUT A DOUBT—HAROLD PLUMLEY, THE OWNER OF THE OLE POOLROOM, HAS MADE AND SERVED MORE HOTDOGS THAN ANYONE ELSE IN GILMER COUNTY.

BOB: DURING ALL OF THE YEARS THAT I HAVE MADE HOTDOGS I HAVE WANTED TO ASK SOME ONE A QUESTION ABOUT HOTDOGS BUT I NEVER HAVE. AND IT HAS BEEN ON MY MIND A LOT LATELY.

IM NOT AN EXPERT ON HOTDOGS HAROLD, BUT I WILL TRY TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION IF YOU WILL TELL ME WHAT IT IS.

WELL, MY QUESTION IS THIS WHY DO HOTDOG BUNS COME 9 TO THE PACK, WHILE WEINERS COME 10 TO THE PACK?

HAROLD, MY ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION IS THIS. WHY DONT YOU TAKE A COUPLE OF WEEKS OFF AND DRIVE DOWN TO YOUR CAMP IN FLORIDA AND GO FISHING? HEH HEH.



## Letters

### Taxation without representation

It's September 1, and we're still wondering what our property tax bills will be. The Board of Education has not submitted their budget so the millage isn't set. We can assume bills will be substantially higher, even if billed at 85 percent of the 2008 value – which for most of us is still over 50 percent higher than last year.

Then, August 28, we hear revenues are down and departments are facing budget cuts. No surprise, we are in a recession. Folks are not spending money. This started over a year ago and still we set the budget on last year's revenue. Do we compare revenue and growth year to year but still set the budget predicting growth even if reduced? This sounds like something we do in government but

not in our personal lives.

The *Courier* reports Jerry Farist met with county heads and requested a 35 percent cut in the budget for the remainder of the year to prevent a budget deficit. No one has said they would do this, all have stated they can't do with less.

This is unacceptable! What do you all propose we do? The citizens elected you – you represent us. If the chairman says cut the budget, you cut.

For real savings, try: no overtime, reduced fuel usage, don't run fire trucks to grocery store or lunch, don't start any new projects – fire stations, dog pound, jail expansion, 911 offices; and turn everything off in every office at day's end to save electricity. Finally, what

jobs can be consolidated, or done without? These are difficult times and extreme measures must be taken to get the county through with a balanced budget.

Gilmer citizens are facing the same challenges and inflation as you, and we can't raise taxes to balance our budgets. I pray the Superior Court Judge tells the tax assessor to use 2007 values to figure our 2008 bills.

**Jim Brooks**  
**Elijay**

### Sheriff's dept. does citizens right

We would like to express our gratitude to the Gilmer Sheriff's dept. for a very quick and professional response and resolution to a nerve-racking, anger-provoking day.

See **Letters** page 5A



Contributed photo

Congratulations to our P.J. winner, Mindy Cavender, and our other door prize winners.

## Thrift store thanks community

The Ellijay Thrift Store thanks the following for their support for North Georgia Mountain Crisis Center.

Terry Ellis, Southwind Feed and Supply, O'Neal's Barber Shop and Beauty Salon, The Bed Store, Brookshires Fireplaces and More,

Fairmont Poultry and Building Supplies, Domino's Pizza, and Punks and Posers.

They also extend their thanks to the community for their donations and continued patronage.

## Letters

from 3A

While we were both away from the house for a few hours, on Monday, August 18, someone came onto our property and stole our Polaris 4-wheeler. This ATV is a valuable piece of equipment to us, not just a recreational toy. We use it to tow mowing equipment for our horse pastures, move large rolls of hay and many other farm-related jobs.

After we called the sheriff's office, Sgt. Crump came to the house to take the information. He assured us they would be on the lookout for the ATV. At this point we really didn't get our hopes up about the likelihood of recovery.

Less than 24 hours later, Sgt.

Crump called and told us they had located our ATV. Sgt. Davenport and B-shift met us at the site and returned our property. The ATV was located while the officers were investigating another crime. It was due to the officers' keen awareness of the situation that enabled them to link the stolen ATV to that individual.

We did not learn the names of all the officers of B-shift, but we appreciate each and every one of you. Sheriff Nicholson and all the residents of Gilmer can be proud of every member of our sheriff's department.

Wayne & Jackie Brown  
Ellijay

### Quick response, rain or shine

I would like to commend Amicalola Electric for their quick response August 25. When a tree snapped my power pole, they came quickly and worked nonstop in the rain to replace it.

Thanks also to ETC for coming out the next day, also in the rain, to repair the damaged cables.

All of these folks worked very hard without any thanks, so thank you from Ted Shelton at 68 June Lane.

Ted Shelton  
Ellijay

# Appalachian Animal Hospital

125 Mulberry St., East Ellijay  
(706) 635-7357

www.appalachiananimalhospital.net



Farley

## RED ALERT! RED ALERT! RED ALERT!

Right before the primaries we had commissioners telling us (in print mind you) what great shape our county was in. They even told us what a good job they were doing. Can you say horse hockey?

They are now telling all departments (again in print) that they must cut back. When you make cuts invariably that means job cuts. When you overspend it will always catch up with you. Unfortunately it took less than four years for us to get bit. A prime example is the five million dollars that was earmarked for the airport. I'm of the opinion that quite frankly that's a joke. Putting five million dollars into the airport achieves absolutely nothing.

To me, if you're going to have departments cut jobs then let's start at the top. We have a Director of County Development. How much does the Director of County Development get paid? Also on our payroll is an Industrial/Business Development person. What do they get paid? Again put that in your reply. Also please tell us what industry that person has brought in.

Our county has been suffering for awhile now but did you know that less than two months ago the Boy Scouts of America gave our Industrial/Business Development person a proposal where they needed 4,500 acres to build their headquarters. Of course there was other criteria that needed to be met and do you know that we meet every one of them. Also in our favor was the fact that one of the Boy Scouts top administrators was from North Georgia. Even an ordinary citizen like me can see what this would mean to Gilmer County. By the time our Industrial/Business Development person got back with the Boy Scouts they had already narrowed down their proposed sites. Low and behold we were not on it. We lost out and we're in hard times. All I can say is good job Industrial/Business Development person. That person now wants to be our Chamber of Commerce Director. I shudder at the thought.

I've been told this will make some people mad. If someone gets mad at this then they can't be for Gilmer County and that's the bottom line.

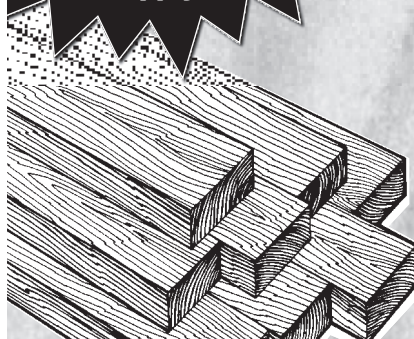
Folks I need your support. Vote this November.  
Gerald "Jerry" Davis - Democratic Candidate  
Post 2 Commissioner

gerald@davis@ellijay.com

This political ad was paid for by the candidate.

## New ES + WOOD Treated Lumber

Only available at Appalachian supply



## Why use regular treated wood?

### Advantages of ES + Wood over regular treated wood

#### The Best Part:

Due to this unique treatment process the wood stabilizes and dries quickly which means greatly reduced shrinkage and cupping with less splitting. We can show you decks that have been down for over a year with nothing on them and still look great!

- Since it retains it's natural color, it can be stained or painted to match the house!!
- Resistant to most all wood-destroying insects including termites, beetles, and carpenter ants.
- Cuts easier (less wear and tear on tools and blades).
- Extremely fire retardant.
- Resistant to mold, mildew and fungus
- Works with all standard aluminum flashings and galvanized fasteners, like the old days. (No more expensive zinc-coated products!!)
- 40-year warranty

What is ES +? The wood is pressure treated with D.O.T. (Disodium Octaborate Tetrahydrate) Borates and envirosafe plus, a colorless odorless water repellent polymer system, approved for use by the International Code Council (ESP-1081) and the Environmental Protection Agency (79628-1).

Thinking outside the box: Since this treatment is safe, this product is approved for outdoor or indoor use which means APPALACHIAN can have virtually anything treated to help prevent rot and decay from occurring. We have already had items treated such as: floor joists, studs, trusses, plywood, sidings, moldings, playgrounds, fencing, etc. The possibilities are endless.

Environmentally Safe!

**APPALACHIAN SUPPLY**  
When Quality Matters Call  
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