

# Times - Courier

Your Hometown Newspaper Devoted To The Progress Of Gilmer County

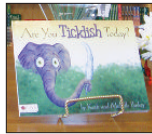
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EST. 1875 • CONSOLIDATED 1916 • 50 CENTS

**Gilmer teachers, authors 'tickled'**

See Gilmer Living 1B



**Lady Cats heading to State**

See Sports 1C



**Mountain Heart plays sell-out show**

See Around Town 1D

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## Qualifying for county offices is April 28-May 2

by Al Summers

alsummers@timescourier.com

The year 2008 is an election year, and the qualifying period for local races will be next week, beginning at 9 a.m. Monday, April 28 and running through Friday, May 2, at noon. Qualifying will take place at the Gilmer County Probate Judge's office in the Gilmer County courthouse.

For the chairmanship of the Gilmer County Commission, the qualifying fee is \$1,779.87 and the base salary starts at approximately \$59,000 per year. The qualifying fee for either of the two post commissioners is \$177.98, and the job carries a \$3,600 per year base salary.

Due to the staggering of terms for the commissioners, the term for the chairman and the Post 2 commissioner will be for two years, ending Dec. 31, 2010. From that point forward, those two positions will be up

for election every four years to coincide with the Georgia governor's election.

This year, voters will elect a Post 1 commissioner for a term of four years. The Post 1 slot will be up for election during the years of a presidential election.

The qualifying fee for Gilmer County sheriff is \$1,779.87 and the base salary is \$59,000 per year.

The qualifying fees for Gilmer County Tax Commissioner, Gilmer County Clerk of Superior Court, Gilmer County Probate Judge, and Gilmer County Magistrate Judge are \$1,491.66 each, and each job has a base salary of \$49,000.

The qualifying fee for coroner is \$108. The qualifying fee for county surveyor is \$50.

The qualifying fees for the three seats on the Gilmer County Board of Education are \$50 each. The seats for Post 1, Post 2, and Post 3 are all up for election this year.

## Rabies confirmed in second Gilmer raccoon

Dogs exposed were vaccine protected

Environmental Health Dept.

Another raccoon in Gilmer County tested positive for rabies this week, according to Andrea Wheeler of the Gilmer County Environmental Health Department. This is the second confirmed case of rabies this year in Gilmer.

"The raccoon fought with two dogs — a 12-year-old and a 14-month-old — Wednesday, April 9, at a Knight Road residence in southwest Gilmer County," stated Wheeler.

"The raccoon was killed in the fight and was tested for rabies at the state lab April 14. The results have now come back as positive."

Both dogs involved in the incident were vaccinated against rabies; therefore, they each received a booster shot and are undergoing a 45-day quarantine at home.

"This is a much happier outcome than having to euthanize a cherished pet because it had not been vaccinated," said Wheeler.

Health officials urge the public to help prevent the spread of rabies by making sure their pets and livestock are current on their vaccinations.

Wheeler reminds residents that the reduced-cost Appalachian Animal Hospital Vaccine Clinic will be conducted Saturday, April 26 and encourages anyone who has not yet had their dogs and cats vaccinated for rabies to bring them to the clinic. Rabies shots will be offered for the low cost of \$10 each at the clinic. (See schedule

on pages 4B and 11C of this edition of the *Times-Courier*.)

Wheeler has said, "By vaccinating your dogs and cats against rabies, you build a buffer of protection between yourself and rabies in the wild. Vaccinated pets won't become rabid and expose your family to this fatal disease. Unvaccinated pets that are exposed to rabies present a potential danger, so they are usually euthanized."

Another way people can avoid rabies is by never coming into direct contact with a potentially rabid animal or with any unfamiliar animal, especially if it exhibits abnormal behavior.

Officials advise that if bitten by an unfamiliar animal, thoroughly wash the wound with soap and water, and seek immediate medical attention. If a pet is bitten, seek veterinary assistance right away. The health care provider and/or veterinarian will need to know the following to assess the risk of rabies exposure:

- The geographic location of the incident;
- The type of animal that was involved;
- How the exposure occurred (provoked or unprovoked);
- The vaccination status of the animal (if known); and,
- Whether the animal can be safely captured and tested for rabies.

For more information about rabies, call the Gilmer County Environmental Health Dept. at (706) 635-6050, or log onto the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site at www.cdc.gov.

## Gilmer detectives close burglary ring, end standoff with armed suspect

Gilmer County law enforcement officers closed a burglary ring last week, and in an unrelated case, dealt with an armed suspect who kept taking shots at those who were trying to arrest him.

Gilmer County Sheriff Stacy Nicholson reported that Det. Lane Bennett and Det. Calvin Wilson have arrested one person and two more arrests are expected in connection with a lengthy criminal investigation that has solved four residential burglaries in Gilmer County which included an armed robbery and kidnapping at a Gilmer County residence.

In addition, a total of four or more burglaries in Fannin County have been solved in connection with this case.

Bennett and Wilson conducted this joint investigation with Investigator J.K. Davenport of the Fannin County Sheriff's Office.

Over the past two weeks, investigators have executed multiple search warrants in connection with these burglaries in both Gilmer and Fannin County. As a result of these searches, investigators have recovered in excess of \$15,000 in jewelry, coins, firearms, power tools, and other items.

Fannin County resident Jamie Pierce has been arrested, and the other two suspects' whereabouts are known to law enforcement. When officers make contact with these parties, arrests will be made. Pierce, as well as the other two individuals, will be charged with armed robbery, kidnapping, cruelty to children, and



Gilmer County Sheriff Stacy Nicholson, center, stands with detectives Calvin Wilson, left, and Lane Bennett, right, as they look over evidence collected during an investigation into a burglary ring. The jewelry, power tools, coins, computer equipment and other items are valued at over \$15,000. One person has been arrested and two others will be arrested. Photo by Al Summers

several counts of burglary and theft by taking.

Nicholson, along with Capt. R.T. Henry, stated that they were very proud of the investigators and the investigation division of the sheriff's department as a whole, further commenting that the Gilmer County Criminal Investigation Division, in relation to violent or major cases, carries over a 98 percent case-solving rate which well exceeds the national average.

Deputies from the the Gilmer County Sheriff's Office responded in the late evening hours of Wednesday, April 16, to a report of domestic violence on Wimpey Road in the western part of the county.

A woman reported she had escaped the incident location and met with deputies near the scene. The complainant reported that she had been battered by Greg Mooney at their residence on Wimpey Road.

When the deputies approached the Mooney residence, they saw Mooney run into the home. A short verbal exchange was initiated as Mooney threatened violence toward the deputies.

An approximately five hour standoff ensued while officers attempted to make contact with the suspect. Gilmer deputies and SWAT officers from both Gilmer and Cherokee counties held a tight perimeter, but could not establish dialogue with

Mooney. During the standoff, several gunshots were fired by the suspect.

At approximately 4 a.m., Mooney surrendered and was taken into custody by Gilmer deputies without further incident.

Mooney is 44 years of age, and has been charged with the following: one count of aggravated assault (family violence act), eight counts of aggravated assault on a peace officer, eight felony counts of obstruction of an officer, one count of possession of a firearm during the commission of a crime, one count of criminal damage to property second degree, and discharging a firearm while under the influence of alcohol/drugs.

## Bennett announces for tax commissioner

Melba Waters Bennett, a lifelong resident of Gilmer County, announces her run for the office of Gilmer County Tax Commissioner. She will run as a Republican.

The candidate was raised and educated in Gilmer County and attended Gilmer County schools while growing up in the Boardtown community. She began her working career with a position with Robert Shaw, Inc. In 1984, Bennett worked at Blue Ridge Mountain Woodcrafts, building trophy bases. She then took a position with the Gilmer County Tax Commissioner's office in December of 1984.

While working at the tax office, she moved from clerk's positions at the tag, property and mobile home desks, to filing reports with the state of Georgia. In 1992 Bennett was chosen to be the deputy tax commissioner, in charge of supervising and

training employees and handling delinquent tax collections.

Bennett was in the position of running the office when the tax commissioner was not present.

During her tenure with the Gilmer County Tax Commissioner's office, helping transition the office to a new efficient computerized system, which is still being used today. In 1993, Bennett chose to explore another field, becoming a property title examiner for local attorney Clifford S. Lancey. Her years of experience in the tax commissioner's office, coupled with her knowledge of property deed records and plats, place her in a unique position to offer excellent service to the taxpayers of Gilmer County.

Bennett graduated from Gilmer High School in 1964 a member of the Beta Club and fifth in her class. She was married to the late Charles Richard Bennett for over 43 years, until

his passing in January of this year.

She has three children and seven grandchildren, all of whom reside in Gilmer County. Margaret Hamlin is serving as treasurer of the Bennett campaign.

Bennett has extensive business experience and will use that experience to make the tax commissioner's office more customer friendly and fiscally disciplined.

Starting now, and if given a full term by the voters in November, Bennett's platform will be to:

- improve customer service and wait times of the tag and tax office;
- create a customer friendly, safe and secure Web site, where taxpayers can access tax information, as well as make online payments;
- allow taxes and fees to be paid with credit cards, pending approval by the city and county;



Melba Waters Bennett

•continue to work with the city and county school boards and board of commissioners to improve the tax collection and assessment process to benefit the people of Gilmer County;

•improve the parking and accessibility of the tag/tax office for our customers; and,

•assure continuity of service by minimizing changes in staffing, and continued training opportunities to improve customer service.

### In this issue...

Editorial .....3A  
Religion.....8-9A  
People.....10A  
Elliott Benefit.....11A  
Gilmer Living.....13B  
Health & Fitness.....3-7B

Legals.....8-11B  
Sports.....1-5C  
Focus on Education.....6-7C  
Around Town.....1D  
Community Calendar.....2D  
Movies.....2D  
Arrests.....3D  
Classifieds.....4-12D

Thursday  
Apr. 24



Partly Cloudy  
Hi 78° / Lo 56°  
Precip. 10%

Friday  
Apr. 25



AM Clouds / PM Sun  
Hi 78° / Lo 56°  
Precip. 20%

Saturday  
Apr. 26



Scattered T-Storms  
Hi 76° / Lo 54°  
Precip. 50%

Sunday  
Apr. 27



Isolated T-Storms  
Hi 77° / Lo 56°  
Precip. 30%

Monday  
Apr. 28



Scattered T-Storms  
Hi 76° / Lo 51°  
Precip. 30%

Tuesday  
Apr. 29



Isolated T-Storms  
Hi 76° / Lo 49°  
Precip. 30%

Wednesday  
Apr. 30



Partly Cloudy  
Hi 73° / Lo 53°  
Precip. 10%