

# Ellijay Every Day

## News and views from Better Hometown Ellijay

by **Mona Lowe**  
Program Manager

Love it or hate it, Ellijay's roundabout is one of its most fascinating features. I have a lot of opportunities to watch traffic at the roundabout. If time allowed, I'd watch it even more. It's a wonderful game we all play, and if we can stretch logic a little, it's just like building Ellijay.

Almost everyone knows the rules and joins in to the communal move toward their destinations. You find your place, you move together, and you still take your own road. You give and take. You

start on the outskirts, get the lay of the land, and move inward to "go with the flow."

You may have a different reaction to this analogy. It's true, some folks just don't get it. They are conditioned by years of stop and go: "you stop and wait for me." It was a simpler way, of course, but there was all that stopping. It took a lot longer to reach their destination.

I suspect most of the traffic mishaps come from those problem drivers in too big a hurry to merge. They just think the best route is the direct one — their direct

one — and charge on through.

Some folks don't get it just because they are new to the neighborhood. They don't understand the road signs. They are waiting for instructions and they are timid about joining in. There's nothing wrong with holding back to get the big picture, as long as you're not in the way. We sometimes get annoyed with folks in the way. I've been behind those folks, urging them to "go, go, go. You can do it. Move." It's hard to remember they are moving toward a destination, too. They just have a different idea about how to do it.

Most of the drivers I've seen on the roundabout do respect the pedestrians' right-of-way in the crossings. Those crossings may be better marked just off the roundabout — out of the center of the action — but the delineations seem to be sufficient. We all seem to know the four-wheeled vehicles are not the only

means of transportation, although sometimes bicycles don't get the rights and respect they should.

Another beauty of the roundabout is the chance it offers to see what's going on downtown. If the way is clear and you're obeying the rules, you can see the new antiques store on the south side of the square, the potter in the window at Whistle-tree, the crosses at Veterans Day, or folks taking photos in front of the Christmas tree. Then you're still moving at a

safe speed so you can see the changes in the Wolf Creek/Blue Door building or the temptations outside the Forever Earth door. If traffic allows you to go slow enough, you might even check the daily specials at Cornerstone or see who's outside at Cantaberry.

Attached to the roundabout are gathering places and churches. Some of our schools are nearby. Our governmental seats are here. Homes for arts, heritage and history are right around the



corner — close to the heart of town.

Look again at these features and see if you agree with the analogy. We move together or we don't move very well. Even if it's a crazy idea, you can still enjoy the game.

I just love to watch that merging.

### Are you recently engaged?

Recently engaged couples may submit an article to Times-Courier of less than 200 words of how you met, how he proposed and any future plans, along with a picture. Articles will be in our Valentine's issue publishing on Feb. 9. E-mail your article to shanaparks@timescourier.com or drop it by the office before Friday, Feb. 3.



## Gilmer County Sheriff's office employees recognized



Contributed photo

Sheriff Nicholson presented the following awards to these employees recognizing their outstanding performance at the annual awards banquet held in December. Winners were chosen by co-workers. Pictured back row, from left are Sheriff Stacy Nicholson, day shift Detention Officer of the Year, Shirley Wood, Deputy of the Year, court services (tie), Misty Hensley, night shift Communications Officer of the Year, Shannon Self, Deputy of the Year, court services (tie), Clint Waldrip and Detective of the Year, criminal investigations division, Dustin Dover. Front row, from left, day shift Deputy of the Year, field operations, Scott Camp, night shift Detention Officer of the Year, Miranda Laney, day shift Communications Officer of the Year, Donavie Lane, and Civilian Employee of the Year, Estelle Manley. Not Pictured: 2011 night shift Deputy of the Year, field operations, Nathan Henderson.

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