



# THE TAOS NEWS

Best U.S. Weekly Paper- NNA 2007, 2008, 2010  
Inland Press Nation's Best Weekly Newspaper 2009

## My Turn

### **'Low-level flyovers are dangerous and frightening'**

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*The Taos News, 11/03/2011*

I was raised in a low-level flyover zone. Based on my personal experience, low-level flyovers are dangerous and frightening. They should be banned. The flyovers being proposed for Northern New Mexico and southwestern Colorado are nothing like the ones I experienced on a weekly and frequently daily basis.

If anything the ones in North Carolina were safer since flights were in daylight over flat terrain. Even in these conditions my family and the community experienced a number of "incidents." A sonic boom directly over our house wrecked havoc. A neighbor's grain bin buckled. A large heater attached to the ceiling to dry corn crashed to the floor.

People were awakened in the wee hours one morning by helicopters scanning the fields with search lights until they paused and then flew away — no explanation. A jet tore through the trees — crashing — just after it cleared the community.

Nerves were shattered as jet after jet screamed over our house and the community. We breathed the exhaust fumes from planes flying just over tree top.

The environmental report from Cannon Air Force Base refers to animals becoming habituated. People are animals.

When do people become habituated? When they stop ducking their heads as jets scream over? When they are no longer so frightened they stop their tractors in the fields and get off? Or is it when they stop complaining because their voices have so little impact?

The approved flight path for jets using the Dare County Bombing Range was south of the community. It didn't take long for pilots to discover a final approach over the big white farm house my grandfather built put them right on target.

When members of the community complained, they used the approved path for an all-too-short period before returning to flying over the community.

It has been a long time since I left home to go to college, to find work, and eventually to move to New Mexico. I identify with people who work hard, living off the land in rural communities.

Northern New Mexico and Ssthwestern Colorado are special places. The Rio Chama flows through a beautiful wilderness area. The Black Canyon of the Gunnison is a natural wonder.

By the time I called my congressional offices to say “No!” I was probably incoherent as the painful memories had rushed back to me.

Noise pollution is real.

People living in rural areas don't ask for this intrusion.

Communities around bases get an economic gain by keeping the bases open.

People living in low-level flight paths don't get any direct benefit from their sacrifice.

Corn don't grow higher and cattle don't get fatter.

The environmental report makes it all sound reasonable. What's really reasonable is to compensate people for the use of their air space and the danger being added to their

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