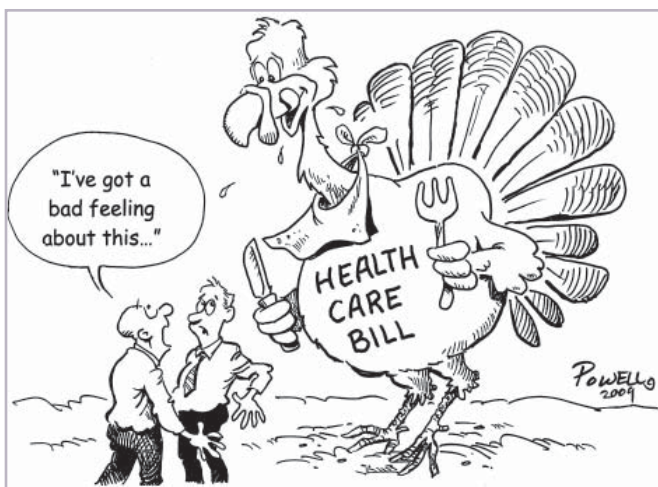


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



Letters to The Editor

Change is good except if it isn't

America voted for change, but can they believe the change that they got? Increased deficits, 5 million more unemployed in the past year with many giving up looking for jobs, a stimulus package that cannot create jobs because it was used for Medicaid et al by the states, a "cash for clunkers" program to encourage those who can not afford debt to go further in debt to save a minimal amount of fuel; a health care program that the majority of Americans envision as another Washington fiasco; no transparency in government and a national debt that we are burdening future generations with just to name a few.

I am certain that this is not what change was expected. The only change that I am sorry about is that I will not leave my grandchildren with a better future like my parents and grandparents left me.

Dewaine A. Olsen



From the desk of John Oxendine
Georgia's Insurance and Fire Commissioner

Oxendine urges caution with turkey fryers

Insurance Commissioner John W. Oxendine urged Georgians to use caution when cooking the holiday bird with the increasingly popular turkey fryer. Here are some tips and safety measures:

Always use turkey fryers outdoors, well away from combustible decks and buildings. Choose a flat, stable surface. Do not move fryer during operation or while oil is hot. Cool oil completely

before removing oil from fryer. Do not overfill fryers with oil; follow manufacturer's recommendations.

Use the thermometer provided with your turkey fryer. Do not heat oil above the temperature recommended by the manufacturer. Keep children and pets away from turkey fryers. Never leave fryers unattended. Thaw turkeys completely before cooking. In case of fire, do not attempt to extinguish with water; call the fire department immediately.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

"Democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for lunch. Liberty is a well armed lamb contesting the vote." This statement is often misattributed to Benjamin Franklin (the word, "lunch" was not used until the 19th century), but when I used the quote in conversation recently it did serve to stimulate an argument over the interpretation and relative merits of the Second Amendment.

One friend insisted that all of our liberties are ultimately dependent on the existence of the Second Amendment. I respect this point of view for several reasons, not the least of which is the fact that his opinion carries with it an awareness of the price which has been paid for the right to express, and contest, an opinion. Having just sent a son to Afghanistan his right to express an opinion, in my opinion, has been paid forward. On the other side of the argument was a very young friend who is currently enjoying the pursuit of a liberal arts education (also paid for by blood and treasure). She maintained that the traditional interpretation of the Second Amendment is outdated and that today's citizens would be better armed with a computer and an active interest in the actions of government, since a shotgun is of little use against a tank. She was keen to point out the success of the non violent approach championed by Mahatma Gandhi in driving the British out of India.

I was challenged to find a middle path between these two extremes, but I do believe one exists. An active and aggressive awareness of the activities of government is certainly essential to maintain liberty, and the computer which facilitates an intelligent vote could very well be the ounce of prevention which prevents the pound of lead. It is gratifying to see a philosophy of non-violence embraced by the younger generation. It is also true that, for Americans, the luxury of adopting this attitude often incubates in an insulated environment, isolated and protected from realities that the armed services and law enforcement personnel deal with on a daily basis. It is often asserted with little knowledge of history. For example, taking nothing from the heroic efforts of Gandhi and the Ahisma movement, to give the Mahatma full credit for Indian independence from the British is simply to ignore

history and the actions of the militant, Subhas Chandra Bose, whose cooperation with Nazi Germany and the threat to turn the Indian military against the Raj were just as influential in the decision by the British to leave India.

The generation born to WWII had little trouble determining when it was appropriate to fight. However the generations since then who have seen so much blood and treasure spent in the pursuit of empire rather than in self defense can rightly question the effectiveness of violence in solving problems. On the other hand, many patriotic Americans find it hard to question the actions of elected officials at all, especially if they are of the same political party. Many conservatives trumpet Ronald Reagan and the billions he borrowed for a strong defense as the cause of the fall of the Soviet Union, yet this opinion ignores the sacrifices made by millions of eastern Europeans who protested, who gave their lives and who resisted tyranny both violently and non violently. It also ignores the actions of Saudi Arabia, which increased oil production to the point that Soviet oil became cheap and the Russians were unable to use their considerable reserves at that time to stave off economic collapse. History is rarely if ever cut and dried in the same pattern as our opinions.

In the final analysis I think that both of my friends are correct, but I believe that the friend who supports the Second Amendment is more correct in this case. Any government that turns its tanks upon its own citizens should be resisted by any and all means, but I don't see things playing out that way in the United States, despite what the conspiracy theorists and those who look for apocalypse might expect. The Second Amendment, among other things, gives us the right to defend ourselves and our families against crime and against chaos. Chaos and crime are normal side effects of change, and with overpopulation, climate change, the end of cheap energy and the collapse of our fiat currency, change is what we can expect over a long and protracted devolution towards a new norm. In the meantime, I prefer to hang on to both my computer and my shotgun. My advice to the young would be to speak softly, walk gently upon the earth, and keep your powder dry.

Extension Tips



by Robert Brewer

Colorful plants brighten the holiday season

The holidays are here. It's time to decorate our homes in the spirit of the season. Here are some colorful plants to complement the traditional poinsettias and evergreens in your home decor.

Christmas cactus

Actually, three related cactus species dependably bloom on different holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. All have been extensively crossbred to produce flower colors, including magenta, white, pink, salmon and orange.

All holiday cactuses need bright light and moderate moisture to grow and flower best. A south window is the perfect spot for them. After the six weeks of holiday blooming, remove the spent flowers and apply a houseplant fertilizer.

Christmas peppers

Christmas peppers are garden pepper cultivars selected for fruit color and form. The fruits can be globe- or cone-shaped and yellow, orange, red, green or purple. Their peak color lasts one to two months. These peppers can be extremely hot, so keep them away from small children. The peppers will be brighter and last longer if you'll keep the plants in bright light, mild temperatures and moist soil. Fertilize them weekly with a soluble fertilizer.

Gloxinia

Gloxinia have single or clustered red, violet-blue, pink, white or bicolor, trumpet-shaped flowers. A 6-inch plant can have a dozen flowers over four weeks, each lasting up to six days.

Keep gloxinia out of direct sunlight and cold or hot drafts. Water them from the saucer with warm water. Keep them moist but not waterlogged. When the leaves start dying back, water them less often. Let them dry out for two to four months. Resume watering when new growth appears.

Begonias

Rieger begonias look much like garden tuberous and nonstop begonias. The leaves are somewhat glossy and can break easily. Both single and

double flowers may be on the same plant. Riegers are fairly tolerant of sun and temperature. They prefer slightly moist soil. A high-quality plant will be at least half covered by flowers.

Kalanchoes

Kalanchoes have fleshy leaves and striking, bright clusters of yellow, orange or red, long-lasting flowers. New multicolored selections are available, too.

They will be happiest if you keep them warm and dry. Drought stress, though, will shorten the flowers' life. Feeding with houseplant fertilizer once a month helps. Kalanchoes will rebloom if you place it in artificially short days for six to eight weeks.

Amaryllis

Amaryllis have spectacular orange, red, white, pink and multicolored blooms. They flower four to six weeks after you plant them, each bloom lasting three to four days.

To get them to reflower, place them in bright light. Move them outdoors when the weather warms. Water and fertilize them, and let the foliage develop all summer. As the leaves begin dying, water them less often. When they die, let the soil dry out. Keep the bulbs in a cool, dry place for a month or two. Then start watering again.

Cyclamens

Cyclamens show up in stores from October through March. They have attractive foliage and white, pink, lavender, purple, red or bicolor blooms. They can flower for four months with proper care.

Place them in a cool east or north window. Water them carefully - not too much or too little. When they stop flowering, gradually water less often. After the leaves die, let the stem stay dry for six weeks. When you resume watering then, new foliage will appear. Bright light and cool temperatures may sometimes get them to reflower.

Blushing Bromeliads

Blushing bromeliads have an open rosette or strap-shaped, toothed, mid-green or variegated leaves, with the inner leaves purplish to red. The flowers are violet or lavender.

Bromeliads like bright light and warmth. Don't over water them. But keep the central vase, formed by the leaves, filled with rain or distilled water. Feed them by spraying the leaves with a dilute fertilizer solution.

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GUEST COLUMNS
From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO: Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: tcherald@brmemc.net. Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc. Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.*
Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.

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 5:30 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, mtntregarts-craftsguild.org. mtntregarts-craftsguild@hotmail.com.
WFW 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 third 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

Community Calendar