

# DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## In case you didn't know

Many of our elite American Legion Riders from American Legion Post #23 in association with VFW Post 7807, Hiawassee, often participate in these honors. Thanks to Bob Haas for his continuous assistance and volunteerism whenever and wherever he's needed. Please consider joining one of our VSOs if you are a qualified Veteran.

**The Veterans' Corner**  
**Scott Drummond**  
*USCG Veteran*



There is always someone who will mention fellowship with great folks, who have done their best serving America in bygone years. The more members we gain, the more projects and services we will be able to accomplish.

We also have Auxiliary groups for our VFW and American Legion as well as the Sons of American Legion and Marine Corps League. Our North Georgia Honor Guard can always use members who are qualified and who wish to participate in final Honors for those who pass.

And we desperately need volunteers for helping at our VFW Thrift store located in the center of Hiawassee. If you can spare only a few hours per week, it would be deeply appreciated. America's "Greatest Generation" and "Silent Generation" Veterans are slowly but surely being ordered Home by our Supreme Commander thus the perpetual missions of our several Veterans groups must be supported by those of us, the "Baby Boomer Generation" and younger. Some of us aren't in the best shape either, so come have fun and give us a hand!

Thanks to Bob Haas for posting us with this article: At the request for assistance by the Clay County NC American Legion Post and The GA - NC - TN Mountain District Patriot Guard, our American Legion Riders of Post 23 Towns County, GA participated with services and motorcycle escort in honoring the passing of WWII Veteran Robert William Von Der Osten Jan. 23, 1920 - Dec. 3, 2016.

Mr. Von Der Osten served in the United States Navy during WWII from Feb. 1942 - Sept. 1945 as Radioman 1st Class aboard LST 388 where he saw action on the shores of Italy, Africa and the D-Day beaches of Normandy where he was involved with the initial landing and many subsequent landings transporting troops, wounded, fatalities, equipment and supplies.

He was awarded the African/European/Middle East and American Campaign Medals along with the French awarded D-Day Medal. Upon returning to civilian life. In 1947 he joined the NYC Police Dept. where he served the public for 20 years and eventually as a Police Academy Instructor.

After retiring from Police Service in NYC he continued on to a teaching career as a College Professor in Florida and finally retiring to Clay County, NC in 1995. He was a life member of The American Legion and The VFW as well as many civic organizations. He volunteered with the food banks and delivered Meals on Wheels for many years here in the Mountains until declining health prevented him from doing so.

Mr. Von Der Osten was a true American Hero and a Public Servant of the Greatest Generation.

*Semper Paratus*

## Georgia Small Farm Conference

The Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council's mission is to assist local citizens to enhance local economies, make their lives better, promote economic activity, and conserve natural resources.

The following is an announcement about a conference that will help small farmers improve their operations and make their farms run more efficiently. The Georgia Small Farm Conference will be held on February 23rd & 24th at the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education in Athens.

The conference is open to any farmer or citizen who is interested in farming or conserving our natural resources with emphasis this year on Urban farming. There will be several public and private organizations represented at the conference with information on programs and help available from their organizations.

Chestatee/Chattahoochee Resource & Development Council (RC&D) along with Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission and Soil & Water Conservation Districts are sponsoring this statewide small farm conference and will provide opportunities for farmers both rural and urban to meet and greet representatives from local, private, state, and federal agencies that can provide help and assistance for their farming operation.

Scholarships from the Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission will cover costs for the first 100 farmers that apply to attend the meeting. For other individuals interested in attending, the registration cost is \$150 which includes meals and lodging. Lodging is available at the Georgia Center.

Topics who provide services and products for small (or large) farmers are encouraged to come and display their programs and wares. There is no charge for the vendor spaces.

The two-day meeting will include general educational sessions covering agricultural topics, as well as breakout sessions covering topics unique to small farming operations. The speakers will present programs and offer information on many interesting subjects pertaining to small farm operations.

Topics will include: Backyard Chickens, Permaculture, Micro Irrigation, Urban Farming, Soil Health, No-till farming, Cover Crops, prescribed burning, forestry, Seasonal High Tunnels, and other topics of interest to farmers and interested citizens alike.

The conference is produced with cooperation from the 40 soil and water conservation districts in Georgia that are led by volunteer district supervisors who work to conserve, improve, and protect Georgia's natural resources. Some of these Supervisors are elected by the people in the counties where they live and some of the supervisors are appointed by the local districts.

Towns, Union, Fannin, and Rabun counties are serviced by the Blue Ridge Soil & Water Conservation District that meets monthly to discuss issues pertaining to soil and water conservation in these counties. The Soil and water districts also approve (or disapprove) soil and erosion plans that are required by the state for any disturbance that could lead to soil erosion and water quality issues.

These plans are submitted by developers, construction companies, and others whose operations will potentially disturb the soil and water on the sites where they are operating and these district supervisors have the strict word for acceptance (or not) for these plans.

This conference will provide speakers who will address some of the issues and farming methods that can lead to soil erosion and water quality issues and will show methods to improve soil health and water quality.

At the state level, the Georgia Soil, and Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC) supports these locally led soil and water conservation districts through education, technical, financial and planning assistance and through program oversight. The Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D strives to improve the quality of life by protecting and improving our natural resources which will help to improve the local economy and we are glad to sponsor this conference to carry out this mission.

The State of Georgia can provide local conservation project funding as does the Federal USDA NRCS that provides match funding thru its EQIP program for farmers who want to improve their operations.

Farmers or others interested in attending the conference should contact the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission Region II office at 706-552-4479 or email region2@gaswcc.org.

Information about the GSWCC is available at gaswcc.georgia.gov or by calling (706) 552-4470.

For information on the Small Farm Conference and programs to be discussed, contact the Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council, on our web site www.chestchatrcd.org by phone 706- 894-1591 or by email info.crcd@gmail.com.

**RC&D**  
**Frank Riley**  
 Executive Director



## Crape Myrtle care

Crape Myrtles are a staple of Southern landscaping, but there are many myths out there about how you should care for them. The real keys to success with crape myrtles are providing adequate sunlight, maintaining the desired soil pH, good drainage, proper pruning, fertilization, mulching to control weeds, and insect control as needed.

Crape myrtles always require full sun for at least eight hours or more per day to be healthy and have beautiful blooms. If they do not receive adequate sunlight, they will not bloom or grow to their fullest potential. Always be familiar with the sun patterns in your yard before planting crape myrtles.

These trees love our Georgia clay because they thrive in slightly acidic soils with a pH of about 6 to 6.5. It is important to maintain this pH because if it is too high or too low, the plant will not use fertilizer properly and your crape myrtles will never reach their full potential. If you are thinking about planting crape myrtles, or have already done so and they seem to be struggling, test your soil to see what the pH is and what nutrients are currently available for the plant.

Late winter is the perfect time to prune crape myrtles. However, contrary to popular belief, they do not all need to be pruned every year. Though it is believed that they should be completely cut back to the main trunk, or "topped," every year, this is not best for the plant. It is so dramatic and stressful that many call this method "crape murder." It can lead to thick, unsightly joints between branches and diminish the natural beauty of the plant. Crape myrtle trees should be pruned so they maintain their natural shape by thinning out branches that cross or rub against each other. This keeps the canopy open to maximize the amount of sunlight that accesses the plant and allows for adequate air movement.

Early spring is the best time to fertilize crape myrtles to maximize their growth and blooms. Fertilizers such as 10-10-10, 12-4-8 or 16-4-8 are acceptable for crape myrtles, but soil testing is always recommended to make sure that the appropriate amounts of fertilizer are added. Over-fertilizing trees will cause excess growth and a reduced number of blooms on each tree.

Mulching crape myrtles after planting conserves moisture, reduces weeds and insulates roots against extreme temperatures. The mulch layer should be about three to five inches deep around the tree, and the mulch area should be much larger than the planting hole is to protect the roots as they grow.

Insect damage is a frequent problem on crape myrtles, especially aphids. In severe infestations, aphids will secrete honeydew onto leaves that can lead to sooty mold, a black discoloration that can occur in the summer and fall. This honeydew can also attract ants.

Sooty mold usually causes little damage, but it can reduce the plant's vigor and look unsightly. Insect resistant crape myrtle varieties are available if this is a consistent problem. Always follow pesticide label instructions carefully, and spray late in the day when bees are not active. Crape myrtles are important food sources and habitats for important pollinators, so it is important to disturb these creatures as little as possible.

**UGA extension**  
**From the Ground Up**  
**Melissa Mattee**



## Letters to The Editor

### Dear Editor:

Young Harris College president, Cathy Cox is real good at calling critics of her off-campus high-rise student housing project as being unjustified attackers. She blames her critics and the public for not reaching out to college executives, private developers, architects, project managers or civic officials. Since when is it the responsibility of individual citizens to track down either civic and/or private parties on matters that concern changing zoning ordinances?

Ms. Cox must surely know that it is she and her developers and civic leaders' responsibility to reach out to the public on matters of special treatment regarding zoning variances. County zoning ordinances are put in place to best serve the public interest of all citizens and not just special interest developments jammed down the throats of local citizens to satisfy college "customers...aged 18-to 24-year-olds".

*Sincerely,*  
**Lance G. Jobson,**  
*Young Harris resident/taxpayer*

### To the Editor:

I've read several opinions about the possible 5-story building in Young Harris, where I live. I don't have sufficient facts to say one way or the other, but my "gut" says "no". However, I question the focus of various earlier contributors to the TCH about maintaining the area's beauty and appeal. In my judgment, there are factually existing eyesores already in Towns County; start with the vehicle junk yard and dump at the Union County border, continue along US 76 with all the abandoned buildings and businesses (particularly downtown Hiawassee, the county seat, for goodness sake!) and finish at the long-deserted Mohawk Industries. Rectifying this abominable situation should be the new commissioner's initial and primary emphasis in this regard.

*Claude Spears*

### 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@windstream.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.*

## Have something to sell?

**Let the Herald work for you!**  
**Contact us at 706-896-4454**

**Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday by 5 PM**



## Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	Village Condos Clubhouse	12:30 pm
Bingo	Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
<b>Every Monday:</b>		
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	Red Cross Building	7 pm
<b>Every Tuesday:</b>		
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Bridge Players	Village Condos Clubhouse	12:30 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
<b>Every Wednesday:</b>		
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
<b>Every Thursday:</b>		
Caregiver support	Brasstown Manor	3 pm
Arts & Crafts Guild	Calvary Alliance Chapel	6 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm
<b>Every Friday:</b>		
Basket Weavers	SC Fire Hall	10 am
Board of Elections	Old Rock Jail	4 pm
<b>Every Saturday:</b>		
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	5 pm
<b>Every Sunday:</b>		
Square Dance Club	Rec. Center	7 pm
<b>Monday of each month:</b>		
Hospital Auxiliary	Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Water Board	Water Office	6 pm
<b>Tuesday of each month:</b>		
YH Plan Comm.	YH City Hall	5 pm
<b>Wednesday of each month:</b>		
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
MOAA	Call Jack @ 828-321-2896	
<b>Thursday of each month:</b>		
Co. Comm. Mtg	Courthouse	5:30 pm
Friendship Comm.	Clubhouse	6 pm
<b>Friday of each month:</b>		
Goldwing Riders	Daniel's Restaurant	11 am

## Towns County Herald

*Legal Organ of Towns County*

<b>Kenneth West</b> Owner/Publisher	<b>Charles Duncan</b> Editor	<b>Shawn Henrikson</b> Copy Editor	<b>Lowell Nicholson</b> Photographer
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