

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Please Attend!

This will be one of the most worthwhile, honorable experiences in setting in Towns County. And yes! The public is invited. This year marks the 77th anniversary of the historic Battle of Iwo Jima, from February 19-March 26, 1945. We here in North Georgia are blessed to have had several of our Greatest Generation there, notably Todd Kimsey and Bud Johnson, both now at Eternal Rest and bliss at the right hand of our Supreme Commander. It is with thanks, honor and gratitude in our hearts that we recognize those who gave so much during that terrible time, most of whom we do not know. But know this, they ALL sacrificed, suffered and so many gave their lives for something far greater than self. Never forget! Which brings me to the point.



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



## Arbor Day

In Georgia Arbor Day is on February 18. Our arbor day is earlier in the year than other places, because we warm up more quickly than a lot of other states. Typically, Arbor Day is celebrated by planting a tree on that day. Some cities are a recognized Tree City. Blairsville, Young Harris, and Hiawassee are all Tree Cities and have been for more than 26 years. Each year on Arbor Day these towns will plant a tree to celebrate arbor day. In preparation for Arbor day this year, I'm going to talk about planting trees.



UGA extension  
**Watching and Working**  
Jacob Williams

It's important to plant trees properly, because you want that tree to be able to grow and stay healthy for a long time. Proper planting goes a long way to helping with that. First off when making your tree selection make sure that you pick a tree that is well suited to the

place you intend to plant it. Ask questions like, how much sun does this tree need, does it like wet areas or dry, how big will this tree get? Container grown plants can be planted at any time of year, but the best time to plant them is in the Fall. Balled and burlap (B&B) plants are typically planted after leaf drop has occurred. Summer planting is discouraged, because new trees will need more watering at that time of year.

When preparing the hole for planting take a soil test to see if any soil amending is needed for the tree. If you are planting somewhere that has poorly drained soils creating an elevated bed to plant into will be beneficial. You want to create a spot that won't hold pockets of water. If you're planting where there is new construction make sure that there isn't any buried debris where you're going to be planting.

You want to dig a hole that is 3x the diameter of the root ball. The depth of the hole is very important. Many trees are planted to shallow or too deep. The depth of the hole should be the height of the root ball. If the tree is planted too deeply then the roots will not be able to get oxygen. If the tree is planted too shallow the roots will dry out.

When planting container grown trees remove the container and make sure that there aren't any circling roots that would strangle the tree later on. If the tree is root bound, use a knife to make 3-4 slices that goes 1-2 inches deep from top to bottom on the root ball. B&B trees should have the burlap removed if it is a synthetic material. In well drained soil burlap can be left except on the top of the root ball. In poorly drained soil remove the burlap entirely. Remove the top of the wire basket if there is one.

When back filling the hole it's best to use mostly original soil from that spot. You can add 10-20 percent compost. Break up any clods before putting them back in the hole. Fill the hole half way and tamp the soil with your foot. Fill the hole the rest of the way and tamp it again.

Apply 2 to 4 inches of mulch around the tree. Don't apply mulch all the way up to the trunk of the tree as this encourages rot. The mulch should go all the way to the tree's drip-line. Newly planted trees need 1-3 inches of water per week. If we are getting plenty of rain, hand watering isn't necessary.

If you have questions about planting trees contact your County Extension Office or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).

## Off You Go

Bonnie and Babu, forever known as "The Puppies," joined our family 13 years ago on Valentine's Day. Two energetic and dangerously cute little balls of puppy fur were the perfect therapy for the gray and leaden days that followed the passing of my mother, just a week prior. Babu's story has been told here. Bonnie's came to an end yesterday as she left us, gently and peacefully, with the two people she loved the most by her side.

Bonnie Underfoot Valentine Pennywhistle Gooberella Beetlebright was special. They are all special. They love unconditionally and invite our better angels. If we are lucky, we'll find that one dog who loves us more than all the rest, at least until the next one comes along.

I know there are many who would agree that the grief we feel for the passing of an animal friend is profound, and often as poignant as the loss of a person. As far as humans are concerned, we have a hope, a promise and a belief that we will see them again in the afterlife. We're not so sure when it comes to our loyal and steadfast friends in the animal kingdom. It is my personal belief that a merciful God who would gift us with such joyful and loving entities must surely provide for their spirits as well. We attach a great deal of emotion and personal history to our pets. Puppies are easy to love. People are not always so. A good dog is good practice for those feelings that might otherwise start to rust or atrophy from lack of use.

Dogs teach us to live in the present moment, and the passage of time marked in dog years must surely be richer than the time we humans abandon to worry and distraction. I have in mind a better calendar than the one we currently use, one which marks time not in months and years, but by the canine companions who accompany us during our different phases of life. That first puppy teaches us enduring lessons as we grow up together. The pups of early adulthood share in the adventures that become our best stories later in life. The next ones share stories with our own children, and console us in those years when it seems like life takes away more than it gives. Finally, we have the companions who comfort us during the years when empty seats surround the table, and our circle becomes ever smaller. I am not a singer. Some of us lack the talent or the inspiration to give ourselves permission for such a spontaneous expression of joy, but I always sang to Bonnie. Her songs were silly and playful, and they celebrated her many names. She was my biggest, my only fan. I sang to her every day of her life, and I sang to her as that life slowly drained from her body and into the spirit realm.

With her final moments of awareness, she still responded to our voices and loving caresses. At the very last her eyes sought us out with the same anticipation and trust, and puzzlement. We told her not to be afraid. "Off you go," we said cheerfully, as if we could ever hide how we truly felt from her. These were the words that gave her permission to go and play, and do "Bonnie things," and then we sang once more to her until she was gone from this realm.

There is a painfully empty spot now where Bonnie's bed used to be, and an empty place in our hearts. A light has gone out, and the world seems a bit dimmer. Grief is the price we pay for love, but it is the greatest bargain in the universe. In time, our grief will change to gratitude, for the laughs, the adventures and the stories. Another puppy will come along; new light will be kindled, and new songs will be sung. The loving memory of Bonnie Beetlebright will endure.

## 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  
P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546  
Our email address: [tcherald@windstream.net](mailto: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.*

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## Outside The Box

By: Don Perry  
[worldoutsidethebox.com](http://worldoutsidethebox.com)

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## Don't Forget to shop ReStore

We get truck loads of donated items in everyday to resell in our ReStore. Customers donate items themselves, dropping off clothing, furniture etc. We also offer a pick-up service to come to your location to pick up furniture or items too heavy or too big to load into a car. Our truck drivers pick up items Monday through Friday filling our store with items generously donated and lightly used for us to resell and display in our store. Though we are not an antique store, we often get items in with a story to tell or a history to research. We've gotten old wartime photos of loved ones, dining room tables passed down through generations, and priceless items that stand the test of time like a console record player with a diamond needle.

Last week we had a dining room table in the ReStore with a note on it from the donors stating, "This table was a wedding gift to my grandparents in 1919, refinished in 1998 and my family has used it until now. It is time to move on. I hope it finds a good home."

The items at the ReStore all have a story to tell, and we enjoy finding treasures like these, that have value far beyond their current shape. We encourage repurposing items from our ReStore and sending in before and after photos of the items you have bought at the ReStore and have restored into a new piece of furniture or décor. You can send these in our Facebook group, "Habitat for Humanity Towns/Union Counties ReStore." We would love to see the treasures you find in our store! The Habitat for Humanity ReStore is about restoring hope in the hearts that have none and restoring homes into prime living conditions for community members. Your donations help us succeed. If you are interested in donating items that are gently used, please give us a call at 706-745-7101, we can schedule to come out and pick your items up. If you have items with a story or some historical significance, be sure to tell us or attach the information to the item!

We love to find items like these in our donations. We can resell these items with a higher value, which benefits our cause. In addition, customers can read up on the significance of them. Shop the Habitat ReStore for unique donations, and items to repurpose. Everyday we receive newly donated items in, you never know what you will find!



**Habitat Happenings**  
Madelyn Bailey

## Letters to The Editor

### War on Energy

Dear Editor,  
Despite recent propaganda designed to deflect responsibility for our energy crisis away from President Biden, common sense dictates that high gasoline and natural gas prices are a direct result of government policies that discourage U.S. fossil fuel production.

Shutting down pipelines, stopping new oil and gas leases on federal lands, and stringent new regulations on industries consuming hydrocarbon based fuels are not Fox News talking points, they are facts.

Actions have consequences, and energy policies enacted under President Biden are designed to reduce production and distribution of U.S. oil and gas while increasing our dependence on foreign energy.

Does anybody actually believe that Biden's reckless policies have no effect on the prices that Americans are paying for our energy needs? Rapidly rising energy prices are THE major component in our out of control inflation!

Again, not a Fox News talking point but a factual correlation as well as a common sense observation. Increased transportation and natural gas prices have a direct correlation to soaring fertilizer prices which in turn impact food costs. Higher gasoline prices affect transportation costs of everything we buy!

Heating costs, grocery prices, gasoline, everyday consumer products from clothing to cleaning products, from cars to construction all to varying degrees are impacted by oil and gas costs.

Biden's reckless war on the oil and gas industry hurts every American, every day. Perhaps if critics of Fox News would broaden their information sources instead of relying on CNN, NBC and NPR they'd wake up to the real causes of the new "misery index" caused by the skyrocketing inflation that is systematically squeezing out the middle class in our country.

Kevin P. Cannon

## The Spirit of Public Discourse

Dear Editor,  
In the spirit of public discourse, this responds to the letter dated February 2, 2022, which letter making excuses for President Biden. Let's look at the actual facts, the ones pertaining to all of us at the gas pump. Let's not dawdle on what's going on elsewhere; President Biden is not the president elsewhere.

Hyperinflated energy and gasoline prices are the NET result of the disastrous Biden energy policies, starting with his highly irresponsible decision to shut down the Keystone XL pipeline, which was set to deliver 800,000 barrels a day to the USA. Also, that deficiency means oil has to be shipped and trucked from elsewhere. Domino-wise that results in transport costs (relying on primarily gasoline for that transport) to deliver it locally. Gasoline prices spiked 50 cents a gallon on news of that shutdown and continue to rise rapidly.

Bottom line: high energy prices and associated transportation costs are accordingly driving this inflation, and, as he says, "the buck" stops with Biden.

Claude Spears

# Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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