

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Why Mr. Rogers Wore a Sweater

Well worth reading. Copied exactly as sent to me by Katie Harkins, American Legion Aux District 9 Chaplain. I was blessed to be able to share this with residents of Brasstown last week.

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



Captain Kangaroo passed away on January 23, 2004 at age 76, which is odd, because he always looked to be 76. (DOB: 6/27/27)

His death reminded me of the following story. Some people have been a bit offended that the actor, Lee Marvin, is buried in a grave alongside 3 and 4-star generals at Arlington National Cemetery. His marker gives his name, rank (PVT) and service (USMC). Nothing else. Here's a guy who was only a famous movie star who served his time, why the heck does the rate burial with these guys? Well, following is the amazing answer: I always liked Lee Marvin. In didn't know the extent of his Marine Corps experiences. But a time when many Hollywood stars served their country in the armed forces often in rear echelon posts where they were carefully protected, only to be trotted out to perform for the cameras in war bond promotions, Lee Marvin was a genuine hero. He won the Navy Cross at Iwo Jima.

There is only one higher Naval award... the Medal of Honor! If that is a surprising comment on the true character of the man, he credits his sergeant with an even greater show of bravery. Dialog from "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson": His guest was Lee Marvin... Johnny said, "Lee, I'll bet a lot of people are unaware that you were a Marine in the initial landing at Iwo Jima and that during the course of that action you earned the Navy Cross and were severely wounded."

"Yeah, yeah... I got shot square in the bottom and they gave me the Cross for securing a hot spot about halfway up Suribachi. Bad thing about getting shot up on a mountain is guys getting shot hauling you down. But, Johnny, at Iwo Jima, I served under the bravest man I ever knew... We both got the Cross the same day, but what he did for his Cross made mine look cheap in comparison.

That dumb guy actually stood up on Red beach and directed his troops to move forward and get the hell off the beach. Bullets flying by, with mortar rounds landing everywhere and he stood there as the main target of gunfire so that he could get his men to safety. He did this on more than one occasion because his men's safety was more important than his own life.

That Sergeant and I have been lifelong friends. When they brought me off Suribachi we passed the Sergeant and he lit a smoke and passed it to me, lying on my belly on the litter and said, "Where'd they get you Lee?" "Well Bob... if you make it home before me, tell Mom to sell the outhouse!"

Johnny, I'm not lying, Sergeant Keeshan was the bravest man I ever knew. The Sergeant's name is Bob Keeshan. You and the world know him as Captain Kangaroo."

On another note, there was this wimpy little man on PBS, gentle and quiet. Mr. Rogers is another of those you would least suspect of being anything but what he now portrays to our youth.

But Mr. Rogers was a U.S. Navy Seal, combat-proven in Vietnam with over twenty-five confirmed kills to his name. He wore a long-sleeved sweater on TV to cover the many tattoos on his forearm and biceps. He was a master in small arms and hand-to-hand combat, able to disarm or kill in a heartbeat.

After the war Mr. Rogers became an ordained Presbyterian minister and therefore, a pacifist. Vowing to never harm another human, he also dedicated the rest of his life to trying to help lead children on the right path in life. He hid away the tattoos and his past life and won our hearts with his quiet wit and charm.

America's real heroes don't flaunt what they did. They quietly go about their day-to-day lives, doing what they do best. They earned our respect and the freedoms that we all enjoy. Look around and see if you can find one of those heroes in your midst. Often, they are the ones you'd least suspect, but would most like to have on your side if anything ever happened.

Take the time to thank anyone that has fought for our freedom. With encouragement, they could be the next Captain Kangaroo or Mr. Rogers.

*Semper Paratus*

## Letters to The Editor

### What are we getting for our Money?

Dear Editor,

The oldest buildings in town have been purchased by the City for \$99,000.00. It is a good thing that something is being done with those buildings.

What did we get? Buildings that have poor curb appeal from Main Street, no parking on Main Street, no parking on either side of the buildings, no parking in the rear of the building and no clear access to the back of the buildings. Limited parking is available on the square.

They were built in 1927 (?) and last occupied and maintained in the early 1970 s. Guestimate to fix these buildings is \$350,000.00. Grants may be available to do the re-construction. That is a great idea and takes a big financial burden off of the City, IF they are awarded. Would it be better to tear them down and make it into parking lot and space to be developed at a later date?

Anyone who has purchased an old building will tell you that planned expenses grow into bigger expenses in a big hurry ...and you have no choice but to continue. The total cost of the project is about \$450,000.00. A year or more may be required to complete the work.

What do we get for that Money? The City will have a \$450,000.00 building for lease or rent in competition with local private property owners that have spaces for rent. What will the City have to charge for rent in order to cover the cost of the buildings? Who pays for the taxes, utilities and upkeep if the buildings are not rented? We do.

Within the City Limits, there are a minimum of 34 business spaces for rent or lease. All of them are newer, have on-site parking, up to date utilities, better curb appeal, and ready to be turn - key occupied. Several of them could possibly support more than one business.

How many new businesses would \$99,000.00 or \$450,000.00 attract? These concerns deserve to be discussed, evaluated and understood before committing to such a large, long term project.

This is progress and a move in the right direction.

**John L. Holmes**  
Hiawassee Resident

## 'Good Fires' Prevent Bad Ones

Carefully Planned 'Good Fires' Prevent Bad Ones, Benefit Wildlife - On February 3, Governor Brian Kemp signed a proclamation designating the first week in February as Prescribed Fire Awareness Week in Georgia and there were many of the fire agencies there to support the event. I was there representing the Georgia Prescribed Fire Council a statewide association that promotes prescribed fire across Georgia.

I am the 2020 president of the council. The many benefits of prescribed fire on Georgia forestland were recognized Feb. 2-8 during the "Prescribed Fire Awareness Week." Prescribed fire, also called "good fire," is a safe way to apply a natural process, ensure ecosystem health and reduce wildfire risk.

"Sound forest management helps keep Georgia's forests sustainable, and prescribed fire is a very important management tool," said Georgia Forestry Commission Director Chuck Williams. "Healthy forests provide so many products, jobs and benefits, including clean air and water, habitat for wildlife, and a place to escape and reconnect with nature."

Prescribed Fire Awareness Week is recognized annually during the first week in February by land managers in Georgia, from private landowners to state and federal agencies. Gov. Brian Kemp's 2020 proclamation highlights prescribed fire as one of the most environmentally and economically feasible methods for managing the state's valuable forest resources. Prescribed fire is key to achieving healthy conditions described in the Georgia Forest Action Plan.

Fire is as natural as sunshine, rain and wind in the many habitats that depend upon it. Before western settlement, frequent low-intensity fires swept across the forests of Georgia, shaping plant communities. Prescribed fire promotes forest health by reducing competition from undesired vegetation, reduces the spread of forest pests and diseases, improves recreational access, and restores forest habitats. No matter which objective is desired, periodic prescribed fire prevents the build-up of leaf-litter and dead plants and trees that can lead to devastating wildfires.

Professional foresters and other land managers use prescribed fire to safely mimic these natural forces, carefully applying controlled burning under specific weather conditions to enhance reforestation, rare species restoration, aesthetics and forest access.

The Georgia Prescribed Fire Council invites the public to register and attend a meeting scheduled on June 4, 2020, in Jasper that will encourage the exchange of information, techniques and experience among practitioners.

"The controlled use of fire, under the direction of skilled resource managers, promotes wildlife and healthy forests, while reducing the risk of unwanted wildfires," said Mark Melvin, chair of the National Prescribed Fire Council. Prescribed fire is also a key conservation tool for achieving goals in Georgia's State Wildlife Action Plan, a comprehensive strategy to conserve native animal and plant species before they become rarer and costlier to restore and protect, including by improving the sustainability and resilience of forests.

Prescribed fire is essential for managing wildlife such as bobwhite quail, eastern wild turkey, gopher tortoises, red-cockaded woodpeckers and other fire-dependent species.

Prescribed burning is the only known forest management method that perpetuates the longleaf/wiregrass ecosystem, Georgia's most diverse flora and fauna ecosystem. "From rare plants such as the white monkeyface orchid to endangered wildlife like the red-cockaded woodpecker, prescribed fire restores habitat conditions that nature needs," said the chief of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Conservation Section.

Approximately 35,000 acres across the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests may be treated with prescribed fire from early February through mid-April.

The Forest Service goal is to safely apply low-intensity controlled burns to reduce the duff layer common in thick overgrown and unmanaged forest areas that chokes out sunlight from native grasses, wildflowers and desired tree seedlings. This goal on the national forest is also a land management priority identified by Georgia state agencies.

"We work with our state agency partners as well as conservation groups like The Nature Conservancy and Georgia Plant Conservation Alliance in stewardship of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest," Forest Supervisor Betty Jewett said. "Whether restoring Table Mountain pine in the mountains or shortleaf and longleaf pine forests in the Piedmont, these partners provide important help in meeting our goal to apply prescribed fire that benefits these trees and habitats."

In 2019, the USDA Forest Service and Georgia signed a shared stewardship agreement that strengthens the commitment between federal and state agencies to work together to accomplish mutual natural resource management goals, further common interests and effectively respond to the increasing ecological challenges and natural resource concerns in Georgia.

To learn more about prescribed fire and activities on public lands visit: [www.appcofac.org](http://www.appcofac.org), Facebook Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D; [www.GaTrees.org](http://www.GaTrees.org), [www.GeorgiaWildlife.com](http://www.GeorgiaWildlife.com), [www.GaStateParks.org](http://www.GaStateParks.org), [www.GaRxFire.com](http://www.GaRxFire.com), [www.GoodFires.org](http://www.GoodFires.org), [www.appcofac.org](http://www.appcofac.org), or @ChattOconeeNF.

### 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.



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

## Sourwood Trees

This week I'm going to talk about sourwood trees. It is a beautiful tree regardless of the season. They are also prized for the honey that bees make from their nectar.

Sourwood trees are native from southern Pennsylvania to northwest Florida. However, they are most commonly found in southern Appalachian Mountains. The scientific name for sourwood trees is Oxydendrum arboreum. The name Oxydendrum comes from the Greek word oxys, which means acid, and dendron, which means tree. If you put the two together, you have a description of the sour taste of the leaves. The leaves used to be used by hikers to quench thirst and used to be brewed into a tonic.

Sourwood is in the Ericaceae family. This family is sometimes called the heather family. Sourwood is the only tree in this family. Other members of the family include rhododendron, azalea, and blueberry. Something that all of these plants have in common is their ability to tolerate soil with high acidity. That's a good thing, because our soils register low on the pH scale, meaning they have high acid. There are no major pests of sourwood trees.

Sourwood forms small white flowers along what's called a raceme. These flowers start to form in June. They turn into dry, silver-gray fruits that can be seen hanging into the fall. In the fall sourwood leaves start to turn a beautiful deep red color that is very distinctive. The leaves are 3 to eight inches long with small teeth along the edge. In the winter, you can identify the tree by its bark. Sourwood bark is grayish brown with deep furrows that are blocky. Once you've seen the bark on a sourwood, it's easy to recognize it again. Sourwoods grows as an understory tree (beneath high rising trees like oak and pine). It can grow in full sun, but will need adequate water. Sourwoods have shallow root systems so they are susceptible to drought, especially when they're in full sun. Oftentimes when I see them growing out in the woods they seem to be coming out of the ground at an angle.

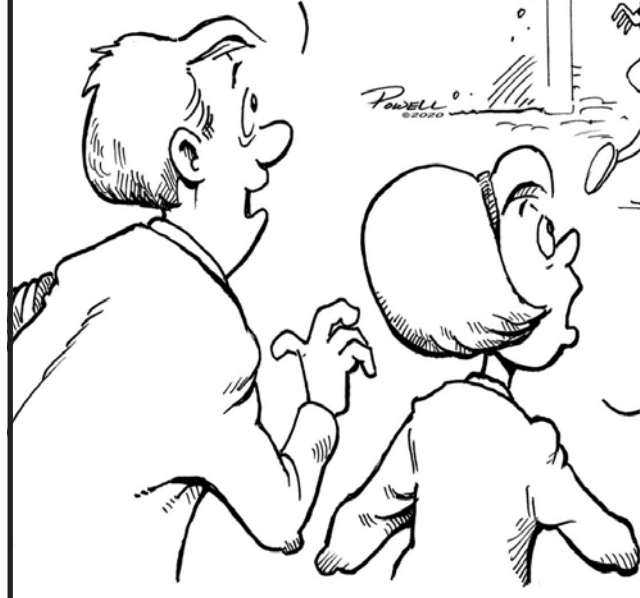
The thing that sourwood trees are known for the most is sourwood honey. Sourwood honey is considered a premium honey that can be difficult to find. That's because the honey contains nectar from only sourwood trees. Sourwood honey doesn't have a sour taste. It has a buttery caramel taste with an aftertaste that has a slight tinge to it. It is usually extra light to amber colored. Many of the local beekeepers here produce sourwood honey, but you'll have to buy it quick, because it doesn't stay on the shelves long. Sourwood honey is internationally regarded as being the best in the world, and north Georgia and western North Carolina is where it comes from. Sourwood trees at higher elevation produce more nectar. Below 1,000 feet above sea level nectar production will be very low.

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



**UGA Extension**  
**Watching and Working**  
**Jacob Williams**

"I'm amazed so many candidates think they know exactly how the government ought to be run."



"And I'm amazed so many voters are so willing to believe them!"

## Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	<b>Every Monday:</b> All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	<b>Every Tuesday:</b> Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Sharp UMC (Men)	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	<b>Every Wednesday</b> Hiawassee UMC	Noon
Bridge Players	<b>Every Thursday:</b> All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	<b>Every Friday:</b> Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	<b>Every Sunday:</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
Quilting Bee	<b>Third Wednesday of each month:</b> McConnell Church	10 am
Book Bunch & Lunch	Daniel's Steakhouse	11:30 am
Friendship Comm.	<b>Third Thursday of each month:</b> Clubhouse	6 pm
Republican Party	Civic Center	5:30 pm
Goldwing Riders	<b>Third Saturday of each month:</b> Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
Red Cross DAT	<b>Fourth Monday of each month:</b> 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
Lions Club	<b>Fourth Tuesday of each month:</b> Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Hiaw. Writers	<b>Fourth Thursday</b> Hiaw. Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30 am
Hiaw. Garden Club	Clubhouse	12:45 pm

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## Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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