

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letter to The Editor

A Letter from Concerned Lacrosse Parents to the YHC Board of Trustees

To Whom It May Concern,
We are contacting you in your role as a representative on the Board of Trustees at Young Harris College to share our frustration and concern regarding the situation with the YHC Men's Lacrosse team.

On Monday, March 2, the entire team presented a list of concerns to the Athletic Director with 41 items and 32 signatures. They requested a meeting with her as well as the coach. They were finally awarded a meeting on Tuesday at 5 p.m. which lasted three minutes. The athletic director told them that their complaints were not valid and that if they did not go to practice all of their scholarships would be pulled. They were not allowed to ask questions or validate their concerns.

As parents we have been hopeful that the boys would be heard but that has not happened. Numerous parents offered help and support to work out some type of solution with zero response. All of us have sent letters and made calls with no result.

While there is a lot to unpack here, one central theme seems to stand out about the boys list and that is the health and safety of our boys. It does not appear to be a priority for coach Goldsmith and by extension YHC. As parents our primary concerns are not only lack of communication but:

1. It is completely unacceptable that practice times prevent our boys from eating. Now I understand why we are sending so much supplemental food to my son. It's either that or starve. With the calories they are burning, I cannot believe the diet and nutrition of these athletes is not more of a priority. This is very different than what we were told during our recruitment. It's also silly to not take better nutritional care of people you are investing money in. In my job if I did provide the resources needed to support the assets of my company, I would be fired in short order.

2. There also appears to be a disregard for proper assessment of injuries. When I read about kids throwing up on the field but then being put back in the game without a health assessment that scares me. When the players tried to protect one of their teammates who is more vulnerable to heat related issues, their concerns were ignored until the player was throwing up, which can be too late. When my son went down with an injury during a game, no one came onto the field to assess this injury. He simply had to crawl off the field on his own. There are several other examples of injuries during practices and games that appear to be ignored or disregarded. When a player went to get water during a game and the coach did not want him too, the player was punished by not being allowed to play the rest of the game. This is not only dangerous but once again it is poor asset management. These are scholarship athletes and improper injury management risks losing players to long term injuries that can be prevented.

3. These boys are student athletes (students first, athletes second), but the student part seems to be less important to this coach. Not accommodating class schedules. Stretching their schedules so thin with everything lacrosse related being mandatory but the advice for the academic's part is to "figure it out" is completely counter to being a student first.

4. Coach Goldsmith appears to also lack compassion. This one is tough because you cannot really expect everyone to be compassionate by nature. I guess we have always been fortunate to have coaches in our son's lives who seemed to truly care about them. We have had coaches come to the hospital to check on our son. We have had coaches that came to support our son when he performed on stage and allowed him to balance practices with rehearsals. We have had coaches that always erred on the side of caution when it came to dealing with injuries. We had coaches vested in helping to make our sons better men. I wished for the same in college but cannot force this style on coach Goldsmith. I guess you either have these qualities or you don't.

Several parents tried to reach the President yesterday. There has been no response other than to inform us that he will be meeting with the team at 5 p.m. and then communicating with all of us following that.

However, a parent was able to speak to him this morning and the information that she shared with us after this conversation is very concerning! The President explained that an investigation was done into the complaints presented to them by the team (however none of the team were interviewed) and that he stands behind the coach. He stated that the culture of the Lacrosse team was toxic. A couple of thoughts on this from our perspective - if this is the case - why were they included in the interview process for the selection of the new coach? Also, I believe it is important to note that approximately 26 players on this team (out of 34) received GPA awards for the past semester and they were the most recognized team.

Next is the part of the conversation that we find alarming. There was a practice last night (Tuesday, March 3), and as parents, we instructed our sons to participate. There are two very different versions of what occurred at the end of practice:

Team version: At the end of practice they tried to engage the coach in a conversation regarding the change in practice times he had announced to 5:45 a.m. three mornings a week. The coach refused and as he walked away there were frustrated comments

directed his way, but no one approached him, and he left without incident. The women's lacrosse team was on the field at the time and witnessed what happened.

President's version: At the end of practice eight players surrounded Coach Goldsmith and yelled profanity at him and threatened him physically. Campus Security had to physically escort him off the field to protect him.

We believe that the truth of this incident will not be difficult to verify, and the team confirmed that although security was on hand at the beginning of practice, they were not there at the end. (We have since confirmed with the YHC campus police that this incident did not occur, and nothing was reported at the lacrosse practice last night.)

Finally, when the parent asked him if he was okay with everyone quitting the team, he said he "did not care." Is this the attitude of a concerned President for the student athletes in his institution? The Mission statement of YHC states that one of its goals is to "empower students to exercise mature and independent moral judgement in an ever changing and diverse world." We believe these boys are demonstrating this in how they have been dealing with this situation. How sad that the President would disregard the voice of 34 young men who just want to enjoy their lacrosse experience while they complete their degree, in favor of another young man who does not have any experience and has demonstrated some pretty poor judgement to date.

As parents we are proud of our sons and of the whole team for standing together in a situation where their scholarship and opportunity to play lacrosse are being threatened.

I hope that the team can receive some support from leadership at YHC. We are looking to the Board of Trustees hopeful you can be the leaders in ensuring that this situation is resolved in a more professional and thoughtful manner than what we have seen occurring to date.

Sincerely,
The Parents of the YHC Men's Lacrosse Team
Wednesday, March 4

Oxen are Slow but Earth is Patient

It was Sunday afternoon and we were waiting to turn right onto a divided highway. Vehicles kept coming in the right lane just frequently enough to extend our stay at the intersection.

"It doesn't look like anyone is going to give us a break," my wife said, "but we're not in a hurry."

"It's a sign of the times," said that voice in my head, the one that reads too much mainstream media.

The situation gave me pause to consider, and since I had the time to consider, sitting there at the intersection with my blinker on, I did.

If we only had a system for driver taxonomy, it might be possible to divide most drivers into two main families: Those who consciously contribute to the safe and efficient flow of traffic - and those who prefer to get where they are going before anyone else, by whatever means necessary.

I think there has probably always been such a division, even when the "drivers" were driving oxen to pull carts. "I have to get to the market before all the best goods are sold," said one angry driver, laying the whip to his ox. "The oxen are slow, but the earth is patient," said the farmer, shaking his head, bemused.

Not too many years ago, an observant driver seeing me waiting to turn onto a divided highway might have signaled a lane change and given me space in the right lane. The same driver, if he noticed he had a line of cars behind him going over the mountain, would have used one of the many turnouts available to facilitate such a courtesy. He wouldn't dream of tailgating someone in front of him, especially when that driver was behind a line of cars impossible to pass safely.

But we all know that this kind of highway courtesy (and what is courtesy but another form of common sense) is increasingly rare, and those of us who have time to consider such things, might ask why.

"City folk," says the voice, and he sounds just like the memorable line spat out by Jack Palance's character, Curly, in the movie, "City Slickers." The voice has obviously forgotten the number of years we spent living in cities, but he may be onto something.

If you have lived in a city, or spent much time on Interstate highways, then you are aware of the level of aggression on the roads there that is so common that it isn't even considered aggression. When there are more people living in a given area, then there is less to go around of many of the things we value in the country. There is less space. There is less privacy. There is less time.

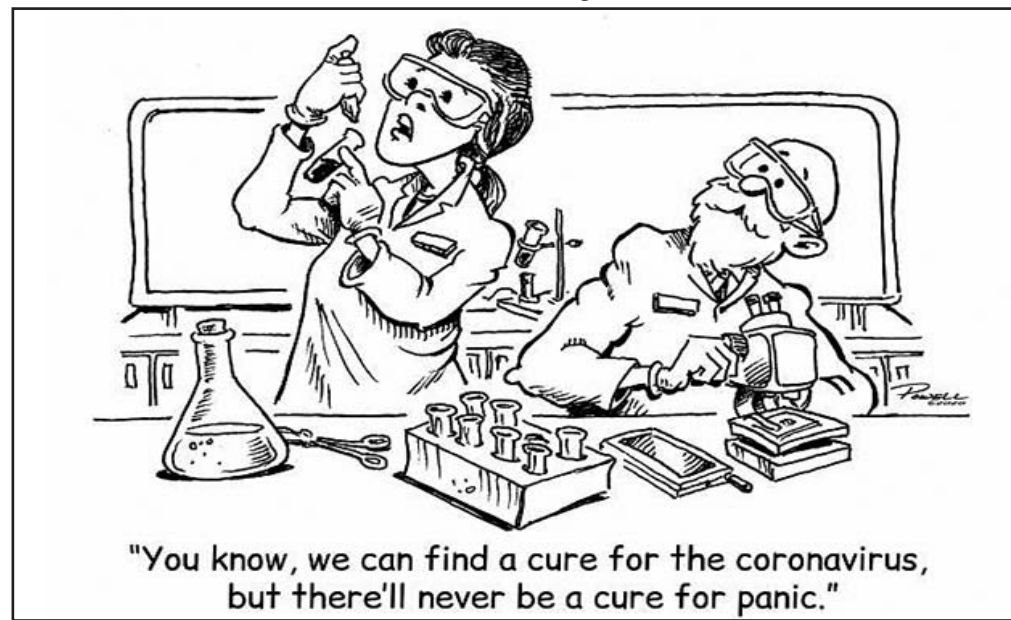
A friend from the city visited me for a long weekend. He spends several hours every day on 285 getting to work and back. As he was driving us to dinner one evening, I noticed that he attached himself to the bumper of every vehicle in front of us. When I mentioned this to him, I realized that he was totally oblivious (though he couldn't understand why many of the cars in front of him were suddenly slowing down). He wasn't in a hurry. He wasn't angry; in fact, he was chatting away happily during the whole trip. It was simply that his behavior on the road was common, perhaps even necessary where he lives. (Tailgating can be a sign of impatience, but it also prevents the idiot whipping his ox from pulling his cart into the narrow space between you and the driver in front of you and causing you and all the drivers behind you to slam on the brakes.)

Life moves faster than it did, and not just in the cities. There are more of us everywhere, even in the country. Several generations now have been conditioned to expect a constant progression of "more and faster," faster cars, faster computers, faster food. We are all a little fast and a little furious. A little courtesy would go a long way toward improving the flow of things, but the dominant paradigm, thanks to a culture steeped in marketing, is about competition, not cooperation.

"I think those drivers aren't letting us in because they're distracted," said my wife. "They all seem to be looking down at something and not up at the road. They're probably texting."

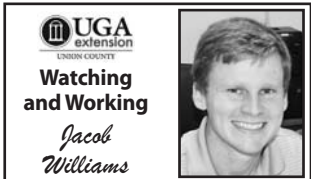
She was probably right, and they won't print what my "inside voice" had to say about that.

The Middle Path
By: Don Perry
onthemiddlepath.com



Spring Peepers

As we move from winter into spring, the nighttime seems to come more alive. More and more animals will be roaming around, and insects start to show back up outside (if your house is like mine, all the ladybugs have just moved inside for the winter). One of the earliest heralds of spring are the spring peepers. These little guys start coming out in February to let us know that warmer temperatures are not too far away. Let's talk about who these spring peepers are and why they are peeping.



The scientific name for the spring peeper is Pseudacris crucifer. They are a small frog that measures from one to one and a half inches long. They weigh in at about two tenths of an ounce. These tiny guys are still able to make some pretty serious noise. Their peep is high-pitched, which means that it can be heard from a mile away. I've heard the sound described like the chirp from a chick. The trill is brief and repeated at about one second intervals. A large number of peepers peeping at the same time is called a chorus. Large choruses can sound like sleigh bells. The males are the ones making all the noise, as they are trying to attract a mate. Their peep can become more aggressive sounding as they compete with other males for better spots to attract the females.

These little frogs are abundant in Georgia. Their skin color ranges from tan to brown to gray. Their most distinctive feature is the dark X on their back. This is also where they get their species name, crucifer. At this time of year, they start coming down from the woodlands to find a mate near a water source. Once a mate has been found, the female will lay eggs in the water that hatch into tadpoles in one to two weeks. They prefer shallow, semi-permanent pools of water. These pools are less likely to have predatory fish in them. After about two to three months, the tadpoles will undergo metamorphosis and change into a frog. These little frogs live for about 3 years. Most of their lives are spent in the woods where they eat insects. They'll consume beetles, ants, flies, and spiders. They only come down to the water's edge during their mating season.

Before coming out for mating spring peepers are in hibernation. They like to hibernate under logs and loose bark. In the winter their body fluid will freeze.

Spring peepers are hard to spot because they are so small and like to spend their time down in the brush. They have small pads on their toes for climbing, but they rarely climb very high. Most of time they do their insect hunting at night. However, if they are living in a dense, damp forest they may hunt in the day and at night. The reason for this is that frogs must be careful to avoid their skin drying out.

If you have questions about spring peepers or other wildlife, contact your County Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	Every Monday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Every Tuesday: Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Sharp UMC (Men)	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Wednesday Hiawassee UMC	Noon
Bridge Players	Every Thursday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	Every Friday: Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Sunday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Chamber Board	Second Monday of each month: 1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	8 am
VFW	VFW Post	5 pm
Historical Society	Hist. Soc. Bldg.	6 pm
School Board	Auditorium	7 pm
Unicoy Masonic	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Conv./Vis. Bureau	Second Tuesday of each month: Civic Center	8 am
Gem & Mineral Club	Senior Center	1:30 pm
Arts & Crafts Guild	Calvary Church	4 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm
Basket Weavers	Second Wednesday of each month: SC Fire Hall	10 am
USCG Aux.	Senior Center	7 pm
Hiaw Writers	Second Thursday of each month: Hiaw Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
Awake America Prayer	Civic Center	Noon
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	6 pm
Hospital Auxiliary	Third Monday of each month: Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Planning Comm.	Civic Center	6 pm
MOAA	Michael email mva62sgn@brmemc.net	
YH Plan Comm.	Third Tuesday of each month: YH City Hall	5 pm
Co. Comm. Mtg	Courthouse	5:30 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Blairsville store	5:30 pm
Water Board	Water Office	6 pm
Quilting Bee	Third Wednesday of each month: McConnell Church	10 am
Book Bunch & Lunch	Daniels Steakhouse	11:30 am
Friendship Comm.	Third Thursday of each month: Clubhouse	6 pm
Republican Party	Civic Center	5:30 pm
Goldwing Riders	Third Saturday of each month: Daniel's Restaurant	11 am

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Towns County Herald

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