

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

A Connected Social Distance

"At a time when the world seems to be spinning hopelessly out of control, there's deceivers, an' believers, an' old in-betweeners that seem to have no place to go". Thank you Willie Nelson for expressing my feelings in this frightening, devastating time. A fellow word smith, Sting, penned a song during the Cold War Era that did the same. "We share the same biology regardless of ideology but what might save us me and you is if the Russians love their children too." Both songs drove the fact that we are in it together. Who and how the ball was dropped that allowed this global pandemic, makes no difference now. Shared knowledge, resources, and energies are vital.

Around Towns
Dale Harmon



Guidelines have been made available for citizens of the world to help slow and stop our common enemy, COVID-19. We are all accountable and responsible to each other.

I'm stepping down from the soapbox now to tell you my discovery for maintaining the 6 feet Social Distance suggestion (a rule for me). It can be possible in the grocery store and other enclosed places only if everyone observes it. I can tell you firsthand that not everyone is considerate. Driving 20 mule team carts, 3 abreast, and blocking isles to chat, prohibitions footed measures between people and almost prohibits air passage. Let me say here that I love the friendliness of our mountain community. Catching up with neighbors and friends in the store is a pleasure. You have no doubt heard the saying, desperate times call for desperate measures. Well people, these ARE desperate times. I kept one foot on the soapbox.

Technology has made it possible to stay in touch with our families and friends in many ways but I miss being with my friends who live near. They have such expressive, wonderful faces. The raising of eye brows, rolling of eyes and the subtle nuances that I've come to know and interpret can only be fully enjoyed person to person.

The "aisles" of Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge are ample for walking the recommended 6 ft. apart with no problem. A little battle-worn from Mother Nature's earlier antics, The Gardens are none the less beautiful and spring once again graces it. (Yes, L.G. pun intended). The birds are blissfully unaware of peoples' plight. They chirp and trill while searching for the perfect honeymoon/ nursery cottage. (Yes. I am corny) I find comfort in the normality of bird instincts and spring blossoms and scents. I find comfort in breeze, blue and gray skies, squirrels throwing dirt from pots and doing the things that rodents do to raise the blood pressure of garden workers. And I especially find comfort strolling, hoeing, sowing, weeding, telling jokes and seeing my friends in glorious surroundings that allow room to protectively and respectfully, just be.

As the old hippies used to say, keep the faith, Baby. See you (from afar for now) around Towns!

What Have We Lost?

What Have We Lost?

This week we're fortunate to hear from our friend, Marty Levine, a native of Gainesville, GA who lives in Texas and enjoys writing about the issues of the day. Marty brings a wide variety of experience to the table as a world traveler in the corporate world and a loving husband and father who enjoys spending time at home with his diverse hobbies.

What Have We Lost ?

In going through some of my Father's belongings I ran across a little book in which his mother, my Grandmother, Ethel Levine wrote a brief autobiography of her life. My Grandparents were born of first-generation Swedish immigrants with my grandfather Irving from Minnesota and my grandmother Ethel from Chicago. Their parents came to America with nothing but what they were wearing in the late 1800's, and through hard work on farms and in trades such as bricklaying were able to provide for their large families. My grandparents met in Chicago in the early 1920's and married in 1925. My father Erland was born in 1926 in Chicago where my grandfather worked in cabinetry.

The three paragraphs below are direct excerpts from my grandmother's little autobiography. I have added a few parenthetical points for clarity. The scene starts in 1933 Chicago, in the depths of the Great Depression when my grandparents where 30 and my father a boy of 7.

"Irving was out of work for a year or more and did odd jobs for Pete Jacobson from Reliance Company. Pete's sister was our neighbor. Pete and some friends decided to perfect a process to that would take the fine gold out of the hills of Auraria, Georgia (near Dahlonega) and they needed someone to build pump houses, a home and a machine shop and hired Irving and sent him to Georgia in February 1933.

"Erland and I stayed with Pete's sister Louise Reinhoff and I helped her with housework. I also had a job at a factory making penlights. I gave her some of my money to help pay for Erland and my board. Irving was supposed to get room and board and seven weeks spending money for us when he went to Georgia. In August 1933 Pete Jacobson gave Erland and I fare to get to Georgia. We stayed at the camp until 1936. The last year or so we were alone. Groceries were paid for by Reliance - a small check once in a while. We were supposed to get \$20 per month for looking after the place.

"A tornado hit Gainesville (Georgia) on April 6, 1936 and Irving went to Gainesville and asked for work at Chambers Lumber Company. He drove there every day (over an hour drive) until June or July when we found an apartment at 736 West Washington. Then Irving wrote to Jacobson and asked them to get someone else in his place (at the mine). They sent us a check for \$100 after months of no money. We saved the \$100 to pay down a little on some furniture."

As I read through this account it occurred to me how much we have lost as Americans in the last 80 years. We have piled on wealth, and unfortunately debt as well. We labor hard to obtain little luxuries and then lose ourselves in distraction with media, sports and the like. Would any of us have the pluck to do what may Grandfather did in 1933? At a young age he had developed - with only an 8th grade education - the skills to build a gold mining operation in the middle-of -nowhere Georgia. He left the comfort of the Scandinavian neighborhood of Chicago to live and work amongst the mountain folk of North Georgia. He left his young family for a time and then when he had shelter in place, moved them down to join him. His good character and skills encouraged those of more means to provide him - albeit often meager - support. He relied upon no government support, no un-earned handouts. There were no concerns about more than basic health care, college tuition and the like - these were not only in short supply, they were simply out of reach. And yet, my grandparents and then my parents prospered by applying the abilities God gave them to build a life their ancestors could only dream of.

Yet as I read today's headlines I am jarred out of nostalgia by the realization that millions of Americans are keen to give socialism a chance. I am hopeful that those so inclined are simply ignorant of history and economics and will in time come to their senses. Sure, our nation has unequal distributions of wealth - this condition has existed through all history and will continue. History has also proven to us that socialism does not solve this at all. The pie gets smaller for everyone, except for the elite few who run the show. Using socialism to solve societal ills is a bit like shooting yourself in the head to cure a headache. It is an economic system that so goes against our basic drive for individual prosperity and thus when perfected, creates a state of collective ennui.

What has happened that so many of us have become so weak, so hopeless, so helpless, so incapable of caring for ourselves and those in their care ? For me, at least, supporting such schemes goes against every life lesson instilled by my ancestors. I will resist to my dying breath those who demand I cash in my freedom to fund schemes to build a better society for others, many of whom are just looking for free stuff. Our American society was built by people like my grandparents, who did not set out to build a better society at all - yet they did. They only sought to responsibly build a better life for those in their care. Thus, their contribution to creating a better society was not having need of a society to contribute to their betterment. The greatest societies, as it turns out, are built upon the character of those who simply take care of their little corner of the world. They know the cost and can revel in any success they have authored.

A final irony is that a key premise of socialism is that Darwinian evolution must be true, and with this survival of the fittest, a rather capitalist sounding notion. An assent to socialism thus requires one to admit they would be extinct without the support of a colony. This model being best displayed in social creatures like ants and termites, who spend their meager lives piling on largess for a few elite drones and a queen, which is, of course, the very picture of socialism. And for humans, endowed with free will, that is never the recipe for a great society.

The Middle Path
By: Don Perry
onthemiddlepath.com

Moss

Moss is often a challenge for people looking to grow a nice lawn in the mountains. I often get calls from people looking to get rid of the moss in their yard so that they can grow grass. There are a couple of things that you'll need to check to ensure that you can have a moss free yard. Oftentimes folks think that grass should be easy to grow, but given the right conditions, moss will be even easier and can take over your yard. So let's talk about moss, the things that enable it to grow, and what steps you can take.

Moss can form a thick mat over the ground, suppressing the growth of plants underneath it. There are actually many different species of moss, and some people collect them to create a moss garden. Moss does not spread by seed like most plants, but produces spores. These spores are blown around by the wind. That means if you have a spot that has the right conditions for moss to grow, there's a good chance that the moss spores will find it and start growing. Moss will send up tiny stalks called sporophytes. The sporophyte is how moss reproduces and spreads.

There are four factors that create an environment that moss likes and grass will dislike. The first is compaction. Compacted soils don't leave enough space for grass roots to grow. In compacted soil, grass will get started but die out, because the roots are strong enough to support the plant. Tillage and aeration help alleviate soil compaction.

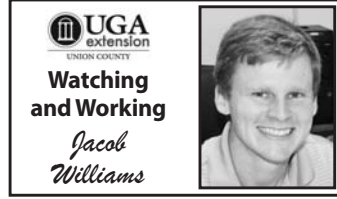
The second factor is pH. Grass, and most plants like a pH that is in the 6 - 6.5 range. Moss on the other hand likes a pH that is more in the 4.5 - 5.5 range. The 4.5 - 5.5 range is where our native soil will usually fall. Applying lime to bring the pH up into the preferred range will give grass a chance to grow. Bring a soil sample into the Extension Office to check your pH for \$10. We'll be able to tell you how much lime needs to be applied.

The third factor is shade. This is a big factor for us in the mountains with the amount of woods that we have. Moss grows very well in the shade; grass will struggle. Tall fescue will do better in the shade than most grasses, but will still thin out over time. Cut tall fescue to 4 inches in the shade to give it a better chance of surviving.

The fourth factor is drainage. Right now, everyone has a problem with drainage because of the amount of rainfall we've had. Heavy clay soil is going to have less drainage than loamy soil in river bottoms. Sloped soil has better drainage because there is more runoff. Creating a channel that allows water to flow out of your yard helps with drainage.

In situations that have a mixture of these four factors it will be very challenging to grow grass instead of moss. Ferrous sulfate can be used to kill moss, but if the environmental conditions aren't changed, the moss will only return. The same thing goes for scraping moss off. If you have questions about moss contact you County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

I was planning to have a Spring Garden Kickoff in Towns and Union. Due to COVID-19, I am moving that class online. It will be streamed on Facebook Live from Towns' and Union's Extension Facebook pages. Go to those pages or email me for more information on how you can 'attend'.



Letters to The Editor

Message from Commissioner Bradshaw

Dear Citizens:

As you all know, the United States is facing an unprecedented event with the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. As your commissioner, I wanted to take the time to reach out and reassure you that your county government and public safety officials are taking the necessary steps to help ensure your safety and wellbeing, as well as that of our county employees.

Although there have been no confirmed cases of the virus in our county (as of March 19), I have decided to take the following steps to help limit the possible spread throughout our community.

Effective Monday, March 23, county offices will be closed to the general public, however, employees will report to work and can be reached by telephone.

The Towns County Transfer Station will remain open during its normal business hours. The Towns County Road Department employees will also be working throughout the county and, of course, the public safety departments will remain operating and ready for response whenever needed.

My continued thoughts and prayers are with our country as we face this event together. I ask that you remain calm and continue to practice the recommended guidelines, such as frequent handwashing and social distancing.

I am optimistic that this will soon pass, and we will be able to get back to our normal course of business and enjoy the freedoms allotted to us by the sacrifices of our military personnel both past and present.

I appreciate your patience and understanding during these trying times. Please feel free to contact me at 706-896-2276 for questions, concerns or further information.

Sincerely,
Cliff Bradshaw
Sole Commissioner

GPA Letter to the State

Ms. Candice Broce
Director of Communications and
Chief Deputy Executive Counsel
Office of the Governor

Dear Ms. Broce:

On behalf of more than 125 member newspapers of the Georgia Press Association, we appreciate the work of the Governor and his staff on the Coronavirus to coordinate and implement the response to one of the worst pandemics our country has experienced in more than a century.

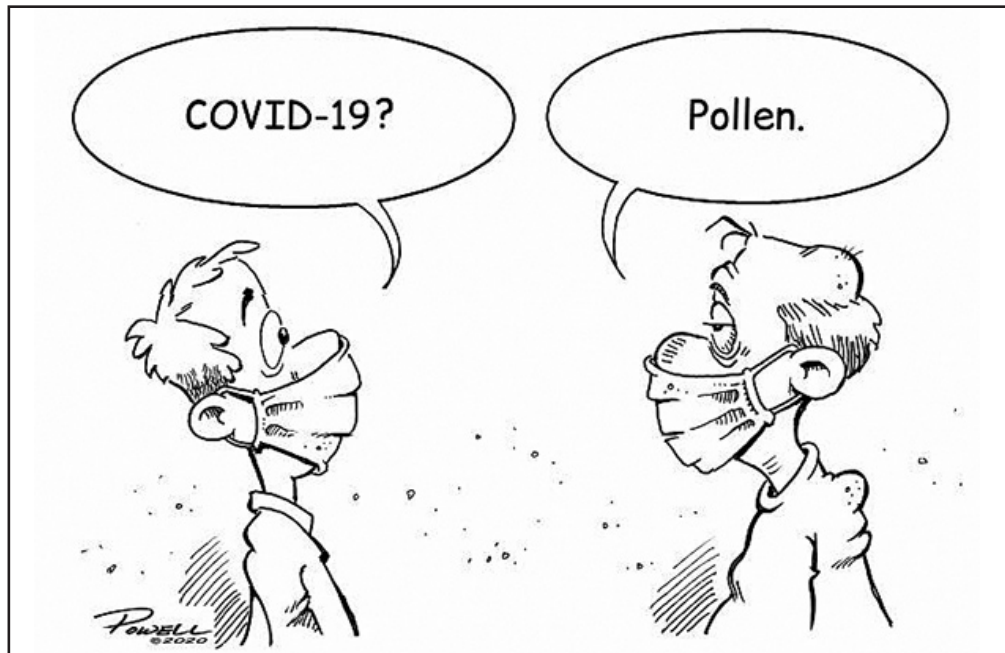
Newspapers and their dedicated journalists provide an essential service at times of crisis. It has always been our job to provide accurate, reliable and critical news. We tell the truth about what is happening. That loyalty you give us is held in high regard.

In recent days, public officials across the country have begun ordering the shutdown of "non-essential" businesses for periods of time. The goal of these orders is to appropriately respond to this unprecedented health crisis.

We are heartened that, so far, newspapers have been identified as essential businesses in these orders - akin to grocery stores, pharmacies and other businesses that are critical to public welfare.

We ask that, in any action by the Administration to limit commercial activity, the government recognize news publishing and reporting as "essential" to public health and welfare. We also ask that you encourage state and local officials to make the same designation. Distribution of quality news and information is absolutely central to all efforts to get beyond the crisis.

Best Regards,
Robin Rhodes, Executive Director,
Georgia Press Association



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
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
Red Cross DAT	Fourth Monday of each month: 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
Lions Club	Fourth Tuesday of each month: Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Hiaw. Writers	Fourth Thursday Hiaw. Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
Hiaw. Garden Club	Clubhouse	12:45 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Last Thursday of each month: Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

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Or mail to: PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546

Towns County Herald

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