

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## VFW appreciated

Towns County, GA, a very unique North Georgia mountain community with unusual demographics, nevertheless has a large percentage of Veterans. Of those Veterans, our VFW Post 7807/Garrett-Owenby Post, P.O. Box 927

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



Hiawassee, GA 30546, located on Sunnyside Drive really needs more participation from those who have already served our nation and who would enjoy fellowship and assisting in the community services provided by our VFW and our VFW Auxiliary, open to men and women. By acquiring more members we have more clout, add to national Veteran resources, thus our VFW can commit to more community projects.

The VFW Mission can be simply defined as: To foster camaraderie among United States Veterans of overseas conflicts; to serve our Veterans, the military and our communities; to advocate on behalf of all Veterans.

Benefits include, but are not limited to: travel services, medical services, financial services, technology and electronics, end of life services, transitioning to civilian life, insurance, haircuts and retail discounts. Insurance and other valuable benefits are far too numerous to list here, but upon gaining membership, a rather large list of all programs available to members will be given to you.

The VFW has already accomplished many legislative priorities which benefit not only our Veterans, but the communities in which they reside. It stands to reason that the more members of our VFW and Auxiliary Families in good standing that we have, equates to more clout in Washington, DC and Statehouse political arenas. Avoiding an obvious discussion warranted by politically-based "disservice" to all Veterans, perhaps this reason alone is one of the most important reasons to not only join but to become active in the VFW.

In addition there are National Veterans Service (NVS) programs available to VFW members through VFW Service Officers. Our VFW would love to have you to join and perhaps become qualified to serve in that very important office!

Another program provided by the VFW is the Unmet needs program. Designed to assist in grants to those Veterans and service members who run into unexpected financial difficulties as a result of deployment or other military related activity. Available for those who qualify and seek assistance from the VFW, for up to \$5,000. This program, thanks to VFW, has already distributed far in excess of 6 million dollars.

Other VFW sponsored programs include scholarships, as well as assistance to those Veterans who have trouble accessing their benefits.

Boy Scouting is also assisted by VFW. The VFW also sponsors local programs such as our "Voice of Democracy" and "Patriots Pen" contests for Towns County school system. And please don't forget about our VFW Thrift Store in the center of Hiawassee and staffed by Veterans and other volunteers who work hard and give freely of their time.

If you are qualified for either VFW or VFW Auxiliary, and want to join please call Charley Andrews (941-914-0682); Julie Andrews, President VFW Auxiliary (941-914-0699) or VFW Post Quartermaster, Brandy Creel (706-970-0188). You've already done the hard part!

*Semper Paratus*

## Slow oxen, patient Earth

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 and 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 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 attacked 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 culture 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

## Winter weeds

I've found that there are two main opinions on winter weeds: people either love to see the extra splash of color and happy bees in their yard, or they view the unwanted plants as nuisances that need to be dealt with. Either way, it's always good to be able to identify weeds and know what their presence indicates about the environment.

Overall, if your lawn has a lot of weeds, the soil conditions are not that great for your grass. If your grass does not have enough nutrients or the soil is too compacted, weeds can easily take control. While pre-emergent and post-emergent herbicides like pendimethalin and glyphosate can help prevent and kill weeds, you will likely continue to have weed problems year after year if you don't improve the soil enough for your grass to fill in.

Certain weeds can actually indicate specific conditions of your soil. Small hop clover is a small weed that has leaves grouped in threes and a small, globe-like yellow flower. If you have a lot of small hop clover in your yard, your soil is much too dry and does not have enough nitrogen. Annual bluegrass, which forms in clumps, usually indicates that there is too much nitrogen, water, and compaction. A lot of moss means there is too much shade, not enough drainage, and compacted soil.

A very common weed that is popping up everywhere right now is henbit. This plant has a dark, square stem with rounded leaves and tube-shaped, purple flowers. Overall, it can be considered a very attractive plant, but it spreads easily and can quickly take over a lawn. Dandelions are also blooming everywhere. These weeds start as bright yellow flowers but eventually turn into fuzzy white or gray globes with seeds in the middle. These seeds are then spread by air movement and begin to infest the rest of your lawns.

Henbit, dandelions and other weeds, though often viewed as pests, are actually the first source of nectar and pollen for bees. If you've ever rubbed your finger over a dandelion flower or perhaps sniffed it a little too closely, you'll notice that your skin is covered in yellow pollen. These ample food sources are very important to help bees recover from the harsh winter.

If you plan on improving your lawn's soil conditions but just can't wait to get those weeds out of your yard, give your lawn a good mow before treating with herbicides. Though there have not been any proven links between herbicide application and bee decline, it is always best to discourage pollinators from being present when chemicals are applied, especially if treating with a combination herbicide/insecticide. Mowing the weeds will also stress them, making them more susceptible to herbicide treatment.

For cool season grasses, which most of us have, September is the most important month for lawn care. What we do in the fall impacts the condition of our lawn in the spring, so it is always important to get a soil test done at least as soon as you see problems. If you have a lot of weeds this year, go ahead and get your soil tested now. Even though you may not do heavy fertilizing, aerating or overseeding until the fall, it is useful to know how much lime you need so you can apply it now. Lime can take months to adequately condition the soil, so if you act now, the pH of your soil will be closer to the target range by September and October.

UGA extension  
 From the Ground Up  
 Melissa Mattee



## Letters to The Editor

To the Editor:

Protecting Towns County's Bell Mountain Park

Towns County built Bell Mountain Park Park at great expense last year and paved the "impossible" road to the top, where several viewing platforms were built for appreciating the spectacular mountain views. The use of this park has exceeded everyone's expectations. On weekends, even in the winter (not tourist season), more than 100 vehicles of every description, drive up the mountain between 1-5 PM to see the view. Where do they all park and what use is the facility receiving? No one knows since the County does not provide any regular monitoring of the park. The County does close the park at night which cuts down the attraction. It is time for the county to "step up to the plate" and help protect this wonderful resource. How? First by providing individuals (probably off duty sheriff's deputies) to be at the top of the mountain on weekends to welcome visitors and to monitor the use of the Park (this might have to be expanded in the summer). This will be viewed as a positive by visitors since this person would greet users and could point out particular landmarks. This would cost the County some money, but preservation is more important. Building any facility without a budget for future maintenance is not "good business". At some stage, volunteers might be trained to assist with this monitoring. So, Towns County Government, it is time for you to act before our park is damaged!

Jerry Carnes  
 AT Community Chair, Hiawassee

doors are secure.

Since summer storms can come up suddenly, you may want to unplug electronic equipment such as computers, televisions, or fax machines.

While you're traveling: Remember to remain alert and watchful, especially in crowds. Many travelers have invested in small, flat bags that hang from neck cords to store money, credit cards, passports, and other important identification. Avoid carrying wallets in a rear pocket that could be easily "picked."

At hotels, avoid hanging the "housekeeping" sign on

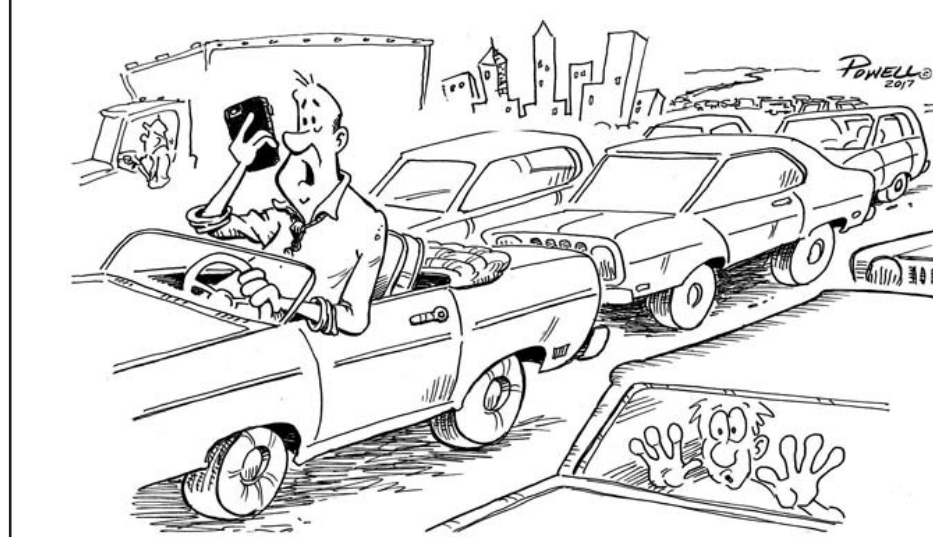
your doorknob. That alerts the observer to your absence from the room.

Avoid discussing your travel plans where strangers may overhear you.

If you are the victim of a theft or any other crime, contact the local law enforcement agency and file a report immediately. Provide contact information so they may keep you updated on any developments in your case.

Remember to lock doors and windows securely. Always lock the doors in your vehicle.

Have a safe and happy travel season!



"Honey, I'm still in Atlanta. I should be home by the time the baby graduates!"

## Towns County Community Calendar

Bingo	Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
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Mtn. Amat. Radio	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	6:30 pm
Alzheimer's Supp.	McConnell Church	1:30 pm
American Legion	VFW Post 7807	4 pm
Hiaw. City Council	City Hall	6 pm
Young Harris Coun.	YH City Hall	7 pm
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
Stephens Lodge	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Chamber Board	1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	8 am
Historical Society	Old Rec. Center	5:30 pm
Mtn. Comp. Users	www.mcug.org	6 pm
Planning Comm.	Civic Center	7 pm
School Board	Auditorium	7 pm
Unicoy Masonic	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Caregiver support	Brasstown Manor	3 pm
Arts & Crafts Guild	Mtn. Regional Library	4 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm
Basket Weavers	SC Fire Hall	10 am
Board of Elections	67 Lakeview Cir., Ste. A	4 pm

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## Towns County Herald

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