

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

High Flying

Long, long ago, in a place far, far away, two people had employment that allowed much travel to many American cities and one entirely different planet, Yellowstone National Park. (I was told that this park is in the United States of America but it sure doesn't look like Earth to me).

This was before the little mountain bed and breakfast, Chancey Hill Inn, was opened in Hiawassee, GA and eons before real Earth held its collective breath and had to ache for human touch, to save itself.

Many of these travels led to beaches and shores of the big and beautiful Pacific Ocean.

One of the people, let's call him John, liked to leisurely stroll so slowly in the warm sand, he made a stoll look like a jack rabbit. Person #2, we'll call her Dale, had been pent up in a car so long, that sanity was only kept by sprinting in the same warm sand. These two people looked like the kindly master who had unleashed his loyal terrier for a romp.

Never letting the master get too far out of sight, the bitch would run back to his side occasionally. Seeing that all was right, the run resumed.

Now in the present, with the world in flux, the two people, John and Dale, do not travel.

They have sequestered themselves at Chancey Hill Inn. The beach has been replaced by a grassy knoll.

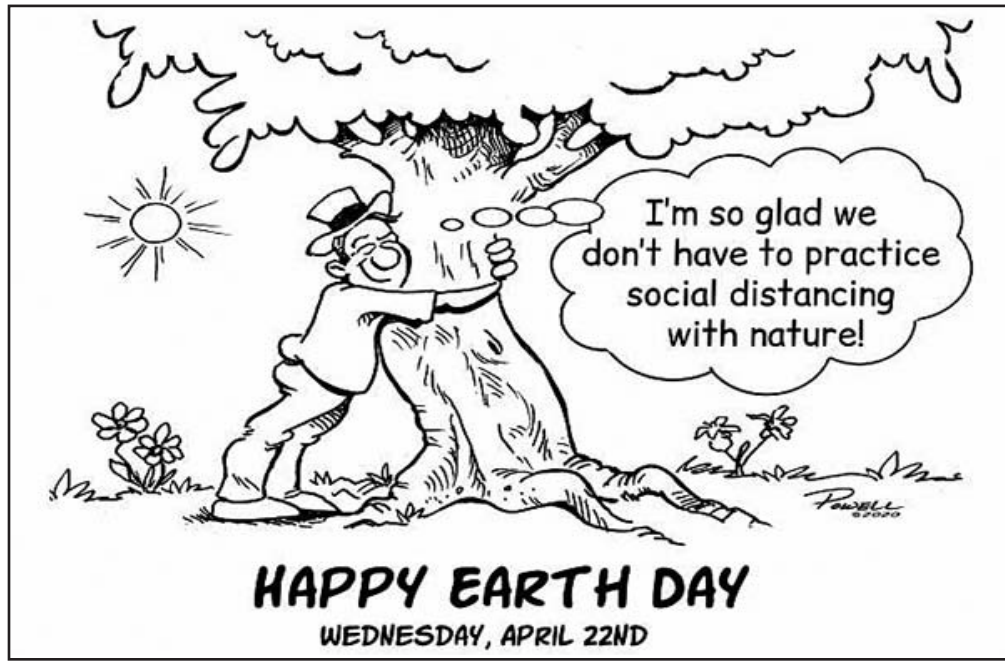
A flying disk is now thrown by the kindly master for his pet to catch. All errant tosses are chased and retrieved by Person #2, who older but no wiser still gets to run.

There is no lolling tongue in this game of fetch and instead of a wagging tail, there is a dragging one. She may stoop to conquer but she struggles to stand.

Health, Happiness, Hope Around Towns.

Around Towns

Dale Harmon



HAPPY EARTH DAY
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22ND

Embracing the "New Normal"

We weren't sick very often in my family when I was growing up. Long before it became television lifestyle expert truth, my parents believed that a reasonable exposure to the residents of the microscopic world via puppies, toad frogs and good honest dirt, would lead to a robust immune system.

More importantly, they stressed hygiene where it mattered, especially when it came to the microscopic passengers carried and distributed by humans.

I rarely saw either of my parents touch their faces when we were in public or traveling. They washed their hands frequently and required us to do the same, and if anything above the neck needed maintenance, there was always a tissue at hand. To this day (especially this day) I still use a bandana or, in a pinch, the inside of my shirtsleeve to wipe the corners of my eyes.

The hygienic discipline of my parents was purchased at some cost. Both worked at Battey State Hospital in the 1950's. Battey was a tuberculosis sanatorium, and hygiene was paramount. Discipline was draconian. All employees were tested regularly for exposure and infection.

Battey was almost a city unto itself, and for the residents of nearby Rome, Georgia, it might as well have been on another planet. Employees of Battey were feared by local residents, and ostracized, so most of the people who worked there only socialized with other employees.

There was good reason for fear, especially in the living memory at that time of the early 1900's when tuberculosis killed one out of seven people living in the United States and Europe.

TB has been contained, though not eliminated in the United States, but it remains the number one cause of death by infectious disease worldwide. In 2018, 10 million people contracted tuberculosis and 1.5 million died from it. New strains of drug resistant TB have briefly made the headlines before being overwhelmed in the collective consciousness by other matters.

Lately I've thought often about what my folks experienced and how the forgotten echoes of the recent past could better inform our attitudes today.

We have never been too far away from epidemic or pandemic, either in distance or time span, and a fifth-grade knowledge of history reveals a long, unbroken planetary experience of adversity. HIV is a quite recent pandemic that is still with us. The Spanish Flu, Cholera, Yellow Fever, Malaria and Polio are all within living memory. Our parents and grandparents experienced them all with a depression and two world wars to boot.

In a remarkably short time span when measured against the backdrop of history, it seems we have developed a habit of feeling put upon, singled out, victimized when adversity enters our lives, and as a nation, we have zero tolerance for uncertainty.

I'm reminded of the words of an early mentor who walked across Holland alone when he was 14 to escape the Nazi occupation and find safety behind American lines. After living in this country for 40 years he observed, "Americans are living in the eye of the storm and they don't know it. One day they will."

We breached the eye wall in September of 2001, and we may be approaching it again as the pandemic shows no clear sign of subsiding. South Korea contained the virus in 20 days, but here, the death toll continues to grow. We are divided once again along the same old fault lines as to how best to cope with the problem. Which will do the most harm, a paralyzed economy or a resurgence of the virus? Our "experts" don't agree. Our leadership is divided against itself and celebrity politicians try to grab the spotlight as they call each other out.

Our celebrity-media and Madison Avenue television commercials tell us, "We're all in this together." No. We're not. None of the famous faces attempting to remain relevant are waiting for a \$1200 government check and worrying about how they're going to pay the mortgage in 90 days.

All too soon, our attention will be forcibly diverted to politics again and we'll be told that by voting right, or left, we can fix the problems we face and, by the way, we could have avoided them altogether if we had voted correctly the first time.

The fate of the world will once again hang in the balance, and there is no one more gullible or easily manipulated than someone who is afraid or convinced they have been treated unfairly.

I can't tell you how not to be afraid if your Faith is not already sufficient to that end. I can't tell you how not to be angry with or suspicious of leadership that seems to be perpetually untrustworthy and unreliable. I can tell you that our parents and grandparents survived much worse, and they did it without losing hope or their sense of humor or their enjoyment of life.

In fact, there is a phrase that comes to mind that I think might be useful for anyone who is feeling like the universe has singled them out for special inconvenience, and it applies mainly to people with a lot of extra time on their hands because they haven't figured out how to put their shoulders to the wheel and be of some service during these times.

The phrase was born somewhere in Iraq among soldiers and marines carrying 40 lb packs in 130-degree heat. They would encourage each other with the phrase, "Embrace the suck."

Now it's our turn.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

onthemiddlepath.com

Composting

I think that more of us find ourselves eating at home during this time. More eating at home means more kitchen scraps that can be used for composting. Compost is a welcome addition to any garden. It's a popular and effective method to improve the quality of your soil. It can also help you get rid of lawn debris such as grass clippings or leaves as they are beginning to fall. Composting is not difficult to do, but here are some tips so that you can start your own compost pile.

Compost is rich, dark humus that is the end product of the natural decomposition of plants or plant products. Using a compost pile will speed up the natural decomposition of plant material. Compost can improve soil drainage, structure, and help hold water and nutrients. The nutrients in compost will not be enough to replace fertilizing, but they can reduce fertilizing.

You can use just about any organic material for composting. Leaves, grass clippings, twigs, old annual or perennial flowers, old

vegetable plants, straw, and sawdust can all be thrown into the compost pile. Try to avoid using insect or disease infested plants to reduce the spread of those plants the following season. You can put things like kitchen peelings and coffee grounds into the compost pile too. Kitchen scraps should be buried into existing compost so that they don't attract too many wild animals. Covering your compost pile will help keep animals out too. Avoid using highly processed foods because these will take longer to break down.

When making a compost pile, it's helpful to have something to contain it. A lot of different materials can be used from wire, fencing, wood pallets or concrete blocks. Leave some open spaces on the sides for ventilation. Good air circulation is important for successful compost. The bottom of the pile needs to be open to the soil to allow good drainage. Construct your pile in an out of the way place in your yard, in full sun. Once you've constructed your container for the compost pile, start adding organic matter. Smaller pieces will decompose more quickly than large pieces of organic matter. Once you have a layer of organic matter in there add in some garden soil or animal manure. These will add fungi, bacteria, insects, and worms to the pile. They're the critters responsible for breaking down the plant material into the humus that you add to your garden. You'll want to keep the pile moist, but not soggy.

Sometimes a concern with compost piles is that there might be an odor. If you turn the pile with a shovel at least once a month this will reduce the smell. A good functioning compost pile will heat up from the activity of the microbes decomposing organic matter. The heat produced will kill off the odor causing bacteria. If you add manure to your pile there will be some initial odor, but as the pile matures the smell will go away. A well maintained compost pile should not have a strong odor. Once the compost has a crumbly earth look and you can no longer recognize the plant material it's ready to be added to the garden. If you add the organic material over time the compost will become ready a little at a time. If you have questions about creating or maintaining your compost pile contact your county Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



Many Help in Many Ways

If you are like me, perhaps you've forgotten another great organization of military men and women who are "part timers" now called up to full time duty. They are our National Guard and Airmen who today are heavily involved, working in all imaginable positions and states across America in this war against the virus. Across America more than 28,000 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen have been mobilized with additional men and women to be activated in the coming weeks. Their duties include, but are not limited to, constructing and staffing alternate care facilities, assisting state agencies in testing analysis, medical care, and building and operating communications facilities as well as delivering much needed supplies and equipment AND FOOD!

Three out of four men and women that you may see in uniform who enhance the abilities of various medical sites are Guardsmen and women. Their forte' is assisting in disasters of any kind, although this catastrophe which affects every one of us is unique to all of us. As such this arena is new to our National Guard forces who are on leave from their regular civilian jobs, giving their best for America. Our NG from various states have even been involved in Search and Rescue (SAR), and have completed over 600 missions of delivering PPE and ventilators within 24 hours of receipt in Louisiana. In Louisiana alone, Guard members have delivered more than 600,000 N95 masks, 3 million gloves, 300 ventilators, and nearly 100,000 protective suits to testing sites. Guard Soldiers and Airmen are also working at food banks and have distributed more than 400,000 pounds of food. Soldiers and Airmen have swabbed over 11,000 symptomatic citizens from these two parishes, already.

In New York, Guard members have supported nine testing sites screening as many as 5,000 people a day! Guard members delivered more than 300,000 meals to all five boroughs in New York City and were instrumental in converting the city's Javits Convention Center into an alternate care facility able to handle up to 2,500 patients. These volunteer units are replete with medicals who support any and all medical sites. Bear in mind they, like all our first responders, doctors and nurses do this at personal risk for America! The NG's training and primary medical capacity was to aid and sustain combat operations in battlefields. As such our entire nation today is somewhat of a battlefield and these men and women deserve honor, kudos and our love and appreciation. As well as this stateside mission we still have over 30,000 NG men and women who are mobilized Title 10 around the globe in the Pacific, Middle East and other locations with whatever their mission and needs are determined to be.

These fine selfless volunteers are part of every segment of our society that makes America great and are not to be overlooked when giving thanks or praise. The various state level National Guard units will continue to stand tall and proud when we overcome this current attack upon and within our precious Sovereign Republic. I'm proud to share my Veteran status with the men and women of our Nation's National Guard!

Semper Paratus

The Veterans' Corner

Scott Drummond

USCG Veteran



Letters to The Editor

Reprint from

Lake Forest Estates Newsletter

Hello Neighbors:

Hope this finds you healthy. We have been told how to maintain our physical health but how about our mental health?

These are stressful times. Feelings of isolation, boredom and even depression can attack us. Stay active, take a walk, tackle that to-do list, on a sunny day start the yard work, etc.

Stay in-touch with friends and family. Call them, text them, let them know what's going on with you. It will be good for you and for them. Don't forget your neighbors. Check to see if they need anything.

When this situation is over and you encounter the First Responders, police, fire fighters, men and women who drive the ambulances, etc., thank them for their service. They have families and the same concerns that you and I have but they show up and perform their jobs every day. They are working for us and deserve our gratitude.

This will end in time and just maybe, the world will be a little closer and more tolerant of each other.

Herb Bruce

Vote Yes on Fluoridation

Dear Editor,

As dentists serving Hiawassee, we have spent decades providing dental care to families throughout the region, including our neighbors and friends.

The Fluoride Referendum, scheduled for the May 19 primary elections, now offers all of us an opportunity to improve our oral health and that of our children. We urge you to vote "yes" to add fluoride to the city's water.

The American Dental Association, our professional organization, observes that 70 years of scientific research have proven that adjusting fluoride in drinking water at recommended levels established by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is safe and effective in preventing tooth decay by 25% in adults and children.

Most water contains some fluoride, but in Georgia it's usually not enough to prevent cavities. Adding just the right amount of fluoride, according to CDC guidelines (adopted by Georgia's public health officials), is the most cost-effective way to improve the oral health and overall health of everyone in the community. Georgians have been fluoridating their drinking water since 1951.

We have a professional and ethical duty to provide the best dental care possible to our patients and to help them make informed decisions about their health.

If you have questions about water fluoridation go to the CDC's website (www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/index.html) to learn the health benefits of community water fluoridation.

Dr. Jason Ledford and Michael Worthy

Should We Listen to Science?

Dear Editor,

Again, I would like to thank a previous writer for his recent response about the coronavirus and climate change. It is obvious he is very passionate about his beliefs, and I want to assure him that my intention was not to downplay the coronavirus.

It is obviously the most serious problems our country and the whole world has faced in many, many years. I pray for our president and our country daily that we may get thru this crisis, and my heart goes out to all who suffer.

However, if we do not learn lessons from our difficulties, we are bound to repeat them. It would seem that the best lesson to be learned is that we have to listen to our scientists, and the sooner we do, the better off we will be.

It is time to listen to the best scientists in the world and take action now on climate change, for waiting much longer will put us in danger of suffering extreme dangers from climate change that will dwarf the problems that we are having now from the coronavirus and will last for generations.

Ask our children and grandchildren if they care about climate change.

Vernon Dixon, MD

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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Owner/Publisher

Shawn Jarrard
Editor

Todd Forrest
Staff Writer

Derek Richards
Advertising Director

Shawn Henrikson
Copy Editor

Lowell Nicholson
Photographer

Publication No: 635540

Advertising, News deadlines: Friday at 5 p.m.

Towns County (1 Year) \$25. Out of County (1 Year) \$35. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points. The Towns County Herald is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. Postmaster: Send change of address to: Towns County Herald, P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546.

Office located at: 518 N. Main St. Suite 7 "The Mall", Hiawassee

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