

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Again: Do the Best You Can

December 21, 1943, Tanana River Valley, Alaska, very close to the Arctic Circle: A B-24 bomber crew on a test run for modified props on the "Iceberg Inez" knew they were in trouble when the plane started diving out of control. They prepared for the certain crash. Pilot Leon Crane bailed out the open bomb bay doors, freely swinging in the air and watching the Iceberg Inez crash into a mountain about two miles away and burst into an inferno. Two things became obvious to Crane, the smoke and flames would last a while and be good for the rescue team. The other was that all his survival equipment was destroyed in the crash and fire, so no use in trying to go and recover anything.

Standing in the deep snow, he shouted and screamed the names of his fellow crew members, but received nothing in return but dead silence. Unaware he was the only survivor, he pondered what to do. He was 23 years old and had his chute for shelter in an oncoming snowstorm. The wilderness terrain was extremely rough and rocky underneath the snow; he had very few provisions and had left his mittens on the B-24 so he could use his hands during the jump.

Fortunately his flight suit wasn't damaged and he had on three pair of wool socks and heavy mukluks. Crane had his knife and a pack of matches, but it was about minus 60 degrees and he struggled to protect his hands from frostbite, by keeping them tucked under his armpits. He knew he was in a very tough mess!

Crane finally decided that his best chances lay in following a small stream down to where it would empty into the Yukon River and hopefully run across trappers or hunters to assist him. Along what was to become an impossibly long 81 day hike he managed to make several fires, locate a couple of isolated cabins where he found food and supplies and fell into freezing water once. It took him hours to travel just a mile. He was starving, extremely cold, fatigued and lonely, but he kept going. He stayed in one well furnished cabin for three days in order to regain some strength, then 53 days after the crash on February 12, 1944 he left the cabin searching for civilization, and this time he had mittens!

On March 10 he followed a small trail, saw a cabin and heard a barking dog. For the first time in 81 days he met another human, a trapper who took him in, warmed him up, fed him and took him on his dogsled to Woodchopper, Alaska where a mail plane flew him back to Ladd Field. He married a nurse he'd met at Ladd Field, they had six children and he rarely spoke of his unwanted adventure in Alaska, deferring to those who saw actual hell in combat. Leon Crane went to be with our Supreme Commander at age 83 in 2002.

Semper Paratus

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran



Do As I Say

We fully support Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw's decision to disallow painting on top of Bell Mountain.

It is with anger and embarrassment that we admit that some of our young people, having been entrusted with a responsibility to behave reasonably, would choose to demonstrate their contempt for our community with vandalism.

The original decision to allow painting of the exposed rock on top of the mountain was not without merit. It was hoped that by giving official approval to something that was going to happen anyway, it would channel some of that destructive energy into something more manageable. One cannot separate from the young the natural desire to explore existing boundaries and push against them. There are many among the younger generations who push those boundaries by tagging and painting things. They even decorate themselves with ink and piercings. It is a form of self expression, and it is their right.

Vandalism is also a form of self expression when one wishes to express contempt, anger and despair. It is a problem as old as civilization.

But before we get too comfortable sitting in judgment, it might be wise to ask ourselves just how different we really are from the youth we can so easily condemn.

It's true that, as adults in a civil society who have benefited from education and experience, we usually make better decisions than our children. We still have the same impulses as our young. We still get angry. We still feel contempt. We still have to solve the equations of risk versus reward on a daily basis. But our impulses have been more or less channeled into conformity, or institutionalized.

We condemn the miscreants who destroy and deface public property and natural beauty. But have we really done so much better as adults with the myriad ways we legally impact our environment?

Let's start with the view from the top of Bell Mountain. Beautiful, isn't it? Perhaps, if you look to the east at some of the remaining few ridgelines unspoiled by "progress" and "job creation." There are a few among us who remember the Bell before the distinctive gash visible for miles was created. It was not done in an effort to make the mountain more beautiful.

Look to the west and we see a manmade lake completely surrounded by houses like a bathtub ring - a lake that covered some of the best and most beautiful farmland in the southeast - a declining lake polluted by excess nitrogen and phosphorus, poorly managed stormwater retention, erosion and sedimentation from badly designed roads and developments, and leaking and failing septic systems.

Take a drive anywhere in North Georgia and look at the shoulders of the road so colorfully decorated by the bright blues and verdant greens of Bud Light cans and Mountain Dew bottles, punctuated with brilliant white highlights in Styrofoam. The color combinations are very similar to what we see on top of the Bell, and the contempt is almost identical.

Do you like to go outside at night and enjoy the stars that light up the night sky? You may have to drive some distance for that pleasure now that our mountain valleys have been defaced with street lights, and empty houses broadcast their contempt for stargazing and diurnal cycles with floodlights on timers.

If you have driven any distance in America, you will realize that the problems just described of our still-beautiful area pale in comparison to what has happened in other parts of the country. Zoom out for a bird's eye view and you will see pollution of all kinds, crumbling infrastructure, and the chaos of unplanned, unchecked development. Zoom out far enough and you will see the Great Pacific Garbage Patch as big as Texas.

The chaos, the pollution and the ugliness, all of it, was rendered by responsible adults acting in a legally sanctioned manner, and yet the contempt and the ambivalence behind it is just as palpable as what we see on top of Bell Mountain.

Earth Day is just a few days behind us and a few of us planted a tree or picked up trash. Our culture is big on gestures and resolutions. But we're going to need more than just a day if we have any hope of changing the behavior we have seen on Bell Mountain - or the behavior that continues to deface and digest the rest of the planet.

So we should, by all means, condemn the vandalism which has occurred. We should seek to understand the anger and the contempt behind it, and what that says about our families and our civil society. But in our condemnation, we must also admit that we can only say, "Do as I say, not as I do."

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.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO: Towns County Herald, 1 Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net. Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc. Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.*
Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Profiles in Foliage

In Jolly Olde England, Prince William got a new baby. Prince Harry is getting married and the world is atwitter.

Hamilton Gardens in Hiawassee, GA, USA, has had a coronation of its own and The Royals rake supreme. The People's Honeysuckle Queen (Linda Jones) and Honeysuckle Princess (Carol Townsend) were crowned on April 20, 2018 at the Observation Deck at the Gardens.

These tougher than Troy-Bilt garden volunteers put their tools, muscles, and buckets of time where their hearts are.

They took up hoes and rakes to take on the tenacious honeysuckle, kudzu and other invading vines that were strangling our treasured Hamilton Gardens.

The battle was sweaty and backbreaking and is ongoing. It requires dedication and vigilance.

The Queen and Princess were bestowed their designations with much thanks and affection, by the equally hard working volunteer garden stewards who along with The Royals give hand-to-soil resuscitation in Hamilton Gardens. Constantly.

There are so many "Hammies" who give care to Hamilton Gardens, the gracious gift of Fred Hamilton, but I would be remiss if this maiden column did not introduce She Whose Name Must Not Be Mentioned. She is so-called because when asked if I could write about her, she firmly told me, "Don't you dare mention my name in anything you write". I told her that I never would so I won't. She Whose Name Must Not Be Mentioned is the grinding gear in the garden's engine. Without her a half dozen people would be needed to accomplish what she does alone. Mulching, weeding, raking, planting, painting structures, even scuttling whimsy throughout the garden for everyone's delight. A.J. Foyt would be proud and perhaps a bit jealous of her driving skills in Lurch and Azalea, garden equipment you'll meet later. She Whose Name Must Not Be Mentioned can eyeball an ailing specimen, diagnose its problem and set it on the road to health. Her knowledge of flora is vast. She even calls plants by their botanical names and doesn't chide me for not being able to do the same.

She Whose Name Must Not Be Mentioned's care and comfort is not reserved just for plants but extends to garden guests as well. Hey people, those bathrooms and trash receptacles don't clean themselves. Day Light Savings Time must have been initiated for She Whose Name Must Not Be Mentioned because she won't quit the task at hand until it is finished.

Martha Stewart might tell you that hoeing and mowing in the dark is not a good thing. She Whose Name Must Not Be Mentioned's love of Hamilton Gardens is evident. Her enthusiasm for it is contagious, or as my mother would have said, catching. She Whose Name Must Not Be Mentioned would have my respect and gratitude even if I did not like her, but I do. In fact I love her and enjoy a friendship with her that is both a blessing and an honor. To her I say thanks for teaching me about Blood Root, Trillium and so much more.

And don't worry. Nobody will figure out who you are.

Dishin' Dirt
Dale Harmon



Letters to The Editor

Common Sense

Dear Editor,

If a cricketer suddenly decided to go into a school and batter a lot of people to death with a cricket bat, which he could do very easily, I mean, are you going to ban cricket bats? Prince Philip, of the UK, reacting to proposals to ban firearms.

Jim Steed

Dying Maple on Hiawassee Square

Dear Editor,

So sad to see beautiful trees die, especially when they are so appreciated for their shade in a public park. We lost our very old and huge white pines on the square because they were dying and their falling limbs were a hazard to anyone sitting or walking under them. Several years ago the maple died on the one back corner of the square and now the matching maple just opposite City Hall has many dead branches in the middle of it. It too will have to come down. I'm sure everyone in the community understands the danger of falling limbs.

On the bright side, the crepe myrtle planted in celebration of Arbor Day at the back of the square is full of budding leaves. And a new tree will be planted in place of the maple. Once the freezing temperatures are gone, you will see a lot more color on the square.

Joan Crothers,
Square Landscaping Committee

Hiawassee Water Leak Insurance

Dear Editor,

This is a suggestion for a positive change to the proposed "Water Leak Insurance" program put forth by the Mayor and City Council. The \$1.80 per month charge allows the City to recover the lost revenue from a water leak. Water customers can opt out of this fee leaving them to luck and fate. I propose the City Leaders cut the monthly \$1.80 per month fee in half to \$.90 per month and provide the Water Leak coverage to all the customers. The City gains full recovery for any big loss and all of us that are customers are also protected from what could be a very large surprise expense. This is especially true since the City is eliminating the adjustment feature in case of such a leak. This shared expense and shared benefit is a much easier pill to take than simply adding another expense to those that are on fixed incomes such as what may happen with the Franchise Fee. I do understand the Franchise Fee problem and support the Council in their efforts. Consider the Air Med program and the community benefit gained from that. I think the water leak insurance is also a step forward. The money to do all of this has to come from somewhere and an equal cost and equal benefit is a great way to do that.

John L. Holmes

Have something to sell?
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Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday by 5 PM • 706-896-4454



Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	Every Monday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Bingo	Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
Free GED prep.	Every Tuesday: Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	Every Wednesday Red Cross Building	7 pm
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
Mtn. Amat. Radio	First Monday of each month: 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	6:30 pm
Alzheimer's Supp.	First Tuesday of each month: 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	First Wednesday of each month: McConnell Church	10 am
Stephens Lodge	First Thursday of each month: Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Quilting Bee MOAA	Third Wednesday of each month: McConnell Church	10 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
Humane Shelter Bd.	Last Thursday of each month: Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

Publication No: 635540

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

Towns County (1 Year) \$25. Out of County (1 Year) \$30. 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
Phone: (706) 896-4454 Fax: (706) 896-1745 Email: tcherald@windstream.net
Or mail to: PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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