

Reflections from Hamilton Gardens

Hamilton Gardens is approaching its fortieth birthday; a good time to look back at how and when it came to be. Hazel and Fred Hamilton lived in Atlanta where he was an executive with Sears, Roebuck and Company and they had a second home in Towns County. The Hamiltons loved native azaleas and rhododendrons and collected specimens from locations around the globe and propagated many varieties in their greenhouse. A number of those were eventually planted on their two properties and now reside in Hamilton Gardens. Mr. Hamilton was an active member of the American Rhododendron Society for many years.

The Hamiltons knew the day would come when they could no longer manage the huge gardens they had so lovingly created. In an effort to preserve the plants and save them from eventually being destroyed by a bulldozer, their vision was to give their entire collection of native azaleas and rhododendrons to the citizens of Towns County if they could find a suitable location. Mr. Hamilton discovered the perfect home on the slopes of Lake Chatuge atop the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds campus, and GMF and the county welcomed this gift for the newly created Towns County Park.

Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge is the largest rhododendron garden in the southeast and houses specimen plants which grow only in this



location. There are approximately 1,500 plants and perhaps as many as 300 hundred varieties of native azaleas and rhododendrons. It was designated a state botanical garden by the Georgia legislature in 2003, a distinction earned by the diversity of its flora and unique ecosystem. This legacy gift to Towns County is to be treasured and preserved for future generations.

In the words of Ansel Adams, Let us leave a splendid legacy for our children. Let us turn to them and say, 'this you inherit: guard it well, for it is far more precious than money; and once destroyed, nature's beauty cannot be repurchased at any price.'

The Gardens are open daily for walking; CDC social distancing rules are in place, bathrooms are closed. Come to the Gardens and introduce your children to this magical place that is blooming now.

More on the Gardens story in the near future. For more information call 706-970-0011, check our Facebook page.

Arrest and Fire Reports

Local law enforcement provides the following information for publication. Names are spelled as they were when received from the law enforcement agencies. It is important to remember that the following individuals have been charged only and are presumed innocent until such time as they are found guilty by a court or enter a guilty plea. Addresses of persons under arrest are no longer available from Sheriff's Office.



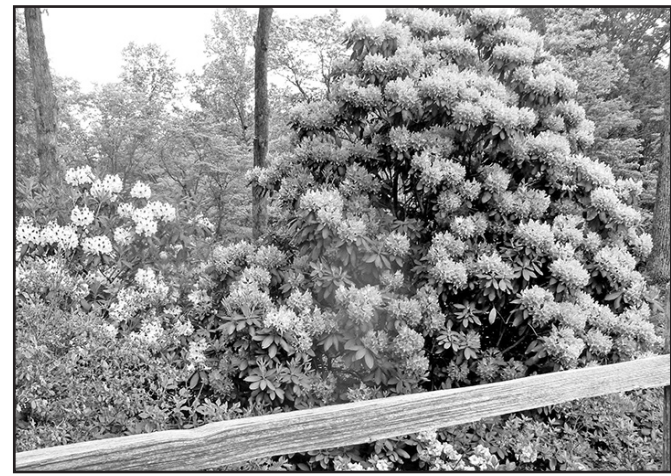
ARREST REPORT

Towns County Jail
Sheriff-Chris Clinton

- 4/21/20 Jordan Wayne Campbell, age 27
Driving on wrong side of road, Fleeing or attempting to elude police officer, Reckless driving, Speeding, Willful obstruction of law enforcement
- 4/21/20 Michael Anthony Hardy, age 43
Cruelty to children - 3rd degree, Simple battery - family violence
- 4/22/20 Terra Marie Hynes, age 50
DUI - alcohol

T(Apr29.H1)SH

Hamilton Gardens Plant Sale



The native azaleas and rhododendrons in one and three gallon pots are waiting patiently for you at the Hamilton Gardens greenhouse. The Garden Shop will be open on weekends: Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. This will be weather permitting and until plants are sold out. Call 706-970-0011 if you need

more information.

The Gardens are blooming beautifully right now, so take a walk after you buy your plants. The storm damage from the past months has been cleaned up so the trails are walkable.

Everyone is asked to follow state recommendations as to social distancing, face masks and no large gatherings.

National Guard...from Page 1A

National Guard disinfected Chatuge Nursing Home the previous week.

"The Georgia National Guard is doing an outstanding job with offering their services to provide cleaning and disinfecting of health care facilities (throughout the state)," said Julia Barnett, chief nursing officer for Union General Health. "So, we have chosen to be proactive and have them come and clean all of our facilities.

"As you know, COVID has touched all of our facilities, because it's just so widespread and there are cases everywhere. Usually, the (National Guard) is cleaning long-term care facilities, but since they were going to be in the area, they said they didn't mind doing our hospitals as well."

According to 1st Lieutenant Richard Hughes, 3rd Battalion public relations officer, each health care facility may submit a request through

the Georgia Department of Public Health, which will then contact the guard to send in a team.

"Our battalion has several infection control teams, but since our base is in Cumming, north-central and northeast Georgia has been our primary area of operation," Hughes said. "There are some areas of Georgia that have been hit harder, so we've been sent elsewhere whenever needed."

In addition to cleaning health care facilities, soldiers from the 3rd Battalion are preparing to battle COVID-19 by setting up mobile testing sites across the state.

"Right now, that seems to be our focus," Hughes said. "We will have a couple of medics on-site and run all of the samples through Augusta Medical Center. We'll soon be taking personnel from our disinfecting teams and moving them toward our testing mission."

As his battalion travels across the state, Hughes hopes that each community understands the guardsmen are there to assist, not to enforce martial law.

In fact, most Georgia National Guard soldiers were born and raised in the same areas they're tasked with serving during the pandemic.

"The people that are putting on the (National Guard) uniform are your neighbors, and when they take off the uniform, they are still members of your community," he said. "There has been a lot of misinformation spread about us.

"We're just here to support our communities and help ensure our friends and families remain safe."

In addition to the Health System's two hospitals and nursing homes, the National Guard also cleaned Brasstown Manor of Hiawassee last month as part of its mission to sanitize long-term care facilities around the state.

Former Inmate...from Page 1A

"This will affect me for the rest of my life, but this tragedy is going to be someone else's blessing," Martin said. "I'm going to do whatever God has me to do. If I can give it back, then that's what God wanted me to do."

The Sheriff's Office said that no complaints regarding inmate mistreatment had been made as of Sunday afternoon, adding that any such complaint would be referred to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation for external review.

When reached for comment about his internal message seemingly praising jail staff for helping him with his medical needs, Martin said he sent the message because he truly was thankful to finally be receiving treatments after going so long without them.

He also said he felt the praise would keep the medical treatments coming, as March 31 was the first time he recalled receiving his breathing treatments since arriving Jan. 28.

After his mom tried to bring him medication, Martin said he was told "greasy wheels do not get things moving in this jail, so stop having your mom calling here. All it's going to do is make your time harder in this facility."

In a statement provided to the Herald Monday, Sheriff

Clinton addressed Martin's claims by citing an online article written by a local reporter, presumably former Fetch Your News reporter Robin Webb, who posted a story Saturday detailing claims similar to those Martin made to the Towns County Herald.

"It has come to my attention that, once again, a local reporter has published an article alleging misconduct against the Towns County Sheriff's Office," Clinton said. "In the most recent article, the reporter makes claims based on the word of Donald Richard Martin, referred to by the reporter as Ricky Martin, a convicted felon, who was incarcerated for dealing drugs in Towns County, Georgia, including meth and schedule I drugs.

"It should be noted that Martin had tried, unsuccessfully, to bond out on the drug-related charges. It is also worth noting that, just over two weeks prior to Martin's hospitalization, he was praising detention center staff and the care he was receiving at the Towns County Detention Center. You can read his own words in the following message (posted above) sent by Martin while incarcerated in our jail.

"Further, the Towns County Sheriff's Office has received no communication

from the reporter to check the validity of the allegation.

"It has been and remains my position that drug dealers will be arrested and charged. This is an ongoing effort to keep children of our community safe."

Clinton's statement originally appeared on the Towns County Sheriff's Office Facebook page with a screenshot of the internal jail message sent by Martin. However, the sheriff decided early Monday to delete/deactivate the entire Facebook page.

"Unfortunately, social media has become a breeding ground for fake news, some of it malicious defamation," Clinton told the Herald. "For many years, I offered the page as an additional way to keep people informed. I no longer have time to deal with all the fires caused by certain social media users who seem to have nothing more productive to do with their time.

"After much thought over the past few months, I have decided it might be best to discontinue its use in relation to the Office of Sheriff. By law, I would have had to take it down by year's end anyway, as I will no longer be sheriff, and the page has always been personally maintained."



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

COVID-19 Hotline

The State of Georgia has a new COVID-19 hotline. If you believe that you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to the novel coronavirus, please contact your primary care doctor or an urgent care clinic. Please do not show up unannounced at an emergency room or health care facility. Hotline: (844) 442-2681. NT(Apr29.Z1)CA



Woman's
ENRICHMENT CENTER
706-745-7518
218 Jones Street • Blairsville, GA 30512

Question: Since Governor Kemp has lifted some of the Shelter in Place restrictions will you be seeing clients?

Answer: Our current plan is to continue as we have for the past five weeks. We will also continue to serve clients by phone and video chat. In addition, we are offering curbside care packages for those with material needs.

In an effort to serve our community we are offering care packages to both clients and non-clients.

If you or someone you know is in need of diapers, wipes, formula, baby food, toiletries and/or masks please call the Center during our normal hours of operation: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 9

AM to 4 PM.

Question: We were disappointed to hear that your yearly Yard Sale and BBQ has been postponed. When will you be accepting donations again?

Answer: If you have large items (such as furniture and appliances) you would like to donate and are able to bring them yourself, we will gladly accept these items at this time. Please call our offices and arrange a time to meet someone at our storage facility. We ask that you not leave items in our back parking lot as we no longer store items at our location. You may reach us at 706-745-7518 during our normal hours of operation. Our after hours number is 706-994-3391.