

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

The Dawning

The realization hit me that for the last few columns I have merely been juggling. Trying to keep the show going until the broken, sequined strap could be repaired and the head lining act could again take the stage.

The column, Around Towns, is a place holder. Scott Drummond, the excellent writer of The Veterans' Corner, seemed to have elsewhere. Knowing that I have more nerve than, sense, Shawn H. at The Towns County Herald asked if I would sub for him. She also knows that while I have a healthy ego, I'm no diva and would have no problem returning the reins to the proper jockey.

Although I am a veteran Camp Fire Girl, that does not qualify me to keep Mr. Drummond's by line. After all, how many ways can the making of s'mores be told?

"John, how can I write about Towns County when I know so little about it?"

"Heck if I know" my dear, expressive husband replied. Did Charles Kuralt, on air or in print, or Woody Guthrie in song, opine about America without experiencing it? I think not. The opportunity to explore and learn about Towns County, to better write about it has me excited. I've enticed John to join me on this quest for knowledge and fun.

GPS is vegetable soup to me. On good days I know up, down, left, and right. I knew I was lost driving from Glastonbury, CT to the Connecticut airport in Hartford, CT, when the Welcome To New York sign appeared. It goes without saying, but I will anyway, John will be the navigator.

We're plotting our course. Shall it be voting precinct to voting precinct? From county line border to county line border or willy nilly random day trips?

Backtracking does not faze me. With my lack of directional sense, it has always been my norm. To John, aka Mr. Georgia Tech, Point A to Point B is a straight line. A very straight line. He even makes blue prints when icing cakes.

This promises to be an adventurous undertaking. As The Beatles sang, "We can work it out". We have many times.

Help me out, Good People. Let us in on what should not be missed on our Tour of Towns. We are pumped up about this and want to see it all. Contact me at: dalegharmon@gmail.com. Be specific and please, be nice.

See you on the flip side, Good Buddy.

Around Towns
Dale Harmon



Curate, Curate, Curate

This week we're continuing our ongoing discussion about how to remain sane in the Age of Information. It's an evolving strategy. Things change so rapidly now that any plan can become obsolete before it has a chance to be implemented.

The most successful part of the plan has been the reclamation of the time once wasted absorbing the nightly shooting report and the national corporate political spin. For the generations who grew up with the television tuned into to local and national news, this has been a habit hard to break, even as the content of the broadcasts became steadily more toxic. But in this case information technology itself has provided the solution, especially for cord cutters. The news apps on Roku and FireTV allow you to choose the stories you want to watch, or you can go directly to Glenn Burns' video weather report and avoid corporate news altogether.

Americans now spend more time looking at phones, tablets and laptops than they do watching television, but around the farm it's not hard to avoid pixels, especially social media pixels, in the spring. Any free time left over after earning a living is usually spent outside. Soil must be turned and tilled, and the greenhouse is full of seedlings that need to be set out. It only takes one rain to turn grass into hay, and the blades on the mower need sharpening.

The morning cup of coffee is usually the time when we are most likely to visit pixel land here on the farm. Social media captured and still holds the attention of millions of people. It was something novel when it was new, but it grew stale long ago for many of us. However, it is specifically designed to be addictive, with feedback mechanisms that serve up small doses of serotonin when we are "liked" or "retweeted" or "followed." Therefore is a difficult habit for many of us to kick.

Curating the social media experience can help. Avoiding the "look at my wonderful life" posts can add hours to your day. (Hint: Most of these are just "commercials" in search of validation and not a valid basis for comparison with our own mundane lives. Just click "like" and quickly move on.)

We've criticized social media often here, but that doesn't mean that it is devoid of benefit. Again, the key is to curate the experience. It takes some time to setup, and a bit of maintenance, but both Facebook and Twitter allow extensive filtering. After a bit of tweaking, the first things I see are posts from people who have a sense of humor, and it is rare now that I am served an unsolicited political opinion. This cuts the time spent on social media down to about the time it takes to drink a cup of coffee in the morning, and avoids an incalculable amount of unnecessary annoyance.

The ongoing challenge for those of us who wish to extract useful information from corporate media is to do so without wasting time on click bait drama. You can safely skip over any headline that contains certain telltale phrases. Articles under the words "slams," "outraged," and "pushes back" usually do not contain any information you can use to improve your life. If the headline sounds like something that could be reported from a professional wrestling match, it probably has little value.

When I'm hiking in the woods or working in the garden, it's easy to imagine a world without our information matrix. But to continue to be able to afford some time with nature, many of us must continue to interface with the world of pixels. I've invested some effort streamlining that interaction, and some of these shortcuts may work for you as well.

Marketwatch is a website that can very quickly provide all the essential financial news without the contamination of politics. ScienceDaily and Physorg provide a wide view of cutting edge science news, with links to in depth articles for the technically minded. Access North Georgia will keep you current on news of interest to north Georgia residents. None of the websites mentioned are behind a pay wall.

There are more sites out there that can provide quality information on current events without politics or drama, but you have to look for them. There are countless sources of scientific, technical and historical information, and many of them are still free. It takes effort to push past the click bait drama that competes for our attention, but it is worth the trouble.

We have an advantage over most of you when it comes to curating our information experience: We have to drive about 5 miles for our cell phones to become useful. This one geographical advantage has allowed us to avoid the Borg-like assimilation that plagues many Americans. When we are away from home, however, we are just as likely to become tethered to the phone as anyone. There is a simple solution for that. Confine the phone to a separate room. Never allow it to enter the bedroom..

In my humble opinion, the best place to keep the cell phone at home is in the bathroom. The amount of time we spend on our phones should not exceed the amount of time we spend there, and the bathroom ambiance somehow seems appropriate for the quality of most of the information a phone can provide. (If you find that you're spending more time in the bathroom, however, a different strategy may be needed.)

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Black Bears

Black bears have been coming out more and more. Let's talk about what to do if you see a bear and the steps that you can take to make sure that your home doesn't become a playground for bears.

Firstly, it's important to remember that we live in an area with copious amounts of national forest. That means black bears are out there. Hopefully, though if you encounter one you'll know what to do or how to make your space less attractive to them. Bears will typically live 8 to 15 years. The females can weigh up to 300 pounds and the males over 500 pounds. The females will give birth in their den in late January. Those cubs will stay with the mother until the following spring when she kicks them out.

Bears are omnivores meaning that they eat whatever is easily available depending on the time of year. Their natural diet is berries, fruits, acorns, grasses, insects, and even mammals. Bears can be attracted by the smell of human food if there is not much natural food available for them. Bears are naturally afraid of humans. However, bears that have been feeding on human food lose their natural fear of people, and become a danger. Bears will usually remain in an area where food is readily available, so the best way to make sure that bears don't move into your backyard is to remove the sources of food.

Never feed bears either intentionally or unintentionally. They will learn where food is available and become a nuisance for you. Make sure that your garbage is in a place that they can't reach. That means leaving it inside the garage or if you're out camping hoisting your trash in the air or putting it in a bear proof trashcan. Bird feeders can attract bears because of the high calorie content in bird feed. Bring your bird feeders in when bears are active. Usually by the time bears are active there is plenty of natural food available for birds. Don't leave pet food out. Just give your outdoor pets enough food for one feeding. If you have a grill, clean and store it after use. Bears will be attracted by the smell of your grill so keep it out of reach for them. And finally, let your neighbors know if you see a bear so that they can take precautions too.

Most bears are not aggressive, unless they have been fed by humans before. Bear relocation is usually not an effective control option. Bears that are relocated might be moved to an area that another bear has already claimed, leading to territory fights, or the bear may try to return to its home and be struck by a vehicle. Relocation is a last resort.

If you do encounter a bear in the open make yourself look big and wave your arms and shout while backing away slowly. Do not get between a mother bear and her cubs. If you are attacked fight back aggressively with anything you can get your hands on. Bears can be dangerous but know that there are no recorded attacks or fatalities in Georgia.

If you have questions about bears in our area contact your local Extension office for more information or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

UGA extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Letters to The Editor

In Appreciation

Dear Editor,

On behalf of the Lake Chatuge-Hiwassee Rotary Club I thank you, your writers and photographers for supporting our signature project "Meals of Hope". You were so generous with your placement of our call for volunteers on a weekly basis. That brought in over 200 people to help prepare the 60,000 meals that were then distributed to various food pantries and churches to help our needy neighbors. Thank you, too, for the excellent post-event article and photo. You've been so very supportive of our Club and we want to let you know we value your support.

Best regards,
Bonny Herman,
Rotary Public Image Chair/Board member

Some Satire, Observations, Thoughts, Questions & Statements

Dear Editor,

1) Why do the pro-choice folks demean those who choose to make a different choice?
2) What's legal about illegal?
3) Is the militia preamble to the 2nd Amendment mere surplusage, considering that the word "preamble" is defined as the introductory part of a law that states the reasons for and the intent of that law. Furthermore, those who are legally charged with the interpretation of the Constitution and other laws, if they are intellectually honest with you and unto themselves, will tell you that each word therein is to be given meaning and effect. And no, I'm not anti-gun, so get over it.

4) Sitting in church, by itself, no more makes one a Christian than sitting in a garage makes one a car.

5) Most folks today favor one political party because they can't stand the other one.

6) Will there be more Democratic entrants in the presidential race that there were in the Daytona 500 race?

7) As your readers consider the foregoing, are they who they honestly are or who, because of outside forces such as their friends, neighbors, co-workers, family, associations, institutions, etc., they are supposed and expected to be in the eyes and opinions of those other people and things? If the former, please contact Diogenes immediately, because he's long been looking for you.

Claude Spears

Climate Change - What The Science Tells Us

Dear Editor,

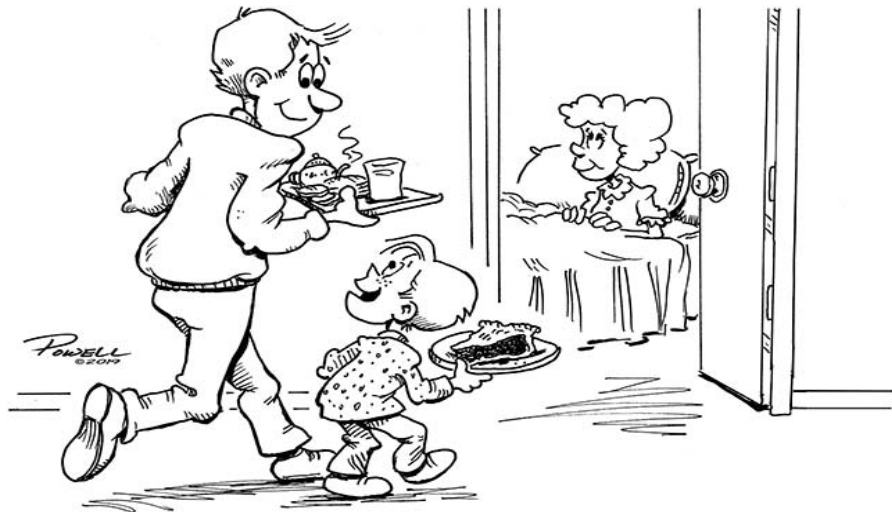
In regards to the article last month saying that climate change is a manufactured hoax, we should look at the scientific truth. It is true that the climate has changed over the course of history, and scientists know the reasons. These changes are due to 4 main causes.

1st, the elliptical course of the earth around the sun and the change in the tilt of the earth's axis. This is what caused the ice ages. 2nd, the activity of the sun, and 3rd, volcanic activity. These 3 show no increase in the last 50 years. The last cause is greenhouse gases-carbon dioxide, methane, and others.

The 1.8 degrees increase in temperature, which all meteorological societies and satellite data agree has happened, correlates totally with greenhouse gases. Mankind now produces 110 million tons daily. 99% of peer reviewed scientific articles agree with the idea of human caused climate change.

HR 763, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Bill, specifically states that all the money goes back to US Citizens. We all called, in the Bible, to be good stewards of the earth, and I hope we all heed that call.

Vernon Dixon



"It's only fair we spoil Mom on Mother's Day. She spoils us the rest of the year!"

Towns County Community Calendar

	Every Monday:	
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
Movers & Shakers	Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Chamber Board	1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	8 am
VFW	VFW Post	5 pm
Historical Society	Hist. Soc. Bldg.	5:30 pm
School Board	Auditorium	7 pm
Unicoy Masonic	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Conv./Vis. Bureau	Civic Center	8 am
Gem & Mineral Club	Senior Center	1:30 pm
Arts & Crafts Guild	Calvary Church	4 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm
Basket Weavers	SC Fire Hall	10 am
USCG Aux.	Senior Center	7 pm
Hiaw Writers	Hiaw Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
Awake America Prayer	Civic Center	Noon
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	6 pm
Hospital Auxiliary	Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Planning Comm.	Civic Center	6 pm
MOAA	Michael email mva62sgn@brmcmc.net	
YH Plan Comm.	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
Quilter Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
Book Bunch & Lunch	Daniels Steakhouse	11:30 am

Have something to sell?

Let the Herald work for you!
Contact us at
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Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday by 5 PM



Towns County Herald

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