

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Debt Ceiling Deception

**Biden's Debt Ceiling Deception** - Last month, House Republicans successfully passed the only plan in Washington that addresses the debt ceiling and reins in government spending. Our sensible solution, the Limit, Save, Grow Act, limits federal spending, saves taxpayer dollars, and grows our economy. I proudly supported this legislation, as it protects hardworking Americans, strengthens our economy, and saves all of us \$4.5 trillion over the next decade — all while avoiding defaulting on our nation's debt.



United States Congressman  
Representative Andrew Clyde

House Republicans did our job — now it's time for the White House and Senate Democrats to do theirs before it's too late.

Yet instead of responsibly leading and constructively engaging with House Republicans, President Biden is determined to push blatant falsehoods about our debt ceiling plan. One of the most widespread and sinister lies coming from the White House claims our legislation cuts veterans' benefits.

Let me be clear: There are zero cuts to the Department of Veterans Affairs or to veterans' benefits in the Limit, Save, Grow Act.

As a veteran, I believe it is egregious that the Biden Administration continues to shamelessly spread this lie in an attempt to fearmonger the American people. Our plan simply cuts woke, weaponized, and wasteful spending in order to reduce our out-of-control debt and deficit. Yet Democrats are desperate to deceive and distract Americans, while also covering up for President Biden's weakness and failed leadership. But the clock is ticking — and we can't pause our efforts to fix America's dire fiscal future while the White House and Congressional Democrats play politics by advancing this deplorable smear campaign.

Despite stubbornly refusing to negotiate with House Republicans for months, President Biden has finally caved and invited Speaker McCarthy to meet at the White House. While this standoff dragged on for far too long due to Biden's inaction, I remain confident that the Speaker will continue to effectively lead on this matter. Please know that I will hold the line with my colleagues to ensure the debt ceiling crisis is handled in a responsible manner that prioritizes fiscal sanity and protects your hard-earned tax dollars.

If you have questions or concerns about the debt ceiling or House Republicans' Limit, Save, Grow Act, please do not hesitate to contact my office (<https://clyde.house.gov/contact/>).

## Letters To The Editor

### Correction of Information

Dear Mayor Gibby and City Council Members,

The purpose of this letter is to address some important points regarding the May 2, 2023, City Council Meeting. First, I wish to express my appreciation to Councilperson Matt Miller for his insight that the council did not have enough accurate information to decide on the "Franchise Fee" to be charged to Blue Ridge Electric EMC. He accurately referred to the "fee" as a tax that will be passed along to BREMC customers.

Second, I shared in my last letter and at the meeting that with the 4% franchise fee, Young Harris College's electric bill would increase by \$50,000. I was taken aback by the lack of concern shown by the mayor and other council members, not including Councilperson Miller, regarding the financial impact the fee would have on the city's largest employer.

Third, I made you aware that the citizens and businesses living and operating within the city were unaware of the franchise fee and the impact it would have on their electric bills. I strongly encouraged the council to postpone action on the franchise fee until a public hearing about the fee could be held. To that recommendation, you said that the topic had been discussed at multiple council meetings.

According to the City of Young Harris website, as of May 3, 2023, on council meeting information, notice that there are no meeting minutes shown for the council's August, September, October, November, or December meetings. Moreover, the council has not posted minutes from the March or April meetings. May I ask how citizens can know what the council is discussing when the council has not posted minutes for seven of its meetings? As I remember from the May 2nd meeting, the council began the meaningful discussion on the Franchise Fee in March. Again, how can citizens know what the council is discussing if they cannot access meeting minutes?

After the May 2nd meeting, I reviewed the minutes from the council's December, January, and February meetings. This is what I found:

The December 6, 2022, Agenda listed GMA Franchise Fee Audit. The minutes from the meeting read, "Attorney Harkins said the Mayor had asked Marvin to look into franchise fees because the state law has changed. Apparently the law changes do not apply to the City of Young Harris. He called GMA and found out they offer a service to manage your franchise fees and make sure the City is getting what it is supposed to get. The City of Hiwassee enacted a franchise fee for the EMC in 2018 where they get approximately \$100,000. The cost for the GMA to manage the franchise fees for the City is \$1050. The amount of fiber running through the City of Young Harris is extensive. The first year they will figure out what the revenue is and if it (sic) there isn't any revenue to be had the service can be canceled. Included in the packet and attached and incorporated herein is an explanation of the GMA service. John Kelley made a motion to engage GMA for the franchise fee service, seconded by Steve Clark and approved unanimously."

There is no mention of the Franchise Fee in the January Agenda or Minutes.

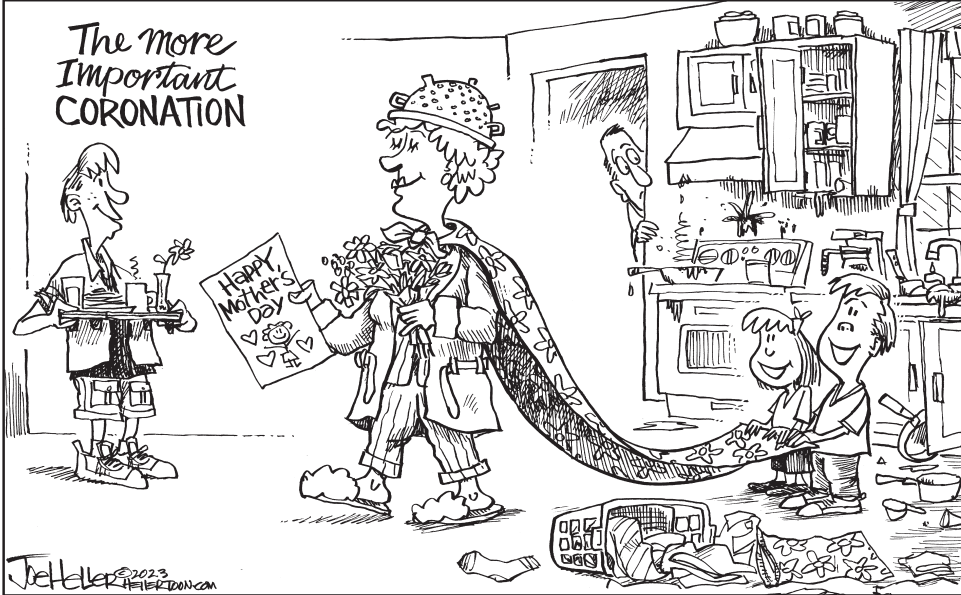
There is no mention of the Franchise Fee in the February Agenda or Minutes.

The Agenda and Minutes for the March and April meetings are not listed.

We as citizens cannot be informed unless you publish your agenda and minutes, which you have not done. This also counters your claim that the citizenry should be aware of your Franchise Fee discussions.

As you can see, I have copied the Towns County Herald on this letter. I hope that they will investigate how your work on the Franchise Fee can be considered above board. I will also be contacting all citizens of the City of Young Harris, encouraging them to be present at your June 6 council meeting to speak against the Franchise Fee.

Regards,  
**Dr. Drew L. Van Horn**  
Young Harris College, President



J. Heller 2023

## Locally Grown at your Farmers Market

This is one I do every year at this time to remind you to support your local farmers, buy the crops that they have grown in the local area which supports the local economy, creates local jobs, and makes us eat healthier.



RC&D  
Frank Riley  
Executive Director

I saw a small cup of apple juice that had juice from US, Mexico, Poland, California, and several other foreign countries. Think about the transportation costs and time it takes to get the products from there to here on our table. Why not just use what we have here? Is that too simple or am I overlooking something, like supporting foreign shippers or overseas growers that do not add one cent to our local economy. I will buy American no matter what it costs because, it will help us one way or another. The only fruit that is really fresh is grown in our part of the country so look at the labels and buy local.

It is that time of year that we look forward to all winter when the farmer's markets open and local grown vegetables are ready for us to enjoy. Those who know me know that my favorite past-time is growing things here on my Grandfather's old farm down on the river in Towns County. Walter Brown was the first Towns County Agent in 1917 and eventually became the Director of the UGA Extension Service in Athens, so I get my Ag experience honestly having grown up on my family's farm in Taylor County where we grew hay, vegetables, and other things that contributed to the food supply of our area. We plant oats, corn, soybeans, in the fields and cut flowers & vegetables in our High Tunnels that grow (sometimes) into something we can eat or sell.

Of course, farming requires my other favorite things, tractors, and equipment to prepare the ground, plant the crops, and harvest what the bears and other critters do not eat before we do. I never was one to use a hoe or manual equipment like that when I can use my 100 hp Kubota with AC, Stereo and air ride seat (we've come a long way since our A John Deere) or my 1964 Ford 4000, my 1958 Ford 871, my 1952 Ford 8N or my 1954 Ford 740 to prepare, plant, and harvest (I like old things). We always plant more crops than we can eat or give away so we sell all that we can at one of the local farmer's markets or on the roadside on our farm. Sweet corn will be ready in late July. If we figured how much the vegetables that we plant really cost if we would just go to the farmer's market and buy our vegetables already picked and ready to prepare and save a lot of money, but that is not as much fun as growing it ourselves and playing with my tractors.

Local farmers need a place to sell their crops, and this is where our local farmer's markets provide the place to sell what they grow so they can try to recoup some of their investment. Farmers Markets are a throwback to earlier days when our ancestors had to grow their own food and then they would bring what they did not use to town to sell to the community. Today Farmers Markets are gaining popularity across the country from the metro cities to the most rural of our towns. Local Farmers Markets have become popular community events that are drawing people together on Saturday mornings, and other days of the week, all over the country. These markets give us a place to meet and greet our neighbors and take-home local grown produce that is much better for us and a lot tastier than those products that are grown somewhere far away. Buying local also keeps our money in the community and helps turn us back toward at least a partial self-sustaining lifestyle. It is a lot more rewarding to plant and harvest our own gardens or buy the local grown vegetables than it is to drive to the grocery store to buy stuff that we have no clue as to where it came from, how it was grown, what it has been treated with, how long it has been since it was harvested or what dread disease we might get by eating it.

Each generation that passes moves further away from the days when our ancestors had to grow their food or go hungry and now most of our children have no clue as to where their food comes from except the grocery store. The State of Georgia is blessed to have many thriving community farmer's markets scattered all over the state.

The Georgia Department of Agriculture oversees these community farmer's markets and administers nine State Farmers Markets which form the network for sales of fruits and vegetables throughout Georgia and the Southeast. These state facilities maintain a viable market for Georgia farmers and farm products in the communities where they are located. The large State Farmers Markets are responsible for over one billion dollars in sales each year.

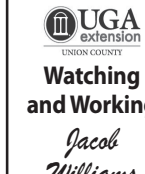
Most local farmer's markets are often operated by non-profits or local governments and serve their local communities and surrounding areas. In our area, Union County has a state-of-the-art farmers market with a new canning plant that is growing rapidly, Hayesville has a market on the square, and Towns County has its Farmers Market located next to the county beach north of Hiwassee. Come out on Saturday mornings and see what the local farmers have to offer or grow your own and come out and sell it.

Visit your local farmer's markets and support your local farmers, it is good for us and good for the community. For more information on Farmers Markets, contact us at: [info.ccrd@gmail.com](mailto:info.ccrd@gmail.com).

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## Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

Have you seen small white cottony balls on hemlock trees? If you have then that means those trees are infested with Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA). Let's look at why it's important to preserve hemlocks, what is the pest that is killing them, and what you can do to save them. We are getting to the time of year when they really start to come out.



UGA extension  
Watching and Working  
Jacob Williams

Hemlocks are a native species that ranges from Maine to Northern Alabama. They are a key-stone species that provides habitat for about 120 species of vertebrates and over 90 species of birds. Hemlocks are unique in their ability to thrive in shade. This attribute makes them common in ravines and along rivers and streams. Their proximity to streams and rivers means that they are crucial in reducing erosion and watershed protection. Hemlocks can be identified by their needles. They have short flat needles with two distinctive pale white stripes on the underside. The needles are wider at the base and taper to a rounded tip, unlike firs that have parallel sides the whole way down.

HWA is a very small insect. The white cottony sacks on the hemlock trees are what the HWA wraps itself with for protection. They are an invasive species from Asia that doesn't have a natural predator here. HWA feeds on the sap inside of hemlock trees. Wind, birds, deer, or humans can spread the HWA. Once a tree has become infested, it will die within four to 10 years. Therefore, it is important to treat trees as soon as possible after finding that they have been infested.

It is important to treat your own trees with cultural and chemical controls. Cultural controls include keeping hemlocks well mulched and watered. Hemlock trees don't have very deep roots and droughts can make them more susceptible to infection. Don't place any bird feeders or deer feeders near your trees. Birds and deer can carry the eggs for long distances. If you are hiking in an area that has HWA wash your clothes afterward because you may be carrying eggs. Be careful to not over-fertilize your trees as that could make them more enticing to HWA. Cultural controls may keep your trees healthy, but when they become infested, chemical controls are the only option. Chemical control involves treating your tree with either Imidacloprid or Dinotofuran, and is the most common and effective method of control. An imidacloprid treatment will last four or five years. However, it may take one year before it is effective. Dinotofuran will last for two years in the tree and will take about four to six weeks to take effect. The ideal way to apply either of these insecticides is by soil drench. Putting the insecticide in the soil will mean quicker uptake by the plant and reduce the chance of off target drift. A soil drench does not require any special equipment. Soil injection can also be used, however, I only recommend using an injector if you are treating a large number of trees. Soil injection and soil drench are equally effective. You can also purchase imidacloprid in tablet form, so you don't have to mix with water. If the trees are near open water, a trunk injection of insecticide is necessary, which will require a professional. Whenever applying a pesticide follow the label.

The Union County Extension Office has a soil injector that is available to be checked out. Checking it out requires a \$250 dollar deposit that will be returned when the injector is brought back. If you would like instructions on how to treat hemlock trees contact your County Extension Office or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu). The organization Save Georgia's Hemlocks has a website that also has lots of information.

Contact your local Extension Office or send me an email at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu) if you have any questions about HWA.

## A Chivaree

A "chivaree" was a big part of most marriage celebrations during my parents and grandparents' younger years. I think today we are all too busy for this type of activity. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy participating in the social media we find on the internet. However, the social media we use via our computers cannot really forge long-lasting friendships like we develop when we rub elbows with one another. To me the social networks are tools I can use to keep up with friends.

A chivaree was a custom during my grandfather's time. The event was held after a marriage ceremony. Remember, there was no such thing as a trip to the beach or mountains for one's honeymoon. After my grandparents married, they were allowed to live in "the weaning off house" until they could afford to get a place of their own. After their marriage ceremony, Papa and Granny knew that the "chivaree" was coming to their place.

After dark Papa heard the "chivaree" coming. About 15-20 of their friends and relatives walked down the lane to their house. The group of people was all singing a song. These friends of Papa and Granny built up a large fire in the front yard of "weaning off house." Some of the group kept up the singing while the rest of the group roasted some chickens and made coffee. Then about every 15-20 minutes the group would parade around the house beating on the walls with pots and pans. Every now and then someone from the group would knock on the door to ask about borrowing some sugar or salt. Papa said, "And you had better answer if they knock or things might get rowdy." The "chivaree" would last the entire evening and the group would not go home until dawn the next morning. Papa said his friends were up all night in his front yard and no amount of pleading could convince them to leave.

Papa also participated in some of these chivarees. He remembered one where the group of boys took things a little too far. He said, "We walked around the house beating on the sides with frying pans and singing. We even knocked on the door to ask for some salt. But we heard nary a peep from inside. So, one of the boys decided we should go in and steal the groom." The group of boys walked into the house and down the hall to the bedroom. They flung open the bedroom door and grabbed up the protesting groom and carried him outside.

The group of boys walked around the house carrying the groom above their heads while they all sang "Oh Susanna." When the group reached the west corner of the house, the leader kept walking all the way down to Little Bear Creek. Upon reaching the creek bank they heaved their load of groom into the cold waters of the creek. All of this happened after midnight in the winter.

They felt sorry for the boy and retrieved him from the waters of the creek, then took him home and built up a nice warm fire to dry his clothes, and all went home to leave the young couple to their honeymoon. What a group of friends. Do you think you could ever experience anything like this as a result of social media?



Around The Farm  
Mickey Cummings

# Towns County Herald

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