

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Missing but Still Moving

Being the granddaughter of a Dahlonega native grandmother, reading old Southern Appalachian cookbooks, is like visiting a foreign, yet familiar country. In previous decades I have eaten and loved plenty of that fare. Armed with recipes, I marched to Ingles to gather ingredients for Kale and Potato Cakes with Tomato Gravy. Dismay over took me when I found no sorghum syrup. Just a few years earlier I had found bottles of it on both shelves and spots near the check-out counter, usually reserved for kid bait (young and old) and other impulse buys. Two highly acclaimed chefs, Kevin Gillespie and Linton Hopkins, from popular Atlanta eateries had sung the praises of sorghum syrup in well-known cooking magazines. Both chefs had confessed their favorite source for the versatile syrup was Hughes Pure North Georgia Syrup in Young Harris, Towns County GA. It seems when Mr. Hughes died so did the syrup production. After allowing a brief grief, being the granddaughter of a resourceful Appalachian grandmother, I improvised and used molasses. That tomato gravy would just not have been the same without the slight taming of sweetness.

The missing component experience was not devastating, but it was a bit daunting. In a county which once held a Sorghum Festival, there was no syrup. As good as the syrup was the labor intensity and lessened demand rendered its production obsolete. Molasses is an acceptable taste substitute and can readily be obtained. Sorghum syrup production requires acres of land to raise the grass for the grain, which must be planted, tended, harvested and processed all before being bottled or jarred and then sold. I don't know how Mr. Hughes was able to produce his treat to us as long as he did.

John and I are looking forward to our Tour of Towns. We've read histories of the county and spoken to people who have lived here all their lives (so far), those who were born here, moved away from here and returned here to live and those who live here part time. Spending as much time as I do at the fabulous Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge, I've had ample time to talk to people visiting Towns County for the first time and those on return visits. Everybody has a little different flavor to add to the cocktail. Some conversations are shaken, some are stirred. And stirring.

Reading old cookbooks and speaking to so many people with different value points, has driven home that PAST +FUTURE=PRESENT

Longing for what's over and yearning only for what's yet to come, leaves little time for the here and now. I feel blessed to have enjoyed all the stages of my kids' lives From infancy to preteen and yes, and even teenage, to the stage we now share, adulthood.

The Tour of Towns begins soon. Stay tuned.

Around Towns

Dale Harmon



At a Loss for Words

It was a quiet Mother's Day, and the memory of her gentle voice rested lightly on the afternoon. The roses she planted were in full bloom, and also the mountain laurel she loved.

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may. Observe, embrace and enjoy while we can. Memory is sweet and bitter and no substitute for being there.

It's a noisy world, full of words and opinions. They are cheapened by their abundance. It's hard to find a quiet moment away from the sound and fury. But be patient. Quiet will come to all of us in its own time.

It may begin with an empty seat at the table. Then another voice is stilled and eventually we're sitting at a smaller table and it's so quiet we turn on the television for company. Everyone sits alone eventually, and one day the house is empty and someone buys our table at a yard sale.

Perhaps that's why the world is full of noise, because in the quiet moments the memories seep in and the fears are audible. We fear the unknown. We fear change.

We fear death. We fear each other. So we distract ourselves with the same sound and fury mankind has practiced we first learned to speak.

Only now the sound and fury are amplified, multiplied and monetized and they rob us of so much time. We can ill afford the loss. It takes time to make memories, and it takes memories to stand the passage of time.

There is an optimum level of noise in each of our lives. Too little, and we beat our drums to ward off the evil spirits. Too much and we can't hear what we're saying to each other.

Just some musings on another holiday, another empty chair and the passage of time at a loss for words.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

The Pine Barrens of New Jersey

Where on Earth is Frank this week? The answer is The Pine Barrens of New Jersey visiting with my friend, Bill Brash. One of my Fire Abated Communities deliverables this year was to participate in a learning exchange with Bill Brash who is the FAC network member from New Jersey. Bill is an old Forester like me, so we speak the same language although not in the same dialect. Southern vs Yankee, but Bill is one of the good guys and he has hosted me this week in his hometown of Freehold, NJ. Bill will visit with us on June 6th to attend our North Georgia Prescribed Fire council meeting in Jasper. Freehold, NJ is the home of "The Boss", Bruce Springsteen. I even had a picture taken leaning on the same tree as Bruce did for an album cover when he was 17.

Bill is Chairman of the New Jersey Fire Safe Council, a Firewise leader, and a member of the New Jersey Fire service wildland firefighters. These on-call fire fighters are engaged when a wildfire breaks out in their part of the state to help the local fire warden "manage" the fire to a place where it becomes harmless or away from civilization. They don't "put fires out"

any more but manage them by various means and techniques learned the hard way over the years. An experienced Fire Warden can quickly tell where a fire will go, what it will do, and how to manage it away from civilization using their hard-learned experience and from listening to the old-time fire wardens who have seen it all. All the latest fire researchers and their theories and models are no substitute for experience with actual wildfire. These local Fire Wardens take the job of protecting their communities very seriously because many have grown up where they work and believe in what they do. Many are second and third generation fire wardens. This is the kind of dedication that it takes to protect the people living here who have no clue as what will happen when the next fire comes to their neighborhood, without warning, and if history holds true, one is due. The area where we have visited in the past 2 days is called The Pine Barrens which is part of 1.1 million acres of the Pinelands National Reserve, which ranges from northern Ocean County south and west, and occupies 22% of New Jersey's land area. This vast region is 45 percent, or about 493,000 acres and publicly owned. It looks a lot like west central Georgia, where I grew up, with sandy soil, scrub oaks, pitch & Virginia pines, and dirt roads. The soil in the area will not grow crops or trees very well so it is just miles and miles of small pine and oak trees, just land holding the world together. Pines throughout this area live in a mutually beneficial relationship with oaks. The oaks grow tall, eventually blocking out the sun to the pitch pines, causing them to weaken. Fire is a friend to the pines. With the intense heat of the flames, the pine cones "pop", allowing the seeds to sprout, thereby bringing about new growth. Driving along Route 539 south of Route 72, you can see the site of the forest fire of 2007 that burned over 16,000 acres of Pinelands. Here stand hundreds of pines, some of which are dead, but others have sprouted new branches after their old ones were burned. Pine saplings are now growing, as are other species of flora indigenous to the Pine Barrens. In March, this year, they experienced a 11,000 acre fire that swept around one of the New Jersey Fire Service air bases. The Fire Service took me on a helicopter tour of the pine barrens where we could see the sites of many fires, most were prescribed but some were wild ones. The 11,000-acre fire was only stopped from sweeping through a 1,300-home community by a recent controlled burn by the NJ Fire Service between the community and the approaching wildfire. Good timing for the burn and shows the advantage of reducing fuel with prescribed fire. Many cedars can also be found in the region. The wood of the cedar was once a valued commodity in building. Red cedars were valued for chest and closet linings and the white cedars for the many fishing boats which residents depended upon to make a living in the bays. My opinion of New Jersey has changed in the past few days since I have seen the rural part of the state and met nice people, but it is still not the North Georgia Mountains. For more information on Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D Council programs and events, check our website www.chestatetred.org and www.appcofac.org.



RC&D Frank Riley Executive Director

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.

Hemlocks are a native species that ranges from Maine to Northern Alabama. They are a keystone 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 which have parallel sides the whole way down.

HWA is a very small insect. The white cottony sacks on the hemlock trees are egg sacks of HWA. They are an invasive species from Asia that doesn't have a natural predator here. HWA feeds on the sap inside of hemlock trees. The HWA can be spread by wind, birds, deer, or humans. Once a tree has become infected 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 infected.

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 if they become infested chemical controls are the only option. Chemical controls involves treating your tree with either Imidacloprid or Dinotefuran, 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. Dinotefuran 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 injection. Soil injection will mean quicker uptake by the plant and reduce the chance of off target drift. If the trees are near open water a trunk injection of insecticide is necessary, which will require a professional. Whenever applying a pesticide it is important to familiarize yourself with the label before using the product.

The Union County UGA 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 with the injector is brought back. You must provide your own insecticide.

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



UGA extension Watching and Working Jacob Williams

Letters to The Editor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:

Towns County Herald, 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 issuing 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.



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Contact us at 706-896-4454

Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday by 5 PM



Towns County Community Calendar

	Every Monday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
	Every Tuesday:	
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
	Every Wednesday	
SMART Recovery	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Thursday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
	Every Friday:	
Movers & Shakers	Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Sunday:	
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Second Monday of each month:	
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
	Second Tuesday of each month:	
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
	Second Wednesday of each month:	
Basket Weavers	SC Fire Hall	10 am
USCG Aux.	Senior Center	7 pm
	Second Thursday of each month:	
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
	Third Monday of each month:	
Hospital Auxiliary	Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Planning Comm.	Civic Center	6 pm
MOAA	Michael email mva62sgn@brmemc.net	
	Third Tuesday of each month:	
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



Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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