

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Take the Wheel or be Run Over

The innovative contest held by the Towns County Chamber of Commerce, to bolster tourism, allowed its members, and in fact all of Towns County to strut their stuff, August 4 - 6, 2015. By first requesting information about



**Around Towns**  
Dale Harmon

Towns County from the Chamber of Commerce website and giving their email addresses, out of town people were pleasantly surprised that they were automatic contestants for a prize package for two, brimming with products and services donated by local Chamber members.

The happy winner, Marilyn, hailed from Milton, FL. She chose her birthday to redeem her prize and chose to share it with her husband, Frank. "I've never won a thing in my life," gushed Marilyn when notified of her good fortune. Two days lodging for the winners was provided by Chancey Hill Inn Bed and Breakfast in Hiwassee. The dinner prize at Enrico's Italian Restaurant made a huge impression on Frank and Marilyn. "We were treated like VIPs," Marilyn proclaimed. The food and the service were excellent. Although full, I couldn't resist the cheesecake, so we got one serving to share. It was great. Frank proclaimed that Marilyn does not share cheesecake well. Boundary Waters contributed a half-day boating adventure for the winners. A hot, beautiful day on Lake Chatuge called for a swim. Frank and Marilyn, being from FL, were delighted at not having to worry about alligators.

The prize package was so bountiful that Marilyn and Frank will be returning in the fall to enjoy dinner and their choice of spa service or horseback riding at Brasstown Valley Resort, Vino and Vibes at Hightower Creek Vineyard, and a Vintner's Tour of Crabes Creek Vineyard. "We will retire in two years," Frank said. "This would be a great place to live." Shucks, Frank - We already know that.

The contest ran but once. As a mother I know that when introducing new food to a baby it takes several tries because new food may have a different texture and taste. That includes ice cream. Just because an idea does not work the first time does not mean it's a bad idea.

It is an inevitable fact that growth is coming to Towns County. It can't be stopped nor should it be. In my exalted opinion, it can and should be controlled. We must get in front of growth to insure that tradition and progress don't impede each others flow. If we remain pedestrians there is always a chance we'll be run over or left behind by the certain oncoming traffic.

## When a Life Lesson Flies in Your Face

When Achilles was born, according to Greek mythology, it was prophesied that he would die young. To protect him from his fate, Achilles' mother took him to the River Styx and washed him in its magical waters to make him invulnerable to all injury. She missed a spot, the very spot where she held him by the heel to dip him in the river, and that's exactly where a poisoned arrow found its mark and ended Achilles' life during the Trojan war.

We all have an "Achilles' heel," a weakness or vulnerability. Usually we have more than just one. When someone says "that really pushes my buttons," chances are they really do have several, most likely of their own design and manufacture.

Some people are so full of anger and frustration that it's not necessary to find the right button to trigger a reaction. Such people react like a touch screen on a phone and the slightest pressure can set them off.

My own Achilles' heel reveals itself every spring. I usually have a fairly high tolerance for bugs, but I can't stand horse flies. Or deer flies. Or any member of that family of blood letting buzz bombs, those infernal flying steak knives that have no difficulty cutting through the hide of a cow or horse, much less any exposed human skin. My ill will for the whole lot is such that I will risk allowing a landing and feeling the first cut of the knife for a chance at smashing the guts out of my unwelcome passenger.

Horse flies know that I am their mortal enemy, and they send their best warriors to confront me. Once they even sent an assassin.

Years ago I was a regular swimmer in Lake Chatuge. This was back when the lake didn't taste funny and the water quality was better. (Many thanks to the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition for their continuing efforts to improve the health of the lake and its watershed.)

I was swimming one day at the Jack Rabbit beach where the lake is fairly narrow and a swim to the opposite shore and back was a good workout. There were several buoys in place which provided a place to rest if needed, and on this beautiful spring day I was the only person at the beach, though as it turns out, I was not alone.

The water was chilly that day, so I decided to limit my swim to between the buoys. I had just passed the first buoy doing the breaststroke when I felt a sharp stinging sensation on the back of my head. The telltale buzzing sound announced the presence of steak knives on the wing. What kind of diabolical bug, designed for feeding off grazing livestock, would fly half-way across a lake to harass a swimmer? It's hard not to take such an affront to logic and good manners personally!

If you're familiar with the breaststroke, you know that the head becomes partially to totally submerged with each stroke, and that blasted fly was timing his attack to every half stroke when I came up for air. I was bleeding and angry, so I interrupted my swim to tread water and do battle with the evil denizen.

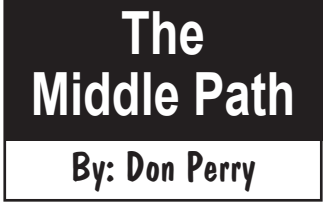
A spirited battle ensued. I splashed and swatted. The fly circled and darted and dive bombed. The conflict seemed to go on forever until a fortunate swipe of my hand actually submerged the beastly bug. I was triumphant! But only for about two seconds until, to my horror and amazement, the fly emerged from the water and flew away across the lake.

It was then I realized that the battle with the assassin fly had left me exhausted, and I was a long way from the shore in cold water. If you've ever been in a similar situation, you'll remember that first twinge of panic which must be immediately put to rest if you hope to make it to shore.

I was a good swimmer. My training took over my thought processes, and I'm here today to tell the story.

How many stories can we all tell about the times when irrationality and anger brought us to the brink of disaster and beyond? Anger has long been the Achilles' Heel of our species. Crimes of passion, assault and outrage are our daily headlines. We tend to think that a bad temper is one of the hazards of youth, but anyone who has driven through Hiwassee and been taigated or given the middle finger by an angry old man, knows otherwise.

The remedy for anger is vigilance. We never know when a horse fly or some other antagonist will be waiting to reveal our weaknesses. Anger is like a horse harried by biting flies, and we must never allow that horse to get the bit in his teeth.



**The Middle Path**  
By: Don Perry

## Drought Strategies

Temperatures in Georgia have continued to rise as the rain has held off for several weeks now. We haven't had any appreciable rain since May 11, as of writing this article. We may have some rain early in the week the first full week of June, which is when this column will be published. I can't predict at this time how much rain we'll get, but I'll talk about some strategies to use in drought situations, and give some websites that contain helpful information regarding rainfall.

The first website that I'd like to share with you is www.georgiaweather.net. This is a great website from the University of Georgia that has tons of information on it. UGA has weather stations all around the state that are continually collecting data that you can use. You can select the weather station that you'd like to look at. I'd recommend either using Blairsville, which is housed at the Experiment Station, or Tiger, which is housed in Rabun County, depending on your location. You can look at current conditions at these stations, which has information on air temperature, soil temperature, soil moisture, and wind speed among other things. If you go over to the drought tab, there are many maps with information about cumulative rainfall for the year, and how that compares to historical data. Under the Calculator tab, you can click on rainfall and look at data there, by making a custom range of dates.

Another website that I'd like to share is the United States Drought Monitor, www.droughtmonitor.unl.edu. At the time of writing this article according to the US Drought Monitor we don't have drought conditions. Obviously, that could change if we don't receive rain soon. Much of southern and central Georgia have abnormally dry to moderate drought conditions currently. I would expect those conditions to continue northward if the rain holds off.

Both of those websites have very useful information and I use them frequently. Now let's talk about some things that you can do when we have dry conditions. These strategies won't solve all your problems, but instead lessen the impact of dry weather.

Applying mulch wherever possible will help conserve soil moisture. The mulch is a barrier that protects the soil from sunlight, which keeps evaporation lower. Mulch will also help build the organic matter in the soil. Organic matter will help build the soil's water holding capacity. Our soils have a high water holding capacity, but increasing the organic matter will also make your soil healthier. Biochar is a product that can also increase the water holding capacity of soil. There is not a lot of scientific research out on biochar, but a lot of anecdotal evidence says that it is beneficial for soil and can improve the water holding capacity of soil.

If you have a pond, you'll want to pay special attention to the fish during dry times. Ponds will dry up, exposing more shoreline and reducing the pond volume. Less volume means that you can't hold as many fish, so some extra harvesting may be necessary. Weed growth in ponds will also increase, because the water level is lower so sunlight is able to penetrate to the bottom of the pond in more spots. Higher temperatures also means less oxygen in the water for fish to breathe. An aerator may be necessary to get oxygen back into the pond to prevent a fish kill.

If you have questions about the impact that dry conditions may have, contact your local Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.



**UGA Extension**  
Watching and Working  
Jacob Williams

## Letters to The Editor

### Transitioning Veterans

#### Open Letter to Governor Brian Kemp,

Governor Kemp I am writing to you with my concerns for the suicide rate of our veterans. According to the most recent report published by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), a national average of 20 Veterans a day die from suicide.

Our Military Veterans have served with honor and have experienced the horrors of war.

Provision should be made to assist their transition back into civilian life. It has reached an epidemic when over 20 veterans are committing suicide each day.

After World War II the GI Bill provided educational opportunities for the returning soldiers. Because there are so many job openings and not enough qualified and trained employees to fill them, the State of Georgia should do its part to save lives and train our Veterans to fill these positions.

The State of Georgia has State sponsored Technical Schools and Colleges. Veterans should have their first year of training tuition free and shall have a state regulated discount for the remainder of and to the conclusion of their training. The initial cost for this program is cost neutral, the resources to put this program into effect are already in place. The State will benefit from this program by the taxes paid when the Veteran starts earning income from a well paying job. And of course another benefit is that this program will also save lives!

Chuck Luca

### Your Car is a Deathtrap

Dear Editor,

As the days grow hotter and hotter, we at your local Humane Society's Mountain Shelter have a reminder for you. Please, do not take your dogs with you on your errands and leave them in the car--not even for "just a minute." If you can't take your dogs inside with you every single place you're going, please leave them home. Yes, we know your dogs love to ride with you--but the risk to them of being in a car, even with the windows "cracked" for just a little while, are immense. Parked cars are deathtraps for dogs: on a 78-degree day, the temperature inside a parked car can soar to between 100 and 120 degrees in just minutes, and on a 90 degree day, the interior can reach as high as 160 degrees in less than 10 minutes. Despite your good intentions, cracked windows will decrease that amount by fewer than 5 degrees. Remember, dogs can cool themselves only by panting and by sweating through their paw pads. Your animal can suffer brain damage or even die from heatstroke in less than 15 minutes. Please leave him or her home!

We've asked the local police department what citizens should do if they see a dog in a parked car. The Blairsville Chief of Police suggests that you request help in locating the owner from the management of the business you're visiting. If that doesn't help, call 911. Give them a clear description of the vehicle and where it is. Wait by the car until the police arrive. In our experience, that doesn't take long. Then let the police take it from there.

The best solution, though, is for all of us to remember that no matter how much we enjoy our pets' company and they ours, in the summer they should be left at home and not in a hot car, even with the windows cracked, even for just a few minutes. Don't risk your dog's life. Please leave your pets at home!

Humane Society's Mountain Shelter Board

### OWN A BUSINESS?

### NEED TO ADVERTISE?

Contact the Towns County Herald  
706-896-4454



"Ok, in this scene we media giants tell the people of Georgia what beliefs we'll allow them to hold!"

### 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, Letter to the Editor,  
PO Box 365, Hiwassee, 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.*

## Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	<b>Every Monday:</b> All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	<b>Every Tuesday:</b> Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	<b>Every Wednesday:</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
Bridge Players	<b>Every Thursday:</b> All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	<b>Every Friday:</b> Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	<b>Every Sunday:</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alzheimer's Supp.	<b>First Tuesday of each month:</b> 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	<b>First Wednesday of each month:</b> McConnell Church	10 am
Stephens Lodge	<b>First Thursday of each month:</b> Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Chamber Board	<b>Second Monday of each month:</b> 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	<b>Second Tuesday of each month:</b> 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

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## Towns County Herald

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