

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Escape from the Asphalt Jungle

For years they had poured themselves into earning degrees in higher education. Friends for years, they kept in touch via the wonders of technology. Both had chosen schools in large cities. One in Chicago and one attended GA Tech in Atlanta. Go Jackets!

**Around Towns**  
Dale Harmon



Upon graduation, they decided to meet and drive to the North Georgia Mountains for much needed outdoor recreation. I was lucky enough to host them in our inn.

The grads set out just after breakfast on the first morning of their stay. Being an old cow, I head for the barn early so I did not see them again until the next morning. John, being an old owl, said their return will be well after dark.

Hiking, zip lining, waterfall finding and packing as much outdoor activity as could be packed into one day had been the goal and it was happily attained. The following day was planned to be just as full. An earlier breakfast time of 6 a.m. was set so all could be accomplished. No problem for the early rising inn keeper.

Alas, a pulled hamstring derailed the appointment to explore Tallulah Gorge. We were all sorry the excursion had to be canceled and even more so that our new friend experienced pain. I used the word friend because although several generations separated us, there was no gap between our guests and us. While I can't speak for others, I sensed a rapport among us all. Lemonade from lemons, we shared enjoyed conversation in found pre-dawn time. As I was leaving to perform my duties at Hamilton Gardens, John and the guys were discussing alternative activities.

John had mapped out sights and stops, in sensible order, for getting back to Atlanta in time for a night flight to Chicago. Hamilton Gardens was first.

I was surprised and delighted that John had suggested The Gardens. He gets tired of hearing me chirp about it. The "injured party" and I talked and chatted on more level terrain while his camera-wielding companion hit the trail to the inner sanctum of lushness. There was plenty to see without having to change elevations. We enjoyed the butterfly and centipede sculptures, found the elusive elephant and talked about the meaning of the Children's Daffodil Garden.

My new friend told me that he hadn't thought much about nature while in school, but spending time in this area, about was taken by the mountains, lakes and waterfalls. Big smile and camera aloft, my other new friend regaled us with impressions of bridge, rocks, decks, and lake sightings he had captured, through fresh eyes, with his lens.

Both men wish they could find a job that would support living here. The newly graduated GA Tech student has a degree in Aerospace Engineering. I'm unsure of the Chicago grad's degree. They talked of finding jobs which would, for the most part, allow them to work remotely. Win/win. An infusion of young blood to Towns County without plant construction and little increase in traffic and pollution. Ain't technology grand?

## Just Right

In astronomy, the circumstellar habitable zone is the range of distances around a star where a planet, not too hot and not too cold, can have liquid water and thus potentially support life. This is also known as the "Goldilocks Zone." Our one and irreplaceable planet sits squarely in the middle of our own Goldilocks Zone, where conditions are just right for supporting human life. "As above, so below," said the ancients, who invented a pantheon of gods and goddesses to mirror human behavior and account for the apparent irregularities of Nature. Science tells us that the principles of balance apply, not only to the heavens, but to those of us who are earthbound. Whether we're balancing an equation or tinkering with a lawnmower carburetor, there is a set of conditions that are just right for the task at hand.

I've always liked small towns because, for me, they are just right: Just big enough to provide needed services; just small enough that you get to know your neighbors. Big enough to give you something to do when you feel like getting out of the house, but small enough that the problems that plague cities, like crime, traffic, pollution and noise, are limited.

Those of us who love our mountain towns and communities tend to consider our area as being in the Goldilocks zone for a happy and peaceful life. But there may be early signs that we are moving, albeit slowly, toward the boundaries of that zone. I was standing outside the post office talking to an older friend who was born and raised in Hiawasse. I was annoyed. It was the third time the post office had returned one of my packages to the sender because of an "insufficient address," even though their own online system had tracked it there. Apparently, to put a notification slip in my box and stick the package in the corner placed an intolerable burden on the whole system, but it was less inconvenient to process a return and put the package back on a truck so that their computer could tell me that my package had been returned. I had shared, generously, my opinion that it was unfortunate our small town post office had evolved to a level of sophistication where it was more important to follow alleged rules and regulations than to help out a neighbor.

"I began to worry about how our area was changing about twenty years ago," said my friend. "When we got that first traffic light, the one between McDonald's and the Huddle House, the town voted on it. Some said the traffic was bad enough that we needed it, and I guess today they would be right. But I noticed after that we didn't get to vote on any of those other traffic lights."

"A lot of us thought we were getting too big for our britches when they started scraping off the tops of our mountains to build more houses. Now it's hard to get from one side of town to the other on a Saturday morning."

"That always seems to be the way of it when you've got something good. There's always somebody who thinks they can't squeeze enough money out of it so they try to make it bigger so they can. Then they crow about how much things have grown until somebody gives them a plaque or names a street after them, and then they put a stop light on that street."

"You'd think folks would figure out that bigger's not always better. Nobody brags about how much the boil on their backside grew, or how their belly got so fat they had to poke another hole in their belt."

My friend was on a roll, and she continued: "People always say they want smaller government, but when you get more people, you always get more government; more laws, more taxes, and more rules."

"What about jobs?" I said. "A lot of what's happened here was intended to create jobs so that our kids wouldn't have to leave the area to make a living."

"Well, you show me the jobs," she said. "All I see is people serving food or selling knick-knacks or driving nails. That's good, honest work, but it's hard to raise a family making ten dollars an hour. It's just my opinion but I think we grew in a way that made a lot of money for a few folks, but left the rest of us still struggling."

"What we need to do," said my friend, "is to decide who we are. If we're going to be a tourist town, that's fine, but we need to act like one, take better care of the mountains and think twice before throwing up another metal building on the side of the road. But I think that ship's done sailed. Who wants to sit in traffic or take a picture of a bunch of houses on a mountain or trash on the side of the road? Folks can have all that in the city without having to drive two hours to get it. "Now the big shots who want us to keep growing are trying to sell us as a good place to retire. I agree with some of that. Compared to the city, we're still quiet and peaceful and not so big that you can't know your neighbors. But I'm 73 and there are times I just dread coming to town, and it wasn't that long ago I never thought about locking my car or even my front door, but not anymore."

My friend had a point. Anyone born here or who has lived here since the 90s can tell you that in some ways our area has changed so much that it would be almost unrecognizable to our forbears, and as we have grown, we have lost some of that time to be neighborly. In small towns, people are generally considered to be more important than rules and schedules. In big towns, there is less time to share with more people. We create more rules and regulations, laws and codes to protect us from chaos.

As above, so below, or when we're dealing with human nature, what's true at a macroscopic level is often true at the microscopic. Our nation has always had its share of empire builders. Our entire economy is predicated on the notion that growth is good for the sake of growth itself. Our population has almost doubled over the last two generations, and the number of laws, rules and regulations has multiplied many times over.

Here at home we enjoy our small communities, our neighbors and our more relaxed pace. But we also want the conveniences and distractions that are available in bigger places. We have grown, and we will continue to grow, but I question, both for us and for the nation, whether the voices clamoring for growth should always be the dominant ones. On a finite world of 7 1/2 billion people where poverty, starvation and unrest are pushing millions of migrants to find a place where they can survive, perhaps we need to hear more from those voices who promote what is sustainable rather than those who always clamor for what is profitable. For the small town, when we're too small we dry up and blow away. When we're too big, we lose the advantages that make us glad to be here. Every town, indeed, every complex system, has an optimal size that can be sustained by its available resources. Whenever we have a conversation about planning our future, we should look for that balance, that Goldilocks zone between growth and sustainability that, for us, is just right.

## The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

## Pond Management

I know that not everyone here has a pond, but chances are that you know someone who does. Maybe you enjoy fishing or someone close to you does. Either way I want to talk about pond management today. There are some simple practices that people can do to manage their ponds to a healthy status. Healthy ponds can lead to better aquatic life, which makes every fisherman happy. Let's talk about pond management.

**UGA extension**  
Watching and Working  
Jacob Williams



Controlling weeds doesn't only happen in the garden, but also in ponds. There are four different types of weeds that will grow in ponds. They are algae, floating weeds, emergent weeds, and submersed weeds. Algae is very common in ponds. Algae can be microscopic; sometimes it's bigger and visible. Floating weeds are not attached to the bottom of the pond. They'll have roots that are free floating in the water. Some common examples are duckweed and bladderwort.

Emergent weeds are usually found along the edge of the shore. It includes water lily, cattails, and rushes among others. Submersed weeds are rooted to the bottom of the pond. They won't rise above the surface of the water.

Grass carp can be used to maintain control of weeds. It's recommended to get sterile grass carp so that they don't multiply. The recommended stocking rate is 5-10 per acre. Generally, when you stock grass carp it's recommended that they be at least 10 inches long. That way other fish in the pond won't eat them. Grass carp will be effective for about 7 years. After that point, their metabolism slows down so that they don't eat as many weeds.

If weed infestation is heavy, herbicides will be used to control the weeds first. After the initial control, introduce grass carp so that they can maintain proper weed levels. Several different herbicides can be used depending on the types of weeds that you have present in your pond. If all the aquatic weeds are killed at one time, it can result in a fish kill, because the oxygen is depleted from the weeds decomposing.

Fertilizing a pond can result in bigger bass for you to catch. However, if you don't plan to increase the amount of fish that you pull out of the pond, fertilizing can have a negative effect, because the amount of pond weeds can also increase. Therefore, if you are going to fertilize it's best to follow a regular schedule so that weed growth doesn't get out of control.

Testing the water hardness of your pond will tell you how much lime you need to add. Adding lime to a pond will allow more of the natural phosphorus to be released. More phosphorus means that plant growth will be encouraged, supplying the fish at the bottom of the food chain with more food. Lime may need to be reapplied every 4 years. When applying lime, you want to make sure that you get an even application. If you have a large pond, spreading from a jon boat will be best. If you have a small pond, spreading from the bank all the way around will work.

Fertilizing, liming, and weed control can all make your pond healthier. If you have questions about pond management, or have fish tales to share, contact your local Extension Office or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).

## Letters to The Editor

### Reflections of A Blooming Affair

Dear Editor,

As the bloom season at Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge (a.k.a. A Blooming Affair) winds down, I find myself inspired by the generosity of all those who support the Gardens. In May we hosted Celebrate the Gardens, an evening of food, fun and conversation.

Thanks to the sponsorships and donations of our community partners the event was a big success. I'd like to give a special thank you to Melanie Hughes (South State Bank) and Carol Lin (Wine Cottage). South State Bank was our premier sponsor and the Wine Cottage provided beverages. We are so grateful for your support.

Equally as important to the Gardens' sustainability is the gift of time. Throughout A Blooming Affair (April/May), volunteers donated their time and energy tending the garden, greeting guests, and educating locals and tourists about Hamilton Gardens. Our volunteers are passionate about this cherished treasure. The wonderful thing about the gift of time is that we can all afford it!

To everyone who has played a part in bringing the Gardens and our events to life, thank you! We couldn't do it without you.

If you would like to learn more about volunteering, donating, or visiting Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge, please visit our website at [www.hamiltongardens.org](http://www.hamiltongardens.org). See you at the Gardens!

**Carol Townsend**  
President, Hamilton Gardens

### Book of Life

Dear Editor,

From the beginning of our existence we all have a story to tell of how we behaved and lived our lives while here on earth. How we treated others and tried to help those in need. How we went the extra mile just to tell them how much God loves them. Our actions reflect our hearts desire to serve others, not just our own selfish gain.

To Almighty God our lives are an open book for He is keeping a record from our birth to our death, for no one knows us better than our Creator, God.

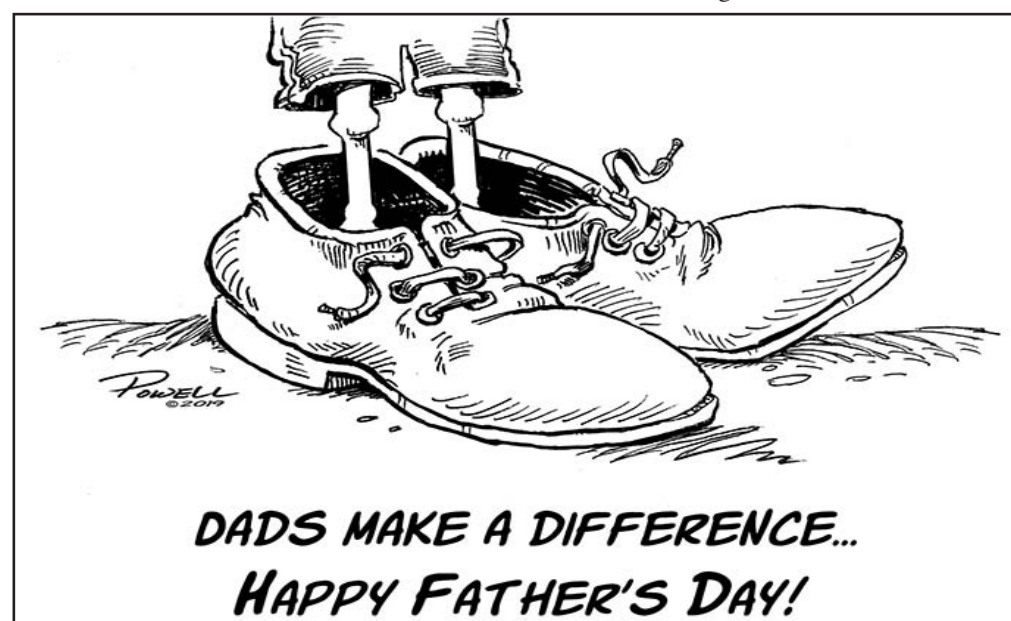
Yes, God gives everyone a free will to decide how they want to live out their lives, but there is always consequences for our actions when it doesn't line up with God's purpose and will for us. Disobedience always leads to punishment or even great wrath from God.

Sadly millions of people choose their own path of destruction ignoring God's commandments and laws, thus sealing their own fate of being totally separated from the One who created them in the first place. What a defining moment in eternity it will be for those who choose unwisely their destiny. Those who have chosen to follow Christ under the leadership of the Holy Spirit have a joyous and wonderful outlook for all of eternity living with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord of all. Don't miss out on the blessings of God by thinking you are smarter than Him, the maker of heaven and earth.

Is your name written down in God's Book of Life? If not, don't procrastinate thinking you have all the time in the world. Time is in God's hands and He calls the shots. None of us know when we will breathe our last breath, but God does. These are the truth of God's words to a dying world.

Come and accept His gracious welcome of eternal life with our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

**Frank F. Combs**



## 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
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
Basket Weavers	<b>Second Wednesday of each month:</b> SC Fire Hall	10 am
USCG Aux.	Senior Center	7 pm
Hiaw Writers	<b>Second Thursday of each month:</b> 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	<b>Third Monday of each month:</b> Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Hospital Comm.	Civic Center	6 pm
MOAA	Michael email <a href="mailto:mva62sgn@brmcmc.net">mva62sgn@brmcmc.net</a>	
YH Plan Comm.	<b>Third Tuesday of each month:</b> 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
Quilting Bee	<b>Third Wednesday of each month:</b> McConnell Church	10 am
Book Bunch & Lunch	Daniels Steakhouse	11:30 am
Friendship Comm.	<b>Third Thursday of each month:</b> Clubhouse	6 pm
Republican Party	Civic Center	5:30 pm
Goldwing Riders	<b>Third Saturday of each month:</b> Daniel's Restaurant	11 am

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## Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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