

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Our Veterans Community

We do try! Like on June 2, 2022 a coalition of Veterans who often volunteer visited our "more mature" folks over at Brasstown Manor as a part of our continuing Veterans Visitation program. We've a coalition of Honorable Veterans from our VFW Post #7807 consisting of VFW members, VFW Auxiliary, American Legion Post #23, AL Riders, SAL (Sons of American Legion) and American Legion Auxiliary. All volunteers. Many regularly who often buy snacks and treats for our elders out of our own pockets. This is a gift for those who have given. We've had the blessing of meeting many of our Greatest Generation and encountered our loving grief of seeing many called Home. Often we meet new residents who welcome us into their wonderful home.



The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran

On June 2, we met a USAF veteran of the Korean War era, who wanted a poem read out loud. Even though we do not know who penned this, nor where it came from it was well received when read aloud and several folks requested it would be worthwhile to reprint in our Towns County Herald. These are simple words, easy to understand, more than anything else these words are truthful and represent FACTS. Two of those Veterans amongst us who wanted this read are ordained ministers, and reading the first line provided a happy smile of truth and honest humility from those fine men.

Please read, enjoy and maybe pass this along:
"VETERANS"

It is the Veterans, not the preacher,
Who has given us freedom of religion.
It is the Veteran, not the reporter,
Who has given us freedom of press..
It is the Veteran, not the poet,
Who has given us freedom of speech.
It is the Veteran, not the campus organizer,
Who has given us freedom to assemble.
It is the Veteran, not the lawyer,
Who has given us the right to a fair trial.
It is the Veteran, not the politician,
Who has given us the right to vote.
It is the Veteran, Who salutes the flag,
Who serves under the flag.
Eternal rest grant them O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
- *Semper Paratus*

Happy Father's Day



Joe Heller

Letters To The Editor

Speaking Freely

Dear Editor,

People are good, but society leads them down paths that are bad. Society is a reflection of who we are. I have come to these opinions over time — 77 years, to be exact. They are neither right nor wrong, just one man's opinions.

I have observed that, through the progressive lens, individuals and their choices disappear, which is why progressives do not hesitate to impose their solutions on others by force, including the people they propose to "save." I do not need saving. I need to be able to speak and protect my family and my community without being suppressed.

Do you know that the national motto is "In God We Trust," established by an act of Congress in 1956 and replaced with "E Pluribus Unum" (Out of Many, One)? Civil government was established by social contract. No one asked me if the national motto should be changed. Were you asked?

This I know with a great degree of certainty: without courage, one can't defend and sustain other virtues. If individuals do not have freedom of conscience, if they are not free to articulate and defend what they believe, they will not be able to defend any of their freedoms. One man's opinion. God bless.

Oscar Ramer

Age 21 Across the Board

Dear Editor,

You have to be a minimum of 21 years of age in the United States to purchase tobacco products and alcoholic beverages. The "defund the police" Democrats want to revoke the 2nd Amendment and prevent responsible, law-abiding citizens from owning guns for self-protection. It's time to raise the minimum age for firearm sales to 21, and only after the completion of a thorough background check; mental health evaluation; and certified firearms training.

Years of handing out participation trophies; applying "time-out" instead of actual punishment; and finding a "safe space" to avoid life's inevitable problems, have given us the weakest, most immature and unaccomplished generation of young people ever known. With their ever-present "devices" in hand needed to solve crucial dilemmas such as what gender to identify as or which tattoo design to get next, this divided country needs to be reclaimed. Upon high school graduation, two years of mandatory, non-combat service in the military, with no exemptions, for both sexes should be required. They'd have to interact and work together as a team with others from all races, cultures and socio-economic groups, and be subjected to physical activity and mental discipline while learning skills in the service of the country they've been conditioned to loathe, providing support roles to our military and humanitarian assistance to Americans in need and others around the world.

While we are at it, raise the voting age to 21 as well. Most 18-20 year olds haven't paid their first utility bill, but thanks to their socialist "educators" in high school and college they somehow know best how tax dollars earned by working Americans should be appropriated.

Greg C. White

Job for Someone?

Dear Editor,

I recently read a letter to the editor in this paper commenting on the Towns County Government being an Autocracy. It brought to my mind the memory from 15 and a half years ago when we moved here that I wondered why this was and in the following years came to understand that the Autocracy is simply an example of an area that wants the County Government to operate without change! And as we all know, particularly at the County level, this has remained true for as long as we've lived here.

The letter writer 'believed' that the Citizens of Towns County will decide if the current sole commissioner is the best way for Towns to be governed.

I personally am too old and lazy to be the citizen that will do whatever would need to be done to have the current Autocracy eliminated and then change to more than one commissioner. This is another subject that will (hopefully) create much debate. Since we've lived here, we have seen some changes in other nearby counties that changed the number of commissioners. There are many reasons for various numbers of commissioners, but I personally believe three has proven to be the optimum number.

How much will the county budget have to increase to pay for the additional two commissioners? My personal solution would be for another radical change that would un-incorporate Hiawassee (population 990) and Young Harris (population 1,100 with a median age of 20.8 — makes one wonder if these citizens care about the future of the area) and consequentially eliminate the duplicate departments like police, water, roads, etc. Then, the cost resulting from eliminating the duplications even with the potential need to increase employees at the county level may not be a concern. (Again, I HOPE someone with the ability and desire to initiate change will begin the process to put actual numbers to this idea).

I do not live within Hiawassee or Young Harris but believe that the current cities are being very well-run and have recognized the need(s) for change. My personal hope would be for the current mayors to be two of the candidates for commissioner, and 'when they win' along with the current Autocratic Commissioner (also winning), the county could for a time be managed by people that KNOW the county's needs and also recognize the need for change. Interested?

Dave Hering

Leyland Cypress

Leyland cypress trees are a very common and popular landscaping plant. They are planted by people all over Georgia. However, there are a couple of issues that are commonly seen in Leyland cypress trees. Let's talk about Leyland cypress trees, what some of those issues are, and what steps you can take to reduce the chances of your Leyland cypresses getting diseased, because recently I have gotten a lot of calls from people with questions on their Leyland cypress trees.

The biggest issue that people have right now is that their trees are turning yellow and brown on the inside. This is due to the lack of rain that we had earlier in the year. With some of the big rains we've had it's easy to forget that we had a period from the beginning of April to end of May with very little rain. The tree's natural response is to start to drop the needles that are closest to the trunk. These needles turn yellow and then brown before falling off. The best thing to do if you see this happening is to make sure that you are watering your trees during a dry spell. With the rain we've had lately, the trees should be able to recover and start to green back up. Leyland cypresses have a shallow root system, which makes them prone to drought stress.

Another thing to keep in mind is that these trees have an effective lifespan of 15-20 years. So, if your trees are that age and don't look healthy, they probably aren't going to improve significantly.

The two canker diseases that Leyland cypress trees get are Seiridium and Botryosphaeria canker. Seiridium canker is the most common and destructive of the two in Georgia. The symptoms from both diseases look very similar. You will see individual branches begin to die off. Sometimes you'll see resin in spots on the branches because of the cankers. These cankers are essentially suffocating the branch, leading to the branch turning brown. Once a tree has been infected the best treatment is to remove the dead branch and dispose of the branch.

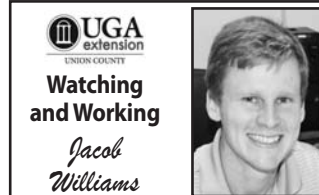
Stressed trees are going to be more susceptible to cankers. During times of drought, trees that are already infected will spread the disease much more quickly. Ice damage and spring freezes can create wounds where infection is able to occur. Trees that are near buildings that reflect sunlight will also be more stressed. Unfortunately, with canker diseases there is not a fungicide that can be used to eliminate the pathogen.

Passalora needle blight has become more common as well. This is a disease that will cause the needles to drop off of the tree, working it's way up to the top. I haven't seen this one here yet, but it is present in the rest of Georgia. The cold temperatures that we have in winter will keep it from becoming too destructive here.

Try to keep plants from becoming stressed by laying mulch around their base. This will increase the moisture retained by the soil, and suppress competitive weed growth. During dry, hot summer days, water the trees if the soil has become dry. If trees are extensively damaged by cankers or needle blight, then they will need to be removed. When planting Leyland cypress make sure to dig out an area 3-4 times larger than the diameter of the root ball. This will improve soil drainage, resulting in your trees being less stressed and less susceptible to root rot diseases. In addition, planting trees at least 15 feet apart will reduce disease incidence.

There are some alternatives to Leyland cypress trees that are better adapted to our environment. Green Giant arborvitae and Arizona cypresses are both trees that serve the same purpose in landscape and are more disease resistant. For anyone planting trees as a barrier or screen, I would encourage them to look into these alternatives.

If you have questions about Leyland cypress please contact your county Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.



UGA Extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams

Letters To The Editor

Biden's Inept Cabinet

Dear Editor,

Given Biden's cognitive challenges, one wonders who is overseeing what is now a current national catastrophe. One thing we can be sure of is the lunacy of Biden's cabinet appointments. For example, Secretary of Homeland Security, Alejandro Mayorkas, has essentially ignored federal immigration laws. Over 2 million illegal aliens have crossed the southern border since Biden took office.

Another cabinet appointee, Attorney General Merrick Garland, directed the FBI and the Justice Department to "investigate threats" from parents against school board members.

We are in a historical fuel crisis that is having a significant impact on every American. Yet when Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm, another Biden appointee, was questioned concerning the administration's plans to lower gas prices, she laughed off the idea as "hilarious." Apparently canceling the Keystone Pipeline, suspending new federal oil and gas leases, and stopping production in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge all had nothing to do with high fuel prices. Another cabinet appointee, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, refused to explain why her department is slow-walking federal oil and gas leases at a time when Americans are paying between \$5 and \$6 a gallon for gas.

And we all are suffering because of the supply chain disruptions that are paralyzing the economy. The Los Angeles Port has been a mess for over a year. Cargo ships have been backed up and thousands of trucks are gridlocked at the port. During this fiasco, another Biden cabinet appointee, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, was AWOL. Throughout this chaos, he took paternity leave to help out his husband. He is supposed to be responsible for ensuring that needed supplies reach millions of Americans. In addition, this past winter, trains leaving Los Angeles were frequently ransacked without any intervention from Buttigieg's transportation agency.

So, what is the common denominator to these Biden appointees? The answer is absolute incompetence. These cabinet appointees are completely unresponsive to the current border, inflation and energy disasters. It is difficult to comprehend why such an incompetent cadre of appointees are overseeing the government, but they are here thanks to Joe Biden.

Tim Groza

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

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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.

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity is a worldwide organization that is recognizable by most and at least a familiar concept for some. In these articles and on our Facebook page (Habitat for Humanity of Towns & Union Counties) we try our best to inform the public about what we stand for, and the kind of work and different projects we do throughout the year. With that said, there is still so much about Habitat that the common public may not know.

There are a lot of false statements, myths, regarding the legitimacy and mission of Habitat all over the internet. A lot of these myths I believed myself without knowing how the process of some of our programs work here at Habitat. However, without the experience of working here I wouldn't have known these statements are false. I believe there is still much to explain about Habitat and how we run things here to properly inform our community about the structure and goals of Habitat. So here are the top three most believed but actually false statements made about Habitat. I'm about to set the record straight.

The No. 1 topmost common myth about Habitat is that a large majority of people "believe that we give houses away for free." This is false. The Habitat Homeownership program does not give out free housing. When a home is built for a local community member, they pay an affordable mortgage, with a requirement of sweat equity, which basically means they will help work on their home through the building process. Donations and help through community volunteers can help lower the cost of the home payments for a Habitat homeowner, and volunteers can put their working hours on building the home toward the Habitat homeowner's sweat equity requirements. We are team oriented here at Habitat and encourage the community to help as much as they can through this process.

No. 2 Myth about Habitat is that "Habitat homes are only available to certain groups of people." This statement is false. We get numerous phone calls here at Habitat asking if they are eligible for a home even though they don't have children. Many people believe that you must have children to qualify, but this couldn't be further from the truth. Habitat for Humanity does not discriminate on family dynamics, marital status, sexual orientation, race, gender, etc. We strictly follow Equal Opportunity Lending and Fair Housing Laws. We strongly encourage anyone in a low-income bracket with a dream to own their own home to apply.

Lastly, the third myth of Habitat is "that we are a government organization." This is also false. Habitat for Humanity is a self-sustaining nonprofit organization. The only government involvement we have here at Habitat includes government funds such as grants, property, and charitable contributions through reaching out on our part to build affordable housing for neighborhoods. We are truly funded by the support of communities, grants and ReStore sales.

If you have cleared up some of the common false ideas about Habitat. I hope this has any questions, please call us at 706-745-7101. We would be happy to talk with you about our programs.



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