

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Flag Day

I believe this bears repeating as this past Monday June 14th was Flag Day, honoring our nation with that beautiful cloth of Red, White and Blue that has stood and withstood so much, bearing honor and love for so many.

The Veterans' Corner Scott Drummond USCG Veteran



"You know, with this new Father's Day shirt the kids gave me, I don't mind wearing a mask in public."

Japanese Beetles

The Japanese will soon be out in full force. I spotted the first few last week. They are a huge pest as they munch their way through your yard. Controlling them can be challenging because they are such voracious eaters. Let's talk about some strategies for lessening their impact.

Watching and Working Jacob Williams



Japanese beetles arrived in the U.S. 1916. They have spread to much of the East coast and across the Mississippi River. They will feed on a wide range of ornamentals, fruit trees, vegetables, and shade trees. Feeding on such a wide range of plants means that your yard may look like an all you can eat buffet to them. They have a metallic green color on their abdomen. They look similar to June beetles. June beetles are typically about 1.5 to twice as large as Japanese beetles. Japanese beetles also have a row of five white dots along the side of the abdomen

that can be used to differentiate them from other beetles. The damage that you see from them looks like skeletonizing of the leaves. They'll eat everything between the leaf vein, but leave the veins.

Thankfully, Japanese beetles only have a single generation each year. Usually the adults, which are the beetles that we see flying around eating leaves, will begin to appear in May - June. They live four to six weeks. The females will lay eggs for most of their adult life. The eggs are laid in the soil. They hatch in about two weeks. After hatching, the beetles live in the soil until they come back out as adults in May.

There are three times a year that are most ideal for controlling Japanese beetles. The most obvious is when they are adults and are out feeding on leaves. You can use carbaryl, which is the active ingredient in Sevin to control adults. Sevin comes as a liquid or in dust form. If you don't have a heavy infestation you can also use a cup with soapy water in it. Knock Japanese beetles off plants into the cup and they will drown. The second time to control Japanese beetles is in September. By that time of year all the Japanese beetles are grubs living in the soil. Even as grubs they can do damage to turf by feeding on the roots. Milky spore is an organic product that can be used to kill grubs in the ground. It's a bacteria that feeds on Japanese beetle grubs after they ingest it. September is the optimal time to make a milky spore application. The third time to control Japanese beetles would be in the spring with another milky spore application. Soil temperatures need to be over 65 for milky spore to be effective. The grubs must ingest the milky spore for it to be work. It only works on grubs, so applying it while the beetles are out eating leaves won't kill any Japanese beetles.

Using milky spore to kill the grubs doesn't mean that you won't have any Japanese beetles the following year, but you can significantly reduce the population that is present in your area. Some people will use traps to kill Japanese beetles. I try to discourage people from this practice because traps with pheromone lures will bring beetles in from five miles away, meaning that you have more beetles.

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

Across the Great Empty - Part I

"From the mountains to the sea, Where her rivers roll. There I ever long to be, O my heart; my soul;" These are the words of Robert Loveman from his poem, "Georgia," which, along with the music of Lollie Belle Wylie, formed the official anthem of the State of Georgia before 1979. The words have always spoken to me, and resonated with my love of the mountains, which is almost, but not quite, equaled by the draw of the Georgia coast. We took a trip to that coast recently, across the Great Empty center of our state. I do not mean "empty" in the sense that it is devoid of beauty or interest, or that there are not people to be found across every mile of it who love their place on this earth above all others. I mean empty in the sense that the cutting, digging, burning, paving and developing changes that we associate with prosperity are largely absent from this blessed realm. The Great Empty is decorated by small towns and little communities where heritage is more than a memory and vitality has not been squeezed out, along with every dollar that can be made at any cost. There are hidden places across the Great Empty which have changed little in decades. They don't need to change in the way that small towns become big ones and pasture becomes parking lot. The Great Empty is full of communities, unincorporated areas and crossroads. The family farms and timberlands, local hardware stores and theaters, small businesses and family owned restaurants supply the worldly needs for communities that look to their local churches for what is truly important.

Outside The Box By: Don Perry worldoutsidethebox.com

The river corridors of the Great Empty have always fascinated me. The Ocmulgee, Oconee, Flint, Satilla and Altamaha wind their way to the ocean like they did 10,000 years ago (sans the occasional dam). The slow currents move along blackwater swamps hung with Spanish moss. The bright sand of ever changing sand bars contrasts with the darkness of the swamps, which are equal parts invitation and menace. You will never know this from the interstate, but if you take the back roads, the moment you stop, smell the air or be so bold as to stick your toes into the brackish water, everything around you says "Slow down. Pay attention." Snakes and gators concur.

Along the way, we stopped at a favorite barbecue restaurant in a small town near the confluence of the... Sorry. That's too much information. As much as I cherish you, dear readers, that information is classified "family." This fine eatery has more than enough customers already, and they have been in business over 40 years. Unlike so many businesses which have capitalized on their popularity by pushing prices to the extreme limit of what the public is willing to pay, our little restaurant has not, and the price of a pulled pork plate was the same last week as it was two years ago. The recipes have been in the family for generations. Every week someone stays up all night watching the wood-fired pit. They know their customers by name, and they keep their prices at a level that their friends and neighbors can afford. This is an example of the kind of spirit that preserves small towns and communities. It's not money that allows a community, or a culture, to survive changing times. It is values which preserve.

The closer you get to the coast, the more you can see a different set of values prevailing. The traffic, the trouble and around Savannah was as bad as any Atlanta traffic jam. The coast is busy, bustling. Construction supplies and earth moving equipment move non stop along the highways. A good road is a fine thing, and without a doubt the bones of the nation need regrowing in many places. The coastal bustle is more than that, however. Wherever a million dollar home can be built on a scenic and secluded bit of land, one has already been built, or soon will be. Our favorite little seafood restaurant near Darien has raised their prices by 50%. The traffic on St. Simon's is horrendous and non stop. Alas, and then there is Jekyll Island. Jekyll was a jewel on Georgia's coast for generations. Protected by a state charter, it was meant to be an affordable place for the "average Georgia citizen." It belonged to the people of Georgia, a place where "regular folks" could take their family for a vacation. For many years it was exactly that.

No more. Apparently the island now belongs to the Jekyll Island Authority, or it might as well as far as you and I are concerned, and the "Authority" has allowed (encouraged) major development on the island. Although their original plans were somewhat constrained a few years ago by an international effort to preserve the unique character and habitat of the island, where they were thwarted from elbowing out, they built up instead. Scores of new condos have popped up to house the fortunate. Perhaps the island is under the influence of some slow moving cosmic plan of retribution for once hosting the group that hatched the Federal Reserve, the Central Bank and the Income Tax. From the famous Driftwood Beach you can have a front row seat of the ongoing effort to remove the environmental disaster of the Golden Ray. The massive cutting and lifting mechanism looms between Jekyll and St. Simon's. On the day we were there, the beach was covered with people, and balls of tar.

The health department has issued warnings because of the fuel and tar impacting the beaches and marshes. In spite of all efforts at mitigation, there are many days when you can see that characteristic rainbow sheen on the surface of the water. Meanwhile, shrimp boats trawl in the distance, and recently the presence of PCB's, the carcinogenic "forever" contaminant, was detected in area dolphins. Can't blame that on the Golden Ray, however. The PCB's are a legacy from decades past.

Our time on Jekyll was brief as we abandoned it to search for quieter places, but we snapped pictures as everyone does. One in particular caught my eye. In the background, the wreckage of the Golden Ray looks menacing. In the foreground a happy family is walking on the beach, stepping over tar balls. To drive the point home, our photos of the beach also show the drastic climate induced changes. Many of the beautiful dunes are gone, and at the current rate of change, Driftwood Beach will be no more in a few years as the ocean advances inland.

Next week we'll take you with us on our journey back home to the mountains.

Rising Sap

John and I are new Grandparents! Those sweet little bluebirds that chose to nest in what was only meant to be a decorative feature, are working their tail feathers off to feed the new brood of vocally demanding hatchlings. Watching them is thrilling and satisfying. The baby turkeys also cause my heart to flutter. You may want to hide this column from the kiddies, unless you need them to explain something. Technology both exposes and introduces children to "stuff" at earlier ages these days. Could someone please tell me why and how the inane explanations that babies were found in the cabbage patch or were delivered by storks, came about?

Spring is generally the season of The Rising Sap, when many animals get the urge to merge. This process of life, this thing called procreation, has marveled, fascinated and has been hushed-up. It has elicited snickers, blushes and it has inspired clever prose and lurid limericks. Nature can be a real mother.

In 1928 Cole Porter penned "Let's Do It ,Let's Fall in Love", a song performed by many but identified to Eartha Kitt's fun-wrung rendition. The Beatles issued a song mentioning do it with no mention of love and too tasteless to print here. If Mr. Porter were to edit and update, folks in Siam would not do it because there is no longer a Siam and Siamese twins is indeed racist, even in Thailand, which is now Siam. Thank goodness electric eels can still be shocked. A gentleman named Marlin Perkins hosted TV's Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom, from 1963 through 1985. Guess what insurance company produced the show. I learned much, most forgotten, from the program, and hold it dear to me because it was Daddy/Daughter time. If I needed clarification, my father would answer questions straightforwardly. I wouldn't have bought that cabbage and stork malarkey anyway. My mother was honest too, but her language was much less slang-riddled than my dad's.

Yard work, if not engaged with power tools, is a fine time for free-lance thinking. With an armload of weeds, I rounded the turn to the garden waste pile, head in the clouds, and this is the truth, was embarrassed to intrude upon a couple of reptiles making whoopie. Yes, I said embarrassed. I realized that I had apologized aloud to them. I beat feet in the opposite direction as they detangled from their thwarted pursuit. (You see Shawn, I can be decent)

Old English pubs bore neat two-word names. Many were animals. Cock and Bull. Hen and Chicks. Bleating Sheep. I was inspired by nature to begin my new career. When it's legal, my bar in Hiawassee will be christened Slinky Skinks.

See you around Towns! (but maybe not if you see me first)

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Around Towns Dale Harmon



Letters to The Editor

Democrat Press Release

Dear Editor,

The Union and Towns County Democrats certainly had a lot to say about SB202 in the Towns County Herald, so now it is the Republicans' turn.

All Americans should be aware by now that Georgia had its problems in the 2020 election, an understatement at the very least, and the courts will soon decide the outcome. All Americans should be worried about the integrity of the Election Process, as no actual evidence has been heard by any Judge - but you wouldn't know it from the media reports.

The right to vote of any "legal" citizen is what we, both sides of the political spectrum, should want no matter color, gender or creed.

The COVID atmosphere gave rise to many changes in the voting regiment, one of which was unconstitutional, as it was decided by Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and Governor Brian Kemp, not the Legislature as required by law.

This agreement with Stacey Abrams gave rise to a massive mail-in ballot debacle; it included roving ballot boxes with no chain of custody, boxes without camera coverage, multiple ballots being sent out by the SOS, when not requested, and no signature verification which had been required up until now. (This, as Democrat President Jimmy Carter said in a 2005 bipartisan report on Federal Election Reform, "Absentee ballots remain the largest source of potential voter fraud.")

If you are skeptical about being able to move votes from one candidate to another, or wiping out an entire group of votes as if they were never there, please watch the HBO documentary, "Kill Chain," produced by Democrats, and then decide.

Both sides "should" demand integrity of our elections, but it is not the case. Why fight a law that will truly reflect the results of what the people want? Voters should be educated, and it is the job of each Party to do that to the best of their ability.

The change in the amount of time to request an absentee ballot will allow the Supervisors of Elections office to better serve the public; Georgia voters need to be made aware of this, but the MSM is presenting it in a negative way. Adding Saturdays and a Sunday along with absentee voting increases the voting time, it doesn't decrease it.

Now let us address the ID requirement. Free ID is available to anyone in Georgia. What do you have to show to get into a public building, cash a check, get a library card, in fact, almost any situation you enter into except visiting a friend's house? A photo ID is required. Why not for voting? What is more important than your right to cast a vote for who you want to lead your country? Even more so is to believe whom the people chose, prevailed.

We may never know the answer to what truly happened in the 2020 election and the 2021 run-off, especially if the courts and the administration continue to try and put out roadblocks, but, in the end, true Patriotic Americans will bring the truth out and election integrity will be returned.

Betsy Young, Chair TCGOP

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