

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

The Shortage

"The job's not finished till the paper work's done." This is the punch line to an old joke about toilet paper. Or do you prefer bathroom tissue? Maybe anatomy wipe best suits your fancy. There is no need to complete the joke. The gist is evident and as it has been decades since I heard it, I can't fully recall it. I do know it was back when personal computers were practically nonexistent and paperwork was required in reams for businesses and love letters. It was also a time when toilet paper advertisements touted designer colors to match one's decor and those dear, twin, rival advice gurus, Ann and Abby, discussed ad nauseam, the proper way to place and present the roll on the holder. People had written to newspapers about this burning issue. Man, I was so uncouth, I thought in-reach was proper enough. Still do.

Somewhere in the annals of American history, a movement evolved which made the use of toilet paper, tissue, or wipe, a sporting event. Called T.P.ing, Rolling, or Draping, the object was to festoon the yards of friends, enemies, or total strangers with as much two-ply as could be amassed. Yards with trees helped to assert the true artistry of participants.

The games were always held after dark and rainy nights left lasting impressions. These gladiator events also left huge impressions on my father. He loathed the teenage prank and thought Thou Shall Not Waste Toilet Paper was the 11th Commandment, left off the tablet only by accident. Dad, born on a GA farm, remembered sharing a privy with his 12 siblings and parents. Toilet paper and indoor plumbing were held sacred by him. My sister, a frequent target of the T.P. raids, said "It's just paper. What's the big deal?" As she knew it would, it launched my father into outer space. "That stuff costs money and doesn't really grow on trees. You'd be sorry if you didn't have it when you needed it." Donna, ranked a Master by her peers, adored a good instigation or retaliation but never used equipment from our house.

The depletion and shortage of ultra soft, ultra strong, quilted, expensive, cheap or any T.P. at all, caused by the pandemic, blanketed us in a new despair. The thought of washable alternatives did not fill me with joy. However, thinking about my father and sister butting heads, did. Daddy was right. Paperwork is important and waste not want not is still the bottom line.

Health, Happiness, Hope

Around Towns

Dale Harmon



"If the state needs money, why don't they just tax every bad thing politicians say about their opponents?"



Build to Last

Some years ago, I took down an old barn to salvage the wood. The wood was a treasure, hand hewn oak and heart pine that grew as saplings at least a century before.

I thought so much of the wood that I stored it under a shed which had been built to keep my tractor out of the weather. It was carefully dry stacked to preserve it, and as an added precaution I covered the stack with a tarp. The tractor? Well, it had to sleep outside.

Time passed and the wood remained under the shed. When I looked at it or thought of it, I imagined ambitious projects like paneling for the den and framing for doors and windows. The ground under the shed remained bone dry, so over time, temporary storage in the tractor shed became semi-permanent storage for a variety of things. The old tractor didn't seem to mind the weather with some regular attention and a bit of paint now and then.

Several years passed and other ambitious projects superseded my visions of antique wood carpentry. Family members got old and needed help, got older and passed away. Jobs changed. Sickness visited the family and was overcome. Life happened. If I thought of the valuable wood at all it was akin to how you might think of some old coins in a safe deposit box, something taken for granted.

They say that time heals all wounds but given enough time, it wounds all heals as well. Somewhere on the tin roof of the shed, successive seasons of heat and cold, expansion and contraction, lifted a nail just enough that a bit of rainwater was able to seep under it. Water dripped down onto my stack of wood, not much, never enough to catch my eye, but it was deflected by the tarp, where it flowed to a tiny invisible hole and then onto my treasure of wood, out of sight and out of mind.

It wasn't a big leak. The ground never showed any sign of wetness. But water has a talent for seeking out any weakness in our defensive plans, and that tiny trickle over the course of several years had a cumulative effect.

The day came when I wanted to get at that stack of lumber, and what I found there would break the heart of anyone who loves old and irreplaceable wood. The ends of the stack were still sound, but the middle was more compost than lumber. I was able to salvage maybe a third of the original pile.

It took me about two days to sort and shovel the remains of my wood stack, and during that time I thought often of the friends who had helped me take down the old barn years ago. I thought also of the irony, for that friendship had gone pretty much the way of the wood. It was left unattended for too long, taken for granted, perhaps, or set aside while life was happening elsewhere. Then one day when I wanted or needed it, though it looked the same on the surface, beneath the covering there was very little left.

We've all had fair weather friends, and some of us have probably been that on occasion too. There are some people who just can't seem to stand any kind of inclement weather, and others who have been so long in their own poor climate that they can't tolerate anything more. Sadly, sickness is a great revealer of fair-weather friends, and what makes it even more difficult to accept is that they disappear when you might need them the most.

Unlike my rotted wood, sometimes a fair-weather friend will reappear when the storm has passed, but we are not likely to count on them ever again. But there was something else I found at the bottom of my unfortunate pile of wet sawdust. There were several lengths of pressure treated pine which were as sound as the day they had been cut. While everything else rotted around them, they maintained their integrity.

We have friends like that too. True friends. Both kinds have their purpose, I suppose, as we build our lives. If we are wise, and lucky, we will frame our relationships with pressure treated friends for structural support. The rest are there for siding, paneling or veneer, and we will learn to accept their loss when it happens, because life often requires remodeling or re-decorating whether we have planned for it or not.

Ultimately, anything we value that we do not attend, anything that we fail to put energy into, will not last. Not my unfortunate old lumber, not even my mighty old tractor, which weathers the storms only because I care for it. Even a pressure treated post will fail if it's left alone long enough. So, it behooves us to decide what we value, and never take it for granted.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE EMAILED 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 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.

Blooms

Whether you've got ornamental plants, vegetables, or fruit trees the blooms are very important. Not all blooms are eye catching, but they serve a purpose. Flowers have several different parts on them. Let's talk about flower parts, why your plants may not be blooming, and some things you can do to improve flowering of plants.

Flowers have male and female parts. The female parts, called the pistil, contain the stigma, style, ovary, and ovule. The male parts, called the stamen, contain the filament and anther. For a flower to be pollinated the anther has to make its way down to the ovules. Flowers that have both male and female parts are called perfect flowers. Flowers that don't have both parts are called imperfect. Cucurbits, which are the melon family, have imperfect flowers. Roses have perfect flowers. Some plants, like rabbiteye blueberries, need more than one variety out there to be able to cross pollinate and bear fruit.

Phosphorus and potassium are important nutrients for plants to be able to bloom. A deficiency of these nutrients could be the cause of plants not blooming. Putting out a little bit of 0-20-20 fertilizer can help instigate blooms. Too much nitrogen can also cause plants to not put on blooms. Nitrogen makes plants put on green, leafy growth. So, if your plants are putting all their energy to producing leaves, they won't have as much energy to put into blooms.

Lack of sun can be a big reason why plants aren't blooming. Most vegetables like to have 6-8 hours of full sun each day. If they aren't getting enough sun, they won't be able to generate enough energy to create flowers. If you have plants that are long and leggy, with a stretched appearance, it could be that they aren't getting enough sun. Stretching out is their way of trying to go higher to reach the sunlight. If you have plants that don't get enough sun, try moving them to a sunnier spot if possible.

The timing of pruning can impact blooms. Some plants put on flowers buds in the early spring. These plants can be pruned in the winter time. Some plants, like azaleas, begin to put on buds after their flowers have die. Therefore, you want to prune them soon after they are done blooming. The time of year that a plant blooms affects when you will prune it. Some people say that crepe myrtles have to be pruned to bloom. However, this is not true.

We've already talked about how nutrients can be a limiting factor to blooms; water can also be a limiting factor. Plants that are dry won't have the necessary moisture to create flowers. However, this shouldn't be an issue in too many cases this year.

This year we had several late freezes. A late freeze on fruits means that fruit tree or bush may not be able to produce any fruit. If the freeze kills off blooms before the flowers are pollinated and the fruit begins to grow, you won't get any blooms or fruit on that plant.

If you have questions about why your plants haven't bloomed or set fruit contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Letters to The Editor

Black Children Matter

Dear Editor,

Black Children Matter! They need committed dad's that are going to nurture, support and raise them; to build their character, strengthen their morality, give them integrity and help make them productive members of society. This way they won't become thugs and hoodlums requiring police to constrain them from breaking societal laws in the first place. They need community leaders that address the social issues that undermine and create their situations rather than excuse them, deflect blame and cause the situation to become worse. They need to elect political leaders who truly care and can make a difference rather than grab media face time to increase their popularity and build their own nest eggs. And they need all of us to help support the organizations that are there to help their mothers when their fathers are missing, which is unfortunately ubiquitous. They desperately need a helping hand rather than another handout.

The police are the thin blue line separating us from Chaos and our support for them is crucial. Only a fraction of a percent of police are a problem, relieve those and encourage the rest.

It's time to address the other end of the equation rather than find fault with the police. God bless our police force and Lord keep them safe!

Mark Adams

An Open Letter

Dear Editor,

An open letter to those protesting the Black Lives Matter event in Blairsville on Sunday, June 14: Yes, all lives do matter. But please take a look at our history. For the past 400 years plus, the African American community has not mattered. Not in terms of health care, voting rights, housing, education, employment, safety, the list goes on and on. All Black Lives Matter is trying to do is bring everyone, everyone regardless of skin color, to the same stature as the rest of the citizens in our country. Please take a look at history; open your eyes and your hearts to the reality of being black in America.

Michelle Maloney

Definition of Democracy

Dear Editor,

Some of the people of our two counties (Towns & Union) apparently feel they are missing out on all the protest fun occurring across the country. To make up for that, they scheduled three protests over the past two weeks, one in Hiawassee, (30 participants) one in Young Harris (36 participants) and the grand finale in Blairsville attended by about 200. Unfortunately, at each of these events, the participants were so emotionally involved they had no idea what they should be protesting. Instead of directing their efforts to protest the chaos, rioting, looting, vandalism, arson and killing that have taken America captive, we saw them holding signs saying just the opposite. Many of them proclaimed "Black Lives Matter". What? Baby's lives matter too, including the almost one million who's lives were snuffed out last year in the USA. How about the many law enforcement officers gunned down the past two weeks attempting to protect citizens and their property from the protesters, don't their lives matter? Certainly they deserved to be honored by these three groups. Another sign proclaimed "Silence is Violence". The person holding that sign got it right. Their silence in condemning the violence around America violently condones such mayhem. Two signs even invoked the name of Jesus. "Jesus was a man of color" said one. Another declared "Jesus was a protester". What they failed to realize is Jesus was also a man of peace and he would have protested against all the protesters at the three protests who were ignoring the nefarious actions of the anarchist protesters from sea to shining sea. Finally, a man proudly raised his sign high with the inscription "Democracy Now". What a shame...because of our system of government, this man is allowed to protest whatever he desires, no matter how ill-advised. Too bad he doesn't realize the freedoms we have from such a system. One wonders what his definition of democracy is.

Gary Meier

Two Great Days in One

Amidst all this America hating turmoil and the ChiCom virus, let's switch gears to some wonderful history we celebrate on one single day, this past Sunday June 14, 2020. In actuality we should celebrate both the year 'round. I think I say that often!

Flag Day begins with some history: January 1, 1776: The first United States flag, the "Grand Union," was displayed by George Washington. It became the unofficial national flag, preceding the 13-star, 13-stripe version.

June 14, 1777: The Stars and Stripes were adopted by the Continental Congress as the Flag of the United States.

June 14, 1877: Flag Day was observed nationally for the first time on the 100th anniversary of the Stars and Stripes — and continues today.

June 14, 1937: Pennsylvania became the first state in the United States to celebrate Flag Day officially as a state holiday.

July 4, 1960: The new 50-star flag was flown for the first time — the flag that still flies today.

Those beautiful colors were not coincidental or circumstance. Our Congress in 1782 picked these colors: WHITE, for purity and innocence; RED for valor and hardiness; BLUE, for vigilance, perseverance, and justice.

So what and who do we owe thanks and honor to for defending that flag and our American way of life? Certainly NOT the political class! It's every single man and woman who served in uniform, and that backbone of those five military services is our United States Army! This year our Army is 245 years old. The official "birthday" of June 14, 1775 to June 14, 2020. My word, how these men and women are so often overlooked and often smeared for doing some down and dirty tasks that positively must be done, by virtue of what war and conflict equates to. So many of these men, in particular never wanted to enlist but were drafted, nevertheless doing their assigned duty anyway.

Space herein doesn't allow for detailing all the wars, battles and skirmishes our valiant Americans serving in our Army have endured. Those numbers and their history are astronomical. More importantly is the FACT that our strong standing Army has prevented more wars! Think about it!

In fact there are several specialized units within the Army; one most recognized is the Special Forces, called Green Berets. And beyond a doubt there are great soldiers who wear the US Army Ranger tab. We have a Mountain Ranger training camp right over in Dahlonega where some fine young American soldiers become Rangers. There's not much our modern US Army cannot do as well as there is not much our Army has not done.

So please never forget the men and women who have served in this fine and one first most military service. And don't doubt for a second that these folks who have actually seen the ravishes and horrors of warfare that they did NOT provoke, nor create, lost dearly loved brothers and sisters and will carry that burden with them until they meet them again at the Right Hand of our Supreme Commander. - Semper Paratus

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran



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