

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Lucky Us x 2

Spoiler alert! Sometimes I'm gobstopped as to how 500 words can be eked out of a subject without using the words "very" and "and" 75 to 85 times. Then again I wonder how a subject can be adequately covered in just 500 words. Usually I'm able to pull it out of my ear one way or the other.

Around Towns
Dale Harmon



After choosing the locale for Tour of Towns, an appointment was made to talk with Matt Youngblood, Director of Towns County Department of Recreation. The plan was to take a little look-see around the Foster Recreation and Convention Center, exchange a few appropriate words of thanks with Matt and haul boogie. The best laid plans of mice and men do oft times go astray. This time, delightfully, Matt generally arrives at his office at 7 a.m. That is unless he's busy attending to and arranging for tournaments at the outdoor and indoor pickle ball courts, football fields, and basketball courts. When there are no tournaments, those facilities do not lay fallow. Summer camps are organized and held for the benefit of our youth. Along with the needed physical activity, the futures of Towns County and the world outside of it, are learning sportsmanship, discipline, respect and are having hot fun in the summer time.

Matt, along with Assistant Director Tyler Garrett, are the only two fulltime employees of our Department of Recreation. Together they do us proud.

We took our walk of what is generally referred to as the rec center. A feat of design has created an edifice which can transform from a comfortable meeting room to a cavernous space that easily contains The Made in Georgia Festival. You may marvel as I did last year to see what wonders are grown, manufactured, created and sold in our great state. It will be presented this June 29th and 30th.

Presto Changeo and an intimate yoga den appears in the rec center where moments before there was none. Can nirvana be far? A state of the art workout area can have you buff, if you're into that stuff. The upstairs walking track (don't get your gym shorts in a twist, there is an elevator) will give you access to one of the best forms of exercise there is. You set the pace that works best for you, it can be done alone or you may become a gang member. Camaraderie is an added component of wellbeing found on and around the track.

Mr. Youngblood graciously shared more of his time than I expected. My thanks to him. We discussed topics that I'll share next week. When he talked about the old rec center, I asked if he meant old rec or old wreck center. Being an ancient, I can ask that sort of question. See you around Towns.

Smokey Bear is 75

The guardian of our forest has been a part of the American scene for so many years, it is hard for most of us to remember when Smokey Bear first appeared. To understand how Smokey Bear became associated with wildfire prevention, we must go back to World War II.

RC&D
Frank Riley
Executive Director



On December 7, 1941, Japanese planes attacked Pearl Harbor. The following spring, in 1942, a Japanese submarine surfaced near the coast of Southern California and fired a salvo of shells that exploded on an oil field near Santa Barbara, very close to the Los Padres National Forest. Americans throughout the country were shocked by the news the war had now been brought directly to the American mainland. There was also fear that enemy incendiary shells exploding in the timber stands along the Pacific Coast could easily set off numerous raging forest fires in addition to those already being caused by people. Protection of these forests from uncontrolled fire became a matter of national importance, and a new idea was born. If people could be urged to be more careful, perhaps some of the fires could be prevented. For many years, the nation had known that forest fires presented a serious threat. In 1939, a poster showing a forest ranger who looked like Uncle Sam pointing to a raging forest fire stated, "Your Forest-Your Fault-Your Loss." Statistics showed that nine out of ten of the fires were person-caused and, thus, preventable. With this in mind, in 1942 the Forest Service organized the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Program with the help of the Wartime Advertising Council. The Wartime Advertising Council was composed of people experienced in the business of advertising who donated their talent to the U.S. Government to get important messages to the people. By using catchy phrases, colorful posters and other fire prevention messages, the CFFP Program encouraged people to prevent accidental fires and help with the War. Walt Disney's motion picture "Bambi" was produced in 1944, and Disney authorized the CFFP Program to use his creation on a poster. The Bambi poster was a success and proved that using an animal as a fire prevention symbol would work. The Forest Service needed to find an animal that would belong exclusively to the CFFP Program. It was finally decided that the Nation's fire prevention symbol should be a bear. On August 9, 1944, the new fire prevention symbol was agreed upon by the Forest Service and the Wartime Advertising Council. The first poster of Smokey Bear showed a bear pouring a bucket of water on a campfire. Smokey Bear soon became very popular and his image began appearing on fire prevention materials. "Only YOU Can Prevent Forest Fires" was first used as a slogan in 1947. One spring day in 1950 in the Capitan Mountains of New Mexico, an observer in one of the fire towers spotted smoke and called the location into the nearest Ranger Station. The first crew to arrive discovered a major fire being swept along by strong winds.

During one of the lulls in the firefighting, there was a report of a lonely cub seen wandering near the fire line. The little cub had been caught in the path of the fire. He had taken refuge in a tree that was now nothing but a charred, smoking snag. His climb had saved his life but left his paws and hind legs badly burned. The firefighters removed the little bear cub from the burned tree, and a rancher, who had been helping the firefighters, agreed to take the cub home. The cub needed veterinary aid and was flown to Santa Fe where the burns were treated and bandaged. The news about the little bear spread swiftly throughout New Mexico. Soon the United Press and Associated Press picked up the story and broadcast it nationwide. The go-ahead was given to send the bear cub to Washington, D.C. Once there, he found a home at the National Zoo and became the living symbol of Smokey Bear. Smokey died in 1976 and was returned to Capitan, New Mexico, where he is buried in the State Historical Park. Smokey will be 75 years old on August 9, 2019. Smokey's new slogan is "Only you can prevent Wildfires!". Smokey did too good of a job for years by encouraging every fire to be put out which has led to the high fuel loads we have in our forests today. We are planning several events to celebrate his birthday including the Georgia Mountain Fair Parade. For more information check out www.appcofac.org - www.smokeybear.com - www.facebook.com/smokeybear/ - www.youtube.com/user/SmokeyBear/.

Snake Eyes

It's hard to love a snake. I know, all creatures great and small, but even though I am a snake supporter, I have to admit that there is something very snaky about a snake.

I had a pet King Snake in college. (It was just a phase.) I've captured beneficial snakes and brought them to the farm and I've relocated other snakes. My official snake policy on the farm is "live and let live." In fact, we have the same policy for all the creatures that share this space.

Except for Copperheads. Copperhead behavior and puppy behavior is not compatible. Copperheads just won't get out of the way. They "bow up" and stand their ground and wait for you or one of your dogs to step on them. "Go ahead. Step on me. I dare you. I was here first and I'm not moving."

I don't relocate Copperheads, but I do relocate parts of Copperheads.

Rattlesnakes? No problem. We have co-existed here with timber rattlers for decades. Rattlesnakes are thoughtful enough to alert you to their presence, otherwise they are good at getting out of the way.

Snakes are just too beneficial to disrespect. They earn their keep in mice alone, and the only cost to me is watching where I put my feet. We could all use an occasional reminder to watch where we put our feet.

We don't have water moccasins here in the North Georgia Mountains. Some people will argue with that, but I've never seen one, and the biologist for our Conservation Easement says that this area is outside their range. I'll take the word of the person who can name every living thing you encounter when you walk with her in the woods.

We do have water snakes though, and they look enough like water moccasins to get your attention, and - they are extremely snaky. They can also be aggressive. They like to jump out of a bush and into the water when you're trout fishing. I think it amuses them to wait until the last minute when you're almost directly under them.

Water snakes are spring-loaded, and they can jump an unbelievable distance. I saw one jump about 10 feet into the Chattooga River. The kid who disturbed him was in a canoe and decided to float over to a rock face and investigate a hole. The snake cleared his face by about 3 inches.

Fear makes you do illogical things. The poor kid screamed and jumped into the river - with the snake. When he realized what he had done, I swear that kid walked on water. I don't blame him.

We have a water snake living in our frog pond. When you look at her head, there is no doubt that she is non-poisonous. She looks almost sweet, with a ghost of a Mona Lisa smile, and she has pretty eyes. I named her Hazel.

While Hazel's visage is very becoming, if you come upon any other part of her unawares, there is a visceral reaction. The grab in the gut, the raised hairs on the arms and the tingle in the spine all shout, "Snake!" We're trying to get used to each other, since the pond is right next to the garden. But even when I know it's her with the pretty eyes, those intimidating markings and that serpentine slither do not inspire a warm cozy feeling.

The frogs in our pond are not very happy with Hazel as a neighbor. Some of them have moved to another nearby pond, and the ones that remain are not nearly as mouthy as they once were.

There were far too many frogs in that pond for the available food supply, but thanks to Hazel, there is a better balance now. Nature always seeks balance, if we get out of the way and allow it to happen.

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, 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 columns 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.

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Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday by 5 PM • 706-896-4454

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

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**"Think of it as a lesson in economics.
If you want pie, you have to pick the berries."**

Hay Testing

This past winter was difficult for some cattlemen because the hay quality was not as good as usual. That was mostly because of the amount of rainfall that we received. More rain meant more vegetative growth, and the sun isn't out so the forage plants aren't able to produce the carbohydrates needed for the forage to be nutritious to the cattle. Essentially, what happens is that the hay fed to cattle has a lot of fiber in it. Lots of fiber in hay without nutrition means that the cattle can't properly digest the forage. Cattle will eat enough forage to be full, but all that indigestible forage creates an impaction in their rumen. The effects of cattle eating low quality hay and getting an impaction can range from calving issues, to diarrhea, to weight loss, and even dying.

Obviously, losing livestock is very disheartening, and a financial loss. I've seen it happen first hand. When cattle start to die because of poor quality hay, usually you will have at least a few cattle go down. Forage quality issues can be made worse if they are combined with supplements that stimulate forage intake, because then cattle are eating more of the low quality hay. The best treatment for low quality forage is to know ahead of time about the quality of your hay. The only way that you can do that is through hay testing.

UGA Extension labs can do hay testing. Because of seeing cattle ill and dying because of poor quality hay this past winter, I want to encourage hay producers and cattlemen to do more hay testing. Unfortunately, hay testing isn't something that I can offer to people free, because the lab charges me for the tests that they run. However, in an attempt to put my money where my mouth is, I have a proposition. This year I will cover the shipping costs to send in a hay sample to the lab. In the past, I have charged a little extra to cover shipping the hay sample. However, because I believe that hay testing will be incredibly beneficial to cattlemen and hay producers I am going to cover those shipping costs myself.

We can do three main tests for hay. The basic one costs \$15 and will tell the moisture, fiber, crude protein, lignin, total digestible nutrients, and give you a relative forage quality (RFQ). The RFQ is an index that will give you a number to give you a reference on the quality of your hay. Dry cows don't need as high of an RFQ compared to gestating cows, or cows with a calf that they are feeding. Above the basic test is a \$20 test that is the basic test + nitrates. Above that is a \$40 test that is basic + nitrates + minerals.

A single hay test can cover an entire hay lot. A hay lot would be all the hay from a particular field at the same cutting. I have a hay probe in my office and I would be happy to come out and collect the hay sample for you. Once we've processed a hay sample, I can help you come up with a balanced ration to get you through the hay feeding months.

I also want to remind you about the Well Water Program that we are having July 25 from 5:30 - 6:30 in the Union County Civic Center. Please RSVP for this free event at 706-439-6030 or my email below to learn about well maintenance, protection, and testing.

If you have questions about hay testing contact your local Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

UGA extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Towns County Community Calendar

	Every Monday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	Red Cross Building	7 pm
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Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
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Alzheimer's Supp.	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	McConnell Church	10 am
Stephens Lodge	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
Book Bunch & Lunch	Daniels Steakhouse	11:30 am
Friendship Comm.	Clubhouse	6 pm
Republican Party	Civic Center	5:30 pm
Goldwing Riders	Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
Red Cross DAT	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Hiaw. Writers	Hiaw. Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
Hiaw. Garden Club	Clubhouse	12:45 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

Towns County Herald

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