

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Emotional Sandbox

We are all familiar with the standard sandbox. Most of us grew up with one in our backyard. In it we had our toys and whatnots, and they usually stayed in it...most of the time. After we finished playing for the day, we were supposed to return everything into our box so that it would be ready for the next day.

Successful Mental Health
Dr. James Ray Ashurst
 PH. D.



On a different level, the sandbox represents our personal space. Throughout the years we all have been in someone's space, accidentally or purposefully. And on the flip side of the coin, some folks have been in ours. We had that uncomfortable feeling when someone was in our space (or sandbox). We felt as if the air was being sucked out of us, mainly due to our not asking that person to be in it.

When anyone gets too close to us in our space, it is as though that individual has trespassed into our imaginary sandbox. We didn't ask the person to enter, but alas! The person is there. The individual may believe that we need our lives straightened out, and the guest has decided that it is his or her mission in life to enter uninvited into our sandbox to become our mentor.

In our sandbox (space), we have our symbolic possessions: our dreams, future plans, our family, our friends, and much more. Our comfortable sandbox is filled with every single thing we treasure. It is our world, all contained in a tiny space... our sandbox. It includes every facet of who we are, who we used to be, and what we would like to become. Thus, we are very protective of our sandbox and who is allowed in it.

The conflict arises when people enter into our space (sandbox) who were never invited. They intrude brazenly in our space—our personal, valuable sandbox. They proceed to instruct us on how we should manage our adult lives and our relationships. It is amazing how others believe they know how to manage our lives much better than we do.

It should not come as a big shock that some individuals firmly believe that they know how we should best conduct our life, with whom, and where. The ideals, hopes, and dreams in our sandbox get tossed out—the very things that made us who we are today.

There are those who will challenge and question God about how He is actually working in our personal life. If it differs from what they think is best for us, then God takes second place to them.

While in our sandbox, some individuals will attempt to wreak havoc in it. This is how it works: the uninvited person wanders into our sandbox and figuratively tosses out every single thing that individual finds unacceptable. We may have certain spiritual beliefs and values in which the uninvited person may not agree. Then according to that person, we need to change our value system. The individual doesn't stop there. One's values, belief system, and spiritual convictions all will be severely questioned, examined, and evaluated.

Everything in one's sandbox will be judged. After creating havoc in the sandbox, the individual will depart with a satisfied look of victory. When we then have the time to examine what is left in our sandbox, very little is there that we once treasured and revered. Our sandbox looks as if a hurricane has ripped it apart. Our sandbox is a disaster.

As soon as we believe that we have our sandbox in some order again, knocking at our door is another person, wandering into our sandbox...uninvited. Keeping our sanity seems impossible. But there is hope!

Protecting the privacy of one's sandbox is a daily task.

Sourwood Trees

This week I'm going to talk about sourwood trees. It is a beautiful tree regardless of the season. They are also prized for the honey that bees make from their nectar.

Sourwood trees are native from southern Pennsylvania to northwest Florida. However, they are most commonly found in southern Appalachian Mountains. The scientific name for sourwood trees is *Oxydendrum arboreum*. The name *Oxydendrum* comes from the Greek word *oxys*, which means acid, and *dendron*, which means tree. If you put the two together, you have a description of the sour taste of the leaves. The leaves used to be used by hikers to quench thirst and used to be brewed into a tonic.

Sourwood is in the Ericaceae family. This family is sometimes called the heather family. Sourwood is the only tree in this family. Other members of the family include rhododendron, azalea, and blueberry. Something that all of these plants have in common is their ability to tolerate soil with high acidity. That's a good thing, because our soils register low on the pH scale, meaning they have high acid. There are no major pests of sourwood trees.

Sourwood forms small white flowers along what's called a raceme. These flowers start to form in June. They turn into dry, silver-gray fruits that can be seen hanging into the fall. In the fall sourwood leaves start to turn a beautiful deep red color that is very distinctive. The leaves are 3 to eight inches long with small teeth along the edge. In the winter, you can identify the tree by its bark. Sourwood bark is grayish brown with deep furrows that are blocky. Once you've seen the bark on a sourwood, it's easy to recognize it again. Sourwoods grows best as an understory tree (beneath high rising trees like oak and pine). It can grow in full sun, but will need adequate water. Sourwoods have shallow root systems so they are susceptible to drought, especially when they're in full sun. Oftentimes when I see them growing out in the woods they seem to be coming out of the ground at an angle.

The thing that sourwood trees are known for the most is sourwood honey. Sourwood honey is considered a premium honey that can be difficult to find. That's because the honey contains nectar from only sourwood trees. Sourwood honey doesn't have a sour taste. It has a buttery caramel taste with an aftertaste that has a slight zing to it. It is usually extra light to amber colored. Many of the local beekeepers here produce sourwood honey, but you'll have to buy it quick, because it doesn't stay on the shelves long. Sourwood honey is internationally regarded as being the best in the world, and north Georgia and western North Carolina is where it comes from. Sourwood trees at higher elevation produce more nectar. Below 1,000 feet above sea level nectar production will be very low.

If you have questions about sourwood trees, contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

UGA extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Letters To The Editor

The "World"

Dear Editor,

Many times as of late, it is hard to remember our war is not against human flesh and blood. The "World" has a ruler and a very arrogant king. It is referred to as a satanic system, and like its king, the goal is to steal, kill and destroy! His system demands conformity, infirmity and blindness to all that would be right and decent. This system and king delight in darkness; there, it can secretly set snares and traps for those who would expand his growing kingdom. This king is not interested in what is good or what you delight in. He will not be bothered by your discomfort because of his works. When you have done all that is required, you are crushed beyond repair and thrown out like trash. You are nothing more to him than a tool in his bag of tricks. Your usefulness has ended.

This counterfeit king and those who would be his puppets have brought division, confusion, lies, death and destruction beyond measure.

We are taught to be in the "World" but not of the world. Why? There is another system and a very generous King! To be continued...

Sincerely,
Gerri Poirier

Re: "Chick-fil-A"

Dear Editor,

It would seem to me that Chick-fil-A, in shaking off the bonds of religious bigotry, becoming more diverse and inclusive, and showing concern for others who are different, has actually become more Christian. Is that not what Jesus would want?

They are doing unto others as they would have others do unto them, rather than demonizing them and attempting to deny their rights as human beings and American citizens. By doing this they are being more accepting of thousands of their own employees, rather than pushing them away simply because of the way they were born or, as many would say, "the way God made them."

THAT is the Christian way.

Sincerely,
Ed Reed

In Good Hands

Dear Editor,

While I enjoy reading the Letters to the Editor, I seldom write one myself. However, I feel compelled to respond to an "Open Letter to Andrew Clyde" in this past week's editorial section. The writer attacked Congressman Clyde by asking, "I wonder what problems and issues you could focus on in our local legislative district - you know, the one you supposedly serve..." He went on to state that the congressman should give "representative politics a try and give the MAGA bullhorn a rest." He continued with "I realize that would require you to actually DO something other than throw red meat to the base." He finished up with "...maybe you'd find actually helping your constituents rewarding."

It is clear from the remaining content of the letter that the writer does not agree with our congressman's political positions and views of what is occurring in Washington. I fully support his right to disagree with our elected officials and do so in a public forum. Unlike so many on the Left who want to limit and suppress speech they disagree with, I advocate for everyone's voices to be heard. However, to paraphrase Margaret Thatcher, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but they aren't entitled to their own set of facts." The writer's assertions that Congressman Clyde doesn't focus on problems and issues in his district and doesn't do anything to help his constituents is not true. In the three years my family has lived here, Congressman Clyde has helped us with two separate issues we were unable to resolve by ourselves. One had to do with a disabled family member's housing situation and the other was with the U.S. Postal System refusing to deliver to the residents on our street. Congressman Clyde's office was very responsive in resolving each situation for us in a matter of days. I have e-mailed the congressman's office concerning legislative and political matters before the House of Representatives, and his office has always responded in a polite and timely manner.

You may agree or disagree with our representative's political positions, but Congressman Clyde's office has been very responsive to my neighbors and my family's concerns. We think District 9 is in good hands.

George R. Huber

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Towns County Community Calendar

First Monday of each month:	School Board... HS/MS Media Center	6:45 pm
Every Tuesday:	Storytime for Children... TC Library	10:30 am
First Tuesday of each month:	Hiaw. City Council... City Hall	6 pm
	YH City Council... YH City Hall	6:30 pm
Second Tuesday of each month:	Conventions & Visitors Board... Civic Center	8 am
Second Wednesday of each month:	Board of Elections... Elections Office	4 pm
Third Monday of each month:	Planning Commission... Temporary Courthouse	6 pm
Third Tuesday of each month:	Commissioner's Mtg... Courthouse	5:30 pm
	City of Young Harris Planning Commission...	
	Meeting Room in City Hall	5 pm
	Water Board... Water Office	6 pm

Halcyon Days

We were determined not to have a garden this year so we could use the extra time to catch up on other projects. Consistent with the best laid plans of mice, men, and gardeners, we had a late garden instead, but just a small one.

We only planted squash and corn. And pumpkins. And tomatoes. And basil, turnip greens, potatoes, broccoli, collards, lettuce and kale, sunflowers and zinnias, garlic and onions. And cucumbers. Just a small garden.

Encouraged by generous contributions from the chicken house and the gift of frequent but not excessive rainfall, the squash in our small garden are huge and the tomato plants are tall and laden with fruit this year. Planting late was accidental genius as we missed the peaks of bug infestations, but if anyone asks, we meant to do it that way all along.

Our bear, Ursula, sensing an accommodating but wary tolerance in our protected cove, has settled into a peaceful routine now that her cubs are old enough to strike out on their own. My elders taught me that you don't push the river. Working with nature is better than working against it, because Nature always bats last and has the home field advantage.

Bears are curious and unpredictable, sometimes dangerous, and they can make a huge mess in a hurry if you're not prepared for them. On the plus side, Ursula digs and eats every yellowjacket nest she can find, and she is as cute as a bear though not exactly cuddly. Electricity thwarts her curiosity about our beehives, corn rows and tomatoes. With a few precautions, we coexist rather nicely.

She doesn't seem very curious about our unprotected patch of turnip greens, however. Maybe she doesn't like the taste, or maybe the hornet's nest hanging above that patch has dulled her interest. A hungry bear will eat a hornet's nest too, but I imagine that hunger would have to be extreme. Being stung by a hornet feels a lot like being punched by a spiked fist. Deer do like the taste of turnip greens, but they haven't taken a single bite this year.

The hornets tolerate me when I'm picking greens. They grew up hearing my voice from the day I first spied the queen's little ping pong ball nest hanging from an alder branch. Alone, then, in her little paper palace, she came out to meet me when I walked over to introduce myself. She sat calmly outside the entrance of her nest as I spoke to her in reassuring tones, and none of her subjects has ever threatened me as their numbers multiplied. To them, I am just another part of nature, but one who moves slowly, wears a wide brimmed hat and turns his collar up when he picks turnip greens. The spiked fist may find me one day, but in the meantime there is hardly a fly to be found, thanks to our hornets.

"Bees do what bees do," our dad always said, "and so do bears." Thus we leave the gate open to the chicken pen at night. Ursula likes to lick up whatever remains of the cracked corn left by the chickens. If we forget to open the gate, she makes her own, and repairing chicken wire loses its charm very quickly. It's not an ideal situation, so I've ordered some electricity for the chicken pen. Bears hate electricity.

In the meantime, I'm using a trick a good friend who kept bees shared with me. He pointed a radio at his hives, and the bears, wary of human voices, left his bees alone. For several nights now, and during the day when we have been away from home, I've pointed a speaker at the henhouse.

We don't get good radio reception here in our cove, so I've turned instead to streaming channels on the internet. One of the first stations I came across that was all talk was NPR. I used to listen to NPR traveling and always enjoyed "Car Talk." Ursula doesn't seem to like the station at all, because she hasn't come near since I started playing it.

That electric fence can't get here fast enough, however, and you will soon understand why. You see, Bluetooth speakers don't work very well at a distance, and when I came home one afternoon it sounded like one of the NPR talkers was saying that there are many types of "ganders." I don't know much about geese, but that sounded interesting, so I walked down to the barn to listen.

Then the talker said she was "gander neutral," and I thought well, I don't care that much about them either, but the geese surely do. Right about then one of my hens started trying to crow, and I understood what my poor captive chickens had been forced to hear. No more NPR for them, and I really miss Click and Clack.

Our meager aspirations to humor aside, these are the halcyon days of summer. These are the good old days, and we hope that you are enjoying the telling or your own tales as the days of your lives unfold.

The mathematician and philosopher, Blaise Pascal wrote, "We never keep to the present. We recall the past; we anticipate the future as if we found it too slow in coming and were trying to hurry it up, or we recall the past as if to stay its too rapid flight...Let each of us examine his thoughts; he will find them wholly concerned with the past or the future. We almost never think of the present, and if we do think of it, it is only to see what light it throws on our plans for the future."

We encourage you to pause frequently in your thoughts to examine the moments of your day and write your ongoing story. The trick is in the telling, and the telling brings us back to the present, where all the action is.

Outside The Box

By: *Don Perry*
worldoutsidethebox.com

Towns County Herald

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