

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Letters to The Editor

### No Choice in Towns County

Dear Editor,  
Are you one of the Towns County residents stuck with only one choice for Internet Service Providers? If you're like me you're stuck, and I do mean stuck, with Windstream as your ISP. As they are the only game in several areas of our county, they call the shots, not the paying consumer. Allow me to relate a recent experience with the Big Green W. The recent thunderstorms in our area knocked me offline Monday, July 21. Like a good consumer my first thought was to call Windstream to report the outage. So...

Day 1, the initial call for service. The person on the phone went through the usual re-boot your modem by unplugging it. Then they remotely rebooted it as unplugging-replugging didn't work (and never does). Of course that re-boot didn't do anything either. I was put on hold for about 8 minutes while they "checked into it".

When they returned I was told that my modem was not pulling an IP address (38 years in IT I could have told them that and saved us both 15 minutes but I regress) this problem would require a service call to my house. I was told to the high amount of service calls in my area (oh no, not again) a technician could not be out until July 30. High amount of service calls in my area is technical support speak for "due to the current state of our company we don't have anybody that can do the repair". Nine days to send someone out to my house? But he assured me this was the best he could do and thanked me for being a Windstream customer then disconnected before I could ask any questions.

Day 2, the second call. By now I've ascertained that Windstream has offshored their customer service. I was told they would look into my service repair order and be right back after a brief hold. 8 minutes later they came back online and said they could expedite my request and a technician would be at my house July 30 before 6PM. I guess Windstream has a slightly different definition of expedite than Webster's. I asked if I could speak to a manager and was promptly put on hold only to be routed to the telephone repair department where the representative went through the exact same steps as the prior tech again telling me the ticket had been escalated and a technician would be there July 30 before 6. UUHGGGGG as Charlie Brown would say.

Day 3, the final call. Not wanting to give up and accept my punishment I called yet again. This time I would outsmart them and ask for a manager right off the bat. The representative asked for all my information like name, rank, serial number, how many kids, blood type etc. after looking at the record on their end I was asked if I would mind being put on a brief hold while they "checked into it". After 8 minutes I heard a voice again that told me they would expedite the service order and I could expect a technician out to the house July 28 before 6. Wait, what? Have I won? Did I beat the corporate giant at its own game? No, I just got a 2 day reprieve and was informed that due to the high volume of service calls in my area it would likely be July 30 before 6. I was then asked if they could help me with anything else. What about my request to speak to a manager I queried. I'm sorry but there isn't a manager available was the reply and the call was abruptly ended. I had lost the fight. Lucy got the football again. Feeling defeated and ready to go back to dialup I remembered a funny thing that I think happened around the time of the last election cycle. I recalled our congressman or senator, I can't remember so let's just say a politician, sending out a letter informing all his constituents that he was going to make sure Windstream improved our speeds and serviced more residents and treated us fairly bla bla bla. I guess after re-election all those promises to the little people fall to the wayside. But it made for a good chuckle, something I needed right about then.

So here it is, day 5 and I'm sitting in the Ingles parking lot with my tablet trying to get cell service enough to post this to the Letters To the Editor then return home and wait for the magic day when I see one of those white trucks with the big green W on the side pull up my driveway. That is unless they expedite the service order to August 30, before 6.

Tim Queen

### Thank you, Hiawasse

Dear Editor,

As a part-time resident of Towns County, I would like to thank Mayor Ordiales and the Hiawasse City Council for the two public parking areas on the lake. It is so nice to be able to pick up food in town and sit and eat in your vehicle enjoying the view. I know it takes resources (money and employees) to keep these areas clean and trash disposed of regularly!

I just wanted to thank them and let them know I appreciate all their efforts in adding this enjoyment to the citizens and visitors.

Ann Peterson

### Government Leadership

Dear Editor,

My wife and I are relatively new to the area and wanted to become involved in volunteer activities to support our community. We understood that the county was short on election poll workers, so we decided to volunteer. We went to the training session on July 17th for poll workers, expecting the county to set an example of responsibility and safety, in-light-of the Covid 19 virus that is sweeping our state and local communities. When we arrived, we were among approximately thirty-five individuals in a community room. Much to our dismay, there was no appropriate social distancing, and while maybe half of the participants had masks, many others, including the county employees, did not. It seemed there was little recognition or concern of the spread of this virus or adequate precautions for the safety of poll workers; many of whom are older and most vulnerable to serious outcomes. We let our concerns be known and respectfully chose, out of an abundance of caution, not to participate further. If we are to get beyond this pandemic, we should all take this more seriously for the health of ourselves and the wellbeing of others. If we want to get beyond this pandemic and return to our jobs, our schools, our football games; then we need to take affirmative action. That should begin with government leadership.

Dave and Denise Phillips

Editor's Note: Per a recent executive order by Gov. Brian Kemp, local governments are not allowed to mandate mask use.

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"Yeah, I decided I needed a cleaner, more wholesome job. So I got out of politics!"

### Messenger (Bag) of War

If you let them, some of the good habits you pick up in the military will stay with you for a lifetime. You may also gain perspectives that can function as a workable template for many situations. Not every situation, but many. Viewing every situation in terms of conflict is unwise, but conflict is all around us, and if we want to avoid it, it's best that we try to understand it. As we travel the pixel universe, we get the impression that there are many "wars" being fought in virtual reality. The war on drugs continues, and we have the war on terror, the war on poverty, the war on oppression, the war on the virus, the war on "anything we don't like." Every challenge must be overcome with a "fight." People who spend their careers talking are now considered "warriors." It soon becomes clear that most people who wield the language of war, do not understand war at all.

Let's not jump directly into the fight. We'll do some reconnaissance first. My dad was a navy man, and he always had an away kit packed and ready with an assortment of items, including tightly rolled skivvies like you would find in a sea bag. I still roll my t-shirts the same way. (If you roll them exactly right it will eliminate most of the wrinkles.) As a former Marine, my bugout bag contains more metal and polymer-based items than textiles, including items that will guarantee a permanent social distance if necessary. There are also seasonal items that change with the weather, as you never know how long you might have to sit in your car on the side of an icy road, or how far you might have to walk. As we entered the undiscovered territory of the plague years, my bugout bag spawned a more portable version for the inevitable trips for business or groceries, which, we must admit, are a bit more serious than they once were. Defensive perimeter enabler? Check. Steel bottle of cool spring water? Check. Leatherman, lighter, flashlight? Check.

Recently the kit has included a spray bottle of alcohol, spare masks, a zip lock with latex gloves, and a pair of mechanic's gloves. There is a small spray bottle of colloidal silver we use to spray eyes and masks. I digress. After growing weary of the plastic shopping bag overburdened with my road kit, my wife purchased for me a vintage military messenger bag. Heavy canvas, brass fittings...OK it's a purse. A man bag, if you will. But if I slapped you with even the empty bag, you probably would not get up for a while.

Not that there's anything wrong with a man who wants to carry a purse, a man-bag or a paper sack, but I still prefer to call my container "The Arsenal of Freedom." Like it? Doesn't that take you back? Sounds like "Patriot Act" or George W. Bush's "Clear Skies Initiative." "I'm ready to go when you are. Do you have your sunglasses?" "Got them. Do you have 'The Arsenal of Freedom'?" That's inspiring conversation to hear around the house when you're getting ready to drive to the dump! Even Alexa would be impressed, if her 8 microphones were plugged in. (They are not.)

A bugout bag, an away kit, a man-bag, a purse: These are all just words to describe similar things, but things that might be motivated by different intentions or burdened by different baggage. I'm not going to slap you with my messenger bag, but isn't that just the kind of fantasy video game thinking that permeates the national discourse and inspires an underemployed and over caffeinated coffeehouse client to throw a rock at a police car? I might call such a rock thrower a "man bag," or worse. Some would call him a "social justice warrior." We're talking about the same guy, but my intention is to describe a rudderless movement doomed to collapse under its own weight with a lot of collateral damage, and someone else has the intention of describing a bright shining ideal (surrounded by a lot of clouds and haze).

You see it, don't you. I know you do. Words begin to lose their meaning when they are wielded as weapons, and the pixel universe has become a battleground of words and the intentions behind them. That battlefield has been mined with political correctness mines, and in the fog of war there have been casualties caused by "friendly fire" when some of the combatants stepped on their own mines or their weapons blew up in their faces.

For example, a particularly destructive but extremely popular weapon is the word, "racist." Racist is a useful word when it is used as a surgical laser for cutting out diseased tissue, but too often it's used as a grenade. As a grenade, it never wins battles, but when it is lobbed into a conversation and blows up, it harms indiscriminately. The intended target will probably not be fooled into engaging in dialogue again. Thus the battle is never won, but the conflict continues.

As you can see, a template of military perspective can bring some understanding to the word wars. Words can do harm, and they have helped to start real wars ever since humans developed language. But allowing that template to become part of a dominant paradigm creates a lot of unnecessary unhappiness while making people vulnerable to the most contemptible manipulations. Look what happens when you remove the template of the language of war from your view of this-moment-right-now. Wow, more foolish arguments on the television. Let's just turn it off. I'm sure glad I don't live where those videos were taken... didn't they show the same ones yesterday? It surely is a beautiful day outside. Eventually, we can learn to recognize straight away those headlines and conversations that promote a skewed version of reality. Any headline or conversation that makes use of the language of war, unless it's about a real war, is probably not unbiased - or completely factual. We can safely skip over those offerings that add toxins to our precious time. Then, if there aren't any protesters coming up the driveway and no actual battles being fought in our front yard (which includes the vast majority of Americans), we can concentrate instead on what our family, our neighborhood and our community needs right now. We can filter words for their functionality, and where meaning is needed, we get to assign that ourselves. And you know what? This canvas bag thing holds a lot more stuff than a grocery sack.

### Hay Testing

Hay testing is an important part of any livestock management program. If you feed hay, it's important to know the quality of the hay. Without performing a hay test, you don't know the quality of the hay.

Feeding hay that is poor quality can lead to an impaction in the animal's stomach. 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 the 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.

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.

Body Condition Scoring (BCS... not referring to college football) also shows how important hay quality is. BCS is an index that measures the health of the animal based on how fleshy or boney the animal is. The scale ranges from 1-9. A one is a severely emaciated cow. Bones in the shoulders, back, and ribs are clearly visible. A BCS of one is rarely seen in the field. A BCS of nine is a very obese animal and its mobility is impaired by excessive fat. This score is also rarely seen in the field. In cows, you ideally want a BCS of five to be maintained for calving. If BCS drops to a four then your calving interval will increase. Typically a BCS of five will give you conception rates of >85% and calving every 360-370 days. A BCS of four or lower means calving will be >380 days. Cows will require high quality forage for about 70 days to go from a BCS of 4 to 5.

UGA Extension labs can do hay testing, and we have 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 do not 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. If you think you have some good quality hay let me know, and we can submit a sample to the Southeastern Hay Contest.

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



### US Army Green Berets

A brief bio of how our Army Special Forces, known as Green Berets got their moniker.

Although these very intelligent, tough, well trained soldiers were formed from the 10th Special Forces Group in 1952, their EXCLUSIVE right to wear the green beret didn't come about until a decade later. They were originally a part of the US Army Psychological Warfare Division. According to Army archives this group was the first of its kind. Nicknamed "Snake Eaters", "Quiet Professionals", "Soldier Diplomats", "Bearded Bastards" and many other nicknames, these men went places and accomplished missions both on an off the record that most of us would consider impossible. Their primary agenda was unconventional warfare very similar to guerrilla fighters. These elite soldiers were, in fact a "jack of all trades".

Founder of Special Forces was Col. Aaron Bank who had been the leader of an Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Jedburgh Team during WWII. They were a small group who gathered intelligence, conducted surprise raids and resupply missions often teamed with local guerrilla forces. Col. Banks retained his experiences from his time with the OSS as the foundation of what was to become our Green Berets. His Jedburgh team was trained in parachuting, foreign languages, hand-to-hand combat, radio communications and many other specialized skills. Why green? Special Services soldiers wanted to be recognized and set apart from conventional soldiers, especially after rugged and rigorous four phase training programs. So once again the result of OSS influence, the color green was influenced by the British Commandos of WWII fame and their green headgear.

Not until 1962 by President John F. Kennedy did this beret officially become recognized as a "symbol of courage, a mark of distinction in the fight for freedom." They train in the US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School in Fayetteville, North Carolina, among other places.

There are seven special forces groups; five being active duty and two in our National Guard. I certainly didn't know that, until I researched this!

Ever since President John Kennedy, a true American Patriot and WWII hero himself, died in 1963, our Green Berets visit his grave annually, laying a wreath upon his grave. Unconventional they may be, but above all they are wonderful humans and patriots that we, as Americans owe our very existence to, not to exclude the debt and gratitude we owe each and every honorable Veteran and current member of every branch of our military forces.

On a personal note I volunteered for the Army and tested well in 1967, resulting in being offered a dream sheet, selecting Green Berets. Shortly before leaving my job for the Army, a WWII Navy Veteran from his South Pacific experiences convinced me of the "best military outfit he ever served with", and drove me to the USCG recruiting station in Atlanta, GA, where my hopes of becoming a Green Beret, became hopes of becoming a Coastie. I am proud of all our men and women who served in any uniform! -Semper Paratus



## Towns County Herald

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