

## DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

## OPINIONS &amp; COMMENTARY

## This is Towns County!

Kudos to those many who organized, participated and came to see our 68th Annual Georgia Mountain Fair Parade on Saturday 21 July. A rebirth, if you will of this community event, as this one with our WWII Veterans leading the parade as Grand Marshals, was the best yet! Those who worked out the many details began their heartfelt efforts in April of this year. Special thanks to Mr. Bob Cloer for his personal donation as enticement for float builders to do their best. Those floats were magnificent with cash awards given. Hiwassee Antique Mall, won First Place! It was people power however that made it work. Between our Veterans community, MANY businesses, TC Sheriffs, Hiwassee PD, officials, and Towns County residents it was bound to be good.

Many thanks also goes to Charley Andrews (USN RET), Terry Taylor, Hilda Thompson, Becky Underwood, Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw for organizing the WWII Veterans as Grand Marshals, the trolley and other transportation issues. With several issues to be worked out, the magnificent staff at Brasstown Manor, Shelby, Hanna, Bobbie, Gail, and Debbie certainly did their part in assisting our several WWII Veterans who have their homes there now. Many were the phone calls and visits to eliminate any scheduling issues and keep transportation on track. We were fearful of the weather after those all night storms Friday into Saturday AM. Many of us asked for God's help for good weather to prevail and all of a sudden, clouds cleared and the sun came out!

Our WWII Veterans aboard the tractor pulled trolley driven by Donald Hilscher, up front, are Bud Johnson (USN RET); Iwo Jima; Todd Kimsey (USN, Iwo Jim) and his wonderful wife Hellen; Martha and Stan Warth (USN); Shirley Sonnenfeld (USN); Frontz Goring (USAAF); and Raymond Anderson (USA). They were all thrilled as Towns County residents all came together to honor them as should be. As an aside, Raymond Anderson is a native of Towns County and his family donated the land for none other than Anderson Music Hall. Jack Bailey (USAF) and Charley both volunteered as assistants on the Veterans Trolley for our fine outstanding Veterans of WWII. These great folks are from that generation that saved America and indeed our civilized world. Never forget!

Many Veterans claim Towns County as home, as do many families of those who served America in uniform. VFW Post # 7807, American Legion Post #23 on Sunnyside Drive would love to recruit new members, especially younger Veterans for new ideas and participating in Towns County Community events as above. We also have several other VSOs under that same roof, VFW Auxiliary, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of American Legion (SAL) and Marine Corps League. Commanders Bart Rodgers and John Harkins would very much appreciate YOUR membership, help and participation.

There are so very many others who make these events possible and who continue to volunteer their time at the Fair. Thank you, Veterans, ALL of Towns County and visitors!

*Semper Paratus*

## Fall Webworms

Have you seen webs spreading throughout your hardwood trees? They can be unsightly and leave brown patches where the webs are. They are very common so let's talk about these little guys that are surfing their web.

There are two types of caterpillars that make webs in trees. Eastern tent caterpillars will make webs in the spring. Fall webworms will make webs in the late summer or fall, hence their very original name. Webworms will have one to four generations each year.

There are many different tree species that they will use to make their nest. Some of the most common host trees are oaks, persimmon, and sweetgum. They generally prefer to make their nests on deciduous trees over evergreens.

Webworms grow into a moth that has a one and a half inch wingspan. The wings are white and sometimes have black spots on them. The female moths will lay egg masses of up to 600 eggs.

The egg masses are covered in hairs, which protects them from predators. When the caterpillars emerge from the eggs they begin constructing nests on the ends of tree branches. The webworms will begin eating the new growth at the end of the branch.

The webs that they construct protect them from predators and some insecticides. As the weather gets cooler the caterpillars will burrow into the ground where they will pupate, the cocoon stage, and emerge as moths when the weather warms up again.

Webworms can heavily infest some trees. If a tree is heavily infested the webworms can completely defoliate the tree. Complete defoliation is not a common occurrence, but it is a possibility. Completely defoliating a tree will leave the tree bare and less attractive. However, deciduous trees are able to handle losing their leaves, because they will grow new ones back the next year.

In most situations it isn't necessary to remove the webworms from trees. The damage that they do is largely aesthetic. If there are some webs on lower branches that are easy to prune then physical removal of the branches is an option. If the branches are out of reach it is possible to use a long pole or rake to knock the webs out of the tree.

A pressure washer is also an option to remove webs from hard to reach places. Opening up webworm nests will expose them to the elements and enable predators such as birds, assassin bugs, and parasitic wasps to get inside and control the webworms too.

It is possible to use insecticides to control webworms. If you decide to apply an insecticide one containing Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) or spinosad will kill the webworms and not beneficial insects that are also nearby.

Broad spectrum insecticides like pyrethroids, which are any insecticide with an active ingredient ending with -thrin, will kill any insects it comes in contact with, and you will have to physically open the nest first so that you get good coverage. As always read the label before applying a pesticide so that you know how to properly handle and apply the pesticide. For more information, contact your local Extension office.

The Towns County Extension office is operating under reduced hours. The times that I will be in Towns County are Tuesdays from 8-12 and Thursdays from 8-5.

If you need to contact me please email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu or call the Union County Extension Office at 706-439-6030.

The Veterans' Corner  
Scott Drummond  
USCG Veteran



## Bear Necessities

If you live in the mountains long enough, you will eventually have a bear story to tell. Despite pressure from hunting and encroachment by human development, bears continue to survive, and some would say thrive in our mountains.

Bears are built for survival. They are powerful and agile omnivores. They have better eyesight than humans, excellent night vision and a phenomenal sense of smell. In fact, they can smell your bird feeder from miles away (a polar bear can smell a whale carcass from 20 miles). A bear's sense of smell is 2100 times more sensitive than yours. When they track that smell down, they can rip apart anything from a tree stump to your garbage can, although our bears usually carry away the entire container and carefully unpack it so they can explore its delicacies at their leisure.

I wrote "our" bears in the previous paragraph because we do have a certain feeling of kinship with our ursine neighbors. They are the original inhabitants of these mountains while we are merely interlopers. We do not hunt bears, or allow them to be hunted on "our" land.

Over the years, we have collected many bear stories and added them to the tales of our ancestors. One of my personal favorites is about the time when a bear borrowed our garbage can and distributed its contents across a thicket of mountain laurel. I spent nearly two hours picking up the disjecta membra of a 30 gallon container when I saw, illuminated by a single shaft of sunlight, my favorite old t-shirt hanging from a twig. My wife swears that she has no idea how that bear picked our lock, crept into the bedroom and removed that shirt from the bottom of the dresser without waking anyone up.

A few nights ago we added another bear story to the record. It was midnight on the night of the Blood Moon and the closest approach of Mars in 15 years. My wife and I and our two 100 pound pups walked out in the driveway with our flashlights, looking for the best view of the night sky.

At the side of our parking area there is an old wild cherry tree where we have suspended a bird feeder from a pulley in an attempt to put it out of reach of our friendly neighborhood bear. Our eyes were just beginning to adjust to the dark. We were about 10 feet from the cherry tree when we heard something move - above us in that tree.

As our flashlights flailed, we caught sight of a 200+ pound bear as she dove out of the tree and landed about 15 feet below, too close for anyone's comfort. I think she was just as surprised as we were and she took off like a rocket strapped to a bulldozer. When she was a safe distance ahead, our barking dogs, exchanging valor for discretion, took off after her.

I don't follow such things, but a friend who does told me that Mercury was retrograde that night. That's supposed to mean that plans can come undone. I think our bear would agree. Surprised, frightened and distracted by dogs, she ran straight

for the fence around our garden. The electric fence. When she hit the half inch rebar supporting the fence, it bent like a pipe cleaner, but the wire held and the fence delivered its charge.

The dogs barked. The humans yelled. The bear lurched and rolled in a tangle on the ground until she freed herself from the wire. She ran across the end of the garden - right into the electric fence on the other side.

Now our dogs know all about electric fences, having discovered long ago that touching (and in particular, urinating on) a charged wire is something to be avoided, so discretion once again superseded valor and they ran back to us, giving Ursula the Bear a chance to free herself from that diabolical wire. She jumped over the creek and disappeared over the mountain.

I've never seen nor imagined anything climbing our mountain that fast, but I imagine she spent the rest of the night calculating the risk versus reward ratio of a teacup of sunflower seeds.

We love our bears, but we also respect them. They are not to be trifled with, and in some situations they can be quite dangerous. But with proper care and caution, a bear can be a better neighbor than many humans we know.

We don't tempt our bears or set them up for failure. Organic refuse goes into the compost pile or an inside container, and if it won't compost, it goes into the freezer until we go to the transfer station. The compost pile is some distance from the house and the bear is quite adept at helping us keep it turned. Nothing but inorganic trash goes into the outside garbage can.

We never, ever leave the cat or dog food bowls outside at night or when we leave the property. Since bears are adept tree-climbers, any and all bird feeders are placed beyond any possibility of being reached by a grasping paw.

As you may have gathered from this story, an electric fence is very effective in discouraging a bear. Bears are quite fond of corn and pumpkins, but our garden has been unmoled since we installed the fence. A bear will shred a beehive and eat bees and honey, but a welded wire fence surrounded by an electric one has protected our bees for years - and for years the bear has dug up and eaten every yellow jacket nest in the meadow.

We hear stories of people who are frightened by bears doing what bears do. They shoot them, poison them or demand that "someone do something about" them. In all honesty, we prefer to have a bear as a neighbor than to live near such a person. As Rudyard Kipling said in The Jungle Book: "Now, don't be angry after you've been afraid. That's the worst kind of cowardice."

## 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.

## The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

## Free Rein Musings

A couple of good things about getting older are, well, getting to get older and not sweating the small stuff. As we old hippies used to say, "It aint nothing but a thang."

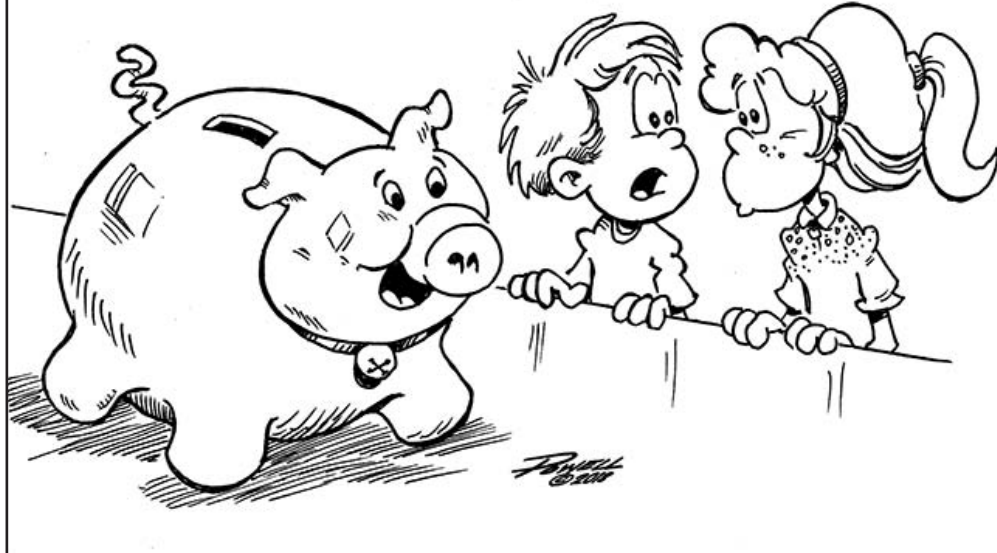
Return of the Natives - Because The Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge was rescued and is regularly tended, long time missing (and missed) native plants have returned and more are expected. The now friendly habitats, conducive for these natives to thrive, have been restored through The Battle of the Bully Creepers waged by the Hammies (volunteer garden terrorists). For now the invading thugs are at bay, but they always lurk and wait to launch another full-grown hostile takeover. It is sheer elation that the Natives have once again deemed The Gardens worthy of the pleasure of their company. That privilege had to be earned.

Listening and Learning - Performing tasks at The Garden while guests explore for the first time or for a revisit, has given opportunity to realize the varied reasons for a garden jaunt. Two people from Murphy, NC were scouting a destination to bring a group of widows. Most of their members were newly alone and felt more comfortable with others in their same circumstance. It was decided that spring would be a perfect time for the outing. A FL couple with a toddler in tow were visiting The Gardens as they always do when in the area. It has become a family tradition. It was the little one's first visit. They were thrilled with the improvements to The Garden since their last attendance. That was great to hear. Sometimes all we see is what needs doing and nothing of what's been done. Doting grandparents with an 11 year old grandson and a camera fully half his size, were there to nurture the next Andel family. The young man was in positive heaven. He had plants, birds, rocks, a lake for subjects and all the adoration he could handle. People who had lived in Towns County for four years had never heard of our garden until friends visiting from TN told them about it. They were all pleased and had a nice romp. That might be an exaggeration. Not the nice part. The romp part. Many lunches were shared in the shade of Paris Pavilion and most people were respectful enough to police their area.

The majority of info about The Garden told directly or overheard by chance was positive. Some a little less. The movie The Godfather recommends not letting anyone outside The Family know what you're thinking and Cosmo magazine (read when the small stuff was still sweated) taught not to point out your flaws to potential suitors because they may never have noticed if attention had not been called to them. The less than stellar tidbits about The Garden will be channeled appropriately.

Bring It Home---- Hamilton Gardens At Lake Chatuge. you've come a long way, Baby. Of course there is still much more to do. There always will be and then you get to start over. Hammies and Board Of Directors, take a bow. The show must go on.

"I put money into it, and never get anything out of it. Pop calls it the Government."



## Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	Every Monday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Every Tuesday: Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	Every Wednesday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Bridge Players	Every Thursday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	Every Friday: Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
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Mtn. Amat. Radio	First Monday of each month: 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	6:30 pm
Alzheimer's Supp.	First Tuesday of each month: McConnell Church	1:30 pm
American Legion	VFW Post 7807	4 pm
Hiaw. City Council	City Hall	6 pm
Young Harris Council	YH City Hall	7 pm
Quilting Bee	First Wednesday of each month: McConnell Church	10 am
Stephens Lodge	First Thursday of each month: Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Chamber Board	Second Monday of each month: 1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	8 am
VFW	VFW Post	5:30 pm
Historical Society	Old Rec. Center	5:30 pm
School Board	Auditorium	7 pm
Unicoy Masonic	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
CVB Board	Second Tuesday of each month: Civic Center	8 am
Gem & Mineral Club	Senior Center	1:30 pm
Arts & Crafts Guild	Calvary Church	4 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm
Basket Weavers	Second Wednesday of each month: SC Fire Hall	10 am
Awake America Prayer	Second Thursday of each month: Civic Center	Noon
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	6 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Last Thursday of each month: Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

Publication No: 635540

Advertising, News deadlines: Friday at 5 p.m.

Towns County (1 Year) \$25. Out of County (1 Year) \$30. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiwassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points. The Towns County Herald is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. Postmaster: Send change of address to: Towns County Herald, P.O. Box 365, Hiwassee, GA 30546.

Office located at: 518 N. Main St. Suite 7 "The Mall", Hiwassee  
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## Towns County Herald

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