

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

No Sweetheart Plea Deal

In an unexpected twist, Hunter Biden's sweetheart plea deal fell apart recently.



United States Congressman Representative Andrew Clyde

After reaching a plea agreement with his father's Department of Justice, Hunter was set to plead guilty to two federal misdemeanor counts of failure to pay federal income taxes, as well as enter a pretrial diversion agreement regarding a separate charge of illegally owning a gun while being a drug user.

In short, Judge Maryellen Noreika did not accept the DOJ-Hunter plea agreement due to concerns about its constitutionality. Specifically, the judge was uncomfortable with the diversion agreement related to Hunter's felony gun charge.

She rejected the portion which would require her to determine whether charges should be brought against the President's son if Hunter were to breach the diversion agreement. Judge Noreika ultimately believes such decisions should be made by the executive branch, not the judicial branch.

Additionally, Judge Noreika had serious concerns regarding the scope of Hunter Biden's immunity. Since prosecutors confirmed that Hunter is currently under active investigation, the judge was rightfully troubled with rubber stamping a deal that provides the President's son with blanket immunity for potential future charges.

At every turn, Hunter Biden has received suspicious special treatment — treatment no other American would receive.

Thankfully, Judge Noreika refused to turn a blind eye to the Department of Justice's blatant two-tiered system of justice.

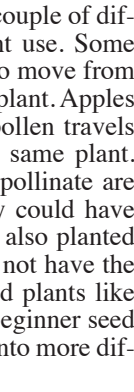
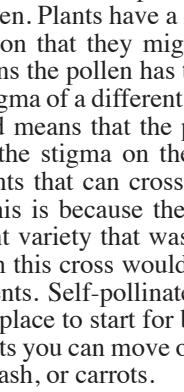
It's simple: Our government should never tip the scales of justice, especially if your last name is Biden.

As this court battle continues, please know that House Republicans are continuing our important work of investigating the Biden family's criminal behavior.

Unlike the corrupt DOJ, the House Republican majority is unwavering in our commitment to uncover the truth and deliver accountability to the American people.

Seed Saving

Seed saving is an old practice that has become less common in recent years. Before World War II seed catalogues that offered varieties of seeds from all over were not common, so if you planted a garden you would have to save your own seed each year to be able to plant again next year.



Very recently, seed saving has risen in popularity again as a way to become more self sufficient or to preserve old varieties of plants that otherwise would go extinct. It's also a great way to save some money on buying plants for next year. Let's talk some of the basics of seed saving today.

To save quality seed is a bit more complicated than simply picking seeds from the garden. Plants have a couple of different mechanisms of pollination that they might use. Some are cross pollinated which means the pollen has to move from the anther of one plant to the stigma of a different plant.

You want to harvest seed when the fruit has reached physiological maturity. To reach physiological maturity plants have to be allowed to grow beyond the stage where you would normally harvest them.

Storage of seeds is very important to maintain good germination rates and seed longevity. Seeds should be stored in a cool, dark place. Storing seeds in a refrigerator can add several years to how long a seed lasts.

If you have questions about saving seed contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu. There is also a seed saving starter guide on the UGA Extension website that has a lot of great information.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor P.O. 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.

Towns County Herald

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For the Million

Did you ever discover a treasure hidden right under your nose or in plain sight? An arrowhead you had stepped over a hundred times, a love letter written when your dearly departed parents were dating, waiting in an old shoebox for you to find it, or a dusty book with an unattractive cover, filled with priceless knowledge?

Outside The Box By: Dan Perry worldoutsidethebox.com

I found such a treasure while sorting and gleaning boxes of memorabilia taken from my childhood home. It was a book I remember gathering dust on the bookshelf in our den. It has a title sure to repel any sophisticated and worldly teenager: "Mathematics for the Million."

Math played a large role in my academic pursuits, though my abilities have admittedly atrophied. Like most of us who still use math at all, my synapses were reconditioned to handle spreadsheets and software. Still, I always loved geometry, which was my only hope as an adult clawing my untrained way toward understanding the basic procedures that are second nature to any professional carpenter.

So before I added the book to the donation pile, I cracked it open and flipped over to the first chapter. A passage caught my eye and I was hooked. I read, "...no society is safe in the hands of its clever people."

The book was written in 1937 by Lancelot Hogben, who was a British medical statistician and experimental zoologist. He was what we once called a "Renaissance Man" back when we could call a man such without offending anyone.

Professor Hogben expands on the purposes of his book in that first chapter, "Mathematics, the Mirror of Civilization." He writes, "Today the lives and happiness of people depend more than most of us realize on the correct interpretation of public statistics which are kept by government offices."

He continues with a historical perspective on math before diving into the basics, and then takes the reader on a journey from geometry to trigonometry, through calculus, logarithms and statistics, with practical applications for each discipline.

As much as I enjoyed the book, two things trouble me about it. First, that it was written in 1937. It was written for the benefit of the "average" citizen at the time, "for the million." The book is over 600 pages. The contents would today be considered college if not graduate level material.

The second thing that troubles me about the book — is that it was written in 1937. Long before the internet, when information was not tightly controlled by a handful of corporate entities, when public trust in government and all the institutions that enable a society to function, indeed, when trust in one's fellow citizens was much higher than it is today — Professor Hogben was concerned that the citizen was ill prepared to discern fact from fiction, truth from propaganda.

What hope do we have today, when a popular book written 85 years ago would be beyond the abilities of all but the most advanced students, when the study of math is actually discouraged by some, even by those positioned to decide the curriculum for a large number of students? It's not just the math. Every smartphone can perform in an instant any calculation found in Professor Hogben's book. What's missing is the ability to reason, to evaluate, to discern. What's missing is the tools of logic essential for separating fact from interpretation.

We're not going to acquire those tools by picking the websites and social media networks that agree the most with our preconceived notions and cognitive biases. Unfortunately that is how most of us acquire the information we need to navigate the world.

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Towns County Community Calendar

Table with 3 columns: Event Name, Location, Time. Includes: 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

National Fire Danger Rating

The National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) is a system that allows fire managers to estimate today's or tomorrow's fire danger for a given area. It combines the effects of existing and expected states of selected fire danger factors into one or more qualitative or numeric indices that reflect an area's fire protection needs. It links an organization's readiness level (or pre-planned fire suppression actions) to the potential fire problems of the day. Knowledge of these levels can help forest visitors make decisions about whether or not to have a campfire or ride their OHV in a grassy area.



RC&D Executive Director Frank Riley

Homeowners may choose to postpone burning a debris pile if they are aware of the fire danger level for that day. Contractors working in the forest may consider extra precautions when using equipment that might produce sparks. In some cases, the National Forest may even restrict certain activities based on the fire danger levels.

What fire danger factors are used to get the Fire Danger Rating? The key inputs into the NFDRS model are fuels, weather, topography, and risks. How is fire danger different than fire behavior predictions? Fire danger is a broad scale assessment while fire behavior is site specific. In other words, fire danger ratings describe conditions that reflect the potential, over a large area, for a fire to ignite, spread and require suppression action. Fire behavior deals with an existing fire in a given time and space, describing the movement, intensity, and indicators of rapid combustion of an ongoing fire. The "Adjective Ratings" are a public information description of the relative severity of the current fire danger situation in a general area.

Adjective Ratings are generally posted on signs as visitors enter public lands or at agency offices. Many people associate these signs as "Smokey Bear signs". What are the different levels and what do they mean? We use 5 different color-coded levels to help the public understand fire potential. The purpose of this is for visitors to understand the current conditions and help mitigate their actions to prevent human-caused wildfires.

Fire Danger Level: Low - When the fire danger is "low" it means that fuels do not ignite easily from small embers, but a more intense heat source, such as lightning, may start fires in duff or dry rotten wood. Fires in open, dry grasslands may easily burn a few hours after a rain, but most wood fires will spread slowly, creeping or smoldering. Control of fires is generally easy. Fire Danger Level: Moderate - When the fire danger is "moderate" it means that fires can start from most accidental causes, but the number of fire starts is usually pretty low. If a fire does start in an open, dry grassland, it will burn and spread quickly on windy days. Most wood fires will spread slowly to moderately. Average fire intensity will be moderate except in heavy concentrations of fuel, which may burn hot. Fires are still not likely to become serious and are often easy to control. Fire Danger Level: High - When the fire danger is "high", fires can start easily from most causes and small fuels (such as grasses and needles) will ignite readily. Unattended campfires and brush fires are likely to escape.

Fires will spread easily, with some areas of high intensity burning on slopes or concentrated fuels. Fires can become serious and difficult to control unless they are put out while they are still small. Fire Danger Level: Very High - When the fire danger is "very high", fires will start easily from most causes. The fires will spread rapidly and have a quick increase in intensity, right after ignition. Small fires can quickly become large fires and exhibit extreme fire intensity, such as long-distance spotting and fire whirls. These fires can be difficult to control and will often become much larger and longer-lasting fires. Fire Danger Level: Extreme - When the fire danger is "extreme", fires of all types start quickly and burn intensely. All fires are potentially serious and can spread very quickly with intense burning. Small fires become big fires much faster than at the "very high" level. Spot fires are probable, with long-distance spotting likely. These fires are very difficult to fight and may become very dangerous and often last for several days. You will see these fire danger rating signs around our area in front of fire stations, US Forest service offices, Georgia Forestry Commission offices, and in my sunflower field down on the river.

These signs are updated when conditions change to alert the public as to the fire danger, so pay attention to these warning signs and the homes you save might be yours and your neighbor's. For more information on the national Fire danger rating system, go search for National Fire Danger Rating system or go to the GFC at: www.gatrees.org or check Chatstatee-Chattahoochee RC&D at: info.ccred@gmail.com.

Letters To The Editor

Population Explosion

Dear Editor,

Towns and Union Counties are absolutely great places to live. The mountains are beautiful and the experience of living here is so grand that it almost defies description. But, I'm starting to be a little concerned about the population explosion.

Some officials are happy because more people and more sales bring in greater revenue through the collection of sales tax. Events are planned to assist in this goal. However, the traffic is getting to be problematic.

The sheer number of cars on the roads and the speeds at which they drive is disconcerting, to say the least. The campgrounds are full and overflowing. The campers, recreational vehicles and tiny houses are so close to each other in some facilities that it poses a hazard in case an emergency should occur. Campers and tiny houses are being placed on lots with existing residences and are being set up, or so it appears, as permanent installations.

The extra revenue from sales taxes, even if it were directed at infrastructure, cannot possibly keep up and repair our roads and bridges, add additional law enforcement and EMS personnel to keep up and meet the needs of the people. The same could be said about life flights when required to transport patients to larger facilities.

The huge influx of people may increase revenue in the form of sales taxes collected, but at some point, the wear and tear on our infrastructure, and the strain put on our First Responders, will leave its mark, and everyone living in our beautiful area will suffer because of it.

Gene Vickers

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