

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

The Answer is "Yes"

Dear Editor,
First let me say I am so thankful for the people who have written to the newspaper voicing their displeasure with the Georgia Mountain Fair Board and the Georgia Mountain Fair Authority in their unwillingness to work with Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge in negotiating a much-needed exclusive lease to continue operating, maintaining and improving the Hamilton Gardens, and ensure the opportunity for them to apply for grants of meaningful amounts to accomplish this.

In a couple of letters to the editor, some people have asked if the County could do something about this impasse to save the Gardens and the answer is absolutely Yes. The agreement the County negotiated with the Georgia Mountain Fair Authority in 1991 states the following: "GMF (Georgia Mountain Fair Authority) shall be responsible for the operation, maintenance, and upkeep on all the presently existing (a) camping facilities (b) pavilions (c) comfort stations (d) parking facilities (e) the boat launching ramp and (f) the rhododendron garden and greenhouse, including all costs for utilities which serve these facilities."

As previously stated in other letters to the editor, the Authority and the Georgia Mountain Fair Board allowed the greenhouse and other buildings to fall into a state of disrepair and be abandoned for use. The Agreement with the Authority goes on further to state: "...and in the event of any breach of any of the said conditions as to any part of said easement area, the County, its successors and assigns, shall have the right to re-enter and take possession of any and all of said easement area covered by this indenture and to hold, own, and possess in the same manner and to the same extent as if this grant of easement had never existed."

So, even though the current Commissioner was not in office at the time of this Agreement, the County as the primary lease holder of the TVA land, has the right and ability to terminate with a written 30-day notice the agreement with the Authority for their failure to abide by the agreement. Or, he could simply insist that they negotiate a reasonable agreement with the garden group that would allow them to continue to keep the Gardens in great shape. In addition, it is assumed that if the Commissioner did terminate the agreement with the Authority, he could then negotiate an agreement with the Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge, if he wanted to.

However, the Commissioner had been silent on this issue, even though many citizens of the community has voiced their displeasure with what has happened so far. Which begs the question, how does the Commissioner feel about the Gardens? Does he care about the Gardens for the enjoyment of the community and the tourism it brings to the county or does he prefer more camping sites too? It would be good if the citizens of Towns County could hear from the Commissioner on this issue and why he has not stepped in to resolve it to the best interest of the County.

Just as Towns County needs the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds to attract visitors and tourists, so it needs the Hamilton Gardens to do the same. And, the Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge organization has demonstrated over the past 5 years they know how to maintain the property and continually improve it for the enjoyment of all who come to this north Georgia County. I urge everyone to support this group in their fight to keep one of our best treasures going.

Douglas Canup

Who is in Charge?

Dear Editor,

Hamilton Gardens, Inc. was an example of open-to-all, garden and community-focused volunteerism at its best. Can the Lions Club and GMF improve upon their work?

In a nutshell, HGI was at a point where they needed an exclusive long-term lease to grow the gardens into a sustainable and well-funded entity.

It seems such an agreement was never in the cards. In a letter to the Towns County Civic Association in December 2020, the Garden Committee Chairman of GMF stated that in 1982 the GMF purchased a collection of rhododendrons from Fred Hamilton and constructed Hamilton Gardens.

This was news to many who thought they were donated to the County and that the County hired and paid an engineer to use county equipment to design the gardens and move the donated plants to the Towns County Park. Perhaps the newspaper can interview past county leaders for clarification.

He went on to state that the Towns County Commissioner does not have the authority to change the agreement between GMF and the County.

The Sole Commissioner has oversight responsibilities and requires annual audited GMF financial statements and must approve all construction on the GMF site. Prior commissioners have taken back many acres managed by GMF for various reasons.

Anyone concerned that GMF will continue to surround the Gardens with more campsites and pavement can ask Commissioner Bradshaw to exercise his authority over construction to stop such plans until they can be aired publicly.

Joe Lashley
Towns County resident and
Hamilton Gardens Supporter

Soon to be Told

Dear Editor,

It is soon to be told if Herschel Walker will run for the U.S. Senate. If he runs for the Senate like he ran for UGA Bulldogs he will be a star! By the way, as a high school student he ran for Wrightsville High School. Home was Wrightsville not Augusta. Let's hide the Towns County Herald if Herschel comes to town — he might be sensitive about his hometown.

Thomas Wolfe said "You Can't Go Home Again," but what could he know about Wrightsville? The hometown hero of Bulldog football was from Wrightsville and he is proud of being a Johnson County native.

Richard E. Hyer

Have something to sell?

Let the Herald work for you! Contact us at 706-896-4454. Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday by 5 PM



Fall Armyworms

Fall armyworms can be a menace to lawns, pastures, and grass crops such as corn and sorghum. They arrive every year in the late summer or early fall. This year we are expected to have more armyworms than usual, so let's look at what they are, how to spot them quickly, and what you can do for management of them.



Watching and Working
Jacob Williams

Fall armyworms have four life stages. They over winter in Florida, as they can only survive a mild winter. Each successive generation moves northward, causing a lot of damage as they advance. The females will lay egg masses of up to 700 eggs at a time. After coming out of their eggs the larvae, the caterpillar stage, will be about one quarter to three quarters of an inch long. The larvae go through six stages of development. Each stage eats more than the one before it. However, the final stage of larval development eats more than all the other stages combined. Armyworms take two to three weeks to reach the pupal stage, where they go into cocoons. After about a week in the cocoon the armyworm moth will emerge. These moths will travel further northward and lay eggs repeating the cycle.

Larval stage is when they will do damage to lawns, pastures, and grass crops. At this stage they can get up to 1.5 inches long. Their coloring can vary from light green to nearly black with dark stripes that stretch horizontally down the length of their body. Their most distinct characteristic and the best way to identify them is by the inverted Y shape on the head. The point of the Y is at the back of the head.

Signs to look for are flocks of birds in the morning and evening. That is when armyworms will do most of their feeding. During the heat of the day they will retreat to the thatch below. The armyworms will preferentially feed on tender green vegetation. Damage from armyworms can also look like thin brown patches. One method of checking for armyworms is to mix two tablespoons of lemon-scented dish soap with a gallon of water, and then pour that into a one square foot area. That will irritate the worms and make them crawl up so that they're more visible. The soapy water method works on all caterpillars, not just armyworms.

If you have a well-established lawn armyworms may feed on the grass but most likely will not kill the grass, however the damage is unsightly. The only effective way to control armyworms is through insecticides, and even then, control will be very difficult on full-grown caterpillars. Therefore, scouting early is essential. Sevin is an effective product that has been around for a while. Products containing Spinosad or Bacillus thuringiensis have organic options and good control of armyworms. Applying as late in the evening as possible is best because that's when armyworms will be the most active and pollinators the least active.

In pasture and hayfields use insecticides when you have over three armyworms per square foot. Products Lambda-cyhalothrin and zeta-cypermethrin are both effective but have a short residual. Dimilin or Intrepid will provide a longer residual but work best on smaller armyworms. However, they will cease to provide control after a rain. If armyworms are 1-1.5 inches then the window has passed for chemical control. Whenever using pesticides always read and follow the label before the application. If you have questions about fall armyworms contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

USCG Douglas Munro

It was a Sunday, 27 Sept 1942, 79 years ago. Just nine months after Pearl Harbor, our nation was at war. That day is a fateful day in the history of the Coast Guard. This very condensed episode of our nation's smallest military service couldn't be better represented, though often equaled, by anyone other than Douglas Munro. Our USCG, unknown by many, and even today those who simply don't know how great our Coasties, men and women, really are or what they do.



The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran

Coasties as such don't seek recognition. Far too laid back. Unassuming worker-bees. Coasties highly prize their individualism and the freedoms and liberties of the America they love. They just do their jobs, some times mundane, often boring and HARD WORK, occasionally very dangerous and often times serving in our never ending wars to preserve freedom. So by choice, I choose to honor our USCG "official birthday," this past week, by sharing an outstanding Coast Guardsman's story, one who gave his life for others. This short story is one that ALL of us Coasties can relate to. I never met a Coastie, regardless of rank or position that wouldn't do likewise, if the "chips were down."

During the Guadalcanal Campaign, U.S. Coast Guard Signalman First Class Douglas Munro was Officer-in-Charge of a detachment of ten boats which landed U.S. Marines at the scene. After successfully taking them ashore, he returned with his boats and learned that conditions ashore were different from what had been anticipated, and that it was necessary to immediately evacuate the nearly 500 Marines.

Munro volunteered for the job and brought the boats to shore under heavy enemy fire, then proceeded to evacuate the men on the beach. When most of them were in the boats, complications arose in evacuating the last men, who Munro realized would be in the greatest danger. He accordingly placed himself and his boats so that they would serve as cover for the last men to leave.

Among the Marines evacuated that day was Lieutenant Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, USMC, in command of 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. During this action, Munro was fatally wounded. He remained conscious long enough to say only four words: "Did they get off?"

He gave his life in the successful rescue, and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, to date the only Coast Guardsman to receive the decoration. His story, "Guardian Of Guadalcanal," is in print and readily available.

"Honor, Respect, Devotion to Duty" by Gary Williams is the Douglas Munro story. And is available at bookstores. On this 231st official birthday of our USCG, last week August 4, 2021, Doug Munro is an icon for each and every one of us who volunteered to serve our great America in the USCG.

I am personally honored and blessed to have served in our USCG. -Semper Paratus

Strange Days Part II

The vast majority of Americans think and believe somewhere slightly to the right and left of center. We are a reasonable, generous and thoughtful people, when we're left to our own devices.

We are not "woke," because we have already embraced the core values of our nation and have no need of a new and pejorative label. Most of us are aware to various degrees that Marxism has always failed as a form of government because it does not understand or accommodate human nature.

There are signs everywhere that Americans are growing weary of being told that everyone is racist or otherwise fatally flawed. Our mistrust of corporate media is at an all time high, though we haven't been able to overcome our addiction to it. Our interest in the panoply of woke celebrities is waning. Viewership of celebrity self-congratulatory shows is low. Professional sports viewers continue to decline. Even the Olympics has suffered dismal ratings, despite the desperate attempts of media to attach a racial component to some very human dramas. More people of color are speaking out to say, "I am not a victim, and you will not make me believe that I am."

The belief in Marxism has always festered in some academic circles, like an old wound that healed but left a scar. Critical Race Theory has a similar pedigree, coming to us in various forms from Germany in the 1930s. Some appear to embrace the principles of CRT without realizing that it follows the Marxist playbook for upending a society almost to the letter. There are others who embrace it because they realize its intentions all too well.

It's troubling that CRT and other manifestations of Marxist theology have appeared in corporate circles outside of the media monoliths. For example, why would Raytheon, the 5th largest defense contractor in the world and the world's largest producer of guided missiles, force employees to "oppose equality and embrace equity?" Why would any company which has reaped the benefits of capitalism embrace a philosophy which is toxic to free enterprise?

Because crony capitalism, is not capitalism. Giant corporations do not disappear in Marxist and fascist regimes, they simply become indistinguishable from government.

While there are hopeful signs that many are waking up from being woke, unfortunately this is not the trend among our youth, who are passionate, idealistic and impressionable. They are more susceptible to media than their elders (though not much more, it seems). But when media elites tell them something that is reinforced in the classroom, the deck is stacked against parents who wish to impart a more realistic worldview to their children. The family and the Church have lost a great deal of guiding influence on our culture, supplanted by media elites and their paid politicians. When culture is the enemy of the family, strange days are almost guaranteed.

*Strange days have found us
And through their strange hours
We linger alone
Bodies confused
Memories misused
As we run from the day
To a strange night of stone.*

Jim Morrison, The Doors

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:

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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.

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