

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Thank you, Hiawassee

Dear Editor,

On Wednesday, July 24th, at approximately 4:45 PM my husband was involved in an accident on Bell Creek Road in front of the 5-dollar store. Both my husband and I know that there is so much bad publicity regarding public servants, namely police, firefighters, and EMS, that we want to publicly say "thank you".

The Hiawassee police officer who responded, Detective Brandon Barrett, has been a wonderful example of professionalism and kindness. He was so helpful in taking control and getting information from bystanders, etc.

Hiawassee is blessed with some of the finest, you should be proud of your public servants.

To those Firefighters and EMS, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the care you took to get him to the hospital in a timely fashion. I did not get your names, but I am sure you know who you are. You were just doing your job but to us it was more than just a job.

To those by-standers who stayed to help I also thank you. In a day and age where no one wants to get involved, I so appreciate you staying and helping. That says a lot for the citizens of this area. We consider ourselves blessed to live in Hiawassee, GA.

Sincerely,
Les and Sue Thorpe

The Sound of... Boats?

Dear Editor,

Please respect Lake Chatuge for what it is. It was started in 1941 and completed in January 1942 as a reservoir storage lake by the Valley Authority (TVA). The water was to provide flow to hydro-electric dams downstream that ultimately supplied power to the Oakridge, TN area for a Top Secret classified WWII project.

The TVA always intended the lake to become a recreation lake. In 1944 Clay County leased land, the lake was stocked with fish, and the lake became designated a recreational/vacation area and remains so today. In 1954, a small generator was added to the Chatuge Dam.

Wing N It does not endanger people or property. Doing so would endanger their passengers, the highly trained pilot and the airplane. The area of the lake Wing N It uses is not an airport. Due to safety considerations, wind, current and traffic, the location of the landing is at the discretion of the pilot. The customers are here at Lake Chatuge. Wing N It makes Lake Chatuge a unique tourist destination.

Wing N It is not a commercial airline. FAA designates them as an Air Tour Operator. They do not make connecting flights to major airports, nor do they transport passengers to different locations. There is not 15,000 acres of lake available to land a seaplane due to high terrain, bridges, power lines and small coves. Wing N It pilots have FAA required commercial pilot's license (rating) and extensive training in seaplane operations and boating regulations.

Wing N It rents the dock they use. There is no provision to service or keep the airplane here so the choice is to return to its home base.

Many people that use our swim beach, don't pay taxes here. Check out the tags in the parking lot. Often local residents can't get in the beach parking lot, let alone find room on the beach. Taxes or fees are not collected for many of our public attractions.

Custom stereos (cars & boats) put out 140 decibels; jet planes at takeoff: 120; car horns 110; lawn mowers, hairdryers and blenders 90 decibels. Yes, that is noise pollution and we all put up with it or tolerate it, on a daily basis. This "crusade" to ban the seaplane begs a question: If it succeeds, what will the group seek to ban next?

Please respect Lake Chatuge for what it is: A lake that has been designated as a recreational area since 1944, open to all the people. That was before most of our residents were born or before they moved here.

My home lies directly in the approach and departure flight path of Wing N It. The sound of boats on the lake often drown out the sound of the seaplane. I wave at them as they fly over.

John L. Holmes
Hiawassee resident

Plastics

Dear Editor,

"I just want want to say one word to you ... are you listening? Plastics. There's a great future in plastics."

In 1967 I had no idea how profound that icon line from the movie "The Graduate" would become. During the next 52 years I have witnessed a steady and subtle transformation in our everyday lives, one that we've taken mostly for granted. Plastics have become ubiquitous. They are found everywhere, in packaging for the food we buy, the water we drink, tools, toys and even the fibers of the clothes we wear. They are also in the bellies of whales, the trash along our roadsides, and mountains of landfill garbage.

Unlike other forms of waste, plastics do not decompose. Once they get on our land, in our lakes and our oceans they will be there forever. The next time that you get single-use plastic bags at the checkout, cups, plates and utensils at the fast food restaurant or drink bottles at the convenience store, take a moment to think about how you will be leaving most of that plastic for our children's, children's children and beyond.

I'm not suggesting that all plastics are bad. Our lives are made better by many plastic products. Just look around and become aware of the every day single-use plastics that can easily be substituted with reusable water bottles, drink cups without straws, and other reusable or recyclable items that can reduce the amount of plastic waste that is fouling our planet.

I'll close with another quote, this one from that denizen of the Okefenokee Swamp, Pogo Possum. When it comes to single-use plastics, "We have met the enemy, and he is us."

David Best

Have something to sell?
Let the Herald work for you!
Contact us at 706-896-4454
Deadline for the T.C. Herald is Friday by 5 PM

Tears In the Rain

The final scene of the iconic 1982 science fiction thriller, Blade Runner, is given to Roy Batty, played by Rutger Hauer who passed away in July. Hauer's character says, "I've seen things you people wouldn't believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser Gate. All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain. Time to die."

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Last week we were working on the gate at the end of our driveway, and the sweat glittered on our brows while we were distracted by the task at hand. A car slowed down and a neighbor spoke to us from the window. We had not seen her for months, and she brought the sad news that her husband had passed away recently.

Our neighbor and her husband were relatively new to the valley, and we had been "meaning to" visit them again, had spoken of it several times, had driven by without knocking when the house looked empty, and had utterly failed to follow up on our good intentions.

I remember how happy he was to have made it to the North Georgia mountains and how interesting his stories were in our brief visit. I'm sure his family will preserve and cherish his memory, but to us, the opportunity to better know our neighbor and share in his life experience is gone forever.

Opportunities are abundant in our lives, but they are ephemeral, and often invisible. When they do appear, they tend to manifest as a "cubic centimeter of chance," and if we are not alert and agile enough to grasp them, they are lost to us.

I keep with me a few "talismans" of thought to remind me to stay alert. One of these is the memory of an opportunity lost. When my ailing mother asked me to stay another night in the family home at Christmastime, I did not know that it was her last Christmas. I don't remember what was more important at the time. I don't remember much of the previous night, which was in fact the last holiday night we spent together, but I'll always remember the loss of the opportunity to spend one more night.

There is an arrowhead on my dresser that teaches and sometimes lectures me. It was crafted with great skill and attention to detail. The concentration necessary to create a tool of such beauty and efficiency must have been remarkable.

I know nothing of the hand that created it; will never see the face of the person who wielded it or know the stories he could have told. The adventures, the triumphs the failures, the loves and the fears, the wisdom of the life he lived, all of these are gone and forgotten, like tears in the rain.

But I do remember the day I found that arrowhead. I remember the trip across the mountain to our grandparents house. I remember my grandparents singing in the kitchen and the sweetbread my grandmother made. I remember the whole family spread out across the freshly plowed field, hunting happily for the opportunity of an arrowhead to appear. I remember the joyful shouts whenever we found one.

Sometimes the most valuable opportunity is the chance to make a memory. My arrowhead reminds me to continue the hunt as time plows on, ever alert for the opportunities that may be unearthed.

Great Georgia Pollinator Census

The Great Georgia Pollinator Census (GGPC) is coming up soon. GGPC is a new event aimed at bringing awareness to pollinators and collecting real world data on the impact that they have. This is a brand new event that has never been done before. Let's talk about the pollinators, and talk about GGPC and how you can participate.



Pollinators have come into the public's awareness a lot more in recent years. Often times when people think of pollinators honeybees come to mind. Honeybees are certainly very important pollinators, but there are also other pollinators that are needed as well.

A lot of our native bees are better pollinators than honeybees are, but honeybees get the edge because of their quantity. Honeybees are important pollinators, but I'd like to talk a little about some native pollinators because they are often under appreciated.

Native bees are usually solitary insects, meaning they don't operate in a colony with other bees. These native bees range from tiny bees in the Perdita genus to large carpenter bees.

These native pollinators are very important for the pollination of many native plants. Native bees most efficiently pollinate crops like pumpkin, squash, blueberry, eggplant, and tomato. Building a nest for native bees is pretty simple and you can find the instructions at extension.uga.edu and searching for "publication 1125".

Generally, bees will have furry bodies that can be used for trapping pollen. You may observe a bumblebee traveling from flower to flower completely covered in pollen. Native bees are generally very docile and are unlikely to attack people. Native bees will often make homes in the ground and holes in trees left by other insects.

The Great Georgia Pollinator Census will be taking place on August 23-24. The idea is to have people all over Georgia out counting the number of pollinators that they see over a 15-minute period on a single plant.

We'll also be taking note of the different types of pollinators that you see. We'll be on the lookout for carpenter bees, bumblebees, honeybees, small bees, wasps, flies, butterflies/ moths, and other insects. You don't need to be a master beekeeper or entomologist to participate in the count.

On the 23rd at 10:30 AM, I'll be at Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge to talk some about the importance of pollinators and how to identify the different types of insects that we'll be looking for.

After talking, we'll go out into the pollinator gardens there and start counting. If you can't make it to Hamilton Gardens on the 23rd don't despair! You can still participate in the census on your own at any time on the 23rd and 24th of August.

After completing your count, you can go online and upload your data. The website ggpc.org/ has more information about the pollinator census. I am looking forward to this event and hope that you decide to come and join us.

If you'd like to know more about the pollinator census contact your county Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.



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:

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO 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 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
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Sunday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Conv./Vis. Bureau	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
USCG Aux.	Senior Center	7 pm
Hiaw Writers	Second Thursday of each month: Hiaw Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
Awake America Prayer	Civic Center	Noon
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	6 pm

Publication No: 635540

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

Towns County (1 Year) \$25. Out of County (1 Year) \$35. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, 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, Hiawassee, GA 30546.

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Towns County Herald

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