

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Soap Sally

You'd better stay close to us or Soap Sally will get you. Mama, don't tell her that." The memory of the exchange between my mother and grandmother isn't exactly vivid but it is stuck with me for over 60 years or more. "Who is Soapy Sally?" I asked.

My Appalachian grannie was only too happy to introduce me to the hag that roamed the mountains in search of wandering children. "If little children don't stay close to their parents, Soap Sally steals them and makes..." My mother quickly diverted the conversation so that her mother could not give me the full, gory scoop on old Sal. My mother knew if I heard the entire account of that long-told Appalachian lore, she'd have me sleeping with her and my dad until I was 30. If you've any interest in just how evil Soap Sally was, you'll have to Google her. The havoc she spread is too gruesome for our local publication.

Did you know that a spider webbing down is an omen of unexpected company? well now you do. Of course everybody who is anybody knows if a black cat crosses ones path, bad luck will befall. If the ebony feline darts across the road while one is in an automobile, a lick of the finger to make a quick X on the wind screen, will circumvent the ensuing siege of mishaps. In my youth I heard if you sweep under someone's feet it will make that person lazy. Even at a tender age it seemed if a person sitting on its fanny had to lift his or her feet so the floor could be swept, that person was already a bit lazy. I did not point that musing out to my grandmother. Placing a hat on a bed, well let's just say do it at your own risk.

Not all tales from my heritage are cautionary. As a kid, my parents moved several times. Each time we left a house, my mother cleaned that sucker from top to stem. It was her gift to the new occupants. She also left a penny (heads up) over the front door to bring them good luck.

Appalachia is not the only culture to rely on oral histories to explain and control. It has been occurring for centuries. The fore-runner to Soap Sally was the fairy tale Hansel and Gretel, teaching children to stay close to home for safety. Walt Disney's movie, Bambi, was lauded and loathed for its cruel reality. Appalachian parents could not park the kids in front of the TV for Mr. Rogers to raise while they planted, cooked, hoed, reaped, and sewed. They loved their babies and did what had to be done.

I don't believe everything my grandmother told me but who knows, maybe I'm here every thing to opine because I stayed close. Soap Sally wouldn't dare go near a child under the watchful eyes of an adult who loved her.

See you around Towns.

### Around Towns

Dale Harmon



## It's Everywhere, Safe, and On Sale

Hang on, my good neighbors. It's going to be a bumpy ride today with some sharp turns. Some of you may get angry, but that's OK. It's good for the circulation.

I don't know your names, but I'll wager I know a thing or two about you.

If you're like me and the tailgate of your truck is the workbench you use most often; if you have more pairs of boots than dress shoes; if there is a sharp knife in your pocket, a worn out pair of White Mule gloves on your bench and a fishing pole or a shotgun or both in the corner of your shop, then you might need to hear this.

My unscientific survey of anecdotal evidence and years of observation tells me that you are the ones most likely to buy a jug of weed killer at the Low Depot and apply it generously.

There's that sharp turn I warned you about, and yes, we're going there again.

If you're about to stop reading, please hang on for a little bit longer. Chances are that no one you know and love has fought a battle with cancer.

Yet, if you do know someone who has fought that battle, you may be more likely to take a look at the mounting evidence that glyphosate and a number of other herbicides (and pesticides for that matter) can make you sick.

If you want science, there are scores of epidemiological studies available which point to the hazards of certain chemicals. You don't even have to go that far. Just read the MSDS or Manufacturer's Safety Data Sheet that is (supposed to be) available in every workplace that uses chemicals.

No, the problem is not science. The problem is one of marketing and "tobacco science." How many years did Big Tobacco tell us that smoking was safe? They had the studies to "prove" it too. And the marketing. "More doctors smoke Camel than any other cigarette."

Who would have guessed that baby powder could have caused ovarian cancer? Johnson and Johnson didn't lose a multi billion dollar lawsuit because they were simply mistaken. Like Big Tobacco and Bayer/Monsanto, they lost because they knew better and covered up that knowledge.

Successful marketing by huge corporations works because it impacts us at a cultural level, and that kind of manipulation has been making hard working people sick for decades. We walk into the Low Depot in the early summer and the first thing we see is stack after stack of Roundup. It's everywhere. It's commonplace. It's on sale.

Organizations we trust tell us that it's safe. We love the BRMEMC here. We trust them to keep the lights on and we admire the heroes who climb a pole or go up in a bucket in the wind and rain and lightning. It must be safe if the power company is spraying mile after mile of right of way. They've got the scientific studies that tell us it's safe, provided by the TVA, and the TVA is part of the government, which we all trust.

The DOT and the GDOT believe that widespread spraying of thousands of miles of road right of way is safe too. And the EPA, which is entirely trustworthy and knows better than the courts, hundreds of studies and dozens of nations which have banned glyphosate, also says it is safe.

It's everywhere. It's safe and it's on sale. But just to make sure that those of us who are most likely to be concerned with weeds in the lawn or along the fence line will not hesitate to pick up an extra jug of spray, we are influenced on a psychological level as well. Only a wimp would be afraid of a little spray. It's always the tree huggers, the hippies, the communists, or the liberals who are concerned about the environment.

Marketing of certain products has long relied on subtle manipulation of our male egos, and sometimes we are easy marks. I'm reminded of the good natured ribbing I took as a young wildland firefighter when I used my safety gear. It was hot. It was uncomfortable. It was wimpy to use it. But today I don't have emphysema or bronchial asthma or heart disease like some of my former co workers.

The problem with weed killer goes even deeper. My great grandmother "brush broomed" her yard. With a bundle of sticks or a rake, she would scour away any blade of grass or living thing. There was a practical reason for this. The snakes had nowhere to hide.

But for generations now, marketing has convinced us that our lawns have to look like golf courses. Look at the happy children playing on the ChemLawn. One squirt of spray on the evil dandelion and next thing you know, the puppy is chasing the ball. You've got clover in your lawn? Aren't you afraid of the bees that will come? You know there's a spray for that, right?

We do things a little differently at home. We encourage native plants to grow. Native plants build and stabilize soil. When it rains, our creek runs clear, but a couple of miles down the valley it turns brown with sediment. We let most of the leaves lay where they fall in October.

The leaves add organic material to the soil and we have many times the number of butterflies every summer than can be found on the golf course. Thousands of lightning bugs light up our cove in the summer. Hummingbirds patrol the jewel weed, the joe pye weed, the larkspur, the ironweed and the succession of native blooms that cover the meadow.

Keep spraying that creek bank and you may not need the fishing pole in the corner of your shop. Even corporate science admits the danger to fish posed by certain weed killers. Now we're hearing that the honeybees are threatened too. Glyphosate impacts their gut bacteria and lowers their immune systems, but corporate science has a good corn syrup to replace the honey on your biscuit.

We live in, arguably, a free society. We still have the right to smoke, but not the right to blow it in someone's face. We can still buy Roundup and any number of lawn and agricultural chemicals, but the battle lines are drawn and the tactics are similar to the tobacco battle our parents fought.

Is it possible hundreds of scientists, dozens of nations and several juries are wrong, and the chemicals in question are safe, or less dangerous than some people think? Sure it is.

But how much are you willing to gamble on that possibility?

## The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

## Fescue Endophyte

In this article, I'm going to be talking about fescue and its use in pastures. Fescue is a very commonly grown pasture grass around here. It is a cool season grass, which means that it does best in the spring and fall. Hot, dry summers are difficult for fescue and will stress it out. Fescue can be an excellent source of forage for livestock. Unfortunately, fescue also has a dark side to it that creates problems for livestock that graze it. I'd like to talk about what causes those problems, and things that you can do to mitigate them in the pasture.

An endophyte can grow in fescue. An endophyte is a fungus that lives inside a plant. If livestock consume too much of the endophyte they'll get what's called fescue toxicosis. Symptoms of livestock that have fescue toxicosis are reduced conception rates, decreased weight gain, decreased milk production, constricted blood flow to extremities, elevated body temperature, heat intolerance, excessive nervousness, and failure to shed winter coats in the spring. Generally, fescue toxicosis doesn't kill livestock directly, but it will weaken them and leave them in an unhealthy state. In horses, the worst effects of fescue toxicosis are in pregnant mares, because they are very sensitive to it and it can cause late term abortions, or thickened placentas. Even very low levels of endophyte can cause fescue toxicosis in equine.

The endophyte does not spread by infecting nearby uninfected fescue plants. It spreads because the endophyte actually benefits the plant by making it more drought tolerant and more persistent under grazing. Therefore, if you have planted fescue that is endophyte free, after a few years you can expect your pasture to be full of endophyte-infected plants, because the endophyte makes the fescue more resilient. Because of this, I would say that it's safe to assume a pasture is endophyte infected, unless you know that you have planted either endophyte free or novel type endophyte recently.

Novel endophyte means that the fescue still has an endophyte in it, but with the bad parts of it taken out. Fescue with novel type endophyte in it that UGA Extension recommends are MaxQ and Texoma MaxQ II. The novel endophyte will have the increased drought tolerance and grazing tolerance, but not make livestock sick.

Another option that many producers use is mixing fescue stands with orchardgrass. Orchardgrass is a very good quality forage that is also a cool season grass. Mixing stands means that livestock will consume less of the endophyte so they will be healthier. An issue with this is that fescue is more persistent than orchardgrass under grazing conditions. It will usually thin after 2-3 years and need renovation. Orchardgrass is best established on a prepared seedbed. The varieties of orchardgrass that UGA Extension recommends are Olympia and Benchmark Plus.

Another strategy is to dilute fescue stands with legumes. Clover provides excellent forage quality, so it is able to balance out negative effects from fescue endophyte. White clover is a perennial that can be used. The UGA Extension recommended varieties are Durana, Patriot, and Renovation.

UGA does not test plants to see if the endophyte is present. You can send samples to the labs at The University of Tennessee for testing. However, as I said before, unless you know that you have recently planted novel type endophyte fescue, my money would be on it being infected.

If you have more questions about fescue toxicosis go to [georgiaforages.caes.uga.edu](http://georgiaforages.caes.uga.edu), contact your county Extension office, or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).



## Letters to The Editor

### Look Mom & Dad, There's the Beautiful Seaplane

Dear Editor,

I took my first airplane ride about 65 years ago. It was in a seaplane, on Cedar Lake in Indiana. We were not wealthy but my father scraped up the money during our camping vacation to give the young boy a memory. The faded memories of that seaplane ride affected my life. I am a pilot, aircraft mechanic, and an aviation industry executive til' this day.

Since that seaplane ride, I have been trained on a lot of aircraft and their systems, from Navy helicopters to commercial jetliners to the space shuttle. I have met with Russian Cosmonauts, Space Station inhabitants, and American moon walkers. I am an aviator, maybe because of that first seaplane ride.

Aviation industry experts say that the world will need over 800,000 new pilots and about the same number of new aircraft mechanics over the next 20 years. There is already a shortage of aviation workers. That shortage could impact availability of flights and certainly the cost of an airplane ticket. Educators and governments around the world are trying to interest young kids in aviation. Adults must help generate interest in girls and boys to fly and fix airplanes.

The next time you want to comment about the seaplane think about the wide-eyed youngsters looking down on the lakes and mountains, from the seaplane. They may be tomorrow's airline pilots, military aircraft operators, and space explorers. One day they will fly you to see your grand children or to your next ocean cruise. That occasional sound of the seaplane overhead is our way of sharing the beauty of this region and maybe impacting the lives of future aviators. Take a child for a ride in a small airplane. That will likely soften your attitude about the occasional beautiful seaplane passing over the lake.

William Johnson

### Seaplane Issue Exposes Failings at Local Level

Dear Editor,

I, too, am exasperated by the noise generated by the seaplanes, which have taken up residence, only on weekends, on Lake Chatuge. I came to Hiwassee to enjoy life in a tranquil, mountain town. I treasure the natural beauty of Towns County, and appreciate how, until recently, county leadership has been a good steward preserving the splendor and quiet of our beloved county. I do not live on the channel where Wing N' It taxis and launches its aircraft, and our home is screened from the direct noise. Nevertheless, we are jarred each time the planes leave and approach their dock, and rev for take-off. The unfortunate homeowners near where the plane operates are suffering much more severely. I have also experienced first-hand the horrendous racket which assaults residents and visitors to Clay County Park, Hayesville in that otherwise lovely, peaceful, lakeside haven. When appeals to State and Federal agencies (DNR, TVA, FAA), for relief produced shrugs and "we can do nothing" responses, residents went to their local government. The TVA Act explicitly reserves local land governance issue for local control. However, instead of addressing the issue affecting local property owners and taxpayers, Sole Commissioner Bradshaw has, so far, dodged, danced and wrung his hands. Commissioner Bradshaw should advocate for the residents of Towns County. Instead, he seems more vested in the interests of a fly-in outfit from Gainesville, bent on exploiting loopholes, abusing Lake Chatuge, and leaving nothing but frayed nerves and a diminished Towns County in its wake.

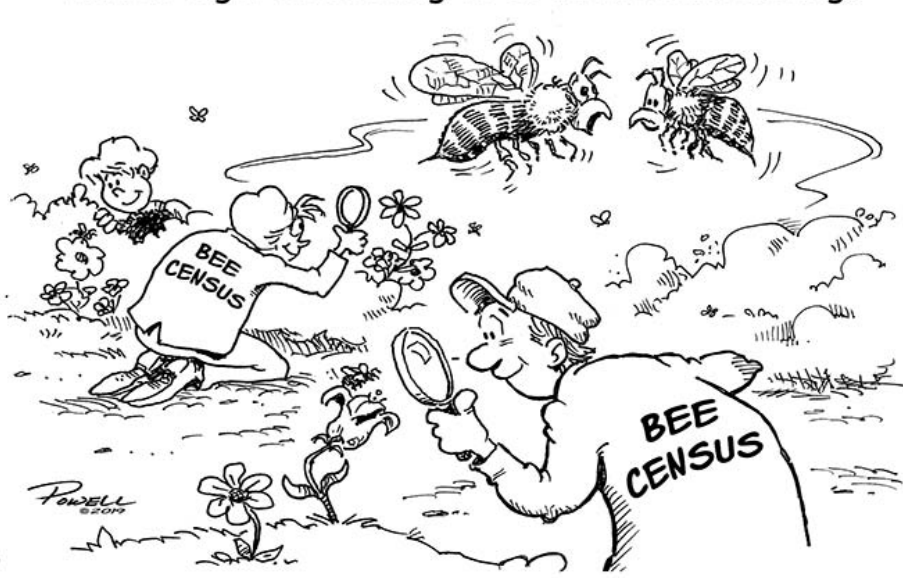
The second failing lies with the business that embraces the menace of Lake Chatuge. The Ridges Resort hosts the seaplanes on one of its docks. The Ridges should have a stake in preserving what makes Chatuge and Hiwassee unique. Instead, it clearly has no problem being a bad neighbor and welcoming a business to its property which torments the neighbors. That tells me a lot about The Ridges. I ask Commissioner Bradshaw to step up to the duty he has to Towns County residents, and for The Ridges to return to the community of good neighborliness -- a hallmark of Towns County.

Gregory Beyer

Editor's Note:

Towns County does not currently have a noise ordinance.

"I'm sure they mean well, but I still think it's got something to do with redistricting."



## Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	<b>Every Monday:</b> All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	<b>Every Tuesday:</b> Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	<b>Every Wednesday:</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
Bridge Players	<b>Every Thursday:</b> All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	<b>Every Friday:</b> Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	<b>Every Sunday:</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
YH Plan Comm.	<b>Third Tuesday of each month:</b> YH City Hall	5 pm
Co. Comm. Mtg.	Courthouse	5:30 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Blairsville store	5:30 pm
Water Board	Water Office	6 pm
Quilting Bee	<b>Third Wednesday of each month:</b> McConnell Church	10 am
Book Bunch & Lunch	Daniels Steakhouse	11:30 am
Friendship Comm.	<b>Third Thursday of each month:</b> Clubhouse	6 pm
Republican Party	Civic Center	5:30 pm
Goldwing Riders	<b>Third Saturday of each month:</b> Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
Red Cross DAT	<b>Fourth Monday of each month:</b> 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
Lions Club	<b>Fourth Tuesday of each month:</b> Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Hiaw. Writers	<b>Fourth Thursday:</b> Hiaw. Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
Hiaw. Garden Club	Clubhouse	12:45 pm

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## Towns County Herald

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