

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

This and That

Sunday, September 9, 2013 our American Legion Post #23 under the roof of VFW Post #7807 hosted our American Legion Ninth District Department of Georgia meeting. Our AL Post Commander, John Harkins worked hard to put this event together and many volunteers from ALL our VSOs attached to our post gave of their time and money to make this successful. And successful it was with guests from all over the northern half of Georgia. This is history for our American Legion Hiawassee Post #23 as this has never occurred before. Thanks, John!

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



Yes, we have a lot of older folks making up our ranks with mean, nasty afflictions like arthritis and such prevalent. However there was nothing but good humor, smiles, warm handshakes, prayers and short but sweet speeches concerning Americanism and various community projects.

Many high ranking officials, past, present and future leaders of our American Legion were present and we all enjoyed a wonderful luncheon donated by Daniel's Steak House. Thank you, Danny! If you are a Veteran and don't belong you need to sign up. If you are a wife, husband or even kin to a Veteran you are probably eligible to be a member of our AL Auxiliary or Sons of American Legion (SAL). If you qualify as above and ride a two or three wheeler you can also join our American Legion Riders (ALR) who are a great, energetic safety oriented group of riders. And NO you do not have to ride a Harley! All bikes and trikes welcome.

Along this same line of thought, this past September 16 was American Legion Day. The resolution for this honorable day was overwhelmingly passed through both houses of our national Congress. It needs to be noted that the official charter for our American Legion was issued by Congress on September 16, 1919.

Here's only a tiny facet of what our Legionnaires have done in addition to serving America in uniform: We provide aid to wounded warriors, their families and just as here in Towns County we volunteer for various community projects. One of our most honorable projects we co-opt with Towns County High School is sponsoring promising young men for attendance at Boys' State. Our American Legion Auxiliary also sponsors young ladies for Girls' State. America's GI Bill of Rights was established by Legionnaires at the Mayflower Hotel years ago. That is considered to be one of the greatest pieces of legislation ever passed into law by many Americans. Anyone desiring more detailed information on our AL can go to our website, Legion Town, USA. At any rate type in American Legion on your browser and you will be pleasantly enlightened. Be sure to research Boys' State and Girls' State while you are browsing.

And let's remember that only one short year away is our American Legion Centennial whereas one of our most Patriotic American organizations, our American Legion will reach the grand old age of 100 years, on September 16, 2019.

Semper Paratus

Seasons and Reasons

The season is changing. Summer is almost gone. My thoughts are on perennials. Both flora and fauna. They're alike. After wintering unseen, they'll return in spring for fun. Some in the herb garden where the aromas and flavors will be enjoyed.

Dishin' Dirt
Dale Harmon



(Some in the shade and sun gardens where the brown of winter will be replaced by varying shades of green and a multitude of colors. And some will return from the state of Florida. Many mountain people call them Snow Birds but I prefer Perennial Neighbors. Just like my plant friends, I miss them when they're gone. Anticipate their return and enjoy the stay until they leave again.

The season is changing. Autumn is almost here. Soon the green leaves of summer will morph into obicular (round), deltoid (triangle), ovate (egg shaped), lanceolate (long & narrow) and cordate (heart shaped) kaleidoscope patterns. When hang time is over the color will fade and corn-flake crisp leaves will cover the ground. The cold, dormant period comes. Plants are no longer growing. They conserve their energy by using stored sugars and carbohydrates they produced during the growing season to survive the winter. The naked starkness of many trees is natural sculpture at its finest and is more beautiful and intriguing than any human-made art. How lucky we are for seasons.

E-dusted from the archives Aug. 22, 2013:

Loose female in Towns County

An incident occurred recently in idyllic Towns County, in fact right here in the City of Hiawassee. I feel it is my duty to report it to the public. On Monday last, the flashing lights of patrol cars grabbed John's and my attention as we wended our way down Chancey Drive. Calls about the loose female traipsing wantonly down Bell Street had come in early. Law abiding citizens demanded she be apprehended before the activity she was conducting became wide-spread. The attractive, headstrong girl with big brown eyes showed no respect for the voices of authority. Officers, hoping to keep this an isolated violation, deemed physical action necessary. She demonstrated no malice as an officer (who apparently had some prior history with this type of behavior) placed an arm around her neck and led her from the kudzu field where she was happily chomping. She is currently being held in a neighboring pasture. She appears to be content and shows no remorse for her morning "crime" spree. I just love living here.

Letters to The Editor

Please Excuse Our Signs

Dear Editor,

PUP (Prevent Unwanted Pets) members have heard a few complaints about the many signs on the square in Hiawassee promoting our biggest fund-raiser of the year on a recent weekend. We are a small group concerned about controlling dog and cat domestic and feral populations by helping Towns County residents with the cost of spaying and neutering. No one in the organization gets paid, so all the money we make goes for the animals. Our signs were bought many years ago, but we have promised the Mayor we would buy a banner for next year so there would not be "sign clutter" in the middle of town.

Thanks to all who participated in making a success of our mum sale, rabies clinic, pet blessing, and VFW Auxiliary hot dog sales. If you need help call 1-888-496-2387. This is the kindest way to end animal overpopulation.

Joan Crothers, Operation PUP

Towns County's Firewise Sparkplug

The nationally acclaimed Towns County Firewise program started in 2008 during an 800-acre fire on Cedar Knob Mountain in Young Harris. When Billy Snipes told a group in Colorado that our biggest fire was 800 acres the comment was made that it would be a camp fire out there, but to us it was a big deal that we want to try to prevent here. A one-acre fire can be a major disaster if your house is sitting in the middle of that acre! After that "camp" fire, local, state and federal agencies began working with community members to get them involved at a grassroots level. They did this by telling the people who live in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) the story about the risks of wildfire in their neighborhoods. The fire agency representatives who started Firewise, Ready-Set-Go & Fire Adapted Communities in Towns County soon realized that we were the only ones pushing the fire safety issue and if we quit pushing, the momentum would roll to a stop, no one would notice, and people would go back to business as usual assuming that the wildfire was something that only happens in California and they would worry about it when a fire happened. One got so close in 2016 that we could see & smell the smoke, but our memory is short.

RC&D
Frank Riley
 Executive Director



The fire agency representatives recognized that wildfire risk is very real and could happen anytime, so in 2013, we passed ownership of these programs to the Towns County Firewise Citizen's Coalition that is made up of the citizens at risk and who the programs are designed to protect. The coalition took ownership of the Firewise, Ready-Set-Go, and Fire Adapted Communities programs and since has developed a grassroots network and built leadership to keep the programs alive into the future. The Citizen's Coalition has been led, developed, and driven by our "Sparkplug" Marsha Elliott who recently passed on to her next project in the heavens. Marsha will be Heaven's gain and our loss because she was an inspiration to all who met her. The Fire Adapted Communities program is, as one of our members put it, "a way of life and an attitude" and is a never-ending process that will continue to grow and evolve if people live in the WUI. The Towns County Firewise Coalition consists of six citizens and three agency representatives, all dedicated to wild land-fire safety and public education. The agencies represented are: Georgia Forestry Commission, Towns County Fire Rescue, and U.S. Forest Service. These are the folks who will stand between you and a wildfire. Supporting the coalition is an ex-officio group providing technical expertise, resources and funds as needed. The Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council was awarded grants to fund the activities for the wildfire education programs. These funds originate with the US Forest Service because the agency believes that it is cheaper to prevent wild fires than to try to put them out and a forest where a fire didn't happen looks a whole lot better than one where it did. When the surrounding communities are safer from wildfire the risk to the National Forests is greatly reduced saving the tax payers the cost of fire suppression and restoration plus reducing losses for communities around the forests. As control of Towns' RSG and FAC programs passed to the coalition, the development team took the lessons learned in Towns to jump-start new Fire-Adapted Communities in surrounding areas using the FAC, Ready Set Go, and Firewise learning network to build these programs. Plans are to spread the programs that started here in Towns County across the south. Our Appalachian RC&D FAC Coalition is an offspring from the Towns County Coalition. This Appalachian project covers from Northeast Georgia through Western North Carolina and into Southwestern Virginia duplicating the Towns model in at risk communities. The first year was so successful that we were recently awarded increased funding to continue our work educating citizens who live in communities in harm's way. When additional funds become available, our coalition will expand the Appalachian FAC project to the western side of the Appalachians in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Southwestern Virginia.

Our success is due to the dedication of our engaged citizens and especially to our "Sparkplug" Marsha Elliott who directed our work and never admitted that something couldn't be done. Marsha guided the coalition around obstacles and won over skeptics and created the largest number of Firewise communities in any county in Georgia. Towns now has 22 Firewise communities out of the 94 for Georgia.

A program such as this must have a spark from a Sparkplug like Marsha and be properly fueled by the citizens that it is designed to protect, and once ignited, it will spread on its own through local grassroots channels. Help us fuel this fire, become the spark or a sparkplug like Marsha, get involved and become Firewise! Your life may depend on it!

Thank you Marsha for all you did for Towns County!

For more information on Firewise, Fire Adapted, or Ready-Set-Go! Contact us at: www.info.crcd@mail.com or www.Chestchattred.org or www.appcofac.org or on Facebook: Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D.

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.*

Changing Leaves

Every year during the fall you'll see leaves start to change colors. In the mountains the array of colors can make a glorious sight. But why don't evergreens lose their leaves, and why are there all the different colors? Let's talk about it so that as the leaves change this year you can show off your scientific knowledge to your friends!

UGA extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Firstly, leaves can change color for a variety of reasons. Disease, drought, nutrient deficiency among other things are all reasons why leaves can change colors. In the plants cells there is a chemical called chlorophyll. Chlorophyll is crucial to the plant. Chlorophyll converts the light energy into chemical energy in a process called photosynthesis. That chemical energy is used by the plant for growth and reproduction. If you eat a plant then you're ingesting that energy too. If you eat an animal that has been eating plants you're still ingesting that energy. Photosynthesis is an amazing process that is one of the biggest building blocks of life.

The chlorophyll can absorb many wavelengths of light. However, the green wavelengths are not absorbed but reflected. This gives leaves the green color that we see. Next to the chlorophyll in the plant leaves there are other chemicals that serve as a buffer to protect the chlorophyll. These other chemicals are pigments and they absorb the wavelengths of light that would be dangerous to the chlorophyll. These pigments vary in the color that they reflect from yellow to orange.

As the temperature starts to drop and the days get shorter, chlorophyll will start to break down in the leaves and stop converting light energy to chemical energy. During the growing season, there is so much chlorophyll in the leaves that the green color overpowers the pigments yellow to orange. However, with the chlorophyll beginning to break down the pigment's coloring begins to show through. Different species of plants will have different levels of chlorophyll. The mixing of chlorophyll and pigment will result in the different colors of leaves that we see in the fall. The weather can affect the intensity of the leaf color. Colors will be more intense with rainy and overcast days.

While the leaves are changing color the tree will also begin to create a special layer of cells at the point of attachment for the leaf to the tree. This layer of cells will seal the tree off from the leaf so that an open wound is not left when the leaf falls by its own weight.

Not all trees lose their leaves in the fall. Evergreens such as pines, hemlocks, and firs to name a few have a thicker coating of wax around their leaves. All leaves have a thin coating of wax that is used to protect them from drying out. On evergreen trees, the wax coating is thicker and can protect the leaves through the winter. Evergreens will still lose leaves, but they don't lose them all at one time. They'll completely replace all of their leaves over a period of 2-4 years.

If you have agricultural questions or please contact your local County Extension Office. You can also send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu. Enjoy the leaves this fall!

Towns & Union County Extension are having a Master Gardeners training course that will begin January 29th. This is a 10 week course that will teach about horticultural practices and includes volunteer opportunities. The cost is \$175. Contact your local Extension office for more information or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

"Now there go some real heroes!"



Towns County Community Calendar

	Every Monday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
	Every Tuesday:	
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
	Every Wednesday	
SMART Recovery	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Thursday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
	Every Friday:	
Movers & Shakers	Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Sunday:	
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Third Monday of each month:	
Hospital Auxiliary	Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Planning Comm.	Civic Center	6 pm
	Third Tuesday of each month:	
YH Plan Comm.	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
	Third Wednesday of each month:	
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
MOAA	Call Jeff @ 386-530-0904	
Book Bunch & Lunch	Daniels Steakhouse	11:30 am
	Third Thursday of each month:	
Friendship Comm.	Clubhouse	6 pm
Republican Party	Civic Center	5:30 pm
	Third Saturday of each month:	
Goldwing Riders	Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
	Fourth Monday of each month:	
Red Cross DAT	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
	Fourth Tuesday of each month:	
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
	Last Thursday of each month:	
Humane Shelter Bd.	Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

Towns County Herald

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