

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Creatures of Habit

Money had to be procured and appropriated. If it is true that money makes the world go 'round, then lack of it can stop the world mid-spin. Perseverance and buckets of sweat equity paid off. The tribute was planned and executed with love and gratitude. Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge was the fitting spot for a living, lasting monument to a person who had worked tirelessly for Towns County in more capacities than most people know. She loved this area and it loved her. If you've lived in or near Towns County long enough, you probably know that I'm talking about Marsha Elliot. If you haven't and you don't, I am.

Around Towns
Dale Harmon



Gardens, of any size, are more than poke, soak, and okie doke. They take tending. Tending is both doing what's good for its inhabitants and preventing what isn't.

In decades of living, I've found good habits harder to make and bad habits harder to break. Habits, both good and bad, often become rituals and create patterns. When one sage-green, soft-to-the-touch lamb's ear in Marsha's Garden began to yellow and sag, and the one on the opposite side thrived, flora troubleshooters were flummoxed. The ailing plant worsened just weeks away from the dedication of the Tribute Garden.

Comparing notes, it was learned that many of us working at the Gardens often had been tasked with scraping and hosing dog poop from the front walkway in the same spot, repeatedly. The bee line to the dying plant just inside the border of Marsha's Garden put the feces and pieces of the puzzle together. It was then observed that a gentleman (I use that word out of generosity) regularly walked his dog on the same walkway where the canine habitually "did his business". The pattern followed to the sweet lamb's ear, the victim of unfortunate watering. The numerous "Garden Property, No Dogs Allowed" postings went ignored. When confronted, the human wagged his tongue that this pet was on a leash and that he cleaned up after it. Only half of that was true. It posed the question, how does one remove urine from a plant in a garden? The dog wagged his tail.

With no time to replace the now defunct plant before the dedication, it was removed, leaving a hole softened by mulch. Grace Howard had a sign reading "Dog Urine Kills Plants" made and installed where a happy plant once lived.

Coco, a mountain gorilla, was taught sign language and to communicate with people. She even requested and received her very own kitten. To my limited knowledge, dogs can't read. The edicts, they are not requests, of The Gardens are not arbitrary. Reason dictated. The dog here was blameless. The man who allowed the murder is not. Now, you tell me, just who is the creature?

R_E_S_P_E_C_T.....Pass it on. See you around Towns.

North Georgia Firewise USA meeting

October 15th at 1 PM, the Towns County Citizen's Firewise USA Coalition will hold their monthly meeting at the Towns County Rec Center. All citizens who are interested in reducing their risk of a wildfire in their backyard are invited to attend, and especially the leaders of any recognized Firewise USA communities no matter what county. We are here to help take the worry out of Firewise USA renewals. Georgia has 108 recognized Firewise USA communities across the state and Towns County has 22 of them! This is a testament to the dedication of our Citizen's Coalition. The meeting will be an update on Firewise USA, the current wildfire situation around here, Ready-Set-Go, and other wildfire risk reduction programs. There will be computers set up at the meeting for community members to enter their Firewise USA annual renewal information so bring your username and password for Firewise USA. Coalition members will be available at the meeting to help navigate the new Firewise USA website and portal in order to enter annual renewal information. Refreshments will be served.

RC&D
Frank Riley
Executive Director



The keynote speaker will be Shawn Alexander, recently retired from the Georgia Forestry Commission as the Fire Management Officer for North Georgia. Shawn was responsible for managing all firefighting activities in North Georgia for the Georgia Forestry Commission. As soon as Shawn retired he began contracting with communities for Firewise mitigation work in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). He knows from many years of hands-on experience how to prepare your home to better survive a wildfire. The first job, or challenge, we gave him was to tackle Tate City and he has been creating defensible space around buildings and reducing the risk of property loss in preparation for the next wildfire that could sweep over the community. This defensible space buys time until the volunteer fire departments can get to your house and gives the firefighters a safe place to defend your home.

Tate City survived the wildfires in 2016 because of quick work by a large group of wildland firefighters from across the country. We may not be that lucky again so the community is taking steps to reduce the wildfire risk before the next one comes blowing in (and it will). The Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D Council has been awarded grants to fund these mitigation activities and is administrating the grants for these programs. These grant funds is originating with the US Forest Service because the agency believes that it is cheaper to prevent wildfires in and around the communities around their forests than to try to put them out after one gets out of hand.

The Towns County Citizen's Firewise Coalition, who is sponsoring the meeting, is made of local citizens and fire agency representatives who are the very people most at risk from a wildfire and responsible for protecting the communities in north Georgia. The coalition has taken ownership of the Firewise, Ready-Set-Go, and Fire Adapted Communities programs in Towns County and developed the grassroots network and leadership to keep the programs alive well into the future. 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 as long as people live in the WUI. Fire Adapted is an umbrella encompassing all agencies and groups responsible for preventing, suppressing, and preparing for the eventual wildfire that WILL happen one day in our communities. The Towns County Citizen's Firewise Coalition consists of six citizens and three agency representatives, all dedicated to wildland fire safety and public education. These members and agency representatives will be at the meeting to answer questions and discuss one-on-one any wildfire issues or concerns you may have. It all started right here in Towns County and the spotlight is on our area from across the country. A program such as this must have a spark and be properly fueled by the citizens that it is designed to protect, and once ignited, will spread on its own through the grassroots channels. Help us fuel this fire, become the spark, get involved, come to the meeting on October 15th and become Firewise. Your life may depend on it!

For more information checkout www.chestchattrcd.org or www.appecofac.org or www.firewise.org.

A Little Advice

"Take my advice, Don't listen to me," is the first line in the old song, "Hippie Dream," whined by Neil Young. Most people love or hate Neil and/or his music. Naturally your author is somewhere in the middle, and Mr. Young has penned some unforgettable lyrics. So in that same spirit, we decided to write an advice column this morning, inspired by the good natured ribbing of a friend. My recommendation would be to heed our advice and ignore it in equal measure.

Why should you listen to advice? Because you have a first class intelligence. A first class intelligence hears the truth, recognizes it as truth and then acts on it. A second class intelligence hears the truth and then verifies it through personal experience. A third class intelligence must repeat the lesson. We all want to fly first class.

Should you take advice on relationships? Maybe. It depends on the track record of the giver. If your well meaning friend is on her fourth marriage, simple math would suggest that her best advice is more likely to be on finding a good divorce lawyer rather than connubial bliss. Besides, there are thousands of books available on the subject, though their best advice may very well be on how to get a book published. If you're too busy to read and you don't have any happily married friends to advise you, perhaps I can save you some time. There are two kinds of relationships. For the scientifically minded, we'll call them ionic and covalent, like the chemical reactions.

In an ionic bond, one molecule has a positive charge and the other, negative. Think of sodium chloride, or table salt. In an ionic relationship, both parties "need" something. "He completes me," is the motto of the ionic relationship and "opposites attract" is the rallying cry. Ionic bonds tend to be soluble in water, like salt, and ionic relationships have a tendency to dissolve in stormy weather.

In a covalent bond, the molecules are not attracted by a missing electron. Instead, they share a pair of electrons equally. Think of carbon, which has an extremely strong bond. Apply enough pressure and you may produce a diamond.

In practice it's difficult, at a glance, to tell a lump of rock salt from a diamond in the rough. That's what dating is for. Just don't marry the first lump that comes along before you weather the first storm. We'll bring our experimental counseling session to a close today with some practical advice. Think back a few weeks ago when you were complaining about how much rain we were getting. Betcha wouldn't mind a shower or two right now. But you're not going to get one for a while, not until that big high pressure dome over the southeast decides to move on. Here's the practical advice: Pray for rain. Get your property fire wise right now. This dry spell could last a while. Rake those leaves and trim that brush and clean out those gutters.

Here's some advice for the future: Don't complain about the rain, ever again and for the rest of your life. Develop the art of gratitude. Some people believe this may actually attract rain. But even if it doesn't, the art of gratitude makes you a much nicer person to be around on a rainy day.

The Middle Path
By: Don Perry
onthemiddlepath.com

Composting

Composting is a popular and effective method to improve the quality of your soil. It can also help you get rid of lawn debris such as grass clippings or leaves as they are beginning to fall. Composting is not difficult to do, but here are some tips so that you can start your own compost pile.

UGA Extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Compost is rich, dark humus that is the end product of the natural decomposition of plants or plant products. Using a compost pile will speed up the natural decomposition of plant material. Compost can improve soil drainage, structure, and help hold water and nutrients. The nutrients in compost will not be enough to replace fertilizing, but it will improve soil health.

You can use just about any organic material for composting. Leaves, grass clippings, twigs, old annual or perennial flowers, old vegetable plants, straw, and sawdust can all be thrown into the compost pile. Try to avoid using insect or disease infested plants to reduce the spread of those plants the following season. You can put things like kitchen peelings and coffee grounds into the compost pile too. However, be careful because adding too many of those things will attract animals. Avoid using highly processed foods because these will take longer to break down.

When making a compost pile, it's helpful to have something to contain it. A lot of different materials can be used from wire, fencing, wood pallets or concrete blocks. Leave some open spaces on the sides for ventilation. Good air circulation is important for successful compost. The bottom of the pile needs to be open to the soil to allow good drainage. Construct your pile in an out of the way place in your yard, in full sun.

Once you've constructed your container for the compost pile, start adding organic matter. Smaller pieces will decompose more quickly than large pieces of organic matter. Once you have a layer of organic matter in there add in some garden soil or animal manure. These will add fungi, bacteria, insects, and worms to the pile. They're the critters responsible for breaking down the plant material into the humus that you add to your garden. You'll want to keep the pile moist, but not soggy.

Sometimes a concern with compost piles is that there might be an odor. If you turn the pile with a shovel about once a month this will reduce the smell. A good functioning compost pile will heat up from the activity of the microbes decomposing organic matter. The heat produced will kill off the odor causing bacteria. If you add manure to your pile there will be some initial odor, but as the pile matures the smell will go away. A well maintained compost pile should not have a strong odor.

Once the compost has a crumbly earth look and you can no longer recognize the plant material it's ready to be added to the garden. If you add the organic material over time the compost will become ready a little at a time. If you have questions about creating or maintaining your compost pile contact your local Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

On September 26, Union County Extension is hosting a Radon Education Program at 5:30 in the Union County Civic Center. Call 706-439-6030 or Email me to RSVP.

The Towns-Union Master Gardeners are having their annual Fall Plant Sale on September 28 at the Union County Farmers Market. Stop by to get some perennial plants that are adapted to our climate.



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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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.	Every Friday: Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	Every Saturday: Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Sunday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	First Tuesday of each month: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alzheimer's Supp.	First Tuesday of each month: McConnell Church	1:30 pm
American Legion	First Tuesday of each month: VFW Post 7807	4 pm
Hiaw. City Council	First Tuesday of each month: City Hall	6 pm
Young Harris Coun.	First Tuesday of each month: YH City Hall	7 pm
Quilting Bee	First Wednesday of each month: McConnell Church	10 am
Stephens Lodge	First Thursday of each month: Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Red Cross DAT	Fourth Monday of each month: 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
Lions Club	Fourth Tuesday of each month: Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Hiaw. Writers	Fourth Thursday Hiaw. Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
Hiaw. Garden Club	Fourth Thursday Clubhouse	12:45 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Last Thursday of each month: Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

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