

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## September 29 National VFW Day

Very similar in structure and mission to our American Legion is our VFW, here in Hiawassee chartered as VFW Post #7807. The VFW was established on September 29, 1899 by Veterans of the Spanish-American War and Philippine Insurrection.

**The Veterans' Corner**  
 Scott Drummond  
 USCG Veteran



Today the VFW is our nation's largest group of combat Veterans with a continuing motto, "to honor the dead by helping the living." Patriotism, goodwill, youth scholarships, military assistance and community service are paramount to VFW organizations across America. If you are a qualified Veteran, please come by our post on Sunnyside and at the very least sign up for membership. Remember if you are VFW qualified, you are also eligible for American Legion membership. These two VSOs (Veteran Service Organizations), including our Auxiliary organizations and Marine Corps League, are top notch insofar as Patriotic American values are concerned. Many more non-Veteran Americans could also very well be qualified to be a member of SAL. Come visit our post to inquire. The fellowship and educational benefits are well worth the yearly dues. Plus membership numbers of any and all of our VSOs weigh heavily on the minds of those we elect to represent us in Washington, DC. Very dog-gone important!

Here's just one example of a very special event sponsored for members and guests at our post. There was hardly a dry eye amongst us as several of us recited what 9-11-2001 meant to or did to us, as Americans. And the pot luck dinner was wonderful! There was a fantastic turn-out for our 9-11 remembrance ceremony and pot-luck dinner. We were fortunate to have our Commissioner, Cliff Bradshaw on hand to say some encouraging words. Prayers were said by our Chaplains, Dwight Moss, Scott Drummond and Katie Harkins. I didn't do an actual head count but I'd guess we had between 50 to 60 veterans and guests in attendance. There was an abundance of delicious dishes and I hope all had a good time. Thanks to all who attended and particularly Brenda Hoyt, Renate DeBold and Kim Boltz who did most of the setup and Bill and Susan Bongiovanni who did most of the cleanup. (Bart Rodgers, Commander).

Thanks to all for their work in making this happen! During the same time frame as our AL District 9 meeting, Bart and a cadre of our VFW members ventured over to Clayton to participate in VFW District #2 meeting. State VFW Commander Tony Dobbins chaired this important meeting. Issues brought to the forefront were membership (PLEASE JOIN!), and various community service projects. Amongst those of interest to those of us in Towns County is the "Voice of Democracy" program for students at our amazing Towns County School, which kicks off this very week. Those young folks who participate could teach us all what we may have forgotten about our America's greatness. They are our future and we are proud of them. We here in Towns County, GA are blessed in so many ways that we often take for granted.

*Semper Paratus*

## Falling Leaves, Gathering Memories

Spring cleanup on the farm is a fine thing, full of energy and anticipation, but I prefer the fall, mellowed by reflection and slowed by caution for that undiscovered yellow jacket nest and the snake looking for a place to soak up the morning sun.

Autumn cleanup is subject to the welcome interruption of having to stand perfectly still while the wind catches falling leaves, plays with them like a cat with a string and discards them just as abruptly.

Fall is a favorite book in a series. We read it more slowly and savor it because we don't want the story to end. Some passages we read over and over until they are committed to memory: Coffee on the front porch on a crisp morning; crunching leaves under deep blue skies in crystalline air; stars, more visible at night, and unlike the winter skyline, you can enjoy the view without shivering.

September ripens and Joe Pye, jewel weed and iron weed are slowly replaced by goldenrod and aster. We pause to watch hummingbirds jousting around the feeder as they tank up for their long journey south. We don't want them to leave, but the nights grow colder, the flowers fade, and one day soon our valiant little friends will hover one last time by the window as if to say, "Thank you," and "See you next year."

Fall cleanup this year began with a neglected little corner of the farm which had collected brambles and dead branches, a half wild area at the bottom of our driveway with cherry trees, sumac and locust. Memories gathered there also.

It was there long ago that my dad and I setup a bee yard. He said that the hives would catch the morning sun there, and the bees would discourage curiosity seekers from entering the barn just beyond. In his later years he would bring a chair and sit near the entrance to the hives to watch the bees coming and going. He could gauge the health of the hive by the traffic, and determine what plants they were working by the color of the pollen on their hind legs.

Dad and I had many conversations in that bee yard. Some pieces of land just seem to be conducive to conversation. Under a big maple tree at the edge of that space Dad would visit with his friend, Jack Dayton, our long time county commissioner, when Jack was in the valley. In the late afternoon the cool breeze from the mountain would flow down an old woods road, through the mountain laurel and under the tree where the two old friends met to revisit their younger days.

Years ago when the road bank at the edge of this plot was bare, I would occasionally find an arrowhead after a rain. Finding an arrowhead gives one pause, especially in the fall, when the signs of change and decay are inexorable. Thousands of years ago someone spent hours to fashion a tool to feed a family, most likely with no thought at all that someday far into the future his creation would be someone's curiosity or trinket.

What, if anything, will remain of our creations of plastic and particle board, even 20 years from now? Every year there is less of the Americana of the southern Appalachians. The old houses and barns, personal creations of oak and chestnut and heart pine, more durable than what we build today, sink slowly to the ground to disappear forever.

I've been asked on occasion why "you people" don't clear away your crumbling old barns and buildings. The simplest answer is that "it's none of your business." But if anyone really wants to know: Old things hold memories. If we're lucky enough to stay on the land, there comes a day when the calendar and the ache in the joints tells us that it isn't prudent to climb a ladder to nail the tin back on the roof. We would pay someone to do it, but money is tight on a fixed income.

It doesn't bother us much, though we sometimes long for the old days when the old barn was new. There is a kind of quiet dignity in decay. It is as natural as the falling leaves, and the old things that make way for and nourish the new. This will happen without any effort on our part to hurry it along.

Yes, old things and old places hold memories, and not every corner needs to be cleaned up right away, and not every piece of ground has to look like a golf course.

The modern world wants everything to be neatly cropped and categorized, and so effective is our masking of the real with the virtual that we have forgotten that chaos and decay are as natural as the changing seasons.

Leaves fall; barns fall more slowly. Trees grow where there were once fields and the bulldozer of modern life turns the forest to field once again. Time turns the bulldozer to rust.

These thoughts all occurred in the time it took the sun to move beyond the limb that was shading me, and I had to smile, remembering my grandfather who would interrupt his morning routine to simply stand and look at the mountain. The old hive stands got cleared away, the brush was piled and the grass mowed. All traces of the old bee yard are gone now, but the memories remain.

**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.*

## The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

## Wells and Flooding

A lot of people around here use well water. Drinking water from a fresh mountain well can be very refreshing. While it may seem like well water is a pure source it's important to know that there are some ways that it can be contaminated. One of those is by flooding. We have had a lot of rainfall this year and our neighbors to the north have experienced a lot of flooding, so it's good to know what flooding can do to your well so that you can maintain that pristine mountain drinking water.

**UGA extension**  
 Watching and Working  
 Jacob Williams



After a flood event the first thing to do is inspect your well. Check the well head to see if large debris has struck that could loosen or displace well materials. It's also possible that sediment has been deposited in the well if the well is not properly sealed. Shallow wells (less than 50 feet) and wells more than 10 years old are more susceptible to contamination from surface water that contains bacteria and other contaminants.

The second item to inspect on your well is the electrical system. Make sure that the electrical system is OFF, either at the breaker or that it is unplugged. Check for moisture in the pump's electrical box and have the wiring checked by a qualified electrician if the electrical system was flooded.

The third and final thing to check is the well pump. Sediment and flood water can damage the valves and gears of the pump. Contact a licensed water well contractor or certified pump installer for assistance in cleaning and repairing the pump. If the pump is not properly cleaned and lubricated it can burn out.

Surface water from floods can carry bacteria that contaminate your well. Before using the well, remove the flood water from the well. To do this, determine the depth of the water in your well. Measure the distance from ground level to water level. Subtract this number from the well depth to have the depth of water. Multiply the depth of water by the storage capacity per foot or your well. If you don't know this value contact the company that installed your well or your local Extension Office. Now you have the volume of water in your well. Run an outside faucet to discard 2 to 3 times the volume of water in your well. If your pump can't maintain the flow long enough to discharge all the water, let the well recharge and begin pumping again until you have discharged the recommended amount of water.

After you have discharged the well, follow the protocol outlined in the UGA Extension Circular 858-4 for shock chlorination. Shock chlorination will only be effective if the source of contamination has been removed. Flush the well again in the same manner described earlier using an outdoor faucet. If you use an indoor faucet you run the risk of highly chlorinated water in the septic system killing the beneficial bacteria.

Finally test your water for Coliform bacteria. The Extension Office has kits available for testing your water. Contact your local Extension Office for more information on Coliform testing or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).

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](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).

## Letters to The Editor

### Congress Should let Medicare Negotiate

Dear Editor,  
 President Trump has promised to lower drug prices, but nearly two years later prescriptions are still really expensive. No one should have to choose between filling a prescription and paying for groceries or rent, but sadly this is the reality for far too many of America's seniors.

The Medicare Negotiation and Competitive Licensing Act (H.R. 6505) is a commonsense reform to lower drug prices for America's seniors while making sure seniors keep access to the medicines they need.

When we vote this fall, we should remember who supports Medicare negotiation and who does not.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Gierach

### Response to Respect Lake Chatuge Letter

Dear Editor,  
 Lake Chatuge was built as a flood control facility and a recreational lake. That includes "Open Lake" designation for use by seaplanes that require additional approvals from the FAA, TVA, DNR and others. That is what Lake Chatuge is and we should be proud and RESPECT what we have available in the selection of recreational activities available to our residents and visitors. There are very few other lakes in the State of Georgia that can offer as much.

Pilots are required to undergo extensive and continuous training, Ground school, flight school, flight training, type certification (for each aircraft), commercial license, seaplane rating and boating regulations. Periodic check rides, in each type of aircraft, with certified flight instructors, are also required.

Operators of water craft are NOT required to do any training of any kind. It is only suggested and voluntary. That is not enough and the results on the lake are obvious. A search for any incident involving a seaplane as described in the "Respect" letter revealed none recorded on Lake Chatuge or anywhere else.

The "narrow inlet" referred to is the main channel in that part of the lake. It was utilized recently by two large twin engine water bombers to fight forest fires in our area. The pick up speed was approximately 90 MPH, with about two minutes between planes. They did not suck up any swimmers or paddle boarders.

There are many people that enjoy the sound of a high performance engine doing what it was designed to do. The noise, music, traffic and confusion is all a part of living in or visiting a recreation and vacation area. Here in the good old USA we have the freedom of choice to come and go and do whatever we desire. Please, do not put restrictions on any of that.

If it is peace and quiet you are seeking, there are roads that will allow you to go find such a place.

John L. Holmes  
 Aircraft, boat and car guy

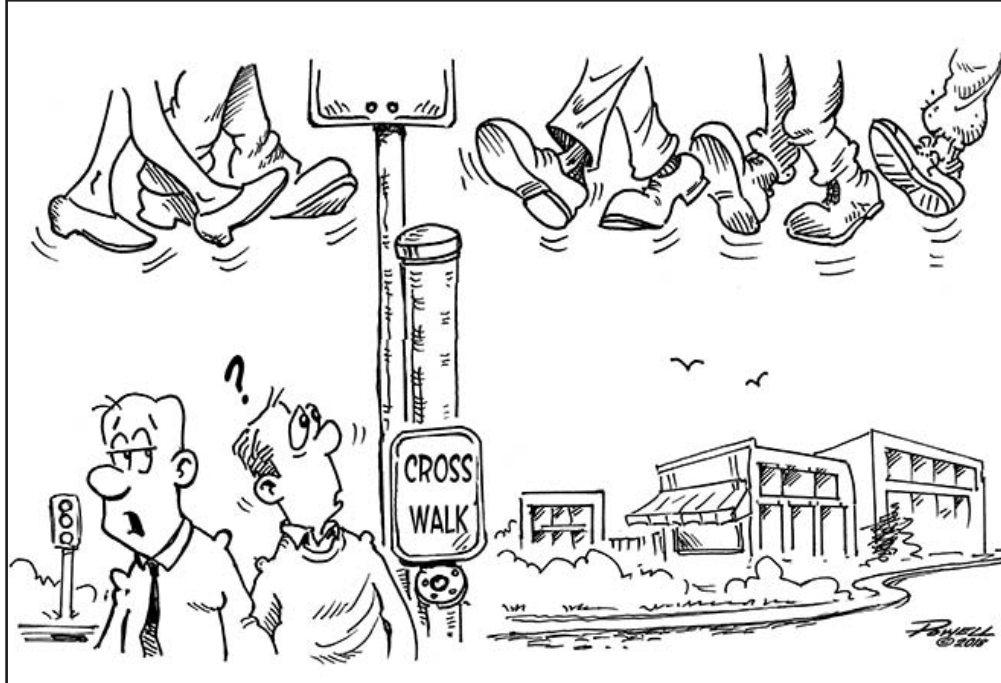
### Have something to sell?

Let the Herald work for you!

Contact us at 706-896-4454

Deadline for the T.C. Herald is

Friday by 5 PM



"Oh, don't mind them. They're just Braves fans!"

## 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
	First Tuesday of each month:	
Alzheimer's Supp.	McConnell Church	1:30 pm
American Legion	VFW Post 7807	4 pm
Hiaw. City Council	City Hall	6 pm
Young Harris Coun.	YH City Hall	7 pm
	First Wednesday of each month:	
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
	First Thursday of each month:	
Stephens Lodge	Lodge Hall	7:30 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
	Fourth Thursday	
Hiaw. Writers	Hiaw. Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
	Last Thursday of each month:	
Humane Shelter Bd.	Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

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## Towns County Herald

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