

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

September Celebrations

First to remember this past September 18th is our USAF, those fine upstanding American Patriots who have and do serve in our

The Veterans' Corner Scott Drummond USCG Veteran



USAF now 75 years of age! Often called upon to "Innovate, Accelerate, and Thrive" our air-men and women are responsible for air power and more to provide America unyielding defense for our Sovereign Republic. Certainly not overlooked in their many missions they also deter or serve to defeat our many adversaries, aid in diplomacy, often called upon to partner with our allies, globally. Were you aware that our USAF actually began as an attached segment of our US Army? The USAAF after much negotiation by forward thinking military leaders was birthed as a separate military service officially recognized on September 18, 1947. As such The 1947 National Security Act restructured The United States military and intelligence agencies in the aftermath of World War II. On September 18, 1947, President Truman signed the National Security Act establishing the U.S. Air Force on board the first Air Force One, a VC 54C. Let's never forget those fine honorable Veterans amongst who have served in our USAF and those who currently wear that beautiful blue uniform. Happy belated birthday all you wingnuts!

September 29, 2022 let us never forget NATIONAL VFW DAY honoring all those devoted individuals of this valuable organization serving those who have served our America. Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) today hold a long-standing history of volunteerism in their communities. They serve not only their country, but they continue to serve their fellow veterans, families, and communities by sponsoring scholarships, career fairs, mental wellness campaigns, and so many more excellent services. VFW membership since its inception has been instrumental in the establishment of the Veterans Administration, the creation of the national cemetery system and passage of the GI Bill. Through the VFW, veterans honor veterans and serve their communities. On National VFW Day, take a moment to recognize all the VFW does in your community. Here in towns County our VFW is Post #7807, under whose roof is our VFW AUX, American Legion Post #23, American Legion Riders, Sons of American Legion, American Legion AUX. Join us! Most likely you too are qualified to belong to one of the aforementioned VSOs!

Often overlooked but impossible to be America without them, impossible to thrive without them, impossible to exist without them, impossible to be born without them, are our mothers and families. Our great nation officially recognizes our Gold Star Mothers and Family Day annually each last Sunday every year. This 2022 we honor them on Sunday September 25, for families of those who have received The Gold Star - the military award no one wants. The award commemorates the tragic death of a military member who has perished while in the line of duty with hopes to provide a level of comfort to the parents and families that are left behind. Since World War 1, a "Gold Star Family" has signified a family that has lost one of its members in combat. The family may display a Gold Star Service Flag for any military family members who have died from any honorable cause - each gold star on the flag signifies a death. Though today only around 1% of the country is involved in military service, as compared to the 12% during other times of war, like World War 2, there are still a significant number of surviving Gold Star families. -Semper Paratus

Balance

There is a chill in the air this morning that stirs instinct and memory. The hummingbirds are busy, shaking off the cold and feeding heavily. Our little friends predict weather better than all the best computer models and prognosticators, and they will be leaving us soon on their long journey south.

In the high country, there is a tinge of color, and the haze of summer has given way to the transpicuous brightness of autumn. No matter where you go, the sun seems to get in your eyes. Leaves are gathering on the yard. Slowly, and then all at once, the seasons change.

Like the hummingbirds, and almost in spite of ourselves, we feel it too. Our time in the virtual world, hunched over our little screens and apprehending the world through the pictures we take of ourselves, is a brief moment in our long history on the planet, as ephemeral as the pixels we worship. Technology has insulated us from the natural world that sustains us. It has convinced us that truth is whatever we pretend it to be, but God is not mocked. The planet still hangs exactly in that "Goldilocks" zone needed to sustain life, tilted at precisely the 23.5 degrees necessary to let the birds know when it's time to move on.

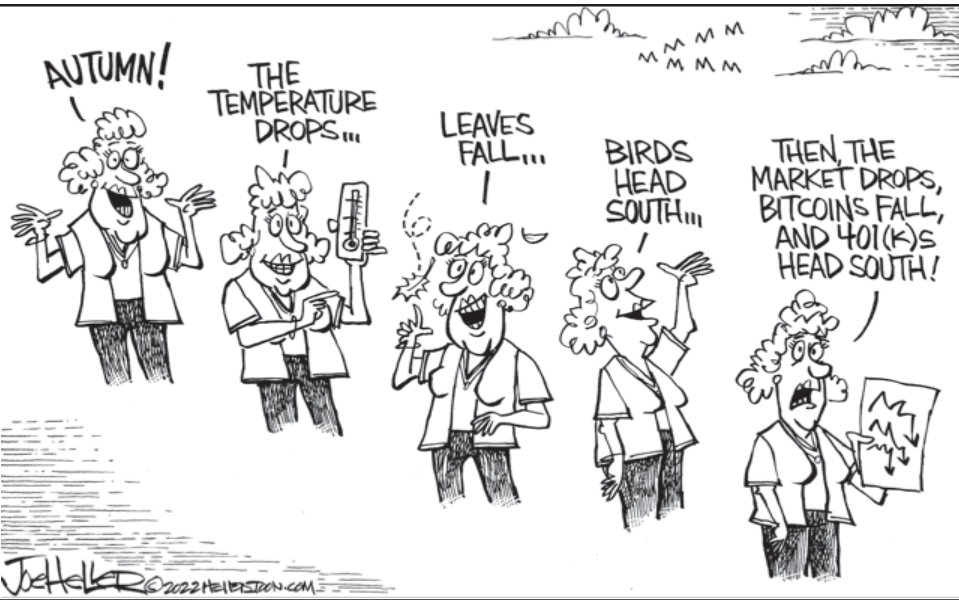
Whatever we may pretend to be, we are creatures created of the dust of this earth, and forever tied to it. The way we think and the way we feel, underneath whatever veneer of civilization we may apply, is driven by the hunt and the harvest, and shaped by the seasons.

Perhaps our journey to the virtual world was inevitable, however. Even when we lived in caves, huddled in furs against the cold, we painted our fantasies on the walls in the flickering firelight. Long before computers, art in all its forms flowed out of us, inextinguishable, irrepressible, as if it, too, was encoded into our most basic instincts.

Perhaps we have never been quite satisfied with what is, to always reach beyond our grasp. Perhaps that is why we were dropped off here, way out on the broken rim of the galaxy, to see if we could find our way home. The hummingbird can. With a brain the size of a pea, it makes a round trip of thousands of miles to return the next year to the same feeder in the same window. Yet we, with all our technology and sophistication, are lost.

Consider also what our reaching and grasping has done to the planet. It's not enough to live on it, live with it. Instead we digest and excrete our home. The extent of our wisdom as a species is to burn the house down to warm ourselves.

There may be a clue for us in that odd, 23.5 deg. tilt of our home. Any more and the extremes of climate would make civilization difficult. Any less and we would lack the seasons that have given us abundance and diversity. The planet is balanced just right, but balance is precisely what we lack as humans.



Changing Leaves

This time of year, you'll see leaves start to change color. Our peak leaf color time is usually in mid-October. In the mountains the colors can make a beautiful 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 hollies 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!

I am hosting program on Georgia Ginseng on October 3rd via webinar from 6 - 8 pm. If you are interested in attending you can register at this link. https://ugeorgia.cal.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\_5aUUKTwfao23ZQ

Letters To The Editor

Burning Household Trash

Dear Editor,

I just want to remind everyone that since leaf season is around the corner, it is advisable to call 844-844-2876 to get a burn permit. And remember that it is against the law to burn household trash. The plastic in those fires is toxic and bad for the environment.

Thank you, Irene Stannard

Christ Never Said

Dear Editor,

Here are some things to ponder of what Jesus Christ never said: That you were worthy to enter heaven on your own good works or on your own good behavior. He never said you were good enough to enter heaven based on your goodness towards others or how much money you gave to charities or to your own church. Jesus never said: just follow Me and be as good as you can and I'll slip you into heaven the back way. He never said: Give me 90% of your love and faithfulness and that's good enough for Me and forget about the salvation plan I have for you. Jesus never said: Forget about what I did on the cross for you and come as you are with all of your sins which are like filthy rags and I will forgive you. Jesus never said: Do whatever you like here on earth without any consequences of your sin and you can still get into heaven.

Now here is what Jesus Christ does say we must do to get to heaven. First step is to acknowledge that you are a sinner and ask Christ to forgive you and confess your sins and repent of them. Secondly, you must be born again by the spirit and water. This tells you that you surrender everything over to Christ and let Him be your Lord and Savior. Your old life is now gone and forgiven and a new life begins with Christ at the helm of your heart. You now start a new journey as a child of God and in time, as you grow in Christ, then you too can tell others of what Jesus Christ has done for you. John 3:16 says: I Am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father in heaven, except through Me.

Why? Because Christ is the One who died for all your sins - past, present and future ones. Hallelujah, praise God from whom all blessings flow. Folks, it's a no-brainer; if only you come by faith and believe upon the Name of Jesus Christ, you will be saved by God's amazing grace. This life here is slowly fading away, for soon a new heaven and a new earth shall spring forth and a new and glorious King Jesus will reign forevermore, and we who have accepted Him as Savior and friend will be co-heirs in heaven with Christ. What is His will also be ours, and whatever rewards we receive from Him we will gladly lay them all down at His feet and give praise to the Lamb of God for His love, mercy and grace as we enjoy forever the glory of our Lord, God. You don't want to miss out on this opportunity of a lifetime. It only comes around once in this life, so come and hang your faith on the anchor that holds the future in the palm of His hands.

Frank F. Combs

National Silver Smokey Award

One of the 8 national Fire Adapted Communities pilot projects was started in Towns County in 2013 and has been very successful, drawing national attention and requests for presentations about our work from local, state, regional and national groups. The success of the project is due in a large part to dedicated partners who all share the same passion for the success of the program. The program has been installed in counties in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. Good partners complement each other by bringing unique skills, strengths, and assets into the mix.

One of our Fire Adapted Community's most dedicated partners is Mark Wiles who has the same drive and dedication for the success of our project as we do and is a friend and mentor for our fire education and prevention team. Mark was recognized this week in Steverson, Washington for his dedication and work to make our communities safer from the ravages of wildfire.

The following is a press release from the National Association of State Foresters. - "In the world of wildfire prevention, there is no greater honor than to receive a Smokey Bear Award. From the 1950s to today, the Smokey Bear Awards program has been managed by the National Association of State Foresters (NASF), the Ad Council, and the USDA Forest Service. "The 2022 Smokey Bear Award winner is being honored for the dedication, innovation, and energy he brings to wildfire prevention," said USDA Forest Service Chief Randy Moore. "For many years, we have bestowed these awards on only the most deserving people, who like him, show up with the passion and desire to make a difference year after year. We thank him and all of those who continue their dedicated and outstanding work in preventing human-caused wildfires." This year's Silver Smokey Bear Awardee is Mark Wiles, a wildfire mitigation specialist for the Georgia Forestry Commission. Throughout his 31-year career, Mark Wiles has been dedicated to wildfire prevention awareness. As the leader of several federal Fire Prevention Education Teams (FPETs), Mark has utilized digital billboards, movie theater advertising, social media memes, and strategic in-person Smokey Bear appearances to significantly reduce human-caused wildfire starts in communities across the country.

During a 2016 drought in North Georgia, Mark's team partnered with local agencies and companies to deploy new forms of prevention media to reach more diverse audiences. While the campaign ran, no human-caused wildfires occurred across the 20-county distribution area. Out west, Mark has led FPET deployments that created and distributed stickers, digital media, and various print materials that brought prevention messaging to "Burning Man" participants in Nevada, back-country hikers in Wyoming, and people experiencing homelessness throughout Washington and Oregon.

Mark was also featured in two recent NPR news stories about wildfire prevention in the U.S. and is the go-to wildfire prevention spokesperson for the Georgia Forestry Commission. "Mark provides us with a terrific model for developing wildfire prevention programming," said NASF President and Connecticut State Forester Christopher Martin. "He has used social media memes to appeal to younger generations and created targeted messaging for non-English speakers. He shows us that taking the time to understand the needs of a community, and to build relationships with that community's influencers, makes a real difference in reducing human-caused wildfires. We commend Mark on this accomplishment and thank him for his valued contributions to wildfire prevention."

"Mark's creativity and passion truly embody Smokey Bear's message of wildfire prevention," said Ad Council Chief Campaign Development Officer Michelle Hillman. "Now, as wildfire prevention is more important than ever, we thank Mark for his work in helping keep our forests safe from unplanned fires and congratulate him on this well-deserved recognition."

The 2022 Smokey Bear Awards will be presented at the 2022 NASF Annual Meeting in Stevenson, Washington, on September 21, 2022. You can get to know Mark Wiles, as well as past winners, with a visit to SmokeyBear.com"

Our wildfire team here in North Georgia accounts for 5 of the prestigious Smokey Bear awards: Mark Wiles GFC - 2022, Frank Riley - CCRCD - 2021, Thomas Black USFS - 2020, Mike Davis USFS - 2014, and Jeffrey Schardt USFS - 2017. These awards say a lot about the dedication by this team to educate the public about wildfire risk and public safety here in the southeast US and beyond. And don't forget, ole Smokey says, "Only YOU can prevent wildfires"!

For more information on Firewise, Fire Adapted communities, Ready Set Go or other programs from Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D, contact Frank Riley, Executive Director at frank.ccrd@gmail.com.

The Towns County Herald is an independent and nonpartisan publication. As such, third-party views contained herein are not necessarily the opinions or positions of this newspaper, e.g. advertising, press releases, editorial content, perspectives expressed in articles covering local events, etc.

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

Kenneth West Owner/Publisher

Shawn Jarrard General Manager/Editor

Todd Forrest Staff Writer

Derek Richards Advertising Director

Jordan Hyatt Office Manager

Lowell Nicholson Photographer

Publication No: 635540

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

Towns County (1 Year) \$30. Out of County (1 Year) \$40. 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.

Office located at: 518 N. Main St. Suite 7 "The Mall", Hiawassee Phone: (706) 896-4454 Fax: (706) 896-1745 Email: tcherald@windstream.net Or mail to: PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546