

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Belated Happy 71st Birthday

For who? Why our United States Air Force, a wonderful group of genuine Patriots, once a part of our Army, wearing OD green. On September 18, 1947 swapping their Army green for Air force blue to become our fifth branch of military service. Our free America simply wouldn't exist without our Air Force composed of an exemplary group of Americans who like all our military services have a continuum of unique missions, only centered on aircraft and flying skills. Thousands of jobs therein for those who wish to serve America in that capacity.



The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran

Began in 1909 when we first purchased our first aircraft the airplane was an afterthought not considered as important as our Army, Navy, Marine Corps and the considerable maintenance and expense issues troubled those in Washington, DC who considered a few planes attached to Army units as sufficient for any future threats to America and the free world. Did you know that the Air Force was designated as Aeronautical Section, Signal Corps in 1909? In 1914 it became Aviation Section, Signal Corps. In 1918 was bounced to United States Army Air Service. Finally becoming United States Army Air Corps in 1926. And before becoming our USAF the United States Army Air Forces in 1941. Our own Towns County oldest Veteran, Frontz Goring enlisted when it was Army Air Forces and had to swap his Army greens for AF blue later in his enlistment. Our high energy, community service oriented Brandy Creel served our USAF for a couple of decades and was a part of our efforts in Afghanistan. As did Bart Rodgers serving with the special EOD division of the USAF, now our VFW Post 7807 Commander.

President Truman signed a National Security Act which created our present USAF as an independent military entity to stand proudly and equally beside our other four branches of our military on September 18, 1947! We, as Americans are truly blessed for that hard fought for decision.

Important trivia:

1949: the nonstop around the world flight of the "Lucky Lady" demonstrated the USAF ability to takeoff from the USA and accomplish missions anywhere on planet earth. 1950-1953: Our first jet aircraft aerial combat missions flown in Korea defending South Korea from being over run by Communists. Our F-86 Saberjets proved very effective against Soviet supplied MIG-15s.

1954: Believe it or not our excellent B-52 Stratofortress came into service and has been serving well ever since.

1960s: ICBMs were developed and managed by our USAF.

1964-1973: Our men and women of the USAF served honorably in Vietnam, once again in the attempt to prevent the poor peasant farmers of South Vietnam from being taken over by self-serving Communist aggressors.

Consider our space program and our USAF involvement in making that a success, benefiting all of us.

Food for thought: Without our USAF would we have to quadruple the size of our other services and bring back the draft? Or would America even exist?

Thanks to all who served and happy 71st birthday USAF!

Semper Paratus

Something to Think About

This week we're going to give you something to think about besides politics, though for some, this issue, like all issues, can be political. This problem will be with us long after whatever media circus currently occupies our pixelated collective consciousness.



Seth McLamb is a young father, an outdoorsman and an engineer with a background in studies. His generation will discover to what extent we have erred in soaking our environment with persistent chemicals, and his concern in this letter is the widespread use of herbicides along roadsides and rights of way.

As if to add further credence to his concerns, a very recent study found that glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup, is contributing to the demise of the honeybee.

"I am writing to address the recent spraying of herbicides on roadsides by the NCDOT and power line right-of-ways by the BRMEMC. I have degrees in Environmental Sciences and Mechanical Engineering from NC universities. In the "Answer Man" column in the August 15 edition of the Asheville Citizen Times, the NCDOT's Division 14 Engineer was quoted defending the practice of spraying roadsides as part of an "integrated vegetation management plan." Driving along roads in Tusquitee and Fires Creek it appears that spraying has been the only part of that plan to be implemented. Dead vegetation hangs limp along the roadsides making it very difficult to enjoy the natural beauty of our area. Highway 64 going over Chunky Gal Mountain is the same.

"Considering that one of the primary reasons that people (and their animals) visit Clay County is to take in the breathtaking views and experience our piece of untouched wilderness, leaving swaths of dead and dying vegetation along every roadside in the county fails to nurture the natural beauty of the mountains that we live in and makes for poor long term economic planning. Within the overarching scheme of negative economic impacts, we can consider lower property values, fewer jobs (e.g. NCDOT and BRMEMC clearing crews), reduced vacation rental revenues, lost restaurant sales, and decreased boutique shop incomes as very real potential outcomes.

Many of the people who choose to vacation in Clay County come here on recommendation from friends or family members who have already visited our beautiful county and some of those folks end up buying a home here, extending their economic contributions indefinitely. Spraying herbicides along roadways and powerline right-of-ways will make this season's visitors less likely to return next year and also less likely to recommend our county to a friend.

Not to mention the poorly studied long term environmental impacts of the chemicals being sprayed along many miles of roads and power lines in western NC and north GA. The current practice of calling chemicals "safe" until proven otherwise is misguided and dangerous.

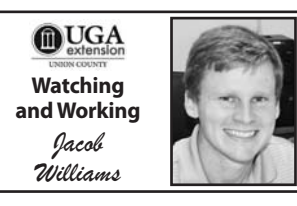
"I urge the residents of Clay County to contact the NCDOT Highway Division 14 office and the BRMEMC to voice your concerns about the widespread spraying of herbicides in our county and the impact it will have on your livelihood and your quality of life.

The beauty of our county is our number one resource and we should not settle for vegetation management practices that detract from Clay County's appeal to visitors and residents alike."

Seth W. McLamb

What is IPM?

Every now and then I'll write an article entitled "What is ...". My goal with these articles will be to factually explain a concept or practice that is happening in agriculture. Some of these concepts may be contentious issues. In writing about these things I won't be saying if I agree with one side or the other, but simply explaining and describing what it is so that people can make educated decisions.



UGA extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams

So, IPM. It's a pretty big buzz phrase out there in agriculture right now. It stands for Integrated Pest Management. Integrated means that you employ several different types of strategies. Pests in this case can refer to insects, diseases, weeds, or any other thing out there that you don't want messing with your plants. Management is important. It's not Integrated Pest Eradication. Management means that an acceptable threshold is found for the pest. Depending on what the pest is and what type of damage its doing affects what is an acceptable threshold. For example, the threshold for kudzu growing in a gully or ditch will be much higher than kudzu encroaching on your yard.

Management in IPM comes by a combination of biological, cultural, mechanical, and chemical means. By using a combination of these practices, the idea is that pests can be managed to minimize economic, environmental, and public health risks. IPM is a long term management strategy where chemical control is used as a last resort.

Biological control is using natural enemies of a pest for control. Ladybugs are an excellent example because they eat a lot of other insects that feed on garden plants. Another example is that UGA is conducting research on beetles that will control the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid that is ravaging our hemlocks. Cultural controls can include watering practices. A lot of fungal diseases are encouraged by wet conditions. Another example of cultural control is selecting disease resistant varieties to plant. An example of mechanical control is using traps for rodents or other pests to remove them. Mulch to prevent weeds from popping up is another example. Finally, chemical control involves spraying pesticides. When pesticides are applied they are used only where needed. Selective pesticides that are safest for the surrounding organisms are used.

Prevention of pest problems is a big part of IPM. When IPM is used on a large production scale quantitative thresholds will be set so that chemical sprays are used only when necessary. Spraying chemicals is not bad or disallowed when using IPM, you just try to much more conscientious of using sprays and use them sparingly. There are times and situations when biological, cultural, and mechanical aren't effective and spraying is the only effective option of control available. The goal with IPM is to reduce the reliance on chemical applications for successful control.

You may already be using IPM without even realizing it. Using mulch around flower beds or drip irrigation to water can be IPM. If you have a fence around your garden to keep deer and other pests out that is part of IPM. Some ways that you could improve your use of IPM could be spraying insecticides when beneficial insects aren't active. When planting look to see what disease resistance your seeds have or use plants that are from our area, oftentimes those will have natural resistance and be adapted to our climate.

The key to being successful with IPM is to be more conscientious of your surroundings and thinking long term. If you have questions about IPM contact your local county Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Letters to The Editor

Surprised, Dismayed and Confused

Dear Editor,
I continue to be surprised, dismayed and confused about our Planning Commission's strategic planning process in regard to off-premises billboard advertising. We have been told that the Commissioner and his Planning Commission are looking to "strengthen" the existing ordinance and that they are looking to balance the interests of the community as a whole with those of property owners interested in generating income from leasing advertising space on billboards to be erected on their respective properties. This issues presents challenges to the planners when considering the extent to which to regulate private property uses while maintaining a community standard for the benefit of all citizens.

What I don't understand is how the Planning Commission continues to consider a billboard with a maximum size of 300 square feet as being appropriate for Towns County's main thoroughfares. That's 30 feet wide and 10 feet high; or 25 feet wide and 12 feet high (pretty BIG). Their rationale being that 300 square feet is the State maximum. Yes, that is the maximum allowed by the State for billboards set on the side of the interstate highways and other multilane, limited access roads. Local communities are not bound by State maximums and can consider what, if any, lesser size is more appropriate for their communities. Why would our leaders think that a 300 square foot sign, located not more than 30 high off the ground, as required by our current ordinance, would be anything other than ludicrous and a dangerous distraction (especially when it is lit up like a Christmas tree)?

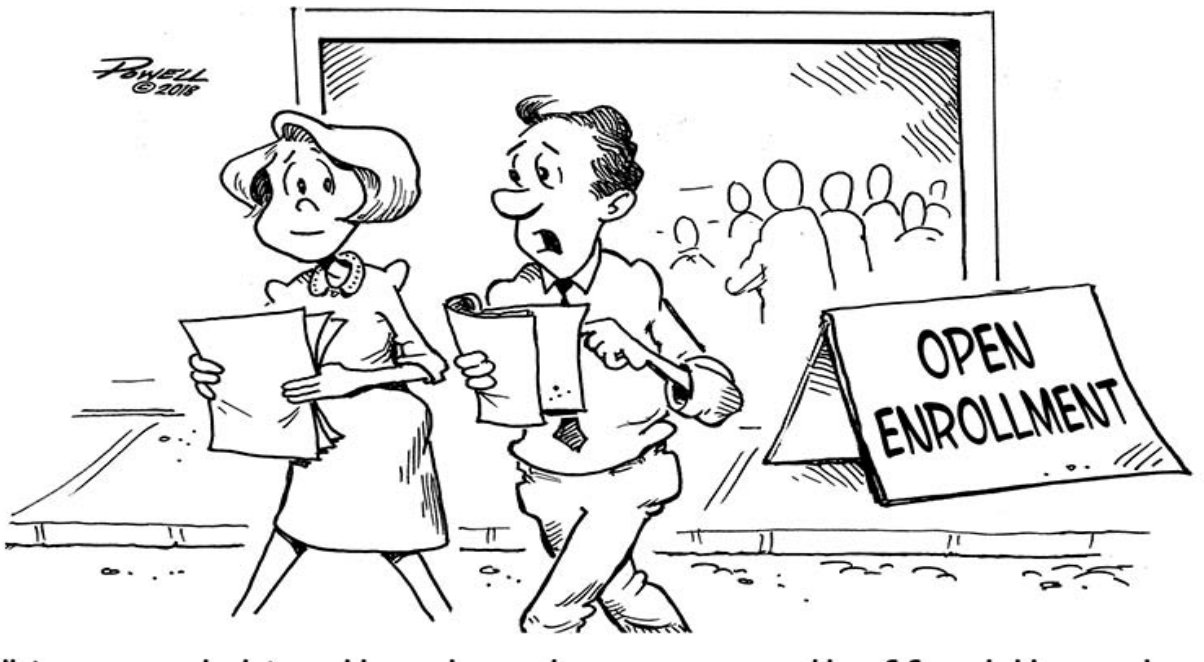
Why is our current ordinance, not being enforced? Sec. 34-71 of the Towns County Code requires sign height not to exceed the lesser of 30 feet above the ground level to the top of the sign, or the highest portion of the roofline of the building. That means no roof-top signs that extend above the peak of the roof. Sec. 34-72 (b) of the Towns County Code requires that the land surrounding an off-premises sign (billboards included) must be landscaped and maintained in a manner to enhance and conceal any support poles and base of sign. Look around.
Larry Sorgen

Festival of Choirs thank you

Dear Editor,
Everyone attending this year's Festival of Choirs, hosted by Little Brasstown Baptist Church on Sunday, September 23, enjoyed a fantastic mix of vocal and instrumental talent. Thanks to our local media, several hundred people learned about our annual interfaith event. We are already looking forward to next year's Festival of Choirs in September.
Susan Evans
Festival Secretary

Have something to sell?

Let the Herald work for you!
Contact us at 706-896-4454
Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday by 5 PM



"Are you taking the plan where you can't afford the rates, or the plan where you can't afford the deductible?"

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: 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.

Towns County Community Calendar

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| 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 |
| Chamber Board | Second Monday of each month: 1411 Jack Dayton Cir. | 8 am |
| VFW | Second Monday of each month: VFW Post | 5 pm |
| Historical Society | Second Monday of each month: Old Rec. Center | 5:30 pm |
| Unicoi Board | Second Monday of each month: Auditorium | 7 pm |
| Unicoi Masonic | Second Monday of each month: Lodge Hall | 7:30 pm |

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Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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