

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Letters to The Editor

### Concerned

Dear Commissioner Bradshaw,

I am concerned and am writing to you about the future of Hamilton Gardens.

My wife and I have been lucky enough to own a home and live in Hiawassee since 1996. Our sons and their families live in Atlanta, so we live part-time there and the rest of the time we enjoy living up here. As you would expect, during our time here we have seen many changes in the Hiawassee area – most have been very good.

One of the best changes has been the transformation of Hamilton Gardens into a real jewel for our area. While the Gardens were always special, the changes in the past four years have taken it to a much higher level. In addition to many more plants, new trails, designer sculptures, new buildings and better signage, the Gardens are now much better maintained than they were prior to 2016. I would now rate the Gardens as one of our best (but still somewhat unknown) visitor attractions in the county.

After I retired in 2017, I decided to see how I could help at the Gardens. The first step was taking the training to become a Master Gardener through the Towns/Union Master Gardener's Association and with the assistance of our Extension Agent, Jacob Williams.

Then, I began to help as a volunteer in the Gardens. During my volunteer time I saw that the transformation of the Gardens was primarily due to the dedication of a relatively small group of volunteers, including Grace Howard, Maggie Oliver, Carol Townsend, Gordon and Linda Jones and several others.

Even in the short time that I have been involved, it is obvious that this group of dedicated individuals has contributed huge amounts of volunteer hours to the Gardens. Early this year they asked that I help them further by joining the Board of the Gardens 501c-3 organization (Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge, Inc.) and I gladly accepted.

The concern that I have for the Gardens is related to the viability of the 501c-3 organization in running the Gardens. While funding is, and always will be, a Gardens priority, the major concern now seems to be whether the County and community will support the 501c-3 as the legal organization responsible for the future of this Garden.

This organization has so many wonderful plans for the Gardens and I urge you to support it even further so that we can bring these plans to fruition. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Mark R. Noyd

### Finger Wagging tells you all you need to know

Dear Editor,

I grabbed a cup of coffee and opened the paper to the editorial page this week and almost spit my first sip out when I read the Letter To The Editor regarding Biden's victory.

It always amazes me when a liberal talks of virtues and Trump's treatment of women.

Why, it's like they don't recall Kennedy and Clinton's virtuous behavior in the WH. I also assume they have forgotten about Tara Reid and Biden. But, I digress.

The biggest laugh I get from the left is how they always seem to circle back at the end of their sanctimonious tirades and cast stones at Christians.

The writer suggested that we as Christians were wrong for voting for Trump. Just to be clear, I would take Trump, "warts and all" over a senile politician who has done zero for nearly 50 years. Well, he did become extremely wealthy off a public servants income. Wonder how that happened? But, I digress.

I'll leave you with a quick thought on Harris. I'll pass on voting for a person who solicited donations to get rioters and looters out of jail.

Not to mention her absolutely despicable behavior during the Kavanaugh Hearings.

I look forward to providing the same support to Biden/Harris as the left did Trump. Enjoy your victory lap. But, do remember, nothing lasts forever.

Regards,  
Michael L. McNabb

### 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  
P.O. 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.

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Investing in others is a great way to receive a dividend.

### Outside the ... Coop

In September of 1945, a farmer in Fruita, Colorado missed out on a chicken dinner when his axe went slightly off target. The blade removed most of the chicken's head but missed the jugular vein and part of the brain stem. "Mike The Headless Chicken" lived another 18 months and became a celebrity and a traveling sideshow sensation. I know, but look it up because it's true.

Chickens have minimal computing power inside the lima bean they use for running their bodily functions, and there is precious little left over for higher functions. Yet there is enough for personality, affection, and at least a facsimile of emotions that can seem very human at times. Chickens can be quite adorable, and in the next moment intensely unpleasant - just like people. Last spring we decided to raise some chickens here on the farm after the third trip to the grocery store to find the shelves empty of eggs. We knew the domestic variety we wanted for eggs would not be able to survive here living fully free range. We have owls, hawks, coyotes and bears, and everyone likes chicken. We needed a proper chicken house.

The baby chicks arrived on schedule. The chicken house did not. Weather, lumber shortages and a variety of adventures delayed construction, but baby chicks grow as fast as they eat. They soon outgrew the dog kennel in the shop that was their first home. They outgrew two dog kennels after we divided the flock. They moved into the back yard into a hastily constructed nesting box attached to a rectangle of t-posts, chicken wire, tin and tarps. It looked like something from a Jeff Foxworthy joke. The chickens kept growing and every modification to their temporary accommodations added to the delay in finishing their permanent home. One night a bear visited our chicken hostel. Bears like chicken. They like chicken feed. They don't like electricity. A makeshift electric fence was added to the chicken shanty, and we stopped letting people see the back yard. Construction continued on our permanent bear-resistant chickenopolis, inspired by my wife's inability to get a full night's sleep with the 4 AM reminders that rooster is rooster from outside the bedroom window. I was beginning to worry that our chickens might disappear again, starting with the roosters.

The rooster has several characteristics that are disturbingly human in their presentation. I think they have a genetic memory of that time when they ruled the earth as dinosaurs, and their current lot in life is a constant source of frustration. They are grandiose narcissists, like so many of our politicians and celebrities, and when the fight or flight switch toggles to fight, they are mindless and dangerous to themselves and anything near their size - like many humans.

Hens present the greatest expression of human-like characteristics. Some are friendly and affectionate. Some are ill tempered. Some are bold and adventurous and some are timid and... "chicken." The roosters are obnoxious and slightly dangerous, but when there is a threat to the flock, real or imagined, they are frontline protectors.

Our flock came of age in a slightly cramped space that was barely big enough for healthy living with frequent changes of litter. They got some sunshine but saw very little blue sky, and the occasional escapee surely told fantastic tales of a mythical outside world. Their social/pecking order and their entire worldview was defined and delimited by a box about the size of a mini-van.

Moving day was an adventure when Chickenopolis was finally ready for residents. All the personalities came into play. The sweet and trusting birds, Rachael Ray, Hazel and Ellie Mae, allowed themselves to be gently carried to the barn and introduced to their new home. Rachael hopped right up onto one of the new nesting boxes and immediately went inside and began keeping house. She actually sang. I've never heard such a song from a chicken, but I know it was joyful.

Miz Drysdale, the head of the chicken homeowner's association, screeched and complained all the way to the new neighborhood, and once inside continued to complain about her mistreatment for some time. Mr. Rumbold and Sergeant Pecker, our two roosters, transformed from berserker barbarians into docile lambs as they were carried by their legs hanging upside down, which is the safest way to transport roosters. The rest of the flock were enticed into a pet carrier with a few sunflower seeds and hardly noticed the journey while they jostled for position and grabbed as many seeds as they could.

We let the herd get familiar with their new home, several times the size of the old one, before releasing them into the large chicken pen outside. This was their first real encounter with the outside world and the big sky. First out the door were the roosters, who immediately began taking credit for the sunshine and fresh air. Next came our favorites, the henpecked ladies at the bottom of the hierarchy who like to be near us because they feel safe.

It took a few minutes for the flock, which had grown up in a box, to "un-box" themselves. At first they clustered together, gradually discovering their new freedom; then they began venturing out on their own or with their friends. Their new home is a radically different landscape with much more room and different sights and sounds. After a few days, there was even a new pecking order inspired by the new landscape.

All this "humanity" in a creature with a brain the size of a bean! More to the point, isn't it remarkable how much animal behavior still exists in us, with our large brains, our technology and our civilization? It's humbling. Or it should be, when the roosters inside our heads stop crowing.

**Outside The Box**  
By: Don Perry  
worldoutsidethebox.com

### What is IPM?

IPM is a pretty big buzz phrase out there in agriculture right now. It refers to 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 and UNG are 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 be 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.

**UGA extension**  
**Watching and Working**  
Jacob Williams



### Often Overlooked

The superb members of our American Legion Auxiliary are always there! They are indeed the "right hand" of so many of our events; our blessed sisters and brothers supporting our Legion family in many ways, not often recognized by the public. Led by Robin Halfon of AL Aux Post#23, their imagination, energy and capabilities often exceed any and all expectations. How it started: The Legion served as a support group, a social club and an extended family for former caucemen. After two planning savaucens held by a committee of officers who had the confidence and respect of their military comrades, they designed a constitution to govern the group and set up headquarters in New York City to begin work on its programs of relief, employment and Americanism.

After the formation of The American Legion, a number of women's organizations wanted to become the official affiliation of The American Legion. The women who had served so faithfully during the trying days of the war wanted to continue to serve. The committee agreed that a new organization should be made up of the women most closely associated with the men of the Legion, and that these women would serve with the Legion, in peace as they had in war.

There was built a new organization from the ground up, so the Auxiliary could then carry forward the phases of Legion activities more suitably performed by women. In less than one year, 1,342 local units of the Women's Auxiliary to The American Legion had been organized in more than 45 states.

As well as supporting our American Legion activities our Auxiliary serves our community serving in concert with our VFW Post #7807 and our other VSOs as needed. Including our VFW Thrift store, Veterans visitation and other sanctioned school activities and programs. Exemplifying volunteerism on many levels they are sincerely appreciated! KUDOS, well earned by ladies of our Auxiliary. However it's changed for the better. From the AL Aux website: Celebrating 100 years of service in 2019, on August 30 the American Legion voted to extend membership in the American Legion Auxiliary to male spouses of U.S. veterans and service members. During The American Legion National Convention in Indianapolis in August, delegates of The American Legion voted to replace the word "wife" with "spouse" in their constitution and bylaws, opening up membership in the American Legion Auxiliary.

Why are The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary making this change? Currently, 1.9 million women veterans are living in the United States, and 9% of the U.S. military is female. "As we welcome eligible male spouses into the American Legion Auxiliary, we gain another perspective on the needs of military families — enabling the Auxiliary to support even more veterans, service members, and their families," said 2019-2020 American Legion Auxiliary National President Nicole Clapp.

Therefore, those who would love to be involved in a great VSO, enjoying fellowship with great folks and perhaps learn of ways to volunteer a little time, our Auxiliary is now open to many more community minded folks and those who appreciate our Veterans. -Semper Paratus

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



## Towns County Herald

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