

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

OK Boomer

Are you insulted? OK BOOMER is a catchphrase and internet favorite used by Gen Xers (born 1965-1979) and Millennials (born 1980-1994) in 2019 to dismiss or mock attitudes attributed to the baby-boomer generation. It is considered to be and is meant by some to be ageist. IT IS PRINTED LARGE BECAUSE BOOMERS HAVE TO READ.

Around Towns
Dale Harmon



Just what is a "boomer"? The term, Baby-Boomer first surfaced in the Salt Lake City Tribune in 1963 to define a person born during the tail end or decades after World War II when the United States of America saw a huge spike in births. (1946-1965). "Welcome home soldier. Now give Mama a kiss". Baby-Boomer was shortened to boomer and came to mean someone older who is closed minded and resistant to change. This makes me think about trying to teach an aunt born in 1913, to drive again after eons without a car. We went to the empty parking lot of a church to practice. I had always driven an automatic (seems strange to even say automatic now). She had learned on and had only driven a stick shift. Although decades had passed, she seemed hard-wired to shift gears with an imaginary stick. She was a smart woman and I never thought her closed minded. She simply reverted to what she was ingrained years ago. She unlearned, relearned and mastered driving her "new buggy". She ranked a car with air conditioning second only to indoor plumbing.

She was not a boomer. She was a member of the Greatest Generation. Her kid brother, my father, was also of that generation but his mind was somewhat more closed than his sister's. My own sister sashayed to the breakfast table one morning with her head circumference enlarged by roughly 9 inches Dad inquired what had happened to her hair. Prima Donna said, "I teased it". He replied, "Looks like you made it mad as h#!*!*. Go fix it".****My husband John is a true boomer. He was born right smack in the middle of the twentieth century. In high school he loved girls with big hair. He also loved girls who were cheerleaders. When he saw a cheerleader with big hair and a great set of pom poms, he was one happy booming, mid century dudes.

I once heard that if one's mind is too open, its contents might fall out. There's a modicum of truth to that. If a mind is too closed, innovation has a hard time seeping in. Education and experience teach. I'll never insert a hobby pin into a socket again but it seemed like a good idea at the time. Thanks to the wireless age, no temptation. Old folks think the young silly. Young think the old are witless.. For now and ever will be.

Face it. We'll all be obsolete. Most Gen Zers (1995-2015) have shed their baby teeth and are ready to eat.

See you around Towns.

Holiday Guide for the Rest of the Year

By the time you receive this message there may be a lot more paper to shift, along with some ribbons and bows and a considerable pile of cardboard boxes and plastic packaging. We would be honored if this page were privileged to wrap one of your grandmother's Christmas ornaments for safe keeping, or to wait in the garage in readiness for mulching your heirloom tomatoes next summer. A paper beats a pixel every time, not only for its tactile advantage but also for its ability to be useful going forward.

As we do move forward from the holidays we sometimes feel like that forgotten party balloon tied to the stop sign to mark the way for our visitors. A bit of the shine remains but the helium is slowly leaking out. Our balloon loses its loft and the memories fade. (Be a good neighbor and go retrieve your sagging party balloons from the road signs, please.)

Certainly we are not balloons, even though as our visitors depart, the new wears off the toys and the bills come due, we can feel a bit deflated. We can feel that way when we weigh in the balance the crescendo of activity that precedes the holiday: The travel, the traffic, the crowds and the cooking, the cleaning and the wrapping, against the house now empty, again the cleaning, and the putting away. Perhaps we are weighing the wrong things.

Consider for a moment your favorite Christmas memories. Is there a common thread? For the life of me I can't remember the toys I received when I was 16, but I will always remember being at my grandparents' house and the church service in the evening when the children put on a special presentation. I will remember my mom and grandmother making hot chocolate in the kitchen, my dad tuning in the Santa report on the radio, the heavy eyelids trying to stay open under my grandmother's heavy quilts, and the crackle of the pot bellied stove.

I'll remember my dad sneaking out before daylight to throw a handful of gravel up on the tin roof. It sounded just like the hooves of reindeer, and to this day I'm not completely sure it wasn't. I will remember my grandmother and grandmother singing together in the kitchen while they did their chores and made us all breakfast, and I will remember that dusting of snow on Christmas morning.

No, we are not balloons, but if we were, we'd be self inflating. We get to choose what we carry forward from the holiday. Unlike the stop sign with the sagging party balloon (that we're going to go retrieve as soon as we finish reading this), the calendar is merely a guide, a suggestion. From Thanksgiving through Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa and on to the new year, we are guided by some excellent suggestions as to what we should carry forward.

In other words, the holiday season does not have to end. If grandmother is not a short drive away, it only takes seconds to make a phone call, and if distance is an issue, this is where pixels shine, because if you haven't showed Granny how to Facetime yet, there's no time like the present.

In fact, there is no time BUT the present. We don't need the permission of anyone's calendar to visit the neighbor who was recently widowed. We don't have to cook a turkey to spend an hour or two at the local nursing home. We don't have to buy or wrap a single thing to spend an evening with our friends, and don't they look better in person than they do in pixels!

I'll say it again for the ones who are a little groggy from trying to imitate the turkey by stuffing themselves at the table: The holiday is not the thing. The holiday is the guide that teaches gratitude and informs the rest of the year.

So it is with gratitude that I move forward today, for so many things unspoken, for the privilege of living here, and for the patient and long suffering readers who gather here on this page. Merry Christmas to you all, and God bless us, everyone.

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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.

The Middle Path
By: Don Perry
onthemiddlepath.com

What's Going on Here?

I often get questions from folks about what's wrong with a plant. I always enjoy answering those kinds of questions because they usually mean that I need to put on my detective hat to figure out what's going on.

I'm going to talk through my thought process when someone brings me a plant with something wrong with it.

There are two categories for what could have caused damage to a plant. Abiotic and biotic. Abiotic damage comes from nonliving sources. It includes things like freeze damage, drought stress, wind damage, insufficient sunlight, soil compaction, not enough nutrients, or even damage from a nearby herbicide spray. To figure out if abiotic factors are playing a role I'm going to need some background information. I may ask questions like, how long has it looked like this, have you fertilized recently, do you know the soil pH, have you sprayed anything in the area? These types of questions will help build a framework and eliminate some possibilities. It is difficult to tell the difference between abiotic and biotic damage. Abiotic factors will often lead to biotic damage, which is damage from a living source. Biotic damage includes insect damage, plant diseases (fungal, bacterial, or viral), and wildlife damage. Biotic damage will leave plants stressed, making them more susceptible and prone to biotic damage. Some pests, like ambrosia beetle, will only attack plants that are stressed or already in decline. When biotic and abiotic factors are both present it can turn into a chicken or the egg type of question. Did beetles feeding on the plant cause it to become stressed so now it has a nutrient deficiency? Or did the plant have a nutrient deficiency which stressed the plant and attracted the beetles? There's not always a clear answer, but usually to fix the problem you'll need to address both sides of the issue.

It helps to know what species of plant we're dealing with, and what the weather has been like recently. For example, earlier this year a lot of Leyland Cypress trees lots some of their needles on the inside of the trees. Leyland Cypress has shallow roots, making it very susceptible to dry spells, like we have had a couple of times this year. Another example is hemlock trees. If someone calls me with a question about their hemlock tree, most of the time the issue is going to be hemlock woolly adelgid, which is an insect pest of hemlocks. In 2018 we had lots and lots of rainfall. That leads to more fungal diseases because fungi love moisture and need it to spread. Therefore, I got a lot of calls from people with leaf spots on their tomatoes. Most of these cases were septoria leaf spot.

Another consideration when looking at plant problems is whether or not it's going to kill the plant. Some diseases can cause a slow death for plants, such as root diseases. Other times, a disease like leaf spot on a plant in the late summer or early fall may not be a big concern because that plant is about to lose its leaves in the fall anyways.

If I'm not able to identify what is going on with your plant I can send pictures to a specialist at UGA for free, or send a plant sample for a small fee. If you have questions about what's going on with the plants in your garden, pasture, field, or forest contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

UGA Extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Letters to The Editor

Shedding Light on BRMEMC

Dear Editor,

In order to attend a board meeting at Blue Ridge Mountain EMC you have to apply at least 48 hours in advance, and if you wish to speak at the meeting you must do so at least five days in advance. The application process was cumbersome and complicated.

Congratulations! At the request of FAIR members, BRMEMC recently simplified the process to apply to attend the board meeting by creating a basic link request. If you want to speak though, the process is still somewhat cumbersome. In both cases, you still had to wait for approval which will come via a phone call on the same day as the meeting.

BRMEMC needs to take the next step in being transparent and open. FAIR is requesting BRMEMC's Board to end its unfair policy of making members apply to attend or speak at board meetings.

It's time for BRMEMC to be bold and make board meetings open to everyone!

BRMEMC is a co-op and meetings should be conducted in the same spirit and manner as public service agencies - allowing the community the freedom to attend and speak - just as school board meetings and town council meetings are conducted.

Members should be able to sign up to speak at the beginning of the board meeting. And because board members currently do not address member's concerns at the time of the board meeting, there truly is no need for someone to apply ahead of time to speak.

FAIR requested the following changes:

That the board respond to each individual who speaks before the board with a substantive written reply to concerns, not just a thank you note.

That the board revisits speaker's issues as "New Business" in the subsequent meeting to provide their official response(s) to concerns and allow for public discussion.

In the spirit of transparency and openness, the board cease its policy of limiting the number of attendees at board meetings. If more people show up than the board room can hold, BRMEMC should be prepared to move the meeting to its training room and have open seating.

In the spirit of transparency and openness, the board cease its policy of prohibiting the taking of pictures or videotaping during the meeting.

The board provide a comfortable enclosed waiting area for members, with a restroom and seating - prior to the opening of the board room. Members should not have to wait outside exposed to the elements or sit in their cars.

More comfortable seating should be provided to members in the board room than the current chairs. If the meeting is to be held in a larger room, then fold up chairs would be understandable.

We are FAIR. Reach us at www.FAIR-BRMEMC.org. If you share our concerns, call or write to your board representatives and Mr. Nelms, BRMEMC's General Manager. You can find them at www.brmemc.com/Board_Directors.

Submitted by,
Lucille Heil
Randy Mazie

Editor's Note: The Blue Ridge Mountain EMC contends that online forms have been planned since the board decided to open the meetings to members in November 2017. The original policy contains provisions to apply for attendance in person at company headquarters, via email or by facsimile.



Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	Every Monday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Every Tuesday: Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Sharp UMC (Men)	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Wednesday: Hiawassee UMC	Noon
Bridge Players	Every Thursday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	Every Friday: Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Sunday: Red Cross Building	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	Clubhouse	12:45 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Last Thursday of each month: Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

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