

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor:
Recently, BRM-EMC established a new payment plan, the FlexPay plan. This program allows subscribers to make daily, weekly, or bi-weekly payments, rather than one large payment each month. This plan would be very helpful to many people, including our family. However, we are not eligible to participate.

My wife and I, like many families in our area, found ourselves in need of financial assistance for a replacement HVAC unit for our home. Researching various financing methods available at the time, we decided to utilize the financing program with Blue Ridge Mountain EMC ("BRM-EMC"), which is guaranteed by the Tennessee Valley Authority ("TVA"), the finance package was approved several years ago. Because we decided to have our HVAC system financed by BRM-EMC/TVA, and a balance remains on our account, we are unable to enjoy the benefits of the FlexPay program.

Possibly, if we just opened the HVAC financing and a large balance remained, I would understand why BRM-EMC/TVA refuses to allow subscribers such as us to participate in the FlexPay plan. However, only a small balance remains.

I invite the Board of Directors to review this policy and allow customers with HVAC loans to participate in the FlexPay program.

Thank you.
*Sincerely,
Christopher D. Mazur*

To the Editor:

The Reality of the Dangers of Climate Change
In response to Tim Groza's letter about climate change, I appreciate his interest and comments. However, we have to look at the facts. Now over 99% of peer reviewed articles about climate change agree that it is very real, very dangerous, and caused by humans through our burning of fossil fuels and degrading our forests and soils. A recent study in the journal Nature said that climate change could cost the world economy as much as 10 times what was previously predicted, with a decrease in output by as much as 23% by 2100 if we make no changes in dealing with climate change.

Almost all experts agree that with rising temperatures will come more heat waves and more droughts, with a marked decrease in crop production estimated at between 10-30%. Consider the years when temperatures are very hot and dry. What does that do to the crop production? This will occur much more frequently as temperatures rise. In addition, there will be an increase in wildfires, more flooding, rising sea levels with flooding of coastal areas and cities resulting in mass migrations of hundreds of millions of people, as well as loss of up to half the species on our planet, loss of lives from heat waves, and an increase in global average temperature of between 4-10 degrees.

We certainly do depend on fossil fuels now, but that does not have to be. Now we have the potential of abundant renewable sources of cheap energy, such as solar and wind-which now can supply cheap energy at about 4.5 cents/kwh. Even if the 99% of experts are wrong, why not take the step now to renewables? At worst, it is a great insurance policy, and now it is cheap.
Vernon Dixon, MD

**RARE KIDS;
WELL DONE**
By Don Jacobsen

Q: Dr. Don, our 5-year old and 8-year old daughters share a bedroom out of necessity and it's not working out very well. The major problem is that the 5-year old acts like she owns everything in the room. We tell her not to touch her sister's things, but she does anyway. She tries to wear her sister's clothes, goes through her drawers and generally leaves the room in a mess. I suppose we could lock up her sister's things in a box but that doesn't seem to us like a good solution. We've talked to her about it but it doesn't seem to make any difference. Where do we start in solving this?

A: Even though you may be tempted, I recommend you not move your 5-year old into the garage. Actually, by the age of 5 kids have the capacity to respect boundaries and private property. So it's time for some parental leadership. Here is what I suggest. You and Elsie (my name for your 5-year old) have "a talk." Take this seriously because you want her to, also. Take her hand and you and she go to her room alone. Place two chairs facing each other so that when you are sitting in them your knees are touching. Take her hands in yours since that will help her stay focused.

The conversation might go something like this: "Honey, today is a major event in your life. After today things will be forever different. This is the day that you stopped touching your sister's things. (Pause.) Unless you have her permission you are not to play with her toys, wear her clothes, or even touch anything on her side of the room. (Pause.) Repeat to me what I just said. Do you have any questions? Good. Continue, "Every Monday morning I will tape a sheet of paper on the refrigerator where we can all see it. The paper will have three little boxes drawn on it. If you forget our new no-touch rule about your sister's things I will make a mark in one of the boxes. If during the week you get a mark in all three of the boxes you will receive a significant punishment. You will not know exactly what that punishment will be, but I can assure you that you will not like it. Any questions? Good." Give her a hug and resume life as normal.

This can be a very valuable teaching moment, Mom. Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@RareKids.net.

Agritourism in Georgia combines agriculture and tourism

Agritourism is a unique experience that combines traditional agriculture with tourism. Mention the phrase 'Agritourism' to the average person, and you'll probably get a wide range of reactions. Some might imagine waking up before dawn to help the farmer, others might picture themselves making cheese, picking fruit, or crushing grapes or olives.

Others may imagine guided hunts or fishing. Many may see themselves and their families having the time of their lives (and maybe getting a little dirty, too) on an adventure packed full of excitement and fun. Whatever the case, this new '-ism' is one that is fast growing! In Georgia, agriculture and tourism are our state's top two economic generators.

The Georgia Agritourism Association is the official voice of this exciting combination. The Association is an Agritourism Operator led 501(c)(6) non-profit corporation. The Georgia Agritourism Association is much like the blended industry it represents: growing rapidly and looking for new opportunities to serve its customers. Agritourism is operators, managers, landowners, landlords and tenants in shared tenancies, who is a producer of an agricultural commodity(s) and allow the public to visit the working agricultural operation for the purposes of experiencing, including but not limited to, education, entertainment, relaxation, hospitality, shopping and dining.

The Georgia Agritourism Association will, by advocacy, education, networking and marketing, facilitate and create new economic growth opportunities for its members (and the state of Georgia) through increased Agritourism and profitable agribusinesses by: enabling, supporting, and promoting Georgia's Agritourism enterprises; educating and informing its constituents on the value of Agritourism; and encouraging the highest standards of hospitality and business practices. Preserving agricultural traditions and increasing net farm income through the creative diversification of Georgia family farms is one of the Association's goals.

In Georgia, agriculture and tourism are our state's top two economic generators. There are many Agritourism farms here in North Georgia and one that is very active in Agritourism in Georgia and promotes the industry very well is Jaemor Farms in Alto. The Echols family at Jaemor Farms has been harvesting crops from this land for 103 years. The family began farming cotton and a few peach trees in 1912. After a few years of growing this "king" row crop, they switched their focus to his few peach trees, and began selling peaches on the side of Old Comelia Highway. It just so happened that in 1981 a four-lane highway was built next to the farm so the Echols opened their familiar produce stand on what is now Highway 365.

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.**



Frank Riley
Executive Director of RC&D

In 2002, they began to diversify the crops grown on the farm to beyond just peaches and apples. Now their customers can enjoy homegrown strawberries, blackberries, scuppermons, concord grapes, watermelon, squash, tomatoes, zucchini, pumpkins and more, during their harvest seasons. Today, on average Jaemor sees more than 750,000 customers annually. Another prominent Agritourism farm here in North Georgia is Mercier Orchards in Blue Ridge and is a family owned and operated apple orchard now in its 4th generation. Started back in 1943 by Bill & Adele Mercier, Mercier Orchards is now celebrating 70 years of fruitful harvest! The combination of their U-PICK events, Bakery & Deli, Market Store, and now their Farm Winery makes them a great choice for a day trip with the family. They currently grow strawberries, cherries, blueberries, peaches, plums, nectarines, and apples and have many seasonal "Events" on the farm.

Another very good Agritourism farm is Mountain Fresh Creamery and Glo-Crest Dairy in Clermont, a milk producing and processing farm where the milk and milk products are produced, processed and sold right on the farm. They are dedicated to their cows' comfort and health 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They milk around 200 Holstein cows, twice a day, every day on their 100 acre farm. Approximately 60% of their herd is registered and they have plans to be 100% registered by 2020. Their cows spend part of each day grazing in the lush pastures. What goes into the cow affects what comes out, so they make sure their cows have fresh water at all times and a balanced, healthy diet. Although the cows love grazing outside in the pasture, the Nutritionist carefully balances the cows' vitamin and mineral needs to ensure they receive the highest quality feed as well. Milk quality is the #1 priority at Glo-Crest Dairy and the practices they have in place to care for the cows has captured their farm the "Cream of the Crop" award each year since 2004!

The list of Agritourism farms and businesses up here in North Georgia is long and these are just 3 of many. Visit one of these farms and you will learn how our produce and other farm products are produced.

Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council was instrumental in the development of the Georgia Agritourism Association and for more information on Agritourism, contact Frank Riley, frank.ccrd@gmail.com.

The Veterans' Corner

By *Scott Drummond, USCG Veteran*

We need members!
First off, our Viet Nam Veterans' Certificates at our Veterans' Day service were presented by Colonel Walter A. Shumway, USA; NOT Walter A. Shumate! No excuses! Other than old eyes with too many miles, yada yada. Probably not the last time, certainly not the first. My focus was and is Veterans, who as our defenders of our unalienable rights, endowed by our Creator, make every day Veterans' Day. Spelling however, not so much...

Today, we are losing members in all our Veteran Service Organizations. In Georgia we have 775 thousand veterans, of which 14% are Gulf War, 14% Vietnam, and 40% Korea era but yet only 8% are members of our American Legion? Auxiliary members are down from 12,000 in 2007 to 8000 in 2014. We would love to and need to rebuild our numbers and recruit as many of our Veterans as possible to become members and bring new energy and ideas to our membership.

Pillar I: Veterans. Pillar II: National Security. Pillar III: Americanism. Pillar IV: Children and Youth. Sons of American Legion, founded in 1932 include males who honor their parents or grandparents who served in our U.S. military and were eligible for Legion membership. [www.legion.org/sons] or 317-630-1205.

American Legion Riders for those who prefer two wheels (or three), provide services for Legion supported causes and even military funerals. These fine folks are responsible for raising more than five million dollars for the Legacy Scholarship fund. Membership in Legion, Auxiliary or Sons is a prerequisite to Rider participation. [www.legion.org/riders] or 317-630-1327. American Legion Auxiliary is the largest women's patriotic service organization in the world! Personally, I cannot say enough about these hard working, cheerful, dedicated and patriotic ladies who do so much in each and every aspect for our coalition of VSOs. While not as well known as other higher profile groups, minus their devotion, our services and projects would not be as successful. Always there, always humorous, always working and supporting our Veterans and ongoing projects, with seemingly tireless energy. [www.alaforveterans.org]

The American Legion is America's largest supporter of Veterans. We have more than 13,000 posts, some even beyond our borders. [www.legion.org] OR 317-630-1321.

For local information or joining call John Harkins, 706-970-0530 OR Jim Hoyt, 706-896-7654. Here in Towns County we have a unique Post #23, and our Brothers and Sisters of VFW Post 7807 share their facilities at 1329 Sunnyside Road. We all work together on projects such as Veterans' Day, Memorial Day, memorial services honoring fallen Vets and various projects and committees. We are a coalition of fine ladies and men who work tirelessly, enjoy friendship and fellowship at our many events, such as working in our VFW Thrift Store, which in turn, "gives back" much to the community. Fun and humor are certainly a part of all our projects and undertakings. Even though we are an easy going, laid back organization, we have accomplished much, we are a loose knit family and look forward to meeting new members.

Semper Paratus

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