

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Boys State, bettering America

Our Veterans organizations aren't just for us old Veterans to have a place to "hang out". We often contribute to community in many ways. One important project is Boys State. Also our American Legion Auxiliary sponsors Girls State, a separate but very similar program. Early this year, Lloyd MacBride (director of American Legion Riders) and John Harkins (American Legion Post #23 Commander), assisted by Coach Floyd paid a visit to our rising junior class at Towns County HS. The purpose of their mission was to introduce and recruit applicants for this year's Boys State and Girls State candidates. Our goal is to have applicants selected by the end of February. 2016 was our first year for Towns County, and young Riley Roach was very successful in his participation in this training and educational program. This could be considered a short summer preparatory program for future leaders of America. Other advantages are potential scholarships, advances in college programs, military academy applications, and career job placements.



The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran

Working with others from all across America, these young folks learn how government is supposed to work, create a mock government, learn the intricacies of elections, legislative sessions, court proceedings, law enforcement, from local to national and acquire advanced learning skills and personal development. According to Lloyd, this year we have three young men from TCHS interested. There are normally two candidates picked from 49 states (Hawaii doesn't participate) to attend Boys Nation in Washington, DC during mid-summer of each year. Boys State was founded in 1935 in order to counter rising socialist training camps in America. Please go here for more details: boysstate-nation@legion.org.

Locally Boys State is sponsored by our American Legion Post #23, our newly chartered American Legion Riders, and Sons of American Legion (SAL). We also owe thanks to Blue Ridge Mountain EMC (their second year) and United Community Bank for their support of this wonderful program. Notable Boys State graduates are NBA champion Michael Jordan, former President Bill Clinton, Neil Armstrong, Nick Saban, Bon Jovi, just to name a few.

American Legion Auxiliary Girls State is a nonpartisan program that teaches young women responsible citizenship and love for God and Country. Since the inception of the Girls State program in 1937, nearly one million young people have had the opportunity to learn first-hand how their state and local government works. Our American Legion attached and partnered with our VFW Post 7807 couldn't function minus the ladies of our American Legion Auxiliary who are now sponsoring applicants from TCHS for Girls State. For detailed information please go here: www.boysandgirlsstate.org/girls.html.

Do you know of a qualified Veteran, spouse, or son of a Veteran who would like to become a member alongside some fine individuals, who would enjoy fellowship and occasionally volunteering to help in our community projects? New members always welcome! These are only two of the missions we try to accomplish as Veterans assisting Veterans, community, and young service men and women.

Semper Paratus

Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor:

Clean Energy-America's Road to Prosperity

Secretary of Energy nominee Rick Perry was right when he said that climate change was a danger, but we had to combat it in a way that does not hurt our economy. Now, wind can produce energy for less than 2 cents/KWH, and solar for not much more. That is often less than new coal powered plant costs. Most economists now agree that combating climate change benefits the US economically. China just announced that it was cancelling over 100 new coal fired power plants and has dedicated itself to leading the world in clean energy production. It will invest \$361 billion over the next 4 years into clean energy and says this will create 13 million new jobs. China now is the world's leader in clean energy technology and production. The country that leads the world into the Green Energy future will lead the world economically. That must be America, not China! For we can use that 13 million good jobs.

For every dollar spent on clean energy production and energy conservation, 2-3 times as many jobs are produced as would be produced from the same dollar spent on fossil fuel energy production. Fossil fuel use has had its time, and we are grateful for it. However, the time has come for us to embrace the future of clean energy technology. George Shultz, a fiscal conservative and former Secretary of State under Ronald Reagan, advocates for a carbon fee and dividend plan that places a fair price on the production of carbon dioxide from fossil fuels to account for their external cost and returns that money to all US citizens. This plan both markedly lowers greenhouse gas emissions by 52% and adds 2.8 million new American jobs, increases the GDP by \$1.375 trillion, and adds extra real spendable income to most Americans over its 20 year life span. We are America, and we can do this! Yes, let us make America even greater by growing our economy and ensuring a livable world for future generations to inhabit.

Vernon Dixon, MD

To the Editor:

I don't understand... Our great-grand parents fought for our rights - and won! We won rights to vote, rights to attend churches, schools-any place we want to go, we can. Yes, our great-grandparents fought for us, but, not to be the sniveling, selfish, give-me, coveting bunch of Americans that we've become. We seem to want what Hollywood has - the biggest and best. I, for one, don't see anything a lot of the "jet set" has to offer. They try to make the world think because they represent the best of acting, that they represent me as an American - wrong! Please Hollywood, do not use your platform to speak your vile words trying to convince the world you're representing the majority of Americans. I am an American woman who doesn't want to be categorized. Yes, I am feminine, I am strong, I am capable - I already know that - no one needs to convince or remind me. I also know that any person who lives in our great country can be anything they put their mind to. But, it does take hard work, a positive mindset, unselfishness and perseverance to get there. Life is a wonderful gift - don't be a puppet of anyone - especially of Hollywood actors; don't be a janitor of your own possessions - less, really is more; don't take yourself too seriously (otherwise you'll be the only one who does!); take time to be truly thankful for who you are. Be the best you can be through Christ who made you.

Shelley Peace

A Chain of Humanity

During the mid 1980s I went on walkabout. My hitch with the Marine Corps had ended and after a lackluster quarter at college, I decided to do some traveling to "get my head right." At least that's what I told my dad, who advised me to forego this wild goose chase, settle down, get a job and avoid worrying my mother.

Soon after his lecture I caught him checking the oil in my car, which I had packed for the trip, and I found out later that he had secretly put an envelope full of cash into my backpack. Years later he told me that he wished he could have gone with me. So do I.

Conservative values were in vogue back then, supported by, rather than demonized by media and pop culture. Enlistment in the Marines was on the upswing, so much so that they were turning away more volunteers and offering early out for some of the enlisted.

On college campuses then, as now, liberal values dominated. There were several in my platoon on Parris Island who had interrupted their college careers for a different kind of "walkabout." Our Senior Drill Instructor, Staff Sergeant Frasier, referred to us as "The Pepsi Generation." This was not meant as a compliment, and it was usually accompanied by an opportunity to do some exercise.

We become what we choose to value from our experiences. Discharged from the service and back in school I still had a tendency to sit at the dinner table with my back straight, heels together and feet at a 45 degree angle, but my hair had grown back to shoulder length. This was in-progress, a former Marine of the Pepsi Generation, put himself on the road in search of the geographical cure around 1986.

After a month or so of random travel I found myself in a campground alongside the Gila River in New Mexico. A cross section of North America was camped there at the time. There was a group of hippies living in a bus, a small group of bikers, an African American couple with their kids, a group of migrant workers, probably Yaqui Indians, headed north from Mexico, and a weekend crowd of locals intent on drinking as much beer as was humanly possible.

The weekend did not start out with our diverse group of folks sitting around the campfire and singing "Kumbaya." There were hostile looks shared between the camps, insults, racial slurs, and at least one fist fight. All of that was about to change.

On Saturday morning an uneasy truce was in effect after the alcohol fueled arguments of Friday night. On Saturday afternoon a young woman and her two children waded across the shallow river to hike down the canyon. Later that evening, as the sun began to set, the river began to rise. Storms had passed by many miles to the north, and a flash flood was moving down the river.

Just before dusk, you could faintly hear cries for help coming from across the river. The woman and her children had hiked back to the campground to find the river too deep and too rough to cross, and darkness was fast approaching. A note of panic crept into her voice as it became too dark to see. A group of campers was milling about on the edge of the shore and wondering what to do.

Marines are not known for milling about. Earlier I had noticed the Eagle, Globe and Anchor sewn onto the leather jacket of one of the bikers, so I ran over to their camp to get help. All I said was, "There is a woman and her kids trapped on the other side of the river. I've got a coil of rope in my trunk and I need some help."

All five bikers were instantly on their feet and running back to my car.

After a quick consultation we decided to move my car, closest to the crossing, to the edge of the bluff overlooking the river so we could tie the rope to my bumper. As luck would have it, my battery was dead. The six of us tried moving the vehicle, but it was stuck in the soft sand.

The closest group was the migrant workers, so I ran over to get more help. None of them spoke very much English, but with a few words and some hand gestures backed up by the woman's cries for help, we soon had enough hands to move my car into position.

We tied one end of the rope to the bumper and the other end into a makeshift harness around my waist. With ten people now on the rope and several others making a human chain into the shallow edge of the river, I waded in.

The water was waist high as I made the first crossing. On the opposite shore I tied the rope around myself and the smallest of the children, picked her up and waded back across. The water was above my beltline now and still rising, but we made it safely across to the human chain waiting for us. The second child was older and able to walk on his own, guided by me and the rope, and we soon got across.

Mom was a more difficult crossing. She was exhausted from panic and frozen by fear, but I managed to get us tied off and headed across the dark water that was now illuminated by several flashlights from the camp. The water was almost chest high now and we lost our footing midstream, but a mighty pull on the rope brought us quickly to shallow water, and we were lifted up by a dozen arms.

Sunday afternoon a large bonfire was shared by most of the campers who had been present at the river rescue the night before. It was a friendly gathering of people bound together by their humanity and their common experience.

There is a river of animosity rising in our country today. I hope and pray that we can rediscover enough of our humanity and common values to get everyone safely across.



By: Don Perry

Roses in Georgia

With Valentine's Day just around the corner, I'm sure many of us have our minds on purchasing dozens of cut roses for our loved ones. While cut flowers are always sure to bring a smile to someone's face, there's nothing like having a beautiful rose bush bloom every year in your own garden.

Like most plants, selecting varieties that are appropriate for the area is key to the success of roses. Hybrid tea roses (Alabama, Cayenne, Matterhorn) have a strong, upward growth habit with single flowers on long stems. Floribundas (Angel Face, Charisma, Bahia) have small to medium sized flowers that grow in clusters. Grandifloras (Arizona, Scarlet Knight, Queen Elizabeth) can grow up to five or six feet tall and have clusters at the end of long stems. Climbers (America, Crimson Glory, Peace, New Dawn) have long, arched stems that are well suited to arbors and trellises, and they can grow up to twenty feet in a single season. Heritage roses are those which existed prior to 1876 and have not been genetically modified through cross breeding. However, most are still disease resistant. All of these varieties are suited to zones five through ten, so they do perfectly fine in our zone 6b/7a climate.

Maintaining good cultural practices also helps to ensure the success of your roses. Always plant roses where they can get six to eight hours of sunlight each day. Morning light is especially important. Adding about four inches of organic matter to the soil prior to planting will aid in soil drainage. Be sure to plant individual rose bushes five to six feet apart. February and early March are prime times for planting roses. Be sure that the graft union (an enlarged area on the main stem) is one inch above the soil line.

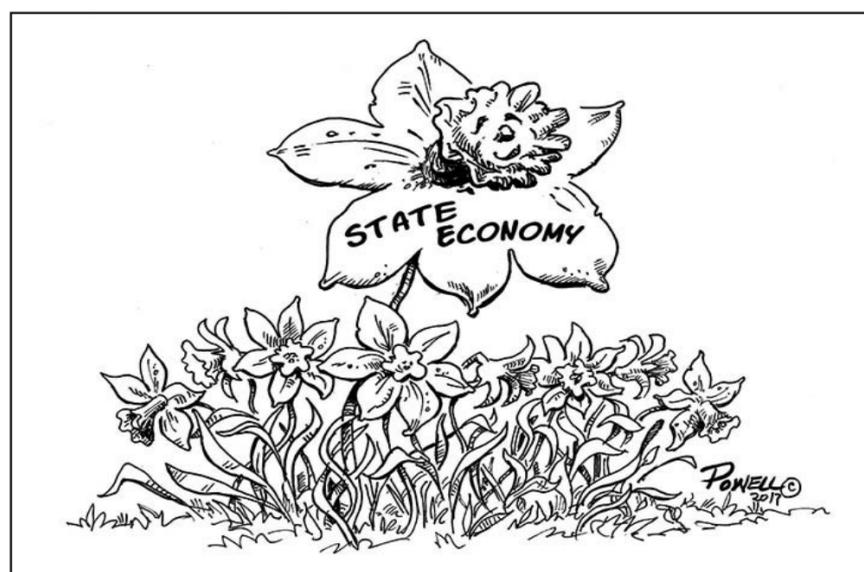
Mulch will help stabilize soil temperature and reduce weed presence. However, mulch can also provide ideal habitat for pests such as voles which love to feast on tasty rose roots. Always keep an eye out for disturbances in your garden to minimize damage to your plants.

Pruning is essential to get the most out of your roses. Hybrid teas, Floribundas, and Grandifloras should all be pruned in late winter before new growth begins. Weak growing varieties should only be pruned lightly, while vigorously growing roses should be pruned heavily. Always be sure to remove dead or diseased wood as well as shoots that emerge below the graft union. Climbing roses should be pruned back to about a third of their length after the first blooms start to fade. Also remove any dead or diseased wood. Be sure to use sharp clippers to reduce splitting of cut wood.

For more information about rose varieties and disease management, contact your extension office for our "Roses in Georgia: Selection and Growing Techniques" publication.

Don't forget about our soil health field day on February 17th at GMREC. Registration and refreshments begin at 9 a.m. and presentations begin at 10 a.m. Topics include ideal soil profiles, improving soil health, federal conservation programs, and soil testing and interpretation. Lunch is provided and the program concludes at 1 p.m.

Union and Towns County Extension will hold the Annual Northeast Georgia Corn Production meeting will be Wednesday, February 22 from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center. There will be pesticide credit available at this meeting; one hour for private applicators and three hours for commercial applicators in category 21. Please RSVP by 5 p.m. Friday, February 17th to the Union County Extension Office at (706) 439-6030. Lunch will be provided!



Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players Bingo	Every Monday: Village Condos Clubhouse	12:30 pm
	Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
Free GED prep.	Every Tuesday: Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	Every Wednesday Red Cross Building	7 pm
Free GED prep.	Every Thursday: Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Bridge Players	Every Friday: Village Condos Clubhouse	12:30 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Sunday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Chamber Board	Second Monday of each month: 1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	8 am
Historical Society	Old Rec. Center	5:30 pm
Mtn. Comp. Users	www.mcug.org	6 pm
Planning Comm.	Civic Center	7 pm
School Board	Auditorium	7 pm
Unicoy Masonic	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Caregiver support	Second Tuesday of each month: Brasstown Manor	3 pm
Arts & Crafts Guild	Calvary Alliance Chapel	6 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm
Basket Weavers	Second Wednesday of each month: SC Fire Hall	10 am
Board of Elections	Old Rock Jail	4 pm
CVB Board	Second Thursday of each month: Rec Center	9 am
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	5 pm
Square Dance Club	Second Friday of each month: Rec. Center	7 pm

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Towns County Herald

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Publication No: 635540

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

Towns County (1 Year) \$20. Out of County (1 Year) \$30. 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
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