

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Get Ready 'Cause Here it Comes

Happy Spring. When did my semi-obsession begin? Oh I remember now. Before attending Culinary School in 1992, I knew about boat ramps, handicapped ramps and runway ramps. I've had and seen my share of rampages that caused running amok and going berserk. I knew that greedily spread gossip and some diseases ran rampant and the ramparts cited in The Star Spangled Banner, our national anthem, were gallantly streaming. I was totally ignorant of what was causing some of my fellow students from the Appalachian area to be so howling-at-the-moon giddy.

Around Towns

Dale Harmon



It was, of course, the upcoming ramp season. Ramps, so called mainly in the Appalachian Region and wild leeks elsewhere, would soon be ready for harvesting. "What are they and what's grand about them?" I asked. The exuberance and euphoria from those "in the know" made me feel like a heathen who had inquired about their religion. Conversion time was nigh. No more questions were needed. Once the bits were champed, the horses ran rampant.

Being a liker of leeks, onions, shallots and other allium species, my interest was peaked. Trying to listen with attention to six voices at once, I gleaned that the eagerly awaited ramps were available for a short time. Aside from being used in zillions of recipes from pickles to pizzas, they were foraged. Foraged! I knew what that meant but had never done it. I guess my tribe had been hunters, not gatherers. Finding good food still in the earth where it grew with The Blue Ridge Mountains as the grocery store sounded a pleasurable romp. Arrangements were made. My classmates and I met and motored to ramp land. We foraged.

Some people taught and some people learned. Hunting wild game requires stealth and silence. Ramps don't run no matter how much chatter is chatted. Warm sun, blue sky and interest - stimulating companions made my first foraging foray far-out fun.

Now is the time to plan your own Ramp Romp. If you've never foraged or eaten ramps ask around for guidance. Proper method in harvesting will help ensure a great crop next season. If you're a veteran "ramp tramp" please share your knowledge and company.

Ramps aren't the only delicacies to be foraged in these parts. A beautiful Chanterelle Tart, shared with my selected sisters, Anne, Grace and Maggie and served with a fine white wine, made me a true believer. Hallelujah. Dr. Phil is right about two sides to everything so if you don't know without a doubt what it is DON'T EAT IT! Next, don't plan a first date for a day or two after enjoying ramps. Trust me on these.

Thanks to Joan Crothers for sharing her ramps with me. They froze beautifully.

Pay Attention

To my mother, seasoning a cast iron skillet was an art. She took special care with her cast iron, and she wouldn't let anyone else clean it. Her pans were almost as "non stick" as Teflon (and they were a lot healthier).

I can almost see a few heads nodding in recognition, and if one of those heads is yours, you might appreciate the image of an obsidian black pan, smooth as glass, bright beads of water dancing on its surface to let you know it's time to cook.

The art of pan seasoning is not often included in a list of the manly arts unless you're a celebrity chef, or were fortunate enough to have listened to your mama when you were growing up. You may believe that such things are more properly the domain of a mama's boy. If so, I think you are mistaken in a sad and impoverishing way.

I learned something about mama's boys on Parris Island. One evening our platoon was sitting on foot lockers polishing brass when we were instructed to put the brass away and get out our writing gear. We were informed that our next task was to write a letter home to our mamas.

One particularly unwise recruit piped up and said, "I ain't no mama's boy." In the blink of an eye, said recruit was vigorously encouraged to do push ups without delay. The push ups as well as the encouragement continued unceasingly for the next hour while we all wrote our letters home. Then, without a moment's rest, our weary but wiser recruit got to write his own letter after all. In the opinion of Senior Drill Instructor, Staff Sergeant Frasier, the recruit, the sergeant himself and every other male who ever had a mama, was and will always be a mama's boy.

The world would be a wiser place if we paid better attention to our elders in general and our mamas in particular. I've always liked the expression, "pay attention." The word "pay" implies that there is a debt owed, and that debt is the price we pay for gaining knowledge. Paying attention is the bill due in gratitude and respect for our elders. Knowledge and wisdom are not free. They must be purchased with our own experience or, if we're lucky, with attention paid to buy the experience of someone else.

There are two cast iron pans seasoning in the oven as I write this. I found them just recently while cleaning out the old family home. Their seasoning had been almost ruined by an over zealous cook who worked for my dad after mom passed away. Fortunately I paid attention when Mama was teaching me how to care for my own cast iron.

Pay attention to your mama while you can. One day you won't be able to. I wish I had paid better attention to my own mother's knowledge and wisdom. Not only would I have had an easier life, but I would have eaten better. For years we have tried to recreate some of her recipes. She gave me her old cook book about two years before she died. On several occasions we talked about her recipes and I took some notes. She even typed up some of the favorites. But my efforts have just not been up to par.

Last week on the last minute of the last day before turning over the old house to the estate sale company, I found an overlooked drawer in a little used corner. It was packed with Mama's recipes, clippings, hand written recipe cards, and a couple of those remarkably good church cook books filled with the personal recipes of the membership. Everything was organized, packaged up, labeled and waiting. I have no idea when she did all that. Her collection had been hidden away in that drawer for 10 years, waiting for someone to pay attention.

While we're still talking about skillets, picture the one Granny Clappett used to whack Jethro with to encourage him to pay better attention. Life is just like Granny. Think of the accidents alone that we could have avoided simply by paying attention. However, cuts and bruises and even broken bones can heal, but what we missed with those whom we loved and lost, because we were too busy or too distracted to pay attention, well, that hurts forever.

One more thing about skillets before we go. If you have a vintage cast iron pan, hang on to it. Modern pans, in the modern tradition of cutting corners, are manufactured without the final polishing process. That new pan will never be as smooth as your mama's old one.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Fertilizers Part II

This week I'm going to continue talking about fertilizers, but I'm going to go into some more specifics of different types of fertilizers and their pros and cons. I'm going to talk about organic fertilizers, weed & feeds, slow release, synthetic fertilizers, and manures.

UGA extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Let's get started with organic fertilizers. There are a number of different organic fertilizers out there. Generally speaking, these fertilizers will have lower concentrations of nutrients in them. They can be less likely to burn plants because of the lower concentrations. They can be a good fit for perennial ornamentals or vegetable gardens. Plants that are heavy feeders, like corn, are going to need more organic fertilizers applied so that their nutritional demands are met. Milorganite is an organic fertilizer that studies have shown can reduce deer browsing. Milorganite can be effective but it does have an odor that comes with it. Compost is also an organic fertilizer. Again, compost is not going to be a very strong fertilizer, but it will help build the soil organic matter, improving soil health. This is going to be beneficial in the long term for your plants.

Weed & feed products can be useful if you have issues with weeds on your properties. They are usually a granular herbicide and a fertilizer mixed together. Using one of these products can make lawn management simpler because you can kill two birds with one stone. Most of the time the herbicide is a combination of 2,4-D, mecoprop, and dicamba. These are commonly used herbicides for lawn care and are effective on broadleaf plants. The only drawback to using a weed & feed product is that you are also fertilizing the plants while you are trying to kill them. As these products have a pesticide in them make sure you always read the label before using them.

Slow release fertilizers are a very good option in certain circumstances. Slow release will release its nutrition over a period of months instead of one shot like most fertilizers. This is beneficial for a lot of perennial plants. Trees typically don't need a lot of fertilizer, and applying a strong fertilizer can actually stress trees. Slow release doesn't cause stress on trees, and they last for a few months. If you have perennial ornamentals that need a little fertilizer but not a big shot all at one time, slow release might be the way to go.

Synthetic fertilizers are the most common ones used. These will usually have higher concentrations of nutrients, meaning you get a bigger bang for your buck. As I've already discussed, that may not be what you're after. If you are doing some vegetable gardening or your soils are very deficient in nutrient synthetic fertilizers will give you the biggest boost.

Finally, I want to say something about manures as fertilizer. Similar to organic fertilizers, their nutrient concentrations will probably be low. Also, you may not know what you're getting nutritionally if no analysis has been done. Manure can be really good for building organic matter in soil. It is easy to add too much phosphorus if you are solely relying on manure; this can lead to eutrophication downstream. Some people are concerned with weed seeds in chicken litter. Studies have been done showing that chicken litter carries very little to no weed seed in it.

There are pros and cons to many different types of fertilizers. If you have questions about fertilizers contact your local Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Letters to The Editor

In the Interest of Fairness

Dear Editor,

In the March 13 letter to the editor "Please Reconsider, Part II," the writer makes the point that full-time residents should not subsidize part-time residents through an increase in the customer charge on their Blue Ridge Mountain EMC power bills. I wholeheartedly agree. Last week, former Commissioner Bill Kendall was concerned about increased energy bills in his own letter to the editor. Unfortunately, subsidies are exactly what is occurring now, and the reallocation of costs on a member's bill doesn't mean an increased bill. The current charge of \$21.37 covers little more than half of the actual infrastructure costs. The remaining 45 percent is built into the kWh usage portion of the bill. So, because part-time residents have low kWh usage over the year, they don't pay their fair share of the infrastructure costs and in effect are being subsidized by full-time residents. As the customer charge is increased over time, the kWh usage charge would be reduced (barring future increases from the TVA), resulting in most full-time residents' annual power remaining the same as current levels and in some cases going down. Part-time residents would experience an increase in their annual power costs.

In my opinion, the General Manager's proposal is fair for everyone involved, including our lower income residents who for years have subsidized those with the means to afford second or third homes.

Respectfully submitted,
Patrick Malone

Deep State

Dear Editor,

My letter is in response to a previous writer. He could not be more correct. I was born and raised during the terrible Depression of the 20s and 30s. I recall that folks helped others, regardless of their political affiliation. Along came WWII and we became better friends. There was patriotic loyalty never seen before. When new presidents were elected, civil service bureaucrats never changed. They supported the new president because that is what they are sworn to do. Now, we have a "deep state" that vows to overthrow our government and protest everything that is good for our nation.

Some may call the "deep state" a bunch of sore losers or some other "nice" term, because their candidate did not win. My definition is pure and simple. It is called treason.

I fought for this nation in Vietnam and returned with two Purple Hearts, and I only hope that it was not in vain. God bless America!

Lt. Col. Dale Sissell (USAF) Ret.

In Our Infinite Wisdom

Dear Editor,

Everyone in America can and does name all the problems that we have today. Everyone in America has a solution for all of our problems. However, if one does not know the origin of any problem, it is impossible to effect a solution. No one knows or either refuses to admit when these problems came about. Our problems began the day we asked God to leave our school systems and our government. The Mayflower Compact clearly states that this country was founded for the God of Christianity. As such, God has blessed this land as he has no other. Today we see the decline of America as never before. In our infinite wisdom we have chosen to elect those over us who hate this land and strive to bring it its demise. We fail as a people to understand and/or we fail to accept God's requirements for revival of the great land we once were. We fail to acknowledge the fact that there are only two types of people living in this world today. Those who know Jesus Christ as savior and those who do not. If you do not know Jesus Christ as savior, you are owned and controlled by the god of this world, satan. If you are owned by satan, you are capable of any atrocity. Thus the demise of this nation as a godly nation.

David Keating



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

	Every Monday:	
Bridge Players	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:	
Free GED prep.	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	Every Friday:	
Alcoholics Anon.	Sundance Grill	8 am
	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Sunday:	
	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Friendship Comm.	Third Thursday of each month:	
Republican Party	Clubhouse	6 pm
	Civic Center	5:30 pm
Goldwing Riders	Third Saturday of each month:	
	Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
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. Garden Club	Hiaw. Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
	Clubhouse	12:45 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Last Thursday of each month:	
	Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

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Phone: (706) 896-4454 Fax: (706) 896-1745 Email: tcherald@windstream.net
Or mail to: PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546

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