

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Gang Activity in Towns County

Almost every day national and large city news broadcasts and periodicals report on the rapid rise of gang activities. This both saddens me and scares me. Task forces are organized to help combat this epidemic but the going is slow.

**Around Towns**  
Dale Harmon



A raucous turf war, with unseen provocation, erupted in Towns County several months ago, but is just now being reported. No weapons were brandished, but tail feathers in full-fan were in full view. There was much bobbing and waddling and non-verbal but audible accusations were hurled like spears.

Rabble 'rousing hecklers (and Jecklers) seized the diverted attention of usual adversaries to get in a few fowl kicks of their own. Crows are smart that way.

After the requisite amount of gesturing and posturing, conflict ended abruptly like a rouge summer cloudburst and harmony was restored to the 'hood.

I conducted an on-line search which explained that the turkey-trot rumble is a pre-season mating ritual that toms are compelled to perform. Men. Go figure.

Now we all know that crime can and does take place any and everywhere. Paying close attention to our surroundings and making habit of locking doors of our houses and cars, even in friendly, neighborly Towns County is vital for our protection. With all that said, we are lucky to live in an area that is not only beautiful, but can light heartedly speak of turf wars. Many places do not have that option. We all share responsibility to help keep this place we love as safe as possible.

Becoming smug and complacent could prove dangerous. Obey laws. Report crime. Robert Frost said it best. "Good fences make good neighbors".

Peace and harmony to us all.

## It's not a lie if what you said...

...Would be true if the facts were different. I wish I could take credit for the title, but I first heard it spoken by the actor Bryan Cranston on the "Malcolm in the Middle" series. There are some days, some weeks, when the phrase seems to capture the spirit of our age.

Last week was one of those weeks. "I'll be there by 11," said the man who wanted to pick up my old refrigerator (at no cost) and restore it. A 1960 Coldspot, still running, had been left over from our estate sale. Quality vintage items are treasures, and I abhor waste, so I didn't want to see it hauled away to the landfill.

A Sears repair technician, days away from leaving the company to deploy to Afghanistan, told me that appliances today, the "good" ones, are designed to last 8 years. I had heard the same thing from a retiring technician with 30 years experience, so I believe what the young man said is true. The number of appliances that have crossed my own threshold, having lived past their ability to be repaired in a few short years, also gives credence to his words.

The opinion of two "insiders" plus my own experience gives lie to the claim of "quality" that is postured by appliance manufacturers, but in our time we must examine that claim with relativity and corporate cultural context, where "quality" depends on what your definition of the word "is" is, to paraphrase former president Bill Clinton. Indeed, modern refrigerators work so much harder and are so much better at keeping our food cold that they give out in 8 years instead of 58, and it's not a lie if what you said would be true if the facts were different.

Eleven o'clock came and went and the old refrigerator still sat in the backyard by the basement door looking quite forlorn. I didn't bother calling the two gentlemen who failed to show up, remembering the distinct odor of poorly metabolized whiskey that surrounded them. Jack Daniels may function at times as a temporary truth serum. It may inspire on occasion the deepest sincerity. But it is not a reliable catalyst for making and keeping commitments.

It was a long trip up the hill on a hand truck for our noble machine, and both the refrigerator and I were relieved when it was finally settled at the top of the driveway. The metal to plastic ratio of a 1960 refrigerator is considerably higher than that of a modern appliance. My wife put a sign on it that said "Free-working 1960 vintage refrigerator," and we hoped that someone would take advantage of the opportunity.

I thought that moment had arrived when, later that day, the pizza delivery guy mentioned that he had a side business hauling scrap metal, and that he would like to restore the refrigerator himself, as well as pick the scrap metal out of the construction dumpster we were using to empty the house. "I'll be there at 7:30 sharp tomorrow morning," he said.

Seven thirty came and went and Scrap Metal Pizza Man did not. I knew that the next day the city would remove the refrigerator from the street and it would end up as scrap metal despite my best efforts, so about 4 PM I called SMPM at work. "Oh, I'm sorry. I had a family emergency this morning and didn't have any way to contact you" he said. The pizza restaurant is two blocks away from our house, and it's not a lie if what you said would be true if the facts were different.

Where do we find honesty and integrity these days? I realize that this is just anecdotal evidence, but I'm pretty sure that the first place I would look would not be among the ranks of the whiskey soaked, or 40 year old guys who deliver pizzas and haul scrap metal and have family emergencies.

We all know that repeated applications of alcohol and drugs will etch a person's honor like acid etches metal. I also believe that hardship and privation, and the ongoing necessity of cutting corners and making ends meet, can in some cases destroy a person's integrity. Only a psychopath robs a liquor store for the fun of it. The lack of integrity can cut across all the boundaries of all the myriad identities we have for labels these days. Some of the most humble can be the most successful. Some of the most deceptive. I'm thinking of a former supervisor, young and intelligent, prosperous, church going. He would, as the old expression goes, "lie as quickly as a cat would lick its hind end." When caught in a lie he would say, "I didn't say that. I would never say that. You must have misunderstood what I said."

Of course, dishonesty was not invented in our time. The old expression about the cat was my great grandfather's, and from the Bible to Shakespeare and in the great literature of the world, the story of lying and its consequences is told and re-told. But lying today is empowered by technology if not actually embraced by elements of our culture. Truth is considered to be relative; good and bad are functions of cultural context, and reality itself is considered to be malleable.

The tale of the noble refrigerator ends well, however. On the morning before the city came to collect our recyclables, I saw a man in a pickup truck carefully, almost reverently, loading up our old friend to haul it away. I don't know if he was an honest man or not, but I am convinced that he was, at least, able to recognize quality.

## The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

## Snakes

As the temperatures continue to rise, plants are blooming, leaves are expanding, and life is rustling in woods again. Some of the life includes snakes. I've already heard a few stories of encounters that people have had with snakes early this spring. Snakes are a natural part of the landscape that we're going to have to learn to live with. So, it's not going to be possible to completely eliminate all encounters with them. There are some things that you can do to make those encounters less frequent and safer for you and the snake.

Most of the snakes that live in Georgia are non-venomous. There are 46 species of snakes in Georgia of which 6 are venomous. Of those 6, we have 2 of them in Union and Towns counties. Copperhead and Timber Rattlesnake are the 2 that we have in our area.

Copperheads can grow to be 4.5 feet long. They are usually light brown with dark brown hourglass shapes on the back. The narrow part of the hourglass is along the spine with the wide base on either side. They are mostly found in forested areas. They like spots with logs, leaf, and rocks for cover. They are capable of living in suburban areas with people around.

Timber Rattlesnakes can grow to be about 5 feet long. They have a color range from yellow to black. Their backs are covered in brown or black chevron shaped crossbands. They like to live along wooded streambanks. They like old debris piles, old burrows and rock crevices. They will also have the iconic rattle on the end of their tail.

Most people will talk about being able to tell if a snake is venomous from looking at the shape of its head. Generally speaking, venomous snakes will have a triangular shaped head. However, this can be difficult to determine in the wild without getting close and handling the snake, which is never advised. Non-venomous snakes can flatten their heads and appear to have more triangular heads too. Some of the markings on non-venomous snakes can be confused with copperheads.

To lessen the chance of having snakes around your home make sure that your dryer vent is covered with a screen to prevent snakes from wandering inside. Remove piles of debris, leaf piles, or wood piles, because those create habitats for snakes. Thick ground cover like tall grass or ivy can create hiding spots for snakes or the rodents, frogs, and insects that snakes like to eat. Keeping the space around your house clear will decrease the likelihood of a snake being present.

Most of the time people are bitten when they try to kill a snake. Non-venomous snake are protected by state law. If you are bitten 1) stay calm; 2) Get competent medical help as quickly as possible; 3) Keep the affected limb level with the body; 4) Do not cut, suck, or apply ice or a tourniquet to the wound. Wear closed toed shoes when walking in areas where snakes might be present.

There are no chemical poisons or effective repellents for snakes. Mothballs are not registered for use as snake repellent. They also can't hear, so any kind of repellent that uses sound isn't going to work. Make sure that the area around your house is kept clear and your house is sealed to that snakes can't enter your home.

If you have any questions about snakes please contact your local Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

UGA Extension  
Watching and Working  
Jacob Williams



## Letters to The Editor

### Georgia Cities Week

Dear Editor,

During the week of April 21-27 Hiawassee will join other cities across Georgia in celebrating Georgia Cities Week. This week has been set aside to recognize the many services city governments provide and their contribution to a better quality of life in Georgia. Our theme, "Georgia's Cities; True Colors" reflects the unique character of cities and the role they play in the state's history, economy and culture.

City government is truly government of, by and for the people - the people who are making the decisions about our community are your neighbors, business owners and community leaders. We are in this together, and we want our city to thrive.

The value cities bring to our state is undisputed. Georgia's cities make up just 9.2 percent of Georgia's land area, but 68 percent of jobs are located within cities. Cities are home to more than 43 percent of the state's population, 65 percent of the commercial property and 50 percent of the industrial property.

We recognize that throughout our lifetimes, the average person will have more direct contact with local governments than with state or federal governments. Because of this, we feel a responsibility to ensure that the public knows how the city operates and feels connected to their city government.

During this week, we want to recognize the role city government plays in our lives: from historic preservation to trash collection to public safety to promoting the area's culture and recreation. We hope you will join us in this celebration and learn more about your city and how it operates for you.

Sincerely,  
Liz Ordiales, Mayor of Hiawassee

## Honeybees - Only insect producing food for man

Domestication of bees is shown in Egyptian art from around 4,500 years ago. Simple hives and smoke were used and honey was stored in jars, some of which were found in the tombs of pharaohs such as Tutankhamun. It wasn't until the 18th century that European understanding of the colonies and biology of bees allowed the construction of the moveable comb hive so that honey could be harvested without destroying the entire colony.

RC&D  
Frank Riley  
Executive Director



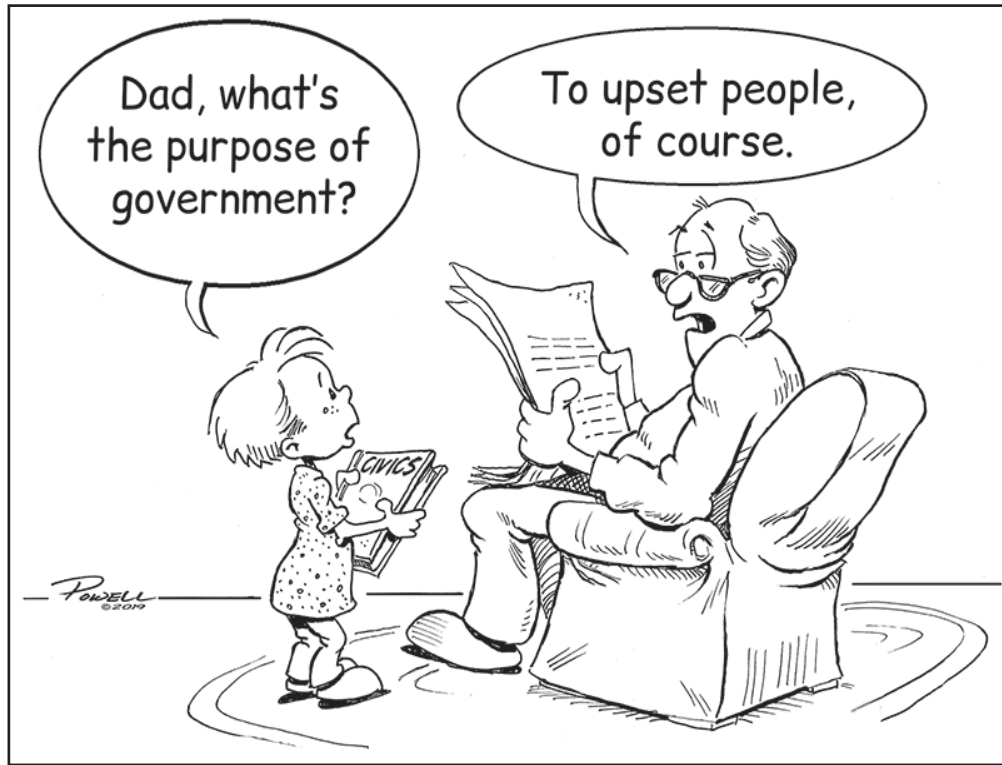
A colony of bees consists of three castes of bee: A Queen Bee, which is normally the only breeding female in the colony. The queen is raised from a normal worker egg, but is fed a larger amount of royal jelly than a normal worker bee, resulting in a radically different growth and metamorphosis. The Queen produces pheromones and one of these chemicals suppresses the development of ovaries in all the female worker bees in the hive. The queen emerges from her cell after 15 days of development and she remains in the hive for 3-7 days before venturing out on a mating flight. Her first orientation flight may only last a few seconds. Subsequent mating flights may last from 5 minutes to 30 minutes, and she may mate with several male drones on each flight. If the queen does not mate and produce eggs, the worker bees will kill the non-performing queen and produce another. Without a properly performing queen, the hive is doomed.

Female worker bees: Most of the bees in a hive are female worker bees. For the first few weeks of the worker bee's lifespan, they perform basic chores within the hive: cleaning empty brood cells, removing debris and other housekeeping tasks, making wax for building, or repairing comb, and feeding larvae (sounds like a good wife) Later, they may ventilate the hive or guard the entrance. Older workers leave the hive daily, weather permitting, to forage for nectar, pollen, water, and propolis, up to a mile away.

Male drones, ranging from thousands in a strong hive in spring to very few during the cold season. Drones are the largest bees in the hive at almost twice the size of a worker bee. They have much larger eyes than the workers have, presumably to better locate the queen during the mating flight. They do not work, do not forage for pollen or nectar, are unable to sting, and have no other known function than to mate with new queens and fertilize them on their mating flights (sounds like my brother-in-law). When queen-raising for the season is over, bees in colder climates drive drones out of the hive to die.

Bees are our little friends and without them a lot of us would go hungry so don't swat the bee on your picnic table, just be glad that they're on the job working hard to keep food on our tables.

For more information on bees and pollination contact Frank Riley at www.info.cccrd@gmail.com.



## Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	<b>Every Monday:</b> All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	<b>Every Tuesday:</b> Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	<b>Every Wednesday</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
Bridge Players	<b>Every Thursday:</b> All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	<b>Every Friday:</b> Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	<b>Every Sunday:</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alzheimer's Supp.	<b>First Tuesday of each month:</b> McConnell Church	1:30 pm
American Legion	VFW Post 7807	4 pm
Hiaw. City Council	City Hall	6 pm
Young Harris Coun.	YH City Hall	7 pm
Quilting Bee	<b>First Wednesday of each month:</b> McConnell Church	10 am
Stephens Lodge	<b>First Thursday of each month:</b> Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Goldwing Riders	<b>Third Saturday of each month:</b> Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
Red Cross DAT	<b>Fourth Monday of each month:</b> 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
Lions Club	<b>Fourth Tuesday of each month:</b> Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Hiaw. Writers	<b>Fourth Thursday</b> Hiaw. Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
Hiaw. Garden Club	Clubhouse	12:45 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	<b>Last Thursday of each month:</b> Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

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Let the Herald work for you!  
Contact us at  
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Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday by 5 PM



## Towns County Herald

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