

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

A Grandson's Love of his Grandfather

Recently I was blessed with an opportunity to meet a young lady from here in Towns County who is so very proud of her father and her son, both who are Marines. She wanted to show me her son's letter of recognition and honor of his grandfather, a USMC Chosen Reservoir survivor and very active servant of Towns County as well as our Veterans community who passed away in Florida just last year. May he rest in peace at the right hand of our Supreme Commander. From the stories that were shared with me, I am in awe and humbled by so many of those who have come before me, and who have sacrificed so much for this unique Sovereign Republic.

The Veterans' Corner
 Scott Drummond
 USMC Veteran



Just read what this young man, now a young Marine has written.

This is a post written by Sgt. Tyler Hoffman USMC:
 "As I am sitting in the truck waiting for the procession to bury my grandfather I feel the collar of my blues coat pressing against my neck, it is a comfortable pain, and I am hot as the Florida sun beams through the windshield. I reflect on his life and the impact he left behind. The man was a true inspiration. He cared about people, and wanted the best for us. He loved the Marine Corps and even on his last days still wished to be able to don his uniform and answer the call of duty. My grandfather is the entire reason I sit in this truck in a uniform and not dress shirt and slacks. The entire reason I wanted to be a part of something more than myself. Today after his funeral I will board a plane, land late in San Diego and return to a class of 30 or so Marines who are attempting to become better leaders, better people for society, and above all better the institution we are part of. It's what he would've wanted me to do. I am so thankful I signed my name on the dotted line a few short years ago, because he was able to live his last few years vicariously through me. I will never forget the everlasting impression he has made on me, the Marine Corps, or my family. Today we may bury your body, but your legacy will live on forever.
 R.I.P. William F. Jacobs, Cpl. USMC 10-20-16"

May God watch over this young Marine as he and countless others watch over all of us and our grateful nation. I ask of you, what better tribute to our United States Marine Corps than this soul-felt tribute and knowing there are thousands more wonderful young men like Tyler Hoffman scattered across America.

And to be able to share this on the heels of our Marine Corps' 242nd birthday!

Thank you, Colette, for sharing this with all of us. The words of your son serve as inspiration for each and every one of us.

Semper Paratus

Letters to The Editor

US Should Heed Its Own Studies

Dear Editor,

The National Climate Assessment, a report regularly ordered by the US government, has just been officially released. More than 300 experts reviewing over more than 1500 scientific studies were involved in the report.

The results directly contradicted assertions made by the Trump administration. It showed that climate change is extremely likely to be caused by humans and that it can have devastating effects on our planet.

It projected sea level increases by the end of the century of between 1-4 feet, though a rise of even 8 feet cannot be ruled out, if we make no changes in our use of fossil fuels. Areas of the eastern and Gulf coasts of the US would see even higher sea level rises.

An increase in temperatures of up to 10 degrees F is possible, with resultant severe increases in heat waves, crop loss, water shortage, and severe loss of infrastructure. Secretary of Energy Rick Perry had previously ordered an assessment of whether the addition of renewable energy has weakened our power grid, hoping that it would show that it did. However, the results of this US study showed that renewables actually made our power grid more resilient.

The evidence is clear, even from studies ordered by the US government, that climate change is very real and will cause potentially catastrophic changes for our earth. We have the resources available, solar and wind energy are rapidly coming down in price, and it is now time for the US to assume the role as the world leader in the Green Energy revolution.

If the US were to adopt a national carbon fee and dividend plan, this would both stimulate our economy and put more money into the average American's pocketbook as well as combat climate change. We lead, or we will be left behind. The choice is ours.

Vernon Dixon

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Curators

The amount of information available today can be confusing. It is intimidating to some, and overwhelming to others. The newspaper we hold in our hands is almost archaic in a world that clicks, pokes and swipes, heads down, shoulders slumped, eyes glazed – constantly connected in an endless search for stimulation and distraction.

Everything that we are inclined to believe is supported somewhere on the Internet. Every fear, every fallacy, every prejudice is presented somewhere as fact, and we are losing the tools of discernment necessary to discover the truth. Many colleges no longer offer classes in logic, and in the rarefied air of some "academic" circles, even mathematics, the purest of the sciences, is considered "racist."

History does not move in straight lines. The only thing new in the paragraphs above is the technology which ushered in this age of information. Past generations also struggled to discover the truth, because propaganda and institutionalized deception have always been with us.

Past generations read newspapers, books and magazines. They listened to the radio. They watched the nightly news on one of the three major networks. They relied on classical education, which emphasized grammar, logic and rhetoric, and the common sense available to an untroubled mind, to discern the truth of what they saw and heard.

Were they any closer to the truth back then, before the Internet, before we all became part of the "Matrix?" Perhaps not. Governments and corporations lied then as they do now. Woodrow Wilson sanctioned propaganda depicting Germans as brutal savages to manipulate U.S. citizens into supporting war against Germany in WWI. Prior to our entry into WWII, Roosevelt goaded the Japanese to war while preaching peace at home. We allowed empire builders to lead us into war with North Korea and North Vietnam. More doctors smoked Camels than any other cigarette. We were encouraged to embrace "better living through chemistry."

Much was hidden from us in the days before the Internet. The mainstream media looked the other way on many of the indiscretions and peccadillos of past presidents, politicians and celebrities. Every aspect of every life was not surveilled and recorded. Though we had better personal tools for discovering truth, we had much less information with which to work.

Technology has revealed much about the past that was overlooked or intentionally obscured. Thanks, in part, to technology, there is no place to hide today in Hollywood – or anywhere else. Everyone who carries a smart phone, and that includes the majority of U.S. citizens now, is a reporter, with a hand-held microphone and film crew and an instant connection to the world wide web. Every bit of information that is stored digitally is vulnerable to discovery, as hackers have easily kept pace with new forms of encryption.

So how does one endeavor to deceive when it is impossible to hide information for very long? Truth is sometimes hidden in plain sight. Often it is obscured by the noise, as it is hard to discern a single note in a cacophony. Politicians obscure truth by manipulating the cognitive bias of their supporters, who sometimes find it just as hard to change their minds as it would be to fight an addiction.

There is a simple but profound reason for that: Belief can function in the brain in much the same way as addiction. Challenge a person's beliefs, threaten their world view, and it causes them pain. They often react with anger or desperation, like a junkie denied a fix.

Where does that leave us, dear readers? Ignorance, they say, is bliss, but ignorance can be dangerous. By the same token, seeking too hard after truth can threaten our peace of mind and ultimately our good health. How can we be well informed without getting lost in the electronic Babel, without sacrificing peace of mind to the constant emergency of broken news?

The "ancients," (our parents and grandparents) had part of the answer: Grammar. Logic. Rhetoric. The ability to understand, reason and communicate. It is never too late to learn, or to refresh these tools, and though modern education emphasizes short term memory with the goal of passing tests, nothing prevents us from teaching our children and grandchildren about these essentials.

Beyond these basic tools for continuing education, we must become curators of our own minds and our own experiences. We must decide for ourselves what is true and what is not, what has value and what does not. We must remain forever skeptical of any person or institution which purports to tell us that the world is this way or that way.

It is certainly easier to be entertained. But if we become so easily and habitually entertained, then we will also be easily frightened, easily angered and easily manipulated.

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, 1 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

Holly Trees

Well it seems since Halloween has passed, we've skipped Thanksgiving and already started decking the halls with evergreens and hollies! Christmas is my favorite time of year so that's no problem for me, and it's certainly no problem for our holly trees and bushes either. This is their favorite time of year, too! I daresay the birds that feast on their berries also appreciate the increased holly presence because holly berries provide food when most of the other fruit has dropped. There are over 400 species of hollies and many of them have several different varieties that suit different landscaping needs. Whether you want a foundation planting, low hedge or trees, there is probably a holly variety for the space you want to fill.

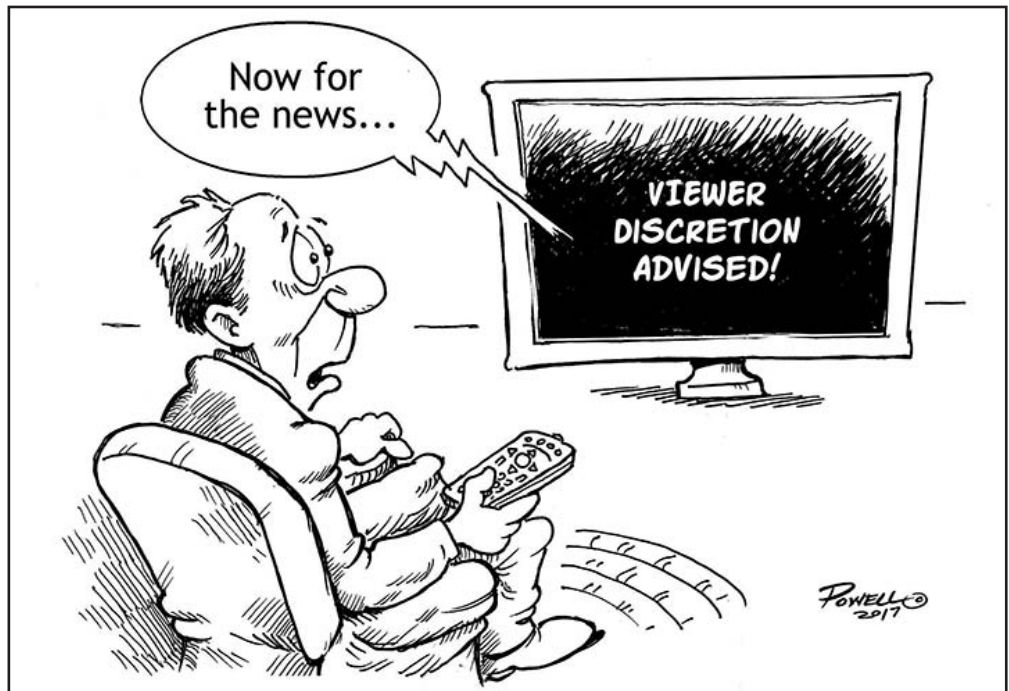
Hollies require well-drained soil that is slightly acidic and has plenty of organic matter. Mulching is a good option to keep weeds down, and it will hold moisture and keep the soil cool. They can grow in part shade, but produce the most flowers and berries when they are planted in full sun. Planting in full sun also helps with maintaining their shape and minimizing pruning because the branches will not become leggy as they try to reach more sunlight. While many hollies are self-fertilizing, some varieties have exclusively male and female plants. Only the females will produce berries, and in order to do so, you will need a male holly nearby.

These plants are hearty, though they do have some problems. If hollies are not producing berries, there could be a pollination issue, high nitrogen levels in the soil, or a late frost that burned flowers that bloomed a little too early. It could also be that the varieties you have are immature and will not produce berries for a few more years, so always make sure to do your research before installing them on your property. Pests can also be a problem. Scale insects, bud moths, red mites and leafminers all feast on holly trees and bushes, and some cultivars are susceptible to root rot.

The American holly is a native plant and typically what inspires our Christmas decorations. It has large spiny leaves and bright red berries. They require a lot of space as they can grow up to fifty feet tall. Some common varieties are Stewart's Silver Crown, Merry Christmas, Jersey Delight and Jersey Princess (these require a Jersey Knight to be pollinated and produce berries). The Yellow Berry American holly also produces bright yellow berries if you are looking for a more unconventional tree. English and Yaupon hollies also grow into evergreen trees. English hollies have very distinctive leaves which have white variegated margins. The native range of the Yaupon holly is from New York to central Florida, and west all the way to Texas. In our area, it typically grows into a small to moderate sized evergreen tree up to fifteen feet tall and as large as ten feet wide. New growth is purple and turns green throughout the summer.

If you are looking for a smaller option, Japanese hollies are shrubs that typically have spineless leaves and black fruit. They average three to five feet and because they form thick hedges, they are a great alternative to boxwoods. Many different cultivars are available: Helli is compact and grows up to four feet, Convexa has dark green leaves and produces many berries, Hetzii is a dwarf form of Convexa, and Roundleaf is a small male bush that does not produce any berries.

For more information on additional holly varieties and how to care for them, contact your extension office.



Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players Bingo	Every Monday: All Saints Lutheran Brasstown Manor	12:30 pm 9:30 am
Free GED prep.	Every Tuesday: Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	Every Wednesday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Bridge Players Free GED prep.	Every Thursday: All Saints Lutheran Old Rec. Center	12:30 pm 4 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Friday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Sunday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Hospital Auxiliary Water Board	Third Monday of each month: Cafeteria Water Office	1:30 pm 6 pm
YH Plan Comm. Co. Comm. Mtg Humane Shelter Bd.	Third Tuesday of each month: YH City Hall Cityhouse Blairsville store	5 pm 5:30 pm 5:30 pm
Quilting Bee MOAA	Third Wednesday of each month: McConnell Church Call Jack @ 828-321-2896	10 am
Friendship Comm. Democratic Party	Third Thursday of each month: Clubhouse Civic Center	6 pm 6 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
Republican Party	Fourth Thursday of each month: New Senior Ctr.	6:30 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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