

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Here's an interesting little tidbit that occurred on a New Years Day in our wonderful American past, so often forgotten, never learned or taken for granted. This occurred on a New Year's about 118 years ago. Or was it 117 years ago?

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



You decide! We truly do have so much to be thankful for living in Towns County, Georgia, within our Blessed, hard fought for Sovereign Republic of the United States of America. If you are reading this, then God Bless you and thanks to the *Towns County Herald* for providing space for so many of our community events, history and common sense issues to be published. S.S. WARRIMOO - FASCINATING -short story:

The passenger steamer SS Warrimoo was quietly knitting its way through the waters of the mid-Pacific on its way from Vancouver to Australia. The navigator had just finished working out a star fix & brought the master, Captain John Phillips, the result. The Warrimoo's position was LAT 0° 31' N and LON 179 30' W. The date was 31 December 1899. "Know what this means?" First Mate Payton broke in, "We're only a few miles from the intersection of the Equator and the International Date Line". Captain Phillips was prankish enough to take full advantage of the opportunity for achieving the navigational freak of a lifetime. He called his navigators to the bridge to check and double check the ships position. He changed course slightly so as to bear directly on his mark. Then he adjusted the engine speed. The calm weather and clear night worked in his favor. At midnight the SS Warrimoo lay on the Equator at exactly the point where it crossed the International Date Line! The consequences of this bizarre position were many: The forward part (bow) of the ship was in the Southern Hemisphere & the middle of summer. The rear (stern) was in the Northern Hemisphere & in the middle of winter. The date in the aft part of the ship was 31 December 1899. In the bow (forward) it was 1 January 1900. This ship was therefore not only in: two different days, two different months, two different years, two different seasons, but in two different centuries - all at the same time. Submitted by a fine friend, great American and one of my brothers who served America in our United States Coast Guard, Ron Willis.

Semper Paratus

The Wake-up Call we Need to Hear

Most of us use alarm clocks to wake up in the morning and if we miss it, we are just late for work, but a more important wake-up call we need to hear can save our lives and is a Smoke Alarm.

RC&D
Frank Riley
 Executive Director



When a smoke alarm detects smoke, it emits a shrill sound that as my granddaddy said, "could wake the dead", which in the case of a house fire is critical so we don't become one of those. Most deaths in house fires are caused by smoke inhalation as it overtakes its victims who never wake up. A smoke alarm can give us a head start so we can survive a house fire.

Smoke alarms are installed on ceilings where smoke will gather first, and the alarm will sound to alert us before the lethal smoke moves down to claim lives. We should have smoke alarms in each bed room in the house so when a fire starts, and smoke begins to flow along the ceilings we can be alerted to the danger and escape. Smoke alarms provide a critical early warning of fire, allowing additional time to escape. National estimates of reported fires show that in 2009-2013, fires in homes with no smoke alarms caused an average of 940 deaths per year. An additional 510 people per year were fatally injured in fires in which smoke alarms were present but failed to operate.

Power source problems were the leading cause of smoke alarm failures. Hardwired smoke alarms were more likely to operate than those powered solely by batteries. In reported home fires in which the smoke alarms were present but did not operate, almost half of the smoke alarms had missing or disconnected batteries. Nuisance alarms were the leading reason for disconnected smoke alarms. The risk of dying in reported home structure fires is cut in half in homes with working smoke alarms.

Installing smoke alarms is the first step, but it is most important to be sure they are working. Half of the home fire deaths resulted from fires reported between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. when we are usually asleep and not aware of what is going on around us.

Statistics show that the percentages of home structure fires and civilian fire deaths reported between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. were higher for properties with smoke alarms that did not operate or with no smoke alarms than in fires in which smoke alarms operated. Smoke alarms give us a sense of security, so we can sleep, but if they aren't maintained, that sense of security will be false and can lead to death by smoke. Most home smoke alarms use either ionization, photoelectric, or both sensing systems to detect a fire. Ionization-type smoke alarms have a small amount of radioactive material between two electrically charged plates which ionize the air and cause current to flow between the plates. When smoke enters the chamber, it disrupts the flow of ions, reducing the flow of current and activating the alarm. Photoelectric-type alarms aim a light source into a sensing chamber at an angle away from the sensor. Smoke enters the chamber, scattering light onto the light sensor and triggering the alarm. Photoelectric alarms respond slightly faster to smoldering fires; ionization alarms respond slightly faster to flaming fires. Ionization alarms are less expensive and the most widely used. Smoke alarms are appliances, just like toasters, televisions, and furnaces. Unlike other appliances, these devices function quietly

in the background, and its alarm, in response to a real smoke situation or to testing, is the only evidence that it works. A television that will not play will not lead to tragedy, but a smoke alarm that fails to sound in a fire, could. Roughly half of the smoke alarms collected as inoperable and studied in the National Smoke Detector Project were more than 10 years old, hence older than the currently recommended replacement age. Alarms designed solely to detect smoke should be replaced every 10 years.

Buying, installing, testing, and maintaining home smoke alarms is essential protection from fire, but it is not enough. Many households have not developed the escape plans that would allow them to use the extra warning time smoke alarms provide effectively. Escape plans identify any obstacles to secondary exits if the main door is blocked, a meeting place outside the home for household members to gather, and makes provisions for household members who need help. We can "Firewise" the outside of our homes to lower the risk of destruction by a wildfire, but we also need to protect our families on the inside by installing, maintaining, and regularly testing our smoke alarms that are our first-line of defense against fire and smoke while we sleep.

For more information on Smoke Alarms, contact your local Fire Rescue Department or Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D at: info.ccred@gmail.com.

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.

Lady Beetles

The cold wet weather has left many of us stuck inside and given us a chance to catch up on movies or relax by the fire. However, while we start to battle cabin fever, another critter is trying desperately to seek shelter for herself and her 500 closest friends: the Asian lady beetle.

UGA extension
From the Ground Up
Melissa Mattee



The Asian lady beetle (*Harmonia axyridis*) was introduced to the United States in the 1970s as a means to control aphids and other pests on important crops. These beetles may be a symbol for luck and appear cute with their black spots on their orange bodies, but they are in fact voracious predators. They reduce pest populations with ease because both the larval form and adult forms feed on aphids, mealybugs, whiteflies, and other soft bodied pest insects. This may seem like a great idea, but these non-native lady beetles have turned into a major pest and have even begun to displace our native lady beetle populations.

It can be very difficult to tell the difference between the Asian lady beetles and our native species. Usually, Asian species tend to have more white on their speckled pronotum, or "shoulders." Native species' pronotums are darker, and many have a richer red color compared to the Asian beetle's orange tint. However, each species has countless variations in color and pattern, making differentiating between native and invasive almost impossible with the naked eye.

One important distinction between our native and invasive beetle species is that the Asian lady beetles are gregarious, while the native lady beetles are not. Native lady beetles are not and have never been pests in our homes because their life cycle synchs with our climate. However, Asian species will scramble to find shelter to overwinter as the temperatures begin to drop. In many cases, their best bet to find shelter is any opening within a house: window screens, attic vents, door jams. Also, because they are gregarious, they will seek each other out so it only takes a few choosing to invade your home to attract even more.

Unfortunately for both us and the beetles, many will end up starving in homes throughout the winter because there are not usually enough plant pests for them to eat indoors. As they die, they begin to stink and can often attract secondary pests like carpet beetles that will feed on their bodies.

The best way to deal with lady beetles is to prevent them from entering the home in the first place. Make sure all door jams are sealed with weather stripping, all vents have fine wire mesh over them, window screens are secured, etc. This will minimize infiltration by the desperate little pests. If you do manage to be overwhelmed by them, simply vacuuming them up with the appropriate vacuum attachment will do the trick. They do not bite, multiply, or do damage indoors, but the sheer numbers in which they appear are why they are classified as pests.

Even though they can wreak havoc in the winter, the established populations of Asian lady beetles can be very advantageous to have in your garden. To promote the presence of native lady beetles, be sure to plant native ornamentals and only use pesticides when pest populations reach levels that the native predators can't reduce.

For more information on lady beetles, native plants, and pest management in the garden, contact your local extension office.

Letters to The Editor

Attention Georgia Drivers!

Dear Editor,
 Georgia State Law can cancel YOUR accident insurance. Here is how it works: You have an accident and the other driver is at fault. Before the ink is dry on the police report, the "at fault" insurance company will send a letter stating: (Capital letters are added for emphasis). "Be advised that we are unable to resolve your claim as we have determined there to be COMPARATIVE NEGLIGENCE on both parties. As Georgia is a MODIFIED COMPARATIVE NEGLIGENCE STATE, neither party can recover their damages." This is a direct quote from one such letter. They simply declare everyone involved as negligent. They do not list reasons on who is, or is not negligent. Other than "Please call if you have any questions", no appeal process is mentioned.

Not only are YOU negligent, but YOU, the innocent party in an accident, now have to file for damages on YOUR insurance policy AND pay YOUR deductible. If you happen to be the driver at fault ... you lose. The at fault driver gets nothing. Since this is a state law, it is not part of an insurance policy. Some insurance agents only become aware of this law when a client files a "second claim" to fix their car.

You get the hassle of filing a claim on your insurance, paying your deductible and the label of being a negligent driver. Now that you have the honor of being a "negligent driver" ... and filing a claim against your insurance company ... what do you believe is going to happen to your insurance rates?

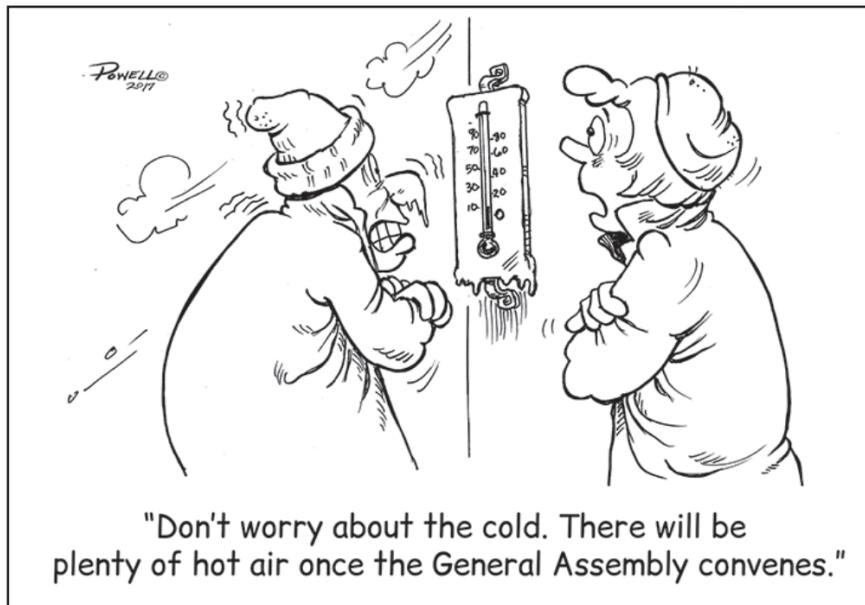
This "comparative negligence rule" is not protecting Georgia drivers. It allows insurance companies to escape their financial responsibilities contrary to coverage listed in their policies. It is time to call or write your Senator, Congressman and the State Insurance Commissioner before you receive greetings from the other guy's insurance company.

Welcome to the world of insurance coverage ... maybe ... or maybe not.
John L. Holmes
 Georgia resident and a "not at fault" driver

CNN is Middle of the Road

Dear Editor,
 From the sound of his letter (tcherald, 12/20/2017) Tim Groza must dislike CNN quite bit. While I can empathize with finding some TV news channels distasteful because they are extremely slanted in their news coverage, CNN seems to be fairly middle of the road. Their stories certainly are not fake news. I don't watch CNN at home, but in a busy airport that quality makes it a good fit. The implication that CNN's rating are falling leads me to suspect that the writer is getting this news from sources that he wants to believe, not reputable, verifiable news agencies. Of course, if you want to share that position you can find plenty of support on social media, blogs or the folks who rant about the liberal media. They don't have to abide by journalist ethics. As for me, I still prefer to believe newspapers. They put what they say in hard copy print, so it can't be posted online one day and taken down the next.
 Sincerely,
David Best

Have something to sell?
 Let the Herald work for you!
 Contact us at 706-896-4454
 Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday by 5 PM



Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	Every Monday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Bingo	Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
Free GED prep.	Every Tuesday: Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	Every Wednesday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Bridge Players	Every Thursday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Friday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Sunday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Mtn. Amat. Radio	First Monday of each month: 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	6:30 pm
Alzheimer's Supp.	First Tuesday of each month: 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	First Wednesday of each month: McConnell Church	10 am
Stephens Lodge	First Thursday of each month: Lodge Hall	7:30 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	Mtn. Regional Library	4 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm

Towns County Herald
 Legal Organ of Towns County

Kenneth West Owner/Publisher **Charles Duncan** Editor **Shawn Henrikson** Copy Editor **Lowell Nicholson** Photographer

Derek Richards Advertising Director **Shawn Jarrard** Staff Writer **Lily Avery** Staff Writer **Website:** townscountyherald.net

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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