

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## American Legion Post #23

How about this? Come March 2019 our American Legion will be 100 years old! Right now would be a perfect time to join, renew your dusty old membership, or transfer your membership from other posts to here. We need you!

**The Veterans' Corner**  
**Scott Drummond**  
 USCG Veteran



Here in Towns County we are a part of VFW Post 7807 also shared with the following Veterans associations: VFW Post #7807; American Legion Riders (recently chartered as an outstanding group of individuals who do great things for our communities, veterans, and bereaved loved ones.); SAL (Sons of American Legion), for those who are children of Veterans, but never served in uniform, the ones I know sure do a heck of a job now!; American Legion Auxiliary, previously "ladies auxiliary"; VFW Auxiliary; and Marine Corps League.

Our post information: Post Address: P.O. Box 927, Hiawassee, GA 30546.

Post Telephone: 706.896.8387. Post Email: vfw7807@gmail.com. Hours: Monday through Friday 1500 – 2000. Saturday 1500 – 2400. Sunday 1200 – 1800 we invite you to come by and join! If there is no one there to answer your questions on any of the aforementioned organizations, you can bet we'll find someone. Applications are there to be handed out for potential members or those who wish to transfer their membership from prior home towns. Here's some great websites for your research: www.legion.org/; www.members.legion.org/; CGI-BIN/lansaweb?wam=MYSINTRO&webtrn=WR\_Salln&tro&ml=LANSAXHTML&part=TAL&lang=ENG; www.legion.org/auxiliary .

I cannot emphasize this enough. All of our Veterans organization members work together; we are like a family. We undertake various and asunder community services and projects. We do simple things such as road cleanup alongside church groups and other community clubs and businesses. We just completed our assigned section of Fodder Creek Road. Yes! Even us older folks, many with arthritis and other health conditions may work slower than we used to but we "git 'er done"! We organize events like our forthcoming Memorial Day celebration, this May 29th.

The "older" statement relates to another request. All of our Veterans organizations today need younger Veterans, as in those recently discharged from any of our branches of armed services. The typically younger age bracket of Veterans active in our clubs today are of the Vietnam War Era, hence age 70 would be just about average. Wow! I remember when I thought 40 was old!

Our WWII and Korean War Era Veterans are dwindling due to the natural course of life which we all share, and we shall miss them dearly when they are gone. So please come join us, and plan on becoming active. We have a great fellowship to offer, and plenty of officer positions which need filling. We love to hear younger folk's stories, and how things may have changed and how many other things are still the same, LOL!

Let's do our part as Veterans to keep our All American spirit alive for the future of our communities and our homeland, the United States of America. We've already done the hard part.

*Semper Paratus*

## The Fire Learning Network

On May 16th thru 18th the Southern Blue Ridge Fire Learning Network (SBR FLN) will hold their annual meeting in Hiawassee. The SBR FLN is a gathering of natural resource managers who are dedicated to bringing fire back into our mountain environment. Fire is a natural phenomenon that has occurred in our forests since the beginning of time and will continue long after we are gone no matter how hard we try to prevent it.

The Firewise and Fire Adapted programs don't try to prevent fire, but educate people who live in the wildland areas how to prepare and protect their property from the out-of-control wildfire that is coming to their backyard one day. Partners in the Southern Blue Ridge FLN (SBR FLN) collaborate to develop, share and apply the best available science to restore fire across a vast, diverse region.

Partners and stakeholders work in teams in the network's eight landscapes to set and achieve restoration goals in their fire-adapted pine and oak forests. Vegetation maps, models and tools developed by partners help build a cohesive vision and description of restoration needs. Landscape teams have adapted a regional treatment prioritization tool and applied it locally, with each learning from other landscapes' work. The SBR FLN has also collaborated with the Cherokee National Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative, Central Appalachians FLN and LANDFIRE to adapt LANDFIRE models to this region. The models, along with a LiDAR-based forest structure analysis and the vegetation maps, have been used to estimate the loss of current vegetation from historic conditions across the National Forests of this region.

This information is informing forest planning and National Environmental Policy Analysis (NEPA) projects in several landscapes. Fire history research on three SBR FLN landscapes is shaping prescribed fire regimes. Evidence that fire historically played a role in maintaining these forests—which are changing, due to almost a century of fire suppression—is also being used to build wider support for the use of controlled fire. Partnership burns across multiple ownerships have become common in most landscapes, and more are planned for the coming year. Partly as a result of the last SBR regional workshop in Johnson City, TN, state agencies in North and South Carolina are discussing collaborative burning across state lines for the first time. A network of monitoring plots established by Forest Stewards enables partners to track the effectiveness of management actions. Consistent, long-term monitoring is essential, since it can take years—and multiple treatments—for the full impact of fire in hardwoods to become evident.

The second comprehensive assessment using these data was recently completed, and will be used to inform planning for future burns and other restoration work.

SBR FLN partners include Georgia Blue Ridge Mountains, Great Smoky & Unaka Mountains Northern Escarpment, Central Blue Ridge Escarpment, Nantahala & Balsam Mountains, Southern Blue Ridge Escarpment, South Mountains, New River Headwaters, Network Partners Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists, Forest Stewards, Georgia Department of Natural Resources—State Parks; Wildlife Resources Division, Georgia Forest Watch, Greenville Water Land Trust for the Little Tennessee River, Mountain True National Park Service,—Blue Ridge Parkway; Great Smoky Mountains, North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation, North Carolina Forest Service, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, South Carolina Division of Natural Resources, South Carolina Forestry Commission, South Carolina State Parks, The Nature Conservancy, Towns County Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, USFS Chattahoochee-Oconee NF; Cherokee NF; Nantahala NF, Pisgah NF, USFS Region 8 Fire & Aviation, USFS—Southern Research Station, and ChestChatt RC&D.

The Fire Learning Network is supported by Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together (PERFACT), a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, the USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior. This FLN has helped build the foundation of the Joint Fire Science Program's Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists, and continues to play a key role in providing opportunities for networking among scientists, managers and practitioners. This accelerates transfer of knowledge and feedback that supports adaptive management.

Well-attended workshops, (they cut this year's meeting attendance off at 100 with a waiting list) collaborative projects, and tools shared by webinar and other means have helped the SBR FLN build strong working partnerships. These in turn support the steady growth of the network, most recently with the addition of the Georgia Blue Ridge Mountains landscape. This landscape brings a new dimension to the SBR FLN, as it includes Towns County, a member of the Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) Learning Network.

For more information on SBR FLN go to: www.nature.org or contact Frank Riley – Executive Director, Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council – info.ccrd@gmail.com.

**RC&D**  
**Frank Riley**  
 Executive Director



## Periodical Cicadas

Nothing quite brings me back to those searing hot summer days I spent collecting insects during graduate school like the familiar chorus of whining cicadas. While cicadas are commonly found throughout all of Georgia, the North Georgia Mountains will be host to a very special brood this year: the seventeen year periodical cicada. These insects wait for years underground until they emerge over a decade later in overwhelming numbers. While there may seem to be crops of them to strip a field of corn bare, they are harmless to people and people alike.

Throughout the month of May, these red-eyed insects will crawl out of the ground where they have been lying in wait since 2000 and shed their skins to free their newly developed wings. You can find many of these shells on trees, porch railings, and any other surface the cicadas can climb up and grab onto. After they emerge from their shells, their skin hardens and their wings inflate with hemolymph, or insect blood. They will then take flight, mate and die by Memorial Day. Though they wait seventeen years to enjoy the fresh air only to die less than a month later, these insects sure do make an impact while they are here.

Cicadas always sing during the day to attract mates. Any singing you hear at night is likely produced by crickets or katydids. After mating, females lay their eggs under the bark of lofty tree branches. Because so many cicadas emerge at once, tree branches that are host to many cicada eggs may lose their tips. Very young trees may be a little stunted, but trees two or more years old will not be damaged. Even if a young tree hosts hundreds of cicadas, because the large hatches emerge so infrequently, there will likely be no problems with it in the future.

Though cicadas cannot bite or sting, their distinctive rasping song may be a little startling if you happen to step on one at night. Dogs and cats are often intrigued by the insects. Cats will typically bat them around or playfully bite them, but they will seldom eat them. Dogs, on the other hand, will happily gorge on cicadas as a crunchy treat. As disgusting as it sounds, a cicada snack every now and again is not likely to make your pet ill. However, if they start to act erratically or refuse to eat for longer than 24 hours after ingesting cicadas, be sure to take them to the vet.

"Dog day" cicadas are the annual cicadas we see every year and emerge consistently throughout the summer. They are active for several months. However this special brood of seventeen year cicadas will not be seen again until the year 2034, so make sure to get out there and see them while you can!

You can track cicada emergences and report sightings to cicadomania.com. If you find a cicada and are not sure if it is a Dog Day cicada or a seventeen year, bring it by your local extension office for identification. The UGA Entomology Department also encourages you to send quality photos of periodical cicadas around your home to your extension office so we can document this fantastic North Georgia experience!

**UGA extension**  
**From the Ground Up**  
**Melissa Mattee**



**From the Desk of:**  
**Sheriff Clinton of Towns County**



I have spoken many times about the rise in illegal prescription drug abuse. Prescription diversion has been an epidemic in much of the United States in the past several years.

One of the major problems with prescription diversion is that young people often see these drugs as "safer" than the common street drugs like cocaine or methamphetamine because, at some point, they were prescribed by a doctor.

The truth is, when prescription medications are used for purposes other than prescribed, they can be just as deadly as any street drug. In fact, they are often more deadly when abused. According to the Georgia Sheriffs' Association, almost 85% of the victims of fatal drug overdoses in recent years have been caused by prescription drugs.

It is important that parents understand the dangers of facing our young people today. I have often asked parents if they ever made a mistake as a teenager; very few of us could claim otherwise. When it comes to prescription drugs, a youthful mistake can quickly claim the life of a young person.

There are some things parents can do to help protect their children from the dangers of prescription drugs and their abuse. Parents should educate themselves about the types of prescription drugs that young people are abusing. Then share that information with others who may be

in contact with their children, such as school administrators, counselors, coaches, youth ministers, etc.

Parents should always communicate with their children. If we don't tell our own children the truth, who will? Don't be afraid to speak honestly with your child. The best form of prevention is often having a good line of communication with your child. Find out if they see others abusing drugs. Use the opportunity to educate your child on ways to make good decisions.

Never leave prescription medications where they can be easily accessible to young people. Young people are curious by nature. As a parent or grandparent, take an inventory of any prescription medications in your home. Keep it out of reach and out of sight. Make sure that you monitor the amounts to see that none is missing.

It is important that we teach our young people the truth about prescription drugs. They should know that these drugs can be just as deadly as any street drug, especially if taken with alcohol or other prescription drugs. The combinations can be deadly!

Always take an active role in keeping your child safe and informed about making the right choices. No one is in a better position to protect your child than you are. This information is meant to help you as a parent to be aware of the dangers of prescription drug abuse. Odds are, your teenager is aware of someone who is already abusing prescription medication. It is my hope that this information will help you protect your loved ones.

If you would like more information please feel free to speak to us at the Sheriff's Office. If you would like to have us come speak to a youth group, please let us know. Our interest is in keeping you and your family safe.



**HEAR US...  
 FORGIVE US...  
 HEAL US!**

**NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER  
 THURSDAY, MAY 4TH, 2017**

## Towns County Community Calendar

Every Monday:		
Bingo	Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
Bridge PlayersAll	Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Every Tuesday:		
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Every Wednesday		
SMART Recovery	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Every Thursday:		
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Every Friday:		
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Every Sunday:		
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
First Monday of each month:		
Mtn. Amat. Radio	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	6:30 pm
First Tuesday of each month:		
Alzheimer's Supp.	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
First Wednesday of each month:		
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
First Thursday of each month:		
Stephens Lodge	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Second Monday of each month:		
Chamber Board	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
Second Tuesday of each month:		
Caregiver support	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
Second Wednesday of each month:		
Basket Weavers	SC Fire Hall	10 am
Board of Elections	67 Lakeview Cir., Ste. A	4 pm

**Have something to sell?  
 Let the Herald work for you!**

**Deadline for the  
 Towns County  
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 706-896-4454**



## Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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