

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Editor:
I am perplexed that almost every time I read the legal ads and various articles in the *Towns County Herald*, the lawyers involved are not from Towns or Union counties. This bothers me because the various merchants and businesses doing business here and taking all or some of their profits here tell us to "buy local" or "hire local". And yet they, as well as some of the local governing bodies (to whom we pay taxes) and the local agencies and utilities (to whom we pay fees and other charges), hire non-local attorneys to do their legal work. Folks, as an attorney (now retired) who held the highest possible rating for both legal ability and ethical practices, I can tell you that I am very demanding yet when I relocated to Towns County I hired a Towns County attorney to help me with some matters and she did an excellent job and I was very pleased.

Two cautions: (1) Potential clients, vet well the attorney you consider hiring and (2) Attorneys, know well what you are doing and do not take cases you are incapable of handling.
Claude Spears

Dear Editor:
After reading the latest propaganda piece that appears from time to time in this column from the "Citizens Climate Lobby" I just have to respond.

If you believe that a carbon tax will "be returned to the citizens of America" and will "boost the economy", then I have a bridge in Arizona I'd like to sell you. Sending more money to Washington is like sending a six-pack to an alcoholic.

Even Obama, in a rare moment of candor, once said that "electric rates would skyrocket..." As a result of this kind of plan.

Consider this: only 4.4% of our electricity is produced by wind energy. This in spite of the fact that there are thousands of giant windmills working today, driven by federal tax breaks for utilities. This tells us this technology isn't ready for prime time. Solar is even worse in this respect.

When the Government interferes in the market place, they usually mess things up. This crazy plan pushed by the good Doctor smells a little too much like Obamacare... and we know how that's turning out...

Jim Soltys

Letter to the Editor:
We believe that when a job is well done it deserves praise. So we want to thank and salute interim chief of police Arvel Walls for a job well done. For the past several weeks, we have been struggling with a problem in the city that was causing us great grief. When it came to Arvel's attention, he acted promptly and efficiently. This very stressful problem was solved in less than 24 hours. Not only was Arvel on top of the matter immediately, but he called us to let us know his plan of action and then again to inform us that the matter was taken care of. We are highly impressed with Arvel's speedy response and his thoughtful communication. Thank you, Arvel, for an outstanding job. And thank you for lifting this huge burden off of our shoulders.

Bill & Sue Scott

To the Editor:
THANK YOU Towns County!
I had the great good sense to move to the north Georgia mountains 15 years ago from Atlanta. I realized I hadn't registered to vote in Towns County late in January. I called the registrar's office February 1 (the deadline to register for the primaries), talked to a LIVE person to ascertain if I was registered, and then stopped in to register. It took me literally one minute to register, and two days later received my voter registration card in the mail. I get the same prompt, courteous immediate service from the Hiawassee Police, 911, my propane company, a new plumber (after 12" of rain), and even my firewood man.
I love, love, love living in Hiawassee!
This is truly God's country!

Linda Wingo

Dear Editor:
I recently learned about an assignment given to students at Young Harris College last semester in which they were to read and comment on an "essay" titled, "Mother F*****". I do not want to name the author or give him/her any more publicity. I cannot quote any of the article here due to the vulgarity of the content which can only be imagined given the title of the essay. What I can say, is that the essay was from the perspective of a male individual who was violating women who were mothers. That's as politely as I can put it! How is this furthering the education of our young people? How is an assignment like this encouraging students to stand firm for Jesus Christ in a world that is in desperate need of Him? The College boasts in saying, "YHC is a private, liberal arts institution in the beautiful mountains of Northeast Georgia. Our campus... allows students to embark on undiscovered paths." What "undiscovered path" is this taking our students on? Granted, the College is stated as being a "private" institution, but it was founded "in 1886 by Rev. Artemas Lester, a Methodist circuit-riding preacher, exploring life's hard questions and engaging in a robust religious life has been an integral part of the YHC experience." How is an assignment like this encouraging students to have a "robust religious life"? I would respectfully encourage the Administration to set forth higher standards and guidelines for assignments given to their students. The reputation of the College is at stake, and more importantly, the future of our students is at risk.

*Respectfully,
Beth McEwen*

Combatting Avian Influenza

It seems the poultry industry started 2016 off on the wrong foot as an avian influenza (AI) outbreak spread through flocks in Indiana. Over 248,000 infected turkeys and 156,000 chicken layers were lost. Naturally, outbreaks such as this are worrisome for Georgians as our number one agricultural commodity is broilers, but by both commercial producers and backyard flock owners working together to understand the virus and prevent its spread, we can keep our birds happy and healthy!

There are two types of AI: low pathogenic (LPAI) and high pathogenic (HPAI). LPAI often goes undetected in flocks as it rarely causes sickness and, even if it does, symptoms are very minor. This type of AI also occurs naturally in wild birds, especially water fowl, and is not usually a cause for concern as flocks are so seldom affected by it. However, LPAI strains sometimes mutate to become HPAI strains, as was the case in Indiana last month. HPAI strains are highly infectious and elicit severe symptoms in birds, including diarrhea, nasal discharge, swelling of the eyelids, combs and wattles, purplish discoloration of wattles and combs, lethargy, and sudden death. It's especially important to be on the lookout for excessive diarrhea, because AI is spread primarily through feces.

While there have been cases of HPAI strains infecting humans, they are rare and usually caused by close contact and improper handling of infected birds, so don't panic! However, with the inclement weather driving waterfowl farther and farther south, it's still important to protect yourself and your birds. You can do this through 6 steps.

1. Keep a distance: Restricting access to your birds from roaming animals and other flock owners can minimize the chance of people or animals your birds to the virus. If you're a small flock owner, keep your birds sheltered in coops as much as you can to keep them away from wild bird feces.
2. Keep it clean: When you tend to your flock, always wear clean clothes that have not been exposed to any other poultry.
3. Don't bring it home: Even though it's inconvenient, it's important to clean truck tires, cages and equipment regularly as the virus can live on these items for months if the conditions are cool and moist enough.
4. Don't borrow the dis-

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 EMAILED 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.



From the Ground Up
Melissa Mattee

ease: We all like to be neighborly, but letting someone else with birds borrow equipment and tools can put your own flock at risk. If you do share equipment, make sure to clean it thoroughly before taking it home.

5. Know the warning signs: Monitor your birds regularly for any of the symptoms I mentioned previously. Early detection is the best detection!

6. Report sick birds: If you think your flock might be infected, don't hesitate to report it. The USDA and University of Georgia are encouraging you to contact your local extension agent (that's me!) if there is the slightest possibility you think your birds might be sick with AI.

Here's a few programs we have coming up:
Tuesday, February 16th: Northeast Georgia Corn Production Meeting, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the GMREC in Blairsville (lunch is provided!). Topics include pest and disease management, agronomy, and the latest and greatest corn production strategies. RSVP to the Union County Extension Office, (706) 439-6030.

Friday, February 26th: Apple Grafting Workshop, 10 a.m. at the GMREC in Blairsville. Registration is \$15, and space is limited! RSVP to GMREC, (706) 745-2655.

Feel free to call me at the Union County or Towns County Extension offices if you have any questions about agriculture, natural resources, or anything in between. I'm happy to help!

The Veterans' Corner

By *Scott Drummond, USCG Veteran*

Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame

Our North Georgia Mountain area, Veterans, and residents were honored on the evening of Feb. 4, 2016 by a visit from Colonel Richard H. White USA, Retired. "Rick" grew up in Norcross, GA and enlisted in our Army, served as a private, was subsequently promoted to Second Lieutenant, served several tours in Vietnam, is Airborne qualified, Special Forces, Ranger and has more awards, decorations, and serious education than I can possibly list here. He was the esteemed guest of our US Mountain Ranger Association (USMRA) at Dahlonega's famed Camp Merrill, the primary purpose of said visit being our State of Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame (GMVHOF). We are blessed and indebted to Colonel White for this endeavor serving as Chairman of the Board of this unique organization, for the purpose of honoring Georgia Veterans, maintaining history, and educating our GA youth about real heroes. Only ten states in our USA have this type MHOV, dedicated to honor those who qualify. Did you know that GA has 31 Medal of Honor recipients from our Civil War forward?

This invaluable Hall of Fame was started in 2013, is physically located in the Floyd Veterans Memorial Building, across from our State Capitol in Atlanta. It is tentatively planned for our Governor to "cut the ribbon", thus dedicating this Hall of Fame in April.

Recipients of this prestigious award are capped at fifteen per year, and in order to qualify must have served in one of our five armed services, have an Honorable Discharge and a DD-214, being either born in

Georgia, entered the military in Georgia or lived in Georgia for no less than ten years, serving in a Georgia based unit, counting towards that criteria. There are three categories of nominees 1- Valor; 2- Achievement; 3- and Service, having made significant contributions to community, state or nation after military service. Valor is heavily weighted for choosing those who will receive this recognition, and the Veteran may be alive or deceased. Thus far, we have 49 inductees permanently and rightfully honored in the GMVHOF. The annual Induction Ceremony and Banquet is held in November when approximately 15 nominees will be selected to be inducted, forevermore into our GMVHOF. The Independent Selection Committee (ISC) do not know each other, never meet as a group and selections from all nominees are immune to political, monetary or any other type outside influence, making this process as fair, unbiased, un-influenced, and honest as possible. All nominees will be considered for up to three consecutive years, with no further action required. Do you know anyone you wish to nominate?

Please go here for more information: www.GMVHOF.org. Or contact Paul Longenecker at 706-302-2220 or PaulLongenecker@yahoo.com or Rick White at rickwhite4750@gmail.com. Deadline for submissions of nominees will be Friday, 26 August 2016, so please follow up in a timely fashion. This year's Fourth Annual Induction Ceremony will be held at Saint Luke Ministry Center, 301 11th Street, Columbus, GA.
Semper Paratus



Community Calendar

- American Legion Post 23** meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 4 PM at VFW Post 7807, Sunnyside Rd., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-8387 for details. We need your support!
- VFW Fish Fry** April - October on 2nd & 4th Fridays each month from 4:30 - 7. \$10 per plate.
- Towns County Water Board Meeting** 3rd Monday of each month at 6 p.m. in the TC Water Office Building.
- Mountain Community Seniors** meet the second Thursday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawassee at 1 p.m.
- Towns County Republican Party** meets at 6:30 PM the 4th Thursday of each month at the new Senior Center. For more info call 706-994-3919.
- Democratic Party of Towns County** meets 2nd Tuesday of each month at 5 p.m. at new Senior Center. Newcomers welcome. Questions please contact the T.C. Dem's at Townscountydemocrats@gmail.com.
- Towns County Planning Commission** is held the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Courthouse.
- Towns County Commissioners** meeting is the 3rd Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in the courthouse.
- School Board Meeting**, 2nd Monday each month at 7 p.m. in the auditorium.
- Hiawassee City Council** 1st Tuesday of month, 5:30 p.m., at City Hall.
- Young Harris City Council**, 1st Tuesday of month at 7 p.m., Young Harris City Hall.
- The Unicoy Masonic Lodge #259** meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.
- Stephens Lodge #414 F & AM** meets the 1st Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM in Young Harris. Sat. morning breakfast 2nd Sat. of each month from 8 - 10:30 a.m. \$6 adults, \$3 12 & under.
- Towns County Board of Elections** holds its monthly meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. at the Elections Office (Old Rock Jail).
- Towns County Historical Society** meets the 2nd Monday of each month at the old Rec Center in Hiawassee at 5:30 p.m.
- Bridge Players** intermediate level meets at 12:30 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Rec Center.
- Mountain Regional Arts & Crafts Guild** meets 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Calvary Chapel on Hwy. 76 in Hiawassee. All local artists and crafters are welcome, for information call 706-896-0932.
- Mountain Computer User Group** meets the 2nd Monday of each month. Meetings start at 6 p.m. and visitors are welcome. Details can be found at www.mcug.org.
- Chattahoochee-Nantahala Chapter, Trout Unlimited** meets 2nd Thursday of each month at Cadence Bank in Blairsville. 5 p.m. Fly Tying - 7 p.m. General Meeting. Everyone welcome. www.ngatu692.com.
- Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)** meets the 3rd Monday of each month at various area restaurants. For information call Gary at 706-896-4308 or visit www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridgemountains.
- Alcoholics Anonymous**: meets every Friday and Sunday evening at 7 at Red Cross Building at 1293 Jack Dayton Circle. 24 hour phone line 828-837-4440.
- Chatuge Regional Hospital Auxiliary** on the 3rd Monday of each month, except the months of July, October and December, in the hospital cafeteria at 1:30 p.m.
- The Humane Society Mountain Shelter** Board of Directors meets the last Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at Cadence Bank in Blairsville.
- The Towns County Alzheimer's Support Group** meets the first Tuesday of each month at 1:30 PM in the Family Life Center of McConnell Memorial Baptist Church. For more info call Carol at 706-896-6407.
- GMREC Garden Tours** every Monday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Shooting Creek Basket Weavers** meets 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at Shooting Creek Fire Hall Community Center. For more info www.shootingcreekbasketweavers.com.
- Friendship Community Club** meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6 PM at Clubhouse, 1625 Hwy. 76, 706-896-3637.
- Goldwing Road Riders** meets the 3rd Saturday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse in Hiawassee. We eat at 11 and meeting begins at 12.
- Narcotics Anonymous (NA)** meets every Wednesday evening at 7 PM at the Red Cross building on Jack Dayton Circle.
- Caregiver support group** meets 2nd Tuesday of each month, 3 p.m. at Brasstown Manor, located at 108 Church St., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-4285 for more info.
- Enchanted Valley Square Dance Club**. Dances 2nd & 4th Fridays at Towns Co. Rec. Ctr. from 7-9 PM. \$5/person to dance. Free to watch.
- Mountain Amateur Radio Club (MARC)** meets 6:30 PM the 1st Monday of month at 1298 Jack Dayton Cir. (next to EMS), Hiawassee. For info call Al 706-896-9614 after 6 PM.
- The Board of the Towns County Chamber of Commerce** meets the second Monday of every month at 8 a.m. at the Chamber office, 1411 Jack Dayton Circle, Young Harris.
- The Quilting Bee** at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church in Family Life Center, Room 216. 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10 AM - 3 PM. Bring a sack lunch. For more information call Kathy at 706-835-6721 or Marilyn at 706-897-4367.
- Mountain Coin Club** meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the North Georgia Tech campus in Blairsville. Guests are welcome. For more info, call 706-379-1488.
- Monday morning BINGO** at Brasstown Manor every Monday morning at 9:30 a.m. 108 Church St., Hiawassee. Players meet in the Bradford. Questions 706-896-4285.
- Towns County Lions Club** meets 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Daniel's Restaurant, 273 Big Sky Drive, Hiawassee.
- Free GED preparation**, basic skills, and college entrance exam classes are now being held at the Old Recreation Building Tuesday & Thursday from 4 - 8 p.m. Call 706-754-7717 for more information.

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Dedicated to the promotion of Towns County

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