

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY
OPINIONS & COMMENTARY



Letters to The Editor

Health Care

There lately has been a great deal of discourse and discord regarding health care. I suggest we all remember on of the eternal lies: "Hi, I'm from the government and I'm here to help you."

Also please note that the guy (Obama) who promotes the health care "reform" (his word, not mine) concept has called the police "stupid" and the woman (Pelosi) who is his medical minion has called the U.S. citizens who have exercised their right to free speech to oppose that concept "Un-American."

Perhaps we should return to the Jeffersonian principle that...

A wise and frugal government... shall leave [its citizens]... free to regulate their own pursuits of Industry and improvement and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government.

Claudos G. Spears

Displaced tennis loving TAX paying seniors

Summer was going along so nicely for a group of nearly 40 tennis loving, Towns County tax paying seniors until the school bells rang and they were told by School Superintendent Dr. Behrens that they were no longer allowed to use during school hours the six beautiful courts located at the Towns County School property.

Where are we to go they asked themselves? Well, there are four courts on Lake Chatuge by the Georgia Mountain Fair Grounds they said. But to their disappointment when they checked them out, they found them to be in total disarray.

These primly located courts are the "Tennis Ghetto" of Towns County. Ironically located right next to the "Gem of the Mountains" playground and swimming beach.

Times are tough right now economically, but can we afford to let the image of a vibrant Towns County be tarnished by not maintaining the amenities that we already have, which attracted taxpayers to our community in the first place. Well maintained facilities raise property values and keep our real estate attractive and inviting to prospective home buyers. So even if you have never had a tennis racket in your hand, poorly maintained tennis courts affect you and your investment in Towns County. The tennis courts were originally a costly investment and it is poor business to let that investment go to waste.

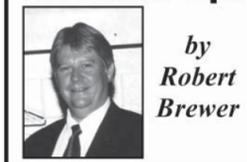
Many argue that "the tennis courts are not used". But what they fail to realize is that "THEY ARE NOT USABLE" with all the cracks, weeds and broken down and missing nets.

Our tennis courts overlooking the beautiful lake Chatuge are a "Diamond in the rough," and could also be a part of the "Gem of the mountains" with a little tender loving care.

Tennis players and Towns County property owners, make yourselves heard. We want to be "WELL SERVED" (excuse the pun) by having a well constructed and maintained tennis facility so that Towns County will remain a vibrant, healthy county that we all can be proud to call home.

Joan Palermo

Extension Tips



by **Robert Brewer**

What's to be blue about blueberries?

They have minimal maintenance requirements, can endure cold temperatures and can grow without pesticides or pest control.

Although it generally takes three to five years for a blueberry plant to generate a good yield, even the smallest of plants will produce some berries the first or second summer. (Blueberry plants will reach a height of 10 to 12 feet when left unpruned).

Blueberries can be planted in either the fall or spring. Just keep in mind that the ideal time to plant blueberries is when the plant is dormant, before fruit appears.

A few tips for blueberry growers: Select an elevated site

to plant blueberries such as a hill. If one does not exist, plant blueberries in a raised bed. Blueberries need to be planted in a location that drains well. Test the soil before planting. Blueberries like an acidic soil with a pH range between 4.8 to 5.2. Space blueberry plants six feet apart. Plant at least two varieties for cross-pollination. Water the plant after planting and top the soil surrounding the plant with sawdust mulch. Remove all flower buds at time of planting to encourage strong root development. Weed early in the spring, before harvest season begins. Keep a 2 to 3 foot weed-free circle surrounding each blueberry bush. This has been proven to increase the yield of berries produced.

Young blueberry plants can easily be damaged by weed-eaters. To protect tender plants, place a thick tree protector around the base of each plant. With a little care, an established blueberry plant will produce berries for 20 to 30 years before needing to be replaced.

Let's get it right
 By Charles Duncan
 T.C. Herald Editor



The system ain't broke, but it sure could use some help — that's my view on the health care issue.

And here lately, I kind of feel like a health care expert. I know how good our health care system is and I feel its weaknesses as well.

I spent 49 days confined in a hospital and the subsequent two months in a hospital bed at my home. Prior to my hospital stay I went to two different doctors and an emergency room at a hospital that will remain nameless to determine my illness.

I walked away from those doctors, who by the way, were south of the Northeast Georgia Mountains and the unnamed ER with a handful of prescriptions. Neither could determine what was wrong with me or what the prognosis of my health condition was. However, they were certain I had an infection of some sort.

It took a trip to the emergency room at Northeast Georgia Medical Center and the supervision of the doctors and nurses at that facility to correctly diagnose my health condition. My blood stream was septic, I had blood poisoning. I also had an infection in my heart that led to the replacement of my aortic valve.

Doctors Daniel Winston, Anita Bhandiwad, John Gott, Lori Parker, Cliff Hastings, Gary Minkiewicz, Jeffery Marshall, Paul Martin — gosh, there were so many who worked around the clock to save my life — worked relentlessly to bring me back from the brink of death.

I fear that the real problem that our lawmakers have with the health care system is that it's too good. So good that it keeps a lot more people around to draw Social Security and Medicare benefits.

I know that I'm living proof of how good our medical system has become.

How do I rate the Ronnie Green Heart Center in Gainesville? Well, they brought me

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@brmenc.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

"Press 'none' for English." This is what many Americans would prefer to hear when we call the ubiquitous computer operated help desk or voice mail system used by thousands of American companies. This is what we would prefer to do when we visit the ATMs operated by our local banks. Instead we are forced to select our native language from a short menu of two choices or else be barred from making any further progress towards our financial or informational goals.

Spanish is a beautiful language. In many ways it is more efficient and more consistent than English and linguistic experts claim that it is easier to learn. Spanish is not, however, the native language of over 82 percent of Americans. It is not (in most cases) the language in which our textbooks are written. It is not the language of the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution.

It is easy to understand the choice that business has made in attempting to elevate Spanish to the status of "second language" for the United States. The Census Bureau reports that the use of English is on the decline in America. The number of non-English speaking households has soared over the last ten years, paralleling the influx of undocumented residents and our national ambiguity about immigration policy. While we as a nation have lacked the wherewithal to make some clear choices about our national destiny, business has decided for us, and business has chosen a bilingual destiny. Few of us vote anyway, but we were never even given a choice to vote in this matter.

Seventy five percent of all non-English speaking households are in 7 states. Georgia, by the way, is not one of them, and although our own English-deficit population has tripled since 1990, currently only 7.9 percent of Georgia residents do not speak our language. Yet every ATM in the state of Georgia and the voice mail

system of every large company that does business here has given Spanish a "separate but equal" status.

After decades of civil rights struggles Americans, of all people, should know that the logic behind "separate but equal" is faulty. A country that is not united by a common language is weakened in many ways, but every national effort to acknowledge English as our official language has been defeated by politicians who are more concerned with not offending voting blocs than they are with our national identity, or so it appears when one examines the arguments that have been used to defeat such measures. If I object to bilingual education or having to choose my language from a menu I run the risk of being labeled a "nativist" at best or a racist at worst. Such are among the most popular brands of mud to be slung these days when there are still among us so many hypersensitive, guilty conscience Americans who can be effectively silenced by straw man logic.

Desiring a common language for our nation does not, in fact, equate to racism or prejudicial thinking. Immigration has been one of the great strengths of our nation, not only through the diversity of the melting pot, but because someone who has the wherewithal to leave their native land and start over somewhere else is very likely to have a toughness, a drive and a strength of character that is much needed by our softening culture of instant gratification. We could benefit enormously from our Spanish speaking immigrants willing to work hard and sacrifice for the same family values that used to be much more common in our culture. We only receive that benefit, however, if these immigrants are actually able to join our culture, to understand it, to embrace it. In order to do that, they must be able to communicate effectively, and to do that, they need to learn to speak our common language.

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- Sen. Saxby Chambliss, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, 202-224-3521
- U.S. Congressman Paul Broun, 10th District, Washington, DC 20515, 202-225-4101
- Rep. Stephen Allison, Georgia House of Representatives, 404-656-0177 or 0185
- Sen. Jim Butterworth, Georgia State Senate, 404-463-1367
- Towns County Commissioner Bill Kendall, 706-896-2276
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