

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## How Do You Promote a Black Eye?

I'm about to ask you a personal, impertinent question. When is the last time you vaccinated? I am doing so now as I write to you. At one moment I'm so sad I could cry and the next I'm so mad I could spit. The Flying Nun taught me to start at the very beginning so I shall.

I often heard my mountain grandmamma say of people who bemoaned all the time, that they wouldn't be happy with a front seat in heaven. Of optimists, she would say, if they found manure in their Christmas stocking, they would start looking for a pony. I delegated my Tour of Towns this past week to a couple of pony seekers. Matthew and Shira had motored from Tucker GA to visit Towns County and surrounding area. Shira had been here years ago and wanted to share fond memories of our part of the state with Matthew. Because they had come to see the sights and have fun, that's just what they did.

Hamilton Gardens At Lake Chatuge was not the place that Shira remembered. Her surprise was genuine. Matthew called The Gardens pristine, and living near Atlanta, marveled that he saw not one piece of trash there. Brasstown Bald was two, two, two treats in one. Ascending gave them wanted physical activity and being on the summit was educational and gratifying. Pleasing eateries and unplanned adventures happily filled their three day stay. I had heard them mention that they had visited Bell Mountain County Park and Historical Site. Never having been there, but having heard some less than glowing reports, I asked Shira's and Matthew's impression of our County Park. The view dazzled them and certainly made the winding drive worth it. John and I hopped into our car and drove, to see for ourselves, Bell Mountain County Park. Although, to me, the historical graffiti on the rocks distracts from the natural beauty, I understand the county's position on it. I'm unsure of the difference between graffiti and vandalism. The "graffaldism" has oozed from the huge, noble boulders and is settling on the paved areas. The cost, if it is even possible to remove it, could make the need for the county's Food Bank unneeded. While not all history is pretty, it holds lessons. Good, bad and ugly.

I have said to my off-springs when they were children, Suck it up, Buttercup and get on with life. Now I am heeding my own advice. When asked about places of interest in Towns County, I will include Bell Mountain Park. With no editorial. From here on, I'm looking for ponies. Heaven can wait.

**Around Towns**  
Dale Harmon



## Not His Time

We're fortunate in so many ways. Not the least of the benefits of growing up in the US is our ability, for the most part, to provide our children with a sustained bubble of innocence in which to grow up. All children should be so blessed, should be given the opportunity to learn to trust their environment and the people around them before that bubble, like all bubbles, disappears.

The bubble of innocence pops early in many parts of the world, if it ever exists at all, but here, and for most of us, childhood is carefree and magical and immortal, until it isn't. My own bubble shrank significantly when I was about eleven and my grandfather, after too many years working in a concrete plant and too many Camel cigarettes, developed lung cancer.

Ernest Beckom was a powerful man who could bend rebar with his hands. When he was 70, I saw him lift a donkey clear off the ground trying to reposition that unreasonably stubborn Equus Asinus to a saddle. Granddaddy was as gentle as he was strong, and he was our hero, and it's hard for kids to understand why their hero has to cry out in pain in the night. He died when I was 12 after a long and painful struggle that left him spent and frail.

Childhood did not end there, but it was much diminished for a while. However, our culture is adept at creating distractions from our own mortality, and those distractions attempt to replace the bubbles of innocence that we lose when we grow up. We emerge from childhood into our teens and young adulthood immortal, and all those whom we love live in an undying land as well.

My dad was in his seventies. He was still quite fit and active, but one day he wanted to drive my new truck, a 4 wheel drive Toyota with a high ground clearance and a big step up into the cab. After our drive, he stepped down from that height and I saw his leg tremble as he almost lost his footing. That may sound like a small thing, but it was a turning point for me. From that moment on, I realized that he would not last forever, and the prodigal gypsy who loved to travel started spending more time with his folks.

That was the best decision I ever made, and fortunately, Dad had many years of vitality left. It was not his time yet, and I don't know if he sensed my concern, but that was about the time when he began telling the story of our other grandfather, Albert Shook, who suffered a stroke in his seventies. The doctor told Pa's family that he would not live. He lived. Then the doctor said Albert would never walk again. He walked. He also outlived his doctor by several decades. It was not his time yet.

Like it or not, one day we all have to squint to see childhood receding in the rear view mirror. We become well acquainted with mortality, and the empty seats around the table attest to that familiarity. A puppy or kitten born into such a home is fortunate indeed for the attention that can be lavished upon them.

They don't fill the empty seats or replace the kids who have departed the nest, but they bring with them their own bubbles of innocence and youthful exuberance. Dogs, in particular, have a great lesson to teach us about living in the moment.

Bonnie and Babu are the puppies that came into our lives in the February that my mom passed away. The lying old calendar says that they are "ten" now, but they will forever be "The Puppies" to us. They are two hundred pounds of trouble, well worth it for the joy they have given us. Babu Underfoot Valentine is a gentle giant. Had I known who he was going to grow up to be, I might have named him "Ernest" after my mother's father. He has eyes that melt your heart no matter what he chewed or where he pooped.

About six months ago Babu started suffering from hip dysplasia, a tragic side effect of long term human meddling in the wolf clan. Once dysplasia sets in, the loss of mobility can occur rapidly. It is heartbreaking to watch. It does not help that as soon as you mention hip dysplasia, many people, including the veterinarian, began to speak of your canine companion in the past tense. It is assumed that you will immediately begin making plans to end the life and the suffering of your furry friend.

When the morning arrived that Babu first realized he could no longer chase the ball, we thought he was ready to go, too. He would not be the first furry friend to cross the Rainbow Bridge and hunt in the Elysian Fields.

But dogs are wiser than us in many ways. One evening I sat with Babu, grieving. He responded by picking up a tennis ball and babbling himself over to me, shoveling his pushy nose under my arm to drop the ball in my lap. He laughed, as dogs do, and continued to prod me with his nose. As clearly as a bell ringing he said, "It's not my time yet."

It is remarkable how our little black 110 lb puppy has adapted to his malfunctioning hip, and how we have adapted to him. Babu has a racing cart now, and boots, and Ace bandages to protect his ankles. I'm getting extra exercise lifting him into the garden cart for more extended trips around the farm, and we still play ball every day.

Plan for the future like a human, but live in the moment like a puppy. We do not know when our time will come, but with each conscious breath, and every tennis ball we pick up and throw in anticipation of joy, we are in that moment, immortal.

**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.*

## The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

## Well Management

Most people in Georgia have well water in their homes. Here in the mountains, many people enjoy fresh mountain water as their primary drinking source. Therefore, it's very important that people be aware of potential issues with well water and things that they can do to mitigate issues. Let's talk about some well issues and things you can do to prevent those issues from occurring.

The US Geological Survey keeps track of water aquifer levels. The nearest test site for us is in White county. Because of the high amounts of rainfall that we receive each year, our aquifers drying out is not a concern like it is in the Western US.

The aquifer we access is the Blue Ridge aquifer. It's a crystalline rock aquifer, which means that the gallons per minutes that you get from a well here is going to most likely be in the 5-10 range. Wells can be pretty variable in yield in North Georgia because of the variations in the fractures in the ground. Basically, for well drilling here, you put the well in and hope that you cross some of the fractures where water is present.

You want to make sure that your well is located at least 50 feet from the septic tank and 75 feet from the septic system's drainage lines. You also want to make sure that your well cap is at least 8 inches above the ground. This is going to keep surface water from getting inside of your well. Surface water can carry bacteria and debris that you want to keep out. It's also a good idea to have a well cover to protect the well cap. A well cover makes your well more visible so that it's less likely to be backed into by a vehicle or run over by the lawn mower.

Always be on the lookout for changes in the water. If you see a difference in color, a new odor, new taste, or particles in your water that's a clue that your well has become compromised. There's a lot of water tests that the Extension Office can assist you with to find out what is going with your water. By knowing the symptoms, when the issue started, where the septic system is, what kind of construction might have gone on nearby, among other factors can help narrow down the range of issues that we are dealing with.

Shock chlorination is a common treatment that is effective if bacteria are present. Shock chlorination won't be effective if the source of the contamination is not removed. Sources of contamination could include a septic system, absence of well cap, or a cracked well casing. You'll want to use three pints of ordinary bleach for 100 gallons of water in the well.

Annual testing of the water in your well will start to build data on what your well normally is like. If you do run into problems with the well then you'll have data to look back at to see what's changed. It's best to test in the spring, because that is generally when our aquifers are recharging. If you would like to test your well water contact your local Extension Office. We can assist you by providing the resources to test.

On July 25th the Union County Extension is putting on a Well Water Program. It will be at 5:30 in the Union County Civic Center. If you would like to attend please RSVP with Union County Extension Office at 706-439-6030 or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.



## Letters to The Editor

### Thank You

Dear Editor,

Recently my wife who has dementia wandered from our home sometime after midnight. By God's blessing and with the assistance of many in our community, my wife is safe and is receiving care.

I wanted to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of the people who helped save my wife that day including the young man who found her wandering on the road and took the time to stop and help her, the deputies and EMTs who responded to the call, the doctors nurses and staff at Chatuge Regional Hospital who took good care of her, the social worker at the hospital who helped me find care for my wife and everyone at Union County Nursing Home who made this difficult transition easier.

I was overwhelmed by the love and care each of these people provided and wanted to publicly thank them all. I am blessed to be a part of a community where people don't hesitate to help each other.

Sincerely,  
Thorvald Burmood & Family

### An Echo Not a Choice

Dear Editor,

Former Vice President Joe Biden was quite busy last week. Looks like he is continuing to gaffe himself right out of the race for the Democrat nomination for president.

Let's review, shall we. He flip-flopped on the Hyde Amendment, which bars the use of federal funds for abortion. He declared that when he's elected president, he's going to cure cancer.

Wow, sounds a bit like VP Gore inventing the internet. He repeated his claim that while he was vice president, "there wasn't one single hint of a scandal or a lie." Whoa nellie! Might need to go to confession for that one. He also repeated the false claim that Stacey Abrams actually won the 2018 Georgia gubernatorial race, blaming the result on "voter suppression."

There was some plagiarism too, but that's nothing new coming from Uncle Joe.

Tim Groza

### Punishment from Above

Dear Editor,

The arguments put forward by the author of the "Book of Life" letter to the editor that appeared in last week's newspaper are purely magical, dangerously drawing on the absurd, nonsensical and bogus.

Without one wit of skepticism or shred of evidence, the writer claims that humanity is the product of an all-knowing Creator. He claims God gave His children "free will" in spite of the vast majority of non-Christian humanity, some not even aware of opposing creeds, who are nevertheless doomed to burning in Hell for all eternity.

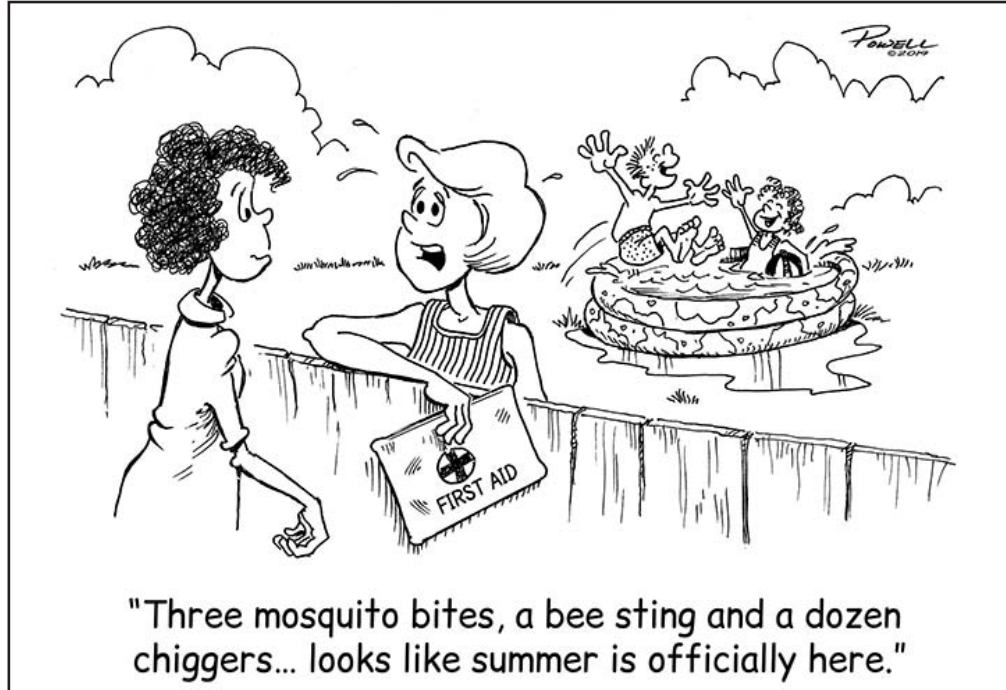
If one tried, I doubt anyone could conceive of a more cruel and uncaring Creator. His own children's Christian God is so callous, as to destroy His own children by eternal perdition, defies credulity.

America's secular and democratic Republic, established in the Constitution and Bill of Rights by our Founding Fathers, is based on the principle of rule by the people and for the people.

The opposing Biblical concept calls for obedience to a higher authority, be it God, King, Big Brother, or dictator — either way, submission is the primary task. If we were to follow that way of living, "We the People" would be replaced by a theocracy based on worship of and obedience to a higher authority.

Meanwhile, the people are bereft of critical thinking or rational thought and are subjected to living lives of inequality, injustice for the minority, with rule by a tyrannical majority and an all-knowing, wise man (or men) at the top.

Lance Jobson



## Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	<b>Every Monday:</b> All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	<b>Every Tuesday:</b> Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	<b>Every Wednesday:</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
Bridge Players	<b>Every Thursday:</b> All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	<b>Every Friday:</b> Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	<b>Every Sunday:</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
Hospital Auxiliary	<b>Third Monday of each month:</b> Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Planning Comm.	Civic Center	6 pm
MOAA	Michael email mva62sgn@brmemc.net	
YH Plan Comm.	<b>Third Tuesday of each month:</b> YH City Hall	5 pm
Co. Comm. Mtg	Courthouse	5:30 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Blairsville store	5:30 pm
Water Board	Water Office	6 pm
Quilting Bee	<b>Third Wednesday of each month:</b> McConnell Church	10 am
Book Bunch & Lunch	Daniels Steakhouse	11:30 am
Friendship Comm.	<b>Third Thursday of each month:</b> Clubhouse	6 pm
Republican Party	Civic Center	5:30 pm
Goldwing Riders	<b>Third Saturday of each month:</b> Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
Red Cross DAT	<b>Fourth Monday of each month:</b> 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
Lions Club	<b>Fourth Tuesday of each month:</b> Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Hiaw. Writers	<b>Fourth Thursday</b> Hiaw. Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
Hiaw. Garden Club	Clubhouse	12:45 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	<b>Last Thursday of each month:</b> Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

Publication No: 635540

Advertising, News deadlines: Friday at 5 p.m.

Towns County (1 Year) \$25. Out of County (1 Year) \$35. 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  
Phone: (706) 896-4454 Fax: (706) 896-1745 Email: tcherald@windstream.net  
Or mail to: PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546

## Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

**Kenneth West** Owner/Publisher  
**Shawn Jarrard** Editor  
**Mark Smith** Staff Writer  
**Chad Stack** Sports

**Derek Richards** Advertising Director  
**Shawn Henrikson** Copy Editor  
**Todd Forrest** Sports  
**Lowell Nicholson** Photographer