

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Happy belated birthday, US Army

As I type this today, June 14, 2017, also "Flag Day" declared in 1777, my devotion and attention is drawn to the fact that 242 years ago, June 14, 1775 our United States Army was created by the Continental Congress under one of our nation's greatest Presidents, George Washington, without whom we would have never had our flag! He was elected Commander-in-Chief the next day and as one of our nation's Founding Fathers set forth the principles for our military services. Here's one of his important proclamations: "The blessings and protection of Heaven are at all times necessary but especially so in times of public distress and danger. The General hopes and trusts that every officer and man will endeavor so to live and act as becomes a Christian Soldier defending the dearest rights and liberties of his country."

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



Thus for the last 242 years our United States Army and all who have served our great nation set the tone for our entire military services and as such have never lost sight of the high ideals given to us by our first Commander-in-Chief.

After the Civil (or not so civil) War, Fredrick Douglass said in 1871: "We must never forget that the loyal soldiers who rest beneath this sod flung themselves between the nation and the nation destroyers. If today we have a country not boiling in an agony of blood (like France)--if now we have a united country, no longer cursed by the hell-black system of human bondage--if the American name is no longer a by-word and a hissing to a mocking earth--if the Star-Spangled Banner floats only over free American citizens in every quarter of the land, and our country has before it a long and glorious career of justice, liberty, and civilization--we are indebted to the unselfish devotion of the noble army who rest in these honored graves all around us."

Later on General John Pershing stated during WWI: "Three thousand miles from home, an American army is fighting for you. Everything you hold worthwhile is at stake. Only the hardest blows can win against the enemy we are fighting. Invoking the spirit of our forefathers, the army asks your unflinching support, to the end that the high ideals for which America stands may endure upon the earth."

General George Marshall eloquently stated: "We are determined that before the sun sets on this terrible struggle, our flag will be recognized throughout as a symbol of freedom on the one hand and of overwhelming force on the other."

Even though by the time this is published in our *Towns County Herald*, it is never too late to remember and honor our many US Army patriots and Veterans who have given of themselves so we may live our lives to the best of our abilities in our United States of America.

God Bless all our brothers and sisters who have served in our US Army, which we all too often take for granted.

Semper Paratus

Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor,

This is in reply to Dr. Dixon's recent letter to the editor in which he appears to be shocked by President Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement. In his words "it is one of the most immoral actions that have ever been committed" and it is "a day that will live on in infamy." Really? It's amazing how calm and rational the proponents of "environmental science" become at moments like this.

On the flip side, Dr. Dixon seems to think that countries like China, India, and Russia are somehow going to fill the void and we will lose face with the rest of the world. Watching the environmental socialists sing praises to these countries for supporting the Paris Agreement is laughable. China's air is so polluted that it is sometimes difficult to see and dangerous to breathe. China loves the Paris accord because they impose huge costs on other countries while requiring nothing of China for thirty years. This argument that China sincerely respects the Paris accords is a fallacy. Environmentalists are fooling themselves by portraying China and these other countries as leaders in the "green energy revolution." Furthermore, the Heritage Foundation shreds the Paris agreement by noting that if it is fully implemented, it would have a "staggering" effect on America's economy and our quality of life, in return for "essentially zero environmental benefits."

Finally, the Paris accords were an obscure attempt in 2016 by Obama to circumvent the Constitution by imposing a treaty on the United States without going through the proper channels because he knew he did not have enough votes in the Republican-controlled Senate openly hostile to the Paris Agreement. President Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris Agreement was the best decision for the American people.

Tim Groza

To the Editor:

It seems as though everything we read or hear today is negative. I agree with the motto "Make America Great Again" with the exception of the word "again". America is still great because we are filled with great people especially in "small town America"! My wife and I are blessed to be part-time residents here and have been for twenty years. We love Hiawassee have decided to adopt it as our "home town". We have met so many wonderful folks here and are thankful for every opportunity we have to return. We love being welcomed at our favorite restaurant by the owner and the servers. We love running into people we know as we traverse the trail at the Chatuge Dam or shop at the local stores. We love the fact that we can publicly pray over our meal at a restaurant and see many others doing the same. Over the years that we have been a part of Hiawassee I've experienced some serious health challenges due to a neuromuscular disease. We are thankful for neighbors who are always there to help us when we need it. Presently, I have to rely on a mobility scooter or rolling walker to get around so there's always something that needs to be done and each time they are there to lend a hand.

Last, we love doing business with people who are caring and honest. Recently, we needed our driveway resurfaced and a new parking area created to allow me to have safe access to our cabin. Trees had to be cut, a huge stump from a tree recently downed in a storm had to be removed, grading had to be done and a new stone resurface. Someone recommended a local construction company. We contacted him and he was wonderful to work with, understanding of our needs and expressed compassion. He and his workers went over and above to help us!

Yes, our nation is filled with great people. You'll find them if you look around. I know Molly and I have found them here in Hiawassee. Thanks for letting us call you our "home town"!

Bob & Molly Hintz

Community wildfire adaptation

The Southern Blue Ridge Fire Learning Network's annual workshop is held somewhere in the Appalachian Mountains every year, and this year we hosted it in Hiawassee where we had speakers and field trips highlighting our work here, and we wowed them with Southern Hospitality mountain style at the Blue Hole. The following is a blog by Wendy Fulks, The Nature Conservancy's Fire Adapted Communities national liaison. "Did you know they have federally listed endangered green pitcher plants in the mountains of north Georgia? Me neither. I learned this while participating in the 12th annual Southern Blue Ridge Fire Learning Network workshop last month. Another thing I learned about is the extraordinary degree to which this region is dominated by the Chattahoochee National Forest. The USDA Forest Service is by far the largest landowner, and the Forest backs up against every development and farm in the area. I marveled at the upscale neighborhoods that are popping up at an increasing rate in those few places that aren't part of the Chattahoochee. Steep places. Local staff of the USDA Forest Service are deeply engaged with the other folks who live here. Forest leaders have made it a priority for staff to use Community Wildfire Protection funds to conduct prescribed burns on adjacent state and private lands to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk to neighborhoods. The Forest Service along with the Georgia Forestry Commission also wants to put smoke up in the air close to where people live to maintain and build community support for fire use. (GFC burned 8,600 acres last year in the mountains.) I've traveled to a lot of fire-prone areas dominated by public land in the U.S. and, although there's been progress in some areas, getting people to tolerate controlled burning near their homes is a challenge. So why are they having success in north Georgia? One reason is that the South still has a fire culture, although that is changing as people move there from other parts of the country. Another reason, according to the local Forest Service leaders I spoke with, is a widespread and growing public awareness of about wildfire risk. The Forest, GFC and Frank Riley with the Chestatee-Chattahoochee Resource Conservation and Development Council have been working for years in Towns County to raise awareness about the need for residents to create defensible space around their homes, be ready to evacuate, and apply for permits before burning debris. State and federal agency staff told me that this outreach makes it easier for them to convince residents to let them conduct controlled burns on their lands because they already understand the need to reduce fuels. I've attended most of the SBR FLN's previous workshops, which typically focus on prescribed fire, fire history, and forest ecology and management. This year was different, because six months ago, at the height of an extreme drought, wildfires burned more than 50,000 acres in north Georgia and more than 100,000 acres elsewhere in the region. In Sevier County, Tennessee, 14 people died and a half a billion dollars' worth of property burned in the Chimney Tops 2 Fire. Most of the people attending this workshop had managed those wildfires, witnessing fire behavior they had never seen before in the region. So, organizers decided to design this year's workshop as an opportunity to reflect on and learn from the fires, and to consider how the regional network might adapt its approach following such a significant event.

RC&D
Frank Riley
 Executive Director



Many of our discussions this year focused on the human element, and the need to do more to engage residents in building sustainable local wildfire adaptation capacity across the southern Appalachians. In addition to prescribed burning, Firewise U.S.A., community planning, evacuation preparedness and fire prevention are important parts of community wildfire adaptation in the southern Apps. A history of cooperation among federal, state, and local agencies paid off when the fires started. We heard stories about potentially disastrous fires that were controlled due to effective response that was enabled by previous cross-boundary controlled burning and fire training that the SBR FLN helped facilitate. The fires, for the most part, didn't reach forest canopies, but they did consume an unprecedented amount of organic material that had accumulated on the forest floor. Tree roots were damaged and trunks were girdled, but it's impossible to know which trees will live and which will die over the next few years. Most land managers I've spoken with are optimistic that the ecological impacts of the fires will be positive overall. Some plants need bare mineral soil to get established and, despite the steep terrain, erosion hasn't been a big problem and water quality was not affected.

As for the social impacts, there is clearly a heightened awareness of wildfire risk among residents. The challenge for SBR FLN partners now is turning that awareness into action. Frank Riley and the Chattahoochee's fire management officer, Mike Davis, emailed me separately last week to tell me how they have expanded their partnerships and project work into Rabun County since the workshop.

For more information on the SBR FLN and other wildfire projects, contact Frank Riley info.ccrd@gmail.com.

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Septoria Leaf Spot

The warm rainy season we've been having lately has definitely helped some of our drought problems. However, it has brought more issues of its own. Though our plants love the extra water, so do fungal diseases. One disease that I've seen repeatedly over the past few weeks is a fungal infection known as Septoria leaf spot. This mainly affects tomatoes and closely related crops and, while hard to avoid in weather such as this, can be managed before it takes over your garden.

From the Ground Up
Melissa Mattee

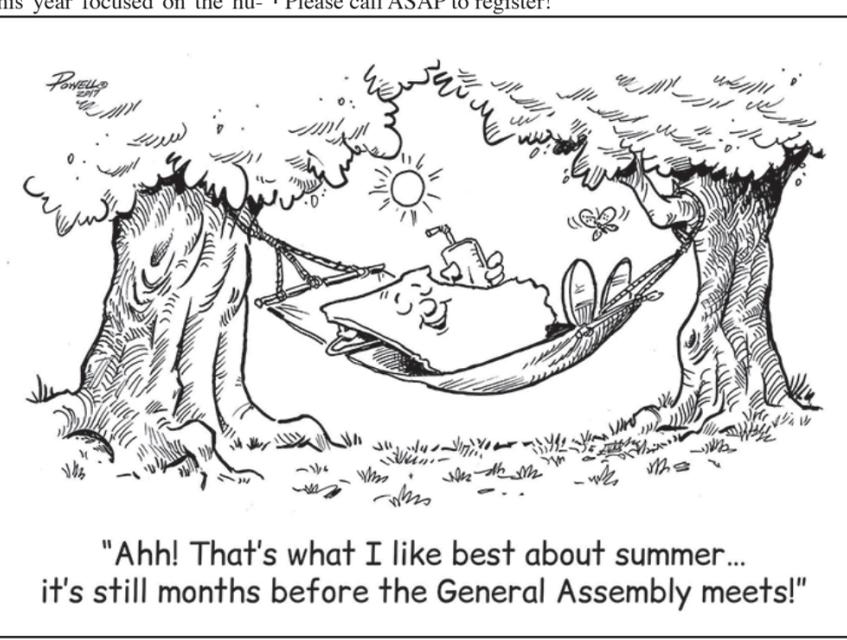


Septoria leaf spot is caused by the fungus *Septoria lycopersici* Speg. It is most commonly seen in periods of warm heavy rainfall, which perfectly describes the May and June that we've had so far. This disease, as its name applies, presents as spots on tomato leaves. These spots first appear on the bottom leaves and gradually move up the plant. They are grayish tan and can also be found on stems. Occasionally, a yellow halo may appear around the spot, but this does not always occur. Eventually, small dark dots may appear in the middle of the lesions. These are called "pycnidia," and are where the spores are produced. Spots on the undersides of leaves may be a deep green color, and entire leaves will eventually turn brown and wither. Though Septoria leaf spot can take out entire plantings, the fruit is very rarely ever affected by the fungus.

With most plant diseases, the best way to manage it is through cultural practices. *S. lycopersici* overwinters in dead tomato plant debris and other solanaceous weeds such as horsenettle and jimsonweed. These plants are all members of the nightshade family and serve as hosts for the same diseases. If you have a tomato plot that has Septoria, do not plant tomatoes or any other solanaceous crops (peppers, eggplants, potatoes, etc) there again for at least one year. Remove tomato crop debris completely to reduce the presence of the pathogen. Always be sure to stake or trellis tomatoes to improve air circulation and allow the leaves to dry more quickly after irrigation or rain. Mulches and plastic covers should also be used when possible, as these can prevent water, soil and infect plant matter from splashing up on the stems. Try to avoid contact with tomato plants while it is wet. People walking through a planting can easily transmit spores from one plant to another if the pycnidia are fruiting. Always clean pruning tools and other equipment thoroughly after using them on infected or potentially infected plants. Finally, after all of these measures are taken, consider applying fungicides to prevent the spread of the disease.

It is important to know that while fungicides can protect a plant, they cannot reverse or "cure" symptoms. Applying fungicides to plants that have already been infected with a pathogen will only protect new growth from being affected. If a plant is starting to decline or almost dead, chances are that a fungicide application will not help on that plant, but it will prevent it from spreading to other healthy tomatoes. For recommendations on what fungicides are effective against Septoria leaf spot, contact your local extension office.

Union and Towns County Extension will be holding a Master Naturalist Class Wednesdays starting July 26th and ending September 20th at the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center. This is an eight week course that meets once a week and covers wildlife management, tree and insect ID, invasive species, Georgia natural history, and many other topics. Registration fee is \$250 for the entire eight week course. Please call ASAP to register!



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
Hospital Auxiliary	Third Monday of each month: Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Water Board	Water Office	6 pm
YH Plan Comm.	Third Tuesday of each month: YH City Hall	5 pm
Co. Comm. Mtg	Courthouse	5:30 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Blairsville store	5:30 pm
Quilting Bee	Third Wednesday of each month: McCConnell Church	10 am
MOAA	Call Jack @ 828-321-2896	
Friendship Comm.	Third Thursday of each month: Clubhouse	6 pm
Goldwing Riders	Third Saturday of each month: Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
Red Cross DAT	Fourth Monday of each month: 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
Lions Club	Fourth Tuesday of each month: Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Republican Party	Fourth Thursday of each month: New Senior Ctr.	6:30 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Last Thursday of each month: Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

Towns County Herald

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