

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Long Overdue

While manna may fall from heaven, hand sanitizers for the weight room at the Towns County Recreation Center certainly do not. Costing about \$850 every four months, or \$2550 per year, it breaks down to a little over \$8 dollars for every day the facility is open. These are not posh luxury items. They are vital tools of hygiene. If I had ever considered them at all, it was probably the same way I thought about clean, folded clothes, which by magic appeared in my closet and chest of drawers when I was a kid. Scheduled service for the machines in the workout area run about \$400, more if repair or parts are needed.

Many people have expressed the desire for a county swimming pool. "Y'all need" or "you should" are generally lead-ins when people want something. Often times it merely means "I want" without examining all the factors. Swimming is fun and grand exercise for young and old. A swimming pool is also a huge, expensive liability. This is not just construction cost.

In addition to chemicals and testing equipment for maintaining proper balances to prevent water-borne maladies, a county pool would require a credentialed staff present at all times the pool was in use. Can you say run-on sentence? A pool at the rec center isn't feasible even if the charge to use the center were to be doubled. Doubled, you say? Isn't 0x0 nothing? Well, yes it is. That is what it costs us Townies to enjoy a dry, air conditioned walking track, and fitness areas.

Matt Youngblood, Director, and Tyler Garrett, Assistant Director of the Towns County Department of Recreation, have responsibilities other than the Foster Recreation and Convention Center.

Serving not only the citizens of Towns County, The Pickle Ball Courts host tournaments that bring an influx of revenue to area businesses. The ball fields at the Rec and Convention Center and abutting The Fairgrounds, add to the coffer with concession sales. (Matt initiated concession sales at The Rec Center) The Towns County Beach and the old rec center, which now houses The Historical Society and holds various classes, fall under the umbrella of The Department of Recreation.

Each of these entities has plenty to offer and can be researched on line. Visit them all. Learn what our county has to offer at little or no cost above taxes paid. No pool. No problem. We have a 7000 acre lake. We are indeed lucky, and you can't beat luck. See you around Towns. Welcome to Maddie Youngblood, a Towns County native just like her daddy.

Around Towns
Dale Harmon



When the Sky Falls

Occasionally something happens that causes us to question our assumptions and re-evaluate our priorities; it can be the death of a family member or close friend. It can be a discovery or a revelation – some new information that challenges our paradigms and shakes up the way we look at the world. Recently I came across such information.

The galaxy in which we reside is, on average, a very dusty place. The remnants of exploding stars, fragments of colliding objects and all kinds of cosmic compost occupy the space between the stars. When enough of this material collects under the right conditions, new stars and new planets are born, and in our Milky Way galaxy there is a large amount of this star stuff. A large amount, that is, except for the neighborhood in which we reside.

It turns out that we live in an empty zone, relative even to the vacuum of space. Other parts of our galaxy are a thousand times more "dusty" than the neighborhood around our sun. Something swept our neighborhood clean. We reside in a kind of "chimney," so to speak, a tunnel of sorts, of relative emptiness that extends beyond us and through the galactic plane. Astronomers refer to this tunnel as the Local Bubble. Sitting at the other end of the Local Bubble some 500 light years away is a pulsar, a gamma emitting neutron star known as Geminga. Geminga is thought to be the remains of a giant star that went supernova some 300,000 years ago.

When the star exploded, a shock wave traveling at a million miles per hour headed for our Earth and beyond. What could such an event mean for a planet caught in its path? If the object was close enough to the source of the explosion it would be annihilated and converted to superheated gas as it joined the expanding wave. At a distance of 500 light years or so, a planet such as ours would be bathed in gamma radiation and pelted with debris traveling at nearly 3000 miles per hour. The ozone layer would be stripped away, exposing the entire planet to a wide spectrum of increased radiation from the sun. Fires would incinerate much of the plant life on the surface of the world. Tsunamis would slosh back and forth from one side to the other of the ocean unlucky enough to be in a position to receive the impacts. The dust from volcanic action and the smoke from fires would combine with increased cloud cover caused by cosmic radiation to rapidly reduce the temperature and change the climate. Many plant and animal species would go extinct in the ensuing years. Human life itself would be threatened. The shock wave from such an exploding star could push comets and asteroids out of their orbits and create new hazards to the earth for thousands of years to come.

In Arizona, Michigan, Manitoba, Alaska and all across a huge swath of North America and eastern Siberia there have been found embedded in the bones of mammoths and other extinct mega fauna, microscopic iron spherules – but usually always appearing on only one surface of the remains. Where the spherules are found they are all embedded at the same angle. These fossilized remains occur in what archaeologists refer to as the Clovis layer, a stratum found in the soil at varying depths all across North America that dates to around 13,000 years ago. Mega fauna appear below the Clovis layer but not above it. The iron spherules and radioactive isotopes appear in high concentrations inside the Clovis layer, but not above it and not below it. From Virginia to Alabama and concentrated in the Carolinas are shallow depressions visible only from the air. Known as the Carolina Bays, these mysterious craters are ringed with white sand, and in this lip which is always higher at the southwest end, and in this lip are found high concentrations of iron spherules and radioactive isotopes.

From Genesis to Gilgamesh, from the Hopi, the Sioux and indigenous people all around the world, legends have been passed down to us of fire and flood, of stars falling to the earth, of the earth shaking and mountains falling into the sea. Physicist, Richard Firestone; geologist Simon Warwick-Smith and Allen West, PhD, have written a book entitled, "The Cycle of Cosmic Catastrophes: How a Stone Age Comet Changed the Course of World Culture." The book tells a very scientifically plausible detective story which points to Geminga as the smoking gun which set the stage for the last 13,000 years of history.

That's certainly something to think about when the Earth enters the Taurid Meteor Stream in November. Some astronomers believe that it was a fragment of the Taurids that exploded over Tunguska in Siberia in 1908 and flattened over 700 square miles of forest.

Here is the rest of the story. Extinctions have occurred many times in earth's history. A catastrophe occurs which eliminates some species and creates conditions for others to flourish. The population of the new dominant species increases rapidly, which leads to a further depopulation of species that are less successful. We are in the middle of an extinction event right now which has already claimed about half of the species that have existed over the last 13,000 years – a blink of an eye in geologic time. WE are the new dominant species, and our rapidly increasing impact on the planet is pushing us towards the next catastrophic depopulation. While we look to a falling sky for our doom, it may already be creeping up behind us, a monster of our own making.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Leyland Cypress

Leyland cypress trees are a very common and popular landscaping plant. I've seen them planted by people all over Georgia. However, there are a couple of issues that are commonly seen in Leyland cypress trees. Let's talk about Leyland cypress trees, what some of those issues are, and what steps you can take to reduce the chances of your Leyland cypresses getting diseased.

Leyland cypress was bred in 1888. It is a cross of Alaska cedar and Monterey cypress. They can grow to be over 40 feet tall. When they are young, they grow very rapidly. They'll grow at a rate of 3-4 feet per year. Later on in life, they'll continue to grow very rapidly at rate of about 2 feet per year. They typically have a Christmas tree shape. In some places, people have even begun to grow them to be sold for Christmas trees. Typically, people plant them for a barrier or privacy screen.

Leyland cypress trees are relatively pest-free. They don't have too many issues with insects or too many different diseases. However, because they have a shallow root system, they are often planted close together, and are commonly planted in poorly drained soils. They are commonly prone to a couple of canker diseases.

The two canker diseases that Leyland cypress trees get are Seiridium and Botryosphaeria canker. Seiridium canker is the most common and destructive of the two in Georgia. The symptoms from both diseases look very similar. You will see individual branches begin to die off. Sometimes you'll see resin in spots on the branches because of the cankers. These cankers are essentially suffocating the branch, leading to the branch turning brown.

Stressed trees are going to be more susceptible to cankers. During times of drought, trees that are already infected will spread the disease much more quickly. Ice damage and spring freezes can create wounds where infection is able to occur. Trees that are near buildings that reflect sunlight will also be more stressed.

Unfortunately, with canker diseases there is not a fungicide that can be used to eliminate the pathogen. Even if there was, spraying a 40-foot tall tree is not practical. Once a tree has been infected the best treatment is to remove the dead branch and dispose of the branch. Try to keep plants from becoming stressed by laying mulch around their base. This will increase the moisture retained by the soil, and suppress competitive weed growth. During dry, hot summer days, water the trees if the soil has become dry. If trees are extensively damaged by cankers, then they will need to be removed. When planting Leyland cypress make sure to dig out an area 3-4 times larger than the diameter of the root ball. This will improve soil drainage, resulting in your trees being less stressed and less susceptible to root rot diseases. In addition, planting trees at least 15 feet apart will reduce disease incidence.

There are some alternatives to Leyland cypress trees. Green Giant arborvitae and Arizona cypresses are both trees that serve the same purpose in landscape and are more disease resistant. For anyone planting trees as a barrier or screen, I would encourage them to look into these alternatives.

If you have questions about Leyland cypress please contact your county Extension Office or email me at the address below. On July 25, 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

Consensus for Action in Climate Change

Dear Editor,

There is now growing momentum across party lines that it is time to take action on climate change. New polling from the firm Luntz Global — led by Republican consultant Frank Luntz, - revealed the below take-away points:

A Carbon Dividends Plan has majority support across party lines — including 4-1 support overall, 2-1 support from GOP voters and 75% support from Republicans under 40.

69% of GOP voters are worried that their party's stance on climate change is hurting them with young voters.

4 out of 5 voters want Congress to put politics aside and reach a bipartisan solution.

Congressman Rob Woodall, GA-07-, and Senator Thom Tillis of NC, have both come out with strong statements about the need to combat climate change in ways that will not hurt the economy. Fortunately, we have a bill in Congress that will do just that. HR 763, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Bill, will decrease greenhouse gases by 90% by 2050 as well as add millions of new jobs and not cost our government any money. It is time to come together, as Americans, and take action to protect our earth for future generations.

Vernon Dixon, MD

Good Luck TCHS Bass Team!

Dear Editor,

Please refer to June 19 article of TCHS Bass Team. It made clear that young men, Mitchell Grimsley and Adrian Hooper, executed a sequence of NUMEROUS bass tournaments with successes which earned them a chance of bringing home a NATIONAL Bassmaster Trophy.

Excitement similar to the level of learning that any of our athletic/academic teams achieved a chance of a state championship play-off, gave me much satisfaction.

A High School National Bassmaster win would place our area further "on-the-map". Even just the knowledge of participation in such an important tournament is awesome!

Wow! I can already see a possible Chamber of Commerce notation: "Home of the 2019 High School Bassmaster Champions".

Grimsley and Hooper have spent a lot of their time and serious work on this adventure. Sure. They have fun. They spend huge amounts of their personal dollars. Ahead will require many more youth dollars. I will proudly donate some. Feels good to know that some people have already donated. More will do likewise.

Good luck, August 3 at Paris, Tenn, Young Bass Fishermen!

Sincerely yours,
Franklin Boulineau

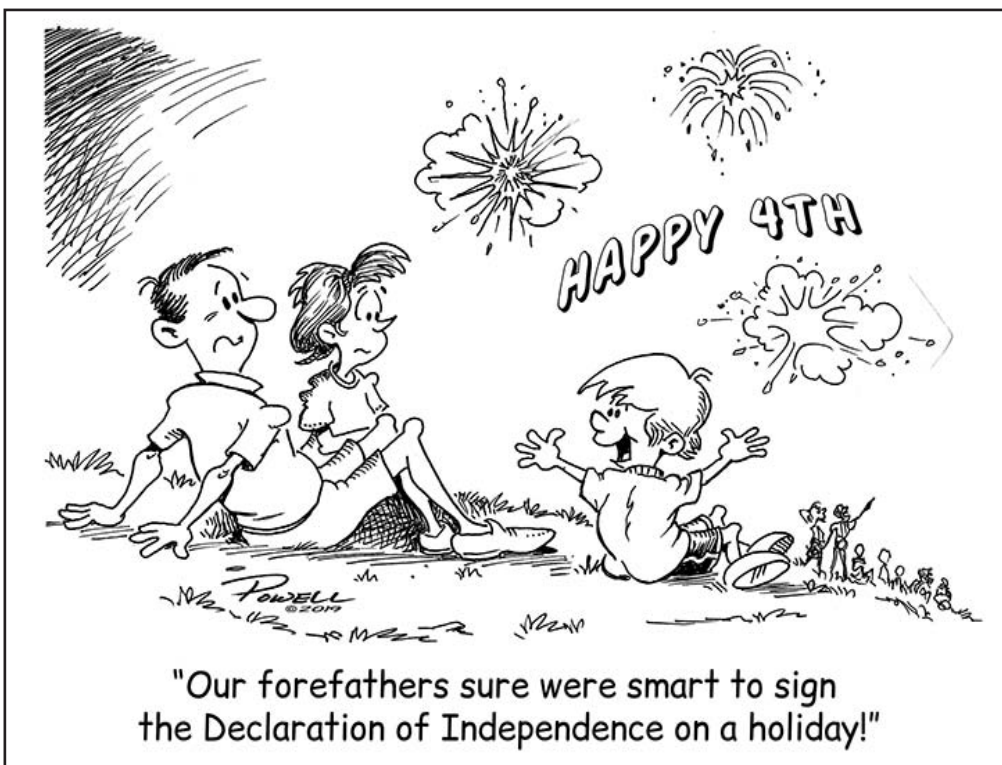
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PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546.
Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net.

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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.



Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	Every Monday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
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
Movers & Shakers	Every Friday: Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Sunday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alzheimer's Supp.	First Tuesday of each month: 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
Quilting Bee	First Wednesday of each month: McConnell Church	10 am
Stephens Lodge	First Thursday of each month: Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Chamber Board	Second Monday of each month: 1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	8 am
VFW	VFW Post	5 pm
Historical Society	Hist. Soc. Bldg.	5:30 pm
School Board	Auditorium	7 pm
Unicoy Masonic	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm

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Let the Herald work for you!
Contact us at
706-896-4454
Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday by 5 PM



Towns County Herald

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Phone: (706) 896-4454 Fax: (706) 896-1745 Email: tcherald@windstream.net
Or mail to: PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546