

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Creatures of Habit

Around Towns
Dale Harmon



Money had to be procured and appropriated. If it is true that money makes the world go 'round, then lack of it can stop the world mid-spin. Perseverance and buckets of sweat equity paid off. The tribute was planned and executed with love and gratitude. Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge was the fitting spot for a living, lasting monument to a person who had worked tirelessly for Towns County in more capacities than most people know. She loved this area and it loved her. If you've lived in or near Towns County long enough, you probably know that I'm talking about Marsha Elliott. If you haven't and you don't, I am.

Gardens, of any size, are more than poke, soak, and okie doke. They take tending. Tending is both doing what's good for its inhabitants and preventing what isn't.

In decades of living, I've found good habits harder to make and bad habits harder to break. Habits, both good and bad, often become rituals and create patterns. When one sage-green, soft-to-the-touch lamb's ear in Marsha's Garden began to yellow and sag, and the one on the opposite side thrived, flora troubleshooters were flummoxed. The ailing plant worsened just weeks away from the dedication of the Tribute Garden.

Comparing notes, it was learned that many of us working at the Gardens often had been tasked with scraping and hosing dog poop from the front walkway in the same spot, repeatedly. The bee line to the dying plant just inside the border of Marsha's Garden put the feces and pieces of the puzzle together. It was then observed that a gentleman (I use that word out of generosity) regularly walked his dog on the same walkway where the canine habitually "did his business". The pattern followed to the sweet lamb's ear, the victim of unfortunate watering. The numerous "Garden Property. No Dogs Allowed" postings went ignored. When confronted, the human wagged his tongue that this pet was on a leash and that he cleaned up after it. Only half of that was true. It posed the question, how does one remove urine from a plant in a garden? The dog wagged his tail.

With no time to replace the now defunct plant before the dedication, it was removed, leaving a hole softened by mulch. Grace Howard had a sign reading "Dog Urine Kills Plants" made and installed where a happy plant once lived.

Coco, a mountain gorilla, was taught sign language and to communicate with people. She even requested and got her very own kitten. To my limited knowledge, dogs can't read. The edicts, they are not requests, of The Gardens are not arbitrary. Reason dictated. The dog here was blameless. The man who allowed the murder is not. Now, you tell me, just who is the creature?

R_E_S_P_E_C_T....Pass it on. See you around Towns.

Wildland - Urban Interface Dangers

Wildland Urban Interface Dangers - Citizens are moving farther into "natural" areas to take advantage of the privacy, natural beauty, recreational opportunities, and affordable living. Developers are building neighborhoods to accommodate the influx. As a result, fire departments are fighting fires along the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), defined as areas where homes are built near or among lands prone to wildland fire. Depending on the area of the country, fire departments might refer to wildland fires as brush fires, forest fires, rangeland fires, or something else; however, they are all part of the WUI and all pose the same threat to local assets. The increase in the WUI threat has been steep because of continued development and exposure.

The WUI is not a place, per se, but a set of conditions that can exist in nearly every community. It can be a major subdivision or it can be four homes on an open range. According to the National Fire Protection Association, conditions include (but are not limited to): the amount, type, and distribution of vegetation; the flammability of the structures (homes, businesses, outbuildings, decks, fences) in the area, and their proximity to fire-prone vegetation and to other combustible structures; weather patterns and general climate conditions; topography; hydrology; average lot size; and road construction.

The WUI exists in every state in the country, and in our North Georgia counties, everyone lives in the WUI since forests are all around us and the danger from wildfire is just as great here as it is out west where they have the spectacular wildfires that can consume 400 homes in an afternoon. We don't normally have conditions like that here but if we lose one home to a wildfire, it is a tragedy just the same for the folks who live there and are without a home after the fire. Wind-blown embers are a major cause of concern in the WUI. Most structures within the WUI are not destroyed from direct flame impingement, but rather from embers. Embers may precede the flaming fire front, carried by the winds that distribute burning brands or embers over long distances, sometimes up to a half mile or more depending on the winds. These embers fall, or are wind-driven into receptive fuels at structures, often going undetected for some time. As the fire front passes, these small embers may ignite incipient fires that spread to the home and then from home to home in a neighborhood.

The most important thing we learned in Firefighter 101 is that safety for the firefighters comes first and in Gatlinburg the crews could not put themselves in jeopardy to try to save a home that was a hazard to them or their equipment. Fire engines cost much more than most houses and fire fighters lives are priceless. I saw a video recently about a wildfire that swept through a neighborhood where the fire crews were chasing the fire down the street. They had passed by several houses that seemed to be intact and not on fire. When they returned in a couple of hours these homes were on the ground. They were burned by embers that were nestled in fuel on the roof and ignited once winds fanned the spark.

The Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) conducted a series of beneficial tests in spring 2011 at their research center in Richburg, SC, to explore the effects of ember intrusion on differing home constructions. The tests illustrate both the threats and preparedness steps residents can take to prevent ember caused fires. Fire departments should consider utilizing this information in their presentations with residents to help explain the ember threat. You can check the IBHS website to see their videos. They are real eye openers!

CBS 60 Minutes aired a piece on Wildland Urban Interface and the dangers that are ever present to residents living there. Check the segment out at: www.cbsnews.com/videos/in-the-path-of-fire/. Another real revelation for those who think they are safe from wildfire.

For more information on WUI, contact Frank Riley at: www.info.ccrd@gmail.com.

RC&D
Frank Riley
Executive Director



A Little Advice

The Middle Path
By: Don Perry
onthemiddlepath.com

"Take my advice, Don't listen to me," is the first line in the old song, "Hippie Dream," whined by Neil Young. Most people love or hate Neil and/or his music. Naturally your author is somewhere in the middle, and Mr. Young has penned some unforgettable lyrics.

So in that same spirit, we decided to write an advice column this morning, inspired by the good natured ribbing of a friend. My recommendation would be to heed our advice and ignore it in equal measure.

Why should you listen to advice? Because you have a first class intelligence. A first class intelligence hears the truth, recognizes it as truth and then acts on it. A second class intelligence hears the truth and then verifies it through personal experience. A third class intelligence must repeat the lesson. We all want to fly first class.

Why should you ignore advice? Because much of it has less to do with supporting you and more to do with validating the experience of the giver. Sometimes advice is a passive aggressive hook baited with an innocent suggestion, and for the large number of contrarians who read this column, any sentence beginning with the words "you should" or "what I would do" are automatically suspect.

Should you take advice on relationships? Maybe. It depends on the track record of the giver. If your well meaning friend is on her fourth marriage, simple math would suggest that her best advice is more likely to be on finding a good divorce lawyer rather than connubial bliss.

Besides, there are thousands of books available on the subject, though their best advice may very well be on how to get a book published. If you're too busy to read and you don't have any happily married friends to advise you, perhaps I can save you some time.

There are two kinds of relationships. For the scientifically minded, we'll call them ionic and covalent, like the chemical reactions.

In an ionic bond, one molecule has a positive charge and the other, negative. Think of sodium chloride, or table salt. In an ionic relationship, both parties "need" something. "He completes me," is the motto of the ionic relationship and "opposites attract" is the rallying cry. Ionic bonds tend to be soluble in water, like salt, and ionic relationships have a tendency to dissolve in stormy weather.

In a covalent bond, the molecules are not attracted by a missing electron. Instead, they share a pair of electrons equally. Think of carbon, which has an extremely strong bond. Apply enough pressure and you may produce a diamond.

In practice it's difficult, at a glance, to tell a lump of rock salt from a diamond in the rough. That's what dating is for. Just don't marry the first lump that comes along before you weather the first storm.

We'll bring our experimental counseling session to a close today with some practical advice. Think back a few weeks ago when you were complaining about how much rain we were getting. Betcha wouldn't mind a shower or two right now. But you're not going to get one for a while, not until that big high pressure dome over the southeast decides to move on.

Here's the practical advice: Pray for rain. Get your property fire wise right now. This dry spell could last a while. Rake those leaves and trim that brush and clean out those gutters.

Here's some advice for the future: Don't complain about the rain, ever again and for the rest of your life. Develop the art of gratitude. Some people believe this may actually attract rain. But even if it doesn't, the art of gratitude makes you a much nicer person to be around on a rainy day.

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@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.

Have something to sell?
Let the Herald work for you!
Contact us at 706-896-4454
Deadline for the T.C. Herald is Friday by 5 PM

Drought

We have been going through a very dry period. Let's take a look at some of the numbers and data. I'm also going to talk some about how this dryness has impacted agriculture and natural resources in our area.

Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



As of September 25 the United States Drought Monitor has spots in the Southeast listed as abnormally dry, with some pockets appearing as in moderate drought, and some small spots as in severe drought. Union and Towns counties are listed as abnormally dry for the most part. The southern tips of both counties are listed as moderate drought. Lumpkin, White, Habersham, and Rabun are all in moderate drought. Some pockets on the south side of Atlanta are in severe drought.

According to the USA drought monitor abnormally dry conditions means that topsoil moisture is decreased and planting is delayed. Fire risk is also elevated. In the coming weeks, with no sure signs of rain coming, I'd expect all of Union and Towns to move into the moderate drought category. This category means that crops are vulnerable, soil moisture is low, gardens and lawns require more water, stream and pond levels are lower, and water temperatures increase. Water temperatures increasing can become an issue for fish, namely trout. Increased water temperatures means less dissolved oxygen in the water. This can present issues for all aquatic life. As our lakes are drawn lower you may start to see weeds appear in places where you haven't seen them before. Aquatic weeds will begin to appear because as water levels drop sunlight is able to penetrate to areas that were too deep to allow sunlight before.

From July 1 to September 25 we've had 8.47 inches of rain according to the georgiaweather.net Blairsville station. In 2018 and 2017 we had over 13.6 inches of rain in that same period. 8.47 is comparable to 2016 when we had 8.49 inches over that same period of time. 2016 was a drought year. We are not near the level of drought that was experienced that year as we've already gotten more rain than all of 2016.

The lack of rainfall that we've had has created issues with non-irrigated crops. Hayfields haven't been able to grow like the normally would, and cattlemen may need to begin feeding hay sooner than anticipated because pastures haven't been able to grow back after grazing because of the lack of rain. No rain has also made conditions more dusty, which can lead to problems for people with allergies.

There are a couple of silver linings to the lack of rain for some individuals. No rain has been good for keeping plant diseases low. Fungal diseases need moisture to be able to germinate and spread. No rain means that there has been less humidity and water to move diseases. The vineyards have benefitted from the dry conditions. Pre-harvest is a difficult time for vineyards with diseases, but they have done pretty well this year.

Let's hope that we get some rain soon. If you have questions about drought and how to manage it contact your county Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.



Towns County Community Calendar

	Every Monday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	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
Hian 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
Conv./Vis. Bureau	Second Tuesday of each month: Civic Center	8 am
Gem & Mineral Club	Senior Center	1:30 pm
Arts & Crafts Guild	Calvary Church	4 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm
Basket Weavers	Second Wednesday of each month: SC Fire Hall	10 am
USCG Aux.	Senior Center	7 pm
Hiaw Writers	Second Thursday of each month: Hiaw Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
Awake America Prayer	Civic Center	Noon
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Senior Center	6 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