

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Say it ain't so, Bill

We should feel blessed. For approximately 40 years Bill Kendall has been a public servant. For 28 or so years, Mr. Kendall served as superintendent of schools. He currently is completing his third term as sole commissioner. During all those years, Towns County was led by a true conservative and a statesman.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



When I first met Commissioner Kendall, I wasn't sure if he was a Republican or a Democrat. Given his conservative nature, I was under the impression that he was a Republican. As it turns out, Commissioner Kendall was a Millerkrat, or a conservative Democrat, molded in the conservative policies of fellow Towns County native Zell Miller.

Last week, we learned that after 40 years of public service, Bill Kendall is calling it a career. Commissioner Kendall explained to me that sometimes you have to know when to say "enough is enough."

Though Commissioner Kendall has been asked by supporters to seek another term as sole commissioner, he has decided to leave public life and enjoy his private life with his wife Jean, and spend more time with the grandchildren.

As much as we want to say "say it ain't so Bill," we understand.

Bill Kendall fought for public education, he fought for the rights of taxpayers. He supports and believes in veterans and what they mean to our community.

We can only hope that our next sole commissioner is as dedicated as our current sole commissioner. We truly believe that there is someone out there that can fill the bill.

The RC&D Council spotlights Towns County, Georgia

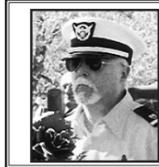
Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D Council's work area covers the 13 counties of North-east Georgia from Union down to Forsyth over to Hart and up to Rabun and all counties in between. ChestChatt's office is located in Demorest in Habersham County. Our projects and workshops emphasize natural resource conservation with subjects such as on soil & erosion education, farm energy efficiency, wildfire safety education, and alternative farming methods such as Seasonal High Tunnels. For the next few weeks I will spotlight each of the 13 counties where we provide the services and programs to the citizens of the county. Since I live down on the river in Towns County, I will start there. Towns County is located in the north east corner of Georgia up on the North Carolina border. As of the 2010 census, the population was 10,471 and in the summer months this figure can double with the seasonal residents and vacationing visitors. The county seat is Hiawassee. The county was created on March 6, 1856 and named for United States lawyer, legislator, and politician George W. Towns. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 172 square miles, of which 167 square miles is land and 5.4 square miles (3.2%) is water. The US Forest Service owns roughly 52% of the land in the county. Towns is mostly in the Hiwassee River sub-basin of the Middle Tennessee-Hiwassee basin, with a part of the county in the Tugaloo River sub-basin in the larger Savannah River basin, as well as a small portion of the county's southwestern corner in the Chattahoochee River sub-basin (Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin), near the source of the Chattahoochee in neighboring Union County. Towns County is located amidst the Blue Ridge Mountains, (part of the Appalachian Mountains), some of which are protected by the Chattahoochee National Forest. Brasstown Bald, the highest mountain in Georgia, rises in southwest Towns County, straddling the Union Countyline. The source of the Hiwassee River is located in eastern Towns County, from which it flows northward into North Carolina. Chatuge Lake, an artificial reservoir created by the completion of Chatuge Dam by the Tennessee Valley Authority in the 1940s, dominates the northeastern section of Towns County. State Route 515 from north of Atlanta ends here at the North Carolina state line near Young Harris. An important facet of early life in Towns County was a road built upon a Cherokee trading path running north to south through the county and passing through Unicoi Gap. It served as a line between settlers and the Cherokees until after the Indian cessions, when it fell solely into the hands of the settlers. When the Cherokees were expelled from their villages, they were forced into "removal forts," one of which was located in what is now Hiawassee, the county seat. Towns County was formed by territory taken from Rabun and Union counties. Organized in 1856, the county honors George Washington Towns, Georgia governor from 1847 until 1851. Hiawassee borrows a Cherokee name meaning "meadow." The region's eastern border follows closely the Appalachian Trail as it weaves through lush forests

Executive Director of RC&D

Frank Riley



from Fannin County to the State of Maine. Hiawassee was incorporated on May 17, 1956. The city and its Hiawassee River have long been popular tourist areas. From the 1800s through the 1930s, wealthy families from the lowlands would "summer in the mountains" (they still do today) to escape the heat of more populated areas. The Fred Hamilton Rhododendron Garden is a Hiawassee attraction that features 2,000 rhododendron and azalea plants and wildflowers. The other city in Towns County is Young Harris, incorporated in 1895; Young Harris honors Judge Young Loftin Gerdine Harris and is home to Young Harris College. Young Harris College is a 4 year liberal arts college. Because of the terrain and abundant forests in the county, Towns County has become a leader in the fire safety education program called Firewise to help residents protect their property and the surrounding areas from wildfires. Because of the dedicated citizens of the county, Towns proudly boasts 19 Firewise communities out of the total of 88 in Georgia. This emphasis on wildfire education has led to a 75% drop in wildfire calls in the past 5 years. Our citizens know what a good thing we have here and they want to protect it from destruction by a wildfire. For more information on Towns County or any of the programs provided by Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D contact Frank Riley, Executive Director at: info.crced@gmail.com



The Veterans' Corner

By Scott Drummond, USCG Veteran

Notices and Announcements

If you missed last week's Herald and the article on Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame, then by all means get a copy or visit the online archives for this paper and last week's Vet Corner. We have a high percentage of Veterans who live here, many with amazing stories, having sacrificed much for you and me. Our state of Georgia, and an assembly of Veterans wishes to honor them with this limited prestigious award and any one of us can initiate the nomination process. This is so worthwhile in so many ways and the fee is only \$25 to cover processing. For detailed information please go here: www.GMVHOF.ORG, or locate a copy of *Towns County Herald*, Feb. 10, 2016 and this column.

On Feb. 19, 2016 we will once again remember America's sacrifices made in WWII with our Iwo Jima program, beginning at 10 AM in the new Towns County Rec Center, followed by a Dutch treat luncheon at Daniel's Steak House. There will be a fairly large contingent of Veterans as well as our two Towns County Iwo Jima Vets, Bud Johnson and Todd Kimsey. You can count on stories from these two, and some of their humor along with their first person historical accounts. There may very well be additional Iwo Vets from just over in NC. This will be a moving event to be enjoyed by all. Even better after our Commissioner and a crew of many dedicated and hard

working assistants designed, created and built our one of a kind Iwo Jima Memorial statue right out front of the Rec Center, dedicated last Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2015.

Speaking of Mr. Bill Kendall, he has always been an ambassador of history, of and for Veterans to his entire professional life. Sad to say he will no longer run for elected office, and no matter what your politics, he has been about as good of a county leader as possible in the last several tumultuous years and an absolutely wonderful supporter of each and every Veteran and our projects, going above and beyond inasmuch as possible. Without him, so much of what has transpired for Veterans within Towns County could've easily fallen by the wayside. In that respect our Veterans honored Mr. Kendall as an "Honorary Veteran" just last year. Trust me, I am not a democrat, but if he was running again, standing beside all our Veterans we would all vote for him. In his own words to me one Sunday morning, "It's all about Right versus Wrong, regardless of politics." Whether you are serving our nation in our armed services or as a community leader, that's a hard line to follow at times, as demanding circumstances sometimes muddies the water but right is always best, even if unpopular. Our nations' leaders would benefit from his example, and so would all Americans. Thank you, and God bless you, Mr. Kendall, from all of us Veterans!

Semper Paratus

Letters to The Editor

Letter to the Editor:

I would like to thank Tim Groza and Jim Soltys for their responses to my recent letter about green energy and a carbon fee and dividend plan. They, like I, obviously want a stronger and more prosperous future for America. I envision a more prosperous world running on clean energy, a world where we have clean air and water, with America leading the way. I envision a time when future generations will look back and say that America saved them from the ravages of climate change and also led us into the green technology future that resulted in increased prosperity. We are America, we have the best economic system in the world and the best innovators, and we can and must lead the way! The Citizens Climate Lobby's carbon fee and dividend plan is the best plan that I know of to accomplish this. Ronald Reagan's former Secretary of State George Shultz, who is a strong advocate of the plan, says this plan is not actually a tax, since it returns all the money to you and me, the citizens of the US, in a monthly check. Numerous studies now show that it is economically and technologically possible for America to convert to 100% clean energy by 2050. Tim Groza says the plan will lower the income of the average American. In fact, it actually stimulates the economy, increases our GDP, and increases the amount of real spendable income of the average American, reaching about \$500 annually by 2025. I am a strong economic conservative, I believe in the balanced budget amendment, and this plan is a conservative, marked based plan that puts a fair price on carbon production and allows the free market to operate effectively. Pope Francis says we have a moral duty to combat climate change, and we now have a way to accomplish this that also benefits us economically. With coal fired power plants causing 13,000 American deaths each year, I would like to close with a question. "What if we are wrong about climate change and future generations are stuck with a cleaner, healthier, more prosperous world?"

Vernon Dixon, MD

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to Beth McEwen's letter to the editor that appeared on February 10, 2016, concerning an assignment last semester at Young Harris College. Interestingly, Ms. McEwen's letter does not contain many pertinent details to the content of the story she found questionable, as well as the content surrounding its use in the classroom. The short story in question by Aimee Bender does have a provocative title, but the story is surprisingly ordinary in terms of content. The professor offered it as a supplemental reading that contains no mention of men violating women, as suggested. Instead, it is an example of magical realism, a style in which unreal elements play a natural part in an otherwise realistic world—a literary tradition that certainly has a place in an American literature survey course. Aimee Bender's work never celebrates the mistreatment of women.

In keeping with our mission, Young Harris College proudly engages with the liberal arts tradition, a legacy that traces much of its history back to the great Methodist thinkers of the past. YHC is a liberal arts college, not a bible college. Ms. McEwen seems to believe that students can simultaneously engage in life's hard questions about the untidiness of human existence all while being sheltered from the same. Rather than shelter our students, Christian and non-Christian alike, we believe in creating educational spaces where students can actively wrestle with difficult questions.

As scholars and critics, we welcome informed dissent. Ms. McEwen's letter is strong on dissent but lacks critical information for a fair and reasonable judgement.

Sincerely,
Dr. Gary Myers
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dean of the Faculty
Young Harris College

Soil sampling - The Basics

With all this snow we've been having, it might be hard for some of us to get out of the winter mindset and start to think about working in the garden or the field. The truth is, though, now is the time to be sending in your soil samples so you're ready to plant in a few months. Whether you've farmed for decades, or you're starting your first vegetable garden this spring, it's important to know what nutrients are in your soil before you plant your crops. If your plants can't get nourishment from the soil, it's going to be awfully hard for you to get nourishment from your plants!

Here are some key steps in getting the most out of your soil samples:

1. Know how to take cores for your sample. A "core" refers to the portion of soil that you remove from the sampling site using either a core sampler or a trowel. The best way to take a comprehensive soil sample is to collect 5-10 cores in a zig-zag pattern throughout the entire area. As you collect your cores, mix the soil together in a clean plastic bucket.



Once you've collected all your cores and mixed the soil well, fill the soil sample bag to about two-thirds full.

2. Decide what you want to plant. When you drop off your soil sample to the extension office, you will designate what crops will be planted in the soil you are testing. Your test results will tell you how suited your soil is to those crops and what fertilizers to apply to make sure they have adequate nutrition and soil conditions. You can select up to 5 plant codes per sample bag, so if you have more than 5 crops you want to test for, you will need additional soil bags. You can get soil bags from our extension offices.

3. Make sure the soil sample is clean. If you're assessing your lawn, clear away any grass or mulch to prevent sampling these materials with

your core. If you're sampling a wooded area, clear away leaf litter and pine straw. Never sample your soil with tools that have been used for fertilizer or lime, as this could skew your soil test results.

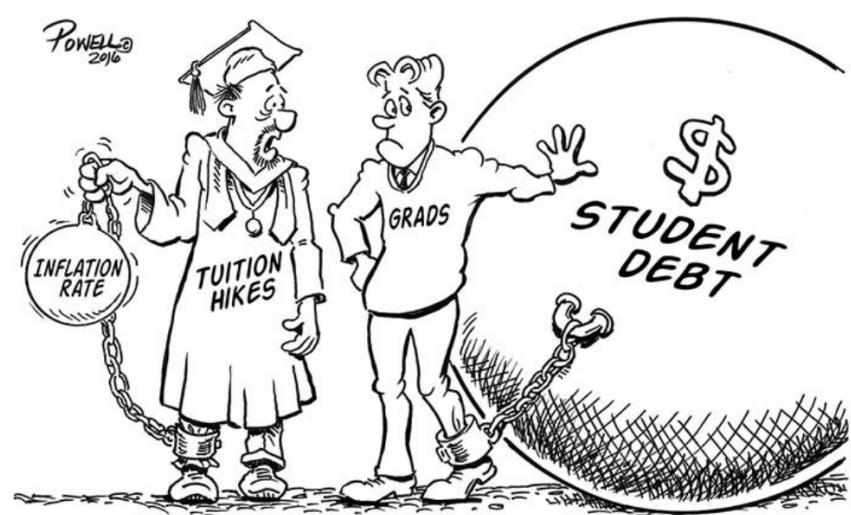
4. If your soil sample is very moist, you should let it air dry overnight before packing it in a sample bag. Removing the moisture also helps prevent inaccurate results.

Once you've collected your soil sample, you can bring it to the extension office and we will ship it to the UGA Soil Testing Lab for you. We charge \$10 per soil sample bag to cover lab fees and shipping, and we can send you your test results by mail or e-mail. When you get your results, call me with any questions or concerns you may have and I'll be happy to go over your soil profiles with you!

Don't forget about the Apple Grafting Workshop Friday, February 26th! It's going to be at 10 a.m. at the GMREC in Blairsville. Registration is \$15, and space is limited! RSVP to GMREC. (706) 745-2655.

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.



"Now I ask you, isn't this just too much of a burden?"

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.

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