

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

State of the Water set for September 14 in Towns County

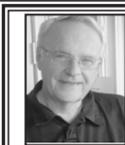
The Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition's annual State of the Water is set for Monday, September 14 at 6 p.m. at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center at Foster Park. The public is invited to come learn about how water quality is doing in the lakes, rivers, and streams of Towns and Union counties in north Georgia and Clay and Cherokee counties, North Carolina. The presentation will also include an overview of recent sampling that's been conducted in our watershed.

The event begins at 5:30 with a bit of gathering and social time. Following the 6 o'clock presentation, other Coalition staff members will provide an overview of what we've been working on in various program areas including Restoration, Lakes, and Education and a summary of our plans for the coming year. The Coalition will also welcome participants to provide input into our events and activities for 2016.

This event is offered annually to the community free of charge. Refreshments will be served. For more information visit the Watershed Coalition web site at www.hrwc.net or call the office: 828-837-5414.



HRWC volunteer monitoring program coordinator, Amanda Kanack uses a meter to measure dissolved oxygen, pH and other water quality parameters from a local stream. Data collected by volunteers in all four counties will be presented at the annual State of the Water on September 14.



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

How much does it cost to have kids and raise them to the age of 18? Are you ready for this? A new government study says that the average cost in today's economy is \$245,300. And for your encouragement that doesn't include college, that's just basic food, housing, clothing, medical, and your frequent, "daddy, can I have one of those?" Add college and it can double the amount.

Not including college, that's about \$1,136 per month for the next 18 years. Are you ready for that? Add inflation and that raises the per-kid cost to more than a quarter of a million dollars. That's a breath-taking number.

But wait. That's actually the easy part. You can save up, budget carefully, count on grandpa, grand-me-downs and thrift stores for some of those needs. But there are some costs you can't even put a price on. Some things cost more than a new pair of tennies or a week at summer camp. Along with adequate nutrition and a warm coat there is the issue of character. We want them to grow up not only well fed and clothed, but with a strong sense of right and wrong. Honest. Truthful. Trustworthy. We want them to grow up thoughtful and courteous. We want them to learn

to take responsibility for their actions rather than blaming others. We want to make sure they are resourceful and don't have an entitlement mentality. We want them to respect authority, grow up with the desire to help others, and with a life-long desire to learn.

As parents, we want our kids to grow up with strong moral fiber and not be sucked into the "everybody's-doing-it" mindset. We call it a moral compass and you can't get it Walmart or Tiffany's. Include a desire to serve others and a vision to help change their world and you have a to-do list that money can't buy. Maybe the quarter of a million dollars is the easy part.

The point I want to make here is to urge parents to be intentional about the really priceless parts of parenting. After the kids marry and move out we can catch up on the bills. But we have only a couple hundred months to hand off the really important things. For that they need from us an example. Guidance. Some teaching when necessary. An understanding of the purpose for which God has put them here. Now that's priceless.

Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@RareKids.net.

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"I See Skies of Blue..." the gift of clean air

The following is an eye-witness description of what it was like living among out of control wildfires in Hayfork, CA this summer, by Michelle Medley-Daniel, Fire Adapted Communities project manager. They never knew when one of these fires would make a run and turn into town. It can happen here so Be Firewise! Editors Note: This story original appeared on www.facnetwork.org.

"Sunday night was the first time that I could open my bedroom window since lightning started over 40 wildfires around Hayfork on July 30-31st. Yesterday morning was the first time I could see the sky and the mountains that surround my community. Twenty-three days of hazard-level air quality, forcing residents to stay in their homes, takes a physical and psychological toll. There is only so much worried pacing that you can do in a 1,500-square-foot house—and it's no substitute for real exercise.

Of the original 40 fire starts, many were extinguished on initial attack, and the rest merged into the Fork Complex. The Fork Complex is one of seven large complexes burning in the area; to date these complexes have burned over 200,000 acres. The first two days of the Fork Complex were chaotic. Residences, communications infrastructure and the center of the community were threatened, and resources had yet to arrive. Evacuations in one area of town overwhelmed the capacity of our emergency personnel, while on the other side of town people began looking out their windows to see flames. Facebook pages blew to life with neighbors trying to inform each other about the location of various fires. Early (and incorrect) news reports that the county fairgrounds had burned left many wondering if the whole town would be lost.

An area called Trinity Pines, a subdivision off-the-grid with approximately 1,200 parcels about ten miles from Hayfork, was also on fire.

The Post Mountain (Trinity Pines) VFD, a six-person crew, was the only resource available in the first hours of the Blue Fire. They were able to create and hold a control line, but lost several residences, including the home of one of the VFD firefighters.

Fast forward a couple of days and a state of emergency declaration had triggered mutual aid from all over the state, and a Type 1 team was assuming command of the incident. LA City fire trucks, highway patrol units from Sacramento, and fire crews from as far away as American Samoa had made their way to Hayfork. Overnight the town's population doubled in size with over 2,500 personnel assigned to the incident.

As the days went by new evacuations and road closures would be announced, town meetings held and, for several days, we intermittently lost internet and cell phone coverage as the lookout tower where both of these resources are housed was surrounded by fire resulting in power loss. Eventually, internet company employees were able to secure an escort to the tower to change the battery backup, which

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 EMAILED OR MAILED TO: Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawasse, 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.

Executive Director of RC&D

Frank
Riley

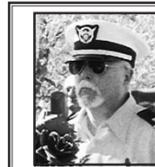


resolved the problem. People began settling into a new-normal: living under a thick blanket of smoke, unable to go outside, and glued to computers and phones hungry for the latest fire information. With stress levels high and some of our best coping mechanisms unavailable—think going for a jog, meeting up with friends for an evening walk, or eating lunch outside—it felt bleak.

On the bright side, the inversion that was keeping the smoke here was also moderating wildfire behavior and having positive impacts on our drought-ravaged river system. In fact, water levels in critical salmon habitat rose as a result of the inversion. Still, predictions that the fires would be going "until the snow flies" left many Hayforkers feeling trapped. The world was still going on, and we were left behind in a morass of smoke. Then, overnight, the inversion lifted and it was as if someone turned summer back on. Beautiful blue skies and sunshine quickly began to raise people's spirits. The fires are not out, but are more contained, and everyone is reveling in the gift of clean air while we can get it.

If I had a magic wand we'd be implementing landscape-scale prescribed burns in every ecologically-appropriate burn window we get. We'd be more proactive in managing our relationship with the place we live, including our land-use and growth, and our resource management. We'd be busy restoring our cultural relationship to fire so that we can live more safely in fire-adapted ecosystems. What we can't keep doing is punting this problem to the future. As I sucked smoke for three weeks, it occurred to me that that was part of the debt we owe this forest. Fire exclusion is passing the buck, and the future can't afford the bill."

For more information on wildfire education & prevention contact Frank Riley www.frank.cered@gmail.com.



The Veterans' Corner

By
Scott Drummond,
USCG Veteran

A salute to our Veterans

Songs and humor for Veterans at VFW Post 7807, Friday evening, September 18, 2015 at 7 PM (that'd be 1900 hours for those who still love that 24 hour clock!). Address: 1329 Sunnyside Road, Hiawasse, GA. Price of admission \$10 per person and reservations are recommended, as our VFW members have already purchased their tickets. Per Bill Renaldo: all shows are done with live vocal and CD accompaniment. Music varies from pop and 1960s — 90s rock and roll to show tunes and some light country western. Humor can be tailored to the audience but is best with an "R" rating. Those who golf may know his wife, Claudia who runs the snack bar over at the golf club and also caters. Bill Renaldo's father served in WWII.

This may be of utmost importance, gleaned from an email just received concerning a promise made by a presidential candidate that most folks seem to either love or hate. Most of our Veterans I have talked with seem to think approvingly of Donald Trump so far. Here is the message: please share to get the word out! Trump is establishing a hotline and email address for U.S. Military veterans to share their stories on how the Veterans Administration should be reformed.

The hotline is 855-VETS-352 and email is veterans@donaldtrump.com David R. Ray

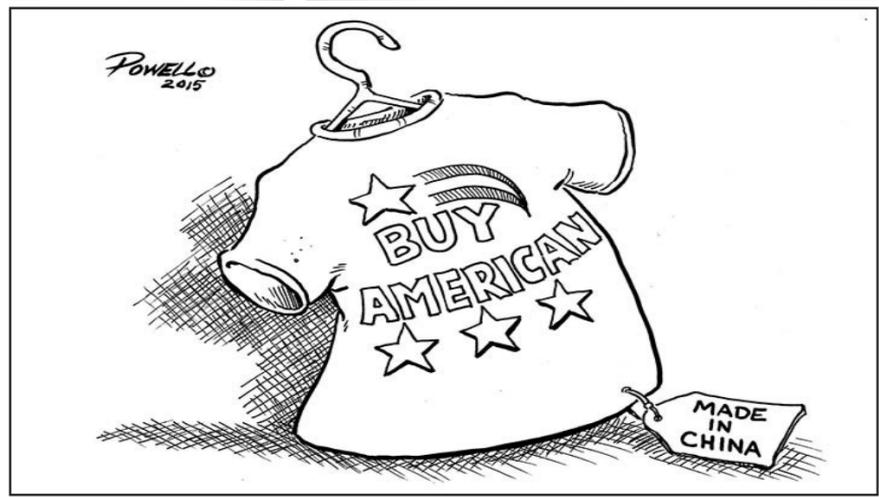
Finally another old piece from our 1940s era scrapbook, from which we could learn lessons of simplicity, decency, love and commitment to our USA. This

one is from an old newsletter for Intermediates at Park Avenue Baptist Church dated May 23, 1943, at which time our whole world was deeply involved in the horrors of war. I am inclined to believe this church was or may still be somewhere in Atlanta, GA. The simple honesty and unity of a deeply religious America is reflected in this sincere statement, which I copied verbatim. I do not know these servicemen mentioned below, but as with all our men and women who serve they deserve honors forevermore! We owe them and their families thanks and remembrance, as we do today to our young men and women who serve. Note: This was hand typed as Volume One, Number One of this church newsletter:

Men in Service. We are proud of every one of our men who have gone into the service of our country. They are fighting to preserve our freedom and we appreciate it. We will remember each one of them every day in our prayers. The stars on the Service Flag represent the following men: Marshall Banks, Franklin Price, Howard Davis, Joe Moon, Wade Human, Billy Lunsford, and Louie Atkinson.

As a proud, thankful, humble resident of Towns County, GA it occurs to me that this same spirit, decency, love, and simple honest patriotism for our Country, our men and women in uniform, past, present and future hasn't diminished here, in our small mountain community, with an abundance of fine honorable Veterans who grew up here, as well as moved here from afar.

Semper Paratus



Community Calendar

American Legion Post 23 meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 4 PM at VFW Post 7807, Sunnyside Rd., Hiawasse. Call 706-896-8387 for details. We need your support!

VFW Fish Fry April - October on 2nd & 4th Fridays each month from 4:30 - 7. \$10 per plate.

Towns County Water Board Meeting 3rd Monday of each month at 6 p.m. in the TC Water Office Building.

Mountain Community Seniors meet the second Thursday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawasse at 1 p.m.

Towns County Republican Party meets at 6:30 PM the 4th Thursday of each month at the new Senior Center. For more info call 706-994-3919.

Democratic Party of Towns County meets 2nd Tuesday of each month at 5 p.m. at new Senior Center. Newcomers welcome. Questions please contact the T.C. Dem's at Townscountydemocrats@gmail.com.

Towns County Planning Commission is held the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Courthouse.

Towns County Commissioners meeting is the 3rd Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in the courthouse.

School Board Meeting, 2nd Monday each month at 7 p.m. in the auditorium.

Hiawasse City Council 1st Tuesday of month 4 p.m., at City Hall.

Young Harris City Council, 1st Tuesday of month at 7 p.m., Young Harris City Hall.

The Unicoy Masonic Lodge #259 meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

Stephens Lodge #414 F & AM meets the 1st Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM in Young Harris. Sat. morning breakfast 2nd Sat. of each month from 8 - 10:30 AM. \$6 adults, \$3 12 & under.

Towns County Board of Elections holds its monthly meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. at the Elections Office (Old Rock Jail).

Towns County Historical Society meets the 2nd Monday of each month at the old Rec Center in Hiawasse at 5:30 p.m. 706-896-1060,

www.townshistory.org

Bridge Players intermediate level meets at 12:30 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Rec Center.

Mountain Regional Arts & Crafts Guild meets 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Calvary Chapel on Hwy. 76 in Hiawasse. All local artists and crafters are welcome, for information call 706-896-0932.

Mountain Computer User Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month. Meetings start at 6 p.m. and visitors are welcome. Details can be found at www.mcug.org.

Chattahoochee-Nantahala Chapter, Trout Unlimited meets 2nd Thursday of each month at Cadence Bank in Blairsville. 5 p.m. Fly Tying - 7 p.m. General Meeting. Everyone welcome. www.ngatu692.com.

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) meets the 3rd Monday of each month at various area restaurants. For information call Gary at 706-896-4308 or visit www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridgemountains.

Alcoholics Anonymous: 24 hour phone line 828-837-4440.

Chattahoochee Regional Auxiliary on the 3rd Monday of each month, except the months of July, October and December, in the hospital cafeteria at 1:30 p.m.

The Humane Society Mountain Shelter Board of Directors meets the last Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at Cadence Bank in Blairsville.

The Towns County Alzheimer's Support Group meets the first Tuesday of each month at 1:30 PM in the Family Life Center of McConnell Memorial Baptist Church. For more info call Carol at 706-896-6407.

The Appalachian Shrine Club meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6 PM at the Shrine Club, Industrial Blvd., Blairsville.

GMREC Garden Tours every Monday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Shooting Creek Basket Weavers meets 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at Shooting Creek Fire Hall Community Center. For more info www.shootingcreekbasketweavers.com.

Friendship Community Club meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6 PM at Clubhouse, 1625 Hwy. 76, 706-896-3637.

Golwing Road Riders meets the 3rd Saturday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse in Hiawasse. We eat at 11 and meeting begins at 12.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meets every Wednesday evening at 7 PM at the Red Cross building on Jack Dayton Circle.

Caregiver support group meets 2nd Tuesday of each month, 3 p.m. at Brasstown Manor, located at 108 Church St., Hiawasse. Call 706-896-4285 for more info.

Enchanted Valley Square Dance Club. Dances 2nd & 4th Fridays at Towns Co. Rec. Ctr. from 7-9 PM. \$5/person to dance. Free to watch.

Brasstown Woodturners Guild meets 1st Saturday of month at 9:30 AM in HHS shop. For more info call J. C. at 706-896-5711.

Mountain Amateur Radio Club (MARC) meets 6:30 PM the 1st Monday of month at 1298 Jack Dayton Cir. (next to EMS), Hiawasse. For info call Al 706-896-9614 after 6 PM.

The Board of the Towns County Chamber of Commerce meets the second Monday of every month at 8 a.m. at the Chamber office, 1411 Jack Dayton Circle, Young Harris.

The Quilting Bee at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church in Family Life Center, Room 216. 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10 AM - 3 PM. Bring a sack lunch. For more information call Kathy at 706-835-6721 or Marilyn at 706-897-4367.

Mountain Coin Club meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the North Georgia Tech campus in Blairsville. Guests are welcome. For more info, call 706-379-1488.

Monday morning BINGO at Brasstown Manor every Monday morning at 9:30 a.m. 108 Church St., Hiawasse. Players meet in the Bradford. Questions 706-896-4285.

Towns County Lions Club meets 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Daniel's Restaurant, 273 Big Sky Drive, Hiawasse.