

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor:
Sometimes when we are counting our blessings and progress that we have because of living in this area, we may overlook some of the good things under our noses which we take for granted. I thought of that as I read your excellent review of 2014. One blessing not mentioned was Young Harris College here in our midst.

A few years ago I wrote a book, "The Miracle of Brasstown Valley" about its founding in 1886 by a circuit riding Methodist minister named Artemas Lester. The old preacher would not believe his eyes to what has happened to that school he started with seven students in the fall of 1886. Young Harris College, now a four-year, baccalaureate degree-granting institution, had its eighth consecutive record-breaking year of enrollment this past fall when 1,216 students joined us from 23 states and 27 countries. That includes a strong showing of 82 from Towns County and 107 from Union County, where we collectively awarded more than \$2,363,895 million dollars in scholarship assistance to local students to make it financially attractive for them to stay in this beautiful area and get their college education.

These 1,200-plus students provide a regular base of shoppers in our region. And, it also means that some 1,200 families are coming in and out of this area to visit their sons and daughters and grandchildren when we host "Family Weekends", student theatre, band and choral performances, athletic events, Commencement, and other special events that feature our students. These families stay in local hotels, shop in local businesses and eat in local restaurants.

The College also hosted the WinShape summer camps sponsored by Chick-fil-A for the fourth year, bringing 1,300 young girls to the campus for a great summer camp experience - along with 1,300 families who likewise came here to visit, shop and often vacation. Similarly, we hosted the Carhart Bassmaster College Series National Bass Fishing Championship, bringing 89 teams from college campuses all over the United States (and their families and support crews) - along with ESPN-U world-wide coverage of Lake Chatuge - for a week of great fishing and vacationing. Additionally, YHC hosted other summer camps for bands, athletic programs, and specialty programs that bring campers and their families to the area on a regular basis.

Young Harris' outstanding Men's Soccer Team captured the Peach Belt conference championship this fall, our first conference championship since gaining full membership last summer in NCAA Division II athletics, and catapulted to a Number 1 ranking in the nation. We had the opportunity thereafter to host the first two rounds of the NCAA national tournament here in Young Harris, bringing teams from throughout the Southeast to campus for two weeks of tournament activity, with teams, families and guests coming into the area to lodge, eat and shop in late fall. Although we lost in the quarterfinals to the team that ultimately won the national championship, our Mountain Lions finished the season ranked #5 in the nation, and our team member Ilija Ilic was named the National Player of the Year from Division II, as well as the National Scholar Athlete of the year for all three NCAA divisions. Our coach Mark McKeever was named the Southeastern Coach of the Year.

The College and its auxiliary physical plant/dining service Sodexo now employ more than 358 people on the Young Harris campus every day, making us one of the largest employers in this region. Our \$11,767,000 payroll - not including benefits - provides direct economic benefits that are expended right here in Towns and Union counties and surrounding areas.

Young Harris also provides a wealth of great entertainment and fun throughout the year for this community as its Mountain Lions athletic teams take on great competitors, and I hardly ever miss a basketball game. I hope your readers will come out and join us in the beautiful Young Harris Rec Center this winter for some first-rate basketball.

Thank you for giving me the chance to highlight one of the major economic engines of this area. The College has had a strong year, and when it flourishes, those benefits flow outward to our community. I'm proud to have attended and graduated from Young Harris, taught at Young Harris, and continue serving as one of its Trustees.

Zell B. Miller



Zell, we agree
By Towns County Herald Editor
Charles Duncan

In putting together the 2014 Year in Review, as noted by Gov. and U.S. Sen. (retired) Zell B. Miller, we sometimes overlook something special. Indeed, we did overlook Young Harris College's outstanding 2014 and 2015 is off to a solid start.

YHC President Cathy Cox was named to the list of 100 Most Influential Georgians' List by *Georgia Trend* to start the New Year off right.

Young Harris College, now a four-year, baccalaureate degree-granting institution, under Cox's watchful eye, had its eighth consecutive record-breaking year of enrollment this past fall when 1,216 students joined from 23 states and 27 countries, Zell Miller let us know.

According to Zell, that includes a strong showing of 82 from Towns County and 107 from Union County, where YHC collectively awards more than \$2,363,895 million dollars in scholarship assistance to local students to make it financially attractive for them to stay in this beautiful area and get their college education.

And Zell notes that these 1,200-plus students provide a regular base of shoppers in our region. And, it also means that some 1,200 families are coming in and out of this area to visit their sons and daughters and grandchildren because of YHC. These families stay in local hotels, shop in local businesses and eat in local restaurants.

The bottom line that Zell is trying to get across is that Young Harris College has grown from its humble beginnings - seven students to more than 1,200 - to become a major regional economic engine that helps power our local economies in Union and Towns counties.

The College and its auxiliary physical plant/dining service Sodexo now employ more than 358 people on the Young Harris campus every day, making YHC one of the largest employers in this region. YHC's \$11,767,000 payroll - not including benefits - provides direct economic benefits that benefit Towns and Union counties and surrounding areas.

I apologize for that oversight. In my defense, much like Artemas Lester would be surprised by the present day YHC campus,

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, 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.

he also would be surprised by the growth of the Towns County and Union County communities.

I too am amazed at the growth of my birthplace (Young Harris), and the community where I was raised (Blairsville-Union County).

As a journalist, it sometimes amazes me that these communities have become so diverse economically, and personally.

I stand back sometimes in awe of my surroundings. It makes me proud that one of the greatest leaders in America (Zell Miller) is from my neck of the woods. It amazes me that I know a former U.S. president, am friends with the governor, lieutenant governor and Georgia's House Speaker.

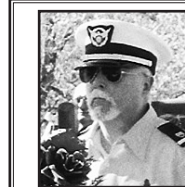
I'm also a friend of YHC. I love Young Harris College, my mother and my oldest sisters are graduates.

YHC is a part of my personal makeup. I hereby amend the 2014 Year in Review.

Thank you, Zell, for bumping my elbow.

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The Veterans' Corner

By
Scott Drummond,
USCG Veteran

Today's Veterans and PTSD

Until a very recent visit to our local VA clinic, just over in the eastern edge of Blairsville, I was unaware of the current population of younger vets, returning from the Mideast suffering from something called, PTSD or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder sometimes resulting in suicides. Older vets, as my WW2 mentors, called this Battle Fatigue. However, in earlier times our nation was structured much like our wonderful rural small town communities of Towns County, GA. In short those returning vets had tight knit families, friends and other associates to rely upon for a network of support. They were greeted, for the most part enthusiastically and that was an era of pride for our nation, as a whole. Didn't always work, in each and every individual's favor but was a very positive factor. Generally speaking some of that warmth and closeness of community, of that era has been left behind, lost or "revised" by modern standards. This, in turn, has resulted in a greater measure of isolation or perhaps desperation not being shared with others by these young heroes.

My non-professional but common sense point being, that we, yes you and I, may be able with compassion and our best ability to share something as simple as time and small talk with these young vets, in order to let them know, that they are not alone, we do care, and appreciate what they've sacrificed for all of us, no matter what they've seen or suffered through. Will we understand their personal dilemmas? Good gosh, no! But we can share our hearts, not always knowledge based, with those young folks.

Friendship and sharing is core to mental health, helps to build strong individuals, who in turn build strong communities. Even as a non-combat veteran, I remember those who greeted ALL of us servicemen and women with "less than stellar" attitudes, which left negative impressions upon many and created hostile feelings. That was an unpopular era, but nevertheless our best did their best and for that, just like ALL our military servicemen and women, honor and respect is due, from all of us.

Here are some websites for more detailed & professional assistance: www.militaryhub.com/article?id=446; www.ptsd.va.gov/; www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/index.shtml; www.webmd.com/anxiety-panic/guide/post-traumatic-stress-disorder. As well, our VA Clinic, just east of Blairsville is staffed with some very caring and professional folks. Personally I was very pleasantly surprised as to the care and cheerful treatment I received, after many decades of avoiding the VA. Here's some additional information: VA Medical Center, 1294 Highway 515 East, Suite 100, Blairsville, GA 30512 Tel. number: 404-329-2222 hours are 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM Monday through Friday.

We are community, here in Towns County and perhaps, that factor, just might add a very positive healing catalyst if we all elect to be just a little more sharing or outgoing. Once again, not being a professional, kindness and sincere appreciation of those who so dearly deserve, cannot be a bad ingredient for a better America.

Semper Paratus,
Scott Drummond



Community Calendar

American Legion Post 23 meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 4 PM at VFW Post 7807, Sunnyside Rd., Hiawassee. Call 706-896-8387 for details. We need your support!
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 Hiawassee 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 the 2nd Thursday of each month at 5 PM at the new Senior Center.
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.
Hiawassee 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 Unicorn 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.
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 Hiawassee 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 and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG) meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse, Hiawassee. The Board meets at 4 p.m., and the Guild at 6. Call us 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 John at 706-896-2430 or visit www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridgemountains.
Alcoholics Anonymous: 24 hour phone line 828-837-4440.
Mothers of Preschoolers meets the third Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church of Blairsville from 6 - 8 p.m. Call the church at 706-745-2469.
Chatugas Regional Hospital 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.
Mountain Magic Table Tennis Club meets 3 p.m. Thursdays at Pine Log Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Brasstown. Ping Pong players welcome. Call Jerry (828) 837-7658.
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 6:30 PM at the Allegheny Lodge in Blairsville. For more info call William 706-994-6177.

GMREC Garden Tours every Monday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Shooting Creek Basket Weavers meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at the Shooting Creek Fire Hall Community Center. For more info www.shootingcreek-basketweavers.com.
Friendship Community Club meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6 PM at Clubhouse, 1625 Hwy. 76, 706-896-3637.
Goldwing Road Riders meets the 3rd Saturday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse in Hiawassee. 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., Hiawassee. 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), Hiawassee. For info call Al 706-896-9614 after 6 PM.
The Board of the Towns County Chamber of Commerce meet 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.

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Q: I am a single mom with three sons, 9, 11 and 16. They are good kids and I haven't had any major issues with them. Until about a month ago. In the middle of the night my 16-year old got the car keys out of my purse and drove over to his girlfriend's house. Well, almost there. Before he got there he turned around and came back. When I found out I was furious, took away his driver's license and thoroughly grounded him. The whole thing really made me feel sick, like I was a failure as a mom. What do you suggest I do next?

A: First I would suggest that you congratulate yourself. It's working! He never got there. He turned the car around and came home. Did you hear what you just said? He was struggling with himself and his better side won. That lad has had some good parenting. Or as my mom would have said, "he's had some good fetchin' up." That's something to celebrate.

I hope you heaped affirmation on him. He made some bad decisions (more on that in a minute) but he made good decisions on the big stuff. The story could have ended differently. He could be the 16-year old friend of a pregnant high school sophomore.

He dared himself, took the dare, but halfway through, his better judgment kicked in and he high-tailed it for home. Don't let him forget that. Don't let him forget how good a right decision feels.

Now what? Well, he broke some rules. He compromised his integrity. He took the keys and the car without permission (not sure if he was licensed to drive without a licensed adult in the car - that would be another major issue). He left in the middle of the night, without letting anyone know that he was going, or where. He breached a trust and that is unacceptable.

One other piece, you didn't mention how you found out. Was the car parked in a different place in the driveway? Did a neighbor phone and report him? If he volunteered that he had done wrong with the intent to apologize, that would also affect what my response might be.

Whether the penalty you already handed out is sufficient I leave that decision to you. Under the circumstances I think it might be. Just make sure he understands that moving ahead privilege follows trust. Then hug him.

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

Towns County Herald

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