

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor:
 What an opportunity the citizens of Hiawassee have been given in the November 3 election! In years past the City Council elections have not been held on more than one occasion due to no challengers for the council positions. This time, there are seven candidates running for the three posts. Those elected will help set the stage for the future of Hiawassee for the next two years. Given the number of businesses that have either closed or relocated out of the City, it is time to take a long, hard look at where Hiawassee is headed. No doubt all of the candidates have the best interest of the City in mind. The question for the voters is 'who can best take Hiawassee to the next level?'

In recent months, there have been more citizens attending the City Council monthly meetings in order to have a better perspective on what is happening now, and what is possible going forward. So why is this of concern to anyone who does not reside within the city limits? The outcome of the elections in the two municipalities, Hiawassee and Young Harris, will impact every citizen in Towns County for at least the next two years. We need for that impact to be positive and in our collective best interest. A Candidates Forum for the City of Hiawassee candidates has been scheduled for October 26, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. in the new Senior Center. This will give all seven candidates an opportunity to speak about their goals for the future. As of this writing, five of the seven candidates have responded to the invitation to address their constituents. As a Towns County taxpayer, I urge everyone to attend. And for those voters in the two cities, your vote is important; it can make a difference for everyone.

Grace Howard

Dear Editor:
 This writing concerns observations about the "Jacksonville" area just inside the Towns County line on State Road 76 (the main artery of travel). Specifically the concerns stated herein relate to the property front SR 76 between the Habitat for Humanity building and Townsend Mill Road. Said property is across the road from Valley Nursery. For many years the commercial building on this site has been vacant and seemingly unattended. Within the last six months or so, however, the building has been upgraded and appears to be suitable for some type of business occupancy. I have been informed from the Towns County Commissioner's office (via the Union County Commissioner's office) that a "sign" company is going to be headquartered in subject building. But, what I and a number of other residents in the areas surrounding this property are observing is that the real estate behind this building (and somewhat to one side of it also) is being littered with (apparently mostly inoperable) vehicles of all types. It is difficult to understand how this happening relates to a "sign" company. The property is now unsightly and will inevitably affect property values in the area as this littering continues to grow.

I would suggest to the Towns County government that what is happening to this property is a poor representation of the County, especially since it is very visibly seen almost immediately to one's left when entering the County (on SR 76) traveling from Blairsville (the Towns County line is about 500 feet away). It (the sighted property) is also one of the last things seen to the right when beginning to exit the county traveling in the opposite direction.

If this property (I am told about 22 acres) is in fact going to be used as a "junk yard," despite what has been stated regarding a "sign" company, I would suggest to appropriate governing officials that at minimum a high solid fence around the property perimeter (and perhaps including other areas where the "junk" is visible) should be required to obscure this (so far) unsightly property.

*Respectfully submitted,
 Henry Brock*

This is a post script to the above letter. Since composing the letter above I am now observing a fence being installed on this property (to apparently shield the sight of junk vehicles behind the building fronting SR 76). This would, therefore, logically reinforce the suggestion that the real purpose of this property is to house junk vehicles. I do not yet see any sign of the "sign" company.



**RARE KIDS;
 WELL DONE**
 By Don Jacobsen

Q: Our son is 4 and he is a good boy, except he bites his fingernails. It isn't really a behavior problem, I guess. But it's dirty, his nails don't look good, and I think some of our friends might wonder if he has psychological problems. Should we just look the other way and hope for the best? Will he stop on his own?

A: The only people harmed in the scenario you describe are the parents who are on the edge of their chair worrying about typical 4-year old behavior. The stress may cause them to begin biting their fingernails or something. About half of all kids 10 - 18 go through a nail-biting phase, boys more often than girls.

I suppose it's scientifically possible, but I don't remember ever hearing of a childhood disease developing because a youngster bit his fingernails. So I suggest you pretty much dismiss the sanitation issue. But isn't it possible he could get an illness if his hands are dirty? Probably, but do you know anyone who ever did? As for the aesthetics of his habit, healthy 4-year old boys don't at this time hold the world record for fabulous fingernails. Or hair. Or creases in their pants. I encourage

you to lower your expectations here, mom. The first time he holds a girl's hand in middle school and she looks at his fingernails and winces, the problem will be solved and you won't have to have said a word.

What about if your friends think he has a psychological problem? Change friends. The ones you have now have been reading too much goofy stuff. One of the physicians I consulted to make sure I was right on this issue said, "...in the majority of cases this [diagnosis] appears to be another case of disease mongering to sell more psychiatric drugs." I suggest you not nag, scold, punish, or medicate. Nail biting is often accompanied by stress or boredom and virtually everyone comes through the nailbiting era in their lives unscathed.

I had a friend in high school who regularly caught himself absentmindedly biting his nails while he was studying. A buddy told him to put a rubber band around his wrist and give it a good snap whenever he was tempted. He got over the habit the first evening he tried it.

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

Two Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership

The United States Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service entered into a multi-year partnership, the Chiefs' Joint Landscape Restoration Partnership, to improve the health and resiliency of forest ecosystems where public and private lands meet across the nation. The vision is to restore landscapes regardless of land ownership, reduce wildfire threats to communities and landowners, protect water quality and supply and improve habitat for at-risk species. Now in its second year, this unique partnership is working across traditional barriers to ensure more efficient and effective conservation work in these vital landscapes.

NRCS and Forest Service will invest \$10 million this year in 15 new projects to improve conditions on public and private lands. Last year, NRCS and FS invested \$30 million in 13 projects, which will result in conservation improvements to over 266,000 acres. These projects build on existing projects and partnerships. By leveraging technical and financial resources and coordinating activities on adjacent public and private lands, conservation work by NRCS and FS will be more efficient and effective in these watersheds.

Chattahoochee RC&D Council has partnered with the US Forest Service, (Georgia & South Carolina), Georgia Forestry Commission, South Carolina Forestry Commission, The Nature Conservancy, and the Department of Natural Resources to develop a proposal to bring one of these projects to our area. These organizations all have the same goals and missions which are to enhance and preserve our natural resources for present and future generations and keep our citizens safe from out of control wildfires. The area for our project encompasses the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains and Foothills of Georgia and South Carolina. This multi-state landscape is best described as a transitional zone between the southern Appalachian piedmont and the Blue Ridge Mountains. The project area was defined using a landscape-scale approach, where the project boundary was delineated using a 10-mile buffer around the Chattahoochee National Forest in Georgia and the Andrew Pickens Ranger District of the Sumter National Forest in South Carolina. This project area includes approximately 877,000 acres of protected lands, of which 88% are USDA Forest Service lands and the remaining 12% are either state owned or private conservation easements. Within this landscape, numerous upland ridges and south-facing woodland slopes are embedded in a larger mesic hardwood forest


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

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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

matrix. Private inholdings are scattered throughout the landscape. Shortleaf pine, pitch pine and numerous oak forest types dominate this landscape; however, these species are slowly being replaced by less desirable yellow poplar, red maple, white pine and mountain laurel resulting in reduced species diversity largely due to fire suppression.

In addition, many wildland urban interface communities are being threatened by the resulting high fuel loads and subsequent risk of uncontrollable wildfire. On-going work to meet our objectives is being accomplished through two initiatives known as the Southern Blue Ridge Fire Learning Network and the Fire Adapted Communities initiative. Through these collaborative efforts, overall public acceptance and support of the role and importance of fire in our landscape has increased over the last decade. Active collaboration has led to a gradual increase in prescribed burning on protected lands within the project area. An "all-lands" approach is being utilized for controlled burns at a landscape scale which is reducing risk and cost to participating landowners.

In addition, the development of Firewise communities raises the public's awareness of the threats of wildfire within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). In fact, one of the focal areas within the Firewise/FAC initiative, has seen a 75% decrease in wildfires responses within that community. This project proposal has two objectives: 1) to expand the capacity for the Federal and state partners working together within this landscape to increase prescribed fire, mechanical treatments and non-native invasive species eradication treatments on protected and private lands within the project area; 2) create educational/outreach programs such as Firewise & Ready-Set-Go and management plans for private citizens living in the WUI. This project will develop two field crews that will help local, state, and federal agencies with the mitigation and fire prevention work around our communities that are in the Wildland Urban Interface where the risk is always just over the ridge.

The Veterans' Corner

By
 Scott Drummond,
 USCG Veteran



Vietnam Moving Wall Memorial

First please allow a correction of last week's article, "It's Good to Give". Marti Rowland, wife of Gene LaJunesse isn't a military Veteran, however she is the mother of a Veteran and her former husband died of Agent Orange related health issues. How much more could anyone be expected to "give"? We often overlook or fail to honor those who served our country. Our VVA Chapter 1101, VFW, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, donors and many other volunteers did an outstanding job this past week with the Viet Nam Moving Wall Memorial presentation in Blairsville (10/8-10/12), dedicated to all who gave their lives or are still missing in our valiant effort to resist the Evils of Communist oppression in Viet Nam. Anyone who has not visited the original in Washington, DC or one of the smaller moving wall events really does need to go and experience this heart rendering, emotional, and patriotic event. I haven't the words to describe what it did to me and so many others. There are 58,299 names inscribed, and all of them as well as each and every one of us who served our country and each other during that tumultuous time were laughed at, rejected, spit upon, and treated as if we were the enemy, are finally getting honorable recognition for who and what we really are. Some of those who came back from 'Nam, like many of our war wounded, are only partially here, and need our sincere love, respect, honor and understanding. With our love and respect, hopefully they will continue to heal, but the scars will never go away. June 26, 2015 was/is the 50th anniversary of the Viet Nam War.

Most Veterans are generally humble and just plain simple, good old fashioned Americans, but beyond that we are Veterans! If not for our Veterans, certain self-servers of our political class and other "over-educated" (please read: indoctrinated) elitists with their liberal philosophies of that day and time would not have the freedom to do what they have done back then, and to continue "forward" today. Yes! We, who have served, stand guard over and fight for defending the rights of all Americans, even those who might not "like us" so much. Their ideas, even though alien to us and maybe even offensive, we have and will defend, too. Without us, where would any of us be? Just ask those who emigrated here from Korea, South Viet Nam, or Western Europe, to escape the end results of what some here consider "good government". America the Beautiful, our Veterans and their families are amongst the most unique, humble, and honorable creations on God's Earth and in the history of mankind's perpetual struggles for freedom, liberty and peace on earth.

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