

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

NMAN, May 2022

Perhaps the most important acronym in our English language. Certainly not the recognition of the political class. As a long awaited

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



spring arrives this month of May, we celebrate and honor our military forces, both in and out of uniform. National Military Appreciation Month. As is hoped for, this declaration encourages unity of our nation's citizens and their honoring our members of our armed forces.

May 1-May 7 is set aside to honor those who serve our nation as federal, state, county and local government employees whose jobs are to insure the integrity of our nation. Here in Towns County we have a superlative Sheriff's Department, Hiwassee Police Department, and EMC/Firefighters who rank as the best anywhere. Our government employees do their utmost under prevailing conditions here, in the North Georgia Mountains dealing with often sudden circumstances.

May 1st is also Silver Star Medal Day.
 May 3rd is also a time for reaching out to Veterans and perhaps making donations, thereof.

May 6th is the Friday before Mother's Day, when we should honor those spouses and families of our military families, thus keeping our Armed Forces strong thus keeping our country secure.

May 8th of 1945 we recognize the sacrifices of those whose Patriotic Spirit and love of America lead to the unconditional surrender to our Allied forces. End of WWII in Europe!!!! And of course Mother's Day, without them we would have no one.

May 13th is to recognize and raise awareness of the sacrifices and struggles of children who lost parents who fell in the service to our nation.

May 21st, Third Saturday in May every year. A single day for our citizens to come together and thank our men and women of our Army, Air Force, Navy, USMC, USCG, and Space Force for their service to our Sovereign Republic.

May 30th, 2022 Memorial Day. Observed annually on the last Monday in May, we solemnly honor those who made the greatest sacrifice while serving in uniform for you and I. Please pause at 3:00 PM for a moment of silence and prayer for those who are our genuine heroes who gave their lives for something far greater than self.

I believe it would behoove our nation for all of us to fly our nation's flag at their home. And to honor, appreciate and love those who now serve and have served Honorably our nation, unlike any nation ever before in the history of mankind. Bear in mind, "FREEDOM AIN'T FREE!" Freedom is a costly proposition born on the shoulders of those few amongst us who have gone forth to do that which must be done.

- Semper Paratus

Letters To The Editor

Biden's Green Military

Dear Editor,

The number one function of the U.S. military should be the use of force to eliminate threats posed by foreign enemies in defense of our nation. But Joe Biden wants a "green" military, you see. It appears that Biden sees the U.S. military as a cultural experiment for the executive branch to impose its leftist Green New Deal ideology upon the American people.

Recently, Biden made the following comments on Earth Day: "In the U.S. military, every vehicle is going to be climate-friendly. We're spending billions of dollars to do it." Is this guy serious? How about the goal that every military vehicle be equipped to help the military meet its aim of taking the fight to the enemy with the express goal of winning? The U.S. military should not be an army of leftist eco-ideologues. If this were the case, the U.S. Navy would still consist entirely of a fleet of sailing ships.

Tim Groza

Signs of a Successful Life

Dear Editor,

As I have aged, and not always so gracefully, my values have changed. It is written that as we get older, we are supposed to get wiser (Job 12:12). I think I have the getting older down to a science. My hair is leaving my head faster than I care to acknowledge, and the "getting wiser" part is under review.

Some of my treasured possessions are soon to be in danger of being discarded or given away. Things I have moved from one state to another, from one basement to another, and from one century to another, now pose a question for me — why? Why did I keep this or that? No one, not even my children, will give two cents for most of my prized possessions. Any money, certificates of deposit, stock, vehicles or property will take center stage, but what about my tools, and my not-so-valuable collections of this or that? What about the collection I have of my vain scribbles? How many trees died because I perceived myself to be a writer? Will anyone read my writings after I'm gone?

The more we acquire during our journey, the more difficult it becomes to assign values to our stuff. Having less, makes the things one has seem more valuable. Our excesses get shelved in our basements, creating the descriptive term "full basement." The pinnacle of a successful life is attained when one has to rent a storage building to house their possessions. By the time one realizes that less is more, it's too late. The basement is already full and the storage building has been rented.

Gene Vickers

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor
 P.O. Box 365, Hiwassee, GA 30546
 Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net

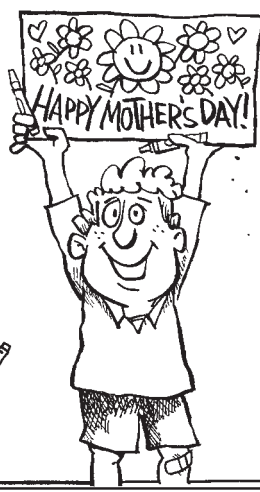
Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address 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.

April Showers...



Bring May Flowers



Fire Adapted Communities Network

This week's RC&D News is directly from Austin, Texas, where I am attending the 9th annual Fire Adaptive Communities (FACNET) Learning Network annual meeting. There are 60 wildfire professionals from across the country meeting to share ideas and learn new ways to install the FACNET programs to help keep citizens who live in the WUI safe from wildfire.

In 2013 at the first annual FACNET meeting in Boise, Idaho, Towns County was chosen as one of the original eight FACNET Pilot hubs in the US with Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D (CCRCD) administering the program.

Fire Adapted Communities are communities with people, structures and landscaping that are prepared to withstand the effects of wildfires with the resources that they have. A Fire Adapted Community is one where the population understands the threat posed by wildfires and takes the personal action necessary to help minimize the risk. Ideally a Fire Adaptive Community is one that can stand on its own, with no intervention from outside fire services, against a wildfire.

A Fire Adapted Community has a combination or mixture of similar characteristics some of which are: The community exists within or adjacent to a fire-prone ecosystem and has a defined geographic boundary; Residents possess the knowledge, skills, and willingness to properly prepare their homes before a wildfire threatens, prepare to evacuate, and safely evacuate when necessary; Local fire suppression forces have the adequate skills, equipment, and capacity to manage wildfire; Residents and the local fire agencies have met and understand the local fire suppression capability and related fire-response expectations; Landowners are aware of fuels threats on their property and have acted to mitigate the danger; A community wildfire protection plan (CWPP) is developed and implemented; The community has embraced the need for defensible space by creating fuel reduction zones and internal safety zones, where treatments have been properly spaced, sequenced, & maintained over the long term; Property owners understand their responsibilities before, during and after a fire; Public expectations are realistic and not based on reliance of government to provide all answers; Individuals accept personal responsibility for their property; The public understands that fire authorities cannot provide protection for every structure affected during a wildfire; and a structure where owners have not taken the appropriate measures to make it defensible will be left unprotected because of firefighter and equipment safety concerns. A community that achieves the FACNET designation gives residents satisfaction in knowing that when wildfire threatens everybody knows what to expect.

Towns County is recognized across the country in wildfire circles because of the things we do to reduce wildfire risk in our mountains. Towns has 24 recognized Firewise USA communities out of 124 in Georgia which is very good, but we can't stop because fire safety is a never-ending process and must become a lifestyle. CCRCD is the Georgia Firewise USA Liaison and manages the Firewise USA program across the state that is now 5th in the nation for Firewise USA communities and was 5th for new communities added in 2021.

The FACNET mission is to develop the FACNET lifestyle in a location and spread it to other communities by peer-to-peer contacts. CCRCD has expanded FACNET to surrounding north Georgia counties from Rabun to Dade and has spread FACNET into 79 counties up the Appalachian Mountains from NE Georgia thru western North Carolina, into SW Virginia and into NW South Carolina. We call our group the Appalachian RC&D FAC Coalition made up of 6 RC&D Councils developing local grassroots FAC networks in those areas.

Chest-Chat RC&D has guided the Towns FACNET for the past 9 years and has been very successful with our Firewise, Ready-Set-Go, and FAC programs in the area. Towns has earned national recognition for its efforts, and I have presented the success stories many times across the country. Firewise USA, is a national program that is one of the main components used to build FACNET and Towns County has become the leading Firewise USA program in Georgia with 24 Firewise USA Communities out of 124 total.

To help achieve the FACNET goals Citizen's Coalitions are organized to develop and operate the FACNET program. These coalitions, along with wildfire agencies, hold yearly community clean up days to lessen the fire risks in communities; help train emergency responders by holding live evacuation exercises; teach citizens about wildfire risks around homes; educate citizens about when, where, and how to evacuate when a wildfire threatens; identify internal safety zones for evacuations; entertain students with Smokey Bear; and attend many local events to implement FACNET, Firewise USA, & Ready-Set-Go programs.

Being Fire Adapted is a never-ending process since the risk of wildfires around homes is a threat that will always be just over the ridge waiting for the right conditions to come roaring in our yards.

For more information on Firewise, Fire Adapted Communities, Ready-Set-Go, or your local emergency response capacity, contact us at www.info.ccrd@gmail.com

RC&D
Frank Riley
 Executive Director



Blueberries

I think that most people enjoy eating a handful of blueberries. Eating them always reminds me of my grandfather because he always puts them on his cereal in the morning. Blueberries grow pretty well here, but there are a few things to be aware of so let's talk about those so that you can have a successful blueberry crop.

If you are selecting a site to plant blueberries, choose a place that will receive full sun for at least half a day. They can grow in shady spots, but the fruit production will be less. Blueberries like soil with a pH of 4.5 – 5.2. This trait makes them well adapted to native soils because most of our soils will naturally be in that range. Therefore, lime is probably not needed when planting blueberries. Rabbiteyes do best with 5 – 6 feet between plants in row and 11 – 12 feet between rows. When planting make sure you don't plant too deep. After planting prune back 1/3 to 1/2 of the plant. This will cause the plant to focus on developing its root system. The first year you want to pick off any blooms, because you want the plant to put its energy into growing roots and not fruit. You can apply 1 oz. of 10-10-10 after the plant has begun to put on leaves the first year. The second year after planting put out 2 oz. of 10-10-10 in March and July. Make sure not to over fertilize blueberries, as that can harm them. After the third season, apply 1 oz. of 10-10-10 per foot of height on the bush.

Blueberry bushes do require pruning each year. Once plants reach 6 feet high you'll want to start cane renewal pruning. This means removing 1 – 3 of the biggest canes each winter at ground level. Over a period of 5 years the bush will be completely renewed. New canes are going to bear more fruit than old canes so it's important to maintain this pruning process. If you have bushes that haven't been pruned for a few years, it might take several seasons to get bushes into the 5-year rotation. After you've picked the fruit, you can top plants if they are over 6 feet tall. This will keep bushes at a more manageable height.

Blueberries aren't bothered by many insects or diseases. However, one disease to look out for is mummy berry. It will cause berries to shrivel up and drop. The berries that drop carry the pathogen over to the next year. Therefore, it's important to keep the space beneath your bushes sanitary. Remove any old berries, wood, and leaves. Placing thick mulch around the base of plants will help prevent the disease from spreading as well. Captan is an effective fungicide at controlling mummy berry, but the timing of the application is very important. You must apply it while the flowers are in bloom because that is when the infection occurs. You must spray Captan every 7-10 days during bloom. Serenade is another product that you can spray instead of Captan that is organic, but it is not as effective.

If you have questions about growing blueberries contact your County Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

UGA extension
Watching and Working
 Jacob Williams



Habitat for Humanity

Introducing Me! This week marks a year of my being at Habitat for Humanity of Towns Union Counties. I have done and learned so much in my time here at Habitat, the opportunities are endless when you have a mission worth working towards and a community that is so supportive through the process of helping others.

I moved to the area in 2020 from upstate New York with my family. We absolutely love it here and are so happy to call Georgia home. I graduated with my bachelor's degree from Houghton College. I studied Communications, with concentrations in marketing, psychology, and writing. In my spare time I love to be outdoors, hiking, swimming and just being in the sun. I also love to write, I do poetry, short stories, and am currently working on a novel.

I also have another business I run, "Madelyn's Marketing LLC" where I help local businesses with starting up, creating websites, advertising, and social media management. Marketing techniques are always expanding and changing, and I love to stay ahead of the game and help local businesses reach a greater clientele base.

Since being at Habitat I have been the administrative assistant and am now the marketing director. I manage Habitat social media via Facebook updates, fun videos, and information design. Our Facebook group is called, "Habitat for Humanity of Towns/Union Counties" be sure to join the group to stay up to date on all the fun events, and sales. In addition, I work on event planning for our organization. Save the date for our Volunteer Appreciation/Recruitment Day, on May 2nd between 10 AM - 2 PM in the Habitat parking lot. I design our flyers brochures, and social media posts in efforts to reach our community via different platforms. I also help in the ReStore greeting and helping customers find what they're looking for. In addition, I manage donations, fundraising in the ReStore, and finances within our outreach programs. I write these articles, create press releases, and anything else that comes up when it comes to advertising for our organization.

What I love most about working at Habitat is the volunteers that we meet who are willing to help others, and the people in our community that we help. It is an incredible thing seeing our community come together firsthand for different Helping Hands projects, the Habitat home build for the Snow family, and financial contributions. We are definitely growing, and it is such an exciting thing to see.

I love the opportunities Habitat has brought to my life, in meeting an amazing work family, an environment to improve and grow my marketing skills, and the opportunity to get our community involved whether it's on our social media page, our events, or Habitat home builds. We are a Christian organization dedicated to empowering and improving homes, and lives of community members in need.

We are always improving here at Habitat and our growth is thanks to our great team and giving community!

Thank you for reading my columns. God bless you and yours!

Habitat Happenings
 Madelyn Bailey



Towns County Herald

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