DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

NMFA

As submitted by a member of our American Legion Auxiliary, who is dear to What it





means is National Military Family Association. And it is recognized, this month, November for the entire month annually. November is Military Family Appreciation Month—a time when America honors and recognizes those unique sacrifices and challenges family members make in support of their loved ones in uniform. Fifty years ago, a group of military spouses gathered around a kitchen table determined to make sure their widowed friends—whose spouses died in war—weren't forgotten. They marched to the Capitol telling their stories and the National Military Family Association (NMFA) was born. November is Military Family Appreciation Month—a

time when America honors and recognizes those unique sacrifices and challenges family members make in support of their loved ones in uniform. No matter what rank or branch, or where life has taken them, our nation's military families share the common threads of service and sacrifice.

As per the organization for support of our nation's finest citizens and families there are camps for military kids. and buddy camps. Also supported are Family Retreats and Healing Adventures for serving and supporting entire military families. Amazingly there is a scholarship program for military spouses to aid them in pursuing academic goals plus cover business related costs as in license transfer fees, recertifications, and startup costs. My SIL, Senator "Bren" of Oklahoma an ex-military wife coauthored legislation to recognize out of state teaching certificates as well as other current liscensures in other professional careers, very similar to this for military spouses who were in need of timely certification in the state of Oklahoma when transferred to Tinker AFB, or any other military installations. Prior to that there was a distinct very sluggish brick wall there. Military spouses, thus their entire families are sometimes at an impasse unknown to most of us.

Military families of today are in a society quite different than in WWII and even 1969. The support of NMFA and indeed each and every American citizen is a much needed comfort for those who willing sacrifice for our Sovereign Republic. Without those families, we have no military men and women. Without those men and women we have no America! Caring for and honoring military families is a duty and responsibility that we all cannot afford to ignore. For more information on how YOU can support our

wonderful military families contact: National Military Family Association; 2800 Eisenhower Avenue, Suite 250; Alexandria, VA 22314; 703-931-6632; info@MilitaryFamily

Semper Paratus

Letters to The Editor

Disappointed

Dear Editor.

My family and I attended the Fall Festival at the fairgrounds for the closing weekend this year. Except for last year, we had not missed a single one since 1995. When we left GA for the Greenville, SC area in 2001, we continued to attend and camp at the beautiful campgrounds at the fairgrounds. I was completely dismayed to learn this year that the annual Old Time Fiddlers Convention had been discontinued and then read in your paper that the staff band had been disbanded just a week earlier. I can't express enough my disappointment about the loss of the fiddlers convention as that was the highlight of the fair for our family. I don't know what went into the decision, but I am led to believe it was financial as an employee told me when I checked in that "it wasn't making any money for us." I submit that a lot of people attended the fair for that event and many like myself will probably not return now. That will make the financial hit even harder. I just have to believe that there was a way to salvage the event. Regardless I hope that some other venue picks up the event and restarts it this coming year. Sign me disappointed. Jack Perry

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 TO:

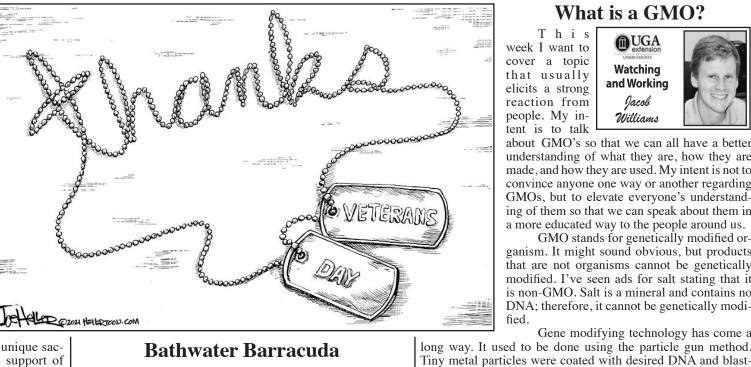
Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546 Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net

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,

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.

The Towns County Herald is an independent and nonpartisan publication. As such, third-party views contained herein are not necessarily the opinions or positions of this newspaper, e.g. advertising, press releases, editorial content, perspectives expressed in articles covering local events, etc.



Outside

The Box

By: Don Perry

It was our privilege recently to spend some time in the beautiful coastal plain of Georgia, where, "...somehow my soul seems suddenly free from the weighing of fate and the sad discussion of sin, by the length worldoutsidethebox.com and the breadth and the sweep

of the marshes of Glynn." We took a meandering route far from the bigger cities and towns. Traveling the Interstates alone, you would never know that the biggest business in Georgia is still agriculture. You would never touch the soul of the state. Judging a place by a view from the "I" is like watching network news in order to understand people. We love the Georgia coast for many of the same reasons we love the North Georgia mountains. The sky across a marsh is just as big as it is from the top of the mountain. The shade of a cypress in a bend of the river is as quiet and hidden as the deepest cove. The people feel the rhythms of the land first, and the clock second, just like they do here

Our travels took us across the coastal plain and down the road to Brunswick, Georgia, where corporate news talkers and paid protesters have migrated from out of state to demonstrate the "rising tensions" emanating from the now famous trial taking place there. They're camped out on the courthouse square or biding their time in motel rooms waiting for the opportunity to be seen on national and international news, feeding on the tragedy like barracuda on a fresh wound.

Away from the microphones, however, the residents of Brunswick and the surrounding area seem to have forgotten that they are supposed to be tense and worried. We spent a long lunch in a fine little Jamaican restaurant visiting with Chef George of the Jerk Shack, passing the time of day with some folks who, incidentally, happened to be black, and there was not one mention of the trial. It was a similar story everywhere we went – restaurants, shops, grocery stores, exhibits, or chatting with the person at the next gas pump. Black, white or purple, everyone we met was friendly, relaxed; no one seemed to care about the trial until we got within range of the cameras and microphones.

This is not a commentary on the merits of the trial which, though it has already been decided in the pixel universe, has not yet been adjudicated by the courts. This is not a suggestion that racism does not exist or that there is not plenty of room for improvement in the way people with different perspectives and life experiences relate to each other. Rather, this is a statement about the toxic influence of corporate media, driven by the desire for profit and the promotion of political agendas, twisted into a warped version of reality that quite often stands in direct opposition to personal experience. In other words, if you haven't been told that you're tense and afraid, or if you just don't believe it, you're probably not going to get that way as a result of you daily interactions with people. But if you believe that you should be experiencing "rising tensions," the chances are much greater that you will. There was an expression commonly used when I was a child that seems fitting today for the pretentious "celebritocracy" which has anointed itself to be the image and the voice of American life. If someone was considered to be thoroughly full of themselves one might say, "He's drunk too much of his own bath water." Bathwater in the media is always at flood tide. Occasionally there are signs that the public has grown weary of the endless parade of bathwater celebrities: politicians, pundits, experts, sports figures, talk show hosts and talking heads. Ratings have trended downward across the board for the perennial rituals of celebrities talking to celebrities about other celebrities congratulating themselves and giving each other awards. Corporate media has responded with scores of "reality shows" that promote stereotypes and celebrate bad behavior, but there are so many that it's difficult for any single show to capture a large

So media has doubled down by turning up the volume and the contrast, and fishing for an audience like a shrimp boat dragging a net through endless news cycles - and they're not above chumming the waters. News is always breaking, but when something is fixed, we rarely hear about it. Everything is imminent. Everything is unprecedented. By keeping us in that narrow band between apprehension and emergency, corporate and political media accomplishes two things: Profit, and control. Yet precious few of us ever stop to ask, "Why are they showing me this? Why is this important? Is it really important? Is this representative of a widespread trend or is this cherry picked to promote an agenda?

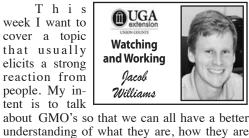
The trial in Brunswick is the final chapter of a tragedy. Cameras and microphones feed on tragedy today like barracuda feed on an open wound. We've seen it here in our own town. For someone who looks beyond the provocative headlines at information less newsworthy, like statistics, an appropriate question might be, is this event more important than other tragedies, or does it demand a bigger audience because it can be leveraged to promote a social/political agenda? When 50 people are shot in Chicago and most of the victims are black people, why isn't the media camped out there to report about it?

Of course this is just one man's opinion. Another man on another day might have had a very different experience than I had in Brunswick, GA, over the course of several days, with a variety of people, in a number of neighborhoods and businesses among the very same "identities" that media claims divide us.

I stake no claims on the possession of the universal truth of this matter. But when it comes to personal truth and the information I choose to own, the information that guides my response to the events of this world and the people in it, I have to go with my own experience over the pixelated opinions of bathwater barracuda. Fortunately, there are no real barracuda in the marsh. Just don't bleed anywhere near a camera.

What is a GMO?

week I want to cover a topic that usually elicits a strong reaction from people. My intent is to talk



made, and how they are used. My intent is not to convince anyone one way or another regarding GMOs, but to elevate everyone's understanding of them so that we can speak about them in a more educated way to the people around us. GMO stands for genetically modified organism. It might sound obvious, but products

that are not organisms cannot be genetically modified. I've seen ads for salt stating that it is non-GMO. Salt is a mineral and contains no DNA; therefore, it cannot be genetically modi-

Gene modifying technology has come a long way. It used to be done using the particle gun method.

ed at plant pieces, hoping that the genetic modification would take. Methods of genetic engineering now are very specific and only target the desired genes. The naturally found Agrobacterium tumefaciens is the bacteria used to insert genes from one species into another. CRISPR is a new technology that can also be used, which edits the genes already existing in the organism. CRISPR can turn on, off, or delete genes. There are 29 crops that have received approval for use. Not all of those are still in production. Sometimes advertising

that says a particular crop is non-GMO is misleading, because a GMO version of that crop doesn't exist. Labeling products as non-GMO also implies that non-GMO is superior. GMO crops undergo extensive testing before hitting the market to make sure that they are safe for consumption. In the US, corn, soybean, and cotton are by far the most common GMO crops. So, for what traits are GMOs normally modified? Her-

bicide tolerance is a big one. Herbicide tolerant crops allows farmers to use fewer herbicide applications and use conservation tillage, which captures more carbon in the soil. Insect resistance in crops reduces the amount of insecticides used on a crop such as corn, and improves the quality of the product brought to the market. Disease resistance has been done too. A GMO papaya saved the Hawaiian papaya industry after papayas were nearly wiped out by a virus. Some modifications can make a crop contain more vitamins, or last longer on the shelf,

GMO crops have provided benefits, but there are negatives too. There are cases where pests have become resistant to pesticides due to reliance on individual pesticides. Pesticide resistance means that pests present an even larger problem than they did before. The companies that manufacture these GMO crops have patent rights to the seeds, which means that farmers can't keep the seed from the crop they grow. Some farmers have gotten in trouble and taken to court because their neighbor planted GMO and it cross-pollinated with their crop. GMO crops are a tool that farmers can use to feed and clothe the world, but just like any tool, if it's used improperly it will be broken. Therefore, the responsibility is on people to be good stewards of the resources that we have, to achieve the goal of feeding and clothing the world.

If you have questions about GMO's contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob. Williams@uga.edu.

On Thursday, November 18th I will have a program on Septic System Management for homeowners in the Union County Civic Center at 6 p.m. Contact the Union County Extension office at 706-439-6030 or email me for more informa-

Blairsville Scarecrow winners

Fall is here. The leaves are just about finished changing colors, and the holiday season is sneaking up on us. One of the fun things that Habitat for Humanity (along with the Downtown Development Authority) does each year is sponsor "Scarecrowville"

Habitat Happenings Cathy Wheeler

around the Old Courthouse. By the time you read this, the scarecrows will have come and gone. This is such a fun event, where the local businesses create scarecrows and display them on the Square. It's a great way for the businesses to get some recognition, and it certainly livens up the place! Everybody has a great time walking around looking at the scarecrows and taking pic-

To make it even more fun, we turned this event into a contest, with first, second and third place winners. Third place was awarded to Abide Coffee (who had their scarecrow in a chair, petting a skeleton dog). They won a gift certificate to the Tin Roof Creamery. Second place goes to Service Plumbing. who posed their scarecrow on a "throne". Their prize is two gift certificates from The Bean Pod. The grand prize goes to Amazing Grace Catering and Events, who created a "Michael Jackson" scarecrow, complete with rhinestone-studded glove! Thank you to all who participated!

Habitat's next event is a Veterans' Day Appreciation party. Stop by the ReStore on Thursday, November 11 from 9 a.m. until noon. Have some coffee and goodies, and let our local veterans know how much you appreciate their service.

While you are here, we will have some Christmas cards available for those who would like to send some encouraging notes to some members of the armed forces who are deployed overseas, and won't make it home for the Holidays. We will make sure those cards get into the hands of our Service Men and Women, to let them know how much we appreciate their

Don't forget that Habitat is in the process of choosing our next family for the home that we will start building soon! If you are interested in finding out more information, call the Habitat Office to get on the list to attend an orientation meet-

The dates are November 9th at 7 p.m. at the Hiawassee Civic Center, and November 11th at 7 p.m., and November 13th at 10 a.m. at the First Baptist Church in Blairsville. The Habitat phone number is 706-745-7101, and interested people must call ahead to reserve a space at one of the orientations. Our Habitat Staff and Volunteers will talk about what it takes to qualify to become a Habitat Homeowner.

Until next time, join us in carrying out Habitat's Mission of "Putting God's Love into Action", creating a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

Towns County Herald

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