

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## New Year's Day

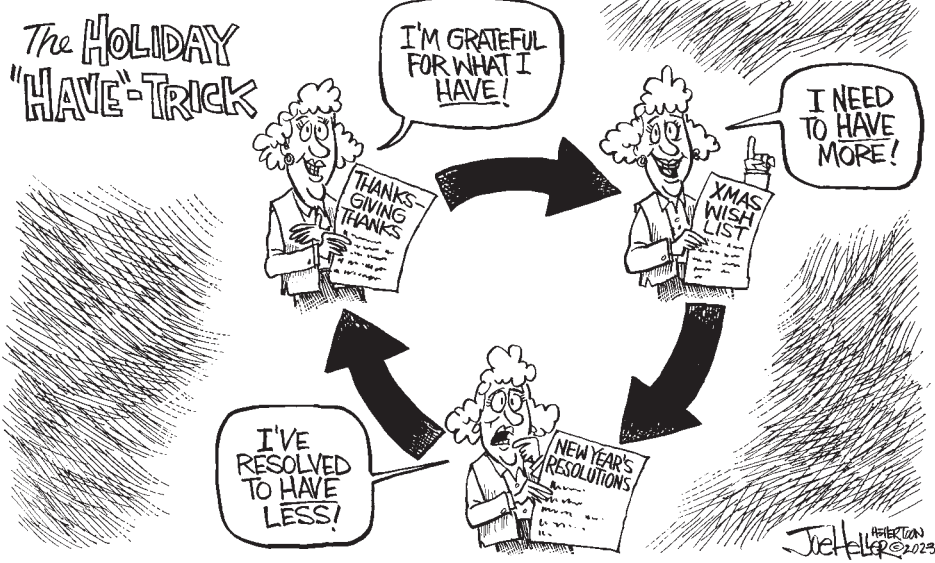
Did You Enjoy Your New Year's Day?

**The Veterans' Corner**  
**Scott Drummond**  
 USCG Veteran



A US Coast Guardsman, Lt. Cmdr Carl Christian von Paulsen certainly did on Sunday NYD 1933 as one of the earliest USCG aviation rescues recorded. Receiving his commission as a third lieutenant from the Revenue Cutter Service in 1913, he then began a series of flight training schools in 1919 resulting in the most highly skilled aviators in the service. In 1920 he became the USCG his tour designated Coast Guard Aviator #6 after graduating Naval Aviator School. He completed his tour on the new Cutter, Tampa in 1924. Then assumed command of USCG Section Base 7 at Gloucester, Mass. He became extremely important in establishing the role of aircraft for all, each and every USCG duties and missions using a borrowed Navy Vought UO-1 seaplane. Carl von Paulsen could be considered the father of our permanent USCG aviation.

At 11:30 AM Jan. 1, 1933 Air Station Miami received a request for assistance from Chester Shoals CG Station. A young man, Paul Long had been overwhelmed by high winds and blown offshore in his small skiff from inside Cape Canaveral at 10:00 PM on Saturday evening. He was in a bind. At 12:20 PM CG seaplane Arcturus was underway with von Paulsen doing what he did best, at the helm. The nearest CG vessel was 85 miles away and the weather was squalls and rain. Little daylight left and a sign of Paul in sight after running many search patterns meant that if he was not found and rescued today, there was no possibility for same tomorrow! Upon finally finding the man and his skiff in poor shape, von Paulsen attempted a water landing in 5-15 foot seas. The left wingtip floats were destroyed by the rough high water impact. His aircrew, tried riding the wing in extreme danger to try and balance the plane on the water. Radioman PO3 Thomas McKenzie in true USCG fashion dived into the water, cleared the broken wingtip float and rescued Paul Long who was treading water. Both were hauled aboard the damaged aircraft. A failed attempt was made to take off, and the end result was a wrinkled hull. Continued to drift, they never gave up hope and sent radio messages for help. At 1:00 AM they drifted ashore in heavy surf and finally landed on solid ground Life saving Medal and set the precedence for USCG aircraft in SAR forevermore. He went on to have an illustrious career matched by very few aviators. Many thanks to William H. Thiesen, PHD USCG Atlantic Area historian for reminding us of this great man and again, of utmost importance, what our USCG men and women are capable of doing come hell or high water! New Year's Day in 1933 was extremely happy for von Paulsen, his USCG aircrew and most certainly Paul Long, with a new lease on life. -Semper Paratus



## Lonesome as a Train Whistle

"The Road goes ever on and on, Down from the door where it began. Now far ahead the Road has gone, And I must follow, if I can..."  
 -J.R.R. Tolkien

The word "sentimental" is sometimes wielded like a weapon. The dictionary describes a result derived from feeling rather than reason or thought. I welcome the word. Feeling illuminates the path in a way that cold logic cannot.

On Christmas Day we were in a rented house far from home. In the house next door an elderly man lived alone. We had watched him preparing decorations for the grandchildren, bringing groceries and refreshments into the house in anticipation of the holiday visit. For a few hours that Sunday, his house was full of warmth and the sounds of family.

As I listened to the sound of children playing, a memory arrived uninvited of a Christmas morning several years ago in the house where I grew up. The house was cold and empty that day, dark but for the glare of the computer screen. My family was diminished, scattered. My mother had recently passed on and my father, now crossed over as well, had moved to a nearby retirement community. I can still mark with certainty the last day that the whole family was under the same roof, the last time the house was filled with the warmth and light of fellowship.

If we live long enough we will experience many such "lasts." It is a bitter irony that in youth we hurry past the moments we will one day try to grasp, but will never again be able to reach. Every time I hear a lonesome train whistle in the distance it takes me back to the time when, safe and warm under the covers, a child's imagination could board that train and travel to undiscovered country. Many stops along that journey became real places later in life and new memories to cherish.

To live fully during our journey we must embrace each precious moment of this life as if it were our last, but to live joyfully we must release those moments to be able to grasp the next ones. This is truth, but it is armchair truth, difficult to realize when we are grieving, and a truth almost impossible to communicate to the young. Each generation has experienced the truth of this journey and attempted to warn its successors, yet it seems required of each that we forget the lesson so that every individual can discover it in their own unique way.

As a child, a train whistle stirred my imagination to travel to distant lands. Like so many before me, I could not wait to grow up, to leave home and to discover life for myself. Had I known that there is no return ticket on this journey, I might have lacked the courage to take it, and my life would not have been as rich or as rewarding. Knowing this lesson can leave a bitter taste, but without bitterness in its proper measure, the other flavors available to the palette begin to fade.

Late in the afternoon on Christmas Day, the family of our erstwhile neighbor loaded up into a car with out of state plates. It slowly backed out of the driveway and paused for a moment. Hands waved, and the car moved forward slowly. Two beeps on the horn sounded, lonesome as a train whistle.

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 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.\*  
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## It was Cold

It was cold. December 23-27 were some very cold days. One of the things about that cold was how early in winter it got cold, how low the temperature got, and how long the temperature stayed cold. Let's talk about the cold and the impact that it could have on plants.

**UGA extension**  
 Watching and Working  
 Jacob Williams



All plants have some level of cold tolerance. Some plants have more than others. In perennial plants the amount of cold tolerance that plant has depends on its level of dormancy. Plants that are 100% dormant can experience some very cold temperatures and not sustain any damage when they start to regrow. There are some things that can affect the level of dormancy a plant has. Fluctuations in temperature affect dormancy. Plants do better in winter if it gets cold and stays cold. When the temperature goes up and down plants can get confused and think that spring is on its way. This is a common issue that we have compared to places further north. Plants that are stressed don't go into dormancy as easily either. Not enough water, disease, insect pests, not enough sunlight, and age are some of the things that can cause stress on plants. If you have plants that are experiencing stress their dormancy won't be as deep, leaving them more susceptible to freeze damage. Plants that are not in their correct USDA zone will not handle the cold as well.

Freeze damage occurs when the temperature inside of plants is cold enough for ice crystals to form. This will break plant membranes causing that portion of the plant to dehydrate and die. Because the damage occurs inside the plant it can be difficult to know if your plants have freeze damage. In perennial plants with large trunk and branches you can start to look for splits in the coming weeks, as evidence of freeze damage. Some plants may look fine, but then as we get into summer have large brown patches in them. These are plants that had some damage to their xylem, and were able to grow until summer when their xylem had to move more water because of the damage.

So, what can you do if you have freeze damage? The best thing right now is to be observant. Watch to see if your plants start to exhibit symptoms. Depending on the where it occurred the plant might be able to self-prune and remove the damaged tissue. In some situations, it may be necessary to prune some dead wood out of the plant. In either case it is best to wait and let the plant fully show the symptoms before deciding to cut.

If you have fescue in pasture or for lawn, it likely did not sustain much damage. Tall fescue has a waxy layer that protects it from colder temperatures. In fescue after a freeze sugar content increases. This makes it ideal for a stockpiling and winter grazing.

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

## Habitat for Humanity

Times of difficulty spawn ideas, creativity, and goals. Although it can be pressing, it also gives insights into solutions.

Habitat is here to help with affordable housing, and in this climate of inflation, has proven to be a challenge. With material costs high, and skilled labor sparse, performing work for a charity is of low precedence in the building industry. Even if you can get at cost material and labor, whether or not the family selected can qualify is a completely different obstacle. Within our income limits (USDA), a family's income cannot exceed \$54k in Union and \$49 in Towns. Calculating that into a mortgage, the margins are slim.

Habitat would like to thank Phil Freitag from Modern Mountain LLC. Phil stepped up and became a partner as a Habitat builder, and his dedication to the community and Habitat's mission is evident.

"We as builders in our community have a responsibility to ensure deserving people have affordable shelter, it's a passion for me, and all worthy builders should use their resources, even if once, to achieve the goal of putting a deserving family in a home of their own."

When asked about his perspective on becoming a Habitat partner builder, Freitag states, "It has given me a deeper drive to use my resources to provide homes for the working class in our community."

As we wrap up our 25th Habitat home and give the keys to a well-deserved family in the next few months, let's go forward and look into serving our community in better ways. It's the people of our community that make it what it is, and if we cannot show compassion, kindness, and dedication to helping the citizens of it, we are not doing it justice.

If every builder in the county was to commit to one Habitat build every few years, a difference could be made. A difference that would change our community for the better. Our community is only as good as we serve it. Making a positive contribution to our local community will open up the doors to better serve others within our community.

**Habitat Happenings**  
 Executive Director  
 Charlotte Randall



## 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.

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