

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

January 1968

Only 50 years ago and did our nation's leadership learn anything? Our men and women in uniform, as always, performed magnificently. Especially considering so many were draftees and never wanted to be in the military, much less Viet Nam anyway. Nevertheless our military personnel, as always, were willing to go above and beyond, and many never came home. Our Veterans of that entire era that did come home were never given the respect or honor they deserved.

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



What am I speaking of here? The Vietnam War, specifically the Tet Offensive. A series of coordinated attacks on more than 100 cities and outposts in South Vietnam by the Viet Cong and Communist allies, however with great effort and time led to another huge win by our determined military forces on the ground, sea and air. And even the primary goal of the Communists, which was to inspire rebellion among the South Vietnamese against their American allies failed to take hold. However General Vo Nguyen Giap, the North Vietnamese military commander did win a huge strategic victory. Several reasons for this twist of fate existed at the time.

Prior to Tet, normally a peaceful season of the lunar new year, President Johnson and military leadership had been boasting that the war was almost over, using political rhetoric and inflated numbers. The cultural climate in America was already somewhat soured on our efforts in Vietnam. And certain Hollywood "experts" exacerbated that issue, effectively siding with the Communists thus encouraging Americans to do so. Sounds familiar, very similar to a couple of years ago doesn't it?

The huge cost in American lives during Tet embarrassed Johnson and his hand picked military advisors, as Tet was totally unexpected and unplanned for. Was our Intel ignored or trashed in favor of political expediency? There is no way to fight nicely, sweetly and fair in war, and our leadership failed that mission miserably. Our men and women in uniform never failed!

The end result was that in an anti-war climate Americans were now finally made aware of the truth, that we were nowhere close to ending that quagmire over there, and even General Westmoreland ordered more than 200,000 more troops.

Tet became the turning point, even though the fighting and deaths would continue over the next five years of fruitless peace talks. Due to obvious lack of spirit on Americans' behalf we lost more soldiers during those five years than previously in that politically fouled conflict.

As much as we desire and fantasize, there will never be absence of war. Not on planet Earth. No one abhors warfare more so than our men and women of our US Army, Navy, USAF, Marine Corps and USCG. Being acutely aware of consequences and sacrifices they may be called upon to make, they are trained and stand ready to pay the cost of freedom and liberty. Typically they are the best of the best of our citizenry. They are our utmost deterrent to warfare.

Semper Paratus

Get Over it - There's Work to do

Join us this week in sending up a chorus of "get over yourself" to our pixel nation of the habitually outraged.

Granted, it is embarrassing to hear reports of a president openly insulting millions of people by referring to their homelands as... "outhouse?" countries. (You know what they said he said. Such language may be acceptable in Washington, but we won't be using it here in our hometown newspaper.)

Whether these reports are accurate or not, we told you what to expect if we elected the republican or the democrat in 2016. We thought it unlikely anyone could go from shaving heads at a UWE match to diplomacy on the world stage without a few ups. But this verbal cage match we find ourselves in is not going to accomplish anything, and it's interfering with the work that needs doing.

Politically, Trump seems to have stepped right into an open privy. The talking heads of the pixel nation collapsed on their fainting couches or ascended to the holier-than-thou heights of indignation and judgment and virtue signalling. Criticism is certainly warranted, but to anyone with a memory for history or a sober outlook for our economic future, the current frenzy is tainted by a measure of cultural illiteracy and hypocrisy.

There is a long list of foul mouthed presidents, and presidents who held private opinions that we would consider reprehensible. Most had enough discretion to keep those private views private. The stable genius currently occupying the White House does not bother with discretion. What you see is what you get, on any given day. Still, to telegraph such contempt on the verge of what promised to be a bipartisan agreement on immigration invites questions. Was it a blunder, or a crass manipulation to further another agenda?

Our broken and outdated immigration policies are in dire need of update and repair. We are confident that those who agree do not share the kind of prejudice to which the president is accused of giving voice. We are glad that prejudice is being called out, but we are troubled that this mission to seek and destroy every hint of bias or racism sometimes resembles the hunt for communism during the McCarthy years.

A sober look at the numbers reveals the simple fact that our country needs immigrants - tens of millions of immigrants to burden with the taxes that will be needed to pay the bills already owed. Every single day about 10,000 Baby Boomers retire, and this will continue unabated for the next twenty years. By 2030 there will be over 100 million living here who are 65 and older. Some prefer immigrants with a demonstrated ability to contribute to our economy and our culture. Others believe they hold a higher ground where humanity trumps nationality, (and perhaps math as well), and they would prefer to invite the huddled masses with fewer restrictions, in the hope that our superior society would create from them the productive citizens we need. Any hope of compromise, however, lies in the shared belief at the very core of our national identity, that the best people we could hope might join us can be found in every nation.

We hope that the President's indiscretion and potty mouth does not fatally wound our chances of fixing immigration through bipartisan cooperation, but in all likelihood now we will have a democrat majority in the House after the midterm elections. An unpopular president and a divided Congress does not bode well for compromise, and if this government continues to behave like so many governments have, the chance to legislate for the good of the country will again take a back seat to the scramble for political advantage.

If we don't get our act together, and soon, many will suffer that need not suffer, and many will fear, both inside and outside our borders, that need not fear. It's anyone's guess how much longer the can will continue to be kicked down the road until it runs into a fiscal wall that will do more to limit immigration than any physical structure ever could, at which time we, ourselves, will begin to transform into an "outhouse" country.

Since politicians watch polls like geologists watch seismographs, maybe we can help improve this outcome by adopting a more pragmatic position ourselves. This is a challenge in an environment where we see a bat or a butterfly depending on whether we are a democrat or a republican. We need to see truly, but we lack the necessary perspective.

To gain that perspective, let's tighten our emotional belts and lace up our boots. Our country has never been led by saints. In every step forward we have taken as a nation, we have been accompanied, if not led, by "rogues and thieves," and supported by those who did the dirty jobs that we prefer not to know about. Our past leaders were essentially identical to the ones under which we now suffer, with the same character flaws and the same massive egos.

Politics is like sausage - it's a lot more appetizing when we don't see how the sausage is made. What is different today is that we have a front row seat at the slaughterhouse where we can see every pixel of the worst parts of the process, and where we can be easily manipulated by our shock and our indignation. It's time to get up from the fainting couch and step down from the lofty perch and roll up our sleeves, and that applies equally to liberals and conservatives. At stake is whether our nation's ship of state will move forward, or continue in circles with two sides paddling in opposite directions.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Treating Winter Injury

We may be able to cuddle up beside the fire with a warm blanket when it's below freezing, but our plants can't. I've spoken a little bit about preventing frost damage to your plants, but winter brings more challenges than just cold temperatures.

From the Ground Up
Melissa Mattee



Desiccation, or drying out, usually occurs when the ground freezes below the root system. This prevents the plant from getting water to its roots. The greatest risk for water loss is during mild weather with harsh winds, followed by bouts of intensely cold weather. Though we've had a few brief warm periods this winter, we've also had severe cold snaps and windy days that dry out plants. To combat this, make sure that plants are still adequately watered during the winter. By giving plants, especially evergreens, a deep soaking before the ground freezes, and watering on warm days in January, February and March, plants will have an adequate water supply throughout the season.

Freezing damage often goes beyond just burning new growth or new buds. The dramatic temperature changes we have seen over the past few months can greatly contribute to trunk cracking. This is because the water and fluids within the tree expand in warm weather and shrink in cool weather. If temperature fluctuation occurs too quickly, the trunk will crack under the stress and you may see sap ooze out or fungus may establish in these wounds. Sometimes this is called Southwest Injury, because it is often on the southwest side of trees due to the amount of sun received on this side. To prevent this, wrap susceptible trunks with burlap or some other protective material and make sure that trunks remain unwounded throughout the growing season.

Breakage is almost always caused by excessive snow or ice buildup, or careless buildup removal. High winds can also damage trees under structural stress that can usually handle windy conditions. Proper pruning is the best way to prevent this. If there are fewer branches, there is less chance of breakage because the branches present will have adequate nutrients and will not be structurally compromised by other branches competing for space. However, avoid late summer pruning unless absolutely necessary, because this stimulates new growth that may not harden in time for the winter weather and will detract nutrients from larger branches that need to retain their strength. If snow has collected on shrubs, always sweep it off with an upward motion. Sweeping downward will only add to the stress created by the weight of the snow and ice, often causing branches to break or crack.

Runoff from roads usually contains chemicals that can have an effect on your plants, but especially when salted in the winter. Salty runoff also changes the quality of the soil by causing it to compact, restricting nutrients, water and other important resources for your plants. Though salt may be applied throughout the winter, most of the damage is seen toward the end of the season when plants begin to actively grow. The primary symptom of salt damage is leaves or needles having dried or scorched edges. To prevent this, never pile snow containing salt or other runoff around plant root zones, or in an area where it will melt and run down to these zones. If you think your plants may have salt damage, flush the area around them with 2 inches of water for two to three hours and repeating this for three days. This should get rid of much of the salt buildup causing the issue.

Contact your local extension office if you would like more information on dealing with winter injury.

Letters to The Editor

Calling All Pastors and Congregants!

Dear Editor,
 I just attended the monthly nationwide Awake America prayer gathering in Blairsville, and as always was touched by the fervent prayer for our Country. Over the past few years, the number of surrounding counties participating has grown to ten—a most encouraging number.

In looking through the phone book, however, I note there are 34 churches listed; but not a full representation of churches. So, whether you are a Pastor or a congregant, this is an appeal and an invitation to attend one Thursday a month.

God never intended for there to be "Denominations" or "Divisions" among His people, and this non-denominational gathering of the faithful is a demonstration that we are called together to be One.

Our Country's founding is the most unique in the entire world, where our Constitution grants the majority of power to the People. However, it is our responsibility to see that we use that privilege responsibly.

If your Church hasn't sent a representative to join the once-a-month Awake America prayer, I implore you to consider having your Church represented. It's just an hour (one lunch-hour a month?) and I guarantee that you will be moved by the experience. There are specific areas of prayer that are assigned to those willing to pray aloud, and no one else needs to feel obligated to pray aloud. In short, it is a privilege to be among the Body of Believers, and I guarantee that you—whether Pastor or Congregant—representing your church, who marks the calendar and attends next month will be blessed beyond your expectations.

The next date will be February 8th in Hiawassee. Please join one of these groups; when you are not with us, there is a hole marking your absence, and you are missed!

Respectfully submitted,
 Arlene M. Gray

What does bitter cold say about climate change?

Dear Editor,
 We all have been shivering from the recent bitter cold, as has much of the eastern US. Does this mean there is no global warming? On the contrary, climate experts have been saying for several years that this will happen more often in a warming world. The science is clear on this. The Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the earth, and this allows the polar vortex of arctic air to flow further south, causing areas under the vortex—most recently the US—to be much colder, while other areas of the world are much warmer.

We should not confuse weather with climate. Weather refers to short term changes over a certain area, while climate change refers to long term changes over the entire globe. Weather is variable, but climate change continues to show a definite warming trend. The last 4 years have been the warmest in recorded history, and we are now almost 2 degrees Fahrenheit above preindustrial temperatures. However, we should start this new year on a hopeful note. Prices of wind and solar energy continue to drop, and the conversion to a clean energy economy is increasing. America's grid is proving more resilient as more alternative energy comes on board. Adoption of a climate fee and dividend plan would be the simplest, most effective way to speed up this process. Not only would it markedly decrease greenhouse gases, but it would also add millions of new American jobs and make America more prosperous. We are America, the greatest nation on earth, and I believe we will unite to combat climate change, one of the greatest problems of our age.

Vernon Dixon

Have something to sell?
 Let the Herald work for you!
 Contact us at 706-896-4454
 Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday by 5 PM



Towns County Community Calendar

	Every Monday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Bingo	Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
	Every Tuesday:	
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
	Every Wednesday	
SMART Recovery	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Thursday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
	Every Friday:	
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Sunday:	
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	First Wednesday of each month:	
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
	First Thursday of each month:	
Stephens Lodge	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
	Third Monday of each month:	
Hospital Auxiliary	Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Water Board	Water Office	6 pm
	Third Tuesday of each month:	
YH Plan Comm.	YH City Hall	5 pm
Co. Comm. Mtg	Courthouse	5:30 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Blairsville store	5:30 pm
	Third Wednesday of each month:	
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
MOAA	Call Jack @ 828-321-2896	
	Third Thursday of each month:	
Friendship Comm.	Clubhouse	6 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	6 pm
	Third Saturday of each month:	
Goldwing Riders	Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
	Fourth Monday of each month:	
Red Cross DAT	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
	Fourth Tuesday of each month:	
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm

Towns County Herald

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