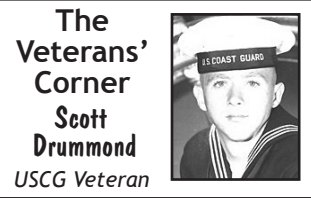


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Women who serve America

As an old fashioned sometimes chauvinistic male Veteran I find that we often overlook our men and WOMEN who serve our Sovereign Republic in uniform. To put it simply, our great nation could not exist or function without our female counterparts, both at home managing our families, in the workplace and serving in our military branches.



The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran

Admittedly I have reservations concerning women in close combat scenarios. That being said there is undoubtedly a plethora of duties and jobs within our ranks of military service that women can and will do much better than typical males assigned to the same jobs.

Once again, honoring our Greatest Generation and women who served in civilian support jobs, as "Rosy the Riveter", there were AND ARE those great and wonderful ladies who volunteer and serve in uniform. A lady named Maggie Thomas posted this tribute on a social media website that popped up in my electronic messages:

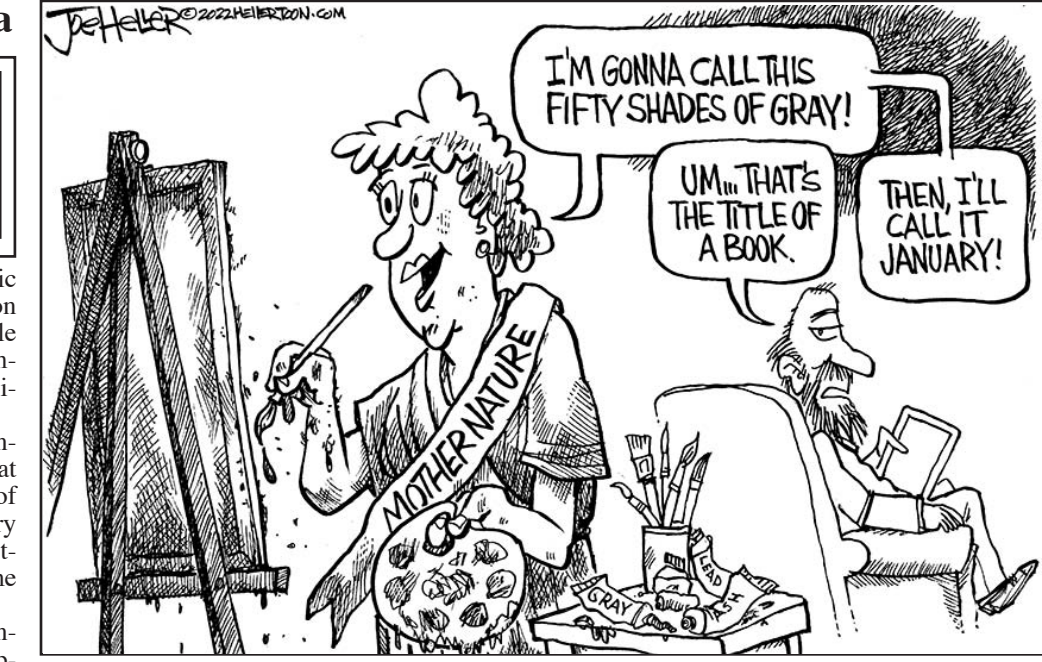
"Veteran of the Day", USCG SPAR, Dorothy Dempsey enlisted in our USCG in the Women's Reserve, 1944 patriotically aroused by the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. There were 13,000 other women training in this effort, beginning their duties as "Coasties" in Palm Beach, FL. Training was a very rigorous process to prepare these fine ladies for land-based duties. They were called "SPARS", a derivative nickname from our USCG motto "Semper Paratus"; IE. "Semper Paratus-Always Ready!"

Dorothy intended to become a chaplain's assistant, however her gender prevented her from serving in religious ceremonies as a devout Roman Catholic. Dorothy nevertheless made lemonade out of her lemons, and became a master-at-arms in Boston and all over New England responsible for morale-boosting, assignment management, as well as recruiting duty. According to her 2010 interview with Rutgers University she took her recruiting and morale building to radio shows as a sometimes singer.

Per Dempsey: "I used to sing with the group in Boston, on Boston radio," she explained. "...We would recruit, tell them about women in the military, and then, Margaret Chase Smith, who was the first woman to serve in both houses of Congress."

Dempsey earned her Honorable Discharge from our USCG in March, 1946. She began work at a New York advertising agency.

Dempsey also became involved with several groups for women Veterans and advocated for the placement of statues of women Veterans. She served on the New Jersey Advisory Committee on Women Veterans in 1989. The same year, she designed a statue of a woman Veteran based on the Minute Man statue in Concord. The statue, known as the "Minute woman," was dedicated in 2003 and resides in the New Jersey Military Cemetery. She also gave many presentations on the history of women Veterans in schools and worked with Veteran women in hospitals and care facilities. Dempsey passed away in 2018 at the age of 96. She clearly represents our Greatest Generation. And I cannot remember ever meeting a SPAR during my service years, however I would have been honored to have met Dorothy Dempsey as one of my sister Coasties.



Joe Heller © 2022 Joe Heller.com

What Box?

I was thinking about pruning our blueberries this morning. Whenever I look at that patch, grown to multiples of its original size, I think of my old friend, Merle, who gave me some of the first sprouts.

Merle was in his late seventies when we met. He was possessed of a vigor which refused to submit to the calendar, or to the doctor who told him he needed to slow down. After a trip to the hospital for some "repairs," in his words, and in defiance of doctors and calendars, he planted a forest while he recovered. No, not just a few ornamental trees, but a "wood," with a healthy variety of tree species covering several acres. Merle refused to be boxed in by opinions which ran contrary to his own truth, and he retained his vigor until his last day on earth.

Merle told me he was one of the last remaining full blooded Delaware Indians, and I will always carry with me his story of the dispersal of his people, also known as the Lenni Lenape, across the Iroquois Nation and beyond, like the ancient Hebrews, as he put it. The Delaware, like so many other native peoples, lost their homeland to broken treaties with a government which refused to be boxed in by honor and integrity.

Merle always referred to himself as an Indian when we spoke of his people. I think he would be amused that there are people today who would label him "racist" for using the term, not even pausing to consider that he had earned the right to refer to himself in any manner he chose. The rush to condemn people for using words considered by self-appointed arbiters of social justice as pejorative, and then affix to the condemned another pejorative label, is another type of box. This one is about control, which is the purpose of many types of container.

We're talking about boxes again this week, which is a reasonable thing to discuss inside a column called "Outside the Box." A younger reader recently asked, "What box?" A reasonable question in a culture which has nudged aside the metaphor for the meme.

You might not know that "meme" predates the internet. The word first appeared in Richard Dawkins book, "The Selfish Gene" in 1976. He used the Greek word, "mimeme," which means "that which is imitated," to describe the way genes replicate, mutate and survive through natural selection. The word was shortened to "meme" before it was appropriated by users of the web.

Chances are you did not know that about memes. I didn't either. The internet was supposed to increase knowledge. It hasn't quite worked out that way. Lately it has served as a means to another kind of box. Increasingly controlled by ever smaller numbers with political and social agendas, the web can be a tool for drawing boxes around thoughts and expression, to manipulate and subdue them.

Nothing new there. My parents referred to the television as the "idiot box," and I'll never get back the hours of life spent watching people pretend to be other people or talking about what someone else said.

Going farther back in time, the square bindings of the humble book could be considered a type of box, but here the metaphor begins to weaken. Once you possess a book, the contents, and the way you process them, are beyond the control of any outside influence. Edward Bulwer-Lytton wrote, "The pen is mightier than the sword." Books have many times been considered such a threat to people who wanted to control other people, that they have often been burned in fits of outrage and righteous indignation.

Books are still being burned today, metaphorically speaking. Outrage is acceptable behavior to those who see it as the ultimate expression of virtue. In many colleges that still bother to teach the classics at all, the Great Books are not read in order to teach the universal truths they contain, but to illustrate modern puritanical notions of oppression and gender thought crime. There is a widespread effort to habituate the young to asses the world around them through permanent lenses of race and gender. That particular box is one for which we here will always seek an exit.

Not everything boxed is bad. Who doesn't like to come home and see an Amazon box sitting on the front porch? A box can be parameters, guidelines, boundaries, without which we surrender to chaos, like an unpruned blueberry patch. Or a mostly peaceful protest.

George Jones wrote, "I've got four walls around me to hold my life, and keep me from going astray." Four walls and a roof over it can become a home, or it can become a prison. The difference is in how we choose, and what we emphasize.

And this, my friends, is why we attempt here to look outside the box, to see its shape and get a sense of what it contains - and what it keeps out. A box without doors or windows is a spirit-crushing confinement, but without any boundaries at all, we are exposed to the elements. Without investigating, we might not know the difference.

Outside The Box
By: Don Perry
worldoutsidethebox.com

Crape Myrtle Pruning

Crape myrtles are a very common tree that many people like to plant in their home landscape or you may see them lining roads in towns. There are couple of reasons why crape myrtles make great landscape trees. The first is that they are very disease and insect resistant, as there are not too many pests that will bother them. Powdery mildew is the most serious disease issue that crape myrtles will usually have, and it rarely kills the tree. Ambrosia beetles will attack trees that are already dead, dying, or stressed. Crape myrtles also come with a variety of flower colors, making them very attractive. Finally, crape myrtles come in a variety of sizes. Varieties range from dwarf to semi-dwarf to full size, meaning mature tree heights range from 3 to 30 feet tall.



Watching and Working
Jacob Williams

Pruning is important for crape myrtles, because the blooms only form on new growth. Even more important is selecting the right sized variety for your location. If you select a variety that will grow to a good height for the spot where you're putting it, the pruning will not be difficult, because you won't be as concerned with managing the plant's size.

Now is a good time of year to prune your crape myrtles. Excessive pruning can lead to problems with disease and insects, because the tree is stressed. Bad pruning practices are called CRAPE MURDER. Crape murder generally involves topping the tree, or cutting back all the branches to 3 to 4 feet above the ground. This will result in an oddly shaped tree that produces a lot of suckers.

To properly prune a crape myrtle start at the base of the tree and work your way up. You're looking for suckers, if you find them prune those off. Once you get to where the branches are, remove crossing branches. Crossing branches will rub against each other when the wind blows and create sites where disease and insects can get in. As the tree grows you can remove branches from the lower third of the tree. Removing those branches will expose the trunk character. Some people like to prune off the old seedheads. I think they're an attractive feature. With new growth in the spring the old seedheads will fall off. On some varieties of crape myrtles you can prune in the summer after the blooms are spent to create another flush of flowers. A second bloom is difficult to force on varieties that bloom after mid-July.

A common misconception is that crape myrtles have to be pruned to produce flowers. This is not true. Pruning allows to you shape the tree. If you have a spot where the tree can grow and does not need shaping for space concerns, pruning is not necessary. I encourage everyone to do some research on finding the variety that will fit in the space that they have, because that will solve a lot of pruning issues before they arise. Pruning crape myrtles properly allows accentuates the natural beauty that they have.

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

Helping Hands Projects

I am excited for the opportunity to write in this column on behalf of the Habitat for Humanity of Towns/Union Counties. We have so much planned for the year of 2022, building new homes, tackling Helping Hands projects, fun filled events, and ReStore improvements.



Habitat Happenings
Madelyn Bailey

We are always working to bring our community together and rekindle hope in the lives of our neighbors who need it most.

Over the past few weeks, we have asked for your support in funding for the Jolley family home rebuild. We are so thankful for all the kind donations we have received from this community. The funds raised are going towards building materials, and tools that we need to rebuild.

The Jolley family home rebuild during one of the massive storms we have recently endured, when a tree fell into the structure.

We are still accepting funds, at our Habitat for Humanity location in Blairsville, and our Donor Box link on our Facebook group page entitled, "Habitat for Humanity Towns/Union Counties ReStore".

The Jolley family home rebuild is an example of what many of our Helping Hands projects consist of. Helping Hands is about helping community members with home repairs. Our employees and volunteers work together to bring about safe, and reliable housing for those in need.

We have "Helping Hands" donation boxes at multiple locations in an effort to raise funds for projects like these. Locations currently include: Daniels Restaurant (Breakfast/Lunch location), Abide Coffee, Cabin Coffee, Skillet Café, Blairsville Grits n' Greens Restaurant, Lucky's, Hole In The Wall, and Tappanyaki Time. Be sure check these locations out in your travels!

I encourage you to continue to stop by our ReStore, we receive newly donated items every day, with sales varying from 25% off furniture or \$1 days! We are always working to improve our ReStore with new displays and changing arrangements to help you find exactly what you're looking for. Employees and Volunteers at the ReStore are always ready to serve you whether you have questions on how to get involved in our organization, or are interested in buying, or simply browsing.

Follow our Facebook group (Habitat for Humanity Towns/Union Counties ReStore) for updates on daily sales, newly donated items coming through our store, and further information on Helping Hands projects and events!

Letters to The Editor

Bidenflation, yes!

Dear Editor,
In response to a recent letter purporting to relieve the current inhabitant of the White House from responsibility for the staggering increase in today's inflation crisis, one need only to look at this administrations' war on the oil & gas industry. From day one in office the occupant of the White House canceled the Keystone pipeline, and banned further exploration of oil & gas reserves on public lands. Almost immediately the United States went from energy independence to begging OPEC to produce more oil to alleviate the massive increases in gasoline prices. The war on hydrocarbon energy was likewise responsible for the massive increase in natural gas & propane, causing heating costs to skyrocket this winter. Additionally, the costs of vital carbon based building blocks used in the production of key raw materials which in turn make the products we use in our everyday lives will be affected as well. Hydrocarbon energy is the lifeblood of our economy; production, transportation, and distribution costs affect everything! All of this is being done to appease a bunch of radical activists who think shifting production of vital energy resources and key raw materials to countries half way around the globe will solve the "climate crisis"! Which of course is a total absurdity. Add this to incentivizing unemployment by doling out ever more government benefits to those who choose to stay at home rather than work and you have a recipe for the run away inflation we're currently experiencing as a nation. Sadly, look for this to continue for a long while.

Kevin P. Cannon

A Special Community

Dear Editor,
In 1873, naturalist John Muir wrote in a letter to his sister, "The mountains are calling." Apparently they still are. On any given day, a smorgasbord of license plates may be observed on our local roadways, suggesting the mountains are indeed sending out a very strong signal inviting others to our community. Someone once remarked to me, "I got here as quick as I could." That's my sentiment as well. My wife and I love this place. The mountains, the lake, the fairgrounds, the restaurants, the people-what a wonderful place to live. We come from many different places and backgrounds and apparently, we weren't too happy there-hence our relocation. Let's make sure the things we didn't like there don't re-establish themselves here. Big city habits, attitudes, and especially driving techniques, are not needed here. Let's keep Towns County as God intended it to be-a beautiful place to live.

Gene Vickers

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

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