

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Four Chaplains (Part I)

Kudos to Katie Harkins, Bart Rodgers and Dwight Moss, of VFW Post 7807/American Legion Post #23 for bringing this historical inspirational perspective to the forefront at one of our meetings. This history is iconic for what exists in the hearts, minds and souls of almost everyone who has served in uniform, and if things go awry. For those Veterans, who read our TCH, please remember we have our regular monthly meeting of American Legion Post #23 the first Tuesday of every month at VFW Post 7807. Please attend Feb 5, 2019 at 4 PM.

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran



On February 2, 1943 a converted luxury liner, the USAT Dorchester was part of SG-19 convoy, cruising along in icy waters en route to an American base in Greenland. Having departed New York on Jan 23, 1943 with over 900 soldiers and the Four Chaplains aboard this secret mission. They were escorted by Coast Guard Cutters, USCGC Tampa, Escanaba, and Comanche, only a relatively short distance from their final destination Greenland. This transport mission was very dangerous as all vessels in North Atlantic waters were patrolled by NAZI "wolf packs", submarines whose entire purpose was to hunt and destroy ships and personal between our USA and anywhere we or our European allies may have interests.

Dorchester's captain, Hans J. Danielson received a message from our Coast Guard escort that they had detected one of those German U-boats in the area, presumably tracking them for ill intent. Danielson gave the order for everyone on board to sleep with their clothes on and lifejackets. Most of the soldiers sleeping deep in the ship's hull disregarded these orders because of the heat from ship's engines and uncomfortable life jackets.

The four chaplains aboard were relatively new Chaplains and all held the rank of first Lieutenant. Methodist minister Reverend George L. Fox; Reformed Rabbi Alexander D. Goode; Roman Catholic priest Father John P. Washington; and Reformed American Church minister Reverend Clark V. Poling came from diverse, varied backgrounds but all had volunteered to serve with our US Army after the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. George Fox, having lied about his age had already served in WWI at age 17. He was a medical corps assistant and was awarded the Silver Star, Purple Heart and French Croix de Guerre for his outstanding service in WWI. Returning home, he completed high school and elected to become a Methodist minister. In 1942 he volunteered as Army Chaplain and began his active service on August 8, 1942.

Alexander Goode from Brooklyn, NY followed in his father's footsteps studying for the rabbinate at Hebrew Union College graduating in 1937. After earning his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins U. he applied to become a Navy Chaplain but was rejected, and after Pearl Harbor was accepted by the Army on July 21, 1942. He served in Goldsboro, NC with the 333rd Airbase Squadron before being transferred to Camp Myles Standish in Taunton, Mass. Where he was reunited with earlier Harvard classmates, Fox, Washington and Poling.

Semper Paratus

The Right to be Happy

Benjamin Franklin said, "Remember not only to say the right thing in the right place, but far more difficult still, to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment."

The relationships we have with our fellow humans often present us with a choice between being right, and being happy. Every couple who has been married for more than a month knows this. But humans are and always have been naturally competitive, and we are often prideful as well. You know I'm right about that.

The insistence on being right affects not only individuals, but large groups of people. In politics, it has been institutionalized to a point of paralysis. There were many times in our history when we became so adamant in our opinions that we eventually went to war to prove who was right.

In between breakups, divorces and wars we can, individually or collectively, regain some of the humility necessary to acquire new information or suffer someone else's opinion. We usually enjoy periods of general peace and prosperity under those conditions.

In the Age of Information, however, we have become quite confident again in our opinions, having googled every source that agrees with us, and opinion is joined at the hip to identity.

This is not a formula for happiness at a time when a fragmented national identity is struggling to reform. "There's battle lines being drawn. Nobody's right if everybody's wrong," and apparently being right is a zero-sum game. The broken news reports every day that we aren't as happy as we used to be.

The trouble is, this competition of ideas is not fun. It isn't a game anymore. It's not even a sport. We struggle to have even a civil debate, much less a cordial one. We are conditioned now to frame things, instead, in terms of conflict, to "fight" for our causes and "slam" our opponents. Or so it is reported, repeatedly, endlessly, and in detail.

It's primarily verbal, of course, this fight to see our opinions prevail, this pixelated virtual reality of hostile adversaries fighting for what's right. Too much media and not enough social, coming to you live and late breaking. But it's all just theater, isn't it? Well, it is until the pent-up unhappiness starts to affect our decision-making. Am I right?

There's not much we can do about the theater. We can choose not to click on the provocative link, to ignore any headline that contains the words "fight" or "slam." This goes directly to the prime motivation behind provocative headlines, as clicks are the life blood of corporate media. But we're addicted to drama. Media serves it up because we consume it, and addictions are not easy to overcome.

We can keep our opinions to ourselves. But that, too, is difficult when identity is ascendant and everyone we know is posting and tweeting like a flock of mockingbirds.

So if we can't stop ourselves from consuming the drama, and if we just have to keep putting our opinions forward, what can we do to keep the peace?

We'll close with more timeless wisdom from Benjamin Franklin, who said, "I made it a rule to forbear all direct contradiction to the sentiments of others, and all positive assertion of my own. I even forbid myself the use of every word or expression in the language that imported a fixed opinion, such as certainly, undoubtedly, etc., and I adopted, instead of them, I conceive, I apprehend, or I imagine a thing to be so or so, or it so appears to me at present. When another asserted something that I thought an error, I denied myself the pleasure of contradicting him abruptly, and of showing immediately some absurdity in his proposition."

Ask anyone who has been happily married whether what Franklin said is true.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Shutdown

As the government shutdown continues there are a number of offices that are closed. I want to talk about the effect that the shutdown is having on agriculture and natural resources. I won't be getting into a political discussion about the shutdown, just simply what the impact is. There is a lot of information out there that is slanted one way or the other, so I'm going to try and cut through that and just talk about some of the effects the shutdown is having.

The Farm Service Agency, including our local office located in Blairsville, is currently closed. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is a branch of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). FSA is responsible for supporting farms and farming communities with programs including disaster relief, conservation programs, commodity price guarantee programs, and loan programs. Commodity loan activity that many farmers rely on has ceased as of January 3. This will become more of a concern if the shutdown progresses into the spring, because that is the time that farmers will be in need of money to pay for the new season that is beginning. Last year USDA gave out over \$5.4 billion in loans. Not being able to have a good sense of their finances is making it difficult for farmers to make financial decisions right now.

The USDA also backs rural development programs that can be used for home loans in rural areas. These programs are also currently closed. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is currently open. However, if the shutdown continues their offices may be closed as well. NRCS is able to provide environmental technical and financial assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The EQIP program is one that many people have used here to build a hoop house. The NRCS works closely with the FSA, so NRCS will continue to be open but some operations will become more difficult without the FSA.

The Forest Service is still open using non-appropriated funds. Forest Service law enforcement, emergency and natural disaster response, and national defense preparedness efforts are still ongoing. Some Forest Service employees are furloughed through the shutdown. Other employees are on standby in case of an emergency.

I am going to stay away from making any predictions about what will happen agriculturally if the shutdown continues. My crystal ball hasn't been the same since the earthquake a few weeks ago. The services that I've talked about here being open may change if the shutdown continues, that remains to be seen. However, as of writing this column on January 24 the information that I've included is up to date. There are a number of other agricultural services that I haven't talked about here that are in limbo. Clearly, the longer the shutdown continues the greater the impact will be on our agriculture and natural resources. When government offices resume normal operations there will be a backlog of work to go through.

Throughout the shutdown the Extension Office will continue to be open. We are funded by the state and county, so our funding is not affected. So don't be worried about contacting your Extension Office or sending me an email at jacob.williams@uga.edu during this shutdown. We are still here to serve you!



Letters to The Editor

National Debt

Dear Editor,

In response to a previous letter regarding the National debt, the writer left out a few pertinent facts: President Obama added over \$8 trillion to the national debt after calling President Bush unpatriotic for adding \$5.5 trillion while fighting the war on terror. Did Obama sign a big "tax cut for the rich" that caused it?

I long ago did some research and determined I would be much better off if I could have kept the social security deductions and invested in the market for the last 45 years...and would be able to leave some of it to my heirs when I'm gone.

The moral of the story: the less \$ we send to DC the better off everyone is.

Just sayin',
Jim Soltys

National Association of Conservation Districts

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is the national association for the nearly 3,000 conservation districts—almost one in every county in the country—working directly with landowners to conserve and promote healthy soils, water, forests, and wildlife. NACD represents these districts and the more than 17,000 citizens who serve on conservation district governing boards and these local Soil & Water Conservation Districts across the country. The Districts are made up of Supervisors who are elected or appointed to these boards to oversee soil and erosion plans for land disturbing projects.

The District serving Towns and Union counties is the Blue Ridge Soil & Water Conservation District that meets monthly in Blairsville to discuss and approve (or reject) soil and erosion projects in the area. Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D is a member of 5 of these groups in our Northeast Georgia work area. The NACD annual meeting this year will be held in San Antonio, Texas and Kim and I will be there to promote our RC&D work. Representatives from Washington DC agencies (USFS, USDA, NRCS, etc.) that provide our RC&D with funding will be in San Antonio and non-profits like us thrive on grants and contracts from these agencies, so we need to be seen anytime there is an opportunity. Last year in Nashville, Chest-Chat was the only RC&D there so we had all of the national attention and 2018 was very good for our programs. The world is run by those who show up and we do! We will have our RC&D booth setup in San Antonio to highlight our projects for District Supervisors from across the country who all have the same mission to preserve our land and water for future generations. We will have our banners and literature to promote our work, and our 13' Smokey Bear blowup.

Chest-Chat RC&D administers programs across Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. In 2018 Chest-Chat RC&D facilitated 37 projects and programs with our local, state, and national partners. The NACD's purpose and mission is to recognize conservation districts for their extraordinary work; to promote their stories, to support their initiatives, and to be their voice—the voice of conservation. When representatives from 32 soil conservation districts met in Washington, D.C., in 1946 to organize a national association of conservation districts, over 1,600 soil conservation districts had already formed in 48 states. The health of the land and the welfare of future generations was a commitment taken very seriously by early district officials.

A report from Nolen J. Fuqua of Oklahoma exemplifies that commitment: "We reorganized into a state organization at the beginning of soil conservation work in 1937. This was due to government men who came down telling us what we needed to do to serve as supervisors. We thought organization would help us and we voted unanimously last week to associate ourselves



RC&D
Frank Riley
Executive Director

with the National Association. Four of every five acres in Oklahoma farms and ranches are now being damaged by soil erosion or have lost some of the precious topsoil before soil conservation treatment was applied. Less than 5,000,000 acres of farmlands have suffered no erosion damages, but more than three-fourths of the topsoil has been lost from 8,543,000 acres. Farmers and ranchers, with the help of Soil Conservation Service technicians, have developed 34,000 conservation plans. These plans provide for sound land use, the proper combination of conservation practices, improvement of soil productivity, and an economical system of farming whereby man can not only save soil, but improve it and at the same time, increase his financial return from the land. Oklahoma has made the most outstanding record in the United States in seeding land removed from cultivation to native grasses. Almost a half-million acres have been seeded under the Soil Conservation Districts' program. However, there is a big conservation job yet to be done." Conservation districts set out to create a national organization in 1946 so that they could deliver a unified message to policy makers on conservation-related issues and better coordinate district activities on a countrywide scale. Today we continue to reap the benefits of the conservation legacy our early district leaders left to us. As we look to the future, it is critical that conservation districts continue to have a national, unified voice. In the words of R. Neil Sampson, author of For Love of the Land: A History of the National Association of Conservation Districts: "the accomplishments of the first half-century are impressive, but the challenges ahead seem equally awesome." Sampson believed the greatest challenge to the implementation of conservation was "moving people to constructive action." Surmounting that challenge, he said, would depend on the recognition of the "potential that lies in the dedication, commitment and skill of those who love the land—the people of the soil conservation districts." NACD's purpose and mission is to provide that recognition of conservation districts; to promote their stories, to support their initiatives, and to be their voice—the voice of conservation.

For more information on NACD and Soil & Water Conservation Districts, contact Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D at www.info.ccrd@gmail.com.



Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	Every Monday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Every Tuesday: Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	Every Wednesday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Bridge Players	Every Thursday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	Every Friday: Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Sunday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alzheimer's Supp.	First Tuesday of each month: McConnell Church	1:30 pm
American Legion	VFW Post 7807	4 pm
Hiaw. City Council	City Hall	6 pm
Young Harris Coun.	YH City Hall	7 pm
Quilting Bee	First Wednesday of each month: McConnell Church	10 am
Stephens Lodge	First Thursday of each month: Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Friendship Comm.	Third Thursday of each month: Clubhouse	6 pm
Republican Party	Civic Center	5:30 pm
Goldwing Riders	Third Saturday of each month: Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
Red Cross DAT	Fourth Monday of each month: 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
Lions Club	Fourth Tuesday of each month: Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Hiaw. Writers	Fourth Thursday Hiaw. Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
Hiaw. Garden Club	Clubhouse	12:45 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Last Thursday of each month: Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

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