

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Iwo Jima Flag Raising

Well, they have done it again! The list of those great Marines raising our flag atop Mount Suribachi has been revised yet again. Hard to believe and may anger some amongst us, but facts are facts and considering the concern that war is controlled chaos at best, there have been plenty of mistakes made, even with best intentions.

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran



After much research by historians Stephen Foley, Dustin Spence, and Brent Westemeyer, the USMC has acknowledged that for 74 years it has "misidentified" one of the fighting men who appeared in photographer Joe Rosenthal's Pulitzer Prize winning photograph.

As a result USMC Corporal Harold Keller has replaced PFC Rene Gagnon as one of the six flag raisers in this iconic American image. In a way this is almost heart breaking but ironically in the best fashion and integrity of our USMC, the search for truth prevails.

It took untold hours and diligence by historians and others reviewing film footage and photos taken by other Marines who were there to determine who was who and where they were on Suribachi. Our USMC convened a special investigative board and the FBI's Digital Evidence Laboratory to verify this momentous change. It needs to be noted there are no politics involved in this quest for facts.

And this is the SECOND change within the past several years to the list of names atop Mount Suribachi with our heroes of that era who will live in our hearts forever, no matter what they did or did not do. In 2016, another USMC board of Inquiry determined that US Navy hospital Corpsman John Bradley was not atop Suribachi as previously recorded in all historical accounts. It is now known thanks to many long hard hours of research that PFC Harold Shultz was one of those six, not John Bradley.

All of this is important and great to know that our USMC, amongst others still put great efforts into finding and sharing the truth and facts concerning America's continuous struggle in a savage global environment to remain the "Shining Beacon of Freedom on the Hill" for possibly other nations who want to emulate America.

The utmost important fact of all these miniature history accounts is that each and every one of our men and women, will always be HONORABLY served our nation in uniform, will always be a part of our greatness and Blessings vested in our Sovereign Republic.

More recently our Commander-in-Chief, President Donald Trump has just authorized, in 2017 construction of a national Memorial for our "post-9/11" Veterans to be placed in close proximity to the Korean, Vietnam and WW II Memorials. Something very much needed to honor our younger Veterans. Believe it or not, there are over 4.8 million who have served in this global war on terror. Also very sadly over 7,000 have made the ultimate sacrifice. Plus 53,000 wounded. We owe them the same honor and respect that we owe those who fought at Iwo Jima and raised our flag atop Suribachi.

Semper Paratus

The Puppies

Eleven years ago we stopped by an animal shelter in Rabun county. We weren't planning on meeting a herd of bright-eyed and bushy-tailed puppies, or bringing home a bouncing brother and sister, half husky and half golden retriever. From that day on, and to this very day, they were known as "The Puppies." Babu looked very much like a wolf, and Bonnie was as yellow as a wheat field on a sunny day. No one would take them for litter mates but for their webbed feet and waterproof undercoats. With their siblings they were the liveliest bunch of puppies we had ever seen.

There is a good chance that the majority of these beautiful creatures didn't live very long. The head of that shelter was arrested soon afterwards and convicted on 60 counts of theft by taking, computer theft, theft by deception and racketeering because she had solicited donations promising no kill adoptions, and many animals guaranteed to be saved were subsequently destroyed.

What an extraordinary loss of life and capacity to love! But our Puppies were destined to have many adventures between the mountains and the sea, and like all furry friends everywhere who are properly loved, they became part of our family. Last June we told you about Babu's hip dysplasia and our decision to keep him with us as long as possible. We lost him two weeks ago.

There are quite a few memories buried in our pet cemetery on the farm. We expect as we get older to become more adept at saying goodbye, if only because time dictates that we become more familiar with loss the longer we stick around. Losing that first faithful friend as a child is hard enough. The second one represents the years we were growing up. The third was the adventures of young adulthood, and the fourth, and the fifth...? It does not get easier.

Babu's life encompassed the last years of my dad's life. The gentle giant who would crash through a small tree chasing a ball would slow down for my father and defer to him with extraordinary patience and gentleness, as if he sensed the delicate constitution of an old man. One of dad's last purely joyful activities was playing catch with The Puppies.

I could fill up many chapters with Babu's adventures and stories of loyalty and unconditional love, but so could you all from your own experience, from the Pomeranian hiding in the purse of the widow, whose constant companionship fills up some of the emptiness, to the horse who taught a young man about trust and bravery. This, however, is a story about determination, perseverance, and the art of living in the moment; qualities that seem to be much needed in a time when every identity comes with a victim story, and entire populations are given to asking, "Why me?"

When Babu lost the use of his hind legs, he did not lose the determination to get where he wanted to go. He never gave up. He learned to pull himself forward with his powerful front legs, and the force of his will was so great that we had to work to devise various methods to protect his feet and legs from friction. Babu had a great love for making his rounds in defense

of the realm, and he liked to cool himself in the creek that runs about 40 yards below our house. On several occasions when he was nowhere to be seen, I found him on his way back from that creek, covered in mud and looking triumphant, having drug himself hundreds of feet by his front legs, down a steep embankment and up again.

Humans pride ourselves on our superior brain capacity, but we're subject to depression and a whole host of emotional difficulties when we're faced with adversity and loss. The "inferior" capacity of the canine clan, however, holds that "play" is the highest and best use of time. For Babu, playing ball was the pinnacle of play. When he lost the ability to chase the ball, he was even more determined to catch it, and in his final year with us, we played catch for hours. His love of "tug of war" never diminished either, and we played at something every single day for the rest of his life. Apparently the diminished capacity of a dog's brain does not include the ability to feel sorry for oneself.

Over time our friend began to lose strength in his front legs, and nerve damage in his hips meant that he began to lose the ability to control his bodily functions. This was hard for a noble canine who prided himself on his personal hygiene, and the only time I ever heard pain in his voice was when he didn't gain our attention in time to get him outside before an accident occurred.

I'll always remember one of Babu's last noble acts. I had caught the "forever cold" that has plagued our mountain counties this winter, and one night I was feeling weak and blue and sitting in the den having a coughing fit. Babu was so concerned about me that he dragged himself from the other side of the room and raised himself up on his front legs so that he could attend to me. He stuck his nose under my arm and stayed there until I noticed his legs were shaking from the effort. I sat down with him on the floor, and I'm pretty sure that we both cried.

I'm happy to report that Babu's sister, Bonnie, is doing quite well. When he didn't come back from his last ride, she was puzzled. The next night, she was gone for quite a long time. We believe she was looking for him, and perhaps grieving in her own way.

But she's still here to remind us that unconditional love still exists, that the best time to play is right now, and, in fact, the only time there ever is, is now.

The Middle Path
 By: Don Perry
 onthemiddlepath.com

Pesticide Safety

Pesticides can be a huge help in your garden and around the home if you choose to use them. They can help you manage pests in your garden, but what do you do with them when you're not using them? When used and stored properly pesticides can be a benefit around the home but if not used properly or stored well they can become a threat to you and the environment. Let's talk about how to properly store and use pesticides so that you can use them in a way that is beneficial.

The EPA describes a pesticide as, "Any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest." And so this is the definition that I am using for this article because the EPA regulates pesticides in the US.

The first thing to know about pesticide usage is that the label is the law. When you purchase a pesticide it will have a label on it that has been approved by the EPA. Companies spend a lot of money creating these labels because what is in there sets the legal limits on what you're allowed to do with a pesticide. If the label says that you can apply 2 oz per 1000 square feet, going over that is breaking the law. If the label says that the pesticide can be applied on only a certain species of plant you can't spray a species that is not on the label.

The label will also include safety information. This information will include on the required PPE (personal protective equipment). For most pesticides that you use around your house the label will probably require long sleeves and long pants to apply. Gloves, shoes, and socks will also be a good idea. This information is included for your own safety to reduce the chance of short term or long term effects of the pesticide on you.

If you use a sprayer for an application, triple rinse the sprayer out to clean the spray tank. This way if you use the sprayer again with a different pesticide the tank will be clean.

When storing pesticides keep them in a cool, dry place. The space should be ventilated and out of direct sunlight. Keep them out of reach of children and pets. Store the pesticides in their original containers. Never use food or drink containers for storing pesticides as this can lead to bad accidents. If you have used up all the pesticide in a bottle, triple rinse that bottle out and puncture it so that it won't be reused for a different purpose. Then throw the bottle in the trash.

The way that you clean up pesticide spills depends on if the pesticide is liquid or solid. For solids scoop the pesticide into heavy duty trash bag and triple bag it before putting it in the garbage. With liquids place and absorbent material like kitty litter on the wet spot and then scoop up the kitty litter and triple bag it and place it in the trash. The label will also have information on how to dispose of excess pesticide or a used bottle.

Whenever you're working with pesticides always take the time to read what's written on the label first. Remember that the label is the law. If you have questions about pesticides please contact your County Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

UGA extension
 Watching and Working
 Jacob Williams



Letters to The Editor

Hoping For a Better Job

Dear Editor,
 I must respond to this week's "Middle Path" column but will make this my last response on that topic as I don't seek a drawn out back and forth.

In obvious reference to my previous letter, the author states he "hopes that those who respond [to his article] actually read and understand it" [paraphrased for brevity].

If only Don would practice what he preaches! He apparently did not do a good job of reading or comprehending my previous letter.

He misrepresented my position as "objecting to his assertion that the root causes of wars is fundamentally economic in length. Go back and read my letter again! Maybe then he will comprehend that I largely agreed with that statement but objected to his ignoring the moral and justice aspects of some of these historical events.

Additionally his article repeats the common left wing trope that the Bush administration LIED about WMD in Iraq as if the administration was pushing a narrative they knew to be false. For anyone who paid attention to the events of the day, it was almost universally accepted, including our intelligence agencies and other world leaders, that Saddam had WMD. Congressional Intelligence Committees saw the same information as the president and believed that to be the case.

While hindsight is always 20/20 Bush and the Congress were working with the best information they had at the time and felt compelled to act. There's a big difference between that and lying, but some people prefer to push a false narrative that leads to hatred and division.

If the author was honest, he'd rename his article "View from the Left".

I hope Don does a better job of reading and comprehending this letter than he did on the first one.

Jim Soltys

Conservative Approach to climate change?

Dear Editor,
 What would a conservative approach to climate change look like? It would have to be fair, help our economy, improve our health, and use a free market approach.

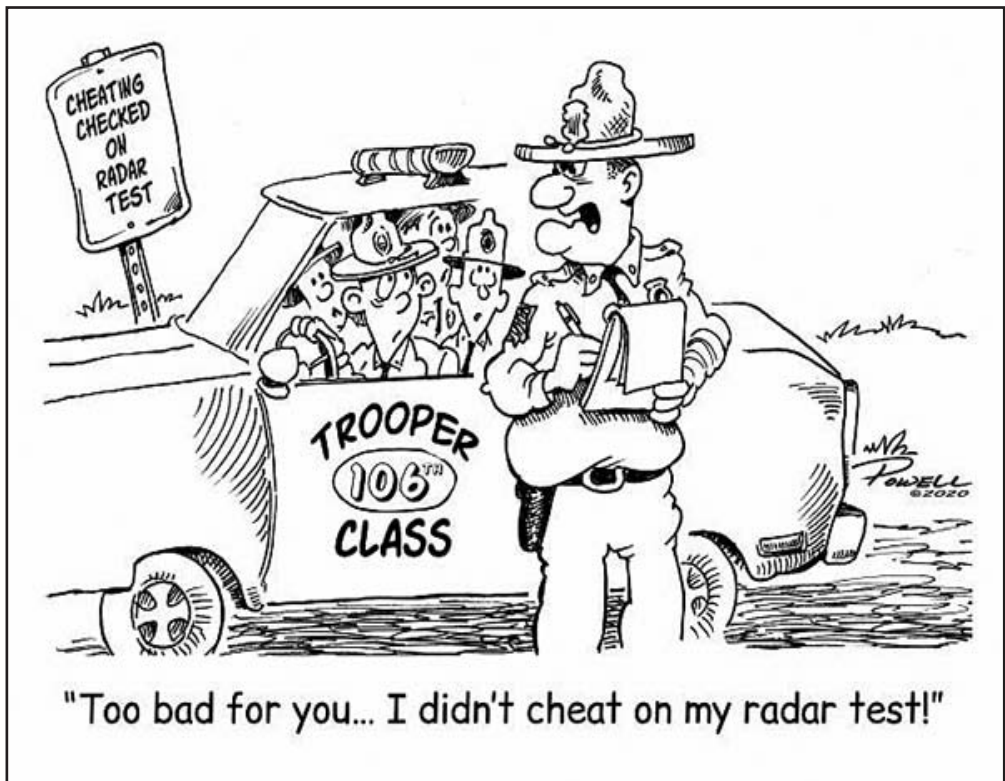
So, does such a plan as this exist? Yes, it does. HR 763, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Bill, is now in the House with Bipartisan sponsorship.

This plan places a progressively increasing price on the production of greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels and returns all the money in a monthly dividend to all American citizens.

The companies that cause the damage from climate change would pay the costs in the carbon fee, and most Americans would benefit economically.

It would add millions of new American jobs, grow the economy, decrease greenhouse gases by 90% by 2050, save countless thousands of American lives each year and not cost our government one penny.

Vernon Dixon, MD



Towns County Community Calendar

	Every Monday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Sharp UMC (Men)	7 pm
	Every Wednesday	
Alcoholics Anon.	Hiawassee UMC	Noon
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
	Every Friday:	
Movers & Shakers	Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Sunday:	
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	First Tuesday of each month:	
Alzheimer's Supp.	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
	First Wednesday of each month:	
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
	First Thursday of each month:	
Stephens Lodge	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
	Second Monday of each month:	
Chamber Board	1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	8 am
VFW	VFW Post	5 pm
Historical Society	Hist. Soc. Bldg.	6 pm
School Board	Auditorium	7 pm
Unicoy Masonic	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
	Second Tuesday of each month:	
Conv./Vis. Bureau	Civic Center	8 am
Gem & Mineral Club	Senior Center	1:30 pm
Arts & Crafts Guild	Calvary Church	4 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm
	Second Wednesday of each month:	
Basket Weavers	SC Fire Hall	10 am
USCG Aux.	Senior Center	7 pm

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