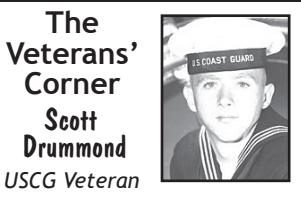


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Another Real American

What would America be without our greatest generation? How about our entire planet earth? I've just recently learned only a wee bit about one of the greatest of the greatest. His name is Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Kenneth "Rock" Merritt of the Army's 82nd Airborne Division. Rock, as his name became, was among the recruits who formed the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, thus jumping into Normandy on June 5th 1944, just before D-Day. He fought the NAZIS in Western Europe until the end of WWII. Rock, now age 97 and not in the best shape, was born in 1923. He joined the CCC at age 18 in 1933 during the Great Depression, but left in 1941. The Fascist Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor and Merritt requested a discharge form the CCC, wanting to go to work for the war effort on the West Coast, helping to build camps and ships. Then, in 1942 he decided to enlist in our USMC because he liked those uniforms. (Very much like our own Zell Miller's (RIP) reasoning for enlisting as a Marine.) However while in the recruiting office he took a long look at a poster of an Army paratrooper.



The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran



"The feds are just starting to worry about inflation? I think I need to shop at the same market they do."

You Ain't Seen the Last of Ernest T. Bass

If you're one of the good people who still watch The Andy Griffith Show, you might get invited to our barbecue. This classic television series remains one of my favorite diversions, and a lonesome reminder that television is capable of doing some good. It stands in stark contrast to the snark, meanness and debauchery waiting for today's channel surfer. Or so I thought.

If you were reading this on network television or an on-line streaming service, what follows might come with a "Satire" warning in the corner of the screen for the frigid and for those who are here without benefit of coffee. Consider yourself warned.

Electronic media evolved for the multitasker who eats, sleeps, drives and consumes media with the external brain in hand. We are conditioned rapidly shift our attention from page to page, multiple tabs open, poking and swiping the days of our lives. We feel like we're wasting time unless we're wasting time on a number of things simultaneously. Otherwise we might miss something.

For the most part I've learned to miss the subliminal messages and added distractions of the banners and logos that crowd the screens of every network offering. Therefore I don't know how long my streaming service has been warning me about the hazards of watching Andy and Opie.

It seems that Barney Fife was right - it's a jungle out there. Soon after I queued up an episode of "Andy" the other night, in the upper left hand corner of the screen there appeared this warning: "Foul Language."

It could be that my archaic human DNA makes me a throwback to an ancient time (mid 20th century?) when we were capable of focusing our attention on one thing at a time. It's also possible that I'm handicapped by the classical education I received before schools began to focus on social engineering and protecting the fragile by making everyone equally fragile. In any event, that warning got my attention, and I watched the entire episode alert to any possible triggering from the foul language used by the residents of Mayberry.

It never happened. Or perhaps I should say, it never happened to me. Perhaps I wasn't fragile enough to be triggered. Perhaps education, military service, failure, success, perseverance, faith, - some people might call it life experience - in the real as opposed to the virtual world, had locked my trigger guard into place.

If anyone ever needed a trigger guard, it was Barney Fife. How that one bullet he kept in his pocket never ended up in his foot, I don't know. The next episode warned of impending violence, but finding myself uninjured by the foul language, I continued to watch.

Watching Barney mishandle his revolver I was insensitive enough to laugh at his antics, but I could understand the reason for the warning if not the intent behind it. But when a friend mentioned Ernest T. Bass, I had a Mayberry epiphany. It's all encapsulated in the song Ernest T. sang for Charlene Darling accompanied by his carefully tuned gas can.

That one song revealed to me how the fragile think, and what I can do to help protect them. Consider this as you picture in your mind Ernest T. trying to find that note as he begins to chant:

Old Aunt Mariah, jump in the fire - age shaming. Fire too hot, jump in the pot - drug use. Pot too black, jump in the crack - racist language and drug use. Crack too high, jump in the sky - drug use again. Sky too blue, jump in canoe - cultural appropriation. Canoe too shallow, jump in the tallow - intellectual elitism. Tallow too soft, jump in the loft - fat shaming. Loft too rotten, jump in the cotton - foul language. Cotton so white she stayed there all night - white privilege!

I get it now. I am the problem. I'm Mayberry. I'm a bit of Andy, Barney, Opie, Gomer and Goober. I was raised by Aunt Bee. I'm Briscoe Darling and at least one or two of The Boys. I may even have a dash of Howard Sprague and the mysterious Mr. Schwamp. I should come with a trigger warning pasted on my forehead like one of those annoying plastic stickers they put on every piece of fruit!

I'm deeply sorry. I'm celebrity host level sorry, but at this point in life I think it's just too much for me to change. Cancel me now, or I'll do you one better and cancel myself preemptively.

Unfortunately, I don't think my cancellation will do much good. There are just too many people who refuse to submit to the benign despotism of the corporate and political class which so caringly curates all our information. Too many people stubbornly refuse to understand how important the opinions of celebrities and celebrity CEOs are in guiding us, as Oprah might say, "closer to the light."

It's all right there in front of us. It's so easy. We all hold in our hands the truth and officially trending narratives of American life which, with great effort and expense are desperately trying to reach us with the news of what is real and what is important.

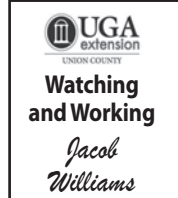
If only we would accept it. Many have. But so many are still so lost in privilege and prejudice and wrong-thinking, trapped in the illusion that what we see and hear outside the official narratives, especially our own life experience, has any validity.

Many of us have fallen on the sword of abject apology, canceled ourselves or been cancelled, but there are so many others trapped by reason, logic, life experience and faith, I'm afraid you ain't seen the last of Ernest T. Bass.

Outside The Box
By: Don Perry
worldoutsidethebox.com

Cicadas

I'm sure that by now a lot of people have heard about the cicadas that are due to emerge this year. Because this will be a once 17 years type of event, I wanted to talk about it. Let's talk about what they look like, what they eat, and any other facts you might need to know about cicadas.



Watching and Working
Jacob Williams

Adult cicadas are a winged insect that grows to be about 2.5 inches long. They sometimes get confused with locusts because people associate them both with coming in waves or plagues. Cicadas are not nearly as destructive as locusts. Their bodies are black with some orange stripes down the wings.

Cicadas are divided into different broods. The brood coming out this year is brood X (10). Some broods are on a 13-year cycle, and the brood like what we're this year every 17 years.

12 broods that emerge every 17 years and 3 broods emerge every 13 years. Brood X is one of the most widespread as there will be appearances from the east coast to the Mississippi River and from New York down to Georgia.

We get cicadas every year, as there are also annual cicadas that emerge. These annual cicadas actually live 2-5 years, so they are annual in the sense that they reappear annually. This brood of cicadas is projected to have as many as 1.5 million cicadas per acre. That brings the total population to the trillions. These cicadas even though they only emerge for a few weeks have been living underneath us for the past 17 years. Scientists don't know why 17 is the magic number. The cicadas will even wait a couple of days together if the weather is rainy. Underground they feed on tree roots. The damage that they cause is minimal. Once they've emerged, the damage that they do to plants is mostly cosmetic. I do not recommend spraying any pesticides for them. There will be so many of them that it will be impossible to control them with the use of pesticides. Their mouthpart is a piercing-sucking one. It's designed like a straw so that they can slurp plant juices. This means that they can't really bite you, but they might stick you if you antagonize them.

The main issue with cicadas is going to be the amount of noise that they create. In groups, their sound can reach 100 decibels. This is the same as a jet flyover at 1000 feet or a helicopter at 100 feet. The males trying to attract a female to mate create this noise. After mating, the female will lay her eggs inside the trees. If young trees are completely swarmed it can damage them. You can use a net to protect them. These eggs will hatch in 6-10 weeks. The nymphs fall to the ground and burrow in, starting the 17-year cycle over again.

Cicadas will begin to emerge when soil temperatures reach 64 degrees. We typically start to hit those temperatures the end of April. Cicadas do provide some benefits. The nymphs in the soil burrow and create channels for roots. They are a source of food for a lot of wildlife like trout and wild turkeys. Moles also feast on the nymphs that are underground.

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

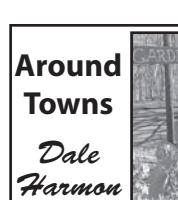
Quick Fix Gifts from Mother Nature

Laughter has been called the best medicine. There's some truth to that but like any medicine it depends on what's causing the ailment. People and other animals have been blessed with many built-in mini cures. Black pepper up your nose? A hardy sneeze will blow that irritant right out of the old proboscis. Need to expectorate a tickle from the throat? That body model you've got came standard with the cough reflex. Knit one, pearl two, that broken ulna will heal for you. For pressure lurking somewhere in the digestive tract, a demure burp or a haughty belch, even if embarrassing, is a relief. Skin will scar but hold together. And now, please forgive me, the passing of gas, that popular butt of jokes long revered by adolescent boys and some grown men, can't be ordered by a doctor but may be suggested. Horses, unlike humans, can't vomit. It's a good thing horses don't drink booze. Their first hangover could be their last.

I could ascertain no specific reason for it when I realized that I was crying. It wasn't a loud, wailing sob like when my mother died. It did not rack my body or blur my vision. Sweet, gentle Bob Ross, The Happy Painter from an old PBS series was on TV but he had been dead for years, so it wasn't that. It could have been learning earlier in the week that a half a million Americans and so many other people world-wide had succumbed to the newest viral plague.

Covid 19 is not the first. Maybe it was because I haven't seen my own offspring or grandchildren in what seems like eons. My adopted sister and I had been at odds recently and even though the patch had been put in place, I regretted that we quarreled. I miss my out of town friends. After a few minutes calmness found me. Laughter is a good medicine, for sure, but not always the best. Sometimes Side B is the song that needs to be heard.

See You Around Towns!



Around Towns
Dale Harmon

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor
P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546

Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net

Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc.

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.*

Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.

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.

Letters to The Editor

Response to "Energy Solution"

Dear Editor,
Unfortunately, the writer of this Feb. 24 letter neglected to include his sources. He did not explain how trying to save our planet from a slow death by fossil fuel pollution is radical. If he wants to learn about air pollution, he should read about people in Beijing who are now buying air to breathe from Canada.

Cancelled pipelines and less drilling will, as he states, eliminate some (temporary) jobs. These will be few compared to the thousands of jobs lost when Trump crippled solar panel manufacturing, sales and installation in the U.S. He did this, shortly after assuming office, simply by threatening to impose a 100% import duty on Chinese solar panels and the parts needed to make them. This doubling of prices for panels and/or their parts caused them to no longer be competitive with those from the Asian countries. So would-be U.S. manufacturers and installers cancelled or scaled back their plans.

If he will study readily available data on the declining health of our planet, as I have been doing for the last 40 years, he will soon learn that climate change is not a "hoax." We don't need more fossil fuels. I have been running my house almost completely on passive and active solar and batteries for 12 years. With no pollution. My system paid for itself in three to four years. I have never been without power. The recent outages in Texas could have been avoided if every building there had been so equipped. He needs to do some homework.

Doug Franklin

Not Amused

Dear Editor,
Regarding the letter entitled "Time Wasted by Elected Officials" from the March 3 edition of the newspaper, I would like to ask the writer if his lame attempts to be funny, while doing his best to humiliate the commissioner and sheriff made him feel like a better man.

The amount of time wasted by the two men was matched by the time wasted reading his letter. Certainly the writer has a right to his opinion, and there is nothing illegal, presumably, in using disparaging language. However, to suggest they would volunteer to take part in a duel seems to suggest a deeper reason for his childish letter.

I would suggest to him that he use his right to an opinion to take a step back and voice that opinion in adult terms. I did not find his letter amusing, only derogatory. There is no reason for anyone to address others in such an immature way.

I do not have a dog in this hunt due to my not knowing either the commissioner or the sheriff, and considering my failing memory at 85, I can't remember if I voted for either one of them.

John R. Gottlieb

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