

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

We Can Never Know Them All

There are thousands upon thousands of men and women who quietly stand in the unrecognized "hall of fame and honor".....

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



those who have served our Sovereign Republic in military uniforms. Within America there exists several famous personalities, such as actors, singers, a mere handful of politicians whose greatest achievements could be classified as serving in any branch of our military. No matter how mundane their assignments may be and up to and including paying the ultimate price of laying down their lives for others.

Among those is a wonderful CW singer that many of us know and have enjoyed his great music, however very few of us know that he served in our US Army. His name is Charley Pride. Born March 18, 1938 as Charley Frank Pride in Sledge, Mississippi into an extremely poor sharecroppers family with ten brothers and sisters. He was also, at times, mistreated by his father. At age fourteen Charley bought his first guitar from Sears and Roebuck, teaching himself how to play, with only a radio to listen to his favorites CW stars.

He started planning the rest of his life, never a hint of desire to continue picking cotton forever. Not wanting to be paid a measly \$3.00 per each 100 pounds of cotton picked. Being an excellent baseball player he began his foray to his future, NOT MUSIC, but hoping for professional baseball. He put his love for singing on hold and at age seventeen, never completing HS, he left home to pursue baseball and in 1955 earned a place in the Negro American League. He was injured which slowed his journey in baseball. However what very few of us ever knew about this great American CW singer, he was drafted and served in our US Army for two years in 1956-1958. Charley did not dodge the draft, run away, or protest out of hatred or bitterness, instead he committed himself to whatever the Army needed him to do. And his God -Given skills as a baseball player plus the Army's need for ball players earned him what many of us would deem as a cushy job, a place on the US Army baseball team. I never knew this until very recently, and I'll bet many others never knew that he served America in the Army.

Charley always seemed to be a very gentle, not angry or bitter person and so many of his songs reflect that. As such he would have done anything that our Army placed upon him. He is living proof that no matter your background, or impoverished conditions and in spite of having your life's plans intercepted by being drafted, that dreams and wealth can be honestly achieved by commitment and using whatever blessings and skills we are all given by our Creator. Another man who has served America in a humble fashion. His songs are of love and gentle kindness which I know now served him well while in the Army, serving America.

Our Supreme Commander called him home on December 12, 2020 at age 86. It was deemed that complications from COVID was the cause of America loosing a very wonderful individual who served America in many ways. -Semper Paratus

Letters To The Editor

National Vietnam War Veterans Day

Dear Editor,

March 29, 2023, is National Vietnam War Veterans Day. It is a nationally recognized day usually only participated in by those men and women who served in the Vietnam Era and their families. Over 2.7 million Americans served during this war, over 57,000 did not make it home, and over 1,600 remain Missing in Action. Every year March 29th acknowledges and honors anyone who served during the war's 20-year time.

Respect and support wasn't immediately given to those that served. The Veterans returning home were met with disdain from their fellow citizens, spat on, pelted with rocks and called "baby killers." The Vietnam War Veterans Day was founded in 2017 to finally offer that respect to everyone involved. Understanding that it wasn't the soldiers' choices to go to war, legislation was introduced and then signed by President Trump on March 29, 2017, calling for U.S. flags to be flown on this day to honor everyone who served during this time, whether they were in Vietnam or not.

Every year this national day has continued to be recognized on March 29, and aside from honoring those who fought, the day also recognizes the service of the Armed Forces and support organizations during the war; the wartime contributions at home; the advancements in technology, science and medicine; and the contributions by American Allies.

The Vietnam Veterans of America Georgia State Council extends thanks and honors to our Veteran members of Blairsville Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1101, and we ask the communities of this great State to pause during the day and quietly thank those that served. So many of our Veterans and their families remain impacted and affected by the war.

Never again shall one generation of veterans abandon another.

Donald Brown
 Secretary of the Vietnam Veterans of America Georgia State Council

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

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO 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.*

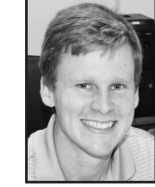
Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.



National Ag Week

This week is National Agriculture Week. It's still a bit cool for us to really start growing plants outside in earnest, but that just gives us an opportunity to focus this week on the agriculture that happens in the mountains.

UGA extension
 Watching and Working
 Jacob Williams



In the mountains, we have a strong and unique heritage of agriculture that has changed over the years. Lately, we have seen a growth of agritourism. The growing wine industry in North Georgia is evidence of that. Vineyards in our area face some unique challenges due to the late frosts that we have. Late frosts can kill blooms on plants that affects the quantity and quality of a grape crop. Vineyards also face challenges from insects and diseases. In spite of these challenges we have some great vineyards in the area that produce fantastic wines.

We continue to have many cattle as well. Cattle farms can be a benefit to the economy because they take land that would otherwise not be productive and make it productive. Cattle farms that incorporate conservation practices are great for the environment by stabilizing land. Most cattle operations in our area are cow-calf operations which means that they raise calves from a mama herd and then sell off the calves each year. Cattle operations face challenges such as growing enough hay for the winter months and raising a healthy lot of calves.

Sweet sorghum for syrup is a crop that is unique to the mountains. It can be used for biscuits, pancakes or any number of things. There used to be a lot of sweet sorghum grown in the US. However, now its production is mainly limited to North Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Kentucky. Sorghum syrup is a very labor-intensive crop. You have to be able to grow it and cook it down to syrup. We have some of the best sorghum syrup in the nation produced right here in Towns and Union counties.

Sourwood honey is another product that is unique to our area. Sourwood trees grow in a large portion of Eastern US, but in most places don't produce the nectar flow for bees to make sourwood honey. Raising honeybees is a lot more difficult than it used to be. In the past, beekeepers were able to have a hive and let it do its thing. Nowadays, bee hives require a lot more management due to invasive species and loss of pollinator plants in some parts of the country.

The food that we eat carries our cultural ancestry with it. It is literally and figuratively a part of who we are. To lose that heritage is to lose a part of ourselves. I encourage everyone support farmers because in doing so, you support the local economy, personal nutrition and health, and the culture that makes us who we are today. The next time you eat be thankful to the farmer that grew or raised it. It is my privilege to support farmers and I am thankful for all that they do for us.

If you would like to know more about agriculture contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Habitat for Humanity

It is 4:15 p.m. on Monday. The Restore has been closed for 15 minutes, and all employees have left for the day. Kim yells out, "Let me just clear this cart so the volunteers don't have a mess in the a.m. Also, I need you to price this art."

Habitat Happenings
 Executive Director
 Charlotte Randall



Kimberly Davenport is a gem. She has volunteered with us for years. Kimberly has become a friend and has made a world of difference in our Restore.

Years ago, as Restore Manager, I had a sidewalk art sale and decided to put various bins out of art at different price points.

Kimberly had stopped by the Restore that day to shop. She was flipping through the art in the sidewalk sale and came across a picture of a church. She stared at the picture, admiring the church's beauty, but ultimately placed it back in the bin and continued shopping. However, Kimberly could not stop thinking about that church. Something moved her in that picture. She ended up purchasing it and took it home.

Hanging it under her wedding picture, she noticed in small writing below the drawing, "Alabama Avenue Methodist Church."

She knew her husband's family had strong ties to Alabama, so she sent the picture to her in-laws.

They stated, "Where did you get that? That is the church where we were married back in July of 1969."

Kimberly became a Habitat for Humanity volunteer shortly after.

The connections we make and the places we are drawn to have significant meanings in our lives. Sometimes the smallest instances, if we pay attention, bring about a larger connection.

Years later, Kimberly has dedicated so much of her time and energy to Habitat. Along the way, she found her friends. We love you, Kimberly, and thank you for your service to Habitat and our community.

Seed Savers

When the world was a bit younger, before the host of consuming and monetizing technologies we take for granted was available, people saved seeds. People did a lot of things differently, but this morning as I admire the tray of Ace 55 tomato seedlings growing in the window, seed saving is on my mind.

The Ace 55 is an "ancient" tomato variety dating back to the mystical dreamtime of prehistory. It was introduced in 1964. It's a good keeper, excellent for canning, with a rich flavor undimmed by it's low acidity. I've never seen it sold in a nursery or big box store, all of which seem to get their seedlings from the same source these days and offer the same varieties.

Most of what my grandparents grew in their vegetable garden sprouted from seeds they saved. We have an heirloom bean in my family that we can trace back to the 1840's, and an "Indian corn" at least that old. I remember the fruit jars of bean, pea, corn and other seeds my grandfather kept in the attic, each with a dash of copper sulfate added to keep the weevils at bay.

My grandfather selectively modified his own liking. He preferred the more mature seed pods with actual beans in them, and therefore some protein, as opposed to the limp slivers of bean hull popular in restaurants. He said "A man can work on a mess of those beans but a plate full of skinny ones will leave you hungry." He saved the seed of the most robust plants which produced mature beans the fastest.

Humans have been genetically modifying plants and animals via selective breeding for as long as there has been agriculture and animal husbandry. We remain suspicious, however, of genetic modification which occurs at the cellular level, or the introduction of DNA fragments of unrelated species to achieve certain traits. Industrial agriculture has become heavily dependent on these technologies. Corn, soy, wheat, canola, sugar beets, cotton, alfalfa and other staple crops are usually genetically modified to be "Roundup-ready," allowing crops to be sown in soil which has been treated with the weedkiller, saving time, cutting costs and increasing yields.

Industrial agriculture feeds a lot of people, and without it a lot of people would simply starve. But there are problems with the "Roundup-ready" system. Weeds develop resistance and become super-weeds. Soil loses fertility, particularly when chemical farming is combined with monoculture. Food crops lose some of their ability to absorb nutrients. We could talk for days about the health risk factors still argued in the scientific community.

Additionally, with a changing climate, some farmers are beginning to understand that resiliency is just as important as productivity, and resiliency is found in a diversity of crop varieties. This is why there will always be seed savers.

For a brief moment in time, when the pandemic and supply chain problems left shelves bare at the grocery, people began to rediscover the pleasures and the practicality of the home garden. The explosion of interest was reminiscent of the World War II era Victory Gardens. Seed companies ran out of stock quickly. Gardening supplies became scarce and expensive, and gold was worth its weight in fertilizer. Seed savers were little troubled by the "out of stock" notices in online seed catalogs, however.

Interest in gardening has waned again, now that supply chain problems are less acute. Unfortunately, prices have not gone back down, and there are fewer seeds in the higher priced packets. Grocery prices continue to rise, along with everything else, and there are still gremlins of uncertainty in the supply chain. Some fruits and vegetables are even being rationed at grocery stores in the UK.

"What do you think of the state of the world?" Someone asked me recently. "Save your seeds," I replied.

Banking Crisis

Two weekends ago, the financial industry faced the largest bank failures since the 2008 financial crisis. On Friday, March 10, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC) announced regulators closed Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) and took control of its deposits. Just two days after the collapse of SVB, regulators also closed New York-based Signature Bank. In an effort to shore up confidence in the banking system, the Treasury Department, FDIC, and Federal Reserve announced steps intended to protect customers and prevent additional bank closures. Under the plan, depositors at both SVB and Signature Bank — including those with holdings exceeding the \$250,000 insurance limit — gained access to their money on Monday, March 13.

United States Congressman
 Representative
 Andrew Clyde



President Biden broke his silence on the matter that Monday, where he delivered brief remarks but declined to answer legitimate questions about the future implications of the bank collapses. He vowed "no losses will be borne by the taxpayers," insisting the money will instead come from fees that banks pay into the deposit insurance fund. Yet while the President urged Americans to feel confident in the banking system due to the federal government's response, many are still concerned about the ripple effects these bank closures will have on the industry. In fact, trading was halted for multiple U.S. bank stocks when the market opened that Monday morning.

American taxpayers, who are already suffering due to President Biden's failed economic policies and runaway spending, should not be left to foot the bill in order to mitigate the fallout. Please know that I will continue monitoring the serious situation as it moves forward, and I will resolutely refuse to support a massive taxpayer-funded bailout.

Towns County Herald

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Towns County Community Calendar

First Monday of each month: School Board... HS/MS Media Center	6:45 pm
Every Tuesday: Storytime for Children... TC Library	10:30 am
First Tuesday of each month: Hiaw. City Council... City Hall	6 pm
YH City Council... YH City Hall	7 pm
Second Tuesday of each month: Conventions & Visitors Board... Civic Center	8 am
Second Wednesday of each month: Board of Elections... Elections Office	4 pm
Third Monday of each month: Planning Commission... Temporary Courthouse	6 pm
Third Tuesday of each month: Commissioner's Mtg... Courthouse	5:30 pm
City of Young Harris Planning Commission...	
Meeting Room in City Hall	5 pm
Water Board... Water Office	6 pm