

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

“The Rest of the Story”

As Paul Harvey used to say... REF: Veterans Corner TCH ISSUE 03/02/2022

More on the extraordinary story of Staff Sergeant “Billy” Boles. As they were crossing the Moselle River, a wounded soldier had to be left behind. With his Division preparing to move on, Billy requested to go back for his trapped brother. His CO reluctantly agreed, with the caveat that the rescue mission would be executed on a volunteer basis only. Billy was worn out from his prior escape from the NAZIS, however he and four others found their way back to their severely wounded brother. Billy allowed that they didn't have a stretcher, so they took a door from the Church, using it for their stretcher, brought him back to safety. This was an all night affair, and they rushed him back to the medics at sunrise. Billy later stated, “I don't know if he made it or not, but he was alive when we got to the medics and we felt good about that.” Being the kind of man he always was, in 2008 Billy found an opportunity to return to that very Church and donated his personal money for cost of the door! Do we even have folks like that today?!

His letter home, June 7, 1945: “I wish all of us could get home together. Simpson, Edwin and the rest. I get plenty to eat and plenty of sleep here. I stay in bed where the sun can shine on me. It's nice to have a bed again. P.S. The Captain just told us we would be on the boat before Sunday. If we do, I will be in the States before this letter. Billy”

On 12-22-1944, two friends of the 7th Armored Division were separated, both had been taken as POW. Moved to different camps. These boys last saw each other in 1945 on a warm summer day in June as they boarded a ship bound for our USA. Through her dedicated and heartfelt efforts Billy's daughter, Diane finally located Billy's comrade, Douglas Collins. In 2004, Fifty nine years after they last saw each other, boarding separate ships they waved to come home. And they embraced again thanking God for being here, being alive, and being Great Americans. Billy had received two Bronze Stars, his CIB, and other awards. Again, Diane and her sisters went to work for their brave Father, Billy who never received his POW award. Due to Diane's efforts at Fort McPherson, where it all began, Billy was awarded his medals in a grand ceremony. Another one of our Greatest Generation had come full circle to where it all began.

Billy went on to serve as President of the Seventh Armored Division Association from 2011-2019, and under his leadership the 7th ADA traveled to reunions all across our USA!

“I will not forget, we all volunteered for the team; Boys wanting to become Men. We learned fast... and became brothers. And got so close it seemed that... if one of us was cut... WE ALL BLED. Thank You, Billy and Diane! -Semper Paratus

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran



Another Hornets' Nest

Politics contaminates anything it touches, and it gropes the truth unashamedly. Truth is always the first casualty of war, and it may be too late for an objective view on this war in Ukraine. For several weeks we've been saturated by the usual. War is evil. Look at the carnage. Hate the enemy. Here's the official version of the history of this conflict. Disregard any part we played in causing this catastrophe – we only have your best interests at heart.

War is the realm of politicians, presidents and premiers. It begins in the boardrooms of those captains of industry, the empire builders and world-improvers who tell politicians what to do. Again and again, we rally to the flags and the causes, believe what we're told and defend the honor of people we have never met, as if they were personal friends or family members. When our passions are stirred, we stop just short of worshipping these very human characters and caricatures, though they are possessed of the very same faults and weaknesses that we also endure.

In war, it is unwise not to seek to understand the national interests of an opponent, and Putin's Russia is undoubtedly an opponent in the long grinding “great power” struggle which continues to crush ordinary lives under its weight. War is a complex issue involving economics and emotions: fear and survival, patriotism, greed, and the lust for power. Unless we accept that the human motivations which move our opponents are identical to those which move us, we are already disadvantaged in any conflict.

Understanding the war in Ukraine requires a review of events which occurred only a short time ago relative to world history, but which have escaped the brief attention span of Americans today. In fact, some of the actors on the stage during the breakup of the Soviet Union are still at work today, on both sides of the Atlantic.

With the demise of the Soviet Union, the Soviets agreed to a unified Germany in exchange for a guarantee that there would be no further eastward expansion of NATO. They felt bullied into this agreement, but the Soviet military, aside from its massive stockpile of nuclear weapons, was weak, and the Soviet economy was in shambles. Nevertheless, since 1991, 14 former Soviet republics have been enticed into NATO, with a threat of more to follow. It was not the first time western promises to Russia were broken.

In the mind of many Russians, and most certainly in Putin's view, the loss of the Soviet republics was a temporary setback to the ultimate destiny of a greater Russian empire. Before we shake our heads in disapproval and pass judgment on a mindset which accepts the loss of blood and treasure in Ukraine as collateral damage, let's reflect on a little slogan we learned in grade school: “Manifest destiny, not to boast, means we'd expand from coast to coast.”

It was the widespread belief of many Americans in the 19th century that the expansion of the United States from Atlantic to Pacific, by any and all means, was our national destiny. From the perspective of human nature, we are uniquely qualified to understand how a nation and/or its leaders can compartmentalize wholesale slaughter, theft and genocide as collateral damage in the struggle for the greater “good.” But again, we have short memories, and we have also forgotten the hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties during our “nation-building” wars on terror, which has resulted in not a single democratic nation or ally.

To further understand our opponent, we also have to realize that no matter how educated or sophisticated we become, as adult humans we are never far away from the basic struggles we experienced on the playground as children. For example, I was a peaceful child in grade school and sought to avoid conflict whenever possible. As is often the case with such children, I was occasionally the target of bullies. I was willing to endure their abuse up to a point. The bullying stopped when it was discovered that making me cry was a dangerous thing to do. When that happened, I did not experience fear or feel pain, much to the dismay of several bigger and stronger opponents.

Many a battle has been lost when a stronger force pushes a weaker opponent to a point of desperation. Surrounding a desperate opponent is a classic battlefield blunder. If desperation does not win the day, a bitter enemy with a long memory and a desire for “justice” and revenge can be created.

After three decades of bullying, the United States and its allies finally made Russia cry. Humiliated by defeat in the Cold War, frightened by the capabilities of the American military as demonstrated in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkans, and enraged by the willingness of the US government to meddle in the affairs of its neighbors, Russia was pushed to that point of desperation during the Maidan Revolution in Ukraine.

In 2014, The Obama Administration, through the office of Vice President, Joe Biden and Assistant Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland, interfered directly in the internal politics of Ukraine and orchestrated a revolution which replaced a government friendly to Russia with one which considered it an adversary. If you can imagine our reaction should Russian operatives conspire with Texas separatists to successfully leave the United States and then petition to join the Russian Federation as an ally, you might come close to understanding Putin's view on events in Ukraine. In desperation and in anger, Russia annexed Crimea and began to pursue objectives in the Eastern Donbas to further protect its flank from NATO.

Behind the pomp and circumstance, flag waving and noble-speak, nations on both sides of the Atlantic have long been cursed by leadership top heavy with playground bullies who throw rocks at hornets' nests and then run screaming home pursued by stinging bees. Then from a safe distance, adopting the somber mantle of leadership wrapped in patriotism, they send someone else to dispatch the hornets, by setting the woods on fire. The world burns, and they never even feel the heat.

Thus, we have a brief history of the war in Ukraine, which doesn't begin to touch on the national and cultural issues involved. Crimea should have been a warning, but that lesson was ignored by the Biden Administration and its NATO allies, and now we have a different bully on the playground.

Outside The Box

By: Don Perry

worldoutsidethebox.com

Raised Bed Soils

Last week I talked about the different materials that can be used to construct a raised bed. This week I want to talk about what we put in the raised beds. There are many different options out there, some are better than others are, and some are cheaper than others are. So let's talk through some options for soil in your raised garden bed.

Before filling up your raised garden bed figure out how many cubic feet of soil you will need. This is a simple calculation of multiplying length by width by height. Let's use the dimensions 8 feet X 4 feet X 10 inches. In this case, we would multiply 8x4x0.833 because 10 inches is 0.833 feet. The answer is 26.66 cubic feet. If we wanted to convert cubic feet to a cubic yard, we would divide our cubic feet by 27. This means that we have close to one cubic yard of volume.

Now that we have the math out of the way and know how much material we need let's talk about what materials can be used. Obviously, you can use top soil to fill the raised bed. If you have extra top soil nearby this might make sense for you. Otherwise, I don't think that it's a great option. Top soil is not regulated in terms of what is in it. So you might have many chunks of bark that haven't started decomposing. If you don't know the source of top soil, it could also contain weed seeds that will grow and compete with your plants.

Another option would be to go to the store and buy bags of soil that are made for raised beds. This would give you quality soil in the beds. The flip side is that you're going to spend a lot of money doing it. You could easily spend \$\$\$ for soil using the dimensions I talked about earlier. If the money is not a problem, this is a quick and easy solution.

Compost is a great way to fill your raised beds. Compost that has completely composted will provide many nutrients to the soil. If you have your own compost you can use that, or you can buy compost in bulk. Some companies will deliver or if you have a pickup truck, you can use that. You can also buy compost in bags. A product like Black Kow is an example. Buying bags will be more expensive. One drawback to using compost is that the pH will most likely be high. This can lead to some nutrient shortages. Another thing to keep in mind with compost is that it will continue to decompose. This means that the amount you have will decrease and more will need to be added periodically.

The lasagna method is a popular way to fill raised beds. You alternate layers of brown and green material. Brown material is dry leaves, shredded newspaper, peat, and pine needles. Green materials are vegetable scraps, garden trimmings, and grass clippings. The green materials contain nitrogen and the brown materials contain carbon. Make the brown layers twice as thick as the green layers and it will compost down into a good material into which you can plant.

If you have beds that are very deep another option is the put branches in the bottom to fill up space. The branches will break down over time, giving you good material in which to grow.

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

UGA extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Letters To The Editor

Choose your invaders

Dear Editor,
Russophobia is the irrational hatred and fear of all things Russian. The recent letter accusing President Putin of being “Hitler-like” is an example of a psychopathic hatred of Russia. Had clearer heads prevailed before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, i.e., had the U.S. and NATO been willing to compromise on the issue of bringing Ukraine into NATO, which was organized in 1947 as an anti-Soviet military alliance, then maybe, the Russian invasion would have been avoided.

Today, NATO is a relic of the Cold War which ended with the Soviet collapse in 1990. NATO is also considered by The Russian Federation as a threat to its national security, just as Soviet missiles stationed in Cuba in 1962 was considered a threat to U.S. national security and which came closest to nuclear war between the U.S. and USSR. It is the height of hypocrisy for the U.S. to demand no Russian nukes in Cuba, but then, the U.S. justifies putting nukes in Ukraine and other countries on Russia's border.

Remember, it was the Soviet Red Army and people that defeated Hitler and the NAZIs in WWII. Russia lost over 30 million of its own citizens in The Great War and they are justifiably concerned with the reemergence of fascist forces, including neo-Nazis and nationalist parties which are extreme Russophobes, including U.S.-led Russophobes threatening Russia's border.

Lance Jobson

What Really Happened

Dear Editor,
Towns County has many wonderful places to eat and shop. Breakfast time will exceed expectations for information that is pertinent and vital to one's safety, security and overall wellbeing.

I took a family member to breakfast one time and he remarked to my wife that I spoke and carried on conversations with people I didn't even know. I laughed and told my wife, that we, those of us who live here, for better or worse, are in this thing together and most of us speak the same language.

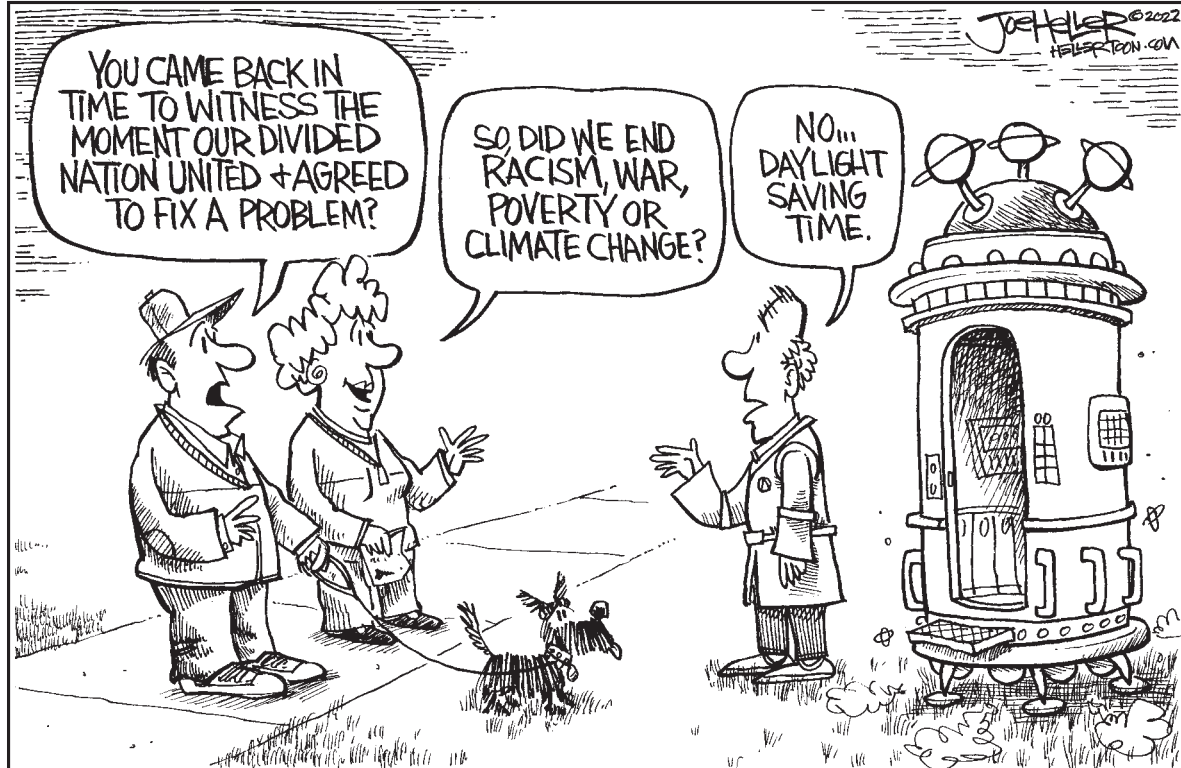
An early morning outing at most of the breakfast spots in town will get you well-fed and up to date on what is going on locally and around the world. You may have watched your favorite news the evening before, or perhaps listened to the radio version of the news on the way to breakfast.

That information you may have acquired by television or radio, will not impress the commentators gathered around the tables eating breakfast and dispensing the absolute gospel regarding what is happening and going on in our world.

Participate, or just listen. It's not leaves-dropping. Most of us are hard of hearing and talk loud enough to inform you, whether you want to be informed or not. Know this!

You will leave your favorite restaurant with your hunger satisfied, and your knowledge of local and world events honed to a fine edge.

Gene Vickers



Habitat for Humanity

I often write about the importance of Habitat for Humanity in our community and the blessing of shopping local in our ReStore for gently used items, however I never explain the moral compass, or the range and depth in which the Habitat for Humanity reaches and stands for every day.

Habitat for Humanity at its core is a non-profit organization with Christianity at its core. We are not just located in the United States or in local communities like ours we are a global phenomenon. Habitat's values include a focus on shelter, advocating for affordable housing, promoting dignity and hope, and supporting sustainable and transformative development.

A Focus on Shelter. I think of the verse in the Bible that speaks of a house built on solid ground, and the house built in the sand. A house built in the sand cannot stand. Matthew 7:24-27, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.” The storms came but the foundation stood strong because it was built on the rock. “Everyone who hears the words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.” The storms came and the foundation crashed and crumbled because it was built on sand. Habitat puts a focus on shelter, ensuring a firm foundation, for our community members, creating a reliable place to call home.

Advocate for Affordable Housing. I often think of the work we do here at Habitat as being the hands and feet of God. Here at Habitat, we advocate for those in need working to be the helping hands to our community. Ephesians 2:10, “We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Promote Dignity and Hope. Galatians 5:13, “You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.” I love this verse and think it correlates perfectly to this value. We lift each other up, and love one another, bringing about hope for a future, and dignity in the fulfillment of this life.

Support Sustainable and Transformative Development. This value has me thinking about the strong tower our God is. He is always transforming us and renewing us as we stand under his protection. Proverbs 18:10, “For the name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.”

Habitat for Humanity works hard to uphold these values, being the hands and feet of God. Our organization here in Towns and Union Counties continually strives to be better at what we do everyday so that we can spread the truths of Christianity through the work that we do in our community.

Habitat Happenings
Madelyn Bailey



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