

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

March 29: A Solemn, Special Day

Many fine men and women amongst us served our nation in and during the Vietnam War and that tumultuous, confusing and divisive era. Every one of those Americans who served HONORABLY, deserves special credit, recognition, and honor from our entire American population, that was cast aside for years afterwards. There was even visceral hatred of our returning Vietnam soldiers, sailors, Marines, Airmen and Coasties demonstrated in various locales throughout America. I cannot say here, precisely what I think of those folks who exerted such horrible, miss-directed, many times drug induced emotions upon our best of the best men and women who only wanted to serve America, their beloved country, certainly not government! As time evolved, many folks came to realize that our self-serving politicians failed in their mismanagement of that awful war. A war, like all wars that took many lives and left many others crippled and wounded for life. Many of our fine folks, through no fault of their own were left suffering from invisible wounds, often referred to as PTSD. In my opinion the post-Vietnam War suffering could have been curtailed and maybe eliminated if our returning military folks and indeed those who served elsewhere could have been greeted and treated like our WWII Veterans. However that was not to come about for years. That is a sad statement upon America's people who DARED NOT SERVE IN UNIFORM, but just as importantly, the political elitists who plain out "messed things up"; Severely. Wars must be fought on occasion due to evil, which exists throughout our world. However strong forthright, American Patriots are needed as leaders who understand how to plan these awful events from beginning to end with an exit strategy upon achieving our goal of WINNING. And in spite of what we've been told our forces won each and every major, battle fought over there, in a foreign nation ostensibly to stop the advance of Communism which would overwhelm and destroy the simple lifestyle of the South Vietnamese agricultural people who never meant to harm anyone. The total takeover for money and power comes to mind.

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



The effort to try and make-up for past sins seems to be the best we can do and in 2017, President Trump signed our NATIONAL VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY into law occurring each year on March 29. This was a very brutal war, with over three million casualties. This day, and remember it always so that we may honor all our Veterans who fought in this conflict. Did you know that this War began in 1955? Continuing until officially terminated on March 29, 1975, our second longest war, aside from the Afghanistan War. Over 2.7 million Americans served during this effort. And just to think how many families and loved one were affected! As many of us recognize, those who never came home are amongst our true heroes, now residing at the Right Hand of our Supreme Commander.

Please never forget those who have done their best, sacrificed much, much, much more than we'll ever comprehend. Appreciate and honor those with whom we are Blessed to have home with us. Not wanting to go to war, they did, and those who were drafted and didn't run off, deserve extra credit. It was President Donald Trump who signed the Act on March 29, 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.

May God Bless them and may ALL Americans honor and appreciate those who have given so much for all of us!
 -Semper Paratus

Letters To The Editor

Community Spirit

Dear Editor,
 I didn't recognize the older gentleman as he entered the restaurant. The waitress seating him asked, "Are you by yourself today?" "Yes, ma'am," he responded. On the way to his table, some customers nodded and others said good morning to the stranger.

There are many things about this area that make it a great place to live. Newcomers quickly blend into the friendly culture here because the locals show them how to do it. Therefore, no one feels alone here. The community, as a whole, projects warmth and acceptance, always willing to reach out to others. The overall consensus is one of neighbors and friends, helping each other and showing a gracious spirit to those moving to our area. It's a wonderful place to live and community spirit envelops everyone. I like the old saying, "I'm not a local, but I got here as quick as I could."
Gene Vickers

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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



A Bag With Holes

"Your silver has become dross, your best wine mixed with water."

These words were written over 2700 years ago, but if you happened to see Bloomberg's graph of FRED (Federal Reserve Economic Data) last week, you might think they were written yesterday but for the language of King James.

If your Early Modern English is a bit rusty, "dross" means impure, inferior. It is the scum that forms on the surface of molten metal. It is a powerful image of a debased currency as the fingerprint of a corrupt society. The author goes on to say, "Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves." The debasement of a currency, when properly "managed," is indeed theft.

Why is it theft? Empires are built on conjured money borrowed from future generations. When that debt becomes unsustainable, inflation makes it easier for the empire builders to service the debt. Meanwhile, on Main Street, wages do not keep pace with an inflated money supply, and over time, first to maintain an expected lifestyle, then to service growing personal debt, people give up real wealth assets. They sell property, mortgage homes, and go farther into debt. Real wealth over time is then transferred from the productive class to the parasitic class, and almost in lock step with the inflation of the money supply.

The Bloomberg chart tracks the Fed's balance sheet reserves: gold, legal tender notes, as the "real wealth" percentage of total assets, and compares it to the purchasing power of the consumer dollar based on the value of a buck in 1967. The graphs both look like double black diamond ski slopes, or the warning signs on the mountain saying, "Trucks Use Lower Gears." Unfortunately, there is no "Runaway Truck Lane" for the consumer.

Seven bucks for a gallon of milk. Six bucks for half a bag of tortilla chips (and a half bag of air). The seed packets that used to contain 100 seeds now hold 20, and they are more expensive. A burger and fries for two people will tear up a \$20 bill. "And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes."

This comes at an unfortunate time for an aging generation rapidly joining the ranks of people living on fixed incomes, dependent on Social Security and volatile retirement accounts subject to the vagaries of the stock market, and now targeted by the parasitic political class for increased taxation.

What to do? Tracey and I have asked people how they get by. The answers may surprise you, or make you uncomfortable. When you're raising kids on two incomes and living paycheck to paycheck, or you're considering the very real possibility that your lifespan may outlast your retirement account, the sooner you wake up to basic math, the better. Many Americans, like frogs in the pot slowly brought to boil, did not wake up in time to prevent scalding. US household debt is at record levels to the tune of \$16.5 trillion, or almost \$100K for each household.

So, if you're noticing that the water is getting uncomfortably warm, this is what people are doing to turn down the heat. The biggest challenge seems to be psychological. You have to realize that the lifestyle you ordered is no longer in stock. Equally important, we end the addiction to pursuing the things we think we want and develop the habit of wanting the things we have. "I used to take things to the thrift store and then buy more stuff to replace them," said one acquaintance. "Now I'm selling stuff on Ebay and learning to repurpose things." "We spend more time shopping," said someone else. "We don't dare go into Walmart without a list. If we stick to the list, it can cut the cost of that trip in half."

Tracey and I comparison shop online. There are still deals to be found, sales, overstocks, clearance, mark downs, coupons. When I was confronted by 5 brands of half bags of chips for \$6, an extra minute or two located the \$3 half bag. It was on the top shelf, hard to see, hard to reach, but it was there. We also like curbside pickup. It saves time, and it saves money. You get exactly what's on your list, and you're not tempted to fill up the grocery cart with what we called "pogey bait" in the Corps.

"We shop the perimeter of the grocery store. We have to plan meals better and cook at home more often, but it's a lot healthier and we feel better. During the pandemic we noticed how much more money we had in the bank account simply because we couldn't eat out."

My brother knows how to stretch a dollar farther than anyone I know. As an engineer who knows how to fix just about anything, he has a strong aversion to buying anything new when so much quality has been discarded. "People don't know how to repair anything, and when it breaks, they give it or throw it away and buy something new. A lot of times a single component or tweak is all it takes to get it working again." He rarely eats out. On his days off he prepares meals for the week to take to work. He paid cash for the last vehicle he bought...

Ironically, you could take away half of the mean wealth of Americans and we would still be wealthier than most of the rest of the world. We might have only a dozen brands of breakfast cereal on the cereal aisle instead of fifty. We might have to car-pool more often in a smaller vehicle or take the bus from time to time. There would be considerably less "buy now" clicking on the internet. There would be wailing and gnashing of teeth and great mental and emotional anguish, even though in material terms we would still be wealthier than parts of the world where people live longer than we do, have less crime, less infant mortality. Perhaps, with a bit of belt tightening, we would become less spiritually and morally bankrupt along with our improving finances. The die has been cast, financially. There is no political solution. If we tighten those belts now, determine to address the addictions that have created that \$16.5 trillion debt, we will be much better off, in fact we may not even notice when that choice is forced upon us.

Outside The Box

By: Don Perry
worldoutsidethebox.com

To Burn or Not to Burn?

We are entering the time of year when prescribed burns are more and more common. I want to talk about why prescribed burns are important. I think that generally we understand that they are important, otherwise we wouldn't take the risk of doing them, but they are important in more ways than many understand.

UGA extension
 UNION COUNTY
Watching and Working
 Jacob Williams



To talk about the importance of prescribed burns we also have to talk about natural forest succession. Forest succession can look different depending on where you live. For us, it can start with meadow lands. Meadows would have plants like asters, queen Anne's lace, and broom sedge. After about 5 years, the meadows will start to grow up some more and brush like sumac and blackberry will start to take over. At year 20, we would see a young pine forest start to emerge. This pine forest would start to mature and at about year 70, we would see an understory of hardwoods begin to emerge in the mature pine stand. From year 70 on, the forest begins to transition to a hardwood forest. At 100 years, we've reached the forest climax which is a mature oak-hickory forest. If there is no intervention, either natural or man-made, our forests will remain at the mature oak-hickory forest stage.

So, what's wrong with allowing our forests to stay at the mature oak-hickory stage? And if it is wrong then what can be done about it? To answer the first question when all or a majority of our habitat is in the mature oak-hickory stage we have less diversity of habitat. Diversity of habitat is necessary to be able to support a diversity of wildlife, plants, fungi, and everything else that creeps, crawls, and grows in the woods. Deer need a diverse habitat to thrive. They need brush cover to protect fawns. Mature forests have very little cover and leave fawns exposed to roaming coyotes and bears. The deer also need mature forest for the mast crop (acorns and other nuts) that those trees provide every year. Our deer population is in decline, which is not due to overhunting as there are fewer and fewer hunters each year. Turkey populations are also in decline, in part because there is not sufficient brush cover for poult (baby turkeys). Bobwhite quail have become very rare in Georgia, because they need brush for their habitat. Grouse have also become rare because they make their home in the transition area between habitat types. These are just a few examples of species that we have seen a decline or significant decline in population.

Controlled burns reset the natural forest succession process, allowing a diverse array of habitats that support a diverse array of wildlife. Historically, in the southern US, wildfires would burn parts of the landscape every 1 to 3 years. Now in the southeast it's estimated that 4% of lands that could be burned are in a burn rotation. With the development that we have now it's a good thing that we don't have wildfires raging through the southeast every 1 to 3 years. Controlled burns are able to keep the fuel load in the forest down to prevent that from happening. But if we don't have enough controlled burns or responsible timber harvest from public lands then we won't see the rejuvenation of the forest necessary for it to sustain a diverse group of species for generation after generation.

If you have questions about controlled burns you can contact the Georgia Forestry Commission, the US Forest Service, or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Shrink Washington, Grow America

As you know, the U.S. reached its \$31.4 trillion debt ceiling in January, prompting the Treasury Department to take so-called "extraordinary measures" to ensure the federal government continues paying its bills. Secretary Yellen has warned this will only buy a few months' time, putting the government in danger of defaulting on its debt by summer. I strongly disagree with the Secretary's assessment, as the nation continues to bring in over \$400 billion each month in revenue and a simple proper prioritization of debt payments first would ensure we do not default. But, as we inch closer to this "X-date," Washington is engaged in debt ceiling negotiations — which have been rife with political gridlock and partisan games.

United States Congressman
 Representative
Andrew Clyde



Yet the House Freedom Caucus is laser-focused on responsibly navigating the debt ceiling debacle and getting our economy back on track. In short, our "Shrink Washington, Grow America" framework outlines commonsense budget measures, including cutting current spending by ending numerous policies enacted by the Biden Administration and capping future discretionary spending at the Fiscal Year 2022 level over the next decade, while allowing for 1% annual growth. Our plan will cut over \$130 billion in Fiscal Year 2024 funding and save roughly \$3 trillion over the long term by eliminating woke, wasteful, and weaponized federal bureaucracy spending. For example, we propose restoring Clinton-era work requirements on welfare programs and unleashing domestic energy production by ending federal regulations and subsidies. As discussions move forward in the coming weeks, please know that I remain committed to restoring fiscal sanity in Washington and refuse to consider raising the debt ceiling without making significant spending reforms.

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.

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