

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Our Oldest WWII Veteran

Shirley Sonnenfeld will be 99 years of age in September.

America couldn't have existed without so many who wanted to serve, especially our ladies. Another wonderful WWII vet, a patriotic lady who enlisted in the US Navy because she simply "wanted to serve America;" thanks to Shirley Sonnenfeld for sharing her story with all of us.

Born September 12, 1922 in Bethlehem, PA. After high school at Liberty High, Shirley completed a two year secretarial course at Temple University, then spent time working at Bethlehem Steel Company.

In Shirley's own words she "didn't want for anything" as a child, as her family furniture business was adequate for family needs. However she was still committed to serve our WWII effort and enlisted in the Navy.

She went to boot camp at Hunter college campus and then on to advanced training in Ames, IA. Serving as a Yeoman with Bureau of Naval Personnel near Arlington, VA, and via hard work and study Shirley advanced from E-3 to E-4, E-5, and E-6 PO1 Yeoman. She happily and proudly served America from 1943-1946.

Simultaneously, Shirley's husband-to-be was also serving in the US Army in Europe, as an engineer. As Shirley fondly put it, "he was building bridges and blowing up bridges". Martin "Marty" Sonnenfeld worked his way up through the ranks from private to lieutenant, enjoying his time with escapades as snow skiing, sans permission from the US Army. He was extremely athletic. Marty was to see the horror of what so many wars are about when he, as a part of Allied forces went in and freed the remaining victims of the Polish death camps.

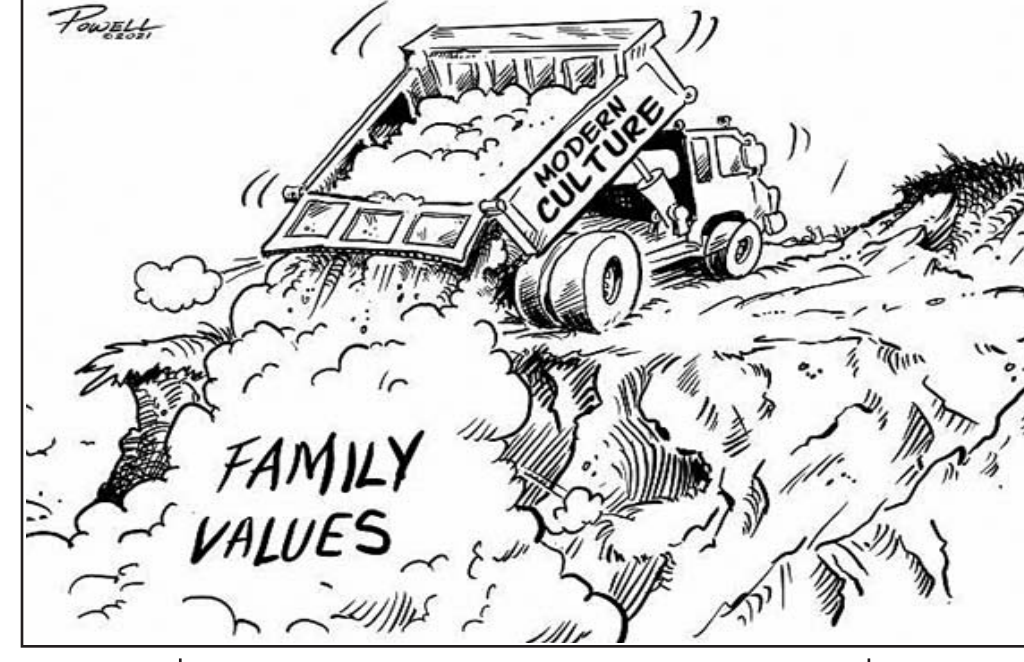
After military life Shirley kept meeting Marty at the bus stop, back home in Pennsylvania, and in August of 1946 they married. Soon they were "raising kids" and pursuing Marty's yearning for education, he a teacher and Shirley as the school secretary. Marty also designed and built a school and "special education" program for kids who otherwise may have been considered non-productive, focusing on their natural abilities and aptitudes, refining these skills into such activities as building fine and sturdy furniture.

After retiring in the 1980s they moved to Sarasota, FL and for 25 years Shirley once again volunteered, full time, serving the Veterans' Administration, the city hospital for seniors, and the Jewish Synagogue.

Due to Marty's health problems and with the assistance of one of their daughters, who was a Registered Nurse already living here, they moved here in 2008. Marty passed in February 2014.

Their family is quite a large, happy, and beautiful example of Americana with Shirley and her three daughters, Nancy, Sandra, and Anita, including four grandchildren, and now great grandchildren. The plethora of framed family photographs and family artwork Shirley maintains is nothing short of beautiful, and tells the story of America's veterans and their love of country and family, without which our nation would flounder and fail.

Shirley says she'd gladly enlist again. Thank you, Shirley!



Bearwise

Black bears are out and about. While people enjoy having them around, it's important to remember that these animals are wild. Sometimes, when you see the bear time and again you may feel a personal connection to that bear. That feeling is probably not reciprocated. Interactions with bears are inevitable to a certain level, so let's talk about what to do if you see a bear and the steps that you can take to make sure that your home doesn't become a playground for bears.

Firstly, it's important to remember that we live in an area with copious amounts of national forest. That means black bears are out there. Hopefully, though if you encounter one you'll know what to do or how to make your space less attractive to them. Bears will typically live 8 to 15 years. The females can weigh up to 300 pounds and the males over 500 pounds. The females will give birth in their den in late January. Those cubs will stay with the mother until the following spring when she kicks them out.

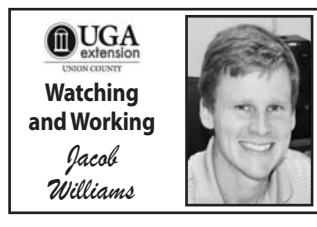
Bears are omnivores meaning that they eat whatever is easily available depending on the time of year. Their natural diet is berries, fruits, acorns, grasses, insects, and even mammals. Bears can be attracted by the smell of human food if there is not much natural food available for them. Bears are naturally afraid of humans. However, bears that have been feeding on human food lose their natural fear of people, and become a danger. Bears will usually remain in an area where food is readily available, so the best way to make sure that bears don't move into your backyard is to remove the sources of food.

Never feed bears either intentionally or unintentionally. They will learn where food is available and become a nuisance for you. Make sure that your garbage is in a place that they can't reach. That means leaving it inside the garage or if you're out camping hoisting your trash in the air or putting it in a bear proof trashcan. Bird feeders can attract bears because of the high calorie content in bird feed. Bring your bird feeders in when bears are active. Usually by the time bears are active there is plenty of natural food available for birds. Don't leave pet food out. Just give your outdoor pets enough food for one feeding. If you have a grill, clean and store it after use. Bears will be attracted by the smell of your grill so keep it out of reach for them. And finally, let your neighbors know if you see a bear so that they can take precautions too.

Most bears are not aggressive, unless they have been fed by humans before. Bear relocation is usually not an effective control option. Bears that are relocated might be moved to an area that another bear has already claimed, leading to territory fights, or the bear may try to return to its home and be struck by a vehicle. Relocation is a last resort.

If you do encounter a bear in the open make yourself look big and wave your arms and shout while backing away slowly. Do not get between a mother bear and her cubs. If you are attacked fight back aggressively with anything you can get your hands on. Bears can be dangerous but know that there are no recorded fatalities in Georgia.

If you have questions about bears in our area contact your local Extension office for more information or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.



Watching and Working
Jacob Williams

My Favorite Window

When I was a young lad we moved to Chicken City on a rainy day in May. Our house was on a hill in a quiet neighborhood that, looking back, resembled Mayberry, North Carolina in many ways. At the end of that memorable day spent exploring the new house and its mysterious basement, the wooded backyard and the nearby park, I came home to discover an orange glow emanating from my parents' bedroom.

Through the western window the sun was shining from a narrow band of sky between the horizon and the thick cloud bank above, which glowed with coral and bronze and stretched to infinity.

I returned to that window many times growing up, and for a while as an adult when circumstances decided that we would live in the old family home for a while. The folks were gone. The town of my youth was gone and Mayberry had become Mount Pilot. Children no longer roamed the neighborhood. Floodlights glared through the woods that remained, and there was nothing mysterious left except for memory.

Yet the sun still shined through that window, and a bit of sky still stretched to infinity, beyond the loud music and drunken shouts of the neighbors and the sounds of traffic. At the end of a hard day I would sit with a cup of tea and look out that window and travel back in time.

This morning my favorite window looks out over the deck and into the forest. The sun is just now coming over the mountain and illuminating the tree tops. Dogwoods in full bloom punctuate the advancing green palette of spring.

There are dewdrops on Tracey's container garden of broccoli and lettuce, and I'm already thinking about the salad we're going to make for lunch.

A steaming mug of cappuccino sits on the desk and I can taste the sourwood honey in the foam. A squirrel is cutting leaves from the top of a giant poplar tree that will soon be covered in blossoms, and a yellow hammer woodpecker is arguing with a cardinal about the suet feeder.

Watching a doe and her fawn grazing on the fresh grass that the recent rain inspired, I hear Cuthbert the Rooster crowing and my thoughts travel to the other side of the wood as I wonder if our neighbors will need more eggs today.

How nicely this window frames those earthly concerns that are the most important, the enterprise and well being of family, the support and companionship of neighbors and community, and the good health of all the residents of this mountain forest entrusted to our stewardship.

Outside the frame of my window and beyond the mountain, the noise and the stink of civilization accompanies its insatiable appetite to digest the planet.

Ozymandias builds his monuments and Silicon Babel baits the masses with bread and circuses, herds them with fear and outrage.

Same as it ever was, but magnified by technology. Babylon wants to frame reality for us. Fear this. Buy that. In the vast tapestry of human experience, breaking news shows us every broken thread. It pulls at the edges of the fabric and urges us to grab a corner and tug. Real life and real suffering will always fray the cloth, but if we can only see the damage, we forget that we are also weavers with the ability to repair, to reinforce and to make new.

The babble of Babel does not describe the real world, but every day we believe it is real moves us a little closer to that reality.

The choice is important. The windows framed in our hands, carried in our pockets, in our vehicles, sitting on the night stand, dominating the den, are powerful. What they frame can aid us, or dominate us, and make no mistake – the intent to dominate has never been so apparent.

We can't always control what we see outside the real windows that show us the real world outside. We CAN choose what we see through everything that has a battery or a power cord. Most importantly, we have the power to frame what we see in our mind's eye. Choose wisely.

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 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.

Outside
The Box
By: Don Perry
worldoutsidethebox.com

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That is the ?

Are you fond of the works of William Shakespeare? Before you become giddy or gag, please hear me out. I pose the question with the welfare of our community in mind. Some people lap the prolific literary offerings of The Bard like sweet mountain honey and some remember having it force-fed in high school. One man's trash is another man's treasure, but when twains meet 'tis a far, far better thing.

Do you find yourself humming "Can You Feel the Love Tonight", written by Sir Elton John for the oh-so popular movie The Lion King? Perhaps "Tonight" or "I Like to be in America" from West Side Story floats your boat more. Both these and countless other movies were borrowed from Willie's work. The Lion King from Hamlet and there can be no doubt West Side Story is a first cousin to Romeo and Juliet. These revenue producers were products of adaptability. It might be considered robbery, but what's in a name? To celebrate his life and work every April 23rd is designated Shakespeare Day.

On stages everywhere the efforts of much ado about everything are presented for fans and friends of fans, wrangled into attending. Practically every city with one holds a Shakespeare in the Park affair. Your patience is appreciated. I'm bringing the flight home.

Legend has it that Shake Rag Road, right here in Hiawassee, Towns County, GA is so called because producers of less than legal celebratory elixir, a little less than daintily, waved their hankies as a warning when revenuers were patrolling. Bootleggers, white-lightning, G-men, flapped, rags, and stalkers could be supplemented here to suit one's fence side. The act of warning could be teamwork or collusion. Choose your side.

With a little play on words and a little adapting, Hiawassee could premier ShakeRag on the Square next April 23rd. The possibilities are endless. The setting could be modern, historic, or futuristic. For that matter so could the vices. Look, I'm just the idea man. Acting directors, costume designers, casting directors, writers, caterers, and someone to discuss film rights with Tyler Perry will be needed when the fance spreads. I'm giving you this idea for no monetary compensation. It's my contribution to my community. You're welcome. This revelation may be received as a grand idea or that I'm as crazy as bat poop. Bat poop, also known as guano, is bagged and merchandised as excellent fertilizer. It's all about adaptation, good people.

See You Around Towns!



Around Towns
Dale Harmon

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Letters to The Editor

I'm Coronafused

Dear Editor,

So let me get this straight. If I get the vaccine, I still have to wear my mask. I still can't sit in a full church. I still can't eat in a full restaurant.

I have absolutely no guarantee of not getting the virus. But I just might have an anaphylactic reaction. I still could get COVID. And if I do get COVID, there's a 7 percent chance I might be hospitalized. And a possibility that I might die. Gee thanks, Dr. Fauci.

Tim Groza

Corporate Tax Increases

Dear Editor,

The April 21st edition of the Herald had a letter to the Editor promoting Biden's plan to raise taxes on corporations. The writer of the letter is either naive of corporate finances or was intentionally devious.

Corporations that have the pricing power through market dominance, patents, brand recognition, etc., will raise prices to offset the amount of additional taxes being paid. As almost everything you buy – food, clothing, utilities, insurance, medical service and prescriptions, cars and gas, etc. – comes from a corporation, everyone (rich, middle class or poor) pays more for the things they buy.

Corporate tax increases are highly regressive as they hit the poor the hardest, as in general, the poor spend a greater percentage of their income on goods and services.

Corporations that cannot raise their prices due to competitive reasons must deal with the higher taxes. There are various ways they can do so including laying off workers, shifting production overseas, lowering the quality of the materials they use in production, downsizing their package (the 16 oz package becomes a 12 oz package with the price remaining the same), etc. Whatever course the corporations choose to use to deal with the higher taxes, the American consumer pays for it in the end.

Liberals will argue that corporations should not do anything except take the taxes out of their profits, which reflects a lack of understanding of how corporations are valued.

A corporation's profits determine the value of the corporation stock. If you lower the profits of the corporation, you lower the value of the stock of the corporation.

Most stock is owned by individuals. Lower stock values hurt people financially, especially retirees and people saving for retirement, who own stock in a mutual fund, IRA, 401K, etc.

Corporate tax increases place a double hurt on the middle class with both higher prices for the goods and services they buy, and lower savings for retirement.

Wayne Austin

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