

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Military Appreciation

Even though the month of May is officially designated as Military Appreciation month, our men and women who serve in uniform are always on duty 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. Our military bears the responsibility of being the exclusive reason we are still blessed to exist as the United States of America.

As such we should pray for, honor, respect and support our men and women in uniform, not just in the month of May, as designated by Congress in 1999, but EVERY DAY.

Amongst us we have many who have done their duty donning the various uniforms of one of our five branches of our military services and received Honorable Discharges upon coming back into civilian life. They too deserve our respect and honor everyday.

As such, here in Towns County we have a plethora of Veterans, many of whom you and I wouldn't suspect they once did their job to protect America, no matter what was required. Most are humble and many do not belong to any of our various Veterans Service organizations, such as those attached to VFW Post #7807 or our American Legion Post #23.

In our America's existence those who never came home are our real Heroes, having made the ultimate sacrifice. We shall never be able to repay that debt to them or their families. Only by our perpetual honor and respect can we begin to do an inkling of justice in our hearts and minds for them.

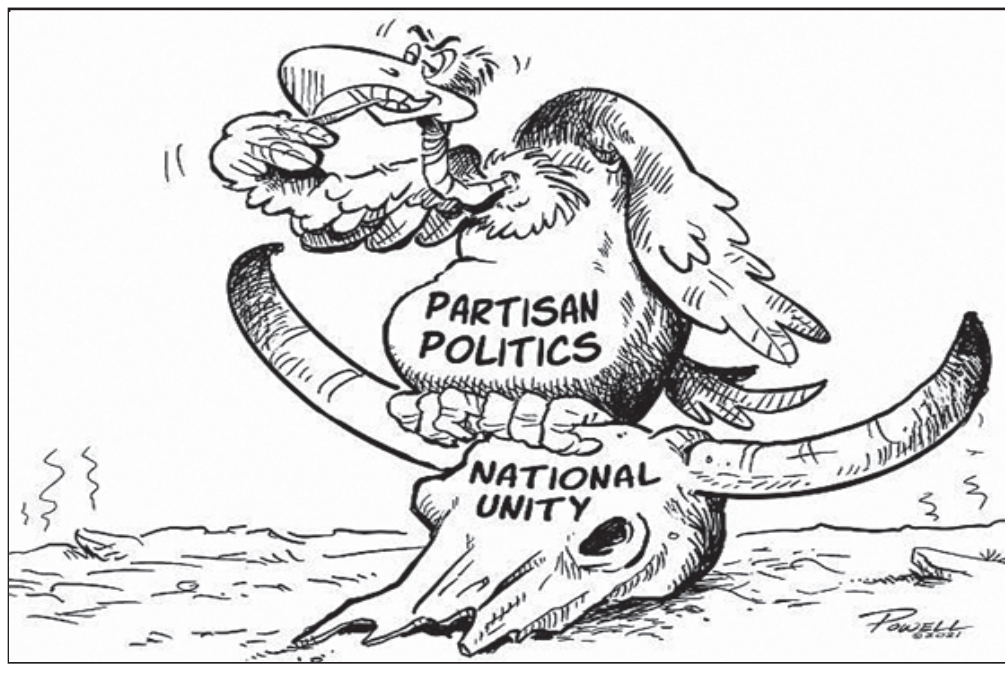
As such, on Monday, May 31 this month we will stand proud on Memorial Day, to be held at our Towns County Veterans Memorial Park at eleven AM, sharp. Come and share the pride and honor shared by so many citizens and Veterans of our North Georgia home.

Let's also share the blessings of having two elder Veterans of WWII living here, Shirley Sonnenfeld, US Navy is almost 99 years of age. Vaughn Barrett is 100 years of age and served meritoriously in our nation's Army during WWII. Look to future columns in our TCH for detailed history of what Mr. Barrett did during those years.

Plus we have a wonderfully nice gentleman, Bill McClain, US Army Veteran who achieved 91 years of age on Monday May 24, 2021. He is a blessing to us all in many ways. There simply is no room in all the print publications in America to honor all those who have served, sacrificed and even died for ALL of us. We can never know all of them or what their families had to endure.

What we can do is to appreciate and honor all of our men and women who have served a cause far greater than themselves. Never, ever forget! -Semper Paratus

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



Tomato Growing

Tomatoes are one of the most common vegetables in home gardens. They are great on a sandwich or eaten like an apple. You can can them and use them in all different recipes. My favorite is a fried green tomato. Tomato growing is rewarding and delicious.

Tomatoes are unique in that there are more tomato varieties out there than other garden plants. That's because of the multitude of different ways that tomatoes can be used. So when you're planting tomatoes, start with the end goal in mind. Use a variety that works well for what you want to do with it. Also, take a look at the disease resistance that tomato has in it. This can vary a lot by variety. Disease resistance will give you a serious leg up and give you a lot fewer headaches as the season goes on.

Watching and Working
 Jacob Williams



Wildfire and Homeowners Insurance

Here is something we do not think about until we need it and many people find out too late that their insurance coverage is inadequate in case of a wildfire.

Every year, the wildfire season seems to start earlier and burn later. In fact, the National Interagency Fire Center reports 2015 as having experienced the most dismal wildfire season on record in the United States — with more than 68,000 wildfires burning a whopping 10.1 million acres. In the past 3 decades, the length of wildfire season has increased worldwide by nearly 20%, according to the scientific journal Nature Communications.

While Georgia is not in the top 10 for acres burned by wildfires, homeowners are still at risk for the many small fires that occur each year and if your home is the middle of one it is bad thing for you.

Damage from wildfires and forest fires could be covered by your homeowner's insurance. While your dwelling coverage can help with expenses related to repairing or rebuilding your home (up to the limits you choose for your policy), personal property coverage can help replace any of your belongings that are destroyed. Plus, other structures protection can be a financial safeguard for things like a shed or gazebo.

Homeowners insurance could also provide coverage for additional living expenses (like food, a hotel, and transportation) if you are forced to evacuate due to a wildfire. And if your house gets vandalized while you're away, your policy may offer you protection in that circumstance too.

What is more, home insurance will typically help cover expenses related to smoke and soot damage, if the damage resulted from a covered event, like a wildfire.

Homeowners who live close to areas prone to wildfires and brush fires may pay more for coverage because of the financial risk posed to the insurer.

And some homeowners will flat-out be denied coverage under a standard home policy — often those who live within 2,500 feet of canyons, wildfire areas, or brush areas. These homeowners can often purchase a standalone fire policy to secure protection against wildfires.

Most insurers will pay up to a certain percentage of your dwelling coverage limit on your homeowners' policy if your trees, shrubs, or other lawn plants are damaged during a wildfire.

For example, many insurance companies will pay up to 5% of your dwelling coverage limit to help remove debris and replace any destroyed plants. Generally, your insurer will not pay more than \$500 per any one plant, including the cost to remove it. However, coverage does vary from company to company, so it is important to read the terms and conditions of your specific policy.

Of course, the best way to avoid having to file a wildfire insurance claim is by reducing your home's risk of damage. The Firewise Communities program recommends taking these steps when it comes to home maintenance and landscaping: Use nonflammable construction materials, like roofing and materials for exterior walls; Apply fire-retardant finishes to exterior wood; Keep gutters and roofs clean of debris; Remove tree limbs from attachments and overhangs; Make sure your home's windows are double-paned, or use tempered glass; Use fire-resistant plants and gardening materials; Keep trees clear of limbs and branches until it reaches the 10-foot mark; Clear your yard of dead vegetation and other debris; Maintain the space between your yard's trees; Make sure to mow, prune, and water your yard on a regular basis.

It is important to note what not to do too — as in, do not store firewood close to your place between April and September, and do not store propane tanks against your home or underneath porches or decks.

It is also a wise idea to have a written evacuation plan that you and your family review on a regular basis. You can decide on safe family gathering points, alternative routes should the unexpected occur, and keep a list of important documents and emergency phone numbers.

And be sure to maintain a thorough home inventory of your more valuable belongings in case they're damaged or destroyed in a blaze — it can really expedite the claims process and help you get back on your feet faster.

We should mention that you should not dispose of any damaged or destroyed belongings until the claims process is complete. One of the most important things to do first is to understand your homeowner's policy to make sure you have adequate coverage for wildfires and other natural disasters before you have a problem. The key words here are, "might", "if", "May" and "could" which be the exits for insurance companies to deny insurance payments so find out before it is too late.

To check your coverage, call your insurance agent. For more information check www.firewise.org or www.chestchat-tred.org.

RC&D
Frank Riley
 Executive Director



Letters to The Editor

War Prayers

Dear Editor,
 The "Day of Prayer" report (TCH, 05-12-21) was more than a little troubling to this reader for the following reasons: Firstly, it defied reason to claim how great is this God, when this so-called All powerful, Creator of all things, created the very viral disease pandemic ravaging the world. Why would He create such misery and suffering in the first place? And why would anyone "pray" to such a cruel being?

Secondly: It is shameful folly to call for pro-war prayers promoting a world where war is perhaps the greatest plague ever suffered by humankind. If we as a society are ever to end wars of conquest, wars for diminishing resources, wars based on racism, then reason clearly demonstrates that endless wars, if not stopped, will be the violent death knell of the human race.

But "no," to the devout religious fanatic on all sides, war is to be tolerated, soldiers are to be prayed for and marched off to wars of patriotic "God and country" hysterical visions of grandeur. Military violence is not a solution to human survival, nor is prayer for the troops sent to fight endless wars based on religious mythological thinking.

Lance Jobson

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:

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 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.

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goes on.

You'll want to plant in an area that gets 6-8 hours of sunlight and has a soil pH of 6.2-6.8. Tomatoes can grow roots all along their stem. So when planting transplants plant them down to the first set of leaves. Plant them 2 feet apart in rows, and set rows 4-6 feet apart. Firm up the soil around the transplants to push out any air pockets. After transplanting put 2 tablespoons of 5-10-10 fertilizer around each plant.

Most plants will need to be staked. You can buy cages to stake the plants. Alternatively, you can use wooden stakes that are 5-6 feet long. Drive a stake into the ground between every other plant about 1 foot deep. You can take twine or strips of cloth and weave these around the stakes to support the plants. As the plants grow higher, you can add more levels of twine.

Apply 1.5 pounds of 10-10-10 fertilizer per 100 square feet prior to planting. Once tomatoes start forming on the vine and are the size of a quarter apply 1 pound of 10-10-10 per 100 square feet. Repeat that application every 3-4 weeks until harvest is finished.

Tomatoes need about 1-2 inches of water per week. If we don't get enough rain, you can supply the rest. When watering plants it's better to give 1 or 2 heavy soakings, than multiple light sprinkles.

There are many insects that can cause problems for tomatoes. Insecticidal soap does a pretty good job for most soft-bodied insects. It works well for caterpillars and insects that feed on the plants. Scout your garden regularly so that you quickly find new pests. Pests are much easier to control in small numbers and when they aren't full-grown.

Blossom end rot is caused by a calcium deficiency. Maintaining a good pH, keeping plants well watered, and having enough calcium in the soil will prevent blossom end rot. Foliar sprays to give calcium are only short-term fixes. Healthy soil and good water practices will eliminate this problem.

Tomatoes are best if they fully ripen on the vine. However, if you pick them before they are fully ripe you can set them out in a room that's around 70 degrees. I like to use the kitchen window sill.

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

Shortcomings

When the phone call came early from my daughter Emma, I knew something grand or tragic was afoot. Otherwise it would have been a text.

She has little a.m. time. The tentative plan for her and Henry to visit the elders had gelled.

I was punch-drunk elated. It had not been fully long since I'd seen them, but it had been too long. I've suggested several times that now John and I are no longer innkeepers, they could just move in with us.

They throw out the same lame excuses every time. The house they have in Atlanta, their jobs, Henry's mom and the left unsaid, that's the worst idea ever.

My father once said "For God's sake I hope you don't name children like you do pets". Simon Bleakman and Weggie Augustus, my feline friends, didn't seem fazed one way or another by their monikers.

"Dad, those cats don't come when called no matter what"

Dad ended the conversation with, "They're embarrassed other cats might learn those names belong to them."

Pets are one thing. Embarrassing one's children or in any way being less than a paragon, of everything too numerous to mention, is another. At my first prenatal visit my doctor noticed that I bit my finger nails.

She in no way sounded preachy when she said, "You know, your child may pick-up that nail biting habit from you."

Oh no, say it aint so! I'll never teach my child anything but wonderfulness. That was the last day I bit my nails and I'd rather eat sand than ever do it again.

When Emma was around 4 years old, her hair was cut by a popular stylist with a large, adoring following. He was also a friend of mine.

Being an only child himself and having no kids, he'd spent little of his adult life with children. "She's too short for you to reach. You need something for her to sit on." I told Curt.

He issued a gasp and told me in her presence, not to say things like that in front of Emma or she'd get "a being short complex".

Even Emma laughed when I said, "Curt, she's only 4, she'll grow". Curt twisted his ponytail, pursed his lips and mumbled "Guess you're right".

Expressing my joy about the upcoming visit I blubbered into the phone, "It seems like I haven't seen you in 40 years". That would have made Emma 8 years old the last time I saw her. She told me that I'd still recognize her although she has grown taller.

She also told me that for the most part she's overcome the complex inflicted upon her when she was 4.

Seems it only bothers her now when she's in line at an amusement park and an elf-looking figure with an extended hand, indicates "You must be at least this tall to ride this ride".

Emma is 5 feet 7 inches and wonderful. See You Around Towns!

Around Towns
 Dale Harmon



Towns County Herald

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