

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

August 4, 1790 to 2018

That was the 228th birthday of our very small but unique United States Coast Guard, an extremely multi-talented and multi-tasked military service dedicated globally to accomplish that deemed necessary for and by our Sovereign Republic, our USA.

The Veterans' Corner
 Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



Why today two weeks later, present this column after the fact, you might ask? Simply because as a Coasty, just as we always do, the choice was to dedicate more timely columns to others. Sacrificing for others, brothers and sisters in uniform and our nation is what our USCG and those serving in our other four branches of American military have always been about. There always has been a special bond between those of us who have served. A quiet humbling honor if you will. As with the USMC, USN, USAF, and US Army birthdays, those Veterans who served often hard, challenging years in those uniforms experience a remembrance, an honor and reawakening of that special bond with those we remember as we reflect back upon those bygone years, especially on those birthdays. Those still serving need our support full time! Without them we cease to exist.

Recently a friend called me advising me that he had watched a three tiered sniper team contest. A very grueling test of endurance, tactics and shooting skills between the elite most participants of the five branches of our military. Our USCG sniper team won hands down even beating out our US Navy Seals. My friend was laughing a little, even though he is a retired US Navy Veteran. He, too, shared his Navy years with our USCG.

Don't doubt for one second that ANY of those participants are less than the best of the best. Original act that created our USCG was signed into law by George Washington in 1790 was the "Tariff Act". What was our USCG merged with in 1915 to become permanently USCG? The US Lifesaving Service. What does our USCG Ensign feature? Eight white and red stripes.

A famous acting family all served in our USCG. Who? Lloyd, Beau, and Jeff Bridges. As an aside I sat with Lloyd Bridges on a military standby flight and spent that time talking to him on various subjects. We mostly talked fishing, shooting, swimming and scuba diving, as I knew him from his TV series. Didn't know why he was so fond of me in my dress uniform or why he asked the flight attendant for me to sit up front with him. He never told me that he was a Coasty. Just a genuine humble, nice guy!

The longest active duty CG aviator is known as the "Ancient Albatross". A very famous actor and writer served our nation in the USCG and has a CG vessel bearing his name, Alex Haley. Of all the federal departments that have overseen our USCG, it has never been under the Department of State. Colleen Cain was our first female USCG pilot, aviator, co-pilot and aircraft commander of our HH-52 rotary winged aircraft. She and two other Coasties gave their lives during a heavy storm on a SAR mission.

Semper Paratus

Letters to The Editor

Music on the Square

Dear Editor,
 As a citizen of Towns County but not in the city limits my wife and I have attended most of the performances this year of the Enchanted Music on the Square and we are greatly appreciative of The Mayor and the City Council for changing the venue of the Enchanted Music on the Square on Saturday nights. The events are more inviting, the asphalt road facing the stage is much more supportive of the portable chairs most everyone uses not to mention we are now not facing the afternoon sun while trying to watch the performers. And many thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Schott for arranging the musicians to perform. Most of all many thanks to Mayor Ordiales and her team of council members for making the decision to make the changes to make the evening more desirable and relaxing for the audience.

Perry Bush

It's Time to Work Together

Dear Editor,
 America is terribly divided now. It seems that if one side of the political aisle holds a position, the other side opposes it, no matter its merits. It seems that the idea of compromise is that we talk, and then do it my way. However, it was not always that way. There was a time in American politics when both sides could sit down together and discuss an issue and arrive at a common solution, and I believe it is possible again. After all, we are all Americans, and we share common values. We want to pass on a healthier, more prosperous world to our children. We care deeply about the values of kindness, honesty, fairness, and love of neighbor. We believe in loyalty, respect, and the sanctity of life. So, let us all decide to build on those common values and begin to work out the big problems of our times so that we truly can pass on a better world to our children. That means not only talking to the other person, but truly listening to the other person with the idea that we can learn something from them. It is time to begin to live our values of respect and love as we begin to work out our differences - both individually and as a nation. Our forefathers knew this well when they said, "United we stand, divided we fall."

One clear example of this is a caucus in the US Congress called the Bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus. This was begun by Citizens Climate Lobby to help our country work out its problems over climate change. It now consists of 43 Republicans and 43 Democrats sitting down at the table together to work on common sense solutions to climate change. Certainly, it has not solved this monumental problem, but it is a start. We MUST have true dialogue if we have any hope of solving problems in our world. We are America, and we can - and MUST - do this.

Vernon Dixon, MD

Thank You, Hiwassee City Council

Dear Editor,
 I wish to thank the Hiwassee City Council for rejecting the resolution proposed by a local environmentalist to press the Congress regarding implementation of taxing producers of fossil fuels. As we are all aware the carbon tax will be passed on to the consumer, which will then increase expenditures involved in goods and services production. As a result, a carbon tax would be detrimental to the economy. In truth, it's a sneaky tax that turns out to be a levy on work, business and American consumption while enlarging government even further. Is anyone for that? And of course, the idea that these taxes will be returned to the American citizen in the form of a rebate is a ludicrous assumption.

Tim Groza

Distilled Wisdom

We have some practical advice for you this morning. It is the distilled wisdom of many hundreds of thousands of miles traveled on the highways commuting, towing and hauling.

It comes at a time when the veneer of civilization that covers our civil society has grown thin in places, and the roadways are beset by an unusual number of, well, we can't print what we sometimes say when we encounter them on the road, but for the purposes of this discussion we'll refer to them as "organs" and "orifices."

That's a good segue to our first recommendation, which is: Don't take anything personally. While it's true that for some people the automobile suggests an illusion of empowered anonymity similar to social media, an illusion which can reveal the more unpleasant aspects of a damaged psyche, many of the people acting like idiots on the highway, really are idiots.

For some the condition is more or less permanent but there are also many for whom an almost immediate lowering of intelligence occurs when entering a vehicle. They don't mean to single any one person out for abuse, it's just that they're not very smart, and for many the effects of medication, intoxication and cell phone distraction are indistinguishable from stupidity.

Sometimes it helps to forget for a moment that there is another human being behind the wheel of vehicle crossing over the center line or pulling out in front of you or changing lanes unexpectedly. Think of that vehicle as simply an inanimate but dangerous obstacle that needs to be avoided, and give it plenty of room.

You wouldn't get angry at a tree that falls across the road, and thinking of other vehicles as being devoid of human consciousness can help you avoid unpleasant feelings. (This is most important if you travel frequently, since you will often encounter drivers devoid of consciousness.)

It's above my pay grade to explain why, but sometimes when you're traveling a distance on an interstate, you will encounter idiots traveling in packs. Packs of idiots are the scourge of every long distance traveler. I think it has to do with some kind of natural attraction for each other shared by drivers who take things personally.

It probably starts with one stupid or selfish maneuver. Someone is following too closely and the car in front speeds up. Someone fails to yield the left lane. Someone insists on going first and unnecessarily passes someone else who also insists on being in front. Someone really bad at the risk versus reward assessment thinks that shaving ten minutes off of a trip is worth risking her own life and the lives of everyone else she passes while she weaves from lane to lane.

Unfortunately, traveling the speed limit exposes you to a higher number of packs of idiots. You can see them approaching in the mirror. The simplest thing to do is to stay calm and maintain your speed while the pack eventually passes you. Beware the sometimes overwhelming impulse to join it.

In heavy traffic it is often difficult to escape a pack of idiots, and sometimes packs take on really unpleasant and even dangerous tones. In this situation it might be best to pull over or take an exit. Get a cup of coffee or top off the tank. Allow the dangerous pack to get a few miles ahead where it will eventually dissipate.

The next piece of advice is specific to rural areas like ours. I'm sure you've seen it often. I call it, "The Jack-in-the-box syndrome." You're on a long straight stretch of highway. There are no cars in front or behind you, and in the distance you see a car waiting to pull out onto the road. You get closer and closer until, at the last possible moment of safety (including the hard braking that you do) the car pulls out. Hopefully it enters the opposite lane but all too often, it deposits itself in front of you in order to travel 30 in a 55 mph zone.

It's hard not to take that personally, but it's necessary, and it's vital in our area to be alert for such vehicles. A simple mnemonic device may help. When you see that car in the distance, begin reciting "Around, around the mulberry bush, the monkey chased the weasel, the monkey thought 'twas all in fun, 'POP' goes the weasel!" The extra bit of readiness may just save you some brake lining.

Another phenomenon familiar to local drivers is what I like to call "The Tractor Beam effect." You've heard of tractor beams if you ever watched Star Trek: An invisible beam of magnetic or attractive energy that reaches across space to pull at another object.

The tractor beam effect is often caused by organ and orifice drivers or by unconscious drivers who follow too closely. There are twenty cars lined up on the highway. You are maintaining your safe interval, but you look in the mirror and see the spinach in the teeth of the driver behind you. The tractor beam is engaged and you are forced to slow down, so you instinctively hit the brakes.

(This is a cautionary tale for urban drivers who visit our area and are accustomed to daisy-chain driving. We're not in such a hurry here. You can't push a rope, and you can't push a line of hops. Back off.)

I hope these suggestions are helpful. Remember, don't take anything personally. Think of other vehicles as dangerous inanimate objects. Avoid packs of idiots. Beware the Jack-in-the-box. Back off or experience the tractor beam effect.

Oh, and one more thing for some of you local drivers: The Post Office is NOT the entrance to Ingles.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Perspectives and Priorities

Seems like 3, maybe 4, years ago, a student of The University of Georgia's Agricultural Management Class, needed to complete a project on farm efficiency in order to earn his degree. He located a small hog farm not too far from Athens, and asked the old farmer if he could observe his operations for a few days, hoping to improve the farmer's procedures. The farmer welcomed the student. The young man was surprised on the first morning to see the farmer open the pen and take one hog to the creek for water. The farmer took the first hog, returned it to the pen, and took another hog to the creek for water. This went on until all 30 hogs were sufficiently hydrated. The UGA student excitedly told the farmer if he would take all of the hogs to the creek and back at one time, he could save hours. The farmer looked at the kid and asked, "Son, What's time to a hog?" This is perspective.

Two bulls were grazing on top of a hill. The young bull said, "Let's run down the hill and service a cow. The old bull replied, "Let's walk down the hill and service them all". This is priority, and a wise use of resources

What has any of this to do with Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge? Well is The Gardens' legacy to be a sometimes-visited local garden or a curiosity-evoking, educational and beautiful destination gem that helps support Towns County?

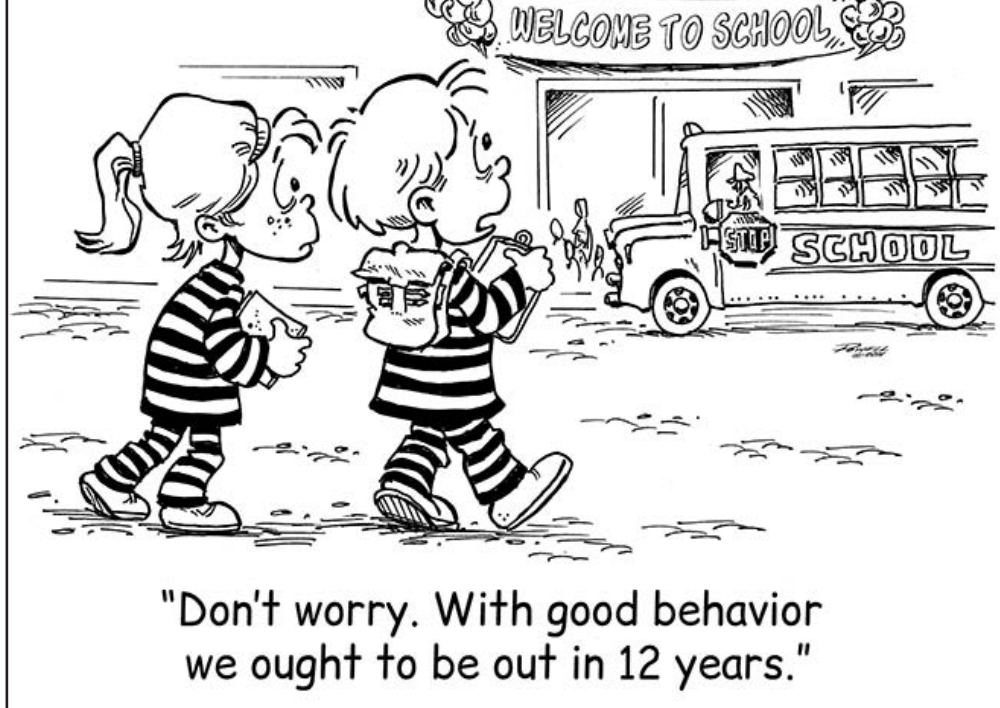
Before US Highway 441 was widened from Atlanta into NC, the town of Cashiers was, for the most part, a hamlet with few sources of income. With easy access provided by the new 4-lane, get aways to the mountains were doable for a weekend. Harried Atlantans and others converge on Cashiers with money to enjoy Mother Nature at her finest. The monetary influx provided means for needed improvements.

US Highway 76 is slated to be widened. It's a done deal. Easier access to Towns County will bring more people here. They too, will have money to spend. The Gardens has an opportunity and an obligation to earn a slice of the pie, but The Gardens must have fluidity or it will become stagnant.

Our kids and grand kids take for granted what to us is progress. The word harvesting for them has always applied to veins and organs for transplanting as well as crops. They cut their teeth on fast-paced, ever in motion Sesame Street. Email, electronically filed tax returns and bank statements are their norms. They have been there, done that and once is enough. Like it or not, they are now our present and our future.

If planned and executed with both tradition and progress in mind, The Gardens can engage people and keep them coming back to enjoy both roots and sprouts.

That's an enduring, win/win legacy.



Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	Every Monday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Every Tuesday: Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	Every Wednesday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Bridge Players	Every Thursday: All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	Every Friday: Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Sunday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Chamber Board	Second Monday of each month: 1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	8 am
VFW	VFW Post	5 pm
Historical Society	Old Rec. Center	5:30 pm
School Board	Auditorium	7 pm
Unicoy Masonic	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
CVB Board	Second Tuesday of each month: Civic Center	8 am
Gem & Mineral Club	Senior Center	1:30 pm
Arts & Crafts Guild	Calvary Church	4 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm
Basket Weavers	Second Wednesday of each month: SC Fire Hall	10 am
Awake America Prayer	Second Thursday of each month: Civic Center	Noon
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	6 pm
Hospital Auxiliary	Third Monday of each month: Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Planning Comm.	Civic Center	6 pm
YH Plan Comm.	Third Tuesday of each month: YH City Hall	5 pm
Co. Comm. Mtg	Courthouse	5:30 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Blairsville store	5:30 pm
Water Board	Water Office	6 pm
Quilting Bee	Third Wednesday of each month: McConnell Church	10 am
MOAA	Call Joff @ 386-530-0904	
Book Bunch & Lunch	Daniels Steakhouse	11:30 am
Friendship Comm.	Third Thursday of each month: Clubhouse	6 pm
Republican Party	Civic Center	5:30 pm
Goldwing Riders	Third Saturday of each month: Daniel's Restaurant	11 am

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Towns County Herald

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