

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Another Great Veteran

I had occasionally seen Ron and Jean Dick around town and over at our post., at American Legion meetings. Did not get to know them until happenstance brought us together. In all probability that's entirely my fault, as they are fun, outgoing very friendly folks just like you'd expect here in Towns County. Ron also tells me that Daytona Beach played an important part in WWII, a story that he will share later.

Ron was born in Daytona Beach, Florida 80 years ago, just prior to the time we were entering WWII. Daytona Beach was very small then, about the size of Hiawassee. While in High School, 1958 Ron decided to join the Army Reserves and one month after leaving HS, Ron found himself serving six months active duty at Fort Jackson, SC. Returning home to Daytona Beach, Ron hired on with Southern Bell Tel. And Tel. As a cable splicer's Helper. (Exactly where I started out in Decatur, GA at age 17!) That means working in manholes and climbing poles, but mostly doing what you are told to do. He couldn't go to all the Reserve meetings so he served two week summer camps, mostly at Fort Benning, GA. He was in a Control Group and in 1961 was called up for full time duty during the Berlin Crisis and the Cuban missile crisis serving in Fort Rucker, AL.

Ron says he was blessed with his beautiful daughter while stationed at Fort Rucker and received an Honorable Discharge from the Army in 1962. Time to go back to the phone company where Ron followed a career path very similar to my own, working his way through many interesting job assignments, some good, some not so good, but always advancing. Thirty Eight years with Ma-Bell was enough for Ron and Jean and they came here to our beautiful north Georgia mountain area to ride two wheelers and enjoy life.

Ron is a proud member of American Legion Post #23, the Honor Guard, and the American Legion Riders while Jean maintains her membership in our American Legion Auxiliary. Ron says he's happy to serve these organizations and to honor both past and present military families.

He has his motto, and it really shows, "Be happy, keep smiling because it makes people wonder what you are up to!"

Ron and Jean are like so many Americans who volunteered to serve a cause, something far greater than themselves. They are the kind of people who continue to make America and Towns County Georgia the greatest places on earth.

*Semper Paratus*

**The Veterans' Corner**  
**Scott Drummond**  
USCG Veteran



"I've been working so much lately I think I'll go to the office and relax awhile."

## All Hands on Deck

The screen door slams at the back door of our old family home. It has a distinctive sound. No other screen door sounds quite like it, and when I hear it I travel through time. It is summer and my mother is carrying a load of wash to hang out on the clothesline. My dad is feeding his birds. My brother and I are heading out to roam the neighborhood. "Be careful, and be home before dark," we are told. How times have changed.

The old farmhouse where my dad lived with his family of 7 has been unoccupied for many years. It was built by hand, of oak and chestnut and heart pine. Friends and neighbors pitched in to raise it up, and it grew organically over the years as the needs of the family grew. It has its own distinctive house smell, which still takes me back to the time when it was warm and rich with the aromas of sweet bread in the oven and a fire crackling in the fireplace. The old house is showing its age, and I think living memory keeps it standing as much as its hand sawed beams. Many younger houses have fallen while this one still stands. We don't build things to last anymore. Times have changed.

Times always change. My childhood memories will look very different from those of someone born in the same place a generation later. There are things I value that were unknown to my forbears, and those who come after me will value things I can't imagine. There is always a generation gap, but a healthy culture has continuity. We pass on our core values, our history, and our sense of place.

We have never done an outstanding job of that in our great nation. We are still a relatively young country, and we are the personification of change. We don't have thousand year old cathedrals to anchor us in time. Chances are we would have knocked them down to build freeways if we did have them. But we do have a history. We've been through some hard times, and we've had our share of triumph and tragedy. We are young, but we are old enough to be "of age," to have a sense of history and national character.

Those of us fortunate enough to have a sense of personal history and place and continuity are blessed. We have a resource which provides us comfort and stability; something that helps us map our course through life. Even the fastest ship needs an anchor, and a great nation, even a progressive one, needs these things also.

Our ship seems to be adrift these days. Our sails are furled and the winds of change are blowing. There is little agreement on what bearing we should take, even among those of us who still know how to read a map.

What does it mean to be an American? Our opinions are divided between the extremes of those who embrace a form of patriotism that is martial in character and leaning toward jingoism, and those who seem content to drift with the currents of identity politics and relativism, or who feel that it is politically incorrect to even ask such a question.

At the right hand edge of those extremes are those who cling to a past that never really existed, a paradigm constructed by propaganda and reinforced by fear: terrorists, radical religions and Russians. At the left edge there is no absolute truth, and a vision which does not extend beyond the social matrix which sucks at our souls through the little windows we bow to and poke at throughout our waking hours. And Russians.

If we are to survive as a great nation, we will need to come to some agreement as to who we are. Still alive among us are traditions and core values which have seen us through many hard times. Peel away the obscuring layers of politics and we may be able to see again the humanity we have in common, and the shared goals of a civil society.

The world around us is changing at an ever accelerating pace, and we need to be able to chart a course through these unknown waters. We need to find a middle path between sailing angrily into the unknown, guns bristling, and drifting wherever the wind blows to run aground or be dashed against the rocks.

Soon enough, as happens to all great nations, it will be time again for all hands on deck.

## 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, 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.*

## Pollinator Census

2020 is the second annual Great Georgia Pollinator Census. Last year the pollinator census was a huge success. It was the first of its kind and really generated some great data on pollinators. It's also a great way for citizens to become involved, learn about, and protect pollinators. This year's census will be held on August 21st and 22nd. Let's talk about how you can be involved this year.

The pollinator census comes together because of the hard work of Becky Griffin. Becky works at GMREC just south of Blairsville. With concerns about pollinator decline, the census allows us to capture critical data that can be used year after year to track the health and wellbeing of pollinators.

Some locations will have guided counts. If you're unsure of how to participate, joining a guided count is a great way to be a part of the census. Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge will be holding a guided count on Friday August 21st at 2 p.m. If you would like to participate from home that is also possible.

If you want to join the pollinator census at home it's very simple. Go to the [ggapc.org](http://ggapc.org) website. Click on the link to the handy counting sheet. Print out the counting sheet and take it outside with you to start your count. Each census count will be done by observing a flowering plant for 15 minutes. Fill out the information at the top of the chart. This includes information on the name of the plant, date, time, and temperature. Also, circle the weather conditions at the time of your count.

For the census, there are eight categories that you count insects. They are: carpenter bee, bumblebee, honeybee, small bees, wasps, flies, butterflies, and other insects. Let's go through how to identify each of the insects in these categories. Carpenter bees are going to be the largest of the bees that we see. They look very similar to bumble bees. The major difference is that carpenter bees have no hair on their abdomen (also known as their hind end). Carpenter and bumble bees have yellow and black hair. Bumblebees will have all black hair on their abdomens.

Honeybees are smaller than bumblebees and will have brown or blackish stripes mixed with golden-brown. They have hair down their whole body. Small bees are any bee smaller than a honeybee. We have many different species of small bees out there that are native pollinators. These native pollinators are very important for pollinating native plants. Small bees can be down to the length of a staple.

Wasps include paper wasps and potter wasps. They are important pollinators for certain plants like rattlesnake master. Flies are pollinators too. They will only have two wings and large eyes. Some flies have coloring to make them look like a bee or wasp to avoid predators. In nature, this is called mimicry. Butterflies are usually pretty easy to identify because of their wings and variation of colors. The other category includes all other insects that may land on the plant while you're watching it. This could be beetles, dragonflies, lacewings, or ants.

After you've done your count for 15 minutes go to [ggapc.org](http://ggapc.org) to enter your results. You can do the census as many times as you'd like on the 21st and 22nd. If you see an insect leave your plant and come back count that as a new visitor.

If you have questions about the pollinator census contact your County Extension Office or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).

**Watching and Working**  
**Jacob Williams**



## Letters to The Editor

### Plenty of Reasons to Worry

Dear Editor,  
Anyone paying into or collecting Social Security should be angry about the President's recent Executive Order deferring payment of the individual payroll tax. This is nothing more than the President using your money to buy your vote. The corruption implicit in that is bad enough, but worse still this scheme will burden working families with a huge tax liability on January 1st, and threatens the solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund so that current and future retirees may also be hurt. Here's why.

While he defers payment through December 31st, he cannot forgive the taxes due. As a result, when, two months after the election, January 1st comes around wage earners will still owe the tax.

This will place a tremendous burden on people who live paycheck-to-paycheck since additional money will have to be withheld from their earnings. For higher wage earners covered by the deferral it will mean less discretionary money to spend in the new-year.

The double whammy of lost income for these two groups threatens an even wider population because reduced consumer spending will have a negative impact on the economy at a time when it is still staggering toward recovery from the current COVID-19 recession. So, what appears to be a tax gift from the President is actually a time bomb waiting to explode. Compounding the corruption of his vote-buying scheme is his claim that, if reelected, he will defuse the bomb by forgiving the taxes due.

After manufacturing a crisis in order to buy votes, he is saying the only solution for its aftereffects is to vote for him based on an iffy promise.

To forgive taxes he will need to have the cooperation of Congress, the branch of government constitutionally authorized to alter the tax code. Considering that Congress has been in bipartisan opposition to a payroll tax holiday, he probably won't be able to deliver on that promise, and that's assuming he is reelected.

The danger we face doesn't stop there. The President in remarks during his signing ceremony said he will propose doing away with the payroll tax if reelected. He did not say what he would replace it with.

Since the payroll tax supports payment of Social Security benefits, unless another source of funding is found, the only outcome possible from ending the payroll tax is ending Social Security.

I, like many seniors, paid into the program with the understanding that Social Security would pay me back in retirement. Sixty-three million Americans rely on Social Security.

Their income is now threatened by the President's ill-conceived and incomplete proposal to wipe out their Social Security.

Working families and senior citizens have plenty of reasons to worry about the President's recent Executive Order and to call on the President to rescind it.

If his blatant vote-buying scheme is allowed to stand, I am afraid all of us, Social Security beneficiaries present and future, will be the losers.

Sincerely,  
**David Plunkett**

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## Towns County Herald

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**Kenneth West**  
Owner/Publisher

**Shawn Jarrard**  
Editor

**Todd Forrest**  
Staff Writer

**Derek Richards**  
Advertising Director

**Shawn Henrikson**  
Copy Editor

**Lowell Nicholson**  
Photographer

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Office located at: 518 N. Main St. Suite 7 "The Mall", Hiawassee

Phone: (706) 896-4454 Fax: (706) 896-1745 Email: [tcherald@windstream.net](mailto:tcherald@windstream.net)

Or mail to: PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546