

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

EOD

Ever heard of it? Our town Bart Rodgers, Commander VFW Post #7807 sure has! His specialty was as an EOD expert in our USAF. Bart traveled over much of our globe, many and diverse countries accomplishing several of these highly trained missions of Explosive Ordnance Disposal, United States Air Force. Teamwork is of utmost importance.

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



The very beginning of our US military's EOD program is relatively young compared to the roots of most of our operational teams. Sixteen weeks before Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, August of 1941 our US Navy graduated the first Navy Bomb and Mine disposal team. Also in 1941 our US War Department created the Ordnance Bomb Disposal School, located at Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. First class to graduate there was February, 1942 and staffed with only twelve officers. The two schools were later combined in 1945. The need for EOD forces became critically important with all the unexploded bombs and mines world wide.

September 1947 marks the date that our USAF became an independent branch of our military. August 5, 1948 our 4410th Bomb disposal unit activated in Greenville, SC. Then in November one captain and six enlisted men formed our USAF EOD program. Supporting our Tactical Air Command and bombing range activities was primary to this group of highly trained professionals. In 1950 when war broke out with Korea, our USAF EOD became heavily involved, or as historians put it, "baptized by fire".

Today most of the schooling is done by the US Navy in a joint services format. However Navy teams must take and be qualified as divers for even more specialized underwater explosive disarming techniques. Those Navy EOD guys are "quite informal" when in country and are humorous with uniform and grooming standards.

In addition to the taxing year long EOD course they must go through a grueling nine week diving and salvage school in Panama City, FL. Superior intelligence and nerves of steel along with a cool head are prerequisites for this critically important job.

According to Bart's savvy knowledge, the IEDs (improvised explosive device) and other explosive devices today are many times more dangerous to EOD teams simply because of modern technology. Often detonated remotely by electronic devices such as cell phones and a bad guy watching from a remote observation post then simply "dialing up" a deadly explosion. Thus the intense training for our nation's EOD men and women has evolved to meet those needs. All Americans need to recognize and be proud of those brave men and women who save lives globally as well as from certain terrorists here at home.

Military leaders around our globe recognize our US military EOD teams as experts and the best in the world. Even though EOD is one of the youngest occupations, only seventy-seven years in existence, each and every EOD member: Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine have unique skills and are proud of what they do world wide. No doubt they have a special bond no matter which branch of our military they served with.

Semper Paratus

Letters to The Editor

What Will Hiawassees's Legacy Be?

Dear Editor,

While the Hiawassees City Council did not support the recent resolution about a solution to the climate change problem, at least they recognize climate change exists. We'll take one step at a time. The Citizens' Climate Lobby isn't the easiest solution to digest. We will get to explaining more how it works later.

Meanwhile, as a community surrounded by natural beauty, let's try not to get so ardent about opposing a solution that we do nothing to combat the impacts the carbon deluge is already responsible for here, around the nation and the world. It's time to accept and embrace that the planet's changing and while some may believe that even though it is a "natural" phenomena not caused by man, that we should do nothing about it. That's like not going ahead with a cure for polio because the virus is a natural occurring bacteria. Shall I name more life-saving drugs and actions?

Shame on those who would resist lighting a candle in the darkness. It's backwards thinking and unfair to the next generation who deserve a cleaner, safer planet. We owe it to future generations.

Let's not stand by and argue about climate change; rather, let's figure out how to stop it. Pick a solution, or many solutions, just do it - soon, very soon.

Bonny L. Herman

Much Appreciation

Dear Editor,

Much appreciation to Terry Rathmann for the terrific job he did on planning, organizing, and executing the March For Jesus on Saturday, August 25. We were very impressed with the quality of the event and Terry's superb attention to every detail. The three musical groups, the teaching, the video presentations, and the actual march all achieved their goal of lifting up and praising the name of Jesus. Those who attended the day-long event were very blessed; those who did not attend missed that blessing.

Bill & Sue Scott

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Rats Under the Floor

It was early Sunday morning and the coffee was good, so we had another cup and lingered over a slice of pumpkin bread.

Not many years ago we would have read the Sunday paper. Comics first, then the headlines and the sports page. On a rainy day, a good novel was always at hand, or a tech journal in earlier years, or even a magazine.

Today we sit with glowing screens and the whole world is at our fingertips, should we choose to reach out. When we do reach out, we don't often reach very far.

Back when we read the newspaper, we read it through. Maybe not front to back, but we read it all, eventually. We agreed and we disagreed with what we read. Sometimes we were moved by emotion and sometimes to action. There was always something inside that we could use.

Today we do what UCLA psychologist Patricia Greenfield calls "skim reading," and multiple studies from San Jose State University tell us that the new normal is a form of word spotting. We read the first sentence and then browse through the rest of the material looking for key words.

When we gather information this way, we fail to develop or to maintain the ability to grasp complexity; we fail to develop empathy with the author or the principle characters and we lose the ability to perceive beauty as it is revealed by the written word.

Research done by Tami Katzir at Haifa University found that damage done by skim reading can show up in children as early as the fourth grade. The advantages of literacy are not transferred genetically – they are gained by the activation of neural pathways. Therefore, for older readers, it's a matter of "use it or lose it."

Unfortunately the transfer of the written word is now dominated by short bursts of information found in texts and tweets. Even "lengthy" articles on some of the most popular websites often consist of a column of various tweets pasted between an opening and closing sentence or two.

It doesn't help the cause of literacy that many of us now only read from sources that agree with our preconceived notions. With a newspaper, we have to make a physical effort to turn the page away from the article that disagrees with us. We can slam a book down on the table. There is a tactile sensation from a magazine. Agree or disagree, we are impacted, influenced, perhaps even challenged, but in pixel reading, a click or a swipe is sufficient to remove the offending thought. The distractions are endless, and the sanctity of our comfort zones is maintained without effort.

For many, however, that safe space is merely a retreat or an attempted escape from accountability, and when comfort becomes tedious for the descendants of hunter gatherers who ride roller coasters and watch horror movies, reality television and nightly news, we need look no farther than social media for a dose of drama. (And drama is very addictive.) Social media, where everyone has an opinion, but few facts; where information is abundant, but truth is scarce.

Don't get me wrong. There is benefit to be found in social media. Friendships are discovered and maintained; good conversations happen. Family ties are nurtured and loneliness is assuaged. Humor is shared, and ideas, music, and art.

But politics came to nest in social media like rats under the floor of a restaurant, and now we are infested. The rats gnaw through the insulation of our wiring, and the smell gets in everything. It makes people sick, angry and afraid, and misery loves company.

You know it does. How many times have you opened up Facebook to another tragedy, another disaster, an insult, an injustice or an outrage? You know that person, the one who, like the six o'clock news, seems eager to find every bad thing that happens and share it with you. You've been that person too, and so have I.

We'll take this moment to remind ourselves again that we, alone, are the ultimate curators of our experience in life, and that includes social media and everything else that solicits our attention.

Back home, the coffee was cold and the news was all bad. Too many memes had crossed the threshold of consciousness to share the misery and outrage and remind us exactly who was responsible for it. We decided quite abruptly to curate our experience of Sunday.

A peaceful drive through the mountains ensued. We had great conversation over a nice meal, without the benefit of phones. We saw four generations sitting happily at one table and an elderly couple holding hands. We made someone laugh that was having a bad day.

Back home the meadow was alive with honeybees, bumblebees and hummingbirds. Partridge pea, Joe Pye, Ironweed and Jewelweed were in full bloom and the sound of water falling on rocks in the stream was the best kind of music. The breeze from the mountain whispered hints of Fall. Pages turned with every step we took, telling stories mysterious and astonishing. All of it was information we could use.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO: Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassees, 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.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Board but Not Boring

The Rat Pack had Frank Sinatra as its Chairman of The Board. Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge has Lynda Grace Howard as its President. The members of The Rat Pack were cool breezes just dripping with panache. The members of The Gardens Board are cool breezes just dripping with panache sometimes tempered with sweat.

For the longest time it was Board Members of any and every thing got to sit in high back chairs at a long, highly polished table which held silver trays with ice water in glass pitchers. I was certain that the men on the board wore long sleeve dress shirts, solid colored of course, and ties that were as wide as a bib or as narrow as a garter snake (this is after all a garden tale) depending on which way the trend wind was blowing. Once women were allowed at the table to do more than serve ice water from the glass pitchers, they surely wore "Sunday" dresses or skirted suits. I was wrong. With a capital W. Profiles of the members of the Board of Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge will be presented from time to time in Dishin' Dirt.

For those of you who don't know these remarkable people, the quote by the great tenor, Luciano Pavarotti, "Learning Music by reading about it is like making love by mail" applies. Ain't nothing like the real thing, Baby. Marsha Elliott was a perfect choice to serve on the board. This classy woman has a unique quality for making both silk purses, and sows' ears, like me, feel high on the hog and comfortable. Marsha spent her Before Mountain Life as an educator. She taught children and became a principal which is the chief executive of an educational institute. After making Young Hecris her home, she devotes her skills and energy to the benefit and enhancement of her community. Having worked with Marsha on several projects, I've seen her defuse ego clashes of Committee Divas. It enabled the purpose for the meeting to move forward and accomplish the intended purpose. A Master Gardener for many years, she knows her stuff about flora. Marsha is more than qualified for a seat on The Gardens' Board (alas, there is no high back chair. Just a wooden garden bench), but before it sounds like she's the goddess Antheia, let it be known that Miss Marsha has a delightfully devilish sense of humor.

She issues her "zingers" before you know what's hit you. Well almost. She has what gamblers call a tell. Just before delivery, her eyes twinkle. Literally.



"You know, Labor Day is a lot more fun when you have a job!"

Towns County Community Calendar

	Every Monday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
	Every Tuesday:	
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
	Every Wednesday	
SMART Recovery	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Thursday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
	Every Friday:	
Movers & Shakers	Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Sunday:	
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	First Tuesday of each month:	
Alzheimer's Supp.	McConnell Church	1:30 pm
American Legion	VFW Post 7807	4 pm
Hiaw. City Council	City Hall	6 pm
Young Harris Coun.	YH City Hall	7 pm
	First Wednesday of each month:	
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
	First Thursday of each month:	
Stephens Lodge	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
	Second Monday of each month:	
Chamber Board	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
	Second Tuesday of each month:	
CVB Board	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
	Second Wednesday of each month:	
Basket Weavers	SC Fire Hall	10 am
	Second Thursday of each month:	
Awake America Prayer	Civic Center	Noon
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	6 pm
	Third Monday of each month:	
Hospital Auxiliary	Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Planning Comm.	Civic Center	6 pm
	Third Saturday of each month:	
Goldwing Riders	Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
	Fourth Monday of each month:	
Red Cross DAT	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
	Fourth Tuesday of each month:	
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
	Last Thursday of each month:	
Humane Shelter Bd.	Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

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Towns County Herald

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