

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Nothing Without Them

So why isn't this an official national holiday? I speak of GOLD STAR MOMS, recognized this year on Sunday, September 26, 2021. Often ignored and taken for granted these American mothers created, sacrificed and have suffered the loss of sons and daughters who served our Sovereign Republic in time of war or conflict and made the ultimate sacrifice. Because our nation has not (yet) opted to make this an official day for Mothers who have lost their son or daughter as in service to a cause far greater than self, there is no affect on public life. In my humble opinion there certainly needs to be!

It would be an honor to honor those mothers who have given of themselves and a debt which we, as a nation can never repay.

We can never imagine the sorrow, pain or mental anguish these ladies have had to endure upon receiving the dreaded visit from one of our military branches to advise them that their son or daughter will not be coming home. These ladies deserve our nation's undying love, honor and respect. For without them, what would we expect our America to become?

It was not without some sort of divine blessing that these mothers were chosen to have and create those heroes and heroines who have served America in ways that most of us will never know. And we also know it is often times political folly that has led to conditions which have resulted in the loss of those who died for you, I and our great nation.

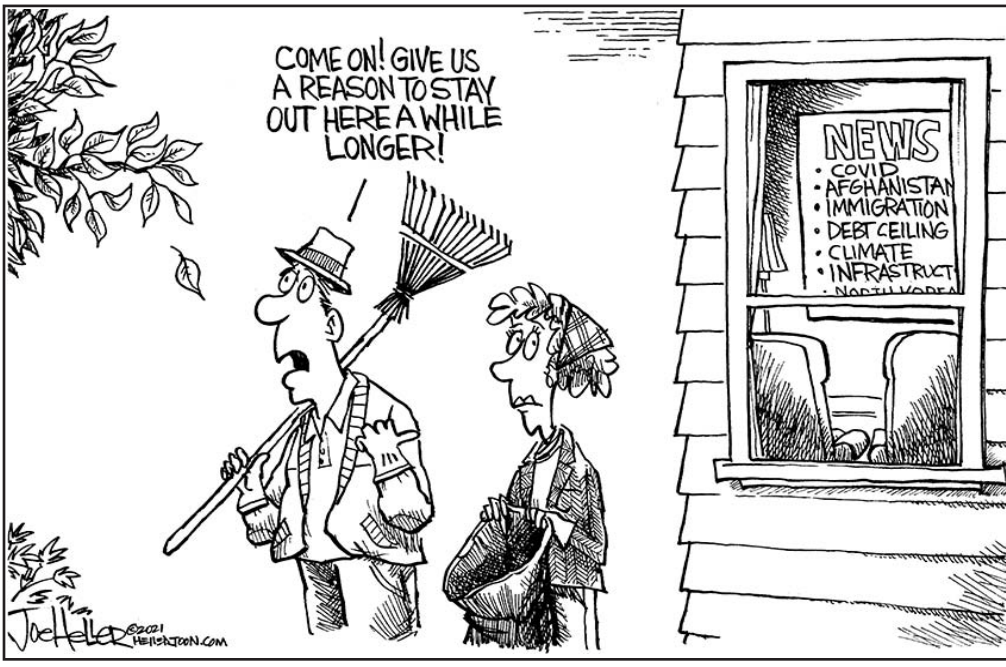
A bit of history: "Gold Star Moms" grew from the custom of military families who placed a service flag in their front window. These flags were adorned with a star for each service member serving our nation. Living service members were honored with a blue star. A gold star was then noted for anyone who died in service to God, nation and family. This tradition has roots in 1918 under President Woodrow Wilson who approved the wearing of a black arm band bearing a "gift star" by those who had a family member who died in service to our USA. They are separate from Blue Star Families who have a living family member serving in the armed forces of our USA.

American Gold Star Moms was incorporated in 1929, via a charter issued by our U.S. Congress. It took only 25 precious mothers living in the DC area to initiate this worthy cause. Later in June of 1936 a bipartisan congressional resolution was passed designating the last Sunday in September as Gold Star Mother's Day. Every year since our President is SUPPOSED to issue a presidential proclamation honoring these mothers on that day.

The question is begged, "Wouldn't it be an appropriate honor for those many Moms who suffered these grave losses to have an official national holiday in their honor as appreciation from a grateful nation that simply would not exist without that which their very own children grew up under mothers' care and guidance, ultimately for ALL of us?"

*Semper Paratus*

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



## Stink Bugs

We are in that time of year when stinkbugs start to move indoors. They can be a real annoyance. Let's talk about where these bugs came from and what you can do to keep them from becoming a big pest in your house.

The stinkbugs that are trying to get inside your house are most likely brown marmorated stinkbugs (BMSB), Halyomorpha halys. We have some other species of stinkbugs, like green stinkbugs, but these other species are not normally a pest inside the house. BMSB are brown as their name implies, but to really be able to tell them from other brown stinkbugs you have to look at their antennae. BMSB will have dark antennae with light bands on them. Part of the reason why these BMSB are such a pest is that they are an invasive species. They originally are from Asia, and first arrived to the US in Pennsylvania sometime before 1998.

One of the things that makes BMSB such a bad pest is that they aren't only a pest in the home, but during the growing season they're a pest to a lot of fruit and vegetable crops too. Stink bugs feeding on the fruit of plants causes that fruit to not develop properly. Apples and peaches will have 'cat facing' or sunken spots on them. Beans and okra will have deformed pods, and tomatoes will get spongy areas. Stink bug damage doesn't always mean that the produce is inedible, but it does make it more difficult for the farmer to sell, because it doesn't look as nice.

BMSB mate in the spring, so there is not a concern that they are reproducing in your house, even though it may seem like they're multiplying. They don't feed inside your home either. Their mouth is like a needle that sucks up juices, so they can't eat building materials.

The first step to keeping them from becoming a pest inside your home is exclusion. Seal up cracks around windows, doors, pipes, and any other spots with a good caulk to block their entry. Insecticides around the exterior of the house will help temporarily, but may not be effective beyond a few days or a week.

Vacuuming BMSB is an efficient method, but it can cause your vacuum to stink temporarily. An alternative is to put some pantyhose over the vacuum tube secured with a rubber band. Stuff the pantyhose down the vacuum tube to keep the bugs from entering the vacuum bag. Once you've vacuumed up some BMSB drop them into some soapy water and they'll drown.

Using an aerosol fogger may kill BMSB, but it won't keep more from entering the house and emerging. Always use care when using pesticides. Make sure you follow the label entirely. Pesticides will only provide brief respite and can lead to more carpet beetles that feed on the dead stinkbugs and then feed on woolens or stored dry goods.

Some homemade traps are quite effective at trapping stinkbugs. One of them uses a foil roasting pan, filled with soapy water. Simply point a desk lamp at the pan, and stink bugs will find their way in there and not be able to get out.

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

**Watching and Working**  
Jacob Williams



## The Locals

Reprinted from September, 2020 - Some of the best advice any writer can take is to write what you know. I try to keep that in mind during those weeks when there's not much to say. The problem with writing what I know is that with every passing year, I seem to know less.

There was a time when I knew quite a lot about information technology and computer hardware. Funny how when you start doing what interests you for a paycheck, that interest can quickly sour, but now that I don't make my living herding electrons, my interest is once again on the rise. Unfortunately I don't want to spoil it by having to write about it.

For a number of years I made my living as a wilderness guide and counselor in a career that combined both interests. I stayed with it about three times the average 4 year burnout period, and while I didn't get completely burned out, I did get scorched around the edges. OK maybe I did get burned out. It's hard not to when you're dealing with one group after another of angry and dysfunctional human beings while sleeping on the ground in a damp sleeping bag. So I stepped away from that career. But after resting on the plate like a file of blackened trout I discovered that there was some flavor left under the crust.

That's why I still write about the wilderness from time to time and occasionally delve into human behavior, though I barely know enough about those subjects to blacken a sardine. I still love the wilderness.

Human behavior, not so much. In fact, it's a good thing that God loves the world because if it were up to me, the world would be out of luck, and while we're being frank, loving my neighbor as myself is the best I can manage on a good day - and I don't have a lot of neighbors.

My friends have often heard me say that I don't like people very much, but I care a great deal for persons. People can be very lovable in person or in small groups. When you start stacking them together, however, you're going to run into problems. Group dynamics. The behavior of most people tends to change in a group setting. Like chickens. As it turns out, I do know something about chickens. And bees.

Chickens are somewhat predictable. Bees...do what bees do. Like cats. So let's talk about birds and bees, and chickens. It has been a beautiful week on the farm. The bees are busy with partridge pea and the hummingbirds have discovered the jewel weed by the frog pond. They are both working tirelessly during this time of abundance and the meadow is filled with a contented buzz.

We've had a rainy year - a rainforestry rainy year. The algae on the deck has algae growing on it. This is the greenest blooming September I remember in a long time, and while those who can, make hay while the sun shines, weather delays have put us behind schedule in the construction of our new chicken house. As a result, the chicken herd has started to outgrow their temporary accommodations and they are beginning to experience social unrest in their relatively urban setting.

When they were small and innocent with plenty of elbow room (assuming that chickens have elbows) they were peaceful and content and awfully cute. Now that they are bigger, hungrier and more opinionated, The "Pecking Order Syndrome" has disrupted their mostly peaceful pursuits, and they are acting out in mostly peaceful protest. Mostly. Occasionally feathers do fly.

Lately they have evolved their language to include some unkind and inflammatory pejoratives. Yesterday I heard, "Baraaaahck buck buck buck buck...SKANK!!!" ("Skank" is shrieked about an octave above high C, and it means about the same in Chickenesse as it does in English.)The argument was between two hens who wanted the same piece of greenery.

Understand that we enhance their diet with bundles of stilt weed and grass - they love it, and it is plentiful. They have more than they can possibly eat, but every day now we hear squabbles and complaints and the stillness of these halcyon days is interrupted by cries of "Skank!" and "Peeeeeewwwww!" (We haven't translated that one yet.) The chickens have divided into groups of associates who only hang out with each other. I'm afraid they have formed political parties. Skank.

Which brings us back full circle to human behavior. Can we better understand politics and humanity by observing chickens? Group dynamics for chickens is fairly simple. It's a matter of breed and greed. When they breed past a certain population density, their natural greed is aggravated to the point where it begins to affect their behavior. Like humans.

We never hear about riots and looting in small towns. Enough people understand that now that there is a push on to escape the crowded coops of the city for places with more elbow room. This could be a good thing, to a point, especially for the people doing the escaping. The trick is, for small towns and rural areas, places like ours where life is peaceful and good, to find that point, that formula that lets you know when the coop is crowded enough, because past that point, greed begins to bump up against greed and feathers start to fly.

I hope that doesn't happen to all the little places we love in this beautiful area. Nothing against Gatlinburg, but if we wanted to live there, we would be there, and I would have a lot less wilderness to write about, and a lot more fowl behavior.

In the meantime, we'll keep an eye on the weather, and on the birds and bees and chickens around us - especially the bees.

They might have something to tell us about what comes next in these interesting times.

**Outside The Box**  
By: Don Perry  
worldoutsidethebox.com

## Letters to The Editor

### Not My Father's America

Dear Editor,  
Our country today is very different than it was fifty years ago. We are slowly losing our Republic as we move to a more socialist society, with a media that has become willing accomplices to that end. Open borders threaten to erase the very sovereignty of our nation, and illegals are treated better than our veterans. Election results are clouded with uncertainty and doubt. Minorities are dictating policy and behavior for the majority. Common sense is being replaced with political correctness. A vast number of people have become dependent on government for their very existence, at the expense of personal freedom and quality of life. Government has grown exponentially over the last 5 decades, right along with our national debt, which we will never be able to pay back. Our country's very foundations are being eroded by humanism and narcissism, with a general rejection of God in our society. This is not my father's America - nor is it mine.

Richard Simile

### Hence Our Decline

Dear Editor,  
What's wrong with our country and how did we get in this predicament? Free stuff has replaced ambition, work ethic and self-respect. Don't figure it out for yourself - let the government do it for you. Common sense, now a distant memory, is something another generation possessed and is no longer needed in our new woke and cancel cultures. The basic values of previous generations don't fit in the new norm - hence our decline. Being on welfare or on unemployment used to be something that you weren't proud of and didn't run around telling everyone. You bought your own stuff, or did without. A dream catcher was a second or third job, however many it took to supply your family's needs. "Now Hiring" signs are displayed prominently in most businesses in Towns and Union Counties. The only way to make these signs go away is to stop the free stuff, and to make everyone responsible again for their own welfare. Americans have always, and still are, willing to help those who can't help themselves. It's way past time for the able-bodied men and women in this country to get off of social media and off their butts and start providing for themselves.

Gene Vickers

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### The Dawning

The load has been lifted. I have finally realized and accepted that I'm a senior citizen, an elder or, oh hello, let's call it what it is. I'm flipping old. When first prescribed progressive lenses by my eye doc it seemed no biggie. I'd stopped wearing contact lens sometime back because they felt like they were made from beach sand. It couldn't have been that I was getting older. It had to be that my eyes were dry due to sinus trouble or hay fever. It does happen. Right? By the by, progressive lenses are the updated bifocals my grandparents and parents wore. The visible line was removed, tri was added to the focal and all just in time for me to still look chic when the printed word, including billboards, became absurdly small.

Spoiler Alert. Whether you grow older gracefully or less than, there will be dryness and juiciness where once there was none and none where there once was some. To each his own, but I prefer not to stuff rolled-up facial tissue in my sleeves to handily stem the rolling tide of my proboscis.

As my wheels started to go flat, so to speak, and I was reckoning with middle age, I asked my father how he coped with old age. What I really, thoughtlessly, said was "How can you stand being old". My dad, always a straight shooter, replied "Because I'm used to it. You need to buck up".

Parents often lament that their children were just not babies long enough. That they grew up too fast. Growing up and growing old are processes of the same life, doled out in phases. No teeth, baby teeth, permanent molars. Hair here, hair there, no hair there now, new hair now here. Guinea, guinea squat.

It takes a good bit of concentration being old. I may not recall why I'm in the pantry. The boxcar on my train of thought is cluttered with pesky hobos but I do recollect experiencing and feeling my phases of youth, even those of losing and cutting teeth. It aids me in understanding how kids feel. I can help my grandchildren with departing and arriving through the tunnel because I've taken the journey myself.

Everybody brings something to the table, some on the plate of fresh ideas and some with tried and true recipes. Growing old is a privilege and a gift. That I composed this column and you're reading it, is because we are survivors. I will "not go gently into that good night". I intend to live until I'm dead. Since it dawned on me that I'm old, I feel more comfortable in my own skin. And Lord knows there's plenty of room in it.

To all my dearest and selected sisters, I love you old bats.

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**Around Towns**  
Dale Harmon



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