

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Guarding the US Mail

When the mail absolutely, positively must be delivered on time call the USMC! Yes, that's what it

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



took 95 years ago when on October 20, 1926, by Presidential Order, Republican President Calvin Coolidge turned to our USMC for civil duty to guard the mail. Leading up to this, on October 14 of that year a brutal mail robbery took place in Elizabeth, NJ whereas a U.S. Mail truck driver was murdered. As per his Presidential order 2,500 fully armed Marines took up their duty to guard our mail system. Seems like when the job must be done, just call on the Marines! Those that I have met and known over the years here in our wonderful North Georgia mountain homeland certainly fit that description. They still very often continue to serve our communities in many and asunder ways the we never think of.

Marine Corps Commandant, upon anticipating this Presidential Order on October 18 directed the Commanding General, HQ, Department of the Pacific to organize a force from the 4th Regiment to be known as the Western Mail Guards, under command of Brigadier-General Smedley D. Butler. He had a long record of combat leadership, two Congressional Medals of Honor, and was a Veteran of WWI and the guerrilla wars of central America. Maybe "overqualified" as is said often today? General Smedley Butler had a very easy-going manner cloaking his cold, methodical manner to handling any task given to Marines. He was known as "Old Gimlet-Eye" to his brother Marines. The primary source for guarding the mail was the 4th Marines who were assigned to eleven states and eventually part of Texas on October 22, 1926. It did NOT take long for Post Offices, mail trains and trucks to be recognized as "off limits" to bad actors due to Marine presence. Note: there was only one attempted robbery involving a mail train that was void of any mail during this period.

After it became apparent that that our U.S. Mail system had returned to normal as a result of our U.S. Marines involvement in securing our mail, the need for keeping our Marines from other duties was ended on January 10, 1927. By February 18 the 4th Regiment USMC was returned to their home bases.

Sometimes, it seems that we need our USMC to secure a lot of not-so-normal operations in our America. From the top down! At any rate, God Bless our U.S. Marines and for Heaven's sake do not mess with the U.S. Mail!

Semper Fi AND Semper Paratus



Ladybugs

Ladybugs are moving inside at this time of year. Let's talk about where they came from and what you can do to try and get rid of them.

Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Most of the time the ladybugs that move inside to hibernate through the winter are Asian ladybugs. I am often asked if the government releases ladybugs and that's why they are in their house. The US Department of Agriculture did release Asian ladybugs during the 1960s to the 1990s. Ladybugs are beneficial insects because they eat many soft-bodied insects that are pests. They were released so that apple and pecan growers would not need to use as many insecticides. Georgia is one of the states where they were released. However, now Asian ladybugs are found in states that did not have releases.

Asian Ladybugs look very similar to our native ladybugs. Females usually have several multiple spots, while the males have fewer spots. Their color can range from tan to orange to red. The best way to tell them about from our natives is that they have a dark M or W (depending on which side you look at them) on the back of their head. Asian ladybugs don't have very many natural predators in the US. That means they can spread very easily. It makes them good at controlling aphids on plants outdoors, but makes them a nuisance in the fall and early spring. In the fall, many of them will try to make their way inside. Once a couple get in, it's hard to keep more out. Ladybugs will use pheromones to let other ladybugs know that they've found a good spot to overwinter. Therefore, you usually won't see just a couple, but dozens or even hundreds. They usually will congregate on the sunny side of a building. Buildings that have light and dark contrasting colors on the outside will be more attractive to them. Older buildings are more attractive too because they will leak more heat out. Ladybugs don't injure people. They also don't reproduce indoors. They won't attack wood, food, or clothing. They can secrete a yellow substance when disturbed. The yellow secretion smells bad and can stain. They use the yellow stuff as a defense mechanism against predators.

So the big question is, how do you get rid of them? If they are inside a simple method is to just vacuum them up and then throw them in the trash. Sealing cracks around doors or windows is a good way to keep them from entering in the first place. Ladybugs are small, so they can use a crack that's 1/8th of an inch. There are ladybug traps that use black light to attract them. These can be effective at capturing ones that have already entered, especially if you use it in a dark space, like a closet or attic. If you have a serious infestation, it's best to call a pest control company.

Ladybugs can be a nuisance inside the house, but remember that they are beneficial to farmers and gardeners. If you have questions about ladybugs contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Heaters - one spark away from disaster

It's that time of the year when we fire up the old wood heater or fireplace so we can enjoy the dancing flames, crackling of the wood burning so we can warm our backsides and toes. We don't think about the cobwebs, bird nests, and creosote in our chimney left over from the long hot summer. When it is hot, we don't think about cleaning out our chimney for the first fire.

It gets cold and we light the match and plan to clean the chimney on Saturday. Saturday might be too late after our first chimney fire!

Wood heaters and fireplaces make the room warm and toasty but are only one escaping spark away from disaster. Wood heaters seem most dangerous but in fact seemingly safe space heaters are the deadliest of all.

While only 32 percent of home heating fires involve space heaters, they are involved in 79 percent of home heating fire deaths, according to a report released by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Heating equipment continues to be the second leading cause of home fires behind cooking and the second leading cause of home fire deaths behind smoking.

NFPA is urging caution and asking the public to practice safe heating behaviors as the peak time for home heating fires continues, and half of all home heating fires usually happen in December, January, and February. The leading factor contributing to space heater fires in general was heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattress, or bedding.

Other leading factors contributing to home heater fires were failure to clean, which is principally related to creosote build-up in chimneys, and leaving an operating space heater unattended.

Whether your chimney supports a wood or coal stove or just a fireplace, be sure to have it cleaned and inspected at least once a year to reduce your risk of having a fire.

Always turn off a portable space heater when you go to sleep or leave the room. In 2017, U.S. fire departments responded to 66,500 home structure fires that involved heating equipment. These fires killed 580 people, injured another 1,850, and were responsible for \$608 million in direct property damage.

NFPA offers the following safety tips. Use a sturdy, metal screen to prevent contact burns, which are even more common than flame burns. Keep things that can burn, such as paper, bedding, or furniture, at least 3 feet away from heating equipment. Use heating equipment that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.

Never use your oven for heating. Have a qualified professional install the equipment. Make sure all fuel-burning vented equipment is vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Make sure the venting for exhaust is kept clear and unobstructed. This includes removal of snow and ice around the outlet to the outside.

Install and maintain carbon monoxide alarms to avoid risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected annually by a qualified professional. Turn portable electric heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room. Use portable space heaters with an automatic shut off so if they're tipped over they will shut off.

Plug power cords directly into outlets and never into an extension cord. Inspect for cracked or damaged, broken plugs or loose connections. Always use the proper fuel in a fuel burning heater as specified by the manufacturer. When refueling, allow the appliance to cool and refuel outside or in a well-ventilated area. When using the heater, open a window to ensure proper ventilation.

In portable kerosene or other liquid-fueled space heaters, always use the proper grade of the proper fuel. All new unvented gas-fired space heaters have an oxygen depletion sensor that detects a reduced level of oxygen in the area where the heater is operating and shuts off the heater before a hazardous level of carbon monoxide accumulates. If you have an older heater without this feature, replace it.

If the pilot light of your gas heater goes out, allow 5 minutes or more for the gas to go away before trying again, do not allow gas to accumulate, and light the match before you turn on the gas to the pilot to avoid risk of flashback. If you smell gas in your gas heater, do not attempt to light the appliance. Turn off all the controls and open doors and windows. Call a gas service person. Start the fire with newspaper or kindling, never with a flammable liquid, such as lighter fluid, kerosene, or gasoline.

Keep the doors of your wood stove closed unless loading or stoking the live fire. Allow ashes to cool before disposing. Dispose of ashes in a tightly covered metal (never plastic!) container and keep the ash container at least 10 feet away from the home and any other nearby buildings. Douse and saturate with water. Chimneys and vents need to be cleaned and inspected at least once a year by a professional.

Heaters are just "Contained Fire" trying to get out into our flammable things, and it only takes one mistake to let the fire escape into our homes.

Think Safety because the home you save might be YOURS!

For more information on heater safety, contact your local Fire Department or Chestatec-Chattahoochee RC&D Council at: info.ccrd@gmail.com

RC&D

Frank Riley
 Executive Director



Letters to The Editor

Hamilton Gardens

Dear Editor,
 Shawn Jarrard's recent article, 'Hamilton Gardens thanks volunteers before dissolution,' is a profound, fact-rich acknowledgment of the value and meaning of the Gardens, the amazing people who have lovingly and tirelessly tended them, and the stunning stupidity of what has occurred! Jarrard stays above the fray and focuses on appreciation for all the good that's been done there, but the underlying tragedy is palpable. I love these two quotes: "The general sentiment that evening was one of gratitude for the amount of dedication it takes to safeguard the most beautiful aspects of nature, which for the gardens has meant thousands of hours of respectful stewardship by selfless volunteers." "Public gardens are always about people. Everyone talks about the plants, about all the things that are there, but the reality is, it's people who make it happen and people who enjoy it." As a relatively recent but very enthusiastic supporter of Hamilton Gardens, I find this outcome incredibly sad.

Sylvia Bell

Senators must protect our democracy and our voting rights

Dear Editor,
 A recent surge of state-wide voter suppression bills and ongoing attempts to erode fair and secure elections requires federal action. Congress must act now to implement national standards for federal elections to protect our democracy. The Freedom to Vote Act would protect people's right to vote, end partisan gerrymandering, and help to eliminate the undue influence of dark money in our elections.

Sincerely,
 Karl Clarke

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Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor
 P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546
 Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net

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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 not be considered for publication.*

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