

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## The Great Escape

Semper Fidelis to Ash Todd for this very interesting and overlooked bit of WWII history. Remember that great movie "The Great Escape" starring Steve McQueen? Based upon a factual event and a 111-yard long tunnel carved beneath the ground by Allied prisoners to escape from POW camp Stalag Luft III. Western Poland was the location and after the failed attempt Germans sealed the tunnel named "Harry" and with the forthcoming takeover of that area by the Soviets behind their Iron Curtain there was no disturbance of this tunnel. Plainly speaking the USSR had no interest and cared not about this bit of history even though they were our "allies", so to speak, during WWII.

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



However this has changed since British archeologists excavated tunnel, "Harry" and its entrance under a stove in Hut #104, formally sealed by Germans. They also discovered another tunnel named "George", never charted, and was never used. Two thousand prisoners were forced to leave their escape plans and march to other POW camps in 1945 due to the approaching Red Army.

"Harry" was 30 feet underground and was ingeniously constructed by Allies imprisoned by the Germans. Bed boards were used to keep the tunnel from collapsing and were still in place when the archeologists dug up this amazing piece of "homegrown engineering". Allied prisoners from all ranks of civilian lives also were keenly aware that caves and tunnels need to be ventilated and created vent shafts out of powdered milk tins. There remained bits of old metal buckets, hammers and crowbars, all used to dig their way to freedom. Six hundred prisoners worked on three different escape tunnels at the same time! There were 90 bed boards, 62 tables, 34 chairs, and 76 benches plus thousands of knives, spoons, forks, towels, and blankets used by prisoners yearning for freedom. Amazingly the German guards took no notice of this well planned and executed operation.

These tunnels were only 2 feet square, so claustrophobia was either out of the question or ignored by the 76 Allied airmen who escaped through "Harry" on the night of March 24 and 25th, 1944. Prisoner number 77 was spotted which stopped the escape planned for 200 prisoners that almost successful night. Only three made it back to Britain. Fifty were executed by firing squad as per a furious Adolf Hitler's orders. In spite of that great Hollywood version of this escape, there were no Americans involved. There were Brits, Canadian tunnelers, Poles, New Zealanders, Australians, and South Africans, all our allies in that horrific war to save civilization from the evils which perpetually plagues civilized mankind.

So many of our later and current generations have no idea of the cost in lives and treasure that paid for the freedoms and liberties which we and our civilized Allies enjoy today. Some are even willing to "give it all away" for something "better". I believe that may be exactly how WWII came about. Never forget!

*Semper Paratus*

## This is how the Sausage is Made

It's Monday morning and a good cup of coffee is a welcome treat in the cold rain. Congress says that this is Veteran's Day, but we all know that the real observance is on the 11th. World War I ended one hundred years ago this eleventh month, on the eleventh day at the eleventh hour. Only 80 members of the incoming congress, or about 16 percent, are veterans, so I'm not sure why the other 84 percent think that they should get an extra holiday.

But then Congress is good at looking after the concerns of Congress, voting itself pay raises, holidays and healthcare privileges, the reward, we presume, for providing us with so many, so very many laws and proclamations, and for the tireless effort to see who can redistribute the biggest share of our tax dollars to their own districts.

It's tempting, sometimes, to join the largest segment of the US population which does not vote and appears to have little concern for political theater. We sympathize with their rejection of a forum which every year seems to more closely resemble professional wrestling, the main difference being that professional wrestlers are also professional athletes, while members of Congress need only money and popularity to qualify for their jobs.

In an effort to encourage more non-participants to vote, former First Lady, Michelle Obama, tells us that we don't need any "special expertise" to vote, that we "don't have to read every news article to be qualified to vote," and that it's OK to vote, even if we "know nothing about nothing." I submit to you that this happens frequently enough without any further encouragement. It is precisely how, as Joseph de Maistre once said, a "nation gets the government it deserves."

I'm pouring myself a second cup of coffee this morning to help dispense the grumpy reflections of a cold, rainy Monday morning. It's never a good idea to start the day with a scan of corporate media headlines, which also seem to increasingly mimic professional wrestling jargon. It is of absolutely no benefit to me to know, especially first thing in the morning, who got "slammed," "destroyed," or "called out," or who is "fighting" for what cause. I really didn't need to know someone's opinion, repeated over several tabloid websites, that Hillary is going to run again (this was an opinion, not yet a fact) and that we could have a repeat of 2016 with "Wrestlemania 2020."

As the caffeine stimulates my memory, however, perspective begins to form. Politics has always been ugly. My own family history underlines this fact, and I can still hear my father telling the story of how he was voted in three different precincts in an election without ever setting foot in the county, and how he lost his student deferral during WWII because his father "voted wrong" in a local contest.

The "McCarthy years" is now forgotten to all but a small group of history students and people with good memories. Those who lived through the turmoil of the late sixties appear to have forgotten that as well, when we hear repeatedly that the country has "never been so divided." Civil War historians are among the first to scoff at this statement.

Yet there is generally a strong sense that somehow, things are different this time. There is anger, suspicion and unrest, and at the root of it all there is fear, which makes people positional and cuts off any meaningful dialogue with opposing views. Granted, there is nothing new in our experience of fear or in its use as a tool of manipulation. But I submit to you that what is different "this time," is technology.

Remember, we are wired to accentuate the negative. This is a survival mechanism and it takes conscious effort to overcome it, but we are so drawn to the negative that the survival of the businesses which dispense information are dependent on negativity to capture and hold our attention.

This is how politics has come to dominate the public discourse, even reaching into our private lives and personal relationships where all things are judged by this false dichotomy of left and right. Politics has always been ugly, but technology illuminates what was once hidden and makes immediate what was once gradually revealed. Politics is a sausage grinder, and technology is showing us all the gory details of how that sausage is made. We, who slow down to gawk at the scene of an accident, are mesmerized, horrified and addicted.

Perhaps in realizing that our fears are often magnified out of proportion by the processes we trust to inform our view of the world, we can begin to assuage those fears. If we're going to have our sausage, it's probably a good idea to know the list of ingredients in the mix, but watching a pig being slaughtered every morning at breakfast would certainly not improve our appetite or our digestion. Of course our vegetarian friends would tell us that we can endeavor to choose a healthier diet, and when it comes to politics, I can't say that they are wrong.

**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.*

## The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

## 4-H Giant Pumpkins

Have you ever seen a pumpkin over 100 pounds? How about over 300? 600? This year we had our first ever giant pumpkin growing competition with 4-H youth in Union county. I had the pleasure of working with them as a coach. Growing the pumpkins was a group effort with Patrick Fix, Tim Grizzle, Timothy Jennings, Mickey Cummings, Ray Covington, and Frank Riley all helping to lead the charge.

**UGA extension**  
**Watching and Working**  
 Jacob Williams



Growing a giant pumpkin is no easy task. It requires months of work with a lot of attention to detail. We had eight 4-H students submit a pumpkin to the Georgia 4-H Giant Pumpkin growing competition. Five of those had a pumpkin that was over 300 pounds. Union County finished in 1st and then 3rd through 8th. So I want to congratulate these kids on the hard work that they put in and on the fruits of their labor.

The pumpkin growing process began back in April. All the seeds were planted in containers inside to allow the plants to germinate before we planted them outside. Planting this way ensures that you only put seeds in the ground outside that will come out and grow. A giant pumpkin needs 900 square feet to grow, so if one doesn't germinate you've lost a lot of space. Germinating in containers also protects young plants from cold damage, getting washed out by rainfall and other environmental factors.

Once the pumpkins were in the ground, this season had its own unique challenges with the heavy rainfall that we had. Downy mildew is a disease that infects a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. It can have devastating affects if it is untreated. Downy mildew really likes wet and warm weather, which made it a big challenge this past summer. There are fungicides available to prevent downy mildew from infecting your plants, but with the amount of rain we had it was difficult to find a time to make good applications.

The amount of rain we had also encouraged copious weed growth in our pumpkin fields. Once the pumpkins vines are large and established hand weeding is required to go in and pull out the weeds around the vines. Hand weeding obviously can take some time in the summer sun. The pumpkins also needed weekly fertilizing so that they could grow to their large size.

Growing plants is an excellent educational experience for youth. They are able to learn about the hard work that it takes to grow plants for food, and appreciate farmers who do that for us. They also learn that growing plants is a continual learning experience. Every season is going to be different with its own unique challenges. Farmers have to be lifelong learners to be able to keep adapting to the change of pest pressures, new commodities, and new technologies out there.

I am very proud of all that our 4-H students accomplished this year, and I'm looking forward to coming back next year and competing again. We'll be looking to push the boundaries even further to see how big we can grow our pumpkins. I'm also thankful for the support that we got from the community. This was a huge success for our first year and we're looking forward to the next.

If have questions about growing your garden for you or youth, contact your local Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

## Letters to The Editor

### Write-ins don't make sense?

Dear Editor,  
 Election Day, like many others here in the county, I went to the polls to vote. While voting, I came upon the question regarding "The Blue Ridge Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor", but there was nobody listed, but a Write-In button provided a place to enter a name.

Not wishing to leave a blank, I entered a county resident in the field, and continued completing my ballot. Wednesday, looking at the results in the paper, it said no one ran. I had expected to see the name of any write-in candidate that won the most votes (even if there was only one vote). I questioned the election folks about that.

They told me that write-in candidates are required to register with the State of Georgia. That seemed odd to me given the fact if they registered, wouldn't their names be listed on the ballot?

Why put that on the ballot for a vote if there was nobody running, and yet have a place to write-in a name. That doesn't make sense!

Craig Earon

### CASA Thanks You

Dear Editor,  
 Colorful falling leaves, anticipation of Thanksgiving and Christmas and the time to make happy memories with family seem just around the corner.

Unfortunately, there were over 324 children from Towns, Union, Lumpkin, and White counties who may not experience joy this year.

They are in the foster care system because of abuse or neglect. They're attending court hearings, adjusting to new foster homes and transitioning to new schools. That's a heavy burden for a child to carry alone.

A court appointed special advocate (CASA) volunteer will be a caring, consistent adult for a child who's experiencing the loneliness and uncertainty of foster care.

With a dedicated CASA volunteer, these child victims will have an adult by their side to speak up for their best interests in the courtroom and community, and to help them find the road home, wherever it lies.

Yet, Enotah CASA cannot do this alone. That is why the outpouring of community support for our major fundraiser, Dancing With North Georgia Stars - Towns/Union is so very much appreciated. We grossed over \$60,000 through sponsorships, advertising, ticket sales and donations; exceeding our goal. Thank-you.

Your financial support means our community's abused and neglected children can have a CASA to give them a voice, hope and the opportunity to thrive in a safe and loving home.

I also extend much thanks to the hundreds that worked to put on this event.

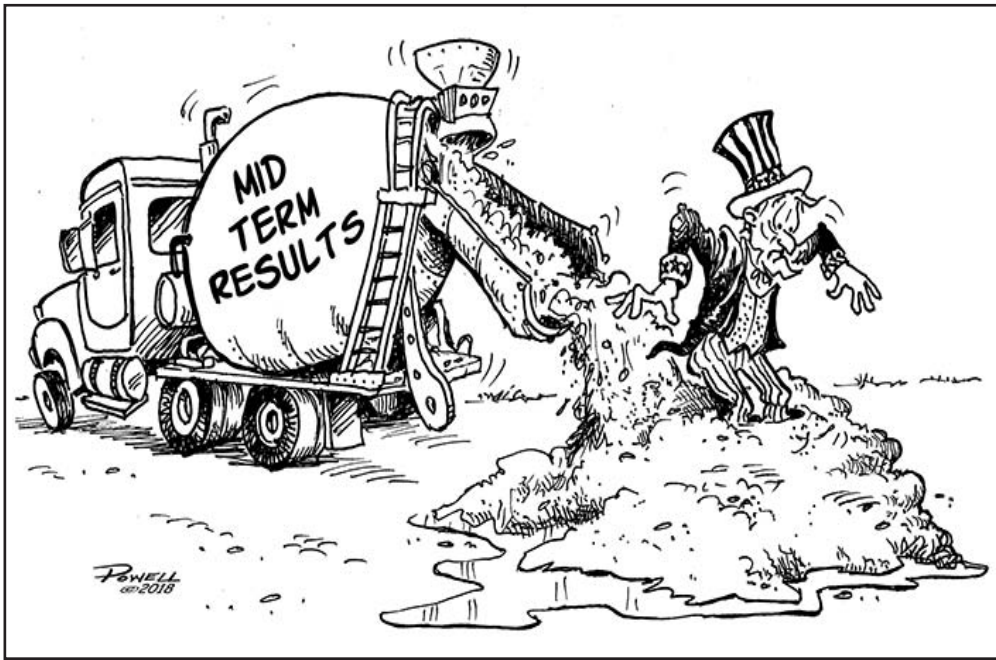
And a special thanks goes to the dedicated dancers.

If you were an attendee, dancer, sponsor, advertiser, worker or donor; you too have joined our effort to fight child abuse and neglect.

Our sincere gratitude for your generous contributions and support.

With gratitude for our caring community,

Linda D'Angelo  
 Executive Director  
 Enotah CASA, Inc.



## Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	<b>Every Monday:</b> All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	<b>Every Tuesday:</b> Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	<b>Every Wednesday:</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
Bridge Players	<b>Every Thursday:</b> All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	<b>Every Friday:</b> Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	<b>Every Sunday:</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
Basket Weavers	<b>Second Wednesday of each month:</b> SC Fire Hall	10 am
Hiaw Writers	<b>Second Thursday of each month:</b> Hiaw Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
Awake America Prayer	Civic Center	Noon
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	6 pm
Hospital Auxiliary	<b>Third Monday of each month:</b> Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Planning Comm.	Civic Center	6 pm
YH Plan Comm.	<b>Third Tuesday of each month:</b> 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	<b>Third Wednesday of each month:</b> McConnell Church	10 am
MOAA	Call Joff @ 386-530-0904	
Book Bunch & Lunch	Daniels Steakhouse	11:30 am
Friendship Comm.	<b>Third Thursday of each month:</b> Clubhouse	6 pm
Republican Party	Civic Center	5:30 pm
Goldwing Riders	<b>Third Saturday of each month:</b> Daniel's Restaurant	11 am

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 Phone: (706) 896-4454 Fax: (706) 896-1745 Email: tcherald@windstream.net  
 Or mail to: PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546

## Towns County Herald

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