

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Lesson Learned?

"OPERATION TORCH" Our Great-est Generation, WWII on November 8, 1942 alongside our Western Allies began Op-eration Torch landing in Vichy-controlled Morocco and Algeria. Our losses for this one week assault on NAZI forces were unusually high for this region, and should have served as a lesson for D-Day 18 months later.

The Veterans' Corner Scott Drummond USCG Veteran



White Pines

White pines are a common tree in the mountains. They have a couple of interesting features and are a native tree so let's talk about white pines, some of their benefits and drawbacks.

Watching and Working Jacob Williams



The scientific name for white pines is Pinus strobus L. They can be found from southern Canada, down along the Appalachian Mountains to North Georgia and Alabama. They are the biggest native conifer in Eastern North America. They can grow up to 150 feet tall and have a trunk that is 40 inches in diameter. The canopy can grow to 40 feet wide. They're capable of growing 2 feet in a year. They are able to tolerate a variety of soil textures. Pines like soils that

French soldier Louis Laplace described the shock for Vichy forces as the Allies landed. "All of a sudden the sirens were going off; it was the first time I heard them in North Africa," recounted the soldier in Vichy forces' anti-aircraft division. "A few minutes later, we saw a plane flying low over the water, releasing a curtain of smoke. And then I realized that he was American." Americans and British Allies decided on the operation a few months before. Winston Churchill's advocacy of landings in North Africa won, over widespread doubt in Washington. Franklin D. Roosevelt was finally receptive to Churchill's strategic vision, overriding his military staff, who were concerned as to our ability for this type of amphibious assault.

As recorded in history, this first "surprise" assault in North Africa was a painful lesson for our military strategists and as for the forthcoming D-Day invasion as to how NOT to commit our great Americans into a ferocious assault operation. The NAZIS, of course, by the time Torch was launched had pushed back our allies in desert warfare who had defeated fascist Italy for the most part. Adolph Hitler then deployed MANY German troops to reverse this trend, under General Erwin Rommel. Prior to the British Forces defeating Rommel's "Afrika Corps" on November 11, under Field Marshal Montgomery, Operation Torch was launched. This was deemed a turning point for Western Allies against NAZI Germany.

Torch was a relatively small assault and in Algeria our forces relied on about 400 resistance fighters for assistance in these landings. Torch was a gigantic logical undertaking, some 107,000 Allied troops deployed (84,000 American and 23,000 British) as well as 110 transport ships. High command selected nine landing sites on the North African coast; six in Morocco and three in Algeria.

In Algiers, that Resistance of some 400 people made it easy to put the Vichy forces out of action. Elsewhere, NOT SO MUCH! In spite of the Resistance taking out the Vichy high command, nearly 500 American and British troops were killed. The Vichy proved their pro-NAZI position in world affairs by fighting our Allies DIRECTLY. This morphed the entire Torch assault into a very tough operation. As recorded, in spite of our winning Torch which is known as a "botched operation". Very costly for a one week "surprise" assault plus inexperience on American forces behalf. The Allied Forces with Naval bombardment and air power along with British counterparts wrapped this costly one week long operation up on November 16. Torch also eventually led to the defeat of Mussolini in Italy in addition to ending the French cooperation with the NAZIS. Our American men and women in military forces and Allies around the world who love freedom and liberty, have often had to sacrifice much, including their lives, as occurred in Torch which proved our unpreparedness for the D-Day invasions. Has America today learned anything? And especially our voters who by now should KNOW to elect strong leaders who with fierce love and unyielding Patriotism for America and our men and women who serve our Sovereign Republic, will fight not war, but fight to keep us out of war. "Si vis pacem, para bellum." - Semper Paratus

Letters To The Editor

Runoffs

Dear Editor, It is now obvious that a runoff is in the works. I would love to see the PAC's stand aside and have the candidates tell us what qualifies them for a position in the Senate representing their constituents and where they stand on the real issues. What platform do you stand on so I know my vote counts for my views of this great Democracy?

It is the holiday season, and I don't want my good cheer to be battered constantly with anxiety advertising. Oh, to see the Black Friday ads again!

In Health, Irene Stannard

Thank You

Dear Editor, Recently I had surgery at Union General to replace my right hip. After the three days in Union, I was transferred to Chatuge Regional Hospital to what they call "swingbed" rehab. I was there for 15 of the most rewarding days I have spent anywhere.

These folks are the absolute best at what they do and provide the most "in-house" comprehensive rehab a person can get after surgery. The nursing staff go well beyond what you would expect of them. They give the patients the best care and make sure everyone is treated with the utmost respect.

Recovery from surgery is scary, but this group of dedicated professionals take it all in stride. Everyone in this facility does everything they can to make you comfortable and speed your recovery.

The Physical Therapists (I call them "Terrorists") make sure you progress at the pace you can do to succeed and get well. The Occupational Therapists show you how to do everyday things while you are incapacitated to make your transition back to normal as smooth as possible.

In closing, I want to thank all the Nurses, CNAs, Therapists, helpers, maintenance and Dietitians for all they do. Thank you.

Timoney Massey

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.

Guest Editorial

Saving Mountain Education Charter High School

This is an open letter to the members of the 2021-22 Georgia General Assembly:

Mountain Education Charter High School began 30 years ago as an alternative to traditional high school. It has catered to, sheltered, encouraged, defended, loved and educated an entire generation of students in North Georgia. We have 18 campuses in 18 counties across North Georgia with an enrollment of more than 2,500 students. For the 2022-23 school year, MECHS had more than 500 new enrollments.

What began as a spark, has blazed into a bonfire, lighting the way for thousands of Georgia students who have been marginalized, ignored or victimized by societal expectations of what high school should be. Our students don't fit the mold set by the past visions of a high school student. We don't have cheerleaders, unless you count the teachers, administrators and support personnel who have cheered on this group of amazing human beings, while they have defied the odds, graduated with a high school diploma and gone on to success in their professional and personal lives. We don't have teams, unless you consider that we are one team with a goal more important than points or rankings. Our goal is graduates: a goal that the staff of this incredible organization has proudly aimed toward for so many worthy young men and women. The 2021-22 school year saw 479 graduates earn their high school diplomas.

What makes MECHS different? Our students are not what you see at "regular" high schools. Students attending MECHS may be older, up to 21 years old. Many have full time jobs, being a breadwinner for their parents and siblings. Several have children. A large number have found that traditional high school is damaging to their hearts and souls. Our students may have dropped out of high school at 16 and found that the world is a harsh place without a high school diploma. Those pupils can come to us at MECHS and continue their high school education, and leave with a HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA, not a GED. Many of our students have received a high school diploma along with an associate degree through dual enrollment.

The staff of Mountain Education Charter High School cares deeply about our kids. After five of our students at different sites committed suicide, MECHS perceived a serious need for the training of all staff to identify the signs of suicide or mental health problems and proper techniques to intervene when a student shows signs of a crisis was a serious need. Each member of the staff is trained in SAFETALK, giving them the tools to recognize when a student is in need as well as how to get them the help required. Additionally, the students of MECHS are shown how to observe the behavior of their friends to know when they should report their concerns to an adult.

Now, as I understand, the Georgia General Assembly has concluded that local school systems need to have services in place for these students. Ooookay? If the local school systems were going to serve the needs of these kids, they would have done so already. Basically, the only way that MECHS can stay open is if the local school systems "authorize" a local campus. Each of the counties in which MECHS has a site has said that there is no way they can afford to do that. None have offered to authorize any sort of provision to keep this model intact.

We are likely to see the end of MECHS and her sister schools Foothills Education Charter High School and Coastal Plains Charter High School. The Charters for MECHS and Foothills will end on June 30, 2023. The Coastal Plains charter ends June 30, 2024. The state will not be renewing these Charters unless something changes.

I would like to thank some of our local legislators who have been working on our behalf. These include Senator Steve Gooch, Senator Bo Hatchet, Rep. Will Wade, Rep. Victor Anderson, and Rep. Stan Gunter. We have also had a promise of support from Lt. Governor candidate Burt Jones. The administration of Mountain Education Charter High School has been working closely with these General Assembly members to find a solution that will allow us to continue serving the students of North Georgia.

To certain members of the Georgia General Assembly: Being the good politicians you are, you find something that works, and throw ALL the monkey wrenches into it, so that you can put your own personal touch of destruction to anything that makes the world a kinder, better place. What a horrible trick you have played on our children. I don't understand how you cannot see that this is, without a doubt, the wrong thing to do.

To the parents and families of students at Mountain Education Charter High School, Foothill Education Charter High School and Coastal Plains Charter High School: I don't know how many of you will read this letter, but if you think that one of these schools has helped your child to achieve what the local school system never could, call your state representative and your state senator. To find out more about MECHS and your local legislators, please go to mymec.org, and click on the Advocacy tab. It explains who we are along with a link to find your representatives and senators.

Help us advocate, with passion and respect, for a different outcome. Maybe if they hear from you, they will realize that the families these amazing schools help are flesh and blood and not just some statistic that looks good in a campaign. Please make your voice heard on this vital issue.

Sincerely, Mary Meaders Adams

Mother, aunt, mother-in-law and cousin to many MECHS graduates and a proud member of the MECHS staff since 2012

have a low pH. That's one of the reasons why we have many pines. It also means that if you clear an area that had lots of pines in it, you'll most likely need to add lime to that soil before most things will grow well.

They are suited to USDA zones 3-8. They used to be used for ships' masts, and were a major export from Colonial America.

The cones from white pines are 4 to 8 inches long. The needles come in clusters of five. The needles are 2.5 to 5 inches long, making them medium sized for pines. The easiest way to tell what is a white pine that I've found is from the color of the needles. They have a greenish, white color to them.

White pines have a very nice Christmas tree shape to them. Some people grow them for this purpose. I suppose you could grow one in your front yard and have a giant Christmas tree in 20 years. They also have ornamental use. If they are planted densely, you can shear them and turn them into a hedge. There is a number of wildlife species that eat the seeds including squirrels, deer, mice, and songbirds. White pines are commonly used as windbreaks and screens. I have seen some old stands of white pines planted along property lines or along a bank for erosion control.

Large white pines can be problematic during the winter. The needles can hold a lot of precipitation that can freeze. This can lead to limbs breaking off. Therefore, it's best to plant them in places where there is no threat of them falling onto structures or vehicles.

The white pine weevil is a major pest of white pines. They will usually feed on trees that are 20 feet tall or less. They will chew on the current year's terminal leader, killing the current year's growth. Usually the tree is able to keep growing by sending up another branch to become the terminal leader. However, this will result in a forked tree. Dying terminal leaders will have a shepherd's crook shape to them. Trees grown in partial shade are less affected by the white pine weevil.

White pines can be a great addition to a landscape. If you have questions about white pines contact you County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Habitat for Humanity

In a previous article, I discussed how home environment directly correlates to a child's development, academic achievement, and ability to thrive in society. Last week, I came across a group at Cabin Coffee that sparked an interest relating to this topic. A local group in Union County that calls themselves the US Men's Academy.

The group, ran by Dustin Barnes, Nathan Dean, Justin Salyer, and Joe Paisley, is an advocacy of catering the needs of young men through a masculine, Christian curriculum. The curriculum centers on positive leadership, and prioritizes outdoor survival techniques, appreciation of nature, fitness, nutrition, Christian social roles, and community service.

The organization is dedicated to investing in the future of our children within our community, just as Habitat is dedicated to bettering the living situations of our youth. Positive male role models in a child's life are shown to improve social skills, academic achievement, and are less likely to end up in a habitual cycle of crime and drugs.

Dustin Barnes states, "The new US Men's Academy is building the first Christian fraternity for young men and fathers in Union County known as the 'Lighthouse Squadron.' An independent organization managed by fathers for young men, it will be especially enriching for families who have fathers that deploy, travel for work, or need positive role models for their boys."

Investing in our future community involves investing in our children's lives. The quote from their website sums up the crucialness of investing into the children of our community. From Aristotle,

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but a habit."

To contact and donate to this cause, or find information on how to enroll your child, visit their website at www.usmensacademy.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor P.O. 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.

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