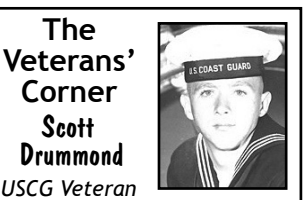


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Linda Hagyard

No, I've never met her, however she is a U.S. Army Veteran and now is the first female Commander of American Legion Post #954 in Jefferson, PA. She was born and reared in Buckingham, VA, not far from Appomattox. Her entire family has served our Sovereign Republic in uniform. Her father was a Marine. Stephen, her older brother enlisted in the Navy and sadly died from exposure to Agent Orange. According to my research she is easy going, a tall redhead and is very well spoken. Following in the footsteps of her family she went to boot camp at Fort McClellan, AL soon after HS graduation and like many of us who served have plainly stated, "If I had it to do over again, I would do the same thing. It was an honor serving my country."



The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran

Her advanced training was in communications at Fort Gordon, Georgia, leading her to be assigned at Fort Meyers, VA for two years and then off to the Pentagon where she worked in the Army switch with a top secret clearance. There was a straight through line to Vietnam. After Army life she could not cease her service to America and became an American Legion member for 49 years, and is very proud of stepping into the roll of Commander of her Post #954 in Jefferson.

From her interview as the first female Commander of her Post: "I take it very seriously because I love my country. It's an honor to be chosen to be commander, and I hope that I prove myself worthy of the job," said Hagyard, who was voted into her position in June after serving for several years as post adjutant. "I have to say that my post, the men that come to our meetings and our post, they have my back 100%. They're really good guys." Hagyard's election follows the appointment of U.S. Army veteran Denise Rohan to National Commander of the American Legion.

Her heartfelt dedication is reflected, not only in her continuing Patriotic service to America, as a Legionnaire, but in her following statement: "The older I get, the more I see those faces of those young men. I believe there were 30 of us in basic training. Thirty in my class, and 29 of them were men. I believe 28 of them were shipped straight to Vietnam after (basic training)," Hagyard recalled. "It's not a day that goes by that I don't think about them and wonder if they made it home. I know I'll carry it with me until the day I die."

Her husband, Larry says he's proud of her and how hard she works. Plus another unusual achievement, if you will, they've remained married for 43 years.

She goes on to say, "I love my country and I love my American Legion, too." And she states what many of us know, that it's important to let younger people know what being a Veteran is all about.

As a Legionnaire I too am proud of her. We have a great American Legion Post #23 right here in Towns County under the roof of VFW Post #7807 on Sunnyside. Come join us.

Semper Paratus

Letters to The Editor

One Nation, Under God

Dear Editor,

Today, modern liberal theology and secularism both agree that the Bible has to be adapted to modern society. In the process, God's word is transformed and his laws and Grace subjugated to liberal theology and its tenets. "That was back then" is used more and more to allow actions defined in God's infallible word as sin to be transformed into practices that are accepted by large segments of today's society. Some churches still preach God's word with accuracy and conviction, but a lot of today's churches are more than willing to give passes on anything and everything their members engage in. An old saying comes to mind—Right is right if nobody's doing it and wrong is wrong if everybody's doing it. And, another—If some of today's sermons were medicine, they wouldn't help you, or if poison, they wouldn't hurt you.

It's time to wake up America and remember who we claim to be—one nation under God!
Gene Vickers

Last Refuge of a Scoundrel

Dear Editor,

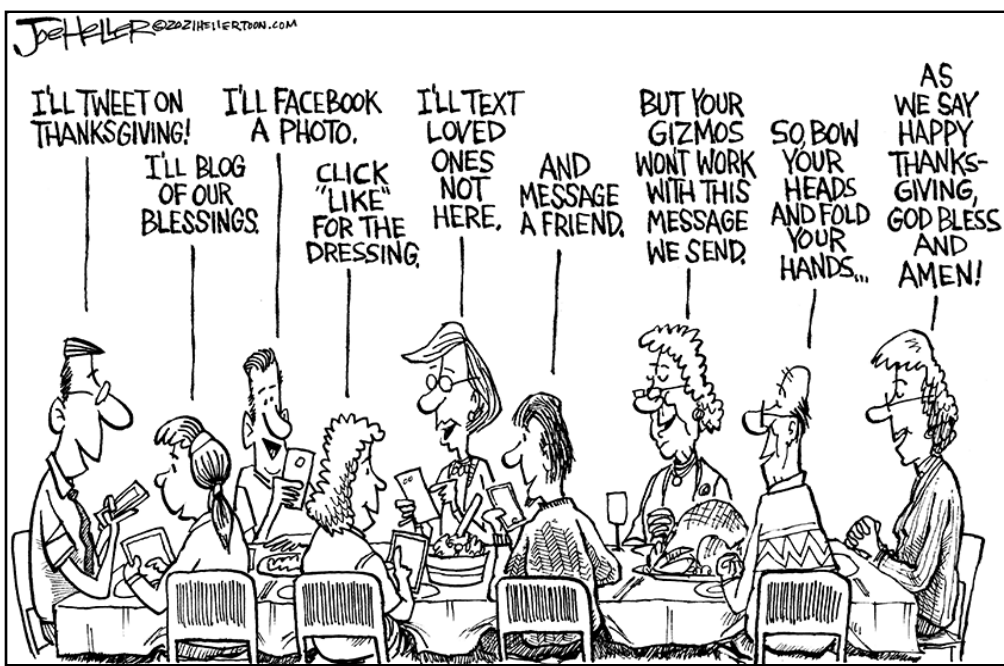
"Patriotism, last refuge of a scoundrel." -Mark Twain

Considering myself an average reader, I was struck once again by the TC Herald's obsequious dedication to all things military. Take last week's (11-17-21) edition in praise of war, warriors and veterans of the military-industrial complex. Two admonitions come to mind: firstly, General of the Continental Army and first U.S. President, George Washington, who in his Farewell Address warned against entering into "foreign [military] entanglements."

Secondly, allied commander of invading armed forces in Europe during World War II, Dwight D. Eisenhower, in his presidential farewell address, issued this dire warning about the dangers to democracy when he said: "We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist."

Obviously, neither of these warnings have been heeded by the local newspaper, veterans organizations, patriotic private citizens, many of whom pretend to follow the teachings of Christ the King of Peace, or other misguided individuals, who think endless war is the best way to end war!
Lance Jobson

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Be a Better Neighbor

Who doesn't love a good campfire? This fascination with combustion is surely programmed into our DNA. Without it we should probably have died out long ago, overcome by those denizens of the animal kingdom that are faster, stronger, and wiser than we are.

It was intelligence, not wisdom, that allowed humanity to wield fire in a self-reinforcing feedback loop. Therein lies the story of our civilization. But it was wisdom, the exceedingly rare spice that makes the human experience palatable, which understood that fire must be carefully controlled and contained. Indeed, in that brief statement we have outlined the ebb and flow of human history from the first smoldering stump ignited by lightning, to the experimental iodine-based ion propulsion system, to the back yard barrel burning trash.

In the country, we burn some of our trash in barrels. In the not too distant past the practice made perfect sense for people in remote areas with no garbage pickup services. In modern times the practice continued for people who could ill afford to pay for pickup, or were of a frugal nature which made them reluctant to spend money on a problem they could resolve themselves. This is still true for some people today, and for people who just like to burn things.

I remember the distinctive smell of newspapers burning in a 55 gallon drum fashioned into a chimney in my grandparents yard. As a child it was a thrill and a privilege to be allowed to add paper to the fire and poke at it with a stick. I also remember the unmistakable smell of plastic milk jugs and egg cartons added to the blaze.

The grandparents didn't know about the toxins released from the burning of plastic and other man made materials, toxins which can pollute air, ground and water. As late as the 1950's, the general consensus on air and water pollution was, "The solution to pollution is dilution."

We know better today, which is why it is remarkable to me when I'm driving through our area and catch a whiff of that unmistakable odor on the wind.

"There's no law against it," said an acquaintance, as the smoke from his barrel of burning plastic enveloped his home, and his wife, coughing and shooting arrows with her eyes, slammed the door shut. I'm not here today to suggest that there should be any more laws, especially here in the country where people live to be away from the nanny oversight of government and neighbors as well.

Liberty, to me, allows people to experience the consequences of their own stupid choices, but since we can't say "stupid" anymore, I'll say "mentally underserved." So, "burn baby, burn," but if you're my next door neighbor, you probably won't be invited to the barbecue.

There is another familiar smoke which results from a favorite pastime of the codgerly, though my use of the term risks accusations of ageism and dooms me to become one of the same. It happens every year about this time, as the leaves fall and collect on the ground, that someone decides the best way to dispose of them is to create a large pile of slow burning, smoldering incense.

It's almost a ritual for some of us, on a crisp fall morning, bright sun and blue sky just begging for a smudging. I've seen folks standing for hours in a meditative, almost transcendent state, watching the tiny blazes flicker and the thick white clouds stretching out in search of a breeze. On one afternoon recently, driving by the lake, it seemed as if multiple signal fires were sending encrypted messages to unknown recipients.

Again, I'm not going to suggest that there is any better solution to this problem than common sense and another increasingly rare quality: community spirit. For the codgerly among us, those who got that way through hard work and perseverance as well as those of us who achieved the state at an early age, perhaps some more information is all that is needed to keep the air in our valleys crisp and clean.

As a haven for the retired, we have a larger than average percentage of people who suffer from respiratory problems – allergies, asthma, COPD and emphysema. When a high pressure dome is sitting on top of us, producing those bright blue skies that we all love to see, the mixing height of any kind of smoke is going to be about head high. One pile of burning leaves is enough to drive indoors an entire neighborhood, and to cause respiratory distress for susceptible individuals a mile away.

It's not a very neighborly thing to do. It's also not necessary. From an ecological point of view, it's even wasteful. Now, I'm not saying "ecological" to trigger the tough and independent but fragile among us who equate the word with "tree hugger" or some political pejorative.

We're talking about ecology in the context of people who enjoy seeing lightning bugs and butterflies, who put out bird feeders and like to watch the occasional chipmunk or squirrel. We're talking "ecology" in the context of the rapidly diminished number and variety of insects among us, without which human life itself is at increasing risk.

There is a growing consensus in the scientific community that when it comes to our yards, the best practice for the chain of life that we both admire and upon which we depend, is to leave the leaves. Ideally, leave them just where they lay (they will be gone by spring) or cut them with a mulching mower. If you rake them, at least use them as compost around shrubs and perennials. Leaving the leaves creates habitat for beneficial insects. It adds organic material to the soil. It increases the survival chances for butterflies, salamanders, chipmunks, box turtles, toads, shrews and earthworms.

It makes you a better neighbor to all of us.

Outside
The Box
By: Don Perry

Deer Health and CWD

I'm sure that everyone knows that we have a lot of deer in Towns and Union counties. With the amount of deer that we have there are going to be some unhealthy deer out there. Let's talk about how to keep deer diseases from passing to you, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), and bovine tuberculosis.



Watching and Working
Jacob Williams

There are some common sense guidelines when it comes to deer health. If you're a hunter it's always best to wear gloves when field-dressing wild fowl or game. Don't eat game that looks ill or is acting abnormally before you take it. Deer carry ticks and hunters in the woods are vulnerable to ticks because of the time spent in the woods. Using tick repellent is always a good idea. Always wash your hands with an alcohol-based sanitizer after handling deer tissues or meat. If you see old wounds on the carcass, the area around that spot should be discarded. Be careful about intestinal contents contacting meat, because they will contaminate it.

For homeowners the best practice is to not feed deer. Wild animals should survive on wild food. Feeding deer can attract predators, spread disease among visiting deer, cause deer to become aggressive to one another, increase deer-vehicle collisions, and reduce fat energy reserves. In the winter time it is most important for deer to have cover not food. In winter deer use their fat reserves to survive. If deer are moving from cover to homeowner feed site, they will burn up more of their fat reserves, making them less likely to survive the winter.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is causing a lot of concern in the U.S. right now. It affects deer, elk, reindeer, sika deer, and moose. The main concern in the Southeast with CWD is whitetail deer. To this point there has NOT been any CWD reported in Georgia. It has been reported in 25 states. The two closest to Georgia are Mississippi and Tennessee. Unfortunately, wildlife experts believe it is just a matter of time before it arrives in Georgia, which is why DNR is being vigilant in monitoring for it.

It is believed that CWD is spread between animals through contact with contaminated body fluids, tissue, or indirectly by exposure to CWD in drinking water or food. It's thought that baiting deer could increase the spread of CWD. Deer coming to bait stations will most likely exchange saliva or contaminate the food. CWD has an incubation period of over a year before the neurological symptoms begin to develop. The symptoms of CWD are drastic weight loss, stumbling, lack of coordination, listlessness, drooling, excessive thirst or urination, drooping ears, lack of fear of people. An easier way to remember the symptoms is the deer look as if they are drunk. These symptoms also happen because of other diseases and malnutrition.

CWD is always fatal for deer. There has not been any strong evidence of it transmitting to domesticated animals or humans. If it were to spread to people, it would most likely happen because of eating infected meat. Therefore, if you take a deer that is expressing symptoms it's best to not eat the deer and report it to DNR.

Deer can also carry bovine tuberculosis (TB). Bovine TB can be transmitted to humans but it is rare. Less than 2% of TB cases in the U.S. are bovine TB. Bovine TB can be contracted by someone when field dressing a deer and inhaling the pathogen. Bovine TB is also transmitted by eating or drinking unpasteurized dairy products.

If you see a deer that you believe has CWD report it to DNR. If you have questions about CWD or deer health contact your county Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

The Holidays are Here

It seems hard to believe that the Holidays are here already! After last year, when so many events got cancelled, we are thrilled to have plenty to do within the next few weeks.

So, it's Thanksgiving week. Many of us were not able to celebrate with our families last year, and we can't wait to get back to "normal", having company at our houses, and eating all that great home cooking that appears this time of year. And then there's the shopping..... Black Friday is just a few days away, and the sales are everywhere.

Saturday, November 27, is "Shop Small Saturday". After you have braved the crowds on Friday, come on out and shop at all our small businesses in the area on Saturday! There, you will find unique things that you can't find in the big-box stores, and there won't be any issues with presents ordered online, arriving in the mail on time for Christmas. This year, the Habitat for Humanity volunteers will be at the Historic Union County Courthouse on Saturday, November 27, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Once you have purchased your gifts from our local small retailers, bring them to the Courthouse during those hours, and our Volunteers will wrap your presents for you! Donations are appreciated, and all money raised will stay with your local Towns/Union Habitat for Humanity, helping our local residents have a decent place to live.

Thank you to the Union County Historical Society for allowing us to wrap the presents inside the Courthouse, where it's nice and warm. A special "thank you" goes out to Ally McGraw, who is on the Board of Directors of the Historical Society, and has volunteered to be there the entire time, to see that everything goes as planned. This is the first year we have offered this service, and hope it becomes an annual event!

In last week's newspaper, I talked about another first-time event, "Pictures for Santa Paws". On Saturday, December 11, 2021, from 2-5 p.m., bring your furry friends to our Habitat ReStore (225 Wellborn St., Blairsville—in the parking lot of The Skillet Restaurant). We will have a professional photographer here, and he will take pictures of your pets, in front of a Christmas background. A suggested donation of \$5 would be appreciated. The photos will be uploaded online, so you can download the pictures you want, and get them printed. You can get photos of just your furbabies, or you can be in the pictures with them. If you need to purchase some "holiday bling" for them to wear in their pictures, stop by The Farmhouse Co, on Cleveland Street, south of the Square, and pick up a new bandana, leash, collar, or other spiffy accessory for your pet to wear in his picture.

All of us at Habitat wish you a very happy Holiday Season!



Habitat Happenings
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Towns County Herald

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