

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## 77 Years Ago

Much has occurred since, but indeed it is our duty and blessing to never forget and to honor those who wear the uniform of any of our nation's armed services and who stand in the way of attack upon our precious America.

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



Sunday morning, December 7, 1941 the Japanese committed an atrocity, attacking our US Naval Base at Pearl Harbor, HI. The media and all public announcements made it appear that America was toast, about to be overtaken by the fascist Japanese oligarchy.

Admiral Chester Nimitz, arriving at Pearl Harbor, Christmas Eve, 1941 to take command of our Pacific Fleet disagreed. This after he took a tour and personally witnessed the destruction wrought by Japanese bombs and aircraft mounted machine gun fire. He went public to announce, "The Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could ever make, or God was taking care of America."

Nimitz:  
 1 - "The Japanese attacked on Sunday morning. Nine out of every ten crewmen of those ships were ashore on leave. If those same ships had been lured to sea and been sunk--we would have lost 38,000 men instead of 3,800."

2 - "When the Japanese saw all those battleships lined in a row, they got so carried away sinking those battleships, they never once bombed our dry docks opposite those ships. If they had destroyed our dry docks, we would have had to tow every one of those ships to America to be repaired. As it is now, the ships are in shallow water and can be raised. One tug can pull them over to the dry docks, and we can have them repaired and at sea by the time we could have towed them to America. And I already have crews ashore anxious to man those ships."

3 - "Every drop of fuel in the Pacific theater of war is in top of the ground storage tanks five miles away over that hill.

One attack plane could have strafed those tanks and destroyed our fuel supply.

That's why I say the Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could make or God was taking care of America ..."

No doubt, Admiral Nimitz was a great man amongst men. A great military leader who observed and paid actual attention. Chester Nimitz, being appointed to command our Pacific Fleet at a tumultuous time in our nation's history was not another political mistake, but was a magnificent choice when all else appeared to be failing.

Please note that Pearl Harbor's oldest survivor, Ray Chavez left us to be with our Supreme Commander on Wednesday November 21, 2018. Ray was 106 years of age and had visited our Commander-in-Chief, Donald Trump as recently as last Memorial Day at our Whitehouse. Ray was very active in the Pearl Harbor Survivor's Association, which at one time had 58,000 members. Today that honor belongs to fewer than 200.

It becomes incumbent upon all of us to NEVER FORGET!

*Semper Paratus*

## Stirring the Pot

Every family has at least one. Every neighborhood and office and every classroom has them as well. We're talking about gossips: people who spread rumors and stir the pot. Our brains are wired to emphasize the negative, but some of us are addicted to the onslaught of neuropeptides that wash through our brains when we're indulging in drama.

Billions of dollars in revenue are dependent on that addiction. Gossip has become institutionalized to a degree never imagined by the architects of the age of information.

Technology has allowed the gossip column to escape the relatively benign confines of the newspaper and merge with mainstream media, where little effort is made to separate fact from interpretation, and where the ideals of the Fourth Estate have been subsumed by political and corporate agendas. Unless you read technical journals, every page is an opinion page, and even scientific studies are not immune to financial motives.

We've had this discussion many times here over the years, but I was motivated to revisit it by some recent efforts to stir the pot.

At our house we indulge in holiday media this time of year, and any of the Peanuts classics, any appearance by Rudolph, and a growing list of holiday movies are likely to be enjoyed on a chilly night by the fire from now until January, and a time tested stack of holiday music emerges from the closet to stand ready by the sound system. Unfortunately, this year mainstream media couldn't wait to tell us that some of our holiday traditions and childhood classics are now part of the battle ground in the culture wars.

Battle ground. Culture wars. Observe how important framing can be in stirring the pot or surreptitiously advancing a point of view independent of the facts. We grew up conditioned to believe that what was important enough to appear in print or on the screen was true and relevant. So when a headline appears simultaneously on diverse websites and in local television news reports, it must be important.

This year we were told that Charlie Brown's Thanksgiving is racist because of how the kids were seated around the table. We found out that Santa's reindeer are misogynistic because Rudolph's alpha-male father preferred to take on the risk of searching the arctic wastes for Rudolph himself to the exclusion of Rudolph's mother and girlfriend. We were dismayed to find out that Dean Martin's classic "Baby, It's Cold Outside" encourages rape culture.

Should we laugh or be offended? Surely there are other choices, including the choice to disregard this "news" entirely. The Thanksgiving story was compiled from a selection of tweets, and the story begins with "viewers have suggested." The same was true for the headlines about Rudolph. As far as I can tell, the story about the song was recycled from "A Line By Line Takedown of 'Baby It's Cold Outside' which appeared in the Huffington Post in 2014.

There are billions of tweets and other forms of social media posts ever year. If you look for them, on any given day you can find people discussing the conspiracy behind the effort to convince people that the earth is round rather than flat, including the fake moon landings. If I wrote a column for The Daily Mail on a slow news week, I could copy and paste a few of those tweets and say, quite truthfully, that "Viewers have suggested..." The story might be picked up by Drudge and the Huff Post and if a major network needed filler between shootings and stabbings, it could then be repeated across a network of hundreds of local affiliates. Someone scanning the headlines over a cup of coffee on a Sunday morning might be dismayed to discover that the Flat Earth Society had attracted such a large following.

Stories like this are produced every day by keyboard "journalists" who do little more than cast their nets into social media for the tackiest and most prurient catch they can find. Sometimes it's a simple (and lazy) effort to grab our attention. Sometimes the motive is more insidious. If I wanted to motivate, for example, conservative voters to go to the polls, what better way than to headline the "culture wars" and the ongoing "attack" on our values. If I wanted liberal voters to turn out, I would remind them of the desperate need for resisting that deplorable basket of "isms"

Several times now we have discussed here how that, though the world continues to improve across almost all of the metrics by which we judge success, the fear that the sky is about to fall at any moment is persistent. We can thank politics and media - and the internal wiring of our own brains - for this.

Nevertheless, people act on their beliefs no matter how skewed those beliefs may be, and if we can believe numerous studies and the science of sociology, our partisans on the left and right are more ideologically divided than at any time in recent memory, and the great exhausted middle is not motivated to forward any candidates who reflect the more balanced views of the majority.

And now my friends we have reached the point where, as my grandfather used to say, we are about to "quit preaching and go to meddling." The view from the middle is this: For many of the years when media was more conservative and when the nation itself was, in fact, more conservative, the ascendant right did not often speak kindly of those on the left. Today, however, the majority of mainstream media except for Fox News promotes a viewpoint well to the left of center. Younger and more technologically savvy citizens dominate social media. They are not any kinder to the "other side" than the other side was to them when they dominated the narrative. The pendulum swings both ways.

For the sake of the country, I hope that the center holds, but in order to do so we must overcome our exhaustion and continue to engage in the narrative.

We must not be led or discouraged by the toxic flow of information of unknown motive and provenance that passes for news today, and we can blissfully ignore any efforts to re-frame Charlie Brown and Rudolph in order to promote someone's effort to stir the pot.

## The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

## Oh, Christmas Tree

Having a live Christmas tree can be a great tradition this time of year. Let's talk about some of the different types of trees that are suitable and proper Christmas tree care so that you can have a happy, healthy tree in your home and avoid a Griswold, "Christmas Vacation" scenario.

Three native grown trees to Georgia are Fraser fir, Leyland cypress, and Red cedar. Some things to consider when purchasing a Christmas tree are needle retention, strong limbs, fragrance, and dryness.

The Fraser fir has good needle retention and remains fresh. It also has strong limbs that can support ornaments. Fraser fir also has a good fragrance to it. Fragrance can be a good thing if you're going for a little extra Christmas spirit, but may not be a good thing if you have allergies concerns in your home. Fraser fir is the "classic" live cut Christmas tree.

Red cedar is sometimes thought of as a traditional southern Christmas tree. Red cedar also has a nice fragrance, which comes with some allergy concerns. The limbs on red cedar are not sturdy and may not be able to support as many ornaments. It can also dry out rapidly in a warm house if it isn't watered well.

Leyland cypress is a newcomer to the Christmas tree market. The limbs are soft and flexible making it more difficult to hang ornaments. Leyland has less of a scent to it than other Christmas trees. Similar to the red cedar, Leyland can dry out quickly in a warm house.

Before you even leave to buy your tree it's a good idea to select and measure the space where you'll be putting your tree. A good space is away from space heaters, fireplaces, or wood stoves. Measure how high the tree can go in your house. It can be difficult to gauge if a tree is going to fit inside when you're looking at it outdoors. Trees can appear small outside, and then seem to grow a couple of feet once you bring them inside.

When you are selecting your tree it is important to make sure that you get one that is fresh cut. A fresh cut makes means that the tree will be able to absorb water more effectively, and therefore not dry out as quickly. When you are purchasing the tree give the limbs a good shake and see if many needles fall off. Then grab a branch of a tree and pull the branch through your hand. Ideally you don't want to see many needles fall off the branch. Also check to for off color on any of the needles.

A dry Christmas tree can be a fire hazard in a house. If your tree has a fresh cut it should be able to last the entire Christmas season without drying out if you keep it well watered. There should always be water in the tree stand. Keep the water level above the cut on the tree so that the cut won't dry out and your tree is continually taking up water.

A couple of ideas for disposing of your Christmas tree after Christmas are chipping or a fish pond. Putting the tree in a fish pond whole creates a good fish habitat.

If you have any questions about Christmas trees contact your local Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu. Merry Christmas and happy tree shopping!

**UGA Extension**  
**Watching and Working**  
 Jacob Williams



## Letters to The Editor

### One Individual, One Vote

Dear Editor,  
 With the recent controversy with respect to election results and allegations from the Democrats regarding voter suppression in Georgia, Florida, Arizona and other states, I think it is time to reevaluate how we hold elections. We need to return to only voting on a specific day and date. And all eligible voters with proof of identity and residency can only vote during the hours at their respective polling places. We should eliminate early voting, provisional voting, mail-in ballots, absentee ballots except for on-duty military stationed overseas. That's largely the way elections used to be conducted. And if voting is so "sacred," according to the Democrats, then treat it like going to church: on a designated day and at a specific place. One individual, one vote, one day. Period.

Tim Groza

### Thank You

Dear Editor,  
 On behalf of the Friends of the Libraries of Towns County (FOLTC), I would like to thank you and the Towns County Herald for your continuing coverage of our organization and events on behalf of the two public libraries in Young Harris and Hiawassee. We understand that your paper covers many groups and events in our area, so it's not always possible for you to publish the articles that we send to the newspaper. However, we greatly appreciate it when you are able to.

The mission of our nonprofit organization is to provide financial support for the two libraries, i.e. book purchases, children's summer reading clubs, etc., and to advocate for all public libraries. We strive to accomplish these goals by having multiple fundraising projects during the year, such as our summer and fall book sales, bake sales, a first-time Thanksgiving pie sale in partnership with Mercier Orchards, a permanent bookstore at the Mountain Regional Library, and other activities. Thank you so much for publishing many of our articles both before and after events.

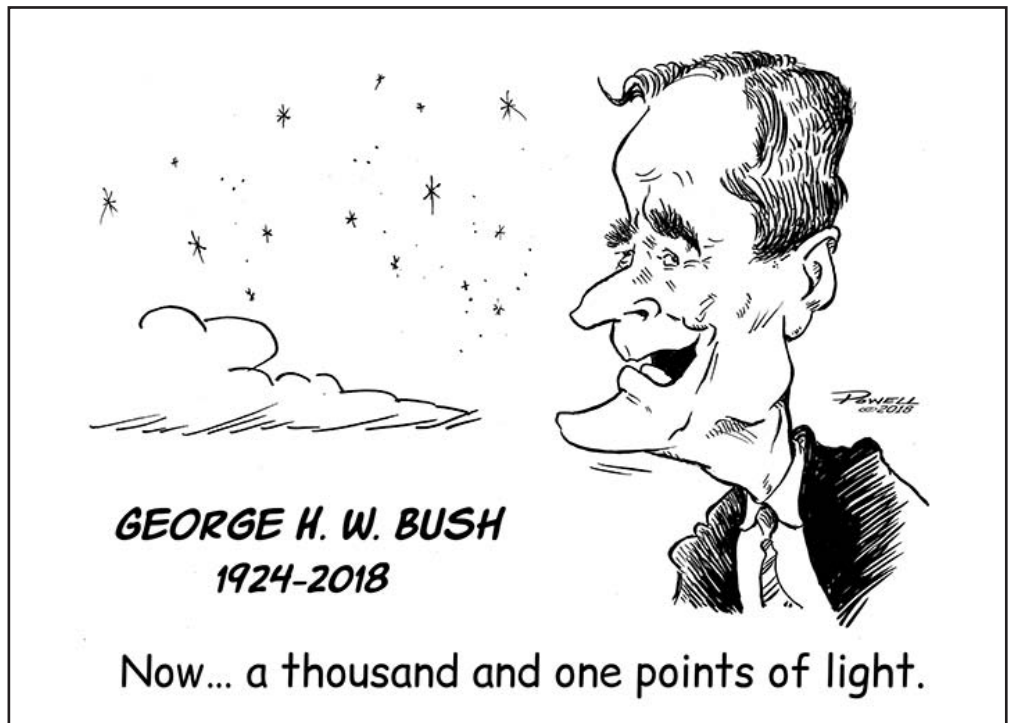
Sincerely,  
 Suzanne P. Carter  
 FOLTC President

### Should We Listen to the Advice of Scientists?

Dear Editor,  
 Again, I thank the other writer for his timely comments. I would like to refer him to the fourth National Climate Assessment that was just released, and it issued dire warnings about Climate Change. The report is mandated by law every few years. Hundreds of scientists and officials from 13 federal agencies wrote the report. The report emphasizes that climate change is due to humans causing an increase in greenhouse gases. The report says that without greenhouse gases, natural forces — such as changes in energy from the sun — would be slightly cooling Earth. It also says that we will have much higher temperatures, heavy precipitation events, much more coastal flooding, ocean acidification, extensive crop losses, and an increase in forest fires with resultant economic losses in the hundreds of billions of dollars annually by 2100.

It seems to me that, if our government ordered an exhaustive test to understand climate change, we should heed its warnings while there is still time. I do believe we all care about leaving a better world for our children. A carbon fee and dividend plan is our best solution, and it would also grow our economy.

Vernon Dixon, MD



## Towns County Community Calendar

Activity	Day/Time	Location
Bridge Players	Every Monday: 12:30 pm	All Saints Lutheran
Free GED prep.	Every Tuesday: 4 pm	Old Rec. Center
SMART Recovery	Every Wednesday: 7 pm	Red Cross Building
Bridge Players	Every Thursday: 12:30 pm	All Saints Lutheran
Free GED prep.	Every Thursday: 4 pm	Old Rec. Center
Movers & Shakers	Every Friday: 8 am	Sundance Grill
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Friday: 7 pm	Red Cross Building
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Alzheimer's Supp.	First Tuesday of each month: 1:30 pm	McConnell Church
American Legion	4 pm	VFW Post 7807
Hiaw. City Council	6 pm	City Hall
Young Harris Coun.	7 pm	YH City Hall
Quilting Bee	First Wednesday of each month: 10 am	McConnell Church
Stephens Lodge	First Thursday of each month: 7:30 pm	Lodge Hall
Chamber Board	Second Monday of each month: 8 am	1411 Jack Dayton Cir.
VFW	5 pm	VFW Post
Historical Society	5:30 pm	Old Rec. Center
School Board	7 pm	Auditorium
Unicoy Masonic	7:30 pm	Lodge Hall
Conv./Vis. Bureau	Second Tuesday of each month: 8 am	Civic Center
Gem & Mineral Club	1:30 pm	Senior Center
Arts & Crafts Guild	4 pm	Calvary Church
Lions Club	6 pm	Daniel's Restaurant
Mtn. Coin Club	6 pm	N. GA Tech
Basket Weavers	Second Wednesday of each month: 10 am	SC Fire Hall
Hiaw Writers	Second Thursday of each month: 10:30	Hiaw Pk. Comm. Rm.
Awake America Prayer	Noon	Civic Center
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	1 pm	Senior Center
Democratic Party	6 pm	Civic Center

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## Towns County Herald

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