

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Our Greatest Generation

Forwarded to me by fellow Patriot, Perry Bruce: "Reflections on Pearl Harbor" by Admiral Chester Nimitz.

Sunday, December 7th, 1941 -- Admiral Chester Nimitz was attending a concert in Washington D.C. He was paged and told there was a phone call for him. When he answered the phone, it was President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on the phone. He told Admiral Nimitz that he (Nimitz) would now be the Commander of the Pacific Fleet.

Admiral Nimitz flew to Hawaii to assume command of the Pacific Fleet. He landed at Pearl Harbor on Christmas Eve, 1941. There was such a spirit of despair, dejection and defeat--you would have thought the Japanese had already won the war.

On Christmas Day, 1941, Adm. Nimitz was given a boat tour of the destruction wrought on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese.

Big sunken battleships and navy vessels cluttered the waters everywhere you looked.

As the tour boat returned to dock, the young helmsman of the boat asked, "Well Admiral, what do you think after seeing all this destruction?"

Admiral Nimitz's reply shocked everyone within the sound of his voice.

Admiral Nimitz said, "The Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could ever make, or God was taking care of America."

Which do you think it was?"

Shocked and surprised, the young helmsman asked, "What do you mean by saying the Japanese made the three biggest mistakes an attack force ever made?"

Nimitz explained: Mistake number one: 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.

Mistake number two: 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.

Mistake number three: 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.

I've never forgotten what I read in that little book.

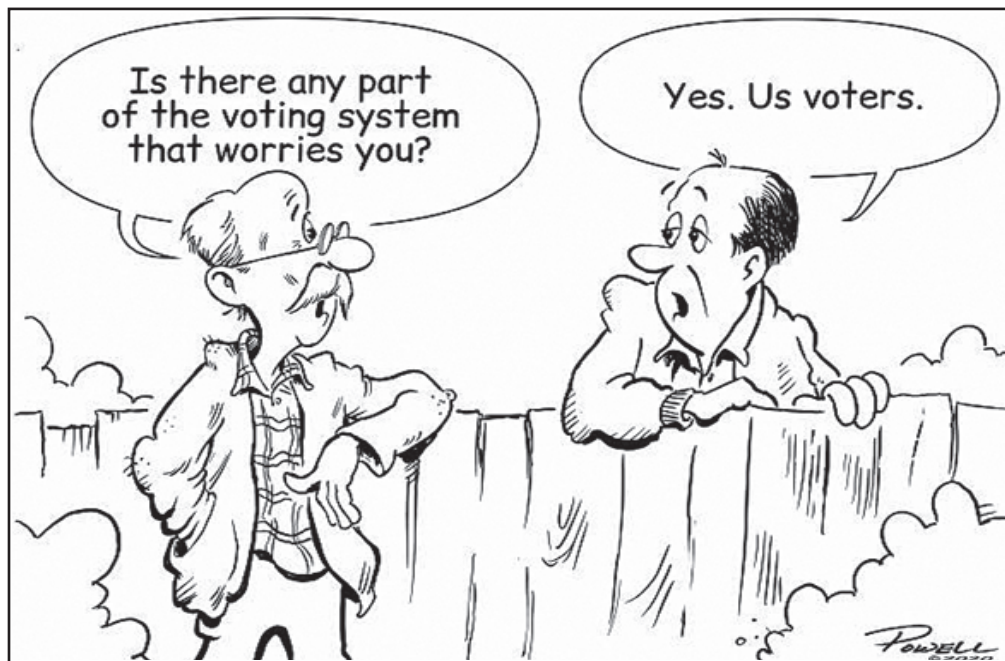
It is still an inspiration as I reflect upon it. In jest, I might suggest that because Admiral Nimitz was a Texan, born and raised in Fredericksburg, Texas -- he was a born optimist. But anyway you look at it--Admiral Nimitz was able to see a silver lining in a situation and circumstance where everyone else saw only despair and defeatism.

President Roosevelt had chosen the right man for the right job.

We desperately needed a leader that could see silver linings in the midst of the clouds of dejection, despair and defeat.

There is a reason that our national motto is, IN GOD WE TRUST. Why have we forgotten? PRAY FOR OUR COUNTRY!

Semper Paratus



Feed Hay Efficiently

Winter-feeding is one of the most costly parts of running a livestock operation. It is also necessary to get livestock through the winter. I know that everyone is being stretched this year, financially, emotionally, and mentally. As we are stretched, we have to find new ways to make do with fewer resources. Let's talk about how to improve the efficiency of your hay, and some practices that you can use to make it go further.

Feeding hay in a hay ring is one of the largest gains in efficiency that you can have if you haven't been using one. Research has shown that cattle will waste 45% of hay if it is fed by simply put out on open ground. Using a hay ring can reduce waste to 20% or less. Modified cone rings are the most efficient design at 5% waste; they are usually the most expensive too. Hay rings are not cheap, but they will pay for themselves over time, because they make your hay go further. Hay trailers or wagons will reduce waste, and are in the 15-20% reduction range. The advantage of using a trailer is that you can move where the hay is fed so that the

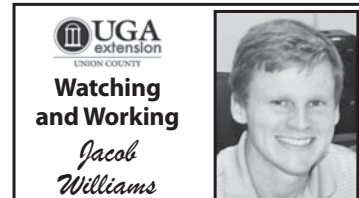
manure is spread over the pasture more evenly.

Chopping hay increases your efficiency because your hay comes in shorter pieces. This makes it easier for the cattle to get the hay out, resulting in less waste. It's estimated that shorter pieces of hay reduces waste by 5-10% because less hay ends up on the ground. Chopped hay is also easier for cattle to digest in their rumen. This is because smaller objects have a larger surface area to volume ratio than smaller objects. A larger ratio means that there is more space for the bacteria in the rumen to break down the hay.

You can sort feeding by groups, which means evaluating which of your animals need the highest quality hay, and which ones can take the lower quality hay. Lower quality hay (50% total digestible nutrients and 7% crude protein) can be fed to cattle in mid-gestation. Mid quality hay (55-58% TDN and 8-9% CP) should be fed to cattle in late-gestation. Your highest quality hay (59-65% TDN and 10-13% CP) should be fed to first calf heifers throughout gestation, growing calves, and mature cows during early lactation. Understanding cattle's body condition scoring also helps you sort which cattle need which hay.

Hay testing is important so that you know what your total digestible nutrients and crude protein are. Ideally you want to wait about 2 weeks after baling to test hay to let the moisture settle. For haylage or baleage, you should wait about a month before testing. A basic hay test will tell you about how digestible your hay is and how much energy is in it. Armed with this knowledge you can make decisions about which animals will get which hay. Animals have a limited amount of space in their belly, so making sure that space is filled with forage that will provide them with enough energy is important. If you would like to test your hay, let me know. I'd be happy to help.

If you have questions about increasing your hay efficiency contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.



Another Christmas Story

My mother loved her Christmas ornaments, and like many mothers she kept certain ones for many years. Carefully wrapped and stored away after the holidays, they would reappear just after Thanksgiving. Our Christmas tree hosted the most unlikely combinations of sparkling shapes; simple childhood gifts and class projects from the ghosts of Christmas Past. Some were cute, some gaudy, and to teenage eyes, embarrassing reminders of the youth we were so impatient to leave behind.

If we are lucky, we will collect memories of many embarrassing moments, and enjoy years of youth and innocence to remember and comfort us later in life; years when the wonders of life are many and the responsibilities few, years when Christmas vacation lasts the entire winter and Santa Claus is as real as the cookies and milk carefully placed next to the tree on Christmas Eve.

In the country, there are certain rites of passage that often accompany the holiday season, and as a young lad I was convinced that the Christmas day after my 12th birthday would bring that long hoped-for present so often desired by boys and girls lucky enough to grow up in the rural South. I was certain that would be the year I received my first real firearm and be able to join the adults on a grownup deer hunt.

It must have taken someone a long time to wrap the long, beautifully decorated rectangular box I found under the tree that year, but I cannot for the life of me remember the color of the paper or the bow I so hastily tore away. I do remember every inch of the Harrington and Richardson single shot 20 gauge inside.

Soon to come was the excitement of waking up long before daylight on the morning of that first hunt and having a hunter's breakfast, a cold bacon and egg sandwich, just me and my dad moving quietly in the kitchen trying not to wake up the house. I remember the way the stars sparkled in the crisp winter air; the ride in the old pickup from the farm to the hunting ground and the last minute advice on cover and concealment. I can still hear the crunch of dried twigs in the dark, and the whispered advice from Dad about how to balance my weight, placing my feet carefully to move silently.

I was well concealed before dawn, nested in pine straw and I was with my back propped against a suitable tree with low hanging branches for cover. Time never passed more slowly or with greater anticipation as I listened, straining my ears for any telltale sounds that might signal the approach of my prey. When a deer finally did come near my location, well scouted by my dad in anticipation of this momentous event, the only sound I could hear was my heart pounding.

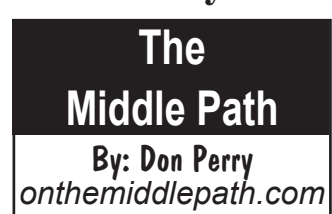
The flash was blinding and the blast deafening when I pulled the trigger. The gray shape of the deer disappeared into the mist and the pounding of my heart was replaced by a loud ringing in my ears as I struggled in vain to hear what direction my quarry might be headed. I had been warned that a spooked or wounded deer might run for quite a distance before settling down, and I was prepared to wait, quiet and watchful until I got my bearings again.

I waited with all the patience a 12-year old could muster, until I thought I heard a likely sound some distance from my vantage point. I headed as quietly as I could in that direction. A thickening mist was rising from the ground and I could barely make out the shape of the trees. After half an hour of carefully picking my way through branch and bramble, I stepped into a small clearing just as I thought I saw the shape of my prey on the other side. I took one more step into the clearing for a better look, but I never got the chance. Just as I stepped forward, the ground beneath my feet collapsed and I went straight down about four feet into a hole, landing hard on the flat of my feet with a thud. I saw stars for a moment, and as I blinked them away, looking up, I noticed with some trepidation that the end of my nose was about a foot away from an old moss covered tombstone.

I don't know what congregation lived and died on that forgotten ground, abandoned long enough to grow a mature stand of timber. I don't think I was ever able to equal the feat of acrobatics I performed when I shot straight up out of that sunken grave like a fish jumping out of water. I think I may have actually levitated when I came up out of that hole. I'm not sure that I have ever run away from a place so fast in my life. I have no memory of how I found my way back to the truck.

What I do remember is the sound of my dad's joyful laughter as we drove back home that morning. He told me something then that I have always cherished, that though I may have missed my buck, I bagged a good story that would be worth a lot more to me as the years went by.

Memories are a lot like those favorite Christmas ornaments my mother kept so carefully. The number and variety we keep, the way we display them or keep them wrapped up and stored away, this is how we decorate the story of our lives. If we are fortunate, when we consider them all, the ones that sparkle, the unlikely shapes, the ones we are proud of and even the embarrassments, we will enjoy a bit of the same sense of celebration we feel when we look at a Christmas tree.



Smoke Alarms

When a smoke alarm detects smoke, it emits a shrill sound that as my granddaddy said, "could wake the dead", which in the case of a house fire is critical so we don't become one of those. Most deaths in house fires are caused by smoke inhalation as it overtakes its victims who never wake up. Smoke alarms are installed on ceilings where smoke will gather first, and the alarm will sound to alert us before the lethal smoke moves down to claim lives. We should have smoke alarms in each bedroom in the house so when a fire starts, and smoke begins to flow along the ceilings we can be alerted to the danger and escape. National estimates of reported fires show that in 2011-2018, fires in homes with no smoke alarms caused an average of 940 deaths per year. An additional 510 people per year were fatally injured in fires in which smoke alarms were present but failed to operate. Power source problems were the leading cause of smoke alarm failures. Hardwired smoke alarms were more likely to operate than those powered solely by batteries.

In reported home fires in which the smoke alarms were present but did not operate, almost half of the smoke alarms had missing or disconnected batteries. Nuisance alarms were the leading reason for disconnected smoke alarms. The risk of dying in reported home structure fires is cut in half in homes with working smoke alarms. Installing smoke alarms is the first step, but it is most important to be sure they are working. Half of the home fire deaths resulted from fires reported between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. when we are usually asleep and not aware of what is going on around us. Statistics show that the percentages of home structure fires and civilian fire deaths reported between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. were higher for properties with smoke alarms that did not operate or with no smoke alarms than in fires in which smoke alarms operated. Smoke alarms give us a sense of security, so we can sleep, but if they aren't maintained, that sense of security will be false and can lead to death by smoke.

Most home smoke alarms use either ionization, photoelectric, or both sensing systems to detect a fire. Photoelectric alarms respond slightly faster to smoldering fires; ionization alarms respond slightly faster to flaming fires. Ionization alarms are less expensive and the most widely used. Unlike other appliances, these devices function quietly in the background, and its alarm, in response to a real smoke situation or to testing, is the only evidence that it works. A television that will not play will not lead to tragedy, but a smoke alarm that fails to sound in a fire, could. Roughly half of the smoke alarms collected as inoperable and studied in the National Smoke Detector Project were more than 10 years old. Alarms designed solely to detect smoke should be replaced every 10 years. Many households have not developed the escape plans that would allow them to use the extra warning time smoke alarms provide effectively. Escape plans identify any obstructions to secondary exits if the main door is blocked, a meeting place outside the home for household members to gather and makes provisions for household members who need help.

We can "Firewise" the outside of our homes to lower the risk of destruction by a wildfire, but we also need to protect our families on the inside by installing, maintaining, and regularly testing our smoke alarms that are our first-line of defense against fire and smoke while we sleep. Monitored security systems are not expensive (around \$15/month) and if something triggers an alarm goes off, the monitors will call you to let you know that there is a problem, and if it is real, they will call 911 to get help on the way.

For more information on Smoke Alarms, contact your local Fire Rescue Department or Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D at: info.cccrd@gmail.com.



Letters to The Editor

Hamilton Gardens

Dear Editor,

County's help needed.

Surely by now most residents of Towns County know of the spectacular and unique asset we call Hamilton Gardens, located above the TC Fairgrounds. As avid hikers my husband and I can fully attest to the quality trails that meander through some of the most spectacular scenery we have ever experienced, even after traveling in over 40 countries; however, this treasure that residents and over 37,000 visitors this year alone have come from near and far to enjoy may well disappear if action is not taken soon.

Volunteers maintain the Gardens, and at this time zero tax money is received for actual operations, but the Gardens cannot survive and thrive without the County's help. If the County fails to act, it is cutting off its nose to spite its face, as Hamilton Gardens is a draw for people to come spend money in Towns County along with a draw for us residents to find serenity and a strengthened faith in a safe and most picturesque setting.

If "the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing" as Edmund Burke once said, then the solution is for our county leaders to actively find ways to help Hamilton Gardens survive and thrive, starting NOW.

Linda JoAnne Barrett

GUEST COLUMNS

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Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor

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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 be considered for publication.*

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