

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## America's Other Enemy

Our beloved friend Todd Kimsey, now resting in peace at the Right Hand of our Lord, told me many stories on this little known history of WWII as our Navy had completed several days of operations against the Japanese in the Philippine Sea.

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



To be exact, Task Force 38, seven fleet, six light carriers, eight battleships, fifteen cruisers and fifty destroyers were located about three hundred miles east of Luzon. Todd was aboard the USS Pasadena, attached to the Third and then the Fifth Fleet and was in one of two deadly typhoons in this area.

We must bear in mind that we had no satellite weather projection data, weather radar as today, and had to rely on educated "reckoning" as to what when and where catastrophic weather would develop, back then.

After spending three days in heavy bombardment of critical Japanese held positions in this AO, the seas grew rough, very rough. Many of our ships were extremely low on fuel and attempted to refuel under hazardous conditions. Many of our Greatest Generation, struggling to do their duty as the "kids" they were back then never faltered in whatever jobs they were assigned to. Todd informed me that many were seasick.

And on December 18, 1944, one of the most violent typhoons overtook our task force with greater fury than the Samoan hurricane of 1889. Buffeted by hurricane force winds, and extreme seas, we lost three destroyers, the USS Hull, USS Spence, and USS Monaghan and all hands aboard.

A cruiser, five aircraft carriers, three destroyers were critically damaged as well as 146 aircraft were lost when the storm broke them loose from their hangers, resulting in fires aboard the carriers. History records that over 790 officers, and men were lost at sea or killed outright. Eighty escaped death with serious injuries.

In lieu of our obvious losses, our Pacific Fleet built new weather stations in the Caroline Islands, Manila, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Guam and Latte. Obviously after securing these sites from Japanese invaders. Obviously there were some very serious charges sought and court of Inquiry brought forward by Commander in Chief, Pacific fleet in the aftermath of these weather related, horrendous losses.

To learn far greater detail and some very interesting history concerning our WWII generation and this little known history I highly recommend reading "Halsey's Typhoons, by Adamson and "Typhoon, The Other Enemy" by Calhoun.

Never forget that in our history of America, those who sacrificed and wore any of our nation's uniforms are the singular most important reason we even exist. And never forget our heroes who never came home. They too are resting at the Right hand of our Supreme Commander, where there are no storms! Be forever thankful for our men and women in uniform, including our EMTs, Police and Firefighters. They all risk their lives every day of the year for ALL of us, especially in this "politically correct" era.

As is reflected in military historical accounts, never trivial and often ignored or forgotten, our nation would not survive without them. *Semper Paratus*

## A Holiday Message For A Political Year

We have a holiday message for you this year. It's not quite Christmas yet, but we're getting into the spirit of things. For many of us, this is the time of year when our better angels prevail. Hopefully by now our hearts have softened a bit in anticipation, and open hearts sometimes lead to open ears.

The message was first brought to us by Buckminster Fuller the said, "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."

We'll need this message again very soon. Next year the political circus will reach the heights of frenzy and the depths of depravity. Some of us may need to repeat this wisdom like a mantra.

If you spend any time at all on social media platforms, or if you scan the headlines of the most popular "news" sources, you'll see the opposite of building. Instead you'll see attacks, insults, derision, propaganda and spin.

Some of the memes we post and share are undoubtedly funny. The friends who agree with us laugh with us. The ones who don't may not comment, but eventually they stop following us. They no longer hear what we have to say, even when we speak the truth.

Meanwhile, outside our bubble of awareness the people who have stopped listening to us are posting their own jokes and insults. We don't know because we've stopped listening to them.

Let's say, for example, that the people who laugh with us get a lot of their "news" from the Pepsi network. The people who laugh at us get their information from Coke. Those of us who laugh at both Coke and Pepsi see two separate "realities" being described. "Did you see the Pepsi article on the impeachment hearings today? Things are looking bad for Trump!" "Did you see the Coke article today? Trump's lawyer made a fool of that witness!"

Lets take a moment and list the innovative and consensus building ideas that the Democrats have produced in their campaigns this year. That didn't take long. Now let's list the new solutions the Republicans have offered. We'll wait.

You get the point. It's not that both sides don't have any solutions, but betcha most of us couldn't name one to save our lives.

There is nothing mysterious about this lack of understanding and communication. Let's think back over our own lives for a moment. Now make a list of the lessons, the breakthroughs and the epiphanies we've experienced from being insulted, disparaged, mocked and ridiculed.

We're all quite capable of recognizing truth, but we recoil from accepting it as an injection or in suppository form.

While we're busy laughing with the people who agree with us and insulting the ones who don't, a lot of bad things can happen outside our bubble of awareness. The government is \$23 trillion in debt and adding another trillion every year. Did you see the excellent and well documented report recently released by the Washington Post about the war in Afghanistan?

For 18 years now the government has deceived, obscured and blatantly lied about the situation there. Everyone's favorite president was complicit. Bush, Obama, and so far, Trump, all complicit in the deception. Secretaries of State and cabinets, members of Congress, Republicans and Democrats, all complicit. And the cost... 2,372 American military deaths; 1,720 contractor deaths; 20,320 wounded. \$1 trillion spent, and at least 100 thousand enemy combatants and 40 thousand civilians, dead.

Who is responsible? It's not our neighbor. It's not the Democrat or the Republican voter we like to insult. There has been so much outrage among our people. Much of it has been engineered outrage, but we have been complicit in perpetuating that anger. Stop and look at what has happened while we were busy insulting and attacking each other.

Now let the outrage and the responsibility rest where it belongs: On the "military industrial complex" that Eisenhower warned us about; on the permanent political class that survives every election; on the every growing and increasingly coercive bureaucracy, and on the corporate media which encourages anger and drama because it is profitable.

When we begin to think in terms of accountability, it makes the process of choosing candidates next year much easier: Not one vote for anyone who was complicit in the crimes of the last 18 years, and that includes a large percentage of the incumbents now living in Washington. Doesn't that save a lot of wasted time and effort? You're welcome.

### 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.

**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  
 onthemiddlepath.com

## Erosion Control

Georgia, along with much of the southeastern US, doesn't have a positive past with erosion. Repetitive cropping of cotton in the Piedmont resulted in seven inches of topsoil being washed away into the ocean.

**UGA extension**  
 Watching and Working  
 Jacob Williams



Soil takes hundreds of years to create, meaning that loss of soil is something that is felt for generations. By the 1950s, new policies and programs began to change Georgia from endless cotton fields to forestland and other uses that are less susceptible to erosion. In the mountains, there is always a threat of erosion if we aren't proactive with protecting our landscape. Let's talk about why we should care about erosion and some things that you can do to make sure that your land isn't eroded away.

Erosion can also lead to water quality issues. Not only does the topsoil muddy up our lakes and rivers, but also the nutrients that the topsoil is carrying can create algal blooms leading to decreased aquatic life. That is bad news for our lakes and the fish that inhabit them. Erosion can also create a hard pan that will repel water and increase surface runoff.

So let's talk about what you can do to reduce erosion. Firstly, construction makes soil very susceptible to erosion. Removing all the vegetation from the top of the soil leaves it open to the rainfall. In construction, surround the project site with hay bales and silt fences, preserve the already existing vegetation, and keep any piles of loose vegetation or gravel covered. Whenever you're clearing land try to leave as much of the existing vegetation as possible. This means you won't need to plant as much back once your project is finished.

Planting permanent vegetation is the long-term goal for erosion control. Mulch can also be used temporarily while you are establishing vegetation. Grasses are really good at intercepting runoff and infiltrating it back into the soil. Shrubs are good at creating cover and habitat for wildlife, and trees are best at blocking noise.

Keep stream banks covered with vegetation and trees. Those plant roots will solidify that stream bank so that the natural erosion process will be slowed down. It will keep the stream from widening. In gardens and around the home use mulch or compost when possible to protect bare soil. This will improve water infiltration into the soil and reduce runoff.

Cleared land is most likely going to need lime and fertilizer before you can replant it with vegetation. A soil test is a great place to start to learn how much lime and fertilizer you need to add.

Minimizing impermeable surfaces such as the driveway or walkway on your property will also reduce erosion. Obviously, you will need some impermeable surfaces at your property, such as a roof for your house. For cases like that, it's important to design pathways for the water from those impermeable surfaces to travel so that they can be deposited in a rain garden or pond. Rain gardens collect water allow the water to infiltrate back into the soil instead of having it run downhill. Usually they have plants that are adapted to living in damp soils.

If you have any questions about erosion or what you can do to prevent erosion at your property please contact your county Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

## Letters to The Editor

### Christmas at Young Harris College

Dear Editor,  
 If you missed the concert, Christmas at Young Harris College, you missed one of the most inspiring and entertaining sounds to come out of our Brasstown Valley and northeast Georgia in many years. Jeff Bauman, Director of YHC Concert and Chamber Choirs along with Dr. Kerry Bryant, YHC Director of Bands, presented a spectacular performance that grandly transformed those who attended into the warm and delightful mood of Christmas. The performance was the combined effort of nearly 150 highly talented student musicians singing and playing their hearts out to lighten our spirits.  
 A highlight for me was the piano ensemble. I have never seen or heard four highly talented and practiced pianists sit at the same concert grand together to tap out a rousing march? This was only a glimpse of this great choral and concert band performance. The last act sealed their success causing goosebumps and shivers with the combined band and choirs booming rendition of Handels' Hallelujah Chorus.  
 We are very proud of the young men and women musicians of Young Harris College. Our hats are off to you.  
**John Scott**

### Over and Over Again

Dear Editor,  
 Over and over again I am reminded why I chose Blairsville as my adopted home. Recently I was on my way to a hospice patient's home nearly 50 miles away. I wanted to make one short stop before going there, and went to the P.O. for a quick errand to mail some items. Deed done in record time, I returned to my car and discovered - to my horror - that I had locked my keys in the car.  
 In many other communities across this nation, that would have meant that no one would have come to my aid. But, that is not true in Blairsville.  
 A man pulled up to park next to me and saw the look of consternation on my face, and within moments said he'd drive me back to my home to get a spare key.  
 His wife was in the car, and I noticed her waving a "welcome" wave to me, and as I got in the car she said, "You're Arlene Gray, aren't you?" And, yes I am.  
 She said she recognized me from the back cover of a book I had written many years ago, which she said she had read and enjoyed. Mostly I was shocked that she had recognized me from that old photo!  
 It was a 10-mile drive [each way] and that couple was congenial and cooperative every inch of the way! For anyone wondering if there is any place on earth more endearing than Blairsville, GA, wonder no more! And for all my neighbors and friends who live in this lovely "small-town with a big-heart," I extend best wishes for a Merry CHRISTMAS and a glad New Year!  
 It may not still be "Thanksgiving," but I am giving thanks anew for that couple: Mark and Sharon Wingertsahn - new friends with big hearts!  
**Respectfully submitted,**  
**Arlene M. Gray**



## Towns County Community Calendar

	Every Monday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Sharp UMC (Men)	7 pm
	Every Wednesday	
Alcoholics Anon.	Hiawassee UMC	Noon
	Every Thursday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
	Every Friday:	
Movers & Shakers	Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Sunday:	
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Third Monday of each month:	
Hospital Auxiliary	Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Planning Comm.	Civic Center	6 pm
MOAA	Michael email mva62sgn@brmcmc.net	
	Third Tuesday of each month:	
YH Plan Comm.	YH City Hall	5 pm
Co. Comm. Mgt	Courthouse	5:30 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Blairsville store	5:30 pm
Water Board	Water Office	6 pm
	Third Wednesday of each month:	
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
Book Bunch & Lunch	Daniels Steakhouse	11:30 am
	Third Thursday of each month:	
Friendship Comm.	Clubhouse	6 pm
Republican Party	Civic Center	5:30 pm
	Third Saturday of each month:	
Goldwing Riders	Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
	Fourth Monday of each month:	
Red Cross DAT	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
	Fourth Tuesday of each month:	
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
	Fourth Thursday	
Hiaw. Writers	Hiaw. Pk. Comm. Rm.	10:30
Hiaw. Garden Club	Clubhouse	12:45 pm

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## Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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