

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## I Did Not Forget

The months of November/December are just loaded with events special to almost all Americans, having just celebrated the earthly arrival of our Lord Jesus. Plus more important military and Veterans events and remembrances than this old scribbler can keep up with. However I did not forget the birthday of our National Guard of December 13, way back in 1636, 385 years ago!! The NG regiments were formed in Massachusetts as the 181st Infantry, the 182nd Infantry, the 101st Field Artillery, and the 101st Engineer Battalion, all of the Massachusetts Army National Guard. Still in existence today, and acquiring activation for any various and asunder duties, even including being deployed into combat zones. So make no fun of or jokes that these "civilian soldiers" are "draft dodgers" or slackers. They work full time jobs plus serve weekend duties for training and any duty for Americans they may be called upon to do.



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

Recently NG units from several other states were activated to build and serve in temporary field hospitals in areas like NYC for the Covid -19 flu outbreak. Our men and women of the NG served as doctors, nurses, attendees 24/7 serving the needs of our fellow citizens and for backup to over crowded hospitals. Had to be physically and mentally demanding duty. We owe those folks our gratitude and should honor them as we should ALL of our military service members.

Many folks may ask how can the National Guard be recognized as older than our Army? This is based in law. The Militia Act Of 8 May, 1792 permitted earlier militia units organized prior to 8 May, 1792 to retain customary privileges and was further promoted by the Militia

Act of 1903, and our National Defense Act of 1916 plus all subsequent laws thereof. That is some rock solid history there, not to mention that which individual Army National Guard members have accomplished in our Homeland and worldwide.

Let us not forget the Air National Guard who serve as a reserve unit to our USAF, with an official birthday as 18 September, 1947. As we know the first Air Force was the Army Air Force for which was created the National Guard Army Air Force units, and like our early airmen in green very soon had to swap Army green for Air Force blue uniforms. Hence the Air National Guard came to be as we know it today.

As Americans we should respect and honor ANY man or woman who volunteers to serve America in any of our various military units whether they serve part time or full time, they have all sworn to and taken the same oath. May God Bless and look over all of those and their families who serve something far greater than self. We certainly need more good people like them. -Semper Paratus

## Letters To The Editor

### God's Calling

Dear Editor,

I have been a Christian for 30 years and I have failed God many times in my walk with Him, and every time I let God down, He would come alongside me and tell me to get back in the game and that He still loved me. That kind of love only comes from a heavenly Father who knows my weaknesses, knows my struggles, knows my longings and my shortcomings, yet still loves me with an everlasting love into eternity.

I think of the story in the Bible about the apostle Paul who once was persecuting Christians and having them killed for their faith, but then God turned Paul's world of evil upside down when the Lord encountered him on the Damascus Road and brother Paul became a diehard fan of the Lord Jesus Christ thereafter. Did Paul have an easy life? Far from it. Yet in every situation he found himself, whether being in prison or shipwrecked or even left for dead, brother Paul stayed true to God's calling on his life and even rejoiced in his sufferings, because of his relationship with the Lord, God.

In my 30 years of walking with the Lord I can honestly say there was one man who I encountered at Walmart here in Blairsville who reminded me of brother Paul. His name is Sean Byers, a greeter at the front door, and I could sense by his speech that he too was a diehard fan of Jesus Christ. And the more I saw Sean when I went to Walmart, I would stop and chat with him and listen of how much he truly loved his Savior and Redeemer. Brother Sean passed into glory last month, but his testimony lives on in the hearts of those who knew Sean, and we thank God above for sending him here though for a short season.

God has a way of sending folks into our lives like the apostle Paul and brother Sean who bless us, who encourage us to keep our faith in God and to give us hope that a better day is coming soon for us who believe in a cross that can and will change your life if you surrender everything over to the Lord and let Him lead your steps down that narrow path that leads to glory. Yes, life here is tough, but the beauty of the next life to come will be one of complete harmony and peace if you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior. He's only a breath away, folks. Call out to Him today and come and be a child of God and be like brother Sean telling the good news of Jesus Christ.

Frank F. Combs

### Tis The Season To Remember

Dear Editor,

The birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. His two greatest commandments—"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and love your neighbor as you love yourself." The less fortunate, and be ready and willing to lend a helping hand. To speak words of healing and to abstain from sowing discord and division. To be kind to one another and be willing to forgive others as Christ forgives us. Mountaintop experiences are great, but we all learn more from the valley experiences of life. To acknowledge we are all God's children, His people, and the sheep of His pasture.

Gene Vickers

A REALLY UGLY HOLIDAY SWEATER



JOE HELLER

## Notes From A Holiday Trek

We opted for a change this holiday season, and decided to spend some time in a place where the low temperatures in December are consistently double digits as opposed to the "not-nearly-enough-degrees" predicted for the mountains.

When you travel during Christmas there is always a chance that Santa may not find you in your proper place, but still smarting from Janet Yellen's rebuke for buying the barbecue grill that brought down the economy, we decided we were abundantly blessed with material things and could do without anything the jolly old elf might bring.

Traveling south across the great state of Georgia, one gets the sense that the "war on Christmas," whatever that might have been, was decided in favor of those who decorate. I've always appreciated their efforts, and Towns County has some notable and even spectacular examples of dedication to the art.

I remain curious about whatever it is that causes the ebb and flow of the seasonal tradition. Is it economic? Is it cultural? Or is it some combination of both? Surely part of the ebb must be a result of time itself. There were certain neighborhoods in the town where I grew up that we would re-visit yearly to enjoy the lights, but as the neighborhoods aged, the lights started to go out. I think perhaps one reaches an age when one is wise enough to realize that climbing the ladder like Clark Griswold is not essential.

There are surely many more reasons. Some of us celebrate other holidays, or none at all. Some may feel that they have spent enough on Christmas without also adding to their electric bills. We have trended toward less at our house in recent years as the number of things in the attic to sort has trended toward more. I believe I may also be developing an aversion to glitter encrusted Styrofoam from Asia.

Though my own Steady Glow Shimmer Chicken remains in the box this year, every little town south of Atlanta was decorated. I'm not sure that Christmas decorations are a reliable economic indicator either. Some of the smallest towns with the greatest number of abandoned stores were also the most brightly decorated, as if in keeping with the ancient practice of lighting a candle to dispel the darkness, like Dylan Thomas they "rage against the dying of the light."

From an entirely subjective and non-scientific perspective (because this is an opinion page after all), we noticed a slight decrease in the genial nature of random encounters on this journey. Civility and politeness seemed weighed down by weariness and frustration, especially for those who must serve or encounter the public on a daily basis. As a society I believe we've become less polite, less patient, more demanding and self absorbed – a theory supported by one retail worker we met who was brought to tears by a few simple words of kindness and support.

Aside from the constant goading and fear mongering of the infotainment and political classes, I believe we spend far too much time in virtual reality. We're constantly "connected," but never so alone, and we're forgetting how to act in the company of real people in a real world where we can't click "next" to something more to our liking.

And now I'm going to risk life and limb to make a bold statement which has laid on my chest like a lump of creosote: We could learn a thing or two about barbecue in the mountains from our neighbors to the south. I'm sorry, but I said it. Smoke, ketchup, black pepper and smoke do not a barbecue sauce make. A proper sauce needs a bit of mustard and a dash of vinegar if you please. The meat needs to simmer in the sauce to be served warm, unless a lukewarm plate of dry meat squirted with cold sauce (so you can better taste the smoke) is your thing. Proper barbecue is available all across South Georgia and again in Virginia, but how the finer points skipped over such a wide swath of North Georgia and North Carolina, I just don't know.

We may never agree about barbecue, and that's perfectly fine, but I believe there's one thing we can all agree upon, and that is that we pay far too much for groceries in our beloved mountains. I was informed by a certain North Carolina based grocery chain that we pay more in Hiawassee because we're considered a "resort area." This explanation was given as if it should immediately explain why a chain would be forced to charge more, obviously, because people on vacation are willing to pay more for everything. It's also, allegedly, far more expensive to truck our groceries across the vast expanses of the mountains that surround us.

Saint Simon's Island is also considered a resort area. It is completely separated from the mainland by the Intercoastal Waterway. Groceries on the island, at least for our shopping list, run 20-30% cheaper than what we pay in Hiawassee. In Brunswick, we paid half what we pay at home for several items. That's right. Half. Not hyperbole pay, not exaggerated half, but 50% half. Adds a bit of red to the holiday lights, doesn't it?

I've always loved a white Christmas, but while Christmas on the Georgia Coast is never likely to give any snow, it does have its charms. The fog rolls in at night, giving the decorations and colored lights a glow that would be the envy of any Shimmer Chicken. Occasionally the sound of a foghorn rolls in over the waters and gives the whole scene an almost Dickensian feeling. There is also something to be said for riding a bike along the dunes in the morning as opposed to scraping ice off of a windshield.

Nevertheless, we love our state from top to bottom, but no part of it as much as the top. Whenever we travel, we're always eager to get back home to the mountains. We wouldn't trade the quality of life we have here, the fine neighbors, the fresh air rolling down the mountainside, for any amount of barbecue.

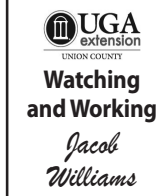
## Outside The Box

By: Don Perry

worldoutsidethebox.com

## Cold, Cattle, and Horses

With cold temperatures well upon us I wanted to take some time to talk about livestock needs in cold weather. Cold temperatures mean that animals require more energy to maintain their body temperature, ice can become a problem, and the way that you care for your animals will change some.



Windbreaks can help reduce the affect cold winds on animals and therefore improve the "feels like" temperature. Cattle are generally cold tolerant and are comfortable down to 20 degrees. Horses are generally comfortable down to about 18 degrees. Horses can be blanketed when temperature get low to help them handle the cold. It's best to use a well-fitting blanket. As these animals

are using more energy to stay warm, be mindful of how much energy you are providing them in feed. Building a shelter for animals to take cover in is also a great way to help keep them warmer.

It's best to have abundant feed available to help animals maintain body temperature in cold temperatures. If the total digestible nutrients (TDN) of your hay is low, there may not be enough energy in the hay to sustain the animals for a long period of time. High quality hay has a TDN of >58%. Low quality hay is 45 to 52% TDN. A simple hay test will tell you the TDN of your hay. Cattle and horses don't have unique vitamin requirements during the winter compared to the rest of the year.

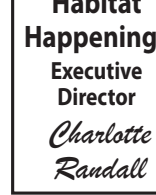
Body condition scoring (BCS) is important to monitor during the winter. BCS is a tool to help you evaluate the health of your animal, and determine if they getting enough feed and energy. The scoring ranges from 1 to 9. 1 is severely emaciated, and 9 is extremely obese. 5-6 is generally the desired score for cattle, while a score of 5 is ideal for horses. On cattle that are 5-6 the spine and the ribs are not visible and the tailhead and brisket have no fat. On horses a 5 will have a level back, the ribs are not visible but can be felt, the withers are rounded, and the shoulders blend smoothly into the body. Animals that are too fat or too thin can have health issues. In the cold maintaining a good BCS will give you a healthier animal.

Outdoor water tanks will need to be cleared of ice under extended cold conditions. Cattle need about 1 gallon per hundred pounds of weight during cold weather. A 1000-pound horse will need 10 to 12 gallons of water each day in the winter. In the growing season grasses contain lots of water that horses can use to satisfy their water need. However, in the winter horses eating dry hay will need to drink extra water. If the winter trough has frozen over the animals can't drink from it. The ice may need to be broken up with a hammer or have a heater put on the water.

If you have questions about the impact of cold weather on your animals contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

## Habitat for Humanity

Looking forward into the New Year, we must reflect on where we are and where we want to be. Betterment of ourselves begins with goals for our future as a roadmap to follow, and define what we want our life to be.



At Habitat, we want our homeowners to be successful. Our philosophy behind a 'Hand Up, not a Hand Out' will clear up several misconceptions about a Habitat home. The homes are not free but kept close to cost in order to provide an affordable mortgage for families. Potential homeowners are qualified for a 502 USDA home loan program, which requires a credit score of 640. Qualified applicants' total income does not exceed 80 % of the Area Median Income of the county. (Towns County \$51,280; Union County \$54,400.) Perspective homeowners also must require the need for safe, affordable housing.

Selected families become a partner with Habitat, helping themselves along the way. Willingness to partner and putting in "sweat equity" is part of the process in becoming a Habitat Homeowner. Sweat Equity can be working on their home, volunteering in the Restore, or performing administrative tasks in the Habitat office.

Last week, Southstate Bank and Habitat hosted a financial wellness seminar at our local Southstate Bank. USDA loan originators from Clarksville were also in attendance, to explain their programs offered. Eddie Temple, Assistant Vice President Branch Manager of Blairsville, stated that three participants from the seminar had contacted him to begin the process of working on their credit score. The strive to begin this work is what Habitat looks for in potential homeowners.

As we leave 2022 and enter into 2023, let us go forward making the decision to be fully responsible for our life. Success requires taking the actions necessary to lead to positive results. Mistakes will be made, and at times lead us out of our comfort zone. It is impossible to learn, grow, and achieve goals in a static position. Learning from failure will ultimately lead to success, and willingness to learn is the key.

## 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.

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# Towns County Herald

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