

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

Letter to the Editor:

Although I was amongst those outspoken about the actions, or rather lack thereof, by the BRMEMC board members in the Taylor debacle, I believe that the actions, although well intentioned, by the group to bring suit for the dismissal of the six members is a grave mistake. Although some board members were guilty of not following up when having been made aware of the Taylor debt, not all board members should be dismissed for the ineptitude of a few. Last September I believe that some of the wrong members were replaced, but the general membership wanted to send a message and the timing was bad for some good and honest people whose only crime was to be incumbents, and who did not deserve it. Hopefully this September we get to replace some of the people who deserve and should be replaced, and not just because they are the incumbents.

It is rumored that one board member suffers from a form of dementia, and others are just "yes men" bullied into voting carelessly. I'd hate to believe that these rumors are true.

I have studied Mr. Minor's report of the Taylor debacle and firmly believe that most of the blame lies squarely on Mr. Akins' shoulders. He should have brought it to the full board's attention immediately regardless of what actions his predecessor had chosen to take. His neglect in doing so is incomprehensible. I understand that Mr. Akins offered his resignation to the board which was subsequently rejected. This action by the board I fear will come to haunt them in the future if not already. Mr. Akins' resignation or dismissal should have been immediate after last year's annual meeting if not before. I also find culpability with the Finance Committee who according to Mr. Minor's report, had not discussed an aging report over the prior ten years, which would have brought to light Mr. Taylor's debt long before. The remainder of the blame lies with those members who had been made aware a year or so earlier and who should have demanded full clarification at the next Board meeting.

Not having been privy to Mr. Allen's work, I cannot comment on his part, however, Mr. Sorgen's responsibility to the board did not include informing them of the Taylor situation, that responsibility lies squarely with the General Manager, Mr. Akins. Termination of Mr. Sorgen's services serves no purpose, on the contrary it would be as harmful and as costly as the removal of all the six board members indiscriminately.

Apparently the suit is also demanding, and I quote "damages in an amount to be proven at trial..." What is not clear is where these monies would be coming from if awarded, and what would be its disposition.

Also worth mentioning is the work of a group from the general membership on a motion to change the by-laws, specifically in regards to length of terms and nominations for board member elections. These changes alone would correct the problems associated with self-perpetuating boards, or as more commonly referred to as "the good old boy" system which largely contributed to the problem.

I fear that the actions of bringing suit does not correspond with many of the membership, including many who signed the petition, who may wish to withdraw if they had only taken the time to consider it in more depth or rather "the other side of the story".

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Botting

Dear Editor,

Spring time is coming, as hard as it is maybe to believe and that of course means new birth of the earth, as well as new births for many many pets and animals. That means more ads in the paper, on Facebook, Craigslist and elsewhere people will try their best to give soup pots full of kittens and puppies away.

I get so sick and tired of seeing this all the time and get so sick and tired of people contacting me, since I am an avid animal lover to see if I would want any. As much as I would love to take each and every one in, I have my own to care for and love. And you best believe when I say they are spayed and neutered!

If people want to have pets, or even consider having a pet, the first thing they need to consider is to have them spayed or neutered! There are low cost/low income clinics that will offer assistance to people who can't afford this. If you still can't afford that at low cost, don't get a pet! And many people think that if they get a male pet they won't have to have him neutered, males don't get pregnant. Well no they don't. But, they do go around and off and can get some one else's female pregnant that is not spayed, so there you go again. Cycle after Cycle. The never ending story! Your negligence can relate in some one else's problem as well. If a stray comes around to your place try to take it to the vet to have it scanned for a micro chip. Although mine are also micro chipped, they also wear a collar with appropriate IDs on them. Even a rabies tag can offer assistance in locating an owner. IDs can also help locate an owner quicker and faster too in many cases. I also get sick and tired of seeing so many ads for lost pets. It is sad too not knowing where they are and if they are alright or not.

Long story short, there are many do's and still too many don'ts when it comes to a pet and animal. Bottom line is if you can't deal with them, don't get them! Leave them for someone else who can handle and deal with them in the correct and appropriate way!

Thank You,
Mrs. D. Barnes

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The Middle Path

by Don Perry

There are few topics with as great a potential for misunderstanding as the subject of religion. There are few topics as potentially dangerous. It is ironic that humans can become so angry, even to the point of violence, as they have done and will do when their religious paradigms are challenged. Some of the greatest crimes against humanity have been perpetrated because of disagreement on beliefs about unseen events that we are told happened thousands of years ago.

This is not a criticism of faith. Faith sustains, heals and gives meaning to life. No, this is simply an observation on that critical flaw in human nature that causes one group of people to judge, to despise, and even to seek the death of another group because they choose a different set of stories to occupy their beliefs.

Religious freedom has always been a core belief of our American values, and the Founders, being superbly rational thinkers and well aware of the pitfalls inherent in religious thinking, sought to ensure that religion would forever be separated from the mechanisms of government.

Religious extremism was thrust into the forefront of our awareness with the World Trade Center attacks in 2001. Ever since then, Americans have struggled to frame the conflict in terms that are not contrary to American values. Many of us, including some of our leaders, with perhaps a more idealistic or even Pollyanna notion of how the world works, have gone to great lengths to distance the conflict with religious extremism from anything to do with the religion of Islam.

We realize that the vast majority of Muslims are not religious zealots working to destroy the very fabric of civilization in order to usher in an apocalypse. However, the Islamic State is composed of exactly that, and its motives, goals and behavior cannot be understood without acknowledging its strict adherence to a medieval interpretation of the Koran.

As difficult as it may be for those of us who prefer to "live and let live," to respect the religious beliefs of others and to seek a peaceful solution to the problem of the Islamic State, we must realize that the core beliefs of the radical members of

the IS make this impossible. Peace is not an option for the IS. Genocide is their goal for "lapsed Muslims" who do not share their beliefs. Slavery is their goal for non-Muslim "pagans." They will stop at nothing in their attempt to bring about the destruction of civilization itself.

This is a harsh reality, and one made even more difficult by the fact that many of the people in a position to confront the problem are the same ones who are responsible for creating the problem. Greed, military and economic adventurism and imperialistic fantasies destroyed the economies and the infrastructure of the Middle East. It replaced the stability of harsh regimes with chaos and out of that chaos of thousands of young, uneducated and unemployed males with their frustrations and testosterone channeled into religious fervor, was born the monster that is the Islamic State.

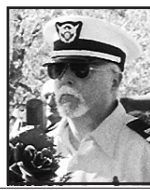
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The Veterans' Corner

By
Scott Drummond,
USCG Veteran

Korean War Veteran, George Goins, Corporal USA

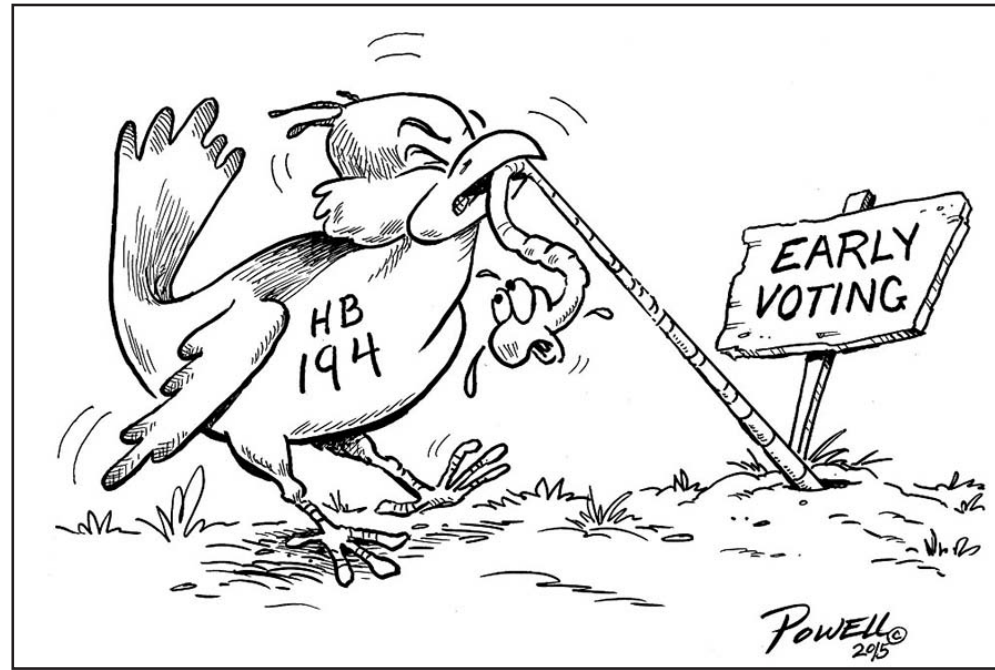
George Goins, a brilliant gentleman resides at Brasstown Manor and was kind enough to allow all of us to know a little of his history. Born just outside Lexington, KY on September 7, 1933, George grew up tending the family's cows on a dairy farm. As his interest in tending cows dwindled and was replaced by a yearning to learn electronics, after high school at the age of 18 George volunteered for our US Army and after boot camp continued his pursuit of electronic schooling in an advanced Army school known then as USAFI. He soon was promoted to corporal and true to form as sometimes occurs in armed services George was given a job in artillery, nothing to do with electronics, in 1950 sent to Korea. He served honorably until 1953. Another fine gentleman, and US Army combat veteran now lives in the beautiful facilities of Brasstown Manor, Mr. Gordon Allison who has become a fellow veteran and friend of George. Unfortunately Gordon was hit by an artillery air burst which left him paralyzed from the waist down. As we were sitting jokingly we blamed this unfortunate incident on George and had a good laugh. Sometimes veterans are like that, foolish as it may sound. Courage, love of fellow man, humor, perseverance, honor and common sense from these great guys, like so many more, that each of us should be thankful for. We three had a great

fun time swapping stories and telling jokes which cannot be printed here in this family paper. I sincerely hope to spend more time with these two.

After his honorable discharge in 1953, George went for a short while to North Carolina, another farm, then moved to Homestead, FL, opened a refrigeration and AC business and was very successful. George then sold his business, went back to North Carolina, this time farming hogs. He finally tired of farming animals, sold the farm and pursued his dream of travelling to each and every state in our USA.

George married his first wife, Barbra, right after Korea, having six children with her. Divorce ended that marriage; however they remain friends to this day. With his second wife Loraine they have three children, and she left to go to her heavenly reward five years ago. Quite a feat wouldn't you say? Nine children, four boys and five girls all by a fine American veteran who cared enough to try and do his part in Korea. Those young folks must be very proud of their dad, and if they are near as intelligent as George, then they'll do very well in life.

Once again, as I've heard from so many veterans, George stated a much repeated lesson learned by so many of us. He emphatically stated that his experience serving as a corporal in our United States Army gave him stability and direction for his entire life. He added that Army life taught him not only how to take orders, but to give them as the need occurred.



Community Calendar

American Legion Post 23 meets 1st Tuesday of each month at 4 PM at VFW Post 7807, Sunnyside Rd., Hiawasse. Call 706-896-8387 for details. We need your support!

VFW Fish Fry April - October on 2nd & 4th Fridays each month from 4:30 - 7. \$10 per plate.

Towns County Water Board Meeting 3rd Monday of each month at 6 p.m. in the TC Water Office Building.

Mountain Community Seniors meet the second Thursday of each month at the Senior Center in Hiawasse at 1 p.m.

Towns County Republican Party meets at 6:30 PM the 4th Thursday of each month at the new Senior Center. For more info call 706-994-3919.

Democratic Party of Towns County meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 5 PM at the new Senior Center.

Towns County Planning Commission is held the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Courthouse.

Towns County Commissioners meeting is the 3rd Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in the courthouse.

School Board Meeting, 2nd Monday each month at 7 p.m. in the auditorium.

Hiawasse City Council 1st Tuesday of month 4 p.m., at City Hall.

Young Harris City Council, 1st Tuesday of month at 7 p.m., Young Harris City Hall.

The Unicoy Masonic Lodge #259 meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

Stevens Lodge #414 F & AM meets the 1st Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM in Young Harris. Sat. morning breakfast 2nd Sat. of each month from 8 - 10:30 AM. \$6 adults, \$3 12 & under.

Towns County Board of Elections holds its monthly meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. at the Elections Office (Old Rock Jail).

Bridge Players intermediate level meets at 12:30 p.m. on Mondays & Fridays at the Towns County Rec Center.

Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, Inc (MRACG) meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse, Hiawasse. The Board meets at 4 p.m., and the Guild at 6. Call us 706-896-0932.

Mountain Computer User Group meets the 2nd Monday of each month. Meetings start at 6 p.m. and visitors are welcome. Details can be found at www.mcug.org.

Chattahoochee-Nantahala Chapter, Trout Unlimited meets 2nd Thursday of each month at Cadence Bank in Blairsville. 5 p.m. Fly Tying - 7 p.m. General Meeting. Everyone welcome. www.ngatu692.com.

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) meets the 3rd Monday of each month at various area restaurants. For information call John at 706-896-2430 or visit www.moaa.org/chapter/blueridge-mountains.

Alcoholics Anonymous: 24 hour phone line 828-837-4440.

Mothers of Preschoolers meets the 3rd Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church of Blairsville from 6 - 8 p.m. Call the church at 706-745-2469.

Chatuge Regional Hospital Auxiliary on the 3rd Monday of each month, except the months of July, October and December, in the hospital cafeteria at 1:30 p.m.

Mountain Magic Table Tennis Club meets 3 p.m. Thursdays at Pine Log Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Brasstown. Ping Pong players welcome. Call Jerry (828) 837-7658.

The Humane Society Mountain Shelter Board of Directors meets the last Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at Cadence Bank in Blairsville.

The Towns County Alzheimer's Support Group meets the first Tuesday of each month at 1:30 PM in the Family Life Center of McConnell Memorial Baptist Church. For more info call Carol at 706-896-6407.

The Appalachian Shrine Club meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Allegheny

Lodge in Blairsville. For more info call William 706-994-6177.

GMREC Garden Tours every Monday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Shooting Creek Basket Weavers meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at the Shooting Creek Fire Hall Community Center. For more info www.shootingcreek-basketweavers.com.

Friendship Community Club meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6 PM at Clubhouse, 1625 Hwy. 76, 706-896-3637.

Goldwing Road Riders meets the 3rd Saturday of each month at Daniel's Steakhouse in Hiawasse. We eat at 11 and meeting begins at 12.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meets every Wednesday evening at 7 PM at the Red Cross building on Jack Dayton Circle.

Caregiver support group meets 2nd Tuesday of each month, 3 p.m. at Brasstown Manor, located at 108 Church St., Hiawasse. Call 706-896-4285 for more info.

Enchanted Valley Square Dance Club. Dances 2nd & 4th Fridays at Towns Co. Rec. Ctr. from 7-9 PM. \$5/person to dance. Free to watch.

Brasstown Woodturners Guild meets 1st Saturday of month at 9:30 AM in HHS shop. For more info call J. C. at 706-896-5711.

Mountain Amateur Radio Club (MARC) meets 6:30 PM the 1st Monday of month at 1298 Jack Dayton Cir. (next to EMS), Hiawasse. For info call Al 706-896-9614 after 6 PM.

The Board of the Towns County Chamber of Commerce meet the second Monday of every month at 8 a.m. at the Chamber office, 1411 Jack Dayton Circle, Young Harris.

The Quilting Bee at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church in Family Life Center, Room 216. 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10 AM - 3 PM. Bring a sack lunch. For more information call Kathy at 706-835-6721 or Marilyn at 706-897-4367.

Mountain Coin Club meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the North Georgia Tech campus in Blairsville. Guests are welcome. For more info, call 706-379-1488.