

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Letters to The Editor

To the Editor:

Hope has a name: Towns County Fire & Rescue/EMS. If you've never come close to drowning you can't imagine the helpless feeling that you go through as you realize that your chances of survival are slipping away.

Second by painful second as your arms and legs begin to weaken from exhaustion, you begin to sink. Water rushes over your face.

You panic. I can't go on! Will I see my family again? Will anyone remember me? Soon, in your moments of distress you hear the faint sounds of a siren. A sudden glimmer of hope. You feel stronger and your will to survive is renewed. They are coming. I have to hang on.

You scream at the top of your lungs for help. Soon you look up and you see that your hope is real. A strong hand reaches and grabs you and pulls you from the water. Your hope stays with you and comforts you while you catch your breath.

The thought of dying was great, but realizing that you are alive is greater. You break down in tears knowing that you have survived drowning.

This event came true for a woman last week after she fell into Lake Chatuge while trying to recover a camera.

Her hope was rescue personnel from Towns County Fire & EMS.

I remember her looking up at me and saying, "I'm scared to let go. I don't want to go under again." We told her, "We will never let you go."

The thoughts of the Bryan Adams song, "Never Let Go" ran through my head over and over again. Chills run up my arms as I recite the verse to myself.

"Can you lay your life down so a stranger can live?"

"Can you take what you need, but take less than you give?"

"Could you close every day without the glory and fame?"

"Could you hold your head high when no one knows your name?"

Rarely do they ever meet our names. They know nothing about us. One thing we can say for sure.

To save a life helps us to hold our heads high even though no one knows our names.

Thank you to the public safety professionals and military that risk their lives daily to help others so that they may live.
Towns County Fire & Rescue

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

We are, and have always been, a nation of immigrants. Even Native Americans did not spring from the soil of North America, although our Hopi friends might beg to differ on that point.

Across the generations people with the courage and where-withal to leave their native lands and strike out into the unknown have brought with them strength and innovation and a toughness that has too often, over time, been diluted in descendants given to entitlement and self-indulgence. Immigration continues to offer potential benefits, but many of us have begun to question the priorities suggested by our immigration policy as well as its implementation.

In the melting pot of the United States, every race and ethnicity is represented and each has contributed its share to our success. Some of these contributions were extorted, as in the case of African slaves, the descendants of which continue to experience prejudice and discrimination. Many groups of immigrants have, each in their turn, experienced varying degrees of the same. Our English speaking nation has, over the generations, absorbed waves of Germans, Italians, Irish and Eastern Europeans. Every racial or ethnic slur has an economic as well as a social history. Just about every new wave of immigrants has been met with resistance by people who were often only a few generations away from being immigrants themselves.

Chinese immigrants, for example, helped to build much of the American west. Escaping unrest in China, they settled in the west and took many low paying jobs in mining, construction and agriculture. The willingness of the Chinese to work for lower wages meant that immigrants were often hired over whites, which contributed to increasing racial tensions. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1852 greatly restricted the number of Chinese immigrants, but not before hundreds of thousands had settled in the U.S. Incidents such as the Rock Springs Massacre in Wyoming in 1885 highlighted the level of hatred which racial prejudice and competition for jobs engendered.

There are parallels to be found in the continuing migration of millions of immigrants from Mexico and Central America, many of which are here, at the risk of being politically incorrect, "illegally." What began a generation ago as a way to import cheap labor continues today, but with the additional pressure of the need to escape political unrest and economic hardship. The issue has become a political football, or perhaps a snowball that grows in size every year that our elected officials fail to create a coherent and workable immigration policy.

A generation ago migrant workers benefited large farms and corporate agriculture. The strength of the dollar compared to the peso meant that Mexican workers could be paid far less than their American counterparts. Many immigrants would gladly accept that lower wage, which was still more than they could make in their

homeland. In Georgia, the poultry industry attracted thousands of immigrant workers who stayed here, raised families and often became anchor points for the continuing immigration of extended families. The continuing influx of Mexican immigrants can be seen all across the South, just about anywhere manual labor is done.

Mexican immigrants are absorbed into American culture no differently than Germans or Italians or anyone else who came here to live. You learn the language, work, pay taxes and send your children to school and they grow up fully assimilated into American culture. There are many benefits to a properly structured and administered immigration policy. Research shows that immigration brings in more tax revenue. It can make the economy more efficient. Contrary to popular belief, it can actually raise the wages of native born Americans.

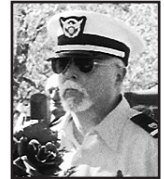
However, the pressure to escape hardships south of the border, combined with the hidden agendas of the policy makers, has resulted in millions of uneducated and often unskilled residents who do not speak English and who find it increasingly difficult to assimilate. Unassimilated, undocumented aliens creates a burden on many of the institutions funded by our tax dollars. Schools must divert resources to educate students who do not speak English. Emergency rooms become the go-to solution for people who understand no other healthcare choice, which creates a continuous upward pressure on medical costs for everyone else. According to the Center for Immigration Studies, "57 percent of households headed by an immigrant (legal and illegal) and children (under 18) used at least one welfare program, compared to 39 percent for native households with children."

The difficulty, as I see it, is compounded by two major factors. First of all there is the political football. Democrats and Republicans, both courting what can be the deciding votes in an electorate otherwise evenly split down the middle, both suggest policy designed more for winning elections than solving problems.

Second, and perhaps worst of all, is the hypersensitivity, promoted by media and political activists, which has seeped into our culture. It is difficult to discuss ideas in this climate of political correctness, where facts are often trumped by sensitivity. The numbers tell us clearly who our immigrants are, where they come from and what impact they have on the economy, but if we acknowledge that fact, we can be accused of being "racist."

In the final analysis, we are brought back to that territorial imperative we discussed last time. On an overpopulated planet of limited resources, developed nations all around the globe are facing similar problems. Hungary, for example, out of desperation is building a 100 mile fence to stem the flow of migrants out of Serbia. Developed nations, here on our one and only planet floating in space, are not dissimilar to lifeboats. How many passengers can a lifeboat accommodate before it sinks?

The Veterans' Corner



By Scott Drummond, USCG Veteran

Lt. Charles Nelson Maynard 3/12/36 - 10/15/14

Charlie, originally from Decatur, GA, began his military service early by enrolling in the R.O.T.C. in high school where he achieved the rank of Company Commander. While attending Decatur High School, he attained one of the highest grade point averages in the history of the school, served as Class President, as well as many other offices in various clubs and associations, was chosen All Region and All State in both basketball and football.

Following high school, he attended Georgia Institute of Technology on a full football scholarship, playing for the great Bobby Dodd. During his collegiate career, he played in 3 Bowl games and Georgia Tech was ranked number one nationally. He achieved many athletic and academic honors while attending Georgia Tech.

Upon his graduation from Georgia Tech, he went straight into the Air Force and served as an Aerologic Officer. He was part of one of the inaugural crews who flew into the eye of hurricanes as an early hurricane hunter. While serving his country, he was able to attend Massachusetts Institute of Technology for two years where he earned his Master's Degree in Engineering with high honors. He also did graduate studies at Harvard and Emory University.

One of Charles' favorite memories from his service in the Air Force is the years he played on a basketball team for his Unit. The General was a huge basketball fan, and this team travelled first class

all over the country competing against other USAF teams. Another memory he loved to share was survival training. He and three other airmen were dropped in the middle of a swamp and were given a rendezvous point to reach by the next morning. There would be a two-man team hunting them, so they had to avoid capture while seeking the rendezvous site. One airman broke his foot as he landed his parachute and was left at the drop site. Another was fearful of snakes and immediately climbed a tree and remained there. Charlie and his buddy were able to make it to the rendezvous site and capture the two officers who were hunting them as part of the exercise. Charlie later served in Marietta, GA at Dobbins AFB as Meteorology Officer.

Charlie and his wife, Brenda moved to Towns County in 1994, and both felt like they had arrived in heaven. Charlie loved the small town life, so much like his own life growing up. He declared he never wanted to leave these mountains, he loved it so much. And now he is here forever.

Thanks, Brenda for sharing this wonderful story! Charlie was called home a short while ago, and consequently, Brenda, in her desire to honor Charlie came to our Veterans' Monument Wall Committee meeting, bringing the required documentation for the process of etching Charlie's name in his earned place of honor, here in Towns County. His name, too, will be unveiled in this forthcoming Veterans' Day. God bless them all.
Semper Paratus

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Q: Dr. Don, how can we get our teen off his duff? He is not motivated. He spends hours watching stupid cartoon reruns and gets out of the recliner just often enough to eat. We are totally exhausted trying to get him motivated. Is laziness a birth defect? Do you know of a pill or a treatment? Whenever we enter the living room the covers because he knows we're going to jump all over him, but it still doesn't change him. Has this ever happened before?

A: Actually, this is not a rare disease. It is a verifiable fact that if all the unmotivated teens in the country were placed end to end they would reach for the remote. I would suggest a kind of radical and immediate surgery. It might look like this...

Get off his back. That doesn't take you where you want to go. Rather, find somebody who needs help. Maybe it's a family whose house just burned down. Maybe it's a single mom who has trouble keeping her lawn mowed. Maybe it's an older man whose roof is leaking and needs to be replaced. Don't just enlist your teen to "help," rather assign him as the front man. Have him measure the roof and then price different roofing options

at Home Depot. For the single mom, have your son draft three of his buddies and he can serve as foreman to get the landscape job done. You get the idea.

Put him on a bus to some community in Appalachia where a church is doing a renewal project in a poverty-plagued community. Hook up with an organization that is helping rebuild Haiti or Nepal. When you find somebody who needs him, put him on a plane. It'll change his life forever. You didn't say how far he is into his teens so he may not be able to get a "real" job. But there are a thousand things he can do. You will need to take the lead but write him into the script for a major role.

This whole thing may alter your calendar for a while, but that's ok. It's a small price to pay to move him in the direction he needs to move. By the way, if you have younger children also, write them into the script early, like about five. To catch a vision for how it feels to change someone's life is highly motivational. Take pictures and send them to your family members. Let this be the summer he caught a vision that changed his life.

Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@RareKids.net.

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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