

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Thank You, Mothers of America

Sometimes we just plain overlook the obvious! Every single man and woman who ever served our great nation of America in any of our military services had a Mom.

As we pursue trying to honor all our Veterans, both living and passed, we frequently fail to do honor to those many moms, who kept the "home fires burning" and suffered through daily worries associated with being the mom and/or wives of those who were called upon to go into harm's way in order to accomplish whatever job came their way. Worse yet is the case with every mother or wife who suffered the horrible experience of receiving the heartbreaking message that their loved one will never be coming home. For this and other obvious reasons those ladies should be honored and respected as we usually do on Mother's Day just as we did this past Sunday, May 13, 2018.

Our nation, plus our perpetual hopes of a civilized and peaceful world would have never survived without those moms who sacrificed as much if not more than their own flesh and blood did for all America!

We owe much to those many for all our blessings, freedoms and liberties enjoyed as Americans. None of which are-free nor ever shall be! Unyielding guardianship and jealous possession of our Sovereign Republic is a requirement for keeping our USA intact as the America we love!

Thank you to all the moms, past, present, and future for your sacrifices that you Mothers of America have bestowed upon us all!

Don't forget Armed Forces Day this forthcoming Saturday, May 19, 2018. On August 31, 1949, Louis Johnson, United States' Secretary of Defense, created Armed Forces Day to replace separate Army, Navy and Air Force Days. Developed from armed forces' unification under one department - the Department of Defense. Events across the United States take place on Armed Forces Day to honor Americans in uniform who served their country in times of war and peace. Those honored on this day include people who serve the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard. National Guard and Reserve units may celebrate Armed Forces Day/Week over any period in May because of their unique training schedules.

Activities may include: Multi-service military displays in public areas. Educational activities may teach children about the armed forces. "Support the Troops" themed motorcycle rides will occur. Large parades and other local celebrations may happen.

So at the very least fly your flag proudly! Tell any Veteran you may meet "Thank you!" Shake their hand and maybe give them a hug!

Did we overlook VE Day this past May 8th? V-E (Victory in Europe) Day occurred on May 8, 1945, is annually commemorated to celebrate the end of WWII in Europe. A day earlier, German forces unconditionally surrendered to the Allies, but Allied nations were forced to continue fighting the Japanese for three more months before they, too, finally surrendered. As always, "freedom is not free!"

*Semper Paratus*

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



## Timeless

Someone asked me a long time ago why I put so much effort into making a garden when it would be cheaper to buy produce at the market. I don't remember who said that. It's likely that I'm no longer friends with that person. Anyone who could ask such a stupid question is not a likely candidate for long term friendship. There are times, however, when I'm tempted to ask the same of myself. The question surfaces in the spring when I discover that the ground has yielded yet another bumper crop of rocks. Where do they come from? They certainly weren't there in the fall. They must issue forth from the smallest of pebbles left behind as seed, watered by the winter rains and heaved to the surface by freezing and thawing ground. Potatoes at the grocery store seem cheap when you're humping a wheelbarrow full of rocks up a hill. But when you compare the taste of a grocery potato to a homegrown spud freshly dug, a potato quite remarkable for its tenderness and creamy consistency and its ability to absorb butter like a sponge, the grocery store variety would seem to be a different species entirely.

And while we're singing the praises of the nightshade family, anyone who has grown tomatoes at home will tell you without hesitation that they taste nothing like the flavorless hybrids gassed in the truck on the ride up from Florida. There are other tangible benefits of the home garden. We are reminded of one of them every time there is a new recall or an outbreak of food-borne disease. The quality of the produce you can grow at home is unmatched. In the age of wage slavery, however, the number of people who have time or energy to grow a significant contribution to their own larder is diminishing. But there are intangible benefits as well. "There is something very grounding about working in the soil," quipped a friend of mine who likes to poke fun at talk show psychology. But he has a point.

During the last two weeks of the planting season, we have enjoyed a profound sense of peace. "That's probably because we've been too tired to worry about anything," says my wife. But there's nothing wrong with being tired when you sleep like one of the many rocks we have birthed this spring. We're spending more time outdoors. We haven't watched the news very much, or worried about the elections or the state of the world. The sound and fury of the pixel world, so hungry for our attention while it schemes to pick our pockets, has quieted down to a murmur, and when I stood in the garden the other evening and watched the first stars appearing in the sky, the vanity of that thing we call civilization seemed but an eddy, a temporary disturbance on the surface of an eternal river.

I'm beginning to understand what my grandfather knew. I remember seeing him in his early 90s, standing in his garden with a hoe in each hand. He would lean on one for support while he chopped with the other, and then alternate. Then he would stand in rapt attention looking, simply looking at the mountain. He didn't use the word, "meditate," but his attention was just as peaceful, just as profound, and timeless. And at 90 years old he could still push a wheelbarrow full of rocks up a hill.

## The Middle Path

*By: Don Perry*

## Steve McQueen

Remember actor Steve McQueen? He was known as the "King of Cool." Do you know what his most valued possession was? It's probably not what you think.

The 1968 Ford Mustang GT 390 used in his movie "Bullitt" splashed ink into the movie memorabilia headlines in 2018. After the car's location had been a mystery for decades, its owner agreed to display it at a car show in Detroit. McQueen had tried several times to buy the famous Bullitt Mustang. The last time was in 1977, ten years after he filmed the movie. He never owned it.

McQueen had a reckless bad boy image. It started young. Abandoned in his infancy by his father, his mother handed him over to her parents. At age eight, she took him back. The stepfather was abusive, so he lived as a delinquent on the streets. His mother eventually remanded him to a home for boys. He left there at 16 for serial jobs as a merchant marine, oil field roughneck, and carnival barker.

He joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1947. They instilled some discipline in him, but only after he spent time in the brig. After his enlistment, he took up acting. But even while becoming the world's highest-paid actor, his life was plagued by broken relationships and substance abuse.

In his late 40s, he started pilot training. His flight instructor was Sammy Mason. Mason became a father figure to McQueen, but more importantly he was a Christian willing to offer answers to McQueen's questions about God and faith. McQueen began attending church with Mason. Within three months he had enough answers, so Steve McQueen believed in Christ Jesus.

Six months later, he was diagnosed with a form of lung cancer caused by asbestos. After U.S. doctors told him no other treatment was available, he sought alternatives in Mexico. It was there Billy Graham visited him, and gave McQueen his personal Bible. It immediately became McQueen's most valued possession. He died three days later with that Bible in his hands. It was just before Thanksgiving in 1980. He was only 50. Now you know the rest of the story, also told in his wife's book *Steve McQueen: The Last Mile*, and the movie *Steve McQueen: American Icon*.

When life on this earth becomes uncertain, what matters most becomes crystal clear. But lest such an experience cause you to have regrets, reflect on the reference Billy Graham wrote in the Bible he gave McQueen. "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6). No matter what stage of life you participate in the gospel of Christ, God will finish what he started in you. That was good news to Steve McQueen.

### 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.*

## Fire Learning Network meeting

This week we are attending the Southern Blue Ridge Fire Learning Network (SBR FLN) annual meeting in Pickens, South Carolina.

**RC&D**  
*Frank Riley*  
Executive Director



The SBR FLN is a gathering of natural resource managers who are dedicated to bringing fire back into our mountain environment. Fire is a natural phenomenon that has occurred in our forests since the beginning of time and will continue long after we are gone no matter how hard we try to prevent it.

The Firewise and Fire Adapted programs don't try to prevent fire, but educate people who live in the wildland areas how to prepare and protect their property from the out-of-control wildfire that is coming to their backyard one day. Partners in the Southern Blue Ridge FLN (SBR FLN) collaborate to develop, share and apply the best available science to restore fire across a vast, diverse region. Partners and stakeholders work in teams in the network's eight landscapes to set and achieve restoration goals in their fire-adapted pine and oak forests. Vegetation maps, models and tools developed by partners help build a cohesive vision and description of restoration needs. Landscape teams have adapted a regional treatment prioritization tool and applied it locally, with each learning from other landscapes' work.

The SBR FLN has also collaborated with the Cherokee National Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative, Central Appalachians FLN and LANDFIRE to adapt LANDFIRE models to this region. The models, along with a LiDAR-based forest structure analysis and the vegetation maps, have been used to estimate the loss of current vegetation from historic conditions across the National Forests of North Carolina. This information is informing forest planning and National Environmental Policy Analysis (NEPA) projects in several landscapes.

Fire history research on three SBR FLN landscapes is shaping prescribed fire regimes. Evidence that fire historically played a role in maintaining these forests—which are changing, due to almost a century of fire suppression—is also being used to build wider support for the use of controlled fire. Partner-

ship burns across multiple ownerships have become common in most landscapes, and more are planned for the coming year. Partly because of the last SBR regional workshop in Hiawassee, GA, state agencies in North and South Carolina are now performing collaborative burning across state lines.

A network of monitoring plots established by Forest Stewards enables partners to track the effectiveness of management actions. Consistent, long-term monitoring is essential, since it can take years—and multiple treatments—for the full impact of fire in hardwoods to become evident.

The second comprehensive assessment using these data has been completed and will be used to inform planning for future burns and other restoration work. SBR FLN partners include Georgia Blue Ridge Mountains, Great Smoky & Unaka Mountains Northern Escarpment, Central Blue Ridge Escarpment, Nantahala & Balsam Mountains, Southern Blue Ridge Escarpment, South Mountains, New River Headwaters, Network Partners Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists, Forest Stewards, Georgia Department of Natural Resources—State Parks; Wildlife Resources Division, Georgia Forest Watch, Greenville Water Land Trust for the Little Tennessee River, Mountain True National Park Service,—Blue Ridge Parkway; Great Smoky Mountains, North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation, North Carolina Forest Service, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, South Carolina Division of Natural Resources, South Carolina Forestry Commission, South Carolina State Parks, The Nature Conservancy, Towns County Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, USFS Chattahoochee-Oconee NF; Cherokee NF; Nantahala NF, Pisgah NF, USFS Region 8 Fire & Aviation, USFS—Southern Research Station, and ChestChatt RC&D.

Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities support the Fire Learning Network together with PERFECT, a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, the USDA Forest Service, and agencies of the Department of the Interior. This FLN has helped build the foundation of the Joint Fire Science Program's Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists, and continues to play a key role in providing opportunities for networking among scientists, managers and practitioners. This accelerates transfer of knowledge and feedback that supports adaptive management.

Well-attended workshops, (they cut this year's meeting attendance (for the second time) off at 100 with a waiting list) collaborative projects, and tools shared by on-line seminar and other means have helped the SBR FLN build strong working partnerships. These in turn support the steady growth of the network, most recently with the addition of the Georgia Blue Ridge Mountains landscape. This landscape brings a new dimension to the SBR FLN, as it includes Towns County, a member of the Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) Learning Network.

For more information on SBR FLN go to: [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org) or contact Frank Riley – Executive Director, Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council – [info.ccrd@gmail.com](mailto:info.ccrd@gmail.com).



"And some folks say Christmas only comes once a year!"

## Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players Bingo	<b>Every Monday:</b> All Saints Lutheran Brasstown Manor	12:30 pm 9:30 am
Free GED prep.	<b>Every Tuesday:</b> Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	<b>Every Wednesday:</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
Bridge Players Free GED prep.	<b>Every Thursday:</b> All Saints Lutheran Old Rec. Center	12:30 pm 4 pm
Movers & Shakers Alcoholics Anon.	<b>Every Friday:</b> Sundance Grill Red Cross Building	8 am 7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	<b>Every Sunday:</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
Gem & Mineral Club Caregiver support Arts & Crafts Guild Lions Club Mtn. Coin Club	<b>Second Tuesday of each month:</b> Senior Center Brasstown Manor Calvary Church Daniel's Restaurant N. GA Tech	1:30 pm 3 pm 4 pm 6 pm 6 pm
Basket Weavers Board of Elections	<b>Second Wednesday of each month:</b> SC Fire Hall 67 Lakeview Cir., Ste. A	10 am 4 pm
CVB Board Awake America Prayer Mtn. Comm. Seniors Democratic Party	<b>Second Thursday of each month:</b> Rec Center Civic Center Senior Center Civic Center	9 am Noon 1 pm 6 pm
Hospital Auxiliary	<b>Third Monday of each month:</b> Cafeteria	1:30 pm
YH Plan Comm. Co. Comm. Mtg Humane Shelter Bd. Water Board	<b>Third Tuesday of each month:</b> YH City Hall Courthouse Blairsville store Water Office	5 pm 5:30 pm 5:30 pm 6 pm
Quilting Bee MOAA	<b>Third Wednesday of each month:</b> McCConnell Church Call Joff @ 386-530-0904	10 am
Friendship Comm. Republican Party	<b>Third Thursday of each month:</b> Clubhouse Civic Center	6 pm 5:30 pm
Goldwing Riders	<b>Third Saturday of each month:</b> Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
Red Cross DAT	<b>Fourth Monday of each month:</b> 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
Lions Club	<b>Fourth Tuesday of each month:</b> Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	<b>Last Thursday of each month:</b> Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

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## Towns County Herald

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