

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## TAPS

Here is something every American should know.

We in the United States have all heard the haunting song, "Taps..." It's the song that gives us the lump in our throats and usually tears in our eyes.

But, do you know the story behind the song? If not, I think you will be interested to find out about its humble beginnings.

Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Elli was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land.

During the night, Captain Elli heard the moans of a soldier who lay severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention.

Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward this encampment. When the Captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead.

The Captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier. It was his son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out... Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial, despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted. The Captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral.

The request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate. But, out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him only one musician.

The Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform. This wish was granted. The haunting melody, we now know as "Taps" used at military funerals was born:

*Day is done. Gone the sun.  
From the lakes. From the hills.  
From the sky. All is well.  
Safely rest. God is nigh.  
Fading light. Dims the sight.  
And a star. Gems the sky.  
Gleaming bright. From afar.  
Drawing nigh. Falls the night.  
Thanks and praise. For our days.  
Neath the sun. Neath the stars.  
Neath the sky. As we go.  
This we know. God is nigh.*

Never forget those lost and harmed while serving their country for always those and remember those who have served and returned as well as those who currently serve our great nation in our armed forces. As forwarded by my dear friend, Richard Metzler, USMC and edited by yours truly.

*Semper Paratus*

## Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor,

According to news sources, the Trump budget proposal calls for cuts of \$800 billion to Medicaid. That coincides with the amount needed to fund tax cuts for those who already have more than enough on the backs of "the least among us."

According to the Georgia Department of Community Health, the cuts would have a serious impact on 1.7 million of our fellow Georgians who are enrolled in Medicaid. According to the same Department, 1,521 people in Towns County are on Medicaid. Given a county population of 11,319, this means that 13 percent of the people in Towns County would be impacted. This is about 1 out of every 7 folks in our county.

What will happen to them? How will this affect the quality of life for everyone in Towns County? When people receive emergency medical care because they do not have access to preventive health care, it ends up costing the rest of us more for our medical services.

We need to hold Congressman Doug Collins and Senators Johnny Isakson and David Perdue accountable for what will happen to our fellow Georgians. There has to be a better way to do the federal budget.

The federal budget is a moral document and I believe that we will be held accountable for how we treat others, including "the least among us." Health care is a basic human right, nor a commodity.

*Sincerely,  
Joseph Mahon*

To the Editor:

The Towns County Board of Elections is currently considering reducing the four county voting precincts to three. The plan is to combine the Macedonia and Hiawassee precincts. Two members of that Board presented this proposal to the regular monthly meeting of the Towns County Republican Party last week.

Rob Murray and Scott Ledford reported the reason they are making this change is they do not have the budget to maintain four precincts nor are they able to recruit the necessary volunteers/staff to man the precincts.

Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw attended the meeting as well and reported he has previously informed the Board of Elections that the necessary funds are available to continue with four precincts. In addition he told the group he has a list of nearly 50 people who have agreed to assist with the staffing of the precincts. Also attending the meeting was a couple who relayed to us an experience they had last year with the Board. Being conscientious citizens, they called the Election Board to volunteer their services. This couple was told they weren't needed as the Board had all the volunteers they could use.

*Gary W. Meier*

## Tommy Dorsey & a mother's prayers

The number of Americans who have died in battle since the Revolutionary War is 657,946. When we look at that number printed on the page in black and white, it does not cry out. It does not tell the stories of the men and women who died. It does not speak of the bravery and the sacrifice, not of the soldiers who died nor the families who watched them go away to war, never to return.

Politicians are good at telling us about bravery and sacrifice. Few, very few of them ever serve. Fewer still have ever seen battle. But they are good at talking about it, and about how everyone who dies has contributed to the great cause. The speeches have not changed much since the Revolutionary War.

War is ugly. It is chaotic and messy. It usually takes a couple of generations for us to find out, but war is rarely about the reasons given by the politicians. War is usually always about business and politics, though stating that may be somewhat redundant.

My father was drafted to serve in WWII in 1944 when he lost his student deferral. He lost that deferral when my grandfather voted for the wrong person in a local election, or so he was told by someone on the draft board at the time. Nevertheless, Dad thought that serving his country was the right thing to do, so he went willingly.

My father went through basic training for the Navy in, of all places, central Texas. So many GIs were being processed at such a rapid rate in 1944 that the Navy was using every available facility for training. Dad's swim test consisted of being herded across an irrigation ditch with a bunch of other recruits. He "couldn't swim a lick," he used to say, but the ditch was shallow enough that he could bounce on the tips of his toes while waving his arms.

After basic training he was garrisoned near Terminal Island outside of Los Angeles while waiting for his ship to arrive. Dad always loved music and he was an excellent dancer. In high school he had even won a couple of ribbons in dance competitions at the John C. Campbell Folk School. So when Dad and his buddy heard that Tommy Dorsey was playing in town one weekend, they were determined to see him. They slipped off the base on a Friday night and made their way to the club where Tommy was playing. They figured the risk was worth this once in a lifetime chance.

As luck would have it, dad's friend and his partner won a dance contest that night. There were reporters in the club following Tommy Dorsey and flash bulbs popping. Someone snapped a picture of the contest winners, which appeared in the local paper the next day.

The Navy was not amused, but the War in the Pacific was heating up and the authorities had no intention of wasting two freshly trained and badly needed sailors. Nevertheless, they confined Dad and his friend to their barracks for a couple of days - just long enough for them to miss their ship. While they waited for the next available berth, that ship was sunk and went down with all hands.

For months, everyone back home thought that my dad had been killed; everyone, that is, except for my grandmother, who prayed morning and night for him. She was a woman of Faith, and she knew that he was still alive.

During his two years at sea, Dad survived typhoons, torpedoes and kamikaze attacks. He had so many near misses that for the rest of his life, he attributed his survival to his mother's prayers.

Six hundred fifty-seven thousand, nine hundred and forty-six stories. Perhaps now, one more of those numbers is something more than a number. Many of you have your own stories. Never forget them. Pass them on. We need to remember each and every one of them, every time the politicians come around waving the flag. They speak such beautiful and inspirational words when they send us to war, but most of them will never know what that flag really means.

## 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.**

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Let the Herald work for you!  
Contact us at 706-896-4454  
Deadline for the  
Towns County Herald is  
Friday by 5 PM



**The Middle Path**  
By: Don Perry

## Drought effects on Leyland Cypress

Recently, I've gotten a slew of calls from panicked homeowners who are noticing that their lush green screens of Leyland cypress are starting to die. Though they are marketed as hardy trees, they had a horrible time in last year's drought.

In fact, the drought is causing most of the deaths we're seeing in oak, pine, and ornamental shrubs by either stressing plants to the point of decline, or exacerbating existing diseases.

One of the most common diseases of Leyland cypress in our area is Sciridium canker. This is caused by the fungus Sciridium uniconne and results in the death of individual branches on an infected tree. Dark, oval cankers form on the flesh of branches and are often dry and sunken with a raised edge. One canker will not completely encompass a branch, but eventually, sap will start to flow from these cankers as the branch begins to die. While individual branches are usually all that is affected, if the infection spreads to the trunk or a majority of the tree, the entire plant will die. There is no cure for this disease, so the best way to take care of it is to prevent it. Make sure cypress planted as a screen have at least twelve to fifteen feet between them to allow for adequate airflow and discourage disease establishment. Drought conditions make trees especially susceptible, but studies have shown that those trees with a regular irrigation schedule can overcome mild to moderate infections.

Environmental stress will present itself as a gradient of discoloration throughout the plant. Some trees may turn yellow or orange from the top down, tips of the branches inward, or bottom up. You may also see needles starting to yellow at the trunk and drop off. These are all signs that the tree is getting either too much or too little water or nutrients. Because trees that receive too much water have the same symptoms as those that receive too little, context is important to know the true cause. Obviously, with the major drought last year, what we're seeing is most likely due to lack of water. However, your tree's symptoms could also be caused by a lack of nutrients in the soil, so a soil test is always recommended.

Insects can also be major pests of Leyland cypresses, especially bagworm moths. Many people get these confused with webworms, which make silken tents on the ends of branches. Bagworms, however, make cocoons using needles from evergreen trees and hide in these cases as they feed on the trees. They continuously add to their cases as they feed on the trees. While mild infestations of bagworms can slow the growth of trees, if there are enough of them, they can kill entire plants. Often, a single side of a cypress will turn a dead, grayish color. The cases will be the same color, so they can sometimes be difficult to spot. If the infestation is mild and the cases are within reach, remove as many as possible in the winter. In cases of severe infestation, consult your extension office for a pesticide recommendation.

Union and Towns County Extension will be holding a Master Naturalist Class in August and September this year. This is a nine week course that meets once a week and covers wildlife management, tree and insect ID, invasive species, Georgia natural history, and many other topics! If you are interested in signing up, please contact your extension office. Specific dates and registration fees TBD.

**UGA extension**  
From the Ground Up  
Melissa Mattee




"Oh, I'd like the government to balance its budget, but I'm more worried about being able to balance mine!"

## Towns County Community Calendar

Bingo	<b>Every Monday:</b> Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
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	<b>Every Thursday:</b> All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	<b>Every Friday:</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	<b>Every Sunday:</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
Mtn. Amat. Radio	<b>First Monday of each month:</b> 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	6:30 pm
Alzheimer's Supp.	<b>First Tuesday of each month:</b> McConnell Church	1:30 pm
American Legion	VFW Post 7807	4 pm
Hiaw. City Council	City Hall	6 pm
Young Harris Coun.	YH City Hall	7 pm
Quilting Bee	<b>First Wednesday of each month:</b> McConnell Church	10 am
Stephens Lodge	<b>First Thursday of each month:</b> Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Chamber Board	<b>Second Monday of each month:</b> 1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	8 am
Historical Society	Old Rec. Center	5:30 pm
Mtn. Comp. Users	www.mtcug.org	6 pm
Planning Comm.	Civic Center	7 pm
School Board	Auditorium	7 pm
Unicoy Masonic	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Caregiver support	<b>Second Tuesday of each month:</b> Brasstown Manor	3 pm
Arts & Crafts Guild	Mtn. Regional Library	4 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	<b>Last Thursday of each month:</b> Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

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## Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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