

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Be Thankful

I realize this is being published one week after Thanksgiving, however no matter how bad we may think we have it, we should be thankful every day. SFC Brian Eisch proves the veracity of that statement being thankful every day for what he has and what he's done. Just as we should be thankful for him, all like him and those who stand ready to do what must be done.

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran



Brian was serving in Kunduz Province, Afghanistan November 3, 2010, working with Afghan Police on "a deliberate clear". They were trying to let the Afghan Police lead the way into a Taliban village. Crossing a river to avoid road mines they came under fire but were under a politically correct ROE "No Fire Hold" until they had direct visual of the Taliban who had ambushed them. Politicians who create these preposterous rules should be the ones forced to fight under these irresponsible restrictions.

They can only sit there taking fire, with no visual and finally they spot this Taliban in the roadway, so it's time to try and eliminate that threat. Meanwhile the Afghan police walked right into the ambush, and ran away into hiding. Brian spotted a wounded Afghan cop lying in the field and tried to get this Afghan counterpart, to rescue his downed man. He simply stated "NO WAY".

Brian swung their vehicle around and went out to get his ally. Brian had to use his vehicle for cover, applying a tour-na-quiet to the severely wounded Afghan before he could put him in the vehicle to make a retreat. A Taliban sniper with an automatic weapon opened fire underneath the vehicle and began shooting Brian's legs. At the moment he realized his legs were shot up, over the intense pain, he also realized his dream of staying in the Army as an Airborne Ranger, already with numerous elite schools and awards, was over. He was hoping for 26 years and already a member of the Audie Murphy Club. He gave this up rescuing his Afghan ally. "Leave No One Behind!"

Medic Specialist Jared Cripe, jumped from the vehicle, saving both Brian's life and that of the Afghan policeman. Brian and Jared both received the Bronze Star for Valor. While recovering in a hospital in Germany the German Defense Minister pinned his Purple Heart stating, "The Afghans wouldn't go get their own man but an American would and did."

One goal Brian was working for was to save enough money to buy a new bass boat. He just had to get back outside, fishing, even being forced into disability retirement. He did however buy a used boat and used truck with his insurance payout.

So be thankful for guys like Brian who gave up his career, money, is crippled, losing one leg already but who is nevertheless thankful for his used bass boat, competitive fishing tournaments, and for his "angel" and life's partner Maria along with their blended family. More than anything Brian is supremely thankful to live in the United States of America! As we ALL SHOULD BE!

Semper Paratus

Fired Up

When the fires were raging around Paradise, California, many of us had an extra measure of compassion for the people who lost their lives or saw their homes destroyed. It was only two years ago, almost to the day, that Towns County was squeezed between two large fires, and parts of Gatlinburg, Tennessee, were destroyed.

President Trump made several comments about the California fires and claimed that the situation was made worse by poor forest management. He downplayed the role of climate change in the tragedy.

The President is prone to shoot from the hip sometimes, with comments that are blunt and confrontational. I can't decide whether I believe that he simply doesn't care what people think about his comments, or that he intentionally goads the media into predictable responses.

Predictably, the media erupted in outrage. How dare he attempt to barbecue the sacred cow of global warming, one of the ideological litmus tests of progressive thought! Celebrities, politicians and pundits were soon generating the headlines we've come to expect: Trump "slammed," "attacked," "destroyed" and "called out."

Such headlines are commonplace, now that politics and news have merged with professional wrestling. But there was one celebrity comment that, I'm sorry to say, got under my skin. A famous musician who lives in California, criticized the president for "defying science," and after "blasting" the president and anyone who would dare to question the popular narrative of anthropogenic climate change, the moralizing musician urged us to "come together as a people to take climate change on."

We live in interesting times when a call to unity begins with an insult, but words do not mean what they used to mean.

Let me pause here to say that I reject outright the climate change litmus test for correct thinking, and it doesn't matter whether that test is administered from the left or right side of the kindergarten. There is, in my view, sufficient data and consensus to demonstrate that the climate is indeed changing. The degree to which humans have precipitated this change and the contribution made by planetary movements, Lorenz energy cycles and solar cycles is still being discovered.

At this point in our history, when humans have populated so many of the areas of the planet that are the most sensitive to change, it's far more important to decide how we're going to prepare for change than it is to argue about who or what is responsible.

With fires still smoldering, hundreds of homes destroyed and people missing, a poor choice was made by those who used the tragedy to prosecute a political ideology. That, too, is becoming commonplace.

For the record, in this particular instance, the president, bluntness notwithstanding, was more correct than the musician. The tragedy in California would have been significantly mitigated by better forestry practices. Veteran foresters have warned for decades that northern California forests needed thinning. Some burned areas were supporting 3-5 times more trees per acre than is considered optimum for a healthy forest in that region.

Controlled burns in California have been delayed or canceled because of lawsuits. Naturally occurring fires have been aggressively fought (sometimes at great sacrifice) before they could do what fire does to manage healthy forest lands. Landowners have been deterred from managing their own properties by restrictive regulations.

These were unintended consequences of laws and regulations that grew out of a sincere, even zealous desire to protect the environment, but that desire does not erase the consequences. Some of the good folks who champion the environment fail to understand that when you add humans to the mix, when you put people on top of mountains, along coastlines, into areas prone to drought or flooding, you change the management formula. Fire has managed forests for millions of years. When you try to prevent fire from doing that job, you are only delaying the inevitable and leveraging its effects.

Of course climate change has made the situation worse, but the musician's explanation also "defies science," specifically the science of forestry and long ignored recommendations on how to manage land that has been prone to drought for millennia. The 20th century was exceptionally wet for northern California. 1000 years ago that area suffered two extreme dry spells, one which lasted 240 years and another 140 years. So even though climate change is extraordinary for ephemeral humans, for California, fire has always and will always happen. Even Governor Brown recommended a change in California's forestry practices - in August - before the fires started.

Longtime readers of this column will appreciate this irony: On 23 November, The White House released a government sponsored report on climate change which agreed with the anthropocentric (human caused) view and predicted painful consequences for the future. Trump was immediately accused of trying to "bury" the report by releasing it on Black Friday....

We haven't wasted a lot of energy in Towns County arguing about who is responsible for the weather. In the mountains, we have long known that weather always changes. When the smoke and fires of 2016 quickly erased the memory of the contrived drama of the elections, we were united in our efforts to support our neighbors and the brave people risking their lives on the fire lines. Since then, our Firewise communities have continued to help people learn to work with their neighbors to reduce the risk of wildfire.

It has long been said that everyone complains about the weather, but no one does anything about it. That's not exactly true. So instead of ruining our digestion with politics or worrying about what's happening on the national stage, we have an opportunity to DO something about climate change, no matter what our beliefs may be. Contact Frank Riley here at the Towns County Herald, call the Commissioner's office or talk with a volunteer firefighter. Find out about the Firewise community near you, or learn how to start one in your neighborhood.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

When the fires were raging around Paradise, California, many of us had an extra measure of compassion for the people who lost their lives or saw their homes destroyed. It was only two years ago, almost to the day, that Towns County was squeezed between two large fires, and parts of Gatlinburg, Tennessee, were destroyed. President Trump made several comments about the California fires and claimed that the situation was made worse by poor forest management. He downplayed the role of climate change in the tragedy. The President is prone to shoot from the hip sometimes, with comments that are blunt and confrontational. I can't decide whether I believe that he simply doesn't care what people think about his comments, or that he intentionally goads the media into predictable responses. Predictably, the media erupted in outrage. How dare he attempt to barbecue the sacred cow of global warming, one of the ideological litmus tests of progressive thought! Celebrities, politicians and pundits were soon generating the headlines we've come to expect: Trump "slammed," "attacked," "destroyed" and "called out." Such headlines are commonplace, now that politics and news have merged with professional wrestling. But there was one celebrity comment that, I'm sorry to say, got under my skin. A famous musician who lives in California, criticized the president for "defying science," and after "blasting" the president and anyone who would dare to question the popular narrative of anthropogenic climate change, the moralizing musician urged us to "come together as a people to take climate change on." We live in interesting times when a call to unity begins with an insult, but words do not mean what they used to mean. Let me pause here to say that I reject outright the climate change litmus test for correct thinking, and it doesn't matter whether that test is administered from the left or right side of the kindergarten. There is, in my view, sufficient data and consensus to demonstrate that the climate is indeed changing. The degree to which humans have precipitated this change and the contribution made by planetary movements, Lorenz energy cycles and solar cycles is still being discovered. At this point in our history, when humans have populated so many of the areas of the planet that are the most sensitive to change, it's far more important to decide how we're going to prepare for change than it is to argue about who or what is responsible. With fires still smoldering, hundreds of homes destroyed and people missing, a poor choice was made by those who used the tragedy to prosecute a political ideology. That, too, is becoming commonplace.



Moles and Voles

Moles and voles can be very damaging to your yard. They can dig up long tunnels through your yard and make a meal out of the plant roots. This can leave your yard with a lumping look and wilted dying plants. The key to treating these issues is figuring out whether you have moles or voles in your yard.

UGA
Extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Understanding some of the differences between moles and voles is important to decide how to treat them. Technically speaking voles are rodents, but moles are not. Moles are carnivorous animals that eat insects and grubs that they find underground. If you look at a picture of a mole they have very large front feet. They're able to use these big, meaty claws to 'swim' through the soil creating the tunnels in your yard. They are looking for insects to eat in the soil. They won't eat the roots of plants, as those aren't in their diet.

Voles are smaller in size than a mole, looking similar to a mouse. The easiest way to tell the difference between a vole and a mouse is that a mouse's tail is about the same length as its body. A vole has a much shorter tail. Voles are herbivores, meaning that they feed on plants. Bulb plants are often a particular favorite of voles. Voles have much smaller front paws than moles do. This means that voles are not nearly as adept at digging tunnels through the ground. Voles will often use tunnels that have been left behind by moles.

Because moles and voles have different diets and behavior they must be treated differently for control. There are a couple of different methods for mole control. The first one is to use a granular insecticide to get rid of all the insects and grubs in your yard. Once the food source is removed the moles will move on to find a new food source. A second way of removing moles is by placing a trap in their main tunnel. Go out into your yard and tamp down all the tunnels that you can find. Wherever the ground has popped back up the next day is the main tunnel. Repeated trapping may be necessary because a single yard could be host to several moles. Some of the grubs that moles eat, such as earthworms, are a sign of healthy soil. Moles also like moist soil because it is easier for digging. This means that if you do a good job taking care of your garden you will also inadvertently be encouraging moles to tunnel!

Voles can also be trapped. Place a mouse trap with peanut butter near an active site to catch the voles. If you are able to get rid of the moles in your yard oftentimes the voles will also leave because they can't do a good job of digging their own tunnels. If you're unsure if you have voles or moles take a slice of apple and tie a piece of string around it. Place it in the hole and let it sit for a couple of days. When you pull it back out, if the apple is gone you have voles (herbivores), if the apple is still there you have moles (carnivores).

If you have questions about vole and mole control please contact your local Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Letters to The Editor

A New Beginning or Not?

Dear Editor,

This letter is in response to a recent letter asking the question "Can this election be a new beginning?" I hate to be a pessimist, but I think that a House controlled by the Democrats and the Senate and Executive Branch both controlled by the Republicans will result in more rather than less gridlock on several important issues. Of course, the previous writer's underlying question, as with all of the climate alarmists, is can we save the world from rising temperatures. For the record, the writer has addressed this issue of climate change in the Towns County Herald nine (9) times in 2018 and twelve (12) times in 2017. One wonders whether this issue is a top priority among Towns County residents. Maybe we should conduct a survey.

Let's review some of the science thus far related to climate change that the previous writer fails to mention:

(1) At least 90% of greenhouse gas warming is due to water vapor and clouds; thus, CO2 level deserves less concern.

(2) Since computer models failed to predict the slowdown in rate of global warming between 1998 and 2013, they cannot reliably forecast climate changes decades in the future.

(3) The plan to reduce global CO2 emissions by the U.S. would be offset by three weeks of CO2 emissions by China.

(4) UN's Paris Climate Agreement would reduce global temperature about one degree by the year 2100, but would cost many trillions of dollars and would require global wealth redistribution.

(5) Eliminating use of fossil fuels for electricity generation would deny developing countries the opportunity to improve their living conditions. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, gas-fired power projects would supply electricity for three times as many people as renewable energy projects would supply for the same cost.

It is clear that this whole man-made climate change myth is purely for implementing a global carbon tax, or put another way, global redistribution of your hard earned money. Climate change may or may not be occurring but it is most certainly not man-made.

Tim Groza

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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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Office located at: 518 N. Main St. Suite 7 "The Mall", Hiawassee
Phone: (706) 896-4454 **Fax:** (706) 896-1745 **Email:** tcherald@windstream.net
Or mail to: PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546