

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Semper Fidelis to Dick Metzler

Semper Fidelis to Dick Metzler for his mentoring. Since the founding of our great nation there have been numerous medals and awards given to members of the military that have fought for our freedom.

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



Let us explore one of these: Purple Heart: The Purple Heart was one of the first medals awarded, actually before we were a nation. The award was established by George Washington, then the commander of the Continental Army and designed as the Badge of Military Merit. Washington awarded three soldiers the medal himself and then authorized his subordinates to award the Badge of Merit as appropriate. From then on the appearance grew, although never officially enacted by Congress. The Badge of Merit started officially arising again with the onset of WWI. After WWI the official approval of the award bounced around Congress and a number of Generals until 1931 at which time General Douglas MacArthur confidentially reopened work on a new design and naming of the medal the Purple Heart. The new medal was to have the shape of a heart with the bust of George Washington in the center, which it has to this day.

The criteria for the medal was announced in a War Department circular of 1932. At the onset of WWII the Purple Heart was awarded for both wounds as well as meritorious performance of duty. With the Legion of Merit being established in 1942 the awarding of the Purple Heart for meritorious duty was discontinued. During WWII the award was authorized for not only military personnel but civilians that received wounds in actions against the enemy.

A number of changes to the award have taken place between 1952 and 2001, namely the award can be given posthumously, former prisoners of war who were wounded, civilians serving under competent authority with the Armed Forces. From 1942 to 1997 civilians serving with the Red Cross, war correspondents, as well as nine firefighters of the Honolulu Fire Department while fighting fires during the attack on Pearl Harbor received the award. However in 1997 Congress passed legislation prohibiting future awards to civilians. Currently the only exception is for civilian employees of the Department of Defense.

The Purple Heart differs from most decorations in that an individual is not recommended for the decoration; rather he or she is entitled to it upon meeting specific criteria. A Purple Heart is awarded for the first wound suffered under "military operations". Each subsequent wound receives an oak leaf cluster. The Purple Heart is not awarded for non-combat injuries!

Since WWI through the Iraq War the Purple Heart has been awarded over 2 million times; a truly sad note! Some notable recipients: "Pappy" Boyington, USMC pilot; Senator Bob Dole, US Army 2 awards; Calvin Graham, US Navy 12 years old (youngest); President John F Kennedy, US Navy; Senator John McCain US Navy; Ernie Pyle, WWII correspondent; and most to all those silent heroes of Northeast Georgia that have received the award - we salute you!

Semper Paratus

Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor:

This is in response to Mr. Jarrard's fine article concerning Mayor Mathis' "pay cut".

The 2015 salary as reported to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) of \$42,366 is different from the City of Hiawassee Employee Earnings Summary, dated 07/13/15 covering January through December 2014 lists her salary as \$48,534.02. Please note the date of the report and the dates of coverage.

Mayor Mathis stated, "When everybody else got a raise, they gave me one." Prior to the current City Council's election, and in previous Letters to The Editor, it was reported that the majority of City employees had not received pay raises for 7 plus years. As Mayor and Chief Executive of Hiawassee, it was her responsibility to know the policies and procedures required to operate the City in a responsible and business-like manner. That is the very least to expect out of a 21 year veteran City Editor. I do wish her the best in her retirement.

That same Earnings Summary lists the salary of the City Manager as \$96,847.01. The City of Hiawassee no longer has a City Manager.

Congratulations are due the new City Council! They have only been in office a short time and have saved the taxpayers a minimum of \$122,223.01. That figure is probably low as the data is not up to date.

This salary information was only obtained after numerous requests by several people and is not what we can expect from the new Council. Keep up the good work, folks.

To all Hiawassee residents: Please attend your Council meetings. It is our city.

John L. Holmes
 Hiawassee Resident & Taxpayer

Dear Editor,

On May 4, the House of Representatives narrowly passed the American Healthcare Act. Our congressman, Doug Collins, proudly voted for the bill. He was derelict and negligent in his duty to his constituents. He voted without having any idea of how the bill would affect people in Towns County and the rest of the 9th Congressional District.

Did he care how the bill would negatively impact senior citizens on fixed incomes, cancer patients, special needs students in our schools, people with pre-existing conditions, and women?

It would have been nice if he has convened a town hall meeting and listened to us before voting.

This bill now goes to the Senate. Demand that Senators Isakson and Perdue carefully analyze the impact the bill will have on people in Towns County and across the state. Why are they refusing to hold face-to-face town hall meetings?

Their time out of Washington is not vacation time. It is time for them to come home and listen to all of their constituents.

Joseph Mahon
 Young Harris, Georgia

A different kind of life

How do we measure success? Popular culture has an answer, and we are all too familiar with that. But there is a better answer, and no finer example can be found than the life lived by our friend, Joe Anderson, of Upper Hightower. Joe passed away last Friday at the young age of 84.

Mothers cherish those days when the family is back home again, together under the same roof, but most families today are scattered. Parents with an empty nest wait for the phone to ring and wonder why it doesn't. We blame our "busy lives," but that excuse brings no comfort.

Our love for community and for the sense of belonging that family once gave us is painfully evident in the empty hours we spend on social media. We left the village for a commute on an Interstate highway, and watched our families receding in the rear view mirror. We attempt to fill that void in the virtual world, and today we cannot drive or even walk without a phone in our hands.

Joe chose a different kind of life. He served in the Army and saw what the world had to offer beyond our green valleys, but he returned here to make a life in the mountains he loved so much. Anyone who grew up here can tell you what a challenge it can be to make a living in our isolated and limited economy. Joe and his wife, Totsy did it, however, and raised five children who built their own homes and raised families here as well.

Joe's success was easy to see, especially on Sunday afternoons, holidays, and on any given day throughout the year when his home would welcome visitors: friends and neighbors, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He raised a family that continues to keep parents and grandparents as a priority in their own busy lives.

I mentioned earlier that Joe passed away at the "young" age of 84. I know people thirty years younger who are less engaged with life than he was. Joe had planted two gardens already this spring. He had just built some homemade bee hives to add to his apiary. His yard was immaculately kept, and he was often seen around the valley on his ATV visiting neighbors or carrying his granddaughter to her house sitting job.

Joe was the first person to welcome me when I moved into the valley, back in the days when I was young, untamed, and in a hurry. He was patient with me, and always kind. Some people are "horse whisperers," but Joe knew how to guide people back onto the right path with good humor and common sense, softly spoken.

Somehow in the midst of raising 5 kids, Joe helped keep an eye on my grandparents when they were old, contributing greatly to the time they were able to stay together in their home. This is just one of many such stories that are told all around our area. When the community came to pay their respects Saturday evening, the line of people waiting could have circled the entire church.

I will miss Joe's wisdom, rooted in the Faith that was central to his life. His Faith was an example to any who seek God, never judging, always welcoming. I will miss Joe's wit, his easy smile, and that twinkle in his eye. I will miss his stories. He is one of the last few people alive who knew my grandparents and the forgotten stories of the pioneers of the Southern Appalachians. He was a bridge between the past and the future.

No one expected Joe to leave so soon, but he lived his life

fully, and he was spared the painful, lingering - and lonesome departure that awaits many who live so long. The only true measure of success is the impact that we have on people's lives, and Joe Anderson touched many lives.

His legacy will continue in the family he leaves behind, strong in Faith, rooted to the land they cherish, and devoted to family and community.

To his children, those of us who have stood where you stand now can only tell you that it will get easier in time, but it will always hurt. Always. But the pain will change to longing, and it will remind you to cherish every moment.

Your dad is not gone. I see him in your faces, and in the lives that you live.

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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The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Carpenter Bees and Bumble Bees

The warm weather has finally brought the familiar buzz of pollinators such as hummingbirds, insects, and various other nectar-loving critters. As many of us know, some of the most important of these assets to your garden are the busy little bees we see zipping around sipping the sweet nectar and catching pollen on their fuzzy bodies. This includes honey bees, bumble bees, and even those pesky carpenter bees. Because carpenter bees can be such pests, it is important to be able to distinguish them from other pollinators such as bumble bees.

Carpenter bees are large bees that burrow into dry wood to create a shelter for themselves and their young. Unfortunately, their favorite hangout spots tend to be our porches, outdoor furniture, and any other wooden structures located outside. The carpenter bees that we currently see outdoors are the surviving generation from last fall. These bees will hover around whatever wood they can find until they find a suitable spot to burrow. They will chew a perfect circle about half an inch in diameter. Once the hole is about an inch deep, bees will then burrow sideways to create corridors with the grain of the wood. The female will fill this burrow with a paste of pollen and nectar for her future young to eat. This paste can sometimes be seen leaking out of the hole. After she mates, she will return to her burrow to deposit her egg which will hatch and develop throughout the rest of the year. These bees will survive throughout the winter and cause more damage the following year. Carpenter bees do not form hives like honeybees, but they are somewhat social in that they will often expand their burrows to connect with those of other carpenter bees. This forms a network of tunnels that can, in time, cause considerable structural damage.

At first sight, carpenter bees look almost identical to bumble bees. However, the abdomen (back portion) of carpenter bees is black and shiny with almost no hair, while the abdomen of the bumble bee is covered in mostly yellow hairs. Bumble bees are also somewhat social, but they do not burrow into wood to create their communities. They prefer soil. Bumble bees construct nests underground and, unlike the carpenter bees, usually have a single queen whose main purpose is to reproduce and is cared for by other members of the community. Their hives are typically anywhere from 50 to 400 individuals, which is far smaller than their cosmopolitan honeybee cousins who form hives of around 50,000 or more.

Carpenter bees are tricky to get rid of. They are highly effective burrowers, so even if you treat one hole, they can easily make another. One effective way to combat these pests is to treat their burrows in the evening or at night by spraying a bee and wasp aerosol insecticide into their burrows. While male carpenter bees cannot sting, the females can sting if provoked so exercise caution when treating burrows. Do not repair the carpenter bee damage until the bee has had a chance to exit the hole and come into contact with the insecticide. Typically, one treatment in spring and one in summer will greatly reduce carpenter bee numbers, and once the population is culled, you can repair the damage using wood putty or dowels.

To prevent future damage, paint or varnish outdoor wooden surfaces. Carpenter bees are less likely to chew through this treated wood to create burrows. However, these bees have no problem chewing through wood that has only been stained.



Towns County Community Calendar

Every Monday:		
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Bingo	Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
Every Tuesday:		
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Every Wednesday:		
SMART Recovery	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Every Thursday:		
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Every Friday:		
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Every Sunday:		
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Second Tuesday of each month:		
Caregiver support	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
Second Wednesday of each month:		
Basket Weavers	SC Fire Hall	10 am
Board of Elections	67 Lakeview Cir., Ste. A	4 pm
Second Thursday of each month:		
CVB Board	Rec Center	9 am
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	5 pm
Second Friday of each month:		
Square Dance Club	Rec. Center	7 pm
Third Monday of each month:		
Hospital Auxiliary	Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Water Board	Water Office	6 pm
Third Tuesday of each month:		
YH Plan Comm.	YH City Hall	5 pm
Co. Comm. Mtg	Courthouse	5:30 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Blairsville store	5:30 pm

Towns County Herald

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