

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Coast Guard Legends Part II

6 - Nathan Bruckenthal along with USCG and Navy personnel were attempting to board a small dhow in the North Arabian Gulf during April, 2004. As per one of their usual techniques the terrorists detonated a very powerful bomb which even overturned our American vessel. Several of our good guys were wounded including Bruckenthal who later succumbed to his injuries. He was our first USCG wartime casualty since the Vietnam War. Rightfully so, he is interred with Honors in Arlington National Cemetery.

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



7 - David Jarvis, Ellsworth Bertholf, and Samuel Call made an extremely hard trek to snowshoes Point Barrow, Alaska. Their mission in 1897 was to provide rescue efforts for hundreds of fishermen who were trapped in ice after an early winter.

After three long hard months they reached their destination, greeting and assisting native communities along the way with medical aid, and more effective hunting techniques. They received Congressional Gold Medals and all three have Coast Guard Cutters named in their honor.

8 - Miles Imlay was instrumental in studying and laying out of invasion plans for Omaha Beach invasion as a part of our D-Day at Normandy. Captain Miles Imlay was commanding a group of Coast Guard landing craft at Normandy and all other amphibious landings across the shores of Europe during WWII. He was second in command of one of the groups that landed at Omaha Beach under heavy fire and commanded the vessel off the beaches during the entire invasion. Coast Guard Captain Miles Imlay received the Silver Star and Legion of Merit awards.

Many Coasties of any era in which we served considered our jobs and assignments at times as routine, hard work, long hours. However we were willing, well trained, mentally and physically able to rise to any occasion that could devolve into life threatening and extreme difficulties, in mere seconds. In wartime or peacetime, sometimes "in between", we quietly and humbly did our jobs. Never expecting any awards, most of us would rather have worn our work uniforms (or less) than dress. In that respect we were all family, willing to do what it takes for each other and anyone else who found themselves in harm's way. Just as we witness today as our USCG plays a leadership role in TX and Louisiana rescue work. Those who never wore our uniform, went through our intense and detailed training, in boot camp, "A" school for specialty education, then on to serve in various assignments simply could not understand our unique USCG and all that we do, globally. To meet us on a laid back normal work day, observing our irreverent humor, banter and very politically incorrect behavior at times, could prove confusing. Sometimes called "Shallow Water Sailors"; "Hooligan's Navy"; plus other terms our USCG could always do our jobs and complete our missions, many of which are and never will be recorded in history. Not interested in paperwork, we did our jobs, went about our ordinary somewhat humble lifestyles, quietly proud of what we did and what we would do again.

*Semper Paratus*

## Remember This

We are often skeptical of some of the narratives promoted by mainstream media and bounced around the echo chambers of social media. A recurrent theme in our discussions here has been the negative bias of news reporting as well as the exaggeration, embellishment and spin practiced by many professional talkers. There are some media-perpetuated myths which continue to be harmful to our civil society. It is not that racism does not exist. It most certainly does. It's not that society has not, throughout much of history, been dominated by men. It has. It's not that there are no underprivileged people living among us. There are many.

There is, however, a persistent myth which appears to be intentionally promoted in order to create hostility between conservative and liberal, white and non-white, and even urban and rural. The myth is that every male, white person, conservative, Christian and any person who has ever voted for a republican, can be painted with the same broad brush of racism, prejudice and misogyny at the worst, and privilege at best. Nothing could be further from the truth. Normally, only a simpleton would accept these, or any such stereotypes.

However, when such myths are implied by mainstream media and reinforced on social media, when "everyone" is posting about it and all the "most trusted" news networks focus repetitively on the worst examples of human behavior while discounting or ignoring the vast majority of what is good, then stereotypes are reinforced to the point where anyone can begin to accept them as truth. There are other stereotypes running counter to the currently dominant memes: the inner city criminal, the liberal snowflake, which are just as inaccurate, but these usually do not benefit from tacit approval by corporate media. Another damaging and persistent myth is that our nation is falling apart, on the brink of collapse or suffering from a great divide because of the behavior of its people.

Yet thousands of pickup trucks driven by men wearing baseball caps, pulling fishing boats or loaded with tools, chainsaws and disaster supplies, converged on flood ravaged Houston last week from all over the south. The "Cajun Navy" came out in force to help. The majority of these volunteers, traveling on their own time and at their own expense happened to be white (a simple function of demographics, not of merit). Most of them came from the same red states to which some have referred when suggesting that natural disaster is a just punishment for voting republican.

Thousands of cowboys, rednecks, hillbillies and blue collar workers, the stereotypes so often aspersed by those who consider themselves to be more sophisticated, came to help strangers in an urban area where less than half the population is white. And there they have spent many long hours in dangerous conditions and toxic water, avoiding snakes, alligators and floating colonies of fire ants, to help anyone who needed help. They have helped rescue thousands of people, and they continue to do so.

To its credit, mainstream media has indeed commented on the spirit of cooperation around Houston which has transcended all barriers of race, class or politics. We have never suggested that there are not people of integrity reporting the news who seek to discover the facts and report them, when they are allowed to do so.

We all have an opportunity for a renewed, more mature understanding of what this country is about. As it was so painfully revealed in last year's election, Hollywood actors, late night comedians and political pundits do not speak exclusively for the nation. They are merely the loudest voices, and the most well financed. Many who could speak prefer to remain silent.

We have yet to hear a full report from that authoritative voice which has grown ever louder in our lifetimes. President Obama once said that government "can and must be a force for good." When we look at the ever increasing size and coercive power of the federal government, as well as the bill to the taxpayers for government's good intentions, we might conclude that if the federal government was a mental patient, the diagnosis would be megalomania or some other manic or paranoid disorder. Government seems to consider itself the essential voice in all matters.

But government is not the force for good which is doing the most to help the people of Houston. That force is ordinary people. One of the greatest organizing forces currently working in the flood damaged areas is churches, which are opening their doors and sharing their human and material resources. Volunteers drawn from the entire spectrum of race, national origin, and political affiliation are working together tirelessly. People are opening their homes to those less fortunate, and often sharing what little they have with people who have less.

This is the reality of America. We see it every time there is a disaster, everywhere there are people in need. We saw it here, during last year's fires. We see it all across the nation, in small towns and in large cities. It persists, long after the news reporters and the tax dollars spent by government have gone. Remember this. Let the images of sacrifice and cooperation and fellowship sink in. This is truth, and soon enough we will be encouraged to forget it.

## The Middle Path

*By: Don Perry*

## Dallisgrass Stagers

Without a doubt, the rain this year has helped our pastures improve and recover from last year's drought. I almost forgot what color grass was for a while! It certainly is a relief to drive through the county and see so many fields starting their second cutting. This warm wet rain we have been having also means an increase in the warm season grasses as well. Though fescue still reigns supreme in our area, many hayfields and pastures have crops of Dallisgrass popping up throughout the property.

Dallisgrass is a warm season perennial grass that is very common to our area. The majority of the grass blades are found at the base of the plant, while the stem has very few if any leaves itself. Around this time of year, we'll start to see the seed heads form. These seed heads have what look like four strings of beads or a small caterpillars extending from the central stem. Eventually, you will be able to see the seeds hanging out of the green seedhead, ready to be dispersed by the wind or animals.

While dallisgrass in many areas of the country is considered quality forage, the flower often becomes infected with a fungus (*Claviceps paspali*) during wet summers. Eventually, this fungus produces an ergot body that completely replaces the seed and contains toxins that cause what is known as "Dallisgrass Stagers" in cattle. The ergot body starts as a tan colored mass but eventually turns black throughout the season.

Symptoms are visible within about three days of cows grazing on ergot-infected Dallisgrass. Nervous system issues are the most common sign of infection. Animals will become skittish and unsteady, with shaky limbs and nodding head. Eventually, cows will begin to stagger and walk sideways. In severe cases animals may collapse and be unable to coordinate their limbs enough to get up themselves. Infected animals may also have diarrhea, though this is not guaranteed. In some cases, cows may be so disoriented and uncoordinated that they attempt to jump fences or accidentally injure people.

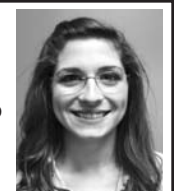
There is no medical treatment of Dallisgrass stagers, but it is relatively easy to manage and very rarely fatal. Simply removing the cattle from the infected pasture and mowing just enough to get rid of the seedheads can stop symptoms quickly. In a healthy stand of grass, cows will not eat the seed heads off the ground, and the leaves of dallisgrass are perfectly safe for them to eat. Usually you can see improvement in three to five days, but in severe cases, it could take up to three weeks.

The best way to prevent Dallisgrass stagers is to closely manage your pastures. Short-term intermittent grazing and rotational strategies work best so you have alternatives for your animals if there is an issue. Scouting for seedheads and mowing down Dallisgrass stands can ensure that your cattle do not ingest the toxin, because as the season progresses, animals can show a preference for this grass over fescue.

Other toxic threats to look out for are acorns and wild cherry. Often, the greener the acorns the more toxic they are. As wild cherry leaves turn and fall throughout late summer and autumn, there is not much danger of cows eating them. However, if a wild cherry tree falls in a storm or a limb breaks off in the pasture with a lot of green leaves, cows will tend to graze on it and can become very sick very quickly.

For more information on Dallisgrass stagers or other toxic pasture plants, contact your extension office.

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



## Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor:

I wish to thank Commissioner Bradshaw and his office for the kindness and concern they showed my husband and I over an incident in Young Harris several weeks ago. It is amazing how far a kind word can go in correcting issues. Again, our sincere thank you.

*Donna Ledford*

To the Editor:

*Hurricane Harvey: Is There a Connection to Climate Change?*

Our hearts go out to all the people in Houston and south Texas for the almost unbelievable devastation that they have suffered. Some areas received a record setting 53 inches of rain. RMS, the world's leading catastrophic risk modeling company, puts the economic loss from Harvey as high as \$90 billion. Two 500 year floods have occurred in Houston in the last 14 months. This all comes amidst rising sea levels, increased coastal flooding, melting glaciers throughout the world, and an increase in wildfires in the US along with an increase in monetary losses from natural disasters. Even closer to home, we recently witnessed the record breaking fires of last fall in North Georgia and North Carolina.

Is this just our bad luck, or is this connected to climate change? I don't think we can claim that Harvey was caused by climate change, but we can say that the atmosphere in which many natural disasters occur has fundamentally changed. The last 3 years have been progressively the hottest in recorded history, and the temperature now is over 1 degree Centigrade higher than it was 100 years ago. This all coincides with the highest CO2 levels of the last 400,000 years due to the burning of fossil fuels. Warmer air holds more moisture, which causes more intense downpours. Hotter temperatures cause more intense storms, and the temperature in the Gulf of Mexico at the time of Harvey was about 7.2 degrees Fahrenheit above average. Hotter temperatures from climate change also cause more droughts interspersed with intense downpours. It is estimated that for every 1 degree Centigrade rise in temperature we get a 50% increase in wildfires.

I hope and pray that we take notice of what is happening with our world, for predictions are that it will only get much worse as temperatures continue to rise. We cannot allow our children and grandchildren to suffer the ravages of climate change. It is not too late. Enacting common sense policies such as a revenue neutral carbon tax not only could control climate change, but it would grow the economy and add money back into the average American's pocketbook. We have a moral obligation to act. As evidenced from Harvey, we cannot afford not to act!

*Vernon Dixon, MD*

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*Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.*



## 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
Alcoholics Anon.	<b>Every Friday:</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	<b>Every Sunday:</b> Red Cross Building	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 Historical Society	<b>Second Monday of each month:</b> 1411 Jack Dayton Cir. Old Rec. Center	8 am 5:30 pm
Mtn. Comp. Users Planning Comm.	www.mcug.org Civic Center	6 pm 7 pm
School Board Unicoy Masonic	Auditorium Lodge Hall	7 pm 7:30 pm
Caregiver support Arts & Crafts Guild	<b>Second Tuesday of each month:</b> Brasstown Manor Mtn. Regional Library	3 pm 4 pm
Lions Club Mtn. Coin Club	Daniel's Restaurant N. GA Tech	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

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Publication No: 635540  
 Advertising, News deadlines: Friday at 5 p.m.  
 Towns County (1 Year) \$20. Out of County (1 Year) \$30. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points. The Towns County Herald is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. **Postmaster:** Send change of address to: Towns County Herald, P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546.  
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