

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Operation Hump

This column is due for November 8, 2017 printing in our wonderful little *Towns County Herald*. As such I tried to remember back as to what event occurred on any November 8 that affected our nation and more specifically our men and women in uniform. With the assistance of our internet I was reminded of "Operation Hump" in 1965 when I was day-dreaming of squeezing through a few more months of HS and darned well knew I was going to enlist in some branch of our armed services. A WWII US Navy South Pacific Veteran who worked in coalition with the USCG in 1945, literally dragged me to the USCG recruiting center when he learned I wanted to enlist. So in lieu of the Marines or Army both tied for my first choice, I became a "Coasty" for better or worse. But I digress.

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran



Operation Hump was a search and destroy operation by the 173rd Airborne Brigade north of Bien Hoa. Our forces were coalesced with elements of Australia and New Zealand. Our 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry was conducting helicopter assaults northwest of the Dong Nai and Song Be Rivers. Main objective was to drive out the Vietcong who had basically taken over that entire region. And owned several hills.

The seriousness of this assault began at 0600 hrs, November 8, when C and B Company engaged several very sizeable elements of the enemy forces on "Hill 65". They were well armed and our men were at times in close contact, fixed bayonets and hand to hand combat. At some point the enemy started a retreat. Our C Company suffered heavily but B Company continued to force the enemy retreat at which time air support was called in. The VC commander realized that mixing it in close contact with our men would terminate our air assault which had taken a toll, thus began this next best tactic. After much deadly fighting that afternoon the VC finally broke off.

The end result was 49 of our paratroopers were killed and many others wounded with 403 Vietcong dead. I am seriously at a loss for words to describe my emotions as I mini-recap this history, not meant to disturb, but meant to honor those of my own generation who sacrificed so much for whatever reasons these wars continue to occur. As long as man inhabits earth there will be more of this. That is an undisputable fact. Without our men and women in uniform, our precious United States of America, our Unique Sovereign Republic would dissolve into something worse than those on this earth who hate us already are and desire us to become.

Freedom isn't free. Never will be. We must continue to support and honor our men and women in uniform, honoring those Veterans of all generations who understand that they serve something much larger than themselves. Those precious souls who never came home are our genuine heroes who happen to be ahead of us resting at ease with our Supreme Commander.

Semper Paratus

Firewise & Assessing Structure Ignition Potential from Wildfire

This week my Executive Assistant, Kimberly and I are in Boise Idaho for NFPA's annual Firewise Liaison training. During this weeklong workshop we are participating in the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) sponsored "Assessing Structure Ignition Potential from Wildfire" training. This training goes into scientific detail about what makes fire work and how it spreads through the wildlands and unfortunately many times into communities where homes are lost to these fires. Here in the mountains, we are now in the leaf dropping season and the ground and homes are covered with tinder, dry leaves that won't go away unless we remove them from around our houses. All it takes is a spark from a burning leaf pile or a spark from some source and these leaves quickly transform from a pretty pile to a raging inferno that can consume anything in its path, and that could be your stuff and house! When folks leave for Florida, or other warmer parts, for the winter, they should have someone clear leaves from roofs, porches, and around the house so if a fire does start in the vicinity it won't have any fuel follow and burn the house down. It is easy to get leaves removed and a whole lot cheaper than clearing the charred ruins, rebuilding the home, and losing all your irreplaceable treasures. We learned in class that wildfires are just the start of the fire tragedy and once homes start to burn they throw fire brands (learned that word today) from house to house in a domino effect so the house burning builds on itself not by the wildfire. The houses become the fuel fanned by winds created by the fire and the process is off and running until it runs out of fuel (houses).

RC&D
Frank Riley
Executive Director



The Towns County Firewise Coalition is planning to offer help for folks who can't get the job done, because it is in the best interest of the whole neighborhood to keep all houses and lots clear of fuel. Most of the houses in our mountains are not packed together like out west, but even with our spaced-out homes, house fires can create fire brand showers that light fires up to a half mile ahead of the fire front. Houses a half mile away can suddenly begin to burn.

We can fight one house fire very well and protect two or three in the vicinity, but when the fire starts spreading beyond our equipment and manpower capability, we are quickly overwhelmed and the only thing we can do is switch to a defensive mode to protect the homes that are savable (Firewise) and only a few of them. The best defense for this kind of fire is to prepare the houses ahead of time by clearing the home-ignition-zone of fuel that even a small fire can use to quickly grow and burn up to and into the house.

We also teach property owners how to create defensible space around the house which is a 30 to 100-foot fuel free zone around the house that firefighters can safely work in to defend the house. Firefighters will not risk their lives to save your house, so homeowners need to do all they can to create a safe place and buy time for the firefighters to do their job.

You don't have to clear-cut the defensible space, just use common sense to reduce the fuel that a fire can use to travel to your house. The good news is, unlike floods, hurricanes or earthquakes, there are simple and often inexpensive ways to make homes safer from wildfire. With a good understanding of wildfire hazards and mitigation strategies, community residents can effectively lower the wildfire risk and losses to their homes, neighborhoods, and natural resources. NFPA recognizes that the changes needed to reverse the loss trends begins with a rock-solid understanding of the basics of how wildfires ignite structures combined with scientifically proven mitigation actions.

For more information on Firewise and ways to reduce the risk of wildfire around your home, contact: Frank Riley, Executive Director, Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D at info.ccred@gmail.com.

All Hands on Deck

The screen door slams at the back door of our old family home. It has a distinctive sound. No other screen door sounds quite like it, and when I hear it I travel through time. It is summer and my mother is carrying a load of wash to hang out on the clothesline. My dad is feeding his birds. My brother and I are heading out to roam the neighborhood. "Be careful, and be home before dark," we are told. How times have changed.

The old farmhouse where my dad lived with his family of 7 has been unoccupied for many years. It was built by hand, of oak and chestnut and heart pine. Friends and neighbors pitched in to raise it up, and it grew organically over the years as the needs of the family grew. It has its own distinctive house smell, which still takes me back to the time when it was warm and rich with the aromas of sweet bread in the oven and a fire crackling in the fireplace. The old house is showing its age, and I think living memory keeps it standing as much as its hand sawed beams. Many younger houses have fallen while this one still stands. We don't build things to last anymore. Times have changed.

Times always change. My childhood memories will look very different from those of someone born in the same place a generation later. There are things I value that were unknown to my forebears, and those who come after me will value things I can't imagine. There is always a generation gap, but a healthy culture has continuity. We pass on our core values, our history, and our sense of place.

We have never done an outstanding job of that in our great nation. We are still a relatively young country, and we are the personification of change. We don't have thousand year old cathedrals to anchor us in time. Chances are we would have knocked them down to build freeways if we did have them. But we do have a history. We've been through some hard times, and we've had our share of triumph and tragedy. We are young, but we are old enough to be "of age," to have a sense of history and national character.

Those of us fortunate enough to have a sense of personal history and place and continuity are blessed. We have a resource which provides us comfort and stability; something that helps us map our course through life. Even the fastest ship needs an anchor, and a great nation, even a progressive one, needs these things also.

Our ship seems to be adrift these days. Our sails are furled and the winds of change are blowing. There is little agreement on what bearing we should take, even among those of us who still know how to read a map.

What does it mean to be an American? Our opinions are divided between the extremes of those who embrace a form of patriotism that is martial in character and leaning toward jingoism, and those who seem content to drift with the currents of "diversity" and relativism, or who feel that it is politically incorrect to even ask such a question.

At the right hand edge of those extremes are those who cling to a past that never really existed, a paradigm constructed by propaganda and reinforced by fear: terrorists, radical religions and Russians. At the left edge there is no absolute truth, and a vision which does not extend beyond the social matrix which sucks at our souls through the little boxes we bow to and poke at throughout all our waking hours.

If we are to survive as a great nation, we will need to come to some agreement as to who we are. We have traditions and core values which have seen us through many hard times. Peel away the obscuring layers of politics and we may be able to see again the humanity we have in common, and the shared values and goals of a civil society.

The world around us is changing at an ever accelerating pace, and we need to be able to chart a course through these unknown waters. We need to find a middle path between sailing angrily into the unknown, guns bristling, and drifting wherever the wind blows to run aground or be dashed against the rocks.

Soon enough, as happens to all great nations, it will be time again for all hands on deck.

GUEST COLUMNS

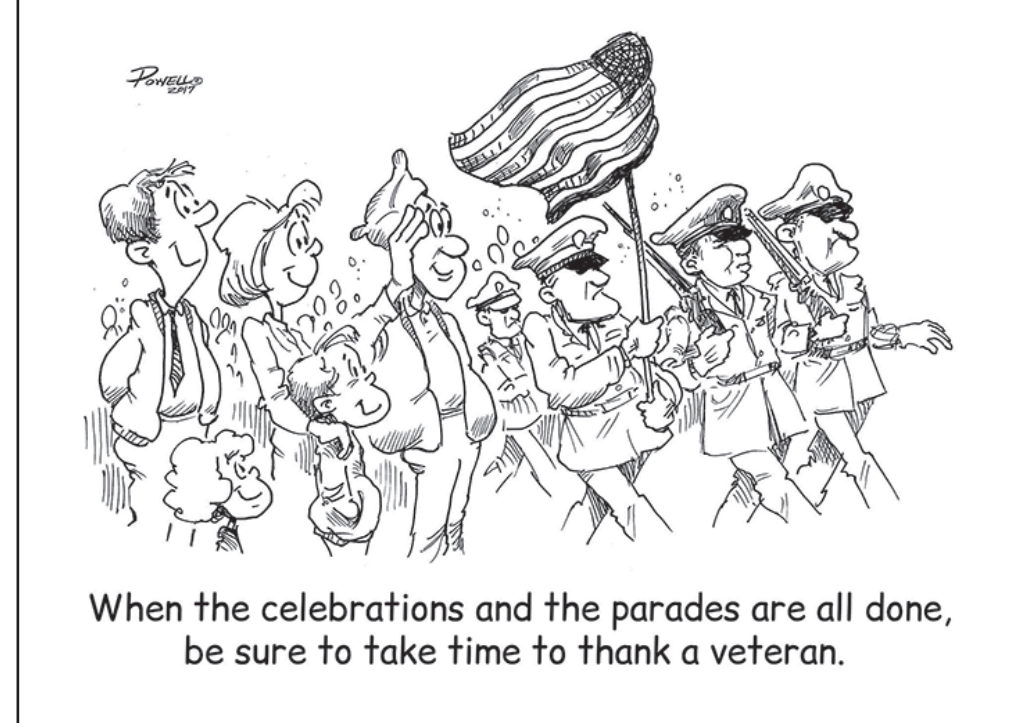
From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

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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



Acorn Toxicity

Many small wildlife species depend on the numerous acorns that fall in late summer and autumn to sustain them through the winter. However, to most animals, acorns can be highly toxic and cause a dangerous illness known as "Quercus poisoning." The term "quercus" is derived from part of the scientific names for many species of oak trees. Numerous oak trees are native to our area and many of them produce huge crops of acorns that we can see starting to drop all around the county. Quercus poisoning occurs when an animal ingests too many acorns in the fall or too many oak buds in the spring. Many domestic pets such as dogs are susceptible to this, but most cases are seen in cattle and sheep. In times of drought or large grass pest infestations, such as this past summer, cattle will take to eating other plant material since there is not enough healthy grass to satisfy them. Since those juicy green acorns are falling all around or hanging onto the tips of branches right now, they are a tempting treat to a cow that does not have access to the fresh grass it wants.

From the Ground Up
Melissa Mattee



If a cow has ingested too many acorns, symptoms usually take a few days to appear. The animal may have nasal discharge, rapid weight loss, loss of appetite or diarrhea. Acorns also produce toxins that can cause extensive kidney damage, so it is important to be on the lookout for these symptoms before the disease advances. Once quercus poisoning extends to the kidneys, the damage is irreversible.

The best way to fight this disease is to make sure it does not happen in the first place. Though fencing may be expensive, in the long run, it is better to keep animals separated from mature oak trees that produce many acorns. It will be worth it to avoid costly vet bills. Some dairy producers have found that a ration containing ten per cent calcium hydroxide can prevent toxicity, but with beef cattle this is not feasible because there is no guarantee they are eating what they need to of the ration.

Calves and yearlings are the most susceptible cattle to quercus toxicity because the smaller the body size, the fewer acorns need to be ingested to induce illness. The larger the animal, the more acorns need to be ingested to induce symptoms. The green acorns we currently see falling are often the most toxic, because the chemicals within them tend to break down and be less concentrated as the nuts mature.

In order to make sure that your cattle are not tempted by these tasty yet toxic treats, try to block off sections of pasture with a lot of acorns for the next few months until they've had time to decay. Also, try to remove what acorns you can by shoveling or raking at least weekly. Finally, always make sure your cattle have adequate hay and supplements if your pasture does not have a healthy stand of fresh green grass for them to graze. This will greatly reduce the urge to eat things that they are not supposed to and prevent a costly visit from the vet!

Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	Every Monday:	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Bingo		Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
Free GED prep.	Every Tuesday:	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	Every Wednesday	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Bridge Players	Every Thursday:	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.		Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Friday:	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Sunday:	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Mtn. Amat. Radio	First Monday of each month:	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	6:30 pm
Alzheimer's Supp.	First Tuesday of each month:	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
Chamber Board	Second Monday of each month:	1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	8 am
Historical Society		Old Rec. Center	5:30 pm
Mtn. Comp. Users		www.mcug.org	6 pm
Planning Comm.		Civic Center	7 pm
School Board		Auditorium	7 pm
Unicoy Masonic		Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Caregiver support	Second Tuesday of each month:	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
Basket Weavers	Second Wednesday of each month:	SC Fire Hall	10 am
Board of Elections		67 Lakeview Cir., Ste. A	4 pm
CVB Board	Second Thursday of each month:	Rec Center	9 am
Awake America Prayer		Civic Center	Noon
Mtn. Comm. Seniors		Senior Center	1 pm
Hospital Auxiliary	Third Monday of each month:	Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Water Board		Water Office	6 pm
YH Plan Comm.	Third Tuesday of each month:	YH City Hall	5 pm
Co. Comm. Mtg		Courthouse	5:30 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.		Blairsville store	5:30 pm

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Towns County Herald

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