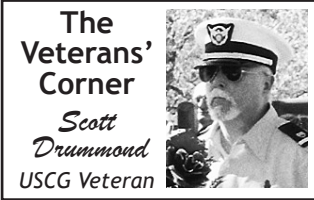


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## What Does Freedom Mean To You?

During this Fourth of July week celebrating 240 years of our Sovereign Republic, I'm in a quandary, being in possession of another young person's knowledge of America to share. However, this week, I am compelled to repeat a young lady's



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

wisdom and ask you her obvious question. What exactly does our often taken for granted freedom mean to you? I sincerely hope it means more than grilling burgers, weenies, having fun at the lake and sharing more of those cherished times with friends and families. None of my very limited descriptions could exist minus the sacrifices of men and women who served in our United States of America military services.

From a wonderful Towns County 8th grader, Audrey Goeltz, a credit to her teacher, Julie Thompson. I certainly cannot say it any better than Audrey.

"What Freedom Means to Me" by Audrey Goeltz: Freedom is something that means a lot to me. Although many people in the United States and other free countries take freedom for granted because they do not even think about it, and in other cases they cannot imagine what it would be like to live under tyranny. As Ronald Reagan said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same." I am very thankful and blessed to have liberty.

In the United States, we are privileged with freedoms that people in some other nations do not have. For example, if I lived in a Communist country, like China, or in some countries in the Middle East that are controlled by ISIS, I would not have freedom of religion, of speech, to vote, or even the right to work. People who do not have these freedoms, do not have any say in who the leader of their country is, and do not get to have their own beliefs. Many citizens of free countries do not realize how lucky we are just to have these rights. I am very grateful for the people who fought in the past and are continuing to fight for our freedom. This would include people in the military and those who protested for civil rights, like Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks.

However, freedom is a big responsibility. It means that citizens have to be independent. It means that people have to be responsible for making right choices. Sometimes it means we even have to sacrifice things. For example, people who fight in the military. They risk their lives so we can have our freedom.

Freedom means something different to everybody. To me, freedom allows me to have my own opinions, and lets me live the life that I want to live. I am very proud of the freedom we have in the United States. In conclusion freedom is a right but it is also a privilege.

*Semper Paratus*

## Elephant-sized Issue in the Room

When these words reach you, my hope is that they will find you well and content. I hope that your long weekend was peaceful and the traffic, not so bad. I hope that your furry four legged friends did not suffer too much the craving for fireworks we like to indulge this time of year.

It is also my hope that our holiday will have passed without another incident of horror coming to dominate the headlines, and that the vultures of media will be forced to find their drama picking the bones of some tacky scandal which brings absolutely no value to our daily lives.

We all need a break from drama, though many of us might be addicted. We are often led, yes, led, to believe that the world is on the verge of falling apart. When you find yourself laboring under such a notion, study history. It may shock you to realize that acts of horror have always been with us, but there may be some comfort in knowing that our generation is no different than any other in having to endure the extremes of human nature.

What is different is the fact that this generation is the first to have all horror everywhere reported instantaneously and then replayed endlessly.

An elephant-sized issue has been waiting in the room to be discussed rationally, but the horror show has driven a wedge deeply between conflicting opinions on how to approach the problem. This elephant has been stampeding through the election circus trampling kindness and common sense. There is no implication here that the elephant is a GOP metaphor, because the democrats are equally at fault. Of course I am talking about immigration.

From the right the problem is magnified in many cases by fear, racism, and a dehumanizing attitude toward children and families. A mouth that would speak of the love of God and country and in the same breath, demonize someone for the accident of birth or the exercise of their own free will, is a mouth that would curdle milk.

From the left, armchair meddlers speak of loving all humanity equally, with the exception of their own fellow citizens who believe or vote differently. They speak with contempt of the opposing philosophy or party, or even the geographical area where people reside, lumping groups of people to these unrelated factors, just like racists who do the same based on skin color or cultural heritage. The language is exactly the same.

Extremes of republican opinion want to build walls, militarize borders, separate families and end the very process which helped to make this country great. They are obsessed with enemies, and they see enemies just about everywhere they look.

Extremes of democrat opinion are devoid of respect for the traditions and values which helped to make this country great. They would open wide the gates and prepare a feast for all who enter, content to send the bill to future generations.

A rational middle path for traversing this issue does exist. It was outlined for us by one of our Founders, James Madison:

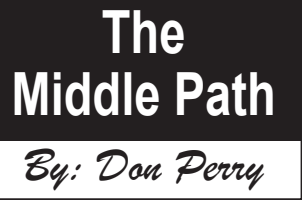
"When we are considering the advantages that may result from an easy mode of naturalization, we ought also to consider the cautions necessary to guard against abuses. It is no doubt very desirable that we should hold out as many inducements as possible for the worthy part of mankind to come and settle amongst us, and throw their fortunes into a common lot with ours. But why is this desirable? Not merely to swell the catalogue of people. No, sir, it is to increase the wealth and strength of the community; and those who acquire the rights of citizenship, without adding to the strength or wealth of the community, are not the people we are in want of. ...

I should be exceedingly sorry, sir, that our rule of naturalization excluded a single person of good fame that really meant to incorporate himself into our society; on the other hand, I do not wish that any man should acquire the privilege, but such as would be a real addition to the wealth or strength of the United States."

A rational interpretation of Madison's formula might look like this: One nation built upon diverse beliefs and traditions, speaking a common language, with a universal respect for equality and human rights. And this is a simple formula, and it is enforceable under existing laws and regulations, given the will to enforce it.

It is worthy of mention that President Obama has deported more people than any other president, almost more than all previous presidents combined, despite his progressive rhetoric, and he has only recently reversed this trend, some would say, just in time for the election.

We find ourselves crowded together at the extremes of this issue, while the rational middle ground is scarcely populated. From these extremes we are often blind to the apolitical and amoral forces which use the issue of immigration as another tool for staying in power. As long as these extremes of opinion are dominant, this issue of immigration will continue to be unresolved, and human lives will continue to be used as game pieces.



**The Middle Path**  
 By: Don Perry

## Drought Stress

Georgia summers frequently come with their fair of drought conditions that put a strain on our gardens and lawns. If you want to maintain a healthy garden or a nice green lawn through a hot dry summer, it is best to consistently monitor weather conditions before drought takes its toll on your vegetation. Droughts during June and July are more damaging than those in August and September because of the longer days. More daylight means more water loss through evaporation, but keeping track of stress symptoms in your plants may help you combat permanent damage.

There are numerous signs of drought stress and often they can mimic other diseases or poor nutrient conditions. Many of the signs present themselves in the leaves, which will turn brown or yellow along the margin and tips, curl up, and needles brown and drop in conifers such as Leyland cypress. Drought stress can also cause undersized vegetables and nuts, and cause an "off flavor." In severe cases, flowers and fruits will not develop and simply drop off the plant.

The problems do not end there. Drought can also cause a variety of secondary problems. Spider mite infestations commonly spike when there has not been adequate rain. Blossom end rot becomes a serious problem, and there are more cases of damage by insects and wildlife that are driven into home landscapes in their search for water and food.

Prolonged drought stress can have long-term consequences. Plants that are continuously stressed are more susceptible to diseases and insects, especially borers. Roots dry out and eventually die, ornamentals lose their winter hardiness and can experience substantial dieback. All of these will eventually lead to the death of the plant if adequate water is not supplied as much as possible.

Though the best way to prevent drought damage is to keep plants watered, these conditions also call for water conservation. You can conserve water and keep your yard and garden happy by prioritizing which vegetation will need water the most. High priority plants are young, recently transplanted trees and shrubs. Large, mature shade trees will seldom need watering unless the drought is so severe they start to wilt. Medium to high priority plants are perennials, fruit and nut trees, small fruits and vegetables, and turf that is less than one year old. Low priority plants are annual flowers and herbs, ornamental grasses, and established turf. Many of these varieties are easily replaced, and it is incredibly difficult to keep large annual beds adequately watered during a drought.

Water is obviously the cure for plant protection in these conditions. However, there are cultural control methods that can be taken to make plant water usage and storage as efficient as possible. Never apply fertilizer or herbicides in hot, dry conditions. This can cause chemical damage to your plants. However, a lot of weeds will compete with planted ornamentals and vegetables for water. Keeping a thick layer of mulch will prevent weeds from popping up. Do not prune ornamentals because even cutting off dead wood encourages new growth. These new sprouts require a lot of energy and water, which further stresses the plant. To prevent spider mite infestations and blossom or fruit drop, spray plants with water during the day. Replace dead or dying plants with more drought resistant varieties when possible.

As the temperatures continue to increase, make sure to keep an eye on your plants this summer. It only takes a few days for drought stress to set in, so make sure to water them when the soil is dry to prevent stress, insects and disease from getting the best of your plants.

## Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor,

The Orlando, Florida killings of innocent people was certainly a horrific and tragic occurrence in our country, but it was by far not the worst.

The largest mass shooting in U.S. history happened December 29, 1890, when 297 Sioux Indians at Wounded Knee Creek on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota were murdered by federal agents & members of the 7th Cavalry who had come to confiscate their firearms "for their own safety and protection".

The slaughter began after the majority of the Sioux had peacefully turned in their firearms. The Calvary began shooting, and managed to wipe out the entire camp. 200 of the 297 victims were women and children.

Wounded Knee was among the first federally backed gun confiscation attempts in United States history. It ended in the senseless murder of 297 people.

The Second Amendment is the right of the people to take up arms in defense of themselves, their families, and property in the face of invading armies or an oppressive government. The Second Amendment was written by our Founders who had fled, or knew of people who had fled oppressive and tyrannical regimes in Europe, and it refers to the right of American citizens to be armed for defensive purposes, should such tyranny arise in the United States.

Wounded Knee is the prime example of why the Second Amendment exists, and why we should vehemently resist any attempts to infringe on our Rights to Bear Arms. Without the Second Amendment we will be totally stripped of any ability to defend ourselves and our families.

*Bill Hall*

To the Editor:

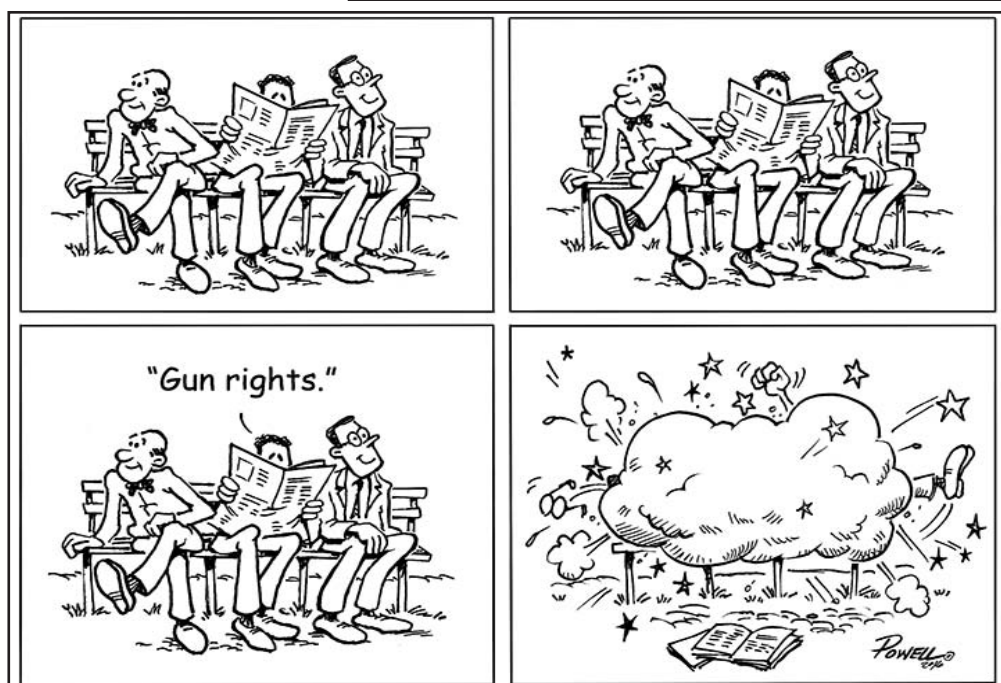
*A Conservative Answer to Climate Change*

The conservative values of the sacredness of life from conception to death, balancing our budget, hard work to get ahead, strong Christian ethics and a belief that God is central to my life, loyalty, taking personal responsibility, a deep respect for scientific reasoning and facts, and being good stewards of the earth are all dear to my heart. I believe we need to keep America strong, for America is a beacon of hope to the world.

I am also a strong believer in our moral duty to combat climate change. Conservative values and concern about climate change really go hand and hand. The Citizens Climate Lobby's carbon fee and dividend plan places a fair price on fossil fuels that accounts for their damage to human and animal life and returns that money to all of us citizens. That is a matter of fairness-polluters pay for their damage. This plan not only would decrease greenhouse gases by 52% over 20 years, but it would also add 2.8 million extra jobs, increase the GDP by \$1.375 trillion, add real extra spendable income to about 2/3 of Americans, and save 227,000 American lives by improving air quality. The increased price of fossil fuels allows the free market to take over and speeds up the transition to clean energy-a win for our environment and for conservative values.

Richard Nixon became the first President to declare environmental protection "a national priority", and the Republican party under president Nixon initiated the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts and created the EPA. Ronald Reagan was a strong defender of the environment. Caring for our earth and the desire to pass on a better world to our children is a bipartisan concern, and there are very conservative, market based ways to do this. It is time for this great nation of ours to unite, using conservative principles, and lead the world into the clean energy era!

*Vernon Dixon, MD*



**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.*

## Towns County Community Calendar

Bingo	Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
Bridge Players	Village Condos Clubhouse	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	Red Cross Building	7 pm
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Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
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Chamber Board	1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	8 am
Historical Society	Old Rec. Center	5:30 pm
Mtn. Comp. Users	www.mcug.org	6 pm
Planning Comm.	Courthouse	7 pm
School Board	Auditorium	7 pm
Unicoy Masonic	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Caregiver support	Brasstown Manor	3 pm
Arts & Crafts Guild	Calvary Alliance Chapel	6 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm
Basket Weavers	SC Fire Hall	10 am
Board of Elections	Old Rock Jail	4 pm
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	5 pm

## Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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**Shawn Henrikson** Copy Editor  
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