

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Our Remarkable History

For those many amongst us who know anything about firearms and bailing out, suspended in motion, hanging from a parachute in an extremely precarious situation, this story may seem like a fantasy. However it has been verified and is true. And Owen John Baggett, one of our greatest generation, proved once again what my WWII mentors taught me at a young age when I was complaining about having "junk hand tools" to work with. Very simply these wonderful men, back from the horrors of war, gently coached me with these words of wisdom: "Do the best you can with what you've got!" That that applies to all of us today and as these great men taught me one key element of that statement is, "Do your best!"

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



Thanks to our friend Perry another son of the greatest generation: Owen John Baggett was born in 1920 in Graham, Texas. By 1941 he graduated from college and went on to work on Wall Street, but by the following year, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps (now USAF) when the United States entered the war. A studious man, he graduated from pilot training in just five months and was sent to Burma, flying a B-24 Liberator. What happened the following year is one of those stories we just described. On March 31, 1943, Baggett and his squadron were sent on a mission to destroy a bridge of strategic importance. On their way, the B-24s got intercepted by Japanese Zeros which hit the squadron hard. Baggett's plane was riddled with bullets to such an extent that the crew was forced to bail out. While parachuting, a Japanese pilot decided that downing the plane wasn't enough. He circled around and started shooting at the bailed out pilots, killing two of the crew. Seeing this, Baggett did the only thing he could. He played dead.

Not convinced Baggett was dead, the Zero pulled up to him at near stall speed, the pilot opening his canopy to check on his horrendous work. Not wasting any time and thinking on his feet (no pun intended), Baggett pulled out his pistol and shot the pilot right in the head.

This is considered the best shot by a Caliber .45 M911 pistol of all time. The last thing he saw was the Zero spiraling toward earth.

When he landed, he and the other bailed out crew members were captured and sent to a POW camp where they remained till the end of the war. They were liberated by OSS agents and Baggett was recognized as the only person during the war to shoot down a Zero with a pistol. Verification of story: wikipedia.org/wiki/Owen_J._Baggett

I sincerely hope our readers enjoy these small snippets of American history, often ignored or forgotten. And I hope you are enlightened and amazed, as am I about those who, "did the best they could with what they had."

Semper Paratus

A Penny for your Thoughts

We didn't forget about you. Sometimes we get busy with those parts of our lives that pay the bills (and this isn't one of those parts). Sometimes there isn't much to say. Sometimes what we want to say would not be printed. And sometimes we write down what we think we want to say and, fortunately, sleep on it before deleting it the next morning.

Over the last couple of weeks we worked. Hard. We like to work hard because that usually leads to sleeping hard, and sleep is one of the best things in life. We read several books. We also read emails and comments on our posts. By the way, if you like to comment, check out the blog at onthemiddlepath.com, where you can read things the newspaper won't print (nothing ugly, mind you, just some opinions that some might find disagreeable), and say anything you like, as long as it isn't rude to another contributor.

Based on the messages and comments we have received over the years, we have formed a strong opinion that our readers are the most intelligent and enlightened people on the planet - even (or especially) the ones who disagree with us. Occasionally we see an opinion that changes our own. New information should always suggest the possibility of an upgraded opinion. Now there's a good working definition of what it means to be rational!

Occasionally, however, by some accident of fate, or because they enjoy being outraged, someone will comment who is not rational. Irrationality can happen to any of us, like catching a cold. We see it all the time in any forum which invites commentary. Unfortunately, outrage appears to be in vogue right now, but if you are among those of us who don't enjoy it, there are some simple measures we can take to avoid it.

The phrase, "It goes without saying" is a logical fallacy, like the beautiful, inspiring and archaic phrase "self evident." Nevertheless, "it goes without saying" that we can often avoid being outraged by the written word if we read more than just the headlines or the titles. Are you listening, Facebook users?

If we are particularly outraged, that state of being can often be assuaged by a more careful read of the offending material. It is perhaps a sign of the times that a constantly texting and tweeting public can lose the thread of an argument (the classical, not the confrontational kind) that is built from an assortment, a collection, a diversity of statements leading to a set of conclusions. Furthermore, if our only experience of a rose consisted of being "triggered" by the thorns, we might be outraged by a bouquet, but most of us perceive "rose" as something greater than the sum of its individual parts. We should read opinions, and follow arguments, in the same way.

We have written often about confirmation bias, which is a heavy contributor to outrage. It is almost tragic to see an otherwise admirable intellect which fails to apprehend reality because perception is so strongly colored by prejudice and a narrow range of experiences. Are you listening, partisans, democrats, republicans, people who only watch either MSNBC or Fox News? If we are attached to or insecure about our opinions, we read to reinforce those opinions rather than to absorb new information. Any information that might challenge our opinions we either disregard, or it makes us angry.

There are others for whom we have no remedy, and since we are not politicians, gurus or saints, we will call them by name. We refer now to stupid people. Yes, we can all do stupid things, again, just like we can all catch a cold. But people who have poor hygiene catch more colds. People who have poor mental hygiene do more stupid things. Some, we might say, are even willfully ignorant.

Whenever you hear the statement, "I'm entitled to my opinion," there is a good chance that opinion is based on willful ignorance. No, you are not entitled to your opinion. You are free to have an opinion. There is a difference. To be entitled to an opinion means that you have done some research, gathered some facts, garnered some experience and reasoned through to a conclusion. Those who are entitled to an opinion are a rapidly shrinking minority.

If that opinion makes you angry, we're willing to examine any data you may have that runs counter to it. Barring that, we will go a step further and say that we see a trend toward "entitlement" which we believe is detrimental. It is popular in some circles to believe that, not only is everyone entitled to an opinion, but everyone is entitled, period. This is detrimental when diversity becomes tyranny. It is detrimental when, for example, the Marine Corps reduces its qualifications for infantry officers so that more candidates will be successful. It is detrimental when people believe in universal income while the country is \$20 trillion in debt.

We're not disputing human rights. We strongly agree with our Founders that all people are created equal, and that this is, indeed, self evident. We practice democracy because we believe all human beings should have equal opportunity. But - and this is pivotal - we are a republic because all do not contribute, sacrifice or perform equally. All do not, as Nassim Nicholas Taleb would say, have equal "skin in the game."

Democracy and socialism are two sides of a coin. When we roll that coin on its edge or spin it on a tabletop, we see the republic in action. It takes both skill and focus to keep that coin on its edge, to keep it in motion. Distracted by our partisan opinions, we're letting that coin slow down to a wobble. Whether it lands on heads or tails is anyone's guess, and sadly, it's worth about 4% of its former value. A penny for your thoughts...

Have something to sell?

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Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday by 5 PM

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

The Cross

Christians tend to be a little excited this time of year! Sunday, April 1 is the day we especially celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But that miracle is meaningless without the cross.

The Bible notes that the message of Jesus' death on a cross seems foolish (lit. "moronic") and scandalous. God dying may seem inconceivable, but it is the crux of the gospel. "The word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18).

What is the cross really about? It's about reconciliation and peace between you and God (Col. 1:20). The cross exonerates you because God nailed to the cross the certificate of debt against you, and makes you alive with Christ (Col. 2:13-14). On the cross, Jesus bore your sins in His body, so you might live to righteousness (1 Pet 2:24). It brings people together (Eph. 2:16). It's about us.

We know Jesus agonized over his impending death, as he anticipated the weight of the world on his shoulders. What motivated him? Love and joy. "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us" (1 John 3:16). Jesus, "who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross" (Heb. 12:2).

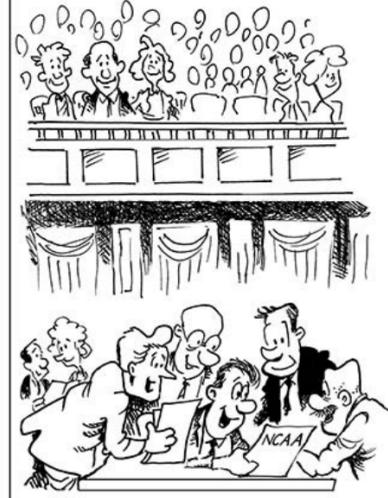
At age 95, Billy Graham recorded his final message in a video called "The Cross." In it he says, "With all my heart I want to leave you with the truth. God loves you, and is willing to forgive you of all your sins. The cross is offensive because it confronts people. We deserved the cross, hell, and judgement, and all that that means. Sin is a disease in the human heart. How can we be set free? "If anyone is in Christ he is a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17). There is no other way of salvation except through the cross of Christ. Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father but through me" (John 14:6). Turn from your sins to Jesus Christ, and say 'I'm a sinner. I need forgiveness. You're the only one that can change me.' Today, I'm asking you to put your trust in Christ."

The great Methodist hymn writer Charles Wesley wrote, "Amazing love! How can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me? Love found in sin and nature's night; I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; my chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed thee. No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in him is mine; alive in him, my living Head, and clothed in righteousness divine." By faith, all this can be yours because of Jesus, and the cross. Rejoice!

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



"My, isn't it inspiring to see lawmakers hard at work!"



"So, how is your bracket looking?"

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 Monday of each month: | |
| Chamber Board | 1411 Jack Dayton Cir. | 8 am |
| Historical Society | Old Rec. Center | 5:30 pm |
| Planning Comm. | Civic Center | 7 pm |
| School Board | Auditorium | 7 pm |
| Unicoy Masonic | Lodge Hall | 7:30 pm |
| | Second Tuesday of each month: | |
| Gem & Mineral Club | Senior Center | 1:30 pm |
| Caregiver support | Brasstown Manor | 3 pm |
| Arts & Crafts Guild | Calvary Church | 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 |
| Awake America Prayer | Civic Center | Noon |
| Mtn. Comm. Seniors | Senior Center | 1 pm |
| Democratic Party | Civic Center | 6 pm |
| | Third Monday of each month: | |
| Hospital Auxiliary | Cafeteria | 1:30 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 |
| Water Board | Water Office | 6 pm |
| | Third Wednesday of each month: | |
| Quilting Bee | McCConnell Church | 10 am |
| MOAA | Call Jack @ 828-321-2896 | |
| | Third Thursday of each month: | |
| Friendship Comm. | Clubhouse | 6 pm |
| Republican Party | Civic Center | 5:30 pm |
| | Third Saturday of each month: | |
| Goldwing Riders | Daniel's Restaurant | 11 am |
| | Fourth Monday of each month: | |
| Red Cross DAT | 1298 Jack Dayton Cir. | 5:30 pm |
| | Fourth Tuesday of each month: | |
| Lions Club | Daniel's Restaurant | 6 pm |
| | Last Thursday of each month: | |
| Humane Shelter Bd. | Cadence Bank | 5:30 pm |

Towns County Herald

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