

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Home of Brunswick Stew Attacked

Just off the coast of Brunswick, GA, April 8, 1942 in the early morning hours a German U-boat (submarine) fired a torpedo at the Esso tanker "Baton Rouge" and the U.S.S. Okalahoma. Twenty-two American sailors were killed and the ships were sunk. Frank Tubisz a 24 year old crewman aboard the Baton Rouge survived the attack, swimming in what he described as frigidly cold water, after being rusted from his uncomfortable hot bunk in his sleeping quarters.

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



Tubisz, from Mount Sanai, NY visited Brunswick, GA and Georgia's Golden Isles for the first time in 58 years after the attack on Veterans Day 2000. With tears of emotion filling his eyes he again thanked the residents of Brunswick for rescuing him and those crewmates who survived that sneak attack by the NAZI U-boat. Those people, so typical of great Southern folks, gave them shelter, food and clothing. Frank said, "From the bottom of my heart and with everything in me, I thank them." He went on to say, "You people down here have an entirely different concept of what the merchant marine did during the war." He continued, "People back home say, oh I don't know anything about that." Tubisz ended his emotional interview that day with, "I appreciate all this so much. It's wonderful, but it's going to take me a week to get over these nightmares again." Frank realized and spoke of our members of the armed services who've suffered torment after battle service. He reminded us all that our merchant mariners just recently (2000) received veteran's status but are not recognized at our nation's Memorial Day and Veteran day services. He also stated that the only difference between himself and "regular" veterans of the USMC, Army, Navy USAF and USCG is that he and his fellow mariners were sent into battle unarmed.

Frank had just turned 82 that Veterans Day in 2000 when he and his wife Alice came down to Saint Simon's Island for the dedication of the historical marker at our old USCG station which describes that attack upon America. Billy Schiech, who was Frank's best friend was killed along with twenty one others that fateful night and Frank and Alice sat next to Louis Schiech, Billy's younger brother, for the role call of those who died and the song, "Amazing Grace." Frank remembered that Billy had traded duty with him that night placing Billy below decks in engineering spaces and certain death when the torpedo hit.

According to eyewitnesses many residents of our southern coastal region watched this same U-boat surface after torpedoing the tanker "Gulf America" the next day and begin shelling and shooting American sailors who were trying to escape. This episode describes the evil all of our Americans who serve in uniform always and today serve in efforts to prevent them from bringing their harm to all of us.

Thanks to Tucker Ray Knight, formerly of Hiawassee and born and reared in Brunswick for educating us on this little known history.

*Semper Paratus*

## Letters to The Editor

### Climate Change - We Should Trust Science

Dear Editor,  
 In reference to the letter in the Herald two weeks ago about climate change and government intervention, I agree that we should keep government out of our lives, unless intervention is necessary. Citizens Climate Lobby has a plan called the carbon fee and dividend plan. It is really an attempt to get the government out of the way as much as possible. You simply place a fee on the production of carbon dioxide by fossil fuels at their source to account for their external damage and return all the money in a monthly dividend check to US Citizens. This helps to correct a market distortion that the free market cannot correct itself. Right now, you and I pay for the damages that fossil fuels are causing-which is certainly not fair!

A study from MIT estimates that the US incurs \$ 330-500 billion annually in additional medical costs just due to the inhalation of particulate matter from the burning of fossil fuels, and a study from the Harvard Medical school estimates that the US incurs up to 200,000 premature deaths annually from the inhalation of such particulate matter. Hotter temperatures are causing more droughts, more crop loss, and increasing damage from natural disasters. Last year the US had a record setting damage of over \$300 billion from natural disasters. An article from the Cornell Chronicle estimates that there could be up to 2 billion climate refugees from climate change by the end of the century. Imagine the cost of that! Sea level rise is increasing due to the melting of glaciers and ice sheets, with a projected sea level rise of 2-3 feet by the end of the century, with some projections up to 6 feet. This will be devastating to our coastal cities.

True, CO2 only makes up a very small part of the atmosphere, but it is responsible for absorbing heat radiated from the earth and keeping our planet warm. We have now had about a 45% rise in CO2 levels over the last 150 years-much of it in the last 30-40 years. THIS is what is causing our temperatures to rise-a scientific FACT that cannot be denied or ignored. It is true that there are multiple natural factors that can cause temperatures to rise-including the ocean currents, volcanoes, land use, sun radiation and the earth's orbit around the sun. However, taken as a whole, these show essentially no increase in temperature. THE ONLY thing that correlates with the present increase in temperatures is the increase in CO2, and we humans are the cause! Now it is up to us to do something about it! The good thing is that we can! Citizen Climate Lobby's plan would go a long way to solving our problem, while growing our economy at the same time, with no government regulations other than correcting a market distortion.

Vernon Dixon, MD

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## The Unforgiving Minute

Another Father's Day weekend has gone. Those of us who have been orphaned by the passage of time can embrace, or we can confront these holidays in various and sometimes unpredictable proportions.

As I move forward from this yearly observance, there is something I want to carry with me and keep close to my heart. This year the memories rested more gently on my spirit, and I have come to realize that my father is still teaching me, even though he has been gone almost 5 years now.

Growing up he always reminded us to embrace the moments of our lives and to cherish them, because nothing lasts forever. Today we might call his philosophy "mindfulness," but in his own words, he encouraged us to listen, to observe, to think about what we were doing – and to think twice before we spoke.

In this age of constant distraction, I begin to realize that my father was teaching us a method of actually slowing down the passage of time. Mindfulness allows us to apprehend the moments as they pass, and in doing so we can build a rich storehouse of memories along the way, the very memories that can help make bearable the terrible losses that time inflicts on us all.

When we're very young we don't yet understand that everything has a "last time." They tend to sneak up on us, those "last times," like the last time your mom cooks your favorite meal, or the last time you play ball with your favorite pup; the last time you hear a loved one's voice, or the last time you go fishing with your dad.

If we knew beforehand when these last times would come, how focused we would be on the moments as we tried to hold on to each one for as long as possible! It would be very difficult to live that way, or at the very least we would become subsumed by melancholy or morbidity.

Dad's way of mindfulness overcomes that difficulty. When we honor as many of our moments as we can grasp, when the last ones arrive, we have already stored them away for safe keeping.

Recently I found an old scrapbook of Dad's which had been given to him by one of his favorite teachers on the occasion of his high school graduation. He had just begun to add to the book when he was called away to serve in the Navy in WWII, and after he returned from the war he had completely filled up the book within a few short years. His book is filled with memories from some of the most intense and influential times of his youth, and he kept it and cherished it for the rest of his life.

Displayed prominently on the front cover of this catalog of his formative years is a passage from Rudyard Kipling's poem, "If." It reads:

*If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
 With sixty seconds worth of distance run  
 Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it  
 And – which is more – you'll  
 be a Man, my son!*

"There is something to learn about everything," Dad would say, and while we grew up learning to gather moments, we still had to learn not to take them for granted.

As I remember the halcyon summers of youth when the moments stretched out endlessly before us, I think one of the biggest challenges Dad faced is one that is given to all fathers at one time or another, and that is to teach their sons and daughters not to procrastinate.

I think that lesson is easier to learn on the farm, where one is connected to the unyielding rhythms of the seasons and where the concept of death is learned at an early age from the stillborn lamb or the chicken that did not come from the supermarket.

When I was eleven and my grandfather's health began to decline, we discussed life and death openly, and when Granddaddy passed away I was prepared as a 12 year old could be for that great loss. I knew then the reason why moments were so important: We are only given so many, and no more.

Nevertheless, like so many of us, I let too many moments slip from my grasp, lost in the distractions and diversions of youth.

But there comes a time when one can no longer ignore the accumulating losses and a renewed appreciation for the moments of life occurs. It urges me to pass on the wisdom that was handed down from my father to me and from his father to him.

Take nothing for granted. Do not wait to return your mother's call. Don't put off visiting your friend because "there will be another time." Take that vacation. You can always make more money. You can never make more time.

As humans we are gifted with the ability to perceive fractions of a second.

We are given sixty seconds in every minute; sixty minutes in every hour; twenty four hours in every day and three hundred sixty-five days in every year. We are gifted with an abundance of opportunities to gather memories. And because of my father's wisdom, I have been blessed with many to cherish.

But oh, what I would give to go fishing with him one more time.

**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 names must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.*

## The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

## Moonstruck

Linda Grace lives all the way over in Young Harris and I in Hiawassee. We began walking together for exercise. To be fair, we alternated between The Young Harris Campus and the Georgia Mountain Fair Grounds. The pleasure of Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge was introduced to me then. At that time it was called The Fred Hamilton Rhododendron Garden and was part of The Fair Grounds but that's another story for another time. Since that first seduction I've succumbed to the Gardens' charm repeatedly.

In the Spring, the Gardens holds its Coming Out Party (A Blooming Affair) and the debutantes dress in their best to hold court. A friendly competition ensues. Early summer takes over and the Belles of the Ball change from the fancy duds into lush green uniforms. Many people experience the warmth/hot fun the Gardens provide but after the colorful personality of Fall, thoughts of the Gardens take a back burner.

We met in the parking lot, early evening, on Nov. 30, 2017. Still reeling from the magnificence of a total solar eclipse in August, I was more than gung-ho when told of the Super, Blue, Red Moon Tour at The Gardens. The temperature was cool, verging on cold. As we early attendees (all 3 of us) waited and the sun lowered, the mercury dropped. I figured we'd be the only ones dumb enough to brave the nippy elements of a mountain night in November. Turned out we were just the only ones dumb enough to arrive so far ahead. Seems not only can you not hurry love, you can't hurry Mother Nature. She pays no heed to falling back by some time change mandate. By show time, we could see our breaths and were adding scarves, gloves and more outer wear. The assembled was a caring, generous lot who offered the extra sweaters and jackets they'd brought so everyone would be comfortable. Seeing that slightly tinged orb rising over Lake Chatuge, growing larger and deeper in color, blocked the cold from my mind. By the time Bella Luna was overhead and our venture into the Garden commenced, a spell had been cast.

The trees, so leafy and full just a few months earlier, were now bare and reaching for a muted silver brightness which made flash lights completely unneeded and unwanted. The reflection across the water was eerie but benign. Not the least bit daunting. With the stage and spot light set, the constellations vied for attention. Guides Lake Maggie shared facts and lore.

Some of us were strangers. Some of us were friends. For now we were family sharing our home. Heaven and Earth. When we reached the bridge someone suggested that as we were being mooned so soulfully, perhaps we should return the favor. No takers on that. Too cold?

I'm sure I heard a gentle zephyr's sigh of relief. I felt vastness and closeness at once. That same moon shimmering over us at Lake Chatuge in Towns County, GA was servicing Agra, India and everywhere else.

All this to say, Hamilton Gardens is always magic.



## Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	<b>Every Monday:</b> All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
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	<b>Every Thursday:</b> All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Movers & Shakers	<b>Every Friday:</b> Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	<b>Every Sunday:</b> Red Cross Building	7 pm
Basket Weavers	<b>Second Wednesday of each month:</b> SC Fire Hall	10 am
Board of Elections	67 Lakeview Cir., Ste. A	4 pm
CVB Board	<b>Second Thursday of each month:</b> Rec Center	9 am
Awake America Prayer	Civic Center	Noon
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	6 pm
Hospital Auxiliary	<b>Third Monday of each month:</b> Cafeteria	1:30 pm
YH Plan Comm.	<b>Third Tuesday of each month:</b> 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
Quilting Bee	<b>Third Wednesday of each month:</b> McConnell Church	10 am
MOAA	Call Joff @ 386-530-0904	
Friendship Comm.	<b>Third Thursday of each month:</b> Clubhouse	6 pm
Republican Party	Civic Center	5:30 pm
Goldwing Riders	<b>Third Saturday of each month:</b> Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
Red Cross DAT	<b>Fourth Monday of each month:</b> 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
Lions Club	<b>Fourth Tuesday of each month:</b> Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	<b>Last Thursday of each month:</b> Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

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## Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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