

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Ron Willis "Old School"

Ron was born 73 years ago in Nebraska growing up around cattle and horses and never thought about serving America in our USCG. After a really nasty Midwest winter and walking up in the snow to the roof of their home, Ron's Dad, a WW II Army Veteran announced, "It's time to move to Florida." Once there, Ron learned to love the water and his parents reminded him that he needed to be preparing for his future. He took that as an obvious hint. Having already befriended several in the local USCG Auxiliary, Ron enlisted in the USCG. His first year after boot camp was prime duty at a USCG LORAN station near West Palm Beach. That changed abruptly about a year later when he was transferred to another LORAN station about 750 miles north of the Artic Circle in Greenland, where upon his arrival, Thanksgiving Day 1964 it was -26 degrees and dark 24 hours a day. He describes this as "living in an alien world". Surviving the elements was a primary concern for everyone there, and as an ET (electronics tech), Ron and all the Coasties had to keep our LORAN station up and running 24/7/365. "Old School" adequately describes Ron and those



of us for which it became our imperative duty to keep our old WW II era equipment up and running. Whether it was a patrol boat or LORAN station, we learned how to improvise, not always "by-the book". It was literally life or death for us old school "Hooligan's Navy" personal to know how to "Improvise, Adapt, and Overcome", something we unknowingly shared with our brethren in the USMC, and seriously lacking by many only a few years younger, in today's society. Ron ended his tour of duty serving on an 82 foot patrol boat and several small boats out of Padre Island, TX.

Returning to Florida, Ron pursued his college education initiating a career with what was Southern Bell Telephone Company as an engineer and retired in 1996. May I add that Ron and his wife Sharon have both served wonderfully in our USCG Auxiliary, with Sharon's superb culinary and planning skills combined with Ron's abilities, his down to earth, common sense and natural leadership skills. They are a winning team! Moving here in 2013, they love our small Towns County Community.

Ron's words of wisdom that he wishes to share with our young folks: ONE: Join the military and learn a marketable skill. TWO: "My experience in the military had as much to do with getting a job within a good company as a college degree. A degree gets you in the door, but your service in the military will get you the job." Finally, "Veterans have a very special bond with each other that lasts a lifetime. No matter if you were enlisted or commissioned officer, short timer or career military, that bond will always be there for support." - *Semper Paratus*

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



## Garbage In, Garbage Out

We can understand the basics of how the brain works by thinking of it as a kind of difference engine. The brain processes a continuous flow of data from the senses, as well as data from its own internal functions, and it interpolates. It assumes, averages, fills in the blanks. This is why optical illusions work. It is also why memory is unreliable, and why some people see a butterfly in an ink blot and others see a bat.

"Difference engine" refers to a mechanical device first conceived by Hessian Army engineer, J. H. Müller, and later attempted by English polymath, Charles Babbage. These were the first inklings of what we now know as the "computer."

A computer needs an operating system to function. Most of the human operating system, like a modern computer, is automated. The heart beats and blood circulates; we breathe; we digest food. On the cellular level, billions of chemical reactions occur at every moment, and the average human brain produces about .085 watts of electrical power (although some appear to produce considerably less). That's enough, by the way, to charge an iPhone in about 70 hours.

So far our basic brain functions are on par with every other living thing, but humans have sophisticated proprietary software and tremendous storage capacity which, as far as we know today, may be unique in the Universe. We reason. We have a sense of time. We develop complicated algorithms for belief, fantasy, morality and religion, as well as countless other concepts far removed from the electrochemical processes going on inside our heads.

There is an acronym as old as the Information Age: GIGO, or "garbage in, garbage out." Computers that receive faulty data can never return accurate answers. We have understood the logic behind this bit of wisdom for much longer than we have understood computers. This is why so much time and expense is applied to education. Unfortunately for our species, even the most sophisticated programs for producing educated, well rounded human beings are plagued by the limitations of our basic operating system. That OS was designed over thousands of years for surviving a great number of dangers and physical challenges. We were built to be able to quickly respond to these challenges by fighting or fleeing, and we are burdened or uplifted by an almost irrational desire to reproduce. What happens when you install a sophisticated program onto an operating system that was designed for basic survival? Many things can happen. We can build pyramids, produce great works of art and literature or push back the boundaries of science. We can also fight over words and shoot each other over parking spaces. History contains a litany of horrors that testify to the glitches inherent in our programming.

We have understood the basic functions of the brain for a long time, and when we did not understand, we intuited. Whether by design or by accident, there have always been individuals and groups who were capable of affecting the programming of large numbers of operating systems like a computer virus. Marketing attempts to achieve this end every day. Political types seek to do it. That odd hybrid of business and government that we call "mainstream media" seeks to influence our programming every moment of every day.

Not all of the programming is bad. That which seeks to educate, to motivate or inspire for the good of the community, is always needed. The problem is that many of our programmers are allowed to move beyond motivation and inspiration to control, and to accomplish this control, whether for the purpose of selling soap or buying votes, the programming targets the survival subroutines built into our basic operating system. In order to sell soap and buy votes, they stimulate the fear, anger and lust that we inherit from our animal nature. Programming us for viral responses is effective, and it is profitable. It also gets out of hand on a fairly regular basis, as anyone who has studied the history of war can tell you. But on a personal level, the place where we live our lives among our fellow humans, where we digest our food and sleep at night and where we try to maintain a healthy body/mind - too much of the wrong information makes us feel bad. It literally makes us sick.

Think about it. We wake up to a curated selection of bad things that happened overnight. Throughout the day, every bad event that is horrific, or shocking or tacky enough to grab our attention is broadcast for our consumption. We digest our food with generous servings of fight-or-flight metabolites circulating throughout our bodies.

Many of us seem to forget that we are all capable of self-programming. We do it unconsciously in the repetitive behaviors that become our habits, but we can also do it with intent. We can choose at any moment to disconnect from the external programming, and we might be surprised to discover how smoothly we will run without all the constant updates.

It won't be easy for some of us. Many of us are addicted to the neuropeptides that are produced by the constant stimulation of our reptile brains. But we can start with a simple, very personal question, a question that can be applied to every shooting and stabbing reported, every celebrity scandal, every imperial presidential tweet and just about every syllable uttered by every talking head out there: Does this information enrich my life in any way?

So turn off the television. Shut down the web browser. Put down the phone. Select quality information in the same way you would shop for ingredients for a home cooked meal. You will find it in libraries, in books, in online courses or continuing education programs. Granted, it's more work this way, but it digests better, and it's much healthier.

**The Middle Path**  
By: Don Perry  
onthemiddlepath.com

## Nutrient Deficiencies

With plants in full bloom and summer going full steam ahead, I hope all the green in your gardens and fields are a vibrant green. However, if things aren't growing as they should be you could have a nutrient deficiency. Let's talk about some of the common nutrient deficiencies, what their symptoms are, and what you can do to fix them.

Seventeen nutrients are essential for plant growth (give or take a couple depending on who you ask). Carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen are all taken from the air or water. The remaining 14 are divided into macronutrients and micronutrients.

The big three of nutrients are Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Potassium. Plants that don't have enough nitrogen will begin to turn yellow-green in the oldest leaves first. Because nitrogen is mobile in the plant, it will move from the old leaves to new growth where it is needed. Nitrogen is also mobile in the soil, so it will leach out easily following a rainfall. Splitting up nitrogen applications

over the course of the season is the best way to make sure it's not wasted. Phosphorus deficiency will turn the leaves to a reddish-purplish color. Typically if you use a fertilizer like 10-10-10, 13-13-13, or 17-17-17 you won't have issues with phosphorus deficiency, because you will most likely have applied more phosphorus than

the plant needs. Potassium deficiency turns leaf edges brown and causes dead spots throughout the leaf. It can look similar to drought damage. Not enough calcium leads to young leaves being cupped and yellow. Lack of calcium also causes blossom end rot. Poor watering can lead to a calcium deficiency because calcium requires a lot of water to move through the plant. Magnesium deficiency is yellowing between the leaf veins on old leaves. These yellow areas can turn brown and die. Epsom salts are good for plants that lack magnesium. Sulfur deficiency will turn the entire plant a lime green color and cause the plant to be stunted. Lack of iron leads to leaves turning yellow, but the veins remain dark green. Some plants are sensitive to excessive iron or iron deficiency, which is controlled by the soil pH. Boron deficiency makes the youngest leaves turn light green and become distorted. It can also cause blackheart in vegetables. Not enough molybdenum makes narrow leaves with yellowing in between the veins. As the leaves expand, they are mottled. A manganese shortage shows up as yellow or white colored leaves with green veins. Zinc scarcity will be reddish colored spotting of older leaves between the veins. Copper shortage will show up as young leaves wilt but remain green.

Nutrient deficiency leads to plants that are more susceptible to disease because they are stressed. Diseases can cause a nutrient deficiency because the plant isn't able to operate properly. Therefore, we can have a chicken or the egg type situation. Both issues will need to be addressed to make the plants healthy again. The best way to avoid a nutrient deficiency is to do a basic soil test. It costs \$10 and you can bring your soil sample to the Extension Office. The report that you get back will have instructions on when to fertilize and how much to use. If the plants you are growing have a unique nutrient requirement that information will be included as well.

If you have questions about nutrient deficiencies in plants contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

**Watching and Working**  
Jacob Williams



## Fireshed

Just when I think I understand what we are doing with wildfire risk reduction along comes new terminology to define in big, new millennial words what we have been already doing for the past 10 years or so. I am old school and like to communicate in the old-fashioned, simple, English language. I guess modern folks must think up new words to try to recreate what we have already done for years and make it look new. I do not understand some of these words but if I listen long enough, I can figure out what they are trying to do and get on board. If the Forest Service likes the new terms, then I like it too because they are the ones with the money to make things happen and keep nonprofits like ChestChat RC&D operating and paying me and Kim. I am like a chameleon; I can change colors to be whatever I need to be to keep the \$\$ coming! I'm not sure but I think a Fireshed is sorta like what we do when we convince citizens that they live in a tinder box and if they can reduce the fuel around their homes then it will be a safer place to live, but that is my old fashioned way to look at it.

Here it is in Millennialism: A fireshed is an area where social and ecological concerns regarding wildfire overlap and are intertwined. The need for improved methods for managing wildfire risk is becoming apparent as uncharacteristically large wildfires in the western US and elsewhere exceed government capacities for their control and suppression. We propose a coupled biophysical-social framework to managing wildfire risk that relies on wildfire simulation to identify spatial patterns of wildfire risk and transmission within "firesheds" surrounding communities, and social science to understand wildfire risk perceptions and the degree of collaboration and mitigation behavior among landowners, land management agencies and local officials.

Such an approach potentially would provide an improved method for defining the spatial extent of wildfire risk to communities compared to current planning processes, and creates an explicit role for social science to improve understanding of community-wide risk perceptions and predict landowners' capacities and willingness to mitigate risk by treating hazardous fuels and conducting Firewise activities. Moreover, this biophysical-social approach would enable identifying potential comparative advantages in the location of risk mitigation effort, whether on public or private lands, according to both the degree to which specific locations contribute to the transmission of wildfire risk and how likely they are to contribute to the mitigation of risk.

This is what we have been preaching for years to the citizens of North Georgia with our Firewise USA programs; get involved in your community, cleanup around your homes, it's for your own good not ours, support prescribed fire in the surrounding forests to reduce fuel that can lead to a disastrous wildfire, and create a Fireshed or in my old fashioned way, become Firewise in your community, it's the right thing to do!

For more information of Firewise or Fireshed contact us at www.info.crced@gmail.com.

**RC&D**  
Frank Riley  
Executive Director



## Letters to The Editor

### The Blame Game

Dear Editor,  
Is anyone else sick and tired of the blame game that occurs every time a crisis happens or a mistake is made by government officials? This petty bickering is not helping to identify the sources of the many problems that are plaguing our nation. If we can't do that, how are we going to achieve workable solutions? A white police officer kneels for over eight minutes on a black suspect's neck, killing him while other officers watch. The mayor is a Democrat. He must be responsible. Really? Racism isn't limited to cities and simplistic rationalizations do not solve complex problems. This year we are facing a series of crises the likes of which my generation has never seen. The most deadly isn't even human, and yet we can't unite to fight it effectively. It is time to put our many prejudices aside and work together if we want to build a better future for ourselves, our families, our communities and all of the American people.

David Best

### Anxious but not Frightened

Dear Editor,  
When I received the June 10 edition of the Herald, I nearly threw up on the front page when I saw the photo of the so-called "protesters". I prefer the term "rabble-rousers". It would be interesting to know which ones had their rights violated in Hiawassee, and how. Mine have been violated since I can watch only TV programs that are approved by Blacks - wonder where that will lead?  
When I returned home from Vietnam on my rotation date with some serious combat injuries, I was in a cast and on crutches. Further, I was in uniform, ribbons and all. We returnees were aware of the riots and that we might be spitted on. When I changed planes in Dallas, I was a bit anxious but not frightened. The folks were all respectful and courteous. I said to myself, "These are the great Texans I left a year ago".

I know this script will draw a great deal of criticism from the "rabble-rousers" and liberals, however, on the other hand, I have a feeling there are a host of silent, law-abiding citizens that agree with what I've said. I love this country and I resent the Blacks promoting anarchy. To those reading this, you think I would sign it "Anonymous". No way - I am not ashamed.

Lt. Col. C. Dale Sissell USAF (Ret.)

### To Move Forward

Dear Editor,  
A couple of weeks ago, nearly 60 demonstrators in Young Harris showed their support for the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. I am grateful to live in a country where people like Dr. Slavkin and Ms. Harkins from Young Harris College are free to voice their opinions without fear of government oppression for what they say. However, they should know that the BLM organization does not share the view that individuals should be able to speak their minds if their viewpoints disagree with the organization's officially accepted policy stances. BLM seeks to further divide people according to skin color, and to compel people to speak and act as that organization mandates. One of its founders, Alicia Garza, openly states that, "we must view this epidemic through a lens of race, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity." Another founder, Patrisse Cullors, openly advocates for eliminating police departments.

To move forward we do not eliminate racism by engaging in more of it, nor by embracing organizations and causes which seek to divide us.

Tim Groza

## Towns County Herald

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