

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Long Overdue

Finally American heroes of whom many of us who have served in uniform consider Veterans acquire only a piece of what they deserve! On March 14th of this year our Commander-in Chief, President Donald Trump signed legislation authorizing the Congressional Gold Medal for American Merchant Mariners whose honorable deeds and sacrifices were beyond a shadow of a doubt or any argument responsible for our America and our Allies saving the world from the aggression of those possessed of evil ideologies. American Sovereignty, strength, and prosperity would not and could not be preserved without these Merchant Mariners who are often forgotten and mostly ignored and overlooked. From a national article and only enthusiastically quoted by me:

In an opinion piece published in the New York Post on Saturday, March 14, Dr. Peter Navarro, Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy, wrote, "Let this Congressional Gold Medal not only celebrate some of the most unsung heroes of World War II; let it also reawaken our interest in promoting U.S.-flagged ships and credentialed merchant seamen and strengthening our shipyards and broader defense industrial base. Such a result would be a truly lasting tribute to those World War II merchant mariners who defended freedom then and a broad salute to our future merchant mariners who will defend us in the tomorrows to come."

"We applaud this bipartisan action that honors these extraordinary American heroes," said Mike Roberts, President of the American Maritime Partnership. "Since the earliest days of our nation's existence, America has relied on a strong domestic maritime capability. During World War II, almost 250,000 merchant mariners transported tens of millions of tons of war supplies and more than seven million servicemen under the most challenging circumstances imaginable. Their actions were heroic and courageous yet second nature to them. We all owe these heroes a debt of gratitude that can never be fully repaid."

It breaks my heart that ALL these fine Americans are not rewarded with Veteran status that our brothers and sisters of the other five branches of uniform military service are entitled to. As well as holding them to the same standards that those of us with Honorable Discharges are held to. By golly, Merchant Mariners EARNED IT, then as they do today! Almost 250,000 hard working, merchant mariners, at extreme personal risk transported tens of millions of tons of supplies in support of more than seven million servicemen. Merchant Marines suffered the HIGHEST PER CAPITA CASUALTY RATE in the US Armed forces during WWII! One Mariner out of every 26 lost their lives. Another 12,000 were wounded. As a result only those who served in the Merchant Marines in WWII are offered Veteran status.

This needs to be addressed and changed for those who unselfishly serve our United States of America, our Sovereign Republic! Our domestic maritime industry is the single commercial source or mariners for National Security in a very dangerous world.

*Semper Paratus*

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



## Watch for Snakes

I loaded up the truck and headed down the road the other day to do some property maintenance. I was carrying a tool bag and a socket set, a steel tamping rod and half a bag of Sackrete for straightening up some road signs. I had a gas string trimmer with a container of fuel and a few bottles of Gatorade.

About ten minutes into the job I discovered I needed a metal shim. That's the way we roll in the country. We do a lot of jobs that require adaptability as much as precision, so back down the road I went.

As I pulled up into the driveway I slowed down when I saw something shiny and black stretched across my path. It was Irving, the friendly neighborhood Black Racer who catches mice around the barn. We exchanged greetings as I walked by on my way to the shop to get the shim and wait for him to exit the driveway.

I'm not an expert on snake logic, so I have no idea why Irving decided to reverse course and park himself under my truck. Maybe he liked the shade, but the sun was creeping higher in the sky and I prefer to carry a gas powered trimmer under more acute angles of illumination. I went back to the shop to get the leaf blower to see if that might convince Irving to move along.

I peeked under the truck and before I could pull the trigger on the leaf blower, I saw Irving climbing up to position himself somewhere on top of the axle. The first beads of sweat began to form under my hat.

We'll pause right here to have a word with a few of you who mumbled something about "running over that snake" when I first saw him. Irving is one of God's creatures too, and a valuable mouse and copperhead-eating part of our ecosystem. If you're the kind of person who runs over every snake he sees, stay off my road. We might be friends, but you're not getting invited to the barbecue.

It was obvious that the sun was going to insist on moving higher in the sky, so I dragged out the garden hose to see if a little cold water would convince Irving to move along. After about 10 minutes, the undercarriage of the truck was very clean but Irving was still out of sight.

The truck was blocking the driveway, so I popped it into neutral and pushed it into the shade and out of the way. Then I proceeded to transfer all of my tools into the back of the van. With a few select Parseltongue investives for Irving, I headed back down the road to finish my chores. A few hours later, sun soaked and thirsty, I backed the van into the driveway and proceeded to unload. As I carried the last tool back to the shop I glanced at the truck in time to see Irving drop onto the ground and head purposefully toward the barn. "Thanks for helping me work on my tan this morning, old buddy!" I said to him.

Personally, I've never seen the Serpent of the Bible as a snake. Snakes don't traffic in apples, or pomegranates, which is a more likely fruit for that part of the world. If the forbidden fruit was knowledge, however, all bets are off.

The Cherokee, according to my old friend known as Black Moon Turtle, had a different view of snakes. According to Turtle, snakes were seen, not as signs of evil, but as harbingers of change. I don't know if that's historically true or not. Every medicine man has his own ideas, but it's a safe bet in a world that changes as much as hours, and any reminder to watch our step is good advice.

Perhaps's Irving's message was a reminder to know when to accept change. The oldest and most enduring wisdom is in agreement on that. Eastern traditions hold that, while change often causes pain, it is the resistance to change that causes suffering. Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us that "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."

I think Irving dropped by to remind us how to navigate this time of extraordinary and unavoidable change. So far, we're doing well here at home. While we don't exactly embrace all the changes (we're not snake huggers, in case you were wondering), we're learning to accept them.

For example, the number of times we eat out is a fraction of what it used to be, but we have a lot more money because of that, and much to my wife's delight, I've discovered a new interest in cooking. My shepherd's pie last week was outstanding, and by the way, Jamie Oliver is a great friend to guys who like to eat well but don't like to spend a lot of time in the kitchen.

In the combination of more time and fewer or slower services, we're also finding opportunities to do more things ourselves rather than paying to have them done. I replaced the carburetor, fuel pump and idler arms on the DR mower myself, rather than taking it to be repaired. I'm building the chickens a veritable palace to live in this winter. We're enjoying more fresh produce harvested from the garden, and we've both gotten more fit this summer rather than wearing out the upholstery on the couch.

Also, the shortages and criminally high prices at the grocery have inspired us to seek out new sources of food and supplies locally and online, and we've found better quality at the same or even lower price.

Some of this is not good news for restaurants and other businesses that depend on doing things for people that they don't have time or inclination to do for themselves. Much of our economy has been built on monetizing distractions for those of us who are hurried and worried, and gratification for those of us who are lazy. Change, for these enterprises, will continue to be painful.

However, we can already observe the enterprises that have accepted or embraced unavoidable change. New ideas are popping up every day. A healthy economy and a vigorous society must allow for creative destruction, and for this time in our lives, the myths of the Cherokee and the wisdom of Irving seem much more useful than the myths and incantations of politics.

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

## Lawn Planting

Tall Fescue is the type of grass that I recommend the most often for lawns. However, it is a cool season perennial. That means that its management is going to be different from warm season perennials like bermudagrass or St. Augustine grass. Let's talk about seeding tall fescue for a lawn because we are approaching the time of year when it's appropriate to seed it.

Tall fescue is a perennial grass, meaning that you don't need to reseed your lawn with it every year. However, if you seeded tall fescue in the spring you will need to reseed it. Because tall fescue is a cool season grass, it doesn't like the heat. If it's not well established, the summer heat will kill it. That's why I recommend planting it in mid-September. Planting in mid-September will give it time to establish throughout the fall and spring before going through the heat of July and August.

There are a number of varieties of tall fescue available. Usually when you buy a bag of tall fescue seed it will have several different

varieties in that bag. This is a good thing because the different strengths and weaknesses of each variety are able to cover for each other. Kentucky 31 variety is the old standard for tall fescue. However, there are many new hybrids, which are much better for lawns.

One of the reasons that I like tall fescue for our area is that it has some of the best shade tolerance. With the amount of trees that we have, shade is often a limiting factor to plant growth. Creeping red fescue is actually a different species from tall fescue but it has even better shade tolerance than tall fescue. These grasses will still struggle in deep shade. What they have is a tolerance of shade, meaning they still prefer full sun, but can take some shade.

When planting tall fescue it is important to prepare the soil first. Taking a soil test and bringing it to your County Extension Office (67 Lakeview Circle Hiawassee or 165 Wellborn St Blairsville) will give you a lot of information about your soil. You'll get fertilizer recommendations and lime recommendations specific to your soil from a soil test.

Before planting till and incorporate all the lime and fertilizer that is recommended on your soil test. Incorporate the lime and fertilizer into the top 3 to 4 inches, or deeper if possible, of the soil. Ideally, you want to seed 5-6 pounds of seed per 1000 ft<sup>2</sup>. After seeding rake the seed into the top quarter inch of the soil with a hard rake. If the seed goes too deep, it will struggle to germinate. Apply straw mulch on top of the soil. This will help to conserve moisture in the soil and keep your seed from being washed away. Ideally, you want to keep the top 2 inches of soil moist, but not wet for the first 3 weeks. After that just water once a week if there is no rainfall.

Start out cutting tall fescue at 2 inches as the grass matures you can raise the height to 2.5 to 3 inches. In areas of shade, it's better to let the grass grow a little taller to give it a better chance to compete with weeds.

If you have questions about a tall fescue lawn contact your County Extension Office or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).

**UGA extension**  
**Watching and Working**  
Jacob Williams



## Letters to The Editor

### What, exactly?

Dear Editor,

Now that Sleepy Joe Biden has selected his "historical" vice presidential running mate in Kamala Harris, we discover that she is actually more radical than Bernie Sanders. So what exactly does she stand for with respect to the important issues of the day? Well, she supports decriminalizing illegal immigration, rejects building a wall on the southern border and has compared ICE to the KKK. She supports government-run health care for illegal immigrants while at the same time promoting the elimination of private health care. She co-sponsors the radical new deal and is against the currently achieved goal of energy independence. She wants to repeal President Trump's tax cuts for the middle class while increasing taxes on all Americans. She supports tax payer funded abortion, including infanticide. As anyone can see, if Republicans lose the upcoming November elections there will be a takeover of the radical left nationwide. Just look at the demise of New York, with Democrats in control. This is what one-party rule could look like in Washington if we don't fight hard for the country that we love, and fight hard for the country that we want.

Tim Groza

### Rolling My Eyes

Dear Editor,

Reading the letter from the person (presumably a Democrat) alarmed about the deferment of the payroll tax, I just had to roll my eyes. Imagine a Democrat complaining about "using your money to buy votes"! That ALL they seem to do (free college, free this, free that). It seems over the past 4 years the Dems have made it a strategy of accusing Trump of doing the very things of which they are guilty themselves.

First of all, anyone thinking the Social Security trust fund is just NOW being threatened after decades of mismanagement is living in la la land. The proposed deferment of the payroll tax is intended to help the economy and boost employment. After all, when people aren't working, they're not paying any taxes, are they? Trump knows what he's doing with respect to the economy, among other things. Remember his policies have done more to put people to work than his previous president. The pandemic is a disaster not of his making. We will recover from it, with God's help.

The letter writer also seems unconcerned about the Democrat promise of "Medicare for all", including illegal aliens, and all the other "buying votes with your money" programs they support.

We should not be fooled by these falsehoods and distortions we hear from the left wing politicians and their cohorts in the media.

Jim Soltys

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## Who Packs Your Parachute?

Here is an article I found in Southern Loggin' Times that proves these thoughts and caught my attention. "Back in the 1960s there was an officer, Captain Charlie Plumb, who flew jet fighters off the aircraft carrier the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk. Charles Plumb was a US Navy jet pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile.

Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and he spent 6 years in a cruel communist Vietnamese prison before being released. He survived the ordeal and went on to lecture on lessons learned from that experience.

One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!" "How in the world did you know that?" asked Plumb. "I packed your parachute," the man replied.

Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man pumped his hand and said, "I guess it worked!" Plumb assured him, "I'm sure did. If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today." They reminisced about their service those many years ago.

And when Charlie went back to his room, he couldn't sleep that night, thinking about that man. Charlie later said "I kept wondering what he had looked like in a Navy uniform: a white hat, a bib in the back, and bell-bottom trousers. I wonder how many times I might have seen him and not even said 'Good morning, how are you?' or anything, because, you see, I was a fighter pilot . . . and he, well he was just a sailor."

Charlie thought of the many hours the sailor had spent at a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands each time the fate of someone he didn't know, with the understanding that most likely, the parachute would never be used, yet there was always the chance.

Now Plumb asks his audiences, "Who's packing your parachute?" Everyone has someone who provides what they need to make it through the day. He also points out that he needed many kinds of parachutes when his plane was shot down over enemy territory. He needed his physical parachute, his mental parachute, his emotional parachute, and his spiritual parachute. He called on all these supports before reaching safety.

Sometimes in the daily challenges that life gives us, we miss what is important. We may fail to say help, please, or thank you, congratulate someone on something wonderful that has happened to them, give a compliment or just do something nice for no reason.

As you go through this week, this month, this year, recognize people who pack your parachutes. You never know which one of these "Packers" might turn out to be important in our lives. No high and mighty person got there on his or her own but had many "Packers" pushing them to the top, and they can let them go just as easily.

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