

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Interesting Facts: Vietnam War

President Richard Nixon: "No event in history is more misunderstood than the Vietnam War."

It was misreported then, and it is misremembered now. Rarely have so many people been so wrong about so much.

Never have the consequences of their misunderstanding been so tragic."

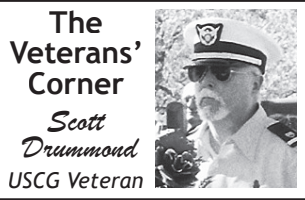
There's never going to be enough time or effort for the apologies and distinct honors that need to be offered up to our Vietnam era Veterans, especially those who served in Southeast Asia during that tumultuous period. Fact is the very class of folks who started that war, our establishment political class, are the exact same ones who set our magnificent military men and women up for failure, here at home, and hatred by our misinformed American public. For better or worse, President Nixon got our men and women out of that war. The whole thing was mismanaged by the politics of that day, in concert with our elitist Hollywood types and the media. Our men and women in uniform did what they have always done and what they always will do, the very best they can with what they have.

A popular myth was/is that most American soldiers were addicted to drugs, guilt ridden about serving in the war, and were inhumane. Facts: Ninety-one percent of our Vietnam Veterans were glad they served. Seventy-four percent said they would serve again even with the hindsight of the outcome we now know. And very interesting is the fact that there is no difference in drug usage between Vietnam Veterans and civilians of the same age group, per a Veterans Administration study.

Fact: isolated incidences of atrocities committed by our news media who mostly ignored those who committed war crimes and atrocities every day. That would be the enemy our men and women sought to defeat, the Communists. Our soldiers and war fighters were also restricted by some very suicidal, politically correct, ROE (Rules of Engagement) which are self-defeating, for the purpose of winning and ending a war. Those rules cost men's lives, some of our nation's best.

Did you know this? Vietnam Vets are less likely to be in prison, only one half of one percent has ever been jailed for crimes. And ninety-seven percent of our Vietnam Veterans were discharged under honorable conditions. Plus eighty-five percent of our Vietnam Veterans successfully transitioned back to civilian life. Vietnam Veterans personal income went on to exceed incomes of non-veterans of the same age group by 18%. Very importantly Vietnam Veterans have a lower unemployment rate than the same age group of those who never served! Lastly, and another not highly published fact, not opinion, is that eighty-seven percent of Americans hold Vietnam Vets in high esteem. Being a Vietnam Era Vet myself, and knowing many who served all over our globe, these facts coincide with what I have known of these wonderful men and women.

Semper Paratus



The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran

The Smell of Smoke

Christmas will come early this year when the rains begin to fall again on our beloved and beleaguered mountains. Fire destroys without discrimination, and the twisted black shapes in the areas that burned the hottest will defy for a time our memories of what was lush and green. The tenacious life that blanketed the coves and clung to the steepest slopes has yielded to smoke and ash, and the long sleep of winter will seem even deeper in those places where all the green has gone.

In Greek mythology the Phoenix was a long lived bird that died consumed by flames, but was soon reborn from the ashes. Winter rains will soak into our mountains, carrying a promise of new life in the dissolved nutrients they bring. The pH of the soil will rise along with the alkalinity of the streams, mitigating some of the harm done by years of acid rains. Spring will be lush with renewed growth, and animal populations will thrive.

There is wisdom for all to read in the open book of Nature's cycles of life. There are lessons to be learned in all hardship. We dwellers on the mountains from Georgia to the Virginias have been given an object lesson in what is truly important.

A spell was broken when the fires broke out and our attention was forcibly wrested from the mind numbing and soul scratching babble of politicians and professional talkers. Our thoughts and fears, consumed by the sound and fury of orchestrated drama; our imaginations corralled by celebrity circus acts, began to focus again on our families, our neighbors, and our communities.

Those of us who confronted real threat, experienced actual drama and faced potential annihilation in the flames will long remember what we did together to face these challenges. But as we move deeper into the holiday season and the political season attempts to follow us like something unsuccessfully scraped from the bottom of our shoes, the clamor for our attention will grow louder. The talkers will talk, the celebrities will perform and the politicians will posture as they all attempt to reach through our hearts and minds and into our wallets.

But some of us know better now, and the smell of smoke will remind us when we begin to forget.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Crop Rotation

Though we may not need to plant our gardens for several months, these cold fall and winter days are the perfect time to start planning for next year's crop. Many of us have a few plants that we're particularly fond of and grow every year: tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, corn, and so many more. While it is no problem to plant your favorite vegetables every year, planting them in the same areas can lead to pest and soil issues, so it is important to plan out a rotation strategy well before it is time to plant.

Crop rotation is one of the most important aspects of maintaining good production. Many of the vegetables that do well in our area are closely related, and planting crops from the same family in the same plot every year can lead to a multitude of issues. To design your rotation scheme, you need to first determine what you want to grow, and if any of those plants are in the same family. Peppers, tomatoes, potatoes and eggplants are all "solanaceous" plants belonging to the nightshade family. Cabbage, kale, broccoli and Brussels sprouts are all in the cabbage family. Cucumbers, squash, and pumpkins are all cucurbits, and peas, beans and peanuts are legumes. These are just some of the main groupings that are important to rotate. There are many more depending on how varied you want your garden to be.

Rotating your crops helps immensely with both disease management and soil nutrition. Closely related plants are often susceptible to the same diseases. Even though one year you may plant tomatoes in a row and potatoes in that row the next year, your potatoes will likely have the same diseases and pests your tomatoes had. This is because despite planting a different crop, the plants are still closely related so you did not truly rotate your garden. Plants in the same family also have similar nutrient requirements. Planting different groups of vegetables in different plots every year allows the soil to replenish some nutrients as others are used up. Some crops, such as legumes, condition the soil by adding nitrogen. You should always wait at least three years before planting a vegetable family in the same spot.

Your crop rotation plan can be as simple or complex as you want. Many home gardeners divide their gardens into sub plots that are rotated every three to four years, leave it fallow after harvest, and plant again in spring. However, introducing cover crops such as clover or rye while your plots are unused can prevent erosion and add nutrients back into the soil. In the spring, they can also be crimped down to form a weed barrier for your summer and fall crops, or be added into the soil to increase organic matter. You can also introduce companion plants, such as herbs or flowers. These plants increase beneficial insect presence while protecting your crop at the same time. Tall flowers can attract bees and hoverflies, while at the same time provide some much needed shade for sensitive plants such as lettuce. Marigolds and dahlias help prevent nematode establishment, and yarrow repels insects and makes a great addition to compost.

Keeping these tips in mind while you plan out your gardens now will help prevent a lot of problems next year. For more information on any of these topics, contact the extension office.



From the Ground Up
Melissa Mattee

Wildfire wake-up call

Our North Georgia and Western North Carolina mountain views have become smoky and hazy these days, and on Code Red days we're told to stay inside, run our ACs, and breathe the filtered air. At this time, dozens of fires throughout WNC and North Georgia have burned more than 80,000 acres of forest since mid-October. Among the largest are the Tellico fire, Maple Springs fire, Boteler fire, Party Rock fire, Rock Ridge fire, and Cohutta wilderness fire.

From the standpoint of ecology, fire is a long-overdue natural process on many mountain slopes, and these fires will benefit an array of species. But these fires are a prime example that there can be too much of a good thing. These wildfires burn fast, and are difficult to fight. They come at a time of extreme drought, when weather conditions push and hold the smoke around our mountain valleys. Businesses that depend on tourism and outdoor recreationalists are suffering. Homes are being evacuated.

Because of the sheer quantity of fire, and the weather conditions they are burning in, the smoke is staying close to the ground and causing major health impacts. Code-red air quality days have been called around the region from Atlanta to Kentucky. Code-red means that it is not safe for anyone particularly elderly, children, and those with breathing ailments, to be outside for extended periods. As the season progresses, even fires that have little activity could flare back up as dry, falling leaves drop onto smoldering hot-spots.

Ironically, another part of the problem is that there hasn't been enough of the right kind of fire. The fires that are raging through our region now are so difficult to stop in part because they are moving through dry, dense vegetation that hasn't burned in 50 - 100 years. Another benefit of controlled burns is that they are planned in weather conditions where smoke is lifted high into the atmosphere. This fire season should be a wake-up call. The frequency and severity of droughts and wildfires are sure to increase. People are generally adaptable, and our communities can adapt to the changing conditions if we take collective action. On our public lands, efforts like the Grandfather NC Restoration Project show a way forward. By returning fire to the mountain slopes and ridges where it was historically common before we started suppressing it, we can reduce dangerous fuel loads and improve plant communities and wildlife habitat at the same time.

Communities must become "Firewise" by adopting building and landscaping practices that reduce the risk of fire to our homes, and discouraging construction and development where fire risks are high - steep slopes, dry ridges, and rocky areas. It is extremely difficult to fight fire on steep slopes, and when firefighters attempt to save homes in steep terrain it puts their lives in jeopardy.

There is a growing awareness that we need to live within our means and maintain an appropriate relationship with the natural world. If we don't plan for the changes ahead, the next drought will be worse: bigger crop failures, more severe fires, more economic losses and mounting human suffering.

If we don't prepare, we have no one to blame but ourselves. We can all do our part by continually maintaining our property to reduce the risk of wildfire which will minimize property damage when a wildfire approaches. We have been telling you for years that it's not a matter of IF a wildfire happens but WHEN and the when is now. Are you prepared for the approaching wildfire that could be just over the ridge and headed your way!

For more information on Firewise and other wildfire preparation programs, contact Frank Riley, Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council at www.info.ccrd@gmail.com.



RC&D
Frank Riley
Executive Director

Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor:

Why must you print photos as well as go into graphic details and demerits of car wrecks and scenes and etc.?

It is bad enough to grieve over the loss, but a week or so later, just as the grieving process kind of gets to the calming point, it resurfaces again as loved ones pick up a newspaper, and see it splattered within.

It is bad enough to read the obituary as well but we can do without the graphics. A simple photo of the victim while still alive and just simple details about the accident or what ever is sufficient enough without going in to the full extreme.

Brittany was our neighbor here, and we loved her very much and dearly. We watched her grow up in to a beautiful young lady.

Please be kind hearted and more considerate about future publications like this. Remember that is some one's loved one!

*Thank You and Sincerely,
Delores Barnes*

GUEST COLUMNS

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

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.

Have something to sell?

Let the Herald work for you!



Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday by 5 PM • 706-896-4454



"And here's another batch wanting you to change your electoral vote."

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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Bridge Players	Village Condos Clubhouse	12:30 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
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Mtn. Amat. Radio	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	6:30 pm
Alzheimer's Supp.	McConnell Church	1:30 pm
American Legion	VFW Post 7807	4 pm
Hiaw. City Council	City Hall	5:30 pm
Young Harris Coun.	YH City Hall	7 pm
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
Stephens Lodge	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
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
Humane Shelter Bd.	Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

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Towns County Herald

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