

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

In His Own Words

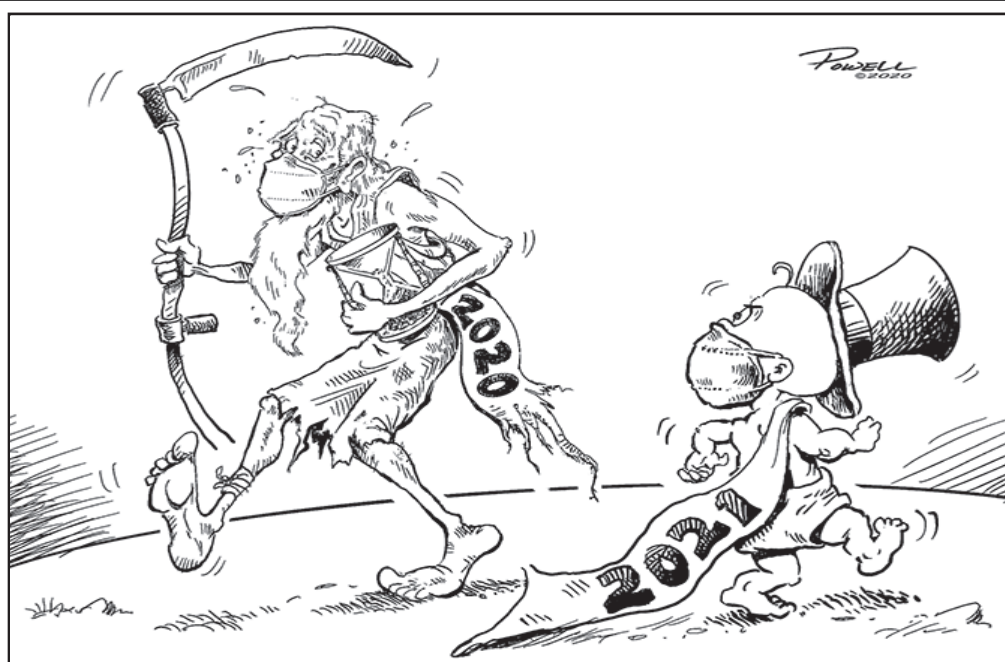
In combat situations, you get very close to your buddies. And you learn whom you can count on and whom you can't. You learn quickly that you cannot count on every soldier in your platoon to "jump in the fight" with you. Some will just cower down and try just to protect themselves. But, some will also die for you if they had to and you know who they are.

I lost several buddies on my tour from sniper fire, booby traps, and mines. They were either killed or severely injured.

One day on patrol, my best buddy, Grover Cash was walking point and I was behind him about 30 yards. He hit a booby trap and lost both legs and part of his left hand. I got hit in the left arm by some shrapnel from the booby trap, which is still in my arm. We called in a medevac they got him to the MASH unit for treatment. I can recall several incidents such as this. Plus when you load up your buddy on a medevac and they take off with him, you never see him again. This really messes with your mind. There were several more incidents such as this but I guess this one affected me the most because he was my best buddy. I could go on with several more incidents that took the life of some of my buddies or incidents where they were severely injured. After my 12-month tour of duty in Vietnam, I caught the "freedom bird" back to the good ole USA. They flew us to Guam, then to Alaska and then into Ft. Louis, Washington. At Ft. Louis, we were allowed to shower and clean up, put on new dress uniform and then they took us to the mess hall and they had every kind of food that you could want and you could eat all of it that you wanted. It was wonderful. I remember that I ate 13 fried eggs. They were so good. Then they pulled us into a big conference room and a major came in to talk to us. He told us that when you get to the airport on the bus, protestors will meet you and they will not be friendly at all. They will call you all kind of names. The police will be there to prevent them from throwing rocks, bottles, etc., at you as best they can but just be observant. Sure enough, when we got off the bus at the airport, there they were. We could not believe it. We made our way into the airport and the people in the airport were not that friendly either. This was the first time that I ever felt dirty in my own country. In the airport there was a small clothing store that I went into and bought me a shirt and a pair of pants. I went into the restroom, got out of my uniform and put on the clothes that I had bought. I placed my uniform in my duffel bag.

Continued, next week.

- Semper Paratus



The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



Dancing Around the Square

My father used the expression, "on the square" to indicate something that was open and honest. It's an old expression, rooted in freemasonry.

It was one of the guiding principles of his life, and in fact it was a hallmark of his generation.

That generation, however, did not live their lives in the two dimensional black and white images we see in old movies. Like every generation, the young endeavored to push against and reshape the boundaries of convention.

Dad loved to dance. He learned to square dance in high school and went often to the John Campbell Folk School where he competed in and won many dance contests. Square dancing is a stylized form of dancing which depends on a rigorous adherence to form.

But in music, as in all human pursuits, adherence to form diminishes as boundaries are pushed out when people think outside the box and color outside the lines. In the 1940s when Dad was in his 20s, swing music became popular. Swing pushed out the boundaries of popular music with its emphasis on improvisation.

In 1944, the war with Japan raged in the South Pacific and Dad was a young seaman waiting to ship out for the first time. All his soon-to-be shipmates were confined to base as their deployment was imminent, and my father's character was of the "lawful good" persuasion, another hallmark of his generation. There was no reason for him to even consider leaving the base.

However, if there was one thing that could possibly supersede his natural self-discipline, it was loyalty to a friend. His buddy had managed to enter a dance contest in town in an effort to impress a girlfriend, and he begged Dad to be his wingman. Loyalty to a friend, dance, and the rumor that Tommy Dorsey would be performing were just too much for him to resist.

Here's where the story takes a fateful turn. Dad's friend and his partner won the dance contest, and the whole party had their pictures taken by a local newspaper, which just happened to be read by the base commander on Sunday morning.

As you might expect, he was...curious...as to how two sailors could get their pictures in the paper when everyone was confined to base.

The Navy was not inclined to waste two freshly trained and badly needed sailors, and Dad's forthrightness probably didn't hurt his cause, so the two dancing fools were not confined to the brig, but they were confined to their barracks while their case was adjudicated.

The Navy made some last minute personnel changes and Dad and his buddy were assigned to another ship. Dad's original ship was deployed without him.

A few weeks later that ship was sunk by a Japanese submarine and all hands were lost. Dad's name was still on the roster, and it was several months before his family knew he was still alive.

They say that history turns on a dime. Personal history pivots on an even smaller axis. I've thought often about the number of factors to which I owe my existence: If Dad didn't love to dance; if he didn't like Tommy Dorsey; if he had never met his friend; if the Commander hadn't read the newspaper that Sunday morning - the amazing luck involved in being given a body to inhabit on this earth is dependent on an infinite number of conditionals.

I've also pondered lately how, as each generation gets older, it is natural to seek comfort in convention. We are less likely to want to test and to push out the boundaries. We are inclined to take fewer risks, just like we are less likely to buy lottery tickets when we're hungry and we've only got \$20 left to buy food. Of course this isn't true for every individual, but for a generation, it is.

For those of us who bother to look for patterns in the cycles of history, a case can be made that when the transfer of responsibility between older and younger generations begins to unfold, there will always be volatility.

The aging generation begins to cling to the box for a sense of safety, and they will wield money and power to protect that box just as the younger generations struggle to push out the boundaries.

Decades may pass during which there is a balance of generations which buffers the more dramatic conflicts, but eventually a nation or even a civilization will reach a point where there are very large groups of people with different values and therefore different goals.

Such is the case today. The aging Boomers are now fewer in numbers than the younger generations, but they have more money, at least for the moment. It is a situation ideal for feeding political conflict.

Compounding that conflict is a mainstream corporate media which profits from seeding conflict and dissent and has little financial incentive for fostering communication and understanding.

If the generations could communicate better, perhaps the older members could remember when they were the ones pushing out the boundaries. Maybe the younger could realize that there is a difference between changing the boundaries and destroying them. This is difficult in an age when our worldly affairs are governed and our imaginations led by libertines and profligates.

There is a balance. A box with no bottom will never hold anything, but a closed container will never hold anything new. A dance that never changes is just another ritual, but without form it's just waving your arms around on the dance floor.

Outside The Box

By: Don Perry
worldoutsidethebox.com

Lake Drawdown

Today I'm going to talk about the lake drawdown. The drawdown happens annually on Lakes Nottely and Chatuge, as well as a bunch of other lakes that are run by Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). I'm going to go through a history of the TVA because, to understand what they do, I think you need to understand what led to their creation. I'll talk about the lakes' drawdown and how that plays into what TVA does.

TVA was started back in 1933 as part of the 'New Deal' from President FDR. TVA was founded with the mission of improving energy, environmental stewardship and economic development in the region.

TVA covers parts of Tennessee, Alabama, Kentucky, Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia. The Tennessee Valley lagged behind the rest of the US in development even before the Great Depression.

The TVA was given authority to acquire land for dams, reservoirs, transmission lines, and power plants. The idea was that these hydroelectric dams would bring affordable electricity and modernize the region. Lake Nottely and Lake Chatuge were constructed in 1942.

The TVA also worked to improve flood control, malaria prevention, reforestation, and erosion control. TVA encouraged farmers to use improved management techniques, like crop rotation. They also produced fertilizers to boost farmers' yields and economic productivity.

One controversial point of the TVA is that creating the dams and reservoirs necessitated relocating around 15,000 families. This included a few towns and several cemeteries.

Today TVA is one of the largest producers of electricity in the US. TVA began to shift away from hydroelectricity towards cheaper coal energy in the 1950s.

Now TVA operates 30 dams or hydroelectric facilities, 8 coal plants, 16 natural gas plants, 3 nuclear plants, 14 solar energy sites, and 1 wind energy site. Even though the hydroelectric dams aren't relied upon as heavily for electric production, they are critical for flood regulation.

Prior to TVA, the Tennessee Valley was regularly devastated by flooding. The flooding would take lives and ruin land. The system of dams and reservoirs that TVA constructed are designed to keep floods under control. Wintertime carries the largest risk for flooding. To prepare for that TVA begins to lower the lakes at a faster rate after Labor Day. Then when a winter storm hits the reservoirs can hold the water back. Once the danger of flooding is subsided, the water is released gradually.

In the summer time, TVA lets the lakes stay fuller to support recreation. By Mid-march the threat of flood producing conditions has largely passed and so tributary reservoirs are filled. The main reservoirs are filled beginning in late April or early May. During the summer, a small amount of lake capacity is saved to protect against flood producing storms.

Lake Nottely was built to reduce flooding in Chattanooga. Nottely and Chatuge were originally built to regulate the water flowing to the Hiwassee dam, which generates electricity. In the 1950s, each lake had a hydroelectric generator added so that electricity could be produced.

The history of TVA is a very interesting one. TVA has been controversial since their inception, but its impact on the region is undeniable.

There is a lot of information regarding lake levels on the TVA website (tva.com). The lakes are closely monitored by multiple organizations for a litany of standards. If you have questions about lake drawdown, you can check out the TVA website, contact your County Extension Office, or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

UGA extension
Watching and Working
 Jacob Williams



Community Wildfire Protection Plan

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is a written document that a community uses to prepare for emergencies that require local resources to protect community infrastructure. A CWPP is a document that lays out resources available for any emergency. Updates to the document are necessary and important that local authorities are familiar with the document so when disaster strikes there will be a plan. A CWPP is designed through collaboration between state and local fire agencies, homeowners, and interested stakeholders. The plan implements the community's values and serves to protect natural and community resources and public safety. Planning also enables communities to address their development patterns in the Wildland Urban Interface and determine how they can reduce their risk through alternative development patterns. The plan includes prioritized recommendations for the appropriate types and methods of fuel reduction and structure ignitability reduction that will protect the community's essential infrastructure. Specifically, the plan includes community-centered actions that will: Educate citizens on wildfire, and ways to protect lives and property; Support fire rescue and suppression entities; Focus on collaborative decision-making and citizen participation; and Develop and implement effective mitigation strategies. CWPP's are updated approximately every five years in conjunction with the county Hazard Mitigation Plan. Additionally, communities with Community Wildfire Protection Plans in place will be given priority for funding of hazardous fuels reduction projects carried out under the auspices of the HFRA. Fires are usually costlier to suppress in the wildland-urban interface—the areas where homes are intermixed with forests and wildlands. Debris burning in the WUI is the most frequent human cause of wildfires, but these human-caused fires can be prevented, and the excessive cost of fire suppression reduced. The first step in wildfire prevention education is to raise awareness of the responsibilities of living in a fire-prone environment. The CWPP collaborative process is effective in improving coordination and communication between emergency response agencies and the community. The goal of protecting communities and natural resources from wildfire cannot be accomplished by any one person or entity so we must work together to identify and pursue a pathway to success thru collaboration. Collaboration is simply people working together to address a shared problem that no one of them could effectively resolve alone. Each participant brings to the effort knowledge, skills, ideas, and resources, and these decision-makers need to stay actively engaged throughout the collaborative process, and the other participants need to know what the collaborative group's "decision space" is and how much weight its recommendations will carry with the decision-makers. The use of a collaborative process is one of the requirements that Congress established for a CWPP. Developing and adopting a CWPP opens the door to significant local community benefits, including being able to: 1) define and set the boundaries of the community's WUI; 2) identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel-reduction treatments on USFS lands in the WUI; 3) recommend the types and methods of treatment to be used; and 4) influence how federal funds for projects on non-federal WUI lands may be obtained. Additionally, the collaboration should stimulate or strengthen local efforts to reduce structural ignitability, enhance emergency management and communication, and foster public education and action to reduce wildfire risk to life and property.

RC&D
Frank Riley
 Executive Director



The Towns County Firewise Citizen's Coalitions makes this happen and creates a sense of ownership among the members and takes the process to the people to help them protect themselves and their property from wildfire.

For more information on CWPP contact Frank Riley at info.ccrd@gmail.com

Letters to The Editor

Mining Gap Road Intersection

Dear Editor,

Attending recent recreation basketball games has called something to my attention that is concerning.

The Mining Gap Road intersection, being so close to the Highway 17/515 intersection, is becoming more and more difficult and dangerous. With Foster Park having become such an important part of our community, something must be done about traffic there before someone dies or critically injures himself/herself in a MVA.

I would recommend that if at all feasible, Mining Gap Road be moved to connect with the stoplight intersection at 17/515, along with an extension of Foster Park Rd to Highway 76 on the other side of Young Harris Water Sports. This would ease traffic from all directions of Foster Park.

There may be better ideas than what I have, but I think most would agree with me that something must be done regardless so we can have much safer traffic moving both in and out of there.

Alan Kendall

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:

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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.

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