

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Reason Aplenty to know and Honor our Veterans

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



Someone you or I probably never knew, a former U.S. Air Force Master Sergeant Melvin Rector has suddenly and unexpectedly been called home, his final mission. As Melvin, among other duties was a gunner on Memphis Belle during World War II was visiting the UK, for one last visit to his old stomping grounds, he passed away. 6 May 2016 marked Melvin's last day on earth, at the grand old age of 94. He hadn't been to Britain in 71 years, when he served in our 96th bomb group, flying missions over Europe. His hopes and dreams were being fulfilled as he visited the Battle of Britain bunker in Uxbridge, west London on May 6th. A fine lady who accompanied Melvin stated that all was well, until after he walked out of the bunker, then said he wasn't feeling well, and collapsed and died. He was on his way to fulfill his life's dream to revisit RAF Snetterton Heath in Norfolk, England where he had spent much of his time during World War II. This is now privately owned facility.

However the small simple funeral which was subsequently planned for Melvin was changed by Neil Sherry, a funeral director, when he discovered who Melvin Rector really was and what all he had done, at great risk for his own life in order to save civilization, not the least of which was England. Sergeant Melvin Rector then was honored by those he served 71 years ago, in another country, buried with full military honors and attendees from the RAF, U.S. Air Force and historians. A very special and well deserved occasion, indeed.

Hence, as we all are privileged to know so many of our Veterans who all have interesting stories, and first person history. We need to be aware that we are promised not one more day on this earth, thus learn as much from these special folks as time allows. Don't let their last days on earth dwindle away without talking to them and sharing time of bygone years, so much of which was spent by these men and women for whom we all need to be grateful.

We are all indebted to Bart Rogers, who sent me this short story, and who also served in our U.S. Air Force for over twenty years as a Master Sergeant in EOD. He met and married "Mo", originally from Hiawassee when she was on vacation in Homestead, near one of his base assignments. After USAF life together, being much of the world, Bart and Mo visited the urban myth surrounding Atlanta, and like a lot of us discovered the truth and settled here in Hiawassee. Mo and Bart are now very active at our VFW/American Legion post, volunteering their time and efforts. As active members of our Volunteer Legion Riders, they are also great fundraisers. They are also both very avid but only fairly good golfers. [Ha-ha!]

Semper Paratus

A Vote Diluted

Someone told me recently that a vote for Gary Johnson and Bill Weld in November would be a wasted vote. Sadly, I've heard similar from both democrats and republicans who are prepared to "hold their nose" and vote for their respective candidates, or more accurately, to vote against the candidate of the opposing party. Clinton and Trump are two of the most unpopular candidates to ever lead their parties into a presidential election. Such is the degree to which we have been conditioned to accept the false dilemma of a two party system.

Personally I believe that my vote is already diluted long before the General Election. When the League of Women Voters facilitated debates for presidential campaigns, we got to hear from a variety of different voices addressing a wider range of issues than our habitual election year arguments about abortion and gun control. Republicans and democrats working together excluded most of those other voices by requiring an arbitrary 15% preference in 5 major polls to qualify for the debates, which are almost always hosted by major media, which is 90% owned by the same companies that own the republicans and democrats. The result is a choice analogous to choosing between Putin and Medvedev, or Coke and Pepsi.

Some voters will vote for an odious candidate because they are concerned about the slippery slope of electing a president who MAY appoint a Supreme Court that MIGHT tilt the scales in one direction or another on our habitual divisive election year issues. To me that is a minor concern for two reasons: Supreme Court justices are notoriously independent once they are in office, and the needle will not move much on our inflammatory issues without the participation of Congress.

For many years we Americans have sat in judgment of corruption in third world nations and the electoral shenanigans of "banana republics." This year we were reminded that the United States is not so different. Wikileaks recently published emails obtained from the Democratic National Committee which suggest an intimate level of cooperation between the Clinton Campaign, the DNC and the media to guarantee a Clinton win over Bernie Sanders.

This is not surprising or even overly concerning to anyone who has studied the history of political campaigns, which is rife with examples of malfeasance and underhanded maneuvering. Yes, there is plenty of room for anger and disgust, but by now if you are not aware that we are dealing with people (in both parties) who consider themselves above the law and unbound by convention by virtue of their grand vision, then you haven't been paying attention.

What does concern me is the growing coercive power of the Executive Branch of government, which growth has accelerated from the time of the first Clinton, and is likely to continue with a second, or with a Trump presidency. We have a dangerously powerful Executive office that can unilaterally deal large scale death, whether we call it "war" or not, and often successfully sidestep both the legislative and the judicial processes by the so called "power of the pen."

I think that this election also, and to some degree the Brexit vote as well, are referendums on globalism, or at least the kind of globalism that has been advanced by Clinton, Bush and Obama. The number of people harmed by this amalgamation of corporate and political power far outnumbers the beneficiaries. While a fraction of one percent of us have prospered from NAFTA and the like (read Charles Hugh Smith, Nassim Nicholas Taleb and Bill Bonner if you are interested in the numbers which support that opinion), the vast majority of us have lost ground. Presidential candidates selected by Wall Street, banks that conjure money out of thin air and a Federal Reserve that has imperial, rather than national interests; thirty years of war, countries destroyed and implacable enemies created out of millions of displaced, frightened, angry and desperate people: All of this, every bit of it my friends, was brought to you by democrats and republicans.

There is no criticism here of the ideals held by either party. We need ideals and noble images to which we can aspire. The constitutions and defining documents of the great countries of the world - are full of them, including some of those nations we have traditionally regarded as enemies. But we judge people by their actions, not their words. Unfortunately we seem to have difficulty, especially during election years, applying that wisdom to our own leaders.

Just for a moment, if you can, set aside the words and the campaign promises. Set aside whatever political philosophy you may aspire to. Pretend for just a moment that you are not afraid - afraid of what you have been told will happen if you don't vote for your candidate. Now think for a moment: Thirty years of democrats and republicans. Democrats and republicans in the White House; republicans and democrats in Congress. If you are content, if you are hopeful and if you are satisfied with the direction you think our nation is headed, then go ahead and cast your vote for more of the same.

Most people are not content. Most of us are worried. Many of us are angry. Some of us are afraid. A majority of Americans is dissatisfied, even disgusted, with the choices offered by republicans and democrats at this point in time.

Every vote is a gamble or an investment, perhaps both. This year I choose to invest my vote in a political philosophy which aspires to a less than imperial presidency, which aspires to a decentralization of government, rather than the concentration of power into ever fewer hands. I want to invest my vote in a vision of a government that does not force its participation into every aspect, public and private, of our lives. I will vote Johnson and Weld in November, and feel better about that vote than I have about any vote for quite some time.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Cedar-apple rust

Cedar-apple rust is a fungal infection that affects a variety of apple trees and cedars. It is caused by a fungus with a very complex life cycle that takes almost two years to fully complete. Though it is not all that harmful to native cedar trees, it can cause a lot of fruit and leaf damage to apple trees throughout the summer and fall.

On apple trees, the first symptoms are greenish yellow spots on the upper surface of leaves. Eventually, these turn orange-yellow and are surrounded by red bands and are visible from the underside of the leaf. By summer, the spots on the upper side of the leaves develop black spots which are actually used in reproduction of the fungus. The spots on the undersides develop little hairs, and the area around the spot becomes thickened.

The symptoms of cedars infected with this fungus are much different from apples. Small green-brown galls form on the foliage and grow throughout summer. In the fall, they turn dark brown, become kidney shaped, and grow to about two inches across. The following spring, bright orange tendrils grow out of the galls and produce spores that can affect other cedar and apple trees.

The life cycle of cedar-apple rust is a very complex one. Cedar needles are infected by spores released from lesions on apple trees in the summer. The galls do not appear until the following summer, and even then, it takes several more months until they finally mature the next spring. After a few spring rains, the galls produce large, jelly-like orange tendrils from all sides. This usually happens about the same time that apple blossoms are in the pink stage. Once the tendrils are done growing, the whole gall can reach the size of a baseball. Spores form on the orange tendrils and are distributed on the wind to any surrounding apple trees.

A few weeks later, if it is moist and cool (between 56 and 61 degrees), the spores will infect the apple leaves they land on and yellow rust spots will appear on the upper surface of the leaves. These spots increase in size throughout the summer and eventually become stippled with tiny black dots. These dots are actually reproductive parts of the fungus that produce "spermatia" and release an odor that attracts insects. The insects visit the infected leaves and transfer the spermatia to other spots on the leaf, fertilizing the fungus and allowing it to reproduce. After fertilization, the fungus grows through the leaf and produce hair-like "aecia" on the underside of the foliage. These structures produce spores that will infect cedar needles to begin the entire process all over again.

Though the galls it forms on cedar trees are unsightly, very little damage occurs on these trees from cedar-apple rust. Because of this, it is not necessary to protect cedar trees from a fungicide, though the galls should still be pruned out. However, since the fungus can cause malformed fruit and damage foliage in apples, it is important to protect trees with fungicides throughout the growing season, starting as soon as new shoots form.

It is always easier to prevent a problem than correct it. Scout your property and remove any cedar trees that are close to apple trees. If you have a large stand of native cedars, consider planting fungus-resistant apple varieties such as Red Delicious, Liberty, or McIntosh. Golden Delicious apples are especially susceptible to this disease.

For a publication with pictures of symptoms and a list of resistant and susceptible apple varieties, contact the extension office.



From the Ground Up
Melissa Mattee

Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor,

For what is the real reason and issues, can the school systems not go back to the "old fashioned way", and start school back around the middle of August like it once use to be, giving the kids three full months of Summer Break instead of just two measly months? Not enough to hardly do any thing, and way too hot in July for outside practices and activities.

No wonder so many players and all are collapsing and even dying from heat exhaustion.

*Thank You,
 Delores Barnes*

GUEST COLUMNISTS

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.

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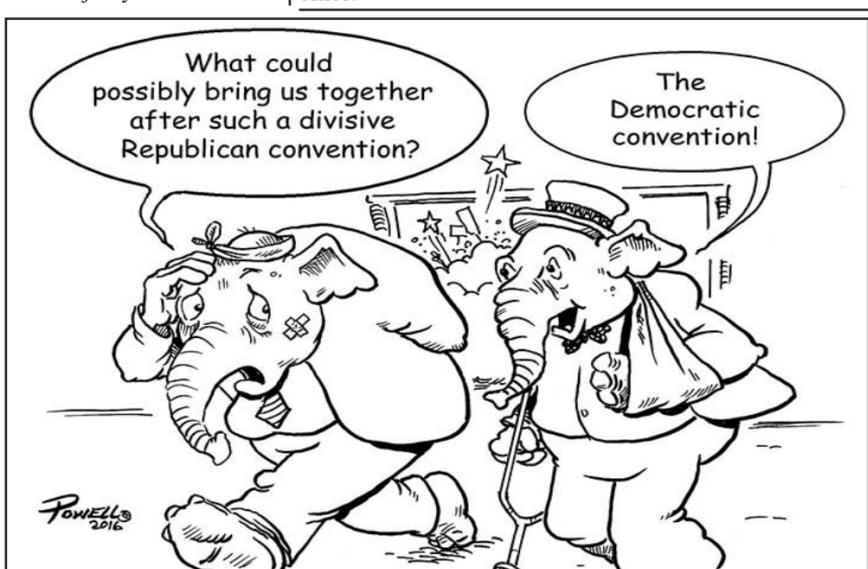


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Bingo	Every Monday: Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
Bridge Players	Village Condos Clubhouse	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Every Tuesday: Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	Every Wednesday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Free GED prep.	Every Thursday: Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Bridge Players	Every Friday: Village Condos Clubhouse	12:30 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Every Sunday: Red Cross Building	7 pm
Mtn. Amat. Radio	First Monday of each month: 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	6:30 pm
Alzheimer's Supp.	First Tuesday of each month: 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	First Wednesday of each month: McConnell Church	10 am
Stephens Lodge	First Thursday of each month: Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Red Cross DAT	Fourth Monday of each month: 1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
Lions Club	Fourth Tuesday of each month: Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Republican Party	Fourth Thursday of each month: New Senior Ctr.	6:30 pm
Square Dance Club	Fourth Friday of each month: Rec. Center	7 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Last Thursday of each month: Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

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