

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

In case you didn't know

Why Marines Being Chosen for High Leadership Positions Eat Last?

By Chris Bolender Capt USMC (Ret.)

America is about to be exposed to some new and extraordinary leadership traits. With Generals Mattis (Defense Secretary), Dunford (Joint Chiefs of Staff), and Kelly (Secretary of Homeland Security) nominated to high positions, the spotlight will be on the Marine Corps and their tribal culture. This means Marine leadership styles, principles, and traits will soon become apparent.

Selfless leadership" will become a leadership buzz term. Americans will soon find out that all three of these gentlemen have one thing in common; they eat last. You will not find a single officer in the Marines who eats before an enlisted Marine. If you do find a Marine in a Marine officer uniform eating first, call the police because this person is a spy. Why is this important? The officer eats last to set precedence that their Marines come first. To understand this, you must know a few things about how the Marine Corps leaders form their bonds with enlisted.

Officers are trained by enlisted. As candidates, they are grounded into Second Lieutenants by enlisted Drill Instructors. If they make it and become officers, enlisted subject matter experts teach them how to shoot, move, and communicate (fight). Once they become platoon commanders, those same enlisted that trained them, will now be under their command. From that point forward, an officer is expected to serve his men and women, not the other way around.

Officers serve their enlisted because they are the ones who are at the tip of the spear on each mission; they provide the guidance that helps them lead. Good senior enlisted leadership will ensure their officers do not fail. Officers rely on their enlisted throughout their entire careers. Each officer in command will have a voice in his or her ears at all times because they have a high ranking enlisted assigned to them.

The Senior Staff Non-Commissioned Officer (SNCO) knows the pulse of the Marines and understands that he is the crucial link to ensuring that all Marines in the unit are trained, ready, and performing well. Each officer is not one man or woman; they are a system, and they are an embodiment of a symbiotic relationship between themselves and their enlisted leaders.

Semper Paratus

The Veterans' Corner

Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran



Hollywood and Politics

An old Hindu proverb suggests that there are three kinds of intelligence. At the highest level, we hear the truth, recognize it as truth, and act on it. This type of intelligence is rare. At the second level of intelligence, we hear the truth but do not believe until we validate it with our own experience. On a good day, this is the level of truth to which most of us aspire. (Much of what passes as wisdom is simply a memory of the mistakes we have made.) There is a third level of intelligence which seems to collect more devotees with each passing year. At this level of understanding, we must repeat our lessons to learn the truth, if we ever do.

We don't think much about Hollywood, and while we do appreciate a good movie from time to time, the film rarely equals the book. Today, however, we notice that some of our beloved celebrities have decided to stay on and fight the good fight rather than leaving the country as promised. Some appear to be struggling with the challenge of third tier intelligence. Either that, or they were so focused on gifting humanity with their unique and irreplaceable talent that the whole of 2016 went by unnoticed.

In case you missed it, a group of celebrities is calling for a general strike in Hollywood to protest the Trump Administration. Longtime readers will know that we could go in several directions with this bit of information from the standpoint of logical fallacy alone. We might discuss how currently there is no "Trump Administration," so any protest would have to be against the things we think Trump "might" do in the future on the always slippery slope of prognostication. However, judging from the overall tone of the election hangover among certain parties, I think we are dealing here with the tried and true Straw Man Fallacy, where we build a facsimile of our opponent embedded with flaws that are open to attack.

Let me say now that this is not a defense of the ugly things Trump has said in the past, but if we hold everyone to the same standards then most candidates and indeed, most of the presidents in living memory could also be labeled as racist, misogynist, etc., etc. The foul mouths and hateful words of Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton and yes, Hillary Clinton are all a matter of record. We all say things in anger or in moments of weakness that we would not choose to own, but we prefer to remember our leaders, and we prefer to be remembered, for the words and actions that are owned. I did not support Trump, the candidate, but I believe it is incumbent upon us to support the new president until and unless he proves undeserving of that support.

Getting back to Hollywood, which fills a much-needed hole in our culture (and by that I mean we need the hole more than we need Hollywood) let's consider the words of the celebrity group intent on punishing America for its mistake: [Hollywood is], "simply put, the base of the entire modern American culture. It is the foundation of the country, so to speak, the glue that's holding it together. And think about what happens when you destroy the foundation of a house. It comes crashing down, right?" And this: "So, in effect, it's not us that are going to force Donald Trump to resign his office; it's the people of America who are going to make him do it, because the God's honest truth is - without Hollywood, there is no America."

There are times when these articles almost write themselves. Soon after I came across the story of the Hollywood protest group, Meryl Streep made her now-famous speech at the Golden Globes ceremony. It was a good speech, and whether you agree or disagree that she was justified in targeting Trump with her comment, the things she said, taken at face value, rang true. True, that is, until the moment she revealed perhaps more than she intended by saying, "So Hollywood is crawling with outsiders and foreigners. And if we kick 'em all out, you'll have nothing to watch but football and mixed martial arts, which are not the arts."

If you believe that martial arts are not to be included in "the arts," then you know very little about martial arts. If you don't believe that millions of Americans would be perfectly content with a strict diet of football and other sports for their watching pleasure, then you don't know much about America.

If we pay attention we learn at a very early age that if we must tear down someone else to make a point, then we don't have much of a point to make. Hollywood, had they been paying attention, should also have noticed that their opinion was "simply put," irrelevant to at least 60 million voters, and perhaps to another hundred million or so who did not bother to vote at all last year. Many of us, including who in Hollywood, suffer under an illusion as old as humanity that the lives, the thoughts and the opinions of our celebrities (including politicians) are somehow more authentic and more valuable than our own. Last year, when the opinion of Hollywood was rejected in large swaths of the country where football is still popular, we were reminded that this simply isn't true. Those who did not learn are doomed to repeat the lesson.

GUEST COLUMNS

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. 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.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Avian Influenza

A new year has brought in a new threat to our backyard birds. This month, avian influenza (AI) was detected in wild fowl in Montana. Though that seems far away, we're entering migration season, so it is still possible for this virus to be a threat even though no domestic flock have been affected yet. Georgia's number one agricultural commodity is broilers so naturally something like this could be devastating, but by both commercial producers and backyard flock owners working together to understand the virus and prevent its spread, we can keep our birds happy and healthy!

There are two types of AI: low pathogenic (LPAI) and high pathogenic (HPAI). LPAI often goes undetected in flocks as it rarely causes sickness and, even if it does, symptoms are very minor. This type of AI also occurs naturally in wild birds, especially water fowl, and is not usually a cause for concern as flocks are so seldom affected by it. However, LPAI strains sometimes mutate to become HPAI strains, as was the case in Indiana last month. HPAI strains are highly infectious and elicit severe symptoms in birds, including diarrhea, nasal discharge, swelling of the eyelids, combs and wattles, purplish discoloration of wattles and combs, lethargy, and sudden death. It's especially important to be on the lookout for excessive diarrhea, because AI is spread primarily through feces.

While there have been cases of HPAI strains infecting humans, they are rare and usually caused by close contact and improper handling of infected birds, so don't panic! However, with the inclement weather driving waterfowl farther and farther south, it's still important to protect yourself and your birds. You can do this through 6 steps.

1. Keep a distance: Restricting access to your birds from roaming animals and other flock owners can minimize the chance of people or animals your birds to the virus. If you're a small flock owner, keep your birds sheltered in coops as much as you can to keep them away from wild bird feces.
2. Keep it clean: When you tend to your flock, always wear clean clothes that have not been exposed to any other poultry.
3. Don't bring it home: Even though it's inconvenient, it's important to clean truck tires, cages and equipment regularly as the virus can live on these items for months if the conditions are cool and moist enough.
4. Don't borrow the disease: We all like to be neighborly, but letting someone else with birds borrow equipment and tools can put your own flock at risk. If you do share equipment, make sure to clean it thoroughly before taking it home.
5. Know the warning signs: Monitor your birds regularly for any of the symptoms I mentioned previously. Early detection is the best detection!
6. Report sick birds: If you think your flock might be infected, don't hesitate to report it. The USDA and University of Georgia are encouraging you to contact your local extension agent (that's me!) if there is the slightest possibility you think your birds might be sick with AI.

The Annual Northeast Georgia Corn Production meeting will be Wednesday, February 22 from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center. Topics will include best management practices in corn production, corn disease identification and management, pest management, and nutrition requirements. There will be pesticide credit available at this meeting: one hour for private applicators and three hours for commercial applicators in category 21. Please RSVP by 5 p.m. Friday, February 17th to the Union County Extension Office at (706) 439-6030. Lunch will be provided!

Letters to The Editor

To the Editor:

I do appreciate that Ms. Cox responded to my two letters to the editor, and I will take it as an honor that she addressed much of her letter to me and not to either our outgoing or incoming County Commissioners who raised the same concerns I did. However I find it somewhat disconcerting that she felt it appropriate to check into the property and voting records of a private taxpayer who wrote a letter to the editor of a small county newspaper asking questions about a topic that affects all Young Harris city and Towns County residents, and not just the college. Even if it is the largest employer in the county and is represented by 4 out of the 6 councilpersons on the Young Harris City council, the residents who are not affiliated with the college still should feel free to publicly voice input and concerns about a topic that affects us all. Had Ms. Cox focused on the issues I raised and not me personally it would have eliminated any need on my part to reply. But having repeatedly addressed me personally, I do feel obliged to respond to some inaccuracies that she states.

My wife and I do live in Young Harris, we have a house and acreage with a Young Harris postal address. We shop, pay taxes and are active in our church here. Ms. Cox is correct that I have not previously paid much attention to the 6 story apartment building to which she refers as it is not in a very prominent location of Hiawassee. She is also correct that I was not aware of the council meetings on the topic until I read in the paper about Commissioner Kendall's opposition.

As my first letter indicated, I was and am interested in knowing "the other side of the story," so after I wrote it I contacted the mayor's office and asked who on the city council should I speak with to get a perspective in support of the project. Mayor Gibby gave me the name of a female council member who I understand also holds a high administrative position at the college. I won't mention her name because upon calling and identifying myself to her she let me know that she wouldn't have any time to talk with me and was quite abrupt in her manner of getting me off the phone. So I spoke again with Mayor Gibby to get the details of the proposed location of the building, that it is intended for housing of Young Harris College students, that the developer has declined to lower the height of the building, and has also refused to include street front retail into the design (which, ironically, would provide for a "semblance of a town").

This was the source of the information of my 2nd letter. She also told me that the council meetings where this topic was discussed were not well-attended by the public. I assume, as in my case, that wasn't due to lack of interest but lack of awareness. Enough about me. If the building is truly designed in such a way so as not to compromise the character of our small mountain town then my major concern will be addressed. I agree with Ms. Cox that the building projects that Young Harris College has undertaken in the past, as well as the college grounds themselves, are very nice and tastefully done. As she points out, there are other tall buildings on campus, and a 5 story student housing building probably would not look out of place on the campus common yard.

However, the only relevant point, the only question I raised in my "attack" (as Ms. Cox calls it) is whether a 5 story building with no street-level retail space would look out of place on the main street corner of a small mountain town. At least in my thinking, though I am not sure Ms. Cox feels the same, Young Harris the town is not the same thing as the Young Harris College campus; the character of each is and reasonably should be different, and we shouldn't confuse the two.

I am pleased to hear that Ms. Cox would be willing to meet with me personally to review the architectural proposal, though a more public forum at a taxpayer-funded location might be more appropriate as there may be other interested citizens who missed the former meetings. Perhaps a reasonably sized sign readable from the road could be placed at the corner at the proposed building site, stating the nature of the changes being proposed and the date and time of the public meeting to review the proposal.

Gil Bullard

Did you see where Georgia is third in credit card debt? No, but my wallet has!



Towns County Community Calendar

Every Monday:		
Bingo	Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
Bridge Players	Village Condos Clubhouse	12:30 pm
Every Tuesday:		
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Every Wednesday:		
SMART Recovery	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Every Thursday:		
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Every Friday:		
Bridge Players	Village Condos Clubhouse	12:30 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Every Sunday:		
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
YH Plan Comm.	YH City Hall	5 pm
Third Tuesday of each month:		
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
MOAA	Call Jack @ 828-321-2896	
Third Thursday of each month:		
Co. Comm. Mtg	Courthouse	5:30 pm
Friendship Comm.	Clubhouse	6 pm
Third Saturday of each month:		
Goldwing Riders	Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
Fourth Monday of each month:		
Red Cross DAT	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
Fourth Tuesday of each month:		
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Fourth Thursday of each month:		
Republican Party	New Senior Ctr.	6:30 pm
Fourth Friday of each month:		
Square Dance Club	Rec. Center	7 pm
Last Thursday of each month:		
Humane Shelter Bd.	Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

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