

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## One of my personal heroes

He's not from here, and perhaps he has never been here. But he's one of us, and one of my personal heroes, amongst the many WWII Veterans I have known since a child and those who I have been blessed to have worked with. These guys and gals, have been my mentors and helped me, through their humility, kindness and wisdom make my way through life. We all, as Americans, owe our entire Veterans community, a debt of gratitude, and especially these elder, wiser guys and gals. Anyone would be fortunate to meet this guy, sit and talk to him, and perhaps buy this dinner.

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



Mr. Louis Schipper of Cincinnati, OH decided in 1943 to leave Saint Xavier High School to do his part in WWII. Problem was, he was only 17 years old. He was a freshman, described as a very hard worker with calluses on his hands. His friend and classmate, George Wood remembers him as an Aurora farm boy, the only one in his class that "knew how to do a day's work." Louis coaxed his mother to sign for him, and he was on his way to serving in our US Navy as a SEABEE in the Pacific, for the next three years. He missed out on so much enjoyed by his fellow classmates, including high school graduation.

Back at home after Navy life, Mr. Schipper didn't let any of that slow him down. He became an electrician, no easy feat in itself, married and raised a family, the good old fashioned American way. He finally retired at age sixty.

Thus far one would believe, 'wow this guy excelled and had a great life for his now ninety years of age', but his wife, Dottie figured he needs one more honor. She took it upon herself to write to Saint Xavier HS and share the story about her husband giving up his diploma in order to defend our freedoms, liberties and rights, as Americans.

Now living in a senior residence, Louis was reluctant to take part in any such ceremony, and responded, "What the hell do I need with a diploma? I'm ninety years old. Do you want me to get a resume' and go to work now?" This man's humble, humorous and straight honest attitude is one of many reasons to love and honor these WWII Veterans. On January 13, 2017 Louis Schipper was presented his Honorable HS diploma by an emotional Tony Schad, representing Saint Xavier HS. He is now an official part of his 1946 graduating class.

Louis Schipper then stated, "I really appreciate it. I never thought I'd make it."

What a wonderful story! This man and his wife's positive attitudes are iconic for the majority of all Veterans, who for the most part are quiet, have worked hard, believe in humility and are proud of recognizing and serving something far greater than themselves.

*Semper Paratus*

## Mind the Shrapnel

Last weekend while we were focused on the inauguration of the 45th President of the United States, or gathering to protest his election, representatives of the world's wealthy elites at the World Economic Forum in Davos were concerned about the possibility that this "populist uprising" may upend the status quo. They have good reason to worry - unless the uprising can be managed properly.

Which populist uprising? The one that elected Donald Trump or the one inspiring hundreds of thousands to take to the streets in peaceful protest? On the one hand, we have a billionaire president putting together a wealthy cabinet to keep watch over the fortunes of the little people, and on the other hand, the losing party and its long list of corporate donors, media giants, and celebrities wants to be the champion of the disrespected, the excluded and the victimized.

I sincerely hope that all of us common folk will see better times ahead. I congratulate those who are celebrating, and I hope you can continue to celebrate. I invite all of us, celebrating or grieving, to take a step back from the fray for a moment.

We don't really know how President Trump will govern. We have Mr. Trump in his own words, and we have the politicized caricature, the straw man created by his opposition during the campaign, but what that means for us on Main Street remains to be seen. Corporate media and Hollywood, stung by a republican sweep of the election in much more decisive ways than the loss of the presidency, will continue to present Trump, the straw man. For some, he will do no wrong and for others, he will do nothing right.

During the event-filled weekend just passed, I had friends who marched in Washington and Atlanta as well as friends who were offended by that same marching. I was not offended. Do we not all want to see our sisters, mothers, and daughters treated with respect? Do we not believe in equal protection under the law for every person, no matter what their religion, creed, color, national origin, or how they are wired to express love for another human being? "We hold these truths to be self-evident..." Don't we?

As stated, we could all march for those values, could we not? In fact, if you take the core values of protesters past and present at face value, it is not so much the ideas that divide us but the appearance, the skin color, or the sex of the participants - or whether there is a donkey or an elephant on their political banners. Some who were offended by the protests pointed out that the well-heeled women and men marching with their Starbucks lattes in hand would not have been able to have such a gathering in Saudi Arabia or Pakistan, where women truly are disrespected and where brutality to women is institutionalized.

Perspective is always essential to understanding. You see, both sides (will we ever grow weary of dichotomy?) have valid points. We could all march, or all stay home while embracing both points of view. They are not mutually exclusive.

But many protesters were guided by an additional meme, the rallying cry of "not my president." Now in all fairness, many of us said the same thing about President Obama and continued to say it for 8 years, no matter what he did or said, even on those days when, if you didn't know better, you would think George W. Bush was still in office.

If we could only take a step back from the fray, we might notice that we're all being played like a cheap fiddle. We might notice that the speeches, the spin, the memes injected into social media and the blatant propaganda disseminated by corporate media are orchestrated for maximum dramatic effect. Predictably, it all serves to keep us clicking and watching, and it keeps us divided. It keeps us distracted.

While we were looking elsewhere, over the last 25 years the top 5% of Americans prospered, many believe, at the expense of the other 95%. Real wages are down. Personal debt, up. The National debt, through the roof. Minority home ownership, way down. There is a long list of areas where the middle class and the poor have lost ground. Meanwhile, most the planet's wealth is controlled by an ever-smaller number of people, and the coercive powers of the surveillance state have grown out of all proportion. Never forget, my friends, that we were led to this place by republicans and democrats alike.

By allowing ourselves to be divided by the national reality show, we're watching the shell game and not the pea. The "pea" is demographic change and an economy under pressure to contract (in real terms). As Boomers retire, we stop spending money, building houses and buying cars, and we remove potentially about \$4 trillion in savings and investments from the table. Job growth slows, and then many of those jobs coming home from overseas under Trump will soon be automated.

The effects of inevitable demographic change have been somewhat camouflaged by the Fed and our fiscal policy, which has created a false sense of prosperity with cheap credit to keep Wall Street humming along. The economy is now Wiley Coyote, who has walked halfway across the abyss, unaware that there is no solid ground under his feet. He'll be fine until he gives him a few more steps toward the other side.

An expanding economy, like an incoming tide, lifts all boats. Everything comes easier. Social issues are not as problematic. The deep state can afford to ease up on its control, its taxation, and its coercive power. We have seen exactly the opposite for some time now. Wiley C. will eventually get to the other side of the gorge, but only after falling in and making that long climb back up.

New disruptive technologies will eventually create new jobs and power will shift. There are more women in college now than men, and more women in Congress, which is also more diverse than ever. We are witnessing a status quo struggling to remain in power, but change will happen independently of our belief in or desire for it. Because we are so divided, this change will explode our paradigms about what we think is normal - and that to which we think we are entitled. Mind the shrapnel.

## The Middle Path

*By: Don Perry*

## Soil health and cover crops

Maintaining proper soil health is essential if you want to have the highest possible yield in your crops, and who doesn't? You can order the highest quality seed and be as diligent as possible in your fields, but if you don't have healthy soil, your product will still suffer.

**UGA extension**  
**From the Ground Up**  
*Melissa Mattee*



There are a variety of ways to improve your soil health. First and foremost, always test your soil to see what the current nutrient levels are. Many of us rely on good old 10-10-10 and a bunch of lime to get us through the season, but the truth is you don't know what's in your soil, blindly applying fertilizer and lime may be doing more harm than good. If you apply too much lime, your pH will become too high and plants won't be able to draw out the nutrients they need. If you put down more nitrogen, phosphorous or potash than you need, you end up just wasting your money because crops can only use so many nutrients and the rest get washed away, sometimes causing toxic algal blooms in nearby bodies of water. A soil test will tell you exactly what you need to apply, when to apply it, and how much. You can get your soil tested through your local extension office.

Another way to improve soil health is through the use of cover crops. The longer you can keep living roots in your soil, the better. This helps prevent erosion, enhances nutrients in the soil, and some cover crops (especially legumes) actually add valuable nitrogen that can be used by later crops. Also, the longer you have a strong crop in your soil, the higher the level of weed suppression. A good stand of rye in the late fall can prevent some of those pesky winter weeds from gaining ground.

Finally, the less disturbed the soil is, the higher quality it is. Tillage can increase erosion and weeds can easily establish before your cash crop does. A popular alternative to tilling is rolling or crimping cover crops so they lie flat along the ground. This protects the soil from harsh temperatures, erosion, prevents weeds from popping up, and slowly incorporates organic material that provides nutrients for a long period of time. Though planting cover crops and rolling them can be a costly upfront investment, after a few years, soil quality typically improves to the point that producers need less fertilizer, reduced herbicide treatments, and produce high crop yields to the point where the process can pay for itself.

This is just the tip of the iceberg that is soil conservation. If you're interested in getting the most out of your soil, the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center and UGA Extension are conducting a soil health field day on February 17th at GMREC. Registration and refreshments begin at 9:00am and presentations begin at 10:00am. Topics include ideal soil profiles, improving soil health, federal conservation programs, and soil testing and interpretation. Lunch is provided and the program concludes at 1:00pm.

Additionally, Union and Towns County Extension will hold the Annual Northeast Georgia Corn Production meeting will be Wednesday, February 22 from 10:30am to 2:00pm 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 credits 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:

As recently as the 1960s there were just three home-steads between the YH city limits and top of the mountain. Visitors cited the view of the YH valley as the most beautiful in Georgia. A sign at the city limits of Hiawassee read, "Welcome to Georgia's Little Switzerland." Then in the 1970s a long-serving state senator bought a landlocked, practically worthless property in a remote area. He "pulled strings" to exchange it with the US Forest Service for Ramey Mountain and started development there. Retiree publications began writing about the virtues of this area and soon developers as far away as Miami, FL hurried to the new "Gold Rush" starting here. Now, a generation later you can drive from Young Harris to Hiawassee and see what greed has done to an area once spectacularly beautiful. The "Enchanted Valley" is Dead! A new sign for Hiawassee could well be, "Atlanta Wannabe."

When I learned of Young Harris College's plan to build a 5-story structure at the intersection of Main Street and Hwy. 666, I reacted like some of you wanting to stop it. Then I realized that nothing the college can build would be as destructive to the area's landscape as unsightly buildings that have already been built and continue to be built on nearby mountain sides.

I understand that Towns County has an ordinance prohibiting buildings over 35 feet tall to prevent developments like those in Woods Grove and Hiawassee. Both our former and current commissioner opposed the YHC building and refused to grant a variance. My sources say that the YH City Council can still authorize the building but with consequences. If built without a variance, Towns County would not be obligated to provide fire services. If the Commissioner grants a variance, the County would need to buy at least one additional ladder truck at a cost to county taxpayers of about \$1 million. As you consider your position on this building and future projects to make YH into a "college town", realize that for taxpayers there may be financial costs. However, citizen protests may not matter. The college has land and political muscle to do much as they choose on that land. Also students can be fickle and the next generation may not be happy living on a corner with a daily traffic count over 17,000. So what must we buy for them next?

*Wm. Ronald Gibson*

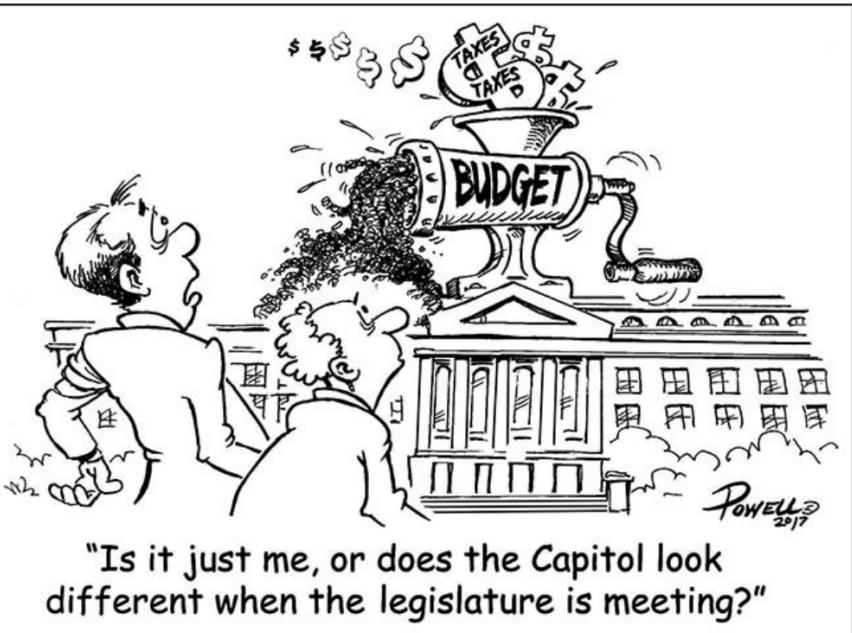
### To the Editor:

*Response to the article concerning the newly renovated library in Young Harris*

During the renovation period at the library in Young Harris, I went to the old BRMEMC building to get some help using their computer. Curtis was very helpful. While I was there I checked out several books and the librarian told me to keep them until the renovated library reopened. I went to return them a couple of weeks after the reopening. What a shock I got on that visit! 2 years before I'd had no problem entering any of the doors, but because I'd had a very serious fall in late 2014 I can no longer walk using a walker. Whoever was hired to design this library was not considerate of the handicapped. The entrance remained the same as before. Imagine trying to push a door open while you're holding onto a walker with both hands to maintain your balance or rolling yourself in a wheelchair with both hands to pull open or push yourself through that entrance. Then in order to enter the second doors into the actual library, you have to fight the doors again! Instead of buying very expensive sofas and chair sets for each room, why didn't someone think of the "push and easy to use" electric door opener at each door that instantly opens a door for the handicapped? The library in Hiawassee has it and it is very user-friendly to the handicapped.

Casey Hunley's comment in a previous paper "We've had all positive feedback, not one complaint whatsoever...everybody loves it" - not true! I was very vocal with my complaints about the difficulty in entering!

*Mary Jean Boyette*



## 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	6 pm
Young Harris Coun.	YH City Hall	7 pm
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
Stephens Lodge	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Republican Party	New Senior Ctr.	6:30 pm
Square Dance Club	Rec. Center	7 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

## Towns County Herald

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