

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Navy Seabees 75th Anniversary

CB pronounced "SEA-BEE" or Construction Battalion of our United States Navy. Their very simple motto: "We build, We fight." An engineering/construction (sometimes demolition division) was sorely needed in WW II. Long story, short, Admiral Ben Moreell, the first Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks not to have graduated from the Naval Academy, was the founding father of the Navy's famous Seabees, was largely responsible for overseeing the Bureau's construction programs, both domestic and overseas, during WW II. After long deliberations concerning its formation, March 5, 1942 is officially considered the "birthday" of this unique and elite division of our US Navy. Examples of their duties are airstrips cut out of dense jungles or in the middle of desert terrain, bridges across swamps or rivers, boat docks, outposts, barracks, communication centers, hospital bases, and camps for Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guardsmen. At certain times these engineers may be called upon to use their special skills to "tear down" buildings or other structures deemed "unhealthy for peaceful civilization". They are not just good at what they do; they are unsurpassed, working in any and all conditions which may be deemed impossible elsewhere.

On April 10, 2015 Blairsville, Georgia became only the third "Island" in the state for all veterans of our US Navy Seabees.

These proud, hard working, good natured and happy guys who have served now have their own post, chartered as Island X-3 GA, to meet, share fellowship, share stories and just like many of our veterans' service organizations are very committed to community service. As Island X-3 GA is now chartered there exists an opportunity for many fine ladies associated with Seabees to form the ladies auxiliary.

Their new organization is meeting in Blairsville at the Major Leon Davenport Veterans' Center at 78 Blue Ridge Street (old Chamber of Commerce building), a very nice facility. Island X-3 GA will serve members from North Georgia, Western North Carolina, and Eastern Tennessee. Information may be obtained by visiting the National Web page at NSVA.org and the local Facebook page at NSVA Island X-3.

On March 4, 2017 Navy Seabee Island X-3 will, again, sponsor a Military Ball in honor of our 75th Anniversary of the Seabees. Location will be the Union County Community Center with Social hour beginning at 5:30 PM; dinner will be at 6:30 PM; ceremony will be at 7:30 PM and dance will begin at 8:00 PM. Attire will be Dinner Dress Blues for military; Civilian is Business Attire, black tie optional. Ladies: evening wear. This has been announced in separate ads in our local papers for several weeks as there are only 150 tickets available. Tickets are \$30 for active duty, \$45 for all others. However by the time you read this, there may be a ticket or two left. Please call Bob Ramay (706-781-2536) or Ed Crenshaw, Commander, at (706-379-3472).

This should be a very enjoyable event with a great bunch of patriots and fine folks.

Semper Paratus

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran



Fast food or home-cooked meal?

A special greeting this week to our partisan friends. Okay, we're all partisan from time to time. There is nothing wrong with being a strong supporter of something we believe in. But how often do we question that belief? How many of our beliefs are carefully built, or as it says in Philipians of salvation, worked out with "fear and trembling?"

When it comes to the body, we are what we eat. The mind is nourished (or starved) by what we think, and what we think grows into what we believe. A body becomes unhealthy when it is malnourished or sustained by junk food.

To achieve good health for the body, we practice discernment when we choose what to eat. For a healthy mind, we use discernment when selecting the information we consume.

Unfortunately for the mind, the Age of Information gives us an all-you-can-eat buffet, a smorgasbord of fact, falsehood, spin, propaganda and marketing. It's not all clearly labeled, and some of it is mislabeled. There are many additives and hidden ingredients.

But there is one simple thing we can do, as the arbiter of our own thoughts. Of every spoonful of information we take, we can ask one simple question that will immediately improve the quality of our diet: Is it fact, or is it interpretation?

No matter where we are positioned philosophically, most of us would agree that "we need to talk." We need to be alert and aware of what is going on in the world, and we need to continue to seek common ground.

Modern life is pressured by volatility and an accelerated rate of change. It is not easy to think clearly when we are pressured. When we are tired or pressed for time, it is easier to go to a drive through restaurant than to prepare a home cooked meal.

Unfortunately, the unhealthy diet of information peddled by the fast food providers of media is interfering with our ability to communicate. If we eat there often, we can ingest toxic amounts of opinion. (Of course, that's just my opinion.)

Social media is like the drive through greasy spoon burger joint of information and opinion. It failed its Health Department inspection, but we continue to eat there.

Many of the opinions we find there are laced with toxins, like a biscuit baked with rancid butter. When we feed our brains there, we absorb anger, outrage, "take downs," and "slams," or insults candy coated with humor.

Even at the better restaurants we find opinions that were cooked with toxic ingredients that are harder to identify, like hydrogenated cottonseed oil or too much sugar: propaganda, spin, fake news and outright lies.

As we habitually consume an unhealthy diet of thought and opinion, we begin to belch and fart toxins ourselves. Our breath stinks with the poisons we have absorbed. So when we try to communicate our opinions, we are puzzled (or angered or outraged) that people turn away.

The only people who will listen to us are the ones who have eaten the same stuff - just like garlic breath is not a problem when we all eat the garlic rolls.

It's a true dilemma. We need to talk. We want to share our opinions. But nobody wants to hear us yell, and the stinky breath of our outrage just makes people turn away.

Some of us are aware of our bad breath, so we try to mask it with mouthwash. We practice "virtue signaling" to cover up the toxic brew we have inside. But minty fresh garlic breath is still garlic breath.

It is vital that we remember there is always something we can do to improve our diet of information. We can read the labels.

We can ask the waiter, "Where did this fish come from?" We can slice it with Occam's Razor and chew it thoroughly before swallowing.

We repeat the question again here, because it is important, and we can apply this question to every bite of information we absorb: Is it fact, or is it interpretation?

If the answer is "interpretation," then we don't really know what we're eating, and we would be better off to put it aside.

I know. It's harder this way. It's easier to eat the fast food than it is to shop for ingredients for a home cooked meal.

But our health depends on a better diet.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Treating Winter Injury

A few weeks ago I talked about how to prevent frost damage to plants, but there have been many other factors this winter that may have injured your landscape that you might not know about.

Desiccation, or drying out, usually occurs when the ground freezes below the root system. This prevents the plant from getting any water to its roots. The greatest risk for water loss is during mild weather with harsh winds, followed by bouts of intensely cold weather. Though we've had several warm periods this winter, we've also had severe cold snaps and windy days that could have dried out plants. To combat this, make sure that plants are still adequately watered during the winter. By giving plants, especially evergreens, a deep soaking before the ground may freeze, and watering on warm days in January, February and March, plants will have an adequate water supply throughout the season.

Freezing damage often goes beyond just burning new growth or new buds. The dramatic temperature changes we have seen over the past few months can greatly contribute to trunk cracking. This is because the water and fluids within the tree expand in warm weather and shrink in cool weather. If temperature fluctuation occurs too quickly, the trunk will crack under the stress and you may see sap ooze out or fungus may establish in these wounds. Sometimes this is called Southwest Injury, because it is often on the southwest side of trees due to the amount of sun received on this side. To prevent this, wrap susceptible trunks with burlap or some other protective material and make sure that trunks remain unwounded throughout the growing season.

Breakage is almost always caused by excessive snow or ice buildup, or careless buildup removal. High winds can also damage trees under structural stress that can usually handle windy conditions. Proper pruning is the best way to prevent this type of damage. If there are fewer branches, there is less chance of breakage because the branches present will have adequate nutrients and will not be structurally compromised by other branches competing for space. However, try to avoid late summer pruning unless absolutely necessary, because this stimulates new growth that may not harden in time for the winter weather and will detract nutrients from larger branches that need to retain their strength. If snow has collected on shrubs, always sweep it off with an upward motion. Sweeping downward will only add to the stress created by the weight of the snow and ice, often causing branches to break or crack.

Runoff from roads usually contains chemicals that can have an effect on your plants, but especially when salted in the winter. Salty runoff also changes the quality of the soil by causing it to compact, restricting nutrients, water and other important resources for your plants. Though salt may be applied throughout the winter, most of the damage is seen toward the end of the season when plants begin to actively grow. The primary symptom of salt damage is leaves or needles having dried or scorched edges. To prevent this, never pile snow containing salt or other runoff around plant root zones, or in an area where it will melt and run down to these zones. If you think your plants may have salt damage, flush the area around them with 2 inches of water for two to three hours and repeating this for three days. This should get rid of much of the salt buildup causing the issue.

Contact your local extension office if you would like more information on dealing with winter injury.

UGA extension
From the Ground Up
Melissa Mattee



Letters to The Editor

To the Editor:

Prominent Republicans propose market based solution to climate change

James Baker, Henry Paulson, and George Shultz, who have variously served as Secretaries of State and Secretaries of the Treasury under the Reagan and Bush administrations, along with Rob Walton, former chairman of the board of Walmart from 1992-2015, have teamed with four other prominent Republicans in putting forth a plan that they call the conservative answer to climate change. These are not just any names that can be easily dismissed. Only 2 people in the last 100 years have been both Secretary of State and Secretary of the Treasury. James Baker and George Shultz are those two. These well respected senior leaders in the Republican party have taken a giant step towards helping the Republican party take leadership in combating climate change.

According to their presentation, given to senior leaders at the White House, they believe that mounting evidence of climate change is growing too strong to ignore. But they are also convinced that any climate solution must be based upon plans that will also help our economy and be based on the principles of free markets and limited government.

Their plan is based on four simple principles. First, the government would place a gradually increasing tax on the production of carbon dioxide to help account for the external damage caused by the burning of fossil fuels. Secondly, all money collected from this tax would be refunded to every American with a valid social security number. A family of four could expect a dividend payment of approximately \$2000 the first year of the plan. Third, there would be a border adjustment on the carbon content of both imports and exports, in order to protect American businesses from being hurt by the plan. Fourth, there would be a significant rollback on current regulations, including the EPA's regulation of carbon dioxide emissions and a repeal of the Clean Power Plan.

According to their analysis, this plan would stimulate our economy and add more money to the average American's pocketbook. By placing a fair price on the production of carbon dioxide, it would allow the free market to take over and make fossil fuels rapidly more expensive than alternative sources of energy like wind and solar. This would help the US rapidly convert to clean energy and thereby help America take the lead in the Green Energy revolution, thereby creating many more American jobs.

I am a strong fiscal conservative, but as a person with a strong scientific background, my research has convinced me that climate change is very real and very dangerous. This new proposal meets my criteria for a plan that both combats climate change and grows our economy, which should help us get closer to a balanced budget. For the sake of generations to come, and for our present economy, I hope and pray that both the White House and Capitol Hill will take this proposal seriously.

Vernon Dixon, MD

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Contact us at 706-896-4454

Deadline for the Towns County Herald is Friday at 5 PM

GUEST COLUMNS

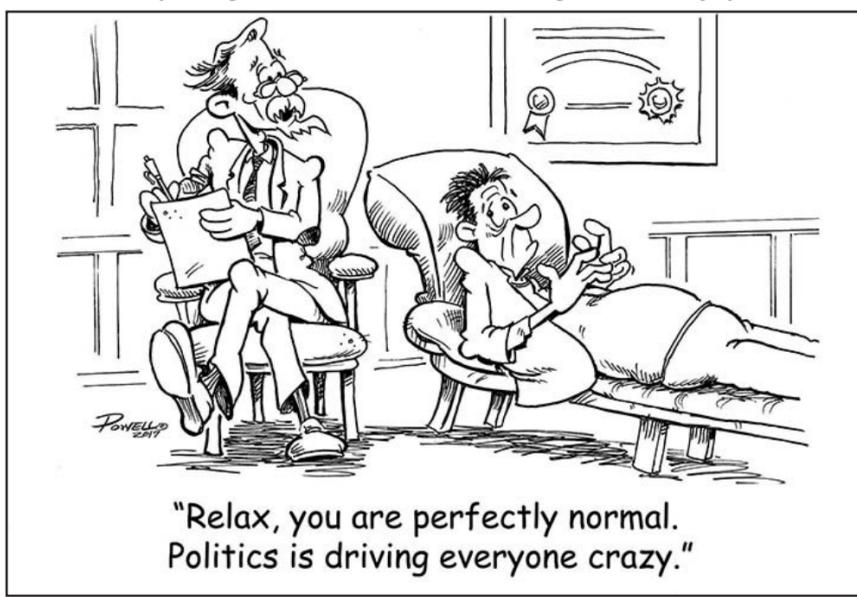
From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear 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.



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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Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
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YH Plan Comm.	YH City Hall	5 pm
Co. Comm. Mtg	Courthouse	5:30 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Blairsville store	5:30 pm
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
MOAA	Call Jack @ 828-321-2896	
Friendship Comm.	Clubhouse	6 pm
Goldwing Riders	Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
Red Cross DAT	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 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

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Towns County Herald

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