

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

May 17, 1987

Only 30 years ago, forgotten already by many and never learned by some, our US Navy's USS Stark was hit by two Exocet missiles fired from an Iraqi Mirage jet. Thirty-seven of our fine young sailors lost their lives and twenty-one more were injured in what should have been a preventable incident. And perhaps many of us do not remember that at that time Iraq was not considered hostile to America.

The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
 USCG Veteran



The USS Stark was a five year old frigate and equipped with the very latest armament which could have destroyed any incoming missiles or attacking aircraft. Yet absolutely nothing was done prior to or immediately after the attack. As hard as it is to believe, even today, the defense system was "turned off"; being complex it was never set up! Thus the Stark, a US Navy warship, was completely defenseless. Human error indeed.

The Stark didn't even try to warn the Iraqi jet off, which according to the ROE of that day was completely permissible when an unknown aircraft approaches one of our military ships within a twenty mile limit. Only after two missiles were launched was any kind of warning issued. However a petty officer had previously warned the ship's tactical officer that he should issue a warning to the Iraqi pilot that he was approaching too close. The petty officer's observation and warnings were ignored.

As unbelievable as this may sound, six minutes before the attack and warnings issued by the Stark, two nearby US Naval vessels radioed the Stark that an Iraqi plane was approaching at attack speed, only to be ignored. As later investigation uncovered, the so called warnings from the Stark were actually "queries" as to the plane's "intentions".

What should have immediately happened was a General Quarters condition should have been set and the ship should have turned broadside to the incoming path of the jet with all weapons and radar armed ready to instantly eliminate the threat. The possibility always exists, in a hostile situation that damage could have been done anyway; however, taking an immediate defensive posture would have undoubtedly reduced the loss of life and damage to the Stark.

Besides the extreme cost of blood and treasure to America, Capt. Glenn Brindel and two of his senior officers were relieved of command. Court Martials were predicted, however, the US Navy decided to not pursue anything against these officers in charge other than retirement at reduced rank and pay grade and resignation of junior officers. In my humble opinion, and from experience, if any enlisted man or woman had been so derelict of duty they would have been properly charged and maybe just now getting out of a strict military prison.

There is so much wrong here, and the question is begged, do we ever learn our history so that thereafter we do not repeat those events and situations that inevitably lead to failure, loss of life, heartbreak, anger, and even more hostilities?

Semper Paratus

Ready Set Go saves lives

The wildfire seasons here in the North Georgia are traditionally November, March, and April. The humidity is usually low, winds are up, and the leaves are dry and just waiting for a spark. We are past the "normal" wildfire months, but don't let your guard down because wildfire seasons are like everything, they are a "changing all over the world due to many factors."

RC&D
Frank Riley
 Executive Director



Look at what's happening in South Georgia and all over Florida now. Evacuations of towns, firefighters from all over the world, air tankers, bulldozers, and many \$\$ for all the tools necessary to protect property from raging wildfires. The fire in the Okefenokee swamp may not be out until October, and it will probably take a hurricane to put it out.

Ready Set Go is a program administered by the International Association of Fire Chiefs and helps prepare first responders and citizens for wildfire. The Ready, Set, Go! Program seeks to develop and improve the dialogue between fire departments and the residents they serve. The program helps fire departments teach individuals who live in high risk wildfire areas - and the Wildland-urban interface how to best prepare themselves and their properties against Wildland fire threats. The program's tenets help residents be Ready with preparedness understanding, be Set with situational awareness when fire threatens, and to Go early when necessary.

The RSG! Program works in complementary and collaborative fashion with existing Wildland fire public education efforts, like Firewise, and amplifies their messages to individuals. NFPA's Firewise Communities Program encourages local solutions for wildfire safety by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, firefighters and others in creating fire-adapted communities - places where people and property are safer from the risk of brush, grass and forest fires.

Firewise principles can help individuals and communities accomplish the "Ready" tenet of RSG by providing the proven steps to empower individual homeowners to lower their property's wildfire risk and to work with their neighbors to make their community safer.

Used together, the Ready, Set, Go! and Firewise Communities programs can save lives and property by: Defining the risk and responsibility. Fire is a natural process and plays an important role in our environment. However, while wildfires are inevitable, loss of homes to wildfire is not. Once residents understand what causes homes to ignite, they have a better understanding of their role in protecting their families, homes and property from wildfire - all year round.

Empowering individual action, Ready, Set, Go! and Firewise provide residents with specific guidelines for reducing risk within the home ignition zone -which includes the home and extends out to 100 to 200 feet. This includes clearing property of debris and maintaining the landscape, as well as recommendations for fire-resistant home design and construction, such as Class A roofing and tempered glass windows. Encouraging community-level engagement by taking a fire-adapted community approach to wildfire preparedness, communities can greatly reduce their wildfire vulnerability.

The Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program facilitates this process with a framework for communities to work with partners including state forestry and local fire departments to organize, plan, and conduct activities each year that make a difference in community wildfire safety.

Furthering firefighter and resident safety during a fire event, a fire-resistant property enables firefighters to focus on containing the wildfire itself, rather than defending individual structures.

Ready, Set, Go! also brings fire departments and residents together to build important understanding, preparedness, and action. Our Firewise programs here in Northeast Georgia are making a difference by making our residents aware of the wildfire risks all around them and the numbers prove it.

We have held full scale Ready Set Go evacuation exercises in 2015 in Towns County and in 2016 in White county with very good results. The emergency responders practiced what they do best, protect property from wildfires under controlled conditions and residents experienced what it would be like under a real fire threat.

To learn more about how to be Firewise and how to develop a personal "Ready, Set, Go!" action plan contact Frank Riley, Executive Director, Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council at www.info.ccrd@gmail.com or go to www.wildlandfireRSG.org or www.firewise.org or www.ppcofac.org or www.chestchattcrd.org.

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.

Woody ornamental pruning

Azaleas and other flowering ornamentals are an integral part of the Georgia landscape from the flats of the coastal plain all the way to our mountains. Currently, we can see bright patches of orange and purple dotting the mountainsides as our native azaleas and rhododendrons bloom. Depending on the varieties of cultivated ornamentals in your own yard, your own plants may be starting to bloom as well. By tending to your flowering plants at the appropriate time, you can ensure a successful and colorful bloom year after year.

UGA extension
From the Ground Up
Melissa Mattee



Because azaleas are spring blooming plants for the most part, they set their buds for the following year in mid-late summer. This means that in order to maintain the parts of the plant that will flower next year, we have to prune ornamentals that bloom in spring right after they lose their flowers. If they are pruned in the fall or winter, the bloom-forming buds may be accidentally removed and the normally colorful and vibrant azaleas will have fewer blooms.

This rule of thumb is good for most other spring blooming plants as well. Early bloomers such as bigleaf hydrangeas, redbuds, forsythia, clematis, beautybush and numerous others should be pruned after they have finished flowering to prevent them from becoming too sprawling. Pruning these plants before late summer ensures proper maintenance without harming newly formed buds. However, because many ornamentals have late blooming varieties, one pruning time is not necessarily appropriate for all plants of the same type. Generally, if a plant blooms before May, it is safe to prune just after flowering. If it flowers after May, then it should be pruned just before the start of its spring growth. Two exceptions to this rule are late blooming azaleas and oakleaf hydrangeas because even though they bloom in the summer, they still form buds in the previous year so pruning in the spring before bloom will remove viable buds.

When pruning flowering or shade trees, always try to minimize the bleeding of sap from the tree. Maple, birch, willow, plum and cherry trees all have the potential to produce large amounts of sap, and while it is not harmful, it can be unsightly. To reduce the amount of bleeding from your tree, prune large branches in warmer weather when the leaves are mature. The leaves will have taken up the majority of the sap as they grow, leaving less available to bleed out upon pruning.

Pruning is also important for disease management. Many ornamental plants are prone to fungal diseases. If you notice a fungal growth or a gall on your plant, prune out the affected portion as soon as possible. Diseased portions of plants may be bagged and immediately brought to your local extension office for diagnosis. Without knowing what is attacking your plant, it can be nearly impossible to successfully treat. However, by identifying the disease, exploring treatment options, and proactively pruning your plants, you can keep your ornamentals in great condition year after year! If you would like a publication on ornamental pruning or disease management, contact your local extension office.

Union and Towns County Extension will be holding a Master Naturalist Class in August and September this year. This is a nine week course that meets once a week and covers wildlife management, tree and insect ID, invasive species, Georgia natural history, and many other topics! If you are interested in signing up, please contact your extension office. Specific dates and registration fees TBD. Please call your local extension office if you are interested!

Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor,

I would like to extend my gratitude and deepest appreciation, to the ladies in the LAB at Chatuge Regional Hospital on Saturday morning, May 6th during the Health Fair. I know they worked all night long and were ready to leave and go home a little after 7 AM, but stayed a few minutes longer, to assist me with my lab work. I know I was told to go upstairs, but after telling them my condition, and how I need to recline to have blood drawn, or I will pass out and fall in the floor, they immediately dropped their belongings and told me to come right on in, that they would be glad to assist me.

I am so sorry that I am this way, but the first time I attempted to have my blood drawn a few years ago upstairs, sitting up, I fell over on to the floor. It was embarrassing and frightening too. I said from then on I would just go to the lab to have it done. It is hard to get people to understand this matter some times. My late dad was the same way too, and I guess I just inherited this from him.

It helps to have patient and kind hearted ladies or personnel in the lab like this, to assist people like me. I know I am not the only one in Towns County, or surrounding areas who is like this.

May I suggest in the future to please have some one available in the lab for me, and for others like me? I dont know the names of the ladies who were there but thank you and God bless you for taking a few extra seconds especially for me. If I could, I'd pay you overtime myself!

*Blessings,
 Delores A. Barnes*

To the Editor:

After reading "A different Kind of Life" by Don Perry, I would like to shake your hand Don, and give you a hug. Your thoughts of our wonderful neighbor, Joe Anderson, are so true.

My wife and I bought a small piece of land and a trailer back in 1981 on Hightower. As outsiders, we were first welcomed to the Upper Hightower community by the Eller Family. I met Joe soon after while walking down our road and we became instant friends.

Joe would stop by with vegetables in hand and sit on our porch pointing out each mountain range by their names. Afternoons would fly by with his visits and stories of his childhood in Shooting Creek. He would soon have to be on his way, continuing with his deliveries to other neighbors, knowing that Totsy would soon be wondering where he was.

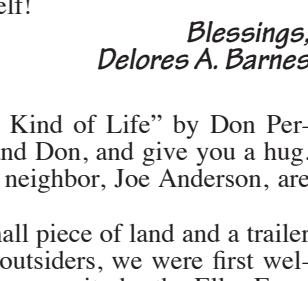
Today I can look into the eyes of his son and see the same kindness that his father showed me and my wife. The footprints of Joe Anderson will be continued by his loving family and friends, as he provided a clear path for us all.

*Ron and Jean Dick
 Hiawassee, GA*

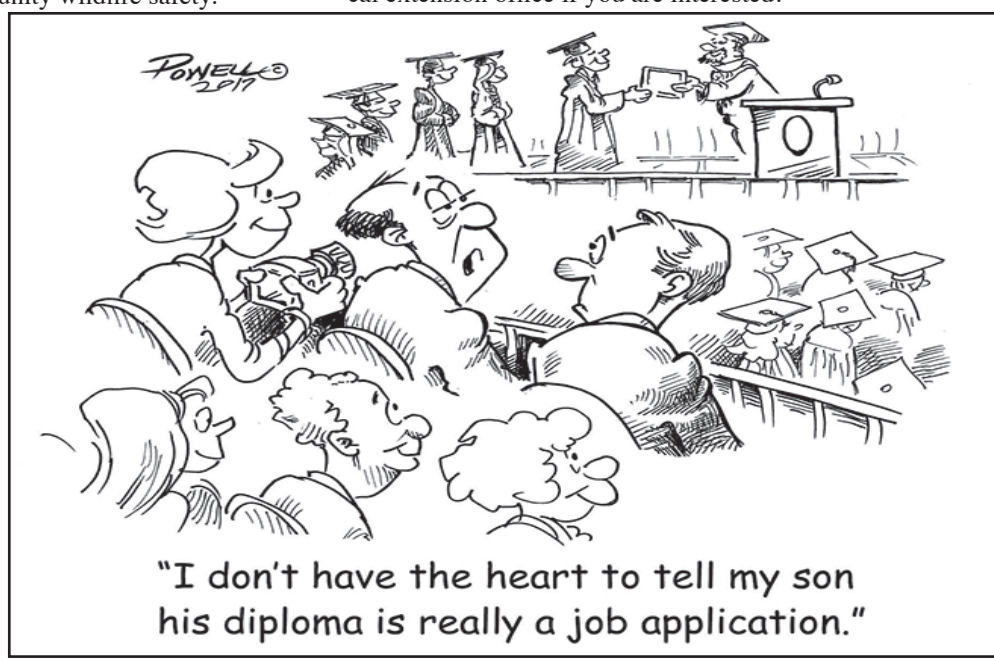
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Deadline for the
 Towns County Herald
 is Friday by
 5 PM



"I don't have the heart to tell my son his diploma is really a job application."

Towns County Community Calendar

Bingo	Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
	Every Monday:	
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
	Every Tuesday:	
SMART Recovery	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Wednesday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
	Every Thursday:	
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Friday:	
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Saturday:	
	Third Monday of each month:	
Hospital Auxiliary	Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Water Board	Water Office	6 pm
	Third Tuesday of each month:	
YH Plan Comm.	YH City Hall	5 pm
Co. Comm. Mtg	Courthouse	5:30 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Blairsville store	5:30 pm
	Third Wednesday of each month:	
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
MOAA	Call Jack @ 828-321-2896	
	Third Thursday of each month:	
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
	Last Thursday of each month:	
Humane Shelter Bd.	Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

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Towns County Herald

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