

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

A very kind, gentle and warm couple

From a mountain top, Terra Alta, WV, 22 July 1933 came David (Dave) Kinney, starting life in his Grandma's home, no electricity, no running water and coal heat. Later, still a young'un Dave's Dad moved them to Clarksburg, WV, in quest of supporting his family in coal mining maintenance. According to Dave, they lived in a "company house", no indoor bathroom and only cold water. Having seen old family pictures of Dave and his cousins, all dirty with coal dust, they all were one large grinning and loving family, a trait which has remained a part of Dave and June's life to this day.

With WWII, Dave and his family moved for his dad's new career in a machine shop, and upgrade in the family home. Dave got a jump start on learning skills for future jobs by working from his early teens in the machine shop, doing menial chores and learning advanced skills.

Dave and two buddies decided to serve America in the USAF a couple of years after high school. Boot Camp was in upstate New York, and then on to advanced training in Greenville, MS, where Dave applied for a machinist's job, as it turns out, those jobs were filled. Dave then became a sheet metal worker, as AIO base maintenance. Then on to South Korea attached to K9 AFB in Pusan. After Korea, he was assigned to Brookley AFB in Mobile, AL, an F-84 overhaul base with quad hangers, a sort of assembly line, and this time fabricating special tools and devices for those who worked on the jets. After discharge from USAF, Dave followed his parents to Sarasota, FL, working with sheet metal in an AC shop at age 23. After 11 months he went to work for "General Sheet Metal Shop", and for 19 years was General Manager of said shop. Dave went on to found his own company, still very successful today, "Kinney-Johnson Fabricating, Inc."

Dave tragically lost his first wife to cancer in 1983 but in 1984 met June who had also lost her husband, and who was very much involved as a medical professional with her beloved doctors in her own successful career. They had a December wedding and today still have a wonderful, happy blended family of three daughters and three sons.

Convincing June to leave her career and move to their first home in Hiawassee, right across the road from Lynn Mauldin, wasn't easy according to June, but has turned out well. They didn't dwell upon the lemons but made lemonade!

As members of Mountain Presbyterian Church they are past volunteers at the fairground. June spearheaded fabrication of and needed installation of the beautiful Celtic Cross, now residing atop their pretty Church between Young Harris and Blairsville. Dave's partner at the sheet metal shop in Sarasota, Kinney Johnson, aided in design and fabrication of this Holy Symbol, in Dave's old shop. June says, "We love these mountains". Dave says, "I'd join the USAF again, as most of my education was gained from the USAF."

Semper Paratus

The Veterans' Corner

Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran



Cats, Dogs and Politics

As we promised you the last time we gathered on this page, this week we are going to take a step away from politics. It's not as easy as it may sound. First of all, you have to be very selective in what you allow mainstream media to inject into your consciousness.

That, in itself, is a worthwhile goal, as mainstream media has long ago stopped representing the interests and the character of mainstream Americans. Second, there is something addictive in the arguments, the scandals and the spectacle of it all for a people long conditioned to be addicted to drama.

Discussing politics in a polarized nation can be counterproductive. Those who agree with us were already in agreement. Those who disagree will not be convinced. Logic does not prevail. If we ever understood syllogistic reasoning, we have forgotten, or we reason to defend our own prejudices. We all suffer in varying degrees from confirmation bias.

We're now three paragraphs into this week's discussion, and we're still talking about politics. I told you it wasn't going to be easy to set it aside. But without further adieu, we will now turn our attention to a new topic: Cats. You know, cats remind me of my grandfather's opinion about politicians. With over 90 years of observations to support his opinion, he claimed that politicians like to make a great show of arguing in public, but just like when you hear two cats "arguing" in the night, quite often it turns out that kittens will be born in a few months time.

Enough. Moving on now. Cats - another one of the points of demarcation that we humans use to define or divide ourselves: Cats or dogs; staples or paper clips; Ginger or Mary Ann. Those of us seeking a middle path are not so easily divided, and here in the country we have room for feline and canine friends alike.

Most of our cats and dogs here at home have grown up together. They bond in ways that emulate both the pride and the pack. The cats come to look upon the dogs as protectors and the dogs look upon the cats as enigmatic and unpredictable curiosities. They form friendships between the species and they have their favorites. At this point let me discourage anyone with a more scientific interest in dog and cat behavior from interjecting with a biological explanation. When a cat is purring in my lap or a dog is bounding across the field with joy at my approach, it does not concern me in the least whether I am anthropomorphizing their behavior. We have pets for companionship, not dissection.

We lost two good cats recently. Both were old. One was very old. Bodicia and her kitten, Lucky, had been with us for 14 and 12 years respectively. Bodicia, like many cats in the country do, picked her own time and place to leave her body, and when that time came she wandered off deep into the woods to die alone and with dignity. Lucky was frantic at being left alone. He looked for her and called out for her. He was inconsolable.

When Lucky realized that Bodicia wasn't coming back, I do not know what science would call it, but to us he was heartbroken. He stopped eating and drinking. We took him to the vet, who could find nothing wrong with him. When we brought him home he climbed up to his favorite perch in the loft of the barn and stayed there. Over time he grew weaker. Every day we climbed up into the barn and sat with him, tried to get him to take some nourishment, scratched his ears. He continued to refuse food or water, but he did manage a purr when he was being rubbed.

After several days without food or water, Lucky grew so weak that we knew his time was short. Those of you who grew up in the country will understand the quick end to his suffering that I considered. I do not accept that taking a pet on a long and terrifying journey to have their life drain away on a cold metal table in a strange and unwelcoming place is always the most "humane" solution. I'm not entirely certain that either "solution," the quick one or the "humane" one, is in the best interests of the animal. I think that often the suffering we think we are sparing our furry friends is in fact our own reluctance to endure their natural passing.

In any event, we decided to let Lucky pass in his own time. He was as comfortable as we could make him and he didn't suffer from lack of companionship. The last time I saw him, I climbed up into the barn to visit. The morning sun was coming in through the window and he turned his face to it as he looked out again over his domain, the trees he climbed, the meadow where he hunted. He purred briefly one more time when I rubbed his head, then he put his head down and closed his eyes. He did not respond any further to my ministrations. The next morning, Lucky was gone. I do not know how he mustered the strength to climb down out of that barn and walk so far into the woods that I have yet to find him, but like the long line of cats who came before him, he picked his own fate.

I do not think I will ever "know" what is the right and wrong of caring for an animal friend at the end of life. I do not condemn a solution that allows them to simply go to sleep and never wake up. I also fully understand and support the need to end suffering quickly in situations that do not allow for any other solution. There are some subjects about which we should never be so arrogant as to assume that we possess the full and unvarnished truth of the matter. There are some situations that call for decisiveness, but in speculation and in reflection thereof, we should always leave room for some doubt. We should always be open to the possibility that we might be wrong, or that a situation may arise that requires us to do things differently than we are accustomed. I'll end here, as it seems the discussion has come back around again to politics.

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The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Black knot

If you are beginning to see black masses in the branches of your plum and cherry trees, it is very likely that you have a black knot infection. This disease is caused by a fungus that infects a wide variety of Prunus trees, both fruit bearing and ornamental. In addition to the unsightly black galls it forms, this fungus can cause bark along the trunk to crack and ooze sap, leaving a wound through which other diseases may enter the tree and eventually kill it. However, with proper management and prevention, a minor black knot infection will have little to no effect on your trees.

Outbreaks of black knot are common in both natural areas and landscapes that are not protected with fungicides. The fungus overwinters in the large black galls that it forms. As temperatures increase and the first spring and summer rains occur, the fungus produces spores that are spread on the wind to other branches and often, other susceptible trees in the area. Once the spores land on new shoots of plum and cherry trees, the fungus starts to grow between individual plant cells. Because the spores are so small, they cannot be seen with the naked eye. Instead, the only way you know if a tree is infected is when the growing fungi releases chemicals that cause the wood of the tree to grow abnormally and create large, irregular masses. Some of this growth is also mature fungi which turns the wood black.

Many times, a gall will completely encircle a branch. When this happens, the leaves beyond the gall wilt and die. In some cases the entire branch dies, which also kills the gall. However, if the branch survives to the next year, the gall will also grow and produce more spores to infect new tissue and continue to do so as long as the branch is alive.

The best ways to prevent losing plum and cherry trees to black knot are to remove any infection sources and prevent it from happening in the first place. The infection does not move throughout the tree tissue like other diseases. Instead, it is isolated to the individual galls, which only infect other trees or part of the same tree under certain conditions. With mild cases, pruning out affected limbs at least four inches from the gall has proven highly successful. Sometimes, though, the trunk itself becomes infected which can cause the tree to become structurally unsound. Once the trunk forms galls and starts oozing sap, it is often too late to save the tree.

There are several ways to prevent your trees from contracting black knot. First, be very careful in your site selection. If there are a lot of infected wild Prunus species around, avoid planting susceptible cultivated varieties. There are several resistant varieties available for purchase and are good alternatives. Second, always inspect plum and cherry trees very carefully when purchasing them to make sure there is no infection. Finally, know what types of plum and cherry trees you have on your property and use fungicides to protect against the disease if they are prone to black knot infections. Purple leafed plum, chokecherry, European bird cherry and most other fruit bearing plum trees are highly susceptible to the fungus. Most other cherries are only mildly susceptible, and Amur chokecherry is almost never affected.

New varieties are constantly being developed, so when investing in a new plum or cherry tree, whether it is fruit bearing or ornamental, always check its resistance to major diseases in your area.



From the Ground Up
Melissa Mattee

Letters to The Editor

Dear Editor:

A Conservative Answer to Climate Change

The conservative values of the sacredness of life from conception to death, balancing our budget, hard work to get ahead, strong Christian ethics and a belief that God is central to my life, loyalty, taking personal responsibility, a deep respect for scientific reasoning and facts, and being good stewards of the earth are all dear to my heart. I believe we need to keep America strong, for America is a beacon of hope to the world.

I am also a strong believer in our moral duty to combat climate change. Conservative values and concern about climate change really go hand and hand. The Citizens Climate Lobby's carbon fee and dividend plan places a fair price on fossil fuels that accounts for their damage to human and animal life and returns that money to all of us citizens. That is a matter of fairness-polluters pay for their damage. It gets big government out of the way and lets the free market take over. This plan would markedly decrease greenhouse gases while growing our economy and saving countless thousands of American lives in the process. A study by the MIT shows that particulate matter produced by burning fossil fuels kills about 200,000 Americans each year! If terrorists inflicted that type of damage, we would wage a full scale war and spend whatever it took to combat that danger!

Richard Nixon became the first President to declare environmental protection "a national priority", and the Republican party under president Nixon initiated the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts and created the EPA. Ronald Reagan was a strong defender of the environment. Caring for our earth and the desire to pass on a better world to our children is a bipartisan concern, and there are very conservative, market based ways to do this. We are one country, and it is time to unite under a market based strategy to combat climate change and help lead America into a new era of greatness!

Vernon Dixon, MD

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

Bridge Players	Every Monday: Village Condos Clubhouse	12:30 pm
Bingo	Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
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
Chamber Board	Second Monday of each month: 1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	8 am
Historical Society	Old Rec. Center	5:30 pm
Mtn. Comp. Users	www.mtcug.org	6 pm
Planning Comm.	Courthouse	7 pm
School Board	Auditorium	7 pm
Unicoy Masonic	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
Caregiver support	Second Tuesday of each month: Brasstown Manor	3 pm
Arts & Crafts Guild	Calvary Alliance Chapel	6 pm
Liions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm
Basket Weavers	Second Wednesday of each month: SC Fire Hall	10 am
Board of Elections	Old Rock Jail	4 pm
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Second Thursday of each month: Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	5 pm
Square Dance Club	Second Friday of each month: Rec. Center	7 pm
Hospital Auxiliary	Third Monday of each month: Cafeteria	1:30 pm
Water Board	Water Office	6 pm

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Towns County Herald

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