

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Daytona Beach WWII

First person history, thanks to Ron Dick, American Legion Post #23, who grew up there!

In the first 7 months of 1942, more than 35 ships were sunk by German U-boats along the Florida coast. Including the entire east coast and the Gulf of Mexico, nearly 400 vessels were torpedoed. We were not prepared in the early months of WWII.

Daytona Beach, Fla., during the war, was a major training facility for more than 20,000 women of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAACs later know as the WACs). Home base was located just east of the Daytona International Speedway. The WAACs attracted attention in Daytona Beach. Often people gathered to observe them parading down the boardwalk, and the servicemen would stop on the beach to watch them exercise.

My Uncle, Edward J. Walton, Jr., flew for Coastal Air Patrol, also know as CAP, later becoming part of the Army Air Corp. His job was to fly up and down the coast scouting for German ships, mostly German submarines. The small planes they flew were able to carry light bombs, 100 to 200 pounds. Always in pairs, one to two miles apart covering as much of the coast line as possible. His squadron patrolled as far north as St. Augustine and as far south as Vero Beach. The Navy would send supply ships to aid Great Britain during the war, traveling down the coast, around Cuba, and across the Atlantic to Africa. This was the shortest route, least exposed to German submarines.

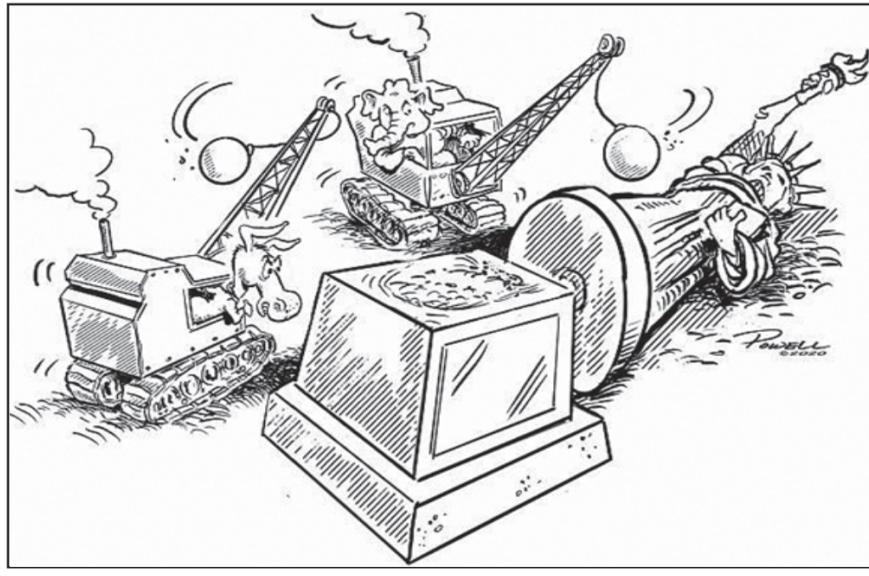
On one CAP patrol my Uncle Ed and his partner spotted a submarine up on the surface recharging it's batteries. The submarine captain spotted the planes, submerged and started to move. The sub went over a sandbar, as it did, my Uncle Ed and his sister plane dropped their bombs. The bombs stopped the submarine from moving, they then radioed the dive bombing base in Sanford, Fla., and that base sent out planes to finish off the submarine. My Uncle received a Commendation Air Medal for this action. This information was supplied to me by my cousin, Edward J. Walton, son of my Uncle Ed.

My father, Charles W. Dick, was part of a group which patrolled the beach at night. This group was called the Army Air Force Ground Observer Corps, numbering about 1.5 million volunteers. Also protecting the coast were the "Mosquito Fleets", consisting of all kinds of military and personal crafts. Coastal watch towers were also in place about 6 miles apart for the use of the ground patrols. There is still one in place, north of Daytona Beach, on A1A.

One dark night, my father and his buddy were patrolling the beach and spotted something slowly submerging out of the water. His buddy called "Halt, Halt, Halt", as required. The object still kept coming ashore toward my Dad and him. He emptied his Thompson Submachine gun and the object stopped moving. With closer observation, it was found to be a giant sea turtle. From then on he was called the "Turtle Man"!

*Semper Paratus*

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



## Septic Smart

It's everyone's favorite time of year! No, I'm not talking about fall or college football right around the corner. I'm talking about Septic Smart Week. However, in all seriousness maintaining a healthy septic system is very important. Fixing a septic system can be expensive and time consuming. Let's talk a bit about septic systems and how to maintain them.

One in five households in the US are on a septic system. One third of people in the Southeast are on a septic system. Septic systems provide several benefits. One of these is that a decentralized waste management system reduces the risk of disease transmission. A septic system also has environmental benefits because it removes pollution from surface water and recharges ground water and aquifers. There is also a cost benefit because it reduces the need for communities to build large treatment facilities. A septic system that is properly constructed and maintained provides excellent wastewater treatment.

State and county governments regulate septic systems.

There are a few different types of septic systems but generally, they all have a pipe bringing wastewater from the house to the septic tank. In the tank, solids will float to the bottom, where microbes break them down over time. There will be another pipe that flows to the drainfield. The drainfield handles the effluent that comes off the tank. This effluent goes into the soil, where microbes filter it.

One problem that you can have with your septic drainfield is roots clogging the stones and penetrating the pipes in your drainfield. Don't plant trees on your drainfield. Also, avoid parking cars or other heavy machinery on it, as this can damage your pipes. Keep stormwater drains away from your drainfield. Excess water in the drainfield makes it difficult for soil to process all the water that is flowing through it.

Another thing to do is to make sure that you have properly disposed of waste. The only things that should go down the toilet are human waste and toilet paper. Be careful about what you put down your sink. Toxins will kill the microbes that digest and treat the waste in your septic system. If you have a clogged sink, try to use a snake or boiling water to clean it. Never pour cooking oil or grease down the drain. If you have a garbage disposal try to limit its use. This will reduce the amount of fat and grease that enter your drainfield and clog it up. Another tip to help your septic system is to use your water efficiently. High efficiency toilets and showerheads can reduce the amount of stress that you put on your septic system. Select the proper load size on your washing machine to avoid overloading your septic system. If you can, spread your clothes washing throughout the week. Doing all of your laundry in one day will put a lot of water through your septic system at one time. Finally, a professional should inspect the average household septic system at least every three years. Typically, it will need to be pumped every 3-5 years.

If you have questions about your septic system contact your County Extension Office or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).

On September 28 at 5:30, I will be hosting a Radon Education Program. This event will be virtual, but there is some limited in person seating available. Pre-registration is required for this free event. Call the Union County Extension Office at 706-439-6030 to pre-register.

**UGA extension**  
**Watching and Working**  
**Jacob Williams**



## On A Personal Note

Some of the best advice any writer can take is to write what you know. I try to keep that in mind during those weeks when there's not much to say.

The problem with writing what I know is that with every passing year, I seem to know less. There was a time, for example, when I thought I knew a little about markets. A lot of us think we do when the rising tide raises all vessels, but today, markets are irrational. Some boats seem to levitate ever higher while the economic tide recedes like a beach just before a tsunami. This I know – but it doesn't take long to say that, so best to write about something else.

There was a time when I knew quite a lot about information technology and computer hardware. Funny how when you start doing what interests you for a paycheck, that interest can quickly sour, but now that I don't make my living herding electrons, my interest is once again on the rise. Unfortunately I don't want to spoil it by having to write about it.

For a number of years I made my living as a wilderness guide and counselor in a career that combined both interests. I stayed with it about three times the average 4 year burnout period, and while I didn't get completely burned out, I did get scorched around the edges. OK maybe I did get burned out. It's hard not to when you're dealing with one group after another of angry and dysfunctional human beings while sleeping on the ground in a damp sleeping bag. So I stepped away from that career. But after resting on the plate like a filet of blackened trout I discovered that there was some flavor left under the crust. That's why I still write about the wilderness from time to time and occasionally delve into human behavior, though I barely know enough about those subjects to blacken a sardine. I still love the wilderness. Human behavior, not so much. In fact, it's a good thing that God loves the world because if it were up to me, the world would be out of luck, and while we're being frank, loving my neighbor as myself is the best I can manage on a good day – and I don't have a lot of neighbors.

My friends have often heard me say that I don't like people very much, but I care a great deal for persons. People can be very lovable in person or in small groups. When you start stacking them together, however, you're going to run into problems. Group dynamics. The behavior of most people tends to change in a group setting. Like chickens.

As it turns out, I do know something about chickens. And bees. Chickens are somewhat predictable. Bees...do what bees do. Like cats. So let's talk about birds and bees, and chickens.

It has been a beautiful week on the farm. The bees are busy with partridge pea and the hummingbirds have discovered the jewel weed by the frog pond. They are both working tirelessly during this time of abundance and the meadow is filled with a contented buzz.

We've had a rainy year – a rainforestry rainy year. The algae on the deck has algae growing on it. This is the greenest blooming September I remember in a long time, and while those who can, make hay while the sun shines, weather delays have put us behind schedule in the construction of our new chicken house. As a result, the chicken herd has started to outgrow their temporary accommodations and they are beginning to experience social unrest in their relatively urban setting.

When they were small and innocent with plenty of elbow room (assuming that chickens have elbows) they were peaceful and content and awfully cute. Now that they are bigger, hungrier and more opinionated, the "Pecking Order Syndrome" has disrupted their mostly peaceful pursuits, and they are acting out in mostly peaceful protest. Mostly. Occasionally feathers do fly.

Lately they have evolved their language to include some unkind and inflammatory pejoratives. Yesterday I heard, "Baraaaahck buck buck buck buck...SKANK!!!" ("Skank" is shrieked about an octave above high C, and it means about the same in Chickense as it does in English.) The argument was between two hens who wanted the same piece of greenery. Understand that we enhance their diet with bundles of stilt weed and grass – they love it, and it is plentiful. They have more than they can possibly eat, but every day now we hear squabbles and complaints and the stillness of these halcyon days is interrupted by cries of "Skank!" and "Peeeeewwww!" (We haven't translated that one yet.) The chickens have divided into groups of associates who only hang out with each other. I'm afraid they have formed political parties. Skank.

Which brings us back full circle to human behavior. Can we better understand politics and humanity by observing chickens? Group dynamics for chickens is fairly simple. It's a matter of breed and greed. When they breed past a certain population density, their natural greed is aggravated to the point where it begins to affect their behavior. Like humans. We never hear about riots and looting in small towns.

Enough people understand that now that there is a push on to escape the crowded coops of the city for places with more elbow room. This could be a good thing, to a point, especially for the people doing the escaping. The trick is, for small towns and rural areas, places like ours where life is peaceful and good, to find that point, that formula that lets you know when the coop is crowded enough, because past that point, greed begins to bump up against greed and feathers start to fly.

I hope that doesn't happen to all the little places we love in this beautiful area. Nothing against Gatlinburg, but if we wanted to live there, we would be there, and I would have a lot less wilderness to write about, and a lot more fowl behavior.

In the meantime, we'll keep an eye on the weather, and on the birds and bees and chickens around us – especially the bees. They might have something to tell us about what comes next in these interesting times.

**The Middle Path**  
**By: Don Perry**  
[onthemiddlepath.com](http://onthemiddlepath.com)

## Letters to The Editor

### Shake Rag Road Accident

Dear Editor,

A group of good folks living on the road leading to Bell Mountain Park suggested I let you know of my experience visiting Bell Mountain on Sept. 6. I live in Atlanta, and it was my first time to the area. I was drawn to Bell Mountain through pictures and advertisements. However, I never thought I'd get my vehicle stuck in the ditch on the way there and escape what could have been a terrible accident. As I was coming up the hill at low speed, a reckless driver coming down forced me to steer to the right, and I went down a ditch. Not only is the road too narrow to accommodate the traffic, but that road was also poorly designed by the local government. My car had to get towed and law enforcement had to be called.

All in all, I was very lucky I received help from local residents who directed traffic and calmed reckless, impatient visitors while we were waiting for law enforcement and the towing company to arrive on the scene. I hope you can exert pressure on the county to make this road safe and regulate traffic up and down this mountain so that no one is harmed.

Regards,  
Luke Talley

### Basic Training

Dear Editor,

Full disclosure: I am a Vietnam veteran and find an interesting and ironic dichotomy between those who want to destroy or deface monuments dedicated to the Founding Fathers, Civil War generals and others (Benjamin Franklin??), all of whom are deceased, and the national monument call the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Could it be because those vets are still living and didn't take their basic training from an X-Box game?

Claude Spears

## Have something to sell?

Let the Herald work for you!  
Contact us at  
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Deadline for the  
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## Georgia Prescribed Fire Council

Fire is a natural phenomenon that has occurred in our forests since the beginning of time and maintains a natural balance in the environment. Some of our well-intentioned ancestors decided that they knew better how to maintain the environment than mother nature, so they created programs to extinguish all fires in the forest. In some areas such as parts of California changing the message is too late and now with the build-up of years of fuels, they are experiencing the largest, hottest, longest, and most expensive wildfires in history. The Georgia Prescribed Fire Council members promote the wise use of planned and controlled fire to get our forests back in line with the way nature intended it to be. The mission of the Georgia Prescribed Fire Council is: To protect the right, to encourage the use of, and to promote public understanding of prescribed fire. Prescribed fires are used by such a variety of individuals, agencies, and organizations throughout the state that the Southwest Georgia Prescribed Fire Council was established in 2002 in a regional effort to encourage the exchange of information, techniques, and experience among practitioners. In January of 2007, the steering committee, working with all partners, decided to expand and become the Georgia Prescribed Fire Council. This platform allows the council to be engaged in prescribed fire advocacy across the state. Frequent fires, set by lightning strikes and Native Americans, have shaped Georgia's ecosystems for thousands of years. Our forest ecosystems evolved with fire and continue to need the strategic application of fire that mimics this natural cycle. The plants and animals of the pine woods are accustomed to frequent fires and depend on these fires for their survival. Fire is as natural as sunshine, rain and wind in many plant communities including upland pine, pine flatwoods, marshes and wet prairies. Fire also benefits many of the rare animal species in our state that are declining. Some of these declines are caused almost totally by fire exclusion. Frequent fires prevent the build-up of flammable fuels in the forest that set the stage for destructive wildfires when ignition does occur. Great care is taken by prescribed fire managers to minimize any temporary inconveniences created by smoke. Smoke management plans for prescribed burns are designed so that smoke-sensitive areas like roads and residences, etc. are not negatively affected by the burn. Smoke from prescribed fires does not contribute appreciably to air quality issues since the practice typically avoids times of stagnant summer air. However, uncontrolled wildfires usually occur during the summer when there is already a bad urban air quality problem. We can reduce the risk of wildfires and the resulting smoke or air quality problems with well-timed prescribed fires. No other tool can so effectively remove the hazardous buildup of woodland fuels and help maintain our forests. Anyone interested in forest health and prescribed fires is welcome to register for the Georgia Prescribed Fire Council virtual meeting at [garfire.com](http://garfire.com) on September 30th. I am the Chair this year so register and sign in to support our cause to help get our forests back into the fire cycle as nature intended. Check the Georgia Prescribed Fire website [garfire.com](http://garfire.com) for more information on prescribed fire and registration information.

**RC&D**  
**Frank Riley**  
Executive Director



Publication No: 635540

Advertising, News deadlines: Friday at 5 p.m.

Towns County (1 Year) \$25. Out of County (1 Year) \$35. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points. The Towns County Herald is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. **Postmaster:** Send change of address to: Towns County Herald, P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546.

Office located at: 518 N. Main St. Suite 7 "The Mall", Hiawassee

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## Towns County Herald

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**Kenneth West**  
Owner/Publisher

**Shawn Jarrard**  
Editor

**Todd Forrest**  
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