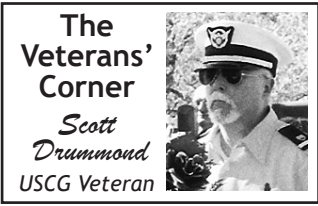


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

American families still wait

If you have been following the last two issues of our TCH/Veterans Corner, then you are aware of Zadi Cunningham's plight and long wait for her beloved brother, Grover Clyde Cunningham's remains to be returned to Towns County.



The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran

We of our Veterans community, wait also, in order to give a fitting honorable memorial service for this man and his family. This would, no doubt, be a tearful, but joyful memorial for all of us.

During the course of talking to, more importantly listening [!!] to Zadi, reading her documents and trying to understand her and her family's lone plight, my research turned up the fact, overlooked by so many of us, that Zadi is not alone! The numbers I intend to present here, multiply those families, like Zadi by the thousands! This is beyond heartbreaking. Perhaps the meager tools we have, like this small article will accomplish nothing. Perhaps, as Zadi stated, "It will help one family." However we just can't cease to hope and pray and at least try to remind and communicate something so important to so many, the issue of our POW/MIA men and women who have made it possible for you and me to be here.

The following numbers were taken from research done by U.S. Representative, Sam Johnson [R] Texas. A fellow Veteran to all Veterans and Americans, his service includes serving as an AF pilot during the Korean War and in Vietnam, where he was held captive for seven years. He is highly decorated. He achieved the rank of Colonel, USAF, and currently serves the people in and around Plano, TX. I've never ceased to ask, "Where do we get such men, like this and indeed men like Zadi's brother who gave his all for our nation and their fellow men?"

Our unaccounted for from past military actions: North America/WWII/1,701; Europe/Cold War/15; Europe/WWII/20,972; Mideast/Gulf Wars/5; Mideast/WWII/19; Africa/WWII/971 and El Dorado Canyon/1; Southeast Asia and Pacific/ Cold War/111; Korean War/ 7,807; WWII/ 48,098; Vietnam War 1,618; South America/WWII/ 1,025. These numbers are astounding plus thinking of those many families, not knowing, multiplies these numbers exponentially to incredible unobtainable numbers. Those are our fellow citizens, like Zadi. My meager math skills determines the total is 82,694 but simply because research on issues such as this is subject to human error, confusion, chaos and in the end bureaucratic red tape, these numbers are probably higher. At any rate, one POW/MIA is one too many for our USA, our men, women and families who have served us well, in wartime and peace.

In closing I'll say again, thank you Zadi for your assistance in composing this and may this long 73 year long wait come to a successful closure for you and your family and thousands of others. Please take note of the small black POW/MIA flag flying just beneath our beautiful Stars and Stripes at all of our Veteran facilities and other locations.

Semper Paratus

The extra gas can

In "World Made By Hand," James Howard Kunstler describes life in America after a series of disasters bring a swift and unexpected end to many of the things we take for granted. With the power grid destroyed and without the constant flow of fossil fuel that enables modern life, Americans in this dystopian novel are forced to live life much like their ancestors in the 19th century.

One of the metaphors we use to annoy our readers into thinking about the irrational assumptions that underlie our fossil fuel dependent way of life is our "God-given right to drive the SUV 10 miles for a jug of milk." We have all done it, or something like it from time to time. Few of us are mindful of the deadly cost in blood and treasure which has been paid to purchase that kind of mindless affluence. Few think often of the environmental costs associated with burning carbon for fuel. But everyone on the east coast should now be aware of how fragile our petroleum based economy truly is.

The shutting down of a single pipeline has, in just a few days, resulted in empty fuel tanks all over the Southeast. Bagged pumps and long lines have already been seen in Towns County, and with a situation closer to inconvenience than emergency (so far), some few of our neighbors have already behaved badly, rudely, selfishly.

The extra gas can which some of us filled over the weekend without a doubt accelerated the emptying of the tanks at our local stations. When service is restored to the Colonial Pipeline, hopefully later this week, that can will most likely still be sitting in the garage unused, the temporary fantasy of being "prepared," forgotten.

Let us use our imaginations for a moment to extend this temporary interruption in the supply of gasoline from the level of inconvenience to a state of true emergency. If a leak can cause this level of interruption, what would a natural disaster do? How long would that gas can last for our commute to work? Driving to the clinic for medical treatments? To the grocery store when the refrigerator is empty? How long would the grocery stores stay open if our supply of fuel was interrupted for weeks instead of days? What would happen to the price of groceries – and everything else – if our fuel supply became sporadic and unreliable?

Consider our addiction to oil from a different angle. The vast majority of our concern and the bulk of reporting on the subject has been about the interruption of that way of life to which we feel entitled. Very little has been reported about the environmental impact of 250 thousand gallons of gasoline spilled in an environmentally sensitive area.

Consider also the irony of a leaking pipeline in light of the ongoing struggle of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe against the building of a pipeline near their tribal lands. The Dakota Access Pipeline is designed to bring crude oil from the Bakken fields to refineries in Illinois. Opponents of the pipeline are concerned about the environmental impact, particularly of the section planned to be dug under the Missouri River.

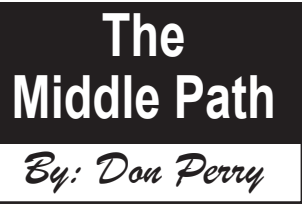
Taking a step back from all the opposing viewpoints on the future of fossil fuels, we see that the stage is set for change. The question of climate change and the reality of poisoned water and air, the cost in blood and treasure and the frailty of our distribution system are pushing us to seek alternatives. There is hope in solar and wind power, electric cars and mass transportation, but we are a long, long way from being able to rely, as a nation, on these technologies. Opposing our need for change is the scale of our dependency on fossil fuel, the vested interests of the corporations that have determined the direction of world history since the first world war, and the natural resistance of the human being to change.

In "World Made by Hand" we see the inherent weakness of an economy, of our American civilization itself, dependent on a fragile network of energy and food distribution. We are stretched out along our highways and crowded into our cities, far from the producers of the things we must have. Think of the old cartoon of the top heavy fighter with a massive chest and shoulders, but tiny weak ankles and a glass gut. One punch to that gut, and the east coast was staggered back against the ropes.

Take another step back and we see a nation with too many eggs in too few baskets. We are increasingly dependent on fewer and fewer elements far beyond our control. Millions of people are totally dependent on government. Our fuel needs are dependent on a fragile network of ever fewer companies. The nation's electricity comes from far away on an aging infrastructure. The majority of our food is grown on factory farms concentrated into just a few regions of the country. It is owned by a small group of giant corporations and it is dependent on our fragile fuel distribution system.

This is the big question of our times, as the difference of opinion resolves into a division between those who aspire to a global economy and the continued concentration of power and resources – and those who see a future where power, including political power, energy and resources are decentralized and concentrated more regionally and locally. Something to think about over the next (hopefully) few days, with that extra time we will have without the need to drive to town for that jug of milk.

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.



The Middle Path
By: Don Perry

With fall quickly approaching, many of us are ready and raring to go harvest some ripening fruit from our trees. Whether you want something fun for the grandkids to pick, or you want something for your own enjoyment, there are a variety of fruit trees that do well in our area. The major steps to having a productive fruit harvest are the three p's: picking, pollination, and pruning. If you know the basics of these three important characteristics, you will have plenty of fruit for yourself, your family and even your neighbors!

The most common fruit trees I see up here are, of course, apples. A wide variety of apple trees do well in the North Georgia mountains, but red cultivars are the most resistant to diseases such as cedar apple rust. Apples ripen throughout late summer and early fall, and are perfect to pick when their color has peaked and they are easily plucked off the stems. Though it may be tempting to prune your apple trees after the fruit and leaves have dropped, the ideal pruning time is in early February. Remove any diseased or dead wood and any branches that are rubbing against each other. You always want to take back about one third of the tree's volume to allow for air flow and to maintain structural integrity. Finally, always make sure you have multiple apple trees that flower at the same time. If you only have one tree, you will not have any fruit because it will not be pollinated.

Pears are also a common tree grown here. Unlike apples, they need to be picked before they are ripe. A good rule of thumb is to pick them when you can see little brown dots (lenticels) appearing on the skin. Early February is also the best time to prune these trees, and you will definitely need to prune them because their branches grow almost straight up and form narrow crotches. Just like with all trees, you want good air flow through the canopy to prevent disease. Even if a pear may be advertised as "self-fertile", it is good to have at least two that flower at the same time to increase your fruit yield. More pollination always means more tasty fruit!

Despite the fact that North Georgia is not traditionally considered a suitable site for fig trees, I have seen several varieties such as Hardy Chicago, Celeste and some Brown Turkey do well in the area. Figs ripen throughout the warm summer months into fall, depending on environmental conditions. Again, late winter is the ideal time to prune as figs typically yield better when they are kept a little short instead of growing into a large tree. February is also a great time to make cuttings. If you are unsure of what variety to get, the best thing may be to ask a friend or neighbor with a successfully producing fig tree if you can take a cutting to propagate your own tree. Cuttings should be made from one year old wood and should be about eight to ten inches long. If you already have a fig tree and it is not producing, there could be a few reasons. Dry, hot weather can stress some figs and prevent them from fruiting. Also, because the flower is located inside the fruit, it requires a visit from a specific wasp. Finally, it might just not be old enough. Figs take a long time to mature and bear fruit.

For more information on other fruiting trees to plant, contact the extension office.



From the Ground Up
Melissa Mattee

Letters to The Editor

To the Editor:

Clean energy-a time to unite
In regards to the recent article in the Atlanta Journal Constitution stating how divisive climate change is, I would like to offer an alternative. Climate change is actually a time for Americans to come together. Even if one does not believe in climate change, everyone wants a safe, healthy, prosperous America, and we all want to pass on a better world to our children. Investing in clean energy will help ensure those aspirations, and now this can be done without hurting our economy, thanks to solar and wind energy now being competitive with fossil fuels. Let us put aside our differences and unite behind the green energy revolution that can lead America into a new era of prosperity and greatness! It can add millions of good paying American jobs. We are America! We can do this, and we can do it together! We must remember the lesson from the founders of our great country-united we stand!

Vernon Dixon, MD

Letter to the Editor:

Residents of North Georgia are familiar with local judges who may have committed ethnic violations resulting in their being removed from the bench either voluntarily or involuntarily. In the November 8th general election citizens of Georgia will be asked to vote on a constitutional amendment concerning the State's Judicial Qualification Commission which currently has authority over these judges.

The Judicial Qualifications Commission was created by Constitutional Amendment in 1972 to conduct investigations and hearings with respect to complaints of ethical misconduct by Georgia judges and is also authorized to issue Advisory Opinions regarding appropriate judicial conduct. The Commission is composed of:

Two (2) judges of any court of record selected by the Supreme Court of Georgia.

Three (3) lawyers, each of whom must have had at least ten (10) years' experience, appointed by the State Bar of Georgia.

Two (2) citizens, neither of whom shall be members of the State Bar, appointed by the Governor.

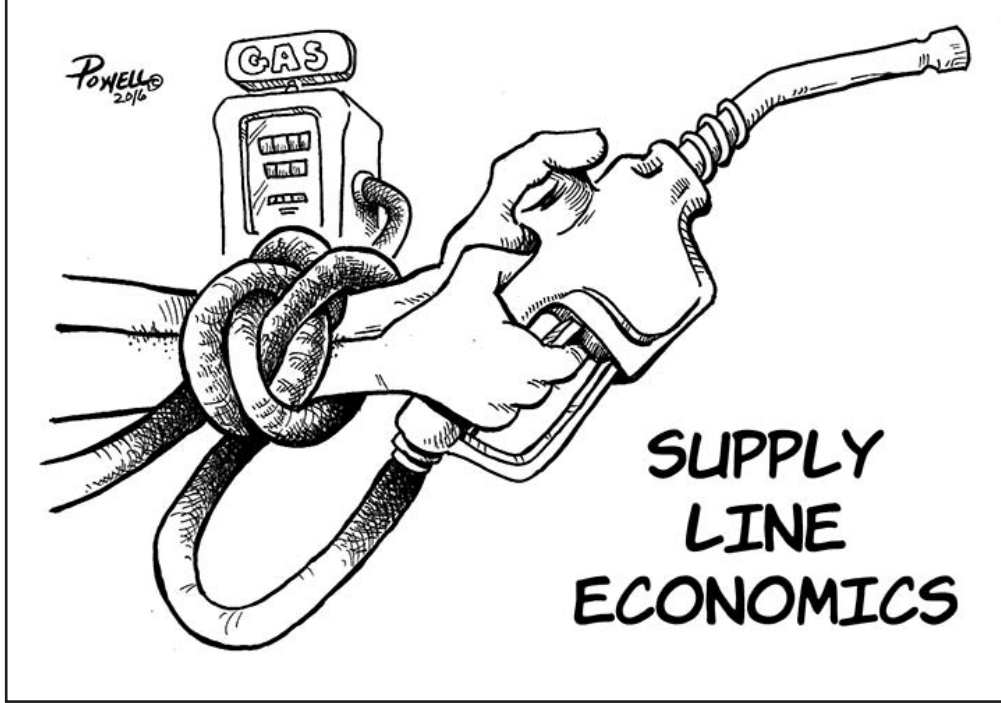
All members serve four (4) year terms and until their successors are appointed and qualified.

The question on the Ballot reads: "Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended so as to abolish the existing Judicial Qualifications Commission; require the General Assembly to create and provide by general law for the composition, manner of appointment, and governance of a new Judicial Qualifications Commission, with such commission having the power to discipline, remove, and cause involuntary retirement of judges; require the Judicial Qualifications Commission to have procedures that provide for due process of law and review by the Supreme Court of its advisory opinions; and allow the Judicial Qualifications Commission to be open to the public in some manner?"

In short, the proposed constitutional amendment would inject the heavy hand of politics (GA General Assembly) into a process in which politics should play no role and would challenge the integrity of Judicial review and the discipline of rogue Judiciaries.

Please inform yourself of the negative impact this amendment will have on the application of equitable and fair justice under the rule of law.

Wesley Hopgood



Towns County Community Calendar

	Every Monday:	
Bingo	Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
Bridge Players	Village Condos Clubhouse	12:30 pm
Every Tuesday:		
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Every Wednesday		
SMART Recovery	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Every Thursday:		
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
Every Friday:		
Bridge Players	Village Condos Clubhouse	12:30 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Every Sunday:		
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
Mtn. Amat. Radio	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	6:30 pm
First Wednesday of each month:		
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
First Thursday of each month:		
Stephens Lodge	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
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
Third Wednesday of each month:		
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
MOAA	Call Jack @ 828-321-2896	
Third Thursday of each month:		
Co. Comm. Mtg	Courthouse	5:30 pm
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
Fourth Friday of each month:		
Square Dance Club	Rec. Center	7 pm

Towns County Herald

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