

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## FYI: Veterans Burial Benefits

Please be advised, as we never know how long we will endure on earth. And we take so much for granted. Hard for us to think about; however our end of life on earth is inevitable for each and every one of us. I reprint this in order to assist Veterans and their families to prepare. Submitted by Ron Willis, USCG Veteran and fine American.

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



According to a press release from the Missouri Veterans Association many veterans are under the impression their status as a veteran means the government will pay for their burial.

This is not true, and it can cause great financial hardship for families who don't understand it at a time when they are least prepared to deal with it.

Eligibility for potential burial benefits depends on the veteran's discharge papers (DD214), which cannot always be obtained quickly from government sources. It is very important veterans have their discharge papers located in a secure place known to their next of kin. To be eligible for burial benefits, a veteran must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable at a minimum. Certain other factors including time period and length of service may apply.

For veterans interred at a national or state veterans' cemetery, the plot, opening and closing of the grave and perpetual care are provided at no cost. If buried at a private cemetery, the family must pay these costs, as well as any related expenses.

If burial is to take place in a national or state veterans' cemetery, the cemetery will make the arrangements for the interment only. Neither the cemetery nor the VA makes funeral arrangements or performs cremations. It is the responsibility of the veteran's family to make arrangements for funeral services with a funeral home, including memorial services, viewings, preparing and transporting the deceased, the casket, etc. Any items or services obtained from a funeral home will be at the families' expense, including the plot and grave provisions if the veteran is not buried in a national or state cemetery.

The VA will provide free of charge, a burial flag, government marker and a Presidential Memorial Certificate regardless of where the veteran is buried. The VA does not pay for any expenses related to a veteran's burial or funeral; however certain survivors may apply for a monetary burial allowance paid after-the-fact by the VA. This allowance generally is given only if the veteran was in receipt of VA disability compensation or pension at the time of death, if the veteran died while hospitalized by VA or while receiving care under VA contract at a non-VA facility.

The amount payable depends on whether the veteran's death was related to a military service-connected disability, with the payments ranging from \$300 to \$2,000+. There are other factors which can affect potential eligibility for this benefit, so veterans or their families should contact the VA at 800-827-1000 or a veterans service officer (VSO) for more information prior to actually needing the information.

*Semper Paratus*

## Gentlemen

"We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honour and are shocked to find traitors in our midst."  
 - C.S. Lewis

With the waning of interest in professional football it has been suggested that the oddsmakers could recoup their losses by taking bets on who the next celebrity will be to stand accused of sexual misconduct.

For two or three generations the word, "celebrity" brought to mind an actor or filmmaker, but we use it today to include the continuous parade of politicians and pundits and the entire menagerie of personalities and stars to which we have ceded the national will and consciousness.

Wave after wave of headlines shout out new accusations, revelations or condemnations, as more and more women, and men, are emboldened, might we say, empowered, to speak up.

Unfortunately, our attention span has become such an ephemeral thing. When we are flooded with information, as we are now, with one scandal stacked on top of another, we quickly lose track of fact and interpretation. We lose interest, and we seek distraction. At this time in our history we run the risk of losing the narrative entirely, and it is a vitally important narrative.

It's as if two alternative timelines for the future of our culture are forming. On the path that we hope we'll take, we will have evolved to the point where people are less afraid to speak truth to power, where truth and reason and the rule of law prevail over brute force, not just in the courtroom, but in our homes and businesses as well.

And brute force is exactly what we are talking about. All along the continuum between the brutal insensitivity of rape and the hypersensitivity of micro-aggression lies the intention to exercise power over another human being. A civil society keeps that intention in check.

If we are lucky, the ongoing revelations represent a leveling up of our collective consciousness and our rejection of brutality. The effect will be systemic and far reaching, and our grandchildren will live in a better world because of it.

If we are not so lucky, the pendulum of public anger and opinion will swing so widely that it damages the clockworks. It's happened many times before. We are quite capable of going from the roaring 20s to prohibition in less than one generation.

Without a thoughtful read of history, it's easy to forget how that clock does actually work. The reason which designed the elaborate gear mechanism and the laws that define the escapement of the complicated clockworks of our society are useless without the pull of a weight or the tension of a spring, or one might also say, the brute force, which makes the clock run.

In other words, in our zeal to signal our collective virtue, let's stop well short of an outright neutering of what is masculine in our culture. We may think that we've outgrown the alpha male, but without him our species would have died out long ago in the days of the megafauna. Without him we would soon discover that all of the noblest ideals of our better natures would be little defense against a planet which has demonstrated over and over again the power of brute force.

Once again we strive for a middle path where strength and compassion are not mutually exclusive. Men used to have an unofficial code for navigating that path. We once referred to those who followed such a code as "gentlemen," and we need them now more than ever.

The concept of the gentleman will be foreign to some, and others may confuse the term with one of the caricatures offered by the theater, but should you find it necessary to explain the word to someone, a gentleman gives all women equally the same respect that he would ideally give to his mother, sister or daughter. It really is that simple.

Most of us have family traditions that we enjoy during the Christmas season. Families with small children may spend Christmas Eve baking cookies for Santa or listening to Christmas carols while enjoying eggnog by the fire. As a small child I remember the anticipation of Christmas being so intense. I was in awe and wonder dreaming about what might be inside all those presents wrapped so nicely under the tree. I would just stare at the Christmas tree and daydream about Christmas Day.

For me, even at 49, Christmas is still the most magical time of year. I love Christmas lights and the sounds of Christmas carols everywhere. The world just seems to be a nicer place during the Christmas season. I love to watch young children open gifts and see their eyes light up with joy. There is no other feeling like the feeling of Christmas.

So, what about the children who are less fortunate? Imagine the child whose family has fallen on hard times. Do they wake up to just another day of struggling to make ends meet? Imagine if you were a parent who loved your child, but had lost a job because of the poor economy. I doubt that there would be anything much harder than not being able to provide your child, whom you love, the wonder of Christmas morning. Each year the Sheriff's Office attempts to provide the joy of Christmas gifts for Towns County's less fortunate children. This effort is only made possible by the help of generous people in the community who donate to this cause. Names of children in need are collected and toys are gathered. We try whenever possible to provide at least one item that the child has specifically asked for. The toys are then given to the parents of the child to handle Christmas in their family's tradition. It is all done in such a way as to protect the dignity of the family and allow them to share in the joy that many of us take for granted. This year has been a tough one for many local families. We are hoping to provide for each child, but we need your help. If you would like to help us with this effort or if you know of a family with children that needs help, please contact your Sheriff's Office at 706-896-4444. I hope that each of you has a blessed and joyous Christmas this year!

## The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

## Christmas Trees

While some opt for the ease of an artificial tree that can be used year after year and passed down to kids and grandkids, there is just something about a real tree that brightens up the home at Christmas. If you choose to purchase a cut tree, make sure you follow steps to keep it as healthy as you can for as long as possible.

First, decide on an appropriate place to put the tree. Do you want it to be seen from all sides or would you rather it be against a wall or window? Always make sure that heat sources, such as TVs, fireplaces, radiators and air ducts are nowhere near the tree, and put the tree in an area that doesn't interfere with doors or common foot traffic. Always measure the height and width of the space you have available in the room where you want the tree to go. Nothing is worse than picking and paying for the perfect tree and hauling it home on top of your car or in your truck, only to find it will not fit anywhere in your house. Have a tape measure handy to determine the height of the tree you want, and always bring some extra cord to tie the tree down with in case the tree farm does not have any extra.

Many trees sold on retail lots may have come from out of state and been exposed to harsh conditions on the journey to their destination. They may have been cut weeks prior to when they are sold, and they are probably stressed by the time they are sold. It is always good to know whether the trees are delivered once at the beginning of the season or are they delivered at different times during the selling season. The earlier and fresher you can get a tree, the better. Fresh trees have a healthy green appearance with very few browning needles. The needles should be flexible but not fall off if you run them through your hand. You can also raise the tree off the stand a little and let it drop. If a bunch of needles drop off, it might not last as long as you want it to. However, it is totally normal for a few needles to fall off and some near the trunk may be brown. The majority of the tree should always be bright green and fragrant, though. Don't forget to check for little hitchhikers as well! Bagworm moths and scale insects are common on Christmas trees.

When choosing your tree, keep in mind the place you've decided to put your tree and choose a tree that's appropriate. For example, if you want to place your tree against a wall, it is okay if some branches in a little are a little damaged, or there is a bald spot. If you place it in a corner, you may even want more branches to be toward one side or another. This approach can help you save time and money, because it can take a long time to find the perfect tree, and prettier trees are almost always more expensive. Once you've decided on a tree, make sure that the bottom of the trunk has at least six to eight inches of clean bark with no branches. Always make sure it is watered to make it last longer. The more water a tree has, the less dry it is, and the less of a fire hazard it is.

UGA extension  
 From the Ground Up  
 Melissa Mattee



## Letters to The Editor

### Why Action on Climate Change is Important

Dear Editor,  
 This letter is in response to Tim Groza's response this week referring to my bludgeoning people about climate change. I certainly hope that is not what I am doing. My intent is only to provide factual information about what is certainly one of the most pressing problems of our times. My passion over the issue of climate change began many years ago after a series of deeply religious experiences that have gradually led me to the deepening awareness that God resides in all people, including those in future generations, and that I have a sacred duty to care for my fellow human beings in the best way that I can. After much intense study, it has become obvious to me that helping to pass on a livable world to future generations by taking action on climate change is the best way that I can do that. I see very clearly the disastrous effects that climate change will have on our children and grandchildren, and I do feel a passionate calling to try and prevent that. Our earth is precious, and I feel very strongly that Creation Care is very important. Over 99% of peer reviewed articles on climate change agree with it being manmade and very dangerous, so I am not alone in my thinking. I do believe in science. If people do feel like I am beating them down, I do deeply apologize.

Vernon Dixon

### Merry Christmas?

Dear Editor,  
 I wish that our square in Hiwassee had a lighted "Merry Christmas" sign instead of "Happy Holidays". For people who prefer Merry Christmas, why not have a lighted display for both?  
 Maybe next year?  
 Carmen Denton

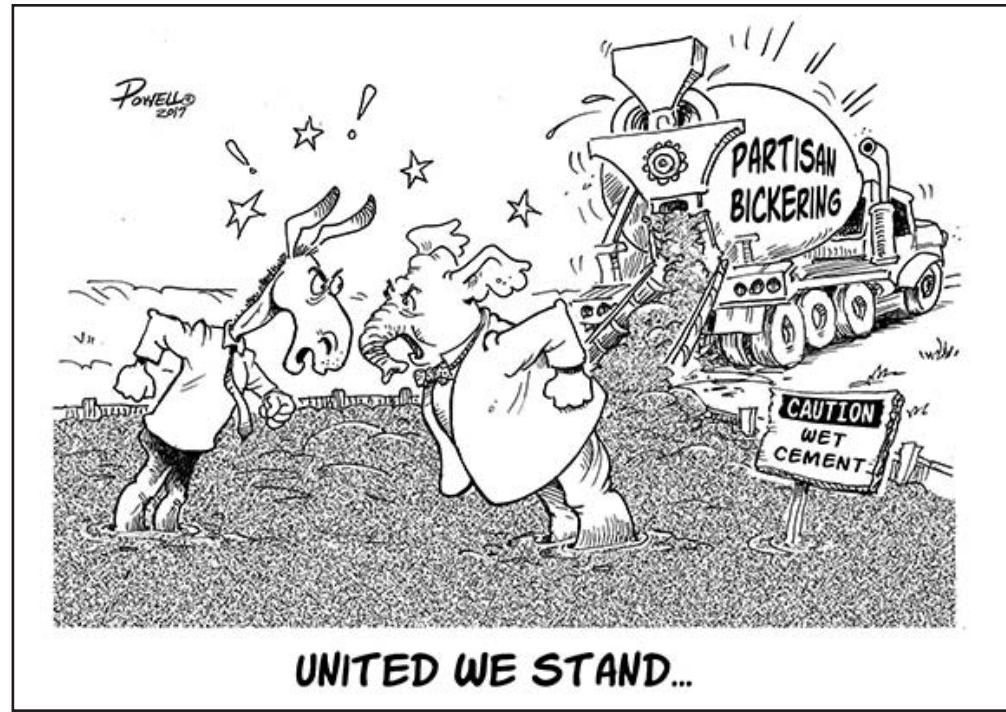
### GUEST COLUMNS

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, Hiwassee, 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.*



UNITED WE STAND...

## Towns County Community Calendar

Bridge Players	<b>Every Monday:</b>	12:30 pm
Bingo	All Saints Lutheran	9:30 am
Free GED prep.	<b>Every Tuesday:</b>	4 pm
SMART Recovery	Old Rec. Center	
Bridge Players	<b>Every Wednesday</b>	7 pm
Free GED prep.	Red Cross Building	
Alcoholics Anon.	<b>Every Thursday:</b>	12:30 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	All Saints Lutheran	4 pm
Mtn. Amat. Radio	Old Rec. Center	
Alzheimer's Supp.	<b>Every Friday:</b>	7 pm
American Legion	Red Cross Building	
Hiaw. City Council	<b>Every Sunday:</b>	7 pm
Young Harris Council	Red Cross Building	
Quilting Bee	<b>First Monday of each month:</b>	6:30 pm
Stephens Lodge	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	
Chamber Board	<b>First Tuesday of each month:</b>	1:30 pm
Historical Society	McConnell Church	4 pm
Mtn. Comp. Users	VFW Post 7807	6 pm
Planning Comm.	City Hall	7 pm
School Board	YH City Hall	
Unico Masonic	<b>First Wednesday of each month:</b>	10 am
Caregiver support	McConnell Church	
Arts & Crafts Guild	<b>First Thursday of each month:</b>	7:30 pm
Lions Club	Lodge Hall	
Mtn. Coin Club	<b>Second Monday of each month:</b>	8 am
Basket Weavers	1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
Board of Elections	Old Rec. Center	6 pm
CVB Board	www.mcug.org	7 pm
Awake America Prayer	Civic Center	7 pm
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Auditorium	7:30 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Lodge Hall	
	<b>Second Tuesday of each month:</b>	3 pm
	Brasstown Manor	4 pm
	Mtn. Regional Library	6 pm
	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
	N. GA Tech	6 pm
	<b>Second Wednesday of each month:</b>	10 am
	SC Fire Hall	4 pm
	67 Lakeview Cir., Ste. A	10 am
	<b>Second Thursday of each month:</b>	9 am
	Rec Center	Noon
	Civic Center	1 pm
	Senior Center	
	<b>Last Thursday of each month:</b>	5:30 pm
	Cadence Bank	

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 Phone: (706) 896-4454 Fax: (706) 896-1745 Email: tcherald@windstream.net  
 Or mail to: PO Box 365, Hiwassee, GA 30546

## Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

<b>Kenneth West</b> Owner/Publisher	<b>Charles Duncan</b> Editor	<b>Shawn Henrikson</b> Copy Editor	<b>Lowell Nicholson</b> Photographer
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