

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Christmas for our people in uniform

I remember, decades ago, spending time on long patrols, SAR cases, drug interdiction, thus missing family events and very special days like Christmas. Work, toil, getting bounced around aboard a Hamilton Class patrol boat, boarding details, no sleep, general quarters, overbearing heat, etc. occupied most of our days back then. hindsight being 20/20 I know now that I (we) were more fortunate than my brothers and sisters serving in the jungles, rivers, swamps and mud of Southeast Asia. Even missing several Christmas holidays, a free and Sovereign Republic! We may even turn on the news tonight and learn of several more of our best young folks who have given their all, over in someplace they'd rather not be. Of course all of them would rather be home for Christmas!

My point being that Christmas, a time for peace and love is upon us. We all pray for peace; even as we face the reality that hostile people, throughout the globe will never, ever allow this. So let's not forget those who go into harm's way whether in peacetime or war by letting them know we honor, appreciate and care for them.

Here's just a small selection of venues that we can accomplish this easily done mission of love and care for those who truly care about something far greater than themselves:

1 - www.garysinisefoundation.org/ This guy does lots of work for our military folks.

2 - supportourtroops.org/ Make a donation or ship Christmas packages directly to: Support Our Troops®, 13617 N. Florida Avenue, Tampa, FL 33613.

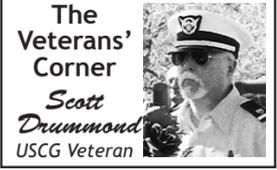
3 - www.operationwearehere.com/IdeasforSoldiersCardsLetters.html, Cards and letters for the military community. I have heard good reports on this one.

4 - www.redcross.org/volunteer/volunteer-opportunities/holidays-for-heroes; we all know of the great work our Red Cross volunteers do.

Or do a little online research, or visit any of our local churches and closer to home another Veteran mentioned to me, just recently that our Salvation Army has lots of programs for military folks as well as veterans.

Our own VFW/American Legion post 7807 on Sunnyside Drive or VFW Thrift Store can always take donations and be assured those donations will be put to good use, especially this time of year. By taking advantage of those sites, listed above you will be doing a great deed for some young person, who may become your friend for life. Please take advantage of this small reminder and make yourself and some deserving young soldier, sailor, airman or Marine happy!

Merry Christmas and Semper Paratus!



The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran

A Tale of two ironies

One of my favorite keepsakes is a copy of the commemorative 1897 Sears, Roebuck and Co. Catalog. It is a window into the world of my grandparents and great grandparents. It illustrates an America very different from the one we experience today, but as we shall soon see, there are also many similarities. The wheel of history sometimes turns in full circles.

The year 1897 marked the end of an economic depression that started with the Panic of 1893. This depression began with the collapse of wheat prices and a run on gold in the US Treasury by foreign investors, followed by a bank run in the United States. Five hundred banks closed. Fifteen thousand businesses failed and many farms were lost or ceased operations. Unemployment skyrocketed, rising as high as 43% in some states such as Michigan. Soup kitchens to help the destitute became common in urban areas.

The Panic of 1893 is all but forgotten except by students of economic history. It has been replaced in the popular imagination by the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Economic hardship before and during the Panic of 1893 led to a great populist uprising. Many of the afflicted, poor wheat farmers in the west, cotton farmers in the south and struggling union members in the north, blamed their hardship on global finance, elites, banks and cities. They believed that these forces were undermining traditional American values.

There was even a racial component to the political movement. According to Hasia R. Diner, author of *The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000*, "Some Populists believed that Jews made up a class of international financiers whose policies had ruined small family farms."

Jews, they asserted, owned the banks and promoted the gold standard, the chief sources of their impoverishment. Agrarian radicalism posited the city as antithetical to American values, asserting that Jews were the essence of urban corruption."

Echoes of the past can be found in the wave of populism which led to the election of Donald Trump, who won the vast majority of votes outside of our cities and densely populated areas. Economic hardship was a common denominator for many Trump supporters also, and once again the culprits were seen to be globalism, elites, banks and cities.

There was even, amongst a tiny minority of Trump supporters, a racial component which disparaged immigrants in general and Muslims in particular, a factor which was not lost on the Clinton campaign, which unsuccessfully attempted to paint all Trump supporters with the same derogatory brush.

I hope that some of you will savor with me the delicious irony which history so often provides to keep us humble. The Populist Party, also known as the People's Party, which played a decisive role in American politics from 1892-1896, was a left wing organization. This 19th century "basket of deplorables" was absorbed by the Democratic Party in support of Williams Jennings Bryan in the election of 1896. Bryan lost to Republican, William McKinley, but he controlled the Democratic party for several years. Bryan was a supporter of Prohibition and an opponent of Darwinism and the theory of evolution. He spoke out against American imperialism and was a leading figure in the "trust busting" campaign of 1908.

Apparently politicians exchange costumes every few generations, but let's get back to the Sears catalog of 1897, which contained within its pages something to address just about every need of the average American of that time. With that one catalog you could clothe your entire family, furnish your home and equip your farm. In fact, you could order an entire house from Sears, and one fine example still stands in Helen, GA in the form of a Christmas shop on the main street through town.

Sears remained one of the most iconic brands in American history throughout the twentieth century, and few Americans have not owned a Craftsman tool or a Kenmore appliance.

Unfortunately, Sears may not be with us for too much longer. In October of this year, Moody's downgraded Sears' liquidity rating, concluding that the company will have to continue to rely on outside funding from the liquidation of assets to remain in business.

About eleven years ago, when Sears stock sold for over \$200 per share, a hedge fund manager by the name of Steven Mnuchin joined Sears' board of directors. Most of these directors were in power during the demise of Sears and Kmart, and they had a plan.

Unable to stimulate sales at Sears anchor stores and unwilling to adapt to a changing market (or reinvest in the company), they setup a REIT, or a Real Estate Investment Trust, and began transferring assets out of the company and into the REIT.

Bill Bonner writes, "Rather than invest in new people and new methods, you take the money for yourself. It is even more attractive if you can borrow a lot of fake money at ultra-low rates against the company's credit... pay it out to yourself and other financiers... and then jump ship, leaving the company, its employees, and its creditors to drown in your debt."

David Stockman concludes, "...the whole deal was a backdoor financing to get assets out of SHLD [Sears] prior to its impending bankruptcy. The hedge fund insiders will now have a secured senior claim through the newly created REIT, which they substantially own, rather than worthless SHLD common stock."

The hollowing out of Sears' retail business was reflected in the hollowing out of the once prosperous middle of America. With less to spend, middle class shoppers at Sears went to Walmart. With more to spend, the rich went to Nordstrom's and Neiman Marcus.

The final irony of this sad tale (which is still being written) is not likely to be one that we can savor. It has an offensive odor which suggests something rotten. Mr. Steven Mnuchin, hedge fund manager and recent member of Sears' Board of Directors, is... wait for it... Donald Trump's nominee for Treasury Secretary.

The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

Frost Protection

I'm sure many of us spent the past weekend bundled up inside by the fire with some hot cocoa to avoid these frigid arctic winds. We aren't the only ones who may need some protection from cold temperatures though. Our plants may spend their lives outside and be somewhat used to adverse weather, but younger, less hardy plants really need our help when it comes to avoiding damage from hard frosts and cold snaps.

Clear, cloudless nights are the worst for frost damage to plants. During cloudy nights and days, the cloud cover helps to keep in heat that the earth has absorbed. Clear nights, however, allow all the heat that has been absorbed throughout the day to rapidly escape, causing the temperature to drop dramatically and moisture left in the air to settle on plants and freeze. The freezing of these crystals damages plant tissues and causes cracks in stems and bark as well as dieback of tender young shoots, leaves, and buds.

Plants that are most susceptible to frost damage are those that are not native to our area, are actively growing, or are not yet cold hardened. Frost damage is a major concern in spring as warm temperatures early in the season cause plants to break their dormant state early, and buds are nipped during the last season frost. However, dramatic drops in temperature throughout the winter can cause significant damage to plants as well. In mature plants, this could mean dieback of branches or the death of buds, causing less new growth or flowering the following year. Young plants with no protection are often killed by prolonged below freezing temperatures.

The best way to protect your plants against frost damage is to prevent it by planning ahead and providing appropriate care as best as you can. When possible, always select cold-tolerant plants and plan your landscaping appropriately. Brick walls, rocks, and patios are excellent heat sources as they absorb sunlight throughout the day. These can serve as heat sources for sensitive plants. Always try to plant in areas with southern and western exposure as these get the most sunlight throughout the day and are the warmest areas at night. If a plant requires full to part sun, always plant in full sun if possible. Plant early-blooming frost tolerant plants in the coldest part of your property to make sure they do not break dormancy and risk losing their beautiful flowers. Plants still need hydration over the winter, so make sure they are adequately watered. Moist soil also changes temperature slowly, so this can help reduce cold damage to the roots. Use plenty of ground cover such as mulch to protect root systems as well.

Preserving heat is another way to protect plants. Draping a large blanket or cloth over young or sensitive plants can protect them from frost crystals forming and hold in heat absorbed by the soil. Leave the cloth loose and let it hang all the way down to the ground. Do not tie the cloth to the trunk of the tree or shrub, as this cuts the foliage off from the heat being released by the ground. Remove the cloth in the morning to prevent too much heat from building up, causing the plant to exit dormancy.

Though sensitive greenery does need to be protected during severe temperatures, it is important not to overprotect on milder nights. Exposure to some cold temperatures can actually aid in cold-hardening plants. For more information on how to protect your plants against frost or what varieties may be susceptible, contact your extension office.



UGA extension
From the Ground Up
Melissa Mattee

Letters to The Editor

To the Editor:

On April 25, 2016 my husband and I drove to Hiawassee. Later than night he left by helicopter!

We checked into the Ridges Resort where he fell and hit his head, losing consciousness. The ambulance took him to the Chatuge Regional Hospital where he was treated by Dr. Paul Conrad. A scan revealed that he had suffered a subdural hematoma, a condition that develops when blood collects under the dura or protective covering of the brain.

He was taken by helicopter that night to Emory Hospital in Atlanta where he underwent surgery and was hospitalized for 12 days, eight of them in intensive care. Following that he underwent two weeks of rehab and months of recovery at home.

He is so much better now, almost back to normal. His primary physician says that God was with him because many people with this injury are paralyzed, in convalescence, or die.

The reason for this letter is to compliment the Chatuge Regional Hospital and to tell the residents of this area how blessed they are to have such a nice, efficient, well-equipped hospital. Dr. Conrad was kind and efficient. He made numerous phone calls trying to find a bed for my husband at a larger hospital where they could do neurosurgery. He talked to me; he listened to me. I might not have all of the names who helped me that night; but I was impressed by an LPN named Tamara, an RN named Jim, the clerk named Whitney, a nurse named Tara, and the radiologist who read the scan. The ambulance crew was efficient and understanding.

We don't know why my husband fell and probably never will. I was out of the room for a minute and came back to find him lying on his back, unconscious, his eyes half open. I immediately called the front desk, and a lady (whose name I can't recall) was in the room in seconds. The manager offered to drive me to the hospital, but I took my car. I certainly did not know the severity of the problem and remember naively asking Dr. Conrad if my husband had suffered a concussion. He replied that there are different kinds of concussions. I had no clue what damage my husband had suffered nor how long his recovery would be. Dr. Conrad knew.

I live in a rural community; and I know how important it is to have a local hospital. My husband is alive because of the Chatuge Regional Hospital.

Patty Proctor

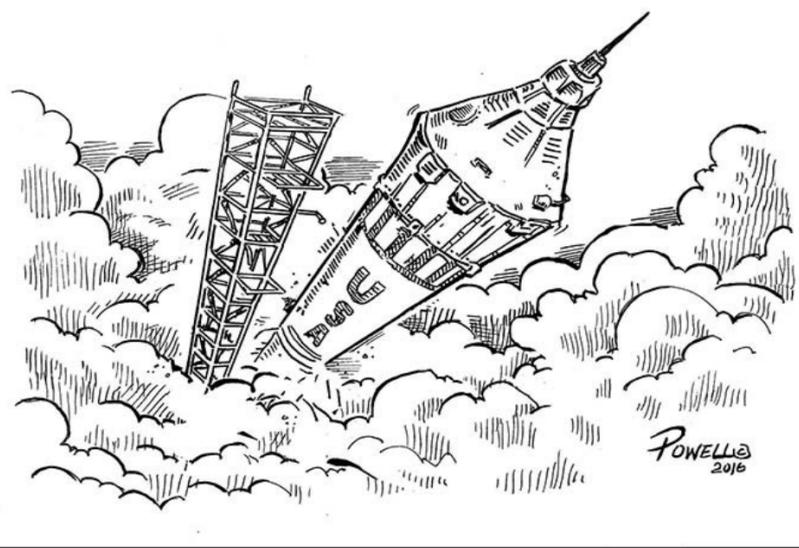
Dear Editor,

President-elect Trump appears to be keeping his campaign promise to severely reduce environmental regulations by selecting Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt to head the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This nomination is consistent with Trump's energy policy which is to increase domestic energy production by reducing regulations. Pruitt also believes the relationship between manmade pollution and global climate change needs more debate. I couldn't agree more. Pruitt is also a strong supporter of fracking—the technique used to extract oil and natural gas from shale rock formations.

Of course, Pruitt's nomination is being strongly criticized by radical environmental groups and liberal politicians. The selection of Pruitt to run the EPA sends an important signal that Trump intends to deliver on his promise to reduce the regulatory burden on the U.S. economy and promote Trump's pro-fossil fuel energy policy.

Tim Groza

Godspeed, John Glenn...



Towns County Community Calendar

Bingo	Every Monday:	9:30 am
Bridge Players	Brasstown Manor	12:30 pm
	Village Condos Clubhouse	
	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
	Second Tuesday of each month:	
Caregiver support	Brasstown Manor	3 pm
Arts & Crafts Guild	Calvary Alliance Chapel	6 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm
	Second Wednesday of each month:	
Basket Weavers	SC Fire Hall	10 am
Board of Elections	Old Rock Jail	4 pm
	Second Thursday of each month:	
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	5 pm
	Second Friday of each month:	
Square Dance Club	Rec. Center	7 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	

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