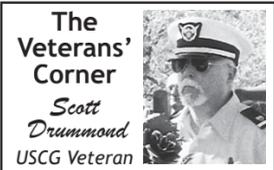


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

USMC, Deer Lodge and July

What does all that have in common? I'm glad that caught your attention, because when two very honest, hard working fine mountain folks get together, and never quit chasing their dreams, never chiding work, or lay back and expect someone else to "carry their load", it adds up to success, happiness and a unique, great place to eat. Seems like everything they accomplished had roots in the month of July, too!



The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran

Richard Haigler, formerly of Murphy, NC enlisted in the USMC on 21 July 1960. Richard's Murphy High School handbook of strict, straightforward rules and discipline, and obvious great parenting, had a positive influence on shaping Richard's character, his drive to work hard and efforts to succeed. Not to mention his desire to enlist in one of our military services. He and one of his HS buddies went to the Navy recruiter, in downtown Murphy, signed up for duty to our America. However a USMC recruiter surprised the Haigler family by showing up at the old family Haigler farm in Murphy, thus Richard became a Marine, forevermore! After boot camp at Paris Island, Richard was a Marine in 3rd Battalion, Platoon 365. Wondering why he and a couple of others were not sent to Camp Lejeune for further training like most of the other Leathernecks, he soon found out he was being shipped out to somewhere he'd "never even heard of", Newfoundland as a part of a security team for our obscure US Naval Facility there. He said it was great duty along with his next and final duty station in Cuba. He was honorably discharged in the month of July. He then worked several jobs before settling with General Motors for a career.

Willene Dyer, a genuine mountain gal, "my Little Lady" as he so proudly calls her and Richard were wed in the month of July and he gives her credit for re-designing, and making the Deer Lodge Restaurant a success with her never ending energy and never missing work for over 36 continuous years. Richard would also come back home to Hiawassee, to work in the restaurant after work on weekends and years later, when the time was right he also gives credit to Willene for designing the layout of their home, which Richard and his friends hand-built, in between all their other jobs, never slowing down or slacking off. Many years of continuous hard work, devotion and of course a lot of love, combined with a wee bit of luck and God's Blessings became their formula for a true life together, and their real All American Dream come true.

Willene gives credit to her schooling at Towns County School and some "well deserved" discipline applied to her backside a time or two by Hellen Kimsey, a wonderful teacher, and another fine mountain lady, married to WW II Navy Veteran Todd Kimsey, who also came home to teach.

Work ethics and self-reliance, anyone?

Semper Paratus

Forest Service struggling to turn wildfires into management tool

The thousands of acres on fire all across the west in the record-heat for early June offer an illustration of the transformation of the Forest Service's approach to wildfires in the past decade. The rapidly evolving approach toward wildfires also reflects a much broader realization that many regions must learn to live with fire rather than always rush to battle the flames. Five or 10 years ago, the Forest Service would have rushed to snuff out those fires as quickly as possible fearful they would get out of control, threaten communities and consume valuable resources including timber. But these days, fire managers seek to turn these low-intensity blazes to their advantage.

Most of those fires started before temperatures rose and humidity plunged in the past week, which means they mostly remained on the ground chawing through a longtime accumulation of downed wood and debris on the ground. Reassured by fuel moistures and fire behavior, fire managers quickly mapped out perimeters — relying on older burns, roads, power line firebreaks and the distribution of subdivisions and settlements to plan a strategy of containment. For instance, when lightning sparked the Juniper Fire managers quickly established an 80,000-acre area in which they felt they could let it burn. Given the wind directions and the movement of the fire, they effectively flanked it with firebreaks and backfires that effectively herded the wildfire toward an area that had burned several years ago.

A growing body of national and international research lies behind the approach, intended to reverse policies that called for putting almost any fire out within the first hour. In addition, forest managers for a century embraced intensive grazing that removed the fuels that carried low intensity fires and clear-cut logging that often resulted in replacement stands that amounted to spindly tree thickets. As a result, densities in ponderosa pine forest rose from about 50 trees per acre to more like 800 trees per acre.

One international study concluded that many forest managers will have to drastically change policies to use wildfire as a tool to maintain forest health and diversity, especially in the face of a projected rise in average global temperatures. More than 70 researchers from across the globe collaborated in a massive study that documented the rapid spread of human settlements into forested, wildlands areas prone to wildfires. Invasive plants, climate change, population growth, economic and social attitudes have all played a role in a dramatic increase in structures and lives at risk in wildfires. The consensus statement indicated the problem will become critical due to a projected 50 percent increase in world population by 2050 and a projected 1- to 20 degree centigrade average temperature increase. Another study concluded that forest managers should study the methods of communities that lived for long periods of time in balance with wildfire often by deliberately setting fires at certain times of the year.

Many Native American cultures in the Southwest and Southeast regularly burned forested areas, keeping the forest cleared and boosting the growth of shrubs and grasses which in turn benefited species they hunted. This approach applied to a wide range of groups according to the study by researchers from Southern Methodist University. The study included contributions from researchers in Australia, the U.S., Great Britain, Canada, Australia, South Africa and Spain. The Basque communities in the French Western Pyrenees and the Aboriginal people of Western Australia all maintained grasslands and forests with the deliberate use of wildfire, the study concluded.

The warming trend combined with an increase in the length and depth of drought in recent decades has resulted in a big increase in wildfires in the United States and many other regions. The shift in the use of wildfires to manage the forest in the U.S. now provides an example of the kind of shift in approach the studies suggest. The Forest Service is currently working on the largest forest restoration effort in history. The Four Forest Restoration Initiative in Arizona has lagged several years behind schedule, but remains an ambitious effort to combine thinning projects and controlled burns to dramatically reduce tree densities across several million acres in Rim Country.

Moreover, the Forest Service in coordination with Payson, the Salt River Project and the National Forest Foundation has undertaken a separate project to thin the 64,000-acre watershed draining into the C.C. Cragin Reservoir, which holds the key to Rim Country's future water supply. Prescribed fire has been a tool used by people for many centuries to manage their wildlife, wildfire risks, timber, and water quality and is still a viable tool to manage our forests today.

For more information on wildfire management, contact Frank Riley, Executive Director, Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council at www.info.ccrecd@gmail.com.



RC&D
Frank Riley
Executive Director

Pond Algae

Over the past few weeks, we have been a little light on rain despite having plenty of hot weather. These two factors lead to the perfect conditions for algal blooms. As temperatures increase, water levels drop due to evaporation and nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous become concentrated within ponds. Also, decreased rainfall prevents natural cycling of water through pond overflows, so water becomes stagnant and a perfect environment for algae blooms.

Algal blooms are more than just unsightly. Some algae, known as cyanobacteria, produce toxins that are harmful to both people and animals that may come into contact with the water. These toxins are not usually released into the water unless the algae dies. However, when a "sudden death" event occurs within a pond which kills a large percentage of the algae, toxins are released into the water because the dead algae start to decay. Sudden death events may be caused by several circumstances such as chemical control, loss of sunlight, or nutrient depletion. These toxins are consumed by fish, giving them an "off" flavor. They also cause the pond itself to have a musty odor. The most common toxin released is microcystin which causes a wide variety of symptoms such as kidney and liver damage, abdominal pains and skin issues when it is consumed.

Because algal blooms can reach critical levels very quickly, it is important to monitor ponds for the first signs of increased algae presence. Acceptable algae levels allow light to reach twelve inches or more into the pond. You can test this by using a Sechi disc, or a plate attached to a stick with marked lengths. If visibility is less than twelve inches, the pond should be checked for toxins and you should look into possible control measures. If you are concerned about algae in your pond but unsure if levels are harmful, the extension office offers several tests that can tell you what types of algae are present in your water and what toxins are being released.

If your pond needs treatment for an algae problem, there are several options. The most common chemical treatments for algal blooms are copper based chemicals and sodium precarbonate. Copper has its advantages because it is inexpensive and can even be used to prevent blooms. However, because it kills so many algae so quickly, it could cause a mass release of algal toxins. Before applying copper to your pond, test the hardness of the water in your pond. If the water is too soft, treatment with copper may actually be harmful to fish. Rainbow trout, koi and blue catfish are especially sensitive to copper treatment, so be sure to explore all options before treating. An alternative to copper is sodium precarbonate, which not only kills algae but also helps to get rid of toxins that are released during treatment. However, toxins will eventually degrade on their own with exposure to more sunlight as the algae dies off.

To prevent future blooms, be sure to maintain grass buffers that will prevent excessive nutrients from entering the pond. Also, if you have livestock around the water source, limit their access to only a few points. This prevents mass contamination of the water with manure that could otherwise feed algae and other pond weeds, as well as preventing erosion and damage to buffers. Always be careful when applying fertilizer near bodies of water as contamination with nitrogen or phosphorous may also encourage algal growth.

If you would like our publication on pond algae management, please contact the extension office.



From the Ground Up
Melissa Mattee

Seizures and Partnerships

I have been a vocal opponent of attempts to take away the ability of law enforcement to seize the illegally obtained assets of drug dealers. Many misunderstand the purpose of utilizing this tool. We live in an age in which sentencing of dangerous criminals has been reduced to a level that it is hardly the deterrent it once was. Couple that with the fact that there is a lot of quick cash in the illegal drug trade and there is a strong incentive for criminal types to get involved in the drug trade. Seizures are important in taking away incentive and preventing drug dealers from forming even more well-armed and well-funded criminal enterprises.

Investigations should never be seizure-driven. It is the duty of the Sheriff to keep our community safe. That is the purpose of targeting the drug trade. Agencies that lose focus of that fact tend to get into serious troubles and do foolish things. They cut corners, place the community in danger, and often misuse the seizures and cause the rest of us to have to fight against legislation that would take away our seizure laws.

Drugs like heroin and methamphetamine are destroying lives all across this nation. They are being brought here by the Mexican drug cartel. Towns County is hardly the base of that operation, though we are only two hours away from Atlanta, which is a main distribution point.

I believe that the best way to keep our community safe is to not only go after drugs within the county, but to network with other agencies and target the source of those drugs. In so doing we cut off supply lines and force the drug trade to regroup, if you will, which helps to keep these dangerous criminals pushed back.

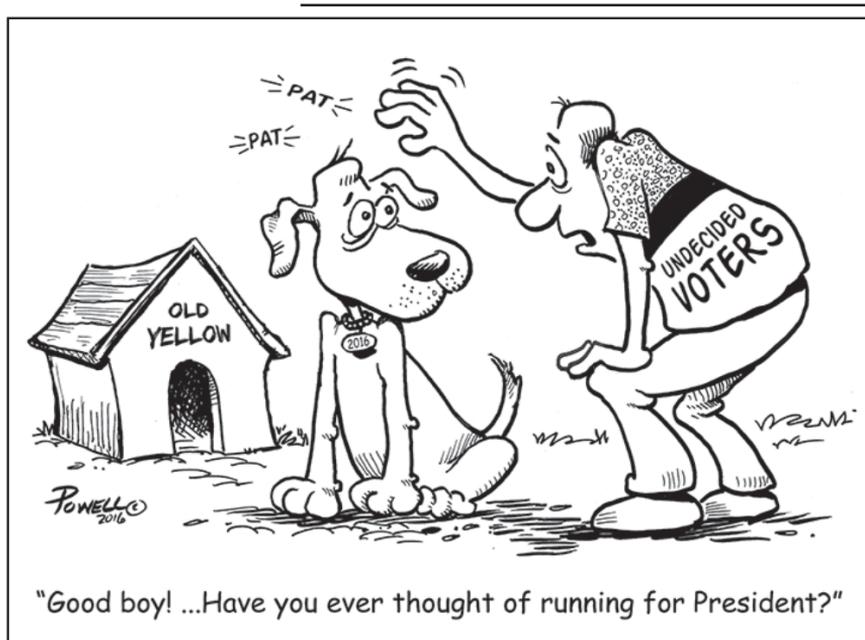
An agency with a seizure-driven mindset would allow the bigger players to come into the area so that they could seize larger amounts of money, vehicles, etc. That would make for a great headline, but would do so at the expense of placing the community in danger. That I find unacceptable. It is the duty of the Sheriff to protect the community.

That is why we are so committed to our growing network of partners through the Appalachian Regional Drug Enforcement Office (ARDEO), Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI), and other law enforcement agencies on the local, state, and federal levels. In the last four years we assisted the ARDEO in investigating crimes that led to arrests and seizures of over \$36,000,000 between 2012 and March of this year. There were no big headlines in the Towns County Herald, but we are all safer because of these efforts.

Under the current agreement, Towns County Sheriff's Office pays nothing to be a part of the ARDEO. We supply a deputy to the attachment. ARDEO reimburses the county for half of that deputy's salary. In addition, ARDEO provides the deputy a vehicle which they maintain and provide the fuel. ARDEO pays for their training and furnishes all the equipment. By being members of the ARDEO, we have access to all their resources -- resources we could not afford to pay for in Towns County. I believe the most important aspect of the relationship is the sharing of criminal intelligence between so many agencies in Northeast Georgia. This is a partnership that has proven to be invaluable and one that has resulted in taking many dangerous criminals off the streets and keeping our community and our children safer. I remain committed to our current partnerships and to the goal of increasing the size and scope of this collaborative effort, which has one focus: working together for the benefit of all of our communities.



From the Desk of:
Sheriff Clinton of Towns County



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 profane, 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	Village Condos Clubhouse	12:30 pm
Bingo	Brasstown Manor	9:30 am
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
SMART Recovery	Red Cross Building	7 pm
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Bridge Players	Village Condos Clubhouse	12:30 pm
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
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YH Plan Comm.	YH City Hall	5 pm
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
MOAA	Call Jack @ 828-321-2896	
Co. Comm. Mtg	Courthouse	5:30 pm
Friendship Comm.	Clubhouse	6 pm
Goldwing Riders	Daniel's Restaurant	11 am
Red Cross DAT	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	5:30 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Republican Party	New Senior Ctr.	6:30 pm
Square Dance Club	Rec. Center	7 pm
Humane Shelter Bd.	Cadence Bank	5:30 pm

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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