

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

USCG - Many Missions

Since our official creation in August, 1790 as the United States Revenue Cutter Service and eventually officially named the United States Coast Guard, there's been rarely an occasion whereas our USCG hasn't been called into action.

The USCG is a very unique and adaptable seagoing service with completed missions on our coastal regions as well as from ferrying Marines and supplies ashore in WWII, to our European theater of war, to Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, ice breaking duties in the arctic regions and even in the middle of the Sahara Desert where one of my friends was stationed as part of a LORAN team. And we have always been an integral life saving service alongside law enforcement duties no matter where the USCG is present.

As of recent world changing events we find our USCG with another challenging duty with our expanding presence in the Westernmost Pacific.

The U.S. Coast Guard's status as a military service coupled with its law enforcement roles allows it to effectively contribute to both the military and maritime law enforcement requirements of the Indo-Pacific region, according to the commander of U.S. Coast Guard units operating in the region.

As a military service of the United States, the Coast Guard can integrate seamlessly into defense operations alongside the U.S. Navy and other U.S. military services, and is fully inter-operable with U.S. allies, Vice Admiral Michael McAllister, Commander Pacific Area and Commander, Coast Guard Defense Force West, said recently during a Sept. 3 media call.

The USCG conducted joint patrols, SAR exercises, and small boat ops alongside the Japanese and Philippine Coast Guards. Our USCGC Munro, (WMSL-755) and crew did an outstanding job operating under command of our U.S. Naval 7th Fleet.

The USCG is not there to duplicate or replicate that which our US Navy is responsible for.

Just as here operating off the coastlines of America, unique jobs, duties and missions always keep our USCG very busy.

Flexibility and adaptability as situations dictate require our USCG to be "different" in almost all aspects of military service.

Our joint exercise exact locations were not made public for obvious reasons, especially in that region of our world. It needs to be noted that our USCG does, in fact cooperate with China in areas of mutual interest. Although China has no interest whatsoever in partnering with US Forces in the South China Sea region.

That balancing act is one of our USCG's strong points insofar as it's uniqueness as a military service.

As our civilized world continues to evolve, so does our unique USCG, hopefully for the betterment of our USA and all mankind. -Semper Paratus



The Veterans' Corner
Scott Drummond
USCG Veteran



Polishing the Mirror

When I was very young, the stories of older people fascinated me. My grandmother's stories were so vivid that listening to her seemed like traveling back in time. Nostalgia smooths the rough places in our personal history and polishes the mirror of reflection until the image may be somewhat distorted, but most of us remember a period in our lives that was somehow sweeter, simpler or richer in some measure than today. Growing up in the Southern Appalachians in the late 19th century was anything but easy, and by modern standards creature comforts were few, but my grandmother always cherished those memories, and as long as she was able, still enjoyed visiting the old homestead. She was blessed to be able to do that. Not everyone has an idyllic childhood of course, but most of us do in the western world. It is the nature of parents to do everything in their power to create a bubble of innocence and safety around their children, and Americans have been fortunate in that this has been easier to accomplish here than in most places.

Nostalgia has been a close companion lately as we make ready to sell the family home my brother and I lived in from pre-school to high school and beyond. Our mother left this earth in that house, and our dad stayed there almost as long. I was married under that roof, and there were many firsts there, as well as many "lasts."

The firsts are easy to identify, but it's a hard turn of fate that we are so frequently blind to the lasts until they are irretrievable: The last time our mom opened a carton of homemade vegetable soup; the last time Dad climbed up the stairs from the basement with a jar of new honey fresh from his hives; the last time we loaded the station wagon for a family vacation at the beach; the last supper together around the kitchen table before school and work pulled us apart; the last Christmas when we were all able to be home at the same time, and the last sound of the screen door slamming with its distinctive tone.

There has been a lot of reminiscing lately between friends and classmates, and I suppose it's only natural that we, like our ancestors did and our descendants will probably do as well, tend to value the past over the present, at least as far as the quality of the time we spent growing up. I'm not sure it's a fair comparison, but I'll make it anyway.

If you count 20 years as a generation, at least two of them here in America were blessed with a charmed existence for the children of that time. There were wars, but participation was voluntary for the youth who chose to serve. There was crime, but we wandered the neighborhood like Wally and The Beaver, more at risk from being late for supper than from anything we might encounter in a place where neighbors knew each other and all the neighborhood kids. Those of us who grew up on or spent time at the farm were even more fortunate. We all spent more time outdoors. Our bodies were healthier. We were less fragile. We knew how to do things, to make things, to invent games and activities on the fly with parts of our brains that must surely be atrophied now in the glare of so many pixels, even among those of us who should know better.

Few of us are lucky enough to hang on to the place where we grew up as long as we have. Not many of us would even want to. Our ambitions and our technology spread us far and wide like the seeds of a dandelion. Those of us who would like to remain in the old neighborhood, too often now are betrayed by changes we don't understand and don't like. The reasons are economic, and they are social, and they do not speak well of a nation and a culture which has allowed it's neighborhoods to become places where children cannot roam freely without fear. We were fortunate. We had a choice to leave, though reluctantly. So many do not have that choice. And what we leave behind is for many people so far and away better than where they live now, that they are willing to send their own children into the unknown for even a remote chance for a bubble of childhood innocence and safety that is not torn by chaos and want. God save them all. But only so many drowning people can cling to even the sturdiest of vessels before it goes under, and we have crossed the Rubicon into an era which will reveal to us all just how seaworthy our vessel really is. That's too big a map for this very personal journey, and the question is too complicated, as to how we lost the will and the way for our cities, towns, neighborhoods and farms to be places where our kids can stay, where they would want to stay. Places that families can pass on to the next generation. Places where people can put down roots.

Still, though what we have shared here may ring true, we do know that it is entirely subjective. On a trip to Driftwood Beach recently, my wife and I grieved at the changes to the shoreline over time, but a young friend on her honeymoon thought it was the most beautiful place in the world. My grandmother believed that her childhood was blessed. My father was convinced that my generation was missing out on so much that he enjoyed while growing up, and he tried to gift us with many of those experiences while they were still possible. My friends and I shake our heads at the kids of today, most likely with replicas of the expressions our parents wore.

Growing up is decorated with firsts and littered with lasts, and we each learn to apprehend time, to capture it for a while, and finally to surrender to it in our own way. It is my firm belief that the more moments we embrace, the fewer our regrets will be, and the easier it will be to let go when it's time to let go. I can almost regret, however, not having one more cup of tea, sitting in that rocking chair in my parents' bedroom, soaking up the spectacular view of the sun going down in the west, but as surely as the sun will rise tomorrow, someone else will enjoy that view.

European Hornets

European hornets seem to be more common this year. Let's talk about them, the damage they do, and how to treat them.



The European hornet is really big. Sometimes people get them confused with the Giant Asian hornet (murder hornet), because they are of similar size, but the giant Asian hornet has not been reported in Georgia. They have only been found in a couple of counties in Washington and Canada. They can be an inch and a half or larger. European hornets have black and yellow stripes, and sometimes a reddish color on their head.

European hornet queens will emerge in the spring from hibernation and start to build their nest. The queen also starts producing offspring. The females that are produced become the workers and they forage, feed the young, build and defend the nest. They are carnivores, which means that they feed on large insects. Primarily, grasshoppers, bees, and yellow jackets. Nests will grow to house 300-500 hornets. Occasionally, they can grow to 1,000. As winter gets closer, the workers will start to die off. Next year's queens will leave the nest and find a place to overwinter. They like to find shelter under bark or in rotting stumps. The nests they make are not reused the following year.

European hornets will sometimes strip the bark off trees. If they remove all the bark in a continuous ring around the tree, it can kill it. When they strip the bark, they are looking for sap from the trees. This type of damage is not severe enough to be a concern on fully mature trees.

European hornets are usually not aggressive towards people. They will become defensive if they are defending their nest. They will defend their nest by stinging if anyone gets too close, and can sting repeatedly. They build large paper nests that are about 6 feet off the ground. Usually these nests are in the hollow of a tree. Sometimes they will raid honeybee hives. A unique feature about them is that they will continue to work at night. Most hornets and wasps will decrease in activity at night, but that is not the case with these European hornets. They will be attracted to light at night.

If you encounter European hornets it's best to have a pest management company handle them. They are difficult to eliminate if you can't find the nest. If you can find the nest, an aerosol 'Wasp and Hornet' spray will be effective against them. Multiple applications will most likely be needed. Wear long sleeves and pants when treating them. It's best to treat them at night, but do not carry a light, because they will be attracted to it. If they are attacking trees, you can use Sevint to treat the affected area. You will need to reapply every 7-10 days depending on the rain. Finding the nest can be difficult since they like to use trees. One trick is to throw flour at a hornet so that it's easier to see and then follow it back to its nest.

If you have questions about European hornets contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Pride of Place

When John and I opened our Mountain Inn all those years ago, we were giddy with excitement. Not only for the new business venture which awaited us but the wondrous topography surrounding us. Far more than an app, it's an entire chain. The Appalachian Mountains, rounded by eons, own knowledge those young, spiky peaks in the western United States of America have yet to experience.

Hiawassee, the county seat of Towns County, holds not only its own City Hall, but the County Courthouse as well. Most small mountain cities have enchanting town squares, complete with gazebos and municipal buildings. County seats are the hosts, if you will, of the county and can express welcome or indifference.

When guests stayed with us and asked about places to see and things to do in the area we were thrilled to mention Music on the Square right here in Hiawassee. "Where is the square?" we heard often. "It's where the gazebo is downtown," we replied. Then came the query "Where is the gazebo? We didn't see one when we drove through town." Here I must stop and say when we first arrived here, the gazebo appeared more like a camouflaged military tent than an announcement of happy happenings. I asked a prominent citizen why the gazebo looked so hidden and was told "We like brown."

That coat of paint that changed the gazebo from a downstairs chambermaid to a lady breathed life where little had been. The inoperable water fountain on the square, while very pretty, had lured tongue lolling hikers to disapproval. Expense deterred repair and from that a lovely stone planter was born. From landscape to latex, City Hall has been given long neglected attention. Not everyone agrees on the new color but all probably agree it beats cracks and peeling and shows it is cared about and tended.

The First Friday Night Market, not intended as a tourist attraction but a local affair, does attract tourists who enjoy interacting with the hometown populace.

Love and pride of place is showing. Ain't it swell?
See You Around Towns!



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Letters to The Editor

Worried

Dear Editor,

Do those people who made the decision to take over Hamilton Gardens ever walk through the gardens? I do!

And I see many volunteers working the grounds. They are there in hot, muggy weather pulling weeds, mulching and making the gardens a beautiful, pleasant place to be. The volunteers I have spoken with are so proud of the work they do, and they work so hard to maintain the gardens! I was so impressed, I considered volunteering myself.

Since moving to Hiawassee a year ago, I have enjoyed walks in the gardens, their educational lectures and great outdoor concerts.

I worry about the future of the beautiful gardens!

Cari Stone

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
P.O. 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.

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